

Futurism and Art Deco

Introduction to Architectural History

Eugene Han

Spring 2020, 7:15 – 8:30pm

Remote

ITALIAN FUTURISM



Italian Futurists

3

- Marinetti would draft the movement's manifesto

1806-1894
Rac. N. 5. 118/1

FONDAZIONE E MANIFESTO
DEL
FUTURISMO



(Pubblicato dal « Figaro » di Parigi il 20 Febbraio 1909)

4

Avevamo vegliato tutta la notte — i miei amici ed io — sotto lampade di moschea dalle cupole di ottone traforato, stellate come le nostre anime, perchè come queste irradiate dal chiuso fulgore di un cuore elettrico. Avevamo lungamente calpestata su opulenti tappeti orientali la nostra atavica accidia, discutendo davanti ai confini estremi della logica ed annerendo molta carta di frenetiche scritture.

Un immenso orgoglio gonfiava i nostri petti, poichè ci sentivamo soli, in quell'ora, ad esser desti e ritti, come farì superbi o come sentinelle avanzate, di fronte all'esercito delle stelle nemiche, occhiagianti dai loro celesti accampamenti. Solt coi fuochisti che s'agitano davanti ai forni infernali delle grandi navi, soli coi neri fantasmi che frugano nelle pance arroventate delle locomotive lanciate a pazzia corsa, soli cogli ubbriachi ansuanti, con un incerto butter d'ali, lungo i muri della città.

Sussultammo ad un tratto, all'udire il rumore formidabile degli enormi tramvai a due piani, che passano sobbalzando, risplendenti di luci multicolori, come i villaggi in festa che il Po straripato squassa e stralicia d'improvviso, per trascinarli fino al mare, sulle cascate e attraverso i goghi di un diluvio.

Poi, il silenzio divenne più cupo. Ma mentre ascoltavamo l'estenuato borbottio di preghiere del vecchio canale e lo scricchiolar dell'ossa dei palazzi moribondi sulle loro barbe di umida verdura, noi udimmo subitaneamente ruggire sotto le finestre gli automobili famelici.

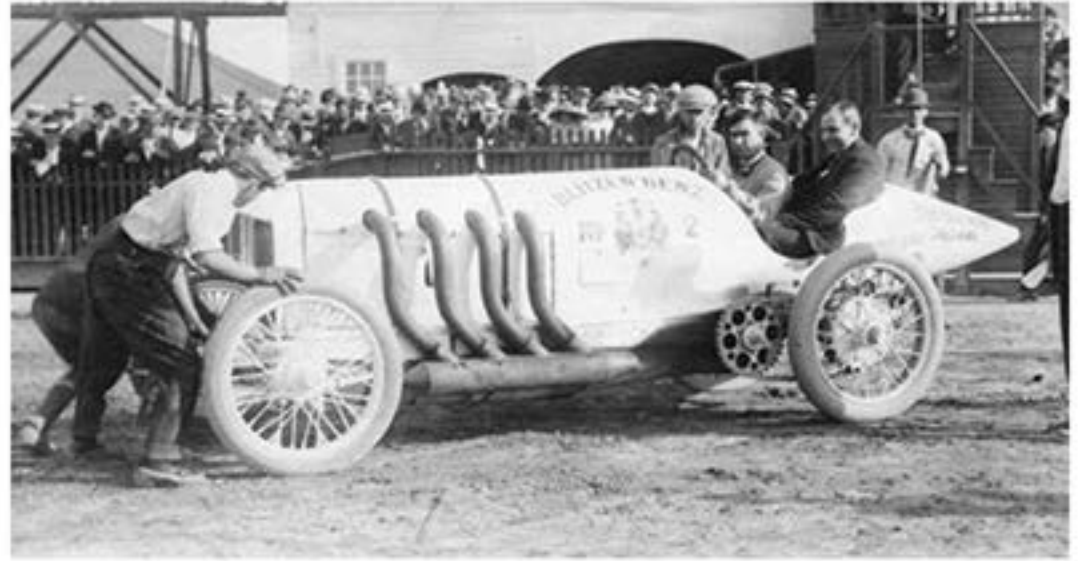
— Andiamo, diss'io: andiamo, amici! Partiamo! Finalmente, la mitologia e l'ideale mistico sono superati. Noi stiamo per assistere alla nascita del Centauro e presto vedremo volare i primi Angeli!... Bisognerà scuotere le porte della vita per provarne i cardini e i chiavistelli!... Partiamo! Ecco, sulla terra, la primissima aurora! Non v'è cosa che agguagli lo splendore della rossa spada del sole, che schermeggia per la prima volta nelle nostre tenebre millenarie!... —

Ci avvicinammo alle tre belve sbuffanti, per palpome amorosamente i torridi petti. Io mi stesi sulla mia macchina come un cadavere nella bara, ma subito risuscitai sotto il volante, lama di ghiogiotina che minacciava il mio stomaco.



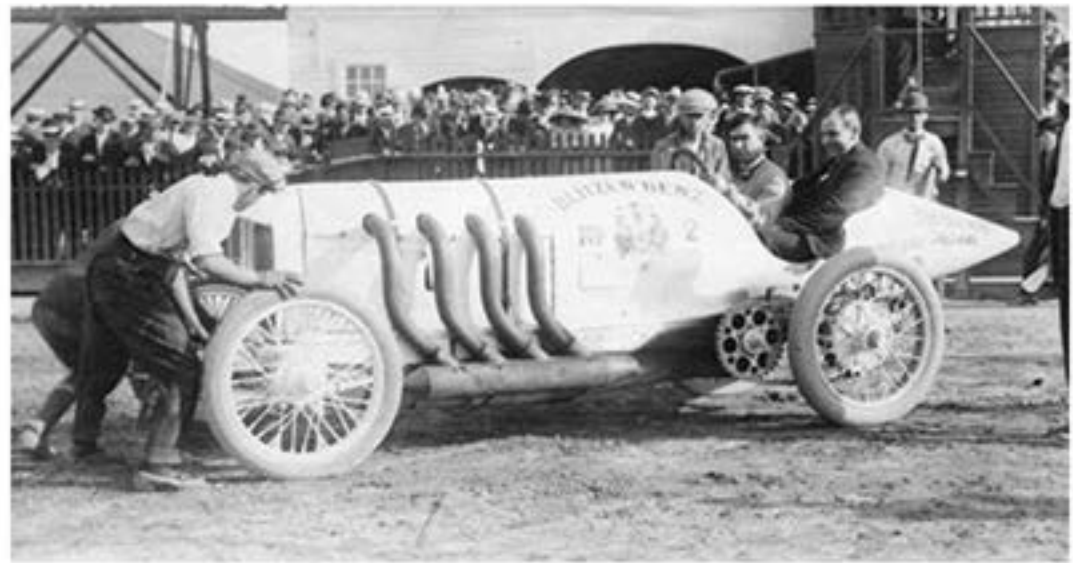
Publication of the Futurist Manifesto (in Italian and French)

