



Flights of Imagination: Aviation, Landscape, Design

Sonja Dümpelmann

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In much the same way that views of the earth from the Apollo missions in the late 1960s and early 1970s led indirectly to the inauguration of Earth Day and the modern environmental movement, the dawn of aviation ushered in a radically new way for architects, landscape designers, urban planners, geographers, and archaeologists to look at cities and landscapes. As icons of modernity, airports facilitated the development of a global economy during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, reshaping the way people thought about the world around them. Professionals of the built environment awoke to the possibilities offered by the airports themselves as sites of design and by the electrifying new aerial perspective on landscape.

In *Flights of Imagination*, Sonja Dümpelmann follows the evolution of airports from their conceptualization as landscapes and cities to modern-day plans to turn decommissioned airports into public urban parks. The author discusses landscape design and planning activities that were motivated, legitimized, and facilitated by the aerial view. She also shows how viewing the earth from above redirected attention to bodily experience on the ground and illustrates how design professionals understood the aerial view as simultaneously abstract and experiential, detailed and contextual, harmful and essential. Along the way, Dümpelmann traces this multiple dialectic from the 1920s to the land-camouflage activities during World War II, and from the environmental and landscape planning initiatives of the 1960s through today.

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