



## Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape

*By Anuradha Mathur, Professor Dilip da Cunha*

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**Mississippi Floods: Designing a Shifting Landscape** By Anuradha Mathur, Professor Dilip da Cunha

Each time the waters of the mighty Mississippi river overflow their banks, questions arise anew about the battle between 'man' and 'river'. How can we prevent floods and the damage they inflict while maintaining navigational potential and protecting the river's ecology? The design of the Mississippi and how it should proceed has long been a subject of controversy. What is missing from the discussion, say the authors of this extraordinary book, is an understanding of the representations of the Mississippi river. Landscape architect Anuradha Mathur and architect/planner Dilip da Cunha draw together an array of perspectives on the river and show how these different images have played a role in the process of designing and containing the river landscape. Analysing maps, hydrographs, working models, drawings, photographs, government and media reports, paintings, and even folklore, Mathur and da Cunha consider what these representations of the river portray, what they leave out, and why that might be. With gorgeous original silk screen prints and a fine selection of maps, the book joins historic, scientific, engineering, and natural views of the river to create an entirely new portrait of the great Mississippi.

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

While exploring the Mississippi by towboat, flying over its mouth, and hiking its levees, Mathur (landscape architecture, Univ. of Pennsylvania) and da Cunha (fine arts, Univ. of Pennsylvania and Parsons School of Design) encountered a range of opinions on how the river should be handled. In this beautiful working document, they seek common ground among the conflicting interests of flood control, navigation, ecology, and environmental protection. Through essays and original works of art, the lower Mississippi is portrayed as a dynamic, living phenomenon, especially in a landscape of flood. The gorgeous prints, drawings, paintings, and collages make this a book to treasure, while the hydrographs, models, maps, photographs, and enlargements of design elements will interest engineers, policy makers, and residents, as well as historians and armchair travelers. The authors hope that the book will lead to a public project to rethink the present ideological constructions of the lower Mississippi. Despite the need for a magnifying glass to appreciate many of the images, this book is highly recommended for academic and public libraries. Margaret Aycock, Gulf Coast Environmental Lib., Beaumont, TX  
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### Review

"A verbally and visually layered symphonic poem to the unimaginable force the river embodies both geographically and in our hearts." -- *Fredric Koeppe, Commercial Appeal*

"[A] beautiful working document... The gorgeous prints, drawings, paintings, and collages make [Mississippi Floods] a book to treasure." -- *Margaret Aycock, Library Journal*

[The authors] tell America's history with the river [using]. . . silk-screen prints, . . . artwork, photographs and antique maps. . . [of] undeniable beauty. -- *American Scientist*

### About the Author

Anuradha Mathur is assistant professor in the department of landscape architecture and regional planning at the University of Pennsylvania. Dilip da Cunha is lecturer at the Graduate School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania, and the department of architecture, Parsons School of Design.

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#### Daniel Soderquist:

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