- Published in 1909
- Attack on traditionalism and celebration of industry



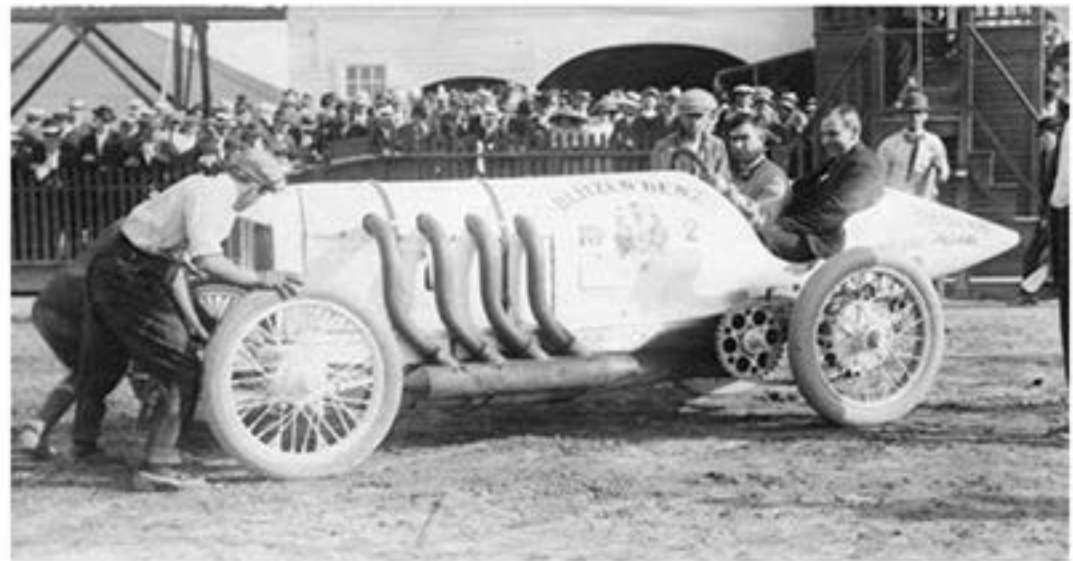
Publication of the Futurist Manifesto (in Italian and French)

Speed
Machinery
Violence
Youth
Industry



Publication of the Futurist Manifesto (in Italian and French)

“We declare that the splendour of the world has been enriched by a new beauty – the beauty of speed. A racing car with its bonnet draped with exhaust pipes, like fire-breathing serpents – a roaring racing car, rattling along like a machine gun, is more beautiful than the winged Victory of Samothrace.”



Publication of the Futurist Manifesto (in Italian and French)



Marinetti's Futurist Poetry (1912 - 14)

- An example of his Futurist poetry, onomatopoeia which recall industrial sounds ('zang,' 'tumb tumb')



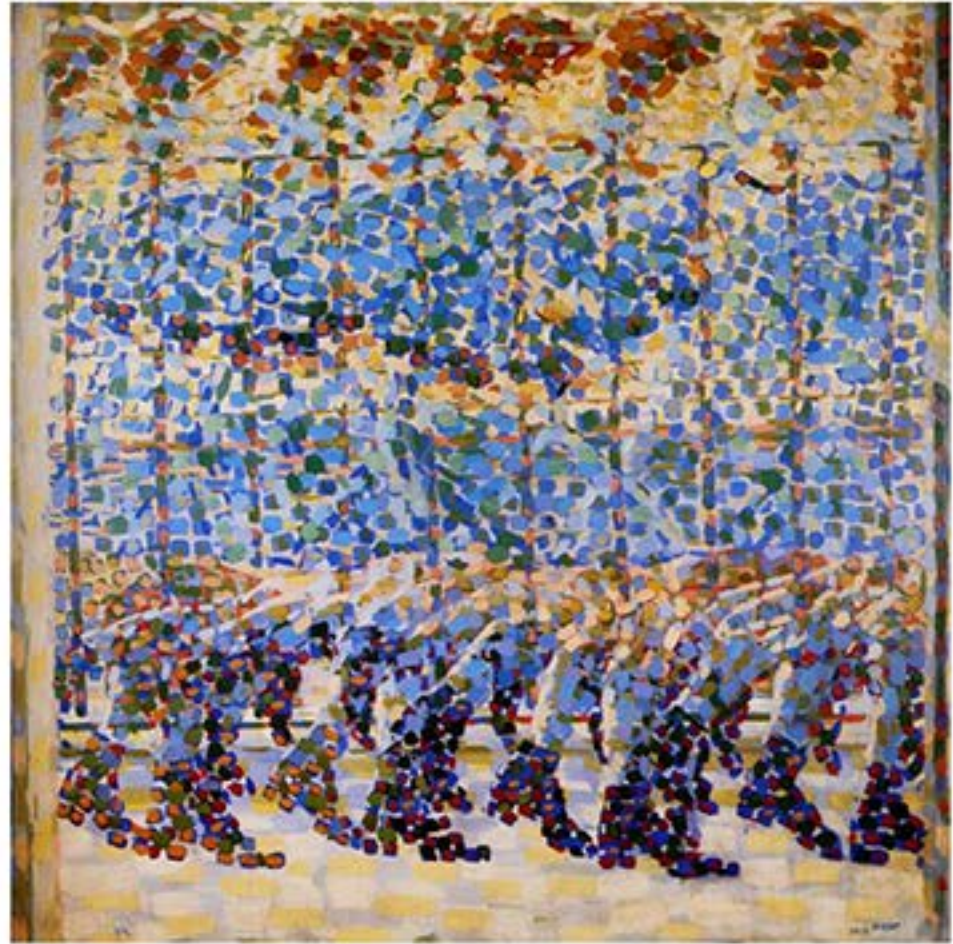
Luigi Russolo, *Dynamism of a Car* (1913)



Giacomo Balla, *Dynamism of a dog on a leash* (1912)

10

- Typical of Italian Futurist painters to show the inherent movement, the kinetics, of both body and machine



Left: Gino Severini, *Dancer in Pigalle* (1912)
Right: Giacomo Balla, *Girl Running on a Balcony* (1912)



Natalia Goncharova, *Cyclist* (1913)



13



Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913)



Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913)

- Often compared with the Winged Victory of Samothrace (as used as a negative in the Futurist Manifesto)



