Framing China: performativity and narrative in museum displays of Chinese porcelain

Yang, P.-Y.

CHAPTER 2 Self-Fashioning: The Multiple Values of Chinese Porcelain in the Rijksmuseum

A heroic past […] is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea.

Ernest Renan, *What is a Nation?*

Introduction: Chinese Porcelain Across Departmental Boundaries

Opened in 1885, the Rijksmuseum is essentially different from many national museums, which are characterized as national only because they are maintained directly or indirectly by central governments and most of their funding comes from national budgets.[159] Beyond these premises, the Rijksmuseum is a museum for the nation because it contributes to the construction of a unified national identity defined by former glories through the combination of art and history.[160] The museum was built to be a landmark of Dutch nation-building during the nineteenth century, and it continues to be an emblematic embodiment of Dutch nationhood today. This makes the museum a special case in the museum world, where reshaping national identities and restaging national histories with a multicultural or transcultural perspective is very much en vogue. So, how does such a Dutch national monument present china?

Today, the Rijksmuseum has three curatorial departments: The Department of Prints and Drawings, the Department of History, and the Department of Fine and Decorative Arts.[161] Both the

[159] The formation of the present-day Rijksmuseum relates to its three predecessors, established respectively by three regimes that characterized the Netherlands across the nineteenth century: Nationale Kunstgalerij (the National Art Gallery, founded in 1800 by the Batavia Republic); Koninklijk Museum (the Royal Museum, founded in 1808 by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the king of the Kingdom of Holland); and the Rijks Museum in the Trippenhuis (founded in 1815 by the United Kingdom of the Netherlands). The political confrontations between the House of Orange and its opponents had brought about the history of the Rijksmuseum complex roots in both The Hague and Amsterdam before today's museum building designed by the Dutch architect Pierre J. H. Cuypers (1827-1921) was completed in 1885. This tortuous path has been articulated in many texts concerning the history of the Rijksmuseum and the gradual process through which the museum became associated with the formation of national identity. See, for example: Ellinoor Bergvelt, "Potgieter's 'Rijksmuseum' and the Public Presentation of Dutch History in the National Museum (1800-1844)," in *Free Access to the Past: Romanticism, Cultural Heritage and the Nation*, eds. Lotte Jensen, Joep Leerssen, and Marita Mathijsen (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 171-195.

[160] Mary Bouquet, *Museums: A Visual Anthropology* (London and New York: Berg, 2012), 42.

[161] Referring to the Rijksmuseum's organization chart: https://rijks-web.azurewebsites.net/en/organisation/organisation-chart [Accessed January 20, 2021]. The Department of Fine and Decorative Arts manages three subsets of objects: Asian Arts, Craft, and Paintings and Sculpture.

Departments of History and Fine and Decorative Arts have collections of Chinese porcelain. This distribution relates to the history of the museum's collection of Chinese porcelain. There are two institutions that significantly contributed to the formation and expansion of the collection of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum: The Netherlands Museum for History and Art (Nederlands Museum voor Geschiedenis en Kunst, founded in 1875 in The Hague, and hereinafter referred to as the Netherlands Museum); and the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst (The Society of Friends of Asian Art, founded in 1918 in Amsterdam. In 2018, the Society was granted the designation 'Koninklijk', meaning 'Royal', hence hereinafter referred to as the KVVAK).

The Netherlands Museum was established to advance public knowledge of applied art and design and the great history of the Netherlands.[162] It was merged into the Rijksmuseum in 1883, shortly before the Rijksmuseum officially opened its doors. This inclusion brought over a thousand pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, and most of them are export porcelain of blue and white and polychrome.[163] The Netherlands Museum's Chinese and Japanese porcelain collection mostly came from the Dutch lawyer and sinologist Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807). Royer's widow bequeathed her husband's collection to the Dutch sovereign (subsequently King) William I (1772-1843) in 1814, and in 1816, Royer's collection was put on display in the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden (Royal Cabinet of Curiosities), a national museum founded by William I in The Hague.[164]

After the closure of the Royal Cabinet in 1883, the Royer collection was divided into two groups: ethnographic objects; and ornamented pieces of artistic interest.[165] The former was transferred to the Rijksmuseum Volkenkunde (National Museum of Ethnology) in Leiden.[166] The latter, including a large group of blue and white and polychromed Chinese and Japanese porcelain, was integrated into the Netherlands Museum and ended up in the Rijksmuseum (following the incorporation of the Netherlands Museum into the Rijksmuseum).[167] This division between ethnographic and decorative objects, according to the art historian Lieske Tibbe, shows how "Simple objects were categorized as 'ethnographic', and ornamented pieces made of precious materials, as 'art'."[168] The transfer of richly decorated objects into the Netherlands Museum was also related to the museum's focus on industry art and design. Notably, Chinese

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[162] Lieske Tibbe, "*Kunstkammer* Objects in Museums of Industrial Arts: Banishment of Useful Destination?," in *Specialization and Consolidation of the National Museum after 1830: The Neue Museum in Berlin in an International Context*, eds. Ellinoor Bergvelt et al. (Berlin: G+H Verlag, 2011), 187.

[163] A. L. den Blaauwen, "The Porcelain Collection in the Rijksmuseum," in *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*, ed. Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1985), 29. In addition to the porcelain collection incorporated from the Netherlands Museum, the Rijksmuseum continuously received Chinese porcelain as gifts, purchased it, or borrowed on a long-term basis from other Dutch collectors throughout the twentieth century. For a detailed introduction to the collection history of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum, see Jan van Campen, "History of the Collection," in *Chinese Ceramics in the Collection of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: The Ming and Qing Dynasties*, eds. Christian J. A. Jörg, and Jan van Campen (London: Philp Wilson, 1997), 11-23.

[164] Jan van Campen, *De Haagse Jurist Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807) en Zijn Verzameling Chinese Voorwerpen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), 399.

[165] Tibbe, "*Kunstkammer* Objects in Museums of Industrial Arts" 185.

[166] Van Campen, *De Haagse Jurist Jean Theodore Royer (1737-1807)*, 52.

[167] Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 12.

[168] Tibbe, "*Kunstkammer* Objects in Museums of Industrial Arts," 185. For more about this division, see Rudolf Effert, *Royal Cabinets and Auxiliary Branches: Origins of the National Museum of Ethnography 1816-1883* (Leiden: CNWS Publications, 2008), 227-236.

and Japanese porcelain was transferred to the Netherlands Museum not only because of its artistic qualities but also because of its artistic inspiration for the manufacture of Dutch ceramics.[169]

In 1927, the Rijksmuseum's director, Frederik Schmidt-Degener (in office 1921-1941), ended the Netherlands Museum's role as an independent organization within the Rijksmuseum and divided its collection into two departments: The Department of History and the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art.[170] For most of the twentieth century, as the first and second sections of this chapter will illustrate, Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum was displayed in the galleries of these two Departments, imbued with values as both a historical record of Dutch maritime power and a home decoration showing Dutch taste in interior design. In 1977, an assortment of Chinese porcelain from the Dutch VOC shipwreck *De Witte Leeuw* (which sank in 1613 and was excavated in 1976) was incorporated into the collection of the Department of History and was later put on display.

The KVVAK was established by a group of Dutch collectors and connoisseurs who had an enthusiasm for collecting and studying Asian objects, especially items not made for export but for Asian local markets.[171] Their collections were mainly comprised of objects from East Asia (especially China, Japan, and Korea) and South and Southeast Asia (especially India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka). This collection field overlaps a geo-cultural field, roughly from British India to Japan, which was labelled 'Asia' in early twentieth-century Europe.[172] When the KVVAK was founded, its members included those who were interested in theology and valued Asian art as a source of wisdom in life.[173] Under the efforts of the KVVAK's founder, Herman Visser (1890-1965), and its first chairman, Herman Westendorp (1868-1941), the Society shifted its focus from "sfeer [atmosphere]" and "stemming [mood]" towards the aesthetic and art-historical values of Asian art in the 1920s.[174]

The members of the KVVAK were endeavoring to distinguish (the European-defined category of) 'fine art', which is valued for its own sake and beauty, from 'applied art', which serves practical and decorative functions, and sought to assemble a collection that could reflect their taste in the former

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[169] Barbara Laan, "Kunstnijverheid en interieur in het Nederlandsch museum voor geschiedenis en kunst in het Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. Ontstaan en opheffing van de cultuurhistorische presentatie 1875-1927," *Gentse Bijdragen tot de Interieurgeschiedenis* 39, (2014-2016): 97 (note 84).

[170] This division was based on the suggestion of the Rijkscommissie [National Advisory Committee] on the reorganization of the museum industry in the Netherlands. This committee was set up by the Dutch government in 1918 and Schmidt-Degener was one of the members. See See J. P. Sigmond, "Museale presentaties van de Nederlandse Geschiedenis in het Rijksmuseum. Inleiding optwee studies" [Presentations of Dutch History in the Rijksmuseum. Introduction to Two Studies], *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 45, no. 4 (1997): 262-264.

[171] Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 19.

[172] Ibid. According to the KVVAK's founder, Herman Visser, the Society's collection of Asian art is comprised of two groups: the first is "Indian Art together with its many menations," such as Thailand and Indonesia, and the second is "Far Eastern Art, which contains the works of China, Japan and Korea." Visser also explains the missing of art of West Asia in the Society: "Aspects of Near Eastern Art differ sharply from those of that widely scattered area including Indian and East Asiatic art; the reasons for divergence lie in cultural, technical and artistic grounds." See Herman F. E. Visser, *Museum van Aziatische Kunst in het Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam: Catalogus* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1952), 8.

[173] Jan van Campen, "Honderd jaar Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst," *Aziatische Kunst* 48, no. 2 (2018): 17-18.

[174] Ibid., 18.

category.[175] The aim of the Society was not to present an extensive overview of Asian art, but rather to "focus on the acquisition of a select group of objects that exemplified a particular region, style, type or period."[176] The Society contributed significantly to the expansion of the Dutch collection of various types of Asian objects; whether porcelain, ceramics, paintings, bronze vessels, tomb figures, jewelry, or religious statues, they are now grouped together, and evaluated and studied (but also generalized) as fine art.

In 1932, the Society's Museum for Asian Art was opened within the Tuinzaal (Garden Hall) on the ground floor of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam.[177] It was the first public museum for Asian art in the Netherlands. [178] In 1952, the Museum for Asian Art was integrated into and displayed in the Rijksmuseum.[179] This incorporation facilitated the establishment of a new Department of Asian Art in 1965, and in 1972 the Society decided to loan their collection to the Rijksmuseum long-term. In 1990, the management of the collection of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum's Department of Sculpture and Applied Art was transferred to the museum's Department of Asian Art.[180]

The collection and presentation history of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum attaches multiple values to china. This chapter sets out to explore the decorative, historical, aesthetic, art-historical, and most of all, symbolic properties that have been attributed to Chinese porcelain between the 1930s and today. The decade of the 1930s was a significant time for the Rijksmuseum. Under the directorship of Schmidt-Degener, the Rijksmuseum of the 1930s had just undergone a major reconfiguration in terms of spatial organization and display perspective. This reconfiguration aimed at enhancing aesthetic experience (for Schmidt-Degener, a museum should be a place "waar de schoonheid spreekt [where beauty speaks]") and providing a more coherent and clear narrative of Dutch national development attuned to "patriotically-minded."[181] As I will explain in this chapter, the presentation of Chinese porcelain

[175] For more about the establishment of the KVVAK as well as its vision and collection field, see Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1985).
[176] Menno Fitski, Anna Aleksandra Ślączka, and William Southworth, "A Pavilion for Asian art in the new Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," *The Portrait* 64, (2013): 56; see also Menno Fitski and Anna Aleksandra Ślączka, "A New Pavilion for Asian Art at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," *Arts of Asia* 43, no. 3 (2013): 134.
[177] Scheurleer, *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*, 15.
[178] The very first museum for Asian art in the Netherlands was the Nederlandsch Museum voor Oost-Aziatische Kunst (Netherlands Museum for East Asian Art), a private museum founded in 1920 in Amsterdam. This museum, later renamed the Yi Yuan Museum, was based on the collection mainly of the sinologist Raphaël Petrucci (1872-1917). For more about the Nederlandsch Museum voor Oost-Aziatische Kunst, see Marie Yasunaga, "How to exhibit the un-exhibitable. Karl With and the Yi Yuan Museum of Eduard von der Heydt in Amsterdam," *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 65, no. 1 (2015): 321-353.
[179] Scheurleer, *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*, 22.
[180] Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 23.
[181] See Ger Luijten, "'De veelheid en de eelheid': een Rijksmuseum Schmidt-Degener" ['The multitude and the rarity': The Rijksmuseum Schmidt-Degener], *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek / Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art* 35, no. 1 (1984): 354; and Patricia Wardle, "Summaries," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 45, no. 4 (1997): 398. Schmidt-Degener made some changes in terms of display scheme that can be considered promotions of Dutch national identity. For example, he applied a nationalist approach to reorganizing the museum's painting collection: separating Dutch painting from that of other Europeans, and sorting pieces from the seventeenth century into a series of regional schools with certain masters singled out. See Ellinoor Bergvelt, "The Decoration Programmes of Cuypers' *Rijksmuseum* in Amsterdam," in *Specialization and Consolidation of the National Museum after 1830: The Neue Museum in Berlin in an International Context*, eds. Ellinoor Bergvelt et al. (Berlin: G+H Verlag, 2011), 311-321.

that Schmidt-Degener designed in the 1930s marked the beginning of appropriating Chinese porcelain into a token of Dutch civic pride and national prestige. This chapter will show that, throughout the twentieth century and up until today, Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum has been combined with Dutch objects of various types and attributed multiple values that contribute to the development of Dutch self-affirmation and national identity.

