

to 16 September 2024

from 12 June

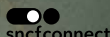
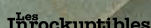
UNBLEMISHED COLOURS

Masterpieces of Chinese
Monochrome Porcelain (8th-18th Centuries)

With exceptional loans from
Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang Collection



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President of the Guimet French National Museum of Asian Arts

Yannick Lintz

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Musée national des arts asiatiques – Guimet

6, place d'Iéna 75116 Paris
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Bus → Iéna (lignes 32, 63, 82)
→ Kléber-Boissière (lignes 30, 22)
www.guimet.fr

Press contacts

Agence Observatoire Véronique Janneau

Viviane Joëssel
+33 (0)1 43 54 87 71
+33 (0)7 66 42 12 30
viviane@observatoire.fr

Vanessa Leroy
+33 (0)1 43 54 87 71
+33 (0)7 68 83 67 73
vanessaleroy@observatoire.fr

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Guimet Communications

communication@guimet.fr

Nicolas Ruysen

Director of communication
+33 (0)6 45 71 74 37
nicolas.ruysen@guimet.fr

Anna-Nicole Hunt

Communications Officer
+33 (0)6 33 61 94 53
anna-nicole.hunt@guimet.fr

Claire Solery

Digital Project Manager
+33 (0)6 31 32 75 37
claire.solery@guimet.fr

Chérifa Lehtihet

Communications Officer
- Social Networks
+33 (0)6 30 03 90 82
cherifa.lehtihet@guimet.fr

Yasmine Boukhelifa

Communications Officer
+33 (0)1 56 52 53 70
yasmine.boukhelifa@guimet.fr

Jinfang Li

Communications Officer
+33 (0)1 55 73 31 70
jinfang.li@guimet.fr

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This exhibition benefits from exceptional loans
from the Richard W.C. Kan / Zhuyuetang collection



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Press release

A quest for perfection, and the pursuit of ever-purer forms and colours. An initiatory journey through beauty, via ten centuries of creation and design in China. A breath-taking aesthetic emotion.

The exhibition *Unblemished colours* is a highlight of the Guimet museum's summer programme. It retraces the long history of Chinese earthenware and Grand Feu colours from the 8th to 18th century. Bringing together 300 masterpieces from Richard Kan's (Hong Kong) Zhuyuetang collection and the Guimet collection, this exhibit illustrates China's taste for formal simplicity and pure colour, perfected throughout the centuries. In their infinite quest for purity and the perfect form and colour, the potters of China created unique pieces with an extraordinarily refined aesthetic, which are presented in this exhibition.

The purity of the kaolin, or "China clay", which becomes immaculate white when fired at high temperature, has contributed to the international recognition that porcelain enjoys today. The quality of Chinese production reached its height in the late 18th century, and European courts were fascinated by the mystery emanated by these wares.

With their single-colour glaze, monochrome ceramics are the finest expression of Chinese potters' craftsmanship: they require both pure materials and an absolute mastery of both the technique and firing. Despite the limited number of pigments which could resist high-temperature firing, Chinese potters

continually developed new colours to satisfy emperors and intellectuals, and to meet the high level of perfection required for use in rituals.

The wares are beautifully presented in nine distinct sections, each representing a colour (white, celadon, green and turquoise, blue, black and aubergine, red, yellow, brown, imitation of materials and rainbow). The exhibit evokes the cultural and symbolic connotations of each colour and the techniques used in production. The visitor is guided along their journey by a selection of poems illustrating some of the profound emotions that the Chinese felt when considering the perfection of these creations.

In addition to ceramic masterpieces, the exhibit features a rare 7-metre-long illustrated album dating back to the 18th century, exceptionally on loan from the Rennes Museum of Fine Arts. This album retraces the ceramic production process at the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen, China's porcelain capital.

In addition, multimedia animations will take the visitor "into" Chinese porcelain, among the particles of glass, with a microscopic journey into the material.

This exhibition benefits from exceptional loans from the Richard W.C. Kan / Zhuyuetang collection and sponsorship from Loewe and China Guardian.

The Guimet Museum will remain open throughout the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.

Editorial by the President of the Guimet Museum



↑ Yannick Lintz © DR

The Guimet Museum's rich collection of Chinese ceramics is one of the most important in the world. Initially built up by Émile Guimet, it has gradually been enriched by masterpieces including those from the magnificent Grandidier collection. Since June 2021, they have been joined by an exceptional *meiping* porcelain vase with blue-and-white decoration, acquired with the support of the Friends of the Guimet Museum thanks to the patronage of Richard Kan.

It is therefore with particular pleasure that we welcome the Zhuyuetang Collection of monochrome ceramics to the *Unblemished Colours* exhibition. These pieces, patiently and passionately assembled by Richard Kan, brilliantly reveal a whole swathe of China's quest for technical mastery and aesthetic perfection.

Their unique dialogue with the monochrome Chinese porcelains in the Guimet Museum reveals, through the extraordinary quality of these major heritage pieces, the Chinese passion for perfect creation and absolute purity. This quest is rooted in the Confucian tradition. In Europe, interest in such works has not waned since the landmark exhibition organised by the Oriental Ceramic Society in London in 1948. *Unblemished Colours* is a dazzling demonstration of just how much these masterpieces have to tell us, both aesthetically and scientifically.

