

EXHIBITION OPENING

Art Deco Scotland: Design and Architecture in the Jazz Age



Paramount Cinema, Glasgow (1934), Frank Verity and Samuel Beverley, architects - image sourced by Bruce Peter

5th - 28th April 2025
(preview & Book Launch 4th April)

Reid Gallery Corridor
The Glasgow School of Art
164 Renfrew Street
Glasgow G3 6RQ

Art Deco Scotland: Design and Architecture in the Jazz Age is an exhibition of images, ephemera, a film and textual interpretation across nine themes through which the Art Deco style appeared during the inter-war period in Scotland. The exhibition will run in the Reid Gallery Corridor at The Glasgow School of Art from 5th till 28th April, and is part of Glasgow 850, a year-long citywide programme of exhibitions, festivals and events celebrating Glasgow's 850th anniversary.

The exhibition accompanies a major new book of the same title, written by Bruce Peter, Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art, and published by Historic Environment Scotland, which will be launched at a special preview event on Friday 4th April. The exhibition and book are Scotland's contributions to an international celebration in 2025 of the centenary of the staging in Paris of the *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, a great exhibition of modern decorative arts that much later gave the Art Deco style its name.



Queen Mary cocktail lounge - image sourced by Bruce Peter.

In Scotland, during the inter-war years, Art Deco spread widely and was applied in many different settings; from fashionable new villas and hotels to everyday spaces such as shops, lidos, tramcars, cafes and cinemas. Indeed, some of Britain's most remarkable design achievements in the style were north of the border; for example the building of the trans-Atlantic liners Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth by the John Brown and Company shipyard at Clydebank, and the staging of the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow's Bellahouston Park between May and December 1938. Though Art Deco came to prominence against a backdrop of economic depression and political upheaval, the style became associated with ideas of modernity and progress, delivering via commerce and industry an idea of luxury and optimism which became available across all social classes. It also had resonances with developments in visual culture across the wider European continent and in the USA, with which Scotland shared strong historic and modern cultural links, as well as with a British Empire by then in decline. At The Glasgow School of Art, the Head of Architecture in the 1900s, Eugène Bourdon, was a Parisian who had worked in New York and who trained in the Beaux Arts manner many of the generation of architects who came to prominence in 1920s-30s Scotland and whose work exhibited Art Deco traits.



*Coronation Scot express train, London, Midland & Scottish Railway (left) ,
Alexander & Sons single decker bus (right) - images by Bruce Peter*

The exhibition comprises a general introduction to contextualise the subject, followed by sections about Housing and Furnishing, Governmental and Municipal buildings, Transport, The Empire Exhibition of 1938, Retail and Commercial buildings and spaces, Hospitality and Catering, Entertainment, Industry and Engineering and Ocean Liner Interiors. An animated, photo-real 3D model of The Empire Exhibition, created by The Glasgow School of Art's School of Simulation and Visualisation's will also be on display at the exhibition.



Nardini's Cafe & Ice Cream Parlour, Largs - picture by Bruce Peter.

By referring to original source material, much of which is drawn from Professor Peter's own research collection, it has been possible to bring forth new perspectives and emphasise the involvement of designers and architects whose outputs have hitherto been under-appreciated. Looking through the many examples of works on display, visitors can appreciate that, despite the many challenges of the era, Scotland achieved a great deal during the 1930s.



Regal Cinema, Bathgate - picture by Bruce Peter.

“It has been fascinating to discover how much Art Deco appeared in 1930s Scotland and how widely it was spread. Readers of the book and visitors to the exhibition will be amazed by the quality, quantity and elegance of the style’s manifestations here in the inter-war years.”

Bruce Peter, Professor of Design History at The Glasgow School of Art.

“Lyon & Turnbull are thrilled to have the opportunity to work with The Glasgow School of Art and celebrated academic and Professor of Design History, Professor Bruce Peter for his new publication and accompanying exhibition. 2025 marks the centenary since Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes was held in Paris. To celebrate, internationally renowned Design specialist Joy McCall will launch ‘1925: Celebrating Art Deco’ on 26th June 2025, a specialist auction ([link](#)) to be sold in London”.

