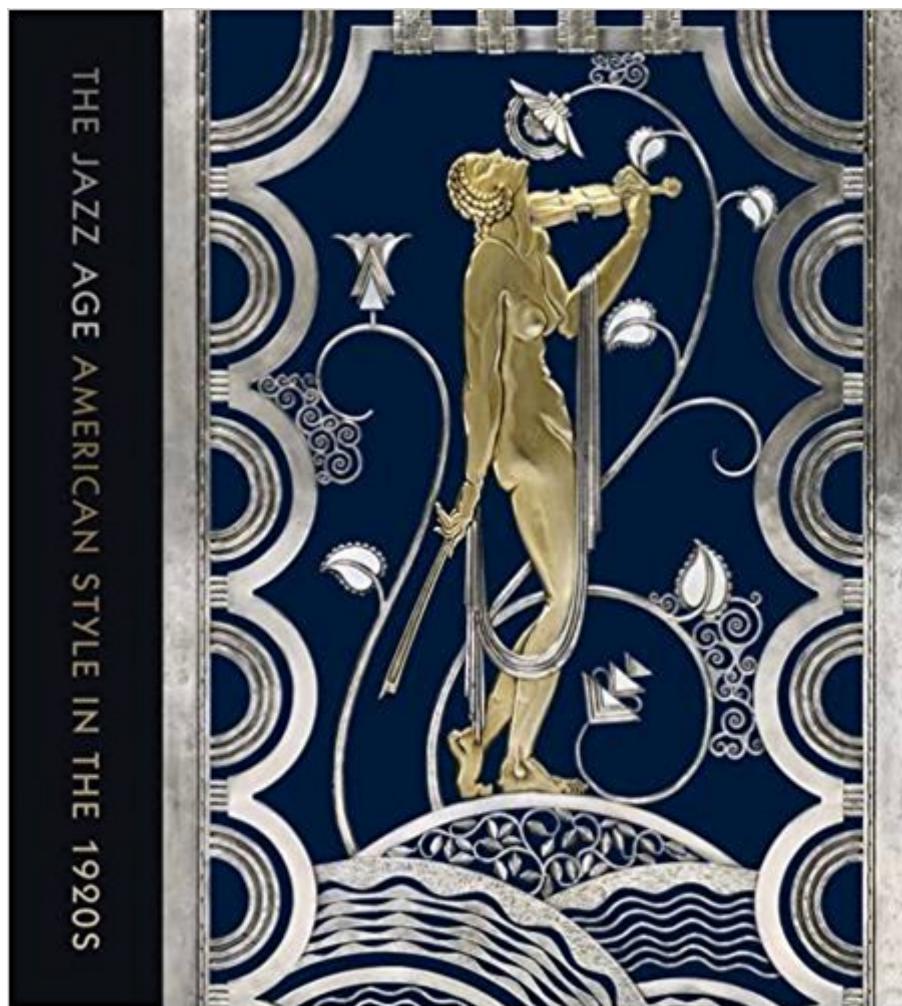


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The Jazz Age: American Style In The 1920s



Synopsis

An exhilarating look at Art Deco design in 1920s America, using jazz as its unifying metaphor. Capturing the dynamic pulse of the era's jazz music, this lavishly illustrated publication explores American taste and style during the golden age of the 1920s. Following the destructive years of the First World War, this flourishing decade marked a rebirth of aesthetic innovation that was cultivated to a great extent by American talent and patronage. Due to an influx of European immigrants to the United States, as well as American enthusiasm for traveling to Europe's cultural capitals, a reciprocal wave of experimental attitudes began traveling back and forth across the Atlantic, forming a creative vocabulary that mirrored the ecstatic spirit of the times. The Jazz Age showcases developments in design, art, architecture, and technology during the 1920s and early 1930s, and places new emphasis on the United States as a vital part of the emerging marketplace for Art Deco luxury goods. Featuring hundreds of full-color illustrations and essays by two leading historians of decorative arts, this comprehensive catalogue shows how America and the rest of the world worked to establish a new visual representation of modernity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Using jazz as its unifying metaphor, this book offers an exciting look into America's role in the development of Art Deco design during the 1920s.

Sarah D. Coffin is curator and head of product design and decorative arts at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Stephen Harrison is curator of decorative art and design at the Cleveland Museum of Art. Emily M. Orr is assistant curator of Modern and Contemporary American Design at Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum.

