

Edward Colonna Collection



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the Newark Public Library
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- Extent:** 1 Solander box and 4 smaller boxes
- Processed:** Emma Crist; August 2017.
- Abstract:** The collection consists of drawings, information files, photographs, and a copy of *Broom Corn*.
- Provenance:** Gift of Edward Colonna, 1923.

Restrictions on Access

Access Restrictions

Available by appointment only.

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Preferred Citation

Edward Colonna Archive, Special Collections Division, Newark Public Library.

Biographical Note:

Edward Colonna was one of the foremost Art Nouveau designers in Paris at the turn of the 20th century. He was born in 1862 in Mulheim-am-Rhein, a small town outside Cologne, Germany, the first of three children in his father's second family. At the age of 15, he left home to study architecture in Brussels, Belgium. In 1882, Colonna left Europe and moved to New York, where he found work with Louis C. Tiffany, one of the country's leading decorating consultants. Colonna's first commissions were the interiors of homes for a number of wealthy New York patrons. After a few years, he left Tiffany and began a position with the New York architect Bruce Price.

In 1885, Colonna started a new job as chief designer for the Barney & Smith Manufacturing Co. of Dayton Ohio. The high point of Colonna's career in Dayton was the publication of two small books containing some of his early designs. The first book was titled, *Essay on Broom Corn* and the second was *Materiae Signa, Alchemistic Signs of Various Materials in Common Usage*. Nearly the entire stock of *Essay on Broom Corn* was destroyed in a warehouse fire; fortunately, the Newark Public Library holds a signed copy in its collection.

In 1888, Colonna left the employment of Barney & Smith. He returned to New York City and became a citizen of the United States. He then continued on to Montreal, Canada, where he established his own office. While in Canada, Colonna worked on a number of projects for the Canadian Pacific Railway. His job was to design the interior of the railways parlor and sleeping cars. Through this, Colonna returned to the architectural design of his early discipline. He was commissioned to design many of the Canadian Pacific's western sector railroad stations and also acquired remodeling projects and commissions among the Canadian Pacific's management.

By the late 1890s, Colonna's commissions for Canadian Pacific slowed as railroad expansion slowed. By 1897 Colonna was working for Siegfried Bing, a German-French art dealer who played a strong role in the development of the Art Nouveau style and was the owner of the Paris art gallery, Maison de l'Art Nouveau. While working for Bing, Colonna designed jewelry and decorative glassware, and later advanced to furniture design and other large-scale objects with the long sinuous organic curves of vegetable-inspired forms, typical of the Art Nouveau movement.

In 1903, Maison de l'Art Nouveau closed for good and Colonna returned to Canada and moved to Toronto. Over the next twenty years, he continued to design interior decorations with some minor commissions but it was clear that his work was now regulated by the customers' demands rather than his own concepts. Colonna also traveled regularly to Italy, Germany, France, England, and New York City, selling antiques which provided him to live comfortably.

In 1923, Colonna retired to Nice in southern France at the age of 61. His health was beginning to deteriorate but nevertheless, he returned to his antiques business while acting as an agent locating items for various museum collections.

Colonna's health continued to decline and by 1928 his legs were completely paralyzed and he was bedridden. Even so, Colonna continued to draw monograms and carved alabaster bowls, vases and candlesticks as a way to retain his income, selling some works through his antiques business or through former business colleagues. He died in 1948 at the age of 86 and is buried in an unmarked pauper's grave in Nice, France.

The large cache of drawings, photographs, and correspondence housed in the Newark Public Library is a primary source of information about Edward Colonna's life and career. Portions of the collection have been digitized and are available at:

<https://cdm17229.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p17229coll32>.

Examples of his designs, including a plate, side chair, a cup and saucer, are in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Access Points

The entries below represent persons, organizations, topics, forms, and occupations documented in this collection.

Subject Names:

Colonna, Edward

Subject Topics:

Decoration and Ornament---Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau

Drawings

Furniture

Jewelry

Document Types:

Sketches

Photographs

Catalogues

Container	Folder	Contents	Date
Box 1	Book	<i>Essay on Broom Corn</i> by Edward Colonna. Small Book containing images of his early works. Measures 21 x 13.5 cm. Note; Exceedingly rare title. Most were burned in a warehouse fire.	1887.

