

Created by: Debra C. Argen

## Swedish Silver: Five Centuries of Swedish Silver

[Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America](#) in New York proudly hosts the exquisite exhibit, Five Centuries of Swedish Silver: Treasures from the [Röhsska Museum](#) in Gothenburg, Sweden.

After visiting the Röhsska Museum in Gothenburg, I was delighted to learn that a small part of their collection was coming to New York for an exhibit at Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America. I attended the reception in February 2007, where Mr. Edward P. Gallagher, President of The American-Scandinavian Foundation welcomed guests. The American-Scandinavian Foundation was founded 97 years ago, and Scandinavia House opened 6 years ago.



**E. P. Gallagher, Mrs. E. Welander-Berggren, Mrs. B. Osher**

The exhibition featured five centuries of Swedish silver covering the 17th century to the present. Mrs. Elsebeth Welander-Berggren, Director General of Prins Eugen's Waldemarsudde in Stockholm and Associate Professor of Decorative Arts at the University in Gothenburg, and former Director of the Röhsska Museum of Design and Decorative Arts in Gothenburg, organized the event, and gave an excellent talk on the history of Swedish silver.

Mrs. Welander-Berggren said, "It is a great honor for the museum to be in New York. Sweden has a very strong silver background. The first silversmith in Sweden was in 1298 located outside of Stockholm, and by 1495, there were silversmiths in Stockholm. "

I had the opportunity to speak at length with Mrs. Barbro S. Osher, Consul General of Sweden in San Francisco, who was instrumental in bringing the exhibit for the first time to the United States. Beginning with an exhibition in San Francisco, followed by the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa, Canada, and New York, the Swedish Silver: Five Centuries of Swedish Silver exhibition will continue its travel to Shanghai, China.



The exhibition displays 94 items from the 150 piece collection of silver at the Röhsska Museum, and focuses on the famous silversmiths of the 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, as well as present day silver, shedding light on Gilding, Swedish Baroque, Rococo style, Ceremonial silver, Gustavian style named

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after King Gustaf III, Gothic Revival, Swedish Modern, Contemporary silverware, and form.

Swedish silver bears both German and French influences combined with the unique Swedish approach to silver design. German silversmiths immigrated to Sweden after Sweden became powerful post the Thirty Years War (1618-1648), bringing their elaborate design ideas with them, and the 18th century brought French influences.

An excellent example of combining form and function, was a Three-Legged Pan and Cover circa 1680, bearing the Maker's Mark of Johan Nützel, Master Silversmith and Goldsmith in Stockholm, 6.2" height (16 cm) made with parcel gilt silver. The cover features three round pegs and could be turned over and used as a dish. An interesting note is that in 1689, Johan Nützel was given the prestigious title of goldsmith to Sweden's Queen Mother, Hedvig Eleonora.

The Document Casket circa 1690 bears the Maker's mark of Arvid Falck, Master Silversmith in Stockholm, 3.15" height (8 cm), 13.97" (35.5 cm) width, is ornately decorated with laurel festoons on the body and the figure of Fortuna on the cover, and would be used for ladies gloves or jewelry was also of particular interest.



A teapot circa 1768 made in the Baroque style by John Christoffer Jungmarker, Master Silversmith, Gothenburg, was definitely unique with two spouts. The silver teapot is 10.12" (25.7 cm), and has a wood and silver handle, and flower finial.

The collection shows how contemporary historical Swedish silver can be, as demonstrated in the coffeepot from the 1740s by Master Silversmith George Erik Wendt in Gothenburg. The coffeepot is 11.02" height (28 cm), silver in a pear-shape design on three supports with a handle of black stained birch. Looking at a coffee service by Wiwen Nilsson made in 1970, in Lund, Sweden, there is a similar shape of the coffee spout. Wiwen Nilsson, son of silversmith Anders Nilssen, studied in Paris, worked in the studio of Georg Jensen in Copenhagen, and later had his own workshop.



A pair of Salt Cellars by Master Silversmith Bernhard Halck Halmstead made in 1761 in the Rococo style, have a swirl pattern that would look perfectly at home in a contemporary setting. The saltcellars are 1.3" (3.3 cm) height, made with parcel gilt silver, oval with twisted ridges. Swedish design of the Rococo period is much more restrained than French designs of this period.

Other examples of Swedish Rococo style were the 1768 Cream Boat by John Christoffer, 7.72" (19.6 cm) length, made with parcel-gilt silver, body with floral festoons, and a Gravy Boat from 1775 by Master silversmith Hobert Scharén of Vadstena, 9.3" (23.6 cm) length, silver, chased around the base with flowers, floral and leaf supports.

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The Gothic Revival Drinking Horn and Cover from 1886, made by Master Silversmith Carl Fredrik Carlman, Stockholm, 12.95" height (33 cm) made with silver, parcel gilt and enamel, in the shape of a cornucopia, and decorated with figures, crests, and castles was very interesting.



The collection included a cocktail shaker from 1937-1938 made by Count Sigvard Bernadotte who was a famous designer for Georg Jensen in Copenhagen, Denmark. An interesting note is that Count Sigvard Bernadotte, the second son of King Gustaf VI Adolf and Princess Margaret of Connaught, married a commoner in 1934 and lost his title of Prince. The cocktail shaker is 6.8" height, (17 cm) silver, with a cylindrical body with engraved geometric design that would look fabulous on my drinks table although I do not think that the Rösshka Museum would be willing to part with it.

If you are interested in silver and design, do not miss this exceptional exhibit from February 14, 2007 - May 26, 2007 at Scandinavia House: The Nordic Center in America.

The exhibition was made possible in part by The Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, Volvo Group North America, Mrs. Ruth Perkins, the Consulate General of Sweden in New York, Christina Lang Assael, Ambassador and Mrs. Lyndon L. Olson, and John L. Loeb, Jr. Foundation.

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Scandinavia House is open from Tuesday - Saturday, 12:00 pm - 6:00 pm. A nominal admission fee is charged to visit the Gallery.

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