2021

In Residence: Witnessing and Gentrification in Susan Silton's Los Angeles

Susanna Newbury

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, susanna.newbury@unlv.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/art_fac_articles

Part of the [Art Practice Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Newbury, S. (2021). In Residence: Witnessing and Gentrification in Susan Silton's Los Angeles. In Christoph Lindner; Gerard F. Sandoval, 155-175. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

http://dx.doi.org/10.5117/9789463722032_ch08

This Chapter is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Chapter in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Chapter has been accepted for inclusion in Art Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

CITIES AND CULTURES

Edited by Christoph Lindner and Gerard F. Sandoval

Aesthetics of Gentrification

Seductive Spaces and
Exclusive Communities
in the Neoliberal City

Amsterdam
University
Press

Aesthetics of Gentrification

Cities and Cultures

Cities and Cultures is an interdisciplinary book series addressing the interrelations between cities and the cultures they produce. The series takes a special interest in the impact of globalization on urban space and cultural production, but remains concerned with all forms of cultural expression and transformation associated with modern and contemporary cities.

Series Editor:

Christoph Lindner, University College London

Advisory Board:

Ackbar Abbas, University of California, Irvine

Myria Georgiou, London School of Economics and Political Science

Derek Gregory, University of British Columbia

Mona Harb, American University of Beirut

Stephanie Hemelryk Donald, University of Lincoln

Shirley Jordan, Queen Mary, University of London

Nicole Kalms, Monash University

Geoffrey Kantaris, University of Cambridge

Brandi Thompson Summers, University of California, Berkeley

Ginette Verstraete, VU University Amsterdam

Richard J. Williams, University of Edinburgh

Aesthetics of Gentrification

*Seductive Spaces and Exclusive Communities
in the Neoliberal City*

*Edited by
Christoph Lindner and
Gerard F. Sandoval*

Amsterdam University Press

Cover illustration: Oliver Wainwright

Cover design: Coördesign, Leiden

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6372 203 2

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 117 0

DOI 10.5117/9789463722032

NUR 758

Creative Commons License CC BY NC ND

(<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0>)

© All authors / Amsterdam University Press B.V., Amsterdam 2021

Some rights reserved. Without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, any part of this book may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise).

Every effort has been made to obtain permission to use all copyrighted illustrations reproduced in this book. Nonetheless, whosoever believes to have rights to this material is advised to contact the publisher.

Contents

Acknowledgements	7
------------------	---

1. Introduction: Aesthetics of Gentrification	9
<i>Christoph Lindner and Gerard F. Sandoval</i>	

Part 1 Spaces of Global Consumption

2. The Forces of Decline and Regeneration: A Discussion of Jane Jacobs and Gentrification	27
<i>Samuel Zipp, Jennifer Hock, and Nathan Storrington</i>	

3. Silicon Wafers and Office Park Dreams: Cross-Cultural Designs, Aesthetics, and Art in and around California's Santa Clara Valley	49
<i>Jenny Lin</i>	

4. Selling Authenticity: The Aesthetics of Design Boutiques in Montreal	73
<i>Guillaume Sirois</i>	

5. The Import of a Narrative: The Role of Aesthetics and Discursive Elements in Fabricating Change in the Centre of São Paulo	91
<i>Beatriz Kalichman and Beatriz Rufino</i>	

Part 2 Anxiety and Visibility

6. Race, Authenticity, and the Gentrified Aesthetics of Belonging in Washington, D.C.	115
<i>Brandi Thompson Summers</i>	

7. Art and the Aesthetics of Cultural Gentrification: The Cases of Boyle Heights and Little Tokyo in Los Angeles	137
<i>Jonathan Jae-an Crisman</i>	

8. In Residence: Witnessing and Gentrification in Susan Siltan's
Los Angeles 155
Susanna Newbury
9. Satellite Dishes, a Creative Incubator, and the Displacement of
Aesthetics in Amsterdam 177
Daan Wesselman

Part 3 Agency, Voices, and Activism

10. Boulevard Transition, Hipster Aesthetics, and Anti-
Gentrification Struggles in Los Angeles 199
Jan Lin
11. Speculative Spaces in Grand Paris: Reading JR in Clichy-sous-
Bois and Montfermeil 221
Gillian Jein
12. On Empty Spaces, Silence, and the Pause 247
Rebecca Amato
13. The "Smart Safe City": Gendered Time, Violence, and
Displacement in India's Digital Urban Age 269
Ayona Datta
- Index 289

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to our home institutions, University College London and the University of Oregon, for supporting our transatlantic editorial collaboration and the broader academic network that this book brings together. For contributing their original work to this volume and for engaging in an extended group conversation about the limits, possibilities, and permutations of gentrification, we are greatly indebted to all of the authors in this book. We dedicate the book to Hannah and Joseph in London and Julio, Giovanni, and Liliana in Oregon.

Christoph Lindner and Gerard F. Sandoval

1. Introduction: Aesthetics of Gentrification

Christoph Lindner and Gerard F. Sandoval

Abstract

This book examines the relationship between aesthetics and gentrification in contemporary cities from multiple, comparative, global, and transnational perspectives. In the introductory chapter, we argue that the aesthetics of gentrification produce sites of spectacular excess where the political economic forces driving urban redevelopment are empowered to remake space according to the needs of global capital. Through an analysis of the development of London's Greenwich Peninsula, we suggest that these forms of neoliberal, consumer-oriented aesthetics create seductive spaces and instill the desires needed to accelerate exclusionary urban transformations. The introductory chapter also considers the ways in which the aesthetics of gentrification now constitute a globalized, transnational phenomenon involving struggles for power in neoliberal urban contexts. We conclude that aesthetics increasingly function as a battleground where these urban spatial power struggles are played out through displacement, exclusion, and division.

Keywords: gentrification, aesthetics, neoliberal consumption, activism, urban renewal, race

Seductive Spaces and Exclusive Communities

The image featured on the book's cover (and reproduced below) was taken in 2019 at Greenwich Peninsula in southeast London shortly after the opening of a new linear park named The Tide (Figure 1.1). In the foreground, we see the end of The Tide's elevated walkway jutting out above a carefully manicured urban landscape. Various people are lounging around the park, some looking

Lindner, C. and G.F. Sandoval (eds), *Aesthetics of Gentrification: Seductive Spaces and Exclusive Communities in the Neoliberal City*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2021

DOI 10.5117/9789463722032_CH01

Figure 1.1: The Tide at Greenwich Peninsula. Photograph by Oliver Wainwright.

out at the riverside view from the elevated structure, others sitting in pairs beneath the structure immersed in conversation. In the background looms the glossy façade of a high-rise luxury apartment complex dominated by a geometric arrangement of mini balconies overlooking the scene of sociality and leisure staged below. We chose this image as it evokes the topic of this book: the aesthetics of gentrification and the ways in which those aesthetics are employed in neoliberal urban renewal strategies to create seductive spaces and exclusive communities. A closer look at Greenwich Peninsula and The Tide helps to bring these concerns into focus.

Completed in the summer of 2019 and designed by architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro, who famously co-designed the High Line elevated park in New York, The Tide marks the culmination of a decades-long effort to transform a stagnant site of postindustrial neglect into a vibrant, chic, and design-driven neighbourhood. The vision driving Greenwich Peninsula's transformation is articulated by the site's property developer, global place-makers Knight Dragon:

On Greenwich Peninsula London is transforming. Here is a new place inventing itself as the capital's most boldly modern landscape. An urban community with design and creativity embedded in its fabric. With 15,000

new homes, 13,000 new jobs and 48 acres of open public space emerging over the coming years. Here a community of thousands of pioneers live in new riverside homes, work in a cutting-edge Design District and enjoy a new linear park The Tide – all wrapped by the river Thames. This is new London: a new destination for modern urban living. (Knight Dragon 2020)

Setting aside the promotional exuberance of this corporate sales pitch, the vision statement is revealing in the way it makes the case for the distinctiveness and novelty of the redevelopment project. Residents become “pioneers” joined together in a bold urban experiment aimed at forming a new community revolving around creativity (Smith 1982).

Not only does this vision replay Richard Florida’s (2002) now tired argument about the regenerative power of the creative class, it also activates a rhetoric of settler colonialism by positing residents as homesteading adventurers – a trend long associated with gentrification and frequently tied to dynamics of race (Addie and Fraser 2019; Sandoval 2018; Lubitow et al. 2016; Osman 2011; Butler 2003). In short, despite all its claims to newness and invention, Greenwich Peninsula follows a well-established pattern of postindustrial revitalization supported by transnational global real-estate investments. The result is a neighbourhood ironically lacking in identity and originality – a site marked by flashy architecture, an abundance of pseudo-public space, predictable public art, corporate shopping and dining chains, superficial greenwashing, restricted mobility, and a general aura of affluence and placelessness.

As the area’s symbolic centrepiece (Figure 1.2), The Tide exemplifies many of these qualities. Notably, the design of the park is conspicuously derivative (courtesy of the same architects involved in the High Line) and represents a fairly cynical example of a developer seeking to replicate the “High Line effect,” whereby the creation of an elevated park sparks widespread public interest and unlocks rapid gentrification in the surrounding area (Lindner and Rosa 2017). Unsurprisingly, like most spin-off projects of this sort, The Tide falls flat in reproducing the success of the High Line. The prevalent view among architecture critics is that, unlike the High Line which adapts an abandoned freight railway for new public use, this park suffers from a lack of purpose, history, and meaning. *City Lab*’s review, for instance, describes The Tide as an “exercise in pretty-but-functionless urbanism”; a “gangplank to nowhere”; an “expensive, heavily monitored add-on to a meretricious corporate development, possessing little in the way of either function or charm”; and an “infrastructural gewgaw to drum up a little attention for the blah condominium cluster that surrounds it”

Figure 1.2: View from Peninsula Square. Photograph by Gerard Sandoval.

