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Things Come Apart: A Teardown Manual For Modern Living



Synopsis

Inspiring and unique photographs capture mechanical and electronic objects of past and present in a dismantled, meticulously arranged form. Welcome to Todd McLellan's unique photographic vision of the material world: fifty design classics are arranged first by size and then by intricacy and are beautifully displayed, piece by piece, exploding in midair and dissected in real-time, frame-by-frame video stills. This book makes visible the inner workings of some of the world's most iconic designs. From SLR camera to mantel clock to espresso machine, from iPad to bicycle to grand piano, every single component of each object is revealed. These disassembled objects show that even the most intricate of modern technologies can be broken down and understood, while beautifully illustrating the quality and elegance of older designs. Stunning photography is interspersed with essays by notable figures from the worlds of restoration, DIY, and design innovation who discuss historical examples of teardowns, disassembly, and reverse-engineering. Each photograph is itself a work of art and offers a reinterpretation of our familiar world. They connect people with the child-like joy of taking something apart to see how it works and will appeal to anyone with a curiosity about the material world. 181 color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fascinating look at just what is inside everyday objects and what surprised me was just how many bits there are when they carefully laid out and photographed from above in one of Todd McLellan's

shots. A nice touch was keeping a running total of all the pieces: a 1982 Walkman has 370; 2007 Blackberry 120; 1960 blender 147; 1970 sewing machine 482; 1980 bike 893. Oddly cameras seem to have a very similar number of components: 1973 SLR has 576; 2012 digital SLR 580; 2005 digital video camera 558. Admittedly all these totals do include every washer, nut, and bolt. Most of the products were hand-holdable except for three, a bike, piano and a Zenith two-seater light aircraft (the CH-650 with 7580 pieces) this was photographed in the company hangar and shown over three pages with a fold-out. Take the book apart and you'll find it's in three sections. First the fifty products were disassembled and laid out in a precise and formal way, photographed and then a second shot, taken with strobe lighting, as all the pieces were dropped from a platform in the studio to create a free-fall photo of parts and the complete opposite of the other photo. Actually McLellan says he had more success creating these second images by dropping them in groups and using software to combine the photos. The third part of the book and the weakest in my view, are four essays looking at tech innovation, restoration, online repairs and product disassembly. These short essays are interesting enough but I thought they were rather out of place in a strongly visual book of products in pieces. They really should have had some photos, too. Penny Bendall, a ceramics conservator, discusses how she repairs broken ceramics: a valuable antique vase or figurines.

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