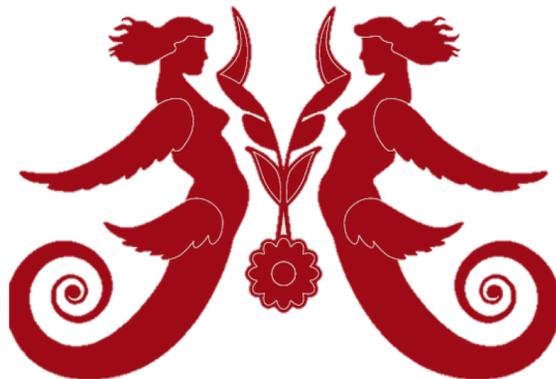


Look Beneath the Lustre

This exhibition invites you to look beneath the lustre and consider how Evelyn and William were inspired to create art.

Hannah Squire, Assistant Curator, National Trust
Working with Victoria Jones, Conservation
Assistant, Wightwick Manor



Inspiring Origins

Decorating the walls and adorning the fireplaces at Wightwick Manor, Evelyn De Morgan's paintings and William De Morgan's tiles are an important part of the Manor's interiors. However, before Evelyn became a successful artist and her husband William De Morgan became a leading ceramic designer, both rebelled against traditional art training to pursue art that inspired them.

“Art is eternal but life is short”, wrote Evelyn in her diary on the morning of her seventeenth birthday.

Art lessons were part of Evelyn's home-schooling, but her parents discouraged her wish to become a professional artist as this was seen as an unsuitable profession for women. Her uncle, the artist John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, helped persuade her parents of her talent however, and from 1873 she studied at the revolutionary Slade School of Art, which was the first to allow women the essential artist's training of drawing from the nude model.

William studied at University College London until he was 19, but knew he wanted to be an artist and joined the Royal Academy of Art in 1859, much to his father's opposition.

After just four years, disappointed with the repetitive drawing of antique sculpture that was an important part of teaching, William abandoned his studies to join his new friends William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones in designing stained glass and eventually ceramics.

Inspiring Collaborations

Making art is never a solitary pursuit. Evelyn and William were supportive of each other's art and collaborated with experimental techniques.

Staring out from many of Evelyn's canvases is Jane Hales, her younger sister's nursemaid. An important part of an artists process was having models to draw. As a woman, Evelyn was restricted in her ability to hire models due to Victorian morality. Jane being 'pretty', as Evelyn's sister described her, and conveniently always around for Evelyn to sketch, became her main model and muse.

There were many obstacles in Evelyn's way to become a professional artist. Having male relatives in the art world was an important resource for women artists. The artist John Roddam Spencer Stanhope provided his niece, Evelyn, with tutelage and support when pursuing a professional career. He moved to Florence, where Evelyn frequently visited him and was greatly inspired by Italian Renaissance artists such as Botticelli.

The production of ceramics is a lengthy, risky and collaborative effort. William created designs but employed a team of staff to decorate the ceramics. The principal painters of vases and plates were Charles and Fred Passenger, Jim Hersey and Joe Juster. They were strictly supervised and not allowed to deviate from his designs. For tile designs, De Morgan created a method of paper transfers, so his designs could be traced onto tiles exactly. This meant the outlines were the same but the depth of the coloured glazes varied from tile to tile.

Phyllis Pickering, the niece of Evelyn and William, knew of Lady Mander's Pre- Raphaelite associations and her art collection at Wightwick Manor. Phyllis wrote to Lady Mander about her Evelyn De Morgan paintings and later donated them to the National Trust.

Inspiring Processes

Both Wightwick and the De Morgan Foundation's collections include Evelyn's preparatory sketches and sketchbooks and William's glaze test tiles and tile design transfer papers. Not originally designed to be exhibited, they are here on display as important artworks in their own right.

Evelyn's studies at the Slade School of Art emphasised the importance of becoming skilled at drawing before beginning to paint. She created hundreds of drawings, many as preparations for her oil paintings. Studying these reveals Evelyn's working method was to sketch a composition, draw nude and draped models for each figure and complete a full pastel portrait for each face. For the final stage she made detailed compositions in pastel. These were considered works of art; a few can be seen inside the Manor, and Evelyn sold them as such. Due to this preparation, Evelyn's oil paintings had little reworking.

William designed and made his own pottery kilns and equipment, and his creativity and desire to experiment with glazes and production shaped him into an experienced chemist.

His experiments led him to re-invent lustre glazes, a technique that had been developed in Egypt in the ninth century and later in Europe before it was abandoned. While working as a stained-glass artist, he noticed the metallic sheen and thought he could reproduce it on ceramics. William's designs were painted with a silver or copper oxide glaze before a second firing. When the kiln reaches the correct temperature, oxygen is released from the metallic oxide leaving a fine film of metal on the surface of the ceramic object, which is why the ceramics look like polished metal.

William's designs could produce lots of variation. For example, he created around sixty animal tile designs which could be combined with one of six different backgrounds and painted in a variety of colours. In total, there were over 6,000 possible variations of animal tiles alone.

Inspiring Movements

In 1884, three years before Wightwick Manor was built, Theodore Mander attended a lecture in Wolverhampton on ‘The House Beautiful’ by Oscar Wilde. The talk inspired the interiors of Wightwick, which became a house of the Aesthetic Movement, with William Morris wallpapers, Charles Kempe stained glass and William De Morgan ceramics integral to the design.

The Aesthetic Movement, championed by Wilde and Evelyn’s contemporaries such as Edward Burne-Jones, valued beauty in art above all else; ‘Art for Art’s sake’. Evelyn’s art was influenced by the Movement. Her art champions the values of colour and form, through her rich use of palette and the importance of beauty in nature and the female form. Evelyn’s creations also express her interest in poetry and focus on inspiring a particular mood through deep emotions. Although, her art does evoke mythological stories through their titles, it could be argued that the story the figures tell is not as important as the mood she creates.

The Aesthetic Movement rejected the Industrial Age and mass production. Artists such as William Morris and William De Morgan, sought to eradicate the snobbery of ‘fine’ arts of painting and sculpture, over the ‘decorative’ arts of ceramics and furniture with their beautiful high-quality designs.

William De Morgan met William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones in 1863 and began working with them to design and make stained glass with Morris & Co. Morris had not been very successful with ceramics and William began creating tile designs for Morris & Co before setting up his own pottery. The earliest De Morgan tile designs are very closely related to Morris’s simple flower patterns.

The Aesthetic Movement drew inspiration from different cultures and eras. Artists were inspired by the artistic styles from Japan and India, Ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance. The influence of the Aesthetic Movement on William De Morgan’s ceramics can be seen in his use of sunflowers, peacock feathers, and his Turkish and Japanese inspired designs, all of which were closely associated with Aestheticism. William’s ceramics were sought after for Aesthetic interiors, here at Wightwick and for his patron, The Peninsular and Orient Steam Navigation Company (P&O), where his opulent tiles covered first class public rooms of passenger liners

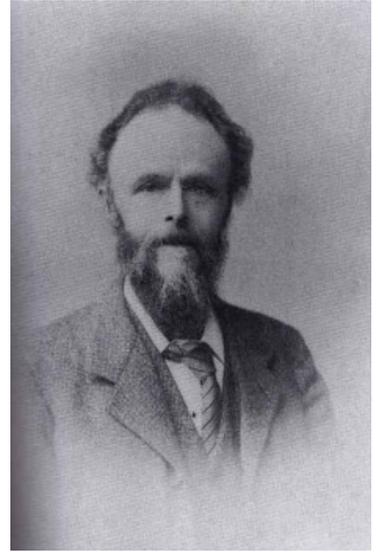
Evelyn De Morgan

- **30 Aug 1855-** Evelyn was born in London to upper-class parents **Percival Pickering Q.C. and Anna Maria Spencer Stanhope.**
- 1866- At 15, Jane Hales, later Evelyn's muse, became nurse to Evelyn's one year old sister. **(More art featuring Jane as Evelyn's model can be seen in the Manor.)**
- **1872-** Evelyn began studying at the **South Kensington National Art Training School**, but disliked its **stifling treatment of women.**
- 1873- At 18 she was one of the first women to enroll at the newly established Slade School of Art. The school revolutionised art education for women and put them on a more equal footing with men.
- **1876-** After Evelyn's father's death and her mother's subsequent move to Yorkshire, she was able to establish an independent life in London. She moved to a studio of her own.
- 1876- Evelyn exhibited for the first time at the Dudley Gallery, *St Catherine of Alexandria*, which quickly found a buyer.
- **1877-** At 21 she was invited to exhibit at the inaugural **Grosvenor Gallery** exhibition in London. Founded as an alternative to the Royal Academy, it championed the **work of women and progressive artists.**
- 1883-Evelyn met ceramic designer, William De Morgan.
- **1890 onwards-** Evelyn lived in the city of Florence, in the winter. She had travelled to Italy lots before, and was influenced by Italian Renaissance artists, particularly **Botticelli.**
- 1907- she exhibited regularly until 1907, including a solo show at Wolverhampton Municipal Art Gallery and Museum.
- **1916-** she held a benefit exhibition of her works at her studio in support of the **Red Cross and Italian Croce Rossa.**
- 2 May 1919- Evelyn De Morgan died in London age 63 and was buried in Brookwood Cemetery, near Woking, Surrey, next to her husband. Jane Hales, Evelyn's muse, was later buried next to them. Over her 50-year career she completed around 100 oil paintings.



William De Morgan

- 16 Nov 1839- William was born the eldest child of Sophia Frennd and Augustus De Morgan. Sophia was a social reform campaigner and Augustus was the first Professor of Mathematics at University College London.
- 1859- William was admitted to the Royal Academy Schools, and studied alongside Pre-Raphaelite artist Simeon Solomon (Solomon's art can be seen in the Manor, as well as a painting by William).
- 1863- He met William Morris and began collaborating with him on stained glass. (The range of pieces Morris and Company created, including stained glass, can be seen in the Manor.)
- 1872- William established his ceramic firm in Chelsea. Before him there was no established ceramicist to supply the popular Arts and Crafts homes with tiles. Whilst experimenting with stained glass he redeveloped the lost art of lusterware. (More examples of William's ceramics can be seen around the Manor.)
- 1877 – 1881- His first major commission was to install Leighton's collection of Damascan and Iranian tiles into the 'Arab Hall' extension of Leighton House.
- Between 1882 and 1900- He designed tiles for twelve P&O Liners.
- 1887- William married Evelyn and travelled regularly to Florence with her, where he collaborated with Florentine ceramicist, Cantagalli.
- 1906- the publication of William's first novel, Joseph Vance.
- 1907- De Morgan & Co business closed permanently.
- 15 Jan 1917- died in London, of trench fever, and was buried in Brookwood Cemetery.



The Aesthetic Movement

'Beauty has as many meanings as man has moods. Beauty is the symbol of symbols. Beauty reveals everything, because it expresses nothing. When it shows itself, it shows us the whole fiery-coloured world.' Oscar Wilde, 1890



The Aesthetic Movement, championed by the Playwright Oscar Wilde, was a late nineteenth century movement. Liberty's was the shop of the Aesthetic Movement.

It was inspired by the following:

- 'Art for Art's Sake', beauty above all else-accentuating the visual qualities of art and design over creating a narrative
- Synesthesia in paintings- stimulation of one sense through another, such as imagery activating a sense of smell or sound
- Reading a picture as an arrangement of colours/musical notes-creating harmony
- Interpreting the mood of a painting- the feelings it evokes
- Japanese art and culture
- Peacocks
- White lilies
- Sunflowers
- Renaissance art
- Middle Eastern textiles and designs
- Medievalism
- Ancient Greek sculpture
- Escaping from the ugliness and materialism of the Industrial Age
- Creating domestic objects with lots of thoughts to form, materials and their quality of making, championing ornamentation and the decorative arts as important as painting- 'Art Furniture'



Artists/Designers associated with the Movement:

- James Abbott McNeill Whistler
- Frederic, Lord Leighton
- G.F. Watts
- Evelyn De Morgan
- William De Morgan
- William Morris
- Dante Gabriel Rossetti
- Sir Edward Coley Burne-Jones



The De Morgan Collection

The De Morgan Collection was formed by Evelyn's sister, Wilhelmina Stirling. Her lifetime passion was to preserve and promote the works and reputation of her sister and brother-in-law. She displayed her collection at her home, Old Battersea House in London and often gave tours of it to the public.



After Mrs Stirling's death in 1965, the De Morgan Foundation was formed to look after the Collection. The De Morgan Foundation is a registered independent charity and it receives no revenue funding from the government.

All the Foundation's income goes towards caring for the collection and making it accessible through loans, tours, research and educational activities. The Foundation relies on the generosity of Friends and supporters to continue to carry out this important work.

