



Art DECO



INTERNATIONAL

During the period between the two World Wars, an eclectic design style developed that later became known as Art Deco. The name was derived from the *1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes*, held in Paris, which celebrated living in the modern world.

What characterises Art Deco design?

The architecture and applied arts of the period reveal a varied mix. However, most share the hallmarks of geometry and simplicity, often combined with vibrant colours and simple shapes that celebrate the rise of commerce and technology.

It was popularly considered to be an elegant style of cool sophistication in architecture and applied arts which range from luxurious objects made from exotic material to mass produced, streamlined items available to a growing middle class.



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The Art Deco era was one of contradictions. Through the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression of the 1930s, the Art Deco style infused the everyday world with an elegant style of glamour and sophistication.

Singers and songwriters entertained audiences through the new medium of radio, and Hollywood musicals offered the hope of better times and a temporary escape from daily troubles.

Travel was in the news with ocean liners racing the Atlantic and trains crossing continents, as speed became a metaphor for modern times.

The world of Art Deco represents a "graciousness of form" from a simpler time. Today, "Art Deco" is used to refer to a mix of styles from the 1920s and 1930s.



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- § Period between the two World Wars
- § Eclectic design style
- § Name derived from the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs Industriels et Modernes* in Paris





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§ Today, "Art Deco" refers to a mix of styles from the 1920s and 1930s.

§ Elegant style of cool sophistication.

§ New medium of radio, growing middle class.

§ Movies offered hope of better times and a temporary escape from daily troubles.

§ Travel - ocean liners racing the Atlantic and trains crossing continents





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§ Speed became a metaphor for modern times.

§ Geometry and simplicity.

§ Vibrant colors and simple shapes that celebrate the rise of commerce and technology.

§ From luxurious objects made from exotic materials to mass produced, streamlined items.





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Before the Exhibition

Although the movement began about 1910, the term Art Deco was not applied to it until 1925 after the exhibition.

Here we see two teapots, one designed by the Suprematist Kasimir Malevich.

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Unknown artist c.1920



Malevich, 1918

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One school, working in a style called **ART DECO**, freely modified the traditional historical styles and adapted them to the needs of contemporary life.

These pieces by **Ruhlmann** show his mastery of simplifying the forms of traditional neo-classical style furniture, without losing the elegance and grace provided through fine proportions. He usually worked in fine materials, ebony, ivory, walnut, etc.



Jacques Emile Ruhlmann (1879-1933)

· ART ·
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Lady's writing desk
(Bureau de dame)
(c. 1920)

Macassar ebony wood, ivory, silver, brass,
steel, silk tassels



Jacques Emile Ruhlmann (1879-1933)

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Leleu, 1924



Cheuret, 1925



Sognot, 1925

Other designers had their own interpretation of the new Art Deco style. Their pieces have a **streamlined richness** that owes as much to **superb handcrafting** lustrously finished rare woods with inlays of such exotic materials as ivory in angular, abstracted designs as to their **daring geometric shapes**.



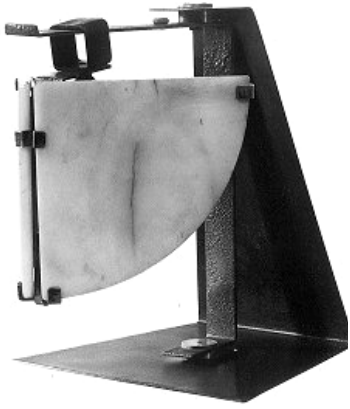
Dufrene, 1925



Legraine, 1923

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The style of Art Deco furniture can be traced back to the first decade of the 20th century, especially to the sharply defined geometric forms of the Constructivists. The Bauhaus concern with the use of new materials also had its influence. In the work of Chareau we can see these influences.



Pierre Chareau

Jean Dunand was famous for his laquerwork, especially in his beautiful screens. Again we see fine materials being masterly crafted into elegant streamlined forms.



