

Bowl



Qialong period (1736-1796)

Bowl in Chinese porcelain from the East India Company, brightly ornamented with roosters and peonies.

Dimensions : Diameter: 11 inches

This bowl belongs to the production documented as "porcelain from the East India Company's famille rose", which was primarily destined for importation to the European market.

Famille rose, or pink family, ceramics sport polychrome décor in which rosy tones dominate.

Painted accents are applied *sur couverte*, which is to say after a preliminary firing of plain porcelain covered in transparent, protective glaze.

It is during a second firing at 800°C, called *de petit feu*, that the colours are fixed.

Famille rose designs appeared during the reign of Emperor Yongzhen (1723-1736) and continued to develop under Emperor Qianlong (1736-1796). The latter's rule is intimately linked with the history of exchanges between the Far East and the Occident during the 17th and 18th centuries.

It was a Dutch chemist named Andreas Cassius who discovered the formula allowing for the creation of pinkish glazes in 1650. The key was a purple mineral, known forever after as Purple of Cassius; a precipitate obtained from gold salts.

Chinese ceramists quickly procured Cassius' formula. They began to call the opaque pigments of the famille rose—pale pink, coral red, mauve, salmon and lavender blue— "foreign colours" (Yang ts'ai) or "gentle colours" (Youang ts'ai).

In China, the rooster is a bird of good fortune; its name, *ji*, is a homophone for "luck". The rooster also incarnates the five virtues: the civil virtue (*wen*) with his crest resembling the Mandarin headdress, the military virtue (*wu*) with his raised hackles, bravery (*yong*) with his combative ardor, humanity (*ren*) because he shares his resources with his fellows and calls to them when he finds food and, lastly, constancy (*xin*) with his morning song. The rooster is also the tenth sign of the Chinese zodiac.

