



At World's End

Diane KW

with Introduction by Christiaan J.A. Jörg

At World's End

Exhibition at the Groninger Museum, Groningen, Netherlands
July 15 - September 15, 2013

Front Cover: *The Geldermalsen Triptych - The Politics* (front view)

Back Cover: *The Geldermalsen Triptych - The Politics* (back view)

Photographs: Judith Monteferrante Photography

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Shards

When Diane KW and I met at a dinner party we quickly bonded over our mutual love of ceramics. I soon learned of – and greatly admired – her carved and pierced ceramics, and then the body of work where she applied decals she created that add greater depth of aesthetics to both her pierced works and to existing ceramics (Meissen, Rosenthal, Chinese export, and others). The transformation is so complete that these would now seem unfinished if the transferred and fired words and images were not there. They could be humorous (spam e-mails) or emotionally powerful (her series on the Holocaust).

Shards are pieces of broken pottery, often found in an archaeological context on land or in the sea. Shards speak to me, as a potter and art historian of ceramics. The thickness of the clay and glazes, the weight, and the remnant form and decoration give evidence to the history of what the whole would have been. Every fragment, no matter how small, connects me to a potter from a hundred years ago, or a thousand years ago. So I pick up shards wherever I travel, always found on the ground or along the shore. I shared this collecting habit of mine with Diane one day, showing her bags of shards I had found all over the world, and an overflowing basket of shards picked up along the waterfront in Salem Harbor.

Diane expressed an interest in using her digital ceramic transfers on shards and returning them to where they were found. Her first experiments on some of the Salem harbor shards led to what has now become an extraordinary collaboration with the Groninger Museum, Groningen, the Netherlands. In my enthusiasm for her work, I had shared images with my friend and colleague Dr. Christiaan J. A. Jörg, who was then inspired to suggest she should work on shards from the Geldermalsen. Thanks to Christiaan's support, the Groninger Museum has graciously allowed shards from that 1752 shipwreck to be modified by Diane with ceramic transfers, in this case with text and images relating to the ship and the recovery of its ceramics.



At World's End

At first glance these shards may not seem out of the ordinary as Diane's work in the selection and placement of the transfers often blends easily with the form and existing decoration. Closer inspection reveals the depth of her understanding of the history and politics surrounding the original production, the economics of trade, and the follow-up history of the pieces – especially with the shards from the *Geldermalsen*. She has embraced the history of trade and this specific ship, but has not shied away from the controversial aspects of the recovery of these and other shipwreck materials. She has created an interactive form of art; merchants, curators and archaeologists speak through the shards and their voices have now mingled with the art itself.

Simon Schama has said, “History without the eloquence of images is blind; art without the testimony of texts is deaf.” No longer simply pieces of broken pottery, Diane KW has recognized each and every shard as a work of art, and has given each a voice of its own that speaks to its place in the history of ceramics. The shards that once lay silent on the bed of the ocean now speak to everyone.

William R. Sargent

Independent Curator, former H. A. Crosby Forbes Curator of Asian Export Art, Peabody Essex Museum
Salem, Massachusetts, June 9, 2013

Introduction

The Story of the *Geldermalsen*

For centuries the city of Canton (modern Guangzhou, Guangdong Province in southern China), situated on the Pearl River, has been the main Chinese port for maritime trade with south-east Asia. Preceded by other European nations, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) traded regularly there from 1728. Canton was a centre of commerce in raw silk and silk cloth; in porcelain and lacquer; in drugs such as rhubarb, curcuma and galangal; in tropical woods; and in fancy goods such as fans, ivory objects, Chinese paintings on paper and other items bought by Western sailors as private merchandise or as souvenirs. But above all Canton was the centre of the trade in tea.

Since the late seventeenth century, the drinking of tea had rapidly become very fashionable throughout Europe. Teahouses sprang up in all major cities and tea parties were an important part of social life. Each year, customers bought more green and black tea and retailers made good profits. However, at the time tea could only be obtained in China and it was up to the East India Companies to provide the amounts needed, because only they could finance the trade and handle the logistics.

The English, the French, the Dutch, the Danes and the Swedes all tried to partake in this lucrative trade. The Dutch VOC, competing with the English Company to be the leader in the China trade, sent four ships a year, primarily to buy tea. As the tea had to be kept dry during transport, it was packed in wooden boxes. These were placed in the ship's hold on top of the lowest layer of crates that were filled with porcelain. This layer of heavy crates not only protected the tea from water, but also made the ship more stable.

The Wreckage of the *Geldermalsen*

This short overview provides historical background to the story of the *Geldermalsen*, a VOC ship that was built in 1747 in the Companies' shipyard in Middelburg, Zeeland Province. It measured 150 by 42 feet and had a capacity of about 1150 metric tons. The ship was named *Geldermalsen* by one of the VOC directors, Jan van Borssele, who owned a manor of the same name close to the city of Geldermalsen. The ship embarked on her successful maiden voyage to the Indies in 1748. Several years later, in July 1751, she

anchored at the Canton roadstead for the trading season; the captain at the time was Jan Diederik Morel. For the next few months, a cargo of almost 700,000 pounds of tea, 203 chests with 240,000 pieces of porcelain, 5,240 pieces of silk cloth, 60,000 pounds of sappan and caliatour wood and some 625 pieces of lacquer was loaded on board. The total value was over 700,000 Dutch guilders. In addition, 147 Chinese gold bars ('shoes') were bought, worth 68,135 guilders.

The *Geldermalsen* left Canton for the Netherlands on December 18, 1751, with a crew of 112 men. The voyage went smoothly until they arrived in Banca (Bangka) Strait, which separates the island of Sumatra and Banka Island in the Java Sea. Then disaster struck: in the evening of January 3, 1752, the ship hit a reef. In the resulting panic the sailors managed to get her free, but she crashed on the reef again, the fore of the ship was destroyed and the ship took on much water. Two lifeboats were lowered, but one became damaged in the commotion. At half past twelve at night the ship capsized and went down with most of the crew, including Captain Morel and his son Thomas, one of the ship's boys. In the morning, two lifeboats with thirty-two survivors set sail southward. After a week of hardship, the open boats, with barely any food or water, reached Batavia – modern Jakarta – then the VOC's headquarter in Asia. Boatswain Christoffel van Dijk, now the highest in rank, was not given a warm welcome. The Dutch local government was suspicious: why were not more men saved? How could they have misread the maps so badly in calm weather? The gold was the main issue: why were documents and two boxes of silver coins handed over by the Captain at the last moment, but not the gold? Did the survivors take it? Time and again Van Dijk and third watch Urbanus Urbani were questioned but in the end no misdoings could be proven. Nevertheless, Van Dijk was demoted and a final report was sent to the Directors in the Netherlands. There, the documents relating the story of the *Geldermalsen's* fate, would remain unread in the Company's archive for almost 235 years.

The Auction of the *Geldermalsen* Cargo

In the early 1980's a marine salvager, Michael Hatcher from Singapore, was successfully locating and salvaging wrecks from WW II in the South China Sea. By chance he hit on the wreck of a wooden Chinese junk and a quick survey revealed it to be loaded with porcelain. Some of the pieces are inscribed with a date: 1643. Not expecting too much, Hatcher put them up for auction at Christie's Amsterdam in 1983,

where they reached reasonable prices. Encouraged, Hatcher returned and brought up more porcelain and this time there was considerable interest at three successive auctions in 1984/5.

Hatcher already knew of another wreck on the same reef, the Admiral Stellingwerf Reef, near the island of Bintan in the Riau archipelago. After a long search he found it and was unbelievably lucky because that ship also contained a great deal of porcelain. Christie's was interested again and a complicated salvage operation started in 1985/6. As Hatcher remarked, 'We could not see much, there was so much tea on the spot that it felt as if we were working in an enormous teapot'. He shipped over 150,000 undamaged pieces to Christie's warehouse in Amsterdam, leaving the broken porcelains behind on the sea bottom. To the specialists of Christie's it was clear that this was an eighteenth century porcelain cargo meant for Europe, but as yet there were no indications that identified the ship.

