



NEWSLETTER VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER 6 MARCH 2024



Bowl, Chinese Midnight Modern Conversation, unknown Chinese painter, Guangzhou workshop, MARS inscribed on stern. Diam. 20 7/8 in. (53.5 cm). KODE Museum, Bergen, Norway, Accession Number VK01153. Photograph by Dag Fosse, KODE.

"Harlots, Rakes and Crashing China - An Accidental Introduction to 18th-Century Ceramics"

by Lars Tharp,
Historian, Lecturer and Broadcaster, Leicestershire, England

Sponsored by Linda Green

Monday, March 11 at 2:00 p.m. via Zoom

Register for the Zoom Lecture at

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN_wO9jDIImYRV-mGk_PVyq3sw

Please join us on Monday, March 11 online when Lars Tharp takes us on a journey of discovery. In London, between Sotheby's auctions, a fortuitous lunch-time ramble through the National Gallery brought him before one of the museum's very early acquisitions (purchased in 1823), William Hogarth's *Marriage à la Mode*, a six-part narrative sequence of London interiors variously furnished with luxuries of the mid 1700s, the fabrics, the furniture, the chattels and materials, including oriental porcelain. As with *A Harlot's Progress* -- the first of Hogarth's so-called *Modern Moral Subject* series (1732) -- in *Marriage à la Mode* (c1743), one catastrophe crashes into the next. In both stories Hogarth pre-echoes or confirms the impending disaster in pottery symbolically suspended mid-air on its way to its own -- and its owner's -- destruction.

While working in the 1730s and early 1740s, i.e., just before the

emergence of the very first English porcelain makers, Hogarth's own "china" props must come from other shores. In times of competition between potters worldwide, that still leaves him with a wide field of ceramic traditions to choose from: Chinese *blanc-de-Chine* from Fujian province or wares exported from Jingdezhen? Japanese Imari/Arita porcelain? Yixing brown stoneware Buddhas? English or German salt-glazed grey stoneware or English salt-glazed white stoneware? Dutch or English Delftware? silverware or an "istoriato" maiolica dish? lead-glazed domestic earthenware? Just how many of Hogarth's pots in paintings and in prints are identifiable to a particular country or tradition?

Conversely, what of the actual ceramics painted, printed or molded with a Hogarth character lifted from his original "stage" and dropped into a scene quite different from the one in his original "script"? – for instance, a dark tavern interior transposed into an *al fresco* party in sunlit parkland. And in transferring a scene from print to pot, what misunderstandings, what liberties have the potters and decorators taken with the original?

Ceramics historian Lars Tharp was born in Copenhagen, Denmark. He was educated in England, and he studied Archaeology (the Old Stone Age) at Cambridge University. In 1977, he joined London auctioneers Sotheby's, representing their Chinese and European Ceramics departments and while there, in 1986, he joined the expert team on the *BBC Antiques Roadshow*, being featured on all its subsequent thirty-seven series.

In 1993, Lars formed his own company as an independent consultant to museums and individuals, advising on ceramics and other works of art. Today he broadcasts and lectures widely: from Europe to Asia, Australia, New Zealand and America (most recently at the 2022 Antiques Forum at Colonial Williamsburg, VA). Many of his talks draw on the life and times of British artist William Hogarth (1697-1764), in whose compositions ceramics play a humorous/subversive role. His acclaimed 1997 exhibition *Hogarth's China* at London's International Ceramics Fair was later transferred to the Wedgwood Museum, Barlaston. In 2005-6 he created three ceramic exhibitions for York Museums. As a self-confessed 'Hogarth nut' Lars gravitated to London's Foundling Museum and, as its Director in 2008-2010, oversaw two major exhibitions, *Threads of Feeling* and *PMT* (works by the artists Paula Rego, Mat Collishaw and Tracey Emin). In 2021-22 Lars was a contributor/author to the Tate Gallery's much discussed exhibition *Hogarth in Europe*. With his passion for music, he also participates as writer/narrator in *London Early Opera's* Handelian concerts, performed in locations with strong Handel/Hogarth associations.

