

RESEAU ART NOUVEAU NETWORK

PRESS RELEASE  
2017

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

**The Réseau Art Nouveau Network** is a European network that was initiated by the Brussels Capital Region (Direction des Monuments et des Sites (Monuments and Sites Department) - DMS) in 1998. It consists of leading Art Nouveau experts from more than twenty European cities and institutions and aims to pursue an ambitious research, protection and enhancement programme for Art Nouveau.

This network, which was labelled as **a cultural route of the Council of Europe as of 2014**, aims to make the Art Nouveau heritage better known by as large a public as possible.

On the occasion of the network members meeting in Brussels from 24 until 26 March 2017, **the conference - master class "from Art Nouveau to Art Deco: restoration projects"** is to be organised on Saturday 25 March so as to present various simultaneous restoration projects of buildings by the emblematic architect and decorator Henri Sauvage (1873-1932): the Villa Majorelle in Nancy, the Piscine des Amiraux in Paris and the Maison Losseau in Mons.

After four successive European projects headed by the DMS (launching the RANN, "Art Nouveau in Progress", "Art Nouveau & Society and then "Art Nouveau & Ecology in the frame of the European Commission's Culture programme) and offering the public many activities (travelling exhibitions, publications, conferences, activities for children, ...), twenty institutions that are RANN members submitted an application in November 2016, in the frame of the European Commission's "Creative Europe" programme, for the new project "Entrer dans l'Art nouveau - Inside Art Nouveau".

This pioneer project, which is planned to take four years, offers for the first time a programme specifically developed for studying and enhancing the Art Nouveau interiors and living conditions on a European scale.

Please find enclosed a press pack with additional information about the Réseau Art Nouveau Network, now a **Cultural Route of the Council of Europe**, our project, our organisation, its structure, partners and actions.

You can read this press pack online in our "press" section and we invite you to visit our website for any other additional information (downloadable photos and logos):

[www.artnouveau-net.eu](http://www.artnouveau-net.eu)

or to contact directly the coordination office:

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Enjoy!

Manoëlle Wasseige, President of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network

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## RESEAU ART NOUVEAU NETWORK GENERAL PRESENTATION

In 1999, following an idea mooted by the Brussels-Capital Region Direction of Monuments and Sites, a large group of institutions from various European cities with a rich Art Nouveau heritage decided to come together to form an initial European co-operation network.

Enterprise and commitment are the network's chief hallmarks; as well as rigorously scientific approach, it aims to keep professionals informed and to make the general public aware of the cultural significance and European dimension of this heritage on our very doorstep.

Since it was created, the Network has realized a number of actions to answer these aims: exhibitions, publications, colloquia and educational tools, which led to an international recognition of the common work of its members with the presentation of a special mention of the jury in the framework of the Europa Nostra Awards/Prize of the Cultural heritage of the European Union in June 2013.

In April 2014, the Réseau Art Nouveau Network has become one of the 29 Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe, thus confirming the seriousness of its cooperation work realised and the quintessentially European dimension of the Art Nouveau heritage.

More than successive European projects, the Réseau Art Nouveau Network obtained the status of association in 2007 (under the Belgian law), of which the membership is open to the active members (cities, regions, institutions) as well as to the individual support members since 2013.

**Association (asbl) member cities:** Ålesund (NO), Aveiro (PT), Bad Nauheim (DE), Barcelona (ES), Bruxelles-Brussel (BE), Budapest (HU), Darmstadt (DE), Glasgow (UK), La Chaux-de-Fonds (CH), La Habana Vieja (CU), Ljubljana (SL), Melilla (ES), Nancy (FR), Oradea (RO), Regione Lombardia (IT), Rīga (LV), Subotica (SRB), Szeged (HU), Terrassa (ES), Wien (AT).

