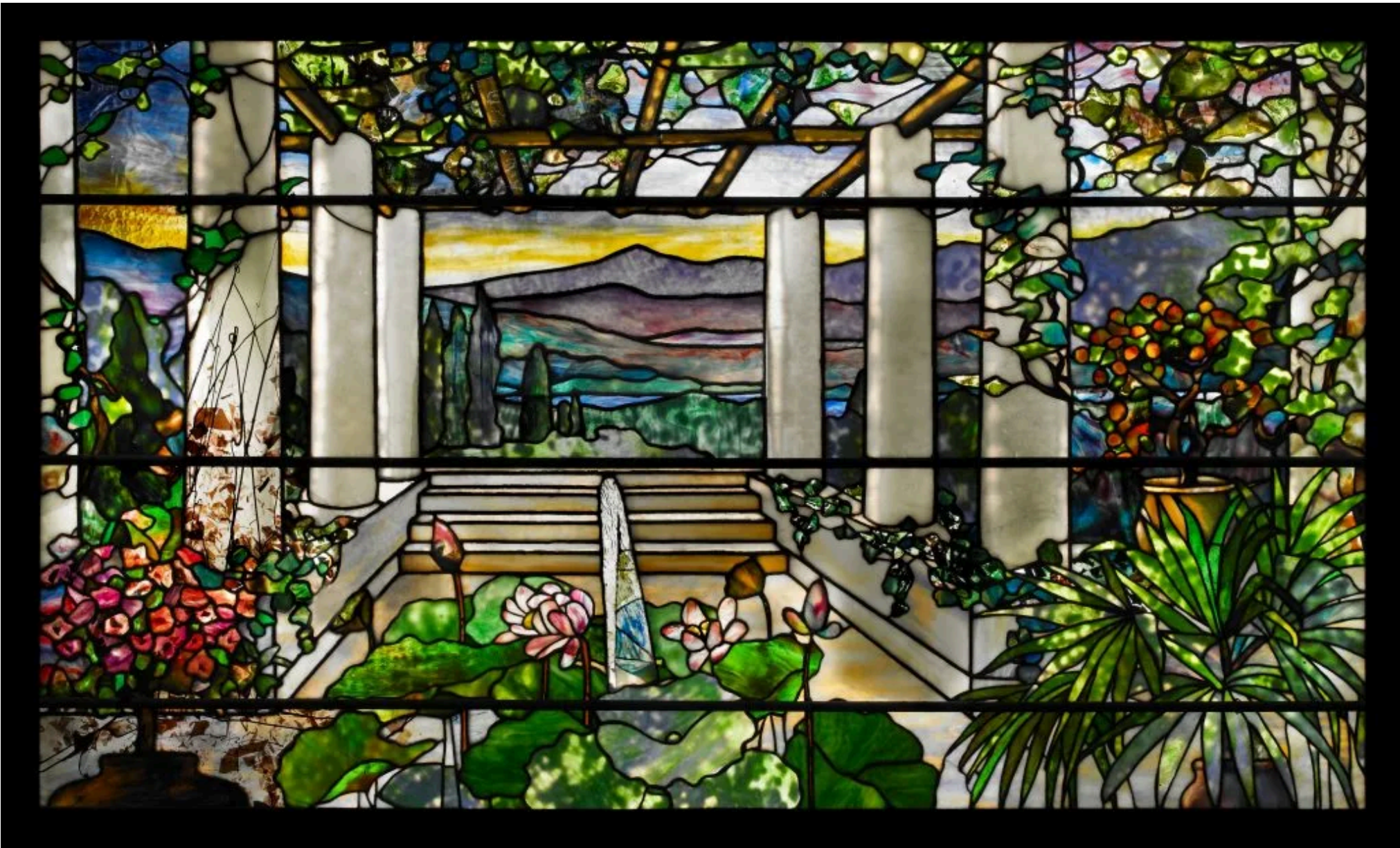


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Why Louis Comfort Tiffany Still Dazzles Collectors

Two New York shows offer new windows on the designer's expansive practice.



