

Streamline Moderne Design in Consumer Culture and Transportation Infrastructure: Design for the Twentieth Century

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Situated in the time between World War I and World War II, the design community sought a new design for a new century, free of the trappings and encumbrances of the past. The impact of this new design idea would be far-reaching and serve as a remarkable milestone in the American experience, ushering in modern contemporary mass-produced consumer culture, and stylistically and philosophically the successor to contemporary design practice. The Art Deco style pioneered in the years following World War I, exhibited at the L'Exposition Internationale des Artes Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes of 1925 (translated to English as the *International Exhibition of Modern and Industrial Decorative Arts*). Art Deco, while certainly new, was not entirely free of the ornamental motifs of the past. Additionally, Art Deco prioritized the handcrafted, high-end, and exclusive,

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providing exceptional design for those who could afford it.

Streamlining was just that, stripping away the excesses of the past, of even a just few years prior. Streamline Moderne, also referred to as Art Moderne evolved from Art Deco as a more accessible style that was influenced by that present moment, the fast paced, contemporary life, taking cues from motion, speed, and transportation infrastructure—adopting an aerodynamic image. Key to Streamline Moderne over Art Deco was the widespread availability of items and products meant for everyday use by a far-reaching group of Americans. Defining elements of the Streamline Moderne style as marketed to consumers are efficiency to fit into the fast-paced lives of the users, not so different from marketing today. The clean, rounded lines exude elegant simplicity and ease of use for the modern household. For those who could afford this forward-thinking new style at the height of the Great Depression made clear that they didn't want to be stuck in the past, but adopt the radically new and different progressive design that did not recall historical periods or ornamentation for decoration, but derived inspiration inwardly from the spirit of that moment in that day.

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

Developed following World War I in Europe and first exhibited in Paris, Art Deco was a response to the devastation of the continent following what was described as the “Great War”. Looking towards the future, designers for the upper-class created furnishings, decorative objects, and finishes in an angular yet organic style. This, however, was not entirely a departure from the past. Art Deco’s organic design elements recalled the Art Nouveau style of the previous two decades, with a more modern and urban influence (Meikle 93). Seeing this as the *en vogue* style, it was quickly adopted by affluent Americans and American designers, who had little to show themselves at the 1925 exposition. The Art Nouveau style’s association with the past was too great for it to be a sustainable design idea, and by Art Deco still too similar though more removed. While Streamline Moderne is successor to Art Deco, it existed in its earlier years concurrently with the latter. It is a further abstraction of that style, rounding the angular edges, making the style less harsh and more approachable, and shaped by the speed of progress.

Similar in inspiration by speed and transportation, the Italian Futurist movement, by artists such as Umberto Boccioni, which predates the Art Deco period are angular and aggressive (White

105). One heavily linked idea of Futurism that is strongly correlated with Streamline Moderne is “dynamism”. While the figures, shapes, and objects are angular, they are not static. These shapes connote motion, much like in Streamlining. However, the futurists looked to the future but with the same combative adherence to the past that weighted the Art Deco style and its predecessors despite offering a vision of what was to come, it nonetheless was also commentary on what had happened. Streamline Moderne is also influenced by and related to the Bauhaus. This German style was first cultivated and inspired much like Art Deco in the years following World War I, but more similar to the Streamlined Style that would follow. The Bauhaus promoted a universal set of design guidelines, and a commonality between all artistic practices--architecture, decorative arts, furnishings, paintings, and other trades which prioritized abstraction as a reflection of modern life (Maulsby 146). Lucy Maulsby speaks of the rise of “Mass Culture” and the relationship of modernity and how people would live in it “in a fundamentally new way of inhabiting the world” (Maulsby 147). The “freedom”, “anonymity”, and “sophistication” of the Bauhaus, like Streamline Moderne appealed to Americans (Maulsby 146).

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

The accessibility, and perhaps mundane nature of Streamline Moderne is what makes it interesting because the extraordinarily significant nature of what this style accomplished as far as advancing design forward, while remaining so ubiquitous and ordinary. Architecture, furniture, decorative objects, automobiles and vehicles, and household appliances and fixtures all designed in the Streamline Moderne style held a prominent place in 1930s and 1940s American households. For the first time, a larger body of the American population was exposed to and maybe able to afford “good” design that was not only aesthetically considered, but also new tools for a new century through time-saving products and transformative inventions, but also novelties of and for consumer fascination

Designers struggled to find a machine aesthetic both intellectually defensible and commercially viable. They sought a new style that would honestly express the technological modernity of American life. But that style also had to appeal to consumers. (Meikle 113)

Streamlining was presented as hopeful, a clear and proud statement about moving towards the future in the present day at that particular moment in time. Designers opted to make use of inexpensive and

readily available materials to manufacture these consumer goods. The materials included were smooth materials found both in nature and manmade “such as plastics, composite metals, and wood laminates reflected the national obsession with speed at a time when efficiency and productivity were passwords to a fast-paced future” (Kardon 28). The interest in streamline modern design pervaded every aspect of design.

