

SHERRY FRUMKIN GALLERY

EXHIBITION ANNOUNCEMENT

PORCELAIN WARE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

from the Doug Wong Collection

EXHIBITION: MAY 7TH – JUNE 18TH, 2005
RECEPTION: MAY 7TH 6 – 8 PM



SHERRY FRUMKIN GALLERY is pleased to present porcelain ware from the Doug Wong Collection. It will be the first time that the collection, comprised of statues, figurines, plates, tiles and plaques, is on public display in Los Angeles. Wong, who lives in San Francisco, collected these porcelain wares during his many travels to China.

The decade of 1966-1976 was a period of tremendous upheaval and dislocation in China. In August 1966, Mao Zedong seized control of the leadership of the Communist Party, ousting his opponents and launching the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." Mao shut down China's schools, and during the following months he encouraged Red Guards to attack all traditional values and "bourgeois" ideology and to test party officials by publicly criticizing them. The Red Guards splintered into zealous rival factions, each purporting to be the true representative of Maoist thought, in some cases resulting in battles involving as many as fifty thousand people. In 1968 Mao ordered the military to suppress the movement and sent the Red Guards to the countryside for "re-education" by the peasants.

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Mao's own personality cult was so extensive and pervasive it assumed nearly religious proportions. Talented artists were hired to design and manufacture statues, tiles, figurines, and kitchenware in praise of Mao Zedong and the spirit of the Cultural Revolution. All vestiges of "feudal", "capitalist" and "bourgeois" forms were stamped out and replaced by socialist realism. Exhortations to the "masses" were painted on cups, bowls, plaques, and figurines so that the people could eat and drink with Mao's great thoughts. The irony is that economic conditions were so poor with few Chinese having the financial means to purchase these items, so very few of them made their way into private homes.



While these porcelains represent an especially painful period in China's history and may be difficult to view by those who lived through that decade, they provide an important record of the continuing tradition of porcelain ware that China originated during the Shang Dynasty in the 16th – 11th centuries BCE.

In a book documenting his collection of these porcelain wares, Fan Jianchuan calls them the "melon on the long vine of the history of Chinese Porcelain."

For additional information or images, please contact the gallery.

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