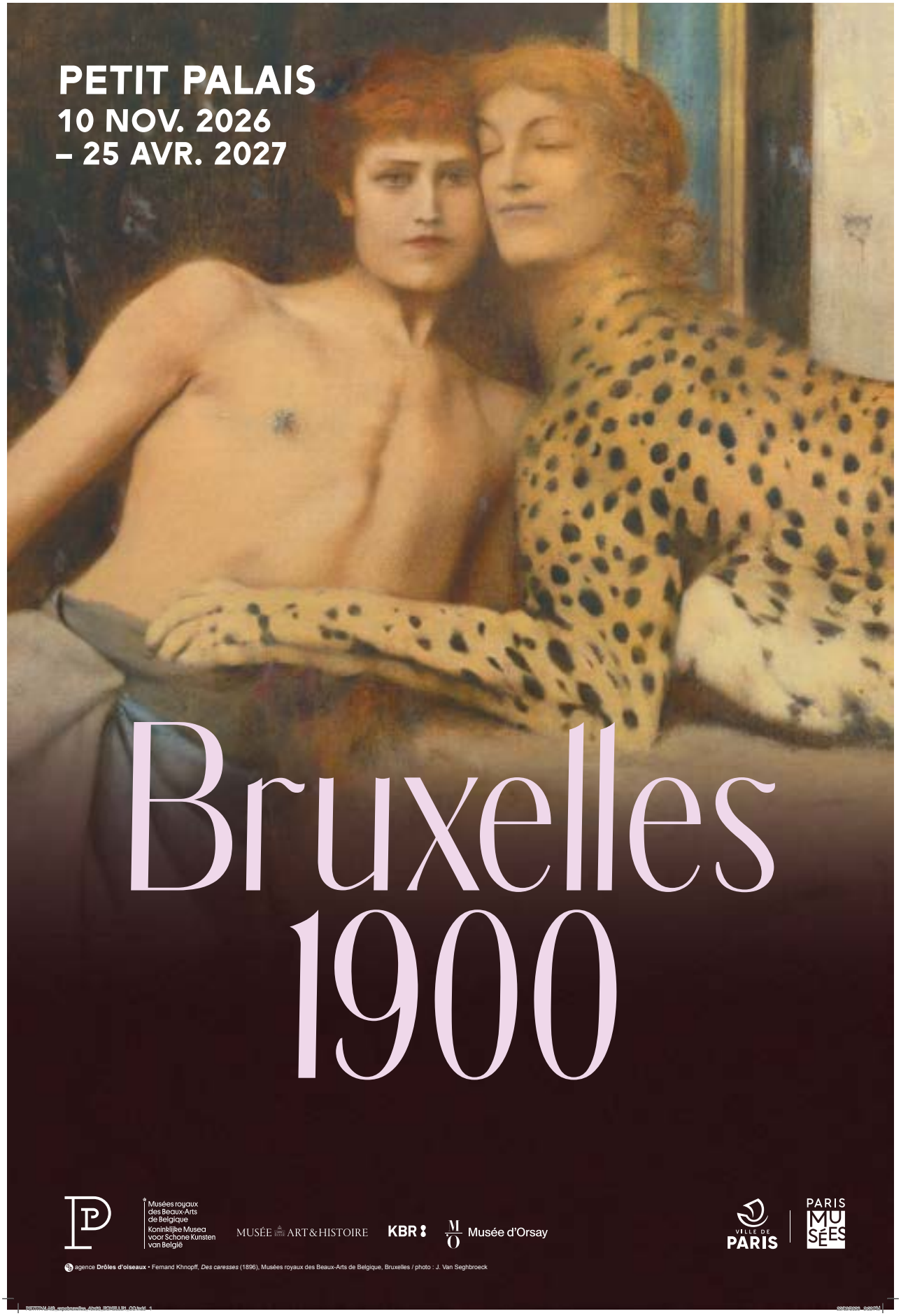
# Press Kit




## November 2026

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**Petit Palais**
Musée des Beaux-Arts
de la Ville de Paris

# BRUXELLES 1900

**PRESS RELEASE**

10 November 2026 – 25 April 2027



Fernand Khnopff, *Art or Caresses*, 1896.
Oil on canvas.
Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Bruxelles, Belgique
© Photo : J. Van Seghbroeck

**The Petit Palais is proud to present the remarkable exhibition Brussels 1900, plunging the public into the heart of the Belgian capital's vibrant art scene, whose influence would have a lasting mark on European art at the turn of the twentieth century.**

**In the autumn of 1900, visitors to the World Fair, held in the newly inaugurated Grand Palais in Paris, discovered as part of the exhibition devoted to foreign nations, a Belgian section that sparked unanimous enthusiasm. Featuring almost one hundred-and-fifty paintings and sculptures from Belgium, it proved to be a veritable revelation. Such recognition and admiration from Parisian audiences cemented Brussels' status as a major European arts hub in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.**

**The exhibition captures this extraordinary cultural effervescence through over two hundred-and-fifty works, including paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, posters, jewellery, photographs, architectural designs, and the graphic arts. Organized in partnership with the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts (Royal Museums of Fine Arts), Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (Royal Museums of Art and History), and the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (Royal Library of Belgium), it brings together a number of exceptional loans from all three institutions.**

**CURATORS:**
**Géraldine David,** General Director of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire
**Sara Lammens,** General Director of the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (KBR), Acting Director-General of the Royal Museum for Central Africa
**Annick Lemoine**, President of the Musées d'Orsay et de l'Orangerie, former director of the Petit Palais
**Kim Oosterlinck,** General Director of the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

**SPECIALIZED CURATORS:**
**Anne-Charlotte Cathelineau,** Chief Heritage Curator of the Sculpture Department, Petit Palais
**Davy Depelchin,** Head Curator of the 19th-century Paintings and Sculptures Department at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
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A young state born of the 1830 revolution, Belgium experienced a spectacular economic boom over the course of the nineteenth century. Brussels rapidly became the showcase of a new modernity: a cosmopolitan, industrial, and intellectual metropolis intertwining French, English, and Germanic influences. Artists, writers, architects, and critics launched new forms of expression there, engaging in a constant dialogue between the aesthetic avant-garde and social transformation.

Organized into seven thematic sections, this exhibition explores the diversity of the various movements and sensibilities that comprised the unique character of the Belgian scene around this time.

The exhibition opens with the artistic circles like *La Libre Esthétique*—veritable laboratories of ideas that shaped the cultural life of Brussels in the late nineteenth century. These avant-garde salons brought together Belgian artists and international creators, merging diverse disciplines in a common pursuit of modernity. Exhibitions, lectures, and concerts provided spaces and opportunities for intellectual exchange, new to Europe, and fostering fruitful collaborations between painters and writers, like those between **Léon Spilliaert** and **Maurice Maeterlinck**, **Émile Verhaeren** and **Théo Van Rysselberghe**, or **Max Elskamp** and **Henry van de Velde**. Symbolism, Social Naturalism, Spiritual Idealism, and decorative experimentation all converged here thanks to the impetus and creative ferment of several key figures, such as **James Ensor**, **Fernand Khnopff**, **Léon Frederic**, and **Jean Delville**.

The following sections explore the major themes underpinning Belgian art around 1900, notably a fascination with mystery, dreams, and the supernatural. Artists created worlds steeped in esotericism, mythology, and explorations of the unconscious. This idealism may best be seen in the work of painter and theorist *Jean Delville*, founder of the *Pour l'art* circle and a pivotal figure in idealist art salons.

The exhibition then focuses on another facet of the "Belgian soul": the exaltation of nature. Landscape painting had diverse forms, influenced by the era's major international trends: the Impressionism of **Anna Boch** and **Juliette Wytsman**; the Pointillism of **Théo Van Rysselberghe**, **Georges Lemmen**, and **Georges Morren**; the Luminism of **Émile Claus**; and the Naturism of **Léon Frederic** and **Firmin Baes**. This idolization of nature and the cycles of life also mirrored an idealization of the rural world, seen as a refuge from industrialization and profound urban change.

