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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Study of Art Déco in the Context of Modern Chinese Design History

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ABSTRACT:

Advertising As the first global design movement to emerge in modern times, the Art Déco trend gradually took shape from the late 19th to the early 20th century, flourishing in Europe starting in Paris, France, and subsequently sweeping the international stage, becoming a fashion trend. Simultaneously, Chinese design art was undergoing profound social change, gradually transitioning from tradition to modernity. Attracted by this international design trend, it rapidly absorbed many unique elements, integrating them into its local social context. This led to a rapid transformation in the expression and application of modern design in China during the 1920s and 30s. This change was inextricably linked to the creative thinking and practices of numerous design artists at the time, as well as the perceptions and reactions of customers and the market. This process not only fostered the widespread popularity of the distinctive Chinese Art Déco trend but also left behind many classic design legacies. Furthermore, it wrote a significant chapter in the history of modern Chinese design, marking a significant chapter in the exchange between Chinese and foreign art and design.

Keywords: Art Déco; design history; study context; modern China

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Introduction

In the field of modern design history, the term *Art Déco* has now become a specialized term referring specifically to an artistic design movement. The movement emerged in Europe in the 1920s, reached its peak in the 1930s, and swept across the globe. In modern design history, scholars often regard the *Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes* (International Exposition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts) held in Paris in 1925 as the hallmark of its ascendancy. Beginning with the *Crystal Palace Exhibition* (also known as *the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations*) held in London in 1851, various world's fair activities had proliferated from Europe. Although world's fairs in Europe had already experienced seventy-five years of prosperity, the significance of the 1925 Paris exposition in the history of modern design was still remarkable. A key reason for its significance lies in that it required exhibitors to present new, modern works. Furthermore, this exposition drew participation from East Asian nations, especially Chinese artists and designers. This situation not only demonstrated the international influence of the exposition, but also reflected the efforts of modern Chinese designers at that time to integrate into global trends in art and design.

1. The China Pavilion at the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*

According to modern design history studies, the Art Déco movement emerged after the First World War, and reached its peak in 1925, when the Paris Exposition was held. With the outbreak of the Second World War, this trend later fell into decline. However, the formation of Art Déco style may have begun earlier than generally recognized. As early as the turn from the 19th to the 20th century, the early signs of Art Déco style had already appeared. For instance, prompted by *L'Exposition de Paris 1900* (The 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle), *the Société des artistes décorateurs* (SAD) was founded the following year (1901). The association brought together a group of decorative artists of the time. In order to promote French decorative arts, they organized various activities and exhibitions. In addition to renowned decorative artists such as Hector Guimard and Eugène Grasset, there were also young representatives including Francis Jourdain, Paul Fallot, Pierre Chareau, and Maurice Dufrêne in the SAD. These figures had a significant influence on the subsequent rise and development of the Art Déco movement.

At the 1925 Exposition, several artists from the SAD played a highly active role in promoting the event. This exposition had originally been planned for 1912, then was postponed to 1914. With the outbreak of the First World War, it was delayed once again and finally took place in 1925. Despite repeated postponements, the exposition achieved remarkable success after years of preparation. It helped post-war France reclaim its position as a global leader in fashion and taste, marking a zenith of the Art Déco movement and exerting a guiding influence on the development of decorative arts in the 20th century. At that time, the Art Déco style had a profound impact on the interior decoration in Paris and throughout France. The exposition was filled with luxurious and gorgeous elements. Nearly all exhibitors were devoted to presenting exquisite works. As early as 1911, SAD, the host of the 1925 Exposition, proposed a series of requirements to renew the traditional design forms. They added the emphasis on *industriels modernes* (modern industry) as one of the themes of the exposition and welcomed the participation of design works with a contemporary character. Through its advocacy of innovative decorative arts and design, the exposition created a crucial opportunity for the further development of the Art Déco movement and its subsequent dissemination across the world.

