

Figure 10. The seventh floor foyer, Eaton's College Street store, Toronto, 1930. (Photo: Eaton Archives)

The Sources For and Influence of Jacques Carlu's Eaton Auditorium, Toronto, 1930

By David Eckler

A cursory survey of the subject heading of "Art Deco" in any library catalogue in North America would not likely turn up more than a dozen books, more than half of which would deal exclusively with furnishings. The remainder, likely authored by Europeans, describe this mode of decorative design in tight temporal and locational contexts: Paris in 1925; France in the 1920s; and, possibly, Europe in the 1930s. Only recently – after such successful exhibitions and catalogues as "Hi-Style in America" at the Whitney Museum, New York in 1986 and "The Machine Age in America: 1918-1941" at the Brooklyn Museum in 1987 – have books which document the movement's architectural and artistic production, like Victor Arwas' *Art Deco*,¹ been published. It appears from these exhibits and publications that, although the 1925 Paris Exposition concentrated on *les arts décoratifs*, it spawned a renaissance in America for the separate yet interdependent disciplines of architecture and its allied arts. This was exemplified by the 1929 exhibition at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art entitled "The Architect and the International Arts," and an analogous exhibit of "Architecture and the Allied Arts" at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 1927.

In the United States the collaboration between fine art and architecture was given form in projects like the Rockefeller Center. A Canadian parallel to this collaboration was commercial patriarch John Craig Eaton's importation of French Art Deco talent, in the person of Jacques Carlu, to design the interiors of the seventh floor of the T. Eaton & Company's Toronto headquarters. Retaining an architect for *interior* work reflected the shifting professional lines witnessed at the Paris Exposition. Of the Exposition's contributors, "few . . . were craftsmen. Most had been trained as painters or sculptors, some as architects, and they conceived their designs as artists. They were, on the whole, anti-functional, constructing their creations primarily on aesthetic grounds,"² seeing decoration as a natural extension of the arts. It can be argued that, as a first-hand example for Canada of the Art Deco mode, Carlu's ensemble of public rooms in Eaton's College Street demonstrated the potential for collaboration between architecture and the fine arts, an idea distilled from the French artistic tradition and disseminated throughout subsequent architectural production in this country.

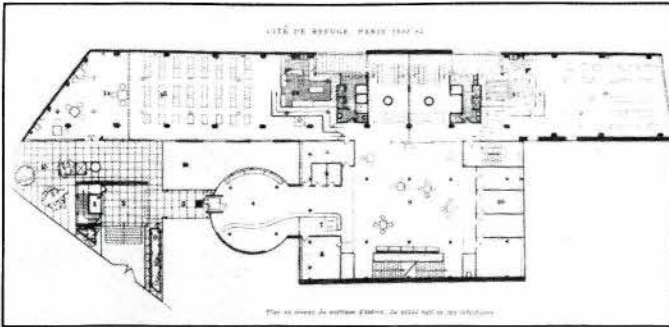


Figure 1. Plan of the ground floor, Salvation Army Building, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, 1933. (Photo: *Oeuvre Complète*, 1929-34, p. 101)

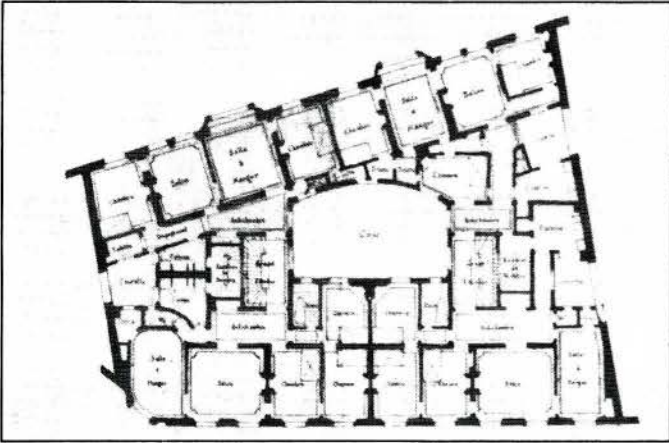


Figure 3. Plan of a typical floor, Paris apartment building, Perrone, ca.1890. (Photo: *Court and Garden*, p. 203)

