



Michael Ashkin // **Long Branch**

Michael Ashkin's *Long Branch* documents the eradication of a New Jersey working-class, beachfront neighbourhood by a corrupt city government and developers in what has been described as one of the worst cases of eminent domain abuse in the country. Family homes condemned and purchased for pennies on the dollar, residents evicted, city services curtailed, mock police raids staged on abandoned homes; all to cleanse the beachfront and install sanitized condo complexes generating tremendous profit. In the end barely a single tree or street remains of this historic bungalow neighbourhood. Shot in vertical format, these fractured, unpeopled photographs from 2002 and 2007 resemble an abandoned urban war zone. Accompanying the photographs, Ashkin includes a fractured narrative built of quotes from news- paper articles, letters to the editor, activist blogs, and real estate websites that mirrors linguistically the struggle visible in the photographs.

This book constitutes the latest project in various media that address the urban landscape. His photographs of the New Jersey Meadowlands have been shown at Documenta11 (Kassel, Germany), Andrea Rosen Gallery (NYC), and the Renaissance Society (Chicago). His sculptural installations, landscape models, and video work have been widely shown, recently at Secession (Vienna).....

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