

Art Nouveau

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Layout:  
Baseline Co Ltd.  
33 Ter - 33 Bis Mac Dinh Chi St.,  
Star Building; 6th floor  
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ISBN: 978-1-78042-178-0



"One can argue the merits and the future of the new decorative art movement, but there is no denying it currently reigns triumphant over all Europe and in every English-speaking country outside Europe; all it needs now is management, and this is up to men of taste."

– Jean Lahor, Paris 1901



# Chronology

- 1893: Victor Horta builds the Hôtel Tassel in Brussels, which is considered to be the first Art Nouveau building.
- Louis Comfort Tiffany creates a new process for the making of vases and bowls, the "favrite" technique, a handcrafted technic of glass-blowing, that allows numerous effects.
- 1894: Edmond Picard uses the term "Art Nouveau" for the first time in the Belgian revue *L'Art moderne*.
- 1895: Siegfried Bing opens his shop "L'Art Nouveau", 22 rue de Chauchat in Paris.
- 1897: Creation of the "Sezessionstil" by Joseph Hoffmann in Vienna. This movement, which also includes Egon Schiele, Oskar Kokoschka and Koloman Moser, is chaired by Gustav Klimt.
- 1897-1899: Josef Maria Olbrich creates the Secession building in Vienna.



1900: Universal Exposition in Paris. Triumph of Art Nouveau.

René Lalique receives the Grand Prix for jewellery at the Universal Exposition and therefore becomes the most famous Art Nouveau jeweller.

Foundation of the first metropolitan stations designed by Hector Guimard.

1901: Creation of the Alliance des Industries de l'Art, commonly known as the École de Nancy, by the artists Louis Majorelle, the Daum Brothers and Émile Gallé, who will be the first chairman.

1904: Antoni Gaudí creates the Casa Batlló in Barcelona.

1914 -1918: The art world is affected by the world-wide crisis.

Around 1920: Art Nouveau gives way to a new style:  
Art Deco.



## I. The Origins of Art Nouveau

Art Nouveau sprang from a major movement in the decorative arts that first appeared in Western Europe in 1892, but its birth was not quite as spontaneous as is commonly believed. Decorative ornament and furniture underwent many changes between the waning of the Empire Style around 1815 and the 1889 Universal Exposition in Paris celebrating the centennial of the French Revolution. For example, there were distinct revivals of Restoration, Louis-Philippe, and Napoleon III furnishings still on display at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris.

Swans, wall paper design

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Walter Crane, 1875

Gouache and watercolour, 53.1 x 53 cm  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London







Tradition (or rather imitation) played too large a role in the creation of these different period styles for a single trend to emerge and assume a unique mantle. Nevertheless there were some artists during this period that sought to distinguish themselves from their predecessors by expressing their own decorative ideal.

What then did the new decorative art movement stand for in 1900? In France, as elsewhere, it meant that people were tired of the usual repetitive forms and methods, the same old decorative clichés and banalities, the eternal imitation of furniture from the reigns of monarchs

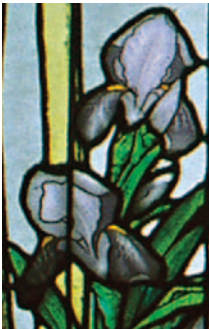
Sarah Bernhardt

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Georges Clairin, 1876  
Oil on canvas, 200 x 250 cm  
Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts  
de la Ville de Paris, Paris







named Louis (Louis XIII to XVI) and furniture from the Renaissance and Gothic periods. This meant that designers finally asserted the art of their own time as their own. Up until 1789 (the end of the *ancien régime*), style had advanced by reign; this era wanted its own style. And (at least outside of France) there was a yearning for something more: no longer to be slave to foreign fashion, taste, and art. It was an urge inherent in the era's awakening nationalism, as each country tried to assert independence in literature and in art.

## Roses and Seagulls

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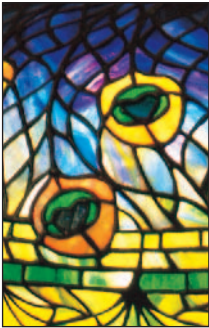
Jacques Gruber

Leaded glass, 404 x 300 cm

Musée de l'École de Nancy, Nancy







In short, everywhere there was a push towards a new art that was neither a servile copy of the past nor an imitation of foreign taste.

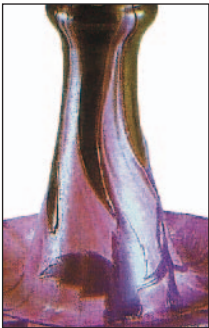
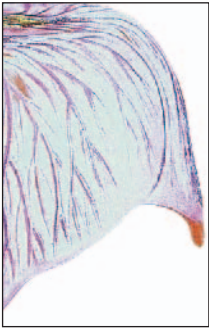
There was also a real need to recreate decorative art, simply because there had been none since the turn of the century. In each preceding era, decorative art had not merely existed; it had flourished gloriously and with delight. In the past, everything from people's clothing and weapons, right down to the slightest domestic object – from andirons, bellows, and chimney backs, to one's drinking cup – were duly decorated: each object had its own ornamentation and finishing touches,

### Peacock Lamp

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Tiffany & Co.  
Glass and bronze  
Private collection





its own elegance and beauty. But the nineteenth century had concerned itself with little other than function; ornament, finishing touches, elegance, and beauty were superfluous. At once both grand and miserable, the nineteenth century was as “deeply divided” as Pascal’s human soul. The century that ended so lamentably in brutal disdain for justice among peoples had opened in complete indifference to decorative beauty and elegance, maintaining for the greater part of one hundred years a singular paralysis when it came to aesthetic feeling and taste.

## Floral Lamp

Émile Gallé

Etched and enameled cameo glass and bronze  
Private collection, Japan





The return of once-abolished aesthetic feeling and taste also helped bring about Art Nouveau. France had come to see through the absurdity of the situation and was demanding imagination from its stucco and fine plaster artists, its decorators, furniture makers, and even architects, asking all these artists to show some creativity and fantasy, a little novelty and authenticity. And so new decoration developed in response to the new needs of new generations.

The definitive trends capable of producing a new art would not materialise until the 1889 Universal Exposition.

### Table Lamp

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Tiffany & Co.  
Private collection







There the English asserted their own taste in furniture, American silversmiths Graham and Augustus Tiffany applied new ornament to items produced by their workshops, and Louis Comfort Tiffany revolutionised the art of stained glass with his glassmaking. An elite corps of French artists and manufacturers exhibited works that likewise showed noticeable progress: Emile Gallé sent furniture of his own design and decoration, as well as coloured glass vases in which he obtained brilliant effects through firing. Clément Massier, Albert Dammouse,

## Peacock Table Lamp

Unsigned

Patinated bronze, glass and enameld glass  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





and Auguste Delaherche exhibited flambé stoneware in new forms and colours, and Henri Vever, Boucheron and Lucien Falize exhibited silver objects and jewellery that showed new refinements. The trend in ornamentation was so advanced that Falize even showed everyday silverware decorated with embossed kitchen herbs.

The examples offered by the 1889 Universal Exposition quickly bore fruit: everything was culminating into a decorative revolution. Free from the prejudice of high art, artists sought new forms of expression. In 1891 the French Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts established a

### Peacock Room from the Frederic Leyland House

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James McNeill Whistler, 1876  
Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.





decorative arts division, which, although negligible in its first year, was significant by the Salon of 1892, when works in pewter by Jules Desbois, Alexandre Charpentier, and Jean Baffier were exhibited for the first time. And the Société des Artistes Français, initially resistant to decorative art, was forced to allow the inclusion of a special section devoted to decorative art objects in the Salon of 1895.

### Vitrine with Artistic Vases

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Émile Gallé

Marquetry and glass

Macklowe Gallery, New York







It was on 22 December 1895 that Siegfried Bing, returning from an assignment in the United States, opened a shop named L'Art Nouveau in his townhouse on rue Chauchat, which Louis Bonnier had adapted to contemporary taste. The rise of Art Nouveau was no less remarkable abroad. In England, Liberty shops, Essex wallpaper, and the workshops of Merton-Abbey and the Kelmscott-Press under the direction of William Morris (to whom Edward Burne-Jones and Walter Crane provided designs) were extremely popular.

### Chair

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Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo, 1882  
Mahogany and leather  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London







The trend even spread to London's Grand Bazaar (Maple & Co), which offered Art Nouveau to its clientele as its own designs were going out of fashion. In Brussels, the first exhibition of La Libre Esthétique opened in February 1894, reserving a large space for decorative displays, and in December of the same year, the Maison d'Art (established in the former townhouse of prominent Belgian lawyer Edmond Picard) opened its doors to buyers in Brussels, gathering under one roof the whole of European decorative art, produced by

Cray

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William Morris, 1884

Printed cotton, 96.5 x 107.9 cm

Victoria & Albert Museum, London





celebrated artists and humble backwater workshops alike. More or less simultaneous movements in Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, and Denmark (including Royal Copenhagen porcelain) had won over the most discriminating collectors well before 1895.

The expression “Art Nouveau” was henceforth part of the contemporary vocabulary, but the two words failed to designate a uniform trend capable of giving birth to a specific style. In reality, Art Nouveau varied by country and prevailing taste.



### Three-Panel Screen

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Josef Hoffmann, 1889-1900  
The Royal Pavilion, Brighton







As we shall see, the revolution started in England, where at the outset it truly was a national movement. Indeed, nationalism and cosmopolitanism are two aspects of the trend that we will discuss. Both are evident and in conflict in the arts, and while both are justifiable trends, they both fail when they become too absolute and exclusive. For example, what would have happened to Japanese art if it had not remained national? And yet Gallé and Tiffany were equally correct to totally break with tradition.

## I Lock My Door Upon Myself

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Fernand Khnopff, 1891  
Oil on canvas, 72 x 140 cm  
Neue Pinakothek, Munich





## England: Cradle of Art Nouveau

In the architecture of its palaces, churches, and homes, England was overrun with the neoclassical style based on Greek, Roman, and Italianate models. Some thought it absurd to reproduce the Latin dome of Rome's Saint Peter's Cathedral in the outline of Saint Paul's Cathedral, its Protestant counterpart in smoky, foggy, London, along with colonnades and pediments after Greece and Rome, and eventually England revolted, happily returning to English art. The revolution occurred thanks to its architects, first to A.W.N. Pugin, who contributed to the design of the Houses of

### Salon de la Rose-Croix

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Carlos Schwabe, 1892  
Poster for the group's first exhibition  
Lithograph, 199 x 80 cm  
Private collection



# SALON

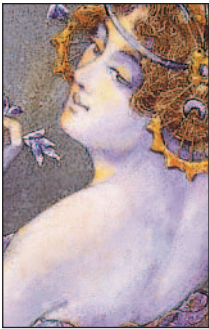
## ROSE-CROIX



EMIL SCHWABE

EXPOSERS A L'OCASEL  
 GALERIE  
**DURAND-RUEL**  
 11, RUE DE LA HARPE  
 OUVRETOIRE 20c  
 VENDREDI 5F  
 SEMAINE 7F  
 DIMANCHE 5F





Parliament, and later to a whole group of mostly Pre-Raphaelite artists who more or less favoured art before the pagan art of the sixteenth century, before the classicising trend so hostile in its origins and its nature to English tradition.

