



NEWSLETTER

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Gifts Worthy of the Shogun: Nabeshima Porcelain and Other Wares in the Macdonald Collection

Three Lectures by Daniel Chen, Ceramic Art Historian and Curator at the Brian Haughton Gallery, London

April 12, 2021, 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Sponsored by Marilyn Chou, Jane Connochie and Janice Rabinowitz

Thank you to those of you who have registered for this exciting Seminar, a wonderful opportunity to explore in depth the fascinating history of Japan's ceramics and, ultimately, their influence on the aesthetics of Western porcelain.

While we will miss our usual delicious box lunch and the socializing we could do in person, this year we invite you to have a special meal before settling in at 1:00 p.m. for an afternoon of stimulating information and beautiful images from around the world. If you haven't yet registered, please do so soon at cceramicsc.org/seminar-topics. More details are below.

Seminar Summary

When the Chinese Ming Empire collapsed in 1644, Dutch traders in Asia sought new suppliers to satisfy the European craze for porcelain. Japan, having only begun porcelain production in the early 17th century, seized the opportunity to become a new source for the global porcelain trade. The potters first adapted their wares to imitate the Chinese, but quickly developed a confident and unique Japanese aesthetic. European collectors soon came to admire and prefer Japanese porcelain brilliantly decorated in the Kakiemon style, with such designs known in the West as "Hob in Well" and "Lady in the Pavilion." In Japan, however, a very different kind of porcelain was prized. Nabeshima porcelain made exclusively for the Tokugawa shogun was reserved for Japan's elite class. Its meticulous design and perfect form are little known to audiences outside of Japan. This lecture series will introduce and discuss rare examples of the earliest-produced Japanese porcelain in blue and white, known as Shoki-Imari, as well as polychrome decorated Ko-Kutani, Nabeshima, and Kakiemon wares.

In the 18th century, the European taste for “old Japan china” was widespread. European porcelain manufactories, initiated by kings and princes, artisans and merchants, sought to emulate the striking colors and refined qualities of Japanese porcelain. Porcelain transcended its functional use to become statement pieces showcasing power, wealth, status, and connoisseurship.

This lecture series will discuss the origins, development, and consumption of Japanese and Japanese-inspired porcelain of the 17th and 18th century drawing from the Macdonald Collection in the Gardiner Museum, Toronto.



Dish with Flower and Grapevines, Hizen, Japan, porcelain with underglaze blue decoration, circa 1610-1630. Diam. 8 ¼” (21 cm). The Gardiner Museum, Toronto, Promised Gift from the Macdonald Collection.

Speaker Biography

Daniel Chen (M.Litt.) is a ceramic art historian and curator with the Brian Haughton Gallery in London. Until recently, he was the Adjunct Curator of Asian Ceramics at the Gardiner Museum in Toronto, where he continues consulting curatorially, with a forthcoming publication on Japanese porcelain in the Macdonald Collection, as well as a digital interpretation of the Gardiner Museum’s Japanese collection. Recent projects include the re-installation of the Gardiner’s Japanese gallery with Curator Emerita Meredith Chilton O.C.; and curating the Chinese porcelain exhibition, *Across the Globe: The Anne Gross Collection*. He received his master’s degree from the University of Glasgow/Christie’s Education, London. His current research explores the historic interaction between Asian and European porcelain



Dish with Ajiro Design, Hizen, Japan, porcelain with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration, circa 1680. L. 6 5/8" (16.9 cm), W. 4 13/16" (12.2 cm). The Gardiner Museum, Toronto.
Promised Gift from the Macdonald Collection.

Summaries of the Seminar's Three Lectures

Legendary Beginnings: Shoki-Imari and Ko-Kutani Porcelain

Prior to the 17th century, Japan relied on foreign trade, primarily with China, for the consumption of porcelain. This changed around 1610 with the discovery of kaolin deposits in Arita. Key figures contributed to Japan's ability to quickly produce a suitable substitute for Chinese porcelain for both a domestic and foreign market. With the decline and eventual collapse of China's Ming dynasty (1364-1644), Japan became a leading supplier of porcelain, which introduced further investment and innovation contributing to the development of polychrome decoration found on early Ko-Kutani porcelain. This lecture explores the origins of Japanese porcelain production by looking at the development of form and decoration in early Japanese wares.

Gifts Worthy of the Shogun: Nabeshima Porcelain

In the Edo period (1615-1868), Japan experienced a new era of peace and stability under the governance of the Tokugawa shogunate, based in Edo (modern day Tokyo). To maintain control over his subjects, the shogun required vassal lords called *daimyo* to present goods and to reside during alternate years between their home and the de facto ruling capital. Sumptuary regulations controlled public decorum, affecting all manner of behavior such as dining, where Nabeshima porcelain was used and appreciated beyond its utilitarian function.

