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## True or False? Defining the Fake in Chinese Porcelain

*Vrai ou faux ? Définir le faux dans la porcelaine de Chine*

*¿Verdadero o falso? Definiendo lo falso en la porcelana china*

**Stacey Pierson**

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# True or False? Defining the Fake in Chinese Porcelain

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- 1 Fake porcelain by definition is made to deceive but what kind of deception is intended? Some porcelain is made to deceive the buyer who believes it is 'authentic'. This is falsifying for profit. However, deception can also be a form of aesthetics or even a necessity. Some Chinese porcelains were intentionally made in imitation of past pieces, for example. Others were made as replacements and still others as skeuomorphs in the trompe l'oeil tradition that developed in court arts of the Qing period. The concept of 'fake' in Chinese porcelain is therefore complex and its production is grounded in both commercial and connoisseurship practices. In order to explore the complexity of this concept in Chinese ceramics, this paper will examine the various types of Chinese porcelain that might be defined as fake, looking at the motivations, history, reception and audiences for this kind of ceramic production in dynastic and contemporary China. The methodology employed here is untested as there are very few, if any, critical studies of faking in Chinese ceramics. There are investigations of aspects of the wider topic of faking associated with Chinese ceramics, such as the work of artists active in the Ming dynasty who made fakes in various media including ceramics,<sup>1</sup> the problem of faking in contemporary Jingdezhen production<sup>2</sup> or my own work on a fake inscription that appears on Qing porcelain<sup>3</sup> but as yet, there is no comprehensive study that defines faking as a historical practice in Chinese ceramics and situates it within the design history of this medium. The present study is a first attempt to do so and is therefore not definitive but rather exploratory, with a view to positioning these porcelains in a defined category within the field of Chinese ceramics.
- 2 One of the challenges of investigating faking as a concept and practice in Chinese ceramics is the fluid nature of the definition of the word 'fake', both in Chinese language and English. In fact, the Chinese meaning is more complex than its partial equivalent in English which is superficially more straightforward. In addition, linguistics is only part of

the issue as 'fake' is both a word and a concept in both languages. To begin with, when discussing faking, in any language or cultural practice, it is necessary to consider what is in fact meant by it. In the art world, a commonly held definition of 'fake' is a work that was made to deceive. In the field of paintings, there are numerous historical and contemporary instances of talented fakers being exposed, or in some cases, exposing themselves such as Han van Meegeren who was a prolific faker of Vermeer<sup>4</sup>. Determining the authenticity of an artwork is riven with danger and frequently now subject to legal action as a recent lawsuit by Sotheby's against London dealer Mark Weiss and collector David Kowitz demonstrated. In this case, which concerned a painting by the 17<sup>th</sup>-century Dutch artist Frans Hals, the auction house took the dealer and the collector to court to recover the profits of a private sale of the painting which has been declared a fake<sup>5</sup>. The painting had been previously considered for purchase by the Louvre and thus the declaration by Sotheby's that it is a forgery provoked a high-profile incident in the art world<sup>6</sup>. As works of art such as this one are so financially valuable, whole industries have emerged around the determination of authenticity and the revelation of fakes. The Rembrandt project's primary responsibility is the determination of authenticity, for example. 'Fake', in this sense, is synonymous with 'forgery' in English. One could also include in this list of synonyms the word 'copy', as in the sense of 'not original'<sup>7</sup>.

- 3 Equivalents of these words and the main concept of deceptive works of art are also prevalent in Chinese language. There are, however, further words and therefore definitions of a wider meaning of 'fake' in Chinese that indicate additional nuanced and historical understandings of such a concept. Translation, of course, is an inexact practice and very much a subjective one, but it is worth taking a superficial look at the multiple ways in which 'fake' is expressed in Modern Chinese with reference to cultural products. The nearest equivalent to the English understanding of the word and the concept as applied to art is 虚假 (xujia, adj.; jia, v.) which defines 'fake' in terms of 'forgery'. Copies are also defined similarly to the English as 复制 (fuzhi). Yet there is an additional form of copying which equates more closely to 'imitation': 模仿 (mofang) and does not contain the negative connotations of the same word in English. Within the word category of 'copying', there are further words which have no real equivalents in English, either in language or concept, in particular that of 仿古 (fanggu) which is associated with antiquarianism and can be literally translated as 'copying the ancient' but is often described as 'archaism'. Finally, there is also a word associated with the deceptive aspects of faking which describes works of art that are *trompe l'oeil* in style: 像生 (xiangsheng) or in paintings 通景画 'tongjinghua', that is, 'illusion' paintings, as defined in the eighteenth century Chinese court<sup>8</sup>. These are intended to deceive but are not forgeries, just like their equivalents in western art. The language of *trompe l'oeil* objects and design in Chinese is a complex subject in its own right<sup>9</sup> but, generally, the phrase which is translated literally as 'life like' (xiangsheng) in Modern Chinese is the nearest equivalent to what is identified as a historical concept in aesthetics and an artistic practice in the history of western art production with origins in illusionistic wall paintings in Ancient Greece<sup>10</sup>.
- 4 The fact that there are so many descriptions in Chinese of what could be classified as 'fake' objects, presents a challenge for how to define fakes with reference to Chinese art and in particular ceramics in China. Ideally one would begin by situating the terminology within its own historical framework and then develop categories from this but, for a shorter study, categorization of deceptive ceramics can also be attempted from an art-historical perspective. China's history of ceramic production is among the oldest in the

