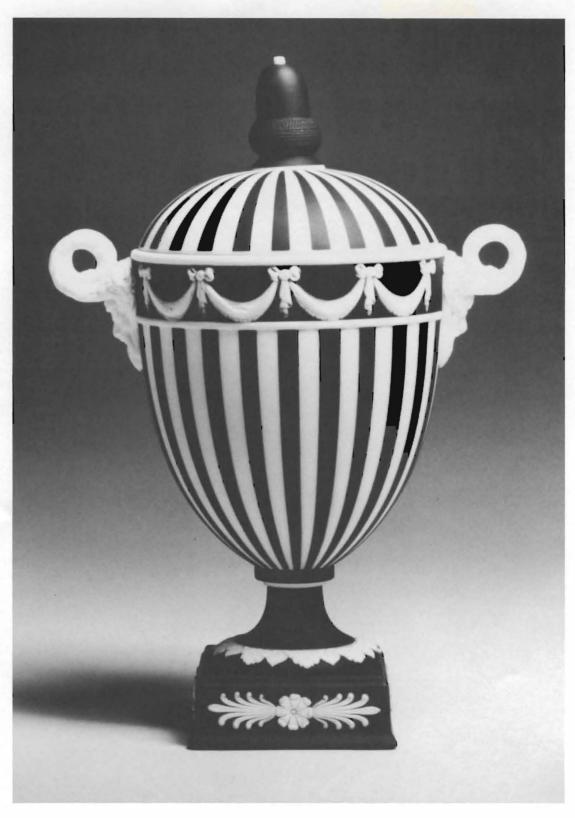


Josiah Wedgwood Experimental Potter







Vase, mid 20th century (cat. 44)

Cover: Grivell, Jasper Vase by Wedgwood, c.1898, lithograph, 14 1/2 x 20 in.

Josiah Wedgwood Experimental Potter

Lucie Nelson

To Christiae and Ken My best wishes Lucie

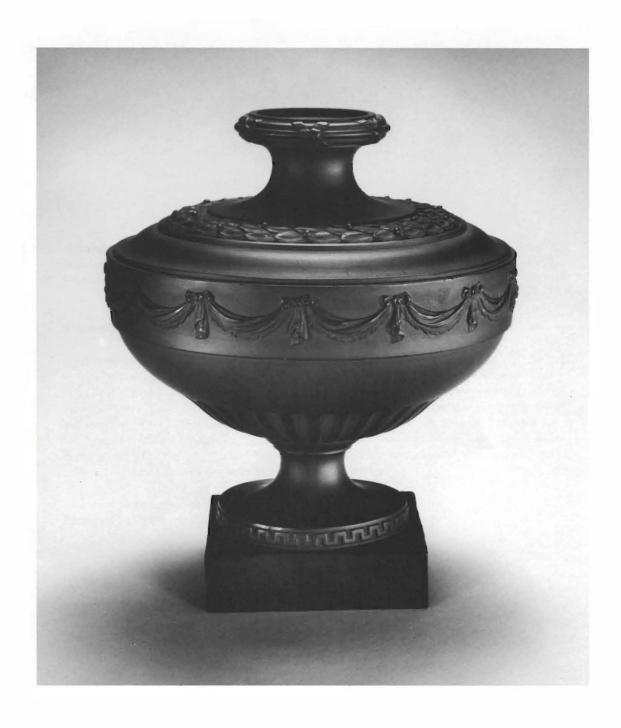
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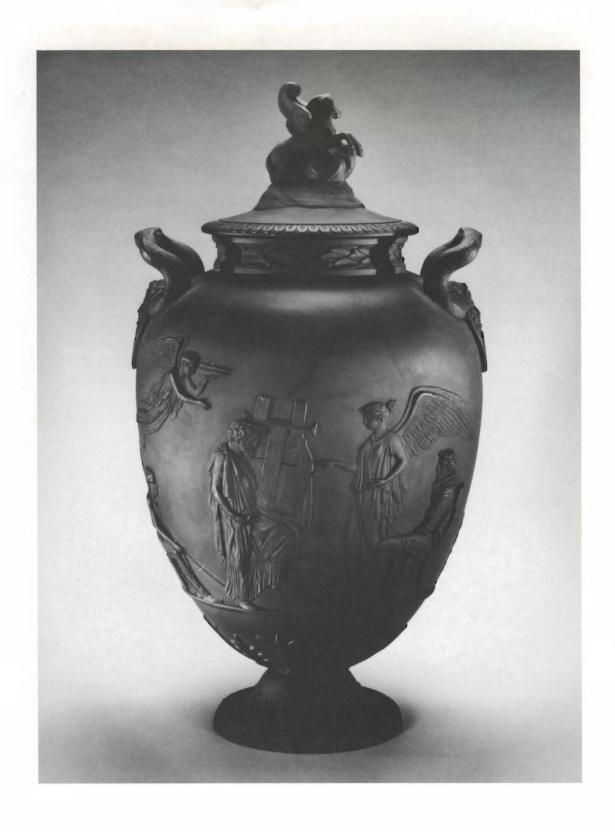




Urn, late 18th century (cat. 11)

Preface

This exhibition celebrates a splendid collection of English pottery, and commemorates the bicentennial of the death of its creator, Josiah Wedgwood (1730-1795). In 1974, more than two hundred examples of Wedgwood pottery were given to Binghamton University by Dr. Ellsworth Lowe, a high school principal in New Jersey, in memory of his wife, Dr. Louise Lowe, who had been a surgeon and a passionate collector of Wedgwood. For more than thirty-five years, Louise Lowe spent her leisure time studying English ceramics. She traveled widely in pursuit of the treasures in this exhibition, especially to London. Although Dr. Lowe had always been fond of Wedgwoodshe loved the color blue-she became a collector only after seeing Wedgwood's black basalt vases, so dramatically different from the quintessential image of Wedgwood as a white and blue ware. As her appreciation of the English pottery deepened, her aim became to assemble examples of Wedgwood from all periods and styles, from functional tableware to ornamental pieces, from the eighteenth century to recent times. Thanks to Dr. Lowe's excellent taste, and her husband's generosity, highlights of the Wedgwood ceramic tradition are presented in this exhibition for the education and enjoyment of the Binghamton University community and museum visitors nationwide.



Vase with Pegasus Cover: Honoring Citharist or Apotheosis of Homer, mid 19th century (cat. 14)

Josiah Wedgwood: Experimental Potter

When Josiah Wedgwood was born in 1730, England was controlled by an aristocracy and gentry whose hegemony extended over the vast territory of their inherited estates. Agricultural villages and provincial centers were scattered across the sparsely populated countryside. The poor worked, using hand tools, as agricultural laborers or as artisans in small workshops. But by Wedgwood's death in 1795, economic power had shifted from rural estates to urban manufacturing centers where a middle class, now demanding reforms for themselves, employed a working population which had migrated to cities in search of factory jobs. Skilled workers now operated machines, which began to supplant hand tools.

Wedgwood's life also spanned the century of the Enlightenment and the rise of modern democracies in France and the United States. The new political philosophies were manifested in art in a return to classicism, the style of the birthplace of democracy. Wedgwood reflected his times in his humanism and expansive, optimistic capitalism. His exquisitely-crafted, neoclassical product found an enormous market in the rising middle classes of England, the continent, and America.