Tiffany Studios, *View From Laurelton Hall Window* (1900–10). Photo courtesy of Nassau County Museum of Art.

by **Min Chen** (<https://news.artnet.com/about/min-chen-26579>) Aug 21, 2026
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Louis Comfort Tiffany’s lamps are coveted and his stained glass is celebrated, but the artist behind the famous brand has remained stubbornly in the shadows. Two new exhibitions aim to throw the spotlight on his full talents.

At the **Nassau County Museum of Art**, in Roslyn, New York, “[Louis Comfort Tiffany: Artist of the Gilded Age](https://nassaumuseum.org/exhibitions/louis-comfort-tiffany/)” (<https://nassaumuseum.org/exhibitions/louis-comfort-tiffany/>)” has assembled more than 130 of his paintings to examine his lifelong yet little-known painting practice. In October, the **Metropolitan Museum of Art**, which holds the largest-known collection of Tiffany’s drawings, will bring together nearly 120 of these newly conserved and rarely seen works in “[Designing the Gilded Age](https://www.metmuseum.org/fr/exhibitions/designing-the-gilded-age-drawings-from-the-studios-of-louis-c-tiffany/)” (<https://www.metmuseum.org/fr/exhibitions/designing-the-gilded-age-drawings-from-the-studios-of-louis-c-tiffany/>).”



Tiffany Studios, *Design for Interior of First Presbyterian Church, Poughkeepsie, New York* (1906–08). Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Tiffany painted, drew, and designed, leaving his mark on jewelry, textiles, furniture, glassware, interiors, and architecture and making him a cornerstone of the American decorative arts market. Lamps by his studios can sell for six figures at auction, while his stained-glass has raked in millions on the block.

That enduring success is “the product of the marketplace and public fascination,” **Franklin Hill Perrell**, the Nassau’s chief curator, told me. Tiffany’s stained-glass “reinvents itself to every generation,” he added, just as fresh research—on the long-overlooked women in Tiffany’s studio, for instance—has generated new interest in the man.

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“He’s been getting more stylish every year as institutions increasingly reveal his work,” Perrell said.

Before the Lamps



Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Cathedral Window*, May 31, 1872 (1872). Photo courtesy of the Nassau County Museum of Art.

Louis Comfort Tiffany was born into a luxury dynasty in New York in 1848. As the son of jeweler **Charles Lewis Tiffany**, co-founder of **Tiffany & Co.**, he had a direct path into the family business. But he had his sights set on art.

From the 1860s, the young Tiffany studied with painters **George Inness** and **Samuel Colman**, and roved across Europe and North Africa, seeking inspiration. He captured landscapes and figures in luminous oils and watercolors, his sensitivity to light and color already apparent. His view of a Venice canal glows with a delirious pink; at an elderly woman's humble market stall, the sunlight catches on the greens and reds of her wares. Tiffany managed to paint like this throughout his life.

"I see the paintings as a key to his personality," Perrell said. "I see them as a key to his ability to be omnivorous and to gain a tactical and strategic comprehension of different areas, but not fuss with it too much."



Louis Comfort Tiffany, *Canal Byway Near Piazza, San Marco, Venice* (n.d.). Photo courtesy of the Nassau County Museum of Art.

Around 1875, Tiffany turned his attention to glassmaking, determined to rethink the medium. Over the following decades, his experiments produced opalescent Favrite glass, its iridescence inspired by ancient Roman and Syrian vessels, as well as a new approach to stained glass in which color is embedded in the material itself, rather than painted onto its surface.

By 1892, he had established the **Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company**, later known as **Tiffany Studios**. It led the vogue for Art Nouveau and quickly drew an affluent clientele, including prominent Gilded Age figures such as philanthropist **Sarah B. Cochran**, entrepreneur **Henry Osborne Havemeyer**, and industrialist **Walter Jennings**. Even then-U.S. President **Chester A. Arthur** sought out Tiffany to design a glass screen (<https://www.whitehousehistory.org/photos/glass-screen>) for the **White House**.



