

Iconographic Studies Poster of the Exhibition and Night Market of the Dutch East Indies and Europe, 1930s Colonial Period

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Article history

Received : 2024-04-29

Accepted : 2025-09-11

Published : 2025-10-11

Keywords

Colonial Art Deco,
Visual Hegemony,
Comparative Iconography,
Postcolonial Representation

Abstract: This study analyses Art Deco (1930s) colonial exhibition posters from the Dutch East Indies and Europe to uncover their active role as an instrument of visual hegemony that transcends the discourse of exoticism. Through a critical comparative iconography approach (Panofsky's adaptation) reinforced by postcolonial theory (Said, 1978) and representation (Hall), the research reveals how Art Deco syntax, rigid geometry, machine typography, and modern chromatic, are used to transform colonial violence into "modernity", domesticating alterity through linguistic distortion. Build a global myth about the world order under European leadership. Key findings point to different aesthetic strategies: while European (French/Belgian) posters erase indigenous traces, the Dutch East Indies version adopts local terms distortively to assert epistemic control. The two met in Art Deco's function as a "universal visual language" that naturalized colonial hierarchies. Research concludes that Art Deco is not just a decorative style, but an ideological weapon that transforms exploitation into aesthetics, and oppression into "progress" in the global imagination of the 1930s. This underlines the enduring power of visual culture to shape ideologies, highlighting how the Art Deco movement functioned as an active agent in the legitimation and perpetuation of colonial dominance.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini menganalisis poster pameran kolonial bergaya Art Deco (1930-an) dari Hindia Belanda dan Eropa untuk membongkar peran aktifnya sebagai instrumen hegemoni visual yang melampaui wacana eksotisme. Melalui pendekatan ikonografi komparatif kritis (adaptasi Panofsky) yang diperkuat teori poskolonial (Said) dan representasi (Hall), penelitian mengungkap bagaimana sintaksis Art Deco, geometri rigid, tipografi mesin, dan kromatik modern, dimanfaatkan untuk mengubah kekerasan kolonial menjadi "modernitas", mendomestikasi alteritas melalui distorsi linguistik. Membangun mitos global tentang tatanan dunia di bawah kepemimpinan Eropa. Temuan kunci menunjukkan perbedaan strategi estetika: sementara poster Eropa (Prancis/Belgia) menghapus jejak pribumi, versi Hindia Belanda mengadopsi istilah lokal secara distorsif untuk menegaskan kontrol epistemik. Keduanya bertemu dalam fungsi Art Deco sebagai "bahasa visual universal" yang menaturalisasi hierarki kolonial. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa Art Deco bukan sekadar gaya dekoratif, melainkan senjata ideologis yang mentransformasi eksploitasi menjadi estetika, dan penindasan menjadi "kemajuan" dalam imajinasi global era 1930-an.



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INTRODUCTION

The interwar period (1918–1939) witnessed the convergence of two global phenomena: the zenith of European colonial exhibitions and the international dominance of Art Deco aesthetics. These exhibitions were staged in metropolises like Paris (1931) and colonies like Batavia, which relied heavily on posters to manufacture their consent for imperialism. While scholars have analyzed these events as spectacles of

power (Benedict, 1983; Greenhalgh, 1988), A critical gap persists: the role of Art Deco's formal syntax in naturalizing colonial hierarchies through comparative visual discourse. This study addresses this lacuna by examining how Art Deco aesthetics, geometric abstraction, machine-age dynamism, and "stylized primitivism" functioned as a *hegemonic visual technology* in the Dutch East Indies and European colonial posters during the 1930s.

Colonial exhibitions served as "laboratories of modernity" (Morton, 2000), where millions encountered curated visions of empire. Posters were central to this enterprise, mass-produced and widely distributed, designed to seduce. However, scholarship remains bifurcated: studies of European posters emphasize architectural grandeur (Benton, 2003; Morton, 2000), while research on the Dutch East Indies focuses on photographic archives (Protschky, 2011), neglecting posters as transnational ideological vectors. As Bernault (2020) notes: "Colonial posters aestheticized violence into consumable imagery, but their comparative semiotics across empires remains unexamined".

Art Deco's rise occurred during major colonial crises: the Great Depression, anti-colonial revolts such as Vietnam's Yen Bay Uprising, and the spread of fascism. Its crisp lines, industrial motifs, and bold colors offered a visual language that reframed exploitation as progress. Greenhalgh (1988) calls this 'exotic decoration', but this overlooks how Deco's geometric rigor helped to systematize racial hierarchies. We argue that Art Deco was neither a neutral style nor an exotic backdrop. Instead, it served as the *aesthetic structure of interwar colonialism*: a visual grammar that turned violence into spectacle and alterity into a product to consume. By comparing posters from the Dutch East Indies and Europe, this study reveals how Deco's 'futurist' veneer made the unimaginable seem normal—what Mbembe (2003) described as '*that genocide could be elegant, and theft beautiful*'.

Literature Review

This literature review examines how colonial posters of the 1930s era reproduce visual hegemony through the theoretical framework of Orientalism (Said, 1978) while exploring their deconstruction strategies. In the context of the Dutch East Indies, the Bloembergen study (2006) revealed the propaganda function of the Colonial Exhibition poster that projected the illusion of social harmony, while Coté (2006) analyzed the narrative of "glorification" in the Ethical Politics poster as a camouflage of economic exploitation. The colonial Dutch East Indies

market began around 1870 after the issuance of the Agrarian Law (Agrarische Wet) and the Sugar Law (Saka Wet) by the Dutch East Indies Government, which reflected the social and economic dynamics of the time and became a form of adaptation to colonial policies that affected the agrarian system and sugar economy in the region. (Ciptoaji, 2023)—This local response to hegemony can be seen in the photography of the Javanese elite (Protschky, 2015), which combines European-traditional symbols, as well as the smuggling of nationalist symbols in Peranakan Chinese media posters (Suryadinata, 1997). Further research by Banindro (2020) entitled Socio-Historical Media Tourism Promotion Study During The Dutch East Indies, Period Of 1930 - 1940, was used as a review of poster printing styles that had been published in the colonial period. In his research, it was concluded that the popular printing art style at that time was the Art Deco style of poster art.

In Europe, Morton (2000) deconstructed the 1931 Paris exhibition that featured the colonies as primitive spaces, while Lebovics (1992) examined the mobilization of French metropolitan nationalism through colonial imagery. The methodological approach emphasizes the dangers of ignoring the subaltern voice (Spivak, 1988) and the need to read "colonial anxiety" in the visual archive (Stoler, 2009). Despite the rich insights, the research still faces gaps, such as the absence of studies on indigenous designers in poster production and the lack of comparative analysis between colonies. Key archives include the collections of the KITLV Leiden and the Tropenmuseum Amsterdam, where the paradox of agency, the poster as a tool of domination as well as a medium of resistance, is central to critical reflection.

Scholarship has long framed international exhibitions as 'imperial microcosms' (Benedict, 1983) or 'rituals of legitimation' (Greenhalgh, 1988), conceptualizations that powerfully capture how these events materialized colonial ideologies through grandiose pavilions, curated human displays, and choreographed spectacles of technological supremacy. Yet these studies overwhelmingly prioritize architectural and performative dimensions, such as the spatial politics of fairgrounds or ethnographic 'villages', while systematically marginalizing posters as peripheral ephemera, a methodological bias that obscures the critical role of printed visuals in democratizing colonial narratives beyond the exhibition's temporal and geographical boundaries.

