

The history and significance
of Meissen porcelain
in the eighteenth century





fig. 18
Barbara Rosina de Gasc (1713–1783),
attrib., *Portrait of a Young Lady of the
Order of the Pug Dog*, oil on canvas, ca.
1770, 45 x 34 cm.
Sold at Van Ham, Cologne, 15 November 2013,
lot no. 532.

To return to the subject of the porcelain figure of Brühl's favourite dog: it is seen sitting on a rectangular cushion (richly decorated in the case of the example preserved in the present collection), almost life-size, with its right paw raised level with its shoulder. The pug is of slender physical build, with a fine round head; though its muzzle, from which protrudes a little pink tongue, is more prominent than those of the pugs that Kändler modelled in 1741. Around its neck is a broad gold and purple collar decorated with the initials of its eminent owner: 'HGVB'.

While many other pug models were produced in great numbers, on account of their popularity, this appears not to be the case with this model, of which we know only three specimens: one preserved in the Marianne Aschenbrenner Foundation in Garmisch-Partenkirchen,⁵⁴ another which was formerly part of the Gustav Klemperer Collection in Dresden (presumed to be destroyed in the war)⁵⁵ and one pug as part of the presented private collection (cat. no. 14). In its appearance, this pug is very similar to the one seen in a painting attributed to Barbara Rosina de Gasc, née Lisiewska (1713–1783), which shows a young lady holding

a little dog that has raised its right paw and is placing it into the hand of its fair owner (fig. 8).

According to his 'Taxa' and work reports, Kändler modelled pairs of pugs on cushions in 1739/40⁵⁶ and 1747.⁵⁷ Preserved in the present collection are examples of two different models: one pair on flat cushions decorated in pale pink (cat. no. 12) and one pair on cushions richly decorated with *indianische Blumen* (cat. no. 11); these models are represented in the present collection with single figures under cat. nos. 17, 18 and 20. While it cannot be ascertained with certainty which pair corresponds to which entry in the archival records, the somewhat poor proportions (particularly around the rear legs) of the pugs in cat. no. 12 suggest that they represent the earlier version.

After having embellished the painting of Landgrave Maurice's family back in 1618, about a century later the pug makes numerous comparable appearances in paintings: toddling in from the side in the family portrait of Louis XIV and his heirs;⁵⁸ baring its teeth in the self-portrait of Nicolas de Largillières (1656–1746) with his family;⁵⁹ in the picture of the merchant Adolph Daum and his son, acting as a touching link between the two;⁶⁰ and snuffling around Antoine Pesnes's legs in his self-portrait at the easel with his daughters.⁶¹

The indisputable fact that the pug was the darling of court society explains its omnipresence in the court context. It was even selected as the symbolic animal of a secret society about which relatively little is known even today (another article in the present catalogue offers a detailed account of this very subject). Although porcelain-lovers who are inclined to believe the myth may tend to regard every 'galant' figural group featuring a pug to be associated with the Order of the Pug, and thus the Freemasons, it must be pointed out here that this is only true in the case of certain Meissen figural groups. As has been shown above, the pug was often represented in the fragile and precious material of porcelain simply as a faithful companion, observer or protector, not to mention the instances of figures that were portraits of actual dogs.



Pugs
in European factories



A very hunched-up pug with bulging eyes adorns the lid of a box created in Schrezheim. He is eating a bone, which he seems ready to defend (fig. 5, cat. no. 115). This rather naive work is probably an invention of the manufacturer, though it may have been motivated by Meissen boxes representing crouching pugs (cat. no. 113). FIG 5

In Meissen, J. J. Kändler modelled pugs from 1745 onwards (fig. 7A, cat. nos. 25 and 24) They were very different, but still similar to that painted by J. B. Oudry (fig. 6). The eyes are not protruding, the muzzle is smaller and more pointed, the ears are cropped, and the legs are shorter. On these ceramics, the tail is usually looped. Various English factories produced FIGURE 6 this type of pug. The collection has examples of Chelsea, Derby, Minton and a spotted copy attributed to Staffordshire. Chelsea's version, marked with a gold anchor, decorates a bonbon dish. There is no obvious influence from Kändler, though it is still likely since other pieces from Chelsea were inspired by Meissen. Some examples of this are a pair of Tyrolean dancers, figurines from the *Commedia dell'Arte* and *Cries of Paris*.¹³ A little later, the Chelsea model was made in Derby. This is probably a copy, which must have been successful since it



cat. XX



fig. 29
A pug with a red ribbon, J. B. Oudry, oil on canvas, 54.5 x 65.3 cm.
Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts, inv. no. Inv.P.348.

was still being produced at Derby in 1820 (cat. no. 58), and was then reinterpreted at Minton around 1830 (cat. no. 59). These figurines, on flat bases with rococo edges painted in different colours, suggest that they formed part of a composite work. FIG 7 FIG 8 A-E

The same type of pug was also produced at Capodimonte (fig. 8, cat. no. 83). It represents a dog on a cushion, with a puppy between its legs. It was designed by Giuseppe or Stefano Gricci around 1748–1755. It is likely that it is one of a pair, the male facing the female. The tassels at the corners of the cushion act as feet, suggesting that this piece would not have been on an independent base. This representation seems to be an interpretation of Kändler's work, following the very German taste for pugs.

