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Printing on Vauxhall Porcelain

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The Vauxhall porcelain factory was set up in 1751. It used overglaze printed decoration from about 1756. As the factory was located close to Battersea, it seems likely that its knowledge of printing techniques was obtained from there. At Vauxhall, printing was sometimes in delicate monochromes, puce being particularly favored [1], but more frequently it was in polychrome – where the pattern was printed in more than one color. It is significant that printing in two or more colors was occasionally carried out at Battersea. At both factories this was almost certainly achieved by using the bat printing process to transfer an impression in oil from an engraved copper plate to the porcelain and then dusting various parts of the the oil impression with different enamel colors.

At Vauxhall the different colors were used to outline individual small elements within the pattern, whereas at Battersea the different colors were applied across larger sections of pattern without any attempt to pick out individual elements. In addition, at Vauxhall, the polychrome prints were further enhanced with painted enamel colors [2]. Some monochrome prints were also over-painted with enamel colors. The presence of the painted enamels can sometimes make it difficult to discern whether the basic pattern is printed in monochrome or polychrome.

No underglaze blue printing was carried out at Vauxhall and the use of overglaze monochrome printing appears to have been on a fairly limited scale, despite the fine results achieved. The novel polychrome technique seems to have been something of a dead end and was not employed by other factories who subsequently used