This scholarly omission is particularly para-

doxical given that posters, designed for mass circulation in urban streets, railway stations, and newspaper supplements, arguably penetrated public consciousness more deeply than the ephemeral exhibitions themselves, functioning as portable propaganda machines that normalized imperial hierarchies through repetitive aesthetic encounters (Morton, 2000; Hoefte, R., & Vries, A., 2001). By relegating posters to the archive's periphery, historians inadvertently reproduce the very hierarchy they seek to critique: valuing monumental permanence over quotidian fragility, thus silencing the paper-based artefacts that mediated colonialism's visual economy to ordinary citizens."

Scholarship has long framed international colonial exhibitions as rituals of imperial legitimacy (Benedict, 1983; Greenhalgh, 1988). Benedict's seminal work *The Anthropology of World's Fairs* (1983) posits these events as "microcosms of empire," yet reduces posters to *peripheral ephemera*, neglecting their agency in shaping public consciousness. Similarly, Morton's *Hybrid Modernities* (2000) brilliantly dissects Paris' 1931's architecture but marginalizes posters' transnational circulation, a critical oversight given their mass dissemination (Bernault, 2020). This study contends that posters were not mere *derivatives* of exhibitions but active conduits of ideological transmission.

Postcolonialism

It is a discourse that portrays an impressive image of Western superiority in seeing Easterners as inferior. As a result, there is an imbalance in the relationship between different entities, such as East-West, involving elements of superiority-inferiority, cultural differences, and others. This reflects the dynamics of power and domination that occur in the context of colonialism and imperialism and leads to ongoing disparities in various aspects of social, political, and economic life. (Said, 2016)

Postcolonial theory is built on previous historical events. The bitter experience of the Indonesian people who were colonized for approximately three and a half centuries under Dutch colonialism is a strong enough reason why this research was carried out. With a series of data collection activities, documentation, and interviews, through tracing manuscripts and library sources, materials, and data on the socio-cultural factual conditions during the Dutch East Indies were obtained. (Hägerdal, 2012)

METHOD

This study employs a critical qualitative design an-

chored in Comparative Critical Iconography, an analytical framework that adapts Panofsky's (1955) iconography to postcolonial visual politics through four dialectical tiers of inquiry: (1) At the level of *Pre-Iconography* (Panofsky, 1957), we systematically catalogue formal attributes of colonial Art Deco posters, color schemes, typography, and compositional hierarchies—to expose how aesthetic choices mechanized visual legibility for mass audiences; (2) In the *Iconographic* phase, Said's (1978) Orientalism scaffolds the deconstruction of recurring motifs (e.g., "primitivized" natives juxtaposed with modernist infrastructure), revealing how these visual tropes naturalized Eurocentric epistemologies. (3) Through *Critical Iconology* (extending Panofsky via Hall, 1997), we interrogate the politics of representation embedded within these aesthetics, not merely as artistic styles but as hegemonic technologies that reproduced colonial power relations through cultural codification; (4) Finally, deploying Stoler's (2009) concept of *Imperial Durability* as a comparative lens, we trace how these visual regimes circulated trans-colonially (Hindia Belanda/Netherland Indie), examining both their localized adaptations and role in sustaining imperial imaginaries across temporal-spatial boundaries.

To dissect how Art Deco aesthetics functioned as hegemonic technology in colonial propaganda. Data Collection and Sampling Primary data comprises 35 Art Deco posters (1930–1939) curated from archives: Vintage Art Deco poster dealer online, The Van Sabben Auction Gallery specializes in vintage posters (Netherland), Tropenmuseum (Netherland), <https://digitalcollections.universiteitleiden.nl/> (Netherland), Musée du Quai Branly (France) for French colonial posters, Collections of the Koninklijk Museum van het Leger en de Krijgsgeschiedenis (Belgia) for administrative context. The core sample was selected through purposive sampling based on three criteria: (1) Provenance from official colonial exhibitions, (2) Dominant Art Deco stylistic features (geometric abstraction, machine-age typography), (3) Representation of geopolitical duality (European metropole vs. colony-produced). Contextual data, exhibition catalogs, colonial press (e.g., *Java-Bode*), and police reports supplemented visual analysis to triangulate socio-political conditions.

This research also examines semiotic aspects such as the text, images, and colors of the 1930s colonial annual market posters. This involves a critical analysis of cultural representations, as well as the ways in which colonialism influenced and transformed modernity in the colony. This research uses

Table 1. Theoretical Integration in Analysis

Method	Theoretical Anchor
Pre-Iconography	Panofsky's (1957)
Iconography	Said's Orientalism (1978)
Critical Iconology	Hall's Representation (1997)
Comparison	Stoler's Imperial Durability (2009)

an interdisciplinary approach of postcolonial structuralism (Table 1). The Postcolonial paradigm is generally used to examine the superiority of the West over the inferiority of the East, either as orientalism or imperialism and colonialism.

ART DECO HISTORIOGRAPHY

Art Deco historiography remains split between formalist celebration (Benton, 2003) and apolitical global surveys (Hillier, 1968). Benton's *Art Deco 1910–1939* (2003) catalogs colonial motifs as "exotic influences", symbolizing reframed resource extraction as "progress." Visser's urban studies (2010). While Said's *Orientalism* (1978) underpins colonial discourse studies, its focus on *text* overlooks visual epistemicide. Protschky's *Images of the Tropics* (2011) advances Dutch East Indies visual analysis but reduces posters to "ethnographic records", neglecting their *agentive* role in spatializing power. Similarly, Hall's representation theory (1997) explains signifying practices but doesn't engage design syntax. Indonesian colonial visual studies focus narrowly on architecture (Locher-Scholten, 2004) or photography (Protschky, 2011). Art Deco emerged in the midst of modernization, which is different from the style of modernism. If modernism uses the Less is more approach and form follows function. Art Deco appears by utilizing ornaments and ornamental styles. (Banindro, 2017)

When posters are analyzed, they're divorced from transcolonial networks. European scholarship (Bernault, 2020; Morton, 2000) rarely cites Indies materials, perpetuating academic imperialism. This siloed approach misses key insights: it reveals distinct hegemonic tactics. Existing scholarship operates in disciplinary siloes: design historians aestheticize Deco (Benton), postcolonial theorists ignore visuals (Said), and regional specialists miss global patterns (Protschky). This study bridges them by arguing: "*Art Deco was the optical unconscious of colonialism, a visual regime that made plunder palpable, and hierarchy beautiful.*" Previous literature (Benedict, 1983; Greenhalgh, 1988) read posters as "exoticism-based decorative art". This analysis

proves that Art Deco is a complex mechanism as well as an aesthetic weapon of imperialism: The Art Deco style (with its fixation on machinery, geometry, efficiency) is a semiotic bridge that converts violence into "progress", packaging colonialism as a "global project". Why is "Art Deco" important to be called explicitly? Based on the findings: (1) Uniqueness of the 1930s Period: Art Deco was the dominant style of colonial exhibitions of this era (it did not exist in the 1900s/1920s). It reflects the modernity of high colonialism; (2) Aesthetic Paradox: Art Deco claims to be a "modern international style", but it is used to serve imperialism—a contradiction that is at the heart of the research; (3) Specificity of Analysis: Without a focus on Art Deco, iconographic comparisons will fall into superficial readings (count visual elements without associating with the ideology of colonial modernism).