## THE RESEAU ART NOUVEAU NETWORK ACTIONS

**Exhibitions**  
**Historical Labs/Conferences**  
**Art Nouveau Research**  
**Multimedia Presentation (MMP)**  
**Educational Tools**

**Multilateral and bilateral exchanges**  
**Future actions aimed to the Visually Impaired Public**  
**Website/Art Nouveau news**

Discover all our past actions on our website

[www.artnouveau-net.eu](http://www.artnouveau-net.eu)

## PRESENT STRUCTURE OF THE RESEAU ART NOUVEAU NETWORK ASSOCIATION (asbl)

**BOARD:** **President:** Manoëlle WASSEIGE  
**Vice-president:** Urban Planning Institute of the Republic of Slovenia - Breda MIHELIC  
**General secretary:** Région de Bruxelles-Capitale – Philippe THIERY  
**Treasurer :** Ville de La Chaux-de-Fonds – Jean-Daniel JEANNERET  
**Members:** Institut Municipal del Paisatge Urbà i la Qualitat de Vida – Lluís BOSCH PASCUAL  
Ville de Riga – Iveta SPROGE

**COORDINATION OFFICE (BRUSSELS):** Anne-Lise ALLEAUME



## THE RESEAU ART NOUVEAU NETWORK FIGURES

21 member institutions  
44 Art Nouveau specialists  
17 countries – 13 being part of the European Union  
17 cities and 3 regions or provinces  
16: the age of the network in 2015  
4.019.797 €: overall budget of the “Art Nouveau & Ecology” project (2010-2015)  
2.009.788 €: European Union financing in the “Art Nouveau & Ecology” project  
2.010.009 €: participation of 12 co-organising institutions in the “Art Nouveau & Ecology” project  
1.520.000 €: overall budget of the “Art Nouveau & Society” project (2005-2008)  
2.000 €: annual fee of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network association active members  
50 €: annual fee of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network association support members  
4 grants by the European Union programme “Culture 2000” since 1999  
More than 30.000 visitors per year on website [www.artnouveau-net.eu](http://www.artnouveau-net.eu)  
6 newsletters per year sent to more than 6.000 contacts  
More than 2.100 “Likes” on our Facebook page  
16 publications downloadable in various languages  
131 Art Nouveau related conferences on line  
196 Art Nouveau related doctorate theses on line  
227 Art Nouveau scientific articles on line  
More than 628 Art Nouveau related links  
More than 360 books related to Art Nouveau

## THE NETWORK WEBSITE

The multilingual website [www.artnouveau-net.eu](http://www.artnouveau-net.eu) is the main communication tool between the network and the general public who can discover a number of Art Nouveau events through our sections "agenda" and "news". The website also allows students and professionals to access a research database listing 185 Art Nouveau related doctorate theses on line.

You will be able to subscribe to our newsletter and download some of our publications and the proceedings of our colloquia. You will also find the actions of the network, information on our partner cities, Art Nouveau links and events all around the world. Professionals and students can use our scientific tools, as well as our research database listing Art Nouveau related theses and a list of documentation centres. Last but not least, our educational tools allow children to read our activity books on line, and the teachers to help the pupils discovering Art Nouveau with our activity sheets on line.

The website graphic was renewed in July 2011 and the website is now available in 11 languages: English, French, German, Italian, Catalan, Norwegian, Slovene, Finnish, Latvian, Dutch and Portuguese.



## ABOUT ART NOUVEAU

Art Nouveau came into being in 1893 when Victor Horta introduced iron and casting into the homes of the bourgeoisie in Brussels. These industrial materials enabled him to breathe space into home interiors, allowing air and light to circulate. By choosing to decorate with abstract curves he was able to express the malleable nature of metal, whose varied composition provided the decorative theme of mural paintings and mosaics. He thus created a teeming universe where lines expressed vitality, the power of plant growth.