Nabeshima porcelain was made for the shogun's pleasure, hence its rarity and limited representation in collections outside of Japan. It is admired for its technical achievement, which required the very best potters and decorators whose skill and livelihood were supported by the Nabeshima *daimyo*. The Macdonald Collection features 17th century examples of Nabeshima porcelain from its early to peak periods of productions, reflecting the development of form and decoration characteristic of this type. This lecture will discuss the significance of Nabeshima porcelain and its use at court.

Inspired by Japan: Interpretations of Kakiemon Across Europe

The consumption of oriental porcelain in Europe dates back as early as the 14th century, beginning with the introduction of Chinese porcelain. Its properties of translucency and impermeability elicited both fascination and admiration as a luxury object afforded only by the nobility. By the 17th century, direct trade with China and Japan supplied porcelain for insatiable collectors, most notably Augustus the Strong (1670-1730), the Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. His self-described "*maladie de porcelaine*" spurred the creation of the Meissen manufactory near Dresden after the discovery of the recipe for hard-paste porcelain in Europe by the alchemist, Johann Friedrich Böttger (1682-1719). With the introduction of Meissen the secret of porcelain production soon spread across Europe. The earliest examples featured designs inspired by Chinese and Japanese prototypes, where the Japanese Kakiemon style was particularly popular and widely adapted at manufactories from Meissen in Germany to Chantilly in France and Bow and Chelsea in London. This lecture will introduce rare examples of Japanese-inspired European porcelain in the Macdonald Collection and will discuss the application and widespread desire for Kakiemon porcelain from the 18th century to today.



Vases with a Ho-Ho Bird, Bow Factory, London porcelain, Soft-paste porcelain with overglaze enamel decoration, circa 1755. H. 10 9/16" (21.9 cm), Diam 5 1/8" (13 cm). The Gardiner Museum, Toronto (G08.6.1.1-2), The Macdonald Collection.

How to Register for the CCC April Seminar

Once you are on the CCC website page at cceramicsc.org/seminar-topics, you'll see a blue "Register for Seminar" button. Click on that and then, to pay with a credit card, click on the blue "Seminar for Members" box at the bottom right. You'll be asked to establish a password. After you've done that, you may proceed as you normally would when purchasing an item online.

If you prefer to pay by check, click on the blue box at the bottom to obtain a printable, mail-in registration form, fill in the form and mail it with your check as directed. Or simply put the information required on the mail-in form on a piece of paper and mail it with your \$45 check to Marilyn Chou, 20 Church Street, Apt. A65, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830. We look forward to having you in the audience on Monday, April 12! Questions: Contact Marilyn at marylin.chou@gmail.com.

Additions to CCC Directory

Please add the following new member information to your CCC Directory:

Pat Close, 1 Pine Ridge Road, Greenwich, CT 06830, 203.940.0970,
patbclose@aol.com

Becky MacGuire, 43 Woodchuck Road, Stamford, CT 06903, 425.232.3799,
becky.macguire@gmail.com.

Stella Wong, 805 Washington Avenue, Suite 9E, Brooklyn, NY, 11238,
646.825.9678, Sutera-us@yahoo.com

Elsewhere in the Decorative Arts

April 10 - August 28: Breakfast, the International Museum of Dinnerware Design's Fourth Biennial Invitational and Juried Exhibition.

Virtual Opening Reception: April 10, 2021; In-Person Closing Reception, August 21, 2021 at the Museum on Main Street, Washtenaw County Historical Society, 500 North Main Street, Ann Arbor, Michigan and online at <http://dinnerwaremuseum.org/main/index.php/breakfast/>.

This beautiful selection of Eva Zeisel's designs in the white Tomorrow's Classic shape will be part of the historic work interwoven with the invitational

and juried work of contemporary artists.

The exhibition is a partnership between the International Museum of Dinnerware Design and the Washtenaw County Historical Society's Museum on Main Street. We thank "Jiffy Mixes" of Chelsea Milling Company for supplying the artist prizes.

The exhibition Breakfast is all about celebrating the first meal of the day. In addition to work by contemporary artists, historic works from the IMoDD permanent collection will be seamlessly woven throughout the exhibition. Due to the pandemic, the exhibition will open virtually on April 10 and will be available via Facebook and our website that day. At that time, visitors will be welcome to view the exhibition catalogue, photographs, and videos of the exhibition on line. Artist prizes will be announced at the virtual opening. Guests can plan to view the exhibition in person when it is safe to do so following common sense and state guidelines and procedures. Museum hours are weekends noon-4:00 p.m. Special tours are welcome by contacting the Museum on Main Street or emailing the exhibition curator at director@dinnerwaremuseum.org. An in-person closing reception is scheduled for Saturday, August 21st 2-4 p.m.

To see a listing of invited and juried artists click [here](#)

APRIL 27: *Marked in Clay: Interdisciplinary Methods to Re-imagine Ancient Greek Potters at Work*, the Iris Foundation Awards Lecture by [Sanchita Balachandran](#), Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland. Bard Graduate Center, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Information at <https://www.bgc.bard.edu/iris-awards-2021>.
