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DESIGNING WOMEN: 
GENDER, MODERNISM AND INTERIOR DECORATION 
IN SYDNEY, c1920-1940 

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A thesis submitted for the degree of 
MASTER OF ARTS

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July 1993
I declare that this thesis is my own original work.

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Peter McNeil
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Acknowledgements

Many people have assisted with the preparation of this thesis.

Particular thanks are due to my supervisor Dr Erika Esau, whose support and encouragement is gratefully acknowledged.

The following have been particularly helpful with my research:

Cecily Adams, Bruce Arnott, Isabel Craig, Livio Dobrez, Patricia Dobrez, Tag Gronberg, Jeanette Hoorn, Noris Ioannou, Catherine Jefferis, Heather Johnson, Margaret Maynard, Caroline Miley, Robert Nelson, Mary Nilsson, Paul Purcell, Catriona Quinn, Michaela Richards, Robyn Taylor, Thea Waddell, Leslie Walford.

At the Australian National University: Jill Bennett, Gordon Bull, John Clark, Ian Dungavell, Paul Duro, Rico Franses, Michael Greenhalgh, Rosanne Kennedy, Sylvia Kleinert, David McNeill, Helen Parrot.

At the National Gallery of Australia: Roger Butler, Daryl Collins, Roger Leong, Susan McCormack, John McPhee, Gael Newton.

At the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse), Sydney: Grace Cochrane, David Dolan, Charles Pickett, Ann Stephen, Anne-Marie van de Ven.

Staff of the following libraries and archives: Barbara Horton, David Jones' Archive, Sydney; Lyndhurst Resource Centre, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales; Mitchell Library and the State Library of New South Wales; Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney; National Gallery of Australia, particularly Margaret Shaw.
Abbreviations:

DJA: David Jones' Archive, Sydney

Fabrications: Fabrications, Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand

JRAHS: Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society

LRC: Lyndhurst Resource Centre, Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales, Sydney

MAAS: Library, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences (Powerhouse), Sydney

ML: Mitchell Library

NGARL: National Gallery of Australia Research Library

NLA: National Library of Australia

OUP: Oxford University Press

SLNSW: State Library of New South Wales

SMH: Sydney Morning Herald

For brevity, dates rather than volume and issue numbers are given for Home and Art in Australia.
Introduction

The thesis examines aspects of interior decoration in Sydney c1920-1940 with particular reference to gender and modernism. The role Australian women played in producing and promoting modern art and design in this period has received considerable attention, but there has been no study of their interest in interior design. The thesis does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of interior decoration *per se*, but examines the interaction between socially-constructed definitions of femininity, modernity and decorative art and design.

The period c1920-1940 has been selected for study for several reasons. The years after World War I witnessed an acceleration of consumer capitalism in which an ideology of progress fuelled desire and spending. Interior decoration was one factor by which the Australian people were to be made modern. World War II marks a useful conclusion for the historical focus of this thesis, as the utopian rhetoric of post-war reconstruction and the newly elevated status of the designer indicate a different set of concerns from those examined in the thesis.\(^1\) This chronological bracketing is matched by the establishment of two major journals relevant to the research. *Art in Australia* was established during World War I, in 1916; *Home* magazine in 1920. Both magazines examined Australia's place within international art and design and promoted stylistic change, albeit at different rates, for fine and decorative art. The period was dominated by the tastemaking of publisher Sydney Ure Smith and his circle, which included the proprietor of David Jones' department store, Charles Lloyd Jones, architects William Hardy Wilson and Leslie Wilkinson, and artists associated with the 'Contemporary Group', including Thea Proctor, Roy de Maistre and Adrian Feint. Ure Smith and his publishing concerns were influential in formulating the definition of 'modern' and 'modernism' in Australia until 1939, when as Underhill argues, his publishing hegemony collapsed and new priorities emerged.\(^2\)

Sydney has also been chosen as the focus of the thesis for several reasons. A national survey of the field would have proven both unwieldy and too broad. Research on architecture and interior design in other capitals is already proceeding.\(^3\) It is not the

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3. See David Bromfield (ed.), *Aspects of Perth Modernism 1929-1942*, University of Western Australia, Centre for Fine Arts, 1986.
contention that Sydney represents the touchstone of modern taste in Australia, but many of
the arguments advanced here could be applied to other centres. Sydney does, however,
usefully anchor the arguments regarding gender and modernism. Sydney was home to
artists sympathetic to modernism including Thea Proctor, Margaret Preston, Adrian Feint
and Roy de Maistre, who were involved with both fine and applied art, including sporadic
decorating.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the writing of what is broadly defined as
Australian design history. Upon commencing this thesis it was found that no such survey
existed. The compilation of this historiography clarified several suspicions. Australian
architectural history has rarely bothered to study interior design; art history has been even
less inclined to examine this aspect of visual culture. It also emerged that the writing of
design history is not separate from the practice of design in Australia, as many key histories
emerged from the hands of individuals who were also practitioners, particularly architects.
Figures including William Hardy Wilson and Leslie Wilkinson were thus able to set both
the agenda of study - the local canon - and directly influence the appearance of upper-
middle class dwellings in Australia.

Chapter 2 examines the ramifications and potential of studying the figure of the
interior decorator. Again, it was found that no analytical survey existed of the development
of this new profession in either local or international contexts. Writers have observed that
women dominated this activity in many countries, but the implications in terms of gender
have not been pursued. The cultural process by which home-making, consumerism and
interior decoration were gendered feminine from the late-nineteenth century forms a focus
for this chapter. Consideration of the large number of homosexual men and women
associated with decoration in the 1920s and 1930s permits more detailed consideration of
the way in which social spaces and practices are distributed in terms of gender and
sexuality.

Chapter 3 explores the role and practice of interior decoration in inter-war Sydney.
The reception of modernism in Australia provides a particularly sharp image of the way in
which women's work, the applied arts and design were defined in terms of negative
stereotypes of sensuality and intuition, the Other of male rationality. Modernist visual
devices were absorbed primarily in terms of women's spaces and women's bodies, in
fashion, advertising and department-store culture. Colour, the key element of inter-war decorating, was thoroughly gendered, associated with femininity, sensuality and intuition. The promotion of decorating as a new job suitable for the modern woman is examined, and the practice of decorators and designers including Molly Grey, Margaret Jaye, Thea Proctor and Hera Roberts considered.

Chapter 4 examines Australian inflections of modernism in interior design. The interest groups which promoted change are examined as a corrective to the model of stylistic innovation which suggests styles are inwardly driven, via a process of inevitable progression. Furniture types and schemes of decoration which have been disparaged as reactionary and old-fashioned are re-assessed, and the nature and fears of the local furniture industry examined. The introduction of a self-consciously moderne idiom, based on variants of art deco, is considered in terms of fashionable dress, store-design, the Burdekin House Exhibition (1929) and the promotion of new materials such as glass and chrome for modern furnishings. This brand of modernism was associated with femininity and disparaged by critics accordingly. Finally, the emergence of a modernism allied with masculine paradigms of rationality and order is seen to emerge in the second-half of the 1930s. By the 1940s design was professionalised and colonised by architects and the emerging brand of industrial designer. A new model emerged which was opposed to both the taste of the 1920s and early 1930s and the feminised amateur practice which dominated interior decoration in the inter-war period.
Chapter 1

Rarely Looking In: The Writing of Australian Design History, c1900-1990

To date no survey exists of the writing of Australian design history. The forging of such histories since the early-twentieth century is inseparably bound with design practice, as both commentary and practice frequently proceeded from the same hands, informed by the personal tastes and aims of individuals. Architects played a key role in popularising historical aspects of both the built environment and decorative arts. The history of the writing of decorative arts studies in Australia also runs parallel with the rise of collecting, firstly by individuals, later by museums. Such a conjunction is not unusual; in a general context, Kenneth L. Ames notes: 'Collecting has usually preceded scholarship and continues to do so, today'. The priorities of connoisseurship and a nostalgic evocation of colonial history dominated the inter-war period in Australia, resulting in a body of largely expository writing. Academic interest in architecture and the decorative arts was virtually non-existent until the 1960s, when the growth in tertiary art-history departments and increasing demands for the new social history combined with an expansion of the museum sector and art market to raise standards of analysis. The obsession with object-based histories, which are nearly always the concern of the museum and the collector, has only recently been questioned by studies which proceed from textual analysis and considerations of class and gender.

The Rule of Taste: Colonial Architecture Revived

An interest in charting nineteenth-century Australian decorative arts and architecture gained momentum in the 1910s and '20s, with the research of the architect William Hardy Wilson and collectors, notably Clifford Craig. Conrad Hamann has

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3 Dr and Mrs Clifford Craig collected early-nineteenth century Tasmanian furniture from about 1927, as well as forming an important collection of early Australian prints and documents [John McPhee, 'Clifford Craig - historian and collector', Australian Antique Collector, November 1985, pp. 71-3]. Craig's collection forms the nucleus of Clifford Craig, Kevin Fahy and E. Graeme Robertson, Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, Melbourne, Georgian House, 1972.
argued that Wilson should not be viewed as an isolated figure, but rather, that he 'comes at the end of a long line of revival activity'.

Hamann cites a range of buildings and architectural arguments from the 1870s-90s which revived Francis Greenway's work and an 'old colonial' style. Wilson's project is more conspicuously commemorated, however, and thus was more influential than that of earlier revivalists, as it coincided with a boom in art publishing in the years following World War I. Wilson's influence functioned on two levels; as the designer of residences and their interiors, and as the author and illustrator of articles and books, most notably Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania (1924). This visual record of Australian colonial architecture promoted that which was framed as a disappearing heritage and attempted to revive a chaste Georgian mode for contemporary Australian architecture. 'Upon these old buildings of ours, which are the stepping stones to greater styles, can be founded better work than that which is being introduced from Chicago or English garden suburbs', Wilson wrote. His endorsement of late-Georgian derived styles revealed an awareness of the international reappraisal of eighteenth-century architecture; he had made a six-year study tour of Europe and America, returning to Australia in 1910. With relatively few Australian examples of late eighteenth-century design extant, Wilson's attention was focussed on Greenway's work (and supposed work) of the first decades of the nineteenth century.

4 Conrad Hamann, 'Nationalism and Reform in Australian Architecture 1880-1920', Historical Studies, vol. 18, no. 72, April 1979, p. 399.
5 ibid., pp. 399-401.
8 See Wilson's introduction to Catalogue of Drawings of Late-Georgian Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania by Mr. W. Hardy Wilson, Melbourne, The Fine Art Society, 3-15 October 1919, pp. 5-6. An article in the Sydney Morning Herald in 1923 noted the 'Buildings erected in Elizabeth Street in the early days now being demolished' ['Old Sydney Disappearing', SMH, 14 December 1923, in Press Clippings Scrapbook, May 1919-September 1924, DJA].
11 Burdekin House, for instance, was attributed to Greenway at this date. The Editors, 'Introduction', Sydney
sympathies are also indicated in his furniture designs, which were based on late-eighteenth century English styles. Wilson's emphasis duplicated the hostility held in collecting circles to the second half of the nineteenth century, 'the blank of the Victorian period' as Wilson described it. His project had major repercussions for the history of Australian interior design as his much-reproduced schemes and choice of furnishings for the pre-WW I dwellings Eryldoun and his own residence Purulia established a standard of 'classic good taste' for upper-middle class living which remains tenacious today.

Wilson's Georgian mode furnished with symmetrically-arranged eighteenth-century British antiques was endorsed by the Ure Smith publications Art in Australia and Home Magazine, notably in Domestic Architecture in Australia. Special number of Art in Australia, 1919. Nancy Underhill's history of this period has indicated the close links between the publisher Ure Smith and the tastemaker Wilson, arguing that the older Wilson directed Ure Smith's attention to Australian colonial architecture and the decorative arts. Wilson made the selections and provided an essay for Ure Smith's Domestic Architecture in Australia, deploring the period after 1840, 'when symmetry, scale and simplicity vanished'. Its photographic illustrations, including three illustrations of Purulia (see my plates 1-3) and two of Eryldoun [also written Eryldene] (plate 4), alternate between nineteenth-century Australian examples and the 'contemporary' models. The analogies are self conscious; Eryldoun's mantelpiece and that of early-nineteenth century Clarendon are both illustrated as examples of restrained

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Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds.), Domestic Architecture in Australia. Special number of Art in Australia, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1919, p. 1.

15 Smith and Stevens, op. cit. The antique furniture displayed at the Burdekin House Exhibition (1929) was arranged in this manner [Home, 1 November 1929, pp. 46-52].
taste (plates 5-6). The New South Wales bias of much of Ure Smith's publishing is also evident; half of the illustrations feature Sydney buildings. The anti-modern tenor of this publication is most overt in W.H. Bagot's essay 'A Plea for Tradition':

The healthiest symptom of present day taste is the cultivation of the antique... Where there has been no deeply rooted tradition to create a standard, the danger of recurrent modernism, the striving for novelty...has had little or no check... Let us preserve the Georgian interior, if only as a background for Georgian furniture and utensils, while we adapt externals to the local conditions of temperature and light.

Ure Smith's lavishly produced *Home* magazine (1920-1942) also endorsed the colonial revival, featuring a dwelling similar to Wilson's *Eryldoun* on its first cover (February, 1920). The relatively old-fashioned appearance of the contents of the first five years of *Home* is largely due to the dominance of neo-Georgian and neo-Mediterranean residences by Wilson, Leslie Wilkinson and John D. Moore, furnished with antiques including the occasional piece claimed to be Australian colonial. A growing interest in the Australian-colonial past parallels the contemporary re-evaluation of early building styles in America. American colonial styles were revived from about 1875; in preparation for the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of that year Charles F. McKim commissioned the first photographic record of colonial architecture. By 1900 the 'modern colonial', combining colonial attributes and progressive ideas on internal planing and hygiene, was a popular mode for middle-class American dwellings. Fiske Kimball's *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic* (1922) was the pioneering scholarly text, and like Wilson's Australian project, can be viewed as part of the 'filiopietistic movement to preserve and restore American antiquities'.

18 *ibid.* , plates XX, XXXVI.
19 *ibid.*
21 *Home*, February 1920.
22 'Anthony Hordems' Shopping page' illustrated a cedar sideboard which it claimed 'dates back to the early Colonial days'. *Home*, 1 August 1928, p. 69.
The arrival in 1918 of Leslie Wilkinson as the first Professor of Architecture at the University of Sydney further consolidated the revival of a pseudo-colonial style; his work, too, provided a benchmark of taste in contemporary publications.\(^{26}\) The essay he provided for *Domestic Architecture in Australia* echoed Wilson's, dismissing the 'cast iron lace, leaded lights' of the Victorian period.\(^{27}\) He abhorred the 'Bolshevistics' of popular taste and noted approvingly '[t]he noticeable tendency towards a more formal manner based on Italian and "Colonial" work...a healthy reaction against the super-picturesqueness once so popular'.\(^{28}\) Wilkinson paid homage to colonial architects in his domestic building types, an amalgam of the Georgian and Mediterranean villa. He named his Vaucluse residence *Greenway* after the colonial architect and included colonial cedar joinery salvaged from demolished Macquarie Street residences in its interior.\(^{29}\) His *beaux-arts* training and conservative pronouncements provide one key to the anti-modernist emphasis of much Australian architecture and interior decoration of the 1920s.\(^{30}\)

**Colonial Design and the Writing of its History**

Despite the suggestions of a market for Australian colonial furniture existing in the 1920s\(^{31}\), no study of Australian furniture appeared until the publication of Earnshaw's *Early Sydney Cabinet-Makers 1804-1870* in 1971.\(^{32}\) The lack of highly

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\(^{29}\) Falkiner, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

\(^{30}\) Wilkinson denigrated both popular culture and the international style. Proudfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

\(^{31}\) The *Burdekin House Exhibition* catalogue carried an advertisement placed by Charles F. Pascoe, Antique Furniture Co., 19 Market Street, Sydney, with the following note: 'Included in the collection will be found examples of the early Colonial furniture of the Governor Macquarie period', and Quinney's, 353 New South Head Road, Double Bay, advertised 'Old English and Colonial Furniture' [---*The Burdekin House Exhibition. A loan collection of good furnishings, including old and modern furniture and fittings..., Sydney, 8 October-21 December 1929, unpaginated*].

esteemed eighteenth-century furniture types, as well as the often assumed inferiority or provincial nature of Australian pieces, partly explains this absence.33 The genre of furniture studies is also relatively recent, very few being published before the twentieth century. As Muthesius' study of British examples found; 'no comprehensive books on the history of furniture appeared before the end of the nineteenth century. Neither did there seem to be reliable, specialist dealers before the early nineteen hundreds'.34 In both Britain and America, pioneering antique-furniture studies were published in the 1890s (Irvind W. Lyon, Colonial Furniture of New England, 1891; Frederick Litchfield, Illustrated History of Furniture [British], 1892), followed by the energetic establishment of national canons of seventeenth and eighteenth-century furniture types in the 'teens and 'twenties.35 Many of the writers were dealers, part of a new 'antique-infrastructure' established after the turn of the century, its emphasis being the authentication of objects.36 The British Antique Dealers' Association of Britain was established in 191837; the American magazine Antiques commenced publication in January 192238; the Art and Antique Dealers' League of America was formed in 1926. Australia had the occasional collector such as Hardy Wilson by the teens, Art in Australia noted in 1921 that it would offer articles on antiques and china, but the Australian trade as a whole lacked a professional infra-structure with its own journals until the 1960s.39 That these collecting interests were relatively new explains why decorating with antique or reproduction pieces in the 1920s and '30s could be described

34Muthesius, op. cit., p. 231.
35Muthesius lists nearly thirty British publications issued between 1902 and 1923. The nationalist bias of these texts is striking; 'with few exceptions, British books on the history of furniture deal with British furniture only' [ibid., pp. 241, 253]. Regarding American publications see Barbara McLean Ward and Gerald W. R. Ward, 'American Furniture to 1820', in Ames and Ward (eds.), op. cit., pp. 79-106. Wilson's library in the 1920s included seminal studies of both British and American antique furniture [Kevin Fahy, 'Furniture' in Simpson et al., op. cit., p. 34].
36Muthesius, op. cit., p. 242.
37ibid., p. 243.
38McLean Ward and Ward, op. cit., p. 80.
39Parts of the Wilson collection were exhibited in Melbourne in 1910. Exhibition of Pictures and Drawings by Arthur Streeton, George W. Lambert, W. Hardy Wilson, and a Selection of 18th C Fans, Textiles, Needlework and Embroideries of the 16th, 17th, 18th Centuries from the Collection of W. Hardy Wilson, Guild Hall, Melbourne, 30 August-12 September 1910. The existence of a dealer network is suggested in other contexts: in an undated letter [written 1926 or after on the basis of internal evidence] to a Mr Connor, Thea Proctor wrote: 'Your show of antiques must have been very interesting - There must still be a lot of lovely things in Tasmania in spite of the dealers' [Facsimile, Proctor files, NGARL. This is most likely the Tasmanian Joseph Connor, who is described as a watercolourist in Alan McCulloch, Encyclopedia of Australian Art, vol. 1, pp. 227-8].
An accelerating nostalgia for the Australian-colonial past is apparent in a range of exhibitions and publications from the 'teens, much of it flowing from the interests of Hardy Wilson and Sydney Ure Smith. Ure Smith illustrated C. H. Bertie's Old Sydney (1911) and Stories of Old Sydney (1912), in 1914 published his drawings as Relics of Old Colonial Days, and in 1918 Smith and Bertram Stevens authored The Charm of Sydney. Hardy Wilson's The Cow Pasture Road (1920) provided his usual mix of romantic longing and veneration for the colonial era, in which buildings were illustrated as if restored, surrounded by characters in nineteenth-century fancy dress. Lionel Lindsay's Conrad Martens. The Man and his Art (1920), published by Angus and Robertson for Ure Smith, marked the beginning of an interest in colonial painting and was also the first substantial Australian art monograph. The Macquarie Book, Special Number of Art in Australia, including Hardy Wilson's essay 'Greenway, Macquarie's Architect', was published the following year. The Ure Smith publishing 'empire' continued to energetically promote an interest in colonial Australia in the late 1920s and '30s, publishing three relevant books in 1928, an Early Days number of Home magazine in July 1929, as well as various articles within this magazine and its annual, and a range of illustrated limited editions such as A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay by Captain Watkin Tench of the Marines (3rd ed. London 1789) [Sydney, 1938] and M. Barnard Eldershaw's An Historical Narrative of the Life and Times of Captain John Piper [Sydney, 1939], both

40 The entry of antiques into Australia became duty-free in 1928, and from this point the number of London antique firms advertising in the magazine increased; see Home, 2 April 1929, pp. 60, 62. Home asserted that 'Australia is one of the last civilised country to awaken to the value of the antique as a national asset' [ibid., p. 20].
41 This affiliation continued when Bertie researched 'particulars of some of the early residences in Sydney' for Domestic Architecture in Australia (1919) [The editors, 'Introduction', in Smith and Stevens, op. cit., p. 2]. Ure Smith published Bertie's Sydney Streets in 1928.
42 Hardy Wilson, The Cow Pasture Road, Sydney, Art in Australia, 1920.
43 Underhill, op. cit., p. 128. The dominance of paintings by Martens in the colonial section of the Burdekin House Exhibition should be noted in this context [see below]. Glover was not well known at the time [ibid., p. 129].
44 H. M. Abbott et al., The Macquarie Book. The life and times of Governor Lachlan Macquarie, 10th no., Art in Australia, Sydney, 1921.
45 Charles H. Bertie, Sydney Streets; Charles H. Bertie et al., Glimpses of Old Sydney; Sydney Ure Smith and Charles H. Bertie, Old Colonial By-Ways, all published 1928.
46 For instance, Peggy C. Macintyre, 'Tasmania's Colonial Homes', Home Annual, 1 October 1936, pp. 67-74.
47 Actually Marjorie Barnard and Flora Eldershaw.
illustrated by the artist Adrian Feint. This reverence for 'early days' is contemporary with the American interest in the significance and preservation of its colonial past, of which Hardy Wilson at least was undoubtedly aware.48

American preservationist activity has been described as 'almost exclusively concerned in the late twenties and the thirties with the colonial image'.49 In 1923 Henry Ford purchased and restored the Wayside Inn, Concord; in 1925 J. Pierpont Morgan purchased the Wallace Nutting collection of pilgrim century furniture for the Wadsworth Atheneum (Nutting's *Furniture of the Pilgrim Century, 1620-1720...* was published in Boston, 1921); in 1926 John D. Rockefeller, Jr. began the purchase and restoration of buildings in Williamsburg.50 This yearning for a pre-industrial past bears a close relation to the aims and ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the circles of which included the first earnest collectors of antiques.51 The marketing of Australian colonial atmosphere is evident in a 1929 advertisement for Beard Watson's furniture store, which illustrated an 'early colonial bedroom' suite, stylistically inaccurate but attempting to evoke the past.52 Governmental support for restoration and preservation of historic buildings in Australia does not appear to have been significant at this time, unlike the increasing state and federal support in 1930's America.53

The American wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art was opened in 1925.

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48Wilson visited and sketched colonial buildings whilst in America and at times compared American and Australian exemplar: 'In Maryland and Virginia I saw and drew many beautiful old homes, but I saw none more beautiful than some I know on sublime hill-tops in the counties of Cumberland and Camden'. Wilson, 'Building "Purulia"', in Smith and Stevens, op. cit., p. 12.
49David Gebhard, 'The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s', *Winterthur Portfolio*, vol. 22, nos. 2/3., Summer/Autumn 1987, p. 119.
50The Wallace Nutting collection of American objects was formed in the 'teens and twenties; the growing middle-class appreciation of this heritage is evidenced in Nutting's manufacturing reproductions of furniture in his collection from 1917 [Hanks and Tober, op. cit.]. Regarding Ford and Rockefeller see Gebhard, op. cit., pp. 117-9.
51Muthesius, *The American Colonial Revival in the 1930s*, p. 233. There may be other reasons for the rise of interest in colonial furniture types. Rybczynski claims the 'Early American' cult and the 1876 Centennial celebrations are due 'partly to efforts by the established middle class to distance itself from the increasing number of new, predominantly non-British immigrants' [Witold Rybczynski, *Home. A Short History of an Idea*, New York, Viking Penguin, 1986, p. 10].
52Home, 1 July 1929, p. 59.
and all major United States' museums began to collect American-colonial decorative arts in this period.\textsuperscript{54} Australian museums were not actively collecting colonial furniture in the inter-war period. There were, however, privately organised exhibitions which included nineteenth-century Australian decorative arts.\textsuperscript{55} An Old Sydney exhibition, including 'engravings, lithographs, paintings, etchings, pencil sketches and furniture used by our forefathers' was shown at the David Jones' store in 1922.\textsuperscript{56} Early architectural subjects by Lionel Lindsay and Sydney Ure Smith were exhibited at the store as \textit{Old Sydney Etchings} in 1936.\textsuperscript{57} Charles Lloyd Jones' role as co-director of \textit{Art in Australia} and \textit{Home} and the links between his department store David Jones' and the magazines' advertising and contents should be noted at this juncture.\textsuperscript{58}

\begin{quote}
The Burdekin House Exhibition, Sydney, 1929, drew attention to the Regency-style villa of 1841 in which it was housed, featuring a Hardy Wilson illustration of the residence on the catalogue's cover.\textsuperscript{59} Conceived as a charity fundraiser and as a project to raise levels of public taste, the exhibition displayed room sets of mainly European antique furniture and applied arts, but also included examples of colonial furniture and the modern room settings designed by artists which are examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis.\textsuperscript{60} The organisational boards once again included Sydney Ure Smith (President of Committee) and Professor Wilkinson (Vice-President).\textsuperscript{61} The
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54}David Gebhard, 'Traditionalism and Design: Old Models for the New', in Phillips et al., \textit{op. cit.}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{55}Terence Lane notes that, 'an example of locally-made silver entered an Australian public collection as early as 1884, and...there had been private collectors of this material as early as the 1930s' ['The Role of the Decorative Arts in Australian Art History: Australian Silver', conference abstract, \textit{Art Association of Australia Newsletter}, no. 7, 1980, p. 7].
\textsuperscript{56}Typescript of exhibitions, DJA. For a review see 'Old Sydney Exhibition', \textit{Daily Telegraph}, 24 May 1922, in Press Clippings Scrapbook, May 1919-September 1924, DJA.
\textsuperscript{57}Typescript of exhibitions, \textit{op. cit.}
\textsuperscript{58}Lloyd Jones was a director of Art in Australia Ltd., providing capital and support to Ure Smith publications [Underhill, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 133-7].
\textsuperscript{59}Burdekin House Exhibition, \textit{op. cit.} Burdekin House had been illustrated in \textit{Domestic Architecture in Australia} [Smith and Stevens, \textit{op. cit.}, Plate I]. Ure Smith also made an etching of the subject in 1923 [Underhill, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 34].
\textsuperscript{60}Purported colonial pieces exhibited are the numbers: 136 Early Colonial pewter tankard; 273 Conrad Martens hand-coloured lithograph \textit{Sydney from the North Shore} 1842; 274 Pair colonial cedar-card tables c1830; 275 Conrad Martens oil \textit{Sydney Harbour from Wentworth House grounds}; 277 Conrad Martens hand-coloured lithograph \textit{Sydney Harbour} ; 289 Early colonial tall trunk cedar veneered clock c1840, Maker F. Jones, Sydney; 296 Georgian circular dining table. Formerly the property of Governor Macquarie; 297 Round cedar dining table, Early Tasmanian c1830. On the basis of the use of cedar probable Australian pieces exhibited are the numbers: 341 Cedar bedside chair; 343 Hexagonal cedar work table; 347 Cedar four-poster bed; 349 Large cedar duchess stool \textit{[ibid.], unpaginated}. The clock and Martens oil are illustrated in \textit{Home}, 1 November 1929, pp. 49, 52.
\textsuperscript{61}Burdekin House Exhibition, \textit{op. cit.}, unpaginated.
catalogue was strategically linked to Ure Smith's *Home* Magazine, an advertisement on the back cover noting, 'The November Number of the Home will contain a complete illustrated section devoted to the... Exhibition', and the magazine's co-editor Leon Gellert providing an essay on modern interiors.62

A similar model of room sets was employed in the *Exhibition of an Englishman’s Home from 1700 to 1941* organised by David Jones’ Art Gallery in 1941.63 The arrangement of antique furnishings within room settings is more indicative of the tenacious Hardy Wilson formula than actual eighteenth-century schemes.64 An 'Early Australian Room' was included, but the display of colonial furniture, even at this date, does not necessarily indicate that it was valued in its own right. The exhibits were borrowed from and arranged by members of the social-set and prominent Sydney families; not surprisingly, the emphasis in the colonial room was on objects with strong associational ties to early-Australian pastoral families.65 The higher survival rate and reverence for objects from upper-class Australia has continued to ensure a preponderance of survival and exhibition of the latter over middle and working-class material culture.66

Fahy's and the Simpsons' useful summary of the development of the market for colonial furniture concludes that the first institutional exhibition to include early Australian examples was held at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1953, when

62 *ibid.*
63 *Exhibition of an Englishman’s Home from 1700 to 1941. Loan Collection of Furniture, Pictures, China, Glass, Silver, and Early Chinese Art*, David Jones’ Art Gallery, Sydney, 6-31 May 1941.
64 See, for example, the early Georgian and Queen Anne rooms [illustrated *SMH* Women’s Supplement, 6 May 1941], with symmetrically-paired paintings hung between mirrors in the manner Wilson furnished Purulia [illustrated Smith and Stevens, *op. cit.*]. The exhibition received considerable press attention resulting in a large photographic record. See 1941 scrapbook, DJA.
65 ‘Historic Australian furniture and pictures are being arranged by Mrs. Gregory Blaxland’ [SMH, May 1, 1941]; ‘there are other reminders of Australia’s beginning, such as a massive convict-made chair lent by Miss Wentworth...Governor Bligh’s deed-box...and the musket which Gregory Blaxland carried across the Blue Mountains’ [unsourced press clipping]; ‘Two of the many interesting exhibits in the Pioneer Australia room, arranged by Mrs. Gregory Blaxland, belonged to Mrs. James Macarthur. They were a pair of mittens...and a specimen of needlework’ [Telegraph, 5 May 1941]; all DJA.
66 On the preoccupation with 'the mansion or comparatively large and elaborate dwelling' as opposed to ordinary dwellings see Peter Balmford and J. L. O’Brien, 'Dating Houses in Victoria', *Historical Studies*, vol. 9, no. 36, 1961, pp. 379-80. Note also the upper-middle-class emphasis of Lane and Serle, *op. cit.*. In a different context, Ames notes 'An object was "art" because it had been associated with some member of the early American upper class' [Kenneth L. Ames, 'Introduction', in Ames and Ward (eds.), *op. cit.*, p. 16].
Australian paintings were displayed with 'period' furniture.67 The Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences acquired its first major example of early Australian cabinetmaking in 1957 (the James Oatley clock, 1822); contemporary examples of cabinetmaking had been purchased since 1906, however, as examples of craftsmanship.68 From the 1960s the number of publications and exhibitions concerning nineteenth-century architecture and decorative arts accelerated in tandem with the expansion of the market for Australian painting and the growth of state chapters of the National Trust.69 The standard of scholarship varies, much of it written by dealers and architects who were not necessarily seeking to write meticulous history.70 The Australasian Antique Collector (becoming the Australian Antique Collector from 1977) was issued from 1966, and although its emphasis was European, its first number noted, 'each issue will contain something of colonial interest'.71

Morton Herman's The Early Australian Architects and Their Work (1954) was the first wide-ranging architectural history published in Australia.72 Significantly, it was written by an architect sympathetic to modernism, and examined the period pre-1840, before 'an orgy of ornate bad taste and rich vulgarity' had debased Australian

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67Kevin Fahy, Christina Simpson and Andrew Simpson, Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture, Sydney, David Ell, 1985, p. 11. Fahy delivered a version of this summary at the Annual Conference of the Art Association of Australia, 1980 [Art Association of Australia Newsletter, no. 8, February 1981, p. 3].