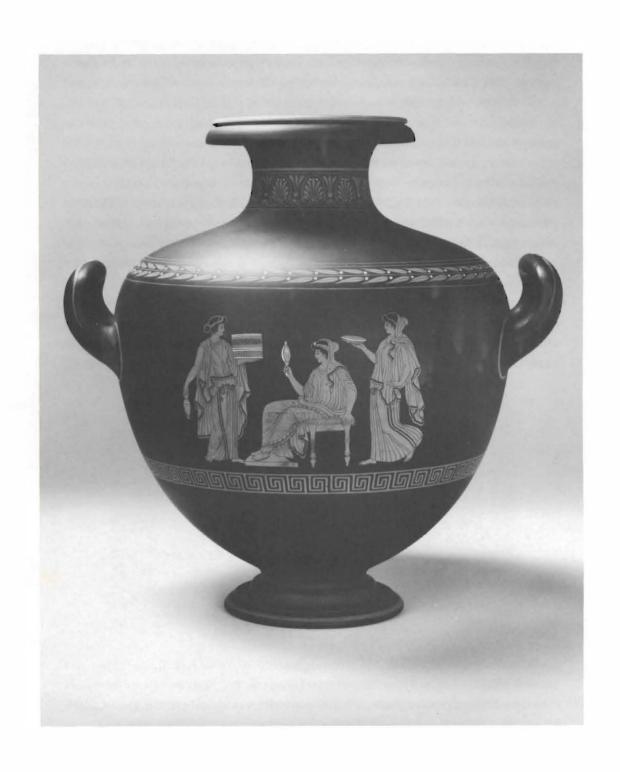
Wedgwood's family had its roots in Staffordshire, a county in central England, east of Liverpool. The region had abundant supplies of coal and clay essential to pottery production, which had occurred there prior to the seventeenth century and perhaps as early as the fifteenth century. The Wedgwoods were one of several families of potters in the area. Josiah's great grandfather, Thomas Wedgwood, inherited the Churchyard Works in 1656 in Burslem, then the main town of Staffordshire. A small factory with a few sheds and kilns, it produced utilitarian peasant ware. Important innovations in pottery were already established in the seventeenth century in England, including the invention of stoneware (sand mixed with clay and fired until vitreous), the refinement of clays by sifting to remove dirt, the turning lathe, and the salt glaze process, whereby a hard pitted surface is created by throwing rock salt into the kiln during firing.

In the seventeenth century, a rage for porcelain imported from the Far East affected every country in Europe. Most European pottery at the time was soft paste, a mixture of clay and an artificial compound such as ground glass. Now even in provincial and isolated Staffordshire, patrons demanded a whiter ware, a more delicate silhouette, and finer ornamentation. The rich, who dined on silver and glass, did not use pottery until the eighteenth century, when they wanted to emulate the Chinese custom of drinking tea from ceramic and their long tradition of porcelain production. True porcelain was invented in China, but after its formula was rediscovered at Meissen, Germany, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, its manufacture spread across the continent. True porcelain is a combination of kaolin, a pure white clay, and feldspar, a fusable mineral that becomes a natural glass at sufficiently high temperatures. During firing of a porcelain piece, kaolin holds the shape and feldspar adds hardness and translucency.

Porcelain was especially suited to the baroque and rococo styles favored by aristocrats. In France, however, growing resentment toward the royalty turned intellectuals and democrats against rococo porcelain with its royalist associations. Spurred by discoveries of the ancient Greek cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii, neoclassical art developed in France in tandem with the political revolution against the monarchy. To display neoclassical taste, was to signal one's disapproval of the court. A similar neoclassical movement occurred in England, prompted by the Scottish architects, James and Robert Adam, and others; Wedgwood introduced the style into English pottery. In America, the association of neoclassicism with the American Revolution and the ideals of democracy, along with close ties with England, may account for the great appeal that Wedgwood pottery has always held for the American public. Thomas Jefferson, for example, had Wedgwood plaques installed in the dining room fireplace at Monticello.

Josiah Wedgwood, fourth-generation Staffordshire potter, learned pottery manufacture as a natural part of growing up. At the age of eleven, he contracted smallpox; this left him in fragile health and with a weakened right leg that was finally amputated when he was thirty-eight years old. Ill health, however, gave him time to read and experiment in ceramic chemistry. Although weak physically, his strong family environment helped him to develop great personal confidence, an optimistic business disposition, and a willingness to take risks—traits that might explain why Wedgwood, among all the Staffordshire potters, was the one to break rank, to begin experiments with new materials, to envision an international market for his wares, and to change age-old factory methods.

Wedgwood's career began at his family's Churchyard Works in Burslem, where he apprenticed at fourteen with his brother, Thomas. In 1754, at age twenty four, Josiah went into partnership with Thomas Whieldon, an established potter. While they produced red ware, salt glaze, and a light-colored ware with mottled glazes, Wedgwood secretly experimented with glazes and clays. He began to keep experiment books, a practice he continued throughout his life. Since stealing formulas and technical innovations was common among potters of the eighteenth century, Wedgwood created secret letter codes for the different firing temperatures he used. The Copyright Act of 1710 had granted patents to English inventors for fourteen-year terms, but such patents offered little actual protection when employees shifted from one pottery studio to the next, taking information with them. When Wedgwood did take out a patent in 1769 for his encaustic painting and bronzing processes, it was challenged by an infringer, who claimed he had copied it from a book. Uncomfortable because he and the perpetrator were in the same social group, Wedgwood agreed to share the patent. In 1775, seeing himself squeezed out of a profitable market, Wedgwood tried to block another manufacturer's attempt to extend a patent for exclusive rights to Cornish china clay and feldspar, the constituents of true porcelain. Wedgwood and other manufacturers were allowed the general terms of the patent specifications, but in turn had to agree not to



Vase: Ceres and Priestesses, late 18th century (cat. 12)

do transparent porcelain. The great lengths that Wedgwood went to for secrecy—codes, ciphers, and hidden laboratories in the cellar of his home—were not unfounded paranoia; he was constantly imitated both in England and on the continent.

After years of experimentation and careful financial management, Wedgwood, at twenty-nine, was able to start his own business in Burslem on the property of his uncles, at Ivy House, a small, ivy-covered cottage surrounded by two large bottle-shaped kilns and a few sheds. Wedgwood enlarged his business when he moved to the Brick House Works in 1762. From the first, Wedgwood showed an ability to organize his workers for efficiency. He checked waste, developed scales for precise measurement of clay, improved his kilns, and bought the latest in turning lathes. By 1769 Wedgwood was able to move his enterprise to an estate that he named Etruria for the Etruscans, who Wedgwood mistakenly thought were the makers of Greek vases found in Italy earlier in the century. Etruria, between Burslem and Stoke-on-Trent, was a vast 350-acre property; eventually its surrounding walls enclosed Wedgwood's own home, which he called Etruria Hall, a factory, and houses for workers. An arm of the Trent and Mersey canal passed through the estate and backed up to the door of the factory. This 140-mile long



(cat. 29)

canal, built with Wedgwood's involvement, joined the Trent and Mersey rivers and enabled efficient transport for his wares to Liverpool, the nearest coastal city. Roads then were little more than tracks, at times impassable; the canal cut transport time by 90 percent and provided a smoother ride for pottery.

Reflecting the optimistic spirit of the Enlightenment, Wedgwood was a humanitarian. It was a time of great confidence, when reformers believed that a more rationally planned society was possible, that education could improve mankind, and scientific progress was unlimited. Wedgwood gave generously to aid American prisoners of the War of Independence in jails in England and Ireland, to the Poles persecuted by Russians, and to French clergy driven from their country by the revolution. In the secular spirit of the day, he also supported the Margaret Street Chapel, where no

religion but morality was taught. He produced a medallion with the inscription "Am I Not a Man and a Brother?" for the Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade (cat. 29). Wedgwood manifested his belief in the value of education by donating funds to a school to be built for the children of Burslem because "two parts of the children out of three are put to work without any learning." In his own family, he took the unusual step of educating his daughters as well as his sons at home.