world, and the most continuous, as is the practice of art collecting and a consequent concept of a history of art. Collecting is often a catalyst for faking thus it is not surprising that a wide range of deceptive or fake ceramics were produced from a very early period in China. Accordingly, the intention behind the production and design of such ceramics can be used as a form of stylistic identification, leading to categorization and classification. Using this method, this paper will now explore the primary categories of deceptive ceramics produced in China from the Song dynasty (960-1279) onward. While there are earlier ceramics that could be identified as deceptive, it was from the Song period onwards that such a practice became more widespread. As this study is also based on categories of 'fake' ceramics, the discussion will not be developed chronologically. Rather, what follows is a thematic exploration of what can be identified as a major design category in Chinese ceramics.

## 1. Faking for Deception 虛假 (xujia)

- 5 If we begin with a category of fake ceramic in China that is representative of the most common definition of 'fake', that is to deceive or forge, we are introduced to a style of ceramic that has a surprisingly long history in China. It is also, to some extent, well documented with the names of fakers recorded and discussed in literature. One name that comes down to us from the Ming period is Zhou Danquan 周丹泉 who was active in the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century and was well known for his ability to fake Song ceramics, among other works of art<sup>11</sup>. He is mentioned in the Jingdezhen taolu 景德镇陶錄, which was first published in 1815 and which notes :

During the Long[qing] and Wan[li] eras, there was a man named Danquan... [.]. In making vessels, his [sic] was a famous hand of the times and he was especially good at copying antique vessels. Every time a famous vessel-type was produced, everyone wrangled to buy them. [...] Even experts were fooled. His copies of Ding-ware tripods, and Ding-ware vessels, of 'King Wen caldron' incense burners and libation jars .... all were so close to the originals as to be without parallel<sup>12</sup>.

- 6 One such late Ming copy of a Ding ware vessel can be seen in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London [fig. 1] and another example, which is signed by Zhou Danquan, is in the collection of the National Palace Museum, Taipei and is somewhat ironically on display in its Ming porcelain gallery where the implicit intention of the display is to represent authentic works of the time<sup>13</sup>. Scholarship has revealed that fake artworks generally were somewhat of a problem in the Ming dynasty, as a result of the expansion of the art market at that time<sup>14</sup>.

Fig. 1



Porcelain incense burner in the shape of an ancient bronze *ding* with glaze imitating Song Ding ware. Ming dynasty, c. 1550-1640, V&A CIRC.130-1935.

©Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

- 7 The art market today much like that of Ming China has also had an impact on the production of fake Chinese ceramics, which have proliferated in recent years, along with unprecedented auction prices. At present, one of the most commonly faked Chinese porcelains is the so-called ‘chicken cup’ or 雞缸盃 ‘ji gang bei’. [fig. 2]. The original is one of about 12 examples surviving from the Chenghua period (r.1465- 87), which can be seen in several museum collections, including the Sir Percival David collection in the British Museum. A few however, have been owned by private collectors and one of these came up for sale in Hong Kong in April 2014, when it reached the still remarkable price of \$ 34, 000, 000<sup>15</sup>. Since this sale, numerous remarkably similar examples have appeared on the market with varying degrees of verisimilitude. Subsequent high-profile auctions of Chinese ceramics have also contributed to the manufacture of fakes which has been characterized as part of the wider problem of the trade in fake antiquities from China<sup>16</sup>.

Fig. 2



Porcelain cup with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration in *doucai* style, Ming dynasty, Chenghua mark and period (1465-87), Sir Percival David Collection, PDF A748.