Another section is devoted to the depiction of the working classes—a theme ever-present in a Belgium undergoing rapid industrial transformation. Influenced by the socialist and humanist ideas championed by figures like **Edmond Picard** and **Émile Verhaeren**, artists such as **Constantin Meunier**, **Léon Frederic**, and **Eugène Laermans** emerged as the authors of a socially engaged art that explored the conditions of the working class. Their works attest to the harshness of the labour, but also to the dignity and strength of this group of people grappling with the upheavals of the modern world.



Theo Van Rysselberghe, *Maria Sèthe at the Harmonium*, 1891.
Oil on canvas,
© KMSKA, Antwerp



Jean Delville, *Orpheus Dead*, 1893.
Oil on canvas
Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB)
© Photo : J. Geleyns - Art Photography



Julien Dillens, *The Silence of the Tomb*, 1896.
Plaster
Musée d'Ixelles
© Photo: Musée d'Ixelles

The exhibition also looks at the relationship with the Flemish tradition, an important element of Belgian identity. All artists, whatever their interests, drew upon this heritage: whether through religious or mystical iconography, the materiality of the works (triptychs and tapestries, etc.), or motifs inspired by Gothic architecture, the Early Netherlandish painters, and fifteenth-century Burgundian sculpture. The modern creators of the 1900s saw themselves as heirs to a prestigious past.

This period also saw the emergence of the concept of "total art", where painting, sculpture, architecture, furniture design, typography, jewellery, and the literary arts all shared a single ambition: to bring art into every aspect of daily life. Therefore, Brussels became one of the cradles of Art Nouveau, spearheaded through the revolutionary architectural designs of **Victor Horta**, **Paul Hankar**, and **Henry van de Velde**.

Finally, the exhibition touches on the complex links between this artistic golden age and the colonial activities carried out by Leopold II in the Congo. The arrival of new materials—notably ivory and exotic woods—fuelled new experiments in terms of form by many Belgian artists, against the backdrop of a political and economic context that is now being critically re-examined. This fundamental historical dimension is woven into the exhibition narrative so as to reflect the tensions and contradictions permeating this new Belgian Modernity.

The exhibition concludes with the notable presence of Belgian artists at the 1900 World Fair in Paris, where their participation earned them enthusiastic critical acclaim and several medals for some of the participating artists.

**Organized in partnership with the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire, and the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, this exhibition features several exceptional loans of works from these three institutions.**

Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België

MUSÉE ART & HISTOIRE

KBR

**This exhibition benefits from the support of the Musée d'Orsay**

Musée d'Orsay

**The cultural program is made possible thanks to the support of the**

FONDATION SIGNATURE

**Exhibition presented with the generous support of the**

BXL

Fondation Roi Baudouin France

Ambassade de Belgique à Paris

**The publication of the catalog was made possible thanks to the generous support of Daniel Thierry**

**PRACTICAL INFORMATION**
PETIT PALAIS - MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS DE LA VILLE DE PARIS
Avenue Winston-Churchill,
75008 Paris
Tel : 01 53 43 40 00
petitpalais.paris.fr

Tuesday to Sundays from 10am to 6pm. Late-night opening Fridays and Saturdays until 8pm.

**Admission**
Full rate: €17
Reduced rate: €15

Booking of a time slot advised on petitpalais.paris.fr

Accessible to visitors with disabilities.



Paul Du Bois, *Minerva or Liberty*, c. 1901.
Ivory and silver, 53 x 36 x 26 cm.
© Brussels, Musée de la Ville de Bruxelles - Maison du Roi



Wolfers, *Birds and Iris,* ornate comb, 1899-1900.
Tortoiseshell, gold, enamel, carnelian and opal.
© Bruxelles, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (MRAH)
Dépôt de la Fondation Roi Baudouin
(Fonds Léon Courtin-Marcelle Bouché)

# Exhibition Tour

## INTRODUCTION

The first major exhibition in France devoted to Belgian art in thirty years, *Bruxelles 1900* seeks to reassess the Belgian capital's key role as a dynamic crossroads of modernities and ideas. Examining the years 1890 to 1900, the exhibition looks at a decade marked by a thorough restructuring of the Belgian and European artistic landscape, set against the backdrop of the rise in Secession movements across Europe. The period was also influenced by significant political and social transformations in Belgium, a fledgling nation born from a revolution in 1830.Bringing together over 250 works from prestigious Belgian and international museums and private collections, the exhibition offers an eloquent panorama of the creative energy that permeated Brussels at that time. Thematically structured, it showcases the diversity of the artistic movements unfolding in the Belgian capital, embodied by major figures like Théo Van Rysselberghe, Fernand Khnopff, Léon Frederic, George Minne, Philippe Wolfers, Victor Horta, and many others. Multidisciplinary and eclectic, this "new" art emerged from a microcosm of artists, intellectuals, and writers, from a variety of backgrounds, united by a shared goal: to forge a new visual language that best reflected their era and mirrored the essence of the "Belgian soul". This creative effervescence contrasted sharply with the political climate that reigned during the later years of Leopold II (1865–1909), a period of industrial expansion accompanied by intense social tension. It also coincided with the Belgian king's colonial ambitions in the Congo (present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo) – the country became his personal possession in 1885 –, an enterprise whose violence was denounced even at the time. *Bruxelles 1900* invites visitors to rediscover a capital in the process of transformation, marked by artistic ambition, the emergence of a national identity, and historical ambiguities.

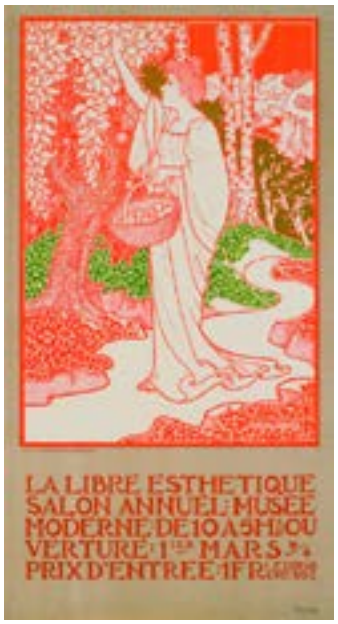


James Ensor, *The Skeleton Paintere,* 1896, Oil on panel.
Musée royal des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers – Communauté flamande (KMSKA)
© Photo: Rik Klein Gotink



Eugène Laermans, *An Evening of Protest,* 1893, Oil on panel.
Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB)
© Photo: J. Geleyns - Ro scan

## SECTION 1
## ART POSTERS




Gisbert Combaz, O. De Rycker & Mendel, Bruxelles, printer.
Poster for *La Libre Esthétique (the Free Aesthetics)* – Annual Salon 1895.
Colour lithograph on paper.
© Bruxelles, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique (KBR)

By the late nineteenth century, advances in printing technology had allowed for the large-scale dissemination of a new artistic medium: the poster. These took over public spaces and became a very popular means of advertising. To capture the attention of passersby, event organizers commissioned artists to explore the medium's creative potential. Recognized as an art form in its own right and championed by specialized Brussels studios like Veuve Monnom and O. de Rycker & Mendel, the poster gained genuine artistic acclaim and was even shown in exhibitions, some of which were dedicated specifically to the genre. For artistic circles like *La Libre Esthétique, Pour l'Art*, and *Le Sillon*, posters were true visual manifestos, combining text and images to promote their activities. Created by artists who made poster art their speciality—Gisbert Combaz, Privat Livemont—or by renowned figures such as Jean Delville and Théo Van Rysselberghe, this form of artwork brought artistic modernity into the public sphere.

## SECTION 2
## BRUSSELS AND THE ARTS



Léon Spilliaert, *Bird of Prey*, 1902.
Pencil, ink, wash, brush, watercolour and charcoal on paper.
© New York, The Hearn Family Trust

Circa 1900, Brussels hosted a large number of exhibitions, offering artists both a platform and visibility. In addition to the official salon—held every three years—independent art associations supporting the new forms of uninhibited artistic expression proliferated from the 1890s onwards. These included *La Libre Esthétique, Pour l'Art,* and *Le Sillon*. While official salons displayed almost a thousand works in a dense layout, these new artistic circles privileged shows limited to around one hundred pieces, all of which were displayed in a linear fashion. This novel approach to scenography marked a veritable revolution in the aesthetic experience. Characterized by their openness to international trends and diverse movements—ranging from Neo-Impressionism to Symbolism—these salons also highlighted works on paper and promoted the rise of the applied arts. With the support of well-known figures on the artistic landscape, like Octave Maus and Edmond Picard, they also fostered a dialogue between the different art forms, giving a special place to music through the organization of concerts.In this way, Brussels became an important crossroads and a showcase for modern artistic creation.

