

Object of the Month-May, Sheila-Marie Untiedt

*Bowl and Stem Glass
Otto Prutscher*

*Bowl with blue cameo cut decoration 86.11
Glass with dark red cameo cut decoration. 86.12
Glass with blue cameo cut decoration 98.276.171
12 1/2" x 9 1/4" bowl, 8 3/4" tall glasses
Gallery 378*



98.276.171 c1912 86.12 c.1910 86.11 c.1905

The bowl and glass currently on display in gallery 378 are beautiful examples of a glass working style and tradition which moved to the forefront of glass working during the Wiener Werkstätte period.

Wiener Werkstätte: [VEEN-er VEHRK-shtet-teh] (German for "Vienna Workshop") A firm established in 1903 as an association of artists and craftspeople working together to manufacture fashionable household goods. The firm was an offshoot of the late 19th century Vienna Secession, a group of artists and architects who sought to establish a "new art" for the new century. Simplified shapes, geometric patterns, and minimal decoration characterized Wiener Werkstätte products. Together Josef Hoffmann and Koloman Moser founded the Viennese Workshop and Production Cooperative of Art Works in Vienna in 1903. By 1905 it had over a hundred craftsmen.

Otto Prutscher studied with Josef Hoffmann at the Kunstgewerbeschule (Vienna School for Applied Art) before working as an architect and interior designer. He also designed textiles, glass, furniture, metalware, and leather goods for the Wiener Werkstätte and several other manufacturers. His glassware for the Adolf Meyr firm utilized the cameo process, whereby clear glass is encased with a layer of colored glass that is then cut or polished away to reveal the clear glass underneath. The bright colors and geometric patterns seen here typify many Wiener Werkstätte pieces.

Prutscher sought to blur the boundaries between art and objects designed for everyday use. At the turn of the century around the year 1900 the city of Vienna was, next to Paris, one of Europe's leading cultural centres. This was due to the rise of the middle classes, who were in the process of emancipating themselves from the model provided by the aristocracy and were searching for ways in which they could express themselves individually in art, architecture and music. The Wiener Werkstätte was created specifically to address the application of the Sezessionstil to objects used in everyday life, such as furniture, lamps, greeting cards, etc.

*(b Vienna, 7 April 1880; d Vienna, 15 Feb 1949). Prutscher was the son of a traditional Viennese cabinetmaker. In 1897 he entered the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna, where he studied with Franz von Matsch (1861-1942) and Josef Hoffmann. Prutscher's work, strongly influenced by Hoffmann and contemporary Secessionist style, began to attract attention during his student years, and in 1900 a number of his designs were published in *Das Interieur*. After completing his studies (1901), Prutscher collaborated with Erwin Puchinger (1876-1944) on a series of interiors in Paris and London that won widespread praise. In 1909 he was appointed to a post at the Kunstgewerbeschule in Vienna, where he taught with several interruptions until his retirement in 1946. In the years prior to World War I, Prutscher designed numerous houses and interiors in Vienna and in the provinces. His early designs drew on Jugendstil geometric formal language developed by Hoffmann and others. By 1908, however, his works reflect a growing emphasis on classical forms as well as native folk motifs similar to Hoffmann's contemporary idiom. His work of this period is best exemplified by the marble room created for the *Kunstschau* in Vienna in 1908, executed by craftworkers of the Wiener Werkstätte.*



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