Fortissimo Screen
Jean Dunand (1877-1942) & Séraphin Soudbinine (1870-1944)
Lacquered wood, eggshell, mother-of-pearl, gold



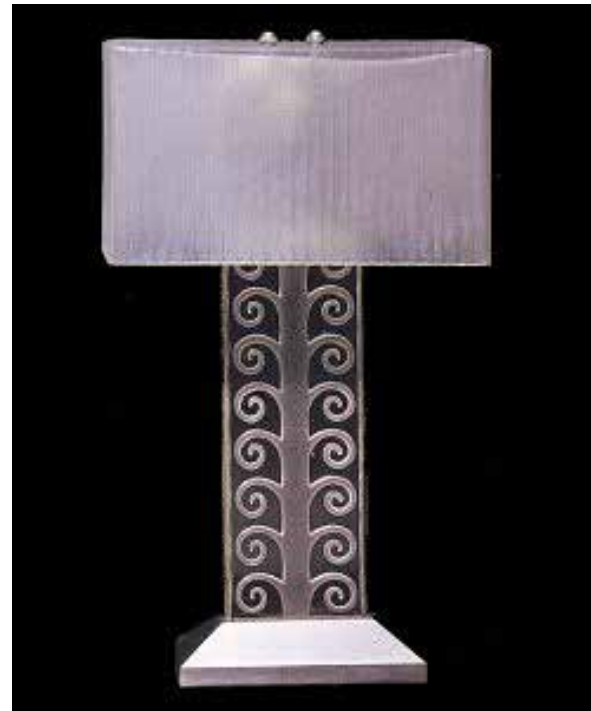
Dunand was also a reputable ceramicist, using the same elegant simplification of decoration.

Jean Dunand (1877-1942)

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Lalique's moulded glassware of the 1920s and '30s epitomises what is now called Art Deco; characterised by frosted surfaces, applied or inlaid colour, deep, stylised relief designs and patterns, and flawless craftsmanship.



1925



1930s



1933

Rene Lalique, France

ART DECO

During the 1920s and 1930s, European and American porcelains became increasingly geometric and abstract in design.

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Vase, c. 1925 made of enamel on copper



Tropics vase of 1937, Manufacture Nationale de Sèvres



Tea-for-two service, c. 1930 Porcelain Clarice Cliff, designer



Sun ray double-handled lotus jug, 1929-30 Glazed pottery

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The French silversmith Jean Puiforcat produced some of the most stunning silverwork of the C20th. His sleek, elegant designs proved that the traditional embellishments could be eliminated without sacrificing luxury or function.

The bold streamlined forms and shining surfaces of his designs epitomise the Art Deco style and Puiforcat's prominence in silver. Puiforcat and other designers of the 1920s looked to aerodynamic shapes used in modern industry as sources, concentrating on form, rather than ornament, in their construction.



Jean Puiforcat (1897-1945)

The Art Deco era was an age of mass production, with a number of new consumer items, such as radios, being produced in large quantities. During the 30s, radio manufacturers took advantage of several new synthetic materials, including plastics, which were cheap to use, easy to mould into attractive shapes and available in a variety of colours. One such material, bakelite, found wide application in a number of objects, including this popular radio by Fada.



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In the 1920s, new and improved manufacturing techniques created a surplus of consumer goods. As supply began exceeding demand, dynamic graphic design became an essential means of persuading customers to buy a particular product. Poster designs were simplified, their images reduced to the essentials of product and brand name. Sharp linear compositions, with strong diagonals and aerial perspectives, as seen in this exceptional poster ad, were floated on flat areas of background colour, all carefully calculated to draw the eye immediately into the message. The view "through a window into the future," is an unqualified embracement of the machine age and the promise it held.





