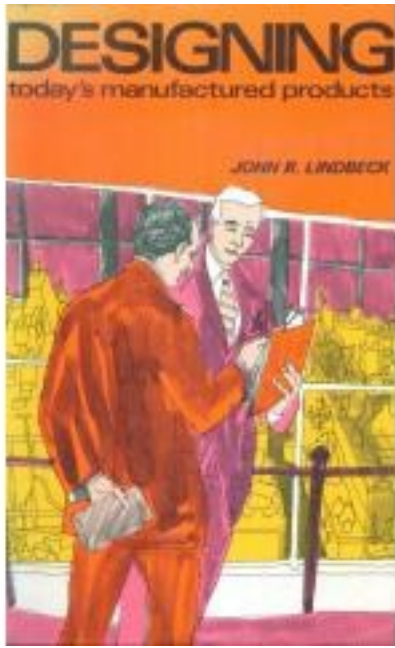


# Designing; today's manufactured products



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Throughout the entire range of his history, man has created artifacts for work and for pleasure. Such artifacts, or products, were indicative of his level of intelligence and his ability to form materials in response to function. Perhaps less obviously, they also reflected his aesthetic-religious value system. There was an admirable directness of approach and a primitive sophistication evident among

his earliest products, a condition which gradually changed as his requirements for existence and pleasure changed.

The current scene in Western cultures reveals a tremendous collage of artifacts, some useful, some not; some pleasantly structured and some ugly. There is a plethora of goods, which condition (rightly or wrongly) seems to be associated with the most advanced cultures.

The designers who devise such goods have contributed to this rather elusive and controversial state called "a high standard of living." But it is common knowledge that this opulence has not been without its trials and problems, for man is beginning to question the product in range and kind. The issues relate to a series of four contemporary crises: excessive energy consumption, the misuse of material resources, waste disposal, and rural and urban blight. Each issue treated in turn uncovers the same major concern: excessive energy consumption.

First, the recurring regional brownouts and blackouts are vivid reminders that this nation is incapable of producing sufficient energy at reasonable cost to provide for its total needs. The designer can contribute to a solution by policing himself and his profession .with respect to the kinds of energy-consuming products he places upon the market. For example, the necessity of using electrical energy to brush one's teeth, to open tins of foods, to slice meat and bread, or for that matter even to wash one's dishes might be questioned. Certainly, the need for certain household appliances cannot be denied: it would be difficult and uncomfortable to exist without

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