



# **Aluminum Upcycled: Sustainable Design in Historical Perspective (Johns Hopkins Studies in the History of Technology)**

*Carl A. Zimring*

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Besides being the right thing to do for Mother Earth, recycling can also make money?particularly when it comes to upcycling, a zero waste practice where discarded materials are fashioned into goods of greater economic or cultural value. In *Upcycling Aluminum*, Carl A. Zimring explores how the metal's abundance after World War II?coupled with the significant economic and environmental costs of smelting it from bauxite ore?led to the industrial production of valuable durable goods from salvaged aluminum.

Beginning in 1886 with the discovery of how to mass produce aluminum, the book examines the essential part the metal played in early aviation and the world wars, as well as the troubling expansion of aluminum as a material of mass disposal. Recognizing that scrap aluminum was as good as virgin material and much more affordable than newly engineered metal, designers in the postwar era used aluminum to manufacture highly prized artifacts. Zimring takes us on a tour of post-1940s design, examining the use of aluminum in cars, trucks, airplanes, furniture, and musical instruments from 1945 to 2015.

By viewing upcycling through the lens of one material, Zimring deepens our understanding of the history of recycling in industrial society. He also provides a historical perspective on contemporary sustainable design practices. Along the way, he challenges common assumptions about upcycling's merits and adds a new dimension to recycling as a form of environmental absolution for the waste-related sins of the modern world. Raising fascinating questions of consumption, environment, and desire, *Upcycling Aluminum* is for anyone interested in industrial and environmental history, discard studies, engineering, product design, music history, or antiques.

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