The main proponents of the new decorative art movement were John Ruskin and William Morris: Ruskin, for whom art and beauty were a passionate religion, and Morris, of great heart and mind, by turns and simultaneously an admirable artist and poet, who made so many things and so well, whose wallpapers and fabrics transformed wall decoration (leading him to establish a production house) and who was also the head of his country's Socialist Party.

### Hand Mirror

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Mathilde Augé and Ely Vial  
Bronze and polychromed enamel  
Robert Zehil collection





With Ruskin and Morris among the originators, let's not forget the leaders of the new movement: Philip Webb, architect, and Walter Crane, the period's most creative and appealing decorator, who was capable of exquisite imagination, fantasy, and elegance. Around them and following them arose and was formed a whole generation of amazing designers, illustrators, and decorators who, as in a pantheistic dream, married a wise and charming fugue to a delicate melody of lines composed of decorative caprices of flora and fauna, both animal and human. In their art and technique of ornamentation, tracery, composition, and arabesques, through their cleverness and boundless

### The Three Fiancées

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Jan Toorop, 1893

Black and colour chalk on paper, 78 x 98 cm  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo









ingenuity, the English Art Nouveau designers recalled the exuberant and marvellous master ornamentalists of the Renaissance. No doubt they knew the Renaissance ornamentalists and closely studied them, as they studied the contemporaneous School of Munich, in all the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century engravings that we undervalue today, and in all the Munich school's niello, copper, and woodcrafts. Although they often transposed the work of the past, the English Art Nouveau designers never copied it with a timid and servile hand, but truly infused it with feeling and the joy of new creation. If you need convincing, look at old art magazines, such as *Studio*, *Artist*, or the *Magazine of Art*, where you will find (in issues of

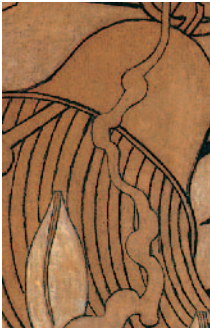
Tassel House, grand hall on main floor

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Victor Horta, 1893  
Brussels

© 2009 - Victor Horta/Droits SOFAM - Belgique





*Studio* especially) designs for decorative bookplates, bindings, and all manner of decoration; note in the competitions sponsored by *Studio* and *South Kensington* what rare talent is revealed among so many artists, including women and young girls. The new wallpapers, fabrics, and prints that transformed our interior decoration may have been created by Morris, Crane, and Charles Voysey as they dreamed primarily of nature, but they were also thinking about the true principles of ornamentation as had been traditionally taught and applied in the Orient and in Europe in the past by authentic master decorators.

### Desire and Satisfaction

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Jan Toorop, 1893  
Pastel on beige paper, 76 x 90 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris







Finally, it was English architects using native ingenuity and artistry who restored the English art of old, revealing the simple charm of English architecture from the Queen Anne period, and from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries in England. Quite appropriately they introduced into this revival of their art – given the similarity between the climates, countries, customs, and a certain common origin – the architectural and decorative forms of Northern Europe, the colourful architecture of the region, where from Flanders to the Baltic, grey stone was subordinate to brick and red tile, whose tonality so complements the particular robust green of the trees, lawns, and meadows of northern prairies.

## Portfolio on its Stand

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Unsigned  
Leather  
Robert Zehil collection







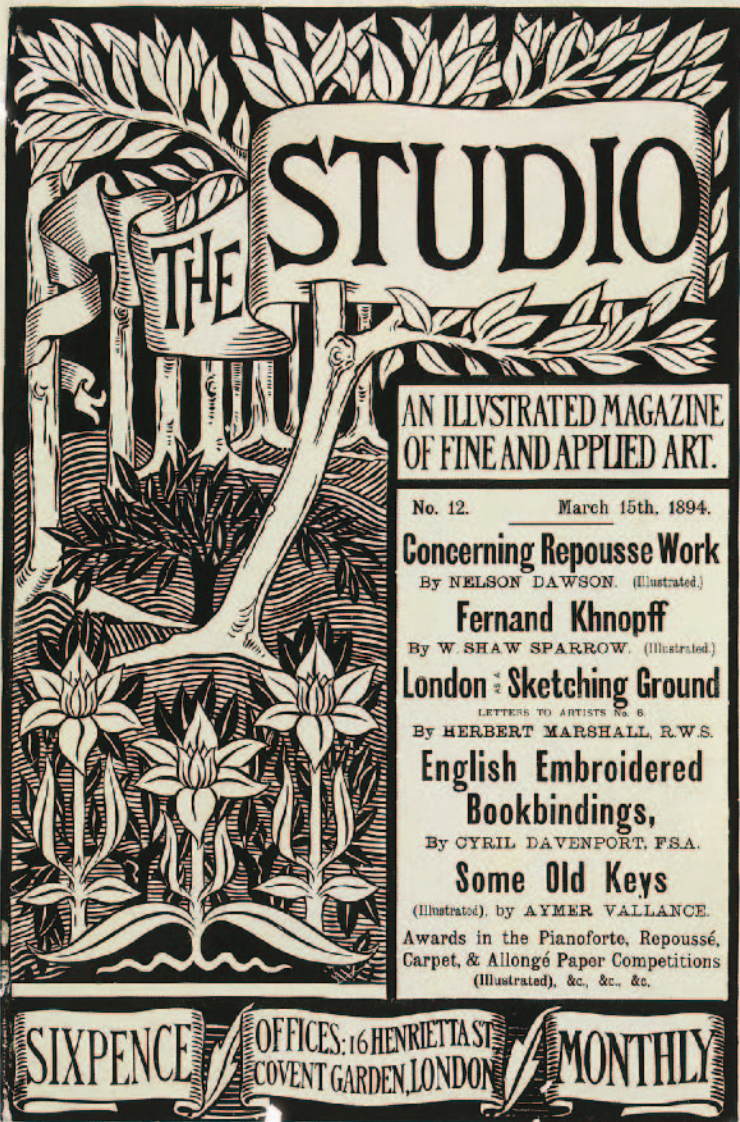
Now, the majority of these architects saw no shame in being both architects and decorators; in fact, achieving perfect harmony between the exterior and the interior decoration of a house by any other means was unfathomable. Inside they sought harmony as well by composing with furnishings and tapestries to create an ensemble of new co-ordinated forms and colours that were soft, subdued, and calm.

## Poster for The Studio

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Aubrey Beardsley, 1893  
Engraving

Victoria & Albert Museum, London



# STUDIO

THE

AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE  
OF FINE AND APPLIED ART.

No. 12. March 15th, 1894.

## Concerning Repousse Work

By NELSON DAWSON. (Illustrated.)

### Fernand Khnopff

By W. SHAW SPARROW. (Illustrated.)

## London Sketching Ground

LETTERS TO ARTISTS No. 6

By HERBERT MARSHALL, R.W.S.

## English Embroidered Bookbindings,

By CYRIL DAVENPORT, F.S.A.

### Some Old Keys

(Illustrated) by AYMER VALLANCE.

Awards in the Pianoforte, Repoussé,  
Carpet, & Allongé Paper Competitions

(Illustrated), &c., &c., &c.

SIXPENCE

OFFICES: 16 HENRIETTA ST  
COVENT GARDEN, LONDON

MONTHLY



Among the most highly respected were Norman Shaw, Thomas Edward Colcutt, and the firm of Ernest George and Harold Ainsworth Peto. These architects restored what had been missing in the genre: the subordination of all the decorative arts to architecture, a subordination without which it would be impossible to create any style.

### The Peacock Skirt

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Aubrey Beardsley, 1893

Drawing from Oscar Wilde's *Salome*

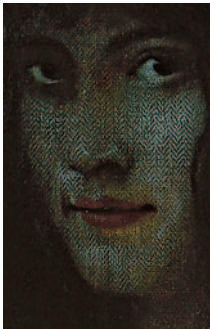
Black ink and pencil on paper

Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge









We certainly owe them such novelties as pastel decor (as in the eighteenth-century domestic interior) and the return of architectural ceramics (probably Oriental in origin), which they had studied and with which they had much greater skill and mastery than anyone else, given their constant contact with it. Thanks to these architects, bright colours like peacock blue and sea green started to replace the dismal greys, browns, and other sad colours that were still being used to make already ugly administrative buildings even more hideous.

## Sin

---

Franz von Stuck, 1893  
Oil on canvas, 95 x 60 cm  
Neue Pinakothek, Munich





The reform of architecture and decorative art in England was therefore national at first. This is not immediately obvious in the work of Morris. However, it was the fundamental inclination of this artist and (whether consciously or not) of those in his orbit, who like him passionately embraced English art and history as their own. It meant a return to profiles, colours, and forms that were no longer Greek, Latin, or Italian: an art that was English rather than classical.

## Soul Searching

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Jan Toorop, 1893

Watercolour, 16.5 x 18 cm  
Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo







Along with wallpaper and tapestries there was truly English furniture being designed that was new and modern, often with superb lines, and English interiors often displayed decorative ensembles with equally superb layouts, configurations and colours.



Finally, throughout England, there was a desire to go back and redo everything from overall structural ornamentation, the house, and furniture, right down to the humblest domestic object. At one point even a hospital was decorated, an idea retained by the English and later adopted in France.

From England, the movement spread to neighbouring Belgium.



### Salon des Cent

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Eugène Grasset, 1894

Print for a colour poster

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection

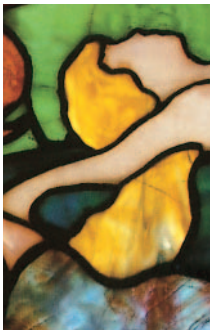






## Belgium: The Flowering of Art Nouveau

Belgium has long recognised the talent of its most famous architect, Victor Horta, along with that of Paul Hankar and Henry van de Velde, and the furniture maker and decorator Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, one of the founders of the Liège School. Art Nouveau owes much to these four artists, who were less conservative than their Flemish counterparts and mostly unassociated with any tradition whatsoever. Horta, Van de Velde, and Hankar introduced novelties to their art that were carefully studied and freely reproduced by foreign architects, which brought



At the New Circus, Father Chrysanthemum

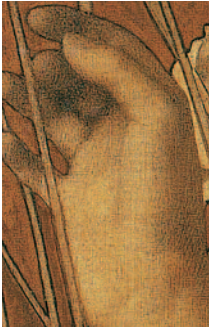
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Tiffany & Co., 1895

Mottled, printed and superimposed glass, 120 x 85 cm  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris







great renown to the Belgians, even though the reproductions were executed with slightly less confidence and a somewhat heavier hand.

