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Hello World: Where Design Meets Life



Synopsis

It is often said that we are living in a new golden age of design. Our gadgets, appliances, and cars are sleeker and more elegant than they've ever been; in our free time, we trawl the internet for pictures of flawless minimalist interiors; and even the great industrialist of our time—Steve Jobs—is admired more for his visual savvy than his technological inventiveness. And yet with Instagram and Pinterest at our fingers and great design more available and more affordable than ever, we've had no guidebook to this ever-fascinating field. Though it's an inescapable part of our lives, there has been no single book that could, in one fell swoop, tell us everything we need to know about design. Enter *Hello World*. The design critic for the *International Herald Tribune*, Alice Rawsthorn has spent many years reckoning with the history of design and with its place in contemporary life, and *Hello World* is the extraordinary summation of her research and reporting. Rawsthorn takes us on a trip through design that ranges across continents and centuries, and wherever she goes, she discovers inspiring, thrilling examples of resourcefulness, inventiveness, and sheer vision. From the macabre symbol with which eighteenth-century pirates terrorized their victims into surrender, to one woman's quest for the best prosthetic legs, to the evolution of the World Cup soccer ball, *Hello World* describes how warlords, scientists, farmers, hackers, activists, and professional designers have used the complex, often elusive process of design to different ends throughout history. Hailed as a "rapid-fire and illuminating ode to contemporary design" (*Telegraph*) and "an extremely readable tour of the subject" (*Financial Times*), *Hello World* is a major work that radically broadens our understanding of what design can mean, and explains how we can use it to make sense of our ever-changing universe.

Book Information

Hardcover: 288 pages

Publisher: The Overlook Press; 1 edition (February 6, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1468308068

ISBN-13: 978-1468308068

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 1.2 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 8 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #600,265 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #261 in Books > Arts &

Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Design History & Criticism #4802 in [The Art of Design: A History of Ideas and Styles](#) > Arts & Photography > History & Criticism > History #142842 in [The Art of Design: A History of Ideas and Styles](#) > Textbooks

Customer Reviews

"Hello World maps and describes contemporary design with flair, passion, clarity and perspective, smartly connecting its most technologically advanced [emerging](#) expressions with centuries-old examples and thus with tradition. We were all missing this book. Alice Rawsthorn has succeeded where everyone else has failed: she has written a page-turner about design." [Paola Antonelli](#), Senior Curator of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art

"Panoramic in scope, passionately argued and highly addictive to read, Hello World is an indispensable guide to design. Seamlessly integrating vivid accounts of contemporary practice with historic precedents, Alice Rawsthorn's book will be an essential reference for decades to come. Hello World is an invaluable toolbox for the twenty-first century." [Hans Ulrich Obrist](#), Co-director of the Serpentine Gallery, London

Praise for Yves Saint Laurent

"As gripping as a thriller, packed with plot, character and atmosphere." [The Times](#)

"Rawsthorn's excellent biography isn't merely a story about clothes, but of crises, comebacks and drug clinics, and as a document of the time it is compulsive." [Evening Standard](#)

"The best book I have ever read about the mesmerizing cruelty of fashion." [The Spectator](#)

"Intelligent and pragmatic . . . This is a page-turner of a book." [New Statesman](#)

"In a world saturated with ill-considered things, Hello World is a real wakeup call: a diverse and impassioned survey of why design matters. And Alice Rawsthorn practices what she preaches. Her on-point writing marries beautifully with Irma Boom's typography, resulting in a truly satisfying object." [Glenn Adamson](#), director of the Museum of Art and Design, New York

"Alice Rawsthorn constructs a meticulous living history of design, bridging the everyday and the extraordinary with equal parts precision and poetics." [Maria Popova](#), founder and editor of [BrainPickings.org](#)

"Making links across centuries of life-enhancing designs, and taking on the difficult task of defining the expansive world of contemporary design, Hello World is a must read for anyone wanting to understand the complex but essential role that design plays in daily life." [Zoë Ryan](#), John H. Bryan Chair and Curator of Architecture and Design, The Art Institute of Chicago

Alice Rawsthorn is the design critic of the International Herald Tribune, the global edition of The

New York Times. Her weekly Design column is syndicated worldwide. The former director of London's Design Museum, she is also the author of an acclaimed biography of Yves Saint Laurent.

I have read many design books, but this one might be the best of the bunch when it comes to profiling the field, the challenges, the opportunities and its history in an accessible, interesting and well-researched manner. The book is filled with anecdotes, well-studied stories and interviews from the author's many years of work as a design-focused journalist. It's a critical piece, showcasing the great things design has done, its trends (and trendiness), its blind spots and the areas it has yet to reconcile. It was a joy to read and will be my first choice for anyone who is looking to dive deeper into design either as someone looking to invest in better design for their company or someone who seeks to employ it in their work. It covers everything from architecture, product manufacture, fashion, and technology all through the lens of design culture, not just the products and stylistic approaches used. The choice of the cover is a strange one unless you've read the book (it is inspired by the original Apple computers welcome message) because it might be the most spartan, non-stylish, curious choice that the book designers could make. Don't judge the book by this cover, it's worth the read.

Alice Rawsthorn really captures what design's capabilities and effects it has on our lives and throughout history before the term "design" was even coined. I am already familiar with many of the designers and projects mentioned in this book so it was refreshing to read. This book encompasses different aspects of design in a holistic manner that is both inspiring and informative. Highly recommend to anyone curious about learning of design's capabilities.

This book is an interesting, if dense, compilation of what has to be decades of research and learning. Beautiful descriptions of revolutionary work of wide impact. I do feel that, for a book on design, it's a bit short on pictures.

Everything about this book is well researched, delightfully told and engagingly written

I remember watching this nice interview (<http://youtu.be/OUW6PnU-uhE>) where Alice Rawsthorn gives an accolade to the design(er) of the book and I was baffled right when opening it, to see it typeset in Arial and Helvetica (as if Helvetica was not

enough (with about 5mm of margins. I will read it at some point, and I trust the content is valuable, I'm not quite sure about its shape & how it reads.

Very insightful reading to think and rethink about designer. Strongly recommended to any design practitioner like me.

For the professional designer of any domain, this book is interesting, but not more than that. But for the new student, or the outsider of design field, it can be very interesting because it present a lot of different example of the field. It could be a very good book for student in the first year !

You would think a book on design would be easy on the eyes, but the formatting of the text makes it difficult and irritating to read. The content might be great but I wouldn't know.

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