## SECTION 3
## AN ART OF CONTEMPLATION AND DREAM



Constant Montald, *The Nymphes,* c.1898.
Oil paint with matt binder and distemper on canvas, 95,5 × 135,5 cm.
Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB)
© Photo : J. Geleyns - Art Photography

At the end of the nineteenth century, Belgium underwent profound transformations due to industrialization, resulting in significant social upheaval. Faced with this changing world, many artists, named as symbolists focused on dreams, mystery, and the supernatural, creating imaginary universes fuelled by the unconscious and fantasy. Drawing on esoteric journals and artistic circles such as Pour l'Art and the Salon d'Art Idéaliste, this quest for spirituality took on a variety of forms. Some works emphasized introspection, like Khnopff's enigmatic women, closed off within their inner selves. While several artists expressed nostalgia for a golden age through bucolic or ethereal landscapes (Montald, d'Anethan, or Calais), others explored more macabre atmospheres, where a fear of death prevailed (Levêque, Degouve de Nuncques, or Ciamberlani). Last but not least, some provocative visions, as in the works of Delville and Lambeaux, combined eroticism and Satanism.In this context of disenchantment, symbolist art was perceived as a refuge from the ugliness of the modern world.

## SECTION 4
## VISIONS OF NATURE

Unlike the Symbolists, some artists prefer to ground their art in reality. In response to the changes brought about by the industrial era, a cultural movement emerged in Belgium that contrasted the city—a symbol of modernity, but also of poverty and alienation—with the countryside, which embodied an ideal of simplicity and happiness. Following the example of Camille Lemonnier, the flag-bearer of this vision, many artists called for a return to nature, a source of both harmony and regeneration, at once personal and aesthetic. Artistic circles became the sounding boards for this sentiment, amplified by the promotion of international trends like Naturalism, Impressionism, and Neo-Impressionism. During the 1890s, this quest took on varied and sometimes opposing forms. Whether through the luminism that characterizes the light-filled painting of Émile Claus, the decorative stylization of Henry van de Velde, the allegorical paintings of Léon Frederic, or the poetic Neo-Impressionism of Théo Van Rysselberghe, all these artists wanted to forge a new path for art by immersing themselves in a concrete experience of nature.



Juliette Wytsman, *Broom*, c. 1900.
Oil on panel.
Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB)
© Photo d'art Speltdoorn & Fils Bruxelles

## SECTION 5
## SOCIAL ART

Driven by its industries (textiles, steel, glass and mining), Belgium emerged as a major economic power by the end of the nineteenth century. While the urban proletariat grew thanks to cheap rural labour, a minority of industrialists grew rich, thus accentuating social inequalities. This situation led to social unrest and created the climate for the founding of workers' corporations and the Belgian Workers' Party (1885).Conscious of these changes, intellectuals, such as Edmond Picard or Émile Verhaeren, sought to "bring together these two great social forces: artists and the people." Many artists, like Constantin Meunier, tried to restore dignity to the people, by making workers the heroes of the Belgian economic miracle and of the egalitarian society to come. Going beyond rural realism and miserabilism, they revealed the other face of bourgeois prosperity: the gruelling working conditions of miners, dockers, and furnace workers.Social art became a truly essential component of Belgian modernity.



Léon Frederic, *The Three Ages of a Worker* (triptych), 1895-1897.
Oil on panel.
Paris, musée d'Orsay
© Hervé Lewandowski / Grand Palais Rmn

## SECTION 6
## MODERN GOTHICS



George Minne, *The Fountain of Kneeling Youths*, 1898.
Plaster.
Gand, musée des Beaux-Arts (MSK)
© Photo : Dominique Provost

As early as 1891, Émile Verhaeren, commenting on the sculptures of George Minne, observed a return to tradition on the part of many Belgian artists: "Our contemporary art is weary, and to renew itself, it has returned to its sources, immersing itself once again in naivety and childhood." A fascination with the Middle Ages became a rallying point for Belgian artists, critics, and intellectuals. They saw in it a way of forging a spiritual and authentic modern art, capable of responding to the crises of the day. Bruges, heavily associated with the Flemish Middle Ages, symbolized this enduring legacy of the past. This approach was also part of a quest for a national cultural identity. In order to break free from the dominant influence of French art, Belgian artists turned to the legacy of the Flemish Primitives, who embodied the country's glorious artistic past. Many Belgian creators, including George Minne, Léon Frederic, Hélène De Rudder Du Ménil, and Fernand Khnopff, claimed this artistic and spiritual lineage. Nicknamed the "Modern Gothics", they were the face of an authentic, indigenous modernity on the international stage.

## SECTION 7
## THE COLONIAL EXHIBITION OF 1897 AND ART NOUVEAU

In 1897, Brussels hosted the World Fair. Held in Tervuren, it featured a colonial section intended as a powerful propaganda tool for the Congo Free State (present-day Democratic Republic of the Congo) and its exploitation. Edmond van Eetvelde, Secretary of State of the Congo Free State and the driving force behind the exhibition, was a formidable art enthusiast. His aim was to promote the wealth derived from the exploitation of Congolese resources through a bold new aesthetic known as Art Nouveau. He entrusted the design of the exhibition to the most innovative architects of the day, including Paul Hankar, Henry van de Velde, and Georges Hobé. Exotic materials, like tropical wood and ivory, were made available to sculptors, resulting in some spectacular works, like Philippe Wolfers's *Caress of the Swan*. The exhibition contributed to the spread of Art Nouveau, sometimes referred to as "Congo style", without being its origin or its culmination. Rather, it played an accelerating role, by disseminating this new artistic language to a wide audience.



Philippe Wolfers, *Caress of the Swan,* 1897.
Bronze and ivory; marble base.
© Bruxelles, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (MRAH)



Philippe Wolfers, *Civilization and Barbarism,* 1897-1898.
Ivory, silver and onyx.
Bruxelles, Musées royaux d'Art et d'Histoire (MRAH), dépôt de la Fondation Roi Baudouin
© Image studio

## SECTION 8
## PHILIPPE WOLFERS THE "BELGIAN LALIQUE"

Philippe Wolfers (1858-1929) was one of the leading figures of Belgian Art Nouveau. Artistic director of Wolfers Frères from 1894 to 1929, he gained international recognition through the creation of exceptional jewellery, remarkable both for its technical mastery and its style, exhibited in Belgium as well as in France, Germany, and Italy. In 1897, at the Brussels International Exhibition, Wolfers discovered the jewellery of the French artist René Lalique, which inspired him to ambitiously expand the jewellery production of Wolfers Frères. In 1899, he presented a collection of sixteen unique Art Nouveau jewels at the exhibition of the Pour l'Art circle, earning him the reputation of being the "Belgian Lalique". Like Lalique, Wolfers made extensive use of enamel to bring a shimmering quality to his creations. In less than a decade, his work underwent a marked stylistic and thematic evolution, moving from Symbolism (*Medusa Pendant*) to Art Nouveau (*Dragonfly Pendant*). After 1902, Philippe Wolfers increasingly turned his attention to sculpture, a discipline that would come to dominate the remainder of his career (*Maleficia, Woman with a Peacock*).



