



## 'Secessionist Ware' plate

Leon Victor Solon

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**Not on display**

**Title/Description:** 'Secessionist Ware' plate

**Artist/Maker:** Leon Victor Solon (Designer)

**Born:** 1904

**Object Type:** Plate, Tableware

**Materials:** Ceramic, Earthenware

**Technique:** Glazing, Throwing

**Measurements:** h. 30 x w. 229 x d. 229 mm

**Inscription:** 'Mintons' stamped and painted reference numbers '3517 A' (or 'B')

**Accession Number:** 21071C

**Production Place:** Britain, England, Stoke-on-Trent

**School/Style:** Art Nouveau

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

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This circular earthenware plate is one of a set of three that were produced by Minton & Co. in 1904. Each plate is stamped with the manufacturer's mark 'Mintons' in capital letters on its underside. Two plates bear the shape number '3517' followed by the letter A or B to indicate the glaze colour combination. This group of objects form part of Sir Colin Anderson's collection of Art Nouveau and were acquired by Sir Colin between 1960 and 1974.

Each slipcast plate in the collection reveals a different colour-way from Minton's trademarked 'Secessionist Ware' product line (see object numbers 21071A and 21071B). [1] When this range first launched in 1900 it was named 'Anglosia Ware'. [2] 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'. [3] An example of this plate design can be found in Minton's Secessionist Ware Catalogue from 1902. [4]

This particular plate has a taupe glazed border with a central floral motif executed in taupe, cream and ochre 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 bold symmetry and restricted palette of the decorative schemes that were developed in Vienna in the late nineteenth century by Secessionist artists.

In production until 1912, 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] When these plates were manufactured in 1904, he had risen to the position of art director at Minton. [9]

Vanessa Tothill, March 2021

[1] A facsimile of the 1902 *Secessionist Ware* catalogue is produced in Paul Atterbury and Maureen Batkin *The Dictionary of Minton* (Suffolk: Antique Collectors' Club, 1990), Appendix Four.

[2] Grant Muter, Grant '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), pp. 41-9 (p. 41).

[3] Muter, p. 41.

[4] Muter, p. 46. Plate 8.

[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.

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## 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)

Muter, Grant '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), pp. 41-9

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