

## **New state museum exhibit celebrates Newcomb Pottery**

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For Newcomb Art Gallery senior curator Sally Main, the recent opening of a Newcomb Pottery exhibit by the Louisiana State Museum gives reason to relive the beauty of the nature-themed artwork and to celebrate its place in the history of women's education.



An okra motif beautifies this 1903-era Newcomb Pottery vase, decorated by Roberta B. Kennon. Joseph Meyer was the potter. (Newcomb Art Collection; Photo by Owen Murphy)

The state museum has opened the yearlong exhibit at [Madame John's Legacy](#), an 18th-century building complex and National Historic Landmark at 632 Dumaine St. in the French Quarter.

Fifty pieces of [Newcomb Pottery](#) are on view, paired with archival photographs

documenting the Pottery's history.

Main worked with exhibition curator, Katie Hall Burlison, to lend objects and images from the Newcomb Art Collection. The exhibition also features a kick wheel used by the Pottery enterprise's decorators in the early to mid 20th century.

Also assisting were Susan Tucker, curator of books and records for the Newcomb Archives and the Vorhoff Library, and the Newcomb College Center for Research on Woman.

Founded in 1896 with a mission to train and employ young women as professional artists, Newcomb Pottery played an important role in the international Arts and Crafts movement. Involved in the creation of ceramics and other crafts, the enterprise continued until the 1940s.

“At first glance, Newcomb's popularity is about aesthetics,” Main says. “These are beautifully crafted, handmade objects that belong to a bygone era. However, the more you know about the Pottery enterprise, its purpose and its accomplishments, I think the public appreciates its place in the history of women's education and the individuality it derived from its geographic location.”

The Pottery “dispelled the impression of the Southern belle archetype and changed it to that of a woman capable of self-reliance and financial independence,” Main says.

The [exhibit](#) ? “The Palm, the Pine, and the Cypress: Newcomb Pottery of New Orleans” ? will remain on view through Sept. 13, 2013. Admission is free of charge. Exhibit hours are 10 a.m. until 4:30 p.m., Tuesday through Sunday.