It was at the World’s Fairs of 1933 in Chicago, and 1939 in New York; that the promise of Streamline Moderne as a realized style was presented to a global audience. Chicago’s *Century of Progress Exposition* promised a bold, bright future to exhibition-goers. Featuring the Burlington’s *Zephyr* train, manufactured by the Budd Company of Philadelphia, the first streamline designed train, Buckminster Fuller’s extraordinarily futuristic Dymaxion Car Number 3, and the Chrysler Airflow (Hanks and Hoy 36). Each of these items exuded early on a sense of movement and dynamism, all in their names alone. The New York World’s Fair of 1939, similarly featured streamlined design in every possible application, continuing to demonstrate a model of the supposed future of the world, with the motto of “building the world of tomorrow with the tools of today”, which

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

Hanks and Hoy describe as the “ultimate endorsement for streamlining” (Hanks and Hoy 36). This endorsement of streamlining as it was applied to so many products and ideas was executed not only in the name of progress, but progress for a cause. Streamline Moderne and the act of “streamlining” as a verb, looking beyond the very basic tenet of increasing efficiency, sought to improve the lives and experiences of users.

Drawing inspiration from the pure forms of machinery, a preoccupation with the nature of innovation was not a new concept by the 1930s. A similar predilection towards the enshrinement of the “machine” was seen as a commanding force in the years following the American Civil War, as evidenced by the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and perhaps even earlier than that with the rise of the “Industrial Revolution”. A new modern industrial revolution was taking place that would dramatically alter the means by which Americans would purchase, look at, and interact with household objects and in the larger picture, design as a whole. What is clear is a linear timeline of industrial innovation that paved the way for modern consumerism, sustained by desire for objects to make life better and easier. It is in this realm

of the domestic sphere that allowed Streamline Moderne to take off:

As a consumer culture assumed social dominance for the first time in history, the commercial practice of design became more significant than ever. New products— automobiles, phonographs, radios, toasters, washing machines, refrigerators, vacuum cleaners—had to be given forms reflecting modernity...Consumers had to decide how much to modernize domestic surroundings. Would acquiring a modern-looking radio for the living room stimulate a desire to replace traditional furniture with something more up-to-date? Or would it serve as a token of modernity among the comforts of a traditional interior? Or would timid consumers avoid modern styles and instead select a radio disguised in eighteenth century trappings? Manufacturers and designers had to determine what consumers wanted and then provide it—but with subtle innovations to keep them slightly off balance, disposed towards novelty and further consumption. While nineteenth century pattern designers and decorative artists had supplied furnishings that supported traditional domesticity, industrial designers of the early twentieth century sought to give coherent shape to mass-produced artefacts in an era self-consciously referred to as the machine age. (Meikle 90).

This assertion by Meikle makes clear the motives and function of the Streamline Moderne style. Beyond serving as simply a jumping off point to reject historical precedents and move forward, Streamline

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

Moderne was a proving ground to test the functionality and aesthetic of every and any item imaginable. It also provided a medium for connecting Americans with products and services. Taking a page from the successes of the Sears, Roebuck and Company catalog which in the Gilded Age made products of every type and purpose available to almost everyone, designers, businesses, and corporations. Magazines such as *House and Garden* featured large enticing colored advertisements marketing these products as thrilling. The March 1936 issue features an advertisement for the Kelvinator DeLuxe Refrigerator showing two men wearing tuxedos and a woman in a gown demonstrating a large new refrigerator. Above this illustration is the text: “Once again...there’s a thrill in the kitchen!” (Kelvinator DeLuxe 5). Perhaps a surprising way to describe a refrigerator, this mode of advertising was more appropriately used for automobile sales, it demonstrates that these products could all be marketed the same way utilizing the same appeal.

