
Sustainability is an increasingly important topic that is appropriate to all types of design, whether it is graphic, architectural, or landscape design. In Design for Sustainable Change, authors Anne Chick and Paul Micklethwaite address sustainability and its application to design. The authors investigate how innovative design can make a sustainable impact on nonprofit organizations, corporations, and society as a whole. The text is tailored so that undergraduate and graduate students of all design programs and professionals from all design fields are aware of these issues so they can apply them to their work.

The book is divided into three parts first starting with design thinking and design activism followed by sustainability (or the “S” word as the authors sometimes refer to it). This section provides useful models and measures of sustainability. The latter part of the book discusses design for sustainable change that includes ecodesign, designing sustainable cities, and designing against inequality. Almost every chapter ends with a case study and/or an interview with a notable international designer highlighting innovative design developments. For example, one section focuses on Motivation, a nonprofit organization based in the United Kingdom best known for its manual wheelchairs, which improve mobility and quality of life for people with disabilities worldwide. Interviews include David Stairs, executive director of Designers Without Borders, and Jonathon Porritt, co-founder of Forum for the Future, a sustainable development organization in the United Kingdom. With vividly striking illustrations, the book includes an annotated list of online resources, an index, and a bibliography along with a list of further resources of journal articles, books, and websites about sustainable design, living, and development.

Chick and Micklethwaite do an excellent job of explaining issues surrounding design and sustainability. As design evolves, so do the social and environmental factors that impact it. While it is important to consider design in preserving the environment, the authors argue that design is an attitude as well as a profession. With design as a mindset, designers are enabled to question the type of designer they want to be. Although the book is geared toward professional and aspiring designers, anyone with a curiosity for design and sustainability will find this book fascinating.

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