

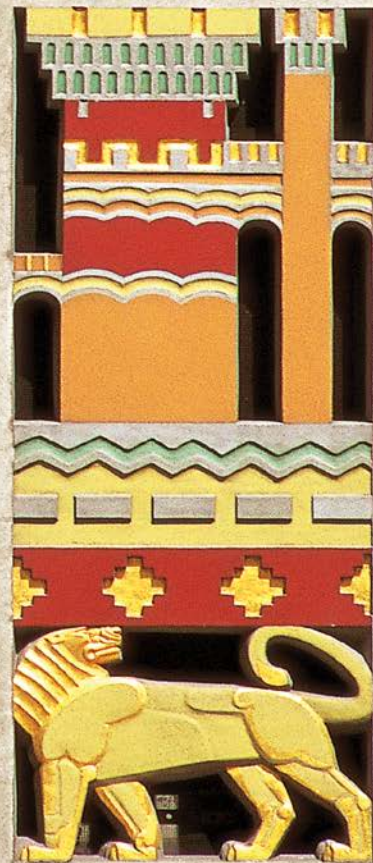
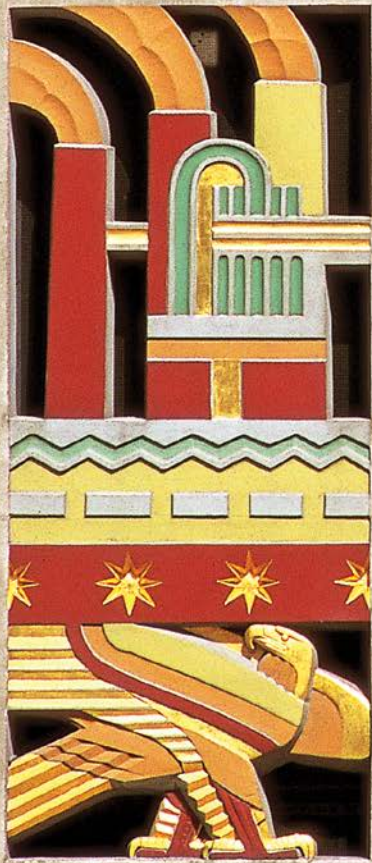


ART DECO

NEW YORK

Volume 3, Issue 2

Winter 2018



JOURNAL OF THE ART DECO SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

Travel Issue



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Deco Friends,

I am delighted to share the fifth issue of ADSNY's *Art Deco New York* journal with you. We launched the journal in the spring of 2016 as another example of our "why don't we just . . ." approach. That same approach has led to many of our recent achievements, including the newest—ADSNY's travel program, offering our members unrivaled curated explorations of interwar architecture and design in major global destinations. Last spring we had a special opportunity to explore Modernism in Israel and this fall we walked the streets of Chicago, accompanied in both cities by leading local architectural historians and design experts.

While celebrating and preserving New York Art Deco will always be at the heart of ADSNY's mission, we believe that in-depth exploration of the design treasures of other cities encourages the exchange of ideas and enriches our understanding and appreciation of the global connections of architecture and design in the interwar period. In that spirit, we have produced this special travel issue of *Art Deco New York* to highlight Art Deco's international reach.

We hope you will enjoy journeying with us through these pages to Mumbai's Art Deco district, Marine Drive, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site earlier this year. Drop in on our neighbors to the north and south as we explore the decorative language of Canadian Art Deco architecture and enjoy Cuba's tropical take on the style. In the United States, we learn about Timothy Pflueger, San Francisco's foremost Deco architect, and stop by Fair Park in Dallas to visit the restored fairgrounds of the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition.

We begin our globetrotting with iconic travel posters from the interwar years that encouraged a growing tourism industry. Our grand tour includes two stops here in New York: the Marine Air Terminal in Queens—site of the country's first transatlantic passenger air service—and Midtown's Rockefeller Center—John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s monument to international understanding.

We hope you enjoy this whirlwind tour of Art Deco around the world with master tour guide and ADSNY Vice President, Anthony W. Robins. This issue would not have been possible without his tireless dedication and imagination as editor. Many thanks to copy editors Harriet Abramson, Alma Kadragic, Peter Singer and Sandra Tansky, who devoted hours to making this issue a reality, and to our Executive Director, Meghan Weatherby, for its lovely design.

All our good wishes to you and your loved ones for a joyous holiday season and happiness throughout the New Year!


Roberta Nusim, President

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WHAT IS ART DECO?

BY DAVID GARRARD LOWE

One of the supreme visual delights of walking around New York today is the vibrant presence of the Art Deco skyscrapers: the Empire State Building, with its dirigible mooring mast; the soaring Number One Wall Street, whose limestone walls shoot up like lithic fire-works; and the Waldorf-Astoria, whose twin towers received their inspiration from Inca temples. Delight is the operable word here. For Art Deco does delight. It is, at heart, a life-enhancing urbanity. Art Deco, like Paris, the city it sprang from, cheers one. It is, indeed, not unlike a chilled coupe of Champagne sipped in a Parisian café.

The structure that epitomizes most perfectly, to me, what Art Deco means is the Chrysler Building. William Van Alen's slender skyscraper has all of the accoutrements of the Art Deco era.

The building embodies the style's fascination with speed and movement, two signatures of the modern era. It is no accident that it is a tangible advertisement for the man who paid for it, Walter Chrysler. It is significant that the 31st floor setback is embellished with facsimiles of hood ornaments and radiator caps of the 1929 Chrysler. These Moderne gargoyles drive away all memories of past transportation—horses and buggies and chariots. The décor of the upper level suggests the spokes of automobile tires. Now, better lit than ever before, they appear to whirl in the night sky. The Nirosta steel needle pierces the clouds.

One of the glories of Art Deco is its enthusiastic embrace of beauty. This is, no doubt, due to its birthplace—France. To stand in front of one of Paris's earliest Art Deco masterpieces, Auguste Perret's 1913 Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, illustrates this perfectly. The severely geometric structure is enlivened with appropriately modern dancers by the splendid sculptor Antoine Bourdelle.

The Chrysler Building's lobby is a dazzling exemplification of the style's unabashed romance with beauty. One enters through a colossal portal set in gleaming black granite, held aside like a parting stage curtain. In the lobby, the ceiling is a wonderful canopy with, at its center, a perspective view of the building itself. The doors of its elevators not only exemplify the style's obsession with beauty, but also its quest to search

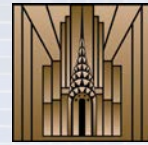
the world for new inspiration. Here is the recent discovery of the tomb of Tut-ankhamen; the doors bear the image of the fans painted on a sumptuous box found in his tomb in 1922. Even the little stairway at the corner of the lobby, which leads to the second floor, exemplifies in the swirl of its metallic railing the charm of Art Deco design.

The incorporation of the image of speed into Art Deco design is a natural consequence of the proliferation of new modes of transportation—dirigibles, airplanes, sleek ocean liners, and high-speed trains. On the broad Hudson River, across town from the Chrysler Building, in the 1930s, rode the greatest ocean liner ever built. The SS *Normandie* flaunted to the world the glories of French style. Here in this thousand-foot long ship was a treasure chest of the supreme designers of the time. Here were rooms and furnishings by the likes of Émile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Jules Leleu, Jean Dupas, Jean Dunand, Louis Suë et André Mar, and Christofle, creating the perfect *mise en scène* for ladies dressed by Coco Chanel, Elsa Schiaparelli, and Madeline Vionnet.

And within the Beaux Arts glories of Grand Central Terminal, just across Lexington Avenue from the Chrysler Building, was found the *ne plus ultra* of Art Deco transportation at its birth, the 1938 *20th Century Limited*. Every afternoon this masterpiece designed by Henry Dreyfus rolled out of the terminal, its striking neon-lit dining room filled with exquisitely dressed passengers quaffing that most Deco of cocktails, that alluring mixture of gin and vermouth, the martini, while outside the American landscape unfolded in a living panorama. The very words, "We are going to Chicago and on to the coast," carried the glamour of the time.

How blessed Gotham is to have these steel and glass exemplars of the dazzling Art Deco decades. Entering their breathtaking lobbies, especially the Chrysler Building's, one can almost hear FDR's distinctive voice, see Ruby Keeler tapping her way along 42nd Street, or note the resonant whistle of the RMS *Queen Mary* as tugs guide her out to sea.

David Garrard Lowe is a well-known lecturer, cultural historian, and author of *Art Deco New York*.



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Front Cover: Lee Lawrie's carved limestone screen of 1935, at the 29 West 50th Street entrance to the International Building in Rockefeller Center, illustrates both ancient and modern international relations. The screen represents, in Lawrie's words, "the deep forces, eternal forces that tend to draw all men, men of all races, together." It includes illustrations of art, science and commerce; the northern and southern hemispheres symbolized by the Big Dipper and the Southern Cross; and various habitats of mankind around the globe. Photo: Richard Berenholtz

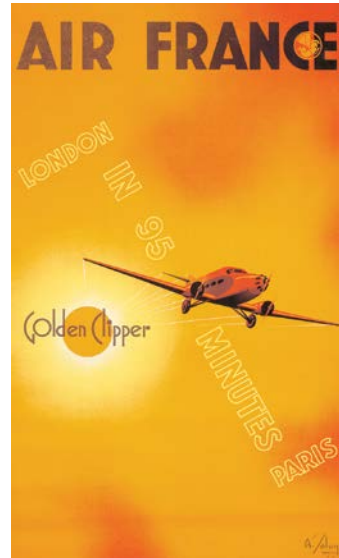
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A NEW WAY OF SEEING: HISTORY OF DECO TRAVEL POSTERS

BY JACK RENNERT & DAVID A. SCHNEIDER



**“ONE’S DESTINATION IS NEVER A PLACE,
BUT A NEW WAY OF SEEING THINGS.”**

- Henry Miller, as he vagabonded his way through Greece in the 1930s

The entire Modernist project was about seeing old things in new ways. “Make it new!” cried Ezra Pound. Amadeo Modigliani, Constantin Brancusi, and Henry Moore seized upon the idea, taking ancient Cycladic art forms from the Aegean, and stripping away the ornamentation of the nineteenth century to create an aesthetic for the twentieth.

Travel for pleasure had once meant the Grand Tour: a ramble through the historic sites of Europe for the edification of aristocratic young men. (Consider it a gap year that lasted three and a half years.) As medical practice evolved in the late nineteenth century, doctors recommended travel as a necessary part of physical rehabilitation—“taking the waters” at the spa to treat rheumatism or tuberculosis. But the early twentieth century saw the reinvention of travel and touring.

THE NEED FOR SPEED

What changed? For starters, just as in our own time, everything suddenly got *faster*. The latter half of the nineteenth century had experienced the introduction of the bicycle—which transformed personal mobility—followed before long by the internal combustion engine, the automobile, and the motorcycle. Steamship companies began competing for the fastest transatlantic crossing. Eventually travelers took to the skies. For most people, however, the great signifier of speed was the railroad. Between the 1910s and the mid-1920s, the top speed of rail travel *doubled*—to 100 miles per hour.

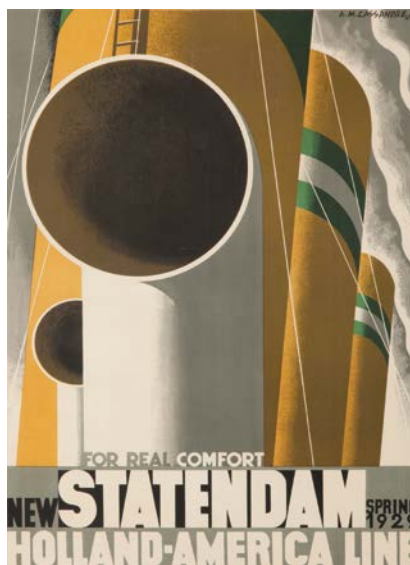
As railroads began to conquer the Alpine passes, mountaineering societies swelled. Cable cars, pioneered during World War I for the Italian Alps campaign, became symbols of the avant-garde. In a remarkable convergence, during the 1920s and '30s, cars, trains, airplanes, zeppelins, and ocean liners all competed for a growing and changing market. Obligated to sell their services, they turned to posters suggestive of speed and experience.

In October 1928, the zeppelin offered the world's first commercial transatlantic flight—from Friedrichshafen, Germany to Lakehurst, New Jersey. In 1932, the Graf Zeppelin began five years of shuttling travelers between Berlin and Buenos Aires, the “Paris of the South,” in a three-day route that radically accelerated the standard airship itinerary, while retaining ocean liner standards of luxury. A poster for the Graf Zeppelin by Ottomar Anton (German, 1895-1976) embodied the zeppelin's futuristic luxury.

In 1933, Albert Solon (French, 1897-1973) designed the first, and now rarest, advertisement for Air France, created that year by a merger of several French airlines. Air France offered travelers an astonishingly quick 95-minute ride from Paris to London. In 1938, having shaved 20 minutes off that flight time, the airline issued an exceptionally clever poster by Roger de Valerio (French, 1896-1938), suggestive of the speed of change.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Some of the most dramatic images of the era began to envision travel, for the first time, as a multimodal network. In 1936, Roland Hugon (French, born 1911) used a photomontage of railroad tracks, combined with the flat colors and precise geometries of peak Art Deco aesthetics, to promote a brilliant one-ticket deal: a straight shot from the rails to the wings to the sky—“You leave one, you board the other”—in an idea of seamless travel that even today seems hyper-modern.



Likewise, the exhilaration is palpable in *Danemark*, an anonymous 1935 work for the Danish Railway, which depicts a train and ship fusing into one apparatus dedicated to collapsing spacetime. The poster emphasizes the emergence of a mechanical age. During the last gasps of the pre-industrial period, in the Romantic age of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, explorers experienced the sublime in the beauty and terror of nature. By contrast, the Art Deco travel poster found the sublime in the enormous constructs of human manufacture. Enormously tall skyscrapers, impossibly large steamships, or unstoppable locomotives—all became objects of awe and veneration, symbols of power and elegance with which one could adorn oneself, like fashionable clothing, and use them, wield them, to conquer the heights and traverse the great spaces of the world.

With so many choices and modes of travel, women—who had tasted their first real freedom of movement with the bicycle in the 1890s—became targets for travel advertising for the first time. The Chicago-based Pullman Company commissioned from William P. Welsh (American, 1889-1984) a high-Deco series of posters, 1935-36, which focused on women's independent travel to "winter playgrounds." Welsh also painted the murals for the Chicago Room in that city's famed Palmer House Hotel.

CASSANDRE

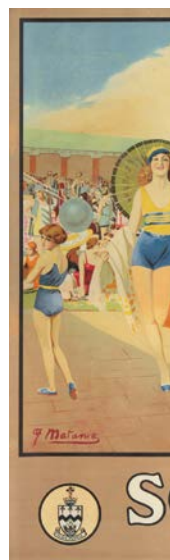
No one better expressed the power, awe, and mystery of this new transportation age than Adolphe Jean-Marie Mouron (1901-1968), a Ukrainian émigré to Paris who took the *nom de plume* of A. M. Cassandre and is now regarded as one of the five greatest poster artists in history. His poster for the SS *Normandie*, justly celebrated at the time of its printing, has become the premier icon of the entire Art Deco period.

Among the many other Cassandre Art Deco travel posters, one in particular deserves mention: his 1928 work for the SS *Statendam*, announcing service between Holland and America. Perhaps the most outrageously counterintuitive of Cassandre's major posters, it doesn't make much sense at first. It's arresting, of course, as Cassandre's own rules for advertising state: "You cannot stop people in the street and explain the advantages of this or that product. You must catch them by surprise and buttonhole them without their even *realizing* it." But the poster doesn't even appear to illustrate the tagline "for real comfort." Cassandre faced a specific problem: the *Statendam* was magnificently appointed—but in seventeenth-century Dutch and Louis XVI style, with Gobelins tapestries and Dutch Old Master oil paintings. How could a poster faithfully sell newness and real comfort given accommodations more suitable for the *ancien régime*?

Since the Holland-America line connected the Old World to the New, Cassandre sought inspiration in American Modernism. By luck, he found the perfect model: *Boatdeck*, a painting by American expatriate Gerald Murphy.

Young, wealthy, and fashionable, Murphy and his wife Sara epitomized the artistic and literary expatriate avant-garde of the Jazz Age. Sara, a great beauty, was a muse to both F. Scott Fitzgerald and Pablo Picasso, while Murphy was taken under the wing of Sergei Diaghilev, Jean Cocteau, and especially Fernand Léger, who became Murphy's mentor. The couple later inspired the characters Dick and Nicole Diver in Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night*.

