



Clara in Qatar: A New Life for a Meissen Porcelain Rhinoceros

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ABSTRACT The Orientalist Museum in Qatar has a small, but important, Meissen porcelain statue of a rhinoceros. This rhino is none other than Clara, the same rhinoceros which toured Venice in 1751, and enjoyed a career spanning some twenty years touring Europe. She became so famous that she was commemorated in art of a variety of media and is represented in the two famous paintings by Pietro Longhi and Jean-Baptiste Oudry, in bronze sculpture, and even appeared as part of the background of an engraving in an eighteenth-century anatomy book. This article will introduce Qatar's Meissen rhinoceros, its provenance and highlight the ongoing travels of Miss Clara.

KEYWORDS: Meissen, rhinoceros, Clara, Qatar, porcelain

Preamble: a note on the species of rhinoceroses

There are five species of rhinoceros with different characteristics and temperaments which are the Sumatran rhinoceros

(*Dicerorhinus Sumantratrensis*), the Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Sondaicus*), the black rhinoceros (*Diceros Bicornis*) with two horns, the white African rhinoceros (*Cerathotherium simum*) also with two horns which is more placid than the black rhinoceros, and lastly, the greater one-horned rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros Unicornis*) which is indigenous to India and Nepal.² Clara, and all the species of rhinoceroses that arrived in Europe between 1515 and 1799 were single-horned Indian rhinoceroses. Many species of rhinoceros, with the exception of females with young calves which form their own complex social interactions, are by nature solitary. The male African black rhinoceros is known to be the most aggressively territorial, but almost as aggressive is the male of the Indian species, which probably accounts for Pliny the Elder's claim that the rhinoceros and elephant were mortal enemies.³ This assertion would influence Western iconography until Clara arrived in Europe in 1741.

In Assam, in the late 1730s, a young rhinoceros calf was orphaned, her mother having been killed by hunters. She was adopted by Jan Albert Sichterman (1692–1764) an employee of the Dutch East India Company in Bengal who named her Clara.⁴ She was trained to walk indoors and eat from a plate, and became a regular guest at the eccentric Dutchman's dinner parties where he would showcase his exotic pet. Predictably, she outgrew her ability to navigate Sichterman's dining table and, too tame to be released back into her natural habitat, was sold to ship captain Douwe Mout Van der Meer (1705–1761), who saw an unprecedented opportunity to profit from the rhinoceros if he could transport her unharmed to his native Netherlands. Clara arrived in Rotterdam harbour on 22 July 1741 and Van der Meer, realising the extent of public interest in the creature, exhibited her widely in more than thirty European cities over the next seventeen years. Clara achieved celebrity status while the entrepreneurial Van der Meer profited enormously from her popularity through tickets sold to a curious public, payment from artists wishing Clara to sit for them, and even copyright for reproductions of her image. Numerous souvenirs were made of her including medals, engravings, paintings, porcelain figurines, clocks and even bottled rhinoceros urine which was believed to possess pharmaceutical properties.⁵ Dresden was one of the many cities on her itinerary. Arriving there in 1747 she sat for Meissen's master modeller Johann Kändler (1706–1775), who reportedly sketched her from life.⁶ Around 1750, at the height of her career, Meissen manufactured porcelain figurines of the rhinoceros in a number of poses, many showing her with a sumptuously-dressed Sultan on her back, another with an accompanying Chinese figure under a palm tree as well as a naturalistic pose, presenting her just as a solitary, brown rhinoceros.⁷ Moving forward some two and a half centuries, a version of the brown Meissen rhinoceros was acquired by Qatar Museums from an auction at Sotheby's, London (1 May 2013: *Property from the Collection of Sir Gawaine and Lady Baillie*, Lot 90), to form a part of

the collection of the Orientalist Museum in Doha, and so it was that the peripatetic Clara arrived in Qatar in the summer of that year and came to my attention (Figure 1).⁸



Figure 1

Johann Joachim Kändler (1706–1775). Porcelain Figure of an Asian Rhinoceros (Clara) c.1747, 18.5 × 10 cm. OM.1000, Qatar Museums/Orientalist Museum, Doha–Qatar.