(O’Sullivan 2019). Similarly, Oliver Wainwright (who took the book’s cover photograph) writes in his *Guardian* review that “when you’re standing on the elevated deck, looking out over a jumbled vista of vents and service hatches, it’s difficult to work out quite how anyone thought this was a good idea,” adding that the walkway “has no purpose whatsoever, apart from providing a slightly different perspective on the surrounding carnage” (Wainwright 2019). He extends the critique to the entire area, which he characterizes as a “souped-up graveyard of novelty trinkets” and “junkyard of half-baked ideas and botched plans” (Wainwright 2019).

Among those ideas and plans is the Emirates Air Line cable car, a public-private partnership infrastructure project that transports tourists (and, theoretically, a very select subset of commuters) between Greenwich Peninsula and the Royal Docks business district across the River Thames (Figure 1.3). Built well before the residential redevelopment of North Greenwich during the 2012 London Olympic Games construction boom, this ostentatious caricature of a transportation project is not a functional piece of the city’s everyday transportation system and attracts only a very small percentage of its passenger capacity (Saul 2013; Transport for London 2020). Rather, as suggested by the corporate partnership with Emirates, the cable car forms part of London’s broader efforts to seduce global capital investment while boosting tourist appeal. The resulting spectacle of aerial-urban mobility has consequently attracted criticism for the way it contributes to London’s

Figure 1.3: Emirates Air Line cable car, looking towards Greenwich Peninsula. Photograph by Hannah Lindner.

disneyfication. The cable car looks and functions like an amusement park ride, offering a carefully crafted experience of leisure, voyeurism, excitement, and distraction.

Interestingly, the interior of the gondolas is one of the only places where the Peninsula's history is explicitly told. As passengers cross above the river, a corporate promotional documentary is played on a screen inside, presenting a history of the area's redevelopment from one of London's principal ports through to its contemporary transformation into a chic, aesthetically polished neighbourhood. When crossing from Greenwich into East London, the history tour ends with a detailed description of The Crystal, a large events venue located adjacent to the Royal Docks cable car station that is marketed as "one of the world's most sustainable buildings." The Crystal building is an example of investment in East London's real estate transformation and a case study in greenwashing in commercial redevelopment. As such, the Emirates Air Line can be seen as a literal and symbolic line connecting two postindustrial sites sharing the same neoliberal approach to urban revitalization.

As an example of gentrification, Greenwich Peninsula is perhaps not among the most obvious in London. Hipsterized neighbourhoods such as Shoreditch, Hackney, and Peckham, to name a few, conform more closely to the conventional model of local residents being displaced by a more socio-economically privileged population. Because Greenwich Peninsula was built on disused industrial land, the development is less a site of direct displacement

and more an aestheticized space of exclusive living and consumption that precludes alternative and more inclusive ways of creating, inhabiting, or experiencing the neighbourhood. Even so, Greenwich Peninsula contributes to, and is symptomatic of, a wider process of gentrification unfolding across the city, a trend marked by the proliferation of unaffordable housing and an accompanying decrease in mixed-income populations. In many ways, Greenwich Peninsula epitomizes the ultimate end of the neoliberal city – a site of spectacular excess where the forces of development have been empowered to remake space according to the needs of global capital. The role of aesthetics in creating such exclusive and seductive transformations is the focus of this book's engagement with gentrification.

Gentrification, Globalization, Aesthetics

Gentrification is widely studied across disciplines in the social sciences, humanities, and art and design fields. Within existing scholarship, the topic is predominantly approached from economic, geographic, planning, sociological, and related social-scientific perspectives (Freeman 2005; Lees et al. 2010; Zukin 1987; Zuk et al. 2017). These perspectives are vital to understanding the forces, conditions, and effects of gentrification on cities and communities, and over the last several decades – but particularly in the present era of neoliberal globalization and accelerated urbanization – they have yielded key insights into dynamics of urban displacement and exclusion in locations around the world. Indeed, the rise of “planetary gentrification,” to use the term developed by Loretta Lees, Hyun Bang Shin, and Ernesto López-Morales (2016), has seen not only a global proliferation of neoliberal urban redevelopment, but also increasing transnational synchronization of the processes involved. The effect is that, as Lees (2019) argues, “gentrification is no-longer, if it ever was, a small scale process of urban transformation,” but “globally is more often than not practiced as large scale urban redevelopment” and “is now predominantly state-led or state-induced” (7). Gentrification, in short, has gone global and is now part of what Saskia Sassen (2014) describes as “the new logics of expulsion” (1) driving the global economy.

In this book, we aim to expand on these analytical perspectives by additionally examining the roles that exclusion and seduction play within the aesthetics of gentrification. We argue that aesthetics are integral to the global story of gentrification, particularly in the way aesthetics are increasingly being used – via neoliberal consumerism (Castro 2015) – to produce the seductive conditions and instil the desires needed for creating exclusionary

urban transformations predicated on displacing and disempowering vulnerable populations. Although the authors in this book approach aesthetics from a range of theoretical perspectives, it is fair to say that the volume as a whole does cohere around a broad understanding of aesthetics as a visual regime in the sense that Jacques Rancière gives to the concept: aesthetics as politics and comprising “forms of visibility that disclose artistic practices, the place they occupy, what they ‘do’ and ‘make’ from the standpoint of what is common to the community” (Rancière 2004: 13). At stake therefore in our various analyses of the aesthetics of gentrification is not only greater understanding of the social-spatial politics of cities but also new insight into the subjects and operations of urban power (Foucault 1982).

Although they examine a geographically and culturally diverse range of case studies, the chapters in this book have certain themes in common. First, we understand the aesthetics of gentrification as an increasingly transnational phenomenon involving struggles for power in neoliberal urban contexts. Second, we are alert to how urban redevelopment actively produces spaces of desire and seduction that deliberately look and feel constructed in order to create gentrification effects that encourage mobility and exploit displacement of low-income populations. Third, we see aesthetics as increasingly being one of the battlegrounds where these urban spatial power struggles are played out through displacement, exclusion, and division. And finally, we are sensitive to the ways in which people become complicit – both consciously and inadvertently – with gentrification processes and their seductive elements. To pursue these concerns, we have organized the book’s chapters into three interconnecting thematic groupings: spaces of global consumption; anxiety and visibility; and agency, voices, and activism.

Spaces of Global Consumption

Part 1, “Spaces of Global Consumption,” focuses on how gentrification encompasses processes of neoliberal consumption involving housing, cultural entertainment, retail experience, and the aesthetics of placemaking. Together, the chapters in Part 1 demonstrate how the aesthetics of gentrification are manifested in spaces of consumerism and circulate globally. The emphasis in Part 1 is on visual culture, architecture and design, and the importance of local narratives in supporting global market conditions.

In the opening chapter of Part 1, “The Forces of Decline and Regeneration,” Samuel Zipp, Jennifer Hock, and Nate Storrington revisit Jane Jacobs’ legacy in light of twenty-first-century urban dynamics. In particular, they draw

on Jacobs' three concepts of the "sidewalk ballet," "organized complexity," and the "self-destruction of diversity" to help situate her work in relation to contemporary aesthetics of gentrification. One crucial issue that emerges in their discussion is Jacobs' understanding and writing on issues of race, which is an area of her work that has been underexamined by scholars. Zipp, Hock, and Storrington's analysis of Jane Jacobs is an important starting point for the book's overall consideration of how the aesthetics of gentrification are reshaping cities. Key concerns, for example, include how Jacobs' thinking relates to neighbourhood aesthetics, neighbourhood building types, residents' access to a diverse range of mobility options, and locally-based commercial retail, which all contribute to the uniqueness of neighbourhoods yet have also become foundational building blocks for gentrification.

In "Silicon Wafers and Office Park Dreams," Jenny Lin critiques the visual culture of California's Silicon Valley and the intellectual milieu of the information age. Her historical analysis traces the morphing of global software design giants, such as Apple and Google, into visually monolithic buildings expressing a corporate structure based on collaboration, experimentation, and a horizontally-based management structure. Lin argues that Silicon Valley's circulatory global corporate aesthetics contribute to a context of placelessness, economic inequality, and displacement. Here, the aesthetics of gentrification emerge from an unlikely space – one of intellectual collaboration operating within a local context concerned with reclaiming multiculturalism and resisting gentrification.

Guillaume Sirois considers the aesthetics of gentrification produced in and around boutiques in Montreal's Mile End District. In his chapter on "Selling Authenticity," he maps the interconnections between the global flows of neoliberal consumption and the commodification of local culture. Sirois demonstrates how the aesthetics of gentrification in this boutique district manifest through the constructed values of authenticity, materiality, and hospitality. As he reveals, locally-designed products often signify to buyers a break with the global market economy, when in fact those products ultimately complement and reinforce larger dynamics of neoliberal globalization.