At that point I was consulted. I had written my Ph.D. thesis for Leiden University on the VOC's porcelain trade during the eighteenth century. Seeing the porcelains on the shelves in Amsterdam, I decided, after some checking, that this must have been the cargo of the *Geldermalsen*. This identification gave an extra boost to the already intensive publicity for what Christie's had named the 'Nanking Cargo', because now the porcelains could be dated exactly. For me, it was an opportunity to write a book about the ship and the porcelain, which was published in time for the auction, and financed by Hatcher and his business partner Max de Rham. For them and for Christie's a scholarly survey was welcome, because it stimulated a wider interest in the auction. In exchange I requested one example of every type and variety in the salvaged cargo, to be given to the Groninger Museum in Groningen, where I was curator of decorative art. Thus, the museum received a complete survey of a mid-eighteenth century VOC porcelain cargo for study and presentation.

The sale in 1986 became a sensation. Long lines of people waited to be admitted on viewing days; there were reports in the Dutch and international newspapers; and TV crews crowded round the showcases. The auction in the Amsterdam Hilton Hotel took a week, from Monday, April 28 to Friday, May 2, and was an international event. It raised over forty million Dutch guilders, but also caused outrage from the Indonesian government, which claimed that the wreck lay in its territorial waters. Another reaction came from maritime historians and archaeologists, who deplored that the wreck had not been researched more thoroughly by specialists. In their opinion, unique data had been destroyed and this specific time machine was lost forever. As a result, a symposium in Amsterdam was held in 1987 where I unsuccessfully defended the acquisition for the museum and my cooperation, while in the US, some public art and maritime museums adopted

regulations forbidding them to own or exhibit shipwreck finds that were not salvaged in an archaeologically correct way. European museums were less strict, and the British Museum, among others, acquired a number of pieces at the auction.

Being directly involved I noted that accidents occasionally happened during the preparations for the auction. Pieces were damaged or broken, while Hatcher himself came up with a few boxes of newly salvaged pieces, including shards and incomplete pieces, partly of hitherto unknown private cargoes. He had also found at the wreck some of the gold bars I had predicted would still be there, thus proving the innocence of the surviving crew members of the *Geldermalsen* after so many years. I received many of the broken and incomplete pieces as a further gift of Hatcher to the Groninger Museum. Since then, the duplicate shards have remained in the museum's storage or have been given to other museums for study.

Although I left the Groninger Museum in 2003, I am still involved in working with the porcelain collection. The creative use of *Geldermalsen* shards by Diane KW transforms these broken and discarded objects into art objects. She invites us to experience history in new, sensitive and sometimes humorous ways. The haphazard shapes of the shards have become bearers of fragmented messages from the past that also comment on the present.

After the exhibition, Diane will donate examples of her artwork to the Groninger Museum, to become part of the *Geldermalsen* collection. How fortunate I am to see how my actions of thirty years ago have made it possible to continue the *Geldermalsen* story in such an unexpected and exciting way!

Christiaan J.A. Jörg

(former curator Groninger Museum, professor emeritus Leiden University, the Netherlands)

May, 2013

At World's End

The ocean is a mysterious place. Most of us try to stay near the ocean's surface where water, air and light meet, but there are the brave ones who would dive deep to discover hidden secrets at the bottom, and those who perhaps unwillingly, would find the ocean bottom as their final resting place. Every morning I awaken to a view of the ocean; I live on an island 2500 miles from the nearest continent. The view reminds me that as humans, we are tiny insignificant organisms floating on top of a huge expanse of water. Who is out there today? Are they traders, pirates, sailors, vacationers? And what joys and tragedies might befall them today? What histories are evolving?

My mind then dives below the ocean's surface, wondering about the hidden secrets of generations past. I think of strange-looking sea creatures, shipwrecks and sunken treasure. I am a ceramic artist, and for me the hidden treasure is not gold or jewels, but rather ancient ceramics salvaged from the ocean's depths. They have lain at the bottom of the ocean for hundreds of years, at "world's end," the coloring and texture altered by sea creatures and seawater to varying extent. Many vessels were broken on the journey to the bottom of the ocean, to the end of the world. These vessels have evolved into a series of shards, their asymmetric individualities hinting at their histories. I help ceramic shards tell their stories, stories about the history of man, his accomplishments and his failures using digital ceramic transfers (also called ceramic glaze decals) of texts and images on the shards.

At World's End is an account of the history of the *Geldermalsen* from its sailing and sinking in 1752 to its salvage and re-birth in 1986 as the center of academic, commercial and governmental controversy. How could a ship sink in clear weather along a well-known trade route? Should the wreck have been left as an undisturbed archeological site, or should it have been reserved for archeological study? Who should pay for the study and underwater artifact recovery? Who would own the property recovered? Should collectors or museums be allowed to purchase excavated artifacts? In the end, who should benefit culturally, financially and academically from the artifacts salvaged?

At World's End is also a history of humanity, from the Chinese artisans making each of 250,000 dishes for the *Geldermalsen*, to human error in navigation, to the loss of lives when the ship sank with its captain and most of its crew. Several shards in this exhibition are dedicated to the crew of the *Geldermalsen*.

In a continuum from the history of the *Geldermalsen*, I touch on the evolution of Chinese export trade from the 1700's to present day, from porcelain and opium to porcelain and Bentleys, to spam e-mails preserved for posterity on ceramic surfaces.

I have used digital ceramic transfers of shipping documents and VOC (Dutch East India Company) documents as well as photographs taken in the 1980's for the imagery on the shards. These were applied and then fired in an electric kiln to permanently adhere them to the ceramic surfaces. The artistic and technical aspects of using ceramic transfers on the *Geldermalsen* porcelain and stoneware shards presented some challenges, in that the surface quality of the porcelain and the glazes had changed the shards in different ways, perhaps related to sea water exposure or marine life interaction or perhaps as a reaction to being steeped in seawater tea for 250 years. I wanted the very modern ceramic transfers of texts and photographic images to look as if they belonged on the shard by integrating them into the original plate/bowl design so that viewers would be a bit uncertain as to what was from 1752 and what was from 2013. To accomplish this, I experimented with different colors, some to match and some to contrast with the original cobalt blue designs on the dishes. I also experimented with different firing temperatures and numbers of firings in order to achieve a "weathered look". The end results were not always predictable, resulting in the transfer application and firing being repeated more than once on many shards.

I have deliberately used small text sizes to draw you closer, to invite you into the personal space of each shard. Look closely for images as subtle decorative borders, in the branches of trees, in the petals of flowers, in the windows of buildings. In doing so, you will see the shard's history as told through its glaze faults, its cracks, and its old and new imagery applied by hand. In this way I hope you will experience some of the history of man and his possessions from ancient times and far away places.

Diane KW
Honolulu, Hawaii USA
June, 2013

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The shards in this exhibition have continued their travels from “world’s end” to the Netherlands, to Hawaii, to North Carolina, to Massachusetts and back to the Netherlands. I will be forever indebted to Chip and Margaret Ziering who introduced me to William Sargent, to Bill for starting me down this shard-littered path, and to Christiaan Jörg and the Groninger Museum for courageously allowing me to do whatever I wanted to these wonderful artifacts. It is my hope that these shards will continue their journey through many imaginations to many more places.

Many thanks to Diane Glover whose kilns, firing assistance and infinite patience were invaluable in completing this project, to Joey Hartley of Artifax who dropped everything he was doing to fabricate the metal mounts for the shards, to Janet Mizoguchi of Ceramic Decal Printing who made my ceramic transfers her first priority and to Judith Monteferrante who expertly photographed and processed the images for this catalogue in record time.

Finally, this project would never have come to life without the continuous encouragement and unconditional support of my dear husband, Jan Koch-Weser.

DKW

Inventory I, V, VI

Carefully handwritten records of porcelain orders and shipping manifests were preserved from the records of the VOC (Dutch East India Company) in the Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague.

