



Majolica Matters

www.MajolicaSociety.com

December 2008

Presidents Message

By Gabrielle Ehrenthal

Greetings everyone,

Happy Holidays and a Healthy, Peaceful and Prosperous 2009!

Another year is about to come to a close and I hope none of us looks back with regrets – I pray that all of us, look forth with a new sense of adventure and hope for better things to come and definitely for more Majolica to be had! Seems just yesterday that we were all together, laughing and having fun, visiting Laurie and Dick’s ‘fairy tale’ home, and Deb and Phil’s historic mansion on the hill. What great memories we all have from that trip!

Well, its time to plan for new memories to be made, new friendships to be started and old ones to be re-kindled.....and what better place to do it than the Big Apple! The Hilton Hotel on 6th Avenue & 54th St will again be our ‘home away from home’. Centrally located, (within walking distance), to just about the very best New York has to offer...theatres museums, great shopping, fabulous antiques, divine restaurants, etc. I do not wish to brag....but New York is the greatest city in the world!

Plan to come early, or stay late – there is so much to do and such little time!!! Besides, when else will we all have the opportunity to see such important collections of rare Majolica?

Just a little north of the city, on a meandering road set amidst manicured gardens, the pool, the tennis court and the garage, (which in itself is the size of my house), sits the lovely home of The Reis family. Donna, David and their children share their magnificent home with a large array of the most exquisite flora, fauna, fountains, and putti – all Majolica, some seen only in photos and some never seen before. Each piece chosen with the greatest of care, highlighting the best and the rarest of Minton, Jones, etc.....and displayed with equal attention to detail.

Donna and David have graciously invited us all for a visit -A RARE TREAT-not to be missed!

(Continued to page 2)

Make your plans for New York City 2009.

Set the date aside.

Date: April 30 – May 03, 2009
City: New York City, New York
2009 Hotel: Hilton - New York, 1335 Avenue of the Americas

Inside this issue:

NYC – Awaits us all. Broadway - your way in May 2009!



NYC – Tours to Member Homes:



Influential Majolica Presentation: Paul Atterbury’s 2008 presentation to the American Ceramic Circle – *“The Majolica Phenomenon”*



Deborah English, and authors Paul Atterbury and & Joan Stacker

MAJ LICA

“Warms You in Winter”

(Continued from Front Cover)



The Reis' Bird "Sanctuary"

Marilyn and Ed Flower have extended their kind invitation to visit their Long Island home. Along with the fine paintings, prints, rare books and advertising (to name just a few of their collections); the house is filled with spectacular Majolica. Their love of art and antiques is displayed in every 'nook and cranny'.

All important and/or rare pieces of Majolica have a place in the Flower's home, important maker or not, small pieces as well as large. Tureens and garden seats, classical design or funky - as long as the rarity and quality are there (or at least bring a smile to Ed's face) - a space will be found, and an environment will be created.

This is a TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITY to see fabulous Majolica cohabitating with many other works of art!



"Down Under" the Flower's stairs

Last and probably 'least', Michael and I would be

honored to have you visit our home and our modest collection.

As you probably know, our collection's focus is 'rare' teapots with some "this and that" thrown in.



One of the Ehrenthal's 19th Century Tea Service

Please comeit will be such fun.....and we'll have tea!

O. Henry wrote: "It couldn't have happened anywhere but in little old New York."

How right he was...the best of everything is right here in New York, so please join us in making this, our 21st Annual Convention, the very best ever!

As we get closer to the event we will provide you with suggestions for galleries, museums, shows and even restaurants.

Hugs to you all and again Happy Holidays!

Gabrielle Ehrenthal

Linda Horn, NY

By Mary Donohue

We are pleased to hear that the Society will be meeting in New York City in 2009. We at LINDA HORN are at a lovely new location on Madison Avenue at 93rd. I am sure that Linda will bring in special majolica pieces for a large window display and interior store display just for the MIS Convention. Our new shop is four times larger than our old location and in a wonderful neighborhood with a real French bistro feeling and some great restaurants.



Recently we brought in some lovely monumental majolica pieces by Choisy Le Roi, Minton, Holdcroft and Rörstrand. Just giving you a "heads up"!!

Contact: Mary Donohue, mary@lindahorn.com
Or visit us at www.LindaHorn.com

New York 2009 Programs

By Ed Flower

COME SOONER AND/OR STAY LATER, AS MANY DID IN 2005. WE HAD A GRAND TIME THEN AND WILL HAVE A GRANDER TIME IN 2009!

Thursday, April 30th, 9:00 a.m.

Buses leave our hotel, the New York Hilton, with one-half of our attendees to visit two Long Island collections. Please note that, while the convention opens "officially" with coffee and cake and collector presentations on Thursday evening, enough of you have already indicated early arrival, allowing us to divide the Long Island visits into two separate days, Thursday & Friday!

10:30-11:00 a.m.: Arrive at home of Marilyn & Ed Flower, Bay Shore, New York. Marilyn & Ed live in an attached home in a gated community. You will be served a New York style brunch - bagels & lox, etc. with suitable accoutrements, in a community club house, very close to the Flower unit, and brought over in groups of twelve to fifteen to visit the Majolica collection along with other things that Marilyn & Ed collect and keep on Long Island.

1:30 p.m. (approx.): Buses depart and head back in the direction of New York City but stop to visit Gabrielle and Michael Ehrenthal at Woodmere, Long Island, to view their beautiful collection. You will see teapots and tea service in Majolica that will boggle the mind, along with other great pieces.

3:30 p.m. (approx.): Buses depart and return you to the New York Hilton. Dinner is on your own.

