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## Roxie Theater Window to Become New Boutique

Grand Opening of HEIST Boutique Slated for Saturday, February 16, 2013, 4pm-8pm

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*It's no coincidence that HEIST boutique opens at The Roxie, San Francisco's oldest continuously running theater (operating since 1909).*

HEIST boutique is a response to the displacement of long-time businesses that cater to the Mission District's Latino, working-class, and Bohemian communities by those that cater to an influx of residents with high-end tastes and disposable income.

Artist and 13-year Mission resident, Liz Worthy, has created merchandise for HEIST boutique with an eye toward the businesses that have served the diverse populations in the Mission, from young punk-rockers to Latina grandmothers. Her wares are a whimsical mash-up of old and new: Leather Tongue brand blue jeans,<sup>1</sup> Modern Times brand eyeglasses,<sup>2</sup> Ourshelves santeria candles,<sup>3</sup> Bombay Bazar and Ice Creamery cowboy

<sup>1</sup> In 2006, Self Edge, a high-end jeans store, opened at the former storefront of [Leather Tongue](#), a 15-year-old video store that rented 99 cent cult classics and sold the zines of local writers. (714 Valencia Street)

<sup>2</sup> Fine Arts Optical is now where Modern Times Bookstore, an over 40-year-old progressive bookstore, made its home for 20 years. Modern Times is now at a smaller storefront at 24th and Folsom. (888 Valencia Street)

hats,<sup>4</sup> Ti Cous catsup squeeze bottles,<sup>5</sup> Kentucky Fried Chicken chopsticks,<sup>6</sup> 826 Valencia barbells,<sup>7</sup> Wang Fat Fish Market bikinis,<sup>8</sup> and Ritual Home Remedies furniture.<sup>9</sup> For a complete list of merchandise visit [www.lizworthy.com](http://www.lizworthy.com).

The Mission District's wealth of taquerías, book stores, bodegas, and other community-minded businesses are a reflection of its vibrant history and diverse population. Following the 1906 earthquake, the Mission established itself as a working class, immigrant neighborhood as it became home for many of the displaced. By 1910 the population was 50,000, slightly larger than it is today. Latinos first began moving to the Mission during World War II and were followed by artists, punk-rockers, activists, and the LGBTQ community in the 1970's. The 70's also saw the influx of service businesses (e.g. auto repair and appliance shops), which increased from 13 in 1970 to 98 in 1988, providing jobs as well as convenience to the Mission's predominantly working class residents.<sup>10</sup>

The dot-com boom of the late 1990's quickly disrupted this Mission bohemia. Between 1997-99, the average price per square foot for commercial space in the Mission rose from \$76 to \$103, a 36 percent increase.<sup>11</sup> On Valencia Street, 50 percent of the businesses that existed in 1990, mostly local operations patronized by the Mission's working class and arts communities, were gone by 1998.<sup>12, 13</sup> Expensive restaurants and high-end boutiques sprouted up alongside, and in some instances replaced, these businesses.

The 16th street corridor itself is currently met with the possible closure of much-loved bookstore and

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<sup>3</sup> Botanica Yoruba has now moved to 19th and Mission streets and Viracocha, a community-operated vintage fashion and furnishing store with a lending library (Ourshelves) in the back and a performance space downstairs, takes its place. (998 Valencia Street)

<sup>4</sup> [Bombay Bazar and Ice Creamery](#) closed in 2010 and in its place is the restaurant West of Picos, which opened last May. Bombay has since reopened on South Van Ness Street. (550 Valencia Street)

<sup>5</sup> Giordano Bros. is at the the former site of French crepe restaurant, Ti Cous (1992-2011). (3108 16th Street)

<sup>6</sup> The Kentucky Fried Chicken location became home to Spork. Spork became The Rice Broker. This August the location reopened as a Sugoi Sushi. (1058 Valencia Street)

<sup>7</sup> 826 Valencia, a pirate store and tutoring center founded in 2002 by Dave Eggers, was formerly a weight lifting gym. (826 Valencia Street)

<sup>8</sup> [Wang Fat Fish Market turned into the boutique Fabuloid](#) which turned into Zoe Bikini. (2199 Mission Street)

<sup>9</sup> Ritual Coffee is in the old storefront of Home Remedies, a furniture and home accessories store. (1026 Valencia Street)

<sup>10</sup> [The Mission District – A History of Resistance for the Mission Anti-Displacement Coalition](#). Fernando Martí, December 2006

<sup>11</sup> [As reported by the Mission Economic Development Association](#). This compares to a citywide increase of 5%.

<sup>12</sup> Alejandrino, "Gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District," in [Geographies of Displacement](#).

<sup>13</sup> Another example is the closure of 12-year-old El Herradero Restaurant in 1999 due to a 63 percent increase in rent. (Mission Economic Development Association (MEDA), San Francisco, "Small Business Displacement Hearing," materials presented to Supervisor Alicia Becerril on September 16, 1999, p. 3. in [Dealing with Neighborhood Change: A Primer on Gentrification and Policy Choices](#), Kennedy and Leonard, 2001.

community hub, Adobe Books. Twenty-four-year-old Adobe rents for approximately \$60,000 a year. Owner, Andrew McKinley, estimates that it would cost at least \$3 million to buy the building.<sup>14</sup>

These closures are noteworthy. To quote Dr. Nancy Mirabal, professor of Latino/a Studies at San Francisco State University, “[T]he role that businesses play in reinforcing a distinctly Latino-identified community, speaks to how local businesses like bodegas, taquerias, and hair salons (peluquerías) are reinterpreted by Latina/os as both community and culture. Thus many see the closures of these businesses . . . as symbols of a larger cultural erasure and communal exclusion.”<sup>15</sup>

The neighborhood is bound to continue changing. Worthy hopes, however, that the beloved establishments that have been staples for these once predominant, and now marginalized, communities will continue to thrive.<sup>16</sup> She hopes HEIST boutique will inspire Mission residents to fight for this reality.

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<sup>14</sup> [Save Adobe Books](#), San Francisco Bay Guardian, June 2012.

<sup>15</sup> To further make this point, in an oral history project directed by Mirabal in 1999 and reported in [Geographies of Displacement](#), Justine Saunders, owner of the Botanica Yoruba, recounts: *There has been a very aggressive renovation of sorts, where buildings on Mission Street and Valencia have been renovated. And they’re really chi chi frou frou upscale restaurants, there are boutiques where there used to be a grocery store. . . .*

<sup>16</sup> Dr. Mirabal says this a more dramatically in the closing lines of her essay [Geographies of Displacement](#): *There are no redevelopment placards, at least not yet, in the Mission District. There are no memorials to a bygone time or concrete statues that speak of a past history and people, who once lived here. But there is a seething presence, a haunting if you will, that travels and moves through space, resting in the cracks of the sidewalks and waiting for what comes next.*