OUVERTURE 10ANS
VILLA CAVROIS

Exhibition
At Villa Cavrois

© Yann Monel / Centre des monuments nationaux

1925
A LEGACY

From 13 May
to 14 September 2025

GUIDE BOOKLET

© Ministère de la Culture - Médiathèque du patrimoine et de la photographie

Curator: Gérald Rémy

Acknowledgements

Emmanuel Pénicaut – Manufactures Nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier National

Sami Melki and the Manufacture de Beauvais team
Christophe Potet and Théo Diers

DDCP – Centre des monuments nationaux

Exhibition supported by the Métropole Européenne de Lille

FROM THE MANUFACTURES NATIONALES TO THE VILLA CAVROIS

The “1925: A Legacy” exhibition showcases a selection of Art Deco-inspired pieces and furniture from the national collections of the Mobilier National and its Sèvres and Beauvais factories in these visionary spaces designed by Robert Mallet-Stevens.

The works of the ceramicists and designers exhibited as part of the Villa Cavrois architectural programme encourage visitors to project themselves into the artistic trends of the early-20th century and to appreciate just how much of an innovative aesthetic breakthrough Robert Mallet-Stevens actually put forward to the Cavrois family a few years later.

As an architect who was highly acclaimed at the 1925 International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts for his spectacular Tourism Pavilion, located in front of the Grand Palais, and his collaboration with the Martel brothers on the cubist trees, Mallet-Stevens gradually moved away from the ideas of the Société des Artistes Décorateurs and gave the drive for modernity renewed impetus.

Just a stone’s throw from this iconic creation, Paul Cavrois, a well-known industrialist in the north of France who first noticed the avant-garde aspirations of Robert Mallet-Stevens, was to be found in the *Pavillon des Industriels du Textile de Roubaix Tourcoing* (Textile Manufacturers’ of Roubaix and Tourcoing Pavilion).

Keen to be at the forefront of the times, he and his wife Lucie Cavrois embarked on a modern adventure when they commissioned the complete artistic masterpiece that would become the Villa Cavrois in 1932.

From traditional skills to a modern way of life, this exhibition sets the scene for a rich period in art history that saw Robert Mallet-Stevens emerge as an architect who made a complete break from the codes of his time. The artists of this period were nevertheless heavily inspired by the motifs, textures and perspectives that nature had to offer.

Throughout the exhibition, the plant-inspired decoration of the Sèvres vases, the floral details of the Follot chairs and even the harmony with the garden itself, as reflected in the architectural approach adopted by Robert Mallet-Stevens, are indicative of a certain tribute to the environment, a source of decorative inspiration and the driving force behind a new way of life.

Inviting residents in the past and visitors in the present day to enjoy the spectacle of its natural surroundings, the Villa Cavrois is part of a certain Art Deco heritage and has set about establishing a dialogue that is unique and unprecedented, to say the least, between its various spaces and the collections of the Mobilier National to mark the centenary of its Art Deco influence.

MOBILIER NATIONAL

The Mobilier National comprises a number of prestigious factories, including those at Gobelins, Beauvais and Sèvres, which still play a key role in the preservation and development of the decorative arts in France. These workshops, specialising in tapestry and ceramics, have undergone periods of crisis and reform but are constantly modernising their production approaches while remaining true to the relevant artisan traditions.

More recently, these organisations have been brought together under the aegis of the Mobilier National, thus strengthening their collaboration and their influence in the decorative arts sphere.

MANUFACTURE DE SÈVRES

Founded in 1740, the Manufacture de Sèvres is a French institution renowned for its production of *porcelaine d'art*. From the 1920s onwards, it became a key player in the development of the Art Deco movement, collaborating with contemporary artists to create pieces with minimalist geometric designs.

It notably innovates by exploiting the lightness and translucency of porcelain to produce pieces such as chandeliers and illuminated vases that represent the fusion of tradition and modernity, thus reinforcing its role as a benchmark in French *savoir-faire*.

MANUFACTURE DE BEAUVAIS

Founded on the road to Flanders by Louis XIV in 1664, the Manufacture Nationale de Beauvais produces low-warp tapestries on a horizontal loom. Now part of the Manufacture Nationale des Gobelins, it continues to promote this expertise by commissioning work on a national scale from contemporary artists that combine tradition with modern design.

