

Princeton University/ Program in Urban Studies

U/S

Tuesday, April 16, 7PM
Betts Auditorium, School of Architecture

DECADE OF FIRE: HOW THE SOUTH BRONX WAS BURNED

Work-in-progress. Directed by Gretchen Hildebran and Vivian Vazquez.
Screening and discussion with the directors.
Commentators, Evelyn Gonzalez and Susan Ryan. Moderated by Alison Isenberg.

04/16



In the 1970s, when Vivian Vazquez was growing up in the South Bronx, she never thought her neighborhood was a slum. But by the time she was 18, the South Bronx she had known was gone. In ten years, fires had destroyed nearly 80% of the homes and almost half a million people had fled. Now, 30 years later, Vazquez returns to her neighborhood to ask: Why did the Bronx burn? Who let the fires rage on for so long? And what happened to those who remained behind? *Decade of Fire* is a documentary-in-progress about the South Bronx's destruction by fire from the perspective of the people, like Vivian, who experienced it first hand. The film also exposes the New York City policies that turned a crisis of fires into the unstoppable epidemic that destroyed once-vibrant communities. It is an opportunity to talk about neighborhoods that have been to the brink and are building back.

During this screening the filmmakers will show scenes from their work-in-progress. They will discuss the genesis of the film, their research techniques, and the evolution of their ideas. Our discussants and audience have a rare opportunity to help shape this important project.

The evening's moderator, **Alison Isenberg** is professor of history at Princeton University and co-director of the Program in Urban Studies.

Gretchen Hildebran has produced several short documentaries, including *Worth Saving*, which was featured in HBO's 2004 *Frame by Frame* documentary series. She shot the PBS documentary *The Learning*, which aired on PBS in 2011, and has edited for film and TV since 1998.

Vivian Vazquez is Nuyorican and grew up in the South Bronx. For nine years, she led projects in children, youth and senior center programs at Bronxworks. She is currently the Director of Community-School Partnerships at a new public school in the Bronx. She is a proud member of 52 People for Progress and this is her first film project.

Evelyn Gonzalez teaches the History of the Sixties, Race and Ethnicity, and New Jersey History at William Paterson New Jersey University. She is the author of *The Bronx* (Columbia University Press, 2004) and is now working on a book length history of urbanization in New Jersey.

Susan Ryan spent more than seven years documenting Trenton in her film *From The 'Burg To The Barrio*. Before that, she worked for more than a decade in film and television production. She is currently an associate professor of Communication Studies at the College of New Jersey where she teaches documentary and film studies.

/ Additional information:
urbanstudies.princeton.edu

/ Events are free and open to the public.

/ Sponsored by Urban Studies, Princeton University, with generous support from the Community Based Learning Initiative.

/ Series organizers: Alison Isenberg, Purcell Carson, M. Christine Boyer

/ Design: Evangelos Kotsioris.

/ Contact: Alison Isenberg, Department of History, isenber@princeton.edu.

26 Feb Berlin: Symphony of a Great City
5 Mar West Side Story
6 Mar "Seeing the City"
SRPING
RECESS

12 Mar The Naked City
26 Mar Ecumenopolis

2 Apr The Pruitt-Igoe Myth
2 Apr "After Pruitt-Igoe"
9 Apr Gut Renovation
16 Apr Decade of Fire

23 Apr Greetings from Asbury Park
30 Apr La Sierra

END OF
CLASSES

7 May The Trenton Project: Critique
20 May The Trenton Project: Final

Film Series/Spring '13