



Acquisitions

Asian Export Art

• JAN VAN CAMPEN •

1 *Writing Box*

India, Vizagapatnam, 1720-30

Ebony, ivory and tortoiseshell

Height 14.2 cm, width 52 cm, depth 34.5 cm

For European traders overseas it was always important to have access to paper and writing materials, and so writing boxes were made in various shapes and sizes and differing degrees of opulent refinement to meet this need.

Vizagapatnam in India, renowned for its ivory inlay work, was an important centre of production. The most common Vizagapatnam boxes are those with broad floral borders along the edges on a rosewood background. They date from the mid-eighteenth century.

This box, however, is an example of a far rarer and earlier type in which the sprays of flowers extend over the entire surface. The execution of these tendrils was extremely successful. On the lid they fan out very evenly over the surface from four European vases in the corners and from two different vases in the middle of the long sides, leaving an oval medallion in the centre free. There are other vase shapes to be found on the sides of the box. The extreme luxury of this piece is also evident from the full decoration of the interior, where both tortoiseshell and ivory have been used.

Flower motifs frequently occur on seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Indian decorative art. They are a fascinating blend of domestic motifs and the large flowers which dominated western decorative art at the end of the seventeenth

century – on Dutch silver for example. These western flowers often served as examples for Indian cotton painters and wood and ivory carvers. The narcissus-like chalices on this box are unusual and make it even more interesting.

LITERATURE:

A. Jaffer, *Furniture from British India and Ceylon*, Salem 2001
J. Veenendaal, *Furniture from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and India during the Dutch Period*, Delft 1985

PROVENANCE:

A.C. Beeling Collection, Leeuwarden; private collection, Amsterdam; transfer of property in lieu of inheritance tax 2012 (inv. no. BK-2012-1).

2 *Parasol*

China, c. 1816

Ivory and silk

Length 76.5 cm

The handle of this parasol is beautifully carved with Chinese figures in a landscape. The carving incorporates a scroll with the words *Mme la Baronne G.A.G.P. Van Der Capellen Née Baronne De Tuyll à Bruxelles*. The Baroness van der Capellen was the wife of Governor-General Godert Alexander Gerard Philip, Baron van der Capellen (1778-1848), the senior official in the Dutch East Indies between 1816 and 1826. Van der Capellen, who married Jacoba Elisabeth van Tuyll van Serooskerke (1781-1866) in 1803, was a great statesman whose career began under Louis Bonaparte. During the annexation by France he turned down every office, but after the revolution of 1813 he was immediately sent to Brussels to protect the interests of the Netherlands on behalf of the sovereign, the later King William I. In 1815 Van der Capellen was present at the Congress of Vienna and immediately afterwards went to the Dutch East Indies to become the first Dutch governor-general after the period of English rule (power was transferred on 19 August 1816). We do not know whether his wife accompanied her husband on his journey there or followed on very soon afterwards, although we do know that she went with him on the long official journeys he made throughout the archipelago. They were both interested in antiquities, ethnic art and nature.

The term *à Bruxelles* in the scroll indicates that Baroness Van der Capellen received the parasol while she was living in Brussels (1814-16). In view of the distinct and instantly recognizable Oriental nature of the piece it is tempting to suppose that it was a gift from her husband, who had just arrived in Asia, and that it was sent to her immediately before she followed him there. However we cannot be certain that this was the case.

The fabric of the parasol is original and in remarkably good condition. The carving is Chinese and the parasol was undoubtedly made in Canton, the centre of decorative art, including ivory carvings, for western buyers.

LITERATURE:

A.E. Wassing, 'G.A.G.P. baron van der Capellen gouverneur-generaal van Nederlands-Indië 1816-1826', *De Nederlandsche Leeuw* 116 (1999), pp. 555-71

J. van Campen, 'Masters of the Knife; Chinese Carving in Wood, Ivory and Soapstone', *Rijksmuseum Bulletin* 59 (2011), pp. 153-73

PROVENANCE:

Jacoba Elisabeth, Baroness Van der Capellen - Baroness Van Tuyll van Serooskerken; by descent in the family; J.B.A.M. Ott Gallery, Zutphen; purchased in 2011 (inv. no. AK-RAK-2011-1).



- 3 *Box in the shape of a double lozenge*
 Japan, second half of the 18th century
 Wood, lacquer
 Height 14.7 cm, length 28.5 cm
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Playing with shapes, in this case with lozenges, is a regular feature of Japanese decorative art. This applies equally to objects made for their domestic market and to items like this box, which were produced for western buyers. This aspect of the Japanese output of lacquer for export – playing with shapes – was not represented in the Dutch national collection, and there are a very few examples abroad (for instance in the historic collection in Burghley House, England).

