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Petrochemical America By Richard Misrach And Kate Orff



Synopsis

Now available in a compact and easy-to-reference paperback edition, "Petrochemical America" features Richard Misrach's haunting photographic record of Louisiana's Chemical Corridor, accompanied by landscape architect Kate Orff's Ecological Atlas--a series of "speculative drawings" developed through research and mapping of data from the region. Their joint effort depicts and unpacks the complex cultural, physical and economic ecologies along 150 miles of the Mississippi River, from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, an area of intense chemical production that first garnered public attention as "Cancer Alley" when unusual occurrences of cancer were discovered in the region. This collaboration has resulted in an unprecedented, multilayered document presenting a unique narrative of visual information. "Petrochemical America" offers in-depth analysis of the causes of decades of environmental abuse along the largest river system in North America. Even more critically, the project offers an extensively researched guidebook to the way in which the petrochemical industry has permeated every facet of contemporary life. What is revealed over the course of the book, however, is that Cancer Alley--although complicated by its own regional histories and particularities--may well be an apt metaphor for the global impact of petrochemicals on the human landscape as a whole. Richard Misrach (born 1949) has a longstanding association with the American south. His previous monograph, "Destroy This Memory," offered a record of hurricane-inspired graffiti left on houses and cars in New Orleans in the wake of Katrina. "On the Beach" and "Violent Legacies" addressed contamination of desert and beach areas. Kate Orff (born 1971) is an assistant professor at Columbia University and founder of SCAPE, a landscape architecture studio in Manhattan. Her work weaves together sustainable development, design for biodiversity and community-based change. Orff's recent exhibition at MoMA, "Oyster-tecture," imagined the future of the polluted Gowanus Canal as part of a ground-up community process and an ecologically revitalized New York harbor.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Beautiful, haunting book of photographs by Richard Misrach, one of the world's great photographers, accompanied by landscape architect Kate Orff's Ecological Atlas (drawings that map Louisiana's Chemical corridor, also called "Cancer Alley", which spreads along the Mississippi River.) What is stunning about Misrach's photographs is that they have an ethereal beauty, and when you look more closely you see that each is underscored by the terrible death and decay that is 'cancer alley'.

Excellent book - I wish there were more photographs - the documentary data is the greater portion of the book .. but it's thorough, informative, very clear. I purchased the book because it is both a creative endeavor, and a socio-political document - pleased on both counts.

For any ecological/landscape architectural/environmental/ innovative illustrative designers out there, this is a must own. Imagery is un-real, topic is current and highly under represented. Great book.

My son is a chemical engineer and he loves this book. According to him, nothing else comes close to explaining the need for PetChem and also providing research and personal glimpses into the dark side of this issue. He highly recommends this for anyone who really cares about the issues and is willing to read carefully and with an open mind on all issues.

If you are a visual person, you will appreciate this vehicle for understanding the impact of petrochemicals. Words tell part of the story and photographs take you deeper into the insidious progression of blight and poison.

Awesome read with amazing graphics and photography. Kate Orff is a genius. The wealth of knowledge in this book is unbelievable. Every person in the country should read this book. The petrochemical dependency paradigm shift is inevitable and this book portrays the need for it.

This book would be an excellent text in any ecology or sustainability course. It synthesizes a large amount of information in a comprehensible way in tandem with Misrach's haunting photos, and has a hopeful addendum tucked in a marsupial-like pouch at the end.

Mishrach is a master and he can't manage to print anything less than a beautiful, fascinating picture. The book has social and political importance and the accompany text is terrific. This is a rare art book that is informative and politically valuable. Buy it while it is still in print.

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