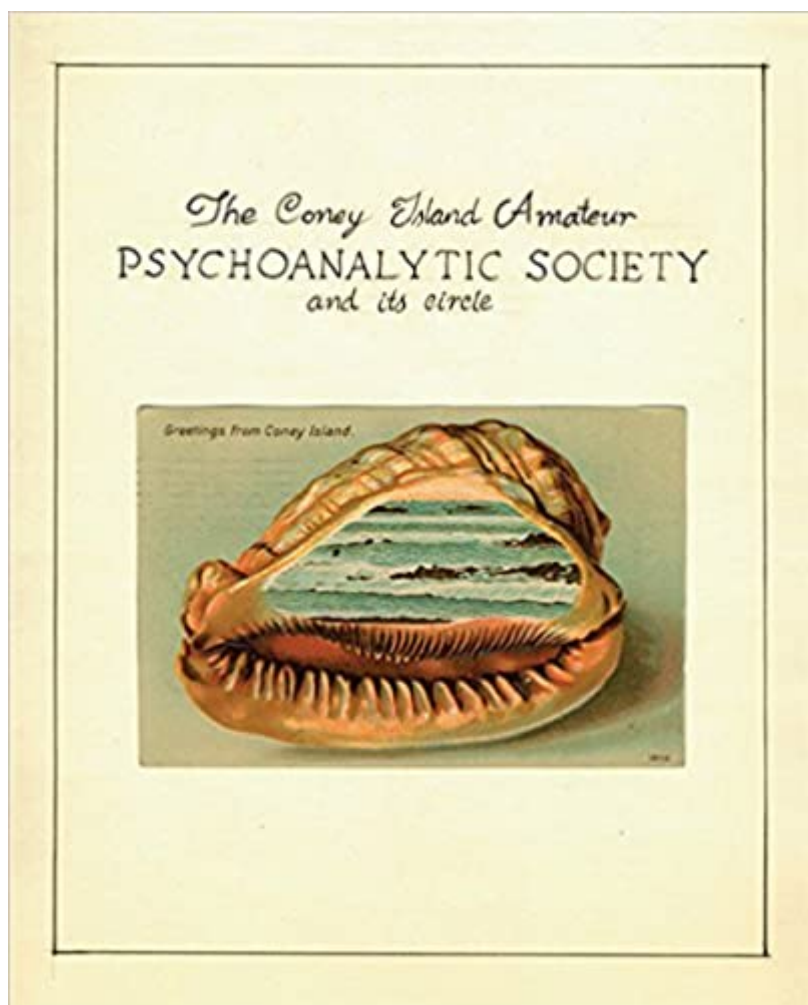


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The Coney Island Amateur Psychoanalytic Society And Its Circle



Synopsis

On the afternoon of August 28th, 1909, Sigmund Freud visited Coney Island's famous Dreamland amusement park. A hundred years later, this lively, imaginative book examines his legacy in Coney Island, a history which might have been. It begins with Norman Klein's reconstruction of his actual visit, though Freud's real impact appears to have come later, with the founding of the Coney Island Amateur Psychoanalytic Society. Zoe Beloff conjures up the world of this unique Society, which would have existed from 1926 through the early 1970s, exploring its activities (which included recreating dreams on film) and discussing its visionary founder, Albert Grass, who attempted to rebuild Dreamland according to Freud's theory of dream formation. Aaron Beebe, former director of the Coney Island Museum, describes how this institution is reviving the idea of the living museum. Amy Herzog discusses how Freud's theories provide a deeper understanding of the public's fascination with Coney Island's attractions. The book is illustrated with previously unseen photographs, drawings and documents.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Zoe Beloff is an artist who is particularly fascinated by attempts to graphically manifest the unconscious processes of the mind. Aaron Beebe is an artist and director of the Coney Island Museum. Amy Herzog is an Associate Professor Media Studies at Queens College. Norman M. Klein is a cultural critic, and both an urban and media historian, as well as a novelist.

I was traveling and saw her lecture totally by accident; I'm a fan of Coney Island history, and this was something different. She (in the book and lecture) explain how Freud came to see Coney Island, and it really affected him. There's minimal stuff about Sigmund himself here, the best is to come...This is REALLY the story of an amateur group who then formed to study psychology - and then MAKE FILMS of their own stories and thoughts!! The book comes with the DVD of the actual films, nicely transferred and looking good. The films run the gamut of styles and decades (I think over 4-5 decades of subjects are here). It's a historical story about a group of interesting characters, but it comes with the films, so you feel as if you have taken part. What fascinates me is the juxtaposition - many are using their own home movies as the source material, almost all shot at or near Coney in "the old days". Beautiful footage of the big and small of Coney Island area. Sometimes you see characters they mention, mothers and lovers and others. Other times, it's illusory and very dreamlike - very much like a memory that's hazy and rosy-colored. There is incredible power here, people's most intimate thoughts on emotion, family, sexuality, life in general. Much more so than most commercial films achieve. These are indeed "home movies" but all the participants seem to be artistic and thoughtful, making this SO much more engaging. I won't give away any of the surprises, but there are incredible revelations about a life in 3-5 minutes of footage. Some are thrilling, most incredibly poignant, some chilling. Get it for the read, get it for the DVD of films... there are many evenings of previously unknown entertainment here. Zoe Beloff did a great job, unearthing this, saving the films, and making it available to us. THANK YOU!

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