



**ASSOCIATION
DU PATRIMOINE
ARTISTIQUE asbl**

Exhibition

FROM ECLECTICISM TO ART NOUVEAU

PAINTER-DECORATOR

VICTOR VAN DYCK (1863-1943)

From September the 7th to October the 28th, 2023

PRESS RELEASE



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VISUALS FOR PRESS

This press release and the visuals can be downloaded from our website :
associationdupatrimoineartistique.be >
 Actualités

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EXHIBITION

From September the 7th to October the 28th 2023, the Association du Patrimoine artistique presents

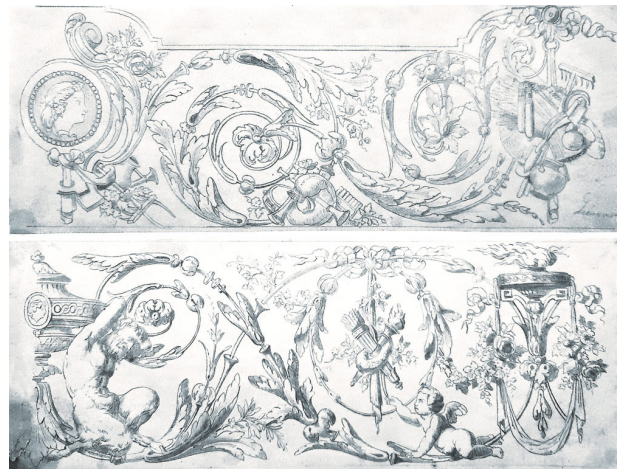
FROM ECLECTICISM TO ART NOUVEAU: PAINTER-DECORATOR VICTOR VAN DYCK (1863-1943)

The Association du Patrimoine artistique's exhibition «From Eclecticism to Art Nouveau: painter-decorator Victor Van Dyck (1863-1943)» aims at discovering the different facets of the decorative artist profession in the historical and cultural context of the time. Curated by Pierre Loze, scientific director of the Association, this exhibition displaying more than 200 drawings, watercolours and paintings preserved by the heirs of the artist, will be opened from the 7th of September to the 28th October 2023. These decorative projects intended for private houses or public buildings (Brussel's brasseries or British theatres) are a testament to the taste of his time.

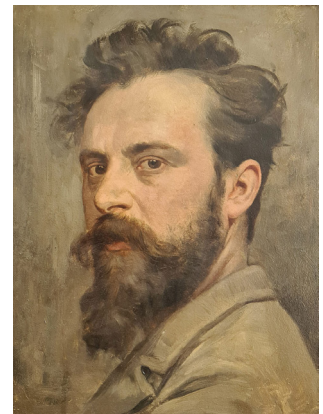
THE TRAINING OF AN PAINTER-DECORATOR IN THE XIXTH CENTURY

The second half of the XIXth century in Belgium is characterized by a shift in artistic productions, especially in the decoration and fittings of the interiors. From 1851, due to a series of failed attempts at the Universal Exhibitions, a set of private and public initiatives, as well as a plan for an educational reform in academies and drawing schools, are launched in order to develop the taste and the quality of Belgian decorative arts. New drawing methods and the use of ornamental grammars such as *Specimens of Decoration and Ornamentation in the XIXth century* by Michel Liénard, highlight the changes in artistic education.

In this context of significant educational changes, **Victor Van Dyck** trained as an artist at both Mechelen's and Brussels' Academy of Fine Arts, at a time when decorative disciplines were included in the academies' curricula. These establishments no longer trained painters and sculptors only but instructed countless draughtsmen and decorators in order to improve the decorative production of the country.



Decoratives friezes, copies from *Specimens of Decoration and Ornamentation in the XIXth century*, Album of drawings by Victor Van Dyck.



Self-portrait, Oil on canvas.

EXHIBITION

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CAFES, BRASSERIES, RESTAURANTS : LET'S EAT!