This article explores the idea that objects acquire, rather than possess, their significance through their associations, just as they may also acquire personal meanings. This proposition will be examined in relation to the Meissen rhinoceros that is now owned by the Orientalist Museum. The Meissen porcelain was not initially recognised as a depiction of Clara, and this only came about as a result of my previous interest in her. She had been part of my intellectual life for almost two decades both as a historian of eighteenth-century visual culture and a museum professional. With specialist interests in the Tiepolo dynasty and famous Pulcinella drawings of Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727–1804), it was impossible to be unaware of a popular carnival tradition of displaying exotic animals in Venice—most notably, a celebrated rhinoceros named Clara,⁹ who is known to have visited La Serenissima in 1751, an event commemorated by genre painter Pietro Longhi (1701–1785).¹⁰ Regrettably the Tiepolos and Clara were not destined to meet as they were away working on the Prince Bishop’s ceiling frescoes in Würzburg in 1750–1753 and so were thus absent for Clara’s Venetian debut. Clara had previously visited Würzburg in 1748, but had the Tiepolos had sufficient knowledge about this then she would surely have been immortalized with other exotic beasts in the Asian quarter of the Würzburg ceiling decoration.¹¹

A further encounter with Clara occurred during a professional association with the Barber Institute of Fine Art at the University of Birmingham. One of the most popular objects for visitors in the institute’s collection is an eighteenth-century bronze rhinoceros, known as Miss Clara, which was cast in Germany around 1750. Perhaps it

is the pathos of Clara's story that fascinates museum audiences, together with a human tendency to anthropomorphize animals and the fact that such an enormous creature should have travelled so extensively in the early modern period and that her likeness should have been so widely reproduced in so many media. Certainly, when Clara's odyssey was explained to colleagues at Qatar Museums, as they contemplated the recently-acquired Meissen figurine in store, they were fascinated by her story and they captured her image on their cell phones, still the celebrity she ever was (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2

Meissen rhinoceros arriving in storage in Qatar. OM.1000, Qatar Museums/
Orientalist Museum, Doha-Qatar.



Figure 3

Meissen rhinoceros arriving in storage in Qatar. OM.1000, Qatar Museums/
Orientalist Museum, Doha-Qatar.

These personal anecdotes bear some relation to the perceived importance of the object in its new museum context, which has developed beyond the meaning it was previously thought to have had, and, additionally, bears some relation to the significance it is now beginning to attain at the Orientalist Museum. Museums select and acquire objects on the basis that they have historical importance and relevance to the institutional mission, as will be discussed below. Qatar's porcelain rhinoceros will be explored in this context, and also with reference to two other rhinoceroses in the museum's collection, the famous print by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) of Ulysee the rhinoceros (1515), and the *Hunting Scene with Shah Jahan and His Sons* (1665/1670) by Willem Schellinks (1623–1678) where an encounter between an elephant and rhinoceros is depicted in the mid-distance.

The Orientalist Museum in Qatar,¹² according to its mission statement, aims “to provide background to further understanding of and challenge received visions of cross cultural exchanges and influences.”¹³ Although it has a strong core collection of art relating to the Orientalist Movement, the collection as a whole extends chronologically and geographically well beyond this area, with objects from the ancient world to the present that demonstrate dialogue and exchange between East and West and, in the context of this paper, the Clara rhinoceros can be regarded as being emblematic of this. It is important therefore to understand the fascination with the rhinoceros in Western history, art and visual culture.

The rhinoceros from Pliny to Clarke, Ridley and beyond

The rhinoceros has an extensive history in literature which has in turn influenced the culture of depicting the creature in Western art. From the *Erythraean Sea* by Agatharchides (c.113 BCE) and the *Naturalis Historia* of Pliny the Elder (CE 23–29), St. Jerome's vulgate version of the Bible (c. CE 400) and *Il Milione* or *The Travels of Marco Polo* (c. CE 1300), the rhinoceros had a literary history that was long and distinguished. Pliny, whose description of the rhinoceros relates to its exhibition at the gladiatorial games, describes it as the “natural-born enemy of the elephant.” The Indian rhinoceros was the usual species brought to Rome for the gladiatorial games, although Pliny records an event involving the two-horned African rhinoceros.¹⁴ His noting of the antipathy between the elephant and rhinoceros, which had great influence on Western iconography, went unchallenged until the Comte de Buffon (1707–1788) wrote his *Histoire Naturelle*. It is unlikely that Buffon had seen a rhinoceros personally as he cites Dr James Parsons's 1743 account of a rhinoceros from the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society,¹⁵ which relates to a young male rhinoceros exhibited in London between 1739 until its demise in 1741. Based on the doctor's account Buffon concluded:

I doubt, whether the battles betwixt the elephant and rhinoceros, have any foundation; they must at least be seldom, since there is no motive for war on either side ... Pliny is, I believe, the first who has mentioned these battles betwixt the rhinoceros and elephant. It seems they were compelled to fight in the spectacles at Rome, and, probably from thence the idea has been taken, that when in their natural state they fought as desperately; but every action without a motive is unnatural; it is an effect without a cause, which cannot happen but by chance.¹⁶