James McNaught, Associate Director at Lyon & Turnbull.

“Turcan Connell is proud to be sponsoring the Scottish Art Deco Centenary and to support bringing people together to celebrate at the world-renowned Glasgow School of Art.”

Pete Murrin, Partner at Turcan Connell.

The exhibition preview and book launch take place on **Friday 4th April, 5-7pm**. Tickets for this event are free, but please pre-book through [Eventbrite](#).

The book *Art Deco Scotland: Design and Architecture of the Jazz Age*, an illustrated hardback publication showcasing an impressive selection of photography and illustrations from the Historic Environment Scotland archive, can be pre-ordered [HERE](#) for dispatch after 27th March 2025.

Supported by Turcan Connell and Lyon & Turnbull as the lead partners of the Scottish Art Deco Centenary and *Art Deco Scotland: Design and Architecture in the Jazz Age*.

THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART



LYON & TURNBULL
AUCTIONEERS SINCE 1826

TURCAN CONNELL

For further information please contact Alan Miller: abnormals@me.com

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Professor Bruce Peter

Bruce Peter is Professor of Design history at The Glasgow School of Art, where he has been employed since 2002. His interest in inter-war design stretches back to his teen years and so the book and exhibition represent the accumulation of nearly four decades of engagement with the subject. Previously, Bruce has published extensively on specific relevant aspects – cinemas, ocean liners and hotels. In 2016-2018, he assisted with the preparation of the successful Victoria & Albert Museum exhibition ‘Ocean Liners: Speed and Style’ and thereafter contributed to ‘Art Deco by the

Sea' at the Sainsbury Centre for the Arts in Norwich. Bruce's love of jazz music - particularly the big band variety - is reflected in the title.

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA)

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is internationally recognised as one of Europe's leading independent university-level institutions for education and research in the visual creative disciplines. Our studio-based, specialist, practice-led teaching, learning and research draw talented individuals with a shared passion for visual culture and creative production from all over the world. Originally founded in 1845 as one of the first Government Schools of Design, the School's history can be traced back to 1753 and the establishment of the Foulis Academy delivering a European-style art education. Today, the GSA is an international community of over 3500 students and staff and 22,000 alumni across architecture, design, fine art and innovation and technology in our campuses in Glasgow and Altyre (in the Scottish Highlands). www.gsa.ac.uk

3D Digital Model of the British Empire Exhibition of 1938.

This research project was funded by the AHRC in 2006 and undertaken by the Digital Design Studio - now called the School of Innovation and Technology (SIT), at The Glasgow School of Art. The British Empire Exhibition, Glasgow 1938 project produced a well-researched and constructed, photo-real, 3D model of the over 100 principal buildings and structures that comprised the Exhibition together with an accurate 3D map showing the relationship of the various buildings, road and pathways and water features, to the topography of Bellahouston Park. This project also created an archive of related cultural assets and video interviews recording opinions of experts in the fields of architecture and architectural history as well as the recollections of members of the public who attended the Exhibition in 1938. This animated film was funded by House for an Art Lover. Find out more about SIT's on-going research into the Empire Exhibition [HERE](#).

About Turcan Connell

Turcan Connell is a Premier Private Client legal firm based in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London. They specialise in providing legal and tax advice to individuals and families, servicing their personal and commercial interests. Clients are philanthropists, business owners, entrepreneurs, charities, trustees, landowners, and farmers.

Lyon & Turnbull

Operating since 1826, Lyon & Turnbull have established themselves as premier fine art and antiques auctioneers, with venues in London, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. The company has one of the largest teams of specialists in the UK, offering services nationwide. Hosting over 50 specialist auctions per year across their locations, there is always something to see at Lyon & Turnbull—from jewellery and watches to fine furniture; traditional British and European art to Modern & Contemporary stars; European decorative arts and design to fine Asian art from China and Japan