Thursday 7:30 p.m.:

Convention officially opens with coffee and cake and two interesting collector presentations:

(1) Donna and David Reis will present "No Teapots or Dead Animals Please". This will serve as an introduction to their collection which you will be seeing at their home in Rye, New York, on Saturday.

(2) Paul Lauer will present his collection under the description "Big is Beautiful".

Friday, May 1st, 9:00 a.m.:

This will be a repeat program of visits to the Flower and Ehrenthal collections on Long Island for those who did not go on Thursday. Those of us who have already gone to Long Island on Thursday are welcome during the day on Friday at the apartment and collection of Joan Graham in Manhattan. This is a special treat, especially for those who may not have seen her collection previously. Members who are in New York on Thursday, but are not going to Long Island until Friday, are equally welcome at Joan's apartment on Thursday.

Friday evening there are no convention activities allowing members a chance to sample one of New York's many restaurants in all price classes and types of food, (we will have a list of suggestions and of our favorites for you), and/or to attend the theater. If you plan to do this, it is suggested that you purchase your theater tickets well in advance. There will also be symphonies, operas, etc. to experience, but again this does require advance planning and ticket purchases.

Saturday, May 2nd 8:30 am:

Formal breakfast buffet presented by the Majolica International Society with the help of, the New York Hilton, followed by two more collector presentations.

Collector's Presentations:

(1) Jim Harkess - "What We Collect"

(2) Carlin Grant - "Majolica and Some of My Other Favorite Things"

Following the collector's presentations, we will, again, hold a mini majolica auction for the benefit of the Karmason Memorial Library Fund. Our first auction, in Washington D.C., was very successful. We need pieces for this auction, (approximately six items total), will be adequate. You can give us a piece of Majolica to be auctioned one of two ways:

(1) You may set a reserve price and we will not sell the piece for less than your agreed reserve price. The seller pays 10% commission to the Karmason Fund, and the balance goes to the seller. Buyers will not be charged a buyer's commission.

(2) You may donate a piece, with the entire proceeds going to the Karmason Fund, and receive a tax deduction for whatever the piece brings at auction.

Saturday 11:30 a.m.:

Buses take us all to Rye, New York, the home of Donna and Dave Reis, to view their superb Majolica collection.

3:30 p.m.: Buses take us back to the New York Hilton.

6:30 p.m.: Cocktail party and advance preview of Majolica Heaven.

8:00 p.m.: No MIS activities are planned, leaving your evening free to enjoy the many activities which NYC presents to you.

Sunday, May 2nd

9:00 a.m.: Continental Breakfast and Business Meeting of Majolica International Society.

10:30 a.m.: Majolica Heaven opens to members

1:00 p.m.: Majolica Heaven opens to the public.

All afternoon and evening and days thereafter for those who stay, final goodbyes.

ATTENTION - Holiday Photos Needed

It's always fun to share member's "Holiday" majolica photos in the pages of Majolica Matters. Please send us photos of how you alter your majolica displays during the Holiday Season. Your creativity can help us all grow! Send to wanda@emajolica.com.

MIS Texas Region Members Meeting

By Darci Iola

Members of the Texas region of MIS met for the first time at the home of Darci and Randy Iola on Friday, September 12, 2008. There were more than eighty, "Texas style", invitations mailed out in the middle of August to members in Oklahoma and Texas. A save-the-date note had previously been mailed in May.



Members began arriving at approximately 10:00 a.m. and toured the Iola home at their leisure to view Darci and Randy's majolica collection. The Texas Region members were honored that Membership Chairman of MIS, Maryanne Leckie, flew in from California to be present at the meeting. A light brunch was served until 12:00 p.m.



Duane Matthes presented: "Marilyn Karmason, the Author's Majolica Collection".

The highlight of the morning's agenda was a presentation by Duane Matthes at 11:00 a.m., entitled, "Marilyn Karmason - An intimate peek into the Author's Majolica Collection." After being introduced by MIS Treasurer, Amy Griffin, Mr. Matthes spoke for approximately thirty-five minutes while presenting a power point, replete with pictures, illustrating the extensiveness of Dr. Karmason's collection. He began by explaining the close relationship that he and his wife, Wanda, enjoyed with Dr. Karmason which led to

his photographing her collection while on a visit to her home. Several members had questions which were answered in detail by Mr. Matthes.

The meeting was a tremendous success and members recommended that a similar occasion be planned early next year. Following the meeting, Texas, Delegate-at-Large, Darci Iola, reported receiving numerous thank you notes expressing members' appreciation of her Texas hospitality, which combined fun and comradeship between members with an educationally informative gathering.



Darci's sideboard held many European and American treasures



Darci had several walls adorned with Palissy groupings



Membership Chairman, Maryanne Leckie enjoyed meeting all the guest and made sure everyone had the information needed to join the society.

The Majolica Phenomenon, A Study of Sources and Styles

As re-created from notes. By Deborah English, who apologizes for using her own words when memory and notes fail.

Paul Atterbury began to study Victorian culture as a young man, when all things from that period had sunk to a low point in cultural esteem. It represented everything that 20th Century people thought they were not: excessive, greedy, domineering and jingoist. Yet, Paul found the era enticing. As a child, he often confronted the artifacts of the Victorian period, and he found them ingenious. "Who were these people?" he asked himself. "Who would make such remarkable machines? Who would design such intriguing things?" In the 1960's, he became aware of Majolica, and found it to be the quintessential Victorian art form.

Victorian taste was so reviled by succeeding generations, that for many decades, it was considered a period best forgotten. People in the 20th Century rejected Victorian mores, and decried the arrogance of cultural hegemony. The Victorian period had become an ugly embarrassment in the history of modern culture.