68Fahy, Simpson and Simpson, et. al., p. 10.

69The first National Trust (N. S. W.) was formed in 1945; 'By the time the Australian Council of National Trusts was established in 1965 there were National Trusts in every State' [Australian Heritage Commission, The Heritage of Australia. The Illustrated Register of the National Estate, South Melbourne, Macmillan, 1981, p. 12]. Membership of the National Trust (N. S. W.) rose from 1 000 in 1960 to 25 043 in 1979 [D. N. Jeans, 'New South Wales', in ibid., part 2, p. 7]. In Sydney in May 1962 the Women's Committee of the National Trust of Australia (N.S.W.) held the exhibition 'No Time to Spare!', with thirty-four Max Dupain photographs of endangered Australian buildings, mostly Georgian [Max Dupain et al., Georgian Architecture in Australia. With some examples of buildings of the post-Georgian period, Sydney, Ure Smith, 1963, p. 9]. The latter text was an outcome of the exhibition.


71Editorial, Australasian Antique Collector, no. 1, November 1966, p. 18. A work by Conrad Martens was illustrated on the cover of this first issue.

72Morton Herman, The Early Australian Architects and Their Work, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1954.
architecture. An incisive contemporary review by the art historian Franz Philipp noted that this was the first history to succeed Wilson's evocative but ahistorical account *Old Colonial Architecture in New South Wales and Tasmania* (1923). Importantly for this thesis, he also observed that, 'Perhaps the most striking gap in Mr. Herman's account... is the very slight regard given to interiors'. It established a precedent which Australian architectural studies tended to follow ever since, an 'architectural extrovertiness' as Philipp phrased it, which examines buildings from the outside, but rarely ventures within.

The publication of Kurt Albrecht's *Nineteenth Century Australian Gold and Silver Smiths* in 1969 marked the first extended treatment of Australian decorative arts. Two books published in the early 1970s, Earnshaw's *Early Sydney Cabinet-Makers 1804-1870* (1971) and Craig, Fahy and Robertson's *Early Colonial Furniture in New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land* (1972) are the genesis of Australian furniture studies. The latter resulted from the endeavours of collectors and revolves around pieces from Craig's collection of Tasmanian furniture and the New South Wales' examples collected by Fahy. The text is based on an analysis of the nineteenth-century press record and a matching of colonial designs to pattern book sources; there is scant consideration of the role or taste of patrons, few suggestions as to why a particular style was favoured and little information regarding organisation of the trade. Fahy and the Simpsons' *Nineteenth Century Australian Furniture* (1985), the next milestone in detailed research, is more satisfying in these respects, but it retains an emphasis on high styles reflecting the state of the market and the Simpsons' role therein as dealers.

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73 *ibid.* , p. 220.
74 Philipp notes, for instance, that Wilson's account 'hardly contains a single date, and only one name, that of Francis Greenway' [F. A. Philipp, 'Notes on the Study of Australian Colonial Architecture', *Historical Studies*, vol. 8, no. 32, May 1959, p. 405].
75 *ibid.* , p. 409.
76 *ibid.*. Bernard and Kate Smith's study of Glebe architecture notes, for instance: 'Since we are here concerned only with architecture as an aspect of the public environment we do not discuss plans and interiors as any full account would' [Bernard and Kate Smith, *op. cit.* , p. 11]. Richard Apperly et al., *A Pictorial Guide to Identifying Australian Architecture. Styles and Terms from 1788 to the Present*, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1989, similarly records the history of exteriors.
77 Albrecht, *op. cit.*
79 Fahy, Simpson and Simpson, *op. cit.*
Institutional exhibitions have accorded increasing prominence to Australian
design since the 1980s, notably the Australian National Gallery and the National
Gallery of Victoria, both of which have published partial catalogues of the
collections.80 In 1990 the first extensive history devoted to Australian interior design
was published by Lane and Serle.81 The nineteenth century forms its focus and, like
Mario Praz’s *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration from Pompeii to Art
Nouveau* (1964) on which books of this type are ultimately modelled, it consists of a
set of illustrations with lengthy captions and bridging chapters.82

**Design History and the Twentieth-century Object**

Consideration of twentieth-century topics in Australian decorative arts is less
substantial than the nineteenth-century field, and remains dominated by the amateur
historian. The relative weakness of the market for twentieth-century Australian objects
for much of this century and the subsequent disinterest of dealers accounts for part of
this lack.83 This aversion has been reversed in recent years by the preservation
movement which emerged strongly in the 1970s, bolstered by the nostalgia and
heritage booms which culminated in the 1988 Bicentennial. Both movements have
been influential in moulding the shape of architecture and interior-design studies, which
to this date tend towards description and a necessary 'cataloguing' of new data.84

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80 Terence Lane, *Formed in Wood. Australian furniture from early colonial times to the present day*,
Banyule Gallery, Heidelberg, 28 March-30 June 1982; John McPhee, *Australian Decorative Arts in the
Australian National Gallery*, Canberra, Australian National Gallery, 1982; Christopher Menz (ed.),
Terence Lane, *From Robert Adam to Biltmore. The Architect as Designer*, Melbourne, National Gallery of
Victoria, 1987-88.

81 Lane and Serle, *op. cit*.

82 Mario Praz, *An Illustrated History of Interior Decoration from Pompeii to Art Nouveau*, London,
Thames and Hudson, 1964. Other texts employing Praz's format include Peter Thornton, *Authentic Decor.
The Domestic Interior 1620-1920*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984; Stephen Calloway, *Twentieth-

83 One of the few articles published on inter-war Australian furniture was written by a Sydney dealer for a
collectors' magazine, illustrated with several examples from his store. It reflects his distaste for 'bastardised'
versions of art deco [Tyrone Dearing, 'Art Deco in Australia', *Australian Antique Collector*, 45th ed.,
January-June 1993, pp. 51-3]. An auction-house employee has also published a brief article [Andrew
Shapiro, 'Searching for Tomorrow's Australiana', *Australian Antique Collector*, 43rd ed., January-June
1992, pp. 44-7].

84 For a brief overview of twentieth-century Australian furniture see Michael Bogle, 'Australian Furniture:
When Terry Smith wrote his historiography of Australian visual culture in 1983 no general history of craft nor design had been written. Discursive studies have appeared since, informed by inter-disciplinary approaches ranging from anthropology to semiotics. Feminist theory has provided a particularly persuasive critique of the distinction between decorative and fine art, between high and popular culture, and established women’s domestic work as a significant area of study.

Historical overview of twentieth-century Australian interior design first occurred in the critical writings of the architect and polemicist Robin Boyd in the 1950s. His much-reprinted texts *Australia’s Home. Its Origins, Builders and Occupiers* (1952) and *The Australian Ugliness* (1960) were written with an advocacy role to promote a modernist sensibility free from the ‘featurism’ - cloaking or camouflage - he found everywhere in suburban Australia. He detested the riot of colour and shapes employed for shops and housing; in his view, what was required for post-WW II Australia was modernist unity, which he believed to be inevitable. The architect was primary; 1930s 'Jazz Style', for instance, dismissed as 'only a decorator's idea; it was not expressed by the plan or even the facade'. Boyd stated firmly that, 'Australian urban development tended to retain a tedious time-lag behind world invention', a contention which is tested in my Chapter 4. In the 'post-modern' age it would be easy to dismiss these posturings as quaint, but Boyd both established the ordinary Australian dwelling as relevant social history - 'Australia is the small house' - and much of the subsequent framework of writing. That Boyd's arguments have enjoyed a long afterlife is indicated by the way they continue to inform

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85 Terry Smith, *op. cit.* , pp. 10-29.
89 Boyd, *The Australian Ugliness*, *op. cit.* , p. 49. 'Whether we like the idea or not it would be blindly unrealistic not to recognize in the I.C.I. and Unilever offices on Sydney Harbour a hint of the machine-made character which will ultimately overtake all construction' [*ibid.* , p. 131].
91 *ibid.* , p. 125.
92 *ibid.* , p. 3.
recent texts such as Archer's *Building a Nation* (1987).93

The architect J. M. Freeland's *Architecture in Australia. A History* (1968) was the first survey published of Australian architecture. In a review welcoming its appearance in 1969, Bernard Smith warned nonetheless of Freeland's tendency to allow his own prejudices to dismiss 'buildings which he finds distasteful as expressions of human behaviour'.94 In this vein Freeland continued to describe the 'Jazz' style of the 1920s, for instance, as 'the result of the cinema and pure mindlessness'.95 Freeland's pronounced aversion to the *art deco* mode results in one dismissive paragraph regarding the popular building and furnishing styles of the 1920s and '30s.96 As Peter Bell wrote in a brief overview of architectural histories published in Australia, 'What Freeland actually wrote was a history of a few selected aspects of the superior architecture of Sydney and Melbourne'.97

The architect Howard Tanner's *Architects of Australia* (1981) drew together fifteen eclectic contributions, including the results of several post-war doctoral theses on nineteenth and twentieth-century Australian topics.98 Cecily Miner's acute analysis of Tanner's project sets this book in the context of his earlier publications, *Restoring Old Australian Houses and Buildings* (co-authored with the architect Philip Cox, 1975) and *Great Gardens of Australia* (1976), also commissioned by Macmillan, and published with a view to the conservation and restoration markets.99 She notes that all contributors to Tanner's 1981 publication were active members of one or more preservationist group.100 Her assessment of this 'anthology of lost opportunities' is a negative one:

93 Archer nowhere questions Boyd's modernist bias: 'It was Robin Boyd's...volume that was my most consistent companion' [John Archer, *Building a Nation. A History of the Australian House*, Sydney, William Collins, 1987, p. 10]. Archer quotes at length from *The Australian Ugliness* regarding the 1960s home [ibid., p. 209].
96 ibid.
97 Bell, op. cit., p. 109.
100 ibid., p. 6.
Unfortunately, without critical discourse, evaluation of works, or study of political relationships, the intentions and impact of each architect, Tanner’s anthology became little more than the identification and assemblage of original facts.\(^{101}\)

Architects have continued to write histories of Australian architecture and interior design, more recently in the role of heritage consultant. The revival of inner-city living and the popularity of renovating old building stock since the 1960s (Hillier’s *Let’s Buy a Terrace House* was published in Sydney in 1967) fuelled the demand for manuals of Australian nineteenth-century and Edwardian styles, which appeared in rapid succession from the mid 1970s.\(^{102}\) The renovator was exhorted to conserve old houses not only for the national heritage, but for a superior resale price, as ‘original’ character became valued over ‘ill-informed renovations’.\(^{103}\) Many of the writers producing these popular guides - Bridges, Broadbent, Cox, Evans, Lucas, the Stapletons, Tanner - went on to write the post-Freeland Australian architecture and interior-design histories, most of which have been published in short anthology form to accommodate their eclectic interests.\(^{104}\) Kate and Bernard Smith’s *The Architectural Character of Glebe, Sydney* (1973) fostered the appreciation of what they argued should be labelled the Federation style dwelling (rather than ‘Queen Anne’) and has been followed by a number of popular manuals.\(^{105}\) Preservation groups have multiplied since the mid-1960s, and the establishment of the Heritage Council of New South Wales in 1978 and of the Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales in 1980 promoted education and preservation programmes.\(^{106}\) Despite the burgeoning

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101 *ibid.* , pp. 10, 6.
104 Howard Tanner (ed.), *Architects of Australia*, *op. cit.* ; Maisy Stapleton (ed.), *Historic Interiors*, *op. cit.*
publications, there has been a serious lack of sustained argument in the field of Australian architectural history.

The 1980s, which witnessed a nostalgia boom and the revival of an eclectic range of decorating styles, contributed the first detailed texts which address the Australian interior in the between-the-wars period. These range from carefully prepared essays on specific topics, often case studies, by the staff of historic houses' groups and galleries to the impressionistic and sweeping overviews of nostalgic publications designed for the homemaker. Peter Cuffley's *Australian Houses of the '20s and '30s* (1989) falls within the latter category. The only substantial text devoted to interior design of the period, Cuffley draws on a wide range of periodical and trade journal literature, much of it in his collection. The text suffers from being neither a history, nor a home-renovating manual, but rather a hybrid of the two. It veers between an attempt at scholarly description, with some footnoting, to unreferenced conjecture; a wide range of sources are cited in an uncritical manner. An essentially emotive and nostalgic undertone runs through the text; in the introduction Cuffley describes childhood memories; 'Our generation soaked up this atmosphere of candles and kerosene lamps, and grew to love every snug and friendly cottage'. Another emphasis is indicated in the design of the dust-jacket, which notes 'From Bungalows to Modern Style. Origins. Home Renovation. Garden Styles. Colour Schemes'. The final chapter, 'Household Collectables', describes how one might 'recreate' the period, and the bibliography is interspersed with pages reproduced from old trade catalogues and is reminiscent of his previous publications. His books *A Catalogue and History of Cottage Chairs in Australia; Chandeliers and Billy Tea. A Catalogue of Australian Life 1880-1940; Cottage Gardens in Australia* and *Creating Your Own Period Garden* are an integral part of the collecting and renovation boom of the last twenty years.

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109 *ibid.*, p. 4.

unfortunately unreferenced in many cases, and arranged in a kaleidoscopic fashion not always keyed to the text. The very design of his book, set out like a magazine with different sized illustrations, some cropped or angled across the page, others set against wallpaper backgrounds, reinforces his 'window on the past' approach. Similarly, Archer's *Building a Nation* (1987), which includes consideration of interior design, shifts from location to location, matching fragments of text from novels and letters to an eclectic set of images in an impressionistic manner.

Academic Enterprise and Australian Design History

Regarding the study of Australian history, McQueen notes that, 'writers performed some of the work of historians, as Eleanor Dark did in the 1940s, since the story of this continent was little researched or written about before the 1960s'. Academic support for the study of Australian design history was not forthcoming until this period, when post-graduate architectural topics were undertaken. Morton E. Herman's *The Architecture of Victorian Sydney*, M. Architecture, University of Melbourne, 1960, appears to be the first post-graduate thesis written in any field of architectural history in Australia. This development was concurrent with the establishment of design history as a valid scholarly endeavour in an international context, when university-trained historians began to apply primarily art-historical methods to fields such as furniture and ceramics. The establishment of art history as a discipline had not been consolidated in Australia until the 1950s, with the first post-graduates completing their work in the early 1960s. With no local art

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112 Archer, *Building a Nation*.
113 Humphrey McQueen, *Suburbs of the Sacred*, Ringwood, Penguin, 1988, p. 235. Novels such as the Martin Boyd trilogy, or Patrick White's descriptions of Edwardian Sydney, are texts which evoke aspects of domesticity.
114 Donald Leslie Johnson, 'Theses in Art History and Theory and Architectural History in Australasia', *Art Association of Australia Newsletter*, no. 5, February 1979, p. 3.
116 The Herald Chair of Fine Arts at Melbourne University was established in 1946 [Ursula Hoff, 'Observations on Art History in Melbourne 1946-1964', *Australian Journal of Art*, vol. 3, 1983, pp. 5-9]. In 1962 three art history M. Arts degrees were awarded at the University of Melbourne. Though not enrolled in an art history department, Bernard Smith was awarded the Ph. D. for *A study of European art and related ideas in contact with the Pacific, 1768-1850* at the Australian National University in 1957 [Johnson, *Building a Nation*].
historical journal apart from the *Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria* in existence, important articles concerning architectural history appeared in *Historical Studies* and the *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*.117

Historians of Australian art have indicated occasional interest in researching aspects of Australian interior design, generally in connection with painting.118 Aestheticism attracted the attention of several scholars; Patricia Dobrez examined the descriptions of interiors in the novels of Martin Boyd;119 Ann Galbally researched the impact of Aestheticism on Melbourne interior-design and consumer goods in the context of late nineteenth-century Australian art.120 Mary Eagle signalled most forcefully that the understanding of a particular period of Australian art cannot exist without recognition of the role of the applied arts - design, advertising, fashion. In her 1978 essay and subsequent book regarding early-twentieth century painting, she argued that modernism entered Australian art not through the hallowed reaches of 'high' art but through 'their secondary manifestation in fashion goods for a growing consumer market'.121 Eagle cited *Home* magazine as a compelling example of the mingling of art and design in which the moderne was espoused as both fashionable and desirable. Eagle's research interest remains, however, Australian painting, and she provides neither a detailed definition of 'modernism' regarding design, nor consideration of the role of gender in the construction of hierarchies within visual culture.


118For a brief description of kitchen scenes see Patricia Grassick, 'Interiors in Australian painting in the 1880s', *Art and Australia*, vol. 21, no. 3, Autumn 1984, pp. 346-351.


Eagle's influential argument informs a number of publications from this point; indeed, it formed the springboard of this thesis. Humphrey McQueen's *Black Swan of Trespass* (1979) explored the Sydney art scene of the 1920s and '30s around the painting of Margaret Preston, and has been criticised for this emphasis on high art rather than architecture and design. He nonetheless usefully argued that the connection between modernism and fashion permitted conservative tastemakers to dismiss modernism as a fad, permitting them to disparage both modernism and women. Heather Johnson made Eagle's connections more explicit in her case studies of Roy de Maistre, revealing the considerable interchange in the 1920s and '30s between decorative and high art. She endows *Home* with the primary position it deserves as a barometer of modernism, but her analysis of decorative schemes by de Maistre will be expanded in this thesis. The thesis also benefits from a recent trend to emphasise the role of consumers over producers. An emphasis on consumers is a political one, in that it has the potential to 'enfranchise groups... who had been beneath the gaze of conventional historical scholarship'. The gendered implications of the conjunction of modernism, femininity and consumption have been briefly considered in Ian Burn, Nigel Lendon and Ann Stephen's *The Necessity of Australian Art*.

Conferences of the Art Association of Australia (representing mainly art historians) have included sessions devoted to Australian design history, particularly architecture, since at least 1976. Considerable momentum for these studies was

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123 This is borne out by a number of Underhill's recent observations. Norman Lindsay, for instance, described Thea Proctor as 'OK for Home covers but not for art'. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
generated in the first issues of the Association's scholarly publication *Australian Journal of Art*, the first issue of which included two articles on Australian architecture. Questions of theory and method have assumed increasing priority in recent years. Perspectives of social history, feminism and semiotics have re-invigorated the discipline, or, as others have argued, revealed its bankruptcy as an inadequate system obsessed with high-culture patterns. Some of the most useful studies of domestic architecture and interior design have emerged from outside the ranks of art and architectural history. Kerreen Reiger's *The disenchantment of the home* (1985) analyses the domestic sphere, popular culture and ephemeral material such as trade catalogues and women's magazines as forces actively shaping familial, sexual and medical discourses in Australia. She examines the development of the role of the 'expert' in 'public health, housing and the management of the household and family'. Such approaches challenge the models of connoisseurship and linear histories of style within which design is frequently positioned.

The late 1980s witnessed an accelerating body of writing in Australia which questioned hierarchies and methodologies within decorative-arts writing and exhibition. Tony Fry's *Design History Australia* (1988) is a landmark publication as the first study to offer an overview of the field. He exposes connoisseurship and the designer-as-hero models which continue to dominate design history as class-bound, hierarchical and 'outside' history. His most challenging strategy has been to dispense with an object-based study and instead proceed with textual analysis of verbal and visual documents. Fry's book is structured in three parts with a historiography of general design history, a series of Australian case studies and the first bibliographic listing of research materials relating to Australian design. The emphasis in these essays is industrial design; he

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131 *ibid.*, p. 33.
132 Tony Fry, *Design History Australia. A source text in methods and resources*, Sydney, Hale and
includes a chapter 'Looking at Industrial Design: theory and inquiry' and three case studies relating to marketing and product design. Elsewhere Fry has written a methodological essay useful for the study of domestic interiors, including a semiotic reading of a 1950s anonymous photograph.133

Noris Ioannou has also argued for an inter-disciplinary approach to design history in the *Culture Brokers: towards a redefinition of Australian contemporary craft* (1989) and *Craft in Society, An Anthology of Perspectives* (1992).134 In 1989 the energies of the Society of Architectural Historians, Australia and New Zealand, previously spread among conferences, art and historical journals, merged in the first number of their journal *Fabrications*. The very title reveals that the editorial policy stresses history as construction; the journal has published theoretical as well as descriptive articles. Robert Nelson's typescripts *Toward a Philosophy of Furniture* (1990) and *Grounds for Change. Expressions of Purpose in Australian Design* (1990) exemplify the development of a theoretically informed reading of designed object as text.135 Nelson interrogates the etymology of familiar things, tracing their shifting meanings. Grace Cochrane's *The Crafts Movement in Australia: a History* appeared in late 1992 and provides the foundation for further scholarly research in this field.136 Ioannou, Nelson and Cochrane were among the many speakers from widely different backgrounds who spoke at the first Australian conference devoted to craft theory, *Interventions*, University of Wollongong, 1992. Organised by Sue Rowley within the School of Creative Arts and coinciding with *Artlink*’s special issue *Thinking Craft Crafting Thought*, its aim was to 'enrich and extend the pool of ideas, theories and methodologies currently underpinning craft writing and exhibitions'.137 This was a salutary mission after decades of expository writing. 'Design history' must continue to

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occupy an inter-disciplinary position or risk becoming another orthodoxy.
Chapter 2

Designing Women: Gender, Sexuality and the Interior Decorator, c1890-1940

The Interior Decorator: An Overview

The study of interior decoration has fared less well than most other areas of the decorative or applied arts. There are neither grand themes nor motives to tantalise the humanist scholar, and its connotations of superficiality and high-style chic leave many marxist historians cold. Feminist enquiry first did something to revive an interest in the development of this twentieth-century profession, noting that this was a field whose profile in the inter-war period included large numbers of women. The basis for further study outlined in Isabelle Anscombe's *A Woman's Touch. Women in Design from 1860 to the present day* (1984) has not been tapped. Despite an increasing number of biographies, surveys and case-studies, both scholarly and general, no extended account of the evolution of the profession of interior decorator has been published.¹ Yet investigation of the changing concept and development of the activity yields a revealing model of the inter-relationship of gender, design and modernism in early-twentieth century visual culture. Interior decoration in the inter-war period was a space made over to large numbers of women. The 'lady decorator' dominated the popular image of the profession at a time when paid work was socially unacceptable for such women. Rather than describing it as work, interior decoration was frequently characterised as an extension of women's natures, directly compared to the female compulsion to colour-blend complexion and costume.

Isabelle Anscombe's *A Woman's Touch* (1984) first raised the significance of the interior decorator in terms of a history of women's contribution to the designed world.² Deriving her material from biographical and periodical sources, Anscombe described how primarily upper-middle class women opened decorating businesses in

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the 1910s and 1920s to achieve economic independence. Arguments against suffrage were frequently directed at the 'New Woman' in paid employment; British women gained the 'matrons' vote' in 1918, full suffrage in 1928; American women gained suffrage in 1920. Anscombe traced the transplantation of the profession to Britain by Americans including Elsie de Wolfe, noting that, 'From the start, the personalities of the pioneers of interior decoration ensured that it was a fashionable profession'.

Women including the Britons Dolly Mann, Syrie Maugham, Betty Joel and Sibyl Colefax, and the Americans Eleanor McMillen, Ruby Ross Wood, Rose Cumming, Dorothy Draper and Dorothy Kinnicutt ('Sister') Parish dominated the popular image of the profession until the late 1930s, when the new male identities such as American Billy Baldwin and Briton John Fowler emerged. Anscombe's survey provided a preliminary sketch, raising a number of questions which have continued to occupy feminist design history.

Anscombe contended that the profession of interior decorator had unfolded from the involvement of women in the Arts and Crafts movement in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As well as acting as practitioners in this period, women were responsible for a considerable number of texts which proposed a new personalised approach to decorating which would bypass the trade. Between 1876 and 1897 books were written in England and America by Mrs Orrinsmith, Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, Mrs Haweis, Lady Barker, Mrs M. J. Loftie, Mrs J. E. Panton, Ella Rodman Church, and Edith Wharton, the British examples forming a series published by

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6Maugham's Baker Street store entitled 'Syrie' was established in 1922 [Fisher, op. cit., p. 16].
7A number of the women adopted the role as a result of financial need following the 1929 stock-market crash. Virginia Woolf described Sibyl Colefax thus: 'Well, a year ago Colefax lost all her money; ... She said, I will not be beaten; and promptly turned house-decorator; ran up a sign in Ebury Street, sold her Rolls Royce, and is now, literally, at work...' [V. Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 14 November 1930, in Nigel Nicolson (ed.), A Reflection of the Other Person. The Letters of Virginia Woolf, vol. IV, London, Hogarth Press, 1978, p. 254].
8McMillen commenced trading in 1924, becoming Mrs McMillen Brown in 1934 [Brown, op. cit., p. 15].
9Cumming was Australian born but worked in New York, opening a store in 1921 [Esten and Gilbert, op. cit., p. 37].
10See Brown, op. cit., p. 171. Regarding the 1930s, Baldwin wrote: 'You notice that during this period not many men are mentioned. For the good reason that not many men were decorators' [Billy Baldwin, 'The Importance of Rooms People Live In', in Mary Jane Pool (ed.), 20th Century Decorating, Architecture and Gardens. 80 Years of Ideas and Pleasure from House and Garden, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p. 9].
Women had welcomed the Arts and Crafts movement, Anscombe argued, 'because it allowed them to be active, creative and professional'. Considerable debate has since ensued as to whether women's involvement in a movement which associated them firmly with the home was liberating or restrictive. Lynne Walker has contended that the Arts and Crafts movement 'provided women with alternative roles, institutions and structures which they then used as active agents in their own history'. The movement did open a number of new spaces for middle-class female involvement in the decorative arts, but without usurping gender-based categories. The nineteenth-century writer W. J. Loftie, for example, argued in 1876 that women should treat the decoration of the home as another amateur, genteel activity:

How many young ladies now spend their time making minute water-colour sketches while their father has to bring in a house-painter to "do up" a sitting-room. Yet there is no reason I can think of why a young lady should not paint and decorate a door as easily as she paints a view in the Highlands or a fisherman's family.

