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The lotus chandelier by Greene and Greene, circa 1908, was made for the Robert R. Blacker house in Pasadena, Calif.



The 1904 linen press was made at Byrdcliffe in a strikingly grained oak with two painted scenic panels.

Rudy Ciccarello And The Two Red Roses Foundation: Preserving The American Arts And Crafts Movement

By FRANCES McQUEENEY-JONES MASCOLO

TARPON SPRINGS, FLA. — Coming to America means many different things to many people. When Rodolfo Ciccarello arrived on its shores from Rome in 1968, his career trajectory appeared to be diplomatic, beginning in Boston at the Italian consulate.

The young man's interests took him elsewhere, however. In Boston he enrolled first at Boston University where he earned a bachelor of arts degree, and then to Northeastern University's School of Pharmacy where he was awarded a bachelor of science degree. From Boston he headed to Florida to a job at the Jack Eckerd Corporation, at the time the largest US pharmacy chain, and for which he developed a home infusion service. Three years later, he founded Florida Infusion Services, the great success of which has brought him numerous distinctions and awards. It has also allowed him to pursue his collecting passion: the American Arts and Crafts Movement.

Ciccarello followed a circuitous route from his youth in Italy, where he attended a classical high school, ran track and field, played volleyball and loved American music and movies, to his role as keeper of a uniquely American art form.

Although he was not new to antiques, having had early exposure in Italy accompanying his parents to auctions and galleries, Ciccarello first came face to face with his ideal in 1997 in a dusty antiques shop near his Florida home. Taken with the line, the architectural form, the construction and the texture of the oak in a bookcase under construction in the shop, he was, as he writes in the introduction to *The American Arts & Crafts Home 1900-1915*, "hooked." The bookcase was a craftsman's reproduction of an example made by Gustav Stickley in the early 1900s.

Ciccarello began acquainting himself with the movement, studying catalogs and books, visiting collections, galleries and auctions around the United States. He was an apt student. His collection began with furniture by such makers as Gustav Stickley, Charles Rohlf, the Roycrofters, the artists of Byrdcliffe and Greene and Greene, but it has grown to include major icons of each art form, ranging from Arts and Crafts pottery to metalwork. He has made it a practice to buy only the best of the best of every aspect of Arts and Crafts work.



The 8-inch-tall earthenware jar was designed and executed by Harriet Coulter Joor and potted by Joseph Fortune Meyer in 1904 at the Newcomb Pottery in New Orleans, La.

It took no time at all for Ciccarello's collecting to exceed the space limitations of most homes, his included, and he moved much of it to a secure warehouse. Around the same time, in 2004, he set up his foundation, the Two Red Roses Foundation (TRRF), which he has endowed with much of his collection. The name is derived from the William Morris poem "Two Red Roses Across the Moon." A leaded glass window made between 1900 and 1910 by an unknown artist illustrates the poem and exemplifies the focus of the foundation.

