

Propelling Italy into a New Century: Fiat, International Expositions, and *Arte Nuova*

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This project suggests the need to reframe the discourse of modernism in Italy at the dawn of the twentieth century, positing that the emergence of modernism in Italy coincided with the birth of the now-famous Italian auto industry and its entwinement with *Arte Nuova*, the Italian strand of the international style known as Art Nouveau. This phenomenon was made possible by Art Nouveau's favored status at turn-of-the-century international expositions, including the Turin Exposition of Modern Decorative Art in 1902. *Arte Nuova* was quickly adopted as a kind of corporate emblem by FIAT (later Fiat), which employed the style in all aspects of its design over the next two decades, from its graphics in advertising and communication to its exposition stands to the new garages that it began building around the country. Fiat's use of *Arte Nuova* spurred the use of the style by the executives of the automotive and other industries, such as agriculture, shipping, textiles, utilities, and railways, which used it at nearly all Italian expositions preceding World War I and even their own residences. The employment of *Arte Nuova* on such a scale for these diverse sectors of the Italian economy thus ensured its unusual survival as an emblem of national modernity until the advent of Fascism in the 1920s.