PHILIPS - THE FUTURE OF DESIGN

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INTRODUCTION

People have always been fascinated with the future. Films have demonstrated this over the century, from Metropolis in 1926 To Bladerunner in 1984. One common theme throughout these films are their bleak visions of the future, technology takes control and transforms our world into a dangerous place in which to live. The future, if we allow technology to take control is doomed. But, if society takes control of technology the future could be a bright sustainable and pleasurable utopia where "people can attain the ultimate form of self fulfillment", where everyone would be able to climb the "ladder of needs" (Marzano 96 p. 13 VOTF) and according to Stefano Marzano the head of design at Philips since 1990, this world is attainable through imaginatively exploited information technology.

The future of product design is presented to society at exhibitions. These exhibitions became very popular in 50s America and are an essential propaganda exercise for manufacturers today. These exhibitions serve as a vision of what life could be like with new products, dream homes that allow you freedom from the chores of everyday life - a house filled with electronic appliances that save you time and effort and makes your work more pleasurable and also gives you more recreation time to watch television, listen to the radio, call friends on the telephone, a life made so convenient and pleasurable because society has taken advantage of technology.

Technology is manipulated in the form of products which are designed and developed by large international corporations. Industrial design has a strong identity as being a profit orientated commercial weapon, but is this the function of design?

> "Design, when nourished by a deep spiritual concern for planet, environment, and people, results in a moral and ethical viewpoint. Starting from this departure will provide the new forms and expressions - the new aesthetic - we are all desperately trying to find"
>
> (Papanek, 1993, p.235)

The terms "new" and "aesthetic" are the words of obsolescence. Are even the most noble of design ethics - design for a sustainable society - destined for obsoletion? Is the quest for a sustainable society just a fad or a fashion to be exploited by designers for commercial benefit?

This thesis will attempt to tackle this issue in relation to the worlds largest product manufacturers, Philips. Is the aesthetic employed by Philips a genuine response to social need or is it an exercise in the commercial promotion of the company?

The first chapter is concerned specifically with consumerism since 1920. It goes on to discuss how large corporations contribute to the growth of consumerism and the way in which this affects product design. It addresses these issues in terms of both the serving and creating of consumer "needs". It attempts to outline the major design trends in the 20th century. These trends show the evolution of design as a means to satisfy and exploit society and questions the benefits and success of its efforts.
The second chapter looks at the concerns of late 20th century design and how they relate to commercial design. It will analyse theorists views on ethics and the function of design as they see it.
Philips provide an excellent example of the development of industrial design in society and within the company. The third chapter will attempt to establish a pattern through the historic analysis of Philips in relation to the evolution of the function of design.

The last chapter will, through the development of case studies, question Marzano's philosophies. It attempts to show Marzano's philosophy as the evolutionary next stage of design rather than a revolutionary one. It tries to legitimise his work by comparing it to theorists ideals.

CHAPTER 1

Consumer trends in the 20th century.

1.1 Consumerism

> The designers job "is to hasten obsolescence"
> (Harley Earl, Whitely, 1993, p.10)

Henry Ford's principles were widely accepted at the beginning of the 20th century. In the United States up until the late 1920's, car design was dominated by Henry Ford, and was based on a concept of scarcity and needs. Ford had introduced the Model T - the "tin Lizzie" - in 1908. Its cheapness, due to quantity production facilitated by specialised production-line techniques and put it within the financial reach of middle income Americans. As sales grew, unit cost and sale price decreased, so expanding the market for the car. However, the low cost was only possible while the car remained essentially unchanged, because any mechanical or styling alterations would have a direct effect on cost to the consumer. A variety of models or even colours, were not available, Ford famously said "they can have any colour so long as its black". Through curtailing the choices of colour the prices of individual automobiles was reduced by $95. (Dormer, 1993, p.62)

However, in the late 1920s styling became an important factor in consumer choice. The possession of an automobile was an essential ingredient of post war suburban life in America. What consumers wanted to buy was a dream, it was the look that sold the car not the engineering. The bigger the car and the more up to date the model, the better the driver was doing. The car was no longer a functional object but functioned almost solely as a status symbol.

Consumerism is a phenomenon that was born this century, and it succeeds today because of a promise of a better and more convenient life. The market place is saturated with a litany of products - all providing temporary satisfaction to our conditioned desires. American car design in the 1950's is the most potent example we have of manufacturers obsession with creating and temporarily satisfying the desires of the consumers with products through built in obsolescence, with regard only for generating profit - an objective many critics claim is still evident today. Die tools and moulds that are used in manufacturing cars have a limited life-span. Opportunity for annual minor cosmetic changes arose due of the need to rebuild these dies. This led to and era of styling for styling sake, which provided the Detroit automobile makers with a timetable for their "styling cycle". This cycle made actual or genuine improvements to the car irrelevant or of secondary importance.

Such design deficiencies included problems with visibility, steering, braking and ease of maintenance. The tinted windscreen introduced by General Motors, which was pitched as a "safety feature", was criticised by the Journal of the Optical Society as a hazard in night driving. These features which were sold as desirable were the work of a profit orientated marketing strategy which carefully created and manipulated the desires of a post war America.

Figure 1.1 A 1950s Cadillac

This approach to design led to anti-consumerist movements. By the end of the 1950s organisations such as the Consumers Union and the writings of individuals such as Vance Packard and campaigners began to voice doubts about many aspects of conspicuous consumerism, and questioned the ethics of the large scale corporation. The ostentatious car designs of the 50s were criticised by consumer groups and campaigners such as Ralph Nader, who questioned the benefits of such designs to society. The annual style change meant that the rapid changes to the design could not be thoroughly analysed. Safety and performance became of secondary concern to increasing sales.

An example of a household appliance whose enormous sales success could be directly attributed to its styling is Raymond Loewy's Coldspot Super Six

refrigerator for Sears. It was advertised for its "lovely modern design" when it was introduced in 1935.

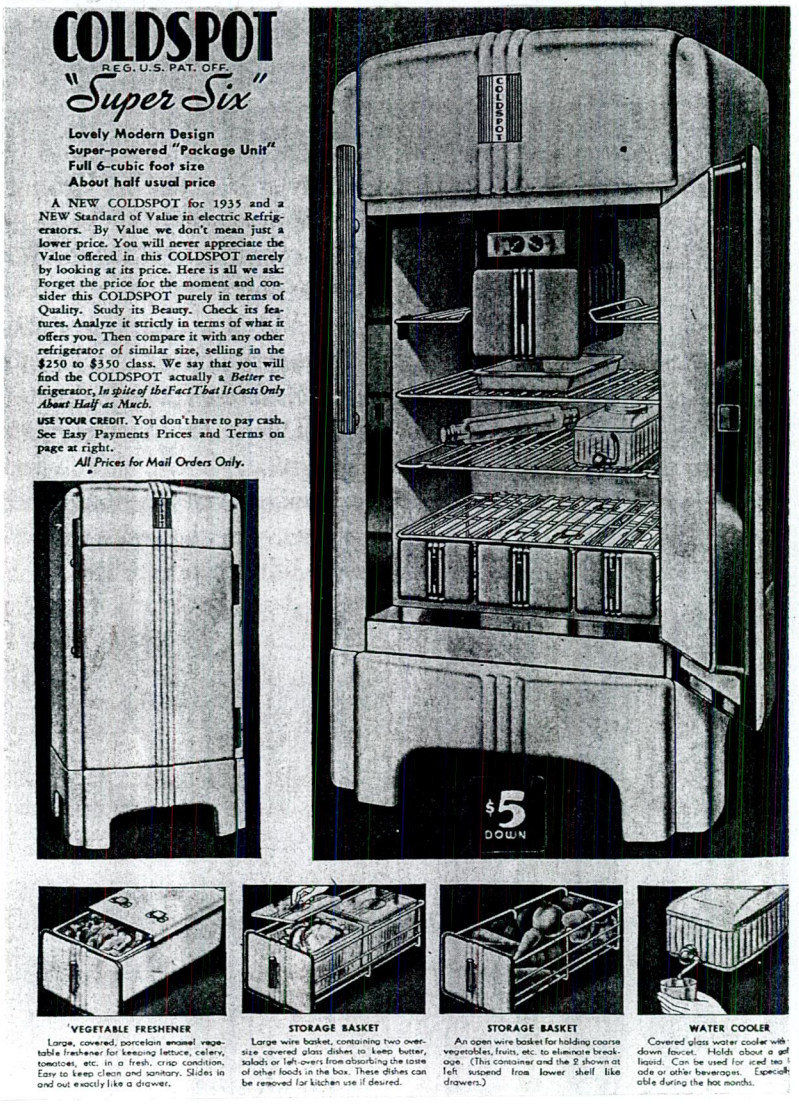

Figure 1.2 Raymond Loewy's Coldspot fridge.

