

ART DECO

NEW YORK

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JOURNAL OF THE ART DECO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Empire State Building at 85

Shanghai

Jazz Age Cigarette Holders

Radio City Music Hall

CELEBRATE NEW YORK ART DECO WITH ADSNY!

Camaraderie, celebration, education, and preservation—that's what The Art Deco Society of New York is all about. Whether you are an Art Deco historian or just discovering your passion for the era, the many distinctive activities that we host, which embrace all facets of Art Deco, will inspire and delight you.

ADSNY members enjoy monthly free or discounted educational and social programs and have full access to our website, ArtDeco.org, which includes our Registry and Map for self-guided walking tours throughout the city, resources, articles, and videos about Art Deco in New York and around the world, preservation alerts, a listing of books, Deco Dealer discounts, announcements of our upcoming events, copies of our publications, and much more.

Our Jazz Age Order offers young professionals in their 20s and 30s an opportunity to share their Deco interests and passions while socializing with like-minded individuals.

Our *Deco Doings* alerts our members to a variety of Art Deco happenings in New York, as well as important and timely preservation issues.

As a member of ICADS, the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies, we also bring you news of Global Deco happenings.

Our activities and interests include:

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THE NEW YORK ART DECO REGISTRY AND MAP

PROHIBITION-ERA COCKTAIL EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

... AND MUCH MORE.

As a volunteer organization, ADSNY welcomes the contributions of its members, who play a vital role in helping ADSNY flourish.

IN THIS ISSUE

A TRIBUTE TO THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

- 4** **ICON OF THE CITY** By **John Tauranac**
A look back at the history and design of the world's most famous and most elegant skyscraper
- 6** **RESTORING A LANDMARK: AN ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE** By **Frank J. Prial, Jr.**
An account of the many challenges faced by the architects restoring the historic lobby of this symbol of New York
- 9** **MRS. WILLIAM LAMB REMINISCES** By **Anthony W. Robins**
Personal stories and insights about her husband's work from the wife of one of the building's architects
- 10** **RECOGNITION, CITYWIDE AND NATIONWIDE** By **Anthony W. Robins**
A look back at the designation of this New York landmark from the Landmarks Preservation Commission staff member who wrote the official report
- 11** **CLASS IN SESSION ON THE EIGHTY-SIXTH FLOOR**
While Documenting Deco, middle schoolers experience the thrills of the Observation Deck



Photo: Richard Berenholtz

- 12** **DIMINUTIVE DECO: CIGARETTE HOLDERS IN THE JAZZ AGE** By **Rebecca McNamara**
For Deco-era smokers, the cigarette holder embodied glamor and sophistication and played a surprisingly significant social role
- 14** **EXPERIENCING THOMAS HART BENTON'S AMERICA TODAY** By **Kathleen Murphy Skolnik**
The new installation of Benton's panorama of American life of the 1920s recreates its original setting

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 1** **WHAT IS ART DECO?**
Experts address this challenging question
- 2** **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**
- 16** **GLOBAL CALENDAR**
Exhibitions, lectures, and tours here and abroad
- 18** **PRESERVATION NEWS**
Updates and alerts on timely issues
- 22** **EXPLORING DECO IN . . .**
Visits neighborhoods off the beaten path
- 28** **ON VIEW . . .**
Spotlights current exhibitions
- 30** **FOR YOUR ART DECO LIBRARY**
Reviews of current books
- 20** **RECORDING OUR HERITAGE: THE NEW YORK ART DECO REGISTRY**
By **Stephen H. Van Dyk**
An ever-expanding online resource helps New Yorkers and visitors explore the city's many Deco-rich neighborhoods
- 24** **ADSNY EXPLORES NEW YORK'S GRAND PERFORMANCE PALACE**
A photo essay reveals why Radio City Music Hall continues to dazzle visitors today
- 26** **SHANGHAI EXPRESS TO THE WORLD CONGRESS**
By **Alex Disbrow**
ADSNY members immerse themselves in Chinese Art Deco architecture, design, and culture
- 32** **JAZZ AGE ORDER: THE NEXT GENERATION OF DECO ENTHUSIASTS**
By **Meghan Weatherby**
ADSNY's group of young professionals shares an infatuation with Jazz Age culture and design

WHAT IS ART DECO?

BY JARED GOSS

I opened my 2014 book, *French Art Deco*, with that very question. And indeed, I spent much of my two-decade career as a museum curator asking myself the same, struggling with a term that has been broadly applied to virtually every aspect of material culture created from the 1910s through the 1940s. For example, how does one reconcile luxurious, handcrafted French objects made for the wealthy elite with machine-like mass-produced American ones made for middle-class consumers, both called Art Deco? And how do those relate to the elegant historicism of Scandinavia? Folk-inspired Middle-European design? Italian works that at the same time exploit links with classical antiquity and Futurism? Or that distinctively American phenomenon, Streamlining? What about towering skyscrapers, stylized ziggurats, and Cubistic geometries? Or the opposing tastes for intense colors and the monochrome? Well, Art Deco is all of these things—and more.

The term Art Deco, which only came into use following important exhibitions at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris (1966) and the Minneapolis Institute of Arts (1971), refers of course, to the famous *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* (International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts), a vast fair held in central Paris during the summer of 1925. Its focus was self-explanatory: what we now consider “design” in its most comprehensive sense, everything from architecture to the smallest personal accessory. And indeed today, just as in 1925, Art Deco continues to refer explicitly to the decorative arts (although the “fine arts” of painting and sculpture are very much a part of the Art Deco canon, within this context they function most successfully as aspects of decoration).

While the majority of work shown at the Paris Exposition was French, over 20 other nations participated, suggesting that by 1925 a full-fledged international design idiom—what is now consid-

ered Art Deco—was firmly in place. Art Deco, however, never was a unified style. Rather, it was broad-ranging and often contradictory. Numerous factors determined its particular expressions: the time and place in which it was created, localized culture and traditions, and broader economic and political forces.

understand a subject. And so, the Art Deco years were those of the Roaring Twenties, the Jazz Age, the Skyscraper Era, and all their attendant personalities: the flapper, the vamp, and the Rockette; the bootlegger and the gangster. But they were also the time of Art Moderne in the English-speaking world, of *Le Style Moderne* in France,

ART DECO, HOWEVER, NEVER WAS A UNIFIED STYLE. RATHER, IT WAS BROAD-RANGING AND OFTEN CONTRADICTORY. NUMEROUS FACTORS DETERMINED ITS PARTICULAR EXPRESSIONS.

Even so, a certain universality came from a widespread attempt to invent a design language suited to the modern world, one that addressed the needs and desires of the burgeoning 20th century and which reflected its changing mores, tastes, habits, and technologies. Although the most general shared characteristics of this new language were simplification and abstraction, the sources designers mined were many and varied: historicism, exoticism, avant-gardism, and others. But perhaps the most important aspect of Art Deco was its unabashed commercialism: it was specifically conceived to appeal to consumers, whether rich or middle class (and it is just this which separates it from Modernism, the contemporaneous movement which was shaped instead by high-minded polemics and ideology rather than commerce).

In my book, I state that Art Deco has come to be used “as an umbrella label for the vast range of design and architecture created globally between the First and Second World Wars.” I like that definition. But classifying things helps us make sense of them; the more specific the terminology, the better we

of Nordic Classicism, Swedish Grace and *Funkis* in Scandinavia, of *El Noucentisme* in Spain, of *Zackenstil* in Germany, of *Estilo Português Suave* in Portugal and its colonies—some of the many iterations of Art Deco. Further, it continued through the period of the Crash of 1929, the Great Depression, and the rise of Fascism, an era bracketed at both ends by devastating world wars. Art Deco encompasses and was informed by all of that.

An important role of organizations such as the Art Deco Society of New York is to spread Art Deco’s multifaceted story, helping aficionados, such as myself, further our collective understanding and knowledge of the subject we love, so that we each may find our own definition for it.

Jared Goss is an independent scholar and former Associate Curator of Modern & Contemporary Art at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and a member of the Board of Directors of the Art Deco Society of New York. Goss is the author of French Art Deco.



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 Anthony W. Robins
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 Stephen H. Van Dyk
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Front Cover

Mural in the Empire State Building lobby fabricated by Oscar Bach. Photo: Meghan Weatherby.

ADSNY thanks David Garrard Lowe, author of the book *Art Deco New York*, for granting permission to use the title for this journal and architectural photographer Richard Berenholtz, for use of his photographs from his books *New York Deco* and *New York New York*.

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The Art Deco Society of New York (ADSNY) is a not-for-profit 501c3 tax exempt organization chartered in the state of New York in 1982 for the purpose of education, preservation, and celebration of the city's Art Deco icons and heritage.

The Art Deco Society of New York
 ArtDeco.org | Info@ArtDeco.org
 P.O. Box 6205 New York, NY 10150-6205
 212.679.DECO (3326)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Deco Friends,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you the premiere issue of *Art Deco New York*, the new publication of the Art Deco Society of New York, celebrating the style's rich heritage in our city and around the world.

The journal will offer a wide range of articles focusing on the many aspects of Art Deco: architecture, decorative arts and design, material culture, fashion, and lifestyle. *Art Deco New York* celebrates Manhattan's iconic Art Deco buildings, as well as remarkable but lesser known examples of Art Deco architecture that enrich neighborhoods in all the boroughs.

In the tradition of ADSNY's earlier publication, *The Modernist*, each issue of *Art Deco New York* will challenge experts to define the term. In this first issue, art historian, author, and curator Jared Goss will take his turn answering the challenging question, "What is Art Deco?"

This issue of *Art Deco New York* salutes the Empire State Building on its eighty-fifth anniversary. To celebrate this milestone, leading architectural experts who participated in a panel discussion on "Eighty-five Years of a New York Icon," at ADSNY's annual meeting, were asked to share with our readers their insights into the building's history, landmark designation, and stunning lobby restoration. We are very pleased to announce that Empire State Realty Trust, the building's owner, is the recipient of the first ADSNY Icon Award for its continuing commitment to the preservation of this beloved symbol of our city.

In this first issue we launch several regular features. *Exploring Deco In . . .* highlights New York neighborhoods off the beaten path. Area maps, building addresses, and brief descriptions offer our readers handy tools for creating self-guided walking tours.

The *Global Calendar* provides a schedule of timely exhibitions, lectures, and tours in the United States and around the world of interest to our members. *For Your Art Deco Library* offers reviews of current books, *On View* describes significant exhibitions here and abroad, and *Preservation News* provides timely updates on important issues.

The ambitious decision to launch *Art Deco New York* would not have been possible without the efforts of a tireless team of volunteers who contributed their expertise, knowledge, and countless hours. I am especially grateful to architectural historian Kathleen Murphy Skolnik, our editorial consultant, and our graphic designer Susan Klein. I also want to thank Sandra Tansky, copy editor, Meghan Weatherby, ADSNY Director of Operations, our many contributing writers, photographers, and proofreaders, and the donors who made this first issue possible.

Art Deco New York was distributed at the Annual Meeting and is also being made available online at ArtDeco.org.

We welcome your comments and suggestions and hope that you will find *Art Deco New York* a valuable addition to your library.

Enjoy!

**Roberta Nusim, President
 Art Deco Society of New York**



Photo: Meghan Weatherly

A TRIBUTE TO THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING

This year marks the 85th anniversary of the opening of the Empire State Building. The Art Deco Society of New York is pleased to celebrate the occasion with a series of articles about this iconic landmark. John Tauranac reviews the history of its design and construction; Frank J. Prial, Jr. addresses the challenges of restoring its historic lobby; and Anthony W. Robins discusses its landmark designation and shares personal insights from the wife of one of the building's architects. In recognition of its continuing commitment, stewardship, and preservation of this New York Art Deco treasure, Empire State Realty Trust received the first ADSNY Icon Award at the June 9th Annual Meeting.

ICON OF THE CITY

BY JOHN TAURANAC

The Empire State Building is enshrined in New York City's Art Deco firmament, but it is hardly an Art Deco extravaganza. It is more a functionalist's ideal than an Art Deco fantasy.

The Empire State Building's design was one of the city's most elegant of skyscraper profiles. It is essentially all tower, yet it worked within the confines of the zoning law of 1916, which mandated that a building could not rise straight up from the building line and go as high as technologically possible on the bulk of its plot. A building could rise straight up from the building line a multiple of the width of the street it faced, then setbacks stacked upon each other could rise in reduced girth. A tower could rise straight up on 25 percent of the land.

Instead of the lower floors climbing ten or eleven stories before having a setback, the Empire State Building had only a five-story base covering the plot. At the sixth floor was a major setback—60 feet from Fifth Avenue and 20 and 30 feet from the side streets. From this low base there rose a tower that in

diminishing jetés soared majestically to the eighty-fifth floor. It was big, it was bold, it was beautiful.

The harmony of design, with all the elements balanced in true classical form, is sheer elegance. At every stage, horizontally and vertically, there is a beginning, middle, and end.

**THE CLASSICAL TRUTHS
OF THE BUILDING ARE
SELF-EVIDENT.
THE SUBTLER ATTRIBUTES
ARE NOT.**

The classical truths of the building are self-evident. The subtler attributes are not. On the base is stone that has been scored to make the building look stouter, and although the stone is the same limestone as the rest of the building, it

adds coloration by virtue of the shadows cast.

The decision to use stone for the facing of the entire building was not based on aesthetics alone. Finished brick is expensive to set, and time consuming. Limestone has a luminosity to it, and it comes with other virtues—it is not as hard as granite, hence easier to turn into ashlar, the finished stone used for the facing, and it is more durable than marble.

The façades were designed without cornices and other architectural features, so there was an uninterrupted flow to the building. The bays conveyed depth, providing a play of light and shadow, with the added benefit of creating a floor plan with more desirable corner offices than a four-cornered tower.

Walls at the setbacks were gently tapered, and the top five floors were chamfered, their corners cut away and softened so that the building reached a logical denouement.

Windows on the lower five floors were installed in the conventional manner. Above, however, the windows were flush with the façade as if the outer wall were a wrapping instead of pretending to be load bearing.

Typical of Richmond H. Shreve, of the architectural firm of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, the plan was not purely aesthetic. The window frames were set into the openings so that the frames covered the edges of the flanking stone and were flush with the spandrels. It translated into stone whose edges did not have to be finished, reducing the cost of the stonework and simplifying installation. And the spandrels themselves were prefabricated slabs of cast aluminum decorated with facing pairs of stylized lightning bolts set in a chevron-like pattern in a classic Art Deco geometric form. They only had to be set in place.