Philippe Wolfers, *Swan and Serpents* pendant, 1899.
Gold, enamel, opal, ruby, diamond and pear
Dépôt de la Fondation Roi Baudouin (Fonds Christian Bauwens)
© Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, Bruxelles, Belgique

## SECTION 9
## VICTOR HORTA AND THE TOTAL ARTWORK

Victor Horta (1861-1947) drew inspiration from the Classical purity of his mentor, Alphonse Balat, while also responding to Viollet-le-Duc's vision of a new architecture adapted to industrial materials and modern needs. From the 1890s onwards, he laid the foundations of Art Nouveau, marked by a desire to tailor architecture to the client's personality and a distinctive style, which culminated in the Hôtel Aubecq (1899-1904). Horta freed architecture from convention: he revealed the structure of buildings through the expressive use of iron and stone and created flexible, interconnected spaces. Bathed in light, his interiors, organized around dynamic floor plans, brought together luxurious furnishings, stained glass, marble, wallpaper, draperies, and carpets in harmonious colour schemes and motifs inspired by nature. Every detail, from the furniture produced in his workshop to the artworks commissioned from his collaborators, contributed to a total work of art in which function and aesthetics combined to reflect the passions and aspirations of his clients. A pioneer of modern architecture, Horta embodied the pursuit of an ideal in which beauty could help shape a better society.



Léon Ledru, Victor Horta
Val Saint Lambert Crystal Works.
*Val Saint Lambert Crystal Works,* c.1900.
Layered and wheel-engraved crystal, gilt bronze mount.
Bruxelles, Horta Museum - St Gilles, Gillis
© Photo : Paul Louis

## SECTION 10
## GUSTAVE SERRURIER : A SOCIAL VISION

Gustave Serrurier (1858-1910), a native of Liège, was one of the leading figures in the revival of interior design in Belgium at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1888, he opened a shop in Liège with his wife, Maria Bovy (1851-1936), combining their names to create the firm Serrurier-Bovy. Inspired by the Arts and Crafts movement, which he discovered during a trip to London in 1893, he embraced its core principles, particularly the idea that form should be adapted to function. He also distinguished himself through his social vision, designing furniture for working-class homes using affordable materials and simple construction techniques, such as screws and cut-out forms. Presented at the Salon de La Libre Esthétique in Brussels in 1895, his Artisan's Room (*Chambre d'Artisan*) is a notable example of this approach. From 1902 onwards, Serrurier increasingly turned towards industrial production. In order to reduce costs, he designed furniture based on the simple, minimalist structure of wooden planks, stripped of all ornamentation.

# SECTION 11
# HENRY VAN DE VELDE, EVERYDAY HARMONY

In 1893, after exploring Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, and Post-Impressionism, Henry van de Velde (1863–1957) abandoned painting to devote himself to the applied arts. Convinced that everyday objects could bring beauty into people's lives without compromising their functionality, he dedicated himself to this ideal. Together with his wife, Maria Sèthe (1867–1943), who worked closely alongside him, he developed an aesthetic inspired by the British Arts and Crafts movement and the writings of John Ruskin and William Morris. First presented in *Déblaiement d'Art* (1894), this vision found its fullest expression in the villa known as *Bloemenwerf*, an English cottage-style house designed by the couple. Both a manifesto of Rationalist architecture and a showcase for their artistic ideals, the house brought together sculptures by George Minne, paintings by Théo Van Rysselberghe, furniture and decorative objects designed by van de Velde, as well as clothing created by the couple and worn by Maria Sèthe.



Theo Van Rysselberghe, *Maria Sèthe at the Harmonium*, 1891.
Oil on canvas,
Musée royal des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers – Communauté flamande (KMSKA)

© Photo : Rik Klein Gotink

# SECTION 12
# BELGIANS IN PARIS THE 1900 WORLD FAIR

At the 1900 World Fair in Paris, the Grand Palais hosted a so-called “Decennial” exhibition, partly devoted to foreign nations. Faced with an artistic panorama deemed disappointing, the Belgian section stood out as an exception, hailed by critics as a “renaissance of painting in the land of Van Eyck, Rubens, and Van Dyck” (Gustave Geffroy). While the Belgian pavilion, a reconstruction of the Gothic town hall of Oudenaarde, sought to anchor the country in its glorious past, the exhibition itself highlighted the eclectic modernity of the Belgian artistic scene, championed by members of the organizing committee such as Octave Maus. The exuberance of Léon Frederic’s Modern Gothic style was juxtaposed with the hieratic figures of the Symbolist Fernand Khnopff, while the idealism of Jean Delville contrasted with Émile Claus’s realist vision. Through this audacious display, Belgium established itself as one of the most influential and distinctive artistic centres in Europe. Although Belgian Art Nouveau remained relatively discreet at the 1900 World Fair, it was nevertheless represented in the Blue Pavilion, a luxury restaurant designed by Gustave Serrurier and the French architect René Dulong.



Léon Frederic, *The Stream,* central panel of the triptych,1890 /1897-1899.
Oil on canvas.
Bruxelles, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique (MRBAB)
© Photo: Art-Photo/PHIA cv

# Scenography

**BRUXELLES 1900 – An architectural scenography**

The exhibition layout is designed as an architectural promenade, wherein each space—identifiable by its form and the colour of its wall panels—is home to a specific section of the exhibition. The spatial structure has been conceived to be as clear and fluid as possible, guiding visitors while incorporating elements of surprise throughout their experience, both in terms of scale and colour palette, thereby maintaining the visitor's interest from beginning to end.

In the introductory area, visitors are welcomed by a large photograph of Brussels in 1900, accompanied by Louis Ghémar's spectacular triptych. A wall of posters guides the visitor towards the vast room devoted to "Brussels and the Arts". This space is intended to evoke a museum setting where the leading Belgian artistic movements from the turn of the century are showcased, with a special focus on Léon Spilliaert.

In the gallery, three sections lead seamlessly from one into the other: "An Art of Contemplation and Dream"—featuring a focus on Fernand Khnopff—followed by "Visions of Nature", and lastly "Social Art". The latter features an immersive space depicting Victor Horta's remarkable—and sadly, long-demolished—Maison du Peuple (House of the People). The next section, called "Modern Gothics", presents the work of George Minne, including his celebrated *Fountain of Kneeling Youths*. The extensive section dedicated to Art Nouveau is divided into four distinct areas: an introduction referencing the 1897 Colonial Exhibition; a cabinet devoted to the works of Philippe Wolfers; and a large octagonal hall with as its centre point, a window overlooking the Petit Palais garden. This hall showcases the key trends and figures of Belgian Art Nouveau in both architecture and the decorative arts. The highlight of this sequence is a room housing an exceptional collection of furniture designed by Henry van de Velde.

By way of conclusion, the last room presents five artworks produced by some of Belgium's greatest artists, all of which received awards and acclaim at the Paris World Fair in 1900.

**Philippe Pumain**



# Press Visuals




1. Gisbert Combaz, O. De Rycker & Mendel, Brussels, printer.
Poster for *La Libre Esthétique*, 2nd Annual Salon, 1895.
Colourlithograph on paper.
© Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium (KBR).



2 James Ensor, *The Skeleton Painter*, 1896.
Oil on panel.
Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, Flemish Community (KMSKA).
© Photo: Rik Klein Gotink.

The Brussels art salons saw the emergence of unique figures like James Ensor. From the mid-1880s onwards, the Belgian artist developed an original style where masks and skeletons became recurring satirical motifs. Having executed over sixty self-portraits, he brought these elements together in *Le Squelette peintre (The Skeleton Painter)*, depicting himself—worn brushes in hand—at the heart of his work as an isolated, misunderstood genius.



3. William Degouve de Nuncques, *Landscape – Night Effect*, 1896.
Pastel on paper.
Ixelles Museum, Belgium.
© Photo: Ixelles Museum.

Gifted to Octave Maus in 1903 to mark the tenth anniversary of La Libre Esthétique, this landscape is characteristic of the night scenes to which William Degouve de Nuncques devoted himself between 1895 and 1899. Inspired by writer Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949)—who cultivated a new vision of landscapes bathed in a lunar pallor—Degouve created a dreamlike pictorial language defined by its blue-toned harmonies. Executed in pastel, his preferred medium, these night scenes—with their subtle, ethereal nuances—convey a poetic and mysterious experience of nature.



