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Art and Industry (1962): Speech 04

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1st

~~Draft~~ Draft Art Speech

In his inaugural address to you, Dr. B-B. pointed out that it is to our national peril to ignore the role that art can & must play in our national life. Although this is essentially true, it is nonetheless true that there now appear to be signs that our industrial leaders are becoming ~~more~~ lately ~~has~~ ~~advised~~ a gradually increasing awareness of this fact by many of ^{the} our ~~of~~ ~~leaders~~ of government and of ~~our~~ industry.

It now may be true that it is not an aesthetic ideal but an economic fact of life that has sparked this reality at us — the fact of the resurgence of Europe & Japan — has been hindered not by ~~an~~ aesthetic ideals, but by an economic fact of life — the fact of the resurgence of Europe & Japan as economic competitors, all the implications of the European Common Market, the simple smart designs of the Japanese — But ~~the~~ whatever the stimulus, an evolution does seem to be taking place in all phases of American industry — designing the product, producing it, packaging it & selling it.

Perhaps the realization that art is more than amateur recreation but has an important

insert page 3

(2)

role to play in our whole economy
may be traced to our street punter
heritage — our Yankee ^{Yankee} ~~belief that~~ ^{generations}
cold hard practical common sense
and a distrust of ^{as soft of}
any attempt in beauty. ~~Even John~~
however we were busy — busy ~~working~~
growing strong — 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 ^{with creative}
and aesthetic considerations. We ^{not} ^{may}
must — ^{but} in many cases ^{are beginning}
give thought and planning to the role
that art plays in industrial design &
economic competition.

Perhaps one reason for the
growth in this recognition of art as a tool
in business is the general cultural
renaissance we are experiencing today.
Quite naturally top business executives
are in a financial position to promote &
sponsor the arts — and in allentary
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 ^{a project} ^{community} relation or even
as the search for status symbols, seems
to have resulted in this new awareness of
the important practical applications of art.

(3)

or perhaps it may be true that this realization has been sparked not by only aesthetic awakenings but merely by an economic fact of life — the re-emergence of Europe & Japan as economic competitors — all the implications of the European Common Market — the remarkably efficient & beautiful production of Germany, Italy & Belgium, the simple smart design of the Japanese products.

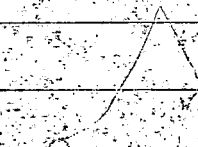
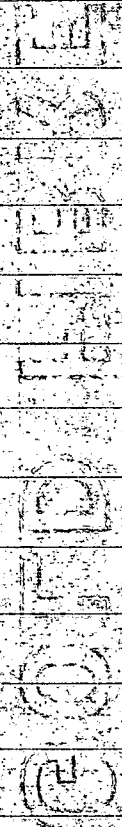
~~But whatever the reason,~~ although future historians may look back on the 20th century (mid) as age of the atom, perhaps future philosophers may look back on it as the time when we lost our national self-consciousness about beauty.

It was not until a generation ago that a small band 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 retooling 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.

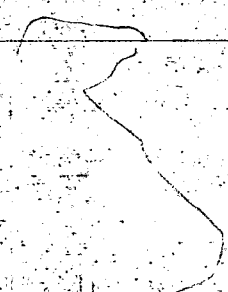
Now of course it is a truism that design has always been the first element of production, But in the early years of

(over)

American industry we have too often conceived of design in the spirit of uniqueness, rather than in the spirit of functional excellence or beauty.



Handwritten text or markings across the middle of the page, including the word "MATERIAL" and other illegible characters.



It might be well to make clear at this point that ~~when~~ in referring to good design I do not refer to fanciful design, for to my mind there has always been a correlation between 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 RISD.

Total blame for this reliance on design for design's sake can not 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 2 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 of ~~the~~ merely for the sake of producing 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. In 1953 Raymond Loewy re-designed the Studebaker with the sleek, low look. This started the entire industry on the move to lower and lower silhouettes which are still prevalent today.. to the 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

Today General Motors has 650 different standard color combinations & even more non-standard combinations.

The telephone - ~~every~~ ^{writing} home had at least one phone. In the ~~1950's~~ ^{1940's} ~~the~~ when ~~for~~ ~~color~~ ~~were~~ introduced ^{of the first} ^{instruments} in ^{for non} ^{color} ~~170,000,000~~ new phones have been introduced ~~at the~~ despite the fact that they ^{cost} ~~cost~~ ^{less or extra charge} ~~cost~~ black one do.

Theylvania Corp. had a problem because people could not distinguish between wattage sizes. Color identity was created for the packages, - ~~red~~
75 " " " " " blue "
60 " " " " " green pack.

within 6 months call graded 66%.

In years until recently paper tissues & hand towels came in white - identified with their sterility & cleanliness. Then ~~the~~ Kleenex came out with colored tissues & towels & today virtually every manufacturer produces colored tissues & towels.

Even stoves & refrigerators have gotten away from stark white & today can be bought in colors to harmonize with nearly every kitchen color scheme.

S G

Y G

L W

P S

P

WB

~~During when she ^{me} ~~was~~~~
 Before yellow was added to
 old magazine it would not
 sell. Soap will not sell in
 gray packages — ~~in fact the soap~~
~~industry has been part, why~~
~~what would~~ Now above one identity
 Howard Johnson without its orange
 roof?

But It is ^{quite} ~~not~~ in the
 field of display ^{and advertising} that ~~the~~ the
 values of art were recognized &
~~partially~~ adapted. ^{to all a product is not} (But even here
 it was first ~~not~~ ^{some} display for the
 sake of display. But gradually it
 has been found that spectacular
 distortions may catch the eye 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 & be no need to
 correct an unharmonious situation.
 In other words ~~it is~~ today there
 seems to be a growing recognition
 that not only must a product be
 well ~~be~~ efficient, it must be well
 designed, ~~good~~ attractive to look at, &
 presented in a pleasing manner.
 In the test of time a soft ^{moderate} voice is
 proving more effective than a harsh
 scream.

insert page on.

It is perhaps an economic fact of life which has started this aesthetic reawakening — the ~~fact of~~ re-emergence of Europe & Japan as economic competitors. All the implications of the E.C. market — the beautiful new factories & ~~designs~~ ^{models} of Germany — the simple & smart design of Japan. But whatever the stimulus for evolution in taste does seem to be taking place in all phases of Am. industry, designing the product, packaging producing it, ~~and~~ packaging it & displaying & advertising it.

One of the most staggering problems of modern times has been that of urban decay. Millions have fled the cities, & the suburbs & in urban renewal has been forced upon us, but too often the human & aesthetic side of the problem has been overlooked. It is gratifying to note that Robert Mann, administrator of the Fed Home Finance Agency recently announced that the Dept. is going to press for higher architectural & design standards in redevelopment areas. He noted that you can do ^{in many} something attractive for the same price you can do something atrocious.