

REFLECTIONS OF THE SILK ROAD
EXHIBITION 2023



BY CAROLE BENNETT

ROYAL PAVILION BRIGHTON,
WILLIAM IV ROOM
4/5 PAVILION BUILDINGS,
BRIGHTON BN1 1EE

21ST - 22ND MARCH 2023

FOREWORD

I would like to say a huge thank you to Carole Bennett for her loyal support of Depaul International. The funds raised from this wonderful exhibition of Carole's work will help us towards our mission to end homelessness and change the lives of those affected by it.

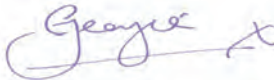
Depaul has been tackling homelessness – one of the most severe expressions of social inequality, poverty and exclusion – for over 30 years. As Patron, I am extremely conscious that the need for this important work has not stopped despite us now supporting over 30,000 people each day in Ukraine. People like Iris and her sons, who we have sheltered, and offered support from our trained therapists in a bomb shelter in Kharkiv.

Iris says: "It's been so hard, but we've made it through thanks to the psychological teams who came to help us. They gave us a chance and hope for tomorrow."

Continuing to play a significant role in helping the people of Ukraine, our commitment to achieving a future where everyone in the world has a place to call home, is unwavering.

Homeless people are at the heart of everything Depaul does and our subsidiaries, currently in the UK and across six other countries, continuously strive to meet the most basic needs of some of society's most marginalised people. Our teams step in when urgent action is required, often at short notice, to provide access to life-saving provisions including shelter, food, sanitation and medical care, as well as helping people discover their potential, seize opportunities and move towards their goals.

On behalf of Depaul International, thank you for supporting this exhibition which means we will be able to support more people like Iris and her sons - it means more to us than you could know.



Georgina, The Duchess of Norfolk DL - Patron of Depaul International



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

*Depaul International -
Registered Charity in England and Wales -
Charity No: 1107385*

INTRODUCTION

“Reflections of the Silk Road” is a collection of hand-thrown porcelain, inspired by travels along the Silk Road from China to Bam in South East Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and even crossing over into Andalusia and North Africa. The glazes are the colours of these countries and the lustres and decorations are taken from ancient books, museum pieces and, most importantly, selected by friends whom I have been lucky enough to meet along the way.

The journey commences in the strange citrus orchards of the ancient city of Bam where the ‘Bam Lemon’ is grown and one can witness the ancient citadel being reconstructed from mud and straw, after the devastation of the earthquake. Travelling through the tiny museums of Iran one can see which were cobalt and lapis lazuli are used to decorate the frit ware. Kashan is where the poetry of Hafez embellishes vessels and new heights of horticulture and design are reached in the desert palaces. Melted ice from the mountains rushes along the ‘qanats’, which irrigate the rose beds and have done so for hundreds of years. The stunning decorative elements of the fragrant gardens reappear in Kashan in the form of decorative gold and bronze lustre.

The ancient city of Tehran showcases the spectacular collections of early Persian ceramics, including the dynamic brushwork in iron oxide of ‘The Dancing Goats’ (No 24 & 25).

The black, underglaze texts of Northern Iran give way to the rich library of Arabic poetry that has been created across the region that was Mesopotamia and into the jasmine-filled city of Damascus (from where many of the most beautiful texts were sent to me). Of course, the Middle Eastern potters would have been working with stoneware covered in a whitewash in order to imitate porcelain, but this does not deter from the beauty and erudition of the designs and texts.

The closing chapters of this collection show the use of reduction firing of porcelain as was carried out in China and the creation of the delicate, reserved colours of the tea houses and the Imperial Court. In addition, one of the silver linings of the pandemic was that Jing Wang moved close by to my studio and brought with her the artistry and knowledge of Tang Dynasty poetry which has been used to decorate the Chinese brushpots and bowls (No 41, 42, 43, 44 & 49).

Continued over

Creating a ceramic collection allows one to reflect. Living under the same roof as others for a period of time allows us to form attachments and connections on a deeper level. Creating, working and living with this collection of ceramics one has begun to know each pot and see them not only as individuals with varying characteristics and appearances, but also as part of a single family of porcelain; despite the diverse sources of inspiration of each, from the rose petal market in Aleppo to the ancient, formal rose gardens of Kashan. Some may be created from iconic archetypes that I have been shown whilst travelling and they have resurfaced from my memory or others have just taken on their own style whilst being formed. This collection is made up of individuals, but also forms part of a family group. Each will travel elsewhere, but each will have a home.