The 1925 Paris Exposition, which marked the peak of the Art Déco movement in Europe, also had a considerable impact on the development of decorative arts and design in China during the first half of the 20th century. On the one hand, by the time the exposition was held, Chinese society had entered a new era. It had been over a decade since the fall of the Qing dynasty(清代) and the establishment of the Republic of China. Therefore, Chinese artists and designers who participated in the exposition enjoyed greater creative freedom than their predecessors. On the other hand, after returning to China, these participants devoted themselves to the practice and education of modern art and design. They brought new energy to the field and helped China integrate into global art trends. The transformation was profoundly shaped by the exposition and the Art Déco movement. Thus, the exposition

holds a special significance for the development of modern Chinese art and design. Notably, although the artistic design and exhibition arrangement of the Chinese Pavilion at the 1925 Exposition in Paris received a favorable response, this pavilion was not organized by the Chinese government of the time. Instead, it was established by Chinese artists and designers then living in Paris, together with *L'Association des Artistes Chinois en France* (the Association of Chinese Artists in France) and *La Société chinoise des Arts décoratifs à Paris* (the Chinese Society of Decorative Arts in Paris). Furthermore, the majority of members joined during the preparatory phase for the 1925 Exposition. Many of them were well-known among Chinese artists studying in France.

In the exhibition catalogue, it was specifically noted that the purpose of organizing the "China Pavilion" was to allow visitors to see China's evolving posture toward modernity. Those Chinese artists and designers sought to present a path to modern style and a dual orientation toward renewal—both temporal and conceptual [1]. The art designer who led the Chinese Pavilion exhibition was Liu Jipiao(劉既漂). Born in 1900, Liu came from a Hakka(客家) family in Liuqiao Village, Yetang(葉塘) Town, Xingning(興寧) County, Meizhou(梅州) City, Guangdong(廣東) Province. From 1918 to 1927, he studied in France, where he graduated from the Université de Paris (University of Paris) and L'École Nationale des Beaux-Arts (National School of Fine Arts). Initially, he studied painting under the guidance of Ernest Laurent. Later, he changed his major to architecture and interior design. From 1924 to 1925, together with Lin Fengmian(林風眠), he had arranged the China Pavilion exhibition at the Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes. In the preface he wrote for China's participation in the 1925 Paris Exposition, Lin Wenzheng(林文錚) mentioned that the organizer was one of the most promising Chinese artists of the time. The catalogue for this exposition was also designed by Liu Jipiao. In the catalogue of the China Pavilion, the introduction to Liu Jipiao stated that his execution method, modeling, colors and style make him a true modern artist.

Liu Jipiao's artistic design style was known for blending Western and Chinese colors in decorative arts. In the exhibition hall of the China Pavilion, there were various Chinese design elements such as inlaid ornaments, large vases, floor cabinets, and low tables. Because the exhibition took place nearly a century ago, the surviving visual materials limited our analysis of its color design. Nevertheless, Liu Jipiao's style, characterized by a harmonious blending of Chinese and Western elements, remains clearly visible in his design forms [2]. The overall structure of the pavilion was a Western-style building, but its decoration followed a Chinese style. For example, the prominent dragon and phoenix motifs on the pavilion gate, the fretwork patterns on the door frames, the wallpaper adorned with interlocking floral patterns, and the chandeliers hung with lanterns. All of these design elements showed a distinctly Chinese artistic taste and a fusion with Western culture. Unfortunately, few materials from that time have survived. In addition, the Chinese Pavilion was not officially organized by the Chinese government. As a result, research and publicity on the pavilion remain scarce.

2. The Popularity and Transformation of the Art Déco Movement in China

In In the first half of the 20th century, the Art Déco movement swept across the globe as a trend in commercial design. Through the exchange of Eastern and Western arts and the flow of people, it generated a distinctive local style in China's coastal cities. Today, from Europe and America to different parts of Asia, there are numerous design works with the Art Déco style. And these works of the 20th century are still widely appreciated. Moreover, China's connection to the Art Déco movement is particularly unique. In fact, traditional Chinese decorative arts served as one of the inspirations for the elegant exoticism of the Art Déco style in France. It helped the style take shape and gain widespread popularity. Later, the Art Déco movement itself became an international design trend that swept across China. During the first half of the 20th century, China's coastal regions experienced an especially direct and powerful influence from the movement. Its design language could be found across a wide range of objects, including architecture, interior decoration, furniture, and everyday items (**Figures 1–6**).

Figure 1. 1929, Sassoon House (The Cathay Hotel). No.20 on the Bund, Shanghai. Figure provided by the author.

Figure 2. 1934, Broadway Mansions Hotel (Shanghai Mansions). No. 20 North Suzhou Road, Shanghai.
Figure provided by the author.

