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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

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Aperture; 2nd Revised edition edition (September 30, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1597112771

ISBN-13: 978-1597112772

Product Dimensions: 11.8 x 0.8 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars 21 customer reviews

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Customer Reviews

Here, the photo works in concert with Orff's atlas and the book's images of bridges, antebellum relics, Texaco stations, decrepit lots, and the like, creating a kind of systems novel of the poisoned American South. The atmosphere is suffocating, to be sure, and Misrach asks us to breathe it in as deeply as we can.--The Editors"Bookforum" (12/09/2014)In 2010, Richard Misrach returned to photograph the stretch of Louisiana known as Cancer Alley, a 150-mile section of the Mississippi River between New Orleans and Baton Rouge, which he had also explored in 1998. The area is home to petrochemical plants that have polluted the river and spoiled the environment for years. Misrach's Petrochemical America is more than a disheartening photographic essay on the evils of Dow Chemical... Misrach's view is mainly detached, favoring an objective-ish style free of "decisive moments."--David O'Neill"Bookforum" (06/01/2014)

Richard Misrach is one of the most influential photographers of his generation, well-known for his ongoing project Desert Cantos. His work is held by major institutions, including the Museum of Modern Art, Whitney Museum of American Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. He is the recipient of four National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the Kulturpreis for Lifetime Achievement in Photography. His books with Aperture include Violent Legacies (1992), On the Beach (2007), Destroy This Memory (2010), Petrochemical America (with Kate Orff, 2012), Golden Gate (2012), The Mysterious Opacity of Other Beings (2015), and Border Cantos (with Guillermo Galindo, 2016).

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'.

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.

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love it

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.

An excellent blend of photography, essays, and diagrams that clearly conveys the beauty and sadness lurking within America's industrial spine.

An incredible book. The images of the first half are so visually striking that you want to study the infographics and text of the second half. A must have.

Beautiful Book. 100% fascinating, Kate Orff's graphics are definitely one to look at for any Landscape Architect.

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