



Material World: A Global Family Portrait

By Peter Menzel, Charles C. Mann, Paul Kennedy



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In an unprecedented effort, sixteen of the world's foremost photographers traveled to thirty nations around the globe to live for a week with families that were statistically average for that nation. At the end of each visit, photographer and family collaborated on a remarkable portrait of the family members outside their home, surrounded by all of their possessions—a few jars and jugs for some, an explosion of electronic gadgetry for others. Vividly portraying the look and feel of the human condition everywhere on Earth, this internationally acclaimed bestseller puts a human face on the issues of population, environment, social justice, and consumption as it illuminates the crucial question facing our species today: Can all six billion of us have all the things we want?



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Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In honor of the United Nations-sponsored International Year of the Family in 1994, award-winning photojournalist Peter Menzel brought together 16 of the world's leading photographers to create a visual portrait of life in 30 nations. *Material World* tackles its wide subject by zooming in, allowing one household to represent an entire nation. Photographers spent one week living with a "statistically average" family in each country, learning about their work, their attitudes toward their possessions, and their hopes for the future. Then a "big picture" shot of the family was taken outside the dwelling, surrounded by all their (many or few) material goods.

The book provides sidebars offering statistics and a brief history for each country, as well as personal notes from the photographers about their experiences. But it is the "big pictures" that tell most of the story. In one, a British family pauses before a meal of tea and crumpets under a cloudy sky. In another, wary Bosnians sit beside mattresses used as sniper barricades. A Malian family composed of a husband, his two wives, and their children rests before a few cooking and washing implements in golden afternoon light. *Material World* is a lesson in economics and geography, reminding us of the world's inequities, but also of humanity's common threads. An engrossing, enlightening book. --*Maria Dolan*

From School Library Journal

YA?A fascinating look at the material possessions of families throughout the world. These people have been determined "average" for their countries and have agreed to have photographers move the contents of their houses outside in order to create visible representations of their relative standards of living. The dirt house and few possessions of Mali residents contrast with the 4 cars, 45-foot long sofa, and 12+ oriental carpets lined up outside the luxury home of a family from Kuwait. Each chapter includes the original spread of possessions, statistics about each family and country, as well as further pictures of daily life and some observations by the photographer. Interspersed among the chapters, which are divided by region, are pictorial representations of such interesting comparisons as televisions, meals, and toilets. Almost all of the pictures are in full color. Menzel hoped this would be "a unique tool for grasping cross-cultural realities." It is that and much more.?Susan H. Woodcock, King's Park Library, Burke, VA
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From Library Journal

Although *Material World* might appear to fall into the genre epitomized by Edward Steichen's *The Family of Man* (1955), the book truly defies facile classification; it seems at once art, photojournalism, human geography, and visual anthropology. It is a remarkable and captivating coupling of photographic art with economic and demographic statistics. Very largely the work of 16 photographers, including Menzel, the book is most outstanding in its color photographic portraits of 30 families with their material possessions arrayed nearby. Each family represents one of 30 different countries-some poor, some rich-and each approximates what World Bank and UN statisticians deemed to be "average" for its country. Tables associated with the photographs provide statistical portraits of the families and their nations; photographers' notes on their specific projects enlighten the viewer. Though the format allows superficial browsing, the combination of detailed photographic presentations of material goods with the commentaries and statistics invites careful reading and cross-cultural comparison. Readers should find the comparison worth making. Strongly recommended for all libraries. [A CD-ROM of the same title is available; for more information, see p. 21.-Ed.] -James D. Haug, East Carolina Univ. Lib., Greenville, N.C.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur Walker:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children till adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important normally. The book Material World: A Global Family Portrait was making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The book Material World: A Global Family Portrait is not only giving you a lot more new information but also to get your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your e-book. Try to make relationship with the book Material World: A Global Family Portrait. You never really feel lose out for everything in the event you read some books.

Clarine Davidson:

The book Material World: A Global Family Portrait will bring you to definitely the new experience of reading a new book. The author style to clarify the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book you just read, this book very suited to you. The book Material World: A Global Family Portrait is much recommended to you to read. You can also get the e-book from the official web site, so you can easier to read the book.

Beverly Rosa:

Often the book Material World: A Global Family Portrait has a lot details on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of gain. The book was authored by the very famous author. The author makes some research ahead of write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can get the point easily after reading this article book.

Orville Hightower:

Is it you actually who having spare time and then spend it whole day simply by watching television programs or just lying down on the bed? Do you need something new? This Material World: A Global Family Portrait can be the solution, oh how comes? The new book you know. You are thus out of date, spending your free time by reading in this completely new era is common not a nerd activity. So what these guides have than the others?

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