Box 2	Drawings	<p>Collection of 18 Sheets of Original Sketches of Jewelry, Furniture, and Glassware by Edward Colonna. All drawings roughly measure 37.5 x 31 cm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sheet 1 – Sketch of Art Nouveau Design • Sheet 2 – 3 Sketches of Purse Frames • Sheet 3 – 9 Sketches of Pendants • Sheet 4 – 6 Sketches of Jewelry (4 Pendants, 2 Bracelets) • Sheet 5 – 4 Sketches of Jewelry (3 Pendants, 1 Necklace) • Sheet 6 – 2 Sketches of Jewelry (1 Necklace, 1 Pendant) • Sheet 7 – Sketch of Car with Art Nouveau Frame • Sheet 8 – 2 Sketches of Jewelry (1 Necklace, 1 Pendant) • Sheet 9 – 9 Sketches of Pendants (2 of which could possibly be bracelets) • Sheet 10 – Sketch of Table (Both Top and Body Design) • Sheet 11 – Sketch of Table • Sheet 12 – Sketch of Chalice • Sheet 13 – 3 Sketches of Decorative Designs • Sheet 14 – 8 Sketches of Pendants • Sheet 15 – Sketch of Chalice (includes negative of chalice) • Sheet 16 – 7 Sketches (5 Rings, 2 Pins) • Sheet 17 – 2 Sketches (1 Necklace, 1 Pendant) • Sheet 18 – 5 Sketches (3 Pendants, 2 Designs, 1 Necklace) 	Unidentified.
Box 3	Photographs	<p>Collection of 16 Photographs of Jewelry, Furniture, Glassware, and Textiles by Edward Colonna. All photographs roughly measure 38 x 31 cm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph 1 – Picture Collection of Jewelry, Kitchenware, and one Vase. • Photograph 2 – Example of 4 Lamps in the Art Nouveau Design • Photograph 3 – 6 Pieces of Jewelry (4 Pendants, 2 Necklaces) • Photograph 4 – Art Nouveau Designed Room • Photograph 5 – Table, Chair, and Textile • Photograph 6 – Fireplace and Wall • Photograph 7 – Art Nouveau Sign Design, Sketch of a Car with Art Nouveau Frame, Headboard Frame • Photograph 8 – Vanity Table, Dresser, Side Table • Photograph 9 – 2 Vanity Tables • Photograph 10 – 6 Examples of Kitchenware (2 Creamers, 2 Spoons, 1 Sugar Bowl (?)) • Photograph 11 – 7 Pieces of Jewelry (4 Pendants, 3 Bracelets) • Photograph 12 – Table with View of Top Design • Photograph 13 – Small Couch with Canopy • Photograph 14 – Art Nouveau Vase • Photograph 15 – 4 Photos of an Art Nouveau Designed Room 	1899.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph 16 – 10 Examples of Jewelry Design (8 Rings, 1 Pin, 1 Pendant) 	
Box 4	Folder 1	E. Colonna; Essay by Dr. Martin Eidelberg. Measures 23 x 20 cm.	1983
Box 4	Folder 1; Photographic Reproductions	Collection of files containing Information on the Artist, <i>Essay on Broom Corn</i> , Magazine Articles (both American and Foreign), Correspondence between Colonna and the Newark Public Library, Exhibition Catalogues and Announcements.	Various dates ranging from 1923 to 1983.
Box 4	Folder 2	Miscellaneous labels from previous Newark Public Library exhibits and 5 sketches of Jewelry Designs, possibly drawn by Colonna.	Unidentified.
Box 4	Folder 3	14 Black and White Negatives (Complete Book) from Essay on Broom Corn by Edward Colonna. 45 Photographs (and Negatives) of Box 2's Collection of Drawings. Correspondence about Reproduction Requests, and Permission to use Original Drawings for Research.	1970's.
Box 4	Folder 4	Collection of Art Nouveau Catalogues; None of which contain works by Edward Colonna. Arts in Virginia. A magazine published by the Virginia Museum; Volume 20, Number One, 1979. Catalogue 22, The Belgian Connection. Published by Warrack and Perkins, 1976. Art Nouveau in Britain, The Arts Council, Published by Shenvall Press, 1965. Pamphlet on Art Nouveau by the Milwaukee Art Center, 1966. Pages of The School of Nancy from Auction Magazine, 1969. Baubles of the Belle Époque by Time Magazine, 1965. Sotheby's Sales Catalogue, Fine Art Nouveau and Symbolist Jewelry, The Ritman Collection, Geneva, 1995.	1979, 1976, 1965, 1966, 1969, 1965, 1995.
Box 4	Folder 5	Edward Colonna Designs for L'art Nouveau Bing-Paris c. 1899-1903. Collection of 10 Photographs measuring 11.5 x 17 cm. From the Collection of Richard W. Pollard.	1899 – 1903.
Box 4	Magazine	Art Nouveau in New York. Published by Du Kulturmedien AG in Zürich, Switzerland in June 1971. Edward Colonna is mentioned on page 462 – 463.	1971.
Box 5	Drawings and Photograph.	<p>Collection of 18 Original Drawings by Edward Colonna featuring Interior, Jewelry, and Furniture, and Glassware Designs. The Photograph is a view of the Salon of Siegfried Bing's Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair circa 1900.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph – View of the Salon of S. Bing's pavilion at the Paris World's Fair, 1900. Designed by E. Colonna. 27 x 37 cm. • 1 – Drawing of 11 Jewelry Designs (7 Pendant Necklaces and 4 Rings) Pencil, Watercolor, Ink on Paper. 6 x 5; 10.5 x 7; 5 x 4; 9.5 x 7; 13 x 10; 9.5 x 7; 8 x 6.5; 4 x 5; 3.5 x 4; 3.5 x 3; 6 x 5.5 cm. • 2 – Drawing of 3 Jewelry Designs (Necklace, Comb, and Brooch) Pencil, Watercolor, and Gold on Paper. 16 x 27; 12.5 x 12; 13 x 10 cm. • 3 – Drawing of 3 Designs (A Letter Sealer, Fan, and Jewelry Setting) Pencil, Watercolor, and Gold on Paper. 13 x 9; 32 x 25; 7.5 x 9 cm. • 4 – Design for a Screen in Decorated Leather. Watercolor, Pen and Brown Ink with Gold on 	Drawings Undated, Photograph dates 1900.