This has led to of the idea that if one is displaced from one's own home and country one hopes to find somewhere to live. However, this is not necessarily the same as a home. What makes a home? Is it somewhere to sleep, prepare a meal, somewhere to sit and read, work, create or drink tea? Or is it hearing someone singing happily in another room whilst coffee is being prepared? Perhaps it is all of those things and others besides. The hope is that the dispersal of this collection will allow others to have not only somewhere to live, but somewhere they can call 'home'.

Let me take this opportunity to thank all the following people and organisations for their enthusiastic and generous support with their time, skills, erudition and talents: Violet and Clementine Bennett, Jean Bennett, Bob Davis, Jason Eades from Depaul International, Vesta Curtis, Lady Gage, Mahmoud Ali Hamad, Anissa Helou, Kate Jenkins, Jill Norman, Sarah Pococke, Sophie Hale, Saeeda Al Satee (in Damascus), Peter Simon, Caroline Teare, Alisdair Watson (The Bodleian Library), Brighton University Art Department, Oriental Ceramics Society and The Iran Society. I would also like to thank Alison Sandeman at West Dean College and Clayman and Scarva for pottery supplies.

Most of all I would like to thank Dr Feras Alkabani (for his invaluable help with texts and translations), Jing Wang (for her exquisite Chinese calligraphy and poetry), Glen Stanton (for his beautiful watercolours) and my husband (for his photography and editing skills).

Carole Bennett, March 2023



1. **Koshari Plate.** (named by Anissa Helou). Porcelain with cobalt underglaze text under a transparent glaze. Text reads:

"Charity does not decrease wealth."

Diameter 220mm



2. Sea Bowl. Porcelain body, hand thrown with painted cobalt underglaze, turquoise glaze, with bronze and gold painted overglaze lustre. Inspired by 12th/13th century turquoise glazes from Kashan, Iran.

H.90mm W. 195mm



3. Kashan Rose Vase. Porcelain body with turquoise glaze, with gold and blue painted over-glaze lustre. Inspired by 12th/13th century turquoise glazes from Kashan, Iran, where the Damask rose has been cultivated for centuries.

H.130mm W. 115mm



4. **Kashan Bowl.** Porcelain body with celadon glaze, with gold and blue overglaze lustre decoration. Inspired by Iranian lustre ware.

H. 68mm W. 138mm



5. **Qamsar Rose Bowl.** Porcelain body with transparent glaze, gold and blue overglaze decoration. Inspired by Iranian lustre ware.

H. 43mm W. 122mm



6. Flower Bowl. Porcelain body with celadon glaze,
with gold, bronze and blue overglaze floral decoration.

Inspired by Iranian lustre ware. Text translates as:

*"Money is not the only provision (fortune) we may be endowed with. If we
contemplate and reflect, we realise we are surrounded by endless provisions
(fortunes); the most important of which is God's guidance towards doing good."*

Chosen by Saeeda Lina Satee and translated by Dr Feras Alkabani.

H. 73mm W. 136mm



7. **Yazd Fire Bowl.** Porcelain body with transparent glaze and gold, bronze and amber overglaze.

H. 88mm W. 133mm



8. Sea Plate. Porcelain body with cream glaze with gold and blue lustre overglaze fish decoration. Inspired by 12th/13th century Persian fritware.

Diameter 190mm



9. Bowl of Reflection. Porcelain body with cream eggshell glaze with gold and blue overglaze lustre decoration. Translation of words of wisdom;
"Peace be to him who stumbles upon bitterness and transforms it into sweetness".

H. 70mm W. 132mm



10. Plate. Porcelain body with cream eggshell glaze with overglaze cobalt and bronze lustre. Inspired by 12th century fritware from Kashan, Persia and Seljuk period production.

Diameter 185mm



11. Rose Petal Plate. Porcelain body with blue and gold overglaze decoration. Text translates as:

"Peace be to him who stumbles upon bitterness and transforms it into sweetness".

(Chosen by Saeeda Lena Satee, Damascus).

Diameter 196mm



12. Fish Bowl. Porcelain body. Transparent glaze with blue lustre overglaze fish decoration. Inspired by 12th/13th Century Persian, cobalt overglaze decoration and the Museum of Idlib, Syria.

H. 68mm W. 166mm



13. Jasmine Vase. Porcelain body with transparent glaze. Gold and blue lustre overglaze, geometric decoration. Inspired by floral displays in Aleppo.