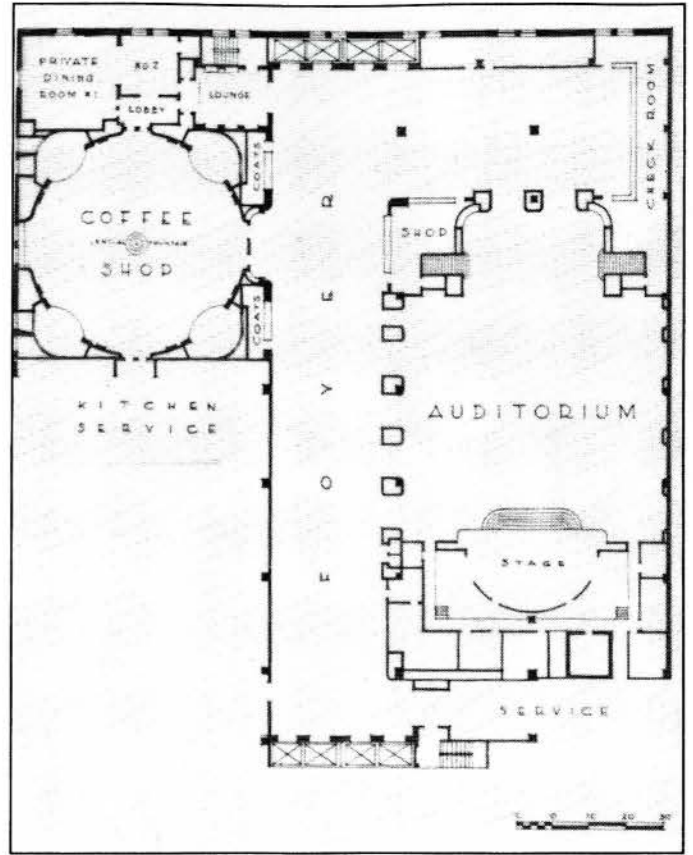


Figure 2. Plan of the seventh floor, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto. (Photo: *Architectural Record* 69, p. 456)

Scholars of “high art” or “the architecture of monuments” have not seriously examined the Art Deco movement precisely because these works, as practiced in Europe, did not fall into either of their categories. In France, the decorative ethos of the Exposition was short-lived, soon superseded by modernism, whereas in America it flourished, spreading into the disciplines of architecture and the allied arts. A metaphor for the cultural colonialism of Art Deco in America was the French cruise ship *Normandie*,³ whose assortment of commissioned art represented a who’s who of the current art scene, and which served as a model for the decoration of Manhattan skyscrapers in the 1930s and 40s. It seems ironically appropriate that, like the Art Deco style it disseminated, the *Normandie* was never to return to its homeland after catching fire in New York Harbour in 1942 and sinking during salvage operations.

...

The obvious commercial attraction of the cubist ornamentation used in the *Normandie* interiors was its applicability to a variety of surfaces, from furniture to floor finishes; similar commercial use of abstract geometries occurred in murals by Le Corbusier for Bata Shoes (1937 World’s Fair) and in chair fabric by Pierre Chareau for Galeries Barbazanges (1928).

John Craig Eaton and Flora McCrea Eaton intended to create a company style across many disciplines as early as 1913 by inviting Paul Poiret, the Parisian couturier, to show his collection in Toronto.⁴ However, the ideological motives behind this universal language of geometry would not have allowed for the inter-disciplinary co-operation demanded by the Eatons: beyond consideration for commissions

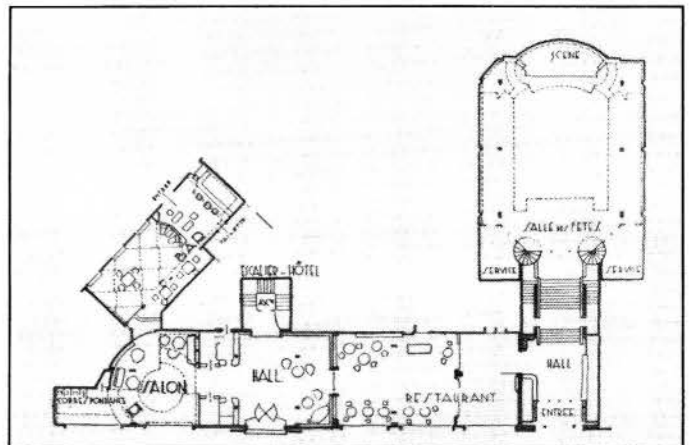


Figure 4. Plan of the ground floor, Grand-Hôtel at Tours, 1931. (Photo: René Herbst, Pierre Chareau (*Paris*, 1954), p. 64)

there were avant-garde designers like Le Corbusier and Chareau, both to whom Poiret was friend and client.⁵ Indeed, as similar in plan as Le Corbusier’s Salvation Army Building’s ground floor (figure 1) is to the Eaton’s seventh floor (figure 2) – a composition of circle, long rectangle, and square, all serving an auditorium below the hall – it diverges in its attitude to the urban context, as Michael Dennis illustrates with a comparison to a traditional Beaux-Arts apartment building plan (figure 3):

Perrone’s plan seems generated primarily from the outside with adjustments made to the inside whereas Le Corbusier’s plan appears to be generated from

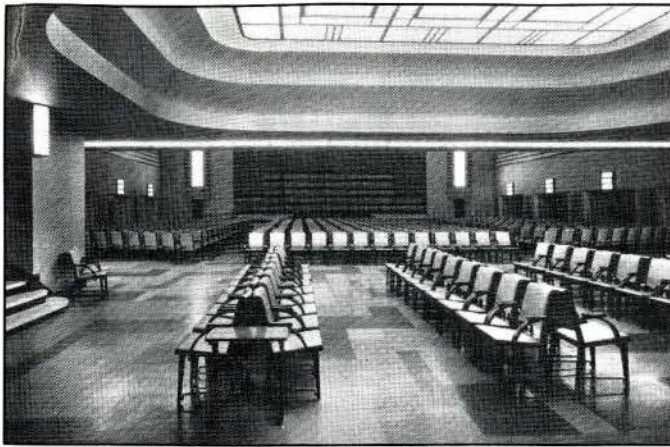


Figure 5. Auditorium, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto, c. 1930. (Photo: Eaton Archives)



