

AMERICAN ART POTTERY:
OHIO'S INFLUENCE ON TRANSFORMING A LOCAL CRAFT INTO A WORLD
RENOWNED FINE ART

A thesis submitted to the College of the Arts
of Kent State University in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

By

Stephanie A. Fadorsen

August 2012

Thesis written by

Stephanie Fadorsen

B.A., Muskingum University, 2010

M.A., Kent State University, 2012

Approved by

_____, Advisor
Carol Salus

_____, Director, School of Art
Christine Havice

_____, Dean, College of the Arts
John R. Crawford

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Prof. Salus and the thesis committee for their assistance as well as my other professors for enriching my education. I would also like to thank my gracious parents and dearest friend, Chris, for their unending love and support.

INTRODUCTION

Elegant ceramic decoration is an ancient and worldwide craft, but in the late nineteenth century, the United States put itself at the forefront of transforming the craft into a praised art form with the ceramic companies of Ohio at the heart of the industry. Clay is abundant in the state and Ohio's waterways and other natural resources, such as coal and timber, made it a popular place to settle and develop industries like ceramics. Upper-class Americans were expected to beautify their homes at this time and one of the most popular ways was with exquisite art pottery. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Ohio was looked to for the styles and the newest techniques that were at the top of this industry. This thesis will focus on the three major centers of utilitarian and art pottery production, East Liverpool, Zanesville, and Cincinnati. Initially the economies of both East Liverpool and Zanesville were based on the manufacturing of ceramic products. Because Cincinnati had become a wealthy city through trade and other industries, such as pork production and packaging, it had a rapidly growing upper class. This wealth permitted women to be able to beautify their homes through means such as painting their own china, which was one of the facets contributing to the beginning of art pottery. Women became the most important pottery artists in Cincinnati and this led to the founding of, arguably, the best known and important art pottery company in the world.

Pottery is often viewed as only a craft creating simple and useful items or as a secondary art form after painting and sculpture, but art pottery proves that assumption

wrong. Although the art pottery pieces could be useful vessels, the sculptural elements were well designed and skillfully produced, allowing them to be used as décor as well. The underglazed pottery was often hand painted with the same realism and skill as an artist would create on canvas. In comparison with painters on canvas, potters are faced with the extra task of having a three dimensional and contoured surface to decorate. They are able to create a fusion of painting and sculpture in art pottery with the knowledge of firing and glazing. The art pottery produced from about 1880 until about 1910 in Ohio reflects the culture of the leisure class in the United States, at that time, both economically and socially. American society during this period had attained social mobility; therefore, individuals could elevate their status through strictly financial gain and be accepted into the upper-class.

American social structure was unlike that in Europe, where so much emphasis was on old money and established families. Because of this, Americans could also show their fiscal success in objects that they liked without thinking as much about following specific styles expected for the wealthy.¹ This helped to pave the way for American art pottery to take a creative and diverse road, rather than trying to fit into a preexisting niche. The American pottery industry responded to the desires of upper middle class families to decorate their residences as they wished. As a result, individual artists were given the permission and the resources by various Ohio companies to experiment with form, glazes, clay, and decoration. This art form became a crucial part of American interior decorating and contributed greatly to the wide array of styles of pottery of the

¹ Barbara Perry, *American Art Pottery: From the Collection of Everson Museum of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 11.

day. The pieces were displayed in rooms in a house which guests might see, as in the parlor or dining room, as well as in gardens and on porches, as they became a way to show wealth and artistic taste.

In the 1840s when pottery production first began on a large scale, the state was still considered part of the Westward Expansion, as more people were settling west of the Allegheny Mountains. Therefore, large numbers of settlers, many of whom were English immigrants, were arriving for a fresh start, seeking individual wealth as land owners. This influx of people encouraged attempts at new industries and the capacity to grow an economy out of so many available resources, clay being one of the more popular choices. Also helpful to the industry was the availability coal which was found in abundance in areas in and around East Liverpool and Zanesville, two of the most prominent pottery towns.² The English who came into the area had the knowledge to properly treat and use the clay found in Ohio's ground because it is very similar to that of England.³ The pottery was easily traded since the waterways in the area, the Ohio River, its tributaries, and the Great Lakes, opened up the state to the rest of the country and to Canada (Figure 1). This exporting and expansion of consumers meant potters could live very well, thus encouraging many others to join the industry.

East Liverpool was a major center for pottery in Ohio from the 1840s until the early twentieth century.⁴ Its companies revolutionized the industry and paved the way for other Ohio towns to share in the trade. While the East Liverpool companies did not have the art pottery success that later developed in other areas of Ohio, they brought the

² Mary Jo Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 1.

³ Pamela Lee Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 35-6.

⁴ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 6.

original potters to the state. They were also the first to begin using white clay which became one of the more popular choices for pottery. The more inventive Homer Laughlin China Company of East Liverpool became one of the largest pottery companies in the world at this time. They are also one of the few from the period still in production to this day. One of their major in town competitors, Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles China Company, also known as KT&K, also manufactured high quality and very durable pieces. With KT&K's success and recognition the company came to produce some of the best examples of boneware in existence with their line marketed as Lotus Ware, a world renowned and award winning art pottery line (Figure 2). Lotus Ware was one of the few lines of translucent bone clay attempted in the United States. The line only lasted a few years as the cost of production was more than the company could sustain. But, during that time, Lotus Ware won numerous awards and demonstrated the skill of their artists as the pieces were ornately carved and shaped.⁵

The city of Zanesville became a ceramic-producing city shortly after East Liverpool. It began in much the same way with local clay being made into utilitarian items. But the industry in Zanesville is much better known for its influence on and its production of art pottery, as the companies there produced some the most famous and most sought after artistic lines. The Weller Pottery Company was one of the producers of some of the best known art pottery. It was started by Samuel Weller who began as a low paid potter for another ceramic company where he worked until he was able to start his own business. He was then able to build his company into a successful ceramic producer,

⁵ William C. Gates Jr. and Dana E. Ormerod, *East Liverpool, Ohio: Pottery District* (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1982), 115.

but it was not until he entered the art pottery world that he truly began to accumulate wealth. He did this by being an intelligent business man and through the deplorable act of absconding with other people's ideas and selling them as his own.⁶

From its start in the 1840s through the early parts of the twentieth century the pottery industry in the three centers in Ohio became very competitive and the artists' secrets were greatly coveted. Weller's first, and very expensive, line of art pottery, named Louwelsa (Figure 3), was stolen from another Zanesville potter, William A. Long, who then went out of business because of Weller's deceit. Another of Weller's popular lines, known as Dickens Ware II (Figure 4) had been similarly obtained. Louwelsa shows the skill of underglaze artists and the detail that can be obtained through portrait vases. The second line of Dickens Ware creates an original style of pottery incorporating glazing and sgraffito, the scraping away of a light clay or slip to reveal a darker color beneath, to create narratives.⁷ But the most prized line of Weller pottery used the glazing done by Jacques Sicard, a Frenchman, who created Sicardo (Figure 5). Sicard's technique created an iridescent, multi-colored, metallic glaze. Despite Weller's attempts to obtain the process no one has yet been able to replicate it with the technology that was available in the early twentieth century. The works of this line are now among the most expensive pieces of art pottery.⁸

One of Weller's biggest competitors was Roseville Pottery, also centered in Zanesville. This company united the skills of the artist with the efficiency of machines.

⁶ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1979), 10-1.

⁷ Louise Purviance, Evan Purviance, and Norris F. Schneider, *Zanesville Art Pottery in Color* (Leon, IA: Mid-America Book Company, 1968), 1-3.

⁸ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 21-2.

As a result they were able to produce works much cheaper than Weller, albeit of slightly lower quality. Roseville had a line similar to Louwelsa called Rozane (Figure 6) which was priced so that wider classes of people could purchase it. Roseville developed lines of true art pottery while also creating other, more utilitarian lines; because of this they began to distinguish all of their art pottery lines by using the name Rozane. This caused the company to add the name Royal to their top line's title to distinguish it. Rozane Royal was all hand crafted and they created many pieces that were qualitatively up to Louwelsa standards, while still making ones which could be less expensive.⁹ Roseville also attempted to recreate Sicardo with a line called Mara (Figure 7), and although it is not the same product, it was still a popular line.¹⁰ Roseville acquired artists who had previously worked at Weller but they created some of their best work at Roseville, notably lines such as Della Robbia and Fudji¹¹(Figure 8 and Figure 9). Roseville was not one of the great innovators during the height of art pottery production in Ohio, but the company did improve on numerous techniques and was able to lower production costs in order to allow for a more diverse range of consumers.

Cincinnati's claim to fame in the pottery world is credited to two women. They revolutionized the industry through new techniques that allowed anything to be depicted in great detail on clay with underglaze. Cincinnati, like East Liverpool and Zanesville, had clay deposits, trade via water, and other resources to support the pottery industry, including coal and timber. They did not, however, compete with the other clay cities

⁹ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1976), 11-2.

¹⁰ Purviance, *Zanesville Art Pottery in Color*, 33.

¹¹ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery*, 13.

until these two women made it possible for amateurs and other women to take part in the art of decorating pottery. It all started with Louise McLaughlin, who formed a club of wealthy women which initially only painted premade pottery. Later, their production escalated to where they were completely making their own pieces. She did not work for a company and therefore was not technically a part of the industry. But, as a talented individual, she entered her pieces into numerous competitions and frequently received top awards. Her renown triggered a rivalry with another woman, Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, and every time McLaughlin would receive an accolade, Storer would attempt to match her success.¹²

The further development of art pottery was fostered by this rivalry; it pushed Storer to form the Rookwood Pottery Company, named for her family's estate. At the company one of her artists developed a technique of underglazing that enabled artists to paint images under the glaze with the precision of oil paints. This technique became known as the Rookwood Standard (Figure 10) and was widely used across the country, allowing for the production of many beautiful pieces even outside of Ohio.¹³ Nearly every art pottery company had a line using this technique of underglazing, including Weller and Roseville with Louwelsa and Rozane Royal. Rookwood epitomizes art pottery and is often also seen as an important company in the history of the American Arts and Crafts Movement between 1860 and 1910. The artists at Rookwood had complete freedom, and no two works were the same, because nothing was made from a

¹² Julie Aronson, ed., *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City* (Athens: Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio University Press, 2003), 106.

¹³ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 30.

pattern.¹⁴ Rookwood pottery is a perfect example of the unification in Ohio of craft skills and fine art.

This thesis is intended to demonstrate the evolution of pottery in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in three key locations in Ohio, as it developed from being treated as a craft to being recognized as a fine art which has gained museum status. These pieces are highly coveted by numerous collectors. This thesis, for the first time, will trace the development of these Ohio companies as the main producers of both practical ceramics and of art pottery in the United States from ca. 1840 to 1910. The cities of East Liverpool, Zanesville, and Cincinnati all represent important aspects of the industry and all influenced each other and are more interconnected. The companies discussed blur the line between craft and art from the non-art producing companies like the Homer Laughlin Company which initially began as a craft and became very industrialized, to Rookwood Pottery which produced unique high quality pieces that were handmade by skilled and creative artists. Without companies like Homer Laughlin, however the artists at Rookwood would not have been able to create their art pottery. This thesis will also discuss the different styles and key lines of art pottery produced in Ohio that emerged through underglaze painting, other glazes and mattes, and finally through sculpting and carving techniques.

¹⁴ Oscar Lovell Triggs, *Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement* (Chicago: Bohemia Guild of the Industrial Art League, 1902), 160.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING OF THE OHIO CERAMICS INDUSTRY

Art pottery was only able to prosper in Ohio because of its roots in the clay industry that had been established in the first half of the nineteenth century. The companies that were founded in the middle of the nineteenth century began by producing functional pottery made from yellow and Rockingham wares (Figures 11 and 12) that were processed from local clay. Many of those same factories changed over the remainder of that century to produce chiefly whiteware (Figure 13). Meanwhile new companies were constantly springing up to join in the production. Many of the whiteware producers continued their functional products but also incorporated decorative art pottery lines using porcelain, a whiteware mainly composed of the mineral kaolin. With rare exceptions, the art pottery producers in Ohio emerged from one of the functional pottery companies. By becoming the site of the biggest producers of ceramic products in the state, the city of East Liverpool paved the way for Ohio to become the national leader in art pottery production. The city's potters developed many techniques and tools that not only helped the local industry but also improved production throughout the state and the country as well. The city of Zanesville prospered from clay production later than East Liverpool. Lessons learned from the East Liverpool experience enabled the potters of Zanesville to make contributions to the early industry as well.

Ohio in the early nineteenth century had an abundance of timber and coal, which at the time formed an excellent base for many industries. Potters needed these resources as well and congregated in Ohio for this and many other reasons. The area also has many

waterways that are easy to navigate and could support boats and barges, so goods were comparatively easy to transport. Because of this early Ohio towns were often built near waterways. At that time Ohio was still considered part of the Westward Expansion, thus the types of people who were moving into the area were typically more adventurous. Not only were they willing to move west in the first place, but that same willingness was applied to starting business ventures. In Ohio, ceramics became the industry of choice due to the large amount of good quality clay that could be found just below the soil.¹⁵ By 1830 pottery production was common in the eastern part of the United States, particularly in Vermont, Pennsylvania, and New York. Within a quarter of a century Ohio became the chief center for pottery production in the country and held that status for more than a hundred years.¹⁶

Pottery production started in Ohio in the early nineteenth century simply as a local commerce to supply useful housewares to settlers, products such as kitchen and toilet items. Originally these had been transported from the east, making them very expensive. Since the local area was so rich in clay, it was only natural that potteries would spring up and fulfill the high demand. The potters were mostly farmers who worked on their pottery seasonally or when demand was high. The clays they used were unrefined and just what they found primarily on or near their property; these clays were typically coarse red and stonewares.¹⁷ The abundance of clay encouraged English potters to settle in the area. With the accessibility of the resources and the high demand for

¹⁵ William C. Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns: Life and Work in East Liverpool, Ohio*, (East Liverpool, OH: The East Liverpool Historical Society, 1984), 5.

¹⁶ Barbara Perry, *American Art Pottery: From the Collection of Everson Museum of Art*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 12.

