

Industrial Design

In life today, we all desire to “possess things” — some of us because we honestly love and enjoy our possessions. others because we want to have more than our neighbors. The quantity of “things” we own is often made the symbol of our success in life; the quality is a factor we sometimes overlook.

Almost all “things” we acquire are nowadays made by **MACHINE**. Mass production makes it possible for many people to own identical objects. Can machines be made to produce objects that have genuine art quality?

The monetary value of an owned article varies according to the person who judges it. One person may accept the market price as an indication of its true value; while another, because the article really appeals to him, would not part with it at any price. A third person might find the same object so unattractive and lacking in taste that he would consider it of no value whatsoever. **THE TRUE VALUE OF AN OBJECT LIES IN OUR INDIVIDUAL REACTION TO IT.** If we find it beautiful, or if it serves us well — and for the time being satisfies our needs — then for us it has genuine value.



As our needs increase and we acquire experience, we may become better able to judge and evaluate. In our youth, we might have placed a high value on something “everybody else had”, no matter what its looks or cost; today, we may examine an object with more attention to the material of which it is made, its form, its color, its texture, the construction, the workmanship, and its possible harmony with other items.



More than two hundred years ago, man began to use the toothed gear (a type of wheel) to build complicated machines. As the uses of the toothed gear multiplied, great strides were made in all industry.

This progress and man’s energy perfected many materials, discovered new uses for familiar things, and found that **THERE WAS OFTEN GREATER USEFULNESS IN AN OBJECT MADE MORE BEAUTIFUL.** (Sound familiar? Isn’t that what craftspeople did in earlier times?)



With mass production as a major part of industry, we still have a need for the aesthetic element being part of functionality. An artist who designs directly for the machine (and consequently for mass production) is called an **INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER**.

THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER IS CONCERNED WITH INCREASING THE BEAUTY AND USEFULNESS OF MACHINE-MADE OBJECTS.

To achieve quality design of this type, the industrial designer must fulfill a number of definite obligations:

- ♦ He must plan an object that will function properly.
- ♦ The design of the object must result from the assemblage of perfectly functioning parts. Its beauty of form lies in the complete unity of its exterior.
- ♦ The material should be recognizable.
- ♦ The material should be so used that it retains its own characteristics.
- ♦ A machine-made object should not imitate one that is handmade.

Pictures of the early stages of present machine-made products now seem quaint and even amusing. The early automobiles, trains, boats, and planes seem crude when compared with those of the present day. Keep in mind that it has taken a considerable number of years to bring these machines to their present high degree of efficiency and beauty.

If we compare photographs of old-fashioned kitchens with our kitchens of today, we realize how important industrial design has become in the modern home. The assemblage of labor-saving devices within a home requires special thought on the part of both the industrial designer and the architect. Working side-by-side, they have created (through design), homes that are highly efficient working units.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, a famous architect, once said, “The house is a machine.” — and as we look about our homes, we can see the truth of this statement. Washing machines, dishwashers, microwave

ovens, refrigerators and freezers, home theater systems, and even whirlpool bathtubs all make a modern home seem more and more like an industrial plant.



Contemporary industrial designers have been especially concerned with designing furniture which can fulfill several needs and can be varied to suit the particular spot in which it is to be used. In some cases, furniture is actually built into rooms as part of the architecture.

Another note is that today, “user friendly”, applies not just to computers, but to many objects — designed for aesthetic considerations as well as efficiency.