Modern, fashionable people considered it maudlin, moralistic, vulgar and overblown. Perhaps worst of all, Victorian art was deemed revivalist. Modernist critics saw Victorian artworks as imitations of older styles and meager copies of earlier designs. They cited sculpture and painting, which demonstrated a clear reverence for the art of earlier periods.

They missed the point. Victorians were cultural omnivores. Because of the Industrial Revolution, people at last had the time and money to think about things beyond the daily struggle for food and shelter. With Britain's global economic and social dominance, trade became a huge business, and those at home saw the great variety of ideas and art that came from exotic places. Furthermore, citizens visited these far-flung regions and brought back tales and artifacts. All this new information rushed in at a dizzying pace. It would have been impossible to make sense of it all, or to sort out this new information with any hierarchy of relevance.

In addition to trade's impact, technology added to the zeitgeist of chaos. New inventions appeared every day. Life changing advancements occurred in nearly all fields of science and engineering.

Concurrently, the British began to examine their own society, and found some of it wanting. Victorian art was moralistic. Artists were no longer dependent on a

system of aristocratic patronage, so they had no limits to their choice of subject matter. They began practicing Realism for the first time. Its purpose was to bring society's failings to light, and in this way, became political art. In fact, the "maudlin" pictures were evidence of the artists' moral imperative to make the world a better place. The artists' efforts were matched by those of the reformers. A crop of utopian plans for the eradication of poverty and disease appeared. Societies devoted to good works abounded.

20th Century critics failed to grasp the social context of Victorian art. They did not understand that the complexities of that period demanded a complex response. Modernism's canon of aesthetics demanded purity of form. This was in rebellion against the excesses of the 19th Century. The new ideal was to strip meaning to its essence, to reject anything but that which perceived as elemental truth.

The truth is that the excessiveness of Victorian art was appropriate for its disorderly and multi-layered world. Victorians found all the new ideas equally compelling. They were proud to learn about other cultures, and about other periods in history. Finding many things to emulate, they emulated them all. A reference to earlier artwork served as proof of sophistication while also providing subject matter. One could argue that this layering of arts' historical references is really the grand subject of Victorian art.

Majolica was no exception, or maybe it was the most flamboyant example of this multi-layered, source-stealing approach to art. Appropriation of older designs has always been commonplace in decorative art. Art history shows a progression of new art growing from the old. There is almost never an important artistic statement that is without reference to an earlier source.

We who live in the 21st Century have been taught that the period around the turn of the 20th Century was the great flowering of originality. However, if you look at the development of Impressionism in France, for example, you can see there is no single painting that represents the break from 'traditional' realism. What we think of as a radical shift in fine art was actually born of a long process of examination and practice. This observation also applies to decorative art. Artists ask, "How do we say what characterizes us? What defines us as we are today?" Should they not also ask, "How can you replicate the past and re-project onto the modern world?" The "borrowing" of artistic references from history precisely defined who the Victorians were.

To understand any art of another time, it is essential to understand the cultural forces that made it happen.

This is something that Modernist critics failed to do when discussing Victorian art. Everything old becomes new again when viewed through the lens of their “own time”.



The Majolica Phenomenon
Paul Atterbury

Assortment of English Majolica, including table wares by Minton and George Jones, and Wedgwood

The Middle Class

The economic significance of the new middle class cannot be overstated. For the first time in history, a consumer-based society began to form. We take this for granted today, but it was a revolutionary concept then.

The members of the middle class were young. They were ambitious, and they were concerned about status. Their homes represented their ability to compete in the new world. There were books written to help the young homeowners pick their way through the mysteries of homemaking and decoration. Charles Eastlake’s, Tips on Household Taste, is an example.

These newly prosperous people were naturally aware of the changes around them. They were keenly interested in Historicism, and in the growing field of Natural History. Art from the East and from Antiquity were very popular. Roman, Greek, Egyptian and Etruscan art appeared in the 19th Century to great fanfare. All of this was fodder for good, middle class taste. It formed a wonderful confusion of design personality.

This was the second great impetus to the emergence of Majolica. There was a need for household goods, of sufficient artistic merit, but affordably produced. The ceramics industry was aptly poised to take advantage of the new market forces.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851 was the first World’s Fair, and it heralded the beginning of a new world. Part of the intended audience was the international market.



Chromolithograph, the Crystal Palace Exterior

British manufacturing had evolved into a modern powerhouse of production. However, a significant focus was the market at home. The enormous hall displayed goods from around the world, and British products consistently rated among the highest in quality.



Slide 3: Engraving, Minton display with life-sized female nude as a water girl, a putto at her feet, and surrounded by pedestal and garden pots, water issuing from the rocky base. Terra cotta figure of Galatea, 1851 Exhibition and designed by A.E. Carrier-Belleuse. (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 218) This ad represents a selection of Minton products at the Crystal Palace.

Over 6,000,000 people went there during the Exhibition’s run. Queen Victoria is said to have

visited every day. She was “amused and informed”. She thought, ‘This is how we are now’. John Ruskin hated the whole thing, but George Elliot exclaimed that the building was a remarkable creation, describing it this way, “the most characteristic thing England has done, other than Shakespeare and the Royal Navy”.

The Crystal Palace Exhibition existed largely for the middle class. Aristocrats already had what they needed for their houses, having inherited generations’ worth of heirlooms. The poor were unable to afford anything new.

Herbert Minton was, of course, instrumental in getting the Exhibition accomplished. He was aware of the commercial opportunity that faced him, and was determined to serve the needs of the new professional class by making new pottery that would appeal to the nouveau riche.