In his BBC TV documentary *One Man and his Pug*, Lars had hoped to discover the whereabouts of Louis-François Roubiliac's lost terracotta sculpture of 'Trump,' Hogarth's pet pug, and he's still on the look-out.

Lars has been awarded two Honorary doctorates for his films and his ambassadorship of ceramic history. He is President of the International Ceramics Fair (Aberystwyth University, Wales), a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries (London) and a Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire, and with his wife Gillian, a Deputy Lieutenant of Leicestershire, his county of residence.

Register for the Zoom lecture at

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8016780466954/WN_wO9jDImYRV-mGk_PVyq3sw

Zoom has instituted updates, so please make sure you've updated your Zoom account before clicking on the link sent to you by Zoom for March 11.



Terracotta bust of William Hogarth (1697-1764), by Louis-François Roubiliac (1702-1762), circa 1741. H. 28 1/2 in., W. 17 3/4 in, (72.4 cm x 45.2 cm). National Portrait Gallery, purchased in 1861, Accession number NPG 121.

Addition to the CCC Directory

Please add the following new member:

Brenda Martin, 401 Arlington Street, San Francisco, CA 94131, martbrenda@gmail.com, 415.585.5260.

Remember, if your email address changes, it's important to communicate the change to connecticutceramiccircle@gmail.com. Thank you!

Save the Date for the Connecticut Ceramics Circle Annual Seminar, 'Changing Times: New Techniques: Sèvres Porcelain 1770-1850'

The Connecticut Ceramics Circle (CCC) is pleased to announce that our annual Seminar on Monday, April 8, will consist of two lectures by the eminent decorative arts historian, John Whitehead. You will already have received a promotion via email, and please look for the hard copy invitation and return

registration form in the mail in early March. The lecture topics will take us into a fascinating time of beauty, political drama and great heights of artistic achievement in the field of French porcelain!

You may register here: ccceramicsc.org



*All Walks of Life: A Journey with The Alan Shimmerman Collection:
Meissen Porcelain Figures of the Eighteenth Century*

Edited by Vanessa Sigalas and Meredith Chilton

The following review of the marvelous book, *All Walks of Life*, by a future CCC speaker, Vanessa Sigalas, and a past CCC speaker, Meredith Chilton, is reproduced here with the permission of its author, Jeffrey Munger. It is an edited, shortened version of Munger's original review, published by Félix Zorzo in the September 2023 edition of the French Porcelain Society newsletter. Please enjoy this glimpse into a fine collection of Meissen figures.

"The collector, Alan Shimmerman, has thoughtfully and determinedly assembled an astonishing (and very sizeable) group of Meissen figures produced primarily in the years 1735 to 1755, creating what almost certainly is the most comprehensive collection of this material anywhere. In addition to its extensive scale, the Shimmerman Collection is distinguished by its focus on aspects of Meissen's figural production that have received less attention from most twentieth- and twenty-first-century collectors. While Shimmerman has acquired Commedia dell'Arte figures as well as those depicting courtly

pastimes, his passion is clearly for those figures depicting Tradespeople, Criers, Artisans, and Peasants, and these genres are abundantly represented in his collection. It is a delight to repeatedly encounter numerous figures with which one (or at least this writer) is less familiar. Shimmerman has also extended the focus of his collecting to include complete, or nearly complete sets of figures, such as the Paris and London Criers, which provides another distinctive feature of this collection.

