



LOUIS TIFFANY
COMFORT TIFFANY

Treasures from the Driehaus Collection

Tiffany Studios, *River of Life* window, early twentieth century, Photograph by John Faier, © Driehaus Museum, 2013



A celebration of beauty, *Louis Comfort Tiffany: Treasures from the Driehaus Collection* features more than 60 objects, spanning over 30 years of Tiffany's prolific career. One of America's most renowned artists, Louis Comfort Tiffany worked in nearly all of the media available to artists and designers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—glass, ceramic, metalwork, jewelry, and painting. Tiffany's technical brilliance in a wide variety of media enabled him to convey his awe of the natural world through a range of objects, from common household items to one-of-a-kind masterpieces. He earned international acclaim for his artistic output, receiving prestigious awards in exhibitions across Europe and the United States. His work was enthusiastically collected by art museums and private collectors throughout his lifetime, and continues to be highly sought after today. This exhibition celebrates the artistry and craftsmanship of the Tiffany artworks from Chicago's distinguished Richard H. Driehaus Collection, highlighting masterworks never before presented in a comprehensive exhibition.

LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY

Louis Comfort Tiffany was born in New York City on February 18, 1848, to Harriet Olivia Young and Charles Lewis Tiffany, founder of the renowned luxury goods retailer Tiffany & Co. Rather than join the family business, Tiffany began his career as a painter, studying at the National Academy of Design in New York City from 1866 to 1867. He continued his studies the following year with the French painter Léon Charles Adrien Bailly in Paris, later traveling throughout Europe and North Africa, sketching the compelling landscapes and architecture, rendering them in oils and watercolors.

After returning from his extensive tour abroad, Tiffany continued his artistic development. Between 1875 and 1877, Tiffany worked at Thrill's Empire State Flint Glass Works in Brooklyn where he began developing some of his signature methods of making glass. Drapery glass, which he devised while at Thrill's, used a technique that manipulated ripples in large pieces of glass to create the illusion of folds. Tiffany would later use this technique to great effect in his ecclesiastical windows. He continued to paint and exhibited several watercolors and oil paintings at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris.

Tiffany's next major venture was as a prominent interior decorator for affluent New Yorkers. In 1881 he merged several design partnerships to create Louis C. Tiffany and Company, Associated Artists, which decorated the Veteran's Room of the Seventh Regiment Armory in New York that year, and the Red Room of the White House the following year. After the dissolution of this partnership in 1885, Tiffany established the Tiffany Glass Company, which was later renamed the Tiffany Glass & Decorating Company in 1892.



4 Tiffany Studios, *Covered box*, c. 1905, Photograph by John Faier, © Driehaus Museum, 2013

One of the most notable achievements of Tiffany's career took place in Chicago during the World's Columbian Exposition in 1892–93 where he presented his "Romanesque Revival" chapel with extensive Byzantine-style mosaics, stained-glass windows, and an elaborate chandelier. Tiffany's great success at the Columbian Exposition earned him countless accolades and a number of important commissions, including the Chicago Public Library and the Field Memorial Gallery in the Art Institute of Chicago.

Even while exploring his other artistic endeavors, Tiffany continued to experiment with new glass forms and techniques. He patented the poetic term "Favrile," from the Latin word *fabrilis*, meaning handmade, in 1894, to describe the iridescent blown art glass he began producing. In late 1897, Tiffany built his own glass furnace in Corona, Queens, New York, initially called Stourbridge Glass Company, but later renamed Louis C. Tiffany Furnaces, Inc. He hired the skilled émigré artisan and designer Arthur J. Nash to oversee the factory, which produced Favrile and other unique varieties of glass for use in ecclesiastical and secular stained glass windows, lamps, vases, mosaics, and accessories.

While the magnificence and exceptional quality of Tiffany glass made this medium the most significant of his career, he continued to innovate, expanding his operations into enamels, pottery, and jewelry. In 1902 his father died, and Tiffany became the art director of Tiffany & Co., his father's luxury goods company. That same year, Tiffany incorporated his glass company, Tiffany Studios, and began to build his Long Island country home, Laurelton Hall, developing its famous gardens on 600 acres overlooking Oyster Bay.