¹⁷ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 33.

products, they were able to start their own businesses with relative ease and success. The English potters were typically trained in the Staffordshire district of England. Thus, they arrived well equipped with the knowledge and skills to transform the rough earthenware clay into yellow ware and Rockingham ware, as these products were already popular at the time.¹⁸

Ohio's clay is unique within the United States but shares many similarities to the clay found in the rivers of England. In the 1830s and 1840s the English settlers in central and southern Ohio began producing yellow and Rockingham wares which were made by simply taking the clay that Ohioans had been using for years, and washing it to remove organic matter, sand and other materials that added to the coarse feeling and red colors of stoneware. This produced a clay that was very smooth and could even be pressed into molds. The clays are also quite strong and more porous than stoneware. Rockingham and yellow ware are made from the same clay, using the same process, but differ in how they are glazed. Rockingham (Figure 12), which is the ware that was favored by the English, used a glaze that was then speckled onto the piece, usually in browns and yellows. The pieces were also often decorated with embossed designs produced with a mold.

Yellow ware's treatment was intended to enhance the brilliance of the color of the yellow clay (Figure 11). It was covered in a clear glaze and never had the embossed designs but rather had colored stripes around the piece that were limited to black, blue

¹⁸ Mary Jo Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1998), 7.

and white.¹⁹ Both of these clays were referred to as Liverpool or Queensware because East Liverpool was the biggest producer of both in the country. The name Queensware drew a connection to England which encouraged sales because Rockingham was already well known as an English craft.²⁰ Both types of pottery were limited to functional pieces and were common in American homes for kitchen and toiletry needs. Although the potters making these items were well regarded and Americans showed great craftsmanship, these pieces could not yet compete with the quality of the porcelain produced in Europe and Asia in the first half of the nineteenth century.²¹

Whiteware production started in Ohio in the early 1860s. This label refers to any clay that is white or off-white and then normally coated in a clear glaze to show the natural color of the clay. There are many kinds of whiteware but the first to be used in Ohio was porcelain. Porcelain production declined because white earthenware required the same kilns as porcelain, but was less expensive to produce.²² White earthenware still required some porcelain and imported clay but could incorporate the local and less expensive clays. The industry that had started off by making yellow ware and Rockingham ware soon assimilated whiteware into their production. After a time it became their primary product type.

American markets and buyers turned away from the other two wares as consumers developed increasing interests in patterns and designs, which could be better demonstrated in whiteware. This ware also has the potential to weigh less than yellow

¹⁹ C. Dean Blair, *The Potters and Potteries of Summit County, 1828-1915* (Akron, OH: The Summit County Historical Society, 1965), 25.

²⁰ William C. Gates Jr. and Dana E. Ormerod, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District* (Ann Arbor, MI: Braun-Brumfield, Inc., 1982), 7.

²¹ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 45.

²² Gates, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District*, 8.

and Rockingham wares.²³ White earthenwares were, and still are, produced for useful household items like dishes and other kitchen ware. This ware is often mistakenly referred to as porcelain or china although the white earthenware is far more common. It is more durable and porous than porcelain and while porcelain is the desired material for decoration, earthenware is more desirable for functional items. The production of yellow and Rockingham wares as a prominent industry enabled the transition as whiteware became the enterprise that ultimately supported East Liverpool.

The city of East Liverpool, located in eastern Ohio on the Ohio River across from West Virginia, came to be known as The Crocker City (Figure 1). In the middle of the nineteenth century the city is believed to have been the producer of more than half of the Rockingham ware in the United States. It enjoyed praise for the high quality of the craft.²⁴ East Liverpool is the only city in the United States that at one point had an economy based solely on products from clay. People began to settle there due to the clay reserves and it became home to more than two hundred pottery companies by the late nineteenth century.²⁵ Much of this success is attributed to the arrival of the English potter, James Bennett, who moved to East Liverpool in 1839 or 1840. There had been many local potters and English potters in the town before then, but he arrived with the deliberate intent to create a large clay based business and to extensively market his pieces.²⁶ He was one of the first producers in the region to have an official mark, stamping his pieces with “Bennett’s Liverpool Ware” on the bottom. Bennett burned the

²³ Pamela Lee Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 10.

²⁴ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 47.

²⁵ Grey, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns*, 35.

²⁶ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 6.

first industrial kiln in East Liverpool in 1840 and shortly thereafter was joined by his brothers in his ceramic venture (Figure 14).²⁷

The Bennett Pottery Company relocated to Pittsburgh after just a few years but his mark left a major imprint on the town. An influx of English potters arrived in East Liverpool due to increasing unemployment in England. They, just like other immigrants, were all looking for a new beginning. The English became the majority of the workers at the six companies operating in the town by 1850. According to the 1850 census there were only two manufacturing firms in East Liverpool that were not a part of the ceramic world.²⁸ By 1900, the city had moved from producing yellow and Rockingham wares to primarily whiteware production. East Liverpool was credited with producing more than forty-nine percent of the country's white earthenware clay.²⁹ It can be said that East Liverpool was to ceramics what Pittsburgh was to steel at the time. In 1900 more than ninety percent of the employed residents in the city were working for the ceramics industry. In fact the town just had that one industry from 1880 until 1930, when the Depression debilitated pottery production throughout the state.³⁰

The ceramic companies of East Liverpool produced a wide range of items to cover any clay needs that people might have, including bricks, pipes, and household vessels. These latter products were the forerunners of the art pottery-producing companies. The innovations they achieved in technology and technique influenced pottery production across the country and led to much of East Liverpool's success. Many

²⁷ Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns*, 36.

²⁸ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 37.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁰ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 6.

of the new techniques simplified and accelerated production, notably the developments by the Hall China Company at the beginning of the twentieth century. Hall developed a lead-free, single fire glaze, and was also the first to successfully fire an item just once. Both of these innovations would reduce production time and the cost as it required less fuel; Hall greatly influenced the pottery industry in a global way.³¹ There were many companies and many more developments in East Liverpool, but perhaps one of the most innovative pottery companies was the Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles Company, or KT&K.

KT&K was founded in 1854 and was therefore one of the earlier Rockingham and yellow ware companies in East Liverpool. In 1872 they produced their first whiteware, which was very successful, so the company then turned its attention to whiteware and away from yellow and Rockingham. The company became so successful that just five years after the product switch they were the largest pottery company in East Liverpool. In that short time they had added a new building and were burning five kilns, whereas most other companies had only one. By 1891 they increased their number of kilns to twenty-nine and became the largest pottery company in the country. They would eventually close down during the Great Depression (1929 to 1939) due to economic hardships.³²

During the second half of the nineteenth century KT&K was at the forefront of the pottery industry. They were among the earliest producers of whiteware in East Liverpool and they were the first company to produce it really well. They were however,

³¹ Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns*, 46.

³² Gates, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District*, 115.

not the first ones to manufacture whiteware in East Liverpool; that was William Bloor in 1860 (Figure 13). Bloor made vases and mugs until 1862, when most of his employees left for the Civil War; otherwise he may have achieved more renown than KT&K.³³ Changing from producing yellow and Rockingham wares to whiteware was a difficult task. Yellow clay has different firing needs than white and so a company often had to build a new kiln or convert one to match the requirements for successful whiteware pottery. The potters in East Liverpool at the time were not well acquainted with the new clay. The more successful companies were those that were already accomplished and successful with yellow and Rockingham wares. They could experiment with the clay in order to create good pieces without crippling their company while at the same time never needing to sell items of a lesser quality. Because KT&K was able to do this, their first whiteware products were highly praised and compared favorably to the whiteware produced in England at that time, meeting English standards. This influenced other companies to also attempt the manufacture of whiteware. KT&K had already mastered whiteware making it easy for nearby companies to learn from their example.³⁴

The KT&K Company was successful at the height of the pottery industry in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was copied for its advancements and style. They were also able to, therefore, be the most inventive and they took the greatest risks. The founder of the company, Isaac Knowles, was very innovative and mechanized much of the pottery production process. There were several patents in his name, one of

³³ Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns*, 39.

³⁴ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 76-7.

which was the first mechanical jigger, which is used as a partial mold for flatware on a wheel. The company was also the first in the United States to burn a kiln using natural gas, which was much less expensive as it required less fuel than when they used timber or coal.³⁵ As they were becoming more successful in the 1880s, KT&K was able to add decorative lines instead of solely manufacturing items for the sake of utility.

KT&K was important to the earliest stages of Ohio's production of aesthetic pottery as they were the first pottery company in the area to have a decorating shop. This allowed them to produce beautiful pieces as well as their sturdy, utility based items. The company even dabbled in the realm of art pottery and produced elegant pieces made of boneware. Much of KT&K was destroyed in a fire in 1889 but was rebuilt a year later with the addition of a new boneware line, Lotus Ware (Figure 2). The ware actually used bones from animals to produce a translucent white clay that could be made very thin while still retaining structural strength. The line is now one of the things for which KT&K is best known but it only lasted until 1897, when it was discontinued due to excessive production costs.³⁶

Another one of East Liverpool's larger and more important companies was the Homer Laughlin China Company. Originally simply known as Laughlin Pottery, the company was founded in 1871 by Shakespeare and Homer Laughlin but the name changed when Shakespeare left in 1879. The company was fast growing and became the main competitor to KT&K. In 1872 Homer Laughlin triumphed over KT&K for a monetary bonus from the city of East Liverpool to enable them to manufacture high-end

³⁵ Ibid., 85.

³⁶ Gates, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District*, 115.

whiteware comparable to imported goods. This bonus is what enabled Homer Laughlin to become so successful in such a short amount of time.³⁷ The Homer Laughlin Company had four manufacturing plants by 1907, three in East Liverpool and one across the river in Newell, West Virginia. The Newell factory was the largest pottery plant in the world at the time.³⁸ The number of plants had doubled by the end of the 1920s and they were on their way to becoming the largest pottery company in the world, a title which they later lost. They still remain among the largest ceramic producers to this day.³⁹

The Homer Laughlin China Company represents a direct link to the legacy of East Liverpool. Most of the local companies closed their doors between 1930 and 1950 as the Depression caused many of the potteries to become deserted due to lack of sales. Many of the companies which remained were affected by World War II which further exacerbated the situation. The region was not able to recover even in the years following war, causing more and more people to leave the city for other areas of the country.⁴⁰ At the present time only a handful of potteries that were started in East Liverpool still exist and even fewer still operate in the town. Hall China Company remains the most notable firm in the area. Homer Laughlin left East Liverpool at the start of the Great Depression and moved all operations to Newell, West Virginia where it became one of the more prominent businesses.⁴¹ They were founded and achieved greatness in the pottery world

³⁷ Gray, *Ohio Valley Pottery Towns*, 44.

³⁸ Lois Lehner, *Ohio Pottery and Glass: Marks and Manufacturers* (Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1978), 48.

³⁹ Gates, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District*, 128.

⁴⁰ Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 340.

⁴¹ Gates, *East Liverpool, Ohio, Pottery District*, 128.

in East Liverpool and their impact on the world can be traced back to the mark that The Crocker City left on them.

The Homer Laughlin Company reshaped the pottery industry in the United States since they were among the first to use a tunnel kiln, which increased their productivity exponentially.⁴² Tunnel kilns are very large linear constant burning kilns in which the ceramic is moved continuously into varying heat environments. This permits customized characteristics in the product, which, when removed from the kiln is already fired and cooled. This is much safer than the old process of multiple firings and the manual removal of hot pottery from the kiln. The firings are also more predictable and allowed for more consistent firing of both the clay and glaze.⁴³ The company is well known to the general public as well as pottery industrialists. Their most famous product, Fiesta Ware (Figure 15), is still in production and is among the most popular dinner line wares in the world. It is made so that it can match the décor of any home,⁴⁴ and now serves as one of the greatest legacies of East Liverpool.

Although it was the largest producer in the country, East Liverpool was not the only Ohio city to develop a profitable industry in clay. Both the city of Zanesville, known as the Clay City, and Cincinnati had similar starts in the development of pottery as did East Liverpool. The areas had rivers running through them. Cincinnati was a developing city at the time, its location on the Ohio River opened it up to trade in many different industries. As a result, its main commerce was not through pottery but through

⁴² Gates, *The City of Hills and Kilns*, 246.

⁴³ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 15.

⁴⁴ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collector's Encyclopedia of Fiesta* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1987), 9.

the many other industries that fed the city. While Cincinnati did sit on a large clay deposit, the local population was not as interested in ceramics as were the populations of East Liverpool and Zanesville. Although Cincinnati did develop a utilitarian pottery industry, it did not become an important center until art pottery began to flourish in the area. This will be discussed in depth in the following chapter.

Not as large as the Ohio River, the Muskingum River allowed for ample trade and communication possibilities for the city of Zanesville. The area around the city, and most of central Ohio, sits on coal and natural gas resources as well as a substantial clay reserve.⁴⁵ Unlike East Liverpool, the first product that put Zanesville on the map was not pottery but instead it first became an important producer of brick in the state of Ohio.⁴⁶ The shift to pottery occurred as English potters from Staffordshire heard about the local clay and flocked to the area in the 1840s to produce mainly Rockingham ware.⁴⁷

Zanesville created its own version of Rockingham, known as bluebird pottery. This pottery was made by potters in their homes and continued the tradition of making pottery seasonally while using the clay found on or near the potter's own property. The pottery received its name because of the seasonality of its production, as potters began producing it when bluebirds migrated into the area and ended when they flew south.⁴⁸ The pottery was also often decorated with drawn birds using a cobalt blue glaze, further encouraging the name given to the pottery type. The bluebird pottery became popular and was sold down the Muskingum River to connecting rivers, making its way to the

⁴⁵ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 9.

⁴⁶ Fay Maxwell, *Early Pottery History of Muskingum and Perry Counties* (Columbus, OH, c. 1970), 14.

⁴⁷ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 9.

⁴⁸ Maxwell, *Early Pottery History of Muskingum and Perry Counties*, 9.

Mississippi River.⁴⁹ Thus began the long line of Zanesville potters revising other people's ideas, making them into their own, and profiting from them. The city did not accumulate nearly as many potteries as East Liverpool but it was still a prominent center for ceramics in the country. Many of its most notable potteries got their start making functional household wares; in the 1880s, however, they emerged as world renowned art potteries.