Agnes F. Northrop for Tiffany Studios, Suggestion for Window in the Residence of Mr. L.D. Towle, Boston, Massachusetts (1923). Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The studio was a collective endeavor. The women designers in its ranks included **Agnes Northrop**, **Clara Driscoll**, and **Julia Munson**, the so-called “Tiffany girls” who were pivotal to shaping its output. It was Driscoll, the head of the glass-cutting department, who broached the idea of using glass scraps from the windows to create lamps. And it was Northrop who transformed the most complex botanical and natural scenes into breathtaking stained-glass works, as in her monumental *Garden Landscape Window* (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/the-met-museum-acquires-tiffany-stained-glass-window-2407462>) (1912).

These collaborations are preserved in design drawings that will be on view at the Met. Among them is one drawing for a “Four Seasons” window for Jennings that was signed by both Tiffany and Northrop.

Some designs are credited to unidentified artists, and at least one bears Tiffany's own signature as an artist, the show's curator, **Alice Cooney Frelinghuysen**, told me.



Louis C. Tiffany, Agnes F. Northrop for the Tiffany Glass and Decorating Company, Design for "Four Seasons" Window, Walter B. Jennings House, Burrwood, Cold Spring Harbor, New York (1897). Photo: © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

There's an elegance to these in-progress works, some of them boasting elaborate mats and others collaged with photographs—a strikingly modern gesture. "They were a means to an end," Frelinghuysen said, "but they are truly works of art themselves."

Selling Tiffany

Tiffany died in 1933, having lived long enough to see his work fall out of fashion. His studio ceased operations after his death; his Long Island mansion, **Laurelton Hall**, whose interiors and gardens he cultivated in high style, fell into disrepair and burned down in 1957.

