

PRESS KIT
EXPO



ART DECO

STYLE IN A CHANGING SOCIETY

AN EXHIBITION ORGANISED BY THE KING BAUDOUIN FOUNDATION AS PART OF ITS HERITAGE & CULTURE
PROGRAMME AT THE BELVUE MUSEUM IN BRUSSELS.

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As part of 'Art Deco Brussels 2025', the King Baudouin Foundation is organising an exhibition titled *ART DECO. Style in a changing society* at the BELvue museum from 4 June 2025 to 4 January 2026. For the first time ever, the stunning Art Deco pieces in the King Baudouin Foundation collection will be on display together. On top of that, the exhibition will focus on how society changed and reinvented itself over the course of this fascinating period.

Explore the magnificent world of Art Deco. Discover how this modern and iconic style reflects the ways the world changed post-World War I: a vibrant era of new relationships between social classes, technological progress and a flourishing art scene, a time when women claimed their place in society and everyday objects were elevated to works of art.

With this exhibition, the King Baudouin Foundation aims to go beyond the traditional approach to Art Deco, which focuses on aesthetics and luxury, by placing the style in its broader social context. On top of that, visitors will be challenged to find parallels with today's ever-evolving society and the challenges we face right now.

The exhibition is part of 'Art Deco Brussels 2025', an event run jointly by urban.brussels and visit.brussels with the collaboration of Patrimoine & Culture asbl in 2025 to mark the 100th anniversary of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, which took place in Paris in 1925.

EXHIBITION SET-UP

The *ART DECO. Style in a changing society* exhibition is laid out across three themed rooms, each of which shines a light on a specific aspect of Art Deco: exclusivity, series production and modernity. In the corridor that connects the rooms, visitors will encounter questions urging them to reflect on the social challenges we face today.

ROOM 1: EXCLUSIVITY IN ART DECO

The 1925 *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris was a showpiece of luxury and grandeur. Visitors to the expo were treated to the most exclusive interiors and *objets d'art* across a series of opulent pavilions. These luxurious designs, with sleek lines and geometric shapes, were aimed at a well-to-do audience. Exclusive Art Deco objects were produced using the most sophisticated techniques and materials. Artists such as Marcel Wolfers and Oscar Jespers created elegant sculptures, while Val-Saint-Lambert produced luxury glassware that embodied the splendour of this style.

What's more, women played a major role in the Art Deco aesthetic. The 1920s and 1930s saw a wave of emancipation: women entered the labour market and demanded new freedoms. All of this was reflected in art and fashion too, with the female figure being portrayed in ever-more powerful and modern ways.

Oscar Jespers, *Perle fine*, 1925. Marble, H 22.5 x W 11 x D 22.5 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the King Baudouin Foundation in 2018, entrusted to the KMSKA, Antwerp. © Benjamin De Vuyst ♥



Marcel Wolfers, *Victory with Laurel Wreath*, 1931. Ivory and lacquer, 63,5 x 20 x 6,5 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the King Baudouin Foundation in 2017, entrusted to the Art & History Museum, Brussels. © KMG-MRAH ➤

ROOM 2: SERIES PRODUCTION — ART DECO FOR ALL

No style has ever found as broad an audience as Art Deco. While previous styles mainly appealed to the elite, Art Deco also set out to win over the middle classes, which were expanding rapidly during the inter-war period. Artists and designers started experimenting with new production methods to make aesthetic objects affordable to a broader audience.

Series production played a major role in this. Designers such as Charles Catteau created ceramics with geometric patterns and exotic animal motifs that could be produced on an industrial scale. As a result, luxurious Art Deco elements started finding their way into normal households too. Furniture designers and graphic artists also adapted their styles to suit mass production, meaning posters, decorative tiles and book binding in Art Deco style became a common sight.

The fascination with the exotic and the world of animals that developed over the course of this era is also clearly reflected in Art Deco objects, which are often decorated with exotic animals such as panthers, antelopes and birds. The geometric forms and stylised lines so typical of Art Deco hint at the influence of cubism.



Series of Art Deco style vases from the Catteau Collection. C. 1925-1930, ceramic and stoneware. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Claire De Pauw and Marcel Stal in 1999, entrusted to Keramis - The Ceramics Centre of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, La Louvière. © Studio Philippe de Formanoir

ROOM 3: MODERNITY — THE SPEED OF CHANGE

One of the main features of the Art Deco period is a fascination with progress and speed. New technologies such as cars, airplanes and trains were making their mark on the everyday lives of people and inspired designers in architecture and the decorative arts. The dynamic lines of Art Deco served to reflect this speed and motion, with aerodynamic shapes, large windows and metal balustrades reminiscent of ocean liners.

