

July 1, 2013

## **The Flapper**

### **ASDVA's Membership Newsletter**

We hope you have a wonderful celebration of America's birthday  
with bonfires, parades, and triumphant assemblies!

#### **New Members**

We are extremely pleased to welcome our newest members, Kristen Hoefke and Kathryn Holland. We hope to see you both at our next event!

#### **News**

Two of our board members, Andy Nishida and Rita Shiang, went up to the Jazz Age Lawn Party at Governor's Island in New York City last month to represent the Society as well as use the experience to bring back ideas for our own Gatsby Afternoon Picnic (see Future Events). Our treasurer, Andy Nishida (standing center in burgundy tank top) represented the Society in the Bathing Beauties and Beaus Parade and even got to meet Mr. Baz Luhrmann (far left), the director of *The Great Gatsby*. When you have that type of star power with you, you can make it on page 6 of the [New York Post](#). It seems that Mr. Luhrmann has really embraced the 1920's culture. We can't blame him, of course!



**Feature Article**

## *Metropolis* and Art Deco

By Rita Shiang

Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* is a remarkable film for many reasons; most importantly, it is the first full-length film of the science fiction genre. Completed in 1927 it is set in a dystopian future (2026) and chronicles the clash between the wealthy industrialists that rule Metropolis and the exploited underground workers that provide power for the city, a seemingly timeless subject. Another reason this film is significant, is its Art Deco style. Lang is said to have visited New York City in 1924 and was inspired by that visit for the vision of his movie. In a 2003 interview he said, “the film was born from my first sight of the skyscrapers in New York in October 1924.....the buildings seemed to be a vertical sail, scintillating and very light, a luxurious backdrop, suspended in the dark sky to dazzle, distract and hypnotize.”

Certainly, some of the most iconic Art Deco buildings in the world are found in New York City, the Chrysler Building and the Empire State Building to name but two. But these buildings were finished in 1930 and 1931 respectively. In fact the majority of Art Deco buildings in New York City were built between 1927-1932, none of which Lang would have seen. So what would he have seen to inspire him?

There were a few buildings finished by that time of what we would consider Art Deco style today. The American Radiator Building (1924), the American Stock Exchange (1921), and an apartment building on Riverside Drive (1922) for example.



American Radiator Building,  
1924 <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

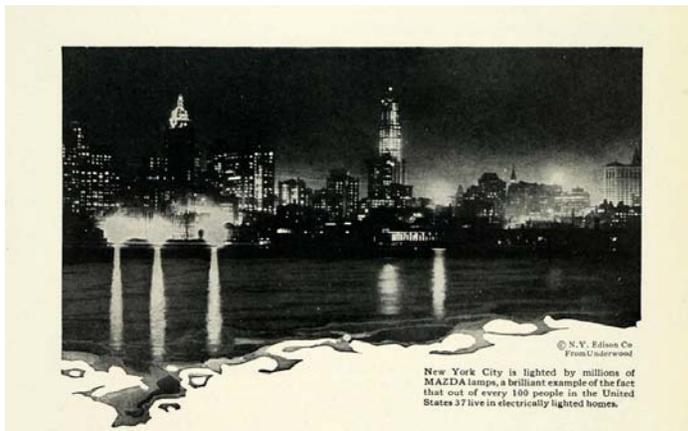


320 Riverside Dr., 1922. <http://en.wikipedia.org/>



American Stock Exchange,  
1921. <http://en.wikipedia.org/>

It is unknown if these specific buildings inspired his vision but even in 1924, prior to building of the tallest skyscrapers, New York City had an impressive modern skyline that likely had no equal in any European city which would have been dominated by a much older architectural style.



At Left: A General Electric Ad from 1924 depicting the New York Skyline. <http://www.ebay.com/itm/1924-Ad-General-Electric-Mazda-Lamps-New-York-City-Skyline-Utilities-Lighting-GE-/310674066841>



A still shot depicting the City of "Metropolis" from the film.

Art Deco itself has often been said to date to 1925 from the [Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes](#) (Exposition of International Decorative Arts and Modern Industry), a world's fair that opened in Paris, France in April of 1925. Lang began filming *Metropolis* in May of 1925 which means he would have created his sets as the 1925 World's Fair was opening. It is more likely that the modern style of Art Deco started after the 1900 World's Fair, also held in Paris (Universal Exhibition) by a group of artists that formed *La Société des artistes décorateurs* (Society of Decorator Artists) to promote French crafts. These artists informed the Art Deco style which also included foreign elements, as well as modernism and futurism.

We learned at Edwin Slipek's lecture on Art Deco architecture earlier this year that Art Deco encompasses Classicalism in its symmetrical style; Modernism as a reaction to Art Nouveau's curved lines replacing them with sleek geometric shapes; Historicalism in the use of motifs from ancient buildings due to affordable travel in the 1920's; and Consumerism as the world moved into the machine age, all of which can be seen in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*. Given that the film debuted in 1927, the question begs to be asked: Did Art Deco inform *Metropolis* or did *Metropolis* also help inform Art Deco? In any event, it is a film not to be missed (See events in July).



