NEW “CHINA”
Porcelain Art from Jingdezhen, 1910–2012

[Introduction in Foyer]

Jingdezhen in Jiangxi province has a thousand-year history of porcelain production. In its most prosperous period, from the thirteenth through the early nineteenth century, this small city was the major source of porcelain for the imperial court as well as for the entire world. The global appetite for this hard, translucent ceramic ware was ravenous, and Jingdezhen’s exports came to have an enormous impact on cultural exchange, aesthetics, ceramic technology, and daily life around the world.

Eventually, foreign manufacturers managed to approximate or replicate what was a unique Chinese product. By the end of the Qing dynasty, foreign competition, political turbulence, and conflict caused a decline of China’s porcelain industry. Jingdezhen had to face the challenge of modernization in order to survive. One response to the threat of mechanized production was a movement to view ceramics as a fine art. This transition began slowly over a hundred years ago and gained momentum with the establishment of modern ceramics education in New China after 1949.
This exhibition, New “China”: Porcelain Art from Jingdezhen, 1910–2012, explores the cultural changes in China’s ceramic art during the past century. Its main focus, however, is on the works created after the period of economic reform and internationalization that began in the late 1980s, especially works since the turn of the millennium.

Within the past generation Jingdezhen has been experiencing a renaissance. It has become a mecca not only for artists and students from all over China, but also for diaspora artists and non-Chinese artists from around the world. In the current era of global exchange and new artistic directions, the persistence of traditional skills among the city’s numerous craftspeople has been a vital attraction. The artists in this exhibition have collectively re-invigorated the historic Porcelain Capital through a diversity of cultural perspectives, personal expression, and technical innovations. Whether working in Jingdezhen with the support of its traditional artisans or in studios outside China, they have all contributed to the flowering of a contemporary porcelain art.

Due to special circumstances, some works are temporarily not on view.
[South Gallery]

THE EARLY PHASE OF MODERNISM

The Eight Friends of Mount Zhu (Zhushan bayou), active in the early period of the Republic of China (1911–49), was a group of ceramic artists (nos. 3–12) based in Jingdezhen. There were in fact ten members: Wang Qi, Wang Yeting, Wang Dafan, Liu Yuceng, Bi Botao, Cheng Yiting, Xu Zhongnan, Tian Hexian, Deng Bishan, and He Xuren. They applied the famille-rose technique to ceramic painting as a way of recreating the effects and artistic approaches of Chinese painting on paper. Like literati painters, they and their followers often inscribed their works with poems and signed them with seals.

Famille-rose overglaze enamel painting, named for its distinctive opaque pink, is known in Chinese as fencai. Perfected in the eighteenth century, it remained the predominant type of decoration for the commercial workshops of Jingdezhen in the early part of the twentieth century.

The Jiangxi Porcelain Company, founded in 1910 with private and government funding, continued the traditional decorative styles of the Qing dynasty before ceasing operation sometime in the 1930s. Notably, the Company set up a school for ceramic research which was later taken over by the Jiangxi provincial government; it trained many of the important ceramic artists of the period.
2. 刘希任 瓷瓶
Liu Xiren (1906–1967)
Vase
Early 20th century
Six-character mark: Jiangxi ciye gongsi
Famille-rose porcelain
Collection of Beatrice Chang

Inscribed: “When all the plants have withered in winter, only pine and chrysanthemum still keep green.” Dated signature follows the artist’s square relief seal, “Xiren”

This vase is decorated with popular auspicious images. It was produced by Liu Xiren for the Jiangxi Porcelain Company, most likely in the 1930s before he established his own workshop. In addition to such figural scenes, Liu also specialized in flower-and-bird paintings and snow landscapes. He was influenced by the renowned Eight Friends of Mount Zhu.
The painted porcelain panel with the seal of “Juren Tang” indicates it was made especially for the president of Yuan Shikai (1859-1916) of the Republic of China in 1916. Together with the two vases, these works exemplify the early twentieth century style of porcelain artists at Jingdezhen.