In 1924, *Boatdeck* became the star of the Salon des Indépendants in Paris's Grand Palais. A 13-foot-tall Modernist masterpiece, it eschewed any image

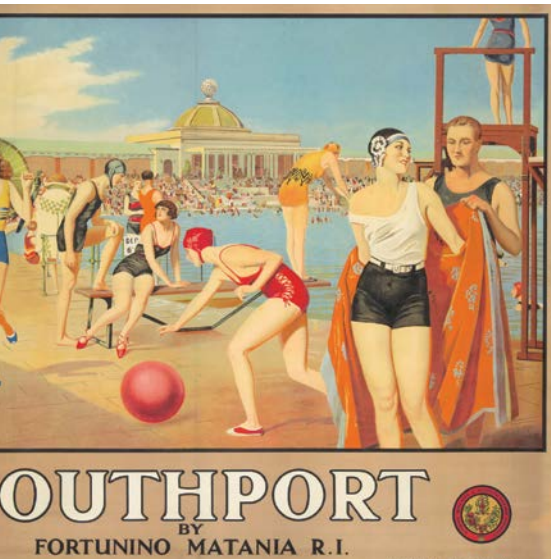


of prow, profile, or shuffleboard-playing patrons, focusing instead on a stark and potent view of smokestacks and ventilators that Murphy created from over 60 photos he took on multiple cruises. Many art critics have noticed the similarity between Cassandre's and Murphy's work. Cassandre, though, appropriated these aesthetic choices for a purpose. The *Statendam* boasted extraordinary ventilation systems: twenty-four thousand feet of piping carried fresh air escorted down ventilators by 76 large electric fans. The *real* comfort, Cassandre's poster says in an instant, is from this *machine*, shown as shockingly new through Modernist aesthetics.

Murphy's *Boatdeck* survives only in a black and white photo from the 1924 Salon, and in Cassandre's interpretation of the painting for the *Statendam*.

SEA, SAND, SUN

Trying to capitalize on the new cachet of the post-war Riviera, destination for the Lost Generation's smart set, towns on the French coast began to compete for well-heeled visitors, leading to what



atorium. His advocacy of sunbathing sparked a movement that truly began burning brightly when, in 1923, Coco Chanel stepped out with a tan. The age of the beach vacation had begun.

Probably the most stylized Deco example of beach worship from the entire period is the 1929 *La Plage de Monte Carlo* by Michel Bouchaud (French, 1902-1965). Like so many other commercial artists of the period, Bouchaud served in World War I. Unlike so many others, however, he demobilized in Algeria, where the crispness of the Mediterranean light inspired artistic epiphanies. The Monte Carlo poster is one of only a handful he designed; he normally worked on far smaller scales such as labels for jewelers and chocolatiers.

tion poster is Roger Broders (French, 1883-1953), who, more than anyone else, balanced the flat color panels and composed geometries of typical Art Deco styling with spots of detail, creating an intense, almost hyperreal effect.

Broders had several periods over a stunningly short ten-year-long career working as a poster artist, 1922 to 1932. His earliest work, from 1922 through 1924, is largely landscape impressionism in a Modernist frame. But by 1927, he reached the graphic avant-garde with works such as *Le Tour du Mont Blanc*, which seizes the cutout geometries of Soviet Constructivism. His 1928 *Vichy ses Sources* sources its own energy from Italian Futurism. Broders is at his best, however, with *L'Été sur la Côte d'Azur*, which fluidly communicates a continuity of artistic styles. In this work, Broders reached the apex of his style: the graceful organic forms of trees with the ideal geometries and primary colors of the coast—as if to say, “travel itself is an art, if done well: seeing things in a new way.”

many consider the greatest Art Deco travel poster of the 1920s: *Trouville*.

This 1927 work by the virtually unknown Maurice Lauro (French, born 1878) perfectly epitomizes the fusion of travel and fashion. Trouville had been France's first resort town, a favorite destination of Claude Monet, Gustave Flaubert, and Marcel Proust—but had become overshadowed by Deauville, a preferred haunt of Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald. Lauro's poster pays homage not to the fashionable celebrities but rather to the growing cult of sunbathing. At the dawn of the twentieth century, John Harvey Kellogg, the inventor of cornflakes, had strongly promoted the health benefits of exposure to sun and water in his san-

As Fred Gray suggests in *Modernism on Sea: Art and Culture at the British Seaside* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), the beach-and-poolside scene was marketed—and in essence, became—a stage for those who would have previously been in the audience. Nothing better displays that trend than *Southport* by Fortunino Matania (Italian, 1881-1963). In this poster, Matania fuses classical forms with Renaissance ensemble figure arrangements to present a classic piece of Art Deco, one in which each individual figure and interaction is meaningful and emotive.

For escapes to the Mediterranean seaside or to the mountains, however, the unrivaled master of the Deco destina-

Jack Rennert, recognized as the foremost authority on poster art, has lectured and published widely on the subject, organized poster exhibitions, and in 1984 founded Poster Auctions International (PAI). He owns and operates Rennert's Gallery, specializing in posters, at 26 West 17th Street in New York City. David A. Schneider is the Editorial Director for Rennert's Gallery/PAI, where he researches and writes PAI's auction catalogues.

All photos: Posters Please, Inc., New York City

Page 3, Left to Right: Graf Zeppelin, Hamburg-Amerika Linie, c. 1932, Ottomar Anton, Printer: Erasmusdruck, Berlin; Air France/Golden Clipper, 1933, Albert Solon, Printer: France-Affiches, Paris; Air France, Paris London, 1938, Roger de Valerio, Printer: Perceval, Paris; Air Fer, 1936, Roland Hugon (1911-?), Printer: Editions Paul-Martial, Paris.
 Page 4 and 5, Top Row From Left to Right: Denmark, c. 1935, artist unknown, Printer: S.L. Mollers, Bogtrykkeri; Pullman/Speed to Winter Playgrounds, 1935, William P. Welsh (1889-1984), Printer: Charles Daniel Frey, Chicago; Statendam, 1928, A. M. Cassandre (1901-1968), Printer: Nijgh E Van Ditmar, Rotterdam; Trouville, 1927, Maurice Lauro (1878-?), Printer: Imp. Devambeze, Paris; La Plage de Calvi. Corse, 1928, Roger Broders (1883-1953), Printer: Imp. Lucien Serre, Paris; Le Tour du Mt. Blanc, 1927, Roger Broders (1883-1953), Printer: Imp. Lucien Serre, Paris; Vichy/Ses Sources, 1928, Roger Broders (1883-1953), Printer: Imp. Lucien Serre, Paris; Été sur la Côte d'Azur, 1930, Roger Broders (1883-1953), Printer: Imp. de Vaugirard, Paris.
 Page 4 and 5, Bottom Row From Left to Right: La Plage de Monte Carlo, 1929, Michel Bouchaud (1902-1965), Printer: Publicity Vox; Southport, c. 1928, Fortunino Matania (1881-1963), Printer: London Lithographic co., London.

DESTINATION DECO: THE WINDY CITY

The Chicago Art Deco Society (CADS) hosted members of the Art Deco Society of New York for a fall weekend to explore the Windy City. The trip coincided with the recently opened Chicago Historical Society exhibition, *Modern by Design: Chicago Streamlines America*, which runs through December 2, 2019 (see page 8). Our curator-led tour gave us a wonderful overview as an introduction to our visit.

After a private lunch at the Historical Society, we took a guided walking tour of Art Deco gems in the Loop (Chicago's downtown), including the Chicago Motor Club (Holabird & Root, 1928). This slender, elegant tower, one of the city's earliest Art Deco buildings, originally housed the club's headquarters and touring department.

The Motor Club is one of the smaller of Holabird & Root's Art Deco buildings at just 48 feet wide and 15 stories (260 feet) tall. But its graceful proportions and exquisite Art Deco ornamentation more than compensate for its diminutive dimensions. Geometric motifs and stylized flowers, plants and birds accent the limestone-clad façade with its gently projecting bay that rises from just above the entrance to the parapet. Also above the entrance sits a cast-iron relief of a frozen fountain, which is strikingly reminiscent of designs by Edgar Brandt and René Lalique that were shown at the 1925 Paris Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes, from which Art Deco takes its name. Inside, the beautifully restored three-story lobby sports geometric moldings, a patterned terrazzo floor, and Art Deco chandeliers. There is a large-scale mural by John Warner Norton charting the country's 19 national highways as of 1928, along with the principal cities and national parks.

Used as office space following the Club's departure in the 1980s, then an unsuccessful condominium conversion in the early 2000s, the building stood vacant until reopening in 2015 as Hampton Inn. Its multimillion dollar renovation included the installation of a 1928 Ford Model A on the mezzanine balcony as a reminder of its past. The Inn was the perfect setting for ADSNY's home base during this program.

The Chicago Motor Club sits just across the street from another stunning Deco design, the 37-story former Chicago headquarters of the Union Carbide and Carbon Corporation (Burnham Brothers, 1929). Most of Chicago's Deco skyscrapers are conservatively clad in gray limestone; however, this building rises from a three-story polished black granite base into a tower covered in dark green terra cotta with gold terra cotta accents and a gold leaf-trimmed pinnacle. The façade is said to have been inspired by a green glass champagne bottle with gold foil wrapping, but the design has also drawn comparisons to a Union Carbide dry cell battery. The exquisite geometric bronze grille-work above the entrance includes a double C referencing the company's name. From 2004 to 2017, the building housed Chicago's Hard Rock Hotel, but it recently reopened as the St. Jane, a hotel named for Chicago activist and Hull House founder Jane Addams.

One block to the north, overlooking the Chicago River and the Michigan Avenue Bridge, stands another Holabird & Root tower, No. 333 North Michigan Avenue (1928). Its stepped-back construction recalls Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen's design for the second-prize-winning entry submitted to the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition. The structure's unbroken piers, vertical columns of windows, dark recessed terra cotta spandrels, and lack of a cornice ornamentation combine to accentuate the building's soaring verticality.



The design of No. 333 reflects a 1923 zoning ordinance regulating building height and mass, similar to the one enacted in New York in 1916. Chicago's ordinance divided the city into five so-called volume districts, with the maximum allowable height increasing progressively from the first to the fifth district, in which a building could reach 264 feet. As in New York, the law encouraged setbacks from the lot line for taller towers like No. 333, which rises 426 feet. The scenes from Chicago's early pioneer days depicted in Fred Torrey's low relief sculptures at the top of the base might seem like an odd choice for such a modern structure, but reflect the site's earlier history as Fort Dearborn, an 1803 military outpost.

One of Chicago's best-loved Art Deco buildings is the Chicago Board of Trade, another Holabird & Root design, at the foot of LaSalle Street in the city's financial center. On completion in 1930, the 605-foot structure was the city's tallest. The forty-four-story tower at the rear of the building is deeply recessed behind the nine-story base, and the two twenty-two-story wings on either side are set perpendicular to it, creating a profile frequently described as a high back armchair with the base as the seat, the tower the back, and the wings the arms. Above the red granite base, a broad band of low relief sculpture depicts corn and wheat surrounded by geometric patterns.

The tall narrow windows over the building's entrance originally marked the location of the six-story trading room, later divided to accommodate an options exchange and now outdated by modern technology. The figures flanking the clock above the windows—a bearded farmer holding sheaves of wheat and a Native American with ears of corn—were designed by Alvin Meyer, the

director of Holabird & Root's sculpture department. On the tower's pyramidal roof, John Storrs' cast aluminum sculpture of Ceres, the Roman goddess of grain and the harvest, holds a sheaf of wheat in one hand and a grain sample bag in the other. A 1983 addition to the Board of Trade, topped with an abstract representation of a trading pit, puts a postmodern spin on the setbacks and roof of the original building,

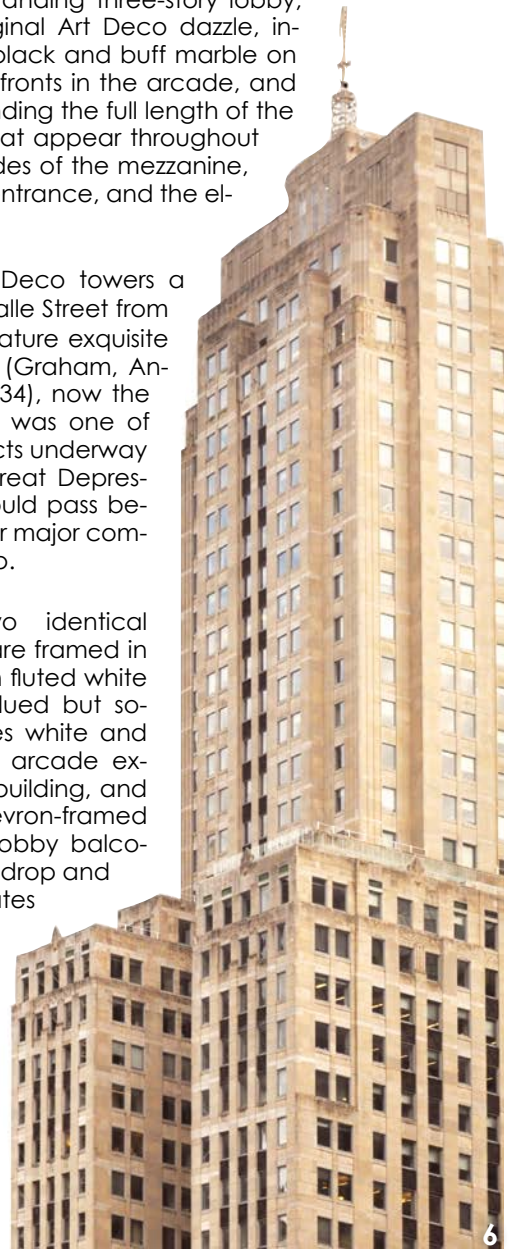
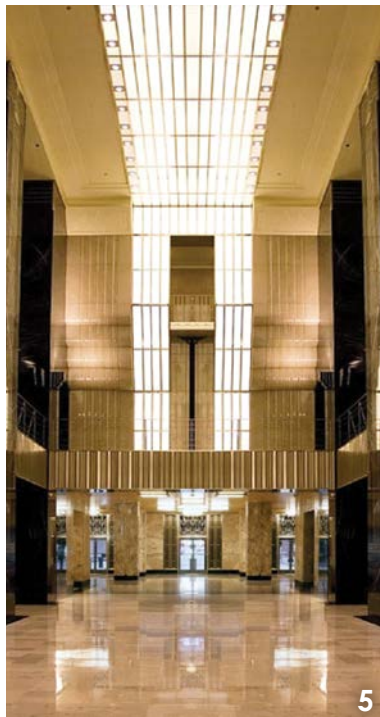
The Board of Trade's outstanding three-story lobby, restored in 2006 to its original Art Deco dazzle, includes waterfall motifs of black and buff marble on the walls, nickel silver storefronts in the arcade, and a large backlit panel extending the full length of the ceiling. References to wheat appear throughout the lobby—in the balustrades of the mezzanine, the grillework framing the entrance, and the elevator doors.

We visited two more Art Deco towers a short distance north of LaSalle Street from the Board of Trade that feature exquisite interiors. The Field Building (Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, 1934), now the Bank of America Building, was one of the few construction projects underway during the years of the Great Depression. A quarter century would pass before the erection of another major commercial building in the Loop.

The Field Building's two identical five-story main entrances are framed in polished black granite with fluted white marble pilasters. The subdued but sophisticated interior includes white and beige marble walls in an arcade extending the length of the building, and mirrored bridges with chevron-framed clocks that connect the lobby balconies. The combination mail drop and elevator indicator replicates the building's profile.

The intricate geometric bronze work framing the entrance to One North LaSalle Street (Vitzthum & Burns, 1930) provides a hint of the glorious lobby beyond the doors—walls sheathed in green-black marble, bronze grilles, and chevron and sunburst motifs on the plaster ceiling. Stylized eagles support frosted glass lamps, and stylized female figures personifying Success and Reputation adorn the bronze elevator doors.

Since any visit to Chicago—famed for its jazz and blues history—should include an evening enjoying its music, our first day ended at Andy's Jazz Club.





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MODERN BY DESIGN: CHICAGO STREAMLINES AMERICA

Modern by Design: Chicago Streamlines America, on view at the Chicago History Museum from October 27, 2018–December 2, 2019, explores Chicago's role in bringing revolutionary modern design to the American marketplace. Focusing on the critical period from the 1930s to the 1950s, the exhibition presents design and aesthetics within the larger social, economic, and cultural context of the time. It explores the impact of the Century of Progress, Chicago's 1933–34 World's Fair, and the ways in which the city's industries, advertising firms, and mail-order companies advanced modern design on the local, regional, and national levels. Innovative designs coupled with the power of Chicago's manufacturing and distribution infrastructure led to the mass production of affordable, state-of-the-art products featuring a new urban-inspired aesthetic that furnished public and private spaces across the United States.