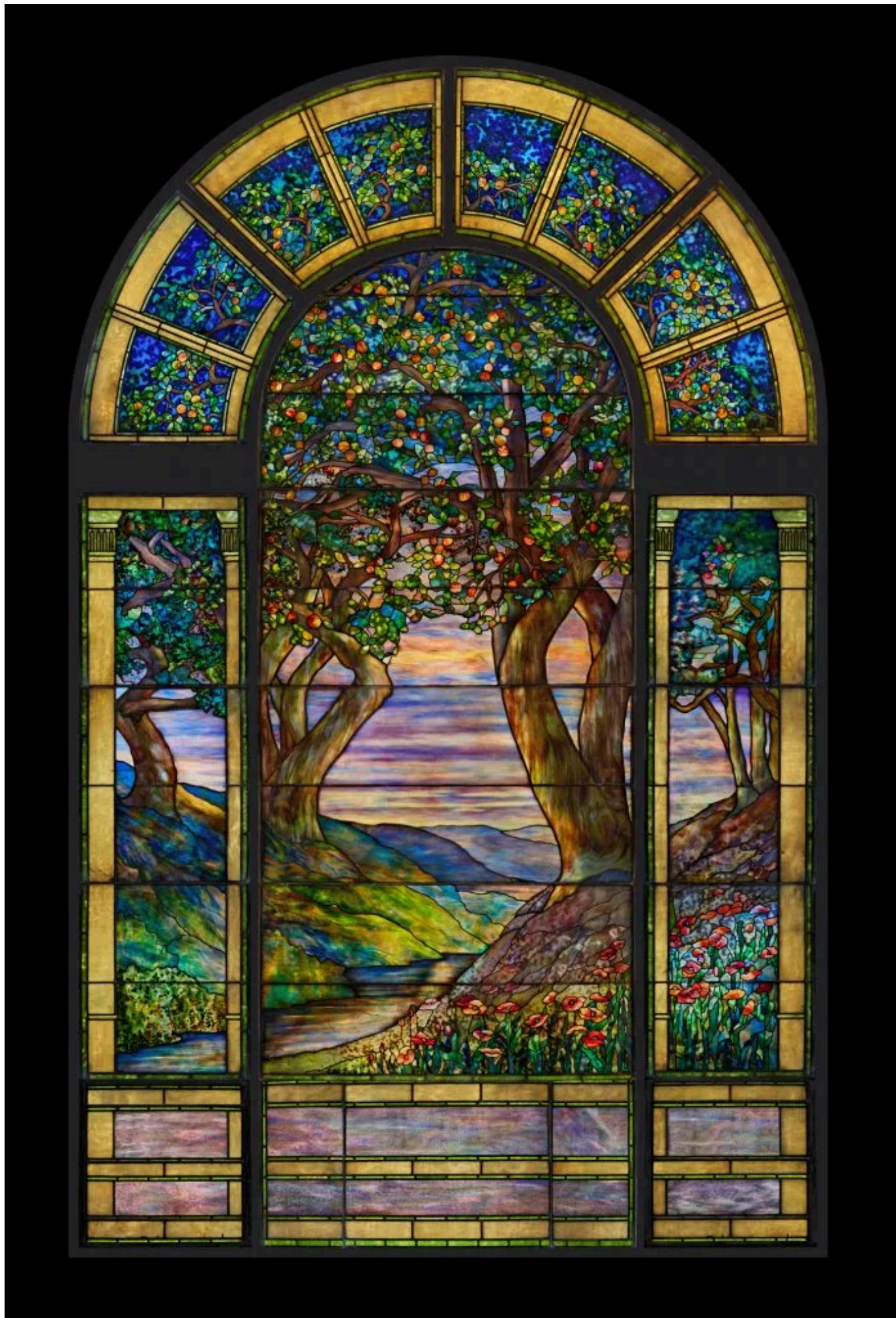
But his lamps would capture a select audience in the coming years. Queens-based dentist **Egon Neustadt**, for one, snapped up his first Tiffany lamp in 1935, before amassing hundreds more. Most of his lavish collection is now stored at the **Neustadt Collection** (<https://www.theneustadt.org/>) in New York; a slice of it was donated to the **New York Historical** (<https://www.nyhistory.org/exhibitions/gallery-tiffany-lamps>) in 1983. “He really was a pioneer,” **Rebecca Klassen**, the museum's decorative arts curator, told me.



The New York Historical's Tiffany gallery. Photo: Corrado Serra.

Dealer **Lillian Nassau** also championed the work, leading a Tiffany revival beginning in the 1950s. From her New York gallery, she sold lamps to collectors such as **Walter Chrysler** and **Edgar Kaufmann, Jr.**, whose father commissioned **Fallingwater** (<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/blueprint-fallingwater-frank-lloyd-wright-2549541>). She also loaned pieces to seminal exhibitions at the **Museum of Contemporary Crafts** (<https://archives.centerforcraft.org/digital/collection/p15785coll5/id/1438/>) (now the **Museum of Arts and Design**) in 1958 and the **Museum of Modern Art** (<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/2752>) in 1960.

The psychedelic '60s saw a reawakening to Tiffany's striking interplay of light and shade, which carried through the '80s. “If we look through moments in time, we can see that interest in Tiffany lamps and other decorative arts really accords with interest in exuberance, color, and our perception of those things,” Klassen said.