This chapter has three sections. Broadly, sections 2-1 and 2-2 demonstrate the incorporation of Chinese porcelain in the construction of an ideal Dutch self-image with specific reference to two schemes of juxtaposition: Dutch portraits and Chinese porcelain; and Dutch landscapes and Chinese porcelain. More specifically, section 2-1 explores the decorative and symbolic values attributed to Chinese porcelain in its juxtaposition with Dutch portraits found in the Rijksmuseum between the 1930s and today. Here, decorative value refers to the function of porcelain in Dutch home decoration; symbolic value refers to the display of porcelain to communicate meaning beyond its material quality, representing, for example, social status, national prestige, and identity.[182] This section shows how china is appropriated into the Dutch 'extended self'. The word appropriation here specifically refers to what the anthropologist James Carrier calls "the process by which a person establishes a relationship of identity with an object, makes it a possession."[183] I introduced the idea of the 'extended self', the idea that one's conception of Self extends beyond "what is me" to "what is mine," developed by Russell Belk, in the previous chapter, and it is key here as well.[184] Section 2-2 focuses on the combination of mapped landscapes of VOC fortresses and trading posts and pieces of Ming porcelain, including porcelain shards from *De Witte Leeuw*. This scheme of juxtaposition has been found in the Rijksmuseum since at least the 1980s and can still be found today. In this display scheme, Chinese porcelain is ascribed historical significance (acting as an important record for understanding Dutch historical events) and symbolic value, giving tangible presence to intangible ideas of Dutch leadership and a sphere of influence that extended beyond the Netherlands' national borders.

After the join of the KVVAK's collection in the Rijksmuseum in 1952, Chinese porcelain was imbued with a new meaning; it became a work of art, ascribable aesthetic and art-historical value. Here, aesthetic value refers to the visual and material qualities of porcelain that contribute to its significance as a work of art; art-historical value is highlighted when porcelain is framed in a historical sequence to illustrate the development of artistic styles.[185] Section 2-3 examines the discursiveness of the viewing environment of simplicity in which the Society's collection has been put on display. For the KVVAK and the curators of the Department of Asian Art, this style of viewing environment helps to de-mystify Asian objects and frame them as works of art. Beyond this intention, this section will also discuss how the separation of today's Asian Pavilion from the museum's main building inevitably creates a spatial narrative of cultural differentiation.

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[182] See Karin Ekström, "Symbolic Value," in *Encyclopedia of Consumer Culture*, ed. Dale Southerton (Los Angeles and London: Sage, 2011), 1420-1421.
[183] James G. Carrier, *Gifts and Commodities: Exchange and Western Capitalism since 1700* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 10.
[184] Russell W. Belk, "Possessions and the Extended Self," *Journal of Consumer Research* 15, no. 2 (1988), 139-168.
[185] See Alan H. Goldman, "Art Historical Value," *British Journal of Aesthetics* 33, no. 1 (1993), 17-28.

2-1 Portrait and Porcelain: Embellishing Dutch Self-Image

Between 1887 and 1927, most of the Chinese and Japanese porcelain collection in the Rijksmuseum was stacked in a decorative manner on shelves in the Ceramic Hall, together with other porcelain and ceramics from the Netherlands, Italy, France, England, and Germany (**Figures 2.1-2.3**). At that time, the ground floor of the Rijksmuseum was allotted to the Netherlands Museum, and the Ceramic Hall was one of the galleries located on the Western side of the ground floor.[186] As the objects shown in the Ceramic Hall were generally grouped based on their places of production, the Ceramic Hall's layout encouraged a comparison of cultural-regional styles, echoing the Netherlands Museum's objective of improving public knowledge of applied art by enabling "the public to compare examples from abroad with original Dutch artefacts."[187]

Figure 2.1 View of the *Ceramic Hall* with ceramics and furniture, ca. 1905-1909. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: RMA-SSA-F-05481-1

[186] Between 1914 and 1917, the Ceramic Hall also displayed a collection of Chinese Zhangzhou ware on loan from the Dutch mining engineer Reinier Dirk Verbeek (1841-1926). Verbeek's collection was moved and displayed in the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden in 1919 and was donated by his heirs to the Princessehof Museum in 1929. See Eline van den Berg, "The Princessehof Collection of Chinese Ceramics from the Former Dutch East Indies," *Journal for Art Market Studies* 4, no. 2 (2020): 1-15.
[187] Tibbe, "*Kunstkammer* Objects in Museums of Industrial Arts," 186-187.

Figure 2.2 Shelf with Chinese and Japanese porcelain vases in the Ceramic Hall, ca. 1914-1926. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011939

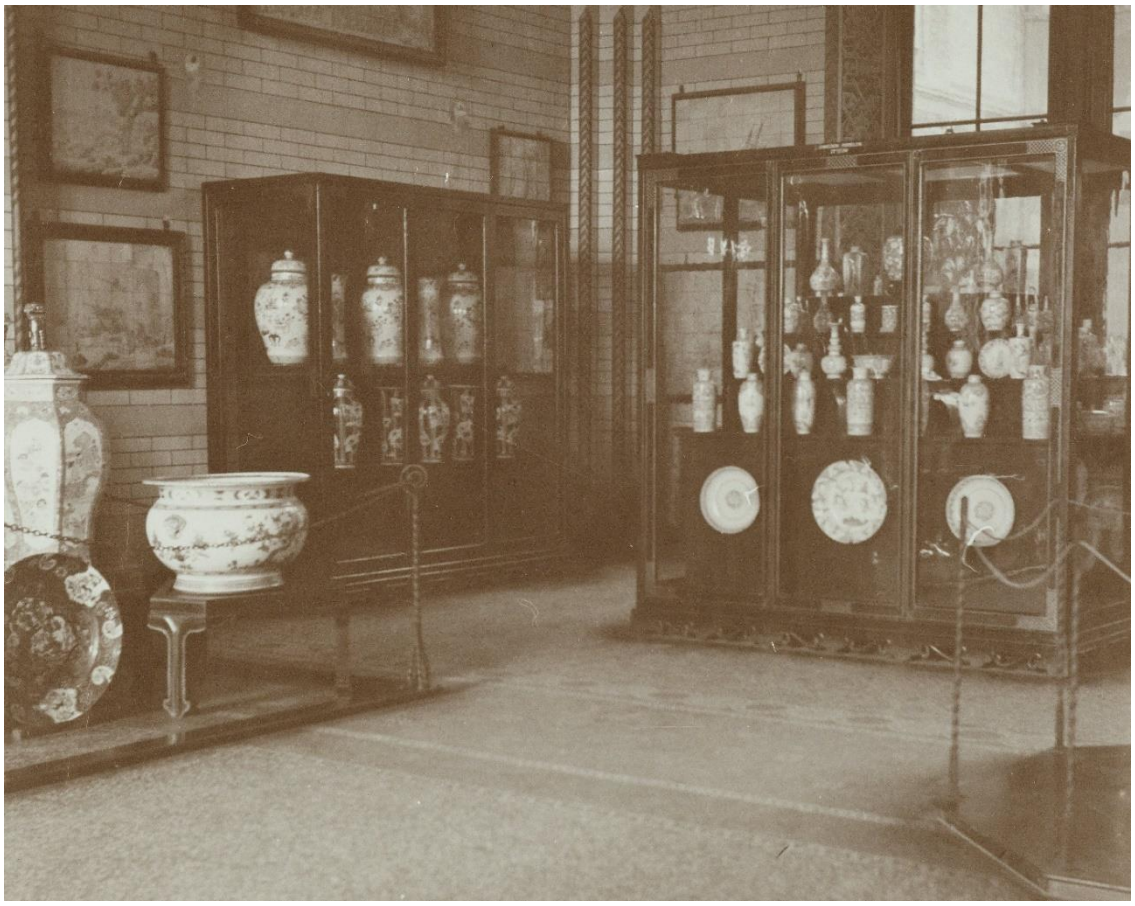

Figure 2.3 View of the Ceramic Hall with Delftware tiles (hanging on the walls) and two showcases with Chinese porcelain (including pieces from the Royer collection), 1926. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: RMA-SSA-F-00126-1

It was not until Frederik Schmidt-Degener was appointed as the new director of the Rijksmuseum in 1921 that the display of Chinese porcelain became indicative of Dutch civic pride and national prestige. Schmidt-Degener, who had studied art history in Paris and Berlin, was a supporter of the German museum reform movement at the turn of the twentieth century. He was deeply inspired by the new display strategy the German museum reformer Wilhelm von Bode (1845-1929) had advocated: that is, mixing objects made of different materials to create eye-catching juxtapositions.[188]

For von Bode, classifying collections into types, such as paintings, sculptures, furniture, and decorative arts, was not an effective way to grab the attention of visitors. Therefore, during his curatorship in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum (which later became the Bode Museum) in Berlin in the early twentieth century, von Bode experimented with "a modified form of the period room" in which various objects made of diverse materials but in one particular period (e.g. renaissance) were assembled in a well-spaced layout to evoke the period's style.[189] Such a mixed display made references to private settings, evoking "the atmosphere of the private houses of the collectors where the objects had been before they entered the museum."[190] Notably, as the art historian Andrew McClellan points out, von Bode's mixed display not only was visually appealing but also had the potential to incite patriotic sentiment as it "captured regional characteristics threatened by the homogenizing pressure of modernization."[191] The evocation of a domestic interior in public museums was considered able to encourage the general public to appreciate and take pride the taste of the nation.[192]

Below, I will explore the patriotic implication of Schmidt-Degener's collocation of Dutch portraits (more specifically, group/family portraits of Amsterdam regents and Dutch VOC staffs) alongside Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum's *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall* and *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*. *Gallery 364* was ready in 1923 and *Gallery 344* around 1932, and the mixed arrangements in these two galleries were clearly inspired by von Bode's style of display.[193] These

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[188] Malcolm Baker, "Bode and Museum Display: The Arrangement of the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum and the South Kensington Response," *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 38, (1996): 143-153; Luijten, "'De veelheid en de eelheid'," 354. Before appointed as the Rijksmuseum's director, Schmidt-Degener was the director of the Boymans Museum in Rotterdam between 1908 and 1921. In the Boymans Museum, Schmidt-Degener also enacted mix arrangement following Wilhelm von Bode's idea. See Julia Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display: Museum Presentation in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture* (Rotterdam: NAi Publishers; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 2004), 66-85.

[189] Charlotte Klonk, *Spaces of Experience: Art Gallery Interiors from 1800-2000* (New Heaven and London: Tale University Press, 2009), 55. See also Wilhelm von Bode, "The Berlin Renaissance Museum," *The Fortnightly Review* 50, (1891): 506-515.

[190] Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display*, 65.

[191] Andrew McClellan, ed., *Art and Its Public: Museum Studies at the Millennium* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 16.

[192] Anthony Burton, *Vision & Accident: The Story of the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London: V&A Publications, 1999), 159. The more elaborate period rooms seen in today's museums in the United States, inspired by von Bode's mixed rooms, are also considered capable of raising patriotic sentiment. See R. T. H. Halsey and Elizabeth Tower, *The Homes of our Ancestors, as shown in the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (New York: Doubleday, 1925), xxii.

[193] Schmidt-Degener also designed mixed arrangements in other galleries of the Rijksmuseum. For example, between 1925 and 1939, the *Gallery of Honor* presented seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, furniture, and pieces of Delftware collected by John Francis Loudon (1821-1895).

arrangements were roughly maintained until the Rijksmuseum was temporarily shut down in 1939 because of World War II.

2-1-1 Home Decoration and the Fashioning of an Ideal Self

During the late period of the directorship of Barthold W.F. van Riemsdijk (in office 1897-1921), the predecessor of Schmidt-Degener, the Rijksmuseum received an important collection from Dutch collector Jean Charles Joseph Drucker (1862-1944) and his wife Mary Lydia Drucker-Fraser. It was mainly made up of paintings of the Hague School (on loan to the museum in 1904) and a pair of eighteenth-century Chinese Qing black square vases, also known as the *Druckervazen* (the Drucker vases, on loan to the museum in 1906) (**Figure 2.4**).[194] A prerequisite for receiving these exquisite collections was that the Rijksmuseum had to provide an exclusive space to show the collection.[195] To this end, the Drucker Wing opened stage by stage between 1909 and 1919.[196] In the Drucker Wing, the Druckers' collection of paintings was hung in a modern, symmetrical style. However, due to risky transportation following World War I and the Rijksmuseum's waning interest in porcelain at the time, the placement of the porcelain was delayed.[197] It was not until Schmidt-Degener became the new director-general that this situation changed.

Schmidt-Degener expressed great appreciation for the quality of the Druckers' porcelain collection.[198] He followed the condition set by Drucker, in which the collector emphasized that his porcelain collection was meant to be shown as a decoration of the interior rooms hung with paintings.[199] Hence, Schmidt-Degener constructed an eighteenth-century domestic space in *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall* by incorporating a Rococo-style staircase and a half-dome shaped imitative stucco ceiling decorated with leaves and blossomy flowers that had been removed from an eighteenth-century Rotterdam patrician house (**Figure 2.5**).[200] In *Gallery 364*, some Asian tapestries or carpets covered the floor; the pair of black square vases that Drucker loved were put on a Rococo console table with a Chinese flower wall-covering as background (see **Figure 2.4**); and other Chinese blue and white and famille verte porcelain, also from the Drucker collection, was framed in several Rococo-style wall cabinets with acanthus decorations, wherein they were arranged symmetrically on the scrolled brackets (**Figure 2.6**). There was also a wall case with a decorative frame showing pieces of Chinese porcelain and silverwork such as plates, ewers, and candlesticks (**Figure 2.7**). The balanced composition of Chinese porcelain in these cabinets coincided with the decorative traditions that flourished in Dutch interiors during the late seventeenth century.[201] Drucker was satisfied with the gallery design. As a result, the Drucker vases were gifted to the

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[194] Jan Van Campen, "Londense Aankopen van J.C.J. Drucker," *Aziatische Kunst* 38, no.4 (2008): 22.
[195] Ibid.
[196] After 2013, the Drucker Wing was renamed the Philips Wing and mainly hosted special exhibitions.
[197] Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 16.
[198] Ibid.
[199] As Van Campen notes, displaying paintings together with porcelain was common in early twentieth-century Europe, see Ibid.
[200] E. P. Engel, "Het ontstaan van de verzameling Drucker-Fraser in het Rijksmuseum," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 13, no. 2 (1965): 55.
[201] Graham McLaren, "Porcelain Rooms," in *Encyclopedia of Interior Design*, ed. Joanna Banham (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 988.

