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VF. Glass production
France - 1939

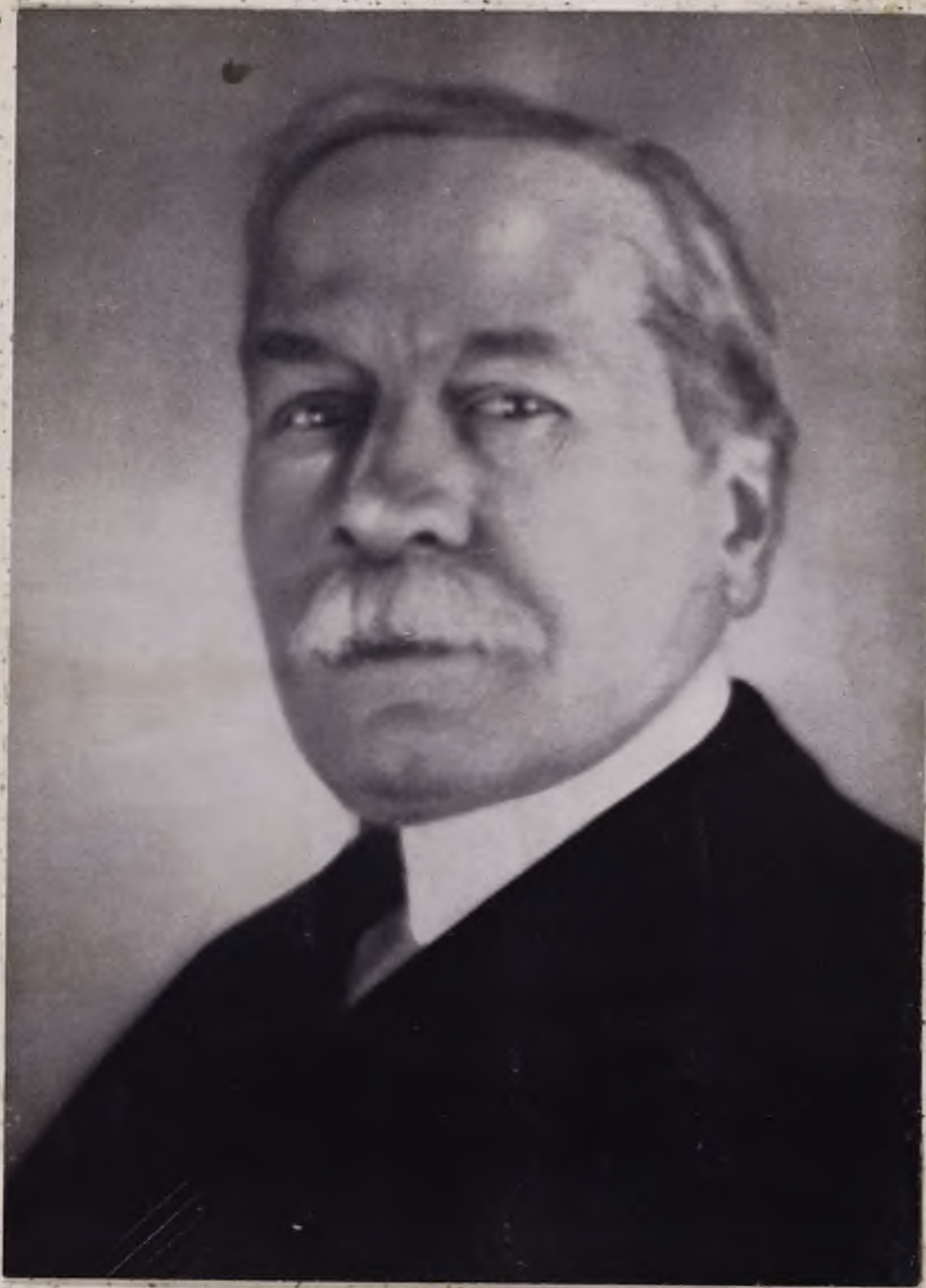


RENÉ

LALIQUE

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SCULPTOR IN GLASS



50269

Corning
Museum of Glass

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Altman has the honor to present a unique exhibition of the masterpieces in glass, wrought by the great French artist, René Lalique. This is the first time such an exhibit has been shown in America . . . it is the most comprehensive showing of Lalique glass ever opened to the public. The exhibition includes:

- a) the collection of decorative glass shown in the Pavillon de Marsan in the Louvre Museum in Paris in 1933.
- b) architectural glass: doors, mantels, wainscoting, balustrades, fountains.
- c) ecclesiastical glass: altars, crucifixes, figures, madonnas.
- d) new designs in decorative objects: crystal bowls, vases, stemware, created expressly for this exhibit.

Altman takes particular pride in showing and offering to the public decorative glass of this character, never before presented for sale.



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SHIP SAILS FOR AMERICA. The year is 1935 . . .

and the ship is the S. S. Normandie, the great luxury liner of the

Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, sponsored by the French gov-

ernment. Into the building of this ship has gone the ingenuity and

imagination of the greatest modern artists and designers of France.

You stand at the entrance of the main dining hall . . . your world

has changed to glass. As far as the eye can reach, you are surrounded

by the sheer beauty of exquisite design in crystal. This dining hall

has been created by one of the great modern artists . . . René Lalique,

sculptor in glass.

