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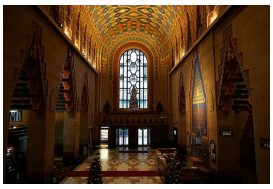
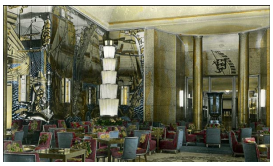


Wirt Rowland, Interior of the Guardian Building, 1929, Detroit.

William van Alen, Elevator doors of the Chrysler Building, 1930, New-York.



A corner of the Grand Salon onboard the Transatlantic Liner Normandie, antique postcard.

Vivert brothers, La parfumerie, room of the Exposition of Decorative Arts, 1925.

Art of the **Roaring Twenties**, the **Art Deco style (1910-1939)** is resolutely turned towards modernity, at a time when rhythms are accelerating. This is the architecture of Skyscrapers such as the **Chrysler Bulding** of New York (1928-1930), and the opulent interior of the first **Transatlantics** like The Normandy. Industries make gigantic leaps and Art Deco is a reflection of enthusiasm for mechanics and rationality, favoring straight lines and geometric shapes. It aims above all for elegance, sobriety, preciosity, rarity and comfort, thus seducing a refined and fortunate clientele. Among the patrons of this innovative movement are Baron **Robert de Rothschild**, couturier **Jacques Doucet** and Viscount **Charles de Noailles**.

This artistic movement had beginnings around 1910, and truly emerged in the aftermath of the First World War in the European capitals, reacting against the Art Nouveau undulations ironically called "noodle style." This new style developed in the 1920s, culminating at the **International Exhibition of Decorative Arts organized in Paris in 1925**, when Le Corbusier had made a sensation with his Pavilion of the New Spirit, as well as Ruhlmann with his Pavilion of the Collector. It is then called "1925 style", and will retrospectively become the "Art Deco style" in reference to this exhibition.

Characterized by strong **ornamentation**, contrary to the rigor of functionalism, the Art Deco fronts and furniture decorations do not prohibit any subject: baskets of flowers and fruits are very present, human figures, symbolic subjects, ornaments inspired by Ancient Egypt, abstract forms. However, these decorations take **geometrical shapes**, often angular, organized, framed by solid **borders**. Hence, a recurring motif of the Art Deco style is the geometrical rose.

For this organized aesthetic, the use of **artistic ironwork** and stained glass, or marquetry and **mosaic**, are very much in vogue. The colors are very present, enhancing the preciousness of the materials. Bold materials such as plexiglass, polished or chrome-plated steel, ivory, ebony, leather or shagreen sheaths are used. **Ruhlmann** executes marquetry masterpieces with new imported woods: Macassar Ebony.

In the 1920's, two orientations became apparent in the Art Deco style: The Contemporaries of **Neo-Traditionalists** and the Moderns. The first group, who founded the movement, emerged in the 1910's. The New Style Manifesto published in 1912 by Andre Vera promoted a return to French tradition: Louis Sue, Andre Mare, Paul Huillard, and Andre Groult created furniture inspired by the curved shape of the Restoration style. Paul Iribe and Maurice Dufrene however, were under the influence of the Art Nouveau. After the war, the focus was the **richness of the materials** used: gilded wood, shagreen, parchment, leather and lacquer, to create refined-shaped furniture in keeping with the Louis XVI, Empire and Restoration styles.

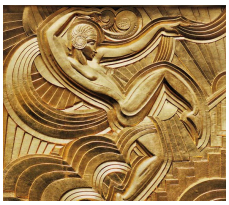
The Modern orientation, consecrated by the creation of the **Modern Artist's Union** in 1929 by Robert Mallet-Stevens, emerged in the 1920's. Among these artists are: Pierre Charreau, Francis Jourdain, Rene Herbst, Pierre Legrain, Jean Prouve, Charlotte Perriand, who wanted to create furniture with innovative shapes that would correspond to the **modern era**'s new life conditions and would be designed as an ensemble, an interior design. Interior design elements were seen as practical, utilitarian and ergonomic. For example, stained glass windows combined formal beauty with actual lighting capacity; furniture combined elegance with practicality; fireplace mantels were integrated into their environment and given high-performance heating systems.

Rene Lalique, entrance door of the Lalique Stand at the 1925 Paris International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts.

Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, « The collector's pavillion », 1925 Paris International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts.

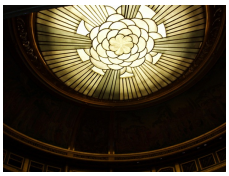
Edgar Brandt, "Oasis" screen displayed at the 1925 Paris Exposition of Decorative Arts

Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Corner Cabinet, circa 1923, Brooklyn Museum, New-York.



Maurice Pico, Bas relief for the Folies Bergeres' front, the dancer Anita Barka, 1928, Paris.

Henri Zipcy, Le Louxor Cinema, mosaics by Gentil et Bourdet, 1921, Paris.



Auguste Perret, Ceiling light of the Theatre des Champs Elysees, 1910.

Paul Kiss, « The pheasants » gate, shown at the 1925 Paris International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts. Paris, Museum of Decorative Arts.

Auguste Martin, The Nouvelles Galeries' grand glass roof, 1927, Angers.

Jacques Simon, Ceiling light of the Carnegie Library, circa 1921, Reims.

Bagues brothers, Dining Room of the Fels Hotel, Paris, 1926.

Armand-Albert Rateau, Room in the Art Deco mansion of Jeanne Lanvin, circa 1925. Paris, Museum of Decorative Arts.