Much of Wedgwood's liberalism sprang from his association with the so-called Lunar Society, an informal group of manufacturers and scientists. Members met in a Birmingham home one Monday ("moon day") afternoon a month when the moon was at its fullest, which allowed them to safely return home by moonlight. Among the members were James Watt, inventor of the steam engine; Erasmus Darwin, physician, inventor, and poet; Matthew Boulton, engineer and manufacturer; Joseph Priestley, theologian and scientist; and James Keir, glassmaker. The men encouraged and supported each other's projects: Wedgwood was among the first to use Watt's steam engine which he purchased in 1782. Darwin devised a windmill for Wedgwood to use for grinding colors; Wedgwood consulted Keir on vitreous substances, and in turn did



experiments to help Keir overcome his problem of streaks and veins in his lenses. Wedgwood addressed this problem in a scientific paper of 1783. He belonged to the Royal Society, which published in its proceedings, *Philosophical Transactions*, three of his papers relating to the measurement of high heat. Two of Wedgwood's articles on chemistry were also published.

Wedgwood divided his production between tableware and ornamentals. He was the first English manufacturer to produce purely ornamental pottery, including statues, medallions, vases, cameos, intaglios, display pieces and busts. His great friend and confidant, Thomas Bentley, was his partner in the promotion of ornamentals, overseeing all sales and shipping and later running the London showrooms, from 1767 until his death in 1780. Formerly a Liverpool merchant, Bentley was a scholarly man of taste

and culture who added polish to the Wedgwood enterprises and understood how to market decorative ornamentals to a wealthy clientele. The factory at Burslem for tableware (called useful wares by Wedgwood) was run by Wedgwood's cousin, Thomas Wedgwood, until it was moved to Etruria in 1773.

With the move to Etruria, Wedgwood progressed from being a master craftsman, closely involved with the everyday activities of each worker, to an industrial manufacturer managing 150 workers, each in turn specializing in one area of what had become a very complex production. Wedgwood was one of the first manufacturers to use mass production techniques in his factory. How much was lost when a worker no longer saw his product from start to finish, but specialized in an isolated task? Some feel that Wedgwood converted an art form, crude as it was, but still executed by the human hand, into a machine-made object. Others argue that because pottery production lends itself to the division of labor, Wedgwood was able to combine art with manufacture without a significant deterioration in artistic quality.

Wedgwood aimed "to make such machines of the men that they cannot err." Because his workers were specialists—throwers, molders, fire men, glazers, ornamenters, modelers, enamelers—more could be produced at lower costs, an advantage Wedgwood quickly seized. The new middle class found his wares to be of high quality, and though expensive, more affordable than comparable metal or stone vessels. His workers, however, found the production system to be less than satisfying. Some felt locked into jobs they did not like; requests for different positions and higher wages are recorded. Like most paternalistic employers, however, Wedgwood felt he knew what was best for his workers and did not heed their protests.

During the early 1780s, unemployment and crop failure spread throughout England. In March 1783, a boat loaded with grain, en route to Manchester, briefly docked at Etruria and was looted by pottery workers, demanding the grain. In response, Wedgwood wrote a pamphlet, "An Address to the Young Inhabitants of the Pottery," in which he impatiently told the young workers how much better off they were than he had been at their age: "Industry has been the parent of happy change - a well directed and long series of industrious exertions, both in masters and servants, has so changed for the better the face of our country." Wedgwood, the humanitarian, hated oppression but obviously did not consider his own workers oppressed. Because of the numerous other pottery works in the area, no doubt wages at Etruria were competitive. But a certain devaluing of the individual was implicit in Wedgwood's striving to make a successful and profitable manufacture.

Throughout his career, Wedgwood pursued ceramic chemistry. From his early twenties he conducted systematic chemical experiments and mineral analyses of clays and ores, seeking new bodies, enamels, and glazes. He examined metal ores for possible new enamel colors. One of Wedgwood's first challenges was to lighten his clay body from a brownish to whitish shade that more aptly imitated true porcelain. He did not invent cream-colored earthenware but Wedgwood did greatly improve and lighten it.

After receiving an order from Queen Charlotte, Wedgwood's cream ware was known as Queen's ware. In 1779 he introduced pearl ware which used Cornish clay and a glaze with a little cobalt oxide to produce whiteness.

Wedgwood constantly sought new clays from as far away as China, Australia, and America. Colonization of distant places was so common in eighteenth century Europe that even a provincial merchant like Wedgwood had access to exotic clays. In 1767, he sent an emissary to Indian territory three hundred miles from Charleston, South Carolina, for a special white clay called Cherokee. Wedgwood did this with no formal permission, fearing competition if others heard about this fine kaolin clay. He was particularly fearful that the Americans might devise their own pottery industry and put an end to his excellent export business with the colonies. The shipment, five tons for 500 pounds, was considered too expensive by Wedgwood, and he never sent for another load. The Cherokee clay was used in jasper ware, a dense white stoneware Wedgwood developed in 1774.





Portland Vase Copy, early 20th century (cat. 28)

In 1773 Thomas Percival, a Manchester physician, announced that lead in pottery glazes might be dangerous. Although the lead level in Queen's ware was not harmful, he advised against its use for fruits or pickles. Wedgwood himself undoubtedly knew that the real danger was to the workers who handled the raw lead before firing, but he was afraid that his thriving Queen's ware industry might be affected by adverse publicity. He spent years, unsuccessfully, trying to find an alternative glaze to lead.

Along with chemical experiments, Wedgwood sought a means of accurately measuring high kiln temperatures, a particularly essential factor in the manufacture of

jasper ware. After years of testing, in 1780 Wedgwood developed the pyrometer, an instrument based on the principle that ceramic shrinks during firing. The pyrometer was used in pottery manufacturing for several generations after Wedgwood's death.

As business prospered with the English demand for pottery, Wedgwood had to step up production. Workmen qualified to paint fine decorative details such as shells and flowers were hard to find, and Wedgwood and Bentley discussed setting up an apprenticeship whereby twelve-year-olds would obtain eight years of meticulous training. New trainees were restricted to outlining figures on vases; more complex neoclassical designs were executed only by top modelers and painters.

Wedgwood himself was a fine modeler, but he knew his limitations in time and ability and sought out some of the best artists of his time. In all, forty eight modelers and twenty three painters are associated with his pottery. Among the best known are William Hackwood, chief modeler; John Flaxman, Jr. sculptor and modeler; James Tassie, gem engraver and modeler; and Lady Templetown, relief designer. Flaxman, the son of a modeler of plaster casts, began working for Wedgwood in 1775 when he was twenty years old. Examples of his designs can be seen on several pieces in the Binghamton University collection, including a chess set (cat. 32,) triton and satyr ewers (Illus. on pgs. 24 & 25), and the relief decoration on a Pegasus vase (Illus. on p. 8). He remained in Wedgwood's employ for many years even though some thought it degraded his profession as sculptor.