Some designers stayed true to the luxurious, decorative style, while others opted for a more sober, functional design that paved the way for modernist architecture.

This room shows how the search for modernity resulted in innovative designs, in which artists and architects responded to the evolving needs of their time.



E. Dupuis, Affiche FN + Minerva, 1927. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Yvette and Jacques Kupelian, entrusted to Autoworld, Brussels. © Jo Exelmans

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS



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Sculptures by Marcel Wolfers and Oscar Jespers

Vases by Charles Catteau



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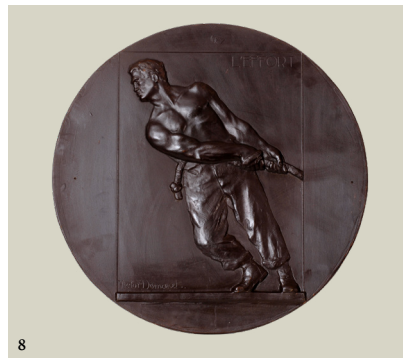
Chalice of Archbishop Jean Jadot

Decorative book bindings and tiles

Furniture and interior designs by prominent Belgian designers



7



8

Posters and graphic design reflecting the commercial and cultural dynamics of the era

Bas-relief sculptures and other objects of applied art

1. Marcel Wolfers, *Victory with Laurel Wreath*, 1931. Ivory and lacquer, 63,5 x 20 x 6,5 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the King Baudouin Foundation in 2017, entrusted to the Art & History Museum, Brussels. © KMKG-MRAH
2. Oscar Jespers, *Head of a Woman (Blanche Charlet)*, 1930. Terracotta, 41,5 x 19 x 13,5 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the Isabelle and Philippe Dewez Fund in 2024, entrusted to the Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels. © Galerie De Vuyst
3. Series of Art Deco style vases from the Catteau Collection. C. 1925-1930, ceramic and stoneware. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Claire De Pauw and Marcel Stal in 1999, entrusted to Keramis - The Ceramics Centre of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, La Louvière. © Studio Philippe de Formanoir
4. Dom Martin (design), Wolfers Frères (execution), Chalice of Archbishop Jean Jadot (with paten and small spoon), 1931. Silver, vermeil and tiger's eye, 17,5 x 8 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Gift within the framework of the Monseigneur Jadot Fund in 2013, entrusted to the museum M. Leuven. © Studio Philippe de Formanoir
5. Parisian Art Deco binding with champlévé enamel inlay, Paul Bonet, 1928. 25,8 x 19,5 cm. Joris-Karl Huysmans, *A rebours*, Paris, KRA, 1927. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Michel and Fiammetta Wittrock with-in the framework of the Michel Wittrock Fund created in 2010, entrusted to the Wittrock-iana, Brussels. © Jo Exelmans
6. Sylvie Féron and René Baucher, bureau, 1932. Mahogany, plywood, veneer, bronze, plastic, 74,3 x 110 x 54 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the Marie-Jeanne Dauchy Fund in 2024, entrusted to the Design Museum Brussels. © Andy Simon
7. J. Van den Bergh, Poster of the Brussels Salon, 1930. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Yvette and Jacques Kupelian, entrusted to Autoworld, Brussels. © Jo Exelmans
8. Victor Demanet, *The Effort. Man*, bare-chested, pulling a rope, 1939. Iron, 56 cm. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Acquired by the King Baudouin Foundation in 2006, entrusted to the Medals Department of KBR, Brussels. © KBR

EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMME

Countless activities will be organised around the exhibition, including:

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE EXHIBITION

14/06	Meet the curator Werner Adriaenssens (NL)
15/06	Meet the curator Cécile Dubois (FR)
22/06	Guided tour (EN)
7/07 until 8/07	Workshop for children (NL, FR)
27/07	Guided tour (NL, FR, EN)
24/08	Guided tour (NL, FR, EN)
20/09 until 21/09	Heritage days - Tours (NL, FR, EN)
28/09	Meet the curators Werner Adriaenssens (NL) & Cécile Dubois (FR)
12/10	Meet the curators Werner Adriaenssens (NL) & Cécile Dubois (FR)
16/11	Arts day for children
20/11	'Art Deco' lecture
14/12	Meet the curators Werner Adriaenssens (NL) & Cécile Dubois (FR)
29/12 until 30/12	Workshop for children (NL, FR)
3/01	Guided tour (EN)

MORE INFO AND TICKETS: WWW.BELVUE.BE

VISITS FOR GROUPS AND SCHOOLS

Self-guided and guided visits for groups are available upon reservation.