Figure 7. Garage in rue Ponthieu, Auguste Perret, 1905. (Photo: L. Benevolo, History of Modern Architecture (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), p. 325)

the inside and adjustments are made to the exterior. Perrone's building responds to the convention of enclosing the space of the street; Le Corbusier's resists the convention of the street and is a fragment of an ideal building imposed on the site.⁶

In establishing a benevolent corporate face on what was to be a newly-widened commercial boulevard, Eaton's College Street building required for its auditorium that an architect adhere to, rather than invert, the rules of the Parisian *hôtel parti*; a contemporary example for Carlu would have been the Grand-Hôtel at Tours, whose interiors Chareau designed between 1928 and 1931 (figure 4).

Carlu's *parti*, certainly closer to Chareau's than Le Corbusier's, is an attempt to find, in the subtlety of its organization, correlations with the preestablished constraints of the classical exterior elevations designed by Ross & MacDonald (Sproatt & Rolph, associate architects). In the auditorium, for instance, the pillars between the exit doors (figure 5) appear to imitate the large-scale columns of the facade (figure 6), whereas in plan (figure 2) they are disclosed as structurally redundant. In fact, to increase this impression of being part of the building's all-important urban exterior, Carlu employs the rhetorical device of an artificially-lit "skylight" in the hall's ante-room (figure 5); the architect here plays the role of an architectural muralist in the trompe l'oeil tradition of the École des Beaux-Arts.



Figure 6. Perspective of Eaton's, College Street, Toronto, as proposed. (Photo: Eaton Archives)

Both Carlu's manipulation of enclosure using light and his avocation as a cloisonné glass designer find parallels in Auguste Perret's rue Ponthieu Garage of 1905 (figure 7). Its central window, if adjusted from a curvilinear to an orthogonal pattern, could be flipped up to become Carlu's ceiling. Even at this early date, as a result of the modern program, the garage's exposed and unarticulated concrete frame neutralizes the differences between street and building, interior and exterior, presenting a precursor to the free facade proposed by Le Corbusier after his apprenticeship in Perret's office. As Michael Dennis has observed,

But the facade as a mask or mediator, between public and private realms was without a doubt latently contradictory to the free plan and consequently the demise of the vertical surface as an architectural and urbanistic concern was ultimately inevitable. Only Le Corbusier ... realized the importance of this contradiction and continued to explore the art of the wall. Quite simply, the facade was not an issue for most modern architects. A list of great modern facades is a short list indeed ... the modern descendants of "l'architecture parlante" lost their tongues.⁷

Nevertheless, having developed his structural grid system to the point of accommodating the complex Théâtre des Champs-Élysées of 1913 (figure 8), Perret backed away from the Corbusian syllogism (perhaps under the influence of the consulting architect for the project, Henry Van de Velde) and filled the framed panels with commissioned artwork—not his own this time, but bas-reliefs by Antoine Bourdelle.⁸ This elevation, with its applied decoration, represents, like its descendant the Eaton Auditorium, a 19th century "speaking ar-

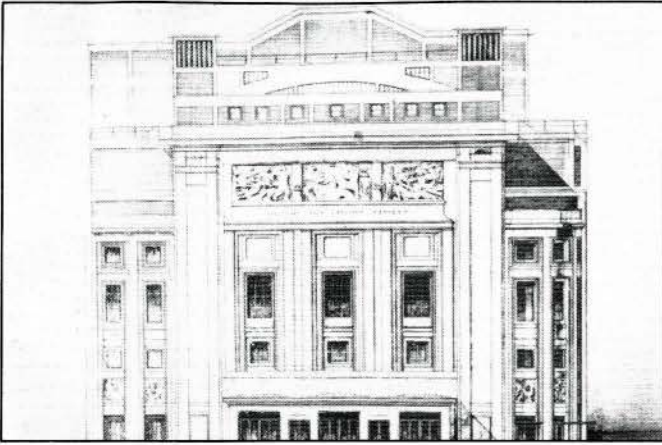


Figure 8. Elevation of the Theatre of the Champs-Élysées, Auguste Perret, 1913. (Photo: Modern Architecture, p. 326)

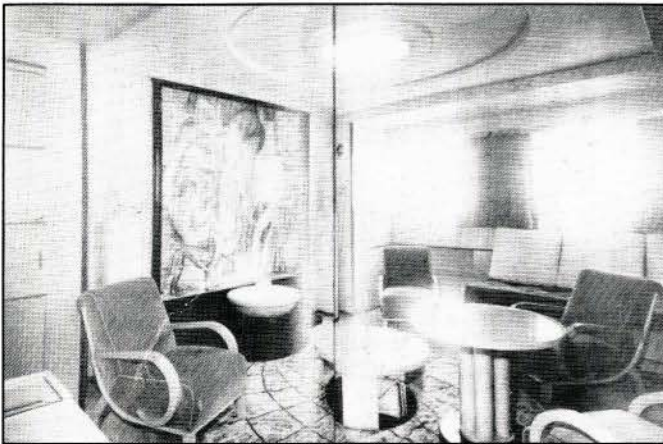


Figure 11. Salon, Le Havre Suite, Jacques Carlu, 1935. (Photo: Normandie, pp. 106-7)

chitecture,” resisting yet the transparent structural facade which became all-pervasive after the war.

