

Duffner & Kimberly Peony Leaded Glass Lamp.

Despite the company only remaining in business for a little over five years, Duffner & Kimberly quickly earned its reputation as a worthy alternative to Tiffany Studios and its iconic leaded glass lamps. Michaan's Auctions was proud to offer a **Duffner & Kimberly Peony Leaded Glass Lamp** which sold for \$36,900 in our Summer Fine Sale, held on Monday, June 17th.

The production of colored glass has a long history, with Egypt, Phoenicia, and the Romans being particularly adept artisans in the ancient world. The popularity of colored glass in Rome would prove essential to its development, as early Christian churches began to incorporate windows

made of sliced alabaster to create a similar effect by 400 CE. This tradition quickly spread, and churches quickly became the preeminent patrons of the burgeoning stained glass industry, commissioning works for cathedrals and other religious items over the next thousand years. These designs spared no expense, featuring painted additions that required the glass to be refired, sometimes multiple times.



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This process, although beautiful and highly detailed, was remarkably expensive and therefore out of reach for all but the wealthiest nobility and the Catholic Church itself. By the Middle Ages, artisans began offering leadlight, or leaded, windows which combined colored glass with simplified patterns while setting aside the time-consuming painting of stained glass works. These works generally incorporate pale or transparent glass, are geometric or otherwise non-pictorial, and are designed to allow more illumination into a room than traditional stained glass. Finally accessible to a wider audience, the windows, and objects produced became very popular, and most towns in Europe had a commercial leadlighter until the outbreak of World War II.

By the mid-19th century, leadlight windows had become a common feature of home design,

especially in the United States and the United Kingdom, a popularity that inspired glassmakers to find additional uses for their skills. In 1893, Louis Comfort Tiffany debuted his leaded lamp design at the Worlds Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which attracted the attention of German state museum officials. These curators were so taken by the exhibition that they worked with Tiffany to export the products to Europe, where they quickly became highly valued, especially following Tiffany's partnerships with French artisans.

This innovation in lighting inspired competing designs from several companies, including Duffner & Kimberly, a company founded in New York during the winter of 1905. The enterprise was a partnership between Oliver Speers Kimberly, an experienced glass artist, and Frank Duffner, a

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businessman with twenty years of experience in lighting. Using a lead came, rather than Tiffany's copper-foil method, the company became a worthy competitor of Tiffany Studios, selling a number of lamps over the following years. Unfortunately, the firm faced a series of bad luck, beginning with the Panic of 1907 and culminating in a factory fire in 1910 that led to its bankruptcy in only 1911.

This stained glass lamp features a conical glass lampshade perched above a bronze base with four sockets. The base has four arching legs attached to a

square cross pedestal, upon which sits an onyx base extending into a velvet-wrapped column with one additional break. The four sockets each include an individual pull-string switch and are attached to an onion dome finial featuring six heart-shaped cutouts. The conical shade is approximately twenty-two inches in diameter and features a red poppy motif on a light blue ground. The stained glass, in deep reds and greens, as well as a sand orange, is held in place with a lead came. This came is manipulated in tight curves around the floral elements and extends in long

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vertical lines in the negative space at the top of the design. The design spreads light in a speckled, organic manner, its deep colors lending a subdued, contemplative air to the surrounding room.

A Duffner & Kimberly Peony Leaded Glass Lamp was sold for \$36,900 in our Summer Fine Sale, held on Monday, June 17th. Our next sale will be Michaan's Auctions July Gallery Auction on Friday, July 19th. This sale features interesting and important pieces from the Furniture & Decorations Department, works from important artists brought to you by the Fine Art Department, and a collection of well-regarded pieces from the Jewelry

Department. The auction is led by a pair of candelabras in the Rococo style by French sculptor Claude Michel, a portfolio of woodcuts by the preeminent Surrealist Salvador Dali, and an impressive Rolex watch in black and gold. Michaan's Auctions catalogs can be viewed on our website: www.michaans.com, LiveAuctioneers, and on Michaan's Live. Bid live in our gallery or remotely via absentee, phone, or online.

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