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## 2. Faking for Aesthetics

- 8 The Chenghua reign period is not only a popular one for faking in ceramics today but Chenghua ceramics were also widely imitated or referenced visually and textually from the end of the reign period (1487) onward. The reign period itself was also one in which imitations of ceramics from earlier periods, particularly the Song dynasty, were made at the imperial porcelain factory in Jingdezhen. These imitations were not made to deceive for profit, as Zhou Danquan's fakes were, but rather to demonstrate both antiquarian knowledge of past styles and objects as well as technical mastery in the ability to make visually very similar objects. In that sense, these fakes were made for aesthetic purposes. Among the most impressive examples are the porcelain cups that imitate Southern Song dynasty crackle-glazed Guan ware [fig. 3]. The original Guan wares were made with dark stoneware bodies but the imitations have a white porcelain body, which was cleverly disguised with a brown glaze applied to the mouth and foot rims. These later pieces also have correct reign marks for the Chenghua period, which demonstrates that these objects were meant to imitate, rather than deceive. Yet the masterful technique ensured the production of porcelains that are truly deceptive visually. Handling such pieces would have revealed their true nature and must have played a part in their appreciation.

Fig. 3



Porcelain cup with imitation Song dynasty Guan ware glaze, Ming dynasty, Chenghua mark and period (1465-87), Sir Percival David Collection, PDF A57.

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- 9 The practice of imitating Song ceramics in Ming imperial porcelain did not begin in the Chenghua period, in fact most examples date to the previous Xuande period (1426-35), but the Chenghua examples are more sophisticated and reflect the return of Southern Song style at the imperial painting academy<sup>17</sup>. Ceramics of the Chenghua period themselves were later subject to imitation, sometimes faithfully, but at other times they were signalled through visual references. In the Yongzheng period of the Qing dynasty (1723-35), the visual references were sometimes seemingly obscure because the original materials on which these were based have not survived or because ‘Chenghua style’ was understood in a way that is lost to us today. On this flask [fig. 4], for example, the references are numerous and often subtle: the decorative technique is that of *doucai* enamelling which developed fully in the Chenghua period and was very much viewed as a Ming technique during the Yongzheng period; the shape is also a reference to the Ming version of it and the decorative motif possibly refers to a Li Bai poem published in a new edition of Tang poetry in the Chenghua period<sup>18</sup>. To confirm the identification of this piece as a Chenghua imitation with a conflation of period signifiers, but not a fake of an actual period piece, there is a Chenghua reign mark running just below the mouthrim.

Fig. 4



Porcelain flask with underglaze blue and overglaze enamel decoration in *doucai* style, Qing dynasty, Yongzheng period (1723-35) with Chenghua mark, Sir Percival David Collection, PDF A733.

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- 10 Extant Chenghua porcelains were also faithfully copied in the Qing period at the imperial porcelain factory. There are, for example, Kangxi-marked chicken cups that otherwise are almost identical to the originals [see fig. 2] and it is possible that these were made as replacements, a category of copying that will be discussed below. More striking are the Qing imperial porcelains made to imitate other materials [fig. 5]. Such ceramics are often classified as *'trompe l'oeil'* and in other fields, such as archaeology, they would also be described as *skauomorphs*. The aim of such objects is to be deceptive materially, not stylistically as with imitations of ceramic prototypes. Their ceramic base is disguised to look like another material such as stone or wood, for example. Surprisingly, this practice also has quite a long history in Chinese ceramics but it was in the Qing period that technical and design mastery ensured the production of truly 'fake' objects. The porcelains imitating or disguised as red lacquer, for example, are even difficult to detect when handled. The purpose of such fakes is complex and will be discussed elsewhere in this journal issue, but the mode of faking represented by these pieces is aesthetic rather than overtly functional. This becomes evident when looking at the extreme examples of such porcelains, such as the plates of food made of porcelain in the Qianlong period that can have no practical function. A notable example is in the Palace Museum, Beijing which features a very realistic crab surrounded by fruits, nuts and seeds, presented on an elegant white porcelain plate<sup>19</sup>.

Fig. 5



Porcelain bowl with red enamel in imitation of lacquer and gold inscriptions, Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and period (1736-95). Sir Percival David Collection, PDF A533.

