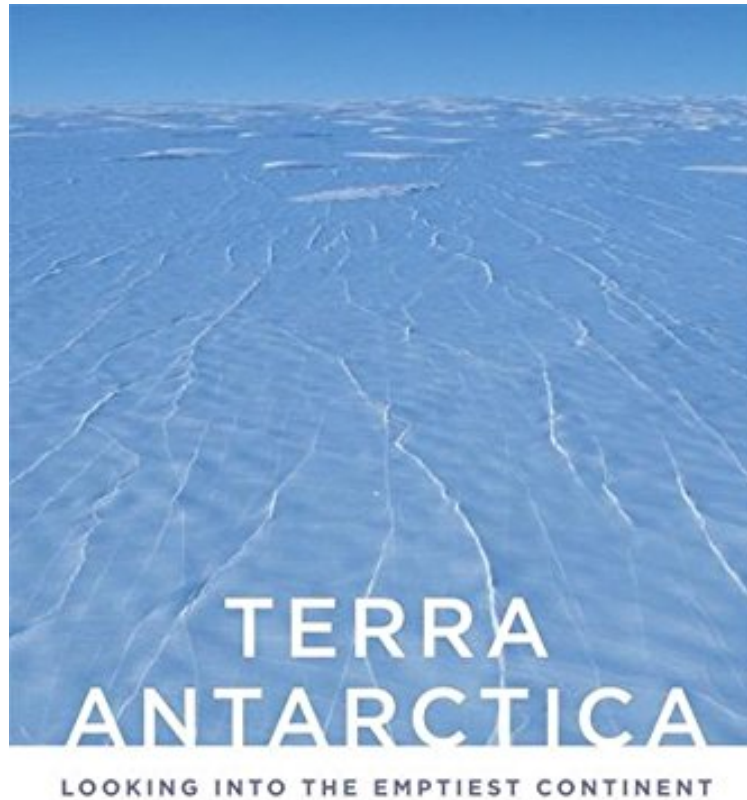


(Free) Terra Antarctica: Looking into the Emptiest Continent

Terra Antarctica: Looking into the Emptiest Continent


William L. Fox

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WILLIAM L. FOX

Author of Making Time and In the Desert of Desire

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William L. Fox : Terra Antarctica: Looking into the Emptiest Continent before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Terra Antarctica: Looking into the Emptiest Continent:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An interdisciplinary adventure to the most extreme place on earthBy Delite RancherIn "Terra Antarctica," William L. Fox visits the emptiest continent through the National Science Foundation's Antarctic Visiting Artists and Writers Program. It's hard to imagine a better thinker and artist to travel to and write about 'the windiest, coldest and driest continent.' The book works on several levels. First and perhaps most importantly, it works as an adventurer's travelogue. Exciting locations include the lava lake in Mt. Erebus, the South

Pole, penguin colonies, the eerie Dry Valleys and historical structures leftover from the heroic age of Shackleton. Second, the book works as a philosophical treatise, exploring how the human vehicle makes sense of such wide open spaces. Those who are familiar with Fox's books about the desert and geography will be familiar with these themes. Third, "Terra Antarctica" documents the history of the continent. It offers an overview of human exploration and settlement in Antarctica. Fourth, the book is very scientifically minded. In addition to offering a geological overview, Fox easily writes about the newest research that sheds light on how life survives on the frozen continent. Fifth and finally, "Terra Antarctica" examines how the place inspires art. Most readers wouldn't associate art with Antarctica, but there's much to write about on this topic as Fox provides a historical overview with detailed information on today's relevant artists. To illustrate this material, the book contains numerous plates that feature examples of either important or representative work. During his adventure, Fox spends a good deal of time at McMurdo Station, a town sized research center. From there, he travels to multiple locations. He often joins scientists working in the field. At other times, Fox visits other research centers like the Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station. The book gives a good sense of the community and culture that develops in such extreme places. "Terra Antarctica" overcomes one of William L. Fox's two weaknesses as a writer. Since he often writes about places and situations that are so outside of regular experience, there is often a need for accompanying visual imagery. In this case, the forty-one plates beautifully illustrate the book so that the reader can actually see the otherworldly imagery and art examples. As with many of his publications, this book suffers from a lack of editing. This work would have been more muscular had about 100 pages been shaved off. Perhaps due to combining the artist's grant obligation with a phenomenal life experience, William L. Fox seems to document just about everything he did during his busy trip to Antarctica. Despite the length, this book offers that interdisciplinary take on both the environment and human experience that has made the writings of William L. Fox so endearing. Travel to the most southern continent with William L. Fox as your guide. Through "Terra Antarctica," any reader is bound to gain valuable insights into Antarctica . . . best of all, these insights are gained without ever putting on a parka!

