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FIRST DRAFT  SPEECH ON RELATIONSHIP OF ART AND INDUSTRY

In his inaugural address to you, Dr. Bush-Brown pointed out that it is to our national peril to ignore the role that art can and must play in our national life. Although this is essentially true, it is nonetheless true that there lately has arisen a gradually increasing awareness of this fact on the part of many of our leaders of government and industry.

Perhaps our failure to realize that art is more than amateur recreation but has an important role to play in our whole economy may be traced to our strict Puritan heritage—our Yankee veneration for cold hard, practical common sense, and our distrust of any interest in beauty and a characterization of any such interest as "soft." Moreover, we were busy...busy growing strong and building an industrial complex. Having now arrived at a pinnacle of technological competence we are in a better position to realize that we must enforce this structure with creative and aesthetic considerations. We not only must—but in many cases are beginning to--give thought and planning to the role that art plays in industrial design and economic competition.

One possible reason for the growth in this recognition of art as a tool in business is the general cultural
For in the framework of the industrial revolution we lost sight of the prime function of the machine—"to improve the conditions and ease of human life." But to perform the mindless function in order to free the mind to explore the creative for the creative power of determining how to better use the machine.
cultural renaissance we are experiencing today. Quite naturally top business executives are in a financial position to promote and sponsor the arts—and incidentally should be encouraged to do so in much the same way that the Medicis encouraged the art of Florence. But what may have started as a project in community relations or even as the serach for status symbols seems to have resulted in this new awareness of the important practical applications of art.

Or perhaps it may be that this realization has been spawned not by any cultural or aesthetic reawakening but merely by an economic fact of life—the re-emergence of Europe and Japan as economic competitors—all the implications of the European Common Market, the remarkably efficient and beautiful factories of Germany, Italy and Belgium, the simple, smart design of the Japanese products. But, as I have said, whatever the stimulus, an evolution does seem to be taking place in all phases of American industry—designing the product, producing it, packaging it and selling it. It would be gratifying indeed if, although future historians may look back on the mid 20th century as the age of the atom, future historians would look back on it as the time when we lost our national self-consciousness about beauty.
of pioneers set out to convince manufacturers that an
attractively designed product could outsell an ugly one. In
the 1930s after Raymond Loewy re-designed one manufacturer's
radio set at a re-tooling cost of $15,000, the company's sales
rose 700%. One might think that such startling evidence would
have sent everyone clamoring to join the industrial design
bandwagon. But for 30 years top executives remained difficult
to convince that design does indeed play an important role in
industrial competition and that not only is good design the
best business in all the visible aspects of a company's
communication with the public, but that it is an intrinsic
part of a total corporate entity. Today there are approximately
300 industrial designers doing 40 million dollars worth of
business yearly....but billions more are spent on the
re-tooling changes necessary once a new design has been accepted.

Now, of course it is a truism that design has always
been the first element of production. But in the early years
of American industry we too often conceived of design in the
spirit of uniqueness, rather than in the spirit of beauty.

It might be well to make clear at this point that in
referring to good design I do not refer to fanciful design,
for to my mind there has always been a strong correlation be-
tween simplicity and good art. Plato's words "Beauty of
style and harmony and grace and good rhythm depend on simplicity," are clearly reflected in the ancient Greek temples, the pyramids of Egypt as well as in the new dormitory of the Rhode Island School of Design.

Total blame for this reliance on design for design's sake cannot be assigned solely to our manufacturers. For our buying public has too often demanded the most modernistic of appearance at the cost of efficiency or even beauty.

The case of the sewing machine will illustrate this point. For decades no changes were made in the basic design of the sewing machine. Then, after World War II foreign machines began to invade our market with completely new concepts and cut seriously into the competitive position of domestic manufacturers. There was a great rush among American producers to make changes in the appearance of their product without adequate testing, merely for the sake of marketing a different looking sewing machine.... it might not be a more attractive machine, and it might not be a more efficient machine, but it was a different-looking machine. These hastily conceived designs were quickly marketed, failed in performance, and once again customer confidence waned. Then, however, a return to a more simple straightforward approach---using design as an integral part of performance---has put the American sewing machine back in the competitive picture.
Again the automobile industry typifies change for change sake. Each year on schedule Detroit spends a phenomenal amount of engineering time and talent to create changes rather than improvements. In fact in some cases they are not only non-improvements but steps backward. In 1953 Raymond Loewy re-designed the Studebaker with a sleek low look. This started the entire industry on the move to the ever lower and lower silhouettes which are still prevalent today—to the great discomfort of many of us six footers, I must say.

It is true that only after considerable experiment does society arrive at a satisfying design. In that same automobile industry there are two companies which years ago arrived at what they considered (and consumer acceptance proved to be) a good design. One of the secrets of the success of the Rolls Royce is that its basic design has not been altered, but merely modified along the lines of sensible application of aesthetic principles. And again the Volkswagen Company is the only other one of the foreign car manufacturers which does not radically change its appearance each year, and interestingly enough, in the face of declining American sales of other foreign cars, sales of Volkswagen continue to rise.