René Lalique was born in the little village of Ay, in the province of Champagne, in 1865. When he was 3 years old his family moved into Paris where the boy received his education in the Ecole Turgot and in Fontenay-sous-Bois. Even during his schooling, his marked originality in design was apparent . . . and when at the age of 20 he was apprenticed to a jewelry firm, his artistic ability won him first prizes for his drawings and sculpture. The individuality of his sketches and work with plastics brought him to the attention of the firm of Petit-fils, Paris jewelers. He was engaged for their designing department to execute special orders. Later he joined the firm of Chez de Stape, of the Place Gallon, then the leading de luxe jewelers of the world. Up to this time his work had consisted of creating settings in metals for precious stones. Now he experimented with enamel as backgrounds for precious stones and achieved effects which revolutionized the jewelry industry. Heretofore, jewelry had been a static art . . . now Lalique conceived the idea of suiting a

particular gem, a particular mounting to the personality of its wearer. At 30 he broke away from his firm to become a free-lancer in design. In his own studio at 3 Rue Therese he planned exquisite mountings for such jewelers as Boucheron . . . and Cartier . . . and in 1890 he gave his first exhibition as an independent jeweler in the Salon des Artistes Francaises. This was his heyday as a jewelry designer . . . royalty came flocking to him for personalized designs. He had become famous . . . his artistry was the vogue. From 1890 to 1904 he worked independently, creating all of his designs, executing them himself in every detail.

It was in 1906 that René Lalique opened his first shop at 24 Place Vendome. Here he made an important discovery that was to mean much to his future career. Until now tortoise shell had been used in jewelry . . . Lalique found the irregularity in color distasteful to his artistic sense. He sought a new medium which would take its place. Perhaps there were other materials in which the grace and

intricacy of his designs could be expressed. He experimented with horn, sculpturing it, combining it with jewels. It met with immediate success. It is interesting to note that as a result of this work in this medium, horn became a luxury in Paris . . . and due to his adaptations, it became more than twice as valuable as the precious tortoise shell.

Throughout the past years, he had been seeking for a medium in which he could not only bring his art to its height, but at the same time remove it from the luxury class, make it available to a wider public. Experimenting constantly, working feverishly, Lalique tried every medium which came to hand. Metals, shell, horn, various woods . . . he had used them all with conspicuous success. Still he was not satisfied.

Finally on one occasion he was executing a new design . . . a buckle of gold set with gem-like rock crystal. Out of this came the idea which charted his future . . . pure crystal glass. Here was the me-

dium he sought . . . the material he knew so well, for had he not
for years worked with enamels . . . glass transformed with oxides?
Scientifically he knew the composition: sand, potash, lead . . . he
understood it, he recognized its possibilities, he foresaw its artistic
future in the hands of the master designer. In his own kitchen he
made his first experiment with pure glass . . . a tiny tear bottle, a
droplike gem. It was moulded in a simple cooking pan over the fire in
his stove in the Rue Therese. He piled on the wood, hotter grew the
flame . . . in that fire not just a treasured work of art was formed,
a great artistic idea was coming to life. In the intense heat, Lalique
worked, alone, oblivious to his surroundings. Suddenly he became
aware of crackling timber. His studio was afire, his experiment
was in danger. While his landlord rushed to put out the fire, Lalique
saved his original experiment in glass.

Because of this fire his landlord ordered him out. Lalique then de-
cided he must have an atelier of his own. Immediately he set out to

build it at 40 Cour Albert Ier. Scientist, artist, designer, he now became architect as well. He drew the plans and supervised in every detail the building of this salon, now famous for its lasting beauty. Its door of sculptured glass was his first architectural glass design. His fame as a designer of glass came overnight. His reputation as a craftsman in intricate design drew the attention of the young but farsighted perfumer, Coty, who came to Lalique to ask his assistance in designing a label in paper for the bottle of his perfume known as L'Effleurt. On his own initiative, Lalique designed this label in glass . . . a new triumph of artistry, a new step toward fame for both Lalique and Coty. Because of the success of this bottle, Lalique glass became famous. In 1919 he acquired his present glass works at Wingen-sur-Moder in Alsace-Lorraine. Glass objects created here are now on view in practically every museum in the world. The man who started as a jeweler's apprentice had become artist, designer, sculptor, architect, scientist and captain of industry.

In the Salon des Artistes Decorateurs in 1922, the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in 1925, the Lalique exhibits proved to the world the beauty of craftsmanship in glass. In recognition of his standing, the French Government, in 1933 invited him to give an exhibition of his work at the Pavillon de Marsan in the Louvre. This was a unique honor, never before nor since extended to any living artist. For a year this exhibit was open to the public.

This year, the S. S. Normandie comes to America on its maiden voyage with tangible evidence of Lalique's life work. It brings as part of its cargo, a priceless exhibit of Lalique glass so that the American public may have the opportunity to learn at first hand of the imagination, the skill, the originality of René Lalique, the artistry which has never been successfully imitated . . . the ability which places him with Bernard Palissy, with Benvenuto Cellini among the great craftsmen of all time.

B. ALTMAN & CO.

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