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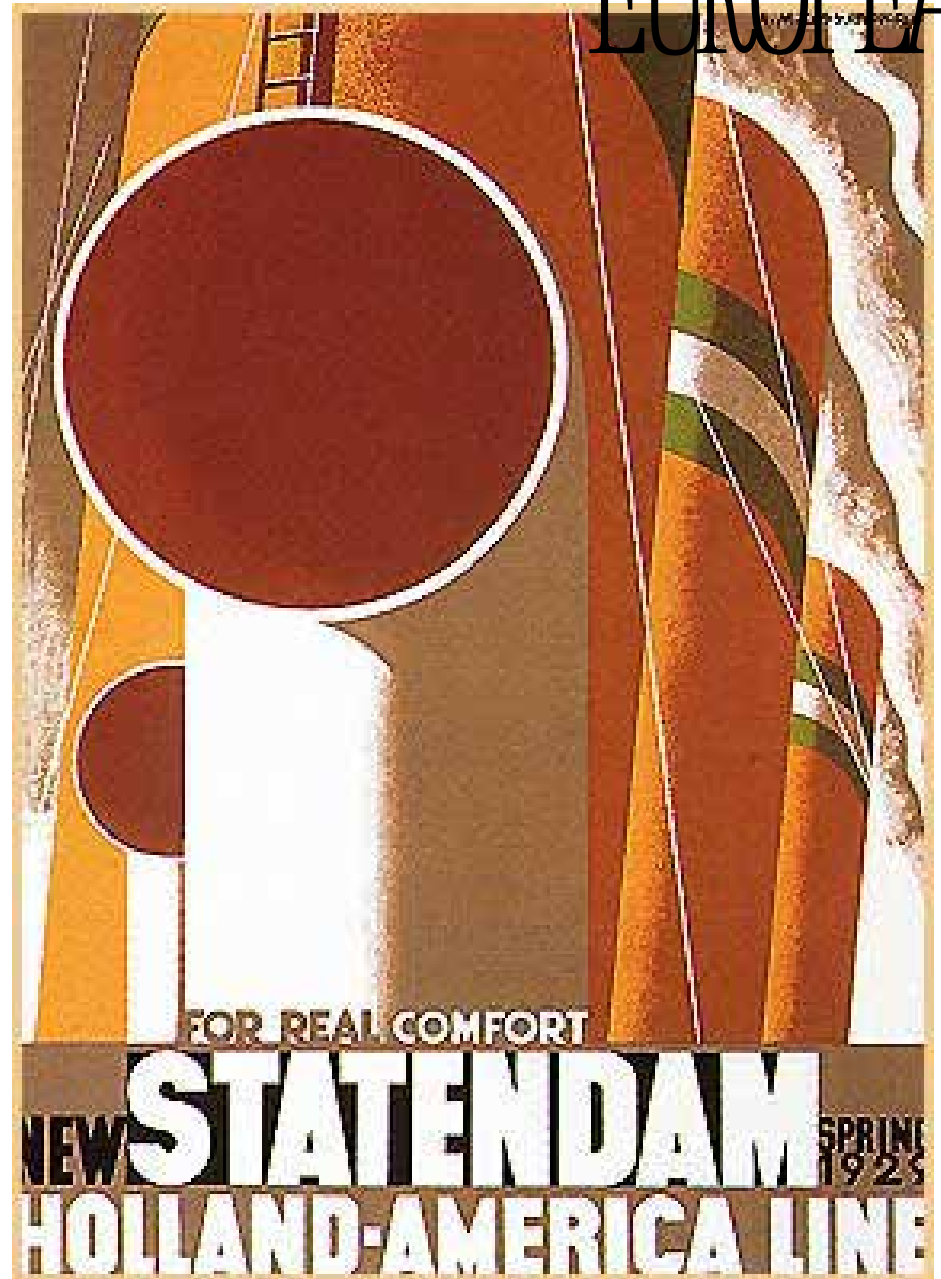
One of the most famous poster designers of the twenties was A.M. Cassandre, who was known for his travel posters, especially his luxury liner designs. Here is a poster for the Normandie liner.



