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## Book Review: Discovering Lewis and Clark from the Air

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likely included in this largely aesthetic tracing of the medium's history as an illustration of the visual power potentially available in images made from the air.

*Discovering Lewis and Clark from the Air* presents the writings of author Joseph Mussulman and the aerial imagery of photographer Jim Wark as a collaborative view of the 1804 expedition often cited as instrumental in "opening" the western portion of the North American continent. The book is divided into five sections and contains 108 written passages, with information drawn liberally from the journals kept by Lewis, Clark, and other members of their exploration team, to describe experiences of these historical figures. Each account is illustrated by a richly reproduced contemporary aerial photograph in color of locations found along the expedition trail that serve as settings for the writings. The combination of text, maps, and photographs creates twenty-first-century views of nineteenth-century places and events, forming a unique visual and literary experience.

Most, if not all, aerial photographs share a capacity to reveal recognizable, even ordinary landscapes in a new and unexpected manner. In Jim Wark's pictures, the terrain of legend and history—places we have read about in numerous accounts of the journey of Lewis and Clark—is revealed from a fresh perspective. When assessed from a primarily aesthetic point of view, the pictures do not convey a sense of the conceptual or structural complexity found in some contemporary photography employing aerial methods (the works of Terry Evans, Marilyn Bridges, and Emmet Gowin come to mind), but nonetheless serve to illustrate the text in a fresh and consistently engaging manner.

Certainly, substantial amounts have already been written about Lewis and Clark's journey, much of it from points of view that are scientific, geographical, political, or sociological in nature. *Discovering Lewis and Clark from the Air* adds to this body of information with anecdotal discourse that reaffirms the expedition's struggles and accomplishments accompanied

*Discovering Lewis and Clark from the Air.* Photography by Jim Wark. Text by Joseph A. Mussulman. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2004. ix + 261 pp. Maps, photographs, recommended reading, index. \$40.00 cloth, \$24.00 paper.

When acclaimed photo historian Beaumont Newhall published the fourth edition of *The History of Photography* in 1964, he included (in a chapter titled "The Quest of Form") an aerial photograph, made by a Royal Air Force photographer, that showed German forces plowing up a Libyan airfield to render it useless for advancing allied forces. This strange, abstract image, consisting largely of linear plowed patterns, though by no means the first example of a photograph made from an airplane, was most

by photographic work that provides a new view of the subject. I recommend the book to readers interested in further expanding their historical interests in Lewis and Clark, as well as to those seeking a type of imagery that will yield a physical perspective that in some instances, such as the image in the "Familiar Ground" section made near Logan, Iowa, border on the profound.

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