Figure 3. 1932, Christian Literature Society Building (Guangxue Building). No. 128 Huqiu Road, Shanghai.
Figure provided by the author.

Figure 4. 1931, Cathay Theatre (Guotai Theatre). No, No. 870 Huaihai Middle Road, Shanghai.
Figure provided by the author.

Figure 5. 1930, Denis Apartment (Deyi Building). No. 2 Shimen Road, Shanghai.
Figure provided by the author.

Figure 6. 1932, Paramount Ballroom Hall (Shanghai the Paramount). No. 218 Yuyuan Road, Shanghai. Figure provided by the author.

In the 1920s and 1930s, the Republic of China was promoting "industrial revitalization" (實業振興). The introduction and application of the Art Déco style emerged in major coastal cities such as Nanjing (南京), Shanghai (上海), Hangzhou (杭州), and Guangzhou (廣州). This trend was particularly evident in Shanghai, a city where Chinese and foreign cultures converged. In Shanghai, many buildings in the Art Déco style survive to this day. For instance, there are the HSBC Bank Building (上海外灘匯豐銀行大樓) completed in 1923 on the Bund and the Cathay Hotel (華懋飯店) completed in 1929, namely the Sassoon House (沙遜大廈), both of which display distinct Art Déco characteristics. Compared with the French original, the Chinese version of the Art Déco movement put more stress on the eastern beauty of pattern design and the practicality in life. It paid attention to architecture and interior decoration, while focusing on design applications in public spaces closely related to urban life. Besides being propelled by the economic climate of the era, the reception and circulation of Art Déco in China were further advanced by the active cultural and artistic exchanges with foreign countries. As treaty-port cities had been exposed to foreign influences at an earlier stage, people were able to gain direct access to international trends in fashion and design through contemporary media such

as newspapers and magazines. In the field of furniture, clothing, and everyday objects, the Art Déco style attracted public attention with its beautiful and unique design features. As a representative of the international fashion of the time, it spread rapidly in China through the approach of "bringing art into life."

Benefiting from the advantages of international exchanges and the well-developed information network in coastal metropolises, the trend spread rapidly. At the same time, the movement of designers played a more direct role in promoting design practice. For example, the French designer Paul Veysseyre and the Hungarian designer Hugyecz László came to China and exerted a direct influence on the Art Déco architecture of Shanghai in the 1930s. In addition, a group of artists and designers who would later affect the development of modern Chinese design arrived in France during this period. They were deeply affected by the prevailing Art Déco style, and introduced its elements into Chinese design practices. These French-returned artists and designers included Liu Jipiao, Pang Xunqin (龐薰琹), Lei Guiyuan (雷圭元) and so on. After returning to China, they entered the fields of pattern education and design, playing a leading role in the internationalization of modern Chinese design. Chinese and foreign designers actively guided and collectively engaged in the exploration and practice of design in China during the 1930s. Their efforts facilitated the spread of the Art Déco movement from coastal metropolises to other regions. Consequently, modern Chinese design presented a vibrant and internationally oriented scene.

Under the guidance of Chinese artists and designers, the dissemination of Art Déco in China was not a mere imitation of existing European and American models. Instead, it integrated and accentuated the indigenous character of Chinese culture and the national artistic consciousness. During this period, many of the decorative design practices embodied the spirit of artistic exploration that sought to harmonize Chinese and Western elements. Meanwhile, these artistic practices generated far-reaching insights and valuable experience concerning how Chinese art and design could move from tradition to modernity. The West Lake Exposition (西湖博覽會) held in Hangzhou in 1929 was a notable event. It vividly demonstrated the important transformations of the Art Déco movement in China, as well as the innovative design explorations it inspired. As a positive evolution of the Art Déco movement in China, the 1929 West Lake Exposition greatly stimulated the development of expositions in China, playing a highly constructive role in promoting public aesthetic education and social progress.

