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Pattern Research Project: An Investigation of The Pattern And Printing Process - Volute

Abigail Deluca

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Volute

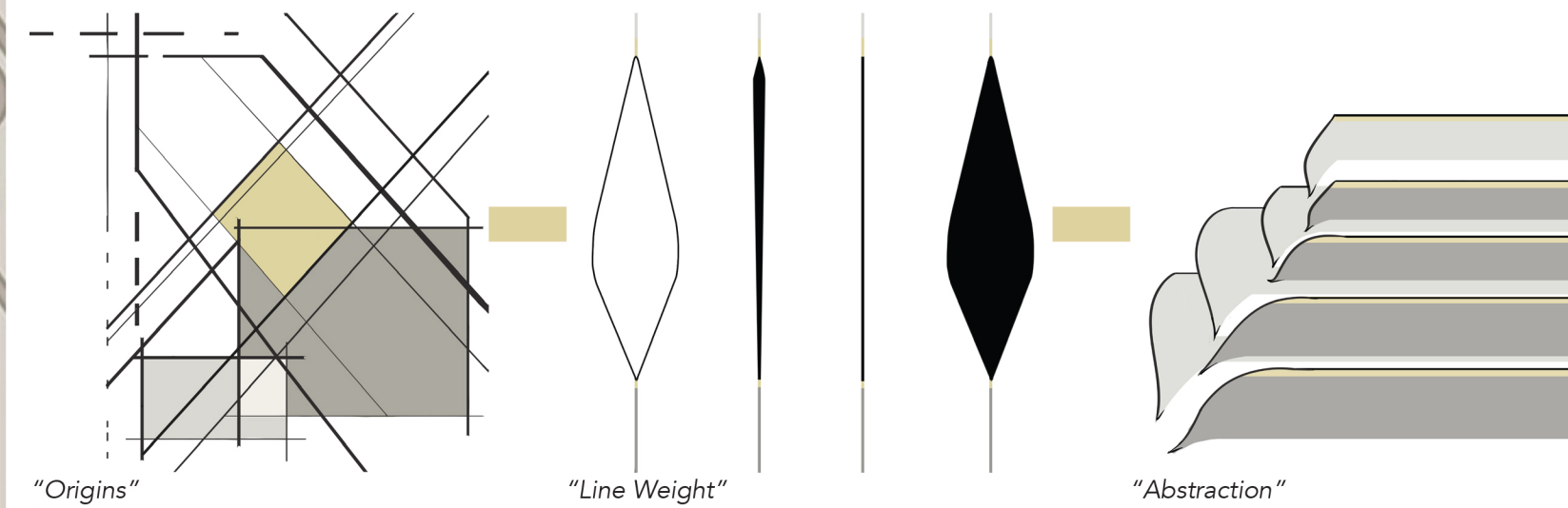




VOLUTE: Revisiting Art Deco

Stephen Bauer, Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers

Rose DeLuca // December 2017 // Pattern Project



Use: Volute evokes the motifs of the **Art Deco** movement of the early 1900's¹. It is still available for sale and **used today**. Its purpose and craft have not changed since its conception in the 80's.

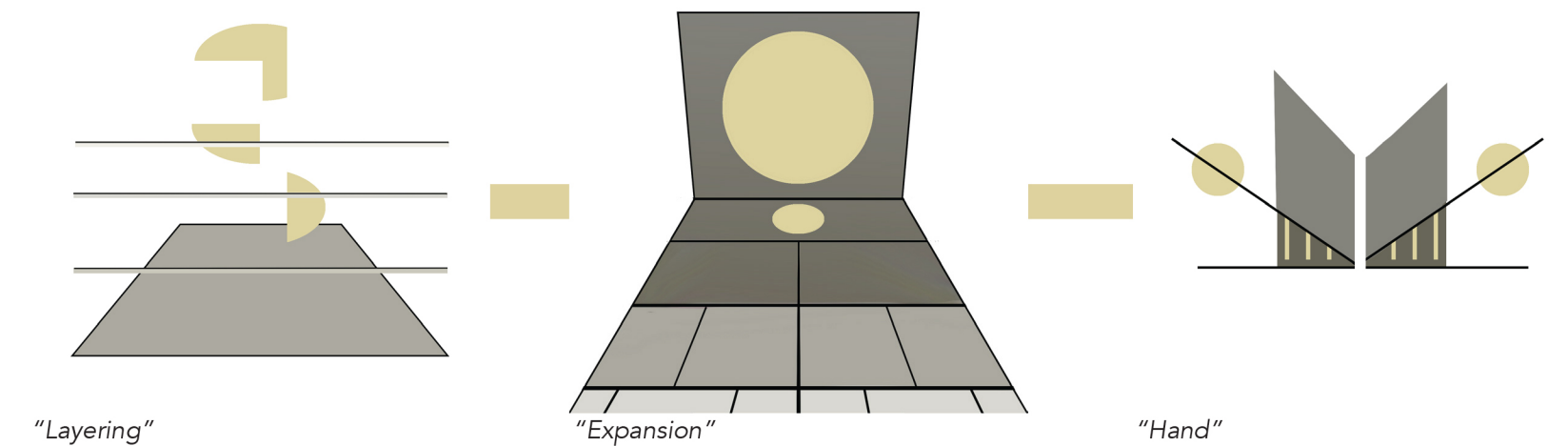
Color: Volute is both **vibrant** and **elegant** despite its limited color palette and muted tones. This gives the pattern a degree of subtlety which makes it more suited to an **interior setting**. The areas of gloss give the wallpaper a greater sense of depth without being distracting and brings out the **luxurious** feeling 'Volute' evokes.