A selection of vases and furniture from the Mobilier National is displayed throughout the tour. The labels for these pieces can be found in this visitor's guide.

1925: A LEGACY

The International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris closed its doors on 25 October 1925. Over the previous seven months, six million visitors had witnessed a peaceful encounter between eighteen countries who had come together in the name of the decorative arts.

Some of the Exhibition's dozens of pavilions had revived the academic vocabulary of the late-19th century, others had marked the return of the great pre-war designers (Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann, Paul Follot), and others still had showcased up-and-coming talents (such as Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier, Robert Mallet-Stevens, and George Bourgeois, known as Djo-Bourgeois) who were changing perceptions with their keen appetites for innovation and modernity.

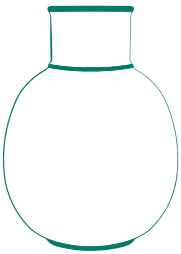
Organised by the Ministry of Commerce, the event was designed to support the French decorative arts sector and raise its profile abroad. For designers and assemblers, it was an opportunity to erase the atrocities of the Great War and move away from the Art Nouveau style without denying the past but by introducing a new aesthetic vocabulary. From late-1925 onwards, this new ornamental rhetoric would be met with universal success, and it was this very success that gave rise to what would become known as the Art Deco style from the 1970s onwards.

To mark the centenary of the 1925 Exhibition, the Centre des monuments nationaux and Les Manufactures Nationales - Sèvres & Mobilier National have chosen to exhibit some iconic sets of furniture from the 1920s, produced by the Sèvres and Beauvais factories, at two significant 20th-century monuments, namely the Villa Cavrois and Villa E-1027.

ART DECO CERAMICS: BETWEEN FORM AND SUBSTANCE

In 1918, with the demobilisation of the workers at the Sèvres factory, the kilns were relit and activity resumed in the workshops. New director George Lechevallier-Chevignard took over the running of the establishment in 1920. Like Ajalbert at Beauvais, he sought to combine the institution's exceptional expertise with the need to embed its production well and truly in the 20th century. Difficulties in sourcing raw materials prompted the factory to explore ceramic options other than porcelain, its research evolving according to the tendencies of the artists selected. Some (Émile Decoeur, Louis Delachenal, Maurice Gensoli) were still influenced in their work with porcelain or stoneware by the Far East, while others tended more towards austerity and abstraction, and others still preferred expressiveness and figuration.

With regard to porcelain, the introduction of a new hard paste helped to consolidate the excellent quality of the pieces produced, and new shapes were created at the initiative of great designers such as Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann. All of this experimentation was showcased in the dazzling Sèvres pavilion at the 1925 Exhibition, sparking a renewed interest in ceramic production— a trend that would continue into the following decade.



LOUIS DELACHENAL (1897-1966)

Delachenal vase - n° 86
1933
•
Sèvres stoneware

This elongated sea-green vase with a straight neck is decorated with fine horizontal stripes. Its acidic colour is the perfect complement to the reflection of the sky visible on the glazed earthenware of the kitchen walls at the Villa Cavrois, giving us an idea of the sort of the crockery that would have sat on the various white Carrara marble work surfaces.

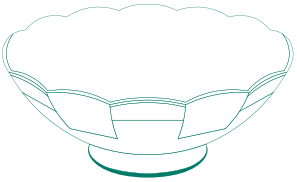
Created by **Louis Delachenal**, this piece has a certain understated elegance to it, as was typical of the designer's work. A French ceramicist renowned for his discipline and inventiveness, he developed, along with Maurice Gensoli, a very soft stoneware influenced by Chinese ceramics from the Song period. He is best known for his animal compositions and double-walled vases. He also founded a ceramics centre in Saint-Méen-Le-Grand, a hub of employment, design and training, in 1942.

EDMOND LACHENAL (1855-1948)

Vase
1911-1944
•
Earthenware

This unique ball-shaped vase featuring a geometric design is sculpted from earthenware enhanced with gilding. Its brown tones complement the zingana, the exotic wood chosen by the architect for the children's dining room.