These four had a great impact. Unfortunately, much of their impact was due to students and copyists (as is often the case with masters) who were sometimes immoderate. This first became noticeable in relation to Horta and Hankar, even though Horta and Hankar had initially employed their decorative vocabulary of flexible lines, undulating like ribbons of algae or broken and coiling like the linear caprices of ancient ornamentalists, with restraint, distributing it with precision and in moderation. Among imitators,

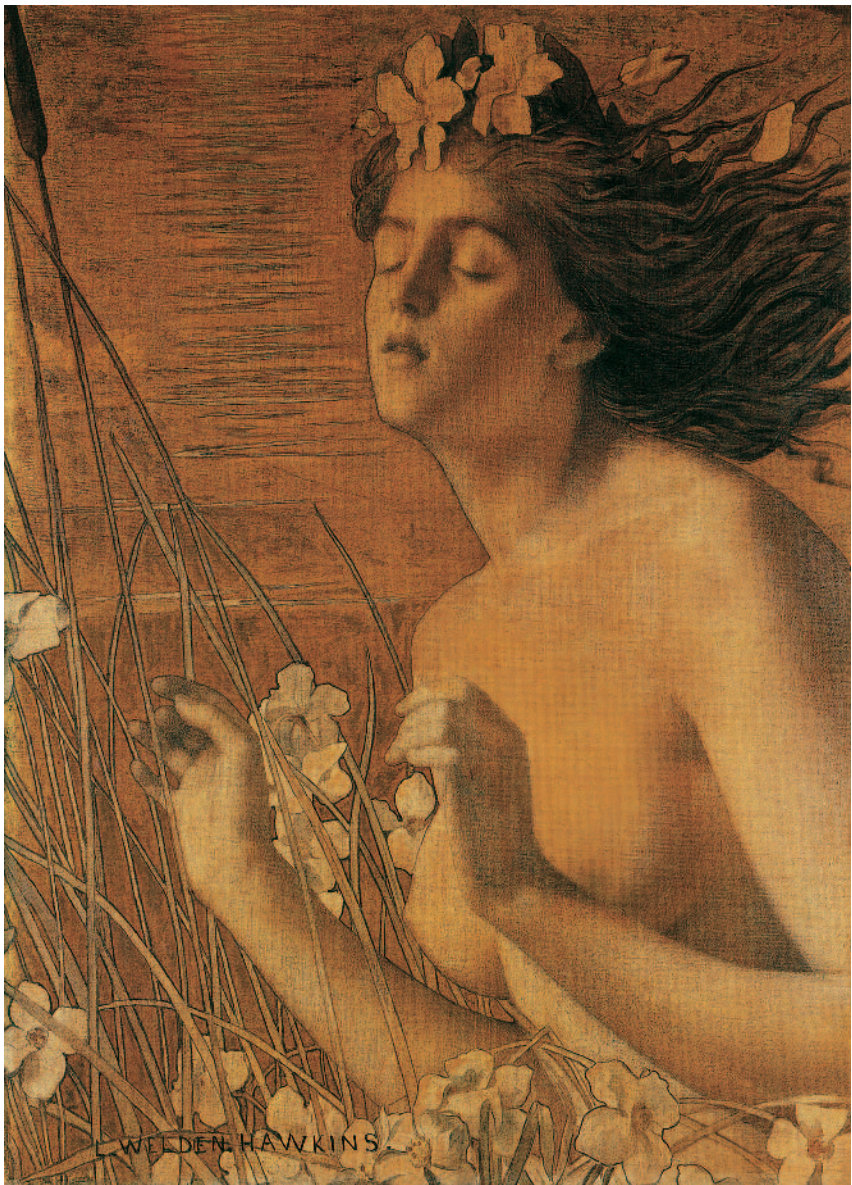
### Autumn

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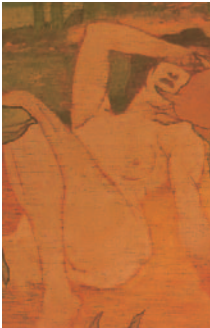
Louis Welden Hawkins, c. 1895

Oil on canvas

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection







however, the lines grew wild, making the leap from ironwork and a few wall surfaces to overrun the whole house and all its furniture. The result was seen in torsions, in dances forming a delirium of curves, obsessive in appearance and often torture to the eyes. The love of tradition was not as strong in Belgium as it was in England and Belgian artists were preoccupied with discovering new and comfortable interior designs. However successfully they met that challenge, however pleasing the interior arrangements, however unexpected the curves seemed, the new decor still had to be enlivened to satisfy the Flemish taste for abundance and elaborate decoration.



### The Voice of Evil

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Georges de Feure, 1895  
Oil on canvas, 65 x 59 cm  
Private collection





Serrurier-Bovy started by imitating English furniture, but eventually his own personality emerged. Nevertheless, his creations, which for the most part excelled in novelty, generally remained more restrained than the work of subsequent Belgian artists. These Belgians were no less talented and imaginative but, in order to make their work more impressive, they exaggerated linear decoration in the leitmotif of the line. Curved, broken, or cursive, in the form of the whiplash, zigzag, or dash, the leitmotif would reach a level of contagion by the 1900 Universal Exposition.

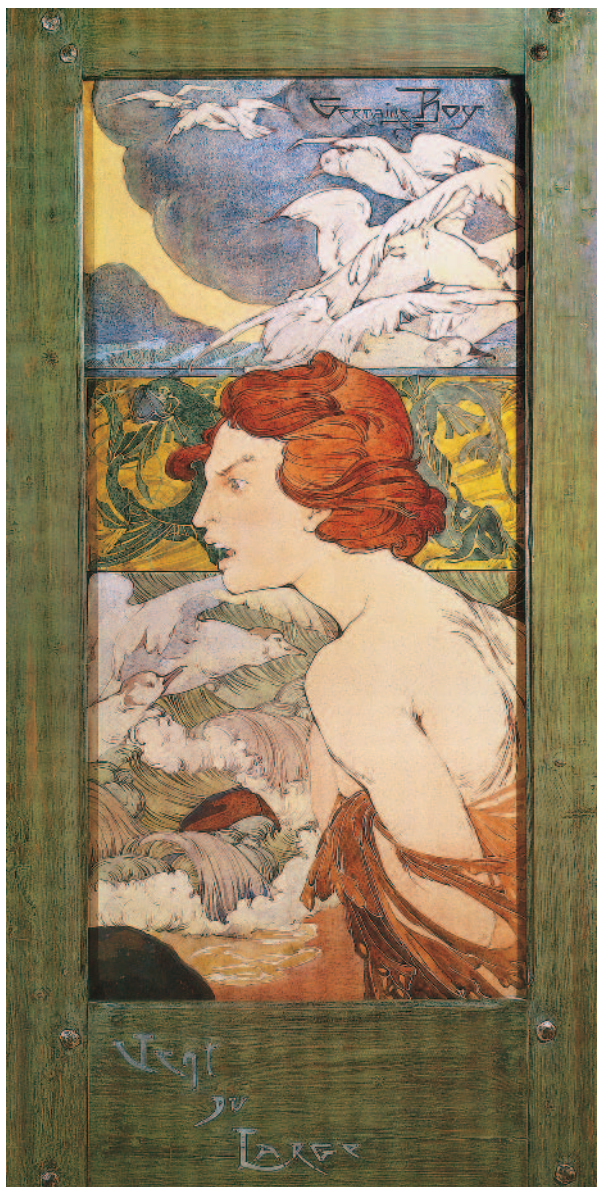
## The Wind from the Sea

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Germaine Boy

Gouache and watercolour

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection





If we linger over the Belgian artists, it is because of the important role they played in the renewal of the decorative arts, especially furniture. In this, Belgium, for better or worse, deserves as much credit as England. From England and Belgium the movement then extended to the northern countries and to France, the United States and Germany.

It is true that Germany needed these decorations to help make its Art Nouveau pillars and its geometric furniture decorated with rigid mouldings borrowed from ancient Greek monuments more palpable.

### Dressing Table

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Antoni Gaudí, c. 1895

Wood

Güell family collection, Barcelona







Displaying the individual character that comes from local resources, customs, and taste, Art Nouveau then also appeared in Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands.

At no point did England, the Netherlands, or Germany excel in statuary art, which almost completely disappeared from their expressions of Art Nouveau. In order to entertain the eye their artists instead gave precedence to shiny brass decoration cut in the form of openwork arabesques and attached to woods that were either naturally rich in colour or artificially highlighted.



Solvay House, view from the main salon

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Victor Horta, 1895  
Brussels

© 2009 - Victor Horta/Droits SOFAM - Belgique





## France: A Passion for Art Nouveau

The passion for Art Nouveau was different in France. Instead of decorating with schematically stylised flora and fauna, French artists concentrated on embellishing new forms with sculpted ornamentation that retained the flower's natural grace and showed the figure to best advantage. This was already the focus of French exhibitors in 1889. But those artists were looking for novelty in absolute realism. Their successors remembered that the refined art of the eighteenth century had derived its charm from the free interpretation of nature, not its rigorous imitation.



Castel Béranger, detail of entry  
and door to courtyard

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Hector Guimard, 1895  
Paris









The best among the artist craftsmen endeavoured to instil their designs with the gentle harmony of line and form found in old French masterpieces and to decorate them with all the novelty that flora and fauna could provide when freely interpreted. Although the best furniture makers, such as Charles Plumet, Tony Selmersheim, Louis Sorel, and Eugene Gaillard had little use for sculpture, it was sometimes a handy aid, as seen in certain ensembles by Jules Desbois and Alexandre Charpentier. By employing freely interpreted flora and the human figure, these two designers (who also designed stunning contemporary jewellery) were able to

### Van Eetvelde House, facade

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Victor Horta, 1895  
Brussels

© 2009 - Victor Horta/Droits SOFAM - Belgique





produce dynamic new poetic effects in which shadow and light played an important role. Such was also the case with René Lalique, whose works evoked exquisite fantasies, or the more robust jewels executed by Jean-Auguste Damp, Henry Nocq, and François-Rupert Carabin, for example. French objects such as these were more sumptuous and more powerfully affecting than the graphic rebuses seen in Brussels and Berlin.

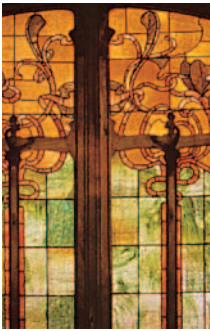
## Bloemenwerf

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Henry van de Velde, 1895  
Brussels







Art Nouveau exploded in Paris in 1895, a year that opened and closed with important milestones. In January, the poster designed by Alphonse Mucha for Sarah Bernhardt in the role of Gismonda was plastered all over the capital. This was the event that heralded the Art Nouveau poster style, which Eugène Grasset had previously tackled, in particular in his posters for *Encres Marquets* (1892) and the *Salon des Cent* (1894). Then December saw the opening of Bing's Art Nouveau boutique, which was entirely devoted to propagating the new genre.

Van Eetvelde House, view from the living room

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Victor Horta, 1895  
Brussels

© 2009 - Victor Horta/Droits SOFAM - Belgique







It was also around this time that Hector Guimard built Castel Béranger (circa 1890). Two years later, Baron Edouard Empain, the engineer and financier of the Paris Metro construction project, selected Guimard to design the now famous Metro stations. Empain's choice, however, was strongly opposed at the time. Some feared that Guimard's architecture represented too new an art form and that the style, derided as *style nouille* (literally translated "noodle style"), would ruin the look of the French capital. An obstinate jury prevented Guimard from completing all the stations, in particular the station near Garnier's Opera: Art Nouveau appeared totally at odds

### Castel Béranger, main entrance

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Hector Guimard, 1895-1898  
Paris





with Garnier's style, which was a perfect example of the historicism and eclecticism the new movement was fighting against.

