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The changing role of the designer

A bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells but what distinguishes the worst of architects from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour process we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its beginning.

Karl Marx, *Das Capital*

Architecture offers quite extraordinary opportunities to serve the community, to enhance the landscape, refresh the environment and to advance mankind – the successful architect needs training to overcome these pitfalls however and start earning some serious money.

Stephen Fry, *Paperweight*

Vernacular or craft design

In the industrialised world design has become a professional activity. There is now a whole range of designers each educated and trained to design objects for quite specific purposes. There are graphics designers who arrange the myriad of images we look at, product designers who create the items we use in our everyday lives and architects who design the buildings we live and work in. At university now it is also possible to take courses on interior design, theatre design, urban design, landscape design, fashion and textile design, and of course there are degrees in civil and structural engineering, electrical and electronic engineering, mechanical engineering and chemical and process engineering. So it seems there is a designer with a university degree who has been trained to design every article we buy, consume or inhabit. However, it has not always been so, nor is it so now in many other