

GALLERY VIII
WATERCOLORS FROM
LOUIS COMFORT TIFFANY'S
“LITTLE ARCADIA”

OBJECT GUIDE



Bell peppers, c. 1901. Watercolor, graphite on paper; Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924 (89-003).

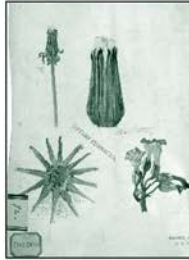
Louis Comfort Tiffany's idyllic enamel department was located seven miles outside the New York City borough of Manhattan. Watercolor studies, examining plant species in detail, lined the walls where, between 1900 and 1902, designers Alice Carmen Gouvy (1863–1924) and Lillian A. Palmié (1873–1944) worked through their ideas for works to be transformed into shimmering enamels, richly glazed pottery, and crisp bronze work. Employees at the Tiffany Studios workshops in Manhattan somewhat enviously referred to the Corona department, located in the New York City borough of Queens, as “little Arcadia,” noting that the artists there were able to freely pursue their creativity without the stresses of Tiffany's more commercially driven workshops.

1) Bell peppers, c. 1901
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower left: A. C. G.
Marks: [ENAM]EL DEPT. /
[S.] G. CO. / TIFFANY FURNACES.
(89-003)

2) Top to bottom:

Dandelion,
c. 1900

Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Probably Alice
Carmen Gouvy,
1863–1924
Marks: TIFFANY
FURNACES. /
124 Pottery /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S.G. CO.
Paper labels: 92. / *Dandlion* [sic]
(89-009)



Skunk Cabbage,
c. 1901

Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Alice Carmen
Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, left sheet,
lower right: A. C. Gouvy
Signed, right sheet, lower middle:
A. C. Gouvy
Marks: *Skunk Cabbage*
Marks, both sheets:
TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.
Paper labels: SKUNK / *Cabbage* / 205.
Museum purchase with funds
donated by Lillian Nassau LLC
(2020-007)



3) *Bittersweet*, November 1900

Watercolor, graphite on paper
Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower center:
A. C. Gouvy - Nov- 1900
Marks: TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
TIFFANY FURNACES.
Paper labels: 28. / BITTER- / SWEET
(89-017)

4) Top to bottom:

Cedar Berry,
c. 1901

Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Alice Carmen
Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower center: A.C. Gouvy
Marks: TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
Stourbridge
Paper labels: 59. / CEDAR / BERRY
(89-011)



Cedar, c. 1901

Watercolor, graphite on paper
Probably Alice Carmen Gouvy,
1863–1924
Marks: TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
Cedar
Paper label: 58.
(89-010)

*“There they sit with
snow-covered trees
out of the windows
and beautiful studies
on the walls, and
vases of seed pods
and dried leaves and
everything both in
nature and art.”*

—Clara Driscoll letter
describing Tiffany’s
“little Arcadia,” 1902

The Artists

Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Educated in her hometown at the
Cleveland School of Art, Gouvy
moved to Manhattan in 1896 to
continue study at the Art Students
League. Following her graduation
two years later, she began working
in Louis Comfort Tiffany’s newly
formed enamel department.
By 1902 she, along with the
department, found their creative
niche in Corona, Queens. Gouvy
became the head of the department
in 1903, experimenting with
enamel, pottery, and bronze design
until 1907 when she returned to
Cleveland to teach.

Lillian A. Palmié, 1873–1944

Palmié and her twin sister Marion
were born in the New York City
borough of Brooklyn. Around 1897,
both talented artists went to work
for Tiffany as clerks. Then, Marion
moved to Manhattan to work
under Clara Driscoll’s supervision,
and Lillian settled in the enamel
department in Corona, Queens until
at least 1903. The Palmié family
owned a hotel in Point Pleasant,
New Jersey that was frequented by
many designers at Tiffany Studios.
Lillian was a talented designer
for a variety of materials. Driscoll
mentions her painting pottery as
well as her successful design of a
wild carrot candlestick in bronze.
In 1910, she was designing jewelry.
Her wedding announcement to
Earl Cox, a former accountant at
Corning Glass Company, in 1923
described her as “a successful
enamel designer in an experimental
laboratory at Tiffany Furnaces.”

