

*a local history* is an installation of three vitrines filled with porcelain, sunk below the paving outside the Alison Richard building on the Sidgwick Site of Cambridge University. These vitrines are meant to be discovered, to be happened upon as you come and go across the site. They are there to make you pause momentarily. They are not sculpture as a Grand Statement.

If you find them and look down through the gridded glass you'll see piles of porcelain dishes, cylinders arranged in rows, and aluminium boxes filled with shards. The dishes are taken from moulds that I made from a Chinese Ming Dynasty dish, a plate from the French Sèvres porcelain factory, and a Staffordshire serving dish. These three dishes are iconic in form: they exemplify porcelain from three of the greatest places where it has been manufactured over the last thousand years. You will see that these pieces are glazed in whites, creams and celadons, and that there are also glimpses of gilding. Gold was used to highlight the value of porcelain, a material so prized that it was often called white gold. It was also used in Chinese and Japanese art when a vessel had been broken: to mend the porcelain with a seam of golden lacquer emphasized that it had been used and appreciated. I hope the flashes of gold, the fragments of broken vessels and the memories of ancient dishes act as a kind of palimpsest: a writing, erasing, and rewriting using objects.

If you look up inside the atrium of the building you will see another vitrine, this time full of shelves holding celadon vessels. This vitrine, *atlas*, is my record of lost pots. It holds 120 lids from lidded jars that I have made over the last twenty years and broken because they were not quite right, because the glaze ran, because of a crack along a rim. If the structure of the vitrine looks familiar, it is because it is a gentle echo of a manuscript page with texts, footnotes and commentaries in intimate conjunction.

All these vitrines are a kind of archive. They record my thinking about the history of porcelain, my travels, my love of fragments, my obsession with shadows, my reading. They are for *this* particular place – a threshold into a building, and a threshold into a site full of libraries and archives, and the people who care about libraries and archives.