

The Metropolitan
Museum of Art
Bulletin

Winter 1998/99





*European Decorative Arts
at the World's Fairs:
1850—1900*

Charlotte Gere

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Director's Note

We are honored to have as author of this *Bulletin* the distinguished British historian of nineteenth-century jewelry and interior design, Charlotte Gere. After being invited to write it, Mrs. Gere discovered that a number of the Metropolitan Museum's objects were made for display at the world's fairs held in London, Paris, and Vienna from the mid-nineteenth century to 1900. More than mere venues for nationalist pride and displays of technical virtuosity, the fairs were a major force in the dissemination of new ideas in design and production. Entries that won medals at these exhibitions were acknowledged masterpieces in their day. Thus a selection of prizewinners owned by the Metropolitan Museum was deemed a thoroughly appropriate way to highlight in this publication the best of our European nineteenth-century decorative objects.

Until recently, the Museum's holdings in this field would have appeared too meager to warrant a *Bulletin*. True, the Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts had conserved remarkable gifts of specialized collections such as the Venetian glass assembled by James Jackson Jarves, given in 1881, and the cameos that came from Milton Weil in 1939 and 1940. But active, systematic collecting only started in the 1980s, coinciding with the reawakening of international interest in this material. The purchase of certain spectacular works came about thanks to prescient donors including Jayne Wrightsman and Frank Richardson. Mention must be made of the department's devoted band of supporters, the Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, and also of Robert Isaacson for key purchases of ceramics, glass, and metalwork.

Recognizing the need to exhibit these collections permanently, in 1991 we opened the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Galleries of Nineteenth-Century European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, which afford both a comprehensive survey and a sense of the interrelationships between sculpture and the decorative arts. The galleries are yet another demonstration of the extraordinary generosity of the Cantors, who had already made possible several major exhibition spaces throughout the building.

The some four hundred objects on view in the Cantor galleries, spanning the period from the Restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in 1815 to the flowering of Art Nouveau around 1900, are arranged to facilitate the study of the various art-historical trends that flourished during the century. Some groupings illustrate different styles within the same category, such as porcelains or medals; others are grouped to emphasize stylistic phenomena, such as Gothic Revival or Renaissance Revival, in various media. Several departments have contributed works that augment and elucidate the holdings of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts. In a similar spirit, our author has drawn upon the Museum's collections of photographs, prints, textiles, and even American glass, to recapture the heady progress of the decorative arts during the period of the great fairs.

Philippe de Montebello
Director

Note to the reader: Minton changed its name to Mintons in 1873. In captions only objects from before 1873 are by Minton. In text "Mintons" has been used throughout.

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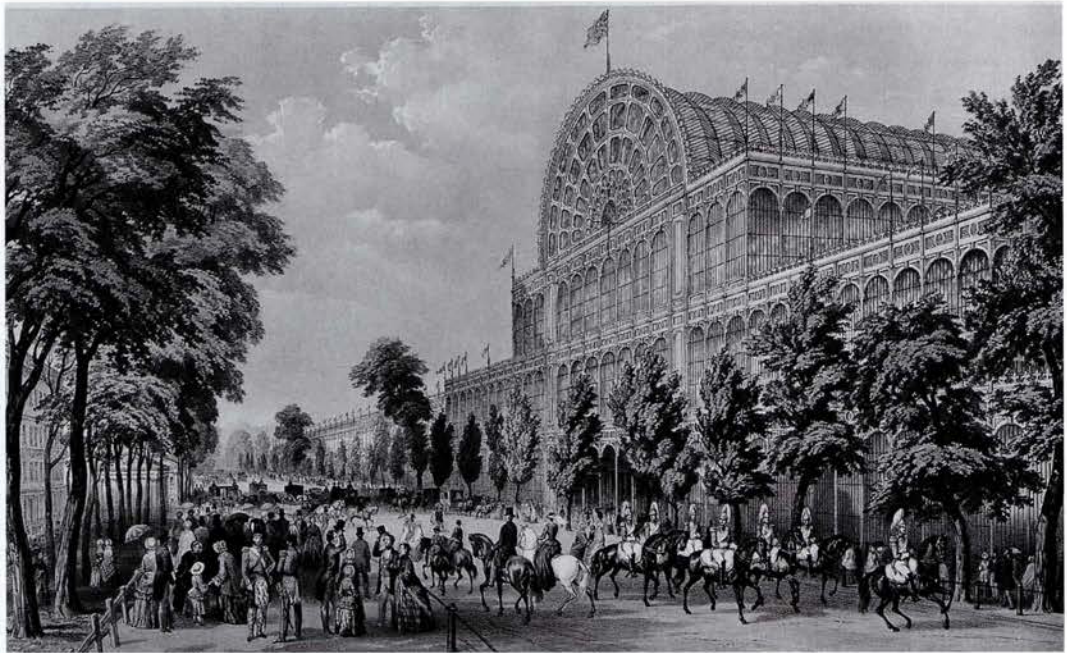
Front cover: Lucien Falize, designer, French, 1839-1897. Clock, 1881. See page 47. Inside front cover: Joseph Nash, British, 1808-1878. *The Mediaeval Court at the Great Exhibition* (detail). Dated 1852. See page 18. Back cover: William Morris, designer, British, 1834-1896. "Honeysuckle" printed linen. After 1876. See page 37.

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Introduction

Fig. 1. View of south side of the Crystal Palace of 1851. Lithograph from *The Park and the Crystal Palace: A Series of Seven Picturesque Views Drawn by Phillip Brannon*, London, 1851. 11 1/8 x 18 3/4 in. (28.3 x 47.6 cm). Rogers Fund, 1962 (62.602.292 [7])



The task of selecting sixty works for publication from among the riches of the Metropolitan's nineteenth-century European decorative arts collections proved difficult, and indeed it would have been impossible without a theme to guide and restrain the choice. Superb technical virtuosity and panache evident throughout the Museum's holdings prompted the selection. The thread linking these works is that they were acknowledged masterpieces—many of them prize medal winners—shown at world's fairs, from the London Great Exhibition in 1851 to the Paris Centennial Exposition in 1900.

It is a measure of their importance that so many of these pieces found their way into the Museum, because this aspect of their history was not the primary reason for acquiring them, simply an extra bonus in the search for exemplary nineteenth-century European decorative art. In fact the appreciation of Victorian high style, with its emphasis on sophisticated technique and revivalist inspiration, is a comparatively recent development.

These pieces were exhibited as expressions of the highest possible skill and artistic taste, but only in the present day have they enjoyed the credit they

deserve, in their own terms or in historical perspective. Rehabilitation has been slow and painful and the unpredictable process of rediscovery arbitrary. In the 1920s it was fashionable to regard the domestic taste of the Victorians as a huge joke, and to prize, for example, wax fruit, shellwork flowers, Staffordshire figures and dogs, glass paperweights, and velvet-upholstered and fringed furniture above the products of a serious commitment to design reform and the improvement of industrially manufactured goods.

In England the main culprits were aesthetic undergraduates at Oxford University, their ring-leader the Italian-born historian and dilettante Harold Acton, who chose to live for a year while he was up at Oxford in the Ruskinian Venetian Gothic Meadow Buildings, which could then—1922—easily have won a prize for the ugliest structure in the city and was quite untypical of the classical beauties of his college, Christ Church. Acton filled his rooms with bric-a-brac in an elaborate tease against all the influential Modernists with whom he came in contact and, as Evelyn Waugh pointed out, “to scandalise parents who had themselves thrown out the wax-flowers

Fig. 2. Walter Crane, British, 1845–1915. *My Lady's Chamber*, frontispiece to *The House Beautiful*, by Clarence Cook, New York, 1878. Planographic print (?), 6 7/8 x 4 in. (17.5 x 10.2 cm). Gift of Elizabeth and Katharine Beebe, 1942 (42.50.1)

The first book of guidance in matters of decoration and design, *Hints on Household Taste*, by Charles Eastlake, was published in England in 1868. Consisting of a collection of articles written for *The Cornhill Magazine* and *The Queen* in the mid-1860s, the volume circulated widely in the United States—establishing a mode of furniture design called the “Eastlake” style—even before publication of the first American edition in 1878. American authors were quick to see the attractions of similar decorating manuals to an expanding and progressively prosperous consumer class. Clarence Cook’s volume, like Eastlake’s, originated in a series of articles, and was almost as popular as Eastlake’s enormously influential book.

Cook was a brilliant pioneering journalist and art critic, who had studied architecture and landscape design with A. J. Downing and Calvert Vaux. Although he did not practice architecture, his training was reflected in his critical opinions. For this lavishly produced volume, Cook chose the English illustrator and designer Walter Crane to draw the frontispiece. Crane had a powerful American patron in Catherine Lorillard Wolfe, but this commission probably reflected his standing in the United States following his success at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.

and woolwork screens which we now ardently collected.” An aura of mockery still lingers around the hugely commercially successful objects dedicated to the artistic embellishment of the Victorian home (figs. 2,3).

From the 1930s scholars like Nikolaus Pevsner mapped a path through nineteenth-century design, leading toward Modernism. As the destina-

tion was pared-down functional form, the highly wrought historicism of the exhibition masterpiece had no role to play. This approach gave prominence to innovators like Michael Thonet, for his bentwood furniture (see p. 33), and to Christopher Dresser, for his undecorated metalwork pieces and Japanese or Persian-inspired ceramics (p. 28), but neither set out intentionally to produce avant-

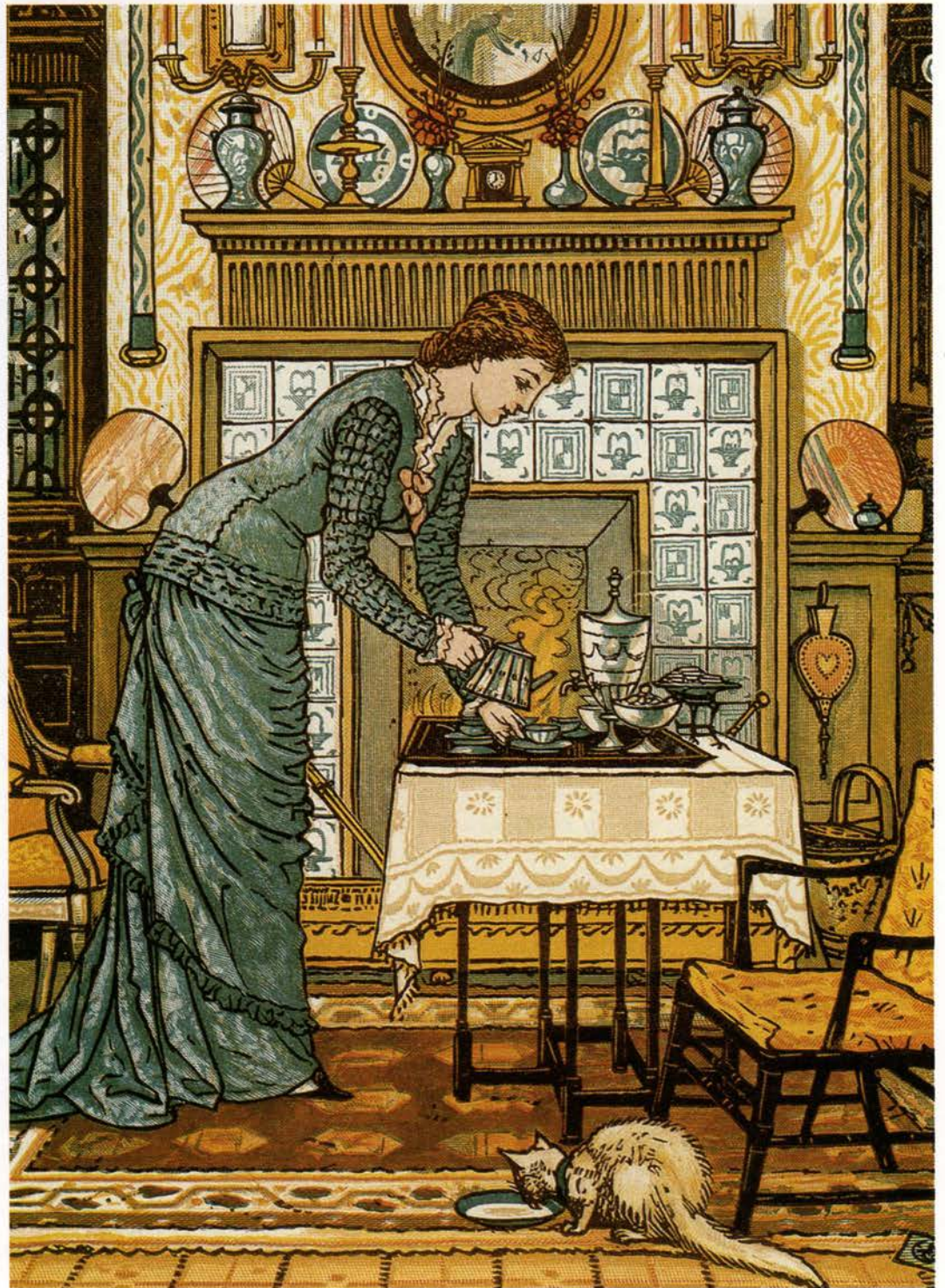




Fig. 3. Detail of floral pole-screen panel. English, ca. 1860. Beadwork and petit point, looped beadwork fringe, l. 21 1/2 in. (54.5 cm). Anonymous Gift, 1949 (49-32-43)

This embroidered banner on an adjustable pole was used as a fire screen and could be raised or lowered to protect the face.

Initiatives toward improving the design of such domestic artifacts were aimed at a public that was bent on filling every nook and cranny of their homes with "artistic" embellishments, many the result of intensive labor by women. Embroidery was practiced to a very high standard, and pieces like this beaded pole-screen panel represent an enormous investment in time and effort.

garde designs, merely cheaply manufactured alternatives to what they saw as a misguided enthusiasm for ornament.

There is no question that these men were highly appreciated in their own time: Thonet's most famous chair, the minimal and economical model no. 14, developed about 1855, sold 7.3 million by 1891. Firms imitating Thonet's practical lightweight inventions were quickly established in the United States. For example, the Henry I. Seymour Chair Manufactory, Troy, New York, founded in 1851, had patented a Thonet-style bentwood chair by 1870 (fig. 5), the year after Thonet's worldwide patent expired. Dresser was employed as a designer by some sixty manufacturers of domestic wares across the whole range of home furnishings and decoration. These are serious success stories in terms of contemporary estimation of talent.

