



Decanter

Harry James Powell & Sons

Not on display

Title/Description: Decanter

Artist/Maker: Harry James Powell & Sons (Manufacturer)

Born: 1903

Object Type: Glassware, Metalware

Materials: Glass, Mother of pearl, Silver

Technique: Blow moulding, Metalworking

Measurements: h. 286 x w. 154 x d. 117 mm

Inscription: W. H. Hutton & Sons Ltd and London assay office marks for 1903

Accession Number: 21069

Production Place: Britain

School/Style: Art Nouveau

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

In 1903, when this decanter was produced, the firm James Powell & Sons were leading innovative glass design in Britain. The simple silverwork, with its mother of pearl cabochon, augments the elegant form and translucent qualities of the thin, light glass. The decanter was designed by Harry Powell, chief designer at Powell & Sons from the 1880s until his retirement in 1919.

Harry Powell's restrained use of decoration, combined with a sensitivity to materials and function, had established the company's reputation for Arts and Crafts inspired glass design and later, Art Nouveau. [1] By the beginning of the 1900s, Powell & Sons, also known as Whitefriars, were supplying their distinctive glassware to the leading retailers of Art Nouveau, including Siegfried Bing's Maison de l'Art Nouveau in Paris. [2]

The hammered silverwork was produced by William H. Hutton & Sons, who manufactured silver for a range of clients in the Art Nouveau style, including Liberty & Co. [3] A decanter identical to this one in the Victoria & Albert Museum collections suggests that it originally had a large silver stopper, set with an additional mother of pearl cabochon. [4]

The Andersons received this decanter as a gift in 1969. Sir Colin's notes in the Sainsbury Centre Archive suggest that it had previously been acquired from John Jesse, an early dealer in Art Nouveau works, based in London. [5]

Lisa Newby, May 2020

[1] Lisa Kent, 'From the Venetian Style to Art Nouveau: James Powell & Sons and Prevailing Fashion in Britain 1850-1914', in *Whitefriars Glass: The Art of James Powell & Sons*, ed. Lesley Jackson (Manchester City Art Gallery and Museum of London exhibition catalogue, 1996), p.24.

[2] Ibid., p.33.

[3] Amanda Geitner and Emma Hazell (eds.), *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau*, (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 2003), p.133.

[4] Victoria & Albert Museum, object number CIRC.154&A-1959.
<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O249701/decanter-and-stopper-powell-harry-j/>

[5] Colin Anderson Papers, Sainsbury Centre Archive.

Exhibitions

Art Nouveau: The Nature of Dreams, Sainsbury Centre, Norwich, 2020-03-29 - 2020-09-13

Further Reading

Geitner, Amanda and Emma Hazell (Eds.), *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau*, Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, 2003 (cat.108, p.151, ill. p.81)

Johnson, Penny, *Art Nouveau, The Anderson Collection*, 1978 (p. 25)