The contrast with European car design at the time could not have been more startling. While US companies were advertising "the bigger the better" the slogan for the VW Beetle was "think small". Europeans looked for economy in size as well as price. Germany's Volkswagen Beetle, initially designed by

Dr. Ferdinand Porsche in 1935 but not really in common use until the 1950's is a prime example of this - an economic and responsible car for the masses. Volkswagen meaning "the peoples car" is a further indication to the motivation be hind the car. The Beetle represented a new aesthetic dictated by the concerns of the consumers, Papanek suggests that "the new aesthetic" will be found in an approach not dissimilar to this.

1.2 IN RESPONSE TO RISING CONSUMERISM

In 1971 Victor Papanek wrote his book Design For The Real World, a book that was long considered the "one book which looks at the environment from a design point of view", and was about "design in the first world, consumerism and what would now be considered key environmental issues." (Woodham, 1997, p.233) His book appealed far more to the idealism of many young designers than to those more firmly established in their profession who saw it as an attack on their integrity. This book marked an important point in the shift from anti-consumerism in the 50s and 60s to an era of growing public concern about the wider environmental and ecological consequences of design, manufacture and consumption.

The concept of green design was marginalised as an alternative outlook on design practice and was often ridiculed. Papanek in his book design for the real world speaks about how he and Ralph Nader had for nearly fifteen years advocated the installation of a third rear breaklight near the top of the car. This was proven to reduce the number of collisions in heavy traffic and during traffic jams by the National Highway Safety Association who placed them experimentally on nearly 12,000 taxis in New York City. After three months it was found that that there were 54% fewer collisions. It was estimated that the addition of the extra light would add approximately $5 to the cost of the

car. The addition of such a simple and cheap accessory would be of great benefit to the consumer, would be socially responsible but was rejected by the spokesman of Detroit calling it "an unsightly and unnecessary design accessory that would add hundreds of dollars to the cost of each automobile". (Papanek, 1971, p.88)

This comment was made by those who had claimed that the design of cars is "consumer led", but this feature could not possibly be requested by the average consumer who would not be aware of its benefits. This highlights the point that manufacturers are in a unique position to educate the consumers as to what is necessary and desirable. Consumers judge what they want on what they have, often consumers become aware of a need when they are presented with it. Manufacturers are guilty of taking advantage of these "needs" by creating and conditioning them towards more frivolous design details such as the tail fin. The irony of this example is that the feature has subsequently filtered into car design. In its early use it was used as a marketing gimmick, it was pitched as a "safety feature" but has become standard in car manufacture today. Consumers have been educated as to its advantages and now demand it as a standard feature.

This is a success story in relation to this particular problem, but unfortunately it is evident that consumers are either unaware or simply not concerned with the environmental impact of electronic goods in their homes.

1.3 CONSUMERISM TODAY

The 1996 British trends research report has identified that the market for kettles, toasters, irons and other similar small kitchen appliances has reached saturation point. (British Trends, 1993, p.164) These products account for a

very large percentage of major corporation's annual turnover. So what do these large corporation's who depend on small kitchen appliances for 60% of their annual income do to combat this economic catastrophe? They fill the market with cheap goods with high built in obsolescence - they are cheap, non-durable, in-efficient and requiring change every 3-4 years. The follow up range has incremental "improvements" in the form of cheap gimmicky features that are not always necessary. In many ways the design idioms of the 50s are still with us today.

These products are designed primarily to be replaced and secondarily to perform their function of boiling water or making toast. If a manufacturer produces products with such rapid obsolescence he cannot claim to be providing the consumer with any service, he is after all manipulating the market for one very specific purpose - to make profit. Consumers continue to be interested in frivolous gimmicks consistent with the conspicuous consumerism that predominated in 50s America. Despite a period of 30-40 years the same undeveloped and irresponsible ethic remains, profit.

Real contributions are to be made if progress is to be made. Using green design as a sales perch can be positive, the manufacturer is taking advantage of the issues, the consumer learns to demand a new standard which will become the norm and therefore the radical objectives will have become accepted as the basic needs or requirements in the design of a product. Robert Blaich points out that all products must reach standard technical requirements in order to make the market. (Blaich, 1993, p.23) Environmental and social concerns can also become standard requirements. "As the green and ethical consuming movements have demonstrated, change is possible, but an essential precondition is an awareness of the current situation." (Whitely, 1993, p.37)

CHAPTER 2

Late 20th century concerns.

2.1 Green products V green identity.

It is clear that some companies use the green image to sell products without actually being "green" or ecologically sound. This is due to the fact that people will, where they can, purchase green products. For example the brown paper bag is associated with green design, as is the colour green. An important point is how manufacturers misuse and take advantage of the identity. For example, at home we have a spin dryer. It boasts a "green label", very attractive when you are buying especially when it claims to consume less energy which saves you money. You can save energy by pressing a button labeled "economy cycle", but on reading the manual this cycle is for acrylics only - a cycle that requires less energy anyway. This clearly proves how manufacturers are willing to take advantage of a green buying public and is an important example of social irresponsibility.

Victor Papanek speaks of a complete change in lifestyle in order to accomplish a sustainable society - that is the reversion to old ways, the abandoning of technology. While Marzano speaks of taking "the big step" before its too late. It is obvious that society can't continue with this level of consumerism. Irreplaceable natural resources are being used up with products that are being designed not to last.

The new approach to design as proposed by Marzano and supported by theorists and realists alike is that our standard of living should be in no way compromised but rather improved. "It is no good telling a mother of three that she'll have to do the shopping without her car unless you provide a system that replaces it". (Myerson, 1994, p.174) New services are becoming available and should be taken advantage of, but according to the theorists the approach to the design process should be different. Papanek speaks about some disposable products having become necessities such as surgical equipment and nappies. He also speaks of high quality durable products whose design suggests these qualities through the materials used and "style" employed, to suggest a permanent sentimental product like pottery. He encourages expensive hand made goods, family heirlooms that will not be discarded because of the relationship developed through using it, like a soft leather strap on a watch where the leather ages well with time becoming more attractive and unique to the user and therefore irreplaceable.

Papanek speaks as an idealist, and reading his books you will realise that he is consumed by design morals and ethics which need to be applied to the technology available to us today which have the potential to improve our lives if approached responsibly.

But what is to be done with international electronic companies that employ thousands of people, are responsible for the well being of towns and are fundamental to our economic well being? These companies produce products that our society are no longer capable of living without. Is the solution to abandon our ways, to ignore technology and the benefits it has brought to our society? The answer is to make modern design ethics a fundamental element of the design process, to add these new concerns to the current process, to update or evolve what is no longer relevant.

Ecological concerns must be as important as the product performing its task. It is essential that in built obsolescence becomes a habit of the past, a habit that, was possibly stumbled upon in the 1940's in car manufacturing.

Government legislation is currently stimulating the design of more efficient products. It seems that this would be the only solution for certain companies that still ignore environmental concerns. Legislation in the USA and Europe requires appliances to be labelled with their energy consumption, so that consumers can make a choice based on energy efficiency. Also, the German government has introduced new laws that will require its car manufacturers - Mercedes Benz, BMW, Porsche, Volkswagen and Audi to repurchase or take back, disassemble and recycle all German cars. The benefit of this will be great in many ways, for the environment, consumer education and the evolution of design as a socially responsible practice.

The leader in the Design For Disassembly initiative is BMW, whose Z-1 two-seater has an all plastic body that can be can be taken from the chassis in less than twenty minutes. Of course this method of design is not just limited to large products such as cars, the Great British Teakettle Company designed the "U-Kettle" for easy assembly and disassembly, this is extremely advantageous in small domestic appliances. Such developments are necessary for products which sell in extremely large quantities. (Papanek. 1987, p.240) This system is in the very early stages but if governments demand that manufacturers of all products to employ a similar strategy results would be much quicker than waiting for design to evolve to this level of concern and social responsibility on its own initiative.