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### 3. Fakes and Antiquarianism

- 11 In the eighteenth century, the imperial porcelain of the Qianlong period (1736-95) is characterized by technical virtuosity but this was also a period in which imperial ‘taste’, broadly defined, was responsive to object scholarship such as that reflected in the many illustrated catalogues of various artworks and objects that were being produced for the court during his reign<sup>20</sup>. This led to the production of objects which responded to objects from the past, including antiques, in a manner which was, to some extent, similar to copying [fig. 6]. For example, blue and white porcelains of the Ming period, specifically the Xuande reign, were copied quite closely, even to the extent of imitating the painting technique which was employed in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. This piece, however, and most of the Ming imitations, does feature the reign mark of the Qianlong period rather than an imitation Xuande one. Thus, if these are not ‘fakes’, what do they represent in design terms? Normally such porcelains imitating past pieces are interpreted as being reflective of antiquarianism in practice and ‘archaism’ in style. As such they can be seen as the culmination of a cumulative response to objects of the past in the Qing court.

Fig. 6



Porcelain bowl with underglaze blue decoration, Qing dynasty, Qianlong mark and period (1736-95). Sir Percival David Collection, PDF B673.

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- 12 Archaistic objects have been produced for the court systematically since the Song period in China and from that time onward, in ceramics, the archaistic mode encompassed shapes from ancient bronzes, Song glazes such as the imitation Guan ware noted previously [see fig. 3], Chenghua *doucai* wares, Xuande blue and white, and so on. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was therefore a vast repertoire of objects from the past to draw upon, and thus many imitations were made. For the most part, these featured contemporary reign marks or other characteristics which made these porcelains identifiable as imitations. This is important because it is what made these porcelains ‘archaistic’ and therefore functional within that design category. Truly deceptive imitations of past pieces, with, for example, reign marks of the period being imitated in the case of Ming-style objects, would not have been appreciated as archaistic. As religious objects require certain features to be efficacious, so do archaistic porcelains if they are to function as such.

#### 4. Faking for necessity and profit

- 13 In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it was not unheard of for porcelains to be made intentionally to look as close as possible to originals from the past. In this case, the function of the imitations was quite different from that of archaistic homages to past styles. Very close copies were often made as replacements or as commercial products. Among the earliest examples of this practice, which is intended to deceive, although probably not for profit, were the crackled wares produced by order for the Southern Song court during the early 13<sup>th</sup> century at kilns located very far from the main production site near the court in Hangzhou. From 1200 to about 1260, kilns located at Dayao produced very close copies of Hangzhou Guan ware, to the extent that sometimes the only way in which they can be distinguished is through microstructural analysis<sup>21</sup>. During the Ming dynasty, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, court wares were also contracted out to commercial kilns and were required to look as though they were made at the imperial factory. Such wares were therefore additional products to enhance supplies. In other cases, both within and beyond the court manufactory, close imitations were made as replacements. There are references in some

Ming texts to the production of replacements for broken earlier pieces which were apparently more fragile. In the *Wanli ye huo bian* 万历野获编 ‘Random Gatherings of the Wanli Era’ (1606), the author notes :

From the Five Dynasties and Song periods the so-called Chai, Ru, Guan, Ge and Ding wares are particularly thin, brittle, and easily destroyed, so they are replaced with recently produced pieces<sup>22</sup>.

- 14 One such replacement piece might be in the Sir Percival David Collection [fig. 7]. In this late Ming dish, which is clearly imitating the colour and decoration of a Song dynasty Ding ware, we can see that the identification of replacements requires some knowledge of the reception context. Today, for example, this piece is easily identifiable as a Ming object but in the late Ming period, original Ding ware pieces were perhaps less familiar and less available. It is also possible that more similar Song-dynasty examples have not survived. In any case, the colour, relief-moulded decoration, and copper band around the rim are all visual signposts for authentic Song Ding ware.

Fig. 7



Porcelain square dish with decoration and glaze in imitation of Song dynasty Ding ware, the rim bound with copper, Ming dynasty, 16<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> century. Sir Percival David Collection, PDF 183.

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- 15 Ding ware was a very successful product during the Song period, and clearly retained a desirable status thereafter. Commercially other white ware producers were competitive during the Song period which meant that Ding ware was copied even during the Song dynasty. One such competitor was the group of workshops making the southern white ware produced at Jingdezhen during the Song dynasty, which is known as ‘qingbai’ ware. There are numerous extant examples of qingbai copies of Ding ware prototypes and archaeologically recovered remains which suggest a competitiveness bordering on

industrial espionage<sup>23</sup>. To our eyes, the copies are not so convincing, as the composition and glaze colours of the two wares are vastly different, but Song-period consumers may not have had ready access to the originals. Nonetheless, this is a good example of deception for profit and therefore should perhaps be included in the wider category of fakes in Chinese ceramics.