At the same time, French brasseries and restaurants offered themselves as privileged sites for the development of the new trend. The Buffet de la Gare de Lyon opened in 1901. Rechristened Le Train Bleu in 1963, it counted Coco Chanel, Sarah Bernhardt, and Colette among its many regulars. With the addition of Maxim's restaurant on the rue Royale, dining establishments henceforth became perfect models of Art Nouveau.

### Vase

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Tiffany & Co., 1895-1898

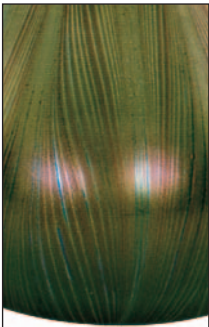
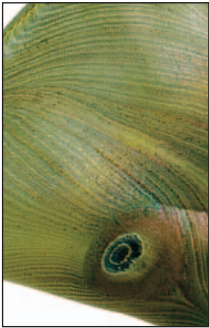
Favrile glass, carved and etched

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York









In 1901 the Alliance des Industries d'Art, also known as the Ecole de Nancy (School of Nancy), was officially founded. In accordance with Art Nouveau principles, its artists wanted to abolish the hierarchies that existed between major arts like painting and sculpture and the decorative arts, which were then considered minor. The School of Nancy artists, whose most fervent representatives were Emile Gallé, the Daum brothers (Auguste and Antonin) and Louis Majorelle, produced floral and plant stylisations, expressions of a precious and fragile world that they nevertheless wanted to see industrially reproduced and distributed on a much larger scale, beyond coteries of galleries and collectors.

### Vase

—  
Tiffany & Co., 1896  
Blown favrile glass

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York





Art Nouveau ultimately proliferated endemically throughout the world, often through the intermediary of art magazines such as *The Studio*, *Arts et Idées* and *Art et Décoration*, whose illustrations were henceforth enhanced with photos and colour lithography. As the trend spread from one country to the next, it changed by integrating local colour, transforming itself into a different style according to the city it was in. Its breadth of influence included cities as distant as Glasgow, Barcelona and Vienna and even reached such faraway and unlikely spots as Moscow, Tunis and Chicago. All the different names used to describe the movement along its

Vase

—  
Daum

Carved cameo glass  
Private collection







triumphal march – Art Nouveau, Liberty, Jugendstil, Secessionstil, and Arte Joven – emphasised its newness and its break with the past, in particular with the mid-nineteenth century's outdated historicism. In reality, Art Nouveau drew from many past and exotic styles: Japanese, Celtic, Islamic, Gothic, Baroque and Rococo, among others. In the decorative arts, Art Nouveau was welcomed with unprecedented enthusiasm, but it also met with scepticism and hostility, as it was often considered strange and of foreign origin. Germany, for example, disparaged the new decorative art as the “Belgian tapeworm style”. France and England,

### Liane de Pougy aux Folies-Bergère

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Paul Berthon

Colour lithograph

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection

FOLIES BERGERE



SCULPTURE ET GRAVURE DE M. J. P. — ARTISTE ANCIEN ET MODERNE — PARIS

H. B. P. H.

LIANE DE POUCK



traditional enemies, tended to trade blame, with the English retaining the French term “Art Nouveau” and the French borrowing the term “Modern Style” from the English.



Art Nouveau reached its apogee in 1900, but quickly went out of fashion. By the next major Universal Exposition in Turin (1902), a reaction was clearly underway. In the end, Art Nouveau strayed far from its original aspirations, becoming an expensive and elitist style that, unlike its successor Art Deco, did not lend itself to cheap imitation or mass production.



## Contemplation

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Eugène Grasset, 1897  
Colour lithograph on silk  
Victor and Gretha Arwas collection







## II. Art Nouveau at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris

History has selected England, Belgium and France as the undisputed primary sources of Art Nouveau's development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but contemporaries were unaware of this supremacy. In its section devoted to the decorative arts, the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris, which called for the construction of both the Grand and Petit Palais, among other buildings, offered a sampling that gave a taste of the real flavour of the period.



### Iris Bracelet

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René Lalique, 1897

Gold, enamel, chrysoprase, diamonds and moonstone  
Private collection, New York





For example, Gaudí, now inseparable from Spanish Art Nouveau and a major architect who gave us the image of Barcelona we know today, was the Exposition's major no-show: he failed to participate in the construction of the pavilions and none of his plans were shown. At the same time, countries such as Russia, Hungary and Romania, long since forgotten in the history of Art Nouveau, were well-represented alongside other countries that history wrongly seems to barely remember.

### Snow Drop

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Eugène Grasset, 1897

Plate 32 from: *Plantes et leurs applications ornementales*  
(Plants and their Application to Ornament)  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London







## The French Pavilion

France showed great artistic merit in bijouterie, jewellery making, ceramics and glassware – all magical arts of fire – as well as in sculpture and medallions. The triumph of France in all these arts was unmistakable.



In the enchanting art of glass, one of the world's oldest arts, and one that seemed to have exhausted every conceivable combination of line and colour, every quest for a perfect union between stones, precious metals and enamel, between repoussé and the gluing of precious stones and pearls, Lalique was a genius who could surprise, dazzle and delight the eye with



### Armchair

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Bernhard Pankok, 1897

Pearwood and silk

Kunstindustrimuseet, Copenhagen





new and truly exquisite colorations in all his creations, with the fantasy and charm of his imagination with which he animated them, and with his bold, inexhaustible creativity. Like a philosopher grading stones on their artistic value alone, sometimes elevating the most humble to highest honours and drawing unfamiliar effects from the most familiar, and like a magician who can pull something out of thin air, Lalique was a tireless and perpetual inventor of new forms and beauties, who truly created an art form in his own style, which now and forever bears his name.

### Pedestal

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Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, 1897  
Congoese rosewood  
Norwest Corporation, Minneapolis







As is the prerogative of genius, Lalique steered his art into uncharted territory and others followed whatever direction he took. There was joy and pride at the triumphant manifestation of French taste in its plateresque palace, thanks to the masters of French bijouterie, jewellery making, and silver, such as Lalique, Alexis Falize, Henri Vever, Fernand Thesmar, and many others, all relatively prestigious, and thanks to the masters of glass and ceramics, such as the still unrivalled Gallé, the Daum brothers, the artists of the Manufacture nationale de Sèvres, Albert Dammouse, Auguste Delaherche, Pierre Adrien Dalpeyrat and Lesbros among others.

Wall seat with vitrine from the smoking  
room at the Maison Roy (Gévrils)

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Hector Guimard, 1897-1898

Jarah

Musée d'Orsay, Paris





It was a splendid victory for Art Nouveau as a new decorative art movement, given what Lalique and the other French masters set out to accomplish. They had endeavoured to free themselves from imitation, from the eternal copy, from the old clichés and plaster casts that were always being recycled and had already been seen and were now overly familiar and worn-out. Their work was new, even to them. These masters on the Esplanade des Invalides therefore deserve our utmost gratitude, because in this exhibition they made certain that France's artistic contribution would be appreciated at last.

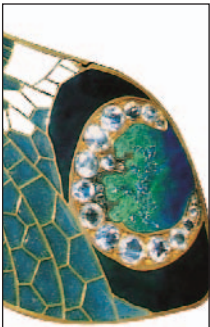
### Pendant and Chain with Peacocks

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René Foy  
Enamelled gold and pearl  
Macklowe Gallery, New York







The French exhibitors included the artists of the Manufacture nationale de Sèvres, whose revitalised works of perfect beauty may have saved the life and the honour of French manufacturers. This was as well as other masters of the applied arts, and no doubt a few practitioners of the fine arts, whose work did not always display the same quality as the work artists of whom they were so contemptuous. But whatever one's opinion of the new decorative art, similar victories were henceforth more and more difficult to win, as France's steady rivals made even greater strides.

### Dragonfly Woman Corsage Ornament

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René Lalique, 1897-1898

Gold, enamel, chrysoprase, diamonds and moonstone,

23 x 26.6 cm

Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon





## The English Pavilion

Art Nouveau was already brilliantly represented in England by 1878, especially in furniture. The movement was in its early stages, but England and Belgium, for various reasons, were underrepresented at the 1900 Exposition in Paris.

English furniture was only prominently displayed by Mr. Waring and Robert Gillow and by Ambrose Heal.



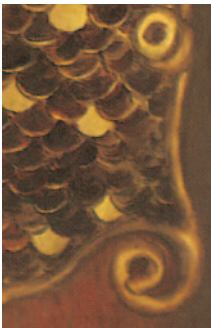
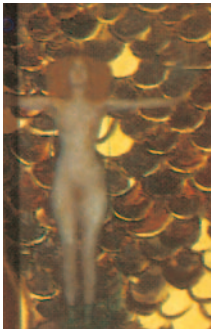
### Vienna Secession Building

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Josef Maria Olbrich, 1897-1898  
Vienna







For every few well-conceived pieces displaying an elegance that was truly new, there were countless others that were overly contorted and ornate, in ugly colours and poorly adapted to function, or designed with such excessive simplicity and pretense that English furniture was seriously compromised in the eyes of critiques – and everyone else. One could grope and search about, but with a few exceptions, the furniture was too often imperfectly designed – without logic and serious purpose, a structural frame or even comfort in mind. These criticisms, however, were perhaps best directed less at England and Belgium than at other foreign countries.

### Athena Pallas

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Gustav Klimt, 1898  
Oil on canvas, 75 x 75 cm  
Wien Museum, Vienna





England failed to show anything really new or exceptional that year. And yet there was one perfect example of its highly developed artistic mastery: the little pavilion that housed the miniature fleet of the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company, a supremely elegant piece owing to the collaboration of Collcutt (architecture), Moira (wall decoration) and Jenkins (sculptures).

### Woman in Red

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József Rippl-Rónai, 1898  
Embroidered tapestry  
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest







## The American Pavilion

The decorative arts owe much to the United States, at least to the admirable New York artist Louis Comfort Tiffany, who truly revived the art of glass, as did Gallé in France, but with different techniques. Like the brilliant artist from Nancy, Tiffany was not satisfied with being a prestigious glass artist: he was also a silversmith and ornamentalist. Above all he was a great poet, in the sense that he was continually inventing and creating beauty. For his young country, bursting with energy and brimming with wealth,



Villa Jiko

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Henri Sauvage, 1898  
Nancy







Tiffany seems to have dreamed of an art of unprecedented sumptuousness, only comparable to the luxurious art of Byzantium in its combination of gravitas and bedazzlement. Tiffany has provided us with much joy. One senses his desire to revive lost grandeur and to create new splendours such as had never been seen before. He meant for his mosaics to create a sense of wonder when they decorated stairways and adorned residences. Such homes would be illuminated by day with dazzling and opalescent Tiffany windows and by night with Tiffany lamps

## Desk and Chair

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Jacques Gruber  
Wood and ormolu  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





and chandeliers, splendid and calm like mysterious stars; in such settings, Tiffany glass would emit sparkling beams as if shot from precious stones or would filter in the tender, milky, lunar gleam of the light of dawn or of dusk. Tiffany was among the biggest winners of this Exposition, along with certain French masters, the Danes and the Japanese.

## Bed

—  
Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, c. 1898-1899  
Mahogany and copper  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris







## The Belgian Pavilion

Belgium was entitled to a large space at the exposition, due to the respect and interest it attracted on account of its traditions, its history and its connection with Art Nouveau issues, pursuits, and curiosities, indeed on account of all its artistic and industrial labour, which was great for such a small nation.

