

# MIAMI BEACH DECO WALK



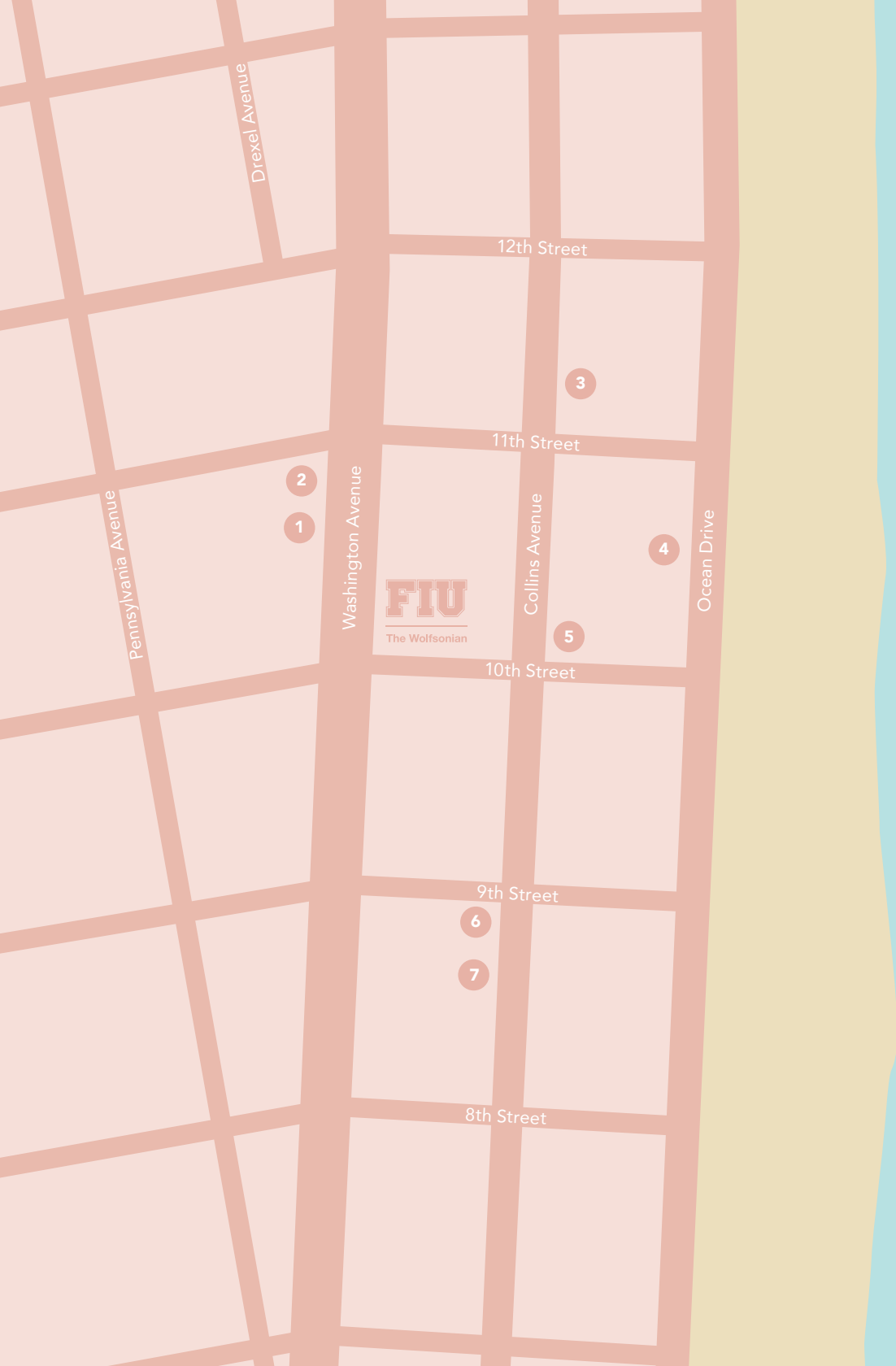
## MIAMI BEACH DECO WALK

This walking tour is presented in conjunction with *Deco: Luxury to Mass Market*, a Wolfsonian exhibition that offers an overview of Art Deco through works from the museum's collection of design and decorative arts. Where *Deco* ends—with the style's legacy here on Miami Beach—this neighborhood guide begins, drawing links between objects in the show and buildings that line nearby streets.