3. 王琦 人物图小瓷板
Wang Qi (1884–1937)
Figures
1931
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with the title, Huajiang qiu Luo (Painting the River, Seeking Luo [an ancient document?] ). Signature and square relief seals of the artist, “Xiyu” and “Taomi”

Wang Qi was leader of the Eight Friends of Mount Zhu. This panel is characteristic of his style of painting; the clothing and surrounding scenery are executed with line and flat color in the Chinese style, but the heads and
hands are described using the Western technique of chiaroscuro.

4. 汪野亭 流水鸣琴图小瓷板
Wang Yeting (1884–1942)
Playing the Qin along the Creek
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with the title, Liushui mingqin. Signature and artist’s square relief seal, “Yeting”

This painting alludes to the classic theme of “High Mountain and Flowing Creek,” an ancient melody for the qin zither attributed to the legendary scholar Bo Ya. Only his friend Zhong Ziqi could listen and understand his music. Thus, a scholar depicted strumming his qin by a flowing stream among tall mountains is seeking to meet his intimate soulmate.

5. 王大凡 贵妃出浴图小瓷板
Wang Dafan (1888–1961)
Guifei after a Bath
1940
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo
Inscribed with the title, **Guifei chuyu tu**. Date, signature, and artist’s square relief seal, “Dafan”

The Tang dynasty imperial concubine Yang Guifei is depicted as she emerges seductively from her bath. This moment, when Emperor Xuanzong first sees her, is celebrated in Tang poetry as the beginning of a tragic romance that eventually plunged the country into conflict. The scene of the bath was a popular painting subject of the early twentieth century.

6. 刘雨岑 暖春图小瓷板
Liu Yucen (1904–1969)
**Warm Spring**
1944
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with the title, **Nuan chun tu**, followed by the date, artist’s signature, and a square intaglio seal, “zhu.” Two-line inscription indicating that this was a gift from Lai Zixiang to his friend Chuqiao, followed by a square intaglio seal, “zi,” and a square relief seal, “xiang”

This painting is alive with suggestions of early spring. It amply displays the expressive power and the rich and
meticulously layered colors which characterize famille-rose (fencai) overglaze painting.

7. 毕伯涛 延年益寿图小瓷板
Bi Botao (1885–1961)
Living a Longer Life
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with the title, Yannian yishou. Artist’s signature and square relief seal, “Botao”

The Chinese name of the paradise flycatchers, shou dai niao, in this scene contains a homonym for “longevity” (chang shou). In addition, the pine tree also has the meaning of longevity in Chinese symbolism. Hence, this painting has been given a title that means “to extend longevity.”

8. 程意亭 春风得意图小瓷板
Cheng Yiting (1895–1948)
Uplift in Spring
1940
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo
Inscribed with title, Chunfeng deyi, and one line indicating that the panel is a gift from Li Ke to his friend Zijia. Date and signature of the artist followed by his square intaglio seal, “Yiting”

In China, the expression “uplift in spring,” inscribed here as the title, frequently describes the happy and carefree frame of mind. Therefore, such scenes easily find customers who like the subject and artists willing to paint them.

9. 徐仲南 雨过溪流图小瓷板
Xu Zhongnan (1872–1953)
Creek after Rain
1938
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with a six-character shi poem in four lines, beginning “Creek after rain” (yuguo xiliu) and describing the beauty and pleasantness of the scenery after rain. Date and signature followed by the artist’s square relief seal, “Zhongnan”

The coloring of this porcelain plaque is characteristic of Xu Zhongnan’s work, in which blues and greens dominate the scheme.
10. 田鹤仙  冬梅图小瓷板  
_Tian Hexian (1894–1932)_  
**Winter Plum**  
Famille-rose porcelain panel  
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with a seven-character shi poem praising the elegance and aloofness of winter plum. Signature of the artist followed by his square relief seal, “Hexian”

The plum is a favorite tree among the Chinese people because it blossoms in the cold of winter and in the snow.

