

COLLECTING – ART NOUVEAU – PEWTER AT THE TURN OF THE 1900s

When no longer a material used on an everyday basis for everyday pieces, pewter was taken up by those concerned with producing interesting pieces of good design. The pewter produced for Liberty of London and by designers such as Knox continues to be appreciated and good pieces are gaining in value and scarcity. However there are many designers who produced very well designed and well made pieces that are not expensive and might appeal to those starting a collection.

The name Art nouveau is French for 'new art', it is also known as Jugendstil, German for 'youth style', named after the magazine Jugend, which promoted it. It is characterized by organic, especially floral and other plant-inspired motifs, as well as highly-stylized, flowing curvilinear forms. Art Nouveau is an approach to design, according to which artists should work on everything from architecture to furniture, making art part of everyday life. Art Nouveau's fifteen year peak was strongly felt throughout Europe, from Glasgow to Spain and as far East as Moscow, but its influence was global.

Here is such a selection –



These are all 'Osiris' pieces – the following is repeated from an article elsewhere on this website concerning simply the teapot above, far right – (the Cigar lighter back left is also shown elsewhere – the Tray is silver plated. The bowl to the left likely a sugar basin in the tea pot range.)

ART NOUVEAU – OSIRIS

The OSIRIS factory was founded in 1899 by father Friedrich August Scherf (1839-1922) and son Walter Scherf (1875 –1909). It was called the “ Metallwarenfabrik Fur Kleinkunst Walter Scherf & co" in Nürnberg

The factory was very small. In the beginning they had two polish machines, three grinders, one lathe and an 8 PK steam machine.

Before Walter Scherf became head of OSIRIS, he worked at the firm ORIVIT, until 1899 .

He took some workers with him and some ideas .

From 1899 until 1909 the factory produced 1300 items .They outnumbered the firm KAYSERZINN with some 300 items . The firm developed a new sort pewter in 1902:

the so-called “ISIS” metal. It was more expensive to buy, but not better in quality.

The firm worked with great designers

They had won several prizes in Turin(1902), the Gold medal of Konig-Ludwig Price (1902), the Gold medal in St Petersburg (1903/1904), the first and second prize in St. Louis, USA (1904), the Gold medal in Cape Town South Africa (1904/1905). In the year 1906 they changed the name from OSIRIS to “ISIS Werke GmbH. kunstgewerblicher Erzeugnisse”.

Because of bad management, the firm was almost bankrupt and, sadly, in 1909, Walter Scherf took his own life. That was the tragic end of “OSIRIS” –“ISIS” .



A FINE ART NOUVEAU PEWTER POCKET WATCH STAND & *VIDE POCHE* EXECUTED BY THE WALTER SCHERF FACTORY FOR THEIR OSIRIS ISIS RANGE, THE PIECE IS FULLY MARKED WITH THE OSIRIS ISIS STAMP AND DESIGN NUMBER, THE MARK IS EMBOSSED & LEGIBLE, THIS PIECE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE ART NOUVEAU JUGENDSTIL PERIOD OF THE EARLY 1900'S, IT HAS BEEN PROFESSIONALY POLISHED TO A VERY HIGH STANDARD WITH A MIRROR LIKE FINISH, THERE IS SOME PITTING TO THE TRAY & SOFTENING TO THE STYLISED LOW RELIEF DESIGN BUT IT IS STILL A VERY STYLISH PIECE, A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF JUGENDSTIL ZINN DESIGN AND IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD SO HAS SOME MINOR SIGNS OF AGE



A LARGE ART NOUVEAU SILVERPLATED PEWTER CAKE BASKET OR FRUIT BOWL EXECUTED BY THE WALTER SCHERF FACTORY FOR THEIR OSIRIS ISIS RANGE, THE PIECE IS FULLY MARKED WITH THE OSIRIS ISIS STAMP AND DESIGN NUMBER 1763 ,THE MARK IS EMBOSSSED & LEGIBLE, THIS PIECE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE ART NOUVEAU JUGENDSTIL PERIOD OF THE EARLY 1900'S, IT HAS BEEN REPLATED AT SOME TIME AND IS A LITTLE BRIGHT BUT THIS WILL SOFTEN IN TIME, THERE ARE MINOR SURFACE SCRATCHES TO THE BOWL FROM USE, BUT THE FABULOUS STYLISED FLOWER DROPLETS DESIGN IS CHRISP & FRESH, IT IS QUITE A LARGE PIECE MEASURING 14"(35CM) LONG & 9"(22.5CM) DEEP, A GREAT EXAMPLE OF JUGENDSTIL ZINN DESIGN AND IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD SO HAS SOME MINOR SIGNS OF AGE & USAGE THIS & THE REPLATING

Interesting that the factory is reputed as producing 1300 items and this is number 1763?

