



Designing America's Waste Landscapes (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design)

By Mira E. Engler

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Designing America's Waste Landscapes (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design) By Mira E. Engler

One of the most visible consequences of our society's breakneck level of production and consumption is the increasing amount of land designated as landfill and other waste disposal and processing sites. Often located in marginal areas or adjacent to politically and economically dispossessed communities, these places are usually ignored by mainstream society, as is the garbage that fills them. Even with the greater awareness of the problems of waste disposal inspired by recycling programs and anti-littering ads, we would much rather take the garbage out than think about where its going.

In *Designing America's Waste Landscapes*, landscape architect and scholar Mira Engler takes a close look at the landfills, recycling and waste transfer centers, and sewage treatment plants that accommodate and redistribute the by-products of consumption. For Engler, waste is not only a pervasive, essential, and constructive process of civilization; it is a key element in the way we consider, order, and shape our landscape. Yet the overwhelmingly negative, defensive perceptions we have of these places?and their marginalization within public debate?limits our ability to respond creatively and effectively to the growing problem of waste disposal.

Engler addresses two distinct aspects of waste landscapes in America: the historic and cultural context of waste and the theories, practices, and concerns of the planners, engineers, landscape designers, and other waste management professionals. She reviews the physical evolution of waste sites across the country, scrutinizes perceptions and representations of these landscapes, and highlights attempts by environmental designers and artists to change public perceptions. Illustrated with more than 70 photographs, maps, drawings, and other images, *Designing America's Waste Landscapes* is a cogent and compelling inquiry into the scientific, environmental, and aesthetic parameters of cutting-edge waste management technology and design.

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Designing America's Waste Landscapes (Center Books on Contemporary Landscape Design) By Mira E. Engler Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1953950 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Johns Hopkins University Press
- Published on: 2004-04-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .90" w x 6.00" l, 1.50 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 312 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

An exposition of the history, aesthetics, etymology, and psychology of waste disposal.

(*Choice*)

An engaging book that addresses a difficult subject and bridges a wide range of issues: social taboos and aesthetics, science and art, theory and application. Well researched and well written, *Designing America's Waste Landscapes* seeks to raise awareness and promote change?both in the design of waste sites and, more broadly, in the way we understand the relationship between the waste we produce and the way we live.

(John L. Motloch, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director of the Land Design Institute at Ball State University)

Engler brings broad meaning to the value of marginalized places... Stimulating reading.

(Martin V. Melosi *Technology and Culture*)

An insightful tour of an overlooked part of the cultural landscape.

(Mark D. Bjelland *Professional Geographer*)

Fresh treatment of the 'environmental' problem of human waste and pollution will be relevant for cultural geographers with an interest in nature-society relationships.

(Kendra Strauss *Journal of Cultural Geography*)

About the Author

Mira Engler is an associate professor of landscape architecture at Iowa State University.

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