French artist **Edmond Lachenal** pioneered the revival of ceramics in the late-19th century. He became known for his innovation in the field of manufacturing processes and the shapes he created. In 1881, he founded his own workshop with ceramicist Anna Le Ciorec, where he created pieces inspired by the ceramic traditions of Rhodes, Isnik and Kapatcha.
His pieces, characterised by bright colours and an Art Nouveau style, were extremely popular at the time.



ANNE-MARIE FONTAINE (1900-1938)

Fontaine cup - n° 3
1932
•
Sèvres porcelain

The salad bowl-like Fontaine cup n°3 is edged with flat scalloped ribs. It is gilded on the outside at the bottom and shaded in blue and dark purple at the top, while its interior decoration depicts stylised blue leaves on a white background, alternating with old pink on a mottled background. A small star of gold threads can be seen in the centre. Its sophisticated design reflects Anne-Marie Fontaine's artistic sensitivity and the growing role of women within the craft.

French ceramicist and painter **Anne-Marie Fontaine** was one of the leading exponents of the Art Deco movement when it came to ceramics. Having trained at the École des Arts Décoratifs until 1920, she went on to work as a designer at the Manufacture de Sèvres between 1928 and 1938. In the early-1930s, she was notably involved in producing the first edition of the Daurat service for David David-Weill.

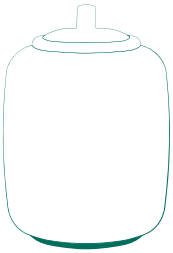
ANNE-MARIE FONTAINE (1900-1938)

JACQUES-ÉMILE RUHLMANN (1879 - 1933)

Vase
1911-1944
•
Sèvres porcelain

This Sèvres porcelain vase combines the elegance of a conical silhouette with a flared neck and a romantic landscape depicting trees, a bridge and a horse-drawn carriage. The contours of the intertwined hills reflect the undulating patterns of the green Swedish marble that lines the walls and floor of the parents' dining room.

Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, a major French designer in the Art Deco style, was renowned for his elegant, neo-classicism-inspired creations. Featuring precious materials such as ivory, ebony and bronze, his furniture was aimed at a wealthy clientele. Having been recognised in 1925 for his work on the Hôtel du Collectionneur at the International Exhibition, he went on to decorate prestigious buildings such as the Élysée Palace.

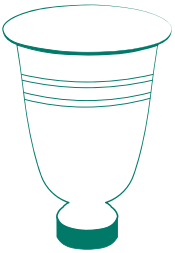


ANDRÉ PLANTARD

Gensoli pot - n° 1
1935
•
Sèvres stoneware

Gensoli pot n°1 is characterised by its functional simplicity and minimalist design courtesy of its small lid. It plays on the contrast between the light blue birds and pink fish depicted and the black background. The animal motifs are produced in a way that evokes a Japanese-inspired style echoing that of the furniture in the parents' dining room, particularly in terms of the detail of the metal handles and their darkened, varnished appearance.

André Plantard was active between 1925 and 1975, during which time he was in charge of design at the Manufacture Nationales de Sèvres, where he was also a painter from 1925 to 1969.



JACQUES-ÉMILE RUHLMANN (1879 - 1933)

LUCIENNE NÉ

Ruhlmann vase - n° 2
1933
•
Sèvres porcelain

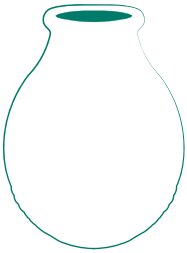
Bearing the same shape as the vase co-produced with Anne-Marie Fontaine, this piece was the result of a collaboration with another female artist, Lucienne Né, a designer at Sèvres from 1919 to 1928 who provided designs until 1932. Its upside-down bell-shaped silhouette on a black patinated bronze base is indicative of Ruhlmann's influence. It is much less figurative in its design than the first and decorated entirely with geometric motifs in two horizontal layers, in perfect harmony with the weft of the room's radiator covers.

MAURICE MODESTE HERBILLON (1888-1955)

Vase
1911-1944
•
Stoneware, ceramic

This Sèvres stoneware vase has an elegant ball shape with a plain ogee neck, mottled with grey and decorated with a frieze of leaves modelled in a greenish iridescent enamel. The decorative composition is the work of Maurice Herbillon and the sculpture by Jules Devicq.