11.  邓碧珊  鱼乐图小瓷板  
_Deng Bishan (1874–1930)_  
**The Happiness of Fish**  
1929  
Famille-rose porcelain panel  
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with a seven-character shi poem describing the happy fish in a pond at sunset. Date and signature followed by square intaglio seal, “Dengshi”

This painting is a representative work by Deng Bishan. It reveals the influence of Japanese painting in his application of color. In addition, his brush technique and
compositional structure show the influence of Song academic painting.

12. 何许人 踏雪寻梅图小瓷板
He Xuren (1882–1940)
Walking in Snow to Seek Plum Blossoms
1934
Famille-rose porcelain panel
Collection of Chen Haibo
   Inscribed with the title, Taxue xunmei. Date and signature of the artist, followed by his square relief seal, “He”

The snow scene here is yet another classical allusion. In the depth of winter, during the twelfth month, the Tang dynasty poet Meng Haoran would become philosophical. When the plum blossoms were beginning to open, he would brave the snow and ride out on a donkey to search for plum trees.
THE RISE OF MODERN EDUCATION

By the mid-twentieth century, the traditional transfer of ceramic knowledge and skills through apprenticeship gave way to a new mode of education—modern-government run schools. Wang Xiliang (nos. 15 & 16) represents this transition. He first learned ceramic art as a youth from his uncle, Wang Dafan, and in 1954 entered the Light Industry Administration Ceramic Industry Science Research Center, established in Jingdezhen. Here, he eventually came under the influence of contemporary fine arts.

After the founding of New China, the government created the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute (1958) from an older school of the earlier Republican period. This Institute is the sole college in China devoted exclusively to ceramics. Training its students from a more contemporary perspective, the Institute has helped to transform Jingdezhen from a traditional ceramic center to a modern one. Three of the artists in this exhibition are professors from this school: Shi Yuren, Zhou Guozhen, and Yao Yongkang.
[East Wall]

**13. 王步 青花花鸟小瓶一对**
**Wang Bu (1898–1968)**
**Pair of Vases with Bird-and-Flower Painting**
1920s–30s
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue
Collection of Chen Haibo

Another type of porcelain for which Jingdezhen was known is blue-and-white ware. Underglaze cobalt blue painting continued to be favored in the market. Wang Bu was so celebrated for this kind of decoration, reminiscent of ink painting, that he was nicknamed “blue-and-white Wang.” Here, a pair of wild geese flying in and out of the reeds is lively and meticulously painted.

**14. 王步 青花笔筒**
**Wang Bu (1898–1968)**
**Brush Pot**
1963
Four character mark on base: Jingdezhen zhi
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with a five-character shi poem describing how to behave as a literatus. Date and signature of
the artist, followed by cobalt-blue square relief seal, “Wang Bu”

This square brush pot, a work of Wang Bu’s later years, appeals to more modern sensibilities. On the one hand, his eyesight in his later years did not permit works in his meticulous gongbi brush manner. On the other hand, the large xieyi (spontaneous) manner perhaps added a greater sketchiness and uninhibited carefreeness.

15. 王錫良 七月七日長生殿插盤
Wang Xiliang (b. 1922)
Double Seventh at the Palace of Eternal Life
2006
Famille-rose porcelain plate on a wood stand
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with the title Qiyue qiri Changshengdian. Date and artist’s signature, followed by his square relief seal, “Wang yin”

The Palace of Eternal Life is an imperial garden on the outskirts of Chang’an, the Tang dynasty capital. It was here, on the night of the seventh day of the seventh month, that Emperor Xuanzong and Yang Guifei together swore an oath, pledging their love with a gold hairpin and an inlaid box. Wang Xiliang carried on the
tradition of the Eight Friends of Zhushan; for the most part his paintings concern classic tales and legends.

