FOSTER & GANE

A rare and exceptional large Art Nouveau soufflé cameo glass plafonnier by Émile Gallé (1846 - 1904)

£48,000

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REF: 5928

Height: 83 cm (32.7")

Diameter: 50 cm (19.7")

Description

The large cameo glass bowl with deep acid etched decoration depicting a squirrel among hazelnut branches. With the original chain and ceiling rose.

Signed Gallé.

France, circa 1925 - 1928

Condition: One screw which attaches the shade holders to the cross-bar replaced. Otherwise in excellent original condition. Wired for the UK and PAT tested

This model was originally designed for the 1925 Exposition Universelle in Paris and went into production the following year. The factory closed in 1931 and it is believed that only a handful of these squirrel lights were ever made. The soufflé technique involved layers of coloured glass being blown into a large steel mould - this allowed for much more dimension on the surface of the glass as opposed to the flat alternatives. The layers were then acid etched away to reveal the colours beneath.

This model illustrated in Gallé Lamps, Alistair Duncan and Georges de Bartha, Antique Collectors' Club, 1998. Pg. 223, Plate 9.192.

Gallé was a prestigious innovator of decorative Art Nouveau glass, who founded the Ecole de Nancy design movement.

He studied philosophy, sculpture, drawing and natural science in Nancy and then Weimar in Germany, before joining the family glass and faience business. In his spare time he became an accomplished botanist and plant collector, a passion reflected in his designs.
Preparing to inherit the family business, at the age of 20 he was apprenticed to the Burgun and Schwerer glass factory in Meisenthal, where he studied the chemistry of glass production. This proved pivotal in the subsequent direction of Gallé glass, with significant advancements in the challenging techniques of both cased and cameo glass.

After fighting in the Franco-Prussian War in 1870/1, he travelled through Europe before es- tablishing his own workshop at the glass factory in Nancy, gradually taking over design and production from his father.

In 1877 he took over the company, expanding the business to include furniture making. By 1899 his worldwide success was considerable, still with the maxim of using only real flowers and plants as design inspiration, thus accounting for his very distinctive, fluid and natural designs.

In 1885 Gallé opened his first shop in Paris, followed by others in Frankfurt and London. He took part in international exhibitions, including the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, at the height of his fame, where he was awarded two Grand Prix, a gold medal and the title of Légion d'honneur.

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It was in the following year that he founded the École de Nancy, with the glassmaker Antonin Daum, furniture maker Louis Majorelle and architect and furniture designer Eugène Vallin as Vice Presidents. Gallé had many distinguished patrons, including the Rothschilds, and his work was, and still is, bought by museums and private collectors throughout the world.

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