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## An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present

Penny Sparke  
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**Penny Sparke : An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised An Introduction to Design and Culture: 1900 to the Present:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. ESSENTIAL READING: A SOCIAL HISTORY OF WESTERN DESIGN, 1900- 2013By Catherine J IshinoCentral ArgumentsIn the 2013 and third edition of her book, "An Introduction to Design and Culture: from 1900 to the present," distinguished design history writer and professor, Penny Sparke, continues to ably trace the development and the role of Western design and designers as she has done in her two previous editions in 1986 and 2004. In this, her latest and updated version, Sparke efficiently weaves in the global and influential role design holds in shaping identities of the world's cultures and lifestyles through the first

decade of the 21st century. In doing so, she firmly situates today's design practice and profession as one of leadership and prime mover in 2013. At the same time and where applicable, she intelligently updates chapters in the previous edition of her 2004 book to reflect more current attitudes of the social, technological and economic forces pervasive on design today. She accomplishes this task by tracing the role of Western design and designers in their relationship to global consumer culture and drawing from theories found in post-modern academic disciplines such as social history, visual culture, and media studies. Additionally, she includes current and fast changing technological trends such as design's engagement in social media, virtual reality, and immersive environments. Also Sparke touches upon the rise of 'globalism'; i.e. the integration of global and local design sensibilities in the first decade of the 21st century. Overall Sparke has ably documented the design enterprise from existing on the periphery i.e. being a decorator of commerce at the turn of the 20th century, towards part of the inner circle during Modernism at the mid-century, later becoming a business partner of corporate globalism, and then entrepreneur in 'globalism'; in this century. Professor Sparke characterizes the profession and practice as being highly flexible and adaptable to the forces and contexts of culture and commerce. Conclusion In Sparke's closing arguments of her latest and third 2013 edition, she maintains 21st century design has become an 'agent of change', serving a 'formative function' that personifies and transmits multifaceted belief systems, messages and values. Consequently, design activity now embodies and transmits socio-cultural content. The vocation is a major working component and player in the vibrant process of constructing today's way of life and our surroundings. What is more, in this historian's view, not only does design effectively mediate between multinational corporations and international consumption patterns on the planet, but is earning worldwide design recognition as a major humanitarian at the beginning decade of the 21st century. - Catherine Jo Ishino, Associate Design Professor -

This third edition of *An Introduction to Design and Culture* has been revised and updated throughout to include issues of globalization, sustainability and digital/interactive design. New for this edition is a chapter which covers key changes in design culture. Design culture has changed dramatically in the 21st century, the designer-hero is now much less in evidence and design has become much more interdisciplinary. Drawing on a wealth of mass-produced artefacts, images and environments including sewing machines, cars, televisions, clothes, electronic and branded goods and exhibitions, author Penny Sparke shows how design has helped to shape and reflect our social and cultural development. This introduction to the development of modern (and postmodern) design is ideal for undergraduate students.

**About the Author** Penny Sparke is Professor of Design History and Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), Director, Modern Interior Research Centre, Kingston University. Her research interests include modern design and the modern interior with special interest in role of gender. She is currently researching the meaning of plants and flowers in the modern interior.