



# THE HISTORY OF ART NOUVEAU

JUNE 27, 2008  
TO NOVEMBER 28

cincinnati  art museum

Witness the beauty and mystique of art nouveau at Prague's traveling History of Art Nouveau exhibit at the Cincinnati Art Museum. The art nouveau movement of the 1870s thru the 1900s embraced all forms of art, blending the traditional arts as paintings and applied as furniture, glassware, and ceramics. It celebrated spiritual and geometric forms, shapes, and elements.

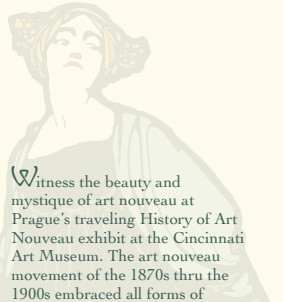
History of Art Nouveau  
Promotional kit

poster, invitation,  
and booklet

THE CINCINNATI  
ART MUSEUM  
INVITES YOU TO...

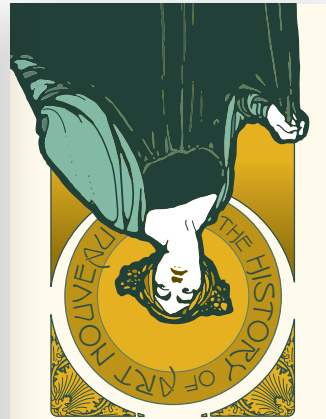
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Witness the beauty and mystique of art nouveau at Prague's traveling History of Art Nouveau exhibit at the Cincinnati Art Museum. The art nouveau movement of the 1870s thru the 1900s embraced all forms of art, blending the lines between traditional art mediums, such as paintings and sculptures, and applied arts, such as furniture, ceramics, glassware, and textiles. It celebrated nature and spirituality, encompassing geometric forms, lines, and shapes, and elements of fantasy and imagination.

cincinnati  art



The Cincinnati Art Museum  
Art Museum Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Brianne Deckerich  
800 Main Street  
Pewaukee, WI 53072

cincinnati  art museum  
Presents a special extension of the History of Graphic Design exhibit:

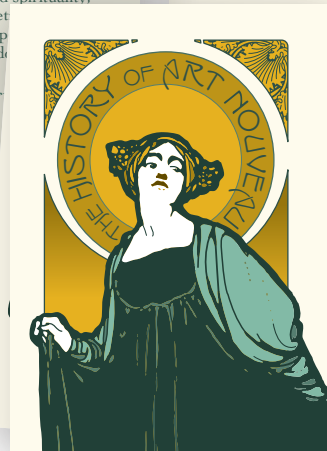


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Additional information about the different stations in the History of Graphic Design exhibit can be found in this booklet.

Special exhibit includes:

- Arts and Crafts movement
- Jules Chéret
- Sarah Bernhardt
- Alphose Mucha





## Art Nouveau

### The movement and style

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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The style of Art Nouveau encompassed geometric and floral forms, lines, and shapes, all with an element of fantasy added to them. The movement celebrated nature and spirituality, featuring highly idealized women who were often pictured partially or completely naked, each in a position that communicated optimism and beauty. Art Nouveau designs had an architectural influence, usually encasing the subject in a structured framework of organic, flowing line work and stylized floral designs. Many of the poster designs utilized a color technique called flat toning, which was heavily influenced by the wood block printings of Japanese culture. Flat toning reduced the detail of the various shading and colors of the subject's skin, clothing, and surroundings to solid, single colors.

#### Diverse mediums

Art Nouveau embraced all forms of art, blending the lines between traditional art mediums such as paintings, and sculptures, and applied arts such as furniture, ceramics, glassware, and textiles. The art and style of the movement also spread into popular architecture, interior

design, decorative arts, and lighting. Its inclusion of all of these different mediums as a form of visual arts has earned the movement to be considered as a "total style."

Because of its broad range of products, it became possible for people to completely surround themselves with Art Nouveau. For many Europeans, it became a way of life as well as a way of thinking. The movement wanted to break the barriers between everyday life and art, allowing people to live amongst art. There was no longer restricted to fine arts, which were meant only to be looked at, but was free to trickle into the realm of practical appliances that were used by individuals every day. This was a very new way of thinking about art, hence the term "new art."

There were many artists who were inspired by and helped define the Art Nouveau Movement. One of the most influential artists for the Art Nouveau poster movement was Alphonse Mucha. Mucha explored many of the key Art Nouveau elements in his artwork, but refused to be

lumped together with all of the other artists who partook in this movement, insisting that his work was his alone, and that he was following his own inspirations and creative impulses. He stated that art is eternal, and therefore could not be "nouveau", or new (Polyani Potter, 2006). Ironically, he is considered to be one of the staple artists from the Art Nouveau movement. Émile Gallé was one of the artists who first brought the style of Art Nouveau into glassware. Samuel Bing was one of the artists responsible for introducing the West to Japanese art, which in turn was a strong force of influence in the style of Art Nouveau.

