The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability: Charting the Conceptual Landscape through Economy, Ecology, and Culture

By Ann Thorpe

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Designing for sustainability is an innovation shaping both the design industry and design education today.Yet architects, product designers, and other key professionals in this new field have so far lacked a resource that addresses their sensibilities and concerns. *The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability* now explores the basic principles, concepts, and practice of sustainable design in a visually sophisticated and engaging style. The book tackles not only the ecological aspects of sustainable design-designers' choice of materials and manufacturing processes have a tremendous impact on the natural world-but also the economic and cultural elements involved.

The Atlas is neither a how-to manual nor collection of recipes for sustainable design, but a compendium of fresh approaches to sustainability that designers can incorporate into daily thinking and practice. Illuminating many facets of this exciting field, the book offers ideas on how to harmonize human and natural systems, and then explores practical options for making the business of design more supportive of long-term sustainability. An examination of the ethical dimensions of sustainable development in our public and private lives is the theme present throughout. Like other kinds of atlases, *The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability* illustrates its subject, but it goes far beyond its visual appeal, stimulating design solutions for "development that cultivates environmental and social conditions that will support human well-being indefinitely."

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Editorial Review

Review

"In presenting information in a way that she hopes designers will relate to instinctively, Thorpe allows her readers to take away the message that designers are well positioned to change the world for the better.

The work's introduction outlines the book's main goals, offers some 'terms of reference,' and includes a section on using the atlas with a whimsical key that includes a 'traveler's note' icon that actually signifies design thoughts. This type of playfulness is evident throughout."
(*Civil Engineering*)

"'All design and development should be sustainable, defined as 'development that cultivates environmental and social conditions that will support human well-being indefinitely.' This book is an essential, clear and comprehensible reference for any kind of designer."
(*Treehugger.com*)

"In this useful book, Thorpe, a senior lecturer in design at the Surrey Institute of Art and Design, has compiled a superb primer on the conceptual principles behind the sustainability movement...the book has a graphically fresh layout that is brimming with colorful images, tables, graphs, and informational boxes that summarize and elaborate upon the subject at hand...Both the veteran eco-designer and the average reader will easily be able to dip in and out of the book."
(*Foreword Magazine*)

"Design has been described as the 'glue' that binds together sustainable consumption and production. British design instructor Thorpe offers a visual tour of the ecologic, economic, and cultural elements of sustainable design."
(*Library Journal*)

"[Ann Thorpe] aims to provide 'ingredients rather than recipes,' giving the reader a highly visual and accessible tutorial in subjects as diverse as lifecycle analysis and materials producton to the effects of economic globalization and corporate responsibility. Whether these ingredients already pepper you practice depends in large part, according to Thorpe's agenda, on how much you care. Thus, the book would most help the young student of design..."
(*Architectural Record*)

"It is neither a 'how-to' manual, nor collection of recipes for sustainable design, but a compendium of fresh approaches to sustainability that designers can incorporate into daily thinking and practice."
(*newdesign*)

"Complex environmental aspects of industrial design and sustainable development presented in clear graphics, maps, diagrams and photographs with examples of projects. Textbook potential; the author tested her ideas in an undergraduate sustainable product design program."
(*Design Issues*)

"*Sustainable Industries* has offered reviews of books focused on design, and this is the only one I would

recommend to a professional interested in the discipline of sustainable design.*The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability* is presented as a resource guide for designers (of anything), but even as a non-designer, I still found it interesting and relevant. Thorpe begins the book with an introduction to the topic of design and sustainability, and continues by offering a chapter to each of the classic triple bottom line considerations from a designer's perspective: ecology, economy and culture."
(*Sustainable Industries*)

"Issues of sustainability are key to many different kinds of designers, from architects to graphic designers—and this title is designed to cross genres to appeal not only to designers but to the consumers using their services. Chapters provide a fine introduction to blending sustainability concerns throughout the design process: college-level collections in design as well as general-interest libraries catering to consumers need *Designer's Atlas of Sustainability*, a key to public policies, consumer needs, and basic sustainability issues."
(*California Bookwatch*)

"The book is written for designers such as architects and graphic artists. It is easy to read and will interest all who have an interest in sustainability and sustainable development. The message is that all citizens must participate and take responsibility for the transition to a sustainable world....[This book] provides a good picture of the issues that designers face as they consider sustainability in their work."
(*CHOICE*)

"This book is the best introduction yet for integrating sustainability throughout the design process. The tone is open, direct, forgiving, non-preachy, and highly understandable. It should be required reading in every design program."
(Ellen Lupton *author of Thinking with Type*; curator of contemporary design, Cooper-Hewitt Museum)

"This eloquently visualized *Atlas* gives deep insight on the economic and social facets of sustainable development. In critiquing the damaging environmental and social consequences of 'free-market' economics, it outlines intelligent strategies for designing systems that restore ecological health and that equitably distribute financial wealth to all societal strata. Designers, businesses and concerned citizens will learn much from this urgently needed and refreshingly wise roadmap."
(Philip White *Assistant Professor, School of Sustainability, Arizona State University*)

"A professor of sustainable design in London, Thorpe makes the case for sustainable design in this book and aims her message at designers of all stripes. She admits up front that she deliberately chose the four-color, sleek design for the book to get the attention of designers who have trouble engaging with 'pictureless, black-and-white texts.' While landscape architecture is not specifically addressed, landscape architects with an interest in sustainable design may find this book thought provoking."
(*Landscape Architecture Magazine*)

About the Author

Ann Thorpe teaches sustainable design at several universities in and around London, England. She was the founding editor and publisher of *On the Ground: Multimedia Journal on Community, Design and Environment* and has lectured widely on sustainable design.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Peggy Hardman:

Information is provisions for people to get better life, information presently can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a huge concern. What people must be consider while those information which is inside former life are difficult to be find than now is taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you receive the unstable resource then you buy it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen with you if you take The Designer's Atlas of Sustainability: Charting the Conceptual Landscape through Economy, Ecology, and Culture as your daily resource information.

Sandra Conaway:

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Patricia Coulter:

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