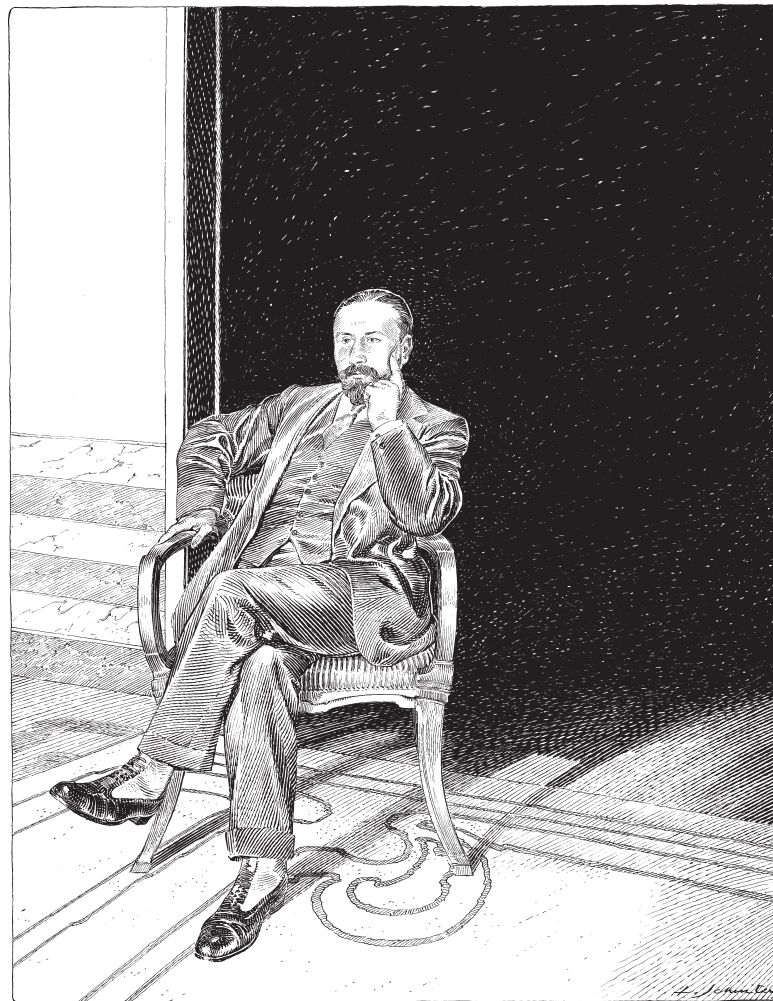


# HORTA MUSEUM

## Press Pack

*VICTOR HORTA VERSUS ART NOUVEAU*  
*HORTA'S VOCABULARY*

24 march 2023 - 08 january 2024



ART NOUVEAU  
BRUSSELS  
2023



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and Fonds Baillet Latour.

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The Museum is supported by the local authority of Saint-Gilles,  
the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles and Urban Brussels.

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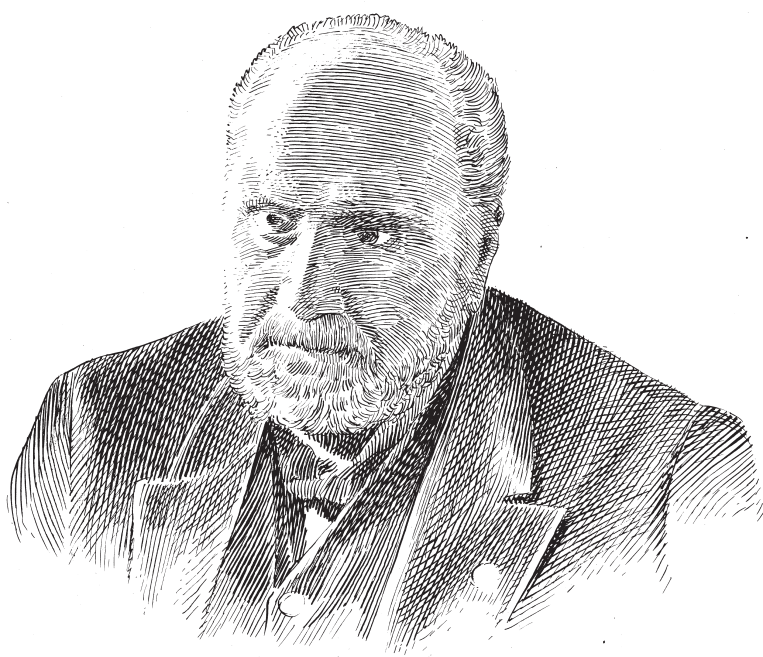
  
urban.brussels 

« HORTA, CECI N'EST PAS UN ARCHITECTE ART NOUVEAU »

