

Project

The Heritage of Water in Lusatia: Lakes and Rivers as Technoscientific Objects

For several decades now, the largest artificial lake landscape in Germany has been emerging from the coal mining landscape of Lusatia. In this region, coal mining is not only a phenomenon of the 20th century, but has a long lasting tradition that goes back to the 18th century and more. Many currently visible smaller and larger lakes are a direct result of these mining activities. Water can take on very different meanings in the context of these landscape changes and also in mining technology itself. It is used for purification and transport, it can become a hazard, it is a resource for drinking and industrial water, it is added to, removed from and transferred to other states and geo-cultural environments. Accordingly, water is crammed with different meanings and codes and loaded with cultural and natural heritage references. What would be an adequate description of the natural and culture heritage with respect to the role of water in this multifaceted historical mining area? How do the new “water landscapes” relate to the former landscapes, before and during the mining period? Which concrete infrastructures have already been realised here, which current difficulties arise, also in the mediation with historical infrastructures (keyword dams)? What makes these new landscapes uncanny, inaccessible, and at the same time a hot spot of landscape design and landscape conservation? What role does the water deficit play in connection with climate change? How can these transformations be adequately described, what become artificial lakes as technoscientific objects in this radical change of landscape and socio-technical conditions?

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