

# GUT renovation

Coming soon to a neighborhood near you

 63<sup>rd</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Panorama

AUDIENCE  
AWARD  
BROOKLYN  
FILM FESTIVAL  
2012

A film by Su Friedrich

Photo by Lindsay Waugler

 **outcast**  
■■■■ FILMS

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# GUT RENOVATION

a film by Su Friedrich

81 minutes, color, USA, 2012

## SYNOPSIS

A documentary of small changes evolves into an historical record of New York. The resulting film is an essayistic requiem for a neighborhood and an entire way of life; it also provides a case study of the rapid gentrification of our cities.

In 1989, together with a group of female friends, Su Friedrich rented and renovated an old loft in Williamsburg, an unassuming working-class district of Brooklyn. In 2005 this former industrial zone was designated a residential area and the factories, manufacturers and artists' lofts were priced out by property speculators lured by tax breaks. Friedrich spent five years documenting with her camera the changes in the area between East River and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. She shows the demolition of industrial buildings and the construction of trendy new apartments for wealthy clients, watching old tenants leave and new inhabitants arrive. As she keeps meticulous record of developments, the extent and speed of the upheaval becomes clear. Her own tenancy agreement expires too and so her documentary images and trenchant commentary become the tools of her growing anger.

## SELECTED QUOTES - FULL REVIEWS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

*"Su Friedrich...has made the most salient and personal film about Brooklyn's ever-changing face since Hal Ashby's 'The Landlord' appeared in theaters some 43 years ago. Her 'Gut Renovation' is bound to polarize audiences. It's a polemical howl in the night, a desperately angry and sidesplittingly funny look at one oh-so-mythologized neighborhood's transformation...[It's] a film essay that is of a piece with the work of heady French names like Godard and Varda."*

**—Brandon Harris, FILMMAKER MAGAZINE**

*"Friedrich uses all manner of wry digs and ironic whimsy to make her point...the "damn-the-torpedoes" directness of her spoken and superimposed commentary gives the film its unique bite and personality."*

**—Ronnie Scheib, VARIETY**

*"[A] sarcastic documentary polemic about the gentrification of a Brooklyn neighborhood... Ms. Friedrich is fighting mad. She is a provocateur."*

**—Stephen Holden, THE NEW YORK TIMES**

*"Su Friedrich's sardonic, scathing portrait reveals a thriving enclave of industry and artists, overrun by 173 (and counting) new constructions and conversions...the magnitude and insensitivity of the transformation are stunning. Highlight: a six-minute tour de force (scored to Vivaldi) in which construction workers attempt—over weeks—to move a boulder that heroically resists displacement."*

**—David Edelstein, NY MAGAZINE**

*"'Gut Renovation' displays genuine New York temper.... Friedrich's self-deprecating pique, familiar from her previous personal documentaries, makes this a rare depiction of privileged-yet-aggrieved urban lifestyles; one of the most honest New York stories ever put on the screen. It reproves the lies and self-deceptions of Woody Allen's movies..."*

**—Armond White, CITY ARTS**

*"Friedrich may be filled with righteous anger and deep sorrow, but she never loses her sense of humor. Particularly amusing are her tours of various open houses for cramped, cookie-cutter apartments selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars. She...invariably ruffles the people showing her around. You can see the alarm in their eyes: just who is this woman, anyway? She seems like she might be dangerous. Maybe she is. Artists are supposed to be that way, after all."*