16. 王锡良 瓷瓶  
Wang Xiliang (b. 1922)  
Vase  
1985  
Porcelain with underglaze red and blue and celadon glaze  
Collection of Chen Haibo

Inscribed with a seven-character shi poem praising the magnificent Huangshan (Yellow Mountain). Signature of the artist who made this vase at the Jiangxi Porcelain Factory, followed by the artist’s circular relief seal, “Wang”

In his middle age, Wang Xiliang changed his approach to painting, learning from his contemporaries and going back to sketching from nature.

20. 周国桢 猴王瓷塑  
Zhou Guozhen (b. 1931)  
Monkey King  
Unglazed porcelain and slip  
Collection of Chen Haibo
19. Zhou Guozhen  
**Sacred Water Buffalo**  
Zhou Guozhen (b. 1931)  
2009  
Unglazed porcelain and slip  
Collection of Chen Haibo

Zhou Guozhen’s early works focused on children and other realistic themes. At that time he was influenced by academic realism, and his style was very different from the traditional sculptural style of Jingdezhen ceramic artists. In his later periods, Zhou Guozhen created a world of animal figures while exploring high-temperature colored glazes and other techniques.

21. Yao Yongkang  
**Millennium Baby**  
Yao Yongkang (b. 1942)  
2006  
Celadon-glazed porcelain  
Collection of Beatrice Chang

A pioneer in the development of contemporary ceramic sculpture in China, Yao Yongkang used molds and rolled clay slabs in his works. Part of a series that he began in 1997, this sculpture embodies the artist’s hopes for the birth of a new human spirit in the new millennium. The child is sheltered by a lotus leaf, a Buddhist symbol of
purity, and sits on a dog-like creature associated with protection in Chinese mythology.

17. 施于人 小鸟供石五彩瓷盘  
Shi Yuren (1928–1996)  
Scholar-Rock and Bird Plate  
Porcelain decorated with red and green overglaze enamel  
Private collection

于人/[朱文方印]“作”  
Signed “Yuren”; square relief seal, “zuo”

18. 施于人 小鸟供石五彩瓷盘  
Shi Yuren (1928–1996)  
Scholar-Rock and Bird Plate  
Porcelain decorated with red and green overglaze enamel  
Private collection

于人/[朱文方印]“作”  
Signed “Yuren”; square relief seal, “zuo”

These two red-and-green plates were painted in Shi Yuren’s later years. While the red-and-green palette created by him used traditional colors and techniques,
his works have a strong decorative quality and exhibit a modern sensibility.

THE CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC ARTIST IN CHINA

The generation of artists who came of age after the period of economic reform and openness of the 1980s received a thorough introduction to modern Western art forms. To them, the city of Jingdezhen and its ceramic industry seemed tradition bound and conservative. They therefore set out to liberate ceramic art from its traditional utilitarian character and the category of arts and crafts. In the end, they surpassed their predecessors not only in their understanding of materials and firing, but by instigating a transformation in expression through space and content. This generation focused on new approaches, new materials, and abstract forms of installation. They reflected on and criticized society, and they incorporated visual symbols that had personal meaning. Changes in international politics and global economics since around 2000 have found it unnecessary for artists and other intellectuals to abandon tradition and possible for them to reconstruct tradition in a modern way. In Jingdezhen, the closing of state factories and growing markets for Chinese porcelain have encouraged private workshops and new entrepreneurial vitality. Artists are returning to embrace
their cultural heritage, to take advantage of the large number of highly skilled ceramic workers, and to redefine Jingdezhen for the future.

[In Case]

24. 朱乐耕    天马
**Zhu Legeng (b. 1952)**
**Heavenly Horse**
2008
**Yingqing** (shadow-blue) porcelain
Collection of James J. Chin

A thick coating of **yingqing** glaze (also known as **qingbai**) unites the solitary horse with a wide-open landscape. Zhu Legeng’s expert control of this glaze exploits the expressive qualities of its water-like fluidity.

