The passive: past tenses

Read the newspaper article. Put the verbs in brackets in the correct past tense, active or passive.

SMASH!

Clumsy visitor destroys priceless vases

By Tom Ball

A CLUMSY visitor to a British museum has destroyed a set of priceless 300-year-old Chinese vases after slipping on the stairs.



The three vases, which **(1)** _____ (produce) during the Qing dynasty in the 17th century, **(2)** _____ (stand) on the windowsill at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge for forty years. Last Thursday they **(3)** _____ (smash) into a million pieces. The vases, which **(4)** _____ (donate) in 1948, **(5)** _____ (be) the museum's best-known pieces.

The Fitzwilliam **(6)** _____ (decide) not to identify the man who **(7)** _____ (cause) the disaster. 'It was a most unfortunate and regrettable accident', museum director Duncan Robinson said, 'but we are glad that the visitor **(8)** _____ (not injure).'

The photograph of the accident **(9)** _____ (take) by another visitor, Steve Baxter. 'We **(10)** _____ (watch) the man fall as if in slow motion. He **(11)** _____ (fly) through the air. The vases **(12)** _____ (explode) as though they **(13)** _____ (hit) by a bomb. The man **(14)** _____ (sit) there stunned in the middle of a pile of porcelain when the staff **(15)** _____ (arrive).'

The museum declined to say what the vases were worth.

ABOUT THE TEXT

The article is based on a true story that took place in the UK in January 2006 at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. The museum contains works of art and antiquities from a wide range of centuries and civilizations. The accident involved the smashing of three priceless Chinese vases from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), which were on open display in the museum. There was much media coverage of the accident, but the vases have subsequently been restored and are on display again – this time in a case!

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