

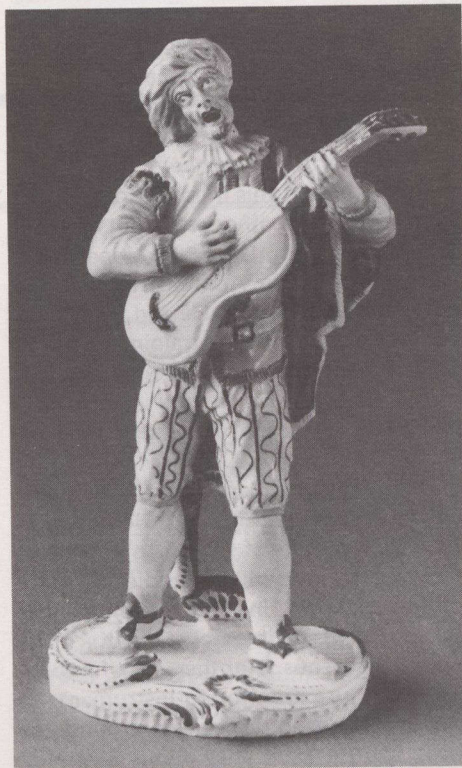
## Museum a showcase for rich ceramic collection

A major new museum, which opened recently in Toronto, features a collection of ceramics which many consider to be one of the finest in the world. The 2 000 objects span the centuries from pre-columbian artifacts to the great European ceramic artists of the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

The George R. Gardiner Museum of Ceramic Art has been created by Toronto financier George R. Gardiner and his wife, Helen, to display their diverse collection of porcelain and pottery to as many people as possible. Not only have they donated their collection of objects valued at \$16 million but they have paid the cost of the \$5.9-million building, located opposite the Royal Ontario Museum in mid-town Toronto, and established a \$2-million endowment for operating expenses.

George Gardiner, now 66 and chairman of Scott's Chicken Villas, decided to take advantage of tax laws that allow him eventually to deduct the full value of the public donation from his income. As well, he did not want his prized collection to disappear "like a pebble on a beach" into a mammoth institution such as the Royal Ontario Museum. As the only institution in North America devoted to ceramics, the Gardiner Museum will establish Toronto as a centre for related scholarship.

The collection is divided into four major categories, each representing a particular aspect of ceramic history within a specific time scale: precolumbian pottery, dating from 2000 B.C. until the fifteenth century A.D.; Italian maiolica



Porcelain figure of Mezzetin, probably modelled by Carl Vogelmann. (Circa 1765).

of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; English delftware of the seventeenth century and continental and English porcelain of the eighteenth century.

The objects are exhibited in two large galleries. The first floor displays the precolumbian pottery, Italian maiolica and English delftware; the second, eighteenth century European porcelain including Meissen, Du Paquier (Vienna) and "Haus-

maler", as well as Italian comedy figures, scent bottles and English and French porcelain.

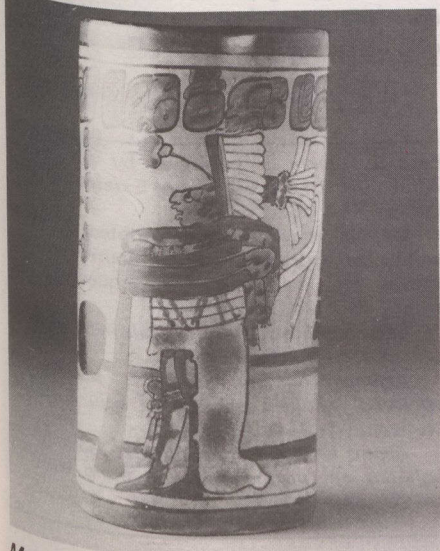
There is also a library, which will be open to the public for research purposes, a lecture theatre, a members' lounge and a gift shop. Workshop, laboratory and a reserve collection storage space are located in the basement and the building is constructed so that another storey can be added.

Work on the Gardiner Museum started about three-and-a-half years ago. The building was designed by Toronto architect Keith Wagland, who proposed a rigidly geometrical building based on a six-metre-square grid. The front end gently pokes onto Queen's Park and has an ample supply of windows to welcome visitors and to light the lobby area, the stairwell, the small library and the offices upstairs. The two galleries lie toward the back of the building.

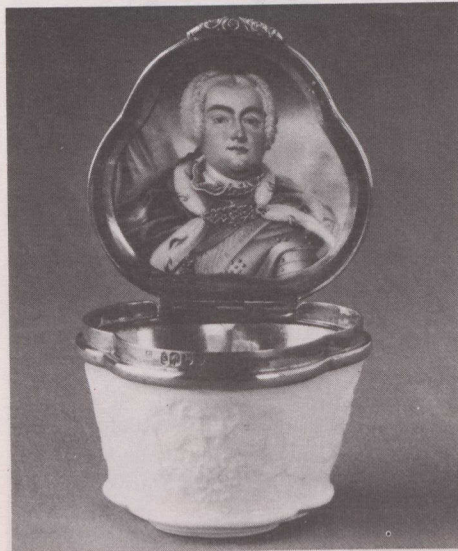
The museum staff refer to the Gardiner Museum as a jewelry box. Each piece — from a tiny porcelain thimble painted with a miniature landscape scene to an imposing Mexican tomb statue in the lobby — is showcased like a gem.

Keith Wagland has designed the display cases "to blend the theatrical with the academic", and to tone in with the colour schemes of the galleries — browns for pottery, greys for porcelain.

The precolumbian pieces, the maiolica and the English delftware are in irregularly shaped oak cases trimmed in black metal and placed around the perimeter of the gallery. The space in the centre is reserved for the showing of other private collections.



Maya polychrome vase painted with a ball game scene. (Circa 550-950).



Meissen porcelain snuffbox, painted with portrait of Augustus Rex inside lid. (1735).



Vienna Du Paquier porcelain hanging wall vase and cover. (Circa 1730).