

V&A Academy

# ART DECO: STYLE AND DESIGN



# Introduction

Distinctive and intriguing, Art Deco began as a luxury style in Paris in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, creating exclusive handmade goods for wealthy connoisseurs which featured exquisite craftsmanship and rare materials. But within decades and in response to a rapidly changing society during the inter-war years, Deco became what was, in effect, a 'set of international styles' expressing modernity and aimed at a wide range of consumers from all walks of life. We will explore the diverse sources and influences on Deco design, including a growing interest in ancient Egyptian, Aztec and Mayan cultures and in the arts of Africa and Japan. The use of 'exotic' and precious materials will be contrasted with an increasing embrace of the nascent machine aesthetic, which used 'new' materials like aluminium, Bakelite and chrome. This course considers key figures, designers and tastemakers such as Emile-Jacques Ruhlmann, Eileen Gray, Paul Poiret, Jean Dunand, Jean Michel-Frank, and Rene Lalique, and themes including exhibitions, skyscrapers, 'exoticism' and the influence of Hollywood films.

## Information

Thursdays, 26 February – 26 March 2026, 10.30-13.00. Online.

Watch lecture recordings on demand, available at the end of each day, until 30 April 2026.

## Your course leader

Christine Lalumia lectures widely and writes on design, art and garden histories with a particular interest in cultural context. A consultant lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art, she was deputy director of The Museum of the Home (formerly The Geffrye), London for 21 years. She is currently lead-Convenor for the Seminar in Garden History and Designed Landscapes at the Institute of Historical Research, London.

*Note: V&A Academy programmes are subject to change without notice.* 2

## **Week 1 – Thursday 26 February 2026**

### **Origins of Art Deco**

10.20 Introduction & Sources and influences, Part One **Christine Lalumia**

12.00 Sources and influences, Part Two **Christine Lalumia**

## **Week 2 – Thursday 5 March 2026**

### **Deco in France: A Luxury Style**

10.30 Rare and ‘exotic’ materials in French furniture and design **Christine Lalumia**

12.00 Deco Metalwork **Lis Darby**

13.00 Meet & Greet **Christine Lalumia**

## **Week 3 – Thursday 12 March 2026**

### **Glamour and display**

10.30 Deco Ceramics **Christine Lalumia**

12.00 Deco Jewellery **Beatriz Chadour Sampson**

## **Week 4 – Thursday 19 March 2026**

### **Deco and the World**

10.30 Paris 1925: The Exposition des arts decoratifs et industriels modernes **Christine Lalumia**

12.00 Speed and Style in the 1930s **Greg Votolato**

## **Week 5 – Thursday 26 March 2026**

### **The Spread of Art Deco**

10.30     Hollywood and Art Deco on film **Keith Lodwick**

12.00     From Manhattan to Miami, Mumbai to Shanghai: Art Deco's  
international reach and legacies **Christine Lalumia**