



In my friends Uni halls, on top of the fridge, between the George Forman grill and Sainsbury's taste the difference decaffeinated Tea, there is an open box with '16 Eggs Boiler' printed on the side. No one had ever seen the '16 Eggs Boilers' device emerge from said box. For a long time, the existence of the '16 Eggs Boiler' had not surpassed the numbers and words printed on the side.

Whose is it?

No one knows, no one has ever been seen with it. It seems to have just appeared (around Christmas time allegedly).

Who needs a '16 Eggs Boiler'?

It seems excessive for a Uni student to boil more than a couple eggs at a time, but maybe that is the only size of egg boiler there is so perhaps it's unfair to consider it excessive for one person.

But a student could just boil an egg in a pan, they don't need this thing, even if at some point they need 16 eggs, they could boil them all in a large pan.

But perhaps the boiler does it quicker, or better or more automatic, relieving you from standing over the pan. I can only speculate without participating in such things as 'eating a lot of eggs'. I have used a rice cooker before, it probably has a similar function. Perhaps there is a good reason for this thing, rather than a pan. After all, does anyone really 'need' anything.

Why 16 'Eggs' boiler? Surely it should be '16 Egg Boiler' This point oddly took the longest time during the 'Eggs Boiler' discussion, no one can decide if its correct. I thought it almost implies that only 16 at a time can be boiled.

But why 16? Don't eggs come in 6 or 12?

If you use it at max capacity, you must buy 3 boxes of 6 eggs and have 2 left over. If you're one person saving boiled eggs, then you won't want 2 raw eggs laying around.

But maybe someone just eats a lot of boiled eggs a day, maybe 2 left over isn't that bad so it's not a worry.

How many 'scrumptious' boiled eggs would you say you eat at a time?

Two, I think. Though, when was the last time I even ate a boiled egg?

So, if you have a family of 8, and each of you have 2 eggs in the morning, will you be using it at its full potential? (2 marks) Show your workings.

But then you will have two spare eggs a day, the LCM of 6 and 16 is 48, so only on each third day will the family have no remaining eggs.

"Wallace on Love Island last night said he eats 4 eggs a day as part of his gym diet, eggs have good protein. So, if he boils 16 eggs, he has enough for four days." (The quotations are to clarify that it was not me, rather someone else, who said they watch love island.)

Wallace's consumption of eggs is, I suppose, cultural. Eating lots of eggs could be a cultural thing. Perhaps I should not be so dismissive of someone else's egg eating

lifestyle, even though I see no sense in the '16', the 'eggs' rather than 'egg', and having a boiler rather than just a pan.

Why do something a lot when you can do it once every four days? When you can have a thing do it for you, giving back a few more minutes of your time from boiling eggs, that you could be using to browse Argos catalogues to buy more things that mean you don't need to do something a lot, I would have so much free time! Right?.

But I suppose people don't buy a Ferrari to get to places quicker. I'd actually admit I quite like the look of the thing. It would fit in nicely between my kettle thing and toaster thing, or perhaps next to my kitchen aid thing. Currently I have an on-going brushed steel theme in my kitchen (in my head), nice and modern looking, and this 'thing' (what does it do again?) would fit right in and help even out all my appliances along my countertop. My microwave looks lonely if it's too far from my coffee grinder, but that then leaves too much space between my food processor and kitchen aid, that's it then, I need a Ferrari.

I feel I have the authority to comment of the capitalist/consumerist nature of the student with the egg boiler. I can discuss around the table the need anyone would have for such a thing. I can toy in my head with how I'm better than the student but am I really any better? Would it make any difference even if it were a Ferrari? Everyone must play along with the system in some respect, but I do think it makes some difference being aware of the different ideas and contradictions we live with, rather than just playing along.



Porcelain for Europe

Porcelain was first made in Japan in the early 17th century at kilns in and around the town of Arita. The earliest pieces were designed for the domestic market. In 1644, following the fall of the Ming dynasty, Chinese porcelain became temporarily unavailable and the Dutch turned to Japan as an alternative source for this highly sought-after commodity. Japan increased its output of porcelain, with much of it being aimed at the export market and often made in shapes copying European ceramics.