[Middle of Gallery]

22. 朱乐耕    禅意
**Zhu Legeng (b. 1952)**
**Zen, also titled Lotus Figures**
2011
Porcelain with white glaze and gold luster
Collection of the artist
From a traditional family of artists, Zhu Legeng was raised in Jingdezhen and tutored by Shi Yuren before going to work at the Jingdezhen Ceramic Institute. He introduced ceramics into public spaces and architectural environments. His works are enormous and his concepts distant from traditional ceramic art at Jingdezhen. The figures in Zen represent the inner strength and core of the Buddhist practice of meditation. This work consists of a very large group of figures, from which these five were selected for exhibition.

[South Wall]

23. 朱乐耕  涅槃
Zhu Legeng (b. 1952)  
Nirvana
2012
111 porcelain fragments with white glaze and gold luster
Collection of the artist

This mural installation features a collection of isolated figurative gestures and lotus elements associated with Buddhist iconography. Six heads are receptive, empty vessels dispersed into a void along with disembodied blossoms, hands, stems, arms, leaves, and seed pods. Nirvana represents the void through which life is renewed.
Diaspora and Foreign Artists at Jingdezhen

Jingdezhen’s remarkable concentration of ceramics expertise and creativity has attracted a multi-cultural mix of students, artists, and designers from within and beyond China. They desire to learn about this city’s unique porcelain technology, to immerse themselves in its vital cultural legacy, and to access its amazing production resources. A variety of educational programs, artist residencies, and museums, as well as a wealth of skilled labor and studio workshops, support the increasing influx of talent, new ideas, and commissions. Hong Kong artist Zheng Yi (Caroline Yi Cheng), who was born in the UK and educated in the US, established a branch of the influential Pottery Workshop in Jingdezhen. Several contemporary Chinese diaspora artists have been attracted to Jingdezhen in order to use porcelain as a “touchstone” for expressing and examining cultural identity. Among them, Ah Xian now lives in Australia, and Sin-ying Ho teaches at the City University of New York. Foreign artists, like Wayne Higby, who came as part of an academic exchange, have found themselves stimulated by the creative...
energy of the place and inspired by the native kaolin clay. Although Chinese-French artist Zhu Dequn (Chu Teh-Chun) produced his porcelains in Sèvres, they represent Zhu’s return to his cultural beginnings after having lived abroad for decades. Working outside China, both Higby and Zhu have pursued the technical and visual effects of Jingdezhen porcelain.

[Middle of Gallery]

25. 郑祎 福
Caroline Yi Cheng (b. 1963)
Prosperity
2012
Unglazed porcelain and jute/cotton fabric
Collection of Beatrice Chang

Individual butterflies, all unique and different, are unified in a dense composition on the fabric of this hanging garment. Its title in Chinese, Fu, is a homonym for “clothing.” By commissioning thousands of small porcelain butterflies for her recent dress sculptures, Caroline Cheng features the talent of Jingdezhen’s skilled artisans. Her porcelain-laden garments are both reminiscent of and in sharp contrast to the Han dynasty’s jade burial suits.
27. 何善影  后现代时代制作系列 4 号
Sin-ying Ho (b. 1963)
Made in the Postmodern Era, no. 4
2008
Glazed porcelain, hand-painted cobalt pigment,
    computer-printed decal transfer, terra sigillata
Collection of the artist

Photodecals of Chariman Mao, Mona Lisa, and Western pop icons Andy Warhol and Marilyn Monroe are juxtaposed with traditional blue-and-white dragon painting to cover the faceted surface of these collaged vase forms. Compositional strategies include the modernist precedent of cubism as well as contemporary music and film practices of rapid editing, mixing, and channel surfing. She is tuning in several channels at once to embody her diaspora experience and the complexity of contemporary global culture.

26. 何善影  英雄系列第 2 号——卧虎藏龙
Sin-ying Ho (b. 1963)
Hero, no. 2—Crouching Tiger and Hidden Dragon
2008
Glazed porcelain, hand-painted cobalt pigment,
    computer-printed decal transfer, terra sigillata
Collection of the artist
Hand-painted designs and photo decal images related to the popular movie *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* animate the surface of this complex and dynamic sculptural form, one which seems to contain the gestural energy of martial art maneuvers, crouching tigers, and undulating dragons.

