

## Chapter 11—Art Nouveau

**Art Nouveau** was a purely design-oriented movement with style based on elaborate surface decoration and curvilinear approach to form. Art Nouveau integrated decoration, structure and function. Art Nouveau designers and illustrators had strong **enthusiasm for the development of commercial printing, which permitted an upgrade from the past of the visual quality of mass communication**. In the Art Nouveau era many **advances in communication and transportation technology offered artists in different countries new opportunities for exchange of ideas**. Influences from Japan, England, France, Belgium and America are evident in Art Nouveau.

### Definitions

- **Ukiyo-e**—early, screen paintings; later, woodblock
- **Art Nouveau**—(c. 1890–1910). “Encompassed all the design arts—architecture, furniture, product, fashion, graphic...posters, packages, advertisements, teapots, dishes, spoons, chairs, staircases, door frames, factories, subway entrances, houses.” Initial phase of the Modern movement, expression of new forms (p194)
- **Chap Book, Inland Printer, “Chap Book Style”** (Will Bradley)
- **Jugendstil** (“young style,” Germany)

### Names—and Important Information—to Know

**Reading on Library Reserve:** “Fin-de-siecle poster design: objectifying national style, pleasure and gender” (from *Graphic Design Reproduction and Representation since 1800*) chronicles this period and provides contrast and counterbalance to your text’s presentation of the material. The information in this handout—when compared to your text’s coverage of the mentioned artists—is extremely important to our understanding of “interpretation” of visual imagery. Also, the handout provides political and social context. No need to read the entire article unless you want to. **YOU MUST, however pay close attention to bracketed sections especially where noted in the margin a specific cross-reference to your text!!!**

**Read text:** begin p195, under “Chéret and Grasset”; through 1st paragraph p199. Contrast to p99 “Fin-de-siecle...” bracketed areas...women promoting themselves for the gratification of the (male) purchaser; bracketed areas pp93–95 “The poster as a vehicle for pleasure”; pp95–100 “Advertising the new woman—sex and sexuality; and concluding paragraphs pp100, 101.

- **Chéret**—(1836–1933), France (pp195–199). Go to [www.internationalposter.com/intro.cfm](http://www.internationalposter.com/intro.cfm) and scroll to “A Brief History of the Poster.” Read from “Cheret and the Birth of the Poster” through “The New Century.”
- **Grasset**—(1841–1917), Swiss, worked in France (p199). Important!!!—his designs, although appearing traditional, included the flowing line, use of color and floral motifs of French Art Nouveau. See especially p 196 #11-12–11-14.
- **Beardsley**—(1872–1898), England (bottom p199–201). “Macabre” copying of William Morris (p200 #11-18, 11-19). Refer to Chapter 10, Morris, especially pp174, 175, “The Kelmscott Press”
- **Ricketts**—(1866–1931) England. His work is reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts movement (pp200–202). The Vale Press: Ricketts hired typesetters and pressmen, he acted much like today’s Art Director.
- **Toulouse-Lautrec**—(1864–1901) France (p202, 203). Extremely influential.
- **Steinlen**—(1859–1923) Swiss, worked in France. Read, “Fin de siecle poster design...” p94, where direct mention and vastly different interpretation is made to #11-30 p204 in your text!!!
- **Mucha**—(1860–1939) Czech, worked in France (p204–206).
- **Art Nouveau in America**

- **Rhead**—(Louis, 1857–1926). Influenced by Grasset, who was commissioned by Harpers to produce posters to advertise their magazine.
- **Bradley**—(Will, 1868–1962). Work for “The Inland Printer” and “The Chap Book,” pp207–211. Bradley, especially, was willing to take risks with the placement of type in relationship to image, and his magazine cover pages reflected his success in producing progressive visual relationships between text and graphics. He received inspiration from William Morris and Aubrey Beardsley—NOT in his choices of subject matter but rather by emulating Beardsley’s style of using flat shapes and undulating contour.

Bradley was also influenced by the design of books printed in colonial New England. The influence of old style type—i.e. **Caslon**—and geometric precision prompted Bradley to work in a style that came to be known as the **Chap Book style** (after crudely printed books formerly sold by traveling peddlers).

In 1907 Bradley became the art editor of Colliers magazine. He became highly influential—Art Nouveau—in the design of magazines in the 20th Century.

- **Art Nouveau in America**, *continued...*
- **Reed**—(Ethel, b.1876). 1894–1898 prolific, then disappeared! First American woman to achieve national prominence as a graphic designer and illustrator. Began her career at age 18; for four years her reputation equalled Rhead's and Bradley's. pp209, 210 #11-46.
  - **Penfield**—(1886–1925), noted for advertising campaign for Harper's—all the people in his illustrations were preoccupied with reading Harper's. pp210, 211.
- **Art Nouveau in Belgium**
  - **Van de Velde** (1863–1957), pp212, 213. An architect, designer printer educator. Interior design, bookbinding, jewelrymaking and metalcraft. His work is interpreted as a precursor to 20th Century abstract art, architecture and design theory. His belief that all branches of art share a communal language of form and an equality of importance to the human community appears to have laid a foundation for the art movements that were to follow in the early 20th C. Indicative of the strength of his philosophy was evidenced by his work at the Weimar Arts and Crafts Institute and Weimar Academy of Fine Arts (precursor to the Bauhaus)
- **Art Nouveau in Germany (Jugendstil)**
  - **Eckmann** (1865–1902). Especially Eckmannschrift p218, #11-70, 11-71—typestyle drawn with a brush.
  - **Behrens** (1868–1940). Especially note Behrens' work, #11-67 (Jugend) and compare this with his later work for AEG, pp238–240. Behrens became more influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement (Ch 10) than by Art Nouveau, and preferred a geometric ordering of space, more in concert with the modernist sense of design which is evidenced in the early 20th Century

In Germany, **Textura** type (i.e. Gothic lettering) was used with Art Nouveau graphics.