



JAPANISM AND ART NOUVEAU

Val Saint-Lamber crystal-
works' bicentenary

17.04 > 27.09.26
Grand Curtius, Liège

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The permanent glass collection at the Grand Curtius Museum comprises some ten thousand items that trace the history of this magical material from antiquity to the present day.

Whilst the City of Liège's acquisition of Armand Baar's prestigious collection in 1952 significantly enriched the museum's glass collection, the following years saw the addition of a wide variety of works, notably from Val Saint-Lambert and other contemporary European glassworks. Founded in 1959, the Glass Museum traces the history of this material up to the 20th century, notably covering the history of the Val Saint-Lambert glassworks since their foundation in 1826. Several masterpieces from the factory are now housed in the Museum, such as the monumental Vase des Neuf Provinces (1894), Art Nouveau creations by Léon Ledru, the 'giant' vase by the Muller Brothers (1906–1908), and the sculpture 'Les trompettes de Jéricho' (1972) by the American Harvey K Littleton, founder of the 'Studio Glass' movement. Forming a significant part of the collection are works from the Art Nouveau period (Philippe Wolfers with the 'Crépuscule' vase (1901), Emile Gallé, the Daum brothers, the Legras crystal works, Karl Koepping...), Art Deco (René Lalique, Charles Graffart, the glassworks of Scailmont and Boom...) and the 1950s (Italian, Scandinavian, German and Austrian design) offer a rich and diverse overview of 20th-century artistic glass production.

Today, through the exhibition 'Japonism and Art Nouveau', the Grand Curtius is celebrating the bicentenary of the Val Saint-Lambert Glassworks (1826–2026) and, in particular, its golden age (from 1880 to 1914).

This exhibition is organised in collaboration with numerous partners who, through the loan of works, their support, and the organisation of exhibitions and events, are also celebrating this bicentenary.



Graphic composition based on three designs by Léon Ledru: 'U Esthétique' vase, urane crystal with aurora overlay, blown, decorated with carved curvilinear grooves, c. 1900; - Bowl, urane crystal with blue overlay, blown, decorated with carved linear and geometric motifs, 1897–1900 - 'Modèle à décor linéaire' vase, aurora-lined urane crystal, blown, decorated with a linear motif, 1897–1908. Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

THE GREAT CURTIUS CELEBRATES THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VAL SAINT-LAMBERT CRYSTAL WORKS

From 17 April to 27 September 2026, the Grand Curtius will host the exhibition 'Japonism and Art Nouveau', which forms part of the bicentenary celebrations of the Val Saint-Lambert Glassworks (1826–2026).

Celebrating a Belgian industrial and artistic gem

In the spring of 1826, the Val Saint-Lambert factory lit its first furnace: this marked the beginning of a great human, commercial, technical and artistic adventure that would reach its peak during the Belle Époque. Tracing the historical thread and key moments of the crystalworks offers an opportunity to appreciate both the prominent place it occupies in Belgium's industrial and artistic history and its power to shape collective identity. In this context, the Grand Curtius in Liège has joined forces with other museums and scientific institutions to organise a 'Val Saint-Lambert Bicentenary' event, which will take place across several venues through exhibitions that will allow visitors to (re)discover the history and artistic output of this famous factory.

The so-called 'American' style of cutting

Hubert Fouarge became a Master Glassmaker and worked at the Val Saint-Lambert Crystal Works in Seraing from 1883 onwards. There, he oversaw the cutting workshops, bringing innovation and refinement to crystal creations. His style is characterised by the precision of its forms and the richness of its decorations.

The arrival of carborundum (silicon carbide) wheels in the cutting workshops replaced those made of iron or stoneware. This new American abrasive made material removal much easier during the cutting process. The deep cut known as the 'American' cut was born.

Around 1894, Georges Deprez acquired a carborundum grinding wheel to follow the trend of the 'brilliant cut' from across the Atlantic: on the Old Continent, this sumptuous decoration is known as the 'American' cut. Covering the entire piece, the fine, deep grooves create a dense and complex network of star-shaped patterns, causing the crystal to sparkle magnificently. The master of this craft was the cutter Hubert Fouarge. The craze for these sparkling pieces is evident in the catalogues of the early 20th century.

The piece features a specific cut, characterised by very deep cross-cuts and wide bevelled facets. This series, renowned for its complexity and exceptional quality, reflects the technical excellence of the Liège crystal works. Named 'Moscow', likely in reference to the Court of the Tsars, who were important clients at the time, the piece combines decorative refinement with technical mastery, where every detail accentuates the sparkle of the crystal. The harmonious arrangement of the motifs and the precision of the bevels bear witness to the expertise of the Master Cutters. The piece also illustrates the influence of the aristocratic clientele on luxury creations.