Pieces like this can certainly be found in eighteenth-century descriptions of Dutch private collections, for example in that of Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807) – the collection that forms the basis of the Rijksmuseum's Oriental collections. He owned 'a tall box shaped like two interlinked lozenges', according to the description of the collection that was made in 1814, after the death of his widow. A great many objects from this historic collection were disposed of in the 1920s – among them the box in the shape of a double lozenge. The full description reveals that this newly-acquired box is a similar piece, not Jean Theodore Royer's original.

PROVENANCE:
 Galerie Delta 98, The Hague; private collection;
 gift of F.T. Scholten, Amsterdam, 2010
 (inv. no. AK-RAK-2010-2).



- 4 *Plaque with the arms of Cornelis Schippers and Judick Bartholomeussen*
 China, Canton, 1733
 Mother of pearl, engraved
 Diameter 13 cm
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This plaque is engraved with the arms of Cornelis Schippers and Judick Bartholomeussen in the centre as if it were a dinner plate. We know of plates like this with the same armorial bearings and almost exactly the same decorations around the edge – there is an example in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen.

We have a good deal of information about who ordered the plates and this plaque. Cornelis Schippers (d. 1737) was chief surgeon on board the *Nieuwvliet*, a ship that arrived in Canton in the autumn of 1733 and left there on 18 January 1734. The captain, the second officer and the third mate also ordered armorial porcelain, but Schippers was the biggest buyer with no fewer than six different sets of plates and tea sets with coats of arms and monograms. The members of the crew of the *Nieuwvliet* could not possibly have afforded commissions like these from their pay alone, and it is safe to assume that they made a great deal of money on the side from private trade. Schippers certainly knew his way around. He was an old hand in the business and had already sailed to Batavia twice before his voyage on the *Nieuwvliet*.

The popularity of armorial porcelain boomed in the 1730s. Jochem Kroes, who wrote a standard work on Chinese armorial porcelain with Dutch coats of arms, established that during this period it was primarily Zeelanders who ordered such porcelain. Schippers's purchases support this. The mother-of-pearl plaque is far less common than the porcelain version. We do know of similar plaques inlaid as decorations on wooden boxes, but never this size.

LITERATURE / SOURCES:

J. Kroes, *Chinese Armorial Porcelain for the Dutch Market. Chinese Porcelain with Coats of Arm of Dutch Families*, The Hague/Zwolle 2007, no. 81

J. van Campen and E. Hartkamp-Jonxis, *Asian Splendour: Company Art in the Rijksmuseum*, Zutphen/Amsterdam 2011, p. 77

PROVENANCE:

Private collection; Betty Aardewerk & Zonen Antiquairs, Leidschendam; purchased in 2008
 (inv. no. AK-RAK-2008-1).



5 *Dish with floral motif*

China, c. 1730

Enamel on copper

Diameter 57 cm

This large eight-lobed dish is made of copper and is completely covered with white enamel on both sides, on which a very elegant decoration of sprays of flowers, peonies, irises, magnolia branches, dwarf quinces and butterflies has been painted in coloured enamels. Painting with opaque enamels, with an emphasis on different shades of pink, was one of the Chinese porcelain producers' last innovations. Knowledge of enamels had, at least in part, come from Europe. Emperor Kangxi (1662-1722) and his successor Yongzheng (1723-35) were both interested in the technical knowledge of the Jesuits at the court and saw to it that they contributed to the innovation of such things as painting with enamels in the imperial workshops. As well as profiting from the Jesuits' knowledge, the porcelain painters also benefited from the experience of Chinese craftsmen in the imperial workshops, in the glassworks and in the workshop where enamel *cloisonné* was made.

The techniques for painting with enamels on porcelain or on a copper base covered with white enamel are very similar and were developed at the same time. Around 1730 the porcelain painters had mastered all the technical aspects of these techniques, and production flourished in the imperial workshops, in the 'porcelain capital' of Jingdezhen and in Canton, where porcelain was decorated for westerners and objects in enamels on copper were produced.

This dish was made at the start of the heyday of the Cantonese enamel-painting workshops. Even though the traditional auricular shape also appears in China – though smaller – this dish has a close affinity to contemporaneous silver memorial salvers from Batavia.

LITERATURE:

J. van Campen, 'Aanwinst. Een grote schotel met bloemtakken', *Aziatische Kunst* 37 (2007), no. 4, pp. 26-31

PROVENANCE:

Sale Christie's, London (15 May 2007, no. 408); J.M. Morpurgo Gallery, Amsterdam; purchased in 2007

(inv. no. AK-RAK-2007-7).



