

ALL THINGS BAKELITE

The Age of Plastic

The pandemic shut down the ACS 2020 Spring Meeting and HIST Division presentations, which included this film. But fortunately, you can still view it [HERE](#).

This is a story about the “Father of Modern Plastic,” Leo Hendrik Baekeland. In 1907, the Belgian/American chemist made one of the most transformative discoveries of the 20th century, the first wholly synthetic plastic, which he called Bakelite. This invention was integral to the beginning of the modern industrial age and ushered in a myriad of plastics that have improved our lives and supported critical advancements in the automotive and aerospace industries, construction and electrical engineering, medicine and design.



In 1924

Leo Baekeland was President of the American Chemical Society and appeared on the cover of Time Magazine.

History comes alive in this unique and innovative 59-minute documentary, with reenactments of Baekeland’s life, rare archival footage, photographs and personal journal entries. Interviews with scientists, historians and artists, as well as satirical musical performances, capture both the wonder and the curse of Baekeland’s discovery. While the film celebrates Baekeland, his invention and its descendants, it does not shy away from the global plastic problem. In the end, it offers a view into essential solutions.

The primary source and inspiration for this illuminating film is great grandson of Baekeland, Hugh Karraker, the film’s Executive Producer.

Learn more about the history www.AllThingsBakelite.com.



“I want to celebrate Baekeland’s life. His invention had a huge impact on our lives, but little is generally known about him. His peers were the likes of Thomas Edison, the Wright brothers and Henry Ford.”

~ Hugh Karraker, Baekeland’s great-grandson



“The Bakelizer”, Baekeland’s early autoclave, and a commemorative plaque are housed in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History



Leo H. Baekeland