

ART NOUVEAU

1890–1910

Inspired by William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement, which began in the 1880s, Art Nouveau was the “new art” that became the first truly international art movement. During the years 1890–1910, it represented the mainstream culture in Europe. Art Nouveau had many names: Style Métro in France, Jugendstil in Germany, Sezessionstil in Austria-Hungary, Glasgow Style in the U.K., Modernisme in Spain, Stile Liberty in Italy, Tiffany Style in America, and so on.

The start of Art Nouveau is generally considered to be with the work that came out of the Century Guild, which was established by the British designer Arthur H. Mackmurdo, who sought to elevate design to a higher status, to stand alongside “fine” arts.

In 1895, Siegfried Bing opened Maison de l'Art Nouveau in Paris to exhibit and sell artifacts that expressed what he considered France’s “most precious hereditary gifts”: elegance and grace (Silverman 184). Bing also exhibited Japanese woodblock prints, ukiyo-e, which had begun to flow into Europe in the second half of the 19th century and had a huge influence on Western arts and subsequently, Art Nouveau. These extremely graphic works from Japan blatantly ignored the linear and atmospheric perspectives to which the Western art world had strictly adhered since the Renaissance period, and dazzled Europe with their flatness, boldness in their use of large areas of vibrant colors, and unusual and dramatic cropping.

Art Nouveau is striking in its horror vacui—fear of white space—and decorativeness, both of which can be traced back to the “carpet pages” of the medieval illuminated manuscripts, like the Chi-Rho page of The Book of Kells, featured on page () of this book. One of the biggest inspirations came from the natural world, especially plant forms. Some of the favored motifs of this time were vines, flowers, birds (peacocks in particular), and the female body. Women were a human analog of plants and organisms belong-

ing to Nature. Women’s role was to “embody nature’s freshness” and “the art of continual renewal” through adorning not only themselves but also their surroundings. René Lalique’s dragon-fly jewelry piece literally morphs a female figure into an insect.

In the designs of the past, ornaments were merely put on the surfaces of objects or buildings to decorate. Art Nouveau saw the basic form of the object and ornaments not as separate elements but as a whole that evolved together. In the same vein, the idea and practice of Gesamtkunstwerk, or “total work of art,” was also important to Nouveau artists. As Nouveau was wide-ranging and touched all corners of art, from utensils to buildings, it sought to create a total environment, in which all of it aspects responded to the Nouveau aesthetic. The Hill House by Mackintosh is an impressive example.

Paris was one of the busiest Art Nouveau cities. The streets of Paris were being transformed into an art gallery, displaying masterly posters of Jules Chéret and Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, and the entrances of metro stations were adorned with biomorphic structures by Hector Guimard.

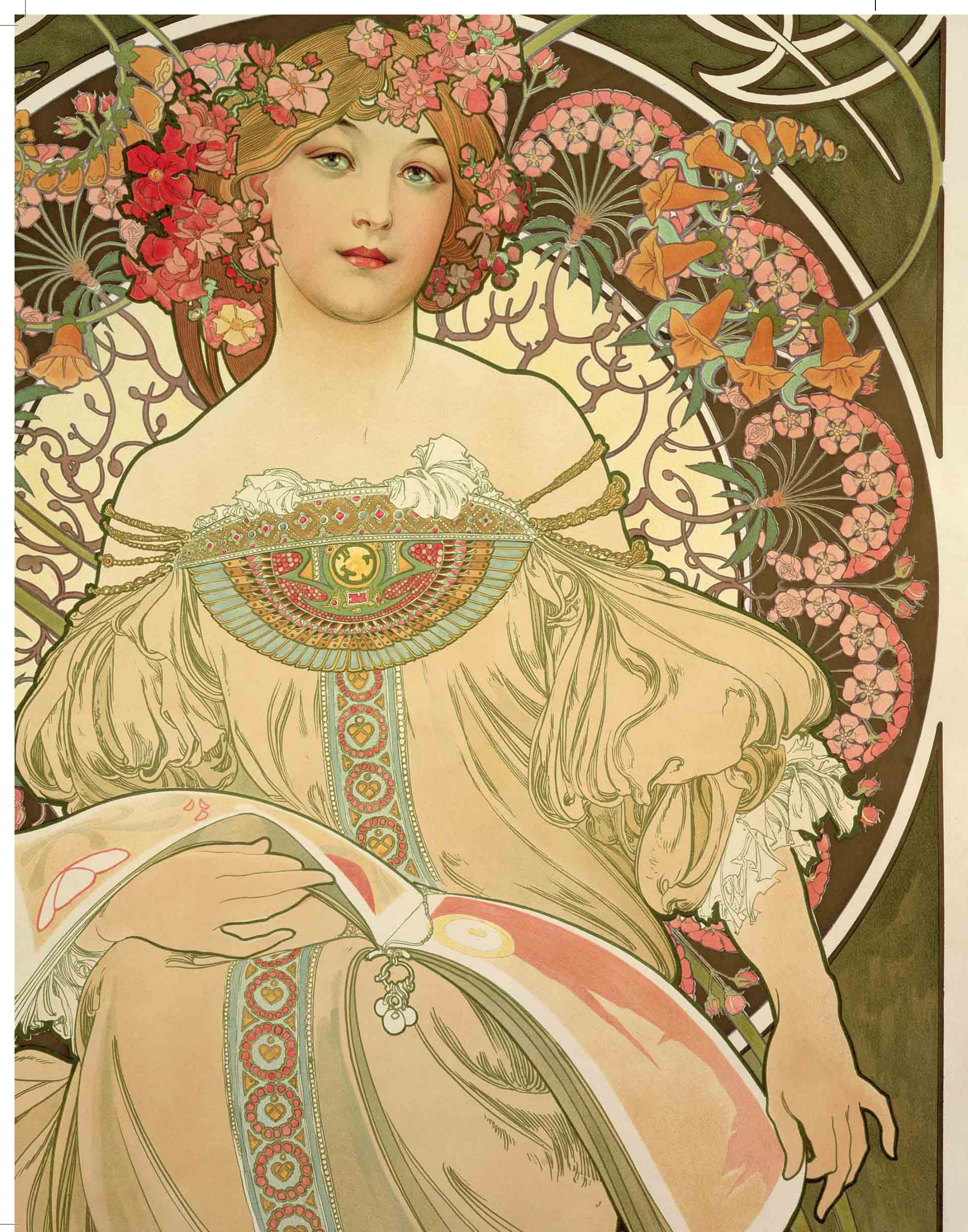
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TOP
Hector Guimard
Paris metro entrance
1900



