

# Critical Report Of Product Design ‘Juicy Salif’ Lemon Squeezer

**Yuxuan Sha**

Nantong Institute of Technology, Nantong 226000, Jiangsu, China

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**Abstract:** This critical report is an evaluation of the contribution made by well-known Juicy Salif lemon squeezer in terms of its practicality, aesthetics, innovation and economy, which is designed by Philippe Starck. Although most of the controversial commentaries surrounding this product is the lack of practicality as a functional product, Juicy Salif lemon squeezer is considered to have made significant contributions to the consumer society and postmodern design in terms of aesthetics, innovation and economy. This report will critically analyze the contributions of the lemon squeezer to these four field. It concludes that the lemon squeezer actually provides three main contributions. One, that aesthetics not only attracts consumers but also improves the value of the product, and second, that innovation beyond the traditional design form and concept, leading the design towards the direction of emotional interaction between products and consumers, and lastly, that it has had a positive effect on multiple aspects of the economy.

**Keywords:** Juicy Salif lemon squeezer; Practicality; Aesthetics; Innovation; Economy

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## 1. Introduction

‘Juicy Salif’ lemon squeezer is one of the well-known postmodern design products from all over the world, which designed by the famous French designer Philippe Starck. The product was first manufactured by Centro Studio Alessi S.p.A. in 1990 (Fig 1). The unprecedented design of the lemon squeezer makes it become one of the Alessi company’s long-term popular products. A minimalist design style, three-legged form, which looks like a squid or a spaceship. The source of design inspirations has a variety of versions, undertaking this product in a range of mysteries. On the one hand, as Lloyd and Snelders (2003) state that Philippe Starck himself described that when he walked into a pizzeria restaurant and noticed a lemon-like squid, realized the design inspiration of the lemon squeezer and immediately started sketching in the dining placemat (Fig 2). On the other hand, the inspiration for this design brainwave could not be separated from the influence of his father’s career (his father worked for aeroplanes) and had a deep affinity with science fiction comics from his childhood (Fig 3).



Figure 1: ‘Juicy Salif’ lemon squeezer by Philippe Starck for Alessi

Such a daring styling product with a range of mysterious stories, a tendency towards more attention from all walks of life. Naturally, different stakeholders hold different viewpoints. The controversial commentary surrounding this design product was that the lemon squeezer lacks of usability in terms of its practical function, resulting in a situation where form outweighs function. However, the lack

of practicality has no significant effect on the contributions to the consumer society and postmodern design in terms of aesthetics, innovation and economy. The lemon squeezer has achieved massive success. The approach to analyze using four different aspects to assess the contributions of ‘Juicy Salif’ lemon squeezer: practicality, aesthetics, innovation, and economy. Therefore, this report will argue that although lemon squeezer has insufficient functions, there are significant pieces of evidence to demonstrate that it has made a great contribution to aesthetic, innovation and economy, which has a profound impact on the postmodern design.



Figure 2: Sketches for the lemon squeezer by Philippe Starck



Figure 3: ‘ The world under attack ’ - science fiction that Starck read as a child

## 2. Critical Evaluation

### 2.1 Practicality

In tradition, practicality is the first consideration in the process of product design. From the beginning of design process, a product needs to have a clear position, that is, which role the product would play, and this reflects the importance of practical functions in product design. For example, when the designer plans to design a water cup, its basic function is a container for water, but due to the difference of the materials and manufacturing process, it derives glass cup, vacuum cup and plastic cup and so on. Each of them has the basic function of installing water, but they have different practical characteristics because of the different materials. As a matter of fact, the nature of ‘Juicy Salif’ lemon squeezer is a functional product. Thus, its practicability cannot be entirely ignored in any case. However, there is a range of specific evidence to show that lack of practicality since the curious shape affects the expedience to use. To be more specific, when consumers put the lemon on the top and then squeezes it, the lemon juice will flow down along the three legs. During the operation(fig.4), it is difficult for lemon juice to avoid splashing around and messing up the kitchen table. Therefore, it is necessary to put a container to prevent the juice from splashing around. Besides, it lacks the ability to intelligently filter lemon residues and remove cores. In fact, the role of the lemon squeezer is to separate the juice from lemons, and the flesh and core finally appear together in the cup to show a flaw failure. In terms of this phenomenon, there has been some controversy over its contributions to consumers. Some people in the field of design intend to improve the practicality of the lemon squeezer, trying to find measurable design strategies, but there are still no more feasibility considerations (fig.5). However, Sir Terence Conran, which is a famous design expert, summed up the experience by expressing that even though it might spray the shirt full of juice, it still has an appeal that makes