Shimmerman's evident interest in the non-courtly figures produced at Meissen has guided the approach taken by the authors of this impressive volume. As Vanessa Sigalas, the primary author, has stated, Shimmerman is intrigued by the stories "told" by the figures, and the book aims to give a fuller picture of life in the eighteenth century as reflected by the activities, dress, accoutrements, and gestures of the figures. It ably succeeds in its mission, aided by an absolute wealth of illustrations that enlighten the reader in terms of context, source material, and possible inspiration. The book is comprised of essays that address topics such as daily life in Meissen, particularly for the factory workers; the market for porcelain figures in the eighteenth century; and Dresden in the Augustan era, and the individual catalogue entries are augmented by sections, distinguished by a different background color, that provide tombstone information including marks, provenance, exhibition history, as well as relevant archival documentation. The excellent photography, done by the collector's wife Melissa Shimmerman, includes numerous detail shots that further our understanding of one aspect or another of a figure's modeling or decoration.

One of the most remarkable aspects of this book, however, is its scientific component, which has enormous implications for all future studies of eighteenth-century Meissen figures. The authors, with the full support of the collector, undertook extensive testing of the figures in the collection, focusing at first on the overglaze decoration and eventually involving the porcelain pastes themselves. Not all of the figures were able to be tested in regard to paste, but the testing of the enamel decoration represents the first comprehensive, large-scale examination of eighteenth-century Meissen figures. The test results, too complex to enumerate here, permit an entirely new understanding of the production of Meissen figures and their decoration, and offer a highly cautionary tale regarding the dating of decoration based upon traditional connoisseurship-based approaches.

In the text, Sigalas frequently cites the work of her co-editor, Meredith Chilton, whose publications and mentorship of the author inform this book from beginning to end. With *All Walks of Life* and the publication of Sarah-Katharina Andres-Acevedo's two volume book on Kaendler earlier this year,ⁱ Meissen's contribution to the field of porcelain sculpture has received the fully, in-depth scholarly attention that it so clearly merits."

Many thanks again to Jeffrey Munger and to Félix Zorzo for giving their permission to reprint this edited book review, originally found in the French Porcelain Society's September 2023 newsletter..

The book was published by Arnoldsche of Stuttgart in 2022. It is available at <https://arnoldsche.com/produkt/all-walks-of-life/>.

Elsewhere in the Decorative Arts

March 2: Artist Panel at AMOCA, Pomona, California, discussing the current exhibit Fahrenheit 2024, which shows the work of 100 ceramic artists, among them Adam Chau, former CCC Vice-President and former recipient of a CCC Research Grant. More information at the following:

<https://www.amoca.org/current-exhibits/fahrenheit-2024/>.

March 4: 'Lighting the Way: Clay Art Center Artist Invitational Exhibition' opens, showing the work of 22 Clay Art Center artists. The exhibit runs through April 5, with an opening reception on Saturday, March 9 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at 40 Beech Street, Port Chester, New York 10573. More information at the following:

<https://www.clayartcenter.org/events-at-clayartcenter/2023/12/lighting-the-way>.

April 3: The Bard Graduate Center has announced its 27th Annual Iris Foundation Awards, to be given on April 3 at a gala luncheon at the Cosmopolitan Club to four individuals, among them CCC member Marilyn Friedland. For more information, go to the following:

<https://www.bgc.bard.edu/about/articles/262/27th-annual-iris-foundation-awards>.

Ongoing through June 4: 'Grounded in Clay: The Spirit of Pueblo Pottery,' is the Metropolitan Museum of Art's first community-curated Native American exhibition in the history of The Met. The effort features more than one hundred historical, modern, and contemporary clay works and offers a critical understanding of Pueblo pottery as community-based knowledge and personal experience. More information at

<https://www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/grounded-in-clay>.

Open Now: Registration for the June 26 and 27 Haughton Seminar in London, England on the topic of 'Mystery, Beauty and Preciousness.' Go to <https://www.haughton.com/seminar-2024> for more information from the Brian Haughton Gallery and to register. Places go fast!

April 8: 'Changing Times: New Techniques: Sèvres Porcelain 177-1850,' the Connecticut Ceramic Circle's Annual April Seminar given by John Whitehead, well-known scholar, author and dealer in French Porcelain. Two lectures at 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Members \$35, Nonmembers \$45, Half Year Membership with Seminar \$75. Register and Pay at cceramicsc.org.