15

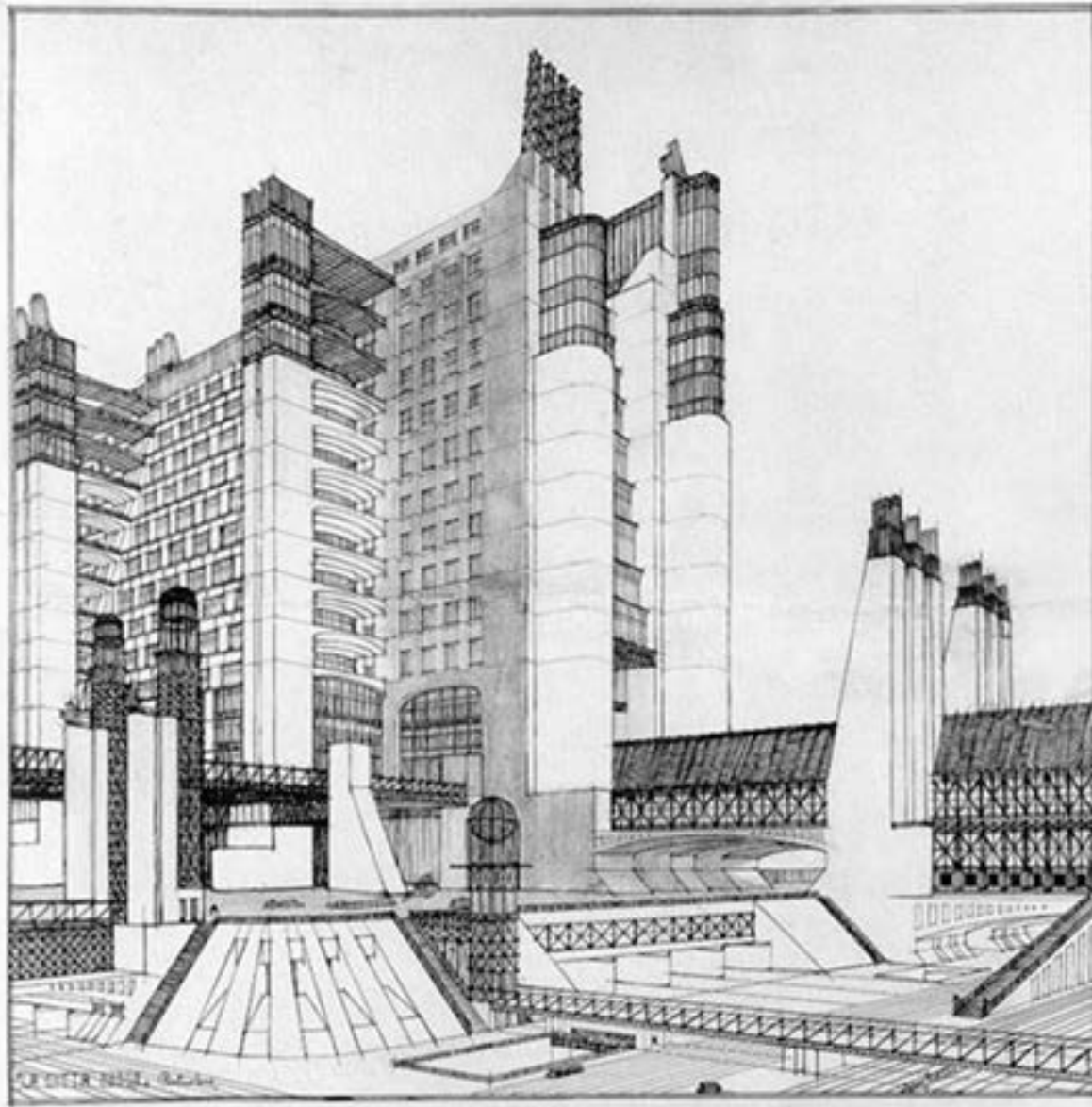


Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity in Space* (1913)



Antonio Sant'Elia
Italian, 1888 - 1916

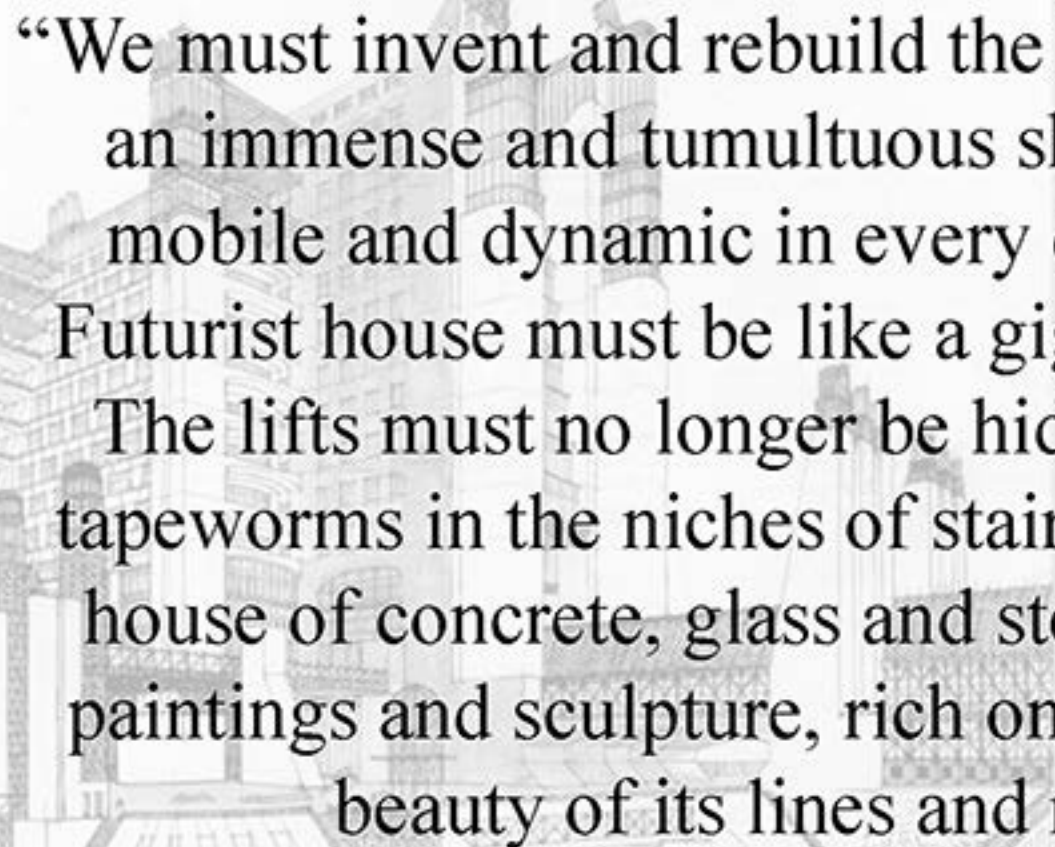
- Sant'Elia believed that a city should be about movement, movement → progress



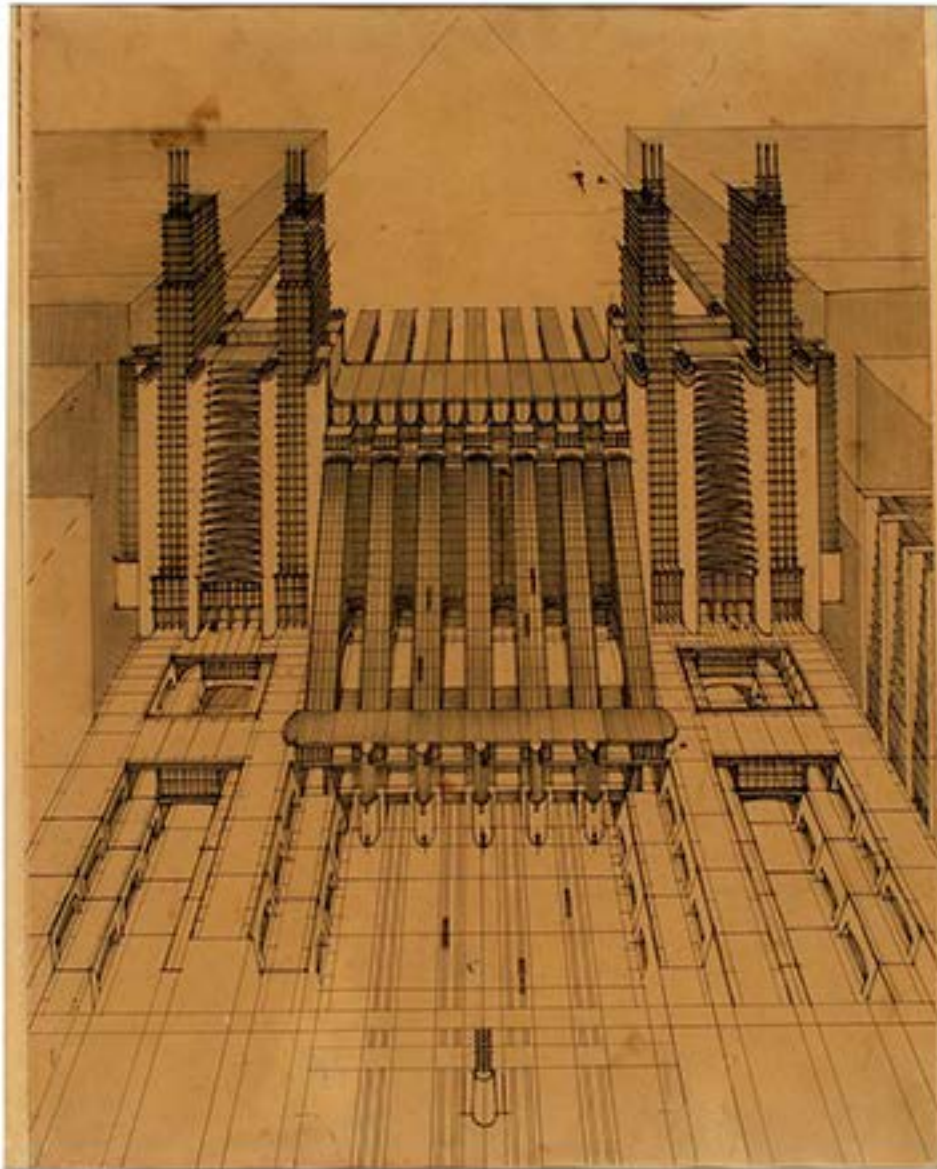
Antonio Sant'Elia, *La Citta Nuova (The New City)* (1913 – 14)

