

**Porcelain circling the Globe. International Trading Structures
and the East Asia Collection of Augustus the Strong (1670 – 1733)**

Porzellansammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden

Wednesday, 13 – Thursday, 14 June 2018

Conference Outline

The Porzellansammlung Dresden will be hosting the international conference "Porcelain Circling the Globe. International Trading Structures and the East Asia Collection of Augustus the Strong (1670–1733)" in Dresden, Germany, on 13-14 June 2018. Speakers include scholars from China, Japan, the Netherlands, France, and Germany.

Over two days, the conference will discuss the porcelain trade conducted by individual dealers working outside of the dominant trading companies in the 17th and 18th centuries. It will focus on private networks in and beyond Asia, and the emergence of collecting East Asian art in Europe. The conference will discuss the extent and importance of these private networks, and will debate the phenomenon of trading and collecting East Asian objects from both the traders' as well as the collectors' perspectives, with the purpose of investigating interactions between agents from different cultures and backgrounds. The conference is part of the research project "Microstructures of Global Trade. East Asian Porcelain in the Collection of Augustus the Strong in the Context of the Museum Inventories of the 18th Century", sponsored by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Foundation).

Day one will focus on the trade networks inside and outside East Asia, as well as the collectors of East Asian porcelains in Europe. The first panel discusses the trade networks in both China and Japan, and analyzes the role of domestic porcelain traders as a link between the producers and the (foreign) wholesale buyers of East Asian products. It will focus on mainland and marine trade, and shed light on the marine transaction networks of Chinese merchants who dealt with Japanese porcelain in the 17th and 18th centuries. The significance of porcelain as a status symbol will be further analyzed by looking into Kangxi period porcelains the Chinese imperial collection of the Qing Court, and draw comparisons to extant pieces from the former Dresden Royal Collection.

As networks beyond China and Japan formed an important connection between the eastern producers and the western buyers, the trade routes and systems outside East Asia will be the focus of the second panel. It will examine both overland trading routes, in particular the Silk Route traders in Safavid Persia, as well as private porcelain trade conducted in cooperation with the main trading companies, such as the Dutch *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (VOC). Although companies like this acted on a large scale of multinational trade, their character as chartered companies permitted private dealers and investors to engage in international trade by using the VOC's ships. The extensive shipping records by the VOC allow a detailed analyzation of the extent of this "chartered" porcelain trade. With the Netherlands as the main center of porcelain trade in Europe, it is furthermore important to take a look on the distribution of wares by dealers in Antwerp, Amsterdam, Rotterdam or The Hague.

The third panel links the porcelain traders with the collectors of 17th and 18th century Europe. It will discuss the development of the French Royal Collection and the role that French porcelain dealers played in Paris, and will examine the collections of Louis XIV – what types of porcelain were acquired, which prices were payed, as well as the collections' compositions and uses. As mentioned above, with the Netherlands as the main supplier of East Asian porcelains to Europe, it is understandable that the Dutch nobility also engaged in the

acquisition of ceramic wares and the formation of significant porcelain collections in the 18th century. Therefore, the Dutch princely collectors will also be a topic of this panel. The history and policies of collecting porcelain among the German nobility (other than Saxony) will be explored with a look on the collection of Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria and a contemporary of Augustus the Strong.

The second day of the conference will focus on Dresden and the East Asia collection of August the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. Augustus was an avid collector of East Asian prints, lacquer work and textiles, and accumulated over 25,000 examples of East Asian porcelain, of which around 8,000 objects are extant at the Porzellansammlung Dresden. The provenance of many of these objects is remarkably well documented, as they were recorded in the early 18th century in extensive royal inventories, with a number of porcelain dealers specifically mentioned in these unique accounts. Considering an extensive body of letters between the Dresden court and porcelain dealers in the Netherlands (kept today in the Dresden State Archives), one must ask the question of how important and influential these private networks were for the formation of East Asian porcelain collections – not only in Saxony, but also in other parts of Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries. The first panel of the day will thus focus on the emergence of the Dresden Royal Collection, and its accompanying systematic cataloging both in the 18th and the 21st centuries.

The second – and closing – panel of the day will expand the conference's focus on porcelain and include the collection of Chinese paintings and graphics of the Dresden Kupferstichkabinett in the context of the trade with (East) Asian artefacts in the time of Augustus the Strong. It will furthermore highlight parts of the Dresden porcelain collection; in particular a group of early Japanese porcelains presumably indented for the Japanese domestic market, and demonstrate their significance for the early history of porcelain collecting in Dresden. The panel will close with a discussion on the impact of global porcelain trade on local cultures, and how the status of these "export wares" changed over time.