

What world events influenced design in this period?

The 1930s were the era of **The Great Depression**. Less than three years after Black Tuesday, the New York stock exchange lost 90% of its value. By 1933, 30% of the American workforce was unemployed. The Depression wasn't limited to the U.S. it affected most of the developed world. It hit city and country folk alike, but the impact on farmers greatest. In Saskatchewan, 125,000 people were forced off their farms. While the U.S. economic failure was in part related to a worldwide downturn, the extreme nature of the American crash, in turn, had a significant impact on world markets. Some say that the onset of World War II stimulated world economies, others say prosperity was restored by reductions in spending, taxes and regulation after the war.

Great Britain ruled India from 1858-1947. Like most colonisers, they took control of resource production. Britain prevented Indians from harvesting or selling salt. In 1930 **Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi** led a 24-day non-violent protest against Britain's salt monopoly. On **the Salt March (Dandi March)** Gandhi and his supporters walked 390 km from his home to the ocean to collect salt from the beach in Dandi. This act of defiance encouraged the growing independence movement. India finally freed itself from British rule in 1947.

In 1933, **the election of the German Nazi Party** brought an end to the European peace established after W.W.I. Hitler promised to make Germany great again and quickly began to rebuild military might. The Nazis immediately established the first concentration camps. They imprisoned political opponents, homosexuals, and anyone they thought "dangerous." Propaganda was cleverly used to spread the Nazis' goals and ideals. During the first six years of Hitler's dictatorship, German Jews were faced with more than 400 regulations that restricted all aspects of their lives, including children's ability to attend school.

Partly as a result of the worldwide depression, the Spanish monarchy fell to a democratically elected government in 1931. New reforms led to further political instability and discontent, prompting the 1936-39 **Spanish Civil War** led by Spain's right-wing military. People from all over the world volunteered to join the fight for democracy, including over 1,600 Canadians. The efforts were in vain and the Republic fell with the help of German and Italian fascist forces. **Picasso's painting Guernica** (1937) was in response to the bombing of Guernica, a town in northern Spain.

In 1939, **World War II broke out** when 1.25 million German soldiers invaded Poland. Two days later Great Britain declared war on Germany. Fifty countries joined the British as "the Allied forces". The Nazis were supported by eight other right-wing countries including Italy and Japan.

In 1937, the **Second Sino-Japanese War** broke out when Japan invaded China. Russia and the United States sided with China. This prompted the **Japanese bombing of the**

American fleet in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in 1941. The war in Asia merged with other W.W.II conflicts and brought the United States into the war. As an ally of the U.S., the Canadian Government chose in 1942 to force the Canadian Japanese population out of their homes and into internment camps. Most of their property was never returned to them. In Vancouver's Japantown the Japanese Language School was the only building to be returned to Vancouver's Japanese residents after the war. It is now designated a national historic site by Parks Canada.

In 1945, **an American B-29 bomber dropped an atomic bomb** on the Japanese city of Hiroshima, instantly killing 80,000 people. **A second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki**, killing an estimated 40,000 more. In total fifty million people died and hundreds of millions were injured before W.W.II finally ended in 1945.

What were the key scientific/technological influences?

In 1932, British scientists **John Cockcroft and Ernest Walton split the atom**—a significant step towards **J. Robert Oppenheimer's creation the atomic bomb**.

The first Douglas DC-3 commercial flights began revolutionising air transport in the 1930s and 1940s. In 1935, two thousand women applied for 43 flight attendant positions with Transcontinental and Western Airlines. In 1938, nine years after Charles Lindberg first flew across "the pond", the German airline Lufthansa made **the first commercial trans-Atlantic** flight in a Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor. The revolutionary aircraft offered room for 26 passengers in comfortable upholstered seats.

What were the key design and literary influences?

In the 1930s many **European artists, designers and architects fled to the U.K and U.S.** to escape the Nazis. They included **Josef Albers, Jan Tschichold, László Moholy-Nagy, Herbert Bayer, Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe and Marcel Breuer**. Other Europeans moved to the U.S. before the war looking for a brighter future including **Fortunato Depero** (Italy), **Cipe Pineles** (Austria) and **Alexey Brodovitch** (Russia) and Herbert Matter (Switzerland). These bold European designers revolutionised American magazine design, working for publications like Vogue, Vanity Fair, The New Yorker, Seventeen, and House & Garden.

In 1931, The Times newspaper of London commissioned Victor Lardent (a designer at the newspaper) and the Monotype Corporation to design the Times New Roman serif typeface for exclusive use in the newspaper. Other memorable 1930s typefaces include Gill Sans (humanist sans serif) and Perpetua (transitional serif) both designed by Eric Gill; Bernhard Gothic (family of geometric sans serifs) designed by Lucian Bernhard; Bank Gothic (geometric sans-serif) designed by Morris Fuller Benton; Braggadocio (geometric sans serif stencil typeface)



designed by W.A. Woolley; Rockwell (slab serif) designed by the Monotype Corporation; Umbra (sans-serif display) and Coronet script both designed by R. Hunter Middleton; Bernhard Modern (modern serif) designed by Lucian Bernhard; Peignot (a sans-serif display) designed by A. M. Cassandre. In the 1940s the sans serif family Highway Gothic was developed by the United States Federal Highway Administration for use on road signage in the Americas, including Canada.