Rijksmuseum in 1928, and following Drucker's will, his collection of more than a hundred pieces of Chinese porcelain was bequeathed to the museum roughly after 1944, and was incorporated in the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art.[202]

Figure 2.4 Drucker's black square vases in the center of *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall*, ca. 1920-1950. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0012062

Figure 2.5 View of *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall* with three display cabinets showing Chinese porcelain, and two portraits of Joseph Bouër and his wife Catherine Bégon hanging between the cabinets, ca. 1920-1950. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0012065

[202] Van Campen, "Londense Aankopen van J.C.J. Drucker," 22; F. J. Duparc, *Een eeuw strijd voor Nederlands cultureel erfgoed* (The Hague: Staatsuitgeverij, 1975), 209.

Figure 2.6 (left) A close look at one of the porcelain cabinets in *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall*, ca 1920-1950. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0012069
Figure 2.7 (right) Wall case showing porcelain and silverware in *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall*, ca. 1920-1950. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0012057

The display in *Gallery 364* clearly features what Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett calls *in-situ* installation. In-situ installations refers to such "mimetic re-creations of settings" as period rooms and dioramas.[203] However, as Kirshenblatt-Gimblett reminds us, no matter how innocent these in-situ installations seem to be (as if they do nothing more than faithfully re-locate an entire house interior into a museum gallery), they are not essentially "neutral" but rather intentionally constituted, or "performative."[204] With this in mind, I argue that the in-situ display in *Gallery 364* acts more than just a mimetic evocation of Dutch house interiors in the eighteenth-century. Rather, it serves the interest of Dutch self-fashioning, especially if one considers the portrait-porcelain juxtaposition in this gallery.

The possessor-possession relationship was foregrounded through the display of three portraits in this gallery. The portraits were: *Joseph Bouër* and his wife *Catherine Bégon* (both 1746) (**Figures 2.8-2.9**, see also **Figure 2.5** for their arrangement in *Gallery 364*), and *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family* (1763) (**Figures 2.10-2.11**).[205] The three portraits were set in their original carved frames in a Rococo style that was coordinated with the style of the gallery. It seems to me that these portraits were put on display not just

[203] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1998), 3.
[204] Ibid., 20; see also Adrian Franklin, "Performing Live: An Interview with Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett," *Tourist Studies* 1, no. 3 (2001): 215.
[205] These three portraits are not from the Drucker collection.

to provide an enriching visual experience, but also to visualize a sense of ownership. According to the 1931 Rijksmuseum gallery guide, "De wanden zijn versierd met portretten van menschen, die geleefd zouden kunnen hebben in deze vermenging van Europeesch Rococo en Chineesche gratie. [The walls are decorated with portraits of people who might have lived in this mixture of European Rococo and Chinese grace]."[206] In this context, the portrait-porcelain juxtaposition alluded to the possessor-possession relationship, in which Chinese porcelain was conceived as a status symbol, or the 'extended self', of the upper class represented by the portrayed people. In addition to this group level of identity (upper-class), the Chinese porcelain in this gallery also contributed to Dutch national identity, particularly when associated with the grand painting *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family*.

Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer (1720-1796/7) was born in Batavia, the headquarters of the VOC in Asia, and his father, Cornelis Hasselaer (1676-1737), was the director-general of the VOC in Batavia. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer left Batavia in 1772, a year after he had been appointed as a member of the VOC Ordinary Council of India in Batavia. After returning to the Netherlands, he became the burgomaster of Amsterdam between 1773 and 1794, and was elected as one of the managing directors of the VOC in 1777. His profound association with this multinational company is equally reflected in his first two marriages: his first wife, Clara Wendela Sautijn (1721-1756), was the daughter of the VOC director Willem Sautijn (1678-1731); his second wife, Geertruida Margaretha Mossel (1742-1768), was the daughter of Jacob Mossel (1704-1761), who was the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1750 to 1761.[207] When the painting *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family* was created in Amsterdam in 1763, Hasselaer was actually in Batavia. Thus, this family portrait is an ideal representation in which the father far away in Batavia is reunited with his children in Amsterdam.[208]

Figure 2.8 (left) *Catherine Bégon* by Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1746. Drawing. Size: high 62.8 cm; width 49 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-233
Figure 2.9 (right) *Joseph Bouër* by Jean-Etienne Liotard, 1746. Drawing. Size: high 62.6 cm; width 49 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-232

[206] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen* [*Guide with Illustrations*] (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1931), 115.
[207] For more about the Hasselaer family and the painting *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family* by George van der Mijn, see J. F. L. de Balbian Verster, "Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer (1720-1797), zijn Indische loopbaan (1756-1772) en zijn burgermeesterchap (tot 1795)," *Jaarboek Amstelodadum* 28, (1931): 65-94; and Reinier Baarsen, Robert-Jan te Rijdt, and Frits Scholten, eds., *Nederlandse Kunst in Het Rijksmuseum 1700-1800* (Zwolle: Waanders; Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 2006), 122-123.
[208] De Balbian Verster, "Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer (1720-1797)" 73-76.

Figure 2.10 *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family* by the George van der Mijn, 1763. Oil on canvas. Size: high 249 cm; width 288 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-1360

Figure 2.11 View of *Gallery 364 The Rotterdam Dome Hall* with a porcelain cabinet and the portrait *Mr. Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer and His Family*, ca. 1920-1950. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0012059

The arrangement of Pieter Cornelis Hasselaer's family portrait in *Gallery 364* was suggestive. The portrait is a large oil painting, measuring 314 centimeters high and 332 centimeters wide, including its gilt frame with carved flowers and arabesque. The painting was placed to allow audiences to appreciate the decorative style of the depicted interior and to compare it with the similar interior style of *Gallery 364* (see **Figure 2.11**). Potentially, this arrangement invited audiences to conceive of the picture surface as an imaginary interior space extending from the real gallery space, with the painting's beautiful frame acting as an interface to bridge the two spaces together.[209] Seen in this way, the cabinets of Chinese porcelain and the portrait of the Hasselaers were closely associated with each other, which enabled some interpretations. This collocation designed by Schmidt-Degener thus echoes one of the important characteristics of von Bode's mixed display; that is, it offers audiences "a wide range of possible associations" between the objects displayed in one room.[210] Considering the affiliation of Hasselaer with the VOC and the fact that Chinese porcelain was one of the goods that the VOC frequently shipped to the Netherlands via Batavia between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one possible interpretation that the portrait-porcelain combination in *Gallery 364* could render is to recall the merits and achievements of Dutch overseas expansion. From this perspective, the pieces of Chinese porcelain displayed in *Gallery 364* acted as a multivalent symbol imbued with not only decorative but also symbolic values linked to the nation of the Netherlands.

How Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum of the 1930s contributed to a Dutch self-fashioning shaped by possessiveness is equally seen, and is expressed more profoundly, in another gallery, *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings of the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century*. *Gallery 344* was located just three galleries away from *Gallery 364*. Here, hundreds of pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain (mainly the collection that originated from the Netherlands Museum and was by then managed by the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art) were displayed so as to highlight their decorative effect, and were combined with Dutch portraits, most of them group portraits of Amsterdam regents. This mixed arrangement, like the one seen in *Gallery 364*, was clearly inspired by von Bode's design. And, likewise, perhaps it is inadequate to consider such a portrait-porcelain combination in *Gallery 344* as simply an expression of decorative beauty, instead of a specific scheme to visualize the civic pride of Amsterdam regents and the national glory of the Netherlands.

In the 1920s, *Gallery 344* displayed individual and group portraits, silverware, and Chinese and Japanese porcelain (**Figure 2.12**).[211] Schmidt-Degener revamped this gallery afresh in 1932. This time, silverware was moved out; Dutch portraits of Amsterdam regent groups were paralleled with various pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain presented in line with the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch vogue in furnishing. As I shall contend, this assortment, with connotations of both interior design

[209] For how painting frames act as the frontiers for both regions of the real territory where the viewer stands and the painted territory of the picture, see José Ortega y Gasset, "Meditations on the Frame," *Perspecta* 26, (1990): 188-189. Also, according to the art historian Barbara E. Savedoff, painting frames serve to "encourage the reading of the painting as a receding space by hiding the edges and thereby disguising the objecthood of the painting." Barbara E. Savedoff, "Frames," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 57, no. 3 (1999): 350.
[210] Baker, "Bode and Museum Display," 145.
[211] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen* [*Guide with Illustrations*] (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1928), 92.

and overseas expansion, appropriated Chinese and Japanese porcelain into an 'extended self' of the Dutch subject.

The 1938 Rijksmuseum gallery guide and photos show that the pieces of Chinese and Japanese porcelain in *Gallery 344* were set up to mimic the porcelain displays in opulent Dutch "woningversiering [home decoration]" (**Figures 2.13-2.16**).[212] Here, the pieces of Chinese porcelain in the showcases were first sorted typologically to bring together those with similar decorative styles (e.g. kraak, blue and white, blanc de Chine, famille verte, blue powder, etc.), and then piled symmetrically upon the shelves (**Figures 2.17-2.20**).[213] There were also Chinese porcelain garnitures (sets of Chinese porcelain vases with matching decoration) displayed above wooden stands. The pyramid-shaped arrangement of porcelain in *Gallery 344* is reminiscent of the mantel garniture formulated by Daniël Marot (1661-1752), a French-born Dutch architect and interior designer, who worked for the stadholder of the Dutch Republic, William III of Orange (1650-1702) and his wife, Mary Stuart (1662-1694) (**Figure 2.21**). A corresponding display is also found in a doll house of the Dutch art collector Sara Rothé (1699-1751), now collected in the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem (**Figure 2.22**).[214] Like in *Gallery 364*, the porcelain pieces in *Gallery 344* were not individually labelled. The emphasis lies more on the ensembles composed by these porcelain pieces than on each object *per se*. Bringing together such a large number of porcelain pieces and large-scale group portraits, it is clear that the gallery must have created a splendid visual effect, although the archive photos are black and white.

Figure 2.12 View of *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings* with portraits, large vases of Chinese and Japanese porcelain, and a showcase with silverware, around 1930. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: RMA-SSA-F-00485-1

[212] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen* [Guide with Illustrations] (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1938), 92. According to the archive photos from 1938, the large group portraits shown in *Gallery 344* were as follows: *Portrait of the Inspectors of the Collegium Medicum* (1724) by Cornelis Troost (1696-1750); *The Regents of the Aalmoezeniersweeshuis Orphanage in Amsterdam* (1729) by Cornelis Troost; *The Directors of the Surgeons Guild in Amsterdam* (1732) by Jan Maurits Quinkhard (1688-1772); *The Four Regents, the Secretary and the House Father of the Lepers' House in Amsterdam* (1773) by Jacobus Luberti Augustini (1748-1822); *The Regents of the Oudezijds Huiszittenhuis in Amsterdam* (1806) by Adriaan de Lelie (1755-1820); and *The Regents and Regentesses of the Lepers' House in Amsterdam* (1834-1835) by Jan Adam Krusema (1804-1862). Most of these paintings are from the Rijksmuseum's collection, while some pieces were borrowed from the City of Amsterdam at that time.

[213] Kraak porcelain, a type of Chinese export porcelain mainly decorated in underglaze cobalt blue, was made in large quantities in the late Ming dynasty. Kraak is thought to be named after Portuguese ships known as carracks.

[214] For the display of Chinese and Japanese porcelain in the Dutch interior, see Jan van Campen, "Chinese and Japanese Porcelain in the Interior," in *Chinese and Japanese Porcelain for the Dutch Golden Age*, eds. Jan van Campen and Titus M. Eliëns (Zwolle: Waanders Uitgevers, in collaboration with Rijksmuseum Amsterdam; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Groninger Museum, Keramiekmuseum Princessehof Leeuwarden, 2014), 191-211.