The book is a feast for the eyes and accompanies the ground-breaking exhibition of the same name held at the Cooper Hewitt Museum in New York and the Cleveland Museum. Sarah Coffin and Stephen Harrison have written interesting essays to accompany the gorgeous photographs and have laid down an intellectual and artistic structure for viewing the decorative arts of the period. An interesting period as America took European developments and brewed up its own styleA great gift and fun to enjoy. Note: Sarah Coffin and Stephen Harrison are the authors and it comes without a dustcover (a little surprising). On the other hand it's a very tactile cover that invites you to touch and open, which I find rather clever.

This book was published in conjunction with an exhibition co-organized by the Cleveland Museum of Art and Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum (the latter in New York). As such, it follows the format of many such books, consisting of items from the exhibition, other items and photos deemed relevant to the story, and text by experts explaining various topics of the exhibition. Where this example stands above some similar books is the overall quality of the result. The photography is outstanding, the organization is solid, and the expert commentary is more engaging than in some books, where it can be rather dry. While the book claims to use "jazz as its unifying metaphor", and while it does invoke the music of the time as part of the context of the art, I didn't find it as central to the story as the authors intended. But it did add a nice flavor to the book, so no objection on my part. I'm fond of these sorts of books, and love Art Deco, so I'm a natural audience for this book. If either of the preceding doesn't apply to you you may not like the book as much as I did. The publisher provided me a copy for review, but I have purchased a copy for my library.

The Jazz Age - American Style in the 1920s has all I would expect/hope for in a book on this subject: a complete treatment of museum objects and the people or events that influenced their design. Copious amounts of high quality photographed objects accompany the relevant paragraphs in the text. The authors give us a thorough and well-researched tour of the era through the objects in their museums: from bracelets to tiaras, cigarette cases to room treatments, objet d'art, fashion, rugs, furniture, and even images from leading magazines of the time. It's a window onto the America

that, thorough the World War, suddenly had the world at its fingertips. And as the title suggests, it is much more than just art deco. The book breaks down by influence rather than subject/type of object. Starting with an introduction about the influence of Paris and exotic locales/history, the book transitions into a discussion on how styles changed during the period. From there, the rise of the American woman, the machine age, influences of immigrants, music and historical references, the rise of the department store, emergence of America as a textile design hub, and more are discussed. The authors are quite thorough but never bland - and the discussions begin and end with the objects themselves. E.g., an ancient Egyptian influence makeup case belonging to the Dodge family or items belonging to the iconic Josephine Baker and why she would have chosen them personally provide perspective on a design element. The images come in all sizes and are closely placed to where they are discussed. The order and presentation makes quite sense and the authors give us a wonderful glimpse into life during that period. Granted, all the objects are museum pieces or from high end fashion magazines like Vogue. They represent the pinnacle of design of the time - and therefore only the very wealthy could have afforded them. But every object (and there are many) is stunning in its own unique way. I learned quite a bit from this book despite having a good foundation knowledge of the period. I highly recommend this book for those interested in design, history, or America of the 1920s. It's beautifully presented and very fascinating. Reviewed from an advance reader copy provided by the publisher.

I love the Jazz era, I love the music, the art, the clothing, the jewellery, the furniture and the interiors - the whole style of the era is just so beautiful. This book has many beautiful examples of the period, beautiful photos and interesting information that accompany most of the examples. Much of the furniture would not look strange in houses today - these designs really were elegant and look like pieces of art. This book would make a lovely addition as a coffee table book, as it is a period that always

I can't say enough about the show and the book, despite not being a deco or jazz age fanatic. The book highlights the unique style of the 20's. I was particularly struck by the work and story of the firm that produced the image for the cover- Rose Iron Works of Cleveland. After attending a lecture by Harrison and Coffin at the Cooper Hewitt I became even more intrigued... this firm (Rose Iron Works) is still in existence, it's still run by the same family, and still producing amazing works of art in a non-descript shop/studio in Cleveland, Ohio. It's one of those amazing all-American stories that has been somehow gone virtually unnoticed. Regardless, the book is chalk full of wonderful

photographs and images from this infinitely interesting period of time. I highly recommend this book!!!

The Jazz Age: American Style in the 1920s by Harrison, Coffin, & Orr is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in mid-April. Along with splendid, full color, sometimes centerfold photographs of museum-curated goods and art pieces come essays from the authors about 1920s imported goods, fashion, industrial design, store display window motifs, Modern art and home decor, and exquisite textiles. Glitteringly bright, yet incredibly informative, this is a book beyond just being about the history of 'things.'

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