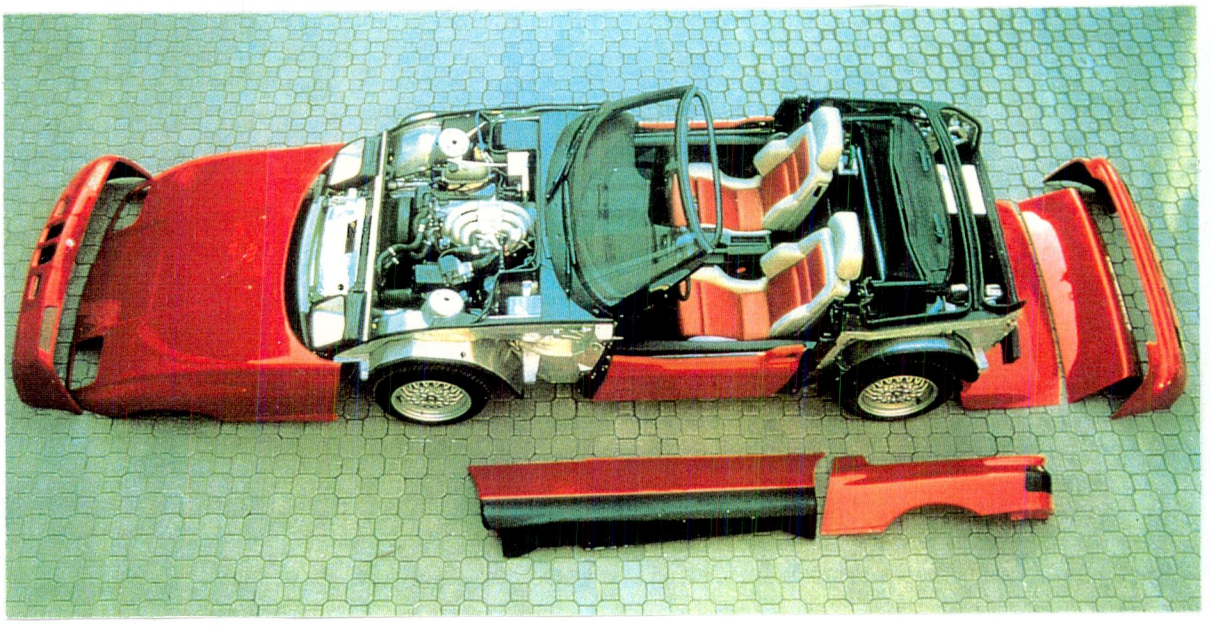

Figure 2.1 The BMW Z-1 sports car.

Green is generally perceived as recyclable, this is of course a very important element of green design but it is not the only one.

2.2 THE NEW AESTHETIC.

> "Many ideas and approaches to design have been explored. If we attempt to weave them together, we realise that inevitably a new aesthetic must emerge out of the web of necessities, solutions and concepts." (Papanek, 1987, p.235)

The green aesthetic that Papanek speaks of can manifest itself in many ways, the most vivid method of portraying a "green" image is through the use of colour, style and materials. The sentiments of a product can be lost through poor use of style, but on the other hand style can also be used to portray a false sense environmental concerns.

Electrolux designed a vacuum cleaner to explore new directions for improving the environmental impact of a typical popular model. The base of the Z2571 Eco was made from reclaimed and recycled materials, colour pigments have

been avoided in the upper body and all internal cables and wires are PVC free. (Mackenzie, 1997, p.70) This project is an example how the colour of the product can reflect the green concerns of the materials used, and can be easily identified as such by the consumer. It is also about a green design initiative which does make a real contribution. This sort of innovation is very important for the infiltration of green design into consumer goods.

Figure 2.2 Electrolux Eco vacuum cleaner.

The development of complex plastic composite materials that can combine the qualities of plastic - mass produceable and cheap, with the increased value aging qualities associated with leather and wood, would give plastic an increased sentimental quality concurrent with the "soft values" discussed by Philips and other futuristic designers. The term "soft" values refers to the "humanisation of materials traditionally associated with high technology.

This quality was explored and developed by a student, Neil Poulton. He designed a pen in a plastic that would wear or corrode as it was used. This was a very slow process that would provide a highly unique colour, finger

grooves would form specific to the way in which the user wrote. This wearing process, a new development in the design and application of plastics gave the pen added sentimental value that grew the more the pen was used. This relates closely to Papanek's discussion of objects like the watch strap.

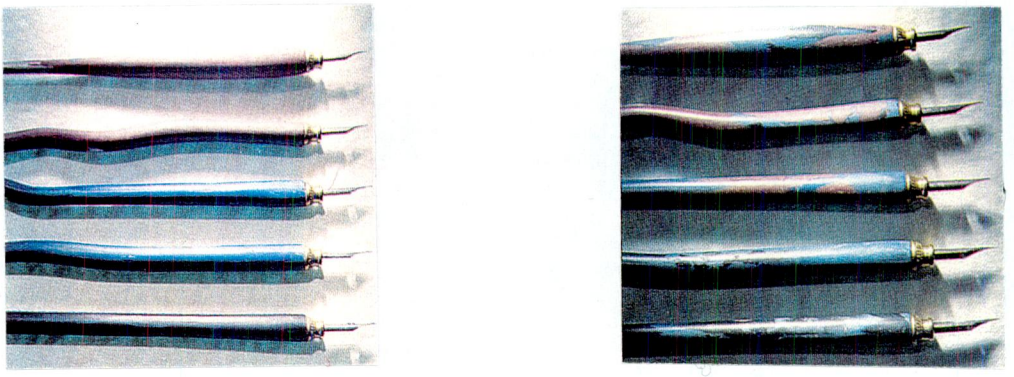

Figure 2.3 Neil Poulton's pens in two stages.

This new application of a material which is recognised as cheap and throwaway made it possible for a cheap plastic pen to have the same qualities as richer materials, the common material becomes unique and of great sentimental value which can not be replaced and therefore will not be thrown away. This is in contrast with the Biro BIC pen phenomenon, which clearly embodies the throwaway philosophy. Developments like this are important if green design is to combat conspicuous consumerism if a "sustainable society" is to be achieved.

All objects must work towards the needs of the end user, on a more sophisticated complex level than mere appearance. Papanek feels that the lack of any spiritual basis for design will make ethical and environmental considerations mere well intentioned afterthoughts. This suggests that the spiritual must be as fundamental in the design of products as functionality. This implies that style has a more important role to play than making products attractive, style presents the designer with the opportunity to convey the

concerns of the product, while the appearance of the product must be attractive, style should transcend fad, trend and fashion. He believes that in order to find "the new aesthetic" products must be designed with a deep spiritual social and environmental concern. (Papanek, 1987, p.235)

2.3 THE ROLE OF DESIGN

Sir Terence Conran sees design as a means for consumers to satisfy their desire to make an individualistic statement about themselves and reflect their own personality and position in society. (Myerson, 1993 p.147) He does not seem to see the position of design in the future as a solution to social, cultural or ecological problems but more of an economic one and the role of the designer as someone with the skill, knowledge and imagination to explore market niches and consumer desires for change for exploitation purposes. He recognises the trend for better quality products that last longer with an emphasis on environmental and ecological concerns. He believes that the new design concerns are to be taken advantage of and used as marketing ploys.

This assessment seems accurate when he addresses ecological and environmental concerns as trends, something that can create a new aesthetic and help maintain our economic position in the future. He does not speak poetically about sustainability or the quality of life but is speaking realistically about the future of design in a consumerist society.

At design renaissance speakers wanted to discuss solutions, not just problems. Bring more depth and credibility to the design profession. Industrial design must set about a re-interpretation of the language and values of the mechanical and electronic world.

It would seem that there are two very different responses to the new design concerns. One is an aesthetic that is formed by the genuine concerns as suggested by Papanek, the second, an aesthetic which stylistically responds to these concerns as a marketable feature, without really addressing the central issues of that concern.

But how can we apply this aesthetic to disposable electronic goods? Unlike a ceramic bowl or a wristwatch, electronic goods have attained a disposable temporary identity through decades of conditioning by large corporations designing high obsolescence into their products in order to maintain sales. How can we reverse this? Can we introduce another electronic product onto the market and expect people to want to keep it, to develop a relationship with it and to love it like a beautiful wrist watch?

Victor Papanek makes these predictions in relation to the future of design. (1995, p.48)

1: There will be greater emphasis on quality, performance and craftsmanship in designed products as people and designers come to understand that obsolescence or bad workmanship waste natural resources that cant be replaced, and contribute to shortages on a global scale. The style of the future will be based on products that age gracefully, and will be more timeless than the quickly changing fads of the late 20th century.

2: Designers and manufacturers will need to question the ultimate consequences of a new product being introduced. Question of profit balances and production quotas are not enough.

3: It will be understood that no design stands on its own: all design has social, ecological and environmental consequences that need to be evaluated and discussed in a common forum.

4: There will be a greater concern for a deeper understanding of nature, and this will be a preserving and healing force for the global environment.

CHAPTER 3 THE EVOLUTION OF PHILIPS

The evolution of design philosophies at Philips is an attempt to facilitate new markets. It is also true that Philips are inventing new products in order to maintain and expand their market but what must be questioned here is - are their ethics sound? Do Philips actually care about their customers or is it all a matter of making profit?

The history of Philips shows that it has developed into an international corporation of a very high standard and is perceived that way by its customers, what is important is how it achieved this status.

How the role of industrial design developed and has become increasingly important to the mass manufacturers of consumer goods, in parallel with the growing importance of aesthetics in manufactured goods.

