

## Failed Design (24 April 2009)

Rebecca Klassen

"Failed Design: What were they thinking?"

Call for Papers--

Failed Design: What were they thinking?

Graduate Student Symposium

Friday, April 24, 2009

The Bard Graduate Center for  
Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture  
New York, NY

Design is a process, yet in our success-driven world, we tend to focus on the end result.

The goal of this symposium is to think about this distinction--process versus end result--by considering the significance of failed design and the insight it offers into societies and individuals. Pruitt-Igoe, Zeppelins, Ford Edsel, and Crystal Pepsi: Why do some designs succeed and others fail, and who decides? What is the distinction between bad and failed design? Does studying "failure" offer the prospect of a unique historical perspective?

Our aim is to gather speakers who will explore these issues, from all disciplines and time periods.

Topics may include but are not limited to:

- scale of failure--humiliation, disaster, catastrophe
- commercial versus functional failure
- reformist and utopian visions
- conceptual design
- emotional investment in design
- the function of taste: Why do some bad designs become popular?
- changing criteria of success over time
- being "ahead of one's time"
- ergonomics
- the role of obsolescence
- intellectual property

Please send a one- to two-page abstract for a twenty-minute presentation,

together with a CV, to GradSymp@bgc.bard.edu by 5 p.m. on Friday, February 27, 2009. Selected participants will be notified by Friday, March 6, 2009.

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Reference:

CFP: Failed Design (24 April 2009). In: ArtHist.net, Feb 25, 2009 (accessed Dec 17, 2025),  
<<https://arthist.net/archive/31269>>.