

## **The Democratic Dish: Mintons Secessionist Ware**

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**From the Alessandra and Simon Wilson Collection**

**Private view: Tuesday 18 September, 6-8.30pm**  
**Exhibition continues: 19 September – 26 October 2018**



Detail of the printed mark found on the base of an early Mintons Secessionist example from the Alessandra and Simon Wilson collection.

Mintons was a British ceramic company established in 1793. From c1901-1916 they produced a range of pottery called Secessionist Ware, designed by John W. Wadsworth under the art directorship of Léon Victor Solon. The stylised floral and foliage designs constitute a major British contribution to the international style of Art Nouveau. However, Solon and Wadsworth named the collection after the leading European Art Nouveau grouping of the time, the Vienna Secession, whose first international exhibition had been held in Vienna in 1898. The use of industrial manufacturing methods meant the Mintons Secessionist range was more accessible to the popular market than other smaller studio or hand-made pottery.

This exhibition of chargers, toilet ware, vases, pedestals, flower holders, candlesticks, jardinières, a cheese stand, plates and other utilitarian wares, alongside archival material from the Minton Archive, will demonstrate the innovative approach to colour that Léon Solon contributed to the Secessionist range, combined with John Wadsworth's designs of often radical abstractions from plant forms. The exhibition will also examine Wadsworth's advocacy for the decorative arts, highlighting both Solon and Wadsworth's contribution to British design between 1900-1915.

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**Public Programme: *The Democratic Dish: Mintons Secessionist Ware*** is accompanied by a **workshop** and a **panel discussion** to take place in October 2018.

### **Workshop**

Visitors to the exhibition will be invited to use physical or digital templates provided by Chelsea Space to create artworks in response to the exhibition. A panel of judges (to be announced), will select four submissions, and the selected works will be made into transfers and worked onto blank ceramic plates by **Amy Hughes**, ceramic artist and specialist ceramics technician at Chelsea College of Arts. The selected entrants will have the option to attend the workshop on a selected day to participate in the transfer process. These plates will then be displayed in the Chelsea Café for 6 weeks.

### **Panel Discussion**

**Collecting, Archiving, Making, and the Place of Ceramics in Art and Society Today.** Invited speakers to give presentations, following which there will be a panel discussion. Speakers include: **Simon Wilson**, art historian and former Curator of Interpretation at Tate [...]; **Louisa Buck**, leading British art critic and contemporary art correspondent for The Art Newspaper; **Amy Hughes**, ceramic artist and specialist ceramics technician at Chelsea College of Arts; and **Cherie Silver**, Chelsea Space, who will chair the panel and introduce the Minton Archive. Banqueting Hall, Chelsea College of Arts, 16 John Islip Street, SW1P 4JU, **18 October, 2-5pm, see [www.chelseaspace.org](http://www.chelseaspace.org) to book.**

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Artist Biographies:

### **Léon Victor Solon (1873-1957)**

Léon Victor Solon was artistic director of Mintons between 1895-1905. Son of Marc Louis Solon, grandson of Léon Arnoux (both employed by Mintons). Studied at Hanley School of Art, and then in 1894 at the Government School of Design at South Kensington (which became the Royal College of Art). After moving to the US, Solon developed a career as a designer of architectural ceramics, nick-named 'Prince Polychromy', his designs included the colour scheme for Rockefeller Centre's sculptural decorations.

### **John W. Wadsworth (1879-1955)**

Apprenticed as a silk designer, he attended classes at Macclesfield School of Art. In 1898 Wadsworth won a National Scholarship to the Royal College of Art where he studied under Walter Crane, Lethaby and Pike. Named Senior Scholar and awarded a travelling scholarship, Wadsworth spent several months in Paris in 1899. In 1901 he was appointed assistant art director at Mintons, and was appointed Art Director when Solon left Mintons in 1905. In 1915 he went to work for the Royal Worcester Porcelain Company as Art Director where he stayed until 1931. He was at Mintons again from 1935 until his death in 1955.

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### **The Minton Archive**

The Minton Archive was presented to the city of Stoke-on-Trent on 31 March 2015 by the **Art Fund** (with a contribution from the **Wolfson Foundation**) with substantial support from the **National Heritage Memorial Fund** and significant additional donations from Staffordshire County Council, The Pilgrim Trust, the Bamford Charitable Foundation, the bet365 Foundation ((Denise Coates Foundation), William A. Cadbury Charitable Trust, Sir Siegmund Warburg's Voluntary Settlement, J Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust and many other generous supporters.

#### **Chelsea Space**

Chelsea College of Arts  
16 John Islip Street, London SW1P 4JU  
[www.chelseaspace.org](http://www.chelseaspace.org)



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*The Democratic Dish: Mintons Secessionist Ware* would not have been possible without the generosity and encouragement of Simon Wilson, and the support of the staff at the Minton Archive, Stoke-on-Trent City Archives, and Donald Smith, Director Exhibitions at Chelsea Space. Special thanks to Chris Latimer, Andrew Dawson and Mrs M. Lewis. The curator of the exhibition would like to acknowledge Arts Council England for additional funding support for this exhibition.

## Ends

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**Publication:** Each exhibition at Chelsea Space is accompanied by a publication, published by Chelsea Space.

**Press Information:** For further information, images or to discuss interviews please contact:  
Cherie Silver at Chelsea Space via email [info@chelseaspace.org](mailto:info@chelseaspace.org) or tel:020 7514 6983

## Notes to Editors

- **Images and further information** are available upon request.
- **About: Chelsea Space** is a public exhibiting space, sited on the Millbank campus of Chelsea College of Arts, where invited art and design professionals are encouraged to work on experimental curatorial projects. See: [www.chelseaspace.org](http://www.chelseaspace.org)
- In copy please refer to **Chelsea Space** and not 'The Chelsea space.'
- **Gallery opening times:** Tues - Fri: 11:00 – 17:00 and by appointment.
- **Private view:** Tuesday 18 September 2018, 6-8:30pm
- **Admission Free**
- **Chelsea College of Arts** is one of the world's leading art and design institutions.
- Located at Millbank, next door to Tate Britain, Chelsea specialises in Fine Art, Graphic Design and Interior and Textiles Design. Since its origins in the 19th century, the College has produced many of the greatest names in the arts, including: Quentin Blake (illustrator and author) Ralph Fiennes (film and stage actor), Anish Kapoor (sculptor), Steve McQueen (artist), Chris O'Fili (artist), Alan Rickman (film and stage actor), Alexei Sayle (comedian) and Gavin Turk (sculptor).

Operating at the heart of the world's creative capital, **University of the Arts London** is a vibrant international centre for innovative teaching and research in arts, design, fashion, communication and the performing arts. The University is made up of six Colleges: Camberwell College of Arts, Central Saint Martins College of Arts and Design, Chelsea College of Arts, London College of Communication, London College of Fashion and Wimbledon College of Art. Renowned names in the cultural and creative sectors produced by the University include 12 Turner prize winners and over half of all nominees, 10 out of 17 fashion designers named British Designer of the Year, more than half of the designers showcased in London Fashion Week and 12 out of 30 winners of the Jerwood Photography Award.