



The Substance of Style: How the Rise of Aesthetic Value Is Remaking Commerce, Culture, and Consciousness

Virginia Postrel

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From airport terminals decorated like Starbucks to the popularity of hair dye among teenage boys, one thing is clear: we have entered the Age of Aesthetics. Sensory appeals are everywhere, and they are intensifying, radically changing how Americans live and work.

We expect every strip mall and city block to offer designer coffee, a copy shop with do-it-yourself graphics workstations, and a nail salon for manicures on demand. Every startup, product, or public space calls for an aesthetic touch, which gives us more choices, and more responsibility. By now, we all rely on style to express identity. And aesthetics has become too important to be left to the aesthetes.

In this penetrating, keenly observed book, Virginia Postrel shows that the "look and feel" of people, places, and things are more important than we think. Aesthetic pleasure taps deep human instincts and is essential for creativity and growth. Drawing from fields as diverse as fashion, real estate, politics, design, and economics, Postrel deftly chronicles our culture's aesthetic imperative and argues persuasively that it is a vital component of a healthy, forward-looking society.

Intelligent, incisive, and thought provoking, *The Substance of Style* is a groundbreaking portrait of the democratization of taste and a brilliant examination of the way we live now.

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