'Moscow' goblet, colourless blown crystal, richly cut decoration, c. 1908, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège..

Val Saint-Lambert – a brief history up to the present day

In the early 13th century, Prince-Bishop Hugues de Pierpont granted the Cistercian monks a large tract of land in Seraing, where they founded an abbey. The monks transformed the site completely, channelling the watercourses, mining coal and building a self-sufficient monastic complex. After the French Revolution, religious orders were abolished and the abbey was sold in 1797 before being briefly converted into a spinning mill.

In December 1825, François Kemlin and Auguste Lelièvre (a chemist and a manager, respectively, at the former Vonêche Crystal Works in the Province of Namur) acquired the estate with a view to establishing a crystal works there. The first furnace was lit in 1826, marking the birth of Val Saint-Lambert. Thanks to a favourable geographical location (access to raw materials and a skilled workforce), production grew rapidly. By the 1830s, the company had adopted the coal-fired furnace and mechanised the cutting process. A workers' housing estate was built around the factory, a symbol of the paternalism associated with the Industrial Revolution. Supported by Société Générale, the crystal factory gained international recognition thanks to

its technical innovations and its presence at industrial exhibitions.

From the 1850s onwards, business grew rapidly. The company also introduced pioneering social measures for its workers. Under the management of Jules Deprez from 1863 onwards, Val Saint-Lambert underwent major expansion, modernised its workshops and developed an extensive sales network.

In 1879, the crystal works became independent under the name Société des Cristalleries du Val Saint-Lambert. The end of the 19th century marked its heyday: driven by designers such as Camille Renard and Léon Ledru, it reached exceptional artistic and industrial heights

Following the First World War, the 1929 stock market crash and the Second World War, business slowed down. The crises of the 1970s further weakened the company. Today, the site preserves its historical and heritage legacy. The factory's artisanal craft continues, with specialised creations and training for young glassmakers. Rooted in its prestigious past, Val Saint-Lambert remains a major centre of industrial heritage and creativity.



Remacle Leloup, view of Val Saint-Lambert Abbey, engraving, 1730–1740, © D.R

Léon Ledru and Naturalism



Léon Ledru (1855–1926) was a leading designer at Val Saint-Lambert, joining the company in 1888 and becoming head of the design department in 1897, a post he held for 28 years. As a designer of both traditional models and original pieces, he steered Val Saint-Lambert's artistic direction towards Art Nouveau, blending naturalist and avant-garde influences. Like many artists of the Belle Époque, he took an interest in botany, from both a scientific and an aesthetic perspective, and developed naturalist designs intended for hydrofluoric acid etching on colourless crystal lined with coloured glass.

Based in Liège, Ledru played an active role in local cultural life and maintained a network of friendships and collaborations with artists and architects such as Armand Rassenfosse, Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, Victor Horta and Philippe Wolfers. These relationships enriched his creativity and led him to oversee the production of crystal pieces for architectural and silversmithing projects. Thus, vases engraved with natural motifs and artistic pieces were produced at Le Val to be set in Wolfers' mountings, as was the case at the 1897 Brussels World's Fair.

To meet customer demand, the crystalworks is developing a diverse range of products, combining everyday items with more original pieces, and offering the same designs in different crystal shapes and colours, thereby enhancing the variety and accessibility of Val Saint-Lambert's product range.

From 1880 to 1914 – the golden age of glassmaking

From the 1880s until the Great War, Val Saint-Lambert established itself as a global leader: around 5,000 people worked within its walls, its machinery was state-of-the-art, its outlets were found everywhere, and its participation in international exhibitions (including Antwerp in 1894, Brussels in 1897 and Turin in 1902) was widely noted.

Japonism and Art Nouveau

The discovery of Far Eastern art, the organisation of world exhibitions, and the emergence of shops specialising in Oriental or Oriental-inspired art all contributed, from the 1880s onwards, to the production of items with an innovative aesthetic strongly influenced by Japanese art. These hyalite vases (named after a variety of opal), usually made of black glass, feature a gilded decoration enhanced with paint and display Japanese-inspired motifs (geishas, landscapes).



Hyalite vase, opaque black blown glass, landscape decoration painted in gold with an enamelled duck, c. 1880, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

Top left: Anonymous, photographic portrait of Léon Ledru in 'Journal de Liège', undated © D.R.