One of the greatest technological advances in Victorian decorative art was the enhanced ability to produce vibrant color; in textiles, in printing, in gardens, and in pottery. The Victorians welcomed the novelty of lavish colors for the brightness they brought to a drab and misty environment. Minton was able to satisfy the craving for color with his new pottery, especially Majolica. It was an important accomplishment; to put several colored glazes on one piece, and firing all the glazes at one time. The pottery became much less expensive to produce, making it affordable for many more households.



Slide 4: George Jones and Minton Majolica, including Triton Candlesticks and Dove Tureen

Slide 5: is a picture of Leon Arnoux in his office. Notice that on his desk there is a platter from China and a St. Porchere candlestick. This is evidence of his use of earlier design forms. Minton recruited Leon Arnoux, a well-known chemist and ceramics painter, who had worked at the Sevres Factory in France. Arnoux, for his part, welcomed the stability and

prosperity of England, and so settled there, eventually recruiting other French talents and contacts.

He also brought with him many design forms and ideas that he had used at Sevres. He was conversant with all kinds of ceramic art, including: Della Robbia, St. Porchiere, Islamic art, Henry II Faience, and Cantagalli maiolica. His design books included all of these.



Slide 5: Left: Photograph of Leon Arnoux at his desk using a protractor. A Chinese stand at his right hand. Right: St. Porchiere candlestick (The Dictionary of Minton)

There were files of drawings. All of art history fed his ideas for Minton products. Some of the new pieces were outright copies of their sources. Later examples began to show something more particularly Victorian. Arnoux began with the idea of Italian-style painted pottery and revised it to make it new.

Leon Arnoux encouraged all the Minton designers to study all periods of decorative art, especially the Renaissance. In this way, he was at the forefront of design education. The Victorian and Albert Museum was new then, and the study of decorative arts through history was a new discipline. Arnoux was poised to take advantage of this great resource.

All this information was posted in the Minton Archives. Today we know the names of some of the designers, but most have been forgotten. The Archives are locked away now, and may be in danger of being lost, or destroyed.

With its mixed sources, the iconography of Majolica is complicated, but there clearly was an intention in the combination of styles. Each piece needs an iconic approach. We must ask ourselves, “What did the designer mean by this?” “Why did he make this piece?” “How do all these ideas come together to form one

modern thought?" We need to know more about the designers and where their ideas came from.



Slide 6: Design pattern executed on the majolica dish painted and made at Minton's according to an inscription on the design by Kirkby".

Paul's Slide 6: is a paper design pattern. "This is the first design for Majolica that was made and was also executed on the majolica dish painted and made at Minton's Manufactory according to an inscription on the design by Thomas Kirkby". (Joan Jones, 200 Years of Minton, p. 135)

Pugin was studying these.

You can see the Palissy influence here. Palissy arrived via France.



Slide 7: Pattern design pages for plates, and then a Minton plate, painted by Leon Arnoux in Maiolica style. (Minton Dictionary p. 316) showing ornate designs with scrolls of putti and Della Robbia fruit.

The artists studied Italian maiolica. At first, they replicated the past, and then they made it their own. Interestingly, the word 'maiolica' did not exist until the 1880's. It developed alongside the word "majolica", as these events took place.



Slide 8: Renaissance design by FW Moody. Monochrome, with a border of human figures, and a central medallion of a heroic style man. The word "Hadrianus and AVC.A.E.LIUS. in the center well.

Here is another example.

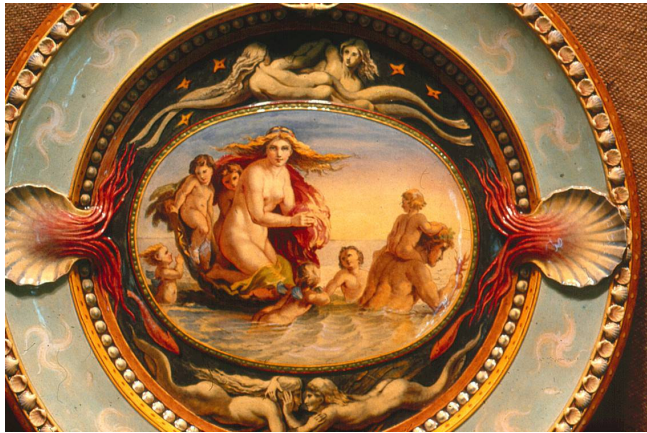


Slide 9: Minton Plaque, one of a pair, after designs by Silas Rice, with portrait of Queen Victoria and Empress Eugenie painted by Thomas Kirkby. They were exhibited at the Paris Exhibition of 1855." (200 Years of Minton, Joan Jones, p. 137)



Slide 10: Plate with maiolica-style painting of peasants in a landscape, showing Italian Renaissance influence.

In addition to Renaissance painting, the designers studied Classicism, Mannerism, and Classical Mythology.



Slide 11: Above: The Lindsay Tray, Minton, designed by Sir Coutts Lindsay and painted by Thomas Allen 1859; below an inset of a Renaissance style medallion of a group with a merman, a female and putti on a waterscape

Slide 11: The Lindsay Tray, Minton, designed by Sir Coutts Lindsay and painted by Thomas Allen 1859; alongside an inset of a Renaissance style medallion of a group with a merman, a female and putti on a waterscape.

Majolica was arrogant, but it was exciting. Brilliant color and dynamic modeling came together in a completely new form. This was a culture searching for a past. The radical transformation of British society had made its traditional history irrelevant. The British had left behind the agrarian paradigm, with its bucolic nostalgia, and traded it for a vibrant global awareness. Britain's national identity had to reflect this change. It had to account for England's naval prowess and its resulting cultural sophistication. Majolica's statements about scale, ambition, and the new world order were perfect communicators of this societal shift.

In finding a way to define themselves, the Victorians pillaged the past, shifting the scale along the way.

