



SAINT-NICAISE du CHEMIN-VERT

René-Jules LALIQUE

Master-glazier (1860-1945)



A brilliant jeweller and grand master of glassmaking, René LALIQUE is considered one of the great designers of Art nouveau for his jewels and of Art Deco for his glass works.

René Jules LALIQUE (1860-1945), born in Ay-en-Champagne (Marne) died in Paris.

C. 1894, (inspired by MORRIS et RUSKIN) he was the proponent of the naturalist movement in his jewellery creations. The 3Fs (Flora, Fauna, Femininity) inspired René LALIQUE in his ornamentation. He revitalized jewellery in an unexpected way by associating gold and gems with material hitherto seldom used, such as horn and ivory. He rehabilitated semi-precious gems, exalted enamel and enhanced glass. He can be regarded as the inventor of the modern jewel, in which beauty prevails over luxury.

The magic lure of glass

René LALIQUE's first experiments in the field of glass dated back to the 1890s. Jewellery making processes had made him familiar with glazes. It was probably thanks to enamel that he found out about glass (enamel with relief surfaces manufacturing patent).

C. 1902, René LALIQUE began to show interest in the decorative potential of glass at an architectural scale. He invented two glass panel doors for his mansion house by assembling thick glass sheets, cast in low relief, with spruce and athletes' patterns.

From craftsmanship to industry

His encounter with perfumer COTY was the start of mass production of small bottles and glass artefacts. Having mastered the process in 1912, he decided to pursue his new passion, glass, and the same year, he exhibited his last jewellery. He gave up multilayer glass and various colours to concentrate on the natural qualities of glass: clearness and transparency.

He moulded, pressed, engraved, and mounted glass using the 'lost wax' method or by blowing in a blow mould. He created aesthetic effects, such as frosted glass and opalescent glass. An unrivalled technician, he filed fifteen patents between 1909 and 1936, testifying to his incredible inventiveness (manufacturing process, mounting and closing systems...). So his works reached the pinnacle of luxury and aesthetics.



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Georges CHARBONNEAUX, a friend of René LALIQUÉ, particularly admired and collected his works.

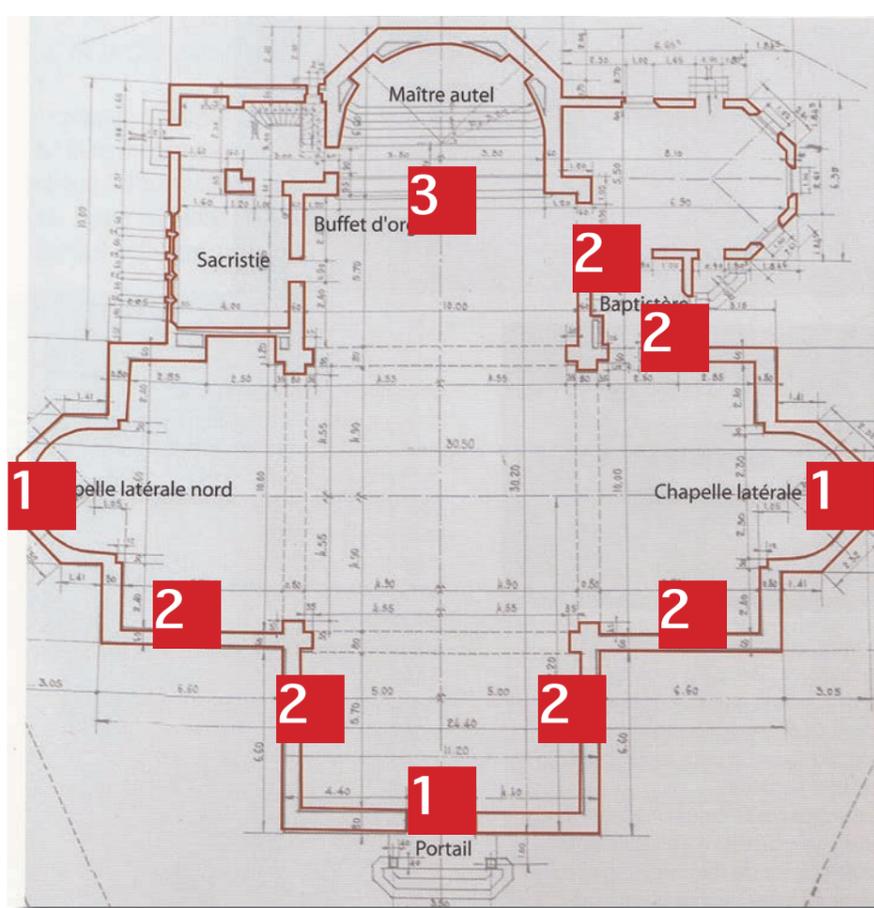
The execution of the glass panels was a first step in the artist's work, enabling him to engage in the religious field.