Excerpts from these documents appear on many of the shards in this exhibition. It is amazing to think about counting and inventorying 250,000 pieces of porcelain onto the *Geldermalsen* by hand in ledger books.





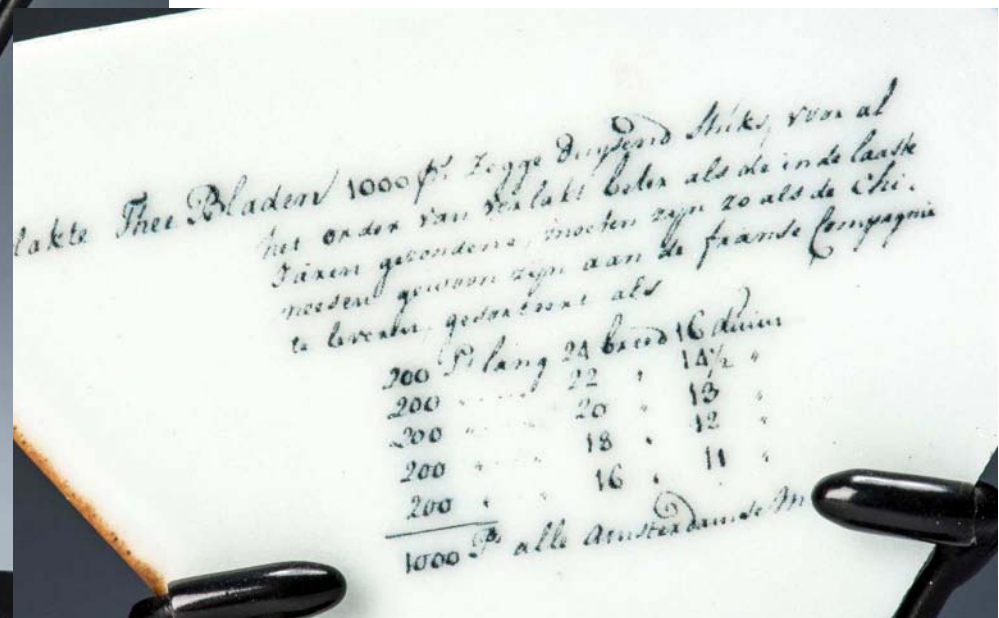
Inventory II and III

The old Dutch calligraphy adds a decorative element to the shards. Ceramic transfers of individual or stacks of dishes recovered from the shipwreck by Michael Hatcher have also been added. The dishes are boldly displayed on the shard or are integrated into the design of the original Chinese artisan who painted the dish.



Inventory IV

Part of the Geldermalsen inventory listing lacquered tea trays in various sizes.



Ready to Sail I, II, III

Captain Jan Diederik Morel was the Captain of the *Geldermalsen*. His written confirmation of cargo loading completion has been transferred to each of these shards, with a variety of "dish embellishments" added on the other side.





Import Export Yesterday (front)

Inventory lists from the *Geldermalsen* appear in red.



Import Export Yesterday (back)

Cargo ships similar to the *Geldermalsen* and a depiction of the weighing of tea appear on the back.



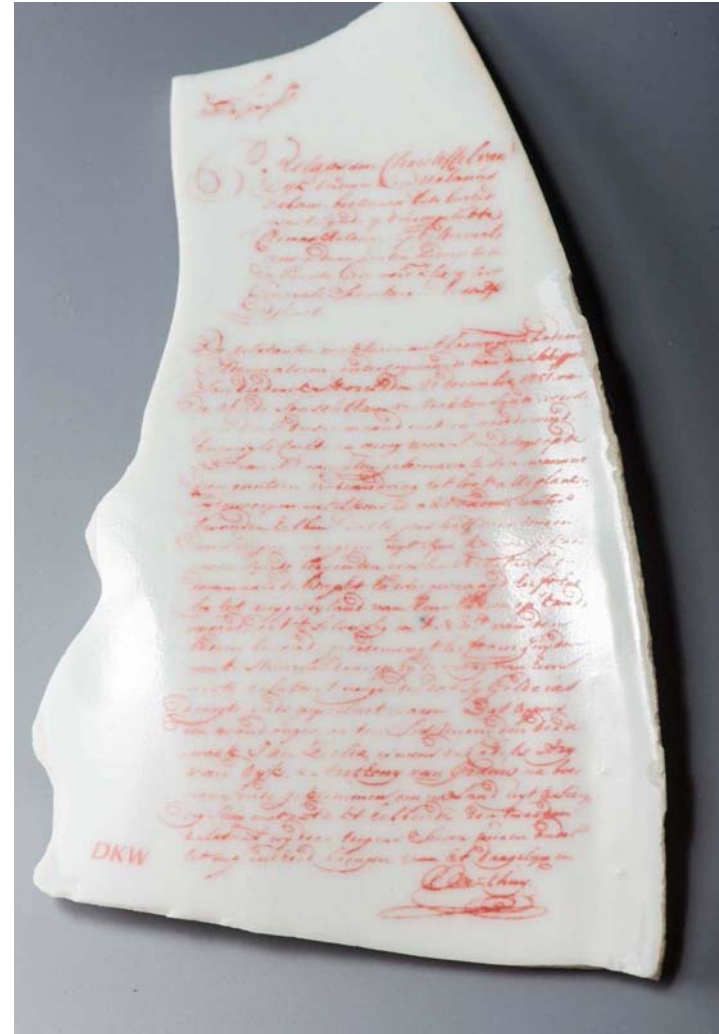
So Much Tea

The *Geldermalsen* contained over 650,000 lb. of tea which was lost to the bottom of the ocean. Teacup images and the account of the shipwreck pay tribute to the lost cargo.



A Small Navigational Error

It was a clear and calm afternoon when the Geldermalsen sailed its last few miles. The underside of this small shard is a partial account of Christoffel van Dijk, the boatswain who was on duty when the *Geldermalsen* hit a reef, possibly due to erroneous information given to the Captain by the boatswain. The floral decoration has not been altered.



The Lost Ship



Front and Back Detail

An image of a sailing ship similar to the *Geldermalsen* and excerpts from *The Nanking Cargo*, by Michael Hatcher and Anthony Thorncroft about salvage operations have been added to a ship-shaped shard.



Tea With Captain Morel

Captain Jan Diederik Morel's signature and statement of readiness to sail has been transferred to this cup and saucer shard. The Captain perished with the Geldermalsen and its cargo of over 650,000 lb of tea on January 3, 1752. He has enough tea around him for an eternity of tea parties.



Tea With Captain Morel

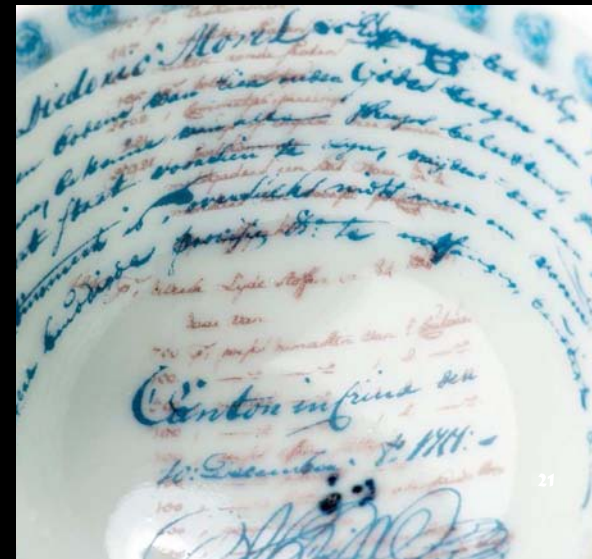


Saucer front view



Cup inside view

Saucer back view





*Postcard From the End
of The World*

Sea Medallion

Ocean Bottom



Front detail of *Postcard from The End of The World*. Ceramic transfers of dishes recovered from the shipwreck are superimposed on an account of the shipwreck.



Detail of *Sea Medallion* front. This shard is a barnacle-encrusted stoneware bowl footring to which a photo of a bowl with tiny images of saucers around it has been applied.