...

After World War I, the Beaux-Arts graduates in Paris faced a depressed economy with no prospects to execute the large public commissions for which they were trained (the last such commission being Garnier’s Opera, completed in 1875). They tried to adapt to the functions and materials of the emerging public client, industrialized society. These practitioners from the academies were different from the avant-garde: they utilized modern construction techniques. These techniques were based on a line of precedent which began with Henri Labrouste’s innovative use of structural iron piers and ribs in his two libraries, Sainte-Geneviève (1850) and the Nationale (1860-68), continued through the 1889 exhibition’s Eiffel Tower, and ended with the Quai d’Orsay train station,⁹ opened for the Paris Exposition of 1900 and designed by Victor Laloux, Carlu’s atelier master.

In comparing the work of teacher and student, Laloux and Carlu, the foyers of both Quai d’Orsay station and Eaton Auditorium (figures 9 and 10) illustrate an adherence to the classical system of column and cornice, even when the modern materials dissolve into shafts and strips of light—the former by applying decorative schema, the latter by deftly incorporating the built-in fittings designed by René Cera, Eaton’s in-house architect. Understandably, Carlu’s ex-



Figure 9. Gare du Quai d’Orsay, Paris, Victor Laloux, 1900. (Photo: Beaux-Arts, p. 462)

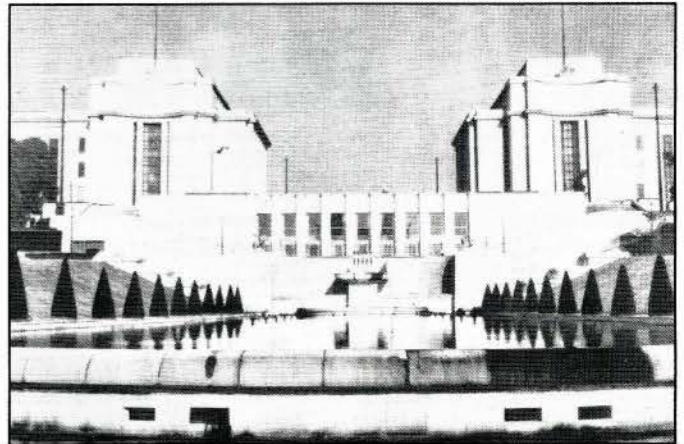


Figure 12. Palais de Chaillot, Jacques Carlu, 1937. (Photo: Chaillot, frontispiece)

planation of technology in 1926 used formalism as a basis:

The true technique for an architect is the intelligent understanding of the program he has to interpret—the skilled use of his materials in an adaptable manner, and a profound understanding of the forms of civilization which characterized the period to which he belongs.¹⁰

Essentially, Carlu designed the Eaton Auditorium foyer using the forms of the ocean liner made “adaptable” (the operative word above) to a neoclassical language, thereby serving a culturally-minded patron—Lady Eaton herself was musically inclined—rather than a society of mass-production as proposed in the modernist manifestos.

Le Corbusier’s argument in *Vers une architecture* (the French edition first published in 1923) for the ship as a modern model for



Figure 13. Ground floor, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto, c.1930. (Photo: Eaton Archives)

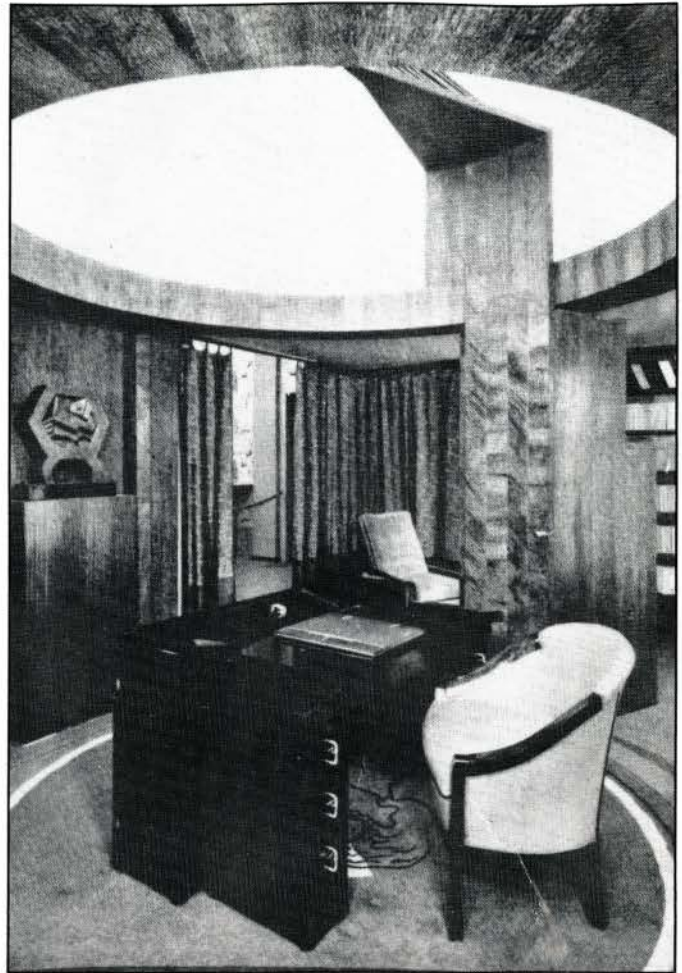


Figure 14. "Study library of a French embassy," Paris Exposition, 1925. (Photo: Pierre Chareau, p. 53)