The aim of this exhibition is to present Horta in a different light. Let's forget the style-related themes and preconceived images applied to this architect. Let's even try to forget Art Nouveau for a moment – although a useful label, it can sometimes be reductive. With this in mind, let's abandon our preconceptions and take a fresh look at Horta to see what he has to tell us (and conceal from us). We'll be looking at the role of his wife, Pauline Heyse, and of his mentors – Balat and Viollet-le-Duc – as well as the inspiration he also gained from Egypt, Greece and the 18th century, not to mention his admiration for the Opéra Garnier and the Palace of Justice in Brussels. Was Horta an eclectic architect ?



*Portrait of Joseph Poelaert by François Schuiten  
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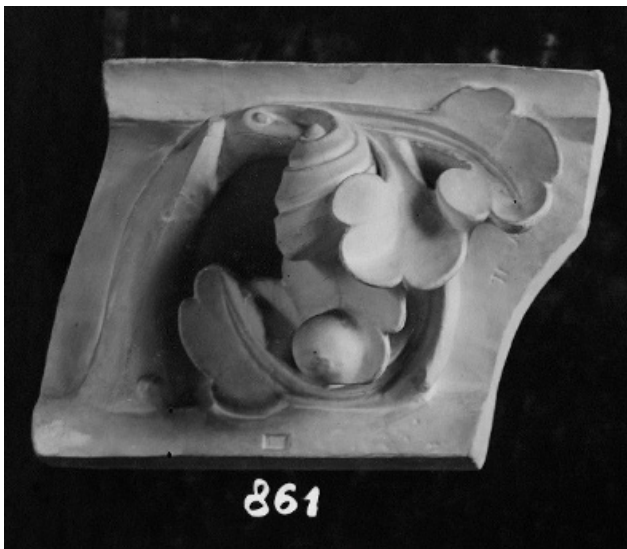


*Portrait of Alphonse Balat by François Schuiten  
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## 1ST PERIOD : HORTA : AN ECLECTIC ARCHITECT

Horta spent a total of eight years in training (comprising studies at the Academies in Ghent and Brussels and an apprenticeship in the capital). There, he studied the architectural styles of the past and copied ornamental elements from bygone eras. In 1892, he discarded the practice of slavishly replicating historical motifs and endowed his art with a personal aspect. We find traces of the sources that inspired his artistic vocabulary in decorative elements and ornamentation ; Ancient Egypt, the Gothic period and the Louis XV or Rococo style offered a repertoire of forms that Horta appropriated, expanded and transformed in his own manner.

A group of 10 plaster models never before shown to the public will be presented in a striking setting that echoes past styles and Horta's work.