Chrome-nickel steel was used for the mullions, the vertical bands separating the windows that would run from the sixth to the eighty-fifth stories. In addition to contributing to the upward sweep of the façade, the mullions were a critical element in the ease of construction. Like the window frames, they too covered the joins. Topping these vertical steel bands were fanlike motifs, Art Deco responses to terminating features that some critics interpreted as sunbursts, others as anthemions.

The great ribbons of windows and spandrels reached for the sky, their soaring quality enhanced by the vertical strips of chrome-nickel steel that flanked them.

But the 102-story building that we know today was not the building as planned. In the fall of 1929, the anticipated height of the Empire State Building was 80 stories, or 1,000 feet. The Otis Elevator Company said that cables any longer than 1,000 feet might just collapse under their own weight, and direct service to the eightieth floor, with its planned observatory, was an important feature. The height of 1,000 feet would also assure the building the world's tallest laurels. The impetus to build a taller building only came when the Chrysler Building rose to a height of 1,048 feet.

Al Smith, the former governor of New York State and presidential candidate, was the president of the Empire State Building, and John J. Raskob, the former chief financial officer of General Motors, was the moneyman. Raskob could not allow the upstart automaker Walter Chrysler to best him. A five-story "penthouse" would be added to the building, taking it to 85 stories, or 1,050 feet, which beat the Chrysler Building by two feet.

But Smith and Raskob feared that another developer could easily come along and do to them what they had done to Chrysler. They were going to need a taller building.

The plan that evolved was perhaps the looniest building scheme since the Tower of Babel. A 200-foot dirigible mooring mast would be erected atop the building. The idea was that a dirigible would be moored from its bow to the top of the mast. A gangplank would drop down from the dirigible, and passengers would blithely walk between the airship and a platform ringing the mast, 1,250 feet in the air.

By the fall of 1931, six months after the building had opened, the plan was quietly dropped. However, the mooring mast was not a total failure. It made the building the world's tallest until the first of the World Trade Towers opened in 1972, and it gave the building one of the grandest crowns that ever a building wore, creating an instant landmark on the city's skyline.

John Tauranac writes on New York's architectural history. He teaches the subject at the NYU School of Professional Studies, and he designs maps. He is the author of The Empire State Building: The Making of a Landmark (reprinted by Cornell University Press), the three editions of New York From the Air, with the great aerial photographer Yann Arthus-Bertrand (Harry Abrams), The View From the 86th Floor (Tauranac Press), and the creator of Manhattan Block By Block: A Street Atlas.



Photo: Richard Berenholtz

RESTORING A LANDMARK: AN ARCHITECT'S PERSPECTIVE

BY FRANK J. PRIAL, JR.



The restored lobby of the Empire State Building closely resembles the original 1931 design while meeting twenty-first century needs.

New York's Empire State Building is perhaps the most iconic image of a sky-aspirant building that could ever have been imagined. It is a symbol of the city. Visitors come from around the world to share in its energy and spirit.

The building is a product of the best of times and the worst of times. It was conceived in the 1920s during a period of extraordinary economic growth and optimism, both in New York City and throughout the country, but it was

built during a time of severe economic depression. Yet a tremendous amount of energy, optimism, and good will went into designing what was to be the tallest building in the world. The availability of labor allowed construction to be completed in only 14 months, from demolition of the Waldorf Astoria Hotel that had previously stood on the site, to the pouring of the foundation, to the placement of the steel superstructure and cladding, to the opening in May 1931. This remarkable achievement was a testament to the labor force that constructed the building, the skill of the architects who designed it, and the contractors, the Starrett Corporation, who devised precedent-setting methods for increasing the efficiency of construction, many of which are still being used today.

The architects, Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, were schooled as Beaux Arts classicists. In designing the Empire State Building, however, they adopted a new form, a novel approach to design that we now call Art Deco. Art Deco was based on classical principles but introduced the concepts of speed, energy, efficiency, and the Machine Age, expressed through both form and materials.

In 2006, Anthony E. Malkin, president of Empire State Realty Trust, the building's current owner, commissioned our firm, Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners, to lead a team of architects, historians, artists, and artisans in the restoration of the Empire State Building's historic lobby. For Malkin, the building is not just a real estate asset but also a landmark, a remarkable and significant piece of architecture, and it was his vision that guided this project.

The restoration presented many challenges. Although the building we inherited was structurally sound, a number of inappropriate modifications had been made over the years. In addition, because the lobby is a New York City Landmark, any changes being considered required approval from the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission. The paucity of historic images of the original lobby further complicated the restoration effort. Fortunately, a series of photographs taken immediately after the building's completion was available. The restoration team repeatedly consulted these images to understand the intent of the original architects. We asked ourselves, what would Shreve, Lamb & Harmon do today if given the opportunity to rethink

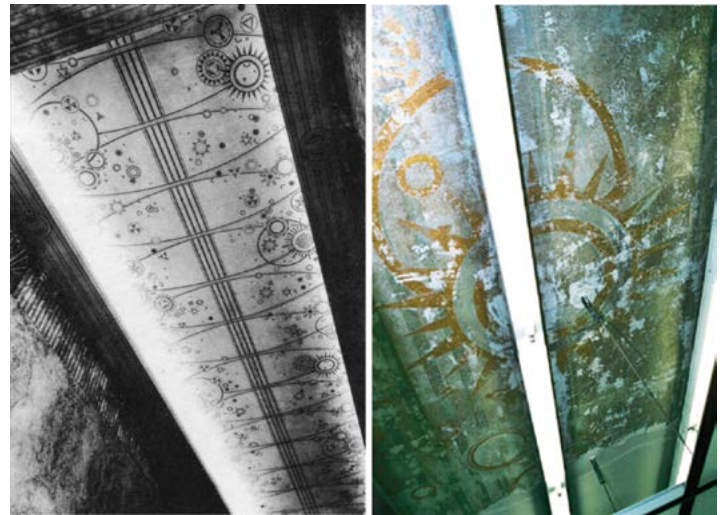
and reinterpret their work of the 1930s to make it suitable for today's users?

Our objective was to create an interior that closely resembled the 1931 lobby and at the same time operated more efficiently to meet twenty-first century needs. The first item on our extensive list of proposed changes was the reception desk. After examining the marble and the Art Deco detailing in the lobby, we designed a piece of furniture capable of integrating the vast amount of sophisticated technological equipment required for the safe and smooth operation of the building. The marble panels on the front of this desk were carefully bookmatched, that is, placed to mirror one another, creating the impression of an open book. The garland-like design was similar to existing patterns elsewhere in the lobby. Glass artist Denise Ames created a mural for the former storefront directly behind the desk. Her design, made up of six layers of etched glass illuminated by LED lighting, incorporates motifs complementary to others found in the lobby.



The new reception desk with bookmatched marble panels and the etched glass mural created for the wall behind it.

The Landmarks Preservation Commission had previously approved the subway-style turnstiles that led to the elevator banks. Although we were obligated to use these turnstiles, we could relocate them. After studying the movement of tenants through the building, we replaced the single, common point of access with a series of separate small elevator halls. Moving the turnstiles back into these halls made them less obtrusive and allowed unobstructed circulation through the major corridors on West 33rd and West 34th Streets. The careful detailing of the turnstiles—stainless steel cladding and Rosso Levanto marble tops—complemented other materials in the lobby.



Historic photograph of the original mural (left) and the mural remnant discovered during the lobby restoration (right).

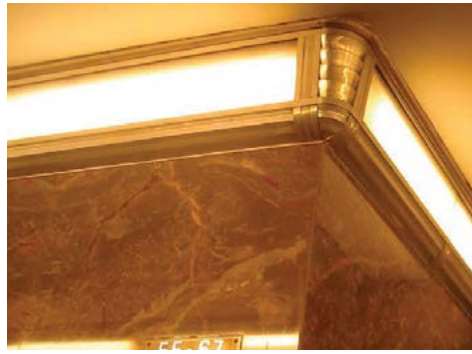
The lobby ceiling was the most significant art restoration effort within the project. Our team worked closely with EverGreene Architectural Arts, the preeminent mural restoration firm in the country. At the onset, we were attempting to restore something we weren't sure had ever existed because the ceiling had been completely covered over. Two fortunate events provided important clues. First, we found a photograph in the building archive showing the original ceiling mural, and second, restorers discovered a remnant of it. Over time, smoke or water damage had caused the mural's delamination, or separation from the ceiling, and in the 1960s it had been covered with a lead-based paint, followed by installation of a dropped tile ceiling and a fluorescent light fixture.

Laboratory analysis of a sample from the remnant identified multiple layers of paints, glazes, and aluminum and gold leaf that allowed us to understand the imagery. The original mural had depicted the heavens filled with suns, moons, stars, and planets, all against a background of small squares that had not been visible in the photograph. With the aid of a computer, we were able to determine the repeating pattern over the full length of the mural. The design was reminiscent of the constellations on the great sky ceiling at Grand Central Terminal. In the case of the Empire State Building, however, this theme was reinterpreted for the modern age. Stars became gears and planets became wheels. It resembled the machinery found under the hood of an automobile or inside a finely crafted watch. After recreation of the mural, members of the paperhangers union installed it on the ceiling using an organic, clay-based adhesive more durable than glues used in the past.



Sketch of the chandelier originally intended for the lobby bridge (inset) and the new chandelier based on this design.

Lighting was another aspect of the lobby restoration. The historic linear glass light fixtures once above the elevators



Original cove lighting above the elevators (left), historic light fixture fitted with an acrylic lens prior to the lobby restoration (center), and restored lighting with decorative glass replicating the original design (right).

had been replaced with plastic acrylic sheets in the 1950s and 1960s. Corning Glass Works, which had provided the 1930s fixtures, has an extensive library and archive and was able to retrieve images of the original raised pattern, which California glass artisan Joan Irving used to recreate the design. The cost-effective fluorescent lights now installed behind 12,000 linear feet of the new glass are controlled by a dimmer that lowers the lighting to the original theatrical level during the day and raises it at night when maintenance is performed.

An archival photo documented two chandeliers over the pedestrian bridges at the upper level of the lobby. Curiously, these fixtures were more Beaux Arts than Art Deco. Construction documents, however, included a sketch of the intended design, which had a staggered profile resembling the top of the building. We worked with the Rambusch Decorating Company, a fourth-generation firm recognized for its expertise in the restoration and creation of historic lighting, to interpret this small sketch, and the chandeliers originally envisioned for the building now hang in the restored lobby.

Medallions on the lobby walls crafted by metal artist Oscar Bach honor the tradesmen, such as masons and painters, so instrumental in the building's construction. He also fabricated the mural of the Empire State Building in the Fifth Avenue Lobby. To highlight the medallions, we worked with lighting designers who ingeniously hid spotlights in reveals and setbacks.

Locating marble to match stonework installed 80 years ago was especially challenging. Surprisingly, we discovered 32 slabs of the original material in a small shop outside Greenpoint, Brook-

lyn, but we needed much more. It took a trip to Forte dei Marni near Carrera, outside of Pisa in Italy, but we were able to find sufficient quantities of a marble closely resembling the original.

One of our top priorities in restoring the lobby was to remove the illuminated artwork depicting eight wonders of the world—the seven classical wonders plus the Empire State Building—that were installed in the 1960s. They were predominantly blue and backlit by a fluorescent light that cast a very unflattering reflection. The Landmarks Commission agreed that the panels were not appropriate to the restoration but asked that they be relocated. The building's owners are planning to move them to the eightieth floor where visitors headed to the observation deck can view them.

Once the illuminated panels were gone, we faced the task of replicating the bookmatched marble patterning on the other walls. We photographed all of the more than 80 slabs of marble we had acquired and worked with an artist who used Adobe Photoshop to select specific portions of the slabs and align and bookmatch them. The building owners could then choose the individual panels they wished to use and decide where those panels would be placed. These images also became technical roadmaps for the artisans cutting the marble slabs.

One of the exterior aspects of the restoration was the signage used for the building's storefronts. We worked with graphic designers Two Twelve to develop a

new Art Deco-inspired font specifically for the Empire State Building. The lettering is illuminated and mounted on black granite above the retail spaces. All tenants must use this font for exterior signs, and building management also uses it for advertising and events.

We commend Empire State Realty Trust and the Malkin family who had the vision to recognize the value of this iconic landmark and undertake the restoration of its magnificent lobby. Restorations of such architecturally significant buildings increase appreciation of these historic treasures. And with increased appreciation, more of these buildings will be saved.

Frank J. Prial, Jr., is an associate partner with Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners. He has led and contributed to many of the firm's most celebrated historic preservation and revitalization projects, including the Empire State Building lobby for Empire State Realty Trust and Grand Central Terminal for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

All Photos: Courtesy of Empire State Realty Trust except where indicated.



Signage using the font created for the Empire State Building.

Photo: Meghan Weatherly

MRS. WILLIAM LAMB REMINISCES

By ANTHONY W. ROBINS

Thirty-five years ago, the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission marked the Empire State Building's fiftieth anniversary by designating the building's exterior as a city landmark and the lobbies as an interior landmark. I was a member of the Commission's Research Department staff at the time and landed the plum assignment of writing the official reports that accompanied these designations. And it was my great good luck that the widow of architect William F. Lamb, the partner in the firm of Shreve, Lamb & Harmon responsible for the building's design, was still living.

Mrs. Lamb kindly invited me to visit her in her enormous Upper East Side apartment. We chatted for half an hour about the building and her husband's career. Although, as she put it, Mr. Lamb never brought work home from the office, she had some interesting things to say about his experience designing the building, as well as his opinion about some later changes.

Mrs. Lamb began by vigorously dissociating herself from a statement attributed to her in a 1975 book about the Empire State Building: "As for the inspiration for the design," the book quoted her saying, "a large pencil served. He was at the drawing board one day and set a large pencil on end. The clean soaring lines inspired him, and he modeled the building after it." The idea that any architect would find design inspiration in an upright pencil she found exasperating. As she explained it to me, "It was *not* Bill, it was Mr. Raskob [the building's developer], at the first meeting with Bill, who held up a pencil and said, 'Can you make it stand?' Now that makes a little sense, instead of pointing to a pencil and saying, 'that's it'—it's the craziest thing I ever heard!"