## 5. Fake Identification

- 16 Another form of deception, which is associated with both commercially-produced ceramics and those from the imperial factory, is the use of inscriptions, particularly reign marks, as a form of fake authentication or identification. From the time of its first use, in objects of the Tang period, the reign mark has been seen as an indicator of not only the date of the piece, but also its authenticity<sup>24</sup>. Reign marks, by design, usually feature the name of a specific reign period and then, from the Ming dynasty onward, also the name of the dynasty. Reign marks were used appropriately in most cases but their use is complicated by the fashion for stylistic archaism, as discussed above, where reign marks of an earlier period were applied to objects to signal a connection to that period [see fig. 4]. The eighteenth-century flask with a Chenghua mark is a good example of this. The mark is 'fake' in a literal sense but its use is not for deception or forgery. In the Chenghua period itself, reign marks of an earlier period began to be used on imperial porcelains in such a way as to suggest a form of fakery but also possibly on objects made for replacement purposes. For example, sherds of bowls that visually appear to be of the Xuande period, and even have Xuande reign marks, have been found at the imperial kiln site in the Chenghua levels and were made in the Chenghua period<sup>25</sup>. It is unlikely that these were leftover products from the Xuande reign, as there was a gap of some 30 years between the reign periods. Thus, the mark is deceptive and complements the authentic visual appearance of the dishes, whatever their intended purposes.
- 17 Even more mystifying is the use of reign marks from a period in which reign marks were not in use, which can be seen on porcelains from the Qing dynasty [fig. 8]. There are a number of extant Qing-dynasty imperial porcelains which feature a mark referring to a Song-dynasty reign: 'Xuanhe' (1119-1126). There was indeed a reign period of this name in the Song dynasty, but not one that appeared in reign marks of the type that were only introduced on imperial craft products in the early Ming dynasty. Thus, there is no authentic 'Xuanhe' reign mark<sup>26</sup>. Should pieces with this mark therefore be identified as 'fakes'? This may depend on how the mark is used and for whom the object was made. In some cases, it appears to reference the Song period textually or visually, in archaic fashion (see discussion above), but in others, it does suggest intentional deception; the effectiveness of this would depend on the connoisseurship knowledge of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century consumer, thus reminding us of the importance of the consumption context in any discussion of fakes and faking. Generally speaking, the reign mark is a tool for identification, both with the place of manufacture (the imperial factory) and the date of the piece, but the variable use of reign marks does problematize their utility in determining authenticity. Nonetheless, forged imperial porcelains invariably feature a reign mark as makers assume that most buyers are not versed in the history or stylistic applications of reign marks and still see such an inscription as a guarantee of authenticity.

Fig. 8



Porcelain bottle with incised decoration, cobalt blue glaze, and spurious Song-dynasty reign mark, Qing dynasty, Kangxi period (1662-1722). Sir Percival David Collection, PDF B563.

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## 6. Faking for Art: Fake Objects Made of Porcelain

- 18 The use of such reign marks is a problem even today. Contemporary production of porcelain in China, particularly at Jingdezhen, is seriously affected by faking. Numerous studios and workshops are churning out counterfeit imperial porcelains and manipulating the market for them<sup>27</sup>. While there are contemporary makers who produce original and authentic products, there is less studio work being produced here than mass-market ceramics. One of the reasons why the fake market is so successful in Jingdezhen is the skilled workforce that can and does produce almost anything from porcelain using traditional techniques. In an interesting development in porcelain manufacture, over the past 20 years, contemporary conceptual artists have begun to utilize the porcelain workers, in Jingdezhen, and related areas such as Fujian, to manufacture art installations from porcelain and, in some cases, fake objects out of porcelain. Lei Xue's blue and white crushed soda cans ('Drinking tea', 2001-2003) are one example and Cai Guo-Qiang's shipwreck, full of Dehua porcelain figurines ('Reflection', 2004), is another. Artworks such as these are blatantly fake, and use porcelain as a medium through which they conceptualize and therefore problematize faking.
- 19 One artist who has taken this to extremes, both in terms of scale and conceptualization, is Ai Weiwei (b. 1957). Ai has used porcelain as a medium in numerous ways both on a large and small scale. One approach he employs regularly is to use porcelain to recreate objects

