

S P R I N G 2 0 1 4



CHICAGO ART DECO SOCIETY

Magazine



IN THIS ISSUE

Chicago Deco
After Dark

Paris
Deco

Inter-War Roman
Architecture

Screen
Deco



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ABOUT CADS

The Chicago Art Deco Society ("CADS") is a community of members that celebrates the unique aesthetic of the Interwar Period including fine and decorative arts, architecture and fashion that defined the elegant Art Deco and Streamline Moderne era. CADS was founded in 1982 as a non-profit organization with a mission of education, preservation and fellowship.

CADS members develop their knowledge, make connections, and get involved to save historic structures through our advocacy and education programs. When you join CADS you'll meet fellow enthusiasts and experts, receive unique benefits, continue learning, and play a meaningful part in preserving our Art Deco heritage.

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With membership you will receive the highly respected *Chicago Art Deco Magazine*. Richly illustrated and loaded with topical articles, special features and a calendar of international art deco events & book reviews. *Chicago Art Deco Magazine* has become a collectible in its own right.

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 Chicago
Art Deco Society

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear CADS Members,

Since the publication of the fall issue of *CADS Magazine* last October, CADS has seen a whirlwind of activity, with many new events and projects.

Fall activities included opportunities to see Art Deco-inspired furniture at The Golden Triangle and Pagoda Red as well as receptions at Club Lucky, Ceres Cafe, and Martin Lawrence Galleries—Oak Brook. Special thanks to Cindy Oakes and Kathleen Murphy Skolnik for suggesting The Golden Triangle event, Richard Souyol for introducing us to Ceres Cafe, and Social Committee Chair Kevin Palmer and his committee for organizing these events. In November, members enjoyed an in-depth presentation at the Polish Museum of America on the work of Polish artist Stefan Norblin who created the Art Deco interiors of Umaid Bhawan Palace in Jodhpur, India. Special thanks to Jan Lorys for inviting us to co-sponsor this important event.

In January, *CADS Magazine* Editor, Kathleen Murphy Skolnik and I visited Paris to view a major exhibition on Art Deco at the City of Architecture and Heritage. While in Paris, we met Pascal Laurent, an architect and Art Deco scholar who will speak to CADS members on May 23 during a visit to Chicago.

Kathleen was hardly back from Paris when she was off again—this time to Camagüey, Cuba at the invitation of Wilfredo Rodríguez Ramos, executive secretary of the Art Deco Society of Camagüey. The occasion was the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the city. Activities included an exhibition of Art Deco in Chicago and Camagüey. Special thanks to both Kathleen and CADS Board Member Mark Garzon for helping to design and produce the exhibition materials. This visit is the beginning of what we hope will be an ongoing relationship between CADS and the Art Deco Society of Camagüey with the aim of supporting our mutual interest in Art Deco preservation. We look forward to Wilfredo visiting us here in Chicago this fall.

The CADS Annual Meeting on February 22 was a huge success with over 150 people attending. Special thanks to my friend and colleague Roberta Nusim, president of the Art Deco Society of New York, for arranging the loan of the video *Deco—The Art of Glamour*. Members also heard updates from Amy Keller, CADS vice president and preservation chair, Keith Bringe, director of the CADS Survey Project, and Bob Bruegmann, editor of the forthcoming book *Chicago Art Deco*. Many thanks to Amy, Keith, and Bob for the countless hours and creative energy they have put into making their projects successful.

I am pleased to welcome longtime CADS Board member Ruth Dearborn as the newest columnist for *CADS Magazine*. Ruth's unmatched knowledge of CADS' history makes her the ideal person to write about our past. Welcome, Ruth.

For frosting on the cake, this issue reprints a book review written by Art Deco icon Bevis Hillier—yes, the same Bevis Hillier whose 1968 book *Art Deco* was a milestone in the resurgence of interest in Art Deco and is widely credited with popularizing the term. Welcome, Bevis.

To all our CADS members—thank you for your continued support and enjoy this exceptional issue.

Joseph Loundy
April 2014



CADS Welcomes Members and Guests at Fall and Winter Social Events



The Golden Triangle gallery with its collection of Asian and Central European antiques and furniture.

Art Deco-themed social programs gave CADS members plenty of opportunities to renew acquaintances and welcome new Deco aficionados this fall and winter.

In late September, the Golden Triangle on North Clark Street opened its doors to CADS for an elegant cocktail reception. Guests enjoyed a private viewing of the gallery's collection of Asian and Central European Art Deco furniture while sipping champagne cocktails, a concoction of champagne, a sugar cube, bitters, and a lemon twist that *Esquire* named one of the top ten cocktails for 1934. Thanks to owners Douglas Van Tress and Chauwarin Tuntisak, and Events Manager Matt Nguyen for such a memorable evening.

CADS members and several new recruits met up in November at Ceres Cafe in the Board of Trade, named for John Storrs' sculpture of the Roman goddess of grain and the harvest that tops the building's central tower. Revelers enjoyed a wide selection of hors d'oeuvres, washed down by some very potent cocktails.

December's Holiday Deco Social began at Bucktown's Pagoda Red with its selection of both Art Deco and traditional Asian furniture and accessories. The next stop was Club Lucky, a former speakeasy and a CADS favorite, for a buffet of pizza, antipasti, and Italian sandwiches along with libations reminiscent of the Deco era.



David Nitecki, elegant as always, enjoys a champagne cocktail at the Golden Triangle reception.

Thanks to the CADS Social Committee, chaired by Kevin Palmer, for organizing the CADS social gatherings and searching out great Deco sites for these programs.

A LOOK BACK AT 2013

CADS thrived during 2013, a year of achievements in many different areas. Members learned of these accomplishments at the society's Annual Meeting, held February 22 at Roosevelt University.

CADS President Joe Loundy reviewed the year's activities, which included a total of ten educational and social programs held in downtown Chicago and in the city's neighborhoods and suburbs. Several of these events represented collaborations with other Chicago-based

organizations. CADS partnered with: Friends of Historic Second Presbyterian Church for the presentation *Grete Marks: When Modernism Was Degenerate* by Mel Buchanan; the Chicago Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians for a tour by curator Tim Samuelson of the exhibition *Modernism's Messengers: The Art of Alfonso and Margaret Iannelli* at the Chicago Cultural Center, followed by a book signing with David Jameson for *Alfonso Iannelli: Modern by Design* at the Cliff Dwellers Club; the Women's Jewelry Association Midwest Chapter for Susan Klein Bagdade's lecture on Eisenberg Jewelry; and the Polish Museum of America, the Consulate of the Republic of India, and the Consulate of the Republic of Poland for a viewing of the documentary *Chitraanjali: Stefan Norblin in India*.

Amy Keller, CADS vice president and Preservation Committee chair, reported on the committee's efforts over the past year, which focused on two main projects—the Ashland Avenue Bridge and the Chicago Motor Club. In 2013, CADS nominated the Ashland Avenue Bridge for landmark status. The Commission on Chicago Landmarks agrees that the bridge meets the criteria for landmark designation. Its survival, however, remains threatened due to the Chicago Department of Transportation's lack of commitment to its preservation. The development of an Ashland Avenue Bridge advocacy strategy is among the committee's priorities for 2014.

Fortunately, news from the Chicago Motor Club is far more promising. New owners acquired the property in summer



CADS RECAP

A look back at the Society's fall and winter events



The CADS Holiday Deco Social began with a reception at Pagoda Red in Bucktown.



Bethany L. Costilow, Richard Souyoul, Ann Marie Del Monico, and Jeffery Segal enjoying the Deco ambiance at Club Lucky.

2013 and are committed to the building's restoration and adaptation to a hotel. Efforts are now underway to stabilize the John Warner Norton mural, repair the building's facade and ironwork, re-install the light fixtures, and restore the lobby based on original plans. In late January, CADS submitted a letter of support to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks applauding the new owners' commitment to the building's preservation.

Keith Bringe, director of the CADS Survey Project, reported that the survey archive continues to expand. It now includes 15,240 contemporary and archival images, 793 buildings, sites, and monuments, and 123 manufacturers.

Plans for the book *Art Deco Chicago* are moving ahead. As part of a restructuring process, Robert Bruegmann, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art History, Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago, was named editor and will be responsible for developing the book's overall

concept and content. Serving as executive editor is Robert Blandford, Associate Professor in the Arts, Entertainment, and Media Management Department at Columbia College Chicago, who will oversee operations, logistics, and finances and manage the Editorial Advisory Board and an international advisory committee.

The Editorial Board and a group of potential contributors have been meeting to discuss the format and contents of the book and the themes to be stressed. A timeline has been established, and the projected publication date is early 2017. Discussions are also underway with the Chicago History Museum for an Art Deco exhibition to coincide with the release of the book.

Another CADS accomplishment during 2013 was the establishment of a Social Media Committee chaired by Mark Garzon. Among the committee's first efforts was a revamping of the CADS website to allow online membership renewal and events registration. In addition, CADS now has a



Jeff Owczarek, Carla Lewis, Patrick Steffes, and Michael Leonhardt socialize at the Ceres Cafe. All photos by Mark Garzon.

presence on social media sites Facebook, Twitter, and Meetup.

A screening of the fifty-minute film *Deco—The Art of Glamour* followed the business portion of the meeting. Supermodel Jerry Hall moderated the film, which featured a panel of international scholars, including Ghislaine Wood. Wood was one of the curators of the exhibition *Art Deco, 1910-1939*, which debuted

in 2003 at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, and a guest speaker at a November 2003 CADS program. The film traced the evolution of Art Deco from its exposure to an international audience at the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, to its impact on skyscraper design in the United States, to its later transformation into the more streamlined Art Moderne form. ■



DECO SPOTLIGHT

Exhibitions, tours, lectures & special events of interest to Art Deco enthusiasts

ONGOING

America on the Move
National Museum of American History, Washington, DC
americanhistory.si.edu
202-633-1000

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

The Art of J. C. Leyendecker: Selections from the Museum Collection
The Haggin Museum, Stockton, CA
hagginmuseum.org/209-940-6300

Downtown Deco, Chicago Board of Trade, and Merchandise Mart Walking Tours
Riverfront Deco Walking and Trolley Tour
Chicago Architecture Foundation
architecture.org/312-922-3432

Cincinnati Union Terminal Rotunda Tours
Cincinnati History Museum
Cincinnati, OH
cincymuseum.org/513-287-7031

Art Deco Walking Tour of Los Angeles
Los Angeles Conservancy
Los Angeles, CA
laconservancy.org/213-623-2489

Art Deco Walks
Art Deco Society of California
San Francisco, CA
artdecosociety.org/415-982-3326

Downtown Deco, Art Deco Marina, Coit Tower Murals, and Controversial Murals of Rincon Center Walking Tours
San Francisco City Guides
sfcityguides.org/415-557-4266

Miami Beach Art Deco District and MiMo (Miami Modern) on the Beach Guided Walking Tours
Self-Guided Art Deco Architectural Audio Tour
Miami Design Preservation League
Miami Beach, FL
mdpl.org/305-672-2014

Guided Art Deco Walking, Bus, and Vintage Car Tours
Self-guided Art Deco Walking, Bike, and Driving Tours
Art Deco Trust
Napier, New Zealand
artdeconapier.com/+64 6 835 0022

IN PROGRESS

Mainbocher Corset (pink satin corset by Detolle), Paris, 1939, Horst P. Horst. © Condé Nast/Horst Estate.

Horst P. Horst (1906-99) photographed the exquisite creations of couturiers such as Chanel, Schiaparelli, and Vionnet in 1930s Paris and helped launch the careers of many models. *Horst: Photographer of Style*, a definitive retrospective of his work on view at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London from September 6 through January 4, 2015, displays Horst's best-known photographs alongside unpublished and rarely exhibited vintage prints and examines his creative process through archival film footage, original contact sheets, sketchbooks, and letters. The exhibition also features a re-creation of Horst's 1940s studio.