Information on how you can help to support the De Morgan Collection is available on our website-

www.demorgan.org.uk

Evelyn De Morgan- Artist in Residence



Evelyn De Morgan
Collaged portrait
Kate Charlesworth
2018

In 2018, as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations of some women getting the vote, Wightwick's Artist in Residence, Kate Charlesworth created representations of important women associated with Wightwick. These were inspired by life size 'silent companions' that were placed in grand houses in the past to make them feel more inhabited.

Evelyn painted a portrait of her husband, William but never created a self-portrait. To incorporate her physical presence into the gallery this artwork has been included. Can you spot all the various details of Evelyn's life added to the figure?

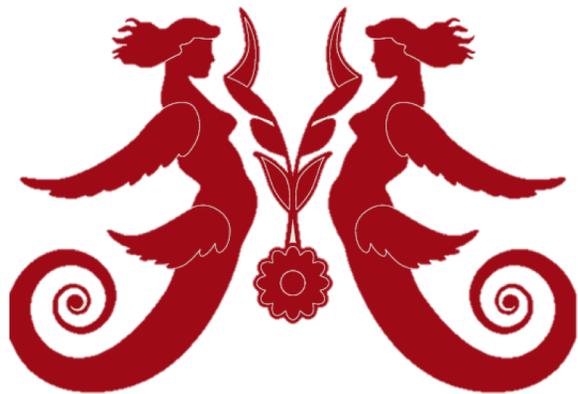


*Silent Companion,
Woman with a
Sword (possibly
Vigilance), Dutch,
17th century*
Snowhill Manor,
Gloucestershire

From the rainbow colours to identify her LGBTQ identity, to the drawing of Jane Hales and portrait of William (both in the gallery), the flowers she painted, and the references to her pacifism and fight for women's suffrage this dummy board cleverly amalgamates different aspects of Evelyn's identity.

Evelyn holds a Gorilla mask, similar to those worn by the contemporary artists and activists the Guerrilla Girls who remain anonymous. Established in 1986, their mission is to bring gender and racial inequality into focus within the greater arts community www.guerrillagirls.com – something the Manders were also passionate about.

'Behind the Art' Cabinet





1

***Study of a Sunflower
with Leaves***
Evelyn De Morgan
**Watercolour and
pencil on paper**
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

From a young age, Evelyn had a drawing tutor and created drawings studied from nature such as this sketch of a sunflower. Drawing flowers, like learning to play the piano, was an acceptable feminine pastime for Victorian middle class women. Art was seen as an accomplishment for ladies but not as a professional career for women, something Evelyn rebelled against.

Sunflowers were an important symbol of the Aesthetic, *Art for Art's Sake*, Movement. "There is no flower so purely decorative as the sunflower (...) it is so perfectly adaptable for decorative art (...) because its form is definite and perfect" said champion of the movement, playwright Oscar Wilde. Sunflowers became so synonymous with Oscar *Punch magazine*, caricatured him as a sunflower. Sunflowers were also important motifs from Japanese and medieval culture- both of which inspired Aestheticism.

Both Evelyn and William were inspired by the Aesthetic Movement and incorporated sunflowers in their art.



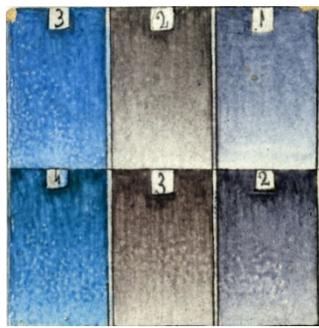
Evelyn de Morgan,
Clytie with Sunflowers,
1885, Wightwick
Collection,
Honeysuckle Room.



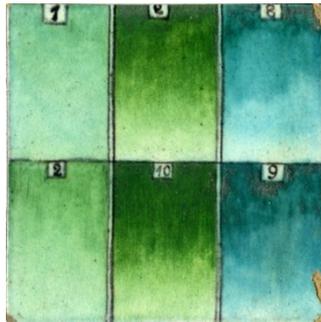
William de Morgan,
Snake and Sunflower dish,
1888 – 1907,
De Morgan Foundation
Collection.

PUNCH'S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 37.





These glaze test tiles offer insight into the process William undertook to perfect his ceramics. Here he experiments with different glazes to achieve exactly the right colour in the finished design.



The blue and purple glazes were created with the use of cobalt, copper and manganese oxide pigments.

Blending pigments including chrome and copper produced the green glazes.

2

Glaze Test Tiles
De Morgan & Co.
1888 – 1897

**Tin-glazed
earthenware
Sands End Pottery,
Fulham**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

William's main talent was as an inventor. Scientific experiments investigating methods and making lead to William being thought of as the preeminent Victorian ceramic designer. He created striking brightly coloured, metallic ceramics, lusterware, a technique that hadn't been used for centuries.

Here he experiments with shade for his Persian wares, which consisted of brilliant blues, turquoises and greens, and were inspired by earlier Turkish Iznik pottery.



William's earlier commission, replicating tile fragments to repair some of the ancient İznik, Damascus, and Persian ceramics at Frederic Leighton's Holland Park house inspired his creations. The colours of these glazes correspond to similar shades.



3

***Undecorated Lion
Relief Vase***
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1904

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation Collection**



Unusual for William's designs, this vase is plain white with a heraldic lion relief. It may have been designed by Halsey Ricardo, who as well as designing for the company, was De Morgan's business partner from the mid-1880s onwards.

This vase was an experimental piece and allows us to see a De Morgan ceramic before the final stages of glaze decoration.

The vase has received an initial tin-glaze coating, which would typically act as a base colour, before additional glaze decoration is applied in multiple colours or lustres. The white base helped to create a luminosity to the added glazes. A similar technique was used Evelyn and the Pre-Raphaelites in their oil paintings. Artists traditionally prepared their canvases with a first layer of earthen paint. However Evelyn and the Pre-Raphaelites chose to paint this initial layer white. The particularly luminous white ground used in their canvases made the bright colours added over it seem illuminated.

To the left are two relief lion tiles featuring multiple layers of lustre. They give an impression of how the vase might have looked with more layers.



4

***Moonlight Suite
Antelope Dish***
De Morgan & Co.
1872 - 1907
**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Inscriptions:
Decorator's mark on
reverse for Charles
Passenger, 'C.P.'**

**De Morgan
Foundation Collection**

A dish decorated with a gold lustre heraldic antelope on a ground of leaves in midnight blue glaze. This piece is among the masterpieces William created of triple-lustred dishes from a series that William called his 'Sunset and Moonlight Suite'. This series is considered some of his finest work and is the result of decades of experimentation before he moved production to Fulham where he mastered the technique.

William's method of lustre firing began with mixing metallic oxides, such as copper or silver, with white clay. To create a gold lustre finish William used silver oxide, the blue/silver lustre is achieved by diluting the silver with clay slip and adding pigment

Gum Arabic was then added to make handling easier. This was then painted onto the earthenware and was packed closely in the kiln, fired at a low heat. At the critical moment, dry material such as sawdust was introduced into the kiln and, once fired up, the kiln was shut down. This closed off all oxygen.

The smoke-filled environment this process created was known as a 'reducing atmosphere'. The resulting effect left an iridescent metallic deposit on the surface, which was cleaned and polished once the ware had cooled.



5

***Baluster Shaped
Floral Vase in
Moonlight Glaze
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907***

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware
Decorator's mark on
bottom of vase for
Passenger, Fred:
'F.P.'**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Lustre earthenware eight-sided baluster shaped vase. Decorated with floral motifs in De Morgan's 'moonlight lustre' colourway.

The metallic sheen applied to the silver areas of the vase is created during the final firing of silver oxide mixed with gum Arabic. Each of the lustres was fired at a different temperature, therefore requiring multiple firings. Each one causes strain on the ceramics and it was not uncommon for items to shatter or crack during the process.

Hollowware such as this was decorated either freehand from William's master design, or decorated using a pouncing technique (dusting charcoal through a pin-pricked design outline which had been traced).

William's experiments with glaze recipes allowed him to master this challenging technique, which has its roots in ancient Middle Eastern and Hispano Moorsque pottery.

This piece is marked with the initials 'F.P.' Fred, along with his brother Charles were two of the De Morgan's most successful decorators.



6

*Moonlight Suite
Eagle and
Crocodile Bowl*
De Morgan & Co.
1872 – 1904
Lustre-glazed
earthenware

Pottery mark on
reverse. Fulham
Impress Mark.
Pottery mark on
reverse Passenger
Fred: 'F.P.'

De Morgan
Foundation
Collection



Earthenware dish decorated with a gold lustre eagle attacking a crocodile on the inside of the bowl. The exterior is decorated with a flower motif, all set against on a midnight blue ground.

The lighter blue might have been achieved simply by diluting the pigment with clay slip. However, it has also been debated that William might have achieved the lighter blue through an acid etching process, with each of the lustres fired at a different temperature.

Triple firings were used to create the moonlight lustre, making the moonlight suite a technologically ambitious process, which accounts for the rarity of the pieces.

De Morgan's work in lustreware was so admired that in 1892 he was invited by the Egyptian Government to deliver a paper on his experiments and processes. He is widely credit with reinventing the lost art.



7

*Studies of
flowers, red
daylily and white
jonquil*

**Evelyn De
Morgan
Watercolour on
paper**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

These detailed sketches of flowers show Evelyn's close observation skills. The plants are painted in photorealistic detail.

Though she was not a member of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, an art movement that began 30 years before Evelyn became an artist, she was influenced by their radical belief that studying nature in all its detail was incredibly important for creating art.

“Go to nature in all singleness of heart, and walk with her laboriously and trustingly... rejecting nothing, selecting nothing and scorning nothing.” Ruskin, art critic and supporter of the Pre-Raphaelites, wrote in his book *Modern Painters* (1843).

White jonquils belong to the narcissus family and may represent creativity and inspiration but also are associated with myth of Narcissus and therefore Vanity. Oscar Wilde himself was caricatured as Narcissus, due to the Aesthetic Movement's preoccupation with beauty.

Lilies, like Sunflowers, were an important motif of the Aesthetic Movement.

Daylily's are native to Japan. Oscar Wilde on his tour of America remarked; *“There's no flower I love so much as the lily. That, too, is perfect in form, and purely decorative. (...) In Japan the worship of the lily is the foundation of religion”*



8

Study of a fish
**Evelyn De
Morgan**
**Watercolour on
paper**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Gold and Ruby Lustre Fish Vase,
De Morgan & Co., 1888-1897,
De Morgan Foundation
Collection.

Unlike the drawings of flowers, that surround this drawing, which appear to be drawn accurately from observation in nature the fish seems to be less naturalistic, with expressive eyes and a stylised shape- like William's representations of fish. William used fish as subjects often in his ceramics (see the third cabinet for a variety of examples.)

Evelyn's fish also has oversized blue fins, or could these shapes represent water? Or maybe the circular pattern in the blue is a close up of the fish's eye as a reference for a later, larger drawing or oil painting? What do you think?

What kind of fish do you think Evelyn has represented? With its prominent whiskers (barbels) it may represent a Koi carp. Japanese art and culture was a large inspiration for the Aesthetic Movement- one of the movements that inspired Evelyn. Koi carp are a common motif in Japanese Art.



Flowers feature in many of Evelyn's oil paintings, and preliminary sketches like this one would act as preparatory sketches for details in her art.

White irises are known as 'Iris Florentina', the Florentine Iris. The Iris has been a symbol of Florence since 1251. Its flag features a red iris on a white background. Originally it was a white iris on a red background.

9

Study of iris and leaves
Evelyn De Morgan
Watercolour on paper
De Morgan Foundation Collection

Evelyn's painting, *Flora*, features Flora the Roman Goddess of Flowers. Evelyn depicts her as the living embodiment of Florence with an inscription: 'come down from Florence and am Flora, This city takes its name from flower'. Showing the close association between flowers and city she was inspired by.

Irises are native to Italy. It's believed that the valley and every hill of Florence in antiquity, was a carpet of white iris.



Evelyn spent a lot of time in Florence and was greatly inspired by its art history and probably sketched this iris whilst in the city. Renaissance artists; Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo called the city home and their work was seen by Evelyn in the Uffizi Gallery

Flora, Evelyn De Morgan,
1894, Oil on canvas, De Morgan
Foundation Collection



A drawing by Evelyn of Jane Hales, drawn when she was in her late thirties.

This drawing was not a preparatory sketch for one of Evelyn's oil painting, where Jane is depicted in various guises. These usually feature a younger Jane. This seems instead to be a portrait of Jane in a modest hat, perhaps denoting her station as a servant but with beautiful, big earrings. The unguarded peaceful expression on her face may denote the closeness between sitter and artist.