In *Art and the Machine; An Account of Industrial Design in 20th-century America*, a book written concurrently with the rise of Streamlining, the authors’ words express the excitement that streamlining offered not only to the consumer but in

the greater context of the power and potential of design to serve as a representative mode of change:

We are thrilled to be eyewitnesses to a battle for supremacy between two types of common carriers, as one epoch of railroad domination ends and another begins to be established, seeing historic significance in the struggle: a struggle which is intensified in its dramatic aspects because high power is no more powerful a weapon than its expressive form, because efficiency will be no more a determining factor than appearance—which results from industrial design...The streamline as a scientific fact is embodied in the airplane. As an aesthetic style mark, and symbol of twentieth century machine-age speed, precision, and efficiency... (Cheney and Cheney 97)

In the groundbreaking 1934 exhibition, *Machine Art*, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, later distinguished architect, Philip Johnson curated an exhibition unlike any other. For this was not a traditional display of traditional art objects. Like the 1876 *Centennial Exposition* in Philadelphia, this exhibit celebrated the machine and the practice of industry. The *Machine Art* exhibition served a very familiar function in revering and presenting the industrial as art, to find beauty in the simplicity and functionality of a particular item, without an unproductive veneer. Differing from the earlier 1876 exhibition, over fifty years prior, which had massive

machinery, engines, and inventions, *Machine Art* displayed more everyday objects, many which visitors likely used or saw in their own homes that morning. Considering the formal design and functional use of these ordinary objects, which included dishes, tea kettles, car pistons, flatware, and ashtrays (Marshall 2-3). Similar to 1876, the intention of these exhibits was to present and display these objects, whether industrial or domestic, to convey the simplistic and pure beauty in the object itself and not from outside or artificial ornamentation. Objects for household use and objects for use on an airplane, or in a laboratory, or factory are beautiful because of the functionality of that object and the expression of that functionality in its design as solely that. According to Jennifer Marshall, these objects presented the objects in the exhibition: “activated by the functionality and use of the object as a representation of that functionality and efficiency” (Marshall 4).

The year prior, the museum had exhibited a show by Johnson, *Objects: 1900 and Today*, comparing the evolution of the decorative arts over the span of thirty years to include examples of ornate and organic Art Nouveau pieces up to sleek, streamlined functionality of Bauhaus. This show demonstrated the simplification and evolution of similar forms

(Marshall 25-26). What *Machine Art* was able to accomplish is the acceptance of these abstracted, often industrial, or domestic objects to be considered beautiful (Marshall 27). “There’s no denying it: Machine Art was a show for shoppers” (Marshall 109). The show was successful in putting modernity and the machine on the minds of Americans. Philip Johnson, however, was against the notion of streamlining, for the same that its principles were being overused and inauthentic in their application, particularly taking aim against the designs of Raymond Loewy. Marshall cites the example of a pencil sharpener:

That pencil sharpener might’ve looked smoothly aerodynamic, but when was the last time a pencil sharpener had to glide quickly through space? In fact, totally contrary, pencil sharpeners function most efficiently when they are solidly mounted to the desk. Here the streamlined shape was a metal casing put over an old-fashioned machine, not only obscuring the turning, spiraled blades of its working interior, but pretending to a ‘look’ of functionalism at cross purposes with a function! (Marshall 122)

However, in disagreement to this point, the use of the streamlined design allowed for that object to take on a contemporary identity, allowing it to evolve, even if the use of a new design was not needed. By transgressing the design of ordinary objects to take on

a more artfully and carefully considered form it asserted a clear adherence to the principles of modernism, which in its rejection of the past was also a radical transformation of what it meant to be designed. While machinery and technology heavily inform the Streamline Moderne style, it is also hypocritical in that it does present the idea of modernity, but the item that is produced is still but a decorative covering of the internal components, however minimalist, streamlined, aerodynamic, and futuristic they may appear to be. In a book review, for Donald Bush's work, *The Streamlined Decade*, Robert Craig sums up Bush's understanding of Streamline Moderne through the use of the teardrop form as:

...the essence of streamlining the 'teardrop' employed by Norman Bel Geddes and others as the ideal form and indeed the symbol of progress resulting from the application of technology and art to the design process. (Craig 779)

Besides the transportation infrastructure designed in an aerodynamic manner, the vast majority of streamlined objects did not have to be. Despite the positivity and general enthusiasm for streamlining on the part of the public and the consumer market, streamlining did come at a cost to the traditional nature of craft, even how craft had been practiced just several years prior with the acceptance of the handmade in Art