Thru May 6
Made in Hollywood: Photographs from the John Kobal Foundation
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Richmond, VA
vmfa.state.va.us/804-340-1400

Thru May 11
Archibald Motley: Jazz Age Modernist
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, Durham, NC
nasher.duke.edu/919-684-5135

Thru May 11
Remaking Tradition: Modern Art of Japan from the Tokyo National Museum
Cleveland Museum of Art
Cleveland, OH
clevelandart.org/216-421-7350

Thru May 11
Frank Lloyd Wright: Building the Imperial Hotel
Frist Center for the Visual Arts
Nashville, TN
fristcenter.org/615-244-3340

Thru May 18
Echoes and Origins: Italian Interwar Design
The Wolfsonian, Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

Thru June 1
Frank Lloyd Wright and the City: Density vs. Dispersal
Museum of Modern Art
New York, NY
moma.org/212-708-9400

Thru June 1
Jackson Pollock's Mural

Getty Center, Los Angeles, CA
getty.edu/310-440-7300

Thru June 8
The Bay Bridge: A Work in Progress, 1933-1936
de Young Museum
San Francisco, CA
deyoung.famsf.org/415-750-3600

Thru June 15
Alexandre Hogue: The Erosion Series
Dallas Museum of Art
Dallas Museum of Art
dallasmuseumofart.org
214-922-1200

Thru June 22
Industrial Sublime: Modernism and the Transformation of New York's Rivers, 1900-1940
Norton Museum of Art
West Palm Beach, FL
norton.org/561-832-5196

Thru June 22
The Left Front: Radical Art in the "Red Decade," 1929-1940
Mary & Leigh Block Museum of Art, Evanston, IL
blockmuseum.northwestern.edu
847-491-4000

Thru June 30
Posters of the Vienna Secession, 1898-1919
Degenerate Art: The Attack on Modern Art in Nazi Germany, 1937
Neue Galerie, New York, NY
neuegalerie.org/212-628-6200

Thru July 6

Hollywood Costume: Celebrating More Than 100 Years of Cinema Storytelling
Phoenix Art Museum, Phoenix, AZ
phxart.org/602-257-1222

Thru July 13
In the Streets: Photographing Urban Spaces
The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, FL
ringling.org/941-359-5700

Thru August 17
Modern American Realism: The Sara Roby Foundation Collection
Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC
americanart.si.edu/202-633-7970

Thru September 1
Italian Futurism, 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe
Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY
guggenheim.org/new-york
212-423-3587

Thru September
Vivian Vance
Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, Albuquerque, NM
cabq.gov/culturalservices/
albuquerque-museum
505-243-7255

Thru September 21
Designing Modern Women, 1890-1990s
Museum of Modern Art
New York, NY
moma.org/212-708-9400



DECO SPOTLIGHT

Exhibitions, tours, lectures & special events of interest to Art Deco enthusiasts

COMING IN 2014

April 25-July 27

Southwestern Allure: The Art of the Santa Fe Art Colony
New Mexico Museum of Art
Santa Fe, NM
nmartmuseum.org/505-476-5072

April 26

 *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior*
Marilyn F. Friedman
Chicago Art Deco Society
chicagoartdecosociety.com
312-280-9097

May 7

Hildreth Meière: Designing for Chicago
Kathleen Murphy Skolnik
Newberry Library, Chicago, IL
newberry.org/312-943-9090

May 8

 *Hildreth Meière and the Classical Roots of Art Deco*
Kathleen Murphy Skolnik
Chicago Art Deco Society/
Chicago-Midwest Chapter of the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art, Chicago, IL
chicagoartdecosociety.com
312-280-9097

May 8-August 10

Charles James: Beyond Fashion
Metropolitan Museum of Art
New York, NY
metmuseum.org/212-535-7710

May 10

The Art Deco Preservation Ball
Art Deco Society of California,
San Francisco, CA
artdecosociety.org/415-982-3326

May 10-October 19

Deco Japan: Shaping Art and Culture, 1920-1945
Seattle Asian Art Museum
Seattle, WA
seattleartmuseum.org
206-654-3100

May 16-September 14

Rising Up: Hale Woodruff's Murals at Talledega College
New Orleans Museum of Art
New Orleans, LA
noma.org/504-658-4100

May 17

Avalon Ball, Avalon, Santa Catalina Island, CA
Art Deco Society of Los Angeles
adsla.org/310-659-3326

May 17

All Wright 2014 Housewalk
Oak Park, IL
Frank Lloyd Wright Trust
gowright.org/877-848-3559

May 21-September 7

Dream Cars: Innovative Design, Visionary Ideas
High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
high.org/404-733-4444

May 23

 *French World's Fairs and Ocean Liners*
Pascal Laurent
The Houses of Tomorrow
Keith Bringe
Chicago Art Deco Society/
Chicago Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians/Alliance Francaise, Chicago, IL
chicagoartdecosociety.com
312-280-9097

May 24-September 7

Carl Van Vechten: Photographer to the Stars
Cedar Rapids Museum of Art
Cedar Rapids, IA
crma.org/319-366-7503

June 4-August 24

Paul Strand: The Mexican Portfolio
McNay Art Museum
San Antonio, TX
mcnayart.org/210-824-5368

June 28-September 28

I Have Seen the Future/Norman Bel Geddes Designs America
The Wolfsonian, Miami Beach, FL
wolfsonian.org/305-531-1001

July 27-October 26

Hard Times, Oklahoma, 1939-40
Philbrook Museum of Art
Tulsa, OK
philbrook.org/918-749-7941

August 29-September 1

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

September 6-January 4, 2015

Horst: Photographer of Style
Victoria & Albert Museum
London, England
vam.ac.uk/+44 (0) 20 7942 2000

September 9-January 4, 2015

The Making of Gone With The Wind
Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX
hrc.utexas.edu/512-471-8944



Ivo Pannaggi, *Speeding Train (Treno in corsa)*, 1922, oil on canvas, Fondazione Carima–Museo Palazzo Ricci, Macerata, Italy. Photo courtesy of Fondazione Cassa di risparmio della Provincia di Macerata.

This painting is one of more than 300 works featured in *Italian Futurism, 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*, the first comprehensive overview of Italian Futurism to be presented in the United States. The multidisciplinary exhibition, on view at the Guggenheim Museum in New York through September 1, 2014, encompasses not only painting and sculpture, but also architecture, design, ceramics, fashion, film, photography, advertising, free-form poetry, publications, music, theater, and performance.

September 14

Gatsby Summer Afternoon
Art Deco Society of California
San Francisco, CA
artdecosociety.org/415-982-3326

September 20

Chicagoland Vintage Clothing, Jewelry and Textile Show & Sale
Hemmens Cultural Center, Elgin, IL
catspajamaproductions.net
612-208-1085

September 22

 *DecoRadio: The Most Beautiful Radios Ever Made*
Peter Sheridan
Chicago Art Deco Society
Chicago, IL
chicagoartdecosociety.com
312-280-9097

October 19-January 11, 2015

Surrealist Photography: The Raymond Collection
Cleveland Museum of Art
Cleveland, OH
clevelandart.org/216-421-7350

October 24

Cincinnati's Art Deco Architecture
Cincinnati History Museum,
Cincinnati, OH
cincymuseum.org/513-287-7031

October 31-March 22

Helena Rubinstein: Beauty is Power
The Jewish Museum, New York, NY
thejewishmuseum.org
212-423-3200

December 13-February 15, 2015

Lure of Mexico
Fort Wayne Museum of Art
Fort Wayne, IN
fwmoa.org/260-422-6467



ART DECO AT AUCTION

A look at significant Art Deco sales

FÉLIX MARCILHAC ART DECO COLLE



Jean-Michel Frank, gypsum and bronze cabinet, c. 1935.



Jean-Michel Frank, pair of shagreen-covered armchairs, c. 1928.



Paul Iribe, Nautilus chair, 1913.

Over the past forty years, art historian, author, and Paris gallery owner Félix Marcilhac has assembled an outstanding collection of decorative objects, paintings, lighting, and furniture from the early decades of the twentieth century, including works by such masters as Gustave Miklos, Paul Iribe, Marcel Coard, Pierre Legrain, Jean-Michel Frank, and Jean Dunand. In 1969, he opened Galerie Félix Marcilhac on Rue Bonaparte, a short distance from Boulevard Saint-Germain. The gallery became a mecca for devotees of Art Deco and Art Nouveau. Over the years, such major Art Deco collectors as Yves Saint-Laurent, Karl Lagerfeld, Catherine Deneuve, and Andy Warhol have sought Marcilhac's guidance.

Last year Marcilhac announced his plans to retire from the gallery, turn its operation over to his son, and spend most of his time in Marrakech. On March 11 and 12, Sotheby's Paris, in association with Artcurial, sold more than 300 masterpieces from Marcilhac's Paris townhouse at auction. The sale attracted nearly 600 registered bidders and brought in more than \$34 million, well above the pre-sale estimate of \$12.1-15.5 million. It set twenty-one auction records, including one for the sale of decorative arts at Sotheby's.

The highest seller was a unique circa 1935 cabinet by Jean-Michel Frank (1895-1941) with gypsum panels set in a bronze frame. The top bid of \$5,117,433 greatly exceeded the pre-sale estimate

of \$556,016-834,024 and set a world auction record for the French designer. According to Cécile Verdier, head of 20th Century Decorative Arts & Design, Sotheby's Europe, Frank's use of gypsum, a mineral with a flaky, crystalline appearance that gave the cabinet an "opalescent gleam," was "unprecedented in the history of furniture." The auction featured several other designs by Frank, including a pair of shagreen-covered wood armchairs, circa 1928, which sold for \$1,036,275 (pre-sale estimate, \$347,510-417,012) and a shagreen, oak, and mirrored glass dressing



Jean Dunand and Jean Goulден, polychrome lacquered chest, 1921.

table from 1925 once owned by Elsa Schiaparelli, which brought \$519,180 (pre-sale estimate, \$278,008-347,510).

Another record setter was an iconic 1913 Nautilus chair from French designer Paul Iribe (1883-1935), which drew \$1,086,317 as compared to a pre-sale estimate



ART DECO AT AUCTION

A look at significant Art Deco sales

AUCTION SETS RECORDS AT SOTHEBY'S



Pierre Legrain, perforated metal console table, 1924.



Marcel Coard, Cubist chair, 1920.



Gustave Miklos, Tête, 1928.

of \$208,506-278,008. The high-backed, carved walnut chair had a graceful gondola shape and slightly tapered feet embellished with carved acanthus leaves. It was signed and dated.

A perforated nickel-plated metal console table with a glass top set a record for its designer, Pierre Legrain (1889-1929), selling for \$852,790, well above the pre-sale estimate of \$139,004-166,805. The 1924 table, which Verdier characterized as an "icon of modernism," was once in the home of arts patron Marie-Laure de Noailles, who owned it for almost fifty years. A 1938 photograph by Cecil Beaton shows her posing in front of the table.

A record price for Marcel Coard (1889-1974) was set with the

sale of a rosewood and vellum armchair with mother-of-pearl inlay, which brought \$619,263 (pre-sale estimate, \$278,008-347,510). The Cubist-inspired chair with interlocking volumes was designed in 1920 for Jacques Doucet, whose mother-of-pearl and Macassar ebony convex vitrine, also by Coard, is now in the collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. The chair was originally upholstered in a fabric embroidered with silver thread to a design by Gustave Miklos (1888-1967) and is the only known collaboration of the two designers.

A sculpture by Miklos, purchased in 1967 formed the foundation of Marcihac's collection, and several works by the Hungarian-born artist were in the auction. A patinated bronze sculpture from

1928, *Tête*, sold for \$1,128,018, several times above the pre-sale estimate of \$278,008-347,510, and a 1921 painting, *Figures et Chien*, set a record for a painting by the artist, selling for \$252,293 (pre-sale estimate, \$139,004-166,805).

Another auction highlight was a unique English-style black and polychrome lacquered chest with birdseye maple, dated 1921, a collaboration of Jean Dunand (1877-1942) and Jean Goulden (1878-1946), both of whom signed it. An abstract landscape evocative of North Africa complements the pure, simple lines of the cabinet, which was featured on the cover of the auction catalogue. It sold for \$469,139 (pre-sale estimate, \$417,012-556,016.) ■



Gustave Miklos, *Figures et Chien*, 1921.
Photos by Art Digital Studio
courtesy of Sotheby's.

Detail of a fisherman's head
in the Foro Italico.



ROMAN ARCHITECTURE

By Robin Grow

After traveling from their home in Melbourne, Australia to Paris, where they visited the Art Deco retrospective exhibition and other Deco sites, Robin Grow and Robyn Saalfield headed to Rome in search of Italian Deco. In this article, Robin, who is the president of the Art Deco and Modernism Society of Melbourne and a major contributor to that Society's magazine, the *Spirit of Progress*, describes their discoveries in the Italian capital.

A trip to Rome guarantees visits to layer upon layer of historic buildings, including ancient ruins from the Roman Empire. But what if you are looking for Art Deco in Rome? A Google search will yield a couple pages, mainly highlighting the Hotel Mediterraneo (Best Western), located near Termini Station, advertised as "10 floors of true and original Art Deco." But Rome is a wonderful walking city and negotiating the streets among the hordes of visitors clutching their guidebooks will inevitably reveal occasional examples of Deco.

Not to say that there was no major design in Rome and other Italian cities in the inter-war period. But rather than being labelled Art Deco, it was called Modernist, as in much of Europe, or Rationalist, a term peculiar to Italy. These were buildings constructed under a totalitarian state—Benito Mussolini's Fascist government. Many of the designers were gifted and dedicated to modernism as opposed to revivalism, but found themselves working within the constraints of the state. They did not necessarily have to subscribe to the tenets of Fascism, but it was easier to obtain work

(and to be considered in architectural competitions) if they supported the state—at least on the surface.