The West Lake Exposition opened on June 6, 1929, and lasted 137 days, making it one of the largest and most influential expositions in China's exhibition history. The exhibition displayed 147,600 items and attracted over 20 million visitors. During its preparation, several thousand people got involved, of whom more than six hundred came from Hangzhou alone. After the Zhejiang (浙江) provincial government established the exposition preparatory committee, branch offices were set up in 75 cities and counties. These offices were located in various cities and counties within Zhejiang Province, as well as in Anhui (安徽) Province, Hubei (湖北) Province, and Shanghai. Exhibit-soliciting committees were also established in Suzhou (蘇州), Wuxi (無錫), Changzhou (常州), and Zhenjiang (鎮江), as well as in Nam Kỳ (南圻), Java, and Bandung, to collect exhibits

from home and abroad. The exposition comprised eight main pavilions: the Revolution Memorial Hall, the Museum, the Art Museum, the Agriculture Hall, the Education Hall, the Health Hall, the Silk Hall, and the Industry Hall. In addition, there were two special exhibition spaces—the Special Exhibits Hall and the Reference Exhibition Hall—and three special display areas: the Railway Exhibition Hall, the Temporary Ministry of Communications Telegraph Office Display Area, and the Aviation Display Area. The preparatory committee also designed a dedicated exposition flag, emblem, commemorative medals, and souvenir albums. They issued commemorative tickets and postcards, and published dozens of periodicals, including the *West Lake Exposition Preparatory Special Issue* (《西湖博覽會籌備特刊》), the *Visitor's Guides and Special Issues for Each Pavilion* (《各館所遊覽指南和特刊》), and the *West Lake Nights Special Issue* (《西湖之夜特刊》).

In discussions of the positive influence of the West Lake Exposition, scholars have generally focused on its primary goals of promoting domestic products, encouraging industry, and revitalizing culture. The event was widely regarded as having effectively stimulated the development of national industries and contributed to the revival of the national economy during that period. Furthermore, from the perspective of modern Chinese art and design, the exposition also integrated the Art Déco style into the popular aesthetic tastes and the design education reform at the time. A group of teachers from the Department of Pattern Design at the National Academy of Art, who were led by Liu Jipiao, participated in design tasks for the exposition. Their works included the design of the entrance gate and several exhibition pavilions, as well as a range of graphic design assignments. As the chief designer, Liu Jipiao not only collaborated with Li Zongkan (李宗侃) on the design of the exposition's entrance gate, but also worked with Chen Qing (陳慶) on Pier No. 1. He also jointly designed several pavilions with other architects. In addition, the entrances to all pavilions and venues were independently designed by Liu Jipiao himself.

3. Art Déco Studies in the Chinese Context

China played a distinctive role in the Art Déco movement, both in its early inspirations and global dissemination. However, the term "Art Déco" was not widely used on the international stage until the mid-20th century. Even though China had exerted influence during the rise of the Art Déco movement in the early 20th century, it was not able to reflect on or respond to this phenomenon in time. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, Western art and culture flooded into China under the impact of globalization. The modernist art, in particular, challenged traditional Chinese artistic concepts. In the process of convergence, collision, and fusion, Chinese art changed its methods of education and transmission, artistic styles and aesthetic ideas, presenting a new aspect. External artistic forms, creative concepts, and related studies, especially those from the West, were successively introduced to China during this period. Nevertheless, this process was disrupted and fragmented due to social and political environments in the 1930s and 1940s. After the mid-20th century, under the influence of the international situation, cultural and academic exchanges between Chinese and Western art fell into a period of stagnation. It was not until the 1980s that China began to see the emergence of studies and introductions

specifically devoted to the Art Déco movement. At that time, China had entered the era of Reform and Opening-up (改革開放). In this period, China rapidly reconnected with the international community and expanded exchanges with Western countries. Western arts and cultures, along with related scholarship, quickly arrived in China. And the research on the Art Déco movement came with them.

