

Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric, 1890-1930 By David E. Nye The winner of the 2005 Leonardo da Vinci Medal of the Society for the History of Technology he is the author of Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric 1890 1930 (1985) Electrifying America: Social Meanings of a New Technology 1880 1940 (1990) American Technological Sublime (1994) Consuming Power: A Social History of American Energies (1997) America as Second Creation: Technology and Narratives of New Beginnings (2003) and Technology Matters: Questions to Live With (2006) published by the MIT Press. By viewing the corporation as a communicator Image Worlds links the histories of labor business consumption engineering and photography providing a new perspective on one of the largest and most representative corporations. General Electric was one of the first modern industrial corporations to use photographs and other media resources to create images of itself; and the GE archives comprising well over a million images form one of the largest privately held collections in the world. While GE was promoting this enlightened image the company was also using its resources to reach the voting public hoping to gain their support for private electrification in the national debate over municipal power, Nye is Professor of American History at the University of Southern Denmark. To produce this venturesome book David Nye has used these vast archives to develop a new approach to corporate ideology through corporate iconography, Image Worlds embraces symbols intentional signs and photographs on the one hand and the history of institutional and technological development on the other: It views photography as a developing technology with a history of its own and presents the corporation as a communicator as well as a producer and employer, Illustrated with nearly 60 photographs from the archives the book identifies five image markets that GE sought to organize and address, Company engineers workers and managers received publications designed to appeal to their presumed interests, Some of these grew into public journals with a scientific-educational mission; others were restricted in circulation even within the company. At the same time illustrated mass-media advertising was created to reach potential consumers of GE products, Advertising that presented an image of GE as a place where progress was the most important product, Nye is Associate Professor of American History at Odense University in Denmark: Image Worlds: Corporate Identities at General Electric 1890-1930



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