Deco. Streamline Moderne rejected the handmade, in favor of the machine made for the sake of efficiency and uniformity, in this mindset, necessities for a society pushing forward. The “handmade” in the context of the Art Deco movement refers to the role of individual craftspeople who designed and made expensive limited production items with valuable and precious materials. Where Art Deco was accessible to only the wealthy, Streamline Moderne was if not *actually* accessible, was at least marketed towards a wider array of Americans, and was produced on a massive scale with man-made and economical materials:

The ever-reaching threat of industry and the machine-made and the separation of the designer from the maker, impinged on the purity of the handmade object. At the same time, the contribution of industry to the period was a critical one. Industry’s mandate was to modernize products and their means of manufacture. Streamlining swept through the design universe, rounding corners, smoothing surfaces, attenuating forms, proselytizing speed. Modernism was like a cult, practiced with fervor and compliance to the doctrine. Everything in American life was affected; craft would be irrevocably altered (Kardon 30).

As previously stated, the emphasis on speed, motion, and transportation are beyond critical for the

emergence and adaptation of Streamline Moderne in the home. The design of automobiles and trains in this streamlined style would serve as the inspiration for household appliances, objects, and furnishings seeking to capture that same spirit. In his 1932 book *Horizons*, Norman Bel Geddes said “To-day, speed is the cry of our era, and greater speed one of the goals of to-morrow” (Meikle 116). A number of years before, the automobile began to influence and dominate the American way of life. The introduction of Ford’s “Model T,” first put into production in 1908 provided a reliable means of transportation, and a sense of independence for Americans. For \$500, a family could own a car. The “Model T”, accessible and affordable enough for the now growing American middle class got America hooked on the idea of speed. Like Art Deco design, the automobile, initially essentially a novelty plaything for the wealthy, began to be seen as viable means of transportation for the American public, should it be made affordable and accessible—that same shift was seen with Streamline Moderne, which evolved from Art Deco and marketed for a wider audience of consumers, at a lower price point (Meikle 102). The earliest cars, like the “Model T,” were angular, boxy and utilitarian. However, the same interest in aerodynamics results in dramatic

design changes, and would influence automobile design for around twenty years.

Streamlining pervaded not only automobile manufacture and design, but every mode of transportation of the time: trains, buses, and airplanes included. In the design of trains, Raymond Loewy was responsible for the design of the Broadway Limited for the Pennsylvania Railroad, while Henry Dreyfuss was responsible for the New York Central Railroad's Twentieth Century Limited, in 1937 and 1938, respectively demonstrate the need to outdo one's competition, particularly in the fast-paced urban environment. The designs of these trains bear a resemblance to contemporary bullet trains—the intention remains the same, speed. These competing designs each provided comfort and luxury in travel for the passengers on board, a departure from older trains (Hanks and Hoy 29). Additionally, providing structural and mechanical improvements, a smoother ride, increased speed, while increasing safety, reduction of wind resistance (the purest justification for streamlining) and fuel efficiency (Cheney and Cheney 133). The trains represented a romanticism and interest in the nature of travel, a dramatization. (Cheney and Cheney 130). Lucille Guild's notable design for "Vacuum Cleaner: Number 30" for

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

Electrolux, bears a compelling resemblance with Loewy's design for the Broadway Limited Train, featuring a similar bullet shaped design, and horizontal striping, along with a rail or track-like sled at the bottom. Hanks and Hoy also describe the vacuum as "emphasizing a train-like form" which it would appear, even upright vacuums also did (Hanks and Hoy 89).

Related to the association of Streamline Moderne to transportation, the adoption of this style was by transportation companies themselves a marketing opportunity to convey the ambitions, reliability, and service of the business. That is precisely what Greyhound did, in the systematic design of buses and stations for a uniform and confident design. Greyhound commissioned architect W.S. Arrasmith to make this vision a reality (Sargent 445). Quite apt for a business whose identity and branding even today is associated with speed, Streamline Moderne proved an appropriate and consummate application of an artistic form which praises the same reliance and endorsement of speed and velocity as not something to simply be admired, and not a way of life, but *the* way of life in the modern, urban, twentieth century.

