

EMBARGOED TILL 4PM, 7 JAN 2010

MEDIA RELEASE

New Exhibition Showcases European Love Affair with Japanese And Chinese Porcelain

The exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum features a collection of European ceramics with an Asian twist, donated by Mr and Mrs Toshio Egawa in 2007

[7 January 2010, SINGAPORE] In 17th and 18th century Europe, porcelain wares from China and Japan were highly sought after luxury goods that were coveted by royalty and the wealthy. This passion for porcelain is the focus of a new exhibition at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM). ***The Egawa Donation: A Collection of Japanese and Chinese-inspired Ceramics*** features 84 exhibits including 68 European ceramics which show the Asian influence on these fashionable European pieces. The exhibition will be officially launched by Guest-of-Honour Mr George Yeo, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at 7pm this evening and will be on show at the museum's Shaw Foundation Foyer till 30 May 2010. Admission to *The Egawa Donation* is free.

The exhibition showcases a collection of European ceramics donated to the ACM in 2007 by Mr and Mrs Toshio Egawa. Of the 83 pieces donated, 68 are on display in the exhibition. In addition, the museum has included examples of the inspiration behind European ceramics designed in an oriental style. These include popular blue and white porcelain from Jingdezhen in China and monochromes such as *blanc de Chine* or white porcelain from Dehua province in Fujian.

“These delicate porcelain wares are beautiful to look at but beyond that, they demonstrate a period of creativity and cultural exchange between the East and the West in ceramic art in the 17th century. We are delighted and honoured to receive this generous donation from Mr and Mrs Egawa, which shows the wide and deep



influence of East Asian porcelain,” said Mr Michael Koh, CEO of the National Heritage Board.

With its high quality and beautiful designs, porcelain was from China and Japan was regarded as ‘white gold’ in Europe. It was especially popular with the wealthy who displayed these objects in their homes as status symbols.

“Porcelain from China and Japan was much admired in the West for its fine quality and exquisite decoration. A fascination with the exotic East, rising affluence and the popularity of tea drinking further fuelled demand,” said Ms Kan Shuyi, curator of the exhibition and Assistant Curator (China) at the Asian Civilisations Museum.

To meet this demand, vast quantities of Chinese and Japanese porcelain were imported by Dutch, English and other European companies. Western potters in Holland, Germany, England, Italy and France faithfully copied and reinterpreted styles and designs of porcelain from China and Japan. Yet, the influence was not one-way. Chinese and Japanese potters also produced wares according to Western taste, resulting in new forms and patterns.

Blue and white wares were among the most popular porcelain exports from China. Western craftsmen imitated the blue and white style while catering to the tastes of their European clientele. One example in the exhibition is a plate from Genoa in Italy which features deer, birds and foliage in a spontaneous style typical of Chinese blue and white wares. What sets it apart is a coat of arms which has been inserted in colour, probably at the request of its original owner.

Another pair of dishes from Holland and China demonstrates the exchange of ideas between the East and West. A crucifixion scene is depicted on both dishes, which are in the Chinese blue and white style. However, the Chinese potter has reinterpreted the scene – flanking the cross are two Chinese looking figures who would not have been found on the European original.

With its attractive colours and lively motifs, Japanese porcelain had the greatest impact on European ceramics. Two of the most popular styles were Imari and Kakiemon wares. Imari wares were typically heavily decorated while Kakiemon wares usually featured large undecorated areas that showed off the milky-white colour of the porcelain. The ‘quail’ pattern – a motif depicting one or two small birds with various flora – was a popular Kakiemon motif that was adapted in English factories. One such plate from Worcester shows a ‘quail’ pattern with the addition of flowers and a rococo style turquoise border, a departure from the simplicity of original Kakiemon wares.

At the height of its popularity, Japanese porcelain was even imitated in China where craftsmen produced Japanese-influenced wares to cater to European markets. The exhibition features one such example – a tea bowl painted in the Imari palette with pretty floral sprays within petal-shaped panels.

