Eskenazi will present an exhibition of 30 important ceramics of the Song Dynasty from 8 to 29 May 2015 in London. The ceramics are from a highly distinguished private collection and represent almost all the principal wares of the period, widely recognised as a highpoint for ceramic art.

The Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD) was a golden age in China. Great prosperity led to huge social and economic changes, and intellectual and technological advances that shaped Chinese culture and politics for centuries to follow. It was during this time that China introduced the first printed banknotes and the use of gunpowder.

The ceramics of the period reached a peak with advances in design, decoration, glaze and firing techniques. Song ceramics were revered and copied as early as the 15th century within China and have continued to influence design worldwide into the 21st century, not least the Studio and Art Pottery movements in the West, of the 19th and 20th centuries. Ostensibly simple tea-bowls with plain forms and glazes have been treasured in Japan for hundreds of years as Important Cultural Art Objects. The exhibition in May will offer a fascinating insight into the history of the enduring international popularity of these Chinese wares, with examples previously owned by many of the most celebrated western collectors of the 20th century, including Lord Cunliffe, Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Clark, Johannes Hellner and Alfred Schoenlicht.

The exhibition includes fine examples from both the Northern Song (960-1127 AD) and Southern Song (1127-1279 AD) periods. The highlight of the exhibition is a rare and exceptional Imperial green-grey-glazed guan ware Southern Song dish, previously in the collection of Lord Cunliffe (1899-1963) and one of the few examples to remain in private hands. Measuring only 13cm in diameter, it was made for the court at a kiln near the Southern Song palace in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, after the emperor was driven southwards in 1127.
Another highlight with imperial connections is a glazed, porcellaneous stoneware, moulded ‘Dragon’ dish from the Ding kilns in Hebei Province. Ding ware is usually found with an ivory-white glaze and was the ware of choice for the upper reaches of society. The present example is decorated with a crisp and finely moulded design of a dragon with open jaws and four claws to each foot, a design associating it with the court. It was previously in the collection of H.M Knight, a prominent European collector of Chinese works of art, and was exhibited at the Rijksmuseum in 1954, and previously at Eskenazi in 2010. Equally fine is a circular dish with flat rim, superbly carved – rather than moulded – with lotus blooms and leaves. For many years it was one of the most highly prized Song ceramics in the Toguri Museum of Art in Tokyo, with a published history back at least to 1959. In addition to these white-glazed Ding wares, the exhibition is fortunate to include rare examples both of black-glazed and russet-glazed Ding vessels.

The exhibition will also include three impressive examples of Jun ware. The name ‘Jun’ is derived from the kiln near Juntai terrace within the north gate of what was the Yuzhou prefecture in Henan province where the ceramics were produced from the end of the Northern Song period to the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). A highlight is a blue-glazed, purple-splashed grey stoneware dish. The vivid colour contrasts in ‘splashed’ Jun wares were created by the application of copper to the dried glaze before the vessel was fired in a reduction kiln and gives a striking effect, and an early form of ‘abstract art’.

An extraordinary example of Jizhou ware is a black-glazed stoneware ‘Leaf’ bowl. Such bowls are the most celebrated ceramics from the kiln, and the example to be exhibited at Eskenazi is an exceptional example with a prestigious history. Formerly in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Clark, it has an extensive exhibition history having been shown at the Royal Academy, London (1935), the Musée de l’Orangerie, Paris (1937), and the Tokyo National Museum (1994), among other venues.

The introduction for the exhibition catalogue is written by Professor Nigel Wood, PhD, Emeritus Professor to the University of Westminster, London and Member, Sub-Faculty for Archaeology, University of Oxford. A leading expert in the field, he has also taught at Central St Martins, London, The Percival David Foundation of Chinese Art, London, and at universities in Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the USA.

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**Eskenazi Ltd** is widely recognised as one of the world’s leading galleries for Oriental works of art and its exhibitions are always eagerly awaited for the rarity and beauty of the objects offered. The family business was founded in Milan in 1923 and the Eskenazi name has since become synonymous with expertise in this area. Giuseppe Eskenazi, who has been head of the business for over fifty years, has an unrivalled reputation for his knowledge and love of the subject and clients have included over eighty of the world’s major museums as well as private collectors.

**Location:**
Eskenazi Ltd, 10 Clifford Street, London W1S 2LJ
[www.eskenazi.co.uk](http://www.eskenazi.co.uk)

**Opening hours during exhibition:**
Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm
Saturday 9 and Sunday 10 May, 10am to 5pm
Saturday 16 May, 10am to 1pm

**For further information and images, please contact:**
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Blue-glazed Splashed Stoneware Dish
Jin period, 12th - 13th century
Jun kilns, Henan province
Diameter: 18.5cm

Green-grey-glazed Stoneware Dish
Southern Song period, 12th - 13th century
Guan ware, Hangzhou kilns, Zhejiang province
Diameter: 13.0cm
Black-glazed Stoneware ‘Leaf’ Bowl
Southern Song period, 12th - 13th century
Jizhou ware, Jiangxi province
Diameter: 15.2cm

Glazed Porcellaneous Stoneware Moulded ‘Dragon’ Dish
Northern Song - Jin period, 12th - 13th century
Ding kilns, Hebei province
Diameter: 23.1cm