Nevertheless, there is a long visual tradition referencing the enmity between the elephant and rhinoceros, which is amply recorded in prints, paintings and sculpture from the early modern period. The text on the Dürer woodcut, for example, references Pliny as does the painting by Willem Schellinks discussed later.¹⁷ As regards the Durer, it is well documented that when the depicted rhinoceros, Ulysee, arrived in Lisbon as a gift to Portuguese Viceroy Alfonso de Albuquerque, the animal was passed on to King Manuel I who staged a fight between it and an elephant in his menagerie to test Pliny's story and the elephant fled.¹⁸ Not only were there misconceptions about the rhinoceros's temperament but there was also some misunderstanding concerning its appearance, which is largely owing to Dürer's print (Figure 4). There, the depicted animal is anatomically incorrect, with regard to its dorsal horn and its armour-plated body. In reality, the Indian rhinoceros does not have a horn between its shoulders, and while it has thick skin folds, with wart-like bumps, it is not armour-plated according to Dürer's rendering. Despite this, the

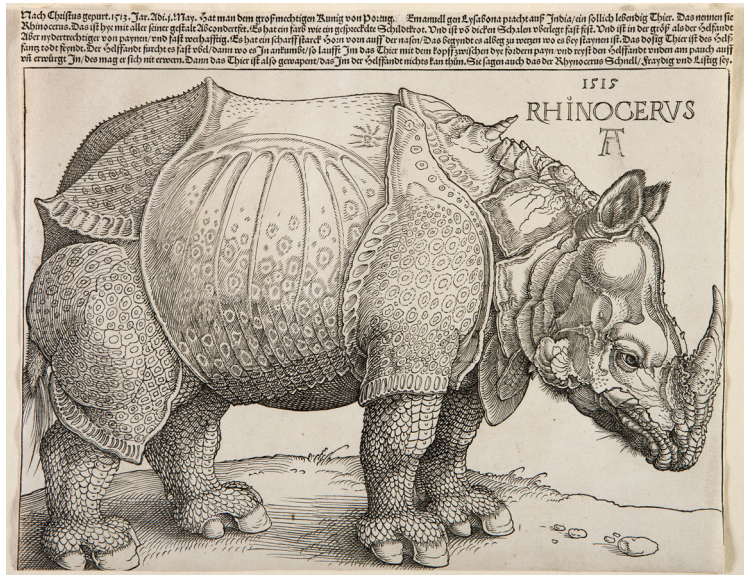


Figure 4
Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) *Rhinoceros*, 1515. Woodcut and letterpress, 23.5 × 30 cm. OM.983, Qatar Museums/Orientalist Museum, Doha – Qatar.

Dürer rendition was extremely popular, over 5000 copies being printed in the artist's lifetime.¹⁹ In fact, it shaped public perception of the creature for almost two and a half centuries, serving as the prototype for countless illustrators wishing to depict a rhinoceros until the mid-eighteenth century. Dürer himself had not seen the animal and had supposedly relied on a sketch and a brief description of the creature in a contemporary news sheet which resulted in the anomalies in the famous print. There are some examples of rhinoceroses that were correctly drawn between 1515, the date of the Dürer print and the eventual arrivals of a rhinoceros in London and of Clara in Rotterdam, the Schellinks painting in the Qatar collection being a case in point; but these are exceptions and they have been largely overlooked. The matter was conclusively settled only by Buffon who, citing Parsons, explained:

Though the rhinoceros was often seen at the spectacles at Rome, from the time of Pompey to that of Heliogabalus, though many have been transported into Europe in these last ages, and though Bontius, Chardin, and Kolbe, have drawn this figure, both in the Indies and Africa, yet he was so badly represented, and his description was so incorrect, that he was known very imperfectly, until those which arrived in London in 1739 and 1741, were inspected, when the errors or caprices of those who had published figures of him became very visible. That of Albert Durer, which was the first, is the least conformable to Nature; it has, nevertheless, been copied by most naturalists; and some of them have loaded it with false drapery, and foreign ornaments.²⁰

Rhinoceroses are herbivorous mammals and it would seem, from Parsons's and Buffon's accounts, that a poor diet may have had a drastic impact on the longevity of the 1739 London rhino, in that the animal died only a few years later though the exact date of its death is unknown. Clara, however, thrived for twenty years especially as her owner was keen that she should be widely exhibited. This combined with the fact that her image was so extensively reproduced meant that Clara, by the mid-eighteenth century, had rectified previous misconceptions concerning the anatomy of the creature largely due to the life-size painting of Clara by Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755).