Unfortunately, Belgium exhibited little; even the exhibit at the Grand Palais failed to include the worthy Belgian school of sculpture. This was a lively and passionate school with many excellent artists that are honoured today,

### Candelabra

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Henry van de Velde, c. 1898-1899

Silver

Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, Brussels





the foremost being Constantin Meunier, a moving master of noble simplicity, a poet of stoic and heroic human labour (like his counterpart Millet in France) and a master of human compassion (like his counterparts Jozef Israels and Fritz von Uhde). At least Belgium's undeniable and major influence on Art Nouveau made itself felt throughout the Exposition. But Serrurier-Bovy, Théo van Rysselbergh, Armand Rassenfosse and many others, and especially Horta, Hankar and Georges Hobé generated a lot of comment by their absence from the Palais des Invalides and the Palais des Beaux-Arts.

### Candelabra

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Fernand Dubois, c. 1899  
Plated bronze  
Musée Horta, Brussels







What was nevertheless very beautiful, and worthy of the new Belgian art, was Franz Hoosemans' silver work and Philippe Wolfers' bijouterie. Also highly interesting were Bock's ceramics (especially the delicate artist's lively stoneware masks) and Isidore de Rudder's sculpture.

Loïe Fuller

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Charles Henri Delanglade  
Marble  
Robert Zehil collection





## The German Pavilion

In the semi-absence of England and Belgium it was Germany (and perhaps France) that best represented Art Nouveau at the 1900 Universal Exposition. Germany's progress in decorative art was astonishing, and considering the country had stopped following and studying foreign artistic production, the revelation came as a surprise, almost a shock. Art Nouveau was the victor throughout Germany, from Berlin to Vienna.



### Nautilus Lamp

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Gustav Gurschner, 1899  
Bronze and nautilus shell

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond





In Prussia, the style reflected imperial taste, no doubt somewhat heavy and massive, as the new Germany, now moving closer to Kaiserism, chose a decorative style reminiscent of French First Empire.

The minor gallant courts of eighteenth-century Germany had followed the French model, demanding nothing of art but frivolity, prettiness and feminine charm and mannerisms – the delightful style of Madame Pompadour, which culminated in the Rococo and the Baroque. Later, at the start of the twentieth century, it was necessary and made sense for the robust and serious German empire to adopt a solid and severe style.

Cover for the Secession  
magazine named Ver Sacrum

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Koloman Moser, 1899  
Private collection, Vienna



A stylized, high-contrast Art Deco illustration. The central focus is a woman's face, rendered in white against a dark background. Her features are defined by bold, black outlines. She has dark, wavy hair and is looking slightly upwards and to the right. Her mouth is open, showing her teeth. Surrounding her face are several roses, also rendered in the same high-contrast style. The roses are depicted with thick, black outlines, showing the spiral patterns of the petals. The overall composition is dense and graphic, characteristic of the early 20th-century decorative arts movement.

VER SACRUM

ZEITSCHRIFT DER  
VEREINIGUNG  
BILDENDER  
KÜNSTLER  
ÖSTERREICH'S

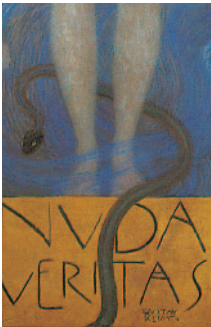
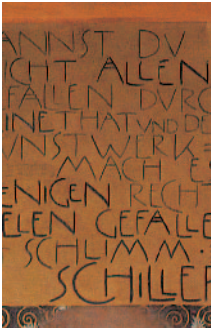
KOLMAN-MOSER

JÄHRLICH 12 HEFTE. IM ABONNEMENT 9 FL. = 15 M. II. JAHRG. HEFT 4.

VERLAG VON E. A. SEEMANN LEIPZIG

ALLE RECHTE  
VORBEHALTEN.

407/3



Germany acquired a reputation for beautiful and elaborate wrought iron; a return to past traditions (such as painted facades and sculpted woodwork); and above all, its rich development (in every sense of the word) of decorative art and consistent attention to the decoration and preservation of its national architecture, for the Germans (like the English) were actively restoring their architectural heritage throughout German cities and provinces.

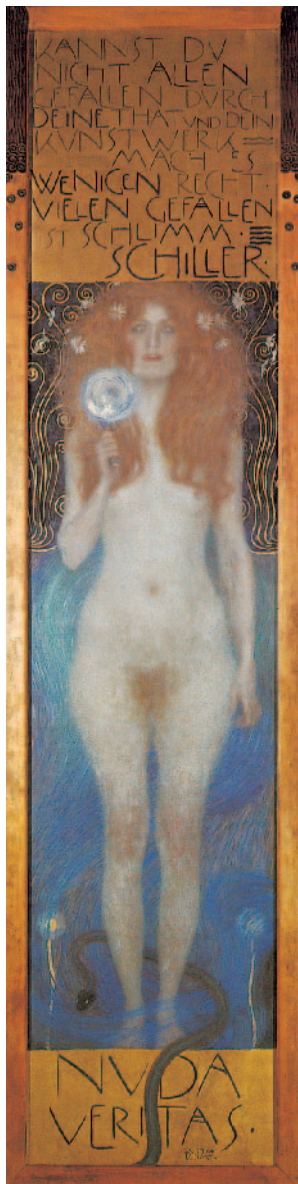
### Nuda Veritas

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Gustav Klimt, 1899

Oil on canvas, 252 x 56 cm

Österreichisches Theatermuseum, Vienna





The movement in Germany therefore was also on the whole very national in orientation. Dominated by foreign influences throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Germany had reconnected its present to its noble past and, in restoring cities like Hildesheim and Brunswick, among many others, with a great deal of respect and patriotism, it rightly rediscovered its taste for polychrome, painted facades, and the colourful sculpted wood that, in places, made for such a charming decor.

### Vase

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Zsolnay Factory, 1899  
Faience, porcelain with Eazin glaze  
Museum of Applied Arts, Budapest







But internationalism and cosmopolitanism triumphed in German furniture (especially in Austria, perhaps due to the artists of the Secession, who were under many foreign influences), where Germans executed Art Nouveau's famous dancing line with complete abandon, exuberance and frenzy.

Yet, even in furniture, there was no less proof of renewed German taste and the highly charged and sometimes excellent new German awareness of decorative art. Germans demonstrated a fervent desire for decorative art, which they satisfied by thoroughly applying it everywhere, to everything and for everybody.

### Winged female figure

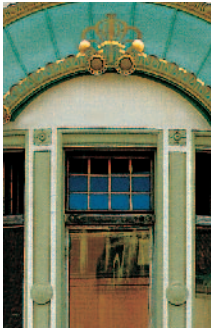
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René Lalique, c. 1899  
Private collection, New York





As for wrought iron, the Germans, who were fond of techniques utilising fire, softened it, moulded it, shaped it and worked wonders with it. The black vegetation and flowers that they obtained, and all the sumptuous ironwork of German doors and gates, truly evoked the magnificence of ancient Germany.



The Germans also made extensive and highly skilled use of wood. The beautiful vaulted ceiling of Professor Riegelmann, which was made entirely of sculpted wood, represented an imitation of the ancient ceilings of the German and Swiss Renaissance, now dotted with electric lights for night.



## Hotel Central

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Friedrich Ohmann, 1899-1901  
Prague





Finally, the Germans exercised great artistry in their delightful application of mural painting and polychrome to the decoration of buildings and houses, for example, the slender and elegantly built Pavilion de la rue des Nations, which was the brilliant work of the architect Johannes Radke, and also the reproduction of Bremen Lighthouse with its superbly decorated entrance. Although all of this was not absolutely new, it was justifiably revitalised, reclaimed from their national heritage and outstanding in every way.

## Winter Garden at the Ursulines Establishment

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J. Prémont and R. Evaldre, c. 1900  
Wavre-Notre-Dame

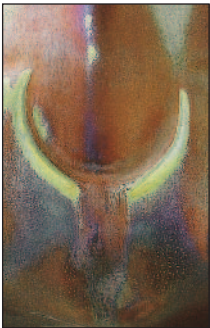






Yes, the Germans, too, had scored a wonderful artistic victory. They had, above all, demonstrated a most praiseworthy passion that rarely concerns us today: the desire to include art, decoration, and beauty in all things.

Compare the attention they brought to the task of fitting out and arraying their painting galleries to the almost careless indifference that France applied to preparing its own galleries and you will see the lesson to be learned here.



### Artichoke Vase

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Keller and Guérin

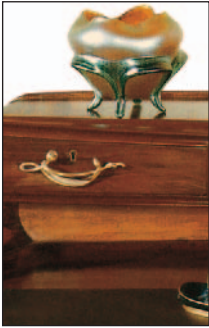
Exhibited at the 1900 universal exposition in Paris

Stoneware

Robert Zehil collection







Among the deserving works remaining for discussion among the Exposition's German sections of applied art is the furniture of Charles Spindler. With Spindler (as with the Nancy masters Gallé and Majorelle) one finds that the marquetry of his furniture is beautiful, whereas the line is somewhat less so, too often tentative or affected.

Spindler was an Alsatian who exercised astonishing mastery to great effect in his marquetry; possessing the skills of a painter, he put poetry and emotion into his wood panels.



### "Water Lilies" Desk and Chair

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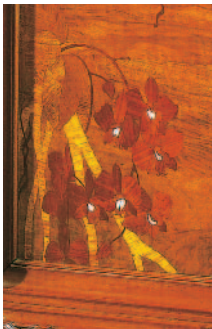
Louis Majorelle  
Wood and bronze  
Galerie Maria de Beyrie, Paris







Germany was also notable for beautiful electric chandeliers – a new genre of decorative art that the Germans (and the English) were typically adept at. The Exhibition’s Bremen Lighthouse was decorated with motifs reflecting the function of the illuminated building. A splendid fixture with a shark and sea birds at the centre of a large crown and with electric globes suspended from fishing hooks, descending lightly like pearls, remains a stunning example. Was the artist thinking of the lavish crowns of the Visigoths? It would prove that a talented artist can always derive new and modern motifs from ancient themes if he really wants to.



## Cabinet

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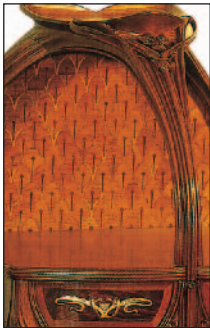
Louis Majorelle

Marquetry and mother-of-pearl  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





Max Läger's wall-hung fountains and ceramic chimneys were also extremely beautiful. The chimneys were English-style with enamelled plaques framing the fireplace recess, but in a dark green, severe style. In Germany, the large stove placed against the wall familiar to northern countries had become a popular Art Nouveau motif, sometimes depicted in sunny interiors that were bright and dazzling due to the enamel and the copperware that decorated them.



## Dressing Table

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Louis Majorelle  
Marquetry and ormolu  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





In ceramics, one could admire new high-fire porcelain with pure enamel produced by the Royal Manufactory of Charlottenburg and the Meissen factory, and earthenware from the Mettlach factory.



