

A presentation by The Réseau Art Nouveau Network
for the project
“Art Nouveau and Ecology, 2010-2015”,

THE NATURES OF ART NOUVEAU ***A travelling sensory exhibition***

In the late 19th century, a vast movement of artistic regeneration emerged in Europe, with Nature as its principal source of inspiration. From Barcelona to Helsinki, from Brussels to Ljubljana and from Glasgow to Nancy, nature itself fashioned a new aesthetic, giving life to forms that revolutionised daily life, uniting science and art in the impulse towards modernism.

The Natures of Art Nouveau explores the movement’s various interpretations as they developed in the 4 corners of Europe, presenting them as a unifying artistic language. Armed with a revitalised repertoire, due chiefly to progress and to scientific publications, the creators of Art Nouveau each translated their perception of beauty using their own personal vocabulary. Although firmly anchored in daily life and its practical needs, their universe became an imaginary paradise peopled with sensual figures from the natural world, symbols, Utopian visions, dreams and mysteries.

Using a quotation from Charles Baudelaire as a starting-point, *The Natures of Art Nouveau* leads us into nature’s “temple”. The first section contains a large display of selected images which reveal the *Eye of an Era*. Drawings of microscopic organisms, ornamental illustrated plates and photographic studies all form an innovative archival record that is both remarkable and extensive. The second section of the exhibition, entitled *Nature’s Studio*, features re-creations of the artists’ desks. We see how they used the material they collected to create their new language, a configuration of line, ornament, structure, models, symbols, material, techniques and metamorphoses. The third section of the exhibition contains a work reflecting their vision: *Artificial Landscapes* takes the form of a metaphorical garden featuring an abundant display of artistic concepts. There, the four elements are depicted as the very essence of Nature’s regenerative or inspirational powers.

Conceived by the Catalan art historian Teresa Sala, *The Natures of Art Nouveau* offers a reflection of scholarship as well as an exploration of the senses. Through the dynamic scenography created by Antoni Garau, the exhibition presents a concise view of Art Nouveau and awakens perceptions of “the perfumes, colours and sounds” of Nature.

Founded in 1999 on the initiative of the *Bruxelles-Capitale* Region, the Réseau Art Nouveau Network today comprises 23 European cities, all keen to protect, study and promote this shared heritage.

Entitled “Art Nouveau & Ecology” (2010-2015) and supported by the European Commission’s Culture Programme, RANN’s 4th European project aims to highlight the connections forged between Art Nouveau and nature through a whole variety of activities: a travelling exhibition, historical laboratories (study days open to the public), shared information sessions between professionals, publications, and so forth.

Comprising two identical concurrent exhibitions, *the Natures of Art Nouveau* will begin its journey to all partner cities in October 2013. The exhibition will be accompanied by a

catalogue on the theme of *Metamorphoses and Hybridisation* and an activity book for children.

For information on the exhibition dates and locations,

For information on the partner cities,

To download information on the activities,

Please go to our website www.artnouveau-net.eu