



Resting

Leon Victor Solon

Not on display

Title/Description: Resting

Artist/Maker: Leon Victor Solon (Artist)

Born: 1896

Object Type: Painting, Plaque

Materials: Ceramic, Enamel, Glass, Gold, Porcelain

Technique: Enameling, Gilding

Measurements: h. 292 x w. 143 x d. 6 mm

Inscription: Painted gilt mark 'L V Solon'

Accession Number: 21015

Production Place: Britain, England

School/Style: Art Nouveau

Credit Line: Donated by Sir Colin and Lady Anderson, 1978

Titled 'Resting', this panel is one of a set of four experimental plaques that were developed by Minton for the Arts and Crafts Exhibition in 1896. Léon Victor Solon (1872-1957) designed the surface decoration for this porcelain plaque while employed at Minton.

Executed in enamels and glazes, the artist depicts a woman reclining on a deck chair, fashionably attired in a long lilac dress and a cape edged in black fur. She appears to be admiring the view from her position on the lawn, in front of the white façade of a classical style building. Another surviving work by Solon and Minton from this series shows a woman seated on a throne clasping a heart to her bosom. [1] Both works are signed 'L V Solon' in gilt in the lower right corner.

Born in Stoke-on-Trent, Léon Solon attended the Hanley School of Art before winning a scholarship to the South Kensington School of Art in London. [2] Although Solon's main interest was in ceramics, specifically slipware, he also excelled at graphics and produced posters, illustrations, and cover

designs for *The Studio: An Illustrated Magazine of Fine and Applied Art*. [3] The stylistic influence of graphic artists, Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Aubrey Beardsley and Alphonse Mucha can be observed in his surface designs for decorative ceramics.

Léon Solon was the son of French ceramist Louis Marc Solon, who had joined Minton in 1870 and introduced the *pâte-sur-pâte* technique. [4] Léon Solon was recruited by Minton as a designer in 1895. An advocate of the 'New Art' style, he succeeded in reviving the fortunes of the languishing company with his fresh vision. [5] In 1903, he rose to the position of art director at Minton but left the company shortly after in order to pursue opportunities in the United States. [6]

Sir Colin Anderson added the ceramic plaque to his Art Nouveau collection in 1964.

Vanessa Tothill, March 2021

[1] British Museum, object number 2006,0306.1

https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_2006-0306-1 [accessed 31 March 2021]

[2] Amanda Geitner and Emma Hazell, eds, *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003), p. 137.

[3] Geitner, p. 137.

[4] Geitner, p. 137.

[3] Geitner, p. 141.

[4] Geitner, p. 141.

Further Reading

Amaya, Mario, *Art Nouveau* (London: Dutton Vista, 1966)

Geitner, Amanda and Emma Hazell, eds, *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich:

Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003)

Greenhalgh, Paul, ed., *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* (London: V&A Publications, 2000)

Greenhalgh, Paul, ed., *The Nature of Dreams: England and the Formation of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2020)