The Hannongs in Strasbourg and Frankenthal produced many *trompe l'oeils* and statuettes of animals. The taste for small sculptures of pugs fits naturally into that style of manufacturing. Around 1755–1757 in Strasbourg, Johann Wilhelm Lanz created pugs of a different design than Meissen but still following the same fashion. Lanz created a straighter dog, with longer legs and a longer neck (cat. no. 69). He placed them on a flat oval or lobed pedestal perfectly designed to fit them into a composite work. The painting of the dogs' heads may vary: one pug from Strasbourg has the black face typical of Meissen pugs, but on another, also from Strasbourg, only the dog's nose and



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Catalogue





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PAIR OF SEATED PUGS

Meissen, porcelain, ca. 1740–1745

Model: J. J. Kändler

Size: Male h. 26 cm; Female h. 25.5 cm (with base)

Mount: gilded bronze, ca. 1775–1780

Provenance: Pascal Izarn collection and Nicolas Springer collection

Acquired: Sotheby's, 14 April 2010

Description: On the left, the male pug and on the right the female, with her left paw raised, feeding her puppy. Both pugs display a high degree of naturalistic and particularly detailed sculpting. They sit on gilded bronze bases in the shape of rectangular cushions, inscribed with a floral design and trimmed with tassels.

Other examples: See cat. no. 6.

Bibliography: R. Rückert 1966, no. 1094, pp. 194 and 269.



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PAIR OF SEATED PUGS

Meissen, porcelain, ca. 1740

Model by J. J. Kändler

Size: Male h. 24.9 cm (without base); Female h. 31.8 cm (with base); Base h. 10 cm, w. 23 cm, d. 15 cm

Mount: gilded bronze, Paris, Louis XV style

Provenance: Dimitri Mavrommatis collection

Acquired: Sotheby's, 8 July 2008

Description: a male pug on the left and a female pug on the right with her left paw raised, feeding her puppy. Both pugs display a high degree of naturalistic and particularly detailed sculpting. Both dogs sit on rectangular cushions with tassels on rectangular four-footed bases in gilded bronze.

Other examples: See cat. no. 6.

Bibliography: R. Rückert 1966, no. 1094, pp. 194 and 269.



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PAIR OF SEATED PUGS

Meissen, porcelain, ca. 1745

Model by J. J. Kändler

Size: Male h. 30 cm; Female h. 31 cm (with bases)

Mount: gilded metal

Acquired: Lefebvre & fils, Paris, December 2008

Description: Two pugs, a male on the left and a female on the right feeding her puppy, sit on rectangular gilded metal bases in a restrained rococo style.

Other examples: See cat. no. 6.

Bibliography: R. Rückert 1966, no. 1094, pp. 194 and 269.



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PAIR OF SEATED PUGS

Meissen, porcelain, ca. 1745

Model: J. J. Kändler

Size: h. 11.5 cm

Mark: trace of crossed blue swords on the male

Provenance: Galerie Nicolier, Paris

Acquired: Christie's, 16 December 2008

Description: Two pugs, wearing gilded collars, sit on rectangular cushions in chintz. The sprigs of flowers are less densely spread on the cushion of the pug on the left.

Other examples: Schloss Lustheim, inv. ES 715; Residenz, Ansbach, (left), inv. P 253; Musée des Arts décoratifs, Paris, inv. GR 307.A and GR 307.B.

Bibliography: R. Eikelman 2004, p. 380; R. Rückert 1966, no. 1093, pp. 194 and 269.



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BOX WITH A PUG LYING DOWN

Size: h. 3.8 cm
 Mount: gilded copper
 Provenance: Alfred Joseph collection
 Exhibitions: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, 1972–2003; Somerset House, London 2003–2008; the Bowes Museum, Durham 2008–2010
 Acquired: Bonhams, 3 December 2008
 Girl-in-a-Swing factory, Charles Gouyn, the Chelsea China Warehouse, St James's street, soft-paste porcelain, ca. 1752–1754

Description: a pug, wearing a purple collar with a bow, and three puppies lie on a green base with pink flowers. The figure stands on a gilded copper mount bearing the inscription "JE SERAI TOUJOURS FIDELE ET TENDRE" (I will always be faithful and loving). Beneath the base of the box, a pietra dura. Inside, three blossoming branches.
Bibliography: B. Beaucamp-Markowsky 1985, nos. 518 and 519, p. 556; B. Beaucamp-Markowsky 1988, no. 103, p. 181.



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BOX IN THE SHAPE OF A PUG'S HEAD

Meissen, porcelain, ca. 1745
 Model: J. J. Kändler, 1742
 Size: h. 5.1 cm
 Acquired: Röbbig, Munich, 29 July 2013

Description: Snuffbox in the form of a pug's head, closed at the back by a lid in gilded metal engraved with floral motifs and rococo-style ornaments.
Another example: a very similar example is held at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. BK.17467.
Bibliography: A. L. den Blaauwen 2000, no. 449, p. 372.



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BOX IN THE SHAPE OF A PUG'S HEAD

Mennecy, porcelain, ca. 1750–1755
 Size: h. 5 cm
 Provenance: Procida Mirabelli di Lauro collection, Naples; Pierre de Regaini
 Acquired: Bonhams, 6 July 2010

Description: a box in the shape of a pug's head, resting on a flat lid. The outer surface of the lid is painted to resemble fur, while the inside shows a bouquet of flowers.
Bibliography: B. Beaucamp-Markowsky 1985, no. 422, p. 477.