It's easy to understand her annoyance at being misquoted, especially in a way that might make her husband seem simple-minded. More of a surprise might be her opinion about the phrase "Art Deco" as applied to the Empire State Building. The phrase "Art Deco," of course, hadn't yet been coined in William Lamb's day, but in 1981 Mrs. Lamb clearly knew what it was, and that her husband did not approve of it:

"I don't consider it Art Deco, and neither did Bill. He didn't actually talk about the Empire State being Art Deco or not, it's just that he never considered himself Art

Deco. He termed the whole form Art Deco—I remember driving down Park [Avenue] with him, and we saw some building, I can't remember what, and he said, 'now *that* I consider Little Nemo [an elaborately ornamental comic strip] style of architecture.' And he considered the Chrysler [an example of] Little Nemo style of architecture. He himself was very simple. He loved everything classical; he loved classical music,



Photo: Richard Berenholtz

and simple lines. His favorite form of architecture was Romanesque, and when we went to France we were all through the south of France seeing those old, very strong, sturdy churches . . . the buildings themselves are very stark . . . I always think of Art Deco as so fancy."

Mrs. Lamb recalled with pleasure her husband's friendship with and admiration for architect Raymond Hood, and also a comment Hood made about the building:

"Oh, he did indeed, very much [admire Hood's work], and they were very good friends, good, close friends . . . He was very enthusiastic about Hood's Rockefeller Center . . . I do remember one thing that he said about Hood, when he was talking to him about it [the Empire State Building] right at the very beginning. Hood said, 'Well, one thing, you won't have to struggle to make it look tall!' I thought it was wonderful."

There were several changes that Lamb did not like. "He did not approve of the . . . television antenna," most likely because it changed the building's profile. Perhaps most surprising: "He also didn't like the fact of its being illuminated."

Completion of the Empire State Building and its opening in May 1931 was marked with great pomp and circumstance, but the Lambs wanted nothing to do with that:

"The building was finished a month before it was supposed to, wasn't it? And for a little less money, absolutely incredible! And he'd [Lamb] been working frightfully hard, you know, and late; it had to be finished, they were under great pressure. However, he knew when it was supposed to be finished there'd be a great to-do . . . and he planned, very deliberately, that we would go abroad that same day [as the building's opening]. We sailed on the *Île de France*. He did not like public speeches or public encomiums or anything like that, he *hated* it. We sailed just an hour or two before the party began. And the captain of the *Île de France* invited us up to his quarters, to have a drink, and to listen to the party [on the radio]. And Bill was in a state of absolute delight. The job was done, and well done, and he said, 'Isn't this marvelous? We don't have to listen to all these speeches!' He was so *happy*."

Anthony W. Robins is an architectural historian, lecturer, tour leader, and author who has been guiding residents and visitors to the city's wonders for 25 years. As a founding member of ADSNY, he created the Society's original tour program in 1981. He has lectured on New York history and architecture to audiences ranging from high school students to senior citizen groups, and from general audiences to university seminars in the United States and abroad.

RECOGNITION, CITYWIDE AND NATIONWIDE

BY ANTHONY W. ROBINS

Ask any New Yorker to name an obvious New York City landmark and odds are pretty good that the answer will be "the Empire State Building." No other building so identifies the city. The official plaque describing the site calls it New York's "quintessential landmark." [Full disclosure: I wrote that, but it's true.] Surely this must have been the very first building designated as a Landmark by the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC).

Well, no. The 1965 Landmarks Law created the LPC. In fact, last year marked the law's fiftieth anniversary and ADSNY celebrated with a five-borough tour of Art Deco landmarks. But the Empire State Building remained undesignated until 1981, its own golden anniversary. The Commission turned first to much older buildings. Ten

years after the LPC's establishment, *The New York Times* could report that no Art Deco buildings had yet been considered for landmark status.

That finally changed in 1978 with the designation of the Chrysler Building and its lobby and Radio City Music Hall—in each case, despite owner opposition. Designation enabled the LPC to intervene, de-

flecting a proposed redesign of the irreplaceable Chrysler lobby and halting the imminent demolition of the Music Hall. In 1979, the Commission turned its attention to the Empire State Building, holding the public hearing that led to the designation of both the building's exterior and the lobby as landmarks two years later. Happily, this time no one opposed that designation. Five years after the New York City designation the building became a National Historic Landmark. The Empire State Building's owners treated Landmark status as the honor it is meant to be and worked with Commission staff to create a master plan to guide future renovations. Today, the Empire State remains the city's quintessential landmark, and thanks to careful renovation and restoration—most recently of the lobby—it has never looked better.



Photo: Meghan Weatherly

CLASS IN SESSION ON THE EIGHTY-SIXTH FLOOR

The Empire State Building continues to thrill each new generation, as the Art Deco Society of New York witnessed first hand when it guided 42 sixth and seventh graders from Middle School 256 on an Art Deco tour of Midtown Manhattan. Culminating with a trip to the Empire State Building's celebrated Observation Deck, the tour was part of ADSNY's middle and high school program, *Documenting Deco*, which teaches New York City students about Art Deco architecture and design. As part of the program, the students participate in a photography contest that has them roaming their neighborhoods, cameras in hand, to capture images of their favorite buildings.

Last year ADSNY received about 100 student entries to the *Documenting Deco* photo contest. This year more than 2,000 photos were submitted. The panel of judges included noted photographers and authors Arlene Alda, Richard Berenholtz, and David Stravitz.

ADSNY President Roberta Nusim and Meghan Weatherby, ADSNY's Director of Operations, presented the program to four classes at Middle School 256 on the West 93rd Street Joan of Arc campus, working with Principal Brian Zager, and teachers Marde McBreen and Greg Fitzpatrick.

"I want to be an architect now that I know what an architect does!" one of Marde McBreen's sixth graders exclaimed at the end of one of the lessons. Principal Zager was delighted with the students' enthusiastic responses to the program. "We are glad to be able to broaden their appreciation of the art and design that surrounds us," he noted. When Roberta told him that May marked the eighty-fifth anniversary of the Empire State Building, Zager asked if the ADSNY team would lead the students on a tour of the Art Deco icons of Midtown Manhattan and take them to the top of the Empire State Building.

A rainy, overcast morning did not deter the group of students and their teachers who met Roberta and Meghan to begin the walking tour at the Chrysler Building. They visited several important locations, including the lobbies of the Chrysler and Daily News buildings. As they walked from the Chrysler Building to the Empire



Photo: Jade Schmitt

State Building, one of the boys spotted the American Radiator Building looming above the tree tops. "Look, look," he called out, "Isn't that the building you showed us in class?" Instantly, all the students were pointing to the building, grabbing their cameras to take photos.

As they neared the Empire State Building, excitement grew. Many of the students and a few of the teachers had never visited the building and didn't know much about its history. Several students were concerned about the elevator ride; they had never been in a skyscraper and wondered what it would feel like to be transported so quickly to such a height. They were all delighted to be greeted by a replica of King Kong as they exited the elevators and headed for the observation deck.

The day concluded with the much-anticipated visit to the eighty-sixth floor. The excitement as the students spotted buildings below that they had studied during the class lessons was infectious. They snapped many memorable pictures, including one of a light fixture in the Empire State Building's lobby that was a finalist in this year's *Documenting Deco* contest.



Photo: Roberta Nusim



Photo: Meghan Weatherby



Photo: Meghan Weatherby



Photo: Roberta Nusim

DIMINUTIVE DECO: CIGARETTE HOLDERS IN THE JAZZ AGE

BY REBECCA McNAMARA



Men in tailored suits and women in sequined dresses dancing the Charleston in black-and-white films. Glimmering skyscrapers. Brass bands playing in smoky Harlem nightclubs. Lawn parties with endless cocktails on Long Island. Radio City Music Hall. These are the images conjured up by the Jazz Age and its Art Deco aesthetic. But the Deco was all in the details: sunbursts on iron gates; fringed dresses cut just so; gold-leaf ceilings; Bakelite radios; stylized, geometric designs affecting nearly everything from posters to furnishings; and a diminutive object held casually in the hand as smoke wafted in the air.

The cigarette holder protected fingers or gloves, as well as teeth, from staining, allowed the cigarette to be smoked down while keeping fingers cool, and kept smoke away from sensitive eyes, but it was really all about show. Anyone could smoke a cigarette, rich and poor alike, but to stand apart, to make a statement about personality and class, users enlivened the paper-wrapped tobacco with a variety of accessories: cigarette cases, ashtrays, lighters, match safes, and of course, most visibly, the holder.

In the narrative of Jazz Age smoking and its accoutrements, the cigarette (and its holder) played a surprisingly significant social role. It was not unheard of for elite women to smoke cigarettes in the first decades of the twentieth century—*Vogue* and other periodicals occasionally reported on women smoking in fancy hotels and even suggested smoking accessories as appropriate gifts for both men and women as early as 1908—but it was not widely accepted, especially in public. American society frowned upon female tobacco users, and colleges even attempted to ban women from smoking well into the 1920s. But as women increasingly worked outside the home, gained higher levels of education and, as of 1920, voted for their government representatives, the cigarette became a simple but conspicuous means to proclaim their equality with men.

Tobacco manufacturers were happy to take up the feminist cause and target female consumers, albeit with different motives. One of the boldest marketing moves aimed at encouraging women to smoke was led by American Tobacco's Edward Bernays, Sigmund Freud's nephew, who used psychology in his role as a public-relations pioneer. In 1929, Bernays paid socially savvy debutantes to smoke Lucky Strikes as they walked in the

well-publicized New York City Easter Parade. The message was clear: if men could smoke, so could women, and there would be no stopping them. Each cigarette was dubbed a "torch of freedom," a direct, visible, and public way to undermine cultural norms just like the flapper's unconfined, revealing clothing, new dance styles, and urban nightlife.

Tobacco companies targeted women through print advertisements as well. Chesterfield's "Blow some my way" campaign showed women longing for their beaux' cigarette smoke while Marlboro ads, with the tagline "Mild as May," featured women in cafes and on beaches—their good taste and fashionability identified by their cloche hats, loose-fitting clothing, and of course, not just a cigarette, but a holder between their fingers.

The holder had become such a staple of daily life that the *Jewelers' Circular*, an industry trade magazine, credited the rise of female smokers not to women's liberation but to the cigarette holder industry. Even if the claim was perhaps too generous, by the 20s, most jewelers—including Boucheron, Chaumet, Cartier, Tiffany, Dunhill, Van Cleef & Arpels, and other high-end establishments in the United States and Europe—carried smoking accessories. Placing a cigarette in an expensive holder was a symbol of wealth, elegance, and taste. Hollywood studio publicity stills of men and women alike enhanced the glamor of smoking as the famous cradled a cigarette holder between their fingers—a prop variously offering a sense of aloofness, modernity, an inquiring mind, sexuality, or simple fashionability, depending on one's stance and expression.



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(Top) An extra-long, brightly colored cigarette holder added flair to the flapper's persona, probably Continental Europe, c. 1915-40.

(2) Chaumet holder in 18-karat gold with a diamond band and amber mouthpiece, Paris, 1930.

(3) Metal cigarette holder with diamond girdles, Zeus Corp., c. 1935-45.

(4) Sterling silver telescopic cigarette holder with ivory mouthpiece and silver and enamel case, imported by George Stockwell & Co. Ltd., London, 1922.

By the early 1930s, the cigarette holder was considered an essential accessory for any fashionable woman. When a 1930 issue of *Vogue* instructed readers on what the “smart woman” should keep in her handbag, the black enamel cigarette holder in a small eggshell case by Dunhill (for day) and a Cartier gold and tortoiseshell cigarette holder (for evening) were recommended alongside a tortoiseshell comb, a bill clip, a vanity case, a cigarette case, and other “examples of charm and good taste.”

Smoking was not something some people did—it was something everybody did—or so it seemed. At the great New York nightclubs like the Stork Club, Delmonico's, 21 Club, and the Rainbow Room, smoking was a given. Women dubbed “cigarette girls” sold packs of cigarettes and cigars from trays suspended from their necks. Ashtrays adorned tables and inexpensive, branded holders were given out to advertise the clubs. The holder was part of the theater of nightlife, exemplified by the telescopic model. Closed and held in a thumb-size case attached to a chain around a woman's neck or on her hand-muff, worn on a wristlet, or tucked in her purse, a few flips of the wrist would release the holder, its full length revealed—a silver ziggurat in miniature. A cigarette would be tucked in, and a courteous man would reach over to provide a match and offer a light.

Though decidedly fashionable, cigarette holders were not just for affluent smokers. They could be purchased at the nearest dry goods store for ten cents each, at department stores such as Bonwit Teller or Saks Fifth Avenue where a gold jewel-studded and ivory option might be had for ten dollars, or at tobacconists' shops, which offered an astonishing variety of styles and prices. In a 1921 *Jewelers' Circular*, London- and New York-based Alfred Orlik, manufacturer and importer of smokers' articles, advertised 750 styles of cigarette holders in Whitby jet, amber, tortoiseshell, ivory, 14-karat gold, platinum, and other materials.

Cigarette holders found a place among the costume jewelry trend that prized luxury in design over luxury in material and embraced trends over timeless design. Parisian jewelry firm Auguste Bonaz crafted an ultimate moderne smoking set: a bold red and black holder with matching cigarette case. Not content with a standard round opening, the tapered

tip is a hexagon, creating greater geometric contrast with the cylindrical cigarette. Other manufacturers similarly squared off the holder's end while the extra-long, brightly colored plastic holders, signifying extravagance and excess, lent a theatrical quality. Plastics made any form possible, and the subtlest change in this small object could create a striking effect.

Even in its most basic form, the cylindrical holder, streamlined in its very essence, easily harmonized with the prevailing geometric aesthetic of the period. The Zeus Corp.'s holders, popular beginning in the late 1930s, were basically sleek, simple devices with a filter that promised to remove nearly all of the nicotine (ironically at a time when tobacco manufacturers proclaimed nicotine posed no health concerns). A basic form could be purchased for one dollar, but Saks advertised Zeus holders for both men and women in various colors or with sparkling marcasite rings and mounts for up to 15 dollars, appealing to various tastes and budgets.