10

*Study of Jane
Hales*
**Evelyn De
Morgan
1887**
Pencil on paper

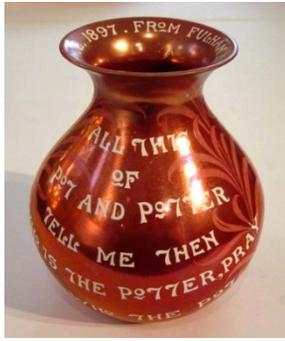
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Jane came from a working class family. Her father was an agricultural labourer. Her Uncle had worked for Evelyn's family, the Pickerings, which is possibly how Jane came to work for the family. At 15, in 1866, Jane joined Evelyn's parents household as nurse to look after Evelyn's 1 year old sister, Wilhelmina. Evelyn was only 4 years younger than Jane.

As Evelyn became more serious in her pursuit of a professional career in art she need life models to draw from. Having Jane living in her family home helped make it easy for Evelyn to create her art.

In later life Jane lived with her charge, Anna, as her ladies maid, in her married home.

Jane died, aged 75, and was buried next to Evelyn. Jane's inclusion in the family graves marks her closeness with the family.



11

***Ruby Lustre
Christmas Vase
De Morgan &
Co.
1897
Lustre-glazed
earthenware***

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre has been applied to the surface of this vase, along with ornamentation in the use of pink willow leaves and white writing. This lustre is achieved using copper oxide.

Inscribed on the vase are the words 'ALL THIS OF POT AND POTTER TELL ME THEN WHO IS THE POTTER, PRAY AND WHO THE POT' from *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*- a popular book of poetry greatly admired by the Pre-Raphaelites.

The verse is a metaphor for the creation of myths. Much like a myth which is retold over the centuries, the pot is only ever a construction by those who construct it so where the potter ends and the pot begins is a matter for debate.

This vase was sent to William De Morgan for Christmas in 1897, whilst he was in Florence. It was made by the workers in his Sands End Pottery, in Fulham. De Morgan regarded his workers highly and describes his objections to his business manager to stopping a worker's pay whilst he is off work with a broken ankle.

It is not a surprise that William's workers sent him a Christmas gift, therefore. William clearly regarded this gift very highly. He returned to London with it where it remained at home with him until his death in 1917.



12

***Lustreware Jar
& Lid***

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1888-1898

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Collection of
Victoria and**

Albert

Museum,

London



Portrait of William De Morgan with vase, Evelyn de Morgan, Oil on Canvas, 1909. On loan from National Portrait Gallery.

This lustreware vase decorated with a vine design has assumed iconic status since, in 1909, William chose to hold it when sitting for a portrait by Evelyn De Morgan (situated on the wall to the right of the display cabinet- when a light is shined on the jar it changes colour).

This piece is a successful firing of gold and ruby lustres (copper and silver oxides) applied to a dark blue base glaze. The pattern owes much to Italian Maiolica and Iznik wares that inspired William in his lustreware ceramic designs. This piece reflects William De Morgan's skill at a time when his extensive research, experiments and practice had made him a technical virtuoso in his field.

This vase is said to be one of the last pieces of lustreware that William De Morgan produced before ceasing pottery production in 1907. It now belongs to the Victoria and Albert Museum from whom we have it on loan.

According to Evelyn De Morgan,

‘[T]he last pieces of lustre-ware he produced in the dying factory [in Fulham] were the best he had ever done’.

Evelyn De Morgan has successfully captured the lustre-glaze of the vase in the painting.



A photograph of Jane Hales, Evelyn's sister's nursemaid, when she was young and Evelyn's main muse.

Similarities between the photograph and many of Evelyn's female figures show the preoccupation Evelyn had with Jane as her main muse and representation of female beauty. She inspired many of Evelyn's depictions of women. Jane as a working class woman did not have the access to education and art training that Evelyn had but nevertheless inspired great creativity in Evelyn.

Compare the photograph to the drawing of *Flora*, a sketch of Jane's face for Evelyn's oil painting. The drawing can be found on the wall near the cabinet.

13

Jane Hales Photograph De Morgan Collection



*Study for female head
of 'Flora'*
Evelyn De Morgan,
1894, red pastel on
paper. De Morgan
Collection

Evelyn and Jane remained close throughout their lives. Evelyn's many depictions of Jane nude has led to speculation about the nature of their relationship. Romantic relationships between models and artists were not uncommon and women were encouraged to form close bonds with each other. We can never be certain of the nature of their relationship, Evelyn left no adult diaries, nor any other first-hand written record of her life or artistic practice. Even if she had, due to the discrimination faced by those of the LGBTQ+ community (male homosexuality was a criminal offense during Evelyn's lifetime) she may not have written these feelings down. Whatever the truth, Evelyn's prolific use of Jane as a model, often naked, and the close bond between Jane and Evelyn is undeniable.

In 2017, to mark the 50th anniversary of the decriminalisation of Homosexuality, Tate Britain held the first exhibition dedicated to LGBTQ+ British Art- 'Queer British Art, 1861- 1967'. As you entered the exhibition the first two artists work seen was Simeon Solomon and Evelyn De Morgan. This room examined Victorian artists depictions of transgressive desire despite the discrimination and prejudice faced by the LGBTQ+ community. Evelyn's celebration of the nude, female form, particularly Jane's was discussed.

A Victorian/Edwardian female artist's consistent representation of beautiful, strong and often nude female figures gives visibility to the lives of LGBTQ+ people who lived a hundred years ago.



14

Sketchbook
Evelyn De
Morgan

Wightwick
Manor,
National Trust
Collection



Venus and Cupid,
Evelyn De
Morgan
Oil on canvas,
1878.
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection

A sketchbook used by Evelyn, in Wightwick's collection. Inside her sketchbooks are drawings of people, animals, nature and buildings, notes about colours, lists of books etc.

Sketchbooks help bring us closer to Evelyn's thoughts and experiments with art. Three sketchbooks by Evelyn are in the Manders' collection. A large proportion of art the Manders collected at Wightwick was preparatory drawings and sketches. As an art historian Rosalie Mander was interested in discovering the process of creation. Drawings seem much more personal and it's easier to decipher the thought processes and decisions artists made by looking at them.

This page shows an early sketch of Venus for the *Venus and Cupid* painting on the far wall, compare the two. Can you see the drapery wrapped around her body was an early decision Evelyn made. On the opposite page Evelyn has drawn multiple perspectives of a horse and rider, trying to perfect her drawing to match the stance of the rider. She was probably sketching from life.



15

**Evelyn De
Morgan
Palette
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

A palette is the board artists use to hold and mix paint. This is one of the palettes Evelyn employed in her studio to create her oil paintings. Splatters of paint can still be seen on it. Like the sketchbook, Evelyn's palette offers insight into her working method and colour mixing.

Before the founding of the Grosvenor Gallery and the opening of the Slade School of Art during Evelyn's younger years, women had little access to art training, places to exhibit or patrons to buy their art. This palette represents the freedom Evelyn had to paint, an opportunity denied to many women.

The layers of paints and indentation from use indicate the energy and hard work Evelyn put into her art.

She was one of the most successful professional female artists of her era. Evelyn was prolific, completing over 100 oil paintings in her lifetime as well as drawings, chalk portraits and sculptures.

Her sister's memoir states: *'her work soon attracted public attention from its richness of colouring, its fine brushwork and the power which, in spite of immaturity, it displayed. No sooner were the pictures seen than they were sold, sales meant money, and money meant freedom to paint.'*

The Manders collected objects at Wightwick associated with artists as well, including ceramics owned by Rossetti and a chair and footstool sat on by Jane Morris. An easel, used by Rossetti is on loan to the Manor and is also on display.



16

William De Morgan Photograph

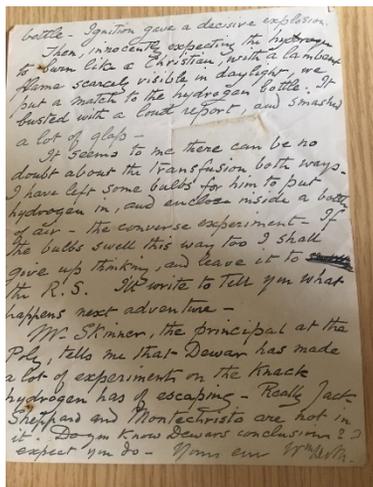
De Morgan Collection

A photograph of William later in life.

William focused his plentiful energy into making beautiful and technically perfect ceramics. His studio, with a focus on the creation of 'artistic' wares and the tireless experiments by William to reproduce various colours and glazes, was seen as the antithesis of the huge industrial factories.

At the height of his pottery's success William was employing nearly 40 members staff to help keep up with demand. However, his hand-crafted ceramics were expensive to produce and unaffordable to the majority of the public, who could purchase transfer-printed ceramics at much lower costs.

William's style of ceramic is distinctive and changed little over the years. When he closed the pottery in 1907, interest in his products had waned. However, today his uniquely beautiful, colourful and playful ceramic designs are instantly recognisable and much sought after.



17

*Letter to Spencer
Pickering,
written by his
brother-in-law
William De
Morgan*

25 January 1916
127, Church
Street, Chelsea

Wightwick
Manor
Collection

The Manders collected letters, notebooks and sketchbooks owned by artists. Wightwick's collection shows they were interested in the biographical details of an artist's life. This letter from the collection shows William's scientific interests and enthusiasm for experiments.

Dear Spencer,

I have just come from the Poly, where I saw the result of an experiment that was very interesting (to me).

We had placed two days ago a blown out rubber (blown by breath) inside a gas bottle of hydrogen. I wanted to compare the incidents of out of door hydrogen coming in with indoor hydrogen coming out.

On going there today the first thing I noticed was that the bulb had swelled up –Handsworth, the manipulation of these things (for my shaky old hand knock everything down) had seen this increase too – before I did. We withdrew the bulb from its bottle and transferred some of its contents to another

(beginning of this page) bottle- Ignition gave a decisive explosion.

Then, innocently expecting the hydrogen to burn like a Christian, with a lambent flame scarcely visible in daylight, we put a match to the hydrogen bottle. It bursted with a loud report and smashed a lot of glass.

It seems to me there can be no doubt about the transference both ways. I have left some bulbs for him to put hydrogen in and enclose inside a bottle of air- the converse experiment. If the bulbs swell this way too I shall give up thinking and leave it to RS. I will write to tell you what happens next adventure.

Mr Skinner, the principal at the Poly, tells me that Dewar has made a lot of experiments on the knack hydrogen has of escaping- Really Jack Shepp and Montechristo are not in it. Do you know Dewars conclusion? Expect you do

Yours ever

William De Morgan



18

*Irregularly fired
red lustre bottle
vase*

**William De
Morgan
1872 – 1907**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

William's work can be broadly divided into two main colour palettes. The Persian wares consisted of brilliant blues, turquoises and greens and the ruby and gold coloured wares, inspired by the decoration of Moorish ceramics and Italian Maiolica.

This small plain vase has irregularly fired red lustre glaze which is intense on one side of vase but fades to white in places. It is unlikely that this piece was intended to remain plain, but due to the poor glaze coverage it was never decorated.

William found producing ceramics to a good, consistent standard was a troublesome process and there were many rejects. This meant that the cost of production was high and his products were therefore very expensive to buy.



19

Ruby Lustre teacup
Ruby Lustre Saucer for
teacup

William De Morgan
1872-1907

De Morgan Foundation
Collection

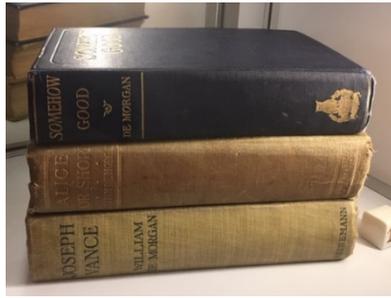


Plain ruby lustre cups and saucers were decorated by William, using a blank ceramic produced by Alfred Meakin Royal Ironstone, to be used by visitors to his showroom on the fashionable Great Marlborough Street in London.

In the showroom William's pottery was displayed in what had once been a large ball-room on the ground floor.

Evelyn and William often socialised at the store holding regular open houses on Sunday afternoons, serving tea from these rose coloured cups.

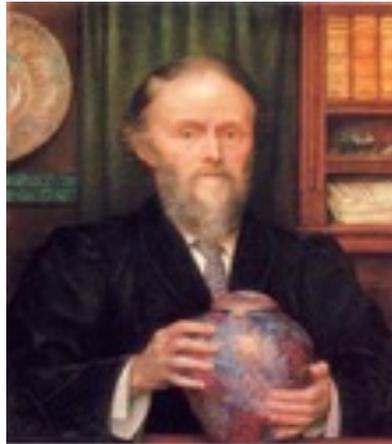
Just imagine entering the ballroom to be greeted by Evelyn and William, browsing the incredible ceramics on display that you could purchase whilst having a cup of tea in one of these mugs.



