

# **The Practical Way to Preserve Urban Culture-Based on the Discussion of the Symbolic Value of Shanghai Art Deco Patterns**

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**Abstract:** Shanghai is the Second-Largest City in the World in Terms of the Total Number of Art Deco Buildings in the World (after New York) and Plays an Important Role in Shanghai's Urban Culture. the Author Visited Shanghai Art Deco Building and Investigated and Analyzed Its Current Situation. among Them, the Symbolic Value of the Graphic Pattern of Shanghai Art Deco Building in the Urbanization of the City is Discussed. It is Pointed out That with This Participation and the Participation of the Public, There Will Be Room for Further Development of Shanghai Urban Culture Preservation.

## **1. Introduction**

Long Yingtai once said that “When the world is on the side of the city, only cultural preservation can give a city character and personality, and cultural preservation will gradually become – or already – the greatest asset of a city”. The culture of a city can be manifested through language, concept, customs and other forms, and can be embodied by visual and intuitive visual elements such as landscape design, architectural design, interior design, and graphic design. The visual elements of urban culture should be deep and hierarchical.

## **2. Shanghai's Art Deco Plays an Important Role in Urban Culture**

Art Deco is an art deco style. It is a design style of 1925-1939, which is based on French, English and American. Art Deco is regarded as an artistic style with equal emphasis on elegance, functionality and modernity. It is reflected in architectural design, industrial modeling and indoor total. , graphic art and many other fields. In the same period, in Shanghai, which is good at absorbing excellent foreign cultures, this style quickly became popular, making Shanghai the second largest city in the world in terms of the total number of existing Art Deco buildings (Second only to New York). According to the statistics of Associate Professor Xu Yihong of Tongji University, there are currently 165 Art Deco buildings in modern Shanghai, accounting for 41.5% of the 398 outstanding modern buildings announced by the Shanghai Municipal Government. The proportion is not small, and it is the first place compared to other styles. Most of Xu Yihong's collections are public buildings rather than residential buildings. Generally speaking, public buildings are more prominent in the city, and they have a higher level of cognition in the memory of the citizens, which is more reflective of the overall appearance of a city. Today, Art Deco Architecture represents the golden age of Shanghai in 1930, representing a considerable historical and cultural heritage.

The style elements of Art Deco include the mechanical modernity of the industrial revolution at that time, as well as the ancient objects or totem patterns of the Far East, Middle East, Greece, Rome, Egypt, Maya, etc. It integrates various schools and national civilizations, spanning regions and time, and is a diversified and integrated Art style. The Art Deco's all-embracing Art style and the Shanghai culture of embracing all kinds of rivers and lakes add radiance to each other.

## **3. All Parties Attach Increasing Importance to and Protect Art Deco in Shanghai**

As excellent Art Deco buildings, the 77m shaxun building (no. 20, zhongshandongyi road) and

the 76m bank of China (no. 23, zhongshandongyi road) are featured in the famous “Shanghai skyline”. Such skylines are printed on all kinds of objects, taken everywhere and cherished. For people with Shanghai plots, such “Shanghai skyline” is more of a city pride and moving. To some extent, the spread of the skyline also promotes the public's understanding and attention to Shanghai Art Deco.

The Shanghai municipal government has also adopted policies to protect all excellent buildings in Shanghai including Art Deco buildings. On July 25, 2002, the 41st meeting of the standing committee of the 11th Shanghai municipal people's congress adopted the regulations of Shanghai municipality on the protection of areas with historical cultural features and excellent historical buildings. The standing committee of the Shanghai municipal people's congress announces article 70 that “the protection of areas with historical cultural features and excellent historical buildings shall follow the principles of unified planning, classified management, effective protection/rational utilization, and subordination of utilization to protection.”

