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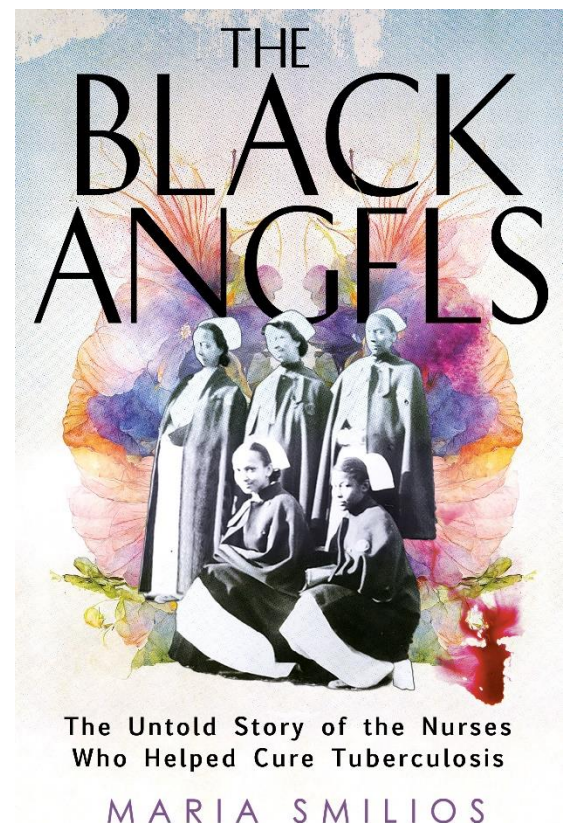
## Staten Island Museum to host book talk and signing for **THE BLACK ANGELS** The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis By Maria Smilios

(Staten Island, NY – September 6, 2023) The Staten Island Museum will host the inaugural book talk and signing of ***THE BLACK ANGELS The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis*** by Maria Smilios on **Saturday, September 23 at 2PM at the College of Staten Island: Center for the Arts**, 2800 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, NY.

In *THE BLACK ANGELS: The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis* (G. P. Putnam’s Sons; on sale: September 19, 2023) tells the incredible, true, never-before-told story of the intrepid women (dubbed the Black Angels by their patients) who fled the segregated South to work at Sea View, an 1,800 municipal tuberculosis sanatorium, woefully understaffed and nicknamed the “pest house”—a place where “no one left alive.” Though the grim reality they met upon arriving was far from what the city had promised, the women kept Sea View running for over two decades, saving countless lives while also challenging institutional racism and actively participating in the movement to desegregate the entire New York City hospital system.

And then, in 1952, the Angels participated in the most “grandiose experiment ever undertaken in the history of medicine”: the cure for tuberculosis, run by Sea View’s own Dr. Edward Robitzek. Its success eventually shut down the hospital, leaving the legacies of these women to languish for more than seventy years. Almost entirely erased from history, for decades, the Black Angels’ presence during this galvanizing breakthrough survived only in the memories of friends, family, and the tight-knit African American community of Staten Island. . . until now.

The public is invited to join author Maria Smilios in conversation with public historian Debbie-Ann Paige and Virginia Allen, a nurse at Sea View Hospital from 1947 – 1957 for the



launch official launch of *THE BLACK ANGELS The Untold Story of the Nurses Who Helped Cure Tuberculosis*.

The event is free with museum admission. Tickets can be reserved at [www.StatenIslandMuseum.org/event/blackangelsbook/](http://www.StatenIslandMuseum.org/event/blackangelsbook/). Books are available for pre-ordered through the Museum here at [www.statenislandmuseum.org/shop/](http://www.statenislandmuseum.org/shop/).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A New York City native, Maria Smilios has a Master of Arts in religion and literature from Boston University, where she was a Luce Scholar and a Presidential Scholar. Smilios spent five years at Springer Science & Business Media as development editor in the biomedical sciences and has written for *The Guardian*, *American Nurse*, *The Forward*, *Narratively*, *The Rumpus*, and *DAME Magazine*.

*Maria Smilios, photo by Parker Pfister*

## UPCOMING EXHIBITION

The Staten Island Museum's exhibition, [\*\*\*Taking Care: The "Black Angels" of Sea View Hospital\*\*\*](#) will open to the public on **January 25, 2024**.

***Taking Care*** highlights the groundbreaking work, lives, and legacy of the "Black Angels," the Black nursing staff at Sea View Hospital in Staten Island who risked their lives to break racial barriers and care for tuberculosis patients.

At the center of this exhibition is *Back and Song*, a meditative film and art installation by artists Elissa Blount Moorhead and Bradford Young. This kaleidoscopic installation reflects on the manner in which health and wellness are part and parcel of the American Black experience from cradle to grave. *Back and Song* considers the labor and care provided by generations of Black healers—doctors, nurses, midwives, morticians,

therapists, and health aides—and their histories of contribution to, and resistance against, the flawed and discriminatory structures of Western medicine.

Major support for *Taking Care: The Black Angels of Sea View Hospital* is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts.



The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts

## **ABOUT THE STATEN ISLAND MUSEUM**

Founded in 1881, the Staten Island Museum engages visitors with interdisciplinary exhibitions, public programs, and educational activities for all ages. The museum's mission is to spark curiosity and create meaningful shared experiences through natural science, art, and history, deepening our understanding of the environment, ourselves, and each other.

The Staten Island Museum is a proud member of the Cultural Institutions Group (CIG), a public-private partnership with the City of New York, and receives operating support from the City of New York which owns its building through the Department of Cultural Affairs, Commissioner Laurie Cumbo, from Mayor Eric Adams; NYC Council Staten Island Delegation and Council Members Kamillah Hanks, Joe Borelli, and David Carr; and Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella.

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The Museum is open Wednesday – Sunday: 11am – 5pm. Universally accessible. For advanced tickets and information visit [StatenIslandMuseum.org](http://StatenIslandMuseum.org).

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