

Maker & Muse

Women and Early Twentieth Century Art Jewelry



THE RICHARD H. DRIEHAUS MUSEUM

Léon Gariod was a talented jeweler and goldsmith who ran a top Parisian shop, often working with other renowned French artisans. His ivory face pendant, circa 1900, with enamel and diamonds hints at a woman's power or perhaps is a rendition of woman as Mercury. Collection of Nelson Rarities, Inc.

By Andrea Valluzzo

CHICAGO, ILL. — Rene Lalique's sylph brooch on the cover of the exhibition catalog *Maker & Muse: Women and Early Twentieth Century Art Jewelry*, featuring a winged woman



Among the most well-known Chicago female Arts and Crafts jewelers was Elinor Evans Klapp (American, 1845–1915), whose carved moonstone brooch, circa 1895–1914, depicts a winged woman carrying a wreath. Collection of the Bronson Family. Photo courtesy Firestone and Parson Jewelers.

hoisting a large teardrop pearl, is an apt metaphor. Her oversized butterflylike wings in green and

yellow enamel hues speak to metamorphosis — a woman's metamorphosis from being a passive wearer of jewelry to being the muse for its design, and its maker, as well.

Women's role in art jewelry, circa 1890–1920, is the central theme running through the many stories being told in the same-named exhibition on view through January 3





Another example embodying the “woman as muse” theme is this brooch by Antoine Bricteux that depicts a Japanese lady with an umbrella, circa 1900. Collection of Nelson Rarities, Inc.


at the Richard H. Driehaus Museum, which comprises more than 250 pieces of Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts period jewelry making their public debut. Museum founder and art collector Richard H. Driehaus began acquiring Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts jewelry in the 1990s and has never before publicly shown his



▲ A circa 1900 mermaid brooch by Karl Rothmüller (German, 1860–1930) in gilded silver, coral and pearl clearly displays its feminine inspiration. Collection of Richard H. Driehaus.

▼ Maison Vever's (French, 1821–1982) plaque de cou, circa 1905, weaves pearls and diamonds among enamel and velvet. Collection of Richard H. Driehaus.





A stunner in the Driehaus collection is this circa 1900 necklace by Charles Boutet de Monvel (French, 1855–1913). Private Collection.

collection. The exhibition comprises works from his collection as well as prominent private and public collections, including the Newark Museum, Tiffany & Co. Archives and the Chicago History Museum. Stunning and boldly wrought necklaces, brooches, bracelets, pins, rings, jeweled and enameled boxes, pendants, buckles, accessories and tiaras — often inspired by nature — are represented, and each of the museum's second-floor galleries is devoted to jewelry showcasing the five areas of

design and fabrication: the Arts and Crafts Movement in Britain, Art Nouveau in France and Belgium, Jugendstil in Germany and Austria, Louis Comfort Tiffany in New York and American Arts and Crafts in Chicago. Each gallery explores the historic social milieu associated with these movements, accompanied by selected contextual objects of the period. “The true beauty and value of art jewelry lies in the artist’s vision and

Favoring Wisconsin and Oriental pearls, jade and moonstones, Florence Koehler (American, 1861–1944) was renowned for her imaginative pendants, buckles and combs, such as this circa 1900 brooch. Collection of Nelson Rarities, Inc.



Frederick James Partridge (English, 1877–1942) for Liberty & Co. (English, established 1875) was influenced much by Lalique designs. He is represented in the exhibition with his tiara with corn design, circa 1900. Collection of Richard H. Driehaus.



mastery of technique, rather than in the sum value and size of precious metals and stones.

Each of the works in the exhibition is truly a complete work of art in miniature,” says Driehaus. “I’m delighted to exhibit my jewelry collection for the first time ... and am honored to be joined by the distinguished collectors and museums who recognize and celebrate their artistic quality. Together, these

works tell a complete story of many jewelers' aspirations, techniques and accomplishments." Were it not for a combination of factors that coincided early in the Twentieth Century, women might have still been expected to stay at home like their Victorian predecessors and not received their

due as jewelry makers — equal peers of their male contemporaries — until much later. The Arts and Crafts movement in Great Britain, dress reform, the suffragette...

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