#### **4. The Current Situation of City Survey is Still Not Optimistic**

Old Art Deco buildings are more or less distributed in various districts of Shanghai, among which huangpu district and xuhui district account for the most, with the sum of nearly 100. These Art Deco buildings cover almost all types of buildings, including public buildings such as Banks, hotels, office buildings, cinemas, theatres, museums, stadiums, as well as private residences such as apartments and villas.

In the field visit, the author found that many of the Art Deco buildings have been listed as excellent historical buildings by the Shanghai municipal government in different batches and have been well protected. However, some buildings that are not listed but still have excellent Art Deco blood are threatened by demolition, improper transformation and lack of maintenance. More commercial institutions simply and rudely use the tall and flat facade of Art Deco buildings and better geographical location to carry out large areas of advertising posts or screen construction, Art Deco buildings gorgeous and elegant surface decoration patterns riddled with holes, straight building outline lines is also beyond recognition.

Recall the glory of Art Deco 100 years ago, let a person sigh. It may be caused by the unclear powers and responsibilities of administrative agencies, the incomplete implementation of policies, the insufficient sense of social responsibility of industrial institutions, or the public's ignorance and indifference to Shanghai Art Deco culture.

#### **5. Graphic Patterns Have Symbolic Value in Cultural Communication**

In the investigation, the author found that many Art Deco buildings in Shanghai have attractive patterns on the surface. As one of the elements of Art Deco buildings, the pattern design of surface decoration is not as large as the volume of architectural appearance design, and the visual effect is shocking, but it is an artistic creation that allows pedestrians and tourists to watch closely and has high aesthetic value. Shanghai Art Deco pattern styles are different, from the modeling, there are radial, step, fan, shell, fountain, and so on. From the form, there are independent graphics, two - sided Mosaic, border, four - sided Mosaic, and so on. It has to be mentioned that in many Shanghai Art Deco patterns there are more Chinese elements, such as longevity peach, cloud, sea, ruyi, auspicious clouds and other modeling, thus forming a unique combination of Chinese and western style, some people call it “Shanghai Deco”. No matter how time changes, shanghaiense live in a world of Art Deco curls or straight lines. Fashion is fleeting, but the Art Deco patterns on the buildings stand there silently and for a long time, witnessing the story of Shanghai's century-long integration and innovation.

From the perspective of graphic design, graphic patterns have the symbolic value of cultural communication, which can effectively draw the public's attention to Shanghai Art Deco culture. The reason is that pattern, as a relatively basic graphic art form, has lower communication cost, faster communication speed, stronger media adaptability, shorter production cycle and wider audience

than other art forms. Whether it is electronic media, paper media or physical advertisements and commodities, all can become two-dimensional cultural communication carriers. In addition, the Art Deco pattern is of excellent decoration, which can be easily applied to various designs and be loved by the public.

## **6. The Significance and Practical Methods of Mass Participation in Cultural Communication**

Cultural preservation and dissemination is not only the responsibility of the government and relevant institutions, but also inseparable from the understanding and support of the public. It is worth mentioning that in the 1970s, there was a popular Art Deco protection movement in western countries. The public protected the Art Deco culture by establishing various organizations and alliances of folk protection, such as publicity, financing and research. Miami even named a street Art Deco, and used it as an activity site, regularly held Art Deco culture and Art festival, to let the public truly integrate and participate in the Art Deco cultural protection action. For this history, we can learn from it and develop Shanghai's own way of Art Deco culture protection.

Cultural confidence is a nation's full affirmation and active practice of its own cultural value and firm confidence in its cultural vitality. Shanghai Art Deco pattern has high artistic value in aesthetics and profound connotation in history and culture. Such pattern can be a key for the public to understand Shanghai urban culture. The author through design "*Art Deco textured map*" this kind of travel map, to the best of their own to Shanghai Art Deco visual elements to show the beauty of the easily understood to the public, to map drive people's feet, to walk, to stop, to pay attention to, to love, to understand their history behind the cultural story and spiritual civilization, and make contributions to urban culture protection.

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