Nature was one of the fundamental sources of the new style: theoreticians such as Eugène Grasset in his work "La plante et ses applications ornementales" showed how motifs borrowed from nature could be used in a logical way. The rediscovery of Japanese art in the latter 19th Century led to a new perspective that would wonder at the beauty of a wave, a kimono motif or the curve of a courtesan's neck. The fluidity of lines, asymmetrical compositions without geometric perspective and delicate shades of colour created a new ornamental vocabulary, freeing itself from historicism, from the grand "carnival of styles" which prevailed for a large part of the 19th Century.

The languishing and mysterious image of the female which haunted the pre-Raphaelites became a decorative theme adopted in advertising (Mucha's posters) before appearing in architecture and the decorative arts in the same way as plants or abstract lines. Art Nouveau has two faces: that of a style appropriate to new ways of life (lighting, hygiene, transport) and that of a quest to embellish daily life (artists trained in the traditional fine arts devoting themselves to the applied arts). The creators pondered the lasting nature of craft production methods as well as the need to provide industry with models of high quality in order to raise the esthetical level of mass production.

Traditional products created by William Morris and Arts and Crafts were costly and only accessible to the well-heeled. In Weimar or Darmstadt, creators of Art Nouveau such as Henry Van de Velde or Josef-Maria Olbrich were employed to revitalise the local industries and increase the prosperity of the states that employed them. In Vienna, the Viennese Workshops

were wholeheartedly committed to costly craft production in the belief that it was time for the bourgeoisie to play its part in artistic patronage. Art

Nouveau spread quickly throughout Europe thanks to photo-illustrated art magazines as well as international exhibitions. The name differed according to country, it was called "Modernisme" in Catalonia, "Jugendstil" in Germany, "Liberty" in Italy or "Secession" in Vienna or Prague. It was to develop more quickly in countries or regions which claimed greater cultural autonomy (such as Catalonia, Czechoslovakia and Finland) or those experiencing economic prosperity and distancing themselves from tastes dictated by capitals (Glasgow or Nancy). The whole of Europe was to adopt Art Nouveau to a greater or lesser extent because the style was able to cohabit with forms inherited from the past. It was more often dominant in new areas constructed to cope with increasing urbanisation at the end of the 19th Century (Riga or Barcelona). The fashion was to diminish from 1906, disappearing almost completely during the First World War.

*Françoise Aubry, Curator of the Horta Museum, Bruxelles-Brussel*



### **Art Nouveau: A Quintessentially European Movement**

Jugendstil, Modern Style, Glasgow Style, Secession, Nieuwe Kunst, Stile Liberty, Modernisme, Ecole de Nancy, Style Sapin - these are all different facets of an essentially pan-European cultural phenomenon: Art Nouveau.

Emerging at the turn of the century, the Art Nouveau trend was driven by a particular set of aesthetic ideals and an enthusiasm for modernity, exploiting the possibilities offered by the industrial technologies and the new materials, and combining an aspiration to beauty with meticulous workmanship and a scrupulous eye for detail. The result was a wonderful concordance of architecture, furniture, and decoration.

### **An Endangered Heritage?**

Having languished for decades in oblivion, Art Nouveau is once again in fashion and apparently well protected. But appearances can be deceptive: as well as the major examples of the movement's output, the importance of which is universally acknowledged, there are large numbers of remarkable creations that remain unknown to the public, enjoy scant protection, or have actually been destroyed. In addition, the tardiness with which protection measures are being implemented in certain countries is placing large numbers of important items associated with the movement in jeopardy. Hence the relevance and necessity of a European network to protect and promote this heritage.



## SHORT HISTORY LINE OF THE RANN EUROPEAN PROJECTS

### 1. Launch phase (1999-2000)

Following an idea mooted by the Brussels Capital Region Department of Historic Sites and Monuments, a large group of institutions from various European cities with a rich Art Nouveau heritage decided to come together to form an initial European co-operation network.