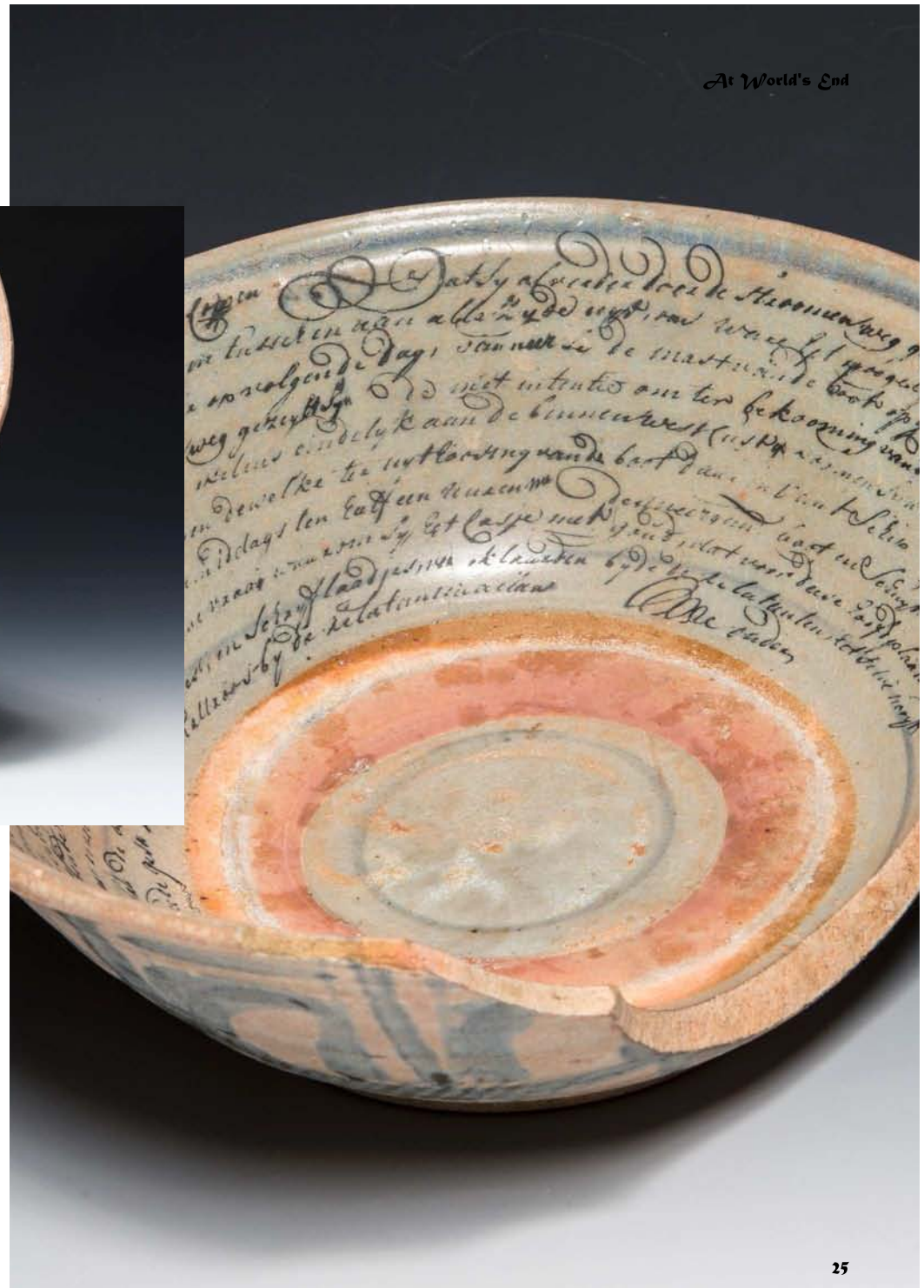


Front detail of *Ocean Bottom*. A photo of the porcelain discovered at the bottom of the ocean (world's end) prior to salvage is bordered with a row of plate images. The murkiness of the photo is due to tons of tea swirling around the dishes, clouding the water.



Half a Bowl of Soup

A partial account of the shipwreck is incorporated into the flower designs on the interior of this Batavian soup or punch bowl as well as on the outside of the bowl.



Having a Bad Day

January 3, 1752 was a very bad day for the *Geldermalsen*. Part of the report of the shipwreck has been applied to this large stoneware serving bowl, the ornate Dutch calligraphy embellishing an otherwise humble bowl.

***Help Wanted:
Dishwasher***

Portrait Gallery



Help Wanted: Dishwasher

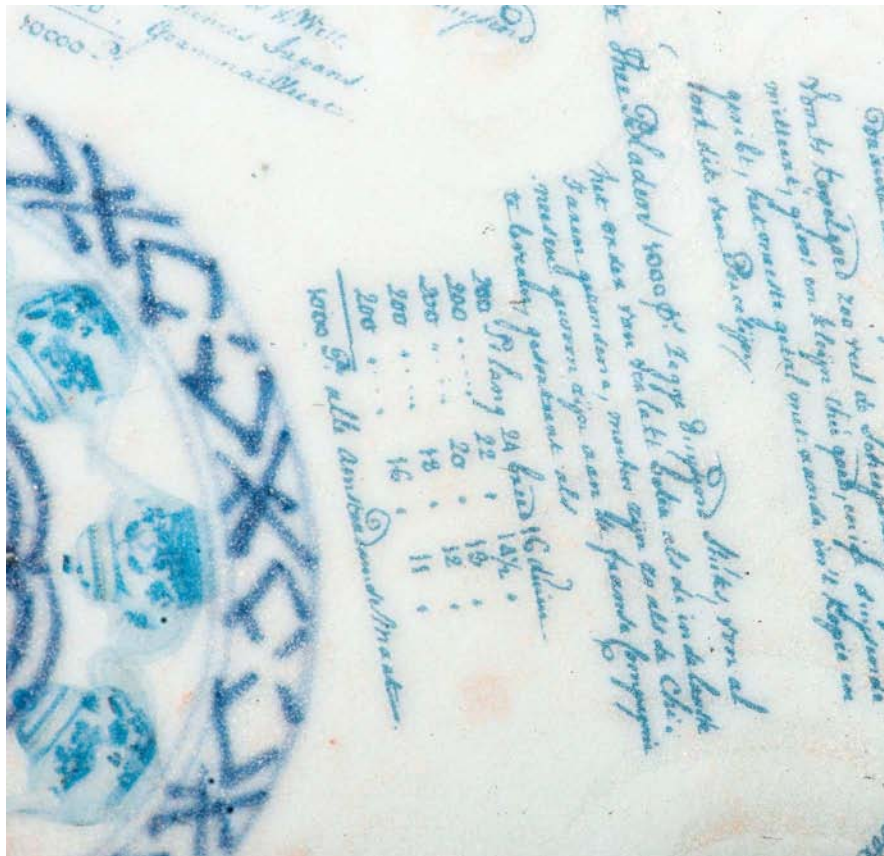


Front



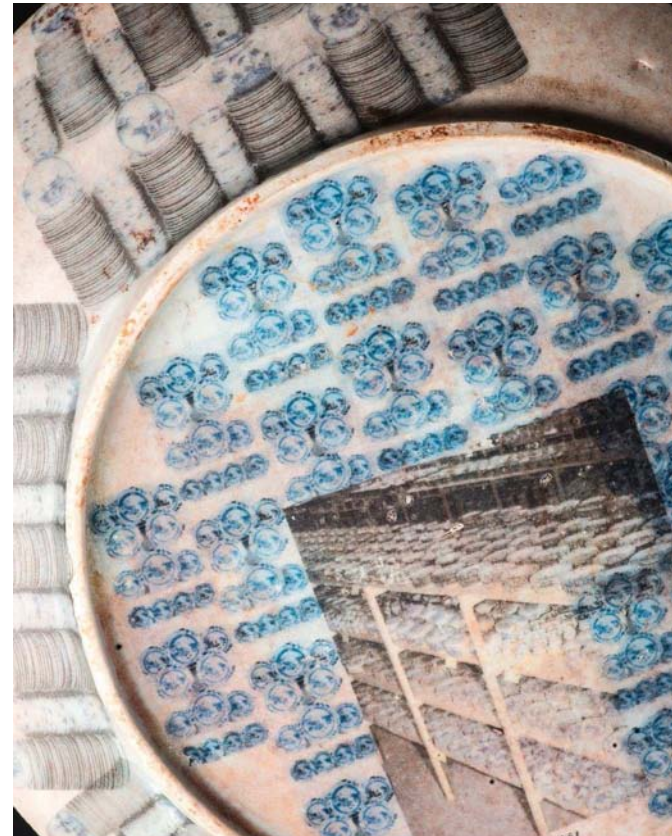
Back

Help Wanted: Dishwasher



Front Detail

The front of this plate shard shows pages from the inventory ledgers as well as images of porcelain teapots recovered from the shipwreck.



