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# Decorative art after 19<sup>th</sup> century

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# Outline

- An overview about interior design
- Decorative art, definition and meaning
- Origins and History of Decorative Art
- History of decorative art
- Decorative art now
- Reference

- In the modern world, human life experience is largely played out in **interior spaces**.
- We may love the outside for the open air and sky, for escaping from life inside enclosure, *but the very joy of being outside reflects the reality that so much of life is spent inside*.
- Most of the time, most of us live inside a house, a flat, or a room. We sleep, eat, cook, bathe, and spend free time “at home”—that is, **inside**.
- Work takes place in an office, a factory, a specialized work space such as a hospital, concert hall, museum, school, or college . . . the list is endless.

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- There have been many speculations about when and where people first learned to use shelters and what the earliest habitations were like.
  - Early shelters existed to provide the interior spaces that offered **comfort** to their **inhabitants**. Those interior spaces influenced the lives of their occupants.

- The study of interior design, its development and change through **history**, is a useful way both to explore the **past** and **to make sense of the spaces in which modern life is lived.**
- Professional interior designers are expected to study **design history**, to know the practices of the past in terms of **“styles,”** and to know the names and the nature of the contributions of those individuals who generated the most interesting and influential approaches to design.



- Interiors do **not exist** in **isolation** in the way that a painting or a sculpture does, but within some kind of shell—a hut, a building, even a ship or airplane.
- They are also crammed with a great range of objects and artifacts: **furniture, lighting, textiles, sometimes art.**
- This means that interior design is a field with **unclear boundaries**, overlapping as it does the realms of construction, architecture, art, the crafts, the technologies of heating, cooling, ventilation, lighting, water and drainage equipment.



Interiors are integral to the **structures** that **contain** them.

This means that interior design is inextricably **linked** to **architecture** and can only be studied within an **architectural context**.



# Decorative Art: Definition & Meaning

The term "decorative arts" is a traditional term for a rather unwieldy range of artistic disciplines concerned with the *design* and *ornamentation* of items, usually functional, that do not necessarily have any basic aesthetic qualities.

In architecture and decorative arts, It is a *decoration* used to *embellish* parts of building or object.





## Victor Horta, Tassel House, Brussels, 1892.

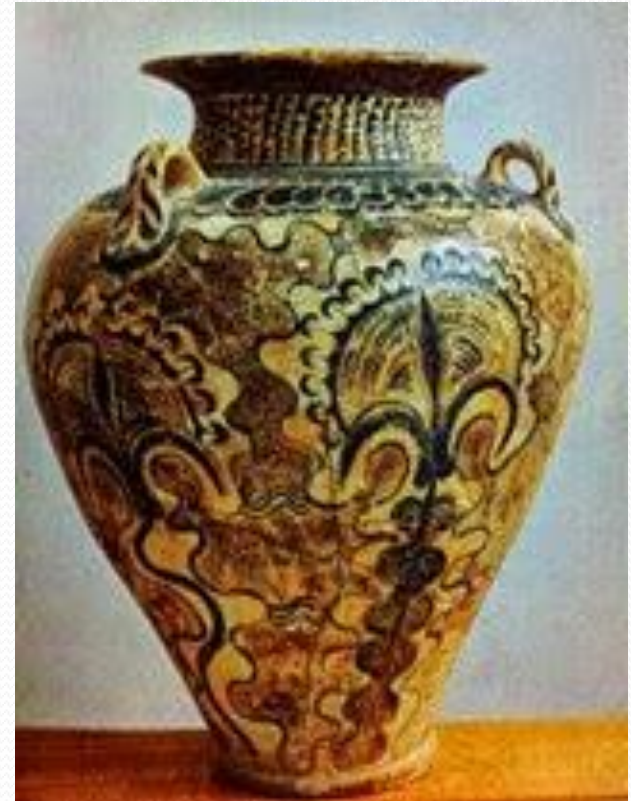
*Stairways offered the Art Nouveau designer opportunities to develop flowing curves in steps, railings, and, as in the Tassel House (now the Mexican Embassy), painted or stenciled color patterns on walls and ceiling.*

*The slim column is an indication of the acceptance of metal as a legitimate material for interior detail, while the hanging lighting fixture exploits the possibilities of the new electric light.*



# Origins and History of Decorative Art

- The earliest type of decorative art was **ancient pottery**, notably the Jomon style Japanese ceramics pioneered from about 14,500 BCE (Before Current Era).
- It was also widely produced from about 5,000 BCE by a number of ancient Mediterranean civilizations.