Ohio was for a time the center of ceramic production in the United States and many of its wares circulated internationally. The ceramic industry in this country really began in Ohio and pottery continued to be centered in the state until the Great Depression. Without an a brief history of the early days of the industry it is difficult to understand the reasons for the emergence of art pottery in Ohio in the late nineteenth century. Many of the most notable art potteries got their start in the locally found earthenware. Many of the innovations that made the art pottery industry possible in the United States came from the city of East Liverpool. While only one of its prominent companies ever attempted to turn their ceramics into art, they were still crucial to the essential foundations of art pottery. The city of Zanesville may be regarded as the connecting piece between the industry of earthen housewares and the decorative art pottery to follow. Many of their prominent potteries achieved fame for their distinctive art lines and will be explained in subsequent chapters.

⁴⁹ Bole, *The Ohio Clay Belt*, 10.

CHAPTER II

THE EMERGENCE OF ART POTTERY THROUGH OHIO COMPANIES

The Ohio cities of Zanesville and Cincinnati were the hubs for art pottery in the United States from the end of the nineteenth century through much of the twentieth century, at which time the style became less fashionable. Art pottery shows the industrial nature of the culture during that period. It was created by individual artists working for companies so that pieces would carry both an artist's mark and a separate company mark. The art pottery artists created unique pieces which were both hand and mechanically constructed; for example, many pieces were made through molds but then ornately hand painted. The socio-economics of the country can be seen in the production of art pottery at that time as more people had expendable incomes which could be spent on beautifying their home with items like pottery. Each company had its own unique styles and each achieved success in the industry through different interpretation and utilization of the materials of the art potter. The Ohio companies of Roseville, Weller, and Rookwood epitomized art pottery at the time and its emergence in American culture. They also embraced different aspects, as Roseville was the most industrial of the three, while Rookwood relied heavily on the skills of the individual artists and only produced art pottery, and Weller functioned as the midpoint between the two.

The height of art pottery production was from about 1880 until approximately 1910. Its development was influenced by both the Industrial Revolution and the Arts and Crafts Movement happening in England. Art pottery prospered mostly in America, as Americans were more enthusiastic about using technology than were the Europeans.⁵⁰ The pottery produced by artists in Europe and Asia at the time was either created by individual artists, who were not typically tied to a larger company and declined mechanical assistance, or the items were decorated with prints applied by a technician and not by an artist, neither of these can be classified as art pottery. Art pottery was not one specific style: it could show many styles and techniques as it could incorporate glazing and sculpting with a focus on either or both. It really is the result of the environment in which it was created, for a company by an artist, and the quality of the product, skillfully handmade.⁵¹

The first art potteries were located in England, thus many of the American potteries formed their companies from similar models. Just as it was with the American pottery industry earlier in the nineteenth century, using yellow ware and Rockingham ware, British potters came to the United States to avoid the decline the industry was having in England. American companies saw the art coming out of England and started to invite specific artists to move to Ohio and work for them. These companies were more financially secure, a reflection of the economic stability of the United States as a whole. The first art potteries in the United States were based on similar factory functions found in English potteries, and the first industrial move in creating the art form was the division

⁵⁰ Barbara Perry, *American Art Pottery: From the Collection of Everson Museum of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 16.

⁵¹ Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corp., 1987), 1.

of labor. Studio potters would form their own pieces, decorate them with glazes, carvings, mattes, and other desired applications, and fire them. But with art potteries a different set of people would perform each task, which would facilitate production and improve the result, as an artist might not be skilled in both building and painting.⁵²

The city of Cincinnati left its mark on art pottery because it is widely considered to be the city where art pottery was truly born and turned into the movement that it became. Although it was more common to do so, not all art pottery companies started from an older ceramic company. Such was the case, for example, with the art pottery that was arguably the most influential and the best known in the industry. Rookwood Pottery was founded in 1880 by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, who came from a wealthy family and then married well. The company was not started by English potters making Rockingham and yellow ware, although without that history a company like Rookwood would not have been able to succeed.

Storer's knowledge in ceramics was focused exclusively on decorative pottery. Styles and techniques created by Rookwood were borrowed by art potteries in America and Europe. A prime example of this is the underglazing technique known as the Rookwood Standard (Figure 10) that showed the versatility of art pottery. The Rookwood Standard would not have come to fruition without another important ceramist named Louise McLaughlin. She revolutionized art pottery although McLaughlin was technically not an art potter, but, rather, a studio potter. She made important developments and caused Storer to found Rookwood due to a rivalry between them.

⁵² Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 16.

The city of Cincinnati found similar fortune in location as had been the experience of both East Liverpool and Zanesville. It also had an abundance of coal and clay, as well as an accessible waterway with its location on the Ohio River (Figure 1). Thus ceramic production started much the same way in Cincinnati as it had in the other two cities. The Queen City had made a name for itself in other industries and had twelve potteries by 1859. This was in excess of most cities in the nation but could hardly compete with cities like East Liverpool⁵³ and because of its potteries, ceramics were common in the Queen City. Although the traditional potters did not move into art pottery as they did in Zanesville, the city's women enjoyed decorating blank pottery vessels for their own homes.

Writings by John Ruskin, the first professor of art history at Oxford University, persuaded women to create art for their households. He had great influence over the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and some influence in the United States as well.⁵⁴ His writings for women were based on the aesthetic decoration of the home. He believed that decorations in the home would influence morality in children; and, as children were mainly the responsibility of women, it was expected that they would decorate their homes properly. Many popular writings began to appear on the same subject in the late nineteenth century as it became the accepted philosophy of the middle and upper

⁵³ Julie Aronson, ed., *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City* (Athens: Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio University Press, 2003), 106.

⁵⁴ Nancy E. Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry: Women, Culture, and Commerce, 1880-1913* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 55-6.

classes.⁵⁵ One of the popular ways women found to accomplish this was through china painting.

Louise McLaughlin (1847 to 1939) and Maria Longworth Nichols Storer (1849 to 1932) began their interest in ceramics with china painting for their own homes. In 1874 they both took a class on china painting that was for affluent young women and was taught by Benn Pitman, brother of Sir Isaac Pitman, the man who invented shorthand. He and the two women went to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876 and exhibited many of their works.⁵⁶ In order to raise money to display their works, the group had held an auction the previous spring. There were thirty-five sets of tea cups and saucers that were auctioned off by the women in the group. At the auction works by McLaughlin and Storer tied for the highest bid. Each set sold for what would be more than \$350 today. Although good friends for much of the rest of their lives, from that day forward these two women were rivals to be the most accomplished potter in Cincinnati during the next couple of decades.⁵⁷ These two women were so important to the industry that the Cincinnati Art Museum has a permanent exhibit about their rivalry and a display of their works.

For many years McLaughlin was the more ground-breaking of the two. In 1877 after her success at the auction, and the recognition she gained at the Centennial Exposition, she wrote a book entitled, *China Painting: A Practical Manual for the Use of Amateurs in the Decoration of Hard Porcelain*. This book, which is still in print and can be easily found, was a great success. The book was also the first American book on how

⁵⁵ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 18-9.

⁵⁶ Lucile Henzke, *American Art Pottery* (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1970), 124.

⁵⁷ Aronson, *The Cincinnati Wing*, 106.

to paint china. McLaughlin was inspired to start the Women's Pottery Club in Cincinnati, which was the first of its kind. Its initial focus was painting on china but soon she had an agreement with Frederick Dallas's Hamilton Road Pottery to use their kilns. The women began forming their own pieces,⁵⁸ which was not a typical female endeavor. Women were expected to just do delicate and detailed work on the pottery, but never anything as potentially messy and labor intensive as building. Nevertheless they still would have had assistance in loading and unloading from the kilns by the men at the pottery.⁵⁹

McLaughlin never worked for a company and thus by definition was a studio artist rather than an art potter, but her technical advancements were crucial to the movement. In the late 1870s she was introduced to works by the first pottery to make items using an underglaze technique. Under the glaze they would paint with slip, which is essentially clay that is made extra moist and in some cases may have color added to it. This process causes the decoration to last the lifetime of the piece while giving it an even and smooth surface. The pottery was made by Haviland, a company from Limoges, France, and thus the technique was given the name Haviland Faience (Figure 16). McLaughlin then experimented for less than six months until she was able to discover the process for herself.⁶⁰ Her process differed from the French who applied slip to fired and dry forms; instead McLaughlin painted onto wet greenware. She became the first person in the United States to learn how to underglaze and was one of a very few in the world to know and use the process at this time. The technique which she developed became

⁵⁸ Ibid., 107-8.

⁵⁹ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 18.

⁶⁰ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 145.

known as Cincinnati Faience or Cincinnati Limoges and was used by art potteries all over the country, including Roseville, Weller, and Rookwood. The technique also contributed greatly to the interest that the United States had in art pottery.⁶¹

Cincinnati's most well known pottery, and arguably the most recognized art pottery in the world, would likely never have been as successful without Louise McLaughlin. After seeing all of the success that McLaughlin was having, her rival, Maria Longworth Nichols Storer, began to do all she could in an effort to outshine McLaughlin. In 1880 McLaughlin produced the largest vase to use underglaze and called it the *Ali Baba* vase (Figure 17).⁶² Pushed to compete by her own competitive drive, Storer learned McLaughlin's technique, through mutual friends, and created the *Aladdin* vase (Figure 18) which is comparable in size and inspired the first line of Rookwood pottery. The *Aladdin* vase is widely believed to be among the first three pieces to have been fired in the first Rookwood kiln burning.⁶³ Both women created more vases like these, thus turning them into series and particularly with McLaughlin. As she was not a sculptor, McLaughlin used a mold for the shape of her vessel but painted them all differently, just as a painter would also create a series on identical canvases. This is common in the art pottery movement, but the pieces are not copies, as they tend to have different images or entirely different subjects.

There is no doubt that Storer had a passion and definite skill when it came to ceramics, but the reasons for starting Rookwood Pottery in 1880 initially dealt with the feud between the two women. Storer was able to start her own business because her

⁶¹ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 40.

⁶² Aronson, *The Cincinnati Wing*, 108.

⁶³ Herbert Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery* (Tucson: Herbert Peck Books, 1986), 12-3.

father was a wealthy supporter of the arts and willing to buy her an old school house in which to set up her ceramics studio. She fired the first kiln late in 1880 and gained recognition almost immediately. The works made by Rookwood in the first year of operation were mostly blank pieces sold to, and decorated by, other artists, such as the Women's Pottery Club. Storer had assistance with the tasks that were typically left to men in potteries and was the only artist in the company until 1881.⁶⁴ She stayed with the company until 1890 when she gave it to William W. Taylor who had been Rookwood's manager since 1883. She left Ohio for Washington D.C. as her second husband, Bellamy Storer, was successfully running for Congress.⁶⁵

Rookwood took pride in being an American company; all of the clay it used came from the United States and most of that from Ohio. This is true especially in the earlier days of the company, when they used the yellow Ohio clays.⁶⁶ The style known as the Rookwood Standard (Figure 10) was built from this clay, as it lent itself to the browns, reds, and yellows used in the designs. The Rookwood Standard was a variation of Louise McLaughlin's Cincinnati Faience. Rookwood artist Laura Fry (1857 to 1949) invented an atomizer to apply glazes allowing for more detail and even backgrounds. This became one of the favored styles of art potteries from 1884, when it was invented, through the end of the century.⁶⁷ Rookwood's existence was completely based in art pottery and it survived, producing only art pottery and decorative tile, until 1967, making it not only the

⁶⁴ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 132-4

⁶⁵ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood*, 40

⁶⁶ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 134.

⁶⁷ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 256-7.

largest and possibly most important, but also the longest lasting of all one hundred and fifty American art potteries.⁶⁸

The city of Zanesville, as discussed earlier, had become an important ceramic community. Its clay industry relied heavily on the blue bird pottery and the other local clay wares. But after the success of Rookwood had been witnessed throughout Europe and the United States, many of the Zanesville stoneware companies turned their interests to becoming successful art potteries. These companies were already well known successes in the clay industry but were determined to be more. Not all of the companies added art pottery lines, but they continued to prosper in the area by creating housewares. The companies of Weller (1895) and Roseville (1900) added art lines to their ceramic production and received international attention and praise. Rookwood had ushered in the early phase of art pottery when it was formed in 1880 but the second phase began with the opening of other art potteries beginning in 1895 as the market expanded, such as these two, and continued until ca. 1915 as companies transitioned away from hiring artists. These companies' first art pottery lines were adaptations of the Rookwood Standard. Since they were larger firms with larger work forces they were able to both experiment with more styles and had developed more art pottery lines than Rookwood by 1910. Rookwood was arguably the highest quality producer with the most unique items, thus increasing their value.

The Weller Pottery Company was started in 1872 by Samuel A. Weller (1851 to 1925) primarily as a blue bird pottery. His business was originally in a small community south of Zanesville but he moved it to town where there was more demand for his

⁶⁸ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 1.

product in 1882. Weller became very successful by mostly producing flower pots with the local clay.⁶⁹ Perhaps the most impressive part of his story is that he grew up very poor and learned the trade by working for other local blue bird potters when he was young. He was then able to start his own company and by 1906 had surpassed Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles Company as the largest potter in the world. Weller was an excellent businessman and so he simultaneously succeeded at being both an industrial ware potter and an art potter.⁷⁰ Weller did not gain an interest in art pottery until more than a decade after the women's initial success in Cincinnati.

It was at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 where he saw the work of William A. Long, called Lonhuda (Figure 19), causing his revelation of the possibility of economic gain by developing the art form as a product.⁷¹ Long's pottery at Steubenville, Ohio was employing the same technique used at Rookwood. Laura Fry had worked for Lonhuda after her time in Rookwood and thus Lonhuda became the gateway for many other companies to learn the Rookwood technique. In 1894 Weller acquired Long as a partner and his workers also learned the technique.⁷² Once Weller knew how to make Rookwood Standard pottery, he absolved the partnership with Long after only a year and made the faience his own.

The name Lonhuda belonged to Long so Weller had to change the name of the line.⁷³ The Weller version of the Rookwood Standard became known as Louwelsa, using

⁶⁹ Nancy N. Schiffer and Betty Purviance Ward, *Weller, Roseville, & Related Zanesville Art Pottery & Tiles* (Atglen PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2000), 6.