An important recent contribution to the study of the rhinoceros in art is T. H. Clarke's article "The Rhinoceros in European Ceramics" which preceded the publication of his book, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs 1515–1799*.²¹ Clarke's article contains a valuable appendix of a list of rhinoceroses represented in the applied arts which, among other objects refers to, and illustrates, the Meissen now in the Orientalist Museum's collection.²² Clarke was head of the Ceramics department at Sotheby's in London and his article not only provides invaluable information on rhinoceros figurines produced by porcelain manufactories but includes a list of the eight rhinoceroses that arrived alive in Europe between Dürer's time and 1799 when a

rhino arrived in London at Pidock's menagerie in the Strand.²³ What becomes clear is that the rhinoceros figurines produced by Meissen were mainly modelled after Clara, although an earlier rhinoceros, modelled in 1731 by Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (1706–1768) and commissioned by Augustus the Strong for his porcelain menagerie in the Japanese Palace in Dresden, was based on a Flemish engraving made in 1583 by Abraham de Bruyn (1538–1587) which, in turn, was dependent on the Dürer print. Clarke's book includes early chapters of interest to natural historians and later chapters on depictions of the rhino, again mostly after Dürer, in the applied arts.

The most extensively-researched book dedicated to Clara was written by Glynis Ridley. This details Clara's story from her life as a calf in Assam, to the astonishingly successful campaign orchestrated by her owner, van der Meer, and her peregrinations throughout Europe. There are chapters devoted to her sojourn in Dresden; the Royal Menagerie at Versailles and her appearance at the Saint-Germain Fair, and her visit to the Venetian Carnival of 1751 before her demise in London in 1758. The volume provides a map plotting her movements together with representations of her from publicity engravings to depictions of her in high art forms and reproductions of her in bronze and porcelain. As regards other publications, Kees Rookmaaker's work on the rhinoceros is extensive, and includes in particular his *Rhinoceros in Captivity: A List of 2439 Rhinoceroses Kept from Roman Times to 1994*.²⁴ Rookmaaker is also editor of "The Rhino Resource Centre" an invaluable digital database which includes over 13,000 references to rhino publications and images dating from 1500 to the present day.²⁵

Clara in Qatar

Clara's story, however fascinating it may be to museum visitors, is still secondary to the role of the Meissen figurine as an object in a museum primarily dedicated to Orientalist art. Part of that role is educational in the sense Clara is of great significance in being the first Indian rhinoceros to survive in Western Europe for any length of time, and the animal that forever changed misconceptions created by earlier images of the rhinoceros, by providing a basis for its accurate depiction through widely disseminated images and art works. This section, however, will explore other ways in which the Meissen figurine responds to the museum's mission statement by challenging received understandings of cross-cultural exchanges and influences between East and West, and in examining new understandings in increasingly nuanced ways.

Of central importance to the museography of an institution dedicated to the exploration of East/West exchange during the early modern period is, in fact, the Meissen manufactory. It was in Dresden, and at the court of Augustus II the Strong, that the formula for making hard-paste porcelain had been discovered by German alchemist Johann Friederich Böttger (1682–1719). Augustus II was

one of many European rulers who was charmed by hard-paste porcelain, which had been made by the Chinese since the T'ang Dynasty (CE 618–907). Its method of manufacture having been kept a jealously-guarded secret for many centuries, Augustus had commissioned Böttger to discover its composition. Before discovering the secret in March 1709, Böttger had initially produced a red stoneware that “surpasses the hardness of porphyry” which was exhibited at the Leipzig Easter Fair.²⁶ This stoneware he found to be well-suited to modelling small figures as well as making tea services, before successfully replacing the red material with a white clay and succeeding in producing the first hard-paste porcelain in Europe. Augustus II then wasted no time in establishing a porcelain manufactory in Meissen, a town on the Elbe northwest of Dresden, to exploit the commercial possibilities of Böttger’s discovery. Yet while the inspiration for European porcelain initially came from the Far East, European modellers aspired to equal and eventually surpass the beauty of Oriental prototypes. There were several renowned master modellers working at Meissen in the first half of the eighteenth century, notably Kirchner and Kändler. Kirchner modelled Meissen’s first rhino in 1731 for the Meissen menagerie which was a technical tour de force in terms of its scale, some 106 centimetres in length.²⁷ However Kändler was the first to recognise the creative potential of the material, as he was accomplished at modelling from nature and at producing birds, animals and *Commedia dell’ Arte* figurines. Several porcelain animals in the Orientalist Museum’s collection were modelled by Kändler, the rhinoceros being based on life-drawings of Clara. Kändler also made models that could be placed next to sugar figures made by the Hof-Conditori, the Royal confectioners, to adorn the tables at Court Banquets.²⁸ The vogue for Ottoman subjects such as Turkish sultans riding exotic animals became a part of the Meissen repertory during Kändler’s employ; and at the same sale where the rhinoceros was purchased Qatar also acquired a pair of Meissen elephants and a figure of a sultan and mahout on an elephant c. 1745. As for the Meissen rhinoceros, it has not yet proven possible to trace its journey prior to its sale at Christie’s, Geneva, on 16 November 1992, where it may have come from the collection of Zurich-based porcelain dealer, Dr Andreina Torre.²⁹ The rhinoceros was purchased by Sir Gawaine Baillie (1934–2003) and Lady Margot Baillie (1934–2012) of Leeds Castle in Kent who were the owners of the most extensive collection of Meissen birds and animals, mainly modelled by Kändler, in private hands. The significance of the rhinoceros in terms of Meissen production is that it was one of the first anatomically correct rhinos manufactured in hard-paste porcelain. There are a number of museological reasons why the porcelain rhinoceros was acquired for the Orientalist Museum. There was, for example, a well-established tradition for exchanging diplomatic gifts which would sometimes include exotic animals, and a longstanding Eurocentric tendency to view the East as a locus of luxury and the