The exhibition includes more than 200 objects, photographs, and documents, many on view for the first time, and features works of celebrated designers including Alfonso Iannelli, Otis Shephard, and Wolfgang Hoffmann. *Modern by Design: Chicago Streamlines America* is curated by Olivia Mahoney, senior curator at the Chicago History Museum.

The following day, we drove out to the Chicago suburb of Oak Park—admiring passing architectural wonders along the way—to explore Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie legacy. We passed Unity Temple, considered Wright's finest public building from his Prairie era; were given a guided tour of Wright's home and studio; and viewed other Wright homes nearby. And we visited Hyde Park, on Chicago's south side, to see Wright's Robie House, a masterpiece of the Prairie style and an icon of modern architecture—its hundred-year-old interiors seem startlingly contemporary today.

One of the weekend's highlights was our visit to the Powhatan apartments (Robert S. DeGolyer and Charles Morgan, 1929), an exuberant, twenty-two-story Art Deco building overlooking Lake Michigan in the Kenwood neighborhood. Two current residents of the building offered an in-depth talk and tour of the building as well as a private reception in one of the Powhatan's stunning apartments.

The Powhatan's design has been compared to Eliel Saarinen's celebrated second-place entry in the Chicago Tribune competition just a few years earlier. Morgan was responsible for such rich decorative details as the design of the elevator cabs and the colorful mosaics that decorate the façade, inner and outer lobby, and swimming pool area. References to both Lake Michigan and Chief Powhatan can be found on the building's striking exterior, which includes 510 terra cotta panels with abstract designs representing Native American motifs including arrowheads and wigwams, as well as the sun, moon, and lightning. The wavy lines at the bottom of each spandrel acknowledge the nearby waters of Lake Michigan. Identical themes extend to the building's exterior light fixtures, its entrance doors, and lobby details. Native American figures appear in the metal grillework at the main entrance; arrows decorate the light fixtures; and sculpted Native American heads support the canopy above the entrance.

The outer and inner lobbies continue the exuberant decorative detail. The fluted pilasters of the oval outer lobby are painted in original metallic shades, and a handsome geometric frieze surrounds the room. Brightly colored mosaics between each set of pilasters depict scenes of exotic locales. The inner lobby is filled with exuberant Art Deco flowers and birds, including the radiator grilles and the elevator cabs. It is this meticulous attention to detail that makes the Powhatan such an extraordinary building.

Morgan's elegantly decorated elevator cabs have been masterfully restored. The aluminum and nickel ornament of geometric flowers that accent the burl wood paneling of the cabs is echoed by similar motifs in the etched glass. The brass elevator doors are

adorned with cranes set amid rushes, a motif echoed in the gilded doors leading to the swimming pool.

The indoor swimming pool and the rooftop ballroom are a few of the amenities that continue to offer today's residents "all the luxuries of an ocean liner," as one Chicago journalist observed in 1929.

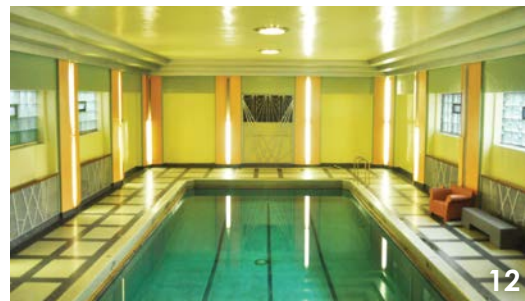
Leaving the Powhatan we stopped to see the 1930 Adler Planetarium, designed by Ernest A. Grunsfeld, Jr. The first public planetarium in the western hemisphere, it is located at the northern tip of Northerly Island, the site of Chicago's Century of Progress world's fair of 1933-34. A broad esplanade leads to the three-tiered, twelve-sided planetarium, which is clad in polished rainbow granite. Bronze relief panels by Alfonso Iannelli depicting the signs of the zodiac top the fluted bands at each corner. The stars on the plaques are positioned to mirror the constellations that they represent.

Our final day in Chicago included an informal talk about the city's history from one of its esteemed tour guides, followed by a private luncheon on Navy Pier overlooking the river. Our weekend festivities ended with a visit to Festival Hall at Navy Pier as V.I.P. guests of the organizers of SOFA—the Sculptural Objects, Functional Art and Design Show—taking place that weekend. One of the nation's most important annual design shows, SOFA features the work of the world's finest designers—from the mid-twentieth century to the present day—in furniture, ceramics, glass, textiles, and fine art. It was a splendid conclusion to our stay in the Windy City!

ADSNY expresses appreciation to Joseph Loundy, President of CADS, and the CADS team for organizing this trip. Many thanks to Kathleen Murphy Skolnik for providing architectural histories of buildings in this article. Skolnik was editor of the Chicago Art Deco Society Magazine and her Spring 2016 issue highlights more than 60 of Chicago's Deco attractions including maps and 150 photos by longtime CADS member Glenn Rogers.

All photos unless noted otherwise: Meghan Weatherby

(1) Stepped tower at the northern end of 333 North Michigan Avenue recalling Eliel Saarinen's second-prize-winning entry in the 1922 Chicago Tribune Tower competition. Photo: Glenn Rogers (2) Group photo of those attending the ADSNY program on the mezzanine balcony overlooking the lobby of the Chicago Motor Club. (3) Entrance to the Carbide and Carbon Building. Photo: Glenn Rogers (4) Stepped back façade of the Chicago Board of Trade. Photo: Glenn Rogers (5) Lobby of the Chicago Board of Trade. (6) Façade of The LaSalle-Wacker Building. (7) Bank of elevators off the lobby of One North LaSalle Street. (8) Playroom in Frank Lloyd Wright's home. (9) Waiting area of Frank Lloyd Wright's studio. (10) Façade of Robie House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. (11) Colorful spandrel mosaics on the façade of the Powhatan. (12) Indoor swimming pool at the Powhatan. (13) Fireplace with colorful details in the inner lobby of the Powhatan. (14) The front door to the Powhatan.



ART DECO CHICAGO: THE EVOLUTION OF THE DEFINITIVE BOOK

From its founding in 1982, the Chicago Art Deco Society (CADS) envisioned a survey of the city's Art Deco buildings. In 2008, the Society hired a part-time employee with a strong background in preservation and architecture to oversee the project. Almost immediately, because Art Deco infused every aspect of Chicago's design, the scope of the survey expanded to include furniture, lighting fixtures, textiles, decorative objects, graphic design, ornamental metal work, and commercial and industrial applications. The survey in turn led to a new project—a book about Chicago's role in the evolution of the Art Deco style.

A diverse group of experts reviewed a list of hundreds of buildings and objects, narrowing it down to the 101 that best illustrate the story of Chicago Art Deco. Yale University Press agreed to publish the book, while the Chicago History Museum—already planning an exhibition on Chicago interwar design—designated *Art Deco Chicago* the exhibition's companion publication. In addition to the 101 entries, *Art Deco Chicago* includes five essays by noted scholars that provide a fresh look at the mainstream modernism that touched every aspect of life in the United States.

SAN FRANCISCO: ARCHITECTURE OF TIMOTHY PFLUEGER

BY THERESE POLETTI

New Yorkers thinking of San Francisco most often imagine Victorian row houses with ornate redwood details. But Deco connoisseurs visiting the city will find some fabulous Art Deco too, with the best examples of the style designed by one architect, Timothy Pflueger.

Though not as well-known as his New York colleagues, in the San Francisco Bay Area Pflueger was the region's Art Deco master, and most of his work is extant and landmarked. A native of the city, born in 1892 to German immigrant parents, Pflueger lived a Horatio Alger-like life. As a young teenager, he found his education disrupted by the devastating 1906 earthquake. But with his artistic talent Pflueger easily found work in a city looking to quickly rebuild. Eventually he became a draftsman, working during the day for San Francisco architect James R. Miller and attending high school at night. He learned his trade in Miller's office and in classes at the San Francisco Architecture Club, one of the many clubs around the country that educated young aspiring architects who could not afford college.

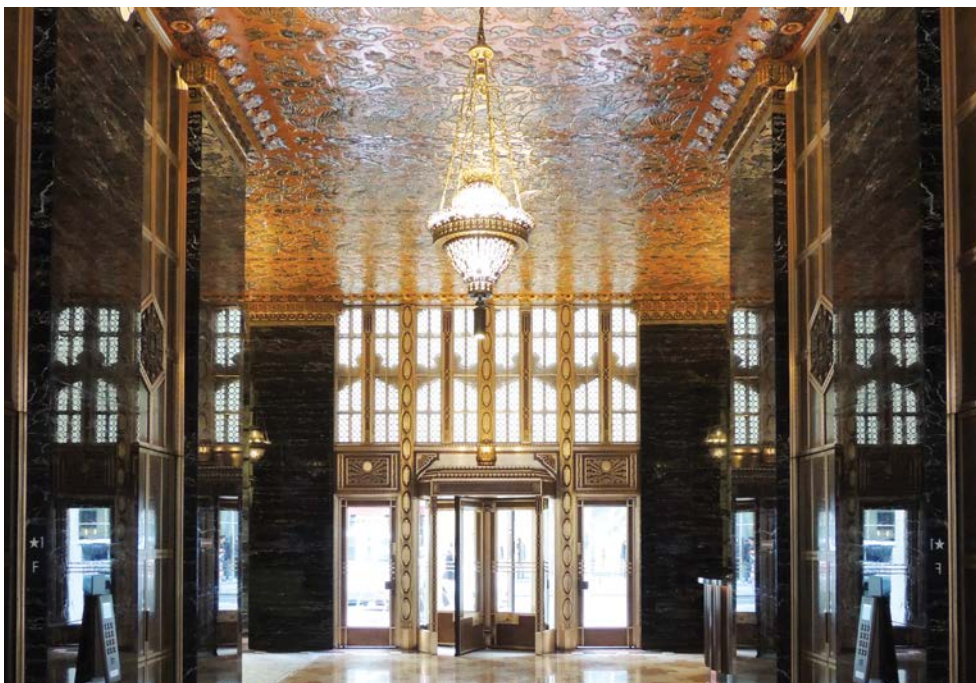
Like many other Deco-era architects,

he turned to popular styles, the traditional Beaux Arts and Spanish Colonial revival, for his first projects. Pflueger's earliest solo building was the Castro Theater (1922), today a landmark of the Castro District. The theater's typical 1920s eclecticism includes Spanish Baroque details on the exterior and a striking auditorium ceiling evocative of the canopy of an outdoor Roman amphitheater. The elegant Castro Theater, which brought first-run movies to the growing Eureka Valley neighborhood, put Pflueger on the map. He was mentioned in local press accounts, which included a photo showing his hair slicked and parted down the middle, in the style of the day.

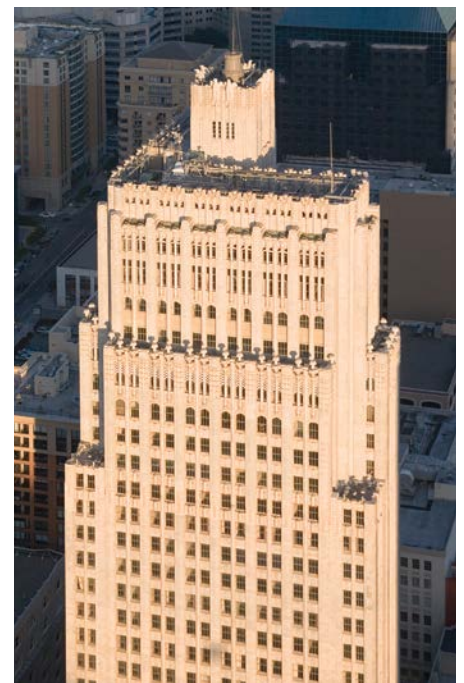
Just two years later, Pflueger became Miller's partner and the small firm tackled its biggest project yet: a 26-story office tower in San Francisco's South of Market district for Pacific Telephone & Telegraph Co. Pflueger and his draftsmen wanted to design something modern for the fast-growing telecommunications company, and they found inspiration in Chicago's 1922 Tribune Tower competition—not the winning neo-gothic tower by Raymond Hood

and John Mead Howells, but rather the runner up, Eliel Saarinen's setback tower design, the more deserving design, according to many critics. The Telephone Building, as it became known, soared 435 feet high, the tallest building in the city for two years.

Completed in 1925, a year before New York's Barclay-Vesey building was finished, the Telephone Building is the West Coast's earliest Deco, its verticality towering over more horizontally oriented office buildings. The *San Francisco Examiner* dubbed it a "shimmery, gleaming monument to Talk." The white and grey speckled terra cotta of its façade evokes the granite in the Sierras near Lake Tahoe. Much of its ornament refers to modern communications, with a massive Bell System logo over the front archway and a series of small "Baby Bells" across one ornament course. Tubes beneath the big Bell may suggest the pneumatic tubes once used for inter-office communications, or as one employee speculated in a newsletter, the receiver stem of the then-popular candlestick office phone. Open books with wings on the second ornament course suggest faster communications



Lobby of 140 New Montgomery. Photo: Therese Poletti



Aerial view of 140 New Montgomery. Photo: © Tom Paiva Photography

in the pre-television, pre-internet 1920s. The setbacks are decorated with long-stemmed, angular flowers that resemble lotuses. The thirteen-foot high eagles that crown the building seem ready to take flight at any moment. Inside, the stunning lobby is an unusual surprise of black marble walls, bronze metal details including bells over the elevator doors, and an ornate plaster ceiling carved with a repeating pattern created from two Chinese mythological creatures, a fenghuang and a qilin. The fenghuang is a Chinese mystical bird, the symbol of the empress and of good fortune, but it is also similar to the western phoenix, which became a symbol of San Francisco rising from the ashes of 1906. The qilin, a hooved magical creature, is seen walking on clouds, an auspicious omen of prosperity and success. The references to Chinese mythology and other Asian themes were bold and unusual in an era during which the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act banning Chinese immigration was still in effect. The ceiling and other Chinese and Asian touches in the building, now known as 140 New Montgomery, show a clear appreciation of a culture deeply engrained in San Francisco's history.

After the success of the Telephone Building, Miller & Pflueger won several large projects. The late 1920s and early 1930s were an especially busy, prolific, and chaotic time. Another major skyscraper designed by Pflueger, the 450 Sutter Medico/Dental Building, opened two weeks before the stock market crash in October 1929. Its temple-like lobby was an ode to the Maya, with detailed metal work in the ceiling and elevator doors covered in Maya imagery—perhaps because the Maya were known for early dentistry, or perhaps because of press coverage of Charles Lindbergh's discovery of Maya ruins in the Yucatan.

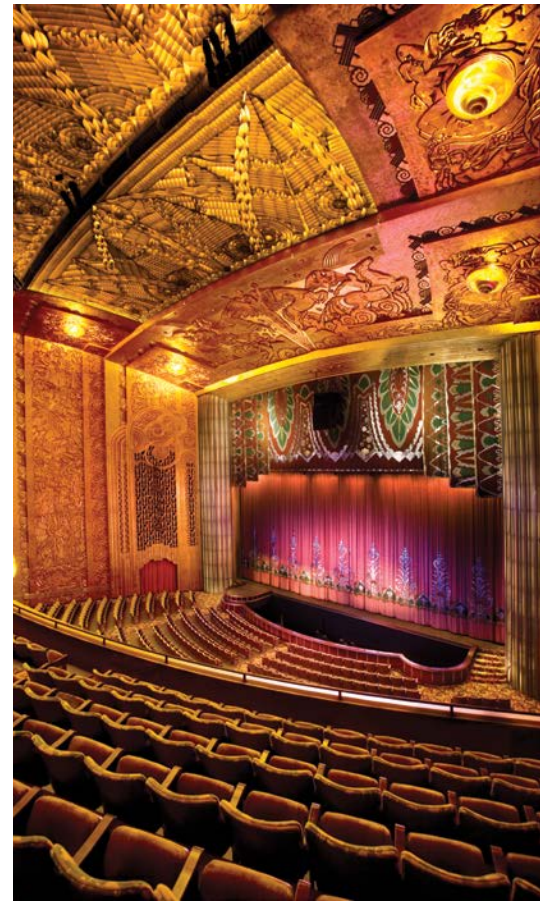
In the early 1930s, a major movie palace commission from Paramount Publix led to Pflueger's best-known work. The Paramount Theater in Oakland, just across the Bay from San Francisco, was an amazing feat of concentrated high style on a small lot. According to Michael Goodman, at the time a draftsman in the Miller & Pflueger office, the theater's tropical forest or jungle theme was inspired by William Henry Hudson's *Green Mansions*, a 1904 book about a man's journey into the jungle in Venezuela; Pflueger kept a copy on his desk during the project. Ref-

erences to exotic plants, birds, and vines range from the emerald green canopy of light in the grand lobby to the parrots over the auditorium entrances and the colorful carpet's pattern of leaves and vines inspired by French artist and textile designer Sonia Delaunay. Inside the auditorium, bas-reliefs in metallic leaf depict warriors ready for battle along the side wall and Poseidon, Greek god of the seas, under the proscenium—all designed by sculptors Robert Boardman Howard and Ralph Stackpole, just two of a huge crew of local artists Pflueger hired to embellish the theater. One nod to California: the giant mosaic along the 120-foot high neon sign, with cowboys, dancers, and other Hollywood players suggesting the movie industry.

