



The Ice Palace That Melted Away: Restoring Civility and Other Lost Virtues to Everyday Life

Bill Stumpf

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With *The Ice Palace That Melted Away*, Bill Stumpf, the designer of the first ergonomic chair, addresses the symbiotic relationship between design and the way we live, the often deadening effect of technology, and his hopes for a more humane future. As a designer associated with Herman Miller, Inc., for more than twenty years, Stumpf has been thinking about the profoundly positive or negative effect design can have on our culture. He is both an idealist and a pragmatist, and his wry, anecdotal style gently reveals his shrewd observations about American customs and values. Stumpf is convinced that good design can create the right atmosphere to inspire learning, rehabilitate criminals, and generally lift our spirits. Since technology has succeeded in distancing us from the real experiences of life and such former pleasures as travel, in this fascinating book he proposes a playful redesign of the Boeing 747 and a jaunty carriage-like taxicab to put us back in touch with travel as it once was. But it is an event such as the construction of the ephemeral ice palace in St. Paul, Minnesota, during the winter carnival—a source of joy and pride to adults and children alike—that encapsulates the idea of play, which Stumpf feels is essential to all our lives.

This provocative book asks whether we might want to do something about our ever-declining levels of "comfort, hidden goodness, play, personal worth, and helping others" to make our future society a truly civilized one.

(Black-and-white illustrations throughout.)

From the Hardcover edition.

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