Cigarettes were perhaps the ultimate frivolity in an era that seemed to thrive on the frivolous, a notion highlighted by the accessories that accompanied them. Smoking was a habit that required nothing more than a flame. As we now know, the lasting effects of smoking are disastrous. But in interwar New York, cigarettes and smoking accessories were both a standard part of daily life and an important social tool. By elongating and adding individual pizzazz to the cigarette, the holder transformed the simple stick into a symbol of chicness and style.



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Rebecca McNamara, an art, design, and material culture historian, currently holds a curatorial position at the Indianapolis Museum of Art. She is co-author, with Martin Barnes Lorber, of *A Token of Elegance: Cigarette Holders in Vogue* (Officina Libraria, 2015). An e-book, tentatively titled *Widows Unveiled: Fashionable Mourning in Late Victorian New York*, is forthcoming from the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum/Parsons DesignFile series.

All photos: John Bigelow Taylor and Dianne Dubler



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- (5) Promotional cigarette holders made of plasticized paper with plastic mouthpieces for New York's Stork Club, c. 1930–65, and Delmonico's, c. 1950–60.
 (6) Cubist geometries and Ballets Russes-inspired colors characterize this black and red cigarette holder with matching cigarette case, Auguste Bonaz, Paris, c. 1925–35.
 (7) Boucheron holder in 18-karat gold with diamond accents and a tortoiseshell mouthpiece, Paris, 1928.
 (8) Rather than mimicking the cylindrical cigarette, this colorful plastic holder has a cube-like shape, United States, 1920s.
 (9) Cartier cigarette holder with platinum and diamond bands, New York or Paris, 1920s.

EXPERIENCING THOMAS HART BENTON'S AMERICA TODAY

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY SKOLNIK



Changing West

Thomas Hart Benton's *America Today* is a panorama of American life in the 1920s, a visual record of its rural, urban, and industrial landscapes and the impact of modern technology on its people. Thanks to AXA Equitable's generous gift of the murals to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2012, visitors to the museum can now experience this monumental mural cycle in a context similar to its original setting in the Board of Directors' room at Manhattan's progressive New School for Social Research.

In 1930, New School Director Alvin S. Johnson commissioned Benton to paint murals for the third-floor boardroom in the school's new Joseph Urban-designed headquarters at 66 West 12th Street, a striking Modernist building wrapped in glass and horizontal bands of black and cream brick. Johnson had no interest in traditional historical and mythological themes but asked instead for contemporary images reflecting modern life.

Working in a loft not far from the New School, Benton painted the original nine panels in egg tempera on gessoed linen. He received no compensation other than the cost of

materials, primarily eggs. When the panels were completed, they were transported to the site and hoisted through a third-floor window.

The murals covered almost the entire wall space of the 30-square foot boardroom. The largest panel, *Instruments of Power*, was installed on the wall opposite the entrance. Unlike the other panels, this one contains no figures but focuses instead on symbols of the machine age—an airplane, a dirigible, a turbine, a dam, and an internal combustion engine.

Three panels originally located to the right of the entrance—*Deep South*, *Midwest*, and *Changing West*—represent three rural regions of the country being transformed by industrialization. Sketches made by Benton during his travels throughout the United States in the late 1920s served as sources for these compositions. In *Deep South*, traditional methods of cotton production and harvesting are combined with images of a rice thresher and steam tractor, signs of increasing mechanization of agricultural processes. Sawmills, combines, and grain elevators appear in *Midwest*, and symbols of the Old West—a cowboy, a windmill—are juxtaposed with images of oil derricks and a gas cracking plant in *Changing West*.

The panels that were placed to the left of the entrance focus on single industries—*Coal*, *Steel*, and *City Building*. Miners extract coal for transport to an electrical power plant; steel workers attend to the blast furnaces and Bessemer converters that process iron ore into steel; and construction workers erect the steel frames that support soaring skyscrapers, such as 40 Wall Street, seen in the background.

Benton devoted the two panels flanking the boardroom entrance to urban life in New York City. Taxi dancers, moviegoers, and circus performers are among the figures populating *City Activities with Dance Hall*. Benton's wife and son appear in a family scene, and the artist himself toasts Johnson in the lower right hand corner. *City Activities with Subway* celebrates such urban pleasures as prizefights, burlesque shows, amusement parks, and soda fountains, not all of which would meet the approval of those attending the revival meeting or listening to the Salvation Army band shown at the center of the mural.



Midwest



Steel



Deep South



Outreaching Hands



City Activities with Dance Hall



Instruments of Power



City Activities with Subway

When the economic crisis that began with the October 1929 stock market crash deepened, Benton decided to add a tenth mural, *Outreaching Hands*, to *America Today*. Placed above the sliding doors leading to the boardroom, this small, narrow panel showing hands desperately reaching for coffee and bread epitomizes the bleakness of the Great Depression.

In the late 1940s, the boardroom was converted to a lecture hall to accommodate the postwar increase in enrollment at the New School. This change increased the vulnerability of the mural to damage, and Benton returned in 1956 and again in 1968 to clean and restore his work. In the early 1980s, the school began searching for a new owner with the resources

to properly maintain the mural. It was purchased in 1984 by Equitable Life, now AXA, cleaned and restored, and installed in 1986 in the firm's corporate offices at 787 Seventh Avenue. *America Today* moved to the lobby of 1290 Avenue of the Americas in 1996 when Equitable relocated there.

When renovation of the building's lobby necessitated the removal of the mural, AXA gifted it to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Today, the panels can be found in the first-floor gallery, 909, positioned in the same configuration as in the New School boardroom. An adjacent gallery contains preparatory studies and a video explaining the mural's content and history.

All images: Thomas Hart Benton (American, 1889-1975) from *America Today*, 1930-31, mural cycle consisting of ten panels, egg tempera with oil glazing over Permalba on a gesso ground on linen mounted to wood panels with a honeycomb interior. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of AXA Equitable, 2012.



City Building



Coal

GLOBAL CALENDAR



Patriot Radio, 1940, Norman Bel Geddes, manufactured by Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corp. (New York, New York), cast phenolic plastic (Catalin), molded urea plastic, molded cellulose acetate, embossed acetate, metal. Gift of George R. Kravis II, 2014, 10 1. Photo: Matt Flynn, © Smithsonian Institution.

Now thru March 12, 2017

Energizing the Everyday

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum

The Norman Bel Geddes-designed Patriot Radio is one of nearly 125 objects included in *Energizing the Everyday: Gifts from the George R. Kravis II Collection*, currently on view at the Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. From radios to furniture, it features some of the most influential objects in the history of twentieth century design, including works from Bel Geddes as well as Russell Wright, Walter Dorwin Teague, Ilonka Karasz, and Peter Muller-Munk. The exhibition celebrates approximately 100 gifts and promised gifts from leading collector George R. Kravis II, which are shown alongside twenty-five contextual works drawn from the museum's collection. The exhibition continues through March 12, 2017.

2016 EVENTS

Ongoing

Americans All: Race Relations in Depression-Era Murals
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

June 11-December 31

Deco Japan: Shaping Art and Culture, 1920-1945
Hillwood Estate
Washington, D.C.
hillwoodmuseum.org
202-686-5807

June 17-21

Festival Perpignan Art Deco
Perpignan Art Deco Society
Perpignan, France
perpignantourisme.com
33(0)4 68 66 30 30

July 2-September 25

Dressing Downton: Changing Fashion for Changing Times
Taft Museum of Art
Cincinnati, OH
taftmuseum.org/513-241-0343

Thru July 3

Paul Strand: Photography and Film for the 20th Century
Victoria and Albert Museum
London, England
vam.ac.uk/+44 (0) 20 7942 2000

Thru July 4

The Power of Pictures: Early Soviet Photography and Film
Frist Center for the Visual Arts
Nashville, TN
fristcenter.org/615-244-3340

Thru July 21

Alphonse Mucha: Master of Art Nouveau
Museum of the Shenandoah Valley
Winchester, VA
themsv.org/888-556-5799

July 22-25

New York Antique Jewelry & Watch Show
Metropolitan Pavilion
New York, NY
newyorkantiquejewelryandwatchshow.com
239-732-6642

Thru July 31

Bearing Witness: Drawings by William Gropper
Queens Museum
Queens, NY
queensmuseum.org
718-592-9700

Thru July 31

Machines for Living
Wells Fargo Center
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minneapolis, MN
arstmia.org/888-642-2787

August 4, 2016

Algonquin Round Table Walking Tour
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

Thru August 14

Stitching History from the Holocaust
Museum of Jewish Heritage
New York, NY
mjhnyc.org/646-437-4202

Thru August 14

Irving Penn: Beyond Beauty
Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas, TX
dallasmuseumofart.org
214-922-1200

Thru August 15

Satchmo: His Life in New Orleans
New Orleans Jazz Museum at the Old U.S. Mint
New Orleans, LA
louisianastatemuseum.org
504-568-6993

August 19-21

Queen Mary Art Deco Festival
Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
adsla.org/310-659-3326

Thru August 21

Promising Paradise: Cuban Allure, American Seduction
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

August 26-28

Denver Modernism Show
Denver, CO
denvermodernism.com
Email through website

September 2-December 18

Celebrating Heroes: American Mural Studies of the 1930s and 1940s from the Hirsch Collection
Francis Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College
Poughkeepsie, NY
filac.vassar.edu/845-437-5237

Thru September 5

American Epics: Thomas Hart Benton and Hollywood
Milwaukee Art Museum
Milwaukee, WI
mam.org/414-224-3200

Thru September 7

Moholy-Nagy: Future Present
Guggenheim Museum
New York, NY
guggenheim.org/212-423-3575

September 11

Destination Deco: Long Island Bus Tour
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

Thru September 11

Coney Island: Vision of an American Dreamland, 1861-2008
McNay Art Museum
San Antonio, TX
mcnayart.org/210-824-5368

Thru September 11

Walker Evans: Depth of Field
High Museum of Art
Atlanta, GA
high.org/404-733-4400

Thru September 18

Stag at Sharkey's: George Bellows and the Art of Sports
Cleveland Museum of Art
Cleveland, OH
clevelandart.org/216-421-7350

Thru September 18

America After the Fall: Painting in the 1930s
Art Institute of Chicago
Chicago, IL
artic.edu/312-443-3600

September 22

Bakelite: A Collector's Odyssey, Tour and Lecture
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

September 23-25

A Few Days Like No Others: Chanel, Van Dongen, Citroen & Murder Mystery
Normandy, France
paris-artdeco.org
33 6 03 37 56 04

September 24

Wilshire Miracle Mile Art Deco Walking Tour
Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
adsla.org/310-659-3326



Thru September 25
ArteK and the Aaltos:
Creating a Modern World
Bard Graduate Center
Gallery, New York, NY
bgc.bard.edu/212-501-3023

Thru September 25
Stuart Davis: In Full Swing
Whitney Museum
New York, NY
whitney.org/212-570-3600

**September 30-
January 14, 2017**
Authenticity & Innovation
Center for Architecture
New York, NY
cfa.aiany.org/212 683-0023

October
*Harlem Renaissance
Lecture*
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

October 8-January 8, 2017
*People on the Move: Beauty
and Struggle in Jacob
Lawrence's Migration Series*
Phillips Collection
Washington, DC
phillipscollection.org
202-387-2151

October 15
*Hollywood Boulevard Art Deco
Walking Tour*
Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
adsla.org/310-659-3326

October 21-23
*Palm Springs Modernism Week
Fall Preview*
Palm Springs, CA
modernismweek.com
760-799-9477

October 22
*Jersey City Tour and
Cocktails*
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

October 25-January 8, 2017
Paint the Revolution:
Mexican Modernism 1910-1950
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA
philamuseum.org/215-763-8100

October 29
*Jazz Age Icons at
Woodlawn Cemetery
Walking Tour*
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

**November 4-
March 26, 2017**
*Pierre Chareau: Modern
Architecture and Design*
Jewish Museum, New York, NY
thejewishmuseum.org
212-423-3200

**November 18, 2016-
November 12, 2017**
Shaken, Stirred, Styled:
The Art of the Cocktail
Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas, TX
dallasmuseumofart.org
214-922-1200



*Suffolk Theater,
Riverhead,
Long Island, 1933.
Harde & Short,
architects*

November 18-April 23, 2017
Dorothea Lange:
Politics of Seeing
Oakland Museum of California
Oakland, CA
museumca.org/510-318-8400

November 18-April 23, 2017
Modern Dutch Design
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

November 20-March 5, 2017
Stuart Davis: In Full Swing
National Gallery of Art
Washington, D.C.
nga.gov/202-737-4215

December
*Skyscrapers and
Oceanliners Lecture*
Art Deco Society of New York
adsny.org/212-679-3326

Thru December 4
*American Modernism: Selections
from the Kunin Collection*
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minneapolis, MN
arstmia.org/888-642-2787

Thru December 11
Icon of Modernism:
*Representing the Brooklyn
Bridge, 1883-1950*
Georgia Museum of Art
Athens, GA, georgiamuseum.org/706-542-4662

COMING IN 2017

Thru January 1, 2017
International Modernism:
Art in a Fast-Changing World
Minneapolis Institute of Art
Minneapolis, MN
arstmia.org/888-642-2787

September 11, 2016

Destination Deco: Long Island Bus Tour

The Suffolk Theater is one of the many destinations ADSNY will visit on this special bus tour with architectural historian Anthony Robins. When it opened on December 30, 1933, the theater was hailed as "the Radio City Music Hall of Long Island." Constructed as a National Recovery Act project for the Century Theater circuit chain, it is the last remaining large Art Deco theater on Long Island. Closed in 1987, the theater remained dark for eighteen years until new owners undertook a meticulous renovation. It is now being used as a performance space and special events facility. ADSNY will recognize the owners with a special presentation to acknowledge their efforts in honoring the building's Deco heritage.