I would like to thank all those who helped bring these major works together, first and foremost Richard Kan, as well as Peter Y.K. Lam and Claire Déléry, the remarkable curators of a truly historic exhibition.

Yannick Lintz
President of the Guimet
French National Museum of Asian Arts

The Collector's foreword



↑ Richard Kan © Photo Ringo Tang



↑ © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui

Apple-shaped vase
Porcelain, clair de lune glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province)
Dynastie Qing dynasty, mark and period
of Kangxi reign (1662–1722)
H. 7; MD. 3.3 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection

A young Chinese ceramics enthusiast once asked me: 'How do you derive pleasure from the collection of Chinese ceramics and what would you consider to be the prerequisites for achieving your goal?'

My answer was as follows:

'One of the rewards of collecting is being able to share the history and beauty of the pieces with others. This is easier said than done because:

- there has to be a genuine interest;
- there has to be a desire for knowledge;
- there is a need to find the right tutors;
- there has to be a stable and healthy financial position;
- and lastly, there has to be humility.'

People often wonder why I have named my collection 'Zhuyuetang'. The name is a portmanteau involving my surname (Kan 簡), meaning 'a moon beam reaching the ground through a bamboo grove'. This is a most befitting match, for the beauty of fine Chinese monochrome ceramics depends not only on the clarity of form but also on the infinite subtlety of the coloured glazes. The clair-de-lune glaze, fully developed in the Kangxi reign of the Qing dynasty (1662–1722), is but one of the most charming and alluring glazes to make my point.

Richard W.C. Kan

Exhibition curators:

Claire Déléry, curator, Chinese ceramics, Guimet Museum

Peter Y.K. Lam, Honorary fellow of the Institute of Chinese Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Presentation of the exhibition



Porcelains that were perfected by potters, glorified by poets and prized by emperors

Introduction

China's cultural, political and economic history is intrinsically linked to the evolution of porcelain, a highly technical material in which Chinese potters gained extraordinary expertise over time. Created using the elements — earth, water, air and fire — these porcelains were further enhanced with coloured glazes to make them water-resistant and suitable for daily use. These coloured glazes were perfected by potters, glorified by poets and highly prized by emperors. In a continual quest to create new colours, the Chinese potters also experimented different firing temperatures and pigments while paying particular attention to texture and surface: a soft feel, and a glossy, even finish.

Considering the importance that Chinese literati attached to the material (a part of our world and a reflection of it) and the need for purity in pieces used for rituals, Chinese potters embarked on a continued quest for perfection, and ever-purer forms and colours. The monochromes – or single-colour ceramics – thoroughly embody this quest. In their pursuit to create new colours and please the Chinese emperors, who were keen art aficionados, the potters invented a variety of extremely subtle hues which can only be perceived in natural light. Chinese literati and emperors admired works of art in daylight. For these Chinese monochrome masterpieces to be appreciated in similar lighting conditions, we are presenting this exhibition in white light. It gathers the finest Chinese monochromes from Richard Kan's Zhuyuetang and the Guimet collections.

Raw materials

In China, there is an infinite variety of soils, some of them, notably clays, can be shaped and fired at high temperature. They can be used to make very resistant recipients for everyday use. Clays from China have been used for thousands of years and are known around the world. When fired, they turn beige, pink, grey or white. Kaolin, is a very pure, white clay, which is generally mixed with petuntse, a felspathic rock, to make porcelain. China was known worldwide for these immaculate white wares. Most clays, with the exception of kaolin, contain iron and oxides which create different colours.

The glaze that makes the object impermeable is often comprised of clay and ash or carbonate-rich minerals. The colour obtained after firing depends on the temperature and the atmosphere of the kiln. For several centuries, the colour range of Chinese ceramics was limited to white, black, green and honey yellow. The colours of these objects inspired Chinese poets for whom they evoked elements of nature.

Ceramics and their coloured surface

To make the body of ceramics impermeable and easier to use in daily life, the objects were covered with a substance that melted into glassy material when fired in the potter's kiln. Specialists use different terms to describe the vitrified surface of ceramics according to its composition and its firing temperature. In Asian Arts, we refer to "high-firing glaze" when the glaze has been fired at a very high temperature 1000-1200°C, and has a similar composition to the body, which leads them to fuse during firing.

"Low-firing glaze" refers to firing temperatures of approximately 900°C, when the glaze mixture has a very different chemical composition than that of the ceramic body.

These glazes are often coloured.

Ceramic firing and colour

Mastering the temperature of traditional kilns is a delicate exercise. For days and nights on end, the kiln must be watched, supplied with wood, and the air flow controlled to obtain the desired result.

The variety of ceramic colours presented in this exhibition was obtained by working rigorously on different glaze compositions, temperatures, and kiln atmospheres (quantity of oxygen). The colours also vary depending on the pigments used.

Firing creates a wide range of colours, from black to yellow, brown and green.

Copper produces greens, blues and reds.

Cobalt produces blues.

Manganese produces browns and purples.

Gold produces pinks and lilacs.