		<p>Paper. 32.5 x 24 cm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5 – 2 Fabric Designs. Pencil, Watercolor, and Gold on Paper. 22 x 18; 18.5 x 15 cm.• 6 – 3 Designs for Purse Frames. Ink and Wash on Paper. 11 x 21; 10 x 10.5; 10 x 21 cm.• 7 – 3 Jewelry Designs. (2 Bracelets, 1 Pendant Necklace) Pencil, Watercolor, Ink and Gold on Paper. 7.5 x 16.5; 11 x 17; 7 x 12.5 cm.• 8 – Design for a Leaded Glass Window. Pencil and Watercolor on Tracing Paper. 16.5 x 20 cm.• 9 – Advertising Design for Swift & Co. Ink and Watercolor on Paper. 13.5 x 19.5 cm.• 10 – 3 Drawings for the Swift Automobile Company. Ink and Watercolor on Paper. 12.5 x 10; 12 x 10.5; 10.5 x 10.5 cm.• 11 – Drawing for the Swift Automobile Company. Ink and Watercolor on Paper. 24.5 x 19 cm.• 12 – Design for a Perfume Company (Perfume Bottle) Pencil, Watercolor, and Gold on Paper. 30.5 x 13 cm.• 13 – 5 Designs for Various Objects. (Snuff Bottles, Covered Vase, Lamps) Ink and Watercolor on Paper. 9 x 7; 17.5 x 11.5; 9 x 7; 15 x 10; 15 x 11 cm.• 14 – Design for a Hanging Wall Cabinet. Pencil and Watercolor on Paper. 30 x 19 cm.• 15 – Design for a Perfume Company. (Floral Design) Pencil, Watercolor, and Gold on Paper. 12 x 12 cm.• 16 – Original Design in the Art Nouveau Style for a Drawing Room Wall. Watercolor, Pen and Ink with Gold on Paper. Acquired by Gift from the Artist in 1923. 35.5 x 51 cm.• 17 – 4 Drawings of Kitchenware. (3 Teakettles, 1 Tong) Watercolor and Ink on Paper. 46 x 35.5 cm.• 18 – Drawing of a Loving Cup. Watercolor and Ink on Paper. 37.5 x 31 cm.	
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