During the Depression, the **U.S. Works Progress Administration** created jobs for artists by commissioning posters. 2,000 posters were produced between 1936 and 1943. The posters were displayed in federal buildings. They were designed to publicise health and education programs, exhibits, community activities and travel.

The American immigrant entrepreneur and philanthropist **Walter Paepcke** used his packing materials company the **Container Corporation of America** to provide work for fellow European immigrants. With their help, CCA established an innovative internal design department that distinguished itself through a daring modernist approach to advertising. CCA hired Bayer, Cassandre and Carlu, among others to design posters for the brand.

Technological advances made travel increasingly accessible in the 1920s and 1930s. Travel posters were also a source of employment for designers and illustrators in Europe. In the U.K., Great Western Railway (GWR) commissioned a great number of posters advertising holiday destinations accessible by train. **E. McKnight Kauffer, Tom Purvis, Fred Taylor, Adrian Allinson, Albert J. Martin and Alfred Lambart** were among the many commercial artists they hired. In Switzerland **Herbert Matter** created many iconic posters for the Swiss Tourist Office. **A. M. Cassandre** and **Jean Carlu** (in France) and **Fortunato Depero** (in Italy) continued to create groundbreaking advertising posters for a variety of products and services.

The **U.S. Farm Security Administration** (FSA) created work for American photographers during the Depression. **Dorothea Lange** was hired to chronicle the "**The Dirty Thirties**". The FSA was set up to try and improve the lifestyle of American farmers and farm-workers during the slump. It's photography program publicised the impact of years of drought and the depression on rural life.

Many of the designers mentioned here also played important roles **designing posters for the Allied forces** for the U.K. Ministry of Information in 1939 and the U.S. Office of Emergency Management during the second world war.

Industrial design:

Raymond Loewy and Walter Dorwin Teague were graphic designers and pioneers of American industrial design. Loewy had a major influence on streamlined modern train and car design and is often referred to as the "father" of American industrial design. He also designed logos for Lucky Strike, Shell, Exxon, TWA, Studebaker, and BP. Teague set the standard for designer/client relationships in the 1930s and 40s. His book **Design This Day** provides commentary on design as

an interdisciplinary approach to solving problems and building environments. Teague was on the design board for the 1939-40 **New York World's Fair**. As an antidote to the ongoing depression, the theme was "The World of Tomorrow." The iconic cubist inspired **Trylon and Perisphere** structures dominated the fairground. The structures housed a diorama called **Democracity**, depicting a utopian city of the future.

What were the key cultural influences?

In 1931 **cigarette advertisements** claimed that smoking was not only stylish but also good for you. That same year California's Rickenbacker company transformed popular music with its launch of **the electric guitar**. It was embraced first by jazz and blues guitarists like Les Paul, Lonnie Johnson, Sister Rosetta Tharpe and T-Bone Walker.

At the movies:

In 1932, Olympic swimmer Johnny Weissmuller became the first Tarzan in **The Ape Man**; in 1933, **King Kong** was released starring Ann Darrow (Fay Wray); in 1934, Shirley Temple appeared in **Stand Up & Cheer**; in 1938, Walt Disney's **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs** became the first full-length animated cartoon; in 1939 **The Wizard of Oz** was released starring Judy Garland.

Literature:

In 1935 Penguin introduced **the first paperback books**. They launched with a cover design that was the same for each book. Created by Penguin designer **Edward Young**, the design was revised in the late 1940s by **Jan Tschichold** using the Gill Sans typeface. **Superman first appeared** in comic books in 1938. That same year **Orson Welles'** terrifying hour-long radio drama adaptation of H. G. Wells' "**The War of the Worlds**" caused a stir when it aired on CBS.

Architecture:

Art deco gave way to modernism. In 1931 the completion of **the Empire State Building** marked the beginning of the end of art deco. Alfred Levard's 1932 design for **The Hoover Building** in the U.K. is an example of art deco transitioning to modernism. In 1935, Frank Lloyd Wright designed his highly acclaimed **Fallingwater** residence in Pennsylvania.

What were the key artistic influences?

Artists, like designers, were forced to flee Europe to avoid the Nazis. Ernst, Duchamp, and Mondrian were among those who fled to the U.S. in the late 1930s. Berlin Dada artist Helmut Herzfeld changed his name to **John Heartfield** as a CT of defiance against rising German nationalism. He was forced to flee to Czechoslovakia in 1933. The Nazis launched relentless attacks on modernist art. They stripped avant-garde works from the nation's museums and sent hundreds of them to Munich for a "degenerate art" exhibition **Ettartete Kunst**.

