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Designing for the Desert

Stories of Coexistence: Building and Living in an Extreme Climate

Steffen Lehmann

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- This book examines sustainable urbanism, architectural strategies, and material innovations for living in hot, arid climates
- This reference work is intended for practitioners and students of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture, and policymakers
- It is for anyone concerned with the future of arid landscapes
- The study explores the contradictions and paradoxes of building and living in the desert

Designing for the Desert provides a critical examination of climate-responsive architecture and urban design within harsh desert environments. More than a billion people now live in desert cities and regions worldwide, and urbanisation of these landscapes continues to accelerate. The book draws together historically significant and contemporary cases of building for extreme climates, identifying emerging trends relevant to the design profession. Designing for desert cities is both a demanding design task and a distinct field of study. Commissioned statements from leading architects and academics, written specifically for this publication, appear throughout. Richly illustrated, this reference work is intended for practitioners and students of architecture, urban design and landscape architecture, and policymakers. It is for anyone concerned with the future of arid landscapes.

The book examines international precedents across 28 chapters and more than 200 images, charting the influence of historical desert architecture on contemporary projects and the continuing development of design techniques for arid environments. Case studies range in scale from individual houses to larger urban neighbourhoods, drawing on well-designed, climate-responsive work from numerous countries. Despite the scale of desert urbanisation, scholarly understanding of appropriate architectural and urban responses remains limited. This study addresses that gap by examining the challenges and opportunities of building in arid environments. Recent case studies examine the United States, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Namibia, and India.

Professor Steffen Lehmann, AA Dipl., PhD, is a Professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Architecture. He is the founder and principal of the design studio steffen + igor_architecture + urban design. He has been a full professor and worked in research and professional roles for more than 25 years, with senior academic appointments as head of school and research director at universities in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia. He leads the Urban Futures Lab with a simple yet powerful vision: To transform knowledge into impact and innovation into sustainable progress.

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