The 1930s saw many wonderful Modernist designs constructed in the Eternal City. Mussolini was determined to modernize Rome, and the years 1922 to 1943 saw much of the city reconfigured for monumental "Rationalist" architecture. These efforts often involved the construction of massive straight avenues and sometimes revealed the remains of ancient structures as older areas and run-down buildings were demolished.

The regime commissioned a series of piazzas, fountains, post offices, bridges, railway stations, community halls, government offices, police/military buildings, airports, churches, hospitals, schools, including a university, and sports facilities. We walked to the vast Piazza Augusto Imperatore, adjacent to the Tiber, designed to honor the ancient emperor Augustus. Here we found a number of multi-story buildings designed by Vittorio Morpurgo and completed between 1937 and 1941. The facades display illustrations from the history of Rome, images of Fascist military prowess and weaponry, and scenes of work, family, and sporting events.

Trains to Rome arrive at Termini Station, designed in 1938, partially constructed by 1942, and finally finished in 1950. A striking feature of the station is the colossal colonnade, with its two levels of semi-circular openings facing Via Giovanni Gillotti. Railway stations were a major plank of the government's platform, with many, including those in Rome, Florence, Siena, and Venice, designed by architect Angiolo Mazzoni. He won the commissions through his Fascist connections, including his marriage to the daughter of the Minister of Communications, Galeazzo Ciano.

Entrance to the Hotel Mediterraneo, 1936, billed as "a rare example of original Art Deco style."



Istituto Nazionale della Previdenza Sociale in the Piazza Augusto Imperatore, 1938-40, exterior and detail of relief showing fasces.



Post office in Via Marmorata, 1935, exterior and postal hall.



OF THE INTER-WAR YEARS

Mazzoni was also responsible for many post offices, highly important structures that symbolized the central role of the state. A short subway ride to the Piramide stop leads to the acclaimed post office on Via Marmorata, completed in 1935 to a design by Mario de Renzi and Adalberto Libera. We admired not only the exterior of the marble-clad U-shaped building, with its columned portico and gallery finished in glass blocks, but also the internal design with its extended hall and internal staircases (and we appreciated being able to take images without any hassle!).

Many Fascist buildings utilized traditional materials like marble to cover the large naked walls that reflected the aesthetics of Rationalism/Modernism. Interior decorations included not only abstract sculpture but also images of Mussolini. Many also incorporated Fascist symbolism, particularly the fasces—a bundle of rods tied together to represent the strength of the community that stood together. But Mussolini emphasized another image—a large axe-head, presumably a reminder to citizens that the state had the power of life and death over them.

Following the Second World War, symbols of the defeated regimes were often removed from buildings by victorious enemy troops or by new governments. However, numerous examples of the Italian fasces remain on buildings throughout Italy, as do references to “Il Duce.” The entrance to the Foro Italico (formerly Foro Mussolini) includes a large obelisk from 1932 inscribed “Mussolini Dux,” and the athletic arena is surrounded by statues of athletes engaged in a variety of sports.

Perhaps the most striking example of 1930s architecture is in the district known as EUR (Esposizione Universale di Roma). Begun in 1937 and designed for a 1942 exposition,

it is a monument to Modernism; many of the buildings are overwhelming, which was the intention of the Fascist state. EUR differs from the chaos found in the rest of Rome—the streets are wide, the traffic is reasonable, the buildings are set back and well-organized, and it is becoming uber-cool to be located there. This area also contains my favorite building in Rome, the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (1938-43), generally referred to as the Square Colosseum. It is immediately visible leaving the train and provides a great introduction to a wonderful Modernist area. The architect responsible for the overall design of EUR was Marcello Piacentini, a major government supporter who could not have achieved his position at EUR without Fascist party membership.

Along with government-sponsored activity, which established an ideological connection between architecture and Fascist politics, the inter-war years were characterized by much private (and co-operative) development across Rome, including commercial offices, shops, banks, houses, bathhouses, cinemas, and bars. We enjoyed walking around the area near the U.S. Embassy where we saw commercial buildings, such as the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro with its friezes depicting various commercial activities.

Rome has many distinctive neighborhoods that were developed in the inter-war period. Located in the inner north area is the small and quirky Quartiere Coppedè, a showcase of fantastic designs combining Art Nouveau,



Inter-war apartment block.

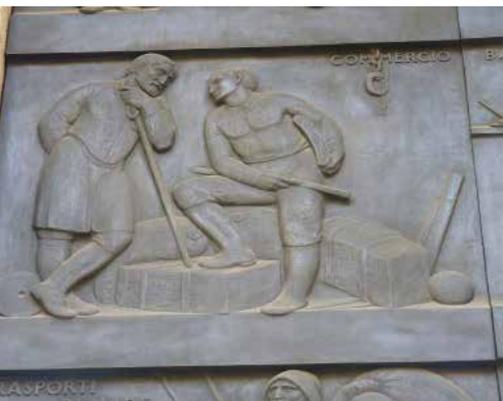


Ice-hockey goalie and falconer, Foro Italico.





Banca Nazionale del Lavoro near Via Veneto, entrance and relief depicting commerce.



Street sign in Garbatella.



Far left: Palazzo dei Congressi at EUR, designed in 1938 but not completed until 1954.

Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (Square Colosseum) at EUR, 1938-43.

Byzantine, medieval, and classical styles, with a dash of Art Deco and flourishes from other periods as well. The structures are attributable to the eccentric Florentine architect Gino Coppedé, who commenced the work in about 1919. Over the next few years he completed buildings adorned with mosaic-tiled archways, intricate brickwork, turrets, towers, and loggias. The three- to six-story buildings are all grouped around the Fountain of Spitting Frogs, eight fat stone frogs spitting water into the basin. Tucked behind the main streets of Quartiere Trieste between piazza Buenos Aires and via Tagliamento, the Quartiere Coppedé is not easy to find and is not even listed in many guidebooks. But looking for it is half the fun, and we enjoyed walking through the surrounding districts of stylish apartment blocks, sometimes constructed of glass and steel and often with elegant rounded balconies.

We also explored Garbatella, another quirky little pocket of Rome, easily

reached by Metro, that provides a fascinating walking tour well away from the tourists at the ancient sites. The suburb originated as a social experiment in the 1920s when the Fascist government developed a planned garden suburb for the working classes. Numerous apartments were built on the twisting streets, organized into more than thirty *lotti* (lots or blocks), each different but similar and each identified by a stylish street sign. Within each *lotti* are two- or three-story buildings in various shades of burnt orange and pale red set around central courtyards and communal gardens. A stylish communal hall anchors the area. On the Saturday morning when we visited, the hall was being used as a local produce market.

The largest church in Garbatella is that of Saint Francis Xavier (c. 1933), striking for its lack of color or embellishment—save for an appealing “noughts and crosses” pattern. Another impressive building is the Teatro Palladium, constructed in 1929-30 as a theater and cinema and recently restored to hold regular cultural programs, including music, dance, and theater. Although some apartment units remain as public housing, in the 1990s many were sold to private owners—most, apparently, to Garbatella residents. The social history of the suburb illustrates how things don’t always work out as planned. Although constructed by the Fascist government, the suburb later became a center for anti-Fascist resentment during the Nazi occupation of Rome and in the 1970s, it was a hotbed of Communist activities.

Exploring Rome is great fun, even more so if you are searching for buildings from the twentieth century. We can’t wait to go back and continue our search in other Italian cities. ■

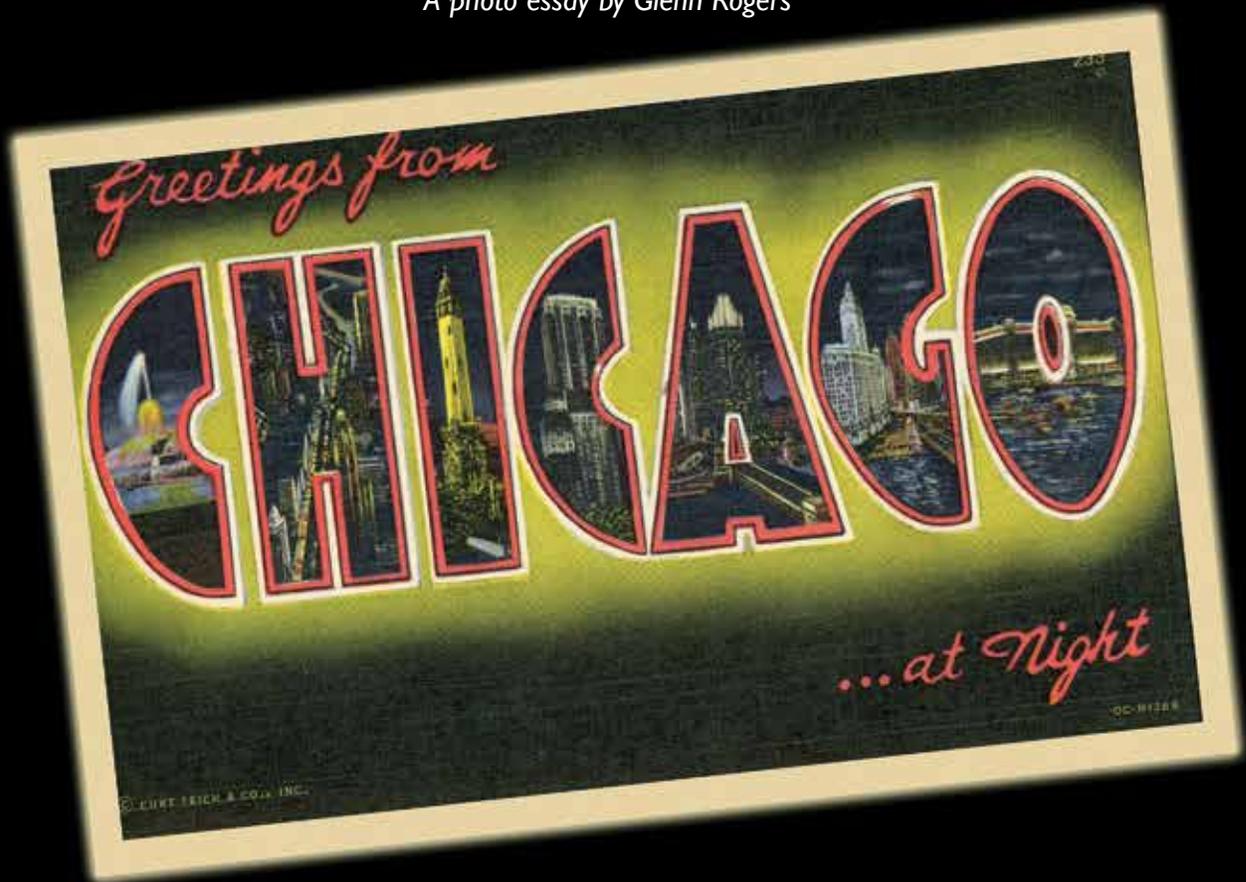


Church of Saint Francis Xavier, Garbatella, c. 1933, dome and entrance.



Deco After Dark

A photo essay by Glenn Rogers



This past January, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel announced a new initiative aimed at increasing Chicago tourism to 55 million visitors by the year 2020. Among the components is a plan to make Chicago “North America’s city of lights.” To achieve this vision, Emanuel is launching an international competition that will solicit proposals for illuminating the city’s buildings, parks, bridges, roads, and open spaces. But Glenn Rogers’ dramatic nighttime photos show that many of Chicago’s Deco masterpieces are already adding brilliance to the city’s skyline.



Chicago Board of Trade Building
 Holabird & Root,
 1930
 This Chicago landmark lights up the foot of La Salle Street. Floodlights illuminate the building's multiple setbacks and the relief sculptures flanking the clock by Alvin Meyers. Adding sparkle to the nighttime skyline is the aluminum sculpture of Ceres by John Storrs that tops the central tower.



Lake Shore Drive Bridge
 This 1937 double-leaf bascule bridge with sleek Art Deco bridge houses is among the historic Chicago River bridges distinguished since the late 1990s by decorative lighting in various hues.



Carbide & Carbon Building
 Burnham Bros., 1929
 The gold-leaf trim on the slender dark-green terra-cotta tower of this Deco gem, now the Hard Rock Hotel, glistens with the onset of dusk. Interior lighting highlights the intricate Deco-patterned grillwork above the entrance.



