

DOMESTIC TREASURES

TIFFANY ART GLASS FOR THE PUBLIC

FAMILY GUIDE

THE CHARLES HOSMER MORSE MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

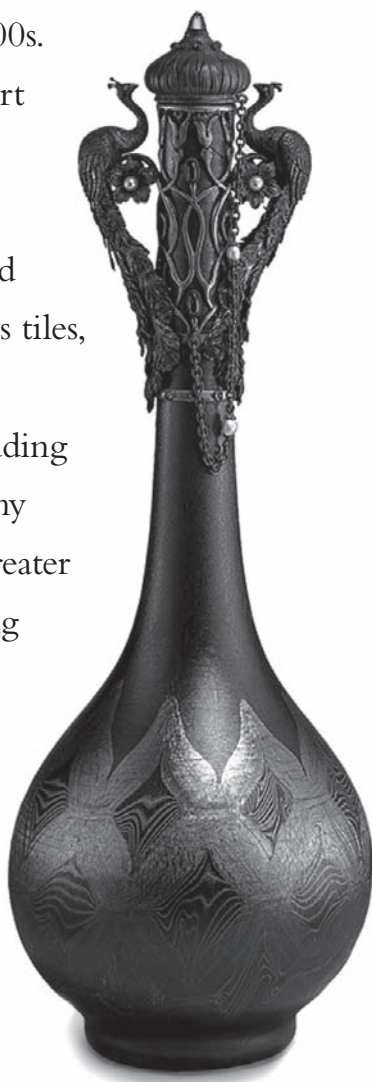
Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848 – 1933) was one of the most important and influential American artists of the late 1800s and early 1900s.

In 1893, Tiffany introduced his “art glass” to the general public. This art glass represented the highest achievement in taste and style and followed Tiffany’s work with glass tiles, glass moldings, and leaded-glass windows. Tiffany’s art glass, including vases and tableware, helped Tiffany achieve his goal of providing a greater number of people with something beautiful for their homes.



Left: Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933).

Right: Decanter, 1898. Luster glass, Tiffany Studios (66-010).



WHAT'S IN A NAME? Tiffany chose one word to describe his works in glass, enamel, and pottery: *Favrile*. *Favrile* comes from an old English word meaning handmade.

About Blown Glass

A TIMELESS RECIPE

To make glass, mix the following ingredients:

- Sand
- Soda ash
- Limestone

Heat to 2,500 degrees.

WHAT'S HOT, WHAT'S NOT

Temperature is so important in glassmaking that three furnaces are used in the process. After the dry ingredients of glass are combined together, the mixture is heated in an enormous furnace known as a **working furnace**. The dry mixture is then heated to 2,500 degrees Fahrenheit to properly fuse the individual components of glass together and transform it into a hot molten mixture.

When working with glass, it is important that the glass stay at a constant 1,800 degrees. So while working with glass, artisans use a small reheating furnace known as the **glory**

hole, a name that pays honor to the beautiful object that will eventually emerge from the furnace.

Once a glass object is completed, it must

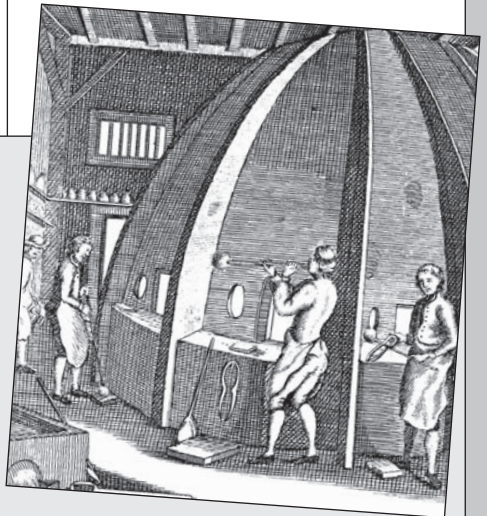
be placed in an **annealing oven** to cool. This oven allows finished pieces of glass to cool gradually over time. If glass objects are not annealed, they will crack or break.

CREATING BLOWN GLASS

Glassblowing is a team activity that employs the talents of many artisans. Typically, a group of seven makes up one **shop** in the glassblowing industry. The boss within this shop is known as a **gaffer**, which is an old word for grandfather.

GLASSBLOWING BASICS

- First, an artisan collects a gob of molten glass, known as a **gather**, from the working furnace on the end of a metal blowpipe, a long, usually five-foot, hollow rod.
- Next, the molten glass is blown, rolled, pulled, and manipulated with various tools into the shape desired. During this phase, the object makes frequent trips to the glory hole.
- When the object is shaped, it is transferred from the blowpipe to a pontil rod, a long, solid iron rod, for the finishing touches.