exotic, in terms of fabrics and costume and also flora and fauna, so that exotic animals could be displayed under the overarching topic of Travel and Trade. Of importance to this case study is the trading relationship between Europe and the East through the VOC (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or the Dutch East India Company) between the sixteenth to the first quarter of the eighteenth century. In this connection it is of some considerable consequence that Clara was adopted by an agent of the VOC and transported to Europe by a Dutch sea captain.

As well as the Meissen porcelain and the famous Dürer print, there is a third rhinoceros in the Orientalist Museum's collection which plays a small, albeit important, cameo role by appearing in the middle-ground of a painting by the seventeenth-century Dutch painter, Willem Schellinks (Figure 5).



Figure 5

Willem Schellinks (1623–1678). *Hunting Scene with Shah Jahan and his Sons* (1665–1670), Oil on canvas 51 × 61.5 cm. OM.672, Qatar Museums/Orientalist Museum, Doha – Qatar.

The subject of the painting is thought to be a “Hunting Scene with Shah Jahan and His Sons”³⁰ and, as such, it is a fascinating fusion of East/West tradition both stylistically and iconographically. While it is nowhere recorded that Schellinks, who was born into a Netherlandish artistic dynasty, travelled to the East, it is known that he worked for patrons with connections to the VOC, among others lawyer, and map collector Laurens van der Hem (1621–1678) and Nicolaes Witsen (1641–1715) VOC administrator who both owned renowned map collections, van der Hem also assembled an important Wunderkammer which was visited by a number of foreign

dignitaries in its day.³¹ Whatever the case, there was a significant market in seventeenth-century Amsterdam for luxury goods imported from Asia, and Schellinks was no doubt exposed to artworks that could well have influenced this painting. It is known, for example, that Schellinks saw, and copied, the same miniatures that inspired his older contemporary Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–1669) to make small-scale paintings depicting riders on horseback, including one of Shah Jahan with a falcon,³² which Schellinks may have used as a source for this composition. In addition to the painting at the Orientalist Museum there are at least three further paintings by Schellinks that refer to Shah Jahan and his sons.³³ The Qatar painting is a curious mix of both Eastern and Western motifs and artistic influences. It is permeated with a sense of the exotic, partly due to the sumptuous attire of the horsemen in the foreground who are dressed in magnificent Oriental costumes of jewel-like hues. The saddles and bridles worn by their horses are equally luxurious, with Oriental carpets draped over their saddles, while the leading white horse, mounted by the figure of Shah Jahan, has an aigrette attached to its mane. The surroundings are fertile and Edenic, with lush trees bursting with golden fruits and red blossoms, and a colourful long-tailed bird which could be a parrot or golden pheasant perching in a nearby tree. Indeed, animals and plants were also popular subjects in Mughal miniatures; and the abundant use of vibrant colour is a characteristic of them too. A further fascinating feature of the painting is the confrontation between the rhinoceros and elephant in the mid-ground (see Figure 6 for an enhanced detail of this). This detail, however, raises the question of whether it is a visual reference to Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, frequently seen in Western



Figure 6

Willem Schellinks (1623–1678). Detail showing encounter between rhinoceros and elephant. Oil on Canvas. 51 × 61.5 cm. OM.672, Qatar Museums/Orientalist Museum, Doha – Qatar.

iconography, or a reference to a contemporary local Indian tradition, as has been argued by Rookmaaker et al. The authors cite the travelogue of the Portuguese missionary and traveller Fray Sebastien Mannique (1590–1669),³⁴ who travelled in India during the reign of Shah Jahan (1627–1658) and published his book *Itinerario de Las Misiones Orientales* in 1653. According to Mannique, the emperor would appear daily, at around lunchtime “to witness contests between elephants and wild animals, such as lions, tigers, *abbadas*, rhinoceros and wild buffaloes.” Whatever the case, the depiction of the rhino in the Schellinks is anatomically correct, which would suggest that the source of reference came from Asia, thus demonstrating that there were available representations of rhinoceroses that were more reliable than the Dürer version. However, none of them had as much influence as the Dürer or, later, the representations of the rhinoceros that were based on Clara.