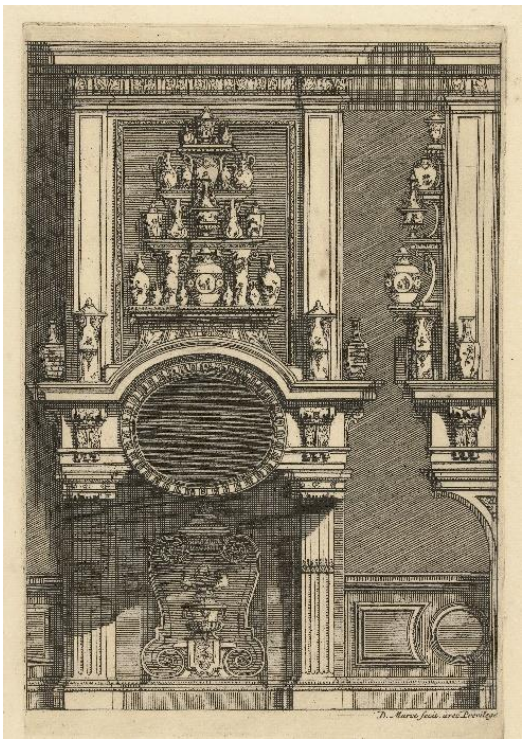
Figure 2.13 View of *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings* with portraits of Amsterdam regent groups and showcases with Chinese porcelain, 1938. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011928

Figure 2.14 View of *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings* with portraits of Amsterdam regent groups and showcases with Chinese porcelain, 1938. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011929

Figure 2.15 View of *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings* with Chinese Porcelain, 1938. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011922

Figure 2.16 View of *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings* with Chinese and Japanese porcelain, 1938. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011920

Figures 2.17-2.20 Different showcases with Chinese porcelain piled upon pyramid-shaped shelves in *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings*, 1938. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011924 (upper left); HA-0011925 (upper right); HA-0011926 (below left); and HA-0011927 (below right)



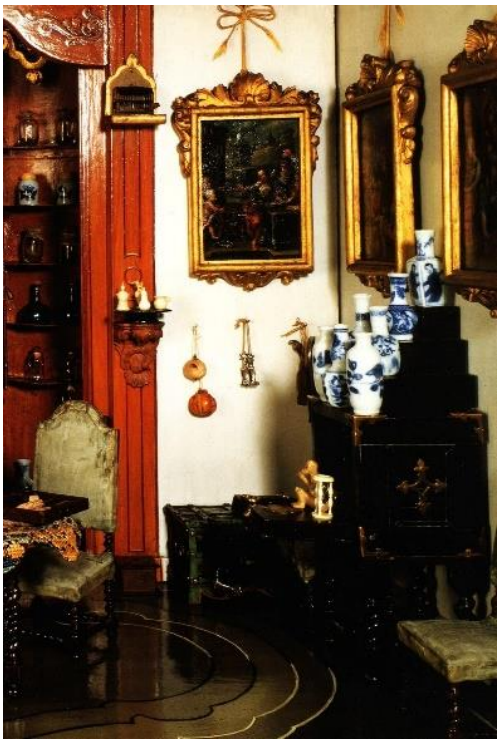


Figure 2.21 (left) Chimneypiece design by Daniël Marot, ca. 1703-1800. Etching on paper. Size: high 24.5 cm; width 16.7 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: RP-P-1964-3214
Figure 2.22 (right) Porcelain cabinet in one of the rooms of Sara Rothé's doll's house (detail), about 18th century. Collected in the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem. Object number: oph II-3566. Ill. from: Epco Runia, *Sara Ploos van Amstel-Rothé Poppenhuis* (Zwolle: Waanders, 1988), 29

The Chinese porcelain in *Gallery 344* played an important role in the composition of a Dutch subject defined by consumption and connoisseurship. The gathering and showing of such a large number of porcelain pieces in one gallery space seems to make this display of china a flaunting of wealth, a spectacular presentation of material excess. The accumulation of porcelain-as-possession in *Gallery 344* embodies what James Clifford calls "the idea that identity is a kind of wealth (of objects, knowledge, memories, experience)."[215] In addition to being an impressive (self-)display of wealth, the excessive display of Chinese porcelain in the gallery also recalls the Dutch upper- and middle classes' collecting taste for Chinese porcelain in the eighteenth century. According to the 1938 Rijksmuseum gallery guide, the pieces of porcelain on display were restricted to those made in the late Ming and early Qing periods, in particular, to the species that were collected by "onze voorouders [our ancestors]" and served as our "kostbare en gezochte woningversiering [precious and sought-after home decoration]."[216] Considering the portrait-porcelain combination in *Gallery 344*, the word voorouders [ancestors] here is readily associated with the Amsterdam regents and regentesses represented at almost life-size in the group

[215] James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1988), 218.
[216] The original Dutch text in the 1938 Rijksmuseum gallery guide: "Het Chinese […] porcelain, in grote verscheidenheid in deze zaal aanwezig, diende in onze 18e eeuw als kostbare en gezochte woningversiering. De collectie is beperkt tot de soorten, die door onze voorouders verzameld warden." [The Chinese […] porcelain, present in great diversity in this room, served in our 18th century as a precious and sought-after home decoration. The collection is limited to the species collected by our ancestors.] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen*, 92.

portraits suspended above the groups of porcelain. The use of the word ancestor in the gallery guide and the flaunt display of china here, I propose, help consolidate the solidarities of Amsterdam's civic pride across generations.

These eighteenth-century regent pieces illustrate the so-called *Pruikentijd* (Wig Period), during which wearing wigs became a way for the privileged classes to externalize power.[217] Formed under the Dutch Republican regime, the regents were a separate social group within the wealthy upper stratum. They held local political power by holding office in city government (e.g. town councils) and were appointed to charitable institutions or guilds by cooption. The regent group was a close-knit oligarchy that had considerable influence and authority in the urban-centered civic society of the time.[218] Often commissioned and paid for regents stepping down, and to be viewed by successive regents in boardrooms or entrance halls of social institutions, the most important functions of regent group portraits was to commemorate. Portraying their subjects in confident poses, looking directly at the viewer, these group portraits let the board of regents honor their own public services and, even more so, perpetuate their reputations.[219]

Removed from their original locations and re-grouped in *Gallery 344*, these immense group portraits created a grand scenario and communicated a sense of collective identity to the Rijksmuseum's audience. The gallery space was, so to speak, a monument of Amsterdam's civic pride, in which the association between portraits and porcelain not only modified the conventional taxonomical categorization in museums, as the museum reform movement sought to achieve. Moreover, the portrait-porcelain collocation helps kindle memories of what pivotal roles these worthy citizens once played, both in the charities in Amsterdam and in the Dutch trade with Asia.[220] Members of the regent class may have been chief VOC investors in cooperation with other non-regent but rich merchant elites. Together, their investment could account for nearly half of the total capital of a regional chamber.[221] Moreover, they may have been appointed as managing directors (*bewindhebbers*) of the VOC chambers, and thereby earned honoraria, patronage powers to appoint favorites at certain warehouses, and the right to customize products to their changing needs and desires.[222] This was especially true of Amsterdam regents; some of them are deemed to have been the most powerful figures in the VOC during the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[223]

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[217] For more about the way wigging represented social status in eighteenth-century Europe, see Lynn M. Festa, "Personal Effects: Wigs and Possessive Individualism in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 29, no. 2 (2005): 47-90.

[218] For the power of the regent group under the Dutch Republic, see Jonathan Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness, and Fall* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

[219] On the function of Amsterdam regent group portraits, see Michiel Jonker, "Public or Private Portraits: Group Portraits of Amsterdam Regents and Regentesses," in *The Public and Private in Dutch Culture of the Golden Age*, eds. Arthur K. Wheelock, Jr. and Adele Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), 206-226.

[220] The newly arranged Boymans Museum in Rotterdam under the directorship of Schmidt-Degener (1908-1921) was also considered "a monument of civic pride." See Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display*, 80.

[221] The organizational structure of the VOC was comprised of six chambers represented by six port cities: Amsterdam, Hoorn, Enkhuizen, Rotterdam, Delft, and Middleburg.

[222] See Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure, and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 452.

[223] For more about the role that Amsterdam regents played in the Dutch VOC, see Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 946-951.

The 1938 Rijksmuseum gallery guide explains that the reason for showing china in *Gallery 344* lies in the fact that it "played such a major role in our civilization history."[224] According to the sociologist Norbert Elias, the word civilization expresses: "the self-consciousness of the West. One could even say: the national consciousness. […] By this term Western society seeks to describe what constitutes its special character and what it is proud of."[225] Indeed, the china display in *Gallery 344* coupled with the group portraits of regents signified the self-consciousness of the Dutch, their pride in the significance of their own nation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: making great advancements in naval technology with the VOC as "the world's first global commercial enterprise;" being a world economic power with Amsterdam as the richest city in the Europe, full of luxury goods from the other side of the world.[226]

Additionally, good taste in interior ornamentation has long been regarded as a measurement of a highly sophisticated civilization from a European perspective.[227] As the literary scholar Eugenia Jenkins notes, "The well-furnished home and the well-furnished mind were mutually sustaining" in eighteenth-century Europe.[228] Especially, furnishing domestic spaces with goods from overseas was a fashionable approach to displaying an ideal self-image for Europeans, as it implied the capability to gather objects from beyond national boundaries.[229] By displaying porcelain in a way that mimics the sumptuous domestic embellishment that only wealthy and powerful Dutch figures could afford, china is here identified as the Dutch 'extended self', serving both the civic pride of Amsterdam and the national prestige of the Netherlands. From this perspective, the porcelain display in *Gallery 344* is not mimetic but rather performative.

The porcelain display in *Gallery 344* indicates that, after having been assigned to the Rijksmuseum's Department of Sculpture and Applied Art in 1927, Chinese porcelain was presented as a Dutch domestic decoration and appropriated to build an ideal Dutch self-image as reflected in the Dutch conspicuous consumption of porcelain. This display scheme was continually seen, at least between the 1970s and the end of the 1980s, in a gallery of the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art: *Gallery 253A Colonial Art*.

Gallery 253A was laid out in a modified period-room arrangement (**Figures 2.23-2.24**). Here, pieces of Chinese armorial porcelain and large vessels with Dutch ordered decorations were combined with Dutch portraits and various other objects, including textiles, silverware, ivory boxes, and furniture.[230] These objects were arranged in a way to evoke a specific style of home furnishings favored by Dutch people in Asia during the seventeenth century. As the 1985 Rijksmuseum gallery guide notes, *Gallery 253A* sought

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[224] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen*, 92

[225] Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1994[1939]), 5.

[226] Anthony Reid, "Economy and Social Change, c. 1400-1800," in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia. Volume II: From c. 1500 to c. 1800*, ed. Nicholas Tarling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 144.

[227] On the relationship between the European idea of civilization and interior decoration, see Sherrill Whiton, *Elements of Interior Decoration: Revised and Enlarged* (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company 1994).

[228] Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, *A Taste for China: English Subjectivity and the Prehistory of Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 11.

[229] Sharon Macdonald, "Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities," *Museum and Society* 1, no. 1 (2003): 3.

[230] Most of the Chinese armorial porcelain collection in the Rijksmuseum comes from J.G.A.N. de Vries (1853-1925), who bequeathed his collection to the museum in 1925. See Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 18.

to present "how the Dutch lived overseas (i.e. in their former colonies)."[231] However, rather than merely mimicking the domestic lifestyle of the Dutch overseas, the porcelain display in *Gallery 253A* acquires specific symbolic meanings, especially if one considers three portraits hanging in the gallery: *VOC Senior Merchant* (1640-1660) by Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1692) (**Figure 2.25**, see also **Figure 2.23** for its arrangement in *Gallery 253A*), and *Elisabeth van Oosten* (1663) and *Johannes van Rees* (1663) (**Figures 2.26-2.27**, see also **Figure 2.24** for their arrangement in *Gallery 253A*).

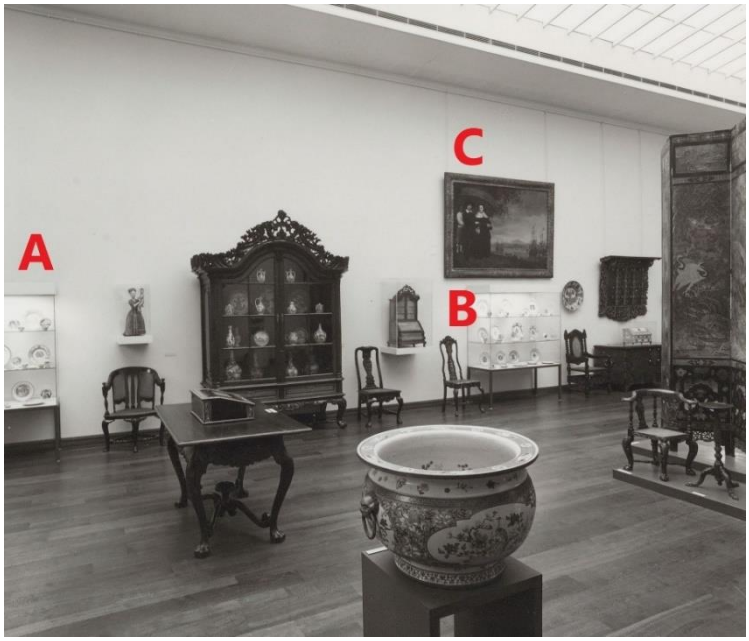

Figure 2.23 View of *Gallery 253A Colonial Art* with Chinese export products (A and B: two showcases with Chinese armorial porcelain; C: *VOC Senior Merchant* by Aelbert Cuyp), 1973. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: HA-0014292

Figure 2.24 View of *Gallery 253A Colonial Art* (A: *Portrait of Elisabeth van Oosten*; B: *Portrait of Johannes van Rees*), 1973. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: HA-0014286

[231] Rijksmuseum, *Guide to the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1985), 17.

Figure 2.25 *VOC Senior Merchant* by Aelbert Cuyp, ca. 1640-1660. Oil on canvas. Size: high 138 cm; width 208 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-2350

Figure 2.26 (left) *Portrait of Elisabeth van Oosten*, attributed to Willem Jansz. Poly, 1663. Oil on canvas. Size: high 118 cm; width 83 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-807
Figure 2.27 (right) *Portrait of Johannes van Rees*, attributed to Willem Jansz. Ploy, 1663. Oil on canvas. Size: 118 cm; width 83 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: SK-A-809

Arguably, these three portraits were carefully chosen to show the VOC's power in Asia. The people portrayed in *VOC Senior Merchant* were probably the VOC merchant Jakob Martensen (birth and death dates unknown) and his wife, with an enslaved person holding a parasol for them. Martensen is pointing to the VOC fleets ready to leave the harbor of Batavia and heading to The Netherlands. This posture sheds light on his status and involvement in the company. The figures depicted in the other two portraits are also related to the VOC; Johannes van Rees (1662-1690/91) was the half-brother of Elisabeth van Oosten

(1660-1714). The latter then became the wife of Abraham van Riebeeck (1653-1713), the Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies from 1709 to 1713. The involvement of these three portraits potentially moves the gallery beyond simply a neutral presentation of Dutch interior design overseas, and into a representation of seventeenth-century Dutch maritime power, power capable of assembling various Asian goods under one Dutch roof.