20

*Somehow Good
Alice-for-short. a
dichronism
Joseph Vance*

**William De Morgan
Books
De Morgan Foundation
Collection**



Portrait of William De Morgan with vase, Evelyn de Morgan,
Oil on Canvas, 1909. On loan from National Portrait Gallery.

William retired from the pottery in 1907. Having led such a busy and creative life, retiring caused him to suffer from a bout of depression. Evelyn encouraged him to find another creative outlet and he started writing novels.

His first novel, the semi-autobiographical *Joseph Vance*, was published in 1906 and was a huge international success. He published seven before his death in 1917 and Evelyn finalised and published two further novels posthumously. The novels were well received by the public, affording the De Morgans a financially secure retirement. Although Evelyn was financially successful with her paintings, De Morgan & Co. had been a burden, needing major investment while in operation.

These three books correspond to the books in the portrait of De Morgan next to this cabinet.

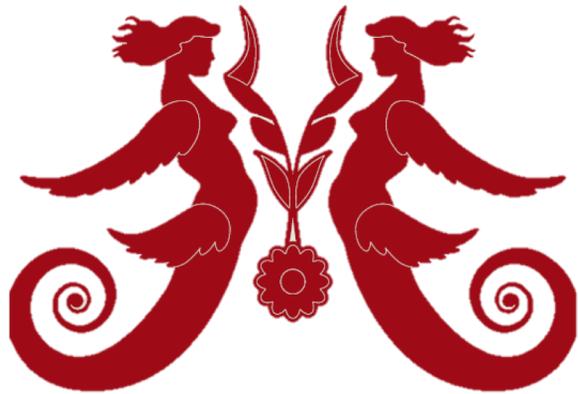
The Manders were great readers and probably read all of William's novels. Wightwick Manor has copies of all William's novels in the library.

Lady Rosalie Mander, was herself a writer and an art historian, and wrote non fiction books about Dante Gabriel Rossetti and the other Pre-Raphaelite artists.

William's writing desk, where he wrote his novels, is on display in the Honeysuckle room.



Art Works And Ceramics on the Walls





Storm Spirits
Evelyn De Morgan
Oil on Canvas

De Morgan
Foundation
Collection

Three female spirits embody the elements of rain, thunder and lightning, causing mayhem in the sea below them. To the left, dressed in yellow, is the spirit of Rain pouring a tide of everlasting water from a shell. To the right, Lightning – a red-winged figure with winged feet- stares at us defiantly sending lightning bolts into the storm. Hovering over both of them is the spirit of the Thunderclouds, dressed in dark blue with her huge, dark wings and draperies merging into the thunderclouds around her which she is concentrating to create.

The sheer size of the painting itself is bold and confident. It emphasises Evelyn's success- that she had a studio big enough to create it as well as the time and materials. Evelyn is making a statement about her position as a professional artist. Defying the stereotypes and limitations that were levelled at women artists.

What else is unusual is that unlike many of her male peers Evelyn chose to represent women as powerful and in control. In the patriarchal society of the Victorian and Edwardian eras Women weren't supposed to be powerful. Upper and Middle class women like Evelyn were brought up to limit themselves to the domestic sphere and rarely engage with public life, that was for men to make their mark.



**Study for ‘The
Storm Spirits’
Evelyn De Morgan
Pastel on paper
C.1900**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Storm Spirits,
Evelyn De
Morgan
Oil on Canvas.
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection

This drawing perfectly illustrates the process Evelyn and other artists were taught to use to paint anatomically correct figures. First the figure was sketched nude and then the clothes were added. The study is a sketch of the central spirit of the Thunderclouds and shows her incredible skill draping fabric on a figure. The drawing demonstrates that Evelyn chose later to change her mind and show the woman's face. In the final painting the cloak is around her shoulders and billowing out behind her instead. The figure in the painting appears bolder and instead clutches at her head, suggesting she is concentrating hard to create a thunderstorm. By comparison the figure in the sketch appears to be modestly hiding her face, much less powerful, and perhaps the reason Evelyn made the change in the final oil painting.

To be a female artist in the Victorian era you had to have a tenacity of spirit. Evelyn's mother disapproved of her pursuit of a career in art. As a young woman she would secretly lock herself into her room in order to paint, and had a false-bottomed bag in which to conceal her sketching materials when leaving the house.

Evelyn was one of the first three women to enroll at the Slade School of Art. Her sister describes that whilst studying at the Slade *‘daily she (Evelyn) was in a fever to arrive the instant the doors were opened, and to make the utmost of the opportunity which had been grudgingly granted to her.’* This skillful drawing shows the long hours Evelyn spent drawing to master the skill.



*Black and gold
compositional
study for
'Gloria in
Excelsis'*

**Gold & charcoal
sketch on grey
paper
1893
Evelyn De
Morgan**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Music, a reoccurring theme in Evelyn's art, is used as a form of divine communication. The earth bound angels speak with the six winged seraphim using a harp. It represents the unifying of earth and heaven.

This compositional study in black and gold for the oil painting 'Gloria in Excelsis' can be considered a finished work of art in its own right, which Evelyn would have intended to exhibit and sell. The painting associated with this work is in a private collection.

Before graphite became popular in the late 16th century drawings were made using a variety of metal sticks, 'metal points'. The metal stylus, was used on an abrasive preparation so that traces of the metal are left on the surface. Popular in Renaissance Italy, metal point required skill. Metal points drawings are difficult to erase but they also do not easily smear. Evelyn saw examples of silver and gold point whilst in Italy. From the late 17th century the technique was virtually forgotten until the 19th century when admiration for Renaissance art sparked its reuse.

Evelyn's work has by art galleries and dealers been misattributed to male artists. Often to sell the work for a higher price or because it was considered too skilled to be created by a woman. Gold metal point was incorrectly believed to have singlehandedly revived by Edward Burne-Jones in the 19th century but as this drawing attests, Evelyn was able to master the technique as well.



The Garden of Opportunity

Evelyn De Morgan

Oil on canvas

1892

De Morgan Foundation Collection

The Garden of Opportunity is full of dualities. Evelyn has painted two medieval male students with two guides who offer them two distinct paths. The students have the opportunity to decide. They have turned their back on Wisdom, and are moving towards Folly, but will they turn back to the path of wisdom and learning, and use their talents for the good of all?

On the right are the symbols of learning and wisdom. The bench is decorated with an owl, the wise bird, and with the cornucopia, the horn of plenty, brimming with the wealth of the earth. A book, lies discarded on the bench. Next to the bench the tree is a symbol of knowledge with two fruit left hanging on the branches for the two students. Behind is a church, the medieval seat of learning. The mill and water wheel behind the bench represent all the riches of the earth, harvested for the benefit of humanity. In front of the bench is Wisdom herself, in an attitude of despair due to the students decision. Her dress by comparison to Folly is constricting, she is kept contained, not able to be free, like the Dove of peace who is grounded. She has also discarded at her feet the riches that she can bring to those who follow her, or perhaps she has abandoned these material possessions, like the crown- a symbol of inherited wealth instead of wealth gained through hard work- as a sign of her wisdom.

On the left, Folly, looks very similar to Wisdom, demonstrating how easy it is to mistake the two. Both figures may have been modelled by Jane Hales. Folly stands against a desolate background, her dress decorated with scales, perhaps reminiscent of the snake in the garden of Eden. She tempts them towards a castle, symbol of transient wealth. She holds out to them a silver ball. On one side of this ball (the side they cannot see) is a skull. In her other hand is a branch of henbane – a narcotic and poisonous plant. On the stairway to the Palace of Folly, a little devil peeps out from the bannister to see which they will choose.



*Study of female arms
and hands in 'The
Garden of Opportunity'*
Pastel on paper
C.1892

*A sketch of the Italian
buildings in 'The
Garden of Opportunity'*
Watercolour on board
C.1892

**Both Evelyn De Morgan
Both De Morgan
Foundation Collection**



The Garden of Opportunity

These two sketches demonstrate how all the details of Evelyn's painting, *The Garden of Opportunity*, were planned.

These studies from left to right represent the upper body of the figure of Wisdom, and the clasped hands of one of the male figures. The other sketch, the single raised hand, may be a pose Evelyn was thinking about for Folly, but which doesn't appear in the final composition. Notice that the faces are missing from these figures. Detailed studies of the facial features of Jane Hales posed to represent the anguish on the face of Wisdom and the serene entreaty of Folly would have been drawn separately and then bought together in the final painting.

This sketch of a water wheel and mill probably amalgamated a few different buildings she saw into one design. (The architecture also seems to have inspired the buildings in *The Cadence of Autumn*.) The design is little altered in the final painting, apart from the change in colour to harmonise with the brighter aesthetic of the rest of the painting.

Using these sketches Evelyn executed the work whilst in Florence, where she often rented studio space.



The Cadence of Autumn
Evelyn De Morgan
Oil on canvas
1905
De Morgan Foundation
Collection



Boreas and the Fallen Leaves



The Gentle Music of a Bygone Day, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, 1873, Oil on Canvas. Upper Hall, Wightwick Manor Collection.

A cadence is the end of a musical phrase, so the painting represents the closing of Autumn and the move towards old age. Evelyn was 50 at the time of creating this painting so she may be reflecting of the passing of time and a new stage in her life and career.

The seasons are a reoccurring theme in Evelyn's art. *Boreas and the Fallen Leaves* is also a representation of Autumn and again includes movement helping again to express the transitional nature of the season. In fact the figure on the far right of the painting appears to be in the same pose as one of the female leaves in *Boreas*.

Cadence represents Autumn as a transitional time, the figures represent the different seasons and also the cycle of life. On the far left, the youngest of all the women crowned in green leaves, a sign of new life, holds a basket of fruit and the tree behind her also bears fruit. She represents spring. The two figures in the middle, working in harmony to harvest an wealth of fruit, represent summer. The weary figure stooping in green, surrounded above and below by falling leaves is Autumn. The oldest figure on the far right, whose hands are empty, has a barren landscape behind her, she personifies winter.

The paintings setting is Italy, and is stylistically similar to her uncle, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope, earlier painting *The Gentle Music of a Bygone Day*. He had also defied family disapproval to become a professional painter and in 1880 moved to Tuscany, where Evelyn was a regular visitor. He encouraged her and early in her career collaborated with her.



These are both detailed sketches of models features and facial expressions to be used as references for later oil paintings.



The first study is a sketch for the head of the fourth figure crouching down in *The Cadence of Autumn*. The model appears to be the same women who sat for the angel in *Port After Stormy Seas* (on display next to the end cabinet). This exhibition is the first time many of these drawings have been framed and on display. The sketches were not designed to be sold by Evelyn but were used by her as a part of the process for creating her oil paintings. This exhibition wants to reinstate these drawings as incredibly skillful and beautiful artworks in their own right. Much of the emotional complexity of the models expression, cleverly captured in pastels by Evelyn is lost in the final oil painting.

***Study female head for
'The Cadence of
Autumn'***
**Pastel on brown paper
1905**

***Study of a female head
for 'Flora'***
**Red pastel on paper
1894**

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

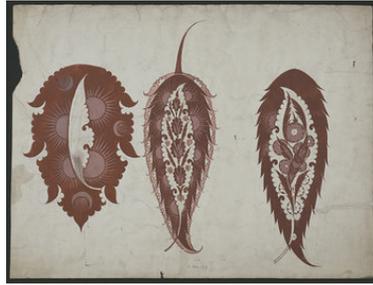


The Cadence of Autumn

The second drawing, a study for the oil painting *Flora* (which is not on display in this exhibition) features Evelyn's favourite model, Jane Hales. Jane is also the model for the figure in the far left of *The Cadence of Autumn*, as well as many other of the artworks by Evelyn. How many images of Jane can you spot in the exhibition?

Flora
**Evelyn De
Morgan**
**Oil on Canvas
1894**
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**





Decorative Ceramic Designs

Sepia and pink wash on paper

c.1885

William De Morgan

**On loan from
Victoria and Albert
Museum**



Lustreware Jar & Lid

De Morgan & Co.