it fun to use. As Hassenzahl (2018) point out that a design product should no longer simply act as a utility. Furthermore, the flaw in practicality undertakes more experience and enlightenment to modern design. Therefore, as a comparison, it has no significant effect on the other aspect contributions of the lemon squeezer, and the reasons for this are apparent from the following three other evaluate aspects.

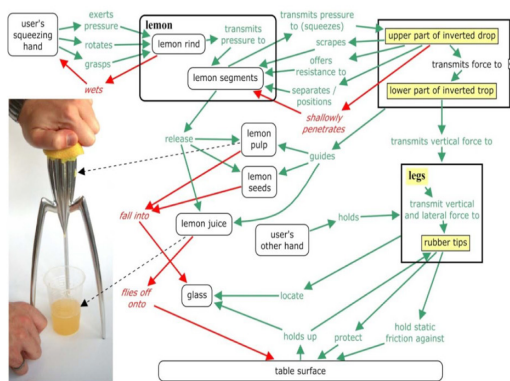


Figure 4: Operational diagram



Figure 5: Tried to improve the practicality of the program

## 2.2 Aesthetic

The aesthetics of the lemon squeezer not only appeal to consumers but also brings a juicy economic value to it. The juicy salif lemon squeezer is Starck’s first design project with Alessi Company. There are conclusive evidences to indicate that lemon squeezer marked the successful collaboration with Philippe Starck in terms of sales performance and market impact due to its sculptural appearance and a strong aesthetic value. It has sold millions of units since it was first manufactured in 1990. This potentially provide an explanation for the importance of the aesthetics of design. In another word, aesthetic is an integral aspect considered in the design process, and a part of scholars have proved it crucially important. Ordinarily, it is not difficult to observe that customers are always attracted by the appearance of novel and unique products in an instant when they are hanging out in front of the market shelves. This phenomenon has been documented by Bloch (1995), who has shown that the appearance of a product is the first sensory experience that attracts the attention of the consumer and stimulates the desire to purchase.

In recent years, while customers are tired of holding the common lemon squeezer, the birth of such a mysterious and attractive product model undoubtedly brings dramatic visual thrills to the customers. But not exclusively, as Hektner (2007) reveals that aesthetics not only attracts the attention of consumers, but also reinforces the stickiness between consumers and products, and then establishing long-term purchase behavior. In addition, most of the time, consumers are more inclined to afford aesthetic products, especially those who are focus on high-quality of life such as the middle-class and professionals since holding it could associate with emotional and self-identity satisfaction so that exceed their performance defects.

In many cases, consumers will judge the product based on their own emotions and purchase behaviors before choosing the product. In other words, consumers buy juicy salif lemon squeezer instead of other conventional products since the lemon squeezer is more in line with their standard of aesthetic. It is well known that a great deal of customers acquired Juicy Salif lemon squeezer to put it in their house as a classic decoration and sculpture rather than for using. The advanced design often comes at the expense of functional performance because it emphasizes aesthetics and a strong sense of overall style. In some cases, the impact of product appearance on consumers’ purchase intention is greater than performance and price (Yamamoto and Lambert, 1994).

