
Sōtō Asian Art

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Shi Dabin Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty

Estimate Period: 16th Century

Height: 11cm

Introduction

介紹

Soto Asian Art is specialises in Chinese, Indian, Himalayan-Tibetan and Southeast Asian art from the 8th to 16th centuries.

A specialist Asian art dealer with a strong emphasis in gilded bronze, copper, and ancient stone sculptures. Our collection consists of, Yixing teaware, Vietnamese incense beads, Indian cairn sandalwood, ceramics, cloisonne ware.

Build upon over 30 years of experience in Asian art. Our collection is tailored for investors, collectors, institutions, scholars in private sales, private client management, and dedicated personalise services in Asian Art.

Soto Asian Art only handles the finest pieces for our collection.

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Team

團隊

Li H.Kei

Founder, 創辦人

Mr Li H.Kei is an impassioned collector. With over 30 years devotion in Asian art, his know-how and practical expertise go beyond theoretical understanding.

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Jason Li, 李浩川

Director, 主任

Mr Jason Li, manages overall operations, business and relationship development within Soto Asian Art. Jason graduated with dual Master Degrees (MSc) from Aston University, and Imperial College London, U.K.

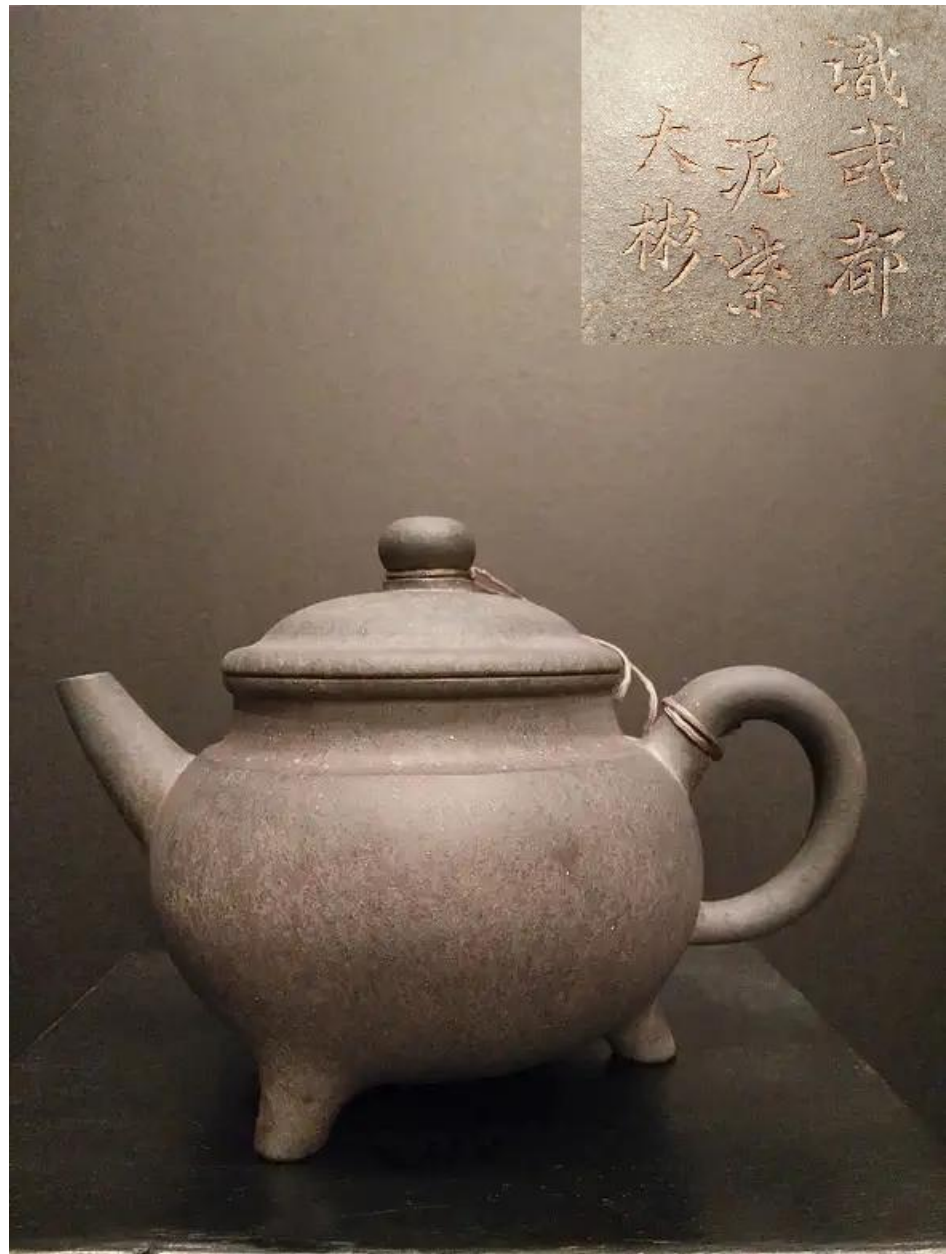
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銀三足圓紫砂壺, 時大彬, 明代萬曆年