Imperial marks

Several marks were written on Chinese ceramics, and these changed over time. They designated the recipient of the object or the context in which it was produced. During the Tang (618-907), Northern Song (960-1125), Southern Song (1127-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) dynasties, the mark "guan" ("official") was used to indicate that the object was reserved for the court. Other marks referring to a central administration department for which the ceramics were destined were also sometimes used.

During the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), the Yongle Emperor (reigning 1402-1424) decided to inscribe his name on exceptional pieces from the Jingdezhen kilns. This practice continued through the Qing dynasty (1644-1911).

Imperial marks were painted or incised into the object, often on the underside. They are not visible at first glance. Different types of writing were used: cursive, or seal script (an old script). These marks are important for Chinese porcelain specialists as they enable them to determine the authenticity of objects.

The art of reduction

By Regina Krahl

Monochromes are the classic proponents of the 'less is more' doctrine.



Reduction in art is concentration on essentials, not simplification. Monochromatic art was created in China in various media at least as early as the Tang dynasty (618–907) and became truly celebrated under the Song (960–1279). Monochromatic ink painting was the art form of choice for China's literati, since it exposes the quality of the painter's brushwork more relentlessly than opulent paintings in colour do. In the same way, monochromes – in the present context, ceramics glazed in a single colour – did not reduce the potters' labour; they imposed an excess of care to be lavished on all other aspects of the ceramic vessel. Monochromatic porcelains were among Chinese potters' most challenging creations.

Monochromes are unforgiving. Any flaw in body or glaze, any weakness in potting, firing or the design itself is bound to mar the overall visual impact of the artefact. The single glaze colour focuses our attention on such features as quality of workmanship, tactility of the surface and harmony of the underlying form – aspects that receive much less scrutiny if our eyes are distracted by coloured patterning. The apparent reduction increases the demands on the potter and concentrates the reception of the viewer, who is more likely to experience the vessel in all its dimensions. Monochromes are the classic proponents of the 'less is more' doctrine.

This long history of fashioning Chinese monochromes has left us with a rainbow of colours and a cornucopia of styles. Once the appeal of monochromes had been noticed, they never went out of fashion again. The range and variety are therefore enormous. To do justice to this in an exhibition is a tall order. The very rich Zhuyuetang Collection, here supported by some masterpieces from the Musée Guimet, offers a rare opportunity to see a representative cross-section of the high standard achieved in this art form. This exhibition of monochromes showcases, however, not only the vast colour range developed by China's potters; the reduction to monochromy at the same time exposes the ingenuity of these ceramic artists in devising vessel shapes and their virtuosity in potting and firing them.

↑ Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / Photo Barry Lui

White



“If Xing ware is like the snow, then Yue ware is ice.”

LU Yu (733 -804), *The Classic of tea*



White ceramics are the finest expression of Chinese potters' craftsmanship, combining a clear paste and a white-tinted transparent or opaque glaze. While their colours may seem similar at first glance, on closer inspection, we see their palette ranges from coolwhite to warm ivory, and even with a bluish tint. These hues were given evocative names such as “egg white” and “sweet white” and each shade reacts differently to the light, giving some a matt texture and a glossy appearance to others. They all however use ingredients which contain trace amount of colourants such as iron, which is often found in clay material. White ceramics became very popular from the 8th century, during the Tang dynasty, when they were introduced into the imperial court. The whiteness of Xing wares even inspired poets, who compared them to polished silver and snow. Their immaculate colour – free of imperfections – was also associated with the notion of purity. In the 15th century, white wares were used for rituals related to the deceased ancestors of the imperial family, as well as used in the Altar of the Moon.



← ↑ Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / Photo Barry Lui

Celadon



“Black in body, crakled like ice, unctous like jade.”

Line from a poem by the Qianlong emperor, written in 1776

China has been producing celadon or greenware for thousands of years. Their colour, which may vary from brown to stunning bluish-grey and sea green, comes from the iron within the clay and the ash used in the glaze mixtures. The proportion of each material and the atmosphere in the kiln (the amount of oxygen) influences the colour obtained. A large quantity of celadon ware was produced by many different kilns, the most well-known being the Yaozhou kilns in the north of China and the Yue and Longquan kilns in the south. The finest pieces were sent to the imperial court and sometimes given as offerings during the construction of temples and pagodas containing sacred relics of the Buddha and worthy monks. Literati compared celadon ware to jade, the most highly regarded material for the Chinese. Emperors of the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) kept for themselves the pieces from the kilns of the Ruzhou region in Henan province. Their water-blue glaze featured fine crazing. The balance and simplicity of the form, the colour of the glaze and its texture were all important criteria for creating the perfect piece. Celadon ware from the Song dynasty remains unequalled but there were attempts to revive it in subsequent centuries.

← Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / Photo Barry Lui

Green and turquoise



In China, bright green is often compared to the skin of a watermelon. In ceramics, this shade is obtained with copper oxide. Originating probably from the Middle East, green glaze mixtures combine both sand and lead. This colour is impossible to be fired in the 1200°C of the kilns used for porcelain and stoneware. Green glaze was therefore used only on earthenware made from ordinary clay which can be fired at a maximum of 950°C. These ceramics, which would easily break, were funerary wares mainly placed in tombs. The colour green was sorely lacking in the palette of porcelain painters, so during the Ming dynasty, they tried to create green by using a two-stage firing technique. The second, low-temperature firing was for the decorative parts. Under the supervision of Lang Tingji, governor of Jiangxi province between 1705 and 1712, new shades of green were created, notably a pale green hue. This significant discovery enabled artists to paint nuanced bouquets of flowers and leaves. Turquoise was initially limited to low-temperature firing. The blue colour palette expanded in the early 18th century to include a pale turquoise blue on porcelain.

