



**Charlotte Hodes and Paul Scott awarded £14,850 by Arts Council England for research into the Spode Copper Plate Archive**

Hodes and Scott are leading contemporary artists who have long associations with the now extant Copeland/Spode company. Both explore the language of printed decorative ceramics in their artwork and both have work in prominent public collections including the Potteries Museum and V&A in London.

The Spode Museum Trust was established in 1987 to protect the Spode Archive in perpetuity. The archive includes some 40,000 ceramic items spanning over two hundred years from the late eighteenth century to 2008. There are collections of antique factory tools, furniture, moulds as well as a quarter of a million Spode and Copeland documents, including watercolour paintings of 70,000 ceramic patterns. The archive also includes over 25,000 engraved copper plates (dating back to 1800) from which ceramic transfer wares were made.

The Spode Museum Trust's collection of copper plates is the finest archive of graphic material relating to decorative tableware anywhere in the world. A valuable and vital part of British heritage, it has international significance because of its unique nature and the widespread dissemination of printed transferwares during the nineteenth century. The engravings were a working archive right up until the closure of Spode and whilst the ceramic ware is well known, these plates are completely under-researched. They are the secret remains of an industry.

Hodes and Scott have been awarded £14,850 by Arts Council England to enable initial access to the archives for sorting, limited sample printing and digitisation. Using digital tools to clone, collage and re-mediate they will re-pattern, re-scale and re-place to create new artworks, which re-animate the historical.

The first outcomes of the research will be shown at Paul Scott's solo exhibition at the Holburne Museum in Bath during the autumn of 2014.

This preliminary investigation is the precursor to a more comprehensive long term research project, which if funded will involve Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, University of the Arts London,

University of the West of England, and Rhode Island School of Design,  
Providence USA.

Scott and Hodes will give further details of the project and its background at *Beyond Blue*, a one day symposium organised by the *Fine Print Research Department*, University West of England at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London on Thursday 23 January 2014. The symposium will bring together leading academic researchers, industry experts and artists to discuss differing aspects of underglaze ceramic printing and transferware.

Paul Scott 12/11/2013

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#### Artists/Researchers:



Project Instigator/Co-ordinator **Paul Scott** is an artist,<sup>1</sup> Research Fellow at MIRIAD (Manchester Institute for Research and Innovation in Art and Design, at Manchester Metropolitan University)<sup>2</sup> and visiting Professor at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO).<sup>3</sup>

He has been involved in research on the Spode site on several occasions - in 1990 when investigating the first edition of his classic text *Ceramics and Print*<sup>4</sup> (meeting with

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<sup>1</sup> [www.cumbrianblues.com](http://www.cumbrianblues.com)

<sup>2</sup> [www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk](http://www.miriad.mmu.ac.uk)

<sup>3</sup> [www.khio.no](http://www.khio.no)

<sup>4</sup> Scott, Paul, *Ceramics and Print* A&C Black 1991, (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition 2012, Bloomsbury)

Robert Copeland and engraving staff), then later in the Museum as recipient of an *Encore Research Bursary*<sup>5</sup> investigating the historical confection of landscape and willow patterns. As part of PhD research, Scott subsequently examined extant copper plate archives in *Gustavsberg* and *Rörstrand* in Sweden as well as *Egersund* in Norway. His work involved historical, documentary research as well as artistic investigations.

As a shortlisted artist in British Ceramics Biennial in 2009, he was given - (limited) access to the closed factory site. Scott was allowed to collect a limited number of abandoned objects, including broken and unfinished tableware. He produced a body of work called *Spode Works Closed* entirely made up from these discarded forms. Objects from this contemporary commemorative for Spode have subsequently been exhibited at *Collect 2011* (Saatchi Gallery, London), *blas&knada* Stockholm (Sweden) *Ting Tang Trash* (Bergen Museums, Norway, 2011), *Rule Britannia* (Gardiner Museum Toronto, Canada, 2012),<sup>6</sup> *The Sèvres Museum* (France), *Blue and White Horizons* (Scottish Gallery 2012),<sup>7</sup> and *Ferrin Gallery* at the *New York Ceramic Fair* (USA, 2013). Another piece has recently been acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Art (USA).<sup>8</sup> The V&A and Potteries Museum have pieces from this series in their collections.

Scott has recently curated an exhibition based on printed tableware landscape patterns for the National Museum of Art Architecture and Design in Oslo.<sup>9</sup>



Collaborator **Charlotte Hodes** is an artist<sup>10</sup> and Professor of Fine Art at the University of the Arts, London. She was winner of the prestigious *Jerwood Prize for Drawing* in 2006 and is the only contemporary artist to have worked at Spode. Her involvement began

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<sup>5</sup> Arts Council

<sup>6</sup> [www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/exhibitions/rule-britannia](http://www.gardinermuseum.on.ca/exhibitions/rule-britannia)

<sup>7</sup> [www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/exhibitions/page/blue\\_and\\_white\\_horizons](http://www.scottish-gallery.co.uk/exhibitions/page/blue_and_white_horizons)

<sup>8</sup> [www.mfa.org/exhibitions/new-blue-and-white](http://www.mfa.org/exhibitions/new-blue-and-white)

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/?module=EventCalendar;action=Event.publicOpen;ID=1539;template=exhibitionView\\_en](http://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/?module=EventCalendar;action=Event.publicOpen;ID=1539;template=exhibitionView_en)

<sup>10</sup> [www.charlottehodes.com](http://www.charlottehodes.com)

in 1997, following a solo exhibition of her large scale paintings at the Potteries Museum. She was subsequently invited to work, with technical support, as an artist in the factory using a large archive of transfers and pattern books. She continued to work intermittently over the following six years until Spode's closure. Hodes was particularly interested in how the much loved iconic images, *Italian Blue* and chintz patterns such as *Gingham* and *New Strawberry* could be appropriated and reconstructed to create new incarnations which were both contemporary and celebratory of their origins. Using her experience as a painter and her interest in collage she utilized existing blank Spode ware and printed copper engraved tissue transfers.

Amongst the work produced were unique dinner services made with the support of Year of the Artist 2000.<sup>11</sup> These were purchased by the Potteries Museum, as well as exhibited at the International Design Biennial at the Design Museum London in 2003. Further works included tableware and vessels exhibited in *Waste to Taste* at Sotheby's,<sup>12</sup> at the Crafts Council and V&A. The work at Spode represents one of many projects in which Hodes has used archives and collections as a primary research source. These include the V&A textile library, in *Fragmented Images* using 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings and porcelain as an Associate Artist at the Wallace Collection in 2007.



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<sup>11</sup> Arts Council England

<sup>12</sup> Curated by Janice Blackburn OBE