Wedgwood enjoyed working relationships with several contemporary English painters, such as his good friend Joseph Wright of Derby and George Stubbs, the renowned horse painter. Stubbs, unable to find suitably sized copper and metal plates for his enamel paintings, sought out Wedgwood, hoping he could make large pottery plaques. After two years of trials, Wedgwood was able to produce 40-by-30-inch pottery plaques. Stubbs in turn did an oil painting of Wedgwood's family in 1780. Wedgwood noted, "I find that Stubbs repents much his having established this character for himself, I mean that of horse painter, and wishes to be considered as an historian and portrait painter." A rather obvious bit of advertising in the family portrait can be seen in the addition of a fine Wedgwood basalt on the table next to Wedgwood. Always looking for new ways to expand the audience for his wares, Wedgwood offered his vases to the artist George Romney as background material for his paintings.

The Binghamton University Collection

The oldest piece in the exhibition is a so-called agate cup that dates to the 1750s, when Wedgwood and Thomas Whieldon were partners (Illus. on p. 18). Its decoration attempts to imitate the mineral agate by mixing different colored clays in a striated pattern; the technique was tricky as the clays could be easily overmixed and the pattern muddied.

While at Ivy House and the Brick House Works, Wedgwood worked on perfecting a cream-colored ware that could compete with porcelain, a process he had begun while in partnership with Whieldon. In cream-colored ware, ground flint is added to a whitish clay as a hardening agent to prevent warping. Cream ware was enormously popular and the mainstay of Wedgwood's manufacture for many decades. In 1768 he finally whitened the product to his satisfaction when he gained access to china clay in Cornwall.

Examples of cream ware can be found in a dinner set decorated with different birds and flowers on a glossy glaze of cream color. Each dish was transfer printed and then painted in red, green, and yellow enamels. This nineteenth-century set displays the variety of interesting shapes that Wedgwood used in his tableware: hexagons, quatrefoils, ovals and so on. Also in cream ware is a splendid cloudy agate vase, so called because of its hazy appearance, signed by Wedgwood and Bentley (Illus. on p. 20). For this piece, a cream ware body was painted with various colored slips and then covered with a clear lead glaze. Molded, winged female terminal figures in cream ware hold swags in their hands; the square, molded plinth is in white unglazed stoneware with relief panels. It originally was probably one of a pair, meant to be displayed on a mantle. By imitating in clay the costly agate, one of the materials so prized by the upper classes, Wedgwood's vase appealed to the gentry.

Initially Wedgwood's preferred body for ornamental wares was a black stoneware, christened black basalt for its close resemblance to the igneous rock. The stoneware had a mat black surface well suited to the classical Greek vase style that Wedgwood wanted to emulate. The early Staffordshire potters used a black stoneware they called Egyptian Black which they derived from coal drainage sediments. Wedgwood refined this crude product both mechanically and chemically to a smooth, hard, evenly colored body, with iron oxide giving the ware its black color. An urn with swags displays the silky, finegrained texture that Wedgwood achieved from polishing before firing (Illus. on p. 6). A holly and berry frieze, fired as one with the body, has the precision of metalwork. The fretwork design at the base was produced with a mechanical lathe, worked by a system of pulleys and weights.

Wedgwood shared the enthusiasm for antiquity that swept England in the latter half of the eighteenth century. He collected books that reproduced discoveries made at Herculaneum, and among his inventory were listed Count de Caylus's *Recueil d'Antiquités* (1752-1767) and his friend William Hamilton's four-volume, hand-colored *Collection of Etruscan, Greek, and Roman Antiquities* (1766-1767). He used the pictures in



Cup, mid 18th century (cat. 1)

these books as models for his bas reliefs. Sometimes he mixed classical motifs of different periods, styles, and media, as is common in revivalist borrowings.

A fine red-figure amphora, painted in encaustic, shows Ceres, goddess of grain and fertility, seated on a stool, attended by two priestesses with offerings (Illus. on p. 11). To make such vases look more ancient, Wedgwood bronzed them, using a process whereby pure gold is dissolved in a mix of acids, applied to an almost dry vase, and burnished after firing. The bronzing on this vase has all worn away except for traces on the bottom.

In 1769 Wedgwood took out a patent for his bronzing method and for what he called encaustic painting, a mat enamel process that has no connection to the wax painting practiced in Egypt during Roman times. Wedgwood claimed in advertisements to be using the same red-figure firing method as the ancients, but he knew it was different. The Greeks used a three-part firing process in which red figures were reserved on a black ground.

Wedgwood decorated the finial of various vases with a depiction of Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology. One such vase (Illus. on p. 8), is made of basalt ware; a molded winged horse surmounts its lid. Each handle is formed by a serpent biting into an egg; beneath each handle is a Medusa mask. Flaxman designed the main scene, which probably represents the Honoring of a Citharist. It presents a bearded man with a cithara, an ancient stringed instrument, standing opposite a winged female; they are flanked by a seated male and female and a flying nike. The scene has alternatively been interpreted as the Apotheosis of Homer. On the back of the vase a spare design of a temple, palm tree, altar, and basin spreads across the field. Similar vases include the figure of Minerva standing in the temple, but after Wedgwood's death, the figure disappears. It has been theorized that the mold was lost.

While basalt ware, a most durable pottery, was an excellent medium for classical motifs, its blackness did not show off figural reliefs to the best advantage. The neoclassical fashion of the times was epitomized in the interiors of the Scottish architects Robert and James Adam. Their white plaster relief ornaments, influenced by ancient cameos and inspired by discoveries in Herculaneum, were set against walls painted in pastel colors. Wedgwood, desiring to imitate the Adam look, worked to find a ceramic medium that could be colored in many shades, could hold precise and sharply detailed reliefs, and could be fired with reliefs in another color. Jasper ware, often considered the most significant technical invention in pottery in more than a thousand years, fulfilled these requirements. Named by Wedgwood for the natural quartz stone, jasper is a fine white, vitreous stoneware whose body is usually colored and offset with decorative reliefs, typically white but sometimes in a solid contrasting color. It is fired at a very high temperature to a glasslike unglazed body.

Wedgwood's quest for jasper took years of experimenting and ten thousand trials; a cameo with the figure of Hope, inscribed 3070 (trial number) and TTBO (tippy top of biscuit oven), is one of these test pieces, in the unusual shade of pink (cat.24). Fearing



Vase, late 18th century (cat. 2)

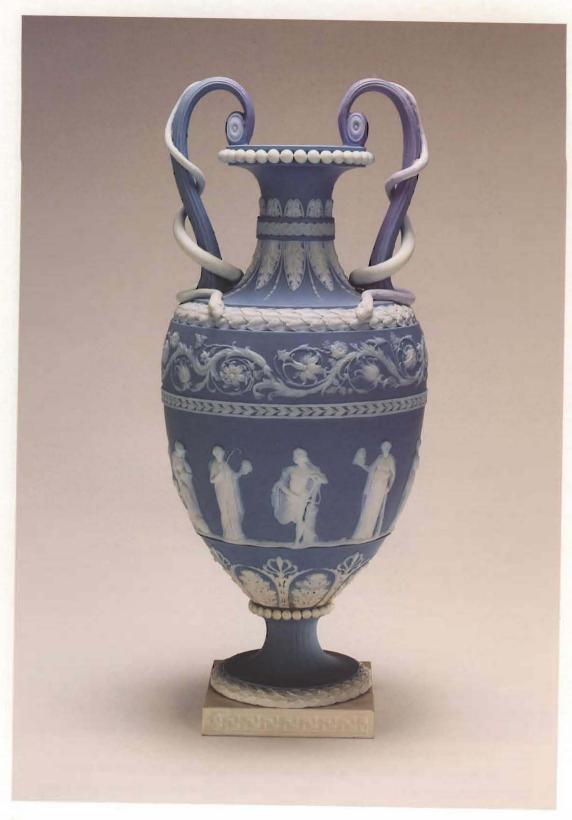
theft, experimental potters like Wedgwood worked in isolation and did not consult others' findings, thus greatly lengthening development time. Finally satisfied, he wrote to Bentley in 1776 "I am fully persuaded this new art is completed and brought to perfection." The public agreed and enthusiastically purchased the new jasper ware, making blue and white Wedgwood pottery a modern classic.