La Salle-Wacker Building

Holabird & Root with Rebori, Wentworth, Dewey & McCormick, 1930

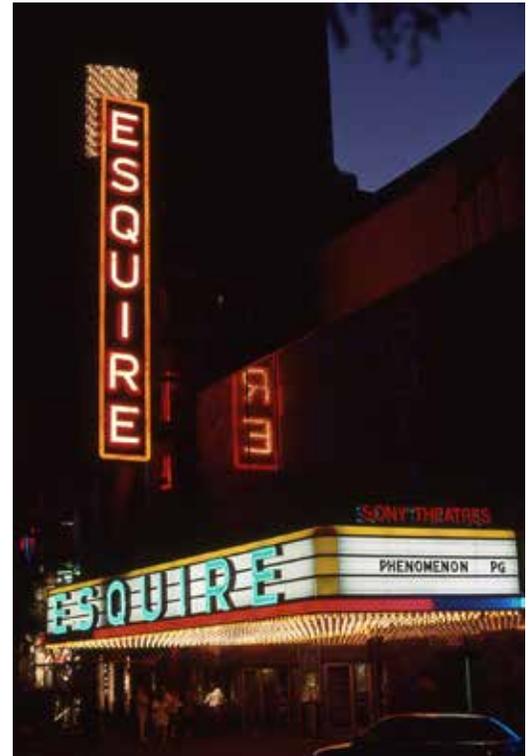
A navigational beacon once topped this elegant skyscraper, named for its location at the “gateway to finance.” The floodlights washing its facade at night emphasize the deep setbacks, and the colored lights just below the illuminated spire change with the season.



Merchandise Mart

Graham, Anderson, Probst & White, 1931

This limestone-clad monolith on the north bank of the Chicago River was designed to house wholesale showrooms for Marshall Field and Company and other retailers. With nearly four million square feet, it was the largest structure in the country until the construction of the Pentagon. At night, light bathes the two subtle setbacks at the top of the main block and the upper levels of the turreted central tower and corner bays.



Esquire Theater

Pereira & Pereira, 1938

The Esquire Theater marquee still brightens Oak Street in this photo. Today the original streamlined structure is barely recognizable, and the marquee is no more, although the vertical sign remains in place. The theater closed in 2006 and is now home to high-end boutiques and an upscale steakhouse.



Palmolive Building

Holabird & Root, 1929

The nighttime illumination on this handsome Art Deco skyscraper, originally an office building and now a luxury residential condominium, emphasizes its sculptural facade with six levels of graduated setbacks. The 150-foot mast topping the building once supported a beacon for aerial navigation, intended to be named the Lindbergh Beacon for Charles Lindbergh, who never acknowledged the honor. The beacon was partially shielded in 1968, extinguished in 1981, and replaced with a stationary light in 1990. A new beacon, installed in 2007, now moves in an arc focused only over Lake Michigan.



One North La Salle Street

Vitzthum & Burns, 1930

The nighttime illumination of this stepped-back skyscraper accentuates the intricate metalwork at the entrance. Beyond the doors is one of the most lavishly decorated Art Deco lobbies in Chicago, with peacock sconces, elegant grillwork, and graceful female figures in bas relief on the elevator doors.



1933/34 Century of Progress International Exposition

Hall of Science, Paul Philippe Cret

Federal Building, Edward H. Bennett and Arthur Brown, Jr.

Lighting was an integral feature of the Century of Progress. As the official guidebook stated, "with the coming of night, millions of lights flash skyward, a symphony of illumination." The fair pavilions are long gone, but the dazzling lighting effects live on in vintage postcards from the collection of Glenn Rogers.

The Deco Delights of Paris



The Fall 2013 issue of *CADS Magazine* previewed *1925, When Art Deco Dazzled the World*, a retrospective exhibition at the Cité de l'architecture & du patrimoine, which closed in March in Paris. Several members attending the exhibition from *CADS* and other U.S. and international Art Deco societies

also visited some of the locations listed in "Outside the Museum Doors," an inventory of Deco sites in and around Paris compiled for that issue by *CADS Magazine* Copy Editor/Proofreader Linda Levendusky. Read what they have to say about those and other Paris Deco attractions.

Robin Simon, Chicago, Illinois
CADS Member

PALAIS DE LA PORTE DOREE

When a work-related project took me to Brussels, only a 90-minute express train ride away from Paris, I had my opportunity to visit the Art Deco exhibition described in *CADS Magazine*. I brought along the list of sites in Paris "outside the walls" of the museum, in case I had extra time to fit in another Deco attraction. Being a big fan of anything having to do with world's fairs, I went to the one remaining building from the Colonial Exposition of 1931 and was not disappointed. (Since 2007, the building has housed the National Museum of the History of Immigration, which covers the history and culture of immigration in France from the early nineteenth century to the present.)

Over 33 million tickets were sold to the Colonial Exposition of 1931, which took place from May through November near the Bois de Vincennes, on the eastern edge of the city. This was one of several world's fairs Paris hosted, the two most famous being the Universal Exposition of 1889 (which introduced the Eiffel Tower) and the Art Deco expo of 1925. The purpose of this fair was to celebrate the French



A monumental oil painting by Jean Dupas titled *La Vigne et le Vin* (*The Vine and the Wine*) greeted visitors to *1925, When Art Deco Dazzled the World*. The painting, created for the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, originally hung in the Bordeaux pavilion, which showcased the French wine industry. Parked below the painting is a Bugatti type 40. Photo by Robert Bradshaw.

colonies by presenting the history of the French empire and highlighting the artistic and economic contributions of the colonies. The French government hoped to encourage investment in and migration to its overseas territories. Other countries participating in the exposition included Belgium, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The "Palais des Colonies" is a monumental building designed by architect Albert Laprade. One source describes it as "a synthesis of the Art Deco style, classic French architecture, Moroccan architecture and elements freely inspired by the art of the [French] colonies." It was designated a national historic monument in 1987. Although some of the Art Deco interior spaces were designed and decorated by familiar names like Edgar Brandt and Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, it was the gigantic bas-relief panels on the exterior of the facade that really caught my attention. This "tapestry of stone" was designed by sculptor Albert Auguste Janniot and completed in less than two years. Educated at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Janniot was known for his monumental architectural sculpture, including some Art Deco relief work on Rockefeller Center in New York City.

The huge panels show the richness and diversity of the people, wildlife, plants, and products of the French colonies of the time. The idealized depictions can be seen as imperial propaganda with imposing and muscular people, savage yet

Palais des Colonies





Martel Brothers Home and Studio



Folies Bergère



Le Grand Rex



Passage du Prado

luxurious nature, and recognizable ethnic groups with stereotypical features based on the ethnographic theories of the day. It is interesting to note that the people are sculpted in profile but their shoulders face forward, reminiscent of Egyptian art (which is commonly referenced in Art Deco). Moving from left to right on the main (south) facade, the panels represent the colonies in Africa, such as Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Chad, Congo, and Cameroon; and Asia, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. The east facade shows the South Sea Islands, which include Tahiti and Papua New Guinea, among others, and the west facade depicts the Americas, including Martinique, Guadeloupe, and St. Martin.

After the fair, the building housed the Museum of Overseas France until about 1960. By 1962, almost all the French colonies had become independent countries and the museum shifted its focus to become the Museum of African and South Sea Islands Art. It continued to house that art museum until 2006 when the collection was moved to the newly completed Musée du Quai Branly. It is somewhat ironic that the building that once paid homage to the riches of the far-flung French colonies now highlights the history and contributions of immigrants to France.

Roberta Nusim, New York, New York

President, Art Deco Society of New York

RUE MALLET-STEVENS

Exploring the neighborhood near Rue Mallet-Stevens was magical and the highlight of my very short stay in Paris. Among the residences on the street itself are Robert Mallet-Stevens' own home and the home and studio he designed for the Martel brothers, which has one of their sculptures out front. Asking directions of an elderly woman, I struck gold because first, she spoke English very well and second, she told me she lived on one of the private gated streets nearby. When I explained my interest, she gave me the code to the gate so that I could wander around places not generally seen by visitors. I felt as though I were back in time as I explored a treasure trove of Modernist buildings!

Graeme Rudd, Sydney, Australia

Member, Art Deco and Modernism Society of Melbourne

PASSAGE DU PRADO

From the late 1700s through the mid-1800s, more than 100 covered passageways were constructed throughout Paris. About twenty survive today, including the Passage du Prado in the 10th arrondissement near the Porte Saint-Denis.

The L-shaped Passage du Prado dates to 1785 and was originally known as the Passage du Bois de Boulogne, named for the public dances once held there. It was initially an open-air arcade with a glass-roofed rotunda at the junction of the two arms. The glass canopy was added in 1925. The Art Deco details of the ironwork supporting the canopy can still be appreciated, despite the passage's dilapidated condition.

FOLIES BERGÈRE

French architect Plumeret designed the building that now houses the Folies Bergère as an elegant opera house. But when it opened in 1869 as the Folies Trévisse, the theater offered popular entertainment like comic operas and acrobatic acts. It became the Folies Bergère in 1872.



Interior, Maison de la Mutualité

Robert Mallet-Stevens Fire Station



Martel Tree Sculpture



In the 1920s, architect and interior designer Maurice Picard, known as “Pico,” designed a new Art Deco facade for the building. The large bas-relief of an exuberant danseuse over the entrance is featured on the cover of the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition 1925, *When Art Deco Dazzled the World*. During a recent renovation of the building, gold leaf replaced the copper foil that originally accented the reliefs.

In the 1920s, the Folies Bergère featured such entertainers as Maurice Chevalier, Mistinguett, and Josephine Baker, who performed on its stage wearing only her infamous banana skirt.

LE GRAND REX

Not far from the Passage du Prado is Le Grand Rex, one of the largest cinemas in Europe. The 1932 Art Deco theater was designed by Auguste Blusén. American theater designer John Eberson, known for his atmospheric movie palaces, served as consulting architect. The Moroccan-inspired auditorium with its star-studded dome mimicking the night sky is the work of Maurice Dufrene. During the German occupation of Paris, the Rex became the Soldatenkino, a theater reserved for German soldiers

Robert Bradshaw, Dublin, Ireland

CADS Member

MAISON DE LA MUTUALITÉ

Maison de la Mutualité in the heart of the Latin Quarter was designed by Victor Lesage and Charles Mitget as the headquarters of a federation of nonprofit mutual insurers. Since its inauguration in 1931, the building has hosted political rallies, conferences, concerts, and even boxing matches. Its theater originally held 1,789 seats, a reference to the French Revolution. Four years ago, a major renovation of la Mutualité was undertaken under the leadership of architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte. During the two-year project, Art Deco moldings and frescoes original to the building were uncovered, and other features that had been lost were reproduced.

FIRE STATION, ROBERT MALLET STEVENS

In 1935, French architect and designer Robert Mallet-Stevens designed a fire station in the 16th arrondissement, said to have been his only public project. The station exemplifies the paquebot or steamboat style, named for its nautical details.

Robin Grow, Melbourne, Australia,

President, Art Deco and Modernism Society of Melbourne

TREE SCULPTURE, MUSÉE DES ANNÉES 30, BOULOGNE-BILLANCOURT

One of the most stunning exhibits from the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris was a series of four concrete trees, each five meters high and painted white. Part of a “winter” garden, each had a cruciform trunk supporting quadrangular planes attached vertically and at angles, suggesting foliage. The sculptures were a collaboration between the legendary French designer Robert Mallet-Stevens, and the Martel brothers, Joël and Jan. The trees were symbolic of the Modernist approach to garden design and also demonstrated the delicacy of construction that could be achieved with concrete.

The reaction of the public varied between “curiosity and hostility” and the uncompromisingly Modernist garden was derided in the popular press of the day. One cartoon depicted a baffled gardener debating whether to water them. The trees were destroyed when the exhibition closed. But during a recent trip to the wonderful Musée des Années 30 (Museum of the 30s) in Boulogne-Billancourt, I was delighted to see a replica of one standing proudly in the forecourt. ■



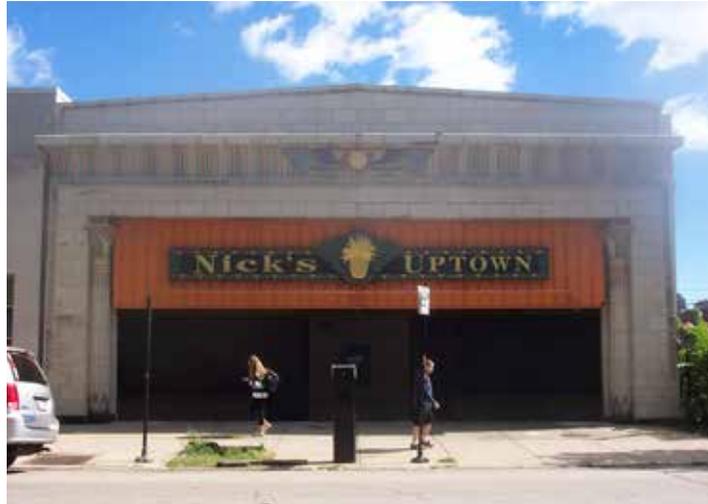


Nick's Uptown Safe—For Now

In December, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks voted to adopt the preliminary landmark recommendation for the Cairo Supper Club Building at 4015-4017 North Sheridan Road, known most recently as Nick's Uptown bar.

