



# The Book of Circles: Visualizing Spheres of Knowledge

By Manuel Lima

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## The Book of Circles: Visualizing Spheres of Knowledge By Manuel Lima

In this follow-up to his hugely popular *The Book of Trees* and *Visual Complexity*, Manuel Lima takes us on a lively tour through millennia of circular information design. Three hundred detailed and colorful illustrations from around the world cover an encyclopedic array of subjects--architecture, urban planning, fine art, design, fashion, technology, religion, cartography, biology, astronomy, and physics, all based on the circle, the universal symbol of unity, perfection, movement, and infinity.

*The Book of Circles* juxtaposes clay trading tokens used by the ancient Sumerians with the iconic logos of twentieth-century corporations, a chart organizing seven hundred Nintendo offerings with a Victorian board game based on the travels of Nellie Bly, and a visual analysis of Stanley Kubrick's film *The Shining* with early celestial charts that placed the earth at the center of the universe, among a wealth of other elegant and intriguing methods for displaying information.

Lima provides an authoritative history of the circle as well as a unique taxonomy of twenty-one varieties of circle diagrams, rounding out this visual feast for infographics enthusiasts.

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## The Book of Circles: Visualizing Spheres of Knowledge By Manuel Lima Bibliography

- Rank: #70904 in Books
- Brand: Lima Manuel
- Published on: 2017-05-02
- Released on: 2017-05-02
- Original language: English
- Dimensions: 10.75" h x 1.00" w x 8.75" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 272 pages

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

"It's a ravishing tour [...] Puts circular thinking in a whole new light." - Nature

"The Book of Circles is a thorough taxonomy of circular infographics, but it's also a deep dive into the psychology behind the shape's enduring appeal." - WIRED

"images form a compelling argument about just how ingrained the circle is in the human mind and Lima gives some compelling explanations for it." - Fast Company

"Manuel Lima has collected a huge variety of circular artworks, infographics and illustrations from across history." - The Guardian

"A new book of illustrations celebrates the beauty and versatility of circles. [...] Lima explains why we're so attracted to this most simple of shapes." - BBC Focus Magazine

"If there is a universal building, block it's probably round. In The Book of Circles, data visualization designer Manuel Lima shows how the circle has shaped human cognition." - Surface Magazine

"[The Book of Circles] explores information design in the form of circles - from 18th-century musical scores to photographs of Jupiter." - The Guardian

"Why do we find circles so beautiful? A new book of illustrations celebrates the beauty and versatility of circles. Author and designer Manuel Lima explains why we're so attracted to this most simple of shapes." - BBC Focus

"A richly illustrated compendium probes the colorful history of the circle. Lima's aim is not so much to tell this history as to show it. And, by all accounts, he succeeds. The Book of Circles is, above all, a wide-ranging exploration of an elemental shape in its guises as a form, symbol, motif, and more. The book joins Lima's previous work, The Book of Trees, as an important study of one of our most human of impulses: to give abstractions visible form. This ancient and universal impulse will no doubt continue in perpetuity. We can hope that so, too, will insightful efforts-like Lima's-to document and understand it." - Science Magazine

"Why are we so surrounded by these rounded figures? Author Manuel Lima seeks to answer this question and more with The Book of Circles: Visualizing Spheres of Knowledge, which delves deeply into circular information design." - Print Magazine

"The humble circle gets its due in this visual study by designer Manuel Lima (The Book of Trees: Visualizing Branches of Knowledge), who specializes in the visualization of data." - Publisher's Weekly

"The human iris, a full Moon, volcanic calderas: natural circles have inspired culture for millennia. Information visualizer Manuel Lima gathered centuries' worth of circular charts, graphics and illustrations for this volume, organized in a 'taxonomy' spanning everything from spirals to pies. It's a ravishing tour, from the spangled glory of globular star cluster M13, imaged by the Hubble Space Telescope, to Martin Krzywinski's bold 2007 radial genomics diagram Human-Dog Homology. Puts circular thinking in a whole

new light." - Nature Magazine

"The Book of Circles: Visualizing Spheres of Knowledge is a compendium of circular infographics and designs created throughout centuries." - Mental Floss

"Manuel Lima's The Book of Circles explores centuries of circular visual expression, from representations of infinity to maps of the stars." - Hyperallergic

"Like its predecessor, this is a beautifully produced book with amazing illustrations. This book will be invaluable for those studying or interested in graphic design, information design, statistics, or data visualization. As Creativity magazine predicted in 2009, Lima is quickly taking his place next to Edward Tufte-author of, among other titles, Envisioning Information and Beautiful Evidence (2006)-as a high priest of the diagram. Summing Up: Essential. All readers." - Choice magazine

"In his new book, The Book of Circles, Manuel Lima investigates how the shape has been employed throughout the ages. Like his first book, Circles is a thorough taxonomy of circular infographics, but it's also a deep dive into the psychology behind the shape's enduring appeal." - Wired

"In a new book called The Book of Circles, the data designer Manuel Lima looks to history and evolutionary science to explain why people like circles so much, using his research to create a taxonomy of approximately 300 images of circles that date from thousands of years ago up to the present day. The images themselves form a compelling argument about just how ingrained the circle is in the human mind--and Lima gives some compelling explanations for it." - Fast Co. Design

#### About the Author

A Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and praised by Wired Magazine "as the man who turned data into art", Manuel Lima is the founder of VisualComplexity.com, Design Lead at Google, and a regular teacher of data visualization at Parsons School of Design as well as a frequent speaker at universities and events worldwide.

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