¹ Stephen Bauer - Bradbury & Bradbury Art Wallpapers. (2014, January 09). Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <http://artisticlicense.org/?p=381>

Design Composition: Volute has a **13.5" half-drop match repeat** and contains **industrial, geometric** and **futuristic** motifs. The pattern takes direct inspiration from the **metalwork** done during the 20's and 30's¹. Volute's use of form is minimal and the emphasis of the pattern falls onto the largest **curvilinear** shape that draws the eye. The pattern's composition is arranged through **diagonals**. Other than the large curve the other main form in the pattern is a thick diagonal line going in the other direction. While the large curve is the emphasis in this pattern the diagonal draws the viewers eye across the wallpaper and creates a flow. These two design elements are complemented through the use of smaller **linear** and **curvilinear** forms but the focus remains on these two pieces.

Design Context: Volute references the design choices that reference **Art Deco**, the stylistic reaction to modernism that took off in the 1920's and the **mechanized age**. Referencing both the periods **political reform** and **machine**. Its aesthetic is derived from the **stylization of images** rather than relying entirely on original forms. It is an abstraction based on **social theory** and **modernism**. Despite this, it was only described as modernistic by those trying to debase it and who carried a distaste for its commercially driven spread. Volute **acknowledges the aesthetics** of Art Deco while **ignoring its ideologies**. It romanticizes the tone of Art Deco's decorative schemes: **'serious, logical, and welcoming'**². The source of its namesake and main form are likely taken from the **metalwork** of the period, however since volutes have appeared in art as early in ancient Greece³ this isn't entirely clear.

¹ Art Deco: A Research Guide (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <https://www.nypl.org/node/171023>
² Menten, T. (1972). *The art deco style in household objects: architecture, sculpture, graphics, jewelry*. New York: Dover Publications.
³ Volute - Definition and Examples. (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <http://www.house-design-coffee.com/volute.html>



Craft: Volute is produced by **screen-printing** layers of color onto rolls of paper with a **photo emulsion** coating¹. The screen and artwork are sandwiched in a large vacuum frame and exposed to light. Areas exposed to the light become impervious; the other areas are become washed out. While this is **not** the method used in Art Deco wallpapers, it is more fitting for some of Bradbury & Bradbury's other wallpapers, which is likely why they go with it. If Bradbury wanted to stay true to the wallpaper producing processes of the 30's they would be producing this print with a **machine**².

¹ Our Studio (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <http://www.bradbury.com/studio.html>
² A brief history of Wallpaper. (n.d.). Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <https://www.museepapierpeint.org/en/wallpaper/wallpaper-little-story/>