This structure seems to be influenced by an ancient culture. <http://buzzdixon.com/christianity/metropolis-the-currently-almost-completely-restored-version/>



This factory in the film depicts sleek geometric lines. <http://domantasinn.blogspot.com/2010/11/metropolis-1927-review.html>

*Rita Shiang is an Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, a Board Member of the ADSVA and a willing pupil of all things Art Deco.*

### Events in July

**Members-Only Tea and Social**  
**Saturday, July 20, 2013; 3:00 pm**  
**Jefferson Hotel**  
**101 W. Franklin St., Richmond, VA**

This is not just tea but the Chocolate Lover's Tea! Just a little something special for ADAVA members to meet, chat, dress beautifully, and have high tea at the Jefferson Hotel. Who doesn't like finger sandwiches, clotted creme, and scones in an opulent setting? Because seating is limited, reservations are required. So don't delay in sending us an email ([artdecova.membership@gmail.com](mailto:artdecova.membership@gmail.com)) by July 14 if you want us to save you a spot! There are still one or two spots left. Payment (includes tax and gratuity) will be made on the day of the event.

***Metropolis***

**Sunday, July 28, 2013, 3:00 pm**

**Byrd Theatre  
2908 W. Cary St.  
Richmond, VA 23221**

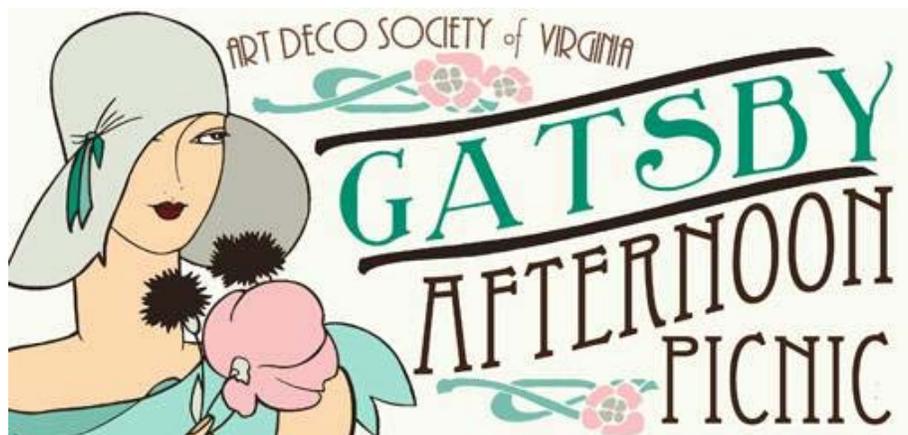
We are excited to once again partner with the Byrd Theatre Foundation in the showing of the iconic movie, *Metropolis*. It is iconic not just for its Art Deco aesthetic but also as the first full-length science fiction film. The original cut of *Metropolis* was thought to be lost for more than 80 years until it was discovered and restored in 2010. On July 28, we will bring you the restored film in its entirety, the way Fritz Lang envisioned it. We know you'll be in your red carpet best or pay homage in your futuristic finest! All for only \$5.



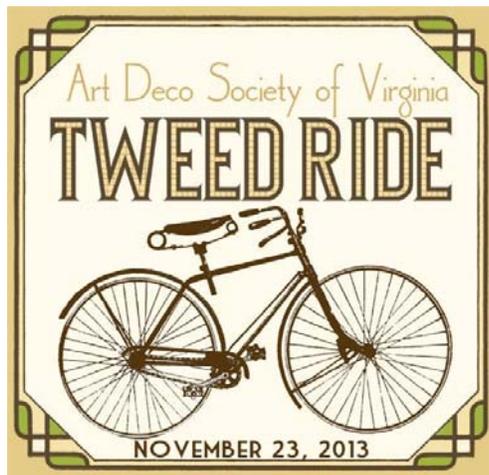
**Future Events**

Please mark your calendars for our fabulous fall events.

**Gatsby Afternoon Picnic  
Sunday, September 8, 2013  
(Rain date: September 15)  
Wilton House Museum  
215 S Wilton Rd  
Richmond, VA 23226**



In 2012, the Gatsby Afternoon Picnic was the Art Deco Society of Virginia's first event. With little fanfare, a group gathered at Forest Hill Park to listen to music on a Victrola, play some croquet, and picnic. It was a sublime time, just the simple pleasures. We can't help if we stopped traffic on Forest Hill Avenue! This year the picnic will be larger and more organized but no less genteel and pleasurable in a beautiful location on the James River.



**Tweed Ride**  
**Saturday, November 23, 2013**  
**(Rain date: November 24)**  
**Richmond, VA**

If you don't know what a Tweed ride is, be on the lookout in our future newsletters but I bet you have a good guess.