H. 112mm W. 135mm



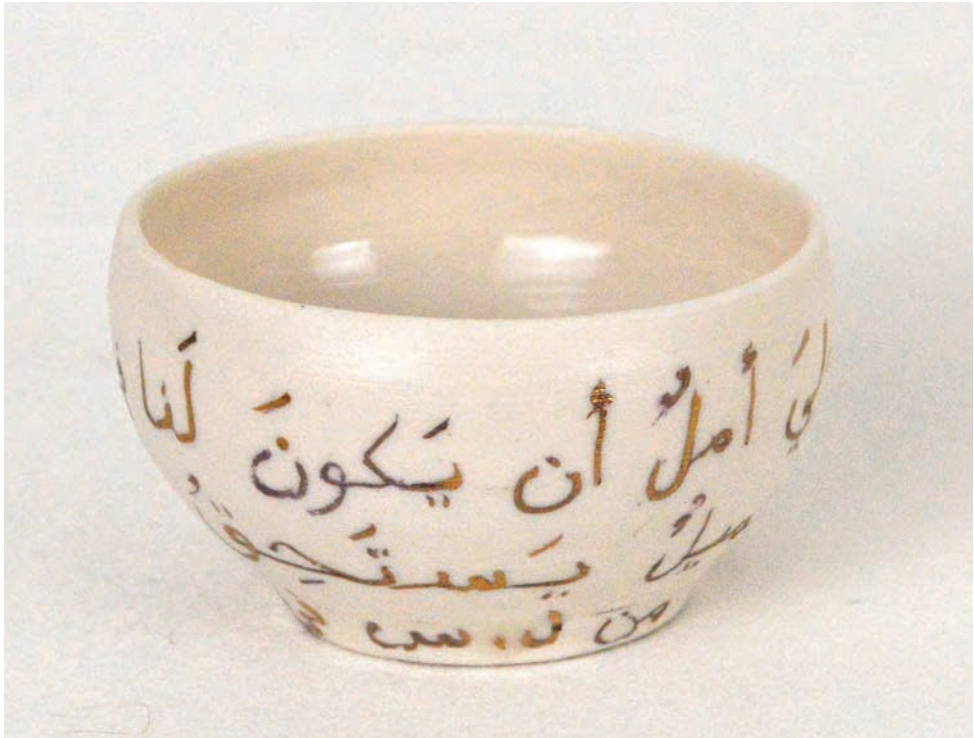
14. “Salver of Separation” Porcelain body with gold and blue lustre overglaze decoration. Text translates as:

“I have cast my eyelashes across your land. Oh Damascus, why exchanging regrets now? You are my love, so lie down as a song on my arm. You are all the women in the world. Everyone I loved after you, felt like a lie”.

Written by Nizar Kabbani (21st March 1923 – 30th April 1998).

Chosen by Mahmoud Ali Hamad.

Diameter 192mm



15. “Bowl of Hope” Porcelain body with transparent glaze.

Gold lustre overglaze text translates as:

*“In my heart there is a hope that the unknown
holds something beautiful that is worth waiting for”.*

Submitted by Saeeda Lina Satee, Damascus.

H. 36mm W. 63mm



16. “Vase en Porcelaine Noire” Black porcelain body with transparent glaze and iron rim. Inspired by the late Pierre Soulages.

H 94mm W. 120mm



17. **Small vase.** Porcelain body with Clayton Green glaze.

Gold lustre overglaze. Text translates as:

"Let us go as we are, a free woman and a loyal friend".

Mahmoud Darwish (1941 – 2008)

H. 88mm W. 80mm



18. Andalusian Vase. Porcelain body with celadon glaze and gold lustre overglaze. Ibn al-Sayed al-Batlyousee – Andalusia.

*"The learned remains alive after his death
even when his body has turned into ashes underground,
The ignorant is dead, even when he walks the earth;
thought to be alive but he is not."*

H. 110mm W. 100mm



19. Bowl. Porcelain body with green, crackle glaze. Gold overglaze text translates as:

*“Everyone’s heart is broken one way or another. Whether by strangers or by friends.
There is no objection if it is broken by a stranger, but by the friend, why?”*

Written by Nahid Yousef. Chosen by Vesta Curtis in “Persian Love Poetry”,
British Museum.

H 60mm W 148mm



20. “Damascus Vase 1” Black porcelain body.

Transparent glaze with gold lustre overglaze. Text translation:

“As we age, our eyesight deteriorates but our vision becomes clearer”.

Chosen by Saeeda Lina Satee, Damascus.

H 108mm W 105mm



21. “Damascus Vase 2” Black porcelain body with transparent glaze with gold lustre overglaze. Text translation:

*“The origin of water begins in Damascus,
for wherever you lay your head, a brook will spring.
Time starts in Damascus, where languages are preserved
and lineages are maintained”*

Written by Nizar Qabbani. Chosen by Saeeda Lina Satee, Damascus.

H. 135mm W. 120mm



22. "Vase à Fleurs en Porcelaine Noire

Black porcelain body with transparent glaze.

H. 105mm W. 116mm



23. Carved Bowl. Porcelain body with transparent glaze. Cobalt underglaze text and amber overglaze lustre. Carved exterior. Text translates;

"Let us go peacefully together."