The final chapter of Part 1 traces the revitalization of a neighbourhood in República, a district in the central area of the Brazilian city of São Paulo. In "The Import of a Narrative," Beatriz Kalichman and Beatriz Rufino analyze the aesthetics and discursive elements in the neighbourhood's transformation from *quitinetes* (worker housing built in the 1950s and 60s) toward more affluent studio apartments. Kalichman and Rufino argue that the aesthetics of gentrification in República hinge on emulating the postindustrial

transformation of SoHo in New York City in the 1970s. Their case study points to the links between aesthetics and planetary gentrification as cities in the global south seek to replicate visual and spatial patterns of neoliberal urban renewal via a circularity of global capital in real estate development.

Anxiety and Visibility

Part 2, “Anxiety and Visibility,” traces the shadow side of gentrification in a sequence of chapters that reveal the often discriminatory nature of urban redevelopment. Through a diverse set of case studies, the authors address issues of racialized gentrification, xenophobia, and “othering” present in gentrification processes and their accompanying aesthetics. The broader idea developed in Part 2 is that gentrification is not limited to the cultural-spatial change seen in a transforming neighbourhood, but can involve a deeper shift in that neighbourhood’s milieu of belonging reflective of racial and ethnic composition.

In her chapter on Washington D.C., Brandi Thompson Summers analyzes a mainly Black neighbourhood experiencing rapid gentrification. She problematizes ideas of “diversity” by demonstrating how a convergence of hipster aesthetics within a Black cultural space has resulted in the displacement of many Black low-income residents. As her analysis reveals, the gentrification process in this Black cultural space exploits a concept of authenticity in which people attach meaning to things (instead of the experiences of people), leading in turn to racialized gentrification as young, upper-income whites settle into the neighbourhood.

In “Art and the Aesthetics of Cultural Gentrification,” Jonathan Jae-an Crisman follows up with two Los Angeles-based case studies: Boyle Heights and Little Tokyo. Crisman assesses the role art is playing in cultural gentrification within these two diverse contexts. The chapter traces how an arts-based aesthetics of engagement opens up opportunities for these communities to shape the gentrification process. Crisman argues that these forms of aesthetics link ethics, collective interaction, and participatory community development. He ends on an optimistic note, stressing that these cultural places can open up new potentials in combating the atomizing effects of gentrification.

Maintaining the focus on Los Angeles, Susanna Newbury’s chapter examines the art performance of Susan Siltan who locates her work in a gentrifying neighbourhood in the city. Siltan’s work relates to aesthetics as representation as it is based on a performance practice of ethical imperative within reparative witnessing, which helps individuals see and account

for their roles in historic forms of crisis (such as the roles played within gentrification). Newbury argues that Siltan's LA-based performances make a connection between the crises brought about through global neoliberal consumerism and its grounding within gentrifying neighbourhoods.

In "Satellite Dishes, a Creative Incubator, and the Displacement of Aesthetics in Amsterdam," Daan Wesselman provides examples of how the aesthetics of gentrification contribute towards reifying "otherness" within Amsterdam's Bos en Lommer neighbourhood. He details the different treatment of immigrant tenements as they become defined in aesthetic terms through xenophobic expressions. Wesselman distinguishes the aesthetic value given to the non-white part of a neighbourhood with satellite dishes attached to social housing and compares that to the aesthetic value given to the part of the same neighbourhood without immigrants. This analysis directly demonstrates the xenophobia enacted through the aesthetics of gentrification and the active role that art, fashion, and consumption play in the neighbourhood's division. Wesselman argues that the newly-inserted globalized aesthetics of gentrification – following the typical creative incubator formula – displace the political battle over otherness occurring across the street.

Agency, Voices, and Activism

Part 3, "Agency, Voices, and Activism," foregrounds the emergence of representational politics in certain forms of anti-gentrification movements. These anti-gentrification struggles push back in diverse ways as activists respond to new or growing inequalities created through neoliberal urban redevelopment. A particular concern in Part 3 is the relationship between gentrification and racialized spaces, including the displacement of marginalized populations as a consequence of emerging hipster consumerist spaces. These urban conflicts have, in turn, activated agency and voice for anti-gentrification political movements.

In "Boulevard Transition, Hipster Aesthetics, and Anti-Gentrification Struggles in Los Angeles," Jan Lin provides an insightful study of Boyle Heights' rapid gentrification and the community resistance against that transformation. As Lin explains, residents in Boyle Heights, a historically Latinx neighbourhood, have fought back against arts-based gentrification. In particular, they have experienced the co-optation of the neighbourhood's Latinx ethnic identity by hipster entrepreneurs seeking to profit not only from new public infrastructure investments in the area, but also from the neighbourhood's edgy diversity. In response, Latinx grassroots activist

organizations have engaged in a neighbourhood-based anti-gentrification movement as they view the new art galleries and hipster aesthetics as threats to their community. Moreover, Lin argues, the activist organizations have struggled to gain ground and lay claim to their space despite deploying an anti-gentrification toolkit encompassing community-based art and theatre.

Gillian Jein considers the aesthetics of gentrification through analysis of street art and spatial politics in the Parisian banlieues. In “Speculative Spaces in Grand Paris,” she highlights the ways in which long-standing political and racial tensions between the centre and peripheries of the city are accentuated, critiqued, and destabilized by artists working against the backdrop of state-led urban redevelopment. Focusing on the work of JR, a street artist who combines large-format photography with the provocative ethos of graffiti, Jein shows how public art installations can bring gentrification into view by expressing the tensions involved in neighbourhood change.

Rebecca Amato argues in “On Empty Spaces, Silence, and the Pause” that the production of empty spaces in New York City is a crucial component of gentrification. Amato demonstrates that techniques such as filtering, investing in the aesthetic potential of ageing neighbourhoods, and declaring vacancy, have all helped to fuel gentrification. As she discusses, New York City encourages the development of underutilized land parcels for high-rises, green sustainable construction, and increased density. Amato contrasts these trends against the activist efforts to provide alternative, more inclusive models of urban redevelopment based on cooperative centres and community gardens.

The book’s final chapter examines confluences between mobility, technology, and gender in the urban peripheries of Delhi. In “The ‘Smart Safe City’” Ayona Datta extends existing thinking on gentrification by considering the ways in which new forms of “technocratic gentrification” have emerged in the global south as a result of the rise of smart cities and postcolonial urbanism’s dependence on acceleration and speed. In particular, she presents findings from an innovative research project that uses mobile technology and social media to support young women negotiating precarious lives in Delhi’s digital and urban margins. Datta argues that their everyday mobility across the city highlights the ambiguities and paradoxes of their lives, including tensions between belonging and exclusion.

Investigating Gentrification

The aesthetics of gentrification are rapidly transforming cities. These changes are both cultural and material. Culturally, the aesthetics of gentrification

transform the milieu of a place by adding to the displacement of low-income populations, racially marginalized ethnic groups, and other vulnerable populations priced out of their neighbourhood. Materially, the transformations are physical via investments in infrastructure, the redesigning of public spaces, and the building or rehabilitating of housing. Whether culturally or materially, these rapidly transforming spaces are ones of seduction and exclusion.

In the following chapters, we explore how seduction has played an essential role in attracting both people and capital to neighbourhoods labelled as “edgy,” “ethnically diverse,” “cool,” “hipster.” We also explore what happens when conditions of seduction collide with the political environment of local activists trying to stop or reroute gentrification. In terms of exclusion, the aesthetics of gentrification create spaces that are unavailable, inaccessible, or unaffordable for either existing residents or incoming populations. There may not be walls around these new developments, but as the Greenwich Peninsula example shows, the combination of flamboyant architecture, restricted mobility, and ambiguity over whether open space is public or private all contribute to forming an aesthetic of exclusion.

Our goal for this book is to encourage new dialogue on the aesthetics of gentrification, both within and beyond social science studies of gentrification. In our thinking, the chapters published here elicit crucial questions that should be further analyzed, theorized, and debated. First, who are the financiers of transnational gentrification projects? What proportion of the capital is being supplied transnationally via multinational corporations? Second, what other forms and methods of seduction and exclusion exist that have not been surfaced in this book? Third, how are the emerging anti-gentrification transnational social movements affecting the redevelopment and consequent transformation of neighbourhoods? Furthermore, to what extent can vulnerable populations increase their agency to secure benefits from the aesthetics of gentrification? Is this even possible? And, lastly, what role does racialization continue to play in the aesthetics of gentrification within a global Black Lives Matter movement?

This last question on racialization is critical to answer and, alongside the other questions raised above, we examine the role of racism in gentrification throughout several chapters. Summers’ study directly focuses on this issue through her discussion of the transformation of a Black community in Washington D.C. into a higher income multiracial neighbourhood where Blackness is accepted but represents a generic form of diversity that becomes commodified. In addition, Zipp, Hock, and Storrington discuss how Jane Jacobs approached issues of race, which represents a fresh perspective on Jacob’s work. Jein follows the racialized making (and unmaking) of the Parisian

banlieues as dangerous and deviant no-go zones. And Wesselman analyzes xenophobic processes tied to the aesthetics of satellite dishes in Amsterdam. These authors make the clear connection between racism in the aesthetics of gentrification and the “othering” of places.