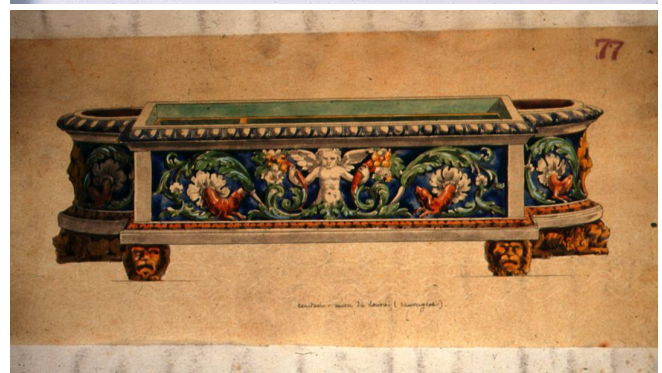
Slide 12: A pattern page of a Classical (Greek) style polychrome urn, with an inset of a Minton urn similarly shaped and with garlands and embraced by a faun.



Slide 12: Right: Pattern page of a Classical (Greek) style polychrome urn. Left: Minton Urn

Here is an example of how the Classical shape is used to form a new idea.

Slide 13: is an example of Della Robbia influence.



Slide 13: Top: Minton's monumental majolica wine cistern, (Sotheby's March 11, 1997, New York, lot 158.). Bottom: an illustration of an earlier Italian style design: with a well at either end, and without the putti on each side

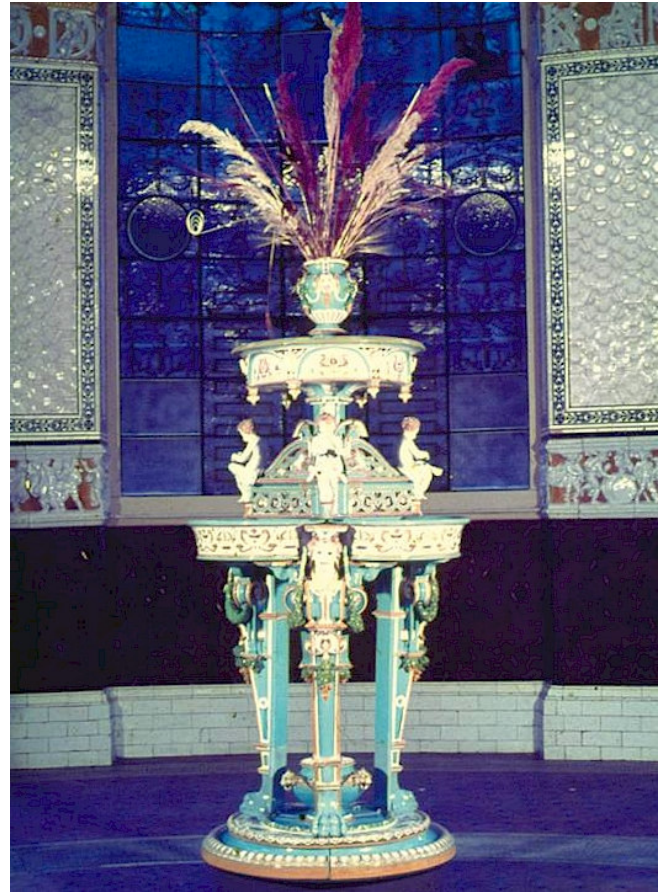
Slide 14: Minton monumental snake handled urn, mottled cobalt (see Joan Jones, 200 years of Minton, p. 139), for "Snake Vase Italian' designed by Alfred

Stevens painted by William Wise. (Exhibited at Paris Exhibition 1878.)



Slide 14: Minton monumental snake handled urn.

Slide 15: "Prometheus Vase" Minton (Victor Simeon) (Majolica, A Complete History and Illustrated Survey, Marilyn G. Karmason, and Joan B. Stacke p. 40). A perfect example of Classicism combined with dynamic modeling and inventive color to make a new form.



Slide 16: Monumental garden ornament, (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 108)

Slide 16: This monumental garden ornament or jardinière was made for the Paris Exhibition of 1855. This is a massive piece. It would have been used in a conservatory.



Slide 15: "Prometheus Vase" Minton



Slides: 17 and 18

Slide 17: Left: Palissy style platter.

Slide 18: Center: an illustration of a Pen Tray, Palissy style, (The Dictionary of Minton p. 244); Minton Majolica dish with molded decoration in the style of Palissy, (p. 123). Palissy influence again.



Slide 19: Minton, Four Continents Jardinières

A literal representation of Victorians' appreciation of the world.



Slide 20: Minton, Majolica version of the "Warwick Vase", 1855 (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 59).

They knew that Antique architecture was polychrome, and they recreated that concept, rebelling against the pristine white of the early and 'tasteful' 19th Century pottery.

Dynamic Modeling



Slide 21

Slide 21: A pair of Minton candelabra with figures in Classical drapery, emblematic of Night and Day, each

with a putto at each side. The candleholders are in naturalistically molded green. A.E. Carrier Belleuse, designer. A heron and pike ewer, Hughes Protat, Minton. (200 Years of Minton, Joan Jones, p. 132)



Slide 22

Slide 22: Minton, Bacchanalian group of putti with a goat, along with a putto with a cart. (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 143)



Slide 23

Slides 23: Minton lidded Tower jug and Slide 24 of the Revelers' Jug, with the jug detail of seated man in peasant dress on Slide 25.

Sometimes they returned to the nostalgic view of an earlier England. These jugs refer to the revelry tradition characterized by the English pub.



Slides 24 & 25 with Detail of Man



Slide 26: Design page for the Wedgwood "Caterer's Jug".