Download the PocketSights app to find a mobile version of our Miami Beach Deco Walk.

Presented with support from Knight Foundation.



**1 Taft Hotel**  
1040 Washington Avenue



**2 Kenmore Hotel**  
1050 Washington Avenue



**3 Palmer House**  
1119 Collins Avenue



**4 Congress Hotel**  
1036 Ocean Drive



**5 Essex House Hotel**  
1001 Collins Avenue



**6 Franklin Hotel**  
860 Collins Avenue



**7 Hotel Shelley** (originally Hotel La Salle)  
844 Collins Avenue

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## ACANTHUS

The acanthus, a plant that originated in the Mediterranean region, appears frequently in ancient Greek and Roman ornament. Deco designers borrowed and simplified the acanthus leaf motif, giving it the highly stylized form it takes in the brass-plated relief by Mario Moschi and the decoration over the entrance to Henry Hohauser's Taft Hotel.

### **Taft Hotel, 1936**

1040 Washington Avenue

Henry Hohauser (American, 1895–1963), architect

### **Plaques, 1929–32**

Mario Moschi (Italian, 1896–1971), sculptor

Florence, Italy

Brass plate

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Private Collection, Miami, Florida, 84.9.20.2, .1 NC



## STACKED LINES

The stacked lines that decorate the Kenmore Hotel echo the streamlined minimalism of the Sunbeam toaster. In both cases, the goal is to emphasize form with an economy of ornament. The lines running along the front of the toaster recall the design of Art Deco skyscrapers, and the decoration on the Kenmore façade does something similar, drawing the eye upward to produce a feeling of vertical rise.

### **Kenmore Hotel, 1936**

1050 Washington Avenue

Anton Skislewicz (American, b. Croatia, 1895–1980), architect

### Toaster, ***Sunbeam Silent Automatic, model T-1-C***, 1935

Alfred F. Fukal (American, 1896–1974), designer

Chicago Flexible Shaft Co., Chicago, manufacturer

Chrome-plated steel, Bakelite

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Juda Greenzaid, 2010.5.3



## FLUTING

The fluting motif in the green limestone pilasters framing the entryway of the Palmer House widens into vertical stripes leading to the corner lighthouse finial, a typical element of many Miami Beach Art Deco hotels. Similar abstracted classical detailing characterizes the rounded surface of the iconic *Diplomat* coffee service designed by German émigré Walter von Nessen.

### Palmer House, 1939

1119 Collins Avenue

Lawrence Murray Dixon (American, 1901–1949), architect

### Coffee Service, *Diplomat*, 1933

Walter von Nessen (American, b. Germany, 1889–1943), designer

Chase Brass & Copper Company, Waterbury, Connecticut, manufacturer

Chrome-plated copper, Catalin

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, TD1991.84.1



## TYPOGRAPHY

The bold round shapes of the Congress Hotel's lettering evoke a machine-age aesthetic, also conveyed by the industrial designer John Vassos on the cover of his book *Contempo*. The hotel's architecture, like many in the neighborhood, combines Art Deco's vertical emphasis, in its ascending central fin, with streamlined horizontal features, such as the projecting "eyebrows" and corner ribbon windows.

### **Congress Hotel, 1935**

1036 Ocean Drive

Henry Hohauser (American, 1895–1963), architect

### **Book, *Contempo: This American Tempo*, 1929**

John Vassos (American, b. Romania, 1898–1985), designer

Ruth Vassos (American, 1893–1965), author

E. P. Dutton & Co., New York City, publisher

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 83.2.833



## FROZEN FOUNTAINS

Introduced at the 1925 Paris exposition, the “frozen fountain” became an Art Deco leitmotif. You can find examples in the bas-relief panels on each side of the entrance of the Congress Hotel, and—on a monumental scale—in The Wolfsonian’s lobby. The Wolfsonian’s frozen fountain was originally on the façade of the Norris Theater, which was demolished in 1983 to make way for a McDonald’s. Architect Mark Hampton chose it as a centerpiece for the museum’s lobby, integrating it into a real fountain.