German tradition dominated the sumptuous silver work of Professor Götz (from Karlsruhe) and Professors Heinrich Waderé, Fritz von Miller and Petzold (from Munich), all worthy of renown.

The art of Bruckman, Deylhe, Schnauer (from Hamburg) and Schmitz (from Cologne) was more modern.



### Vitrine

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Eugène Gaillard, 1900

Walnut

Kunstindustrimuseet, Copenhagen







Germany also exhibited beautiful stained glass windows, whose design, manufacture, and colour brought honour to Professor Geiger (from Fribourg), as well as Llebert (from Dresden), and Luthé (from Frankfurt).



As for glass, need we remind you of the exquisite work of the engraver Karl Köpping, who produced glasses on long, refined, slender stems like flowers, charming in both form and colour?



### Vase from Bourges

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Manufacture nationale de Sèvres  
Exhibited at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris  
French "pâte nouvelle" porcelain  
Robert Zehil collection





## The Austrian Pavilion

Austrian art contrasted sharply with that of Northern Germany. Where Northern Germany's art was often severe and dreary, labouring under an excessive burden of discipline, Austrian art was rather pleasant and feminine.

In Vienna, Art Nouveau was less nationalist and idiosyncratic than in Northern. A crossroads of many peoples where cosmopolitanism reigned, Vienna was necessarily dominated by its excellent School of Applied Arts, directed by chevalier Salla,



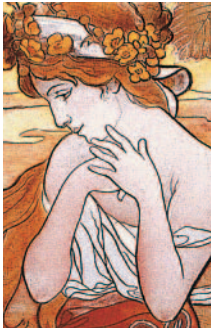
### Polychrome Leaded Glass Panel

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Georges de Feure  
Glass  
Robert Zehil collection







which showed work of the highest quality. The wonderful lace produced by the Herdlickas and by Miss Hoffmaninger, which was so innovative in its design and technique, is definitely worthy of the label Art Nouveau.

### At Water's Edge

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Hippolyte Lucas  
Aquatint

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection

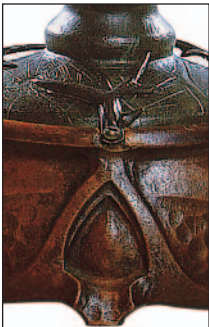




## The Hungarian Pavilion

Hungary, still focused on independence, seemed to express a desire for artistic autonomy in relation to Vienna.

Proud of its glorious past, rich in ancient and wonderful treasures that radiated magnificent Oriental influences, Hungary, which had completed its new and beautiful Budapest Museum of Applied Arts under the active and highly intelligent direction of Jenő Radisics de Kutas, seemed unable still to decide between two different paths in art (and literature):



Vase

—  
Daum

Wheel carved cameo glass and wood  
Private collection





the faithful preservation of its national tradition or the path to an art that was free. The latter choice had its merits, but it also had the drawback of building the same sumptuous and banal homes in Budapest as in Frankfurt, Vienna, and Berlin.

Hungary mined the depths of its past for decorative motifs that would enable it to establish an originality in art that was as pure and distinct as the uniqueness of its music and literature.

## Orchid Vase

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Émile Gallé

Glass with inserted ornaments and relief  
Private collection







Hungary attracted attention at the Exposition primarily with its historical pavilion and the decor of its sections, as well as its earthenware, glazed stoneware, glass and copper enamel. Beautiful coloured porcelain vases were a credit to the Herend Factory.



Miklos Zsolnay excelled in metallic reflections: in the polychrome surface of the vestibule leading to the recently created Museum of Applied Arts, the reddish-gold reflections of his glazed bricks produced a magnificent fiery effect. Bapoport's new copper enamel work in blues and pinks was also exquisite and extremely fine.



### Vase

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Eugène Michel

Wheel etched cameo glass

Robert Zehil collection





There was too little on display from Bohemia, but it showed the same dual tendencies and Bohemia's School of Decorative Arts still wavered between them. Prague also had its own Museum of Applied Art and a National Museum, valued above all for an extraordinary collection of traditional popular costume.

### The Swan Princess

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Mikhail Vrubel, 1900  
Oil on canvas, 142.5 x 93.5 cm  
Galerie Tretiakov, Moscow







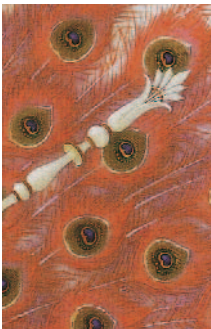
Among the Bohemians, the following deserve mention: the iridescent glass manufactured by de Spaun that was inspired by the Favrile Glass and that made a version of Tiffany (certainly less refined) accessible to all; the decorative high-fire porcelain manufactured by Messrs. Fisher and Mieg of Pirkenhammer, under the direction of a Frenchman named Carrière; and lastly, the Decorative School of Prague for its simple glazed earthenware, so lovely in form and decoration.

## Kiosk at the Porte Dauphine Station

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Hector Guimard, c. 1900  
Paris





Thanks to the architecture of their pavilion and to the brilliant decorative talent of Alphonse Mucha (who drew and painted with fertile imagination, as passionately as a Gypsy playing the violin), Bosnia and Herzegovina, still considered completely Oriental, enjoyed great success at the Exposition. In spite of their political and social transformation, these countries had remained faithful to Oriental tradition in their art and they would have been wrong to abandon it.

## The Peacock and Juno

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Manufacture nationale de Sèvres  
Exhibited at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris  
Robert Zehil collection







## The Dutch Pavilion

The traditional decor of the Netherlands is so charming that it would have been a shame to want to change it. In the buildings of the early twentieth century, in the Hague and in Amsterdam, neo-Flemish taste, masterfully handled, usually triumphed. But the Netherlands also participated in the new movement, often with exceptional feeling. What a pity that the Netherlands failed to exhibit architectural drawings at the Exposition, because some of the houses in the new quarters being built near the museum had exquisite line and coloration:



### Spoon

---

Prince Bojidar Karageorgevitch  
Exhibited at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris  
Silver  
Robert Zehil collection







light touches of soft colour in the pale green hues that harmonise so well with brick. Department stores, boutiques, brasseries and new cafes in Amsterdam and elsewhere boasted truly innovative ornament.

The fabric designs of Thorn Prikker, as well as those of Jan Toorop, were also of interest. These designers apparently based their peculiar visions of long, bony figurines on the strange, grimacing puppets among the Pantheon of characters in the Javanese Puppet Theatre, proving that Dutch taste was not always severe and Protestant. Dutch contact with the Far East may be source of the imagination and fantasy that sometimes appeared in Dutch forms and decoration.

### Chair

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Carlo Bugatti

Mahogany, mother-of-pearl, abalone and gilt bronze  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





The Far East could also be the source of the forms and decoration produced by the Rozenburg factory in The Hague (later deservedly appointed royal manufacturer by the Queen) that gave Dutch porcelain – so exotic, intricately shaped and decorated, but also extremely beautiful, rare and pure – its astonishing lightness. Dutch glazed clay pottery with polychrome decoration was also notable. Finally, Joost Thoof and Labouchère deserve acknowledgement for reviving the former Porceleyne Fles factory (especially Jacoba earthenware), thereby revitalising the art of Old Delft.

### Music Cabinet

---

Édouard Colonna  
Marquetry

Made for the Art Nouveau pavilion at the 1900 Universal  
Exposition in Paris  
Macklowe Gallery, New York







## The Danish Pavilion

The Royal Copenhagen factory deserved every form of praise it received, as did the Bing and Gröndahl Porcelain Factory, which fearlessly went into competition and friendly conflict with Royal Copenhagen, but which, under the skilled and stern management of Willumsen, concentrated on plastic decorations. There is little that has not already been said about these porcelains, about their blue and white colorations, so soft and tender and easy on the eye, about the decoration of the plates and vases, where the Danes with

### Wisteria Lamp

---

Tiffany & Co.  
Bronze and glass  
Private collection





such taste and dexterity evoked Japan's delicate decoration even as they translated it. It was Sèvres that paid this Danish factory its greatest tribute by henceforth imitating it gloriously, but in a way that did both factories justice. Sèvres owed its own renaissance and resounding victory partly to the Danish factory. Certainly Sèvres surpassed its rival, but it was a rival from whom it had learned how to win. Royal Copenhagen porcelain long remained the undisputed artistic triumph of this gentle and noble country.

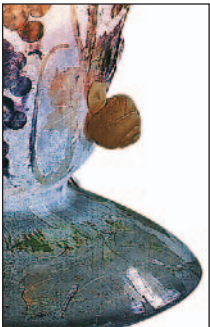
Bottle

---

Daum

Polychrome glass surface and applications in relief  
Private collection, Japan





But there were other examples of Danish artistry. Copenhagen's Town Hall, designed by Martin Nyrop, was then among the most beautiful in Europe, and its traditional, exceedingly pure style, with its thoroughly national decor, made it one of the most interesting, if not the most extraordinary building in Northern Europe.

## Table Lamp

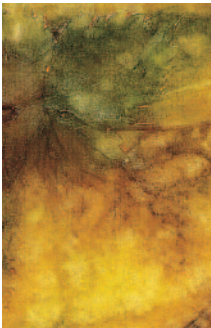
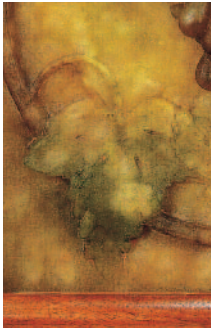
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Daum

Etched polychrome cameo glass  
and applications in relief  
Private collection







## The Swedish and Norwegian Pavilions

Sweden's contribution to the Exhibition was hardly an Art Nouveau revelation, although the movement had penetrated the country and was apparent in simple buildings, country homes, and railroad stations, sometimes with charming modernity. This rather disturbed the Swedish society's taste for industrial art that had been established to encourage and maintain respect for Sweden's national tradition, and thus Art Nouveau met with some ambivalence.

### The Grape Vine

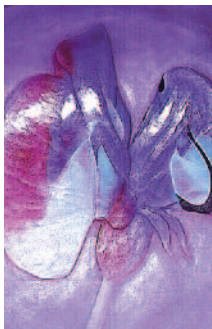
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Daum

French "pâte de verre", applications  
in relief and wood

Private collection, Japan





Among the Scandinavian countries, Norway most faithfully upheld its artistic traditions and respected spirit of its people.

Norway contributed some well-executed pieces of furniture that were among the best in the Exposition. These items were in the style of Norway's exemplary national ornamentation (somewhat transposed and modernised), which is so unusual, refined and vigorous and of which Norway (along with Iceland) preserves the most precious remains in certain types of architecture, ivories and sculpted wood.

Vase

—

Daum

Cameo and intaglio glass  
Macklowe Gallery, New York







The decoration by Johan Borgersen (from Oslo) of one the Norwegian sections with beautiful, rich Scandinavian-style tracery sculpted in red and green-stained wood was worthy of distinction. It is still cause for amazement that the dining room of the Norwegian Arts and Crafts Association, with its green-stained woodwork and red mahogany furniture, enhanced with elegant verdigris metal fittings, was not awarded a silver medal at the time.

