

# RESTORATION OF A DÉCOLLETÉ FAIENCE TERRINE

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**MĀRTIŅŠ LABLAIKS**

## INTRODUCTION

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Décolleté ceramic items began to be produced in 19th century England. Décolleté technology developed gradually, creating crockery in the décolleté form with diversity in motifs. Décolleté ceramic crockery became very popular and in demand in the 19th century. It was exported and also ended up in Latvia's manors and the houses of the rich.

Décolleté was created in the following way. An engraved copper plate was covered with ceramic paint. An impression of it was then obtained on paper which was pressed onto the surface of the crockery and then glazed. The decor is reminiscent of a fine engraving.

The décolleté faience terrine, with lid, in the collection of the Museum of the History of Rīga and Navigation is an outstanding example of English décolleté ceramics. Its sides are decorated with a natural pastoral landscape with ducks, trees and people, while its upper part, leg and lid are decorated with ornamental belts of flowers and leaves.



Before restoration



Before restoration



Before restoration



Restoration process



Restoration process



Restoration process



Before restoration



Restoration process



After restoration



After restoration



After restoration



After restoration

## CONDITION OF THE ITEM PRIOR TO RESTORATION

The terrine had shattered into 59 fragments of varying sizes, 32 of which had been glued earlier. This was done sloppily, with fragments being glued in a skewed fashion forming large and thick seams filled with glue, and with the surface being covered in glue. 27 small fragments had been stored separately and had not been glued into the terrine. Base mass and glazing fragments of various sizes had been lost. The terrine was very dirty, with fine cracks in the glazing having formed on its surface, through which everyday grime had become ingrained into the base mass over time, forming dark brown stains. A fragment had been knocked off the side of the terrine's lid and there were small losses of glazing.

## RESTORATION PROCESS

The process of restoration was determined by the plan of restoration tasks developed by the MHRN Restoration Board.

The previously glued fragments were unglued by dipping the vessel in hot water and carefully separating each fragment. The remains of the old glue were cleaned mechanically with a scalpel under a magnifying lamp and with tampons soaked in acetone. The fragments were bleached, rinsed and then grouped and glued. Protasil material forms were made for moulding the missing fragments. The prepared matrices were attached accurately to the item and the missing fragments were cast in turn. Small fragments were shaped to fit, soaking the base mass with glue first. The renewed fragments were mechanically processed with instruments and smoothed with sandpaper. The small losses of glazing and bits which had fallen out along the fragment gluing seams were filled in with putty. The largest renewed fragments were covered with a thin layer of putty, then dried and smoothed off with fine sandpaper. The fragments were toned in the base colour and the lost décolleté fragments were renewed using carbon paper and transferring the missing drawing from the original onto the restored fragments, then touched up with a fine paintbrush and feather. All of the renewed fragments were covered with lacquer.