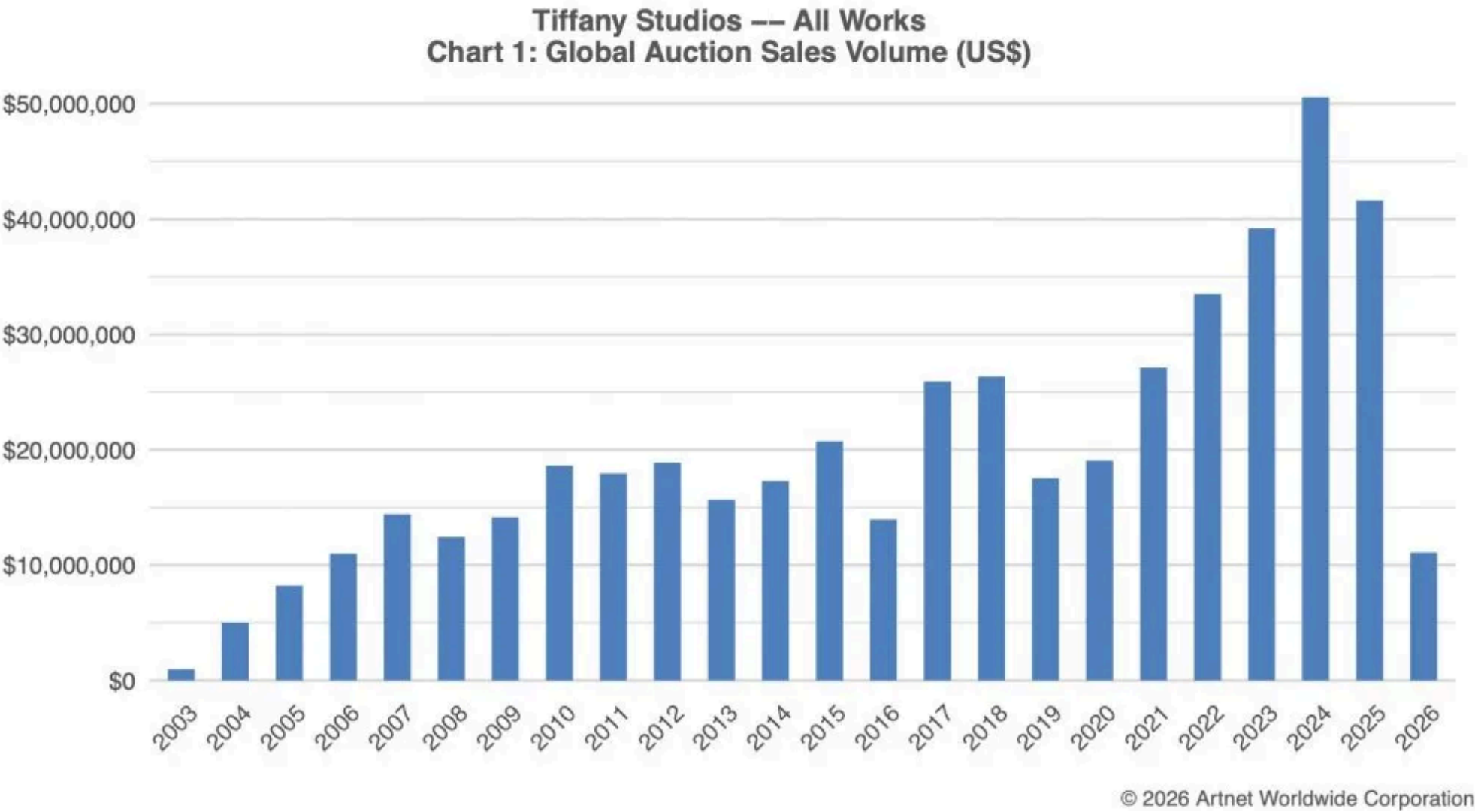


Louis Comfort Tiffany & Agnes Northrop, *Danner Memorial Window* (1913). Photo: Sotheby's.

Today, collector appetite for Tiffany remains robust. The past two years have seen records set at **Sotheby's** for the studio's designs: \$4.4 million (<https://news.artnet.com/market/tiffany-magnolia-lamp-sothebys-sale-2728111>) for a Magnolia floor lamp, now the priciest leaded lamp by Tiffany, and a staggering \$12.4 million (<https://news.artnet.com/market/tiffany-record-12-4-million-danner-memorial-window-2572035>) for the *Danner Memorial Window*, still the most valuable work made by the company. The most expensive Tiffany table lamp remains the \$3.7 million Dandelion lamp (<https://www.ragoarts.com/auctions/2021/05/early-20th-century-design/273>) that sold at **Rago/Wright** in 2021.

