



# Hollow City: Gentrification and the Eviction of Urban Culture

*Rebecca Solnit*

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California's Bay Area is home to nearly a third of the venture capital and internet businesses in the United States, generating a boom economy and a massive influx of well-paid workers that has transformed the face of San Francisco. Once the great anomaly among American cities, San Francisco is today only the most dramatically affected among the many urban centers experiencing cultural impoverishment as a result of new forms and distributions of wealth.

A collaboration between writer-historian Rebecca Solnit and photographer Susan Schwartzberg, *Hollow City* surveys San Francisco's transformation—skyrocketing residential and commercial rents that are driving out artists, activists, nonprofit organizations and the poor; the homogenization of the city's architecture, industries and population; the decay of its public life; and the erasure of its sites of civic memory.

Written as a tour of the city's distinctive characters and locales, Solnit's text grounds the current evictions in earlier histories of urban renewal and the economic geography of artists, from Haussmann's impact on the Paris of Baudelaire, to the relationship between the Beats and San Francisco's African-American community during 'negro removal' of the 1950s. She investigates the ways wealth is now clear-cutting the cultural richness of American urban life, erasing space for idealism, dissent, memory and vulnerable populations.

Schwartzberg's photo-essays document the profusion of construction and demolition projects in the city, the imperial spaces of dot-com businesses, the proliferation of retail chains, and the rapid disappearance of areas in which artists can live and create. They feature works by more than a dozen San Francisco artists.

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