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David Taylor: Monuments



Synopsis

In 2007, Arizona artist David Taylor began photographing the monuments that mark the border between Mexico and the United States, aiming to document each of the 276 obelisks installed by the International Boundary Commission following the Mexican/American War. Taylor's documentation is reflective of a survey conducted by the photographer D.R. Payne between 1891 and 1895 under the auspices of the Boundary Commission (now the International Boundary and Water Commission or IBWC). While many people have photographed the border, there has been no full documentation of the monuments in more than 100 years. This volume combines Taylor's series with texts by curator Claire Carter and cultural geographer Daniel Arreola, humanizing a zone in transition in the wake of drug smuggling, immigration debates and a post-9/11 security climate. *Monuments* exists as a typology, the incongruous obelisks acting as witness to a shifting national identity as expressed through an altered physical terrain.

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Customer Reviews

wonderful huge large format assembly of photographs of each border marker within its geographical and geo-political context, embracing the surrounding desert and hills, and security measures. I live along this line and wonder fiercely how Photographer Taylor acquired clearance to do this work nearly ten years ago. I also admire greatly his equipment, clearly large format, and keen vision for discerning the best possible perspective for each of the well over 250 monuments, from El Paso to the sandy shores of Tijuana. An artistic marvel which fully informs us not only through the vision of

the monuments "in situ" but gathers a great deal of documentary artifacts, including attachments of the original facsimile "blueprint" brochures of the designs of the original monuments set up to establish territorial lines (still in dispute) shortly after the Mexican-American war in the antebellum age. I find the first hand interview with the master photographer himself most revealing, while enjoying as well the long supplemental essays other authors and historians, placing the political meaning of these monuments even more fully in context. The Nevada Museum of Art through Radius Books truly offers us at a time when this same border is presented as requiring even greater walling than that fully on display herein, a clear and complete and breathtaking vista of the borderland from El Paso through Tijuana's shore. While apparently static images, they come effused with the tensions of these lands, and often the presence of Border Patrol vehicles and personnel, and the mighty, impassable iron walls.

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