

11.329 Social Theory and the City

Session 5: "Stealth Gentrification: Camouflage and Commerce on the Lower East Side"

The class discussed a draft work-in-progress written and presented by the student Lara Belkind. Lara provided a summary presentation of her work, which looked at the way that artists and representatives of counter-culture have subtly transformed marginal neighborhoods into sites of gentrification by appropriating the urban form of those communities to give themselves authenticity as people outside the mainstream culture. Students were asked to comment on, criticize, and present their questions about the theoretical content of the piece.

Theoretical issues underpinning the content:

- Authenticity: What does it mean to be authentic?
- Mediation: What is being mediated? Who is mediating?
- Invisibility
- Center vs. Periphery (vertical/horizontal)
- Boundary