

News Release

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## V&A acquires and conserves rare Wedgwood tea and coffee set from the estate of Karl Lagerfeld

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[vam.ac.uk/collections/wedgwood](http://vam.ac.uk/collections/wedgwood)

[vam.ac.uk/articles/campanula-tea-and-coffee-set-by-paul-follot-for-wedgwood](http://vam.ac.uk/articles/campanula-tea-and-coffee-set-by-paul-follot-for-wedgwood)



Today the V&A announce that a rare tea and coffee set designed by Paul Follot for Wedgwood and the accompanying set of design drawings has been acquired for the V&A Wedgwood Collection and is now on display in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent. The set was previously owned by Karl Lagerfeld and was acquired from his estate. No other examples of the pattern or even the shape are known to exist.

**Catrin Jones, Chief Curator, V&A Wedgwood Collection said:** “This glamorous art deco set is a rare and unusual example of Paul Follot’s designs for Wedgwood, reflecting the tastes of its collector, fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, known for his love of monochrome as well as his interest in ceramics. These extraordinary pieces and their design drawings fill an important gap in the V&A Wedgwood Collection, and are a wonderful example of the Wedgwood company’s tradition of working with innovative artists to create their designs, and of inspiring tastemakers such as Karl Lagerfeld.”

Paul Follot (1877 – 1941) was a French designer of luxury furniture and decorative art objects. After World War I he became a director of the Pomona Studios for the fashionable Paris department store Le Bon Marché. During the 1930s he was co-director with Serge Chermayeff of Waring & Gillow’s French furniture department. In about 1911, Follot was recommended to Cecil Wedgwood, one of the partners of the Wedgwood company, by French retailer Georges Rouard – himself a champion for artist-craftsmen who ran a luxury goods shop, À la Paix – and completed a number of designs, none of which were manufactured until the early 1920s. Many of these

designs were very labour-intensive for Wedgwood to produce, so were only made in small quantities and are now very rare.

The 'Campanula' tea and coffee set and design drawings represent a very significant contribution to the V&A Wedgwood Collection as only a very small number of Wedgwood products were made in the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles. Among the drawings is a design for an unusual 'Pomona' Queen's ware centrepiece, also crafted by Follot for Wedgwood. The drawings are an important addition to the V&A Wedgwood Collection's archive, offering an insight into the unusually complex design process for this set. They show the journey from concept to production: Follot's note on several of the drawings, 'avant réduction', suggests the scale of the drawings represents the size of the product before the clay shrinks as it is fired in the kiln.

For the tea and coffee set, Follot created four different shapes of cup, each with a complementary saucer shape – a 'Tasse à Café'; a tall 'Tasse à "Chocolat Américaine"' or hot chocolate cup; a wide 'Tasse à Thé', and a smaller coffee cup, alongside a 'Cafetière' for coffee, a 'Petite Théière' or small teapot, a 'Pot à Crème' or milk jug, and a 'Sucrier' or sugar bowl. The 'Campanula' design is distinguished by a scrolling handle and an elaborate long fluted finial surmounted by a fleur-de-lis. The hand-painted decoration features black enamel stripes highlighted with a gilded stripe motif, on a gilded base with a scroll pattern. With only four of each type of cup, the set presumably enabled the user to choose which drink they preferred.

The set was owned by Karl Lagerfeld, the mercurial creative director for Chanel until his death in 2019. Lagerfeld was an insatiable collector for most of his life, with a passion for the elegance of the decorative arts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the modernity of Art Deco to the contemporary designs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century advertising. The set was probably used by the designer as it shows some signs of wear. The V&A's conservation team cleaned the pieces, including the gold decoration which had some tarnishing, and repaired a small crack. One of the lids belonging to the teapot is missing but a project is in early-stage development with the Wedgwood factory to determine whether they could recreate this piece.

The set was acquired thanks to the generosity of several organizations and individuals. It was purchased with the support of the V&A Americas Foundation through the generosity of the A. Alfred Taubman Foundation at the recommendation of William and Ellen Taubman, The Friends of the National Libraries, The Decorative Arts Society 40th Anniversary Fund, and Simon Wedgwood. A legacy gift towards this set was also left by Jacob Holt, a young man who loved art and design – in particular ceramics. When he tragically died at the age of 20, he left an unrestricted percentage of his estate to the V&A, his favorite museum.

The set joins the highlights from the V&A Wedgwood Collection including Josiah Wedgwood I's Portland Vase and First Day's Vases, to modern designs by Keith Murray,

Eric Ravilious and Daisy Makeig-Jones, and is currently on display in the V&A Wedgwood Collection, at the World of Wedgwood, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent.

**– ENDS –**

**Notes to Editors:**

For further PRESS information, please contact Callum Walker on [c.walker@vam.ac.uk](mailto:c.walker@vam.ac.uk) / +44 (0)207 9742 2502 (not for publication). A selection of press images are available to download free of charge from [pressimages.vam.ac.uk](http://pressimages.vam.ac.uk)

**About the V&A:**

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London (V&A) is the world's leading museum of art, design and performance with collections unrivalled in their scope and diversity, spanning 5000 years of human creativity. It was established in 1852 to make works of art available to all and to inspire British designers and manufacturers. Today, its purpose is to champion creative industry, inspire the next generation, and spark everyone's imagination.

**About the V&A Wedgwood Collection:**

The V&A Wedgwood Collection is one of the most important industrial collections in the world and a unique record of over 260 years of British ceramic production. The V&A Wedgwood Collection and UNESCO-recognised archives comprise over 175,000 works of art, ceramics, manuscripts and photographs charting the Wedgwood factory's history, designs and ceramic production. Owned by the V&A following a successful fundraising campaign spearheaded by Art Fund, it is on display at Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, where an imaginative public programme celebrates the diversity, creativity and depth of the collection, within its local context of North Staffordshire, known as The Potteries.