

**Plastics as an Art Form.** THELMA R. NEWMAN. Chilton Books, Philadelphia, 1964, xxi + 339 pp. \$11.00.

It is, of course, common knowledge that plastics have replaced other materials in myriads of applications. Not many polymer chemists are aware, however, that our products are arousing increasing interest among artists. There are now many serious painters and sculptors who are making fruitful use of the peculiar properties of plastics, such as their ability to be shaped and colored, their texture, optical properties, etc.

In this very unusual book, Dr. Newman, who is a distinguished artist and educator, has gathered some fascinating information about how artists produce their creations with plastics. Polymer specialists will be astonished to see that such techniques as laminating, casting, foaming, extrusion, and thermoforming are all practiced by artists, although frequently with rather simplified techniques. The usual problems such as reinforcement, flameproofing, imparting light and weather stability are also present for the artist, and their solutions are described. General techniques as well as the specific handling characteristics of each class of plastics are discussed in detail and illustrated with an abundance of informative photographs. Although the book is aimed at the artist, Dr. Newman makes use of the familiar terminology of the plastics chemist and engineer. Astonishingly, the author has succeeded in defining plastics terms in language intelligible to the layman yet without offending the polymer specialist by oversimplifying the technical aspects. In general, the technical quality is very high and only a few errors were found.

The book includes a lengthy list of tradenames, their generic equivalent, and the names of suppliers. Although clearly not intended by the author for this purpose, the book's extensive descriptions of techniques and tabulations of properties of plastics should make it entirely suitable, in the reviewer's opinion, as an introductory text to polymer technology. It also appears likely that it will make school science projects easier. Even polymer specialists may wish to take a busman's holiday and try their hand at sculpture in the basement.

Dr. Newman has done a superb job. The illustrations (some in color) are beautifully executed. This book is highly recommended.

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