Figure 15. The Round Room, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto, 1930. (Photo: Eaton Archives)

design did not convince Carlu who, as a participant in the *Normandie* interiors with his Le Havre suite (figure 11), reiterated a classicizing inspiration in all the circular elements: pedestal, urn, chair arms, tables on colonnettes, rug, and a central oculus. Pulling him away ideologically and, eventually, physically from the avant-garde was his belief in the yet-prevalent image of architecture as *palace*.¹¹ Although he eluded the politicizing of this word which took place in competitions for the Palace of the League of Nations (1927) and the Palace of the Soviets (1931),¹² he was eventually awarded the more culturally-intriguing Palais de Chaillot in 1937 (figure 12).¹³

This theatre and museum complex on Chaillot Hill, overlooking and on axis with the Eiffel Tower, was built specifically for the 1937 World's Fair in Paris (on the site of the 18th century Trocadéro Palace by Percier and Fontaine).

All these elements reinforced Carlu's faith in public institutions as elevated châteaux—as did the Eaton's Department Store penthouse floor overlooking Toronto. Eaton's, College Street—a seven-storey podium capped by the auditorium, and on which a skyscraper was to rise but never did (figure 6)—opened in 1930 as the "Home Furnishing Building." It expressed a grand domestic scale with features like high Monel-metal vases (figure 13). Cera, who coordinated the selection and design of furnishings, heightened the effect of coming around the bend of the theatre foyer by grouping chaises and lounges to follow

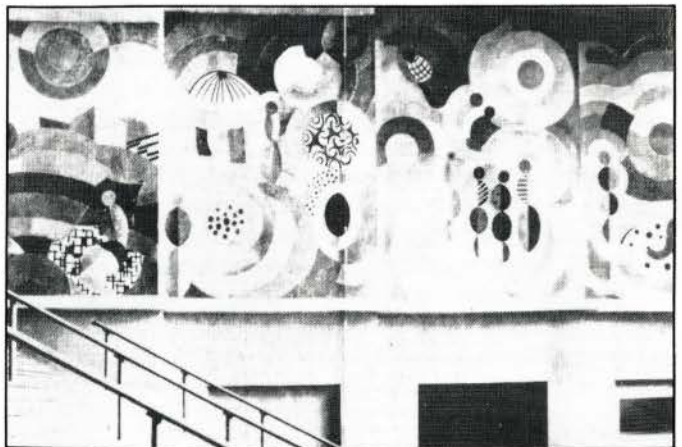


Figure 16. "Distant Voyages," mural, Railroad Pavilion, Paris International Exhibition, 1937. (Photo: Sonia Delaunay, p. 87)

the ceiling's fluorescent lights (figure 10). This arrangement fulfilled Carlu's Corbu-like prescription that

first it is necessary to give architecture its rationalism, its sense of volume, its system of geometrical solids dictated by the plan which is the determining factor, for which both logic and imagination are the laws. From this solid background the artist's dreams must be developed and expanded in order that

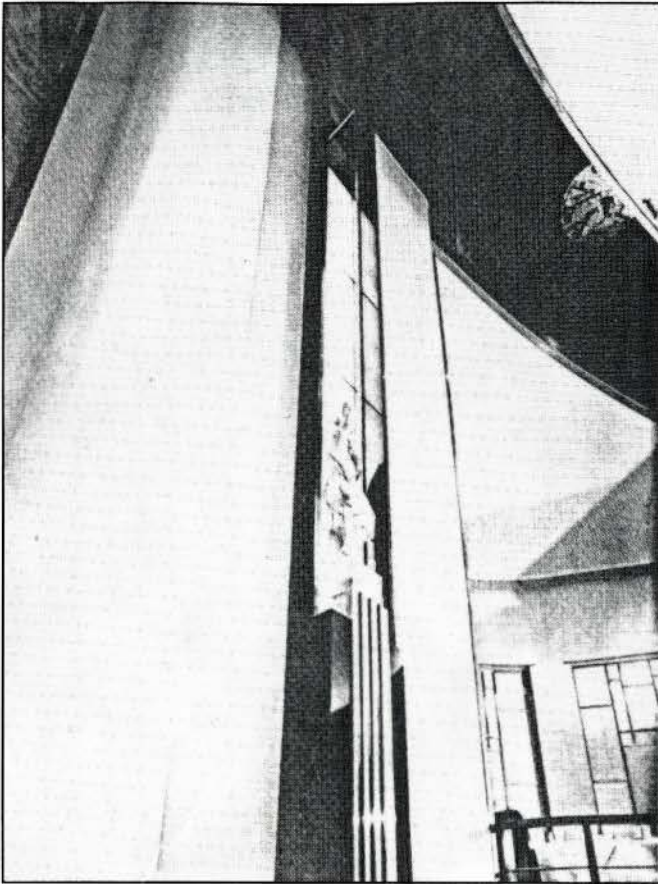


Figure 17. Sculpture niche, the Round Room, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto. (Photo: Architectural Record 69, p. 454)

the logical and sensitive masses which are expressed by the silhouette and by the light and shadow may have a surface that is vibrant with life, delicate or rugged according as the requirements may be constructive or suggestive ...¹⁴