Thus far, this section has sought to show the ideological textures of the china displays in the twentieth-century Rijksmuseum, arguing that these displays do more than just mimicking Dutch home decoration but rather visualizing how possession of china affords an ideal Dutch self-image. Below, I focus on the display of a specific type of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum: armorial porcelain. Chinese porcelain with Dutch coat of arms is itself a materialization of ownership. The following will show how, in the museum today, Chinese armorial porcelain is presented in a way that accentuates its ownership by specific Dutch individuals, which is different from this porcelain's perspective of display in the museum of the twentieth century.

2-1-2 The Personification of Chinese Armorial Porcelain

After having been separated from the Netherlands Museum by Schmidt-Degener in 1927, the galleries of the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art and Department of National History both were assigned a collection of Chinese armorial porcelain. The Department of National History was then further divided into the Department of Dutch Maritime History, opened in 1931, and the Department of Dutch Territorial History, opened in 1937. A showcase of pieces of Chinese armorial porcelain was displayed in a gallery of the Department of Dutch Maritime History. Meanwhile, another group of Chinese armorial porcelain was displayed in *Gallery 345* (the exact title of the gallery is unknown), which was set up in 1932 adjacent to *Gallery 344 Dutch Paintings*.

The Department of Dutch Maritime History was distributed in a series of ground floor galleries in the museum's east wing. These were sequenced chronologically, from the Dutch War of Independence (or the Eighty Years' War, 1568-1648) to the Belgian Revolution (1830-1831) and the Shimonoseki Campaign (1863-1864). [232] The showcase with pieces of Chinese porcelain featuring Dutch armorial and other customized ornaments was found in one of these galleries (**Figure 2.28**). As the museum's 1938 gallery guide indicates, this gallery also included landscape paintings of Dutch trading posts in Asia, weapons, and portraits of the VOC Governors-General in Asia to indicate important periods in the history of the overseas regions.[233] Here, the pieces of Chinese armorial porcelain served as material proof of the history of Dutch expansion in Asia. As far as I could understand from the Rijksmuseum's archived photos and guides, it was not until this placement that Chinese (armorial) porcelain was considered as an object with historical value (to the Dutch) and incorporated in the narrative structure of Dutch national history. After 1945, the Departments of Dutch Maritime History and Dutch Territorial History merged into the

[232] The Shimonoseki Campaign was a series of battles fought by joint naval forces from Great Britain, the Netherlands, the United States, and France, against the feudal Japanese Choshu Domain to seize control over the Shimonoseki Strait.
[233] Rijksmuseum, *Gids Met Afbeeldingen*, 75.

Department of Dutch History.[234] Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, there seems to be no evidence that Chinese armorial porcelain was displayed in the galleries of the Department of Dutch History. In the late 1970s, however, an important collection of Chinese porcelain from *De Witte Leeuw* was incorporated in the Department of Dutch History, which I will discuss in the next section.

Meanwhile, *Gallery 345* also showcased a group of Chinese armorial porcelain and pieces of Chinese export porcelain painted with Dutch figures (**Figures 2.29-2.30**). The gallery included various Chinese and Japanese export products—ivory stacking boxes, lacquerware, and a carved wooden screen, to name a few. Chinese armorial porcelain was here displayed in groups, as it used to be ordered for dinner service, meant to be collected and used in quantity. Since these pieces of armorial porcelain were not labeled individually, it seems to have been almost impossible for audiences to acquire information regarding the historical Dutch family who had ordered these products. As far back as the 1970s, Chinese armorial porcelain in *Gallery 253A Colonial Art*, as discussed previously, was also displayed in groups (see **Figure 2.23**).

Figure 2.28 View of one of the galleries of the Department of Dutch Maritime History, 1935. A: The showcase with Chinese armorial porcelain. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: RMA-SSA-F-01228-1

[234] Arthur F.E. van Schendel, *Nederlandse geschiedenis in het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam* [Dutch history in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam] (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1971), 60.

Figure 2.29 View of *Gallery 345* with Chinese and Japanese export products, 1939. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011919

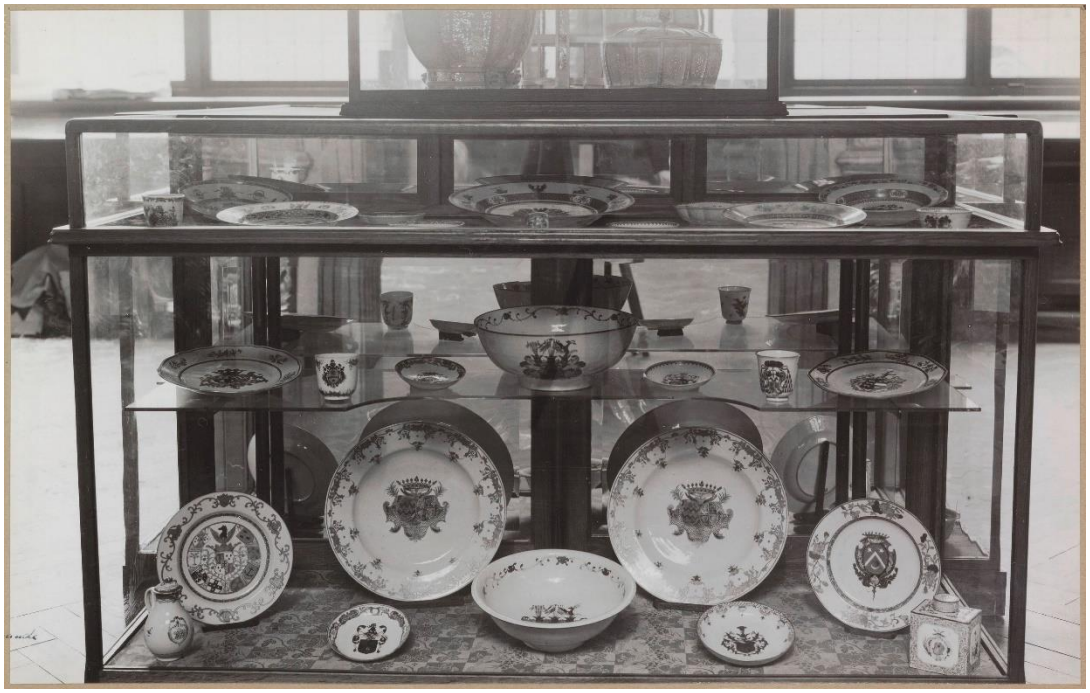

Figure 2.30 Showcase with Chinese armorial porcelain in *Gallery 345*, 1939. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0011918

Today, in the Rijksmuseum, Chinese armorial porcelain is also incorporated in the narrative of Dutch national history related to the VOC's power, but from a different perspective, as seen in *Gallery 1.5 Netherlands Overseas 1700-1800*.[235] Occupying a whole sidewall of *Gallery 1.5*, portraits of the governors-general are arrayed to mimic their initial layout in the assembly hall of the Company's fort in Batavia (**Figure 2.31**). These governors-general are consistently represented in a dignified manner, holding their command batons and positioning themselves majestically to reinforce their authority as the highest office. Most of the portraits shown in this gallery depict their subjects against backgrounds of their family coats of arms. As a confirmation of illustrious ancestry and a sign of elite status, Dutch heraldic emblems are equally visible upon the pieces of Chinese porcelain under the portraits.

From the seventeenth century onwards, each governor commissioned his own portrait and hung it next to the one of his predecessors at the end of his governorship.[236] An early example of such an arrangement is seen in an engraving in *Allerneuester geographisch und topographischer Schauplatz von Africa und Ostindien* (1744) by Johann Wolfgang Heydt, who was appointed as an architect for the Company in Batavia around 1737 (**Figure 2.32**). It seems that this display scheme symbolizing the inheritance of Dutch power in Asia, is now resurgent in the Rijksmuseum's *Gallery 1.5*. In a similar fashion, the governors-general's portraits in the gallery are sequenced chronologically and suspended in high positions, inviting audiences to look up, as if to pay tribute to these powerful figures. Seen from this vantage point, this wall of fame harkens back to the heyday of the Company and honors the leading nobility of that time—even though in recent times nearly half of them have come to be remembered in history for their involvement in corruption, nepotism, mishandling, and even massacres.[237]

Like the 1930s arrangements in *Gallery 364* and *Gallery 344* designed by Schmidt-Degener, the portrait-porcelain juxtaposition in today's *Gallery 1.5* also helps anchor a possessor-possession relationship. Compared to the displays of Chinese armorial porcelain in groups in the aforementioned galleries in the twentieth-century Rijksmuseum, the pieces of armorial porcelain in *Gallery 1.5* are personalized by emphasizing their ownership by specific, worthy Dutch individuals. For example, there is a porcelain dish with the Valckenier arms commissioned by the governor Adriaan Valckenier, whose portrait with identical coat of arms is hung nearby (**Figures 2.33-2.35**). Such parallelism highlights how the armorial ornamentation acts as a possessive branding, whereby the porcelain plate is closely associated with the powerful image of its owner. Customizing foreign goods with personalized,

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[235] Some pieces of Chinese armorial porcelain are showcased in an area called *Special Collections* on the eastern ground floor of the Rijksmuseum. The objects here are laid out according to their materials and certain categories, such as musical instruments, Delftware, Chinese porcelain, jewelry, costumes, and so on. The *Special Collections* area is independent from the grand narrative of Dutch national history presented in the Rijksmuseum today.

[236] See Michael North, "Production and Reception of Art through European Company Channels in Asia," in *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia, 1400-1900: Rethinking Markets, Workshops and Collections*, ed. Michael North (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 99.

[237] This somewhat ironic contradiction is also seen in the gallery's display. According to the wall caption in *Gallery 1.5*, the privileged position of the Dutch overseas trade during the eighteenth century "could only be maintained with increasing violence." However, not only does the caption lack any more explicit self-critical reflection, visual and material reference to demonstrate such violence is also missing from this gallery. On the contrary, the interpretation and presentation of the objects on view in this gallery tend to highlight the pride, rather than the prize, of the Dutch overseas trade.

possessive emblems is surely a way to make an object part of the Self.[238] Through associating the portrait of the possessor with the porcelain he possesses, a person-object bonding—that is, the making of something one's own—is made explicit.

Figure 2.31 View of *Gallery 1.5 Netherlands Overseas 1700-1800*, 2013. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0028588

Figure 2.32 The assembly hall of the Company's fort in Batavia, with the portraits of the governors-general hung on the left wall. Ill. from: Johann Wolfgang Heydt, *Allerneuester geographisch und topographischer Schauplatz von Africa und Ostindien* (Willhermsdorff: Johann Carl Tetschner, 1744), 37

[238] Belk, "Possessions and the Extended Self," 141.

Figure 2.33 (left) Chinese dish with the Valckenier arms. Porcelain, ca. 1735-1740. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: AK-RBK-1969-152
Figure 2.34 (middle) *Portrait of the governor Adriaan Valckenier* by Theodorus Justinus Rheen, 1737. Oil on canvas. Size: high 102.5 cm; width 85.5 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: SK-A-3778
Figure 2.35 (right) Detail of Figure 2.34

The idea of 'selves as owners' is equally informed by the object labels, for they provide audiences nothing from a production perspective, and only biographical information about the Dutch owners. To take but one example, the label of an armorial plate with a squirrel holding a leaf (object number: AK-NM-13380) reads:

> The arms are those of the Sichterman family. This plate belongs to one of many services ordered by Jan Albert Sichterman of Groningen. He worked for the Dutch East India Company from 1716 to 1744 and was very influential in the silk and cloth trade in Bengal. He eventually returned to the Netherlands, where he lived in a splendid house on the Ossenmarkt in Groningen.

With its label written like a brief biography recounting the accomplishments of Sichterman, the porcelain plate bearing his personalized coat of arms acts as a confirmation and reminder of the elite identity of its Dutch owner.

In this section, I have discussed how the juxtaposition of portraits and porcelain in certain galleries of the Rijksmuseum from the 1930s to today constitutes a specific possessor-possession relationship. Below I shift the focus to another type of grouping: Dutch landscape paintings and Chinese porcelain, especially the shipwreck porcelain excavated from the VOC's *De Witte Leeuw*, in the galleries of the Dutch History Department from the late 1970s to date. In this grouping, Chinese porcelain seems to be ascribed not just historical but also symbolic values, providing a material signifier of Dutch national power in the global arena.