One of the heroes of Pevsner's proto-Modernism was William Morris, no great innovator in design (pp. 27, 37), but his importance was to pro-

vide a coherent "look," through the agency of a successful decorating business that enshrined the ideals of Prince Albert in his great venture, the 1851 Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations. The prince's brief, on the artistic front at least, was to improve the quality of industrially manufactured goods and educate the taste of the domestic consumer.

"The Victorians were a highly civilized people who were endowed with much sense and sensibility, who thought they were living in one of the great periods of British art." This was the conclusion of Luke Val Fildes, son and biographer of the successful realist and portrait painter and elected Royal Academician Luke Fildes. He was referring to the art of painting, but his statement is equally applicable to the decorative arts, which have never before or since been the subject of such wide-ranging and intense debate. The second half of the nineteenth century was truly a period of ascendancy, and because of the political and social

Fig. 4. Thonet, Vienna, New York City branch. Bentwood side chair, model no. 378, ca. 1905–10. Rosewood. Purchase, 1917 (1978.300.1)



Fig. 5. Henry I. Seymour Chair Manufactory, American (Troy, New York), 1851–85. Bentwood chair, 1870–78. Hickory and ash, h. 36 in. (91.4 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. I. Wistar Morris III, 1984 (1984.448.2)



significance of the world's fairs, national products were the concern of emperors, kings, queens, presidents, and princes, eager to see their nation's prestige enhanced.

It is hard to overstate the role of the fairs in utilizing and popularizing the fruits of mechanical and technical progress. In brief, they could not have existed without the newly developed transportation systems on sea and land, principally the railways. Print, too, was to assume a great importance. In 1851 illustrated periodicals were still a relatively new phenomenon, but the laborious and often crude methods of production were deployed with hardly less effect than the sophisticated technology of the present day, and to an avidly interested and impressionable audience. The buildup of reporting, with pictures of the huge crates containing exhibits piled on railway platforms and awaiting shipment across the Channel, created an atmosphere of tense expectation. The undertaking for more distant exhibitors was so formidable that miscalculations were inevitable, and neither the United States nor Russia had completed their displays for the Great Exhibition in time for its opening.

However, the public was, on the whole, not

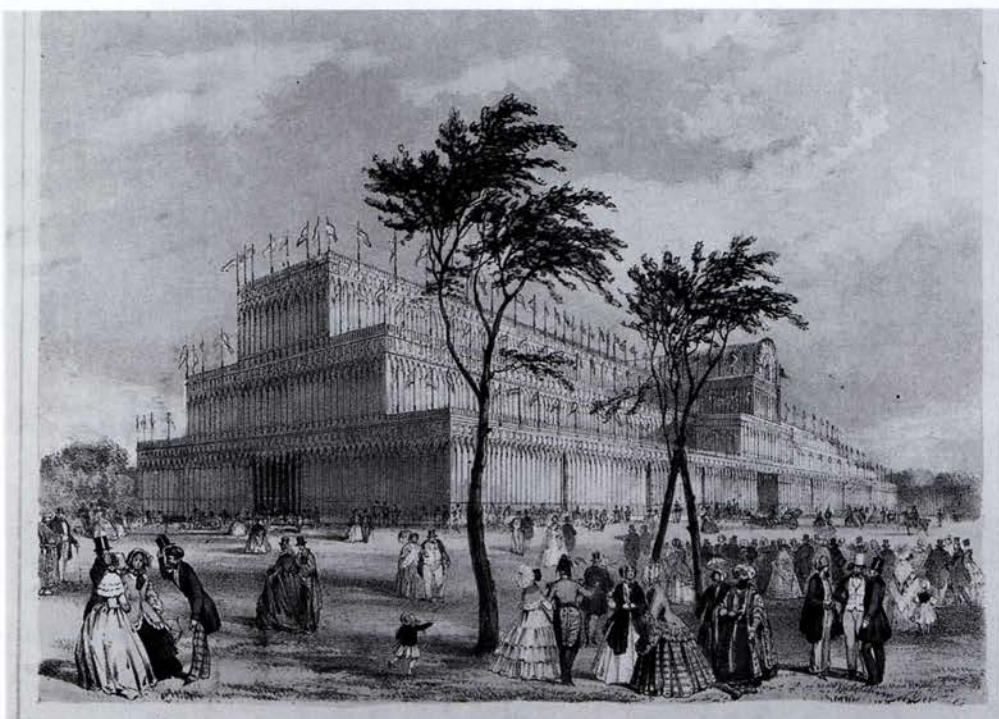
disappointed. Queen Victoria poetically expressed the general reaction to the installation in its giant glass hall, aptly named the Crystal Palace and not unlike a vast conservatory—to which it was compared by the critic John Ruskin, among others: “We went up into the Gallery, and the sight of it from there into all the Courts, full of all sorts of objects of art, manufacture etc., had quite the effect of fairyland.”

Official Reports and other publications—notably the “Illustrated Catalogue” in *The Art Journal*—were important both to the contemporary promotion of the wares and to our present-day understanding of mid-nineteenth-century culture, as well as for providing a vast compendium of consumer goods (fig. 8). The 1851 fair generated an enormous record of itself; the bibliography is awe-inspiring, running to many hundreds of titles. Some contemporaries regarded this as a valuable and lasting result of the ephemeral exhibition, in providing the material for future assessment of that point of development. Although much of the commentary is wordy and self-congratulatory, the study of these sources has resulted in an extraordinarily revealing picture of nineteenth-century sensibilities and aspirations.

The Great Exhibition marked the beginning of an international movement. That it took place in London gave Britain a preeminent place in the history of world's fairs. Never before had people and goods converged on such a vast scale, but in retrospect it was actually quite modest. In some respects it came about by historical accident, not as an inevitable reflection of Britain's leading industrial position in the world. Rightly, France should have seized this initiative, having had a

long history of trade fairs, and with a model for promoting national products in the post-Revolutionary exhibition held in 1797. This was mounted in order to dispose of products of the former royal manufactories of ceramics, tapestries, and carpets. In spite of all subsequent embellishments and the nationalistic and political overtones of later exhibitions, expansion of markets remained the essential focus of these events.

By the middle of the nineteenth century



THE
GREAT EXHIBITION POLKA,
 1851,
 FOR THE
Piano Forte.
 COMPOSED & DEDICATED TO
 HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
PRINCE ALBERT,
 BY
FRANK B. TUSSAUD.

ENT. STA. HALL.

LONDON, DUFF & MODGSON, 65. OXFORD ST.

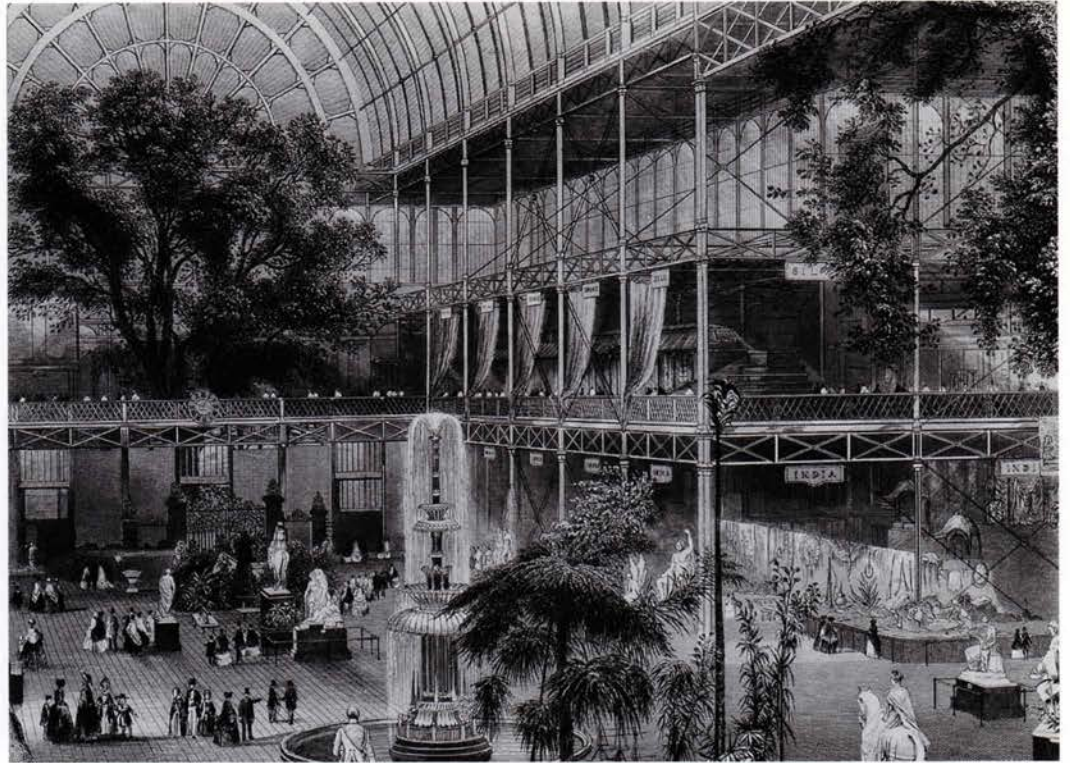
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Fig. 6. Sheet music cover, "The Great Exhibition Polka." London, 1851. Color lithograph, 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (34.6 x 24.8 cm). Purchase, Myra Carter Church Bequest, 1958 (58.545.18)

From the first, exhibitions generated a mass of souvenirs, not least of which were in the popular field of sheet music to be played in the home. In America "A World's Fair Polka" by William Vincent Wallace, also with the Crystal Palace on the cover, was speedily issued by a New York publisher. Opening ceremonies were celebrated with musical compositions, such as the "Imperial Cantata" by Hector Berlioz, for the Paris 1867 Exposition, the most profitable commission of his career. The *New York Tribune* described Richard Wagner's "Centennial Inauguration March," for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, as "perhaps one of the most original things Wagner has written since *Tristan*."

Fig. 7. Interior of the Crystal Palace of 1851, from the transept looking south. British, 1851. Wood engraving after a daguerreotype, 5 7/8 x 7 7/8 in. (14.9 x 20 cm). Transfer from the Library, 1921 (21.36.194)

Here we see the aerial view that moved Queen Victoria to compare the Crystal Palace to "fairyland."



the search for new markets had become an urgent necessity for all industrially developed nations, since technology had so hugely increased productivity that it far outstripped the demands of a comparatively small consumer base. The ability to supply goods in such quantity was, in effect, a solution looking for a problem. Society needed to be educated into expanding the horizons of its aspirations, culturally and domestically, and persuaded into the "conspicuous consumption"—a phrase coined at the end of the century by the American economist Thorstein Veblen—that was a crucial driving force in design developments and patterns of shopping. In a sense, the Industrial Revolution produced both a means and an end, in creating a large and newly prosperous urban population. Much of the developing technology was directed to the furnishing and equipping of middle-class homes. This technology could have relieved domestic drudgery rather than creating it, but there was no incentive in a society endowed with a vast labor force from which to recruit servants.

On the brink of running their own international exhibition, the French hesitated just a little

too long. A number of factors were to blame: fear of foreign competition damaging to French industry, an innate opposition to free trade, and finally the political situation that had in 1848—the Year of Revolutions in Europe—once again thrown the French economy into disarray. Ironically, it was the last in the series of national trade exhibitions in Paris in 1849 that propelled Britain into taking the initiative.

With a head start in industrial development the British could afford to ignore the fact that competitors worldwide would have access to their home markets and to their manufacturing secrets, though a residue of suspicion still lingered in 1851: "Foreigners also came," remarked a correspondent of the London *Times*, "their bearded visages conjuring up all the horrors of Free Trade." The political unrest in France provided another quite unlooked-for advantage to trade competitors overseas, in that many of the most skilled craftsmen fled to find refuge abroad. In Britain the evidence of French taste was most apparent in furniture making, silver-smithing, and ceramics production—Mintons was conspicuous in this respect—but the most beneficial

effects were in the improved manufacturing techniques for wares already unmatched for innovation in design. The French in the United States left a valuable legacy; as the architect A. J. Downing remarked in his *Architecture of Country Houses* (1850),

"there is almost a mania in the cities for expensive French furniture and decorations," and it was probably the large number of French cabinetmakers living in the States in the period 1840-70 who provided these customers with their French-style interiors.



Fig. 8. Ceramic pieces illustrated in "Art Journal Catalogue of 1862 Exhibition," from *The Art Journal*, 1862, p. 126. Thomas J. Watson Library

At the upper left is the Museum's Persian-style bottle (see p. 28). The colors were probably turquoise and gold, as in the example at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Later the range was expanded to pink and gold and coral and gold.

The world's fairs provided an arena in which intense rivalries were fought. Mintons, manufacturers of this bottle, claimed and maintained an important lead in design reform.

Fig. 9. Verdé, Delisle and Company, manufacturer. Lace flounce with a repeating motif of irises. Shown at the Paris International Exposition, 1867. Brussels needle-point (*point-de-gaze*), l. 45 1/2 in. (115.6 cm). Gift of Mrs. Edward S. Harkness, 1943 (43-37.1)



Trimnings of real handmade lace were very expensive prized possessions, and a piece as fine as this may never have been used. Queen Victoria had tried unsuccessfully to revive interest in the Honiton laces, handmade in Devon, with the order for her magnificent wedding flounce, but the craft was already too far gone in the face of competition from machine production. After 1861 she wore the flounce with her mourning dresses for the rest of her life.

As a result of the disappearance of lacemaking by hand on a commercial scale, collecting antique handmade lace became very popular in the late nineteenth century. Pieces such as collars and flounces were purchased to be worn. Exhibition pieces continued to be made, mostly in the form of handkerchief borders, until at least 1900. The Museum owns a number of fine examples.

The 1851 Exhibition set out to achieve the highest aims. Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria and leading instigator of the project, saw a vision of "a living picture of the point of development at which the whole of mankind has arrived . . . and a new starting point from which all nations will be able to direct their further exertions." It was a huge success and can be measured in terms of exhibits, as well as in the numbers of visitors and the vast quantities of food and drink that they consumed. The Great Exhibition was the right event at the right time, and significantly it was one of the very few to show a profit.

From the opening day on May 1 there could be no going back; Dublin and New York both entered the game just two years later in 1853. With hindsight we can identify landmarks pointing to the future: the building for that first New York fair of 1853, which was expected to be a permanent feature of the city, burned down only three years later, but the sight of Elisha Otis triumphantly riding his safety elevator was a vision of skyscrapers to come. By 1855 France at last entered the international fray with an enormous show (p. 23), which, as Napoleon III made plain, was specifically designed to surpass the Great Exhibition.

Political relations between France and Britain, always precarious, were still somewhat uneasily maintained in spite of the Crimean War, and a rueful acceptance by the French of the great influx of English visitors (40,000 out of a total of 130,000 foreigners) is apparent from the notice "English spoken here," which became widespread at this time.