28. 何善影  充满希望的梦想系列 1 号

**Sin-ying Ho (b. 1963)**

**In the Dream of Hope, no. 1**

2010

Glazed porcelain, hand-painted cobalt pigment, high-fire underglaze decal transfer

Collection of the artist

Created in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crash, this monumental work features the silhouettes of a seated Adam and a standing Eve, who reaches for fruit in a lush garden. Rows and columns of stock values fractured by a plummeting graph line fill their silhouettes to create a visual metaphor for the relationship between human nature and the changing physical world.
29. 陆斌  化石 2004 III  
Lu Bin (b. 1961)  
**Fossil 2004 III**  
2004  
Five porcelain objects (glazed and unglazed)  
Collection of the artist  

During the past decade in his *Fossil* series, Lu Bin has concentrated on the fundamental nature of ceramics as a medium of cultural preservation. In *Fossil 2004 III* he has excavated beyond the façade and into the core of traditional porcelain vessels to discover evidence of war, environmental degradation, Eastern religious architecture, and Western consumer products.

30.1 陆斌  大悲咒 4  
Lu Bin (b. 1961)  
**Great Compassion Mantra 4**  
2012  
Porcelain fragments of three vases  
Collection of the artist  

The disintegration of the three vases resulting in these fragments is recorded in the three-part video accompanying this exhibit. Observing the time-lapse disintegration of blue-and-white porcelain vases while listening to a Buddhist chant of the Great Compassion Mantra is a meditation on tradition, time, and
transformation. At the same time, the gradual destruction of the vases symbolizes a broken belief in life.

30.2 陆斌 大悲咒 1, 4, 3
Lu Bin (b. 1961)
Great Compassion Mantra 1, 4, 3
2012
Video (DVD, 8 min.)
Collection of the artist

This short video of Dabeizhou, or Great Compassion Mantra, is in three parts titled “Faith,” “Life,” and “Civilization.” They record, respectively, the gradual disintegration of a stupa, vases, and handscrolls. Together, they represent broken beliefs in faith, life, and civilization.

31. 赵梦 河流的记忆
Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
The Memory of the River
2008
Glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong

The artist explores the cultural significance of Chinese scholar’s rocks through a contemporary use of porcelain.
Here, simulated geological processes seem to create the eroding forms of this ceramic scholar’s rocks.

35. 赵梦 岩岛
Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
Rock Island
2010
Celadon-glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong

This brush rest captures the rugged power of an island landscape, providing inspiration to the scholar-painter.

36. 赵梦 水波浪
Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
Cresting Waves
2010
Celadon-glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong

This brush rest, in the shape of a seascape, inspires the user with the dynamic energy of nature.
33. Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
Scholar’s Rock (Gongshi)
2011
Celadon-glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong

Zhao Meng merges the reverence for rocks, porcelain, and celadon in Chinese culture in this sculptural porcelain. The scholar’s-rock form subtly suggests an anthropomorphic gesture.

34. Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
Scholar’s Rock (Gongshi)
2011
Celadon-glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong

32. Zhao Meng (b. 1967)
The Impression of Water
2008
Glazed porcelain
Collection of Mee-Seen Loong
40. Zhu Dequn (b. 1920)
Vase
2007
On the base: Artist’s vermillion seal; blue Sèvres mark; and series title, De neige, d'or et d'azur / Of Snow, Gold, and Blue Sky; and the red imprint of the gilding and decoration mark
Porcelain painted in cobalt blue with pink, yellow, and brown colors and highlights in gold
Private collection, Hong Kong

39. Zhu Dequn (b. 1920)
Vase
2007
On the base: Artist’s vermillion seal; blue Sèvres mark; and series title, De neige, d'or et d'azur / Of Snow, Gold, and Blue Sky; and the red imprint of the gilding and decoration mark
Porcelain painted in cobalt blue with highlights in gold
Private collection, Hong Kong
38. Zhu Dequn (b. 1920)
Vase
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On the base: Artist’s vermillion seal; blue Sèvres mark; and series title, De neige, d'or et d'azur / Of Snow, Gold, and Blue Sky; and the red imprint of the gilding and decoration mark
Porcelain painted in cobalt blue with highlights in gold
Collection of Manufacture de Sèvres, France