The originality of the Art Nouveau style at Val Saint-Lambert lies in the resolutely modern aesthetic introduced, from 1897 onwards, by Léon Ledru (Paris, 1855 – Liège, 1926). This designer joined the crystal works in 1888 and became head of the Design Department in 1897. His compositions, with their bold colours, were progressive in their forms and dynamic curvilinear patterns, reflecting the aesthetic of Belgian architects (such as Van de Velde). The 1897 World's Fair in Brussels showcased his innovative and original designs. At the same time, he designed numerous items adorned with delicately coloured floral motifs, which were etched using acid.



Designed by Léon Ledru, "Orchids" toiletries set, colourless crystal with a blue lining, blown glass, featuring acid-etched orchid motifs on a moiré background, cut stoppers, circa 1908, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

Furthermore, sophisticated pieces whose aesthetic evokes the floral style of Émile Gallé (1846–1904), a leading figure of Art Nouveau in Nancy, emerge from the workshop of brothers Eugène Muller (1834–1918) and Désiré Muller (1877–1952), two artists from Lorraine who worked at the factory in the early 20th century. These high-end ranges offer aesthetics and techniques that are quite distinct within the crystalworks.

The brothers Jean-Désiré and Eugène Muller, former colleagues of Émile Gallé, were employed at Val Saint-Lambert to produce pieces in the 'Daum style' (sic) between 1905 and 1908. They were masters of the fluogravure technique. The vase, which stands 1.61 m tall and weighs 8.8 kg, is a true technical feat. It features a long, narrow cylindrical neck on an oval body, signed 'Val Saint-Lambert'. It illustrates the harmonious combination of naturalistic influences and technical mastery. This piece bears witness to the innovation of the Muller brothers, who revitalised the processes at Val Saint-Lambert and passed on these techniques to other glassmakers, combining bold forms, technical complexity and chromatic refinement.



Designed by Jean-Désiré and Eugène Muller, large vase with chestnut branches, enamelled glass, etched, between 1906 and 1907, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

Art Nouveau – a total art form

Art Nouveau is a European movement of the late 19th century that broke with historical styles and drew its inspiration directly from nature. Depending on the region or country, the Art Nouveau aesthetic can be more naturalistic or more geometric. Its sinuous, undulating forms, drawing on plants, flowers, insects and other animals, can be found in architecture, furniture, glassware, ceramics and the graphic arts. The lines are fluid and harmonious, emphasising the elegance of curves and the continuity of patterns to create an organic, living effect, whilst the colours, often inspired by nature, are subtle and nuanced. Breaking with historicist and eclectic styles, the movement aims to create a total art in which all aspects of an object or space (structure, decoration, colour, material and function) are designed in a coherent and integrated manner. Each creation harmonises form and function, transforming everyday objects or architecture into complete works of art. In this way, Art Nouveau goes beyond mere decoration to offer a holistic and sensory approach to art and life.



Alfred Stevens, *The Japanese Parisian*, oil on canvas, (1872–1874) ©
Museum of Fine Arts of the City of Liège

JAPANISM AND ART NOUVEAU: THE EXHIBITION AT THE GRAND CURTIUS

The exhibition highlights the period between 1880 and 1914, during which Val Saint-Lambert established its international artistic reputation.

Through works produced during this golden age, the exhibition reveals the importance and originality of the key figures in Val Saint-Lambert's Design Department, as well as the expertise of the craftsmen (glassblowers, cutters and engravers) who, together, established the factory's global reputation. An outstanding artist, Léon Ledru (Paris, 1855 – Liège, 1926), a lover of Oriental and Orientalist art and a dynamic figure who moved in artistic circles in both Liège and Paris, is given special prominence within the exhibition.

Around 150 works showcasing the aesthetic and techniques experimented with and developed by Val Saint-Lambert during those years are on display. Alongside pieces from the Grand Curtius collections – some of which have never been exhibited before – there are also items from private collections. The exhibition is further enriched by Belle Époque works from the City of Liège's museum collections: paintings, posters, furniture... In addition to artistic creations, the Art Nouveau aesthetic also extended to tableware, hygiene and beauty products (toilettries), decorative items and lighting, as electricity made its way into homes.

International exhibitions play a vital role. Alongside aesthetic design, they showcase the technical expertise of specialists and the mastery of glassblowers, cutters and engravers. Designed to showcase the crystalworks' craftsmanship at the 1894 Antwerp World's Fair, the monumental Vase of the Nine Provinces, created by Léon Ledru, displays complex techniques of cutting, engraving and moulding, all executed with brilliance. Since 2011, this unique piece, comprising 85 elements and weighing 200 kilos, has been on display in the permanent collections of the Grand Curtius; it has also been classified as a Treasure of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation since 2017.