Philips traditional strengths according to Heskett (1989, p.2), are in its commercial strategy and technical research, but it is clear that in recent years this has been augmented by a perceived commitment to the high quality in the design of its various products.

3.1 THE ORIGINS OF PHILIPS

Gerard Philips' awareness of the future prospects of the light bulb and his experience in the field led him to develop his own light bulb capable of large scale manufacture with financial support from his father, Frederik. After promising laboratory experiments the company was founded on May 15th

1891. A small factory was opened to manufacture his light bulbs using methods that balanced small scale craft production and new mass manufacturing techniques. Gerard realising the need for a commercial director, appointed his brother Anton in 1895 so that he could concentrate on technical research and production development - his specialised area. "This co-operation set a pattern for Philips organisation, which for many years had two parallel strengths of commercial and technical management." (Heskett, 1989, p.4)

The brothers realised that in order to make a profit, the company would need to increase production and open overseas markets to accommodate this increase. Constant enlargement of the scale of production through progressive improvements in the technical quality of the light bulbs led the brothers to surpass their modest target in 1891 to produce 500 bulbs a day to becoming Europe's third largest producer of light bulbs after phenomenal growth that brought their production up to 20,000 bulbs a day in 1895.

The First World War helped Philips expansion between1913 and 1919 due to the fact that the Netherlands remained neutral and their competitors production was diverted towards the war effort. The war diverted supplies of components and materials and as a result Philips expanded its production to compensate for these losses.

In 1918, Philips first produced radio valves, their first product outside light bulbs. Anton had made the decision to diversify as commercial director, believing that there was a great future in radio and consciously steered the company towards the domestic consumer market. This diversification led Philips to manufacture an assortment of radio components like valves, loudspeakers, power supply units, and receivers for self assembly kits and in 1927 Philips manufactured their first domestic radio set. Because of the company's constant dedication to development and technically led innovation,

Philips continued to expand into new product areas in the 1930s manufacturing products as diverse as microphones, bicycle lamps, sun-ray lamps, X-ray equipment, televisions and electric shavers.

In the 1930s The Great Depression had a huge affect on Philips and cut backs could not be avoided. Between 1931 and 1933 the workforce was almost halved. Despite this difficult financial and economic period Philips did not cut back on research and development, for it was believed to be "the life-blood of the future" (Heskett, 1989 p.12). This consistent dedication to research and development was fundamental to the expansion of Philips in the 1930s and is still evident today. Frederik Philips wrote at the time that "half of our turn-over has usually consisted of products which we were not manufacturing, or which were not even thought of, ten years before." (Heskett, 1989 p.12). This shows that in order for a company to be successful, compete or even survive that it must be innovative in the products it manufactures, and Philips' dedication to inventing and developing new products is a quality that has allowed it to become such a phenomenal success.

3.2 THE EMERGENCE OF DESIGN AT PHILIPS

Once Philips diversified into the realm of consumer goods it became obvious that aesthetics was an area of concern. This was due to the fact that they were no longer dealing in products whose aesthetics were defined by materials, production techniques and technical requirements. In 1917 the newspaper Algemeen Handelsblatt conducted a survey asking artists, architects and manufacturers for their experiences and opinions, on collaborations between "art and industry". Philips response was that they carried out and were in favor of such collaborations, but that "the artists were expected to be aware of the necessity of mass production of their designs

and that profits should be made." (Heskett, 1989, p.17) In the late 18th and early 19th century there was no such thing as an industrial designer and architects were the only people with qualifications as aesthetic and technical designers, and it seems fitting that in 1925 Louis Kalff, an architect, was hired as the head of the propaganda section with responsibility for the artistic aspects of advertising and products. In 1926 he designed a radio that included what later evolved into the company emblem and was the first consistent element of Philips visual identity - the stars and waves.

The problem with technology being manifested as domestic appliances was making the product acceptable in the home environment. I said earlier that Philips first diversification's into the consumer goods market, outside of light bulbs were radio components as self assembly kits. The first attempt at product styling was made when Philips technical research department consulted local furniture makers and asked them to provide designs for wooden cabinets that would act as housing for the first range of household radios produced. This approach was simple but effective in that the radio was made as an inconspicuous piece of furniture so that consumers were presented with a functional piece of living room furniture as opposed to a piece of technology. This approach proved very successful for Philips as a means to introduce the technology to the market and give it added value by making it visually attractive, which gave rise to the birth of the industrial designer.

Figure 3.1 1925 Philips radio designed by Louis Kalff.

The Dutch radio station was first broadcast in 1919, making the radio the only means of mass communication available to everyone free of charge apart from the initial investment in the hardware. Once the technology became acceptable in the home environment demand for the radio was phenomenal. In order to meet this demand the radio had to adapt to mass production techniques and the use of new materials. Plastic was used because it increased the rate of production and also reduced unit cost making the radio more accessible. The radio became a true mass produced product and Philite, a version of Bakelite patented by Philips was used for components and housings for the radios. This new material required an aesthetic that suited both the product and its domestic environment and led to new functional forms that meant that the radio was no longer disguised as a piece of living room furniture but rather a functional object in its own right. As well as making technology more acceptable the designers at Philips also played a role

in the domestication of plastic materials and much of the early work can be seen as trying to find a suitable aesthetic for new products using new materials.

Forty describes a process taking place in Britain in the 1920s and 30s, where new technologies were made more acceptable to an apprehensive public, largely through the activities of designers who could provide acceptable visual metaphors (1986, p.201-206). In the case of the radio, furniture was used as the metaphor to project technology as a domestic appliance.

3.3 PHILIPS NEW MATERIALS AND DESIGN ETHICS.

To introduce plastic into the domestic environment was a difficult task for the designers at Philips, but was necessary for larger distribution of what had been luxury goods. The properties of plastic materials in the production process demanded a new visual language, processes dictated that castings would have to have thick walls (as Philite was quite brittle) and to have no sharp edges, so that housings could be easily removed from the molds. Colours were limited due to the nature of the plastics available at the time, so it was important to use the materials sensitively, Anton Philips' loudspeaker of 1927 is an excellent example of the possibilities that new materials offered to the creation of an acceptable visual identity for products. The design was chosen because he felt it "to be most suitable for Dutch mantelpieces" (Heskett, 1989 p.11) and shows how the application of a new material to a new product resulted in mass produced electrical goods developing their own identities.

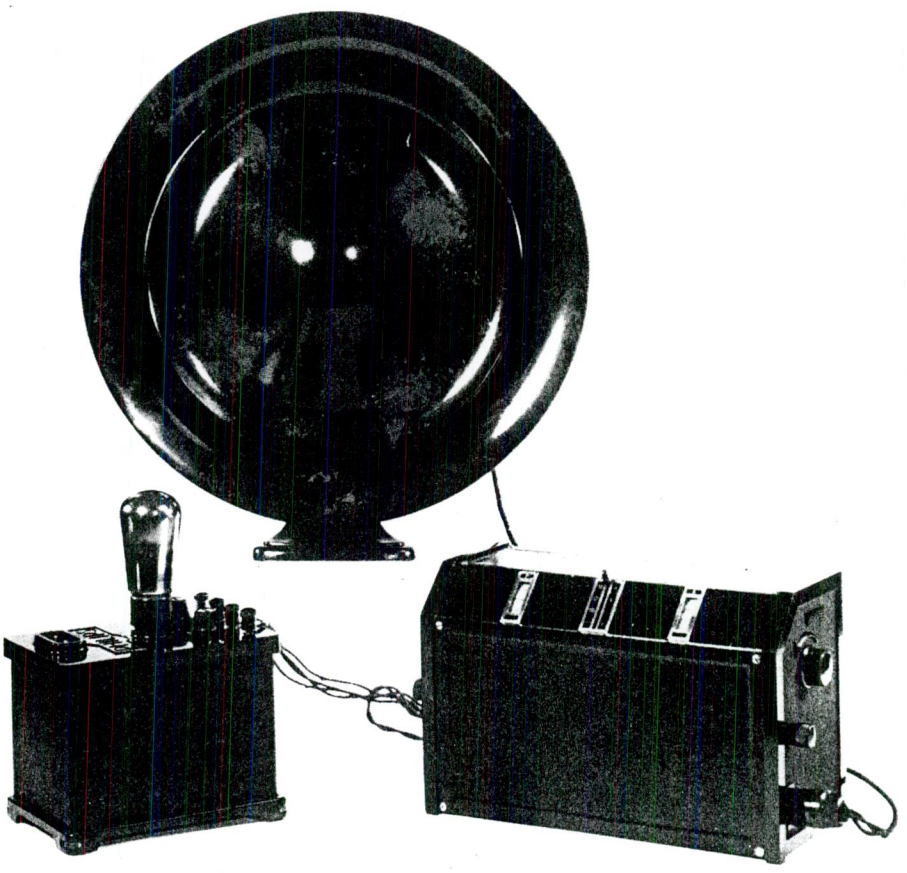

Figure 3.2 The 1927 Philips radio designed by Anton Philips.