Anscombe designated Edith Wharton and Ogden Codman's *The Decoration of Houses* (1897) the 'first book on interior decoration', without explaining what she meant by this term. Why should not the myriad nineteenth-century decorating manuals, both middle-class and high-style, or eighteenth-century pattern books by

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16Anscombe, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Other writers have argued that Elsie de Wolfe represents 'the first decorator in the modern sense of the word' [Brown, *op. cit.* , p. 14].
George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton, for instance, qualify as books on interior decoration? The matter of trade is the significant issue. Nineteenth-century design reformers, notably John Ruskin and Charles Eastlake, attributed the 'deterioration' of taste in the Victorian home directly to the upholsterer or house-decorator, the tradesman who co-ordinated the outfitting of middle and upper-class homes in this period:

just as no man of taste would entrust the design of his house to a builder, so no one should allow an upholsterer to provide its internal appointments except under the advice of an architect.17

Rhoda and Agnes Garret provided the following useful description of the shift in perception of the late-nineteenth century decorator:

Until lately a house-decorator (to all except the extremely wealthy) has meant simply a man who hangs paper and knows mechanically how to paint wood... But a decorator should mean some one who can do more than this; he should be able to design and arrange all the internal fittings of a house, the chimney-pieces, grates, and door-heads, as well as the wall-hangings, curtains, carpets, and furniture.18

Their text also indicates the class focus of much of this attention, made possible by the burgeoning wealth of the British middle-classes in the second half of the nineteenth century; 'It is middle-class people specially who require the aid of a cultivated and yet not extravagant decorator who may help them to blend the fittings of their now incongruous rooms into a pleasant and harmonious habitation'.19

Characterising the upholsterer or house decorator as the uneducated product of commercialism, Eastlake and other design reformers paved the way for the interior decorator, whose primary concern was to market 'art' and taste and promote the new brand of 'designers'. The inclusion of 'art' in the title of William Morris' company (Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co., Fine Art Workmen in Painting, Carving, Furniture and the Metals; later Morris and Co., established 1861) promoted the concept of the 'artistic' home which dominated upper-middle class living for the rest of the century. Mrs Haweis argued that an understanding of fitness of purpose combined with a refined colour sense distinguished 'the born decorator from the mere purveyor of reigning fashions, the artist from the upholsterer'.20 Whereas many nineteenth-century decorating manuals were blatantly commercial, with advertisements or illustrations

18Garretts, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-6. Mrs Haweis, too, stressed the trade emphasis of the 'decorator': 'His province is to help you in that mechanical part which you cannot do yourself' [Haweis, *op. cit.*, p. 30].
keyed to particular firms, a text such as Wharton and Codman's *The Decoration of Houses* (1897) ignored practical considerations completely, concentrating instead on prescriptions based on neo-classical design in which architecture was primary. 21

Elsie de Wolfe's *The House in Good Taste* (1913) popularised the tenets of *The Decoration of Houses*, particularly its emphasis on eighteenth-century furnishings, by employing the first person to outline an individual's approach to interior design problems. 22 Its autobiographical nature parallels the self-promotion of the couturier in early twentieth-century culture, who also attempted to cast off trade associations and retailed instead a style or image associated with the artistic expression of an individual. The new decorator would be consulted as much for distinctive taste as the supply of products; the traditional upholsterer's association with trades such as house-painting and plumbing was generally avoided. As Stefan Muthesius notes regarding the Arts and Crafts practitioners of the late nineteenth-century; 'Theirs was now the claim to produce 'art'; the guarantee for this was primarily to centre all claims of quality, authenticity and rank around the person of the individual designer'. 23

The fashionable profile interior decoration acquired after World War I resulted in considerable commentary in women's magazines. Anscombe included some of these tantalising quotations, but did not analyse the manner in which this interest was articulated. 24 The novelty of the economically independent middle-class woman accounts for much of the fascination with the figure of the interior decorator. *Vogue* noted in 1921:

> Someone once said that a woman is either happily married or an Interior Decorator. Whether the rise of the Society decorator can be attributed to the present slump in married felicity, it is as certain that it is as fashionable now to be doing-up the house of one's acquaintances as it was to open a hat-shop in pre-war days. 25

Unmarried status resurfaced to structure the satire directed at the female decorator in a

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22 Elsie de Wolfe, *The House in Good Taste*, New York, The Century Co., 1913. The autobiographical focus of the work is strengthened by the inclusion of a glamorous signed photograph of de Wolfe as the frontispiece; many of the illustrations feature her own residences. The text was ghost-written by Ruby Ross Goodnow, later Wood [Esten and Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 4].
passage from Eleanor Gizycka’s romantic novel Glass Houses (1926), in which the
wealthy Judith describes the decoration of her new ballroom:

The hangings have just come and they’re all yards too short, and they’ve
got the wrong gray on the walls...silly fool women decorators...They
should be limited by law to sofa cushions and lamp shades...All lady
decorators...are recruited from the ranks of the great misunderstood. You
know what we say in America about them? Is she happily married or an
interior decorator?26

It is the therapeutic value of work outside the home which is satirised in L. J. Webb’s
(pseudonym of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney) Walking the Dusk (1932); of the poison-
suicide of Mabel Randolph a male character notes:

Usually in our crowd when a girl gets hard hit she either takes to
dissipation or else has a nervous breakdown and goes in for interior
decoration as an after-cure.27

A tension within the vocation of interior decoration between art and trade,
between working and middle-class status, also emerged in contemporary British
literature. Evelyn Waugh’s Vile Bodies (1930) included a debate in the servants’ hall
regarding the status of a group of young women:

"Nor they ain’t governesses either, nor clergy not strictly speaking; they’re
not entertainers..."I believe they’re decorators,” said Mrs. Blouse, “or else
charitable workers.”..."Decorators are either guests or workmen.”28

This passage illustrates the split which emerged between the ‘painter decorator’ and the
new nomenclature ‘interior decorator’, who could occupy a status more akin to an artist
than a tradesperson. Whereas large nineteenth-century London decorating firms such
as Waring and Gillow carried out the complete outfitting of houses including plumbing
and maintenance29, the modern interior decorator need provide only advice. There
remained the suspicion, however, that the trade associations had not diminished at all.
Describing interior decorator Sibyl Colefax, Virginia Woolf wrote in 1930:

no red on her nails, and merely lying in an armchair gossiping and telling
stories of this sale and that millionaire, from the professional working class
standard, as might be any woman behind a counter.30

26Eleanor Gizycka, Glass Houses, New York, Minton, Balch & Co., 1926, p. 249. The last line
cited may have been borrowed from an article published in British Vogue, 1921 [Anscombe, op. cit.,
pp. 75-6].
27L. J. Webb [pseudonym of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney], Walking the Dusk, New York, Coward-
McCann, 1932, p. 33.
29Calloway, op. cit., p. 27.
30V. Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 14 November 1930, in Nicolson, op. cit., p. 255.
Woolf described Colefax as a 'house decorator' and her disdain appears to have been provoked by both the association with trade - 'Sibyl has transformed herself into a harried, downright woman of business...a hardhearted shopkeeper' - and the suggestion that manual labour was involved - 'now, literally, at work, in sinks, behind desks, running her finger along wainscots and whipping out yard measures from 9.30 to 7'. Her description is an important counter to the image of artistry and genteel advice retailed by decorators, many of whom were probably more involved with mundane outfitting than their image-making suggests.

Long-term Companion: Homosociality and the Interior Decorator

The issue of female decorators' sexuality has been consistently suppressed in most design literature. Yet information gleaned from biographies indicates that a number of the women prominent in the field of inter-war decoration - the decorator Elsie de Wolfe, the florist Constance Spry, painter and frame-designer Gluck (Hannah Gluckstein), furniture historian and advisor Margaret Jourdain, designer-architect Eileen Gray and designer-couple Eyre de Lanux and Evelyn Wyld - pursued same-sex relationships. Elsie de Wolfe and companion of approximately forty years Bessie Marbury have been described as 'perhaps one of the first accepted female couples in New York society'. The first individual to describe herself as an interior decorator in Australia, Sydney woman Margaret Jaye (trading from 1925), had a female companion of approximately forty years Bessie Marbury has been described as 'perhaps one of the first accepted female couples in New York society'.

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31 Ibid., p. 254
32 V. Woolf to Vanessa Bell, 2 November 1930, in ibid., pp. 243-4.
33 V. Woolf to Ethel Smyth, 14 November 1930, in ibid., p. 254.
35 Gluck and Spry formed a relationship between 1932-36 and shared many of the same clients, the former for her paintings, the latter for her floral arrangements. See Diana Souhami, Gluck 1895-1978. Her Biography, London, Pandora, 1988, pp. 87-101.
36 Margaret Jourdain was the companion of novelist Ivy Compton-Burnett from 1919 to 1951. Jourdain published dozens of articles in Connoisseur, Queen and Country Life, and books including History of English Secular Embroidery (1910), Regency Furniture 1795-1820 (1934) and The Work of William Kent (1948). She advised dealers, collectors and the establishment decorating firm of Lenyon and Morant (from 1911) and knew the decorators Herman Schrijver and Derek Patmore and the architect Basil Ionides. Her mission was to promote the eighteenth-century revival and rail against Victorian decoration. See Hilary Spurling, Ivy when Young. The early life of I. Compton-Burnett 1884-1919, London, Victor Gollancz, 1974, pp. 259-263 and Secrets of a Woman's Heart. The Later Life of Ivy Compton-Burnett 1920-1969, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1984, pp. 60-1, 66-9, 89.
38 Evelyn Wyld supervised the production of Gray's rugs, later designing her own [ibid., p. 181]. She formed a relationship and established a shop with Eyre de Lanux (Elizabeth de Lanux, American painter and furniture-designer) c1924 [ibid., pp. 181-2].
39 Pauline C. Metcalf, 'From Lincoln to Leopolda', in Metcalf, op. cit., p. 20.
To deploy these facts it is not necessary to 'prove' lesbian status for these women; as Robert Aldrich notes, the term 'homosocial' is a more useful term to describe places, relations and situations 'which have indications of particularly close links, often exclusively so, between either men or women'. The term homosocial also usefully emphasises the social rather than the sexual, without excluding the latter. Thus it becomes irrelevant to 'prove' that a particular subject was lesbian or gay; 'traces of sexual activity need not be proved before the subject can be explored'. This is not to suggest that decorator's schemes can be explained in terms of sexuality; rather, the profession may have been instrumental in providing single women who did not choose marriage with both independence and respectability. The satirical suggestion in Gizycka's *Glass Houses*, that a woman is either 'happily married or an interior decorator', takes on a different complexion in this context. If the matter of sexuality is ignored, then the social networks in which women moved, the possible source of commissions and alliances, are also obscured. Eileen Gray, for example, mixed in Paris circles which included Romaine Brooks, Gabrielle Bloch and her lover Loïe Fuller, the singer Damia and Natalie Barney. Although Gray's biographer is coy regarding the designer's sexuality, the patronage of her lesbian associates undoubtedly assisted her venture, with Gaby Bloch taking charge of the business matters.

Although most female decorators shared middle or upper-middle class status, their preferred decorating styles were not heterogeneous. Elsie de Wolfe employed late-eighteenth-century French furnishings or streamlined painted variants combined with simple wall treatments and plate-glass mirrors. Margaret Jourdain dealt exclusively in a fantasy recreation of the Georgian past. Gluck in her paintings and frame-design and Constance Spry in her floral arrangements promoted the bleached neo-classical 1930s aesthetic, whilst Gray's practice represents the purist modern end

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40 Author's interview with Bruce Arnott, Sydney, 22 April 1992.
42 *ibid*.
43 Gizycka, *op. cit.* , p. 249.
45 Romaine Brooks purchased Gray-designed rugs; Damia owned several pieces of lacquered furniture [*ibid.* , p. 110, 115]. The Duchesse de Clermont-Tonnerre wrote a positive review of Gray's furniture for the *Feuillets d'Art* in 1922 [*ibid.* , p. 129].
46 *ibid.* , p. 120.
of the spectrum. The store Gray opened under the ambiguous title *Jean Désert* in Paris in 1922 retailed high-style art-deco furnishings, notably lacquer, until the early-1920s, then the more pristine metal, chrome and glass furnishings of her own design which attracted international recognition.

These seemingly disparate approaches to interior decoration were firmly united in a vociferous rejection of the Victorian past. The dark, cluttered, upholstered interior was anathema, to be replaced with pale, washable paint finishes, simples draperies, lighter and fewer furnishings. Alison Light's analysis of the construction of Britishness in the inter-war novel highlights women's rejection of the values of their mother's generation in this period, of 'not wanting to be like mother, whose image was always one of confinement'. Representations of the domestic interior played a role in effecting this shift. The deployment of eighteenth-century antique or reproduction furniture, the genteel modernism which merged the old and the new in an uncluttered environment, or more radical modernist solutions to architecture and design, all created 'spaces which felt physically and psychologically free of the past'.

**Gendered by Design**

The inter-war period witnessed a realignment of gendered labour within consumer capitalism. Increasing numbers of women were employed in low-wage positions in office, shop and factory work, including glass, chemicals, and the manufacture of food and drink. Just as the development of a specifically female identification with fashion permitted large numbers of women to also work in service industries as hairdressers, outfitters and beauticians after World War I (unlike earlier periods, when men dominated many of these roles), so the gendered charge of 'home' sanctioned interior decoration as a career for women. The close connection between decorating and the home, which had been promoted as a feminine past-time for middle-class women since the last quarter of the nineteenth century, sanitised women's involvement in business and the public sphere. The high profile and relatively large number of female-owned decorating businesses or establishments backed by wealthy women sets them apart from most other consumer sectors, which were dominated by

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49 ibid., p. 35.
masculine interests. Despite a tendency by writers to trivialise Elsie de Wolfe as a frivolous actress turned decorator, whose 'vulgarly cozy chattiness' suited clients' tastes, de Wolfe had been involved with the pre-war suffrage movement, and described her business activity as a model for other women. It has been claimed that she represents the first businesswoman 'that any man would have sat and talked to in the million-dollar range'.

It is significant that this claim is made for an interior decorator, an occupation frequently associated with the frivolous or amateur. The obverse, of course, is that any man undertaking similar work was liable to be considered effete. The flapper's counterpart, the effeminate male, was the subject of derision in the 1920s British press. The development of the stereotype of the gay-male decorator warrants further investigation for the light it would cast on this process of gendering. As social changes recast an occupation whose outcomes had previously been the domain of trades and businessmen it was feminised, to become an unmanly activity.

The significance of de Wolfe's use of the first person and the autobiographical format adopted by many decorators when publishing has encouraged a reading of decorator's work as amateur, as an extension of the self, in distinction to the 'trained' professional such as the architect. Such distinctions may be valid, but they are rarely stated, as in Richard Guy Wilson's comment, 'Decorating in Elsie's hands becomes

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52 The American Nancy Lancaster, for example, purchased Colefax & Co. and financed John Fowler in the inter-war period. Regarding the overwhelming 'masculinity of retail owners, managers and publicists' in twentieth-century culture see Reekie, op. cit., p. xii.


54 Despite the problems of retrospective musings, de Wolfe's autobiography describes her commitment to feminism, marching for suffrage in 1912; 'I was in business...I realised how women were handicapped by the many discriminations against them in the matter of pay and promotion and the kind of work they were permitted to do' [de Wolfe, After All, op. cit., p. 140]. Rhoda and Agnes Garrett, authors of Suggestions on House Decorating, op. cit., were also feminists, campaigning for women's rights and the opportunity to practice architecture [Lynne Walker, Women Architects', in Attfield and Kirkham (eds.), op. cit., p. 98].

55 Diana Vreeland, preface to Smith, op. cit., p. xii.


57 References to gay male decorators are scanty compared to the discussion of women's sexuality. Spurling notes several of Margaret Jourdain's colleagues were homosexual [Spurling, Secrets, op. cit., pp. 31-6]. Ogden Codman Jr. is said to have had 'homosexual proclivities' [Metcalf, op. cit., p. 21]. The contemporary American decorating press continues to speak coyly of male companions. For a note regarding the impact of gay-male designers on Australian post-war life see James Waites, 'Gay Crossover', Independent Monthly, December 1991-January 1992, pp. 18-22.

58 A parallel process transformed the window-dressing trade, which in Australia was an exclusively male profession until the 1930s [Reekie, op. cit., p. 91]. The stereotype of the gay male window-dresser is today as culturally resonant as that of hairdressing or decorating.

59 In the context of her biography of rival decorator Eleanor McMillen, Brown claimed de Wolfe 'was not a creative force'. Brown, op. cit., p. 14.
fashion design; architecture is not the controlling element. The tension between the architect and the decorator, between the trained and the untrained, indicates hierarchies operating within the notion of 'decorator'. Not only women wrote personalised accounts. The British decorators Duncan Miller and Derek Patmore published accounts of solutions to their decorating problems which were frequently reprinted in the 1930s. These texts were designed for a popular audience and they do not position themselves as treatises. It is the nature of the first person that although seductive, it carries less authority than the 'objective' text. The more serious guides to interior decoration avoided the personalised format, disguising private tastes as a canon of good design. At least one was written by women, Ruby Ross Goodnow and Rayne Adams, whose *The Honest House* (1914) promoted the British rural vernacular and American colonial in arts and crafts terms, upholding the dicta of William Morris.

None seems to carry the weight of the American Frank Alvah Parsons' *Interior Decoration. Its Principles and Practice* (1915), a much quoted text which positioned itself as the antithesis of de Wolfe's *The House in Good Taste*, published two years previously. Parson's speaking position was masculine: 'The house is but the externalized man; himself expressed in colour, form, line and texture...It is he.' His arguments utilised arts and crafts ideas of suitability and appropriate ornament, but rather than featuring oak trestles, Parsons lauded eighteenth-century commodes. Not only was *Interior Decoration* written from the perspective of art and architectural history, placing precepts of decorating within a canon of taste, it came from the pen of an individual determined to professionalise decorating. Parsons was instrumental in forming the programme of the Department of Interior Architecture and Decoration at the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts (later renamed the Parsons School of Design), founded in 1896 by William Merritt Chase to teach painting, which by 1904 offered courses in interior decoration. The 1913 prospectus claimed 'Interior

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61A Sydney woman who worked with local decorator Marion Hall Best in the late 1930s said of herself disparagingly, 'I didn't have the training' (her emphasis). Author's interview with Isobel Craig, Elizabeth Bay, 22 April 1992.
63Ruby Ross Goodnow and Rayne Adams, *The Honest House. Presenting examples of the usual problems which face the home-builder together with an exposition of the simple architectural principles which underlie them: arranged especially in reference to small house design*, New York, Century Co., 1914.
65Esten and Gilbert, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
decoration'... like architecture, has reached the dignity of a profession'; students drew elevations, learned the history of art and studied constructive and decorative architecture.66

The distinction between the trained and untrained decorator is one which is frequently used to distinguish between individuals in decorating literature. Erica Brown argues for Eleanor McMillen Brown a status as the first 'professional' decorator, as she received formal training from the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts.67 McMillen Brown is claimed to have said:

I thought if I was going to do it at all, I'd better do it professionally. That's why it's McMillen Inc. and not Eleanor McMillen. I wasn't one of the 'ladies'.68

America professionalised the occupation early, allowing it to join the range of new 'expert' vocations connected with domestic life, ranging from dietary to sexual matters.69 The American Institute of Interior Decorators (later the American Society of Interior Designers) was founded in 1931, twenty years before its Australian equivalent.70 Although the model of the home expert emerged in the guise of the domestic science movement in countries such as Australia from the 1890s, professionalised training for decorators was a matter of conjecture in most countries in the 1920s and '30s. In Australia the alleged links to 'art' would provide the most compelling means of marking oneself off from 'trade' in lieu of formal training.

The Feminising of Private Space

The association of women with private space and domesticity is not simply reflected in the practice of interior decoration but actively produced by it. The elision of fashionable dress and interior decoration, with fabricating both personal appearance and the home, naturalised stereotypes of women's natures and women's work. Whereas the outfitting of houses in earlier periods was considered a normal and suitable interest for gentlemen, by the last quarter of the nineteenth century decorating was gendered feminine and closely linked with consumerism and rapid fashion changes.71 This cliché is easily exposed historically by considering the attention men have paid to the

66ibid. , pp. 5-6.
67Brown, op. cit. , p. 15.
68ibid.
71Forty, op. cit. , p. 105.
outfitting and decoration of their homes, particularly in the eighteenth century when upholstery and case furniture represented a significant investment for the aristocracy which signified both the taste and status of the family.72

Fashion change for high-style interiors became rapid in the eighteenth century, accelerating by the second half of the nineteenth century such that interior decoration was increasingly allied to the notion of regular change, like shifts in women's fashionable dress. By the twentieth century this notion of regular change had become in some cases seasonal, and interior decoration was frequently compared to the work of the couturier. Decorating ensembles were described in precisely the same terms as dress. The magazine *Leisure* stated:

> The vogue in furniture changes almost as suddenly as fashion. Last season white and navy blue was the chic modern scheme. This season it is to be olive green and white - very lovely and unusual... when the familiar feminine urge to change our colour scheme overtakes us the furniture will still be right.73

This conjunction was particularly marked in the modern media, where interior decoration was as important in defining individuals as their dress. The creation of Hollywood reputations revolved not only around personal appearance, but the design of stars' homes, which became a regular feature of both mass and élite periodicals. A parallel between women and fashionable change circulates as a type of common sense in publications of the period, and modern interior-design was often justified in terms of women's updated appearance:

Consciously or unconsciously, women of today are living monuments of the art of Picasso, Matisse, Augustus John, or Dufy, or Marie Laurencin, with their hair inspired from pruna [sic] and their make-up derived from Van Dongen. It is inevitable that these living symbols of modern art should look incongruous in surroundings of an unlived past.74

In a positive article regarding modern Australian interior design, Sydney's *Home Magazine* stated: 'The chief enthusiasts have been women. Bowing to each seasonal demand of fashion, their lives are largely made up of changing their minds'.75 Cecil Beaton's *The Glass of Fashion* (1954) captured precisely the conjunction of decorating

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74Isabel Ramsay, 'An Australian Woman and her Modern Paris Flat', *Home*, 1 May 1930, p. 36. 'To us of to-day the undecorated slightly geometric furniture which we see in every modern flat... is modern because it fits exactly with the life of to-day and the clothes of to-day' ['Discoveries in Chic', British *Vogue*, 20 March 1929, p. 72].
75'The Case for Modernity', *Home*, 1 November 1929, p. 54.
one's self and one's domestic setting, and the concurrence between the couturier and
the decorator in inter-war society.76 Beaton's photograph (c1930) of his sister Nancy
posed in London decorator Syrie Maugham's drawing room positions both the interior
and the woman as equally alluring ensembles (plate 7). A correlation was indeed made
in the 1930s between the expanses of mirror glass and silvered surfaces fashionable for
high-style interiors and the reflective lamé and satin evening wear used to encase
women's bodies.77 More than merely connecting women with fashion, the concept of
the house itself is sexualised. As Adrian Forty notes, it functions as a metaphor for the
female body; 'among its effects is the supposition that a woman is under an obligation
to care for her house as she cares for her body'.78

Female reformers within the Arts and Crafts movement played their role in
structuring these gendered assumptions. The American Christian newspaper The
Outlook published in 1895 an endorsement in two parts by Candace Wheeler of
women's right to professional status as decorator, argued from a fixed view of
woman's nature.79 Wheeler has been described as 'one of the most influential women
of the American Aesthetic movement', advocating financial independence for all
women.80 In 1877 she had established the Society of Decorative Art of New York
City and in 1879 worked with L.C. Tiffany in the firm of Associated Artists. In 1893
she was appointed 'color director' (i.e. interior decorator) for the Women's Building at
the Chicago World's Columbian Exhibition.81 Wheeler wrote from a position of
considerable authority, and with the reformist mission of equipping women for suitable
work. She argued that women should be trained in some capacity 'in addition to the
natural capacity which every woman possesses for family direction and family life'.82
Her articles distinguished between interior decoration and interior arrangement,
claiming the latter was open to anyone; 'I am speaking now of real excellence, of
decoration as an art'.83 She proceeded to introduce the model of intellectual man,
reactive and emotional woman:

A mail-order catalogue noted, 'Again dress fashions have entered the curtain realm'. David Jones' Mail
77'The mode for shining surfaces has spread from our clothes to our furnishings: here are some ideas
for using mirror and glass with brilliant effect'. 'Shining ideas', British Vogue, 7 February 1934, p.
60.
78Forty, op. cit., p. 104.
79Candace Wheeler, 'Interior Decoration As a Profession for Women', The Outlook. A Family Paper
[later The Christian Union], part I, 6 April 1895, pp. 559-60; part II, 20 April 1895, p. 649.
80C. H.Voorsanger, 'Candace Wheeler', in Burke et al., op. cit., p. 481.
81ibid., p. 482.
82Wheeler, 20 April 1895, op. cit., p. 649.
83Wheeler, 6 April 1895, op. cit., p. 559.
the man decorator, if he is not a mere man of trade... will follow the purpose of the architect more understandingly... than the woman... he has less enthusiasm for objects... This latter fact, which should result in an immense advantage to the woman, is an absolute disadvantage until she has learned to generalize and not to particularize; and practical generalization comes from knowledge and training - from power to subordinate things to effects.84

Women were held to have an advantage due to 'the apparently instinctive knowledge which women have of textiles, and which men have not', reiterating the model of women's work as innate and intuitive.85 Wheeler demanded the professional training of women as interior decorators, so that they might enjoy knowledge 'founded upon principles instead of small facts and experiments'.86 Her articles concluded with a demand for college courses in the field:

Decoration is becoming more and more an important part of architecture, and women have already claimed it as a feminine field...if women are to share the thorough training of men in any direction, those things which lie more naturally within their usual and essentially feminine experiences should not be overlooked.87

The opposition of female intuition to male rationality became a constant in a wide range of sources concerned with both the practice of decorating and the broader cultural connotations of the adjective 'decorative'. In a 1929 Vogue article justifying modern art which appears 'purely decorative in kind', male genius was defined in opposition to female practices:

Purely decorative arrangements can be achieved by any woman of taste in the disposition of flowers in a bowl, in the choice of colours in her boudoir, in the nice adjustment of a jewelled buckle. But for an artist like Picasso such processes of arrangement are without significance unless they symbolise relations of universal form.88

Similarly, Elsie de Wolfe's The House in Good Taste spent considerable time justifying the role of women in decoration:

We take it for granted that every woman is interested in houses - that she either has a house in course of construction, or dreams of having one...It is the personality of the mistress that the home expresses. Men are forever

84ibid. , p. 559.
85ibid.
86ibid. , p. 560.
87Wheeler, 20 April 1895, op. cit.
88'Picasso as Decorator', British Vogue, 17 April 1929, p. 41.
guests in our homes, no matter how much happiness they may find there.

She described her role as decorator as a type of displacement; 'For the time-being I really am the chatelaine of the house.' The effective use of colour was characterised as innate; 'Love of color is an emotional matter.' Unlike Parsons, there is no reason in de Wolfe's version of decorating.

The Decorator and Consumer Culture

Despite the sneering at trade and the claims to 'art' made by interior decorators working in different styles, their activity was very much part of twentieth-century consumer culture. Constant appearances in fashion magazines, the publication of decorating manuals and memoirs, and public-speaking engagements consolidated the reputations of decorators. Commercial contracts, which previously might have been handled by architects, provided a new source of income. Elsie de Wolfe, once again, occupies the legendary status of securing the first significant contracts when she decorated New York's Colony Club in 1905, and the Frick mansion in 1916. As marketing became increasingly sophisticated, the department store, with specialised sections and individualised attention to maintain the impression of personal service, was swift to capitalise on the new fad for professional decorators. Two strands emerged, the first retailing exclusive advice, represented by the boutique within the store, the second offering roaming staff who assisted or cajoled customers into making purchases. An example of the latter, Barker Brothers' furniture store in Los Angeles, featured by the early 1930s a model house and the free services of their 'decorator-salespeople'. Criticising this department store ethos became another way of marking one's distance from mass taste; Katherine Muselwhite's *The Principles and Practice of Interior Decoration* (1937) advised, 'you must not take the word of any salesman, unless you go into a very high-class shop, such as interior decorators'.