1888-1898

Lustre-glazed

earthenware

Collection of

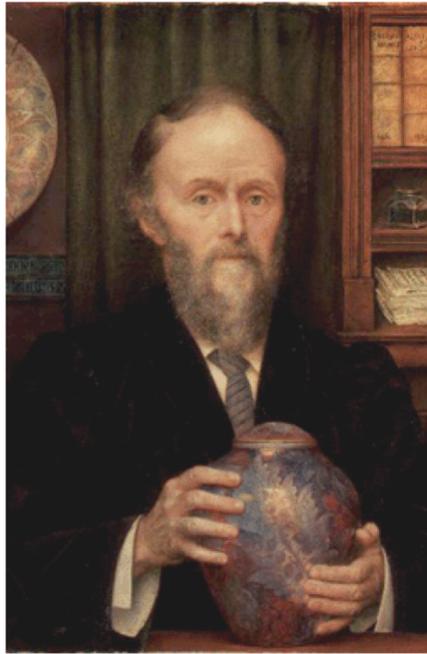
Victoria and Albert

Museum, London

Drawn by William, these designs were used to adorn the jar, which sits in the cabinet next to it.

William's designs show the direct influence of Persian leaf patterns. He was inspired by the huge influx of 'Islamic' and 'Persian' decorative arts from across the Middle East and Asia being collected and exhibited in the late-19th century. William incorporated the jagged saz leaf motif popularised in 16th-century Turkish Iznik ware in this design.

William created the designs but had a team of decorators who used these drawings to adorn the ceramics. The workers would have either transferred this freehand from his master design, or used a pouncing technique (dusting dark powder through the pin-pricked outline of a design filled then with pigment by hand). This technique ensured that William's decorators produced ceramics with the hand-painted principles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, whilst achieving consistency between repeated patterns.



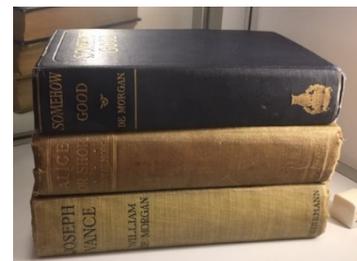
Evelyn De Morgan
Portrait of William De Morgan with vase
Oil on Canvas
1909

**On loan from
National Portrait
Gallery**

This is one of two portraits in oil which Evelyn De Morgan painted of her husband. Interestingly Evelyn never painted a portrait of herself; even though, in the canon of Art History many female artists did paint self portraits as a way to assert themselves as professional artists.

Evelyn painted her husband surrounded by his creative achievements: holding a lustre vase, with one of his large plates and a tile panel behind him. Also, to the right in the book case are bound volumes of his first three novels *Joseph Vance* (1906), *Alice-for-Short* (1907) and *Somehow Good* (1908), together with inkwell, pen and loose manuscript sheets of the latest work, *It Never Can Happen Again* (1909). This was painted shortly before the sitter's fourth novel was published.

Surrounding this portrait are objects/drawings of the features within it. At the bottom of the page are images of the books, vase and designs for the vase that all feature in this make up the painting and are in the exhibition.





De Morgan Shop Front Sign

**William De
Morgan**

Tile Panel

1886

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Ruby Lustre cup from which the De Morgan's served tea to their guests at the showroom.

What better way in 1886 for the preeminent ceramic designer, William De Morgan to advertise his new showroom on Great Marlborough Street than to announce it will a ceramic tile panel shop sign featuring his signature blue and green colours. Near the fashionable Liberty's store in London (which embodied the Aesthetic interior), he had this shop until 1898. (It was probably this shop that the Manders visited whilst Wightwick was being built in 1887 to choose the designs for the fireplaces at Wightwick.)

Formerly the house of Sarah Siddons, the famous 18th century English actress, William's pottery was displayed in what had once been a large ball-room on the ground floor. Evelyn and William often socialised at the store holding regular open houses on Sunday afternoons, serving tea from De Morgan rose coloured cups.

Previous to this William's showroom had been Orange House, in Chelsea, London.

No photos of the layout of the De Morgan Company wares in his showroom have yet been discovered, however the far end of the gallery wall covered in tile panels and the cabinets of ceramics, showing an extensive range of the ceramics he created is designed to invoke the idea of a customer perusing his showroom.

We know a few things that were bought from the showroom by the collector Pitt-Rivers-

- 1.Persian painted vase blue and green.
- 2.Plate coloured yellow, blue
- 3.Iridescent vase



***Female nude study for
'Daughters of the
Mist'***

***Study of female arms
and hands for
'Night and Dawn'
and 'The Search
Light'***

**Both- Evelyn De
Morgan, Pastel &
Charcoal sketch on
grey paper, 1910-1916**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Daughters of the Mist



Night and Dawn

The first sketch is a nude study for *Daughters of the Mist*, it depicts the female figure at the bottom right of the painting. Later sketches by Evelyn would have incorporated the drapery before she tackled the final painting. As with lots of Evelyn's paintings, the pose is little changed from the sketch to the painting.

The second page of sketches incorporates two different poses of the same model, which Evelyn then used in different paintings. Below the posed arms are close ups of the models face and hand for more detail.

Whilst at the Slade School Evelyn won a silver medal for her life drawings. As reported by Charlotte Weeks in *Women at Work: The Slade Girls* (October 1871) 'here for the first time in England, indeed in Europe, a public Fine Art School was thrown open to male and female students on precisely the same terms, and giving to both sexes fair and equal opportunities.'



***Study of a female torso
for 'The Light Shineth
in Darkness and
the Darkness
Comprehendeth it not'
Evelyn De Morgan
Pastel & charcoal
sketch on grey paper
1906***

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**



***The Light Shineth in
Darkness and the
Darkness
Comprehendeth it not***

Evelyn's drawings show her still in being able to render flesh incredibly accurately with only pencil, pastel and charcoal. The muscles in the back and stomach have been accurately rendered. Drawn when Evelyn was in her fifties the drawing showcases not only her natural talent but the decades she dedicated in hard work to perfect her talent.

A keen observer of human emotion and interactions, Evelyn's figures exhibit their emotions not just through their faces but through their bodies. Though the body does not have a head, just by looking at the posture, the curved back, the body protectively pulled together with the arms covering the chest, the viewer can understand the sad, defensive and shrinking feeling of the person depicted.

Throughout her career Evelyn's drawings of nude models were radical and revolutionary. Life drawing, sketching a nude model, so fundamental to art training was denied to women until the Slade School opened. However, it was so frowned upon that even at the Slade women were only permitted in the life studio until 5pm.

Having Jane Hales, earlier in her career, at home to draw whenever she could be 'bullied or cajoled' into sitting for her, as Evelyn's sister describes, made it much easier for Evelyn to practice.



Love's Passing
Oil on canvas
1883-1884
Evelyn De Morgan
De Morgan
Foundation Collection



Lovers Listening to Music,
Elizabeth Siddal, Pen and
pencil on paper, c.1854.
Honeysuckle Room.
Wightwick Manor
Collection.



Love Among the Ruins
Edward Burne-Jones, Oil
on canvas, 1894. Great,
Parlour. Wightwick Manor
Collection.

“If music be the food of love, play on; Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting, The appetite may sicken, and so die.” William Shakespeare, Twelfth Night, (c. 1601-02)

Music, a reoccurring theme in Evelyn’s art, is here used in that time honoured tradition to evoke love. Similar to Elizabeth Siddal’s earlier drawing, which is on display in the Manor.

This painting is an allegory for the passing of time. The young lovers in the foreground sit listening to music. The male figure is engrossed but the woman is in deep thought. The book open before them explains her distress. It shows a passage from the Latin poet Tibullus’s *Elegy*, where the writer imagines dying in his lover’s arms and considers her grief at his funeral. Across the River of Life, we see a old woman being accompanied by the Angel of Death, come to finally reunite the widow with her departed lover.

The theme of young lovers and the passing of time, inspired many artists. Evelyn painted *Love's Passing* shortly after meeting the William De Morgan and prior to her marriage. She didn't sell the work and it remained within the family until her younger sister's death in 1965.

Like the personal nature of *Love's Passing*, *Love Among The Ruins*, in the Manor, was created by Edward’s as an homage to the love affair with his model Maria Zambaco.



***Boreas and the
Fallen Leaves***
Evelyn De Morgan
Oil on canvas
Probably 1910-1914
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection

Another depiction by Evelyn of a season, this painting is a representation of Autumn. Boreas, the ancient Greek God of the north wind, blows a gale. Leaves, depicted as women, are blown to the ground.

Evelyn's artworks feature far fewer male figures, as it was less socially acceptable for a female artist to employ a male model, particularly if he was unclothed. This is a rare depiction by Evelyn of a stereotypical Edwardian masculine figure, with his large hands firmly grasping the branches.

The model for Boreas was Alessandro di Marco from Northern Italy. He was a well-established model who sat for many artists, including Edward Burne-Jones.

The painting is similar to Edward Burne-Jones' earlier painting, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880, which depicts a group of women in a sequence of continuous movement on stairs.

Another influence on this painting might be the art movement Cubism. Began in France in 1907 by Pablo Picasso, Cubist art brought different views of objects/figures together, resulting in paintings that appear fragmented. The female figures appear as different perspectives of the same figure.



***Demeter Mourning
for Persephone***

Oil on canvas

1905

De Morgan

Foundation Collection



Another Greek myth that features the abduction of a woman by Hades- the story of Orpheus and Eurydice can be seen in a drawing by Simeon Solomon and in the plasterwork in the Great Parlour, in the Manor.

Evelyn's mastery of drapery and colour can be seen in this painting. The pose and drapery of the female figure emphasise the anguish of her situation and the gold of Demeter glows as a beacon of distress.

Demeter was the Greek goddess of the earth, particularly the fruits of the fields. Her hair appears to be in braids but it is actually covered with ears of corn, from which poppies drop around her, to suggest the harvest and upcoming slumber. Due to her distress Demeter has caused the landscape around her to be barren and therefore she represents Autumn and the approaching winter.

Her pose suggests the agony she feels after her daughter Persephone was kidnapped by Hades. The gods arranged for Persephone to return to earth but Hades tempted Persephone to eat a few pomegranate seeds, the symbol of marriage. A compromise was reached, whereby Persephone spent two-thirds of the year with her mother and the rest with Hades. Thus the ancient Greeks explained the seasons. This myth has inspired artists for centuries, here the focus is on Demeter.

*Conserved with the aid of a grant from the
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*Port after stormy
seas*

Evelyn De

Morgan

Oil on Canvas

1905

De Morgan

Collection

The title is a quotation from from Spenser's epic poem *The Fairie Queen*:

*Sleep after toyle, Port after stormy
seas,
Ease after Warre, Death after life
does greatly please.*

Very typical of art work of the Aesthetic Movement, a beautiful female figure dominates the composition but with no narrative surrounding her. The title includes no reference to her name or identity apart from the poems hints at a peaceful afterlife.

Evelyn's composition of her canvas suggests a balance between the foregrounded serene female figure dressed in white, lit by the sunshine with calm waters behind her and the dark angel with hands clasped and surrounded by menacing clouds with the stormy sea below her.

The painting may be in fact mocking the Pre-Raphaelite male artists representations of red haired women as sensual and languid. The addition of the angel, a different representation of womanhood, full of action who changes the world around her may be a foil. A force of nature, the angel is similar to the female figures in *The Stormy Spirits*.



Venus and Cupid
Evelyn De Morgan
Oil on canvas
1878
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection



Evelyn De Morgan
Sketchbook.
Wightwick Manor
Collection- see earlier
entry about the
sketchbook..

Venus the Roman Goddess of Beauty is preoccupied with something in the distance, whilst Cupid the Roman God of Love is enchanted by Venus. Love is preoccupied with Beauty. This painting fits the Aesthetic movement which championed beauty and mythology over any particular meaning.

Unusually, unlike many of her depictions of drapery, Venus appears bound and restricted by her dress. On the other hand, cupid has one foot slightly raised off the floor and his wings unfurled and so has the freedom to leave, perhaps suggesting love is free from beauty. Evelyn, a staunch advocate for women's autonomy and rights might also be representing the plight of women, restricted in their ability to vote, pursue careers and control their lives.

Venus and Cupid was exhibited at the experimental Grosvenor Gallery, London. The gallery was founded a year earlier in 1877 by married couple Sir and Lady Lindsay, both were themselves amateur painters. The gallery caused a monumental change in the Victorian art world. It exhibited the work of avant-garde, Aesthetic artists like Edward Burne-Jones and Frederic Leighton and Evelyn's uncle, John Roddam Spencer Stanhope. It challenged the traditional restrictions of the Royal Academy with its distinctive methods of display, invitations to exhibit and support of women artists. A quarter of all the artists represented at the gallery were women, which is still a larger percentage than many exhibitions today.



*Church Tower Against
Mountains Tile Panel*
Tin-glazed earthenware
De Morgan & Co.

1872-1907
De Morgan Foundation
Collection

These earthenware tile panels are decorated with polychrome pictorial scenes. The colourful tiles depict vistas framed with stone archways. The scenes are intended to represent fanciful views of landscapes of foreign countries visited by the P&O steam liners, possibly seen from aboard.

The designs are in keeping with the designs produced William for his P&O commission.