Another important theme running through many of the chapters is the emergence and value of activism and transnational social movements. This is evident, for example, in Lin’s analysis of the community activism in Boyle Heights, Crisman’s discussion of anti-arts protest, and Newbury’s focus on artist-led critiques and resistance. Social activism against gentrification or tenant right protests, or even efforts to maintain the ethnic symbolism of neighbourhoods, are on the rise globally. The book’s examples span the United States, Britain, Brazil, Canada, India, The Netherlands, and France, and demonstrate the pivotal role social movements and “the revolt of the excluded” (Dikec 2017) can play in both resisting and reinforcing the aesthetics of gentrification.

These anti-gentrification movements constitute rebellious communities whose activist efforts to halt gentrification can make those spaces appear – at least superficially – more exciting, edgy, and attractive. Ironically, this frequently ends up contributing to gentrification because the atmosphere of resistance tends to increase the seductive capacity and cultural value of the neighbourhood, leading to the dispossession of original residents through rising rents and increased property taxes (Harvey 2012: 77-8). The implication is that the appeal of counterculture and the allure of “authentic local places” (Zukin 2009) are drivers of gentrification – hence our use of the phrase “seductive spaces and exclusive communities” in the book’s title. For example, Sirois points out a contradiction he observes in Montreal’s small boutiques. As he discusses in his chapter, these boutiques in a rapidly gentrifying neighbourhood cater to customers seeking unique local products as an alternative to the global economy, but the boutiques are actually plugged into and directly support the global consumer market. As this suggests, the aesthetics of gentrification can play a subtle yet influential role in maintaining contradictions that ultimately benefit neoliberal urban redevelopment.

Gentrification itself is now a structural condition of transition within cities across the world. It relies on a neoliberal, consumer-based population that is rapidly transforming neighbourhoods. As detailed throughout the book, gentrification commodifies local culture, creates inauthentic local narratives, and leads inexorably to displacement and expulsion. Three key elements are implicated in these processes: transnational neoliberal consumerism, global capital financing of the real estate market, and local

anti-gentrification social movements trying to resist these forces. All of these entangling elements combine to create eruptions of accelerated urban change. These urban transformations threaten to create neighbourhoods lacking uniqueness, an established history, or a sense of purpose and meaning. They lead to new forms of urban placelessness that impede belonging, reinforce exclusion, and further embed structural mechanisms of global inequality.

Works Cited

- Addie, Jean-Paul D. and James C. Fraser (2019) "After Gentrification: Social Mix, Settler Colonialism, and Cruel Optimism in the Transformation of Neighbourhood Space." *Antipode* 51.5: 1369-1394.
- Butler, Tim (2003) "Living in the Bubble: Gentrification and its 'Others' in North London." *Urban Studies* 40.12: 2469-2486.
- Castro, J.C.L. (2015) "The Consumer as Agent of Neoliberalism." *Matrizes, São Paulo* 9.2: 273-288.
- Dikec, Mustafa (2017) *Urban Rage: The Revolt of the Excluded*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Florida, Richard (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1982) "The Subject of Power." *Critical Inquiry* 8.4: 777-795.
- Harvey, David (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso.
- Knight Dragon (2020) "Vision." *Greenwich Peninsula*. Retrieved from: <https://www.greenwichpeninsula.co.uk/about/vision> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- Freeman, Lance (2005) "Displacement or Succession? Residential Mobility in Gentrifying Neighborhoods." *Urban Affairs Review* 40.4: 463-491.
- Lees, Loretta (2019) "Planetary Gentrification and Urban (Re)Development." *Urban Development Issues* 61: 5-13.
- Lees, Loretta, Tom Slater and Elvin K. Wyly (eds) (2010) *The Gentrification Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Lees, Loretta, Hyun Bang Shin and Ernesto López-Morales (2016) *Planetary Gentrification*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Lindner, Christoph and Brian Rosa (eds) (2017) *Deconstructing the High Line: Postindustrial Urbanism and the Rise of the Elevated Park*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Lubitow, Amy, Bryan Zinschlag and Nathan Rochester (2016). "Plans for Pavement or for People? The Politics of Bike Lanes on the 'Paseo Boricua' in Chicago, Illinois." *Urban Studies* 53.12: 2637-2653.

- Miriam Zuk, Ariel H. Bierbaum, Karen Chapple, Karolina Gorska and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (2017) "Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment." *Journal of Planning Literature* 33.1: 31-44.
- O'Sullivan, Feargus (2019) "That Sinking Feeling: London's 'Tide' Disappoints." *City Lab*, 11 July 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.citylab.com/design/2019/07/london-tide-park-diller-scofidio-renfro-landscape-design/593620> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- Osman, Suleiman (2011) *The Invention of Brownstone Brooklyn: Gentrification and the Search for Authenticity in Postwar New York*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rancière, Jacques (2004) *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. G. Rockhill. London: Continuum.
- Sandoval, Gerardo (2018) "Planning the Barrio: Ethnic Identity and Struggles over Transit-Oriented, Development-Induced Gentrification." *Journal of Planning Research and Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X18793714>
- Sassen, Saskia (2014) *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Smith, Neil (1982) "Gentrification and Uneven Development." *Economic Geography*. 58: 139-155.
- Saul, Heather (2013) "Boris Johnson's £60m Cable Cars Used Regularly by Just Four Commuters." *The Independent*, 22 November. Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnsons-60m-cable-cars-used-regularly-by-just-four-commuters-8954646.html> (accessed 16 April 2020)
- Transport for London (2020) "Emirates Air Line Passenger Journeys." Retrieved from: <https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/publications-and-reports/emirates-air-line-passenger-journeys> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- Wainwright, Oliver (2019) "London's Answer to New York's High Line? You Must be Joking." *The Guardian*, 10 July. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jul/10/tide-elevated-walkway-greenwich-peninsula-london-new-york-high-line> (accessed 16 April 2020).
- Zuk, Mariam, Ariel Bierbaum, Karen Chapple, Karolina Gorska and Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris (2017) "Gentrification, Displacement, and the Role of Public Investment." *Journal of Planning Literature*. 33.1: 31-44.
- Zukin, Sharon (1987) "Gentrification: Culture and Capital in the Urban Core." *Annual Review of Sociology* 13.1: 129-47.
- Zukin, Sharon (2009) *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. New York: Oxford University Press.

About the Authors

Christoph Lindner is Professor of Urban Studies and Dean of The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment at University College London, where he writes about cities, globalization, and social-spatial inequality.

Gerard F. Sandoval is an Associate Professor in the School of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon. His research focuses on the roles of immigrants in community regeneration, the urban planning interventions of governments in low-income immigrant communities, and the transnational relationships that exist within immigrant neighbourhoods.

8. In Residence: Witnessing and Gentrification in Susan Silton's Los Angeles

Susanna Newbury

Abstract

Los Angeles artist Susan Silton has created a type of performance practice based on the ethical imperative of reparative witnessing. Orchestrating deeply researched opportunities for participants to engage in elective communities, her art helps individuals see their roles in historic forms of crisis accountably. Several recent pieces reflect not only on global crises perpetuated by neoliberalism and US political fallout, but on a more specific, if tricky crisis: gentrification. Tracing Silton's own biographical relation to urban change, as well as the modes in which key works select specific sites of change as text or subtext, this article discusses the roles artists play in gentrification, as well as their potential for attending to its reparative aesthetics.

Keywords: arts district, reparative practice, real estate, Los Angeles, adaptive reuse

Los Angeles has been a flashpoint for conversations on art, race, ethnicity, and social justice for over forty years, and since that time artists have been positioned as strategic agents of urban change. In the city's Downtown those conversations have boiled over as the after-effects of gentrification – public policy aimed at economic development on a municipal scale – take hold. A former railroad complex became the Arts District in 2002. Bars and restaurants now spill east across Downtown's Alameda Street into Skid Row. Art galleries populate the industrial flats abutting historically working-class, immigrant Boyle Heights in what many residents see as

a sign of coming change (Miranda 2018). The politics and aesthetics of Los Angeles gentrification are front and centre, pitting artists, activists, gallerists, and municipal politicians against one another as complicit or active agents of change (Shaked 2017). Wild real estate speculation brings with it charges of urban whitewashing, anti-Latinx racism, and art elitism while simultaneously worsening a homelessness crisis that sees, according to some estimates, nearly 5,000 people spending nights on downtown streets (Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority 2019).

This wave of gentrification and displacement is not new. Rather, what is seen today in Downtown LA is the result of over thirty years of urban policy planning and legislation aimed at recapitalizing the city centre. That artists play a part in this dynamic is also not new. In fact, artists are often singled-out as bearers of gentrifications in ways both generative (they escalate rental prices in their search for 'affordable' space and bring overpriced coffee bars in their wake) and regulative (they are awarded preferential housing status as a first step in a longer real estate development cycle). But what is often missing as these issues are debated in media and public – and the arts public is no exception – is a historical understanding of how this came to be. While artists can form part of an opposition to the economic restructuring of urban space (Deutsche 1996), they just as often go unaware of their active participation in this process – their self-placement within a complex web of transactions implicating and affecting this change (Peterson 2011). This apparent lack of awareness on the part of both existing residents and artists seeking affordable rents, has produced the caricature pitting the self-interest of the gentrifier against the collective (and often ill-fated) resistance of the neighbourhood. It's a caricature that leaves little room for interpretation.