Art Deco is his signature style in creating his creations. Art Deco itself was a design movement that was popular from 1920 to 1939. It was introduced by Westerners, especially the Dutch, who came to the Dutch East Indies, with contributions from the Amsterdam School architectural movement that had concepts strongly associated with modernism. In the Art Deco style, pictorial objects seek to avoid dominant lines and emphasize embellishment through the use of gradations of block colours, creating a rich artistic feel and appearing stylish, warm, and giving the impression of luxury. Art Deco visual applications tend to use a neutral or dark colour approach, sometimes mixed with bright colours. (Arief, 1999)

Art Deco typically features visual elements that present a modernistic feel, as seen in the poster images. This is reflected in the presentation of local inland cultural activities presented with a Western-derived Art Deco style approach, resulting in a modern visual image. In the depiction of visual objects, the complexity of details is often simplified, yet a luxurious effect is still exuded, especially through the use of strikingly contrasting colours. (Banindro, 2020) Art Deco figures of the Dutch East Indies period include Frits van Bommel (1898–1981), a poster artist educated at art schools in the Netherlands, who can be considered a pioneer of the realistic style in modern visual art in the Dutch East Indies. Van Bommel lived in Batavia (now Jakarta) and worked for the advertising agency Aneta with his scintillating work. (Brattinga, 2014) Van Bommel has created many notable posters during his career, especially in the Art Deco style that was popular at the time. His posters often feature clean, geometric, and modern designs, with the use of

bright colours and decorative motifs typical of the Art Deco style.

Another prominent Art Deco poster artist was Jan Lavies. Lavies (1902-2005) was one of the modern poster artists who came to the Dutch East Indies in the 1930s, after completing his studies at the Royal Academy in the Netherlands. (Banindro, 2017) He is a modernist artist whose concept of less is more, "less is more". Lavies has brought modernization to the world of tourism promotion, affiliated with the Art Deco style, through Deco graphic art printing. Jan Lavies brought the spirit of Western modernity and placed his visual poster medium to appear in a modernistic frame. (Banindro, et al., 2014)

While architectural histories (Benton, 2003) detail Art Deco's global spread, its deployment in colonial propaganda remains underexplored. Visser's *Cities Surround the Countryside* (2010) notes Art Deco's presence in Batavia's urbanism but ignores its poster aesthetics. Crucially, Art Deco's geometric abstraction, with its machine-age aesthetics and "stylized primitivism", provided a visual lexicon to *repackage colonialism as progressive* (Morton, 2000). This research bridges design history and colonial studies by arguing that Art Deco's formal syntax.

FORMALISM AND STRUCTURALISM IN POSTERS

Some of the points emphasized in formal structuralist theory for poster analysis include: Visual Composition: The analysis will look at how the visual elements are organized and put together in the poster, including the placement of images, text, and other decorative elements. Attention will be paid to compositional patterns and the way the elements interact with each other. Color Patterns: Structuralist formal theory will pay attention to the use of colors in the poster and how they are arranged in relation to each other. This involves analyzing the color patterns, contrasts, and harmonies that might be used to achieve the desired visual effect. Motifs and Symbols: This approach will also look for motifs and symbols that may be present in the poster design. The analysis will look for recurring patterns of motifs or symbols and how they convey a certain message or meaning to the viewer. Visual Narrative Structure: Some posters may have a complex visual narrative structure, where visual elements are arranged sequentially to create a visual narrative. Formal structuralist theory will look at how this structure is used to capture the viewer's attention and convey an effective message. (Sachari, 2005)

Structuralism dissects posters as a system of signs structured in binary oppositional relations, reproducing colonial power hierarchies. Roland Barthes (1957) in *Mythologies* described how posters converted signifiers (signifiers: static) and signifieds (myths into signs called *mission civilisatrice*. Hall (1997) asserts that visual stereotypes are circuits of cultural representation that braze hegemony through repetitive sign structures. Thus, the poster is not just an aesthetic object, but a mythological machine that transforms the history of violence into a structured narrative of "civilization." The Formalists viewed the form as an agent of ideology, while the Structuralists dismantled the sign as a power relation. The collaboration of the two approaches uncovers how colonial posters crystallize imperial violence into beautiful geometries and structured myths.

ART DECO POSTER ON THE TERRITORY OF THE WESTERN COLONIES

Posters include a variety of design styles, visualizations, and themes related to the design object. Structuralist formal theory in the context of posters can refer to an analytical approach that emphasizes the visual structure and formal elements in poster design. In this case, the formal structuralist theory will pay attention to the patterns, motifs, composition, use of colour, and other visual elements in the poster to understand how the message is conveyed and how its aesthetic and communicative effects are achieved. The graphic design of colonial posters often used images, typography, and colour to attract attention and convey messages effectively. Art Deco emerged during the colonial period. Art Deco appeared by utilizing ornamental omens and ornamental styles, the simple materials that were often used displayed a sense of luxury.

Art Deco's aesthetic is modernistic, producing new combinations of simplified objects with local decorative tendencies. Minimalist design, simplicity in detail, and depiction of the local hinterland are common features of Art Deco. (Banindro, 2017) The main purpose of colonial poster visuals was to promote positive images of colonialism, such as progress, modernity, security, and the economic benefits that colonizers were perceived to bring. Night market posters were also used to showcase the exoticism and appeal of the colonies to audiences outside the colonies. This reflects the colonizers' efforts to reinforce a favourable and attractive image of colonialism and to attract interest and support from the international community. (Banindro, 2020)

Poster visuals in the colonial period were heavily influenced by various graphic design styles that were trending in Europe and America at the time. These styles included the Victorian style, Art and Crafts style, Art Nouveau style, and Art Deco. These styles were prevalent and became the main trends in poster and advertising design at the time, giving a distinctive colour and shape to every visual display of posters and advertisements in mass media such as magazines and newspapers. The influence of these design styles can be seen in the visual elements used in colonial posters, such as the use of intricate and detailed ornamentation, elegant organic curves, or clean and modern geometry.

This reflects the local adaptation of international trends in graphic design while creating a modern and appealing image for the audience at the time. As such, these graphic design styles give colonial posters a strong visual identity and reflect the complex relationship between colonialism and global design trends at the time. (Riyanto, 2017) Art Deco as Hegemonic Aesthetic: The style's "futurist" vocabulary, camouflaging Colonial Violence Through Modernist Form. Art Deco's formal lexicon, characterized by geometric abstraction, machine-age dynamism, and "stylized primitivism", served as a visual alchemy that transmuted colonial exploitation into narratives of progress. This aesthetic hegemony operated through three interlocking mechanisms, exemplified by the posters (Woodham, 1997).

MODERNITY EXHIBITION POSTER IN THE COLONIES

British Colony

The poster *Good Night Ceylon*, (Galle Fort, Nighttime) 1930, the visualization of the poster captures the image of a poignant moment of a couple leaving the beautiful paradise of Ceylon behind them. The poster depicts a landscape with the famous lighthouse and fort in the background (Haks, 1995). The poster is painted in a burnt sienna shade. With a foreground image of a couple, male and female, western "gesture", dressed in Tuxedo suits and glamorous European-style Vionnet Cut dresses (sketch Figure 2), spending the night. A silhouetted image of the lighthouse tower at Galle Fort (Figure 1) is visible in the background of this poster.

