

# Sydney <sup>the</sup> Punchbowl

MAKING THE REPLICA FOR HORDERN HOUSE



*The factory in Jingdezhen; the old frames for preparing kaolin; drawing the vignette; first colours added; painting the panorama.*

Hordern House first considered the possibility of going to traditional Chinese craftsmen to create a replica of the Sydney Punchbowl many years ago. The process did not begin in earnest until 2008 when Paul Brunton, then senior curator at the State Library of New South Wales, listened enthusiastically to our proposal and gave us the go-ahead to photograph the original. Looking for the ideal artist to oversee the project, we were introduced to master craftsman Huang Yun Peng, a distinguished figure in the world of ceramics who holds numerous academic appointments as well as visiting professorships at Shanghai and Beijing universities. Master Huang works in the “porcelain city” of Jingdezhen (Ching-te-Chen) in Jiangxi province, which has been producing high-quality ceramics for nearly two millennia. So began a process of making prototypes in Jingdezhen, flying them to Sydney to study them alongside photographs, colour swatches and even physically comparing them with the original bowl in the Mitchell Library. Over the course of four years no fewer than five prototypes were made.

Production was a very slow process. Antique colours had to be ordered (the gold from France for the correct subtle tone). The bowls were hand-thrown in the traditional manner before painters and artists worked on each piece over a three-month period, hand-painting the panorama, the centrepiece, and the floral and gilt borders. Three to four carefully controlled firings were then needed in the kilns, an extremely difficult process because the enormous size of the bowls made them unusually vulnerable. As a result, every bowl is an individual work of art, and each is very slightly different in detail to its fellows.

More details on the bowl and its manufacture are on our website: [www.hordern.com](http://www.hordern.com) (follow the links to the Sydney Punchbowl).