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DAYTON ART INSTITUTE SPECIAL EXHIBITION
HIGHLIGHTS JAPANESE ART DECO

Deco Japan: Shaping Art and Culture, 1920-1945 opens November 15


Following World War I, the world changed rapidly and was set against the pulsating beat of the jazz era. The period witnessed the rise of film, the advent of skyscrapers, leisurely air travel, and the modern girl with her cigarette, short hair and cropped skirts. Frivolity, luxury, and a sense of hopefulness pervaded the air. From the fine and decorative arts to fashion, film, photography, and commercial design, art deco affected all forms of artistic output during the inter-war years.

“Art deco was an eclectic style that drew on many international sources,” notes Dr. Aimee Marcereau DeGalan, The DAI’s Curator of Collections and Exhibitions. “It simultaneously maintained one foot in tradition and yet also celebrated the mechanized, modern world. Art deco’s bold colors and streamlined, yet muscular, forms celebrating progress were often deeply nationalistic, and Japan embraced the style enthusiastically, as the combination of visual strength operated in support of Japan’s expanding empire.”

Deco Japan features nearly 200 works and is the first travelling exhibition outside Tokyo dedicated to Japanese art deco. Selected by guest curator, Dr. Kendall Brown, the works are drawn from the Levenson Collection, the world’s premier private collection of Japanese art in the deco style.
Dr. Brown, Professor of Japanese Art History at California State University, Long Beach, has developed exhibitions of 20th-century Japanese art for the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Minneapolis Institute of Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and, for the Honolulu Academy of Art, he organized the exhibition, *Taisho Chic: Japanese Modernity, Nostalgia and Deco*.

In contrast to many exhibitions and books on art deco that organize the material by medium, *Deco Japan* is organized to highlight the cultural, formal and social aspects of Japanese deco. The exhibition is divided into seven sections, each segueing into the next so that the exhibit unfolds sequentially, providing variety while underscoring key ideas.

Through a wide range of mediums—sculpture, painting, prints, ceramics, lacquer ware, jewelry, textiles, furniture, and graphic ephemera—*Deco Japan* introduces the spectacular craftsmanship and sophisticated designs of Japan’s contribution to the movement to pull viewers into this rich period in world history and visual culture.

“Dayton, like many other American cities, felt the influence of art deco during the 1920s and 1930s, and this exhibition provides a unique look at a seldom-seen aspect of the deco movement,” says Michael R. Roediger, Director and CEO of The DAI. “The Dayton Art Institute will host the only Midwest stop for this beautiful exhibition, so don’t miss your chance to see it!”

The DAI’s presentation of *Deco Japan* is made possible by the support of Benefactor Sponsor Premier Health; Patron Sponsors Chase, DMAX, Ltd., DP&L Foundation, Emerson Climate Technologies, Honda, HORAN and Toshiba International Foundation; and Supporting Sponsor School of Advertising Art; with additional support from University of Dayton and The Japan Foundation, New York.

Accompanying the exhibition is a full-color catalogue, available for purchase in The DAI’s Museum Store. It illustrates all of the objects in the exhibition and features essays that explain the major themes and individual works. Also included are essays by Dr. Brown and by specialists from Europe, America, Australia, and Japan.

In conjunction with the opening of the exhibition, Dr. Brown will speak at the museum on Wednesday, November 12, at 1 p.m. in the NCR Renaissance Auditorium. The talk is part of Companion Program Series that also includes a reduction woodblock printing demonstration by Andrea Starkey on November 19 and 20, and the talk *Synthesizing Oppositions: Tradition meets the Future in Japanese Art Deco* by University of Dayton art historian Dr. Hsuan Tsen on December 11. The cost of each talk is $5 for museum members and $10 for non-members. A series pass for all three programs may be purchased for $10 members and $25 non-members.

In addition, other related programs include the *Prime Time Party Rental Series Around the World Party* on November 21, a special Super Saturday Family Day on November 22, and the talk “I Was Modern, But”: *Tradition and Innovation in 1930s Japanese Film* on January 15.

For more information about *Deco Japan*, the Companion Program Series, and other related programs, visit [www.daytonartinstitute.org/decojapan](http://www.daytonartinstitute.org/decojapan) or call 937-223-4ART (4278).

*Deco Japan* will be on view at The Dayton Art Institute from November 15 – January 25, 2015. Exhibition admission is free for museum members; $12 adults; $9 seniors (60+), students (18+ w/ID), active military and groups (10 or more); and $6 youth (ages 7-17). Children (6 & under) are free.
Prices include admission to the special exhibition and the museum’s permanent collection. A $2 per transaction fee will be added to all ticket sales for Building Preservation and Art Conservation.

Tickets for the exhibition and related programs may be purchased at the Museum’s Guest Services Desk, by phone at 937-223-4ART (4278), or online at www.daytonartinstitute.org.

**Docent-led tours** of the special exhibition are available for individuals, groups and schools. Contact Group Sales and Tour Coordinator Donna Young, at 937-512-0152 or dyoung@daytonart.org, for more information or to book a tour.

*Deco Japan* is drawn from The Levenson Collection and is organized and circulated by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia. Support has been provided by The Chisholm Foundation and the E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. His Excellency, Mr. Ichiro Fujisaki Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America is Honorary Patron of the exhibition.

For more information about this and other programs at The Dayton Art Institute, please visit www.daytonartinstitute.org or call the museum at 937-223-4ART (4278). Tickets for most Dayton Art Institute events, exhibitions and programs may also be purchased online at www.etix.com. Be sure to connect with The Dayton Art Institute on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest for additional information, behind-the-scenes photos and exclusive offers.

**ABOUT THE DAYTON ART INSTITUTE**

As one of the Miami Valley’s premier fine art museums, The Dayton Art Institute offers a full range of programming in addition to exhibiting its collection. Galleries hours are Tuesday – Friday, 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., Saturday, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday, noon – 5 p.m. Suggested admission to the museum’s permanent collection is $8 adults, $5 seniors, active military and groups. Admission is free for museum members, students (18+ w/ID) and youth (17 and under). Some special exhibitions, programs and events may carry an additional charge and include admission to the museum’s permanent collection as part of that price. Free parking is available at the museum and the facility is fully accessible to physically challenged visitors. The DAI’s Museum Store and Leo Bistro are open during regular museum hours. For more information, please call 937-223-4ART (4278) or visit www.daytonartinstitute.org. The Ohio Arts Council helped fund this organization with state tax dollars to encourage economic growth, educational excellence and cultural enrichment for all Ohioans. The DAI also receives support from the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District.

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