4. Charles Van der Stappen, *The Sphinx*, 1898.
Marble.
Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB)
© Photo: J. Geleyns / Ro scan

A versatile sculptor, Charles Van der Stappen moved between Classicism, Realism, and Symbolism. This *Sphinx* is one of his masterpieces. The bust, featuring youthful features and a Mannerist-inspired helmet, attests to his study of Florentine Renaissance sculpture, an interest sparked thanks to several stays in Italy. The work was produced in various materials, including an ivory version exhibited at the Colonial Exhibition of 1897. The marble work shown here was acquired by the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts (Royal Museums of Fine Arts) of Belgium as early as 1899.



5. Léon Spilliaert, ***Bird of Prey***, 1902.
Pencil, ink, wash, brush, watercolour and charcoal on paper.
© New York, The Hearn Family Trust



6. Léon Spilliaert, *Self-Portrait, 2 November 1908*, 1908.Ink, wash, coloured pencil, pastel and gouache on paper.
© New York, The Hearn Family Trust

Léon Spilliaert created multiple self-portraits between 1902 and 1909 which may be said to reflect his existential anguish. Most are characterized by a mask-like face with hollow eye sockets. The self-portrait of 2 November 1908 is no exception: a near-spectral figure, the artist confronts the viewer in an abyssal composition, scrutinizing his image in a mirror whose frame is visible behind the objects in the foreground. The presence of the number 2 on the right can be interpreted as a reference to All Souls' Day, adding to the macabre quality of the self-portrait.



7. Constant Montald, *The Nymphs*, c. 1898. Matte oil binder and tempera on canvas, 95.5 × 135.5 cm. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB)
© Photo : J. Geleyns - Art Photography

The work of Constant Montald stands out for the alliance of a classicizing pictorial style and an ethereal atmosphere. Privileging monumental formats, the artist experimented with a distemper technique (using a glue-based binder rather than oil paint), in an effort to recreate the matte finish of Italian Renaissance frescoes. Through his iconography, poetic atmosphere, and penchant for large-scale compositions, he also aligns himself with the legacy of Pierre Puvis de Chavannes, whose work he discovered during a stay in Paris.



8. Xavier Mellery, *The Fall of the Last Autumn Leaves*, c. 1890.
Brush and grey and reddish-brown ink,watercolour, graphite, black dry media and white gouache on silver-gold prepared paper mounted on cardboard. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
© Photo: J. Geleyns / Ro scan

*Chute des dernières feuilles d'automne (The Last Leaves of Autumn)* is one of Xavier Mellery's poetic and Symbolist masterpieces. While no leaves actually fall in the image, instead, within a dynamic, concentric composition, female figures seem to descend from the bare branches of an unseen tree, thus evoking the finitude of human life. The web-like structure and the trio of figures implicitly allude to the Fates.



9. Jean Delville, *Orpheus dead,* 1893.
Oil on canvas. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
© Photo : J. Geleyns - Art Photography



10. Fernand Khnopff, *Caresses or Art*, 1896.
Oil on canvas.
Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB)
© Photo : J. Van Seghbroeck

*Caresses* perfectly demonstrates Fernand Khnopff's aesthetic. The scene evokes the encounter between Oedipus and the Sphinx, but the artist—with a marked penchant for esotericism—deliberately cultivates a sense of ambiguity. Blue columns, enigmatic symbols, and wings associated with Hypnos (the god of sleep) merge into an arcane composition where mystery prevents a single definitive interpretation.



11. Fernand Khnopff, *With Georges Rodenbach, A Dead City*, 1889.
Black ink, pencil and coloured pencil on paper.
© New York, The Hearn Family Trust



12. Jean Delville, *The Treasures of Satan*, 1895.
Oil on canvas. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
© Photo d'art Speltdoorn & Fils, Bruxelles

In an underwater realm of rocks, coral, and marine creatures, naked young men and women—intoxicated and entwined—argue over the gold coins and jewels on the seabed. Above them, a satanic figure with red hair, whose wings transform into tentacles, is seen dancing gracefully. In Delville's work, this infernal scene distances itself from European tradition: it seeks less to foster revulsion than to inspire a strange fascination, thereby rendering Satan's kingdom an ambiguous, quasi-seductive ideal.



13. Juliette Wytsman, *Broom*, c. 1900.
Oil on canvas.
Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
© Photo d'art Speltdoorn & Fils Bruxelles



14. Léon Frederic, *The Three Ages of a Worker* (triptych), 1895-1897.
Oil on panel.
Paris, musée d'Orsay
© Hervé Lewandowski / Grand Palais Rmn

Depicting a teeming crowd on the streets of Brussels and symbolizing the life of the worker from birth to death, this painting is akin to a pictorial monument dedicated to the new heroes of modern society. Léon Frederic modifies the conventions of Flemish triptychs—in both format and iconography—to raise the proletariat to a sacred status, endowing his subject with a biblical solemnity. The work, emblematic of social art, reflects the changing attitudes of the elites, who were now aware of and sensitive to the living conditions and aspirations of the common people.



15. Constantin Meunier, *Woman of the People*, 1893.
Bronze.
© Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).

Far removed from sentimentality and pathos, Constantin Meunier represents the most disadvantaged social classes. In the words of Octave Mirbeau: "He detests the idle chatter and anecdotal detail that diminish everything they touch". In his 1893 critique, Mirbeau praised the nobility of line, the purity of contour, and the restrained anguish of *Femme du peuple (Woman of the People)*, qualities endowing this working-class figure with a sober, universal grandeur.



16. Eugène Laermans, *An Evening of Protest*, 1893.
Oil on canvas. Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB)
© Photo: J. Geleyns - Ro scan

Born in Brussels, Eugène Laermans bears witness to the social unrest and struggles that tormented his city and country during the 1890s. His deafness likely influenced his interpretation. In *Un soir de grève (An Evening of Protest)*, the shapeless crowd expresses a pent-up anger. A hesitant young woman, who looks directly at the viewer, seems to question the collective movement into which she has been swept. The look on the man's face in front of her condemns her doubts. The group, united under the socialist flag, dominates the scene. A crying child clinging to his mother's skirts breaks this unity.



17. Léon Spilliaert, *Man with Flag* or *Crowd Gathered Under a Black Flag*, 1904.
Pencil, India ink wash, watercolour and pastel on paper.
© Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium (KBR).

*Homme au drapeau (Man with Flag)* is one of the few works by Léon Spilliaert to focus on a social theme. A menacing crowd with closed faces advances behind a large black flag, a reference to the anarchist movement. In the background, the dawn is tinged with red. Although Spilliaert was not overtly political, he rubbed shoulders with certain cultural circles sympathetic to anarchism and socialism. This drawing—atypical within his production—reveals his perspective on the social tensions of the era.



18. Léon Frédéric, *Girl with Cabbage*, 1898.
Pencil and charcoal on paper.
© New York, The Hearn Family Trust



19. George Minne, *Fountain of the Kneeling Figures*, 1898.
Plaster.
Ghent, Museum of Fine Arts (MSK).
© Photo: Dominique Provost

A sculptor, printmaker, and draughtsman, George Minne made a name for himself through the spiritual depth and expressive restraint of his art. Like Rodin (1840–1917) with his *Trois ombres (Three Shades)* crowning *La Porte de l'Enfer (The Gates of Hell)*, Minne arranges five versions of his *Agenouillé (Kneeling Youth)* around the edge of a basin, thus creating the fountain of the same name. Also absorbed in a posture of quiet contemplation, this kneeling young man embodies the quintessence of Minne's art: introspection, formal minimalism, purity of line, and the long, elongated body.



20. Hélène De Rudder-Du Ménil, *The Four Seasons : Autumn*, 1900-1903.
Silk embroidery.
© Brussels, Museum of the City of Brussels – Maison du Roi

Inspired by the British Arts & Crafts movement, Belgian artists played an active role in the development of the decorative arts and the revival of national traditions, particularly textile art. Hélène De Rudder-Du Ménil became renowned for her skilled embroidery work. Created from cartoons (drawings) done in collaboration with her husband—painter and sculptor Isidore De Rudder (1855–1943)—*The Four Seasons* takes inspiration from the traditional allegorical link between the stages of life and the seasons, a motif dating back to the Middle Ages. The scenes are richly ornamented and rendered in a naturalistic style fusing tradition and modernity.



