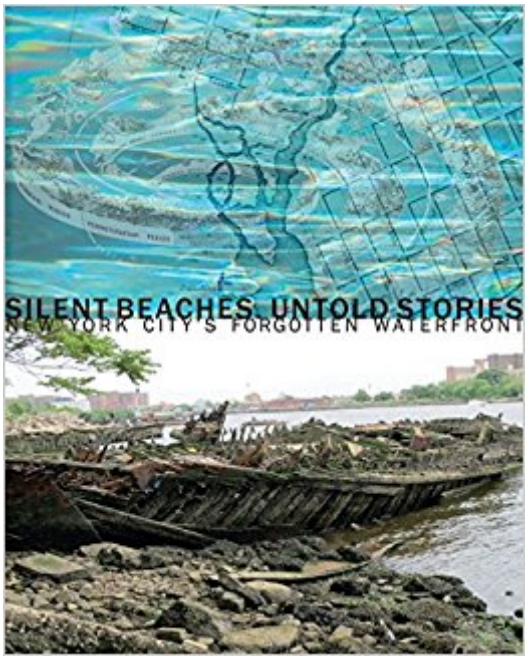
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Silent Beaches, Untold Stories: New York City's Forgotten Waterfront



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Synopsis

Silent Beaches, Untold Stories: New York City's Forgotten Waterfront transports the reader into the extraordinary past and present embedded in New York City's more than 600 miles of coastline through a stunning selection of rare photographs, history, new fiction, and contemporary art. Each often chapters centers on one of New York City's lesser-known waterfront spaces: Dead Horse Bay, where the pre-automobile city's legions of horses once met their maker; Hart Island, New York City's still-active potter's field, where over 800,000 of New York City's unclaimed dead have been laid to rest; Sandy Ground, one of the earliest free black communities in the nation, made prosperous through oystering and strawberry farming. Elizabeth Albert has written historical texts on each location, and Underwater New York has selected ten new works of fiction, setting the stage where history, fiction, and image coalesce into a powerful and haunting experience. Silent Beaches features the work of internationally known and notable contemporary artists and writers, including Joel Meyerowitz, Mary Mattingly, Carrie Mae Weems, Spencer Finch, Susan Choi, Nelly Reifler, Ravi Howard, Antoine Wilson and others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

a stunning guide to 10 offbeat and pristine sites that have so far been spared the incursion of high-rise condominiums or private swim clubs. (Sam Roberts The New York Times)With an engrossing mix of art, photography, and writing, Silent Beaches tells the stories and histories of the lesser-known and forgotten stretches of the New York areaÃ¢â ¬â„¢s more than 600 miles of coastline. (Eileen Kinsella Artnet)A book that offers great prose along with impressive visuals. (Vol.1

Brooklyn)... a fascinating and poignant combination of art, poetry, photography, essays, historic drawings, and short stories about New York City on the margins. In the early 21st century city we are so focused on growth, and the consequences of that growth, for better or worse, that we forget how the city also leaves places and people behind. Sandy Ground, Hart Island, Gowanus Creek, Dead Horse Bay, and other off-the-beaten track locales, remind us that abandonment, decay, isolation, and death, are also part of our experience on this particular verge between land and sea. [Silent Beaches] give[s] voice to the bright dreams and restless forces that transform. (Eric Sanderson Author of Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City)A truly beautiful work. At a time when progress on the waterfront is measured in miles of promenades and acres of vertical developments, Silent Beaches reminds us that even the most robust products of human labor are no match for the agencies of time and the eternal cycles of nature. (Kevin Bone Author of The New York Waterfront)Silent Beaches, Untold Stories is a lush, inspired reminder that New YorkÃ¢â ¬â„¢s waterways were once its lifeblood. Dense with fanciful discoveries and hidden treasures, it evokesÃ¢â ¬â ¢and echoesÃ¢â ¬â ¢the richness of the New York waterfront itself. (Jennifer Egan)

Elizabeth Albert is a Brooklyn-based visual artist, professor,curator, and writer. She has received grants and fellowships from the NEA/ Mid-Atlantic Arts Council, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Inc., Furthermore: a program of the J.M. Kaplan Fund, Byrdcliffe, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, and the MacDowell Colony. Her paintings and works on paper are exhibited nationally and are in the collections of the Butler Institute and the Naples Art Museum.Her first book, Silent Beaches, Untold Stories: New York City's Forgotten Waterfront is an exploration of lesser known and neglected areas of the New York City coastline through the multi-disciplinary lens of historical narrative, archival photography and contemporary art.Each chapter is completed by the addition of short fiction selected by the editors of the on-line arts journal, Underwater New York, whom Albert has credited as one of the original sources of inspiration for this project. Silent Beaches is the culmination of six years of research, image collection, photography and writing, originally realized in the form of a multi-media exhibition curated by Albert for St. John's University's gallery.Albert is an Associate Professor at St. John's University in Queens, New York, where she teaches in the Department of Art and Design and the Institute for Core Studies. She lectures nationally on the intersection of art, history, and the environment and its application as studio practice and educational framework.About the Fiction & Poetry EditorsUnderwater New York is a digital journal of stories, art and music inspired byÃ Â the waterways that surround New York City

and the objects submerged withinÃ Â them. Since its founding in 2009,Underwater New York has published the work of more than 130 contributors and hosted events and excursions in all five boroughs. Underwater New York is edited by Nicki Pombier Berger, Helen Georgas, and Nicole Haroutunian.

A beautiful object and fascinating read.

Geology was kind to New York because the waterfront provided plenty of inlets and islands to accommodate facilities that kept the city ticking over in past decades. Elizabeth Albert's book historically looks at ten places that reveal an intriguing amount of human activity.Islands in particular were taken advantage of by the city authorities. A prison was built on Blackwell's Island (now Roosevelt) in 1832, later various hospitals and facilities for the insane were also built. The unclaimed dead ended up at Hart Island, the cities Department of Corrections estimates that more than a million bodies are buried there. A photo from 2012 shows the still standing remains of a prison. North Brother Island had a hospital for infectious diseases in the early years of the last century, later it was used as a rehabilitation center for drug addicts but finally abandoned by the city in 1963.Non-island locations include Sandy Ground on Staten Island which was the home of black farmers and oystermen (displaced from Maryland in the 1850s where they were forbidden from owning boats). The Gowanus Canal is a badly constructed 1.8 mile long waterway in Brooklyn, it has no locks and the builders hoped two tides a day would clean the water...it didn't. By 1910 the canal was almost solid with industrial waste and sewage and it remained polluted right up to recent years. A ten-year clean up began in 2015. Coney Island Creek (originally an island) is another of New York's incredibly polluted waterways and also heavy with marine litter, including Jerry Bianco's handmade Questar 1 submarine and originally painted yellow (what else) but a storm tore it from its moorings and dumped it in mud away from the shore. Page ninety-one has a lovely color photo, from 1971, of the sub being lifted by a crane ready for her maiden voyage. Dead Horse Bay was just that, a place where animals were rendered from 1860 to the 1930s. Later it was used as a landfill until 1953. Interestingly this has now been breeched by the tides and the shore is littered with a changing collection of household rubbish and animal bones.The author makes the ten locations come alive with her copy as well essays from other writers. Old photos, graphics and contemporary photos provide the visual interest. Incidentally if you use the Bing maps Bird's eye view option you can see some of the ruins of buildings mentioned in the text and photos.

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