

FENTON FINDERS OF GREATER KANSAS CITY



The meeting of the Fenton Finders of Greater Kansas City will be SATURDAY, APRIL 10TH, 2010 at the Raytown City Hall, 10000 E. 59th Raytown, Missouri. The meeting will start at 7:00 P.M.

The first thing that needs to be done is to apologize to everyone for not catching that the telephone number that I gave everyone for the Embassy Suites was wrong. The correct number is 816-891-7788, not 896. I am sorry for any problems this caused anyone. I've also been informed that the clerks at the front desk do not always understand what we are asking for when we ask for the Gala rate. They seem to have a better time when we ask them for the Fenton Finders of Greater Kansas City rate. In any case keep trying and something will work.

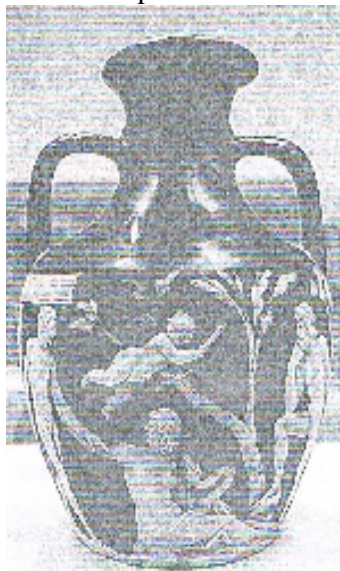
Our meeting in February was wonderful. Janet Wilke brought in all her wonderful perfume bottles as well as a picture or two of bottles that were on their way to her home as well as a picture of one she would like to have. We learned a lot about Fenton perfume bottles made to be used with DeVilbiss atomizers.

Our show and tell was great. Everyone responded to Steve Duncan's request in February for more glass for show and tell. I decided to bring in samples of glass that showcase the theme of our big display for the Gala this year, Cameo glass. We will also be showing off Fenton's etched glass as well so that we can continue to celebrate Fenton's past, present, and future in our big display. Of course one of our members stumped me. They asked, just what was cameo glass?

Good question. We all know it when we see it but just what is it and what is etched glass? Nick Duncan, our vice president, used his handy dandy phone to come up with a text book definition of cameo glass. I will try to come up with the same or one very similar along with some history about this beautiful art glass.

This is from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia and I found it when doing a search on the internet on cameo glass. Cameo glass is a luxury form of glass art produced by etching and carving through fused layers of differently colored glass to produce designs, usually with white opaque glass figures and motifs on a dark colored background. The technique is first seen in ancient Roman art of about 30 BC, where it was an alternative to the luxury engraved gem vessels in cameo style that used naturally layered semi-precious gemstones such as onyx and agate. Glass allowed consistent and predictable colored layers, even for round objects.

It is easy to think that cameo glass has only been around for the last few hundred years, but as we can see from the above quote, it has been around for a long, long time. There are very few examples left of the fragile Roman cameo glass. According to the article only 15 complete objects of early Roman cameo glass survive. The Morgan Cup is in the Corning Museum of Glass which is wonderful news for anyone who would like to see an intact example of early cameo glass. It is believed that cameo glass was produced in two periods, about 30 BC to 60 AD. Samples of cameo glass from later periods are even harder to find. Because of all this it is believed that it was restricted to the elite. The Portland Vase was excavated from the tomb of the Emperor Septimus Severus. For him this vase was a two hundred year old antique.



The Portland Vase, about 8-25 AD.

Cameo glass was used again in Islamic art in the 9th and 10th centuries and then the art was lost until the 18th century in Europe. Well known glass producers in England perfected the art. Thomas Webb and Sons and George Bacchus and Sons are well known as producers of this art glass. Some more famous and well known cameo glass artisans were Philip Pargeter (1926-1906), George Woodall and John Northwood (1836-1902). Emile Galle (1846-1904), a French glass artist, was artistically the most creative and

perhaps the best known today. At this time Roman-inspired subjects and color schemes were replaced by plant and flower designs. Galle was a leader in designing and producing floral designs and is one of the most collected cameo glass today. Unfortunately, there have been cheap copies made of his art glass with the Galle name on the glass that has been sold as the real thing. Collectors need to beware.

Techniques

In the modern revival, all of the top layer except the areas needed for the design are usually removed by an etching process, The figure areas are covered with a resist layer of wax or some other acid-resistant material such as bituminous paint, and the blank repeatedly dipped in hydrofluoric acid, so that cameo glass is in some sense a sub-set of acid-etched _Glass. The detailed work is then done with wheels and drills, before finishing, and usually polishing. It seems that in the ancient world the entire process of removing the unwanted white or other top layer was done by drills and wheels. Wheel cut decoration on glass of a single color was very common in ancient Rome. In the case of "three-layer (or three-color) cameo, there is another layer of glass on top of the white opaque one, and further layers are possible. One Roman piece uses a record six layers. It is not known where the Roman pieces were produced, but for want of any better suggestion, most scholars think in the capital itself. It appears likely that at least the making of the blanks was initially in the hands of imported Syrian glass-workers.

References

- Hugh Honour and John Fleming, *A World History of Art*, 1982 & revised eds, Macmillan, London
- Lightfoot, Christopher. "Luxury_Arts of_Rome". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000—. (February 2009, retr. 23 September, 2009),
- Trentinella, Rosemarie. "Roman Cameo Glass". In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-9. link (October 2003, retr. 16 September, 2009)
- Texas A&M University_Museum Exhibition feature George Woodall and the Art of English Cameo Glass.
- Whitehouse, David. *Roman glass in the Corning Museum of Glass*, Volume 1 Corning Museum of Glass. Google_books

As you can tell, much of the information in this newsletter was picked up from the web. I included the references to give credit where it is due as well as hints for those of you who would like to get more information on this glass.

It will be interesting to find out from Kelsey Murphy if the technique described in this article is the one she uses. There is much to learn about the work it takes to create this beautiful glass. I hope that all of you are looking forward to having Kelsey Murphy and hopefully Robert Bomkamp to help us increase our knowledge of this ancient glass making art.

In future newsletters we will try to get better definitions of etched glass as well as cut and acid etched glass as it seems they are all related to cameo glass.

As we get ready for the Gala, I hope that some of you are making plans to make some goodies for the hospitality room. We always need a lot of homemade goodies and Richard and Virginia are looking forward to all the good stuff. They even brought some goodies to share with us at our last meeting that may well show up at the Gala. How nice it is to get to try out some of the good things that we will be eating in September. Always keep in mind that we need sugar free goodies as well.

It is with sadness that I must admit that I am very bad about remembering to acknowledge holidays and such in the newsletter. Quite often it is very difficult for me to keep up with the holidays that are just around the corner. Therefore, I want to be ahead of the times now and remind everyone of the holiday that is coming up quite soon. Please remember to celebrate April 15th by sending your hard earned money to our Uncle Sam.

More seriously, the program for our next meeting will be a celebration of Easter with a group program on Fenton Eggs and any and all egg related Fenton glass. This would include Barber Eggs, Egg Cups, Hens & Roosters and Bunny Rabbits, after all, who delivers Easter Eggs. Any other Fenton egg related product. Don't forget to take care of yourself and be safe. Enjoy the holidays and don't forget to bring your egg related glass for our program as well as your glass for show and tell.

Jackie Oglesby
Secretary

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