The Reform and Opening-up that started in the 1980s has often been described as a new phase—or another climax—of China's opening to the outside world in the late 20th century, following the earlier wave of foreign exchange that began in the late Qing(清末) and early Republican periods (民初). In terms of introduction and study of Western modern art in China, the first climax had already occurred as early as the 1920s and 1930s. For instance, the paintings and ideas of Henri Matisse, who was a leading figure of Fauvism, were introduced to China as early as the 1920s. At that time, Liu Haisu, one of the founders of the Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts as well as a renowned art educator and painter, held Matisse in high esteem. Beginning in 1925, he published articles dedicated to the study and promotion of Matisse's works. A group of early overseas-trained artists and scholars, represented by Liu Haisu (劉海粟), played a crucial role in disseminating Western modernist paintings within the Chinese art community. Through the efforts of Liu Haisu, Li Puyuan (李樸園), Ni Yide (倪貽德), Chen Baoyi (陳抱一), Lü Cheng (呂澂), and others, the Chinese art community gained a deeper understanding not only of Western artistic forms and techniques including linear perspective, chiaroscuro and material techniques, but also of Western cultural, historical, and aesthetic concepts. In the early 20th century, the pioneering works of Cubist and Expressionist artists like Pablo Picasso and Paul Cézanne were introduced to China. In the field of art historical studies, works such as Fu Lei's (傅雷) *Twenty Lectures on Western Fine Arts* (《西方美術二十講》) were published. Although some achievements had been made in both introduction and research, the translation and introduction of Western design arts at that time still lacked systematic organization. Furthermore, many translated texts in the field were based on Japanese versions rather than directly on Western originals. It was not until the 1980s that both art history and design history began to be introduced to China in a more comprehensive and systematic manner.

In this context, "Art Déco," a term that had just been recognized in the field of design history since the 1960s, was rapidly introduced to China through translation in the early 1980s. Because the term is a French abbreviation, its Chinese translation had several different versions. From the 1980s to the present, one of the most common Chinese translations has been zhuangshi yishu yundong (裝飾藝術運動), which was used early by Wang Shouzhi (王受之), Chai Changpei (柴常佩), and Yuan Shan (原山). Other scholars preferred zhuangshi pai (裝飾派), including Zhu Chun (朱淳), Chen Ping(陳平), and Zhang Qiman (張綺曼). Further variations included yishu zhuangshi zhuyi (藝術裝飾主義), adopted by Wu Jiang(伍江) and Liu Xianjue (劉先覺); yishu zhuangshi feng (藝術裝飾風) and zhuangshi feng yishu (裝飾風藝術), named by Yin Dingbang (尹定邦), Shao Hong (邵宏), Yan Yong (顏勇), and Huang Hong (黃虹); and zhuangshi yishu feng (裝飾藝術風), employed by Lu Yongyi(盧永毅), Luo Xiaowei (羅小未), Xu Anzhi

(許安之), and Ai Zhigang (艾志剛). There were also translations that adopted a direct rendering, translating the term simply as zhuangshi yishu (裝飾藝術).

Many of the translations above have continued to be used from the late 1980s to the present day. In particular, renderings such as zhuangshi pai and zhuangshi zhuyi have even been adopted in specialized catalogues and dictionaries [3]. Among these various terms, zhuangshi yishu yundong began to appear in the late 1980s and gained broader acceptance after the turn of the 21st century. An important factor contributing to this shift was the development of domestic research in modern design history.

Labeling *Art Déco* as a "movement" carries a distinctly design-historical narrative tone. Although it is formulaic, this term has proven effective in introducing the trend of modern Western design history. From the emergence of the Arts and Crafts Movement, through the rise of Art Nouveau, to the popularity of the Art Déco Movement, these successive movements constituted a transitional phase leading toward modernism in design. Beyond translations and general introductions, specialized studies on Western Art Déco movement also started to emerge in China. Particularly after the turn of the 21st century, some monographs and articles were published, which reflected a growing interest in the movement within the domestic academic community. Representative articles included Ma Ke's(馬可) *A Study on the Design Style of the Art Déco Movement* (first published in *Journal of Suzhou Institute of Silk Textile Technology*) and Guo Qiuhui's(郭秋惠) *Art Déco and Its Style* (published in *Art & Design*). In terms of academic books, notable publications comprised Gao Bingqiang(高兵強) et al.'s *The Art Déco Movement* and a series of volumes edited by Anxin(安心) Studio. The volumes included *The Awakening of the Senses: The Art Déco Movement*(《感官覺醒·裝飾藝術運動》), *Light of the Empire State Building: Masters and Masterpieces of the Art Déco Movement*(《帝國大廈之光·裝飾藝術運動大師及傑作》), and *Twenty Lectures on the Modern World and the Diversity of the Art Déco Movement*(《摩登世界和多元裝飾藝術運動二十講》).