For classes in the final years of secondary education, a self-guided and interactive visit titled 'Then and Now: Art Deco in Perspective' has been developed.



Pierre De Soete, Art Deco Minerva radiator cap. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Yvette and Jacques Kupelain, entrusted to Autoworld, Brussels. © Jo Exelmans

HERITAGE AND CULTURE PROGRAMME

The *ART DECO. Style in a changing society* exhibition is an initiative of the Heritage and Culture Programme of the King Baudouin Foundation. Through this programme, the King Baudouin Foundation endeavours to protect Belgium's heritage and encourages philanthropy in the fields of heritage and culture.

For over 38 years, the Foundation has been buying iconic works and important documents that bear witness to the historic, social, economic and cultural evolution of Belgium and, more in general, Europe.

Thanks in part to countless donations, it has been able to amass a valuable collection, which today numbers nearly 29,000 works and 29 archival funds. The collection is housed and made accessible to the public at more than 100 museums and cultural institutions.

Patrons can also turn to the King Baudouin Foundation to help realise their philanthropic ideas in the fields of heritage and culture. In fact, such collaborations have already resulted in a wide variety of projects relating to moveable heritage, music, architecture, natural heritage, archaeology, history, literature, young talent, projects with a social impact and much more.

WWW.HERITAGE-KBF.BE

 **INSTAGRAM: @BELGIANHERITAGE**



King Baudouin Foundation

KING BAUDOUIN FOUNDATION

The King Baudouin Foundation's task is to contribute to a better society in Belgium, Europe and elsewhere in the world. The Foundation is a driver of change and innovation, all in service of the common good and social cohesion. It is committed to realising maximum impact by enhancing the skills of organisations and individuals. It encourages effective philanthropy among individuals and businesses. Integrity and transparency, promoting solidarity, respect for diversity, pluralism and independence are its core values.

Our vision for the future:

- embed our activities in Belgium at all levels, from the local to the national;
- continue to position KBS on the European stage;
- become an international point of reference in cross-border philanthropy via Myriad, an alliance for cross-border donations founded together with Myriad USA and Myriad Canada, and via our partnership with Give2Asia.

The King Baudouin Foundation was founded in 1976, when King Baudouin had been on the throne for 25 years.

WWW.KBS-FRB.BE

BELVUE MUSEUM

BELvue is both a museum and a centre for democracy. Through its permanent exhibition about Belgium and its history, temporary exhibitions and workshops on political and economic citizenship, justice, colonial history and society, BELvue offers a range of keys to unlock an understanding and interpretation of Belgian society today.

Each topic is presented in detail through actual testimonies and then explained through a series of moments in history, offering a modern and original way to understand the Belgium of yesteryear and today.

BELvue is an element of the Democracy Programme of the King Baudouin Foundation.

WWW.BELVUE.BE



© Luc Viatour, BELvue museum

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Where

BELvue Museum, Paleizenplein 7, 1000 Brussels

Data

From 4 June 2025 to 4 January 2026

Languages

Exhibition in Dutch, French and English.

Audio guide available (using your own smartphone)

FREE ADMISSION!

OPENING TIMES

Monday

closed, group bookings only (09:30 to 17:00)

Tuesday to Friday

09:30 to 17:00

Saturday, Sunday, July and August

10:00 - 18:00

**Closed on Mondays (except groups),
21/07, 25/12 and 01/01.**

PRESS EVENT PREVIEW



Art Déco tiles, ca. 1925-1935, ceramic. Collection King Baudouin Foundation. Donated by Roberto Pozzo in 2016, entrusted to the Gilliot & Roelants Tegelmuseum, Hemiksem. © Mario Baeck

WHEN

3 June 2025

SCHEDULE

- ◆ **10:30**
Tour (in Dutch) by Prof **Werner Adriaenssens**, curator of 20th century collections at the Royal Museums of Art and History, professor at VUB and curator of the exhibition. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, hold individual interviews, make recordings etc. afterwards.
- ◆ **12:00 - 13:00**
light lunch
- ◆ **13:00**
Tour (in French) by **Cécile Dubois**, historian, author and chair of the Brussels Art Deco Society and curator of the exhibition. There will be an opportunity to ask questions, hold individual interviews, make recordings etc. afterwards.

PRESS CONTACTS

For further information, interviews or image material, feel free to contact:

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IMAGE MATERIAL

You can download high-resolution photos of the artworks shown at the exhibition as well as the key: <https://images.kbs-frb.be/1WZ46QyyfO>



**WE WARMLY INVITE YOU
TO COME EXPLORE THIS SPECIAL EXHIBITION AND
EXPERIENCE THE TIMELESS ELEGANCE OF ART DECO!**