But where similar Corbusian rhetoric always referred to architectural solids, the masses in "silhouette" here would refer to the more decorative accessories: rounded armchairs, or ceiling mouldings.

...

In the new Parisian style of the 1920s, a constructive sensibility took hold which delighted in expressing the circular form, free and uncontained. The circle-in-the-round is demonstrated in interior furnishings such as André Lurçat's carpet under Chareau's "ambassador's desk" (figure 14) and in the rayonist paintings of the Delaunays (figure 16).¹⁵ The circular rings in Eaton's Round Room dominate the space differently, however, by vertically extending the illuminated niches holding elongated figurines by French sculptor Denis Gélin (figure 17). Carlu's wife Natasha, the other contributing artist, acted as architectural perspectivist, dissolving the wall panels into multi-layered bucolic scenes (figure 18). The overall effect of the Round Room coffee shop (figure 15) is of a colonnaded tempietto, with engaged columns negotiating the corner *poches* to complete the squared plan.

Jacques and Natasha Carlu's concession to the machine style—a decorative language which would circulate quickly in Canada—appears in the overlapping and geometricizing of the figures in these murals. In spite of the false impression of industrialized construction given by photos of Canadian Pacific oceans liners and Montreal and Calgary



Figure 18. Mural painting, the Round Room, Eaton's, College Street, Toronto. (Photo: Architectural Record 69, p. 453)

grain silos in *Towards a New Architecture*,¹⁶ the generation which included Beaux-Arts architects John Lyle and Ernest Cormier¹⁷ and the Group of Seven regionalist painters was more apt to adopt a purely ornamental use of the machine aesthetic. By collaborating on such vast public works as Toronto's Union Station in 1924 (involving Lyle, among the three architectural firms), both architect and artist could learn from each other's work. Yet this ensemble approach was already becoming obsolete under the divisive pressure felt by their European counterparts:

[The ensemble] presupposed an attention to something more than furniture itself; to its relationship to volume. An ensemble was a spatial response to a given activity. From as early as 1910, critics spoke of "ensemblers." After the war, a few were quick to identify a school of 1919 which was devoted entirely to ensembles. Yet the definition still lacked a measure of clarity. In 1925, Marie Dormoy, who had consigned Chareau to the ranks of "engineer-constructors" as opposed to the "colorist-decorators," defined the ensemble in aesthetic rather than functional terms: "An ensemble is a combination of decorative elements which may have no individual importance, and which serve only to contribute to the general effect."¹⁸

The same circular motifs of Eaton's Round Room can be seen, on a more modest scale, in Cormier's own house (1931) in Montreal.¹⁹ There is a similar stepped ceiling over the stairway, intersecting circles on the studio terrazzo floor (figure 19), and a delicately detailed pattern of mechanistic gears over the front window (figure 20). Because of the heavy bias toward watercolour rendering at the École (hence the term "colorists"), the earliest forays into combining art and architecture were to come from this milieu. A case in point is Lyle's decorative panels on the Bank of Nova Scotia, Halifax (1930) (back cover). Its collage of circular shapes describes figuratively—rather than replicating abstractly, as the Delaunays would have done—an emerging industrialized nation.

...

Building upon the lessons of the École des Beaux-Arts to create a modern style which included both art and architecture remains Jacques Carlu's greatest contribution to Canadian culture. Nevertheless, an awfully sparse bibliography suggests the "illegitimacy" of this style because it was abandoned by all the French Art groups. By 1930 the Société des Artistes Décorateurs, founded in 1901 to better promote and allow exposure of the decorative arts in the annual art salons, was practically defunct, its founding members Chareau and Francis Jour-



Figure 19. Studio entrance, Cormier house, Montreal, 1931. (Photo: Trace 1:1, cover)

dain defecting to form the Union des Artistes Modernes with Le Corbusier and Sonia Delaunay. Precisely because designers like Carlu escaped the factional battles around the 1925 Paris Exposition—likely not finding any allies between the extremes—Art Deco was allowed a slightly longer life span in North America, its demise concurrent with the influx of the German modernists in the 1940s and 50s.