Maurice Modeste Herbillon was a French ceramicist renowned for his vases and decorative pieces and a designer at the Manufacture de Sèvres from 1901 to 1941. Influenced by the Art Deco style, his work was characterised by the harmony of its geometric shapes and the use of vibrant colours. His vases combine modernity and tradition, demonstrating exceptional technical expertise and a keen sense of aesthetics.

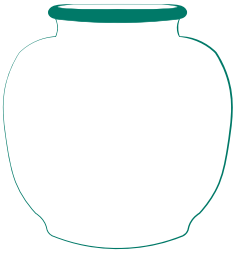


ÉMILE DECOEUR (1876-1953)

Vase
1911-1944
•
Stoneware, ceramic

The appeal of this thick-necked ball-shaped vase in dark blue flamed stoneware lies in its simplicity. The grooved lower section features a varnished blue mottled design that gives it a certain metallic appearance reminiscent of the materials used for switches, lamp bases and radiator covers.

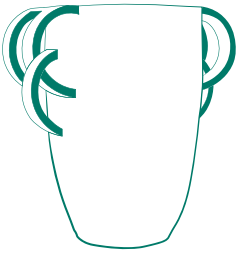
French master ceramicist **Emile Decoeur** trained with Edmond Delachenal and developed an understated style influenced by Art Nouveau and Japonism. In 1919, he joined Emile Lenoble's 'Nouveau Groupe' and established himself as one of the great names in the arts of fire, before the Musée des Arts Décoratifs devoted a retrospective to him in 1922. In 1927, in his pursuit of 'pure art', he invented a paste that was a cross between stoneware and porcelain. His style, inspired by oriental potters, is rather stripped back. He continued to play an active role in major exhibitions until the war. He was appointed artistic advisor at Sèvres in 1942 but suspended his activity because he refused to collaborate, before later resuming his research until his death.



UNATTRIBUTED

Vase
1911-1944
•
Sèvres porcelain, Ceramic

This unattributed Sèvres porcelain belly vase is very rounded in shape, with a vertical neck and flared lip. Its engraved starfish and seaweed design on an enamelled celadon background is indicative of the organic, marine aesthetic so typical of the Art Deco period. These maritime influences are also visible in Robert Mallet-Stevens's architecture, with walls reflecting the portholes of a liner and outdoor terraces and railings evoking the decks of a ship.

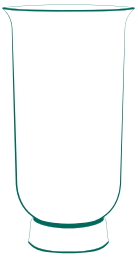


LUC LANEL (1893-1965)

Vase
1937
•
Stoneware, ceramic

This grey chamotte stoneware vase is notable for its raw material and textured rough edges. Its slightly offset handles give it a modern look, while its curved lines are perfectly in keeping with the enveloping ambience of the sitting room, a room that Lucie Cavrois could retreat to rest and indulge in creative pursuits.

Luc Lanel was a French designer known for the Art Deco silversmith pieces he created for Christofle as of 1925. He began an artistic collaboration with his wife Marjolaine in 1920, focusing on ceramics, and as of 1946 the pair devoted themselves entirely to this discipline, creating original pieces for prestigious venues such as churches, liners and the Élysée Palace.

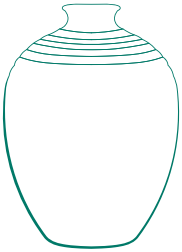


MAURICE DAURAT (1880-1969)

Vase Daurat - n° 3
1937
•
Porcelaine de Sèvres, Céramique

In contrast, Maurice Daurat's fine Sèvres porcelain vase features a delicate scene depicting "runners in the forest", highlighting his search for formal purity and his talent as a designer. The few clouds echo the blue colour of the room, which was considered decidedly feminine at the time. With its cylindrical shape, flared edge and plain pedestal, it combines traditional craftsmanship with a modern style, just like Robert Mallet-Stevens's design for the sycamore veneered furniture.