Despite the enormous success he experienced in his many interrelated businesses over his long career, Tiffany's work went out of vogue with the advent of modernism and Louis C. Tiffany Furnaces, ceased operating in 1924. Tiffany Studios filed for bankruptcy in 1932. Tiffany's work received renewed appreciation in the mid-twentieth century, and continues to be associated with unparalleled quality and beauty to this day. When Tiffany died in 1933, the *New York Times* obituary counted him "among the best known of American artists."



Tiffany Studios, *Jewelry box*, c. 1900-1910, Photograph by John Faier, © Driehaus Museum, 2013



“Never, perhaps, has any man carried to greater perfection the art of faithfully rendering Nature in her most seductive aspects, while subjecting her with so much sagacity to the wholesome canons of decoration.”

– Samuel [Siegfried] Bing, “Louis C. Tiffany’s Coloured Glass Work,” in *Artistic America, Tiffany Glass, and Art Nouveau*

THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS COLLECTION

The Richard H. Driehaus Collection is one of the country's most important private collections of works by American decorative designer Louis Comfort Tiffany. Widely recognized as the gold standard for American decorative objects of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, works by Tiffany and his associated firms are a core collecting area for Richard H. Driehaus. Since acquiring his first Tiffany Studios stained glass window in 1978, the businessman and philanthropist, has expanded his collection to over 1,500 Tiffany works, including ecclesiastical and secular windows, Favrile glass, vases, lamps, candlesticks, accessories, and furniture, to preserve for future generations as well as to enjoy personally.

In 2003, the Richard H. Driehaus Museum was founded in Chicago to preserve and publicly exhibit American and European fine and decorative arts of the Gilded Age (1870–1900). Today, the Museum, which opened to the public in 2008 after an extensive five-year restoration, is a stunning showcase for late nineteenth and early twentieth century art and design, displayed against the magnificent backdrop of the historic Samuel M. Nickerson Mansion (1879–1883). The Italianate exterior of the Nickerson Mansion conceals the extraordinary fully restored interiors replete with onyx, alabaster, carved and inlaid wood, as well as 17 types of marble, characteristic of the Aesthetic Movement.

ABOUT THE CURATOR

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, David A. Hanks served as Associate Curator of American Decorative Arts at the Art Institute of Chicago (1969–74) and Curator, Department of American Arts, at the Philadelphia Museum of Art (1974–77). Among the many exhibitions he organized during his museum tenure was *The Decorative Arts of Frank Lloyd Wright* (1977–79) for the Smithsonian Institution. The catalogue of this exhibition continues to serve as a basic text for the decorative arts field. Until 2000, he was director of Exhibitions International in New York, a non-profit exhibition service. Since 2000, he has been Curator of the Stewart Program for Modern Design, Montreal and is the consulting curator for the George R. Kravis II Collection. He has served on curatorial teams for numerous exhibitions, including *High Styles: Twentieth Century American Design* for the Whitney Museum, 1986, and *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987. His other books include *Innovative Furniture in America*, 1981; *Donald Deskey: Decorative Designs and Interiors*, 1987; and *The Century of Modern Design*, 2010, for the Stewart Program.



“Art interprets the beauty of ideas and of visible things, making them concrete and lasting.”

– Louis Comfort Tiffany

EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

NUMBER OF WORKS:

60+ decorative objects, including lamps, vases, and stained glass windows with accompanying custom casework for all objects

ORGANIZED BY:

The Richard H. Driehaus Museum

CURATOR:

David A. Hanks, Curator of the Stewart Program for Modern Design, Montreal

REQUIREMENTS:

High security, approximately 2,500–3,500 square feet

PARTICIPATION FEE:

Please Inquire

SHIPPING:

IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors pay outgoing shipping costs within the contiguous U.S.

BOOKING PERIOD:

12 weeks

TOUR:

January 2018 – May 2021

PUBLICATION:

Louis Comfort Tiffany: Treasures from the Driehaus Collection
by David A. Hanks with essay by Richard H. Driehaus and photographs by John Faier

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