Women’s Work

Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) promoted women’s talents in the decorative arts and publicly employed them. Most notable were the female employees—referred to as the “Tiffany Girls”—supervised by Clara Driscoll (1861–1944), head of the Women’s Glass Cutting Department at Tiffany Studios in Manhattan since the 1890s. While Driscoll’s artists worked on large commissions like windows and mosaics early on, by 1900 an expansion of the overall company led to honing artists into specialized departments. Driscoll directed a team making lamps and fancy goods in Manhattan. A separate department, focused on Tiffany’s special projects in enamel, then pottery, opened in Corona, Queens. Here workers could be both close to the production facilities and far from the watch of the corporate financial managers.

- 5) *Cabbage*,
August 1902
Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Lillian A. Palmié,
1873–1944



Signed, lower right: *L. A. Palmié* /
Aug. 1902
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.
Paper labels: 89. / *Cabbage*
(89-020)

- 6) *Vines*, October 1901
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower right: *A. C. Gouvy* /
Oct 1901
(89-004)

- 7) *Tomatoes*, September 13, 1902
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower right: *A. C. Gouvy* /
Sep. 13 1902
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES.*
(89-021)

- 8) *Top to bottom:*

Tulips, c. 1901
Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Probably
Lillian A. Palmié,
1873–1944
Mark: *TIFFANY*
FURNACES.
Paper label: *TULIPS. / 216.*
(89-008)



Wild Cherry, c. 1901
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Probably Alice Carmen Gouvy,
1863–1924
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
Cherry Wild
Paper label: 56.
(89-016)

- 9) *Top to bottom:*

Beach Plum,
c. 1901
Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Alice Carmen
Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower center: *A. C. Gouvy*
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
Plum (Beach)
Paper label: 184.
(89-018)



Wild Cherry, c. 1901
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Probably Alice Carmen Gouvy,
1863–1924
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.
Paper labels: 55. / *Cherry / (Wild)*
(89-006)

*“No one ever
comes and asks them
when they will
finish a thing or how
much it will cost to
execute their designs.”*

—Clara Driscoll letter
describing Tiffany’s
“little Arcadia,” 1902

Working Documents

The watercolor studies, though beautiful works of art, were also working documents. The various ink and pencil markings found on the studies reveal the collaboration between the primary artwork, signed by the artist, and the assorted stamps and labels reflecting the production process. Serving as the first step in portraying naturalistic details, the imagery would be translated into three dimensional forms produced at the glasshouse, kiln, or foundry at Corona, Queens. The watercolors were created for the enamel department at Tiffany’s Stourbridge Glass Company (1893–1902) as it was being renamed Tiffany Furnaces, Inc. (1902–20), resulting in the two stamps on the studies. The change of name reflected the addition of specialized facilities for manufacturing pottery and metalwork as well as glass. The paper labels most likely indicate a sorting system used for reference during the stages of production.

- 10) *Top to bottom:*

Violets, c. 1901
Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Alice Carmen
Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower
center:
Alice C. Gouvy
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
Violets
Paper labels: 232. / *Violets*
(89-007)



Magnolia, c. 1901
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Alice Carmen Gouvy, 1863–1924
Signed, lower right: *AC Gouvy*
Marks: [Mag]nolia /
TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.
Paper labels: 154. / *Magnolia*
(1998-036)

- 11) *Berries*, September 12, 1902
Watercolor, graphite on paper
Lillian A. Palmié, 1873–1944
Signed: *L. A. Palmié* /
Sept. 12th 1902.
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO. /
Berries
Paper labels: 34. / 34 / *Berries.*
(89-015)

- 12) *Eggplant*,
September 1902
Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Lillian A. Palmié,
1873–1944
Signed, lower right: *L. A. Palmié* /
Sept. 1902
Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
TIFFANY FURNACES. /
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.
Paper labels: 109. / *Egg / Plant*
(89-014)



13) *Chestnut Fruit*,
c. 1901

Watercolor,
graphite on paper
Lillian A. Palmié,
1873–1944

Signed, lower
right: *L. A. Palmié*

Marks: *TIFFANY FURNACES. /*
ENAMEL DEPT. / S. G. CO.

Paper labels: 73. / *Chestnut /*
Fruit

(89-019)



*“Their work is,
practically, the private
enterprise of a rich
man, and they never
consider anything but
the question of beauty,
while I have to consider
the cost of production at
every step.... But there is
this comfort, I can earn
more than any of them
and that is something...”*

—Clara Driscoll letter describing
Tiffany’s “little Arcadia,” 1902



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