Located in the Buena Park Historic District, this visually distinctive Egyptian Revival building, a rarity in Chicago, was designed by Paul Gerhardt, Sr., best known as the designer of Cook County Hospital and a number of Chicago schools, including Lane Technical, Van Steuben, and Du Sable. The Northwestern Terra Cotta Company produced the multicolored terra cotta that clads the one-story structure. Its exotic Egyptian-influenced decorative motifs include lotus capitals topping the columns, polychromatic molding, and a striped concave or "cavetto" cornice with a large winged-scarab medallion at its center.

Harold Carter's discovery of the tomb of King Tutankhamen in 1922 prompted a fascination with all things Egyptian. The years that followed saw the completion of Grauman's Egyptian Theater in Hollywood (1922), the Pythian Temple in New York (1927), and the Egyptian Theater in DeKalb (1929). The 1920 Cairo Supper Club Building, however, predates this discovery. The Preliminary Source of Information report prepared by the Commission staff attributes the interest in ancient Egyptian culture in Chicago at that time to the early twentieth century work of Egyptologist and University of Chicago professor James Henry Breasted and the opening of the Oriental Institute in 1919.



The Cairo Supper Club Building, Paul Gerhardt, Sr., 1920.

The original tenant of the Cairo Supper Club Building, then called the Winston Building, was the Overland-Phillips Motor Car Company. It later became a showroom for Marmon and Hupmobile automobiles. After World War II, the building opened as first the Cairo Lounge and then later the Cairo Supper Club. A popular North Side night spot in the 1950s and 1960s, it featured acts such as hypnotist Marshall Brodien, known later as "Wizzo the Wizard" on *The Bozo Show*, and exotic dancers with names like Emilia Greca and Kismet. The Cairo Supper Club closed in 1964 after being firebombed. From 2000 to 2013, its former site was home to Nick's Uptown. The sale of the building last September to Thorek Memorial Hospital raised concerns that it would be demolished.

The staff's report identifies several criteria that qualify the building for landmark designation, including its rare and unusual Egyptian-revival style, the fine craftsmanship and detailing in the multicolored terra cotta, the significance of its architect, Paul Gerhardt, Sr., its visual distinctiveness and uniqueness in the context of the Uptown community area, and its very

good physical integrity. The report points out that changes, primarily a new, slightly recessed storefront, are relatively minor and do not impact the building's historic and architectural significance.

The preliminary landmark status is no guarantee that the Cairo Supper Club Building will become a city landmark. Several steps remain before the Chicago City Council considers the Commission's recommendation, and no action is likely in the immediate future. At its March 6 meeting, the Commission granted the property owner's request for a 120-day extension to the request-for-consent period, which was scheduled to expire on June 27, 2014. ■



Exotic Egyptian-influenced motifs include lotus capitals, polychromatic molding, a striped "cavetto" cornice, and a winged-scarab medallion. Images courtesy of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks.

CADS Launches Partners in Preservation— Architectural Sister Sites

By Kathleen Murphy Skolnik

The 12th World Congress on Art Deco, held in Havana, Cuba in March 2013, offered a post-tour to five Cuban cities to the east—Cienfuegos, Trinidad, Camagüey, Holguín, and Santiago de Cuba. The group, which included CADS President Joe Loundy and myself, received warm welcomes at each stop, but we felt a special affinity with Camagüey, a city between Havana and Santiago de Cuba with a population of approximately 320,000. We enjoyed a reception, viewed an exhibition organized for the event, attended a special lecture program, received Deco sculptures created especially for us, and toured Camagüey by bici-taxi.

While sharing a bici-taxi, Joe and I also shared our thoughts about Camagüey. We were both very impressed by the large number of Art Deco buildings, primarily small residential structures, and by the enthusiasm and commitment of the Deco community, especially Wilfredo Rodríguez Ramos, executive secretary of the Art Deco Society of Camagüey and director of the Camagüey chapter of DOCOMOMO (Documentation and Preservation of the Modern Movement). As we explored the city, we discussed strategies for increasing communication about Art Deco preservation between Chicago and Camagüey.

Initially, we focused on the exchange of information about preservation issues for publication in *CADS Magazine* and Camagüey's *La Ciudad Infinita (The Infinite City)*. But by the end of our tour, the concept had evolved into something much more ambitious, what we are calling Partners in Preservation—Architectural Sister Sites. The principal objective of the program is the promotion of mutual cooperation and exchanges between Chicago and locations in other parts of the world committed to restoring and preserving their Art Deco heritage. It will begin with a pilot project between CADS and the Camagüey chapter of the National Union of Architects and Engineers of the Construction in Cuba (UNAICC) and



The logo of the Art Deco Society of Camagüey is derived from this ornamental motif, found on Art Deco buildings throughout the city.



Camagüey's Provincial Center of Cultural Heritage with three goals:

- Increase awareness of Art Deco architecture, interiors, and decorative arts in Camagüey and Chicago,
- Disseminate and publish news of preservation efforts,
- Facilitate communication between architects, historians, and preservation professionals in the two cities.

As a first step, I traveled to Camagüey in February to begin a collaborative research project with Wilfredo related to the building that once housed the offices of the Cuban Consolidated Railroads. The exterior design of the building, completed in 1925, is an example of Eclecticism, a

style of architecture popular in Cuba during the early part of the twentieth century, and incorporates a few Art Deco elements, primarily in the grillwork. Art Deco, however, was the style chosen for the design of the interior courtyard. The building now houses government offices. Construction of the building was funded in part by North American interests. My role in this project is to research archival sources in the

United States and Canada that may have documents or correspondence related to its unusual design.

While in Camagüey, I spoke to the members of the Art Deco Society and the UNAICC on *Art Deco Preservation in Chicago: Failures, Successes, and Threats*. In addition, CADS collaborated with the Camagüey Art Deco Society, the Camagüey chapters of UNAICC and DOCOMONO, and the Architecture Society of UNAICC on a joint exhibition of Art Deco architecture in Chicago and Camagüey. Architect and CADS Board Member Mark Garzon designed the Chicago portion, which I curated. The exhibition highlighted thirteen of our city's Art Deco treasures, ranging from the Board of Trade and the Chicago Motor Club to the Russell House and the Frank Fisher Apartments. The exhibition was on view at the Publishers



A panel from the Chicago/Camagüey exhibition showing Art Deco residences in Camagüey.

Partners in Preservation

Many Art Deco buildings in Camagüey are relatively well maintained...



while others show deterioration.



Association through March and then at the UNAICC headquarters and the University of Camagüey. It included biographical sketches of the architects who designed the buildings and the artists involved in their decoration. The Camagüey portion of the exhibition showcased examples of the city's outstanding collection of residential Art Deco buildings.

The next step for Partners in Preservation is a visit by Wilfredo to Chicago, planned for September 2014. During his stay, CADS will host a lecture on the Art Deco architecture of Camagüey. Also on the agenda are discussions with local architects, educators, and historians on such topics as preservation-related technical issues, preservation education curricula, the

organization and operation of the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, the criteria for the categorization of buildings included in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey, and strategies for increasing awareness of Art Deco architecture in the two cities.

Partners in Preservation is in its early stages, but may eventually include cooperative restoration projects involving students from Camagüey and Chicago. In the future, CADS, and perhaps other Art Deco societies, may establish relationships with other sites. We hope CADS members are as enthusiastic as Joe, the CADS Board, and I am about this new program. ■

House at Andrés Sánchez #304, Roberto Douglas Navarrete, 1940.



The former headquarters of the Cuban Consolidated Railroads with its Art Deco grillwork.



Deco-Themed Lectures Slated for Spring and Fall



Study designed by Pierre Chareau for the 1928 Lord & Taylor Exposition of Modern French Decorative Art. Photograph by Sigurd Fischer. Library of Congress 255-N4.



The Spirits of Communication, Hildreth Meière's design for the terra-cotta tile floor of a pool in the Communications Court at the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition. Private collection.



Architect Pascal Laurent, who will speak on the 1931 Exposition Coloniale Internationale and French ocean liners of the Deco era on May 23. This photo was taken in the Lenox Hotel lounge in Paris, a space that has been re-created in the spirit of the 1920s.

The year 2014 promises to be an exciting one for CADS, with several programs already scheduled for the upcoming months.

What could be more fun than roaming through a life-size version of your potential living room, bedroom, or kitchen? In the early years following the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris, department stores throughout the United States teamed with European and American Modernist designers to create exhibitions that featured in-store replicas of modern home interiors. On Saturday, April 26, CADS will welcome historian and author Marilyn F. Friedman, an expert on twentieth century interiors and decorative arts, who will speak on *Selling Good Design: Promoting the Early Modern Interior*. Learn how modern design, especially Art Deco, was introduced to the press and the public through the patronage of prestigious and trendsetting department stores.

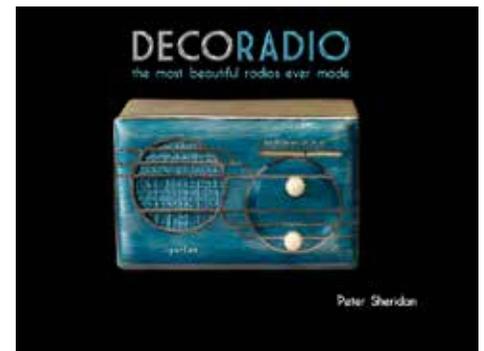
The modern approach to decoration now known as Art

Deco represents an amalgam of many artistic movements—Cubism, exoticism, the Ballets Russes, Art Nouveau, Futurism, and Constructivism. In addition, many designers of the Deco era, including twentieth century American muralist Hildreth Meière, often looked to the classical past for inspiration. On Thursday, May 8, CADS will partner with the Institute of Classical Architecture and Art for a lecture at the Driehaus Museum, 40 East Erie Street, by art and architectural historian and CADS Magazine Editor Kathleen Murphy Skolnik, co-author with Catherine Coleman Brawer of the forthcoming book *The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière* (previewed in this issue of CADS Magazine). Skolnik's topic, *Hildreth Meière and the Classical Roots of Art Deco*, will examine this talented artist's modern interpretations of classical themes and motifs.

Friday, May 23 will bring a lecture by French architect Pascal Laurent, instructor of history and design at the Ecole Supérieur d'Architecture Paris-

Malaquais (ENSAPM) of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. The program is a collaboration of CADS and the Chicago Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians and Alliance Francaise, which will host the event at its headquarters at 54 West Chicago Avenue. Laurent's lecture will focus on the 1931 Exposition Coloniale Internationale and the luxurious interiors of the French ocean liners of the Art Deco era, including the *Atlantique*, the *Paris*, and the *Normandie*. Joining him on the program will be Keith Bringe, director of the Chicago Art Deco Survey Project, who will examine the experimental houses featured at the 1933 Century of Progress International Exposition in Chicago.

And on Monday, September 22, historian, author, and collector Peter Sheridan will travel from Australia to speak on *DecoRadio: The Most Beautiful Radios Ever Made*, which is also the title of



Cover of *DecoRadio: The Most Beautiful Radios Ever Made* by Peter Sheridan, scheduled for publication in May 2014.

his new book, scheduled for publication in May. Sheridan's radio collection is one of the most comprehensive in the world, and his 2008 book, *Radio Days—Australian Bakelite Radios*, is the standard reference for Australian radio collectors. His lecture will examine the small mantel and tabletop radios of the 1930s, designed by such luminaries as Raymond Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes, and Walter Dorwin Teague, that not only brought multiple sets into the home, but changed the audience from the family to the individual. ■

By Matthew C. Hoffman

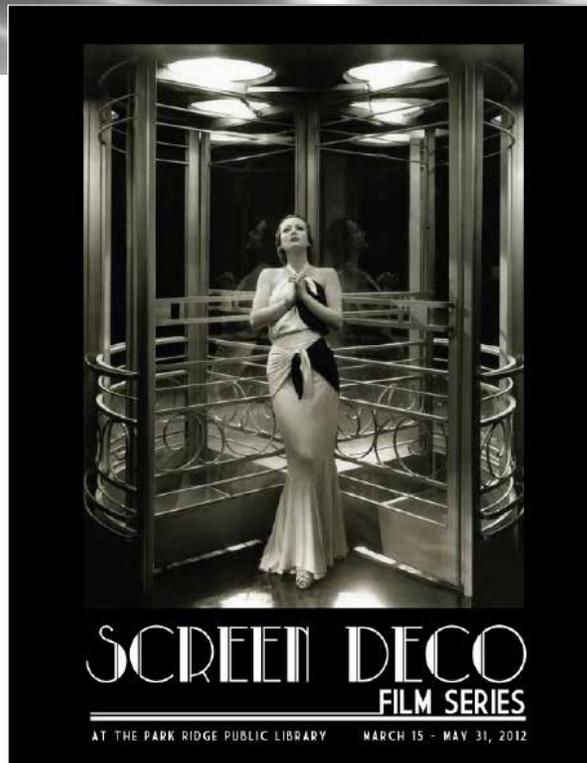
Imagine a world of clean lines and pure forms, a perfection as simple as two champagne glasses tinkling together. It's a universe of nightclubs seemingly floating in space, executive suites overlooking a Manhattan skyline, grand hotels bringing people together, and luxury liners carrying them on romantic trips across the Atlantic. The only class here is first class. Every man has a tux, every woman has an exquisite gown, and every conversation is memorable.

