

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Lyman Allyn Art Museum

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NEW EXHIBITION AT THE LYMAN ALLYN EXPLORES THE EARLY U.S.-CHINA TRADE

New London – Lyman Allyn Art Museum announces the opening of *China from China: Porcelain and Stories of Early American Trade*, on view from Jun. 14 through Sept. 14, 2025. This exhibition explores the early U.S.-China trade, with a focus on Connecticut merchants and sailors who participated in this transpacific exchange, helping to shape American identity, industry, and global presence.

With over a hundred examples of fine and decorative arts, *China from China* reveals how cultural and economic trade between China and the United States helped to shape a young nation and set the stage for a geopolitical relationship that endures today.

The exhibition is a collaboration between the Lyman Allyn and the Dietrich American Foundation, showcasing the Dietrich collection of Chinese export porcelain and paintings, a portion of which was exhibited at the Chinese American Museum in Washington, D.C. in 2022. Expanding on this material, the exhibition also features objects from the Lyman Allyn's own collection, and loans from regional public and private collections.

The early days of trade between the United States and China came just after the young nation's hard-won independence from Great Britain in 1783. With resources depleted by war and shifts in international commerce, America set its sights on China, long a source of both fascination and coveted imports like tea, porcelain and silk. Embarking from New York harbor in February 1784, the ship *Empress of China* set sail with a hold full of American trade goods and an entrepreneurial spirit. The success of that first voyage set in motion a vast enterprise that, over the following decades, produced incredible wealth and cultural exchange, helped shape national identity, and forged the first ties in the complex relationship between the two countries. Along the way there was risk, reward, and tragedy.



Lam Qua (Chinese, 1801-1860), ***A Hong Merchant***, ca. 1835-40, oil on canvas in the original Chinese gilded frame, 28 7/8 x 21 3/4 inches, Collection of Ginger H. and H. Richard Dietrich III.

At the heart of the early China trade story are individuals—American traders and hong merchants, sailors and artists, diplomats and scholars—who shaped the course of history in ways small and large.

The opening reception is Saturday, Jun. 14, from 5 - 7 p.m. Museum members are free, and non-members are \$10. To register, call 860.443.2545 ext. 2129 or email us at info@lymanallyn.org.

Related programming includes:

- Community Day on Saturday, Jun. 14, from 1–4 pm, featuring free activities such as a tea tasting, a Chinese brush painting workshop, and a lion dance performance. This event is free and open to all.
- A lecture by award-winning history author Eric Jay Dolin on Saturday, Jul. 26, from 1–2:30 pm. Admission is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.
- A virtual discussion with collectors H. Richard Dietrich III and Edward Tiedemann on Wednesday, Aug. 20, from 6–7 pm. This event is also free and open to all.

For more event information, please visit lymanallyn.org.

For more information or to request images, please contact Rebecca Dawson by email at dawson@lymanallyn.org.

This exhibition has been made possible with support from an anonymous foundation. Funding has also been provided by the Dietrich American Foundation and the Connecticut State Legislature, administered by the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of the Arts.

About Lyman Allyn Art Museum

Lyman Allyn Art Museum welcomes visitors from New London, southeastern Connecticut and all over the world. Established in 1926 with a gift from Harriet Allyn in memory of her seafaring father, the Museum opened the doors of its beautiful neoclassical building surrounded by 12 acres of green space in 1932. Today it presents several changing exhibitions each year and houses a fascinating collection of over 19,000 objects from ancient times to the present, including art from Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe, with particularly strong collections of American paintings, decorative arts and Victorian toys and doll houses.

The museum is located at 625 Williams Street, New London, Connecticut, exit 83 off I-95. It is open **Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. and Sundays 1 - 5 p.m.**, and closed on Mondays and major holidays. For more information call 860.443.2545, ext. 2129 or visit www.lymanallyn.org.