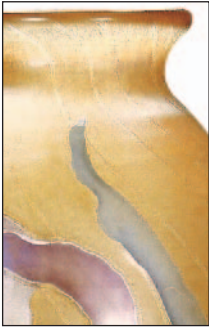
### Vase with Irises and Leaves

---

Daum

Wheel carved cameo glass and hammered background  
Cicko Kusaba collection, Japan





Fine-quality enamel work also flourished in Norway. It was the same art of enamel as found in Russia, and Anderson, Olsen and Marius Hammer handled it with equal brilliance among the silversmiths of Oslo and Bergen. Tostrup, an artist with a sensitive imagination and perfect execution was foremost among them, producing (in Oslo) translucent enamels of extreme beauty and refinement. One of his works in particular was exquisitely designed in form and colour: a blue enamel cup on a stem, it looked poised to open like the calyx of a magic flower.

### Iris Vase

Émile Gallé

Wheel etched glass

Private collection, Japan





Finally, the following works were also admirable: the beautiful earthenware of Lerche and the tapestries of Frida Hansen, along with the more old-fashioned tapestries of Gehrard Munthe and Holmboe.

Vase

---

Tiffany & Co.  
Favrile glass  
Private collection







## The Russian Pavilion

Russia and Finland surprised and delighted viewers. Here, more than anywhere else, unadulterated national tradition appropriately triumphed in Art Nouveau. In short, Russia rediscovered the hidden treasures of its past and awoke to the profound soul of its peoples. One day Russia (like England), in the midst of its aesthetic revolution, was shocked to see a Latin monument – standing out from the rest and by a talented French architect, but still a copy after Rome's Saint Peter's Cathedral – being raised in the centre of its capital to serve as the cathedral of its Greek Orthodox faith. Russia (like England)

Rhododendron Table Lamp

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Émile Gallé  
Etched cameo glass  
Private collection



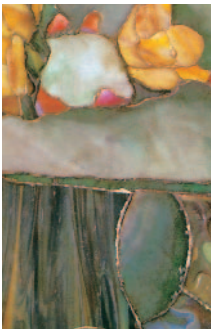


thus wanted a new Art that responded to its new and fervently felt patriotism. However beautiful was Etienne Falconnet's statue of Peter the Great, crowned with laurels and, under his divine emperor's toga, heroically nude in the winter snow, it was not as prized by the Russians, who were in the process of extricating themselves from Western influence, as the vigorous and superb statue of Peter the Great with his boots on, majestically clenching his stick in one hand with authoritative determination: the *Peter the Great* by Russia's first truly great sculptor, Markus Antokolski.

Lamp  
—  
Émile Gallé  
Glass  
Private collection







In architecture, this patriotic sentiment created the highly respected neo-Russian Style, which was especially prevalent in Moscow, in the Church of the Saviour on Spilled Blood and in Red Square, in the Museum of Antiquities and the new Gostinõi-Dvor. Ingenious architects with confident taste made brilliant use of enamel and mosaic coverings in the richly polychrome decoration of churches, monuments and houses, such as the neo-Russian style Igoumnov house in Moscow.

### Crested Cockatoos

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Tiffany & Co., c. 1900  
Glass, 76 x 56 cm  
Haworth Art Gallery, Accrington





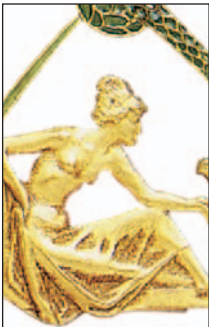
But the national aesthetic movement was first evident in music. The new Russia had begun to listen to its popular music, all the folk songs in which Russians cried, moaned, and sighed, or were suddenly lifted up in gaiety and *joie de vivre*, wildly laughing and dancing along the Volga and the Black Sea, and in them the new Russia discovered the melancholy, sorrows, dreams, and exaltations of its people. Russians listened with surprise and delight to sad songs expressing the infinite sorrow of the Russian steppes, to lonely songs reflecting the bleakness of Russia's autumn and winter skies,

### Vase

---

Philippe Wolfers, c. 1900  
Glass and metal  
Private collection, Brussels





and to tender and strange songs full of the affection and eccentricity of the individuals among its vast sea of peoples. So they came, after Glinka, the Russian musicians: Cui, Borodin, Tchaikovsky, Mussorgsky, Balakirev, Seroff, Rimsky-Korsakov and their followers. For starters, they wanted to become Russian again (or simply to remain Russian). Although they would not deliver on all their promises and achieve all their dreams, they nevertheless created a lively and active new school of music that was already illustrious.

### Pair of Earrings

---

René Lalique  
Enameled gold  
Robert Zehil collection







In the realm of painting, some Russian artists managed to free themselves from foreign influences. But in our eyes, the man who made the greatest contribution to the new decorative art was unquestionably Viktor Vasnetsov, a supreme artist. It was an astonishing display of ignorance about foreign art, when no one at the Exposition knew how to classify or judge him (not to mention the fact his work was simply under-represented). Such a master deserved more than a silver medal!

### Orchid Brooch

---

Georges Fouquet, 1900  
Gold, enamel, rubies and pearls  
Anderson collection





Vasnetsov was among the top Russian and European artists, along with Ilya Repin, Antokolski, and the amazing Troubetzkoy, who had just emerged, although in temperament and in their art the latter artists were more Western than Vasnetsov, less faithful to older tradition than he was and ethnically semi-eastern. Vasnetsov alone was responsible for almost the entire decoration of Kiev's Saint Vladimir's Cathedral, one of the most glorious monuments of contemporary Russian art.

### Sylvia Pendant

Henri Vever, 1900

Exhibited at the 1900 Universal Exposition in Paris  
Gold, agate, rubis, diamonds and pink diamonds  
Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris







In this church and elsewhere Vasnetsov infused many paintings with moving religious and national mysticism. This mystic was moreover (and primarily) an exquisite master ornamentalist, a miniaturist whose work looks like it came out of the convents of old.



Several of Vasnetsov's menus (for example, the one intended for the banquet of the last coronation) are masterpieces of the purest Russian ornamental style. Finally, Vasnetsov decorated and furnished his *Moscow isba* (a northern-style country cabin) in the latest fashion,



### Dragonfly Necklace

---

René Lalique, c. 1900-1902

Gold, enamel, aquamarines and diamonds

Private collection, London





which happened to be the most traditional and the simplest of styles: the rustic style. Perhaps this house, where Vasnetsov authored everything, and where everything makes for an harmonious ensemble, was the source of the delightful new decorative art we now see flourishing in Russia and which was given a strong impetus by Vasnetsov's victory at the Exposition.

### Palais de la danse

---

Manuel Orazi

Poster for the official dance theater at the 1900 Universal  
Exposition in Paris

Colour lithograph

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection





The favour enjoyed north of the Kremlin by all the artists who contributed to the Exposition's Russian Village in the Trocadero Gardens is well known. But one master stood out among the others: Konstantin Alekseyevich Korovin, a painter, sculptor and architect who was responsible for the vigorous and colourful naïve-style constructions in the popular northern style. As a painter, Korovin also produced the decorative landscapes in the Russian Palace of Asia, which revealed his very individual and sincere talent. Anyone who has perused the collection of albums at Mamontov House,

### Dressing Table

---

Charles Plumet and Tony Selmersheim, 1900  
Wood, padauk and bronze  
Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg







or who has admired the delightful Russian stringed instruments known as balalaikas made by Aleksandr Yakovlevich Golovin, Maliutin, Princess Tenichev, and Korovin (again) will understand how decorative art in Russia rightly regenerated itself from the mysterious and invigorating resources of popular tradition.

Lastly, the art of enamel was also shown to brilliant advantage by Owtchinnikoff and Gratscheff.

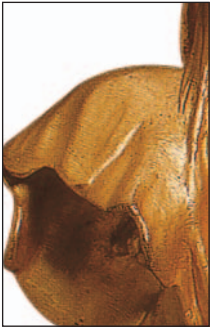
Desk

Henry van de Velde, 1900-1902

Wood

Österreichisches Museum für angewandte Kunst, Vienna





## The Finnish Pavilion

Finland was located some distance from Russia at the exhibition, as if Finland wanted to distinguish herself from Russia. The Finnish pavilion was a highly original and pure masterpiece of decoration and architecture. It also provided a good demonstration of the extent to which the newest, most modern art could draw on past tradition and how right it was for a people of national pride and passion to attach themselves to their own tradition. Everyone justifiably praised Eliel Saarinen, the exceptional and sensitive artist who created the Finnish Pavilion.

Sleep or Woman with Poppies

---

Maurice Bouval  
Gilt bronze and marble  
Victor and Gretha Arwas collection







The entire pavilion's ornamentation, both exterior and interior, was new and intriguing, harmonious in line and colour, solemn, impeccable. It represented an art that was entirely individual and remote, foreign, strange and nevertheless very modern, where appeared, translated in exquisite taste, the memories of a profound past, including memories of ancient peasant houses or old-fashioned country churches with bell towers.

A beautiful illustration was that of "Kalewala" by Akseli Gallen-Kallela, whose mural paintings for this pavilion revealed a mystical genius haunted by heroic and divine legends.

## Orchid Maiden

---

Louis Chalon  
Gilt bronze

Victor and Gretha Arwas collection





## The Romanian Pavilion

Romania, which owes its artistic heritage to the East and to the Greek Orthodox church, was taking back its memories, its dispersed fragments (as did Hungary), in order to forge a new art, at least in its architecture. The queen of Romania (simultaneously a respected poet, artist and queen) presided over and contributed more than anyone in her country to this positive restoration of national tradition. Not only in the architecture of churches, buildings and houses,

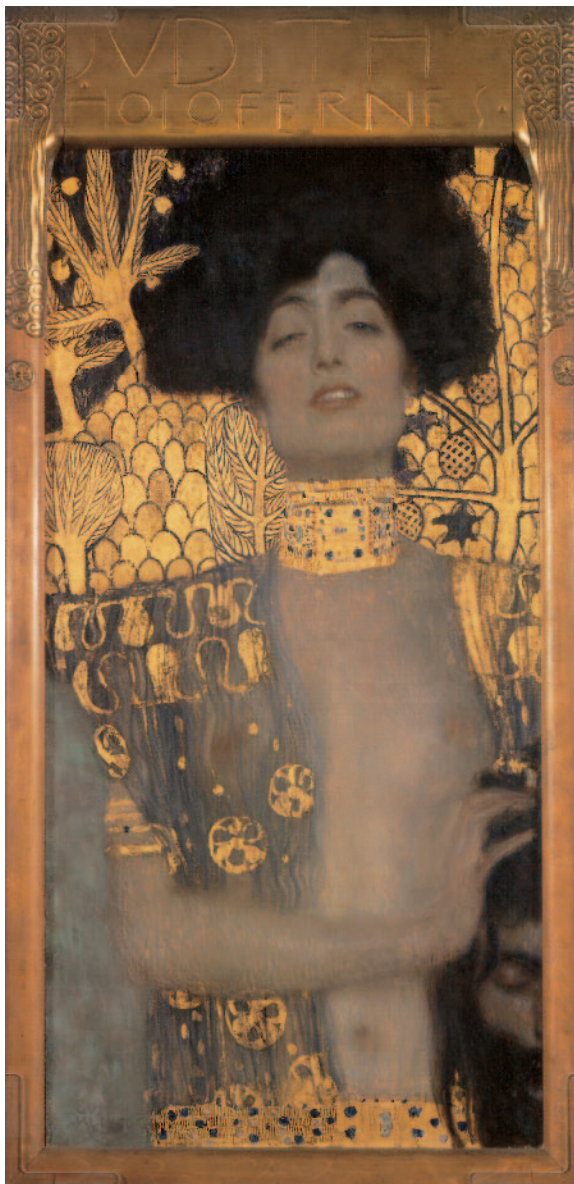
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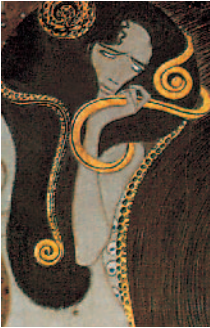
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Gustav Klimt, 1901

Oil on canvas, 82 x 42 cm

Österreichische Galerie Belvedere, Vienna





currently sometimes splendidly decorated with oriental polychrome, but she also contributed in the exquisite art of embroidery decorating the costumes that remain so colourful in many regions of Romania, and which is being abandoned and will perhaps soon disappear regardless of what is done with those other still cherished remains of the past, popular song and dance.