37. Zhu Dequn (b. 1920)
Vase
2007
On the base: Artist’s vermillion seal; blue Sèvres mark; and series title, De neige, d'or et d'azur / Of Snow, Gold, and Blue Sky; and the red imprint of the gilding and decoration mark
Porcelain painted in cobalt blue with highlights in gold
Collection of Manufacture de Sèvres, France

When Zhu Dequn (Chu Teh-Chun) approached the age of ninety, he created a series of fifty-seven ceramic works at The Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres in France. On these porcelains, he recorded his painterly vision of
a world he described as “of snow, gold, and blue sky.” Decorated mainly in Sèvres blue with added specks and splashes of gold as well as bright color, these dynamic works reflect his ties to Chinese culture; although abstract, the paintings evoke the imagery of classic Song and Yuan dynasty painting.

43. Wayne Higby (b. 1943) 
Lake Powell Memory—October Rain 
1999
Celadon-glazed porcelain
Collection of the Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, New York

It is difficult to distinguish his subtle low-relief drawing in this work from natural fissure lines in the clay or crackle lines in the glaze. Intent, substance, and process are merged into one.

41. Wayne Higby (b. 1943) 
EarthCloud Sketch / Gold #3 
2012
Celadon-glazed, hand-cut porcelain; gold luster
Collection of the artist
42. 文铁山  土云草绘 / 4 号
Wayne Higby (b. 1943)
EarthCloud Sketch / #4
2012
Celadon-glazed, hand-cut porcelain
Collection of the artist

A faculty member of the New York State College of Ceramics at Alfred University in Alfred, New York, the artist first visited Jingdezhen in 1992. He has returned frequently and has been acclaimed an Honorary Citizen of Jingdezhen, and holds a teaching position in China. These two works are studies for his large mural (30 x 56 ft.) EarthCloud, installed in Alfred University’s Miller Performing Arts Center. His glazes capture the effect of qingbai glaze made famous at Jingdezhen.

45. 阿仙  China, China——胸像 45
Ah Xian (b. 1960)
China, China—Bust 45
1999
Porcelain with jiaohuang enamel glaze
Collection of the artist

The glazed surface of this male porcelain bust is carved in relief with an ocean wave design.
Ah Xian (b. 1960)
China, China—Bust 60
2002
Porcelain with overglaze silver finish
Collection of the artist

This female porcelain bust is carved with an openwork “Ten Thousand Flowers” design. Floral forms are strategically positioned to suggest parts of the human anatomy. The stark contrast between the flower-covered body and the realistically modeled ears adds a mysterious dimension to this passive but alert figure. The metallic quality of the finish prefigures Ah Xian’s work with traditional artisans in other media: cloisonné, lacquer, and bronze.

Ah Xian (b. 1960)
China, China—Bust 35
1999
Porcelain with underglaze cobalt blue
Collection of the artist

Years of living in Australia has given the artist a better perspective on China, and he uses porcelain as a “touchstone” for expressing and examining cultural identity. In this series, he works with the technical
support of Jingdezhen artisans to explore the expressive possibilities of various craft materials and techniques in a contemporary context. Here, he paints a traditional Western bust form with a traditional Chinese flower-and-bird design in cobalt blue.

47. 阿仙  China, China——胸像 65
Ah Xian (b. 1960)
China, China—Bust 65
2002
Porcelain and overglaze polychrome enamels
Collection of the artist

This bust is painted in overglaze enamels with a landscape scene. The lower part of the torso is earthbound and cloaked in a hilly terrain. The pure white dome of the head rises above the highest mountain peaks. The merging of a traditional Chinese landscape on a still white body with closed eyes suggests the meditative retreat of a Buddhist monk.