Traced formalistic continuity and development in decorative plant forms from ancient Egyptian art and other ancient Near Eastern civilizations through classical world to the arabesque of Islamic art.



- Styles of ornamentation can be studied in reference to specific **culture** which developed unique forms of decoration, or modified ornaments from other cultures.
- The ancient **Egyptian** cultures is arguably the first civilization to add pure decorations to their buildings.

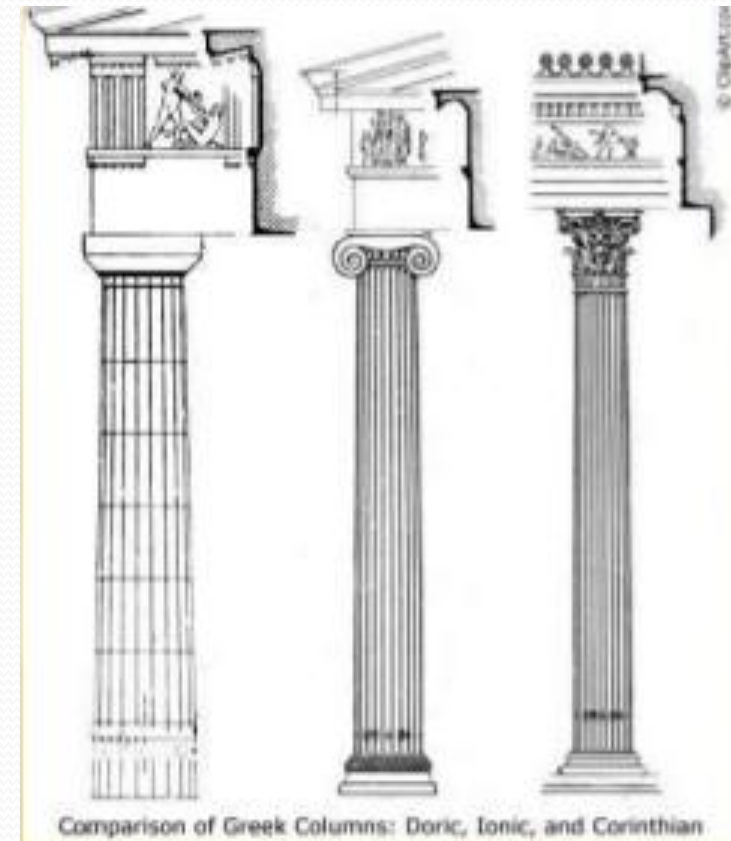
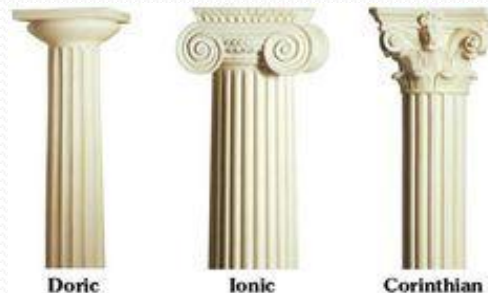
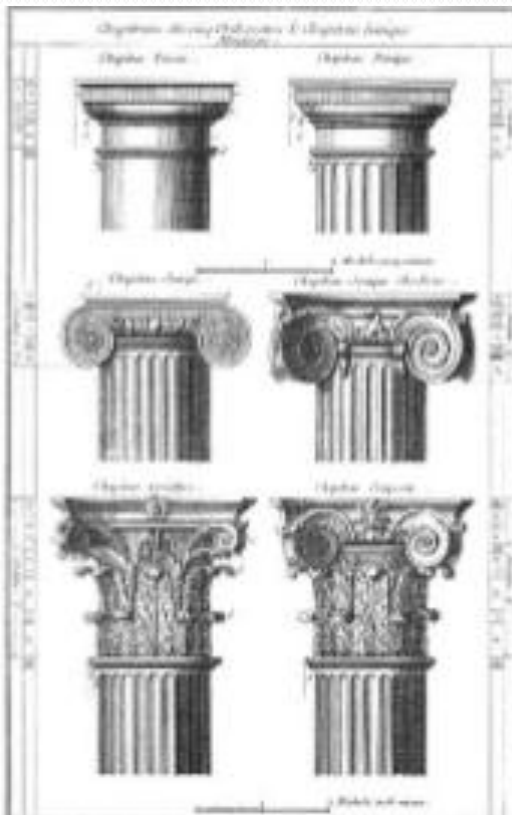


