



Collectors, Collections and Museums: The Field of Chinese Ceramics in Britain, 1560-1960

By Stacey Pierson

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This book presents the first comprehensive study of the collecting, consumption and display of Chinese porcelain in Britain from the 16th to the 20th century, as well as the impact of this activity on British culture. Beginning with the early porcelains acquired as objects of exotica and vessels for the consumption of tea and coffee, followed by porcelains for display in the country house interior, the first part of this book reveals the role of porcelain in Britain's developing economic relations with China and the impact of this material on both daily life and interior design. The subsequent diplomatic and political conflicts of the 18th and 19th centuries provide a framework for an examination of British consumption of Chinese porcelain as both spoils of war and iconic representations of China, material which helped to shape and influence British perceptions of China. The final section demonstrates how these perceptions of China and its porcelain began to change significantly in the 20th century with porcelains acquired as works of art and displayed publicly in museums. Collectors in Britain began to specialise in this area and actively invented a 'field' of Chinese ceramics that was promulgated by learned societies and culminated in the founding of a museum of Chinese ceramics in London by one of the foremost British collectors, Sir Percival David, who donated his world class collection to the University of London in 1950.

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Bibliography

- Rank: #439935 in Books
- Published on: 2007-04-24
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x 5.75" w x .50" l, .77 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 248 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

The Author: Stacey Pierson is Curator of the Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art at the University of London and a lecturer in Chinese Ceramics at the School of Oriental and African Studies. She completed a Ph.D. in the History of Art at the University of Sussex on the subject of Percival David and the Field of Chinese Art in Britain, 1920-1964.

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