History & Context: While it was actually designed in the 1980's, this pattern mimics the style of Art Deco wallpaper designs. The style gained popularity in the States after receiving pessimism and criticism early on as American designers found it **eclectic**¹. It takes inspiration from a wide range of artistic styles including the art of ancient **Egypt**, the **Mayans**, **Cubism**, **Fauvism**, and **Expressionism**. With surfaces covered in rare materials such as **morocco leather**, **crocodile**, or **snakeskin**². However, it soon gained popularity and was integrated rapidly due to the existing modern art scene in America, and the growing interest in the **Paris Exposition**. It's **strong linear forms** and **sharp angles** began showing up in architecture and clothing all over **New York City** and spread from there. Art Deco became a very popular style in **cinema** which also helped its growth. Cities across the US that had previously turned their nose at European modernism were embracing the style. It even became associated with Americas newest genre of music and Art Deco became known as **the jazz style**. The evolution of American Art Deco centered around a gradual move from applied **ornament** and eventually rejected the **angularity** of zig-zag patterning, turning instead towards **curved** and **uninterrupted** smooth lines. The **stock market crash** of 1929 lead to a distinctive change in the style, when its overt luxury was seen as **vulgar** and **inappropriate** in a time of such economic dearth. After that it became much more about **bright colors** and **geometric shapes** with **minimal ornament**. Paired with that and the emergence of the **industrial design** profession what became known as moderne art deco had a very futuristic look that seemed to come from **science fiction**. Products in this style were produced cheaply and at a large scale. The style resurfaced in the 60's thanks to the work of architectural historians such as Bevis Hillier. Volute "reflects the vibrant, elegant vision of the artists and designers from the 20's and 30's." Volute takes its inspiration specifically from the post depression motifs of Art Deco, and echos its futuristic forms and smooth lines.

Materiality: Volute is **silk-screened** by hand, however this is not apparent in the wallpaper itself. The pattern is made through **uniform thick lines** and stripes of color with no variation or evidence of the artist's hand. Bradbury's decision to screen print Volute by hand is also unusual as Art Deco's popularity was partly due to it being a style that could be **mass produced** thanks to recent technological innovations and sold very cheaply. If Bradbury and Bradbury wanted to recreate the production methods of this period they would produce Volute mechanically. This is telling as to the audience of the print today. Bradbury & Bradbury's customers likely care more about **materiality** and want something hand-crafted, despite this being in dissonance with Volutes inspiration.

¹ Hillier, B. (1997). *Art Deco total style*. American Institute of Architects.
² Arwas, V. (2000). *Art deco*. New York: Abradale Press.

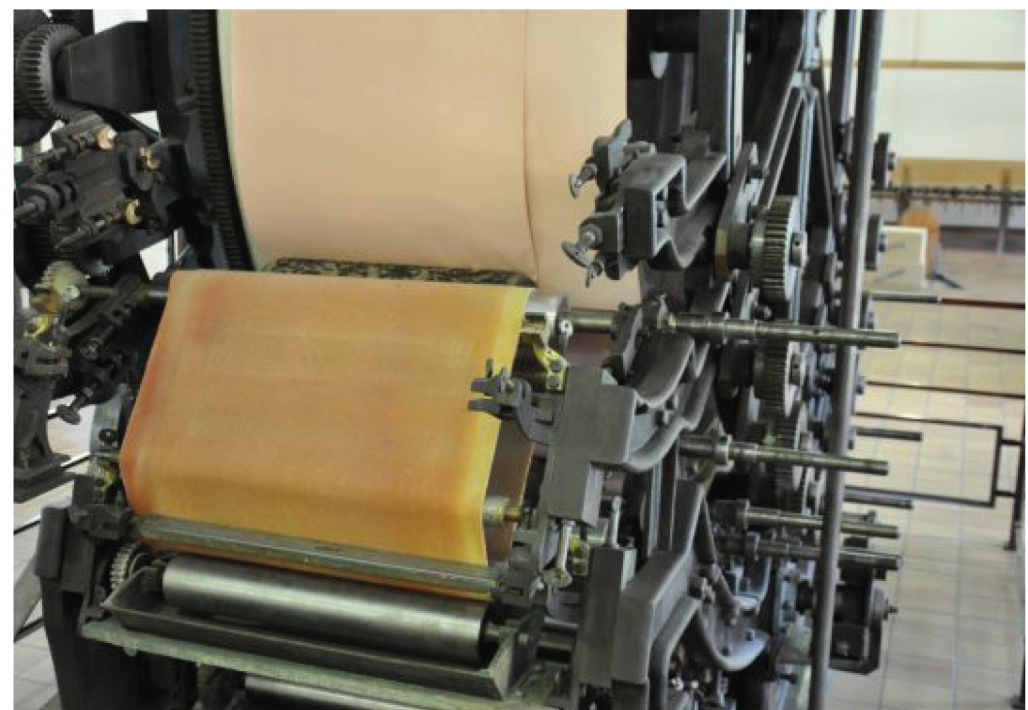


Top: pattern image, provided by: <http://www.homeportfolio.com>

Left: "Repeat"



Art Deco metalwork, image provided by: <http://www.decopix.com/>



Wallpaper printer from early 1900's, image provided by: <https://www.museepapierpeint.org/en/wallpaper/wallpaper-little-story/>