This is an amazing volume with tons of great information on the emerging field of molecular aesthetics. As editor Peter Weibel wrote: the pioneering work in this book “illustrates the transition from the aesthetics of product-based industrial Modernism to that of postindustrial service-based Second Modernism or Postmodernism and, further, to the aesthetics of the knowledge-based Third Revolution.” Molecular aesthetics originates from our ever-increasing knowledge of and the ability to manipulate the invisible
molecular world.

The book consists of 17 beautifully illustrated essays written by artists, philosophers, scholars, and scientists, most of them from a symposium held at ZKM | Center of Art and Media in Karlsruhe in 2011. However, a few essays were collected from other sources like “Molecular Beauty” by Noble laureate Roald Hoffmann. Besides these essays, there are also 33 visually-stunning displays of works by artists working at the intersection of art and science. Because of my personal background, I am happy to found works I am familiar with, such as those by Irving Geis, David Goodsell, and Drew Berry. But it is so exciting to see some amazing works I have never seen before. Very inspiring!

In the beginning of the book, there is a short section called “23 Molecules that Changed the World”, which was adapted from a 3D interactive installation at ZKM | Media Museum by Ljiljana Fruk and Bernd Lintermann. The print version uses stereoscopic images and a 3D glass is provided together with the book, so that you can really see these molecules in 3D.

I highly recommend this book. If you are new to Molecule Aesthetics, you will learn a lot! If you already have some experience of the field, I am sure you will find a lot of new information and inspiration from this book. Finally, I am happy that MIT press sets a reasonable price for this 480 pages full-color book.