



# Beaker

Louis Comfort Tiffany

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## Not on display

**Title/Description:** Beaker

**Artist/Maker:** Louis Comfort Tiffany (Designer)

**Born:** 1897

**Object Type:** Glassware, Vase

**Materials:** Glass

**Technique:** Blow moulding

**Measurements:** h. 95 x w. 84 x d. 84 mm

**Inscription:** Engraved: 'L.C.T G2037'

**Accession Number:** 21031

**Historic Period:** 19th century

**Production Place:** New York, The Americas, USA

**School/Style:** Art Nouveau

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

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Produced by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848-1933) in 1897, the beaker is made from iridescent Favrile glass with a hook-pulled feather decoration in undulating bands of pale blue, yellow and brown around its rim. Manufactured by blowing glass into a mould, the vessel's form is low-waisted and flares outwards towards its circular rim.

Louis Comfort Tiffany patented his lusterware in 1881, and registered Favrile as a trademark in 1894. [1] Extremely desirable at the turn of the century, the 'soft, incandescent sheen' [2] of Tiffany glassware took inspiration from the lustrous colours of Roman and Syrian excavated blown glass. [3]

Tiffany's process of manufacturing gold lusterware was experimental and innovative:

'Lustre glass was made by dissolving salts of rare metals in the molten glass and keeping them in an oxidized state while subjecting the glass to the flame to produce the chemical reaction. Then the piece was sprayed with chloride, which made it crackle and break up into a mass of fine lines that

picked up the light. Different effects were produced with different metals - pearly sheen, golden lustre, rich deep blues.' [4]

The beaker is engraved 'L.C.T G2037' on its base around the pontil, indicating that this vessel was produced in 1897.

The late 19<sup>th</sup>-century enthusiasm for non-European artistic traditions had produced English Aestheticism and Japonisme. Tiffany would have encountered these movements during his travels to London and Paris (1865-1866) [5] and through contact with artistic circles in New York. [6] These stylistic developments in Europe, in combination with the ideals of English Arts and Crafts, informed Tiffany's fashionable Art Nouveau designs.

## **Vanessa Tothill, November 2020**

[1] John Loring, *Louis Comfort Tiffany at Tiffany & Co.* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002), pp. 241-42.

[2] Vivienne Couldrey, *The Art of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (London: Quarto Publishing, 1989), p. 100.

[3] Couldrey, pp. 41, 45.

[4] Couldrey, pp. 98-100.

[5] <https://www.tiffanystudios.org/tiffany-chronology.html> [accessed 24 November 2020]

[6] Couldrey, pp. 18, 38-40.

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## **Further Reading**

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

Vivienne Couldrey, *The Art of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (London: Quarto Publishing, 1989)

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

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

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

John Loring, *Louis Comfort Tiffany at Tiffany & Co.* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2002)