In the new century, as translations and specialized studies on the Art Déco movement grew steadily, a phenomenon became evident in China, namely the increase of research focused on the popularity and new developments of the movement within the country. One of the representative early studies was Xu Yihong's(许乙弘) book *The Origin and Development of the Art Déco Movement: A Study on the Relationship between Chinese and Western "Modern Architecture"* (《Art Deco 的源與流——中西"摩登建築"關係研究》), published by Southeast University Press in 2006. Another representative was Zheng Jing's (鄭靜) edited volume *ART DECO in Shanghai* (《ART DECO 在上海》), published by Liaoning Science and Technology Press in 2008. These works were not only early in exploring the cultural exchange and development of the Art Déco movement between China and the West, but also emphasized studies on its heritage in China, especially its architectural design. In the past decade, based on the number of articles published in journals and magazines on the development of the Art Déco movement in China, this field has entered a phase of rapid expansion. Beyond the focus on architectural design, research topics have also extended to furniture, clothing, jewelry, and other industrial and fashionable design fields.

4. The Art Déco Movement, Modern Design History and the Chinese Perspective

The term "Art Déco" derives from French and is often written as "Art Deco" in English. The term is an abbreviation of the French phrase "Arts Décoratifs" (decorative arts), which had been used long before. In 1766, King Louis XVI of France established the École royale gratuite de dessin (the Royal Free Drawing School), inviting craftsmen and artists to participate in the school's design and educational activities. This institution later became the renowned École nationale des arts décoratifs (the National School of Decorative Arts) in France. The school was famous in the field of decorative art and design. By the end of the 19th century, "Arts Décoratifs" had become a common term for the "applied arts" and was widely current in popular culture. These applied arts basically comprised interior decoration, furniture, textiles, jewelry, and other categories. They largely overlapped with the types of objects referred to as "decorative art" at the time. This background set the stage for "Art Déco" to become the abbreviation for "Arts Décoratifs" and the defining term for the design trends of the 1920s and 1930s.

One of the earliest prominent figures to use the abbreviation "Art Déco" in place of "Arts Décoratifs" was Le Corbusier. His influence on the naming of Art Déco is clearly reflected in his article titled *1925: EXPO. ARTS. DÉCO.* The article was published in the magazine *L'Esprit Nouveau* in 1925. When writing the topic of the article, Le Corbusier used "ARTS. DÉCO" to summarize the characteristics of the Exposition internationale des Arts décoratifs et industriels modernes of 1925 [4]. However, it is worth noting that the "ARTS. DÉCO" employed by Le Corbusier at the time was just a shortened form of "Arts Décoratifs," rather than a systematic exposition of the Art Déco style. The comprehensive generalization of the decorative arts of the 1920s and 1930s did not formally emerge until the 1960s. The most representative event was the exhibition *Les Années 25: Art déco, Bauhaus, Stijl, Esprit nouveau* held in 1966. On the occasion of this exhibition, *the Times* published a special article by Hillary Gelson focusing on the Art Déco style, with the title *Art Deco* [5].

According to the records of the 1966 Exhibition, "Art Déco" had by then become a term used to describe the art and design trends popular in the 1920s and 1930s. This phenomenon was connected to the growing wave of collecting modern and contemporary art and design, which took shape in the 1960s. Among those contemporary trends, Modernism advanced rapidly. Marked by the establishment of the Bauhaus school, it spread quickly and eventually was regarded as the mainstream of 20th-century design. Yet, beyond Modernism, Art Déco had its origins in France and arose in the interwar period, largely in parallel with the dissemination of Modernism. It spread across the globe and remained highly popular after the mid-20th century. This enduring appeal was closely linked to Art Déco's inclusive artistic orientation and its emphasis on the essential beauty of decorative art. The Art Déco style drew from the past, engaged with the present, and looked toward the future. Bevis Hillier's book *Art Deco of the 20s and 30s* (1968) demonstrated that the design historical community had begun to accept "Art Déco" as a recognized scholarly term.