January 7, 2017
*Authenticity and
Innovation, Curator Tour*
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

January 11, 2017
Art Deco Tours Toronto! Lecture
Art Deco Society of the
Palm Beaches
ArtDecoPB.org/561-276-9925

January 19-21, 2017
Art Deco Weekend
Miami Design Preservation
League,
Miami Beach, FL
mdpl.org/305-672-2014

January 20-29, 2017
Winter Antiques Show
Park Avenue Armory
New York, NY
winterantiquesshow.com
718-292-7392

February 12-June 18, 2017
Moholy-Nagy: Future Present
Los Angeles County Museum
of Art
Los Angeles, CA
lacma.org/323-857-6000

February 15-19, 2017
Tremains Art Deco Festival
Art Deco Trust
Napier, New Zealand
artdeconapier.com
+64 6 835 0022

February 16-26, 2017
Palm Springs Modernism Week
Palm Springs, CA
modernismweek.com
760-799-9477

February 17-20, 2017
*Palm Springs Modernism
Show and Sale*
Palm Springs, CA
palmspringsmodernism.com
708-366-2710

Thru March 12, 2017
Energizing the Everyday:
*Gifts from the George R.
Kravis II Collection*
Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian
Design Museum
New York, NY
cooperhewitt.org
212-849-8400

March 18-July 9, 2017
*Charles Sheeler: Fashion,
Photography & Structural Form*
Michener Art Museum
Doylestown, PA
michenermuseum.org
215-340-9800

**June 10-
September 17, 2017**
*Gió Ponti: 20th-Century
Renaissance Designer*
Georgia Museum of Art
Athens, GA
georgiamuseum.org
706-542-4662

2017 WORLD CONGRESS ON ART DECO

All Congress dates listed below
are tentative.

May 7-9
Pre-Congress Program
Cincinnati, OH
Hosted by:
Chicago Art Deco Society
chicagodeco.org

May 10-12
Pre-Congress Program
Detroit, MI
Hosted by:
Detroit Art Deco Society
daads.org

May 14-21
World Congress on Art Deco
Cleveland, OH
Hosted by:
20th Century Society USA
29thcs.org

May 21-24
Post-Congress Program
Pittsburgh and Falling Water
Hosted by:
Art Deco Society of Washington
adsw.org

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COUNCIL HONORS ADSNY WITH GRASSROOTS PRESERVATION AWARD



Photo: Meghan Weatherly

The Art Deco Society of New York was honored to be the recipient of a 2016 Grassroots Preservation Award from the Historic Districts Council, the citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods. The awards are given to activists and groups who have campaigned for community preservation throughout the city. In recognizing ADSNY, the Council cited its commitment to drawing attention to and promoting the preservation of New York's irreplaceable Art Deco architecture. In particular, the Council saluted ADSNY's "heroic efforts" to save the New York City Fire Services Pumping Station on Neptune Avenue in Coney Island.

The pumping station, which opened in 1938, is the only known public building designed by architect and developer Irwin S. Chanin, best known for such projects as the Century and Majestic apartment buildings on Central Park West and the Chanin Building at the corner of Lexington Avenue and East 42nd Street. Its purpose was to ensure constant water pressure for firefighters in outer areas of Brooklyn.

New York City's Fire Department closed the pumping station in 1976

and since that time the building has suffered from neglect. The wide bands of glass block windows that once filled the lower portion of the Streamline Moderne façade disappeared long ago. Also gone are the four pairs of charming winged horses designed by Harry Lowe that originally flanked the entrance. After the limestone sculptures were damaged by vandals, they were relocated to the Steinberg Family Sculpture Garden at the Brooklyn Museum, where they are on loan from the City of New York.

ADSNY led the campaign for landmark designation of the pumping station, engaging many segments of the preservation and local communities. At a Landmark Preservation Commission (LPC) hearing last fall, ADSNY presented testimony, letters of support, and a petition with 371 signatures. While the LPC voted against landmark designation of the pumping station this year, LPC Chairwoman Meenakshi Srinivasan stated, "We did receive a lot of support in terms of designating this building...that's the reason why we are not voting on it being taken off the calendar on the basis of merit. Maybe at some point in time it could be restored." The Commission encouraged the community to find a new use for the site.

As a result of ADSNY's efforts, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services and the New York City Economic Development Corporation are now studying the feasibility of adaptive reuse for the pumping station. ADSNY joins LPC Commissioner Adi Shamir-Baron, a champion of Art Deco era architecture, in recognizing that, "It is a building that's worthy of designation."

GOOD NEWS FOR AN ART DECO GEM IN THE BRONX

BY SAM GOODMAN

It was called "The Riviera of New York" when it opened in July, 1936. Long neglected, the Art Deco Bathhouse and Promenade at Orchard Beach—a 1.1-mile long crescent-shaped public beach at the eastern end of Pelham Bay Park—may once again become a haven for beachgoers, thanks to a multi-million dollar allocation for their restoration.

Between the 1920s and 40s, the Bronx's population increased by 664,000. These were the golden years for the northernmost borough of New York City, a time when the Bronx was labeled the "Wonder Borough," a term coined by the Bronx Board of Trade, which routinely boasted that eventually two million people would call the Bronx home.

Inspired perhaps by the amazing energy that seemed boundless in the Bronx, and despite the onset of the Great Depression, Robert Moses, New York City's first Commissioner of Parks, set out to build a grand beach on Long Island Sound. Orchard Beach, located within the 2,700 acres of Pelham Bay Park, would offer Bronx residents a sensational place for summer fun. Work commenced in 1934, with funding largely provided by the Works Progress Administration.

The highlight of Moses's plan had less to do with sun and swimming and more to do with dining facilities, changing rooms, and a sand-free area for passive recreation. In 1936, construction began on the magnificent bathhouse that greeted visitors on their arrival. Designed by Aymar Embury II in a style that combined Beaux-Arts principles with Streamline Moderne forms and motifs, this imposing 200,000 square-foot structure consists of two curved pavilions to the north and south joined by a raised plaza. The bathhouse facilities in the pavilions originally included a 500-seat cafeteria, showers, restrooms, and locker rooms equipped with 5,000 individual lockers. The upper plaza offers an unobstructed view of the most ambitious public beach development north of

Coney Island. The crescent-shaped promenade is just above the beach level, and colonnaded loggias extend from the upper plaza.

Moses included a bathhouse in his plans because most people arriving at Orchard Beach came fully dressed in their street clothes. In that era, beachgoers wouldn't ride a bus in their swimsuits, so a place to change was essential. Likewise, after a day in the sun, many families wanted to shower and change back into their street attire before looking for a place to dine. So a day at the beach was just that, a daylong escape from the oppressive summer heat. Over time, however, the increasing number of automobiles, coupled with the advent of air conditioning, made such excursions less necessary, while the upkeep of the bathhouse grew ever more costly.

Now, 80 years later, the bathhouses and pavilions have undergone no extensive renovations. Indeed, as Bronx prosperity ebbed, these landmarked buildings were largely neglected and by the 1970s, substantial areas of the pavilions were simply boarded up.

Recent events renew hope for restoration. A \$2.5 million pre-scoping study completed in April 2015 found that the bathhouse remains structurally sound, although the details that made it both beautiful and functional—terrazzo floors and glazed blue tiles—are “faded history.” Still, because this facility represents the most striking example of Art Deco architecture found anywhere along the entire length of Long Island Sound, its restoration is essential. Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz, Jr. recognizes this need and as part of his 2016-2017 fiscal year allocation, has provided \$10 million to the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) for restoration. This is the largest single allocation by the Borough President for any capital project initiated by the DPR.

The overall restoration plan has three priorities. The first is an allocation of \$39.4 million to restore the north and south pavilions and upper plaza, which were designated as New York City Landmarks in 2006. This work will include opening the 12-foot wide loggia for a café concession with views of the beach; construction of a passage with space for seasonal kiosks and flexible programming; adaptation of the north and south waiting rooms off the upper plaza for programming purposes; and installation of a cafeteria and retail

services in the brickfaced areas on the lower level.

The second priority is the construction of a \$7.1 million beach passage under the upper plaza that will allow for ADA-compliant beach access, eliminating the need to negotiate steps in order to reach the beach.

The third priority is the \$14.4 million relocation of maintenance and operational facilities. These facilities are vulnerable to flooding caused by storm surges. This project would also provide additional space for commercial and public use.

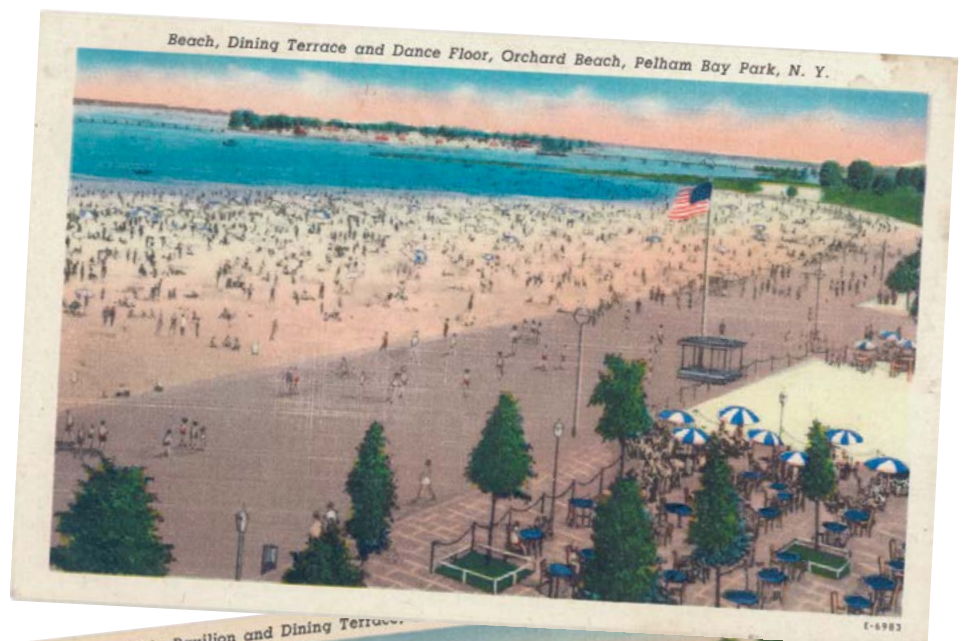
These three separate priorities constitute a comprehensive plan to dramatically restore the pavilions and improve access to Orchard Beach, while also providing a storm-safe location for the equipment and offices currently located there. The projected cost totals \$60.9

million. Once funds have been committed to this project, the timetable is 18 months for design, nine months for procurement, and twenty-four months for construction.

Today Orchard Beach attracts as many as 100,000 visitors per day during the height of the summer. Hopefully, they will soon be able to enjoy the same amenities offered to the beachgoers of the 1930s.

Sam Goodman is a proud third-generation resident of the Bronx's Grand Concourse. Since 1995 he has been employed by the Bronx Borough President's office as an urban planner. As a hobby, he also offers walking tours highlighting Grand Concourse buildings and the area's rich history.

Postcards: From the collection of Sal Arena



RECORDING OUR HERITAGE: THE NEW YORK ART DECO REGISTRY

BY STEPHEN H. VAN DYK



Photo: Richard Berenholtz

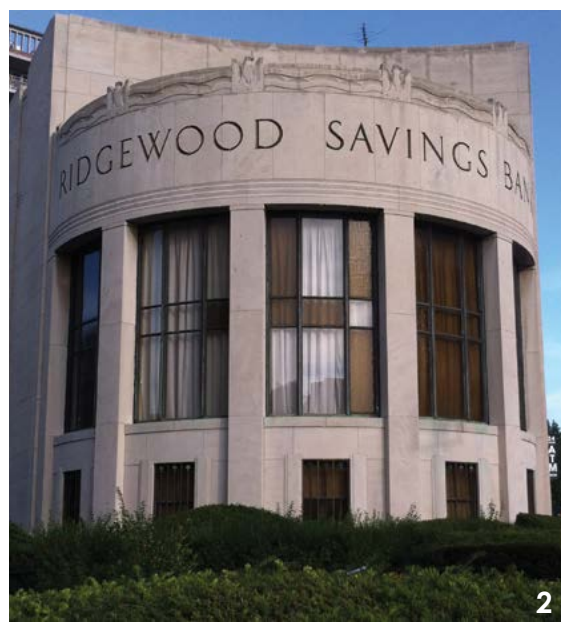


Photo: Roberta Nusim

NEW YORK CITY HAS AN EXTENSIVE WEALTH OF ART DECO ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN THROUGHOUT ITS FIVE BOROUGHS. ADSNY'S NEW YORK ART DECO REGISTRY PROVIDES A VALUABLE RESOURCE FOR EXPLORING AND PRESERVING THESE TREASURES.

The New York Art Deco Registry is an ongoing online resource currently containing information on more than 350 existing buildings with distinctive Art Deco designs and details. The Registry is accessible on ADSNY's website at ArtDeco.org/Explore/Registry. ADSNY's website also includes the New York Art Deco Map, pinpointing the location for each entry, ArtDeco.org/Explore/Map.

The principal goal of the Registry is to increase awareness of New York City buildings, both major and lesser known, constructed in the 1920s and 30s and representative of the Art Deco aesthetic. The Registry provides a resource for local residents to learn about Art Deco design in the areas where they live, work, and attend school and to encourage them, as well as visitors to New York, to explore the many Art Deco-rich neighborhoods throughout the city. Comments and additions to the Registry, which can be sent to [ADSNY at Registry@ArtDeco.org](mailto:Registry@ArtDeco.org), continue to add

(1) Located in Midtown Manhattan, Rockefeller Center epitomizes the Art Deco aesthetic. The complex was designed in 1939 by architects Raymond Hood and Corbett, Harrison & Murray. Then and now, visitors have flocked to this landmark to get the best view of the city—whether from the ground or the Observation Deck.

(2) In 1940, architects Halsey McCormack & Helmer designed the Ridgewood Savings Bank in Queens. Unlike their Williamsburg Savings Tower Bank (see page 21), the Ridgewood Savings Bank is a more modest five stories, yet also perfectly captures the essence of Art Deco with its curved entrance pavilion and geometric grillwork in the windows.

to our ever-expanding knowledge of the many hidden Deco riches throughout the city.

I am overseeing the development of the Registry and initially met with a small group of graduate students and ADSNY members to formulate effective ways to celebrate and promote the remarkable Art Deco heritage of New York City with an easily accessible digital tool.

The first step in its creation was the use of recent New York architecture publications to identify notable Art Deco buildings. The Smithsonian's Cooper Hewitt Museum Library in New York proved to be a treasure trove of material and databases on Art Deco, architecture, and New York City. The fifth edition of the *AIA Guide to New York City* (Oxford University Press, 2010), which cites nearly 200 Deco buildings in the five boroughs, was the initial key resource for Registry entries. Robert Stern's *New York 1930* (Rizzoli, 1987), *Skyscraper Style* by Cervin Robinson and Rosemarie Haag Bletter (Oxford University Press, 1975), and David Garrard Lowe's *Art Deco New York* (Watson-Guptill Publications, 2004) were also valuable resources for identifying and researching entries.

