

understanding of a complex process of realignment and appropriation as social spaces and economic initiatives perceived as “Western” come to be more closely aligned with those more clearly aligned with the elite of China (again both local and foreign born). This summary does little justice to the diverse voices and eye for detail that populate a text that takes on expatriate economic, architectural, culinary, sexual, and educational fields of intersection. Few have written so thoughtfully about the “blurred racial boundaries” within the once largely white expatriate community (36).

Still, the pattern holds throughout the various chapters and concurrent subjects of the text. As we reach the end of the book, we find that Farrer makes a case for a tacit but hopeful reconciliation of all parties involved as the elite cosmopolitan communities Western and white, on the one hand, and Asian local and transnational on the other hand, come to terms with a shared socioeconomic terrain. Farrer hints at a hope for a more equal future and an increasingly mutual understanding that transcends the earlier colonial dynamics of expat and national with which he began in the 1990s as a variety of elite communities learn to live and work together in a city transcending its colonial past. We end our journey in 2018 as this negotiation continues and potentially diverges from the thesis.

The author clearly has developed a far-reaching social network and his contracts provide much insight into the changing dynamics of international life in Shanghai. These individuals, unfortunately, rarely become fully fleshed-out characters in the story Farrer tells. Instead, they are the sources for key quotations that propel the narrative forward through the key issues of 21st century transnational social science.

There is a sense of comfort in the patterns described that could be read as the kind of talk that takes place in cocktail parties and nice restaurants. One wonders about the delicate line being walked by the author in order to maintain these relationships while also casting a critical eye. While power is always in play, “studying up” brings its own issues. But it is not clear if Farrer is studying up or participating in something more like “intimate ethnography.” The relationships come off as collegial, the conversations read as comfortable and honest (if edited for the sake of narrative consistency). Many fascinating statements are left largely uninterrogated while still successfully propelling the story forward. This lack of critical engagement is, as stated at the beginning, the price we pay as readers for access to the insights allowed. And there are many. Farrer succeeds in providing an overarching picture of a changing landscape, populated with many fascinating voices. Asking for more interrogation of these voices might be asking too much for such a brief but insightful manuscript.

CONTESTED CITY: ART AND PUBLIC HISTORY AS MEDIATION AT NEW YORK’S SEWARD PARK URBAN RENEWAL AREA, by **Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani**. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2018. ISBN:978-1-60938-611-5; 234 pp; \$50; hardcover.

Reviewed by

David Halle

UCLA and CUNY Graduate Center

City & Community 18:4 December 2019

doi: 10.1111/cico.12462

© 2019 American Sociological Association, 1430 K Street NW, Washington, DC 20005

This delightful, highly original, and fascinating book is a study of the history and present of an area of roughly fourteen-square blocks on Manhattan's Lower East Side. The area was designated by the city from 1967 to 2013 as the Seward Park Urban Renewal Area (SPURA). As such, in the 1960s, the city claimed this area for "demolition and construction," and condemned and tore down most of its tenement buildings, displacing over 1,800 families, mainly low-income and Latino. But the reconstruction part basically stalled and never happened as the many interested parties, from city planners and local residents to politicians and housing activists, fought over what should become of the site. The author sets out to tell this story, which fully engages with the many problems with "urban renewal," in graphic detail.

Then, in 2013, the area entered its current phase. Officially renamed and rebranded as Essex Crossing, the term given it by NYC's Economic Development Corporation after much of the area was rezoned for development in 2012, the land was then handed over to the winner of a 2013 RFP for reconstruction/development along specific lines, to which the local Community Board (CB3) had consented and had input. (Community Boards are New York City's officially designated source for community input into planning issues.) The winning team was L+M Dev Partners, BFC Partners, and Taconic Inv Partners, along with a nonprofit partner Grand St Settlement, all now operating under the name Delancey St. Associates.