A. M. Cassandre (1901-1968) France

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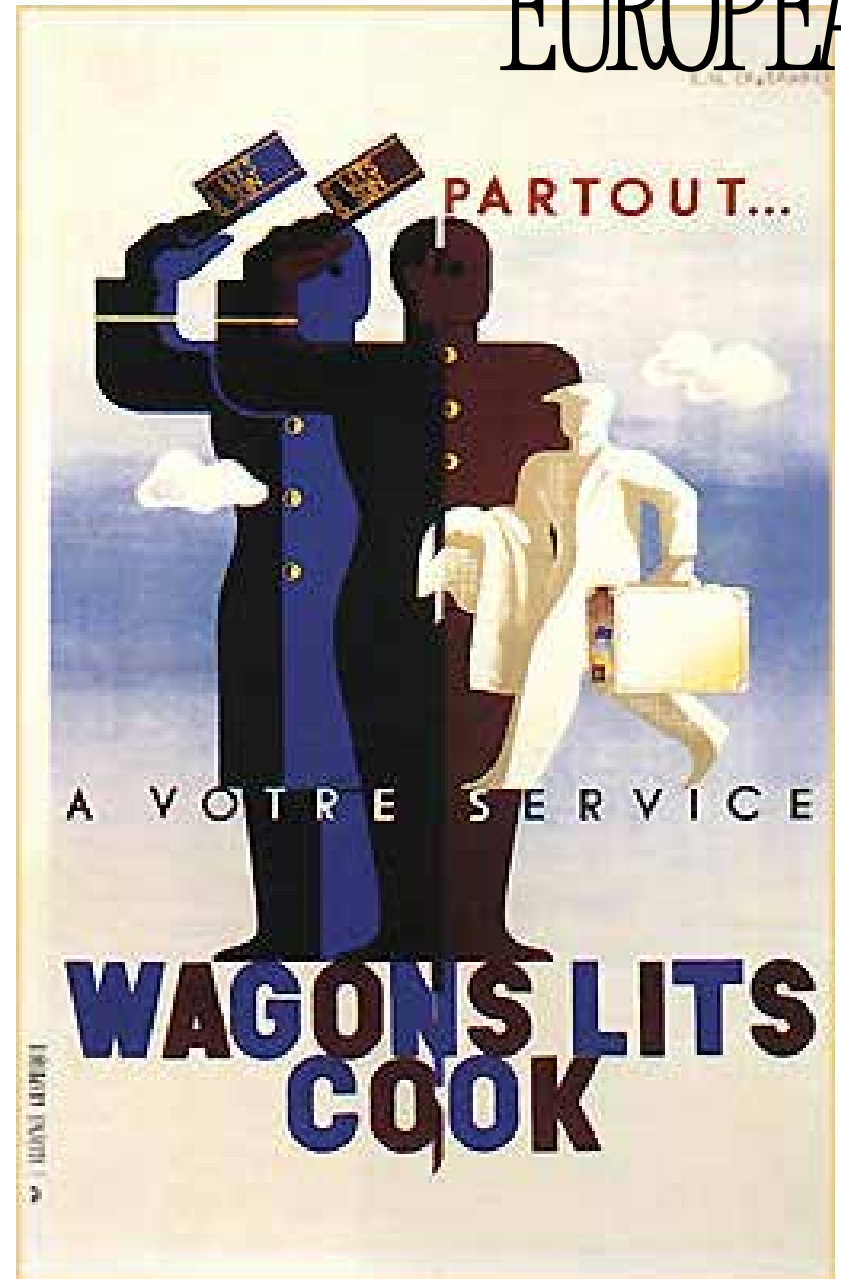
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A. M. Cassandre (1901-1968) France

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A. M. Cassandre (1901-1968) France

