

Some Recent Books

A final reminder that these processes are not universal, that they have long-histories, and that they are neighborhood specific. In the past few years, several books have been published that detail these processes in three different neighborhoods: SoHo, Harlem, and BedStuy. These books present a complex picture of the promises and failures of even the best-intentioned agents, and provide important historical knowledge from which to proceed (even if you may not agree with their author's own conclusions). They are just a few recommendations of a vast and growing literature on these topics.

Brian Goldstein, *The Roots of Urban Renaissance: Gentrification and the Struggle over Harlem*

Aaron Shkuda, *The Lofts of SoHo: Gentrification, Art, and Industry in New York, 1950-1980*

Michael Woodsworth, *Battle for Bed-Stuy
The Long War on Poverty in New York City*

To end a hopeful note, Colin Kinniburgh's review-article "[How to Stop Gentrification](#)" outlines some of the major problems confronting fair housing, but also details possible paths to ensure a decent home for all. He especially recommends David Madden and Peter Marcuse's recent book, *In Defense of Housing*.

Equitable Housing Resources

[Community Service Society of New York](#)

[The Fair Housing Justice Center](#)

[FUREE \(Families United for Racial and Economic Equality\)](#)

[Live-On NY Senior Housing](#)

[Picture the Homeless](#)

[Tenants and Neighbors](#)

[The University of Kansas's Community Toolbox](#)

[The Urban Justice Center](#)

[Artist Anti-Gentrification Resources](#)

[Art Against Displacement](#)

[Chinatown Art Brigade](#)

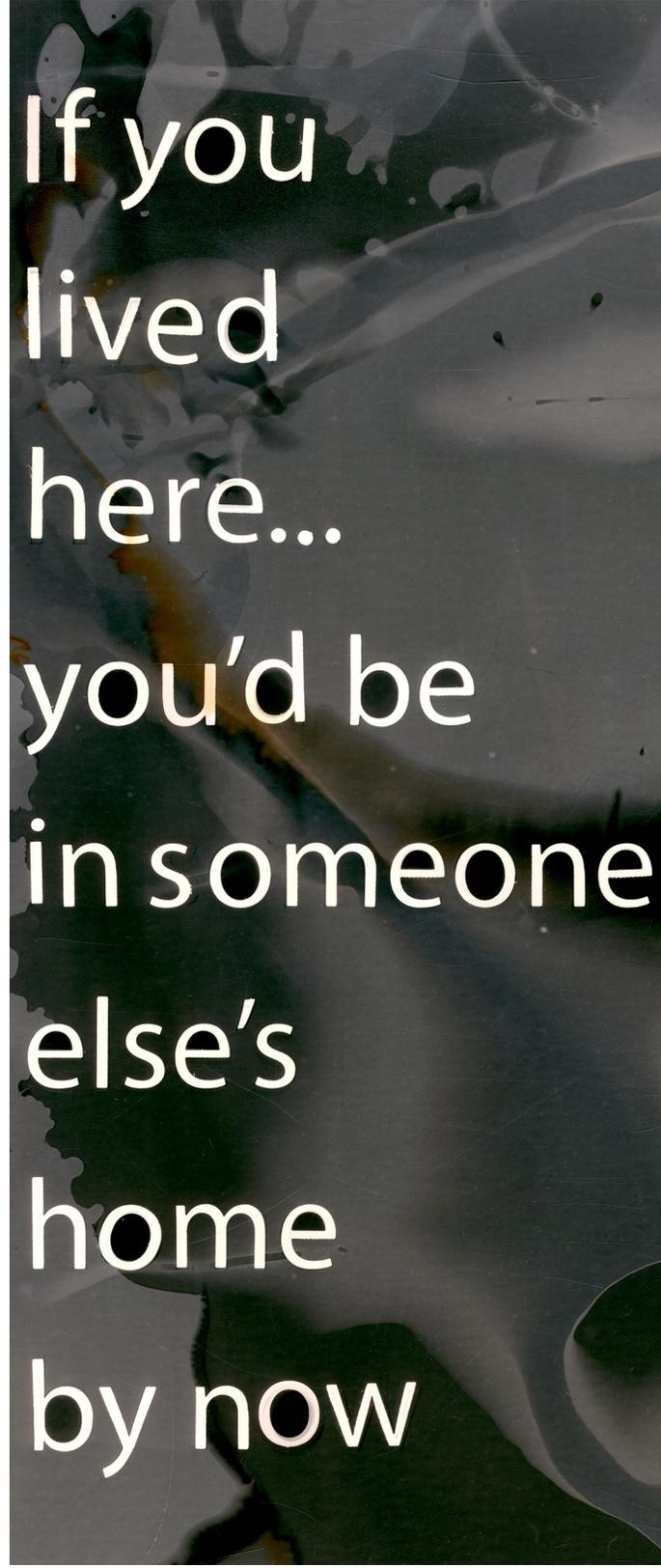
[Decolonize This Place](#)

[If You Lived Here...](#) (Martha Rossler's classic social practice work on whose legacy we hope to build)

Image by: Anthea Behm

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Thanks to 14x48.org



If you
lived
here...
you'd be
in someone
else's
home
by now

If you lived here

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There is nothing natural or obvious about gentrification. There is no particularly compelling reason why where we live should be determined by how much we make, or our parents made, or the luck of a housing lottery or city planning commission decision, or why when someone else with more money decides they want to live there that we should be forced out. Housing could just as well be determined by the location of our jobs (as it was in many industrial towns), or by our current studies (as it is in dorms), or by our communities (as it is in communes). Land ownership could be communal, or run by public, non-governmental organizations, or state-run.

And gentrification is not the only problem we face with regard to housing displacement. Wherever one lives, however much one pays, and however one arrived to this country, New Yorkers live in lands that were once the home of the Lenape and other peoples. Such displacement is true for much of this country. Much of the world, indeed, is a history of people displacing other people without care for the lives and homes destroyed. If you live here—anywhere—you're in someone else's home already.

Cycles of displacement do not only affect the poor. Increased inequality that depletes housing stocks drives boom and bust cycles; decreases the quality of public service and increases the costs of private care; tears at the social fabric and creates invidious and unnecessary distinctions in what could be communal lives. There *is* enough housing for everyone. There *are* ways to make not just decent but good housing available to all of society. And there are steps that you can take to make the place you live a site of refuge, welcome, and community.

Conscientiousness matters. Recognizing that our own displacements do not justify the displacements of others is part of what can end this cycle. We have designed this billboard to help encourage reflection on these matters. It has been made through a unique process combining digital imagery, photographic paper, and the uneven exposure of that paper to light. This “uneven development” of the photographic paper is a physical registration of the processes—both planned and accidental—which enable some elements of a community to prosper while others struggle.

Redistributive action matters. After creating the image in its analogue form, we scan it back into the digital world for further mark-up and manipulation. This process again registers the ways in which much of the wealth of this area is being created: through complex financial instruments that turn real human labor into fantastical profits through manipulation. But these same processes that create uneven development can be used to transform the system. There is no reason that the circulation of goods or their transformation in our modern, digital economy cannot be equitably produced and distributed.

There are a great many things that we can do to make our neighborhoods places of redemption and refuge. These include: supporting reparations and right of return for land confiscation at home and abroad, actively advocating for increased public housing, refusing “not in my backyard” politics, joining housing rights organizations, and voting in part based on candidates' proposals for affordable housing. We must act both locally and globally, connecting fights for justice in housing around the world. Merely displacing exploitation itself onto another community or country will not solve the problem. Get started right away with the list of readings and organizations on the back of this pamphlet