Gustave Serrurier-Bovy (1858–1910) was a Belgian architect and interior designer, and a leading figure of the Art Nouveau movement. Trained in Liège, he developed a style combining fluid lines, naturalist inspiration and functionality. He applied the principle of 'total art' by designing cohesive interiors in which architecture, furniture and decorative objects formed a harmonious whole. In 1888, together with his wife, he founded Maison Serrurier-Bovy, producing furniture, lighting and decorative objects, some of which were designed to be self-assembled, foreshadowing flat-pack furniture. Among his creations, this single-flower vase, made around 1902, perfectly illustrates his decorative repertoire; the crystal vase, blown and cut at Val Saint-Lambert, is set within a brass frame featuring a resolutely innovative geometric design and motif. Serrurier-Bovy favoured simplicity of form and technical innovation, whilst making some of his creations accessible to a wide audience.



Designed by Gustave Serrurier-Bovy, colourless blown and cut crystal, brass mount, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

PARTNERS OF THE EXHIBITION AND CELEBRATIONS MARKING THE BI-CENTENARY

The Grand Curtius has joined forces with other museums and scientific institutions to organise a 'Val Saint-Lambert Bicentenary' event, which will take place across several venues through exhibitions that will enable visitors to (re) discover the history and artistic output of this famous foundry.

The exhibition 'Japonism and Art Nouveau' is being organised in collaboration with a number of partners who, through the loan of works and their support, have made this exhibition possible.

In tandem with the exhibition at the Grand Curtius, it is possible to continue to discover the Val-Saint-Lambert crystal-works through several other exhibitions organised in 2026:

- *Cristal vivant* (10/4-6/12/2026), château du Val Saint-Lambert, Seraing
- *Art déco et modernisme* (18/4-27/9/2026), Musée des Beaux-Arts, Charleroi
- *Val Saint-Lambert & design 1958-2000* (24/4- 25/10/2026) Design Museum, Brussels
- *Les Frères Muller & le Val Saint-Lambert. Décorateurs verriers entre la Lorraine et Liège* (2/10/2026-11/04/2027), Maison Hannon, Brussels

And also

- *Bloemen van inkt, bloemen van kristal* (1-10/5/2026), Gent
- *Illusion du merveilleux. Presse-papiers du Val* (4/03-31/05/2026), Musée de Verviers
- *Les mal-aimés du Val Saint-Lambert* (13/9-14/11/2026), Fondation Madeleine 7, Brussel
- *Vonèche, une cristallerie au cœur de l'Europe* (11/04-21/06/2026), Musée de Beauraing
- *Fantaisies artistiques : Guido en Antonio Bon*, Nationaal GlasMuseum, Leerdam (NL)



THE GRAND CURTIUS GLASS COLLECTION

A story of passion, patronage and acquisition, the Grand Curtius Glass Department showcases its exceptional collections, spanning from antiquity to the present day.

Originally, highly knowledgeable enthusiasts

In 1952, the City of Liège acquired a remarkable collection of antique glassware from a Liège family. Recent research has made it possible to piece together a fairly detailed picture of these outstanding collectors, although some uncertainties remain regarding the circumstances under which many of the glassware items were acquired.

Alfred Baar (1838–1907), fascinated by antique glassware, particularly Venetian and 'Venetian-style' pieces, began collecting items as early as 1875 and started compiling a catalogue from 1883 onwards. He frequented numerous auction houses, particularly when the dispersal of a glass collection was announced; he was also a regular visitor to many Belgian and foreign antique dealers.

His son Armand (1875–1942) inherited his father's collection and his passion for glass. A brilliant engineer, he travelled extensively and met specialists and antique dealers. He acquired remarkable objects in Amsterdam, Cologne, Paris and Beirut, and even purchased Venetian pieces at the sales of the Rothschild collection in 1932 and 1937. His expertise enabled him to study the materials in his collection, catalogue the pieces and classify them. A tireless collector, and a member, assistant curator and later President of the Liège Archaeological Institute in 1935, he passed on his passion to the Curator of the Curtius Museum, Hélène van Heule (1885–1960), who undertook a systematic study of the glassware. Aware of the importance of this exceptional collection, she persuaded Armand Baar's widow to fulfil her husband's wish: the collection remained in Liège, where it was first presented to the public in 1946.

