History of Design in France (Paris, 21 Jun 17)

Paris, Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Jun 21, 2017
Deadline: Mar 3, 2017

Stéphane Laurent

Call for papers
History of Design in France
International conference

Institut national d'histoire de l'art
University of Pantheon-Sorbonne

The history of design in France presents a great richness but paradoxically no state of the question has been really carried out. Inventions multiplied during the industrial revolution and the first attempts to industrialize an aesthetic object with modern forms were undertaken at the beginning of the twentieth century. While some of the Art Nouveau decorators made the first proposals, the style motivated some entrepreneurs, who saw an opportunity to diversify their catalogues of items. Art Déco was more successful in popularizing the modern object within a commercial approach although it remained based on craftsmanship. On the eve of the Second World War, there was a rapprochement between engineers, industrialists and creators. It was incarnated by the Union of Modern Artists (UAM) and presented at the Exhibition of Arts and Techniques of 1937.

The impulse came mainly after the Second World War with the influence of the American model of "industrial design". It was imported in France under the translation of "esthétique industrielle" thanks to figures like Jacques Viénot and Raymond Loewy, who respectively founded Technès and the Compagnie d'esthétique industrielle (CEI). Thereafter was developed an enthusiastic research on plastics through a derision of forms. It was illustrated by the Pop movement in the Sixties and Seventies, with designers like Olivier Mourgue, Roger Tallon and Pierre Paulin. It was largely on the initiative of French graphic designers such as Paul Colin, that the International Graphic Alliance was founded, and the one of Viénot that the International Council of Industrial Design Companies (ICSID, now World Design Organization) was created. Aware of the importance in artistic practices of this new field, which is demonstrated by the success of a star designer like Philippe Starck, some public institutions decided to support the movement. Thus were created the Centre de Création industrielle in Paris in 1969 or the Cité du design in Saint-Etienne more recently.

Recent research and publications on the subject, will help to update and adress the question.

Paper submissions will be sent in Word format no later than Friday 3 March 2017 to stephane.laurent@univ-paris1.fr. They will not exceed 500 words and will include in addition a short biography of 150 words.

Reference:
CFP: History of Design in France (Paris, 21 Jun 17). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 22, 2017 (accessed Nov 2, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/14823>.