Design at this time was concerned with appropriateness for specific countries.

This resulted in a new aesthetic that tended towards efficiency and simplicity, while meeting both marketing and manufacturing requirements. The use of plastic materials was also a major factor in the aesthetic change in the products of Philips. Philite, and other plastics, reduced aesthetic limitations and also increased volumes produced. Plastics allowed designers to conceal the components that made the product work in a form that eventually allowed consumers to associate the form with the product. This freedom to explore product identity and aesthetics with fewer technical limitations was not available before.

Philips first directly prioritised design as a discrete marketing strategy, under the direction of the advertising department or "Propaganda Section" as it was officially titled. With the process of diversification into different product areas intensifying, the need to increase market exposure for new products grew and advertising became increasingly important, so that products used sign value to extend exchange value.

A role Philips played in the domestication of plastics. Philips at this time mainly produced consumer goods for home entertainment or labor saving devices, resulting in the increased mediation of domestic life through electrotechnology , with ever increasing ranges of products such as radios, televisions, electric razors, kitchen appliances and record players. This can perhaps be seen as the extension of the modern movements efforts, which created the home as a functional environment full of labor saving devices.

3.4 POST-WAR DESIGN AT PHILIPS

It was not until 1945 in the aftermath of the second world war that design was brought to the center of Philips' marketing strategy, when the design department was enlarged and restructured. This coincided with the post-war economic boom in the more developed capitalist countries. The restructuring was part of the huge rebuilding necessary after the Second World War which had been disastrous for the company; it had seen the bombing of the factory and imprisonment of senior directors and members of the Philips family. Within five years however, talk of recovery was replaced with that of expansion. Technical research was still the major factor in the development and marketing of new products. Philips began to acquire companies abroad in South and North America, India and Europe, expanding both production capacity and the range of products. Philips emerged as a truly global with the

setting up foreign design departments tailoring products for the different nations.

In 1953, the design of consumer goods came under the direction of Rein Veersema, who like Kalff had been trained as an architect. Veersema understood mass-production and its technical aspects and believed that in a large commercial organisation "design should be anonymous, a team effort dependent on co-operation with other disciplines." (Heskett, 1989, p.17) that the role of design should be the "unification of aesthetics and science.....in the evolutionary movement towards ever new and more progressive conceptions" (Heskett, 1989, p.20). this shows a degree of continuity with the avant-gardism of the modern movement, but where the Bauhaus had attempted to progress towards universal "type forms", Philips' search for more "progressive conceptions" meant that products would often face aesthetic, if not technical obsolescence. The passing of Kalff marked a shift within the design and marketing divisions of the company away from the stereotypical European rational model towards a more commercial American style approach with the introduction of market research and a re-acceptance of taste as a differentiation between goods.

Despite Veersema' beliefs that design should be the result of co-operation with engineers etc. design still remained as a styling exercise. Product aesthetics were the only concern of the designer and evolved through incremental changes to the styling. The fact that Philips, in 1953, hired Americas pioneer figure of commercial product styling - Raymond Loewy as an outside consultant to "streamline" the casing of the Philishave dry-shaver, is proof of the direction Philips were taking and their understanding of the function of design. The Philishave was a great commercial success, more compact and refined than the previous model. This was due to the style of the product.

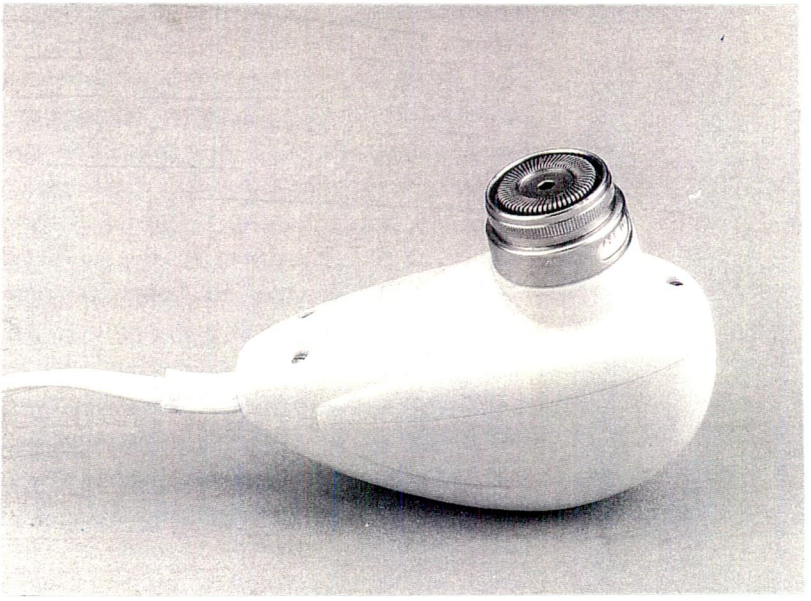

Figure 3.3 1948 Philishave designed by Raymond Loewy.

Veersema played a substantial role in integrating design further into the company as an essential corporate function in its own right. In his 14 years in charge he brought ergonomics and the costing of all elements into the design process. He also began the systematic analysis of many aspects of design and integrate product aesthetics into a family in an attempt to identify Philips as the manufacturer at first glance which became typified as a restrained streamlined style.

As design was integrated into the corporate structure at Philips, designers had to work as part of teams with employees from many other disciplines such as marketing, technical research and engineering. This meant that Kalff's understanding of the designer as autonomous intellect was rejected in favor of the designer as part of a team. This new role was later described as it was developed by a new head of the Philips Industrial Design Center, the Norwegian Knut Yran in 1966, who said that "design is a technical profession with a marketing function" and that " designer must realise the concern's intentions before he realises those of his own" (Heskett, 1989, p.23).

This growth in the importance of designers to the company was matched by the increased importance of design as marketing feature and increasing

freedoms in what designers could do aesthetically as plastics and manufacturing technology became more advanced. The earlier method of casting thermoplastics had been replaced by the injection moulding of thermosetting plastics which provided wider ranges of color and surface finishes, better accuracy and the ability to produce higher volumes of products. This led Yran to question whether "designers have recognised in full, the wonderful possibilities of plastic materials, so willingly waiting to be sculpted into more humanised forms" (Heskett, 1989, p.28). Yet there is little evidence that such thoughts were translated into concrete ideas, although design was recognised as a fundamental element in creating an identity etc. its potential as a functional element of the design was not realised. The Philishave of 1980 proves that ergonomics and ease of use, genuine design concerns, were not considered in its design. This product presents itself, through its style, as a technological and high quality product that could be associated with Philips identity at the time.

Figure 3.4 1980 Philishave under Robert Blaich.

Knut Yran introduced many initiatives which profoundly changed the role and nature of design at Philips and the acceptance of design as a necessary element in an overall strategic policy was an important foundation for its future development.

3.5 DESIGN FOR DIFFERENTATION - MOVING SOUND.

Until the 70s Philips adapted designs and aesthetics to suit national tastes. In the 1980s however Philips entered the new era of global marketing in which product design was a key competitive weapon. This approach was prompted by the commercial threat posed by the superior exploitation of design and technology by Japanese companies like Sony.

When Robert Blaich became head of design in 1980, Philips had a very bad image, their products were considered "dull and disparate", (Design, Sept 91, p.13) in order to compete with Japanese products Blaich felt that design needed to play a decisive role, and in order to achieve this "it had to be integrated as an equal partner in the process of design, development production and marketing", (Heskett, 1989, p.37) the days when design could be regarded as a last resort for styling exercises were over.

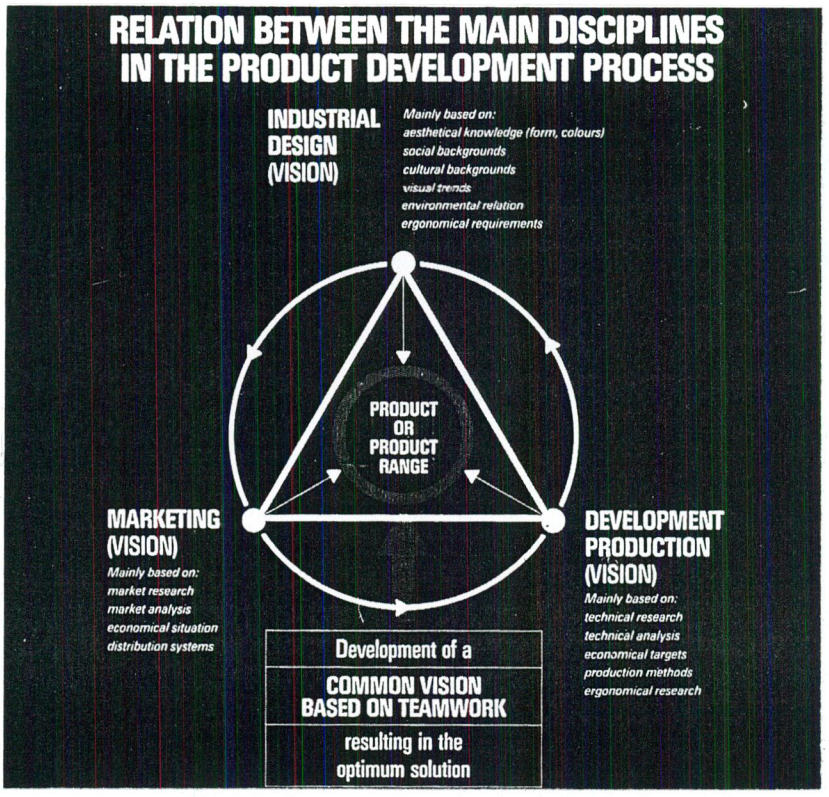

Figure 3. Design is given the same status as marketing and product development at Philips, 1984.