17

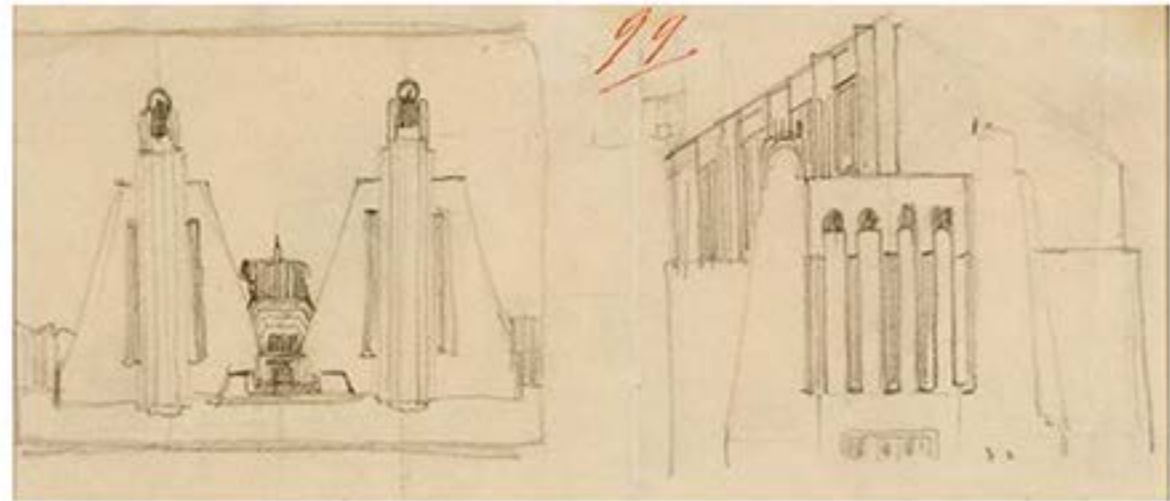
- Architectural style in which building and machine merge into a single aesthetic



“We must invent and rebuild the Futurist city like an immense and tumultuous shipyard, agile, mobile and dynamic in every detail; and the Futurist house must be like a gigantic machine. The lifts must no longer be hidden away like tapeworms in the niches of stairwells; [...] The house of concrete, glass and steel, stripped of paintings and sculpture, rich only in the innate beauty of its lines and relief.”

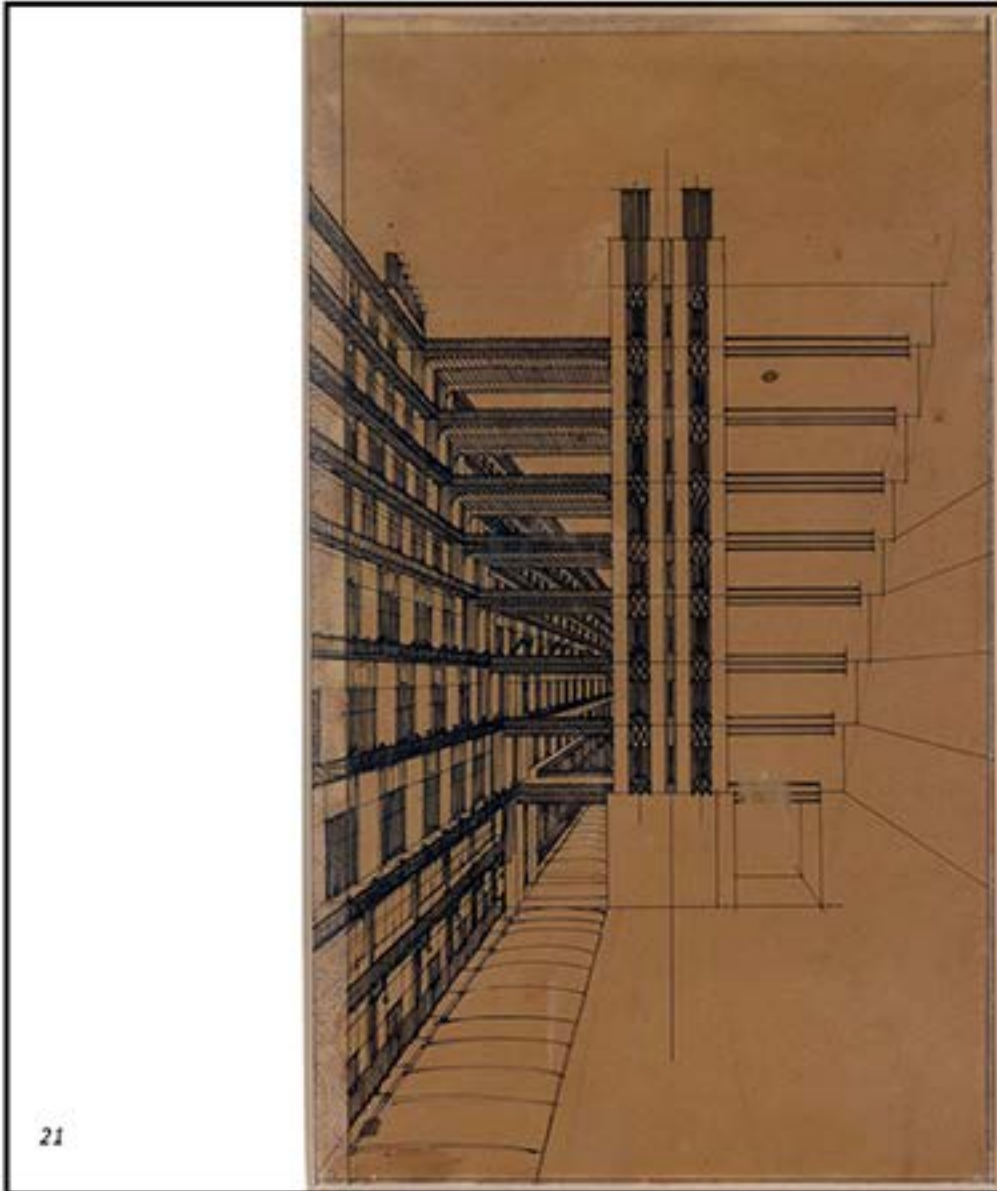


Left: Antonio Sant'Elia, *La Citta Nuova (The New City)* (1913 – 14)
Right: *Pilastri reggenti statue equestri* (1913)



