



Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Fukushima



Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s), Fukushima. In-glaze decal collage on broken and re-assembled Willow pattern platter, marked *Japan* (c.1965). Wave insert from erased Willow platter (c.1840). Gold leaf, tile cement and epoxy resin. 464 x 349mm

In March 2011 the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan was enveloped by tidal waves following the Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. The ensuing events cut power to water-cooling pumps and nuclear fuel rods melted down, creating the largest nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986. It will take decades to decontaminate the surrounding area and decommission the stricken plant.

Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Fukushima commemorates the event. I bought the *Willow Pattern* plate (made in Japan c.1965) on eBay. The seller posted it off to me packed only in a Jiffy bag. Unsurprisingly the piece arrived in pieces. Although I have been using 'Kintsugi' type repairs on artworks recently, the shattering of the platter exactly where I would put the tidal wave made me wonder if I could salvage this particular broken object. The fragments sat in my studio for eighteen months or so before I could figure out how to use

them. In the end I collaged an erased piece of an old English Willow pattern platter (c.1840) into the scene.



I erased the original print on this to take an in-glaze print after Katsushika Hokusai's woodblock print *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* (c.1830). The nuclear power plant can be seen behind garden buildings. Although the Willow pattern was originally made to imitate Chinese porcelain wares, it has been seen in the West to represent all things Oriental - landscapes from China and Japan. In its original composition decorative details incorporate elements of Japanese Imari ware, and this platter was originally made in



Japan (and is accordingly stamped on the back). It seemed an appropriate form for the creation of this work.

It could be inferred that the object is one of an edition (I only ever do at most ten prints)... however in the case of works on old tablewares - prints are seldom put onto the same form, and each requires selective erasing, so the notion of an edition is pretty flexible. Whatever, the series are usually of up to five pieces - never more than ten. Each object is individually titled, signed and given a unique number. This is usually a combination of the number of the object placed in the kiln and its date - but sometimes the numbering is more random. At present this is the fourth *Fukushima* platter.

Paul Scott January 2015



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