

Lynn Brofman Object of the Month

Martelé Coffee and Tea Service for Rockledge House

nr Winona MN

Link to Arts Connected: [Teapot from the martelé coffee and tea service for Rockledge](#)

Artist: George Washington Maher; Gorham Manufacturing Company

Date: c. 1912 (Titanic sunk April 12 1912)

Medium: Decorative Arts and Utilitarian Objects, Metalwork

Size: 7 1/4 x 8 7/8 x 5 in. (18.4 x 22.5 x 12.7 cm)

Institution: Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Accession #: 95.36.3

designed for Rockledge, the E. L. King House, Homer, MN (demolished 1987)

Label Text: The coffee and tea service that Maher designed for Rockledge illustrates his adherence to the progressive idea of a unified interior. Emblazoned on each piece, along with the King monogram, is the ubiquitous tiger lily, one of Maher's dominant motifs for the house. The service also exhibits the trapezoidal dentils and flattened arch that Maher used as architectural detailing. This set was custom-made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company as part of their exclusive "Martelé" line. The hand-hammered surface (martelé means "hammered") is characteristic of Arts and Crafts metalwork of the period



Questions

1. What's the one work you would use to describe this tea and coffee service?
2. Imagine that you lived in Rockledge, a 12,000 square foot summer home
How would you use this tea and coffee service?
Where would you put in your home?
3. If you were designing a home today using a Unified Design
What design motif would you choose to have throughout your home?

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Key Points See "Notes" section for detailed narrative

- Unified Design---harmony in the home and in life
 - Motif rhythm theory –went further than Wright, Purcell, Elmslie, other Prairie School architects
 - Flattened Arched Doorway repeated in coffee pot handle
 - Coral Tiger lily, King Monogram
 - Out of vogue by 1930 redecorated in Art Deco
- Mixed Design
 - Maher known for blending traditional with Arts and Crafts
 - Arts and Crafts hammered aesthetic
 - 18th century silversmithing techniques---cast, applied handles, ivory insulating inserts ---*see attached photos of production methods*
- Rare example
- How it was used
 - 12,000 sq ft summer home
- Tea and Coffee drinking in America
 - http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/coff/hd_coff.htm
 - <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee>

Transition

To be determined

Bibliography

From MIA web resources

<http://www.artsmia.org/unified-vision/architectural-tour/king-1.cfm>

<http://www.artsconnected.org/resource/7098/2/teapot-from-the-martel-coffee-and-tea-service-for-rockledge>

From Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Maher

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gorham_Manufacturing_Company

http://www.gorham1831.com/misc/gorham_history.cfm

Misc websites

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee>

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/coff/hd_coff.htm

http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/University_Library/test/bbuzzell/gorham/exhibit_introduction.html

<http://histocylit-rays.blogspot.com/2008/03/1912-society.html>

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Progressive Design in the Midwest, the Purcell-Cutts House and the prairie School Collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. From page 145 "Relevant Texts:

1. Bahnemann, Greta L. George Maher's Rockledge: a study in architecture, patronage, and consumption / by Greta L. Bahnemann. NA737.M24 B34 2005 MIA Main Collection pp. 34, 39-40
2. Conforti, Michael. Minnesota 1900: art and life on the upper Mississippi, 1890-1915 / Michael Conforti, editor; with essays by Marcia G. Anderson ... [et al.]. N6530.M6 M56 1994 MIA Main Collection
3. Gustafson, Eleanor H. "Museum Accessions," *Antiques* (January 1996) 36.
4. Kaplan, "The Art that is Life," pp. 48, 94, 95, 396-400
5. Kardon, *The Ideal Home*, pp 74-75, 205
6. Komar, Jennifer, "The Rockledge Coffee and Tea Service: An Integral Part of George Maher's Progressive Interior" in 12th Annual Antiques Show and Sale catalogue, Decorative Arts Council of The Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1995, pp. 6-7
7. Volpe and Cather, *Treasure of the American Arts and Crafts Movement*. pp. 17, 61-63.

Provenance: Ernest L and Grace Watkins King. Historical Design Collection, New York (dealer)

Notes

Mahe- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_W._Maher

- early work influence: Silsbee, Richardson, Louis Sullivan, Chicago School
- worked w/ FLW, Elmslie as draftsman, home in Kenilworth IL.
- As part of his design philosophy Maher developed what he call Motif-Rhythm theory in an attempt to produce a design unity throughout the building and its interior. This involved using a decorative element, often a local flower, a geometric shape, or a combination of the two, which would be used repeatedly throughout the design to "bind the design together." [12] At "Rockledge", the 12,000-square-foot (1,100 m²) summer house he designed in 1911 for Ernest and Grace King in Homer, Minnesota, Maher was also commissioned to design the interior furnishings for the house allowing him to use the Motif-Rhythm theory to the fullest extent possible. Ultimately the house fell into disuse but before the house was demolished the furniture, clocks, lamps, rugs, even the tableware that Maher had designed were sold with many pieces ending up in various museum collections as examples of Arts and Crafts design. [13]
- Influence Euro Arts and Crafts Movement, Vienna Secession

New at the Institute: Coffee and Tea Service, 1912: Arts Magazine

Coffee and Tea Service, 1912

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George Washington Maher, designer, American, 1864-1926

From Rockledge, the E. L. King residence, Homer, Minnesota

Silver, ivory

Made by the Gorham Manufacturing Company, Providence, Rhode Island

Gift of Ruth and Bruce Dayton in honor of Russell A. Plimpton

Photo: Bob Fogt. The coffee and tea service from Rockledge illustrates the extent to which Prairie School architect George Maher pursued a progressive, unified interior in his designs for businessman E. L. King's house near Winona, Minnesota. He believed that harmony in the home—and therefore in life—could be achieved by the consistent repetition of specific design elements. This was done at Rockledge, which was unfortunately razed in 1989, through the use of the flattened arch, placed above the doorway of the house and on many of the furnishings, and the coral lily abundant at the site, also applied throughout the interiors. Because King wholeheartedly supported his architect's vision, Maher was able to design a silver service that was created to the highest standards. The Gorham Manufacturing Company of Providence, Rhode Island, meticulously followed Maher's design, and the result cleverly combined the popular arts-and-crafts aesthetic of the time with traditional high-quality silver-making techniques. For instance, the visibly hand-hammered surface of each piece typifies arts-and-crafts metalwork, while the techniques of casting and applying the handles and other projecting elements and inserting ivory insulators date from the 18th century. The hot-water kettle of the silver service features the flattened-arch motif and thus further links the interior of Rockledge and its furnishings to the exterior. Each piece of the service is emblazoned with the King monogram and the coral lily. The result is a finely crafted and decorated object, with a strong architectural presence, that formed an integral part of one of the region's most progressive turn-of-the century interiors.

SPAULDING & CO

origin in 1855 as S. Hoard & Co. Bought by Gorham Mfg.Co in 1920 changing its name in Spaulding-Gorham Inc. The name was changed in Spaulding & Co in 1943 when the firm was purchased by Gordon Lang.

Martelé (French- to hammer) line is cataloged by Gorahm. Each piece is numbered individually and recorded. Coffee pot, which was less detailed, took 140 hours to produce. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/> Antiques Roadshow, Washington D.C., aired 5/28/11

Gorham Production Photos

See following pages—4 photos

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