One counter-example can be found in the work of Susan Siltan, an LA artist who has made work that investigates the politics, aesthetics, and sites of artists' studios and movements as historical cycles of collectivity, belonging, and displacement. Her practice consists of conceptual projects that gather collaborators and audience members as co-authors for durational, site- and temporally-responsive performances. Typically organized in response to urgent political crisis, each performance is conceived in historical terms, a reprisal of earlier specific moments betraying similar symptoms in the present. Each performance, action, or object is absorbed into a constellation of texts, events, exhibitions, and publications orchestrated by Siltan to create a profoundly intertextual experience of exploring meaning in the context of change. Within the past decade, she has focused on economic crises affecting cities and citizens in the United States and elsewhere. On the surface, the

activities they join are elegiac and aesthetic. A group of women whistlers converged on a gallery in Culver City and a museum in Santa Fe, NM, their tunes re-telling the famous soundtracks of hypermasculine movies, like the *Godfather* (*The Whistling Project*, 2010-present). Eleven writers (I was one of them) researched short biographies of 118 artists, half living, half of whom committed suicide, compiled in an artist's book *Who's in a Name?* (2013) that remembers the overlooked. The dead artists' names had previously played on a scrolling marquee on Sydney's Australia Museum – Silton had entered them into *Your Name in Lights*, a 2011 participatory work by the artist John Baldessari that invited the anonymous submission of names to appear on the marquee in random order, a chance to literally see one's own name in lights. By squatting the piece, Silton gave each deceased artist the opposite chance – a renewed visibility in the afterlife in the name of remembrance rather than self-interest. The book, *Who's In a Name?* was illustrated with screen grabs of each name Silton assigned for submission, taken from the marquee's live-feed (Harren 2013). Her strategy of accompanying performance with other parts – borrowed texts, new essays, live lectures, video documentation, as well as the creation of new objects, seek to enact a different, discursive aspect of art production, one that makes explicit the complex contexts in which it unfolds.

Most recently, she has turned to Los Angeles, her home town, to focus on artists and their own responses to contemporary crisis events. While they vary from national politics to local issues, all can be grouped under fallout from the extreme forms of inequality produced under neoliberalism. With this perspective, migration, housing insecurity, and living conditions are all subjects that could be extracted from her work. But rather than making art that charts the visual look of such topics or seeks directly to intervene in imbalances of power neoliberalism produces, her work lies in a different, almost lyrical practice of calling attention and, in turn, beholding. Silton's framework of convening groups as witness to crisis generates a social praxis: a means of behaving ethically in complex relation to one another and to the outside world. One could think of her work as reparative in the sense recently proposed by literary critic Jess Row: staging a collective confrontation of a shared past in order to lay bare participants' complicity in allowing such dynamics of harm to continue into the present (Row 2019). Works like *In everything there is the trace* (2013), *A Sublime Madness in the Soul* (2015), and *Quartet for the End of Time* (2017) address themes of dispossession and remembrance in present-day Los Angeles by referring to displacements in time, particularly the economic depression and political totalitarianism of the 1930s and 1940s.

Though never explicitly named, the contemporary context such antecedents refer to is urban gentrification. Since 2013, many of her works have been designated site-specific, a discursive formation the art historian Miwon Kwon has defined as not just a functional location, but a “fragmentary sequence of events and actions *through* spaces,” a conceptual as well as physical “vector” in which space produces meaning (Kwon 2004: 29-30). Siltan sites her performances within this specific context – as both location and text for inquiry. In choosing to stage such events, recently, in charged spaces of divestment and recapitalization – South LA, Boyle Heights, the Arts District – her work complicates the intertwined relationship of art and urban redevelopment (Newbury 2021). But rather than passively accepting and perpetuating this state of affairs, Siltan builds self-criticism into her work, gathering participants as a means of rejecting the normative complicity of artists in cycles of gentrification, and in its place enacting a rigorous examination of self-accountability as an ethical process of making.

In order to understand this, we must begin with a history of gentrification as a form of public policy. It is a slow process, twinned with large-scale economic restructuring, and can take both prosaic and virulent forms. Rezoning, historic preservation, and live-work conversion ordinances are all examples of components in a longer gentrification cycle. Most often, differences of race and class become polarized and antithetical positions in this cycle, particularly in cities where decades-long restrictive mortgage lending practices (redlining), racialized policing, and gang injunctions bind working-class communities of colour in geographic isolation. In a city like Los Angeles, which saw an overwhelming wave of post-World War II residential and commercial development that created suburban affluence and urban divestment as racialized opposites, gentrification poses the potential of a second phase of violence enacted on the working poor and people of colour, recapitalizing the city not for its standing residents, but for a new and wealthier population considered more ideal (Avila 2004). Of course, this project is not unique to cities of the twenty-first centuries, nor as racially binary as it may seem. Historian Daniel Widener, for example, has written of intermediate stages of urban gentrification during World War II as an enactment of anti-Japanese American policy, chronicling how Japanese-American owned properties in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo were appropriated by the city, leased to new landlords, and rented largely to the city’s swelling population of African Americans following the Great Migration out of the US South (Widener 2003). Art Historian Kellie Jones has researched that African American population’s geospatial imagining of home as the genesis of the distinct visual aesthetics of Black Art in LA’s

the post-war era, itself framed by racist, restrictive housing policies aligned with municipal attempts at urban economic restructuring euphemistically known as urban renewal (Jones 2017).

From 1946 through to this day, Los Angeles as a municipal entity has taken pains to represent white citizens' economic exodus from the city centre as rationale for redevelopment. To make the city 'vibrant' has meant attracting new forms of capital investment that would appeal to a proper class of new urban residents, marked in common by consumer affluence. Early in this process, art and artists were identified for their potential to lure such consumers back to the city – a theory so influential it has itself produced a literature on the stimulating power of the so-called 'creative classes' (Florida 2002, 2018). In LA, this attempt began downtown. After levelling the multi-ethnic working class neighbourhood of Bunker Hill in the 1960s under the auspices of the Community Redevelopment Agency, the city spent over sixty years designing and redesigning the area in a hubristic attempt to usher in LA's new image as a powerhouse on the global stage (Davis 1990). Throughout it all, civic leaders imagined Bunker Hill evolving into a corridor for high culture. Implementation has been slow: the 1960s saw the construction of the Mark Taper Forum and Ahmanson Pavilion theatre and music complexes, the 1980s the founding of the Museum of Contemporary Art's main campus, the early 2000s the completion of the Disney Concert Hall, and with each phase came an initial bounce of enthusiasm quickly followed by inertia; the area is too disconnected from the rest of downtown, too corporate, inauthentic, and not sufficiently pedestrian friendly. Today, the neighbourhood conversion is now in its final, speculative phase. Currently known as the Grand Avenue Corridor, it is lined with big-name cultural institutions backed by big-name funders. A last piece, the \$1bn+ Frank Gehry-designed Grand Avenue Project, is under construction and, when completed, will form a luxury mixed-use residential tower complex whose proponents and detractors both already compare it to New York City's Hudson Yards (Lubell 2019). In this case, as in many, gentrification bypassed resettlement, funnelling private investment into multibillion-dollar projects now reading as showpieces of global capital more than they do the image of a thriving city (Peterson 2011).

But there was another enactment of gentrification started by the City of Los Angeles that pivoted not on large-scale renewal, but on residential real estate. Since 1981, such policy has been tested and implemented in an area of Downtown south and east of Bunker Hill, known today as the Arts District, previously the centre of LA's manufacturing economy since the early twentieth century. Laid along freight rail lines shadowing the Los Angeles

Figure 8.1: Silton's Anderson Street loft building, viewed from the Sixth Street Bridge, 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

River, the area consists of warehouses and factories, anchored by the Santa Fe Freight Depot. In the early twentieth century, it served as a distribution centre for the Inland Empire's citrus industry. After World War II, small manufacturers moved in, and a second wave of industry, this time focused on garment, tool, and cold storage for the Produce Market along Alameda Street. As trucking surged as a preferred means of conveyance between Downtown and the Ports of Los Angeles and San Pedro – a straight 20-mile shot south – many of the railyard's support structures went without tenants.

By the mid-1970s, offshoring and the outmigration of manufacturing in the United States rendered many such districts tenantless. Both state and local governments began responding by passing series of legislation aimed at shoring up the physical assets of such neighbourhoods – typically through live-work conversion ordinances that allowed for temporary adaptive reuse before any formal process of rezoning and private redevelopment could occur. Artists were identified as key agents of change as officials noticed their peremptory moves into such disused spaces and organized to legitimate their living arrangements (Zukin 1982). California passed laws allowing such conversions to bring properties up to contemporary health and building codes in 1979, and the City of Los Angeles followed up with an Artist in Residence Ordinance in 1982 that specified artists as a protected class of individuals charged with doing so (California Senate, 1979; LA City ord. 156279).

In fact, such changes to law were spearheaded by artists themselves who had begun moving into the upper floors of disused manufacturing properties throughout the 1970s in search of cheaper rents, and organized to lobby both state and local governments for the changes (Peterson 2011). A temporary Museum of Contemporary Art founded in part by artists, today's Geffen Contemporary branch of MOCA, was opened at the area's northern edge, its buildings adapted from garage and warehouse into the raw aesthetics of studio spaces that today collectively signify the look of creativity (Newbury 2021). In subsequent decades, artists themselves pushed to formalize adaptive reuse ordinances following enactments of various property tax breaks for developers working in historic districts (Peterson 2011). A 1999 adaptive reuse ordinance put into place redevelopment incentives for individuals occupying Downtown buildings constructed before 1974 (LA City ord. 172571). And, in 2002, such adaptive reuse benefit designation was given to the Arts District (LA City ord. 17459, 174978). Today, many cities use such arts-forward legislation to jump-start economic development. A common result, however immediate or delayed, is broad-scale gentrification, the state-sponsored set of strategic policies directed at recapitalizing and privatizing urban space.

