Jar - Porcelain jar

Object: Jar

Place of origin: Germany (possibly, made)
Austria (possibly, made)

Date: 1880-1900 (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Glazed porcelain

Credit Line: Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1996

Museum number: S.1096:1 to 2-1996

Gallery location: In Storage

Public access description

This lidded jar is decorated with reproductions of Sir Joshua Reynolds' 1762 painting of David Garrick being torn between Comedy and Tragedy, and his 1763 painting of the Graces decorating Hymen. The Garrick subject was probably chosen by Garrick as a playful parody of the classical story of Hercules choosing between pleasure and virtue, designed to emphasise his versatility as an actor. Reynolds presents the figures of Comedy and Tragedy in the style of the Italian artists Antonio Correggio and Guido Reni.

David Garrick (1717-1779) was recognised during his lifetime as one of the greatest actors ever in both comic and tragic roles, and it is this universal aspect of his acting that Reynolds celebrated in his painting. Garrick was born in Hereford and came to London in 1737 to work as a wine merchant but made his London debut as an actor in 1741 at Goodman's Fields Theatre as Richard III. He managed the Theatre Royal Drury Lane from 1747 until 1776 and was depicted during his lifetime in many of his most famous roles, especially in paintings by Johann Zoffany (1733-1810).

Descriptive line

Lidded jar decorated with an image of David Garrick being tugged by Comedy and Tragedy, after the painting by Joshua Reynolds, 1762. Porcelain decorated in enamels, Austrian or German, c.1880-1900.

Physical description

Onion-shaped polychrome glazed porcelain jar with lid, the body of the jar painted with a landscape view of a lake and mountains, to one side of which Garrick is shown with Comedy and Tragedy, and on the other, three muses with wreaths decorating a bust of Hymen. Around the tapering top gold Chinoiserie decoration is painted on magenta ground, with an image of a gold boat against a cream ground.

Dimensions

Height: 25.5 cm total height, lidded, Height: 18.0 cm jar, without lid, Diameter: 7.7 cm of base, Depth: 7.2 cm across opening at top of jar

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Object history note

The original painting by Reynolds on this jar was very popular and no less than fourteen different mezzotints of it are known, one full-length by Charles Corbutt with the added title: Strive not Tragedy nor Comedy to engross a Garrick Who to our NOBLEST CHARACTERS does EQUAL HONOUR.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O123000/porcelain-jar-jar-unknown/