

Lines Of Sight: A New Site Documents Art Deco Architecture In Mumbai

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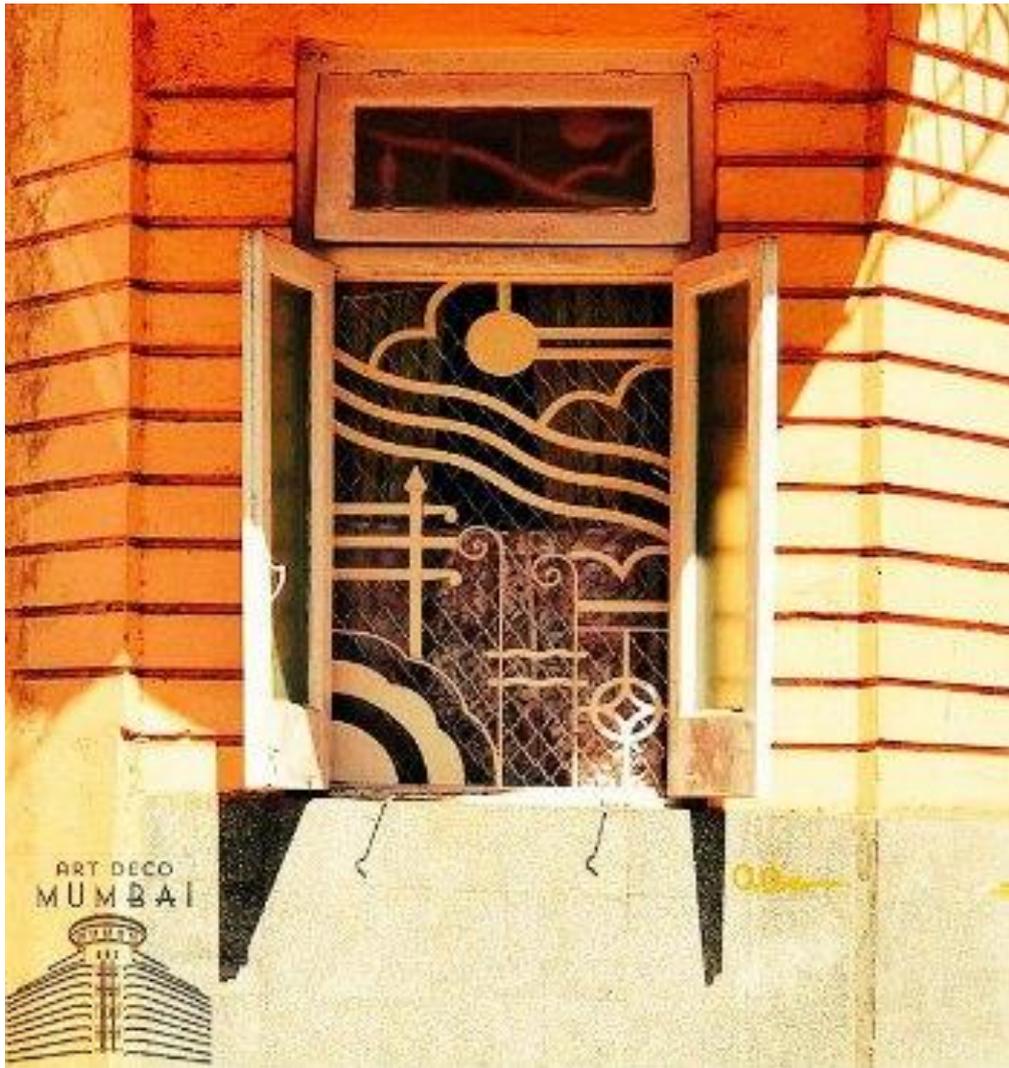
Modernist terrazzo flooring inside Court View, Oval Maidan. Images courtesy Art Deco Mumbai.

It's well known that Mumbai is the world's largest repository of art deco architecture after Miami. There are a few books that document this cache such as Navin Ramani's [Bombay Art Deco](#) (2007), [Bombay Deco](#) (2008) by Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra, and Kamu Iyer's [Boombay: From Precincts to Sprawl](#) (2014). But until now, there was no online resource barring small photo projects such as [Doors of Mumbai](#). Atul Kumar, a finance professional, hopes to fill the gap with [artdecomumbai.com](#), a project that began as an [Instagram exercise](#) in May 2016. The site went live on Tuesday, June 27.



BEST Bhavan also known as Electric House, Colaba.

“What bothered me is that we have buildings of international significance but nothing to show (of them) on the internet,” Kumar said. The site is a service for folks interested in the city’s heritage, especially “millennials” who acquire a lot of their knowledge online. Among the sections are a gallery of images of buildings, architectural details and furniture and an ‘Inventory’, which has a map on which art deco structures are marked, most of which are located in clusters such as Marine Drive, Oval Maidan, Mohammed Ali Road and Matunga. The ‘Inventory’ also has a list of art deco edifices by name that Kumar and his team have so far documented as well as tabs for the ‘Elements’ and ‘Features’ of the style. Under ‘Elements’, visitors can see pictures showing examples of ziggurat motifs, nautical signs and Indian figurative reliefs. “I’m often asked, ‘What is art deco?’,” Kumar said. “You can look at specific elements across different buildings to help you understand it better.”



Window grill in Karim Court, Colaba.

There's a brief 'Research' section with notes on the histories of the style across the world and a few of the city's iconic art deco cinemas and residences. This includes a potted biography of G. B. Mhatre, a graduate of the Sir J. J. College of Architecture who was among the first locally-trained architects to distinguish himself. He designed a number of buildings here including Soona Mahal on Marine Drive and Moonlight and Empress Court opposite Oval Maidan.



Curvilinear balcony in Pai House, Matunga.

Kumar, who lives in an art deco building on Marine Drive, said his passion for the subject began nearly 15 years ago and was cultivated by conversations and interactions with architects and members of resident associations in the area. The Oval Cooperage Residents Association, for instance, is one of the most hawkish in the city when it comes to protecting heritage and open spaces. He's assisted in this self-funded project by interns studying mass communication and architecture. Teams of two interns, one from each discipline, are sent to document neighbourhoods, usually on weekends or early mornings when there's little traffic. So far they've been working on neighbourhoods in south Mumbai. Dadar, which contains gorgeous art deco often ignored by the city's many amateur photographers, is next. Visit ArtDecoMumbai.com.

<https://www.thedailypao.com/lines-of-sight-a-new-site-documents-art-deco-architecture-in-mumbai/>