

REVIEWS

Edited by Sarah Simpkin

Atlas Obscura: an explorer's guide to the world's hidden wonders

Reviewed by Rebecca Bartlett

Foer, Joshua, Morton, Ella and Thuras, Dylan. ***Atlas Obscura: an explorer's guide to the world's hidden wonders***. Workman Publishing Company, 2016. 480p. \$35.00 US. ISBN 978-0761169086.

Atlas Obscura is not an atlas in the traditional sense but, as described in the introduction, "a cabinet of curiosities." The content is derived from the website <http://www.atlasobscura.com>, which was founded in 2009 by Foer and Thuras and currently includes thousands of locations across the globe contributed by a community of users. This book contains more than 600 of those sites organized by continent and country.

With perhaps two dozen maps found throughout its nearly-500 pages – including one entitled Lake Monsters of the USA (p. 368) – this is not the kind of atlas normally found in a post-secondary academic collection. Furthermore, due to the crowdsourced nature of the material, while the authors have made efforts to ensure accuracy there is no real authority or expertise at play. However, the purpose of this book is not academic but "meant to inspire wonderlust as much as wanderlust" (Introduction). *Atlas Obscura* is a book to pore over and meander through, discovering in the process that there are an astonishing number of preserved human body parts on view around the world.

In large part due to its organization by geography and including navigational tips to many of the sights, *Atlas Obscura* functions primarily as a travel guide to bizarre, macabre, natural, and cultural wonders the world over. Each entry is described in a paragraph or two, and along with the expected alphabetical index of locations there is also a special index organized into themes including giant holes, self-built castles dangerous paths, and mummies and bones.

Of particular interest is the Globe Museum in Vienna, which displays over 650 globes (p.24). While this book may not have a natural place in an academic library and its content (and more) can be found on the corresponding website, it is an entertainingly-written book that provides a glimpse into the myriad oddities and marvels found around the world.

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Atlas of Design, Volume Three

Reviewed by Rhys Stevens

Matthews, Sam V. and Elmer, Martin E. (Eds.). ***Atlas of Design, Volume Three***. Milwaukee, WI: North American Cartographic Information Society, 2016. 98p. \$35.00 US.

Prepare to spend several hours poring over the fascinating assortment of maps included in the *Atlas of Design, Volume Three*. This hard-bound atlas contains 32 separate maps selected from amongst hundreds of entries by a team of North American Cartographic Information Society (NACIS) editors "...to spread a variety of the top mapmakers' ideas about what it means to make a good map, and inspire others to follow their lead."

The maps appearing in the atlas primarily originate from either the United States or Europe and are extraordinarily different from one another. Included are maps that have incorporated caricatures, illustrations, 3-D bird's eye views, landscape imagery, transportation routes, infographics and numerous other visualization techniques. There are maps drawn entirely by hand as well as those that have been digitally-produced using the latest cartographic software. In addition, there are maps of underground worlds (cave systems in Kentucky), mythological creatures (monsters appearing in the folklore of the