

**What world events influenced design in this period?**

In 1925, 25,000 **Ku Klux Klansmen** marched on Washington. First founded in 1865, the KKK was a national fraternal organization founded on the premise of white supremacy. The power of the Klan peaked during the 1920s when urbanization, industrialization, and immigration frightened many Americans.

In 1928, 15 nations, including the United States, signed the **Kellogg-Briand pact** “outlawing” war. The unenforceable pact was made a mockery of by the rise of European fascist states in the 1930s.

In 1929, Canadian women were granted **the right to be considered “persons.”** Canada’s first female magistrate, Emily Murphy, was humiliated while hearing her first case in 1916 when a male attorney pointed out that she was not a “person” under the law. She successfully campaigned—over 13 years—to overturn the 1876 ruling that stated: “Women are persons in matters of pains and penalties, but are not persons in matters of rights and privileges.”

In 1929, the Lateran Treaty recognised the **Vatican City** as a sovereign and independent papal state. This made the Catholic Church more visible internationally. The Treaty still has a clause that threatens Italians with five-year imprisonment if someone tells a joke about the Pope.

In 1929, the **Saint Valentine’s Day Massacre** was the single bloodiest incident in a decade-long turf war between rival Chicago mobsters fighting to control the lucrative bootlegging trade. Members of Al Capone’s gang murdered six followers of rival gangster Bugs Moran.

On **Black Tuesday**, October 29, 1929, Wall Street investors traded about 16 million shares on the New York Stock Exchange in a single day. Billions of dollars were lost, wiping out thousands of investors. In its aftermath, America and the rest of the industrialised world spiralled downward into **the Great Depression** (1929-39), the deepest and longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world up to that time.

**What were the key scientific/technological influences?**

1925 – The **Second Narrows Railway Bridge** became the first bridge to connect Vancouver with the North Shore.

1927 – Aged 25, **Charles “Lindy” Lindberg** hopped across the Atlantic. His heroics promoted the viability of commercial aviation which began to expand rapidly.

1927 – **Philo Taylor Farnsworth** patented the television and TV’s became commercially available the next year.

1927 **Georges Lemaître** published his **Big Bang Theory**.

**What were the key design and literary influences?**

The **Bauhaus School of art and crafts** was founded in Weimar, Germany in 1919 with **Walter Gropius**, a pioneer of German modern architecture, as its first director.

Gropius’s objective for the school was a radical concept: to reimagine the material world to reflect the unity of all the arts. Fine art, design of all kinds and craftsmanship were taught in unison using hands-on techniques. The Bauhaus went on to have a profound impact on all fields of art and design across the world, both through its teaching methods and its famous graduates. Some graduates and instructors spread the Bauhaus ethos to the U.K. and the U.S., as they fled the Nazi regime in the 1930s. Likely influenced by Gropius’s (and fellow architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe’s) involvement in **Hermann Muthesius’s Deutscher Werkbund**—which continued to operate until 1933—the Bauhaus fostered relationships between crafts and industry to bring good design to the masses.

Bauhaus instructors included: Swiss painters **Johannes Itten** and **Paul Klee**; German painter **Lyonel Feininger** and sculptor **Gerhard Marcks**; Russian painter **Wasily Kandinsky**; and the Hungarian constructivist artist **László Moholy-Nagy**. The German artist and choreographer **Oskar Schlemmer** was Master of Form at the Bauhaus theatre workshop. His **Triadisches Ballett** (Triadic Ballet) toured parts of Germany, spreading the Bauhaus creative ethos. Several students later became instructors including German artists **Josef Albers** and **Joost Schmidt**; the Hungarian modernist, architect and furniture designer **Marcel Breuer**; and the Austrian artist **Herbert Bayer** who went on to become director of printing and advertising at the school. Itten and Albers would go on to publish books on colour theory. Their theories and books are the basis for colour theory as it is still taught today.

By 1923, the local right-wing government and the taxpayers who funded the school were becoming uncomfortable with the non-conventional left-wing thinking of the Bauhaus. By 1925, feeling threatened, by the amount of oversight the local government was imposing, Gropius and his staff resigned. Gropius then sought out a new location for the school and found a suitable fit in the industrial town of Dessau. The proximity to industry was ideal for their purposes. In 1925/26 the school reopened in a new purpose-built complex designed by Gropius. The interior was designed and constructed by the students. Gropius remained the director until 1928, when he was succeeded by Swiss architect **Hannes Meyer**, followed by the German architect **Ludwig Mies van der Rohe**, who headed the school until its forced closure by the Nazis in 1933. Both the Weimar and Dessau schools are now Unesco world heritage sites.

One young German designer who didn’t attend the school, but was greatly influenced by it, was **Jan Tschichold**. He was the son of a sign-writer and had a passion for typography. He discovered Herbert Bayer’s **Universal typeface and unique layout designs**. He was thrilled by



the innovative absence of capitals; the bold type hierarchy; the use of left-aligned type and dynamic compositions using horizontal, vertical and diagonal axes; the use of rules and other graphic devices to guide the eye; and the combining of black with one strong colour. He was such a convert that he wrote an essay on typography called *Die Neue Typographie*. In it, he set forth rules for standardisation of practices relating to modern type usage. The essay condemned all serif typefaces; advocated for standardized sizes of paper; and provided guidelines for establishing typographic hierarchy. This 24-page booklet was sent to printers and designers across Germany. The Bauhaus and Tschichold's booklet changed type design and layout forever.