21. Paul Du Bois, *Minerva or Liberty,* c. 1901.
Ivory and silver.
© Brussels, Museum of the City of Brussels – Maison du Roi.



22. Philippe Wolfers, *Swan's Caress*, 1897.
Bronze and ivory; marble base. Brussels,
© Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH).

On display in the Hall of Honour at the 1897 Colonial Exhibition alongside some thirty other ivory works, *Caresse du Cygne (Caress of the Swan)* was the centrepiece. Featuring an exceptionally large elephant tusk with a bronze swan gracefully embracing it, the piece demonstrates a remarkable technical mastery. Its original title, *Vase au Cygne (Swan Vase)*, referred to its first function as a recipient for flowers, however for the exhibition, Philippe Wolfers changed it to the more poetic *Caresse du Cygne (Caress of the Swan)*.



23. Philippe Wolfers, *Civilisation and Barbarism*, 1897-1898.
Ivory, silver and onyx.
Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), on deposit from the King Baudouin Foundation.
© Image Studio

This work was gifted to Edmond van Eetvelde (1852–1925), State Secretary for the Congo Free State, in recognition of his role in the creation of the 1897 Colonial Exhibition. Executed by silversmith Philippe Wolfers, the piece is in tune with the colonial propaganda of the day: a swan—symbolizing civilization—is shown battling a dragon representing barbarism to protect the lily, a flower of purity. The ensemble rests on a green onyx base that echoes the woodwork of the drawing room in van Eetvelde's home, which had been designed by Victor Horta.



24. Philippe Wolfers, *Birds and Iris Ornamental Comb*, 1899-1900.
Tortoiseshell, gold, enamel, carnelian and opal.
© Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), on deposit from the King Baudouin Foundation (Léon Courtin-Marcelle Bouché Fund).



25. Philippe Wolfers, *Swan and Snakes Pendant*, 1899.
Gold, enamel, opal, ruby, diamond and pearl.
© Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), on deposit from the King Baudouin Foundation (Léon Courtin–Marcelle Bouché Fund).



26. Firmin Baes, *Portrait of Sophie Wolfers-Willstädter,* 1903.
Oil on canvas. Brussels, Royal Museums of Art and History (RMAH), on deposit from the King Baudouin Foundation (Christian Bauwens Fund).
© (RMAH)-KMKG/Image Studio - CC BY-SA 4.0.

In 1903, Philippe Wolfers commissioned painter Firmin Baes to create a portrait of his wife, Sophie Wolfers-Willstädter (1864–1946). Elegantly dressed, the sitter is depicted in profile with her body turned three-quarters, revealing the *Cygne et serpents (Swan and Serpents)* pendant—a unique jewellery piece designed and gifted by her husband—against her bare throat. The painting was first displayed to the public in 1904 at an exhibition held by the Pour l'Art artistic circle, of which Baes was a member and Wolfers, president.



27. Philippe Wolfers, *Maleficia*, 1906.
Red marble (porphyry), ivory and amethyst.
© Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
On deposit from the Gillion-Crowet Collection.

An exceptionally talented goldsmith, Philippe Wolfers also made a name for himself in the realm of sculpture, a field he began to explore circa 1905. *Maleficia* is one of his most spectacular works of this type: the combination of porphyry (the bust), ivory (the snakes in the hair), and amethyst (the mask) reflects Wolfers's taste for polychromy. Furthermore, the femme fatale theme (Medusa) converges with the tradition of fin-de-siècle Symbolism.



28. Philippe Wolfers, *Woman with a Peacock or Fairy with a Peacock*, 1904.
Marble, bronze and enamel.
Brussels, private collection.
© Photo: Cédric Verhelst

A highly talented goldsmith, Philippe Wolfers also made a name for himself in the realm of sculpture, as spectacularly evidenced in *La Femme au paon (Woman with a Peacock).* Associating a female figure in marble—whose bodily movement harmoniously follows the curve of a bronze peacock—this piece demonstrates a perfect mastery in the use of both materials. As a final touch of refinement, the polychromy of the eyespots on the peacock's train is competently rendered through the use of multi-coloured enamel.



29. Léon Ledru, Victor Horta Val Saint Lambert Crystal Works.*Val Saint Lambert Crystal Works,* c.1900.
Layered and wheel-engraved crystal, gilt bronze mount.
Bruxelles, Horta Museum - St Gilles, Gillis
© Photo : Paul Louis



30. Théo Van Rysselberghe, *Maria Sèthe at the Harmonium*, 1891.
Oil on canvas.
Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp,
Belgium – Flemish Community (KMSKA).
© Photo: Rik Klein Gotink

In a Pointillist style, Théo Van Rysselberghe depicts Maria Sèthe sitting at a harmonium. The model came from a wealthy, cultured Brussels family for whom music was very important. A member of Les XX avant-garde circle, she married Henry van de Velde in 1894 and became his collaborator. Their villa, called *Bloemenwerf*, was a product of their creative synergy and boasted this very portrait in the hall, where the pink of the walls complemented the sitter's dress, creating a harmonious colour scheme.



31. Léon Frédéric, *The Stream*, central panel of the triptych, 1890 / 1897-1899. Oil on canvas.
Brussels, Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB).
© Photo: Art-Photo/PHIA cv.

Presented at the 1900 World Fair in Paris and awarded a gold medal, *Le Ruisseau (The Stream)* combines exuberance with naturalistic precision. Dedicated to Beethoven's Pastoral (1808), this allegorical triptych offers a moral and poetic meditation in which the ideal of happiness stems from the contemplation of nature. In the painting, Frederic represents a regenerated form of humanity—at one with nature and embracing a childlike state—thereby recalling the words of anarchist geographer Élisée Reclus (1830–1905): "Thanks to this return to nature, humanity blossoms once again in all its youth and joy."



32. Julien Dillens, *The Silence of the Tomb*, 1896. Plaster.
Ixelles Museum, Belgium.
© Photo: Ixelles Museum.

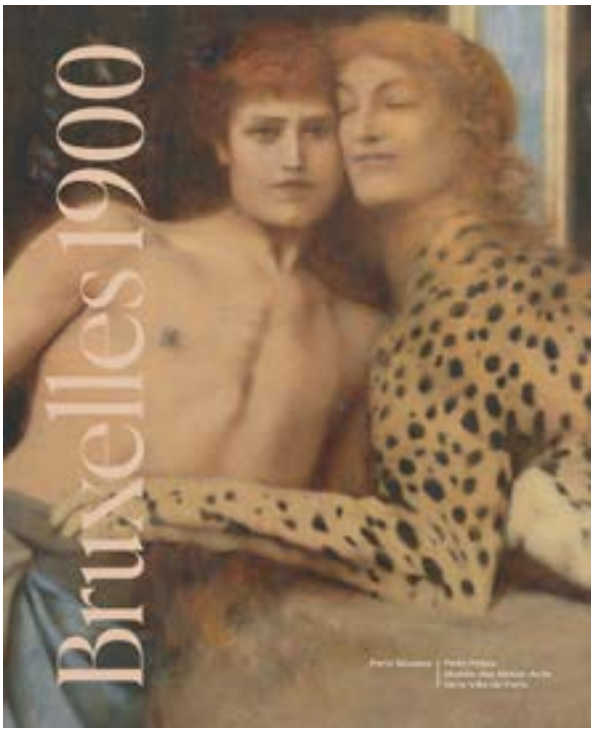
Julien Dillens was one of the most influential Belgian sculptors of his generation. After winning the Prix de Rome in 1877, he travelled to Italy, where he spent several years. The confrontation with Renaissance masterpieces enriched his style. For example, the sculptural power and pose of the draped figure recall the art of Michelangelo (1475–1564). The funereal aura of this hieratic figure—poised between the worlds of the living and the dead—captured the interest of Idealist circles. The work would also make a lasting impression at the 1900 World Fair in Paris, earning Dillens the Grand Prize.



33. Jean Delville, *The Love of Souls*, 1900.
Mixed media on plaster.
Ixelles Museum, Belgium.
© Photo: Vincent Everarts.