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90 ibid., p. 17.
91 ibid., p. 71.
92 Anscombe, op. cit., p. 70.
93 New York Wanamaker's *Au Quatrième*, offering antiques and home decorating, opened in 1913 and was directed firstly by Nancy Vincent McClelland, from 1918 by Ruby Ross Goodnow (later Ross Wood) [C. R. Smith, op. cit., p. 56].
94 *Modern Homes, Barker Brothers* [pamphlet], Los Angeles, n.d. [1920s-30s], SLNSW.
The idea that interior decoration was a natural task for women was reinforced by the assumption that the modern consumer was female.\textsuperscript{96} Sales-technique manuals by the 1910s organised shoppers in gendered and sexualised categories which included the 'calmly-indifferent, over-careful, grumpy, overbearing, argumentative, frigid, procrastinating, prejudiced, logical or emotional types'.\textsuperscript{97} The new brand of 'housewife' was targeted as a purchasing manager and most advertising for electrical servants and other household furnishings was directed at 'the lady of the house'. Women were held by a 1930s furnishing-sales guide to be inherently tasteful, with an 'innate love of beauty'.\textsuperscript{98} A 1920s British photograph indicates how the consuming fashion-driven woman and her opposite, the long-suffering male, was naturalised as an axis of gender (plate 8). She is the defiant modern flapper-consumer, her husband the emasculated lackey which the press had warned about in the wake of World War I.\textsuperscript{99} Alison Light notes that the cultural association of spending, 'with its momentary gift of autonomy and power, has a long history as a sexual metaphor', adding another gendered charge to the matrix.\textsuperscript{100}

This 'power' women exercised as consumers functioned ambiguously. The middle-class female recurs ubiquitously in advertisements and illustration as both subject and object; as Gronberg notes, she is 'simultaneously consumer and object of display'. \textsuperscript{101} This ambiguity is signalled in a sentence from Patmore's \textit{Colour Schemes for the Modern Home} (1933): 'The correct colour scheme in a room is as important as the clothes its owner wears.'\textsuperscript{102} Does the woman determine the room, or the room the woman? The May 1934 cover of Sydney's \textit{Home} magazine is paradigmatic; an attractive model, swathed in a grey-blue dress decorated with abstracted tree forms, leans languidly on a ziggurat-like white-lacquered cabinet (designed by the artist Hera Roberts); the latter is surmounted by a vivid floral arrangement in geometrically-patterned vase, all arrayed against an abstract beige and

\textsuperscript{96}Marchand remarks that, 'Scarcely anyone estimated women as comprising less than eighty per-cent of the consumer audience'. A contemporary advertisement noted, 'the proper study of mankind is man... but the proper study of markets is woman' [Roland Marchand, \textit{Advertising the American Dream. Making Way for Modernity, 1920-1940}, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, p. 66].

\textsuperscript{97}Reekie, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 53.


\textsuperscript{99}Melman, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 19-20.

\textsuperscript{100}Light suggests that the crush of female shoppers itself held an erotic appeal for women: 'Perhaps the culture of 'the sales' at big department stores and the frantic crushes which such shopping involved, provided a female equivalent to the homo-erotic pleasures of the football match?' Light, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 250.

\textsuperscript{101}Tag Gronberg, 'Décoration: Modernism's 'Other', \textit{Art History}, vol. 15, no. 4, December 1992, p. 550.

coffee-coloured hanging (plate 9). The woman is but one element in a discreetly modern ensemble, arranged for the delectation of the viewer.

Interior decoration in the early twentieth century was presented as both a suitable and lucrative profession for women; its connection with the home ensured respectability and it was argued that women held a natural advantage in the domestic sphere. To suggest, however, that decorating provided the New Woman with another useful job opportunity is to present half the story: to promote a role on the basis of women's natures restricted rather than added to the spaces of female activity. The model of sensual, intuitive, colour-hungry femininity became the Other of the rational male, who in contrast was concerned with the pursuit of universal truth. The discourse of decorating did not merely reflect artistic hierarchies, but produced the parallel denigration of women and applied art, feeding into each other at every turn. Decorating could be kept down by the association with the feminine, the feminine was denigrated through association with a less professional and supposedly intuitive activity. The hierarchies of art and design were not only informed by feminine stereotypes, but implicated in the production of a discourse of gender. They reproduced the associations of femininity with decoration, surface, artifice and intuition, the Otherness of male rationality.
Chapter 3

*The Sydney Interior Decorator, c1920-1940*

In the 1920s interior decoration was a new profession in Britain and America, with women prominent amongst its practitioners. The rise of this vocation signalled dissatisfaction with the products and services of trade outlets, upholsterers and furniture dealers. The new decorator would be consulted as much for distinctive taste as for the supply of products; there was an emphasis upon the taste and image of an individual. The profession was reviewed enthusiastically in the Australian press as a suitable and lucrative job for women; its connection with the home ensured respectability and it was argued that women held a natural advantage in the domestic sphere.

The particular circumstances of the reception of modernism in Australia in the early-twentieth century provide a particularly sharp image of the process by which decorating was gendered feminine. When modernism was imported into Australia it was resignified 'feminine', associated with the spaces of urban life and defined in opposition to the male pastoral ethos which monopolised establishment painting. The key signifier of modernism in this country - bold colour - was thoroughly gendered, aligned with the feminine sphere, sensual and intuitive. The links between modernist painting and modern design - dress, advertising, decorative arts - were seized upon by conservatives to equate modernist practice with fashion and folly, supposedly feminine attributes. The manipulation of colour was in turn conflated with women's natures and desire for self-adornment, an extension of women's necessity to colour blend their costumes and complexions. These connections involve more than arguments regarding the relative status of high or low art. The gendering of spaces and practices produced the image of the 'New Woman', who might work in selected spheres defined as feminine and intuitive.

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1For a reading of Australian art in which the heroic landscape tradition is revealed as a masculinist discourse, defined in opposition to the modernist painting of women such as Margaret Preston and Grace Cossington Smith, see Jeanette Hoorn, 'Misogyny and Modernist Painting in Australia: How Male Critics made Modernism their Own', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 32, March 1992, pp. 7-17; David Walker, 'Introduction: Australian Modern: Modernism and its Enemies 1900-1940', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 32, March 1992, pp. 1-6. I am also grateful to Jill Bennett for her comments regarding gender and modernism.
Art and Trade: Interior Decoration in Sydney

The majority of middle-class Sydney consumers in the inter-war period furnished their homes from the stocks of department stores and furnishing warehouses such as Bebarfald's or the more expensive Beard Watson's and Anthony Horderns'. The latter two marketed a wide range of furniture including genuine antiques, at a time when there were few such dealers. The department store David Jones', although not always carrying furniture, was particularly well-stocked with the latest furnishing textiles, priding itself on importing novel wares from Europe. As well as wide choice, department-store shopping offered an element of fantasy; the Grace Brothers' furniture-floor featured by 1930 period styles arrayed in the midst of brightly-patterned columns and a deco-style coloured fountain (plate 10). Retailers were swift to capitalise on the marketing appeal of 'expert' decorators, and began to advertise these services to shoppers. The Furniture retailer Marcus Clark & Co., Sydney, published an illustrated guide to decorating the middle-class home in the 1920s; Bebarfald's offered a Home Planning Bureau in 1927; Myer's, Melbourne, established one by 1929. With furnishing styles and colour schemes changing rapidly under the aegis of modernism, the bewildered consumer probably needed a higher level of individual attention and assurance than in earlier periods.

The independent interior decorators offered a novel service in the 1920s and 1930s. Their clientele, drawn from the ranks of wealthier, style-conscious customers, especially those who moved in artistic circles, was relatively small, but images of the homes designed by these decorators appeared in both up-market magazines and the daily newspapers. In a sneering description, Lionel Lindsay argued:

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2See 'Modern interiors need modern fabrics' [Warner's fabrics], SMH Women's Supplement, 9 August 1934; 'Modern Furnishing Fabrics', Sunday Sun, 12 September 1937, both DJA. The latter refers to fabrics selected by The Studio, London; 'As it is Sydney will see them on display at the same time as London'.

3Home, 1 October 1930, p. 23. For an illustration of the Horderns' showroom, which extended the length of a city block, see Hordernian Monthly, Bridge Commemoration Number, Containing the History of Anthony Hordern and Sons, Limited, from 1823 to 1932 by T.J. Redmond, 1932, p. 63.


5Wright notes that the American 'color craze of the 1920s assumed that only a trained decorator could balance the lively mixtures of bright colors through which families expressed themselves' [Gwendolyn Wright, Building the Dream. A Social History of Housing in America, New York, Pantheon, 1981, p. 208].
The psychology of salesmanship, which engaged the United States in mortgaging its future, foundered in the Depression, and a more subtle type has arisen in the shape of the advisor on decoration. As a trade move it is, of course, very clever...It is the business of the great stores to provide fine materials, admirable workmanship, furniture of quality...but the source must not be tainted through the act of selling...The decorator as such - and the bird is a rare one - must have instinctive taste and be a free agent.6

Artists were central to a redefinition of Australian interior decoration, as their involvement in promoting modern design was a subject featured in both Art in Australia and Home magazine, which consistently promoted the younger generation of Sydney artists. Thea Proctor, Hera Roberts, Adrian Feint and Roy de Maistre moved easily between roles as fine artist, illustrator, decorator and furniture-designer in the inter-war period. Consideration of the Australian decorator can be extended beyond well-known artists, whose careers are readily accessible, to those without high-art pretensions, who were more closely linked to an image of trade. Female entrepreneurs including Yolande Proctor, Margaret Jaye and Molly Grey also promoted the modern interior in articles, exhibitions and business. Consideration of their role provides a broader and more accurate picture of the connections between modernism, decorating and gender in inter-war Australia.

The Interior Decorator and Evidence

Although several Australian novels by Martin Boyd include reference to the late-nineteenth century artistic home, there are few literary references which describe the new brand of Australian decorator in the inter-war period.7 George Johnston's My Brother Jack includes an evocative description of an amateur's decorating scheme in 'Beverley Grove' which incorporates elements of the brand of middle-class modernism popular in the 1930s-40s - 'severely modern pale-wood furniture', folk-weave fabrics, Van Gogh prints - but this was published much later, in 1964.8 More useful to the study of the Australian decorator are women's periodicals including Home and Australian Home Beautiful, newspaper columns and the art journal Art in Australia. Oral history is useful for uncovering details regarding individual's practice which are not apparent in contemporary sources, but it should be noted that this approach is often weighted in favour of those individuals who left heirs or employed many assistants.

6Lionel Lindsay, 'Rembrandt v. Kalsomine', Art in Australia, 15 May 1936, p. 56.
7Tony Duff, a character of Boyd's Lucinda Brayford, is an interior decorator. I am grateful to Patricia Dobrez for making me aware of this. See Patricia Dobrez, 'Martin Boyd's Aestheticism: a Late Victorian Legacy', Australasian Victorian Studies Association, Brisbane Conference Papers, August, 1978, pp. 29-39.
Few decorating manuals were published in Australia until the 1940s. Margaret Lord's *A Decorator's World* (1969) provides an autobiography of an Australian decorator in the post-WW II period, and Marion Hall Best's autobiography exists in typescript. Both are valuable documents not so much for the facts they reveal, which can generally be gleaned elsewhere, but more for revealing self-image and the novelty of this profession in Australia.

A problem regarding the nomenclature 'interior decorator' summarises the tension between art and trade which structured the profession. No entries appear for the category of 'interior decorator' in the professional listings of Sydney trade directories in the period 1920-1940, although individuals described themselves as such in the street listings. The nineteenth-century conjunction of decorating with manual trade is evident in Sand's directories for this period, with lists of 'Decorators' cross-referenced to 'Painters, decorators, etc.', and in turn to 'Oil and Colormen, Oil and Paint Manufacturers'. The more elevated categories of 'Art Decorators' and 'Art Furnishers' included firms established in the late-nineteenth century such as Althouse & Geiger and Lyon, Cottier & Co., which were also listed in the artisanal categories. Although the use of the adjectives 'art' and 'artistic' was linked to the aesthetic movement and not used to describe modern interiors in smart magazines such as *Vogue*.

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9 A graduate of the New York School of Fine and Applied Arts, and Principal of the Sydney Interior Decoration Studio, Miss McDougall wrote *Interior Decoration for Australians*. A discussion course of eleven chapters, for the Australian Army Education Service, sometime in the 1940s. Advocating modern design, the text notes; 'Servicewomen to whom Miss McDougall lectured on interior decoration showed such keen interest that this booklet was prepared to carry the information to a wider public' [Miss McDougall, *Interior Decoration for Australians*. A discussion course of eleven chapters, Australian Army Education Service, n.d., [1947], p. 1]. Also published in this period was *Interior Decoration for Salespeople*. Produced by the Retail Training Institute of NSW it explained the characteristics of modern furniture, advocating built-ins and noting 'the fashion of using period furniture in homes of the modern era is steadily losing favour' [---*Interior Decoration for Salespeople*, Sydney, The Retail Traders' Training Institute of NSW Ltd, n.d. [1940s?], p. 37]. Another result of war-time education programmes was Margaret Lord, *Interior Decoration. A Guide to Furnishing the Australian Home*, Sydney, Ure Smith, 1944.


11 All sorts of variants were possible on this term. The high-style British magazine *Leisure* described decorator Julie Jacob as an 'interior decorative artist and modern furniture designer' [Round the Mayfair Market*, Leisure. The Quality Magazine for Women, 24 March 1936, p. 26].


13 *Sand's, op. cit.*, p. 1952. Lyon, Cottier & Co. were established in 1873 by the Briton John Lyon with the reputation of 'artistic' decorators, having links to British arts and crafts figures including B.J. Talbert.
or *Home* in the 1930s, it persisted in Australian trade names as late as 1937.\(^{14}\) This indicates the conservatism which may have precluded such guides from introducing categories such as 'interior decorator', in regular use in magazines and newspapers of the period.

*Wise's Post Office Directory* indicates the longevity of traditional trade associations in a different manner, in the employment of the nineteenth-century concept of the upholsterer. Their 1920 directory added the category of 'Furnishing Drapery Mnfrs.' [sic] to 'Furniture Brokers [sic], Ware-housemen & Dealers', 'Furniture Importers' and 'Furniture Manufacturers'.\(^{15}\) This indicated the continuing association of the supplier of textiles and drapery with the co-ordination of the decoration of the home. Sydney decorator Margaret Jaye is listed in this trade category from 1935.\(^{16}\) The decorator Stuart Low is first listed in the category of Broker and Dealer in 1930.\(^{17}\) The decorator Deric Deane (who also worked as an architect under the name Frederick Deane) appears for the first time in trade listings in 1933 at 35 Rowe Street, an address which like the 'Queen Street, Woollahra' of the post-WW II period, included a number of decorators including Margaret Jaye.\(^{18}\) The term interior-designer is even less common, replacing the old 'decorator' only in the 1950s, when an image of educated professionalism, bolstered by education programmes and societies, was promoted.\(^{19}\)

Material relating to the decoration of the home was written by a number of Australians who were not professional 'decorators', including artists, architects, columnists and tastemakers. Nineteenth-century aestheticism and the Arts and Crafts movement in Australia generated considerable periodical literature relating to the home, most of which appears to have been addressed to women. The *Illustrated Sydney News* included a regular column in the 1880s which described how the home might be crafted according to artistic precepts, with the use of props including Doulton and Bretby ceramics, and asymmetrical Liberty draperies.\(^{20}\)

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15 *Wise's, op. cit.*, 1920, p. 2037.
17 *Ibid.*, 1930, p. 2863. Low's business was at 363 New South Head Road [1930]; 435 New South Head Road, Double Bay [1931, p. 1043]; 107 Elizabeth Street [from 1932, p. 1046].
18 *Ibid.*, 1933, p. 1019. I wish to thank Catriona Quinn for pointing out the twin roles of Deane.
19 In Australia the professionalisation of the activity is marked by the establishment in 1951 of the Society of Interior Designers. See Lord, 1969, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Hall Best, *op. cit.*
for goods ranging from dress to pottery. 'Artistic' ideas were translated into more permanent form in Mrs. F. B. Aronson's *XXth Century Cooking and Home Decoration* (Sydney, 1900). Addressed to the middle class woman, the text is concerned mainly with recipes and household hints, but includes an illustrated thirty page section 'Decoration within the Home', classified by room-type. Written within the frame of aestheticism, Aronson advocated removal of all 'old-fashioned' pieces and their replacement with models including 'the revival of the best eighteenth century styles, notably those of Chippendale and Sheraton'. She demanded the informality of 'art-colour-blending and its attendant charms and details', and illustrated numerous contorted but asymmetrical draperies. Commercial interests were not submerged, as her text is keyed to advertisements for the decorating firm Whitelaw, Melbourne, a general supplier of furnishings and textiles.

Mrs Aronson's model of decorating as an extension of housewifery, an essentially amateur occupation, was not supplanted until the 1920s, when the concept of the modern 'interior decorator' was first promoted in Australia. Its development coincides with the rise of the expert in all fields of domestic life - mothercraft, cookery, nutrition and sex. Within this context the decorator can be seen as but another expert equipped with superior taste and knowledge, whose previously amateur status was placed on a more professional footing in accord with the rationalisation of women's work in the early twentieth century. 'Let us deliver ourselves into the hands of the expert' proclaimed *Home*, reviewing the state of interior decoration in 1928.

'Attractive Opportunities': Interior Decoration as a Career for Women

Unlike architecture, a profession with recognised standards and organisations, interior-decorating in Australia was ill-defined and not well recognised. Opportunities

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23 This was also the case with Mrs Panton's *Suburban Residences*, the type of model which Aronson's text emulates [Mrs J. E. Panton, *Suburban Residences and How to Circumvent Them*, London, Ward and Downey, 1896, advertisement facing p. 301].
25 Mary J. Quinn, whose *Planning and Furnishing the Home. Practical and Economical Suggestions for the Homemaker* [New York, Harper & Bros.] was published in 1914, is described in the frontispiece as 'Instructor in Design. School of Household Science & Art, Pratt Institute'.
26 'Interior decoration in Australia', *Home*, 1 June 1928, p. 23.
for training in Australia as an interior decorator were extremely limited in the inter-war period. The centrality of artists to the development of the profession is indicated in that the Arts and Crafts societies and Thea Proctor's design classes appear to be the only source of training available to those interested in 'design'. Details of how Thea Proctor conducted her 'design' classes are scanty, but judging from contemporary comments 'design' meant a bold 'modern' approach in which form and colour were primary. An interior-decorator such as Marion Hall Best came to interior decoration via other forms of the decorative arts; embroidery classes with June Scott Stevenson (1926), then Proctor's design classes. Margaret Lord also entered the field after an art education; her autobiography describes her studies at Swinburne and teaching art in secondary school before attending the Arnold School in London. The obsession with 'art training' was not new. A cornerstone of the Arts and Crafts movement, it continued to be mobilised as a way of indicating one's distance from uneducated taste. In Home magazine, artists were not only assumed to be the tasteful individuals who could best raise standards, they were described as synonymous with the decorator:

Our aesthetic senses are just as much in need of diagnosis as our internal organs. "I have handed over the whole furnishing scheme to a qualified designer" should be as frequent an acknowledgement as "I have placed myself in the hands of the very best doctor". There ARE artists in this country capable of undertaking the interior decoration of your house in a manner comparable with the work which is being done in other countries.

The post-war concept of the 'design' school did not exist in Australia; there were technical colleges for carpenters and joiners, but no training in design per se. Artists and tastemakers argued for the establishment of such a course, claiming improved standards of taste in both art and manufactures would be the result. The

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27 In 1930 Art in Australia noted: 'The time has come, it would seem, for the establishment of an Australian school of design whose business it would be to train students to design the rugs and furniture, the cups and saucers and plates, the wallpapers, the textiles, everything in daily use... Firstly we must have a place where design is taught, not merely design in the abstract but its application to particular crafts and industries and the technical education involved'. Editorial, Art in Australia, March 1930, unpaginated.

28 She has endeavoured to instil the principles of balance, of the rhythmic play of line and the satisfying juxtaposition of masses' [H.H. Fotheringham, 'The Importance of Design and its Relation to the Student', Art in Australia, September 1927, pp. 46-8].

29 Best, op. cit. Her design 'education' was formalised by attending Wilkinson's First Year Architecture course at Sydney university, 'just part time for drafting, plans for layouts and isometric projection' [ibid., p. 5]. In 1940 she furthered her education by enrolling in a New York correspondence course, Arts & Decoration. Practical Home Study in Interior Decoration. A copy of the course is held in the LRC.


31 'At the same time there is a certain amount of art education which must be acquired before genuine satisfaction even in the best work can be experienced' [Garretts, op. cit., pp. 21-2].

32 Home, 1 June 1928, p. 76.
Burdekin House Exhibition (1929) was organised as a *de facto* design museum, albeit a temporary one. The theme of improving Australian art and design formed the leitmotif of Ure Smith's *Art in Australia* and *Home* magazine, and accounts for the considerable attention accorded modern continental interiors in these publications.

An early Australian description of the profession of interior decorator occurs in the Adelaide *Woman's Record* in 1922. Concerning women and the architectural profession, the article was written in consultation with Edith Napier Birks, Secretary of the School of Fine Arts. The editorial noted:

Miss Birks believes that there is also a place for the woman decorator and furnisher able to give expert advice on colours and types and convenience... There is no doubt that if enough of us realised our ignorance and were in a position to pay for skilled opinion on our ideas, a good firm of women could be very useful. Such a firm would watch for and disseminate ideas on furnishing the maidless house.

The article analysed the exclusion of women from the architectural profession; 'this seems a career especially suited to women, and yet very few - only one in Australia so far as we know - have taken it up'. The profession was seen as a suitable and lucrative role for the middle class women, one which ensured respectability and maintained a reassuring link to the home. The author argued that, as 'Woman is more completely a house dweller than man', she should be ideally suited to the design of dwellings, 'schools, hospitals, children's homes, and such institutions'. The explanation for the exclusion of women given by architects, that, 'Women would probably be good at design and decorative detail, but... not interested in the practical side, in the constructive work', was dismissed as 'very weak'. Women's admission to law and medicine were cited as instances disproving this theory.

Several Sydney women's periodicals in the late 1920s provide illuminating commentaries on the subject of the New Woman and the role of interior decorator. The cheap monthlies *Herself. Her present, past and future* (1928-1931) and *Helen's*
Weekly (1927-1928) exhibited considerable ambivalence regarding the post-WW I women and paid work. The first editorial of Helen's Weekly proclaimed, ' "Helen" is an out and out Feminist. She is stage managed, written and - I almost said printed - by women'. The cover masthead of Herself illustrated a progression of women whose dress changes from the nineteenth-century crinoline to the 1920s flapper, but the first issue warned, 'the transition must be to true womanhood, not to imitation of the other sex'. The issue of the female consumer and her new 'power' fuelled many of its first numbers:

in the shops the tastes of Herself are much more considered than HIS [sic]...The machine age and modern industry have ousted woman from the producing function and she now concentrates upon that of the consumer... Woman has lost the creative side of work from immemorial time recognised as hers, and has received in exchange a subject position of drudgery and routine.

A later issue advocated communal kitchens, bulk buying and the British Letchworth communal system, indicating that the ideal of the self-contained suburban home was not universally lauded in women's magazines of the period.

Helen's Weekly included articles on domestic architecture, dress, make-up and interior decoration. It forms a useful contrast to the expensive Home magazine which covered similar terrain for the upper-middle class woman. The former was cheap at 2d, from 1929 3d; Home magazine retailed for 2/6- in 1920. Helen's Weekly was printed on cheap paper with little colour apart from the cover, and opposed the cosmopolitan airs of magazines such as Home; ' "Helen": intends to be practical... she will not rouse your cupidity concerning a certain make of rug only to inform you that it cannot be obtained in Australia'. In its short life considerable space was devoted to the rationalisation of domestic work, the principles of Taylorism. Typical was an article entitled 'Build your own Kitchenettes. Conserving Time and Energy by Forethought', in which the author claimed she had 'suffered long and bitterly at the hands of the man architect of kitchens'. A model similar to the Frankfurt kitchen (c1925) is illustrated, with swivel adjustable stool at 'the centre of domestic operations' (plate 11).

39This was also the case with the shortlived Ours, A Paper for Australian Homes. Describing itself as a right-hand to the housewife, it included articles on the working woman, as well as some advocating women stay in the home.
40Helen's Weekly, vol. 1, no. 1, 8 September 1927, p. 43.
41Herself, vol. 1, no. 1, 15 June 1928, cover.
42ibid., p. 4.
43Mary Moss, 'Domestic Foundations of the New Age', Herself, vol. 1, no. 5, 1 November 1928, p. 11.
44Helen's Weekly, vol. 1, no. 1, 8 September 1927, p. 43.
Both Herself and Helen's Weekly published articles which chronicle attitudes towards decorating in Australia. The obsession with colour and the pseudo-scientific nature of the discussion is indicated in titles such as 'Color as a Curative Agent' and 'Great Healing Power of Chromopathy', which explored the possibility of 'colour cures'. The latter described the activities of Yolande Proctor, 'an earnest student of Design, Interior Decoration and especially Health Rooms, having studied Commercial Art and Colour in relation to environment and health'. Proctor was described as championing colourful painted furniture. The latter was associated with modernity in this period, a commercial range having been designed by Thea Proctor in 1927. Stylistically, however, such furniture was not necessarily tied to modernism, Yolande Proctor giving suggestions for both modern and antique room decoration. 

'Style rooms', Herself claimed, 'are designed according to the temperament of their inhabitants', and the journal indicated letters of enquiry could be addressed to Proctor care of the Argosy Gallery, Hunter St, a store which retailed small works of art and ornaments.

The definition of 'decorator' needs to be broadly interpreted. In 1928 Home advised that, 'Miss Thea Proctor... will in future make available to those who contemplate furnishing or re-decorating, her skill in planning schemes of interior decoration... she will design entire schemes, advise on purchases and shop with clients'. Like Yolande, Thea Proctor had no decorator's shopfront, nor does she appear to have sold any products, but retailed instead her taste and her colour-sense, removing completely the taint of trade. Thea Proctor's family circle included other women working in this field. Hera Roberts, the illustrator and designer, was her

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47 'Great Healing Power of Chromopathy', Herself, vol. 1, no. 4 [incorrectly printed as no. 3], 17 September 1928, p. 5.
48 'Health Rooms', Herself, vol. 1, no. 4 [incorrectly printed as no. 3], 17 September 1928, p. 6. See also Yolande Proctor, 'Health Rooms', Herself, vol. 1, no. 6, 6 March 1929, p. 13; 'Miss Yolande Proctor. A Young Artist Interested in Home Beautifying', Herself, vol. II no. 1, 30 January 1930, p. 2. Proctor appears to have owned or managed the Argosy Gallery, Hunter Street, later 223 Macquarie Street, which sold Persian rugs, old china, antiques, etchings [advertisement, Home, 1 May 1929, p. 18]. Communication with a living relative of Thea Proctor suggests that Yolande Proctor was not a relation [Thea Waddell, Vaucluse, communication dated 21 October 1992].
49 Home, 1 April 1927, p. 50.
50 'Health Rooms', Herself, vol. 1 no. 6, 6 March 1929, p. 13.
51 'Personal and Social', Home, 2 July 1928, p. 4. Minchin claims that Proctor completed a Diploma course in Interior Decoration by correspondence from New York in the 1920s, but does not substantiate this. She notes also that Proctor gave classes on interior decoration at the girls' school, Frensham College [Jan Minchin, 'Thea Proctor. A Biography', in Chris Deutscher et al., Thea Proctor. The Prints, Sydney, Resolution Press, 1980, p. 10].
student and cousin,53 and another cousin, Mrs C. Dibbs (née Mary Proctor) conducted a country 'Shopping Club' to 'undertake any kind of buying - from furnishing a house to buying a piece of cherry ribbon'. Of the latter Herself noted, 'Her ideas on interior decoration should be very helpful - she is a cousin to the well-known Thea Proctor, and she shares her artistic tastes'.54 The Proctors were clearly 'ladies', spelled out in their glamorous appearances in the social Home magazine and also 'artists', considerably fuelling their credibility and appeal. In the same year Home indicated the cachet of such work, when it was noted amidst the expatriate social notes:

Miss Betty Dangar has been bitten with the prevailing craze for interior decoration, which is having such a vogue in the Old World. She writes: "I am busy with furniture design and cabinet making and various things. I go to a school of arts and crafts."55

Other women were more closely connected with business, retailing antique and modern furniture (both 'period' and modernist), soft-furnishings and fabrics, such as Merle du Bourlay and Margaret Jaye. By 1928 an accelerating number of traders listed their decorating services in the pages of Home.56

In 1930 Herself published two articles by F. Kay Ross entitled 'Fortune Favours Expert Woman. Interior Decoration as a Career for Girls'.57 Ross' nationality is uncertain; no mention of her occurs in other contexts, but it is claimed here she 'spent many years in America in the study of her profession' (i.e. decoration).58 The articles formed part of a series examining careers for the New Woman, such as secretarial work. Apart from the valuable insights into attitudes to the profession of decorator, they provide a rare contemporary summary of this practice in Sydney, as

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53 Ibid., p. 10. In 1934 Home reported that Roberts was recently returned from aboad, where she had studied 'the latest ideas in interior decoration' ['The New Ideas in Interior Decoration', Home, 3 April 1934, p. 48].
54 'New Shopping Club', Herself, vol. 1, no. 12, 5 December 1929, p. 10. See also her advertisement, Herself, vol. II, no. 1, 30 January 1930, p. 11. A family member, Thea Waddell, suggested in a communication with me that Mary Dibbs 'married a rich, older man - or at least she thought he was rich - but he went through his money... and then had nothing' [Thea Waddell, Vaucluse, communication dated 21 October 1992]. This suggests one motivation for Dibbs embarking on such business.
55 Home, 2 April 1928, p. 96.
56 'The Treasure Chest, 19 Darlington Road, Art Dealers and Interior Decorators' [Home, 1 December 1928, p. 14]; 'Cecil N. Weir, who will be pleased to call at your home and advise you for your colour scheme, 333 George Street' [Home, 2 April 1929, p. 3]; 'Florence Duvelle, Consulting Interior Decorator, Potts Point' [Home, 1 October 1929, p. 3]; 'Jean Little, Melbourne - chintzes, cretonnes, & furnishing silks from London & Paris. Interior decoration, and assistance' [Home, 1 November 1929, p. 7]; 'Monica Piddington, Nursery Designer and Decorator, Pitt Street, Sydney' [Home, 2 January 1930, p. 9].
58 'Interior Decoration', Herself, vol. 2. no. 7, 5 November 1930, p. 3.
interesting for whom they exclude as for whom they consider. Ross stated that the only decorators in Sydney were Margaret Jaye, an American male, architects and the department store advisors. She described the field as dominated by men, perhaps because they controlled the furniture departments of stores. None of the Proctors, nor Molly Grey, are mentioned. As they did not have shopfronts, and acted in an advisory capacity, Ross might not have known of them (although it is difficult to countenance this in the Sydney of 1930, one year after the Burdekin House Exhibition). Perhaps she did not consider them models of professionalism. The art/trade distinction might also be at play; just as Jaye is rarely mentioned in Home and never in Art in Australia, the art-focus and individual commissions of Thea Proctor might not have registered as significant in Ross' business context. Ross described the anomaly of a profession which should be dominated by women - 'Since furnishing the home is essentially the province of women' - but which was apparently little known and exploited. The requirements are described as simple; 'the student bent upon this career must have an innate artistic sense...All other things can be added.' She concluded, 'What career for girls offers more attractive opportunities', an editorial note indicating, 'There are no schools for teaching Interior Decoration in Sydney, but a class is in process of formation'. Again, not mentioning Thea Proctor's design class suggests her emphasis was trading rather than amateur activity.