However, there is a state of different viewpoints between the general public. In such a context, the diversity of global culture makes the evaluation standard of aesthetic value more and more complex and diverse. Thus, the consumer society is unpredictable and complicated. Every consumer has his own judgment on aesthetics, and the aesthetic evaluation of design products is subjective. In fact, Alessi Company has produced ten thousand gold-plated versions for collection and exhibition. Apart from that, the lemon squeezer is assured of a place in galleries such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Victoria & Albert Museum in London

and National Museums Scotland (Fig.6). This is no doubt that lemon squeezer is no longer a pure functional product, but also a work of art with strong aesthetic contribution.



Figure 6: One of Collections in National Museums Scotland, (K.2015.23.412).

### 2.3 Innovation

Design innovation is a key factor for products to occupy the market. This view has been proved by Roy and Riedel (1997), they claim that innovation has made a great contribution to improving the competitiveness of products in the market. The Juicy Salif lemon squeezer is a significant innovation whatever in terms of the design form or design concept.

From the aspect of design form innovation, the shape of streamline and the use of aluminum materials abandon the image of squeezer which has been solidified in the past. The silver of the aluminum material undertakes the feeling of sharp and futuristic, and the three-legged shape also enhances the sense of stability. With the designer's highly simplified and abstract bionic form, an unparalleled design form came out. This potentially provide a reason for the lemon squeezer is popular and sought after by the consumer society that it contains more than one peculiar point compared to similar products and meet the spiritual needs of modern minimalist pursuers.

From the perspective of the design concept innovation, in comparison with traditional design ideas, lemon squeezer broke with convention that the design form should be based on function (Malpass, 2017). According to the records, the designer himself asserts that the design purpose to Juicy Salif lemon squeezer is intended to be used to start the talking topic in the kitchen, not just for squeezing lemon juice. This novel design concept endows the product with emotion and make the product have vitality. The current trend is that consumers are no longer simply meet material satisfaction, but towards the direction of emotional interaction between the consumer and products. The lemon squeezer brings a sense of special experience when it is used, thereby creating an emotional experience with the consumers. In fact, when the lemon is squeezed and slowly circulates along the groove, the slow process that inspires the essence of the power of the user experience. On the contrary, it is the opposite of the modern fully automatic squeezer working in an instant. The traditional squeezers are always in a hidden state when they working and customers just need to press a button and then the operation process is fast and efficient. However, there is a tendency that consumers get tired of this mechanized model. The slow working process allows user to enjoy the labor fully and relieve the pressure of a fast-paced life. Compared with traditional fully automatic mechanical extruder, this product brings more experience and interactivity. As Khaslavsky and Shedroff (1999) proposed a new word: design seduction, he mentioned that a successful and impressive product is not only for function or vision, but also for the emotional relationship between the expectations of user and the product. Undoubtedly, lemon squeezer has taken this innovative concept to the extreme. However, whether the lemon squeezer is a good dialogue starter and discussion topic cannot be defined. It is impossible for every consumer has the opportunity to experience this special social function on it, and it is by no means that each of consumers pays for this purpose.

The innovation of the lemon juicer has attracted the attention of all walks of life. It can be considered that the existing value is to guide consumers, designers and manufacturers to reconsider the appearance of the product needs to have a standard form? The general public is caught up in the reflection of the inherent opinions and then rises to a reflection on the aspects of life. Furthermore, the value of design concept innovation has guided the general public through a deeper spiritual aspect with this product. As Norman (2005) suggests that the product is the medium of communication and spiritual resonance between the users and the designers. Ordinarily, this convert of the concept of design contributes to more considered and thoughtful about its impacts. Nevertheless, a part of experts suggest that successful product design is inseparable from innovation, but it does not mean that innovation is completely successful. As (Lloyd and Snelders, 2003) state that the ability of designer's personal innovation is indeed a necessary condition for successful design, but it is not a sufficient condition.

### 2.4 Economy

The economic budget is a permanent decisive factor in the design process. The relationship between product design and economic budget is close connection since economy is the foundation of design development. In another word, design serves for economic development. This viewpoint is supported by Morelli (2003), through the observation of his, the products are designed based on economic criteria.

