



'Secessionist Ware' dish

Leon Victor Solon

Not on display

Title/Description: 'Secessionist Ware' dish

Artist/Maker: Leon Victor Solon (Designer)

Born: 1902 - 1912

Object Type: Dish, Tableware

Materials: Ceramic, Earthenware

Technique: Glazing, Throwing

Measurements: h. 30 x w. 210 x d. 210 mm

Inscription: 'Mintons' stamped and incised '3519'

Accession Number: 21024A

Production Place: Britain

School/Style: Art Nouveau

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

This shallow earthenware bowl is one of a pair of 'fruit baskets' that were produced by Minton & Co. in the period 1902-1912. Each bowl is stamped with the manufacturer's mark 'Mintons' on its underside and incised with the shape number '3519'. [1] Both objects form part of Sir Colin Anderson's collection of Art Nouveau and were acquired by Sir Colin between 1960 and 1974.

The pair of fruit baskets reveals two different colour-ways from Minton's trademarked 'Secessionist Ware' product line (see object number 21024B). [2] When this range first launched in 1900 it was named 'Anglosia Ware'. [3] It is possible that the manufacturer's desire to link the wares with a contemporary progressive art movement led to the rebranding of the range as 'Secessionist'. [4]

The slipcast dish has a circular base and a square undulating rim. This particular bowl has a pale blue and light brown glazed border with an asymmetrical decoration of hydrangea and foliage executed in olive green, light brown, blue and white glaze. The ceramic has been moulded to give an attractive outline to the design, which loosely holds the glaze in cells. Extant examples of the Secessionist product line reveal that some pieces combined relief-moulded decoration with hand applied tube-lined slip decoration. [5] In principle, this ceramic technique is strikingly similar to cloisonné enamelling. The range is named after the restricted colour palette and decorative schemes developed in Vienna in the late nineteenth century by Secessionist artists.

The 'Secessionist' range was the work of Léon Victor Solon (1873-1957) and his assistant John Wadsworth (1879-1955). [6] The aesthetics of their successful design drew inspiration from native slipware traditions, slip-trailing techniques, and the fluidity of lead glazes. Léon Solon was the son of French ceramist Louis Marc Solon, who had joined Minton in 1870 and introduced the *pâte-sur-pâte* technique. [7] Léon Solon joined 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. [8] In 1903, he rose to the position of art director at Minton. [9]

Vanessa Tothill, March 2021

[1] Grant Muter, 'Léon Solon and John Wadsworth: Joint Designers of Minton's Secessionist Ware', *The Journal of the Decorative Arts Society 1850 to the Present*, No. 9, *Aspects of British Design 1870-1930* (1985), p. 49, fn. 16.

[2] A facsimile of the 1902 *Secessionist Ware* catalogue illustrating this design and Cat No. 88 is produced in Paul Atterbury, Maureen Batkin *The Dictionary of Minton* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1990), Appendix Four.

[3] Muter, p. 41.

[4] Muter, p. 41.

[5] Muter, p. 43.

[6] Amanda Geitner and Emma Hazell, eds, *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003), p. 141.

[7] Geitner, p. 137.

[8] Geitner, p. 141.

[9] Geitner, p. 141.

Further Reading

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

Atterbury, Paul and Maureen Batkin *The Dictionary of Minton* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1990)

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)

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