But in the process, artists become canaries in the coal mines. City ordinances are frequently updated as gentrification takes effect, and with them come redefinitions of who count as artists. Beyond independent workers utilizing their homes for the direct production of studio or conceptual projects, since 1999 those qualifying for artist status need only show employment related to the arts or its production, broadly defined, or employment in a variety of occupations ranging from architect, designer, and photographer to accountant, attorney, software engineer, and real estate agent (LA City ord. 172792). As the definition of artist shifts to include professional classes, income levels eligible for rental units reserved for artists increase, creating a market where rents may be raised beyond the affordable designation many artists work within. In other words, artists, too, get gentrified out.

Susan Siltan is one of those artists. An LA native, her first studio building had been, in fact, downtown, near the corner of East 8th Street and San Julian Street bordering today's Flower and Fashion Districts. The building had been leased by her father – a 1930s Austrian Jewish émigré and Los Angeles clothing manufacturer – following the enactment of the 1982 Artist in Residence Ordinance. Siltan purchased the property with two others, converted it into rented live-work lofts, and managed it between 1983-1987. In her early career, Siltan worked as a graphic designer for the Los Angeles Theatre Company and other non-profit arts institutions, commuting daily

in the heart of the area. She was a member of a group of queer artists integrating conceptual and performance art with discursive approaches to identity and belonging, centred on a sense of place. She frequented artist-run gallery LACE (founded downtown in 1978), local 24-hour watering hole Gorky's Café, owned and operated by Judith Markoff, a former librarian at South LA's Manual Arts High School, Al's Bar (begun by Allen Ruppersberg in Skid Row's American Hotel), and the lofts and studios of other artists who had moved to the area (Silton 2019). In the long-observed pattern discussed above, she formed part of a wave of artist gentrification in the area (Zukin 1982).

As much as this period of her life mirrored the generic pattern of a first-wave gentrifier, Silton had a deeper connection to downtown: it was where her father first landed in Los Angeles in the early 1940s, opening a clothing business on Santee Alley. He soon moved the factory to Main and Jefferson, then to 35th and Broadway, a few miles south and just blocks across the Harbor Freeway from the University of Southern California. As a teenager Susan worked at the factory filing in the office, visiting the shop floor, and taking a front-row seat to the everyday life of industrial commerce. And she was witness, too, to the decline of the manufacturing business in the 1970s and early 1980s as a consequence of industrial consolidation and globalization, when the family largely switched over to managing rental properties on LA's Westside. Her own history with Los Angeles's changing urban space, therefore, extends through many iterations and communities across decades.

Forming community is a hallmark of her contemporary work, which, as previously noted, tends toward the performative. As often, those performances are keyed, directly or indirectly, to contemporary politics. They are also keyed to important periods and places from the past. In 2013's performance *In everything there is the trace*, for example, Silton staged bi-weekly typing sessions, inviting participants to collectively rewrite John Steinbeck's 1939 classic *The Grapes of Wrath* on ten typewriters set with archival rag paper during an exhibition at the University of Southern California's Fisher Museum. Over a three-month period, two hundred people – some of whom knew each other, most of whom didn't – signed up for and participated in the re-typing project, reading and inscribing Steinbeck's accounts of migration, labour, and economic marginality in collective sessions. But the typewriters were set without ribbons, generating only impressed copies of the texts in which the words, like the history of those dispossessed, are merely a trace of experience. The result is neither reproduction nor representation of Steinbeck's work. Rather, it evidences an

act of collective labour, articulated in the phantom strokes of keys leaving blank impressions as the only proof of existence.

We can also understand *In everything* as site-specific, in Kwon's discursive use of the term (Kwon 2004). USC is a major US university, a site committed to learning and knowledge, and a place where the past is investigated as history. It is also, famously, an agent of rapid urban change in its main campus South LA neighbourhood, in the early twentieth century home to the mansions of the city's elite, and since then a locus of an under-resourced population of African American and Latinx working poor, and in Boyle Heights, the location of the University's Keck Medical School. While Silton did not have control over the choice of site for this piece – she was invited to make the work as part of the Fisher Museum's 2013 exhibition *Drawn to Language* – the themes of her chosen topic nonetheless resonate there. In 2013, South LA was, like other communities of colour across the nation, reeling from the after-effects of the 2008 credit crisis, and experiencing extremely high rates of residential housing foreclosure due to predatory subprime mortgage lending. This dynamic spurred another intense forced migration, this time of people from their homes (Gottesdiener 2013). Though formal, the connection between Steinbeck's 1930s epic of deprivation and the area's 2010s epic dispossession was specific and poetic. A community gathered to bear witness to collective displacement within an art institution but generated nothing permanent.

Sometimes, as in the case of *In everything there is the trace*, Silton literalizes that movement as fodder for the work itself, even if it is also a consequence of her own life's contingency. A working artist, she often picks up camp and moves. After leaving her converted building on 8th and San Julian in 1987 following a post-earthquake condemnation, Silton moved through several studio spaces across the city. In 2005 she relocated downtown once again, just under a mile away to Anderson Street, just north of the Sixth Street Bridge on the east side of the Los Angeles River. In the grand scheme of things, Silton's path was like any other person's engaged in the daily life of a rapidly globalized city: having helped establish the very arts community marketing the neighbourhood as desirable, the private market moved in, and she moved out (Hackworth and Smith 2001). But within her own history, and within her art practice, these geographic movements take on a different resonance both personal and professional. Her work often centralizes her own person and history as a producer into the subject of larger cultural investigation. And part of that investigation was into her own circumstances as an artist, one imbricated within the politics of residence.

What does it mean for an artist to be ‘in residence’? For many, it is a category of labour, a professional context in which to develop in exception. At the turn of the last century, to be ‘in residence’ was in fact to depart home for isolation in the countryside. In more contemporary terms, an artist ‘in residence’ may still involve a physical decamping from home, but most often results in placement within (often provisional) community. The political and practical implications of artists residencies mean that rather than holding in place, artists donate personality to institutions and agencies as much as the latter return the former with creative space to develop (Badham, 2017). In the United States, for an artist to be ‘in residence’ also has a juridical dimension, such as in the example of Artist in Residence ordinances that allow professional-class housing advantages, and in some case secure their housing stabilities under so-called ‘Loft Laws.’ It can even imply self-institutionalization for purposes of access (as in the case of Los Angeles’ Woman’s Building) or as aesthetic practice with social aims for a community in place (Chicago’s Dorchester Projects serves as only one such example).

But in a sense, to be in residence implies a different politics of location: a rooting. And with that comes an ethics – a set of moral principles governing one’s behaviour. Recent projects by Silton have more directly addressed the ethics of being in residence as an artist in the changing city. Two serve as examples of this reparative witnessing. *A Sublime Madness in the Soul* and *Quartet for the End of Time*, a double, one-night performance conceived and executed in 2015 and 2017, respectively, consist of carefully choreographed collaborative performances keyed to strategic development sites in contemporary Los Angeles, staged, crucially, at the moment of their physical destruction. The first took the form of an open-air mini-opera performed at the (now demolished) 6th Street Bridge connecting Downtown LA and Boyle Heights. The second was a public performance of Olivier Messiaen’s well known 1941 musical piece of the same name, *Quartet for the End of Time*, at an emptied Arts District warehouse about to come on the market for commercial/mixed use redevelopment.

Planning for *A Sublime Madness in the Soul* began in 2015, as Silton prepared to face the news that her Anderson Street studio building might be sold in tandem with an adjacent infrastructure redevelopment project to demolish the historic 1932 Sixth Street Bridge, a famous backdrop for film and television shoots. Like art, film and television packages a neighbourhood for the real estate industry, forming an essential part of long-tail gentrification by ‘donating personality’ in the form of a media profile (Smith 1996). In the case of the bridge, the personality it donated to films was that of a dystopian viaduct to city life, and throughout much of the past thirty years, the life

Figure 8.2: Sixth Street Bridge showing railroad tracks in the foreground, June 1933. California Historical Society Collection at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA. CHS-35367. USC Digital Library.

symbolized by it was deteriorating. As was the bridge itself, designated unsound in 2004 and slated for demolition in 2016 (Fact Sheet, 2019). As part of an environmental impact study, the city had determined the long-planned demolition of the bridge would render her 1933 brick studio-warehouse building unsound, and she and the other artist-renters were at risk of being evicted after the building's proposed seizure by eminent domain (Impact Study 2011; LA City ord. 182958; LA AIN 5171-012-902). The cultural writing had been on the wall for several years, as new galleries began to move in up the street and other buildings went up for sale, anticipating the windfall of cultural rezoning and transit redevelopment on the area (Miranda 2016). Increasingly cognizant of the structural role artists played in this process, and of their own precarity as a consequence, Silton devised a farewell for the two structures, and for the neighbourhood as an artists' space.