The influence of Art Nouveau reached countries and provinces all over the world, including France, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria, Britain, Hungary, Spain, Prussia, and the United States. The style of Art Nouveau varied slightly from country to country, as did the name of the movement, however, the overall style and attitude of the movement was the same throughout the world.



## Lithography innovator

### Jules Chéret

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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The late 1800s to early 1900s was a time where social rules were very conservative. Women had defined roles that governed how they were to act in the context of their family and in society. Any deviance from that role was shocking and scandalous. Jules Chéret was one of the first individuals to push that social boundary, and he did so with his famous poster art.

Jules Chéret was one of the first artists on the commercial level in his time to picture women in a different light. The women in Chéret's posters were confident, relaxed, independent, playful, and having a good time. They were sometimes pictured in bars, which was something that was very uncommon in that era. The women that Chéret is best known for, however, are his dancers. He created a short series of posters for the famous Moulin Rouge featuring two dancers. The dancers depicted were La Goulue and Valentin le Desosse. These

women, along with the other playful, dancing women depicted in his other posters, became known as the "Chérettes."

The bright, vibrant colors in his posters were the product of his own perfecting of the lithography process. Instead of layering colors on top of each other, Chéret separated each color which increased the vibrancy and made each color unique. He also balanced all of the colors he used with one another, creating a harmony of colors that all complemented and worked with one another. His innovative enhancement of the lithography process has earned him the credit of elevating the lithography process to an art form.

The fun, whimsical spirit, the fantasy, and the laughter that Chéret captured in his posters, along with his brilliant color use, took Paris by storm. A color revolution was sparked and many other poster artists emerged who began to incorporate Chéret's methods into their own art.

## Alphonse Mucha

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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ALPHONSE MUCHA'S INSPIRATION CAME FROM CZECH FOLK TRADITIONS, NATIONALISM, AND MYSTICISM. He always sought the spiritual in his work, no matter the content.

He was best known for his poster work, which typically featured beautiful women draped in fabric with long, flowing hair that curled into

intersecting, geometric semi-circles. His poster designs usually contained the subject within a symmetrical frame of line work that often had a very organic, flowing, natural appearance. Along with the spiraling hair and organic line work frames, Mucha incorporated intricate ornaments and architectural elements in his designs. There is a lot of movement, balance and energy in his work, between the flowing hair, the fabrics, the line work, and the way he chose to pose his models.



## Sarah Bernhardt

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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Every artist has a muse. For many artists in the late 1800s to the early 1900s, including Jules Chéret and Alphonse Mucha, Sara Bernhardt was the most sought after subject for key creative projects. This French born actress is often said to be the most famous actress in the 19th century. She has been painted, filmed, written about, photographed, had her voice recorded, and has been depicted in the popular poster art of France's poster revolution in the late 1800s, early 1900s.

Sara Bernhardt was born on October 22, 1844 in Paris, France. The details about her early life are not fully known, partially because

of her habit of exaggerating and distorting the stories of her life, and partially because of all of the rumors that were spread about her. It is known, however, that she was born to a Jewish woman and that the identity of her father was unknown. She began acting at the age of 13, and began her ascent to fame in her early 20s. At around age 35 her position as the greatest actress of her day had been securely established.

Sarah's incredible skill as an emotional actress along with her beauty caused the

Continued on page 6

01 Louis Comfort Tiffany Stained glass window for Yale University (1891)

02 Jugend magazine Front cover of an 1896 edition of the German magazine Jugend

03 Jules Chéret Advertising Poster Folies Bergère La Loo Fuller

04 Jules Chéret Portrait from Supplément à La Plume, 13 Novembre 1893

05 Zola by Alphonse Mucha

06 Alphonse Mucha Portrait from Geo. K. Lawrence Co., Chicago



## Contemporary type

### Illustrative typography

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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Illustration is one of the oldest art forms in human history. It dates back to before humans developed written language and therefore was often used as a communication tool. Many paintings and illustrations from ancient times depict the grand stories, legends, and histories of the various people groups of the world. The development of written language changed the method of communication dramatically. Though illustration is and was still readily used to record important stories and information throughout history, the development of the written word exploded and, over time, became an art form in and of itself.

Today typography as an art form is an extremely popular form of artistic communication. Letter forms have become more than just symbols in a written language, they have crossed

the border into art, becoming grandiose shapes appreciated for the negative and positive space that they create. It's not surprising that this shift in the consideration of type as an art form has produced a design phenomenon of blending the concepts of typography and illustration into one, larger form of visual communication.