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Blue



“The orchid blooms on the rock pedestal. Underneath, various autumn flowers pile up. Their arrangement is perfect, conveying subtle meaning. No need to add the green and red colours.”

Poem written on the painting *Flowers, rock and planter with orchids*, by Wang Jian



Dark blue comes from cobalt, a rare and expensive pigment imported into China from the Middle East during the Tang dynasty. It was very popular during the 8th and 9th centuries and was mainly used on pottery with “three-colour” (*sancai*) polychrome décor, which combined green, yellow, white and a few touches of blue.

The use of cobalt was reserved for luxury objects and strictly controlled. Under the Yuan and Ming dynasties, in the 14th and 15th centuries, blue monochromes were produced for imperial use and as tableware during ceremonial rituals at the altar of Heaven. In the Temple of Heaven, tableware, tiles and fabrics were all blue. A *claire de lune* white was also used for tableware for the Temple of the Moon.

In the early 18th century, Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723-1735) asked the imperial kilns of Jingdezhen to study and draw inspiration from the precious pieces in the imperial collection. He wished his artisans to emulate these historical masterpieces. The potters subsequently created items with blue-green hues which imitated the legendary *ru* and *guan* glazes from the Song era. They also invented the new shades of delicate pastel blue.



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Black and purple



“Black as lacquer.”

CAO Zhao, *The Essential Criteria of Antiques (Gegu yaolun)*, Ming dynasty, 1387

Remarkable black monochrome wares were produced in the kilns of northern China under the Tang dynasty. The colour black came from the high quantity of iron present in the glaze. The ware had to be fired at a high temperature, around 1200°C, to obtain a glossy black colour with a dense and velvety quality. Fired below this temperature, the colour became brown or obtained a greenish hue. Black monochromes reached the height of their popularity between 11th and 13th centuries, during the Song and Jin dynasties.

They became paired with extremely refined black lacquer pieces on tables. Although they fell out of fashion over the next couple of centuries, black monochromes made a remarkable comeback in the 18th century when the Qing emperors asked the Jingdezhen potteries to reproduce these historical glazes. These new types of black were called “mirror black” or “metal black”. They had a different composition than their predecessors: a greater quantity of iron, and the addition of cobalt and manganese.

In its infinite quest to create ever more colours, China also created a variety of aubergine-purple and pink shades.

← Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / Photo Barry Lui

Red



In modern-day China, red is a colour of celebration and joy, thanks to its association with fire and the sun.

At the beginning of the Ming dynasty, Emperor Hongwu (r. 1368–1398) decided to use porcelain vessels for official rituals, demanding the Jingdezhen potteries to produce flawless porcelain pieces. The first red monochrome wares were used to give offerings to the Temple of the Sun.

Copper was used to create this remarkable red, yet copper red is an unstable, volatile colour, which can only be obtained with a particular glaze mixture and at a specific firing temperature. The kiln must also have a good reduction atmosphere and be at a very high temperature. If there is oxygen in the kiln, the copper will be oxidized to a green colour. No potter can ever be sure to achieve the perfect copper red. The most beautiful red monochromes were mastered in the 15th century, under Emperor Ming Xuande (r. 1426–1435).

This difficult technique seems to have been quickly lost as imperial rituals to celebrate the Temple of the Sun became less frequent. One hundred and fifty years later, these pieces were already considered as treasures, even more precious than jade.

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Yellow

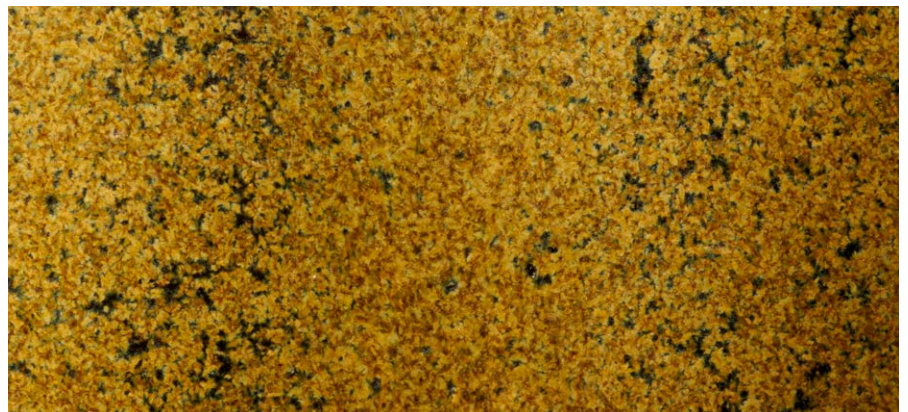


↑ Musée Guimet © Richard W.C. Kan / musée Guimet, Paris / Photo Barry Lui



The colour yellow has been associated with the earth in China since the first millennium BCE. Indeed, many types of soil in China are yellow. Materials of this colour, notably yellow jade, were used in rituals dedicated to this primordial entity. Heaven and the earth are central elements of Chinese cosmology, and in the tradition begun by Confucius (551–479 BCE), heaven, the earth and society are all intertwined: it was up to the emperor to ensure that natural order was in place.

