

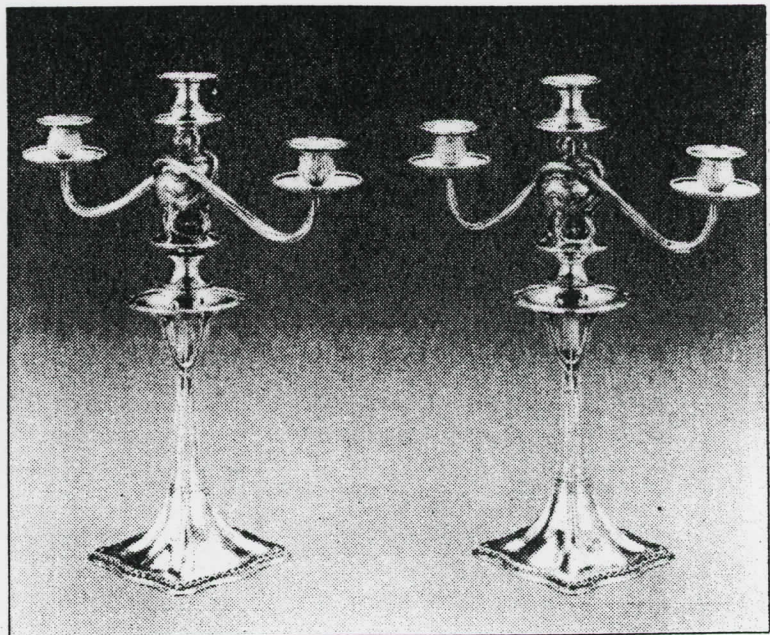
Environmental awareness evident in 19th-century silversmith's work



Bullard Tea Set, 1906 & 1912, silver with gold wash, is in exhibit, 'Arthur J. Stone: Master Silversmith,' at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, through May 14



Sterling silver fruit stand adorned with sculptured fruits is in Bard show, 'English Silver: Masterpieces by Omar Ramsden from the Campbell Collection,' circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibitions



NEW YORK—If you happen to think nature's patterns are hallmarks of our environment-oriented era alone, you'll discover differently at two significant exhibits of 19th-century silver.

They're now on view through May 14 in the Gallery at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, 18 West 86th Street.

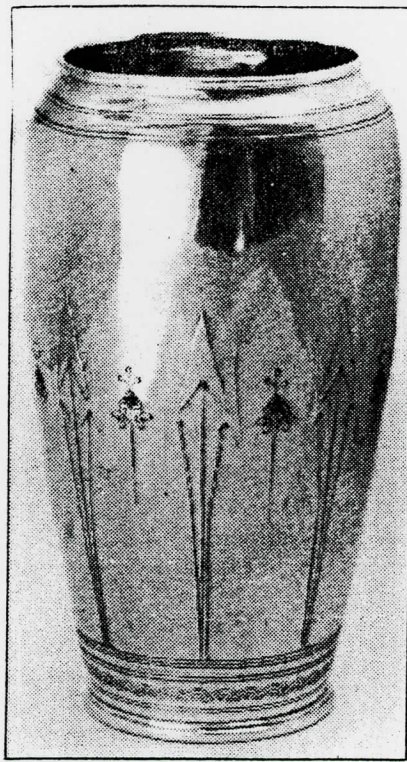
"Arthur J. Stone: Master Silversmith," was organized by The American Federation of Arts. It is a project of ART ACCESS, a program of the AFA with major support from the Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

In the first comprehensive survey of the work of master silversmith Stone (1847-1938), an artisan important in the development of early 20th-century silver, nature's importance surfaces:

Stone's most inventive works were inspired by natural elements of plants and flowers. In both those, and in other themes, he excelled at producing subtle decoration using ornamental chasing, or surface modeling, to raise patterns in relief.

That silver scholar's dramatic use of natural themes that reflect the turn-of-the-century Arts & Crafts influence, is demonstrated, among many designs, in a Tea & Coffee Set with Tray (1916-18). Created for George G. Booth, founder of the Cranbrook Academy and Art Museum, Bloomfield Hills, Mich., the set, silver with gold wash and ivory insulators, is embellished with an array of gold grapes and silver leaves.

Such motifs stemming from na-



The pair (above) of candelabra, 1905-06, Ramsden & Carr, London, combine sterling silver, turquoise enamel. Collection of Vivian & David Campbell

This vase at left, silver with gold inlay, by Arthur J. Stone, master silversmith, whose works form one of two major silver shows at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, through May 15 (Worcester Art Museum)

ture, however, represent only one genre in the works of Stone, to whom silver making, the exhibit notes, "was an intellectual pursuit as well as a creative process." His exhibited works reveal that Stone adopted forms and decorative motifs from many eras. These ranged from Etruscan art to French baroque and English 17th- and 18th-century decorative arts.

Concurrently with the Stone exhibit, is a second one, "English Silver: Masterpieces by Omar Ramsden from the Campbell Collection." Here, too, motifs from the natural world mingle

with many others.

Concerning Ramsden, "preeminent English silversmith," Gallery representatives inform visitors:

"Although Stone and Ramsden both worked in the early 20th century and sought to revive studio handcraft traditions and use preindustrial models in the creation of beautiful objects, their differing approaches offer an informative comparison."

Ramsden's 50 objects in the show—vases, cups and goblets, candelabra, tea services, boxes, bowls, inkwells and more—form a map of sorts of his career from 1901 to 1939.

It began with the 1890s nature-themed Arts and Crafts movement, a reaction to factory conditions and to the poor design quality of machine-made objects that flourished as Ramsden was learning his craft, culminating in a modern idiom.

Like other silversmiths, Ramsden sought inspiration from England's past, borrowing from Celtic, medieval, Elizabethan and other sources. Wood, ivory, semi-precious stones and enamel were often worked into silver designs.

The Ramsden exhibit was organized by David A. Hanks & Associates and the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service. Lynn Springer Roberts is the curator.

On Friday, May 5, the Public Programs Division will present a day-long symposium, "Answering the Call of Nationalism: Decorative Arts, 1890-1914." The event will provide a context for the work of Ramsden and Stone.

The Gallery at the Bard Graduate Center for Studies in Decorative Arts is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. It is closed Mondays. Admission is \$2 for adults, \$1 for seniors. Children under 12 are admitted at no charge.

—Shirley M. Friedman