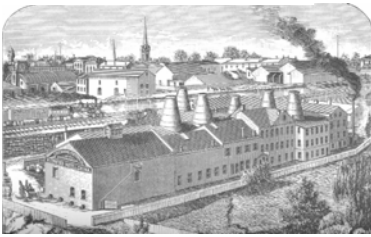


TRENTON POTTERIES

Newsletter of the
Potteries of Trenton Society



The University of Richmond Museum Opens Faces & Flowers: Painting on Lenox China

The University of Richmond Museums presents *Faces & Flowers: Painting on Lenox China* on view from February 19 through June 28, 2009, in the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature. The exhibition includes more than seventy objects made by Ceramic Art Company/Lenox China and drawn from public and private collections, featuring china plates, vases, and decorative wares with exquisite paintings of orchids, figures, idealized women, and landscapes.

Walter Scott Lenox (American, 1859-1920) started the Ceramic Art Company in 1889 in Trenton, New Jersey (becoming Lenox China in 1906), with the ambition to achieve "the perfection of American porcelain." His goal was to make art, and he chose the best artisans he could find — specialists in clay bodies, firing techniques, design, and decorating. Lenox recruited for his company the premier European, English, and American porcelain painters of his time, including Bruno Geyer (Austrian, active late 19th – early 20th century), William Morley (British, circa 1869-1934), and Sturgis Laurence (American, 1870-1961).

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries china painters mixed their own colors by grinding metallic oxides — such as blue from cobalt, green from copper, and yellow from antimony — to powder form and combining them with ground glass and a variety of aromatic oils that provided the medium for laying the colors on a glazed porcelain surface. The plates were embel-

lished with gold and enamel decorative borders adding visual interest and opulence to the final product. The quality and creativity shown in the wares from Ceramic Art Company/Lenox China surpassed the best porcelain produced in the Old World at the time.

The exhibition highlights the remarkable talents of Lenox's china painters with works by the firm's leading artists made for some of America's foremost citizens, including orchid fancier Charles G. Roebling, son of the great bridge builder, and Newark industrialist Franklin Murphy, who was governor of New Jersey from 1902 to 1905.

In her catalogue essay, Ellen Denker states, "Paintings on china offer the confluence of many arts and sciences — the form and substance of translucent porcelain enhanced by idealized nature rendered in metallic oxides. Few entrepreneurs, fearing the costs and disappointments of failure, have yielded to the siren call of creating exquisitely painted porcelain, but many connoisseurs desire the results and are willing to pay dearly for the privilege of possession."

Organized and circulated by the University of Richmond Museums, the exhibition was curated by Ellen Denker, an independent scholar. An illustrated catalogue with an essay by the curator and published by the University of Richmond Museums is available. Following its venue at the

(Continued on page 2)

Contents

The University of Richmond Museum Opens Faces & Flowers: Painting on Lenox China.....1

Ceramics in America 2008
Reviewed by George Miller.....3

2009 Symposium: Art Revealed
By Industry4

The Potteries of Trenton Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the study and preservation of Trenton's ceramic past. Officers: President – Patricia Madrigal; Treasurer – Jay Lewis; Secretary – Brenda Springsted. Board: Ellen Denker, Richard Hunter, Meta Janowitz, Jay Lewis, Emma Lewis, William Liebeknecht, George Miller, Brenda Springsted, Rebecca White. Newsletter Editor: Patricia Madrigal

Faces and Flowers



William H. Morley (British, circa 1869-1934), Lenox China, Trenton, New Jersey, for the Roebing Family, *Cattleya mantinii*, 1906, painted with polychrome glazes on porcelain plate with etched-gold border (with the Charles G. Roebing monogram), 10 3/8 inches diameter, Private collection.

(Continued from page 1)

Lora Robins Gallery, the exhibition will be on view at the Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, North Carolina, from August 28, 2009, through January 31, 2010.

Programming

February 18, 2009, 7 to 9 p.m.

7 p.m., Lecture and exhibition walk-through, Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, *Faces & Flowers: American Painting on Porcelain*, Ellen Denker, independent scholar and curator of the exhibition

8 to 9 p.m., Reception and preview of *Faces & Flowers: Painting on Lenox China* Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature

February 20, 2009, 2 to 4 p.m.,

Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature, *China Painting Workshop* taught by Amy Talley, educator and owner of *All Fired Up*, a ceramics studio in Carytown, Richmond.