in other media or materials, such as the monumental installation ‘Sunflower seeds’ (Tate, 2011), and ‘Watermelons’ (2009), both of which relate closely to the historical practice of *trompe l’oeil* or illusion porcelain discussed earlier. Another method, also related to faking, is the reproduction of historical pieces, such as ‘Blue and White Moonflask’ (1996) which is almost identical to an 18<sup>th</sup>-century original. The aim here is deception, which can be appreciated on several levels, and the object is truly a fake, but with the intention of challenging notions of authenticity. More recently, Ai has created an entire exhibition around porcelain which included new pieces made to look like older examples but with contemporary motifs and narratives in the designs (‘Ai Weiwei on Porcelain’, Sakip Sabanci Muzesi, Istanbul, 12 September 2017- 28 January 2018)<sup>28</sup>. From a distance, these appear to be historical objects, but on close viewing, they are revealed to be ‘fake’, not dissimilarly to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century landscape paintings by the artist Gao Jianfu 高剑父 (‘Flying in the rain’, 1932), which feature tiny modern references such as an airplane in an otherwise traditional landscape.

## 7. Conclusion

20 Ultimately, as the work of Ai Weiwei demonstrates, the study of fakes and faking in Chinese ceramics is really a study of authenticity and its meanings in particular contexts. It is possible to define the fake stylistically, as was done here, but as the categories suggested above demonstrate, the reception of these porcelains is as much a part of their identification as their visual appearance. The broader Chinese context further complicates the definition of ‘fake’, as this has meant different things in different times and places. In another context, for example, an archaistic object or a copy of an old master painting might be interpreted as a fake, but in pre-Modern China, this reflected traditional artistic practices. As seen above, the production of what are perhaps universally understood as fake objects, those that are forged, also has a long and complex history in China, and objects identified as forgeries are even collectible now. What Chinese porcelain demonstrates is that the fake is an important category of object that can be examined as both a design phenomenon and a form of cultural practice, adding a more nuanced perspective to a topic generally considered purely from a commercial standpoint.

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## NOTES

1. Ellen Johnston-Laing, ‘Chou Tan-ch’uan is Chou Shih-ch’en : A Report on a Ming Dynasty Potter Painter and Entrepreneur.’ *Oriental Art* 3 (1975) : 224-230.

2. Maris Gillette, ‘Copying, Counterfeiting, and Capitalism in Contemporary China : Jingdezhen’s Porcelain Industry’, *Modern China* 36(4), 2010 : 367 –403.

3. Stacey Pierson, ‘Authentic Ceramics with Fake Reign Marks : Characterizing *Xuanhe Nian Zhi* Wares of the Qing Dynasty’, *Oriental Art* 46 : 8, November/December 2015, pp. 58-65.