During this first phase of the Network the structure of the cooperation between the member cities was established; responsibilities delegated during several plenary meetings, the website was created, the graphical identity was chosen, the image bank was launched, the publication 'Art Nouveau in Europe today – A general appraisal' was edited, the presentation kit was exhibited in different public spaces, etc.

Partner cities: Ålesund, Barcelona, Bruxelles-Brussel, Budapest, Glasgow, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Nancy, Palermo, Reus, Rīga, Terrassa, Wien and Ecole d'Avignon as technical partner.

### 2. Art Nouveau in Progress (2001-2004)

A key feature during this phase was the exhibition 'Art Nouveau in Progress' and its catalogues. It was created as a very different event from the large exhibitions, which have successfully celebrated the Art Nouveau movement over the last few years.

The aim of the exhibition is to explore the destiny of the Art Nouveau heritage in the thirteen cities and brings to light a number of examples of previously unknown projects: examples hitherto unseen or now disappeared, not acknowledged in their day or undergoing restoration. It also shows how the buildings have changed and been adapted to fit in our contemporary life one century later. The exhibition is presented successively in each of the partner cities, each host city featuring its own local extension of the event, showing current restoration projects for its Art Nouveau heritage.

During this second phase of the Network, colloquia were held in Wien (Oct. 2002) and Ålesund (Oct. 2004), both centered around the same theme as the exhibition (see Colloquia) and allowed researchers and European professionals to share their experiences and thoughts for the future.

Furthermore, an awareness campaign for the youth was launched 2003-2004 with four publications, a series of posters, guided tours for the schools and a very appreciated handbook for interactive visits- all of which are available on this website.

Partner cities: Ålesund, Barcelona, Bruxelles-Brussel, Glasgow, Helsinki, Ljubljana, Nancy, Provincia di Varese, Reus, Rīga, Terrassa, Wien and Ecole d'Avignon as technical partner.

### 3. Art Nouveau & Society (2005-2008)

The main action of this phase is the production of the multimedia presentation mentioned above.

Under the title 'Art Nouveau & Society', the Network has conceived a pluri-annual programme of actions to be realized under three structures: Innovation Labs, Historical Labs and Exchange Platforms. **The core feature is a multimedia presentation entitled: 'Art Nouveau & Society'. The launch of this multimedia presentation took place in Bad Nauheim (DE) in May 2008.** This short film examines European Art Nouveau and its social, political and economic context, linking cities in the past and present. The presentation is designed to be a permanent tool for the partners, allowing them to promote their heritage as an expression of their unity with the rest of Europe. The research and iconography gathered at the Historical Labs will also be included.

As a whole, six plenary meetings and Historical Labs will have taken place during the period 2005-2008:

- International Exhibitions and World Fairs (Bruxelles-Brussel, 22 October 2005)
- National Identity and International Trends (Ljubljana, 10 March 2006)
- Decoration in Art Nouveau (Riga, 20 October 2006)
- Urban Quality and the Perception of landscape (Como-Cernobbio, 4 May 2007)
- Art Nouveau Patrons (Nancy, 19 October 2007)
- Healthy in Body and Mind (Bad Nauheim, 16 May 2008)

The Historical Labs aim to establish an exchange platform of knowledge and know-how for those in and outside RANN. The content is a mix of research, practical knowledge and experience to reflect an agenda that aims to attract members of the general public as well as those working in the sector.

The Multilateral exchanges provide the opportunity for those working in the Art Nouveau cultural heritage sector to exchange their knowledge and experience across Europe on three specific subjects:

- Tourism and Art Nouveau (Ljubljana, 14 March 2006)
- Education and Art Nouveau (Provincia di Varese, 8 May 2007)
- Art Nouveau Interpretation Centres (Nancy, 23 October 2007)

The Innovation Labs include an educational package for educators and school children (including a new publication on Monsters, activity sheets, activities on-line and teachers' sessions), a project for the visually impaired public and an Art nouveau guide through mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs).