2-2 Landscape and Porcelain: Mapping the National Power Beyond the National Boundaries

The porcelain cargo from *De Witte Leeuw* shipwreck signifies the Dutch ability to assemble and dominate beyond national boundaries. Built by the Amsterdam chamber of the VOC, the trading ship *Witte Leeuw* exploded and sunk off the coast of the island of Saint Helena in 1613, during its homeward voyage, a price paid for its battle with two well-armed Portuguese ships. The goods from the wreck *De Witte Leeuw*, therefore, are a historical document of power struggles between leading maritime nations (Portugal and the Netherlands) in the seventeenth century. Excavated by the underwater archeologist Robert Sténuit in 1976, the intact pieces and shards of porcelain were acquired by the Department of Dutch History in the Rijksmuseum in 1977, and were later put on display in the Department's *Gallery 102 The Seventeenth-Century Square* (**Figure 2.36**).[239]

Figure 2.36 View of *Gallery 102 The Seventeenth-Century Square*. A: The display of the shipwrecked goods from *De Witte Leeuw*, 2000. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0014497

The Dutch History Department opened a series of new galleries in the museum's east wing in 1971, including *Gallery 102*, which was a large, two-layered gallery in the east inner courtyard. These galleries were maintained up until the grand renovation of the Rijksmuseum that started in 2003. From 1971 to 2003, they offered a schematic presentation of Dutch historical highlights from a Dutch-centric point of view. As the then Director-General of the Rijksmuseum, Arthur F.E. van Schendel (in office 1959-1975), has noted:

> While planning the aims and the kinds of display to be used in the historical department it was of the greatest importance to bear constantly in mind that to a considerable extent, this department shows our history as it was seen by our ancestors. They selected certain objects to be kept, they indicated what should be emphasized. […] [I]t should be also pointed out that […] in the Netherlands as in any other country, the official conception of historical events has always been characterized by a patriotic bias.[240]

[239] Christine L. van der Pijl-Ketel, ed., *The Ceramic Load of the 'Witte Leeuw' (1613)* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1982).
[240] Van Schendel, *Nederlandse geschiedenis in het Rijksmuseum te Amsterdam*, 61.

This statement informs us that the selected objects presented in the Department's galleries were those that contributed to a patriotic narrative about the history of the Netherlands. In this sense, it is not hard to understand why the Department devoted its most spacious gallery (i.e. *Gallery 102*) to the most heroic page of Dutch history, the seventeenth century.

Many objects that were shown in *Gallery 102* are again brought together in today's *Gallery 2.9 Netherlands Overseas 1600-1650*. These objects include, to name just a few: paintings of Dutch trading posts in Asia, a VOC's ship model, objects excavated from the island of Nova Zembla, and the shipwreck porcelains from *De Witte Leeuw*. *Gallery 2.9* has two parts, devoted to the VOC trade with Asia and the WIC trade with Africa, respectively. In the part dedicated to the VOC, there is a showcase containing a group of Chinese blue and white porcelain, including pieces from *De Witte Leeuw* and pieces of Chinese export porcelain made for the Dutch market (**Figures 2.37-2.38**). Here, I would like to draw attention to the combination of Chinese porcelain and Dutch landscape paintings of colonies and harbors in Asia, to show how this combination acts as a metaphorical mapping, suggesting a far-reaching national dominion.


Figure 2.37 (left) Showcase with the pieces of Chinese porcelain from *De Witte Leeuw* shipwreck and other commissioned products in *Gallery 2.9 Netherlands Overseas 1600-1650*. Photographed by the author in 2017
Figure 2.38 (right) Shipwreck porcelains from *De Witte Leeuw* displayed in *Gallery 2.9 Netherlands Overseas 1600-1650*. Photographed by the author in 2017

The landscape paintings shown in *Gallery 2.9* stage a panoramic view of Dutch forces' configuration beyond national boundaries: namely, of the seventeenth-century Intra-Asian trading network. These paintings include: six seventeenth-century topographic views of the cities of Neyra (Indonesia), Lawec (Cambodia), Judea (Thailand), Canton (China) (**Figure 2.39**), Cochin (India), and Cananor (India); *The Castle of Batavia* (1661), portraying the heart of the Dutch trade network in Asia (**Figure 2.40**); and *The Trading Post of the Dutch East India Company in Bengal* (1665), in which a settlement, river, Indian tents, and graveyard appear as landmarks along a web of footpaths crisscrossing the land, making the painting map-like (**Figure 2.41**).[241] These pictures feature what the art historian Svetlana Alpers calls

[241] Here, I do not mean that the scenes in *The Trading Post of the Dutch East India Company in Bengal* are all realistic or without any artificial arrangement. This is especially so, if one considers the fact that the painting was commissioned by the VOC as a display of power. For a detailed discussion of the painting's sources, see Byapti Sur, "The Dutch East India Company through the Local Lens: Exploring the Dynamics of Indo-Dutch Relations in Seventeenth Century Bengal," *Indian Historical Review* 44, no. 1 (2017): 62-91.

"mapped landscapes," offering a privileged view of the otherwise invisible, distant world, transforming the that world into a flat surface and bringing it before the viewer's eyes.[242]

Figure 2.39 *View of Canton in China*, attributed to Johannes Vinckboons, 1662-1663. Oil on canvas. Size: 97 cm; width 140 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: SK-A-4474

Figure 2.40 (left) *The Castle of Batavia* by Andries Beeckman, 1661. Oil on canvas. Size: high 108 cm; width 151.5 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: SK-A-19
Figure 2.41 (right) *The trading lodge of the VOC in Hougly, Bengal*, by Hendrik van Schuylenburgh, 1665. Oil on canvas. Size: high 203 cm; width 316 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: SK-A-4282

The arrangement of these mapped landscapes articulates a metaphoric spatial collapse in *Gallery 2.9*. These mapped landscapes were formerly placed in the Amsterdam Oost-Indisch Huis (East Indies House).[243] The Oost-Indisch Huis was the headquarter of the VOC in its home city. Here, several paintings, including *The Castle of Batavia* and Vinckboons' panoramas, once hung in the Great Hall, where the Heren XVII held their meetings (**Figure 2.42**). Conceivably, there was a connection between showing these

[242] Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 119-168.
[243] Today, the Oost-Indisch Huis in the center of Amsterdam is a listed Dutch national heritage site. Inside, the meeting room of the Heren XVII is restored and features replicas of *The Castle of Batavia* (1661) by Andries Beeckman and a series of landscape paintings by Johannes Vinckboons, the originals of which are seen in today's *Gallery 2.9 Netherlands Overseas 1600-1650* in the Rijksmuseum. See Kees Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money: Maps, Plans, and Topographic Paintings and Their Role in Dutch Overseas Expansion during the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Batavia Lion International, 1998).

mapped landscapes in the East Indies House and showing off the ability of the Dutch: that is, their unsurpassed power to dominate what lies beyond their national borders, to assert ownership over foreign lands, and to gather goods from distant areas into one place. The symbolic implications of cartography are "proprietorship and authority," as Geoff King, the scholar of cultural studies, puts it: "To map a territory is to stake various kinds of claim to it, to make assertions of ownership, sovereignty, and legitimacy of rule."[244]

Figure 2.42 *Willem V takes a seat as director with the VOC* by Simon Fokke, 1768. Etching and engraving. Size: high 29.5 cm; width 40.5 cm. Collected in the Rijksmuseum. Object number: RP-P-1944-2072

Whether inhabiting the walls of the East Indies House in the past, or of *Gallery 2.9* in the Rijksmuseum today, these mapped landscapes act as windows opening onto the world, inviting viewers to travel it virtually; put another way, the assemble of these mapped landscapes works to encompass the world in one Dutch room. As the seventeenth-century Dutch cartographer Joan Blaeu wrote, "maps enable us to contemplate at home and right before our eyes things that are farthest away."[245] Such a viewing experience, evoking a metaphorical mapping of Dutch maritime power, has now recurred in *Gallery 2.9*, in which china acts as an "artefactual cartographer" metonymically referring to the VOC's Asian trading networks.[246]

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[244] Geoff King, *Mapping Reality: An Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 23, 27.

[245] Cited in Alpers, *The Art of Describing*, 159, from Joan Blaeu, *Le Grand Atlas* (Amsterdam, 1663), 3.

[246] According to the art historian Rebecca Duclos, the map and the collection-as-map are both "message-bearing entities that operate metonymically (having a direct relationship to a specific body of material or a landscape)." See Rebecca Duclos, "The Cartographies of Collecting," in *Museums and the Future of Collecting*, ed. Simon J. Knell (London and New York: Routledge, 2004[1999]), 85, 89.

One can describe what I have discussed thus far in terms of the portrait-porcelain and the landscape-porcelain exhibition schemes; it seems that they both show how china contributes to Dutch self-fashioning. I will now move on to examine the aesthetic and art-historical values that have been attached to Chinese porcelain since the integration and presentation of the KVVAK's collection in the Rijksmuseum in 1952. The incorporation of the KVVAK's collection contributed to the development of the category of Asian art in the Rijksmuseum.

2-3 De-mystification and Cultural Difference

The founding of the KVVAK in 1918 was rooted in a broader context: twentieth-century European taste when it came to collecting Asian objects had shifted from curiosity to aesthetic and art-historical concern.[247] Based on the Society's collection, the Museum for Asian Art was opened within the Garden Hall of Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum in 1932.[248] The Garden Hall had three galleries. The central gallery was reserved mainly for Indian and Indonesia statuary. The side galleries showed various Chinese and Japanese objects, including porcelain, ceramics, lacquerware, sculptures, bronze, wooden crafts, and paintings (**Figure 2.43**).[249]

Figure 2.43 View of the left-side gallery in the Museum for Asian Art in the Garden Hall of the Stedelijk Museum, 1932. Ill. from: Herman F. E. Visser, "Het Museum van Aziatische Kunst in het Stedelijk Museum te Amsterdam," *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten*, no. 5 (1932): 138

[247] Regarding this change in the taste of collectors, see Basil Gray, "The Development of Taste in Chinese Art in the West 1872 to 1972," *Transactions of the Oriental Ceramic Society* 39, (1971-1973): 19-42. See also Yasunaga, "How to exhibit the un-exhibitable," 325-326.

[248] For more about the KVVAK's history before the opening of its Museum for Asian Art in the Stedelijk Museum, see Maartje Draak, "Chronicle of the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst," in *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam*, ed. Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff/Landshoff, 1985), 9-13; and Jan van Campen, Wang Ching-Ling, and Rosalien van der Poel, "The Asian Art Society in the Netherlands: A Centennial Celebration," *Arts of Asia* 48, no. 4 (2018): 110-117.

[249] Herman F. E. Visser, "Het Museum van Aziatische Kunst in het Stedelijk Museum te Amsterdam," *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten*, no. 5 (1932): 131-139.

Arranging objects in ways that could highlight their visual characteristics and catalyze aesthetic experiences was a crucial concern for the Society's founder, Herman Visser. In the 1932 *Bulletin*, Visser notes that, wherever possible, sculptures in the museum were placed at angles that enabled sidelights to illuminate their visual qualities.[250] In addition to the relationship between lighting and visual perception, the interplay between the styles of the exhibited objects and the ambience of the exhibition space was foregrounded in the Museum for Asian Art. For example, according to the KVVAK's first chairman, Herman Westendorp, the Society preferred showing ceramics and porcelain from the pre-Ming period over richly decorated Ming-Qing porcelain (though Ming-Qing ceramics in plain styles were also on display).[251] This was in part because the study and collection of pre-Ming wares, in particular those of the Song period (906-1279), were blossoming in early twentieth-century Europe.[252] And it was in part because, for the Society's members, compared to porcelains with lively ornamentation, the plain style of pre-Ming wares was more compatible with the "stille sfeer [quiet atmosphere]" of the Museum for Asian Art.[253]

After five years of negotiations, the Society's collection was transferred to the Rijksmuseum in 1952, and was presented on the ground floor of the Drucker Wing (**Figure 2.44**).[254] This transfer plan was supported by the Rijksmuseum's director David Röell (in office 1945-1959), partly because the integration of the Society's collection fit Röell's goal of giving the Rijksmuseum a more international flavor.[255] The Museum for Asian Art in the Drucker Wing originally had eight galleries organized based on object origins and types (**Figure 2.45**). These eight galleries were followed by another two galleries to show later Chinese ceramics and porcelain from between fourteenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly from the Rijksmuseum's prior collection (**Figure 2.46**).[256] Although displays in these galleries were changed from time to time in the following years, the overall regional and typological framework remained until the Drucker Wing was closed for renovation in 1993.[257]

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[250] Ibid., 136-137.

[251] Herman Karel Westendorp, "De Ceramiek op de Tentoonstelling van Aziatische Kunst," *Maandblad voor Beeldende Kunsten*, no. 7 (1936): 254-255.

[252] Gray, "The Development of Taste in Chinese Art in the West 1872 to 1972," 26, 29; see also Van Campen, "History of the Collection," 20.

[253] Westendorp, "De Ceramiek op de Tentoonstelling van Aziatische Kunst," 255. For more about the KVVAK's emphasis on Chinese art before the Ming dynasty, see Herman F. E. Visser, "The Exhibition of Far Eastern Art at Amsterdam," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 35, no. 199 (1919): 144.

[254] See Draak, "Chronicle of the Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst," 22; and Wang Ching-Ling 王靜靈, "Helanren de yazhou tansuo" 荷蘭人的亞洲探索 [The Dutch Exploration of Asia], *Diancang dutianxia gumeishu* 典藏讀天下古美術, no. 5 (2014): 72-73. There were many reasons why the Museum for Asian Art was moved to the Rijksmuseum. One was that, the Stedelijk Museum changed its focus to become a museum of modern art after the Second World War. See Jan Fontein, "De Vroege Jaren van de Vereniging," *Aziatische Kunst* 35, no. 2 (2005): 11. For more about the KVVAK's developments after the Second World War, see Herman Visser, *Asiatic art in private collections of Holland and Belgium* (Amsterdam: De Spieghel, 1947).

[255] Fontein, "De Vroege Jaren van de Vereniging," 11-12. Röell's attempt to build a less nationalist narrative in the Rijksmuseum is also reflected in that he moves Dutch paintings out of the museum's Gallery of Honor, and presents here paintings from France, Italy, and Spain. See Jouke van der Werf, "Vormgeven in dienst van de beschouwing – de herinrichting van het Rijksmuseum 1945-1959," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 51, no. 3 (2003): 198-199, 222.

[256] Herman F. E. Visser, "New Presentation of the Museum of Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," *Museum International* 6, no. 2 (1953): 118-119.