Ross' position was revealed in Herself's October editorial, which also endorsed the adoption of decoration as a career for women. The 'class in process of formation' was to be taught by Ross herself; her lecture on 'decoration in America as practised by women' was announced, and the claim reiterated that 'Special courses will be arranged as a career for girls'. Ross' lecture, held on 13 October, was described as stressing the importance of colour and space, but did not advocate a particular style. That her 'special courses' might not have occurred is possible: there is no review of them in Herself nor other women's magazines, and no mention of them in the memoirs of Sydney decorators Marion Hall Best nor Margaret Lord.

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59 Margaret Lord also noted in her 1969 autobiography that the department store field was dominated by men. She claims Joyce Brown was the first woman to break into this male preserve at Anthony Horderns' in the 1940s [Lord, 1969, op. cit., p. 102]. Gail Reekie has suggested to me that the heavy nature of the goods in the furniture section would have precluded women from this work due to social convention.
60 Ross, op. cit., p. 13
61 ibid., p. 30
63 'Interior Decoration', Herself, vol. 2, no. 7, 5 November 1930, p. 3.
An article similar to Ross' was published in the *Australian Woman's Mirror* the same year.\(^64\) It described the activity of women including Ruth Lane Poole, who supervised much of the furnishing of the Governor-General's residence at Yarralumla and Mrs Guy Smith, who worked at an 'exclusive furnishing firm' in Melbourne.\(^65\) Interior decoration is described as a genial occupation, the following description reading like a chronicle of social life:

Mrs. Smith declares her work to be most congenial, meeting pleasant people, spending her time amid beautiful furnishings and furniture and seeing her color-schemes [sic] take form and effect; and as the art of home decoration is so essentially feminine it is surprising more Australian women have not adopted the role of advisory decorator.\(^66\)

'In Future all Modern': Interior Decorators and Modernity

i. Margaret Jaye

The first trader to be listed as an 'interior decorator' in Sydney was Margaret Jaye, who opened a store in Darlinghurst Road in 1925.\(^67\) In Wise's directory she is described as 'art decorator', a term replaced by 'decorator' in subsequent years.\(^68\) She is not listed in Wise's trades directory until 1935, when she appears under the awkward heading 'Furnishing Drapery, Mrs. & Imprtrs.' (sic), a slightly more elegant choice than the alternative 'Furniture brokers, Ware-housers & Dealers'.\(^69\) Sand's describes her between 1926 and 1931 as an 'antique dealer', although several contemporary advertisements indicate she carried mainly reproduction-antique furnishings.\(^70\) Although her business is recalled by many as a type of gift shop, Jaye stocked furniture, ornaments, hand-blocked linens, Italian brocades, chintzes and Rodier

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\(^64\)I. M. Brodie, 'Interior Decoration. Advisory Work as a Career for Women', *Australian Woman's Mirror*, vol. 6, no. 49, 28 October 1930, p. 12.
\(^65\)ibid.
\(^66\)ibid.
\(^67\)In both Sand's and Wise's directories Jaye's business is listed firstly in 1925. The correct address differs. Sand's Directory lists her as 'decorator, 89 Darlinghurst Road', which was perhaps her residence [Sand's *Sydney N.S.W. Directory*, 1925, p. 1349]. Wise's directory lists her at 69 Darlinghurst Road, which is more likely the correct business address [Wise's *New South Wales Post Office Directory*, 1925, p. 28], as Mrs E. Crawley's furniture shop had been at this address the previous year [ibid., 1924, p. 27]. The business moved to number 68 in 1926 [Sand's *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 1428], and to 68a in 1937 [Wise's, *op. cit.*, 1937, p. 119]. Inaccuracies can be expected in these guides, as Jaye is called 'Joyce, Margaret', in one listing [Sand's, 'Decorators', 1932-33, p. 2309].
\(^68\)Wise's, *op. cit.*, 1925, p. 28.
\(^69\)ibid., 1935, p. 113.
\(^70\)Sand's, *op. cit.*, 1926, p. 1428, and subsequent issues. See following note.
fabrics. In Sand's 1932-33 listing she appears as an 'interior decorator' for the first time.

As a single woman with no known heirs Margaret Jaye's work is difficult to research. According to a contemporary she did not employ assistants, relying instead on her female companion. Her non-art profile also hinders research. Unlike Marion Hall Best, Molly Grey and Thea Proctor, Jaye's interiors were not featured in *Home* magazine. Nor was she a participant in the *Burdekin House Exhibition* (1929) which received extensive coverage in both the press and *Art in Australia*. Although Australian decorators were rarely committed to one schema for the home (Cynthia Reed in Melbourne, stockist of Fred Ward furniture and Michael O'Connell fabrics is an exception), most of them were involved sporadically with promoting modern decorative ideas. A room Jaye furnished c1930 was thoroughly modernist, including modern hangings, geometric upholstery and a built-in sofa-bookcase surmounted with globular light fittings (plate 12). Its details are similar to contemporary American schemes. In 1932 she sold a shipment of Anne Dangar's modernist abstract-patterned pottery, made by the Australian artist in rural France. The cream and green ceramics included tea-sets, bowls and jugs, which according to Dangar, Jaye complained were 'too thick for Australian taste'. As Jaye was charging the equivalent of fifteen francs and sending Dangar one franc per item, Dangar was moved to complain to artist-friend Grace Crowley; 'I guess it's her prices are too thick for people with taste'. In September 1933 Jaye's advertisement in *Home* Magazine announced with asymmetrical typography 'In Future all Modern', noting Jaye would specialise in 'art moderne' furnishings and gifts, the expression used at the time to indicate an *art deco* aesthetic.

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71 Margaret Lord recalled her business as a 'pretty shop' attracting 'much attention [Lord, 1969, *op. cit.*, p. 99]. For advertising see *Home*, 1 April 1933, p. 77; 1 May 1933, p. 73; 1 June 1933, p. 83; 1 July 1933, p. 71; 1 August 1933, p. 75; 1 September 1933, p. 73.
72 Sand's, *op. cit.*. 1932-33, p. 1542.
73 Interview with Bruce Arnott, Sydney, 22 April, 1992.
74 *Herself*, vol. 2, no. 3, 5 July 1930, p. 12. Surprisingly, one interviewee, who worked with Marion Hall Best, claimed that Jaye did not produce complete schemes, a claim contradicted by the advertisement [Interview, Isobel Craig, Sydney, 22 April 1992].
77 *ibid.*.
78 *ibid.*.
79 *Home*, 1 September 1933, p. 73.
A self-consciously modern photograph by Cecil Bostock illustrated a chrome lamp and angular ornaments (plate 13).

Jaye's non-art credentials, and her marked association with trade and money-making in the minds of interviewees, also explain her absence in Ure Smith publications. Jaye is characterised by those who remember her as 'a real old take', a tough business-woman who was not interested in the meticulous detail decorators such as Marion Hall Best later expended on her commissions, not above buying napery in Coles' and reselling it at a considerably higher price. As Dangar wrote to Crowley regarding the sale of her pottery: 'you can arrange it all at once or bit by bit in your studio to sell, but at honest prices - not Miss Jayes.'  

Jaye's business may not have satisfied the art pretensions of the Art in Australia/Home magazine readership. Clearly hierarchies were not only drawn between the milieu of the decorator and the mass taste of the furnishing store, but within the ranks of the interior decorator.

ii. Molly Grey

According to Marion Hall Best, Molly Grey was 'Sydney's first modern commercial designer'. She appears not to have had a shopfront, and no profession is listed next to her name in the Sydney directories. Surprisingly, neither of my interviewees, one of whom worked in the trade with Marion Hall Best in the early 1940s, recalled her. The designer had returned to Sydney from Europe and America in 1934, where she had worked with several decorating firms. Her Greenknowe Avenue, Potts Point flat was illustrated in the Sydney Morning Herald and Home magazine that year in the context of articles on the 'modern interior decorator'. The apartment paired the simple lines of a late eighteenth-century chest with a blocky sofa and plaid cushions, the type of genteel modern treatment popular in Studio publications and British decorating manuals of the period (plate 14). Home published a Harold Cazneaux photograph of Grey beside a deco-style figured-wood desk in her flat, her severely masculine dress with tie and cuffs and short angular hair-style a startling contrast to the more feminine images which populated the magazine (plate 15).

80 Arnott, op. cit; Craig, op. cit.
81 Dungavell, op. cit.
83 Arnott, op. cit; Craig, op. cit.
86 Home, 2 September 1935, p. 29.
Grey worked for David Jones' upon her arrival, arranging table settings for photo-publicity. In January 1935 she commenced a four-part radio series for 2FC entitled 'Let's Do Up the House', indicating the popularity of such information at the time. Other entrepreneurial activities included sponsoring a Taubman's Paint booklet, for which she was described as the 'well-known Interior Decorator of David Jones'. There is no evidence that Grey worked as a public consultant within the store; her focus appears to have been design. Her furniture range, illustrated in Art in Australia, 1936, reveals she could design in a number of manners, from a ponderous art deco sideboard with elaborately-figured timbers (plate 16) to a severe-limed dressing table with concealed-strip lighting. The magazine's interest in her work is not surprising, as Charles Lloyd Jones, brother-in-law of Sydney Ure Smith, owned a share of both Art in Australia and Home, using them to promote a modern and stylish image for his store. Grey's eclectic sympathies are indicated in her article for Home magazine in 1938, which reproduced a 'Vogue Regency' dining room in New York. The latter was also illustrated in an America publication of that year, suggesting that although not necessarily avant-garde, Australian images of the domestic interior were at the same time not out of date.

iii. Thea Proctor

Thea Proctor lived in England between 1903-21, apart from a visit to Sydney in 1912-14. On her return to the city in 1922 she was interviewed on a broad range of matters connected with taste, from hats to speech. A relatively conservative practitioner whose fine art owes more to the fin-de-siècle model of Charles Conder than a modernist ethos, she absorbed modern stylistic devices from French art deco illustration which were considered appropriate for modern advertising and magazine...

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87 "Table elegance", SMH Women's Supplement, 22 March 1934; Woman, 6 February 1936, p. xii; Home, 1 February 1937, p. 52 [all Press Clippings Scrapbooks, various dates, DJA].
88 "Doing up the House", op. cit.
89 "You can have a room like this", Australian Women's Weekly, June 12, 1937, p. 67 [Press Clippings Scrapbook, April-November 1937, DJA].
90 "Australian Furniture", Art in Australia, 16 November 1936, pp. 80, 82, 86. Lord notes that 'Under her direction some pleasant semi-traditional furniture was produced by Ricketts and Thorp. During the war, Molly Gray had been decorator for Lennons Hotel in Brisbane' [Lord, 1969, op. cit., pp. 98-9].
91 Underhill describes Home as the virtual house magazine for the store. Underhill, op. cit., p. 136.
92 Home, 1 February 1938, p. 43.
As well as producing art, she was renowned for her accompanying decorations; 'For the opening ceremony this afternoon... Miss Proctor is preparing a number of her well-known arrangements of fruit and flowers.' Her commercial activity included the provision, along with George Lambert and Sydney Ure Smith, of colour schemes for Ford cars, an act possibly influenced by Elsie de Wolfe's endorsement of the colours of the new Willys-Knight Six in America. She designed a range of painted furniture for David Jones, provided panels for the beauty parlour there in 1927, and it is claimed that she decorated the Farmer's department store tea-rooms, opened in 1932 and the subject of the painting *The Lacquer Room* (c1935-6) by Grace Cossington-Smith.

iv. Hera Roberts

Hera Roberts did not have a shopfront but was well known as the designer of many *Home* magazine covers. Her cover for *Interior Decoration Number* of 1930 illustrated modern circular blonde-wood furnishings, a sheet-glass lamp-base after Djorbeige and a suitably modish woman (plate 17). She continued to design furniture similar to her *Burdekin House Exhibition* designs into the 1930s, often employing a ziggurat form with simple painted finishes (plate 18). Ure Smith's Macleay Street flat, *Manar*, was furnished with such designs by Roberts, his companion. She designed at least one piece of furniture for the Stuart-Low Furniture Studio, a straight-sided writing desk in figured Queensland walnut with synthetic-ivory pulls.

95See Deutscher et al., *op. cit.*
97 *Home*, 2 December 1929, pp. 94-5; Marchand, *op. cit.* , p. 128.
98 *Home*, 1 April 1927, p. 50.
101 See photograph of a similar lamp in *Home*, 1 August 1929, p. 27.
102 See cover of *Home*, 1 May 1934.
103 *Home*, 1 December 1931, p. 47.
104 'Australian Furniture', *Art in Australia*, 16 November 1936, p. 84.
The Quest for Colour and the Construction of Femininity

Vibrant colour and bold design were the chief signifiers of the modernism imported into Australia and taken up by a group of Sydney artists including Margaret Preston and Thea Proctor. Lacking access to the professional courses which had existed in New York since the teens, Australian decorators, particularly in the 1920s, emphasised the pseudo-scientific jargon of colour theory which enjoyed considerable vogue for its supposed curative and psychological power. In 1919 Roy de Maistre commenced his experiments with coloured interiors as therapy for shell-shocked soldiers, as well as holding with Roland Wakelin the 'Colour in Art' Exhibition, Gayfield Shaw's Art Salon, Sydney. The exhibition introduced the 'colour-music' theory and associated oil paintings of Wakelin and de Maistre to a wider public, the catalogue noting that such theory applied equally to interior decoration. De Maistre subsequently marketed a colour wheel targeted at decorators and dress-makers through Grace Brothers. An emphasis on vibrant complementary colour schemes dominated avant-garde interior design throughout the world at this time.

The emphasis on colour, with its sensual connotations, was significant in prescribing a gendered charge to the notion of 'decorator'. In the post-Renaissance tradition colour has been associated with the irrational and intuitive, as opposed to the cerebral practice of drawing. Drawing represents the intellectual and abstract, colour the vulgar imitation of nature. Australian women artists and decorators supposedly excelled at the new brand of modernism because a colour sense was a component of their natures. The conservative artist Max Meldrum, for instance, argued that painting was a science in which colour was insignificant; 'Colour by itself suggests nothing to our intellect and would appeal to uncontrolled sensuality'. Some commentators claimed that the significance of colour to the success of decorative schemes made this a natural pursuit for women, who pursued colour toning constantly in their costume. Men, of course, had undergone the 'masculine renunciation' of colourful dress in the early nineteenth century, which was swiftly naturalised as a cultural trope. Women were

107 The De Mestre [sic] Color Harmonising Chart' was patented in 1924 [Johnson, op. cit., pp. 30-2].
108 Quoted in Walton, op. cit., p. 18.
109 Women, as a rule, are much more gifted in colour selection than are men, a fact which probably arises from their choice of colours in dress. In these days, a man who dressed in very pronounced colours would be regarded as eccentric, to say the least, while woman is free to adopt any colours, or
not necessarily expected to understand the science of colour, but supposedly acquired their knowledge as a matter of intuition.\footnote{\textsuperscript{110}}

The manipulation of colour was conflated with femininity and women's desire for self-adornment in their dress and in their homes. The quest for colour was described as a feminine desire; 'the tinted cover with the attractive red lettering satisfies to a certain extent the feminine craving for decoration', noted the otherwise monochrome Australian woman's magazine \textit{Herself} in its second editorial, 1928.\footnote{\textsuperscript{111}} An American decorating manual of the 1930s insisted that colour was directly related to women's good health. It made the remarkable claim that, 'the doctors in many big department stores actually urge the salesgirls (who must wear unrelieved black all day) to carry bright-colored handkerchiefs and wear cheerful shades in their underclothes'.\footnote{\textsuperscript{112}} Female shop assistants are forced to adopt the façade of masculine sobriety and control, to reject colour and take on the colourless uniform of servitude which we see to this day in department stores. But it can only ever be a covering, for underneath, the female craving for emotional colour continues unabated, and if ignored, will result in the demise of femininity.

The connection between the colouring and arrangement of women's dress and environment was made explicit in a 1927 guide published by the sewing-machine section of Bebarfald's, the large Sydney furniture-retailer.\footnote{\textsuperscript{113}} Proceeding from a description of complementary colour theory (plate 19), the text proposed a number of colour themes for the dress of women of various ages and sizes. It concluded with a section devoted to the furnishing of the middle-class home. The author hoped, 'there will come a time when the study of the principles of colour and its application to herself any combination of colours, which meet with her approval as being harmonious' [Arthur Seymour Jennings, \textit{The Decoration and Renovation of the Home...A Practical Handbook for House Owners and Tenants, Architects, Decorators and Others...}, London, Trade Papers Publishing Co. Ltd., n.d. [1920s], pp. 12-13]. This unpretentious trade manual gives some indication of the cultural currency of this trope in its direct application to the field of decorating.

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\textsuperscript{110} Often a woman will design a beautifully coloured room although she is completely unaware of the laws of colour arrangement' [Derek Patmore, \textit{Decoration for the Small Home,} London, Putnam, 1938, p. 162]. Thea Proctor reproduced the gender distinction in the following passage: 'Taste is the most important quality for any artist to possess. The word taste implies a colour sense; certainly a person without a colour sense cannot possess taste... It is well known that the majority of women art students have a good sense of colour, but few have a feeling for form, and that the reverse is the case with men students - the majority can draw more or less accurately but are not sensitive to colour' [Thea Proctor, 'Modern Art in Sydney', \textit{Art in Australia,} 15 November 1938, pp. 25-6].
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\textsuperscript{111}\textit{Herself}, vol. 1, no. 2, 13 July 1928, p. 2.
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\textsuperscript{112}Dorothy Draper, \textit{Decorating is Fun! How to be Your Own Decorator}, New York, Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1939, p. 7.
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\textsuperscript{113} Moncrieffe, \textit{op. cit.}
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and her home... will become compulsory subjects' for young girls'. Colour, yet again, was held to be the key to marking gender:

The fascinating woman is she who is clever enough to emphasise the charming contrast between herself and man: and what better opportunity has she than dressing and choice of colour? What other opportunity does she have to characterise herself if she is defined in these terms? Dressing and colour become the only way women can distinguish themselves; they were to be specifically taught the practice. The idea of instruction gives the lie to the whole enterprise, just as the teaching of domestic science and mothercraft contained an implicit contradiction. If women required instruction in everything from mothercare to decorating, then such behaviour could eventually be characterised as learned rather than innate.

The description of the fascinating woman who knows how to emphasise her difference from men was accompanied by an illustration of a red-head in her boudoir, surveying a range of men's hats and walking sticks grouped around her bed; one top-hat has appeared on the pillow (plate 20). Encompassing both day and evening types, these hats represent either men of all classes, or men of all times of day. Furthermore, the hats stand in for the opposing values of masculinity, from which colour is absent. Whether she is the castrating woman surrounded by trophies, or threatened by the advancing phalanx which is about to rise up the crimson rug on which she is perched, the image reproduces the trope of the *femme fatale*, the enchanting woman. The realm of colour and the irrational becomes the only sphere which women control; it represents both her power and her difference from men.

The British Arts and Crafts writer Mrs Haweis had made the connection earlier between 'the importance of surroundings and their effect on personal appearance' in her books *The Art of Beauty* and *The Art of Decoration* (1881). 'No colours suit a room that are not pleasing in dress', she argued, and proposed testing colour combinations first by trying them in a bonnet. Leon Gellert's essay for the *Burdekin House Exhibition* catalogue (1929) noted that, 'Modern dress, which insists on severity and more definite vertical lines, is provided with the ideal background in the modern interior

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114 *ibid.*, p. 94.
115 *ibid.*, p. 7.
setting'. The analogy of a woman fabricating her environment and her appearance is restated in the first manual of its type published in Australia, Margaret Lord’s *Interior Decoration. A Guide to Furnishing the Australian Home* (1944). Lord criticised 'modernistic' furniture, that is, mass-produced variants of art-deco modes, as being 'like make-up badly applied'. In 1946 the conservative artist and critic Lionel Lindsay used the connection to denigrate both women and modernism in *Addled Art*: 'the superficial nature of modern painting attracts them, picture or hat, all is one'.

The correlation between the female consumer and decorative modernism was particularly strong in Australia as many aspects of European modernism were received not through high art but in terms of women's spaces and women's bodies - in dress, household goods, advertising. When *Home* reviewed the 1925 Paris *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes*, the motifs associated with art déco were presented in terms of dress and fashion goods, including examples of evening dress and Sonia Delaunay's Orphic outfits and car. Many of the artists involved with interior decoration crossed hierarchical boundaries, Thea Proctor, for instance, producing fine art, magazine covers and illustration, advertising (plate 21), interior decoration, flower arranging and advice on the dress of the modern woman. The artist was frequently described as an art-work herself, 'a gorgeous picture in navy blues and petunia purples'. Proctor defended modern art by highlighting its impact on design - 'I think it is foolish to dismiss all revolutionary art as useless...A lot of it is healthy revolt - for instance, the pure colour realism and simplified pattern reform that has resulted in new designs of great beauty and freshness in stuffs [fabrics]' The conservative fine-art establishment was thus easily able to dismiss modernist approaches to painting and sculpture as fashion-driven, the misguided work of women. Allied to the emphasis on decorating domestic rather than public space, and the necessarily amateur (i.e. untrained) nature of the profession, it was inevitable that interior decoration would be represented as a feminine pursuit.

These are not biological but symbolic categories - that men were involved with interior decoration strengthens the case, for their work, too, was feminised. As

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120 Quoted in Hoorn, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
121 European avant-garde painting was available only in reproduction until the 1939 Herald Exhibition.
123 *Home*, 1 October 1925, p. 96.
124 J. McDonald 'An Interview with Thea Proctor', *Art in Australia*, February 1922, p. 46.
Caroline Ambrus notes, in Australia the 'girls and the gays' were blamed for modernism's wide-ranging influence. Conservative artist and Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, J. S. MacDonald, wrote in 1934:

the contemporary movement is a feminine one ... For two generations women have flooded the schools and, because they were women, received intenser instruction than men got from the same masters... though still incompetent to paint, they shall be recognised as creators of fashions in what they call 'interior decoration'. Behind this so called decoration is nothing but caprice. Conviction would imply a measure of stability, and that is precisely what women do not want. It shuts out the opportunity which fickleness provides, and prohibits the exercise of that inane modishness which makes them cast off one ugly fashion for the next... This development has led to the emergence in numbers of what the Americans call 'pansies'; and fine allies they make. These beings can trim a hat or tie a bow with any girl... They rule the world of art today, and unless real painters speak up for themselves and right art the women and their near men abettors will ruin both.

Responding to these claims, a woman writer argued that it was not women, but the effeminate male, who was to blame:

it is men - decadent men, 'pansies' even - who supply the ideas, paint decadent pictures and generally keep up the world supply of mischief and poison for women to play about with... the 'pansies', continuing to look languid, to bleat their grievances and to owe their tailors, are fed and feted by impressionable women.

Such diatribe alludes to Australian male artists, whose art-making was considered modern in local terms, and who worked sporadically as decorators in the inter-war period. Adrian Feint and Roy de Maistre, for instance, provided modern furniture designs for the Burdekin House Exhibition (Sydney) in 1929. De Maistre had visited the 1925 Paris Exposition, and in Sydney designed decorations for a range of furniture for Grace Brothers. He decorated the Sydney club Pakie's and several homes for his circle, which were nearly always described in terms of their 'daring and uncommon arrangement of colours'. Home illustrated two rooms in

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1929 in which the colour scheme was carried out by Feint.\textsuperscript{131} Feint produced still-life paintings, commercial art, magazine covers and illustration, the same marginalised repertoire as the Australian women modernists.\textsuperscript{132} By the 1960s Robert Hughes subsumed Feint's work within the broad and caustic label of Sydney 'Charm School' art, produced by 'various decorators and designers, whose work is generously regarded as painting'.\textsuperscript{133} Hughes made the gay connection explicit, describing the inter-war Sydney painters as 'the stylists': 'So Australian easels were filled by the same Picasso harlequins, the same mottled ruins, and the same hip-swishing sailor boys as Paris and London produced',\textsuperscript{134} It is through the conjunction of homophobia and misogyny that the category of the camp male decorator continues to circulate as a type of common sense, another instance of social spaces and practices distributed in terms of sexuality and gender.

\textsuperscript{131}Home, 2 April 1929, p. 34.
\textsuperscript{134}\textit{ibid.}, p. 171.
Chapter 4

Sydney Interior Design, c1920-40: Markers of Modernism

In inter-war Australia, three main trends influencing domestic interiors, promoted by three different groups, are clearly discernible. These positions, all of which represented the 'modern' to various constituents at different times, highlight the fallacy of restricting the terms modern and modernism to a European avant-garde context.1 The interest groups which effected stylistic change are here examined as a corrective to the chronological model which suggests styles are inwardly driven, via a process of inevitable progression.2 The aim is not to privilege modern design, but to assess its shifting meaning to those groups promoting it - the architect, the decorator, the retailer, the manufacturer. The first position is an anti-Victorian Arts and Crafts aesthetic dominated by the prescriptions of architects Hardy Wilson and Leslie Wilkinson, prevalent throughout the 1920s and continuing to be influential in the 1930s. The second is the art deco mode promoted by artists associated with the Contemporary Group and their circle. Following primarily American, British and French models, it emerged circa 1929 and was considered outdated by the mid-1930s, although it continued to influence popular taste as late as the 1950s. The third is an austere modernism with Bauhaus pretensions, which surfaced when a younger group of architects began to practice from the mid-1930s. The emergence of the latter marks the moment when modernism ceased to be associated with femininity, fashion and women artists and designers, and acquired a masculinised rationalist ethos. Several common themes cross these stylistic and ideological boundaries. Descriptions of the alleged benefits of the rationalisation of domestic labour, reduction of household clutter and the application of colour to the domestic environment recur throughout the inter-war period. Men dominated the architectural profession, but women were positioned as the primary consumers in this period, exercising considerable influence over the

1Within the tyranny of the avant-garde, whose pre-suppositions have structured the modernist writing of twentieth-century design, key players are focussed upon for radical innovation; breakthrough follows breakthrough in what Krauss has called the great modernist 'footrace'. [Rosalind Krauss, unpaginated essay in Man Ray. Objects of My Affection, New York, Zabriskie Gallery, 1985]. Within this paradigm mainly French and German architect-designers - Behrens, Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier - are privileged, to the exclusion of women such as Eileen Grey and Charlotte Perriand, and to popular styles such as art deco. In such a framework, the modern art, architecture and design practised in countries other than the originating one are invalid, inauthentic; dismissed as servile copies, they are doomed to lose the race.