Partner cities: Ålesund, Barcelona, Bruxelles-Brussel, Bad Nauheim, Glasgow, Helsinki, La Chaux-de-Fonds, La Habana Vieja, Ljubljana, Łódź, Nancy, Provincia di Varese, Regione Lombardia, Reus, Rīga, Tbilisi, Terrassa, Wien and Ecole d'Avignon as technical partner.

#### 4. Art Nouveau & Ecology (2010-2015)

For this new five-year project, the Réseau Art Nouveau Network wanted to pursue its existing activities while also raising public awareness with the general European public for burning questions: the importance of ecology from the Art Nouveau era until now, Art Nouveau & sustainable development, the climate effects on the Art Nouveau buildings, etc.

Key actions have been organized in the frame of this project:

- Conducting a **travelling exhibition entitled « Natures of Art Nouveau »**, innovative by its touchable aspect and aimed at the general and visually impaired public, ideal to promote Art Nouveau amongst European publics through the circulation of works and to increase the policy of heritage awareness in all co-organising cities and beyond. Curator Teresa Montserrat-Sala (Barcelona) and the partner cities have taken the visitor on a very personal tour, showing how Art Nouveau relates to nature, stressing its poetic aspect as well as its links with the scientific discoveries of that time period. The exhibition was opened in October 2013 in Helsinki and traveled since then in the 11 other partner cities;

- A **series of five Historical Labs** on the topic of ecology and nature, one-day symposia allowing professionals and the general public to share their knowledge experience of Art Nouveau: in Terrassa ("The Art Nouveau Herbarium", 3 June 2010), Barcelona ("Tourism and the Preservation of Art Nouveau Heritage: a source for funding... a source of problems?", 4 June 2011) ; Milan ("Nature, Creativity and Production at the time of Art Nouveau, 19 November 2011); Aveiro ("Raw materials and Art Nouveau", 26 January 2013) ; Riga ("Consistency of inner and outer spaces in European Art Nouveau architecture", 5 September 2014). The proceedings of these labs are available on our website, as well as their publication entitled "Art Nouveau & Ecology. Combination";

- **The 10th anniversary of the Réseau Art Nouveau Network** was celebrated in Brussels during a great international symposium about the «Perception of Art Nouveau» on 4 and 5 December 2010 (proceedings available on our website);

- **The multilateral exchanges**, working meetings to share experiences and training between co-organisers on the following topics:

- Listed buildings, preservation policies and financial support through the European Union (Brussels, December 2010 and Helsinki, October 2014)
- New technologies and social networks in the diffusion of heritage: challenges and opportunities (Barcelona, June 2011)
- The preservation of Art Nouveau in a changing environment (Ålesund, March 2014)

- **Bilateral exchanges**, personalized trainings and « à la carte » visits between co-organisers allowing an effective circulation of European cultural actors and an optimization of meetings;
- The **publication of a « good practice » manual** aimed at professionals who will be able to use it as a guide for the promotion and the diffusion of the Art Nouveau heritage towards the visually impaired public. A **feasibility study** for the creation of a specialized Art Nouveau educational Malette containing elements with which visually impaired public can gain a better knowledge of Art Nouveau heritage has also been launched.
- **Activity books** and **activities on line** to introduce the young public to Art Nouveau and ecology;
- An effective **communication plan** (website, newsletter, press conference, leaflets, social networks, etc.) to promote RANN's actions and our partner cities' heritage beyond the EU borders.

All the photos captions are available on the cover of our new presentation leaflet.



These projects have been funded with the support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the authors and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



The Council of Europe cultural routes demonstrate in a visible way, by means of a journey through space and time, how the heritage of the different countries and cultures of Europe represent a shared cultural heritage. The Cultural Routes also provide a concrete demonstration of the fundamental principles of the Council of Europe: human rights, cultural democracy, cultural diversity and identity, dialogue, mutual exchange and enrichment across boundaries and centuries.

[www.coe.int/itineraires](http://www.coe.int/itineraires)