The first yellow-glaze wares were coloured using iron. Clay, ashes and lime were then used to produce honeyed tones. At the end of the 14th century, the porcelain imperial kilns developed yellow glaze on porcelain. Objects of this colour were reserved for the emperor and were used for state rituals in honour of the Temple of the Earth. In the 18th century, a new shade of yellow was introduced by the Western missionaries. Using lead antimoniate, this bright and vivid yellow evoked the colour of chrysanthemums and pine flowers and was very prized.



↑ Musée Guimet © GrandPalaisRMN (Musée Guimet, Paris) / Photo Thierry Ollivier

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Brown



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“One day, Emperor Renzong visited the pavilion of his concubine Zhang and saw a vermilion-red porcelain from Dingzhou. The emperor sternly asked her: “Where did this come from? “. She replied that it was a gift from Wang Gongchen. The emperor replied angrily: “I’ve already warned you not to accept gifts from my ministers and officials, why didn’t you listen? “. He grabbed a weapon and smashed the object to pieces. The concubine apologised at length and everything was settled.”

SHAO Bowen (1057-1134), *Register of Shao's Observations*, Song dynasty

Some magnificent russet-brown ceramics were produced in the 11th and 12th centuries in the kilns of Ding (Hebei province) and Yaozhou (Shaanxi province) in the north of China. Their brown hue comes from iron oxide-rich particles which crystalized on the surface of the glaze during the last phase of firing, as they are cooling, with the presence of oxygen. Potters in the Song era had completely mastered the different possibilities of iron. Present in most clay, iron creates brown, black and green hues. While its abundance makes iron easy to get hold of, but it is very difficult to obtain a perfectly opaque and even brown glaze. The shapes and colours of the brown and black Song ceramics took their inspiration from lacquered objects. Their silvery reflections were also compared to the patina that bronze develops over time.

In the early 18th century, the French Jesuit priest François-Xavier d'Entrecolles describes the contemporary discoveries at the kilns of Jingdezhen. He mentions a glaze called tse-kinveou (golden-brown glaze) which he compares to the colour of bronze, coffee or withered leaves. At that time, a new range of light browns was also perfected, including the subtle “millet (café-au-lait)” which made reference to a very popular cereal in China.



Material imitations



“I would compare certain flambés to a permanent firework fixed to the clay by the skillful combinations of a clever enchanter [...]. Magic vase, which wizard has, on your slight sides, created and kept unalterable the flames that throw lightning?”

Ernest GRANDIDIER, *Chinese ceramics*, 1894

With their poetic angle of the world, Chinese Literati gave evocative names to certain objects or compared colours to natural elements (the colour of snow, the sky after rain), to plants (watermelon, pine flower), to animals (partridge feather, hare fur, etc).

As part of a major movement to renew the historic glazes which characterised the 18th century, the artisans at the Jingdezhen kilns succeeded in recreating a very special glaze produced during the Tang dynasty. This glaze was called “tea dust” because its colour and texture were like a crushed tealeaf. But the artisans did not stop at imitating historic wares, they drew on their research to master new colours which they submitted to the emperor for his approval. Among these new colours were “eel yellow” and “snakeskin green” created by the imperial kiln director Tang Ying (1682–1756). Emperor Yongzheng (r. 1723–1735) was fascinated by these new shades and reserved most of the pieces for the court. The recreation of purple *jun* (flambé) ware from the Song and Ming eras gave rise to other colours and effects such as changing colours, mineral colours, jade and “robin egg”.

The Chinese ceramics collections at the Guimet Museum



By Claire Déléry
curator, Chinese ceramics,
Guimet Museum

“When one stops to consider all the many hazards of firing, all the multiple causes of deterioration or destruction, all the sorts of defects inherent to porcelain, is it not incredible, extraordinary, uncanny to possess perfect pieces of immaculate purity? Thus, my admiration knows no bounds before every such masterpiece.”

Ernest GRANDIDIER, *Chinese ceramics*, 1894

The world-renowned collection of Chinese ceramics at the Guimet Museum in Paris is the largest collection of its kind anywhere in France. It notably gathers together pieces purchased by Émile Guimet (1836-1918), as well as works from the Asian collections of the Musée du Louvre, transferred to the Guimet Museum in 1945. The Guimet collections testify to the European taste for the palette of Chinese potters.

The museum opened by Émile Guimet in Paris in 1889 was dedicated to the history of Asian religions. Its founder chose to exhibit works evoking the region's main spiritual currents, as well as Japanese and Chinese ceramics from the 18th and 19th centuries, and also a few older objects. The showcases dedicated to Chinese ceramics retraced the history of ceramic techniques and the discovery of the various colours used. Émile Guimet was fascinated by ceramics and colours. His family owned a factory of textile dyes which allowed him to make his fortune, and as a young man he had pursued music and ceramics. At that time, within the scientific and intellectual world of Paris, Chinese ceramics were lent particular importance. The Sèvres porcelain manufactory had opened a museum in 1824, which explained the history of ceramics in all its various forms. The manufactory sought to document and reproduce the colours perfected by the Chinese and had carried out several fundamental studies on the subject.