One example of this dynamic combination is a piece titled "Love" by Tsang Kin-wah (as seen in the upper right-hand corner of this page, number 01). In this illustrative treatment of type, Kin-wah created the image of a tulip using words that express love. She accomplished this by associating the association of flowers with love by creating the image of the tulip. Using expressive words to build the image furthers the idea of love.

Using type to illustrate images is extremely effective because it speaks to both the connotative and denotative sides of commu-

nication. In the example of the piece by Kin-wah, the viewer clearly sees both the straight forward message of love in the words as well as being invited to think creatively about the meaning of flowers as it pertains to the idea of love.

The exploration of type as an illustrative tool is more than just a fashionable design trend. Designers everywhere continue to push the boundaries of traditional typesetting, creating new and interesting design approaches.

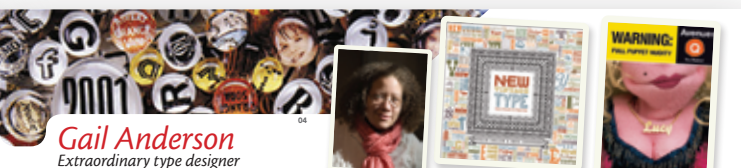
was severe enough to eventually lead to the amputation of that entire leg. This did not stop her from acting, however. Her captivating vocal abilities and already established fame were enough to earn her many roles in later plays, most of which allowed her to stay in one place on stage. Sarah died of Uremia on March 26, 1923.



01 Paul Groszowski Poster for Type Directors 56th TDC Show

02 Tsang Kin-wah "Love", tulip illustration using type

03 Napoleon Sarony Sarah Bernhardt as Cleopatra



## Gail Anderson

### Extraordinary type designer

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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Gail Anderson was one of three graphic designers to be awarded a medal by AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts) in 2008. She is known

for her strong editorial design work, bold and innovative use of typography, and entertainment design work.

She started out designing for Rolling Stone Magazine, working her way from an associate to senior art director. Her use of typography in the publication helped define

its overall graphic style. She now works as senior art director at SpotCo, one of the largest entertainment design agencies in New York.

"Her significant contribution to design is a belief in the tradition of typography and a joy in using it in a contemporary vernacular."

A legacy of Type Her innovative use of type over the years has helped define some of the changing trends of type design. Many of her type treatments have been copied by other designers. She is a strong trend setter, not a trend follower; successfully avoiding falling into design traps that would have kept her from pushing the

boundaries of design.

It is her passion and love for type that has made her so successful in using it as an art form. She is extremely picky about type, often fretting over the smallest details of her typesetting. Former classmate, Drew Hodges, said "Her significant contribution to design is a belief in the tradition of typography and a joy in using it in a contemporary vernacular." This couldn't be more true, and it shows in her work.

### Early typographers

## Phillippe Grandjean and William Caslon

**BY BRIANNA DEDERCH**  
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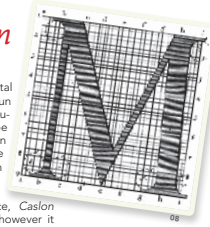
Phillippe Grandjean was a French typographer in the mid to late 1600s. He was one of a few scholars that were collected by King Louis XIV in 1693 to develop a typeface to be used exclusively for the Imprimerie Royale (the Royal Printing office). The typeface was created to be mathematically perfect. Each letter was constructed using a grid that contained a total of 2,304 squares.

Although a mathematically perfect typeface seemed like a good idea, when it came down to reproducing each letter at a much smaller scale, maintaining the precision of it proved to be nearly impossible. Therefore, Grandjean chose to discard the grid and use his aesthetic judgment to create the punch cuts for the letters instead. This typeface was given the name Romain du Roi, which translates to "the King's Roman." The creation of Romain du Roi reflected the culture's growing resistance to tradition and marked the departure from the previously used Oldstyle type. It is one of the first Transitional typefaces.

William Caslon was a typeface designer in the early to late 1700s in Britain. His

experience working with metal began as an engraver of gun locks and barrels. He was eventually encouraged to begin a type foundry around 1720. The Caslon type foundry flourished and the typeface that William Caslon designed, titled Caslon, was a big success. Much like the

Romain du Roi typeface, Caslon was a transitional face, however it had its differences from the Romain du Roi. Caslon increased the thickness of the thick strokes, therefore increasing the overall contrast of the face. At first, the lighter Romain du Roi face was preferred, but it wasn't long before the Caslon face was the leading typeface used in Britain and in the newly established United States: the first printed version of the Declaration of Independence used the Caslon type face. The Caslon foundry continued until the 1960s.



04 Gail Anderson Type Directors Club annual, 2001

05 AIGA Portrait of Gail Anderson

06 Gail Anderson New Vintage Type

07 Gail Anderson Avenue Q Broadway Poster

08 Phillippe Grandjean Romain Du Roi grid

09 William Caslon Sample of Caslon typeface