The poster was designed by Gunnar Mossberg, a Swedish artist who was born in 1903. Colonial Britain wanted to give the impression that in the colonies, life was serene, with nights bathed in exotic starlight and moonlight. Modernity is depicted with Art Deco-style paintings. Connotatively,

the message conveyed through this poster is that the West (colonial) has been able to make the East (Ceylon) a colony that is conducive, prosperous, modern, and "under control". In its visual application, Art Deco predominantly uses a colour palette that tends to be dull or muted. Sometimes, a bright colour palette is used to provide contrast, but there are also times when the colour palette is very contrasting, using only black and white. This created variations in the visual appearance of Art Deco that were influenced by the specific mood and context. (Charles & Carl, 2012)

This analysis examines the "CEYLON FORT BAZAAR" poster from Port de Galle as a representation of modern colonialism through the Art Deco style, integrating Panofsky's iconography, Said's Orientalism, Hall's representation theory, and Stoller's concept of imperial durability to reveal the power ideology embedded in colonial aesthetics.

Panofsky's Iconography. Pre-Iconography (Visual Description): main text: "CEYLON" (colonial spelling of Ceylon/Sri Lanka), "FORT BAZAAR", "PORT DE GALLE" (Port of Galle). Visual Style: Art Deco geometric typography



Figure 1. Poster *Good Night Ceylon*, (Galle Fort, Nighttime) 1930. Source: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/471470654754249506/>



Figure 2. References Jas Evening Tuxedo, Gown Vionnet Cut 1931 and Fort Galle. Source: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Srilanka_galle_fort.jpg

(modular sans-serif letters, bold-thin combination), asymmetrical layout with diagonal emphasis, colors are expected to be high contrast (black/gold/blue). Context: Galle Fort - a 16th-century Portuguese/Dutch heritage fortress that became a symbol of colonial power in Sri Lanka. (Panofsky, 1939) 5. Art Deco Style & Colonial Politics in Ceylon Signature Poster: Cubist Typography: modular sans-serif letters (e.g., "ROTOR" Lighthouse) reflect the aesthetics of the engine/modernity. Global Symbolism: Art Deco connects Ceylon with the colonial urban network (Bombay/Singapore). Radical Minimalism: There are no other striking illustrations, only the text as a symbol of administrative efficiency. (Crinson, 2003)

Said's Orientalism. Taming of Space through Naming: the local name "Galle" is packaged in French ("PORT DE GALLE"), claiming multicolonial heritage (Portuguese/Dutch/English) as belonging to Europe. Power Dichotomy: *Western (Colonial)*: represented by European languages and Art Deco styles. *Eastern (Ceylon)*: simplified into an exotic setting for European entertainment (Said, 1978). Entertainment as a Tool of Power: The bazaars in colonial fortifications transformed the sites of oppression into places of recreation, erasing the memory of local resistance. (Jayawardena, 2000) Iconography (Conventional Meaning): "FORT BAZAAR" implies the transformation of a colonial military site into an entertainment commercial space. "PORT DE GALLE" (French) confirms the European-centric narrative even in South Asia. Art Deco style: represents Western modernity in the colonial landscape (Crinson, 2003). Ideological Message: rationalization of Colonialism: The "futuristic" aesthetic justifies colonialism as a modernization project. (Said, 1978) Multicultural Erasure: The name "PORT DE GALLE" (France) ignores South Asian heritage, with the native language writing "Gala" in Sri Lankan. (Perera, 1999)

Hall's Representation. The stereotype of the "Orderly Colony": the poster builds the image of

Ceylon as a "safe" colonial entertainment destination. There is no representation of the local population, obscuring their agency. Elimination of Conflict: focus on "bazaars" hiding the political tensions of the 1930s era (Sri Lankan independence movement). (Hall's, 1979) Audience Decoding: *Hegemonic* (colonial government): evidence of the successful taming of imperial space. *Oppositional* (Ceylon nationalist): A symbol of the commodification of cultural heritage. (Wickramasinghe, 2006) Iconology (Ideology): Commercialization of Imperial Heritage: Fortresses (symbols of conquest) are used as entertainment markets, normalizing colonial history. Selective Modernity: Art Deco projected an image of Ceylon as an "advanced colony" under British administration. (Pieris, 2013)

Stoler's Imperial Durability. Repurposing Colonial Infrastructure: The use of the fort as a bazaar was an imperial resilience strategy to maintain the physical/ideological relevance of colonial sites. Pseudo-Imperial Citizenship: local communities are invited to participate in the economy, but the narrative legacy remains dominated by Europeans. (Stoler, 2008) Nostalgia as a Tool of Power: the "elegant" Art Deco style obscures the history of exploitation at Galle Fort (slave trade, military occupation). Heritage Sustainability: Today, Galle Fort is marketed as a "world heritage" tourist destination without a critical context. (Perera, 1999)

This "Fort Bazaar" poster represents three interrelated colonial ideological mechanisms: first, through the transformation of military fortifications (symbols of conquest) into entertainment bazaar spaces, there is a *whitewashing of history*, which systematically erases the memory of imperial violence, transforming sites of repression into sterile recreational commodities. Second, by packaging Ceylon as an entertainment product for colonial consumption, this poster activates *consumer orientation*, which reduces the local cultural space to a passive exotic destination, while affirming the position of the West as an observer subject and the East as an object of consumption.

Third, the Art Deco style, as an imposed international aesthetic, served as a *tool for the globalization of imperial hierarchies*, in which Western "modern" geometry reinforced the dichotomy of European superiority over Asian traditions. In the postcolonial context, ironically, contemporary tourism practices at sites such as Galle Fort often repeat this logic of colonial representation, where the violence of the past remains obscured by attractive commercial packaging, proving that the legacy of imperial ideology lives on through a seemingly neu-

tral aesthetic.

France Colony

Art Deco posters in France featured more experimental and innovative designs, with a bolder and more abstract use of geometric shapes. Artistic use of typography and bold colour combinations may be the hallmark of French Art Deco posters. Themes such as fashion, performing arts, and legendary figures were the focus of French Art Deco posters, sometimes reflecting the cosmopolitan and cultured Paris of the time. The 1931 poster of the République française, Exposition Coloniale Internationale (Figure 3) is an important part of the colonial visual cultural heritage. Influences from modernist art movements such as cubism or surrealism are visible in Art Deco posters in France.

An Exposition Coloniale Internationale poster from the 1931 era, designed by Jacques-Pierre Bellenger, in the Art Deco style of 1931. The poster depicts the figure of the leader of the French expeditionary army, Capitaine Maréchal Hubert Lyautey (Figure 4). The figure is shown in a close-up portrait, the figure is depicted decoratively with a block technique. The commander's face is depicted in sienna colour, wearing a white war helmet and rendered in marine blue shadow, until it merges to form a torso; the poster is reinforced with a tosca green background. The colors present in the poster, at least to remind the public, reflect the superiority of the French Republic.