H. 65mm W. 196mm



24. **“Dancing Goats Platter”** Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze.
Iron oxide overglaze decoration. Inspiration from The Islamic Museum in
Tehran and The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Diameter 214mm



25. Dancing Goats Vessel. Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze.
Iron oxide overglaze decoration. Inspiration from The Islamic Museum
in Tehran and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

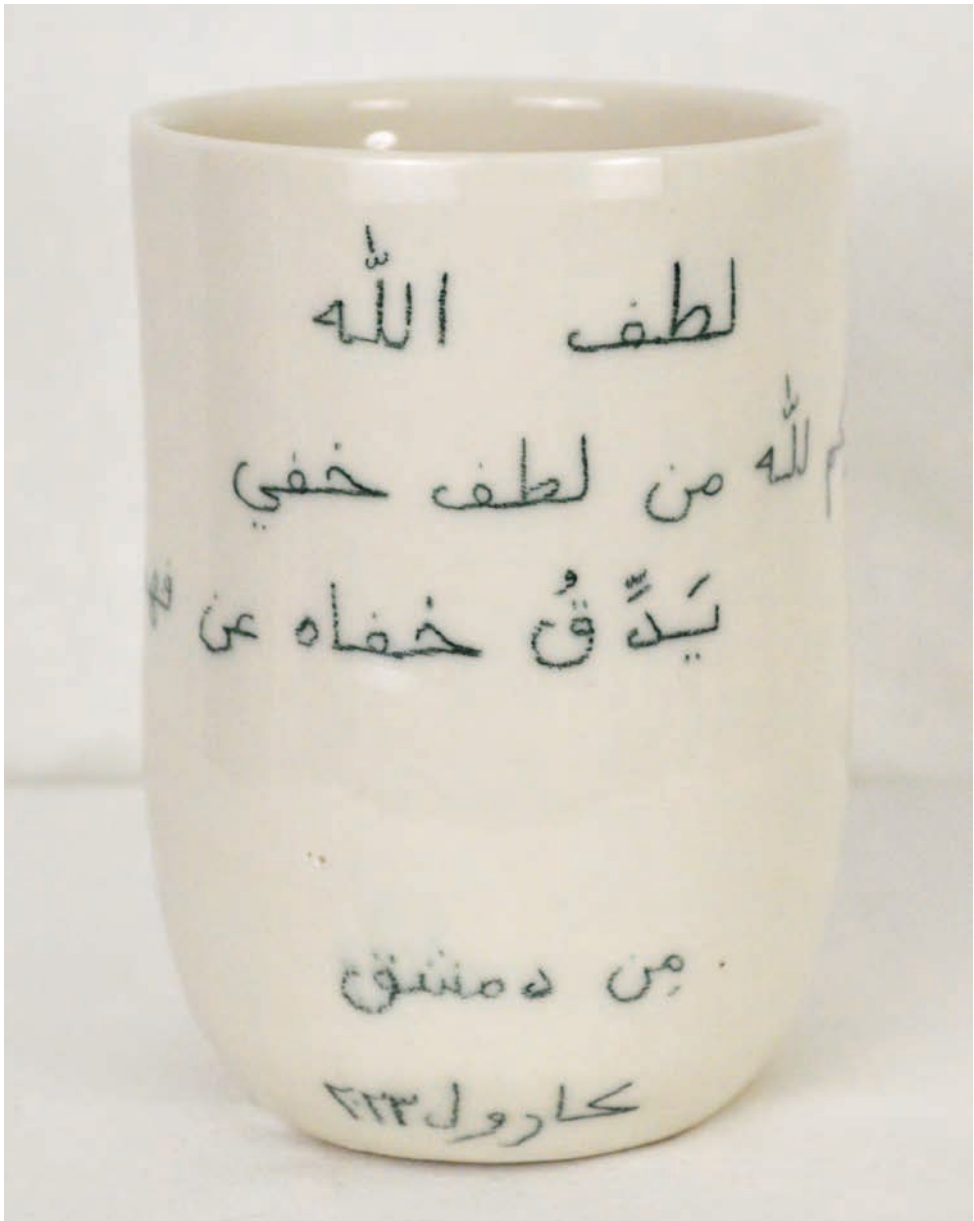
H. 122mm W. 112mm



26. Small vase. Porcelain body with gold and blue lustre overglaze. Text translation:

"Peace be to him who stumbles upon bitterness and transforms it into sweetness."

H. 96mm W 100mm



27. **Brush Pot.** Porcelain body with green underglaze text and transparent glaze. Text translation:

"How many hidden graces are concealed, even from intelligent minds."

