



## Soil and Culture

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SOIL: beneath our feet / food and fiber / ashes to ashes, dust to dust / dirt! Soil has been called the final frontier of environmental research. The critical role of soil in biogeochemical processes is tied to its properties and place—porous, structured, and spatially variable, it serves as a conduit, buffer, and transformer of water, solutes and gases. Yet what is complex, life-giving, and sacred to some, is ordinary, even ugly, to others. This is the enigma that is soil.

Soil and Culture explores the perception of soil in ancient, traditional, and modern societies. It looks at the visual arts (painting, textiles, sculpture, architecture, film, comics and stamps), prose & poetry, religion, philosophy, anthropology, archaeology, wine production, health & diet, and disease & warfare.

Soil and Culture explores high culture and popular culture—from the paintings of Hieronymus Bosch to the films of Steve McQueen. It looks at ancient societies and contemporary artists. Contributors from a variety of disciplines delve into the mind of Carl Jung and the bellies of soil eaters, and explore Chinese paintings, African mud cloths, Mayan rituals, Japanese films, French comic strips, and Russian poetry.

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