

GALLERY I

TIFFANY ART GLASS

FROM THE MORSE COLLECTION

O B J E C T G U I D E

TIFFANY STUDIOS WAS ARGUABLY THE MOST ACCOMPLISHED MAKER OF ART GLASS IN THE WORLD in its day and undoubtedly one of the best of all time. Introduced to the public in 1893, after years of experimentation, Tiffany art glass was like no other consumers had ever seen. It was a sensation, universally praised, and widely imitated.

The firm transformed the merely useful domestic object into something of rare beauty. This installation of art glass from the studios of Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) features examples that richly illustrate how Tiffany and his artisans mastered this medium in terms of color, form, and technique. These objects were blown



VASE, C. 1903. MORNING GLORY, *paperweight technique, blown glass, Tiffany Studios, New York City, 1902–32 (79-531)*.

into amazing shapes and formulated into brilliant, often lustrous, hues. Of endless variety, some were made with pitted textures, others were layered to produce special effects, and still others were manipulated to create undulating, mesmerizing patterns. Tiffany art glass was inspired by an array of sources—antiquity, horticulture, rocks, the flow of lava, and, most of all, Tiffany’s own powerful imagination. Through the exploitation of chemistry, mechanics, and the logistics of production, the artist was able to translate his ideas into splendid objects of astonishing originality. “The search for beauty is in itself the most wholesome of all quests,” Tiffany wrote in an article for *Harper’s Bazaar* in 1917. Tiffany’s blown-glass vessels, prestigious to own and display in an era of expanding industrial wealth, provided the artist’s crusade for beauty with a new path into the American home.

All objects were designed by Louis Comfort Tiffany (1848–1933) or one of his artists and made under the name of one of his companies in New York City.

1) Vase, c. 1897

Cypriote
Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. T. / E 118*
Paper label: [conjoined
LCT] / *TIFFANY*
FAVRILE GLASS
REGISTERED TRADE MARK
(55-002)



2) Morning glory vases, paperweight technique, left to right:

Vase, c. 1914
Exhibited: La Société des Artistes Français, Paris, 1914
Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. Tiffany – Favrite*
8566H / Paris – Salon 1914
(56-002)

Vase, c. 1903
Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. T. Y3193*
(79-531)

Vase, c. 1914

Exhibited: La Société des Artistes Français, Paris, 1914
Blown glass
Marks: *Paris / Salon / 1st award / L. C. Tiffany / oooC / EX 1024*
Louis C. Tiffany Favrite
(56-001)

3) Floral vases, paperweight technique, left to right:

Vase, c. 1914
Narcissus
Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. Tiffany – Favrite / 8027K*
(69-022)

Vase, c. 1915
Gladiolus
Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. Tiffany – Favrite / Exhibition piece / 1146L*
(55-003)

4) Aquamarine vases, paperweight technique, left to right:

Bowl, c. 1912
Blown glass
Marks: *5197 G / L. C. Tiffany – Favrite*
(65-025)

PAPERWEIGHT TECHNIQUE

Paperweight vases were constructed using the centuries-old technique for making the traditional decorative objects that keep paper in place. Tiffany Studios refined the technique to make floral design vases sheathed in transparent glass. One famous version was the **Morning Glory** vase. Around 1913, Louis Comfort Tiffany presented his glasshouse workers with a watercolor design for morning glories and challenged them to recreate it using the paperweight technique and reactive glass, which changed colors when reheated. Morning Glory vases, with their brilliant variations in color, sold for \$1,000 to \$1,500 each. **Aquamarine** vases most closely resembled actual paperweights as they encased lampworked aquatic plant or fish designs in a thick gather of glass at the vessel's base. They were especially difficult to produce because of the heaviness and variety of glass.

