



Art Deco — Definition List

- **Art Deco:** A design and visual arts movement (most prominent in the 1920s–1930s) defined by geometric forms, symmetry, modern materials, and a polished, glamorous aesthetic that celebrates modernity, speed, and luxury.
- **Geometry:** The use of clean shapes—triangles, circles, rectangles, and arcs—often arranged in bold, decorative compositions.
- **Symmetry:** Balanced design where the left and right sides mirror each other (or feel evenly weighted), creating a formal, “architected” look.
- **Chevron:** A repeating “V” pattern (like stacked arrows) used in borders, textiles, architecture, and graphic design.
- **Zigzag:** A sharp, angular line pattern that suggests energy, motion, and visual rhythm.
- **Sunburst Motif:** A radiating design (like light rays) used to symbolize power, optimism, and the “modern age.”
- **Stepped Forms:** Layered, stair-step shapes (like a tiered pyramid) common in Deco buildings, furniture silhouettes, and decorative frames.
- **Streamline Moderne:** A late Art Deco offshoot (1930s) emphasizing smooth curves, horizontal lines, aerodynamic shapes, and “speed-inspired” design.
- **Vertical Emphasis:** Tall, upward-pulling lines used in architecture and composition to suggest strength, height, and ambition.

- **Chrome:** Shiny metal finishes used to communicate modern technology and luxury—especially in interiors and product design.
- **Lacquer:** A glossy surface finish (often black or richly colored) that creates a sleek, high-end look.
- **Inlay:** A decorative technique where contrasting materials (wood, metal, shell, etc.) are set into a surface to form patterns or images.
- **Ornamental Relief:** Decorative elements carved, molded, or raised from a surface—commonly seen on facades, panels, doors, and interior details.
- **Marquee Lighting:** Bold, theatrical lighting often associated with cinemas and nightlife venues, reinforcing Deco's glamour and drama.
- **Decorative Paneling:** Repeating framed sections (bands, borders, stacked panels) used in architecture and interiors to structure ornamentation.
- **High Contrast Palette:** Strong light/dark combinations—often black, white, metallic gold/silver, and jewel tones—to create visual impact.
- **Jewel Tones:** Rich colors like emerald, sapphire, ruby, and amethyst used to evoke opulence and depth.
- **Stylized Figure:** A simplified, elegant human form—often elongated or idealized—designed for graphic punch and sophistication rather than realism.
- **Machine Aesthetic:** Visual cues inspired by technology and industry—clean edges, precise repetition, polished surfaces—treating modern machines as objects of beauty.
- **Luxury Materials:** Materials associated with wealth or high finish—marble, glass, chrome, exotic woods, mirrored surfaces, and richly textured fabrics.