Slide 27: Why is this seat called the Ruben's Garden Seat? Did one of these ever appear in a Reubens painting? What was the thinking behind this? Who thought of making ceramic furniture? Why did they have these ideas?



Slide 27: Wedgwood, watercolor design page of the Ruben Garden Seat

Slide 28: Minton Japanese inspired garden seat, with relief molded flowers and birds in Eastern style. (200 Years of Minton, p. 146). This is a garden seat with distinctly Asian influence.



Slide 28: Minton Garden Seat

Slide 29: An auction page of Asian inspired majolica pieces, Minton: A group of Majolica Chinese Bottles', along with a Minton 'Chinaman Teapot', a Minton Monkey Tea pot and a Minton "Japanese Boat (see Joan Jones, p. 157)



Slide 29

Asian art was important. The Victorians confused Japanese art with Chinese, but it didn't matter. They were happy to merge both styles.



Slide 30

Slide 30: A George Jones cachepot and two candlesticks in cobalt, in the Egyptian style, Sphinx pattern. Egyptian art was another design source.



Slide 31: (compared to the 1851 ad of Slide #3)

Slide 31: Allows us to compare the Minton Jardinière and Under Plate in the Fern and Foxglove pattern with the 1851 Minton Ad. Naturalism is extremely important influence, and it is used in many pieces. The exotic world was fascinating to them. There was mystery in the natural history of far away places.



Slide 32: Minton Hare and Bird Game Tureen

Slide 32: Minton Hare and Bird Game Tureen was meant to be functional ware, so there is always an aspect of 'fitness of purpose'. This is a game dish, meant for serving hare, presumably. Its use is described by its form.



Slide 33: Minton Asparagus Cradle

Slide 33: The middle class had disposable income and could afford to buy specialized items. Here is an asparagus server. Asparagus is in season only three or four weeks a year. Once the season was over, the server would be placed in the cabinet until the next year when asparagus was available again. Now, one could afford to keep a dish that was only used a short time, and could also afford space to store it away.



Slide 34: A selection of Minton Oyster plates.

Slide 34: Oysters were not the luxury they are today. They constituted a large part of a poor man's diet, but in the middle class home, they merited their own serve ware.



Slide 35: Minton Shape Book pages

Slide 35: Two pages from the Minton shape book, with photographs of blank wares, including: Oyster plates, table servers, a bow-waisted garden seat and the Fish Tureen. The Minton shape book, which holds a photographic record of all the shapes Minton ever put into production. It is buried somewhere in the Minton archives, and the archives are the subject of a bitter custody battle. Meanwhile, no one knows whether or not the pages are still together, or if they have suffered some kind of damage. This is an extremely important resource, and someone should rescue it.



Slide 36: Twin Dolphin and Nautilus shell Compote, along with a Minton Blow fish Teapot

Slide 36: Fantasy appears in many forms and is an important component of Majolica. This teapot is a fish form that clearly is from imagination. Asian inspired.

Slide 37: This jardinière shows fishes floating above the water lilies and below the birds, in clear defiance

of the normal way of things. Who dreamed this up? What need did it satisfy?



Slide 37: Holdcroft, Cobalt fish Jardinière and under plate, with cherry blossoms, birds and water lily

Slide 38: Minton Melon Teapot, Log and Mushroom sugar bowl, and matching teacup with saucer. All set on a Minton revolving sandwich tray, designed in Neo-Gothic style by Pugin.



Slide 38: Assortment of Minton Tea elements

There was a tradition of making things that looked like other things. This tea service of a melon teapot, and log shaped sugar bowl, all on a Pugin tray is an example of forms made from other things. These are nonsense associations. This is tradition found in Meissen.

SLIDE 39: There was fitness of purpose, but it wasn't always practical. This Minton archive page shows a teapot made of a vulture wrestling a snake. By the time the tea arrives at the spout's end, it will be cold.



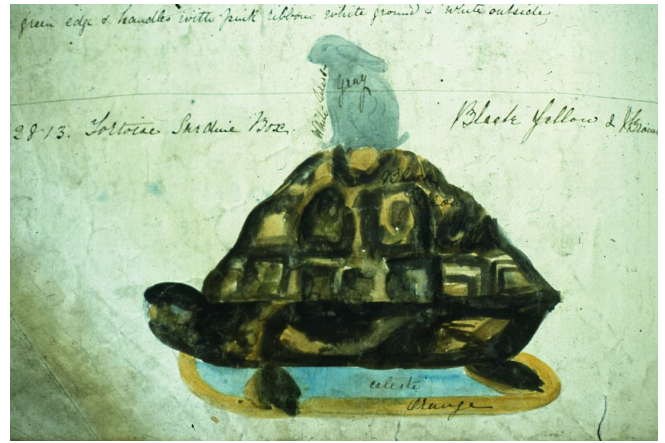
Slide 39: Minton pattern book page, including Vulture teapot, and a facing pair of Cockatoo figures



Slide 40: Watercolor pattern for "Gypsy" strawberry service (the "Kate Greenaway" pattern)

Slide 40: Here is the pattern for a strawberry service made in the pattern of a straw hat. What a bizarre concept! Why? And why is it called the "Gypsy" pattern?

Slide 41: A pattern in watercolor, of a Minton sardine box, with a tortoise and an upright rabbit as the finial. Here a rabbit rides a tortoise, which forms a sardine box. The logic defeats me.



Slide 41: Tortoise and Rabbit Sardine Box

Slide 42: A group of four Minton Majolica tiles. Tiles were an important product for use in public spaces. They are in the Queen's Dairy and in railway stations, among other places.



Slide 42: Four examples of Minton Tiles

Slide 43: A slide showing some of the diversity in the table wares, with Minton and Wedgwood items.