Working with the singer and performance artist Juliana Snapper, Silton prepared a mini-opera libretto of found dialogue, taken from screenplays addressing money, power, and greed. Snapper composed an improvisational score for four singers, each to be positioned in the two windows of Silton's studio and the two windows of the adjacent studio looking out over the bridge. The work, which Silton designed to be performed in the darkness of night, relied on each window lighting up at the moment its inhabitant began

to sing, exposing the interior of the building in flashes. As in a formal opera house, the libretto lines were projected in white text onto the pop-up roof annex above, creating a parallel experience of sonic presence and textual protest. Amplified out the windows of the functionally vacant building, music and lyrics pounded into the night sky, interrupting the flow of auto traffic across the bridge, the sounds of trains ambling toward nearby Union Station, mixing with barking dogs and the tinny alarm bells of the light rail approaching an intersection. The building, otherwise silent, for a last moment reordered the sensorial life of the neighbourhood.

A Sublime Madness was not performed in a vacuum – Silton invited an audience via Facebook (Silton 2018), word of mouth, and printed flyers. The work could be seen from a variety of spatial positions within a visual sightline of the building near the eastern anchorage of the Sixth Street Bridge, edged in narrow sidewalks with occasional extended pockets gathered around streetlights. At the appointed start time, a set of two musicians approached each other from either side, playing songs all having in some way to do with capital and community. The instrumental overture announced the work to the crowds that gathered as dusk fell, watching and listening as *Sublime Madness* played out against one of LA's outrageous purple-orange sunsets. During one of the two performances, traffic slowed as a vintage car club, tracing its usual Saturday route over the Bridge from downtown back to East LA, came to a halt, listening as their radios mixed into the scene. They did so on a piece of physical infrastructure that provided a soon-to-be-impossible view. Demolition began on the bridge in 2016 to make way for a highly-landscaped park on the site of the former anchorage, which will be absorbed into Frank Gehry's proposed LA River Redevelopment, the material legacy of a 1930s public works project demolished for 2020s public experience – itself belonging to the aesthetics of gentrification. Silton's night in 2015 vanished as well as a memory.

The work's title, however, recalls another memory. 'Sublime madness in the soul' comes from the final pages of theologian Reinhold Niebuhr's *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, originally published in 1932, coincidentally the year of the Sixth Street Bridge's construction (Niebuhr 1932: 275). In the book, Niebuhr reflects on unchecked global inequality, the increasing prominence of a politics of hate, and the possibility of social justice in a world where an individual's capacity for love, in the religious sense, is threatened by a culture of self-interest. His argument rests on an understanding of a sharp distinction between moral and social behaviours of individuals and defined groups (national, racial, economic) of which they form part. Reflecting on cases from the American enslavement of peoples

Figure 8.3: Documentation from Susan Silton, *A Sublime Madness in the Soul*, 2015. Photo: Alexandra Brown. Courtesy of the artist.

Figure 8.4: Still from night of performance of Susan Silton's *A Sublime Madness in the Soul*, August 22, 2015. Video still on 6th Street Bridge. Video still: Alina Skrzyszewska. Courtesy of the artist.

of African descent to Spanish colonialism in Latin America, and fallout in European politics from the first World War, Niebuhr concludes that it is possible for individuals to behave morally, even if the groups in which they participate do not. As a consequence, individuals may not recognize when collective power exploits weakness, and the acts of justification an

individual may go through to reconcile immoral group behaviour is “one of the tragedies of the human spirit,” an “inability to conform collective life to individual ideas. As individuals, men believe they ought to love and serve each other and establish justice between each other. As racial, economic, and national groups they take for themselves whatever their power can command” (Niebuhr 1932: 9). The only response to the overwhelming grip self-interest has on individual behaviour, he writes, is for an equivalent power to eradicate it.

One of the worst forms of social injustice he identifies is economic power’s grip on political life. Niebuhr sees this as the cause of the most intractable forms of injustice. To him, the solution is revolution powered by the insanity such inhuman behaviour generates:

The discovery of elements of common human frailty in the foe and, concomitantly, the appreciation of all human life as possessing transcendent worth, creates attitudes which transcend social conflict and thus mitigate its cruelties. It binds human beings together by reminding them of the common roots and similar character of both their vices and their virtues. These attitudes of repentance which recognize that the evil in the foe is also in the self, and these impulses of love which claim kinship with all men in spite of social conflict, are the peculiar gifts of religion to the human spirit. Secular imagination is not capable of producing them; for they require a sublime madness which disregards immediate appearances and emphasizes profound and ultimate unities. (Niebuhr 1932: 275)

Gentrification is one such form of economics gripping political life in an era of self-interest. Its effects of displacement disaggregate individuals who might share common experience, and places them into groups where more prominent affinities (race, class, education, and so on) separate and antagonize, perhaps to the extent that they no longer see beyond appearances. An artist’s angry eulogy for her residence, her studio, is at the same time lament for one group and sign of impending crisis for another. By gathering groups to witness not destruction but the textural palimpsest of mediations on greed, *A Sublime Madness* created, if only temporarily, a reordered community defined by temporal coexistence rather than by social position. The ‘sublime madness’ the performance expressed was, in a sense, a reparative one. Artists reframed creative celebrations and condemnations of greed identified in the works of others, and reframed them as pretext to eviction. In so doing, those same artists and friends who attended had to face, in some way, their own complicity in that process – their ability to be

Figure 8.5: Documentation of 1399 Factory Place exterior, site for a performance of Susan Silton's *Quartet for the End of Time*, 2017. Courtesy of the artist.

present, to witness and participate in the making of art prepared the area for their own future exclusion. Furthermore, they were then coincidentally joined by Latinx residents of Boyle Heights, East LA, and neighbourhoods beyond made newly visible as future sites of economic displacement. At least in theory, such collectivities force the parties to consider their mutual implication in and oppression by the dynamics of gentrification that brought Silton to Anderson Street in the first place: the intersection of capital development, de facto ethnic cleansing, and pursuit of creativity that masquerades as the market.

Today, art, like real estate, becomes an expedient tool of capital formation, and Silton's recent work like *Sublime* identifies and illustrates that expediency as a condition worth scrutiny. She continued exploring these themes in her 2017 work *Quartet for the End of Time*, conceived shortly after the 2016 US presidential election as rage and lament. Staged on the cleaned-out ground floor of a pre-market Arts District warehouse, Silton directed two live concerts of the work, originally composed and performed by and for World War II POWs and their guards in a German Stalag (Ross 2007: 358-359). Silton's version was accompanied by an original dance score prepared by the choreographer Flora Weigmann, who formed part of the all-women cast of performers on both nights. As the musicians played on a spot-lit section of the sparse floor, level with and surrounded by the audience, a quartet of four dancers entered the light, moving around them, their gestures and facial expressions peering out, around, and over the audience, searching, like a blind chorus, for recognition in the darkness that appeared not to

come. Its 2017 performance seems like a sombre elegy for a vanishing era, and a warning of things to come, almost as if the two did not belong to the same continuity of time.

Silton's purpose was clear: to stage an historical work created at a time of deep political turmoil. But her staging of the work as a specific *experience of site* is also canny, if tongue-in-cheek, given the Arts District location and some of the transformations of sites as aesthetic consequences of gentrification, in which artists like Silton take part. In this sense, the warehouse site should be taken seriously as both audience and participant, as if the dancers peering into the darkness wanted some recognition for their spatial surroundings, too. The warehouse's location was purposeful: she wanted a non-professional space in a neighbourhood whose original function as waystation for the transfer of persons and goods now serves that purpose for the creative class, commuting daily to jobs in marketing, advertising, and architecture rather than in manufacturing or art making (Silton 2018). And, that intent bears out today as well as it did on the warehouse's construction in 1890 (LA AIN 5164-002-011). What was a railyard storage house is now a filming site as it awaits sale next to the new Los Angeles headquarters for Spotify (Jay Luchs Real Estate Brochure 2019). Part of Silton's inquiry, then, is into the overlooked backdrop for this change: the financialized real estate market that takes artists as its first-stage developers and sometimes unwitting collaborators in social transformation. Her *Quartet* asked its audience to observe their role in easing that transition, or, even, making it viable in the first place, gathered as they were – gallerists, artists, curators, and others – to witness and instantiate a moment of cultural capital in an empty building up for sale.

The sites of *Sublime Madness* and *Quartet* trace between them a geography of displacement: the line they connect describes the movement of arts-based development out of the central city and into its historically immigrant, working class residential neighbourhoods. Hovering over this discussion of Silton's practice is the rise of community protest over the expansion of arts district space and programming into the same areas; the conflict over the gallery-backed spaces and their assumed collateral impact on resident populations' ability to remain in community there. Silton's work, however embroiled in and constituent of gentrification in municipal play since the early 1980s, also serves a reflexive purpose: to lay bare the workings of such practices within comparative historical politics. The 1930s construction of the Sixth Street Bridge, for example, facilitated the growth of Boyle Heights and its connectivity to labour markets, just as its redevelopment will for different populations in the 2020s. Whereas *A Sublime Madness in the Soul* was a late-stage opportunity for gathering, *Quartet for the End of Time* offered

a temporary yet interruptive moment to recognize how the operations of a given site silently reorganize the anonymous daily life of urban users.

