

OBJECT of the **month**

April 2021



BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to the Object of the Month. I'm Norma, a Museum Guide at the Dayton Art Institute. In this presentation, I will be talking about a Korean celadon ceramic bowl from the 13th century.

Let's look closely at this beautiful example of celadon ceramic. This is an almost 8 inches in diameter with gently sloping sides decorated inside and out. In the interior of the bowl, we see a pair of fish, a symbol of prosperity and good luck. Moving our eyes outward from the fish, we will see they are surrounded by a circular pattern of fungi heads, a symbol of prosperity, also.

The four medallions are blossoming peony sprays, representative of enduring matrimonial bliss. Between the medallions, there are willow trees, a subtle symbol for progeny or children, swans representing happiness and foliage denoting prosperity. The upper rim is inlaid with a decorative pattern.

As we look at the underside of the bowl, you will see more roundels of chrysanthemum sprays, intended bring good health and wellbeing, surrounded by leafy tendrils. Decorative rings are seen around the upper and lower parts of the footed bowl.

The art of celadon was originally adapted from China. Celadon, or greenware as they are called in Korea, was introduced to ancient Korea during the Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392. With the pale green luster reminiscent of jade and the super smooth glaze, Goryeo ceramics remain some of the finest and most prized collectors' items in the world of ceramics.

The name *celadon* is a 17th century French word of Greek origin used to refer to colors ranging from blue-green to soft gray-green. Celadon was the name of a shepherd hero in a pastoral romance who wore a striking green coat. Celadon thus became fashionable for describing particular green colors and was incorporated into the English language in the 19th century.

The manufacturing of Korean celadon occurs in several steps.

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The clay is gathered from riverbanks in several regions of southern Korea, each having its particular properties. These clays are mixed, then formed by hand, to be turned on a wheel into specific shapes. The process of adding inlay, or carved details, involves incising a design directly into the damp formed clay. Next, a white or black slip, which is clay suspended in a watery solution, is applied, allowed to dry, then polished to remove excess. This leaves the incised areas filled with the colored slip.

The celadon is hand dipped several times into the glaze. The glaze contains iron oxide, magnesium oxide, and quartz particles, all helping to create a smooth surface. Finally, the celadon is placed in a kiln at a firing temperature of 1200° Centigrade or 2000° Fahrenheit. This firing process produces an extremely smooth surface, although those that have very fine cracks, or crackling, are also desirable.

Thank you for joining this presentation. If you would like to see this artwork in-person on your next visit to the museum, it can be found in the Patterson-Kettering Wing of the Asian Art, Gallery 108.

END TRANSCRIPT

Click [here](#) to access the video presentation.

ARTWORKS FEATURED IN VIDEO*

Korea (Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392), *Bowl with Inlaid Fish, Bird, Flower and Plant Design*, 13th century, stoneware with celadon glaze. Gift of Mrs. Virginia W. Kettering, 1976.161

Korea (Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392), *Melon-Shaped Ewer with Bamboo Decoration*, first half of the 12th century, stoneware with carved and incised design under celadon glaze. Metropolitan Museum of Art, NY. Gift of Mrs. Roger G. Gerry, 1996.471

Korea (Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392), *Bowl with Incised Parrot Design*, 1100s–1200s, celadon ware with incised decoration. Cleveland Museum of Art, OH. Gift of John L. Severance, 1918.482

Korea (Goryeo Dynasty, 918–1392), *Fluted Cup and a Cupstand*, 12th century, celadon ceramic. Private collection. Image: Sotheby's.

"Celadon (Korean Ceramics.)" *YouTube*, uploaded by Art of East and West, Nov. 23 2019, <https://youtu.be/Fq8eBghuOLA>

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edu@daytonart.org