In 2013, Rosannah Sandoval, a Cooper Union graduate student, began working with me and ADSNY's Director of Operations, Meghan Weatherby, to develop the layout and mapping system and determine the content and functionality for the site. Rosannah then entered data (architect, building name, borough, neighborhood, building function, and date) obtained from published sources along with images for

each Registry item. Links were created to landmark documents and other published information. In 2014, ADSNY intern Charles Horvaic, a graduate student in Columbia University's Historic Preservation Program, identified, researched, and entered content into the Registry for more than 50 sites in the borough of Queens. Since that time, ADSNY members and volunteers have offered additional information and images for inclusion in the Registry.

The Registry includes information for residential, commercial, religious, academic, and public buildings. The search box function allows entries to be filtered by architect, building name, borough, neighborhood, building function, or date.

This past January, Anthony Robins, ADSNY Board member and New York architectural scholar, held a valuable workshop for ADSNY volunteers involved in the Registry on methods for researching New York City buildings. Compiling accurate information through online resources and databases will be of vital importance as we move ahead. Research on approximately 130 architects whom Robins identified as working in the Art Deco style in New York in the late 1920s and 30s will no doubt uncover additional sites. Tours and architectural surveys on select neighborhoods have revealed further structures to be researched and entered, notably in the neighborhoods of Brighton Beach in Brooklyn, the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, and Washington Heights and Inwood in Upper Manhattan. Other potential sources of information are new books on such architects as Ralph Walker and Cross & Cross.

In addition to expanding the Registry, our focus in the near future will be on improving the accessibility and content of each entry. We are in the process of assembling an illustrated guide to Art Deco characteristics that will become a useful introduction to the Registry; devising a new, more accessible mapping system, perhaps with suggested walking tours; adding informational links; and providing better quality images. Plans are also underway for the creation of brief content notes for each entry that will call attention to special details. We will continue to explore and implement new technologies and programs for



Photo: Meghan Weatherly



Photo: New York Department of Education



Photo: Meghan Weatherly

(3) Art Deco also made its way to Staten Island, as seen in the Ambassador Apartments, designed in 1932 by Lucien Pisciotta in the St. George neighborhood. Standing seven stories tall, the Ambassador Apartments boast a façade ornamented with golden sun rays, blue terra-cotta geometric forms, and blue and gold stylized plants and flowers, a colorful expression of the quintessential elements of Art Deco.

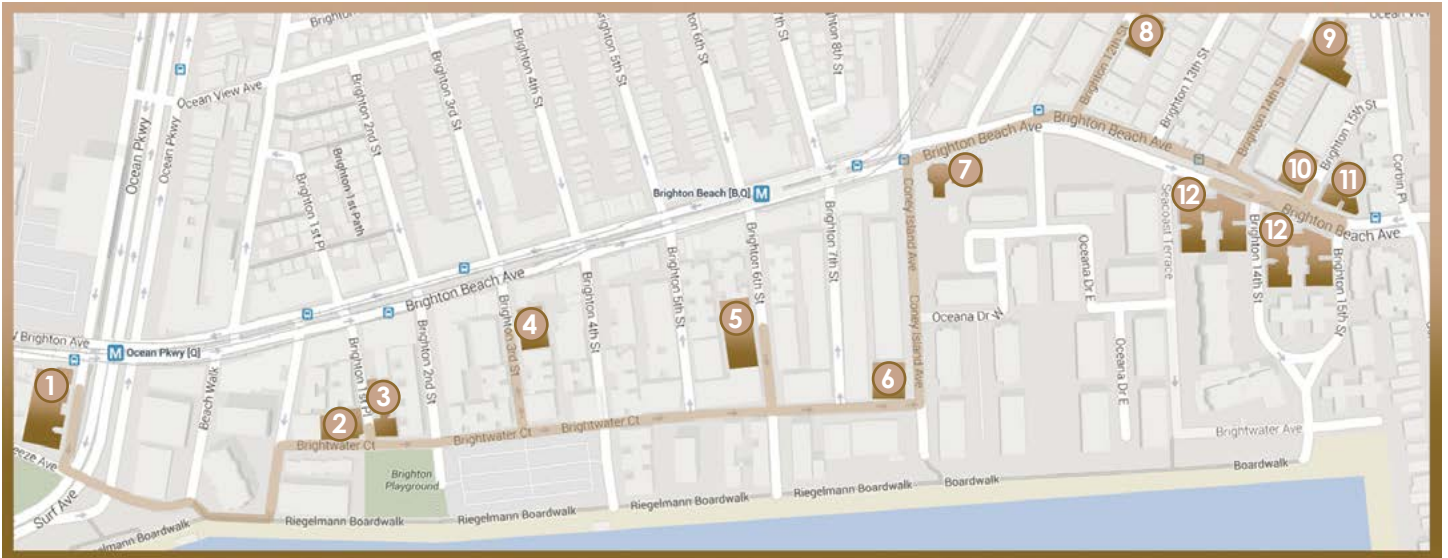
(4) A favorite building in the Bronx is the Herman Ridder Junior High School, which was designed in 1929 by Walter C. Martin. Located in the Crotona Park neighborhood, the building stands proudly on the corner of Boston Road and East 173rd Street, its tower-like structure at the entrance attracting attention.

(5) The Williamsburg Savings Bank Tower was designed in 1929, a decade before Rockefeller Center. At thirty-seven stories, the design by architects Halsey, McCormack & Helmer cuts a particularly handsome figure on the Brooklyn skyline with its stepped configuration, culminating in a clock tower.

improving the mapping system. In addition, we plan to include buildings discovered during the *Documenting Deco* educational program for middle and high school students in the five boroughs as well as sites identified through preservation initiatives and walking tours. The greatest challenges facing the Registry are funding and adequate staff to oversee new data entry and upkeep. It is our hope that the Registry will be an effective forum for sharing information and learning about the heritage of our urban Art Deco treasures, as well as a tool for encouraging the maintenance and preservation of these remarkable buildings.

Stephen H. Van Dyk, ADSNY's Vice-President, currently heads the Smithsonian Libraries Art Department, and has worked in art, design, and architecture libraries for nearly forty years.

EXPLORING DECO IN . . .



BRIGHTON BEACH

Although Brooklyn's Brighton Beach may not be known as an Art Deco mecca, a closer examination into the interwar past of this neighborhood on the Coney Island peninsula shows it to be one of the city's top destinations for Art Deco explorers. Take a stroll below its elevated subway tracks and you'll discover residential and commercial buildings that, albeit modest in scale, rival those found on the more renowned Grand Concourse in the Bronx.

Today, Brighton Beach is affectionately known to members of its tight-knit Russian community as "Little Odessa," after the seaport town on the Black Sea, because of the area's large Russian Jewish population. But the influx of immigrants from the former Soviet Union is relatively recent. In the middle of the nineteenth century, luxurious beachfront hotels

for New York's elite began to replace what had been farmland. The landscape changed again with the rapid expansion of the mass transit system in the early twentieth century, when large hotels gave way to clusters of residential buildings and small oceanside shops and for the first time, Brighton Beach became a place to live, not just to visit or vacation.

Such redevelopment was not unusual and occurred in many other New York neighborhoods that were expanding during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s, largely due to an increase in immigration. Like Queens and the Bronx, Brighton Beach became populated with Renaissance and Tudor Revival-style buildings as well as magnificent examples of the modern architectural vocabulary that we know today as Art Deco. Behind many of these beautifully preserved façades are even more stunning interior spaces. Use the accompanying map as your guide to discovery of the Deco delights of Brighton Beach.



1. 3100 Ocean Parkway, Façade and Lobby
The beauty of this Art Deco residential building from 1932 is attributable primarily to the brick patterning of the entrance and spandrels. The central design in the lobby's terrazzo floor and the fluting on the ceiling guide visitors through public spaces.



2. 115 Brightonwater Court, Façade
The chevron banding, often found in Deco design, distinguishes this 1933 apartment building. Aquatic motifs embossed on the metal around the door are reminiscent of those found on Manhattan's Chanin Building and reflect the building's proximity to the beach.



3. 3111 Brighton 1st Place, Lobby
Built in 1932, this building features a stunning lobby with original lighting, elegant crown and ceiling moldings, green and pink terrazzo floors, and a superb fireplace.

4. 3091 Brighton 3rd Street, Façade
Built in 1935, the masonry of this Art Deco Building boasts an organic fauna motif.

5. 3130 Brighton 6th Street, Façade
The alternating horizontal patterns of yellow and red brick on the façade of this 1930 apartment building create a bold statement.



6. 711 Brightwater Court, Façade
Designed in 1934 by Martyn N. Weinstein, this perfectly maintained building boasts vibrant terra-cotta spandrels, clean-lined banding created with alternating black and beige brick, a single band of chevron patterning, as well as a breathtaking black and gold terra-cotta entrance. The lobby has been very well maintained.



12. Brighton Beach Gardens Apartments, 1120-1130 & 1150-1170 Brighton Beach Avenue, Façade and Lobby
Not all New York Art Deco is based on angular geometric ornamentation. This Kavy & Kavovitt project from 1935 features beautiful organic forms that have been interpreted in the Art Deco style. The lobbies have been magnificently maintained.

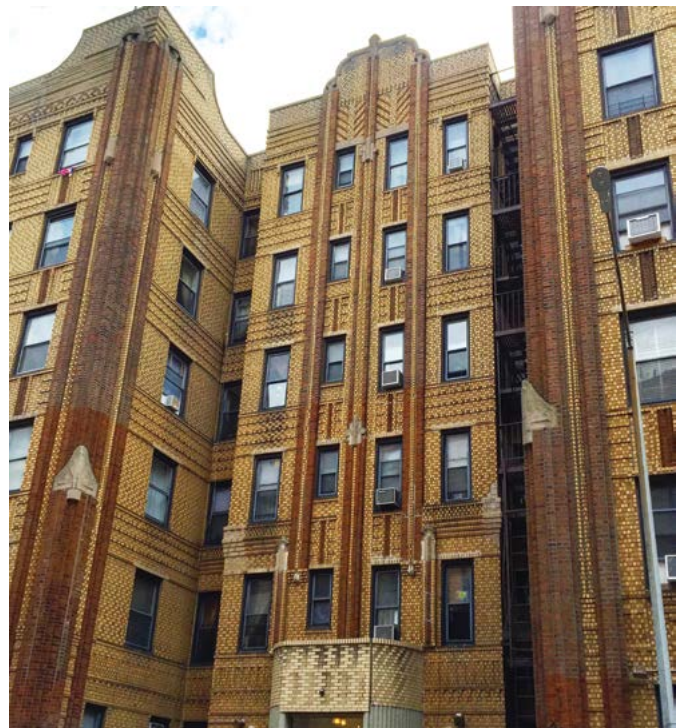
Not pictured here:

7. Lincoln Savings Bank, 1002 Brighton Beach Avenue
This 1942 Art Moderne design from Adolph Goldberg features a large WPA mural in the original lobby depicting scenes of Abraham Lincoln giving a speech in a nineteenth century Brighton Beach landscape. (Although Lincoln did make it to Brooklyn, he did not venture as far out as Brighton Beach.)

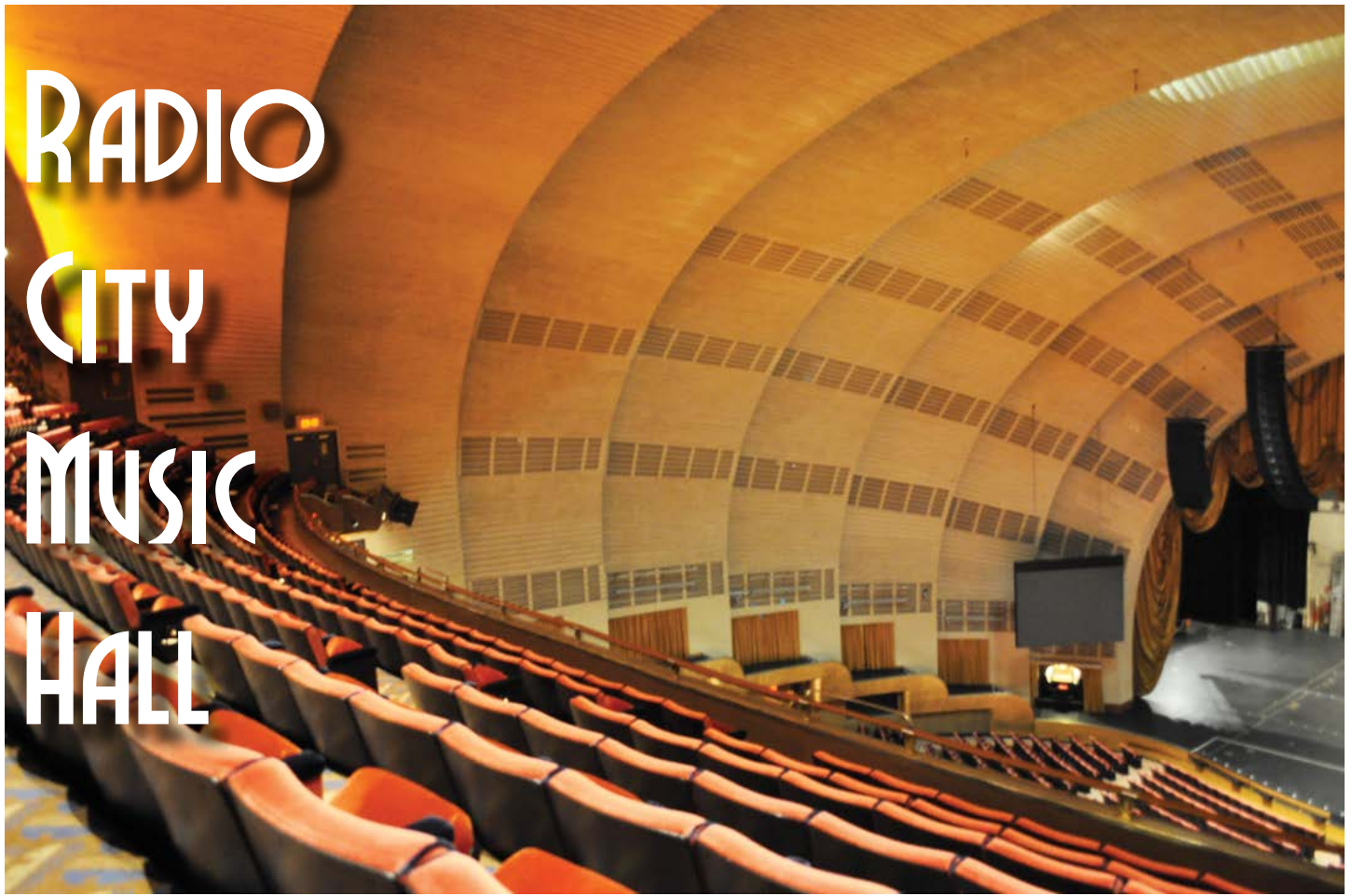
8. 3029 Brighton 12th Street
The brick banding emphasizes the verticality of this 1928 building. The lobby is definitely worth a look.

