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This publication records the exhibition *The Multifaceted Mr. Morris*, which was mounted in conjunction with a conference, "Useful & Beautiful: The Transatlantic Arts of William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites," held at the University of Delaware, the Delaware Art Museum, and Winterthur Museum & Country Estate in October 2010. Organized with the assistance of the William Morris Society in the United States, "Useful & Beautiful" focused on the multitude of transatlantic exchanges that involved Morris, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the Arts and Crafts and Aesthetic movements of the late nineteenth century. Drawn from the collections of both Mark Samuels Lasner and the University of Delaware Library's Special Collections Department, *The Multifaceted Mr. Morris* complemented *London Bound: American Writers in Britain, 1870–1916*, on display in the Library's Special Collections Gallery from 24 August to 17 December 2010.

While the conference largely focused on Morris as an influence on Americans, *The Multifaceted Mr. Morris* redirected attention towards the man himself. Seeing Morris in his roles as poet, artist, designer, typographer, translator, and political activist, the exhibition illuminated the personal passions that anchored his almost unparalleled achievements as one of the protean figures of the Victorian period.

Morris's presence looms equally large in the life of the collector Mark Samuels Lasner and in the collection to which he has dedicated himself. Indeed, Samuels Lasner came to know about Morris in an astonishing way. "It was," he explains, "a mere chance that brought me to know someone who actually knew Morris, a survivor from late Victorian Britain who lived in—of all places—Black Rock, Connecticut." This was May Bradshaw Hays, a friend of his grandmother. Daughter of the Australian-British folklorist and scholar, Joseph Jacobs, Hays was born in 1880 (she claimed to have been seen in her cradle by George Eliot) and remembered

well the array of visitors to her father's house that included Robert Browning, Edward Burne-Jones and, of course, William Morris. She recalled visiting Kelmscott House when a teenager and reported that Morris's favorite color was green—a heretofore unknown fact.

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It was in no small part because of Hays's colorful reminiscences about these great late Victorians that Samuels Lasner began collecting them. In fact, the collection started with a gift from Hays herself. When Samuels Lasner graduated from Connecticut College in 1974, the ninety-four-year-old sent him the remnants of a blue-and-white tea set that was William and Jane Morris's wedding gift to her parents, along with a pair of hand-painted fireplace tiles designed by Henry Ryland, originally a present from Edward and Georgiana Burne-Jones.

Since writing an undergraduate thesis about the British influence on the American Arts and Crafts movement, Samuels Lasner has spent nearly forty years gathering presentation copies, letters, manuscripts, photographs, artworks, and ephemera of Morris and his associates, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the writers and artists of the 1890s. From 1989 to 2004, he served as the President of the William Morris Society in the United States. In 1996 he curated (with William S. Peterson) the Grolier Club exhibition, *William Morris: The Collector as Creator*.

William Morris's work and ideas continue to resonate today. Morris wallpapers and textiles are still reproduced and marketed, and his designs influence numerous contemporary products. The publications of the Kelmscott Press are admired by many, disliked by a few, and eagerly collected. There has been renewed academic interest, too, in his poetry and prose romances, with Morris's writings—*News From Nowhere*, in particular—acknowledged as landmarks in the history of Socialist theory and environmentalism.

3 *The Multifaceted Mr. Morris* presented a selection from the Samuels Lasner Collection, as limited space allowed for only a representation of Morris's extraordinarily varied career. What is listed here is merely the tip of the iceberg—there is much more, but not everything. The great gap in the collection is, undoubtedly, the lack of a Kelmscott *Chaucer*, an absence keenly felt by the collector, who has tried several times to buy one. Happily, the copy owned by the University of Delaware Library's Special Collections Department was on display elsewhere in the Library for the duration of the conference. For their assistance in making this exhibition and catalogue happen we thank the following friends and colleagues at the University of Delaware: Halina Adams, PhD student in English and Graduate Assistant in the Mark Samuels Lasner Collection; Susan Brynteson, Vice-Provost and May Morris Director of Libraries; Mary Durio, Associate Librarian and Head, Center for Digital Collections, University of Delaware Library; Margaret D. Stetz, Mae and Robert Carter Professor of Women's Studies; and from the Special Collections Department of the University of Delaware Library: Timothy D. Murray, Head; Rebecca Johnson Melvin, Librarian and Coordinator, Manuscripts Unit; Lora Davis, Library Analyst; Shaun Mullen, Library Generalist; and Anita Wellner, Library Assistant. Our greatest gratitude goes, however, to Ray Nichols and Jill Cypher at Lead Graffiti for producing this lovely record of the exhibition.

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