

The Suede Underground



featuring: Chloe Laguerre & Dea Sumrell: golden
girls on the town

issue 1; vol 1

Artists often hold up a mirror so the rest of us can better see the world around us. At the moment, the image reflected back is of a city undergoing a rapid, and sometimes disorienting, transformation. And it is no wonder artists have taken an interest in gentrification — they are often its bellwether. When artists arrive, developers often take it as a signal that a neighborhood is ripe for investment.

Longtime residents, meanwhile, get the message that displacement is not too far behind. But artists are not immune to the effects of gentrification, either, so why shouldn't it find its way into their art? Artists often play an uncomfortable role in real estate and gentrification. Someone has to paint those graffiti walls in the condo lobbies, but few artists can afford to actually live in such places. Instead, artists

often live on the fringes of hot neighborhoods — until developers discover these areas, too, discover these areas, too, discover these areas, too. "We are used by marketing people and developers as a sign that a neighborhood is going to be palatable for wealthier people," said the artist Jennifer Dalton, 48, who lives in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.

"We are part of the process, but also pawns.

Last May, Ms. Dalton and the artist William Powhida, 40,

of Bushwick, organized Month2Month, a monthlong series of events held in private homes that focused on “whether housing

is a right or a privilege.” An exhibit about Month2Month is on display through February in Manhattan.

One event, “a night of experimental improvisational comedy” was called “The Rent Is Too Damn High So We Took Away Its Weed.” Another, called “Gentrifiers Anonymous” encouraged participants to confess their gentrifying sins.

“Who Stole the House” was a murder mystery involving a Brooklyn home in the clutches of a limited liability corporation. “A lot of people came away feeling like it’s more urgent than ever for artists to organize,” Ms. Dalton said of the series. “We need to be activist citizens.” Ed Hamilton, 55, a writer who has lived in the Chelsea Hotel on West 23rd Street for more than two decades, is certainly aware of the urgency. “Artists used to be able to resist gentrification,” he told me. “At

some point, the tide turned.”



99 Songs Party, October 2006
The bi-weekly party has since relocated
Photo Credit: Grier Nordin
Article by: Chloe Anderson

Features:

meet the model



Camille Elliott, 19

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HE WAY SHE LOOKS WHEN SHE
STEPS OUT AT NIGHT; GLITTERING GOLD; NIP-
PLES HARD; IN THE BITTER FEBRUARY WIND
HER REFLECTION, THROUGH THE PUDDLE IN
THE GUTTER. A GLEAMING SMILE AMONGST
THE STONE FACES. SHE IS A BEACON OF LIGHT;
ENERGY; HER SOUL IS A BURNING FLAME;
THAT WILL NEVER GO OUT. NEW YORK IS HER
PLAYGROUND. SHE RULES THE COURT.

Camille is a model and artist from San Jose, California.

*She is signed with IMG, and was one of the newest faces to walk NYFW!
Alexander Wang cites her as his latest muse. Some compare her to Dixie
Watson. Photo Credit: Ty Hampton*

People to look out for:

A*lexandra*

C*hloe*

alex is 19, and an up and coming fashion designer.

chloe is 20, and is the fashion editor of Galore.

B*est* **F***riends*



Photo Credit: Lee Harrison