This renewed attention to the decorative arts and their rebirth had a strong impact on both public and private interior projects and buildings in Belgium, as well as in other European countries. Victor Van Dyck began his career decorating cafes, brasseries and recently built restaurants (like the Strobbe Café, Place Royale, or the **Café-Restaurant Laroche**, 15 Place De Brouckère, both demolished), on the new boulevards of downtown Brussels, the capital of a country that aimed at presenting itself as politically, economically and culturally advanced. These iconic, lavishly decorated and emblematic establishments privileged by the middle class and the industrial bourgeoisie, quickly became one of the poles of attraction of Brussels's social life.

Van Dyck moved to England where he continued his work as decorator in many restaurants and hotels, as well as in theatres.

Decoration project, watercolour on paper, annotated on the verso "Restaurant (Laroche) place De Brouckère (demolished)".

THE PRACTICE IN ENGLAND : THEATRES AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

It is particularly in the **decoration of theatres**, other symbolic spaces that punctuated the British cultural and social life from the end of the XIXth to the beginning of the XXth century, that Victor Van Dyck specialised as ceiling decorator. Close collaborator of James M. Boekbinder, a prominent entrepreneur based in London, he painted many decorations with allegorical subjects or gallant scenes, in the style of Jean-Antoine Watteau or Nicolas Lancret (some of them are still visible), in several performance venues including the Euston Theater at King's Cross, the London Pavilion in Piccadilly Circus, the Wyndham's Theater in the West End, or the Royal Theater in Richmond.



Project for the ceiling of the Preston Theatre, Preston, watercolour on paper.

BACK TO BRUSSELS: PRIVATE AND PUBLIC COMMISSIONS

Upon his return to Belgium, Van Dyck resumed his activity as a skilled painter-decorator for private commissions, where he was able to adapt to the eclectic bourgeois taste of the time, which mixed both old classical styles - as in the house at 256 chaussée de Haecht in Schaerbeek (monument.heritage.brussels/fr/buildings/22043) - with the trend for exoticism (Moorish Salon), and the rediscovery of the Flemish neo-Renaissance - a local interpretation of the Greco-Roman and Italian Renaissance tradition that embodied the values of the supremacy of Belgian art and craftsmanship, and evoked the golden age of local civilisation.

At the beginning of the XXth century, Van Dyck embraced Art Nouveau's decorative trend, which celebrated the liberal bourgeoisie through a poetic elaboration of the images of the industrial world. In this style, which had spread throughout Europe, he designed several interior projects. Thanks to the drawings found in his personal archives, his authorship of the rose ornamentation and of the mural adorning **the great staircase of the Hotel Max Hallet by Victor Horta** was restored.

His archives also preserved the drawings he made around 1912 for the decorations of two **royal berlins for Léopold II (1901-1905) and Albert I (1909-1912)**.



Mural painting and floral decoration of The Hotel Max Hallet's grand staircase, Brussels, around 1905-1906, photography, 2023. © Fabien de Cugnac.



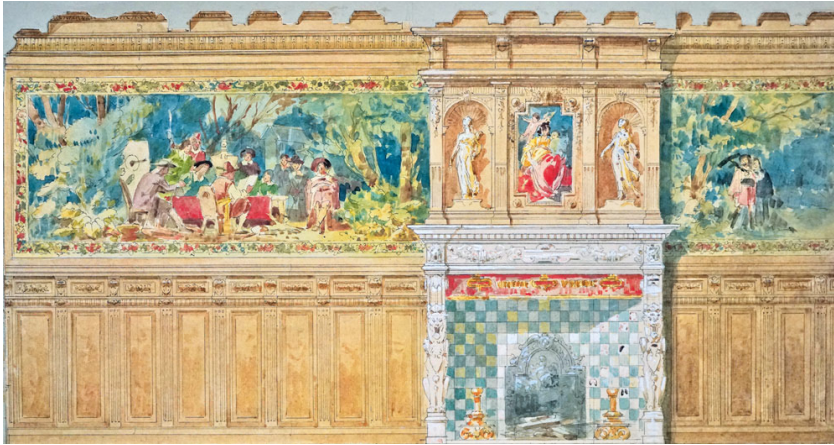
Project for Albert I Royal Train's dining room (detail), watercolour on paper, around 1912.