In many instances, of course, design must await the
development of suitable materials... for example, part of the revolution in the changing appearance of much of our building is directly attributable to the emergence of new and stronger metals, glass and the like. In architecture particularly there is this close dependence of design upon materials evidenced in the mud-block adobe huts of primitive Mexico, as contrasted with the glass buildings on New York's Park Avenue today. An example of the combination of aesthetics with practicality are the steep pitched buildings seen throughout Norway—not only are they aesthetically harmonizing with the giant spruce trees, but they serve the more practical purpose of reducing the snow load.

No modern American company has made more practical use of art than has the Reynolds Metals Company which started out as a small producer of aluminum foil for cigarette packages. Them for the most valid of reasons—to promote its own business—company management became interested in art. Now one of the 100 largest manufacturing giants in the country, Reynolds' interest in contemporary design is closely tied to selling its product. Not only are top executives exposed to great art so that they will be influenced; but designs in aluminum are sought, honored and used. In 1953 a department was set up to explore the possibilities of aluminum as a construction material.
Top executives are expected to act so that they will be influenced. Good paintings are hung in offices.

Advisors met with special executives, art advisors with the curators. All displays are conceived in a creative spirit. Competitions are held for the best designs in architecture and in addition to card displays, sculptures in aluminum is commissioned. The awards are displayed.

2) The Aluminet Process using aluminum, New Bedford is a city that has mills in the area. They are realizing that new industrial ideas of materials have flown. Through the use of glass, etc., it is possible to constitute often needed a creative mind to constitute a city like New Bedford. Spring a lively city, we can expect the competition for 15.5 students. The competition is very encouraging, but the competition was extremely impressed by the imagination of young design students. They are currently at work designing the future of society. The designs are winning awards.
The success of this exploration was so great that today the
construction industry is the company's largest single market.
The company's new stature among architects has even led
management to plan, sponsor and build large urban renewal
projects.

I shall return to the subject of art in relation
to this whole urban renewal problem, but first I should like
to delve for a moment into one of the primary elements of
art--color. This is just change for the sole (diversity)
because of purity or change efficiency of change. Yet,

At a time when several basic products of our society
seemed to have reached their full growth, the introduction of
vast color has added new consumer demand. Henry Ford used to
say "Make your cars in any color you like--as long as black." Today General Motors has 650 different standard
color combinations and even more non-standard combinations.

The telephone--virtually every phone had at least
one phone when the company introduced new instruments in
fashion colors. 10 million new telephones have since been
installed despite the fact that they carry extra charge,
whereas black ones do not.

The Sylvania Corporation had a problem because people
couldn't distinguish between Wattage size of their bulbs,
so bought others. Color identification was created for the
packaging--100 watt bulbs came in red packages, 75 watt
bulbs came in blue packages and 60 watt bulbs came in green packages. Within 6 months sales jumped 66%.

The introduction of color into the production of paper tissues, paper towels, even stoves and refrigerators, has opened large new markets for these industries. And since the addition of yellow color to oleomargarine, sales of that product have increased a thousand fold.

It is quite natural that in the field of display and advertising the values of art were first recognized and adopted. But even here, it was at first display for the sake of display. But, gradually it has been found that spectacular distortions may catch the eye at first, but aesthetic ads are more effective for later recall. Just as in a fine painting, a good advertisement must produce a feeling of well being, be easily comprehended, and present a harmonious picture.

There are some products which by their very nature are non glamorous, not susceptible to changes in design, and therefore can only get the competitive edge through their method of sales, display and advertising. An example of this is the paper bag. A well-thought out, attractive, eye-appealing advertising campaign was waged by one manufacturer—the Chase Bag Company, and was so effective that the sales
of Chase bags started to spiral upward.

There are various examples and proofs that today there is a growing recognition that not only must a product be efficient, it must be well designed, attractive to look at and marketed and displayed in a pleasing manner. Fortunately, in the test of time, a soft, well-modulated voice is proving more effective than a harsh scream.

One of the more staggering problems of modern times has been that of urban decay. Urban renewal has literally been forced upon us, but all too often the human and aesthetic side of the problem has been overlooked. It is therefore particularly gratifying to see that Robert Weaver, Administrator of the Federal Home Finance Agency has recently announced that the government is going to press for higher architectural and design standards in redevelopment areas.

He commented that you can usually build something attractive for the same price that you can build something atrocious, a fact that has been generally forgotten in too many instances. His agency will encourage schemes such as the one undertaken in Philadelphia, were 1 per cent of the cost of renewal projects must be spent on desing. Private developers might do well to give this type of thought and planning to design.
It is not only our business

new industrial leaders

must face issues that the

represent

Certainly, by having new industrial
leaders to recognize the role of art in

many primary areas, we are overlooking a

more primary answer. I

it is crucial to present leaders in both

educators in both fields. - A

artistic

there in schools, not in

more serious than those in art schools. Perhaps we might

do well to look back to the Bartosz

Walter Gropius -

controversial that he has been called

Committee

Red by the "fascists," Fascist

by the Communist - alien by American

As you will recall, in Balhaus was

founded on the theory that all, you

must be taught with and all application

with practical application. It

might be interesting to investigate how

many of the top European architects

affected by some students of his teachers.
While it is true that man has generally been prone to undervalue art in its relation to human welfare, I am hopeful that a more careful appraisal is being made today. I should like to suggest that when art and industry do indeed form a more perfect partnership, our entire way of life, both cultural and commercial, shall enter a golden age.