

V&A Academy

ART DECO: STYLE AND DESIGN

V&A

Introduction

Distinctive and intriguing, Art Deco began as a luxury style in Paris in the early years of the 20th 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, 20th May – 25th June, 10.30-13.00. Online.

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

Week 1 – 28th May 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 – 4th June 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 – 11th June 2026

Glamour and display

10.30 Deco Ceramics **Christine Lalumia**

12.00 Deco Jewellery **Beatriz Chadour Sampson**

Week 4 – 18th June 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 – 25th June 2026

The Spread of Art Deco

10.30 Hollywood and Art Deco on film

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

13.00 Meet & Greet **Christine Lalumia**