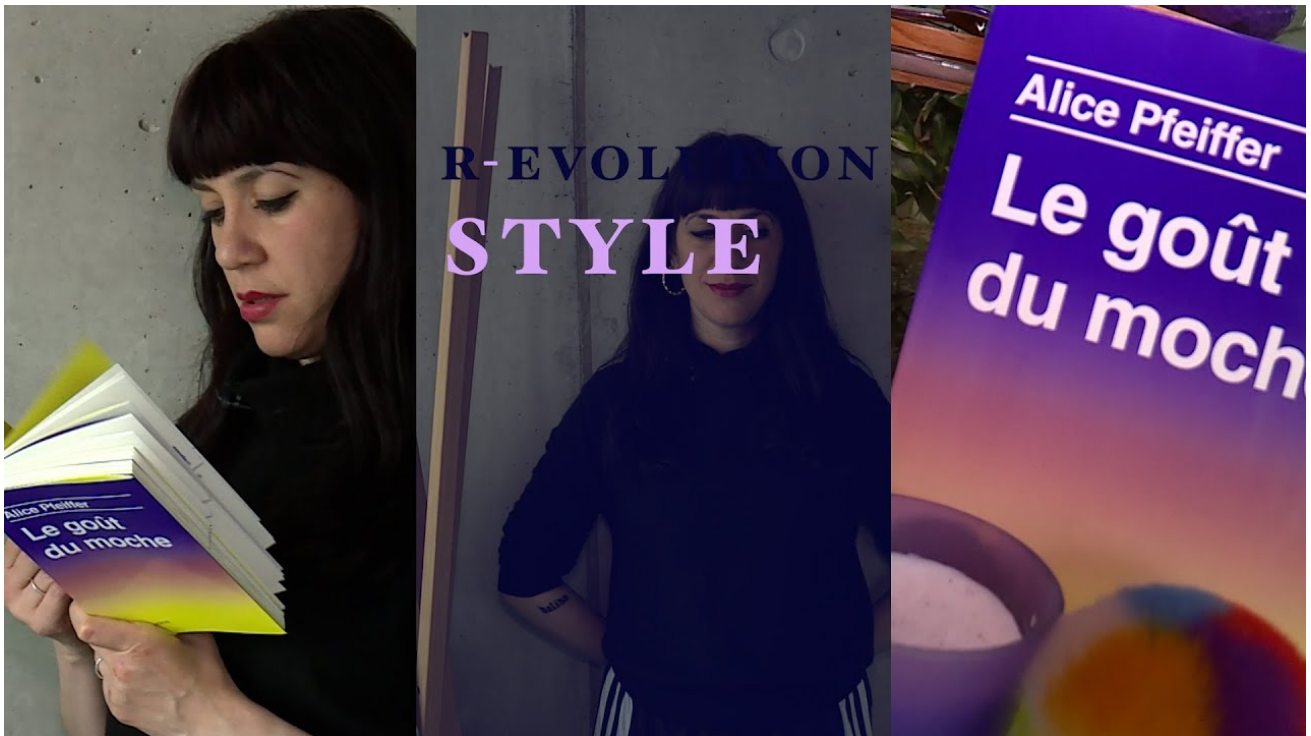


Kitsch and Our Taste for the Ugly

by Theodore Dalrymple



In the unlikely event that I were to become rich, my first act of philanthropy would be to found a National Museum of Kitsch with free entry to the public.

I am undecided whether I would place kitsch objects next to beautiful ones to drive home the intended lesson, or to allow the kitsch to speak for itself.

Judgment being always comparative, the former might be the more instructive; but since the didactic often results in resistance to or rebellion against whatever is being taught, it might be more effective to allow the viewer to draw his own conclusions.

A conclusion that you draw for yourself, after all, is always more powerful and lasting in effect than a conclusion that someone else draws for you.

I first had the idea for the museum in Istanbul, where I bought a baby-pink plastic alarm clock (made, off course, in China) in the form of a mosque, which would wake the sleeper with a flashing light and a couple of surahs of the Koran recited by an electronic muezzin.

It cost three euros and I chose the pink rather than the apple green or baby blue version because it was so particularly awful.

Needless to say, so prevalent is kitsch in the world—it is at least as universal as [*Epoch Times*](#).