### **Congress Hotel, 1935**

1036 Ocean Drive

Henry Hohauser (American, 1895–1963), architect

### **Window grille, 1929**

From the Norris Theater, Norristown, Pennsylvania, 1929

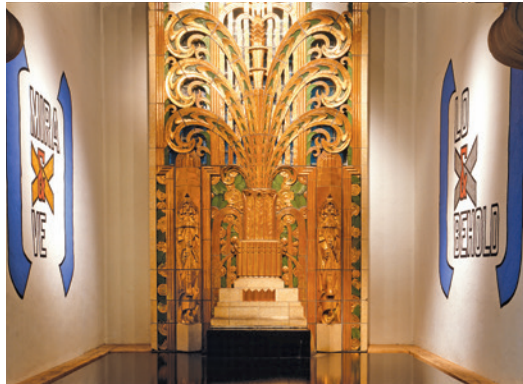
William Harold Lee (American, 1884–1971) and

Armand Carroll (American, 1898–1976), architects

Conkling-Armstrong, Philadelphia, manufacturer

Glazed terracotta

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XX1989.429



## STREAMLINING

Streamlining—the use of curved forms and horizontal bands to convey speed—was implemented by American industrial designers of the 1930s. The technique was first used for ships, trains, and vehicles, but the style soon became popular for all kinds of home goods, including radios. The Essex House's stripes, horizontal window overhangs, and rounded corners show how the same design ideas could be applied to a building. Its circular windows and vents are not unlike the knobs and controls on the *Sparton* radio.

### Essex House Hotel, 1938

1001 Collins Avenue

Henry Hohauser (American, 1895–1963), architect

### Radio, *Sparton*, model 558-C, c. 1937

Walter Dorwin Teague (American, 1883–1960), designer

Sparton Corporation, Jackson, Michigan, manufacturer

Glass, brass, wood, Bakelite

The Wolfsonian—FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, XX1990.1484



## TERRAZZO

While at the Essex House, step onto the front terrace and look down. Terrazzo is a composite material made of marble, glass, and quartz chips mixed with a cement binder. Different groupings and colors of chips allow designers to create patterns, such as the shapes and words embedded in terrazzo floors and hotels throughout South Beach. The pattern on the Essex House terrace, like the cover of the catalog *A Century of Progress Homes and Furnishings*, uses geometric shapes and diagonal lines to give a sense of speed and direction. The catalog was published in conjunction with the 1933 Century of Progress exposition in Chicago, which inspired much of South Beach's architecture.

### Essex House Hotel, 1938

1001 Collins Avenue

Henry Hohauser (American, 1895–1963), architect

### Catalog, *A Century of Progress Homes and Furnishings*, c. 1934

Dorothy Raley (American, 1908–2003), editor

M. A. Ring Company, Chicago, publisher

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 83.2.1093



## FLORA

Flowers and leaves, simplified and flattened to create two-dimensional ornament, were among the most common motifs of Art Deco design. Similar patterns could be applied to objects as different as a bowl sold by the French department store Le Bon Marché and an architectural frieze on the Franklin Hotel. Like many Deco buildings, the Franklin also looks back to historical forms, from the arched windows on the ground floor to the Classical references of the entrance portico.

### **Franklin Hotel, 1934**

860 Collins Avenue

Victor Nellenbogen (American, b. Hungary, 1888–1959), architect

### **Bowl, c. 1929**

Longwy, Longwy, France, manufacturer for Atelier Pomone du Bon Marché, Paris  
Enameled earthenware

The Wolfsonian–FIU, The Mitchell Wolfson, Jr. Collection, 85.7.282



## ANGLES

Some Deco objects, such as the silver-plated tray designed by Albert F. Saunders, were ornamented with overlapping triangles to create a jagged, dynamic feeling. A similar pattern, mixed with leaf and floral forms, can be found on bas-reliefs over the entrance to the Hotel Shelley. The zigzag pattern on the building's cornice, just below the roof, is another feature that was popular in both architecture and decorative arts of the time.

**Hotel Shelley** (originally Hotel La Salle), 1931  
844 Collins Avenue  
Henry J. Moloney (American, 1885–1949), architect

**Tray**, 1928  
Albert F. Saunders (British, 1878–1964), designer  
Benedict Manufacturing Corporation, East Syracuse, New York, manufacturer  
Silverplate, Bakelite

The Wolfsonian–FIU, Gift of Jewel Stern, 2010.4.4





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