Back Detail

The *Geldermalsen* carried approximately 250,000 pieces of porcelain onboard. Of these, 150,000 intact pieces were recovered. On the back of this plate are images of rows and stacks of salvaged dishes as they were photographed prior to the Christie's auction.



Portrait Gallery

Like the crew onboard, the types of porcelain on the Geldermalsen were varied in size and appearance.



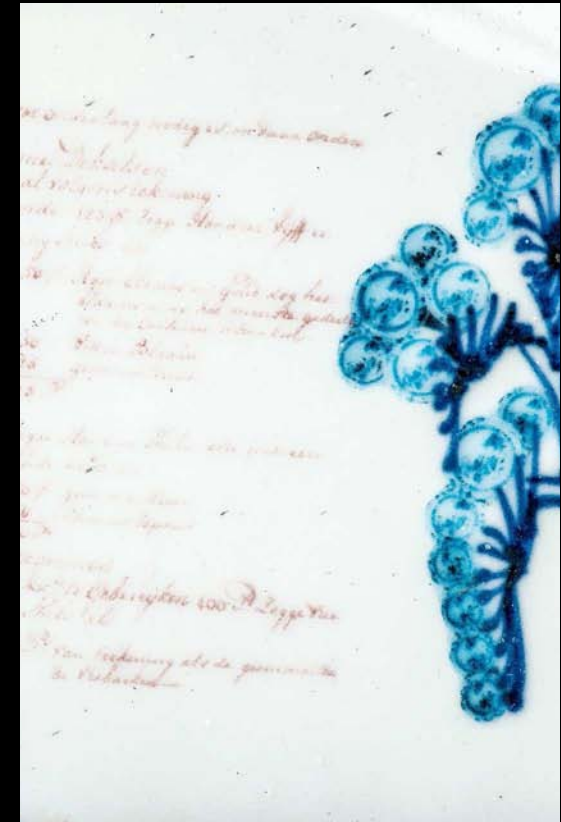
The Geldermalsen Triptych

From left to right: The Harvest, The Catastrophe, The Politics

These large basin shards recount their history from the order and production of decorated porcelain pieces (The Harvest), to the shipwreck (the Catastrophe) and loss of the porcelain, to the storm of controversy after the sale of the salvaged pieces (The Politics).

The Geldermalsen Triptych - The Harvest





*The Geldermalsen
Triptych -
The Harvest (front detail)*

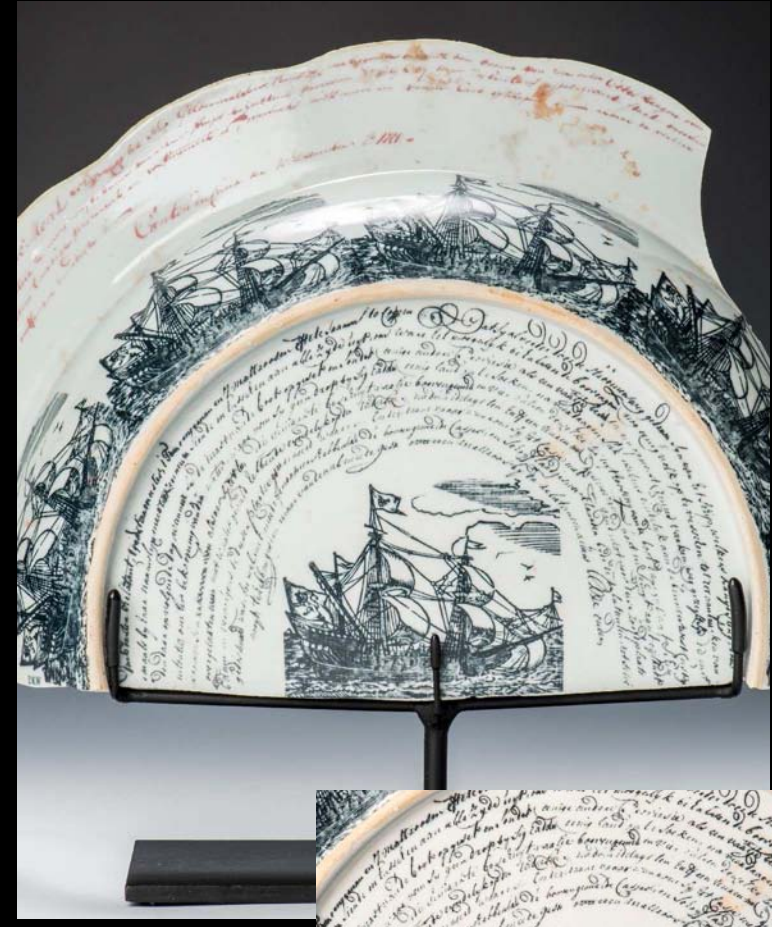
"I had read of the potter's clay and wheel from Scripture, but it had never occurred to me that the pots we use were not such as had come down unbroken from those days, or grown on trees like gourds somewhere, and I was pleased to hear that so fictile an art was ever practiced in my neighborhood."

Henry David Thoreau
Walden



*The Geldermalsen Triptych -
The Catastrophe (front)*

Accounts of the *Geldermalsen* shipwreck and images of fish and sunken porcelain everywhere speak to the loss of cargo.



(back)

A fleet of merchant ships and an account of the shipwreck, symbolize the hazards of commerce in the 18th century.



The Geldermalsen Triptych - The Politics (Front view)

Serendipitously broken into two main shards, this large basin recounts the political controversy surrounding the salvage of the *Geldermalsen*. On the left are quotes from those who objected to Hatcher's activities and on the right, Hatcher's position and those who were more supportive of his position.



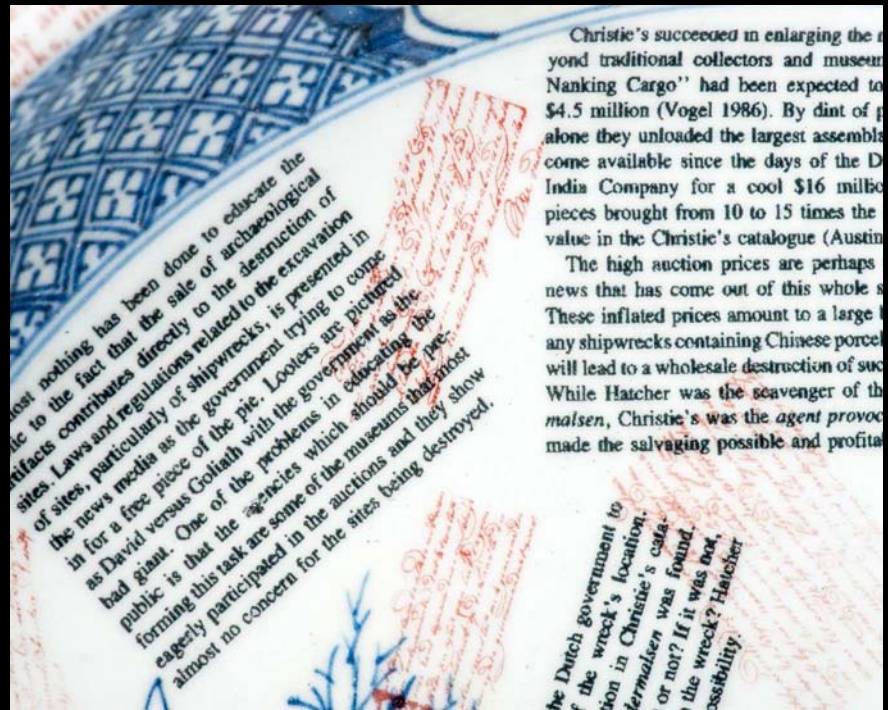
The Geldermalsen Triptych - The Politics (back view)

