ART NOUVEA PAINTINGS

The Art Nouveau idealization of nature is perhaps best reflected in the fact that each of these artists chose women as their primary subject matter. In addition to using organic shapes and subjects in their paintings, Art Nouveau artists seemed to view women as a symbol of nature. Not only were women featured in paintings, but they were prevalent on advertising posters as well.

Art Nouveau acquired distinctly localised tendencies as its geographic spread increased, some general characteristics are indicative of the form. A description published in Pan magazine of [Hermann Obrist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Obrist)'s wall hanging Cyclamen (1894) described it as "sudden violent curves generated by the crack of a whip", which became well known during the early spread of Art Nouveau. Subsequently, not only did the work itself become better known as The Whiplash but the term "whiplash" is frequently applied to the characteristic curves employed by Art Nouveau artists. Such decorative "whiplash" motifs, formed by dynamic, undulating, and flowing lines in a syncopated rhythm and asymmetrical shape, are found throughout the architecture, painting, sculpture, and other forms of Art Nouveau design.

The origins of Art Nouveau are found in the resistance of the artist [William Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Morris) to the cluttered compositions and the [revival](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gothic_revival) tendencies of the 19th century and his theories that helped initiate the [Arts and crafts movement](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arts_and_crafts_movement). However, [Arthur Mackmurdo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Mackmurdo)'s book-cover for [Wren](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Wren)'s City Churches (1883), with its rhythmic floral patterns, is often considered the first realisation of Art Nouveau. About the same time, the flat perspective and strong colors of [Japanese wood block prints](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ukiyo-e), especially those of [Katsushika Hokusai](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Katsushika_Hokusai), had a strong effect on the formulation of Art Nouveau. The [Japonisme](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japonisme%22%20%5Co%20%22Japonisme) that was popular in Europe during the 1880s and 1890s was particularly influential on many artists with its organic forms and references to the natural world. Besides being adopted by artists like [Emile Gallé](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emile_Gall%C3%A9) and [James Abbott McNeill Whistler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Abbott_McNeill_Whistler), Japanese-inspired art and design was championed by the businessmen [Siegfried Bing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siegfried_Bing) and [Arthur Lasenby Liberty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Lasenby_Liberty) at their storesin Paris and London, respectively.



ART NOUVEA SCULPTURE

Sculptors included [Ladislav Saloun](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ladislav_%C5%A0aloun%22%20%5Co%20%22Ladislav%20%C5%A0aloun), [François-Raoul Larche](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois-Raoul_Larche) and [Charles van der Stappen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_van_der_Stappen). [Jewellery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewellery%22%20%5Co%20%22Jewellery) of the Art Nouveau period revitalized the jeweller's art, with nature as the principal source of inspiration, complemented by new levels of virtuosity in [enameling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vitreous_enamel) and the introduction of new materials, such as [opals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Opal) and semi-precious stones. The widespread interest in [Japanese art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Japanese_art) and the more specialized enthusiasm for Japanese metalworking skills fostered new themes and approaches to ornament. For the previous two centuries, the emphasis in fine jewellery had been on [gemstones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gemstone), in particular on the diamond, and the jeweller or [goldsmith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goldsmith) had been concerned principally with providing settings for their advantage. With Art Nouveau, a different type of jewellery emerged, motivated by the artist-designer rather than the jeweller as setter of precious stones.

The jewellers of Paris and [Brussels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brussels) defined Art Nouveau in jewellery, and in these cities it achieved the most renown. Contemporary French critics were united in acknowledging that jewellery was undergoing a radical transformation, and that the French designer-jeweller-glassmaker [René Lalique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ren%C3%A9_Lalique) was popularizing the changes. Lalique glorified nature in jewellery, extending the repertoire to include new aspects of nature—such as [dragonflies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dragonfly) or grasses—inspired by his encounter with Japanese art. The jewellers were keen to establish the new style in a noble tradition, and for this they used the [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance), with its works of sculpted and enameled gold, and its acceptance of jewellers as artists rather than craftsmen. In most of the enameled work of the period, precious stones receded. Diamonds were usually subsidiary, used alongside less familiar materials such as molded glass, [horn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horn_%28anatomy%29) and [ivory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivory).