4. Mark Jones, ed., *Fake ? The Art of Deception*, London, British Museum, 1990, pp. 237-238.

5. Nina Siegal, 'Sotheby's Files Second Lawsuit Over Works it Calls Fake', *The New York Times*, 7 February 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/07/arts/design/sothebys-forgery-lawsuits.html>. Viewed 2 July 2018.
6. In the world of paintings, 'fake' and 'forgery' are considered to be slightly different with the latter generally referring to a modern copy passed off as a genuine work by a known artist.
7. A lexicographical analysis of these terms was published in a recent study of glass objects which elucidates the ambiguities associated with these multiple terms related to imitation in its widest sense. See Corine Maitte. « Imitation, copie, contrefaçon, faux : définitions et pratiques sous l'Ancien Régime », *Entreprises et Histoire*, 2015, 1 (78), pp. 13-26. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for bringing this article to my attention.
8. And identified by Kristina Kleutghen in *Imperial Illusions : Crossing Pictorial Boundaries in the Qing Palaces*, University of Washington Press, 2015.
9. See the paper by Chen Chih-En in this journal issue for a detailed discussion.
10. Most studies focus on trompe l'oeil in painting and architecture. A recent exploration of the subject in English is Sybille Ebert-Schiffer, et al, *Deceptions and Illusions : Five Centuries of Trompe L'oeil Painting*, Washington, National Gallery of Art, 2002. Trompe l'oeil is also seen as an aesthetic phenomenon, as outlined in Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei, 'Trompe L'oeil and the Mimetic Tradition in Aesthetics', in Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, ed., *Analecta Husserliana LXXXVII*, Human Creation Between Reality and Illusion (2005) : 79-93.
11. Johnston-Laing 1975.
12. Johnston-Laing 1975, p. 224, fn. 3. Edition consulted : *Meishu congshu* II, 8, Taipei, 1963, pp. 208-209.
13. This piece can be seen on the museum's website : <https://theme.npm.edu.tw/selection/Article.aspx?sNo=04001113&lang=2> Viewed 2 July 2018.
14. Craig Clunas, 'The Art of Social Climbing in Sixteenth-Century China', *The Burlington Magazine* 133, no. 1059 (Jun.) : 368-375.
15. 'The Meiyintang "Chicken Cup"', 8 April 2014, Sotheby's Hong Kong. The sale catalogue is still available online : <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2014/meiyintang-chicken-cup-hk0545.html> Viewed 3 July 2018.
16. Toby Full and Stefan Gruber, 'Forge and Export : the Trade in Fake Antiquities from China', chapter 4 in Joris Kila and Marc Balcells, eds., *Cultural Property Crime : an Overview and Analysis of Contemporary Perspectives and Trends*, Brill, 2014, p. 61.
17. As is demonstrated in the work of the court painter Dai Jin (1388-1462). See for example the hanging scroll 'Returning late from a Spring outing' in the National Palace Museum, Taipei, in Maxwell K. Hearn, *Splendours of Imperial China*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1996, p. 94.
18. Kang-I Sun Chang and Stephen Owen, eds., *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature*. Volume II : from 1375, Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 11. The poem 山中問答 (shangzhong wendai) is known in English as 'Questions and Answers in the Mountains' and refers to peach blossoms falling on flowing water.
19. Most of the surviving examples of porcelains like this one are in the Palace Museum Beijing collection. GU22675.
20. Stacey Pierson, "From the Daguan lu to the Shiqu Baoji : Chinese Art Catalogues of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century", *Hautes Études Orientales-Extrême-Orient* 8, no. 44 (2008) : 73-94.
21. Rose Kerr, ed., *Ceramic Technology*, part 12, volume 5, *Science and Civilisation in China, Chemistry and Chemical Technology*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, p. 250 and 265.
22. Shen Defu, *Wanli ye huo bian*. 1591. Cited in (and translated by) Craig Clunas, 'The Cost of Ceramics and the Cost of Collecting Ceramics in the Ming Period', *Oriental Ceramic Society of Hong Kong Bulletin* 8 : 47-53, p. 50.

23. Examples of qingbai wares which closely imitate Ding ware prototypes have been excavated in the Song levels at Jingdezhen. See Liu Xinyuan, ed., *Ceramic Finds from Jingdezhen Kilns (Jingdezhen chutu taoci)*, Hong Kong, Fung Ping Shan Museum, 1990, no. 70.
24. Dagmar Schafer, 'Inscribing the Artifact and Inspiring Trust : The Changing Role of Markings in the Ming Era', *East Asian Science, Technology and Society : An International Journal* (2011) 5 :239-2
25. Published in Zhao Yueting, ed., 2010. *Huangdi de ciqi : Jingdezhen chutu "Ming san dai" guanyao ciqi zhenpin huicui*, vol. II : Xuande, Chenghua juan. 2 vols. Shanghai : Dongfang chubanshe, 2010, fig. 126, p. 332.
26. The history and use of this mark is explored in depth in Pierson 2015, pp. 58 – 65.
27. Gillette 2010 : 367 –403.
28. Catalogue : Aysen Anadol and Erman Ata Uncu, *Ai Weiwei on Porcelain*, Sakip Sanbanci Muzesi, 2017.

## ABSTRACTS

This article explores the category of 'fake' in Chinese porcelain. It begins by defining the fake in the context of Chinese art and considers how the fake might be a stylistic category as well as a concept with reference to Chinese ceramics. Fake porcelain by definition is made to deceive but what kind of deception is intended? Some porcelain is made to deceive the buyer who believes it is 'authentic'. This is falsifying for profit. However, deception can also be a form of aesthetics or even a necessity. Some Chinese porcelains were intentionally made in imitation of past pieces, for example. These are usually defined as 'archaistic'. Others were made as replacements, and still others as skeuomorphs in the trompe l'oeil tradition that developed in court arts of the Qing period. For the latter, this article queries and explores what in fact is being faked. In doing so, it demonstrates that the concept of 'fake' in Chinese porcelain is complex and its production is grounded in both commercial and connoisseurship practices. In order to explore the complexity of this concept this article examines the various types of Chinese porcelain that might be defined as fake, looking at the motivations, history, reception and audiences for this kind of production in dynastic and contemporary China. Stylistically six types of 'fake' porcelains have been identified for the purposes of this article: deceptive pieces; aesthetic fakes; antiquarian pieces; necessary fakes; objects with fake identification, and fakes made as artworks. Ultimately, truly deceptive fakes, like forgeries, are an increasing problem across the arts, not just in Chinese porcelain, but this article demonstrates that the production of fake Chinese porcelain was deceptive in several different ways and such porcelains were made in a very particular context that is revealed when the subject of 'fake' porcelain is positioned within a historical stylistic framework.

