

## **SPOTLIGHT ON A TIFFANY LAMP**

### **Tiffany Lamp Daffodil Library Lamp, 1905**

On view at Nassau County Museum of Art's exhibition *La Belle Époque* through November 7, 2021

American artist Louis Comfort Tiffany started his career as a painter then moved on to the medium of stained glass. His studio, Tiffany Studios, designed hundreds of stained glass lamps between the years of 1890 & 1930.

An icon of the [Art Nouveau](#) movement, a typical Tiffany lamp is composed of a bronze stand topped with a stained glass shade.

These iconic stained glass lamps, were created by soldering together small pieces of colored glass to create floral, fauna, and geometric patterns. Tiffany and his staff of talented artists, many of whom were woman, often took inspiration from the theme of nature.

The design and production of lampshades was primarily accomplished within the Women's Glass Cutting Department. Tiffany established the department at his studio in 1892, allowing women for the first time to cut and select glass for windows and mosaics alongside the men in his studio. Tiffany employed six women at his glasshouse in Corona, New York. By 1897, Tiffany had between forty and fifty women employed in his glass workshop.

Today we will explore one of the 6 lamps on loan from The Neustadt Collection of Tiffany Glass. These magnificent works are on view at the Nassau County Museum of Art as part of our *La Belle Époque* exhibition.

The lamp we will explore today is approximately 2 ½ ft. in height. It is titled –

### **Tiffany Lamp Daffodil Library Lamp dated 1905**

I will first describe the bronze base that the stained glass shade sits upon. The base is approximately 1 ½ feet high and is composed of a tall stem which appears to grow out of a circular base.

The stem, 2 inches in diameter, and 9 inches in height has 7 incised vertical lines which end in spiral forms reminiscent of a fiddle head fern.

The round base that holds the stem is 8 inches in diameter and sits upon 4 small feet which raise the lamp up from it's display base by 1 inch.

Encircling the base is a pattern of 12 raised convex petal like forms.

If I were to touch the base I would feel the cool smooth bronze and the incised line of the stem and petals.

I will now describe the shade. The shape of the shade is a wide conical form with a flattened point.

The top part at the shade is app 5 inches in diameter with the bottom of the shade measuring 16 inches in width.

As the title indicates the motif of this lamp are daffodils. The orientation of the flower to stem is inverted with multiple blooms ringing the bottom edge of the lamp. The flower's stems jut upward toward the top of the shade.

The stained glass daffodils have overlapping petals that create volume and form and range in colors from warm yellow, peach, orange and golden hues.

Stems and leaves are fabricated with spotted glass the color of moss and celery. The irregular pigmentation gives the impression of dappled sunlight.

Peeking out from behind the stems are irregular pieces of grey and sky blue glass like the sky before a spring rain.

At the bottom of the shade, below the flowers, are 3 rows of grey, blue and green glass rectangles arranged in a staggered brick like pattern.

If I were to touch the shade I would feel the raised black outlines that encircle each individual piece of glass. To create this shade, artisans fit the pieces of cut glass into flexible lead comes, which are strips of lead shaped like miniature "I-beams. The glass pieces are placed on either side of the "I" and soldered and mitered at the joints.

This brilliant colors of the shade are illuminated by 3 light bulbs visible only when peering under the shade. The use of incandescent light bulbs and the stained glass shades used to embellish their harsh light, was the result of a partnership between Tiffany and American inventor Thomas Edison.

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