



NEWSLETTER VOLUME XXXVI NUMBER 4 JANUARY 2026



Bowl, Talavera, Unknown Maker, tin-glazed earthenware with enamel decoration, circa 1650–75. Diameter 13 1/8 in. x H. 2 1/4 in. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of E. Royall Tyler (accession number 30.167). Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

"Common Languages, Distinct Accents: Mexican Ceramics in Dialogue at the MFA and Beyond"

by Lucia Abramovich Sánchez,
Carolyn and Peter Lynch Associate Curator of American
Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Sponsored by Letitia Roberts

Monday, January 12 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/1317598447136/WN_46M9xFavQk6

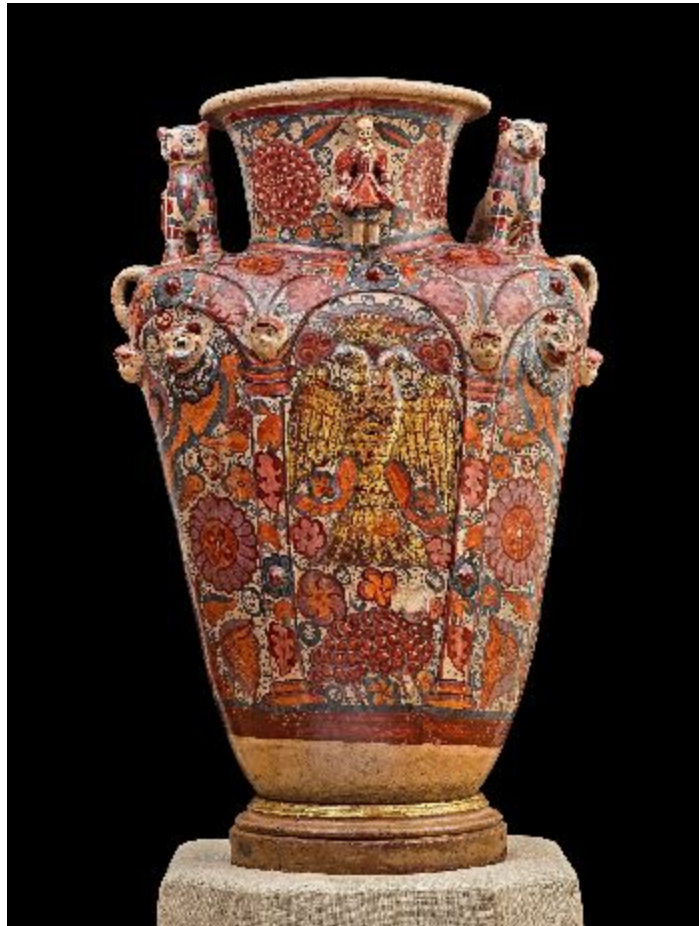
We are pleased to welcome Lucia Abramovich Sánchez for our first Zoom lecture in 2026. In this presentation, our speaker will explore the distinct regional accents embedded in Mexico's long and diverse history of ceramic production. She will convey how these are distinguished — or overlooked — in their presentation within museum exhibitions and collections, particularly in U.S. and European institutions. Beginning with a brief overview of pottery traditions in pre-contact Mesoamerica and the Viceroyalty of New Spain, this presentation will trace the aesthetic evolution and material practices of ceramic production in two regions — Puebla and Jalisco — whose rich legacies are the most prominently represented in international museum holdings. Puebla's *Talavera Poblana*, with its cobalt blue glazes and iconography shaped by Asian and Islamic influences, and Jalisco's burnished redwares, known for their aromatic clays and sculptural forms, will serve as primary case studies.

Through recent advances in scholarship on 17th-century *Talavera Poblana*, as well as an analysis of recent exhibitions and permanent displays that reexamine colonial ceramics across the Americas, Sánchez will illustrate how narratives around Mexican ceramics are being reshaped within global art history. She aims to highlight these gaps in the research of historical ceramics, such as the overlooked biographies of potters, intergenerational technical knowledge, and the histories of lesser-known centers like Natá, Panamá, and Santiago de Chile, and argue for a more inclusive and nuanced interpretive framework.

Finally, Sánchez will propose curatorial strategies to increase the visibility of these works in underrepresented collections, especially interpretive models that frame Mexican ceramics not only as works of decorative art, but as objects of cultural memory that speak across time and place, telling stories that connect people around the world through the universal language of clay.

Lucía Abramovich Sánchez is the Carolyn and Peter Lynch Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She previously served as Associate Curator of Latin American Art at the San Antonio Museum of Art in San Antonio, Texas, and has also held curatorial positions at the New Orleans Museum of Art and at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian. At the MFA, she works with a wide range of artwork that includes decorative arts and sculpture from North America and Latin America, spanning over 3,000 years of history. Among her projects in development is a major reinstallation of the first floor of the MFA's Art of the Americas wing, which will reopen in June 2026 to mark the U.S. Semiquincentennial. Dr. Abramovich Sánchez earned her B.A. from the College of William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia and received her M.A. from the Sainsbury Research Unit at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, United Kingdom. She holds a Ph.D. from the Latin American Studies and Art History joint doctoral program at Tulane University, New Orleans.

Registration Link for the 2:00 p.m., January 12 Zoom Lecture:



Earthenware Jar, Unknown Maker, Viceroyalty of New Spain (present-day Mexico), burnished and painted earthenware, Tonalá, Jalisco, Mexico, ca. 1760. Diam. 22 3/8 in. (56.72 cm), H. 33 1/2 in. (85.09 cm), 13 in. (33.02 cm). San Antonio Museum of Art, purchased with funds provided by the Lillie and Roy Cullen Endowment Fund (object number 2021.21.a-d).

SAVE THE DATE!