In this hands-on painting workshop, create your own painted china plate. Limited space, pre-register by calling Heather Campbell, Curator of Museum Programs, University of Richmond Museums, at 804-287-6324, or email hcampbel@richmond.edu

All programs are free and open to the public.

University of Richmond Museums comprises the Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art, the Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center, and the Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature. Admission to all museums is free and open to the public. For group visits and tours, please call 804-287-6424 at least two weeks prior to your visit for reservations. Call 804-289-8276 for information and directions or visit our website at museums.richmond.edu

The Joel and Lila Harnett Museum of Art is located in the George M. Modlin Center for the Arts. Museum hours: (1/13/09 through 4/26/09): Tuesday through Sunday, 1 to 5 pm. Summer hours (4/29-5/15/09): Wednesday through Friday, 1 to 4 p.m. Closed Spring Break (3/7-16/09), Easter Weekend (4/11-13/09), and Summer Break (5/16-8/19/09).

The Joel and Lila Harnett Print Study Center is also located in the George M. Modlin Center for the Arts. Museum hours: (1/13/09 through 4/4/09): Wednesday through Saturday, 1 to 3 pm., and by appointment (804-287-6424). Closed same schedule as above. The Lora Robins Gallery of Design from Nature is located

(Continued on page 5)

Ceramics in America 2008

Rob Hunter has again produced another great addition to the ceramics and archaeological literature with the publication of *Ceramics in America 2008*. As with past volumes, this one has superb color photographs by Gavin Ashworth.

Now in its eighth year of publication, *Ceramics in America* is considered the journal of record for historical ceramic scholarship in the American context and is intended for collectors, historical archaeologists, curators, decorative arts students, social historians, and contemporary potters. The 2008 volume of *Ceramics in America* features articles on 18th-century New York and New Jersey salt-glazed stoneware, a fascinating ceramic cargo from the "Blue China Wreck", 19th-century ceramic consumption patterns in the Anglo-American merchant trade, and commemorative ceramics made for the 1907, 1957, and 2007 anniversaries of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia. Included are many additional articles detailing important new discoveries in the ceramic field, scholarly reviews of recently published ceramic books, and a bibliography of ceramics publications for 2007.

I would like to point out that the New York stonewares from the African Burial Ground were lost because the laboratory for that project was in the New York World Trade Towers that were destroyed on September 11, 2001. Fortunately, Meta Janowitz had them photographed by Rob Tucher, so this information has been preserved.

Another notable contribution is by Neil Ewins who used a sales ledger, an account book and a day-book from Cork and Edge, a mid-size Staffordshire potter, dating from 1848 to 1867, to examine the marketing of

their wares. The distribution map showing the location of Cork and Edge's customers in England, Europe, North America, Australia and the West Indies is most revealing. Neal uses some of that data in an attempt to document when American tastes in ceramics departed from those of English consumers.

"Ceramics from the 'Blue China' Wreck" by Hawk Tolson, Ellen Gerth, and Neil Cunningham Dobson will be controversial to some because a commercial company salvaged the wreck. It was over 1000 feet below sea level and discovered when a stoneware jar showed up in a trawler's drag net. The photographs of the ceramic part of the cargo are pretty amazing, as most of the pieces appear to be intact. According to the authors, the pristine nature of the deposit is being badly disturbed by continued commercial fishing activity, so they decided to salvage a larger sample of the ceramics and glass artifacts. Unfortunately, nothing from the wreck or historical documentation has been able to identify the wreck or when it went down. The ideal situation for wreck assemblages is to know the date that it occurred and thus the site would date the artifacts. In this case, the artifacts date the wreck. The ceramics are well described with excellent photographs.

Sumpter Priddy III and Joan Quinn's article on the Monroe Punch Bowl owned by the James Monroe Memorial Foundation is a wonderful piece of historical research on how the bowl came about. It also documents the use of the lithographic process being used on French porcelain a good twenty to thirty years before the Staffordshire potters were using lithographic prints. This article is an excellent read.

Reviewed by George Miller

*The journal can be ordered directly from Antiques Collectors Club
www.antique-acc.com or from Amazon.com.*

*For more information see
www.chipstone.org*

2009 Spring Symposium: *Art Revealed by Industry*

Don't Miss this year's POTS/New Jersey State Museum Symposium on Saturday, April 4, 2009. This year's topic is *Art Revealed by Industry: Painters, Sculptors and Designers Create Trenton's Ceramics*.

