

Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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Author Merry Outlaw shows off her book, along with other unique items, at Historic Jamestowne.

Special Signed Edition of *Following the Dragon* Available Now!

JAMESTOWN, VA (January 27, 2026) –

The early years of Jamestown were filled with turmoil, violence, and struggles for the barest resources. Yet archaeologists have excavated objects that represent the wealthiest of English society, including more than 100 artifacts of Chinese porcelain, worth more than its weight in gold. The result of more than five years of research and a lifetime of experience studying early American ceramics, Jamestown Rediscovery Senior Curator Merry Outlaw has published *Following the Dragon: Late Ming Porcelain from James Fort, Jamestown, Virginia*.

While researching Jamestown’s Chinese porcelain collection, Outlaw learned of an incredible find in Bantam, Java: a porcelain bowl depicting a dragon chasing a flaming pearl—a metaphor for the pursuit of wisdom. The bowl bears the mark *yu tang jia qi*, which translates as “an

exquisite vessel for the Jade Hall.” Remarkably, the same mark is found on a dragon bowl excavated at Jamestown. These are two of the only known bowls with the same decoration and maker’s mark in the world. How did these bowls end up on different sides of the globe? That search inspired the title, *Following the Dragon*. Filled with beautiful images of artifacts, intact objects, and contemporary artwork of the period, the full-color, hardback book explores the global phenomenon that carried the "white gold" of Jingdezhen porcelain across oceans to the settlement at Jamestown.

And now, only available at Historic Jamestowne, signed editions of *Following the Dragon* are available for purchase! Signed editions can be purchased in-store at Historic Jamestowne or online at historicjamestowne.org.

“In *Following the Dragon*, Merry Outlaw beautifully illustrates and expertly identifies the Chinese origins of porcelain uncovered at early seventeenth-century Jamestown, Virginia, offering a compelling window into the vast trade networks that made fine Chinese porcelain a coveted status symbol in the Western world.”

– Dr. William M. Kelso, CBE, FSA, SAR

“In the early seventeenth century, Chinese porcelain went all over the world, becoming what some scholars have called the first ‘global brand’. No better example of this is the number and variety of pieces that made it to Jamestown, a tiny settlement perched precariously on what was, to a European perspective, the edge of the known world. This book beautifully explores this rich collection, giving us a better understanding of Chinese porcelain’s range and reach and of the material world of Jamestown’s earliest settlers.”

– Ronald Fuchs, Editor, *Ceramics in America*

“The quantity of Chinese porcelain vessels brought to Jamestown during the first quarter of the seventeenth century is remarkable. For their owners, porcelain functioned as a potent marker of status and refinement. While the intricate designs on the vessels appeared merely decorative to English consumers, to the Chinese, they constituted a visual language encoding systems of belief, moral virtue, and aspiration.”

- Merry Outlaw, author of *Following the Dragon: Late Ming Porcelain from James Fort, Jamestown, Virginia* and Senior Curator at Jamestown Rediscovery

Outlaw's research, and this book, became the basis for a groundbreaking joint special exhibition of the same title in partnership with the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation. Developed by Outlaw and Jamestown Settlement Senior Curator Beverly "Bly" Straube, Ph.D., FSA, the exhibit reveals unexpected cultural connections between colonial Virginia and imperial China. See the exhibition at Jamestown Settlement, now through July 12, 2026.

Available photos can be found [here](#). All images courtesy of Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation.

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[About Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation](#)

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation preserves and shares the original site of James Fort and Jamestown, established in 1607. The Foundation is dedicated to uncovering, preserving, and sharing

Jamestown's diverse history, and highlighting its major contribution to the foundations of modern American society. Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit and jointly administers Historic Jamestowne alongside the National Park Service. Admission includes the James Fort site, New Town, and the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeological Museum, as well as walking tours, living history, and public programs. For more information about visiting Jamestown, please visit www.historicjamestowne.org or call (757) 856-1250.