Louis Hubert Gonzalve Lyautey (November 17, 1854-July 27, 1934) was a French Army general, expeditionary army leader, and colonial administrator. After serving in Indochina and Madagascar, he became the first French Resident-General in Morocco. He became a legend among the brave expeditionary soldiers, a brilliant strategist in conquering his native enemies in the colonies. Bellenger, as a poster artist, provides visual connotations that reinforce the general through the embodiment of the iconic figure of the "legend of the battlefield". Placing it at the moment of an international colonial exhibition was to show and remind that the French Republic was a superior and respected colonial state. Honored as the "Maker of Morocco" and the "Builder of the French Empire," he reached the peak of his popularity in 1931. (Singer, 1991)

This analysis explores the "INTERNATIONAL COLONIAL EXHIBITION 1931" poster as a visual instrument of French imperial ideology, employing Panofsky's iconography, Said's Orientalism, Hall's representation theory, and Stoler's concept of imperial durability to uncover how art and design reinforced colonial power

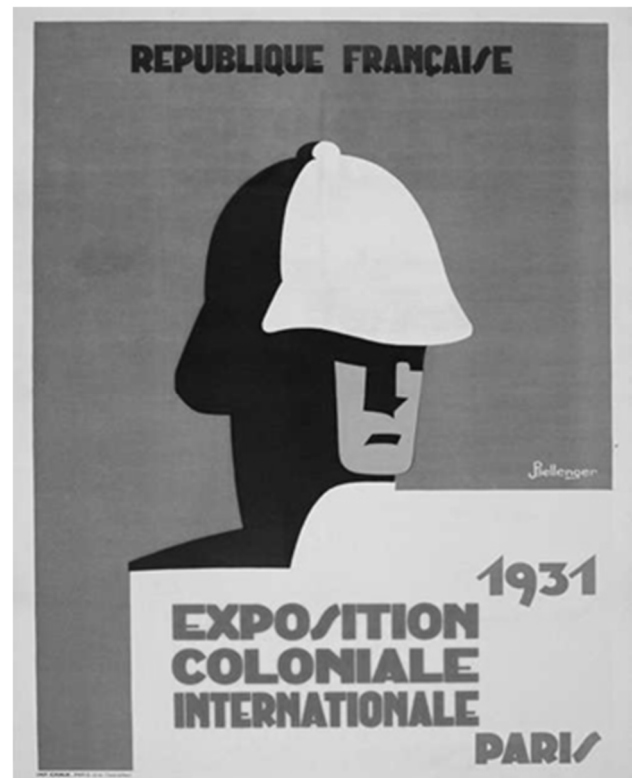


Figure 3. International Colonial Exhibition Poster, 1931. Source: <https://artscart.com/products/jacques-pierre-bellenger-art-deco-poster-1931?variant=41353681698980>



Figure 4. References to the leader of the French expeditionary army Capitaine Humbert. Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris_Colonial_Exposition#/media/File:Reynaud,_Diagne,_Olivier,_Exposition_coloniale_1931.jpg

and racial hierarchy.

Panofsky's Iconography. Pre-Iconography (Visual Description): main text: "REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE" (top), "Ranger of the leader of the French expeditionary army" (middle), "EXPOSITION COLONIALE INTERNATIONALE 1931" (bottom). Formal pose like a statue. Visual

Style: Academic realism with a contrast of modern sans-serif typography.

Said's Orientalism. The construction of "The Other": the figure of the "Ranger of the leader of the French expeditionary army" is used as a monolithic symbol of "colonial Africa", strong but in need of European guidance. The elimination of specific tribal identities (e.g., Bambara, Fulani) simplifies continental diversity. Power Dichotomy: *French (West)*: Represented by the official text ("REPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE"). *Africa (Orient)*: Represented by a "primitive" organized body. (Said, 1978) Iconography (Conventional Meaning) in "Ranger of the leader of the French expeditionary army" refers to the head of the African colonial forces serving France. The Colonial Exposition of 1931 was a major exhibition in Paris to showcase the wealth of the French Empire. (Morton, 2000) Colonial Knowledge Economy: posters produce a narrative that the colonists "accept" subordinate roles in the imperial order. (Norindr, 1996) Iconographic durability: similar imagery is still used in French military memoirs. (Cooper, 2005)

Hall's Representation. Stereotypes as Political Tools: images freeze the subject in the stereotype of "obedient native warrior of the "Ranger of the leader of the French expeditionary army", remove: Anti-colonial resistance (e.g., Rif uprising of 1925). Diversity of social roles in African society. Naturalization Strategy: The static pose implies "natural obedience" to French rule. (Hall, 1979) Iconology (Ideology): Mission Civilisatrice: The loyal "Ranger" represents the success of colonialism in "cultivating" the colony. Visual Hierarchy: The African body as an ethnographic object vs. the French text as a ruling subject. (Morton, 2000) Meaning Polisemy: *hegemonic reading*, the French public saw the "successful integration" of the empire. *Opposition Reading*: anti-colonial activists read it as a symbol of oppression. (Blanchard, 2008)

Stoler's Imperial Durability. Colonial Memory Infrastructure: The 1931 Exposition served as a "laboratory" of imperial resilience to test public acceptance of colonialism. Creating a visual archive of the legitimacy of power. Pseudo-Imperial Nationality: "Ranger" represents the colony's "included" population, but its status remains subordinate. (Stoler, 2009) Sensory Heritage: The "heroic" aesthetic of the poster obscures reality: forced labor in the colonies. Military repression of the rebellion.

As an ideological artifact that goes far beyond the function of a mere invitation, the "International Colonial Exhibition 1931" poster perpetuates colonial myths through the aestheticization of racial

hierarchies, while disguising the economic-political exploitation behind the rhetoric of protection and progress; This poster simultaneously projects the French empire's fear of collapse by garnering public support, while at the same time showing the paradox of the power and fragility of colonialism where legitimacy is built through public spectacle just as the foundations of its power are cracking. Thus, it becomes visual evidence of the cultural hegemony of colonial power, as well as a mirror of the ambivalence of the late colonial era: spectacular splendor overshadowed by decline.

Belgium Colony

Designed by architect Gédéon Bordiau with a final finish by Charles Girault (1905), the Belgian Gate Monument (Arcade du Cinquantenaire) in Brussels was built to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Belgian independence (1830–1880). Visser (2010) criticizes that: "His design creates an illusion of 'cultural harmony' that hides exploitation." Officially, this Neoclassical-Baroque style triumphal monument aims to celebrate "industrial and artistic progress" (De Meulder, 1998), but it covertly functions as imperial propaganda to show off Belgian colonial power in the Congo, as seen from the relief of the "Brabant Raising the National Flag" statue surrounded by the symbols of prosperity (rubber, ivory) resulting from the exploitation of the Congo (Vanthemsche, 2012).

An inherent myth is the claim that the gate structure was financed by Congolese wealth, especially after King Leopold II injected private funds from the *Congo Free State* (Hochschild, 1998), although state archives mention the combined budget of parliament and royal donations (Vijver, 2003). Today, this monument is a controversial symbol of Belgian colonial amnesia, where its architectural splendor obscures the history of the genocide of 10 million Congolese people (Marchal, 2008). Exhibition poster made by artist: Willy Thiriar, poster printer: J.E. Goossens, in Brussels in the year: 1924.

This analysis investigates the "VILLE DE BRUXELLES BRUSSELS CITY" poster as a subtle expression of Belgian colonial ideology, integrating Panofsky's iconography, Said's Orientalism, Hall's representation theory, and Stoler's concept of imperial durability to reveal how modernist design aesthetics masked colonial exploitation and reinforced cultural hierarchies.