2Greenhalgh notes: 'styles don't simply change due to transformations in the taste of the market, or because individual designers suddenly come up with new ideas... They change principally because significant groups within society make them change' [Paul Greenhalgh, 'The Struggles within French Furniture, 1900-1930', in Paul Greenhalgh (ed.), Modernism in Design, London, Reaktion Books, 1990, pp. 55]. In her study of Australian photography Willis warns of uncritically endorsing the new and regarding a shift to modernism as inevitable historical progression. 'Photography is placed in the weaker position of reflecting the modern world instead of being seen as part of the process of making it' [Anne-Marie Willis, Picturing Australia. A History of Photography, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1988, p. 264].
choice of both dwelling and interior design. In all contexts an ideology of inevitable progress was employed to fuel consumer desire and spending.

The Craftsman Home

Australian interior design of the 1920s, both high-style and quotidian, was dominated by an arts and crafts aesthetic. As in domestic architecture, the popularisation of concepts of truth to materials and fitness of purpose witnessed a rejection of late Victorian or Edwardian styles of interior decoration. Civic architecture and the upper-middle class housing market were heavily influenced by the group around Leslie Wilkinson, notably John D. Moore and W. Hardy Wilson, who had derided the Victorian period as debased and barely acknowledged the pre-War 'Queen Anne' (Federation) as it tended to be called. These men supplied many of the articles published in *Art in Australia* and *Home* in the 1920s, magazines which despite their relatively small runs established themselves as arbiters of taste. Moore encouraged a vision of the Australian dwelling which included arcades and breezeways, and acknowledged the changing nature of post-war domestic life in which paid help was decreasing and demands on the housewife accordingly greater. To this end he promoted the integration of the kitchen with the living areas of middle class homes. Just as the architecture of Wilson and Wilkinson favoured a hybrid of neo-Georgian and neo-Californian mission, so too their preferred interiors presented an ordered mixture of late eighteenth-century English styles with the occasional Spanish flourish or 'Jacobean' touch. Upper middle-class furnishing was dominated by either reproduction or genuine antique furniture, middle-class rooms by reproduction furniture or types based on American 'craftsman' models. Jacobean and Georgian-inspired reproductions dominated both middle-class furniture stores such as Beard Watson's, and popular woodworking manuals addressed to a lower-middle and working-class audience. Generally dismissed as uneducated copies, 'debased concoctions', little attempt has been made to consider why such furnishings appealed.
The relative novelty of furnishing the middle-class home with reproduction styles is bound up with the establishment of a canon of English furniture in the 1910s and 1920s. For late-nineteenth-century British design reformers genuine antique furniture enjoyed the appeal of both fitness of purpose and honest craftsmanship.8 The celebration of such furniture coincided with extensive mythmaking concerning an English rural past, in which the English cottage, the country garden and chintz upholstery were feted as timeless models. A recreated manor house or a collection of antique furniture became a useful tactic to suggest families were of venerable lineage.9 The collecting of genuine pre-Victorian furniture was a new preoccupation in this period, and explains why the manufacture of reproduction furniture could be described as novel in the inter-war period. In America, too, antique furniture gained a new status and period forms clothed the new consumer durables such as radio sets. Gebhard argues that American colonial furniture emerged as 'the predominant traditional furniture of the 1930s'.10 He accounts for its popularity in terms of 'a simpler, puritanical, family-oriented world of manageable scale' invoked by the style.11

In their coverage of interior decoration the first decade of Art in Australia (established 1916) and Home (established 1920) are dominated by reproduction furniture. The consistent promotion of 'Jacobean' and 'Georgian' styles by the large Sydney retailers Bebarfald's, Beard Watson's and Anthony Horderns' throughout this period indicates the market penetration of such furniture (plate 22).12 Beard Watson's and Anthony Horderns' were also the most important source of genuine antiques in this period, a role they relinquished as late as the 1950s.13 Their reproduction-antique departments were the predictable source of furnishings for the upper-middle-class Sydney home.14 Furniture based upon American 'Craftsman' types was also frequently advertised in the 1920s. Designs emulating Gustav Stickley's range

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10Ibid., p. 116.
11Ibid., p. 146.
12Bebarfald's appears to have supplied the lower end of the market as its advertisements tended to appear in the press, not the expensive journals, and its monochrome catalogues were printed on cheap paper. Where and How to Furnish, B. Bebarfald and Co. Ltd., Sydney, n.d. [late 19th century].
14The decorator Leslie Walford states that Beard Watson's was the shopping ground for his mother and her wealthy friends. The choices made as to where to shop involved considerations such as personal networks and class, which are lost to us today without oral history. Walford described his mother's aversion to David Jones because she did not like Lady Lloyd Jones and considered the store's stock rather 'fast'. Ibid.
employed the craftsman vocabulary of pegged construction, were made of oak or grained in imitation and received titles such as the 'Mission dining suite' or 'craftsman couch'.

Craftsman-style writing-bureaus and circular tables were particularly popular in carpentry manuals and a cheap pre-fabricated range was marketed under the title 'Homerex' by 1928. Craftsman design continued to co-exist with other more modernistic modes well into the 1930s; Anthony Horderns' 1938 trade catalogue included an illustration of an oak 'craftsman' dining table alongside a 'modern dining room suite' with v-shape inverted supports. An Australian advice manual directed at budget-conscious women, Within the Home (1924), suggested either 'mission type' or Jacobean furniture for the living areas, with no concept of built-in furniture at this date. Similarly, a manual produced by retailer Marcus Clark and Co. (n.d., 1920s), included illustrations of furniture described as 'craftsman finish', 'colonial mission' and 'period' styles such as Queen Anne and Jacobean.

Trade journals confirm the image of middle-class Australian furniture of the inter-war period as embracing anglophile revival styles with Jacobean at the pinnacle. The manufacturers' journal, The Craftsman, preached a conservative editorial into the 1930s; 'Pieces which seek completely to ignore the influence of the work of the past... are rarely among the most successful'. As this journal suggested, furniture 'is bought in the average home only twice in a life-time... only a small number of well-to-do people can afford to be cajoled into buying the unusual and to change it when they become tired of seeing it in the home'. Karskens notes that Australian suburban home-buyers preferred a safe set of choices as, 'They needed sound investments as well as appropriate and practical styles. The popularity of reproduction styles can also be explained by their suggestion of timeless values and tradition. The baronial

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15Anthony Horderns' Mail Order Catalogue, Sydney, October 1923, p. 961.
16Alex Smith, The Australian Home Carpenter. A Book for Amateurs and Craftsmen, Melbourne, United Press, 1929, illustrates arts and crafts types such as a bookcase-secrétaire, p. 106.
17How the Hobby Family Solved all their troubles, "Homerex", Home Recreations Ltd. 388 George St, Sydney, n.d. [late 1920s ready-cut furniture], MAAS. For the dating see Home, 1 May 1928, pp. 72-3.
19---Within the Home, Sydney, R. Maitland, 1924, pp. 15, 23.
21A 1930 editorial noted 'The furniture industry has a great future before it.... we have the advances made in the making of Jacobean and Elizabethan types of furniture, which reflects the greatest credit upon both our designers and those who effect the fabrication of such excellent specimens of art'. 'Psychology in Solving Difficulties', The Craftsman, vol. 4, no. 8, September 1930, p. 7.
24Karskens, op. cit., p. 142.
pretension of the inter-war Jacobean manner is neatly indicated in the frontispiece of a 1922 British furniture-design manual, in which a battle-axe is propped against a suburban lounge and oak buffet (plate 23).25

**Art Moderne, Fashion and Femininity**

The craftsman house has been characterised as embodying masculine associations. Cheryl Robertson argues convincingly that the American Craftsman bungalow was an 'architecture of virility', related to the frontier ethos of the late-nineteenth century.26 It generated masculine meanings centred upon the woodsman ethos, the use of textured surfaces such as stone in exterior and interior-design, craftsman-style furniture and the development of the den, an updated term for a male smoking-room.27 If the craftsman style can be considered masculine in orientation, then the modernism promoted in Australia in the late 1920s and early 1930s was feminine. Despite the associations of modern science and engineering with masculine rationalism, modern design in Australia was firmly associated with fashion, faddishness and femininity until the mid-1930s.28

In post-war Sydney the popular face of modernism was mediated through design, notably fashionable women's dress and associated advertising.29 Art deco-derived motifs appeared on women's fashions before they emerged extensively in graphics or other consumer goods.30 A 1922 article entitled 'Poiret and Paris. David Jones' Display. Vogue of Steel and Fur' described the store exhibit thus; 'Life-sized futurist ladies sported gowns... they smirked and flirted with their cubist eyes'.31 The store began to employ a bold modern advertising style from 1924, although not

26Cheryl Robertson, 'Male and Female Agendas for Domestic Reform. The Middle-Class Bungalow in Gendered Perspective', Winterthur Portfolio, vol. 26, nos. 2/3, Summer-Autumn 1991, p. 133. Robertson argues that in the period after World War I the American house was refeminised, mission furniture replaced with lacquered or painted furnishings, restoring 'elements of the gilded and textile-swatbed parlor'. Wright also notes that decorators 'parlayed Sigmund Freud and Havelock Ellis into a formula of "sex psychology" for decorating and architecture', in which men's spaces were associated with 'dark colors, substantial furniture, and bold, rugged materials'. *ibid.*, p. 141.
27*ibid.*, pp. 133-8.
28Willis' study of Australian cultural identity, which appeared as I finalised this chapter, notes, 'there was not a great deal of distinction between the world of fashion and the world of art'. She cites interior design and magazine illustration without considering their feminised charge. Anne-Marie Willis, *Illusions of Identity. The Art of Nation*, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1993, p. 145.
30In the 1924 David Jones' mail-order catalogue the only detail resembling art deco design is beading on dresses. *David Jones' Mail Order Catalogue*, Sydney, Autumn-Winter 1924.
31'Poiret and Paris', *Daily Sun*, 5 April 1922, in Press Clippings Scrapbook, May 1919-September 1924, DJA.
exclusively, as traditional illusionistic wash-drawings continued to dominate their mail-order catalogues. Their campaign for 'Paris Yesterday - A Fashion Presentation', July 1924, employed striking deco-style graphics in presenting an image of the modern angular androgyne (plate 24).32 Men were never so radically distorted in illustrations nor advertising. The Australian examples accord with Marchand's thesis regarding American modernism and gender. Men were assumed to be modern; they might be portrayed in advertising as managers and business men. Women, on the other hand, had to be made modern, ruthlessly reshaped; 'never did advertising artists distort and reshape men's bodies as they did when they transformed women into Art Deco figurines'.33

Allusions to modern-art movements occurred frequently in the context of David Jones' fashion installations. The store was noted for its window displays arranged by H. W. Bindoff, descriptions of which are a good indication of the contemporary perception of modern design. 'Modernism in decoration has come to Sydney... (with) the restraint and simplicity of the new movement, the stark lines, the rich colour and austere forms'.34 Other stores followed David Jones' lead; in 1937 Farmers' Autumn fashion windows featured replicas of the works of artists including Max Ernst, Alexander Calder and Picabia.35

Retailers rather than Australian manufacturers appear to be responsible for initially promoting the new taste for art moderne in Australia. The fad appears first in imported textiles and 'smalls' - Lalique glass, china by companies such as Shelley and Clarice Cliff, lamps, ornaments and accessories.36 They were frequently advertised with images using the techniques of modernist photography - raking angles and bird's-eye perspective (plate 25). These stocks and fashions changed rapidly, and were possibly responsible for the jaded view of modernism as a woman's style. Smith's Weekly reported that 'the hostess of 1931... would look decidedly out of place serving tea from the "modern" sets of a year or so ago, when all black, and all gold tea-sets in cubist designs were rampant, and when patterns were blocks of futuristically applied

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34 See 'Modern Art in Window Display at David Jones', *Home*, 2 September 1929, p. 54.
35 'Examples of strange Surrealist art', *Daily Sun*, 26 February 1937, Press Clippings Scrapbook, November 1936-April 1937, DJA.
36 Lalique glass was illustrated at Hordern's Fine Art Gallery in 1926 (*Home*, 1 December 1926, p.105). Goods illustrated and described as available in Sydney in 1929 included Lallemant ceramics (with both art deco patterns and bold geometric forms, retailed at Beard Watson's), modern Dutch glassware (available at the Roycroft Library and Art Shop) and Swedish Orrefors glass including examples by Simon Gate and Edward Hald (retailed at Grosvenor Galleries) [*Art in Australia*, December 1929, plates 58, 67, 70, 71].
Home magazine in turn reported upon and illustrated the new merchandise, the magazine itself becoming self-consciously modern from 1932, with new typography and layout.46 Sydney Ure Smith was also a sleeping partner in the Grosvenor Galleries, which stocked the modern Orrefors glass and bold woodcuts which were in turn advertised in the pages of Art in Australia and Home.47

In 1924 a range of Paul Poiret cretonnes and matching velvet-pile furnishing fabrics was installed in David Jones', arranged by Margaret Preston on framed black board.48 Poiret's fabrics were famous throughout the world for their bold patterns by Raoul Dufy and the young female artists at the Ecole Martine. A review in the Daily Sun claimed the display was 'unique for its striking color [sic], unusual design, and pictorial quality'.49 The 'brilliant colour and design' of the fabrics became a pretext for endorsing modern painting; 'some sort of unusual picture is necessary as a wall decoration. A Gruner picture would be lost beside such vivid color'.50 Several years later Home illustrated precisely this formula. The living-room of Mrs Wilfred Fairfax, Point Piper, featured a chair in a pink, blue, mauve and green Poiret cretonne, surmounted by a painting by Roy de Maistre.51 Women's umbrellas covered in Poiret fabric were also sold in David Jones', and it was claimed 'there is one parasol made - handle and all - by the great Poiret himself.52 West Australian artist Kathleen O'Connor had worked with Poiret in Paris for about five years, before visiting Sydney in 1927.53 She 'painted fabrics, ceramics and straw sunshades' for Grace Brothers' and David Jones' at this time.54

Poiret's bold, stylised fabrics made a considerable impression on modern Sydney artists, as they were copied as painted backdrops for the Harold Cazneaux

46The modernism of Home magazine was not inevitable; when compared to the British journal My Home it appears sophisticated and advanced. In the June 1931 edition of My Home, all decorating hints are 'Jacobean' in nature.
47Regarding the partnership see Underhill, op. cit., p. 163.
49ibid.
50ibid.
51Home, 2 April 1929, p. 34.
52'Poiret Cretonnes. Rich, Colored Fabrics', op. cit. A Poiret parasol is illustrated Home, 1 December 1925, p. 48. Early the following year the Daily Sun noted that 'Poiret made a day of it at the Tirranna races yesterday, and his cretonne umbrellas dominated' [Daily Sun, 10 January 1925, in Press Clippings Scrapbook, September 1924-November 1928, DJA]. Poiret was of considerable interest, articles appearing regarding copies of his gowns ['Poiret Gowns for All. Life size Patterns', Sunday Times, 15 February 1925, in ibid.] and an article describing Poiret's designs for furniture, perfume, fetes and clothes was published in The Sun, 23 August 1925 [in ibid.].
54ibid.
Home fashion shoots published between 1928-29. Closely resembling Dufy's block-printed designs for fabric printed at the Petite Usine (established by Poiret and Dufy in 1911) and by Lyons silk manufacturer Bianchini-Férier from 1912-28, slight discrepancies reveal them to be copies. The backdrop Roy de Maistre designed to highlight several sitters for their Cazneaux photographic portraits (plate 27) imitates a stylised black and white floral motif, first used as a border to a hanging by Dufy in 1910, and later produced as the printed velvet La Perse in the Petite Usine (plate 28). It is possibly the fabric described in Home as 'a growth, strong and clamorous, of prehistoric and colossal sunflower, joyous on a ground of resonant black'. Similarly, there is a striking resemblance but slight differences in de Maistre's version of the Dufy-designed Bianchini-Férier fabric Bagatelle (plate 29) used in the photograph of Miss Anne Jamieson (plate 30). Although the artists might have observed these fabrics in reproduction, the pear-and-foliage design employed by Adrian Feint in several Cazneaux studio photographs is a near copy of a Poiret fabric available at David Jones' in 1924 (plates 31-2).

The question of time-lag is clearly raised by this example of copying, and although it might be argued that these fabrics by French standards were old-fashioned, ten years or more out-of-date, it should be noted that Dufy continued to work in the manner of the looser rose motifs until 1930. The photographs arose as a result of Cazneaux being asked by Leon Gellert to create more self-consciously modern images in cooperation with modern artists. Modernism did not rise phoenix-like from the

55 The seedheads of the anemones in the backdrop resembling the pattern La Perse [see below] are larger and placed differently from the Dufy original. I have not identified a prototype for the de Maistre backdrop of Miss Bethia Anderson [Home, 1 March 1929, p. 38], but the disposition of leaves and tendrils resembles Dufy's Bianchini-Férier fabrics of c1925 [Dora Perez-Tibi, Dufy, London, Thames and Hudson, 1989, pp. 92-3]. The backdrop to 'Miss Shirley Bavin' [Home, 1 December 1928, p. 26] resembles Dufy's overblown rose designs of the mid 1920s [Perez-Tibi, op. cit., p. 111].

56 H. Cazneaux, photographer, Roy de Maistre, stylist, Miss Mary Turner, Home, 1 November 1928, p. 45; Miss Molly Street, Home, 1 December 1928, p. 36; Miss Anne Jamieson, Home, 1 March 1929, p. 39. Dickinson-Monteth photographed Miss Sonia Revid against the same backdrop in 1933, where it is positively identified as by Raoul Dufy [The Penitent, Home, 2 October 1933, p. 36].

57 Raoul Dufy, La Perse, black and white velvet, 1911. For the hanging see Perez-Tibi, op. cit., p. 68, and for a contemporary photograph of the fabric made into a cape see ibid., p. 67. Poiret hung the walls of his couture house with this pattern in the 1920s [ibid., p. 69].

58 A poorly drawn illustration of this fabric accompanied the note. 'Sydney s'amuse', Home, 1 September 1924, p. 49.

59 This fabric is dated 1923 [Perez-Tibi, op. cit., p. 64]. For Jamieson see Home, 1 March 1929, p. 39.

60 Articles concerning Dufy's textile designs appeared in such journals as Art et décoration and L'Amour de l'art from 1920 [Perez-Tibi, op. cit., p. 331-2].

61 'Sydney s'amuse', op. cit. H. Cazneaux, photographer, Adrian Feint, stylist, Doris Zinkeisen, Home, 1 March 1929, p. 37; Miss Betty Willsallen, Home, 2 April 1929, p. 45.

62 Perez-Tibi, op. cit., p. 207.

63 Cazneaux recalled: 'Syd was well known in Society Circles and he could name the subjects possible. One evening he suggested that I work in with some prominent artists in the production of 'Home'
ashes of the arts and crafts movement; it was prodded into existence by various interest
groups.

**Home Magazine: Modernism and Marketing**

In February 1920 the first number of *Home* was published by Sydney Ure Smith, its stated aim being to bring the best of modern living to the Australian consumer. Judging from the cover designs, the contents and addresses, this consumer was marked as feminine. The class basis of the journal is indicated in its assumption that the reader had staff or domestic help. The magazine’s emphasis, unlike *Australian Home Journal* and later the *Women’s Weekly*, was on leisure and taste; there was very little on cooking, household hints, let alone domestic chores. That its circulation was never much more than 7500 indicates the problem in taking it as a model for modernity in Australia. The editorial tactic was to claim a position as arbiter of taste, disguising the promotional tactics and frequent uncritical judgements. With Charles Lloyd Jones as a financial backer and frequent advertiser, the magazine took on a complexion as a house magazine for David Jones, which in turn benefited from *Home’s* connection with high culture and art. The customer could in fact purchase *Home* on a David Jones’ charge account.

In format and style *Home* is virtually identical to both British *Vogue* and British *House and Garden*, also founded in 1920 to feature 'examples of good contemporary work ...along with the good work of the past'. These magazines featured both line drawings and black and white photographs often framed in cartouches. They marked themselves off from more pedestrian magazines which included little colour and less imaginative approaches to advertising and graphic design. Unlike *Home, House and Garden* never featured the Gustav Stickley American Craftsman aesthetic, favouring instead French schemes of the type popularised by Paul

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portraits of noted people. I said Syd we will call them our 'New Idea portraits'... the idea didn't work well [he notes artists dwelled on the position of subjects] I told Syd... I would ... do the job on my own - So in future work I worked alone but I did use some of the painted modern Idea Backgrounds that Adrian Feint and de Mestre painted for my purpose... Syd ...congratulated me on being able to become 'modern'” [Harold Cazneaux to Jack Cato, 6 March 1951]. 'Leon Gellert then on The Home Editorial staff asked me if I could possibly produce some "Modern distortive portraits" as a stunt for the Journal...Leon Gellert was a live wire, always asking me for *unusual stuff, something different, new ideas Caz!!*’ [Harold Cazneaux to Jack Cato, 10 March 1951; NGA correspondence files, courtesy Gael Newton].

64 Underhill, op. cit., p. 166.
65 Marchand notes an art link was a common strategy in twentieth-century marketing. Marchand, op. cit., p. 8.
66 *David Jones’ Mail Order Catalogue*, Spring 1931, p. 16.
67 *House and Garden* [British ed.], vol. 1, no. 1, November 1920, p. 8. The British edition took the place of the former American edition available in Britain.
Poiret in the early 1920s.\textsuperscript{68} The modern schemes in both magazines were counterpoised, however, by a high proportion of interiors furnished with reproduction and antique furniture. In 1929 \textit{Home} was advertised in \textit{Art in Australia} with the strident 'Modernism has reached Australia', accompanied by an Harold Cazneaux-Adrian Feint studio portrait of the type described previously.\textsuperscript{69} From this point the magazine made a self-conscious effort to identify itself with the 'modern spirit of Australia'.\textsuperscript{70} Both \textit{Home} and \textit{Art in Australia} used modern design to promote and justify modern Australian art. The following example provides the typical conjunction:

> The prejudice against the more modern art in Australia is difficult to understand. Modern designs in fabrics used for women's clothing, curtains, furniture, rugs, glass, china and lighting fixtures are imported every month in quite large quantities into our country and they are all readily appreciated. Many of them are designed by modern artists, yet we are confronted with the inconsistency of a woman in a gown designed by a modern French artist and completely surrounded by the products of a modern decorative artist's brain, condemning "modern" work, by an Australian artist, which would fit in so well with her modern home.\textsuperscript{71}

David Jones' itself became a paradigm of modernity when the George Street men's store was opened in 1936.\textsuperscript{72} The most common adjective applied to the architecture and internal fittings of the store was 'streamlined', which the proprietor Charles Lloyd Jones described as epitomising 'that new form born of a combination of science and art'.\textsuperscript{73} Trade journals were not coy in noting the lucrative connection which was made between modern display methods and the ability to retail the cult of modernity, of being up-to-date: 'such modernization has an important place in getting maximum sales volume'.\textsuperscript{74} The opening of the Market Street store in 1938 completed the David Jones' mission of modernity. The interiors included 'electrically-illumined glass-topped tables of modernistic design'.\textsuperscript{75} Its streamlined façade with rounded corner, aluminium window-frames, cantilevered awning and concealed lighting merged an image of luxury and the machine age.\textsuperscript{76}

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\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{68}House and Garden, vol. II, no. 4, August 1921, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{69}Art in Australia, March 1929, advertisement.
\textsuperscript{70}ibid.
\textsuperscript{71}Editorial, Art in Australia, September 1929, unpaginated.
\textsuperscript{72}See Art in Australia, 15 February 1936, pp. 83-6.
\textsuperscript{73}Charles Lloyd Jones, 'Art and Design', Design, Summer 1937, Press Clippings Scrapbook, November 1936-April 1937, DJA. See also Laurence Kirk, The Streamlined Store of To-morrow [sic], Selling, 1 October 1936, Press Clippings Scrapbook, July-November 1936, DJA.
\textsuperscript{74}ibid.
\textsuperscript{75}David Jones' News. A Newspaper for Staff, vol. 1, no. 29, 8 August 1938, p. 2, Press Clippings Scrapbook, November 1937-May 1938, DJA.
\textsuperscript{76}For coverage of the opening see Art in Australia, 16 May 1938, p. 5 [advertisement]; 15 August 1938, pp. 53-7.
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The Burdekin House Exhibition

The Burdekin House Exhibition (Sydney, 1929) represented the waning of the arts and crafts aesthetic which had dominated the 1920s and its replacement with the cult of the self-consciously moderne. Organised by a Committee including Sydney Ure Smith, antique collector Oscar Paul, the artist Roy de Maistre and the architects John Berry and Leslie Wilkinson, the majority of exhibition space was occupied by antique furnishings borrowed from private collections, arranged by period and nationality in room sets which reinforced the model of restrained symmetrical taste popularised by Hardy Wilson in the preceding years. Several modern room sets designed by artists who had been tagged the 'Contemporary Group' - Roy de Maistre, Adrian Feint, Thea Proctor, Henry Pynor, Hera Roberts and Frank Weitzel - were included on the third floor. Here, arts and crafts concerns were emphatically rejected and replaced with an emphasis on brilliantly-coloured surfaces, unpatterned walls and furniture based on geometric forms. Distancing themselves from the wood aesthetic which was so prominent in arts and crafts furniture, the pieces were painted in bright colour combinations such as orange, vermilion and magenta (plate 33).

This was a genteel modernism which had little to do with the type promoted by Le Corbusier or Walter Gropius. Despite the claim that the furniture designed by Pynor and Weitzel was modelled on the Bauhaus (plate 34), neither metal nor glass were employed as materials, and furnishings continued to conform to traditional single functions. Unlike contemporary overseas examples, there was no attempt to exploit concealed lighting, which became a marker of modernity in Australia in the 1930s.

Sydney Ure Smith wrote in the Burdekin House catalogue: 'Nothing as complete as these rooms has been seen previously in Sydney and they prove conclusively that good modern furniture can be designed and made in Sydney.' Ure Smith's endorsement of stylistic change in the decorative arts is described by Underhill as of a different order than his conception of high art, which was expected to maintain a

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77 Burdekin House, op. cit
78 Art in Australia, September 1929 [issue entitled 'A Contemporary Group of Australian Artists'], unpaginated.
79 Burdekin House, op. cit, unpaginated. For another photograph of their designs see Home, 1 November 1929, p. 54.
80 See, for example, 'A Hallway for a Modern House [design by Paul Frankl], British Vogue, 20 March 1929, p. 60.
81 Burdekin House, op. cit, foreword.
more conservative position. His interest was in 'developing taste in the community' and he expressed the hope that a Museum of Decorative and Applied Art might be established in Sydney. Leon Gellert provided an essay regarding the Burdekin House designs which explained the new trends as an inevitable result of the generation gap:

Modern interior decoration had at its origin, no doubt, the usual rebellious regard which one age has for its immediate predecessor. It sprang from the spirit of revolt against the drab and the fussy and expressed itself in the creation of stark, rigid forms and broad surfaces of bare, unbroken colour... It eliminates all that is unnecessary and is in agreement with the whole world-movement towards simplification as exemplified in modern dress, modern architecture, modern art, modern hygiene, town-planning and constructional engineering.

There was no attempt to problematise the meaning of 'modernism' in accompanying literature. Even Vogue had described the issue:

A sky-scraper bookcase is essentially no more modern than a horizontal one, nor are the geometric motives that prevail in so-called modernistic design more reflective of a twentieth-century point of view than flower forms or curves.

The Burdekin House furniture types were all closely related to American and French models. Heather Johnston identified de Maistre's design for a skyscraper bookcase (plate 35) as derived from New Dimensions. The Decorative Arts of Today in Words and Pictures (1928) by Paul Frankl, an Austrian emigré working in New York, whose text entered the State Library of New South Wales in 1928. Frankl's skyscraper bookcases (plate 36) were identified with chic penthouse-living and were also reproduced in Britain around this time. Frankl's New Dimensions illustrated a wide range of contemporary designs ranging from Frank Lloyd Wright to René Herbst as well as his own work. Johnston's argument can be extended in that other Burdekin House furniture designs appear to be copied from Frankl's text; de Maistre's

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82Underhill, op. cit., p. 22.
83Burdekin House, op. cit.
84Leon Gellert, 'The Modern Interior Decoration', in ibid., unpaginated.
85'Two Wings of German Modern Art', British Vogue, 1 May 1929, p. 55.
arc-armed chair (plate 37)\textsuperscript{89}, Hera Roberts' chair design, a cylinder bisected diagonally (plate 38)\textsuperscript{90} and Adrian Feint's desk (plate 39).\textsuperscript{91} The Frankl designs had wide currency; variations of both the de Maistre and Roberts chairs were illustrated in American publications between 1928 and 1930 (plate 40).\textsuperscript{92}

Although the Burdekin House furniture is often discussed in terms of \textit{art deco} it bears little resemblance to the furniture types exhibited at the 1925 Paris Exposition International des Arts Décoratifs Modernes et Industriels.\textsuperscript{93} The term \textit{art deco} is highly problematic, coined as it was in the 1960s to describe the varied exhibits in the 1925 Exposition. Rather than the presence there of Le Corbusier’s marginalised \textit{Pavillon de l’Esprit Nouveau} and the constructivist Konstantin Melnikov’s Soviet Pavilion, the style is taken to denote the aristocratic manner of designers including J.-E. Ruhlmann, André Groult and Sue et Mare, in which neo-classical furniture forms (Louis XVI, Empire, Biedermeier) and high-style types (the \textit{bergère}, \textit{sécrétaire}, sleigh bed, \textit{commode} and console) were crafted in luxury materials and updated with simplification.\textsuperscript{94} It was an élite, costly style which did not question the traditional function and arrangement of furnishings. Rather, it continued the eighteenth-century arrangement of public and private rooms - salon versus boudoir - with the addition of luxurious new bathrooms. In these terms the Burdekin House furniture is unrelated to French \textit{art deco}. The retailer Beard Watson's included in the catalogue a line drawing of a small table whose form is typical of French design of the mid 1920s, but this piece is neither described nor photographed and is possibly invention.

