

The Frick Collection: Detail Report



Two Figures of Ladies on Stands

Chinese, Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), Kangxi Period (1662–1722)

Date 1662–1722

Medium Hard-paste porcelain with polychrome overglaze

Dimensions 38 × 10 1/4 × 10 1/4 in. (96.5 × 26 × 26 cm)

Credit Line Henry Clay Frick Bequest

Accession Number 1918.8.40

Currently On View

First Floor, Room 10, Living Hall

Commentary A particularly fruitful and innovative period of production, the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the development of new techniques and styles of ornamentation. One of the most important contributions was the invention of overglaze enamel palettes, known as *famille vert* because they are dominated by translucent green glazes. This porcelain figure of an elegant lady on a stand, and its pair, 1918.8.39, are decorated with a colorful mix of green, red, yellow, aubergine, and blue glazes in a pattern of naturalistic motifs including chrysanthemums, rose blossoms, and flying storks combined with abstract elements like the large *wan*—a swastika-shaped Buddhist symbol for good fortune—that is repeated on the porcelain bases. The women represent ideal female beauty, as defined by the seventeenth-century writer and aesthete Li Yu (1611–1680): egg-shaped rather than round faces, eyebrows lightly curved like the leaves of a willow tree, lips resembling cherries, and slim, supple, curved bodies also resembling willow trees. Their delicate hands seem to be offering a fruit or a flower, in China the sign of a good wish extended from a woman to a man. These two figural ceramics were probably made for export to the West; however, their large size made them particularly fragile to ship, and only a few ever reached Europe. Source: Vignon, Charlotte. *The Frick Collection Decorative Arts Handbook*. New York: The Frick Collection/Scala, 2015.

Collection History J. Pierpont Morgan, London and New York, 1907. Duveen. Frick, 1918. Source: *Porcelains in The Frick Collection: Oriental and French*. Volume VII. New York: The Frick Collection, 1974.