Cet article explore la notion de "faux" dans la porcelaine chinoise. En préambule il définit le faux dans le contexte de l'art chinois et l'envisage à la fois comme catégorie stylistique et comme concept en lien avec la céramique chinoise. La fausse porcelaine est par définition faite pour tromper mais quelles sont les intentions de cette duperie ? Certaines porcelaines sont destinées à leurrer l'acheteur qui pense investir dans de "l'authentique". C'est une contrefaçon pour le profit. Cependant la tromperie peut avoir une intention esthétique ou s'avérer être une nécessité. En effet certaines porcelaines étaient faites à l'imitation de pièces plus anciennes par exemple, elles sont alors identifiées comme "archaïques". D'autres étaient des objets de

remplacement, ou encore des objets “skeuomorphes” dans la tradition du trompe-l’œil, développé dans les arts de cour durant la période des Qing. Enfin, cet article interroge et explore ce qui est finalement imité. Faisant cela, il démontre que le concept de “faux” dans la porcelaine chinoise est complexe et que sa production relève à la fois des pratiques commerciales et du *connoisseurship*. Pour explorer ce concept dans toute sa complexité, l’article examine différents types de porcelaines chinoises qui peuvent être reconnues comme “fausses” en regardant les motivations, le contexte historique, la réception et la clientèle de ce type de production dans la Chine dynastique et contemporaine. Stylistiquement, six types de “faux” ont été identifiés pour nourrir la démonstration de cet article : les pièces de contrefaçon ; les “faux” esthétiques ; les pièces “à la manière” des antiques ; les “faux” nécessaires pour un usage courant ; les objets avec une fausse identification, et les faux produits comme objets d’art. En définitive, les contrefaçons véritablement trompeuses constituent un problème croissant parmi les arts, pas seulement dans le domaine de la céramique ; cet article montre que la question de la fausse porcelaine chinoise, encore produite aujourd’hui, doit être située dans un contexte particulier, à la fois historique et stylistique.

Este artículo explora la categoría de lo "falso" en la porcelana china. Comienza definiendo lo falso en el contexto del arte chino y considera que lo falso puede ser tanto una categoría estilística como un concepto propio de la cerámica china. La porcelana falsa por definición está hecha para engañar, pero ¿qué tipo de engaño se pretende con ella? Se fabrica porcelana falsa para engañar al comprador que cree que es "auténtica". En este caso se trata de falsificar con fines de lucro. Sin embargo, el engaño también puede ser una forma de estética o incluso una necesidad. Algunas porcelanas chinas, por ejemplo, fueron hechas intencionalmente a imitación de piezas antiguas, y así se las consideró como objetos "arcaicos". Otras se hicieron como reemplazos y otras como “skeuomorphs” en la tradición del *trompe l’œil* que se desarrolló en las artes de la corte del período Qing. Por fin, este artículo enfoca y explora lo que en concreto se suele falsificar. Al hacerlo, se demuestra que el concepto de "falso" en la porcelana china es complejo y su producción se basa tanto en las prácticas comerciales como en el aprecio estético. Para analizar la complejidad de este concepto, el presente artículo examina los diversos tipos de porcelana china que podrían definirse como falsos, analizando las motivaciones, la historia, la recepción y el público de este tipo de producción en la China dinástica y contemporánea. Estilísticamente, se distinguen seis tipos de porcelanas "falsas" en el marco de este artículo : piezas engañosas ; falsificaciones estéticas ; piezas de anticuario ; falsificaciones necesarias ; objetos con identificación falsa ; falsificaciones realizadas como obras de arte. Finalmente, las imitaciones verdaderamente engañosas constituyen un problema cada vez mayor en el arte, y no sólo en la cerámica. Este artículo muestra que la cuestión de la porcelana china falsa, todavía producida hoy, debe enfocarse en un contexto a la vez histórico y estilístico.

## INDEX

**Mots-clés:** Porcelaine, faux, Chine, classification, marque de règne

**Palabras claves:** Porcelana, falso, China, clasificación, marcas de reinado

**Keywords:** Porcelain, fake, China, classification, reign mark

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