Unpacking the V&A Wedgwood Collection (London, 7–8 Jul 23)

Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent/London, Jul 7–08, 2023
Deadline: Feb 15, 2023

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Call for Papers:
A two-day symposium exploring new research avenues for Wedgwood studies;

NEW DATE: Friday 7 July, V&A Wedgwood Collection, Barlaston and Saturday 8 July 2023, Victoria and Albert Museum, London

The V&A Wedgwood Collection is one of the most important industrial collections in the world and a unique record of over 260 years of British ceramic production. Owned by the V&A following a successful fundraising campaign spearheaded by Art Fund in 2014, it is on display at Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, where an imaginative public programme celebrates the diversity, creativity and depth of the collection. The conference is organised in honour of Gaye Blake-Roberts MBE, former Curator of the then Wedgwood Museum. After forty years of research and achievements, she retired from her position in early 2020, continuing her research as Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the V&A Research Institute.

Wedgwood was founded in 1759 by British potter and entrepreneur Josiah Wedgwood, who helped transform English pottery from a cottage craft into an art form and international industry. A museum has existed since 1906, first at the Etruria site and then from 1952 at Barlaston and a newly designed museum opened in 2008, winning the prestigious Art Fund Museum of the Year prize in 2009. It houses the finest collection of Wedgwood material, showcasing innovations in taste and fashion over three centuries and the UNESCO recognised Wedgwood Archives.

CALL FOR PAPERS
We are pleased to invite submissions from established scholars as well as emerging voices, and look forward to conversations which expand our understanding and push scholarship in new directions.
Contributions are invited for four research themes:

1. Beyond Josiah Wedgwood – Re-examining the narrative
2. Global Wedgwood
3. Creativity, technology, economics and labour
4. Impressions of the Past – Contemporary ceramic making

Topics may include, but are not limited to:

• Transatlantic and continental trade
• Creativity, design and artists
• Race
• Economics and labour
• Disability
• Workshop traditions
• Female contributions to the development and history of Wedgwood and ceramics
• Production and consumption of ceramics
• Empire and colonialism
• Technology
• Class
• Displaying and collecting of ceramics
• Social histories of ceramics
• Factory architecture and employee welfare

Please submit a 400-word abstract outlining a 20- to 30-minute presentation along with a short biography or CV by 15 February 2023 to r.klarner@vam.ac.uk. These will be reviewed by the organising committee. Selected participants will be notified by 15 March 2023.

Reference:
CFP: Unpacking the V&A Wedgwood Collection (London, 7-8 Jul 23). In: ArtHist.net, Nov 14, 2022 (accessed Nov 15, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/37918>.