



Decanter

Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik

Not on display

Title/Description: Decanter

Artist/Maker: Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik (Manufacturer)

Born: 1900 c.

Object Type: Glassware, Metalware, Tableware

Materials: Glass, Metal

Technique: Blow moulding, engraving, Metalworking, Relief

Measurements: h. 273 x w. 105 x d. 80 mm

Inscription: 'W.M.F.'

Accession Number: 21070

Production Place: Germany

School/Style: Art Nouveau

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

Marked with the letters 'WMF, EP, as' stamped into its handle, this elegant Art Nouveau glass decanter with metal decoration was manufactured by Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik in Germany around 1900. 'EP, as' refers to the electroplated, antique silver finish of Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik's hollow wares. [1]

Blow moulded in clear glass, the vessel's tall conical form has been engraved with a linear decoration that ripples diagonally across its body creating a whiplash curve. The origins of this dynamic motif, so closely associated with the Art Nouveau, was Hermann Obrist's cyclamen inspired wall hanging of 1895. An image of *Wandbehang mit Alpenveilchen* (Wall hanging with cyclamens) was reproduced in the Berlin journal, *Pan*, in 1896 (Feb-March) and shaped the aesthetic development of Jugendstil or 'Youth Style' in Germany. [2]

Obrist's whiplash line is repeated in the relief decoration of the decanter's metal spouted neck ring, petal-shaped stopper and angular openwork handle. The trembling stems of stylised flowers create sinuous borders and symmetrical compositions across the container's electroplated surfaces.

The company, Metallwarenfabrik Straub & Schweizer, was founded in 1853 when Daniel Straub formed a partnership with the brothers Louis and Friedrich Schwiezer. Together they established a factory in Geislingen, which specialized in the manufacture and export of mill turbines. [3] At the departure of the Schwiezer brothers in 1866, Metallwarenfabrik Straub & Schweizer was renamed Straub & Sohn. [4] An 1880 merger with Ritter & Co., Esslingen formed the public limited company, Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik. From this point on, production diversified, and the company excelled in the design and manufacture of electroplated tableware. [5]

The decanter in the Sainsbury Centre Collection was produced when Albert Mayer was the Studio Director at Württembergische Metallwarenfabrik (1894-1914).[6] During this period, design was influenced by the commercially successful Art Nouveau style. [7]

Vanessa Tothill, January 2021

[1] <http://www.silvercollection.it/WMF.html> [accessed 27 January 2021]

[2] https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Wand_Decoration_Obrist_1895.png [accessed 28 January 2021]

[3] <http://www.silvercollection.it/WMF.html> [accessed 28 January 2021]

[4] Amanda Geitner and Emma Hazell, ed., *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003), p. 144.

[5] Geitner, p. 144.

[6] <https://www.rubylane.com/item/1415055-g151/Art-Nouveau-WMF-Claret-Jug-designed> [accessed 28 January 2021]; <https://senses-artnouveau.com/biography.php?artist=WMF> [accessed 28 January 2021]

[7] https://scottishantiques.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=21546 [accessed 28 January 2021]. Similar in design to the decanter in the Sainsbury Centre Collection, this object has been manufactured in green glass and has a pierced silver-plated neck ring, stopper, handle and stand.

Further Reading

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

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

Geitner, Amanda and Emma Hazell, ed., *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)