[257] The Drucker Wing was closed for renovation in 1993. This renovation was completed in 1996 and the Drucker Wing was reopened as the South Wing. The Rijksmuseum's Department of Asian Art had three galleries in the South Wing classified by object types: sculptures, paintings, and crafts. The Department's galleries were

Figure 2.44 View of one of the Chinese galleries in the Museum for Asian Art in the Drucker Wing of the Rijksmuseum, 1952. Placed at the end of the passage is the bronze statue of *Shiva Nataraja*. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0013753

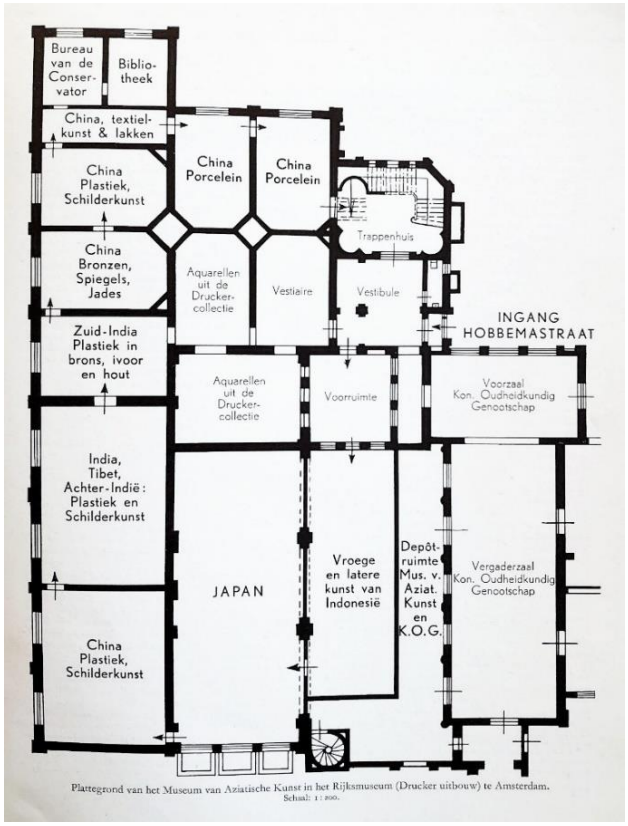

Figure 2.45 Floor map of the Museum for Asian Art in the Drucker Wing of the Rijksmuseum, with arrows indicating a specific viewing order, 1952. Ill. from: *Bulletin van de Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst*, no. 36 (1952): 133

dismantled in 2003 and the South Wing was reserved for seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, as the Rijksmuseum's main building was closed for a drastic renovation. See Pauline Lunsingh Scheurleer, "De Nieuwe Indeling van de Kunstvoorwerpen van de Afdeling Aziatische Kunst," *Aziatische Kunst* 26, no. 1 (1996): 10-12; and Renée Steenbergen, "Chronology of the Society of Friends of Asian Art from 1985-2010," *Aziatische Kunst* 40, no.2 (2010): 29.

Figure 2.46 Showcase with Rijksmuseum's collection of Chinese powder-blue porcelain in one of the Asian art galleries in the Drucker Wing, 1957. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0013796

The space allotted to the Museum for Asian Art in the Drucker Wing was twice as large as at the Stedelijk Museum's Garden Hall, which allowed for greater freedom in spatial configuration and object arrangement. To whet the audience's interest, Visser put the Society's most famous pieces (e.g. the Dancing Shiva) in the axis of the entrances to the galleries where they were displayed (see **Figure 2.44**). Such a careful layout was underlined by a specific viewing direction. As Visser notes:

> Zij dient in de hier aangegeven volgorde te worden ondernomen, want men mist anders de "doorkijk effecten" van Dansende Çiva en grote Chinese houten figuur. Chronologisch zou het ook fout zijn met het recentste (het latere Chinese porcelein) te beginnen. [It should be taken in the order given here, otherwise you will miss the "see-through effects" of Dancing Çiva and large Chinese wooden figure [the *Guanyin* statue]. Chronologically it would also be wrong to start with the most recent (the later Chinese porcelain).][258]

Visser was also pleased with the spacious layout in the Drucker Wing. For him, leaving ample space between showpieces not only enabled a pleasant viewing experience without objects becoming each other's disturbing background, but also echoed the features of the displayed Asian art. "Empty space play an extremely important role in Chinese and Japanese art," says Visser: "nothing could be more disastrous than to fill every available square inch in rooms where [they are] exhibited."[259] This elegantly spacious arrangement of Asian art continued in the Drucker Wing throughout the twentieth century and in the Society's current home in the Asian Pavilion, an annex of the Rijksmuseum which was opened in 2013, as I will show later.

On top of a spacious arrangement, light-colored interiors were key in producing a viewing atmosphere of harmony and simplicity. When the Museum for Asian Art was opened in the Drucker Wing,

[258] Herman F. E. Visser, "Een en Ander over de Inrichting en Opstelling van ons in het Rijksmuseum Heropende Museum," *Bulletin van de Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst*, no. 38 (1952): 150.
[259] Visser, "New Presentation of the Museum of Asiatic Art in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," 119.

all its galleries were painted to create a bright and soft atmosphere. Some galleries were specifically painted in hues that matched the colors of the objects on display. For example, the walls of the gallery with Chinese bronzes were painted in a "light greyish green," which "match[es] well the patina of the bronzes," and the walls of the Hindu-Javanese gallery were covered with a "light grey fabric" to set off "the dark grey colour of the stone sculptures."[260] Notably, the light-colored Asian art galleries were consistent with those in the Rijksmuseum's main building, which was related to the taste of the Rijksmuseum's director at the time, David Röell.

Before serving the Rijksmuseum, Röell was the director of the Stedelijk Museum between 1936 and 1945. Supported by the Stedelijk Museum's curator, Willem Sandberg, Röell had the interior walls of the Stedelijk Museum painted white to create a simplified gallery style. For Sandberg and Röell, the white walls were not only adaptable for often-changing exhibitions, but also gave the Stedelijk Museum a modern look, which helped fulfill the museum's commitment to collect and display modern art.[261] After his time as the Rijksmuseum's director, Röell worked with the Dutch architect Frits Eschauzier to carry out a large-scale modernization plan for the museum in the late 1940s and the 1950s. This plan included revamping the interior of the Rijksmuseum's main building by reducing showpieces to make a more spacious setting and whitewashing the gallery walls (**Figure 2.47**).[262] Röell and Eschauzier also worked with Visser to design the interior of the Museum for Asian Art in the Drucker Wing.

Figure 2.47 One of the whitewashed galleries of the Department of Sculpture and Applied Arts in the Rijksmuseum, 1952. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0015974

[260] Ibid., 120.
[261] Willem Sandberg, "An Old Museum Adapted for Modern Art Exhibitions," *Museum International* 4, no. 3 (1951): 155, 158. See also Rudi Fuchs, "The Museum from Inside," in *L'Exposition Imaginaire: The Art of Exhibiting in the Eighties*, eds. Evelyn Beer and Geoffrey Bennington (Den Haag: Rijksdienst Beeldende Kunst/SDU, 1989), 308, 310.
[262] David Cornelis Röell, "New Arrangements at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," *Museum International* 8, no. 1 (1956): 24-28; and Ivan Nevzgodin, "Transformations of the Rijksmuseum: Between Cuypers and Cruz y Ortiz," in *Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: Restoration and Transformation of a National Monument*, ed. Paul Meurs and Marie-Thérèse van Thoor (Rotterdam: NAi010 Publishers; Delft: The Delft University of Technology, 2013), 82.

For Röell and Eschauzier, the white of the Rijksmuseum's walls provided a neutral background that helped focus attention on the objects on display, not an enclosed and sanctified "white cube" space as O'Doherty describes.[263] For Visser, the light-colored background brought the gallery space into visual harmony with the displayed objects.[264] The light atmosphere of the Society's Museum for Asian Art also clearly distinguished it from the often dimly-lit ethnographic galleries in Europe, and this distinction aligns with the goal of the Society; that is, to "get Oriental art away from on the one hand the minor, decorative sphere and on the other the domain of ethnography."[265] The varied interpretations imposed upon the function of the plain-colored walls by Sandberg, Röell, Eschauzier, and Visser confirm what the art historian Charlotte Klonk has argued: "a uniformly hermetic room with four white walls and a stable function and meaning [has] never existed."[266]

The KVVAK's development of an art-historical understanding of its Asian collections is reflected in the Society's planning of special exhibitions. In 1954, Röell and Visser together organized a special exhibition of Asian art with a published catalogue: *Oosterse Schatten: 4000 jaar Aziatische Kunst* [*Oriental Treasures: 4000 Years of Asian Art*].[267] This was a large-scale exhibition with nearly a thousand objects on display, including pieces from the KVVAK and those borrowed from other institutions and private collectors. About half the showpieces are from China, and the other half are mostly from Japan, Korea, India, and Indonesia. According to the catalogue, the exhibition included not only Chinese export porcelain but also pieces that were made for local and Asian markets and some pieces for Chinese emperors.[268] Compared to the Society's 1925 exhibition *Tentoonstelling van Chineesche Kunst* [Exhibition of Chinese Art], which focused on Han-Tang ceramics and Song porcelain, and its 1936 exhibition *Tentoonstelling Aziatische Kunst* [Exhibition of Asian Art], which presented only Ming-Qing products under the category of "Chinese ceramics," *Oosterse Schatten* included more types of Chinese porcelain and ceramics from the Neolithic Period to the Qing dynasty.[269] Also, compared to the catalogues of the previous exhibitions in 1925 and 1936, the catalogue of *Oosterse Schatten* is more informative: it not only lists each showpiece with notes on its period of production, shape, size, color, and decoration, but also offers an overview of the development of Chinese porcelain manufacturing techniques in different kilns

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[263] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (Santa Monica and San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1999); Van der Werf, "Vormgeven in dienst van de beschouwing," 196, 213.
[264] Visser, "Een en Ander over de Inrichting en Opstelling van ons in het Rijksmuseum Heropende Museum," 146-150.
[265] Scheurleer, *Asian Art in the Rijksmuseum*, 7. See also Pieter Ariëns Kappers, "Een Bijzonder Eeuwfeest" [A Special Centenary], *Aziatische Kunst* 48, no. 2 (2018): 7.
[266] Charlotte Klonk, "Myth and Reality of the White Cube," in *From Museum Critique to the Critical Museum*, ed. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius and Piotr Piotrowski (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 67.
[267] The exhibition's catalogue: Jan Fontein, *Oosterse Schatten: 4000 jaar Aziatische Kunst* [Oriental Treasures: 4000 Years of Asian Art] (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum, 1954).
[268] Ibid., 41.
[269] The KVVAK's 1925 exhibition *Tentoonstelling van Chineesche Kunst* was organized by Herman Visser and Herman Westendorp. It was pioneering in Europe, earlier than the famous 1929 exhibition of Chinese art in Berlin and the 1935 *International Exhibition of Chinese Art* in London. The exhibition's catalogue contains statements about the form, style, and manufacturing techniques of Song porcelain. See Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst, *Tentoonstelling van Chineesche Kunst* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1925). The pieces of Chinese porcelain in the KVVAK's 1936 exhibition *Tentoonstelling Aziatische Kunst* were sorted based on periods and decorative styles (e.g. powder blue, blue and white, polychrome, etc.). See Vereniging van Vrienden der Aziatische Kunst, *Tentoonstelling Aziatische Kunst* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1936).

and period-styles in different dynasties. The catalogue of *Oosterse Schatten* also briefly introduces the reception of Chinese porcelain in overseas markets in Japan, West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe.[270] The narrative that captures developmental patterns across time imparts art-historical value to porcelain.

This art-historical value is also expressed by the way porcelain was displayed in the exhibition's galleries: pieces of ceramics and porcelain were sequenced chronologically and grouped based on similar period-styles to show the stylistic development (**Figures 2.48-2.50**). Compared to the porcelain display in a decorative manner (as we have seen in *Gallery 364* and *Gallery 344* of the 1930s Rijksmuseum), the porcelain pieces in this exhibition were arranged horizontally in showcases, with ample space between them. This layout invites a closer look at the visual characteristics of individual pieces.

The Asian Art Department was established in the Rijksmuseum in 1965 in association with the KVVAK, and the KVVAK's collection was then formally decided to be put on long-term loan to the Rijksmuseum in 1972. The display scheme of grouping Chinese porcelain based on period-style and neatly arranging it within a spacious gallery was seen in the galleries of the Asian Art Department in the Rijksmuseum throughout the second half of the twentieth century (**Figures 2.51-5.52**). Also evident here was a continued preference for showing the Asian collection in a viewing environment of simplicity. Such a viewing environment is equally favored in the Asian Pavilion today.

Figure 2.48 View of *Gallery 8* in the exhibition *Oosterse Schatten* with Chinese porcelain, 1954. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0009478

[270] Fontein, *Oosterse Schatten: 4000 jaar Aziatische Kunst*, 39-42.