9. 3033 Brighton 14th Street
Built in 1932, this building is very similar to 3029 Brighton 12th Street, and features an equally impressive vertical aesthetic.

10. 1151 Brighton Beach Avenue
This 1935 apartment building has one of the more unique lobbies in Brighton Beach.



11. 1159 Brighton Beach Avenue, Façade
A beautiful Art Deco façade combined with a striking interior distinguishes this 1935 Kavy & Kavovitt apartment building.



RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL

ADSNY EXPLORES NEW YORK'S GRAND PERFORMANCE PALACE

“It has been said of the new Music Hall that it needs no performers; that its beauty and comforts alone are sufficient to gratify the greediest of playgoers.” So wrote Percy Hammond in the *New York Herald Tribune* on December 28, 1932, the day after the grand opening of Radio City Music Hall. This winter, ADSNY members had the opportunity to go behind the scenes at the elegant Music Hall, still dazzling today, thanks to an extensive restoration in the late 1990s.



The magnificent Grand Foyer has a gold leaf ceiling, elongated crystal chandeliers designed by Edward Caldwell, gold-backed floor-to-ceiling mirrors, and a giant mural, *Eternal Quest for the Fountain of Youth*, painted by Ezra Winter in 1932.



René Paul Chambellan designed the stainless steel doors of the auditorium with bronze bas-relief, which include a snake charmer, a performing seal, a flamenco dancer, and a lion tamer.



A highlight of the event was a trip to the eighth floor of the Music Hall to visit the private apartment of theater impresario and visionary behind Radio City Music Hall, Samuel Lionel (Roxy) Rothafel, with its sleek Donald Deskey-designed furniture.



Nine overlapping arches extend from the sixty-foot proscenium across the auditorium ceiling. When illuminated, they create the effect of a sunrise.

RADIO CITY MUSIC HALL HAS THIRTY-ONE LOUNGES, EACH WITH ITS OWN THEME AND CHARACTER



Stuart Davis painted *Men Without Women* in 1932 for the smoking room of the men's lounge on the lower level. The mural was moved to the Museum of Modern Art in 1975 and reinstalled in its original location in 1999.



Nicotine, an aluminum-foil wallpaper designed by Donald Deskey for the second mezzanine smoking lounge.



A crouching panther painted by Henry Billings lurks in this mural in the ladies' powder room on the third mezzanine.



This small circular ladies' powder room on the first mezzanine, designed by Donald Deskey, is lined with sixteen mirrored-glass panels extending from the dressing tables to the ceiling.



Yasuo Kuniyoshi's gargantuan florals and foliage in soft, delicate hues cover the walls of the ladies' lounge on the second mezzanine. Covered over during an earlier remodeling, the mural was repainted during the restoration.

SHANGHAI EXPRESS TO THE WORLD CONGRESS

BY ALEX DISBROW



Just like Marlene Dietrich in the classic 1932 film *Shanghai Express*, this past November ADSNY's President Roberta Nusim and ten other ADSNY members made their way to Shanghai. The purpose of our journey was to attend the Thirteenth World Congress on Art Deco and unlike Shanghai Lily, Dietrich's character, we traveled halfway around the world by jet rather than by express train to Shanghai.

Shanghai Art Deco Society President Patrick Cranley warmly welcomed us and other Art Deco enthusiasts from around the world at the opening reception, held at the beautiful Art Deco Pei Mansion (yes, it's where I. M. Pei grew up), now a boutique hotel. We sipped champagne and cocktails on the lawn as we chatted with our colleagues and anticipated the week ahead.

The morning lectures in the ballroom of the Peninsula Hotel took us back to the Shanghai of the 1920s and 30s. Michelle Qiao, author of *Shanghai Hudec Architecture*, introduced us to László Hudec, a Hungarian architect who moved to Shanghai in 1925 and designed some of the city's most notable Art Deco buildings. We learned about the influence of Art Deco design on Chinese films of the 1930s from Dr. Linda Johnson, of the Royal Asiatic Society film program; Peter Hibbard, author of *Peace at the Cathay*, spoke about Shanghai's extraordinary Art Deco hotels; and author and longtime Shanghai resident Spencer Dodington discussed distinctive Art Deco inte-

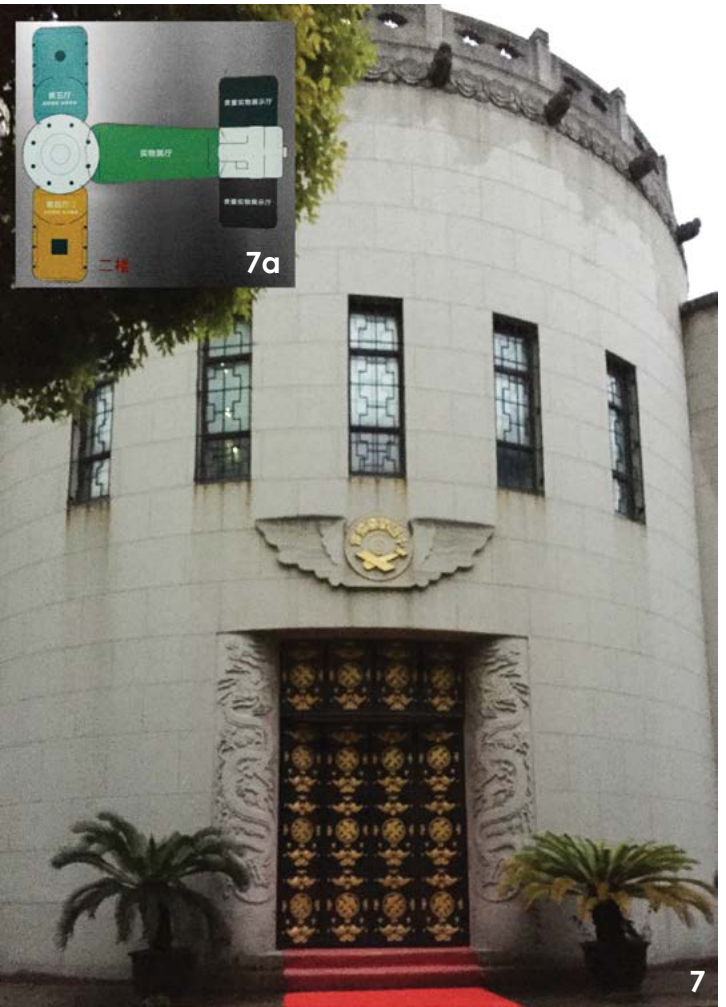
riors. We heard about the Art Deco movement in Manila from Ivan Man Dy, founder of Old Manila Walks, and Chinese Art Deco nightclubs in San Francisco from Therese Poletti, author and member of the Art Deco Society of California. There was not a dry eye in the room when Jennifer Wong, an American living in Los Angeles, related the touching story of the struggle of her grandfather, Liu Jipiao, architect of the Chinese Pavilion for the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris and many important buildings in China. Forced to flee his country because of his position in the Kuomintang, he settled with his family in New Jersey and worked as a chicken farmer.

The afternoons were filled with tours of Shanghai's Art Deco neighborhoods. Among the highlights were Hudec's Grand Theater and Park Hotel and the Art Deco commercial buildings in the riverfront Bund district. One of the most intriguing areas of the city was the French Concession, with its Art Deco homes and low-rise apartment buildings. Its shops, restaurants, and cafes were reminiscent of Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris and Greenwich Village in New York.

The evenings were filled with exciting social events. Prior to dining in the ballroom of the Art Deco Wing On Department Store, Tess Johnston spoke on "100 Years of Shanghai's Expat History." Tess is the author of *Shanghai Art Deco* and was the First Lady of Shanghai's expatriate community before her



3



7a



5



6

recent move back to Washington, D.C. A lecture on Paul Veyseyre's architecture by Charles Legrance, co-author with Spencer Dodington of *Shanghai's Art Deco Master*, preceded dinner at the Veyseyre-designed *Cercle Sportif Francais* (French Sports Club) in the French Concession. We also enjoyed a relaxing traditional Shanghai dinner at Fu 1039, once a mansion.

The former Art Deco *Cercle de la Police* (Police Club) was the venue for a traditional Kun Opera performance. When the cast asked for volunteers to join them on stage, Patrick Cranley stepped up and, with some prodding from Roberta, so did I. I was dressed as a Chinese warrior, equipped with a spear, and told to look fearsome.

We said goodbye to our friends and to Shanghai at the farewell dinner, "Last Dance," held in the 1929 Peace Hotel, an Art Deco landmark. Dressed in formal attire, we enjoyed cocktails in the hotel's Jazz Lounge before moving to the ballroom for a lecture by Patricia Luce Chapman, author of *Tea on the Great Wall*, who reminisced about her childhood in Shanghai in the 1930s. The menu for the evening was a replica of one offered at the Cathay Hotel in the 1930s. We ended the evening by dancing until the wee hours of the morning.

Alex Disbrow is ADSNY's International Ambassador.
All photos: Roberta Nusim

(1) Lobby, Peace Hotel, former Cathay Hotel/Sassoon House, Palmer & Turner, architects, 1929, recently renovated in the Art Deco style.

(2) Cathay Cinema, C.H. Gonda, architect, 1932. It has a seating capacity of 1,080 and is one of the few cinema palaces from the 1930s still open today.

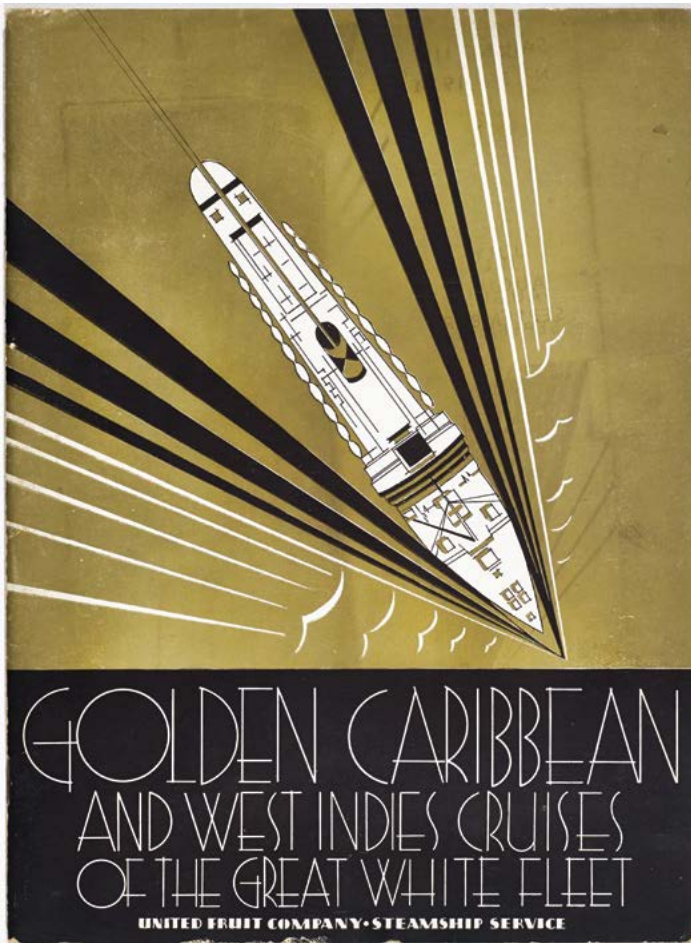
(3) ADSNY's Global Ambassador, Alex Disbrow, in traditional costume as a Kun opera performer.

(4) Grosvenor House in the French Concession, Palmer & Turner, architects, 1930. It was popular with the elite of Shanghai society.

(5) Interior of the Cercle Sportif Francais in the French Concession, Alexandre Léonard and Paul Veyseyre, architects, 1926.

(6) Staircase of the Pei Mansion, built in 1934 for the Pei family and once the home of architect I.M. Pei. Now a boutique hotel, it was the setting for the opening night festivities of the World Congress.

(7a) Floor plan illustrating the airplane-shaped China Civil Aviation Association Building, now a hospital, Dayu Doon, architect 1936. (7) Original front door of the China Civil Aviation Association Building.



Brochure, *Golden Caribbean and West Indies Cruises of the Great White Fleet*, c. 1950, United Fruit Company Steamship Service, publisher. The Wolfsonian-FIU, Vicki Gold Levi Collection, XC2016.01.1.388.



Advertisement, *Cool cruises to Havana, Greatest pleasure port of all*, c. 1930, Wendell P. Colton Co., publisher. The Wolfsonian-FIU, Vicki Gold Levi Collection, XC2002.11.4.61.

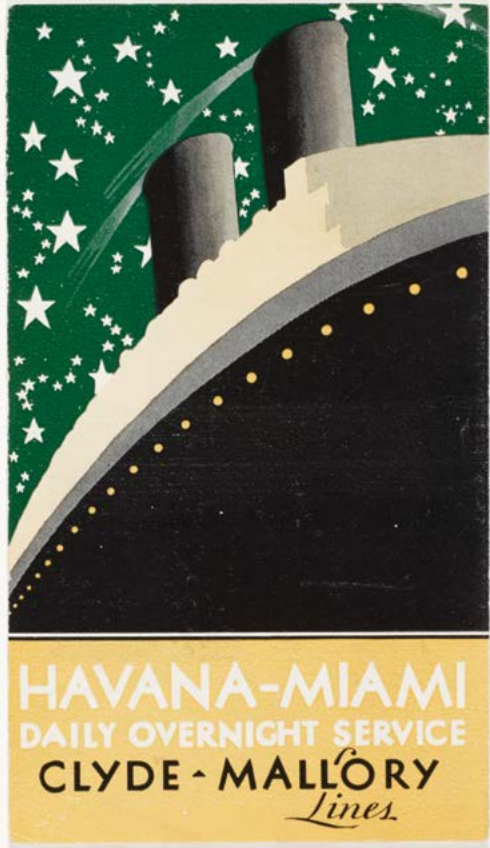
PROMISING PARADISE: CUBAN ALLURE, AMERICAN SEDUCTION AT THE WOLFSONIAN-FIU

In the decades prior to the U.S. embargo against Cuba, Americans converged on the island nation in search of sunny beaches, tropical cocktails, glamorous nightlife, and games of chance. The cultural exchange between the two countries as expressed through the graphic design and photography of the early to mid-twentieth century is the focus of the exhibition *Promising Paradise: Cuban Allure, American Seduction*, on view through August 21 at The Wolfsonian-Florida International University in Miami Beach. *Promising Paradise* celebrates the gift from collector, author, and ADSNY member Vicki Gold Levi of more than 1,000 objects ranging from photographs to cigar labels, posters, menus, and magazine and sheet music covers. A number of these works are on public display for the first time in the United States.

