

ART DECO (also known as 'Le Style 25) around 1920 to 1940

Art Deco covered a wide range of disciplines- Architecture, Fashion and Costume, Graphic Design, Interior Design, Furnishings, Jewellery, Glass, Clocks, and Fine Arts and was a worldwide phenomenon. It was influenced by a huge number of artistic heritages and sources- Oriental, Aztec, Mayan, Greek, Roman and Egyptian amongst many. The discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922 brought Egyptian images especially into vogue.

Characteristics that make Art Deco recognisable are many and varied. Stylistic features include all, or a combination, of the following descriptions – sharp edged, 'stark' appearance, geometric, streamlined, high contrast, exotic, 'jazzy', using an eclectic mix of materials –often with the expensive and everyday included in a single item.

This movement, unlike **Art Nouveau**, actively gloried in the 'modern' manufacturing, industrialised processes, materials and techniques. The newly developed synthetic materials had, for the era, an exoticism and expensive lure that is difficult for us today to understand today as we are surrounded by a wide variety of plastics and related materials.

The 'modern' idea of speed and sleekness was a strong factor in Art Deco. This was transferred to images and products alike. Detail was frequently left out or relegated in importance – but not always!

It should be remembered that Art and Design 'movements', artists and designers do not just "happen" in isolation and each 'new' set of ideas often follows on from, or are a reaction to, a previous 'movement'.

Artists and designers often feature across more than one 'movement'. Examples are Cartier, Peter Behrens and Charles Rennie MacKintosh.

Some important Art Deco designers and artists are – **Graphics:** Cassandre, Marfurt, McKnight-Kauffer. **Architecture:** Van Alen, Hoffman. **Fashion:** Bakst, Erte. **Furnishings:** Cliff, Hoffman. **Jewellery:** Cartier, Lalique **Fine Arts:** de Lempicka, O'Keefe, Burra.