



## *New American Scenery, New York and Transferwares*



The City Hotel New York, transferware plate 25cm dia, by Ralph Stevenson & Williams, c. 1826 (RISD Museum collection) and Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery, *fleurs.de.sel's New York, Hot Dogs*. Screenprint (decal) on Syracuse China with pearlware glaze, 28cm dia., Paul Scott 2019.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, tens of thousands of printed blue and white tablewares from England were exported to North America. Scenes of the newly independent United States were used in a myriad of designs and were characterized by a deep blue semiotic. Alongside printed wallpapers and textiles these transferwares formed part of the new media of their day. Pictorial in nature, their vitrified designs remediated prints from book or magazine illustration, melding them with floral and botanical borders. By the end of the century, they became highly collectible and the subject of a number of books, including RT Haines Halsey's classic 'New York on Dark Blue Staffordshire Pottery'. Published in 1899, the limited edition tome plotted the history of the genre, illustrated by sumptuous photogravures in blue depicting a comprehensive range of pictorial transferwares. 120 years later, in my *New American Scenery* series of artworks *I updates some of these early subject matters of New York using 21st century alternatives*.

In the 200 years since the original production, media, ceramic & print technologies have changed beyond recognition, in addition the collection/dissemination of images have

become instant, their spread facilitated by the World Wide Web and social media. In the creation of *New American Scenery*, I resolved to actively employ these contemporary equivalents of 19th century imaging and reproductive technologies.

The City Hotel New York, preparatory artwork (V&A Museum) for Stevenson & Williams' transferware plate c.1826, with #gowanus photograph by Leah Mitch, published in her



@fleurs.de.sel Instagram account on 14 August 2018, and used in *New American Scenery*, *fleurs.de.sel's New York, Hot Dogs*, transferware plate, Paul Scott 2019.

### *Instagram & @Fleurs.deSel's New York*

Instagram is primarily to do with the collection/dissemination of imagery and is perhaps the default Social Media app for many artists. I'm a regular, primarily using it as a public pictorial diary linked to my practice. My interest is not only in the dissemination of images, but I also use the platform as a source for harvesting and storing interesting visual material.

Graphic designer Leah Mitch, based in New York posts as @fleurs.de.sel and I'm one of her 'followers'. Her daily posts of buildings and places in her home city honestly depict





*Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery, Fleurs.de.sel's New York*, a set of twelve plates. In-glaze screen print (decal) on salvaged Syracuse China plates with pearlware glaze (each 28cm dia.). Paul Scott 2019.



the nuances and detail of an architecturally diverse, multicultural, vibrant city in wonderful, concise framed compositions. They brought to my mind the depictions of relatively modest buildings and streets in early transferwares by Ralph Stevenson and John Ridgway.

In selecting pictures for use in the @fleurs.de.sel's New York series I contacted Leah via Instagram, then through an ongoing email conversation. The final images were only cropped through the default 'frame' of the circular oak leaf border. All @fleurs.de.sel's New York material has been used with her permission.

In a more direct link to the original Stevenson *City Hotel New York* plate, I collaborated with my friend, former Spode engraver, Paul Holdway who engraved an Oak Leaf design as part of a small Indian Point cup plate which was to be produced using traditional 19th century methodologies. The tissue print border was scanned, enlarged and made as a screen-printed decal to frame the New York centres.



*Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery, Indian Point, cup plate (10cm dia.).*  
Produced using traditional transfer print methodologies, from an engraving by Paul Holdway.  
Paul Scott 2020.

#### *New York from Brooklyn Heights:*

Ralph Stevenson was also responsible for larger more expansive transferware landscape patterns, including a platter depicting *New York from Brooklyn Heights* based on an engraving by John Hill after a painting by William Guy Wall (1823). I met fellow artist

Beth Katleman in Providence at an event connected with the *Raid the Icebox* project<sup>1</sup> in the summer of 2018. I discovered that her studio was in Brooklyn, and told her about the Stevenson transferwares. She agreed to photograph New York from Brooklyn for me... So it was that on May 25 2019, Beth took a walk from her studio on 232 3rd Street towards East River, and with a combination of iMessages and emails took a series of directed panoramic shots across to Lower Manhattan which simultaneously landed on my computer... These formed the original material used in the *New American Scenery*, *New York from Brooklyn* series of prints on pearlware platters.



*New York from Brooklyn Heights* by Ralph Stevenson & Williams, c. 1826.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://risdmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/exhibitions/raid-icebox-now>





New York from Brooklyn Heights, engraving by John Hill after a painting by William Guy Wall (1823).



Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery, New York from Brooklyn (After Beth Katleman). Inglaze decal collage on shell edged pearlware platter c.1820, 35.5cm x 47cm. Paul Scott 2019.



Beth Katleman, New York from Brooklyn, iPhone X camera photograph, May 25 2019, 11.21am (New York time).



The back of Cumbrian Blue(s), New American Scenery, New York from Brooklyn (After Beth Katleman). In-glaze decal collage on shell edged pearlware platter c.1820, 35.5cm x 47cm. Paul Scott 2019.

Paul Scott, May 2020.