



Italian Willows

The Spode company, responsible for the development of transferware printing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, produced wares on the same factory site until 2008 when the company entered administration.¹ Two of its most famous engraved patterns the *Willow* and *Italian* had been in continuous production on tablewares since its earliest days.

In 2009 I was given limited access to the closed Spode factory site in Stoke on Trent. It was a sad, poignant experience for me, as I had previously visited the factory on numerous occasions over the years in connection with my research into British transferware. As I wandered through the dereliction I recalled a thriving busy place with skilled workers crafting well made wares with significant cultural value.

I was allowed to collect a limited number of abandoned objects, including broken or unfinished tablewares and a limited number of discarded decal sheets. I subsequently made a series of artworks which commemorated the closed Spode Factory, but the decals remained in my studio print drawers for a number of years.

In 2014 I created a new body of work for a touring solo exhibition *Confected, Borrowed and Blue* which included some collages of historical transferwares. Most were composed of elements of two plates and their titles were generated by juxtaposing edited pattern names with each other. So a *Wild Rose* platter melded with an *Italian* became an *Italian Rose*, or a *Wild Italian*



Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Wild Italian. Collage, sliced Staffordshire transferware, Paul Scott 2014.

¹ The *Spode* intellectual property rights were subsequently purchased by *Portmeirion* which has since re-started production of classic tableware patterns.



Collage, *Temple* pattern platter, Spode, c. 1815, transfer-printed earthenware, 38cm dia. Paul Scott Collection

Later that year I acquired a rather remarkable, two hundred year old Spode collage. This strikingly contemporary object was made by collaging tissue prints from elements of the *Temple* pattern and is one of only two known to exist. It has lived with me in my studio for the past few years.



Scott's Cumbrian Blue(s) Willow Italian, Collage No:2_2017. In glaze decal collage (using old, salvaged decals from the closed Spode Works Factory collected in 2009) on small Spode/Royal Worcester bone china platter with gold lustre, H26 x W33 cms.

The two pieces made for the *Scottish Gallery*'s 175th anniversary exhibition draw from the *Cumbrian Blue(s) Spode Closed* and the *Italian, Willow Collage* series as well as this historical piece.



Scott's Cumbrian Blue Italian Willow, Collage No:2 2017. In glaze decal collage (using old, salvaged decals from the closed Spode Works Factory collected in 2009) on Spode/Royal Worcester bone china plate with gold lustre, D32 cm.

The collages insert elements of the *Willow* into the *Italian* and vice versa. They are the first of a small series which will explore the melding of two instantly recognisable fantasy landscapes on the last wares salvaged from the Spode Factory in 2009.

Paul Scott March 2017