The Tiffany market had a banner year in 2024, with total auction sales reaching \$50.6 million, according to the **Artnet Price Database**. That represented a culmination in the brand's upward trajectory beginning in

2021; average annual sales since then have been more than double their pre-2020 levels.



Global auction sales volume for Tiffany Studios from 2003 to 2026. Photo: Artnet Worldwide Corporation.

Tiffany’s own creations have also been sought after by collectors. His auction record stands at \$3.6 million for a gold, opal, and demantoid necklace offered by Sotheby’s in 2021, according to Artnet data. Indeed, jewelry overwhelms his highest auction results (he served as Tiffany & Co.’s first design director from 1902).

The Tiffany collector has evolved over time, according to **Benjamin Macklowe** of **Macklowe Gallery**, a leading Tiffany dealer. Where the previous decades saw a dedicated decorative arts audience, the present-day buyer is younger, and less likely to view a Tiffany as an antique. (Some younger fans without the means for a Tiffany lamp have resorted to acquiring a [Tiffany lamp tattoo \(https://news.artnet.com/art-world/tiffany-lamps-gen-z-tiktok-2457921\)](https://news.artnet.com/art-world/tiffany-lamps-gen-z-tiktok-2457921).)

“Today, we are just as likely to place a major Tiffany object with someone whose home contains a **Giacometti** sculpture, **Ruhmann** furniture, and a **Twombly** on the wall,” Macklowe told me. “They are looking at these objects with fresh eyes and seeing how extraordinarily inventive and modern they can be.”



Tiffany Studios Magnolia floor lamp. Courtesy of Sotheby's.

The Tiffany market today has become far easier to navigate, too, said **Mike Fredericks**, senior specialist at Rago/Wright, which features Tiffany in an average of three auctions a year. “Whether it’s Facebook groups or Instagram posts, there’s a lot of situational awareness with the public these days,” he told me. “There are more avenues to find Tiffany now than ever before.”

But whether then or now, it is the studio’s phenomenal artistry that has drawn collectors, the experts said. Fredericks pointed to the painstaking craftsmanship of Tiffany’s lamps and candlesticks, while Macklowe noted the technological innovation that went into achieving naturalistic glass, producing hallmarks like the Wisteria and Magnolia lamps.



Tiffany Studios, Wisteria Table Lamp. Photo courtesy of Macklowe Gallery.

This fall's shows at the Met and Nassau museums may attract even more collectors to Tiffany, but in Macklowe's view, they serve an even more important purpose. "The more we understand his contribution to the visual culture of late 19th- and early 20th-century America, the more significant the objects themselves become," he said. "Exhibitions like these are important because they allow people to understand Tiffany as an artist rather than simply as the name behind a famous type of lamp."

"Louis Comfort Tiffany: Artist of the Gilded Age

(<https://nassaumuseum.org/exhibitions/louis-comfort-tiffany/>) is on view at the Nassau County Museum of Art, One Museum Drive, Roslyn, New York, through November 8. "Designing the Gilded Age: Drawings from the Studios of Louis C. Tiffany

*([<https://news.artnet.com/art-world/louis-comfort-tiffany-met-nassau-market-2799918>](https://www.metmuseum.org/fr/exhibitions/designing-the-gilded-age-</u></i></p>
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drawings-from-the-studios-of-louis-c-tiffany)” is on view at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1000 5th Avenue, New York, October 22, 2026–February 7, 2027.

Correction (August 25, 2026): An earlier version of this article stated that the most expensive Tiffany table lamp is the Pond Lily lamp that sold at Christie’s. It was actually the Dandelion lamp that realized \$3.7 million at Rago/Wright. This article has been updated.



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