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. interesting and cool
By Sarah Koplowitz
What a story. I love non fiction and it's hard to get into but this author takes you on a journey !
2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A medley of artistic, cartographic, and scientific images intertwine
By Midwest Book Review
Terra Antarctica: Looking Into the Emptiest Continent is the true-life story of award-finalist author William L. Fox's journey to explore the Antarctic, the "largest and most extreme desert on Earth". A medley of artistic, cartographic, and scientific images intertwine in his reflections of the remote and brutally harsh continent. A handful of gorgeous color photographs illustrate this compelling tale tempered with a scientist's respect for and love of nature's glory.

How does the human mind transform space into place, or land into landscape? For more than three decades, William L. Fox has looked at empty landscapes and the role of the arts to investigate the way humans make sense of space. In *Terra Antarctica*, Fox continues this line of inquiry as he travels to the Antarctic, the largest and most extreme desert on earth. This contemporary travel narrative interweaves artistic, cartographic, and scientific images with anecdotes from the author's three-month journey in the Antarctic to create an absorbing and readable narrative of the remote continent. Through its images, history... and firsthand experiences snowmobile trips through whiteouts and his icy solo hikes past the edge of the mapped world Fox brings to life a place that few have seen and offers us a look into both the nature of landscape and ourselves.

From Publishers Weekly
The environment of Antarctica, "the largest and most extreme desert on Earth," is so foreign to our visual expectations that we are almost unable to perceive it. For Fox (*Playa Works*), who studies the ways in which humans respond to such vast, empty spaces, it's the ideal location for examining the connection between cognition and extreme landscapes. In this insightful book, he chronicles his Antarctic sojourn during the austral summer of 2001-2002, recording his impressions of the landscape and the people who live at McMurdo Station on Ross Island and at Pole, a newer station a few hundred feet away from the South Pole. At the same time, he examines the works of the cartographers, painters and photographers who have depicted Antarctica from the days of the earliest explorations down to the present, showing how the human mind transforms pure space into landscape, then turns landscape into art. A fascinating look at the "windiest, coldest, highest, and driest continent on earth" and man's creative responses to it, this seems the perfect read after seeing *The March of the Penguins*. 40 color photos, 2 maps. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist *
So pristine is Antarctica, and so spare is its ecosystem, it has become a living laboratory for scientists studying everything from the icy continent's microbial life to cosmic radiation. Thanks to the National Science Foundation program, in which author Fox participated, it is also a sublime studio for artists and writers. Fox became fascinated with how visitors to Antarctica, a land wholly unlike the realm in which humans evolved, are baffled by mirages and "cognitive dissonance." The continent's "monolithic expanses of flat white ice" confound our perceptual mechanism. Fox vividly describes his own disorienting sensory experiences while trekking across the world's largest desert and offers a fresh and enlightening history of the two disciplines that have enabled us to "see"

otherwise incomprehensible places: cartography and landscape art. This leads to intriguing portraits of Antarctica's first explorers and the gifted men who mapped, drew, painted, and photographed its spectacular and daunting vistas, staggering accomplishments Fox compares to today's intrepid Antarctic science and art in a lively report on life at McMurdo Station and the South Pole. Thoughtful and enjoyable on many fronts, Fox's uniquely fashioned chronicle of Antarctica brings into sharper focus the crucial symbiosis between art and science. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "If you read only one book about Antarctica, you won't go wrong choosing this one." "Fox gives us an enthralling guided tour of the human mind's attempt to make space into place, and land into landscape." "Thoughtful and enjoyable on many fronts, Fox's uniquely fashioned chronicle of Antarctica brings into sharper focus the crucial symbiosis between art and science." "A fascinating look at the 'windiest, coldest, highest, and driest continent on earth' and man's creative responses to it, this seems the perfect read after seeing The March of the Penguins."