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***PICTURESQUE***  
*JULES BUYSSENS,*  
*LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT*

**30.09.22—12.02.23**

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Culture — Architecture

## Picturesque

### Jules Buyssens, Landscape Architect

30 September 2022 - 12 February 2023

CIVA is pleased to invite you to the press conference for the new exhibition  
*Picturesque*, Thursday 29 September at 11 a.m.

Curators: Eric Hennaut and Ursula Wieser Benedetti

This exhibition charts the career of Jules Buyssens (1872-1958), a leading figure in Belgian landscape architecture, but it also aims, in a subtly cheeky way, to initiate a broader debate on contemporary issues of pressing relevance: the place of professions in design in the face of ecological and scientific challenges and the question of image production in relation to time-based spaces.

Jules Buyssens trained under Édouard André in Paris. He was responsible for, among other things, the gardens of the Van Buuren villa in Uccle, the Osseghem Park, and the restoration of the gardens of La Cambre Abbey. Concurrently, he was inspector of plantings for the City of Brussels and head landscape architect for the Brussels International Exposition of 1935. One of his many disciples and collaborators was René Pechère.

Buyssens also initiated the movement and periodical *Le Nouveau Jardin Pittoresque* (1913-1940). For Buyssens, the term 'picturesque' indicated the irregular, unexpected and random character of nature in its wild state; it also echoed the word 'picturesque' in English – 'that which is worthy of a painting'.

His work, as unique as it was varied, extended far beyond the borders of Belgium; he is probably the only Belgian landscape architect of the first half of the twentieth century to have worked in nearly ten European countries.

This major personality has not been the subject of a global presentation for nearly forty years. This exhibition thus provides an opportunity to fill in a significant gap in Belgian and international garden history and to display documents of exceptional graphic quality, many never before published, from the CIVA archives as well as from other Belgian and foreign collections.



Jules Buyssens, the  
gardens of La Cambre  
Abbey.



## EXHIBITION

The exhibition offers a dual reading of the oeuvre of Jules BuysSENS: on the one hand, it presents a chronological progression that allows visitors to discover the evolution of his work, spanning a vast arc of trends and typologies from the mixed landscape park of the French tradition and the 'pre-ecological' preoccupations of the 1920s to Art Deco. On the other hand, it presents a series of thematic cells covering such subjects as the notion of the picturesque in the work of BuysSENS, the birth of colour photography within landscape architecture, the role of training and education, or the foundational experience in restoration that was La Cambre Abbey.

**Le Nouveau Jardin Pittoresque**, a reform movement in the art of gardens led by BuysSENS from 1913 to 1940, systematically advocated inspiration drawn directly from the examples of nature in its wild state. BuysSENS elaborated this outlook through close links with the community of botanists affiliated with the Université libre de Bruxelles, and made this collaboration concrete in exemplary fashion in the Jean Massart Experimental Botanical Garden in Auderghem (1922). This part of the exhibition features a series of spectacular botanical models from the famous Brendel brand, as well as original microscopes used at the Massart Garden in the 1920s.

A section dedicated to **Adolphe BuysSENS**, Jules's brother and a keen amateur photographer, evokes the birth of **colour photography** using autochrome projections, photographic equipment and materials that he owned, and a stereogram viewing station affording a three-dimensional view of these startling dual-lens images.

The introductory cell on **training and education** enables visitors to explore the varied path that BuysSENS followed with stays in Germany, England, Russia and France, before spending six years at the agency led by Édouard André (one of the designers of the Buttes-Chaumont park) in Paris. This provides an opportunity to display various documents that have rarely been presented on André and his relations with BuysSENS and Belgium, notably several original plans of projects in Lithuania.

Finally, a section dedicated to the **International Exposition of 1935** on the Heysel Plateau highlights the role of Jules BuysSENS as the exposition's head landscape architect, with a vast plan of the Ossegem Park, never before exhibited, as its centrepiece.



## PROGRAMME

We are pleased to invite you on Thursday 29 September, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., to the press visit for the exhibition *Picturesque. Jules Buyssens, Landscape Architect* hosted by curators Ursula Wieser Benedetti and Eric Hennaut.

As part of the exhibition *Picturesque. Jules Buyssens, Landscape Architect*, CIVA is also organizing a cross-sectional programme of lectures, round-table discussions and guided tours. Creative workshops, internships and a 'discovery notebook' will welcome visitors aged 6 to 99 throughout the exhibition. Keep an eye on our website for more information.

## PUBLICATION

A book will also be published as part of the exhibition in collaboration with CFC-Éditions.

Title: *Jules Buyssens et le Nouveau Jardin Pittoresque*

Authors:

Florence André, Jean-Marie Bailly, Claire Billen, Brigitte Buyssens, Odile de Bruyn, Stéphanie de Courtois, Eric Hennaut, Michael Jakob, Philippe Nys, Anne-Marie Sauvat, Ursula Wieser Benedetti.

Technical details:

248 pages

200 colour illustrations

Hardbound fabric cover, stitched binding

Publication date: late 2022

## PRESS CONTACT

For a visit by appointment or for any content request (exhibition texts, images or other), feel free to contact us:

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## PRACTICAL INFO

Expo

*PICTURESQUE*

*Jules Buyssens, Landscape Architect*

30.09.22 - 12.02.23

CIVA

Rue de l'Ermitage 55 Kluisstraat, 1050 Brussels

### OPENING HOURS

Tuesday — Sunday: 10:30—18:00

### TICKETS

Standard rate: 10€

Youth (-26), job seekers, seniors (+65): 5€

Children (-18), museumpassmusées, Brussels

Card, Subbacultcha members, press, ICOM:  
free entrance.

Group rate: 8€ / person (min. 10 people)

Paspartoe: 2€

Article 27: 1,25€

Guided tours by reservation via  
[info@civa.brussels](mailto:info@civa.brussels)

### INFO & UPDATES

[www.civa.brussels](http://www.civa.brussels)

[www.facebook.com/civabrussels](https://www.facebook.com/civabrussels)

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As well as the lenders who wished to remain anonymous.

CIVA warmly thanks its team. Without them this project would not have been possible.

With the kind support of the Brussels-Capital Region.