

# THE TRIUMPH OF NATURE

ART NOUVEAU  
from the CHRYSLER  
MUSEUM OF ART



TRAVELING EXHIBITION SERVICE

IA&A

INTERNATIONAL  
ARTS AND ARTISTS

# THE TRIUMPH OF NATURE

## ART NOUVEAU from the CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART

The florid, languorous curves, natural motifs, and refined elegance of Art Nouveau furniture, glass, and other works have entranced generations of collectors and museumgoers since the apex of this brief but intense movement around the turn of the twentieth century. Known in Europe as Jugendstil (in Germany) and Stile Liberty (Italy), Art Nouveau has, until recently, been critically undervalued by the art establishment—due largely to its association with the decorative arts and the Decadent movement, as well as bias against its “feminine” qualities by critics of the time.

An exuberant, radical style, Art Nouveau blithely trampled many of the Victorian Age’s orthodoxies of art and design, exploding age-old strictures with its fanciful approach to furniture, graphic arts, jewelry, architecture and more, while also embracing new technologies and incorporating foreign (e.g., Japanese) stylistic flourishes. It was also unabashedly luxurious and sensual. *The Triumph of Nature: Art Nouveau from the Chrysler Museum of Art* brings together approximately 140 of the finest Art Nouveau treasures from the uncommonly rich holdings of the Chrysler Museum of Art, drawing primarily from the gifts of Walter P. and Jean Chrysler, whose homes were once the showrooms for these opulent treasures.

1. Louis Majorelle, *Buffet*, ca. 1900. Fruitwood and marble, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.



Designing for a range of clients and settings including domestic interiors, innovative artists such as de Feure, Majorelle, and Gallé fashioned their eclectic works to play off each other in harmonious visual arrangements, conceiving of Art Nouveau as an enveloping style. To fully illustrate this concept, this comprehensive exhibition gathers a profusion of Art Nouveau works and accessories—furniture, paintings, sculpture, mosaics, books, posters, prints, lamps, glass from one of the country’s finest and largest collections, and other stunning objets d’art—all of them originally designed and coordinated to complement each other in elaborate ensembles.

*The Triumph of Nature* returns us vividly to this entrancing time in European decorative arts, from its beginnings in the Arts and Crafts movement and *Japonisme*, through to its evolution into Art Deco style—which incorporated geometrical and industrial motifs, as well as more efficient (and frugal) systems of production. The exhibition will introduce a new generation to Art Nouveau’s luminous innovations and artistic triumphs, enticing visitors once more into these lustrous, nature-inspired havens of ornate beauty—all orchestrated over a century ago by visionary designers, just before the First World War ushered in a stark new reality.

The exhibition will comprise the following sections:

2. Daum Frères, *Cameo Vase*, ca. 1900, Blown, acid-etched, and cameo-carved glass, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.
3. Tiffany Furnaces, *Gooseneck Sprinkler*, ca. 1898-1899 Blown glass, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

# 1 | Breaking the Rules

The 1854 opening of Japan to foreign trade by Commodore Matthew Perry led to an explosion of interest in Japanese porcelain and printmaking. The Japanese artists’ reverence for nature, together with their revolutionary approach to perspective and composition in their prints, inspired artists all over Europe and North America, including the French Impressionists and the pioneers of Art Nouveau. This section will introduce *Japonisme* in art and design as a European phenomenon in the 1870s and 1880s. It will also examine the rise of the Arts and Crafts movement, *Jugendstil*, and the influence of William Morris, Victor Horta, and Louis Comfort Tiffany—all of which would come together in Siegfried Bing’s seminal Art Nouveau gallery in Paris.



2



3



4. Riessner, Stellmacher, & Kessel, *Vase*, ca. 1895, Ceramic, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art
5. Zsolnay Factory, *Vase*, ca. 1900, Ceramic, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art
6. Daum Frères, *Vase*, ca. 1910, Glass and metal, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.
7. Daum Frères, *Stick vase*, Acid cut glass, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art
8. H.A. Copillet & Cie, *Art Nouveau Iris Design Vase*, ca. 1903–06, Blown glass, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art

## 2 | Siegfried Bing as Art Nouveau Impresario



Art Nouveau is identified with the Parisian gallery of that name, established in December 1895 by the Japanese-art dealer Siegfried Bing, who sought to improve French craftsmanship in decorative arts, partly by popularizing Japanese art in Paris. Artisans who supplied Bing with Japanese-influenced work—Edward Colonna, Georges de Feure, and others—are featured in this section, which covers the history of Bing’s gallery and his participation in the international expositions in Paris that served to further popularize the new style.