Ironically, the sort of commercial patron who could mobilize the artistic efforts needed for a 1930s civic landmark were still the same clients for the engineered and unadorned monoliths (like Toronto's Eaton Centre or New York's Citicorp Building) in the post-World War II period. No wonder the French craft tradition, to Le Corbusier's

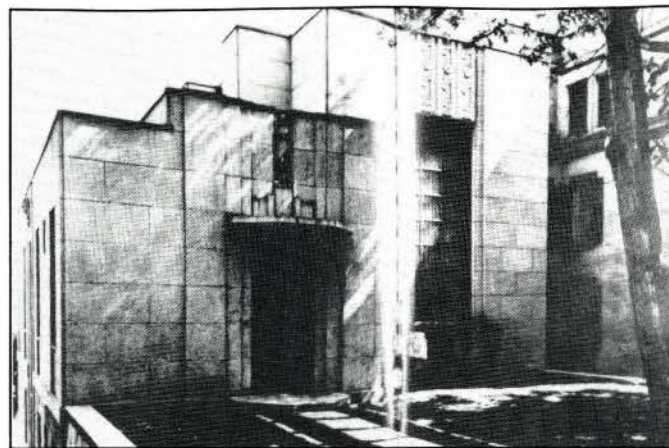


Figure 20. Front facade, Cormier house, Montreal, 1931. (Photo: Trace 1:1, pp. 26-7)

chagrin, resisted the industrialization of the construction site: "As early as 1907 Roger Marx had written that the new International Exhibition which was being planned—and which was to materialize in 1925—was to be the landmark which would 'signify the end of the contempt directed at the machine.' While the German avant-garde movements were designing for the machine, the French Art Deco designers could not shake their fear and distrust of its product."²⁰ They saw mechanization merely as a stylistic choice far inferior to their rich building heritage. Nevertheless, in the same way that the annual salons would attract Sir John and Lady Eaton, the French government, with projects like the *Normandie*, hoped to showcase their national industries.

The host country of the 1925 Exposition no doubt expected worldwide praise for their support of both design for industry and the decorative arts, especially with the absence of likely competitors in these fields: Germany was not invited; the United States declined participation. The Fine Arts Ministry's sponsorship of Le Corbusier's Immeuble Villa model unit, with its concrete structure based on the "Dom-ino" module, only served to undermine and antagonize the other contributors because it contained only "anonymously"-designed furnishings like English club arm chairs and Thonet bentwood furniture. Likewise, the obviously political intention of a project for "a French embassy," designed by Chareau, Jourdain, and Robert Mallet-Stevens, was thwarted by criticism that its customized details ignored the socialist commitment to mass-produced furniture. The diverging political agendas for decoration and industrialization, dividing architectural practice from artistic theory, left the only middle ground for Carlu in the less politically-charged and more culturally-open context of Toronto in the 1930s . . . to the city's benefit.

Endnotes

1 Victor Arwas, *Art Deco* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1980).

2 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3 Charles Offrey, *Normandie, Queen of the Seas* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1985). Surprisingly, considering its small scope, this document and its publisher (the same as Arwas) best illustrate the culture of the Art Deco period of all the recent publications.

4 William Dendy, *Lost Toronto* (Toronto, 1978), pp. 156-163. For background history of the Eaton's College Street Store, one invaluable chapter in this book was used as the single source throughout this paper.

5 A 1924 exhibit of "the public and private areas of a modern apartment," which marked Chareau's entry as a contributing member of the Salon des Artistes Décorateurs, also included design work by Poiret. Other noteworthy designers: Mallet-Stevens, Ruhlmann and Eileen Gray. Poiret gave the commission for the design of a seaside villa (never constructed) to Le Corbusier, who elaborated his proposal sketches in a letter, the date of which is obscure. See Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret, *Oeuvre Complète, 1910-1929* (Zurich, 1937), p. 27 and Stanislaus von Moos, *Elements of a Synthesis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), p. 340n.

6 Michael Dennis, *Court and Garden* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), p. 204.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 202. Dennis describes the line of transition between the decorated Beaux-Arts facade and the structural modern elevation when he makes the comparison between the two French entries to the 1931 Palace of the Soviets competition—one by the office of Le Corbusier and the other by his mentor Auguste Perret.

8 Further artistic collaboration in this building can be found in the interior wall murals by Maurice Denis. Though a founding member of the *Société des Artistes Décorateurs*, he nevertheless influenced the next generation of artists, as epitomized by the young Jacques Carlu (in whose neighbourhood of St. Germain-en-Laye Denis' studio was located).

9 Also called the Gare d'Orléans, it has recently been renovated into a museum of 19th century culture by Italian designer Gae Aulenti.

10 E. S. Campbell, "French Comrades in America," *Pencil Points*, VII (1926), 283.

11 Le Corbusier's 1929 sketch illustrating his proposals for the League of Nations and the Skyscraper as translations of "le palais" and "le paquebot" captures his generation's obsession with these two images. This sketch is discussed more thoroughly in William J.R. Curtis, *Le Corbusier: Ideas and Forms* (New York, 1986), pp. 121-122.