There are similarities between the Bauhaus style and constructivism, such as the heavy use of black and red, the use of diagonal type, and the use of photography as a design element. The two movements existed in parallel; however, there is no other clear link between them.

Tschichold was friends with the German typographer **Paul Renner**—designer of the typeface *Futura*, and a prominent member of the Deutscher Werkbund. Renner created a set of guidelines for good book design and wrote essays including *Typografie als Kunst* (Typography as Art) and *Die Kunst der Typographie* (The Art of Typography).

The influence of de Stijl, constructivism and the Bauhaus can be seen in the graphic design work of Dutch designers **Piet Zwart** and **Paul Schuitema**. Zwart referred to himself as a typotekt—a combination of the words typographer and architect. Tschichold, Zwart and Schuitema were members of Kurt Schwitters's *Ring Neue Werbegestalter* (Circle of New Advertising Designers), which also included László Moholy-Nagy, and Herbert Bayer.

The terms *post-cubist pictorial modernism* and *art deco* are used to identify the geometric style that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s. Its influence encompassed architecture, interior design, industrial design, fashion and graphic design. The term art deco derives from the influential *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, held in Paris in 1925. Cubism, the Bauhaus, aspects of the Vienna Secession, de Stijl and suprematism all influenced the art deco movement.

French poster artist **A.M. Cassandre** was at the forefront of defining the new more geometric and three-dimensional approach to imagery typical of the art deco era. Cassandre was also the designer of the *Bifur*, *Peignot*, and *Exotic 350* typefaces.

Other art deco typefaces include *Broadway*, *Parisian*, and *Bank Gothic* designed by **Morris Fuller Benton** (American); Jakob Erbar's *Erbar Grotesk*; Oswald Bruce Cooper's *Cooper Black*; Paul Renner's *Futura* and Eric Gill's *Gill Sans*. In 2002 the New Yorker commissioned type designer Christian Schwartz to design the art deco inspired typeface Neutraface that the magazine still uses today.

Other important poster/advertising designers in this period include: **E. McKnight Kauffer** (U.S.), **Jean Carlu** and **Paul Colin** (France), **Austin Cooper**, **Joseph Binder** (Austria), **Fortunato Depero** (Italy). Depero was a very unique Futurist graphic designer. In 1927 he published a self-promotional book (bound with bolts) called *Dinamo-Azari*. Illustrators **George Barbier** and **Erté** (Russian) were instrumental in capturing art deco fashion and interiors their illustrations. Erté began illustrating covers for Harper's Bazar in 1929.

### What were the key cultural influences?

In 1925 the outrageous American entertainer **Josephine Baker** moved to Paris and became a sensation. She was so well treated there that she made France her permanent home. She went on to become an activist and a French Resistance agent in WW2.

The glamorous world of early Hollywood was an important part of culture. Popular movies included: *Ben-Hur* and *The Phantom of the Opera* in 1925; Buster Keaton's *The General* and *Metropolis*, directed by Fritz Lang in 1926. The first "talking movie" *The Jazz Singer* opened in 1927. It starred Al Jolson, a Russian-born Jew who performed in blackface (a white entertainer wearing face paint to appear black). This smash-hit marked the beginning of the end of the silent film era.

Actors became celebrities: among the best-known were Lillian Gish, Clara Bow, Colleen Moore, Louise Brooks, Greta Garbo, Valentina Schlee, Gloria Swanson, Joan Crawford, Pola Negri, Mary Pickford, and Fay Wray.

In literature, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* was published in 1925; **A.A. Milne's** *Winnie-the-Pooh* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* in 1926.

### Architecture:

Examples of European art deco architecture include: *the Spring Pavillon* at *the International Exposition* of 1925 and the *Apollo Victoria Theater Auditorium* in London (1929). In New York examples include *the Chrysler Building* (1930), *the General Electric Building*, and *the Empire State Building* (1931).

After seeing the 1925 Exposition in Paris, **Eileen Gray**, an Anglo-Irish painter, furniture designer and architect, renounced art deco and headed in a new direction. She became part of a new modern architecture movement that included Walter Gropius, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and the Swiss-French architect **Le Corbusier**.

### What were the key artistic influences?

See those listed as Bauhaus masters. Also dada-surrealist painter Max Ernst (Germany); surrealist sculptor Alberto Giacometti (Switzerland); cubist painter Fernand Leger (France); and Orphist painters Robert Delaunay (France) and Sonia Delaunay-Terk. While there is no art deco art movement per se, the work of Polish painter Tamara de Lempicka captures the essence of the period. Spanish-Mexican filmmaker Luis Buñuel and Spanish artist Salvador Dalí collaborated on their surrealist films *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and *L'Âge d'Or* (1930).