

## FAQs

### **Explain the need for a new style, Art nouveau.**

The advent of Art Nouveau can be traced to two distinct influences: the first was the introduction, around 1880, of the Arts and Crafts movement, led by the English designer William Morris. This movement, much like Art Nouveau, was a reaction against the cluttered designs and compositions of Victorian-era decorative art. The second was the current vogue for Japanese art, particularly wood-block prints, that swept up many European artists in the 1880s and 90s, including the likes of Gustav Klimt, Emile Galle and James Abbott McNeill Whistler. Japanese wood-block prints contained floral and bulbous forms, and "whiplash" curves, all key elements of what would eventually become Art Nouveau.

It is difficult to pinpoint the first work(s) of art that officially launched Art Nouveau. Some argue that the patterned, flowing lines and floral backgrounds found in the paintings of Vincent van Gogh and Paul Gauguin represent Art Nouveau's birth, or perhaps even the decorative lithographs of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, such as *La Goule at the Moulin Rouge* (1891). But most point to the origins in the decorative arts, and in particular to a book jacket by English architect and designer Arthur Heygate Mackmurdo for the 1883 volume *Wren's City Churches*. The design depicts serpentine stalks of flowers coalescing into one large, whiplashed stalk at the bottom of the page, clearly reminiscent of Japanese-style wood-block prints.

### **Brief about the key features of the style- Art Nouveau.?**

The desire to abandon the historical styles of the 19th century was an important impetus behind Art Nouveau and one that establishes the movement's modernism. Industrial production was, at that point, widespread, and yet the decorative arts were increasingly dominated by poorly made objects imitating earlier periods. The practitioners of Art Nouveau sought to revive good workmanship, raise the status of craft, and produce genuinely modern design.

The academic system, which dominated art education from the 17th to the 19th century, underpinned the widespread belief that media such as painting and sculpture were superior to crafts such as furniture design and silver-smithing. The consequence, many believed, was the neglect of good craftsmanship. Art Nouveau artists sought to overturn that belief, aspiring instead to "total works of the arts," the infamous *Gesamtkunstwerk*, that inspired buildings and interiors in which every element partook of the same visual vocabulary.

Many Art Nouveau designers felt that 19th century design had been excessively ornamental, and in wishing to avoid what they perceived as frivolous decoration, they evolved a belief that the function of an object should dictate its form. This theory had its roots in contemporary revivals of the gothic style, and in practice it was a somewhat flexible ethos, yet it would be an important part of the style's legacy to later movements such as modernism and the Bauhaus.

### **Who were the key proponents of Art Nouveau.?**

Art Nouveau architecture made use of many technological innovations of the late 19th century, especially the use of exposed iron and large, irregularly shaped pieces of glass for architecture.

Key Proponents:

- Alphonse Mucha
- Gustav Klimt,
- Jan Toorop,
- René Lalique,
- Louis Comfort Tiffany
- Otto Wagner
- Henry Van de Velde
- Charles Rennie Mackintosh,
- Antoni Gaudí
- Hector Guimard
- Victor Horta
- Peter Behrens
- Josef Hoffmann
- Eliel Saarinen
- Louis Sullivan

### **What was Art nouveau called in various languages?**

Austria - Secessionstil after Wiener Secession,  
 Spanish -Modernismo,  
 Catalan -Modernisme,  
 Czech -Secese,  
 Danish -Skønvirke or Jugendstil,  
 Germany -Jugendstil,  
 Art nouveau or Reformstil,  
 Hungarian -Szecesszió,  
 Italian -L'Art Nouveau,  
 Stile floreale or Stile Liberty,  
 Norwegian -Jugendstil,  
 Polish -Secesja,  
 Slovak -Secesia,  
 Russian -Модерн (Modern),  
 Swedish -Jugend.

### **Explain the different fields in which art nouveau was prospering in its heights.**

Art Nouveau designs were most common in glassware, jewelry, and other decorative objects like ceramics. But the style was also applied to textiles, household silver, domestic utensils, cigarette cases, furniture

and lighting, as well as drawing, poster art, painting and book illustration. Theatrical design of sets and costumes was another area in which the new style flourished. Jewellery of the Art Nouveau period saw new levels of virtuosity in enameling as well as the introduction of new materials such as moulded glass, horn, and ivory. The growth of interest in Japanese art (a fashion known as Japonisme), along with increased respect for Japanese metalworking skills, also stimulated new themes and approaches to ornamentation. As a result, jewellers stopped seeing themselves as mere craftsmen whose task was to provide settings for precious stones like diamonds, and began seeing themselves as artist-designers.