The Politics - The Academic and the Government (left half, front view)

A storm of controversy arose after the sale of the Geldermalsen porcelain by Christie's Amsterdam in 1986. Many marine archaeologists, art historians, museum curators, and governments were enraged over the fact that the wreck had been ravaged for its cargo and not archaeologically excavated. Some governments felt they had a financial claim on the cargo sales. Resolutions were passed by maritime archeology groups and museums condemning Hatcher, Christie's and collectors who bought the artifacts. Articles were published suggesting that no one should be allowed to profit from an archeological site.



The Academic and The Government

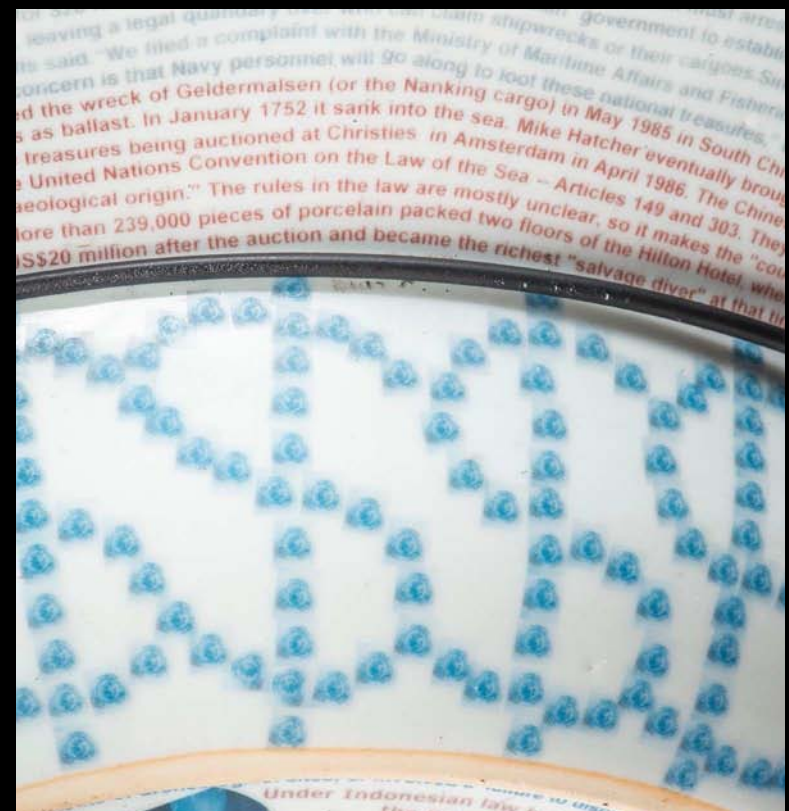
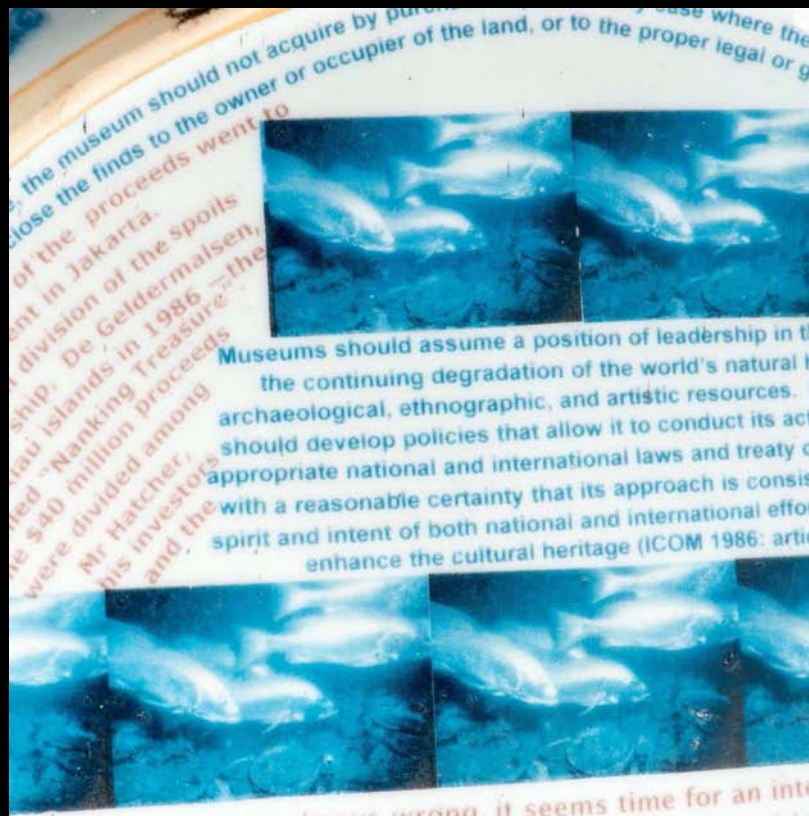


Detail of the academic and the government side of the controversy.

The Politics- Left side, back (detail views)

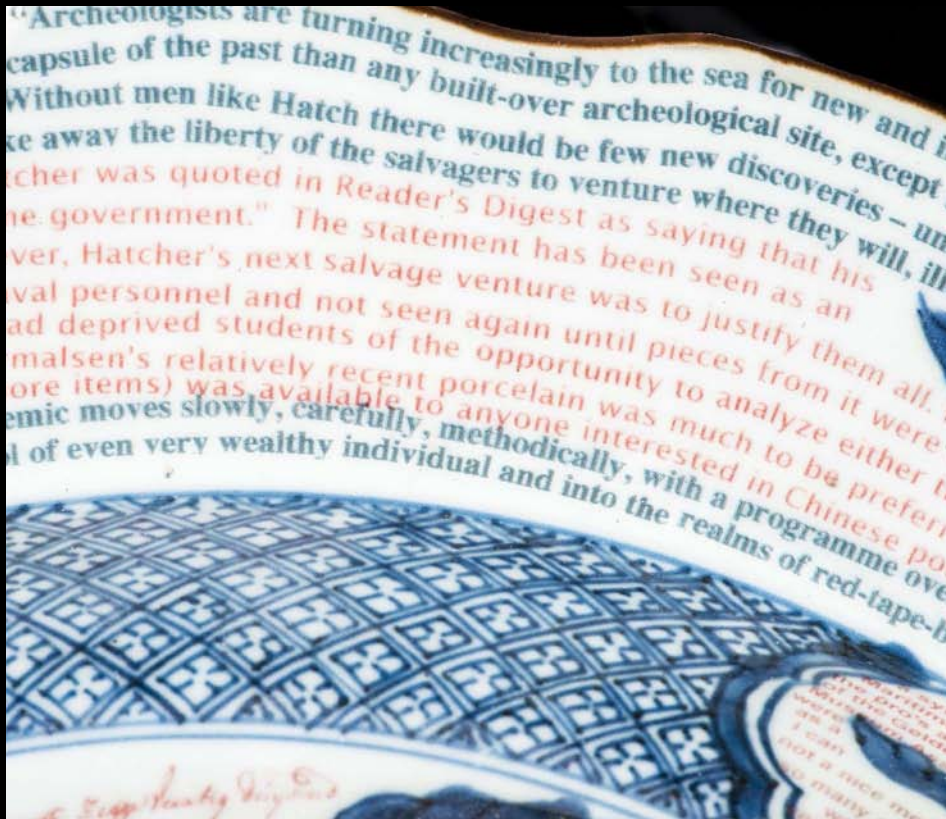
Although much of the objection by the academics and governments was related to the plunder of an archeological site without adequate preservation, there were strident objections to Hatcher profiting financially as well. Christie's and collectors were condemned. Indonesian and Chinese governments felt they had claims to the profits. Salvaging was bad unless everyone left out could benefit in some way - for the academics it was scientific study, for the museums it was artifacts for its collections, for the governments it was money.