This design process marked the end of technical domination at Philips. An excellent example of how this new co-ordinated approach to product design and marketing helped Philips forge new markets is the Roller radio of 1980. The Moving Sound project identified a youth market which was targeted through the visual style of the product and "the success of the radio has changed Philips image in a significant and positive way in the youth market" (Heskett, 1989, p.137) According to Heskett,

> "one of the most noteworthy features of this project, is that the distinctive visual qualities of the Roller and of Moving Sound have been carefully and creatively designed for young people by young designers in CID. They were deliberately chosen by age and given the freedom to express themselves in ways relevant to their consciousness of themselves and their generation. Behind what has been a considerable

success, is a close and continuous co-operation between design and marketing, and above all a management perception of design potential that was given it's opportunity." (1989, p.140)

Figure 3.6 Part of the Philips Moving Sound range 1984.

As global marketing has become a fundamental necessity and the technologies more similar, companies have to look to design to differentiate their products and make them more attractive to specific market sectors. The hard values of technical competency, cost and serviceability "must absolutely be gotten right, since they satisfy the minimum expectations of the consumers." (Blaich,1993, p.8) Completely achieved these factors bring the competitive positioning up to the starting line. "The "soft" values of environmental friendliness, ease of use and distinctive appearance are now recognised as the differentiating values that enable the product to have a competitive advantage." (Blaich, 1993, p.9)

Moving Sound is an excellent example of this trend which makes the styling or aestheticisation process a fundamental element of the product. This reflects the shift of importance of design, not just as a method of solving ergonomic and economic problems but also as a means to satisfy individuals desires and to add meaning and personal identity to products for both competitive advantage and customer satisfaction.

Blaich retired having won back a profile for Philips by generating mountains of publicity, and assembling star-studded design workshops to come up with attention grabbing concepts. Stefano Marzano, his successor is very different. He combines vision with realism. He wants to concentrate on "soft" values, "to use technology to encourage the individual's cultural growth", in an attempt to improve our experience of products. in order to achieve this he has to introduce a design methodology at Philips, "high design", which not only deals with the complexity of products but also attempts to imbue extra meaning for the consumer.

Marzano is taking Blaich's idea of industrial design and taking it up a couple of levels, he has retained Blaich's "workshop" format as a tool for generating ideas for possible future products. Blaich was very focused on ergonomics and the company had very simplistic methods of anticipating trends. Existing products work well but mean nothing to their owners and are therefore "irrelevant" Marzano wants to make products more substantial, lasting and valued, carrying an emotional significance for their owners.

The history of design at Philips can be divided into three broad categories. The first was pre-design where Gerard and Anton sold unadorned, functional light bulbs. The next stage was the realisation that aesthetics could be used as a marketing feature, and the current stage is where designers are trying to express particular ideas through visual language.

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The changes in design function at Philips has been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. The seven different directors of design each contributed to the evolution of design from a styling exercise to a globalised design process dedicated to customer satisfaction. The history of Philips commercial

"Opportunities for technological development and the complexity needs are paving the way for a new pattern of design. The traditional designer figure and his or her linear creative process are on the way out. On the way in is a team system, whose mainstay is its feedback with potential customers. The prototype is born and adjusted on the basis of answers obtained. Communication and information are becoming key resources to be built into the product, to bring it even closer to people" (Federica Zano, VOTF - the Philips Corporate Design, p.61-69, Domus 788, December 96')

Throughout history of Philips design has evolved as a commercial promotion for the company - Loewy's Philishave, the Roller radio and Blaich's use of workshops to generate publicity prove this. Marzano wants to make design ethics a fundamental part of design in the same way as Blaich made design a fundamental part of the design process. Of course these views will only be tolerated as long as it provides marketing success. the important point is the idea of design is becoming broader. Design concerns include, technical, ergonomic, ecological and personal. This is very different from Gerard Philips work in the 1920s.

CHAPTER 4 Case Studies

Philips has been directed since 1992 by Stefano Marzano who like Alberto Alessi has a very set direction for his companies products. Philips claim that he has brought about a "radically new design development process" he refers to this as "High Design" (Beckwith, 1994, p.11). the aim of this High Design process is "to keep everyone focused on a vision of responsibly designed, longer lasting products of higher value and higher quality, that are more compelling because of greater attractiveness". It would seem that Marzano is saying that the purpose of the project is to promote design that is simply more attractive. But it is not just a question of "style", of course the style must add to the products identity as permanent and it being attractive would add to this image, therefore style has a fundamental role to play in this approach to environmentally friendly products.

This chapter will look at Philips' Vision of the Future (VOTF) project, Television at the Crossroads (TV) and the Philips Alessi range of kitchen appliances, in relation to how they portray the function of design. VOTF is a project that was released as a media event rather than a collection of tangible, salable products. it is an ambitious attempt to map the future of product design and technology within the company. While TV and the Alessi product ranges have been launched onto the market.

The history of Philips shows that the companies main strength has been its dedication to the research and development of technologies. This project is testament to this, but the approach is very different. In the past Philips researched and developed technologies and then applied them to consumer products. With VOTF however, extensive research was carried out into socio-cultural trends and developments in technology. Teams of cultural anthropologists, ergonomists, sociologists, engineers, product designers and interaction designers collectively developed more than 300 conceptual scenarios based on the research that were distilled down to 60 well defined product descriptions. These were divided into four domains focusing on

people, rather than technology, representing all aspects of everyday life; personal, domestic, public/work and mobile. The technologies presented were conceived in relation to peoples needs.

The concepts were conceived through a collaboration of several disciplines. This project represents the complete integration of design into the process of product conception and development, an aim that Directors for Design from Veersema to Blaich had tried to implement to the process but were not fully successful due to the perception of design as merely a styling exercise once the development was complete.

These concepts were developed and manifested into tangible models where the use of visual metaphors were used extensively to relate the design to familiar objects such as books, pens and jewellery. "The result was, we believe, a relatively clear picture of socio-cultural attitudes and preoccupations in the year 2005." (Philips, 1996, p.29)

Style has also become of fundamental importance. Previously style was used as a means to impose obsolescence on a product but now it has the more responsible function of translating function and need of a product. This project is an attempt to imbue "style" with longevity or permanence on technological products. This is achieved by trying to appeal to individuals by making technology a form of personal expression. You could dismiss the style employed as post-modern but the use of metaphors and semantics give the highly technological products a very traditional and personal feel, the magic pens for example, the simplicity of natural interfaces such as writing and speech, combined with the simple metaphor of a pen and an "ink well" to store information presents technology in a way which is easy to use and highly personal.

Figure 4.1 Philips magic pens 1996.

Style was used as a medium to communicate ideas. Metaphors and a retro feel that conveys the projects concerns were used over more temporary attractions. The use of retro styling has been labeled as "plagiarism dressed up as nostalgia" (McDowell, 1996, p.20). It is an easy way to appeal to society. We cannot dismiss Philips' or Alessi's use of fifties styling. We must ask ourselves, is nostalgia a negative thing in a consumerist society? Philips needed people to fall in love with theirs products, nostalgia was used as a weapon to achieve an image of permanence. To use a style that is a classic is a way to combat obsolescence, the biggest enemy in the electrical appliance industry today. I believe that while it would be ideal to create a new "style" for the future identity of our products, a style that communicates its concerns to society, the decision to use 50's styling was a well anticipated choice.

