



### Cumbrian Blue(s) - On Cracks, Blooms and Chips

Contemporary attitudes to the re-use of existent material are generally very positive, re-cycling wood for example in contemporary furniture has become commonplace and the patina of age a pre-requisite for selling much 'Country Living' type craft. If it does seem to be less acceptable with chipped, cracked or crazed ceramics then I'm not exactly sure why, perhaps its because Antiques Road Show valuers frown upon them. However, I habitually collect glazed tableware from e-bay, junk and antique shops. Some of it has crazed glazing, some may be cracked, chipped, or the gold lustre worn from the edges. At first I was reluctant to use these pieces in exhibition work, being aware that they are perceived by many as flaws and devaluations, but over time I have grown very fond of these imperfections. Some are simply beautiful in their own right, as cracks trace a line across a form, or blooms in the glaze create vitreous clouds in the glassy surface. Their main significance however is that their presence evidences the object's history. For me these characteristics are no longer flaws or reasons to reject a form, in fact quite the opposite. They allude to an object's previous life, it has already been used and handled, it has a history. For me this evidence of wear has become an enhancement to a piece.

Sometimes, on re-firing antique wares, crazed glaze and dirty cracks fuse in the kiln with unexpected results.... faded grey crazing, pink blooms and opening cracks in a form add to its richness and complexity. I acknowledge 'imperfection' when re-working the ready made, bringing attention to the mark, chip or crack, often using them as part of collage and composition. These 'gifts' from the kiln are generally uncontrollable demanding time and reflection before the compositional work (collaging decals/prints) takes place. Broken pieces are repaired using a *Kinstugi* type process which involves bringing attention to the break or crack with glue, filler and gold leaf. In recent years I have begun to use the marks, cracks, chips and blooms to allude to the conceptual reasoning behind particular artworks.



Paul Scott, January 2015