



Taking Measures Across the American Landscape

By James Corner

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Taking Measures Across the American Landscape By James Corner

Only in the past century have Americans been able to see their country from the air, to view its majestic natural and manmade topography and muse how it came to look the way it does. Landscape architect James Corner and aerial photographer Alex MacLean now present breathtaking photographs, exquisite map-drawings, and thoughtful essays that record their flights across the continental United States and express their growing understanding of the way the American landscape has been forged by various cultures in the past and what the possibilities are for its future design.

The book traces the influence on the American landscape of the Anasazi and the Hopi in the southwest, the French along the Mississippi, the British in the east, the pioneer Americans across the plains, and the technological society across much of modern-day America. It investigates the ways in which landscape representation--particularly aerial vision--not only reflects a given reality but also constitutes a way of seeing and acting in the world. It discusses the many meanings of measure--from practical (such as solar furnaces in California) to poetic (such as raised tablets in Illinois that once formed the structure of an ancient city). And it suggests alternative possibilities for planning and taking future measures in our environment, building upon examples that range from the rectilinear survey landscape to the great transportation networks and such technological innovations as windmill fields, pivot-irrigation systems, and radio-telescope installations.

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Taking Measures Across the American Landscape By James Corner Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This book gives the impression of being handcrafted, as if each copy were its own special volume. It is a loving appreciation of the land, space, and forms that architects, builders, road crews, and farmers have added to the America that can be seen from above. Corner (landscape architecture and regional planning, Univ. of Pennsylvania) has contributed the essays and commentary that give the book its flow. His drawings are the work of a keen imagination capable of startling points of view. But it is MacLean's aerial photography that forms this beautiful volume, giving heart and light to the land and all that is upon it. The dignity of Iowa farms, the quilted surface of agriculture in North Dakota, and the amazing markings in the Mojave somehow merge to give a sense of a sculpted nation waiting for MacLean to fly over it at low altitude to photograph and glorify. This is a work of pure aesthetics, with some prose to hook it all together, but it will be visually thrilling to library browsers. Highly recommended. David Bryant, New Canaan P.L., Ct.

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From Kirkus Reviews

How we represent the land to ourselves affects the ways in which we value and act upon it, according to landscape architect Corner (Univ. of Pennsylvania). His text accompanies the beautifully suggestive aerial photographs of MacLean (whose previous book was *Look at the Land*), which document the ways in which we impose shape and meaning on our landscape: Irrigated fields contrast sharply with the surrounding desert; old homesteads, now abandoned, anchored people in an undifferentiated and dangerous landscape--their isolation from one another reflecting American individualism; and wheat fields follow the rolling contours of the land. "Revealed is the absurd and magnificent ingenuity of American people," Corner writes, "a people enmeshed with yet remote from their land." -- Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

Review

"Whatever way you look at it, the collaboration of landscape architect James Corner and Alex S. MacLean measures up." -- *Globe and Mail*

Users Review

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