The architect AUBURTIN in 1923 had planned glass panels including a central cross motif to diffuse radiating light. The angel pattern, suggested by LALIQUÉ, was possibly a tribute to the famous smiling angel of the cathedral, thus linking the two buildings.

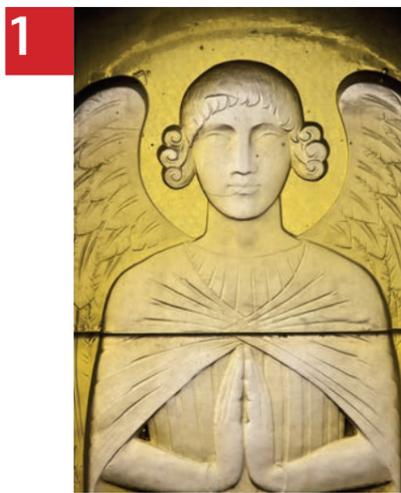
The complete glass panels, manufactured with the moulded-pressed process in the Wingen-sur-Moder plant in Alsace, were put into place in 1926.

René LALIQUÉ executed two groups, each consisting respectively of 5 and 3 angels.

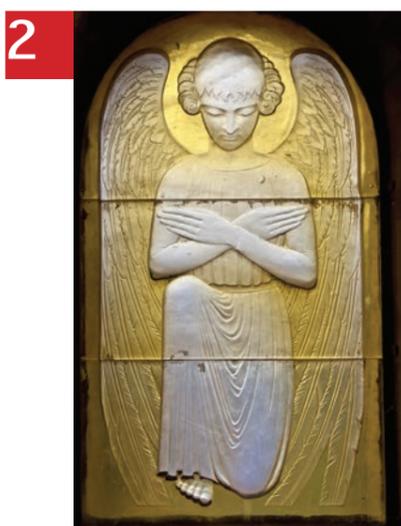
- The 5 angels' group decorates the large windows in the transept chapels and the entrance.
- The 3 angels' group decorates the top of the sidewalls.



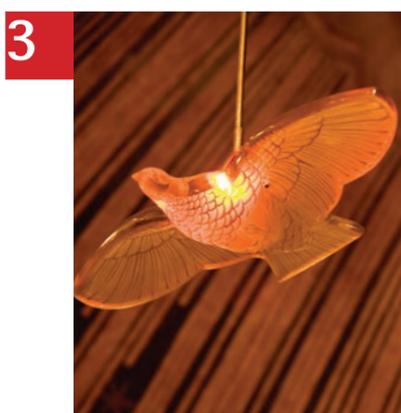
Place of René LALIQUÉ's work



Five times duplicated, the same angel (5.2 by 2 ft.) forms the whole of each large glass panel. In an upright position, with a hieratic attitude, the angel joins his hands and his curly hair is reminiscent of the smiling angel in the cathedral. Made of four glass blocks set without spacers, these 1.5-inch thick glass panels are moulded with hollows on the inside and smooth on the outside.



The five small glass panels are made of groups of 3 angels (42 by 23 inches). The central figure, kneeling down with hands crossed on the chest, head down, is associated with two angels, on one knee, with praying hands.



In 1932, LALIQUÉ executed the dove holding the tabernacle light in the choir.

Light in the church is given by cruciform lamps in frosted glass, moulded by René LALIQUÉ on a design made by architect AUBURTIN.