Amidst the furor, the Dutch government was silent, having received its share of the auction profits from Hatcher.



The Politics - The Salvager and The Public - (right side, front view)

Michael Hatcher, the salvager was pragmatic in outlining the difficulties and dangers involved in gathering objects from the ocean bottom between seasonal storms and the expense involved in doing so. Some academics and marine archaeologists felt that what little information that was gathered from the salvage site was better than none at all. Some also felt that everyone had a right to profit from the sale of the *Geldermalsen* items, including Hatcher, his investors and the public.



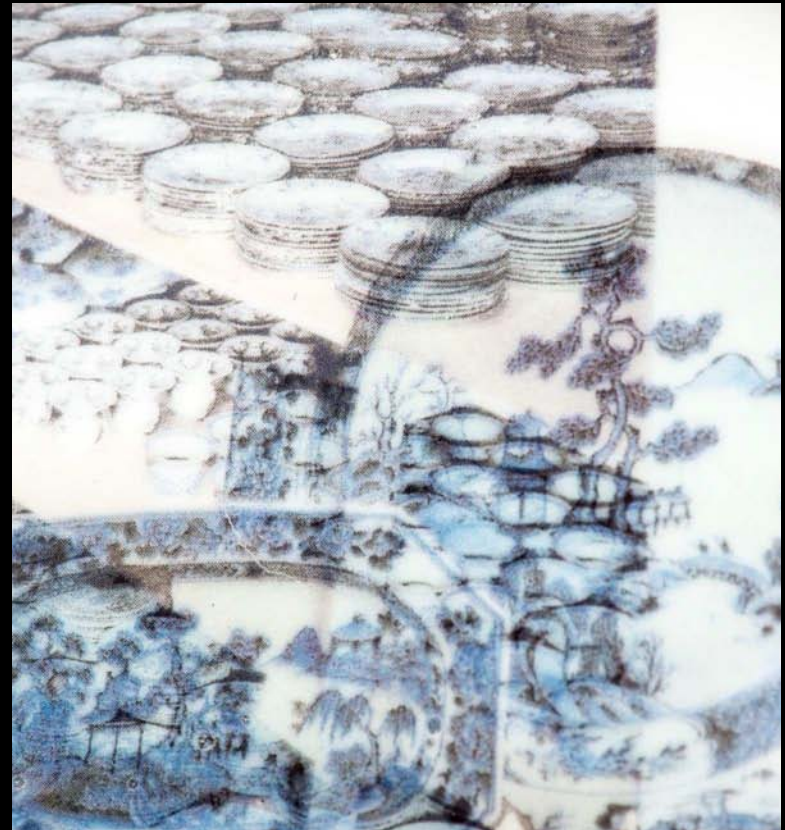
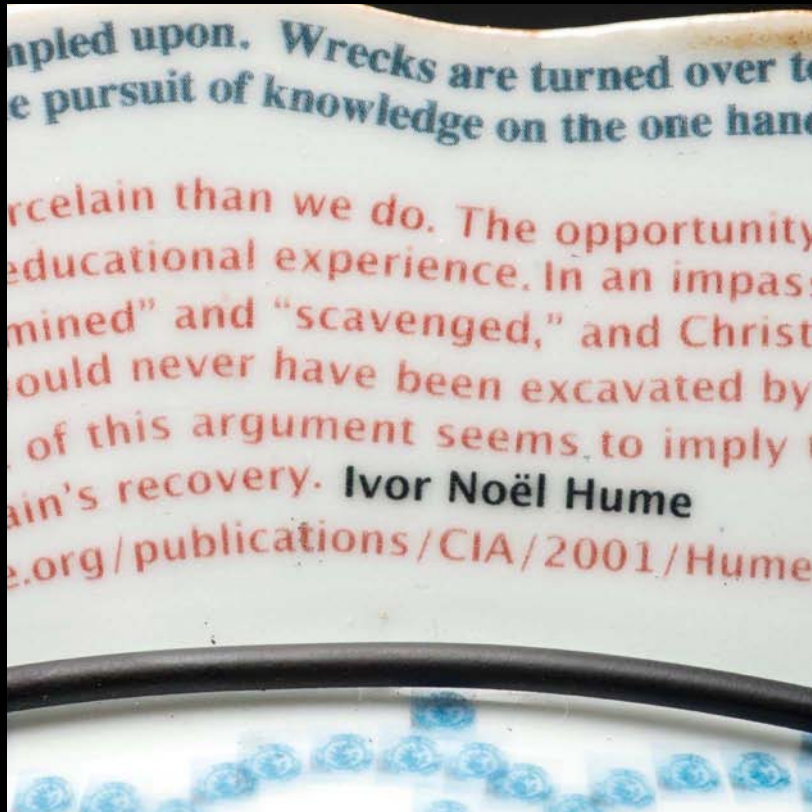
Detail of *The Politics* front right detail



The Salvager and the Public

The Politics - The Salvager and The Public
(right side, back detail views)

Hatcher says of himself and the academic: "Without men like Hatch there would be few new discoveries - university departments do not have the guts, funds or time to mount many highly speculative expeditions. But Hatch can only work in a free market." That is the dilemma of modern day marine excavation - a question of time and money - and time is money.





The Dilemma (front)

While shipwreck recovery is a mutual goal, the salvager and the marine archeologist are often in conflict over the methods and the time taken to reach this goal. There is also conflict between the archeologist and the collector for possession of the artifacts, the former who would retain all finds in a museum for study and the collector who wishes to own them.



The Dilemma (back)



The Solution (foreground)

The Dilemma Triptych

Ivor Noël Hume's suggested solution to the conflict between salvager, archeologist and collector in his 2012 publication - an international agreement with all parties involved has been transferred to this cup shard. Unfortunately, such an agreement would be as likely to bring results as this cup will hold tea.



Now Hiring

An 18th century trading ship had many professions onboard. In addition to sailors and soldiers (by far the largest representation) there were:

- Captain
- First mate
- Second mate
- Boatswain
- Junior Boatswain
- Cadet
- Senior Master
- Constable
- Constable's Mate
- Provost
- Surgeon
- Visitor of the Sick
- Senior Sail Maker
- Barrel Maker
- Cooper
- Steward
- Steward's Mate
- Quartermaster
- Trumpeteer

These were the personnel onboard the *Geldermalsen*, most of whom perished in 1752. The survivors transferred to other ships.





The poet sits in his house under the trees in China. He has just heard of a shipwreck laden with tea and porcelain. He reflects on all the porcelain, now lost at the bottom of the ocean.

The Ballad of 1752

**We were destined for distant shores and fine tables,
To be held and used,
Treasured by elegant fingers and kissed by ruby lips.
But Fate intervened,
Leaving us broken and shattered,
At world's end.
But we have stories to tell!
So many stories to tell...**

DKW



The Ballad of 1752 (back)

The Dutch version of The Ballad of 1752 with stacks of dishes recovered from the *Geldermalsen* have been added to the back of the shard.

Another shard with the Dutch version of the Ballad appears on the next page.



***De Ballade van 1752 and
The Ballad of 1752***

Front sides of the English and Dutch versions of The Ballad of 1752. The subject of the ballad is seen on the back.



(back)



(front)



Writing History



(back)

The official scribe responsible for recording the verbal accounts of the surviving crew was W. van Deusen. His signed affidavit appears on this shard.



Grave Consequences (front)

The shipwreck became a porcelain grave yard for the crew and the cargo.



