

RESTORATION OF A PORCELAIN MANUFACTORY MEISSEN PAIR VASE

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Catalogue entry - VRVM 55722, Germany, Meissen KPM, 1850, porcelain, dimensions h36, D12,5 cm.
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Since 1936, two pair vases made at the Porcelain Manufactory Meissen have been in the storage collection of the Riga History and Navigation Museum. In the 18th century, their design was created by Johann Joachim Kändler. Bottle-shaped vases with slender necks, adorned with reliefs of various sizes and types, handcrafted and molded, featuring flowers, leaves, tendrils, and polychrome depictions of butterflies and insects painted on the surface of the vase, with a lid topped with a flower.



1. Before restoration



2. Process restoration



3. Process restoration

THE CONDITION OF THE OBJECT BEFORE RESTORATION

Both vases had been severely damaged over time. The first of the vases to be restored was the one in the worst condition. It had broken into 26 fragments of various sizes and had been glued together with a dark brown hard adhesive. This was done in poor quality - the fragments were misaligned, forming large seams filled with glue, and the entire object was smeared with glue. Not preserved - a fragment with a flower at the bottom edge of the vase and small base fragments in its body along the seams of the glued fragments. The decorative flowers and leaves had suffered greatly - 173 petal fragments of various sizes and volumes, 17 leaf tips, 15 stems and their fragments, and 4 flowers were missing.

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESTORATION PROGRAMME

The restoration council of the Riga History and Navigation Museum developed the restoration task plan that determined the restoration process. Previously glued vase fragments were detached - acetone-soaked compresses were applied to the glued seams, and when the glue dissolved, each fragment was carefully separated from the other. Old glue residues were cleaned mechanically with a scalpel and acetone-soaked swabs under a magnifying lamp. This was done carefully to avoid damaging the delicate flowers. The seams of the fragments were bleached, rinsed, and then the vase fragments were glued (30% Paraloid B-72 in ethanol). Missing vase fragments were filled with plaster mass and processed. Since both vases have identical flowers and leaves, it was possible to find the necessary missing flower and leaf fragments. Forms of "Protesil" material were taken from both vases for casting the missing flowers, leaves, stems, and their fragments. Missing fragments were cast in the prepared molds (Araldit 2020, talc, filler "Schotchlite TM"). Often only a few petal fragments were used from the cast flower or its part. Each petal and leaf, stem fragments were precisely marked and cut, then glued in the missing places. The joints were filled with putty and sanded. The restored fragments of the vase were toned and retouched. All restored fragments were coated with varnish. Work is currently ongoing on the second pair vase.



Process restoration
Fragment



After restoration
Fragment



Process restoration
Fragment



After restoration
Fragment



Before restoration
Fragment



Process restoration
Fragment



After restoration
Fragment



4. After restoration