From the perspective of the product cost, the lemon squeezer removed excess decorative material, and aluminum is a sustainable



material that is a benefit to the environment. It has three characteristics: easy to obtain, durable and recyclable. Thus, the relatively low cost of production would bring higher profits. But not exclusively, it is worth to mention that aluminum as a sustainable material will make consumers to meet moral satisfaction and feel that they are responsible for the environment. As Steenis et al. (2018) reveal that consumers have a higher sense of moral satisfaction when they buy products with sustainable materials. As a result, the lemon squeezer arouses the desire of environmentalists to purchase. Moreover, casting is a relatively simple production process, so the prime cost can be affordable whether using low-labor-cost or mechanized mass production.

In terms of sales volume and profit for Alessi company, the product is clearly successful. According to the research of Ettlle (1997) indicate that the success of the new product depends on the sales figures in the market. Since 1990, it has occupied the market for nearly three decades and still remains one of the best-sellers. The profit that the lemon squeezer brings to the Alessi company could be observed in the launch of the gold-plated limited edition. It is not difficult to find that even if the lemon squeezer is sold at a higher price than similar products, its exquisite and unique design style will make the target customer group willing to cost more money to buy. In other words, the lemon squeezer has higher economic value than traditional products since its artistic design.

From the side of enterprise economy, the sale figures of lemon squeezer will be benefit to establish a distinct corporate image of Alessi company. The general public consider Alessi company as a design factory, no longer just a huge production industry. Successful product design has the best publicity for Alessi company in the invisible, which has a positive impact on the future development of Alessi. Apart from that, the lemon squeezer also has an important impact on Italy's economy. The birth of lemon juicer cannot be separated from the promotion of external forces, the external power is the needs of the times. In other words, the background of the times promoted the emergence of the lemon juicer. It is worth noting that science and technology developed rapidly in the 1960s, and the historical transformation of Italy undoubtedly brought resourceful design inspirations to the designers at that time. Moreover, it contributed to the economic and industrial development of Italy.

### 3. Conclusion

The critical report has first identified a classic product design, which is the 'Juicy Salif' lemon squeezer and four aspects surrounding the product – practicality, aesthetics, innovation and economy – and has offered a rigorous assessment of these four main aspects. The first is the lack of practicality of the lemon squeezer, followed by its aesthetics to enhance the value of the product while attracting consumers. The third is that its innovation abandons the traditional design form and concept and leads the design to the emotional interaction between products and consumers. Finally, it is undoubtedly a great success in terms of multiple economic profit.

However, the lack of practicality of the lemon squeezer should not eclipse the value of aesthetics, innovation and economy. In such a context, it is worth to explore the better way to create a design strategy that combines these four design factors effectively. Therefore, a more practical solution is a method of balancing practicality, aesthetics, innovation and economy. Furthermore, there is a tendency that the consumer demand for product aesthetics is getting higher, the proportion of emotional elements in the design will become larger. Modern product design is the combination of multiple dimensions. The emotional factors will make products more appealing and energetic, thus becoming a bond of harmony between consumers and design. As some recent reviews of existing literature have shown, some experts have done researches on how to improve the practicality of lemon squeezer. Whatever positive or negative attempts, it provides an opportunity to realize the harmonious form and function, and serve as an enlightening role in the future design trend. In fact, due to the controversy over it, more people pay attention to it. The product is better known for its aesthetic, innovative and economic aspects than for its practical ones. This suggests that a balance between these four design aspects may be needed, but not necessary for success.

Therefore, as this report shows, the lack of practicality does not eclipse the value of aesthetics, innovation and economy. In fact, whether the controversial or admiring commentary surrounding this design, the lemon squeezer is becoming more and more popular as an unprecedented product design. It could serve as a classic model for the evolution of various kinds of design products in consumer society and have a profound contribution to postmodern design.

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