- **Assyrian** cultures produced ornaments which shows influences from Egyptian sources and a number of original themes, including figures of plants and animals of the region.





- Ancient **Greek** civilization created many new forms of ornament, with regional variation from **Doric**, **Ionic** and **Corinthian** groups.



- The **Romans** Latinized the pure forms of Greek ornaments and adapted it to the forms of every purpose.





# History of Decorative art

Art Nouveau, for all its excesses, was a conscious effort to evolve such a "natural" vocabulary of ornament.



or by the unique Antoni Gaudí.



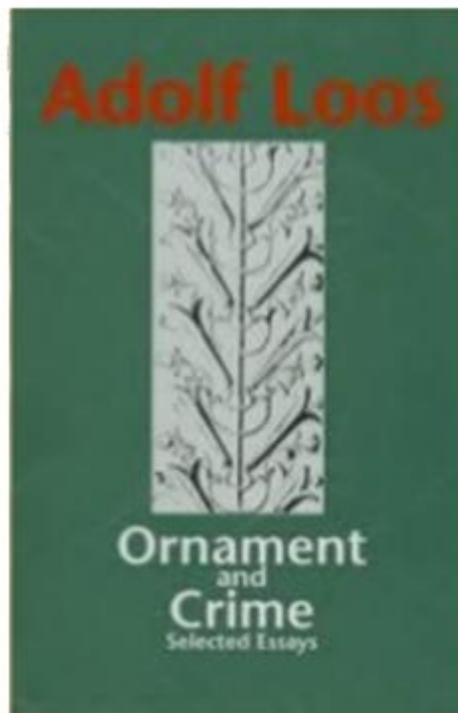


# History of Decorative art- Modernity

- ✦ Modern architecture, conceived of as the elimination of ornament in favor of purely functional structures, left architects the problem of how to properly adorn modern structures.
- ✦ There were two available routes from this perceived crisis.
- ✦ One was to attempt to devise an ornamental vocabulary that was new and essentially contemporary.
- ✦ This was the route taken by architects like Louis Sullivan



- This latter approach was described by architect **Adolf Loos** in his 1908 manifesto, translated into English in 1913 and polemically titled **Ornament and Crime**, in which he declared that lack of decoration is the sign of an advanced society.



- His argument was that ornament is economically inefficient and "morally degenerate", and that reducing ornament was a sign of progress.
- Modernists were eager to point to American architect **Louis Sullivan** as their godfather in the cause of aesthetic simplification, dismissing the knots of intricately patterned ornament that articulated the skin of his structures.

Adolf Loos furniture



- With the work of **Le Corbusier** and the **Bauhaus** through the 1920s and 1930s, lack of decorative detail became a hallmark of modern architecture and equated with the moral virtues of honesty, simplicity, and purity.



**Le Corbusier Sofa**



**Bauhaus Furniture**



Difference between ornament and structure is subtle and perhaps arbitrary.

The pointed arches and flying buttresses of **Gothic architecture** are ornamental but structurally necessary.





# History of Decorative art- Modernity

- ✧ The argument against ornament peaked in 1959 over discussions of the Seagram Building, where Mies van der Rohe installed a series of structurally unnecessary vertical I-beams on the outside of the building,



# Decorative art- Now

Environmental role, besides their role for aesthetics



King Fahad National Library,

Riyadh Saudi Arabia



Shading control.

Poetics of space: Shadows on interior space are changing as pattern moves.



Institute of Arab world.

Paris, France



Architect: Jean Nouvel