Australia produced neither whole interiors nor individual furnishings to rival the grandest \textit{art deco} manner which was employed from Paris to Tokyo in the inter-war period.\textsuperscript{95} Unlike America, there were none of the exhibitions and large-scale copying

\textsuperscript{89}A chair identical to de Maistre's was illustrated in William J. Etten (ed.), \textit{Manual of the Furniture Arts and Crafts}, Grand Rapids, Michigan, A.P. Johnson Co., 1928, p. 255, where it is described as designed by Frankl galleries in silver leaf finish.

\textsuperscript{90}For a similar design by Louis Sognot see Frankl, \textit{op. cit.}, pl. 48 and \textit{Home}, 1 October 1928, p. 43. Roberts' cover design for \textit{Home}, 1 April 1930, illustrated a similar chair in a dining-room overlooking a skyscraper city.

\textsuperscript{91}For a similar design by Etienne Kohlmann for Studium-Louvre, Paris, see \textit{ibid.}, pl. 46.\textsuperscript{92}ibid. 'Very modern chairs' similar to Roberts' were illustrated in \textit{American House and Garden} c1928-9 [see Mary Jane Pool (ed.), \textit{20th Century Decorating, Architecture and Gardens. 80 Years of Ideas and Pleasure from House and Garden}, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980, p. 83]. The same photograph appeared in British \textit{Vogue}, 1929, indicating the international circulation of imagery within the Condé Nast group ['New York Lights Up', British \textit{Vogue}, 23 January 1929, p. 44].

\textsuperscript{93}Daniel Thomas, 'Art Deco in Australia', \textit{Art and Australia}, vol. 9, no. 4, March 1972, pp. 345-6. Terence Lane surveyed the exhibition briefly describing the pieces as 'art moderne', which was the name at the time accorded to \textit{art deco} idioms [Lane, \textit{op. cit.}].


\textsuperscript{95}The pre-eminent Parisian decorator Ruhlmann, for instance, provided several elaborate interiors for
of goods from the 1925 Exposition. The interiors of department stores and the Australia Hotel (opened Sydney, 1936) provided the few large Australian commissions of the period, and they are not in the same vein as overseas examples. There were to be found instead furniture and fittings which reproduced the motifs but not necessarily the sumptuousness of the art deco style, the 'contemporary art' cornice designs by Wunderlich, for example (plate 41). Beard Watson's had illustrated and offered for sale a facsimile of a macassar ebony and mother-of-pearl cabinet (plate 42) which was purportedly exhibited in 1925, but this was both an isolated instance and a poor example of the style. The Australian art deco aesthetic was frequently not assimilated to the body of a piece, but made its appearance in details. A chair by H. Goldman, c1932, consists of a standard form with a sun-ray inlaid back.

It is possible that detailed plates of French art deco interiors were not readily available in Australia at the time of the Burdekin House Exhibition. Home magazine had reproduced few of the decorative schemes from the 1925 Paris Exposition, favouring architecture and dress instead. The modern French furnishing folios lodged in the State Library of New South Wales were not available until 1930-31, entering almost immediately following their publication dates. Presuming that the collection of the Library indicates the types of sources available to the Sydney artist of this period, if the Burdekin House Exhibition had been held slightly later a different aesthetic might have emerged. A more thorough understanding of both French deco modes and German modernism would have been available for the artists to peruse. Henri Rapin's text, for instance, juxtaposes designs by Gropius and Breuer with the quintessental deco-designer J.E. Ruhlmann, noting the tension between the French and German conceptions of furnishings: 'Jusqu'à présent le Français répugne à l'idée de s'entourer de meubles fabriqués en grosse série, il admet peu la standardisation de son

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98 *Home*, 1 February 1928, p. 53.
100 *Home*, 1 June 1925, pp. 40-1; 1 October 1925, p. 48. This was also the case with a report which illustrated a wax model at the 'recent Decorative Arts Exhibition in Paris' [*Australian Woman's Mirror*, vol. 1, no. 41, 1 September 1925, p. 11].
Anything published by *Studio* magazine was likely to have been read—many special issues were reviewed by *Art in Australia*—but the magazine retained a strong British emphasis. The Adrian Feint collection of books and periodicals (National Gallery of Australia) unfortunately includes few periodicals pre-1940, suggesting they might have been discarded. One such relating to interior decoration is *Le Jardin de Bibliophile*, Paris 1929, which includes an illustration of a Ruhlmannesque highly-varnished buffet. This aesthetic was not, however, promoted in the 1929 *Burdekin House Exhibition*.

The wider impact of the *Burdekin House Exhibition* is difficult to assess. Not surprisingly, it was extensively covered by *Home* magazine, providing a useful photographic record of the layout of the furnishings, including perhaps the only colour reproduction. None of the pieces has come to the attention of museum curators. The catalogue included an advertisement for Beard Watson's claiming that the furniture would be manufactured by them, and there is photographic evidence that at least one item of the Burdekin House furniture was produced. Hera Roberts' chair appeared in Beard Watson's advertisement in the Burdekin House number of *Home*, where it was described as part of an 'art moderne' bedroom suite, 'one of the most interesting that has ever been seen in Sydney' (plate 43). A variant of the de Maistre armchair and skyscraper bookcase was used to illustrate a Grace Brothers' advertisement for 'Moderne Art' carpeting in 1932 (see plate 48). The longevity of styles is indicated in Anthony Horderns' 1938 mail order catalogue, which illustrated a bedroom chair similar to Roberts' 1929 chair. Hera Roberts' *Burdekin House* cabinet and another elongated version of it enjoyed an afterlife, a 'grey-green' version appearing on the cover of *Home* in May 1934 and a similar piece furnished Ure Smith's apartment in Manar, Potts Point. It is possible that artists including Roberts contributed other

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102 Rapin, *op. cit.*, unpaginated.
103 No intelligent Australian who is interested in art, architecture or the crafts should be without this journal... One can see the most interesting examples of modern architecture, shop fronts, theatres, films, glassware and pottery, textiles of all sorts... interior decoration in modern liners, Halls, public buildings, domestic architecture... Every year *The Studio* publishes a special number on Decorative Art, giving the newest ideas in house-planning and interiors'. Sydney Ure Smith, '“The Studio” Publications. What they mean to intelligent Australians', *Art in Australia*, 15 February 1932, p. 65.
104 Lodged NGARL.
105 *Le Jardin de Bibliophile*, 1929, unpaginated. That other French journals were imported by 1930 is indicated in an advertisement for *La Renaissance de l'Art*, which 'will also give many new ideas in Modern Interior Decoration'. See *Art in Australia*, March 1930, unpaginated advertisement.
106 *Home*, 1 October 1929, p. 21.
107 Lane, *op. cit.*, introduction. I wish to thank John McPhee for confirming that none has appeared.
108 *Home*, 1 October 1929, p. 60.
109 *Home*, 1 October 1932, p. 63.
110 *Anthony Horderns' Mail Order Catalogue*, Sydney, 1938, p. 38.
designs to furniture retailers in the inter-war period which were not credited.\footnote{A sideboard by Molly Grey, for example, was illustrated in an Art in Australia advertisement with reference only to the manufacturer, Ricketts & Thorp Ltd. 'Australian Furniture', Art in Australia, November 1936, p. 110. For the attribution see ibid., p. 80.}

The Australian Furniture Industry and Conservatism

The nature of the Australian furniture industry mitigated against the adoption of a modernist aesthetic and the use of materials such as metal and glass in the 1920s. The furniture market in twentieth-century Australia consisted primarily of locally made goods, a reversal of the nineteenth-century trend in which Australia was the second largest market for British manufactures after the British West Indies.\footnote{In 1924 it was reported that in the pre-war period Australian-made chairs were confined largely to dining-room suites; bedroom, office, kitchen and library chairs coming from America, drawing-room chairs from Britain and 'Austrian' (ie. bentwood) chairs from Central Europe. The Furnishing Worker, 5 November 1924, editorial note.} This distinguishes furniture from most other products, which were designed and manufactured overseas.\footnote{Anne-Marie Willis, Illusions of Identity. The Art of Nation, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1993, p. 135.} A post-war government review noted, for instance, that in 1938-9 imports of furniture were valued at approximately £92,000, a small figure compared to the value of Australian manufacturers at £6,666,861.\footnote{Brief Review of the Australian Furniture Industry, Department of Post-War Reconstruction, Division of Industrial Development, Melbourne, October 1948, pp. 3-4. The United Kingdom and U.S.A. were the principal sources of imports in the pre-war period, to which Sweden was added in 1946-47. ibid., p. 5.} The report indicated that apart from a small quantity of high-grade American furniture, the 'major part of imports, however, would be samples only...The high transport costs, duties, etc. , would make the price of imported furniture almost prohibitive for general sale on the retail market'.\footnote{ibid., p. 5.} Australian figured-woods such as silky oak and Queensland walnut, which were considered particularly appropriate to the \textit{art deco} aesthetic in the 1930s, were popular materials. The majority of coverings - upholstery as well as carpets - however, was imported.\footnote{ibid., p. 10.}

The furnishing trades published numerous journals which reveal the conservative guild-like structure of the activity in Australia.\footnote{Occupations included machining, assembly, finishing and upholstering; within these divisions were sub-divisions such as enamelling, staining, French and spray polishing, lacquering. Workers were broadly defined as wood machinists (sawyers, turners, shaping and moulding machinists, planers, sanders, borers etc.), furniture makers (cabinet makers, chair or frame makers, carvers, upholsterers, assemblers, veneer cutters), polishers and bedstead and wire mattress makers. ibid., p. 7. For the purpose of Commonwealth statistics furnishings of metal, cane or wicker were not collated as 'furniture' until the post-Second World War period.} Although labour
specialisation and assembly-line methods existed in the large factories, the majority of pieces were made by hand in smaller establishments. Manufacturers tended to specialise in either bedroom, lounge or dining suites, kitchen pieces, office furniture, occasional pieces or period reproduction styles. The very nature of the trade predisposed it to conservatism; specialised tasks acquired over a long apprenticeship were not willingly relinquished and new technologies and materials were vocally rejected at a time of economic uncertainty.\textsuperscript{119} The hostility directed towards modern furnishing schemes revolved around new materials and the declining use of case-pieces; in the early 1930s the increasing popularity of built-in furniture and the use of metal were described as a threat to the livelihood of members of the trade.\textsuperscript{120}

Revealing attitudes towards modern styles are indicated in the trade publications. A 1919 article on Australian design noted:

I have observed with regret that the so-called "new art" of Munich seems to predominate. I have seen frequently house furniture which gave the impression that the draughtsman had conceived the design under the influence of a nightmare...\textsuperscript{121}

Probably continuing the reference to a continental art nouveau idiom, the writer suggested, 'it would be advisable to modify the existing methods and leave entirely on one side the Chino-German inspiration, which is injuring the national production in this artistic and important industry'.\textsuperscript{122}

It was generally acknowledged that Australians favoured British models. Hera Roberts stated in 1934; 'In Sydney I think women would prefer to follow the English method in interior decoration rather than the Continental'.\textsuperscript{123} The Australian middle class had never adopted the curvilinear excesses of art nouveau but preferred the rectilinear version; interestingly, nor did the British nor the Americans.\textsuperscript{124} The

\textsuperscript{119}It was claimed that the furnishing trades were 'the first and worst-affected' by the Depression. See \textit{The Furnishing Worker}, 5 April 1930, p. 1 and subsequent issues.
\textsuperscript{120}See Editorial, \textit{The Australian Woodworker}, July-August 1933, p. 2. That simple flush units were also more accessible to the home carpenter might also suggest a source of antagonism to the trade. A 1937 manual noted 'Certain pieces of furniture in the modern manner may safely be achieved by the amateur, whereas the turnings and carvings and shapings of "period pieces" are possible only to the skilled cabinet-maker' [W.T. R. Price, \textit{It's Fun to Build Things}, New York, Hillman-Curl, 1937, p. viii]. Built-ins were proposed not merely as part of a modern aesthetic but had been valued in the Craftsman home for their hygienic potential. 'The four-legged bathtub is rapidly becoming obsolete. Housewives rightly condemn it as unsanitary and productive of unnecessary labour' [Edwin M. Love, \textit{Built-In Furniture. Complete plans and instructions covering almost every conceivable application of built-in furniture, in such a way as to enable any handy man to add greatly to the beauty and convenience of his home, at small cost}, Chicago, Popular Mechanics Press, 1927, p. 96].
\textsuperscript{121}Paul Thomsen [sic], 'The Furnishing Art in Australia', \textit{The Furnishing Worker}, 4 April 1919, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{122}\textit{ibid}.
\textsuperscript{123}\textit{Home}, 3 April 1934, p. 49.
\textsuperscript{124}Hanks and Tober in Phillips, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 17.
French and Belgian brand of *art nouveau* was associated with decadence and had been disparaged by prominent British Arts and Crafts theorists. Their criticism reverberates in the comments of an Australian furniture salesman describing his visit to continental factories in 1931:

In the art of furniture-making England now, as always, leads the world... There is a great sanity of thought in the English designs... the bizarre and eccentric ideas of contemporary continentals are brought into a sensible subjection.125

The model of a fashion-crazy Europe and a sane antipodean refuge was similar to that used to attack modernist painting. French furniture, presumably *art déco* variants, was described in a trade journal as 'eccentric' and 'bizarre' - 'the Art Moderne, unrestrained and undignified, rules to the exclusion of everything else'.126

**Metallic Modernity**

Apart from light-fittings, there is little evidence that the type of decorative bronze and wrought-iron furnishings exhibited at the 1925 Paris *Exposition* were copied here. There was, however, considerable interest after 1930 in the minimalist aesthetic of the tubular-steel cantilever chair and metal beds and tables pioneered at the Bauhaus and popularised by American, British and Finnish designers. The amount of such furniture manufactured here is surprising, considering the nature and conservatism of large elements of the furniture industry. As early as 1930 the *Furnishing Worker* noted the competition from an Adelaide firm manufacturing metal bedroom suites and metal office furniture.127 In Australia the use of materials such as metal and glass in household furnishings became synonymous with modernity from this date.

Such innovation was scrupulously discouraged in certain circles. The *Craftsman* claimed smugly and prematurely in 1930; "The modern movement in furniture design has consolidated, rather than imperilled, the position of period reproduction work...Pieces which seek completely to ignore the influence of the work of the past...are rarely among the most successful".128 Reviewing modern French furniture, the journal dismissed it as unpractical; "There is such a striving for originality that the first principles of ease and comfort are over ruled in favour of the unusual and startling... [one sees] so called lounge chairs, made of bent steel piping

125Rorke, *op. cit.*
126Rorke, *op. cit.*
127The *Furnishing Worker*, 5 April 1930, p. 2.
and silvered leather that no one could rest in for long'.

Built-in furniture was also derided. Possibly describing the architecture of Adolf Loos or Joseph Maria Olbrich, the Grace Brothers' furniture-section manager wrote; 'Austria has the most fantastic modernism of all. The idea is to fit in all they can along the wall and leave the room bare, but the style is distinctly their own and simple to absurdity'. Nonetheless, Australian manufacturers copied metal-framed furniture by at least 1933, when Healing's advertised a copy of the Mart Stam/ Marcel Breuer cantilever chair as 'the chair everyone will want'.

Terence Lane notes that an Australian-made version of Stam's tubular steel cantilever chair was owned by the architect Roy Grounds in Melbourne in 1933.

By 1934 metal table lamps were manufactured by the Australian Glass Company. David Jones' chose to specialise in and retail Newlands' steel furniture when they opened the new Market Street store in 1938.

An attempt to pin down the 'genesis' of such furniture is problematic; what is more significant is the way in which such pieces were popularised. Once again, an image of the stylish cosmopolitan woman played a role in promoting this brand of modernity in Australia. Particular attention was paid to the private collection of Madame Staal, wife of the Norwegian Consul to Sydney. Described as 'possibly the pioneer of the modern furnishing in this city', her Bellevue Hill residence contained furnishings she had brought from Europe by at least 1933 (plates 44-5).

These included Breuer steel chairs and table, a J. Dudok birch chair, Aalto-like bentwood chairs, Thonet side tables, an 'ultra-modern light', a dressing table of steel and black rubber, a Wienerwerkstatte [sic] tea-service and Swedish glass, illustrated in Home and lent to the 1933 exhibition of modern furnishing and fabrics arranged by expatriate architect Raymond McGrath for David Jones'. Another member of the diplomatic community, the wife of the Dutch Vice-Consul in Sydney, Mrs. M. F. Vigeveno,
allowed her Dutch tubular-steel furniture to be photographed in 1936 (plate 46).\textsuperscript{137} Admittedly, they were photographed for a woman's magazine, but neither their husbands nor evidence of their husbands was anywhere to be seen. They pose amidst their imported furniture, adding to it their grace and accomplishments (amateur painting, in the case of Mrs Vigeveno).

The woman of fashion appeared more and more amidst modernist furniture in 1930s Australian advertising.\textsuperscript{138} Rather than Louis Seize, she could recline on a Breuer-like chaise, as in an advertisement for Dodge automobiles.\textsuperscript{139} The latter, which denotes the progressive woman of style, features a crisply dressed woman of fashion, with long gauntlet-like cuffs, attended to in a salon de couture (plate 47). That the advertisement concerns motoring (with not a car in sight) indicates the intertwined perception of women's appearances, environments and behaviours, of which interior decoration was one strand.

The use of metal as a furnishing material was not new. Metal-framed bedsteads had been promoted since the late-nineteenth century in terms of hygiene, and the same rhetoric of the healthy home was deployed to market the range of metal and chrome-plated furnishings which were introduced to the middle-class consumer in the 1930s. The reflective surfaces of chrome plating, its 'labourless finish', durability and the futuristic associations of such furniture were used as promotional tactics to argue it was a reflection of the modern age.\textsuperscript{140} Nonetheless, there was considerable criticism of the new metal furniture even before it had achieved middle-class market penetration. The most common accusation was that such furniture was clinical and reminiscent of a medical establishment. British Vogue in 1929 noted that 'complicated lampshades, and metal furniture of curiously surgical shape are all oppressive to live with.'\textsuperscript{141} The association was not surprising, considering that the Australian company Newlands manufactured metal bedsteads, chromium-plated bar-stools, hospital fittings and surgical equipment.\textsuperscript{142} In his inimitable style, Lionel Lindsay referred to such modern interiors as 'evacuated chambers set with mathematical furniture, empty of all significance but a cocktail table set with vicious little glasses'.\textsuperscript{143} Even some of the architects associated with modernism in Australia were unsympathetic to extreme

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{137}A Vice-Consul's Flat', \textit{Home}, 2 March 1936, pp. 34-5.
\item \textsuperscript{138}See advertisement for Sunbeam Knitting Wools, \textit{Home}, 2 March 1933, p. 62.
\item \textsuperscript{139}Home, 1 December 1934, p. 5.
\item \textsuperscript{140}Interior Decoration. The Modernistic Home', \textit{Housecraft}, vol. 2, no. 6, 4 January 1937, p. 7.
\item \textsuperscript{141}The Uncluttered Modern Interior', British \textit{Vogue}, 6 February 1929, p. 33.
\item \textsuperscript{142}Art and Australia, 15 August 1936, p. 117; 23 May 1940, p. 89
\item \textsuperscript{143}Lionel Lindsay, 'Rembrandt v. Kalsomine', \textit{Art in Australia}, May 1936. p. 57.
\end{itemize}
functionalism. Bruce Dellit, architect of the Hyde Park Anzac Memorial, rejected the 'inhumanity' of the functionalist interior; 'We see living interiors looking like scientific laboratories; steel and black, forbidding glass, gracing buildings fit only for the occupation of robots; furniture of steel contorted like abused drainpipes'.144 He believed that 'the products of science and technology were best reserved for commercial structures, those publicly identified with progress'.145

The unpopularity of the machine aesthetic at home, and the parallels which were frequently made with office and hospital environments might also be explained in terms of the disruption of notions of home. Reiger claims, for instance, that in inter-war Australia:

"a nineteenth-century conception of the home continued. Throughout the period the home was stressed as a place of emotional warmth and tranquillity, a retreat for men from the world of industrial work and the natural habitat of womenfolk."

Enthusiastically promoted by distributors, by the mid-1930s metal furnishings were criticised in some decorating manuals as faddish and not suited to all spaces.147 A more eclectic use emerged, an Edgecliff Road dining-room merging cantilevered tubular-steel armchairs with antique furniture and a metal uplighter.148

'Chromium and Sawdust': Modernism and Class

As Bourdieu highlights, consumer choices, 'tastes', are potent markers of class differences.149 The early twentieth century witnessed the development and intensification of consumer capitalism in Australia, in which all strata of society were offered more and more goods pegged at various pricing levels. Australia exhibited a high level of home ownership; by 1890 almost half of the population were home-owners.150 By the 1920s all states had loan schemes in place actively encouraging

Footnotes:
145ibid.
147The average person has quite rightly rebelled against the barrenness, the lack of warmth and comfort of an all metal mise-en-scène' [Franklin Hughes, 'Talks on Interior Decoration', *Home*, 2 October 1934, p. 68]. 'Many people hurried off to buy metal furniture for the most unsuitable room in the certainty of being in the fashion. The reaction has now come' [Duncan Miller, *Interior Decorating*, London, The Studio, 'How to do it' Series, no. 13, 1937, p. 8].
150Michael Berry, 'To Buy or Rent? The Demise of a Dual Tenure Policy 1945-60', in Renate Howe (ed.), *New Houses for Old. Fifty Years of Public Housing in Victoria 1938-1988*, Melbourne, Ministry of Housing and Construction, 1988, p. 120.
Australians to mortgage themselves and purchase a home. These homes had to be furnished and retailers courted business with the lure of novelty and improvement. The contents of lower-middle and middle-class Sydney homes, universally condemned by architects, historians and critics, became the marker against which 'sophisticated' taste could be measured. The cliché encountered in accounts such as Robin Boyd's, of fatly-stuffed genoa-velvet armchairs, geometric paper friezes and crudely-turned period furniture, does accord with surviving photographs and advertisements. An undated mass-market Adelaide catalogue indicates comprehensively the typical conjunction of popular furnishings in the 1930s. Jacobean dining-sets are merged with 'modern' bedroom suites, employing geometric veneers.

'Modern' design could mean either furniture upholstered in a geometric (ie. 'cubist', 'futurist') fabric or furniture without applied ornament and having no suggestion of the arts and crafts aesthetic - the latter's use of oak, for example. Mass-market copyists rendered previously fashionable styles unmodish. American Thelma Burrows' Successful Home Furnishing (1938) noted:

The Modern period...began several years back with a grotesque style called futuristic. It was crude and quickly copied by every cheap manufacturer of furniture...it was killing itself due to cheap copyists. It was made of cheap veneers highly decorated with chromium-plated metal. "Chromium and sawdust" it was...

The enthusiasm for 'modernistic' carpets and wallpapers was the most marked index of a class divide. Wallpaper appears in few of the photographs of smart homes in Home, apart from the bedrooms. High-style interiors preferred plain blocks of wall-colour, in the early 1920s perhaps with a frieze, the case also in Britain.

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151ibid., p. 103.
152Lord paints a very depressing picture of Sydney interiors in the inter-war period. Lord, op. cit., p. 98.
154Adelaide's Oldest and largest Home Furnishers - Hoopers, Adelaide, n.d. [1930s]. Such catalogues never represent the poorer consumer, unlike the middle and upper-class advertisements which imaged their constituents. This position accords with Marchand's contention that 'Only those of the middle class and above ever appeared in the tableaux as consumers'. Marchand, op. cit., p. 198.
157Mark Turner and Lesley Hoskins, Silver Studio of Design. A Design and Source Book for Home Decoration, Exeter [Devon], Webb and Bower, 1988, pp. 132-6. Design reformers projected their middle-class ethos onto working-class preferences: 'There is little doubt that there is a desire for pattern...There seems to be a general reluctance to look at anything bare and plain...The general break-up of traditional styles has not yet had much effect in working class homes' [---The Working Class Home. Its Furnishing and Equipment. Report by the Council for Art and Industry, London, His
Tastemakers mocked the application of cheap 'modernistic' friezes, borders and carpets, which were marketed in stores such as Grace Brothers' and Bebarfald's (plate 48). Lower-middle class taste continued to embrace such styles into the 1930s and beyond, and they became the *bête-noire* of post-World War II commentators including Robin Boyd and the decorator Margaret Lord and are repeated to the present day. Surviving wallpaper catalogues are particularly apposite, indicating the longevity of geometric styles first introduced in the mid to late 1920s. Patterns which mingle geometric backgrounds with floral motifs and myriad borders of fans, sunbursts, chevrons and autumn foliage in a palette of orange, green and brown continued to be sold as late as 1941. Such patterns were reviled as symptomatic of an uneducated approach to modern design, yet represented modernity to the vast majority of suburban Australians.