BELOW A CLARET GOBLET AND A SPIRIT BEAKER

Claret goblet made by Walter Scherf & Co. c1900 of Nuremberg, trading as 'Osiris', which is stamped under the base with pattern number '504'. A delightful Art Nouveau item, with raised cast decoration of trailing vines with bunches of grapes around the entire body. Vanessa Brett shows identical examples with their matching claret jug at p214 of *Phaidon Guide to Pewter*. In very good condition, with medium-grey original surface patina. 4¼" high with 2⅞" top and 1⅞" base diameters.



Spirit beaker made by Walter Scherf & Co., c1900 of Nuremberg trading as 'Osiris', which is cast under the base with pattern number '501' and 'Isis'. This is a delightful Art Nouveau item; having raised cast decoration of bunches of grapes hanging from vines around the upper body, and random 'prunts' around the lower body. It is in very good condition, with medium-grey original surface patina. 4" high with $2\frac{3}{8}$ " top and $1\frac{3}{4}$ " base diameters.

Some part of showing these two pieces is to show the differences when cleaned. Elsewhere on the website are clues on how to make the above look as below without very many hours of effort.



COLLECTING – SMALL PEWTER TRAYS AND TOURIST SOUVENIRS

The fashion in better off houses of a servant taking in a visitor's calling card on a small tray makes possible the collection of such small trays. They can be amusing. The card on a tray made as where a reptile emerges from a pond could say something about the visitor as could a tray with a girl swimming to the edge of a pond. The one's seen by this writer are usually about the turn of the 1900s and thus largely Art Nouveau though they are to be found from the middle 1800s. Some trays were smaller and these were often called pin trays and here Liberty produced a range of well designed pieces that are very collectable.

Small Pin Trays were also turned out all over the country as tourist mementoes featuring representations of the tourist attraction visited. These are not popular with collectors and doubtless an interesting collection could be gathered now for little money, and some of them do have remarkably skilled draughtsmanship.

Other small trays we can only wonder at their use – below for example is shown the Kaiser Willem battleship about the size for a card tray – maybe it was.





Card Tray showing salamander emerging from Pond or the depths? Whose card is it?



A RARE AND UNUSUAL CARD TRAY PROBABLY DESIGNED BY HANS PETER UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF FRIEDRICH ADLER AND EXECUTED BY THE DUTCH FIRM OF URANIA AS IT IS UNMARKED, LATER PIECES BY HANS PETER FROM THE ESSLINGEN FACTORY WERE USUALLY MARKED JUVENTA PRIMA METAL AND IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO HAVE TWO IDENTICAL PIECES ONE MARKED URANIA THE OTHER JUVENTA, THIS PIECE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE ART NOUVEAU JUGENDSTIL PERIOD OF THE EARLY 1900'S, THE TRAY HAS BEEN PROFESSIONALLY POLISHED TO A VERY HIGH STANDARD WITH NO LOSS OF THE DESIGN TO THE WONDERFUL STYLISED FLORAL MOTIF, IT MEASURES 7" (18CM) LONG AND 5.5" (14CM) AT THE WIDEST PART SO A NICE SIZE FOR DISPLAY THE TRAY IS FULLY ILLUSTRATED IN JAN KWINTS DEFINITIVE BOOK ON URANIA PAGE 92, THIS PIECE IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF JUGENDSTIL ZINN DESIGN AND IS OVER 100 YEARS OLD NOT A REPRODUCTION PIECE



Above are three of the souvenir pin trays. The top two celebrate Great Yarmouth and the bottom one an unknown Abbey ruin. The sizes of these are only about 3 7/8" x 2 5/8"

In the top two illustrations there are (repeated in each photo) two Liberty of London Pin Trays designed by Archibald Knox.