Left: *Casa a gradinata (Stepped House) (1914)*
Right: *Edifici monumentali con sculture (1911 - 12)*

- Sant'Elia's fictional urban environments



Left: *Via secondaria per pedoni con ascensori nel mezzo* (1914)
Right: *Bozzetto d'architettura* (Architectural sketch) (1914)

- Sant'Elia's fictional urban environments

“Calculations of the resistance of materials, the use of reinforced concrete and iron, exclude ‘Architecture’ as understood in the Classical and traditional sense. Modern structural materials and our scientific concepts absolutely do not lend themselves to the disciplines of historical styles, and are the chief cause of the grotesque aspect of modish constructions where we see the lightness and proud slenderness of girders, the slightness of reinforced concrete, bent to the heavy curve of the arch, aping the solidity of marble.”

- From Sant'Elia's "Messaggio", an introduction to one of his exhibitions

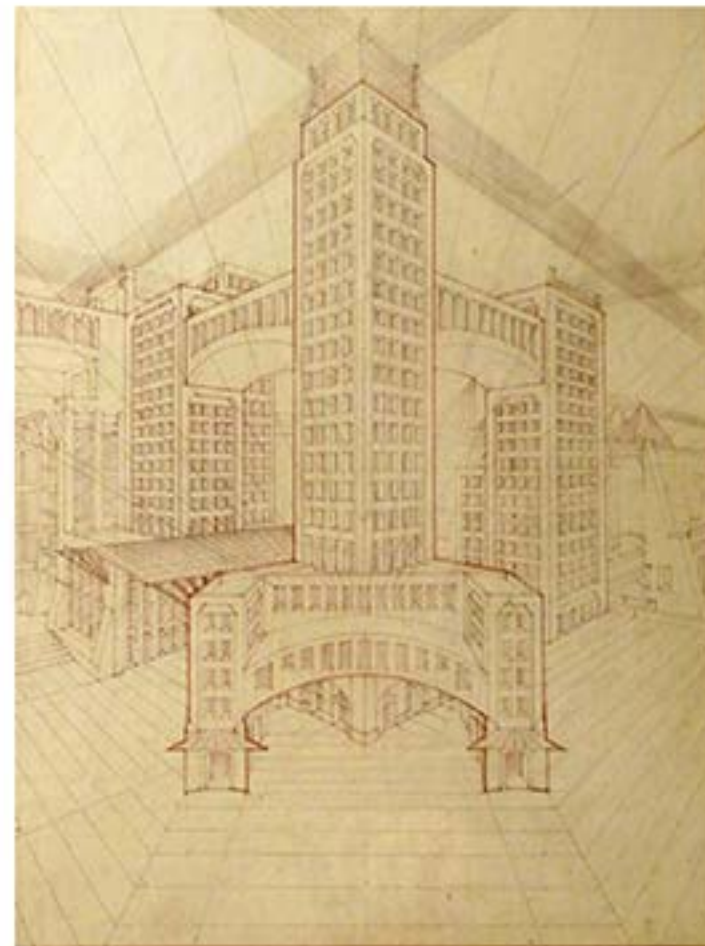


Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)

- Sant'Elia's work had a lasting influence throughout the 20th century
- Often depicted the urban metropolis as a thriving but also daunting environment



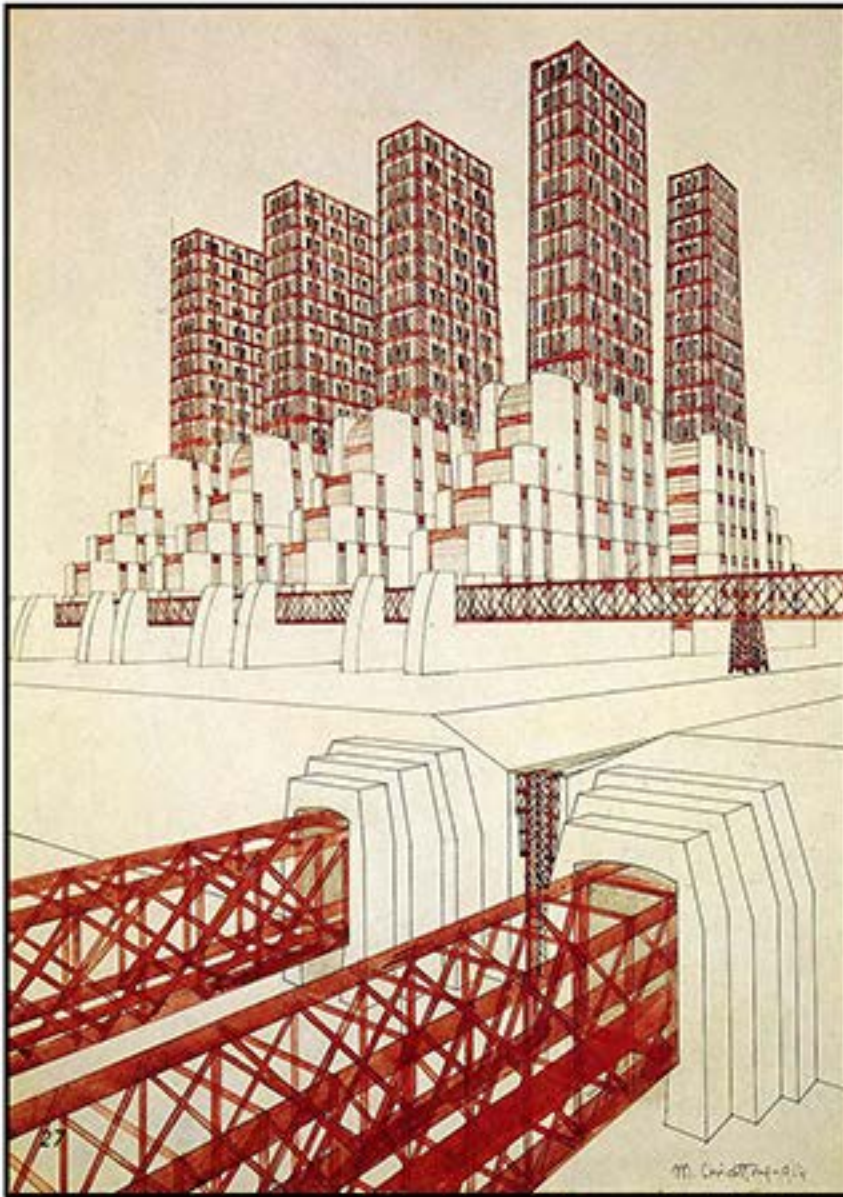
Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (1927)