Maurice Daurat was a French silversmith who revived metal as an artistic material in its own right. Showcased at the Exposition des Arts Décoratifs in 1925, his simple, minimalist pieces set him apart. He was supported by a benefactor between 1927 and 1930 and his work received lasting recognition, culminating in the Grand Prix d'Honneur at the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs in 1949.



LOUIS DELACHENAL (1897-1966)

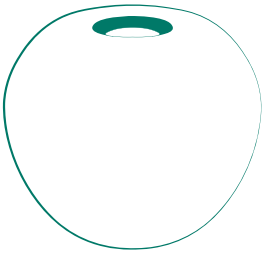
Vase

1911-1944

•

Stoneware, ceramic

The two vases on display in the parents' bedroom show how ceramic production at the Manufacture de Sèvres evolved over the course of the 20th century. Louis Delachenal's Nile green stoneware vase primarily features organic shapes and grooves inspired by the art of basketry. Its aesthetic is very much in keeping with the material chosen for this piece, namely essence of palm and its textured veins. The dark appearance of the greenish-brown vase is also reminiscent of the contrast the architect chosen to create with the darkened brass elements.



MAURICE GENSOLI (1892-1972)

Vase

1945-1955

•

Sèvres stoneware

This beige Sèvres stoneware vase features a little mottled design, its bright hue echoing the lightness of the satins used to upholster the seats and cover the parent's bed. The beige shade chosen for Monsieur and Madame Cavrois lends a decidedly luxurious air of elegance and purity to this master suite.

Maurice Gensoli was a decorative artist trained in the arts of fire who worked at the Manufacture de Sèvres as of 1921. He created pieces inspired by nature and mythology featuring subtle hues and collaborated with Ruhlmann and the Martel brothers. He was also responsible for the interior design of liners Normandie and Liberté.

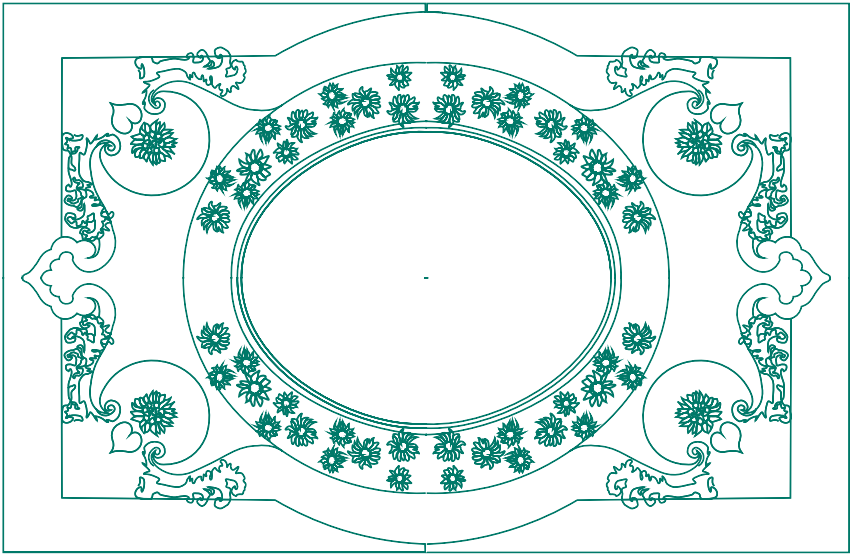
MANUFACTURE DE TAPISSERIE DE BEAUVAIS, 1925

Jean Ajalbert (1863-1947), curator of the Château de Malmaison, was appointed head of the Beauvais low-warp tapestry factory in 1917. Upon his arrival, he was surprised to find the weavers repeatedly weaving seat pads based on models dating back to the Second Empire. He then decided to radically reform the establishment to reflect "the art of today" and worked tirelessly to achieve this until he left in 1934.

Ajalbert called upon contemporary artists with an interest in tapestry in his efforts to update the models, as well as establishing a dialogue between these 'cardboard' painters, meaning those who created the models, such as Louis Anquetin, Jean Veber, Paul Follot and Émile Gaudissard, and fashionable 'assemblers', furniture designers and makers, including the likes of Paul Follot, Louis Sue, André Mare, Armand Albert Rateau and Jacques-Émile Ruhlmann. The upholstery and wood of the seats share a common aesthetic that highlights their exquisite quality.

