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A folding plug, what next?

This month the folding plug won the Brit Insurance Designs of the Year award, but what led to this thought of design and how over time have designers changed their focus? Tomes and Armstrong present their theorem in the **Dialectics of design: how ideas of ‘good design’ change**, the paper advances a first-pass theory of change in the styling of objects of domestic utility.

Tomes and Armstrong base their paper on the idea that the expressive potential of design for the maker, the user and the designer exists in tension with other desirable properties of the designed artifact. Respectively these are:

- mass availability
- conformity to professionally-defined ideas of good taste, and
- the demands of function and marketability.

The theory is illustrated by reference to the emergence and subsequent dilution of three design movements; Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau and certain versions of Modernism.

Dialectics of design: how ideas of ‘good design’ change

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Published in *Prometheus*, Volume 28, Issue 1.

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