During the Great Depression, Pflueger's office worked on publicly funded projects, including schools and the San Francisco Oakland Bay Bridge, for which he served as one of three consulting architects. Though prevented by cost restrictions from including art on the bridge's concrete anchorage and approaches, Pflueger had more success with the schools, commissioning a huge mural on the life of George Washington, for George Washington High School, painted by Ukrainian social realist Victor Arnautoff. Pflueger's most significant contribution to art in San Francisco came from Diego Rivera, whom he hired to paint two striking murals, one at the San Francisco Stock Exchange Tower and another originally at the Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939–1940 but later relocated to City College of San Francisco.

Pflueger's subsequent work included more movie theaters, glamorous bars in the post-Prohibition era, and department stores in the post-war boom—best of all, the I. Magnin Company's flagship store in San Francisco's Union Square. Sadly, Pflueger never saw the clean white marble Modernist building completed—in 1946 he died of a sudden heart attack after a swim at the Olympic Club. Fortunately for the city of San Francisco, Pflueger's legacy lives on today.

Therese Poletti is the Preservation Director of the Art Deco Society of California, author of Art Deco San Francisco: The Architecture of Timothy Pflueger, and a volunteer with San Francisco City Guides, for whom she leads the Downtown Deco walking tour. She blogs on Pflueger and all things Deco at Blog.TimothyPflueger.com.



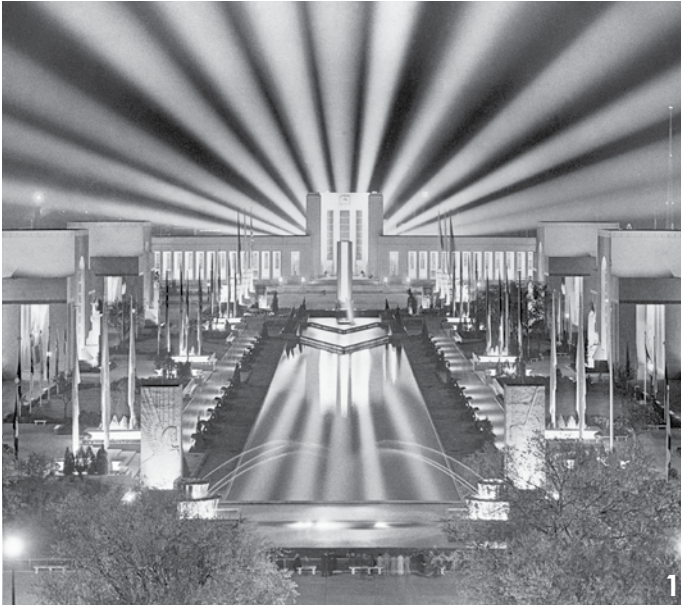
Paramount Theater Auditorium.
Photo: © Tom Paiva Photography



Lobby of 450 Sutter. Photo: © Tom Paiva Photography

ART & ARCHITECTURE: THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL EXPOSITION

BY DAVID BUSH & JIM PARSONS



THE TEXAS CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION “WILL BE TEXANIC IN IDEALS, CONTINENTAL IN PROPORTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL IN SCOPE.”

- Cullen F. Thomas,
President, Texas Centennial Commission, June 1, 1935¹

Although “Texanic,” a word invented by promoters to describe Texas’s 1936 centennial celebration of its independence from Mexico, never found its way into everyday use, there’s no better way to describe the impression made by the Texas Centennial Exposition in Dallas. The fair put its host city on the map and introduced millions of people to a larger-than-life image of the Lone Star State. Today, the exposition’s influence continues in part because 60 percent of its Art Deco structures remain standing—perhaps the most complete collection of modernistic exposition art and architecture in the world.

The story of the Texas Centennial Exposition began in economic depression. By the middle of the 1930s, Texas officials had set their sights on a great celebration to boost the economy. Dallas won the right to host the Centennial Exposition, the centennial year’s central

more than fifty new structures, installing utilities, and landscaping the park’s 185 acres, all in about nine and a half months. Given the scope of the work and the tight schedule, Dahl recruited a staff of 130 architects, designers, engineers, and artists, many of whom had worked at the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago and would later help create the New York World’s Fair of 1939.

Dahl had a clear vision for the fairgrounds. “The treatment should be carried along the lines of good contemporary architecture, but still influenced by good classical design,” he instructed his director of works, Ray A. Foley, adding that he expected “a great deal of glamor [sic], but still a monumental and dignified effect.”³ Designing most of Fair Park’s buildings for future use by the State Fair of Texas, Dahl specified that they be less flashy than the temporary

event, by pledging nearly \$10 million in bonds and the use of Fair Park, site of the Texas State Fair since 1886.

The Texanic task of remaking Fair Park as a modern exposition ground fell to 41-year-old Dallas architect George L. Dahl, who had oversight of every aspect of the exposition’s design. “From the largest towering building to the smallest hot dog or peanut stand, all physical details have been subject to [his] approval or rejection,” the *Dallas Morning News* noted in June 1936.²

The \$25 million exposition project included remodeling and expanding a dozen existing Fair Park buildings, designing and constructing

structures at the Chicago fair. “We have held down the experimental aspect of things more than we would have done if the structures were to be used but a season,” he told a *Dallas Times Herald* reporter.⁴

The fairground’s main axis, the Esplanade of State, looks much as it did when the exposition opened in June 1936. Exhibit halls flanking the promenade feature massive porticoes with murals by Pierre Bourdelle and Carlo Ciampaglia. In front of each portico, sculptors Raoul Josset and Lawrence Tenney Stevens created heroic statues symbolizing the six nations that have had sovereignty over Texas: Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States. All four artists went on to create major works at the New York fair.

The esplanade terminates at the State of Texas Building, Fair Park’s architectural centerpiece. Its limestone colonnades front a series of richly decorated exhibit halls culminating in the 94-by-68-foot Hall of State, the building’s main interior space, with a pair of massive murals by Eugene Savage and the gilded *Great Medallion of Texas* by Joseph Renier. Almost immediately after opening, the entire building—which contained Texas history exhibits during the exposition and today houses the Dallas Historical Society—became known as The Hall of State.

Surprisingly, George Dahl did not design the exposition’s most significant landmark. A group of Dallas architects who lobbied for the job found themselves unable to agree on a design, so Houston architect Donald Barthelme was called in at the eleventh hour. The result, critic David Dillon wrote in his 1985 book *Dallas Architecture*, was “one of the finest, and last, architect-artisan collaborations in the country.”⁵

The Federal Building (now the Tower Building) is Fair Park’s other surviving government-funded exhibit hall. Dahl’s chief designer, architect Donald S. Nelson—who worked on the 1933 Chicago exposition—marked the geographic center of Fair Park with the building’s 175-foot tower, crowned with a gilded



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eagle by Raoul Josset. The star-spangled Reception Room, designed by Julian Garnsey of Los Angeles, retains its original Herman Miller furniture beneath a stepped, backlit ceiling.

The area beyond the Federal Building has changed more than any other at Fair Park. Just south of the federal tower stood Albert Kahn's sprawling Ford Motor Company building, with interiors by industrial designer Walter Dorwin Teague, demolished in 1937. Also gone: the National Cash Register pavilion, a Teague-designed landmark crowned by a gigantic reproduction of an NCR Model 100 cash register; and the nearby Centennial Midway, where the "Streets of Paris" offered dining and risqué floor shows in and around a replica of the ocean liner SS *Normandie's* bow.

Yet many notable structures remain standing. Architect William Lescaze's Magnolia Lounge, often called the first European Modern building in Texas, now houses the offices of the nonprofit Friends of Fair Park. Modernistic museum buildings and an aquarium built by the city of Dallas still welcome visitors, as does an amphitheater—modeled on the Hollywood Bowl—designed by locals W. Scott Dunne and Christensen & Christensen. Fair Park's art still delights, too, particularly Lawrence Tenney Stevens's Texas Woolfuss, an iconic amalgam of Texas livestock.

Over the years, Fair Park demolition proposals came and went; meanwhile, aging buildings needed repairs. Officials patched, painted, and sandblasted, obscuring original details, covering mu-

rals, and nearly destroying relief sculptures. The biggest loss came in 1942, when fire destroyed its largest exhibit building, the Hall of Varied Industries. A smaller replacement hall was built on the site after World War II, but it would be forty years before the new building's Esplanade of State façade was restored to approximate its 1936 appearance.

This is not to say that Fair Park went totally unappreciated. Longtime *New York Times* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable found herself enchanted by the Exposition's remnants. "I loved Fair Park," she told the *Dallas Morning News* after touring the fairgrounds in 1976. "I see Fair Park as a quite fabulous concentration of 1936 Art Deco, Art Moderne buildings."⁶

In 1986, concerned citizens formed the Friends of Fair Park to preserve the exposition's art and architecture and encourage thoughtful planning for the park's future. The Friends' cooperative

effort with the city of Dallas, supported by millions of dollars in municipal bonds, had amazing results: original murals uncovered and restored, sculpture recreated, and the Esplanade of State given a thorough rehabilitation. In 2017, Dallas voters approved \$50 million in improvements and the city began reviewing proposals for private groups to take over Fair Park's operation.

Today, Fair Park is an irreplaceable civic asset for Dallas and an essential destination for any fan of Art Deco. Although much work remains to be done, visitors can once again enjoy the Texanic experience that was the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition.

Jim Parsons and David Bush are the co-authors and photographers of Fair Park Deco: Art and Architecture of the Texas Centennial Exposition (TCU Press, 2012). Their latest book, DFW Deco, examines the modernistic architecture of Dallas, Fort Worth and the North Texas region. Fair Park is a public park open year-round. For information: fairpark.org.

Endnotes

- (1) "Texanic in Oratory," *Austin American-Statesman*, June 2, 1935.
- (2) "Centennial's Stunning Beauty Due to Unique Style of Architecture," *Dallas Morning News*, June 7, 1936.
- (3) Memorandum from George L. Dahl to Ray A. Foley, October 5, 1935, Centennial Collection, Dallas Historical Society.
- (4) "Innovations in Architecture Get Tryout at Fairs," *Dallas Times Herald*, March 8, 1936.
- (5) David Dillon, *Dallas Architecture: 1936-1986* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985), 24.
- (6) Janet Kutner, "A Critic's Impressions of Area Architecture," *Dallas Morning News*, November 14, 1976.

Images

- (1) Esplanade of State at night, 1936 (C.M. Cutler, lighting designer) State Fair of Texas archives.
- (2) Federal Building exterior—the 175-foot tower, marking the geographic center of Fair Park, was the tallest structure at the Texas Centennial Exposition.
- (3) Hall of State, State of Texas Building (Adams & Adams, interior architects).
- (4) Portico of Texas, Esplanade of State (statue: Texas by Lawrence Tenney Stevens, one of the six heroic statues on the Esplanade representing the "six flags" that have flown over Texas).
- (5) Texas Woolfuss (Lawrence Tenney Stevens, sculptor; 2002 recreation by David Newton)—Stevens' tribute to Texas livestock has the body of a hog, tail of a turkey, wings of a duck, neck and mane of a horse, head of a sheep, and a pair of chromium longhorns. The original was damaged and removed in the early 1940s; it wasn't until 2002 that the Friends of Fair Park financed a recreation of the Woolfuss using the original artist's models.

GLOBAL CALENDAR

CURRENT EXHIBITIONS

Art and Design in the Modern Age: Selections from the Wolfsonian Collection
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

Williamsburg Murals: A Rediscovery
Brooklyn Museum
Brooklyn, NY
brooklynmuseum.org
718-638-5000

1918-1938
Trade Fair Palace,
National Gallery in Prague
Prague, Czech Republic
ngprague.cz/+420 224 301 122

To December 30
Women of Influence: Elmira Bier, Minnie Byers & Marjorie Phillips
Phillips Collection
Washington, DC
phillipscollection.org
202-387-2151

To December 30
Dorothea Lange's America
Reynolda House Museum of American Art
Winston-Salem, NC
reynoldahouse.org/888-663-1149

To December 30
Rufino Tamayo
Figge Art Museum
Davenport, IA
figgeartmuseum.org
563-326-7876

To January 6
French Moderns: Monet to Matisse, 1850-1950
Figge Art Museum
Davenport, IA
figgeartmuseum.org
563-326-7876

To January 6
History of Transportation: A Mural Study by Helen Lundeberg
Nevada Museum of Art
Reno, NV
nevadaart.org/775-329-3333

To January 6
Balenciaga in Black
Kimbell Art Museum
Fort Worth, TX
kimbellart.org/817-332-8451

To January 6
Kimono Refashioned: 1870s-Now!
Newark Museum
Newark, NJ
newarkmuseum.org
973-596-6550

To January 6
Serious Play:
Design in Midcentury America
Milwaukee Art Museum
Milwaukee, WI
mam.org/414-224-3200

To January 6
Cult of the Machine: Precisionism and American Art
Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas, TX
dma.org/214-922-1200

To January 7
Glass of the Architects: Vienna 1900-1937
Corning Museum of Glass
Corning, NY
cmog.org/607-937-5371

To January 13
Art Colony: The Laguna Beach Art Association, 1918-1935
Laguna Beach Museum
Laguna Beach, CA
lagunaartmuseum.org
949-494-8971

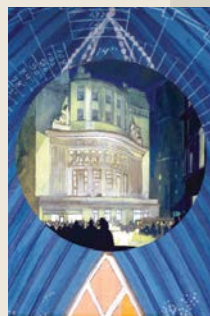
To January 13
The Language of Vision: Early Twentieth-Century Photography
Jepson Center, Telfair Museums
Savannah, GA
telfair.org/912-790-8800

To January 20
I, Too, Sing America: The Harlem Renaissance at 100
Columbus Museum of Art
Columbus, OH
columbusmuseum.org
614-221-6801

To January 20
Paris to New York: Photographs by Eugène Atget and Berenice Abbott
Taft Museum
Cincinnati, OH
taftmuseum.org/513-241-0343

February 2

Florenz Ziegfeld & Joseph Urban: Transforming Broadway



ADSNY members will get an exclusive look at Florenz Ziegfeld's and Joseph Urban's transformation of Broadway theater in this private curator-led tour of treasures from the Columbia Rare Book & Manuscript Library archive. We will see original drawings and set models for the Ziegfeld Follies from 1915-1931, the Midnight Frolics, and many other Broadway shows, including *Century Girl*, *Sally*, *Rio Rita*, *Smiles*, *Show Girl*, and *Show Boat*. We will also see playbills, photographs, and sheet music that illustrate the stage magic that Urban created.

