

Rene Lalique - Victoire; Spirit of the Wind



Rene Lalique was an *Art Deco* / *Art Nouveau* artist, widely known for his glass works and jewellery. As artists began to draw inspiration from Nature and other cultures, moving away from the classical traditions, **Lalique** enters a new realm of Art, which was very unique, Car Mascots. **Lalique** was individual in his forms and styles in which he incorporated new materials with more colour, but also maintained a certain extravagance. He was inspired by many things in his works, however the natural influences seen in his works give a clear sense of his main inspiration, which can be identified in the Spirit of the Wind. As he progressed as an artist, **Lalique's** name became synonymous with creative beauty and equality.

Lalique's, Spirit of the Wind, is a press-moulded glass, Car Mascot. Lalique designed this glass figurehead as a symbol of speed on a vehicle. It was designed in 1925, cars had only been around for a short period of time, however in typical *Art Deco* fashion, geometric like eccentricities were added to objects to increase their extravagance. The wind blown hair with strong geometric lines demonstrates this idea of speed that is intended by **Lalique**. All of his Car Mascots went even further in terms of their extravagance. Each of these mascots had bases with special wiring and lighting inside, which would light up as the car was driven in multiple colours, some even got brighter as the car was driven faster.

As he uses a press-moulded cast glass, Lalique is able to craft the glass into the desired shape. This is created through glass casting, specifically kiln casting which was the norm during the *Art Deco* period. Forming the mould involves creating a mould from wax, which once invested will form a new mould. This new heat resistant mould is now placed in the kiln and filled with glass fragments or lumps of the desired colour and then fired in the kiln. Once the glass becomes liquid it fills the mould encasing. This enables **Lalique** to fine tune the details of the face and the lines and curves of the figure. By furthering the finesse of the Mascot, **Lalique** increases this idea of extravagance and odd perfection, which was a theme of many *Art Deco* artists and is what made many very successful under the media and processes which were available to them at the time.

Lalique's design is uniquely *Art Deco*. The way in which he subtly introduces a natural influence by using the head figure of a woman and the way in which the hair is formed to represent the speed of the car, clearly displays the influence of the styles of the period and the materials and process which **Lalique** was able to engage into his glass designs. Not only does this design emphasise the extravagance of itself with the extended hair design and mouth agape, but it highlights the bold techniques in which **Lalique** is able to portray his ideas in the style of the period. Very few were ever made and at present day they sell for large sums.

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