Panofsky's Iconography. Pre-Iconography (Visual Description): main text: "VILLE DE" (France), "BRUXELLES" (France), "BRUSSEL STAD" (Netherlands). Style: Art Deco/Modernist

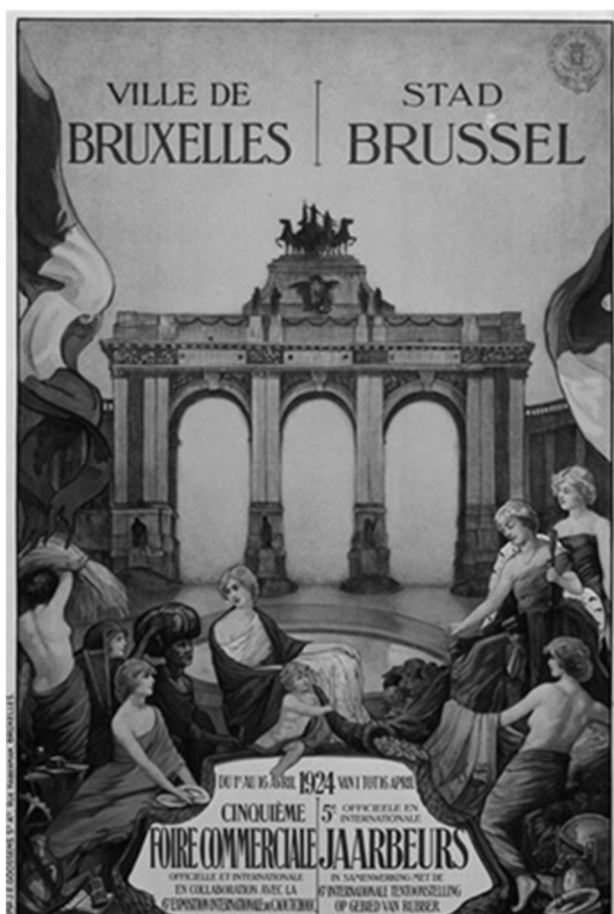


Figure 5. Poster series 41 size, 104 3/4x65 1/2 cm. karya J.E. Goossens, Brussels. 1924. Source: <https://postermuseum.com/products/bruxelles-poster-3124>, archives the collections of the Koninklijk Museum van het Leger en de Krijgsgeschiedenis.



Figure 6. References to Brussels - Arcade du Cinquantenaire. Source: https://monument.heritage.brussels/nl/Brussel_Uitbreiding_Oost/Jubelpark/1a/18703

geometric sans-serif typography, asymmetrical vertical layout, negative space dominant. Expected Color: Monochrome (black/white) or red-black (the official palette of the City of Brussels in the 1930s). (Panofsky, 1957)

Said's Orientalism. Silent Orientalism: Colonial Erasure, in the absence of visual/textual references to Congo, is a representation strategy to naturalize Congo as an "invisible treasure" that does not need to be displayed. (Said, 1978) Separating Brus-

sels' "civilized Europe" identity from colonial violence. Linguistic Dichotomy: The use of French as the primary language affirms the hegemony of Western culture over colonial spaces. (Stanard, 2011) Deconstruction of Space: The name "Brussel" (the French version of "Brussels") indicates the linguistic conquest of the original Flemish identity. Iconography (Conventional Meaning): Bilingual (French/Dutch) reflects the administrative duality of the Kingdom of Belgium. Extreme simplicity symbolizes bureaucratic efficiency and urban modernity. (Janssens, 2008).

Hall's Representation. Stereotypes of National Cohesion: bilingual creates the illusion of "Belgian unity" that disguises the post-World War I Flemish-Walloon Conflict. The Politics of Disappearance: The absence of illustrations obscures Brussels' role as the center of Congo's exploitation decisions. Production of Meaning: Hegemonic Reading, The Belgian elite saw it as a symbol of administrative modernity. Opposition Reading: Flemish activists read it as an affirmation of French dominance. (Hall, 1997) c. Iconology (Ideology): Hidden Hierarchy, the position of "VILLE DE" (the French elite) over "BRUSSEL STAD" (Dutch) reflects the political dominance of the Francophones over the Flemish. The vast negative space represents the removal of the Congolese colony from the narrative of urban identity. Selective Modernity: Sterile design obscures the source of Brussels' wealth from Congolese exploitation (rubber, ivory). (Verschaffel, 2023)

Stoler's Imperial Durability. Infrastructure Banality: minimalist design is a resilience strategy to: routineize colonial power as an "ordinary administration". Building a collective memory of Brussels being "separate" from Congo. Imperial Materiality: Poster paper likely contained rubber/ivory fibers imported from the Congo. Sensory Heritage: the neutral typography style survives as a template for the design of the city's archives, perpetuating colonial amnesia. Example: A reproduction of a similar poster is sold as a souvenir at the Musée Belvue without historical context. (Stoler, 2013)

As a tool of visual hegemony that goes far beyond the function of promoting tourism, the "Ville de Bruxelles" poster whitens Belgium's colonial history through the glorification of European monuments and the removal of traces of systematic violence, while consolidating national identity over the suffering of the colonies by transforming Brussels into a symbol of imperial "success"; The poster also projects the fantasy of modernity that relies on the exploitation of the Global South, while exposing the fragility of colonial discourse, where the avoid-

ance of colonial representation reveals unacknowledged trauma. In doing so, these artifacts freeze a historical irony: the splendor of European cities built on colonial foundations, a paradox that continues to haunt the Belgian public space to this day.

Netherlands Colony Poster of Exhibition Gambir Market

Gambir Market poster designed by van Bamel in 1930. Exhibition Gambir Market has existed as a bustling centre for a long time, and it is perceived by many as an icon of the Koningsplein area (now Monas Square). As an area, Koningsplein was located in the Weltevreden district (now Banteng Square). Initial research on the history of Exhibition Gambir Market was conducted in 2015. The first objective is to describe the economic activities in Gambir Market, the second is to describe the function of Exhibition Gambir Market as a recreational place for the people of Batavia in 1906-1942. (Galih, 2015) The result of this research shows that Exhibition Gambir Market was one of the Jaarmarkt or Annual Market projects organized in Gambir Square by the Dutch East Indies Government. The colonial Exhibition Gambir Market exhibition building was carried out with an innovative concept, in the sense that they wanted to show a new (eclectic) building style that was a blend of Western and Dutch East Indies architecture. (Lukito & Miranda, 2018) The idea of using the visualization of the Exhibition Gambir Market exhibition poster is the glittering ideology of the spread of modern culture during the colonial era. (Yulia, 2016)

Gambir, as an administrative area, emerged in 1912 as an interdistrict. In this case, the older districts in the Weltevreden district were Senen, Mangga Besar, Gambir, and Tanah Abang. (Poestaha Depok, 2019) Gambir, the name of the interdistrict, remained unchanged until the end of the Dutch colonial era. During the Japanese military occupation, it is less clear. But when the Dutch returned to power in Djakarta/Batavia, several areas were formed into districts, including Gambir. (Harahap, 2019)

This analysis examines the 1930 "PASAR GAMBIR" poster as a visual manifestation of colonial modernity, employing Panofsky's iconography, Said's Orientalism, Hall's representation theory, and Stoler's concept of imperial durability to uncover how Art Deco aesthetics functioned as a tool of power that aestheticized control, entertainment, and colonial hierarchy in Batavia.

