

Conservation Unit Laboratory Record Card

UL No:

Object Name: Oriental Chinese urn

Owner: Belvoir Castle

Owner's No: None

Treatment Instructions:

Remove previous restoration, take down, clean, reconstruct and replace areas of loss

Description

Materials: Hard- paste porcelain, on glazed enamels.

Dimensions: 63cm in height/ 22cm in diameter at its widest point

Construction / manufacture: The body of the vase was wheel made. The missing handles were produced separately in a mould. These would have been applied to the body whilst wet. Both components became fused together during the firing process.

The decoration can be classified as 'on-glaze'. This is when enamels are applied above the surface of the glaze. The porcelain is then subjected to further firing at a lower temperature.

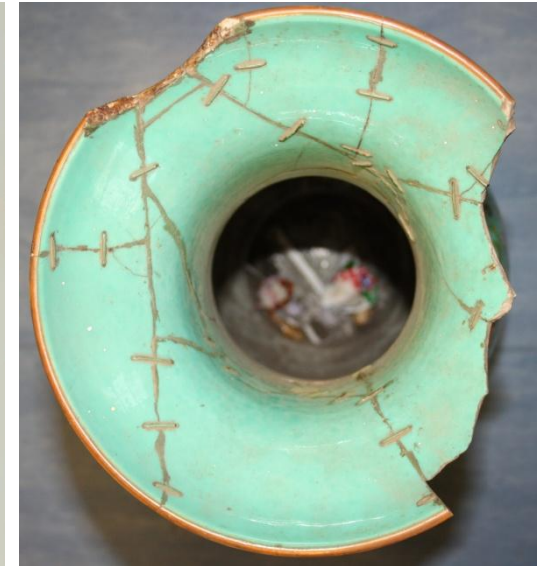
Historical / cultural background: The vase is of Chinese origin, most probably produced for European export during the 19th century (due to the lack of a makers mark). Its decoration is most similar to Chinese cloisonné (filigreed enamelled objects) produced in the Qing dynasty.

Condition

Structure: The vase had suffered major losses to the rim. Handles were also missing. Due to the positioning of these losses, the vase was structurally stable. Previous restoration in the form of rivets was supporting the broken shards. These appeared stable enough for general transportation of the object.

Surface: The surface of the vase was extremely disfigured. Rivets and paint were liberally applied across joining edges of the shards. Adhesive and paint residues were apparent across the whole surface. Organic dirt had heavily accumulated across both the inner and outer surfaces. This could be seen within crazing of the glaze. Human litter was found within the vase.

Photo / Drawing, with scale.

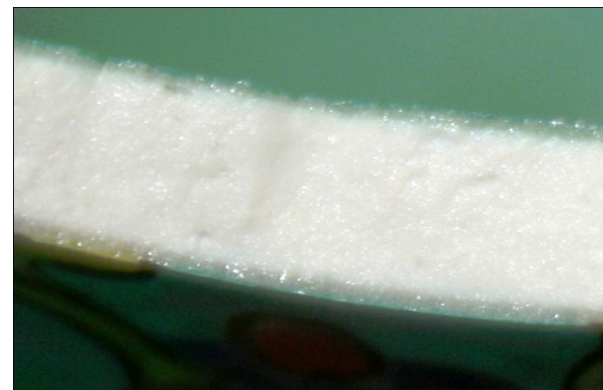


Treatment.

1. Previous retouching paint was removed using Nitromors (commercial paint stripper containing dichloromethane).
2. The rivets were removed physically. They were loosened with a scalpel blade; a small sheet of acetate was then slipped underneath. This could be gently lifted to remove the rivet from the surface.
3. The previous application of Nitromors softened the adhesive also supporting the shards. They could then be physically lifted after the removal of the rivets.
4. Remaining adhesive and paint across the shard edges and porcelain surface were removed with a further application of Nitromors.
5. To remove organic surface dirt, the vase was soaked in a mixture of warm water and Biotex (commercially sold biological washing powder). It was left submerged for 24 hours.
6. All surfaces and shard edges were brushed with a tooth brush. This removed any remaining surface dirt.
7. To remove filling material from within the rivet holes, each shard was steam cleaned. This brought the material to the surface of the holes. It was then physically removed with a needle under a microscope
8. To ensure invisible bonding, the shard edges were bleached with hydrogen peroxide catalysed by ammonia.
9. They were then bonded together using Araldite 2020 (a two part epoxy resin adhesive).
10. Handles were replaced through the creation of a two part mould. They were then cast in plaster. To strengthen the material, each cast was impregnated with a 5% solution of Paraloid B72 (solvent based adhesive) in acetone.
11. Losses within the rim were replaced in layers using Millput (two part epoxy putty), Araldite 2020 (two part epoxy resin adhesive) and Fynebond (two part epoxy resin adhesive). Losses across the surface (including rivet holes) were replaced with pigmented Fynebond
12. Decoration was applied to all areas of loss using Golden Acrylic Artists Colours.
13. To replicate the glossy surface of the porcelain, these areas were coated using Golden Restoration Porcelain Glaze in gloss.

Results of analysis / tests.

Microscopy showed the body to be hard-paste porcelain



Aftercare / environmental recommendations.

Under no circumstances should the vase be lifted by its handles

Where possible the vase should be protected from dust. If in storage it can be covered with acid free tissue. If on display, a plastic disk such as clear acrylic could be placed within the neck. This will also stop the accumulation of litter.

Storage or display should never be overcrowded, as ceramic objects most commonly suffer physical damages above all other forms.

Temperature: Should remain constant, without extremes. Normal seasonal room temperature will suffice

Lux: 200 (this should remain constant as much as possible).

Relative Humidity: 50-60% (this should remain constant where possible).