H. 130mm W. 93mm



28. “Saladin’s Urn” Porcelain body. Transparent glaze with carbon underglaze text. The poem was written by Saladin’s Wazir, Abd Alraheem Albesarnee in the 12th Century AD. Translation: Dr Feras Alkabani.

*“By He all powerful who may have chosen not to create intentions,
If you were to be away from my sight, never are you away from my heart.
My longing for you is so strong that I address you as though we were near,
even if we are not.”*

H. 102mm W. 125mm

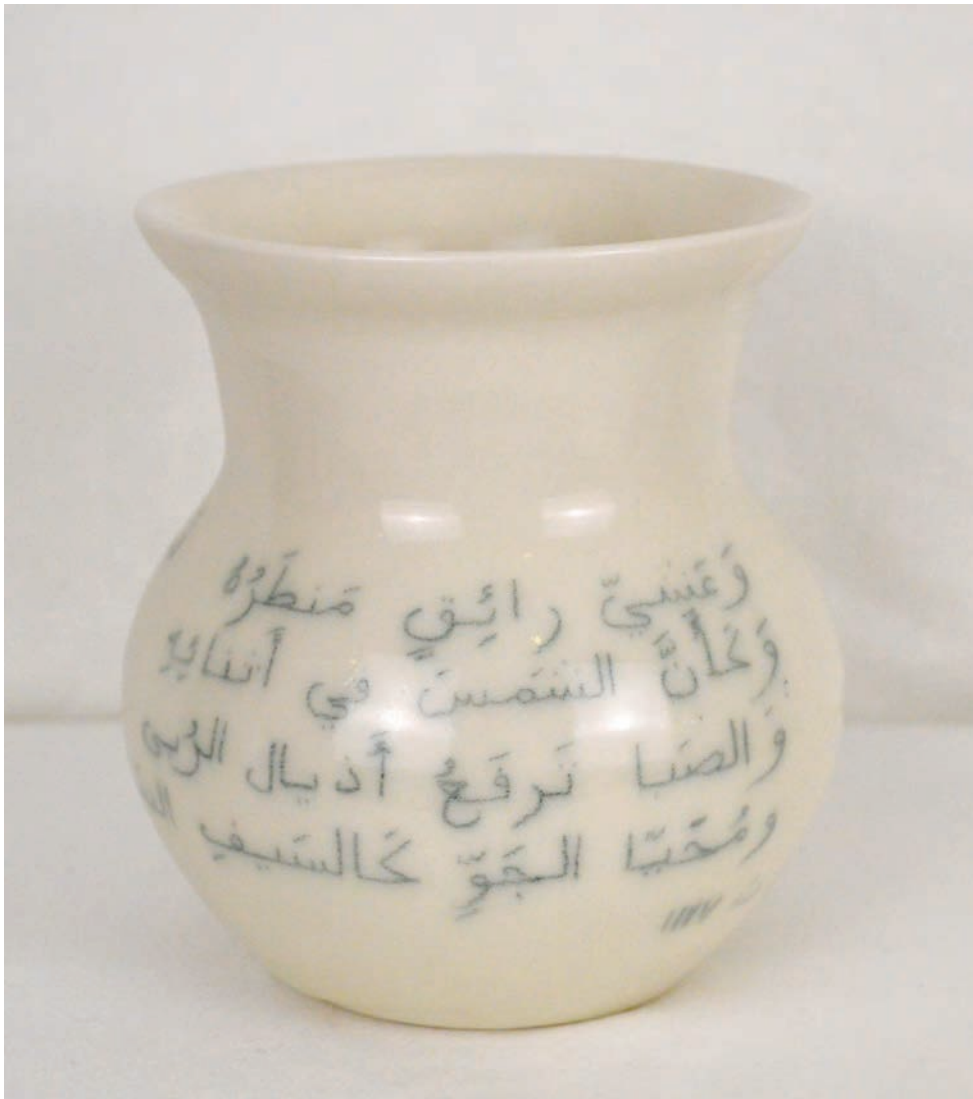


29. “Stranger’s Vessel” Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze, circular text, which translates as:

“I am a stranger to myself, so strange that when I hear my tongue speaks it surprises my ear, and maybe I see my laughing inner self, crying, fighting, frightened. So my being admires itself, and my soul wonders to my soul, but I remain unknown, hidden and submerged by the mist, covered by the silence.”

Written by Khalil Gibran (6th January 1883 – 10th April 1931)

H. 135mm W. 150mm



30. “Evening Vase” Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze text which translates as:

*“Many a blissful evening have we passed with cool, unmixed wine;
When the sun in the folds of evening seemed to lay its cheek on the earth to rest;
And the east wind rustled the robes of the hills,
and the face of heaven was like the polished surface of the river”*

Written by Ibn Ghālib al-Rusāfi, Valencia (d. 1177)

H. 147mm W. 140mm



31. Plate. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze text which translates as:

"Time does not change, time reveals."