4.2 PHILIPS AS MEDIA SPECTACLE

The first and most obvious aspect of this project is the way in which it was presented. The products are not for sale and are only accessible to the public through different forms of mass media. Marzano justifies this idea when he describes the project as a "joint project with consumers", who can communicate their ideas and help formulate better, more relevant products. "an important objective of the project is getting feedback from as broad an audience as possible. Using this feedback we will be able to gain a clearer picture of peoples needs and desires" (Philips, 1996, p.19)

Since the eighties Philips, under the leadership of Blaich, have concentrated on the development of one of the strongest corporate images in their field. This project has improved their image, was this the sole purpose of the project? Is this collaboration a marketing ploy? Would it be fair to say that this was the sole purpose of the exercise? Because of the similarities between these workshops and the collaboration with Alessi it must be asked whether this was also a marketing ploy for Philips, or are the statements made by Marzano on behalf of the venture genuine.

"To what extent will well intentioned companies be supported by the consuming public?", (Philips, 1996, p.?) here we see the importance media coverage has on the success of new concerns. Philips are resigned to saying that "ultimately it is social acceptability, not technology that determines what happens." (Philips, 1996, p.?) Social acceptability is only possible through the gradual infiltration of ideals to the market as proven with Papanek's rear brake light. This highlights the importance of presenting the project as a media spectacle, society, by exposure to the ideas and ethics will learn to expect them. I must conclude that media attention was fundamental to the objective

of the workshops - to promote debate and discussion and increase awareness within society which in no way invalidates Philips efforts.

Since Marzano became head of Philips two workshops led to the launch of products while Blaich never did. It would be fair to say that Blaich used them as propaganda exercises while Marzano due to the launch of products uses them as a means to forge the future of design as a genuinely concerned designer.

"Manufacturers still compete very much on the basis of volume of sales and numbers of features. Many of the "added extras" serve only as sales gimmicks of little or no practical value to users who become frustrated at the rate at which new models appear." "Clearly this is not the way forward." (Marzano, 1994, p. 14 D.R.) instead we need to work towards quality. A sustainable society requires a mature outlook. Products must become relevant to specific needs. Form and function are not enough, our designs must have content which is meaningful to the consumer. By producing products that enhance the consumers quality of life, we shall ourselves be acting ethically. Philips made a promise to get rid of irrelevant products but "in order to get rid of these products we first have to create alternatives to show what irrelevancy is". (Marzano, the high way)

4.3 THEORIES IN PRACTICE

In the last four years Philips, under the direction of the head of their Corporate Design Centre, Stefano Marzano, launched two conceptual product ranges and a concept design project. On September the 27th 1994 Philips launched a range of kitchen appliances consisting a toaster, citrus press, coffee maker and a kettle. The range was the result of a collaboration with Alessi, the

Italian design firm. In 1997 a range of televisions in a collaboration with the Dutch furniture manufacturer, Leolux. In the summer of 1996 Philips released an in house conceptual design project called Vision of the Future. These projects mark a remarkable change in the function of design at Philips, establishing it as a socially progressive framework for the future of design.

Are Philips taking an initiative in establishing design ethics in what are essentially high obsolescence products in an attempt to gain commercial promotion - social credibility, or is it a genuine reaction to the growing concerns of society? Robert Blaich says that design could be the only form of differentiation between products in the future, is this Marzano's aim - to create a new philosophy for Philips as a form of differentiation from its competitors?

Alessi are renowned for their high quality design while Philips is associated with mass produced, quality, functional and aesthetically unimaginative products. Philips have themselves pointed out that they need a better image in order to maintain and expand their business. Is the collaboration an attempt to be recognised as stylish and technologically advanced, essentially a fashionable company?

"People don't buy our pots and lemon squeezers because they have to boil water or squeeze lemons but because they want aesthetic pleasure." (Scheinn, 1991, p.41)

How is this "aesthetic pleasure" any different to car design in the 50's? cars that were designed to satisfy mans every whim? The fundamental difference is that the products abandon the idea of obsolescence and the only way to successfully achieve this is to satisfy genuine need as opposed to the superficial desire of 50's design. The Alessi range is designed to last, every Alessi product is designed to remain very special to the consumer. The fact that each Alessi product has the designers name stamped on them in the

same way as a painting has the artists signature gives the product a sense of status and individuality. Philips are trying to achieve the same effect and the use of the Alessi name and style, I believe achieved this.

Marzano's philosophy of products which last and become of intrinsic value to the consumer is a very valid one. It was an ideal that Victor Papanek protested in the 70s. The philosophy is not new but actually applying it to electronic goods is. Philips have attempted to apply this identity or association to electronic products. And the products in the Alessi range are those that manufacturers rely on in replacement sales. Philips are breaking the mould.

How does Marzano's reference to the "ladder of needs compare with Knut Yran's description of design as a "technical profession with a marketing function"? (Heskett, 1989, p.23) VOTF presents a new function of design or the design process, it can be viewed as a positive development as it provides a framework for direct communication between the designer and the consumer.

Philips place great emphasis in the project on the possibilities for aesthetically personalised products such as the Magic Pens. This highlights the importance style has to play on objects. Philips are trying to customise products in an attempt to shrink niche markets to very small groups of consumers or even individuals, this allows the consumer to express him or herself through the consumption of technological products.

"many of the concepts strive to be highly cherishable so that they will be treasured and kept for a long time for their personal symbolic and sentimental value" (Philips, 1996, p.191) "clearly, the Emotion Containers, because of their highly personal content, have a high degree of cherishability."

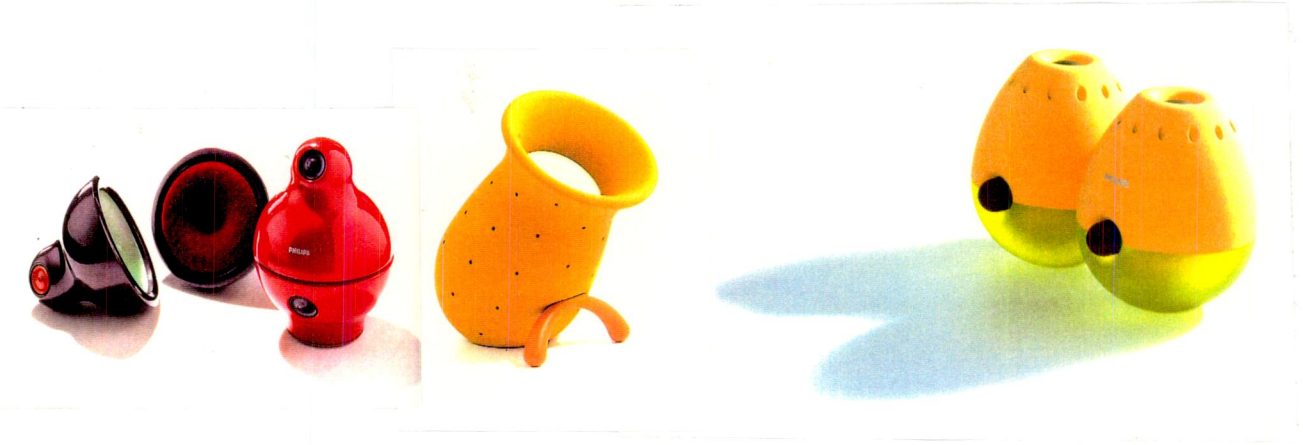

Figure 4.2 Philips Emotion Containers 1996.

Marzano wants to add a patina to what were previously utilitarian products and tools, in the same way that a watch with a good leather strap soon becomes inseparable from its owner, technological products, he proposes, would become user specific over time. This application of high quality, durable new materials is a means of combating obsolescence by challenging the way consumers perceive their technological products. This theory is supported by both Papanek and Neil Poulton, who proved that such a concept is actually viable through the development of plastic composites. The products in VOTF work on several levels - function, form, colour and material.

The materials due to their nature extend their value as personal items. Imaginatively exploited, information technology can answer many of the environmental requirements of a sustainable society through its highly efficient use of energy and materials. Software, by being upgradeable, means

that each improvement does not automatically entail new hardware. Miniaturised technology is eco friendly due to these factors. Single task objects are genuinely ecological, you can choose more carefully not only what you want them to do, but also how you want them to look, without having to surround yourself with repetitive designs. (Abitaire, 361, p.167) which tackles obsolescence.

Philips have demonstrated through their collaboration with Alessi and Leolux (a Dutch furniture manufacturer) that they have very deep concerns for the consumer and the environment. The decision to launch these product ranges is extremely brave considering the current climate of consumerism. Several people have criticised Philips despite these two ranges of products and the VOTF project that clearly illustrate Marzano's objectives for the future of design at Philips.

In the Television at the Crossroads project Marzano's aim of humanising technology is achieved through the use of existing domestic icons - furniture - as technology carriers in an attempt to eliminate the discrepancy between living environment and technology. Philips use the same tactics to harmoniously integrate technology and furniture as was used in the 20s when Philips first disguised the life-changing radio technology into furniture as a suitable visual metaphor. And to make the products more substantial, lasting and valued rich materials were used carrying an emotional significance for their owners.

Figure 4.3 Two TV's from Philips Television at the Crossroads project 1997.

