



## Women in the Material World

*Faith D'Aluisio , Peter Menzel , Naomi Wolf (Foreword)*

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nder the direction of former television producer Faith D'Aluisio, a team of female photojournalists and interviewers was formed to take a closer look at the lives of women on the eve of the 21st century. The rewarding result is a multicultural portrait in words and images that illuminates the hopes, dreams, sorrows, and joys of women around the world. 375 color photos.

## Women in the Material World Details

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Author : Faith D'Aluisio , Peter Menzel , Naomi Wolf (Foreword)

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## **From Reader Review Women in the Material World for online ebook**

### **RachelvlehcaR says**

I love this series of books. It's artwork (photography) in an social anthropology style. I first learned about these books in 1999 and have meant to look at this one. I love how it shows a glimps of what is going on with women across the world, like a snapshot in 1996. It is dated now but it's still a good book to see how far we have come and how far we haven't. Since the focus is just one "average" woman in that country it does makes it limit the process but at the same time it has some amazing stats for the country and what are the hot topics of the women at that time and place in their lives. My favorite parts is when the photographers collect photos of the women all doing something the same to show the different methods. An example would be the task of washing clothes. There are a great deal of women around the world in 1996 washing their clothes in tubs, buckets, or open water. I enjoyed this and would love to see an updated version of this style of books.

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### **Abby Welker says**

A few journalists went out into the world to various countries and found random, everyday women to interview. The stories within this book are FASCINATING, eye-opening, and touching. Each woman shares her brief story and helps shed light on living conditions, cultures, and attitudes of women in the world. I had to wonder how some of them kept going. This is such a good book to have around the house to pick up for a quick 5-minutes of reading here and there because each story is fairly brief. VERY, VERY good book!!!

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### **Jane says**

Fascinating book about the lives and thoughts of a sampling of women around the world. I wish there could be a follow-up book to describe what has happened to these women and their families since it was published in 1996.

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### **Catherine says**

I absolutely loved this book. One of my greatest passions in life is learning about other cultures. I prefer traveling there myself, but this book was the next best thing. I loved the interviews and all the photographs of the families. Loved learning about their daily lives, what they eat, their chores, their families and extended families, education, jobs, etc. The book covers women in 20 countries around the world and their families.

I also enjoyed looking up all the villages on Google Earth, another great passion of mine. LOL!

I wish this company would publish an updated version of this book so we could see how people are living now. The book was from 1996, so I'm sure things have changed quite a bit.

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## **Stacy says**

I loved this book! I did. It was about the lives of women in 20 diverse countries. I found it fascinating and hard to put down. Dave even noticed "Gee, everytime I turn around you're reading that book again" which made me defensive for some odd reason? I feel so blessed (really terribly spoiled) to have the life that I have. I never realized that things like indoor plumbing and electricity were luxuries. The thing I value most from reading this book is my education! So many women are uneducated in this world. I also really liked how it focused on women's issues. The world is changing for the better but it is slow. I must admit that I was a little sad when Hilary Clinton lost against Obama for the Democratic nomination. But it is definitely a major break through for women that she made it so far. Go women!

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## **Prima Seadiva says**

As with the other books in the Material World series this was an enjoyable read. The photographs are quite lovely. I liked seeing the comparisons between cultures and the similarities of problems women face around the world.

I will say that I thought the American family chosen was typical of a rather narrow segment of our country's culture. It would have been interesting to have a second family, less traditional, maybe a single parent family, same gender parents, a family of color, or religion other than Christian.

This narrowness is most likely true of other countries as well especially the really large ones such as China, but I don't have the travel experience to know about those variables.

This book was published in 1996. It would be interesting to see where the families and their members are today. Many of the kids would be adults now.

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## **Jill says**

The photo-journalistic team, Faith D'Aluisio and Peter Menzel, created a beautiful book photographing and interviewing women from 20 different countries. The first person interviews asked the women to share their feelings about family, children, money, love, sex, and marriage. I felt like I was there and met each woman as they shared their hopes, joys and sorrows.

I really enjoyed the sections that compared and contrasted how women of the world experience marriage, laundry, work, education, childcare, hair, food, water and friends. I can't help but look with nothing but gratitude at my laundry machine again!

I was deeply touched by the photo and summary about friends in Ethiopia. A 90 something great grandmother claims her 8 year old great grandson as her best friend. He is somewhat neglected by the other members of his family because of undiagnosed disabilities (form of autism?). He often seeks out his great grandmother for reassurance and friendship!

