

Two Master Silversmiths Meet In Decorative Art Exhibition

NEW YORK CITY – The Bard Center for studies in the Decorative Arts presents two concurrent exhibits of silversmith masters Arthur J. Stone and Omar Ramsden through May 14.

“Arthur J. Stone: Master Silversmith” traces Stone’s career through 80 objects and 20 working and presentation drawings on loan from various collections. The pieces include presentation silver, ecclesiastical commissions for major American churches, and tableware examples.

Stone was born in 1847 in Sheffield, England, where he apprenticed with master silversmith Edwin Eagle. He emigrated to the United States in 1884, and worked for several different companies before opening his own workshop in Gardner, Mass., in 1901 in continuous operation until his retirement.

Stone was instrumental in promoting the goals of the Arts and Crafts movement, and through his association with the Society of Arts and Crafts in Boston, he came in contact with a community of

like-minded craftspersons, architect-designers, and patrons with whom he enjoyed a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

Stone adopted forms and decorative motifs from many eras, ranging from Etruscan art to French baroque. Some of his most inventive works were inspired by natural elements of plants and flowers, and he excelled at producing subtle decoration using ornamental chasing, or surface modeling, to raise patterns in relief.

The 50 objects in the Ramsden exhibition, including vases, cups and goblets, candelabra, tea services, boxes, bowls, inkwells, and other items, trace the artist’s career, beginning with the Arts and Crafts movement and culminating in modern idiom.

Omar Ramsden, like Stone, was born in Sheffield, England, in 1873. He looked to England’s past for inspiration, borrowing from Celtic, medieval, Elizabethan, and other earlier sources. Wood, ivory, semi-precious stones, and enamel were often

worked into silver designs.

While studying at the Sheffield School of Art, the artist met his future partner, Alwyn Charles Ellison Carr (1872-1940). In 1898, the two men inaugurated the firm of Ramsden and Carr. The partnership ended in 1918, but Ramsden retained the workshop and a group of highly skilled silversmiths.

The form most closely associated with Ramsden is the mazer. This wide shallow, turned wooden drinking vessel was prevalent from the Fourteenth through the Sixteenth Centuries. Ramsden produced abundant examples, with a variety of rim, f r i e z e , a n d f o o t configurations.

In the 1920s and 1930s, Ramsden’s work showed Scandinavian influences, particularly Danish.

The gallery is at 18 West 86th Street. Hours are Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 11 am to 5 pm; Thursday, 11 am to 8:30 pm.