Screen Deco, Park Ridge Public Library's most popular film program with over 1,100 visitors, invited viewers into a world that sprang from the Art Deco movement and went on to become one of the great legacies of Hollywood's golden era. Inspired by the book of the same name by Howard Mandelbaum and Eric Myers (St. Martin's Press, 1985), the series explored visions of the past and future created by set designers and costumers, directors and actors—all those who saw in Art Deco the style for a dynamic new age.

The origins of Art Deco began in Europe after the First World War, when artists and thinkers from all disciplines were making deliberate attempts to break from their Victorian past. They wanted a bolder, more unconventional style to accompany new ideas about society and people. Inspiration came from unexpected sources. A fascination with Egypt and other ancient cultures helped shape the ornamentation of the style. Additional influences came from art movements such as Cubism.

The 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes in Paris saw the first comprehensive display of Art Deco, showcasing hundreds of decorative works. Reflecting on the Exposition, Myers told me,

As for what was on display at the Exposition, the idea was to show how design could be incorporated into all aspects of daily life, so in addition to architecture, you also had interior design, and everything that comprises that. In terms of specific objects, all the major designers were represented, so you certainly saw furniture by



Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann, screens by Jean Dunand, decorative paintings by Jean Dupas. One of the latter, "Les Perruches," turns up in some MGM films, including Cecil B. DeMille's *Dynamite* (1929).

Its influence on a generation of architects and designers was nothing short of electrifying. New buildings began to feature zigzags, sunbursts, and stepped elements. Interior spaces broke free of the dark, claustrophobic Victorian style and became open and light. In time, the sharp angles of the 1920s gave way to the more rounded lines of the Streamline Moderne style.

With their elegant simplicity, both Art Deco and Streamline Moderne suggested luxury and progress. By the time the 1939 World's Fair opened in New York, the styles had merged the perfect blend of art and technology, showcasing man and machine in an optimistic World of Tomorrow.

Hollywood displayed a natural affinity for Art Deco from the beginning, exemplified by some of the great Hollywood art directors of the 1920s and 1930s, including Cedric Gibbons, Hans Dreier, Anton Grot, and Van Nest Polglase. Others, such as William Cameron Menzies, Richard Day, and Charles D. Hall, were also profoundly influenced by the style. It was Polglase at RKO who shaped the look of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers musicals. However, one of the most stunning sets in any RKO musical was done not by Polglase but by Broadway designer John Harkrider, who created the magical silver and black nightclub called the "Silver Sandal" in *Swing Time* (1936). The set was an escapist dream featuring a double staircase and Bakelite floors. With their high-gloss sets and black and white decor, the Astaire and Rogers films are the essence of what we now call "Screen Deco."

Anyone familiar with the screen titles of classic movies will recognize the name Cedric Gibbons. He was perhaps the most influential art director in Hollywood. His name contractually appeared on every MGM release from 1924 to 1956. Having attended the 1925 Paris Exposition, he brought Europe's Art Moderne to the American screen beginning in the late 1920s. More an executive than an on-the-set

designer, he supervised a huge staff and made sure the designs they created were in keeping with the glossy and elegant style MGM was known for. Gibbons designed what has been called the “Big White Set” seen in films like *Dinner At Eight* (1933). It was a distinct studio look that he originated.

MGM’s *Our Dancing Daughters* (1928), one of the key films in the series, was designed by Gibbons with Richard Day. This hugely popular silent movie is the Art Deco film that started a major trend in modern American set design. In his special introduction to the film series, Mandelbaum elaborated:

For an age obsessed with speed and liberation, bolder was better. Thus, on screen, the rich were very rich.

Nowhere is this more true than in *Our Dancing Daughters*, a seminal film for the scale and modernity of its sets. The décor is geometric and sparse, providing plenty of room for Joan Crawford and her fashionable friends to exemplify flaming youth.

Other films credited to Gibbons in the series were *The Kiss* (1929) and *Grand Hotel* (1932), but he was not the only designer profiled. One of the most fantastic films in the program was Universal’s *The Black Cat* (1934). Directed by Edgar G. Ulmer, it’s a wicked excursion into a nightmarish form of Modernism with horror icons Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi facing off in a game of death. The set designs were by Charles D. Hall and Ulmer, who had a background as an art director and was influenced by the Bauhaus school of design in Germany.

Beyond the sets, objects, and fashions, the human form itself, specifically of the woman, became identified with this high style. In the book *Screen Deco*, glamorous publicity photos radiate a streamlined beauty of the female form. The body itself becomes part of the surrounding décor—a look epitomized by actresses like Gloria Swanson, Joan Crawford, and Carole Lombard.

Busby Berkeley’s geometric choreography of the female form in his musical numbers is in the best tradition of the



The Rediscovered, the current film series at the Park Ridge Library, continues through May 29. Films remaining in the series include:

May 8 <i>The Key</i> (1934)	May 22 <i>The Prisoner of Shark Island</i> (1936)
May 15 <i>Theodora Goes Wild</i> (1936)	May 29 <i>The Unsuspected</i> (1947)

**Coming to the Pickwick Theatre
Classic Film Series:**

April 24 <i>Scarface</i> (1932) with guest author Christina Rice	June 19 <i>Gone With the Wind</i> (1939)
May 1 <i>In Old Chicago</i> (1938) and <i>Jesse James</i> (1939), with special guest Taryn Power-Greendeer, daughter of Tyrone Power	

Screen Deco style. His arrangements of showgirls displayed a machine-like precision in films like *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *Footlight Parade* (1933). At its height, Screen Deco presented a world that few in the Depression-era audience could expect to find in real life, but that’s precisely what sent people to the movies in droves. Simply entering a movie palace allowed the average person to become part of the fantasy world of Hollywood, as many theaters adopted glamorous Art Deco elements for their lobbies, staircases, and seating areas.

Even today, Screen Deco speaks to the dreams we’ve shared as a culture. It isn’t about cynicism or hopelessness, but rather transcendence and cultural achievement. It’s about looking your best and succeeding, about living the first-class lifestyle and finding your inner millionaire.

The public’s embrace of movies like *The Artist* (2011) reflects the continued popularity of the Art Deco look. The Screen Deco blog, which was created specifically for the library series, still generates an incredible amount of activity, with over 20,000 views from around the world. The most popular topic is Cedric Gibbons. This interest is impressive considering the blog posts concluded shortly after Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers brought down the curtain in *Swing Time*—the final show in the series. Art Deco in film is a topic always ripe for examination. Through events and revivals by organizations like the Chicago Art Deco Society, Screen Deco will live on in new forms. Whether for film buffs or students of architectural history, the combination of cinema and Art Deco has proven to be a perfect match.

For more on the history of the book *Screen Deco* as well as the set design that inspired it, you can revisit the 2012 program online at screendeco.wordpress.com. ■

Matthew C. Hoffman is a film historian and classic film programmer for the Pickwick Theatre and the Park Ridge Public Library. He hosted the Screen Deco film series.

A Look Inside...

Eva Zeisel: Life, Design, and Beauty

EDITED BY PAT KIRKHAM, EXECUTIVE DIRECTION BY PAT MOORE, CONCEPT AND DESIGN DIRECTION BY PIRCO WOLFFRAMM

CHRONICLE BOOKS, 2013

Reviewed by Rolf Achilles

Just as Louis Comfort Tiffany is credited with countless windows that his prolific studio never created or fabricated, Eva Zeisel's name is often linked with ceramics that she never

designed. To help assemble a body of facts about Zeisel, Chronicle Books, under the indefatigable guidance of Pat Kirkham, Pat Moore, and Pirco Wolfframm, among others, recently published what will be for many years to come, the definitive biography and survey of Zeisel's astounding life and complex design history. The 256-page volume, illustrated with 200 photos, most by Brent Brolin, includes a biographical profile by Kirkham, followed by twenty-eight short essays examining Zeisel's designs.

Eva Zeisel's work is legendary. Known in Hungary, Germany, and the Soviet Union as Eva Stricker, she came of age in the most complex two decades of the twentieth century—the 1920s and 1930s, a period defined by cultural experiments, financial disasters, political atrocities, and *joie de vivre* in newness and discovery.

It was during this era that for the first time, the machine ruled everyday life more than the artisan. Enter the designer who worked intimately with machines to produce everyday beautiful, colorful, and functional objects, especially household ceramics, often with playful organic forms, for the common consumer. In an industry traditionally populated by men, Eva Stricker and a few other women, most notably Marguerite Wildenhain, Grete Marks, and Martha Katzer, braved the Industrial Revolution as designers and fabricators, establishing their own terms and aesthetic parameters.

Brandy service with jug (3366), mugs (3367), and tray (3387), Scotland decoration, c. 1930, Schramberger Majolikafabrik.



of design. It was a time of pressure, not options." Her efforts resulted in tea sets, dinner and luncheon sets, vases, lamp bases, ashtrays, cigarette and cigar boxes, inkwells, desk trays, flower pots, wall pockets, jars, tea glasses, jugs, brandy decanters and goblets, butter dishes, cookie boxes, serving bowls, and even lemon squeezers. She had a preference for circles, and her decorative

T tea service (*Kugelservice*), Carstens-Harschau, decoration not by Eva Zeisel, 1932.

During her lengthy career, Zeisel worked in both isolated industrial towns and cosmopolitan cities. Each of her tenures was relatively short, but in the German ceramics industry of the time, few designers remained with one company for long. It was a turbulent industry in cutthroat competition with Czechoslovakia for an ever-shrinking share of the world market, demanding a constant flow of new designs and what seems like almost daily changes of forms and patterns.

New major monographs examine the work of Eva Zeisel and Hildreth Meière, two talented twentieth-century women designers closely associated with the style we now call Art Deco. Rolf Achilles, independent art historian and Adjunct Associate Professor, Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, as well as a collector of German ceramics, reviews *Eva Zeisel: Life, Design, and Beauty*, published in fall 2013, and Robert Brueggemann, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Art History, Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Illinois at Chicago, previews *The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière* by Catherine Coleman Brawer and *CADS Magazine* Editor Kathleen Murphy Skolnik, scheduled for release on May 1.

By 1925, Zeisel was producing ceramics that she sold at a local market. She also worked as a freelance designer for Kispester-Granit, Budapest, which created a short-lived special art department especially for her. She soon left Budapest for Hamburg and Hansa Kunstkeramik before moving on to Schramberger Majolikafabrik in the heart of the Black Forest. From the fall of 1928 to the spring of 1930, Zeisel created more than 200 designs for Schramberger. She also photographed her own ceramics for the firm's advertisements and catalogues, as she had earlier at Hansa Keramik. The numerous photographs that survive illustrate a keen sense of composition and a

preference for steep visual angles and stark lighting. Zeisel maintained that her ceramic designs were not influenced by the Bauhaus, which may well be true. However, her photography is akin to contemporary photographs by Marianne Brandt, Lucia Moholy, László Moholy-Nagy, Lux Feininger, and even Herbert Beyer and Walter Peterhans, all affiliated with the Bauhaus.

At Schramberger about 350 people depended on her designs. As she later wrote: "My job was to keep the company going... our pots were bought on the basis



Teapot (3301), sugar (3334), creamer (3333), and cup and saucer (3335), Gobelín 8 green decoration, c. 1930, Schramberger Majolikafabrik.



Three-pint pitcher, two-pint pitcher, and creamer, Town & Country, 1947, Red Wing Potteries.

patterns were bright and often geometric. She later stated that she “played with geometry because it was in fashion.” She also adopted Mondrian-inspired patterns commonly seen on cheap linoleum and tablecloth designs of her time.

In 1930 Zeisel took the unprecedented step of becoming a freelance designer for Hirschau, a subsidiary of Christian Carstens, KG, located in Bavaria, a seven-hour train ride from Berlin where she was based. She leased a studio from the artist Emil Nolde, who was not pleased to learn that she was Jewish and tried to renege on his lease agreement. During her time in Berlin, the vivacious Zeisel socialized with members of the progressive, intellectual, artistic, and political circles in which she moved.

Carstens-Hirschau’s ceramics are harder than Schramberger’s, with rounder bodies and thinner cross sections and handles. During her time there, Zeisel’s designs became more compatible with serialized industrial production. Writing in 1932 in the trade publication *Die Schaulade*, she explained that her designs were meant to establish a bond with their users and to become friendly companions, at the same time being restrained enough not to disturb their owners or demand unnecessary attention. She retained these ideals throughout her design career.