Diameter 180mm

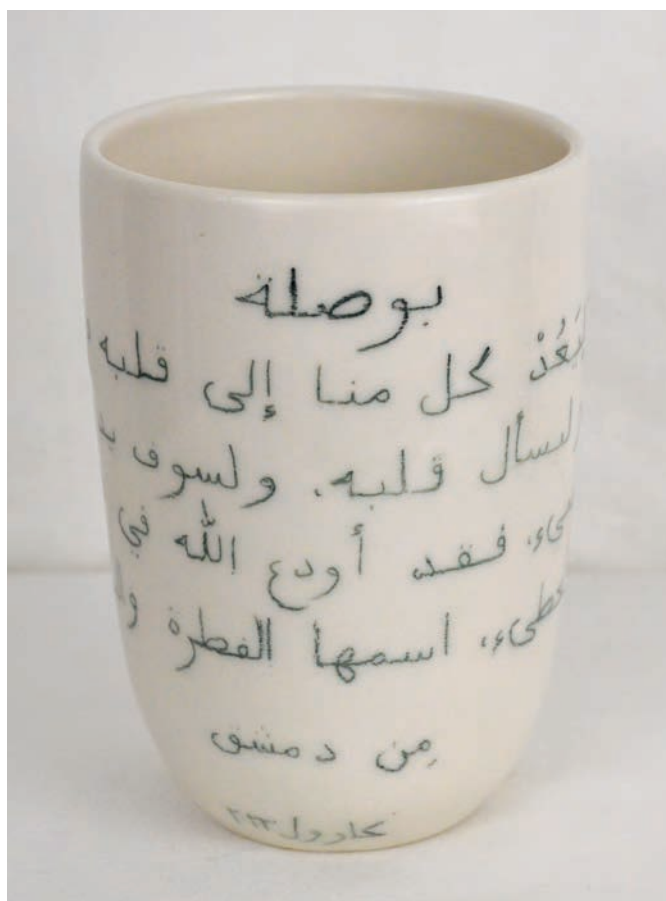


32. Brush Pot. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze
Arabic text which translates as:

“Money is not the only provision (fortune) we may be endowed with. If we contemplate and reflect, we realise we are surrounded by endless provisions (fortunes); the most important of which is God’s guidance towards doing good.”

Chosen by Saeeda Lina Satee and translated by Dr Feras Alkabani.

H 141mm W 102mm



33. Brush Pot. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze
Arabic text which translates as:

"Let us go back to our heart in an hour of contemplation. For, if we ask our heart, it will guide us towards everything (we wish to know). For God has placed a perfect compass in each of us called instinct and common sense".

Chosen by Saeeda Lina Satee and translated by Dr Feras Alkabani.

H. 149mm W. 102mm

The Coronation Bowls

(Exhibits 34-40)

The Coronation Bowls are a set of commemorative pieces that are inscribed with “An Arabic Poem for an English King” (Edward Pococke’s *Verses to Charles II* Oxoniae, 1660. *Britannia Rediviva*). The poem, which was also translated into Latin, was written to celebrate the Coronation of Charles II in 1661 following the Commonwealth and demonstrates the jubilation that was felt then for the return of the monarchy. Pococke was Professor of Arabic and Hebrew at Oxford University and a renowned academic of his day, who also studied in Aleppo and Istanbul.

The bowls have been created with the full text of his poem in both Arabic and Latin, to commemorate the coronation of King Charles III in 2023.



34. Coronation Bowl. Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze
with overglaze gold lustre text of the Latin translation.

English translation by Dr James Parkhouse.

*"Long night has hindered eyes with blind shadows
Now a new day has appeared with the rising Sun.
The Sun itself provides a model for the British Sun:
Brighter from its shadows each one emerges.
Eyes suffer an eclipse while the sun is unharmed:
When you suffered it, the harm was ours, not yours.
Your glory has always kept a steady course;
You have witnesses to your virtue where the world is at peace.
The one who, covered with a veil, shone with such bright light,
How great now will he be, shining with full light?
This is nature's order, first light followed shadows;
Charles, there were shadows, which your light banished.
May your splendour shine and increase, glorious King,
While the radiance of the sun blazes with unquenched fire."*

H. 98mm W. 175mm



35. Coronation Bowl. Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze with overglaze gold lustre text “The Coronation Sonnet” which translates as:

“Long night has hindered eyes with lightless gloom;

Now, with the rising Sun, new day has sprung.