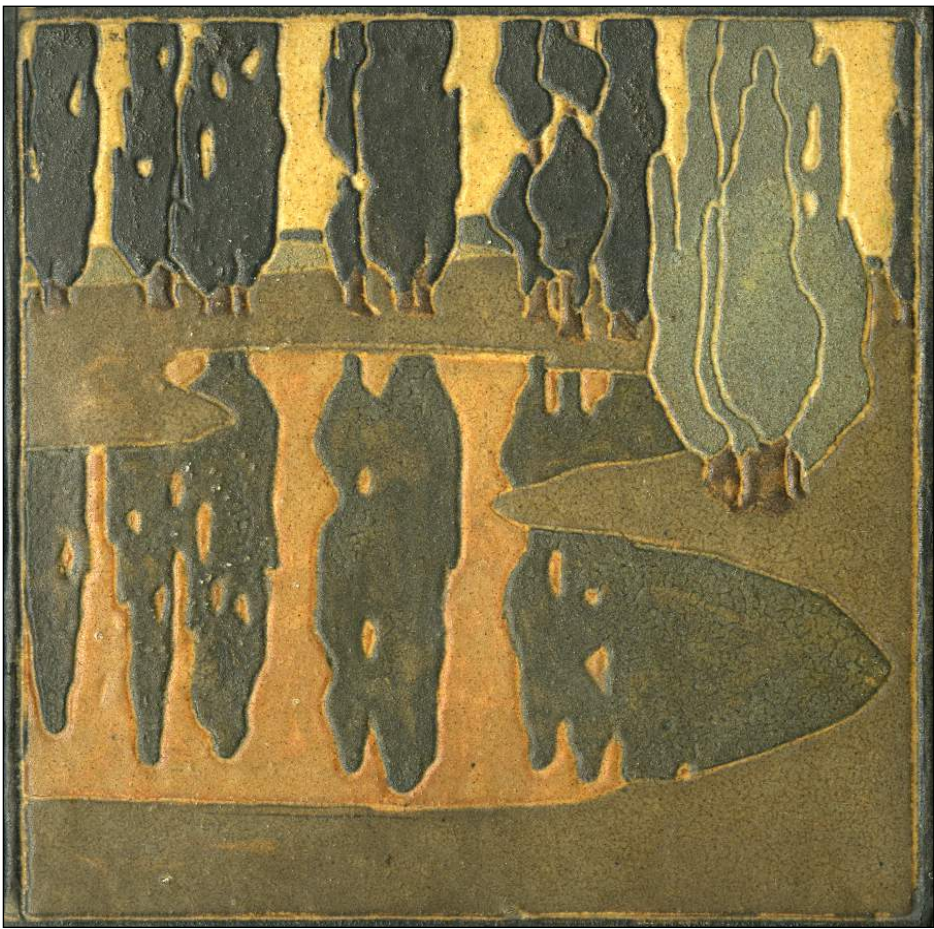
Ciccarello established his foundation with several goals in mind. He recognized the need to safeguard these objects of the Arts and Crafts Movement for future generations through conservation. He is also aware of the importance of making the material available to people with a serious interest in Arts and Crafts objects. In addition, Ciccarello is interested in furthering study and research of the objects. Finally, he has charged the foundation with the task of finding the collection a permanent home in Tampa.

A museum is in the planning stages; the search for a site is underway. Ciccarello's goal is to be able to mount a permanent exhibition of the entire collection to illustrate its exceptional depth and range. Galleries in the museum will allow the display of objects on loan from institutions and private collections.

The Two Red Roses Foundation encompasses more than 1,000 of the best examples of the Arts and Crafts Movement: furniture, lighting, tiles and architectural faience, metal work, woodblocks, pottery and fine art, even picture frames. Over the course of its 14 years, the foundation has occasionally made the news with the acquisition of major pieces, usually the best of the best, for the collection.

There is the spectacular set of 1,200 matte-glazed Grueby tiles rescued from a Cleveland, Ohio, bathroom that was undergoing renovations. Decorated with pond lilies and irises, Ciccarello acquired them with the aim of conservation and preservation. The tiles will be reassembled and displayed in the foundation's museum once it is up and running. TRRF is also the owner of a Grueby tile fireplace mantel and surround fireplace, removed from the lobby of a bank in Auburn, Maine. The deep green tiles have as their focal point a carrack, a Fifteenth Century

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A Marblehead Pottery tile was decorated by Arthur E. Baggs with a scene of poplars reflected in a pond.



A Marblehead Pottery tile depicting two cats on a fence facing each other in the moonlight, each with arched back, was marked with initials “NIB.”

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Mediterranean cargo ship signifying commerce and exploration. The fireplace and surround will also be reinstalled in the museum.

TRRF holds some stunning Arts and Crafts furniture. There is, for example, an oak revolving desk with copper hardware from 1901 by designer Charles Rohlfs, erstwhile actor and stove maker, who worked in Buffalo, N.Y., in the early years of the Twentieth Century. There is also a 1900 Rohlfs oak hall chair. Rohlfs’ rich carving and exotic ornamentation with Chinese, medieval and Art Nouveau influences stands in stark contrast to the spare simplicity of the Stickleys — Gustav, Leopold, Albert and John George — and other proponents and practitioners of the form.

Among Ciccarello’s favorite pieces, a difficult choice akin to determining a parent’s favorite child, are a china cabinet and a cupboard, both by Gustav Stickley.

The china cabinet was a custom piece, made in 1901 during Stickley’s experimental period. With a trapezoidal form, the cabinet is one of the few pieces Stickley constructed with miter mullions.

The rare Gustav Stickley cupboard from Allenwood, the Vermont summer “camp” of George Marshall Allen, was known only from a drawing by Gustav Stickley until it surfaced at an auction in 1999. Recognizing the importance of the rare piece, Ciccarello acquired it for the Two Red Roses Foundation. An 80½-inch L&JG Stickley oak tall case clock has a signed copper plated face and brass works.