To January 20
Becoming John Marin
San Antonio Museum of Art
San Antonio, TX
samuseum.org/210-978-8100

To January 27
Berlin 1912-1932
Royal Museums of Fine Arts
Brussels, Belgium
fine-arts-museum.be/en
+32 02 508 32 11

To January 27
Anni Albers
Tate Modern
London, England
tate.org.uk/+44 020 7887 8888

To January 27
Modern Couples: Art, Intimacy, and the Avant-garde
Barbican Art Gallery
London, UK
barbican.org.uk
+44 0 20 7638 8891

To February 10
Between Nature & Abstraction
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA
philamuseum.org/215-763-8100

To February 10
Monet to Matisse: Masterworks of French Impressionism
Jepson Center, Telfair Museums
Savannah, GA
telfair.org/912-790-8800

To February 17
Irving Penn: Beyond Beauty
Museum of Photographic Arts
San Diego, CA
mopa.org/619-238-7559

To February 17
World of Charles and Ray Eames
Oakland Museum of California
Oakland, CA
museumca.org/510-318-8400

To February 18
Gordon Parks: The New Tide, Early Work 1940-1950
National Gallery of Art
Washington, DC
nga.gov/202-737-4215

To February 18
Constantin Brancusi Sculpture
Museum of Modern Art
New York, NY
moma.org/212-708-9400

To February 25
Cubism: A New Approach to the World
Centre Pompidou
Paris, France
centrepompidou.fr
+33 1 44 78 12 33

To March 3
Fabulous Fashion: From Dior's New Look to Now
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA
philamuseum.org/215-763-8100

To March 3
Dior: From Paris to the World
Denver Art Museum
Denver, CO
denverartmuseum.org
720-865-5000

To March 11
Freedom: The Art of the Novembergruppe
Berlinische Galerie
Berlin, Germany
berlinischegalerie.de
+49 0 30-789 02-600

To March 17
Natural Abstraction: Brett Weston and his Contemporaries
Indianapolis Museum of Art
Indianapolis, IN
discovernewfields.org
317-923-1331

To March 31
Aviation: la belle envolée art déco
Saint Quentin, France
centraledesmarches.com
+33 03 23 06 91 33

To March 31
Harry Bertoia: Sculptor and Modernist Designer
San Antonio Museum of Art
San Antonio, TX
samuseum.org/210-978-8100

To April 28
Deco: Luxury to Mass Market
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001



To May 19

Winslow Homer to Georgia O'Keeffe: American Paintings from the Phillips Collection
Taft Museum
Cincinnati, OH
taftmuseum.org
513-241-0343

To May 27

Postmen of the Skies: 100 Years of Airmail Service
Smithsonian National Postal Museum
Washington, DC
postalmuseum.si.edu
202-633-5555

To July 1

Magnificent Obsessions: Why We Collect
National Museum of American History
Washington, DC
si.edu/202-633-1000

To July 14

Magic Realism: Art in Weimar Germany 1919-1933
Tate Modern
London, England
tate.org.uk/+44 0 20 7887 8888

To July 31

The Duchamp Family
Philadelphia Museum of Art
Philadelphia, PA
philamuseum.org/215-763-8100

To August 11

The Art of Labor
The Wolfsonian
Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

To September 30

A Changing Reflection: Silver, Metalwork, and Jewelry in the 19th-21st Centuries
Rhode Island School of Design Museum
Providence, RI
risdmuseum.org/401-454-6500

To December 1

Modern by Design: Chicago Streamlines America
Chicago History Museum
Chicago, IL
chicagohistory.org/312-642-4600

UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS**December 19–April 22**

Kolomon Moser: Universal Artist Between Gustav Klimt and Josef Hoffman
MAK—Austrian Museum of Applied Arts
Vienna, Austria
mak.at/+43 1 711 36-0

January 18–May 5

Stuart Davis: Arch Hotel
Sheldon Museum of Art
Lincoln, NE
sheldonartgallery.org
402-472-2461

January 24–March 23

Josef Rings & Erich Mendelsohn: New Building in Germany and Mandatory Palestine
Bauhaus Center
Tel Aviv, Israel
bauhaus-center.com
+972 3-522-0249

February 4–May 5

The Art of Seating
Michener Art Museum
Doylestown, PA
michenerartmuseum.org
215-340-9800

February 14–July 7

Jan Tschichold and The New Typography
Bard Graduate Center
New York, NY
gc.bard.edu/212-501-3023

February 28–June 24

The Self-Portrait, From Schiele to Beckman
Neue Galerie
New York, NY
neuegalerie.org/212-628-6200

March 15–May 27

Dorothea Lange: Politics of Seeing
Frist Art Museum
Nashville, TN
fristartmuseum.org/615-244-3340

April 4–May 5

Art Nouveau Riga
Bauhaus Center
Tel Aviv, Israel
bauhaus-center.com
+972 3-522-0249

April 17–September 21

Hildreth Meière: The Art of Commerce
Fairfield University Art Museum
Bellarmine Hall Galleries
Fairfield, CT
fairfield.edu/museum
203-254-4000

June 5–July 29

Dora Maar
Centre Pompidou
Paris, France
centrepompidou.fr
+33 1 44 78 12 33

June 8–September 15

L'Affichomania: The Passion for French Posters
Taft Museum
Cincinnati, OH
taftmuseum.org/513-241-0343

June 16–September 15

Monet: The Late Years
Kimbell Art Museum
Fort Worth, TX
kimbellart.org/817-332-8451

June 28–October 6

The Expansion of Cubism
Portland Museum of Art
Portland, ME
portlandmuseum.org
207-775-6148

UPCOMING EVENTS**January 13**

Brunch at Chez Josephine
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

January 18–27

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

February 2

Florenz Ziegfeld & Joseph Urban: Transforming Broadway Talk and Curator-led Exhibition Tour
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

February 7–11

Manila Art Deco Weekend
Asian Art Deco Alliance
Manila, Philippines
asianartdeco.org/240-271-5488

February 12

Argentina: Culture and Design of the 1920s and 1930s
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

February 13–17

Tremains Art Deco Festival
Art Deco Trust
Napier, New Zealand
artdeconapier.com
+64 6 835 0022

February 14–24

Palm Springs Modernism Week
Palm Springs, CA
modernismweek.com

February 15–18

Palm Springs Modernism Show and Sale
Palm Springs, CA
palmspringsmodernism.com
708-366-2710

March 15–18

Hong Kong Art Deco Weekend
Asian Art Deco Alliance
Hong Kong, China
asianartdeco.org/240-271-5488

March 30

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

April 18–21

Amoy (Xiamen) Art Deco Weekend
Asian Art Deco Alliance
Fujian, China
asianartdeco.org/240-271-5488

April 28

Bus Tour of Art Deco in Queens
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

May 1–5

American Art Pottery Association Convention and Sale
Chantilly, VA
aapa.info/774-644-0195

May 3–5

Destination Deco: Washington, D.C.
Art Deco Society of New York
artdeco.org/212-679-3326

May 4–5

Washington Modernism Show
Art Deco Society of Washington
Chantilly, VA
adsw.org/703-568-3745

May 16–19

Singapore Art Deco Weekend
Asian Art Deco Alliance
Singapore
asianartdeco.org/240-271-5488

July 13–15

Art Deco Weekend Napier
Art Deco Trust
Hawke's Bay, New Zealand
artdeconapier.com
+64 6 835 0022

October 13–January 12, 2020

Thomas Hunt: California Modernist
Laguna Beach Museum
Laguna Beach, CA
lagunaartmuseum.org
949-494-8971

FIFTEENTH WORLD CONGRESS ON ART DECO

Every two years the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies presents the World Congress on Art Deco to promote the conservation and preservation of Art Deco sites and monuments. This week of activities provides the opportunity for Deco enthusiasts from around the world to come together, celebrate, and explore the important Art Deco heritage of the host city. In 2019, for the first time, the Congress will span three countries—Argentina, Chile and Uruguay. Additional details and registration information coming soon. Save the dates.

November 1–2

Pre-Congress Program
Santiago, Chile

November 4–9

World Congress on Art Deco
Buenos Aires, Argentina

November 11–13

Post-Congress Program
Montevideo, Uruguay

All 2019 World Congress on Art Deco programs hosted by:
Art Deco Buenos Aires Argentina
artdecoargentina.com.ar
+1535468690

CUBA: DECO WITH A TROPICAL TWIST

BY KATHLEEN MURPHY SKOLNIK



Anyone who has traveled to Cuba is aware that the island's delights extend well beyond a sunny climate, royal palms, daiquiris and mojitos, and vintage automobiles. Cuba possesses a rich architectural legacy that dates from its centuries as a Spanish possession through its nearly twelve decades as an independent nation. The colonial-era palaces lining the city squares and the undulating Baroque façade of the Havana Cathedral may be the images seen most frequently in the pages of travel magazines. But impressive examples of Art Deco architecture—commercial buildings, churches, theaters, hospitals, hotels, and single and multifamily residences—can also be found throughout the island. In fact, Cuba's striking Art Deco heritage led the International Coalition of Art Deco Societies (ICADS) to choose Havana as the site of the 2013 World Congress on Art Deco.



HAVANA

The first Cuban city to embrace Art Deco was Havana, where it arrived in the late 1920s, during the first term of Cuban President Gerardo Machado. Machado was intent on revitalizing the capital and this modernistic approach to design embodied the image he was striving to create.

What has been called the most magnificent Art Deco interior in the city was unveiled in 1927. Surprisingly, it lies behind the doors of the Baró-Lasa house, a rose-colored Italian Renaissance Revival mansion on Avenida Paseo in the El Vedado neighborhood, west of Havana's downtown area. The romance of Juan Pedro Baró and Catalina Lasa, who was married when they met, caused quite a scandal among Havana's elite and led the couple to self-exile in Paris until Cuba legalized divorce in 1917. The interior of the new home they moved into ten years later reflects the avant-garde design trends percolating in Paris during their time there. The Art Deco spirit pervades the furnishings and finishes—floors, metalwork, glass, lighting. The most spectacular space is the conservatory or sunroom, designed

by the couple's friend René Lalique and sheathed entirely in white opaque glass. Today the house is Casa de la Amistad, or Friendship House, welcoming visitors from around the world, and the former conservatory is a café.

The Francisco Argüelles House in Miramar, the first private residence in Havana to adopt Art Deco for both its interior and exterior, was also completed in 1927. A symmetrical design with two wings extending diagonally from the cylindrical entrance, it resembles the pavilion of the La Maîtrise design studio of the Galeries Lafayette department store at the 1925 Exposition internationale des arts décoratifs et industriels modernes in Paris.

Above the entrance is a relief panel by Cuban artist Juan José Sicre said to represent the struggle between the old and the new, perhaps referencing the challenge posed by the avant-garde design of the house to Cuban architectural traditions.

The Bacardí Building of 1930 is widely acknowledged as one of Havana's Art Deco jewels. The winning entry in the

competition to select the architect was an Italian Renaissance-inspired design, but by the time of the building's completion, the historic decoration originally proposed for the façade had been replaced with motifs reflecting trends displayed at the 1925 Paris Exposition. The multicolored bricks covering much of the façade are woven into geometric patterns, and terra-cotta nymphs peer down from the top floor. The tower's ziggurat roof is topped with a bronze bat, its wings outspread, the company's corporate logo. The spirit of Art Deco continues in the metalwork, moldings, floors, lighting, and elevator doors of the lobby, but the highlight of the interior is the exuberant mezzanine bar with its tropical motifs. The company's products could once be sampled there and, until the space was recently closed for renovation, visitors could sip Cuban coffee or rum—now Havana Club rather than Bacardí.

The terra-cotta clad Lopez Serrano Apartments in Vedado might be just as comfortable in New York or Miami as in Havana. Occupying an entire half block, this stepped back residential tower was the tallest multifamily build-

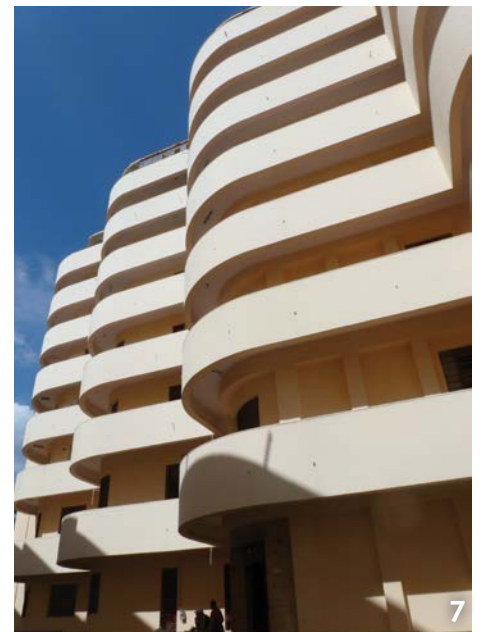
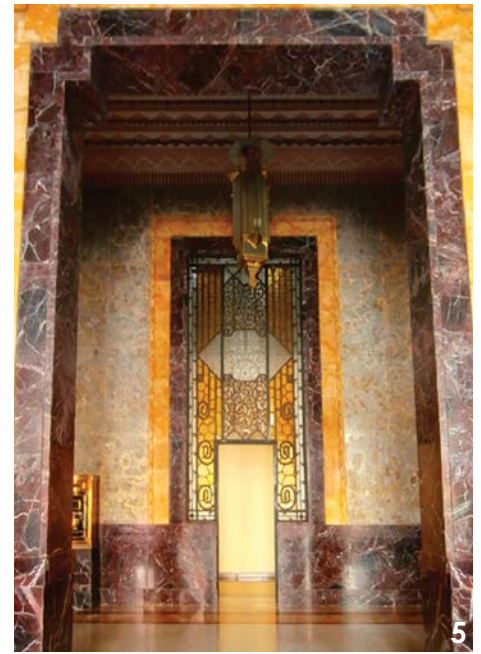
ing in Havana on its completion in 1932. Entrances are framed by ziggurat-like arches, repeated in the lobby, which contains an Art Deco nickel-silver relief panel symbolizing the arrival of modernity by renowned Cuban artist Enrique García Cabrera. Art Deco motifs appear in the lobby's terrazzo floors, and colorful Art Deco designs cover the tile floors of the individual apartments.

Many of Havana's later Art Deco designs incorporate the aerodynamic forms that typified the Streamline Moderne apartments and hotels being constructed in Miami's South Beach in the 1930s and 1940s. Among the most noted examples is the 1939 La Moderna Poesía, a bookstore located at the edge of Old Havana. Its beauty stems primarily from its gracefully curved lines rather than from a profusion of ornamental embellishments. The rhythmic undulating walls of the Solimar Building also reflect the Streamline aesthetic. Completed in 1944, the residential Solimar marks a transition from the later phase of Art Deco into the age of Modernism.

CAMAGÜEY

From Havana, Art Deco spread throughout Cuba. One of the country's largest collections of Art Deco architecture is located in Camagüey in the east central part of the island. A survey of the city's historic buildings identified more than 1,000 examples representing a wide variety of building types. Art Deco arrived later in Camagüey than in Havana. Its first appearance dates to the mid-1930s but the trend persisted into the 1940s and, in a few cases, even into the 1950s.

The Champagnat School on Martyrs Avenue in the La Vigia, or Watchtower, neighborhood, is considered to be the finest example of Art Deco in both Camagüey city and the entire province of Camagüey. Founded by the Marist order, it opened in 1941. Although the Marist Brothers are gone, the school continues in use. The modest three-story structure has a five-part façade with the entrance and the two corner pavilions projecting from long recessed expanses in between where most of the classrooms are located. The symbol of the Marist order remains etched in the glass of the tympanum above the doors, which are surrounded by chevrons and flanked by continuous projecting pilasters that extend almost to the full height of the building. The façade is decorated with stylized low relief panels containing symbols of education and learning—a book, globe, and com-

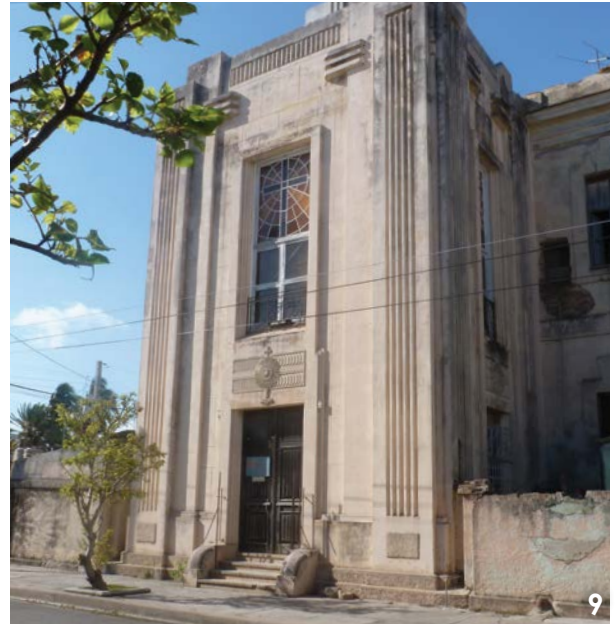


pass—and stylized foliage against a fluted background.

Also on Martyrs Avenue in La Vigia, not far from the Champagnat School, is the Ignacio Agramonte Provincial Museum. The structure itself dates to the colonial period when it housed a cavalry barracks. In the early twentieth century, the building became the Camagüey Hotel, considered the finest in the city at the time. In 1948 it was transformed into a museum. The remodeled façade is an example of the Art Deco variant known in Cuba as Modern Monumental, an austere modernistic interpretation of classical elements known in the United States as Classical Moderne or WPA/PWA Moderne. The portico or covered walkway fronting the entrance was part

of the building's adaptation to a museum. It is supported by twelve monumental fluted piers and echoes the public arcades of the older buildings lining Martyrs Avenue.

