



Kunstinstituut Melly

"30 Pieces" A limited-edition artwork by Bouke de Vries

Kunstinstituut Melly is pleased to announce a new limited-edition by Dutch artist Bouke de Vries (b. 1960). The edition includes 30 original sculptures and two AP. Proceeds from the sale of this artwork benefit the exhibitions and educational programming at the institution. Each comes with a certificate of authenticity signed and dated by the artist.

In creating this work, fragments of an 18th century Chinese porcelain vase from the Qing Dynasty are cast in a resin sculpture. De Vries's translucent sculpture is itself modeled after the profile of the original porcelain. The 32 pieces that make up the broken porcelain vase, if restored to its original shape, also make the total number of sculptures by De Vries. Each single porcelain fragment is now encapsulated into one of Bouke's sculptures. For the artist, "crystallizing these porcelain fragments relates to the way memory captures a precise historical moment."



In 2020, the artist participated in *An exhibition with works by Athos Bulcão, Marcos Castro, Anna Franceschini, Ni Haifeng, Nicolás Lamas, Praneet Soi, Adriana Varejão, Ana Vaz, Bouke de Vries, Raed Yassin, Karlos Gil & Belén Zahera*, curated by Sofía Hernández Chong Cuy and Bernardo de Souza for the institution formerly known as Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art. This exhibition explored the immigration of forms, and especially how a cosmopolitan artifact, such as a piece of blue-and-white ceramic, came to be rooted in a national project in the Netherlands and elsewhere. These ceramics are known here as Delft Blue, and once symbolized advanced technology and globalization.



Commissioned by Kunstinstituut Melly, the limited-edition artwork *30 Pieces* (2020) by De Yries is inspired by this exhibition and the artist's longstanding fascination with historical ceramics, as much as his investigation of art as a memory vessel or time capsule. Like an insect captured in amber, each of the sculptures in *30 Pieces* contains a part of a whole, turning it into an artistic vessel or cultural custodian of something from a time of the past. Together, the 30 sculptures that form the edition contain the pieces that complete the original vase, and therefore, the shape of the work.

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TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Bouke de Yries
30 Pieces, 2020
Porcelain cast in resin
240 x 100 x 40 mm
Edition of 30 + 2 AP

Note by the artist: Fragments of an 18th century Chinese porcelain vase from the Qing dynasty have been cast in a resin outline of the original shape of the vase. The fragments were roughly placed in the area where they would also have been placed as part of the original vase. Each person who acquires a sculpture thus becomes the custodian of a fragment of the vase and can be seen to form their own community.

Cleaning instructions: For cleaning, use warm soapy water and a soft cloth. Abrasives and chemicals will cause the acrylic to lose its optical clarity.



PRICE

1.500 Euros, per sculpture

21% VAT surcharge applies for all sales in EU

To acquire or to inquire about the work:

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CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

In the Netherlands, the rise in popularity of blue and white ceramics came by way of the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in the early seventeenth century. The esteem and value of these ceramics was not only caused by their exotic provenance and designs, but also by their foreign material composition. These imported pieces were made in porcelain, a process that, just like its related applications, was kept strictly confidential by the Chinese. In the fourteenth century, when porcelain was considered “white gold,” the Ottoman Empire was already commissioning custom-made Chinese porcelain for export. The Ottomans are also credited for having first provided the Chinese with cobalt, the blue color-producing mineral, which they sourced from the region known today as Iraq.



But it was long-distance maritime trade that globally internationalized the style of blue and white ceramics. In the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were principally taking Chinese porcelain to Europe. When the VOC broke the Portuguese monopoly in Euro-Asian trade, at the start of the seventeenth century, a new global flow of ceramics began. For its part, Spain spread the influence of Chinese porcelain to the Americas through its Pacific routes, and Portugal through its Atlantic routes. While the VOC began importing and eventually commissioning Chinese porcelain for the European market, artists in the Netherlands began developing similar-looking, earthenware pieces, referred to as Delft Blue.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

The visual artist Bouke de Yries (1960, Utrecht, the Netherlands) lives and works in London, UK. His practice also involves ceramic conservation and design. In his practice as a conservator, he has been faced with issues and contradictions around perfection and worth, saying, “*The Venus de Milo* is venerated despite losing her arms, but when a Meissen muse loses a finger, she is rendered virtually worthless.” These contradictions inspire his artistic practice. His ‘exploded’ artworks reclaim broken pots after their accidental trauma. He has called it ‘the beauty of destruction.’ Instead of reconstructing them, he deconstructs them. Instead of hiding the evidence of this most dramatic episode in the life of a ceramic object, he emphasizes their new status, instilling new virtues, new values, and moving their stories forward.

De Yries studied at the Design Academy Eindhoven and Central St Martin’s, London. Subsequently, he studied ceramics conservation and restoration at West Dean College. Recent solo exhibitions include; *War and Pieces*, Montgomery Museum of Fine Arts (Alabama, 2019); *War and Pieces*, Wardsworth Atheneum (Connecticut, 2018); and *Nieuw Amsterdams Peil*, Ron Mandos Gallery (Amsterdam, 2018), among others. Recent group exhibitions include: *Beyond the Vessel*, Mesher Gallery (Istanbul, 2019); *Glitch*, Kunsti Museum (Vaasa, 2018); *The Precious Clay*, Museum of Royal Worcester (Worcester, 2018/2019); Taiwan Ceramics Biennale (Yingge, 2018-2019); and *Vasa Vasorum*, Peters Projects (Santa Fe, 2018), among others. His work is held in the collections of Museum Voorlinden (Wassenaar); Aberdeen Art Gallery (Aberdeen); The Ariana (Geneva); The National Museum of Norway (Oslo); National Museum of Scotland (Edinburgh), Philadelphia Museum (Philadelphia). National Dutch Ceramic Museum (Leeuwarden); and York City Art Gallery (York), among others.

Bouke de Yries is represented by Galerie Ron Mandos in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.



Kunstinstituut Melly

Kunstinstituut Melly was conceived as an art house in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, with a mission to present and discuss contemporary art and theory. We commission art, organize exhibitions, publish, and develop educational and collaborative initiatives. Kunstinstituut Melly is the new name of the institution formerly known as Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art.

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As part of its fundraising activities, Kunstinstituut Melly commissions limited-edition artworks to artists who have exhibited in its program. Available for sale are the following editions: a silkscreen by Douglas Coupland; original monotypes by Federico Herrero; a silkscreen by Cecilia Vicuña; and a series of sculptures by Bouke de Vries.

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Images by Aad Hoogendoorn

kunstinstituutmelly.nl
office@kunstinstituutmelly.nl
+31-10-411-0144

Witte de Withstraat 50
3012 BR Rotterdam
The Netherlands

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