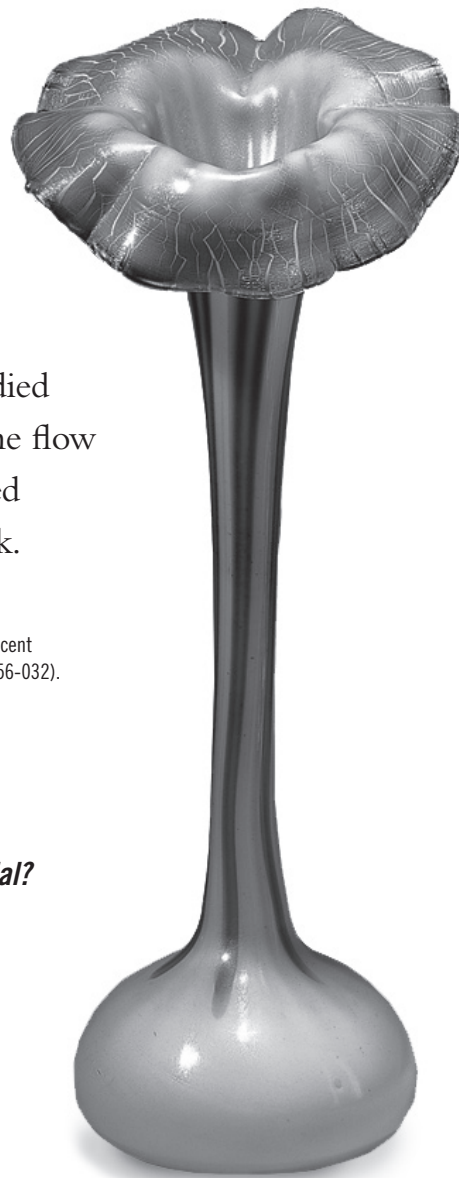


About Tiffany Art Glass

TECHNIQUES AND SOURCES

Ideas for Tiffany's art glass pieces came from a variety of places. And, of course, there was no greater source of inspiration for Tiffany than nature. He studied plants, flowers, rocks, and the flow of lava and then incorporated these things into his artwork.

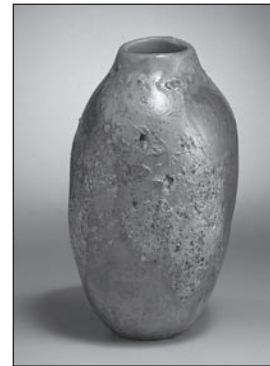
Right: Vase, 1900. Jack-in-the-pulpit floriform, Opalescent glass with iridescent blossom, Louis Comfort Tiffany (56-032).



Tiffany was fascinated by the art of ancient worlds. Archaeology was a new and popular science during the 18th and 19th centuries, and Tiffany most certainly saw many objects from archaeological digs. These two types of Tiffany art glass were inspired by such finds:

CYPRIOTE GLASS:

This glass, its name derived from the island nation, Cyprus, has the rough, irregular, or pitted surface – and also the unusual sheen – that was common in glass buried for centuries. It is believed that Tiffany reproduced this ancient surface by rolling molten glass in crushed glass crumbs.



Above: Vase, 1898. Cypriote glass, Louis Comfort Tiffany (56-024).

TELL EL-AMARNA:

This Egyptian-inspired glass from Tiffany Studios has simple neck decorations and is based on Tiffany's knowledge of the ancient vases recovered from the Pharaoh Akhenaten excavation in Tell el-Amarna.



Right: Vase, 1914. Tell el-Amarna, Luster glass, Louis Comfort Tiffany (70-023).

What makes Tiffany art glass special?

- Gem-like colors
- Original forms
- Surface finishes
- Variety

DID YOU KNOW?

- Sand is the main ingredient of glass.
- Glassmaking is believed to have been invented in Mesopotamia – now Iraq – 4,500 years ago.
- The technique of glassblowing began in the Roman Empire around 50 B.C.
- Tiffany's art glass has practical uses but is more often purely decorative.

Family Activities

SCAVENGER HUNT

Tiffany created art glass in wonderful shapes, sizes, colors, and designs. Can you find:

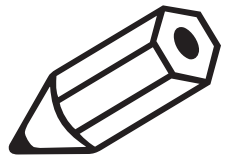
1. A vase that looks like lava.
2. A vase that looks like it might be a genie's home.
3. The largest work in the exhibition.
4. The smallest work in the exhibition.
5. Objects that look like they might be inspired by the view from a glass-bottom boat.
6. A vase that is pink.
7. Vases decorated with tulips.
8. Vases decorated with zigzag designs.
9. Decorative tiles.
10. Vases decorated with vines.

ANSWER KEY:

1. Case #11 (65-029) and Case #18 (1999-115)
2. Case #26 (66-010)
3. Case #25 (55-002)
4. Salt dish on table
5. Case #4 [(62-005) and (56-005)]
6. Case #12 (57-004)
7. Case #22 [(71-001) and (55-006)]
8. Case #2 [(70-023) and (54-040)]
9. Most of Case #27
10. Case #28 [(79-529) and (55-004)]

DRAWING ACTIVITY

Draw your favorite Tiffany art glass piece from the exhibition *Domestic Treasures: Tiffany Art Glass for the Public*.



EXPLORE TIFFANY'S CAREER!

1848

Tiffany is born in New York

1870s

Exhibits paintings at National Academy and Century Club



1879- 1892

Hired for important jobs in interior design

1893

Exhibits chapel interior, a mosaic masterpiece, at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago



1893

Introduces art glass to the public

1894

Awarded patent for use of the trademark "Favrile"

1899

Introduces leaded-glass lamps



1904

Introduces pottery; begins designing jewelry

1905

Completes Laurelton Hall on Long Island



1933

Tiffany dies in New York

Word Puzzle

Fill in the blanks, using the clues and the words below.

1. The first furnace used in the glassblowing process.

2. The term used to describe Tiffany's vases and tableware.

3. The reheating furnace used in glassblowing.

4. The main ingredient of glass.

5. The team leader in glassblowing.

6. The term Tiffany used that means handmade.

7. The tool used by artisans to make hollow vessels.

8. The modern-day name of the area where glassmaking was invented.

9. A naturally-occurring form of glass.

10. A tool used by artisans while finishing a blown-glass object.

11. A group of seven makes up one of these.

12. Tiffany glass inspired by archaeological digs.

art glass
blowpipe
Cypriote
Favrite

gaffer
glory hole
Iraq
obsidian

pontil rod
sand
shop
working furnace



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