3. Dish with VOC monogram of the Dutch East India Company

1660–80

VOC stands for Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Dutch East India Company). The company was founded in 1602 and opened a trading post in Japan in 1609. Initially located in Hirado, the Dutch trading post was relocated to the island of Dejima in Nagasaki Harbour after the expulsion of the Portuguese in 1639. The coat of arms of a Dutch East India Company director, Pieter de Graeff, appears on the jug behind this dish.

Arita kilns

Porcelain painted in underglaze blue

Museum no. 3-1886

On the ground floor of the V&A, at the front of the building there is a sort of Asia-Europe collaboration room (at least that's how I interpreted it at first, it's the Japan room).

It is explained how porcelain was a commodity, produced in China and Japan and exported to Europe via western trading companies such as VOC, all this happening in the 17th century.

What first struck me was how the porcelain had been produced in European style shapes (I had to read this on the little card, I'm clueless on the formfactor of porcelain styles). Even in the 17th century, Europe was already using labour in Asia to produce goods to be exported back.

From the description of the dish, you would be able to visualise two things about it. You would be able to visualise the object as a dish. Secondly, you would know that somewhere on the object is a monogram of VOC. Other than this we know nothing of the object, for what is discussed in the description is the situational history of the object and its connotations. Nowhere in this display case had any of the porcelain been observed, analysed or interpreted. Since the institution that is the V&A is meant to be about craft, art and design, we are left strangely in the dark about the design or configuration of this object. While there are sculptures down the hall that are meant to poetically depict the struggles of man. Or glass work on the top floor that is described as a ground-breaking innovation in its field of this kind of artist practice. This dish is apparently no more than its context, no more than the event above it, its network surrounding it. Thought there are patterns and imagery that I know nothing about, and a shape that has no recognisable function to me, I am presented with only historical facts on the symbioses of the handlers of the object.

Though I suppose they could explain this away with saying there are examples of these kinds of objects being studied more locally elsewhere in the museum, I can recognise this sections as being a display of historical events rather than physical objects, these objects being only evidence to a larger idea which is being presented as design, world trade and global culture. If the V&A is here to marvel in objects of good design, choosing this event is perhaps odd because of it being so reminiscent to the exploitation of the East by the West. Or perhaps it's an example of bad design, or shady design that the V&A is teaching us to learn from. If this is true, the display comes across far too nostalgic towards the power of western empires.

Though I recognise the important history that had worldwide implications around institutions such as VOC, I cannot help but also recognise the eurocentrism of much of the V&A's collection. This will, of course, be a understandable historic bias since the collection started as just that, a collection. 'Collected' from Europe by Europeans, so of course everything is from a European perspective. But this exhibit has been

organised to explain the craft and art of mid-late millennium Japanese culture, but the collection is limited to, and positioned from the perspective of, European objects and influenced artefacts. I think perhaps the V&A will never truly be able to represent this period and geography of culture since the way it is being presented, the method of object collecting, and the public interest is all European. There is specific interest in the value of the items and the historic significance of them rather than perhaps their situational/cultural significance. If the objects were selected based on histories from Japan, by Japanese people and about what they consider culturally significant, then maybe it would be better (though weighted on what Japanese historians want the world to think of them or understand of their culture). But then it would perhaps not apply to this general public's interests, despite that maybe being because of the ignorance of the public. This all depends on things such as what could be the 'correct interpretation of history' which I think is an ideal so undesirably difficult to seek.

The significance of the VOC dish can come down to it being a commodity. A desirable object because of its rarity and exclusivity. This only plays to the divisive side of the capitalism. The dish is an example of something valuable because few people could possess it, a horrible, vain part of society.

This dish needs to be considered no different to any other, then maybe it will be equal, better or worse of a plate based on personal preference, functionality and aesthetics, judgements we can pass as human beings with our own experiences of using plates rather than a value assigned to it by a system above us. The only logical way to take it down to this level would be to serve my mum's roast dinner on it tonight, it needs to be used and not displayed.

Love Island Series 6, Episode 16. 2020. ITV2. 21:00, 20th January.

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