As mentioned above, "Art Déco" in design history is essentially a term constructed by later scholars. They selected it as a label and formalized it as a term, intending to characterize

the art and design developments of the 1920s and 1930s. Moreover, they particularly emphasized the differences and even points of opposition between the Art Déco movement and Modernism in terms of stylistic goals and aesthetic ideals. The term appeared in the mid-20th century, when Modernism had already become the dominant force. Because early modern design history favored linear narratives, Art Déco had often been treated as a style of the early 20th century, while Modernism had been viewed as the dominant current in the decades around the mid-20th century. In fact, it is not difficult to find evidence that Art Déco remained highly popular in the second half of the 20th century. This situation not only exposes the limitations caused by linear narratives in design history, but also reflects the uniqueness of the Art Déco style, particularly its distinctive relationship with Modernist design. As a matter of fact, although Art Déco is often associated with decorative arts, it is not a design movement unified in style and goal [7]. Labeling it a "movement" is just a rhetorical device in design-historical writing, which is used to emphasize its global impact in the 1920s and 1930s and to insert it into the linear narrative of modern design history.

In the framework of modern design history centered on the West, it seems entirely reasonable to apply this narrative logic to the decorative movement. After all, Art Déco itself originated in Paris. This situation reinforced the impression that modern design history, or the history of 20th-century design, had long been equated with the history of Western modern design. However, as Art Déco studies gained increasing scholarly attention and continued to expand, the movement's internal character and essence have gradually become clear. This movement cannot be understood as a purely Western-born art and design movement. In fact, in the background of globalization, the Art Déco movement emerged from the convergence of Eastern and Western art and design. The diverse elements that played a positive role in this movement came from different parts of the world. This diversity explains why the style was able to become an international design trend so quickly. The development of Art Déco was not simply a one-way process that started in the West and then disseminated worldwide. The Art Déco movement was once seen as an extension of Art Nouveau, because they were both influenced by Eastern art and design. It is accessible to find connections in the early Naturalist style and the Aesthetic Movement, both of which drew inspiration from Eastern art. Whether Art Déco is viewed as a continuation of Art Nouveau or a departure from it, these views have been constantly contested by contemporary research. This ongoing debate has offered new inspiration for understanding what Art Déco truly is [8].

In addition, "Art Déco" has frequently been treated in modern design history as a design trend or stylistic phase that rose and declined during the first half of the 20th century. Yet, based on its nature, essence, and the scope of its influence, it is apparent that the Art Déco movement cannot be regarded as a simple, stylistically independent and chronologically well-defined historical period. Research on the Art Déco movement has flourished since the mid-20th century, and it reached a peak around the turn of the 21st century. A similar trend has also emerged in China, where research on the subject has entered a period of rapid growth. This academic trend can be attributed to two main factors. One is Art Déco's considerable popularity in China's coastal cities during the early decades of the 20th century. It left behind substantial heritages of decorative art design. The second is the remarkable

advancement of Chinese design history research that took place around the turn of the 21st century. As the introduction of Western design historical studies has increased, a growing number of scholars have turned their attention to the study of Chinese design history. A key characteristic of Art Déco is its markedly international nature. The style thus bore a deep mark of cultural exchange, which was visible both in its aesthetic qualities and its global impact. Therefore, to explore its true nature, it is necessary to trace the cultural and scholarly contexts in which Art Déco was received and promoted across the world. This tracing should also include its evolution in China.

Conclusion

The Art Déco movement is an art and design trend emerging in the West in the early 20th century and spreading globally. At its formative stage, it absorbed artistic inspiration from China. In turn, it later influenced modern Chinese art and design practices and early design education. In terms of its design heritage and characteristics, Shanghai stood at the center of the Art Déco wave in China. At the same time, an evident tendency toward localization could be seen in China's economically advanced coastal cities. However, due to the diversity and ambiguous boundaries of Art Déco itself, the extent of localization was difficult to determine. By then, Chinese art and design had entered a period of successive transformation, and multiple design currents flowed into China, including trends from France, Russia, Germany, Britain, the United States, and Japan. Their modern design practices offered valuable external experiences for China's design progress during that period. Based on these experiences, China was able to find its own way and form a distinctive cultural identity. In conclusion, the Art Déco style can be truly regarded as an international style. Throughout the formation, development, and evolution of this style, China was actively involved, either influencing or being influenced. This two-way exchange greatly stimulated the circulation and advancement of fashionable art and design in early 20th-century China. Meanwhile, the wave of collecting modern and contemporary art emerged in the 1960s and gained further international popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. After entering the new century, this collecting trend reached China and attracted growing attention. Driven by the convergence of these art trends, research on the Art Déco movement in the field of Chinese modern design history has steadily increased. This has also created favorable conditions for reinterpreting the style at present from a Chinese academic perspective.

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