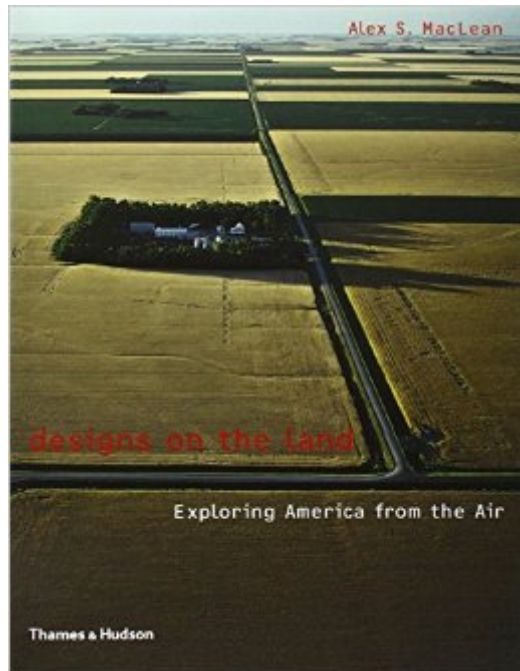


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Designs On The Land: Exploring America From The Air



Synopsis

"Mesmerizing....Look long enough and the obsession of photographer-pilot MacLean begins to resemble genius." —Los Angeles Times

The tradition of aerial photography arose from a keen nineteenth-century desire to see "the world in motion." Starting with Nadar's photographic balloon trips, airborne experimentation with landscapes and cityscapes continued through great photographers from Steichen to Burkhardt. With Alex MacLean, we enter a different world. For thirty years, this committed photographer has portrayed the history and evolution of the American land, from great desert spaces to agricultural patterns to city grids. A trained architect who is closely involved in landscape heritage protection issues, MacLean has set out to create a series of pictures that show and explain the universal history of town and countryside. What he has to say may be invigorating or alarming, but it always raises the issue of the landscape's future. This new collection of exemplary photographs taken across the American landscape reflects MacLean's passionate interest in the effects of time, geological movements, shifting landscapes, redeployment, pollution, urban sprawl, and the overlapping of surfaces and activities. More than 400 color photographs reveal in a unique way the physical splendor of America: both the beauty of the ongoing inhabiting of the land and the potential for modern planning to create spectacular environments. 400+ full-color photographs

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Alex S. MacLean is an architectural geologist with an impressionist's eye for composition and light.

He is a pilot and a gifted photographer as well. The consistently fascinating imagery he has created by fusing all these talents into a rigorous and aesthetically gorgeous body of work is on splendid display within the pages of *Designs On The Land* which ably demonstrates how uniquely important an aerial vertex is to a complete understanding of human interaction with the planet Earth. I recently drove thousands of miles through the high desert southwest and had a marvelous opportunity to appreciate that landscape from a mostly horizontal vertex. What a revelation to see the same tableaux from above! So much that is only hinted at at ground level reveals itself completely from above. The central thesis of *Designs On The Land* is that human transformation of the environment is among the most revealing indicators of man's developmental and evolutionary status. By extension, aerial views of the results of man's activities on the land provide a powerful tool for interpreting and understanding this interaction. As with any authentic synthesis, *Designs On The Land* functions on many levels simultaneously. Most significantly, the images presented in this critically important portfolio are simply beautiful and moving; both compositionally and as sophisticated studies in shadow, light and color. But aside from the captivating imagery, this volume contains a wealth of data that provide for informed consideration of land use protocols, environmental degradation and pollution, and the shifting utilization of land over time, to name but a few of topics taken up here.

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