The prevalent qualities of Streamlining extended to the far reaches of everything that was or could be designed, used, or experienced. The argument made is the expression of these attributes in both consumer products, household appliances and furnishings, and well as how the same style was manifested in transportation design as the ultimate statement of adherence to the principles of Streamlining which in itself seeks to be informed by movement and speed--a key reason for the adoption and association with transportation. Coinciding with this was an allure for items with no relationship or association with movement, transit, or speed to suddenly reflect these ideas. Much of the focus of Streamline Moderne design in the design, marketing, and sale of consumer products was in the kitchen, where for centuries, housewives toiled, initially over an open hearth, then moving to more rudimentary stoves. With the advent of electricity, the modern housewife, maybe even the working wife would not have to struggle to keep up a proper home. New ingenious appliances mechanized tiresome work, previously done by hand, while also saving precious time. This ease of use alleviated this strain on the modern woman, making life easier. Therefore, it was fitting to incorporate those same design elements that

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

exuded the idea of speed and innovation in products that aimed to accomplish or promote the same. “The perfect design for any object could be derived from the ‘function which the object is adapted to perform, the materials out of which it is made, and the methods by which it is made’” (Meikle 114).

At the same time, while streamlining offered a new freedom for women and was emblematic of the changing role of women, it continued affirmation by society, which deemed that women belonged in the home. However, with the ability to vote with the 1920 passage of the nineteenth amendment, and the specific marketing of streamlined products towards women making purchasing decisions for the home--it made clear that women practiced some agency, and having time and energy saving products would make life as a housewife better and easier, it remained however still a part of the hegemony of a patriarchal society. Although the futuristic and progressive designs may have been symbolic of an attempt or hope to break with this tradition as a part of Streamlining’s larger goal of breaking with the past.

This is not the only evolution and attempt at change in response to Streamlining. Thinking about this evolution of these appliances themselves, which we now consider nothing less than a definite necessity,

many of these products were new and novel inventions at the time. From the beginning of the twentieth century, and three decades in, we see the modern American home develop, all within the context of Streamline Moderne. Looking at a timeline, we see these significant appliances and products enter the market earlier, and are then further developed and perfected by Industrial Designers in the 1930s, and going forward. 1903: “Lightweight electric iron”, 1905: “Electric filaments improved”, 1907: “first practical domestic vacuum cleaner, 1909: “first commercially successful electric toaster”, 1913: “first refrigerator for home use”, “first electric dishwasher on the market”, 1919: “first automatic pop-up toaster”, 1927: “First iron with an adjustable temperature control”, Mid-1930s: “Washing machine to wash, rinse, and extract water from clothes”, 1935: “First clothes dryer”, and 1947: “First top-loading automatic washer” (“Household Appliances Timeline”). Mail order businesses, like Sears and Montgomery Ward were early adopters of Streamline Moderne to stand out amongst the brick-and-mortar competition as consumer’s dollars became scarce during this, the height of the Great Depression (Meikle 108).

In 1931, Montgomery Ward established a “Bureau of Design” headed by Swedish designer

Anne Swainson. It is clear that Montgomery Ward began to take the design and marketing of their products seriously. Sears, Roebuck took a different approach, focusing on the design of key products, hiring Industrial Designer, Henry Dreyfuss to design a washing machine, which was introduced in 1933 as a “designer appliance” (Meikle 108-109). The result was a clean and shiny appliance that would certainly make life easier. In 1935, Sears introduced the Raymond Loewy designed “Coldspot” Refrigerator. This appliance, which prioritized a simple elegant design that highlights its ease-of-use “... *in the door release, a long vertical bar that someone with both hands full could operate with the nudge of an elbow*” (Meikle 110).

In the consideration of the role that the refrigerator played in streamlined design, and how it was marketed to consumers, historian Shelley Nickles delves deep into this analysis. Again, the need, or perhaps desire for streamlined appliances comes from the approach that an object designed to look efficient will be efficient. Nickles describes the ideal consumer for a time, money, and energy saving appliance for the home: “a homemaker in a depression economy, without servants or helpers, who found herself opening the refrigerator door with both hands full. She

valued thrift, efficiency, convenience, and modern food preservation methods for her family” (Nickles 694). Nickles argues that this example was needed to shift the refrigerator from a luxury item to everyday household object, not a status symbol, but a necessary tool for any modern household. The icebox simply would not do any longer as the twentieth century progressed (Nickles 696).

By the mid-1930s, the design of refrigerators and other household equipment would be transformed by the new modernist ‘streamline’ aesthetic. Historians have tended to emphasize the dramatic quality of this change, as did industrial designers themselves. Therefore, consumers’ rapid acceptance of streamline modernism has seemed remarkable. But as the foregoing discussion illustrates, household economists and other reformers already succeeded in simplifying refrigerator design by calling on values such as hygiene and efficiency. What designers contributed was a new aesthetic vocabulary and rationale...Designers found a visual vocabulary that expressed modernity but, just as significantly, was restrained within the boundaries of household values as they were being defined through the role of the servantless housewife. (Nickles 708).

