

Material thinking

Saturday 25 April 2009, by [quattrolibri](#)

We are screening the movie [NOUS RESTERONS SUR TERRE](#) on May 13th in [Paris](#). [Contact us](#) for details if you want to attend.



This movie is the result of four years of dedicated film making, with stunning images shot around the world. The photography, editing and musical score will catch your imagination, hold your breath.





Praise to the content.

The film consists of video sequences shot around the world, both of nature and human life, showing growth, extraction, transformation and their effect. The sequences are “raw” footages, with music as their only commentary.

The sequences are interspersed with interviews with wise men and women:

Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel peace prize laureate (first African and first environmentalist to receive the award), whose autobiography recounts how she helped replant one million trees in Kenya.

Mikhail Gorbachev, 1990 Nobel peace prize laureate, founder of the Green Cross International organisation

James Lovelock, British scientist, fellow of the Royal Society, author of the GAIA hypothesis

Edgar Morin, thinker and philosopher, author of La Methode, who pioneered the structural analysis of complex interdependent systems (a necessary pattern when dealing with Climate Change).

Praise to the beauty of the film.

We need facts, we also need visual help in understanding the magnitude of the

facts. The film echoes the series “running the numbers” by [Chris Jordan](#) (previously mentioned here). When we invited Chris Jordan to present his work in Paris on November 4th, he was adamant that his work should provide a mirror of our consumption patterns.

Should the mirror be pretty? This question has its roots in our [childhood books](#), and each of us may form a different opinion. I value the aesthetics of the “mirror effect”. If the movie, the picture is a beautiful object in itself, you may consider it for its own good, and then have access to the underlying message. Beauty may well lift our mental barriers, when we instinctively dismiss unwanted images, angst ridden news, uncomfortable facts.

Praise to the method.

Should the mirror be a cristal ball? Should the movie provide solutions? I don't think it should.

We still haven't crossed the first step: information, analysis, understanding. There is still an immense task at hand in mobilising the public, in facing up with the facts. I don't think we should stop acting on solutions, but it's worth thinking about the magnitude of the problem, of the intricacies of the symptoms, about individual and collective responsibility.

As such, I chose to see the movie as a toolkit, where the film acts as the pretext for debating and engaging with the underlying issues, where the film leaves each viewer with the responsibility to choose what to do when confronted with the issues.

Related thinking material.

Meanwhile, here is some “material thinking” in relation to the movie.

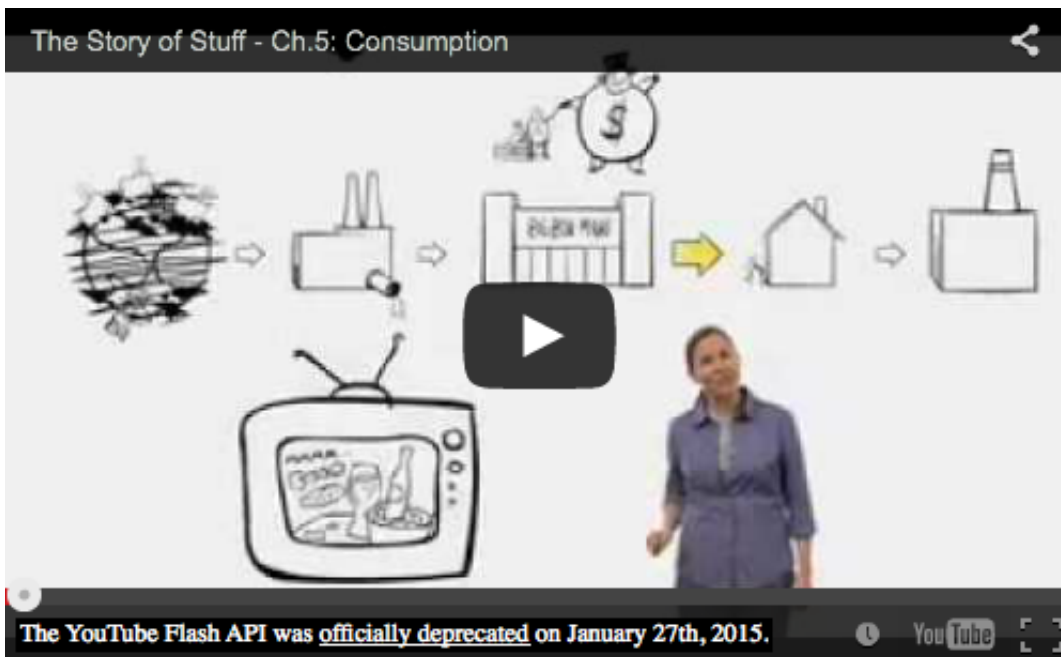
The history of stuff has been published in 2007 by [Annie Leonard](#). The 20 minute feature is a useful companion to the movie. It details the mechanics behind the scenes, it breaks down the chain of material consumption, from extraction through transformation, distribution, consumption and disposal.

Only one percent of the total North American materials flow ends up in, and is still being used within, products six months after their sale.

It offers [background data](#) to support the analysis and illustrates an alternative system, moving away from a linear economy to a [circular economy](#).

Take a plunge, enjoy the animations, feed on the facts, muse on the possibilities...

6 minute extract:



Full version [here](#).

Credits and thanks:

Thomas Sorrentino, [Le Comptoir Général](#)

Olivier Duverdier, Françoise Auberger, [Nous Resterons Sur Terre](#)

Annie Leonard, [The History of Stuff](#)