The great success of the 1855 Exposition was largely due to the emperor's personal enthusiasm and intervention. Queen Victoria, on a state visit, was his most important guest, conducted by Napoleon in person and showered with mementos in the form of all the articles she had admired. It was the last fair she could enjoy; by the time of the second International Exhibition in London in 1862, her beloved Albert was dead and she had retreated into a long self-imposed seclusion.

The year 1862 provided the opportunity to correct many of the perceived faults of 1851, and a bigger and better show resulted—so much better, in fact, that Napoleon pressed on fast with a retaliatory fair for France in 1867. This was the culminating shot in the Anglo-French rivalry, which had marked the exhibition scene up to this point; from here on, the aim was to blow a nationalistic trumpet to astound rivals and to entertain the

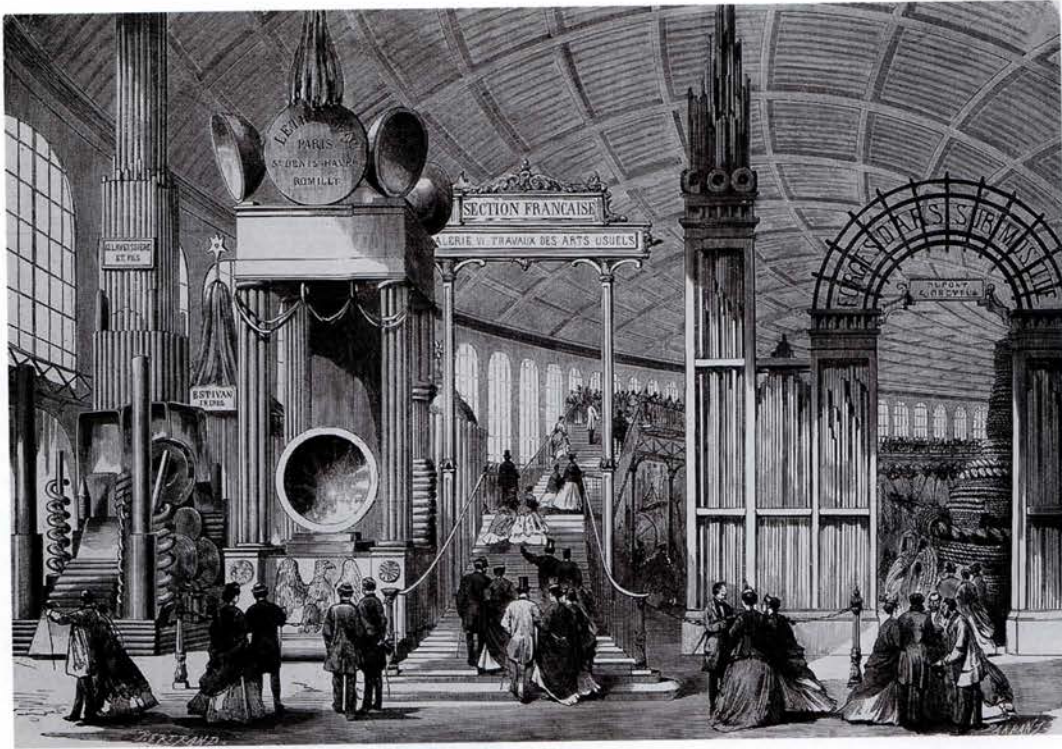


Fig. 10. Entrance to the Gallery of Machines at the Paris International Exposition of 1867. French, 1867. Wood engraving, 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (22.2 x 32.4 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1959 (59,500.691)



Fig. 11. Philip Henry Delamotte, British, 1821–1899. *The Apse under Construction.* Sheet 36 from *The Progress of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, 1854.* Albumen silver print, 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (28.7 x 23.8 cm). David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1952 (52.639.36)

When the massive building that had housed the 1851 Great Exhibition in London was removed from Hyde Park to be re-erected on the outskirts of London, Delamotte took the opportunity to record all the stages by photography. The remarkable glass-and-iron structure—its designer, Sir Joseph Paxton, had described it as “the simplest, the merest mechanical building that could be made”—was as much an exhibit as anything that had been shown inside, but for the visitor the vast size was impossible to grasp. In these images of empty vistas the scale can be understood.

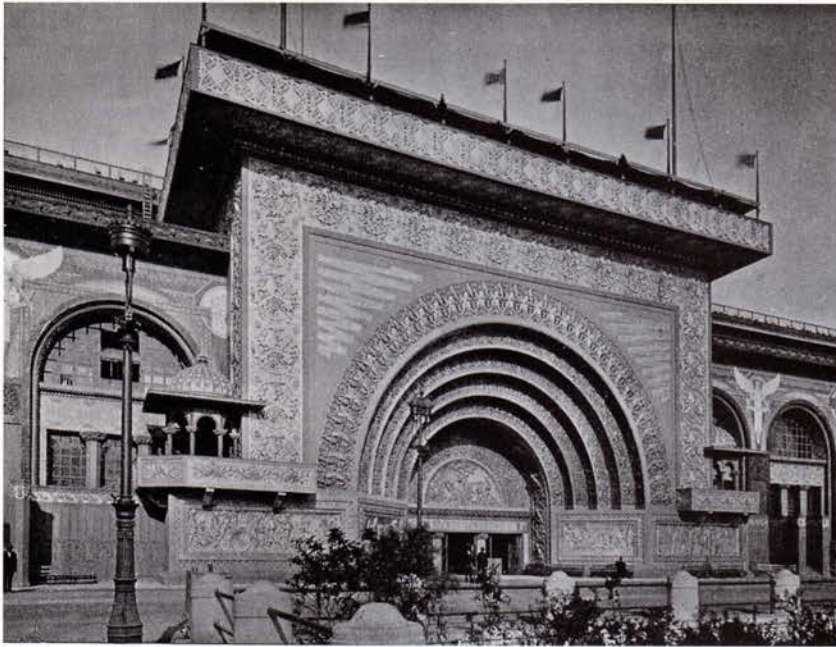


Fig. 12. Louis Sullivan, American, 1856–1924. The Transportation Pavilion at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition, 1893. Photograph (from a brochure), 7 1/8 x 10 1/4 in. (18.1 x 26 cm). Gift of Lincoln Kirstein, 1963 (63.698.7)

This dramatic view shows the gilded door of Sullivan's magnificent structure. The architecture of exhibitions was so important to the development of the modern idiom that it deserves—and has received—extensive study on its own account. The stark beauty of the 1851 Crystal Palace was unrepeatably, due mainly to practical faults in its function as a display building, so the ways in which apparently solid buildings could be used to contain great voids exercised the ingenuity of Paxton's successors. The massive scale of the arched entrance to the Transportation Pavilion is at the same time Byzantine and Modernist.

enormous crowds that continued to visit the fairs. Gustave Flaubert wrote to George Sand in 1867: "I went twice to the Exposition; it is overwhelming. It contains splendid and exceptionally curious things. But man is made to swallow the infinite. One would have to know all the sciences and all the arts in order to be interested in everything that one sees on the Champ-de-Mars. Never mind; someone who had three months at his disposal to visit the Exposition every morning and take notes could spare himself the trouble of ever having to read or travel again." This experience of the whole world encapsulated, remarked upon by many visitors, suggests that these events are direct lineal ancestors of multimedia and virtual reality.

Ambition sometimes outran the administrative capacity of the organizers. On her wedding tour in 1873 Emily, wife of a Gloucestershire squire, Dearman Birchall, visited the Vienna fair: "The exhibition is in a deplorably unfinished state; some parts look perfectly hopeless, and can certainly not be ready for months." In this same diary entry she goes on to remark on the lamentable state of the British contribution—"England stands *absolutely* alone in the glorious distinction of *bad taste*."

The Birchalls were in Vienna from May 1 to 16, and they went to the exhibition every day, a fairly common practice at all the world's fairs—and one probably insufficiently taken into account in compiling the statistics for numbers of visitors—among the leisured and well-to-do, who

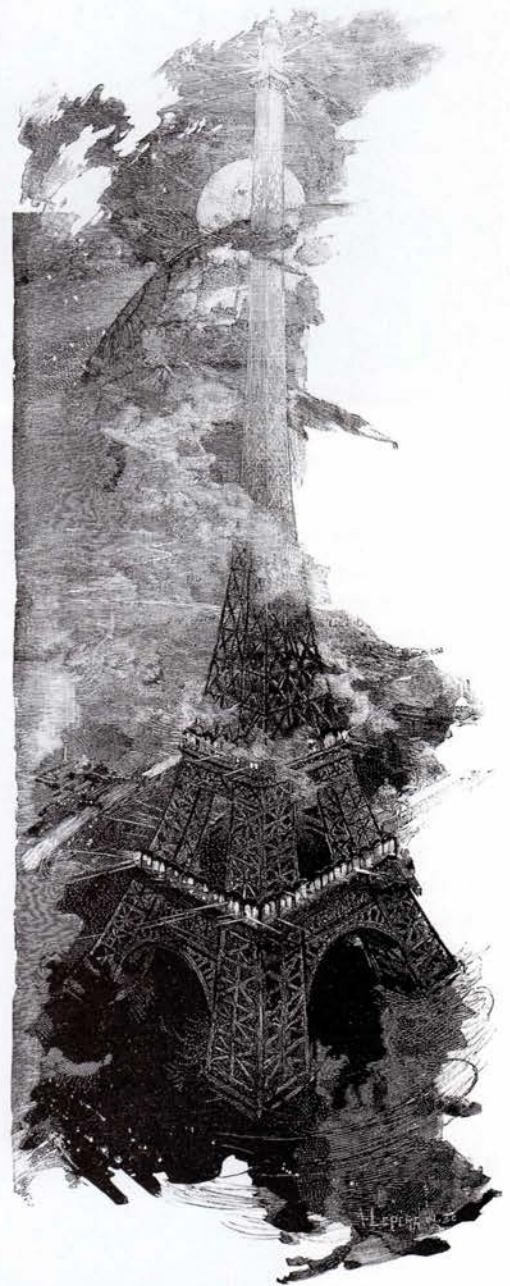


Fig. 13. Auguste Lepère, French, 1849–1918. The Eiffel Tower. Wood engraving from *Revue de l'Exposition Universelle de 1889*, Paris, 1889. 12 x 4 1/2 in. (30.5 x 11.4 cm). Gift of Edwin de T. Bechtel, 1948 (48.180.80)



Fig. 14. *Electricity*. English (Nottingham), made for the Paris Centennial Exposition, dated 1900. Levers machine-made black lace, w. 26 in. (66 cm). Gift of Stern and Stern Textiles Inc., 1964 (64.229.2)

This lace border incorporates images of modern transport and transmission of power with railway trains, hot-air balloons, telegraph poles, and electric lights. The motifs echo a preoccupation with the new electrical power, much in evidence at the Paris Exposition, and the lace won a medal. The machine-made lace industry, centered in Nottingham, was enormously successful since it replaced a declining cottage industry, the products of which had become so expensive that they were out of the reach of most ordinary people.

nonetheless often complained about the admittance charges and about the restaurants charging excessively for mainly indifferent food.

Britain bowed out of the international megashow rat race in 1862, but still contrived to make a considerable impact at foreign events. Particularly ironic was the acclaim for the British exhibit at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876, since this event marked the centenary of the American victory in the War of Independence.

The French overcame crushing political and economic difficulties to maintain their eleven-year cycle up to 1900, but the palm passed to the United States with shows of unrivaled magnificence: Chicago (1893), St. Louis (1904), and San Francisco (1915).

The physical legacy of all this frenetic activity is surprisingly sparse, and often not very inspiring. Internationally recognized landmarks, like the Eiffel Tower (1889 Paris Exposition, fig. 13), are few, and the lonely remains of exhibition buildings have an eerie, even surreal quality, like the echoing classical spaces of the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts overlooking the bay. Walking through the roofless colonnade with urns and female figures looming in niches high above one's head is like inhabiting a Piranesi print. The site of the 1939 New York World's Fair in the borough of Queens greets the visitor coming from JFK Airport with a desolate

message of waste and redundancy. The 1851 building in London—by far the most distinguished and groundbreaking structure—was saved from becoming obsolete and derelict by the removal of the Crystal Palace to Sydenham on the outskirts of London (fig. 11), where it survived as a popular public resort until razed by fire in 1936.

In 1895 H. H. Cunynghame remarked in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*: "One of the most satisfactory changes of public opinion that has taken place within the last fifty years is the disappearance of that dread and even hatred of machinery, which once distinguished the majority of inhabitants of this country." This was written on the brink of the twentieth century, but, as Cunynghame points out, the view that manufacturing industries had damaged art was vociferously enunciated throughout the nineteenth century. The far more extensive coverage given to the arts in reporting world's fairs, over the machinery, natural products, and industrial goods, which in fact dominated the exhibition spaces in terms of volume, presented an unbalanced picture. Illustrated periodicals inevitably devoted most space to the decorative arts and the architecture of exhibition buildings, although the working machinery was exciting and inspiring and certainly appealed to the visitors (fig. 10 and p. 23).

The most striking development as the

Fig. 15. *Persian Shah*. Russian, ca. 1896. Printed calico, l. 27 in. (68.6 cm). Gift of The United Piece Dye Works, 1936 (36.90.816)

Colorful Russian designs such as this were popular in France, possibly for their distinctive Russian-Asian exoticism. They were produced in villages dedicated to textile manufacture, where every able-bodied inhabitant was employed in this local industry. A label on the length of fabric records medals for the manufacturer at Paris in 1867 and 1882 and at the Pan-Russian Exhibition in Nizhni Novgorod in 1896. Colorfastness was an important development and won a medal for one of the leading Russian manufacturers, Ludwig Rabenek, at Moscow in 1891.



Fig. 16. Lyon and Healy Company, American (Chicago). Harp, 1916. Maple, spruce, and other materials, h. 72 in. (182.9 cm). Harp case, ca. 1916. Wood and various other materials, h. 82 7/8 in. (210 cm). Lent by Peter S. Reis

The legends painted in white on this battered harp case—"Gold medals and highest honors/Chicago 1893/Antwerp 1894/London 1909/Leipzig 1909"—recording Lyon and Healy's triumphs at fairs across the world, are poignant reminders of the era, in which innovation and excellence came from a competitive spirit in exhibiting.



world's fairs progressed was in the professionalism of the exhibitors. Curiosities gave way to highly sophisticated showpieces by prominent manufacturers, and an identifiable exhibition style evolved. The attraction of sculptural objects—ceramics, metalwork, and furniture, in which the Museum's collection is particularly rich—was that they showed off the admired qualities of high finish, technique, and artistry. Similarly, mixing a number of trades, as in the 1867 imperial Austrian casket (p. 33), demanded organization as well as supreme technical command and was valued accordingly. However, in spite of this dangerous bias toward exhibition-style products, which distanced the manufacturers from sustainable day-to-day trade, the world's fairs maintained an admirable record of avant-garde exhibits, giving prominence to innovators like Pugin, Morris, Whistler, Godwin, Bracquemond, L. C. Tiffany, Bing, Colonna, Lalique, and Knox—all of whom are represented in the following pages of this publication—and many others.