Before the Cuban Revolution and the restrictions on travel by U.S. citizens to Cuba, Americans were lured to the island

by tourism campaigns that emphasized the glamor and exoticism offered by their neighbor to the south. The bold graphics, lush imagery, and dazzling, enticing color palettes of travel brochures, posters, and promotional films shaped Americans' vision of Cuba, creating a fantasy, an image of an island paradise that offered an escape from Prohibition, the economic hardships of the Great Depression, and the rationing imposed by World War II. Their exposure to the island, its people, and its culture started a craze for all things Latin. The rumba and mambo invaded the dance floors of American supper clubs—Levi herself recalls mamboing her way through high school to the music of bandleader and “Mambo King” Pérez Prado. American jazz musicians adopted an Afro-Cuban beat. Cuba became the setting for Hollywood films of the time, such as *Rumba*, starring George Raft and Carol Lombard, and *Holiday in Havana* with Mary Hatcher and a pre-*I Love Lucy* Desi Arnaz.

Among the objects in the exhibition dating to the 1920s, 30s, and 40s is a 1931 photograph of an American tourist sipping a cocktail at the newly unveiled Bacardi Quest Bar in Havana. Another image from 1945 captures several of Cuba's most famous musicians of the 1940s, including rumbero Silvestre Méndez, singer Miguelito Valdés (known as Mr. Babalú), and Chano Pozo, one of the creators of Afro-Cuban jazz. A Cuban couple sways to the strains of *Siboney*, "a quaint and original melody all Havana dances to," on a sheet music cover for the 1929 song, a Cuban-American collaboration between Cuban composer Ernesto Lecuona and American lyricist Dolly Morse. José Manuel Acosta's vibrant illustration for



Advertisement, Havana-Miami: Daily Overnight Service, 1929, Clyde-Mallory Lines, publisher. The Wolfsonian-FIU, Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XB1991.523.

a 1929 *Social* magazine cover epitomizes Cuba's Art Deco aesthetic. Objects from the 1950s include photographs of Marlon Brando playing the bongos in Havana, gangster Meyer Lansky and his staff at the Hotel Habana Riviera, and an original performance dress worn by famed Cuban singer Celia Cruz.

While the exhibition occupies the Wolfsonian's seventh-floor gallery, the museum's historic lobby is hosting a summer-long celebration of Cuban music and dance. Visitors can master the rumba, mambo, and cha-cha-cha by following the Arthur Murray footprint diagrams outlined on the floor.

Many of the works featured in *Promising Paradise* are reproduced in the companion publication *Cuba Style: Graphics from the Golden Age of Design*, co-authored by Levi with distinguished art director and Wolfsonian advisory board member Steven Heller. First published in 2002, the book has been reprinted for the exhibition.



Photograph, Bacardi Quest Bar, 1931, gelatin silver print. The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Vicki Gold Levi Collection, XC2016.01.1.65.



Magazine cover illustration, *Social*, February 1929, José Manuel Acosta (Cuban, 1895–1973). The Wolfsonian-FIU, The Vicki Gold Levi Collection, XC2002.11.4.313.4.

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SILVER TO STEEL: THE MODERN DESIGNS OF PETER MULLER-MUNK

Rachel Delphia and Jewel Stern
with Catherine Walworth
(Carnegie Museum of Art and DeMonico
Books/Prestel, 2015)

From customized, hand-wrought silver candelabras and tea services to mass-produced steel appliances and office furniture, Peter Muller-Munk (1904-1967) brought good design into everyday life. *Silver to Steel: The Modern Designs of Peter Muller-Munk* focuses on this influential but often overlooked designer whose forty-year career began in the Art Deco era and extended into the 1960s. It was published in conjunction with an exhibition held at Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh this past winter.

The story opens in Berlin where the young Muller-Munk apprenticed with a German sculptor and silversmith. In 1926, at age 22, he sailed for New York and within two weeks was working in the silversmithing and repair department of the New Jersey factory of Tiffany & Co. But the position offered little opportunity for creative expression, and Muller-Munk soon left to open his own metalworking studio in Greenwich Village.

As art historian and curator Jewel Stern writes in an essay on Muller-Munk's New York years, "Peter's success in the luxury market was meteoric." His handcrafted bowls, candy boxes, dresser sets, and coffee and tea services with their

simplified, elegant forms and stylized decoration appeared in exhibitions in museums, galleries, and department stores, and in magazines such as *Town and Country* and *Arts and Decoration*. Orders poured in.

Muller-Munk also took on industrial commissions, including a hollowware line known as Silvermode for the Poole Silver Company of Taunton, Massachusetts. But his best-known work of this time was the 1935 chromium-plated brass tear-drop-shaped *Normandie* water pitcher, an icon of Streamline design, for Revere Copper and Brass, Incorporated. Its name was inspired by its resemblance



Normandie pitcher for Revere Copper and Brass, 1935. Carnegie Museum of Art, Decorative Arts Purchase Fund.

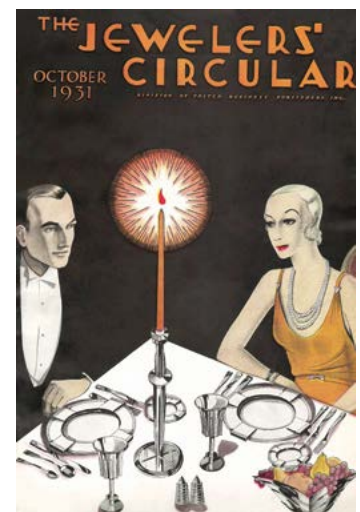
to the smokestacks of the French luxury liner.

In 1935, Muller-Munk's career took a new turn when he joined the faculty of the newly formed industrial design department at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now Carnegie Mellon). With the permission of the university, he also continued his own professional practice. Rachel Delphia, the Alan G. and June A. Lehman Curator of Decorative Arts and Design at Carnegie Museum of Art, addresses Muller-Munk's designs from this period, which include such diverse products as clocks, vending machines, and the skyscraper-in-

spired Waring Blendor. In 1945, he resigned from Carnegie Tech to devote his full attention to Peter Muller-Munk Associates (PMMA).

During the next 20 years, the firm moved from industrial and consumer product design—power tools, gasoline pumps, electric shavers, kitchen appliances, even hearing aids—to other client services, such as long-range planning, corporate identity, and market research, analysis, and development. PMMA participated in government-sponsored programs that provided design assistance to developing nations, designed American exhibitions for international trade fairs, envisioned uncharted uses for glass and steel, and collaborated with the United States Steel Corporation on the realization of the Unisphere for the 1964-65 New York World's Fair. After the sudden loss of its talented and charismatic leader in 1967, the firm concentrated on designs for transportation systems and the urban environment and wayfinding graphics until it merged in 1974 with Wilbur-Smith Associates, an engineering consultancy based in South Carolina.

The culmination of nearly two decades of research, *Silver to Steel* is the first retrospective in-depth examination of the life and career of one of the preeminent designers of his generation. It is also an important contribution to the history of American industrial design.



Nina Novinska, cover, *The Jewelers' Circular* (October 1931), featuring silver designs by Peter Muller-Munk. Image courtesy of the Meriden Historical Society.



HAVANA ART DECO ARCHITECTURAL GUIDE

María Elena Martín Zequeira (*Copperbridge Foundation, 2015*)

With the easing of restrictions on travel by Americans to Cuba, and the prospect of regularly scheduled flights on the horizon, publication of this guide could not be timelier. Its planning, however, began long before the recent thaw in relations between the U.S. and Cuba. Havana architect, historian, and author María Elena Martín Zequeira has been assembling information on the 200 sites described in its more than 400 pages for the past ten years.

The 2013 World Congress on Art Deco in Havana introduced many Deco fans to the Cuban capital's impressive assemblage of architecture and interior design. This guide continues that journey, exploring examples in ten of Havana's municipalities, beginning in the narrow streets of the old city, La Habana Vieja, and continuing as far as Playa to the east and Boyeros and Arroyo Naranjo to the south. Maps of each section identify the location of the sites described.

Art Deco took hold in Cuba in the late 1920s when the island, under the leadership of President Gerardo Machado, was moving toward modernization. Havana architects

were quick to adopt this new approach to design, which they read about in the architectural press and saw firsthand during travels abroad. Its influence can be seen in all types of buildings—commercial, residential, industrial, and recreational—as well as in urban spaces and funerary monuments. Expressions range from the polychromatic façade and ziggurat cap of the iconic Bacardí Building to the simple geometric lines and Art Deco graphics of the Sarrá Perfume Store.



More than 700 color photographs in the guide illustrate these variations. The images include a number of interior views and a captivating exploration of ornamental details, some elegant, some whimsical, that all embody the Art Deco aesthetic.

The buildings and monuments documented in this guide attest to Havana's rich Art Deco heritage. Unfortunately, as the author points out, not all of the city's significant examples of Art Deco survive today and many others are in serious disrepair. It is her hope that increased awareness and appreciation of the Cuban architecture of this era will contribute to its protection and restoration.

(Top) The colorful façade of the Sarrá Perfume Store in Old Havana.

(Bottom) Bacardí Building, the former headquarters of the Bacardí Rum Company.

JAZZ AGE ORDER: THE NEXT GENERATION OF DECO ENTHUSIASTS

BY MEGHAN WEATHERBY

Let's face it, a group of people in their twenties and thirties is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the phrase "Deco enthusiasts." But don't forget that Art Deco is more than a sophisticated design style



or an exclusive visual vernacular. It represents an epoch, an all-encompassing way of life.

For many, Art Deco is synonymous with the Jazz Age. Art Deco was the Roaring 20s and tumultuous 30s; it was flappers and bootleggers; it was vivacious, free-spirited, and exciting; it was banana skirts, big bands, and the Charleston. It was new technology and cutting-edge design. Art Deco was young. So it's no wonder that many young people are discovering and becoming curious and passionate about everything the 1920s and 30s had to offer.

When people learn I'm ardently interested, maybe borderline infatuated, with all things Deco, most are bemused that someone my age could find such fascination in something so seemingly detached from contemporary life. It



began in graduate school when I stumbled upon a book with beautiful images of the *S.S. Normandie* and became instantly hooked on Art Deco. As many Art Deco Society of New York (ADSNY) members can attest, once you catch the Deco bug, it's hard, if not impossible, to shake. And I am far from the only young person interested in this important cultural movement. Whether trying to learn more about their own apartment building's ornamentation, discovering the dynamic 1939-40 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, becoming enamored with Deco fashion and jewelry, or delving into the cultural history of the Jazz Age, many young people have similar defining moments that sparked their interest in the period.

Through the creation of the Jazz Age Order in 2013, ADSNY has given young people a chance to meet like-minded individuals through special lectures, tours, and cultural events. The Jazz Age Order is a unique membership category of Art Deco enthusiasts in their twenties



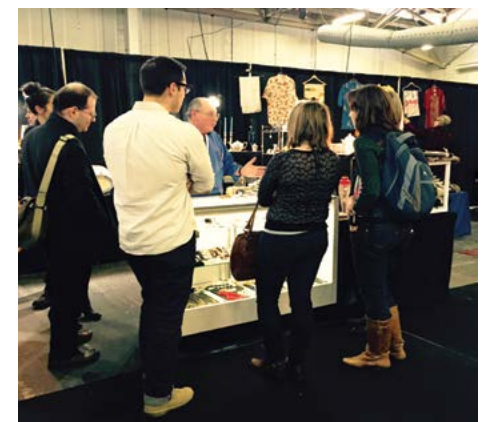
and early thirties, ranging from professionals, such as architects, designers, preservationists, gallery directors, and historians, to collectors, and, of course, those who just love Deco.

In keeping with ADSNY's mission, Jazz Age Order members celebrate New York's leading role in the unique aesthetic of the 1920s and 30s as expressed in fine and decorative arts, fashion, entertainment, and the city's iconic architectural masterpieces. In the past, members have participated in exclusive architectural tours, visited the homes of collectors, and donned their Deco finery for speakeasy soirées. Many Jazz Age Order members are also beginning to form their own rapidly expanding collections of Art Deco decorative arts and design as well as Jazz Age ephemera.



But the Jazz Age Order is not only about reveling in the glamor of the period; many members play a vital role in furthering community understanding and promoting preservation of buildings from the era. For example, Jazz Age Order members are currently working to expand the web-based New York Art Deco Registry and Map to include neighborhoods that are underrepresented.

Engaging young people through the Jazz Age Order helps to cultivate their interest in Art Deco and introduce them to its varied aspects. Most importantly, by creating a forum for its members to come together, the Jazz Age Order helps to familiarize the next generation of individuals who will protect, celebrate, and honor New York's rich Art Deco heritage.



Meghan Weatherby is the Director of Operations of the Art Deco Society of New York. She holds a Masters degree in Decorative Arts and Design with a dual focus on the transatlantic relationship of Art Deco between Paris and New York as well as 20th Century material culture.

BECOME AN ADSNY MEMBER TODAY!

As a member of the Art Deco Society of New York, you are a vital part of the celebration and preservation of New York's rich Art Deco heritage. Your membership helps sustain ADSNY's important initiatives while you enjoy the many perks of membership.

To become a member you can register at ArtDeco.org or you can send this application and your membership check to the Art Deco Society of New York, P.O.Box 6205, New York, NY 10150 or call us for assistance 212.679.DECO.

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