Development of La Caridad, a neighborhood southeast of the original city boundaries, began in the nineteenth century when Camagüey's historic core became overcrowded. Its principal commercial street, Liberty Avenue (originally Charity Avenue), is the location of the Art Deco Alkazar Theater, which opened in 1948 and at the time was the largest theater in Cuba outside of Havana. The continuous piers and vertical bands of windows of the theater's upper façade are balanced by the horizontal canopy, once topped by



the marquee, and a horizontal band below the roofline that originally displayed the theater name. The theater is currently under restoration.

Camagüey has literally hundreds of Art Deco residences. One of the most outstanding is a two-story home in the La Vigía neighborhood dating to 1940. The design incorporates an intriguing combination of curved and straight planes separated by a vertical molding that rises above the level of the roof. Inside, a graceful curved staircase lit by long narrow windows filled with colored glass and surrounded by geometric woodwork leads to the second floor. One of the most surprising and spectacular features of the house are two original Art Deco bathrooms.

Most Art Deco residences in Camagüey, however, are much more modest. They consist largely of simple one-story single-family homes whose sole nod to Art Deco may be a stepped parapet or low relief panels with a seemingly endless variety of stylized floral and geometric designs. The style has been labeled Art Deco Pobre, or poor Art Deco, because it is so humble, but it is often this simplicity that makes these buildings so appealing.

HOLGUÍN, CIENFUEGOS, AND BEYOND

About 100 miles northeast of Camagüey is the city of Holguín, another repository of Art Deco design. As in Camagüey, Art Deco first made its appearance in Holguín in the 1930s. The most significant Art Deco building in the city is the Wenceslao Infante Theater, which opened in 1948. The façade of the three-story rectangular structure features fluted vertical bands, stylized relief panels, and ziggurat motifs topping the continuous pilasters that rise above its entrance, which was originally illuminated by blue neon at night.

Holguín's Art Deco National Medical College overlooks one of the city's many parks. The red panels that rise the full height of the façade of the two-story building convey a sense of verticality, despite its modest height. A zigzag pattern fills the panels that decorate the upper part of the façade, which also displays the school's emblem. Art Deco detailing continues in the interior, as seen in the rectilinear design in the balustrade of the staircase leading to the second level.

The city of Cienfuegos lies on Cuba's south coast about 150

miles east of Havana. Most Cuban churches are Baroque, Neocolonial, or Gothic designs, so the two Art Deco churches in Cienfuegos, one Catholic, the other Baptist, are somewhat of a surprise. The Art Deco features of the chapel of the Convent of the Servants of Mary from 1940 are confined primarily to the entrance, which is framed by colossal fluted pilasters. The monstrance, the receptacle for the consecrated host, shown in relief over the entrance is reflected in the design of the stained glass window overhead. The Baptist church, which dates to 1936, is located on the Cienfuegos Prado, the city's most significant street. Its tower is decorated with geometric latticework and topped with a pyramidal roof. Stained glass chevrons fill its windows.

Art Deco in Cuba is by no means confined to the cities of Havana, Camagüey, Cienfuegos, and Holguín. Examples exist in Matanzas, Santa Clara, Las Tunas, Santiago de Cuba, and many of the small municipalities that lie in between. Unfortunately, the preservation of Cuba's Art Deco masterpieces has, for the most part, been a far lower priority than the conservation of its colonial-era architecture. Hopefully, the attention generated by events such as the 2013 World Congress and the efforts of the Art Deco Societies now active in a number of Cuban cities will awaken the need to preserve and restore these treasures of the more recent past as well.

Kathleen Murphy Skolnik teaches art and architectural history at Roosevelt University in Chicago, and has led seminars on Art Deco at Chicago's Newberry Library. She is a member of ADSNY's Advisory Board. She lectures extensively on Art Deco topics and is the co-author of The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière and the editor of the English translation of Havana Art Deco: Architectural Guide by Maria Elena Martin Zequeira.

All photos unless noted otherwise: Kathleen Murphy Skolnik

- (1) The Francisco Argüelles house in the Miramar neighborhood of Havana. (2) Main dining room, Catalina Lasa house, now known as Casa de la Amistad. Photo: Randy Juster/decopix.com (3) The conservatory designed by René Lalique for the Baró-Lasa house in the El Vedado neighborhood of Havana. Photo: Randy Juster/decopix.com (4) The Bacardí Building with its pyramidal roof topped with its bat logo. Photo: Roberta Nusim (5) The Bacardí Building lobby. (6) The Streamline Moderne façade of La Moderna Poesía bookstore. (7) The undulating façade of the Solimar Building. (8) The Wenceslao Infante Theater in Holguín. (9) Chapel of the Convent of the Servants of Mary in Cienfuegos.

ART DECO IN MUMBAI: THE OVAL & MARINE DRIVE

BY NITYAA LAKSHMI IYER & ATUL KUMAR

A NEW WORLD HERITAGE SITE

On June 30, 2018, following a decade-long effort, UNESCO inscribed The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai as a World Heritage Site. This inscription serves to protect, enhance, and showcase a spectacular ensemble of 94 historic buildings, which includes the unrivaled Art Deco promenade of Marine Drive.

The journey towards World Heritage status was unique simply because no World Heritage Site nomination previously had been initiated by stakeholders. Typically, the initiative, impetus, funding, and preparation of the dossier are driven by the state government. In the case of Mumbai (formerly Bombay until 1995 when it was renamed, but often referred to as Bombay when recounting its history), the entire nomination dossier, running over 1,500 pages, was completed by a group of individual citizens, resident associations, architects, conservationists, and urban planners, led by Abha Narain Lambah Associates, a prominent Indian architectural conservation firm. Politicians worked across ideologies and party lines to support the initiative.

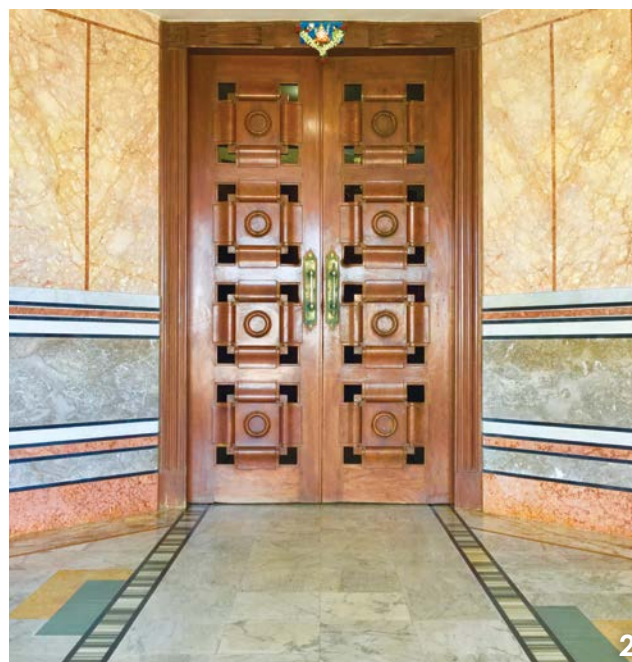
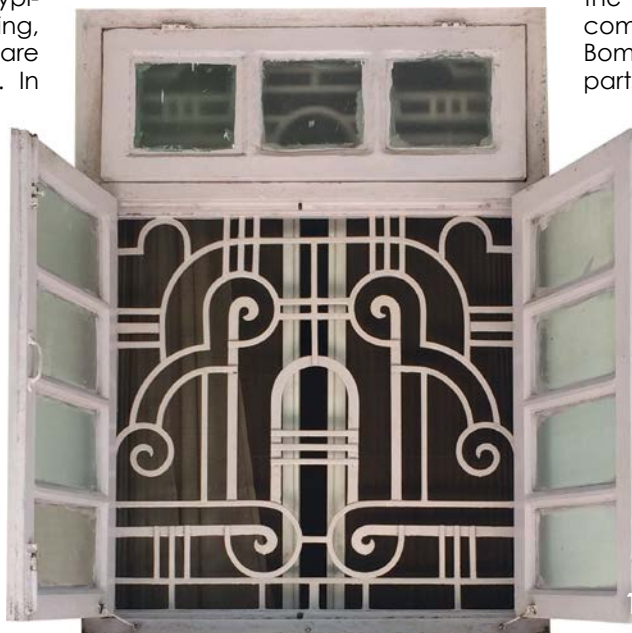
Two centuries, the nineteenth and twentieth, straddle the Oval Maidan, or public park, making the area unparalleled. The dramatic confrontation of the two styles across the Oval reflects two waves of urban expansion and two major styles: Victorian Neo-Gothic and Art Deco. Other styles are also represented, including Indo-Saracenic and Neoclassical, but the Art Deco buildings are particularly impressive—together they form one of the largest and most homogeneous such assemblages in Asia and the world, with the spectacular coastal promenade, Marine Drive, sweeping the western boundary of the precinct. This formidable architectural ensemble influenced the development of Modernism in Asia with a distinct architectural genre—western in form and Indian in spirit—as an example of shared heritage.

FIRST CITY OF INDIA

In 1661, before gifting the islands of Bombay to King Charles II of England as a dowry for marrying Princess Catherine of Braganza, the Portuguese controlled the seven islands of Bombay, then called Bom Bahia, with the aim of proselytizing the natives and using the islands as a port for their spice trade.

It was only after 1668, when the British Crown handed over the islands to the East India Company “at a farm rent of ten pounds payable on September 30 in each year,” that the city transformed into an important commercial port and trading center. Bombay attracted people from various parts of the Indian subcontinent, who migrated to establish businesses in this bustling city. Moreover, growing trade in cotton, opium, and spices brought a lot of wealth into Bombay.

Over time, the constant influx of working class residents and the ever-growing need for housing led to land reclamation, thanks to which the trading center evolved from seven islands into one island city. In the early twentieth century, Bombay saw a transformation of its social, cultural, and political framework, a transformation mirrored in its physical form through Art Deco.



MUMBAI'S ART DECO

Art Deco entered India from Bombay, thanks to Indian princely statesmen, merchants, and entrepreneurs, as an expression of their love for contemporary ways of living. It signaled the arrival in India of an appreciation for modern aesthetics. Ornamentation, a significant part of Indian architecture, remained an integral part of the language of Art Deco, but took the form of minimal and geometrically driven design. The new emerging architectural spaces in Bombay such as cinemas, social clubs, schools, hospitals, and apartments adopted this modern style. In addition, newly trained architects—especially those from India—graduating from local or international schools



embraced this style and incorporated it in their own designs. India's first architectural exhibition, the Ideal Home Exhibition organized by the Indian Institute of Architects at Town Hall in November 1937, enlightened the public about new styles, furniture, and such building materials as reinforced cement concrete (RCC) and ferrocement, making the architectural movement more visible within the city as well as the country.

As the style gained popularity, it evolved into a more pronounced expression of Indian aspirations as opposed to the initial European influences. These indigenous expressions of Art Deco are widespread in buildings around the northern suburbs of the city such as Dadar and Matunga, and are commonly referred to as Bombay Deco or Indo Deco. At the same time, the style had a more direct influence on Bombayites' lifestyles through industrial design, graphic design, fashion, and mass media. Although the design sensibilities of Art Deco in the West thrived on industrial means of production, India continued to rely on manual labor for construction. This gave Indian buildings a hand-made quality different from their western counterparts, while creating a highly skilled workforce that eased the architectural transition in the late 1940s.

DECO PRECINCT: BACKBAY RECLAMATION

After World War I, the pressing need for more housing led to the reclamation of various areas around the city. The Backbay Reclamation Scheme, undertaken in November 1920 and completed in 1929, identified 439.6 acres of reclaimed land available for building. Blocks I and II at the northern end of the Backbay Reclamation Scheme compose what we know today as the Art Deco Precinct that stretches from the western edge of Oval Maidan (East) to Marine Drive (West). The Maidan, a public park, was developed in the early 1930s, and Marine Drive soon after.

To ensure proper architectural and urban form, the development was controlled by special laws that governed details such as building location, use, footprint, height, number of floors, structural design, finish, and color. To maintain general uniformity and harmony, specific rules regulated the overall design and types of permanent architectural features. These rules created a unique massing, delineation of the precinct, and skyline. In the case of Marine Drive, the plots facing the sea were assigned primarily to residential use.

Residential buildings were also constructed on the plots that ran along the Queen's Road (now Maharshi Karve Road) facing the Oval Maidan, creating a unified urban fabric even though each building showcases its individuality through design. Most of these buildings, especially Shiv Shanti Bhuvan and Rajjab Mahal, have highly decorative surfaces that evoke a sense of flamboyance in the way color, banding details, relief patterns, and motifs are used.

Architectural lettering was also incorporated into the building design as part of a larger ornamental scheme. Stylized fonts along with varied materials such as wood, metal, stone, and plaster were used to create building name signs. There was also a sudden shift in building names within the precinct, reflecting the changing political climate of the country at that time. Colonial names like Empress Court, reflecting a European aspiration, gave way to Bharatiya Bhavan, which translates to "Indian House."

DECO CINEMAS

Beginning in the 1930s, the widespread popularity of cinema in Bombay led to the construction of many theaters. These new cinemas, all built in the Art Deco style, had a great visual presence in the city's urban landscape.

The Regal, built in 1933 by architect Charles Stevens—son of F. W. Stevens, designer of some of Bombay's most significant Victorian public buildings—was the city's first Art Deco building. A multi-use structure, it housed a fully air conditioned theater with shops on the ground floor and underground parking. Its modern design included towers and rectangular slabs stepping back on the façade to sensitively complement features such as the gables, turrets, and domes of the nearby Wellington fountain.

Another iconic theater, and the only non-residential building along the Oval that sits in a commanding position within the Backbay Reclamation, is the Eros Cinema. This V-shaped structure is a mixed-use building partially clad with red Agra sandstone that contrasts with the light cream painted finish on the overall façade. A prominent ziggurat-like tower, and the further use of the color red to accentuate ornamental features on the façade, add to the illusion of height, so it appears to be a lot taller than its actual size. The Eros serves as a visual marker in the Churchgate area within the Backbay Reclamation Scheme.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

Although cinemas in Mumbai popularized Art Deco architecture, it was the large set of residential buildings within the Oval and Marine Drive precinct that transformed Mumbai's image from a Gothic colonial outpost to a modern and cosmopolitan world city. The two open spaces around the area, the Oval Maidan and Marine Drive, formed the fulcrum around which the Art Deco district developed and continued to flourish in subsequent decades.

The residential Art Deco buildings along the western edge of the Oval facing the imposing Victorian Gothic buildings, with the open Maidan in the center, form a captivating urban composition. These buildings—despite their varying styles, scales, uses, and materials—engage city dwellers in a fascinating dialogue between the two styles, while standing tall as an individual cluster of buildings from the heydays of the two centuries.

Mumbai's Art Deco buildings bear witness to a very important period in the history of the city and India. Through their physical form, they captured the aspirations of a colonized India ready to become independent and modern. These living spaces were designed with the intention of evoking a sense of ownership while transcending time. Even today, most citizens of the city, across generations, identify and continue to interact with them every day. Although their numbers across the city make them one of the largest collections of Art Deco buildings in the world, it is the fact they are still in constant use by city dwellers that keeps them relevant and significant. Hence, this precinct forms an important part of Mumbai's modern living heritage.

Atul Kumar is a Founder Trustee and Nityaa Lakshmi Iyer is the Head, Documentation & Research, of the Art Deco Mumbai Trust. For Mumbai's World Heritage Site inscription: ArtDecoMumbai.com/Research/#UNESCO. For a tour of the Art Deco precinct in Mumbai: ArtDecoMumbai.com/Guided-Tours.

All photos unless noted otherwise: © Art Deco Mumbai Trust

Endnote

(1) Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, *Bombay: The Cities Within* (India Book House P. Limited, 1995).

Images

(1) Detailed view of the window grille at Nalini Kunj, Matunga. (2) Entrance lobby of Seksaria building, Marine Drive. (3) View of eyebrows on Shiv Shanti Bhuvan, Oval Maidan. (4) Detailed view of ground floor window on Rajjab Mahal, Oval Maidan. (5) Street corner view of Soona Mahal, Marine Drive. (6) Detailed view of architectural lettering and plasterwork on Sunshine, Oval Maidan. (7) Frontal view of Regal Cinema, Colaba. (8) View of the architectural lettering of Eros Cinema, Churchgate. (9) Interior view of Liberty Cinema, Marine Lines.