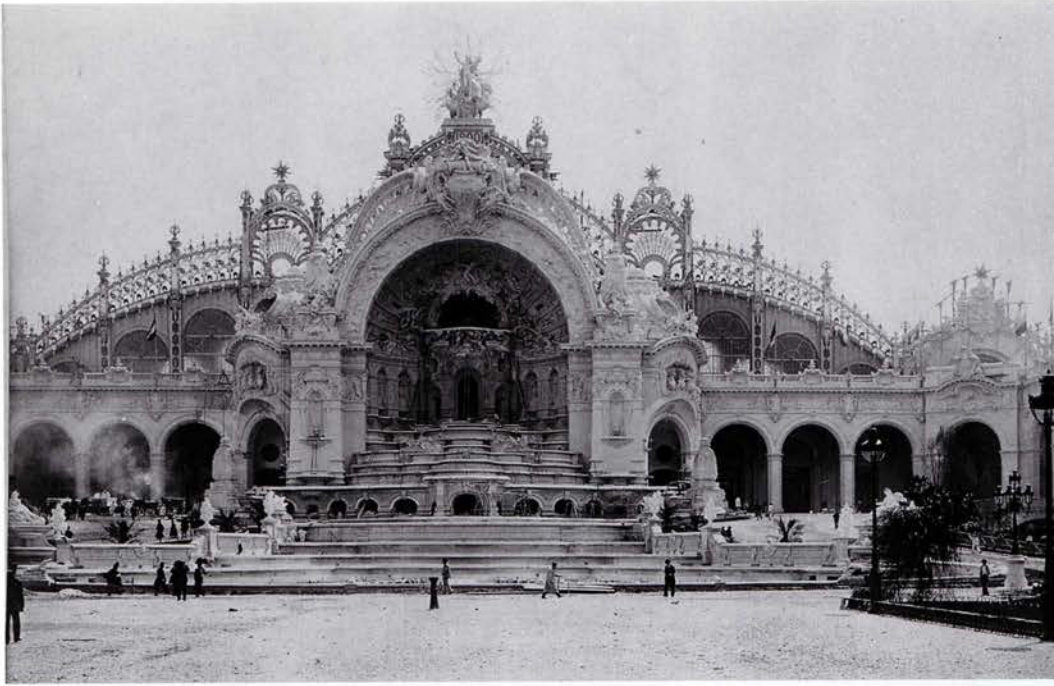


Fig. 17. *Palais de l'Électricité et Château d'Eau*. Photograph of the Paris Centennial Exposition, 1900. Gift of Robert B. Hale, 1964

Much of the intricate ornament lavished on these—often machine-made—exhibition pieces was meretricious and satisfied uneducated tastes that looked simply for novelty in their consumer goods. But mechanization was only a tool, and the end product could be influenced by informed use of the means at hand, as design reformers had repeatedly demonstrated. Henry Mayhew, chronicler of the London working poor, who had more grasp of the implications of cheap production than the critics of mechanized industrial processes, observed of the “shilling folk” (visitors on the cut-rate days at the 1851 Exhibition) that “at least they know something about the works of industry, and what they do not know, they have come to learn.”

The 1851 site and the financial profits were used to build a culture complex of museums, schools of art and music, and concert halls, and it was the promptitude with which the financial framework to ensure the long-term viability of the scheme was set up that enabled a concrete legacy from the exhibition era to be assembled. The commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition were empowered to purchase significant objects from international

fairs for the newly established decorative arts museum (the South Kensington Museum, now known as the Victoria and Albert Museum), and this material, spanning half a century, provides fascinating insight into the taste and value judgments of the time. Comparing the Metropolitan's objects, acquired up to a century later, shows a striking consensus as to merit.

The famous names—Sèvres for porcelain, Théodore Deck for earthenware, Carrier-Belleuse for decorative sculpture, Christofle for precious metalwork, Castellani for archaeological goldsmiths' work, Falize for cloisonné enamels—are represented in both museums. The eminent Austrian designer Professor von Störck is featured at the Metropolitan, having devised the magnificent ceremonial casket for presentation to the Empress Elizabeth in 1867 (p. 33), and at the Victoria and Albert as designer of a great amber-colored enameled glass vase shown at the 1878 Paris Exposition by the Lobmeyr Glassworks. There are other overlaps too numerous to mention, and these are no coincidence, for the wheel of taste has come full circle.

The electrical pavilion fascinated the American Henry Adams. He writes of it in “The Dynamo and the Virgin” (in *The Education of Henry Adams*, 1906): “Then [Langley] showed his scholar the great hall of dynamos, and explained how little he knew about electricity or force of any kind, even of his special sun, which spouted heat in inconceivable volume, but which, as far as he knew, might spout less or more, at any time, for all the certainty he felt in it. . . . To Adams the dynamo became a symbol of infinity. As he grew accustomed to the great gallery of machines, he began to feel the forty-foot dynamos as a moral force, much as the early Christians felt the Cross.” The pale sugar-icing decoration of the building hardly seems equal to the burden of such heavy symbolism.



Jeanselme Frères, French (Paris). Gothic Revival chair. Ca. 1840.

Rosewood, leather, silk, and serge, h. 51 ½ in. (130.2 cm). Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts and Rogers Fund, 1995 (1995.164)

The Jeanselme firm was steeped in French royal and imperial tradition, and the English-influenced Gothic style seems an unusual departure from the Neoclassical taste of both Napoleonic empires. The explanation lies in the 1840s Anglomania fostered by King Louis-Philippe (r. 1830–40), who acquired the taste during his long residence in England as an exile. The Jeanselme firm was founded in 1824, and within ten years the brothers Joseph-Pierre-François and Jean-Arnoux Jeanselme had become the leading Parisian chair manufacturers and *Fournisseur du Mobilier de la Couronne* (Furnisher to the Crown) to Louis-Philippe. At the 1851 Great Exhibition in London they showed an “Etruscan-style” armchair in burr elm with amaranthus inlay of classical motifs to much acclaim. The design dated from the 1830s and was by then far less fashionable than Gothic, but the classicism allied with sumptuous workmanship accorded with public perceptions of French imperial taste.



Deneirouse and Boisglavy, probable manufacturer, French. Kashmir-pattern shawl. Ca. 1849.

Wool and silk double-interlocked twill tapestry weave, l. 12 ft. 3 1/4 in. (3.7 m). Rogers Fund, 1965 (65.91.2)

M. Pin, manufacturer, French (Lyons). Kashmir-pattern shawl. Made for the Paris International Exposition, 1867.

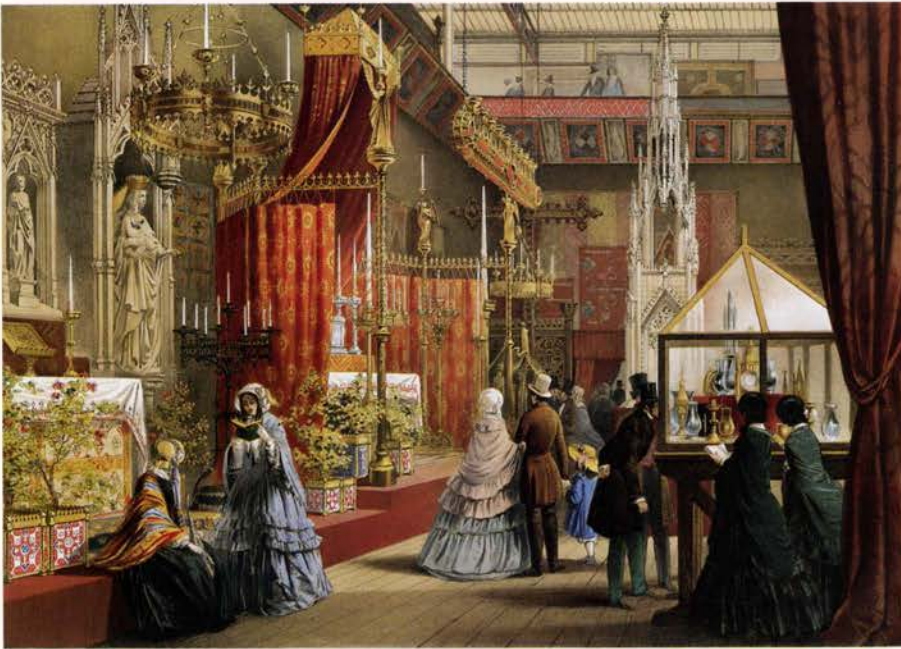
Woven silk and wool polychrome, l. 11 ft. 9 1/2 in. (3.4 m). Rogers Fund, 1939 (39.19)



The 1849 jury reports for an innovative gold-medal-winning shawl, which virtually describe the one above (left), suggest that it was woven specially for the Paris Exposition of Agriculture and Industrial Products of that year by the firm of Deneirouse and Boisglavy. Mid-nineteenth-century shawls were mechanically made in Europe but still produced by hand in India. This particular manufacturer had developed the technology to weave in the Indian way on a mechanized loom. The firm exhibited a very similar design in London at the 1851 Great Exhibition.

Shawls continued in fashion for another twenty years or more, though developing a different style. The 1867 example (above right) lacks the plain white center and the pattern is formalized natural ornament rather than naturalistic flowers. Fine shawls such as these were very expensive.





Joseph Nash, British, 1808–1878. *The Mediaeval Court at the Great Exhibition and The Stained Glass Court at the Great Exhibition*. Dated 1852.

Color lithographs, sheet 18 1/2 x 25 1/2 in. (46.4 x 65.4 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941 (41.123.3[5,2])

The Mediaeval Court was designed by the Gothic Revival architect A. W. N. Pugin, celebrated for his work on the new Palace of West-



minster, then nearing completion, and it excited much interest and comment, not all of it favorable. The effect of the Mediaeval Court was somber, famously described as “looking dark and solemn for the display of the taste and art of dead men,” but individual items on view within it were brilliantly colored—the ceramics, jewelry, rich textiles, gilded statuary, and brass candelabra in particular, all of which are eagerly sought by modern collectors.

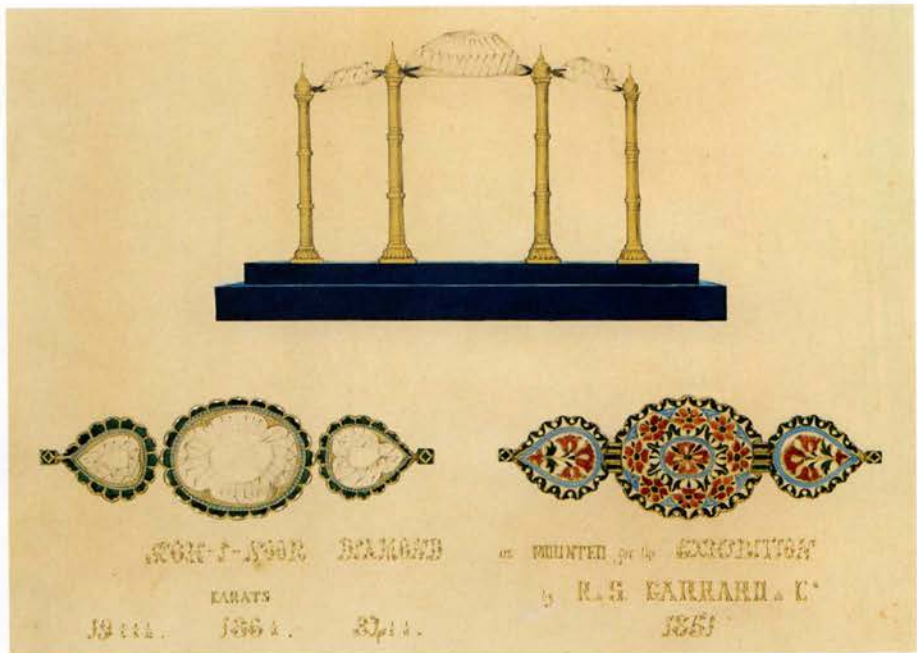
The revival of stained glass was to change

the face of both church and domestic decoration in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is a measure of the importance of this branch of architectural embellishment in England that an entire court was devoted to examples of contemporary stained-glass design. Some of the foreign exhibitors included glass panels on their stands. The 1851 display in the Stained Glass Court was installed to give the greatest impact to the intensely rich colors.

R. and S. Garrard, English (Haymarket, London). The Koh-i-noor diamond, mounted for display at the Great Exhibition, in the original enameled Indian armlet setting. Painted for the Crown Jewellers, 1851.

Pencil, watercolor, and metallic pigment, $9 \frac{3}{4} \times 12 \frac{7}{8}$ in. (24.8 x 32.7 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1966 (66.562.24)

For many visitors the Koh-i-noor diamond epitomized the magic of the Great Exhibition. Excitement attended its arrival in England aboard the HMS *Medea* (of which a fine model was also exhibited), a "splendid war steamer" with the reputation of being the fastest paddle steamer under canvas in the Royal Navy. The diamond was received by Queen Victoria from an emissary of the East India Company on July 3, 1850. The Koh-i-noor (or "Mountain of Light") was shown in a specially constructed cage, and the stone could be lowered into the pedestal at night for security. The publicity surrounding it raised the expectations of many of the visitors too high—a cartoon in *Punch* depicts a couple viewing an enormous lump of coal that dominated the display of natural products, under the impression that it is the diamond. Its subsequent recutting as a brilliant produced a much-reduced stone, which is set in the band of the Imperial State Crown. The Indian setting, with models of its three diamonds, is displayed in the Tower of London.



Claret jug and wineglasses. French, ca. 1840–50.

Glass with raised gold-leaf decoration, h. (jug) $10 \frac{3}{8}$ in. (26.5 cm), h. (glasses) $4 \frac{3}{4}$ in. (12.1 cm). Gift of Mrs. John Chambers Hughes, 1963 (63.62.1a,b,4,5)



Rococo-style decoration and the more severe Louis XVI taste, inspired by the French eighteenth century, have not fared well in modern critical estimation, but for the Victorians these were the most appropriate and enduringly pop-

ular types of ornament for elegant domestic items. Rococo was the dominant mode among commercial manufacturers exhibiting in 1851, to be overtaken by Louis XVI inspiration in the 1860s. The products are usually marked by

their high quality of workmanship, in this example by the crisp raised goldwork. The crystal purity of contemporary glass was much prized by the Victorians.