Occupying this same vein, was the collection that Ernest Grandidier gifted to the Louvre in 1894, and which he would further enrich up until his death in 1912. This collector sought to write the history of techniques and decorative

↑ Plate
Stoneware covered with a brown wash, Jun glaze
Jun kilns (Yuzhou, Henan Province) - Early Ming dynasty,
early 15th century - H: 5; D: 18 cm
Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, entered the Louvre
collection before 1912, Inv. G5431
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designs employed by Chinese potters and to exhibit objects capable of inspiring French ceramicists. He published his research in a book entitled *La céramique chinoise*, and in so doing contributed to an already rich scientific movement. Although comprising over six thousand pieces, his collection, typical of the 19th century, was incomplete, for not all Chinese productions were represented. Most pieces then available for sale in Paris were porcelains from the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and the Qing dynasty (1644–1911). Grandidier also managed to purchase older objects – then difficult to procure – dating back to the dynasties of the Song (960–1279) and the Yuan (1271–1368).

The Chinese ceramics incorporated into the collections of the Far East section of the Louvre's Decorative Objects Department (1893–1932) and then into its Asian Arts Department (1932–45) were of a different nature. Extensive development projects carried out in China in the early 20th century unearthed tombs documenting the productions of ancient China. In this manner, ceramics dating back to the Neolithic period and to the dynasties of the Han (206 BC– AD 220), Tang (618–907) and Song entered the Louvre as illustrations of the Asian arts of sculpture and ceramics. Notable additions to the museum were the ceramic pieces brought back from their missions to China by Édouard Chavannes (1907–1908) and Paul Pelliot (1906–1909), those donated by David David-Weill (1929), and those bequeathed by Raymond Koechlin (1932). The Louvre also purchased or was gifted other antique Chinese ceramics, allowing it to complement those acquired by Ernest Grandidier.

Following the transfer of the Louvre's Asian collections to the Guimet Museum in 1945, the latter continued to welcome important collections of Chinese ceramics, notably those of Atherton Curtis (1863–1943) and Michel Calmann (1880–1974), which stood out for their quality. These collections focused on the productions of the Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties, including many monochromes. They reflected a new period of French collecting, profoundly influenced during the 20th century by the arrival of Chinese ceramic pieces hitherto almost unknown in Europe.

↑ Wicker-basket-shaped tripod censer
Porcelain, tea-dust glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province)
Qing Dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35)
H. 11.5; D. 20.5 cm - Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection,
purchased from Count Robert of Semallé, inv. G1845
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The Exhibition catalogue



Unblemished colours, masterpieces of Chinese monochrome porcelain (8th - 18th Century)

A Musée Guimet / Lienart éditions co-publication

352 pages

350 illustrations

Price: 39 €

Language: french-english

Available in bookshops on 12 June 2024

Famous worldwide, porcelain has long remained the exclusive preserve of China, with Europe only unlocking its secrets in the 18th century. Monochrome porcelain – that is, coated in a single colour – represents the pinnacle of technical perfection in this art, requiring great purity of materials and absolute control over the firing process. Pigments capable of withstanding very high firing temperatures are few, and Chinese potters, thanks to their know-how, have continuously developed new shades to satisfy emperors and literati.

The long history of the mastering colours is traced here through a selection of 250 absolute masterpieces from the Zhuyuetang and Guimet Museum collections.