BOTTOM
Hiroshige
The Plum Garden in Kameido
1857





Heinz Schulz-Neudamm
Movie poster for Metropolis
1927



Heinz Schulz-Neudamm
Movie poster for Metropolis
1927

ABCDEFGHI
QRSTUVWXYZ
ABCDEFGHI.

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Movie poster for Metropolis
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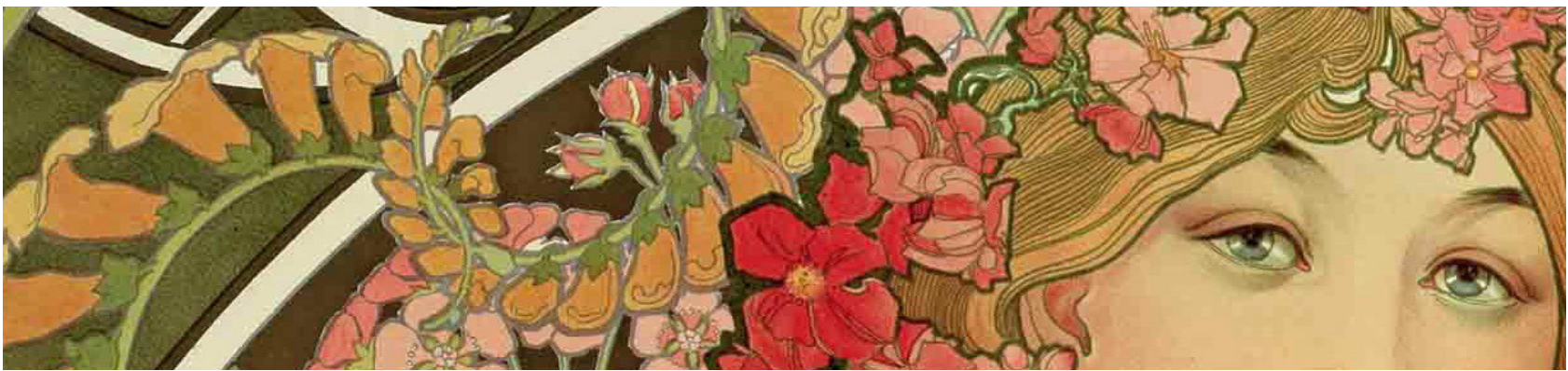
1899 Japanese prints exhibition	1895 Siegfried Bing opens the Maison du l'Art Nouveau	1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris	1902 Hoffmann and Moser founds Wiener Werkstätte	1903 Hoffmann and Moser founds Wiener Werkstätte	1914 World War I begins	1922 King Tut's tomb is discovered	1925 Exposition des Arts Déco- ratifs et Industriels Mod- ernes, Paris
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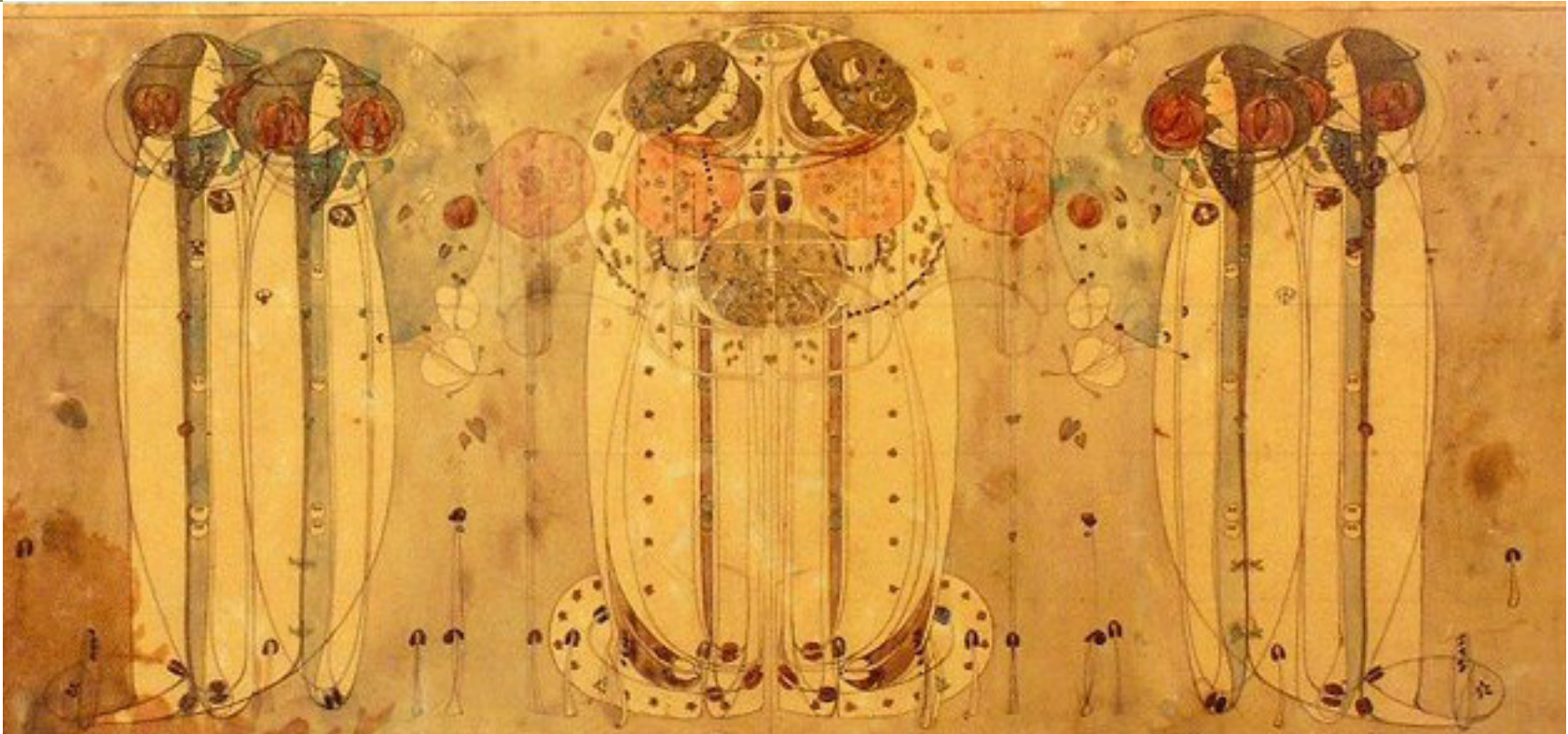
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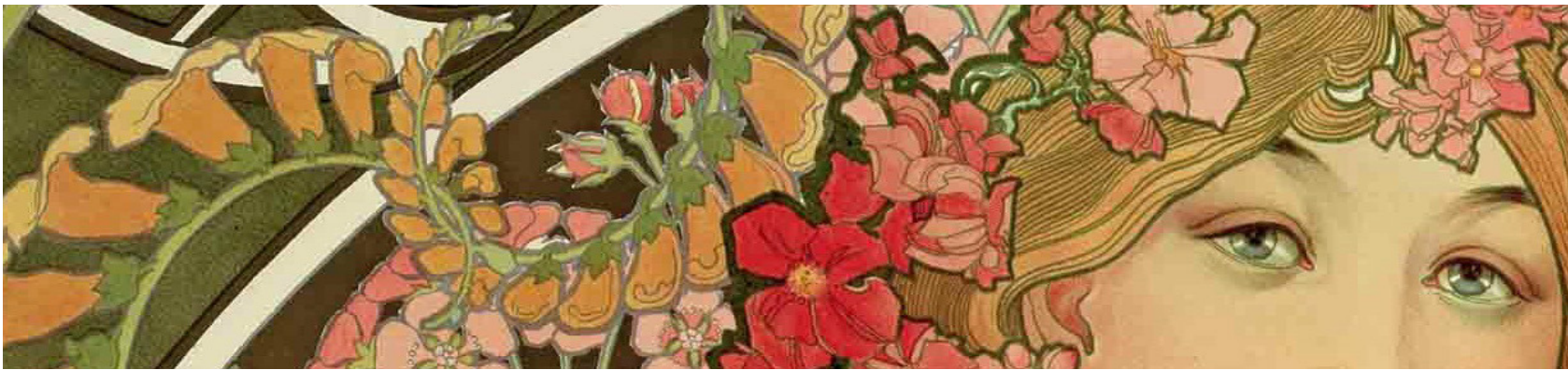


Artist name
Title of work blah blah

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