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# Signs of Life: Why Brands Matter

Stephen Bayley

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- A majestic sweep across the history and culture of brands and branding
- First of a series of polemical books to come from Bayley and Circa

Nietzsche said all of life is a question of taste. And he was right. But nowadays all of life is also a question of branding. A brand is not something concocted by graphic designers and marketing consultants: it is "the intangible aspects of an intangible thing", as Massimo Vignelli (who re-branded the New York subway) explained. Brand values are the expectations and associations that all successful (and, indeed, unsuccessful) products and services possess. And now they are under threat from Health & Safety. Ugly, generic packaging for cigarettes will soon be mandatory. Bans on attractive presentation for sugar, alcohol and cars will logically follow. Simultaneously, brands are vulnerable as conventional advertising becomes redundant and younger affluent consumers suffer from consumer fatigue.

With *Signs of Life* Stephen Bayley makes the case that far from being pernicious, manipulative voodoo, brands and branding should be regarded as the contemporary equivalent of folk-art.

**Stephen Bayley** is an author, critic, columnist, consultant, broadcaster, curator and founding director of the influential Design Museum in London. Over the past thirty years his writing has changed the way the world thinks about design. He is the author of *Death Drive*, one the most talked about books of 2016.