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

In order to accomplish this, the refrigerator had to be redesigned to fit this new market—overseen by Industrial designers, making clear that was a carefully orchestrated craft meant to express this message. Frigidaire, in their model to attract more customers, sought to do so by radically reconsidering the American consumer landscape. In this, they drew their consumer base from every class and position in society (Nickles 698). The research conducted demonstrated that there was a growing need to reach consumers at the lower end of the spectrum who at that point were the ones making refrigerator purchases (Nickles 698). As an attempt to attract potential customers, many companies gave away sets of serving pieces—like plates, jugs, and pitchers. These items, known as “Refrigeratorware” were meant to incentivize the purchase of a new refrigerator. Appropriately, these pieces were also designed with streamlining in mind (Stewart).

For those Americans who in the midst of the Great Depression were unable to afford these same conveniences, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal came to the aid, with the Electric Home and Farm Authority (EFHA), a New Deal program that has seemingly been underrepresented in analysis of New Deal programs. The EHFA worked to provide families

in need, particularly in the rural South, with appliances at low prices and competitive payment plans, allowing up to five years to finish paying. “The electrified, modern American kitchen took shape within a government-managed economic, social, and technological infrastructure” (Mock). The EHFA pushed for “Model T Appliances”—“appliances for the masses”, just as the automobile had done nearly thirty years prior. “By 1935, *Electrical World* confirmed that ‘the appeal of modern electrical appliances has become so strong and public interest has been so increased as a result of the wide publicity that has grown out of President Roosevelt’s enthusiasm for the social benefits that come from electricity in the home’” (Mock)

It is important to note that Streamline Moderne design extended its reach into every possible type of item. “*Nothing is too small or too obscure to be redesigned and made expressive of the new ideal of form*” (Cheney and Cheney 217). David Hanks’s and Anne Hoy’s work *American Streamline Design*, captures and documents the carefully rendered designs of numerous objects, everything from architecture to, staplers and tape dispensers, vacuums to toasters, hair dryers to power tools, and everything in between. The nature and scope of Streamline Moderne design is so

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

extensive that a complete analysis cannot be undertaken in a work this short, however, the context given of particular interest in the role of kitchen appliances designed in the Streamline Moderne style as marketed to consumers as necessary items for a modern-day lifestyle, inspired by the need for speed, motion and movement of that day, is represented first by the physical motion of transportation.

This definitively specific style speaks to a difficult time in American and world history, following the aftermath of World War I and a devastating flu epidemic. At that particular moment, the United States was in the middle of the Great Depression, when the outlook on American society seemed hopeless. Industrial designers and corporations established a new stylistic vocabulary. This vocabulary, a style that would become to be implemented widely in every marketable designed object would draw on the successes of the Art Deco movement, but would be a new style that did not recall tradition, whose only inspiration was looking forward and moving into the future. The harsh and sharp edges of the Art Deco style would be rounded and smoothed-gliding through space; familiar forms from nature and classical antiquity would be rejected. While it can be said that the entire language of design has always been

a dynamic discipline and that every change is a turning point in its own right, this particular departure from tradition was especially groundbreaking for setting the course for future changes to come--and with those changes, continued progress took place. These changes did not take place in a vacuum but in the context of the twentieth century, where conflict, violence, revolution, civil rights, and so much more clashed and played out not just on a national, but a global stage. Streamline Moderne itself continued to evolve and ultimately resulted in the adaptation of new styles which emulated American society's sentiments on modernity in the acceptance of the International Style and then Midcentury Modern and Brutalism. It is not a surprise that American society ascribed to lofty ambitions for the future, depicting an ideal world going forward through the 1930s, and again in the 1960s at the height of threat of nuclear war, just as the United States looked towards space. The *Jetsons* in particular depicts a futuristic, space-age society that in an animated universe exists as Streamline Moderne in its most idealized and widely embraced form. Streamline Moderne was a reflection of modernity and the ambitions of a nation moving forward in the progressing twentieth century, which would come to be regarded as "the American century". It was in the

STREAMLINE MODERNE DESIGN

era of Streamlining that ushered in the age of contemporary American consumer culture and the proliferation of goods and services never before seen. The radical and rounded design vocabulary instituted in the twenties, thirties, and forties set forth a transformational change in the way design is thought about and incorporated into everyday life for Americans.

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