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Tamara de Lempicka



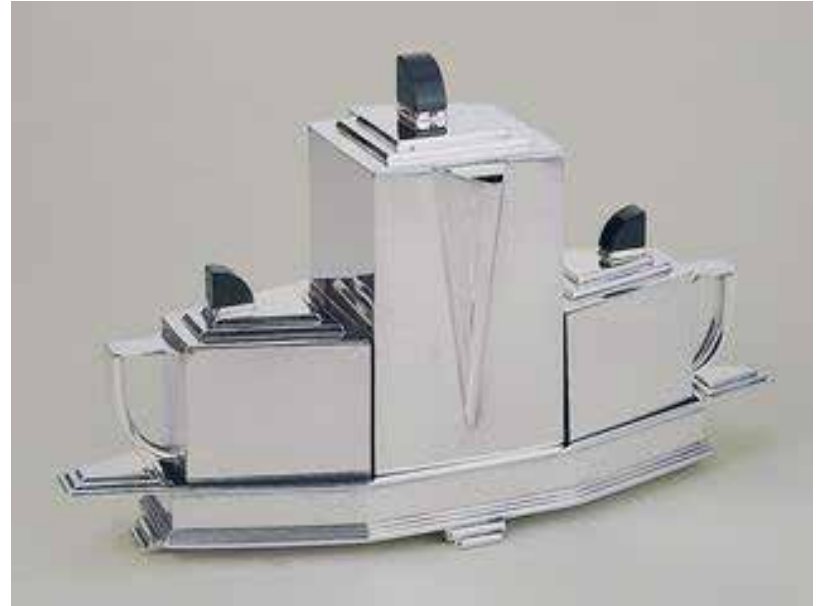
U.S.A



Art Deco became steadily more geometric and linear as objects were increasingly mass-produced and as the U.S. supplanted France as the spiritual centre of the movement. It found expression in objects as diverse as locomotives, skyscrapers, roadside diners, radio cabinets, jukeboxes, and advertising displays.



1927



1928

Designers of accessories for the urban home soon drew on the "vertical" city's premier 1920s emblem, the skyscraper, as an appropriate design motif. Its terraced step-back form provided the inspiration for a host of home furnishings such as this "Skyscraper" tea and coffee service by Louis Rice.

We can see the same shapes in the tea set of 1928 made of silverplate with bakelite handles.

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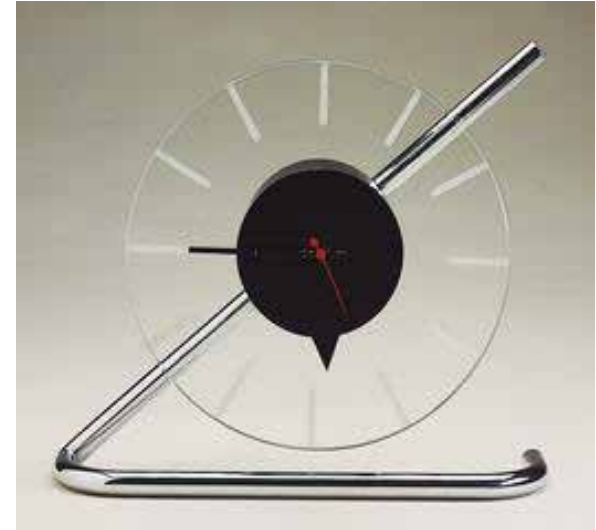
Tea service, c. 1928 of
silverplate with Bakelite
handles



Breakfast set, c. 1928 - Silver plate with
pewter



Aluminium tea service 1929



Art Deco flourished in America, mostly in mass-produced furniture of lesser quality. A notable exception is the work of the studio of Donald Deskey (1894-1989). In this two-tiered metal side table we see the blending of the sumptuousness of French modernism to the technology of the Bauhaus. He combined walnut with chromium, a new material for the time. The shelves, shaped like orbiting disks, give the piece a futuristic appeal and reveal the 1930s interest in science fiction.

This table by glass designer Dorothy Thorpe is extremely rare, and perhaps the only one of its kind ever produced. Here, she utilised solid glass rods as supports for the circular glass top.

Z Clock, c. 1933 - Chromium-plated metal and etched glass



Zephyr, 1934, brass & bakelite



Brass "Columns" clock

Kem Weber's approach to design was "to make the practical more beautiful and the beautiful more practical." Weber's many distinctive designs epitomise his approach, resulting in a streamlined objects that are both elegant and utilitarian.

Kem Weber (1889 – 1963)



c. 1936

Walter Dorwin Teague - Sparton radio, 1936 - Cobalt-blue mirror, wood, and chromium steel

In this radio, Walter Teague combined sight and sound to herald the unlimited promises of the future. The work's streamlined form—achieved through horizontal lines, rounded corners, sleek surfaces, and bold typography—suggests supersonic flight, as if it were hurtling through space.

Walter Dorwin Teague (1883 – 1960)

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Raymond Loewy was an industrial designer well-known for designing the Coca Cola bottle and several advertising icons.

1940 the redesign of the Lucky Strike's pack,
1943 soda fountain and
1933 pencil sharpener

Raymond Loewy

Henry Dreyfuss was one of the pioneer American industrial design consultants. Engaged by a number of companies to design everything from telephones to locomotives, Dreyfuss was inspired by the machine aesthetic. The water cooler and tray designed in 1935 combines streamlining and the use of metallic finishes, popular touches on mass-produced products in the 1930s.