The 1950s and 1960s: a golden age

In recognition of the growth of the Curtius Museum's glass collection, the Val Saint-Lambert Glassworks donated 87 pieces and a range of tools in 1957. The following year, three major events marked the history of the collections: the first International Glass Days in Liège, which promoted the study of this material; the exhibition 'Three Millennia of Glass Art through the Public and Private Collections of Belgium' and the first exhibition 'Aspects of Contemporary Glasswork', which showcased the generous donations from some 35 European glassworks participating in Expo 58. The Baar collection, enriched by these modern pieces, led to the creation of the Glass Museum, which opened in June 1959. A further expansion of the contemporary glass collection took place in 1963, bringing together donations from 47 European glassworks. Since then, the internationally renowned collection has continued to grow within the Grand Curtius; alongside antique glass, it features Neo-styles, Japonism, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, the Glass Department at the Grand



Designed by Léon Ledru, 'Natal' vase, colourless crystal with a pink lining, blown glass, decorated with violets etched and wheel-engraved, 1897–1905, Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

Curtius brings together over 10,000 pieces spanning 3,000 years of glass history. The various sections include ancient glass (Egyptian, Roman, Near Eastern), Islamic glass, Venetian and Venetian-style glass (one of the richest sections in terms of both quality and quantity), English and Bohemian crystal, as well as glass produced in Europe during the 17th and 18th centuries (Liège, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Spain).

From the 1950s onwards, a large number of acquisitions were made, with a focus on building a collection dedicated to the 19th and 20th centuries. Belgian glassworks are well represented, featuring pieces from the Cristallerie de Vonêche, the glassworks of Chênée, Herbatte, Laeken, and the central region (particularly in Hainaut). They also enable us to trace the history of the Val Saint-Lambert glassworks since their foundation in 1826, marked by several masterpieces such as the monumental Vase of the Nine Provinces (1894) and Art Nouveau pieces by Léon Ledru, the 'giant' vase by the Muller Brothers (1906–1908) and the sculpture 'The Trumpets of Jericho' (1972) by the American Harvey K. Littleton, founder of the 'Studio Glass' movement.

The Art Nouveau period (Philippe Wolfers' 'Crépuscule' vase (1901), Emile Gallé, the Daum brothers, the Legras crystal works, Karl Koepping...), Art Deco (René Lalique, Charles Graffart, the glassworks of Scailmont and Boom...) and the 1950s (Scandinavian, German and Austrian design) are the most extensive.

A remarkable collection, distinguished by the works of illustrious creators, glassmakers and 'designers', ranks it, on an international level, amongst the most significant glass collections.



Vase decorated with arum motifs, Cristalleries du Val Saint-Lambert, May 1826. Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

THE GRAND CURTIUS

The Museums of the City of Liège - The Grand Curtius

The Museums of the City of Liège comprise the Grand Curtius, La Boverie, the Lighting Museum (Mulum), the Grétry Museum, the Ansembourg Museum (currently undergoing renovation), and the Heritage Collections.

The Grand Curtius is an art and history museum covering over 5,000 m², housing collections divided into five departments: Archaeology, Religious Art and Meuse Art, Weapons, Glass and Decorative Arts. The Glass Department is currently in storage. Its collections comprise over 5,000 exhibited objects, drawn from a total collection of more than 200,000 items.

Thanks to the richness of its collections and the rigour of its heritage management, the Grand Curtius has established itself as a leading institution in the museum and heritage sector in Belgium.

Within its walls, visitors can explore over 7,000 years of Liège's history, set within a remarkable architectural complex. The Curtius Palace (early 17th century), the museum's iconic building, houses the arms collection, which is world-renowned both for the quantity of items on display and for their quality.

www.grandcurtius.be

With the support of the City of Liège and the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.



ORGANISATION

The exhibition '**Japonism and Art Nouveau**' will be on display at the Grand Curtius Museum from 17 April 2026 to 27 September 2026.

Organised by

- Mr Willy DEMEYER, Mayor of the City of Liège
- Ms Elisabeth FRAIPONT, Deputy Mayor for Culture, Public Reading and Remembrance
- Ms Pauline BOVY, Administrative Director of the Department of Culture and Tourism

Exhibition curator

- Ms Isabelle VERHOEVEN, Curator of the Glass Department at the Grand Curtius

In collaboration with

- The administrative, technical, graphic design, events and communications departments of the Museums of the City of Liège

Acknowledgements

- The museum would like to express its deepest gratitude and pay tribute to all the generous donors, past and present, who have contributed to the enrichment of the collections of Liège's museums, as well as to the institutional and private partners who, through their support and/or the loan of works, have made the exhibition 'Japonism and Art Nouveau' possible.
- The Wallonia-Brussels Federation
- The Department of Culture of the City of Liège

PUBLICATIONS

The exhibition is accompanied by publications produced especially for the occasion, available at the Grand Curtius.