The number of designs Zeisel completed for Hirschau and the number that actually went into production are unknown. Several coffee and tea sets—S, T, R, and C, Holland, and Ceylon—the Nürnberg table setting, a smoking service, and several serving dishes, including cake platters, are documented. Kugelservice T may have been her most successful, but the number of pieces produced and the length of time the service continued in production remain undetermined. Although she may have been involved with Spritzdekor (stenciled, airbrush-applied glazes) at Hirschau, no specific glaze designs can be definitively attributed to her. As at Hansa Keramik and Schramberger, Zeisel took photographs of some of her Carstens-Hirschau designs, which were then used for advertising purposes.

In 1932, Zeisel left Berlin for the Soviet Union, where she remained for five productive and tense years. She was quickly hired as a designer in the Artistic Laboratory, Lomonosov State Porcelain Factory, Leningrad, where she married physicist Alex Weissberg, one of the German intellectuals Zeisel had known in Berlin. After their later separation, she

fell in love with “Jascha” (Jacob Alexandrovich Ravic), a high-ranking officer in the NKVD, a precursor to the KGB, whom she met during frequent trips to Paris.

Zeisel subsequently became artistic director for Dulevo Porcelain Factory in Orekhovo-Zuevo and then for China and Glass Industry before she was suddenly arrested on false charges by the GPU (Stalin’s secret security agency) and imprisoned from May 1936 to September 1937. She spent ten months in solitary confinement living with the daily expectation of execution.

Upon her sudden and unexplained release, Eva was sent to Vienna where she met her family, divorced Weissberg, and began a relationship with longtime friend Hans Zeisel. Following Hitler’s *Anschluss* of Austria on March 12, 1938, Zeisel and her family moved quickly to Switzerland. She and Hans were later reunited in England, where they married in July 1938. Three months later, they left for the United States, settling in New York City.

Zeisel quickly received commissions and also taught ceramic design at the Pratt Institute. In 1939, she collaborated with Castleton China and the Museum of Modern Art to develop a modern line of dinnerware known as *Museum*. Over the next twenty-five years, she received commissions from Red Wing Potteries, the Hall China Company, United China and Glass Company, and Western Stoneware in the United States and Rosenthal in Germany, among others.

In the mid-1960s, work slowed and Zeisel had no ceramic commissions for the next twenty years. The mid-1980s saw a revival of interest in her work, both in the United States and abroad. Some of her earlier designs were re-introduced, and new ones were developed for Zsolnay Porcelain Manufactory, International China Company, Nambé, and the Lomonosov Porcelain Factory. In 1983, she returned to Kispester-Granit to design the *Granit* line, (shown on the cover of the book), put into production by Design Within Reach in 2009. Zeisel died in 2011, ending what Kirkham describes as “one of the longest professional design careers ever.” ■

Hot water pot and creamer from the *Museum* line, Castleton, 1946.



The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière

BY CATHERINE COLEMAN BRAWER AND KATHLEEN MURPHY SKOLNIK
ANDREA MONFRIED EDITIONS, 2014

Previewed by Robert Brueggmann

Readers leafing through the images in *The Art Deco Murals of Hildreth Meière* will probably be astonished that Meière's work could ever have become neglected as it was during the decades after her death in 1961. I suppose it is a testament to the polemical power of European avant-garde historians and

critics like Sigfried Giedion and Henry-Russell Hitchcock, and their crusade for a minimal modernism stripped of applied decoration that Meière was pushed into the shadows for so long.

Fortunately, the wheel of fashion usually cycles through a reaction and a reconsideration. In the case of Meière this reaction has been slowly gathering speed for some time now along with a growing appreciation of decorative artists and Art Deco architects and artists in general. It probably helps that some of Meière's most important commissions have been cleaned and restored recently. With this book the reaction has reached a critical point. Meière's work, carefully documented and captured in spectacular photographs in this first-ever monograph of her work, nearly jumps off the page. It is hard to imagine how her murals and decorative treatments at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C., the Nebraska State Capitol, Rockefeller Chapel at The University of Chicago, or St. Bartholomew's Church and the Irving Trust Company (One Wall Street) in New York City will ever again slip back into the shadows. Meière worked on some of the most important buildings erected in America during her lifetime, and her work was fully the equal of the famous architects, sculptors, and other artists she worked with.

Marble floor of the foyer of the Nebraska State Capitol, 1927.



From the evidence in the book, Meière had a peaceful and productive life with little sign of deprivation or the stereotypical torment associated with the "artistic temperament." Her talent apparently was recognized early and, despite the handicap of being a woman in a field traditionally dominated by men, she seems to have surmounted any obstacles. Hildreth Meière grew up in comfortable circumstances in Flushing, Queens. Her mother had had artistic aspirations before she married and did everything to encourage Hildreth who showed similar talent at an early age. At age 16, Hildreth determined to become an artist, more specifically a portrait painter. However, during a sojourn in Florence in 1911 she was overwhelmed by the great medieval and Renaissance murals that she saw. That encounter would lead to a long and productive career primarily involving mural work. Her enthusiasm was perfectly timed. The United States, made rich by its industrial development in the nineteenth century, was just then experiencing a growing desire to create major architectural monuments that could rival the most magnificent buildings of Europe. During the heady years of this City Beautiful Movement, architects turned to a wide variety of decorative artists to produce grand architectural ensembles.

On Meière's return to the U.S., she studied at various art schools in New York, San Francisco, and Chicago, served briefly in the Navy during World War I, and received her first art commissions. Her big breakthrough came in 1921 when architect Bertram Goodhue asked her to prepare some sketches for the decoration of the Nebraska State Capitol. Goodhue was at the height of his career, and the Nebraska State Capitol was arguably his masterpiece, pointing the way to a new and thoroughly modern American architecture although one still rooted in the classical Western tradition. But before Meière's work

on the Capitol actually commenced, Goodhue commissioned her to design decoration for the Great Hall at the National Academy of Sciences building

Art Deco interpretation of the Creation cycle in glass mosaic for the narthex ceiling of St. Bartholomew's Church on Park Avenue in New York, 1930.



The Baltimore Airport from the marble floor of the Baltimore Trust Company banking hall, 1929.



Hildreth Meière, c. 1924.



50th Street facade of Radio City Music hall in Rockefeller Center with roundels of Dance, Drama, and Song in mixed metal and enamel, 1932.

in Washington D.C. Her designs for the Great Hall were applied in raised gesso directly to the acoustic tile produced by Guastavino & Company and then gilded and painted. But Goodhue never saw her work installed; he died in April 1924, just days before the building's dedication.

Meière's designs for the vestibule and rotunda domes of the Nebraska State Capitol used glazed ceramic tiles set directly into Guastavino's acoustic tiles of the vaults. The decorations throughout the Capitol were based on an elaborate iconographic program drawn up by ethnologist and philosopher Hartley Burr Alexander with whom Meière would consult on several subsequent commissions. Meière's compositions combined motifs from classical, Byzantine, and medieval art which she transformed by fusing them with Art Nouveau linearity and elements of what would later be called Art Deco to create a distinctly modern design sensibility that fit perfectly with Goodhue's brilliantly eclectic architecture. The result was one of the most dramatic fusions of architecture and art to be seen anywhere and, arguably, Meière's masterpiece.

Goodhue's successor firms would commission a number of other works from Meière. At Rockefeller Chapel at The University of Chicago she again used glazed ceramic tiles set into the vaults and apse of the church. Between 1927 and 1956, Meière completed three projects for St. Bartholomew's Church in New York, including mosaic decorations for the walls and vaults, done in a Byzantine style with figures set against a gold ground, and stained-glass windows with Art Deco elements.

Other architects also commissioned Meière to design decoration for their buildings. At Temple Emanu-El in New York, she used glass mosaic, much gold, and elements drawn from medieval Spain, Eastern Europe, and mid-nineteenth century Berlin to create a space that glowed and glittered as light passed over the slightly irregular tesserae. At the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Louis she had to not only maintain coherence in her own work, executed over several building campaigns spanning many years, but had to integrate the existing work of several other artists. Using a style derived from mosaics that she had seen in Ravenna, Italy, with newer Art Deco motifs and a great deal of gold, she created another glittering interior. A high point of her secular commissions was the banking room at the Irving Trust building at One Wall Street where Meière clad the

walls and ceiling in an abstract pattern of glass mosaic that accentuated the vertical dimension by lightening the color from floor to ceiling.

There were many other commissions. Among her most visible are the three great metal and enamel roundels on the facade of Radio City Music Hall in New York. During the Depression she participated in several federal government relief projects for artists, including a bronze allegorical sculpture for the post office in Logan Square in Chicago. She received eleven different commissions for the 1939 World's Fair in New York City, several of them involving multiple parts. Only at the very end of her life when she was asked to create murals for buildings in the newly dominant International Style does her work appear to be slightly out of place; this may have more to do with the fact that this work is still too close to our own time than to any inherent problem with Meière's art.

One of the great strengths of this book is the view it gives readers of Meière's working methods and her own voice. This was possible because of the extensive records that the artist and some of her collaborators left as well as letters from Meière to her mother, and to friends and colleagues. The authors have made generous use of these records to vividly describe how the artist approached her commissions, studied the architecture, created sketches of her murals and stained glass, worked with the artisans who created them, and oversaw their installation.

This beautiful book does full justice to Meière's eye-popping work. It should go a long way toward recovering for her the high esteem in which she was held during her lifetime. ■



Detail of glass mosaic for the AT&T Building at the 1939 New York World's Fair.

All photos of Meière's work by Hildreth Meière Dunn.



Art Deco

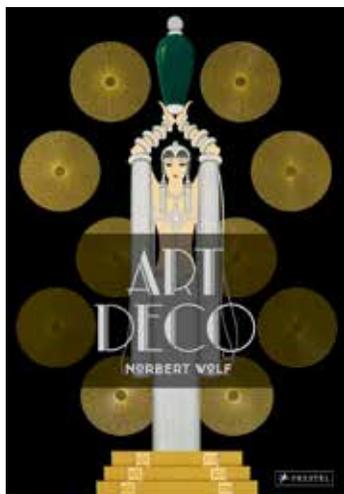
BY NORBERT WOLF
PRESTEL, 2013
REVIEWED BY BEVIS
HILLIER

Reprinted from the November 30, 2013 issue of *The Spectator* with the permission of the author and publisher

Over the past forty-five years, there have been two distinct and divergent approaches to Art Deco. One of them—which was mine when I wrote the first little book on the subject in 1968—was to treat the subject as a sociological, as well as artistic, phenomenon. As I wrote then, it was “the last of the total styles,” affecting almost everything, from letter boxes and powder compacts to luxury liners and hotels. With that approach, one shows the dress as well as the gold, and asks such questions as “Why did the style become so universal?” “How far did it succeed (with mass production) in coming to terms with the machine age?”

The other approach—particularly in favour with such writers as the late Martin Battersby and Philippe Garner—is to concentrate only on the top-quality artists and craftsmen: people like Jean Puiforcat in silver, Jacques-Emile Ruhlmann in furniture, and René Lalique in glass. That approach naturally commends itself to experts in the leading auction houses, where the prime interest is making big money and taking fat commissions—things that are not going to happen in the case of a tinny Woolworth’s powder compact of the 1930s.

From the first sentence of Norbert Wolf’s book, you might imagine he is going bullheaded for the sociological approach: “In the present book *Art Deco* is not treated under the auspices of the art and antiquities market.” However, as you leaf through, you will look in vain for “demotic” Deco. There is not a smidgen of



Clarice Cliff’s “Bizarre” range of Staffordshire pottery, that mainstay of television’s *Flog It!* Everything is of tip-top quality, from paintings by Tamara de Lempicka depicting figures that look as if they have been carved out of tinted blancmange, to the finest New York buildings. Almost everything in the book (aside from the architecture—too big to be a “collectable”) would put a gleam in an auctioneer’s eye.

So I would suggest that, without necessarily setting out to do so, Wolf has achieved a compromise between the two historical approaches to Deco. Yes, he is interested in the social conditions and the artistic firmament that led to the style; but equally, he has no truck with the downmarket, not to say kitsch, end. A lot of his illustrations are of Cubist paintings which influenced Deco rather than were Deco—I have always regarded Deco as, in essence, domesticated Cubism. (Heretically, I would go further and claim that the right place for Cubism was in carpets, lino, and wallpaper, not in the pomp of gilt frames in posh galleries.)

In my 1968 book, which had the same title as Wolf’s, I made it clear that I did not invent the term Art Deco—which is derived from the 1925 Paris Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes.

But Wolf credits my book with popularising and establishing that name of the interwar style on both sides of the Atlantic, in spite of rearguard actions to call it “Jazz Age” and “Modern Style”—he might have added “Streamline Moderne,” the term favoured by the admirable American architectural historian David Gebhard. (Derek Clifford, father of the art historian and museum wallah Sir Timothy Clifford—he lived through the style—told me that he and his friends had called it “Aztec Airways.”)