This book was a wow!

Pictures beautiful!

Interviews stunning!

Message insightful and full of hope (even though also full of real struggle)

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## **Laura says**

This book is great! It takes an in-depth look at the women from 'The Material World' and looks at their lives in the context of their family, culture and society. It was incredibly interesting to see how each of these statistically 'average' women live - it was very clear there isn't any 'average' in any of them!

This is the earliest collaboration I've found between Menzel and D'Aluisio where you really feel her influence - the book is a lot less choppy than 'The Material World' and I feel that's because she edited more cohesively. There are some beautiful pictures, and it was also interesting to see how the women's lives had progressed since 'The Material World' - there were two years between the books. The only downside of this book is its age - it was published in 1996, so again - the political climate in many of these countries would have changed significantly. I'd love a follow-up, to see where these women are now.

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## **Liralen says**

When I was in college, one of the exhibits in the on-campus museum was called Global Feminisms: the exhibit curators had gone to various countries around the world and chosen pieces that they believed represented feminism.

Mull on that for a moment: *pieces that they believed represented feminism*.

There were some truly cool pieces -- Tracey Moffatt's *Love* comes to mind, or Ingrid Mwangi's *Static Drift* -- but I couldn't shake the suspicion that not all of the artists would have considered their work feminist, that the exhibit had been constructed (and was being viewed) through a distinctly North American lens.

And that's where this book loses me a little. On the one hand, it's great to see the women in Material World: A Global Family Portrait given more of a voice. On the other hand, the questions are so leading in places, and some of the women seem so uncomfortable, that it's hard to tell how accurate a picture we're getting. Only one woman, I think, openly expresses dissatisfaction with her life. Maybe all of the other women are truly happy (how would I know otherwise?), but I wonder whether it would have been a more varied collection -- or whether particular themes would have arisen -- if the questions had been less pointed.

I actually wish they'd selected different women for this book, using the same criteria as for Material World: statistical averages. Is a statistically average woman in the same position as a woman in a statistically average family? I suspect that they returned to these families for the sake of ease -- because, in many cases, it was easier to get the okay from husbands or boyfriends who were familiar with Material World -- but in places it felt like a retread of what was covered in the previous book.

Still an interesting read, though, and another one of those books where it would be particularly interesting to see how things have changed between the book's publication and now.

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## **Viktoria says**

it was quite unexpected when I read it years ago ...

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### **Amber says**

This book is why the printed hard copy book will never disappear. Great photographs and reporting of the different countries and lives of women working, mothering, and home keeping in an ever-changing world.

I really admired the matter-of-factness of the women whose lives I thought would be the hardest. Very practical women even though they may not be educated or have easy sources of clean water. Also, the women who had knowledge and skills such as animal husbandry, gardening, and sewing were really impressive.

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### **Jayla Johnson says**

Very eye-opening, and makes me feel incredibly lucky with all I have!

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### **Mauri says**

Excellent.

I find it interesting that I can view the lives of these women with little to no prejudice about their decisions or circumstances (save for the families who keep going on about how they want to send their daughters to school, but admit that they actually never will), but the family from the United States makes me itch. Maybe it's because the families selected are supposed to be "average" and this family is so ideologically different from mine that I squirm at the thought of someone assuming all Americans are like them.

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### **Mary Robinson says**

This book is a day in the life portrait of individual women in 20 countries. Thank you Beth for recommending this book to me – I was fascinated, amazed and moved by the courage, caring and perseverance of these women, most of whom live in difficult situations with very few resources. Two of the things that stood out for me were how very poor most of the world is and how amazingly lucky we are to have all that we do. And one of the greatest gifts we have is the ability to stay in school. Almost all of these women wished they could have gone to school longer (only a few had any college or even high school), but they had to drop out for economic and/or cultural reasons (for example, girls don't need much school).

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### **Lori says**

I found it very interesting to learn about how women in other countries live. The stories, conducted as interviews and supplemented with wonderful photographs, are mostly about women living in 2nd and 3rd world countries. All are married and have children and live pretty much where they were born, so their

"material world" as well as their physical world is much smaller than what the average reader experiences. For many, even the ones in more affluent locales, life is a struggle, but it was encouraging to read that not all are unhappy with their lives.

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