The pieces produced during the Ajalbert era are very diverse, symbolising the sheer potential that was in fact compressed into the 1925s. They are still steeped in the heritage of the late-19th century but are seemingly unsure as to which pathway to take moving forward. There are clearly two lifestyle concepts already emerging here, one rooted in the bourgeois system and embracing the stylistic and technical constraints of its heritage, the other looking resolutely towards a modern future.

In Ajalbert's mind, the revival of the Beauvais factory had to be supported by commercial success, but the latter was not forthcoming, and there were too few customers to balance the books. The Fine Arts Administration merged the Beauvais and Gobelins factories in 1935 and the whole operation became part of the Mobilier National, with Ajalbert's position being abolished in the process. In the space of seventeen years, however, he developed the artistic reputation of the Beauvais factory to such an extent that it is still admired by specialists today.



PAUL HANNOTIN (1861-1927)

Velours rug
1926
•
Wool

Adorned with a medley of plant motifs, the velours rug is very much representative of Paul Hannotin's elegant decorative style. An ode to nature in itself, it features different varieties of flowers, notably including sunflowers and roses, as well as black butterflies flying over sky-blue waves. Just as the woven piece invites us to admire this decorative landscape, Robert Mallet-Stevens incorporated a full-length window, a signature of the foundations of modern architecture, giving the young children panoramic views of the "curtain of greenery" that is the garden from their desks.

French carpet designer **Paul Hannotin** was renowned for his contributions to the Art Deco style, working with noble materials and geometric patterns to combine elegance with innovation. His creations demonstrated great technical expertise, reflecting his acute sense of harmony and modernity.

PAUL FOLLOT: A GARDEN OF WOOL

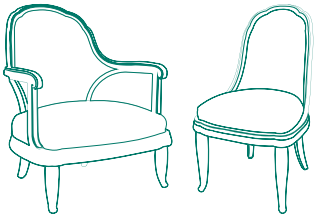
Jean Ajalbert turned to Paul Follot (1877-1942) several times during the period when he was commissioning contemporary artists. This decorative designer, a pupil of Art Nouveau master Eugène Grasset, was renowned for his research into nature, which was evident in abundance in all of his work.

A great connoisseur of historic French styles, he offered his own decorative take on them, inspired by the baroque spirit so characteristic of the early Art Deco style.By 1922, when he was invited to Beauvais, Follot was already a well-known figure.

A man of many talents, he decided to design the woodwork and tapestry cardboards for a set of two armchairs and two chairs by himself.

Inspired by the Louis XVI style, the seats, in black and gold varnish, were covered with fine Beauvais tapestry woven between June 1925 and November 1929 and decorated with an impressive landscape and floral design.

This "garden of wool" reflected the gardens designed in France during the inter-war period, characterised by their geometric aesthetic and their references to the history of gardens. The precision of the composition, with its distinctly Art Deco motifs, is tempered by a Mediterranean vibe reminiscent of the emerging trend of the Côte d'Azur.



PAUL FOLLOT (1877-1942)

Armchairs and Chairs
Beauvais Follot
1911-1944
•
Painted wood, textile

The Follot salon, comprising two chairs and two armchairs upholstered in Beauvais, is a sophisticated set designed by Paul Follot. The ornate floral motifs and curved shapes have a certain theatrical feel to them that was a perfect match for the playroom at the Villa Cavrois. The room itself was used for both study and play, a place where the children of the Cavrois family could have fun and even put on their own performances; indeed, the dark red waxed fabric stretched over the walls delivered excellent acoustics, while the split-level layout provided them with a stage, and fabrics could be hung from the metal rod to create the illusion of a curtain falling.

Parisian designer and assembler **Paul Follot** trained with Eugène Grasset. Initially influenced by the Art Nouveau style, he later adopted a more aristocratic style inspired by Louis XVI and the Empire. His work is characterised by the lightness of its forms, the use of precious materials such as exotic wood and gold, and the great importance he placed on the quality of his pieces.

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

CENTRE DES MONUMENTS NATIONAUX

MANUFACTURES NATIONALES – SÈVRES MOBILIER NATIONAL

MEL METROPOLE

hello lille

CAMBER