**—Sarah Goodyear, THE ATLANTIC**

## SCREENINGS

**WORLD PREMIERE**  
**Brooklyn Int'l Film Festival**  
June 2012  
**WINNER: AUDIENCE AWARD**

**INTERNATIONAL PREMIERE**  
**Berlinale 63**  
February, 2013

**THEATRICAL PREMIERE**  
**Film Forum, NYC**  
March 6-12, 2013

**Dortmund/Cologne**  
**International Women's Film**  
**Festival**  
April 2013

**Athens International Film**  
**Festival**  
April 2013

**Clinton Street Theater**  
Portland, OR  
May 2013

**San Francisco DocFest**  
June 2013

**Viennale**  
October 2013

**University of Rhode Island**  
April 2013

**Princeton University**  
April 2013

**Hamilton College**  
April 2013

**National Gallery of Art**  
March 2013

**New School University**  
March 2013

**Filmwax**  
December 2012  
**City College of New York**  
November 2012

**Images, Toronto**  
September 2012

**58<sup>th</sup> Robert Flaherty Film**  
**Seminar**  
June 2012

## **CAST, CREW, CREDITS**

### **CAMERA, WRITING, EDITING and GRAFFITTI**

Su Friedrich

### **WRITING and EDITING CONSULTANT**

Cathy Quinlan

### **ADDITIONAL EDITING CONSULTANT**

Janet Baus

### **COLOR CORRECTION CONSULTANT**

Shanna Maurizi

### **POST-PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS**

Cubby Dimling

Ariel Hahn

Dani Leventhal

Allison Paz

### **SOUND MIX**

Bill Seery/Mercer Media

### **INTERVIEW/APPEARANCE/ PERFORMANCE**

Munesh Bissessar

Cathy Diamond

Pete Friedrich

Mimi Hassimi

Amy Jenkins

Peter Kuper

Francisco Oyla

Michael Perconti

Cathy Quinlan

Harry Ragubir

Edwin Sanabria

Martina Siebert

Romin Sirjue

Caspar Stracke

### **PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEOS OF LOFTS**

William Basinski

Amy Jenkins

Ruth Kahn

Linda Pellagrini

### **HECLA IRON WORKS IMAGES**

The Science, Industry and Business Library at  
The New York Public Library

### **PANORAMA OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Queens Museum of Art

### **FUNDED IN PART BY**

The University Committee on Research in the  
Humanities and Social Sciences

&

The Peter B. Lewis Center for the Arts,  
Princeton University

## ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Until 2005, Williamsburg was a modest Brooklyn neighborhood that was home to working- and middle-class Italians, Hispanics and Poles, small industries, and increasingly to artists who were fleeing Manhattan real estate prices. It was also my home; in 1989, we renovated an abandoned loft in a commercial building which we then rented and shared with a changing assortment of three roommates.

By the late 90's we noted the increasing changes—the sushi restaurants, the organic shops, the boutiques. Gentrification had taken hold, but it wasn't until the City Council passed a rezoning ordinance in May 2005 that all hell broke loose. Developers were often being given twenty-five year tax abatements for building; everything that was available was purchased, and almost everything else was gradually made so through evictions or skyrocketing rents.

In late 2005, I began to record all the demolitions and constructions. Over the next three years, in an area bounded by the East River and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway—an area 6 blocks wide by 17 blocks long—I recorded 173 sites. And in late 2008, I also began to record what was happening in our own home, since it was becoming clear that we would also have to leave, as had so many other artists already.

In making *Gut Renovation* I was concerned with documenting two central aspects of my experience as the neighborhood collapsed around me. These were the physical changes—the heart-rending loss of so many beautiful old industrial buildings, as well as the men and women who worked in them—and the changes in our lives—the loss of our living and working space and of the friendships we had forged with our roommates and neighbors.

## CAREER SUMMARY OF SU FRIEDRICH

Su Friedrich has produced and directed twenty 16mm films and videos, including *Gut Renovation* (2012) her newest release. Other notable films are *Hide and Seek* (1996), which screened at the Berlinale and at Sundance in 1997, and *Sink or Swim* (1990). Her work is widely screened around the world and has been the subject of retrospectives at numerous museums and festivals including The Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, The Rotterdam International Film Festival, The National Film Theater in London, the Bios Art Center in Athens, The Cork Film Festival in Ireland and The Stadtkino in Vienna.

Her work is in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Royal Film Archive of Belgium, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the National Library of Australia, as well as many university libraries. The films are distributed by The Museum of Modern Art, Outcast Films, Canyon Cinema, The Canadian Filmmaker's Distribution Center, Light Cone in Paris and the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek in Berlin.