1949 Vacuum cleaner for Hoover.

1937 Model 300 phone for Bell.

1935 Thermos.



Henry Dreyfuss (1904-72)

The Collins Park Hotel is one of the many fine buildings in the Art Deco District of Miami Beach. Designed by Henry Hohaus in 1939, the building's circular entry is dramatised by the vertical columns, chevron designs and vivid colors characteristic of many buildings in the district.



The Collins Park Hotel, 1939

The Empire State Building, finished in 1931-32, ended the era of Art Deco skyscrapers. The building's tiered structure, reminiscent of the Egyptian and Aztec pyramids, reflects the popular skyscraper style of the period. The building is topped with a mast for mooring dirigibles, an expression of the machine age and its focus on transportation.



The Empire State Building, 1932

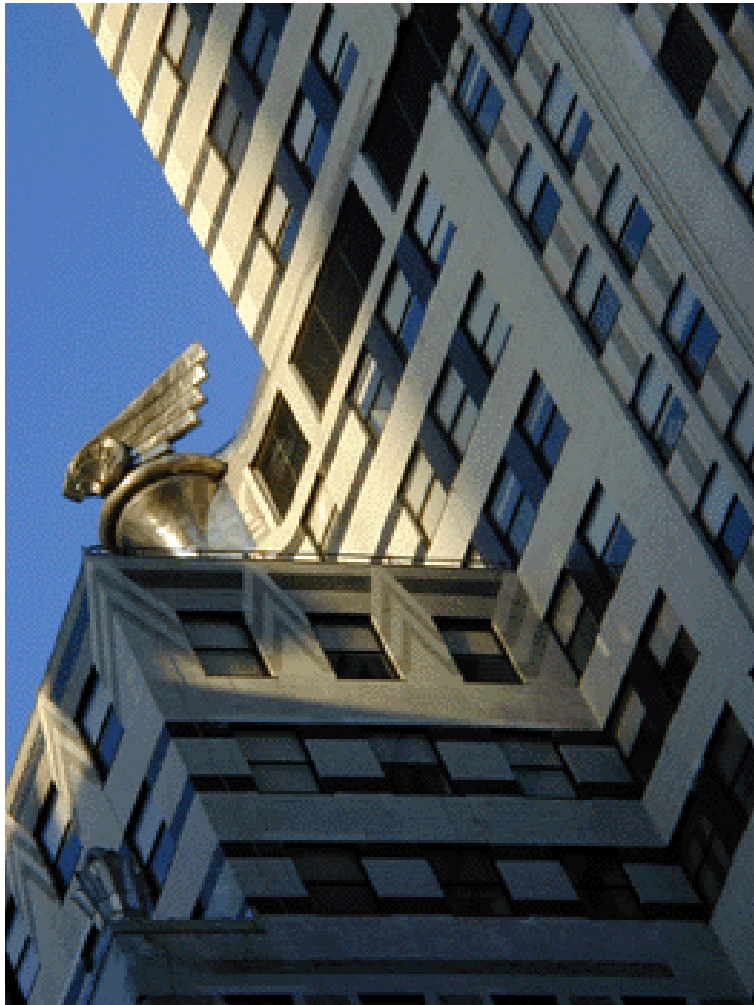
The Chrysler Building is considered an archetypal American Art Deco skyscraper. Designed in 1930 by William van Alen, the exterior of the building reflects the Chrysler automobile. The building is faced with Nircosta metal, which resembles platinum, and is decorated with sculptural ornaments similar to hood ornaments. The radiating curves on the building's dome mimic giant sunbeams, a popular Art Deco theme.



The Chrysler Building, 1930

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These decorative features on the building are based on the hood ornaments of Chrysler cars.

The Chrysler Building, 1930



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Another great example of Art Deco architecture is the Rockefeller Centre in NY. Designed by Raymond Hood in the 1930s.



Rockefeller Centre, NY



Prometheus, sculpture Paul Manship, 1934

Rockefeller Centre, NY



Relief panel of Hermes

Rockefeller Centre, NY

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Sound - detail main entrance - Lee Lawrie

Rockefeller Centre, NY

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Wisdom - Lee Lawrie

Rockefeller Centre, NY





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The Art Deco style came to Australia around the thirties and with the boom in cinema building, it seemed the appropriate style – sleek, stylish, and oh so modern – to apply to these new forms of architecture.

