

# The art deco

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ART DECO Art Deco Art Deco is a prominent visual arts design style. It first appeared in France around the time when World War 1 was starting<sup>1</sup>. Between 1920 and 1940s it gained fame internationally but finally declined after World War 2. The word Art Deco was coined from the 1925 exposition in Paris which was dubbed Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes. It is a design style that combines traditional craft motifs with imagery and materials from Machine Age. Machine age, in a nutshell, is a term used to refer to the period between two world wars. After 1925, designs were mostly influenced by the changes in art and innovations in the period between the two wars. Chic elegance, eclectic history and national imagery, and Machine age characterized the revolution. Art movements such as the Bauhaus, Constructivism, Cubism, De Stijl, Futurism, Orphism, and Surrealism served to help the inherent modernism of the style<sup>2</sup>. Art Deco encompassed all types of art: crafts and fine arts. Some of its applications included: interior design, furniture, jewellery, textiles, fashion and industrial design. Architecture, graphics and paint also incorporated art deco. Mathematical geometric shapes formed the basis of the structure of most Art Deco design patterns. They were generally seen to have trapezoidal, zigzag and triangular shapes, chevron patterns, stepped forms and sunburst motifs<sup>3</sup>. Floral patterns and images of botanical objects were also part of the design. Plain or geometric fabrics were mostly used in Art Deco. Smooth fabrics such as wools, silks that lacked texture were used. Cushions sometimes covered in fabrics that contrasted with the rest of the body were sometimes used to enhance boldness. Art Deco reflected a shift to lighter and more neutral shades that had a metallic undertone. Popular colors in this

design are such shades as black, gray, silver, white and brown variations. Bolder colors such as yellow, red, gold, green and blue were used minimally and were muted. Exotic pastels were a popular accent color at the time when Art Deco was popular.

Art Deco fashion formed the next fashion look after the decline of art nouveau. It had two phases between 1910 to 1924 and between 1924 to 1930. The former was built around neoclassical/ peasant designs while the latter was more minimalistic, with a modern touch. The first phase was led by Paul Poiret<sup>5</sup>. He launched his first works in 1908 which were slim, simple, high waisted dresses that were delicately layered and exotic in style. His use of shades of pink, purple, blue, green and gold was inspired by his interest in Fauve paintings. In 1911, Paul organized the thousand and one night Ball which brought to fame the use of light fabrics, gold tassels, tunic dresses and statement embroidery<sup>6</sup>. The second phase was initiated by designers such as Jean Patou and Chanel whose style was influenced by Sonia Delaunay's cubist designs. This new look was made with consideration to the revolutionized woman who was characterized by flat chest, bobbed hair and was more outgoing. Styles in this phase included short-skirted, simple art deco inspired outfits. They were made from fine wools, gilded and flowered Lyon silks and were embellished with beading/ tucking detail for identity.

#### Bibliography

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