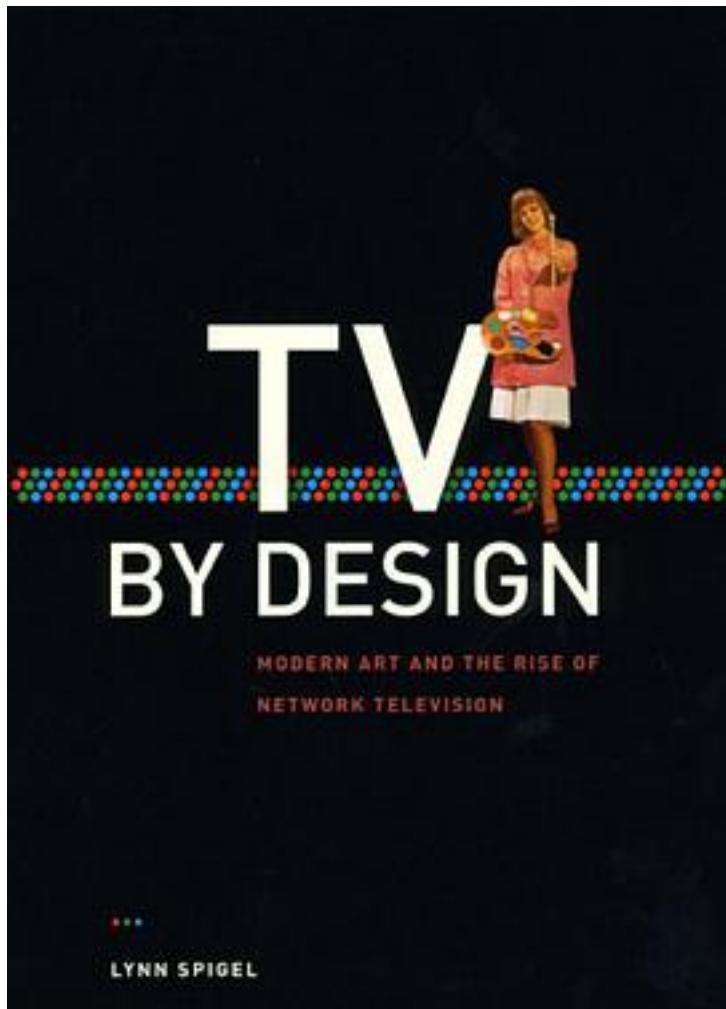


TV by Design



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著者:Lynn Spigel

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While critics have long disparaged commercial television as a vast wasteland, TV has

surprising links to the urbane world of modern art that stretch back to the 1950s and '60s. During that era, the rapid rise of commercial television coincided with dynamic new movements in the visual arts - a potent combination that precipitated a major shift in the way Americans experienced the world visually. "TV by Design" uncovers this captivating story of how modernism and network television converged and intertwined in their mutual ascent during the decades of the cold war. Whereas most histories of television focus on the way older forms of entertainment were recycled for the new medium, Lynn Spigel shows how TV was instrumental in introducing the public to the latest trends in art and design. Abstract expressionism, pop art, art cinema, modern architecture, and cutting-edge graphics were all mined for staging techniques, scenic designs, and an ever-growing number of commercials. As a result, TV helped fuel the public craze for trendily modern products, such as tailfin cars and boomerang coffee tables, that was vital to the burgeoning postwar economy. And along with influencing the look of television, many artists - including Eero Saarinen, Ben Shahn, Saul Bass, William Golden, and Richard Avedon - also participated in its creation as the networks put them to work designing everything from their corporate headquarters to their company cufflinks. Dizzy Gillespie, Ernie Kovacs, Duke Ellington, and Andy Warhol all stop by in this imaginative and winning account of the ways in which art, television, and commerce merged in the first decades of the TV age.

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