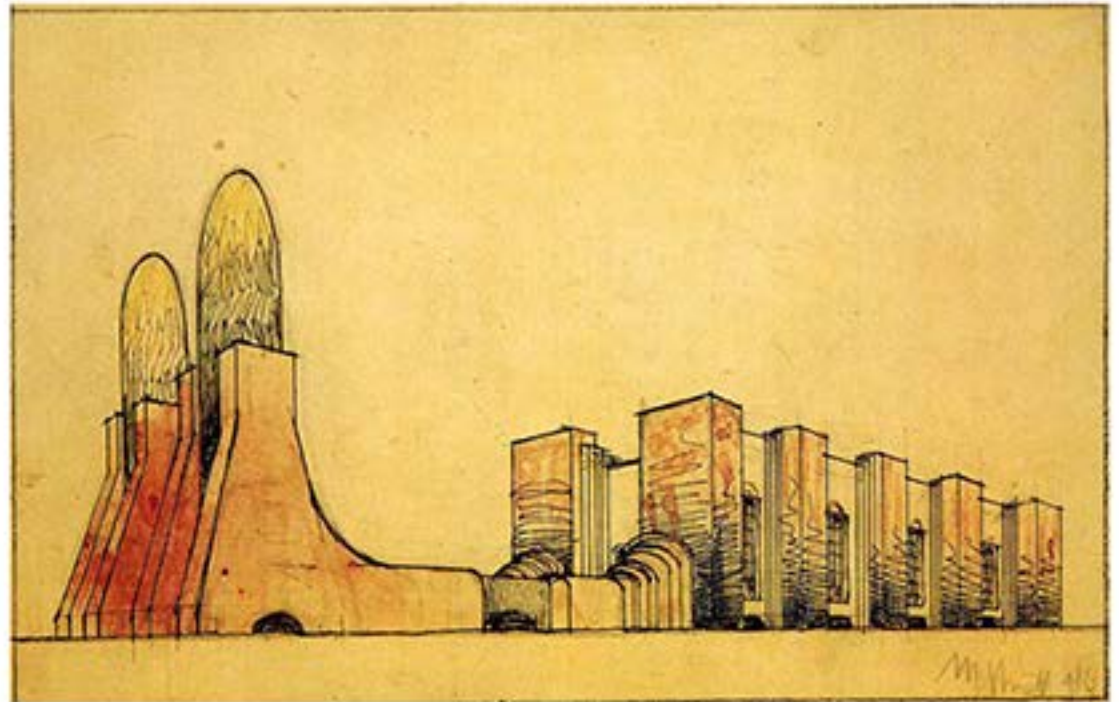
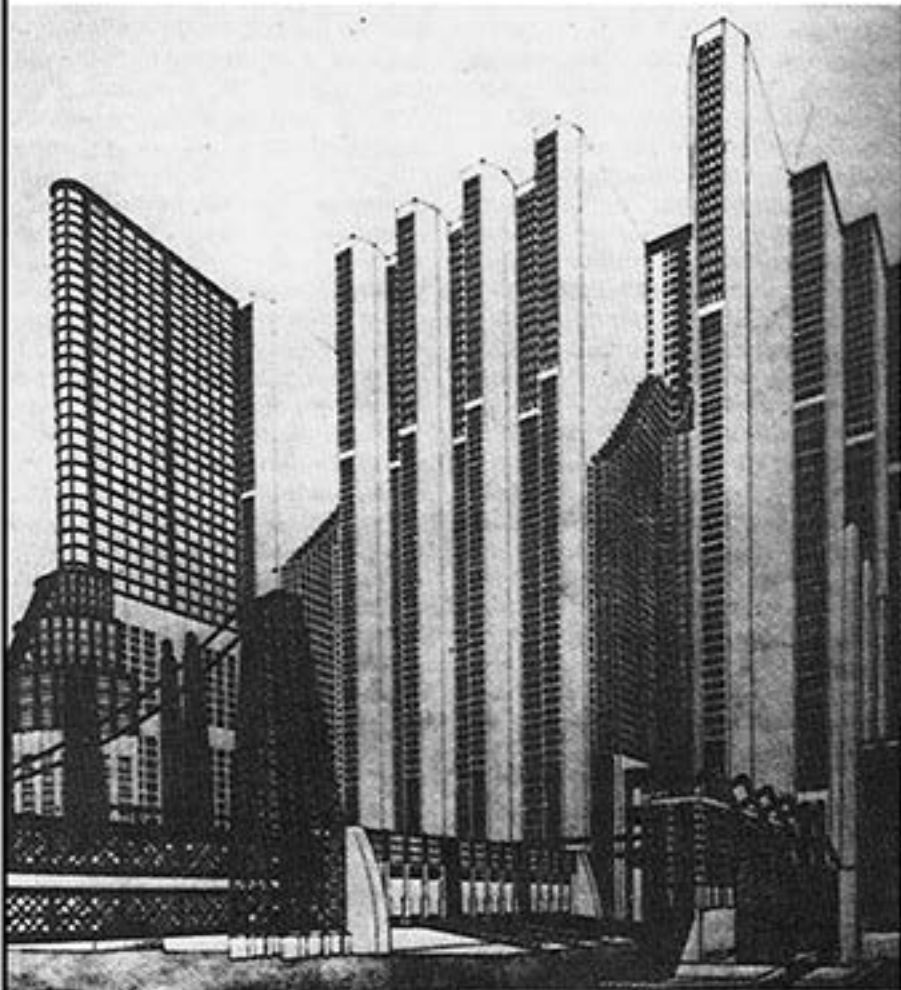
Virgilio Marchi, *Various Works*



