

My dearest watercolourists,

Last week we looked at an art movement which challenged the hierarchy of the arts and it expanded further than solely what is known as the fine arts- painting and sculpture. It was an innovative approach that focused on practicality and technology. The Bauhaus manifested in architecture, textiles, design, glass, as well as painting. However, it was not the first European art movement to challenge the hierarchy and the structure of the art world. As I mentioned, previous movements, such as The Art Nouveau, laid the foundations for the revolutions proposed by the Bauhaus School. Well, this week I decided that the Art Nouveau deserves its own spotlight in our newsletter, and I think you will agree.



Alfons Mucha - F. Champenois Imprimeur-Éditeur via Wikipedia

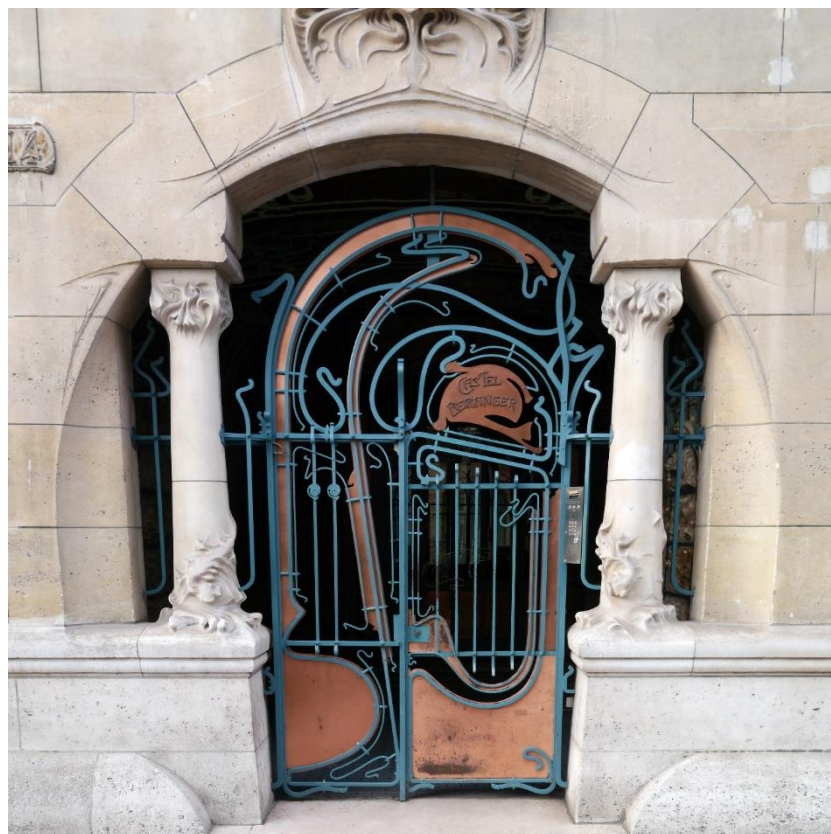


Alphonse Mucha *Winter*, 1897, From the Series: The seasons, Dimensions: 32 x 73 cm via Wiki

Famous for its advertisement posters and illustrations, the Art Nouveau was so much more than just that. It was a way of life!

We talked about the style of the Academy which dominated the art scene and the art market in the nineteenth century. Well, the Art Nouveau movement is yet another counter-reaction to the limitations of the Academy. Representative for the decades between 1890-1920, Art Nouveau was profoundly inspired by the curves encountered in nature, however, it moved towards stylising them. It also explored movement, dynamism and organic shapes. The revolutionary style drew inspiration from Japanese printmaking. The style spread across Europe and the United States and had different manifestations depending on the geographic location.

Belgium, Germany, Denmark, Austria, Hungary, Italy, the United States, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and also Romania, to name a few, are countries in which the movement materialised incorporating local references and influences.



Gateway of the Castel Béranger by Hector Guimard (1895–1898)

Although the Art Nouveau movement was popularised in Paris, it can be also be traced back to the Arts and Crafts movement and William Morris flower design.



Floral wallpaper design (Florales Tapetendesign) William Morris

Moreover, it can be argued that the Pre-Raphaelites also influenced the new aesthetic.



John Everett Millais The Bridesmaid 1851

As mentioned, this movement challenged the art hierarchy. The new art proposed an innovative coherence and intertwining of the arts and crafts—something that The Bauhaus School took further as discussed last week!

Imagine you are in an Art Nouveau. Everything around you is in a continuous dialogue: the furniture, the windows, the patterns, the ceilings. All lines are sinuous, and the inside echoes the outside world, seeking an organic harmony.



Casa Batlló, Barcelona



The Old England Building, Brussels



The Secession Building, Vienna



La Casina delle Civette Rome

I was fortunate enough to visit the La Casina delle Civette when I was studying in Rome. The name of the house translates as the Little House of the Owls, due to its owl decorations. The house is open to the public and preserves a fascinating and quite fun interior. The Art Nouveau style is known as the Liberty Style in Italy and I think this is a wonderful example of the proportion of the movement. It also shows how this movement was not only an aesthetic but a way of life. Below I attached some images of the interior of the house. I think they are so out of this world. I half-wish this will get back into fashion because I would so not mind some Art Nouveau stained glass and a chandelier just like that in my own little owl house!









Well, my dear watercolourists, what do you think? Is it time for the Art Nouveau aesthetic to be back in fashion? Is this too much? Do you love it or not so much?

Have you visited or experience Art Nouveau environments? Let me know your thoughts and impressions

Kindest

Ioana