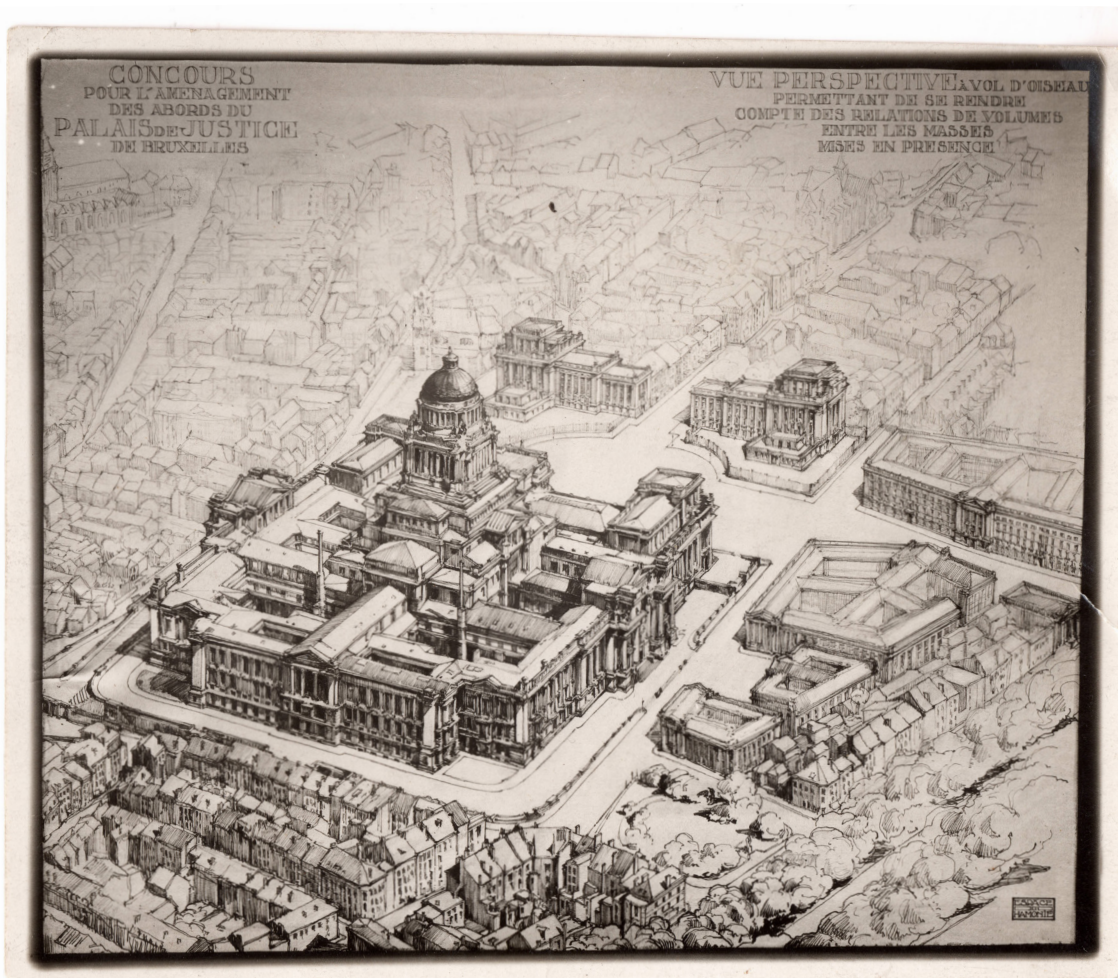
*Element of a frieze (leaf), plaster, the mould making studio at the Art and History Museum, 1863-1926*



*Victor Horta, model for a console, Horta Museum Collection, 1902*

## HORTA VERSUS POELAERT

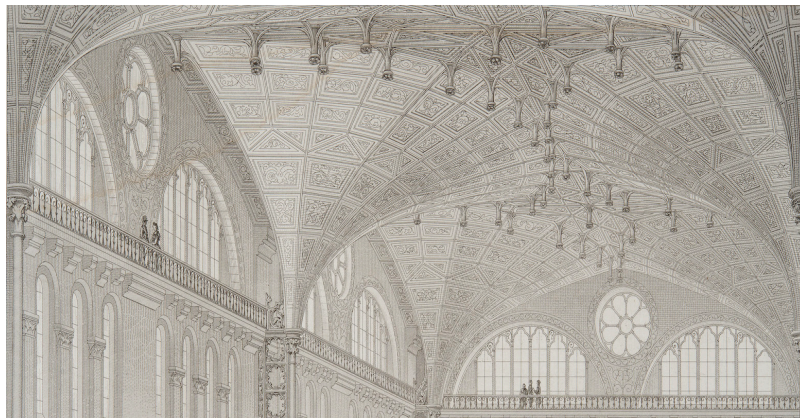
It is a little-known fact that Horta was fascinated by the Palace of Justice ; he even presented a design for its entrance door (1892), and also submitted an entry for a competition to develop the Place Poelaert, comprising two buildings that he designed in the style of Poelaert.



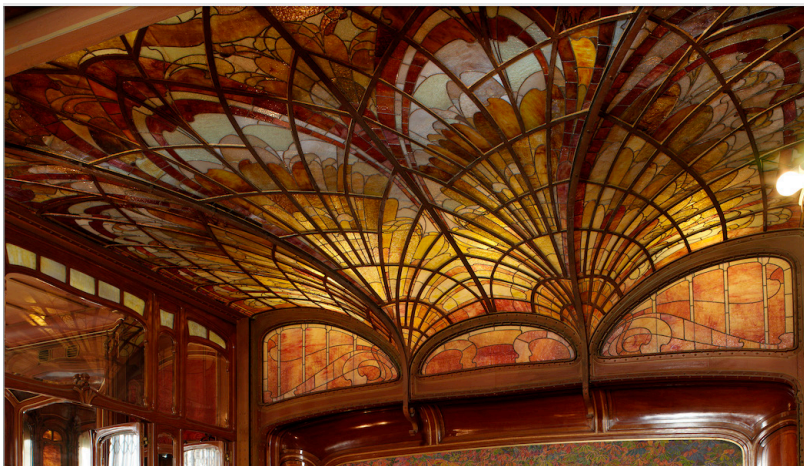
*Grandeur and harmony : a design by Victor Horta for the development of the Place Poelaert as it is today. Ca 1932.*

## 2ND PERIOD : HORTA : AN ART NOUVEAU ARCHITECT

Horta certainly never described himself as an Art Nouveau architect ; indeed, the term he used to define his architecture was « modern Gothic ». The exhibition centres on the exploration of the links between Horta and Viollet le Duc. These powerful connections form the very origin of the birth of an innovative architectural language. Viollet le Duc had already championed both Japan and the natural world as elements that would revitalise architecture and endow it with coherence and a completely original, foundational identity.



