

Edmund de Waal gives new work to the Fitzwilliam Museum

in plain sight

Edmund de Waal, 2013

20 porcelain vessels in 3 aluminium, glass and plexiglass vitrines

18 x 42 x 13 cm each

Celebrated potter and author Edmund de Waal has given a new work, *in plain sight*, to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

Comprising 20 porcelain vessels in 3 aluminium, glass and plexiglass vitrines, the work was created by de Waal specifically for the bureau bookcase in the Fitzwilliam's Lower Marlay Gallery (26) and forms part of his intervention *On White: Porcelain Stories from the Fitzwilliam*, which is showing at the Museum to 23 February 2014.

On White explores the thousand-year story of porcelain, and the obsession, from China to Europe, with this impossibly white material. The intervention creates dialogues between historic pieces of porcelain ware and contemporary works by de Waal, highlighting unique objects from the history of porcelain production, from ancient Song and Ming dynasty vessels from China, to Meissen and Venetian pots in Europe.



in plain sight
Edmund de Waal
Image: Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge

In preparation for the intervention, Edmund de Waal made a research trip to Jingdezhen, China, the birthplace of porcelain production. Porcelain wares from Jingdezhen are included in the displays, and Edmund de Waal's experiences in China and research into the history of porcelain will also be part of his next book, which will explore this journey of porcelain and fascination with the colour white.

In plain sight is a semi-concealed display, created to sit in the Georgian oak bureau bookcase in the Lower Marlay Gallery, where the Museum's European and Japanese porcelain is exhibited. De Waal's contemporary vessels contrast with the permanent displays of historic porcelain around them.

De Waal observed: "There is a real pleasure in hiding things; it allows for serendipitous, unconnected and unexpected encounters to happen, for discoveries away from your favourite known paths and places. Not everything has to be found easily, quickly downloaded. Concealing things in museums is especially worthwhile."

Tim Knox, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum commented: "This is a very handsome gesture by Edmund de Waal, and a wonderful legacy of his exhibition - which is just the finale of a project which started years ago, with a London 2012 Cultural Olympiad trip to Jingdezhen, China, for the Stories of

the World artist exchanges. We hope visitors will enjoy discovering these contemporary pieces amongst our gallery of European and Japanese porcelain.”

In plain sight will remain in the Lower Marlay Gallery (26) after *On White* closes at the end of February. Admission to the Fitzwilliam Museum is free.

- Ends -

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Notes to editors:

The Fitzwilliam Museum, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RB
FREE ADMISSION

OPEN: Tuesday - Saturday: 10.00 - 17.00
Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays: 12.00 - 17.00
CLOSED: 24-26 & 31 December and 1 January

Founded in 1816 the Fitzwilliam Museum is the principal museum of the University of Cambridge and lead partner for the University of Cambridge Museums (UCM) Major Partner Museum programme, funded by The Arts Council. The Fitzwilliam’s collections explore 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 21st century, world class prints and drawings, and outstanding collections of applied arts, ceramics, coins, and Asian arts. Welcoming over 470,000 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.
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