A FLYING LEAP INTO THE FUTURE: NEW YORK'S MARINE AIR TERMINAL

BY ANTHONY W. ROBINS

"This is a materialistic, scientific and practical age that Jules Verne could not picture with his wildest imagination. Radio, the spanning of the continent with the telephone, the talkies, television, the airplane and dirigible, mass production, newest machinery and what not, cannot be expressed in an Italian Renaissance or other styles of the past."

- Harry Allen Jacobs¹

Though Jacobs, a New York City architect, wrote those words in 1930, some New York firms remained firmly in the grip of the "styles of the past" for another decade. The partnership of Delano & Aldrich turned modernistic only in 1939. Tasked with designing a building type barely a decade old, the firm produced the original Art Deco core of New York City's LaGuardia Airport. Most of those original buildings have long since disappeared, but one survives, the Marine Air Terminal.

During the decade following Charles "Lucky Lindy" Lindbergh's 1927 solo

flight from New York to Paris, the nation avidly followed the development of air travel, first for mail, then for passengers. New York welcomed half a dozen early aviators—from Amelia Earhart to Douglas "Wrong Way" Corrigan—with ticker-tape parades. Following a determined campaign by Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, himself a World War I bomber pilot and aviation enthusiast, the New York City Municipal Airport (soon renamed for the mayor) quickly became the region's most important. LaGuardia wangled federal funds for its construction, making it the last and largest project of the Works Progress Administration.

Tucked away in an obscure corner of today's far larger airport, the Marine Air Terminal might seem like an afterthought. It opened only in 1940, some months after the rest of the original complex. But as first conceived, it housed one half of LaGuardia's air service. Long vanished buildings handled local airplanes—called landplanes—that took off and landed on the tarmac. The Marine Air Terminal dealt with the much larger seaplanes—enormous so-called flying boats, planes with pontoons—that took off and landed on Bowery Bay (hence the terminal's loca-

tion at the water's edge). And while in recent years the Terminal has housed only local shuttles, it began its career as the New York terminus for the world's first transatlantic passenger airline service, provided by Pan American Airways' Yankee Clippers.

Officials turned to seaplanes because they could accommodate emergency water landings, as well as land at shipping ports where no airport yet existed. But more than just providing a speedy means of travel, the Yankee Clippers offered a taste of the luxury found in railroads and ocean liners, including dining rooms and double-decker sleeping bunks. A year after the service began, Clare Boothe (Luce) wrote in *Life* magazine: "Fifty years from now people will look back upon a Pan American Clipper flight of today as the most romantic voyage of history."²

The Clipper's maiden voyage from the Marine Air Terminal on March 31, 1940, earned front-page coverage from *The New York Times*: "Pictured as the forerunner of a great substratosphere fleet of the future that will fly to Europe on daily twelve-hour schedules, a forty-one-ton clipper plane took off yesterday on the first regular commercial flight from New York City to Europe as a throng of thousands gathered at La Guardia Field to witness the official dedication of the new \$7,500,000 seaplane base. With an official blessing from President Roosevelt . . . the international air marine terminal at the . . . municipal airport in Queens was formally opened, bringing New York City within twenty-six flying hours of Europe."³

Two weeks later, Lucky Lindy himself came on an inspection tour of the terminal, in his capacity as a director of Pan Am.

Delano & Aldrich enjoyed impeccable architectural credentials. Both William A. Delano and Chester H. Aldrich had studied at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Paris. Forming their partnership in 1903, Delano and Aldrich spent the better part of four decades producing traditional designs—neo-Renaissance or neo-Federal—for wealthy families. Their extensive portfolio included Upper East



The geometric forms of the Marine Air Terminal as seen from the street. Photo: Meghan Weatherby



Buff and black brick around horizontally organized windows and the glazed terra-cotta band depicting flying fish, which suggests seaplanes. Photo: Lynn Farrell

Side townhouses, private clubs, the Rockefeller estate at Pocantico Hills, and—perhaps presciently—a house for Lucky Lindy in Hopewell, New Jersey. In the later 1930s, Aldrich took a leave of absence to serve as director of the American Academy in Rome, where American architects studied the glories of classical antiquity. Delano instead joined the Board of Design for the futuristic 1939 New York World's Fair, and took on the project for the new airport.

Delano turned out a handsome terminal in what might be called *Seaplane Moderne*. On opening day, it earned praise in the press as “strikingly modernistic.”⁴ Unlike his firm's more traditional productions, the Terminal's design depends on pure geometric forms: a massive rectangular entrance leading to a grand rotunda. More *Moderne* than strictly Art Deco in spirit, the building has windows organized horizontally rather than vertically. Instead of elaborate classical carvings, it relies on the contrast of simple materials—buff and black brick playing off against a band of stainless steel. Only at the roofline did Delano permit a purely decorative flight of fancy, a sky-blue, glazed terra-cotta band with a ring of golden flying fish suggesting seaplanes—a typically Deco reference to the building's function. Similarly, grillework over the Terminal's doorways takes the form of globes with wings.

The Terminal's two-story rotunda—which New York's Landmarks Commission calls “among the most noteworthy Art Deco interiors in New York City”—has handsome, dark green marble walls. Flying boat imagery includes more of the stainless winged globes found on the exterior, and continues with stainless steel propeller blades in the end panels of the wooden benches. But those cannot compare to the rotunda's chief glory: James Brooks's *Flight*—a 12-foot-high, 237-foot-long mural completely ringing the space.

As the last and largest of the nation's WPA murals, *Flight* depicts the history of humanity's quest for the skies, from Greek mythology to the 1930s. Panels range from Icarus and Daedalus to the Wright brothers, culminating in the final

scene of a Yankee Clipper landing on the bay.

Over the years, seaplanes fell out of fashion, and the Terminal found other uses. In the 1950s and 60s, charter flights to the Terminal brought dignitaries on official visits, from Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy to the moon-shot astronauts of 1968. The building gradually deteriorated; the harshest blow came in a 1950s renovation that painted over Brooks's mural—apparently because local officials detected references to socialism in its symbolism. By 1973, *The Wall Street Journal* could describe the terminal as “just an obscure part” of the airport. “The marble has lost its polish, and the rotunda is painted yecch blue. The mural is gone.”⁵

In 1976, Geoffrey Arend, publisher of *Air Cargo News* and an admirer of the Terminal, mounted a photo exhibit in the Terminal hoping to attract attention. As described in *Newsday*, “DeWitt Wallace, the founder of *Reader's Digest*, and Laurance Rockefeller, the financier, were wandering through the terminal after missing a flight. They spotted Arend's display,” and eventually put up half the money needed to restore Brooks's mural.⁶ Brooks attended

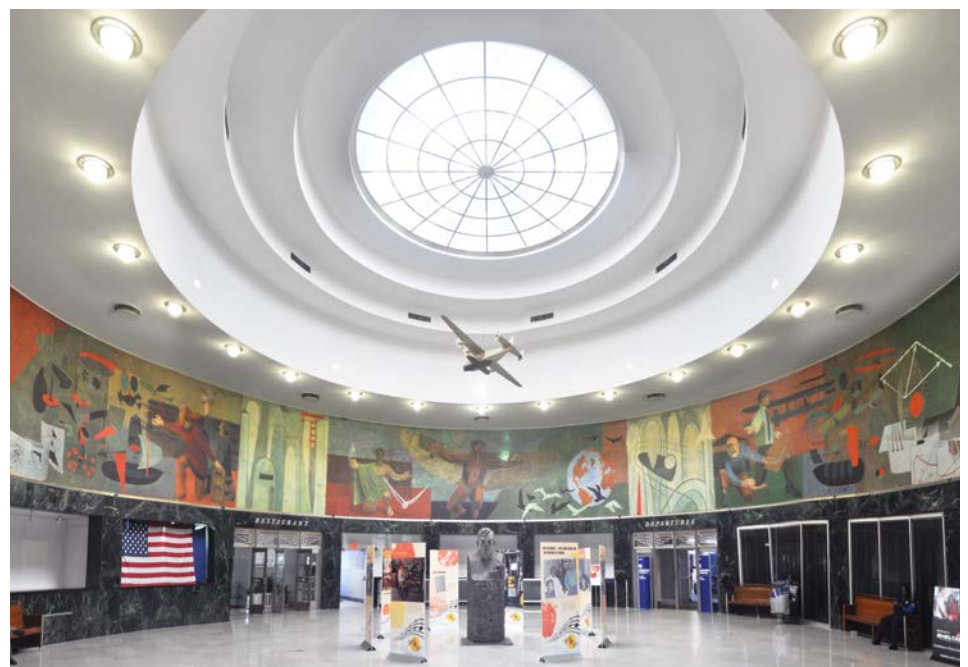
the dedication of his restored murals in 1980, the same year the Terminal became a city landmark. In 1995, the Port Authority commissioned the restoration of the entire terminal from the firm of Beyer Blinder Belle.

Today the Marine Air Terminal serves as a temporary home for Jet Blue. It remains an out-of-the-way oddity at LaGuardia. But Deco lovers will find it worthwhile to search it out—if not for a transatlantic seaplane odyssey, then for a trip back in time to the glory days of early aviation and Art Deco splendor.

Anthony W. Robins, ADSNY's Vice President, is a historian, writer, and educator specializing in New York architecture. A twenty-year veteran of New York's Landmarks Commission, he has a passion for Deco that is reflected in his most recent book, *Art Deco New York: A Guide to Gotham's Jazz Age Architecture*.

Endnotes

- (1) The New York Times, November 30, 1930, RE2.
- (2) Clare Boothe, “Destiny Crosses the Dateline,” *Life*, November 3, 1941, 99.
- (3) The New York Times, April 1, 1940, 1.
- (4) Long Island Daily Press, April 1, 1940.
- (5) “That Fabulous Airport of Flying-Boat Days,” *The Wall Street Journal*, May 15, 1973, 1.
- (6) “Mural Restored, but the Hurt Remains,” *Newsday*, September 19, 1980, 17.



The grand rotunda and a portion of James Brooks's restored mural, *Flight*. Photo: Meghan Weatherby

EXPLORING DECO IN . . . ROCKEFELLER CENTER

ESSAY BY SIBYL MCCORMAC GROFF

For the Art Deco fancier, a visit to Rockefeller Center—a city within a city—is a must. New York's most important urban complex of the twentieth century, the Center was built between 1931 and 1939. Today, with later additions, it comprises some twenty buildings. John D. Rockefeller, Jr. originally planned the Center as a commercial complex surrounding a new home for the Metropolitan Opera. When the Met dropped out following the 1929 crash, Rockefeller reimagined Metropolitan Square as Radio City, bringing NBC and its parent company, RCA, to be the flagship tenants.

Rockefeller Center extends from 48th to 51st Street, and from Fifth to Sixth Avenue. Its western portion is the business end—former corporate headquarters for Esso, the Associated Press, Eastern Airlines, U.S. Rubber, and RKO Radio Pictures. But Rockefeller imagined the Fifth Avenue frontage as a showcase for his dearly held cause of international understanding—hence the International Building, the Maison Française, the British Empire Building, the Palazzo d'Italia—and the Channel Gardens (named for the English Channel separating France and England), between the French and British buildings, lined with lush foliage and statuary.

Renowned architect Raymond Hood headed the architectural team, which included modernists Harvey Wiley Corbett and Wallace K. Harrison. Architect Edward Durrell Stone, working with industrial designer Donald Deskey, created the fabulous Art Deco interior of Radio City Music Hall.

The Center epitomizes the Machine Age—building materials like aluminum and stainless steel, parking facilities for cars and trucks, high speed elevators, air cooling, noise silencers and escalators.

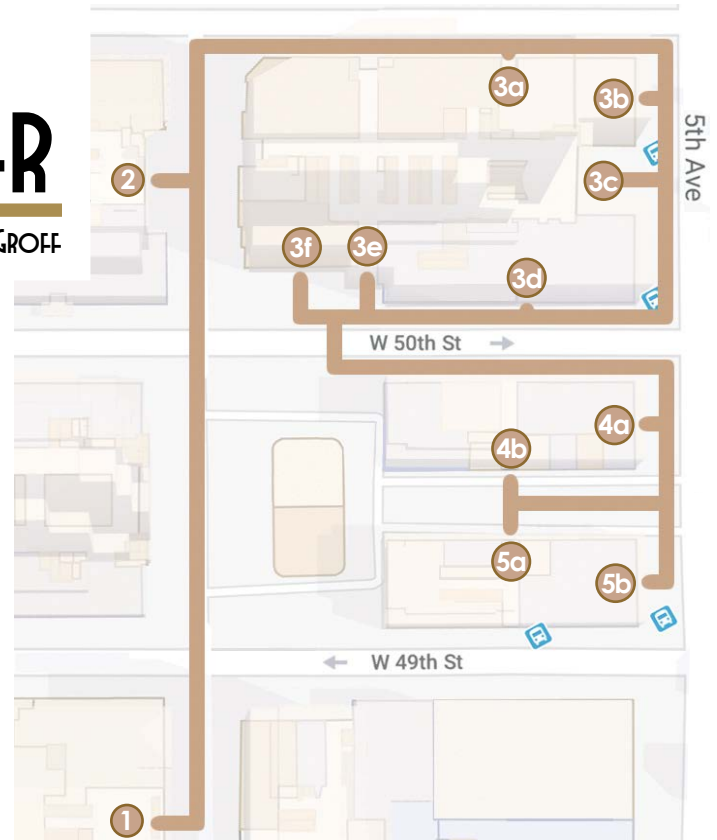
An international roster of artists created some one hundred works of art for the Center—Americans Lee Lawrie, Hildreth Meière, Paul Manship, Isamu Noguchi, and Gaston Lachaise, but also artists from abroad, including Jose Maria Sert from Spain and Anglo-Welsh Sir Frank Brangwyn, all working on themes of progress and the future as requested by Rockefeller.

If you visit in December, don't miss the Center's world-famous Christmas tree—a tradition begun in 1931 by grateful construction workers. In the words of former gardener David Marbach: "The tree is a gift to the world. I see it as a message of goodwill and peace on earth." Even when the tree is not on display, its location is marked in the sidewalk opposite the entrance to the Comcast (formerly RCA) tower at 30 Rockefeller Plaza.

Free brochures about Rockefeller Center and its artworks are usually available in several languages in the lobby of 30 Rockefeller Center.

Sibyl McCormac Groff is a cultural historian whose expertise includes Rockefeller Center and the history of Christmas. She is the author of A New York Christmas - Hohoho at Gothamside.

All Photos: Lynn Farrell



1. 10 Rockefeller Plaza (originally Eastern Airlines), History of Transportation
This award-winning mural by Dean Cornwell (American, 1892–1960) represents advancements in transportation and global unity. The sections are titled *Night Flight*, *New World Unity*, and *Day Flight*. The mural includes the figure of Eddie Rickenbacker—top World War I pilot, race car driver, and president of Eastern Airlines—along with several historic modes of transportation, scenes of America, and goddesses.



2. Bank of America Building (originally Associated Press), 50 Rockefeller Plaza, News

Isamu Noguchi (American, 1904–1988) created one of the Center's best-known images: a stainless steel sculpture illustrating the dynamic, fast-paced business of journalism. The diagonal lines across the piece suggest the energy of the newsroom and represent AP's global network.



3. The International Building

The International Building is the longtime home to international consulates and airlines. It houses a handsome Art Deco lobby lined with marble from Tinos, Greece and wonderfully Stream-lined elevators and escalators.



3a. 10 West 51st Street, Cornucopia of Plenty
Lee Lawrie (American, born Germany, 1877–1963) wrote that his carved stone piece symbolized “the plenitude that would result from well-organized international trade,” a major theme of the international buildings.



3b. 636 Fifth Avenue, Youth Leading Industry
Attilio Piccirilli's (American, born Italy, 1868–1945) innovative, cast Pyrex relief represents the 1930s Italian fascist ideal that youth will lead the way.



3c. 630 Fifth Avenue, Atlas
This statue of Atlas supporting the world, by Lee Lawrie and Rene Chambellan (American, 1893–1955), is one of the Center's most revered artworks. Don't miss the view from behind, as Atlas contrasts St. Patrick's Cathedral across Fifth Avenue.



3d. 9 West 50th Street, St. Francis of Assisi
Though similar in size to the British and French Buildings, the Palazzo d'Italia, on which this piece is featured, is actually a wing of the International Building. This Lee Lawrie relief depicts St. Francis preaching to the birds, who form a halo around his head.



3e. 19 West 50th Street, Boatman Unfurling a Sail, Columbia Greeting a Woman, Swords Into Ploughshares
Lee Lawrie's three allegorical panels appeal for global unity and world peace. The first shows a muscular boatman representing a path to freedom. The second shows Columbia, symbol of America, welcoming an immigrant to the New World's skyscrapers. The third, a gilded intaglio carving of a plowshare with crossed swords, illustrates Isaiah II:IV: “He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore.”