6 *Chasuble with accessories*

China, mid-18th century, made into vestments in the Netherlands
in the first half of the 19th century

Embroidered silk

Chasuble length 108 cm

In 1966 the Rijksmuseum acquired this chasuble with stole, maniple, velum and bursa on loan from a private collector. According to the loan form, the vestments had come from the Sint-Franciscus Xaveriuskerk aan 't Zand in Amersfoort and had been made from the wedding dress of the Baroness van Stoutenburg. The fabric proved to be fine Chinese satin, adorned with elaborate multi-coloured embroidery: flowers, hares, sprays of flowers and European ornamental ribbons. In view of the motifs and above all the large flower in the middle of the back of the chasuble, it is far more likely that it was an embroidered counterpane rather than a dress.

The Baroness van Stoutenburg referred to on the form must be Lucia Theresia van Lilaar, Lady of Stoutenburg (1752-1819), the wife of Petrus Leonardus, Baron van Heilmann (d. 1821). The Van Lilaars were staunch Catholics and had a strong link with St Francis Xavier's. Until 1795 the building and furnishings were actually owned by an uncle of Lucia's, as Catholic institutions were not allowed to have possessions. According to the estate inventory, which was drawn up after her death, in her house in Amersfoort Lucia had 'a yellow silk counterpane with lappets of the same' – possibly the fabric from which the vestments were made. On the basis of the gold braid used in the cross on the chasuble and elsewhere, it is assumed that the vestments were made in the first half of the nineteenth century from Chinese silk that was already old then. No information about the acquisition or the making of the chasuble has as yet been found in the church archives.

LITERATURE:

T. Stam and R. van Blerk, 'Borduurstuk uit China', *Aziatische Kunst* 25 (1995), no. 2, pp. 2-26

J. van Campen, 'Twee Chinese geborduurde beddenspreien in het Rijksmuseum', *Aziatische Kunst* 40 (2010), no. 3, pp. 17-37

PROVENANCE:

The parish of Sint-Franciscus-Xaverius, Amersfoort; private collection; loaned to the Rijksmuseum in 1966; purchased in 2008

(inv. no. BK-2008-176).



7 *Coffer*

Japan, c. 1600

Wood, lacquer, mother of pearl

Height 47.5 cm; width 93.8 cm

The coffer is decorated with black lacquer and the scenes in the panels have been applied in gold lacquer. The panels on the front and on the lid contain animals – some in pairs – and in one case a cart among trees and shrubs. The sides and the back of the trunk are simpler: on the sides there are two narrow fields with the same lush trees and on the back three fields with more stylized and broader vines. Some of the trees are recognizable as maples, which in view of their magnificent display of colour at that time of the year denote autumn. The pair of deer refers to the same season. The inside of the coffer is plain black with a design – without borders – of common cranes and sheaves of rice hanging up to dry; once again a motif that indicates autumn. The scenes on the outside are enhanced with inlay work of mother of pearl, and mother of pearl is repeated much more prominently in the decorative borders surrounding the panels. The shape of the coffer is derived from European trunks with curved lids, and the mother-of-pearl bands between the panels refer to the iron strapwork on trunks of this kind.

This type of lacquerware with the spontaneous painting style and the mother-of-pearl inlay work is known as *Namban* lacquer. *Namban* was the name the Japanese gave to the southern barbarians – in other words all foreigners apart from the Chinese and the Koreans. In the sixteenth century these foreigners were mainly the Portuguese, but from the end of that century Dutch traders were also active in the East Indies. *Namban* lacquer was among the earliest merchandise transported to the Netherlands and it was highly valued. The States-General used it for diplomatic gifts and *Namban* lacquerware was copied in Amsterdam almost immediately – the copies were also highly valued and they, too, were used as diplomatic gifts.

LITERATURE:

T. Canepa (introduction), *After the Barbarians II. Namban Works of Art for the Japanese, Portuguese and Dutch Markets*, cat. London (Jorge Welsh Oriental Porcelain and Works of Art) 2008

J. van Campen and E. Hartkamp-Jonxis, *Asian Splendour: Company Art in the Rijksmuseum*, Zutphen/Amsterdam 2011, p. 24

PROVENANCE:

Private collection, Germany; Jorge Welsh Gallery, London/Lisbon; purchased with the support of the Vrienden van het Rijksmuseum

(inv. no. AK-RAK-2009-1).