Trenton's ceramics – whether useful or ornamental – begin with aesthetic concepts generated by painters, sculptors, and designers. The 2009 ceramics symposium co-sponsored by the Potteries of Trenton Society and the New Jersey State Museum will examine the role of artists and designers in developing the wares produced in Trenton.

For background, Diana Stradling, an independent scholar, will discuss the work of modelers in developing designs for New Jersey's rockingham wares, those mottled-brown kitchen wares that were ubiquitous in American homes in the 1800s. These modellers learned their skills working in English and American factories. They invented, combined and recombined a variety of motifs to appeal to American retailers and homemakers.

Keynote speaker Ulysses Dietz, curator of decorative arts at the Newark Museum, will review the biography and work of sculptor Isaac Broome ranging from his parian wares for Ott & Brewer's display at the Philadelphia Centennial exhibition in 1876 through his late nineteenth-century contributions to tile design for Providential and Trent Tile and concluding with his return to Trenton's pottery workshops in the early twentieth century.

Ellen Denker, an independent scholar who was formerly the archivist for Lenox China, will discuss design at Ceramic Art Company/Lenox



Plate from a set of thirty-two made by Lenox China and painted with orchids by William H. Morley for Charles G. Roebing; dated December 25th 1906. The orchids are said to have been grown in Roebing's greenhouse in Trenton. This one is identified as Laelia Cattleya. The gold-etch border contains the monogram CGR. Lewis Collection.

China through the work of Walter Lenox, Frank Holmes, and a myriad of post-war dinnerware designers that moved the company from the dominance of a single design vision to design by committee.

After our usual informal and delicious box lunch we will finish the afternoon by visiting two new Lenox exhibitions.

Collector and POTS board member Emma Lewis will give us a virtual walk-through of the exhibition "Faces and Flowers: Painting on Lenox China," which opens in February 2009 at the University of Richmond, Virginia. This exhibition features the work of Bruno Geyer, William Morley, Jan Nosek, and other painters, enamellers, and gilders who decorated the special-order wares produced by Ceramic Art Company and Lenox China

(Continued on page 5)

2009 Spring Symposium: Art Revealed by Industry

(Continued from page 4)

from 1889 into the 1930s.

Finally, Ellen Denker will return to lead a walk-through of a new exhibition at the New Jersey State Museum that celebrates the recent gift from the Lenox Archives, donated by the china maker's former parent company Brown-Forman Corporation. Symposium participants will have the first look at this exhibition, which will open on April 4. They will also be invited to a celebration of the exhibition opening, which will follow the symposium.

The registration fee for the day includes the program, morning refreshments, lunch, the walk-through

of the new exhibition, and the reception at the State Museum. Advance registration must be received by March 20, 2009 in order to attend at the regular fee, which is \$30.00 for members of POTS and the Friends of the New Jersey State Museum; \$35.00 for non-members. Registrations made after March 20 or paid at the door will be \$40.00. POTS takes checks or money orders only, no credit cards. The New Jersey State Museum is a division of the NJ Department of State. Directions to the State Museum's auditorium on West State Street are available on the websites for POTS and NJ State Museum.



(Continued from page 2)

in a separate wing of the Boatwright Memorial Library with its entrance on Richmond Way. Museum hours: Tuesday through Friday, 11am to 5pm; Saturday and Sunday, 1 to 5 pm. Closed Spring Break (3/7-16/09), Easter Weekend (4/11-13/09) and Independence Day weekend (7/3-6/09).

Statuette of Baseball Player, parian, designed and modeled by Isaac Broome for Ott & Brewer, Trenton, New Jersey, 1875-76. Height 14 7/8 inches. Private Collection. Broome modeled the catcher for his famous Baseball Vase to go with the pitcher and batter. Ott & Brewer also sold the figures separately as statuettes.

POTS Membership

Membership in the Potteries of Trenton Society is open to all interested in Trenton's pottery industry and the ceramic products manufactured here. We welcome pottery workers, historians, archaeologists and collectors. Your contribution is used to support newsletter, lecture, meeting, and conference costs.

Annual Membership \$25

Name: _____

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Please make your check payable to the Potteries of Trenton Society and mail to:

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