“For producers of porcelain, watching the market and spotting trends was essential for business survival. Knowing the consumer meant that they could produce what the market wanted. These wonderful porcelain wares provide a fascinating insight to the times in terms of how people lived and what was in fashion,” said Ms Kan.

The Egawa Donation: A Collection of Japanese and Chinese-inspired Ceramics will be on display at the Shaw Foundation Foyer at the Asian Civilisations Museum till 30 May 2010. Admission to this exhibition is free.

ANNEX: About The Egawa Donation & List of Highlight Artefacts

Acknowledgements

Special Thanks to:

Mr and Mrs
Toshio Egawa

Curatorial Consultant:

Mr Anthony du Boulay

Sponsor:



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de Jean
MARTELL

About the Exhibition

The Egawa Donation

*A Collection of Japanese &
Chinese-inspired Ceramics*

Date : 19 December 2009 – 30 May 2010
Opening Hours : 1pm – 7pm (Mon), 9am – 7pm (Tue – Sun), to 9pm on Fri
Venue : Shaw Foundation Foyer, Asian Civilisations Museum
Admission : Free
Admission charges apply for entry to ACM main galleries.

Media Invitation

You and/or your representative are cordially invited to the Official Opening of **The Egawa Donation: A Collection of Japanese and Chinese-inspired Ceramics.**

Guest-of-Honour : **Mr George Yeo**
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Singapore
Date : 7 January 2010
Time : 6.30pm (Proceedings begin at 7pm)
Venue : Asian Civilisations Museum
1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555

Please RSVP with Ms Jennifer Quong by 7 Jan 2010.

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About the Asian Civilisations Museum

The Asian Civilisations Museum's mission is to explore and present the cultures and civilisations of Asia, so as to promote awareness and appreciation of the ancestral cultures of Singaporeans and their links to Southeast Asia and the World. The Asian Civilisations Museum first began its operations at Armenian Street in 1997, which closed at end-2005, and re-opened on 25 April 2008 as the Peranakan Museum. The ACM's flagship at the historic Empress Place Building opened on 2 March 2003.

Address

1 Empress Place, Singapore 179555

Museum Front Desk : (65) 6332 7798

Public Programmes Hotline: (65) 6332 3284

Opening Hours

Mondays : 1pm – 7pm

Tuesdays – Sundays : 9am – 7pm (to 9pm on Fridays)

ANNEX

About the Egawa Donation





The Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) received a very special donation of ceramics from Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa in 2007. These ceramics were produced in England and continental Europe in the 18th century, a time when imported Chinese and Japanese porcelain greatly influenced their designs. The exhibition explores the East Asian influence on these fashionable European ceramics.

Mr. Toshio Egawa is the President of the Egawa Strategics Laboratory in Tokyo. His ties with Singapore date from the 1970s when he was Managing Director of the Minebea Corporation and later the Konica Corporation. Travelling widely, Mr. Egawa has been able to build and expand his collection of English and European ceramics. He also collects Chinese bronzes, stained glass, rare books and manuscripts. Other interests include karate, judo, *ikebana* (the Japanese art of flower arrangement) and classical music.

Books from the Egawas' library have also been given to the ACM and are displayed outside the Museum Library on level 2 of the ACM.

Highlight Artefacts

Caption	Image
<p>Blue and white armorial dish Genoa, Italy c. 1710 Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa</p>	
<p>Blue and white dishes with crucifixion scene</p> <p><i>Left:</i> Jingdezhen, Jiangxi province, China c. 1700 – 1720 Collection of the Asian Civilisations Museum</p> <p><i>Right:</i> Delft, Holland Early 18th century Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa</p>	

Dish with 'quail' pattern

c. 1770

Worcester, England

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa



Dish with brocade pattern in Imari style

Chelsea, England

c. 1755

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa



Tea bowl with floral motifs

China

c. 1720 - 1730

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Toshio Egawa