Charles Asprey, British, 1813–1892. Pieces from a desk set. London, 1851.

Gilt bronze and malachite, h. (calendar) 8 in. (20.3 cm), l. (knife) 8 ½ in. (21.5 cm). Purchase, Gifts of Irwin Untermyer, Loretta Hines Howard and Charles Hines, in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Hines, and J. Pierpont Morgan, by exchange, 1982 (1982.88.1–8)

This extensive set of eight pieces was part of the Asprey display at the Great Exhibition, and each object, except for the paper knife, is marked "C. ASPREY. 166 BOND ST. / EXHIBITION 1851. CLASS 29, No 50." History has judged Pugin's Mediaeval Court to be the most significant contribution to the exhibition in terms of decorative design, but the contemporary visitor would have found handsome, usable items for

the home, such as this desk set, of more immediate relevance. The *Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* specifies further items, now missing: an envelope case, a blotting book, an inkstand, and a matchbox, bringing the set up to a dozen pieces. The design, with echoes of Hellenistic, Celtic, and Renaissance influence, is essentially eclectic, in contrast to Pugin's archaeologically correct Gothic.



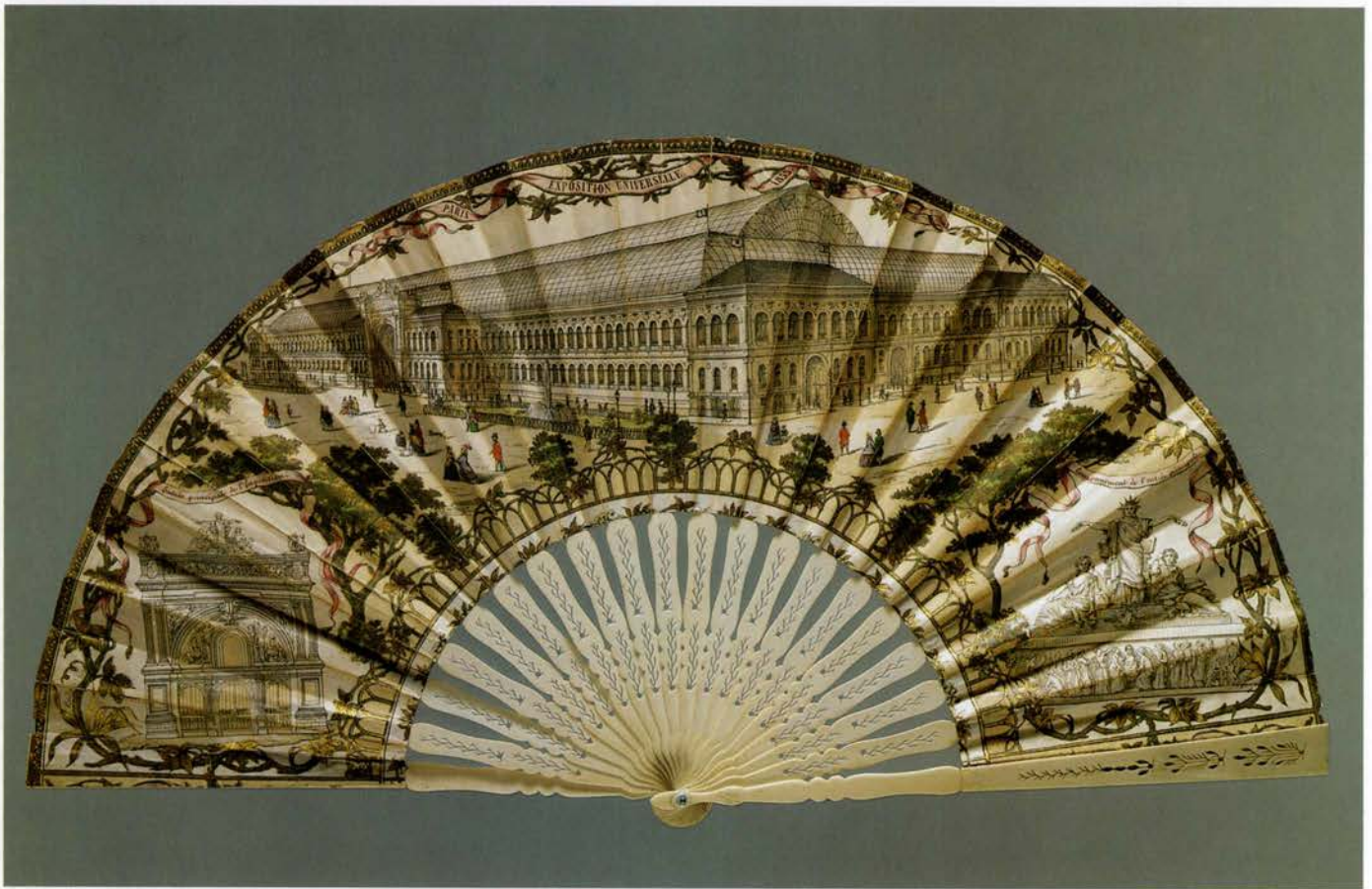


R. Nunns and Clark, American (New York City). Square piano. 1853.

Rosewood and various other materials, w. $87 \frac{7}{8}$ in. (223.3 cm). Gift of George Lowther, 1906 (06.1312.1)

Pianos were a much-remarked feature of the American contribution to the Great Exhibition, not for the elegance or decoration of the cases, which were far surpassed by those offered by European manufacturers, but for their ingenuity and novel musical effects—for example, the “mammoth double-action grand pianoforte, to be used by three or four performers simultaneously,” and the mechanical “piano-violino,” in which three bows were

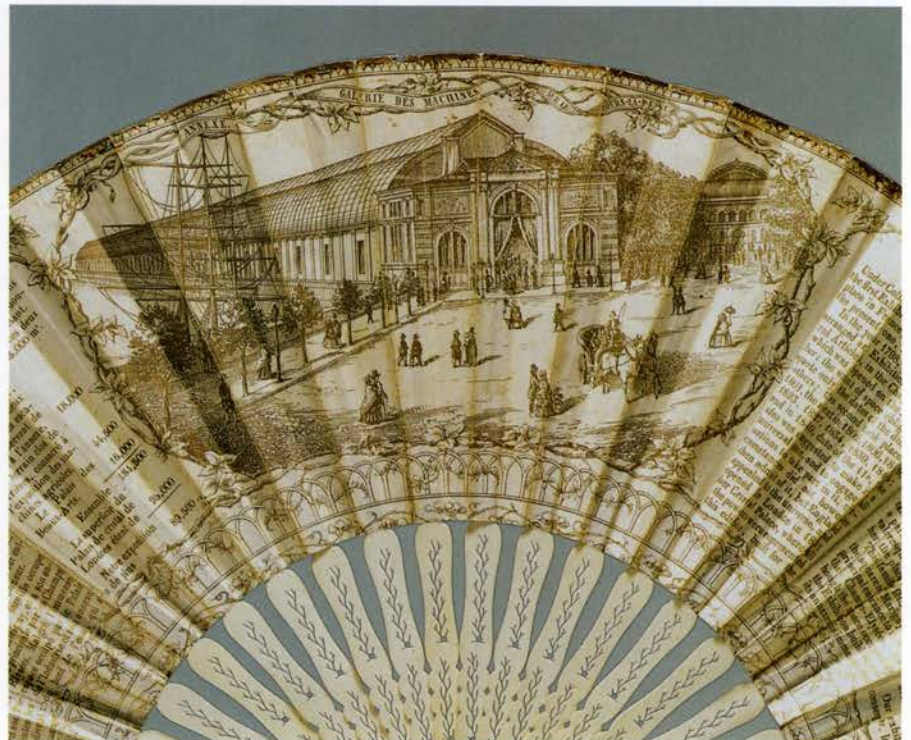
made to scrape over a fixed violin to the accompaniment of the piano. They were equally noted at the World's Fair in New York two years later. This example's heavily carved and decorated Renaissance-inspired case and keyboard with mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell keys confirm its exhibition quality, and it may well have been shown at New York's own Crystal Palace in 1853, the year of its manufacture.



By Brionde after a design by A. Guillerat. Souvenir fan with views of the 1855 Paris International Exposition. French, 1855.

Ivory and lithograph heightened with gilding, w. 19 3/4 in. (50.2 cm). Signed: Guillerat, inv./Brionde Imp. Lith. Direxit. Gift of Mrs. Thomas Hunt, 1933 (33.82.14)

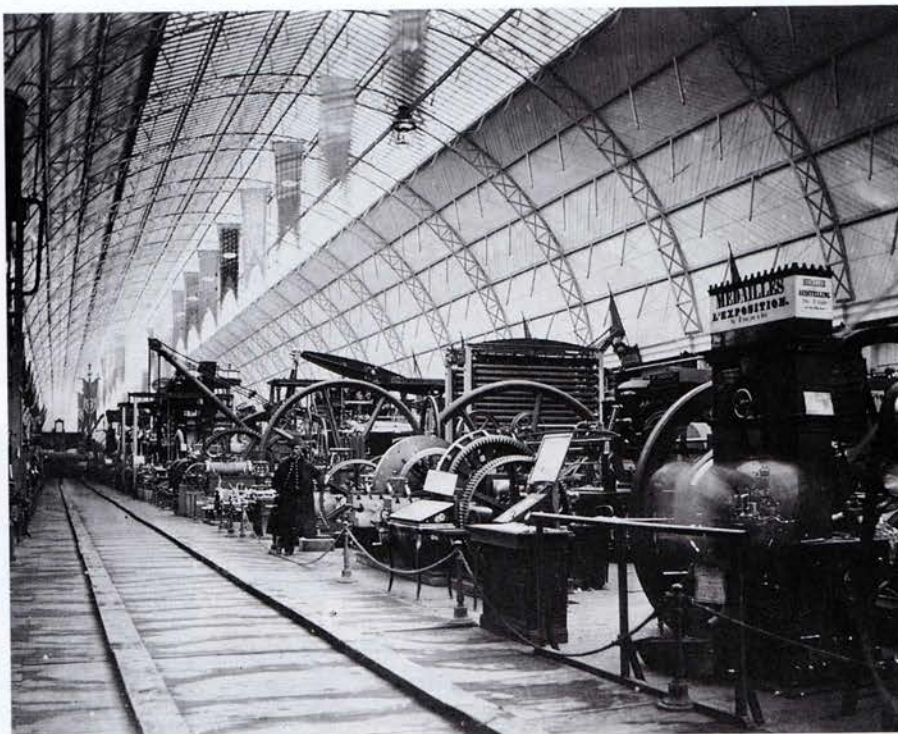
The structures and interiors of exhibition buildings continued to excite strong interest among visitors, and souvenirs like this fan, as well as collections of photographic views, were issued in enormous quantities.



Charles Thurston Thompson, British, 1816–1868. *Industrial Exhibit from the Paris International Exposition of 1855*. 1855.

Salted paper print from a glass negative, 10 x 8 in. (25.4 x 20.3 cm). Purchase, The Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation Gift, 1992 (1992.50.30)

Machinery provided an image of power and modernity, and an impressive show of industrial and manufacturing capacity was part of the nationalistic agenda of the international exhibition movement. Machines themselves, frequently shown working, were an important attraction at the expositions.



Adolphe Braun, French (?), 1811–1877. *Rose of Sharon*. Ca. 1854.

Albumen silver print from a glass negative, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (37.5 x 41.9 cm). Gift of Gilman Paper Company, in memory of Samuel J. Wagstaff Jr., 1987 (1987.1161)

In addition to its superb artistic quality this image had a practical application. It was intended for designers and manufacturers to use as inspiration and for artists to copy. Braun began his working life in the textile industry in Mulhouse, France, with the firm of Dollfus-Meigs, and turned to photography in 1848. He was a consummate professional, and this, allied with his practical knowledge of the trade, won him a gold medal for his multivolume *Fleurs Photographiées* for its ingenuity and utility to the textile industry at the 1855 Paris Exposition. H. W. Vogel wrote of these flower studies in the *Philadelphia Photographer* (1868): "They excited the admiration of the profession, as well as the artist, and the men of science; King Frederick William sent him [Braun], in acknowledgment, a golden snuff box."





Louis Perrin, French, act. 1823–65.
 Double-barreled percussion shotgun.
 Paris, dated 1854.

Steel, walnut, and silver, l. (overall) 46 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (118.4 cm); caliber .69 in. (16.4 mm). Inscribed (in Gothic letters on the barrel): PERRIN B^{TE} [*brevet*] A PARIS. Purchase, Rogers Fund, The Sulzberger Foundation Inc. Gift, Gifts of William H. Riggs, Bill and Joyce Anderson, Charles M. Schott Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Robert W. de Forest, William B. Osgood Field, Christian A. Zabriskie, Dr. Albert T. Weston, Henry Victor Burgy, and Bequest of Alan Rutherford Stuyvesant, by exchange, and The Collection of Giovanni P. Morosini, presented by his daughter Giulia, John Stoneacre, Ellis Collection, Gift of Mrs. Ellis and Augustus Van Horne Ellis, and Bashford Dean Memorial Collection, Funds from various donors, by exchange, 1991 (1991.5)

Exhibitions created a showcase for highly ornamental items, the practical utility of which disappeared under a burden of carving, metal mounting, and inlay. At the 1855 Exposition the arms makers of Paris were awarded a special medal for their artistic taste and quality, and this example has been identified as one for “trophy or panoply.” The ways in which the carving and the chased-silver mounts are used on the highly ornate stock make it impractical as a firearm. (The butt cap at right displays the figure of a Native American.) The gun stands in the greatest possible contrast to Samuel Colt’s sleek and deadly revolver, which had been unveiled to an eager audience in London in 1851.



Pierre-Louis Pierson, French, 1822–1913.
Virginia, Countess Castiglione (1835–1899)
with a fan, 1858; printed 1940s.

Gelatin silver print, 14 ½ x 16 ⅜ in. (36.8 x
41.6 cm). David Hunter McAlpin Fund, 1947
(47.149.15)

Certain images give a powerful flavor of their moment in time and barely need text to explain them. Here the great courtesan of Second Empire Paris is caught in opulent and moody magnificence by Pierson in the year following the end of her liaison with Napoleon III. Edmond and Jules de Goncourt wrote of her in their *Journals* (1851–70): “All women are enigmas, but this is the most indecipherable of them all.” It is said of her that she spent her last years with the mirrors in her small apartment on the place Vendôme covered over so that she could not see the wreck of her marvelous beauty.



Fan. Spain (?), ca. 1858.