Set of visuals for the press

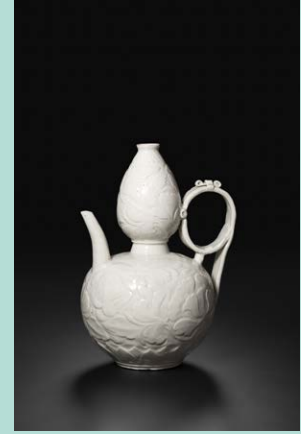


Fig. 008
Double-gourd-shaped ewer
Porcelain, carved design of peonies under transparent glaze - Ding kilns (Hebei Province)
Northern Song dynasty, 11th century - H. 23.5 cm
Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, entered the Louvre collection before 1912, inv. G5700
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Fig.009a
Ewer
Porcelain, incised and moulded design under transparent glaze - Ding kilns (Hebei Province)
Northern Song dynasty, 10th-11th century - H. 18; MD. 3.5 cm
Guimet Museum, Michel Calmann bequest (1977), purchased in 1913, inv. MA4135
© Richard W.C. Kan / Musée Guimet, Paris / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 021b
Lidded jar
Porcelain, translucent white glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Ming dynasty, Yongle reign (1403-24) - H. 29; D. 21.5 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 024b
Stem bowl
Porcelain, incised dragon design under transparent glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Ming dynasty, mark and period of Yongle reign (1403-24) - H. 9.8; D. 14.7 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 032a
Deep cup
Porcelain, incised dragon design under transparent glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Ming dynasty, mark and period of Jiajing reign (1522-66) - H. 6.8; D. 7.7 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 046a
Six-sided bowl
 Porcelain, transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 7.5; D. 15.5 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 048a
Bowl in the form of a lotus flower
 Porcelain, transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 5.3; D. 9 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 050b
Stem bowl
 Porcelain, incised Eight Treasures design under transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province)
 Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 10.8; D. 15.9 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 051a
Chrysanthemum-shaped dish
 Porcelain, transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 3.8; D. 17.6 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 055a
Bowl
 Porcelain, design in mitong style under transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736–95) – H. 5.2; D. 9.9 cm
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Fig. 058a
Ewer with double phoenix spout
 Porcelaneous stoneware, carved design under celadon glaze – Yaozhou kilns (Shaanxi province)
 Late Five Dynasties or early Northern Song dynasty, mid-10th century – H. 20.5; D. 16.5 cm
 Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, entered the Louvre collection before 1912, inv. G5119
 © Richard W.C. Kan / Musée Guimet, Paris / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 068c
Plate
 Stoneware covered with a brown wash, Jun glaze
 Jun kilns (Yuzhou, Henan Province) - Early Ming dynasty,
 early 15th century - H. 5; D. 18 cm
 Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, entered the Louvre
 collection before 1912, inv. G5431
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Fig. 072b
Mallet vase with handles in the form of fish
 Stoneware, celadon glaze - Longquan kilns (Zhejiang
 Province) - Song or Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th century
 H. 14; W. 11 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang
 collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 073a
Tripod censer with twin handles
 Stoneware, monster faces design under celadon glaze
 Longquan kilns (Zhejiang Province) - Southern Song
 dynasty, 12th-13th century - H. 13.3; D. 7.7 cm
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 collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 077b
Meiping vase
 Stoneware, celadon glaze - Longquan kilns
 (Zhejiang Province) - Yuan or early Ming dynasty,
 14th century - H. 45.5; D. 38 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang
 collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 099a
Large double-gourd vase
 Porcelain, pale celadon glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi
 Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign
 (1736-95) - H. 36; D. 20 cm
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 collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 113a
Bowl
 Porcelain, green enamel over transparent glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark
 and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 6.8; D. 14.5 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang
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Fig. 117b
Pair of small bowls
 Porcelain, lime-green enamel over transparent glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 3.3; D. 6.9 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 119b
Six-lobed washer
 Porcelain, turquoise enamel over transparent glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 6.5; D. rim 23.2 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 122a
Bowl
 Porcelain, pale turquoise enamel under transparent glaze and centre painted with five red-enamelled bats
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736–95) – H. 7.6; D. 16.9 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 125a
Bell-shaped cup
 Porcelain, sacrificial blue glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Ming dynasty, mark and period of Jiajing reign (1522–66) – H. 8; MD. 11.9 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 127
Stem bowl
 Porcelain, cobalt blue glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 10.7; D. 15.2 cm
 Guimet Museum, purchased before 1890, inv. MG7650
 © Richard W.C. Kan / Musée Guimet, Paris / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 131c
Yuhuchunping vase
 Porcelain, sacrificial blue glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 28.9; D. mouth 8.8 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 136a
Meiping vase
 Porcelain, sacrificial blue glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 35; D. base 13.4 cm
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Fig. 143a
Double vase
 Porcelain, lavender blue glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, Yongzheng reign mark (1723-35), probably 18th century - H. 13; D. 11.5 cm
 Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, entered the Louvre collection before 1912, inv. G1788
 © Richard W.C. Kan / Musée Guimet, Paris / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 149a
Vase with two monster face handles
 Porcelain, lavender blue glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 16.8; D. mouth 6.7 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 149b
Vase with two monster face handles
 Porcelain, lavender blue glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 16.8; D. mouth 6.7 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui

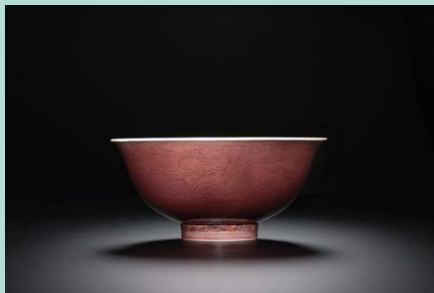


Fig. 161a
Bowl
 Porcelain, incised dragons under pale aubergine glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Kangxi reign (1662-1722) - H. 7.2; D. 15.2 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 166a
Beehive-shaped water pot
 Porcelain, incised dragon medallions under peach-bloom glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Kangxi reign (1662-1722)
 H. 8.7; FD. 12.6 cm
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Fig. 173a
Bottle
Porcelain, sang de boeuf glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, Kangxi reign (1662-1722)
H. 24.7; W. 11 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 174a
Brush pot
Porcelain, sang de boeuf glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, Kangxi reign (1662-1722)
H. 12.6; D. 9.8 cm
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Fig. 182a
Bowl
Porcelain, ruby red enamel on transparent glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 6.7; D. 10.7 cm
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Fig. 184a
Dish
Porcelain, coral red enamel on transparent glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723-35) - H. 3; D. 14.8 cm
Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 186a
Small-handed censer
Porcelain, coral red enamel on transparent glaze
Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723-35)
H. 5.2; D. base 8.3 cm
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Fig. 204a
Pair of ogee-form bowls
Porcelain, café au lait glaze - Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) - Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736-95) - H. 8.2; D. 15.7 cm
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Fig. 209b
Dish
 Porcelain, yellow enamel over transparent glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Ming dynasty, mark and period of Zhengde reign (1506–21) – H. 4.5; D. 20 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 212a
Bowl
 Porcelain, yellow enamel over transparent glaze
 Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Ming dynasty, mark and period of Wanli reign (1573–1620) – H. 6.6; D. 15.7 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 220a
Pair of bowls
 Porcelain, incised dragon design under yellow enamel and transparent glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province)
 Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736–95)
 H. 6.9 and 7; D. 14.1 and 14.2 cm
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Fig. 222a
Lobed dish
 Porcelain, lemon yellow enamel – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) – H. 5.6; D. 27.7 cm
 Zhuyuetang Collection © Richard W.C. Kan's Zhuyuetang collection / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 233a
Wicker-basket-shaped tripod censer
 Porcelain, tea-dust glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province)
 Qing Dynasty, mark and period of Yongzheng reign (1723–35) H. 11.5; D. 20.5 cm
 Guimet Museum, Grandidier collection, purchased from Count Robert of Semallé, inv. G1845 © Richard W.C. Kan / Musée Guimet, Paris / photo Barry Lui



Fig. 243a
Globular vase
 Porcelain, robin's-egg glaze – Jingdezhen kilns (Jiangxi Province) – Qing dynasty, mark and period of Qianlong reign (1736–95) – H. 12.5; D. base 6.6 cm
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LOEWE is one of the world's major luxury houses, founded in 1846 in Spain. Today LOEWE is under the creative direction of Jonathan Anderson, who is building a multi-dimensional brand with a focus on the intersection of fashion, craft and culture. At the heart of this, he sees craft as a way of making luxury feel more accessible; by showing how the collections are made, and honouring the often complex artisanal processes behind them, we can see their value and merit.

Positioning LOEWE as a cultural brand is about creating a platform that can interact with craft, fine art, dance, film, and cross-pollinate in a totally non-hierarchical way. This idea of curating and reinterpreting from within a house that's over 175 years old is crucial for the brand's evolution; charting new territory with a sense of excitement and innovation will ensure that LOEWE lasts for another 200 years and beyond.

Since our beginnings as a leathermaking collective, our journey has been defined by an obsessive focus on craft and unmatched expertise with leather. Originally founded in 1846 by a group of Spanish craftspeople in Madrid, the house was later unified in 1872 under the name of the technically gifted leathermaker Enrique Loewe Roessberg, who arrived from Germany and drove the brand forwards.

Based out of our main workshop in Madrid ever since, our master artisans have long valued artisanal techniques in their approach to design and manufacture, combining accumulated craft knowledge with new technologies to produce truly modern objects of desire.

Our ambition is to be simultaneously modern and rooted in craft and tradition.

Jonathan Anderson is one of the leading designers of his generation, earning both critical acclaim and commercial success with the collections he designs as LOEWE's creative director, and for his eponymous label, JW Anderson. Jonathan was appointed our creative director in 2013 and since then he has overseen a bold new chapter for the house, evidenced through an intellectual yet playful approach to fashion, bold and vibrant Spanish lifestyle, and ongoing commitment to the highest standards of craft and leathermaking. In recognition of his work at LOEWE and JW Anderson, Jonathan's most recent awards include International Designer of the Year at the 2023 CFDA Fashion Awards in New York, as well as the British Fashion Council's Designer of the Year at The Fashion Awards 2023 and Designer of the Year at the 2023 GQ Fashion Awards in London.



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"Paris is a party", wrote Ernest Hemingway. From 5 to 14 September 2024, our capital will be celebrating design again this year, in all its forms, thanks to Paris Design Week!

Paris Design Week is an opportunity to showcase design in all its diversity. Graduate schools, young emerging talents, art and design galleries, decorators, established designers, publishers, museums and institutions... For 10 days, everyone in Paris will be getting together to celebrate art and creation.

The capital is mobilising for this 14th edition to showcase design in all its forms. Because design is a multi-faceted, cross-disciplinary discipline that expresses itself in so many different ways, Paris Design Week is offering 11 itineraries to suit all tastes: #Art&Design, #NordicDesign, #Design&Sport, #Savoir-faire... It's up to you to choose the path that suits you best to rediscover an enchanting, creative and inspiring Paris!



RATP is delighted to be a partner of the exhibition *Unblemished colours. Masterpieces of Chinese Monochrome Porcelain (8th-18th centuries)*. Every day, the RATP Group provides 16 million journeys in France and around the world: since its creation, the Paris metro has generated a real urban culture that is part of the collective memory of the people of Paris and visitors to the capital. By supporting major cultural events such as this exhibition at the Guimet Museum, RATP is reaffirming its commitment to promoting the arts and culture, in order to best fulfil its mission as the public transport operator of a multicultural metropolis. RATP is committed to making its transport network lively, enjoyable and surprising, by inviting passengers to discover contemporary art. Heritage, music, photography, poetry, street art... Every day, RATP supports culture and enriches your journey on the network operated for Île-de-France Mobilités. ratp.fr/culture



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