- 12 Le Corbusier's proposal for the League of Nations was placed in the short-list of eight finalists before being disqualified over the use of an incorrect presentation medium. Perret, along with Le Corbusier, was among a handful of invited European competitors in the otherwise nation-wide Soviet competition. Both jury selections—the former for a Beaux-Arts scheme, the latter for a Russian architect—appeared tainted by political considerations overruling technical quality.
- 13 The choice for the design team of Carlu, Boileau, and Azéma can be appreciated, in hindsight, as stemming from the architects' allegiance to a traditional *palace* form for such a prime location. Their selection was much further removed from the issue of political symbolism which coloured the jury decision in the two international competitions noted above. Nevertheless, protests from the artistic community, as described in a contemporary open letter and a recent scholarly reappraisal, suggested a conscious attempt to subvert any modernist solution: see "Le projet de MM J. Carlu, L. Boileau et L. Azéma," *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui* VII (janvier, 1936), pp. 4-7; and Isabelle Gournay, *Le Nouveau Trocadéro* (Brussels, 1985). One of the few photographic publications of this Parisian landmark is Pierre Auradon's *Le Palais de Chaillot* (Paris, 1948), found by the author on a sidewalk sale table in front of a Left-Bank art bookstore.
- 14 Campbell, loc. cit.
- 15 If the translation of the circle from a classical to an industrial context marked a major breakthrough for abstract art, then Sonia Delaunay, rather than her better-known painter-husband, Robert, is the unacknowledged pioneer of modern design, by reason of applying their rayonist principles to objects as diverse as clothing and automobiles. See Sherry Buckberrrough, *Sonia Delaunay, a Retrospective* (Buffalo, 1980).
- 16 The origins and publication of these photographs have been fully documented in Reyner Banham, *A Concrete Atlantis* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986).
- 17 Although John Lyle attended the École des Beaux-Arts with an earlier generation

of atelier masters (1892 to 1894), he undoubtedly came into contact with Carlu's work with his two commissions for renovations and alterations to Eaton's Queen Street Store, in 1934 and 1935. Geoffrey Hunt, *John M. Lyle: Toward a Canadian Architecture* (Kingston, 1982). While Jacques Carlu received his Grand Prix in 1913 and went on to his Rome prize in 1919 after an interruption for military service, Cormier's studies in Paris from 1908 to 1914 were immediately followed by studies in Rome until 1916. See Odile Hénault and Larry Richards, "Cormier House," *Trace* 1:1, pp. 25-33. Nevertheless, even if social paths didn't cross in either case, the watercolour rendering exercises of the Academy (in Paris or in Rome) became the common medium by which the new French decorative style would pass into Canadian architectural ornament. Cormier is emerging as a pivotal figure in adapting the European style to Canadian sensibilities. Phyllis Lambert's Canadian Centre for Architecture, with its comprehensive archive of the architect's drawings, is now preparing an exhibition of his design for the University of Montreal (to be curated by Carlu scholar Isabelle Gournay).

18 Frampton, op. cit., p. 61.

19 Although the Toronto Eaton Store opened in 1930, the concurrent construction of an addition and top floor dining room to the Montreal branch was not completed until 1931, at which time both Carlu projects were published. See J. Carlu, "The T. Eaton & Co. Department Stores in Toronto and Montreal," *Architectural Record* 69 (June 1931), pp. 446-456. Not only would Cormier have likely visited the Toronto work before publication, but would also have seen the design drawings before construction, thus giving him ample time to use the various circle motifs for his own house. An indication of the immense contribution to Canadian culture of his 1418 Pine Avenue residence was its purchase in 1981 by then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, during whose term of office Cormier received the Order of Canada (1975).

20 Arwas, op. cit., p. 21.

Editor's Postscript

The Toronto Region branch of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (ACT) has recently focussed efforts on a campaign to reopen and restore the seventh floor of the former Eaton's College Street store. This floor, which houses the Eaton Auditorium and Round Room restaurant, was closed more than ten years ago. According to ACT, the floor is rapidly deteriorating. The present owners, Toronto College Street Centre, Ltd., are not permitted to demolish the interiors; moreover, when developing the College Park complex in 1976, they made legal promises to restore the interiors, according to ACT. Mayor Art Eggleton has established a special committee to study the Eaton Auditorium situation.

The campaign to reopen the seventh floor was reported in ACT's *Newsletter* (November 1988):

Campaign to Restore Landmark Art Deco Interiors

A campaign to restore the seventh floor of the former Eaton's College Street store—home of the luxurious Art Deco-style Auditorium, Round Room, and foyer—kicked off on Tuesday, October 11 with a press conference and unveiling of the original console from the Auditorium organ, at the Ontario Heritage Centre.

Coordinated by the Architectural Conservancy Toronto Region (ACT) and the Friends of the Eaton Auditorium, the campaign is slated to include the following components:

- the sale of \$5 buttons (depicting the floor plan of the seventh floor) to raise funds for future lobbying activities;
- a lobbying effort to municipal politicians just prior to the November elections;
- a petition campaign to increase public awareness and pressure for restoration;
- an effort to educate the public at large.

At the October 11 press conference, selected items from the interiors, including a set of tableware and several chairs, were displayed, in addition to a show of pictures of the interiors in operation. Persons representing various groups and official bodies with an interest in the restoration or the history of the facility spoke briefly at the conference.

The original organ console from the Auditorium, which was a favourite of the late Glenn Gould, and which was recently purchased by ACT, will be kept on display in the lobby of the Ontario Heritage Centre, 10 Adelaide Street, Toronto, until November 25, 1988.