

Maurice Dufrene

(1876 – 1955)

French Furniture, Textile, Glassware, Ceramic, and Silverware Designer

Born in Paris in 1876, Maurice Dufrene was educated at Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Decoratifs in Paris. In 1899, at the age of just 23, he became the director and manager of La Maison Moderne, an association of artist who worked together to create designs which could be produced in multiples.

His work was first shown at salons in 1902, and from 1903 he regularly exhibited at Salon d'Automne and Salon de Societe Nationale des Beaux Arts. In 1904, he helped cofound Societe des Artistes Decorateurs which became a pivotal artists' organization whose anual exhibitions were well-documented by the press.

In 1922, he became creator and director of La Maitrise design studio of Les Galeries Lafayette in Paris - and the full-flowering of his talent became apparent in his refined furniture designs and complete interiors. His inspiration was taken from 18th and 19th century designs, with a modern approach.

At the 1925 Paris Exposition Internationale des Arts Decoratifs et Industriels Modernes (which would later give the movement "Art Deco" its name), Dufrene's designs included luxury boutiques, the living room of Une Ambassade Francaise pavilion, and the interior of La Maitrise pavilion.

He taught at the Ecole Boule and the Ecole des Arts Appliqués in Paris and was one of the prinvipal designers of the first modernist film sets (1919 film Le Carnaval des Verites).

His interiors ranged eclectically from townhouses to avant-garde to glass, metal and mirrors, to commissions from Mobilier National for embassies and the Palais de Elysee in Paris. He would remain at La Maitrise until 1952.