'Bearing witness' is the perfect phrase for Silton's work. In insisting on the conceptual-performative framework of duration and engagement, *Sublime* and *Quartet* depend on a collective beholding of choices enacted or observed in a given situation. The situation is always the same: art at the brink of social vanishing becomes the vantage for self-reflection. This idea of witnessing also has profound moral and ethical implications when we consider the social, cultural, and economic sea changes underpinning the work in the first place: art's increasing role as a financial instrument of global economic speculation. Artists have a choice to be present for their own convenient positioning as agents of economic change. The recognition of that power is something Silton herself is concerned with as an ethical imperative, and which she conceptually integrates into each level of her work, even the linguistic. If Niebuhr's philosophy revolved around a requirement that use of power serve justice rather than profit, the role of the artist in such situations of injustice should be rooted in strength of community versus the individual, and the necessity of scrutinizing and critiquing the contemporary world in light of that moral imperative (Niebuhr 1932).

This echoes an impulse in Silton's earlier work to explore the boundaries of self and other, mediated through her queer body personally experienced or received. It's a different way of being public – thinking about the repercussions of a person or their activity beyond the boundaries of their own experience. At a very basic definition, perhaps that's what a public is: an awareness of a multiplicity that doesn't just reframe the individual, but rather establishes an intimacy between otherwise disinterested parties brought together to bear witness to each other's presence. Silton's work positions artists among these responsible groups for witnessing and action. In a 2018 interview, she explained:

The money changing hands within our field is responsible for the economic boom changing downtown in this particular iteration, and it is displacing many communities made up of both long-term residents and working artists. That demands more attention and discussion on our part because without anything to stabilize it, this will mean the displacement – and therefore, the invisibility – of most artists I know. The only artists that will continue to have visibility in that world will be those in the 1%.

This prioritization of profit above all [...] in an unregulated way, contributes to the conditions that [isolate artists' zero-sum] mindset. That's

Figure 8.6: Site location, interior, for *Quartet for the End of Time*, 2017. Photo: Chris Wormald. Courtesy of the artist.

where our primary attention should be at this moment: how can we have a conversation that's really transparent. I feel those with privilege in the art world at the highest levels have an opportunity to guide that conversation. (Silton 2018)

In other words, for Silton, there is an existential imperative for artists to investigate and understand how economic and political power coalesce within a very small, privileged community. As a corollary to that, there is an imperative for artists to understand how speculation is an operative mechanism of our time, and how artists themselves are heavily implicated in it.

Literary critic Jess Row proposes sadness and acknowledgement of the infliction of hurt as a reparative position: a way of addressing the root of sadness the subject herself is involved in inflicting on others (Row 2019). The idea fits in well with Niebuhr's study of the dynamics of morality and immorality between individual and group. The question posed by protesters, as well as Silton herself, is less about the politics of art than it is about the issue of artists' complicity in urban redevelopment at a moment for the potential erasure of historic communities. In this sense, a reparative witnessing would involve addressing that complicity, integrating it into a structural understanding of their existence in the first place. The politics of observation in view of history are precisely the point. With *In everything*

there is the trace, revivifying Steinbeck's epic of displacement and migration sheds light on contemporary versions taking place mere blocks from the site of a university art museum, itself partaking in cultural erasure as it simultaneously provides a space for its ethical identification. In *Sublime*, Silton models the site-responsive artwork as a space of exception: a place temporarily institutionally reorganized for the production and export of a specific product, in this case, performance-based art that temporarily reorganizes perception of how art and development go together. *Quartet* manages to become both elegy and warning, a nod to the extreme politics of ethnic cleansing gentrification staged at a ground zero for the erasure of community in the name of profit. Her work is responsive to change in a way that doesn't necessarily seek to alter its course, but to lay bare the politics of its occurrence. Counteracting complicity requires and insists on an awareness of its consequences as they play out in real time and disappear, and Silton's work is no exception.

Works Cited

- Badham, Marnie (2017) "The Social Life of Artists Residencies." *Seismopolite* 18. Retrieved from: <http://seismopolite.com/the-social-life-of-artist-residencies-working-with-people-and-places-not-your-own> (accessed 11 October 2018).
- City of Los Angeles Bureau of Engineering (2019) "Sixth Street Viaduct Project Fact Sheet," August. Retrieved from: https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/6stbrp/pages/1/attachments/original/1565034702/NEW_FACT_SHEET_2019_final_8.5.19.pdf?1565034702 (accessed 2 April 2020).
- Davis, Mike (1990) *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Verso.
- Deutsche, Rosalyn (1996) *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Florida, Richard (2002) *The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Leisure, Community, and Everyday Life*. New York: Basic.
- Florida, Richard (2018) *The New Urban Crisis*. New York: Basic.
- Gottesdiener, Laura (2013) "The Great Eviction." *The Nation*, 1 August.
- Hackworth, Jason, and Neil Smith (2002) "The Changing State of Gentrification." *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie* 92, no. 4 (November): 464-477.
- Harren, Natilee (2013) "Susan Silton: 500 Words as told to Natilee Harren." *Artforum*, 12 July. Retrieved from: <https://www.artforum.com/interviews/susan-silton-discusses-who-s-in-a-name-41902> (accessed 28 March 2020).
- Jones, Kellie (2017) *South of Pico: African American Artists in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s*. Durham: Duke University Press.

- Kwon, Miwon (2004) *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Jay Luchs Real Estate (2019) *Properties for Sale 1242 Palmetto Street and 1399 Factory Place Informational Brochure*. Retrieved from: <https://www.jayluchs.com/properties/for-sale/1242-palmetto-street-and-1399-factory-place> (accessed 28 March 2020).
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (2019) "2019 Greater Los Angeles Homeless Count Data Summary, Skid Row." 2 August. Retrieved from: <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=3527-hc2019-skid-row-data-summary.pdf> (accessed 4 April 2020).
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 156279.
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 172571.
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 172792.
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 174549.
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 174978.
- Los Angeles City Council Ordinance 182958.
- Lubell, Sam (2019) "Can Big Names and Big Money Make the Grand a Great Civic Place?" *Los Angeles Times*, 22 May.
- Miranda, Carolina (2016) "Out! Boyle Heights Activists Say White Art Elites Are Ruining the Neighborhood." *Los Angeles Times*, 14 October.
- Miranda, Carolina (2016) "The Art Gallery Exodus from Boyle Heights and Why More Anti-Gentrification Battles Loom on the Horizon." *Los Angeles Times*, 8 August.
- Newbury, Susanna (2021) *The Speculative City: Art, Real Estate, and the Making of Global Los Angeles*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Niebuhr, Reinhold (2013) *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics*. 2nd ed. Lexington, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Peterson, Marina (2011) "Utopia/Dystopia: Art and Downtown Development in Los Angeles." In Marina Peterson and Gary McDonough (eds) *Global Downtowns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 209-233.
- Ross, Alex (2007) *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Row, Jess (2019) *White Flights: Race, Fiction, and the American Imagination*. Minneapolis: Graywolf.
- Shaked, Nizan (2017) "How to Draw a (Picket) Line." *Hyperallergic*, 14 February.
- Silton, Susan (2018) Conversation with the author, September.
- Silton, Susan (2019) "Artists at Work," interviewed by Susanna Newbury. *East of Borneo*, 15 July. Retrieved from: <https://eastofborneo.org/articles/artists-at-work-susan-silton/> (accessed 4 April 2020).
- Smith, Neil (1996) *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*. New York: Routledge.

State of California Department of Transportation (2011) "Sixth Street Viaduct and Seismic Improvement Project Final Environmental Impact Report." October. Retrieved from: http://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2011/11-1789_RPT_BOE_10-19-11-2.pdf (accessed 24 February 2020).

Widener, Daniel (2003) "'Perhaps the Japanese Are to Be Thanked?': Asia, Asian Americans and the Construction of Black California." *positions* 11.1: 135-181.

Zukin, Sharon (1982) *Loft Living: Culture and Capital in Urban Change*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

About the Author

Susanna Newbury is Associate Professor of Art History, Theory, and Criticism at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and the author of *The Speculative City: Art, Real Estate, and the Making of Global Los Angeles* (University of Minnesota Press, 2021).

Gentrification is reshaping cities worldwide, resulting in seductive spaces and exclusive communities that aspire to innovation, creativity, sustainability, and technological sophistication. Gentrification is also contributing to growing social-spatial division and urban inequality and precarity. In a time of escalating housing crisis, unaffordable cities, and racial tension, scholars speak of eco-gentrification, techno-gentrification, super-gentrification, and planetary gentrification to describe the different forms and scales of involuntary displacement occurring in vulnerable communities in response to current patterns of development and the hype-driven discourses of the creative city, smart city, millennial city, and sustainable city.

In this context, how do contemporary creative practices in art, architecture, and related fields help to produce or resist gentrification? What does gentrification look and feel like in specific sites and communities around the globe, and how is that appearance or feeling implicated in promoting stylized renewal to a privileged public? In what ways do the aesthetics of gentrification express contested conditions of migration and mobility? Addressing these questions, this book examines the relationship between aesthetics and gentrification in contemporary cities from multiple, comparative, global, and transnational perspectives.

Christoph Lindner is Professor of Urban Studies and Dean of The Bartlett Faculty of the Built Environment at University College London.

Gerard F. Sandoval is an Associate Professor in the School of Planning, Public Policy and Management at the University of Oregon.

"The book brilliantly demonstrates that a focus on aesthetics should be at the core of our understanding of gentrification and displacement forces."

– *Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Distinguished Professor of Urban Planning, UCLA*

"In this powerful collection of essays, editors Christoph Lindner and Gerard Sandoval identify the seduction of gentrification's aesthetics, its power to exclude, and the activism that can change its course."

– *Karen Chapple, Professor of City and Regional Planning, University of California, Berkeley*