

VIKTOR SCHRECKENGOST – ONE OF THE MOST NOTABLE FIGURES IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN

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Abstract. *This article looks back at one of the most significant industrial designers in the modern era, Viktor Schreckengost, and some of his most important and famous inventions. The author presents the most important aspects of the subject's professional career, and the impact that he left behind, as well as a conclusion for future industrial designers who want to truly change the world.*

Keywords: *design, industrial design, art, impact*

Introduction

Viktor Schreckengost (June 26, 1906 – January 26, 2008) was an American industrial designer, a sculptor, an artist, and a professor emeritus at Cleveland Institute of Art [4]. Throughout his career, he has made a notable impact in his specialty with wide-ranging work in many niche categories, such as: pottery and dinnerware designs, bicycle and tricycle designs, toys and so on. He also developed a pioneer industrial design program at Cleveland Institute of Art or CIA in 1933. In 2006, at 100 years old, Viktor Schreckengost received a National Medal for Arts from President George W. Bush. Everybody is familiar with at least some of the products created or inspired by the work of this industrial designer. Here are some of the most known ones.

Notable Designs

1. Ceramics and dinnerware

Schreckengost loved the art, not just cartooning, which he studied, or pottery, but also music, especially jazz, being a skilled saxophone player. In his time, he taught in Austria, where he even impressed his students with his skills. This passion most likely inspired his famous "Jazz" punch bowl, or the "New Yorker". It is an Art Deco, 28-inch diameter ceramic bowl, which was designed in 1931. This became an immediate success and till this day is one his most famous pieces [3].

While working for the American Limoges in the mid-1930s, Viktor Schreckengost also created the first ever modern mass-produced dinnerware, called Americana. This design can be seen everywhere till this day and it served as an inspiration for other designers too.

2. Bicycles and Pedal Cars

Viktor Schreckengost genius in industrial design led him to the position of chief bicycle designer for Murray-Ohio. There he released the streamlined Mercury Bicycle, in 1939, which was later displayed at the New York Fair along with four of his sculptures. While working for Murray he designed many bicycles and children's pedal cars, in fact he revolutionized both industries so much, that during his 35 years with the company, Murray became the biggest bike manufacturer in the entire world. Mr. Schreckengost was also the one who designed the banana seat bike, after observing that many kids had replaced the front wheels on their bike with smaller one [1].

The designer might not have been the first one to invent the pedal car, but he completely changed the industry forever during his time at Murray. First of all, such toys were incredibly expensive, most people could not afford them. That was until Viktor Schreckengost did not simplify the design and started using scrap sheet metal in their making. This made the toy accessible to most kids till this day and made it a staple in everyone's childhood [2].

3. Truck designs

Another notable design was the new and innovative truck with the cab over the engine, thus allowing the Depression-era truck drivers to improve their income. Truck drivers were only paid for their cargo, but the new design was not only an esthetic change, but also an entire industry change, creating great revenue for White Motor Co. This not only allowed more room for cargo in trucks but also became the blueprint for the 18-wheel trucks, buses and military vehicles [3].

Conclusions

Viktor Schreckengost is a true example of what industrial design is all about, and also what every industrial designer should strive for. It is not only about creating beautiful or new things that are pleasing to the eye, it is about changing peoples' lives, revolutionizing industries, making everyday things more accessible for everybody, making new products that improve the quality of life for entire generations to come. This should be the designers' goal, and Mr. Schreckengost showed just how achievable all of it is if you just pay attention to the world around you and the world inside you. Putting your imagination to work, and being inspired by your own passion, or the passions of others, and then putting it into creation is the humanity's great gift, and we should learn how to use it more often, especially if we are part of a creative field.

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