III VISITOR'S GUIDE

Highlights of the *Japonism and Art Nouveau* exhibition

Produced by the Museums' Events Department, the Highlights of the exhibition focuses on ten works on display and provides key concepts and both historical and scientific information about them.

This visitor's guide is published in French, English, Dutch and German.

Price: €2



III ACTIVITY BOOK *Japonism and Art nouveau*

For ages 6 and up, discover the world of glass-making at the Cristalleries du Val Saint-Lambert. Published in French, English, Dutch and German.

III EDUCATIONAL PACK

JAPONISM AND ART NOUVEAU

Available on request from the Museums' Events Department: animationsdesmusees@liege.be

2026 'Teachers' Day' at the Museums of the City of Liège: 13 May 2026

As part of the 'Japonism and Art Nouveau' exhibition, the Grand Curtius is hosting a 'Teachers' Day' dedicated to Art Nouveau.

Come and discover the museums of the City of Liège (Le Grand Curtius, La Boverie, the Heritage Collections, the Grétry Museum and the MULUM) during the 'Teachers' Day' on Wednesday 13 May 2026, which will take place at 2 pm at Le Grand Curtius.

During this afternoon, you will not only meet the Museums' Events Department (responsible in particular for welcoming school groups) and learn about the various educational programmes, but you will also be informed about upcoming exhibitions for the 2026–2027 season.

Of course, you will also be able to book your upcoming educational visits.

*Registration required:
animationsdesmusees@liege.be*

EVENTS CALENDAR

A programme of events and accompanying activities for all ages, from children to adults, has been organised by the Museums' Events Department and will run throughout the exhibition.

III CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP DISCOVER ART NOUVEAU GLASS - FULLY BOOKED

Immerse yourself in the history of Val Saint-Lambert and discover the secrets of glass as you explore the Crystal Works. Watch the stained-glass artisans at work, be inspired by their movements, and learn their techniques to create your own luminous piece. Then follow in the footsteps of Art Nouveau by exploring the museum's collections and the 'Japonism and Art Nouveau' exhibition, spotting the hidden shapes and patterns, before finding them again in the streets of Liège. Keep your eyes peeled, experiment, create, and let your imagination take the lead. Experience a week of hands-on activities, discovery, creation and wonder: a workshop where history, craftsmanship and creativity come together.

Monday 27 to Thursday 30 April 2026

III LECTURE: 'JAPONISM AND ART NOUVEAU AT VAL SAINT-LAMBERT' By Isabelle Verhoeven, Curator of the Glass Department at the Grand Curtius

Founded in 1826, the Val Saint-Lambert Glassworks became, within a few decades, an undisputed economic powerhouse. Their golden age (1880–1914) flourished during the Belle Époque. It is notably illustrated by a remarkable artistic output: richly cut luxury items, Japanese-inspired works, and a highly original Art Nouveau line designed by Léon Ledru, head of the design department at Val. Between 1905 and 1908, a new range was developed, initiated by the Mullers, who had come **from Lorraine, to produce 'Daum-style' vases.**

Sunday 3 May 2026 at 11.00 am
Price: €5

III CREAMUSEUM: 'DESIGN YOUR OWN ART NOUVEAU PATTERN'

Drawing inspiration from the delicate, organic patterns of Val Saint-Lambert's Art Nouveau glassware, participants will explore the characteristic shapes, lines and colours of this style. They will draw inspiration from these to design their own decoration and personalise a vase from the catalogue, experimenting with different graphic and decorative approaches. An activity that combines observation, creativity and the discovery of an exceptional glassmaking heritage.

Sunday 3 May 2026 from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Free



III CHILDREN'S TOUR: 'THE MUSEUM AND 200 YEARS OF VAL SAINT-LAMBERT'

Take the whole family on a journey into the fascinating world of Val-Saint-Lambert with a fun tour suitable for everyone. At the heart of the anniversary exhibition, discover Japonism and Art Nouveau through astonishing pieces, some of which have never been seen before, that bear witness to the glassmakers' exceptional craftsmanship. Be amazed by the stories of the World's Fairs, the technical innovations and the pioneering figures who shaped this history. An interactive and entertaining tour, where art, technique and little historical curiosities come together to offer a real cultural adventure for young and old alike.