Sydney Cinemas



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Sun Theatre

Melbourne also had its examples. As well as Art Deco cinemas, there are many fine examples of skyscrapers and other Art Deco architecture as well.



Melbourne Cinemas

· ART ·
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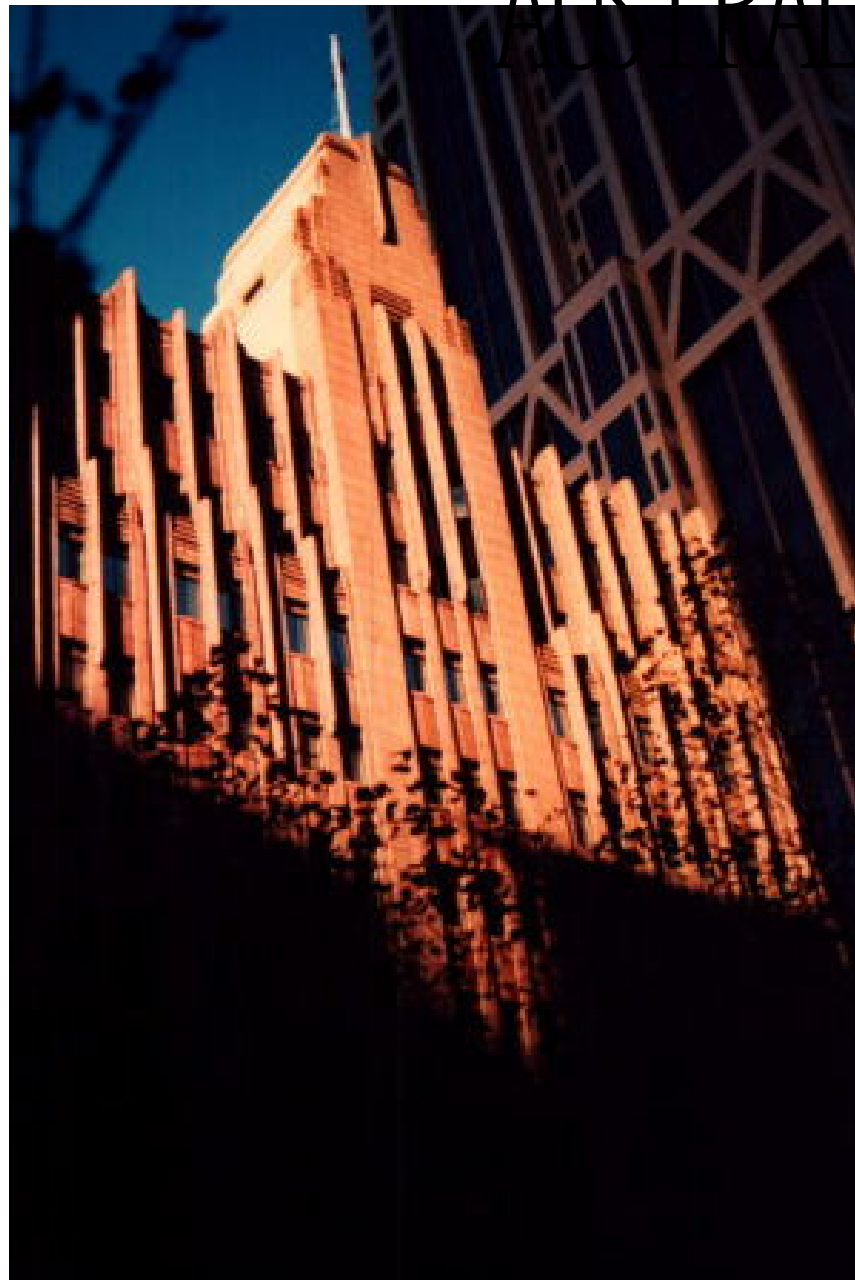
Various Melbourne buildings

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Various Melbourne buildings

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Prince of Wales Hotel

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Sydney Harbour Bridge

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Sydney Harbour Bridge

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Sydney Harbour Bridge



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Luna Park, Milsons Point

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Anzac War Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney

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Pub Poster



The End