Closing thoughts

The painter Willem Schellinks was a polymath and a keen travel writer, with journals preserved at The Royal Library Copenhagen³⁵ and The Bodleian Library in Oxford,³⁶ as well as an accomplished poet and painter. Such was his admiration for Indian miniatures that in 1657 he published the following poem on Indian painting:

Now the discerning Gujarat [Indian] displays
Most wonderfully, on his silk paper,
His painting, as wonderously delicate
As anything created by the artist’s brush;
So that he, mocking Europe,
Takes back this Artist’s Crown.³⁷

Schellinks here pays tribute to painting as an art form that originated in the East,³⁸ and the painting in the Orientalist Museum honours the artist’s fusion of Eastern and Western elements.

The Orientalist Museum will also facilitate narratives about how ideas of the rhinoceros were misconstrued in Europe for over two millennia since the time of Pliny, and in these narratives the Dürer print, the Schellinks painting and the Meissen Clara play critical roles. When Clara was brought to Europe, she succeeded, with the help of myriad artists, craftsmen and manufacturers who reproduced her image, in finally setting straight Europe’s ideas about what a rhinoceros looked like. The curators at the Orientalist Museum, however, can elaborate on the story in increasingly nuanced ways such as by exploring exchanges between East and West of objects and artefacts on display. The three rhinoceroses—Dürer’s perennially popular albeit inaccurate representation, Schellinks’s correctly drawn rhino based possibly on an Indian source, and the porcelain Meissen Clara—can be displayed to show how Western understandings of it were incrementally reshaped.

For the rhinoceros more generally, interest in the creature has never waned. To celebrate the 300-year anniversary of the Meissen manufactory a much smaller reproduction of Kirchner's original large-scale white rhino with the dorsal horn, now named Anton the Armoured Rhinoceros, was released in 2019 by Meissen in an edition limited to 15 figurines and decorated with *Rosa Centifolia*, commonly known as the cabbage rose which was first cultivated in Holland in the seventeenth century.³⁹ More urgently, however, we must not forget that wildlife organisations all over the world are ever more concerned about the plight of the rhinoceros, and that three of the world's five species are now critically endangered as a result of illegal poaching and habitat loss.

As for Clara, her popularity over the centuries since she first set foot on European soil remains undiminished. Van der Meer's ambitious marketing campaign secured her posthumous reputation in the visual arts. She is still an object of universal fascination, which shows no sign of changing in the near future, with no less than three exhibitions focusing on her programmed in museums between 2021 and 2023. The Bowes Museum in the north-east of England, which has in its collection an eighteenth-century white marble sculpture of the rhinoceros,⁴⁰ has planned an exhibition with the title "The Adventures of Clara" (17 July–31 October 2021). The show is designed to appeal to younger audiences, being based on the original drawings of a children's book on Clara, and it promises to "tour the globe" with a strong sensory input allowing visitors to "see, hear and smell as well as learn how Clara lived."⁴¹ The Barber Institute of Fine Art in Birmingham has an upcoming Clara exhibition, due to open 12 November 2021–27 February 2022, accompanied by a scholarly catalogue, entitled "Miss Clara and the Celebrity Beast in Art 1500–1860."⁴² The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is planning an exhibition on Clara from 30 September 2022 to 15 January 2023, with the central object being the above mentioned life-size painting of Clara by Oudry from the Städtliche Museen in Schwerin, Germany. Although the concept for the show is in its embryonic stage, central themes will be the fascination for Clara during her travels through Europe, and the change in the perception of the anatomy of the rhinoceros in the mid-eighteenth century, together with examinations of exoticism and colonialism, and of the relationship between animals and humans which the curator considers to be relevant in relation to current ecological crises and the threatened extinction of the rhinoceros.⁴³ Last but not least, Qatar Museums looks forward to inviting visitors to admire its own crash of rhinoceroses in the not too distant future.⁴⁴