THE VERSATILITY OF AN PAINTER-DECORATOR AT THE TURN OF THE XXTH CENTURY

Painter-decorator Victor Van Dyck's career is marked by a great versatility, typical of the artists and craftsmen that were trained primarily in the reformed art academies promoting the union of all arts, who subsequently perfected their skills on building sites where different craftsmen worked closely together. Therefore, Victor Van Dyck was able to master the use of different styles and of diverse materials and techniques, which allowed him to adapt to the changes that, between the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth centuries, led to the advent and the dissemination of Art Nouveau.

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Project for a room in the Flemish Renaissance Style,
watercolour on paper, 20 x 40 cm.



Rococo Style decoration,
watercolour on paper, 22 x 50 cm.



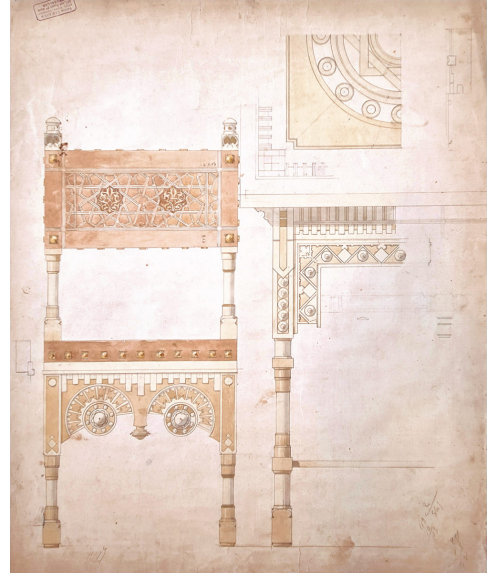
Study of women at the fontaine,
watercolour on paper, 18 x 25 cm.

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Decoration project for an Art Nouveau's ceiling (detail),
watercolour on paper, 33 x 44 cm.



Study for Moorish furniture,
watercolour on paper, 67 x 54 cm.



Project for an Art Nouveau's frieze,
watercolour on paper, 26,5 x 10 cm.



Project for Wyndham's theatre's ceiling, London, (executed), watercolour
on paper, pasted on cardboard.

SPONSORS & PARTNERS



Since 2019 the Association has been collaborating with the Brussels-Capital Region to the inventory of the artistic heritage of Brussels' nineteen municipalities.

urban.brussels



The Association aims at promoting and improving the knowledge of artistic heritage with the support of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

www.culture.be



This exhibition is presented as part of the **Art Nouveau Brussels 2023** events organized by the Brussels-Capital Region, which offer a multidisciplinary program highlighting the richness of the capital's architectural heritage and the impact of Art Nouveau on many other artistic fields.

www.visit.brussels

ABOUT US



OUR HISTORY

Association du Patrimoine artistique

Founded in 1979, the Association aims at promoting the protection, the restoration and the enhancement of artistic heritage in Belgium.

With its exhibitions and guided tours, and through the publication of the outcomes of its scientific research addressed to the general public (catalogues, books, etc.), the Association sheds light on overlooked artworks that need to be rediscovered, and whose existence or conservation is threatened by ignorance or indifference.

THE TEAM

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PRATICAL INFORMATION

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LOCALISATION ● AND DIRECTIONS

Tram n° 93 / 92
Bus stib n° 95 / 33 / 71
Petit Sablon Stop
SNCB Train Station
Central Train Station (900 m), 12 mn 
South Train Station (1,3 km), 17 mn 



EXHIBITIONS OPENING HOURS

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays: 2 p.m. - 6 p.m.
Bank holidays: Closed

TICKETS

Heritage exhibitions

Full price: € 3

Free: children < 10 years old

Guided tours

€ 56 (group of maximum 10 people), registration required: as.pat.art@gmail.com

Exhibitions of contemporary artists

Free of charge

EXHIBITION CATALOGUES

The Association offers its exhibition catalogues and art books for sale. These publications are the result of scientific research carried out by its team.



Project for a room in the Flemish Renaissance-Style (detail) water colour on paper.