



Globular Vase with Stylized Peony Scroll Design (Blue-and-white ware)

Date

early 15th century, Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

Primary Maker

Chinese

Medium

porcelain with decoration in high-iron cobalt blue pigment under a clear lime-alkali glaze

Description

Bottle-shaped vase. Globular body, tall slightly flaring neck. Painted in mottled blue under the glaze: on the body an all-over design of floral scrolls, around the shoulder a cloud-collar. In their importance to Chinese culture, ceramics are comparable to secular sculpture in the West. The most influential ceramic type in history, Ming underglaze-blue decorated porcelain was exported from China to Southeast Asia and to Europe and was carried in Arab ships throughout the Islamic world. This vase, painted all over with peonies in a leafy scroll, is characteristic of the outstanding blue-and-white ceramics manufactured under imperial patronage at the Jingdezhen kilns in the early Ming dynasty. Its quality identifies it as an object created for refined Chinese taste and not for export. In addition to the painting, which shows great sensitivity in line and shading, the technical process contributed to

the depth and richness of the surface. Sometime during firing, the cobalt blue pigment 'heaped and piled', creating small, dark dots; at other times the pigment ran. Both of these accidental circumstances enliven the piece with tonal variations and painterly effects.

Dimensions

43.3 x 34.6 cm (17 1/16 x 13 5/8 in.)