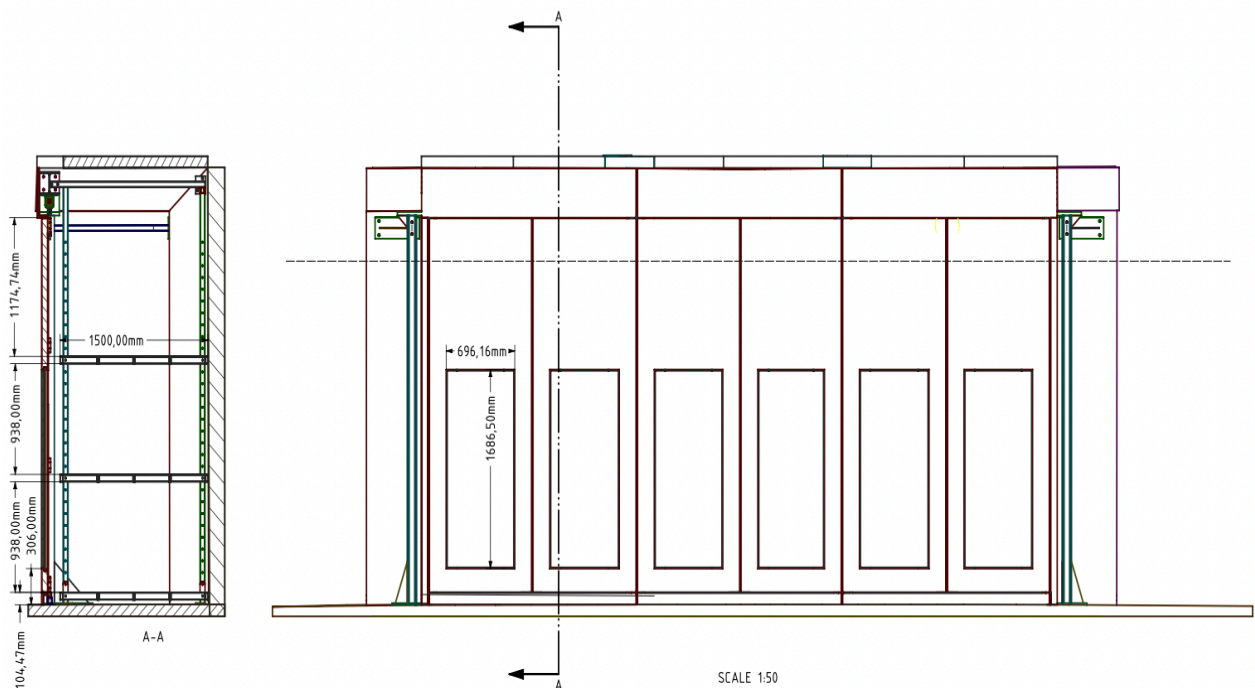
*Eugène Viollet-le-Duc, Entretiens sur l'architecture, planche XXVI, 1864*



*Victor Horta, skylight at the Solvay town house, 1895  
Photograph by Bastin & Evrard*

## A NEW STORAGE SYSTEM FOR THE HORTA MUSEUM

This exhibition has also provided the Horta Museum with the opportunity to acquire a new furniture storage system, conforming to rigorous standards. Thanks to the support of the Fonds Baillet Latour and the ingenuity of the metalworker Luc Reuse, the Museum has a modern and adaptable storage system. This can be used for exhibitions ; the highly original system features a glass door, with the storage area being transformed into an exhibition display case when the need arises. To inaugurate this modular system, we will be presenting a selection of exceptional chairs.