3f. 29 West 50th Street, The Story of Mankind
Lee Lawrie's culturally eclectic, carved limestone screen illustrates international communication and cooperation.

4. British Empire Building, 5. Maison Française

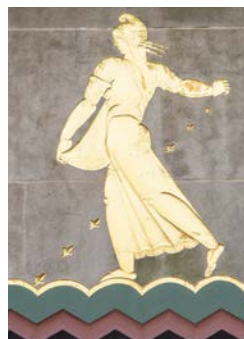
Together with the Palazzo d'Italia, the British Empire Building and Maison Française were part of Rockefeller's plan to create a midtown Manhattan presence for some of the world's major nations.



4a. 620 Fifth Avenue, Industries of the British Empire
The nine gilded bronze figures by Carl Paul Jennewein (American, born Germany, 1890-1978) directly above the entrance illustrate the Empire's most fruitful industries.



4b. Channel Gardens British Empire Building entrance, Winged Mercury
This artwork by Lee Lawrie, in the form of a gilded intaglio relief, depicts Mercury who is representing the global strength of the mercantile British Empire.



5a. Channel Gardens Maison Française entrance, Seeds of Good Citizenship
Lee Lawrie's image of Marianne—classic symbol of France—sows seeds in the form of fleur-de-lis.

Channel Gardens

The promenade separating the British and French buildings—the Channel Gardens—enjoys a spectacular view of the seventy-story Comcast (originally RCA) tower and the sunken plaza that features a skating rink in the winter and outdoor cafe in warm weather. Flags of member countries of the United Nations surround the plaza—a reminder that the Rockefellers helped secure the U.N.'s East Side site.



5b. 610 Fifth Avenue, Friendship Between America and France
This sculpted relief by Alfred Janniot (French, 1889–1969) shows two women, symbolizing Paris and New York, shaking hands; Paris holds two buildings—Paris City Hall and Notre Dame Cathedral—while above New York rises the 1930s downtown skyline.

THE DECORATIVE LANGUAGE OF CANADIAN ART DECO ARCHITECTURE

BY TIM MORAWETZ

Like Art Deco buildings everywhere, Canada's examples display a rich array of decorative motifs that are unique to the country's geography, history, and culture. Archetypes such as hockey, beaver, and maple syrup farming all turn up on the country's Deco buildings, along with many more symbols that reflect Canada's identity and history.

As a country, Canada is about 25 percent larger in area than America's lower 48 states. In 1930, it had a population of ten million, compared to 124 million in the United States, with a population density one-tenth that of its southern neighbor. While the U.S. had more than 100 cities with a population of 100,000, Canada had only eight. The population has always hugged the country's southern border—to this day, some three-quarters of Canadians live within 100 miles of the U.S.

Canada was—and is—a trading nation, with an economy during the 1930s largely based on natural resources such as mining, fishing, forestry, and agriculture. Although Canada gained its political independence from Britain in 1867, it truly began viewing itself as its own nation only after World War I. In earlier years, Canadian architecture reflected European traditions, but by the Deco era, Canada's architects started looking south for inspiration.

Notwithstanding its smaller and more widely dispersed population, Canada produced a collection of interwar buildings—from office towers and apartment buildings to schools and cinemas—that measure up to those of other regions around the globe and that span the categories of Zigzag, Streamline Moderne and Stripped Classical styling. Although there are lesser-known gems in smaller and more remote communities across the country, this article focuses on buildings in Canada's major cities.

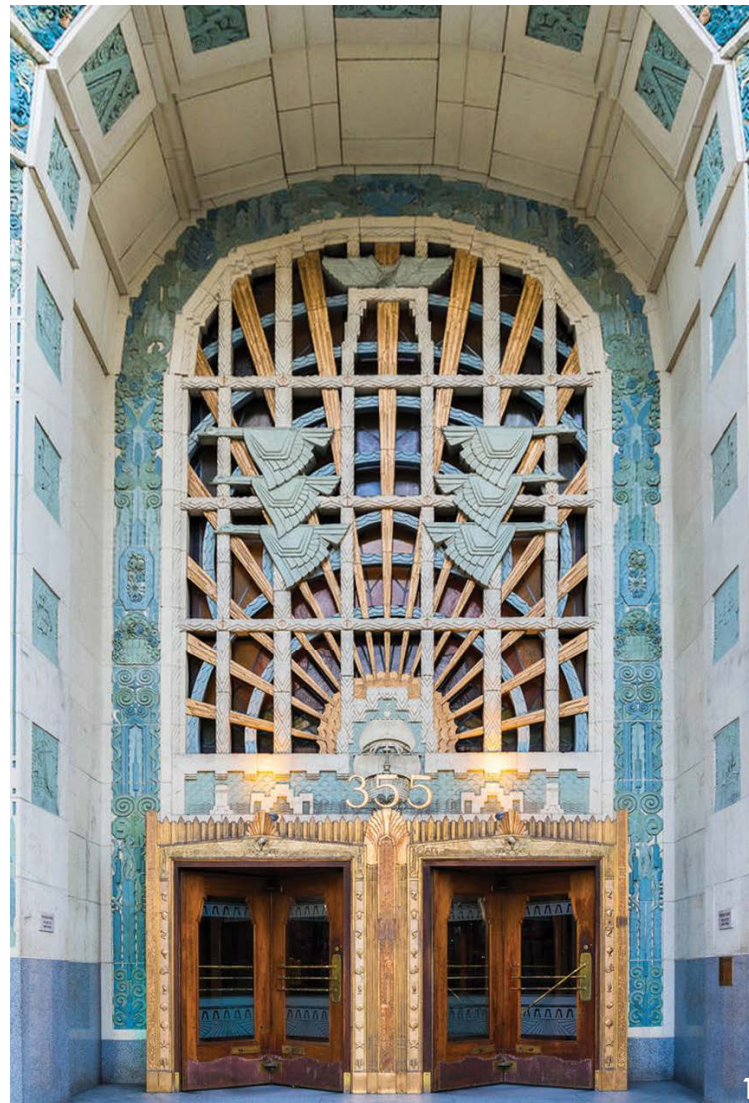
VANCOUVER

The west coast city of Vancouver—150 miles north of Seattle—rose to prominence in the 1920s with the opening of the Panama Canal, which positioned the city as an alternate shipping route to Europe. Vancouver is home to Can-

ada's finest Zigzag skyscraper: the twenty-story Marine Building (McCarter and Nairne, 1929–30) that overlooks the city's harbor. The subject matter of the building's decoration reflects its function—providing office space for grain and lumber shipping companies, insurance brokers, and import/export merchants. In the architects' words, the

tower "suggests some great crag rising from the sea, clinging with sea flora and fauna, tinted in sea green, touched with gold, and at night in winter a dim silhouette piercing the sea mists."¹¹

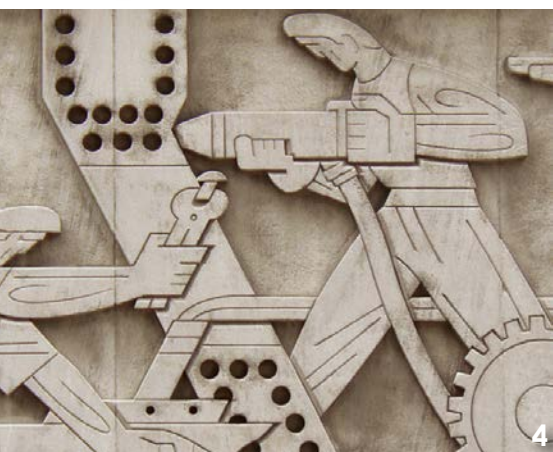
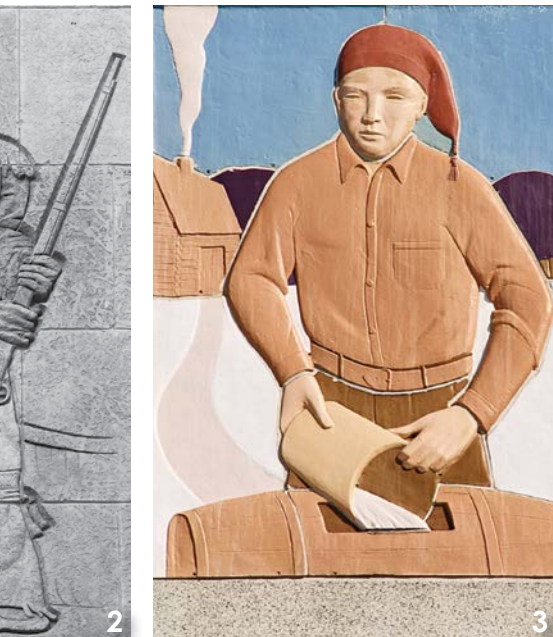
Three in-house designers at McCarter and Nairne developed the Marine Building's dazzling decorative palette.



Glazed terra-cotta panels lining the front archway feature fronds of seaweed and various marine creatures, while panels on a lower cornice include flying geese and leaping fish. The brass trim framing the revolving front doors boasts turtles, starfish and snails; other terra-cotta panels at the building's base include dirigibles, ships, biplanes, and trains emerging from mountain tunnels. No other Canadian building from the period incorporates such a lively and coherent decorative program.

TORONTO

The Toronto Stock Exchange building (George and Moorhouse, with Samuel H. Maw, 1937) sports decoration depicting eight different industries—in-



cluding transportation and communications, logging and smelting—whose shares were traded on the exchange. Designed by noted Canadian artist Charles Comfort (1900–1994), the uniquely stylized motifs of men at work are presented in three media: in paint on a series of eight canvas murals adorning the trading floor; in pneumatically chiseled limestone on the giant bas-relief frieze spanning the Streamline Moderne front façade; and in stainless steel roundels on the entrance doors.

Given the vital role hydroelectricity from the Canadian side of Niagara Falls played in powering the growth of the province of Ontario, it's not surprising that Toronto's Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario Building (Sproatt and Rolph, 1935) features representations of moving water. Giant carved stone sluices flank the wavy glass block wall above its front entrance, while the wave theme continues inside on the marble trim and door handles.

MONTREAL

During the Art Deco era, primarily French-speaking Montreal led the country as a center of commerce, a position relinquished to English-speaking Toronto only after the rise of the Quebec sovereignty movement in the 1970s. The city's Canadian National Railways Central Station (John Schofield, 1942–43) includes Charles Comfort's remarkable murals gracing the interior of the concourse. Comfort wrote: "The work is an effort to formalize the contemporary life of Canadians, their industry, their recreation, their culture, their hopes and aspirations, and to some extent their environment."² Four large stepped bas-reliefs—representing the North, South, East and West of Canada—wrap around the corners, with smaller reliefs running beneath the giant windows at the ends of the concourse. Cream-colored on a pale blue background, these bas-reliefs—similar to those of the Toronto Stock Exchange—depict industrial activities such as lumbering, mining and fishing, but also feature interconnected scenes of such iconic Canadian activities as dog sledding, downhill skiing, canoeing and, of course, hockey. The French and English lyrics of "O Canada," by then the country's de facto

national anthem, encircle the murals' base.

EDMONTON

The fur trade played an important role in Canadian history. The city of Edmonton in central Alberta was once the location of a major trading post for the Hudson's Bay Company. The company's department store in that city (Moody and Moore, 1937–38) boasts an oversize incised limestone carving of a trapper. Meanwhile, across the country in Montreal, on the façade of the Holt Renfrew store (Ross and Macdonald, 1937), the copper and brass front doors feature low-relief depictions of beaver, sheep, and fur-bearing animals.

Many architects and artists incorporated Canadian symbols in their work. Charles Dolphin included beaver—nibbling on tree stumps and interspersed with maple leaves and bulrushes—in the bas-relief

"ARCHETYPES SUCH AS HOCKEY, BEAVER, AND MAPLE SYRUP FARMING ALL TURN UP ON THE COUNTRY'S DECO BUILDINGS"

cornice on the Toronto Postal Delivery Terminal (1939–40). Montreal sculptor Henri Hébert depicted an *habitant* man (early French settler) making maple syrup in one of four terra-cotta bas-relief panels high up on the Administration Building of the Montreal Botanical Garden (1932–37); the three other panels show a moose eating water lilies, a First Nations woman grinding corn, and a First Nations hunter in a birchbark canoe. Pine needles adorn the metalwork on Alexandra Biriukova's 1930 house designed for Group of Seven painter Lawren Harris.

But perhaps the greatest champion of Canadian-themed decoration was architect John M. Lyle (1872–1945) who, incidentally, worked in New York City from 1896 to 1905. In the late 1920s, Lyle's office set out to "accumulate data in the forms of Canadian flowers, fruits, trees, birds, animals, grain, marine life, and motifs of indigenous people . . . [We were] trying to create a new language [of decorative ornament] based on Canadian forms, the only criterion [being] that any form had to pass the test of beauty."³ Much of his work from this period consisted of bank branches, all in the Stripped Classical idiom.

For his 1929 Dominion Bank in Toronto, Lyle designed a carved capital of a quarter column on the front façade with native flora such as lilies, sunflow-

ers and corncocks, while the capitals of side-façade pilasters consist of birds, including swans and pigeons. The molding above the first floor reflects First Nations motifs.

Also in 1929, the Bank of Nova Scotia hired Lyle to design a branch in the southern Alberta city of Calgary (which became the oil capital of Canada only in the late 1940s). For the building's front façade, Lyle designed three carved limestone bas-reliefs depicting the primary elements of the local economy: oil, grain and ranching. Vertical bas-reliefs framing the ground-floor windows portrayed prairie life before and after European contact: the former contained a bison head, hunting tools, and a First Nations elder, the latter featured a horse's head, rifles and a Stetson-wearing cowboy.

Lyle's most complete expression of Canadian iconography was the Bank of Nova Scotia's head office building in

Halifax, the country's leading city on the east coast. This remarkable structure, built 1930–31, features 86 different representations of Canadian animals and plants, plus scenes of local economic and historical significance.

Lyle was certainly aware of classic Deco motifs: for instance, he treated the oil gushing from the oil well on the Calgary bank façade and the smoke belching from the Sydney Steel Mill's exhaust stacks on the Halifax bank façade as perfectly symmetrical frozen fountains. Without question, however, Canadian motifs take pride of place in Lyle's work of the Deco era.

BEYOND CANADIAN ICONOGRAPHY

Canadian architects also incorporated more universal Deco motifs. The fascination with Egypt played out on the Empress Theatre in Montreal (Joseph-Alcide Chaussé, 1927), whose façade includes a pharaoh's head and palm leaves. On the Albert Memorial Bridge

(Puntin, O'Leary and Coxall, 1930) in the city of Regina, Saskatchewan—some 350 miles northwest of Bismarck, North Dakota—the baluster capitals sport colorful terra-cotta motifs of lotus flowers and papyrus plants. And the neon-lit sign for the Vogue Theatre in Vancouver—designed in 1940 by Canada's premier cinema architects, Kaplan and Sprachman—is crowned with a kneeling silhouette of the Roman goddess Diana.

With the arrival of the International Style after World War II, building ornamentation fell out of favor. Fortunately, Canada can still enjoy the blessing of its rich heritage of architectural decoration from the interwar period.

Tim Morawetz is the author of Art Deco Architecture Across Canada: Stories of the country's buildings between the two World Wars (2017). ADSNY members can use the promotional code ARTDECONYC to obtain a 15% discount when purchasing the book on Amazon.com.



Endnotes

(1) Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal, July 1931, 256–7. (2) Engineering and Contract Record, June 23, 1943, 43. (3) Royal Architectural Institute of Canada Journal, April 1929, 135.

Images

(1) Marine Building, Vancouver: front doors. (2) Hudson's Bay Co. store, Edmonton: fur trapper bas-relief. Photo: Tim Morawetz (3) Montreal Botanical Garden Administration Building: maple syrup habitant bas-relief. Photo: Sandra Cohen-Rose and Colin Rose (4) Toronto Stock Exchange: frieze. Photo: Tim Morawetz (5) Toronto Postal Delivery Terminal: cornice, beaver bas-relief. Photo: Tim Morawetz (6) Bank of Nova Scotia, Calgary: oil well bas-relief. Photo: Adina Currie (7) Dominion Bank, Toronto: quarter-column capital. Photo: Tim Morawetz (8) Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario Building, Toronto: carved sluice. Photo: Tim Morawetz (9) Bank of Nova Scotia, Halifax: Sydney Steel Mill bas-relief. Photo: Sandra Cohen-Rose and Colin Rose

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