Brussels 1900 Art Nouveau

Presentation by Chris Bourne
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Outline

• Why a “new art”?  
• Why around 1900?  
• Why Brussels?  
• Art Nouveau Architecture
A “new art”

• “Art Nouveau” in French & English-speaking countries, “Jugendstil” in German-speaking countries, “Sezessionstil” in Austria, “Modernismo” in Spain, “Stilo Liberty” in Italy

• Created by groups of young artists who rejected the historicist “Neo” styles of the nineteenth century
Classical

Parthenon, Athens, Greece completed 432 BC
Neo-Classical

Brussels Stock Exchange completed 1873
Gothic

Cathedral of SS Michael & Gudula, Brussels completed c1450
Neo-Gothic

Notre-Dame de Laeken Church, Brussels completed 1872
Renaissance

Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence completed 1581
Neo-Renaissance

Royal Galleries, Brussels completed 1847
Why around 1900?

• Combination of artistic influences
  – Arts & Crafts
  – Pre-Raphaelites
  – Japanese art
  – Aesthetic movement

• Changed role of women
Arts & Crafts

William Morris (1834-1896)

– preaches return to true artisan methods and values
– “Have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful or believe to be beautiful”
– Morris & Co founded 1861, selling tapestries, fabrics, wallpaper, furniture, stained glass etc. for homes & churches
– Kelmscott Press reprints Chaucer, Icelandic sagas, Middle Eastern poetry, etc.
Woodpecker tapestry 1885

Acanthus wallpaper 1875
Pre-Raphaelites

“Ophelia” by JE Millais 1852
- highly-romanticised view of nature
- minute observation of natural detail
- mediaeval fantasies
- bright colours

“Isabella and the Pot of Basil” by W Holman Hunt 1868
“The Viking Ship” by Edward Burne-Jones (stained-glass window by Morris & Co.) 1884

“Lady Lilith” by Dante Gabriel Rossetti 1883
Japanese art

Japanese Native Village Exhibition, London 1885-87

“Red Fuji” by Hokusai 1833

• Lack of perspective & shadow
• areas of flat, bright colour
• ukiyo-e woodblock prints
• kakiemon porcelain

Hiroshige’s “Reeds in the Snow” on the cover of Siegfried Bing’s “Le Japon Artistique” magazine 1888
“The Great Wave off Kanagawa” by Hokusai
1832

Stained-glass window in Paul Saintenoy’s house, Brussels, 1896, designed by Saintenoy and made by Raphael Evaldre.
Aesthetic Movement

“The Peacock Skirt” by Aubrey Beardsley 1894

“Patience” by Gilbert & Sullivan 1881

Cartoon satirising Oscar Wilde’s poetry in “Punch” 1881
“Aesthetic” teapots by James Hadley for Royal Worcester 1881
Changed role of women

• Women targetted by advertisers
• Votes for women campaigns
• Artists portray decadent, sexualised women
• Prominent women in theatre (e.g. Sarah Bernhardt)
Advertisements by Alfons Mucha
Why Brussels?

- Capital of first country in Continental Europe to undergo industrial revolution
- Huge profits from steel & coal industries & Congo colony fund large middle class which wants to appear innovative and progressive
- Talent pool of young artists, designers, architects and artisans
Art Nouveau architecture in Brussels

1893: Suburb of Ixelles sees first two Art Nouveau buildings

1) House for Professor Tassel by Victor Horta (1861-1947)
As Horta’s designs are still protected by copyright, we regret that the photos used in the presentation are not available in this version published online.
2) own house & studio by Paul Hankar (1859-1901)
Horta’s career blossomed,

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Another house from Paul Hankar’s tragically short career

Alberto Ciamberlani house, Rue Defacqz, 1897, with sgraffiti by Adolphe Crespin
Sgraffiti on facade of Ciamberlani house executed by Adolphe Crespin
Brussels was also home to a disciple of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and his wife Margaret MacDonald...
There is hope in honest error none in the icyp perfections of the mere stilt.

CHAS. RENNIE MACINTOSH
GLASGOW 1901
... Paul Cauchie and his wife Lina

Paul Cauchie 1875-1952

Lina Cauchie 1875-1969
Cauchie House, Rue des Francs, 1905
Brussels was also home to Henri Jacobs (1864-1935) one of the most prolific Art Nouveau school architects, who built over 400 schools and colleges in Belgium. Most of them are still in use today.
Schaerbeek School No 13, Avenue de Roodebeek, 1913, mural by Privat Livemont
Wall paintings from gymnasium at Schaerbeek School No 13
Schaerbeek School No,1, Rue Josephat, 1907
sgraffiti panels by Privat Livemont in indoor playground at Schaerbeek School No 1
Former Girl’s Secondary School, Rue Herkoliers, 1907, street elevation and detail of sgraffiti by Adolphe Crespin
indoor playground with sgraffiti by Adolphe Crespin at Rue Herkoliers school
Former Cohn-Donnay house, Rue Royale Sainte-Marie by Paul Hamesse 1904, details of bar (former reception room and garden passage)
Now “De Ultieme Hallucinatie” bar-restaurant
Aegidium dance hall (later cinema), Saint-Gilles 1905, G Seghers
Otlet house, Rue de Florence, by Octave Van Rysselberghe 1897
Otlet house, entrance hall, stained glass by Henry Van de Velde 1863-1957
Otlet house, stained-glass window from salon to stairwell by Henry Van de Velde
former Edouard Hannon house, now Contretype Gallery, Avenue de la Jonction, by Jules Brunfaut 1904, stained-glass by Emile Gallé, executed by Raphael Evaldre
Hannon house, upstairs landing window executed by Raphael Evaldre
Hannon house, stairwell mural “Les Joies de la Vie” by Pierre-Albert Baudouin
Thank you for your attention
Any Questions?