Wolf’s is a massive book: a coffee table might almost need flying buttresses to support it. The publisher, Prestel, now ranks with Phaidon and Thames & Hudson in its output of gloriously produced art books. This one is a work of art in itself—with a price to match.

Wolf has already given us a similar juggernaut tome on Art Nouveau. The present book is absolutely up to the same high standard. My reservations are mostly minor. We are not told anything about him either on the jacket or inside the book but I suspect (no hint of xenophobia here) that his surname is pronounced in the German way, like that of the greatest lieder-writer, Hugo Wolf. If he is German or Austrian as I suppose, his bibliography suggests a few lacunae in his research. While it is gratifying to find my 1968 book there and the large-scale book I wrote with Stephen Escritt almost 30 years later, there is no reference to the catalogue of the huge Deco exhibition that David Ryan and I organised at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 1971—it was issued in book form as *The World of Art Deco*. I think it would have given Wolf some aperçus to leaven his too upper-drawer approach.

The other big gap in his reading is the catalogue of the outstanding Deco show put on by the Victoria

& Albert Museum in 2003. That exhibition included part of the prismatic 1920s facade of the Strand Palace Hotel. It was insanely pulled down by J. Lyons in 1969 and most intelligently acquired by the V&A. (In the name of modernisation, Lyons replaced the stunning Deco with something that looked like fossilised nose-drippings.)

One of the great merits of Wolf’s book is its international scope. He even finds room for Nazi sculptures, which cannot all be dismissed as rebarbative because of their links to a vile ideology. But he is not wide-ranging enough in representing Deco architecture. New York is there in force; but what of Los Angeles? The 1920s and 30s were the golden age of Hollywood; and one would have liked to see more of the existing and demolished LA buildings illustrated. He shows Frank Lloyd Wright’s Hollyhock House (which is more Modern Movement than Deco) and the towering Eastern Columbia Building; but missing are the Richfield Building, Bullocks Wilshire store, the El Rey Theater, and (most significant of all) the aerodynamic Pan Pacific Auditorium of 1935. I was photographed in front of it in 1984: the shot has an exclusivity to it, as four years later the superb building was destroyed by arson.

English readers will also miss some of our best Deco buildings—among them, the Adelphi Theatre, Claridge’s, and the Savoy, the De La Warr Pavilion, and that 3D palindrome, the Oxo Tower.

In 1968 I showed how Art Deco was already influencing contemporary design. I wish Wolf had added a section on Art Deco revival. If he had done, he would have needed to illustrate Terry Farrell’s marvelous 1994 building, the M16 headquarters in Vauxhall. It gives me a lilt of the heart every time I pass it on my train journeys from Winchester to Waterloo. ■



Paul T. Frankl Autobiography

CHRISTOPHER LONG AND AURORA MCCLAIN, EDITORS
DOPPELHOUSE PRESS 2013
REVIEWED BY BENNETT JOHNSON

This is a page turner! Anyone who has read Christopher Long's essential book *Paul T. Frankl and Modern American Design* (Yale, 2007) may ask, why this one? Just wait until you have an opportunity to read this easy flowing account, which captures this leading Modernist in his own words. Few changes have been made in Frankl's original text, generously shared by his daughter Paulette Frankl, but previously unpublished photographs, a brief preface and foreword by Long, memories of her father by his daughter, and an extensive bibliography and index have been added. Paul Frankl's candid reflections capture his time, with its challenges and flaws. From Vienna, New York, and Los Angeles, Frankl looks back on his experiences, his colleagues and collaborators, and his clients with fresh insights. He preached Modernism to a reluctant American public.

The wars and the Depression posed setbacks, but in retrospect, nothing kept this pragmatic designer from finding new ways to survive and flourish. One critic said Frankl "made junk sing!" An example was his redesign of a pushcart to sell hotdogs in New York City at the height of the Depression. The idea was born at a modest party for professionals where hotdogs were served from a cart and designer Donald Deskey played bartender, dispensing bathtub gin. Frankl had refashioned a decrepit cart he managed to obtain into something more functional than those available for rent. Placed in his office window, Frankl's redesigned cart attracted amused crowds. He offered his version for sale until others copied it.

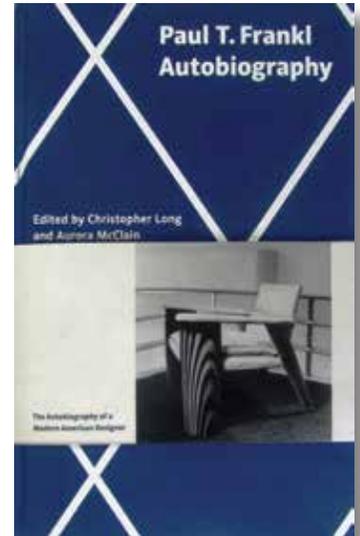
lone Robinson, an employee in the Frankl Galleries at 4 East 8th Street just off 5th Avenue in New York City, remarked, "He has the most amazing way of making everything look chic and of making people buy things that frighten them." Frankl lectured across the country admitting he "never missed an opportunity to present my ideas [on Modernism] to a placidly interested public," a reminder of how conservative America was at the time. When Americans returned from Europe after visiting the 1925 Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, he saw the opportunity to design furnishings appropriate to the modern buildings under construction. He brought in fabrics and ideas from Europe and designed vignettes demonstrating their use in combination with his own furniture.

Interior design became Frankl's specialty and his output included remarkable examples that were copied by followers and his own students. In describing his approach, he stated: "Decorating... is the process of eliminating."

As Frankl stated in his lectures, "My real aim, with my architectural background, lay in designing furniture, a highly specialized field. From the very outset I had the field completely to myself." Although his claims may be exaggerated, his accomplishments were many. Known for his "Skyscraper Furniture," Frankl describes how it evolved and became a success. Despite his efforts, knockoffs of his designs denied him copyright protection.

Although he complained of a lack of money, Frankl traveled

widely in Asia and Europe. And he owned a humble retreat in the Catskills, where he entertained professional colleagues. After many years in New York, he moved to Los Angeles in 1934 where he opened a shop near Rodeo Drive. He collaborated with many leading architects and retained a remarkable friendship with Frank Lloyd Wright. He knew everyone from Vienna, Berlin, Paris, and the United States. This "fussy little man with a Viennese accent" charmed many, sold more, and never stopped promoting Modernism.



This book is a must read for anyone interested in the modern design era. ■

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LOOKING BACK... TO MOVE AHEAD

The history of our Society from our earliest members

CADS—In the Beginning

By Ruth Dearborn

In this new feature CADS Historian Ruth Dearborn, a longtime CADS Board member and past treasurer, looks back to the early days of the organization.



My name is Ruth Dearborn, and I am a former neighbor of Lynn Abbie, CADS founding president. We met in the early 1960s at the Westchester Art League (now long dissolved). In addition to being an artist in her own right, Lynn was definitely a “chauvinist about Chicago.” She felt that the public was really not aware of the Art Deco treasures in the city and the metropolitan area and decided it was her mission to change this. Lynn became a docent for the Chicago Architecture Foundation, where she met Bunny Selig, and got more involved in learning about local Art Deco buildings and their architects.

When Barbara Capitman, director of the Miami Design Preservation League, gave a sold-out lecture in Chicago about the city’s Art Deco legacy, Bunny urged Lynn to form the Chicago Art Deco Society. According to the December 1981 *Chicago Deco* publication, the first Board members included Carol LaVinn, Patricia Casler, Franklin Orwin, and Bunny Selig, supported by committee members Ruth and William Knack, Jack Garber, Wes Andrews, and Larry Hale.

As Lynn wrote in the December 1981 issue of *Chicago Deco* under the headline, “Our Time Has Come—Society Formed”:

The sell-out crowd at last summer’s lecture by Barbara Capitman, director of the Miami Design Preservation League, was a clear sign that Chicago is ready for an Art Deco Society... Capitman waxed lyrical on the splendors of Chicago Art Deco. While her definition of the style—she includes Wright, the Arts and Crafts Movement, the International Style, and the postmodernists—may be too all-encompassing for some—there’s no disagreeing with her enthusiasm. “She’s the Jewish mother of Art Deco,” said architect Stanley Tigerman in his introduction.

A few days after the Madlener House lecture, a small group met with Barbara Capitman and Miami Beach designer Leonard Horowitz at Riccardo’s and agreed formally to begin a local Art Deco group. ... At least two people at that meeting—Lynn Abbie and Jean Nerenberg—had participated in the Chicago Architecture Foundation Art Deco program in 1979. The successful eight-week series of tours and lectures was organized by Bunny Selig. The Capitman visit, those at the meeting agreed, was the spur needed to get the long-talked-about society underway.

At a Sunday afternoon meeting at the Northwest Tower, [at North and Milwaukee Avenues, now known as the Coyote Building], the organizers came up with a set of goals for the fledgling organization. They boil down to four:

1. Education—making the public aware of the value of the style
2. Documentation—through survey, photography, research
3. Design—offering assistance to building owners, contractors, architects
4. Entertainment—to communicate the sense of fun that characterizes the Art Deco style through parties, shows, and “events”

With a general agreement on goals, it was time for the formalities of officers, dues, and committee structure. All three were defined at an early November meeting at the Friends of Downtown office. But the main event that evening was a pep talk by John Hern of the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks. Hern told the group that it was dealing with a sorely neglected architectural period, and he recommended that it undertake a survey to identify important buildings with Art Deco elements. A survey of downtown buildings would mesh with the commission’s recent attention to North Michigan Avenue. Hern pointed out that, while much is known about well-documented buildings like the Palmolive, buildings like 700-20 and 900-20 N. Michigan have received little attention. Both are in imminent danger of destruction.

As Lynn’s knowledge about Chicago’s architectural heritage increased, she became more and more interested in the preservation of the buildings constructed in the Art Deco era. She even created a Survey & Research Committee, comprised of William Knack, Pat Casler, and Henry Dovilas. Do these statements sound familiar? We have come a long way and seem to be right on target with the early premise and goals. Lynn would be so proud! She passed away in 2005.

CADS AND THE CHICAGO MOTOR CLUB—A LONG HISTORY

One of the primary objectives of CADS has been the preservation of prominent Art Deco buildings in Chicago. One of the earliest architectural gems to catch the group’s attention was the Chicago Motor Club at 68 East Wacker Place. The Summer 1986 issue of *CADS Magazine* featured an article about the building, along with a photograph, by Lynn Abbie.



Chicago Motor Club, Holabird & Root, 1928. Photo by Keith Bringe for the Chicago Art Deco Society.

And the Chicago Motor Club is among the issues currently being discussed by the Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Planning and Development. In 2011, Amy Keller, CADS Preservation Committee Chair, represented CADS in an appeal for landmark designation of the building, which was granted by the Chicago City Council in April 2012.

At a meeting with several preservation-minded groups—CADS, Landmarks Illinois, and Preservation Chicago—held on January 20, 2014, Paul Alessandro of Hartshorne Plunkard Architecture presented the firm’s plans for the restoration of the building and its conversion to a boutique hotel. Contact Amy for a PDF of the presentation. See future issues of the magazine for updates on the Motor Club project. ■

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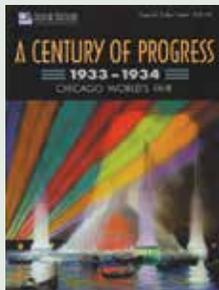
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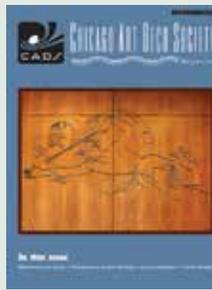
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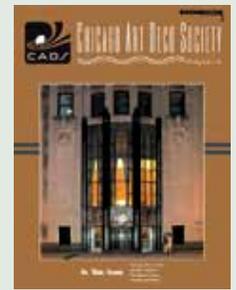
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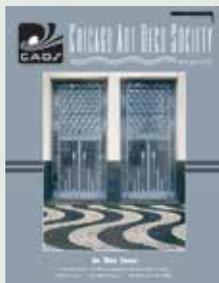
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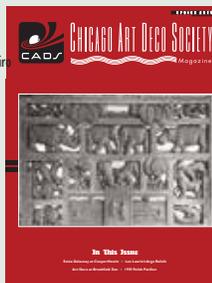
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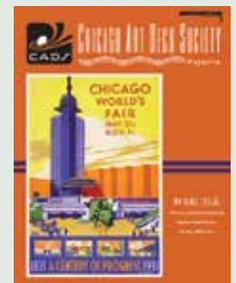
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Chicago Board of Trade (Holabird & Root, 1930), topped by sculpture of Ceres by John Storrs. Photo by Glenn Rogers.