



Archived at the Flinders Academic Commons:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2328/27231>

This is a scan of a document number DUN/Speeches/2101
in the Dunstan Collection, Special Collections, Flinders University Library.
<http://www.flinders.edu.au/library/info/collections/special/dunstan/>

Title:

Address at the opening of the 'Design South Australia' exhibition, Art Gallery

Please acknowledge the source as:
Dunstan Collection, Flinders University Library.
Identifier: DUN/Speeches/2101

© Copyright Estate Donald Allan Dunstan

ADDRESS BY THE PREMIER, DON DUNSTAN, AT THE OPENING OF
THE 'DESIGN SOUTH AUSTRALIA' EXHIBITION, ART GALLERY.

8/5/73.

DR. HACKETT,
MR. BAILY,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND EXHIBITORS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

I'M VERY PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO OPEN THIS EXHIBITION OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN DESIGNS.

IT IS, IN A SENSE, AN HISTORIC EXHIBITION. IT IS THE FIRST TIME THE GALLERY HAS HELD AN EXHIBITION OF THIS TYPE - AND IT IS THE FIRST TIME SUCH A WIDE-RANGING DISPLAY OF THIS STATE'S INDUSTRIAL DESIGN EXPERTISE HAS BEEN ASSEMBLED.

.../2

AND BY DOING SO, THE ART GALLERY HAS PAID A DISTINCTIVE COMPLIMENT TO THE STATE'S INDUSTRIAL DESIGNERS. IT HAS, IN EFFECT, PLACED THEIR PRODUCTS ALONGSIDE THE GALLERY'S COLLECTION OF FINE ART, AND IT IS ASKING US TO LOOK AT THE PRODUCTS OF INDUSTRIAL CIVILIZATION NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF FUNCTION, BUT ALSO IN TERMS OF FORM, LINE, TEXTURE AND DENSITY, AND HOW THESE RELATE TO FUNCTION AND TO GRACE.

IN OTHER WORDS, IT IS SUGGESTING THAT THERE IS AN AESTHETIC AND FUNCTIONAL CONNECTION BETWEEN, FOR INSTANCE, THE GALLERY'S 4TH CENTURY APULIAN FISH PLATE AND THE RANLEIGH WARE MODEL S14 STAINLESS TRAY ON DISPLAY IN THIS EXHIBITION.

BOTH OBJECTS WERE CONCEIVED AND PRODUCED TO FULFIL PRACTICAL FUNCTIONS. BOTH OBJECTS WERE MANUFACTURED USING A STANDARD TECHNOLOGY. BOTH COULD HAVE BEEN UGLY.

THEY ARE NOT SO, BECAUSE THEIR CREATORS IN THEIR DIFFERENT WAYS ACHIEVED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE AESTHETIC LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL OF THE MATERIALS TO HAND AND THE METHODS OF PRODUCING AN OBJECT OF GRACEFUL FUNCTION.

SUCH CONSIDERATIONS CAN BE EXTENDED FROM A TEASPOON TO A ROCKET SHIP. BUT THE ESSENTIAL CONSIDERATION IS THAT IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT ALL FUNCTIONAL OBJECTS ARE AESTHETICALLY PLEASING.

TAKE THE STOBIE POLE: WHAT COULD BE MORE FUNCTIONAL AND YET SO GRACELESS?

IT IS NOT JUST FUNCTION THAT CREATES A WELL-DESIGNED PRODUCT. THERE IS, IN ADDITION, THE GENIUS OR TASTE OF THE DESIGNER, AND HIS UNDERSTANDING OF HIS MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURING PROCESSES.

LOOKING AROUND THIS EXHIBITION, I THINK WE CAN IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA CONGRATULATE OURSELVES ON HAVING ALREADY ACHIEVED A FAIRLY HIGH INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STANDARD. BUT I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD GO TOO FAR IN SELF-PRAISE.

YOU WILL NOTICE IN THIS EXHIBITION FEW EXAMPLES OF WELL-DESIGNED DOMESTIC PRODUCTS, AND ANY VISIT TO ANY SHOPPING CENTRE WILL INDICATE THE OFTEN VERY LOW DESIGN STANDARDS WE HAVE ACHIEVED IN SUCH AREAS. AND I THINK THESE ARE AREAS TO WHICH WE MUST PAY INCREASING ATTENTION.

THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGN EXPERTISE OF SCANDANAVIAN COUNTRIES HAS ACHIEVED FOR THOSE COUNTRIES MASSIVE EXPORT MARKETS, AND THEY ARE MARKETS WHICH WE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA SHOULD BE PENETRATING.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO REASON WHY THE CRAFTSMEN, DESIGNERS AND MANUFACTURERS OF FURNITURE, PLASTICS, CERAMICS, TEXTILES, CUTLERY AND FLOOR-COVERINGS IN THIS STATE SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO SET A DESIGN STANDARD THAT WOULD STARTLE AUSTRALIA AND GIVE US THE WORLD AS A MARKET. IT IS A SIMPLE MATTER OF ENTERPRISE ALLIED WITH THE ACCEPTANCE BY MANUFACTURERS OF THE FACT THAT A TRAINED INDUSTRIAL DESIGN STAFF IS AN ESSENTIAL INGREDIENT IN A WELL-DESIGNED COMPANY STRUCTURE.

OF COURSE, THE USUAL RETORT OFFERED BY MANY MANUFACTURERS TO COMMENTS LIKE THESE IS THAT MOST BARREN AND INDEFENSIBLE PHRASE: 'WE GIVE THE PUBLIC WHAT THEY WANT.'

BUT OF COURSE THIS IS PATENTLY NOT SO.

IN FACT, THE PUBLIC IS MORE OFTEN FORCED TO BUY ONLY WHAT IT CAN AFFORD. SINCE MOST OF THE BEST DESIGN PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN AUSTRALIA ARE IMPORTED, A GREAT MANY PEOPLE CANNOT AFFORD WHAT THEIR TASTE WOULD NATIVELY WANT.

FURTHER, THERE IS AN AXIOM INVOLVED IN THESE CONSIDERATIONS, AND THAT IS THAT BAD TASTE CREATES BAD TASTE. AND SINCE IT REALLY COSTS NO MORE TO PRODUCE A WELL-DESIGNED ARTICLE THAN IT DOES A BADLY DESIGNED ONE, OUR MANUFACTURERS SHOULD LEARN FROM WORLD-WIDE EXAMPLES THAT GOOD DESIGN IS NOT ONLY SOCIALLY AND CULTURALLY VALUABLE, BUT ALSO COMMERCIALY ADVANTAGEOUS IN THE BROADEST POSSIBLE SENSE.

TO THIS END MY GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN ANXIOUS TO SUPPORT AND ENCOURAGE THE AUSTRALIAN DESIGN COUNCIL IN ITS EFFORTS TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN HERE AND THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA.

IT IS SUPPORT THAT WILL CONTINUE, AND THIS, TOGETHER WITH VARIOUS OTHER INITIATIVES WE WILL BE TAKING IN SPECIFIC DESIGN AND CRAFT AREAS, WILL ASSIST IN PROVIDING A BASIS WHEREBY THE DESIGN QUALITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIAN PRODUCTS WILL ACHIEVE INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED STANDARDS.

FOR THIS EXHIBITION SHOWS HOW EASILY WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS GOAL. THE GALLERY IS TO BE CONGRATULATED IN ASSEMBLING IT. AND I HAVE GREAT PLEASURE IN DECLARING IT OPEN.

THANK YOU.