

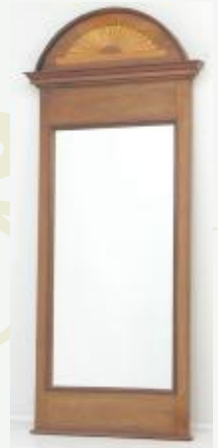
Art Deco furniture & design

Art Deco was a popular design movement from 1920 until 1939, affecting the decorative arts such as architecture, interior design, and industrial design, as well as the visual arts such as fashion, painting, the graphic arts, and film. This movement was, in a sense, an amalgam of many different styles and movements of the early 20th century, including Constructivism, Cubism, Modernism, Bauhaus, Art Nouveau, and Futurism. Its popularity peaked during the Roaring Twenties. Although many design movements have political or philosophical roots or intentions, Art Deco was purely decorative. At the time, this style was seen as elegant, functional, and ultra modern.



After the Universal Exposition of 1900, various French artists formed a formal collective. This was known as *La Société des Artistes Décorateurs*. Founders included Hector Guimard, Eugène Grasset, Raoul Lachenal, Paul Follot, Maurice Dufrene, and Emile Decour. These artists heavily influenced the principles of Art Deco as a whole. This society's purpose was to demonstrate French decorative art's leading position and evolution internationally. Naturally, they organized the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* (International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Art), which would feature French art and business interests. Russian artist Vadim Meller was awarded there a gold medal for his scenic design.

The initial movement was called "Style Moderne". The term *Art Deco* was derived from the Exposition of 1925, though it wasn't until the late 1960s that this term was coined by art historian Bevis Hillier, and popularized by his 1968 book *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s*. In the summer of 1969, Hillier conceived organizing an exhibition called *Art Deco* at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which took place from July to September 1971. After this, interest in Art Deco peaked with the publication of Hillier's 1971 book *The World of Art Deco*, a record of the exhibition.



It was widely considered to be an eclectic form of elegant and stylish modernism, being influenced by a variety of sources. Among them were the "primitive" arts of Africa, Egypt, and Aztec Mexico, as well as Machine Age or streamline technology such as modern aviation, electric lighting, the radio, the ocean liner and the skyscraper. These design influences were expressed in fractionated, crystalline, faceted forms of decorative Cubism and Futurism. Other popular themes in art deco were trapezoidal, zigzagged, geometric, and jumbled shapes, which can be seen in many pieces. Art Deco is characterized by use of materials such as aluminium, stainless steel, lacquer, and inlaid wood. The bold use of stepped forms and sweeping curves (unlike the sinuous, natural curves of the *Art Nouveau*), chevron patterns, and the sunburst motif are typical of Art Deco.

Art Deco was an opulent style, and its lavishness is attributed to reaction to the forced austerity imposed by World War I. Its rich, festive character fitted it for "modern" contexts, including the Golden Gate Bridge, interiors of cinema theatres and ocean liners such as the *Île de France* and *Normandie*. Art Deco was employed extensively throughout America's train stations in the 1930s, designed to reflect the modernity and efficiency of the train.

The Art Deco style celebrates the Machine Age through explicit use of man-made materials (particularly glass and stainless steel), symmetry, repetition, modified by Asian influences such as the use of silks and Middle Eastern designs. Art Deco slowly lost patronage in the West after reaching mass production, when it began to be derided as gaudy and presenting a false image of luxury. Eventually, the style was cut short by the austerities of World War II.