Sunday 10 May 2026 at 2pm
Price: €10 per adult and €6 per child under 12

III LECTURE: 'THE BELLE ÉPOQUE: THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIÈGE POSTERS'
By Sandrine Vandecasteele, Curator of Heritage Collections

Between 1880 and 1914, Belgium, like other Western European countries, experienced one of the most prosperous periods in its history. The emergence of Art Nouveau and the development of numerous artistic circles encouraged artists to express themselves in various fields. Auguste Bénéard, a printer and lithographer based in Liège, quickly established himself as a pioneer in the field of poster art and artistic printing in Belgium.

Sunday 17 May 2026 at 11am
Price: €5



III THEMED TOUR: 'ART AND THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF VAL SAINT-LAMBERT'

As part of the exhibition marking the 200th anniversary of Val-Saint-Lambert, this tour offers an in-depth exploration of Val-Saint-Lambert's artistic output between 1880 and 1914, a period marked by the influence of Japonism and the rise of Art Nouveau.

Participants will discover previously unseen pieces from Belgian public and private collections, whilst placing these creations within the historical context of the World's Fairs and international exchanges that shaped the evolution of glass. This tour will highlight the technical, commercial and aesthetic dimensions of the glassworks, revealing two centuries of innovation and glass-making expertise.

Sunday 17 May 2026 at 2pm
Price: €10

III A TOUR OF THE VAL SAINT-LAMBERT BICENTENARY EXHIBITION 'JAPONISM AND ART NOUVEAU'
By Isabelle Verhoeven, Curator of the Glass Department at the Grand Curtius

The golden age of the Val Saint-Lambert Glassworks flourished during the Belle Époque, between the 1880s and 1914. This prosperous period is illustrated, amongst other things, by a remarkable artistic output: works in the Japonist style (hyalite vases, Oriental-inspired designs) followed by an avant-garde Art Nouveau range designed by Léon Ledru. .. The tour offers an unexpected exploration of works by Val Saint-Lambert, drawn from museums and private collections. Organised as part of Art Nouveau Week

Sunday 7 June 2026 at 11am
Price: €10



Close-up of the 'Modèle à décor linéaire' vase, urane crystal with an aurora finish, blown, with a carved linear pattern, 1897–1908. Grand Curtius, Glass Department © City of Liège.

III "ART NOUVEAU FAMILY DAY – CREATE YOUR OWN ART NOUVEAU DESIGN"

Drawing inspiration from the delicate, organic patterns of Val Saint-Lambert's Art Nouveau glassware, participants will explore the characteristic shapes, lines and colours of this style. They will draw inspiration from these to design their own decoration and personalise a vase from the catalogue, experimenting with different graphic and decorative approaches. An activity that combines observation, creativity and the discovery of an exceptional glassmaking heritage. Organised as part of Art Nouveau Week

Wednesday 10 June 2026 from 2.00 pm to 4.30 pm
Free

III 'ART AND COMMERCE' DAY

Le Grand Curtius is dedicating a day to commerce during the Val Saint-Lambert era, as part of its anniversary exhibition. A unique opportunity to discover the rise of the Cristalleries and have your pieces appraised.

Programme for the day:

- 11am to 12pm – Guided tour of the 'Japonism and Art Nouveau' exhibition on the theme 'Val Saint-Lambert: between creativity and commercial strategy' by Isabelle Verhoeven, Curator of the Glass Department.

- From 2pm to 4.30pm – Antique dealers trained in the "Business Manager: Antique Dealer" section of the IFAPME will appraise your "Art Nouveau" pieces:

Sandra Schrouben from the "Adèle et Jo" shop in Vielsam - Véronique Pallen from 'Trésors du Lavaux' in Esneux - Damien Carron from the 'Aurore Morisse Gallery' in Liège.

Organised as part of Art Nouveau Week

Saturday 13 June 2026 from 11.00 am to 4.30 pm
Price: €10 for the tour and appraisal

III LECTURE: 'ART NOUVEAU FURNITURE IN THE COLLECTIONS OF THE GRAND CURTIUS' By Carmen Genten, Curator of the Department of Decorative Arts at the Grand Curtius

Art Nouveau in the Department of Decorative Arts focuses almost exclusively on works from Liège, and the core of this collection is clearly made up of furniture and objects by Gustave Serrurier-Bovy. This architect and interior designer displays a restrained use of the characteristic curves seen in Brussels and Paris, combined with a typically English and Germanic geometric style. This ability to synthesise artistic influences continues to earn him international renown to this day.