At first Wedgwood used his new method in small objects like cameos. The Scottish sculptor James Tassie made glass-paste reproductions of real gems and lent Wedgwood some of his casts. These reliefs, molded separately, were applied to the body of the stoneware piece by hand. Wedgwood started by using only "solid" jasper, meaning that the body of the piece was colored throughout so that the jasper could be polished like a natural stone. In this method, however, the color of the body could seep into the relief during firing, mottling the usually white decoration. For his larger pieces, Wedgwood began to color the white stoneware body by dipping it into a jasper slip before the reliefs were applied. This not only prevented the color from running but was cheaper, since much less of the expensive cobalt, used to obtain the distinctive Wedgwood blue, was necessary.

Perhaps the finest piece in the exhibition is a tall scroll-handled urn with entwined snakes. Dating to the last decade of Wedgwood's life, it is done in a solid jasper of a deep, almost periwinkle blue (illus. on p.22). Although Wedgwood objected to the seepage of blue into the white decoration and chose later to fire the reliefs separately, the translucent quality that the blue gives to the white decoration adds a distinct beauty, recalling glass. The urn is adorned with a frieze of Apollo and nine muses and a Roman scroll frieze. The unglazed white stoneware plinth has a meander pattern.

The Portland vase, named for its English owner, the Duchess of Portland, is an ancient Roman cameo glass vase. It was discovered during the Renaissance in a Roman sarcophagus in a burial tomb near Rome. In 1786 the Duke of Portland lent it to Wedgwood to copy. After four years of experimentation, Wedgwood produced a jasper copy, now also called the Portland vase after the original. The subject of its decoration has long been debated. One recent theory suggests that its architectural elements form Greek letters, which in turn identify the figures in the courtship scenes as the mythological Peleus and Thetis on one side and Paris and Helen on the other. Wedgwood discovered to his surprise that the material of the Roman vase was paste glass in two layers, the upper having been cut away in the cameo style of ancient gems. Wedgwood received much praise for the accuracy of his copy, particularly its surface texture and color, but he actually changed the lines of the handles and shortened the neck, thereby giving his reproduction a thicker profile than the original. Illustration on page 15 is a late example in black jasper.

At the same time that Wedgwood was producing basalt and jasper to satisfy the rage for classical arts, he continued to produce other wares — namely buff (also called bamboo and cane) and red ware both usually for tableware. Caneware offered decorative possibilities not attainable with jasper, such as enameling. The ware did not



Vase: Apollo and Muses, late 18th century (cat. 25)

originate with Wedgwood but through trial and error, he greatly refined its body. The exhibition has several pieces in the bamboo motif (Illus. on p. 27) — a teapot, cup and saucer, and inkwell. The cup and saucer, molded into the shape of bamboo, are decorated and enameled in mat blue to show the leaves, buds, and joints of bamboo. These pieces probably date to the period between 1787, when the bamboo motif was featured in the Wedgwood catalogue, and 1800, when most caneware was produced.

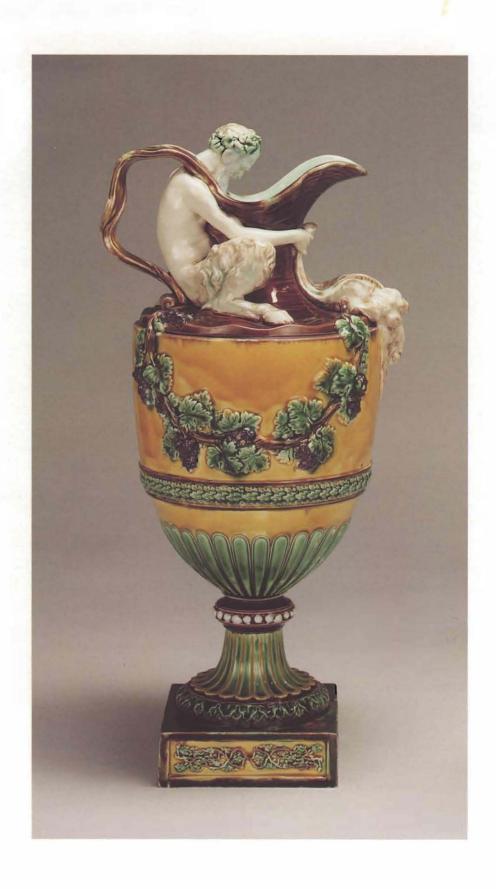
The vital, driving spirit of the Wedgwood company was lost with the death of Josiah Wedgwood in 1795. Never again would one individual take such singular interest in the overseeing of all aspects of design and production. Wedgwood's original plan was for his three sons and his nephew, Thomas Byerley, to succeed him. But his eldest and youngest sons left the business while Wedgwood was still alive, and upon his death, the company passed to his second son, Josiah II, and his nephew, Byerley, who had worked for Wedgwood since 1779. Although still a family-run business, the Wedgwood factory sorely missed the strong personality of its founder.

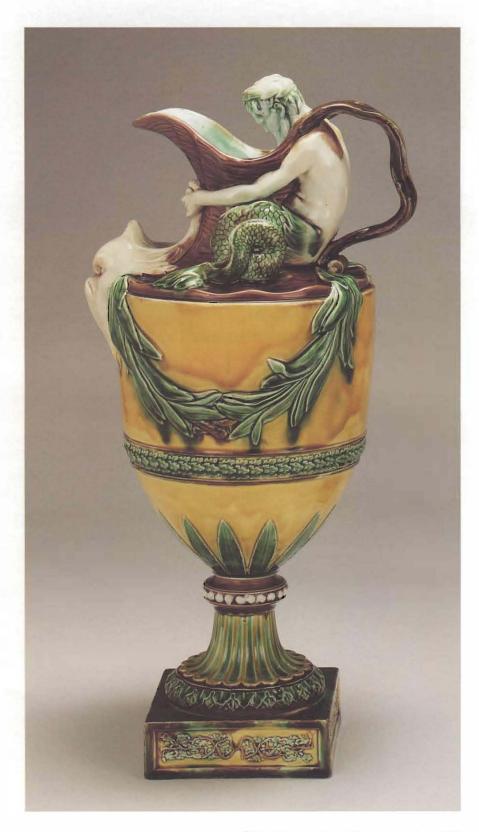
Good tableware was made, but the quality of ornamental ware declined. Although William Hackwood remained as chief modeler until his death in 1832, no other designers or modelers of the quality employed by Josiah Wedgwood were found. Basalt, cane, and red wares, all self-coloring (where 'clay' itself gives shade to the body) continued to be produced. To these were added several new self-coloring wares—celadon, drab, and in the mid-century, lavender. Majolica and bone china were made by the Wedgwood company in the second half of the nineteenth century, but neither were Wedgwood inventions.

Wedgwood's offspring faced a problem often common to children of highly successful parents: developing independence. Wedgwood's oldest son, John, chose banking for his career, while his youngest son, Thomas, whose health was fragile, traveled abroad. None of the sons wished to live at Etruria; they had been raised and educated as gentlemen and did not want to be associated with trade. The factory almost closed, but conditions improved between 1804 and 1812 when both John and Josiah II, because of financial difficulties, returned to Etruria to oversee the pottery.