The Sun itself has modelled Britain’s Sun:

Brighter from darkness each in turn comes forth.

Eyes suffer an eclipse; the sun’s unharmed.

With you in exile we were harmed, not you.

Your glory’s always kept a steady course;

Where’er the world’s at peace, your virtue’s known.

The one who, veiled, yet shone with such bright light,

How greatly will he shine now, in full light?

In natural order, first light followed dark;

Charles – there was dark, which your light drove away.

Your splendour gleam and grow, O glorious King,

While the radiant sun still shines with unquenched fire.

Translation by Salman Hasan of the Arabica Institute

H. 100mm W. 159mm



36. Coronation Bowl. Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze with overglaze gold lustre text – “The Coronation Sonnet”

H. 101mm W. 160mm



37. **Coronation Vase.** Porcelain body, cream eggshell glaze with blue overglaze luster (exterior). Text – “The Coronation Sonnet”.

Interior. Overglaze gold lustre text, which translates:

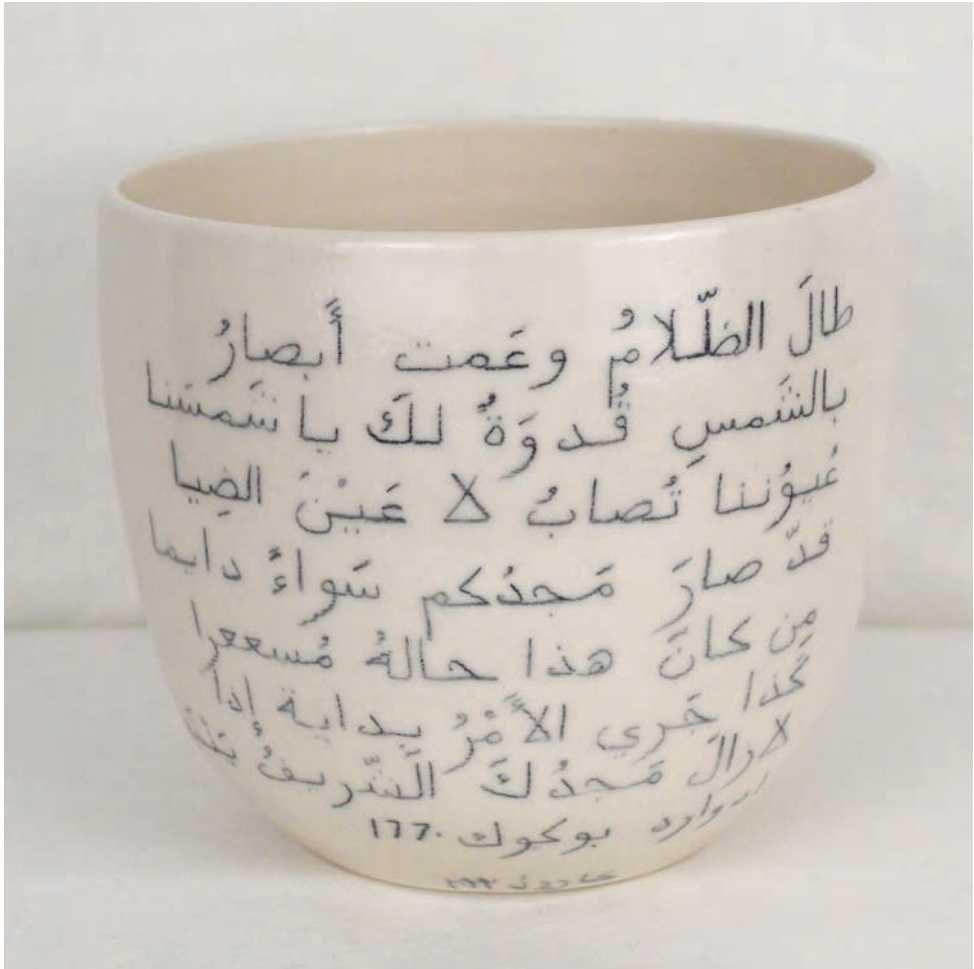
*“Written by Edward Pococke for King Charles II
and now for King Charles III. 1660.”*

H. 128mm W. 136mm



38. Coronation Vase. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze text – “The Coronation Sonnet”

H. 106mm W. 170mm



39. Coronation Vase. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with green underglaze and gold lustre overglaze text. "The Coronation Sonnet"

H. 128mm W. 143mm



40. **Coronation Bowl.** Porcelain body, transparent glaze with gold lustre overglaze text. "The Coronation Sonnet" (exterior) and text (interior) translates as:
"1660. Written for King Charles II and now for King Charles III. Edward Pococke".
 H. 140mm W. 200mm



