



THE CHARLES HOSMER
MORSE MUSEUM
of American Art

Tiffany Lamps to Illuminate the Morse

WINTER PARK, Fla. (December 24, 2002) – On February 4, The Morse Museum of American Art opens *The Illuminated Vision: Tiffany Lamps and Lighting*, the museum's most comprehensive exhibition ever of Tiffany lamps and lighting from its permanent collection.

The exhibition – on view through January 4, 2004 – will include more than 40 Tiffany lamps that taken together illustrate Tiffany's visually dramatic and innovative design achievement in an era when electric light was revolutionizing the way we see. They will include examples of rare and prize-winning designs; selections made for his own home, Laurelton Hall; and lamps of virtually every sort: table or desktop, standing, hanging, and wall-mounted. Original Tiffany Studios lamp catalogues, watercolor designs, archival photographs, prints from glass-plate negatives, flat lampshade sample pattern displays, and models showing phases of lamp fabrication will further illuminate Tiffany's vast and fabulously successful enterprise. Twelve lamps made by Louis Comfort Tiffany's contemporaries further illustrate the ways in which electric light was being embraced and celebrated nearly 100 years ago. Taking in all the galleries, there will be more than 60 examples of Tiffany lamps and lighting on exhibit in the Museum.

On Friday, February 28 at 6 p.m., in conjunction with the exhibition, there will be a free leaded-glass lampshade fabrication demonstration at the museum. The program will include a take-home activity for children.

As early as 1885, working with Thomas Edison, Louis Comfort Tiffany was praised for spectacular jewel-like blown-glass shades installed at the Lyceum Theatre in New York City. Lamps from Tiffany Studios' early production were fitted with blown-glass shades in one piece or simple geometric leaded-glass shades made with pieces of glass bound together with copper foil.

In 1899, he introduced the more familiar lampshades of brightly colored leaded glass. By 1905, at its peak of production, Tiffany Studios made almost 400 different lamp designs and combinations in subtle color variations and employed nearly 200 craftsmen. His mosaic-patterned lampshades, artful bouquets of brilliantly colored glass, remain a universally recognized high point in design achievement.

Tiffany's fame was international. At the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, Tiffany won 54 gold medals, including one for the artful design of an electrolier. Other prize winners included the *Dragonfly* lamp at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1900 and the *Wisteria* and *Pond Lily* lamps at the First Exposition of Modern Decorative Arts in Turin in 1902. In his lamps, Tiffany's fascination with color, nature, and light coalesced, and through them, he gave many Americans an opportunity to join in his own "pursuit of beauty."

The museum's exhibitions are drawn from the collection built by Jeannette McKean (1909-1989), who founded the museum in 1942, and her husband Hugh McKean (1908-1989), director of the museum until his death. The couple assembled over a period of almost 50 years extensive holdings of Tiffany objects - what is today the world's most comprehensive collection of the designer's work - along with American paintings, art pottery, and decorative arts of the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

Through May 2003, museum hours are 9:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday; 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday and Saturday; and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$3 for adults, \$1 for students, free for children under 12, and free to all visitors after 4 p.m. Friday. From June through August, the Museum closes at 4 p.m. on Friday.

The Morse Museum is owned and operated by the Charles Hosmer Morse Foundation and receives additional support from the Elizabeth Morse Genius Foundation. It receives no public funds.

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