

THOUGHTS ON DESIGN

ART VERSUS DESIGN

It's funny - many well-designed objects seem undesigned; even inevitable. Others can be striking and expressive, blurring the boundaries between design and art.

From Dieter Rams to Karim Rashid, every designer has a unique way of working on this continuum. Design treads a line between form and function that is at once exciting and problematic. By contrast, the artist's goal is to be as expressive as possible, whether the result be messy (like a Pollock) or modest (like a Morandi). What is the optimal mixture of design prudence and artistic creativity? Is there only one answer, or are there as many answers as there are designers?

While "good art" has been the subject of philosophical debate for centuries, we can all talk about good design because we all use things. This ubiquity gives designers great power to make change – for better or for worse.

MAKE WELL / MAKE GOOD

Carelessness haunts every stage of the materials economy, from the companies that design wasteful, unnecessary, or ill-conceived products to the consumers who buy them and don't (or can't) properly dispose of them. Why

do bad products rule our patterns of production and consumption? Because it's easy and profitable? We are dependent on a finite system whose days are numbered. But if, starting now, each designer took real responsibility for each of her products from birth to rebirth – instead of from CAD model to cash register – the world we live in really might become a better place.

True sustainable design isn't just making products that are "green" – it's making objects that last. What makes an object last is not how much recycled content it has, or whether its manufacturers have a comprehensive sustainability strategy; the objects that don't end up in a dumpster six months or six years after they're bought are the ones that support a lasting emotional connection with their owners. It's like the Beatles said: all you need is love. But how do you make someone love something?

The modern paradigms of consumption, which are built on our systems of mass production, dictate that the forms of our objects be fundamentally reliant on massive-scale fabrication processes and industrial design technologies. The objects we surround ourselves with have undergone a slow but dramatic change from the very personal, handmade objects of the pre-industrial era to the assembly

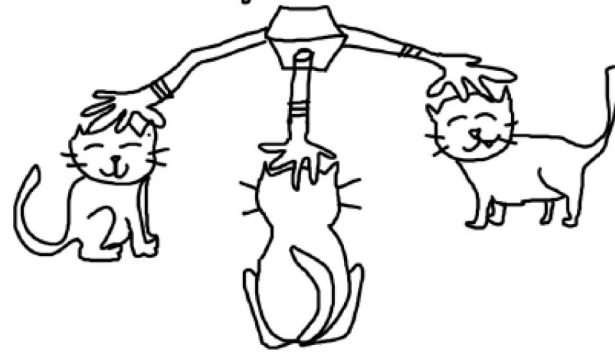


line clones that we find on shelves today. The result is a profound hunger for good things, a longing for a lost time when our belongings were not emotionally distanced from us through complex systems of anonymous mass fabrication.

It's simple – if we could love our things, we wouldn't throw them away. But how can you love an injection-molded plastic anything, the next version of which is going to make the one you bought look outmoded and cheap? Designers, it seems, have largely forsaken designing things that people want to love, settling instead for designing things that people love to buy. And while this works well for those who pay us, in the end it hurts us all.

How do you design good things? Sometimes it can be as simple as masterful material choice, or good aesthetics of form. But it's not always up to us designers. What one person may adore and keep as an heirloom, another might dump the next time they move house. The best we can do is, through our work, encourage a material culture where we treasure our things without worshiping them. And though we may be constrained by the limitations of industry, by our mastery of these constraints we can create objects that are soulful, not soulless; objects in whose reflection we see our patrons – and ourselves. That's a start.

120% Post-Consumer
RECYCLED ECO-GREEN
organic micro-local
no BPA fair trade ...



TRIPLE CAT MASSAGER!!!