



New Ceramics Galleries

Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Opening 18 September 2009

For the first time in a century the V&A is redisplaying its ceramics collection, the greatest and most comprehensive in the world. Extensive new galleries will tell the story of world ceramics with 3000 objects on display from the earliest Chinese pottery to contemporary ceramic art.

The central gallery will show masterpieces dating from as far back as 2500 BC, exploring the links between the world's great ceramic traditions. Highlights will include a drinking cup from Ancient Greece; Ming dynasty Chinese porcelain; 14th century pottery from Spain; a Chinese-inspired blue and white bowl made in 16th century Turkey; Meissen figures; Dutch Delftware ordered by Queen Mary for Hampton Court Palace; colourful, painted Japanese porcelain imported to Europe by the Dutch East India Company; tea bowls rescued from an 18th-century Chinese shipwreck; and a vase painted by Picasso in the 1950s depicting the artist with his model.

For the first time, the V&A will create a gallery exploring ceramic production, which will incorporate a workshop area where techniques will be demonstrated and visitors will be able to make, decorate and fire their own ceramics. There will be a part reconstruction of the studio of Dame Lucie Rie, one of the greatest potters of the 20th century, with film footage showing the artist at work.

There will be five further galleries. One will be devoted to Architectural Ceramics and will contain large scale objects such as a German 15th-century tiled heating stove and Baroque tile panels from Portugal.

There will be two rooms displaying 20th-century collections. One will show ceramics made in a factory context and will include objects by designers such as Susie Cooper and Clarice Cliff as well as fine tableware by Wedgwood. The other 20th century gallery will show hand-made, unique works created in small studios by artists such as Bernard Leach and Lucie Rie.

There will be a gallery for changing temporary displays, the first of which will be *Objects of Luxury* showing French porcelain from the 18th century with works from Sèvres and other leading factories of the time.



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The final gallery will show contemporary ceramics by artists including Anders Ruhwald and Martin Smith as well as a site specific installation by Edmund de Waal entitled *Signs and Wonders*.

Mark Jones, Director of the V&A, said: *"The V&A's ceramics collection is one of the greatest glories of the Museum. With these new galleries, it is set to become the world's leading resource for international ceramics."*

The new galleries have been funded by a lead donation from the Headley Trust and Sir Timothy Sainsbury, together with generous support from the Ronald and Rita McAulay Foundation, the DCMS/Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund and other private donors. They are located on the top floor of the museum and will be designed by Stanton Williams. The new designs will reveal a beautiful domed ceiling and restore the original parquet flooring of the galleries.

The second phase of the redisplay (opening in 2010) will house the study collections, showing around 26,000 further objects and creating one of the world's leading resources for scholars and artists.

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Note to Editors

· The Ceramics Galleries are part of the V&A's Future Plan to transform the Museum through new galleries and beautiful redisplays of its collections.

· Admission to the Ceramics Galleries will be FREE

· For more information about the V&A's ceramics collections visit www.vam.ac.uk/collections/ceramics

· A new publication *Masterpieces of World Ceramics* edited by Reino Liefkes and Hilary Young accompanies the new galleries (available now). For further PRESS information about V&A publications please contact Julie Chan on 020 7942 2701 or j.chan@vam.ac.uk

There is a selection of images available to download from www.image.net



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