Two Red Roses also holds one of the largest private collections of Byrdcliffe furniture in the country. One piece, a 1904 oak chiffonier with traces of the original green stain, has dreamy landscape panels painted by Hermann Dudley Murphy. The foundation also holds a Byrdcliffe mahogany cabinet with a wild carrot decoration by Zulma Steele and a Byrdcliffe chiffonier with a carved horse chestnut decoration across the single panel front.

The foundation also retains prime examples of Craftsman Workshops furniture, such as a 1904 Harvey Ellis-designed oak side chair with pewter, copper and exotic wood inlay, a settle designed by Ellis or LaMont Adelbert Warner with the same inlay as the side chair and a sideboard, Model #814, in oak with handsome copper hardware.

An Ellis-designed oak secretary bookcase, 1901–1902, for Craftsman Workshops was made with leaded glass and dramatic iron hardware. Craftsman is also the source of a wrought iron, glass and oak electrolier with four lights, circa 1909–1912, a copper and earthenware chafing dish and several important lanterns.

While the TRRF collection spans only two decades, between 1900 and 1920, there are exceptions. When George Nakashima’s spectacular Arlyn table came to auction, it was too good to pass up. Ciccarello says he took advantage of what he terms “an opportunity of a lifetime to own the piece.” A longtime admirer of Nakashima’s work and his connection to nature, he believes the table to be the artist’s most important piece. The redwood slice table top with



In 2005, Rudy Ciccarello, at left, looks over a rare Byrdcliffe chiffonier that he added to the Two Red Roses Foundation collection, paying a record price at auction for the lot. He is pictured with auctioneer Jim Bakker.



A copper table lamp with a fine patina made by California artist Elizabeth Eaton Burton attests to her interest in botany.



A Karl Kipp handwrought copper fern dish, circa 1912, was made with four panels decorated with mushrooms amid incised grass.



The sublime color woodblock “Summer Clouds” by Margaret Jordan Patterson depicts the area along outer Cape Cod where she spent many summers. The print is said to have been drawn from her 1918 watercolor, “River and Clouds.”

madrone burl, walnut and laurel is the only piece of furniture to survive the fire that destroyed the entire furniture collection Nakashima created for Arlyn, the Princeton, N.J., home of Arthur and Evelyn Krosnick.

Ceramics held by Two Red Roses include the best examples of each of the established makers of the period. In addition to the aforementioned Grueby tiles and a generous selection of sturdy and sculptural Grueby pots, Rookwood, Saturday Evening Girls, Teco, Newcomb and Overbeck and others are represented. Many were featured in “Beauty In Common Things,” a 2008 exhibit of pottery from the foundation collections at the Museum of Fine Arts in St Petersburg, Fla. A favorite is the iconic Frederick Hurten Rhead vase, circa 1915, decorated by the artist with stylized eucalyptus trees. Another Rhead vase was lobed and a stylized lizard is attached.

Innovative and talented Rookwood designer Kataro Shirayamadani developed a process for modeling three-dimensional clay pieces that could then be plated in metal and applied to the vase. He created an arresting vase with an electroplated copper dragon and painted a design of 14 flames emanating from the dragon.

Color woodblock prints from TRRF comprised an entire exhibit in 2008–2009 at the Leepa-Rattner Museum of Art in Tarpon Springs, which had previously mounted the 2006 exhibit “The American Arts and Crafts Home 1900–1915,” a showcase of objects from the foundation.

Prints by Arthur Wesley Dow include the 1916 “The Derelict (The Lost Boat),” from a hardcover book of



The vibrant oil on canvas “Beach at Far Rockaway” by Ohio-born artist Edward Henry Potthast is one of the artist’s most highly regarded works.

poems by Everett Stanley Hubbard of Ipswich, Mass., illustrated with prints by Dow and a number of other prints of Ipswich and the marsh. Gustave Baumann is also represented solidly, as are Frances Hammell Gearhart, Edna Boies Hopkins and Margaret Jordan Patterson.

Devotees can look forward to the Two Red Roses Foundation museum where the more than 1,000 choice art objects of the Arts & Crafts movement will be on view and available for study.

For information, 727-943-2144 or www.tworedroses.com.

Frederick Hurten Rhead gave an earthenware vase, circa 1915, an incised decoration of tall eucalyptus trees inspired by the California landscape, perhaps influenced by Arthur Dow’s work.



A rare Roycroft hammered copper stein.



A rare Gustav Stickley ebonized writing table and chair.