Slide 43: Wedgwood and Minton tablewares

There were other things besides tablewares. This Minton garden seat refers to the public discourse on the "Origin of the Species", which had been published shortly before. If you sit on the garden seat, you're making a statement on the controversy.



Slide 44: Minton Monkey Garden Seat

common subjects. This one has a base that comes from a 17th Century metal work source. The figure's costume is in the style of the 18th Century, with his lace-up boots.

Slide 46: A Minton monumental Garden Pedestal, or Centerpiece, Renaissance style, with four scrolled legs and satyr masks. Who would have thought of pottery furniture? This plant stand would have gone into a conservatory. Conservatories had become popular.



Slide 46: A Minton monumental Garden Pedestal, or Centerpiece, Renaissance style, with four scrolled legs and satyr masks.



Slide 45: Left, Design on paper for a gasolier to be manufactured in Majolica in 1865, (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 117). Right, a life size Male Blackamoor by Minton

Scale was an important component of Majolica. Here is giant gasolier, and a life-sized Blackamoor. Blackamoor figures have many sources, and they were



Slide 47: Minton pedestal of elephant form, photograph, 1885 (Minton Dictionary, p.78)

Slide 48: Illustration showing the St. George Fountain, designed by John Thomas and made in majolica in 1862. (The Dictionary of Minton, p. 117)

This is the St. George Fountain. It has been dismantled. We can assume that some parts of it no longer exist. What an extraordinary accomplishment!



Slide 48: St. George and the Dragon Fountain

Majolica is important because it displays the excitement, the arrogance, the creativity, and the insanity of the Victorians. They were proud of their accomplishments and their brazenness says, "I made this because I can."

Majolica was a radically new form and became so popular that it soon appeared all over the globe. Majolica helped change the way people thought about their own world. It represents the Victorians in the way that 18th Century porcelain represents its own time.

Victorian art is not easy to study or categorize. Its design is a jumble, anarchic. The taste is vulgar. Today, we are burdened with post-Victorian concepts, and reject that which does not conform to the 'tasteful' art rules of later times. The twin stains of

appropriation and vulgarity insured that succeeding generations would dismiss it.

There is a prejudice against the decorative arts of this period because of all these reasons. Yet, they are precisely the reasons Majolica should be studied. To understand the art of any period, it is essential to understand the forces that made that art speak to its constituency. Victorians have been misunderstood for all of the 20th Century because people haven't stopped to consider what they were about. We see them with our own biases, which are of our time, not theirs. We impose our tastes on their art and condemn it for failing to meet our standards.

What conventional wisdom fails to see is that Majolica is the single most important ceramic form developed in the 19th Century. Nothing else comes close to describing a society in turmoil better than this.

Majolica's defamation came early on. In 1906 the brothers, G.W. and F.A. Rhead published *Staffordshire Pots and Potters*. These self-appointed arbiters of taste, after excoriating Arnoux for his lack of creativity (while grudgingly acknowledging his skills as a chemist), turned to the St George Fountain and pronounced it, "a magnificent failure; poor in design and possessing none of the fine qualities of the productions of Della Robbia and his schools". Soon after that, Modern art began to take hold and Majolica was forgotten.

It seemed to vanish until the 1960's. Then, there were people around the world who were independently rediscovering it. Ceramics authors began seriously researching Majolica in the 60's. In the 1970's, Paul approached publishers about a book of Majolica and was turned down, because of that subject's unpopularity. The first books were not published until the 1980's.

It is collectors who have assembled most of the information about Majolica. They have done a lot of work, but it is an effort of love. They are not professional art or ceramics historians. There has been almost no academic work done on the subject. Professional scholars need to get involved. Much original material is threatened with destruction. The Minton Archive is a perfect example. If we don't act quickly, we may never be able to retrieve valuable papers that would help us learn more about the period.

We need to study Majolica and other Victorian art because there is so much that we don't know about the Victorian psyche. This is how we can begin to make sense of it. The whole of the Victorian period has been

slighted. We can't make any headway by continuing to talk about the same things forever. It is time to look at the Victorian period and give it its due. It has been dismissed for its failure to conform to the taste of the 20th Century, which is an invalid judgment in any case. The Victorian era was messy, chaotic and hard to define, but those who love Majolica are beginning to recognize its significance in the time line of art history.

It's not genteel. It's not tasteful. Sometimes people act as if they are afraid of it. But we are going to learn more about it. We are the Barbarians at the gate.

Did We Know?

Bethesda Terrace and Arcade, NYC

Members – there is a Victorian treasure that you should put on your calendar while your in New York City in May 2009. The Minton Tiles of the Central Park Bethesda Terrace Passageway. A story of the tiles follows.

In their 1858 plan for Central Park, designers Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux proposed an architectural "open air hall of reception" for the area that was both incorporated into nature and, at the same time, the architectural centerpiece of the Park.