Black and white Chantilly lace with mother-of-pearl sticks, w. 19 ½ in. (49.5 cm). Bequest of Mary Clark Thompson, 1923 (24.80.35)

This fan, with its coronet and initial V in the design of the sticks, was made for Countess Castiglione and must have been a favorite, based on the evidence of the photograph above. It sets off the hugely crinolined gown in which she sat for Pierson.



The London International Exhibition, view of the central dome with Minton's majolica fountain. From the *Illustrated London News*, August 30, 1862.

Color lithograph, 15 5/8 x 20 1/8 in. (39.8 x 51 cm).
Gift of Mrs. A. Z. Gardiner, 1936 (36.52.17)

As time went by, exhibition buildings became more elaborate in decoration and more "architectural," sacrificing severity and scale to pretentiousness. The shimmering glass fountain that had formed the centerpiece of the 1851 Crystal Palace is here replaced by an enormous example of Minton's celebrated majolica.

The revived majolica technique, with its bold modeling and vivid coloring, was appropriate to exhibition ceramics. Under the direction of the Frenchman Léon Arnoux, Minton's was very successful, and the company was responsible for the high regard paid to British ceramics from 1851 onward.

Philip Webb, designer, British, 1831–1915.
Sir Edward Burne-Jones, painter of *The
Backgammon Players*, British, 1833–1898.
Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Company,
manufacturer, English (London), 1861–75.
Medieval-style cabinet. 1862.

Painted and gilded pine and painted leather,
h. 73 in. (185.4 cm). Rogers Fund, 1926 (26.54)

William Morris founded his decorating firm in 1861, just in time to assemble the material to fill an imposing space in the Mediaeval Court at the 1862 International Exhibition. This cabinet was one of the striking painted pieces shown by the firm at its debut appearance. The subject on the panels is by Burne-Jones (the preparatory drawing is in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge), and, along with the many other painted pieces shown at the exhibition, the cabinet might be described as “Pre-Raphaelite.” The idealist Morris was sufficiently pragmatic to overcome his strongly expressed distaste for the 1851 Exhibition—he had remarked to his mother that it was all “wonderfully ugly”—and to exploit the opportunity offered in 1862. The earliest history of Morris’s venture is enshrined in the 1862 display; he soon saw that the way forward was not with expensive painted pieces but in affordable merchandise of pleasing design and fine quality.





Christopher Dresser, British, 1834–1904.
Detail of plate 23 (“Greek ornaments suitable for dadoes. . .”), from *Studies in Design*, London, 1876.

Chromolithograph. Library Administrative Fund, 1917, transferred from the Library, 1991 (1991.1073.26)

Attributed to Christopher Dresser, designer, British, 1834–1904. Minton, manufacturer, English (Stoke-on-Trent), 1793–present. Persian-style bottle. Ca. 1862, the model shown at the London International Exhibition, 1862.

Bone china, h. 7 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (19.4 cm). Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts, 1996 (1996.92)

Dresser trained as a botanist, but his career as a designer was nurtured as an assistant to Owen Jones on the great work of draftsmanship required to produce the *Grammar of Ornament* (1856). Although his designs are clearly rooted in the Jones school of geometric Islamic-inspired pattern, Dresser quickly developed a distinctive style for his work in a great variety of media. He preferred Persian patterns and shapes for his earliest ceramics for Mintons, as in the example shown here. His wallpaper designs in particular found favor in the United States, as is evident from photographs of artistic interiors of the 1880s and 1890s.



Etruscan-style bracelets. Shell cameo by Luigi Saulini, gem engraver, Italian (Rome), 1819–1883. Ca. 1860–70.

Gold, shell, and marble, h. (.2 [cameo]) 2 $\frac{5}{16}$ in. (5.6 cm), h. (.3) 3 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (9.2 cm). Bequest of Maria Morgan, 1893 (93.6.2,.3)

These bracelets have an intriguing history, having belonged to Maria Morgan, sister of the Irish artist Jane Morgan. Both women were in Rome during the late 1860s, where they joined a group of sculptors that included the Americans Harriet Hosmer and Emma Stebbins. Maria led a most unusual life for her time; she was a journalist and, for a period of five years, was in charge of the stables of King Victor Emmanuel II of Italy. Traditionally, the bracelets were said to have been presented to her by the king. After her sojourn in Italy she settled in America and became a noted expert on livestock—on which subject she wrote for several New York newspapers—and a racing tipster. When she died in 1892, souvenirs presented to her by Victor Emmanuel were bequeathed to the Museum.



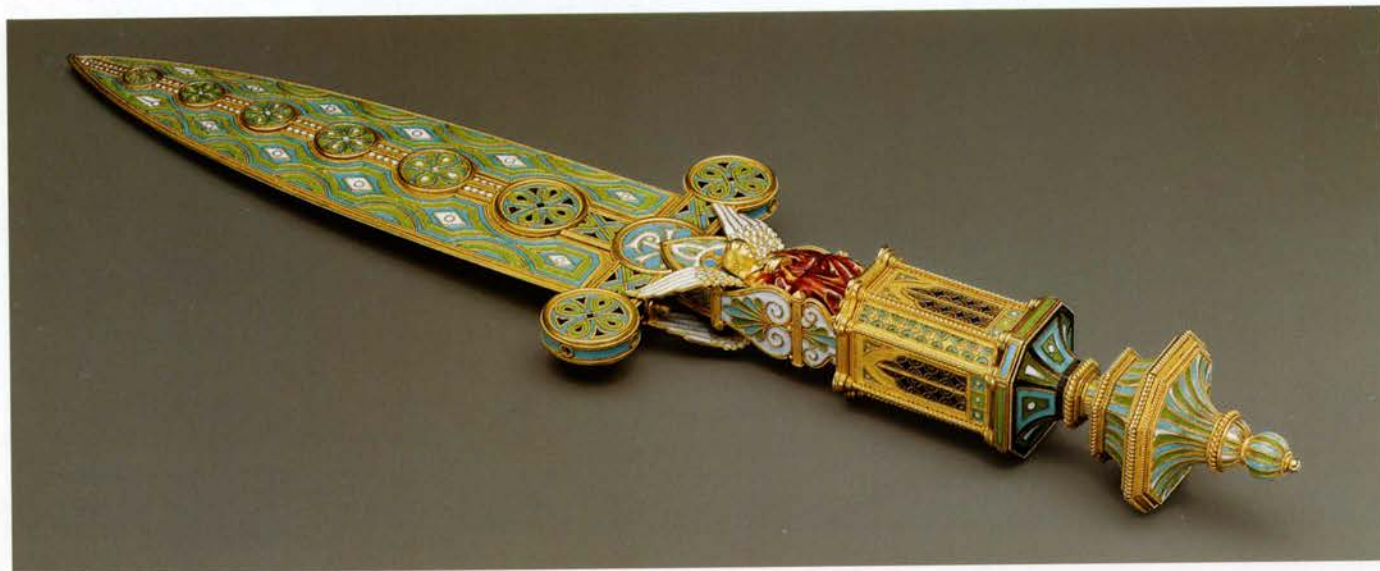
Michelangelo Caetani, duke of Sermoneta, possible designer, Italian, 1804–1882. Castellani, manufacturer, Italian (Rome), 1815–1930. Paper knife. Ca. 1863.

Gold and enamel, l. 10 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (26 cm). Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1993 (1993.66)

The eclectic mix of Early Christian, Renaissance, and classical ideas in the design of this

dagger-shaped paper knife places it in the early production of the famous Castellani firm of Rome. It was founded by Fortunato Pio Castellani and developed by his sons Augusto and Alessandro, and its fortunes were transformed by the patronage and advice of Caetani, a highly regarded antiquarian. Ultimately, the firm's reputation rested on well-publicized attempts to reproduce the delicate

Etruscan goldwork revealed by archaeological excavations around Rome. Castellani's jewelry was first seen by a large international audience at the 1862 London International Exhibition, and he made a number of different paper knives, finding them a good vehicle for fanciful designs rather than faithful revivals of ancient patterns. The knives were used for cutting the pages of books as well as for opening letters.





Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, French, 1824–1887. *Father Time on a Globe* (design for a clock).

Red and black chalk, heightened with white chalk and gray wash on beige paper, 21 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (54.3 x 41.9 cm). Purchase, David T. Schiff Gift, 1991 (1991.266)

Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, designer, French, 1824–1887. Guéret Frères, cabinet-makers, French, 1853–ca. 1900. Atelier Cartier and Vincenti and Company, clock-makers, French, 1860–90 and 1850–60. *Clock*. Paris, dated 1863.

Walnut, glass, bronze, and steel, h. 20 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (52.7 cm). Purchase, David T. Schiff Gift, 1991 (1991.261)

Carrier-Belleuse was a prolific sculptor-designer, turning with apparent ease from full-scale Salon exhibition pieces and public monuments to the intricacies of porcelain, goldwork, and other luxury items. His creations typify the opulent, even decadent, side of Second Empire taste, and he was, indeed, a favorite of Napoleon III. The mixture of materials employed in this clock put large demands on the skill of the cabinetmaker. The nostalgic eighteenth-century flavor of the design suggests that it was destined for an elaborately decorated salon, to stand before one of the large overmantel mirrors then in fashion.





Joseph-Théodore Deck, French, 1823–1891.
Dish with asymmetrically placed flowers.
Paris, dated 1866.

Earthenware, diam. 16 in. (40.6 cm). Purchase,
Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative
Arts and Robert L. Isaacson Gifts, 1992
(1992.275)

Deck was born in Alsace and arrived in Paris in 1847, where he set up production primarily of artistic pottery, often painted by professionals. He was inspired by intensely colored Isnik wares and the delicate, asymmetrically designed ceramics of Japan. A pioneer in many areas of ceramic production, not least in his use of Japanese-inspired motifs, Deck experimented with glazes and produced the intense turquoise blue that bears his name, "bleu de Deck." He was the founder of the artist-potter tradition.

François Hubert Ponscarne, French,
1827–1903. Medal presented to Cyrus W.
Field and his telegraph companies. Shown
at the Paris International Exposition, 1867.

Gold, diam. 2 5/8 in. (6.7 cm). Gift of Cyrus W.
Field, 1892 (92.10.1)

The obverse of this finely modeled medal shows the laureate head of Emperor Napoleon III, facing left, and the signature H. PONSCARME F. On the reverse two winged geniuses support a panel that has a victor's laurel wreath above and an eagle as an emblem for France below. The inscription records the award of a Grand Prix to Field for laying the first transatlantic cable from Britain to America. A piece of the cable is preserved with the medal.





Josef Ritter von Storck, designer, Austrian, 1830–1902. Gebrüder Rodeck (Rodeck Brothers), maker. Presentation casket. 1867.

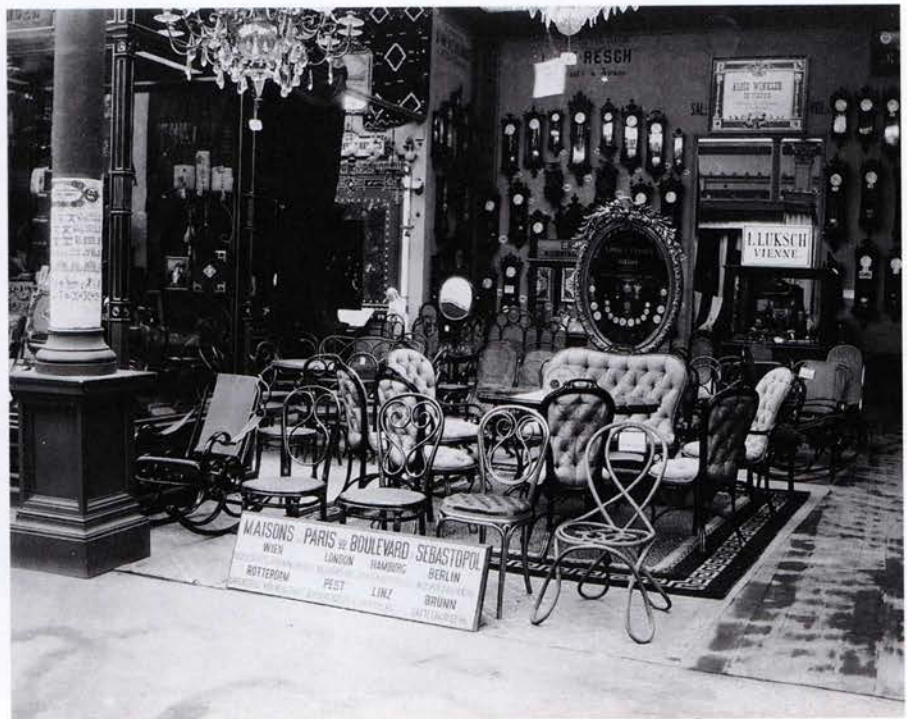
Stamped leather and velvet, gilt-bronze, silver, and blue-enamel mounts, lapis lazuli, and moiré silk, w. 22 ¼ in. (57.8 cm). Gift of Gabriel Wells, 1935 (35.132)

The presentation casket to Empress Elizabeth (1837–1898), wife of Emperor Franz Josef, was made to contain seventy photographs, showing the stands of all the Austrian exhibitors at the Paris International Exposition in 1867. Elizabeth had intended to pay an official visit to the exhibition in order to admire the Austrian

contribution, but was prevented by ill health from doing so, and the pictures were made as a souvenir. Like the popular stereoscopic series of the 1862 London Exhibition, these photographs are an invaluable record; shown below, the display of the Thonet furniture manufacturers.

Auguste-Rosalie Bisson, French, 1826–1900. Display of Thonet furniture at the Paris International Exposition, 1867.

Albumen silver print from glass negative, 7 ¼ x 9 ⅜ in. (18.3 x 23.9 cm). Gift of Gabriel Wells, 1935 (35.132)





Egisto Gajani, Italian, 1832–1890. Carved mirror frame (a later version of Gajani's exhibit at the Paris International Exposition, 1867), Florence, 1870.

Walnut, modern mirror glass, h. 30 ¾ in. (78.1 cm). Signed and dated (on cartouche below mirror): EGISTO GAJANI FECE FIRENZE 1870. Gift of James Parker in memory of Alfreda Huntington, 1992 (1992.317)

Gajani was a virtuoso wood-carver, who worked in the revived Italian Renaissance manner. He showed spectacular examples at exhibitions, first at Paris in 1867, where he displayed a version of this frame. He entered similar pieces in two further expositions, Vienna in 1873 and again in Paris in 1878. In 1880 he published, with his partner Luigi Fullini, a set of twenty-eight designs for carved-wood panels.



Charles-Guillaume Diehl, cabinetmaker, French, 1811–ca. 1885. Emmanuel Frémiet, sculptor, French, 1824–1910. Jean Brandely, designer, French, act. 1855–67. Armoire. Paris, 1867.

