

More Information on Jeanne Preus Rost Collection

Rost focused her collecting on Chinese cloisonné. Her interest in Lutheran missions in China and in her brother Rolf Brand Preus' World War II flying experiences in the area influenced her choice. Rost collected the cloisonné in the United States, working exclusively with antique dealers and antiquities merchants.

Cloisonné is defined succinctly in the *Art & Architecture Thesaurus (second ed.)* published on behalf of the Getty Art History Information Program by Oxford University Press in 1994.

Cloisonné is “a technique of enameling in which the design is laid down in thin metal strips on a metal or porcelain ground, forming chambers (cloisons) to receive the vitreous enamel pastes.”

The piece is fired after it receives the pastes. The rough, uneven surface is then ground smooth and polished off flush with the wires. The resulting surface is even and smooth, typically with a dull or matte finish. Chinese cloisonné objects are often decorated in intricate designs with pictorial scenes, stylized floral patterns and spiral and scroll figures predominating. The designs are typically painted in a variety of clear, bright colors. Since enamel is a form of glass, cloisonné objects can be easily cleaned. Other less well-known types of enamel work that are similar to cloisonné are champlevé and repoussé.

The origin of cloisonné is estimated to be early, perhaps around the 13th century BCE in Mycenaean Greece. Records indicate that Chinese cloisonné began to be created in the 14th century. The technique was brought to China by traders from the west. After the Boxer Rebellion in 1900, when European armies fought in China, cloisonné became better known in Europe and America.