Virgilio Marchi, *Various Works*

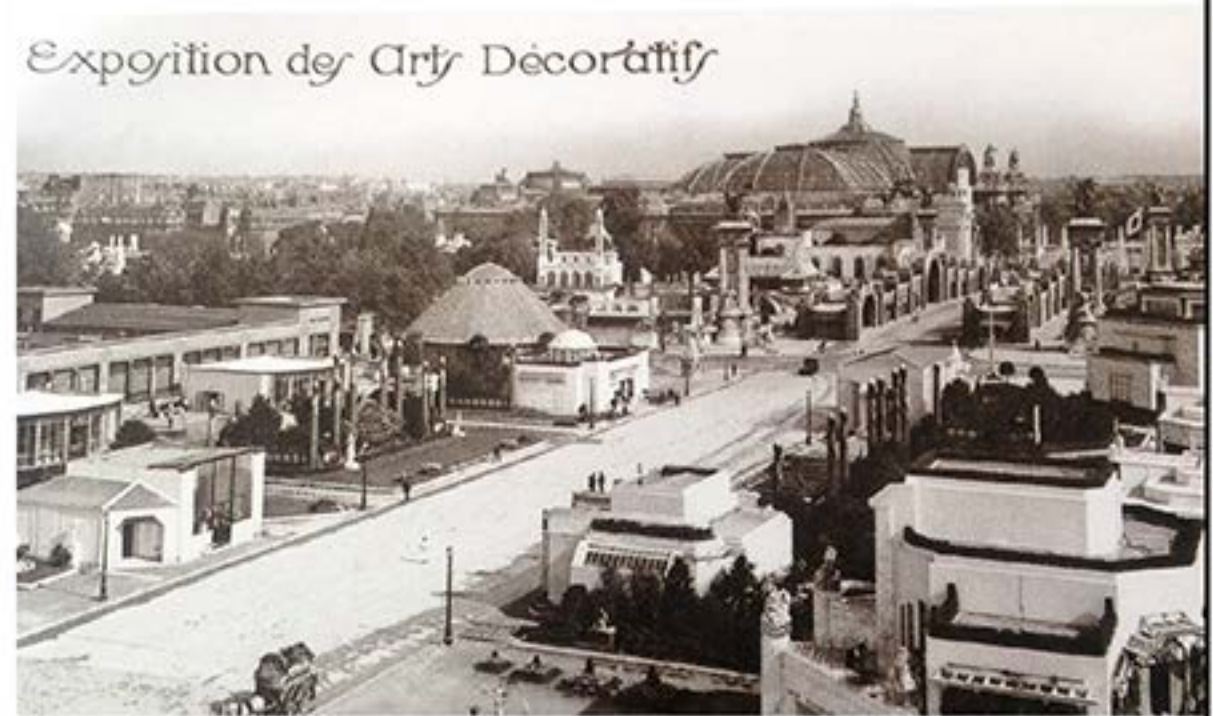


Mario Chiattoni, *Various Works*



ART DECO

- Aesthetically, the movement was a kind of pastiche, combining various aesthetic devices from a number of previous and extant movements

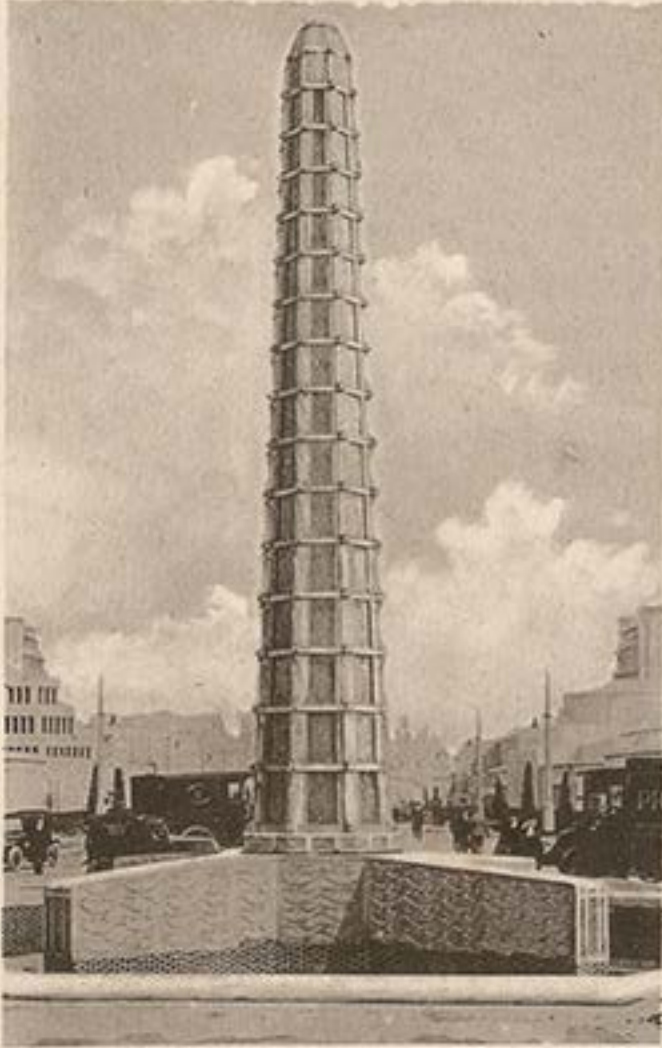


Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, Paris (1925)

- “Art Deco” came from the French “Art Decoratifs”
- An exposition of the arts with an air of post-WWI optimism



- Not a particularly strong theoretical foundation
 - Much more about the combination of styles – a new sense of freedom, a measure admiration of industrial aesthetic, but also attempts to incorporate classical motifs with modern lines and modes of production



32

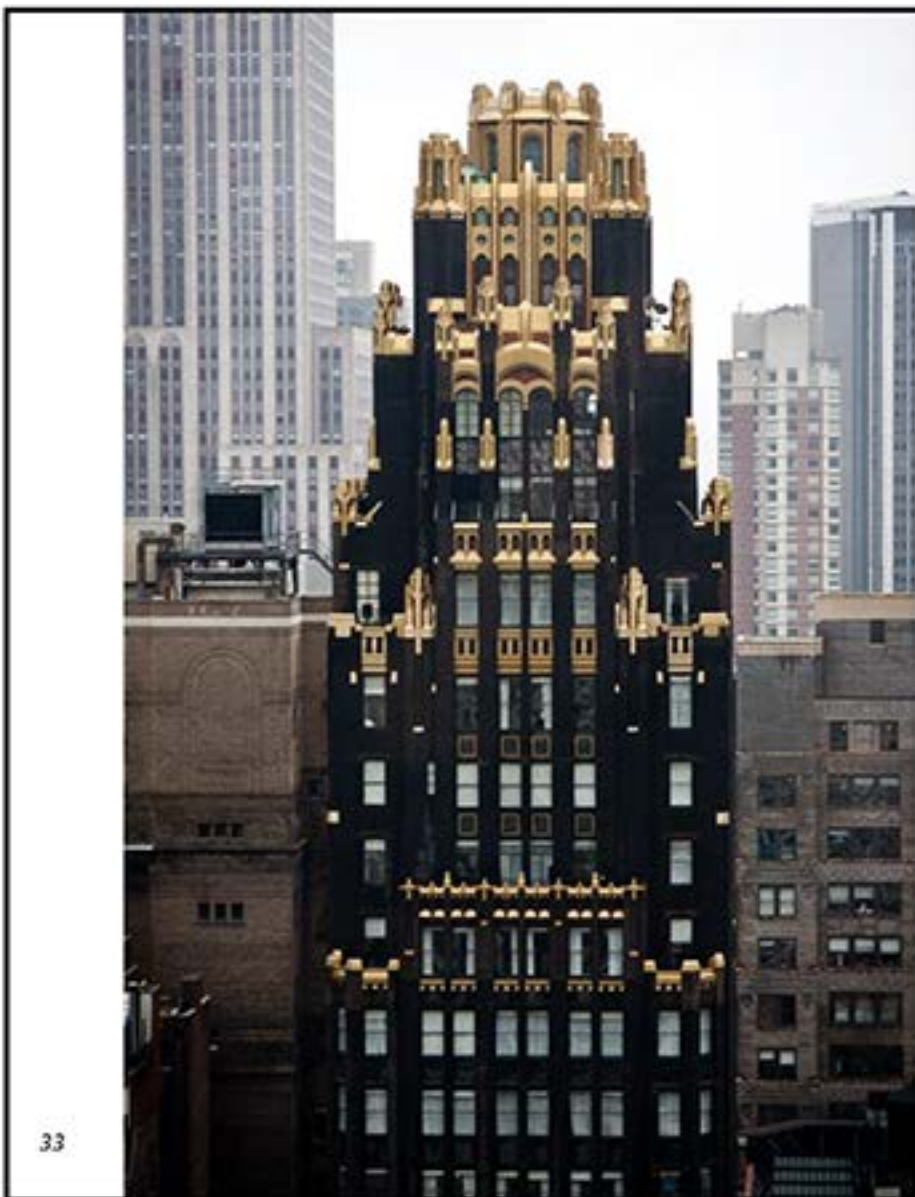
EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS — PARIS 1925



EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE DES ARTS DÉCORATIFS — PARIS 1925
15 - Le Pavillon du Bon Marché — The Pavilion of the firm "Bon Marché"

Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes, Paris (1925)

- More images of the original exhibition.