⁷⁰ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1979), 6.

⁷¹ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 7.

⁷² Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 45-6.

⁷³ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 323.

part of his daughter's name, Louise, part of his last name and then ending with his initials. This line was very successful and Weller produced Louwelsa from 1895 until 1918, making more than five hundred different forms.⁷⁴ Louwelsa used the same color palette as Rookwood and tapped into the local clay for the forms. Weller employed the same motifs of natural flora and fauna. Although Rookwood also produced some portrait vases, Weller became far more interested in the idea. The company produced many portrait vases, perhaps most notably those portraying Native Americans⁷⁵(Figure 20).

To aid in expanding the realm of art pottery, the Weller Pottery Company developed many art lines that did not use the underglazing technique. Weller initiated this by hiring Charles B. Upjohn to develop new lines. He worked for Weller from 1895 until 1905 and ran the pottery's art department during that time.⁷⁶ Upjohn designed and created three lines of Dickens Ware, named for the English writer Charles Dickens, because Weller enjoyed the fact that Dickens named an important character in his book, *Pickwick Papers*, Sam Weller. Weller had remarked, "If Dickens can create a character named Sam Weller, the least I can do is name a line after him." As in England, it had been popular in America to decorate works with scenes and characters from Dickens's books, and so Weller adopted this theme.⁷⁷ The lines depicted many other kinds of scenes as well, but all of the Dickens lines were decorated with people and often expressed some sort of narrative. The first and third lines (Figures 21 and 22) both

⁷⁴ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 36.

⁷⁵ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 46.

⁷⁶ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 13.

⁷⁷ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 38.

utilized an underglaze technique, but the second line, which was the most popular and longest running, used a sgraffito technique with a semi-matte glaze paint⁷⁸ (Figure 4).

Weller hired a French artist named Jacques Sicard in 1902, who created a lustrous, metallic glaze. Sicard had been working on the glaze in France with his assistant, Henri Gellie, and by the time they came to work for Weller he was able to produce an even, multicolored luster ware, called Sicardo⁷⁹ (Figure 5). To this day it remains a mystery as to how Sicard achieved the glazing, though not through lack of trying, as many companies wanted to know how to reproduce this popular line. There were other attempts by companies to produce lusterware which were successful, but they could not achieve the same range of colors.

Sicard was aware of Weller's reputation for learning people's techniques and then stealing the product, as he had done with Long and his Lonhuda line. Thus, he would only work with Gellie in a locked room, speaking together only in a French-Swiss dialect, which was unknown to the other Weller employees as well as to Weller himself. Then, to ensure their secrecy even further, the two men checked for peepholes every morning, as Weller was overly interested in learning the technique. The ware was very difficult to make even for the two experts, as it was not just the glazing that had to be dealt with carefully, but the luster was achieved through specific firing conditions. As a result only about thirty percent of Sicardo was put up for sale. All of it was retained and not destroyed, so today even the rejected pieces are in high demand by collectors. The

⁷⁸ Louise Purviance, Evan Purviance and Norris F. Schneider, *Zanesville Art Pottery in Color* (Leon, IA: Mid-America Book Company, 1968), 3.

⁷⁹ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 46.

Sicardo line was only produced until 1907 when the two Frenchman returned to their homeland. Weller continued to sell the pieces for many years as they increased in value.⁸⁰

Zanesville was also the location of Roseville Pottery, another significant art pottery. It was founded in Roseville, Ohio in 1892 but in only six years expanded to having another factory only a few miles north in Zanesville. Here it achieved success, beginning in 1900, in art pottery. When Roseville Pottery was founded, George F. Young was selected as the secretary and general manager of the company. He had been facing economic hardship and even his wife needed to work. But when he joined with three other men to start the pottery business, they achieved almost instantaneous success. Their original products were stoneware house items which were very similar to what Weller had first produced twenty years earlier.⁸¹ Young became the primary owner after only a few years. By 1901 they operated four factories, two in each town, although the facilities in the town of Roseville never produced art pottery.⁸²

Roseville's first art pottery line was a copy of Louwelsa, and therefore a copy of Lonhuda, and thus a copy of the Rookwood Standard. Young saw the thriving businesses that Weller and Rookwood had become and the success they both continued to have, and he was interested in accomplishing the same. Even though Roseville was comparatively new, it had become prominent so rapidly that they were able to sustain the production costs of attempting art pottery. In 1900 Young hired Ross C. Purdy who knew how to make the Rookwood Standard from previously working for other companies, allowing Roseville to start creating Rozane ware (Figure 6). Rozane eventually came to be the

⁸⁰ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 12.

⁸¹ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 207.

⁸² Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 264.

first word of the brand names of most art pottery lines produced by Roseville.⁸³

Roseville allowed for more machine intervention in the production of their pieces and so the early Rozane pottery required less labor and thus cost dramatically less than Rookwood, enabling it to be sold to a market that had not been able to afford art pottery. Roseville wanted to compete in the high quality art pottery market and so began to call some of the Rookwood-like pieces Rozane Royal. These pieces were completely hand decorated and more expensive.⁸⁴

Roseville desired to produce as many lines as possible; therefore, they hired a great number of artists. One of the more noteworthy was Gazo Fudjiyama from Japan, who was employed in 1905 after having worked for Weller for a short time. It had become common for pottery companies to hire Japanese artists as Japonisme, the interest in Japanese culture and art, was becoming very popular in all aspects of art and décor. Fudjiyama designed two lines, Rozane Woodland and Rozane Fudji⁸⁵ (Figures 23 and 9). Even though they were more Art Nouveau in style than Japanese they still met with much interest in the market.⁸⁶ Both lines were decorated with designs that were embossed with a gloss glaze or colored slip, while the background was left with a simple matte glaze although they did use some different techniques. The lines differed in designs as Woodland was more organic and Fudji used more geometric and abstract shapes.⁸⁷

Roseville also procured an English artist named Frederick Rhead (1880-1942) who was hired as the art director in 1904. Like Fudjiyama, Rhead had worked at Weller

⁸³ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 89.

⁸⁴ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 57-8.

⁸⁵ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1976), 13.

⁸⁶ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 58.

⁸⁷ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 212.

before coming to Roseville. He was at Weller for less than a year and then worked for Roseville until 1908.⁸⁸ During Rhead's time at Roseville he created many of their most popular and impressive art pottery lines, including Mara (Figure 7), which was the closest anyone got at the time to replicating Sicardo. He also changed the style of the pottery produced at Roseville, simplifying the shapes of the pieces, taking the firm from Victorian to a more modern look.⁸⁹ The most popular line he created was Della Robbia (Figure 8). The name of the line was borrowed from the Italian Renaissance sculptor family founded by Luca and Andrea della Robbia, but their art does not influence this line further than just giving a name. Della Robbia is considered to be the most original line to be put out by Roseville, since neither Weller nor Rookwood had previously developed anything like it.⁹⁰ The pottery was created by using sgraffito to accentuate the underlying color of the clay, although sometimes there would be added colors using slip. Not much Della Robbia was produced, as some of the pieces could take up to a day to decorate and thus were time consuming and expensive. Rhead had the pieces decorated with many different motifs ranging from fruit to Vikings and they were very popular and well admired.⁹¹

Both Weller and Roseville stopped producing art pottery after 1910. The two companies still produced aesthetic pieces; however, they were primarily formed in molds and no longer hand built and decorated. Even those that appear to be carved came from molds and then perhaps painted by hand, but not with the same skills as artists of the

⁸⁸ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 13.

⁸⁹ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 58.

⁹⁰ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 265.

⁹¹ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery*, 12.

earlier art pottery days in the late nineteenth century. Rookwood continued to produce art pottery for as long as they were in business, as this was their only focus. There were many different lines of art pottery produced by the three companies that show a range in glazes, carving and sculpting, as well as painting. These lines demonstrated the styles and interests of the era and their emergence reflects the socio-economics of the country at the turn of the century. These companies are considered to be three of the most important art pottery companies in the world at that time, and were certainly the most influential even in comparison to those in older pottery centers such as in Limoges, France. The art pottery lines mentioned in this chapter as well as other lines by Weller, Roseville, Rookwood, and Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles will be discussed thoroughly in the chapters to follow.

CHAPTER III

THE ART OF GLAZING

Art pottery began to flourish in the 1880s once artists in Cincinnati discovered how to underglaze and Rookwood developed its Standard. Rookwood Pottery was one of the first American companies to produce art pottery and quickly became the most influential in the United States. The designs and images that were created on the clay through glazes and slip painting were now able to mimic oil paintings. Ceramic artists were faced with the challenge of presenting them on curved and shapely vessels rather than on flat canvas. Rookwood, Weller, and Roseville artists began using underglaze initially to paint flowers and occasionally animals, but the technique grew to depicting lifelike portraits and landscapes. The artists were often knowledgeable chemists and the underglazing had many manifestations through a variety of colors as the Rookwood chemists discovered how to create a transparent matte glaze to cover the slip painting. Weller and Roseville began their art pottery production by copying the Rookwood Standard but they discovered their own paths to success by creating unique glazes or rediscovering forgotten ones. They were able to create art pottery that did not use the

underglaze slip painting but focused on the majesty of the clay form and the elegance of the glaze itself.

Ceramist Louise McLaughlin was inspired to learn the underglaze technique when she saw Haviland Faience pottery from Limoges, France, in Philadelphia in the 1876 Centennial Exposition (Figure 16). The French underglaze captivated her as she had only done china painting over the glaze and the underglaze permitted a very different appearance.⁹² Few people worldwide knew how to underglaze, and although many attempted it, they were unable to replicate the Limoges technique. Their failures resulted from their attempts to use pure pigments as their paint, but these would burn in the kilns. Louise McLaughlin was among the first people in the world, and she is believed to be the first American, to discover the French technique. She mixed the colors with clay and produced a slip that was wet enough to be applied like paint.⁹³

McLaughlin was not aware of exactly how the Haviland Faience was produced. Though she overcame the most important factor of how to underglaze by developing a successful slip paint, she, in fact, invented a different process. Limoges pottery was made by painting on a bone dry clay body with a paint that was composed of fired clay ground into a fine powder and suspended in water. McLaughlin created a new way of treating the ceramic as she worked completely with a vessel that was still raw and humid. Her slip was also made from unfired clay and was applied directly to the greenware. This process could be more difficult than the Limoges ware but became the technique used by

⁹² Herbert Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery* (Tucson: Herbert Peck Books, 1986), 5.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 11.

Rookwood, Weller, Roseville and numerous other American companies and artists.⁹⁴

There were a number of other underglaze techniques used by a very small number of artists. One of these was the English potter John Bennett, who had achieved his own fame and recognition by the time McLaughlin was being acknowledged. The two artists were compared in the issue of the *Cincinnati Enquirer* from February 20, 1878.

Miss McLaughlin's vases are certainly the sensation of the hour for she has produced the first pottery of the kind in America. Mr. John Bennett's faience is all done under the glaze, a different process from Miss McLaughlin's. His process is to decorate an unglazed vase, bake it, then glaze and bake it again, while Miss McLaughlin's is like the process at Limoges. That is, she takes a common stone vase and paints it with clay and enamel mixed. This thick coat of clay, enamel, and glaze is then baked and the whole surface is a glaze, full of color, brilliance and beauty.⁹⁵

Louise McLaughlin was renowned for her success in glazing and thus caused Maria Longworth Nichols Storer to push herself to achieve similar stature. Storer became famous for starting her own pottery company, Rookwood, and the art she produced there. She learned McLaughlin's underglaze technique and, as she was also a very skilled artist, she became equally proficient. Her family was important to art in Cincinnati as her grandfather, Nicholas Longworth, had become one of the wealthiest Americans at the time and was a patron of the arts. He had even lived in the house which is now the Taft Museum of Art in Cincinnati, he had hired African-American artist, Robert S. Duncanson to paint the landscape murals which still decorate the walls to this day. His wealth elevated Storer's father, Joseph Longworth's, financial status. He, in turn, was gracious enough to finance his daughter's business, allowing her to become very successful very quickly, as a woman she would have otherwise had difficulty

⁹⁴ Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corp., 1987), 145.

⁹⁵ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 5.

obtaining resources to start a business. Rookwood began production with Storer as the only artist and this continued for the first year, until she hired Albert Valentien in 1881; together they developed the high standards for Rookwood artists.⁹⁶

Storer was enamored with Japanese art, like much of Western society at the time. The interest in culture and art Japanese, or Japonisme, began in the 1850s after Commodore Perry's time in Japan, which resulted in a treaty that opened trade with Japan. The world was already intrigued by the mysterious and closed off island but after Europeans were able to see and buy Japanese items and art, the interest turned into a craze which flooded the art world.⁹⁷ The interest in Japan did not spread quickly to America, at first, and Storer was one of the earlier artists to be influenced by it. Rookwood was the first art pottery to use Japanese motifs and in 1887 became the first to hire a Japanese artist.⁹⁸

Storer's early Rookwood pieces with a Japanese flair often utilized marine motifs and dragons⁹⁹ (Figures 18 and 24). These pieces were frequently decorated with dragons or fish sculpted on the rims of vases and even textured netting over the paintings of marine life. She would also oftentimes add gilding in order to frame and divide the images. After just the first year of production Storer was already receiving high accolades for her company. In an article from January 19, 1882, in the *Crockery and Glass Journal*, it was said, "The pottery had finished its first year's work with results that bear the highest testimony to the genius and courage of a woman who is laudably seeking

⁹⁶ Lucile Henzke, *American Art Pottery* (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1970), 132-3.

⁹⁷ Helen O. Borowitz, *Le Japon Artistique* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975).

⁹⁸ Carol C. Clark, *American Japonisme* (Cleveland: Cleveland Museum of Art, 1975), 8.