(back)

The consequences of the shipwreck, not only for the crew, but also some 100,000 pieces of porcelain are remembered.

They Were Only Boys

Four boys under the age of 15 were aboard the *Geldermalsen*, as trainees serving the officers. One of the four was Captain Morel's son. All perished when the ship sank.

This small shard, bearing the names of the boys, remembers them forever.





Small Monuments

In Memory of Shards Left Behind

What I Am, What I Might Have Been

Forever Young



What I Am, What I Might Have Been

The shipwreck from a shard's perspective.



Detail View

Small Monuments

With the shipwreck, the fate of the crew and the porcelain were forever linked in an underwater grave.



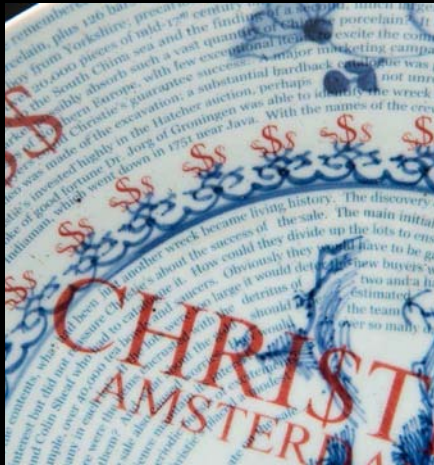
The Third Watch



The 3rd watch was responsible for navigating the ship at the time the Geldermalsen struck a coral reef, not once but twice. After the second strike, the ship was severely damaged and began to sink. Christoffel van Dijk and Urbanus Urbani, both 3rd watch boatswains survived. Van Dijk's account of the wreck and the names of some of the survivors have been listed here. This cup celebrates the survivors.



*Requiem for the Geldermalsen I and II with
And What About the Gold?*



(front detail)



Requiem For the Geldermalsen I



(back detail)

An excerpt from the 1986 Christie's Year in Review describes the auction house's marketing strategy for the Geldermalsen china and gold and jubilation over the results. For them, the Geldermalsen cargo was just a commodity. There was no moment of silence for those who perished.



Contemplating the Past

(back)

(detail)

Before and after photos of the cargo are accompanied by Ivor Noël Hume's commentary on collecting.

Layers of History

The history of the *Geldermalsen* is summarized on this shard, from its lading and setting sail, to the shipwreck, to the salvage, to Christie's sale, and finally to the political controversy that continues today.



(front)



(back)

Layers of History



front detail



back detail

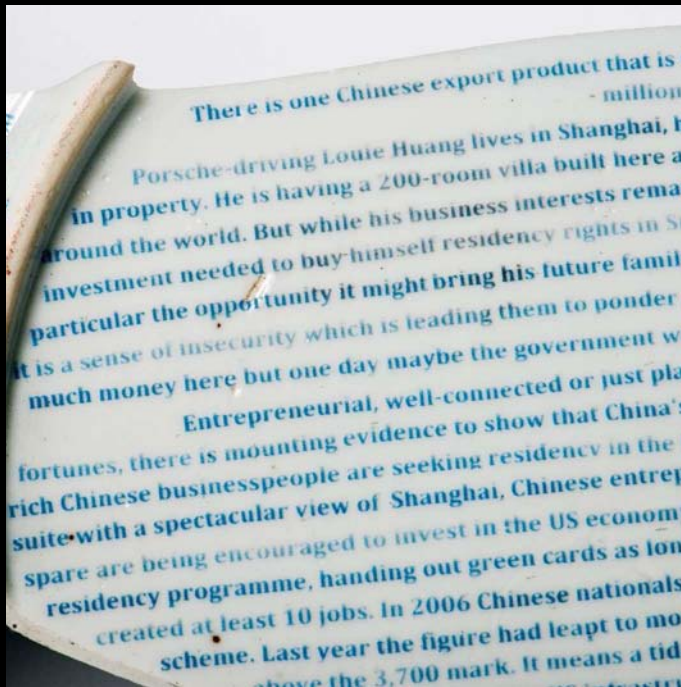


back detail



Import Export Today

The wealthy merchant sits in his house, his trees, flowers and home filled with porcelain. He contemplates emigrating from China with his money to avoid the government confiscating it.



Import Export Today (back detail)

According to a 2012 BBC UK publication, one of China's big exports today is millionaires who are seeking citizenship in other countries, worried that the government will take away all they had gained.



It's Everywhere I

Spam e-mail in English.

Spam e-mail is a ubiquitous commodity like porcelain. Spam appeals to our fantasies, our desires, our greed for material things today- just as Chinese porcelain did to the Europeans in the 18th century. However, unlike porcelain, spam is fantasy, ethereal and short-lived, as spam filters and folders eject them into the distant regions of cyberspace.

It seems somehow fitting to combine the two together, to preserve spam on worthless bits of broken china so that neither will be lost or tossed away. Together, they become one symbol of global society, of our humanity.





Alle Rechten Voorbehouden

A Dutch spam e-mail addresses modern business and commerce.



It's Everywhere II

Spam e-mail in Dutch.





Bentleys Not Opium

A 2012 newscast reports China to be the second-largest importer of Bentleys in the world has been added to this shard. No longer the number one importer of opium, China has become wealthy through hard work and low wages. As a consequence, the nation has become very rich - with "a Bentley in every garage" - or maybe even two.

Bentleys Not Opium
(back)

An image of merchants weighing bricks of tea has been altered to be weighing a Bentley. A continuous stream of porcelain cups and saucers merges into the weighing, and emerges from the image as Bentleys with porcelain wheels.





***Bentley Blossoms (left) and
The Money Tree (right)***

The porcelain dishes in the trees are now replaced with money signs. Bentleys become part of the decoration on the shards, as China's economy and trade expand world-wide.

The Price of Doing Business

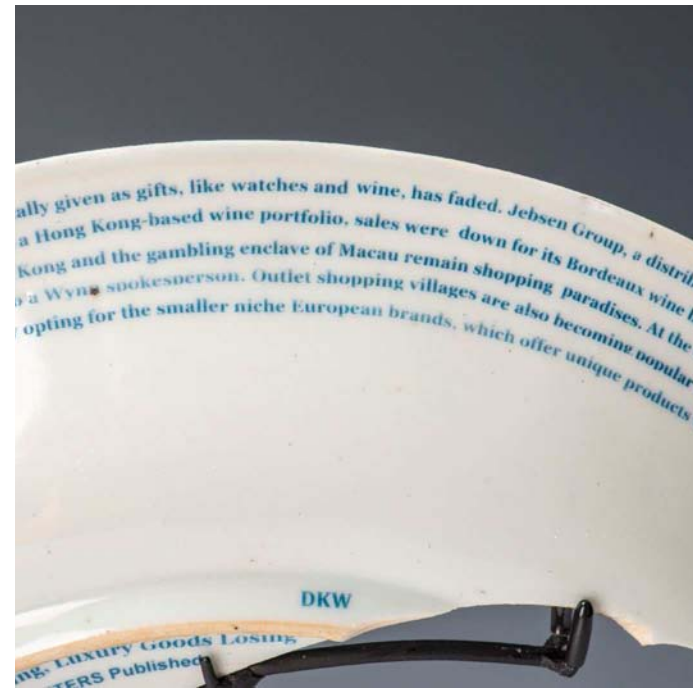


Modern day China retains its old world methods of doing business including "gift giving" of luxury items to government officials. The Chinese government is trying to halt this with little success according to a recent Reuters News Agency account. In a continuum over time, this shard and the news report link the past and the present trade practices, questioning the likelihood of government officials policing themselves.

The Price of Doing Business



Front detail view



Back detail view



Fragments of History

Small shards have been altered using excerpts from the shipwreck reports and images of broken porcelain.



In the End, Little Remains

Tiny shards, some as no larger than 2 mm. diameter, have been placed in the sand of the Groninger Museum aquarium. They bear the names of the crew lost, images of porcelain dishware and some of the political controversy. In the end, what will mankind's legacy be?

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