



James Howard Kunstler

Urban Planning Expert | Social Critic | Author | Journalist

James Howard Kunstler had written seven novels and countless articles and essays when the scene outside his window, on his street—on most of the cities and streets in America—caught his attention. “...the tragic landscape of highway strips, parking lots, housing tracts, mega-malls, junked cities, and ravaged countryside that makes up the everyday environment where most Americans live and work.”

Stunned by the pervasiveness of this all-fronts assault, he wrote his first critique of American architecture and urban planning, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America’s Man-made Landscape* (1993). *Geography* earned much attention and praise, launching him into the spotlight as a commentator on America’s hapless urban planning. “Kunstler provides an accessible overview that’s all the more interesting



and effective for his frankly expressed and all-enveloping viewpoint” (*Kirkus Reviews*).

In characteristic fashion, Kunstler makes what has almost become a cliché about our wasted landscape, actually *matter*. “A land full of places that are not worth caring about will soon be a nation and a way of life that is not worth defending.” Reminding us that we, in fact *are* where we live, he says, “The future will require us to build better places, or the future will belong to other people in other societies.”

Kunstler’s years of writing novels and articles for a variety of publications, including *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times*, and *Atlantic Monthly*, developed in him a provocative, entertaining voice, a critical eye and the good sense to write from passion. This is true in person as much as it is in print.

The *Christian Science Monitor* noted, “Disturbing others’ sense of normality is something Kunstler does well...everyone who knows his work acknowledges his power to wake up a crowd.” A masterful rhetorician, Kunstler hit a nerve and has been deftly carrying this message—and a host of others—to audiences ever since.

He followed *Geography* with *Home from Nowhere: Remaking Our Everyday World for the Twenty-First Century* in 1996. Mike Weilbacher of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* described it as a “deliciously wicked over-the-top nonfiction romp across the tortured terrain of suburban America. This

Like the better cities he describes Kunstler’s literary territory is dazzlingly multifarious, frequently infuriating—and quite often exhilarating.

David Goldberg
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Provocative and entertaining.

Michiko Kakutani
The New York Times

Contributes to a discussion our society must hold if we are to shape our world as it continues to change at a dizzying pace.

James G. Garrison
The Christian Science Monitor

A wonderfully entertaining useful and provocative account of the ravaging of the American environment by the auto, suburban developers, purblind zoning and corporate pirates.

Robert Taylor
Boston Globe

In this spirited, irreverent critique, Kunstler spares none of the culprits that have conspired in the name of the American Dream to turn the U.S. landscape from a haven of the civic ideal into a nightmare of crass commercial production and consumption.

Library Journal

book is a wonderful whack-on-the-side-of-the-head to an increasingly complacent country bent on turning everywhere into Nowhere.”

The City in Mind: Meditations on the Urban Condition (2001) is Kunstler’s third book in this urban-planning trilogy. In it he examines eight cities—Paris, Atlanta, Mexico City, Berlin, Las Vegas, Rome, Boston and London—discussing the ways in which their design and architecture have shaped their cultures and successes.

Now training his eye on the oil crisis, Kunstler’s most recent nonfiction book, *The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of the Oil Age, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-first Century* (2005), expands on his past work on sprawl and automobile culture by exploring the sweeping economic, political and social changes that will result from the end of access to cheap fossil fuels.

Writing in *American Scientist*, Rutgers University biology professor David Ehrenfeld notes, “What sets *The Long Emergency* apart from numerous other books on this theme is its comprehensive sweep—its powerful integration of science, technology, economics, finance, international politics and social change—along with a fascinating attempt to peer into a chaotic future. And Kunstler is such a compelling, fast-paced and sometimes eloquent writer that the book is hard to put down...Kunstler, like George Orwell, understands that being honest about the past and present is the only way to prepare ourselves for an uncertain future.”

A seasoned journalist, he continues to write for *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Slate.com*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New York Times Sunday Magazine* and the Op-Ed page where he often covers environmental and economic issues. Mr. Kunstler has lectured extensively about urban design, energy issues and new economies for the TED Conference, the American Institute of Architects, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the International Council of Shopping Centers, the National Association of Science and Technology and other professional organizations as well as at numerous colleges and universities, including Yale, MIT, Harvard, Cornell, University of Illinois, DePaul, Texas A & M, West Point, and Rutgers University among many others.

Kunstler aptly describes his lectures as “stand-up comedy with some dark moments.” His audience knows he is dependably acerbic, witty, well-read and exceedingly alert, drawing from a tremendous store of hard facts and idealism that ends on a good note: Well-earned and reasoned hope.

Selected Nonfiction and Fiction Books

- *The Witch of Hebron* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2010)
- *The World Made by Hand* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2008)
- *The Long Emergency: Surviving the End of the Oil Age, Climate Change, and Other Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-first Century* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005)
- *Maggie Darling: A Novel* (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004)
- *The City in Mind: Meditations on the Urban Condition* (Free Press, 2001)
- *Home from Nowhere: Remaking Our Everyday World for the Twenty-first Century* (Simon & Schuster, 1996)
- *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-made Landscape* (Simon & Schuster, 1993)

For more information about James Howard Kunstler and his work, please visit www.kunstler.com and www.lyceumagency.com.