⁹⁹ Barbara Perry, *American Art Pottery: From the Collection of Everson Museum of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 26.

to impress upon a great industry – whose creations enter more largely into domestic life than any other – the principle of pure art.”¹⁰⁰

McLaughlin and Storer’s skills and styles can be seen clearly in their very large vases from the early 1880s. McLaughlin created the *Ali Baba* vase (Figure 17) which in 1880 was the largest vase in the world decorated with underglaze. The vase is thirty seven and a half inches high and sixteen and a half inches in diameter.¹⁰¹ It elegantly shows flowers in pinks and reds while the leaves and stems almost blend into the background as the muted greens are not too different from the greens and grays behind the plant. McLaughlin was conscious of the shape of her vase and so grouped the flowers towards the widest part of the vase, thus making the piece very balanced. McLaughlin’s style is painterly, but with her technique, the glazing causes the surface to be smooth, allowing the images to appear as though they are within the vase and not on the surface. As stated above, Storer produced a vase of similar size to compete with McLaughlin called the *Aladdin* vase (Figure 18). Hers was larger in volume but not as tall and the original was decorated with fish, crabs, lobsters and other marine motifs. It showed her skills in painting as well as sculpting as she depicted many of the creatures in relief. This piece was sold in 1880, the same year it was fired, to the artist and founder of the Tiffany Company, Louis Comfort Tiffany; but it inspired many more grand vases decorated both in underglaze and relief, commonly featuring sea creatures or dragons.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Nancy E. Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry: Women, Culture, and Commerce, 1880-1913* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 47.

¹⁰¹ Julie Aronson, ed., *The Cincinnati Wing: The Story of Art in the Queen City* (Athens: Cincinnati Art Museum, Ohio University Press, 2003), 122.

¹⁰² Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 12.

In the early years, from 1884 until about 1900, Rookwood used a smear glaze, which had a dull finish (Figure 25). The glaze was applied over slip paintings of flora and occasionally fauna. The vessels were decorated in light colors such as shades of blue, white, and pink. They were also often accented with overglazed gilding.¹⁰³ The smear glaze gave works a very specific look as it was a semi-matte glaze, and was thinly applied so that it was difficult to see at first glance. This allowed the decoration to float to the surface instead of being glossed over and appearing within the surface, as with the *Ali Baba* vase. This glaze has some shine but it is very light and subtle, giving the appearance that the clay itself has a shine, and not that there is a layer over it. Even though it is so thin and difficult to detect, it still works to protect the painted images on the vessel in the same way as a thick gloss glaze would.¹⁰⁴ The thinness of the glaze also allows for the enjoyment of subtle textures. The artists would impress patterns into the still wet clay with objects like the head of a nail. They would then fill in the patterns with colored slip.¹⁰⁵ The gilt accents also had impressed designs and textures but the gold was applied in far thinner amounts than the slip. These pieces helped to demonstrate some of the versatility of underglaze painting and gave Rookwood much of its success in its first decade of operation. However, the smear glaze's influence on art pottery cannot compare to that of the Rookwood Standard.

The Rookwood Standard (Figure 10) was produced from 1884 until around 1909 and was the line that gained Rookwood its initial international success at the turn of the century. It was also the most copied of the company's lines, as both Roseville and Weller

¹⁰³ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 239.

¹⁰⁴ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 26.

¹⁰⁵ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 17.

had their own versions of the Standard, as did most other art pottery companies in Ohio and other parts of the United States. The line used the same underglaze process that was developed by Louise McLaughlin but is distinguished by having a yellow tinted glaze over darker slip colors of yellow, red, green, and brown. Originally these colors were used because they complimented the yellow clay found in Ohio. After 1890 the company also began to use white clay for their base.¹⁰⁶ What is innovative and different about the Standard is that the background coloring is smooth and different hues were blended into a seamless gradient. The background is very different from the *Ali Baba* vase by Louise McLaughlin with its large and obvious brush strokes. Both techniques are beautiful and desirable, but each exudes pleasantly unique effects. The technique for applying the background colors of the Standard was invented by the Rookwood artist, Laura Fry. She discovered a way to alter and use an atomizer in order to apply the slip evenly and smoothly, creating the smooth gradient.¹⁰⁷

The Standard specifically used an earthen color palette but there were other lines produced by Rookwood that were made in the same way, with the underglaze and atomized backgrounds, using different coloring. One such line was Iris (Figure 26) which was made from 1893 until 1912. It was usually placed on a white body, or occasionally blue-gray and green, and was painted with light colors. The pieces were mostly decorated with floral images and occasionally depicted animals. This was similar to the Standard, although it used a wider range of images, including portraits and

¹⁰⁶ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 240.

¹⁰⁷ Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corp., 1987), 256.

landscapes.¹⁰⁸ A Rookwood catalog from 1904 describes the Iris line by saying, “‘Iris’ is a light type with deliciously tender and suggestive color effects under a brilliant white glaze. The light body is decorated in delicate grays, pinks, soft blues, greens, and yellows.”¹⁰⁹ This line was also copied by Weller and Roseville and although not as exactly as they had copied the Standard, they used the idea of having a pastel Standard line, which had become quite popular.

Lonhuda was very similar to Rookwood as William Long learned the process from Laura Fry, especially her inventive use of an atomizer for the background decoration. Weller’s transitioning from Lonhuda to Louwelsa does not at all change the product, only the stamp on the bottom of the piece (Figure 27). Louwelsa was a successful competitor to the Rookwood Standard but never achieved the same high quality, though it was still highly regarded. The artists at Weller were not as skilled as those at Rookwood. The slip painting, designs, and coloring were not up to the same quality as Rookwood. Storer only hired educated artists, sending them to other countries to learn new techniques and improve their skills. Weller chose not to emulate Storer in this way, as he was more concerned with a profit than in excellence in quality. Weller also never mastered the same control of the overglaze and it was prone to cracking, limiting its quality¹¹⁰ (Figure 28). Lonhuda was only produced at Weller in 1895 and 1896 but Louwelsa was in production until 1915, during which time the company had manufactured over five hundred different pieces. They used many of the same motifs as Rookwood, most commonly pieces featuring flowers. Weller also had a limited number

¹⁰⁸ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 240.

¹⁰⁹ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 74.

¹¹⁰ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 46.

of pieces with animals. Louwelsa shared another similarity with the Rookwood Standard, as in the early years Louwelsa pieces were decorated in browns and yellows to complement the local clay. One of the rare additions that Louwelsa made to the Standard was using silver overlay to enhance the painted designs on the form of the piece itself¹¹¹ (Figure 3).

The portrait vases distributed by Weller under the Louwelsa name are still some of the most sought after pieces of any art pottery. Although some artists were better than others, thus some pieces are exquisite and impressive while others have obvious flaws, as a whole they can compete with two dimensional paintings on canvas (Figure 20). The shadowing is typically natural looking as it follows the shape of the object, while at the same time the faces are clear and recognizable. The artists painted many different types of people, including specific individuals, people of all class levels, monks and other specific occupations, as well as African Americans. The Louwelsa artists did not just paint portraits of people but also renditions of dogs that truly captured the spirit of the species. This was even a favorite of a few artists who then specialized in canine depictions¹¹² (Figure 29).

In the late nineteenth century all things dealing with Native Americans had become very popular as their culture was waning, giving them an air of mystery for American middle and upper classes. Because it was so different from what people knew, the world of Native Americans began to influence American art pottery like Japonisme had done before. Other art pottery and decorative art companies, such as Tiffany and

¹¹¹ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 36.

¹¹² Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1979), 36.

Rookwood, were experimenting with Native American styles in the 1890s and Rookwood even produced some portrait vases featuring Native Americans.¹¹³ Weller was one of the main companies to feed this trend and produced vessels with detailed and emotional underglazed portraits of Native Americans (Figure 20). Throughout the period that Weller produced Louwelsa, it maintained the same quality with these works as they did with the other portrait vases.¹¹⁴

The name Louwelsa was used in the titles of other pottery lines and not only with the imitation of the Standard. The Blue Louwelsa line (Figure 30) is very similar to the Standard although, like Iris, it is glazed in pale colors, primarily blues instead of yellows and browns. It is quite rare and has only been found to be decorated with painted flowers.¹¹⁵ Other lines such as the First Dickens line (Figure 21), produced from 1897-1898, was modeled after Louwelsa in coloring and technique. The Dickens line displayed mainly portraits or narratives that were painted on a solid, dark background instead of the atomized blending seen in Louwelsa.¹¹⁶ Eocean (Figure 31), produced from 1898-1915, also used the underglaze technique but on a white clay instead of the local yellow clay. Since it is used on a light colored clay, the pieces were painted with ethereal backgrounds, such as pale blues and grays. The typical floral images are then painted in darker shades of pinks and browns.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 160-1.

¹¹⁴ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 50.

¹¹⁵ Nancy N. Schiffer and Betty Purviance Ward, *Weller, Roseville, & Related Zanesville Art Pottery & Tiles* (Atglen PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2000), 34.

¹¹⁶ Louise Purviance, Evan Purviance, and Norris F. Schneider, *Zanesville Art Pottery in Color* (Leon, IA: Mid-America Book Company, 1968), plate 2.

¹¹⁷ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 41.

Roseville began to produce pieces similar to the Rookwood Standard in 1900 with their first art pottery line and continued until 1919. It was originally called Rozane, but they began to use that name for all handmade art pottery and thus Roseville called its Standard line Rozane Royal (Figure 6). The technique used was identical to that of both Rookwood and Weller. Roseville also completely recycled the motifs used by the other two companies.¹¹⁸ The company reduced the amount of hand construction used on each piece, by employing molds and patterns, so pieces could be sold at a lower price; this was their main departure from Rookwood and Weller's underglazed pottery. The Rozane Royal pieces were sold at substantially reduced prices compared to Rookwood and Louwelsa, thus opening sales to a new market of people who previously could not afford art pottery.¹¹⁹

As they came later to the art pottery industry than the other two companies, Roseville began producing many lines that were copies of Rookwood and Weller. In 1902 Roseville developed a short lived line called Rozane Azurean (Figure 32) which in many ways resembles Weller's Blue Louwelsa and was just the blue version of Rozane Royal.¹²⁰ Roseville also produced Rozane Light (Figure 33) which closely mimics Weller's line of Eocean, using the same color palette and type of clay. These lines were meant to compete with Rookwood's Iris, although Roseville never achieved the same quality as the Iris line.¹²¹ These lines are not entirely original and not produced as skillfully as Weller and Rookwood; they were nevertheless important since they reached

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 89.

¹¹⁹ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 56.

¹²⁰ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1976), 12.

¹²¹ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 58.

a broader economic field with their products, enabling people of lesser means to beautify their homes.

Rookwood not only innovated the underglaze technique but also developed a variety of matte glazes, sometimes spelled mat or matt, between 1898 and 1915. These gave pottery a completely different effect than the glossy underglazed pieces that had become immensely popular in the previous years. The matte was initially opaque, which made underglaze impossible at first, and could be one color or a gradient.¹²² There were three main kinds of matte glaze vessels. The first, Painted Matte (Figure 34), was decorated with natural and stylized subjects. Designs were not made with slip under the glaze but painted in with the matte.¹²³ The Rookwood catalog from 1904 describes Painted Matte as, “a mat glaze with decorations painted in rich, warm, reds, yellows, greens, and blues, a process of the greatest difficulty, suggestive of flowing enamels, but with a mat texture.”¹²⁴ The second and third matte types were Incised Matte (Figure 35), which was decorated with sgraffito, and Modeled Matte (Figure 36), decorated in either and both bas-relief and high relief. Both of these matte types were then coated in the matte glaze used for the Painted Matte,¹²⁵ but as their unique qualities lie in how the artists used sculpting and carving to carry the glaze, they will be discussed further in chapter four.

¹²² Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 241.

¹²³ Kenneth R. Trapp, *Ode to Nature: Flowers and Landscapes of the Rookwood Pottery 1880-1940* (New York: The Jordan-Volpe Gallery, 1980), 64.

¹²⁴ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 90.

¹²⁵ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 139.

The most innovative and perhaps potentially most beautiful of the Rookwood mattes was Vellum (Figure 37). The Rookwood catalog from 1904 offers a long and adoring description of the type.

This variety of Rookwood Mat Glaze differs from all the others. Devoid of luster, without dryness, it partakes both to the touch and to the eye of the qualities of old parchment. The Mat Glazes hitherto known have permitted, by reason of their own heaviness, of but little decoration other than modeling or very flat and broad painting. The Vellum on the contrary retains for the artist all those qualities possible hitherto under brilliant glaze alone.¹²⁶

The Vellum glaze allowed for underglaze decoration, which had previously been impossible. The matte is fired in the kiln at the same time as the decoration instead of giving it its own glaze firing. This firing was the main component that gave the glaze its famous vellum look and feel, but it was through chemistry that it became translucent instead of thick and opaque and therefore not ideal for the underglaze treatment, like other matte glazes.¹²⁷ The Vellum Matte gained fame because the artists created detailed and elegant seascapes and landscapes instead of only painting flora and fauna. This style variation was related to the interest in landscape painting generated by the American Tonalism movement which had emerged in the 1880s.¹²⁸ Tonalism was a movement where natural landscape painters focused on tonal transitioning, often painting misty dawn and dusk scenes. It began in the late nineteenth century and was strongly influenced by the works of George Inness and James Abbott McNeil Whistler.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery*, 90.

¹²⁷ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 139.

¹²⁸ Trapp, *Ode to Nature*, 65.

¹²⁹ Matthew Baigell, *A Concise History of American Painting and Sculpture* (New York: Harper & Row, Publications, 1984), 155.

On pottery the influence of Tonalism accounts for the misty atmospheric appearance of the paintings for which the Vellum glaze was perfect for conveying. The underglazed ceramic paintings share in the beauty of the Tonalist paintings but were more difficult to produce. They had to incorporate the shape of the vessel to which they were applied. A good understanding of the chemistry behind their paints was required by the artist, as many colors would change when fired. The Vellum line was one of Rookwood's most successful, witnessed by the fact that the slip-painted or carved semi-translucent matte glazed objects were produced from 1904 until 1948.¹³⁰ The line was also awarded many accolades, including, in its first year of production, an award of the Grand Prize at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. It was described at the event as, "a great departure from any known type," as it was seen as the only distinctive piece in the competition.¹³¹ Rookwood's most unique glaze innovations were with mattes. Although these too were copied by other companies, there emerged innovations by others, like Weller and Roseville, which were different from Rookwood or anyone else.

