

Design history and criticism

Studies design past and present: how its practices emerged, what role objects and images played in the economy and culture, and how to judge them critically.

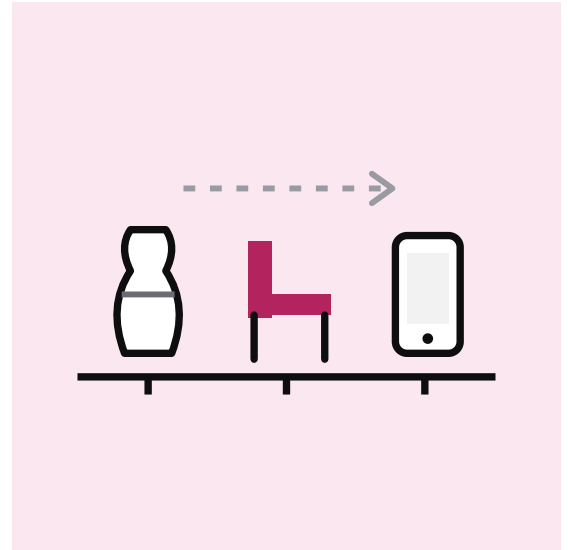
In Spanish

Historia y crítica del diseño

Origin

Consolidated as a field with Forty (1986) and the Journal of Design

History (1988)



What it studies

How and why design became what it is. It gives design perspective so it doesn't unknowingly repeat itself, and helps it understand which values its work conveys.

Principles

Objects tell a story

An object reflects the economy, ideas and customs of its time.

Beyond the famous author

Look also at manufacturing, selling and use, not just at whoever signed the design.

A history of the whole world

Design didn't start with European industry; each region has its own history.

Applications in design

✓ Use it like this

Look for the precedents of what you're going to design and ask which values of its time it still conveys.

✗ Avoid

Telling design history only as a list of famous designers and objects.

👁 Don't fall for it

Check which places and which people your reference talks about: whole regions are almost always missing.

Connections

Campos cercanos

■ Design studies

Used in

■ Fashion design

■ Graphic design

■ Industrial design

Authors and works

1986	Adrian Forty	Studied product design since 1750 as part of commerce and society, starting with how Josiah Wedgwood designed and sold his pottery.
1988	Design History Society	Has published the field's reference journal since 1988, covering the history of furniture, product, graphic and fashion design, craft and exhibitions.
2015	Victor Margolin	Wrote a world history of design that starts in prehistory and isn't limited to the West, because a definition tied to industry leaves many regions without a history.

Sources

Original sources

- Forty, A. (1986). Objects of desire: Design and society 1750–1980. Thames and Hudson.
- Design History Society (1988–). Journal of Design History. Oxford University Press. [View source \(https://www.designhistorysociety.org/publications/journal\)](https://www.designhistorysociety.org/publications/journal)
- Margolin, V. (2015). World history of design (2 vols.). Bloomsbury.

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