A major figure of Belgian Esoteric Symbolism, Jean Delville notably founded the Salons d'Art idéaliste (Salons of Idealist Art), dedicated to promoting art endowed with a certain spirituality and purity. *L'Amour des âmes (The Love of Souls)* perfectly embodies this quest: two intertwined, ethereal bodies rise towards a celestial light source, carried by the undulating clouds whose arabesques are reminiscent of the fluid lines of Art Nouveau. The theme echoes Greek philosopher Plato's myth of the androgynous being. The work won a silver medal at the 1900 World Fair in Paris.

# Exhibition catalogue




## BRUXELLES 1900

In the late nineteenth century, amidst a period of rapid urban and industrial growth, Brussels became an important European capital, home to an artistic and intellectual microcosm that sought to break free from all forms of conformism. Within avant-garde circles like La Libre Esthétique, a number of artists, such as Fernand Khnopff, James Ensor, Théo Van Rysselberghe, Henry van de Velde, and George Minne, shared an ambition to create a new visual language by exploring emerging artistic movements, including Symbolism, Idealism, Neo-Impressionism, Luminism, and social art. This creative ferment touched not only the fine arts but also the graphic and decorative arts, encompassing posters, furniture, and ceramics, as well as jewellery. This can be witnessed in the remarkable creations by Philippe Wolfers; in literature and theatre with authors like Maurice Maeterlinck and Émile Verhaeren; and even in architecture, where it is best seen in the Maison du Peuple and the private townhouses designed by Victor Horta. This was the beginning of Art Nouveau, a movement that sought to achieve harmony across every creative field.

Under the direction of Anne-Charlotte Cathelineau, Chief Heritage Curator, Petit Palais, Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris, Davy Depelchin, Head Curator of 19th-century Paintings and Sculpture at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, and Benjamin Foudral, Curator and Director of the Musée et Pôle Gustave-Courbet, Ornans Foudral, conservateur et directeur du musée et pôle Gustave-Courbet, Ornans.

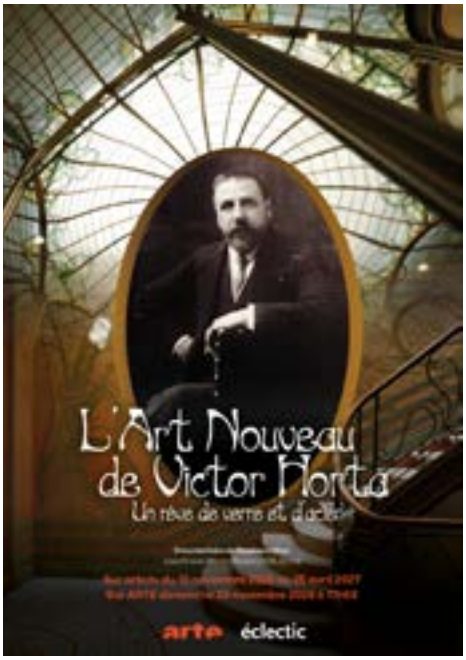
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# Exhibition partners

## Media partners

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### ARTE documentary
### *L'Art nouveau de Victor Horta. Un rêve de verre et d'acier* (The Art Nouveau of Victor Horta. A Dream of Glass and Steel)

Visionary architect Victor Horta made a spectacular breakthrough in Brussels in 1893 when he designed the Hôtel Tassel. This marked the emergence and foundations for Art Nouveau—a novel blend of materials, open-plan spaces, and bold forms inspired by nature. Tracing the life of this ambitious and dedicated artist, the documentary immerses the viewer in the creative energy of Europe during the Belle Époque. It also shines a light on the hard-fought battle to preserve his extraordinary works, some of which, like the Maison du Peuple, no longer exist today.

***L'Art nouveau de Victor Horta. Un rêve de verre et d'acier***
**A documentary by Stéphane Ghez**
**Co-written with Manon Raineri**
**Coproduction: ARTE France, Éclectic, Agent double (France, 2026, 52 mins)**
**Broadcast on ARTE Sunday 22 November 2026 at 5.55pm and available on the ARTE player from 10 November 2026 to 25 April 2027**

## Corporate sponsors

Fondation Roi Baudouin France

Founded in Brussels in 1976, the King Baudouin Foundation is an independent foundation working across several sectors in Belgium, Europe, and internationally. Its mission is to contribute to a fairer, more inclusive, and more sustainable society. A major player in the philanthropic field, the Foundation mobilizes generosity in support of public interest projects with a positive societal impact. In 2021, it opened an office in Paris to be closer to its philanthropists and project leaders in France, and to facilitate the implementation of philanthropic initiatives.

The preservation and promotion of Belgian heritage is one of its key activities. Over the decades, the Foundation has amassed a collection comprising over 29,000 works of art and 31 archival collections. These are put on long-term loan across some one hundred museums and public institutions throughout Belgium, thus making these artworks accessible to the widest possible audience. Some of the works in the collections also travel abroad for international exhibitions. Twenty-one works from the King Baudouin Foundation are featured in the *Bruxelles 1900* exhibition at the Petit Palais in Paris, thereby reflecting the Foundation's commitment to sharing and showcasing an exceptional heritage preserved for the benefit of all.

**The inauguration of this exhibition was made possible thanks to the support of**

Ambassade de Belgique à Paris

P M PIERRE MARCOLIN

Maison Vranken, Reims

# Programme of events

**The programme of cultural activities and events around this exhibition has been made possible thanks to the support of** FONDATION SIGNATURE

## AROUND THE EXHIBITION

**THE STRANGE TOUR 6-10 YRS**

Families can enjoy an unusual tour as they follow the character of punch from room to room as he points out some strange and rare works of art.

## ACTIVITIES FOR INDIVIDUAL VISITORS

**Adults and young visitors**

**Guided tour**
Duration 90 mins. €7/€5 + exhibition admission
**Tuesday and Friday at 12.30pm, Saturday at 10am**

*Dates and bookings for the different activities via the website: petitpalais.paris.fr*

**Tours for hearing impaired visitors**

**Lip-reading guided tour GROUP**
In the company of a guide trained in tours for the hearing impaired, participants can discover the exhibition.
Tuesday 1 December at 10.30am

Tour duration 90 mins.
€5 per person. Free for the person accompanying the hearing-impaired visitor.
Free admission to the exhibition.

*Booking for activities by mail to: petitpalais.handicap-champsocial@paris.fr*

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

*Adults, social action groups or associations, visitors with disabilities, school groups (from 13/14 yrs+)*

### Guided tour
In the company of a museum guide, visit the exhibition on a tour that is adapted to the participants.

For information about prices, see: petitpalais.paris.fr.
Bookings via petitpalais.reservation@paris.fr or by telephone on Tuesday and Thursday at +33 (0)1 53 43 40 36

### Group visits (without a guide)
Bookings necessary. See booking information on petitpalais.paris.fr under “Public” .

## YOUNG ADULTS (18-30 YRS)

**“BRUSSELS ELECTRIFIES THE PETIT PALAIS / SOIRÉE NOVA – XX”**

Friday 27 November from 8pm to 11.30pm

An evening organized as part of the Biennale NOVA_XX, an international festival by the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles/Paris.

Inspired by the artistic effervescence of 1900s’ Brussels, this event is a celebration of the creative audacity of today’s Belgian artists. Over the course of the evening, the public can enjoy an electric and surprising programme of DJ sets, performances, and interventions.

It brings together Azo, NVST, Iced Lattina, and Emma Caers for the DJ sets, Elen Braga, Ugo Woatzi, Luna Isola Bersonnati, Vittoria Toscana, Lux Laurent, and Jean Biche for the performances, while Esther Denis has designed part of the scenography.

Event organized in partnership with the Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles.

## PERFORMING ARTS

### “Le petit pays – notes for an upcoming show”

Friday, 26 March from 6.30pm to 7.30pm

Texts taken from Petit Pays, a theatrical work-in-progress by David Murgia following in the footsteps of Discours à la Nation and performed here for a creation scheduled for 2027/2028.