Figure 2.49 (left) Showcase with Chinese monochromatic porcelain in *Gallery 7* in the exhibition *Oosterse Schatten*, 1954. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0009469
Figure 2.50 (right) Showcase with Chinese porcelain of blue and white and powder blue in *Gallery 8* in the exhibition *Oosterse Schatten*, 1954. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0009476

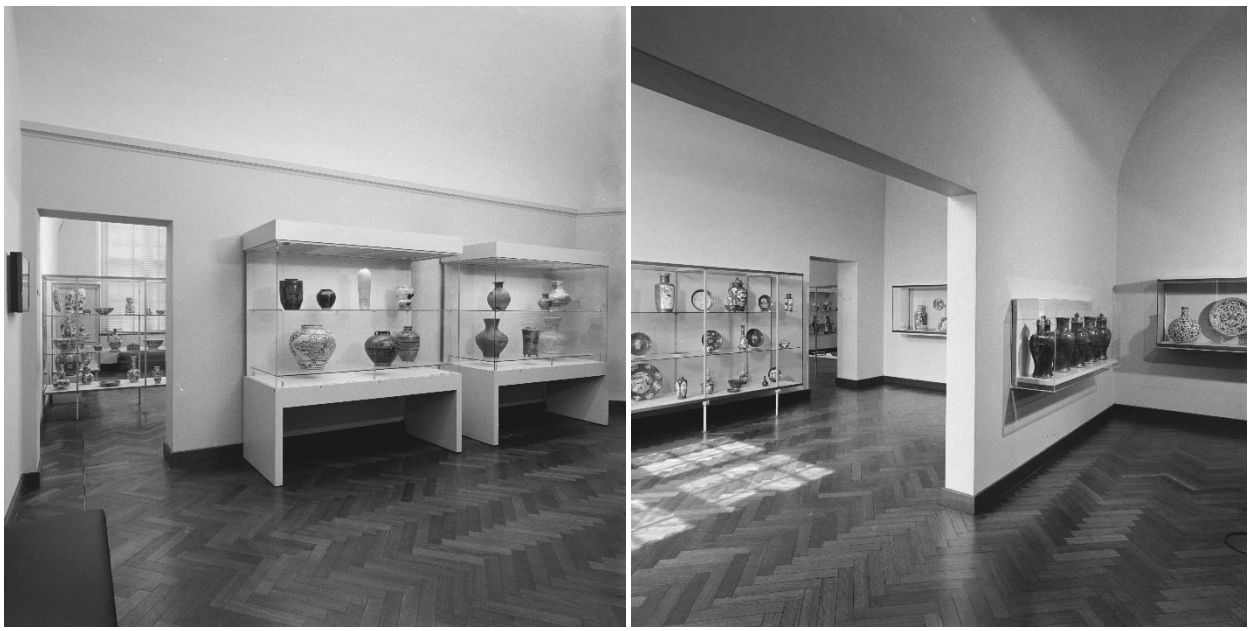

Figure 2.51 (left) View of the galleries of the Asian Art Department, with Chinese ceramics and porcelain, 1983. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0019922
Figure 2.52 (right) View of the galleries of the Asian Art Department, with Chinese porcelain, 1983. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0019925

After ten years of closure, the Rijksmuseum underwent a large-scale refurbishment and was finally reopened in 2013 (**Figure 2.53**).[271] This renovation was directed by the Spanish architects Pedro Cruz Villalón and Antonio Ortiz García. They also designed a free-standing, irregularly shaped, two-tiered structure (and its interior elements) called the Asian Pavilion, which is dedicated to the display of the Asian Art Department's collection (**Figure 2.54**). Its upper floor displays Hindu-Buddhist statues from India and Indonesia (**Figure 2.55**). For the curatorial team, daylight from a series of windows on this floor helps not only to enhance the viewing experience of these sculptures by highlighting their three-dimensional qualities, but also to underscore that many of the sculptures displayed here were originally shown in outdoor, open-air spaces.[272] Additionally, by bringing these religious sculptures together, the curators manage to encourage an artistic comparison of the similarities and differences between those made in India and in Indonesia.[273] The lower gallery on the below-ground floor shows various objects, including those that are light-sensitive, such as painting and lacquerware, mainly, but not exclusively, from China, Japan, and Korea (**Figure 2.56**). As these materials are light-sensitive, the display on the lower floor is more frequently changed compared to the display on the upper floor, where the large stone statues are more difficult to move.[274]

The interior exhibition space of the Asian Pavilion is closely connected with an exterior garden and waterscape through a line of large windows along the stairwell (**Figure 2.57**). The particular collocation of the label 'Asian Pavilion' and the surrounding water garden may evoke a specific Asian image that has been reinforced from a European perspective for centuries.[275] As a widespread decorative motif on Chinese and Japanese porcelain, lacquerware, and wall-coverings, garden pavilions were conceived by European artisans and interior designers as a signifier of China or, more broadly, Asia. The motif was then commonly copied on chinoiserie products in order to create an imaginary Chinese/Asian genre of landscape. The whiteness of the exhibition space (which is usually less crowded compared to the main building) in association with the waterscape of gravel seems to be readily reminiscent of the tranquility, clarity, and simplicity of Zen aesthetics.[276]

To a certain extent, the display aesthetics in the Asian Pavilion today recall Visser's tastes by creating a viewing atmosphere of harmony and simplicity, an atmosphere that is set by neatly arranged objects and plain-colored galleries. The major difference is that, compared to the Society's early displays

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[271] Throughout the twentieth century, the spatial layout in the main building of the Rijksmuseum had been based on departments. After the renovation, collections of paintings, sculptures, crafts, and historical objects from different departments were no longer shown in separate parts of the museum, but displayed in combination to present a chronological overview of Dutch art and history. For more about this ten-year renovation, see Paul Meurs and Marie-Thérèse van Thoor, eds., *Rijksmuseum Amsterdam: Restoration and Transformation of a National Monument*; see also the documentary about the renovation, *The New Rijksmuseum* (2014).

[272] Anna A. Ślączka and William Southworth, "Rijksmuseum," *Arts asiatiques* 68, (2013): 120. See also the documentary *The New Rijksmuseum* (2014).

[273] Ślączka and Southworth, "Rijksmuseum," 120.

[274] Menno Fitski, "Wisselen in Het Aziatisch Paviljoen" [Changing in The Asian Pavilion], *Aziatische Kunst* [Asian Art] 44, no. 2 (2014): 40.

[275] Oliver R. Impey, *Chinoiserie: The Impact of Oriental Styles on Western Art and Decoration* (New York: Scribner's, 1977).

[276] For the curators of the Asian Art Department, the spatial atmosphere of the Asian Pavilion is one of "simplicity and clarity," which is "aligned well with the nature of the Asian art collection." See Fitski and Ślączka, "A New Pavilion for Asian Art at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam," 134.

in the Garden Hall and the Drucker Wing, the presentation in the Asian Pavilion is organized in an endeavor to show more of the diversity of Asian art. Except for a few pieces that are semi-permanently showcased, the Department of Asian Art change its showpieces and exhibitions in the Asian Pavilion almost every six months.[277] This decision is made in accordance with the curatorial intent of keeping a spatial organization that is "visueel rustig en duidelijk [visually calm and clear]," while simultaneously showing the collection as much as possible, so as to entice audiences to visit more regularly.[278]

Figure 2.53 North facade of the Rijksmuseum, 2013. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0027608

Figure 2.54 Asian Pavilion, 2013. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0026665

[277] In 2014, Anna Grasskamp and Annette Loeseke published a research report based on two hundred interviews with the museum's visitors. According to the report, "a lack of paintings and prints in the Asian Pavilion" plus the fact that "the audio guide's selection of two Asian sculptures [the Japanese temple guardian and the Shiva Nataraja] in the Pavilion" runs the risk to "channel the perception of […] an object-concentrated Asian section which in turn might negatively reinforce rather than deconstruct some problematic stereotypical views of the very nature of artistic practices in Asia." See Anna Grasskamp and Annette Loeseke, "Framing 'Asia': Results from a Visitor Study at the Rijksmuseum's Asian Pavilion," *Aziatische Kunst* 44, no. 2 (2014): 55. This argument maybe somewhat overdetermined, given that displays in the Asian Pavilion change regularly.

[278] Menno Fitski, "Een Nieuw Paviljoen voor Aziatische Kunst" [A New Pavilion for Asian Art], *Aziatische Kunst* 43, no. 3-4 (2013), 5.

Figure 2.55 (left) View of the upper floor of the Asian Pavilion, 2013. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0027969
Figure 2.56 (right) View of the lower floor of the Asian Pavilion, 2013. Collected in the Rijksmuseum, object number: HA-0027983

Figure 2.57 View of Asian Pavilion with *Vessel of the Soul* (facing the waterscape) by Tu Wei-Cheng, 2019. © Tu Wei-Cheng

Moreover, the showpieces in today's Asian Pavilion are not limited to the Department's (and the KVVAK's) original collection scope—which focuses on four key regions: China, Japan, India, and Indonesia—but also include works from outside of these regions, through international collaborations, to enrich the image of Asian art. This results in a quite refreshing viewing experience. For example, between 2019 and 2020, the Asian Pavilion has presented a special exhibition titled *The Future of Now: Bu Num Civilization in the Rijksmuseum*. The exhibition shows a series of fictitious cultural relics by the contemporary Taiwanese artist Tu Wei-Cheng (not the Asian Art Department's collection), including

Vessel of the Soul, a site-specific artwork made to display at the Asian Pavilion, echoing the waterscape of gravel and plants just beyond the glass windows (see **Figure 2.57**).[279] This is the first time that a contemporary Taiwanese artist has been invited to hold a solo exhibition at the Rijksmuseum, and his presence provides a fresh impression of Asian art.

Ideologically, the whitewashed space of the Asian Pavilion is *not* a homogeneous space of art that whitewashes the heterogeneity inherent in the category of Asian art.[280] Quite the opposite, the ever-changing presentations that include not just the KVVAK's collection but also contemporary artworks borrowed from other Asian artists or institutions shows a promise of expanding the category and highlight the diversity of Asian Art of the KVVAK and the Rijksmuseum's Asian Art Department. Nevertheless, it should be also noted that, when compared with the Rijksmuseum's main building, the architectural and interior design of the Asian Pavilion could unintentionally evoke a sense of cultural difference. That is to say, the very idea of differentiation is not simply found in the Asian Pavilion, but it is constructed and reinforced if one compares the Asian Pavilion with the adjoining main building of the Rijksmuseum.

As mentioned, when the Museum for Asian Art was incorporated in the Rijksmuseum under the directorship of Röell, its light-colored galleries were consistent with those in the museum's main building. By comparison, today's Asian Pavilion is visually distinct from the museum's main building. The Asian Pavilion is detached from the main building with only a long white hallway to connect the two. More than simply a spatial transition from one building to another, I contend that this white passageway may also unfold a spatial narrative of cultural differentiation: 'we are here at this place and they are there at that place'. Unlike the nineteenth-century cathedral-like main building, which was erected of red bricks, with a Gothic-renaissance appearance, the Asian Pavilion is built of Portuguese limestone, giving it an off-white, modern look, and it is intentionally built in a zigzag shape to contrast the symmetrical rectangle of the main building.[281] In addition to their architectural profiles, the two buildings' interiors and exhibition designs also form an obvious contrast. The main building presents the grand linear narrative of Dutch art and heroic national history in galleries with walls painted in varied greys. In contrast, the showpieces and exhibitions in the Asian Pavilion's simple gallery space are changed often. Their obvious differences in terms of architectural style, interior design, and object organization potentially make a walk from the main building to the Asian Pavilion potentially a symbolic bordering process following a logic of differentiation.

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[279] For an introduction to the exhibition, see Wang Ching-Ling, "The Future of Now: The Bu Num Civilization in the Rijksmuseum," *Aziatische Kunst* 50, no. 1 (2020): 64-65.

[280] The Asian Pavilion is criticized by Anna Grasskamp and Annette Loeseke as embodying "a certain epistemic violence," especially if one considers that "the Pavilion's attempt to stage Asian religious sculptures as 'art'." See Anna Grasskamp and Annette Loeseke, "Asia in Your Window Frame: Museum Displays, Window Curators and Dutch-Asian Material Culture," *World Art* 5, no. 2 (2015): 239. However, what should be also noted here is that, by collecting and displaying religious sculptures as arts, the KVVAK intends to highlight possible artistic relationships between religious sculptures in China, Japan, India, and Southeast Asia, and to get Asian religious objects away from a (European) ethnographic standpoint. See Visser, "Het Museum van Aziatische Kunst in het Stedelijk Museum te Amsterdam," 131.

[281] Fitski, "Een Nieuw Paviljoen voor Aziatische Kunst," 4.

Conclusion: The Making of Multivalent Porcelain

Through the close readings and historical contextualization in these three sections, this chapter aims to show how important the collection history of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum is in exploring the performative effects of the museum's porcelain display. Archival photos and old gallery guides provide a rich material for this chapter to explore how the display of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum has attributed decorative, historical, aesthetic, art-historical, and symbolic values to Chinese porcelain from the 1930s up until today. Chinese porcelain displayed in the galleries of the Department of Dutch History and the Department of Sculpture and Applied Art acts like a reminder of former Dutch glory and splendor. In these galleries, the juxtapositions of Chinese porcelain with Dutch portraits depicting powerful classes and landscapes mapping the VOC's field of influence show us how china display can work to express discourses of Dutch civic pride and national identity. Exploring the schemes of arrangement of Chinese porcelain in the Rijksmuseum offers a deeper understanding of the patriotic narrative through which the museum negotiates and constructs Dutch national identity and self-image with objects coming from other places. At the same time, the incorporation of the KVVAK and the development of the Asian Art Department introduced the category of Asian art in the Rijksmuseum. As shown, in the galleries of the Asian Art Department, Chinese porcelain and other Asian objects are displayed in a way to accentuate their aesthetic and art-historical values.

This chapter has explored the appropriation of Chinese porcelain from the Rijksmuseum's Dutch-centric narrative perspective. The next chapter, Chapter 3, focuses on two special exhibitions co-organized by the Rijksmuseum and the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, the United States, between 2015 and 2016: *Asia > Amsterdam* at the Rijksmuseum and *Asia in Amsterdam* at the Peabody Essex Museum. It analyzes the performativity of the two exhibitions by introducing the issue of focalization, a concept originally proposed in the study of literary narratives.