

A Gap in the Education of Designers and Architects. On the Pedagogical Importance of the Notions of *Style* and *Styling* (and on the Need to Stop Gratifying a Fictitious Client)

By Jan Michl

ABSTRACT. The modernist architecture and design schools have educated several generations of aesthetically highly capable designers and architects. They all, however, have been willing to work merely in an anti-figurative, anti-decorative, and anti-historicist, exclusively abstract aesthetic idiom – the only one taught in the schools for the past seventy years. This long-running aesthetic abstinence is the result of a once novel, but now very old, modernist idea, according to which the duty of a modern architect or designer is not to heed the diverse aesthetic preferences of the market but to fulfil the “Modern Epoch's” alleged desire for its very own aesthetic expression. This metaphysical thesis, implying that the true customer of designers and architects is the “Modern Epoch” – a fictitious client, insisting that the aesthetic diversity of the market be ignored – led to many subsequent problems. The paper focuses primarily on one of them: the expulsion of the notion of *style* from architecture and design pedagogy and the negative impact this expulsion has had on the responsibility felt by architects and designers for their own aesthetic decisions.