Panofsky's Iconography. Pre-Iconography



Figure 7. Poster of Exhibition Gambir Market in 1930 in Batavia. Source: <http://www.tropenmuseum-KITLV.Nederland.Id/>



Figure 8. The atmosphere of Exhibition Gambir Market during the day, filled with colonial symbols. Source: <https://foto.tempo.co/read/42277/>

(Visual Description): Main Text: "GAMBIR MARKET" (bold, sans-serif), "1930", "23 Aug. BATAVIA 7 SEPT." Visual Style: Art Deco, typical geometric typography (clean lines, clear text hierarchy), symmetrical layout, colors of possibility monochrome or high contrast (black/gold/red). Context: "Gambir Market" is an annual night market in colonial-era Batavia (now Jakarta), featuring entertainment, culinary, and cultural exhibitions.

Said's Orientalism. Tamed "Eastern" Construction: "Gambir Market" is represented as a colonial entertainment space, not a cultural practice native to Java. The local name ("Gambir") is packaged in a Western aesthetic (Art Deco), affirming the power of colonial knowledge. West-East Dichotomy: *West (Netherlands)*: Represented in the Art Deco style (modern, rational). *East (Java)*: Simplified to an "exotic" entertainment object regulated by the colonizers. Power through Entertainment: The people's market was transformed into a scheduled event ("23 Aug-7 Sept"), reflecting colonial control over time and space. Iconography (Conventional Meaning): "Market" (market) + "Gambir" (Batavia district) = an "orderly" symbol of colonial entertainment. The mention of "BATAVIA" (the Dutch name for Jakarta) confirms colonial authority. Art Deco style: represents Western modernity, contrasting with the "traditional" image of the Dutch East Indies.

Hall's Representation. Stereotypes as Tools of Power: The poster builds the stereotype of the "obedient and entertaining colony." The Gambir market, which in reality may be full of resistance, is decontextualized into a neutral spectacle. Removal of Subject Agents: There are no images of the local population; the focus on Western texts and styles obscures the colonized subjectivity. Decoding by the Audience: *Hegemonic* (colonial government): Proof of the success of "modernization". *Oppositional* (anti-colonial activist): A symbol of covert exploitation. Iconology (Ideology): Colonial Modernity: Art Deco (global style of the 1920s-1930s) was used to project the Netherlands as the *carrier of civilization*. Hidden Message: Entertainment is "controlled" for the locals, normalizing the colonial presence as part of progress.

Stoler's Imperial Durability. Colonial Cultural Infrastructure: Events like the Gambir Market were an imperial resilience strategy to build loyalty through entertainment. "Pseudo-Imperial Citizenship": Local communities are invited to participate, but their status remains subordinate (as seen by the dominance of Western language/aesthetics). Imperial Nostalgia: The use of Art Deco style (a symbol of the "golden age" of the 1930s) obscures colonial violence. Today, similar posters are often collected as *aesthetic nostalgia*, perpetuating distorted imperial memories.

As an artifact of colonial propaganda, the "PASAR GAMBIR" poster (1930s) transforms exploited commodities into symbols of imperial prosperity through visual fetishism: gambirs are portrayed as glamorous raw objects in tropical exotic

settings, while indigenous labor and ecological destruction are erased from the narrative. This representation cemented Dutch hegemony by normalizing resource extraction as "development", projecting the Orient myth of a passive-fertile archipelago, while revealing colonial anxiety about the global economic crisis. In the end, these posters are not just commodity advertisements, but rather documents of epistemic violence that freeze colonial power relations: nature is exploited, bodies are made invisibilized, and wealth is diverted to finance European modernity.

Night Soerabaia Market

Surabaya City Council organizes Jaarmarkt from September to early October. The background of the government making Surabaya the pioneer of the Jaarmarkt event is because Surabaya is already a well-known city in the eyes of the international community, and is a port city, so it is very easy to connect with foreign countries, so the Jaarmarkt event is expected to be quickly promoted to other countries. (Faber, 1933) The night market (Jaarmarkt) in Surabaya was first organized on May 21, 1905, by a Kontrolir named J.E Jasper. The Soerabaiasche Jaarmarkt Vereeniging (Soerabaia Night Market) was established in 1908 by the Dutch East Indies government but only received legal status from the government in 1910. The Surabaya annual market was organized for the first time on May 21, 1905, by the controller J.E. Jasper. The existence of ethical politics brought changes to the work of the government, which was no longer limited to cultural affairs but moved into a broader field. Government work moved almost entirely from government officials who lacked modern education and training in systematic organizational work, to more modern European government officials. (Irianto, 2024)

The Jaarmarkt was organized annually by the Surabaya municipality (Gemeente). After gaining legal status from the government, every year Jaarmarkt was held at Canalaan, now located at Jalan Kusuma Bangsa, Taman Ria Surabaya. The beauty of Surabaya's night market can especially be enjoyed at night, when the buildings, including the monumental gates, are lit up, adding to the beautiful effect of this annual event. (Dyokta, 2013) Visitors to Jaarmarkt Surabaya consist of all groups, namely the Indigenous people, Chinese, other foreigners, and Europeans. Parents, adults, and children also do not miss this event.

This analysis explores the 1930 "YOUR ANNUAL FAIR PASAR-MALEM SOERABAIA" post-

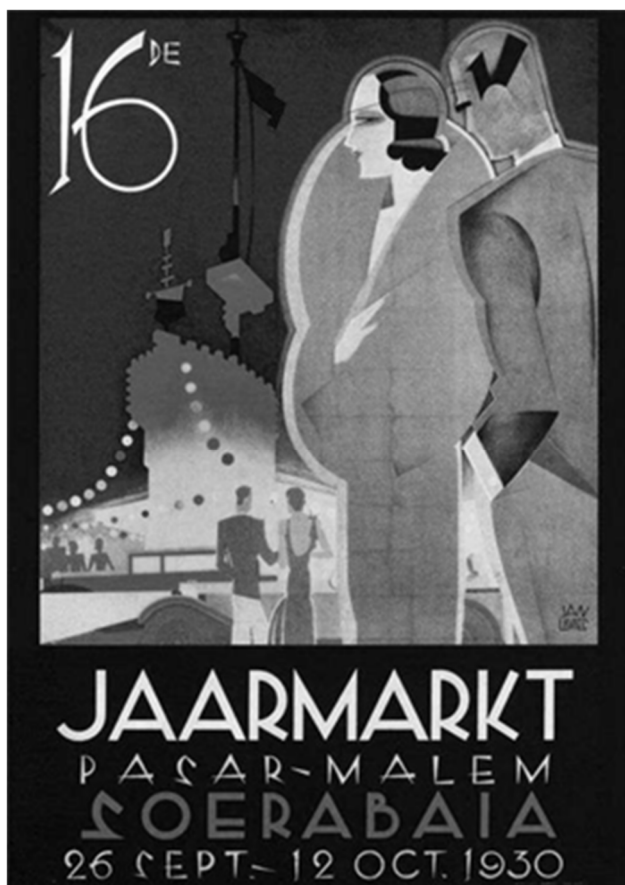


Figure 9. Poster of Pasar Malem Soerabaia Market in 1930. Source: <https://id.pinterest.com/pin/555983516482070259/>



Figure 10. The atmosphere of Surabaya Night Market, with its visible colonial symbols, is striking. Source: Universitaire Bibliotheek Leiden *Digitale collecties*.

er as a visual narrative of colonial modernity, integrating Panofsky's iconography, Said's Orientalism, Hall's representation theory, and Stoler's concept of imperial durability to reveal how Art Deco aesthetics transformed local culture into a symbol of controlled entertainment, linguistic dominance, and imperial nostalgia in colonial Surabaya.

