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James A. Cox, Editor-in-Chief
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The Architecture Shelf

Environmental Activism by Design

Coleman Coker, author

Sarah Gamble, author

Synopsis: "Environmental Activism by Design" is a monograph by architects and educators Coleman Coker and Sarah Gamble. They seek to challenge designers to actively engage the environmental crisis through their work, while articulating an optimistic, tangible means to pursue community good and environmental justice through design activism and engagement.

"Environmental Activism by Design" advocates that in addition to greener buildings, cheaper housing, and technological fixes, in this era of Climate Change and its challenges, architects must rethink pedagogy and praxis so that every single architecture graduate can define equity and transform the profession.

"Environmental Activism by Design" centers on the award-winning Gulf Coast DesignLab at the University of Texas, which works directly with clients and stakeholders to produce spaces for the public to learn and researchers to undertake their environmental work. "Environmental Activism by Design" asks environmentally aware architects and designers to challenge themselves, as agents of social equity, environmental justice, and climate action, to pursue operative practices and transformation rather than mere keywords and consensus.

Critique: This large format (7.75 x 0.75 x 9.75 inches, 1.83 pounds) hardcover edition of "Environmental Activism by Design" is expertly illustrated with numerous full color illustrations and features an informative three page Foreword (An Architecture of Sentient Beings), a ten page Introduction, a fourteen page Conclusion, and three page Afterword (Why Do We Do What We Do?). "Environmental Activism by Design" is an inherently fascinating, insightful, thoughtful and thought-provoking read and an especially recommended addition to personal, professional, community, college, and university library Sustainability/Green Design collections and supplemental Architectural Criticism curriculum studies lists.

Editorial Note #1: Coleman Coker (<https://soa.utexas.edu/faculty/coleman-coker>) is the Professor of Practice at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture and director of the Gulf Coast DesignLab there. He is also a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a Rome Prize recipient from the American Academy in Rome. Coker is an Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) 2019 Architectural Education Award Winner for his community-outreach work with the Gulf Coast DesignLab. He is past director of the Memphis Center of Architecture, a design program focused on urban ecologies through the art of building.

Editorial Note #2: Sarah Gamble (<https://dcp.ufl.edu/faculties/sarah-gamble>) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Florida School of Architecture, following teaching at the University of Texas at Austin from 2011 to 2018. Gamble's academic research focuses on context and how the design process is catalyzed by the surrounding environment and designers' understanding of it. Gamble previously served as Architect for the Texas Historical Commission's Main Street Program, Principal at GO collaborative, and Architect at the Austin Community Design and Development Center.