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Notes

1. I am indebted to my colleagues at the Orientalist Museum Doha, in particular, Dr Giles Hudson, Curator of Photographs, for assistance with images, Dr Xavier Dectot, Deputy Director of Curatorial Affairs, for sourcing essential research material, Elina Nuutinen, Head of Collections Management and Khalid Al Romaihi, Registrar, for facilitating access to objects. I am grateful to Qatar Museums for funding my attendance at the *Beauty and the Beast—Venice and the Rhino* Symposium at Palazzo Contarini Polignac in November 2018. Open Access funding provided by Qatar National Library. Alice Minter, Curator of the Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, who catalogued the Baillie Collection, from which Qatar Museums acquired the Meissen Rhino, answered several queries; and Pamela Klaber, Ceramic Historian and Porcelain Dealer, shared her lecture delivered to The French Porcelain Society, London 4 July 2020. Two other associates were also generous in their correspondence: Robert Wenley, Deputy Director and Head of Collections at The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, who is preparing an exhibition on Clara (forthcoming 2021); and Gijs van der Ham Senior Curator at the Rijksmuseum who will be curating an exhibition on Clara in 2022.
2. The Indian Rhinoceros has no subspecies. There are subspecies within the first four species of rhinoceros. A concise account of these can be found in Bending, “Improving Conservation Outcomes,” 149–186.
3. “Rhino Species,” Save the Rhino International. Accessed July 20, 2020. <https://www.savetherhino.org/rhino-info/rhino-species/white-rhinos/>.
4. Ridley, *Clara’s Grand Tour*.
5. Mishra, *Soul of the Rhino*, 134.
6. Clara’s visit to Dresden 5–19 April 1747 and her meeting with Kändler is well-documented by Ridley. See “Pretty in Porcelain: The Muse of Meissen,” 77–106.
7. A Rhinoceros mounted with a Chinoiserie figure ca. 1750. Hard-paste porcelain with polychrome decoration and gilding forms part of the collection of the Museum für Angewandte Kunst, Frankfurt, inventory number 12335, a figure of a rhinoceros, similar to the model in Qatar Museums’ collection can be found at the State Hermitage Museum, inventory number ГЧ-1084.
8. Sale L13310 Property from the Collection of Sir Gawaine and Lady Baillie, Sotheby’s London, 1 May 2013. Accessed July 12, 2020. <https://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/2013/property-from-the-collection-of-sir-gawaine-and-lady-baillie-13310.html>.
9. Torchynowycz, “Exhibition of a Rhinoceros.”
10. Pietro Longhi painted two similar versions of this picture, one, *The Rhinoceros in Venice* forms part of the collection at the Ca’ Rezzonico Venice and was commissioned by Venetian patrician Giovanni Grimani and the second, *Exhibition of a Rhinoceros in Venice*, commissioned by Girolamo Mocenigo is in the National Gallery, London.
11. According to Charissa Bremer-David in her essay “Animal Lovers are Informed” the rhinoceros came to be associated with popular allegories of the Four Continents. It was sometimes misplaced, appearing in the American section of the allegory as opposed to in Asia or Africa, Morton, *Oudry’s Painted Menagerie*, 94.
12. This is the current working title of the Museum reflecting the strength of its core collection, the name is likely to be changed to reflect the diversity of its holdings and remit by its inauguration in 2027.
13. From an unpublished mission statement by Dr Xavier Dectot, Deputy Director, Curatorial Affairs, Orientalist Museum, last updated 10 February 2020.