9. Unknown, *Flower form clock*, ca. 1900, Gilt bronze and wood, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art
10. Unknown, *Candlebra*, ca. 1900, Gilt bronze and fruitwood, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art

# 3 | École de Nancy

This section focuses on Art Nouveau in the city of Nancy, in the industrial northeast of France, where wealth was largely acquired through industry rather than inheritance; and so nouveau-riche collectors were at liberty to indulge their tastes without fear of social rebuke. The works of competing designers Majorelle and Gallé are featured together with those of their collaborators in the fields of glass and ceramics. The revival of rococo style in late-nineteenth-century France gave a competitive edge to leading furniture makers such as Majorelle, who were uniquely positioned to transition to Art Nouveau: while radically different, both styles of furniture featured elaborate decoration, marquetry, arabesques, floral motifs, and other flourishes.

11. Louis Majorelle, *Nenuphars Cabinet de Travail (Water Lily Cabinet)*, 1902, Mahogany, courbaril, and gilded bronze, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.,  
12. Louis Majorelle, *Console Desserte*, ca. 1900, Mixed woods, ormolu and mother-of-pearl, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.



11



12

# 4| The Triumph of the Natural:

## IRISES, WATERLILIES, DRAGONFLIES, AND ORCHID

This section focuses on popular motifs as they appeared in Art Nouveau across media and countries, together with their sources in Japanese *ukiyo-e* ("floating world") woodblock prints. Siegfried Bing was a leading dealer of Japanese prints in Paris before opening the Art Nouveau Gallery in Paris, and he encouraged artists and artisans to incorporate the unique compositional traits and motifs of Japanese prints not only in their pictures, but in furniture, glassware, and other genres of decorative art as well. Thus, the dragonflies, irises, orchids and waterlilies so beloved by nature-obsessed Japanese printmakers went on to become especially prominent in Art Nouveau.



13

13. Duxer Porzellanmanufaktur, *Bust of a Woman with Irises*, ca. 1900, Porcelain, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art



14

14. Amphora Porcelain Works, *Vase*, ca. 1900, Porcelain, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art

# 3 | DE NOUVEAU À VIEUX, The Rise of Art Deco

This coda includes a selection of Art Deco furniture, glass, and decorative arts to illustrate the transition to Art Deco by such Art Nouveau artisans as Majorelle and Lalique. The labor-intensive methods of manufacturing Art Nouveau furniture and glassware were no longer feasible in post-WWI Europe; the war had also inspired a new machine aesthetic based on the designs of the tanks, airplanes, ships, and other modern weaponry that had so transformed armed conflict in the "Great War." The heyday of the beauty-, luxury-, and nature-obsessed generation that had embraced Art Nouveau was now romanticized as a lost age of innocence, before the cataclysmic horrors of the war. The austere lines, geometric forms, and cheaper materials utilized by the new Art Deco artisans represented a sharp retort to that previous generation, and signaled a new age and a world forever changed.



15



16

15. Pierre Chareau, *Armchair*, ca. 1925, Mahogany and Mohair, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

16. Sèvres Porcelain Manufactory (French, founded 1756), *Untitled (Woman with a Musical Instrument)*, ca. 1925, Bisque fired porcelain, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.



## EXHIBITION APP

The exhibition *The Triumph of Nature: Art Nouveau from the Chrysler Museum of Art* includes an interactive visitor-centered app designed for both iOS (Apple) and Google Play (Android) devices. The app will feature content to enhance and deepen the visitor experience onsite as well as pre- and post-visit. Selected sections will be customizable for each venue hosting the exhibition. The app, select/limited customization options, and hosting fees are included in the participation fee.

## COMPANION PUBLICATION

*The Triumph of Nature* will be complemented by a companion publication of the same title published by the Chrysler Museum of Art and International Arts & Artists, in partnership with Scala Art Publishers. The illustrated book will feature essays by American art historian Gabriel P. Weisberg; Chrysler Museum of Art Chief Curator and Irene Leache Curator of European Art Lloyd DeWitt; and the Barry Curator of Glass, Carolyn Swan Needell. The companion publication will be available for wholesale purchase from IA&A.

17

17. Louis Ernest Lessieux, *Rose and Thistle*, 1898, Pen, ink, watercolor on paper, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.



FRONT Duxer Porzellanmanufaktur, *Bust of a Woman with Lady Slippers*, ca. 1900, Porcelain, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr., Photo by Shannon Ruff, Chrysler Museum of Art  
BACK William Christmas Codman, *Martelé Centerpiece*, 1904, Sterling silver, Gift of Walter P. Chrysler, Jr.

## EXHIBITION SPECIFICATIONS

---

**Number of Works**

Approximately 140 objects

**Exhibition App**

Included

**Exhibition Publication**

Available

**Requirements**

High security; approximately  
4,000-5,000 square feet

**Participation Fee**

Please inquire

**Shipping**

IA&A makes all arrangements; exhibitors  
pay outgoing shipping costs within the  
contiguous US

**Booking Period**

12 weeks

**Tour**

September 2022 - August 2025

**Contact**

TravelingExhibitions@ArtsandArtists.org  
9 Hillyer Court NW  
Washington, DC 20008  
202.338.0680  
ArtsandArtists.org