

Translation
Eduard G. J. J.

✓ ✓ Sweeney
10th Ave. St. Pauline

VIE QUOTIDIENNE ET VALEUR DES FORMES

In our discussions I feel we may have perhaps been too persistently concentrating on the theme Vie Quotidienne et le Valeur des Formes from the point of view of the influence of the "Vie Quotidienne" on art forms. I would like to suggest another approach: the influence of "art forms" on the environment of the "Vie Quotidienne" and in this way indirectly or directly on "daily life".

When I speak of "art forms" I refer to those forms which the inventors or explorers whom we commonly describe as "artists" - especially painters and sculptors - work out for themselves and for us.

The artist on the highest level - purest level if you will - may be seen as the laboratory researcher. He, in the seclusion of his studio - his laboratory - "renews" the forms which he has inherited with the purpose of passing them on to those of his contemporaries who may be interested.

The artist in this sense - and particularly in our day - works disinterestedly. He does not work primarily for propagandistic reasons - either those of political propaganda, or religious propaganda. The forms he discovers - or uncovers - are offered to the public, and at one point or another may attract public interest and admiration.

Once this comes about, the designer of utilitarian objects - the architect and the commercial artist in general - recognizes the public appeal of such forms and adopts them consciously or unconsciously to his own work.

We know this from the forms which Brancusi, Archipenko - perhaps even Arp - have given to mechanical forms such as aeroplanes, motor cars or lesser items. We have seen it in the inspiration Dufy, Léger, Mondrian, Miro and others have given commercial design.

We see it in the effects the form discoveries of these artists have had on stage settings - the change from cubism, futurism, through surrealism to tachism in theatre design. - Or the influence of Picasso, Léger or Mondrian on the surface aspects.

- I have even amused myself in classifying shooting galleries in the United States according to the Léger school - which is possibly still most popular - the Miro school - the tachiste school. Though perhaps the Sunday painter school is the most persistent. -

The next stage is the superannuation of the inspiration so recently à la mode. The inspirations become banal, uninteresting and a new inspiration has to be sought.

In this way, therefore, the laboratory artist contributes his discoveries in design to the design of those objects which surround us in our daily life, - and through influencing our environment, influences our daily life itself.

There is, however, another side to the medal: the contribution which this same process makes to creative expression.

Utilitarian design, as we have seen, takes over and eventually consumes the discoveries of the creative artist in the field of form. If there were no such consumption of the products of the creative artist, what would happen? The interest in the production of renewed or fresh forms would tend to be discouraged. But this consumption of the laboratory products of the creator creates an appetite for fresh creation, something new to feed the appetite of the public, and eventually the designs of these utilitarian forms which surround us in our "vie quotidienne" - or daily life. This consumption - this eating up of the creative artist's renewed forms by the "vie quotidienne" - the quick accustoming of the eye to these unfamiliar forms - clears away the accumulation which would undoubtedly in time discourage further creation.

To use a plumbing term, it precludes "back siphonage".

These I propose as two aspects from many which certainly exist of the relations between the "vie quotidienne" and the value of forms from the point of view of the influence of art on the forms of daily life, rather than the inverse influence of daily life on forms.

I feel that in our discussions we have inclined to neglect too cavalierly the important extent to which the artist's form effects our daily life. Granted, of course, there is a definite action in both directions. But I wonder if, in crediting environment for its shaping of art forms, we do not too frequently tend to forget how deeply we are indebted to the creative artist for the differences which we recognize between the environments and attitudes of one generation and another; - in other words, how much we are indebted to the artist for the world we live in - for his personal creation of the values of forms in daily life as well as more immediately those in art.