*Details on the cultural programme and bookings on: petitpalais.paris.fr*

## AUDITORIUM

### CONFERENCES

Thursday 19 November 2026 at 12.30pm
Inaugural conference
*BRUXELLES 1900*
With the curators of the exhibition, Davy Depelchin, Head Curator of 19th-century Paintings and Sculpture at the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Benjamin Foudral, Director of the Musée Gustave Courbet d’Ornans, and Anne-Charlotte Cathelineau, Chief Heritage Curator in charge of the Sculpture Department, Petit Palais.

Thursday 14 January 2027 at 12.30pm
**“The Revival of Architecture and the Applied Arts in Belgium (1890 – 1900)”**
By Benjamin Zurstrassen, Curator, Musée Horta, Brussels.

Thursday 4 February 2027 at 12.30pm
**“Musée d’Ixelles 135 Years of Art: A Great Story on a Human Scale”**
By Claire Leblanc, Director-Curator, Musée d’Ixelles.

Thursday 1 April at 12.30pm
**“Filming Brussels - 1897-1930”**
By Wouter Hessels, Professor of cinema history at the Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema & Sound and at the Institut National Supérieur des Arts du Spectacle in Brussels and Thomas Beaufils, Professor of Dutch civilization at the Université de Lille.

**Conference series**

**Paris-Bruxelles, Bruxelles-Paris : Historical Affinities**

Friday 27 november at 12.30pm
**“The Origins of Belgium: Myths and Realities”**
By Sébastien Dubois, Director of the Archives générales du Royaume, professor at the Université catholique de Louvain.

Friday 4 December at 12.30pm
**“Paris, Brussels: Two Colonial Capitals”**
By Emmanuelle Sibeud, Professor at Université Paris 8 and Amandine Lauro, qualified FNRS Researcher and Professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles.

Friday 26 February at 12.30pm
**"Belgians in Paris in the 19th century: A Community?"**
By Henk Byls, Researcher and Teacher at the Haute école de Thomas More.

Friday 12 March at 12.30pm
**"A Complex Admiration. Culinary Associations between Brussels and Paris during the Belle Epoque (1895-1914)"**
By Peter Scholliers, Professor Emeritus at Vrje Universiteit Brussels

Friday 23 April at 12.30pm
**"France-Belgium (1830-1914): A Tumultuous Relationship"**
By Catherine Lanneau, Professor at the Université de Liège.

In partnership with the Comité d'Histoire de la Ville de Paris

## CONCERTS

L'Ecole Normale de Musique de Paris - Alfred Cortot participates in the exhibition Bruxelles 1900 with two concerts taking place on **Sunday 7 March and Sunday 18 April.**

*Detailed programme available on: Internet petitpalais.paris.fr.*

## SYMPOSIUM

Thursday 10 December from 10am to 5.30pm
**"Joint creation. The literary and artistic collaborations between France and Belgium (1870-1930)"**
The Petit Palais is collaborating with the Sorbonne Université and hosts the first day of this symposium. Experts will shed light on the artistic collaborations that occurred at this time, bearing witness to the cultural effervescence of the nineteenth century and the close ties that existed between France and Belgium.

## SISTERHOOD SERIES

**Women's Season Events at the Petit Palais**
Our monthly gatherings—bringing together contemporary female artists and other well-known women, like writers, journalists, and doctors—continue this season. They will share their personal journeys and reflections on the empowerment and recognition of women in art and society.

Saturday 12 December at 5pm
**"Evoking Virginia Woolf",** with Carine Bratzlavsky, translator.

Saturday 27 February at 5pm
**"Despite the apocalypse, you shall hear our voices",** with Chloé Delaume, writer, Joëlle Sambi, poet, Héloïse Husquinet, author, Marie Darah, poet, Solenne Planchais, author, and Eloise Brézillon, author-researcher

*For more details, see the programme online at: Internet petitpalais.paris.fr.*

*Free conferences and concerts, open to all, subject to availability.*

# The Petit Palais
## Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris



© Paris Musées / Petit Palais / Benoit Fougeirol

Built for the Exposition Universelle of 1900, the Petit Palais building is a masterpiece by architect Charles Girault. In 1902, it became the City of Paris Museum of Fine Arts and presents a very beautiful collection of paintings, sculptures, furnishings and art objects dating from Antiquity to 1914.

Among the museum treasures are an exceptional collection of Greek vases and a very large group of Flemish and Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century, displayed around the famous Self-Portrait with Dog by Rembrandt. A magnificent collection of French paintings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries includes major works by Fragonard, Greuze, David, Géricault, Delacroix, Courbet, Pissarro, Monet, Sisley, Cézanne and Vuillard. The museum is also very proud of a very beautifulcollection of sculptures by Carpeaux, Carriès and Dalou. The collection of decorative art is especially noted for objects from the Renaissance and the 1900s, including glasswork by Gallé, jewellery by Fouquet and Lalique and a dining room designed by Guimard for his private mansion. Finally, the museum has an outstanding graphic arts room featuring complete series of engravings by Dürer, Rembrandt and Callot and a rare collection of Nordic drawings.

The programme of temporary exhibitions at the Petit Palais alternates ambitious major themes such as *Paris Romantique, Paris 1900, Les Bas-fonds du Baroque, Modern Paris* with monographs that allow us to rediscover forgotten painters such as Theodore Rousseau, Jusepe de Ribera, Walter Sickert. Each autumn, contemporary artists such as Yan Pei-Ming (2019), Laurence Aëgerter (2020), Jean-Michel Othoniel (2021), Ugo Rondinone (2022), Loris Gréaud (2023) and Bilal Hamdad (2025), as well as the Street Art in 2024 have been invited to exhibit in the Petit Palais' permanent collections to create a dialogue with these paintings and reveal the links between their works and those of the museum.

# Paris Musées
## A museums network

**Paris Musées est un établissement public regroupant les 12 musées et 2 sites patrimoniaux de la Ville de Paris. Premier réseau de musées en Europe, Paris Musées a accueilli en 2025 plus de 5,1 millions de visiteurs.**

Administratively grouped together as Paris Musées, the fourteen museums and heritage sites of the City of Paris possess collections that are as exceptional for their diversity as for their quality.

To open up and share this significant cultural heritage, they have adopted a new visitor experience policy, moderated prices for temporary exhibitions, and focus on providing access to members of the public who traditionally lack access to cultural offerings.

Their permanent collections, which are free*, and the temporary exhibitions and varied cultural programming reached 4.8 million visitors in 2024.



## Get the Paris Musées card!

A card can be bought from Paris Musées, which gives unlimited access, ahead of the queue, to the temporary exhibitions in all 14 of the museums of Paris*, as well as special tariffs for activities.

It entitles the holder to reductions in the bookshop-boutiques and the caferestaurants, and to receive prior information about events in the museums. In 2014, the card was bought by 9000 people.

Information is available at the Museum ticket offices or on petitpalais.paris.en

*Except the archaeological Crypt under the forecourt of l'île de la Cité and the Catacombs.

# Practical information

## BRUXELLES 1900

**Petit Palais**
Musée des Beaux-Arts de la Ville de Paris.
Avenue Winston-Churchill, 75008 Paris.
Tel : 01 53 43 40 00
petitpalais.paris.fr

Accessible to visitors with disabilities.

**Opening hours**
From Tuesday to Sunday from 10am to 6pm
Late openings on Fridays and Saturdays until 8pm.
Closed 25 December and 1 January.

**Admission**
Full rate: 17 euros
Reduced rate: 15 euros
Reservation of a recommended visit time on petitpalais.paris.fr

**Access**
Metro
Lines 1 et 13 : Champs-Élysées Clemenceau.
Line 9 : Franklin D. Roosevelt

RER
Line C : Invalides.

Bus
Lines : 28, 42, 72, 73, 80, 83, 93.

VÉLIB'
Station 8001 (Petit Palais).

**Auditorium**
Informations on the programmes at the front desk or at petitpalais.paris.fr

**Café-restaurant *Le 1902***
Openings 10am to 5:15 pm (last order)
Terrace closure 5:40pm.
Late openings: see on the site: petitpalais.paris.fr

**Bookshop-boutique**
Openings from 10am to 5:45pm
Late openings: see on the site: petitpalais.paris.fr