The films have been reviewed in many publications, including *Variety*, *Premiere*, *The Village Voice*, *Artforum*, *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *Film Quarterly*, *The Millennium Film Journal*, *Sight and Sound*, *Corriera della Serra*, *Flash Art*, *Cineaste*, *Die Presse*, *The Independent*, *Afterimage*, *Arte e Critica*, *Der Standard*, *La Repubblica*, *The British Film Institute Bulletin*, and *The L.A. Weekly*. Essays on her work as well as excerpts from her scripts have appeared in numerous books, including *Modern Women: Women Artists at the Museum of Modern Art* (2010), *Cinema brut: Eine alternative Genealogie der Filmavantgarde* (2010), *Adventures of Perception* (2009), *Women's Experimental Cinema* (2007), *501 Movie Directors* (2007), *Contemporary American Independent Film: From the Margins to the Mainstream* (2005), *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde, 1943-2000* (2002), *Left In the Dark* (2002), *Collecting Visible Evidence* (1999), *Experimental Ethnography* (1999), *The New American Cinema* (1998), *Play It Again, Sam* (1998), *Film Fatales* (1998), *Cinematernity* (1996), *Screen Writings* (1994), *Women's Films* (1994), *Avant-Garde Film: Motion Studies* (1993), and *Critical Cinema: Volume Two* (1992).

## FILMOGRAPHY and VIDEOGRAPHY

**Gut Renovation** 2012, 81 min., video  
**Practice Makes Perfect** 2012, 11 min., video  
**Funkytown** 2011, 1 min., video  
**Conservation 101** 2010, 6 min., video  
**From the Ground Up** 2008, 54 min., video  
**Seeing Red** 2005, 27 min., video  
**The Head of a Pin** 2004, 21 min., video  
**The Odds of Recovery** 2002, 65 min., 16mm  
**Being Cecilia** 1999, 3 min., video  
**Hide and Seek** 1996, 65 min., 16mm  
**Rules of the Road** 1993, 31min., 16mm  
**Lesbian Avengers Eat Fire, Too** 1994, 60 min., video  
**First Comes Love** 1991, 22 min., 16mm  
**Sink or Swim** 1990, 48 min., 16mm  
**Damned If You Don't** 1987, 42 min., 16mm  
**The Ties That Bind** 1984, 55 min., 16mm  
**But No One** 1982, 9 min., 16mm  
**Gently Down the Stream** 1981, 14 min., 16mm  
**I Suggest Mine** 1980, 6 min., 16mm  
**Scar Tissue** 1979, 6 min., 16mm  
**Cool Hands, Warm Heart** 1979, 16 min., 16mm  
**Hot Water** 1978, 12 min., super-8

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

Alpert Award in the Arts  
National Endowment for the Arts  
Independent Television Service (ITVS)  
Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship  
John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship  
New York State Council on the Arts  
The Jerome Foundation  
Peter S. Reed Lifetime Achievement Award  
Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst--DAAD

## **FESTIVAL AWARDS**

### ***The Head of a Pin:***

DIRECTOR'S CITATION/HONORABLE MENTION, 2005 Black Maria Film Festival

### ***The Odds of Recovery:***

FEMMEDIA AWARD—BEST DOCUMENTARY, Identities 2003 Film Festival, Vienna, Austria

### ***Hide and Seek:***

SPECIAL JURY PRIZE, 1997 New York Gay & Lesbian Film Festival

OUTSTANDING DOCUMENTARY FEATURE AWARD, 1997 OutFest, Los Angeles

BEST NARRATIVE AWARD, 1997 Athens Film Festival

JUROR'S CHOICE AWARD, 1997 Charlotte Film Festival

HONORABLE MENTION, 1997 Atlanta Film Festival

BEST DOCUMENTARY NOMINEE, 1998 GLAAD Awards

### ***Rules of the Road:***

DIRECTOR'S CHOICE AWARD, 1994 Black Maria Film Festival

HONORABLE MENTION, 1994 University of Oregon Queer Film Festival

SPECIAL COMMENDATION: KINO AWARDS, 1993 Melbourne Film Festival

CERTIFICATE OF MERIT, 1993 Cork International Film Festival

### ***Sink or Swim:***

GOLD JURORS CHOICE AWARD, 1993 Charlotte Film and Video Festival

GRAND PRIX: KINO AWARDS, 1991 Melbourne Film Festival

GOLDEN GATE AWARD, Best of "New Visions" Category, 1991 San Francisco Film Festival

SPECIAL JURY AWARD, 1991 Atlanta Film Festival

BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM, 1991 USA Short Film and Video Festival

JUROR'S CITATION AWARD, 1991 Black Maria Film Festival

### ***Damned If You Don't:***

BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM AWARD, 1990 Athens Film Festival

BEST EXPERIMENTAL NARRATIVE FILM AWARD, 1988 Atlanta Film Festival

### ***Cool Hands, Warm Heart:***

SPECIAL MERIT AWARD, 1983 Athens Film Festival



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