



Dam (Objekt)

Trevor Turpin

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As well as much-needed electricity, dams generate extremes of emotion. Traditionally, dams have facilitated hydraulic civilizations such as those in the Nile Valley, China and Mesopotamia, and, in the twentieth century, Las Vegas and Los Angeles. Yet with the proliferation of dams – there are now more than 40,000 large dams worldwide – opposition and support can be measured in equal proportion. Their outstanding design and construction, often in inhospitable conditions, is representative of the skills of their engineers, yet others do not see such beauty in the ‘taming’ of rivers. In 1998 the continuing controversy led to the forming of the World Commission on Dams to seek a meeting of minds.

Dam, a new addition to Reaktion’s Objekt series, traces the development of dams from the Industrial Revolution to the present day through a number of themes – both successes and failures – including the extension of the design teams forming an alliance between engineering, architecture, landscape architecture and ecology.

A profusely illustrated exploration of a previously neglected subject, this book is neither a polemic against dams nor a defence of their proliferation. It offers a fresh and much-needed account of their design, construction and function, which will appeal to general readers and those interested in environmental policy, history and civil engineering.

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