14. Jennison, *Animals for Show*, 74.
15. Parsons, "A Letter from Dr. Parsons."
16. Buffon's entry on the rhinoceros taken from *Buffon's Natural History*.
17. Inscription Content
Signed, dated, and titled on the block.
The print has five lines of text along the upper edge beginning: "Nach Christus gepurt. 1513. Jar. Adi. i. May. Hat man dem grossmechtigen Kunig von Portugall Emanuell gen Lysabona pracht aus India ein sollich lebendig Thier. Das nennten sie Rhinoceros ..." (translation in full: "On 1 May 1513 [this should read 1515] was brought from India to the great and powerful King Emanuel of Portugal at Lisbon a live animal called a rhinoceros. His form is here represented. It has the colour of a speckled tortoise and it is covered with thick scales. It is like an elephant in size, but lower on its legs and almost invulnerable. It has a strong sharp horn on its nose which it sharpens on stones. The stupid animal is the elephant's deadly enemy. The elephant is very frightened of it as, when they meet, it runs with its head down between its front legs and gores the stomach of the elephant and throttles it, and the elephant cannot fend it off. Because the animal is so well armed, there is nothing that the elephant can do to it. It is also said that the rhinoceros is fast, lively and cunning.").
18. Clarke, "The Rhinoceros in European Ceramics," 4.
19. Feiman, "The Matrix and Meaning in Dürer's Rhinoceros," 22–26.
20. Buffon, *Buffon's Natural History*.
21. Clarke, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs*.
22. An informative list of decorative objects made in Clara's image compiled by Tim Clarke can be found on the Rhinoceros Resource Centre. See figure 13 on page 2 and a photograph of the Meissen rhinoceros from Dr. Torre's collection, figure 39, page 17 on the following link: http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com/pdf_files/138/1381966876.pdf. Accessed August 11, 2020.
23. Clarke lists the eight rhinoceroses that arrived in Europe between 1515–1799 as follows: 1515 The Lisbon or Dürer Rhinoceros, also known as the Ganda; circa 1579–86 The Madrid rhinoceros or Abada; 1684–85 The first London rhinoceros; 1739—The second London (or Parsons) rhinoceros; 1741–circa 1756 the 'Dutch' rhinoceros [Clara]; 1770—The Versailles rhinoceros; 1790—The third London rhinoceros; 1799—The fourth London rhinoceros. Clarke, *The Rhinoceros from Dürer to Stubbs*, 3.
24. Rookmaaker, *The Rhinoceros in Captivity*.
25. <http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com>. Accessed August 6, 2020.
26. For a History of the discovery of hard-paste porcelain and the foundation of the Meissen manufactory, see Hackenbroch, *Meissen and Other Continental Porcelain Faience*, xi–xii.
27. See Clarke's list. Table 1, fig. 4, p.17; f/n. 3 p.19 and illustration of large white rhinoceros, fig. 3. http://www.rhinosourcecenter.com/pdf_files/138/1381966876.pdf.
28. See Cassidy-Geiger, "An Jagd-Stücken"; Williams, *Turquerie*, 175.
29. Christie's Geneva, Sale Number 1131, European Ceramics and Galenterie, 16 November 1992 https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot_details2.aspx?intObjectID=2522023. Accessed 1 August 2020. Here the rhinoceros is incorrectly catalogued as being modelled after Dürer.
30. See *Asia in Amsterdam*. Qatar Museums loaned its Schellinks to the exhibitions as follows: Rijksmuseum 17 October 2015–17 January 2016 and Peabody Essex Museum 27 February 27–5 June 2016. Catalogue entry by Jan de Hond cat. 82, 291–93.
31. See the following for details of van der Hem's map collection and relationship with Schellinks <https://kalden.home.xs4all.nl/verm/atlas-blaeu-vanderhem11.html>. Accessed August 11, 2020.
32. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Shah Jahan with a Falcon on Horseback*, 1654–1656, Musée du Louvre, Paris; Rembrandt van Rijn, *Oriental Cavalier*, 1656–1661, British Museum, London.

33. These are *Shah Jahan Watching a Princely Parade*, 1665-1670, at the Musée Guimet, Paris; *Parade of the Sons of Shah Jahan on Horses and Elephants*, V&A, London; and *Shah Jahan Seated*, 1665–1670, location unknown. De Hond, 293.
34. Rookmaaker, “The Rhinoceros Fight in India,” 28–31. Note that the article focuses on other fights including pitched battles between two rhinoceroses into the nineteenth century and observes that the rhinos often refused to fight perhaps reflecting the gentler nature of rhinoceroses than many wished to believe. <http://www.rhinoresourcecenter.com/index.php?s=1&act=pdfviewer&id=1175860231&folder=117>. Accessed August 8, 2020.
35. Dagh-register wegens onse Reysze in en door Vranckryck, Engeland, Italien en Duitschland 1646-65. I-III deel. (Med adskillige Smaaskrifter til den franske Topographie henørende indheftede. (3 voll.). Mss. Willem Schellinks, Jac Thierry 1646-1665. NKS 370 kvart. Det KGL Bibliotek, Copenhagen. Accessed August 7, 2020. https://soeg.kb.dk/discovery/search?query=any,contains,Schellinks&tab=Everything&search_scope=MyInst_and_CI&vid=45KBDK_KGL:KGL&lang=en&offset=0.
36. Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS d’Orville 558, 559, 560.
37. Schellinks’s poem is translated from the original Dutch by Dr Jan de Hond and included in the catalogue entry accompanying the painting loaned by Qatar to the Asia in Amsterdam exhibition, *Asia in Amsterdam*, 291.
38. *Ibid.*, 291.
39. <https://www.meissen.com/en/25a384-78640-1.html>. Accessed August 1, 2020.
40. The maker of the Bowes rhinoceros is unknown.
41. Bowes Museum Website <https://www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk/Whats-On/Future-Exhibitions>. Accessed August 1, 2020.
42. Email with Robert Wenley, Deputy Director, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham. Monday 27 July 2020.
43. Email with Dr Gijs van der Ham, Senior Curator, Department of History, Rijksmuseum. Monday 27 July 2020.
44. A prefiguration exhibition is planned in Qatar for the end of 2022–23 and the rhinoceroses will appear in a gallery dedicated to Flora and Fauna.

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