John made improvements by adding a new Boulton-Watt steam engine, enlarging the factory, and introducing a printing works. Transfer printing of pottery had become big business, and John wanted to produce horticultural designs based on botanical prints that he favored. Transfer printing involves the transfer of an engraved image onto a ceramic surface.

The company was unstable again in the early decades of the nineteenth century. In 1827 the York Store in London closed (Illus.on p.13). Molds and stock were sold, with some items going for one-tenth their original price; family members were not interested in keeping anything. By 1844 Etruria itself was put up for sale, but as it did not sell, it remained in the family. Frank Wedgwood, Josiah I's grandson, attempted to modernize it. Unfortunately, "modernization" meant throwing away all the old records, patterns, and documents.





Pair of Ewers, late 19th century (cat. 57)

Recovery began in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wedgwood pottery gained prestige in the Great Exhibition of 1851. This first great world trade fair at Crystal Palace in London brought international artists and manufacturers together. During this time of eclectic taste, medieval and rococo styles were preferred, but many styles were appreciated and displayed together. With new enthusiasm for the neoclassical came a revival of interest in jasper ware. Wedgwood began to be collected and exhibited. In 1894 Frederick Rathbone, a London antique collector, held an exhibition of Wedgwood in his store gallery. New designers were hired by the company—Émile-Aubert Lessore, a painter who had studied with Ingres in Paris, in 1859, and Thomas Allen, a painter trained at Minton, in 1875.

The early decades of this century saw little change at Etruria. The business, managed largely by descendants of Josiah Wedgwood, was still a relatively small operation, employing about fifteen hundred workers. Attempts were made to modernize. A new plant was built at Etruria; electric tunnel ovens for firing were introduced; and a company was started in the United States in 1930 to facilitate export to the huge American market, which bought half of Wedgwood's production. Sales were at an all-time high in the 1920s, but a slump occurred after the Wall Street crash. By the late 1930s it was clear that, after 170 years, Etruria had to be abandoned. The buildings had sunk eight feet below the level of the canal, and the area had become heavily polluted by nearby coal mining.

To upgrade, the company moved in 1940 to Barlaston, a 500-acre, parklike estate six miles away. The first London Wedgwood showroom in more than 120 years opened in 1948. In the 1950s, Wedgwood Rooms—shops within shops where tableware was sold—were opened and spread to dozens of cities around the world.

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, styles at Wedgwood reflected changing tastes. Caneware and red ware were especially suited to the oriental motifs that remained popular in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Red ware, called rosso antico (antique red) by Josiah Wedgwood, was never favored by him as a body since it reminded him of crude early Staffordshire ware. But red ware showed off brilliant enamel colors advantageously, as in the peony design, painted freehand, after glazing on a pitcher in pink, blue, green, and gold (cat. 54). The enamel, colored with metal oxides, sometimes needed to be fired repeatedly, as different colors required different firing times.

Another form of decoration, called intaglio or inlaid, was used in the nineteenth century on red ware and basalt. To create the decoration on a basalt coffee and tea set (cat. 21), the unfired body was impressed and the impressions then filled with a contrasting color, creating inlaid horizontal bands.

Luster ware, a metal-colored glazing on earthenware, was first produced by the Wedgwood company in 1809. Although Josiah Wedgwood had experimented with the luster technique after platinum was discovered and imported to England from the New World, he never made it commercially. To make luster, a thin film of metal is applied



Cup and saucer, 18th century; covered dish, teapot and inkwell, all early 19th century (cat. 49, 51, 52, 53)



Teapot, early 20th century (cat. 42)

to the glaze surface and fired in a reducing kiln. The so-called variegated or splashed luster of a lavender and pink colored pearl ware cup in the exhibition (cat. 3) has a marbled, mottled appearance, the result of applying gold with a feather to the glazed body.

Among the self-coloring bodies introduced by the Wedgwood pottery in the early nineteenth century was drabware, appropriately named for its greenish brown color and dull surface. A drabware creamer and sugar bowl, with bas-relief friezes in white of fruits and flowers, are covered with a smear glaze (cat. 55). This very thin glaze, used in the 1820s and 1830s, resulted from glazes which were smeared on the inside of the saggar, the box holding the pottery in the kiln during firing, leaving a thin deposit on the surface of the vessel. Another drabware piece, a teapot, is also smear glazed (cat. 56). Its relief combines the classicism of an arabesque design with the cozy Englishness of the spaniel finial.

Brilliantly colored majolica (not to be confused with Italian *maiolica*, a tin-glazed earthenware) was produced at Wedgwood from 1860 to 1910. It was first developed at the Minton factory, another Staffordshire pottery, in the 1850s. The vibrant polychromy of the glazes are the result of a soft lead stained with coloring oxides and fired over an earthenware body at very high temperatures. The exhibition has majolica versions of the famed wine (Sacred to Bacchus) and water (Sacred to Neptune) ewers designed by John Flaxman as his first assignment for Wedgwood in 1775 (Illus. on pp. 24-25). On one of the pair of molded vases, a satyr crouches under the handle with his head over the spout, holding the horns of a ram; on the other vase, a triton in the same position holds the tail of a dolphin. The vases, wildly colored in lustrous yellow, turquoise green, and rich brown, are festooned with relief decorations: grapes for the wine ewer and leaves for the water ewer.

Queen's ware vases in traditional shapes, but using unusual, bright colors instead of the creamy white of earlier examples, were also featured in the late nineteenth century. The reliefs of a turquoise and gilt pair in the exhibition depict classical scenes of sacrifice (Illus. on p. 29).

Josiah Wedgwood was an avid collector and expert on shells, and he had anticipated a whole dinner service done in shell shapes, some of exotic, elaborate specimens. Examples of these shell dishes include a majolica plate in green and brown tortoiseshell colors (cat. 58), and a delicately colored pink and white pearl ware platter (cat. 4). The design for both appeared in an 1802 pattern book of Wedgwood.

Twentieth-century art movements are reflected at Wedgwood. Art Deco vases were produced by Wedgwood in the 1910s. The influence of abstract art was felt in the 1930s and thereafter when undecorated earthenware was designed, sometimes by architects, to suit contemporary interiors.

The pieces assembled in this exhibition are, for the most part, of a traditional nature. Some are rare and excellent. The crimson of a jasper-dipped teapot and footed trivet is of a color made only in 1910 and from 1925 to 1932 (Illus. on p. 27). Bone china,



Pair of Vases: Sacrifice of Peace and Flora, late 19th century (cat. 6)

made from clay, feldspar, and bone ash, developed by Josiah Spode in 1796, was widely made in England in the nineteenth century. Produced briefly by Wedgwood from 1812 to 1822, bone china became a major body for the company after 1878. A vase in the Worcester style (so-called for its attempt to imitate Worcester porcelain) has brown flowers and red maple leaves painted in enamel colors against a creamy white ground and a gold rim (cat. 59). A new type of luster ware was produced by Wedgwood in the twentieth century. Instead of applying a thin film of the actual metal to the glaze surface, a commercial luster was applied over the colors, and gold figures were printed over this. The orange exterior and powder blue interior of a vase with gilded butterflies (cat. 60) is an example of the work of Daisy Makeig-Jones (1881-1945), best known for the Fairyland luster pieces she designed, in which fantastic, brilliantly colored subjects crowd on vase surfaces.