Essex Crossing, whose many parts are now either recently built or under construction, embodies most of the numerous issues and debates that pervade urban development in today's New York City. Indeed, the overall project exudes "on-the-one-hand, on-the-other-hand" judgments, as the author sets out in wonderful and passionate detail. For example, in November 2017, the first new building opened, 175 Delancey St. It contained 99 below-market one-bedroom rental apartments for people 55 and older, a testimony to the advocacy of community organizations and CB3. Further, these units, and all the other "affordable units" to be built as part of the Essex Crossing, are legally required to keep forever ("lifetime") whatever stipulations make them "affordable," rather than have expiration dates (e.g., after 20 or 30 years), which is the case with "affordable" units almost everywhere else in New York City. Yet, the Essex Crossing's less positive features are numerous in the author's view. As she writes: "the site is a plum for developers and its luxury housing, shopping, and cultural spaces will contribute to accelerate the dramatic development on the Lower East Side—at such a scale and cost that 'gentrification' might no longer be the word to describe it." She concludes: "We need all the help we can get so that we don't wake up one day to find that here in New York City we live in a place that caters solely to desires that can be satisfied through purchases but that is devoid of any real investment in our lives, our hearts, our souls... and most importantly our investments in each other." (pp. 129, 135)

The author's recipe for a bright outcome is also what constitutes her very distinctive methodology in the book and in her professional life. Since 2008, she has been teaching an annual City Studio class for undergraduates at the New School, which has focused on SPURA/Essex Crossing. The approach uses art and dialogue to produce a series of exhibitions, and collaborations with local activists, in order to illuminate and engage with the subject matter. She calls this the "Layered" approach. Reflecting this, the book

has several chapters, which reproduce in text the numerous walking tours of the area that she has conducted over the years. Crucial among the “layers,” which she is dedicated to presenting, are the histories of the peoples and buildings that once filled the area, but her overall aim is to use these layers to promote real community and civil debate in today’s Essex Crossing. The approach is both wonderful and subtle; it would be terrific if all of New York City’s mega projects could receive the same treatment as they proceed.

CONTEMPORARY BOHEMIA: A CASE STUDY OF AN ARTISTIC COMMUNITY IN PHILADELPHIA, by **Geoffrey Moss**, **Rachel Wildfeuer**, and **Keith McIntosh**. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Publishing, 2019. ISBN: 9783030187743; 126 pp. \$59.99 paperback.

Reviewed by

Judith R. Halasz

State University of New York at New Paltz

Artists have played a central role in the history of bohemian communities from Paris’ Latin Quarter to New York City’s Greenwich Village, Lower East Side, and Williamsburg. Artists provide the cultural capital, unconventionality, vibrancy, and hipness that give bohemian neighborhoods their distinctive character. Their liveliness and rich cultural consumption opportunities often draw in more affluent people attracted to the lifestyle amenities and liberal attitudes. As creative class and hipster lifestyles gain broad appeal among urbanites, real estate developers, entrepreneurs, and municipal urban planners, vestiges of bohemia have become increasingly widespread, albeit in increasingly gentrified areas. Yet, the relationship of these areas to seminal bohemian communities is tenuous.

In *Contemporary Bohemia: A Case Study of an Artistic Community in Philadelphia* (2019), Geoffrey Moss, Rachel Wildfeuer, and Keith McIntosh situate Philadelphia’s Fishtown/Kensington neighborhood at the contemporary intersection of artistic and bohemian communities. Based on ethnographic and historical research, they identify continuities and disjunctures between Fishtown/Kensington’s post-industrial “artistic bohemian lifestyle community” and the character of classical bohemian enclaves (p. vi). In doing so, they interrogate the traits essential to sociospatial formations associated with the history of bohemia.

The book begins with an overview of their case study of Fishtown/Kensington and the limitations of prior scholarship on bohemia. Chapter Two establishes the defining features of classical bohemia by describing the seminal communities in mid-19th century Paris and early 20th century Greenwich Village, which united creative, intellectual, and political radicals bent on challenging bourgeois social and economic conventions. Chapter Three examines Brooks’ (2000) bourgeois bohemians, Florida’s (2002) creative class, Zukin’s (1982) loft living phenomenon, and Lloyd’s (2006) neo-bohemia as contemporary vestiges of bohemia that blend the creative and cultural capital of old bohemias with urban redevelopment, economic aspiration, and bohemian consumption among the