Organised as part of Art Nouveau Week

Sunday 14 June 2026 at 11am
Price: €5



III EXPERIENCE THE BELLE ÉPOQUE – A FESTIVE COSTUMED AFTERNOON

On 29 August 2026, the Grand Curtius Museum invites you to enjoy an afternoon full of atmosphere and discoveries centred around the Belle Époque. Entertainment, music, games, workshops and surprises will punctuate this event, which is open to everyone. The perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in the elegant and vibrant world of the early 20th century, enjoy activities for young and old alike, and rediscover the museum in a new light. A friendly, festive and accessible outing to share with family or friends.

On the programme

- At 2.00 pm, 2.40 pm and 3.15 pm, our Curator of the Glass Department, Isabelle Verhoeven, will lead short guided tours, offering a glimpse of the collections through the lens of the Belle Époque;
- Throughout the afternoon, a 'Belle Époque aperitifs' stand will allow visitors to discover the flavours and rituals of yesteryear;
- During the afternoon, a photo studio will be available to the public, offering the chance to leave with an old-fashioned portrait, combining authenticity with period charm;
- During the afternoon, traditional games – chess, pétanque, skittles... – will allow the public to rediscover the popular pastimes of the era;
- At 4pm and 5.30pm, musical performances dedicated to the great tunes of the Belle Époque (Aristide Bruant, Mistinguett, Félix Mayol);
- Continuous screening of early films and archive footage in the auditorium.

Saturday 29 August 2026 from 2pm to 5.30pm

LECTURE: 'ART NOUVEAU AT THE FN: A FEW RARE ENGRAVED WEAPONS FROM THE GRAND CURTIUS COLLECTIONS'
By **Loïc Servais, Curator of the Weapons Department at the Grand Curtius**

Art Nouveau influenced almost every art form at the end of the 19th century: engraving on weapons was no exception. The Museum possesses several high-quality examples of this style. They are signed by leading figures in Liège engraving such as Funken and Corombelle. These pieces are rare because this artistic movement enjoyed only relative success in the field of weapon engraving, which remains very attached to more classical motifs still in use today.

Sunday 20 September 2026 at 11am
Price: €5



Hunting rifle, 1939, FN, walnut and steel, engraved by Funken. © City of Liège.

Register for events at
www.grandcurtius.be/fr/votre-visite/billetterie

ART NOUVEAU WEEK IN LIÈGE
06.06 > 14.06.2026.

The City of Liège, a member of the European Art Nouveau Network (RANN), with the support of several organisations including the AWaP and the GAR-Archives d'architecture (Faculty of Architecture, University of Liège), is organising a week-long event from 6 to 14 June 2026 to celebrate Art Nouveau in Liège.

Whilst Liège is renowned for its thousand-year-old heritage, particularly linked to the history of the Principality of Liège, the 'Fiery City' is less often associated with Art Nouveau. Yet, as was the case for many major European cities, Liège was profoundly shaped by this artistic movement, and this heritage can still be discovered on the corners of many of the city's streets and in the collections of our museums.

Alongside remarkable buildings with their distinctive silhouettes, Art Nouveau in Liège can also be explored through its rich museum collections (posters, sculptures, glassware and even furniture designed by Serrurier-Bovy), which bear witness to the full diversity and richness of this movement. The first edition of Art Nouveau Week offers a wonderful opportunity to discover these treasures, which are all too often overlooked, thanks to an attractive programme of exhibitions, talks, events and tours of iconic sites.

Discover the programme at www.liege.be



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition: **Japonism and Art Nouveau** –
Bicentenary of Val Saint-Lambert
17 April to 27 September 2026

Grand Curtius
Féronstrée, 136 – 4000 Liège
+32 (0)4 221 68 17

www.grandcurtius.be
Facebook: Legrandcurtius

Monday to Sunday: 10am–6pm, closed on Tues-
days
Closed on 1 January, 1 May, 1 November, 2 No-
vember, 11 November and 25 December.

PRICES

Japonism and Art Nouveau Exhibition

- Adults: €8
- Seniors (over 65s), groups: €6
- Article 27: €1.25

Combined ticket for the Japonism and Art Nou-
veau Exhibition and the permanent collections of
the Grand Curtius

- Adults: €10
- Senior citizens (over 65) and groups: €6
- Article 27: €1.25

Free admission

- For under-26s.
- For holders of the MuseumPassMusée.
- The first Sunday of the month for everyone.
- For accompanied school groups based in the
City of Liège and for students at the Saint-Luc
schools and the Académie de Liège.

The Grand Curtius is accessible to people with
reduced mobility.

Shop

Cafeteria with terraces (closed on Mondays and
Tuesdays)

CONTACTS

EXHIBITION CURATOR

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PRESS | GRAND CURTIUS: PERMANENT COL- LECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS

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