In the 1960s Wedgwood became a public company, no longer under Wedgwood family control, and for the first time a non-family member became the director. Now a world-wide company employing over six thousand people, it recently has acquired many small businesses, such as Franciscan Tableware in California. If Wedgwood were alive today, he would no doubt chortle at the success of the modern Josiah Wedgwood and Sons Limited, although he might look askance at profits flowing outside his family.

Lucie Nelson Curator



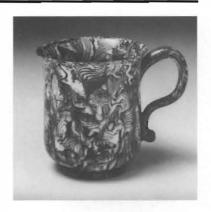
Vase, early 20th century (cat. 43)

For further reading see: Frederick Rathbone, Old Wedgwood (London: B. Quaritch, 1989); William Burton, Josiah Wedgwood and his Pollery (London: Cassell & Co., 1922); John Meredith Graham and Hensleigh Cecil Wedgwood, Wedgwood (N.Y.: Tudor, 1948); Carol Macht, Classical Wedgwood Designs (N.Y.: M. Barrows, 1957); Robert E. Schofield, The Lunar Society of Birmingham (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963); Ann Finer and George Savage, eds, The Selected Letters of Josiah Wedgwood (London: Cory, Adams, and Mackay, 1965); Warren E. Cox, The Book of Pottery and Porcelain (N.Y.: Crown Publishers, 1970); David Buten, 18th Century Wedgwood (N.Y.: Methuen, 1980); Kathy Niblett, ed., Wedgwood of Etruria and Barlaston (Stoke-on-Trent: City Museum, 1980); Robin Reilly and George Savage, The Dictionary of Wedgwood (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors' Club, 1980); Barbara and Hensleigh Wedgwood, The Wedgwood Circle 1730-1897 (Westfield, N.J.: Eastview Editions, 1980); Aileen Dawson, Masterpieces of Wedgwood in the British Museum (London: British Museum Publications, 1984); Neil McKendrick, "Josiah Wedgwood and George Stubbs," History Today, Vol. 7, 1957, pp. 502-514; Elizabeth Bryding Adams, The Dwight and Lucille Beeson Wedgwood Collection of the Birmingham Museum of Art (Birmingham, Alabama: Museum of Art, 1992); William H. Homan, "For an Answer to a Roman Riddle Find Pi," New York Times, Mar. 26, 1992, sect. C., page 15.



WEDGWOOD-WHIELDON PERIOD

Cup, mid 18th century Agate 2 x 3 in. Identifying mark: none 1974.323 See illus. on page 18

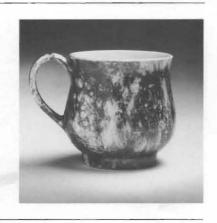


CREAM WARE, PEARL WARE, STONEWARE

Vase, late 18th century
 Cream ware with agate slip under glaze
 8 ½ x 5 ½ in.
 Identifying mark: Wedgwood & Bentley
 1974.325
 See illus. on page 20

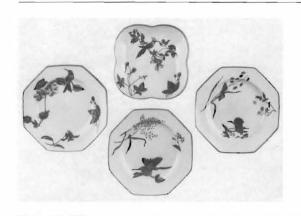


Cup, early 19th century
 Pearl ware with variegated luster decoration
 2 3/8 x 3 in.
 Identifying mark: none
 1974.68



Platter, shell-shaped, late 19th century
 Pearl ware
 12 x 7 ½ in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "T" "P" 'PQC"
 1974.67





Dinner set (3 plates & serving dish): Birds and Flowers, late 19th century
 Cream ware, hand painted over transfer patterns
 Each: 9 1/2 x 9 1/2 in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "PUC" "PUL"
 1974.206, 1974.213, 1974.216, 1974.221



Pair of vases: Sacrifice of Peace and Flora, late 19th century Cream ware, turquoise with gilt Each: $8^{5}/8 \times 4^{3}/4$ in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.201 & 1974.202 See illus. on page 29



Teapot, early 19th century
 White stoneware, glazed
 2 ⁷/8 x 6 in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.63



8 Covered cup and saucer, mid 19th century White stoneware cup: 3 ½ x 4 ½ in.; saucer: diam. 4 ¼ in. Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "X" 1974.167 & 1974.168

9 Potpourri, 19th century White stoneware, blue blackberry frieze, smear glaze 4 ½ x 3 ¼ in. Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "RK" 1974.170



Tea set, beehive style, early 19th century Blue stoneware
 Teapot, h: 5 ½ in.; Sugar bowl, h: 4 ½ in.; creamer, h: 2 ½ in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.60, 1974.61, 1974.62



BASALT

Urn, late 18th century
Basalt, engine turned
7 ³/4 x 7 in.
Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD & BENTLEY, ETRURIA" in circle around central screw
1974.268
See illus. on page 6



Vase: Ceres and Priestesses, late 18th century
 Basalt with encaustic decoration
 18 x 18 in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.258
 See illus. on page 11





13 Vase: Woman Offering, early 19th century Basalt with encaustic decoration $8 \times 3^{3}/s$ in. Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "Z" "105" 1974.277



Vase with Pegasus cover: Honoring Citharist or Apotheosis of Homer, 19th century Basalt

 17 ½ x 9 in.
 Designer: John Flaxman Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "D"

 1974.270
 See illus. on page 8.



15 Medallion: Gordianus, late 18th century Basalt $2^{1/8} \times 1^{3/4}$ in. Identifying marks: "GORDIANUS" on front; "Wedgwood" on back 1974.274



Intaglio: seal, late 18th century
 Basalt
 7/8 x ³/4 in.

 Identifying mark: "Wedgwood & Bentley" 1974.272

17 Intaglio: Head of Woman Inscribed in Greek, early 19th century Basalt $1 \times \frac{7}{8}$ in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.273



Coffee Pot, early to mid 19th century Basalt, engine turned
 9 ¹/₄ x 7 in.
 Identifying mark: none
 1974.271



19 Inkwell: Nymphs as Archers; Mother Entreating Coriolanus, 19th century
Basalt and rosso antico reliefs $2^{-1}/8 \times 2^{-1}/2$ in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "D"
1974.337



Pitcher: Sewing Lesson; Reading Lesson, mid 19th century Basalt
 7 ½ x 6 in.
 Designer: Lady Templetown Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"

1974.265





Coffee pot, teapot, and sugar bowl, late 19th century Basalt with incised decoration
Coffee pot: h. 6 ½ in.; Teapot: h. 4 in.; Sugar Bowl: h. 4 ½ in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "107", "OHN" "L" "108"
1974.262 & 1974.263 & 1974.264



Bust: Sir Walter Scott, late 19th century Basalt
 8 ³/₄ x 6 in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 Designer: Edward William Wyon
 1974.269



Pair of vases: Muses, mid 20th century
 Basalt
 Each: 8 ³/₄ x 3 ⁵/₈ in.
 Identifying marks: "ETRURIA" "ENGLAND"
 "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.266 & 1974.267

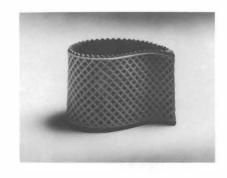


JASPER

Trial piece: *Hope,* late 18th century Solid Pink jasper ⁷/₈ x ³/₄ in. Identifying marks: "3070" "TTBO" 1974.166 Vase: Apollo and Muses, late 18th century Solid medium blue jasper
15 ½ x 6 in.
Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
1974.76
See illus. on page 22



26 Custard Cup, late 18th century Solid pea green jasper, white jasper lattice 1 \(^1/4\) x 2 \(^3/8\) in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.173



27 Garment ornament: *Season*, late 18th century Solid blue jasper, white reliefs 3 ³/₁₆ x l ³/₄ in.

Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.143

See illus. on page 32



28 Portland vase copy, early 20th century Black jasper dip $8^{-1}/4 \times 5^{-1}/4$ in. Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "ENGLAND" "Y" 1974.180 See illus. on page 15





Medallion: Chained Slave, mid 20th century White jasper, black relief

 $1^{1}/8 \times 1^{1}/4$ in.

