

Tune into the past

May 10, 2021 | Dalreen Ramos

A virtual conversation this weekend with a leading radio collector will explore the historical significance of Art Deco radios



Sheridan views the arrival of Art Deco radios as the meeting point of art and technology they changed the way people looked at objects

On a visit to London in 1998, Australian dentist Dr Peter Sheridan stumbled upon a green Bakelite radio in a jewellery shop. It immediately caught his fancy but in that moment, he didn't realise that this wouldn't be his last purchase of an Art Deco radio. As of today, over a phone call from Sydney, he tells us he has collected over 300.

This Sunday, Sheridan will be part of a virtual webinar, In conversation: Deco Radio that is being organised by the Art Deco Mumbai Trust (ADMT). He will deliver a visually-illustrated talk on the subject followed by a discussion with professor of architecture and ADMT trustee Dr Mustansir Dalvi. Sheridan states that the tabletop radio that emerged in the Art Deco period of the '30s is a significant development in history because it did not have a predecessor like the console radio did. It followed the gramophone and was considered a piece of furniture.

"The tabletop radio benefited from the fact that new plastics like Bakelite had been invented. The early 1930s was the period of The Great Depression and so, in England and America, a lot of industrial designers didn't have work. Hence, radio companies recognised that there was a market for small radios made out of plastic. The console radio which would be situated in the lounge room was an expensive piece of furniture. But now there was a possibility that everybody could afford a radio," Sheridan says. At the session, he adds that he will be looking into the influence of 30 industrial designers who worked on these radios. "They are the founders of streamlining. These men, like Raymond Loewy and Norman Bel Geddes, became extraordinarily famous as industrial designers later in their careers but the first thing most of them designed was radios."



Dr Peter Sheridan

On: March 14, 5 pm to 6.30 pm

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