William experimented extensively with glazes to ensure he was able to create various tones and depths of colour within the same scenes. The decorative process for his tile panels involved a transfer process, which enabled his decorators to apply pigment inside a traced outline on thin tissue paper, which was then adhered to the tile. During the firing the paper burnt away and absorbed into the glaze. This enabled the tiles to be reproduced exactly as William has designed them and on a large scale whilst maintaining the hand painted techniques of the Arts and Crafts Movement.



*Castle & Boats Tile
Panel*
Tin-glazed earthenware
De Morgan & Co.

1872-1907
De Morgan Foundation
Collection



Honeysuckle Tile Panel

Tin-glazed earthenware

De Morgan & Co.

1872-1907

De Morgan Foundation Collection

This tile panel, which is one of a pair, is decorated in polychrome with honeysuckle, spotty buds and tendrils on a blue ground.

William designed tiles that would work as stand-alone patterns, or that when placed side by side would connect and flow to create a larger frieze. This pattern was possibly designed as a tile frieze suitable to be used in a fire surround.

The flat stylised flowers, leaves and buds in this pattern are reminiscent of William Morris's designs. In the 1860's De Morgan collaborated with Morris & Co. on furniture design and stained glass. It was De Morgan's intention to create ceramic patterns, which would complement Morris interiors. As can be seen inside Wightwick Manor.

Morris like William was influenced by/influenced the Aesthetic Movement belief in the raising of the decorative arts to be as prestigious as the 'high art' of painting.

Morris himself wasn't very successful with ceramics with his colours often coming out the kiln dull and the glaze separated from the tile. De Morgan took over production of Morris designs on tiles, buying tiles from English manufacturers rather than using Delft tiles from Holland. After a while De Morgan adapted Morris's designs and developed his own repertoire of floral designs.



***BBB and Carnation
Tile Panel***

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

De Morgan & Co.

1872 – 1904

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

This BBB tile was designed by William for fireplace manufacturer Barnard, Bishop and Barnards. William produced tiles, which they advertised in their catalogues to sell alongside their cast iron fire surrounds.

In the 1880s and 1890s Turkish themed rooms became popular in Victorian homes. Tiles such as these, inspired by ancient Turkish designs, were popular, as they could be wiped clean of tobacco or fire smoke. Morris & Co., weren't particularly focused on tile designing but De Morgan being a keen chemist was keen to explore the techniques and the potential.

Like many of William's tile designs, BBB was first conceived at his Chelsea pottery (1872-1882), and the pattern continued to be in production until the closure of the company. He produced the pattern in two sizes – 6" and 8" – and several different colour ways including blue, yellow, green and manganese. William also produced variations on the thistle theme including this design with "ruffled" petals.

The tiles in this panel have both Merton Abbey and Sands End impress stamps on their reverse. It is likely that Mrs Stirling incorporated these individual tiles into a tile panel at some point between 1935 and 1965.

His production periods can be defined by the location of his studios starting with Chelsea (1872-81), then Merton Abbey (1882-8) and ending with Fulham and Florence (1888-1907).



*Peacock Tile
Panel*

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1872 – 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

This tile panel depicts a peacock standing on a balustraded terrace. Stylistically the balustrade and paved ground connects this tile panel with many of the designs which William created for P&O. It is possible that this panel was intended as a part of a decorative scheme for the one of the twelve ships that De Morgan was commissioned to produce work for.

The peacock became an image synonymous with aesthetically inspired art and design. The lustrous feathers and decadent beauty inspired decorative imitations both abstract and literal. The colours of peacock feathers lent themselves to be the perfect symbol of all that the aesthetic movement admired and appreciated. William included peacocks in many of his designs to reassert focus onto exploration of colour, form and composition.

Symbolically Peacocks are imbued with several meanings. In pagan society they were a symbol of protection due to the "all seeing eyes" on their feathers. In Islamic cultures they are a symbol of nobility or royalty, and in Christian iconography they are a symbol of holiness and protection.

William would have been aware of all these meanings and in addition to their potent symbolism he clearly enjoyed the design possibilities offered by the lustrous colours and elaborate tails of these impressive birds.



*Snakes and Cypress
Tree*

De Morgan & Co.

Tile Panel

1872-1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

These tile panels demonstrate the influence the Aesthetic Movement's upon William's work as these ceramics were objects purely for contemplation and decoration.

The pattern consists of a snake and cypress trees against a starry sky. Snakes were a popular motif for William who used them in a multitude of designs, as their sinuous scaled forms were a versatile design motif.

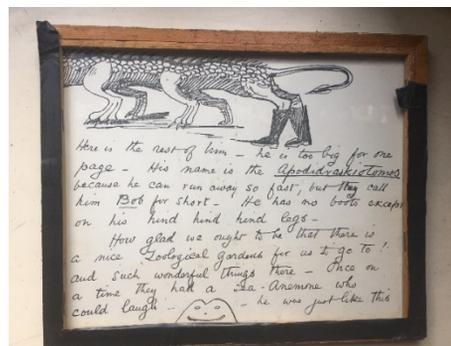
William's hand-painted tiles were bought in huge numbers to decorate the fireplaces of middle class 'artistic' homes, or framed and hung on the walls. His designs commonly included mythical beasts as well as plants and animal motifs in an array of vibrant colours.



Dragon Tile Panel
De Morgan & Co.
1872-1907
Tin-glazed
earthenware
De Morgan
Foundation Collection

William's whimsical animal designs have great charm.

This spectacular polychrome design depicts a blue-winged dragon with a curved tail, spiked tongue and sharp claws. The bright yellow background is ornamented with green leaves and purple carnations. The vivid and unusual purple glaze was created by the addition of the metal manganese to the glaze recipe.



Whilst the bright yellow ground of this tile panel is not typical of Islamic design, carnations are a motif often found on the Turkish and Persian ceramics, which De Morgan was so inspired by. In Western symbolism purple carnations denote impulsiveness and unpredictability; characteristics that could be attributed to the fierce looking dragon. In this way William often mixed Eastern and Western cultures and traditions in his designs.

The playfulness in William's designs can be seen in the above handwritten letter he wrote in 1877 to his little cousin Fanny. He illustrated it with a dragon wearing wellingtons. This letter is in Wightwick's Collection and can be seen in the Honeysuckle Room on William's writing desk.



*The
Trumpeter*

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1865-1882

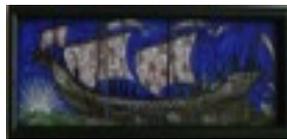
**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Unusually these De Morgan tiles features a human form, a trumpeter with swirling drapery against a background of foliage. It is one of a small number of rare figurative tile panels which William created. Stylistically this piece is very reminiscent of the figurative works produced by Pre-Raphaelite artist, Edward Burne-Jones.

Morris & Co., which was formed by William's life-long friends and colleagues, William Morris and Burne-Jones is where De Morgan began his artistic career. It was during his time with the firm he first produced designs for fired works such as tiles and stained glass.

William eventually started his own pottery in 1872 building upon the inspiration and skills he'd acquired at Morris & Co., Five churches are known to have stained glass designed by William and it is possible to imagine this design on a stained glass window. This piece alludes to the work produced by and influence of De Morgan's Pre-Raphaelite peers.



Galleon Tile Panels

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1882 – 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware
polychrome tile
panels**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

The different galleons depicted demonstrate William's, imagination, variation in design, and humour using the same Galleon motif. Both William and Evelyn used the artistic trope of personification in their work. In some of the tiles the elements such as the sun and wind are depicted with human faces, with the clouds puffing wind onto the boat in the turbulent sea below.

William received many commissions throughout his career. One of the most notable was from P&O Steam navigation Company. Between 1882 and 1900 he designed elaborate panels for the first and second-class public rooms and circulation areas of twelve new passenger liners. The subject matter of these panels includes stylized galleons, fishes and fanciful landscapes representing major cities and countries visited by P&O liners on their journey to the Far East.

Previously he had been commissioned by the Tsar of Russia to create nautical themed vases and tile panels depicting heroic figures for his yacht.

The vibrant and varied pigments in these tiles demonstrate William's technical ability. The precision and consistency that he achieves through colour and tone creates fluidity across the panels. This is the result of his extensive experimentation with glazes.

William usually created spare schemes when creating tiles for P&O liners in case any needed repairing. Ultimately twelve of the liners he designed for between 1882-1900 were either sunk during the First World War or dismantled in the 1920s.



***Troy Town Tile
Panel***

De Morgan & Co.

1882 – 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

This tile panel consisting of three large relief tiles depicts a castle fort on the bank of a river with cypress trees and volcanos in the background. A scroll, centre front indicates that the scene represents Troy town.

In popular legend, the walls of the city of Troy were constructed in such a confusing and complex way that any enemy who entered them would be unable to find his way out. The name "Troy" has been associated with labyrinths from ancient times

Stylistically this panel is very different from William's typical work and it is highly likely that this, and his other relief tiles were designed his friend by Halsey Ricardo, an architect.

William had perfected his glazes, had trained and developed a dedicated team to expertly turn his design ideas into reality and had created a business partnership with Ricardo from the mid-1880's onwards.

It was under Ricardo's influence that De Morgan & Co. produced large-scale pictorial tiled schemes for interiors.



Heron and Fish
Tile Panels
De Morgan & Co.

1872-1904

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

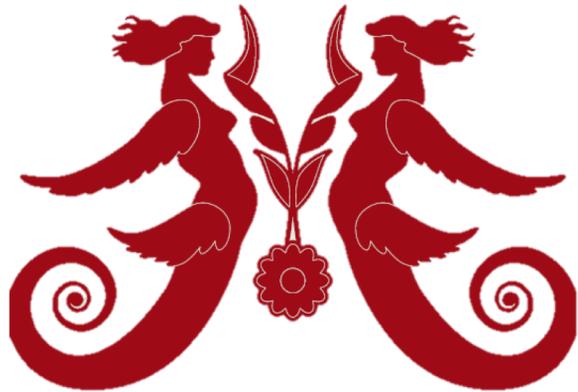
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

The tiles are decorated with a design of herons standing beside a river teeming with fish, who appear to move different directions.

These symmetrical tiles reflect a strong Japanese influence, popular among Aesthetically inspired artists and designers during the Victorian period such as William. In Japanese art water, or waves, signify power and resilience whilst Heron symbolise patience.

The elegant and soft form of the bird was a visual antidote to the heavy industrial forms of the late nineteenth-century. Here William has captured the rapid movement of the water and the fish whilst the Heron appears still and focussed, ready to strike. As the popularity of 'art tiles' for home decoration increased in late 1800s, it was common for De Morgan tiles that were designed to be mounted in a domestic setting, most commonly around a fireplace.

Aesthetic Movement Cabinet





21

*Ruby Lustre
Antelope
Dish*

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1872 – 1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre dish decorated with an antelope against a fruit tree and leaf on a white glaze background.

Much of William's flora and fauna designs were derived from Middle Eastern ornaments. The bold leaf and berry pattern decorating the background of the dish is evocative of the floral patterns of Turkish Iznik wares that William admired.

Illustrated works capturing animals of lands far and wide were popular in the Victorian period. It is highly likely that William was inspired by the drawings of Edward Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607). This volume included engravings and descriptions of animals and mythological creatures.

The reverse of this dish is covered with plain red glaze and there is an imbrication (scale pattern) on the outer rim.



22

***Ruby Lustre
Mermaid Dish***

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1888-1907

**Lustre-glazed
Earthenware**

**Decorator's
mark on base
for Passenger,
Fred: ' F.P.'**

**Label: 'OBH
Garden room
above
Draina[?]'**



Ruby lustre earthenware dish decorated with mermaids, mermen and winged snakes and swirling vine and leaves. The reverse is decorated with concentric rings or white and ruby red lustre.

William often referred to mythology and folklore as a source of inspiration for his ceramics. This dish is decorated with confronting winged mermaids surrounded by scrolling foliage. Above is a winged trumpeter figure.

The design of the dish has a vertical line of symmetry running down the centre of the plate. This simple device creates a well-balanced design. It also reduces the design process by half – as William would only need to draw one half of the plate's decoration. Flat decoration of Persian wares accorded with Morris' ideas about two-dimensional ornament.

The reverse of the dish features a stylised leaf pattern.



23

Eagles & Tulip Bottle

De Morgan & Co.

1888 – 1897

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark on
bottom of bottle for
Juster, Joe: Painted
Monogram (null)**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Pear shaped bottle with a long straight neck, decorated with ruby lustre eagles and leaves with gold lustre tulips on a white ground.

The eagles that William designed for his ceramics were similar to the medieval representation of the bird. William was greatly inspired by medieval art, the study of which promoted by William Morris and contemporary art critics such as John Ruskin.

