



ITINERARIO LIBERTY



Nancy

The Art Nouveau which developed in Nancy was more bound to naturalism and to floral motifs of rococo, reinterpreted by the influence of Japanese art. The most important centre was the Nancy School, founded and directed by Émile Gallé (1846-1904), to sustain and promote the artisan class in the province. In 1874 Gallé took over the direction of the glass workshop of his father, transforming it into one of the most renowned businesses in Europe. His contribution was fundamental not only for Art Nouveau, but for the history of glass art itself. He experimented every kind of technique for creating and decorating, like incision, intaglio, grinding, enamelling and the inclusion of thin metal layers, often combined between themselves with virtuosity, and invented new techniques, amongst which marquetry on glass. He produced pieces in series, the well-known cameo glass, and hand-made pieces, amongst which the marvelous “verrieres parlantes”, engraved vases with incisions about the greatest poets of French literature, like Mallarmé and Baudelaire. The forms and decorative motifs of his production are mainly inspired by the nature of Lorena, or by the art of the near and far East. Gallé also designed some pieces of furniture, in which the structural and decorative elements are made up of floral motifs or animals.

Among the furniture artists the most important was Louis Majorelle (1859-1929) he, too, a member of the Nancy School. Exotic, grained woods often near to elements in gilded bronze, are worked in sculptural forms and are engraved or inlaid with decorative vegetable and animal motifs. The production of the ebony artist Eugène Vallin (1856-1922) was also important.

Returning to glass, one must also remember the Daum brothers, who produced high quality vases and lamps influenced by the decorative motifs of Gallé with whom they worked before founding a company of their own.