Vase, c. 1919

Cherry blossom
Blown glass
Marks: 1335N /
Louis C. Tiffany Favrile –
Special Exhibit
(67-011)



5) *Back row, left to right:*

Vase, c. 1908

Blown glass
Marks: 1578 E / *L.C. Tiffany* –
Favrile
(55-016)

Vase, c. 1910

Blown glass
Marks: 5973E / *L.C. Tiffany* – *Favrile*
(54-014)

Vase, c. 1914

Blown glass
Marks: 100K *L.C.*
Tiffany – *Favrile* /
exhibition piece
(66-054)



Front row, left to right:

Vase, c. 1898

Blown glass
Marks: *L.C.T. K2973*
Paper label: [conjoined *TGDco*] /
TIFFANY FAVRILE GLASS
REGISTERED TRADEMARK
(54-103)

Vase, c. 1910

Blown glass
Marks: 5576 E / *L.C. Tiffany* – *Favrile*
(55-015)

Vase, c. 1914

Blown glass
Marks: *L. C. Tiffany* – *Favrile* / *84K*
exhibition piece
(62-003)

CYPRIOTE GLASS

Louis Comfort Tiffany’s Cypriote glass mimics the finely pitted, iridescent surfaces associated with ancient Greek and Roman glass objects buried for centuries in mineral-rich soil. Metallic luster was applied to give the pieces iridescence, and they were rolled on a marver, or rolling table, covered with crumbled glass to create the textured surfaces. Tiffany named his Cypriote line “in honor of the glass which had been discovered” by soldier, diplomat, and amateur archeologist Luigi Palma di Cesnola (1832–1904) in Cyprus. This famous collection, reportedly numbering 35,000 pieces, was sold to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. So successful was the Cypriote line that newspapers and magazines of the period suggested that antique glass had been “successfully revived by Tiffany.”

WINDOW VASES

Tiffany foliage, or confetti, glass, mostly employed in window design, was incorporated into the walls of window vases. This flat glass—created by pouring molten glass on top of colorful, paper-thin glass shards or sprinkling the pieces into hot glass—simulated tree leaves in leaded-glass windows. Encasing this beautiful but fragile glass type in uncolored glass and then placing it as a small window within the sides of vases as they were being formed was technically challenging. Of the two vases on view in this exhibit, the smaller is one of only a handful known to have even survived production.

LAVA GLASS

Tiffany Lava glass vases, with their dark, roughly textured bodies covered in thick gold trailings, reflected the drama and movement of erupting volcanoes. The deep color was comparable to that of obsidian—the glass naturally formed in lava flows—and the trailing decoration suggested the fiery streams of molten lava. The volcanic activity in Southern Italy had a popular allure in the late nineteenth century, and tourists to these areas returned with obsidian souvenirs. Tiffany and other glass companies capitalized on this interest. The organic shapes of Tiffany's Lava glass were likely inspired by Raku pottery, the handcrafted, porous vessels developed in 16th-century Japan for traditional tea ceremonies.

Vase, c. 1910

Blown glass

Marks: 4081 E / L.C. Tiffany – Favrite
(57-001)

Vase, c. 1899

Blown glass

Marks: L.C.T. / T 5292
(54-104)

6) Window vases, left to right:

Vase, c. 1928

Blown glass

Marks: Louis C. Tiffany –
Favrite / 3301 P

Paper label: [conjoined
LCT] / TIFFANY
FAVRILE GLASS REGISTERED
TRADE MARK
(70-022)



Vase, c. 1928

Blown glass

Marks: Louis C. Tiffany – Favrite
(56-003)

7) Cypriote and Lava vases, clockwise from back left:

Vase, c. 1914

Lava

Blown glass

Marks: 9771 K / L.C. Tiffany – Favrite
(65-029)

Vase, c. 1922

Cypriote

Blown glass

Marks: L.C. Tiffany Inc. Favrite / 6N
Gift of Alan Dunn, Louis Comfort
Tiffany Foundation Fellow
(74-021)

Vase, c. 1899

Cypriote

Blown glass

Marks: K 1462 / L.C.T.
(62-040)



Vase, c. 1924

Cypriote

Blown glass

Marks: 5470 N / L.C. Tiffany –
Inc. Favrite
(1999-115)



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