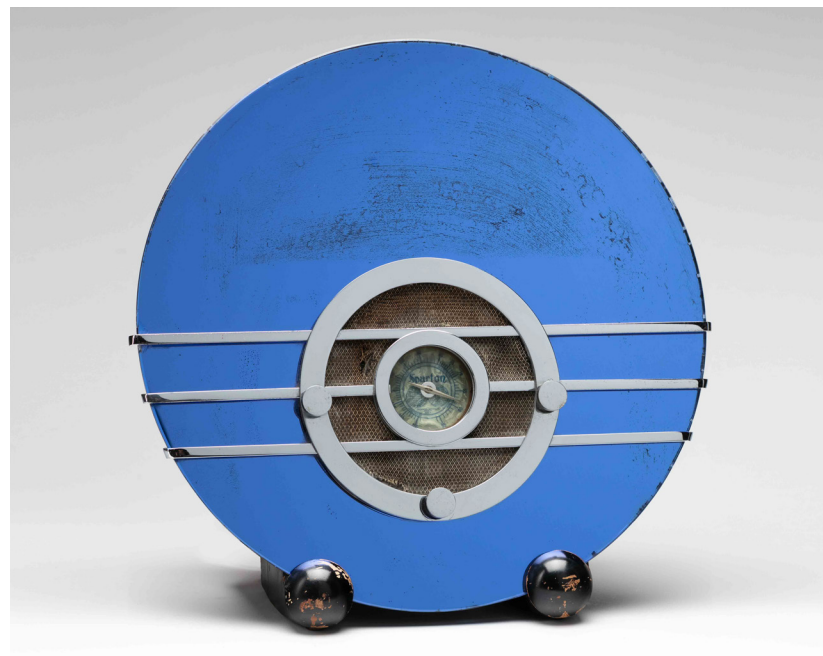




Ship at Sea Compact, ca. 1925. Sterling silver and enamel, 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 5/8 in. Collection Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, Denver, 2006.0187



Walter Dorwin Teague, designer (American, 1883–1960); Sparks-Withington Company, manufacturer (Jackson, Michigan, founded 1900). Sparton Bluebird Radio (Model 566), 1934. Wood, glass, and metal, 14 3/4 x 14 5/8 x 6 in. Collection Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, Denver, 2004.1850. Image courtesy of Kirkland Museum of Fine & Decorative Art, Denver. Photo: Wes Magyar

This Frist Art Museum Art Trunk activity is inspired by the exhibition *American Art Deco: Designing for the People, 1918–1939*. This exhibition not only highlights the glamour and optimism of the 1920s but also the impact of the great Depression in the 1930s. Art Deco originated in western Europe in the 1920s and was later popularized in the United States. The artistic style shows deep admiration of machinery, simplicity, and symmetry.

In this style of art, the works exude balance in their **compositions**—their use of lines, shapes, texture, form, color, value, and space. Balance

can be **symmetrical**, meaning that both sides of an object are equal in the formal qualities and placement of its elements. Or balance can be **asymmetrical**, meaning that an object's formal elements have the same visual weight yet are unequal.

Art Deco objects often incorporate **geometric shapes** and **repetition** of lines. They are complemented by florals, animals, and sunrays with colors such as bright, deep yellows, reds, greens, blues, and pinks.

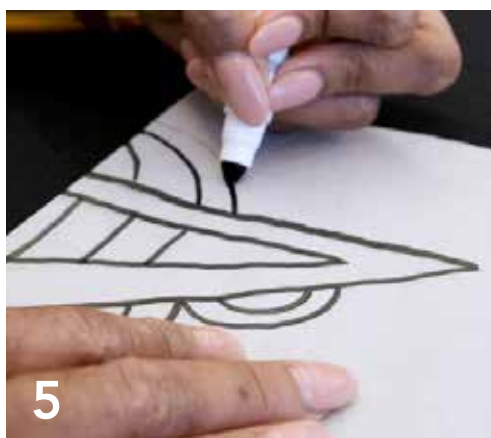
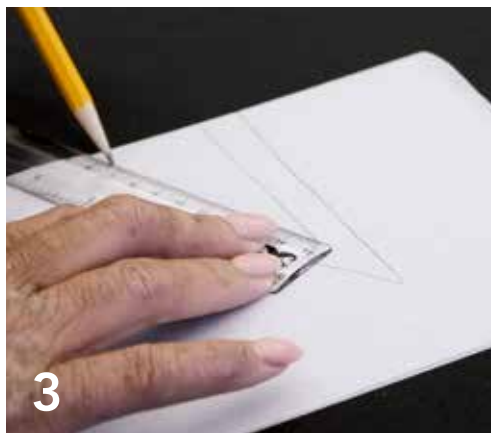
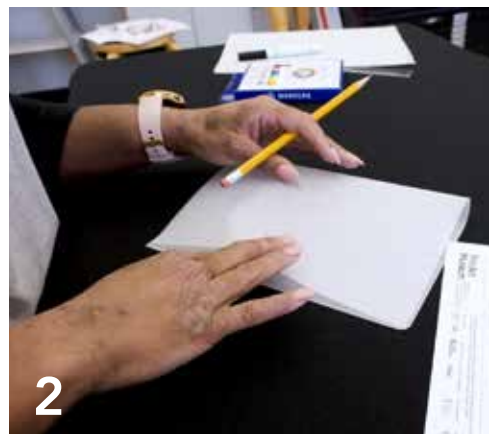
Composition: the arrangement or organization of elements in an artwork

Symmetrical: having two sides that are alike or equal in composition

Asymmetrical: having two sides that are unequal in composition

Geometric shapes: shapes such as triangles or squares that are made of points and lines

Repetition: the use of the same element more than once in a work of art



Objective

Design a poster using Art Deco characteristics of balance, repetition, and geometrical shapes, incorporating objects inspired by the era.

Materials

- Art reproductions on this activity sheet
- A 2B or HB (#2) pencil
- Tracing paper
- A ruler or straightedge
- Crayons, colored pencils, or markers
- 1 sheet of copy paper or cardstock (approximately 8 1/2 x 11 in. or 9 x 12 in.)
- A 4B pencil

Steps

1. Look at the art reproductions. Study the lines and shapes of the objects. Is the balance symmetrical or asymmetrical? What kind of lines are repeated?
2. Fold your tracing paper in half, horizontally or vertically.
3. Starting from the fold, use a pencil to lightly draw your design on one side of the tracing paper.
4. Once satisfied with your design, heavily trace over your lines again with your pencil.
5. Flip your folded paper to the other side and continue the drawing by tracing over the lines to achieve symmetrical balance. What would you change to make it asymmetrical?
6. Color in your design with colored pencils. You can also use metallic markers to imitate industrial materials. If you want to transfer your design to drawing paper, try using a 4B pencil to trace over your lines.