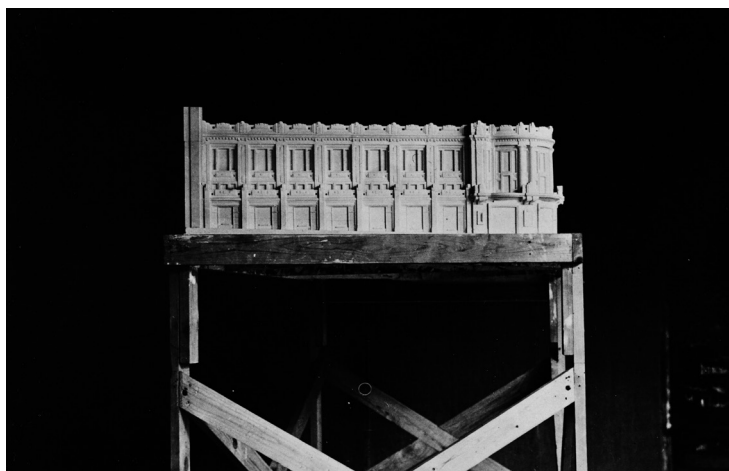
*the Reuse firm : design for sliding doors*

## HORTA : AN ART DECO ARCHITECT

The idea here is to cast aside preconceived notions about Horta by exploring his creations before and after the Art Nouveau period. This will give us a better understanding of the importance of Balat's role in his development and identity. In this context, the original model of the Palace of Fine Arts will be presented as a counterpoint to a model of the Temple of Human Passions created by students from the Saint-Luc Art School.



*Victor Horta, The Temple of Human Passions in its original version, 1892*



*Victor Horta, model of the Palace of Fine Arts, ca. 1920, Horta Museum archives*



## REPRODUCING VANISHED OBJECTS...

In order to understand Horta's aesthetic vocabulary after 1918, we will also be presenting 3D reproductions of two creations that have not survived : the house that Victor Horta refurbished and restored at 136 Avenue Louise and which was demolished, as well as the Chamber Music Room at the Palace of Fine Arts. Sadly, the latter was permanently disfigured about forty years ago. These two reproductions were created by the Laboratoire Alice at the architecture faculty of La Cambre – Horta.



*Florian Thiry, proposal for a reproduction of the dining room at 136, Avenue Louise, refurbished by Victor Horta. Copyright Laboratoire Alice.*

This exhibition forms part of the ambitious programme initiated by Pascal Smet and Urban.

In this context, the Horta Museum is delighted to announce the following:

**29.01 – 05.02** : Horta, guest of honour at the Brafa Art Fair.

**16.02 – 19.02** : The Bright Festival : an image of the Maison du Peuple will be projected onto the façade of the Bleton Tower.

**30.03 – 08.01.24** : Horta versus Art Nouveau : Horta's vocabulary.

**October 2023** : Horta : The Grammar of Art Nouveau. Bozar.

**15.11 – 15.01** : From Art Nouveau to fashion : the Fashion and Lace Museum will be invited to the Horta Museum.



*François Schuiten, portrait of Victor Horta. All rights reserved*

# Partners

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# Alice

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Faculté d'Architecture La Cambre Horta

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Atelier de moulage - Musée Art & Histoire

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# Colophon

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## Exhibition Curator

Benjamin Zurstrassen

## Coordination

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## Scenography

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Benjamin Zurstrassen

## Guest Artist

François Schuiten

## Artisans

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## Press Agency

Carcascom

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Bulle Color  
Limelight

The Horta Museum is grateful for the many items received on loan :

## Artisium

Collection Jonathan Mangelinckx  
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Hôtel Solvay  
Musée Art & Histoire

We would also like to thank the other private collectors

## Visitor information

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[info@hortamuseum.be](mailto:info@hortamuseum.be)

## Getting here

Trams 81, 92, 97 (place Janson) / Bus 54

## Opening times

14.00 to 17.30 Tuesday to Friday incl.

11.00 to 17.30 Saturday and Sunday

Last entry 17.00

Online bookings only

Mornings are reserved for group visits.

The interior of the Museum's is made up of 11 half-floors arranged around a narrow central staircase. Because the whole of this structure has listed status, we are unable to welcome visitors with reduced mobility to all areas. A virtual tour is, however, available on application at the ticket-counter.

## Closing times

Every Monday, 1 January, Easter Sunday, 1 May,  
Ascension Day, 21 July, 15 August, 1 November,  
11 November, 25 December

## Prices

Admission to the exhibition is free, but the following charges apply for access to other areas:

Adults – 12.00 €

Seniors – 10.00 €

Students (18+), Belgian jobseekers, residents of Saint-Gilles – 6.00 €

Primary and secondary school children/children 6 to 18 years – 3.50 €

Article 27 – 1.25 €

Art nouveau Pass, MuseumPassmusées, Friends of the Horta Museum, ICOM, OKV concessions, press-card holders, children < than 6, disabled visitors – free

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