Yixing teaware by Shi Dabin (時大彬), originate in the county-level in Yixing (宜興市) during the Wanli period of the Ming dynasty (1573 – 1619) in the southern province of China; the city famous for its traditional Yixing clay ware. Only a finite number of Shi Dabin works are displayed in museums and private institutions around the world, which includes The MET, British Museum, and Flagstaff House Museum of Tea Ware.

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Zhengde period of the Ming dynasty (1506 – 1521) is the period recognised in Chinese references as the beginning of Yixing ware. The teapots commonly attributed to this era are made in the naturalistic style, resembling the burl of a tree. Rustic and irregular in shape, the body of the piece, including the spout and handle, is pinched out from a single lump of clay. This type of teapot is attributed to Gong Chun (供春), who lived during the Zhengde period; he is considered as the first and foremost master in Yixing teaware, with Shi Dabin (時大彬) as his only disciple. Gong Chun learned the art of making teapots by surreptitiously watching a monk of the Jinsha temple; these two are the earliest Yixing potters known to us.

After the passing of Gong Chun, the first important phase of Yixing ware took place during the late Wanli Ming dynasty. Four teaware family masters (四大家) have emerged during this period; Dong Han (董翰), Zhao Liang (趙梁), Yuan Chang (元暢), and Shi Yiu (時朋), with Shi Dabin, represent the Shi Yiu family.

Shi Dabin established himself as the leading Yixing teaware master during the late Wanli period; he is known to partly imitate his style from Gong Chun. Shi Dabin's teaware is renowned for its minimalistic style heavily focuses on simplicity; and such teawares at the time are highly appealed to scholars, aristocrats, and wealthy merchants.

Shi Dabin prominence began during a fortuitous tea ceremony when young Shi Dabin met calligrapher and essayist, Chen Jiru (陳繼儒), with Chen expressing the idea of changing his style from large teaware to small teaware; the meeting with Chen marks a major turning point for young Shi Dabin and the remainder of his life as a Yixing teaware master.

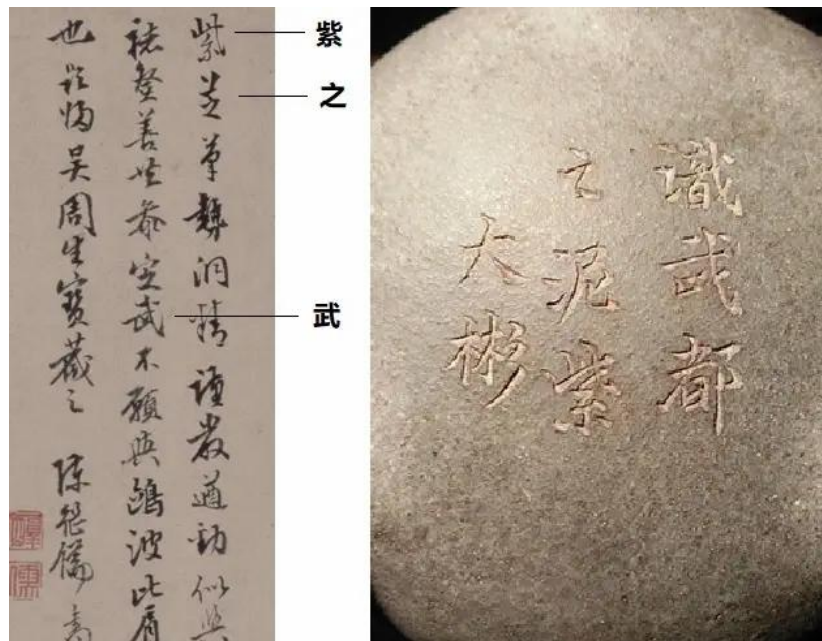
Shi Dabin uses a personal Yixing blend known as, 調砂 in making his teaware. It is widely known in historical records, Shi Dabin's Yixing mixture contains elements of metallic sand and white crystal sand. The finish Shi Dabin's teaware surface often describe as silver sand glow (銀砂閃點), while the surface texture remains perfectly smooth. However, the exact mixture distribution in making a Shi Dabin's Yixing teaware remains unclear to this day. It is customary for all Yixing teaware masters to have their own personal Yixing blend and such secret will be guarded by the teaware master and by no means be passed on to his disciples.

