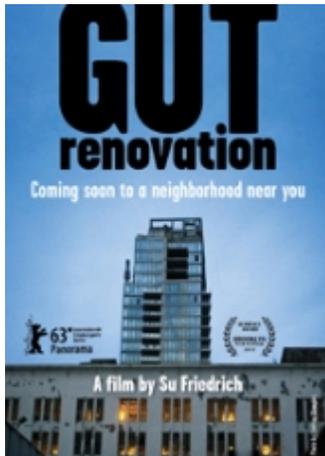


## BEYOND CHRON—San Francisco’s Alternative Online Daily News

### S.F. DOCFEST—“GUT RENOVATION,” “F\*\*K FOR FOREST,” “THE MAYOR”

S.F. DOCFEST—“GUT RENOVATION,” “F\*\*K FOR FOREST,” “THE MAYOR”  
by Peter Wong, Jun. 06, 2013



“Gut Renovation,” veteran avant-garde documentarian Su Friedrich’s newest film, will definitely stir anger in the hearts of former Mission and SOMA residents priced out of the neighborhoods they lived in. Despite its East Coast setting, the truths and dark humor captured by Friedrich’s film unfortunately apply to the West Coast as well.

In 1989, the filmmaker moved into the Williamsburg area of New York City. Williamsburg was a six block by fifteen block area of light industrial factories, small businesses, and former commercial buildings converted by sweat equity to artists’ lofts. In 2005, Mayor Bloomberg’s administration rezoned the area to encourage redevelopment. Eviction waves hit Williamsburg over the next few years, forcing out existing artists and neighborhood businesses. Friedrich’s personal film chronicles the greed-fueled destruction of the neighborhood she loved.

Many frames of “Gut Renovation” tremble with Friedrich’s barely suppressed anger. Sometimes her feelings are expressed in snarky onscreen titles such as one observing Williamsburg’s invasion by designer dogs and their well-heeled owners. Yuppies complaining about unapologetic filming of their activities appear utterly petty next to seeing former Williamsburg residents losing their homes and livelihoods. But an animated neighborhood map provides the film’s best visual metaphor. As old Williamsburg buildings get destroyed, the cumulative decimation captures the depth of redevelopers’ greed.

Apologists for gentrification will claim that the mass redevelopment replaced Williamsburg’s old dirty buildings with newer cleaner structures. Friedrich’s camera shows what developers call age and dirt are the architectural equivalent of character built from years of living and associating with one’s neighbors. By contrast, the interiors of the expensive condos that replaced those old

Williamsburg buildings reflect an aesthetic that's the architectural equivalent of botox.

Two pieces of graffiti seen in the film encapsulates the heartbreak of Williamsburg's redevelopment. A sign reading "Williamsburg" gets changed to "Condoburg." An "Artists lived here" graffiti posted on the Internet brings forth comment trolls applauding the artists' eviction from the neighborhood. One wonders if City Hall would also be happy with San Francisco becoming a West Coast Condoburg.

<http://www.beyondchron.org/news/index.php?itemid=11450>