You will soon receive a special invitation via email to register for the CCC's February 9, 2026 Seminar, "A Guide to Chinese Ceramics Ancient and Modern, and How to Navigate a Complicated Market," two lectures given by the renowned Chinese ceramics expert, Lark Mason, on Zoom. Please join us then!

Correction to the CCC Directory

The correct email address for Christopher Maxwell is cmaxwell@artic.edu. Please make that change in your Directories. Thank you!



Student Exhibition at the Clay Arts Center, Port Chester

From January 14 to February 14, the show, Rising Stars: Annual Student Exhibition, will appear at the Clay Arts Center, 40 Beech Street in neighboring Port Chester, New York. This exhibit is a celebration of the accomplishments of their adult, youth, and Community Arts students to showcase their talent and growth. More information at <https://www.clayartcenter.org/events-at-clayartcenter/2026/1/rising-stars-annual-student-exhibition-estrellas-en-ascenso-exhibicin-estudiantil-anual>.



Menecy Tea Pot, Circa 1760. Private Collection, New York.

"NO PARALLEL IN ALL OF EUROPE: EARLY FRENCH SOFT-PASTE PORCELAIN"

The article below by Phyllis Simons is a reprint from a Connecticut Ceramics Circle newsletter, following the above-titled lecture given in January 2002 by Jeffrey Munger, who has graciously lectured to the group many times since then.

"When, in 1700, a writer commented that French porcelain had "no parallel in all of Europe" he was correct on both historical and aesthetic grounds. So great was the demand for porcelain - and so prestigious its possession - that patrons and potters of all nationalities strove to discover the

secret of its manufacture. The first successes were in France. In his January 14th lecture to CCSC, Jeffrey Munger - Associate Curator of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts at the Metropolitan Museum of Art - discussed the achievements of three French factories: Saint-Cloud, Chantilly, and Villeroy-Mennecy.

All early French porcelain was soft-paste - i.e. the body was composed of white clay mixed with ground glass or frit and fired at a temperature of 1100 degrees Celsius. The milky body usually was dipped in a lead glaze, well suited to take decoration in many colors. Less heat resistant than true, or hard-paste porcelain, soft-paste had high kiln losses. Some estimates are that only 20-30% of the pieces survived the first firing. Early production was entirely experimental - making, added Mr. Munger, for the scholar an exciting, rapidly evolving field of study.

French porcelain originated in Rouen, center of a thriving faience industry - faience being the French name for tin-glazed earthenware. Here in 1673 Louis Poterat received a patent from Louis XIV to make porcelain. Laboring virtually alone for fear his formula would be stolen, Poterat died in 1696. His legacy: fewer than twelve porcelain pieces, none marked, of a bluish paste decorated in underglaze blue.

Near Rouen is the town of Saint-Cloud where a faience painter named Pierre Chicanou relentlessly pursued the formula for porcelain before his death in 1677 or 1678. His widow Barbe married a potter, Henri Trou, and by 1697 they had established a company solely to manufacture porcelain (faience manufacture had never stopped). The early pieces were based on Chinese forms and decoration, but by 1700, European shapes (based on silver) and decorative motifs were incorporated into the factory's output. The earliest pieces were blue and white, but later the factory produced creamy white blanc de chine objects as well as pieces decorated with polychrome enamels. Saint-Cloud succumbed to competition from Vincennes-Sèvres and closed in 1766.

Another duke (a cousin of Louis XV), the Duc de Condé, established a porcelain factory in 1730 at Chantilly - site of his chateau and a forest renowned for good hunting - perhaps the *raison d'être* for the factory's red hunting horn mark. Until 1751, the works were managed by Ciquaire Cirou who came to the post from Saint-Cloud. In its first decade the factory was known primarily for objects painted in the Kakiemon style - inspired, perhaps, by pieces in the Duc's extensive collection of Japanese porcelain. Another influence was a book of Chinese designs published by J. A. Fraise in 1735.

At Chantilly, tin was added to the lead glaze, resulting in a whiter surface for decoration.

After Condé's death in 1740, Asian influence gradually yielded to the prevailing rococo taste, though the factory never mastered ground colors. In its last quarter century, Munger commented, the factory lost its creativity. Concentrating on dinner wares, Chantilly was unable to compete with Vincennes-Sèvres which had the sole right to gild its objects - and it closed around 1800.

Yet a third duke was the patron of a factory founded around 1734 by François Barbin on the estate of the Duc de Villeroy. The operation was small - fifteen workers during its eleven years of existence. Among its most original pieces were figures, notably of dwarfs and harlequins as well as chinoiserie figures. After the factory was relocated in 1748 to Mennecey, production was on a modest scale and focused on utilitarian wares.

These were decorated with "natural" motifs, such as flowers, in a distinctive palette featuring pink and purple.

In opening his talk, Jeffrey Munger observed that French soft-paste porcelain has great originality and charm. So did his informative lecture!"



Ecuelle, Sèvres, rose marbré and oval platter, painted by Nicolas Dodin, 1762, 18.5 cm, 14.5 cm., Former collection Richard Deacon.

Auction Corner The stunning écuelle with platter above was auctioned in December by Bonhams, sold for 57,550 British pounds.

Elsewhere in the Decorative Arts

January 21: "Frozen Delights - A History of Porcelain and Ice Cream." From the Museum of Royal Worcester, a Zoom lecture by Ivan Day. Register at <https://www.museumofroyalworcester.org/whats-on/winter-talk-series-frozen-delights-a-history-of-porcelain-and-ice-cream-by-ivan-day/>.

February 9: CCC Seminar: A Guide to Chinese Ceramics Ancient and Modern and How to Navigate a Complicated Market, two lectures by Lark Mason. Registration information at CCC Website, <https://www.cceramicsc.org/2026-seminar>.