The three-leg round-lid teapot, the teapot engraved with a belt-like dragon in imitation of Gong Chun teapot, the miter-like teapot, the hexagonal teapot, and the tianxin pavilion-like teapot, are all Shi Dabin finest works.

銀三足圓紫砂壺, 時大彬, 明代萬曆年

Early works of Shi Dabin engraved inscription at the base of the teapot are incise by freshly strip bamboo blade. Shi often appoints skilled calligrapher to engrave his signature at the base of his teaware as, 大彬, in regular script Chinese (楷書). After being influenced by renowned scholars, Dong Qichang (董其昌) and Chen Jiru (陳繼儒), Shi Dabin personally engraves his signature with the use of bamboo blade in his later works as, 時大彬.

A careful examination of the eight characters calligraphic inscription “識武都之泥紫大彬” at the base of the teapot (Soto Asian Art, 禪藏 collection - Shi Dabin, Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty). Both the styling and strokes represent the definitive works of Shi Dabin’s close friend, Chen Jiru (陳繼儒), a renowned landscape painting and calligrapher; a pivotal cultural figure in the late Ming dynasty literary circles. In Chinese works of art, it often signifies as “the complement works of master craftsman and master artist” “名工名士，相得益彰”.



Prominent calligrapher and essayist in the Ming dynasty - Chen Jiru (陳繼儒), original inscription (Palace Museum Beijing) (left picture), Shi Dabin, Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty (Soto Asian Art) (right picture) - Both the styling and strokes represent the definitive works of Shi Dabin’s close friend, Chen Jiru (陳繼儒)

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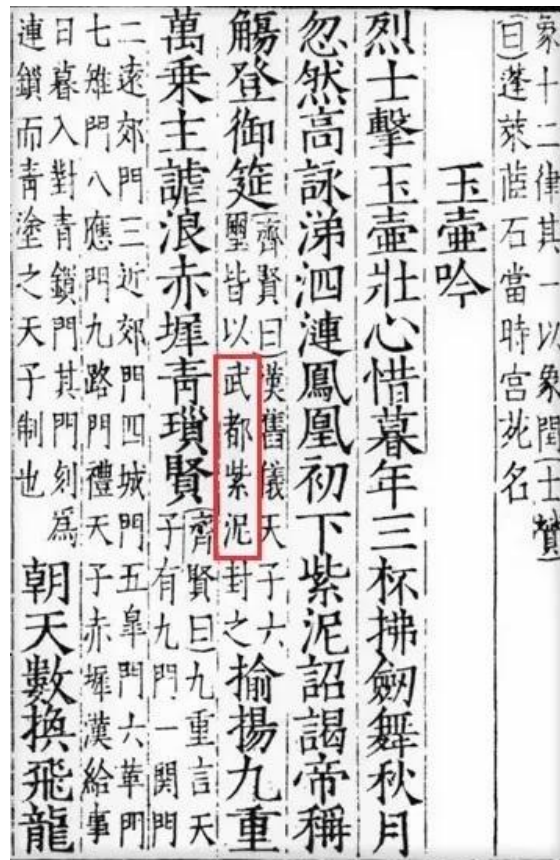
銀三足圓紫砂壺, 時大彬, 明代萬曆年

Wudu Yixing “武都紫泥” originates in Zishui District (紫水區), Gansu province (甘肅省), north-central China, Wudu County (武都區). The unique nature of Wudu Yixing exhibits long-lasting cohesiveness (sticky in nature). Historical records from the Han dynasty recounts the following, “皇帝六璽, 皆玉螭虎紐.....皆以武都紫泥封之。” “Emperor Imperial seal, jade dragon pendants seal with Wudu Yixing Clay (in a box)”. The inscription “識武都之泥紫大彬” “Yixing Clay of Wudu Shi Dabin” provides an insightful historical context from a scholarly perspective, the use of Wudu Yixing in the Han dynasty, prior to the establishment of Yixing tea culture during the Ming regime.

