



Refrigerator (Object Lessons)

By Jonathan Rees

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Object Lessons is a series of short, beautifully designed books about the hidden lives of ordinary things.

It may be responsible for a greater improvement in human diet and longevity than any other technology of the last two thousand years-but have you ever thought seriously about your refrigerator? That box humming in the background displays more than you might expect, even who you are and the society in which you live. Jonathan Rees examines the past, present, and future of the household refrigerator with the aim of preventing its users from ever taking it for granted again. No mere container for cold Cokes and celery stalks, the refrigerator acts as a mirror-and what it reflects is chilling indeed.

Object Lessons is published in partnership with an essay series in *The Atlantic*.

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Refrigerator (Object Lessons) By Jonathan Rees Bibliography

- Rank: #1409708 in eBooks
- Published on: 2015-09-24
- Released on: 2015-09-24
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

Review

"Does life exist without refrigerators? For most of us, the answer is no. How this common kitchen appliance achieved its indispensable status in less than a century is an amazing tale filled with surprising twists and unexpected connections. *Refrigerator* is a delight to read. Bravo!" ?Andrew F. Smith, Editor-in-Chief of *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Food and Drink in America*

"Allow Jonathan Rees to re-introduce you to the most underappreciated appliance in your kitchen: the refrigerator. Despite its recent and as yet patchy arrival on the world stage, the humble fridge has transformed how and what we eat, for better and for worse. This concise overview should be required reading for the 99.5 percent of Americans who own a refrigerator." ?Nicola Twilley, author of *Edible Geography* and contributing writer at *The New Yorker*

"The Object Lessons series achieves something very close to magic: the books take ordinary?even banal?objects and animate them with a rich history of invention, political struggle, science, and popular mythology. Filled with fascinating details and conveyed in sharp, accessible prose, the books make the everyday world come to life. Be warned: once you've read a few of these, you'll start walking around your house, picking up random objects, and musing aloud: 'I wonder what the story is behind this thing?'"?Steven Johnson, best-selling author of *How We Got to Now: Six Innovations That Made the Modern World*

"The Object Lessons project, edited by game theory legend Ian Bogost and cultural studies academic Christopher Schaberg, commissions short essays and small, beautiful books about everyday objects from shipping containers to toast. *The Atlantic* hosts a collection of "mini object-lessons", brief essays that take a deeper look at things we generally only glance upon ('Is bread toast only insofar as a human toaster perceives it to be "done?" Is bread toast when it reaches some specific level of nonenzymatic browning?'). More substantive is Bloomsbury's collection of small, gorgeously designed books that delve into their subjects in much more depth." ?Cory Doctorow, *Boing Boing*

About the Author

Jonathan Rees is Professor of History at Colorado State University – Pueblo, USA. He is the author of four books, including of *Refrigeration Nation: A History of Ice, Appliances, and Enterprise in America* (2013) and *Industrialization and the Transformation of American Life: A Brief Introduction* (2012).

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