

# China's White Gold

## Contemporary Porcelain from Jingdezhen

18 December 2012 – 1 April 2013

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

To mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, The Fitzwilliam Museum is showcasing the first major exhibition in this country of more than 80 works created in Jingdezhen by over 50 contemporary ceramicists. Comprising technically brilliant works ranging from the traditional to the avant-garde, the exhibition explores Jingdezhen's legacy, and looks at what it means for artists working there today.

Porcelain - perhaps more than any other material - is still invariably associated with China. So much so that the word 'China' in English, is still used today to refer to both the country and the material. The city of Jingdezhen in Southeast China has been producing porcelain for almost 2,000 years. From the eleventh century until 1912 when imperial rule in China came to an end, it produced porcelain to order for emperors, their households and officials in successive dynasties. Porcelain from Jingdezhen - known to be 'white as jade, bright as a mirror, thin as paper, clear as a bell' - was in such demand by Europe's elite that it became known as 'white gold'.

This exhibition - the first in Europe of such breadth and diversity - will include works by artists from four distinct groups:

- 1) Chinese artists who specialise in making reproductions of antique porcelain. Their skilful replicas will be juxtaposed with historical examples of Jingdezhen ware from The Fitzwilliam Museum's own permanent collection.
- 2) Chinese artists whose work is traditional in terms of form, iconography, style and/or technique - exemplified by



Ning Gang, *Lotus in sunlight*  
© Ning Gang



Caroline Cheng, *Prosperity (White)*  
© Caroline Cheng

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master ceramicist Ning Gang's spectacular vermilion vase *Lotus in Sunlight*.

3) Chinese artists who have consciously broken with Chinese tradition and who produce work that is contemporary in style and execution - such as veteran artist Zhou Guozhen's *Owl*.

4) Non-Chinese artists who work predominantly with Jingdezhen's highly prized kaolin clay, and who gather in this ancient city to exchange ideas and create new masterpieces. This section includes new works by three artists of international standing, all of whom have exhibited their works here in the UK as well as on the international stage: Felicity Aylieff, Senior Tutor of Ceramic and Glass at the Royal College of Art; Caroline Cheng, Founder and Director of The Pottery Workshop, the largest ceramics centre in Hong Kong with branches in Shanghai and Jingdezhen; and Takeshi Yasuda, formerly Professor of Applied Arts at the University of Ulster.

This special exhibition reveals a tale of incredible craftsmanship, industrial espionage of trade secrets and conspicuous consumption on a grand scale. Featuring some of the world's foremost porcelain ceramicists and works never before seen in the UK, including a number of specially commissioned pieces, it really is a 'must see'.

*The exhibition's principal partner is Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute, a leading centre for research and teaching in ceramics.*

- Ends -

**For further information and images contact the Marketing and Press Office:**

Telephone: 01223 332941 | Email: [fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk](mailto:fitzmuseum-press@lists.cam.ac.uk)

**Notes to editors:**

**China's White Gold**

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**ADMISSION FREE**

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00

CLOSED: Mondays, 24-26 & 31 December 2012 and 1 January 2013

## **The Fitzwilliam Museum**

Founded in 1816 the Fitzwilliam is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge, with collections exploring world history and art from antiquity to the present day. It houses over half a million objects from ancient Egyptian, Greek and Roman artefacts, to medieval illuminated manuscripts, masterpiece paintings from the Renaissance to the 21<sup>st</sup> century and outstanding collections of applied arts, ceramics, coins, and Asian arts. Welcoming over 400,000 visitors a year, the Fitzwilliam presents a wide ranging public programme of major exhibitions, events and education activities, and is an internationally recognised institute of learning, research and conservation.

[www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk)

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