In the case of Philips' collaboration with Alessi, the objective of this project was to add long term or intrinsic value to the products. The use of semantics is an attempt to achieve this - the coffee maker is described as a couple snuggled up together, the kettle is a silent butler or servant, the toaster ejects toast quietly so as not to disturb and the juice extractor works almost silently so as not to intrude. (Philips,1994) This is an attempt for people to see the products with human like qualities, to consider them as friends rather than characterless machines. The objective again is for people to become attached

to them so that they will be less likely to be thrown away. Their rounded forms serve the purpose of making them seem reliable and durable.

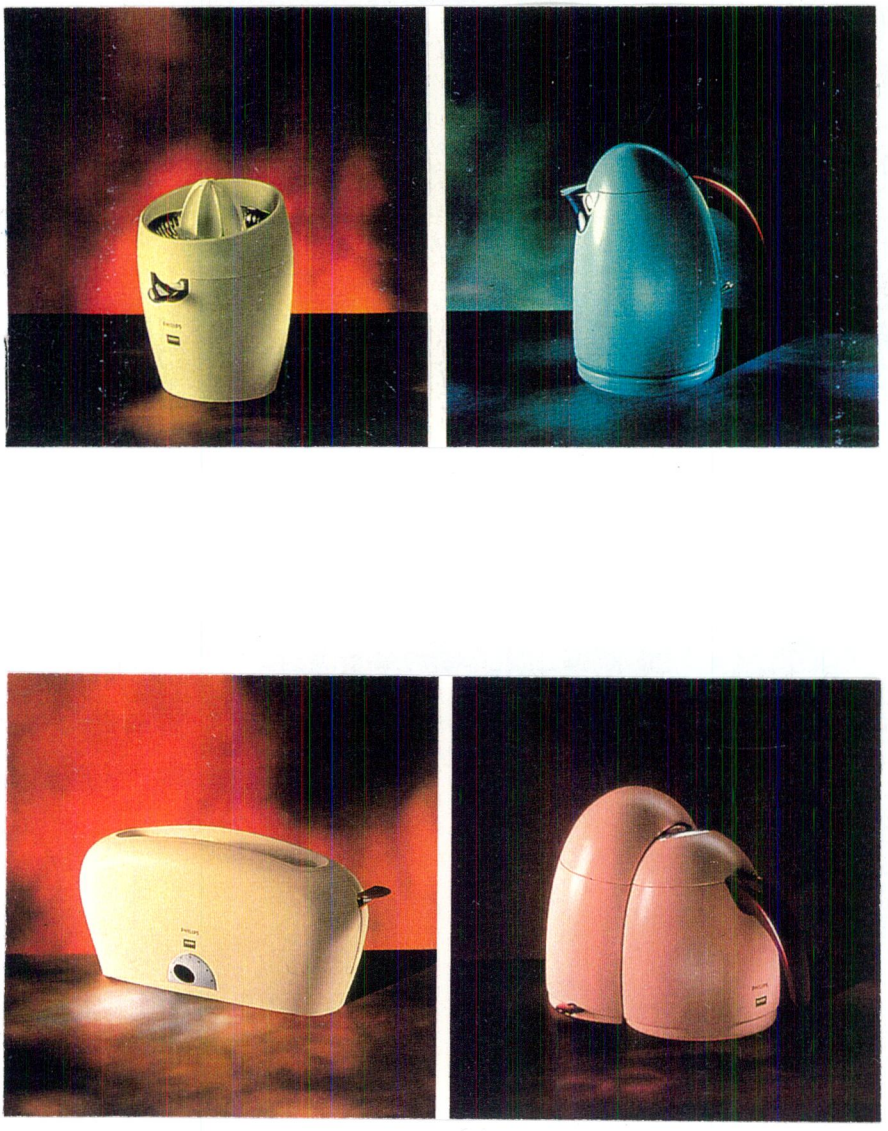

Figure 4.4 Philips - Alessi range of kitchen appliances 1994.

Philips use of conceptual and actual products as sentiments for change provides a well balanced and intelligent barometer from which the media and

society can actually see future concerns in context. "Successful exploration of this area could generate a new, higher quality in industrial mass production" (Philips 1994) For Marzano to refer to the project as an "exploration" and what it "could" achieve suggest that this project is a test run for the new philosophy, a public exercise of trial and error.

The Philips Alessi range is a flagship, a sample to test societies response, and of course to condition their attitude towards products in much the same way as futuristic car designs did in the 50's and still do today. Philips have taken the "exhibition piece" up a couple of levels, in the VOTF book Marzano spoke of how to achieve a sustainable society saying that the gradual evolution of products will bring change too late, what is required is a more drastic move, to actually launch the futuristic concepts. Philips took a risk with this range, a risk that has proved the new direction to be a viable solution to the problem of irresponsible obsolescence in design. For this reason I do not see the collaboration just as a marketing ploy, of course it has its marketing connotations but also expresses and instigates a genuine concern for change.

Philips have described the Philips Alessi range as "the very best in form and function" (DAP, 1994) Adrian Forty believes that the function of design is to make things beautiful, to solve problems but also design is a means to make profit. (1992, p.8) According to Graham Vickers functionality embraces much more than just basic ergonomics. There are also marketing matters, ease of manufacturing and styling to take into account. (1991, p.1) But design must evolve with society in order to remain relevant and as a result new requirements add to the complexity of the design process. Papanek adds to the equation, design must have social and environmental responsibility, "All objects, tools, graphics and dwellings must work towards the needs of the end user on a more basic level than mere appearance. Nevertheless, the lack

of any spiritual basis for design will make ethical and environmental considerations mere well intentioned afterthoughts." (Papanek, 19??, p.?)

Stefano Marzano seems to agree with all of these theories, this suggests that his design philosophy is concerned with more than making profit and products look attractive - his objectives run deeper.

4.4 FUNCTION AND NEED

"Our world is being transformed by technology. - Whether we like it or not, culture in the next century will be conditioned by electronics and telecommunications - and designers need to be there, making things beautiful as well as practical, expressive as well as functional. - The qualities of interaction need to be designed, not left to chance." (Smith - Myerson, 1994, p.146)

Vision of the Future could be invalidated if it was perceived as a means to create need for profit, much in the same way as Motoramas conditioned society in the 50s. What must be questioned is the concept of necessity as presented by Philips. Some of the objects in VOTF can be seen as extreme attempts to create irrelevant new needs. For example Emotion Containers and Hot Badges could represent an attempt to commodify areas of life preciously unavailable to product manufacturers - those of memory and human relationships. On the other hand there are also products that identify and suggest solutions to real problems such as the Hospital Network devices, which tackle the problems of medical information processing and suggest technological solutions to cutting back staff in hospitals.

Figure 4.5 Philips Hot Badges 1996.

While Philips use technological needs to justify a lot of these products, they are also addressing a less tangible need - one for pleasure and expression from personal objects, the need for technology to be both functionally and aesthetically friendly. There is a very clear difference between these products and current technological products. the function, styling and layout of current products are based on the technologies, while Philips' approach is based on the consumer, their needs and desires, and the technologies accommodate these. This marks a more consumer orientated, rather than consumer led (which resulted in tail fins) design approach. An example of this difference is pocket organisers. It has been said that "scientific and technological progress can damage as well as enhance the quality of life" (Myerson, 1994, p.175)

Papanek criticises the electronic notebook claiming that "a notebook and a pencil do the same job with greater efficiency", (19??, p.164) yet these devices last several years, combine many useful functions with great efficiency and have a large capacity for information. While these gadgets have been conceived by large corporations in an attempt to commodify a market sector that was not previously available to them, it is true to say that they

provide a very useful service in an environmentally sound way. This is due to the use of miniaturised technology.

The Sony Walkman was the result of studying social tends in relation to lifestyle which successfully anticipated desires before consumers were even the slightest bit aware that they might want the new product. Conran supports this by saying that "companies have to create products, services and consumers" (Whitely, 1993, p.?) Philips are trying to anticipate technological an social trends before they occur. VOTF is an attempt to prepare and condition society for their future in products as a means to maintain their economic well-being and it also is an attempt to structure the development of information technology and its application to product design so that it will be more environmentally friendly in that it is directed at satisfying genuine human needs in a responsible way.

CONCLUSION

The design function has evolved a great deal in Philips since it was founded in 1891. Today the process seems to be an eclectic combination of all the best elements through its evolution. Philips maintain their dedication to technical research and development, have developed a corporate identity strategy and have firmly established a humanware research centre to further assist their designers in designing the right products for society.
Today's products are technologically appropriate, ergonomically correct, environmentally friendly and are becoming more user specific due to the latest applications of style and materials. Philips have evolved considerably, and even though they are still a profit orientated organisation their approach to design suggests that they are becoming ever more customer orientated.

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