

The people behind the steeple

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An exhaustive database compiled by Art Deco Mumbai will familiarise you with the great minds responsible for some of the city's finest architectural marvels



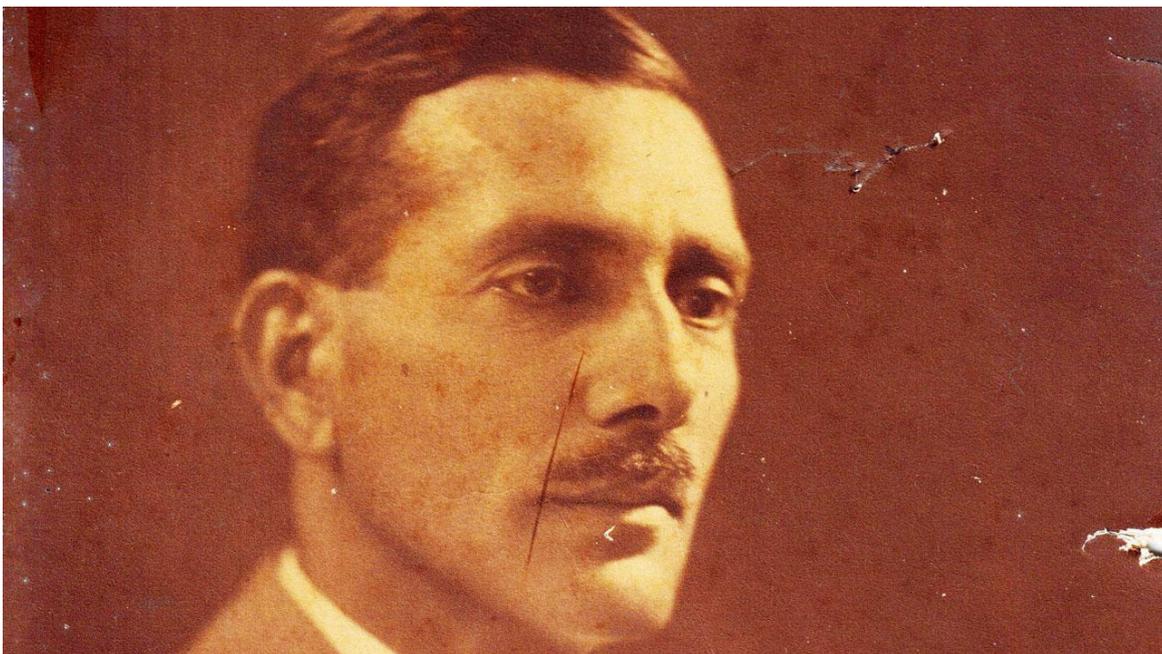
The compilation by Art Deco Mumbai brings together the finest architecture from the city's past, along with the minds that visualised and shaped it. Pics Courtesy/Art Deco Mumbai Trust Archives

Iconic buildings like Regal Cinema in Colaba or the Sona Mahal at Marine Drive may have made for terrific backgrounds for your Instagram Reels, but how much do you know about the people who made these buildings possible? Art Deco Mumbai, a not for profit organisation that documents the history of Mumbai's Art Deco buildings, has compiled an exhaustive list of architects and designers of yore to specifically fill this gap in the city's history.



The inaugural poster of the Eros Cinema in Churchgate

Mumbai is said to have the second highest number of Art Deco buildings in the world after Miami, thanks to the planning and construction it witnessed during the British Raj. Art Deco is a style of architecture characterised by features like rounded corners, tropical imagery and architectural lettering, the way it is seen in old theatres, courts and buildings in and around south Mumbai. On June 8, Art Deco Mumbai released a comprehensive resource revolving around these buildings and the people behind them.



Sohrab Kaikushro Bhedwar, the architect of Eros cinema

“While we routinely hear names of Western architects who only built a handful of buildings, there is an entire generation of architects who went to the JJ School of Arts and are responsible for designing our neighbourhoods and buildings. We wanted to create a public record of this for everybody to access,” says Atul Kumar, Founder Trustee of Art Deco Mumbai.

The process lasted six long years, while the research team accessed archives and spoke to descendants of the architects. Not only did they end up putting together the unique compilation, they also collected hundreds of anecdotes and insights in the process. Ask Kumar to name one or two and he struggles to pick the best out of a sea of gems.



Perin Mistri, India's first woman architect

“Take Eros, for example,” he finally says. “The Cumbattas [who own the theatre] described the vision for the theatre when it was conceptualised; the ethos was not to have a commercial venture but to give Bombay a cinema theatre no less than any other in the world. Who thinks like that about property anymore?” The list includes iconic names like Perin Mistri, the first woman architect of India, and Waman Namjoshi, a fiery perfectionist who would tear down a piece of architecture if it was not up to the mark.

The list can be accessed at: <https://www.artdeco mumbai.com/>

<https://www.mid-day.com/sunday-mid-day/article/the-people-behind-the-steeple-23298178>