

Reviews

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ZEN IN THE ART OF PERMACULTURE DESIGN

Stefan Geyer
Permanent Publications, 2016
200 x 125mm, 124 pages
£7.99



This is an essential book for anyone interested in permaculture. Although permaculture originated as a land-based design framework, it is now applied to all aspects of our lives, our communities and our planet. *Zen in the Art of Permaculture Design* is the philosophical layer to permaculture design.

This won't tell you how to start a permaculture garden, or how to design your permaculture project, but what it does do is to use permaculture tools to guide you through your own journey, whatever that may be.

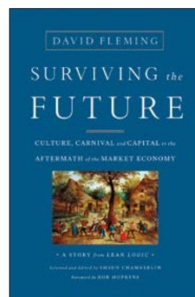
The book works through the classic permaculture SADI (survey, analysis, design, implementation). After a brief introduction to what permaculture is, Stefan begins with surveying, asking us how we observe the natural world, and imploring us to fully observe. Observation is key to permaculture, and with meditation being a big part of Zen practice, the two go hand in hand. Stefan urges us to observe without prejudice. Meditation can help us peel away the layers of our cultural conditioning, making it easier to fully observe our potential project

or remit. "There can be no doubt, any time spent in observation will reward tenfold." He also explains the importance of talking to others within your surveying, as well as looking to Nature, with the perspective that we are part of it. Nature also offers solutions through patterns, such as spirals, webs and cones. These patterns have been used by Nature for millennia. Stefan also explores systems thinking, essentially the study of ecosystems, thinking abundantly, how to design with attitudes and then on into implementation. Stefan is a guide through these steps, offering advice on what to consider as you work towards your goal.

Zen in the Art of Permaculture Design is the wisdom and philosophy behind permaculture, helping us all to use permaculture design to its full capacity. *Rozie Apps is assistant editor at PM*

SURVIVING THE FUTURE

Culture, Carnival and Capital in the Aftermath of the Market Economy
David Fleming and Shaun Chamberlin
Chelsea Green, 2016
229 x 152mm, 304 pages
£12.99



David Fleming's *Surviving the Future* (*STF*) is a slim book graced with humour and gravitas. Drawn from his compelling, encyclopaedic, 'linked dictionary' *Lean Logic* (see p71), this

book, posthumously published, shares the broad-minded insights of a thinker and writer who played significant roles in the beginnings of the UK Green Party, the Transition Towns movement, and the New Economics Foundation.

And it is this eclectic, widely read mind that comes to the fore when reading *STF*. Wonderfully edited by Shaun Chamberlin, *STF*, subtitled *Culture, Carnival and Capital in the Aftermath of the Market Economy*, has been the most realistic, sobering, frightening and yet strangely comforting disquisition into our current state of affairs and where we, and the planet, might be headed. It is exactly this heterodoxy that lends itself to what I label as an 'ecological worldview' where a connecting-the-dots, systems thinking approach comes not just as a matter of principle but as a way of understanding and acting in the world. As Rob Hopkins observes in his foreword, "His mind wasn't a linear thing."

Eminently readable, Fleming's tone and approach is neither shrill nor righteous, but avuncular, accessible and at times playful – exactly what's needed when communicating such big ideas as 'Descent', 'Collapse', 'Growth' and 'Continuity'. Chapter titles such as 'Carnival', 'Eroticism' and 'The Wheel of Life' give an indication of his eclectic scope and original approach.

Fleming pays close attention to historical antecedent whilst reading the signs of what's to come, delineating the flow of culture and ideas, without falling prey to the reassuring myths our civilisation lives by. Recognising that big changes means losing much that is good, not just what is bad, his nuanced approach has been a refreshing perspective, offering both an acceptance of what