41. Brush Pot. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with charcoal underglaze text in Chinese, chosen and transcribed by Jing Wang. Translation:

*A pot of wine among flowers
 I alone, drinking, without a companion.
 I lift the cup and invite the bright moon.
 My shadow opposite certainly makes us three.
 But the moon cannot drink.
 My shadow follows the motions of my body in vain.
 For the briefest time are the moon and my shadow my companions.
 Oh be joyful! One must make the most of Spring
 I sing – the moon walks forward rhythmically;
 I dance and my shadow shatters and becomes confused.
 In my waking moments, we are happily blended.
 When I am drunk, we are divided from one another and scattered.
 For a long time I shall be obliged to wander without intention;
 But we will keep our appointment by the far-off Cloudy River.
 Drinking Alone in the Moonlight, Li T’Ai-Po (701-762)*

Translation from “The Fir-Flower Tablets” Florence Ayscough and Amy Lowell.

H. 145mm W. 98mm



42. **Brush Pot.** Porcelain body, transparent glaze with charcoal underglaze text in Chinese, chosen and inscribed by Jing Wang. Translation:

*"Life is short;
Time passes so quickly.
That fate has brought us together in this way
Is something to be treasured."*

Journey to the North, by Zhaungzi

H. 128mm W. 82mm



43. Gold Spot Bowl. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with charcoal underglaze text in Chinese and gold spot in overglaze gold lustre. Chosen and transcribed by Jing Wang.

*"In seclusion, I ascend the west tower in silence,
A sickle of a new moon hangs above,
On guarded grounds, lonesome phoenix trees apprehend the works of a brisk fall,
Sever not, reasons fail,
It is the parting sorrow, but sweet it is not.
It is a taste of something else on the sickle,
On my mind it frees me not."*

A Joyful Rendezvous by Li Yu (c. 937 – 978)

H. 33mm W. 116mm



44. Bowl. Porcelain body, transparent glaze with charcoal underglaze text in Chinese, by Liuzu Dajian Huineng (638-713), chosen and inscribed by Jing Wang.

*"Fundamentally, there is no Bodhi-tree
Nor stand of the mirror bright
Since all is void from the beginning
Where can the dust alight?"*

Hui Neng 638 – 713 AD

H. 48mm W. 106mm



45. Bamboo Bowl 1. Porcelain body. Low-fired oil spot glaze to represent bamboo. Gold lustre overglaze decoration.

H. 45mm W. 148mm



46. Bamboo Bowl 2. Porcelain body. Low fired oil spot glaze to represent bamboo. Gold lustre overglaze decoration.

H. 53mm W. 145mm



47. **Snowdrop Vase.** Porcelain body. Ivory glaze.

H. 84mm W. 80mm



48. Ivory Vase. Porcelain body. Ivory glaze.

H. 88mm W. 88m



49. Small bowl. Porcelain body with transparent overglaze and cobalt underglaze and gold lustre overglaze. Chosen and transcribed by Jing Wang. Chinese text translation:

"Spring is birth;

Summer growth;

Autumn is harvest;

Winter is the store.

These are the rules of nature."

From Gui Gu Zi Chishu (date unknown – BC)

H. 53mm W. 102mm



50. Temple Bowl 1. Porcelain body, transparent glaze.

H. 112mm W. 148mm

51. Temple Bowl 2. Porcelain body, transparent glaze.

H. 102mm W. 140mm



52. **“The Moss Pot.”** Porcelain body with moss overglaze glaze.
Reduction fired (gas kiln)
H. 82mm W. 65mm



53. Quiet Bowl. Porcelain body with Loree overglaze.

H. 49mm W 107mm



54. “Tea Jars” with amber rim. Transparent glaze.

Thrown from the most difficult and beautiful material, black porcelain.

i. H. 85; W. 78mm

ii. H. 71mm; W. 74mm



55. Tea bowl. Porcelain body, black overglaze with brown rim.
H. 55mm W. 122mm

56. Tea Bowl. Porcelain body, black overglaze with brown rim.
H. 58mm W. 136mm

57. Rice Dish. Porcelain body, black overglaze with brown rim.
H. 38mm W. 166mm



58. Rice Bowl. Black porcelain body with transparent glaze.
H. 74mm W. 112mm



59. "Metal Rice Dish" porcelain body with metallic glaze.
Reduction fired.
H. 50mm W. 152mm



60 “Tortoiseshell” Porcelain body. Oil spot glaze. Reduction fired.

H. 81mm W. 105mm

61. “Oil Spot Bowl.” Porcelain body. Oil spot glaze. Reduction fired.

H. 44mm W. 114mm



Watercolour by Glenn Stanton

CAROLE BENNETT
www.silkroadceramics.com