The arabesque patterns accompanying the eagle and tulips on this vase are reminiscent of Islamic art designs that William was inspired by. The Aesthetic Movement allowed him to include the use of arabesque as a beautiful pattern devoid of moral or narrative meaning.

The base of the vase has the eagle wing impress stamp denoting it was thrown and fired at the Sands End Pottery in Fulham from 1888. The decorator's initials 'JJ.' are applied in on glaze, along with various other pottery numbers.

Joe Juster joined De Morgan during his Chelsea period (1872-81). He was a highly skilled painter who worked with De Morgan throughout most of his ceramic career, decorating some of De Morgan's finest pieces.



24

*Ruby Lustre
Artichoke Dish*

**De Morgan and
Co.**

1872-1904

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ruby Lustre earthenware dish with a deep bowl. Decorated with an artichoke plant with two curling leaves in a vase. The rim of the plate is decorated with a leaf pattern. The reverse is decorated with a petal and leaf pattern in ruby lustre on a cream ground.

This large red lustre dish is decorated with an image of a vase holding an artichoke and Islamic inspired flowers with a leaf decoration. The rim of the dish features a scale pattern, which is another motif often, found in Islamic designs.

William was unusual in always decorating the reverse of his plates. This particular plate is decorated on the back with concentric circles and a foliate scrolling pattern.

This piece was bought in as a “blank” plate from another ceramic supplier for decoration by William’s firm. It therefore does not have a De Morgan impress stamp. Nor does it have any painted marks denoting the year of production or the decorator.



25

Ibex Dish

De Morgan & Co.

1872 – 1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Pottery mark on
reverse, De
Morgan, William**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

In the centre of this dish is a regal ibex which is a species of wild goat, whilst on the outside rim deer are also featured.

Having perfected the traditional lustre techniques, William went on to demonstrate his mastery in creating multiple lustres in different colours as demonstrated by this piece.

William's use of fantastic beasts in his designs, noted by the ibex and deer on this dish, are reminiscent of medieval ornament and Romanesque stone carvings, both of which inspired the Aesthetic Movement.

The lustre on this creates a brightly patterned design of brown and cream swirls. The colour palette and swirling decorative elements are inspired by Hispano Moresque ceramics.

William's experiments with lustre decoration in the late Victorian period were directly inspired by Hispano Moresque ceramics from the 13 – 15th centuries and Italian Maiolica from the 15th – 16th centuries, both of which contained metallic, lustrous glazes.

His ideas derived from motifs found on sixteenth century Italian maiolica, particularly Gubbio and Deruta where lustre pottery was manufactured.



26

***Leopard and Stag
dish***

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1888 – 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark
on reverse: band
4 from centre:**

**Passenger,
Charles: Painted
Monogram**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

William's ceramics often represent his playful and humorous side. This plate was a wedding gift to Evelyn's sister and brother-in-law - Mr and Mrs Stirling by William De Morgan. But who was the leopard and who was the stag?

Tin glazed earthenware polychrome dish with a leopard and stag in a field of flowers, at a riverbank. Reverse decorated with concentric bands of blue, white and turquoise and a leaf pattern on the rim.

William's drawings of fantastic beasts are reminiscent of medieval ornament and Romanesque stone carvings.

In many designs featuring animals, a comic element appears as he often imbued his creatures with human like expressions. The fish on these pieces are examples of this and of William's whimsical side. However, the humorous element never impeded on the visual effect or quality of the design.

The rich and bold colours neatly presented on this dish are the product of William's extensive glaze experiments as depicted on the glaze test tiles on display.



27

***Snake and Shield
Dish***

De Morgan & Co.

1872 - 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**Pottery mark on
reverse for De
Morgan, William:
WDM Fulham.
Passenger, Charles:
'C.P.'**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

The sense of unity in this dish is provided by the symmetrical nature of the design, in which two snakes intertwine between the central shields.

Symmetry is synonymous with beauty in art and the Aesthetic Movement allowed William to design ceramics without having to focus primarily on moral or narrative content. This enabled him to explore and create beautiful designs such as this one.

Mathematics was at the core of William's artwork. He once stated that Euclid's *Book I*, an ancient text on linear geometry, was 'the most enchanting novel in literature.' His father, Augustus De Morgan was a leading mathematician of the Victorian period and this inspired William to use symmetry in his designs.

The reverse of the dish is decorated with concentric rings in turquoise, blue and green and is marked in glaze with 'W.D.M. Fulham CP'. C.P are the initials of one of De Morgan's longest standing decorators, Charles Passenger.



28

Floral Vase
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark
on base for Hersey,
James: '2205 J.H 9
Fulham'**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Gold lustre inverted pear shape earthenware vase with a gourd-like swelling to neck. Decorated with leaves and flowers in gold lustre on an engobe (white slip) ground.

The medieval inspired floral design used on this vase is painted in a gold lustre accompanied by a deeper red lustre. This demonstrates William's technical ability with lustres.

Hollowware such as this was decorated either freehand from William's master design, or decorated using a pouncing technique (dusting charcoal through a pin-pricked design outline which had been traced).

The beauty of this vase comes from the floral motifs and soft double lustres. These reflect the freedom that the Aesthetic Movement gave to artists to explore form and colour within their work as William has here.



29

Lizard Jar
De Morgan & Co.
1872-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark, on
base for Hersey, James:
'D.M. 2293 J.H. 21
Fulham.'**

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

Another example of William's whimsical style, the facial expression of the lizard is comical and human like.

This ruby and gold lustre earthenware ovoid jar is decorated with gold lustre lizards and ruby lustre leaves on an engobe (white slip) ground. The lid is also decorated with a gold lustre lizard.

Reptilian creatures are a common feature seen on William's work. He would almost certainly have been familiar with and drawn inspiration from standard literary works of reference in the nineteenth-century. These include Gessner's *Historiae animalium* (1551-87) and Edward Topsell's *History of Four-Footed Beasts* (1607). These volumes included engravings and descriptions of animals, birds, reptiles and mythological creatures.

The pot was glazed by one of William's lesser-known decorators James Hersey.



30

Stork Vase
**De Morgan &
Co.**
1872-1907

**Lustre-
glazed
earthenware**

**Pottery mark on
base for Sands
End:**

Impress mark 'K'

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Birds such as storks, cranes and heron were a popular design motif of William's as their forms lent themselves to the contours of De Morgan's pottery shapes. Storks feature often in Japanese design as well, showing the influence of the Aesthetic Movement on William's work.

As a child William would read the popular Thomas Berwick's *Birds of Great Britain*, featured in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. This book depicted a wide variety of birds, showcasing the array of colours, patterns and shapes that could be incorporated into designs. These fabulous, soft and colourful drawings were a refreshing distraction from the murky colours and laborious scenes of industrial Britain.

Again, William has used an elegant arabesque pattern to adorn the ground behind the stork. A magnificent highly lustrous finish has been applied to this stork vase. It creates a shimmering finish that would have reflected and sparkled by gas or candle light.



31

***Snake and Sunflower
Dish***

**De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907**

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**Pottery mark on
reverse De Morgan,
William WDM
Fulham. Charles
Passenger 'C.P.; ??**

**De Morgan
Foundation Collection**

Tin-glazed earthenware dish with a symmetrical design of four yellow sunflowers with relief stamens intertwined with two green snakes with spots and stripes also in relief.

The sunflower, along with the Peacock, was a principal symbol of the Aesthetic Movement. The sunflower, an appealingly bright and beautiful flower was the perfect subject for designs created to be adored. The sunflower, which follows the shining sun was also a popular metaphor for the Aesthetic artists who sought out pleasure and beauty.

William also used mystical and unordinary (to Victorian industrial Britain) creatures, such as colourful and beautifully patterned snakes as on this dish. This inspiration he drew from earlier Middle East ceramics.



32

*Dish with Herons
and Fish*
De Morgan & Co.
1872-1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**Pottery mark on
reverse: band 2 from
centre Initials 'C.P.'**
number

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Tin glazed earthenware polychrome dish with two herons catching fish on a flowered riverbank.

Hérons were a reoccurring motif in Japanese art, once again showing the influence the Aesthetic Movement had on William's art.

This piece is almost certainly inspired by the ornithological works of John James Audubon, popular during the Victorian period. Audubon's soft and elegant drawings of blue Heron are alluded to in this design and the bold variations of colour demonstrate William's technical ability with the glaze.

The reverse of the dish is decorated with concentric bands of blue, white and turquoise and a leaf pattern on the rim.

William gave this piece to Mr and Mrs Stirling, his sister-and brother-in-law as a Wedding present.



33

Peacock Rice Dish
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark on
reverse (in concave
of dome) for
Passenger, Charles:
'C.P.'**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

This spectacular rice dish is a heavily potted piece of earthenware which has a central raised boss, decorated with a little blue bird. The rest of the dish is ornamented in similar colours, consisting of soft blues, greens and pinks. The reverse is decorated with concentric rings in turquoise and white on a white ground and is marked in glaze with the initials. C.P.

The elaborate design and the use of brilliant blues, turquoises, and greens demonstrate the inspiration that William drew from the richly coloured Persian wares of the sixteenth-century.

The Aesthetic Movement's influence is also evident in this piece. The movement separated art from its traditional obligation to convey a moral or socio-political message. Instead, as this piece demonstrates, William was able to focus on exploring colour and form in order to create something that was first and foremost, beautiful.

This dish was originally created by an unknown manufacturer for the export market, but was bought by William to decorate.



William often used peacocks in his designs. Their long crests, sinuous bodies and sweeping tails provided plenty of scope for creating lustrous designs whose shape match the curvilinear forms of his pottery.



These pieces allude to the Middle Eastern pottery that William much admired in his trend towards historicism. The peacock motif, accompanied by delicate flora was also a popular motif on Iznik pottery as well as those used in art influenced by the Aesthetic Movement.



Rich ruby and gold lustre highlights the ornate decoration. These pieces were designed to surround William's clients with beauty and were created solely to be admired. In line with the Aesthetic Movement, these designs are uplifting in a way separated from moral meaning or narrative.

34, 35, 36

Peacock Motif Ruby Lustrewares

De Morgan & Co.

1872-1907

Lustre-glazed earthenware

De Morgan Foundation Collection

The base of these pieces are marked by Fred Passenger, Halsey Ricardo and Joe Juster, some of De Morgan's finest decorators.



37

Galleon Vase

De Morgan & Co.

1888-1897

Tin-glazed earthenware

Pottery mark, Early

Fulham Period

Impressed (l) on

bottom of the vase.

Decorator's

monogram. Inventory

No.

De Morgan

Foundation Collection

Tin glazed earthenware polychrome rounded vase with wide neck decorated with galleons on the bowl frieze on the neck.

Galleons and fish are both popular motifs in Middle-Eastern pottery and William frequently employed them on his wares. Sailing and angling were both popular past-times during the Victorian period, which may be one reason why they were sought after by William's clients.

The rich colours on this vase are the result on his extensive glaze experiments that enabled him to achieve various depths and tones of different colours on the same piece of pottery.

Decorated during the Fulham period by Joe Juster, one of De Morgan's most versatile and talented decorators.



38

Carnation Vase
**De Morgan &
Co.**
1888-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's
mark on base for
Juster, Joe: 'J.J.'
Thistle**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre earthenware oviform shaped vase, with a shallow neck. Decorated with pale yellow carnations and ruby lustre leaves on a cream ground.

The style of this design can be attributed to in part to the effect of working for Morris & Co. during the 1860s. During his time with the firm, William De Morgan painted tiles to Morris' designs and designed stained glass.

In the mid-1870s William and Morris studied Islamic pottery and fabrics at the South Kensington Museum. The flat decoration of Persian wares accorded with Morris' ideas about two-dimensional ornament, which in turn inspired William.

His use of the carnation implanted between smooth repetitive leaves on this vase is comparable to Morris' designs for fabrics and wallpapers. The similarity between this vase and the BBB and carnation tile panel demonstrates how De Morgan was able to apply the same designs in different forms, colours and compositions, much like Morris did.



Ruby lustre inverted pear shaped earthenware vase. Decorated with a stylised pattern of storks against a background of tufted grass.

Storks were a frequent feature of Japanese art and of the Aesthetic Movement.

39

Ruby Lustre Stork Vase

De Morgan & Co.

1888-1897

Lustre-glazed earthenware

Pottery mark on base: 'Sands End, Fulham'

De Morgan Foundation Collection

The flattened, stylised nature of this design is inspired by William Morris's idiom. Prior to opening his own pottery in 1872, William De Morgan worked alongside William Morris creating ceramics and stained glass for the founder of the most iconic interior design firm of the Victorian period.

The base of the bowl has a Sands End, Pottery impress mark.