Arguably Weller's most important pottery line and distinctive glaze line was Sicardo (Figure 5), designed and produced by Jacques Sicard and his assistant Henri Gellie from 1902 until 1907. The line favored the use of Art Nouveau floral patterns and is distinguished by the lustrous glaze in rich colors, typically blues, greens, and purples.¹³² Sicardo gained much recognition and was sold in expensive jewelry stores including Tiffany's and Wanamaker's for \$300 or more, which was around half an

¹³⁰ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 241.

¹³¹ Trapp, *Ode to Nature*, 64.

¹³² Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 46.

average yearly income. Jacques Sicard was an incredibly skilled ceramist, as he threw or hand built all of his pieces as well as hand decorated each one. With his luster glaze, he demonstrated that he was also a brilliant chemist. Jacques Sicard received high praise and his works were described in numerous publications of the day, including an article by the writer May Elizabeth Cook published in *The Sketch Book* from May of 1906.

The metallic lusters require, not only the fine color sense of the artist, but the skill and knowledge of the chemist; these gifts M. Sicard happily possesses. Accustomed to the use of peat or dead brushwood to fire the kilns in France, M. Sicard could with difficulty be persuaded to use the natural gas in the kilns in which the luster ware was to be fired. In his first experiments, he insisted on firing the kilns with the wild growths found along the roadsides around Zanesville. Was it not a pretty thought that the wild blossoms, having caught all the glow and richness of the summer, in rainbow tints, should through sacrificial fires transfer their glory to the molded clay? The large showroom devoted to Sicardo ware would indicate most satisfactory results from the complicated experiments requiring such care in decoration and firing. Beautiful forms with exquisite tones of flame, rose, blue, green, bronze, purple, and crimson, melting into one another like colors in an opal, or in the great arch of the rainbow, are most harmonious and restful.¹³³

Sicard's pieces vary in size and shape as he was given complete freedom by Weller to produce any forms he desired. He created umbrella stands, candy dishes, jewelry boxes, vases, candle sticks, and many other items, all of which were unique and ranged in size from just a few inches to almost a yard. The pieces required many layers of glaze, the first of which could be seen inside the vessels as a deep rose color, while the façades of the pieces are then decorated in additional layers. Sicard highlighted the rich colors on the outside with gold or silver to enhance the patterns he had painted. Even though he used many layers, when completed, they all blended into a single layer, which

¹³³ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 11-2.

created a smooth, iridescent, multicolored surface.¹³⁴ Much of the technique is a mystery, especially in the specifics of the firing, but the basic composition of the glaze did not remain a secret, as previously described. Sicard would bisque fire the pieces and then cover them in a clear copper glaze that served as the base for the designs he would paint. He created his reds and pinks by using gold and silver salts that were fired in a reduced atmosphere. His blues and greens were done with copper oxide that was fired with oxygen. The changes in atmosphere were difficult to control at the time and heightened the risk of the kiln exploding, causing the company to design a special kiln that could relieve pressure when needed.¹³⁵

Creating this effect is not overly difficult in modern, computer-controlled kilns, but it seems almost impossible that Sicard was able accomplish this in the first decade of the twentieth century. The glaze and the firing conditions were both difficult to predict. There were few pieces that came out of the kiln without flaws because the glaze was known to run when fired as it was very thick. In order to get the desired blending of colors many layers needed to be added, thus there are bubbles in some places and craters in others. There are also markings on many of the pieces inflicted by the stilts that were holding the pieces so that the glaze would not fuse to the kiln. The heat in the kiln was often uneven, causing some of the pieces to be streaked or to have one side that is lighter in color or that would lack the intended lustrous appearance.¹³⁶ It is not uncommon for glazes to bubble or flow unexpectedly even today, unless produced industrially. But Sicardo was produced in a kiln that was hard to control, with a glaze that could be equally

¹³⁴ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 48.

¹³⁵ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 12.

¹³⁶ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 49-50.

as difficult, therefore many pieces were not for sale while Jacques Sicard was at Weller. Their worth only continued to increase after he left and has not stopped increasing even to this day, so that even the flawed pieces are incredibly valuable, each selling for thousands of dollars.

Roseville was able to produce a line of lusterware called Rozane Mara (Figure 7) which was among the closest attempts to recreate Sicardo. The line was only produced in 1904 and had mostly been forgotten but can be found in a rare catalog from 1905.¹³⁷ The line was produced by Harry Rhead, whose brother, Frederick Rhead, was the art director in the company and had created many of the important sculptural lines to be discussed in the next chapter. The Rhead brothers' father was also a ceramist who worked for Weller at the time. Since Rozane Mara was produced during Jacques Sicard's time at Weller it seems likely that some of the company's secrets were leaked from father to son.¹³⁸ Rozane Mara was different from Sicardo as it did not match the vibrancy of Sicardo's colors and expressed more of a variety of light colors. Rozane Mara was produced in reds and purples and there are even pieces with white and pastels creating a different, but still beautiful effect.¹³⁹

Roseville was not always the most creative company but did fashion some glazes that stood out from the other art potteries. The company invented two important solid colored glazes, Rozane Mongol and Rozane Egypto, which were applied to pieces that often had designs in relief. The Rozane Mongol line (Figure 38) did not meet with much commercial success but was critically well received and even won a first prize at the

¹³⁷ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 107.

¹³⁸ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 210-1.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 212.

Louisiana Purchase Exposition in 1904.¹⁴⁰ The line has a Chinese influence and the shapes of the pieces are typically based on Chinese pottery. The creator of the glaze, John J. Herold, successfully tried to copy the Chinese glaze Sang de Bœuf, meaning ox blood. This glaze was thought to have been lost since the sixteenth century but Herold discovered how to make the copper glaze. This allowed Roseville to produce pottery with a high gloss glaze whose name describes it perfectly, as it is ox-blood red.¹⁴¹

Rozane Egypto (Figure 39) was an impressive glaze line that met with far more success than Rozane Mongol. The forms of these pieces were meant to imitate ancient Egyptian vessels and were decorated with embossed designs.¹⁴² The designs were replicated from Ancient Egyptian artifacts and fed the public's interest in exotic cultures. It was developed around the same time as Rozane Mongol in 1904. They are similar since the art pottery focus of both was based on older, exotic styles and used vibrant solid colored glazes. A Danish born potter, Christian Neilson, employed by Roseville developed Rozane Egypto. This line used a matte that was a soft, dark green which was visually and tactilely textured and serves as Roseville's first matte glaze.¹⁴³

The Ohio companies of Rookwood, Weller, and Roseville show many of the diverse kinds of glazing used by art potteries during the movement's heyday between 1880 and 1910. Their glazes incorporated gloss glazes of varying colors, mattes that could be opaque and dull, or translucent and semi-gloss, as well as brilliant lusterware. The artists were not only skilled in painting and sculpting, but they also needed an

¹⁴⁰ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 93.

¹⁴¹ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery*, 12.

¹⁴² Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 256.

¹⁴³ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery*, 12.

understanding of the chemistry of glazes. The Rookwood Standard paved the way for art pottery to become an important feature in American households and for it to be regarded as a real art. The pottery was able to serve as a stage for a wide variety of paintings including plants, animals, portraits, and landscapes. All of the pieces could be hand painted with careful detail while the artists were mindful of the form upon which they were applying the image. The underglaze pottery allowed for companies to become successful enough to experiment with other glaze types. Weller's Sicardo line and Rookwood's Vellum were two of the most original and renowned glaze lines by American art pottery companies. Important as well was Roseville's rediscovery of the lost Chinese Sang de Bœuf glaze with their Mongol line. Glazing and two dimensional decorations are important aspects of art pottery and are what initially peaked the interest of the public in the 1880s; glazing, however, shares artistic glory with the three dimensionality of sculpting and carving that will be discussed in chapter four.

CHAPTER IV

THE ART OF SCULPTING AND CARVING

Art pottery's earliest days were founded on the underglazing technique and its impressive nature of being able to recreate, on ceramic, the look of oil painting. The artists and companies then evolved, showing off an abundance of difficult, creative, beautiful glazes; but this is not all that art pottery contributed to the fine and decorative arts. The Ohio art pottery companies also displayed competence in showcasing the dimensionality of the clay vessels. The earlier sculptural elements of the movement were reliefs that enhanced the underglazed designs and held to the theme of using texture. Images and scenes were emphasized by employing sgraffito to make the images a little more three dimensional while still focusing on the beauty of the matte or glaze being used. Art potters also created pieces where the sculpting could take center stage and used glazing to enhance the texture instead of the other way around. This was done primarily with the slip squeeze bag technique so that these designs were really on top of the surface of the objects. The companies also used higher reliefs under the glazes which united the importance of the sculpture and the glaze, both with underglaze painting and carving under solid colored glazes.

Just as art pottery glazing in the United States got its start through Maria Longworth Nichols Storer and Rookwood, so too did the incorporation of sculpting with art pottery. Storer was a very creative woman and was willing to experiment with her clay. As a result, her earlier works were unique and show a style that was all her own, which was not repeated by many others in her company. From 1880 through 1884, when the Standard was developed, Rookwood was still searching for its identity. During this time, Storer experimented with numerous ideas and many of her pieces demonstrated her skill as a sculptor. The company focused more on the art of ceramic painting and glazing but once the Standard was produced it immediately gained much fame and reverence.¹⁴⁴

Storer's original *Aladdin* vase demonstrated the versatility she had as an artist in that it coalesced relief and painting. The vase encouraged Storer and Rookwood artists to produce more pieces with similar styles and motifs, like the later vase seen in Figure 18. Reliefs on clay are typically done by adding many thin layers of clay until the desired shapes and sizes are attained; it is achieved through building and not through subtraction. It is possible to change the design or fix a mistake while working, though it is still not an easy process. Storer sculpted detailed fish and crabs on her vase and then finished with underglaze painting, resulting in what appears to be a three dimensional image. She was really ahead of her time with this idea, since this type of unique style was not fully appreciated or desired by the public until much later; nonetheless, she did receive critical admiration. In Cincinnati, women during this period were expected to paint floral designs, like most places, as seen on Louise McLaughlin's *Ali Baba* vase (Figure 17).

¹⁴⁴ Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corp., 1987), 256.

However, Storer personally favored dragons, as well as marine life, and she indulged her interest with the series inspired by the *Aladdin* vase.

One of her more impressive vases from the Aladdin series was her 1882 dragon vase (Figure 24), now at the Cincinnati Museum of Art. Storer's work went beyond only reliefs as she sculpted a dragon that was partly in relief but also comes fully away from the vase. Parts of the dragon merge with the vase so that they are smoothed to match the shape of the vessel, while others are highly textured reliefs. The arms of the dragon disconnect completely and even use the vase for support as though it were a separate object. This is clearly seen with the upper arm which is holding onto the lip of the piece. Her unique style was not what gained Rookwood its fame, as her pieces were very different from most styles of the time. The company artists instead focused mainly on painting and glazing the pottery and not sculpture, particularly after Storer left Rookwood.

Sculptural enhancements became popular in art pottery with the use of sgraffito in the last few years of the nineteenth century. Sgraffito in clay is done by covering the vessel with a slip that is typically lighter colored than the clay base; the artist then scrapes away areas of the slip to reveal the different colored clay underneath, thereby creating a design. Weller artist, Charles B. Upjohn introduced this technique to the Zanesville company in 1898 for his second Dickens Ware line (Figure 4). This line was then produced until Upjohn left Weller in 1905. Upjohn did not simply invent the style but had a hand in every piece. Not all of the line was created by him from start to finish, but at the very least he designed each piece. He would draw the designs, and then workers would trace them, cut out the shapes, and perforate the lines within the image, which was

moistened to stick to the clay form. After perforating the paper on the clay, the paper was left on the piece to mask the design portions while the artists applied the background glaze. The pieces were then painted with colored slip using India ink to outline the figures and the perforations. Once the piece was leather hard the eye end of a needle was used to carve out the lines.¹⁴⁵

The process for making the second line of Dickens Ware was very time consuming, but the pieces created were among the most unique and exceptional works produced by Weller. The line was highly popular, which is why it was in continuous production for nearly a decade. The second line had subjects similar to the first line of Dickens Ware, as it also showed scenes from Charles Dickens's stories and other narratives, as well as portraits. The line was in fact more appropriate for showing elaborate stories as it allowed for more control and the scenes are crisp and clear. This line unites carving and glazing as both are equally important to this unique style. The sgraffito and the black ink outlines help to give the images more depth without being completely realistic. The glazing is then made using slip painting, creating smooth gradients and shadowing, thus allowing the images to stand out clearly. The Second Dickens Line was usually made with local red stoneware, so the colors used are typically in either dark earthen tones or blues. Upjohn designed and decorated the pieces with contrasting colors, causing the images to stand out even more boldly. The final step was

¹⁴⁵ Nancy N. Schiffer and Betty Purviance Ward, *Weller, Roseville, & Related Zanesville Art Pottery & Tiles* (Atglen PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2000), 14.

the glazing, which could be done with mattes or gloss glazes, allowing for a wide choice for appearances of the final product.¹⁴⁶

Roseville also made a famous sgraffito line, but it is entirely distinct from Weller's Second Dickens line. Fredrick Rhead, who previously worked for Weller and created a number of their popular lines, designed Rozane Della Robbia in 1906 (Figure 8). The line used sgraffito for its decoration, like Dickens Ware, but the artist changed the technique at Roseville. Dickens Ware was made so that the figures were primarily outlined in sgraffito, but Della Robbia is done so that within the outline the top clay is completely scraped away to reveal the underlying color. With this process the design is recessed into the clay, instead of either being raised above the surface like a relief or a mere outline. This technique also allowed for a multitude of textures to be impressed into the sgraffitoeed surface. Slip was used to color in areas of the artist's choice and finally the pieces were covered in a clear glaze.¹⁴⁷

Della Robbia had seventy-five different designs; among these were pieces influenced by Persian and Greek art (Figure 40) as well as typical pottery designs such as flowers.¹⁴⁸ These motifs could be designed as either naturalistic or abstracted and geometric. This is one of the few art pottery lines that did not use specific colors or ever have a predominance of one color. It is clear that Rhead was given a lot of freedom and was able to use this line as his unpatterned creative outlet. The Della Robbia pieces universally share only a common technique. Sadly, this technique was very time consuming and was therefore also very expensive, as it could take an artist as much as a

¹⁴⁶ Lucile Henzke, *American Art Pottery* (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1970), 38-9.