Oak veneered with walnut and marquetry woods, silvered bronze, h. 93 ¾ in. (238 cm). Purchase, Mr. and Mrs. Frank E. Richardson Gift, 1989 (1989.197)

The first version of this striking piece of sculptural Second Empire furniture, a medal cabinet, is in the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, and was made for the 1867 Paris Exposition. It was widely discussed and illustrated in periodicals of the time. Because its panel showed a triumphant victory from the Merovingian period, a glorious episode in French history, Diehl had hoped that the cabinet would be purchased by Napoleon III for the newly created Museum of the Sovereigns. In spite of being disappointed in this and being awarded only a bronze medal (which he refused), he nonetheless created the second version with minor variations, the armoire shown here, which he kept until his death.



Minton, English (Stoke-on-Trent), 1793–present. Limoges-style centerpiece. Shown at the Paris International Exposition, 1867. 1866.

Bone china, enameled and gilt, h. 18 ½ in. (47 cm). The Charles E. Sampson Memorial Fund, 1994 (1994.92)

This centerpiece is another example of Renaissance Revival design from the 1867 Paris Exposition, but in the French taste. Ceramic imitations of Limoges enamels were made at Mintons from about 1856 and were widely popular from the late 1850s, being produced also by a number of factories in France, for example, at Sèvres and Gien. Interest in this highly specialized technique was greatly increased by the 1862 showing in London of the Rothschild collection, with its important holdings of real Limoges enamels.



**Edward William Godwin, designer,
British, 1833–1886. Drop-leaf table.
London, ca. 1872.**

Mahogany and gilded brass, h. 29 ½ in (74.7 cm).
Purchase, Rogers Fund, Bequests of Ogden Mills
and Bernard Baruch, by exchange, and Margaret A.
Darrin, Ann Eden Woodward Foundation and
Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative
Arts Gifts, 1991 (1991.87)

Although he began as a Gothic Revivalist and disciple of Ruskin, Godwin was among the first of the Victorian architect-designers to furnish in the Japanese style. His own house in Bristol was sparsely and elegantly equipped in a way quite new for the 1860s, with matting on the floors and Japanese prints on the walls. The design of this table has echoes of Japanese architecture in the parallel latticework and the stepped shelves. The table dates from the period when Godwin and the actress Ellen Terry lived together, between 1868 and 1874. Godwin's Japanesque designs had a great impact when they were displayed at the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition, where art from Japan was also shown.

Félix Bracquemond, designer, French, 1833–1914. Haviland and Company, manufacturer, France (Limoges), 1864–1931. Plate from the “Service parisien.” Limoges, 1875.

Porcelain, diam. 9 in. (22.9 cm). Gift of George Haviland, 1923 (23.31.18)

In spite of the name given to the porcelain, the image on this plate—as on the other articles in the service—is entirely Japanese, very freely painted in the manner of ukiyo-e prints, with windblown bamboo, clouds, and a flash of lightning. Many of Bracquemond’s ceramic designs were inspired by Japanese prints, notably those in Hokusai’s *Manga* sketchbooks, which were circulating among European and American collectors in the 1860s.



William Morris, designer, British, 1834–1896. Thomas Wardle, printer, British, 1831–1909. Hencroft Dye Works, English (Leek, Staffordshire), 1875–81. “Honeysuckle” printed linen. After 1876 (design registered 1876).

L. 67 in. (170.2 cm). Theodore M. Davis Collection, Bequest of Theodore M. Davis, 1915 (30.95.46)

Morris had recognized early on that the success of his decorating business depended on having a variety of stock available for his clients, rather than relying on individual commissions. His first wallpapers date from 1862, but the printed and woven textiles for which the firm is famous did not evolve until some ten years later. Beginning in 1873, Morris experimented with techniques of printing and dyeing, and by the time the “Honeysuckle” design was registered with the patent office, in October 1876, he had produced about twenty patterns. The sources for his patterns were eclectic, the earliest being suggested by the garden of his home, Red House in Kent. He owned copies of rare early herbals such as Gerard’s celebrated publication of 1597, the illustrations of which were an inspiration for the designer’s plant and flower motifs. Morris’s collection of antique textiles was important for his later designs.



William Morris, designer, British, 1834–1896. Catherine Holiday, reputed embroiderer. Embroidered panel. Ca. 1870.

Silk, l. 78 in. (198.1 cm). Rogers Fund, 1972 (1972.65)

Because of their association with medieval domestic decoration, embroideries were among the first textiles to attract Morris's attention, in the form of crudely executed appliqué panels made for the designer's home. "Art embroidery," using flat, long and short satin and stem stitches, was far more sophisticated and transformed the character of embroidered decorative pieces

completely (compare p. 5). The example above is said to have been worked by Catherine Holiday, who is acknowledged as the finest executant of her time. This elevated type of work formed the mainstay of the much-admired display by the Royal School of Needlework at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876.

Frederick Sonne, manufacturer, Danish (Copenhagen).
V. Wendrich, decorator. Pair of amphora-shaped vases with
scenes after sculptures by Bertel Thorvaldsen. Ca. 1875.

Terracotta with encaustic painting, h. (.1) 8¼ in. (21 cm), h. (.2)
8⅝ in. (21.1 cm). Gift of Mrs. B. V. Smith, 1969 (69.216.1,.2)

Vases of amphora shape with scenes very similar to those here
were exhibited by Madame Ipsen of Copenhagen at the Philadel-
phia Centennial Exhibition in 1876. The Philadelphia fair provided
a focal point for the Aesthetic Movement ideals of art and design,
emphasizing the purely beautiful, that reached a high point in
the near-abstract canvases of J. A. McNeill Whistler and in the
Japanese-influenced furniture of E. W. Godwin (see p. 36). A great
interest in archaeology characterizes decorative design in the
second half of the nineteenth century. Admiration for the simple
forms and stylized ornament of antique terracotta vases also
influenced early forays into art pottery in the United States.



Left: Cinerary urn. Italian (Venice), 1860–70.

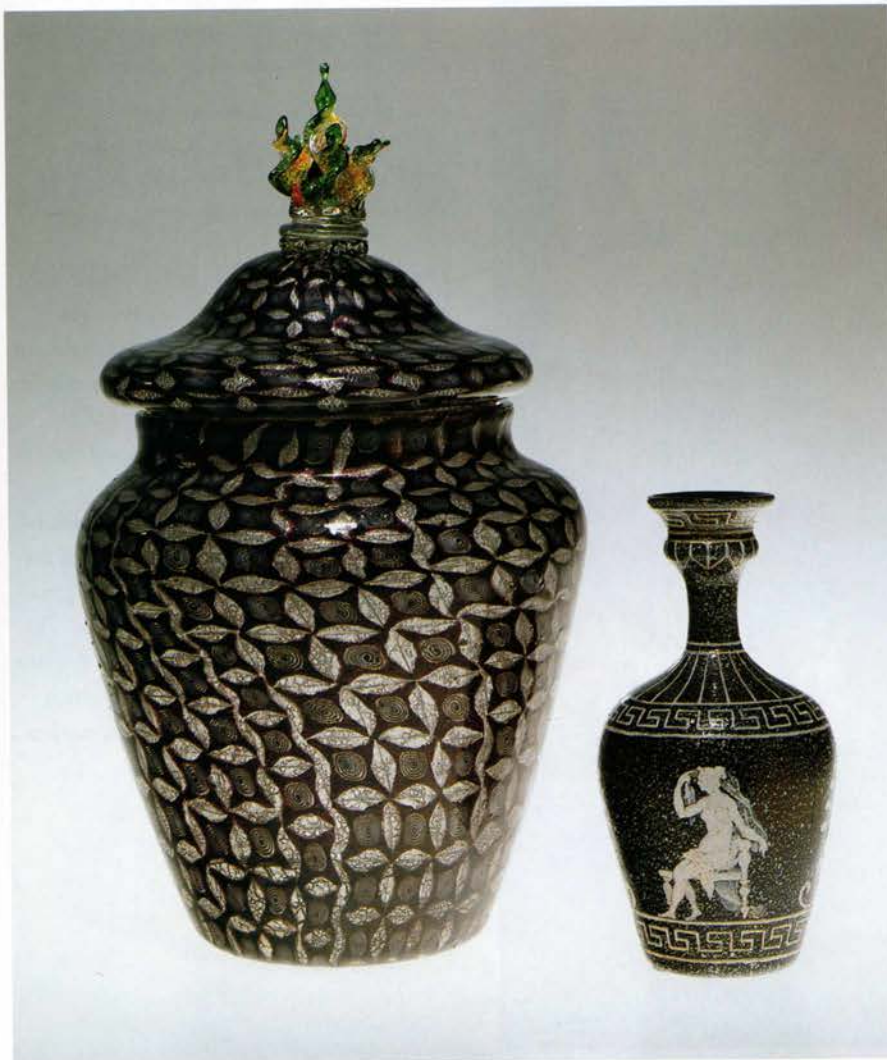
Glass, h. 12 in. (30.5 cm)

Right: Venezia-Murano Company, Italian
(Venice). Neoclassical vase. Ca. 1870.

Glass, h. 6⅛ in. (15.6 cm).

From the James Jackson Jarves Collection, Gift of
James Jackson Jarves, 1881 (81.8.213,.230)

In 1881 the Metropolitan Museum received from
James Jackson Jarves, son of the American glass
manufacturer Deming Jarves, nearly three hun-
dred pieces of Venetian glass, a range of
examples comprehensive in date and technique.
It was Jarves's intention for these wares to form a
nucleus for the study of the subject, and with
this in mind he did not neglect the important
contributions of his own day. The products of
firms like Salviati and Venezia-Murano were much
admired and imitated. Techniques were employed
to display virtuosity without much regard to
archaeological accuracy, and shapes that were
originally carried out in solid materials—clay,
stone, wood, or bronze—were executed in glass,
such as that of the lidded cinerary urn shown
here. The interest in these pieces thus lies not
in their historical accuracy but in the insight
they give into nineteenth-century taste.



Adolphe David, French, 1828–1896. *Phaeton Driving Apollo's Chariot*. Paris, ca. 1876.

Sardonyx cameo, h. 3 in. (7.6 cm). Signed A. DAVID. The Milton Weil Collection, 1940 (40.20.12)

The delicate modeling and subtle use of colored layers of the stone to differentiate the four horses make this an outstanding example of late Neoclassical cameo cutting. David was a celebrated sculptor, gem engraver, and medalist, who exhibited at the Paris Salons from 1854 until 1894. His reputation as an engraver on a large scale brought him the commission to cut an enormous cameo in gray agate for Napoleon III, the *Apotheosis of Napoleon I*. Designed by J.-A.-D. Ingres, it was destined to rival the great cameos of antiquity. After years of labor, the largest cameo of its time was shown at the 1874 Salon and at the 1878 Paris Exposition, but the result was coarse by comparison with this smaller, exquisite work.



Henri Téterger Fils, French (Paris). Watch chatelaine in the Renaissance style. Shown at the Paris International Exposition, 1878.

Gold, platinum, and diamonds, l. 6 ½ in. (16.5 cm). Marked *Téterger / 31 rue st. Augustin / Paris Hippote Téterger / H. T. déposé*. Gift of Cele H. and William Rubin, 1959 (59.43a–c)

Henri Téterger was trained by his father, Hippolyte, founder of the family firm, and succeeded him in 1862. Although this chatelaine carries Hippolyte's trademark, given the date it must, in fact, have been designed by Henri. Such continued use of a trademark was not unusual at the time.

The firm produced handsome, fashionable jewelry throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, moving with smooth professionalism to Art Nouveau around 1900. The Tétergers were prominent exhibitors in this new style at the 1900 Paris Centennial Exposition and were among the foremost Parisian jewelers of the early twentieth century.



Émile Reiber, designer, French, 1826–1893.
Eugène Guignard, probable executant,
French, act. 1845–ca. 1878. Christofle and
Company, French (Paris), 1830–present.
Jardinière with patination in the Japanese
manner. This or another example shown at
the Paris International Exposition, 1878.

Copper, silvered and patinated, and gilt
bronze, l. 15 ¾ in. (40 cm). Purchase, Bequest
of J. Pierpont Morgan, Fletcher Fund, and
Kennedy Fund, by exchange; and Rogers Fund,
1991 (1991.88a,b)

An aspect of the fierce Anglo-French rivalry
had been the race between the Birmingham
firm of Elkington's and Christofle in Paris to
develop a range of new techniques. Both dis-
played a brilliant mastery of the popular
Japanese-influenced colored-metal decoration—
by no means the equal of actual Japanese work
but impressive in European terms—which was
also a specialty of Tiffany and Company, whose
invitation to participate in the Paris Expo-
sition in 1878 was issued on the strength of its
Japanese-style silverware, developed under the
influence of Edward C. Moore.



Mintons, English (Stoke-on-Trent), 1793–present. Dessert plate in the Persian or Indian taste. Displayed in the Prince of Wales Pavilion at the Paris International Exposition, 1878.

Bone china, diam. 9 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (24.3 cm). Purchase, Robert L. Isaacson Gift, 1991 (1991.322)

The prestige of the Prince of Wales Pavilion inspired all those responsible for the architecture, the interior, and the exhibits to work toward the ultimate refinement of design and greatest technical virtuosity. Mintons made a specialty of imitating the metalworking techniques as well as the shapes and colors of Eastern artifacts. The plate at the left displays glazes in enamel-like hues and gold accents.

Mintons, English (Stoke-on-Trent), 1793–present. Vase with bamboo decoration. Ca. 1880.

Earthenware, h. 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ in. (25.1 cm). Purchase, Robert L. Isaacson Gift, 1989 (1989.232)

Mintons's dazzling display at the 1878 Paris Exposition demonstrated the range of demanding and showy techniques developed by the firm. While the historicist pieces commanded great respect for the manufacturer's mastery of difficult procedures, the Japanese-style designs were admired for their novelty.





Left: Standing cup with cover (“coupe Couty”). French (Sèvres), 1879, designed as a prize at the Paris International Exposition, 1878.

Porcelain, h. 19 3/8 in. (49.2 cm). Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts, 1990 (1990.238a,b).

Right: Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, modeler, French, 1824–1887. Alfred Thompson Gobert, decorator, French, act. 1849–91. Vase with *pâte-sur-pâte* decoration. Sèvres, 1883 (manufacture); 1885 (decoration).