PEWTER TRAYS FROM THE EARLY 1900s – ART NOUVEAU



SUPER SILVERPLATED CARD RECEIVING TRAY OR DRINKS SALVER FROM THE ART NOUVEAU SECESSIONIST PERIOD, THIS PIECE WAS PRODUCED BY THE WORLD FAMOUS WMF FACTORY AROUND 1903, THE TRAY IS IN A POLISHED CONDITION NO LOSS OF PLATE OR DEFINITION TO THE ART NOUVEAU STYLISED GINKGO LEAF & BERRY DESIGN WHICH ARE TYPICAL OF THE ERA AND MAKE THIS A VERY ELEGANT & SPECIAL PIECE, THERE IS SOME MINOR TARNISHING BUT NOTHING THAT DETRACTS, THE TRAY IS A NICE SIZE MEASURING APPROXIMATELY 11.5" (29CM) IN DIAMETER AND CARRIES THE OLD WMF MARK TO THE BACK, IT ALSO RETAINS ITS ORIGINAL HANGER SO COULD EQUALLY BE DISPLAYED ON THE WALL. THIS PIECE IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF JUGENDSTIL SECESSIONIST ZINN DESIGN AND OVER 100 YEARS OLD NOT REPRO AND AS SUCH MAY HAVE MINOR SIGNS OF AGE AND USE



A very unusual JUGENDSTIL WMF pewter card tray designed with a highly detailed maiden standing beside her harp, with stems and leaves surrounding her. Literature: 1906 WMF ART NOUVEAU CATALOG Germany, ca. 1905 – 1910 Pewter, marked with the early WMF OSTRICH MARK, B, AS 9 inches by 8.75 inches. Weight is 530 grams
Scarce



Early 1900's pewter coin dish - has touch mark and is marked "Etainfin" (of little if any value) About 5" diameter



A MONUMENTAL ART NOUVEAU PEWTER DRINKS TRAY OR SALVER EXECUTED BY THE WALTER SCHERF FACTORY FOR THEIR OSIRIS RANGE AND DESIGNED BY FRIEDRICH ADLER, THE PIECE IS FULLY MARKED WITH THE OSIRIS STAMP AND THE DESIGN NUMBER 551 IT IS ALSO FULLY ILLUSTRATED IN THE ADLER BOOK PAGE 172 PLATE ME23, THIS PIECE WOULD HAVE BEEN PRODUCED IN THE ART NOUVEAU JUGENDSTIL PERIOD OF THE EARLY 1900'S, IT HAS BEEN POLISHED THROUGHOUT ITS LIFE LEAVING IT WITH A MIRROR LIKE FINISH AND AS A RESULT THERE IS SOME SOFTENING TO THE STYLISED FLORAL DESIGN, MEASURING A MASSIVE 16"(40CM) IN DIAMETER IT IS A VERY IMPRESSIVE PIECE, THIS PIECE IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF JUGENDSTIL ZINN DESIGN



SUPERB SECESSIONIST ART NOUVEAU SILVERPLATE DRINKS TRAY OR SALVER PRODUCED DURING THE JUGENDSTIL DESIGN PERIOD OF THE EARLY 1900'S AND MADE BY THE WORLD FAMOUS WMF FACTORY. FULLY MARKED TO THE FRONT WITH THE WMF MARK, ox 1/o FOR THE QUALITY OF SILVERPLATE, IT HAS BEEN VERY WELL LOOKED AFTER THROUGH OUT ITS LIFE AND IS IN A SUPERB CONDITION WITH NO LOSS OF PLATE OR DEFINITION TO THE PIRECED STYLISED WHIPLASH & GEOMETRIC DESIGN, THERE IS SOME LIGHT SURFACE SCRATCHING FROM USE BUT NOTHING THAT DETRACTS. IT MEASURES 10.5"(27CM) ACROSS THE WIDEST PART, THIS WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL STARTER PIECE FOR A NEW COLLECTION OF JUGENDSTIL ZINN OR A SPLENDID ENHANCMENT TO AN EXISTING ONE. THE OVERALL CONDITION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS EXCELLENT AND 100% AUTHENTIC NOT REPRO, THE TRAY IS IN EXCESS OF 100 YEARS OLD SO A TRUE ANTIQUE AND MAY CARRY SOME MINOR SIGNS OF AGE