¹⁴⁷ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 265.

¹⁴⁸ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 95.

day to complete one piece. Therefore the line was produced for only a short time, during which very few pieces were made. Despite this, it is still considered to be one of Roseville's most important lines and certainly among its most creative and artistic.¹⁴⁹

A popular decorating technique emerged in art pottery in the 1880s and 1890s through which Knowles, Taylor & Knowles, from East Liverpool, produced some of its most exquisite pieces. Through the use of a bag filled with clay slip, an artist could apply delicate designs and filigree by extruding the slip on the pieces through a small hole in the bag. This process closely resembles pastry decorating in that it uses essentially the same type of squeeze bag. The slip offers a very different consistency and allows for more three dimensional work. The clay used at KT&K was able to maintain elaborate forms because it was strong bone china. Bone china has rarely been produced in the United States and KT&K was the first American company to attempt to produce it. The clay had been made elsewhere in the world, mainly in England, but required special knowledge and specially designed kilns.

KT&K hired a potter, Joshua Poole, who was recognized as an expert on bone china. He developed a bone china of extremely high quality that could even rival English wares. Bone china is made from animal bone ash that is reduced to a fine powder and then mixed with white clay. The clay that is produced can be made very thin yet still be stronger and more chip resistant than porcelain. It is also translucent, which gives it a special visual quality. Originally this ware was developed by KT&K to produce molded dinnerware (Figure 41). The ware was only manufactured in 1889 since much of the line

¹⁴⁹ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1976),13.

and all of the molds were lost in a fire in the same year.¹⁵⁰ Luckily, the bone china process was not lost as Joshua Poole still worked for the company. After the plant was restored and ready for production he began to produce the bone ash clay once again.

In 1894 KT&K released their only line of art pottery, called Lotus Ware (Figure 2). It was made from Poole's bone china but was decorated by the German artist, Henry Schmidt. Lotus Ware was first shown at the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and was immediately well received. Schmidt's decoration on Lotus Ware was unique at the time as he used the squeeze bag technique to apply beautiful flowers (Figure 2) and filigree (Figure 42) to the clay surfaces. His technique is documented in a letter written by his assistant, Will Blake.

His instruments were a rubber bag and copper tube, similar to that used in cake decorating. The stems, leaves, and flowers of his patterns were produced with remarkable skill. He used a small piece of plaster of Paris, a little bit thicker than lead pencil and shaped like a petal, to give a more realistic impression to his flowers. This was also done after the clay petals had reached a proper hardness. The stems of these floral designs, and sometimes the leaves attached to them, were indented with a sharp tool to give a roughened and more natural effect to them.

His open work patterns were first worked on a small plaster mold. He would do a quick penciling of his design on a mold and then etch it out slowly with his cornucopia bag, these minute indentations served to support the moist clay while the clay was drying. When the drying process was complete, the open work would be removed from the mold by a slight jolt on the plaster form from the hand.¹⁵¹

Lotus Ware was decorated with a variety of adornments, in addition to the flowers and filigree listed above. A third and more common motif used to embellish many of the pieces was fish netting (Figure 43); this was relatively simple and could be colorized with

¹⁵⁰ Timothy J. Kearns, *Knowles, Taylor & Knowles: American Bone China* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1994), 6.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.* 9-10.

china painting or a solid glaze. Another type of slip decoration was jewellery (Figure 44); although far less common, this type was decorated with reliefs giving the appearance of jewels or chains which looked to be completely detached from the piece. Lotus Ware was very ornate and the squeeze bag technique greatly influenced other art pottery companies, such as Roseville and Weller. KT&K's Lotus Ware was the only art pottery line produced by any East Liverpool company and remains one of the finest lines ever to be manufactured in the United States. Lotus Ware was very expensive to produce and had to be discontinued in 1896, although KT&K continued to make dinnerware and other pottery until 1934.

No one else in the United States attempted anything quite like KT&K's Lotus Ware. Weller did copy the squeeze bag technique for a few lines, although nothing as complicated as Lotus. The first line that the Zanesville company produced was Turada from 1897-1898 (Figure 45) which was designed by Samuel Weller and not by a company artist.¹⁵² The line is elegant and Victorian but was discontinued because it was too fragile and had a reputation for chipping. The pieces were done with incised lines in the clay, marking the pattern; a squeeze-bag was then used to fill in these lines with slip.¹⁵³ The Turada pieces have dark colored backgrounds commonly of blue, black, or maroon. The abstract designs are in lighter shades of similar colors while also employing browns and oranges. The style was not duplicated; however, the technique was used again by Weller for a later line.

¹⁵² Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 325.

¹⁵³ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 58.

Before his time at Roseville, Fredrick Rhead developed some of Weller's most popular lines, one of which was Jap Birdimal (Figure 46), which began production in 1904. This line used the same technique as Weller's Turada, as it was done with incised lines filled in with extruded slip from a squeeze-bag, but the themes and coloring were entirely different from that of Turada. Rhead combined the ideas of the squeezed ribbons of slip and painting in his works. Jap Birdimal tends to have Japanese styles or subjects, such as Geishas, birds and peacock feathers, fish and other animals, and even landscapes.¹⁵⁴ The images were also commonly enhanced with geometric designs. The figures were outlined with the extruded white slip and the images were then painted with colors contrasting the background.¹⁵⁵ The background colors varied and were typically in light earthen hues while some pieces have blues and greens. High quality is maintained in all the pieces, yet sizes and types of pieces varied.¹⁵⁶ The use of the squeeze bag makes this line rather like the reverse of the Second Dickens line, because instead of having the sgraffito depressed outlines; Jap Birdimal figures have protruding outlines. This technique minimizes the three dimensional appearance of the designs, which is fitting for works influenced by Japanese art; it still enables the images to stand out from the background, however.

Roseville also had interest in capitalizing on the Japanese craze with lines that could compete with Jap Birdimal, and so they hired Japanese artist, Gazo Fujiyama, sometimes referred to as Fudji or Foudji. The artist had already spent a decade in Paris

¹⁵⁴ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1979), 13.

¹⁵⁵ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 324.

¹⁵⁶ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 46.

and some time in the United States working for a few companies, including a short stay with Weller. This had altered his style, so while the Americans around him were excited by anything Eastern, he was more interested in Art Nouveau. Thus, the two lines he designed for Roseville followed his interests instead of the expectations of the company; nevertheless, these lines were still successful. He did not stay in Ohio long before going to Pennsylvania for a time and then to New York to work with glass. Nonetheless, his work still left a lasting impact on the company and art pottery as a whole.¹⁵⁷

Fujiyama's first Roseville line was Rozane Woodland (Figure 23), developed in 1905. The designs on the pottery in this line were entirely floral. They were incised into wet clay and then gloss enamel was added to fill in the designs and also to make dots for ornamentation. This gave a raised gloss look similar to that which Rhead had achieved in his Della Robbia and Jap Birdimal lines.¹⁵⁸ Despite this, Fujiyama's Woodland line was still a very different style from Rhead's art as Woodland had simple designs and allowed for more negative space. The carved patterns separated the background from the image and gave more depth to the look of the enamel, thus the carving allowed the image to stand out from its background. This line is very unique as glaze is only used as a clear layer on the inside of vessels so that they could hold water. Otherwise the exterior background is left as just bisque ware, in order to celebrate the unaltered clay.¹⁵⁹

The second Roseville line created by Fujiyama in 1906 was simply called Rozane Fudji (Figure 9), after the artist. The line is very similar to Rozane Woodland in

¹⁵⁷ Barbara Perry, *American Art Pottery: From the Collection of Everson Museum of Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997), 58.

¹⁵⁸ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 94.

¹⁵⁹ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Roseville Pottery*, 13.

technique as Fudji was also created with an incised pattern decorated with glossy enamel and a bisque background. These pieces have shadowing done in areas such as around the necks of the vases. Fujiyama decorated this line more intricately and moved away from floral patterns and toward geometric shapes and abstract patterning. Much less simplistic than Woodland, the negative spaces of Fudji pieces were decorated with dots or wavy lines, causing any empty area to become part of the design.¹⁶⁰ Despite their busy appearance the pieces still maintained order and balance, demonstrating Fujiyama's skill as an artist and his mastery of form.

At the same time that art potteries were experimenting with squeeze-bag slip and gloss enamel drawing on their ceramics, they were also displaying their skills in the art of sculpting reliefs on their pottery. Weller, Roseville, and Rookwood all used both bas and high reliefs. The reliefs could be the focus of the pieces or be used to emphasize their underglazed paintings. One of the lines that encompasses all of these qualities, and perfectly demonstrates the Art Nouveau style that was popular at the time, was Weller's L'Art Nouveau line from 1903 through 1904 (Figure 47). This line was another Fredrick Rhead creation in which he used a variety of relief elevations and was able to unify both painting and sculpting, without either being the primary component; both aspects are soft, muted, and harmonious. Also, as the name suggests, the line displays only Art Nouveau motifs while focusing on the style's organic designs.

Rhead initially made L'Art Nouveau using high-gloss and dark brown glaze with only slight variation in the shade to emphasize certain areas.¹⁶¹ The style quickly evolved

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶¹ Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 324.

to the use of a semi-matte glaze, giving a soft and light effect. The coloring then changed dramatically to pastels, primarily using greens and pinks¹⁶² (Figure 48). Typically the pieces are in high relief, but the sculpting transitions, thereby, smoothing the relief into the piece. Thus many features, such as the stems of plants and curvaceous accents are represented in low relief. These pieces are far less simple than what is typical of the three dimensional designs found on art pottery from this time. They are very elegant and perfectly capture the mood of Art Nouveau and the chic style of the time as it pertained to other decorative arts, such as glass work and furniture.

A very rare Weller line using relief for decoration was the third line of Dickens Ware that was only produced in 1905 (Figure 22). The line was also designed by Fredrick Rhead, less than a year before he left Weller to become the art director at Roseville. Samuel Weller requested that Rhead design a third line of Dickens because the second line, although very popular, was time consuming and costly. The goal was to develop another successful line that was an improvement from an economic standpoint. The line which he developed was similar to Eocean but with very low relief, and utilizing the themes found in the first two lines of Dickens Ware.¹⁶³ The low relief images were commonly portraits of characters from the illustrations by the cartoonist George Cruikshanks. And, as it was Dickens Ware, the images of his that were chosen were those he had drawn for the stories written by his friend, Charles Dickens. These were done with underglaze painting utilizing natural coloring on the figures with the addition

¹⁶² Louise Purviance, Evan Purviance, and Norris F. Schneider, *Zanesville Art Pottery in Color* (Leon, IA: Mid-America Book Company, 1968), plate 6.

¹⁶³ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 13.

of blue, grey, or green solid colored backgrounds.¹⁶⁴ On the opposite side of these pieces was a raised disk that featured the title of the story and the name of the character who was portrayed. In rare examples there is a second disk featuring a cameo of Charles Dickens. This line was not met with anywhere near the success of the second line and was quickly discontinued, making it the rarest of the three Dickens lines.¹⁶⁵

The last Weller line that could be characterized as art pottery was Etna, produced in 1906 (Figure 49). The style is very similar to the third line of Dickens with the low relief and underglaze painting technique. It is different, though, in coloring and design as it is essentially just Eocean but in relief. Etna uses a similar color palette to Eocean, with grays and dark pinks, and also typically displays floral designs, although occasionally other designs like grapes appear. The line shows Weller's transition from hand crafted art to industrial assemblage. Both Etna and Dickens Third line were created with molds rather than each piece being hand sculpted. This was the beginning of the end for art pottery at Weller because the only decoration done by hand was the painting, and even that was beginning to get simpler.¹⁶⁶ The end of this line marks the end of Weller as an art pottery and also the fading of the movement as a whole. Weller was one of many potteries to stop producing true art pottery, replacing hand-sculpture with molded and patterned pieces by the early nineteen-teens.

Rookwood's matte glazed pieces from 1898 through 1915, begun after Storer's departure from Rookwood, show the company's attempt to produce forms with reliefs and carvings. The Arts and Crafts Movement, at the time, was moving steadily away

¹⁶⁴ Schiffer, *Weller, Roseville, & Related*, 16.

¹⁶⁵ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 42.

¹⁶⁶ Huxford, *The Collectors Encyclopedia of Weller Pottery*, 14.

from the organic complexities of Victorian style and entering a more modern age with simplicity in form, color, and decoration. In response, Rookwood's Incised Matte line (Figure 35) and Modeled Matte line (Figure 36) used an opaque glaze that required all decoration to occur through modeling and carving. Unlike Weller, Rookwood maintained their art identification and never produced the pieces in molds and held on to their handcrafting ideals.¹⁶⁷

The Incised Matte line was simple and typically decorated with geometric designs. This line was inexpensive to make and could be produced quickly due to its simplicity. The pieces could also be made using patterns by less skilled artists than those who were typically employed by Rookwood. This line was used primarily to permit the company to produce items to turn a profit while supporting their other, more expensive, lines.¹⁶⁸ Modeled Matte pieces were much more skillfully done and maintained Rookwood's artistic quality, particularly in the works produced by artist Anna Valentien, who was the wife of Albert Valentien, the first hired artist in 1881. She was an excellent sculptor and had achieved critical recognition for her skill.¹⁶⁹ Anna Valentien was intent on making sculpture a successful Rookwood type; this, sadly, was unsuccessful as consumers had come to expect underglazed flowers and that was mostly what they wanted. Her pieces were still recognized as beautiful and impressive works and she was one of the few artists not interested in painting. Arguably she was the most skilled

¹⁶⁷ Nancy E. Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry: Women, Culture, and Commerce, 1880-1913* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2001), 86.

¹⁶⁸ Perry, *American Art Pottery*, 38.

¹⁶⁹ Owen, *Rookwood and the Art Industry*, 98.

sculptor at Rookwood.¹⁷⁰ A punch bowl by the artist from 1900 is a perfect example of modeled mat glaze as well as her skill (Figure 36). The piece shows her treatment of female forms as though they are waves in the water; the figures are beautiful, graceful, simple, and make the bowl quite elegant.

