



'Le Verre Francais' vase

Cristallerie Schneider

Not on display

Title/Description: 'Le Verre Francais' vase

Artist/Maker: Cristallerie Schneider (Manufacturer)

Born: 1925 c.

Measurements: h. 197 x w. 80 x w. 80 mm

Inscription: A millefiore cane inclusion is a standard factory mark for the 'Le Verre Francais' factory

Accession Number: 21077

Historic Period: 20th century

Credit Line: Donated by Sir Colin and Lady Anderson, 1978

This vase by Cristallerie Schneider belongs to a range known as 'Le Verre Français' or 'French Glass', patented in 1921. [1] Works that bore this trademark comprised acid-etched cameo glassware decorated with stylised floral patterns in contrasting colours. Produced between 1918 and 1932, Le Verre Français sold in major department stores in Europe and America. [2]

Blow moulded in layers of orange and blue glass, this cylindrical vase is narrow at the base, widening in the upper section to create a rounded shoulder. A thick circular glass foot raises the body of the vase and balances its top-heavy form. Etched with hydrofluoric acid, the vessel's glass ground has been given a matt semi-opaque finish and shows pale mottled orange. Decorative areas, which were kept in reserve and not exposed to the acid, stand out in relief and have been highly polished.

Inspired by plant stems, the vertical patterns have a pleasing asymmetry that prevents the design from becoming overly static. Heart-shaped leaves branch out from the central stem in shades of dark blue graduating to orange. Millefiore cane has been added to the base for decorative effect.

The carving or etching through of fused coloured glass is known as 'cameo glass', after a Roman technique for engraving glass vessels and semi-precious gemstones that was developed in the 1st century. [3] Attracted to the process of antique cameo glass, and inspired by the aesthetics of Qing-dynasty Chinese glass [4], designers of Art Nouveau revived cameo glass with some modifications, choosing to substitute Classical motifs with contemporary botanical designs.

Both brothers, Charles (1881-1952) and Ernest Schneider (1877-1937), worked at Daum in Nancy before purchasing their own glassworks in 1913 in partnership with Henri Wolff. [5] While at Daum, Charles received practical training in glass engraving, decorating and model-making. [6] In 1904, he entered the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts in Paris, where he developed his skill in bronze engraving and painting. [7]

Their first enterprise, Schneider Frères et Wolff at Epinay-sur-Seine, specialised in the production of glass light bulbs, but was forced to close at the outbreak of the First World War. [8] After serving in the war, the brothers reopened the glassworks in 1917, renaming it the Société Anonyme des Verreries Schneider. It was at this point that manufacture shifted to the production of art glass in the Art Nouveau style. In the post-war years, Art Nouveau design continued to appeal to the public and the brothers catered to this popular demand by experimenting with the production of acid-etched cameo glass. [9]

The vase in the Sainsbury Centre Collection was produced in the 1920s, during a period when Art Deco was establishing itself as the international modern style. In the Collection, there are two other examples of Art Deco cameo glass by Cristallerie Schneider (see objects: 21078 and 21085).

Vanessa Tothill, January 2021

[1] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

[2] Amanda Geitner, and Emma Hazell, ed., *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003), p. 143.

[3] Paul Greenhalgh, ed., *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* (London: V&A Publications, 2000) p. 209.

[4] <https://www.britannica.com/art/cameo-glass>

[accessed 16 November 2020]

[5] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

[6] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

[7] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

[8] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

[9] <http://www.artdecoceramicglasslight.com/makers/schneider-charles/schneider-charles-biography>
[21 January 2021]

Further Reading

Amaya, Mario, *Art Nouveau* (London: Dutton Vista, 1966)

Couldrey, Vivienne, *The Art of Louis Comfort Tiffany* (London: Quarto Publishing, 1989)

Geitner, Amanda and Emma Hazell, ed., *The Anderson Collection of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2003)

Greenhalgh, Paul, ed., *Art Nouveau, 1890-1914* (London: V&A Publications, 2000)

Greenhalgh, Paul, ed., *The Nature of Dreams: England and the Formation of Art Nouveau* (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, University of East Anglia, 2020)