40

*Eagle and Carnation
Vase*

**De Morgan & Co.
1888-1897**

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's mark on
bottom of vase for
Juster, Joe: painted
monogram: eagle
surround by the text
'W.De Morgan and
Co., Sands End
Pottery' 2369 15**

**De Morgan
Foundation Collection**

This inverted pear shaped vase has a flared neck, and is decorated all over with lustre. Gold lustre carnations and eagles sit amongst pink lustre leaves, set on a ruby lustre background.

What made William's reinvented lustreware special was the fine metal film deposited over its surface, which renders the colours iridescent. This shimmering shift in colour as demonstrated on this vase, depends on the angle at which light hits the decorated object.

The leaf and carnation flower alludes to Morris designs whilst the use of the eagle is reminiscent of those used in Medieval art, another influence on the Aesthetic Movement.

The base of this pot has a impress mark consisting of eagle wings surrounded by the text "W De Morgan Sands End Pottery Fulham" in addition an on glaze decorator's signature J.J. is apparent along with the number 15, the meaning of which is unknown.



41

*Ruby Lustre
Tazza with
Antelope Design*

**De Morgan &
Co.**

1888 – 1904

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Sands End
Pottery, C.P**

**Decorated by
Charles
Passenger**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre tazza (from the Italian- meaning a shallow cup or vase on a pedestal) featuring a design of an antelope standing on a red globe with a background of abstract grasses. The underside is decorated in concentric circles with swirl pattern.

Painted in glaze on the base is the decorator's mark 'C.P' and the following text: 'W.D.M. I.P. Fulham'. In 1888, William dissolved his business relationship with Halsey Ricardo.

For the next nine years he worked in partnership with former employees Charles and Fred Passenger and his kiln master, Frank Iles. Marks from this period onwards denoted this change with the inclusion of the initials 'I.P', which stands for 'in partnership'.



42

***Swallow and Eagle
Punch Bowl***
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907
**Tin-glazed
earthenware**
**Decorator's mark on
reverse for Passenger,
Fred: 'F.P.'**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



An incredibly striking, modern deep earthenware punch bowl standing on a flared foot. Decorated with two eagles on the inside of the bowl and a repeating pattern of diving swallows on the rim. The exterior decorated with swimming fish.

The unusual symmetrical pattern is reminiscent of those found on Japanese wood block prints which became fashionable during the Aesthetic Movement Victorian period.

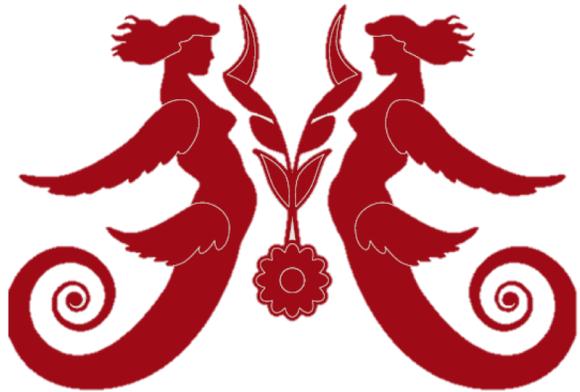
Whilst this punchbowl would make a spectacular centrepiece it was intended to be decorative and not functional. This was because William's ceramics were generally fired at low temperatures and were therefore too porous to hold liquids.

William and other British artists and designers were particularly influenced by stylised motifs based on natural forms found in Japanese art. Birds such as the swallow aligned with the Japanese preference for elegance in design as William creates on this piece.

Japanese styles and designs were of great importance during the Aesthetic Movement. The style is known as Japonisme or Japonaiserie.

This Godwin sideboard (circa 1867 - circa 1888) on the Pomegranate Passage inside the Manor was also inspired by Japanese design.

Inspired by the Sea Cabinet





43, 44, 45, 46, 47

53, 54, 61

***Galleon
Lustrewares
1872-1907
De Morgan
& Co.
De Morgan
Foundation
Collection***



These ruby lustre earthenware dishes and plates are all decorated with the galleon motif.

Galleons were a popular motif used by William and he frequently applied them to many different wares.

The galleon was a key symbol of the Arts and Crafts movement. The motif was popular at the peak of Victorian industrialisation.

Billowing sails symbolise adventure and escape, and the image of a ship sailing in the wind, out on the sea represented a life very different to that in industrialised cities. The galleon motif was sought after among De Morgan's clients as sailing was a popular past time during the Victorian period.

The galleon motifs also featured on the Middle-Eastern pottery designs from which William drew inspiration.

The decorations adorning the galleons sails and the surrounding space on these pieces include the use of birds, fish and floral motifs. William has used a gold lustre on some pieces to highlight the galleon's sails, clouds and birds.

Applying copper metal pigments to the plate during the firing process creates the ruby lustre effect of these pieces.

The reverse or outer edges of these dishes were commonly decorated with alternating ruby lustre and white concentric rings or arabesque patterns. These pieces were decorated by Charles Passenger, one of De Morgan's most skilled painters.

The quality of the glazes and the use of multiple lustres in decoration demonstrate the pinnacle of William's technical ability.



48, 50, 57, 59

*Fish
Lustrewares*
**De Morgan &
Co.**
1872-1907
**Ruby lustre
earthenwares
decorated with
fish motifs
amongst
swirling wave
patterns**
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**



Animals feature heavily in William's designs and the fish motif was popular amongst his customers in Victorian industrialised Britain. Angling and other riverside and maritime activities were widely enjoyed. These outdoor activities were relaxing and angling in particular, was a quieter activity compared to the loud processes of industry.

In many of William's designs featuring animals, a comic element appears as he often imbued his creatures with human like expressions. The fish on these pieces are examples of this and of his whimsical side. The humorous element however, never impeded on the visual effect or quality of the design.

Initially he was only able to achieve flat areas of lustre colours so that designs were in silhouette. However, following much experimentation in later designs he was able to produce tones in lustre colours. Whether on tiles or vessels, William was able to produce red, gold, gold and silver lustres on the same design.

The patterns of the fish's scales and the swirling waves enabled William to create a range of attractive and lustrous designs. The arabesque (ornate swirling and interlacing foliage) designs that feature either in the background or on the reverse of many of his fish and galleon designs demonstrate the inspiration of early Islamic art in his designs. The swirling patterns can be 'tiled' or repeated seamlessly which made it attractive to William.



52

Dolphin Lustreware

De Morgan & Co.

1872-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenwares**

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre earthenware dish. Decorated with a fantastic dolphin facing right against prickly leaves on a cream ground.

A stylised depiction of a dolphin that looks more like a large fish with a fantastical mouth and scales.

The reverse is decorated with a complicated pattern including William's signature concentric rings and an abstract scrolls and leaf patterns.

The dish was bought in as a blank for decoration and is marked on the reverse with a star inside a small oval.



49

***Two-handled Fish
Vase***

De Morgan & Co.

1888-1907

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator: Joe Juster
Sands End Pottery,
Fulham**

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

Gold Lustre two handled oviform vase. Decorated with gold fishes swimming in a swirling sea pattern on an engobe ground.

Fish were popular motifs in Middle-Eastern pottery and William frequently employed them on his wares.

The circular swirling pattern on this vase is indicative of the Japanese influence during the Aesthetic Movement. Circular motifs called 'mon' were popular in the Japanese designs that inspired British artists and designers like William.

He often bought-in blank forms from other potteries, which his decorators then glazed. This two-handled vase is likely to be one such piece that has received a subtle gold lustre.





51

*Gold and Ruby
Lustre Fish Vase*

**De Morgan & Co.
1888-1897**

**Lustre-glazed
earthenware**

**J.J, Early Fulham
Period**

**Decorated by Joe
Juster**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Ovoid shaped vase with a flared neck, decorated with ruby lustre fish on a sea of golden lustre waves. Sea motifs, including fish and galleons, very regularly occurred in William's designs and this reflects the Victorians' obsessions with riverside pastimes such as angling, rowing and maritime travel.

The base of the vase contains the eagle wing impress stamp denoting it was thrown and fired at the Sands End Pottery in Fulham after 1888.

The decorator's initials 'JJ' are applied in on-glaze, along with various other pottery numbers.



55

Fish Bowl
De Morgan & Co.
1888-1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

**Decorator's Mark
for Passenger, Fred:
Initials**

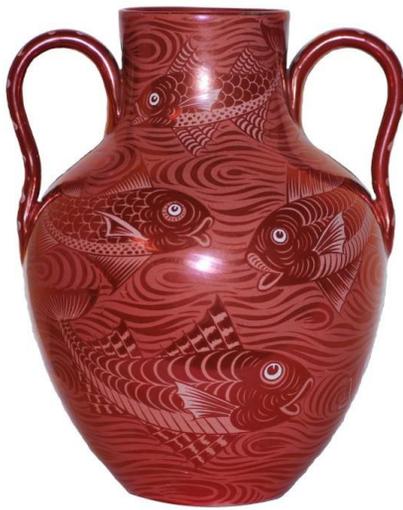
**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

Tin-glazed earthenware polychrome bowl with a flared foot. The inside of the dish is decorated with dark green fish on a blue ground.

The pigment on this piece is a much darker, heavier and much looser than on the more delicate lustre pieces. The colours on this piece present the Persian ware inspired colour palette that William developed during his experiments with glaze recipes and techniques.

The flat decoration of Persian wares aligned with Morris' ideas about two-dimensional ornament, whose ideas inspired William's own designs.

The forms of fish match the curvilinear forms of William's pottery making them ideal motifs in his designs.



Ruby lustre earthenware vase with two handles. This highly fired and iridescent two handled fish vase was decorated by Joe Juster who was responsible for some of the De Morgan Company's finest work.

56

*Ruby Lustre Two-
handled Fish
Vase*

**De Morgan &
Co.
1888-1904**

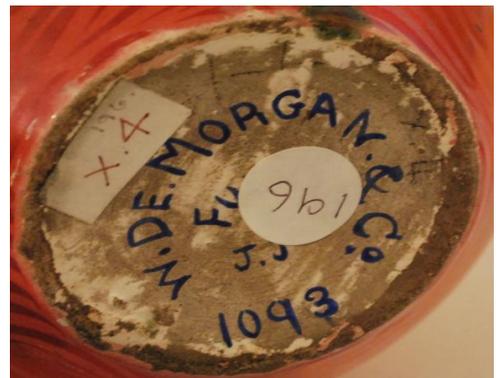
**Lustre-glazed
earthenware
Decorator: Joe
Juster**

**Sands End
Pottery, Fulham**

**De Morgan
Foundation
Collection**

William often imbued his creatures with personalities – and these fish look gleeful as they swim in the swirling sea.

What made lustreware special was a fine metal film deposited over its surface, which renders the colours iridescent: this shimmering shift in colour depends on the angle at which light hits the decorated object.





58

*Two-handled Vase
with Fish and
Branches*

De Morgan & Co.

1888 - 1907

**Tin-glazed
earthenware**

Decorator: Joe Juster

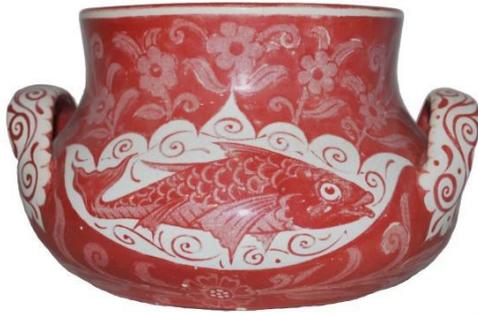
**Sands End Pottery,
Fulham**

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

Lustre earthenware polychrome two-handled vase with fish and branches decorated in smoky mauve and gold lustre. This vase was decorated by Joe Juster, one of De Morgan's most versatile and talented decorators.

William often bought-in blank pottery shapes from other potteries for his team of decorators to work on. This unusual shaped vase was bought from an unknown source. Both the form and lustre decoration are inspired by ancient Middle-Eastern ceramics.

Galleons and fish are both popular motifs in Middle-Eastern pottery and De Morgan frequently employed them on his wares. Angling was a popular pastime during the Victorian period and the fish motif lent itself to why they were sought after by De Morgan's clients.



60

*Ruby Lustre Two-
handled Fish Bowl*

De Morgan & Co.

1888-1907

Lustre-glazed

earthenware

Decorator: Joe Juster

Sands End Pottery,

Fulham

**De Morgan Foundation
Collection**

Ruby lustre, cream and pink earthenware squat pear shaped two-handled bowl.

This bowl has Eastern inspired aspects with the fish swimming inside a stylised lotus flower juxtaposed against a more English floral patterned ground.

The repetitive floral pattern is similar to the delicate floral patterns on Iznik and Maiolica pottery that William admired.

This piece was painted by Joe Juster who was one of De Morgan's most prolific decorators.