Roseville treated the decoration under their 1905 Rozane Mongol (Figure 38) and Rozane Egypto (Figure 39) glazes in a similar fashion to Rookwood's matte glazes. Both Mongol and Egypto were thick glazes which were intended to focus the viewer's attention on the richness or uniqueness of the single color. Thus, painting under or over the glaze could damage the effect, although occasionally Mongol also was produced with silver overlay.¹⁷¹ To solve this, like Rookwood's Modeled Matte, Roseville decorated over molded or sculpted reliefs. Mongol pieces rarely have designs under the glaze and when they do they are all in low relief. The reliefs do not distract from the glaze but just demonstrate how it adheres to a changing surface. Egypto, on the other hand, is typically found on vessels decorated with both high and low reliefs, depending on the piece. These are meant to emulate Egyptian antiques while the deep green glaze softens and ages the forms underneath it, creating a distinctive effect.¹⁷²

The use of three dimensional elements continued the growth of art pottery that was first established with the use of underglaze painting. Maria Longworth Nichols Storer demonstrated immense skill in sculpting in the early days of Rookwood with her *Aladdin* vases. Storer's pieces united her underglaze painting with sculpting and created a unique style. A later Rookwood artist, Anna Valentien, showed an even deeper

¹⁷⁰ Herbert Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery* (Tucson: Herbert Peck Books, 1986),143.

¹⁷¹ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 209.

¹⁷² Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States*, 265.

appreciation for the art of sculpting in her works. Valentien emphasized the sculpture by modeling it under solid colored mattes and glazes. Both Storer and Valentien were very skilled and their works were beautifully executed. Though both were critically recognized for their art, neither of their sculptural forms gained much popularity with the public. Weller, Roseville, and KT&K had much more success with their three dimensional lines but the sculptural elements in their lines were more muted than those produced by Rookwood.

The squeeze-bag technique used for Lotus Ware and various lines created by the artist Fredrick Rhead was one of the principal ways that the companies formed different surface levels. This process was very difficult and demanded the attention of highly skilled artists as they created delicate and ornate decoration. Lotus Ware and work by Rhead were incredible and showed an understanding of form, color, and the artists' dexterity. The Japanese artist, Gazo Fudjiyama simplified this technique, making it slightly more marketable, and allowed the natural beauty of the clay form to emerge rather than relying heavily on glazing. The importance of carving and sgraffito to art pottery is evident through two of the most important and loved lines produced at the time. Weller's Second Dickens Ware line and Roseville's Rozane Della Robbia allowed sgraffito to enhance images and create new styles. These art potteries showed the versatility clay can have, even though only vessels were made as clay is a malleable material that can be sculpted or carved to create numerous effects. This versatile medium enables a skilled artist to demonstrate multimedia capabilities, permitting pieces to not just be vessels, but also be seen as works of art.

CONCLUSION

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, pottery companies in Ohio led a movement that altered the perception of pottery from a commonplace functional craft to a recognized fine art form. Art pottery expanded the definition of fine art as artists were able to successfully and harmoniously use both painting and sculpture on the same pieces. Painting and sculpture are the only two media which are always perceived as the fine arts, and during the art pottery period both of these arts were skillfully applied to clay vessels. This movement was exemplified by skilled artists who would often unify both of these art forms on the same piece, creating, in effect, multimedia artwork. American art pottery is specifically pottery made for aesthetic purposes by artists working for a company, as opposed to either individual studio artists or to companies producing attractive pieces using machines and unskilled labor. In order to comprehend the art pottery movement, an appreciation of certain distinctions between industrial pottery and studio artists from art pottery is crucial. Art pottery took the concepts of a single skilled craftsman working in combination with the resources and name or brand of a company to incorporate fine art into the industry and allow for worldwide distribution. Utilizing the company's resources, artists were able to demonstrate the versatility of ceramics and open the world to its aesthetic potential.

The first period of art pottery was from 1880 until 1910; this period also represents its peak of popularity and this was also when Ohio dominated the industry. In the years following 1910 many of the companies stopped producing art pottery as consumers lost interest in the expensive pieces. The companies continued to manufacture aesthetic pieces, but they were no longer hand decorated. The art trend did continue for a short while in the American West where art pottery encountered stylistic changes, but these never enjoyed the attention experienced by the Ohio potteries. There were also potteries focused on Art Deco designs after 1935 that continued to make art pottery on a much smaller scale. And, like Rookwood, they were typically not producing any other type of ceramic product, focusing entirely on the art. But these cannot compete with the fame achieved by Rookwood, Roseville, Weller, and KT&K during the thirty-year period, 1880-1910.

While these Ohio companies produced some of the finest art pottery in the world and helped to establish pottery as an art form, but they ultimately all fell victim to the Great Depression, to war, and to cheaper foreign imports. Of the discussed art pottery producing companies, Knowles, Taylor and Knowles was the first to meet its demise. Sadly, like many other potteries in East Liverpool, they were unable to survive the Great Depression and were forced to terminate operation in 1934. Although their time in the industry was short lived, their Lotus Ware line was able to leave a lasting impact.¹⁷³ Weller was able to survive the Depression long enough to make it to World War II (1941 to 1945), at which time it thrived, as many businesses did at the time. After the war,

¹⁷³ Lois Lehner, *Ohio Pottery and Glass: Marks and Manufacturers* (Des Moines: Wallace-Homestead Book Company, 1978), 48.

Weller encountered an increase in competition from new companies that had appeared due to the heightened demand. Moreover, because of the availability of inexpensive foreign goods, Weller was also unable to continue and closed in 1948.¹⁷⁴ Roseville was able to hold on a little longer since it had always manufactured less costly pieces. But in the end, consumers replaced many Roseville products with plastic items, and thus they could no longer sustain a profit and were forced to close in 1954.¹⁷⁵

The decline in pottery production in Ohio is clearly seen in the history of the city of East Liverpool, where the legacy of the “Crocker City” is now only seen in the handful of its still existing pottery companies. The town is also home to The Museum of Ceramics, one of only a handful of museums in the world dedicated to the medium. Where there were once two hundred companies, there are now fewer than ten potteries still operating in the area today. Two of the remaining survivors are the Hall China Company and Homer Laughlin China Company, both of which were discussed in the first chapter. These companies developed many innovations which were used in art potteries and are still used by potteries around the world today, such as the tunnel kiln and the “once firing process.” Homer Laughlin moved across the river from East Liverpool, into Newell, West Virginia (Figure 1), but is still a part of the East Liverpool community. The company also currently makes one of the most popular dinnerware lines in the United States. Fiesta Ware (Figure 15) relies heavily on simplicity and the ability to mix-and-match. The line started in 1936 and shows how the interests of the American

¹⁷⁴ Lucile Henzke, *American Art Pottery* (Camden, NJ: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1970), 75.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 216.

consumer had shifted away from art pottery, as styles like Fiesta had become more attractive to them.¹⁷⁶

Some art pottery was able to survive past all of these developments. Rookwood continued to make primarily hand decorated ceramics until 1967, but the company did fall victim to the changing interests and tastes of the public. Although they kept trying throughout the 1960s, they were unable to produce a successful new line and production slowed until they finally had to cease all operations.¹⁷⁷ The company was revived in 2004 when a Rookwood collector was able to obtain the company's assets, including glaze formulas, molds, and trademarks, and then rebuilt the company. Today Rookwood is hopefully beginning an ascent to its former glory as it once again sells high quality, artist produced pieces.¹⁷⁸

The art pottery movement had a lasting effect in the United States and the world, as the pottery became a crucial part of not only home decoration but also required décor in hotels and theaters. It encouraged more people to gain proficiency in the art and led to the first ceramics programs in universities in the United States. The very first of these was established by The Ohio State University in 1894. The second was the New York State School of Clayworking and Ceramics at Alfred University in 1900. Both remain top schools for the art and Alfred has long been considered the top school in the country

¹⁷⁶ Sharon and Bob Huxford, *The Collector's Encyclopedia of Fiesta* (Paducah, KY: Collector Books, 1987), 9.

¹⁷⁷ Herbert Peck, *The Book of Rookwood Pottery* (Tucson: Herbert Peck Books, 1986), 133.

¹⁷⁸ Rookwood Pottery, Inc., "About Rookwood," <http://www.rookwood.com/about.php> (accessed February 20, 2012).

for ceramics.¹⁷⁹ Over the following years at the turn of the twentieth century, universities in the country added ceramic departments until it came to be expected that schools with art programs would provide ceramic education as well.

The art pottery revival was started by Rookwood-influenced potters such as Guy Cowan (Figure 50). He was a graduate of the ceramic program at Alfred University and had been born in East Liverpool, the son of a pottery decorator.¹⁸⁰ Cowan began as a studio artist and founded his own company in Cleveland in 1913. Although his company did not last long, ending in 1920, it left a lasting impression on ceramics by encouraging future ceramists.¹⁸¹ Cowan continued to be a studio artist and his art was highly sought after and well regarded. Artists like him were able to exist because of the history of the ceramics from East Liverpool through Rookwood.

Art pottery was only able to succeed because of the prominence first attained by the utilitarian ceramics industry that was centered in Ohio. The state is rich in clay and accessible waterways, making it a perfect place for the mass production of ceramics. It became an attractive place for English potters who transformed the local unrefined clay into popular Rockingham and yellow ware. This trend attracted more attention from potters and helped to populate the area. But it was not until James Bennett founded his pottery in East Liverpool, that Ohioans began to see the potential of their craft. Within fifty years the community of East Liverpool witnessed the birth of more than two hundred pottery companies, including two companies that were in competition to be the

¹⁷⁹ Paul Evans, *Art Pottery of the United States* (New York: Feingold & Lewis Publishing Corp., 1987), 8.

¹⁸⁰ Mark Bassett and Victoria Naumann, *Cowan Pottery and the Cleveland School* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 1997), 11.

¹⁸¹ Henzke, *American Art Pottery*, 294.

largest in the world. It became the only city in the United States to have ever had an economy based entirely on clay. The East Liverpool companies revolutionized ceramic production, making it safer and more efficient. This encouraged other towns throughout Ohio to tap into their clay resources. And it led to the ability of these companies to create art pottery, which helped to launch their further success.

Art pottery began in 1880 when Maria Longworth Nichols Storer formed the Rookwood Company. Rookwood art pottery would encourage dinnerware companies, such as Weller, Roseville, and Knowles, Taylor, and Knowles to begin art production as well. With the exception of Rookwood, these companies were formed out of the East Liverpool mold. Because they successfully applied East Liverpool's development of yellow, Rockingham, and white earthenware they became profitable mass producers of dinnerware and other household ceramics. Each had multiple factories and Weller, like KT&K in East Liverpool, enjoyed a period as the world's largest pottery. The companies were, therefore, more than capable of adapting a factory to produce specifically art pottery, without detracting from their mass production lines. Roseville and Weller in particular were able to experiment with clay and chemistry to produce numerous lines of fine art pottery that varied greatly in their physical and aesthetic characteristics. There were many art potteries in operation in Ohio between 1880 and 1910 and others also in the surrounding states. But none matched the success and renown of the lines produced by Rookwood, Weller, Roseville, and KT&K.

From the underglazed flowers of the Rookwood Standard and its imitators, to the detailed Tonalist landscapes of Vellum, these companies demonstrated how painting

could be used to elevate the status of pottery and how the curvature of the vessel could add to the character of the painting. These pieces or ceramic lines were detailed and completed using slip, but the artists were still able to create paintings that had the same look as oil on canvas. Underglaze began with the painting of flowers and some animals, such as birds and fish, but evolved to show detailed portraits and landscapes. The glazes demonstrated the ceramists' deep understanding of chemistry and form as they were able to unify the glazes with the shape of the vessel; and these glazes could be applied to pieces sculpted with reliefs or left smooth. The glazes used would complement whichever style was utilized, forming a harmonious piece of art. Roseville and Weller had some of the more inventive glazes as Roseville rediscovered the Chinese Sang de Bœuf with their Rozane Mongol glaze and Weller had the lusterware Sicardo which remains, to this day, one of the most coveted and valuable art pottery lines.

The marriage of glazing and sculpting on these vessels is among the most impressive feats of the artists. Storer began this with her first Rookwood pieces in which she used relief to embellish the underglaze painting and thus demonstrated her proficiency in both arts. One of Rookwood's later artists, Anna Valentien, demonstrated even more skill in sculpting with her pieces. Instead of using reliefs to add distinctness to the painting, she put the focus on the forms and showed how sculpture can be used to decorate what would have otherwise been just a simple vessel. Both Weller and Roseville had lines where reliefs were the sculptural element and were mainly intended to embellish the glazes, but the pieces have a pleasant balance and the artists showed how sculpture can be used without distracting from the glazes. These two companies also

used sgraffito for a similar purpose, although there was more focus on the textural changes and the excitement of different elevations. The squeeze bag technique employed by KT&K, Roseville, and Weller caused the decoration on pieces to focus on three dimensional elements.

This thesis is the first place where these three cities are discussed at the same time and given equal attention. They all have unique and important contributions to ceramics and art pottery and can be easily written about separately but I wanted to show how they are interconnected. This starts with East Liverpool's beginning of the industry in Ohio led to Zanesville and Cincinnati being able to create art pottery and develop a profitable industry. This thesis shows how Cincinnati was the birthplace of American art pottery and without the art of Rookwood and Louise McLaughlin, KT&K and the companies of Zanesville would not have created their art lines and would have likely only ever created utilitarian pottery. And finally that without the companies of Zanesville, art pottery would not have grown as much as it did, as these companies produced many more pieces and lines than Rookwood, thus gaining the attention of a larger audience.

Art pottery pieces covered a wide range in styles and techniques. For some pieces colors and glazes were used to showcase the sculpture and for others it was the opposite. Sculpture and painting can both have a place on a clay vessel thereby revealing the art that is ceramics. Through chemistry, painting, carving, sculpting, and the initial building of the pieces, the artists could apply multiple levels of skill rather than focus on a single aspect, such as painting. Within the umbrella of a larger company, artists were able to experiment with ideas far more than they would have been able to do alone in a studio.

This thesis has demonstrated how the art pottery companies in Ohio fronted a movement that proved that pottery need not be confined to being viewed as just a simple craft but could be transformed into an exquisite fine art.

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