John Howells and Raymond Hood, *American Radiator Building*, NYC (1924)

33

- A significant part of its (Art Deco) maturation in the US
- Prime example is the American Radiator Building in Manhattan
 - Now known as the American Standard Building



John Howells and Raymond Hood, *American Radiator Building*, NYC (1924)

- Should be seen as a transitional example, between Gothic Revival and Art Deco



John Howells and Raymond Hood, *American Radiator Building*, NYC (1924)

- Detail of gilded friezes



John Howells and Raymond Hood, *American Radiator Building*, NYC (1924)



William van Alen, *Chrysler Building*, New York City (1930)

- Served as the headquarters of the Chrysler Corporation from its inception to the mid-1950s

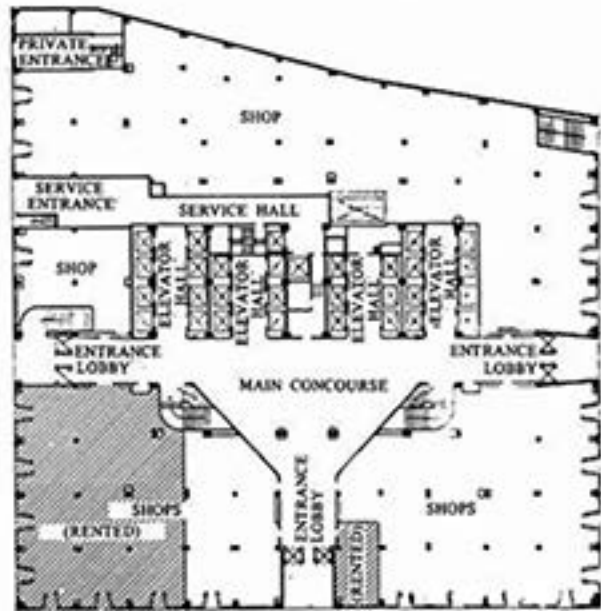


William van Alen, *Chrysler Building*, New York City (1930)

- Continued a trend in American Art Deco, with heavy use of stainless steel paneling



- Well-known for its use of Art Deco styled grotesques





Cross & Cross, 20 Exchange Place, New York City (1930)



42



Cross & Cross, 20 Exchange Place, New York City (1930)



Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, *Empire State Building*, NYC (1931)

43

- Iconic building of early American skyscrapers
- When completed in 1931, stood as the tallest building in the world (until 1970, eclipsed by the World Trade Center – Twin Towers)



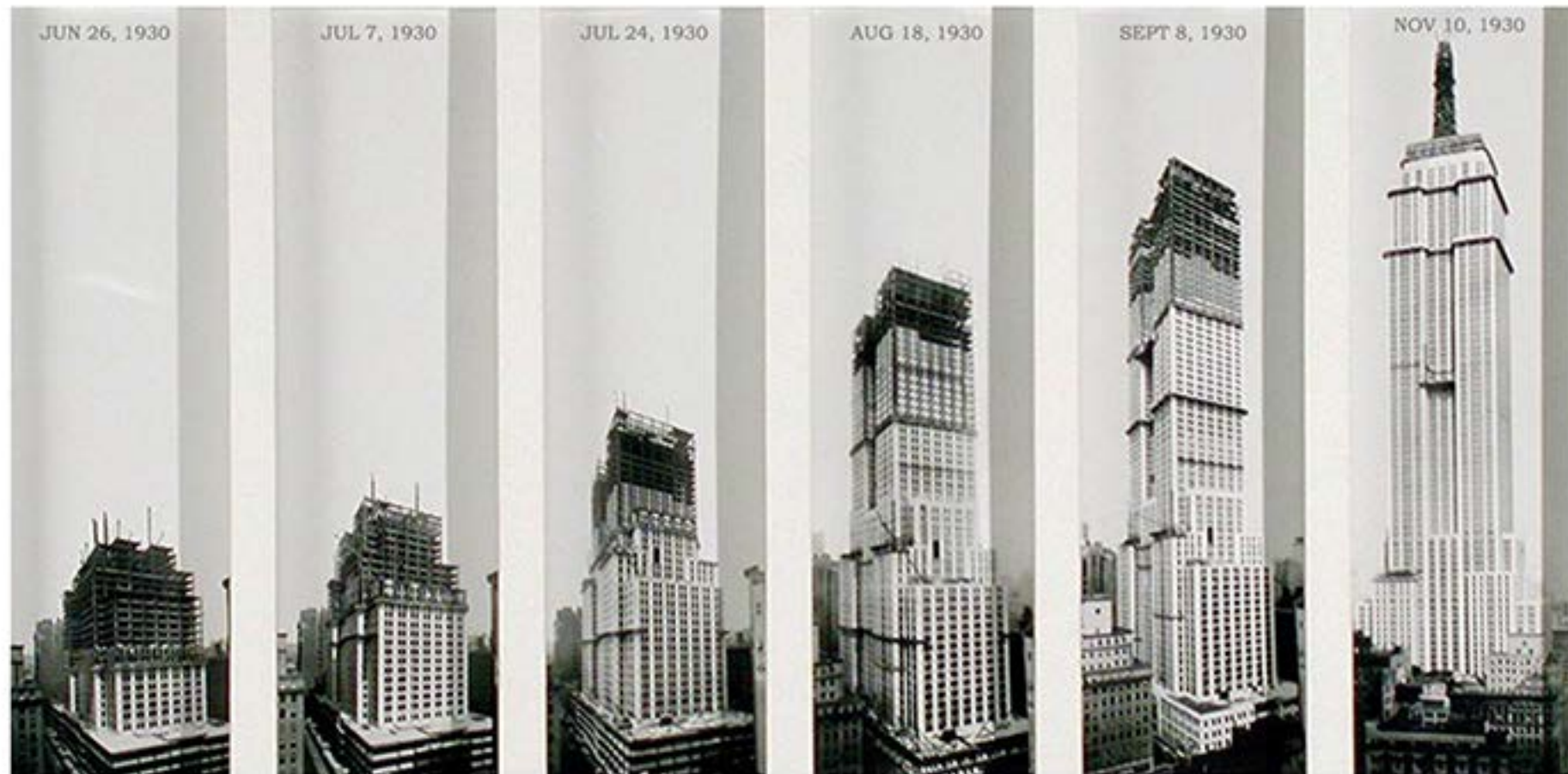


45



Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, *Empire State Building*, NYC (1931)

- Among the most notable elements of the tower is its spire, recalling Gothic architecture's vertical reach



Shreve, Lamb and Harmon, *Empire State Building*, NYC (1931)

46

- Great example of the 'ziggurat' ('stepped', or 'setback') aesthetic
 - Lower floors are wider in footprint than upper floors
- This has some practical advantages
 - This allows a tower to reach higher but allowing for more sunlight to cross its profile
 - With narrower profile, increased fresh air can travel across it
 - lower center of mass
 - This was actually mandated by the city of NYC in 1916 Zoning Resolution



- Art Deco flourished in areas like Miami, but also in various major cities across the US



- Examples of Art Deco



- Examples of Art Deco



Terry Farrell, *SIS Building*, London (1994)

50

- A revival of Art Deco in the 1980s, brought on by a movement called Postmodernism
 - (this style will be covered towards the end of the semester)