Porcelain, h. 14 in. (35.6 cm). Gift of the family of Richard Butler, 1902 (02.8a,b)

Commercial manufacturers in France greatly envied the imperial and state-owned firms for their freedom from financial pressures, but this freedom led them to neglect the development of sustainable markets. The products of the Sèvres factory were prestige pieces, conceived as highly complex works of art, and their function was for exhibition, presentation, and display. Limited numbers of the “coupe Couty” (cup designed by Couty) were made as prizes for exhibitors at the 1878 Paris Exposition. The *pâte-sur-pâte* covered vase was presented by the French government to Richard Butler, a member of the American committee responsible for the site, construction, and dedication of the Statue of Liberty.





**Josiah Wedgwood and Sons, English.
Swan vases. Staffordshire, 1876 and 1883.**

Lead- and tin-glazed earthenware, h. (each)
54 in. (137.2 cm). Gift of Gyora and
Judith S. Novak, in honor of David T. Siegel,
1995 (1995.288.1a-c, 2a-c)

Like Mintons, Wedgwood produced a range of large-scale, sculptural majolica pieces, of which these swan vases and their variants (with putti on the covers in place of the swans) were the most imposing. One of the putto-mounted vases, painted by Émile Lessore (1805–1876), was shown by the firm at the 1878 Paris International Exposition. The designer of these swan vases is not recorded, but the French sculptor Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse (1824–1887) has been proposed.

The majolica technique is most strongly associated with the English Mintons and Wedgwood factories, but the credit for its revival and development must go to the French émigrés who worked in England during the middle years of the century. The first Mintons pieces were shown at the Great Exhibition in 1851, and by 1853 the Baltimore factory of E. W. Bennett was in majolica production.



Lucien Falize, designer, French, 1839–1897.
Léon Chédeville, sculptor, French, d. 1883.
Le Roy et Fils, clockmakers, French,
1828–98. Clock. Paris, 1881.

Silver, gold, semiprecious stones, enamel,
amethysts, and diamonds, h. 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (45.1 cm).
Purchase, Mrs. Charles Wrightsman Gift, 1991
(1991.113a–f)

Lucien Falize, French, 1839–1897. Design
for enameled clock. Ca. 1882.

Pen, ink, and watercolor, 23 x 13 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. (58.3 x
35 cm). The Elisha Whittelsey Collection,
The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1991 (1991.1254)

Clocks provided an ideal opportunity to create the quintessential exhibition piece. The movement could display ingenious features—which, as leading Parisian clockmakers, Le Roy et Fils were well placed to provide—and the case could be decorated very elaborately with sculptural and architectonic motifs, as if it were a miniature building.

This magnificent clock was apparently not shown at an exposition; rather, it was made for Alfred Morrison (1821–1897), millionaire patron and connoisseur. The case is in the form of a Late Gothic church tower, and the base is taken from the design for the tomb of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany in the Abbaye Saint-Denis. This is the most complex and ambitious of Falize's precious-metal works, encompassing a wealth of skills and research to devise the historical-revival design. In Morrison, Falize had the perfect patron, in that he was immensely rich as well as a connoisseur of craftsmanship and technique, particularly in metalworking and enamel.





Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, designer, British, 1836–1912. Johnstone, Norman and Company, manufacturer, English, act. 1880–1900. Settee for the music room of the Marquand house, New York City, 1885.

Mahogany, boxwood, sandalwood, cedar, ivory, mother-of-pearl, and brass, l. 58 ¼ in. (148 cm). Bequest of Elizabeth Love Godwin, 1975 (1975.219)

This handsome Neoclassical settee comes from a large suite of furniture commissioned by Henry Gurdon Marquand (1819–1902) for the music room of his home in New York City. It was among the most important artistic houses of its day, along with the Vanderbilt and Rockefeller mansions. Marquand's music room, entirely in Aesthetic Movement style, needed the collaboration of a truly impressive artistic team. Frederic, Lord Leighton, and Sir Edward Poynter—who, like Alma-Tadema, were highly successful Royal Academicians—contributed painted decoration, and the sculptor Edward Onslow Ford executed the andirons,

but the room was dominated by the elements of this suite, which included a wonderful grand piano (on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).

Alma-Tadema was intensely interested in design and decoration. He planned and furnished both his own homes. The suite he designed for Marquand reflects his passion for ancient Rome. Throughout his paintings he worked to invent fitting backgrounds for incidents of Roman daily life, and here, for Marquand, he translated these imaginings to the equipping of a New York mansion.



Luc-Olivier Merson, designer, French, 1846–1920. Eugène Stanislaus Oudinot, maker, French, 1827–1889. *La danse des fiançailles* (three-light window for the Bell apartment, New York City). Passy, 1885.

Stained glass, h. 8 ft. 7 ¼ in. (2.6 m). Bequest of Adelaide Mott Bell, 1906 (06.292a–c)

Merson was an immensely successful artist and decorative designer who was in great demand. He was commissioned by Isaac Bell to supply stained glass for Bell's residence in the

Knickerbocker Building, on Fifth Avenue at Twenty-eighth Street, one of the first cooperative apartment houses. The scene of the window apparently depicts a party celebrating a couple's betrothal, as is indicated by its title. In engaging the team of Merson and Oudinot to supply this Florentine Renaissance-style window, Bell was following the example of Henry Gurdon Marquand (see opposite for a settee from the Marquand house), whose staircase windows were portraits of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci, also Florentine sub-

jects, and William K. Vanderbilt. Large-scale windows for domestic decoration had a considerable impact at successive international exhibitions—Merson was a medal winner in Paris in 1889—and were very fashionable for important residences in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The American artists Louis Comfort Tiffany and John La Farge devised a more modern look for stained glass in both technique and subject matter, in contrast with the historicism of the Merson-Oudinot partnership.



Tiffany and Company, American (New York City), 1853—present. Loving cup. Shown at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893.

Silver, amboyna inlaid with exotic woods and mother-of-pearl, and turquoise, h. 9 in. (22.9 cm). Gift of Jack Steinberg, in memory of Mrs. Regina Perlmutter Steinberg, 1973 (1973.170)

The bacchanalian motifs decorating this large display piece suggest that the inspiration is classical, but the shape and the exotic materials are typical of the American Age of Opulence, already coming to an end by this date. Tiffany continued the world's fair tradition of making large-scale and highly ornamented prestige pieces for exhibition, but the Arts and Crafts Movement in America was tending toward a very different course, influenced by William Morris and the newly established craft guilds in Britain.

Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, Belgian, 1858—1910. Cabinet-vitrine. Liège, 1899.

Red narra wood and ash, copper, and enamel, h. 98 in. (248.9 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Macklowe, 1981 (1981.512.4)

Belgian artists were at the forefront of the European Art Nouveau movement and the allied field of Symbolist painting. Serrurier-Bovy, an architect and furniture designer, occupied an important position as the first Belgian master of Art Nouveau, closely followed by Henri van de Velde and Victor Horta. The echoes of structural Gothic in the supports and the glazing bars of the glass doors hark back to English midcentury designs, which also influenced the Parisian Hector Guimard at this same time. The cabinet was shown at the opening of Serrurier-Bovy's Paris showroom, where it dominated the dining-room display in his inaugural exhibition, entitled "L'Art dans l'Habitation."





Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, designer, British, 1857–1941. Turnbull and Stockdale, manufacturer, English (Ramsbottom, Lancashire), for Liberty and Company, London. Tulip- and bird-printed velveteen. 1890s.

Cotton, l. 94 ½ in. (240 cm). Purchase, Friends of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Gifts, 1990 (1990.155)

Voysey supplemented his small architectural practice by designing all kinds of domestic decorative items: furniture, metalwares, wallpaper, carpets, and textiles. His patterns are distinctive, with stylized plants and birds, in a range of muted, subtle colors.

Edward Colonna, designer, French, 1862–1948. Art Nouveau Bing, manufacturer, French (Paris), 1895–1904. One of a pair of palisander side chairs. 1899.

Wood, silver, gold, and rose damask upholstery, h. 35 1/4 in. Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1926 (26.228.5,.6)

Siegfried Bing's artist-designers were all distinguished contributors to the development of European Art Nouveau, but his sojourn in America to investigate and report on the decorative arts had given him the vision to range farther afield in his search for designers.

Colonna, who had been in the United States since 1882, was recruited by Bing along with Louis Sullivan and L. C. Tiffany. Bing's venture was extensively reported in design and decoration periodicals, and the display at the Paris Centennial Exposition in 1900 was regarded as a triumph for his gallery and its designers. For that display, Colonna created a *salon* complete with furniture and all its decoration, including this elegant chair, which expresses the essence of Art Nouveau without any of the excess of ornament sometimes employed.



Archibald Knox, designer, British, 1864–1933. W. H. Haseler and Company, manufacturer, English (Birmingham), for Liberty and Company, London. Claret jug. 1900–1901.

Silver and chrysopease, h. 11 7/8 in. (30 cm). Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1992 (1992.346)

Like Voysey, Knox was also an architect by training. He became a prolific and inventive metalwork designer, and his creations were shown at the 1900 Paris Centennial Exposition.

Liberty and Company started in 1875 as an Oriental warehouse, with large stocks of Japanese artifacts and textiles, and became one of the most successful of the department stores, in part because of its policy of commissioning designs from leading artists and architects for its products. As well as the artists represented here, Arthur Lazenby Liberty had persuaded E. W. Godwin (see p. 36) to manage the artistic-dress department, which was stocked with Grecian-style robes and embroidered gowns made from the soft Oriental silks that were Liberty's specialty. The firm also continued to use the avant-garde furniture designs developed by Christopher Dresser's Art Furnishers' Alliance (see p. 28).

The parallels with those exhibited at Siegfried Bing's Paris gallery, *L'Art Nouveau*, are striking (left).



Left: James Powell and Sons, designers, British. Whitefriars Glassworks, manufacturers, English (London), 1834–1980. Free-blown, ripple-fluted, long-stemmed vase. Ca. 1890.

Shaded greenish glass, h. 12 in. (30.5 cm). Purchase, Robert L. Isaacson Gift, 1994 (1994.282)

Right: Louis Comfort Tiffany, designer, American, 1848–1933. Tiffany Studios, manufacturer, American (Corona, Queens, New York), 1910–20. Vase. Ca. 1917.

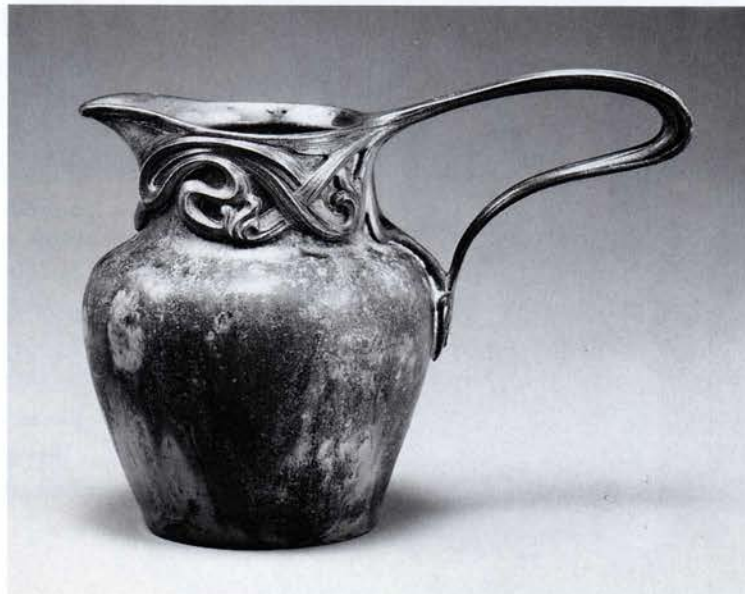
Glass, h. 13 in. (31.3 cm). Gift of Mr. and Mrs. David G. Martin, 1987 (1987.140)

Tiffany is by far the better known of these two glassmakers, but Powell was doing very similar experiments at the same date, and sometimes just in anticipation of Tiffany's introduction of a new shape or style. These two pieces form a bridge between the Art Nouveau initiatives in London and Paris, since Powell glass was retailed by Liberty and Company, and Tiffany glass by Bing at his gallery, L'Art Nouveau. The idea behind these flowing shapes was to achieve the appearance of spontaneity characteristic of ancient glass.

Edward Colonna, designer of silver mounts, French, 1862–1948. Alexandre Bigot, potter, French, 1862–1927. Art Nouveau Bing, producer, French (Paris), 1895–1904. Pitcher. Ca. 1899.

Stoneware, *grès flammé*, with silver mounts, h. 3 1/8 in. (7.9 cm). Purchase, Edward C. Moore Jr. Gift, 1926 (26.228.7)

The silver mounts are typical of Colonna's sinuous style of metalwork, which has the delicacy of jewelry even when used for furniture or, as here, to provide the handle for this subtly glazed stoneware jug. The Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris has an example of this design purchased from Siegfried Bing in 1900.



G. Callot, designer, French, 1823–1905.
Design for a haircomb with swan mounts.
Ca. 1900.

Pencil, pen and ink, and gouache on buff paper,
7 3/4 x 12 in. (19.7 x 30.5 cm). The Elisha
Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey
Fund, 1953 (53.670.6)

René Jules Lalique, designer and maker,
French, 1860–1945. Brooch. Ca. 1905.

Greenish gold, diamonds, green glass, and fins of
plique-à-jour (open-backed) enamel, l. 4 7/8 in.
(12.4 cm). Signed: LALIQUE. Bequest of Mary
Kellogg Hopkins, 1941 (45.28.2)



Lalique was the most celebrated and inventive of the Art Nouveau jewelry designers, being particularly adventurous in his use of materials. The brooch at left is composed of two motifs, each with eight interlaced fish gliding toward a central gem. Lalique's masterful technique incorporated brilliant-cut diamonds set in the gold bodies of the fish, molded, opaque green-glass heads, and open-backed enamel to create a shimmering surface of fish scales and sea colors. The popularity of this style of jewelry was comparatively brief but intense, and Lalique had many imitators. G. Callot's book of similar designs, from which the swan comb above is taken, shows the originality of an artist rather than the slavish copying of a commercial imitator.

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Opposite: Joseph Nash, British, 1808–1878. *The Hardware Section at the Great Exhibition* (detail). Dated 1852. Color lithograph. Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941 (41. 123. 3 [3]).

The Birmingham firm of Jennens and Betteridge featured prominently in the hardware section of the Great Exhibition of 1851. Their japanned and gilt papier-mâché, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, is as highly prized by today's collectors as it was by the Victorians. Empress Eugénie loved it, and Queen Mary had a large number of very fine examples. The piano and sleigh-shaped *capitonné* chair were among the more ambitious of the firm's products.



HARDWARE

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MANUFACTURERS TO THE QUEEN
LONDON
& BIRMINGHAM.

NEEDLE WORK

FETHAM & CO

FETHAM & CO

JENNENS & CO

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