### The Beethoven Frieze (detail)

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Gustav Klimt, 1902  
Casein on plaster, h. : 220 cm  
Secession, Vienna







## The Swiss Pavilion

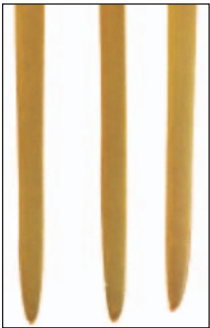
Among the smaller countries, which can be rather large in their sense of history and in their current activity, Switzerland is of great interest because it was reclaiming its old artistic traditions in order to revitalise and modernise them. Switzerland was headed in this direction at the last Exposition in Geneva, which revealed (although less effectively and thoroughly than the amazing national museums established in Basel and Zurich) a national art that was truly Swiss and

### Winged Serpent Brooch

---

Georges Fouquet, 1902  
Gold, enamel, diamonds and pearls  
Private collection, New York





either misunderstood or unknown to us, an art of its own, despite certainly more than one foreign influence (primarily Germany's). Nothing was more original, charming and gay than the decoration of its pavilions for food and its pavilion for the Swiss Watch-making Industry, by Bouvier.

### Sycamore Comb

---

René Lalique, 1902-1903  
Horn and gold  
Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich







Finally, the following Swiss achievements should be noted: the cloisonné enamels on wood or plaster, so charming in decoration by Heaton of Neuchatel; the silks of St. Gallen and Adliswil (which warranted greater vigilance from the French silk trade in Lyon out of jealous respect for these worrisome Swiss rivals); the greater attention given to the needed revival of all art forms; and the work of Geneva's School of Industrial Arts.

### Prickly Pear Table Lamp

---

Daum and Majorelle, 1902  
Patinated bronze and glass  
Musée de l'École de Nancy, Nancy





The Universal Exposition of 1900 presented a much grander view of Art Nouveau's development than the image of Art Nouveau retained by subsequent decades. The event is therefore a true testament to the trend, defining the new movement as nearly universal and moreover highly national in character. The aesthetic renewal that came out of the Decorative Arts and rapidly spread to other areas (such as architecture and music), advocating Unity of Work

### Chair

---

Jan Kotera, 1902  
Wood

Museum of Decorative Arts, Prague





(one art in everything and for everything) really was present in nearly every Western country, but each country chose to apply its own taste to the trend and in this way the movement was a multi-faceted cultural phenomenon among different populations. England's Modern Style (born out of the Arts and Crafts movement), France's Art Nouveau, Germany's Jugendstil, and even the Austrian Secession movement are all good examples. If the ideals of modernity and aesthetics remained the same, the works themselves always responded to purely national taste and expertise.

## Huot House

---

Émile André, 1903  
Nancy







## Conclusion

Art Nouveau was confirmed as a trend in 1900 as a result of the Universal Exposition, which proclaimed the movement's quasi-universal victory.

Art Nouveau meant marvels of jewellery making, bijouterie, silver, glass, mosaics and ceramics. In the beginning, Art Nouveau was produced by architects and decorators returning to their roots in national traditions (or who simply wished to remain faithful to the same), who were able to derive magnificent and delightful new variations from old domestic themes that had been more or less forgotten.

### Woman's Writing Desk and Chair

---

Koloman Moser, 1903

Thuja, marquetry, copper and gilt  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London





Art Nouveau was also the work of French architects like Paul Sédille and Jean-Camille Formigé, who (on the heels of their predecessors Henri Labrouste and Emile Vaudremer) eagerly combined novelty with talent, taste, and ingenuity and were able to introduce ornamental iron and ceramic work to the visible structural skeleton of modern construction and homes.

Art Nouveau was the eccentric Barcelona of Gaudí (whose work was, however, notably absent from the 1900 Universal Exposition), which provided Spain such a colourful and appropriate image.

### Umbellifer, Table Lamp

---

Maurice Bouval

Exhibited at the Salon of the Société des Artistes Français in  
1903 in Paris

Gilt bronze and moulded glass  
Macklowe Gallery, New York









Art Nouveau was the work of English, Belgian and American architects, subject neither to classical principles or the imitation of Greek and Italian models, but deeply and completely committed to modern life, who created a solemn, refined style that was not always faithfully copied by their imitators, work that was new and original and usually excellent: a youthful and lively architecture that truly represented their respective countries and time. Art Nouveau meant pastel-coloured wallpaper, tapestries, and fabrics that made French interiors sing with exquisite harmonies and French walls burst forth with delightful new flora and fauna.

Castel d'Orgeval, view of the left lateral facade

---

Hector Guimard, 1904  
Villemoisson-sur-Orge





Art Nouveau appeared in the form of illustrated books, such as those decorated by Eugène Grasset, Alphonse-Etienne Dinet, James Tissot, Maurice Leloir, and Gaston de Latenay, in France; Morris and Crane, among others, in England; German artists in Berlin and Munich; and Russian artists in Moscow. Among a few masters in France, England, and the United States, Art Nouveau was the art of bookbinding.

Art Nouveau was the art of the poster, because posters were needed during this era of insistent advertising. Of course, we refer to the poster as created by Jules Chéret, such as it was and continues to be interpreted after him in England,

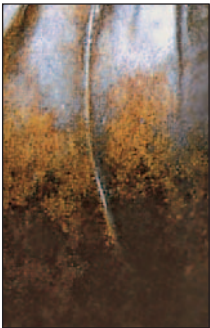
### Casa Batlló, upper facade

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Antoni Gaudí, 1904  
Barcelona







the United States, Belgium, and France by many exceptional artists with imaginative flair: posters displaying delightful whims of colour, harmony, and line, sometimes exhibiting grace and beauty, and posters displaying pyrotechnics, razzle-dazzle, and the use of harsh and brilliant colours.

Art Nouveau was the printmaking of Henri Rivière, respected interpreter of the French and Parisian landscape. In the simplicity of his images, Rivière sometimes applied more truth and more genuine and moving poetry than was available in works of the most famous classical masters, and his wondrous rendering, perfect colour, and eloquent impressionism, evoke and even surpass the very Japanese works that inspired him.

### Vase

—  
Hector Guimard

Patinated bronze and ceramic  
Robert Zehil collection







Art Nouveau was the art of the minor masters of statuettes, whose graceful novelties took the form of delicate figurines shamelessly dangling, crouching, or extending themselves in supple nudity on every imaginable object (such as cups, vases, and desk accessories), as well as more serious works in bronze, marble, and ivory. In France, these masters included the refined Carl Wilhelm Vallgren, Jean-Paul Aubé, Raoul Larche, Agathon Léonard and Fortini, while Belgium had Charles Samuel, Vienna had Gustav Gurschner, and Germany had Mrs. Burgev-Hartman.

### Vase

---

St Petersburg Imperial Glasworks, 1904  
Wheel carved plated glass  
Victoria & Albert Museum, London





Within the Art Nouveau movement, French bijouterie had Lalique, while the art of glass had Gallé and Tiffany. Gallé's now-acknowledged gifts went well beyond mere talent into the realm of genius and extraordinary ingenuity. The arduous efforts and frequently beautiful execution of Plumet and Selmersheim, Majorelle, Gaillard, de Feure and Colonna also deserve mention.

### Vase with Crickets

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Henri Vever

Exhibited in the Salon of the Société Nationale des Beaux-Arts  
in 1904, in Paris

Bronze and enameled silver

Robert Zehil collection







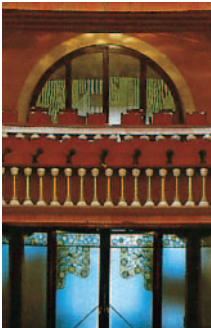
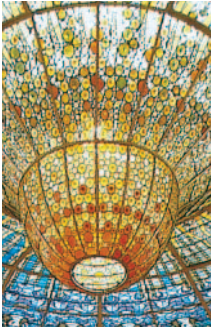
Art Nouveau was the furniture of Van de Velde and Horta: the desks and chairs that had plant feet, the dressers and buffets perfectly fused with the architecture that they coordinated with. In furnishings (already often expertly handled) it was the new library of the open bookcase that held (in addition to books) bibelots, figurines and items of ceramic and glass that were as vital sustenance for the eyes as books were for the mind.

La Pedrera, entrance

---

Antoni Gaudí, 1905  
Barcelona





What was even more outstanding and typical of the new style (and what became and remains standard), was the English wardrobe with full-length mirror and the fully-designed and decorated bathroom interior, including another English novelty that would become standard: the mirrored étagère similar to chimney glass. Here the exquisite work of Charpentier and Aubert also comes to mind: for example, their decorative ceramic wall covering depicting water blooms with a frieze of slender nude bathers.

## Auditorium of the Palau de la Música Catalana

---

Lluís Domènech i Montaner, 1905-1908  
Barcelona







Art Nouveau was the decoration of the fireplace and mantle framed in glazed brick or tile, wood, bright copper, or onyx, which was most effectively conceived and executed by the English.



Then there was the period's innovation in lighting, the illumination of interiors that in the past had often been too dark and too heavily draped. Here Art Nouveau is associated with truly magical applications of electricity (yet to be thoroughly exhausted), which was definitely a boon to the movement. Electricity lent itself to all lighting needs and already necessitated a



### "Water Lilies" Bed and Night Table

---

Louis Majorelle, 1905-1909  
Wood and bronze  
Musée d'Orsay, Paris







transformation in lamps, which was handled with great creativity in Germany, England, and the United States, where in the hands of Tiffany the lamp was transformed into a variety of configurations, forms, and lighting techniques. Interiors might therefore be enchantingly lit by opaque glass skilfully and softly coloured to take on the appearance of onyx, jade, and rare stones, and at the same time have Tiffany Favrile glass and lamps by Gallé or Daum adding their own charming illumination and magical iridescence to the mix.

## Bed

—  
Louis Majorelle  
Wood and metal  
Macklowe Gallery, New York





Art Nouveau is the sum of all these artists. Their names alone evoke the period, so beloved by our modern cities, which decisively broke with the past and enabled art to undergo renewal: a renewal preserved forever in the words *Art Nouveau* – and what greater honour could an artistic movement have than to be eternally new?

Suzanne Bathing

---

René Lalique, c. 1925  
Glass  
Private collection





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