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The famous poet of the Tang dynasty - Li Bai (李白) with ancestral roots in Gansu province (甘肅省). The presence of Wudu Yixing “武都紫泥” narrated in his poem 《玉壺吟》

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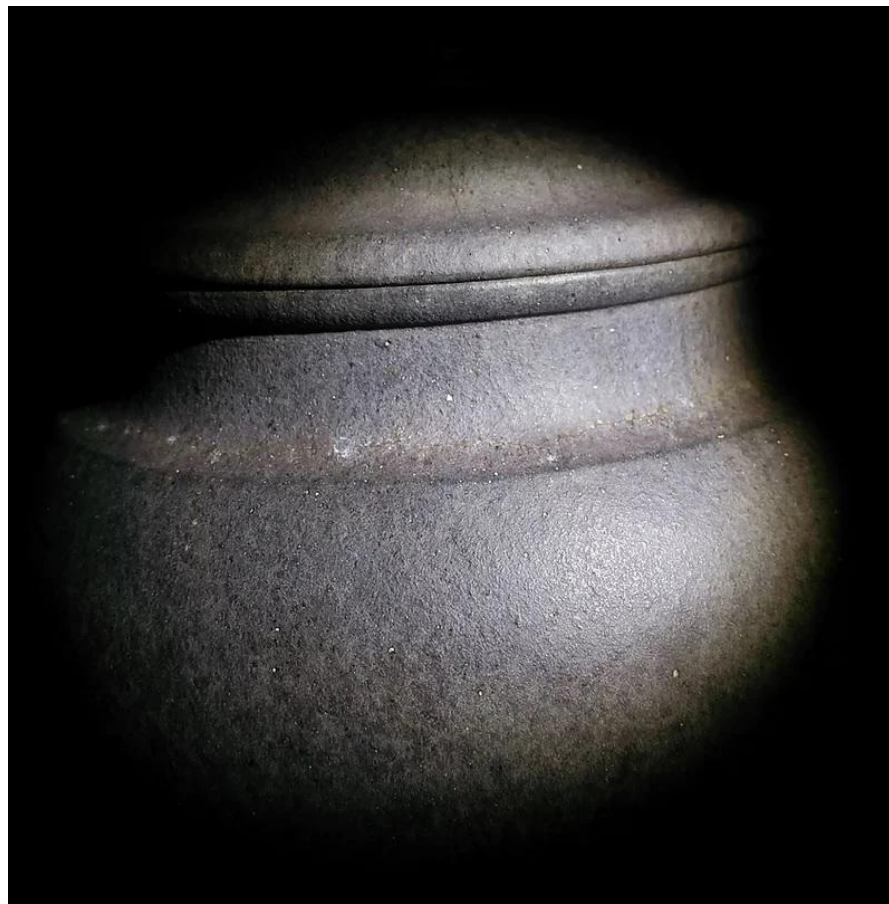
Shi Dabin Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty (4)

銀三足圓紫砂壺, 時大彬, 明代萬曆年

Variations of counterfeit Shi Dabin teaware have emerged in recent years due to its scarcity in the marketplace. However, counterfeit Shi Dabin teaware can be easily identified with the following features; the base of the teaware lacks Shi Dabin signature, a mechanically made imprint square or rectangle shape stamp with the translation "Made Shi Dabin" (時大彬製), teaware surface lacks the often described as silver sand glow (銀砂閃點), and any form of ancient seal script (Chinese pre-date 1st millennium BC) at the base of teaware is considered as counterfeit works of Shi Dabin.

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Beam with a single light source, the silver sand glow surface will reflect as small stars twinkle on its surface, Shi Dabin, Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty (Soto Asian Art)

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Shi Dabin Yixing clay teapot, Wanli period, Ming dynasty (5)

銀三足圓紫砂壺, 時大彬, 明代萬曆年

This exceedingly rare Yixing clay pot is one of the finest original teaware by renowned Yixing teaware master; Shi Dabin (時大彬) made during his rising years to prominence. The teaware is a three-legged Yixing teapot, the legs of the teapot often described as “three short elephant legs” (象腿形短三足) from its distinctive appearance. The surface appeared as silver sand glow (銀砂閃點), while the surface texture remains perfectly smooth, with the teaware dark grey silver in colour, the teaware lid is just and tight when resting in the mouth-rim. When place in a dark room, and beam with a single light source, the silver sand glow surface will reflect as small stars twinkle on its surface. In addition, to Shi Dabin signature as, 大彬, it also engraved with, “識武都之泥紫” “Yixing Clay of Wudu”.

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Soto Asian Art, 禪藏

Private viewings are conducted by appointment.

We are only able to accommodate viewings of artworks in a secured off-site facility in Central and Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

Those wishing to make an appointment may send an email to **info@sotoasianart.com**, alternatively, an appointment can be made by phone **(+852) 93219101** or by WeChat (微信) **sotoasianart**.

Website: www.sotoasianart.com

Email: info@sotoasianart.com

Phone: (+852) 93219101

WeChat, 微信: sotoasianart

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