

Edward Eberle Porcelain Terra Sigillata Teapot.

Originating in China during the Shang Dynasty (1600-1046 BCE), porcelain has been used to make high quality, elegant, and delicate ceramics for centuries. The tradition began with “proto-porcelain” wares, and were typically decorated using a greenish lime-based glaze. These early artworks look similar in form to bronze jars, vases, and decoratives of the same time period. Porcelain ceramics have since become highly sought-after due to not only their delicate beauty, but the expertise and skill it takes to produce well-crafted porcelain ceramics. Michaan’s Auctions is pleased to offer this **Edward Eberle Porcelain Terra Sigillata Teapot** (\$1,000-



\$1,500) in our September Gallery Auction, taking place on Friday, September 20th.

Edward Eberle was a Philadelphia-born artist who started his career with a passion for drawing and painting. As he pursued an education in the arts, Edward (Ed) fell in love with clay as an artistic medium due to the infinite possibilities it

offered. Ed began to combine his love for painting with the creative freedom clay offered; now, his most popular artworks are those in which the porcelain form acts simply as a canvas, with intricate compositions painted directly onto them. His sculpture work ranges from classically



inspired vessels like our teapot, to deconstructed forms, all made from porcelain. His work often features fragmented dreamlike imagery with elaborately interlinked human, animal, and

celestial forms painted directly onto each piece using **terra sigillata**.

Terra sigillata is an ultra-refined clay slip used to decorate bone-dry wares, and it is as old as porcelain itself. It is an ancient decoration technique used in Greek and Roman pottery in lieu of modern glaze. Ancient pottery made with this technique would often be stamped with decoration, with ‘terra sigillata’ literally meaning ‘sealed earth,’ in Latin.

In order to be applied to greenware, or unfired clay, the piece’s surface must be bone-dry (as dry as possible pre-firing), perfectly smooth, and completely dust-free. Any texture on the ware will be visible through coatings of terra sigillata, no matter how many layers are used, due to its extremely fine nature. Any presence of dust will make the sigillata peel off after firing. Eberle’s ability to paint so freely with terra

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sigillata speaks to his skill as a ceramicist, considering the constraints of working with both terra sigillata and porcelain.

In speaking about his process of painting a porcelain artwork, Eberle has described that he uses just three shades of gray and homemade yucca brushes to “unconsciously” mark the surface of his white porcelain creations. Once satisfied, he “discovers the individuals and subjects” through “freely painted marks,” or, the detailed painting seen in the foreground of his pieces. This **Porcelain Terra Sigillata Teapot** is titled “The Eye That is Found When One is Not Looking,” and features the human form, birds, and linework, as well as other, more vague motifs.

This piece is part of Michaan’s collection of deaccessioned items from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. The underside of this piece features the title and

“E.S. Eberle 1995,” as well as museum catalog numbers. Also from this collection and available to be purchased in September’s Gallery Auction, Michaan’s is offering a Lancaster New York Blue Blown Glass Pitcher, a 14k Yellow Gold Presentation Medallion, a painting by artist Lee Gatch Jr., and more.

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