



**BROOKLYN
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

DUMBO

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jeanne Hodesh

347-381-3712

jhodesh@brooklynhistory.org



Top: *Gowanus Canal Canoeist* (2009) by Nathan Kensinger; *NYC: Dance to the Sea* (1998) by Chester Higgins, Jr.
Bottom: *Brooklyn Bridge Park Construction* (2011) by Lynn Saville; *Warehouse, Water and Dock Streets* (1936) by Berenice Abbott

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY BERENICE ABBOTT, RUDY BURKHARDT, BRUCE DAVIDSON AND
OTHERS ON VIEW IN INAUGURAL EXHIBITION AT BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DUMBO**

*A second location of Brooklyn Historical Society opens with a photography exhibition featuring images of the
Brooklyn waterfront from Greenpoint to Coney Island*

May 10, 2017 Brooklyn, NY— With the opening of Brooklyn Historical Society DUMBO (BHS DUMBO) on May 19, 2017, the museum welcomes visitors to view its inaugural exhibition, *Shifting Perspectives: Photographs of Brooklyn's Waterfront* on view through September 10, 2017. Featuring 65 modern and contemporary photographs created by 25 acclaimed photographers – many of them Brooklyn-based – *Shifting Perspectives* presents a survey of realistic documentation and fine art photography of the borough's shoreline from Newtown Creek to Jamaica Bay. The display encourages contemplation and exploration of Brooklyn's waterfront neighborhoods. By picturing decades of Brooklyn's coastal scenery, including its changing industrial

and postindustrial environment, the exhibition presents dramatic panoramic vistas; spectacular aerial views; representations of particular buildings, streets, landmarks and bridges; glimpses of popular recreational attractions particularly in nearby Brooklyn Bridge Park and at Coney Island; and other scenes, including those impacted by natural or manmade forces, as well as by gentrification. The photographs provide a snapshot of Brooklyn's history from the 1930s to today.

Works featured in the exhibition, organized by guest curator Marilyn Symmes, include:

- Berenice Abbott's iconic *Warehouse, Water and Dock Streets* – the photograph she took in 1936 of Empire Stores, the building which is the new home to BHS DUMBO. Another vintage Water Street view is lent by the Museum of the City of New York. These images provide an important context for later photographs of the area by Stanley Greenberg, Michael Kenna, Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao, Jeffrey Milstein, Lynn Saville, and Julienne Schaer.
- Rudy Burckhardt's now-classic film documentary *Under the Brooklyn Bridge* (1953), and two photographs of the Brooklyn Bridge neighborhood in the early 1950s
- Two memorable photographs from Bruce Davidson's *Brooklyn Gang* photo-essay (1959)
- Captivating scenes of Coney Island by Morris Engel, Matthew Pillsbury, and Harvey Stein
- Photographs of the *Maafa* ritual by Chester Higgins, Jr.
- Waterfront images that are part contemporary urban archaeology and part environmental advocacy by Nathan Kensinger and Robin Michals
- A majestic cloud formation by Mitch Epstein, who shot a glorious phenomenon of nature in 2015 from a spot just south of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge

“This inaugural exhibition directly connects to BHS DUMBO's dramatic site on the waterfront in Brooklyn Bridge Park,” Brooklyn Historical Society President, Deborah Schwartz said. “Our aim is to link visitors to the water's edge through inspired images created by some of the world's great photographers. We hope and expect that when people leave the exhibition and walk out to the park, they'll look at their surroundings differently having experienced the tantalizing images in *Shifting Perspectives*.”

List of photographers in this loan exhibition featuring 65 photographs, 2 digital presentations, and special showings of Rudy Burckhardt's film, *Under the Brooklyn Bridge* (1953):

Berenice Abbott; David Attie; Rudy Burckhardt; Bruce Davidson; Morris Engel; Mitch Epstein; Lucille Fornasieri Gold; Anders Goldfarb; Stanley Greenberg; Chester Higgins, Jr.; Michael Kenna; Nathan Kensinger; Shai Kremer; Jeff Chien-Hsing Liao; John Maturri; Robin Michals; Jeffrey Milstein; Garry Pierre-Pierre; Matthew Pillsbury; Paul Raphaelson; Lynn Saville; Julienne Schaer; Harvey Stein; Todd Webb; Jackie Weisberg; in addition to a selection of stereo views from the Brooklyn Historical Society Collection. Photographer biographies are available upon request.

Shifting Perspectives is made possible with support from Joanne Witty and Eugene Keilin Fund at The NY Community Trust, Tim Bradley and Eliot Nolen, and Norbert and Judith Weissberg.

About Empire Stores, home of Brooklyn Historical Society's new DUMBO gallery

Just as the photographs shown in *Shifting Perspectives* encourage reexamination of Brooklyn neighborhoods and scenes we thought we knew, BHS DUMBO, housed in its new second floor quarters in the renovated Empire Stores warehouse, located between Water Street and Brooklyn Bridge Park, will prompt new insights into Brooklyn's maritime and industrial past and new vistas of its park waterfront. Originally built between 1869 and 1885, Empire Stores was a series of seven attached warehouses used to store goods from all over the world. In the nineteenth century it stored barrels and bags of sugar, rubber, wool, linseed oil, animal hides, and more. In the twentieth century, the building stored raw coffee beans. A giant winch on display in the gallery was used to hoist countless tons of goods into and out of the warehouse. The building was sold in 1945 by Arbuckle Brothers Coffee, and has remained empty ever since, waiting for this opportunity to reveal its history. Brooklyn's waterfront history is a fluctuating one, incorporating countless perspectives of transformative changes involving architecture, commerce, engineering, industry, and shipping, as well as revitalized buildings and parks for cultural, commercial or residential purposes.

Opening in December 2017

Waterfront, a long-term exhibition opening in December 2017, will explore tales of families and communities, labor, commerce, environmental change, industrial boom and decline, and the impact of Brooklyn's waterfront across the United States and beyond. It will be filled with intriguing interactive media exhibits for adults and playful activities for children.

Shifting Perspectives: Photographs of Brooklyn's Waterfront

On view May 19-September 10, 2017

Brooklyn Historical Society DUMBO

55 Water Street, 2nd floor

(Enter at 55 Water Street or through Brooklyn Bridge Park)

Brooklyn, New York

Planning your visit

Brooklyn Historical Society DUMBO is open seven days a week, Monday through Friday from noon to 6 pm, and Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 7 pm. Suggested admission is \$10 for adults; \$6 for seniors and teachers; free for students, children and members. For extended hours on "Summer Fridays" please check the website, www.brooklynhistory.org. BHS DUMBO's gift shop offers an array of books, apparel and souvenirs including many items created by Brooklyn artists and designers.

To arrive by subway take the A or C train to High Street; the 2 or 3 to Clark Street; or the F to York Street.

About Brooklyn Historical Society

Founded in 1863, Brooklyn Historical Society is a nationally recognized urban history center dedicated to preserving and encouraging the study of Brooklyn's extraordinary 400-year history. Located in Brooklyn Heights and housed in a magnificent landmark building designed by George Post and opened in 1881, today's BHS is a cultural hub for civic dialogue, thoughtful engagement and community outreach.

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