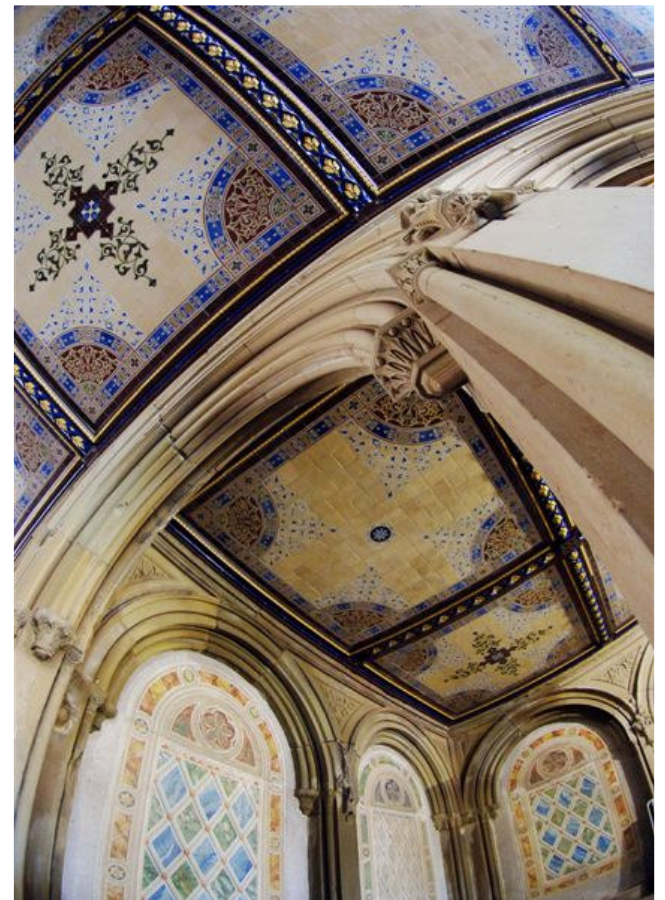
Drawing plan of the Bethesda Terrace and Fountain

Bethesda Terrace, which was completed in 1869, was one of the first structures built in the park. The Terrace consists of three main areas located on two separate levels: the Upper Terrace flanking the 72nd Street Cross Drive, the Lower Terrace surrounding the Bethesda Fountain and abutting the Lake, and the Arcade, which serves as a pedestrian passageway, running beneath the 72nd Street Cross Drive to the Lower Terrace. The Arcade features one central passageway and two side loggias. It is accessed from the northern end of the elm-lined mall by a flight of stairs.

Designed by Vaux and his chief assistant, architect Jacob Wrey Mould, the Arcade's Minton tile ceiling is made up of 15,876 elaborately patterned encaustic tiles. The tiles were handmade by Minton and Company, a leading 19th century ceramic manufacturer in Stokes-on-Trent, England.



Pedestrian passageway, running beneath the 72nd St. Cross Drive, with Victorian Minton tiles, in 2007



Ceiling detail of how a few of the 49 tiles sections fit together

The Arcade's ceiling is divided into 49 panels, each panel containing 324 tiles. Each panel features repeated stylized floral motifs and geometrical forms in earth tones, cobalt, and forest green. There are two distinct panel designs that differ only in their central

medallion—25 panels bear a small central rosette medallion and 24 panels bear a large pinwheel medallion.

The tile panels were removed from the Arcade and put into storage in the early 1980s because their backing plates were severely corroded due to water infiltration. To restore the tiles, the Conservancy employed a team of seven conservation technicians who cleaned and repaired about 14,000 original tiles by hand. Only three panels of new tiles—approximately ten percent of the ceiling—were needed to replace those that were too damaged to repair. These new tiles are being manufactured by hand in England by Maw and Company, Minton's successor, and will be placed in the east loggia.



Ceiling Detail of one of the 49 tile compositions



Ceiling Detail of one of the 49 tile compositions

Please send your comments and material
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Heavenly Hutch

By Kathy Duane

In 1987, I chose a lovely wallpaper for the kitchen of our new home. It was a "fern" pattern on an eggshell background. The ferns were not the traditional color green, but pastel pink and aqua. Unbeknownst to me at the time, the purchase of that wallpaper would be the instigator of what would become a twenty year obsession.

At the same time, I had also purchased a new hutch for the kitchen. It obviously needed to be filled with something. I unknowingly started my collection of "Majolica" with the purchase of a small plate from an antique shop for \$40. It had two large leaves on its bumpy surface. Amazingly, one was pink and one was aqua! They were an exact match to my wallpaper, only the colors were more vivid. Perfect!!!

Ultimately, that hutch became an excuse for my ever growing need to find and purchase more of those pretty pink and aqua dishes. I soon discovered that the plates had a name - Majolica. I had never heard of it before and could find little about it, anywhere. I finally located two small paperbacks about the "pottery" - Majolica Pottery by Mariann K. Marks, 1989, and her 1990 book, second series, Majolica Pottery..... and, an obsession was born. The pieces were beautiful and fun and I wanted more!

Fast forward to today. We moved from that original house in 1994, and I designed and built this current home's kitchen around my one hundred-fifty pieces of pink and aqua majolica.

You'll see that I now have two kitchen hutches, a large display area above my main sink and walls covered with Majolica. I also created, and photographed, two large "still life's" of my favorite pieces and had hand-painted tiles created from those photos for the kitchen backsplashes.

My collecting, as I'm sure most of you have experienced, has not stopped with my hutch or even with the kitchen. It also now includes my sun porch and a bedroom with a few additional pieces sprinkled throughout my home.

Who would have ever imagined that an empty hutch would change my life and give me a wonderful twenty-year adventure too!



Kathy's the hand painted backsplash tiles are on either side of the cottage canisters at the bottom



Kathy's pink and aqua majolica



More of Kathy's Collection

Majolica Wine

Winery: Podere Castorani; €7.95 a bottle.
Types of grapes: 100% Montepulciano d'Abruzzo.

Geographical: province of Pescara.
Country: Italy.

Characteristics of the vineyards:
This special selection of the grapes is completed in the traditional overhead trellis system "pergola" of Abruzzo region. The grapes are harvested by hand in the first half of October for accurate grape selection. Aged for about 5-6 months with 30% of the wine in oak barrels and 70% of the wine in vats.

Advices: Ruby red color with violet reflections. It has intense aromas of red fruits with light hints of spices and "boise." Medium bodied to the palate, mature tannins, and notes of spices and "boise" with a mature fruit finish. Enjoy it, if you find it!