Panofsky's Iconography. Pre-Iconography (Visual Description): main text: "16" (16th edition), "JE JAARMARKT PASAR-MALEM SOERABAIA",

"26 SEPT-12 OCT 1930". Visual Style: Art Deco style sans-serif bold typeface (modular, geometric letters), dynamic asymmetrical layout with emphasis on the number "16", designed by Jan Lavis in 1930, high contrast combination colors (black/yellow/red). Context: "Jaarmarkt" (Dutch annual market), "Pasar Malem" (Surabaya area), "SOERABAIA" (colonial spelling for Surabaya).

Said's Orientalism. Domestication of Local Space: the Javanese name "Pasar Malem" (residential area) was changed to a colonial entertainment commodity ("Jaarmarkt"). Power Dichotomy: *Netherlands (West)*: Control naming ("SOERABAIA") and time (schedule "26 SEPT-12 OCT"). *Indigenous (Eastern)*: Used as an "exotic" setting that was exploited for European entertainment. Entertainment as a Disciplinary Tool: Traditional night markets are framed as *Western-style structured events*, reflecting colonial regulation of local culture. Iconography (Conventional Meaning): The large number "16" symbolizes an *established tradition* under colonial administration. The name "Pasar Malem" (derived from the Pacar plant) is packaged in Dutch ("Jaarmarkt"), confirming linguistic *dominance*. Art Deco style: represents Western modernity in colonial urban spaces.

Hall's Representation. The stereotype of "Harmonious Colonial City": the poster erases the context of Surabaya 1930 (nationalist movement, labor strike) and replaces it with an *image of apolitical entertainment*. Removal of Subject Agents: No human imagery; focus on text obscures the role of the native as the organizer/spectator. Decoding the Audience: *Hegemonic* (colonial government): Evidence of the "prosperity" of the Dutch East Indies. *Oppositional* (Sarekat Islam activists): A tool of distraction from oppression. Iconology (Ideology): Imperial Stability: The number "16" builds the myth of the continuity of Dutch power that "brings order". Selective Modernity: Art Deco portrays Surabaya as an *advanced colonial city*, obscuring the reality of indigenous poverty.

Stoler's Imperial Durability. Colonial Rituals as Infrastructure: Annual events such as the Jaarmarkt are a *resilience strategy* to build loyalty through "controlled fun". Pseudo-Imperial Citizenship: Societies are invited to participate, but racial hierarchies remain (separation of European/native areas). Aesthetic Nostalgia: The "glamorous" Art Deco style obscures the reality of 1930s Surabaya: the economic crisis and police repression. Legacy of Durability: The spelling "SOERABAIA" is now an urban nostalgic commodity, perpetuating colonial memory.

Through the integration of Panofsky's (iconography), Said's (orientalism), Hall's (representation), and Stoler's (imperial durability) approaches, this poster exposes the political function of Art Deco style as a tool of colonial hegemony: geometric typography and contrasting colors (pre-iconography) represent Western modernity while domesticating local spaces ("Pasar Malem" becomes a commodity of "Jaarmarkt") through Said's lens; the elimination of human figures and the focus on texts (Hall) builds the myth of "colonial harmony" by disguising the social conflicts of Surabaya in 1930, while the annual rhythm of the event (Stoler) consolidates the resilience of power through structured entertainment rituals that perpetuate racial hierarchies and imperial memory, making Art Deco aesthetics a means of distraction as well as an infrastructure of colonial durability.

CONCLUSION

Art Deco style in a Colonial Context, Art Deco Signature on posters: geometric typography: bold sans-serif letters reflect efficiency and modernity. Symmetry & Simple: the structured layout represents colonial "order". Color Contrast: possibility of using a gold/black/red palette, a symbol of luxury and power. Art Deco Aesthetic Politics: this international style was used by the Dutch to connect Batavia with global modernity (Paris/New York). Obscuring Exploitation: Visual luxury masks the reality of forced labor and inequality. Constructing a *modern colonial identity* that contrasts with the narrative of "primitivism". "*Colonialism is a visual project, a right to see as well as a right to erase.*" This analysis proves that the "beauty" of posters is a structured language of violence, every line, letter, and color designed to normalize colonialism. "Beyond Exoticism": Implicitly refers to the failure of the exoticism discourse in reading posters. It was Art Deco that turned exoticism into an ideological tool (e.g., the distortion of the "Gambir Market" into an aesthetic commodity, Fig. 4)." Comparative Iconography": This methodology reveals how Art Deco syntax (geometry, typography, composition) functioned differently in Europe (Fig. 2: splendor) vs. the Dutch East Indies (Fig. 5: domestication). "Global Narratives": Art Deco is a transnational visual language that allows colonial narratives to be replicated globally (Fig. 1's "ROTOR Lamp Flare" and Fig. 2's "INTERNATIONALE" use a similar design code).

The five posters from the 1931 Paris Colonial Exhibition, Batavia Gambir Market, Jaarmarkt Surabaya, Fort Bazaar Ceylon, to the identity of the

city of Brussels, use the Art Deco style not just as an aesthetic expression, but as an ideological weapon to naturalize colonial violence. Through "modern" geometric typography, dynamic layouts, and glamorous contrasting palettes, the colonial regimes (France, the Netherlands, Belgium) disguised structural crimes, forced labor in the Dutch East Indies, massacres in Indochina, genocide in Congo, by constructing the illusions of "order", "progress", and "civilization". This aesthetic serves as an architecture of lies: it transforms the colonized body (like the African "Ranger") into a benign exotic object, colonial urban space (Surabaya/Batavia) into a sterile entertainment stage, and a site of oppression (Fort Galle) into a tourism commodity, deliberately erasing the memory of subaltern resistance and brutal economic extraction. Placing Art Deco as an active subject ("*hegemonic aesthetic*"), not just a context.

Maintain the key phrases "*beyond exoticism*" and "*comparative*" (implicit in "*Dutch East Indies and Europe*"). In a postcolonial dialectic, this visual legacy perpetuates historical amnesia, where the beauty of Art Deco is curated as a nostalgia for design, while the violence it conceals remains fragmented in the archive. Thus, the posters are not ordinary promotional artifacts, but rather a visual blueprint of hegemony designed by the holders of power to justify colonialism as a "sacred mission", proving that imperialism operates not only through weapons and laws, but also through typography and negative space that tacitly braces the hierarchy of power in the collective imagination. Propaganda of Colonial Modernity. This poster is a visual hegemony tool that uses Art Deco to package Colonialism as a modernization project (Panofsky/Stoler). Simplifying Local Culture into an entertainment commodity (Said/Hall). Perpetuate Power through Imperial Durability. Postcolonial Criticism: The "beautiful" Art Deco aesthetic risks distorting history, turning the memory of colonial violence into a nostalgia of design. This poster shows how the global style (Art Deco) became a tool of colonial propaganda, creating an illusion of harmony that actually strengthened the imperial hierarchy. *Posters are not just advertisements, but political tools to normalize colonial power through aesthetics.*

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