The Australian consumer is generally presented as antagonistic to change and deeply conservative. In an early commentary on the history of Australian furnishing style Terence Lane described 'the widespread apathy, and in many cases open antagonism, to the new styles'. The divide between the 'artistic bankruptcy of the mass-produced reproduction furniture' and the furniture favoured by artists and architects is, however, neither neat nor final. Illustrations of the schemes arranged by Hera Roberts and Thea Proctor indicate that variants of the Jacobean trestle table continued to be favoured when mixed with vibrant colour schemes and a few modern paintings. The rapid commercialisation of modern styles which is evident in trade catalogues and mass advertising of the early 1930s indicates that an image of domestic modernity became a popular mode of marking one's allegiance to an ideology of progress. Like the promotion of modern architecture, advertisers of goods ranging from Philips' lamps to felt wall-to-wall carpeting promoted their products in terms of inevitable progress. The new consumer white-goods were particularly apposite:

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Majesty's Stationery Office, 1937, p. 42-3].
158 Many people associate the period with kitsch and, within this country, the attitude is often strongly justified... followers were short sighted in their understanding of a piece and rarely approached it as a whole, in its purest form... The conglomerations were most often appalling and, sadly, that is what the average Australian grew up with... Researching this period through the pages of *Australian Home Beautiful* and the like, one comes away with a very drab impression of the period. The dark, sombre and cluttered tastes of the Victorian era still crippled attempts at modernity right up until the late 1930s'. Tyrone Dearing, 'Art Deco in Australia', *Australian Antique Collector*, 45th ed., January-June 1993, pp. 51-2.
159 *Sunworthy Semi-Trimmed Wallpapers Book No. 6C*. WHC, Canada, n.d. [in use 1937-8], LRC.
160 *New Seasons Wallpapers. Decro Wallpapers and Borders*, retailed Lewis Berger and Sons (Australia) Pty. Ltd., 1940, LRC. See also *Academy Wallpapers 1940-41*, retailed Wilkinson, Heywood and Clark, Sydney, 1940-1, LRC.
161 Lane, *op. cit.*
162 ibid.
163 *Home*, 2 January 1929, p. 36.
The modern refrigerator, in its severe simplicity, stands out as an art masterpiece in practically every kitchen... this art is definitely progress. It cannot be held back. The days of fancy mouldings and ornaments are rightly sliding past, and if we are to faithfully represent the modern age, it is wise to accept the new simplicity which has definitely come to stay.164

Industries such as the glass and glass-brick manufacturers were particularly active in promoting their wares, funding the journal Decoration and Glass which encouraged their use in modern interiors. An element of fantasy sometimes over-rode rationalist principles: 'The three official tables at the Associated Glass Companies' annual staff ball, held at Farmer's Blaxland Galleries last night, had tops of glass bricks, through which shone colored lights'.165

Colour Choices

Returning from London in 1922, Thea Proctor noted in Home magazine; 'Colour enters tremendously into decoration now...The moderns are not afraid of their taste'.166 Although not an innovation restricted to this period, the uses of colour became the over-riding obsession of the interior-decorating industry in the inter-war years.167 A chapter or more on the 'science' of colour, its psychological effects on the family and curative potential was ubiquitous in decorating manuals of this vintage.168 All share the vilification of Victorian taste, the proposal of a new simplified aesthetic based on the toning or keying of colours, and an obsession with raising the standards of public taste. Its centrality recurs in the attention paid to the 'colour-skills' of the interior decorator; the alleged complexities of colour fuelled and encouraged the development of this new profession. Colour choice for the twentieth-century home was an ever-increasing priority. Women were exhorted to seek professional assistance from the decorating departments of stores, or individuals if they could afford them, to juggle wallpaper and paint schemes. Paint companies marketed

165 'Gay Glass Tables', Sunday Sun, 18 July 1937, Press Clippings Scrapbook, April-November 1937, DIA.
166 Thea Proctor, 'Australians must develop taste', Home, 1 June 1922, p. 38.
167 In 1900, for instance, Mrs Aronson noted, 'Now-a-days art is so intermingled with decorating that it is exceedingly hard for anyone who really wishes to have the name of possessing a pretty house to make it so without having the true knowledge of blending colour'. Mrs. F. B. [Zara Baar] Aronson, XXth Century Cooking and Home Decoration [sic], Sydney, William Brooks, 1900, p. 310.
both the cleanliness and emotional benefit a freshly painted room could bring.\textsuperscript{169} \textit{Helen's Weekly} claimed that 'both science and psychology are on the side of gay colour schemes'.\textsuperscript{170}

Thea Proctor's art, teaching and writing established colour firmly as a \textit{desideratum} in 1920s Sydney high-society, as did Roy de Maistre's colour-theory experiments.\textsuperscript{171} The decorator Marion Hall Best, who was prominent from the early 1940s, foregrounded colour in her recollection of 1930s advanced Sydney taste. She mentioned specifically de Maistre's colour wheel, Thea Proctor's design classes and lectures on stage design: 'Thea taught me about how colours could be jumpy. How adding a little bit of a complementary colour, such as green into red, stops harshness but retains the intensity'.\textsuperscript{172} The \textit{Interior Decoration} number of \textit{Home} (April 1929) popularised these notions to an audience other than artists and their circle, with articles such as 'Colour saves the situation' which included rooms in which the colour scheme was carried out by artist Adrian Feint.\textsuperscript{173} The preoccupation spread across all classes and genres, and can be found in trade catalogues\textsuperscript{174}, advice manuals\textsuperscript{175}, paint advertisements and mass-market magazines. The new furniture showroom of Anthony Horderns' was described in 1932 as of general effect 'emphasising of the colour schemes, which are now such a pronounced feature of modern furnishing'.\textsuperscript{176} In Australia as in America, previously colour-less products such as sheets, bath-towels and bath-room fittings were marketed in coloured ensembles, often sold in terms of harmonies with women's complexions and personalities.\textsuperscript{177}

Consideration of the significance of colour also exposes the false dichotomy of period versus modern interior decoration in the inter-war years. Today's reader is struck by the number of rooms described as 'modern' in 1920s-30s publications which appear to our eyes old-fashioned. A \textit{Home} cover by Hera Roberts (plate 49) for the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{169}Robertson, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 123.
\item \textsuperscript{170}Colour as a Work Stimulus. Cheerful Hues Make Cheerful People', \textit{Helen's Weekly}, vol. 1, no. 6, 13 October 1927, p.15.
\item \textsuperscript{171}See Roland Wakelin, 'The Modern Art Movement in Australia', \textit{Art in Australia}, December 1928, unpaginated, regarding Wakelin's and de Maistre's schemes for harmonising colour and sound.
\item \textsuperscript{172}Shona Martyn, 'Brilliant Ideas', \textit{Vogue Living} (Australia) March 1985, pp. 74-5; I wish to thank Michaela Richards for this reference.
\item \textsuperscript{173}Colour Saves the Situation', \textit{Home}, 2 April 1929, p. 34.
\item \textsuperscript{174}The psychological charge of colour was employed to sell even curtains. \textit{See} David Jones' \textit{Mail Order Catalogue}, Sydney, 1932-3, p. 65.
\item \textsuperscript{175}It has been proven that furnishings and color [sic] produce either desirable or disastrous effects upon the sensitive minds of children... blues and violets soothe, while reds, yellows and sometimes green are exciting and stimulating colours.' ---\textit{Within the Home}, Sydney, R. Maitland, 1924, p. 18.
\item \textsuperscript{176}Hordernian Monthly. \textit{Bridge Commemoration Number, Containing the History of Anthony Hordern and Sons, Limited, from 1823 to 1932} by T. J. Redmond, 1932, p. 65.
\item \textsuperscript{177}Marchand, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 123-7.
\end{itemize}
annual Interior Decoration number (1 June 1928) clarifies this point. Roberts illustrated a woman seated on a couch in her living room. The furniture includes a windsor chair with cushioned seat, traditional stuffed armchair and sofa and a painted and gilded commode. None is modernist in any sense of the word, rather, modernity is evoked in terms of colour. The blue sofa is set off with a strident yellow cushion, the chairs are upholstered in a pink and blue stripe, the commode is bright orange. Colourful floral arrangements punctuate the room. An interior such as this ensemble could be considered 'modern' in the 1920s and 1930s simply by virtue of a vivid colour scheme.

Masculinity, Modernism and the Rationalist Paradigm

Those searching for a purist Bauhaus version of modernity are unlikely to be satisfied with Australian interior-design until the mid 1930s. Conrad Hamann puts the date even later, describing Romberg's Newburn Flats, Melbourne, 1939, as 'the first genuine European modernism in Australia'. The younger generation of architect-designers which emerged in Australia from the mid to late 1930s changed the complexion of modernism in this country. Their work had more than stylistic ramifications, as this marks the moment when modernism was thoroughly masculinised, when it became synonymous with a rationalist paradigm.

The influence of the new generation of architects is evident in Art in Australia, which increased its coverage of architecture from August 1934, and further still from November 1935, from which point up to a third of the journal might be devoted to photographic essays concerning buildings and their interiors. Unlike earlier periods, nearly all the interiors illustrated were architect-designed, indicating a shift in emphasis from the amateur to the professional designer. There was a new emphasis upon the technological benefits of modernism rather than its relation to fashion or novelty. Photographs and line-drawings of machinery were proffered in advertising as beautiful in themselves, and were used, for example, to promote Carrier air-conditioning (plate 50), Waygood-Otis Lifts and Elevators and Wormald Brothers' sliding door tracks (plate 51).

179See Editorial, Art in Australia, 15 May 1934, p. 7. From November 1935 the section was edited by J.L. Stephen Mansfield [Editorial, 15 November 1935, p. 16]. From August 1940 George Beiers was editor [23 August 1940, p. 73].
180Many of the examples of architecture in Art in Australia included factory interiors; in 1937 the 'largest steel window yet constructed in Sydney' in the Boilerhouse, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Sydney, was proudly illustrated. Art in Australia, 15 May 1937, p. 76.
181Art in Australia, 16 November 1936, p. 109.
182Art in Australia, 15 February 1937, p. 82.
183ibid., p. 7.
Rather than the skyscraper, department store or residential villa, the hospital emerged as the exemplar of modern design in this period. Innumerable examples were illustrated, often employing angled perspectives to highlight the cantilevered balconies, geometric outlines and horizontal emphasis of these buildings.\textsuperscript{184} Of the Rachel Forster Memorial Hospital Walter Bunning noted:

In the heart of Redfern is set a hospital which in planning, design and equipment is equal to the world's best. This is probably the only branch of Australian architecture about which such a statement could be made. ...it is the only field in which scientific planning dominates the desire to be romantic and to imitate the glories of the past.\textsuperscript{185}

Hospital interiors, too, were proffered as rational and hygienic models for domestic emulation, including the emphasis upon the 'psychology of colour'.\textsuperscript{186} Nairn linoleum, provider of floor coverings for the new wing of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, advertised their product in terms of its 'amazing germicidal qualities'.\textsuperscript{187} The pared-down decoration of the ocean liner Orion was now preferred to 'the neo-Hollywood or Jacobean cum palm and poppy decorative scheme of too many Australian drawing-rooms'.\textsuperscript{188} The older patrician models for twentieth-century living offered by Wilkinson and Moore and Dowling did not entirely disappear, but in typically Ure-Smith schizophrenic fashion, were illustrated side by side with stripped-down residences by Mewton and Grounds.\textsuperscript{189}

The modern flat, the subject of considerable energy from the international avant-garde, gained increasing attention. Sydney, unlike Melbourne, had experienced an explosion of flat-building following the depression, due to relaxation of zoning laws. Despite opposition to such housing from both political parties on the grounds of social disruption and familial breakdown, over 500 blocks were built in Sydney annually between 1935-41.\textsuperscript{190} From 6.8 per-cent of Sydney's building stock in 1921, they

\textsuperscript{184}`Mercy Hospital, Melbourne', \textit{Art in Australia}, 15 November 1935, pp. 84-5. 'Gloucester House, Royal Prince Alfred Hospital', \textit{Art in Australia}, 15 August 1936, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{185}Walter Bunning, 'The Rachel Forster Memorial Hospital', \textit{Art in Australia}, 1 June 1942, p. 78.
\textsuperscript{186}\textit{Art in Australia}, 15 August 1936, p. 85.
\textsuperscript{187}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{188}Alleyne Zander, 'Impressionism and the English Painter', \textit{Art in Australia}, 15 November 1935, p. 67.
\textsuperscript{189}See no. 434 Edgecliff Road, a Georgian-Mediterranean villa by Moore and Dowling, \textit{Art in Australia}, 15 May 1937, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{190}Peter Spearritt, \textit{Sydney Since the Twenties}, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1978. p. 72. Flats were condemned by one Australian architect as not 'in the best interests of the race... The flat is no place for the rearing of a family, more particularly a middle-class family' [Frank G. Costello, 'Development in Flat Life', \textit{Architecture}, vol. 25, no. 1, 1 January 1936, pp. 4-5].
rose to become 12.8 per cent in 1933. Flats did not cater for most workers due to the relatively high rents, and there was little discussion of economical working-class interior design until the 1939 Erskineville Rehousing Scheme. The interiors of the latter were described in rationalist terms:

full play was allowed to the scientific, humanitarian, and sociological considerations... Finishes throughout are kept as flush and smooth as possible to resist the accumulation of dust and to discourage vermin.

By the late 1930s such precepts came to influence popular culture. Comparing editions of an Australian carpentry manual from 1929 and 1938, one finds designs for Jacobean tea-waggons replaced with simple cases to modernise the grandfather clock, and architectonic book-cases illustrated in modernist isometric manner.

Modernism was increasingly harnessed to a nationalist cause, unlike the situation in the 1920s, when writers identified the essence of Australia with rural living. A description of the Australian Pavilion at the 1937 Paris Exposition is typical. Designed by architects Stephenson, Meldrum & Turner, the cylindrical pavilion featured an interior of stainless steel and timber. It was described as having 'been designed to emphasise the transition from the primitive to the modern, and represents the initiative, freshness, and virility of a new nation'. Photographic murals filled the interior, ranging from an aboriginal's head to the 'modern house'. The 'modern' house illustrated was neither a Bauhaus nor a deco-inspired example, but Wilkinson's Bibury House, Bowral, a bungalow with a Mediterranean-style courtyard. Michael O'Connell fabrics were displayed in the pavilion.

Despite such inconsistencies, the work of architects sympathetic to the International Style populated the pages of Art in Australia in the second half of the 1930s. The 'influence of Professor Gropius' was noted in the designs of Arthur Baldwinson, who had experience in the offices of Gropius and E. Maxwell Fry, and returned to Australia in 1937. Modelling themselves upon the earlier British model,
the M.A.R.S. (the Modern Architectural Research Society) group of Australian architects also popularised these ideas in the late 1930s.200

None of these architect-notables was a woman. The shift in emphasis from women dominating vanguard interior decoration to the male architect, from the amateur to the professional, was to intensify in the post-war period. The concept of the 'designer', which had been present in America since the 1920s, spread rapidly in the context of Australian post-war reconstruction and led to a redefinition of such activities. The interior 'decorator' became an interior 'designer', the graphic artist became a graphic 'designer' and so forth. Gronberg observed such a process taking place in Paris of the 1920s, in which modernists such as Le Corbusier masculinised the process of interior-design by designating their own work as rational in terms of its Other, decoration provided by the commercial (feminised) ensembliers.201 'Decoration' became a disparaged term; taken from the hands of women it was recast as a masculine activity worthy of the modernist architect. The shift is neatly summarised in the formation of SIDA, the Society of Interior Designers of Australia, in 1951, which asserted the professionalism of the activity.202 The founding members included as many men as women, and Australian furniture design in the 1950s and '60s gravitated towards a masculine province - the work of Gordon Andrews and Grant Featherston, for instance. Textile designing, by women including Frances Burke, Catherine Hardress, Edith Grove, Anne Outlaw and Nance Mackenzie, with its association with femininity and women's work, continued as a feminine field.
In 1936 Lionel Lindsay penned the following description of the 'advisor on decoration':

If a new house is to be furnished in the most modern style, the manikin decorator whose aesthetic is sometimes bounded by the shop she serves, has no thought of accommodating the owner's present possessions...Her real purpose is salesmanship; so out go all the pictures - the Streeton's, Lambert's, Heysen's, Gruner's - to the garret. Nothing must interfere with the colour scheme proposed.¹

This passage highlights many of the conjunctions which are examined in this thesis. Most significantly, the figure of the interior decorator is gendered, assumed to be female, the 'manikin' characterisation conferring on her a faddish or modish status. Secondly, modernism is elided with fashion and trivialised by typecasting it as feminine. Lindsay also alludes to the importance of colour in the redefinition of the inter-war Australian interior. Colour's sensual connotations and alleged links to femininity constructed both women and their practice of interior decoration as amateur and intuitive; their work was described as an extension of their natures. Lindsay's real concern - the demotion of masculine 'academic' painting and its replacement with work by dreaded 'moderns' such as Thea Proctor or Margaret Preston - forms the subtext of his diatribe.

Interior decoration was promoted in the inter-war period as a new profession particularly suited to women. Previously the province of male traders and architects, interior decoration had been proposed as a suitable amateur occupation for the middle-class woman in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Women's involvement in the Arts and Crafts movement fuelled the growth of this connection, as women were encouraged to oversee and produce fittings for the 'artistic' interior. By the 1920s interior decoration was one of the few commercial occupations dominated by women. An image of the independent lady decorator fascinated society, recurring in magazines and novels. Some of these women moved in homosocial networks, providing one explanation for the contemporary fascination. Any threat to the heterosexual order was defused by the elision of decorating with femininity, domesticity and private space. The modern consumer was also gendered feminine; by the 1920s the shopper had been organised by marketing and commercial interests into a set of feminine stereotypes.

¹Lionel Lindsay, 'Rembrandt v. Kalsomine', Art in Australia, May 1936. p. 56.
Australian artists including Adrian Feint, Roy de Maistre, Thea Proctor and Hera Roberts were closely involved with popularising the modern interior in inter-war Sydney. These artists are associated with the introduction of a modern aesthetic to Australian art in which bold colour and form were primary. Modernity and modernism in Australian visual culture has received considerable attention. It has become a commonplace to discuss the interaction between fine and applied art, between the oil painting and advertising, for example. The gendered charge of this dynamic has not been thoroughly charted. My thesis argues that modernism in 1920's Australia was mediated through women's spaces and women's bodies, in decorative arts, fashion, advertising and department-store culture. Interior decoration is a useful test-case as it was intimately linked to all these sectors.

The emphasis modern artist-designers placed upon colour is crucial within the matrix of gender, as colour is categorised in post-Renaissance artistic discourse as base, sensual, irrational. Women were consistently described as superior colourists in the inter-war period, their natures conflated with the fore-mentioned attributes. Fashion plays a key role in this discourse. Colour had been largely banished from western men's dress since the early-nineteenth century, and placed instead within a femininised realm. This historical incident was swiftly naturalised as another axis of gender. Women, it was argued, were ideally suited to the task of interior decoration, as their experience with fashionable dress gave them an advantage with colouration and textiles. Analysis of the language framing interior decoration in the inter-war period highlights the way in which spaces and practices are gendered masculine or feminine, and ranked accordingly.

Tastemakers including Sydney Ure Smith and Leon Gellert had used the decorative arts as a bargaining chip in the promotion of a modern aesthetic for Australian painting. If a woman wore a modern French fabric, then she should look at a modern picture, they argued. This polemic relegated both women and design to a tenuous position. They gained their significance only in terms of what they might do for the cause of high art, for the ocular adjustments they might bring to the average person in the street. 'The aesthetic experience provided by surroundings and articles of accomplished design is the best preparation for the higher enjoyments in the realm of disinterested art', wrote Ure Smith. With design a primary outlet for women's artistic energies, and the domestic interior, as

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2 Willis has most recently considered this connection. Anne-Marie Willis, Illusions of Identity. The Art of Nation, Sydney, Hale and Iremonger, 1993, chapter 5.
3 Editorial, Art in Australia, March 1930, unpaginated.
Sylvia Kleinert proposes, an important route of women's access to modernism, such hierarchical distinctions ensured a compromised status for both women and their work.4

Technological modernism, the modernism of the factory, engineering, the Sydney Harbour Bridge, did not emerge strongly in Australia until the mid-1930s, when modernism was realigned with a masculine paradigm. A younger generation of architects sympathetic to the International Style rejected popularised versions of art deco and promoted a model of rationalist modernity. Fewer women were involved with this movement and the rise of the professional industrial designer displaced women from their previously amateur role as interior decorators and furniture designers. 'Decoration' became the disparaged term which was expunged from the discourse of post-World War II modern architecture and design, and the cultural production of a generation of Sydney women artists and designers demoted accordingly.

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1. W. Hardy Wilson; living room, Purulia, Wahroonga, Sydney, residence of the architect [Sydney Ure Smith and Bertram Stevens (eds.), Domestic Architecture in Australia. Special number of Art in Australia, Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1919, pl. XVII]

2. W. Hardy Wilson; living room, Purulia, Wahroonga, Sydney, residence of the architect [ibid., pl. XVIII]

3. W. Hardy Wilson; Purulia, Wahroonga, Sydney, residence of the architect [ibid., pl. XVI]


9. Home, 1 May 1934, cover; cabinet designed by Hera Roberts [photograph courtesy National Gallery of Australia Research Library]

10. Grace Brothers' furniture department, Home, 1 October 1930, p. 23 [photograph courtesy National Gallery of Australia Research Library]


13. 'In future all modern', advertisement for Margaret Jaye [Home, 1 September 1933, p. 73]

14. Molly Grey; own residence, Potts Point, Sydney c1934 [Home, 1 May 1934]

15. Harold Cazneaux, photographer; Molly Grey [Home, 2 September 1935, p. 29]

16. Molly Grey, designer, for Ricketts and Thorp Ltd., Sydney; sideboard veneered in Italian burr walnut and Queensland straight-grained maple ['Australian Furniture', Art in Australia, 16 November 1936, p. 80]

17. Hera Roberts, illustrator; cover for Home, Interior Decoration Number, 1 July 1930 [photograph courtesy National Gallery of Australia Research Library]

18. Hera Roberts, designer; bureau, Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [The Burdekin House Exhibition. A loan collection of good furnishing, including old and modern]
furniture and fittings..., Sydney, 8 October-21 December 1929, unpaginated]


20. 'The Fascinating Woman is she who is clever enough to emphasise the charming contrast between herself and Man' [ibid., p. 8]

21. Thea Proctor, illustrator; Beaudura corset advertisement for Berlei [Home Pictorial Annual, 1927, unpaginated]

22. Beard Watson, manufacturer; Period Furniture c1919 [Smith and Stevens, op. cit., unpaginated at rear]


24. 'Paris Yesterday', advertisement, Daily Sun, July 1924 [courtesy David Jones' Pty Ltd.]

25. 'Designs that are different for up-to-date tables' [Home, 1 July 1930, p. 49]

26. 'Uncommon! Lamps from Russia'; David Jones' advertisement, 1929 [Burdekin House, op. cit.]

27. Harold Cazneaux, photographer, Roy de Maistre, stylist; Miss Mary Turner [Home, 1 November 1928, p. 45].

28. Raoul Dufy, designer; La Perse, black & white velvet, 1911 (cape design by Paul Poiret) [Dora Perez-Tibi, Dufy, London, Thames and Hudson, 1989, p. 63]

29. Raoul Dufy, designer; Bianchini-Férier fabric, Bagatelle, here in dressing-gown by Paul Poiret, 1923 [ibid., p. 64]

30. Harold Cazneaux, photographer, Roy de Maistre, stylist; Miss Anne Jamieson [Home, 1 March 1929, p. 39]

31. Harold Cazneaux, photographer, Adrian Feint, stylist; Doris Zinkeisen [Home, 1 March 1929, p. 37]

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33. Hera Roberts, room design, Roy de Maistre, overmantel painting; Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [Home, 1 October 1929, p. 21]

34. Henry Pynor & Frank Weitzel, designers, furniture made by Anthony Horderns'; Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [Home, 1 November 1929, p. 54]

35. Roy de Maistre, designer; bookcase, Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [Burdekin House, op. cit.]

37. Roy de Maistre, designer; armchair, Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [Burdekin House, op. cit.]

38. Hera Roberts, designer; armchair, Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [ibid.]

39. Adrian Feint, designer; office desk, Burdekin House Exhibition, 1929 [ibid.]


41. Wunderlich Contemporary Art Cornices, Sydney, after May 1933 [Recent Additions to the Range of Designs in Wunderlich Ceilings, Wunderlich Limited, Sydney, c1933, MAAS]

42. Macassar ebony cabinet reproduced from the 1925 Paris Exposition, retailed Beard Watson's, Sydney, 1928 [Home, 1 February 1928, p. 53]

43. Hera Roberts, probable designer; 'A Modern Bedroom Suite' made by Beard Watson's [Home, 1 October 1929, p. 60]

44. Living-room of Mme Staal, Sydney [Home, 3 January 1933, p. 23]

45. Dining room of Mme Staal, Sydney [Home, 3 January 1933, p. 24]

46. Living room of Mrs Vigeveno with Dutch chairs, Sydney [Home, 2 March 1936, p. 34]

47. 'Style is my Business', advertisement for Dodge Cars [Home, 1 December 1934, p. 5]

48. 'Modern Carpets of Distinction', Grace Brothers', Sydney [Home, 1 October 1932, p. 63]

49. Hera Roberts, illustrator; cover for Home, Interior Decoration Number, 1 June 1928

50. Carrier Air-Conditioning [Art in Australia, 16 November 1936, p. 109]

51. Wormald Brothers' Bangor Sliding Door Track [Art in Australia, 15 February 1937, p. 7]
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[photograph courtesy National Gallery of Australia Research Library]
Build Your Own Kitchenettes

CONSERVING TIME AND ENERGY BY FORETHOUGHT

There are kitchens—and kitchens. Some of them are a blast on the occasion of the housekeeper and shrill about the reason for her weariness. With a little forethought and not a great deal of audacity or labour, she could transform the centre of domestic operations into a place of real enjoyment.

This is a serviceless age—domestic help is as scarce as figs on a Mission—when the housekeeper, unless she has her tenth favourited of fortune, must needs do her own work herself.

Her kitchen is the central point of her existence and unless it is designed to eliminate all unnecessary labour, it takes more out of her than all the other "chores" put together.

Modern exigencies—flat life, the general pressure on space, combined with the lack of help—have done away with the spacious kitchens, which, after all, was a dubious blessing and Leiaed endless moving from place to place to collect and put away articles in constant use.

Every woman has her dream kitchen, the sort she would bring to reality if she built her own house or flat, or whatever type of residence she deemed to dwell in. But since domestic architecture has been left almost entirely to men, who know nothing about its needs, she has to make the best of what she can get. And it's generally pretty bad at that.

"To the mind of this scotche, who has defined long and bitterly at the hands of the man architect of kitchens, too much space in this important room is excellence. Conservation of energy, effort and of time are essential in the modern woman who has no desire to spend half her life cooking and washing up and grappling round generally. She wants a few hours to herself and enough tidiness left over from housework for recreation and the refinement of her mind, which is not necessarily like a vegetable because she deals with vegetables for part of each day of her life.

If you want your kitchen to be run successfully and with the minimum of labour, first make sure that everything you need is ready to hand. You may—though you shouldn't—spend half your day in the kitchen. Do away with all unnecessary fiddling and stirring.

The kitchenette depicted on these pages is possible to the home carpenter. In one instance a long-room was built with the store and sink placed in the correct positions at the end of the room. Then the rest of the house set to work and put up all the shelving. The set of solving

This kitchenette is an extension as a ship's galley. Almost all the cooking and dishwashing can be done while seated.

Miss Jaye is able to offer to the people of N.S.W. a unique service, viz, The furnishing of the Home throughout no matter how small or how large, or in what colour or period. Her many years of training in the art of colour and furnishing are at your service. Any one interested in furnishings is cordially invited to visit her delightful Salon and have a personal chat with her.

MARGARET JAYE
66 DARLINGHURST ROAD
SYDNEY.

13. 'In future all modern', advertisement for Margaret Jaye [Home, 1 September 1933, p. 73]
A SMALL FLAT IN THE NEW MANNER

14. Molly Grey; own residence, Potts Point, Sydney c1934 (Home, 1 May 1934)
15. Harold Cazneaux, photographer; Molly Grey [Home, 2 September 1935, p. 29]
16. Molly Grey, designer, for Ricketts and Thorp Ltd., Sydney; sideboard veneered in Italian burr walnut and Queensland straight-grained maple ['Australian Furniture', *Art in Australia*, 16 November 1936, p. 80]
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away blue, red and yellow remain. These colours mixed make orange. A small piece of orange colour placed on white would reflect a sort of halo of blue—the missing colour. Then blue is the complement of orange.

Without first studying the principles of colour, it seems absurd to say that one colour reflects an opposite colour, but that very fact is one of the reasons why some people cannot wear certain colours to advantage. This is the only reason why I have mentioned the matter at all.

Try out this simple test with all the colours mentioned. Take a small piece of coloured paper or material, place it on a larger white sheet, and gaze steadily at the colour for half a minute or so. Presently you will notice a fringe of another colour around the edge of the smaller piece, and if you remove the colour you have placed on the paper, and still keep your eyes glued, as it were, on the paper, there will be a vivid reflection of the complement exactly where the coloured piece had been. A colour will reflect its complement according to the intensity of that colour. Thus a light or bright colour will reflect quite noticeably, whereas a dark hue will probably absorb all reflections so that its effect will only be a good or bad contrast with another.

20. 'The Fascinating Woman is she who is clever enough to emphasise the charming contrast between herself and Man' \textit{[ibid., p. 8]}
Introducing Beaudura, an entirely new creation at the hands of Berlei designers... exquisite materials and the very finest of workmanship fabricate figure-moulding Controleles and Wrap-ons of supreme elegance, garments which ensure enduring loveliness of line. Ask for and fit them on at fashion stores.

Beaudura

PERIOD FURNITURE

Some charming examples of Jacobean and German Reproduction Furniture will be found, in our showrooms at very moderate prices. We have on hand examples of old Brass Plaques, Candlesticks, Trays, etc.

BEARD, WATSON, LIMITED

22. Beard Watson, manufacturer; Period Furniture c1919 [Smith and Stevens, op. cit., unpaginated at rear]
24. 'Paris Yesterday', advertisement, *Daily Sun*, July 1924 [courtesy David Jones' Pty Ltd.]
25. 'Designs that are different for up-to-date tables' [*Home*, 1 July 1930, p. 49]

Uncommon!

LAMPS

from Russia

Specially selected by Mr. H. W. Bindoff on his recent visit to the Continent for David Jones'. The lamp has suddenly become an article of great importance in modern home furnishing. Here are new types from Russia, quaint and quite different. The stands are in brightly hued wood, many evolved from actual Russian toys. Their parchment shades are brilliantly colored, introducing uncommon designs. ON THE FOURTH FLOOR.

DAVID JONES

Castlereagh, Market and Elizabeth Sts.

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MODERN CARPETS
OF DISTINCTION

Ever since "Home" has meant something more to man than merely "Dwelling Place," the covering of the Floor has been a first principle of comfort: a fundamental and necessary furnishing.

These carpets of distinction are always on show at Grace Bros. from the best British manufacturers.

48. 'Modern Carpets of Distinction', Grace Brothers', Sydney [Home, 1 October 1932, p. 63]
49. Hera Roberts, illustrator; cover for *Home*, Interior Decoration Number, 1 June 1928
50. Carrier Air-Conditioning [Art in Australia, 16 November 1936, p. 109]
THERE is no doubt that the sliding door is the door for the modern home. It saves space, is sound-proof and grooves in perfectly with contemporary design.

Bangor ball-bearinged door hangers are acknowledged as the outstanding sliding door track and are manufactured in a particularly wide variety of types, solving every interior and exterior door problem. On your request we will gladly send you a copy of our new illustrated catalogue.

WORMALD BROTHERS PROPRIETARY LIMITED
All States and New Zealand

BANGOR SLIDING DOOR TRACK

51. Wormald Brothers' Bangor Sliding Door Track (Art in Australia, 15 February 1937, p. 7)