Designer: William Hackwood

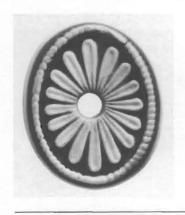
Identifying marks on front: "AM I NOT A MAN AND A

BROTHER?"

Back: "WEDGWOOD" "MADE IN ENGLAND" "57" "EC"

1974.175

See illus. on page 12



Button, late 18th century Blue and white jasper $^{7}/_{16} \times ^{1}/_{2} \text{ in.}$ Identifying marks: none 1974.70



Candleholders, late 18th century Solid light blue jasper, gold metal fittings $8 \times 4^{1/2}$ in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.125 & 1974.126



Chess set, 32 pieces, early 19th century Solid blue and white jasper 2 in. (pawn) to 3 ³/₄ in. (king and queen) Designer: John Flaxman Identifying marks: none (except for "WEDGWOOD" on one pawn archer) 1974.77-1974.105

Pawn from chess set, early 19th century
 Solid lilac jasper
 2 ¹/₄x 1 ⁵/₈ in.
 Designer: John Flaxman
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"

1974.160



Plaque: Dancing Hour, early 19th century Green jasper dip 6 x 4 ½ in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.196
 See illus. on page 48



35 Creamer: Achilles Staying Chariot of Victory; Friendship Consoling Affliction, 19th century
 Dark green jasper dip, glazed interior
 1 ⁵/₈ x 4 in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.199A



36 Pitcher: Offerings to Flora, late 19th century Lilac jasper dip $4^{1/2} \times 3$ in. Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "Y" "118" "36" 1974.159





Pair of Vases: Dancing Graces; Votaries of Diana,
19th century
Lilac dip
Each: h: 6 in.
Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
1974.162 & 1974.163



38 Pair of perfume bottles, 19th century Green jasper dip, lilac, white & metal fittings Each: 4 ½ x 2 in. Identifying marks: none 1974.187 & 1974.188



39 Pair of jars, late 19th century Light blue jasper dip, green medallions, white Each: 2 ½ x 2 ¼ in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.153 & 1974.154



40 Pair of vases, late 19th century
Medium blue jasper dip
Each: 6 in x 4 ³/₈ in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "V" "I"
1974.73 & 1974.74

Tea set: Classical Scenes, late 19th century
Dark blue jasper dip
Teapot, h: 3 1/8 in; marks: "S" "T" "42" "D"
"WEDGWOOD"

Sugar bowl: h: 3 $^{1}/_{2}$ in.. marks: "WEDGWOOD" "RK" Creamer: h: 1 $^{3}/_{4}$ in.; marks: "WEDGWOOD" "30"

"D" "V"

1974.109 & 1974.110 & 1974.111



42 Teapot and tea stand, early 20th century Crimson jasper dip
Teapot: 4 ½ x 4 ½ in.; Stand: diam., 6 3/8 in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
1974.157 & 1974.158
See illus. on page 27

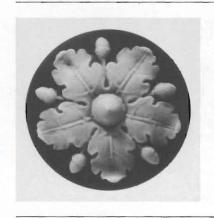


Vase, early 20th century
 Peach green jasper dip, rose medallions, white
 8 ⁷/₈ x 4 ³/₄ in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "J" "ENGLAND" 1974.185
 See illus. page 31



Vase, mid 20th century
 Black and white jasper dip, engine-turned
 8 ½ x 5 in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "J" "MADE IN ENGLAND" "A" "09"
 1974.179
 See illus. page 2

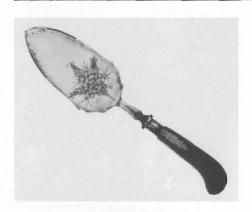




Furniture or door knob, early 20th century Black and white jasper
 h: ³/₄ in.; diam. l ¹/₄ in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.176



Salad serving fork and spoon, 20th century Dark blue jasper handles, silver utensils Each: L: 10 ½ in.
 Identifying marks: hallmarks on silver 1974.288 & 1974.289



47 Pie server, 20th century
 Blue jasper, silver utensil with embossed floral design
 L: 9 in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "ENGLAND"
 1974.116



48 Cachepot, 20th century
Buff jasper dip with black reliefs
4 x 5 ½ in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "MADE IN
ENGLAND"
1974.172

CANEWARE, ROSSO ANTICO, AND DRABWARE

49 Cup and saucer, late 18th century
Caneware with blue and white enamel decoration
Cup: 1 ½ x 3 ½ in.; Saucer: diam., 5 ¼ in.
Identifying mark: "Wedgwood"
1974.316 & 1974.317
See illus. on page 27



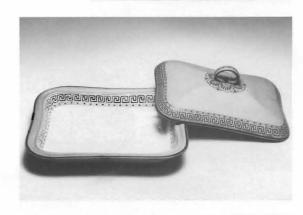
Covered jar: Domestic Employment Scenes, late 18th to early 19th century
 Caneware
 3 ½ x 4 ½ in.
 Designer: Lady Templetown

Identifying mark: none

1974.303

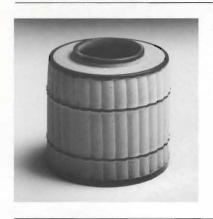


Covered dish, early 19th century
 Caneware with blue enamel decoration; glazed white interior with blue enamel decoration
 3 1/4 x 8 in., including lid
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD"
 1974.318
 See illus. on pg. 27



52 Teapot, early 19th century
Caneware, smear glaze, glazed interior
4 ⁷/₈ x 7 ¹/₂ in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "156"
1974.314
See illus. on pg. 27





53 Inkwell, early 19th century Caneware with blue enamel decoration $1^{-1/2} \times 1^{-3/4}$ in. Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" 1974.315 See illus. on pg. 27



Pitcher: peony pattern, early 19th century
 Rosso antico with polychrome enamel decoration
 4 ³/₄ x 4 in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" "O"
 1974.336



55 Creamer and sugar bowl, early 19th century Drabware Creamer, h: 3 ½ in.; marks: "WEDGWOOD" "O" "D" Sugar bowl, h: 3 ¼ in.; marks: "WEDGWOOD" "X" 1974.321 & 1974.322



56 Teapot, early 19th century
Drabware
3 ½ x 6 in.
Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "2"
1974.320

MAJOLICA

57 Pair of ewers for wine and water, late 19th century

Majolica

Each: 17 x 8 in.

Designer: John Flaxman

Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "236" "AAQ" "V"

1974.64 & 1974.65 See illus. on pgs. 24 & 25



Plate in shell shape, late 19th century
 Majolica
 8 ¹/₂ x 8 ¹/₂ in.
 Identifying marks: "WEDGWOOD" "W" "P" ?LD"
 1974.66



BONE CHINA

Vase, Late 19th century
 Bone china
 h: 3 ⁵/₈ in.
 Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" under red Portland vase
 1974.278



60 Vase, early 20th century Bone china with luster 4 ½ x 2 ½ in.

Designer: Daisy Makeig-Jones

Identifying mark: "WEDGWOOD" under gold Portland vase

1974.326



The exhibition also includes selected prints from Frederick Rathbone, Old Wedgwood (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1898).



