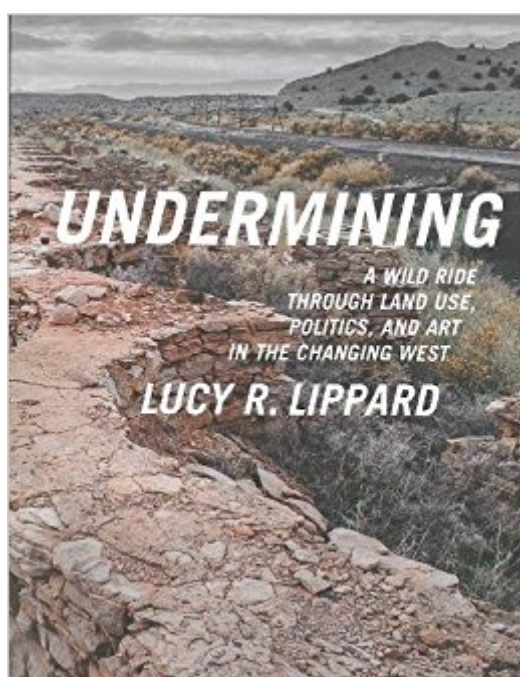


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# Undermining: A Wild Ride Through Land Use, Politics, And Art In The Changing West



## Synopsis

Award-winning author, curator, and activist Lucy R. Lippard is one of America's most influential writers on contemporary art, a pioneer in the fields of cultural geography, conceptualism, and feminist art. Hailed for "the breadth of her reading and the comprehensiveness with which she considers the things that define place" (The New York Times), Lippard now turns her keen eye to the politics of land use and art in an evolving New West. Working from her own lived experience in a New Mexico village and inspired by gravel pits in the landscape, Lippard weaves a number of fascinating themes—among them fracking, mining, land art, adobe buildings, ruins, Indian land rights, the Old West, tourism, photography, and water—into a tapestry that illuminates the relationship between culture and the land. From threatened Native American sacred sites to the history of uranium mining, she offers a skeptical examination of the "subterranean economy." Featuring more than two hundred gorgeous color images, *Undermining* is a must-read for anyone eager to explore a new way of understanding the relationship between art and place in a rapidly shifting society.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[A] brilliant and penetrating fantasia on land use and exploitation. . . This singular book will stir the 'creative energies' of veteran Lippard fans and environmentalists as well as a new generation of artist-activists." — Publishers Weekly (starred review) "This is a marvelous slim book full of dirt: the literal dirt and gravel and other materials of the earth, and the unseen, unsung source in

that earth of all the building materials of the cities, the cement and concrete, the uranium and oil. Lucy Lippard weaves, as only she can, ideas, facts, images, and histories into a whole about the rawness of raw materials and the ecology of the manmade world."#151;Rebecca Solnit "Lippard weaves a complex narrative that moves through the slow processes of ecology to the blitzkrieg of development and extraction. Thoughtful, poetic, and unflinchingly critical, she also presents a way to consider the value of art in the collaborative fight for a sustainable future."#151;Nato Thompson, chief curator, Creative Time "This is an intensely personal narrative of degraded ecosystems, exhausted lands, and dispirited peoples. Readers will be captivated by Lippard's gut-wrenching identification with, and her eloquent elucidation of, accumulating hazards and diminishing resources."#151;Linda Weintraub, author of *To Life!: Eco Art in Pursuit of a Sustainable Planet* and *Art on the Edge and Over* "Lippard's timely book extends beyond the discourse of art history and cultural geography. It is a call for action. She guides us on a tour of the American West that is being ravaged by oil and gas interests, damaging both the environment and our collective psyche. Her critique and the numerous artists that she weaves into her narrative visualizes the destruction, as well as presenting alternatives that could direct land use toward a more just and sustainable future."#151;Nicolas Lampert, author of *A People's Art History of the United States* "Investigating both the undermining of environmental sustainability by capitalist industry and the critical undermining of normative approaches to nature by artists, Lucy Lippard offers an insightful model of how to live locally with ecological consciousness, doing so without surrendering to a narrow parochialism or losing sight of social justice imperatives."#151;T.J. Demos, reader, department of art history, University College London "What you don't know can hurt you. This is true not just in the case of the slow violence through which various forms of environmental toxins seep into our bones and blood. As Lucy Lippard shows in her brilliantly hybrid book, it is also true of the subterranean spaces where these toxins are often stored and, in many cases, blasted, excavated, generated, and buried. Surveying the land beneath that most iconic of American landscapes, the Southwest, Lippard traces the links between the gravel mined for roads, the coal mined for electricity, and the uranium mined for nuclear weapons in the region, just to name a few of the connections she makes. Lippard brings these hidden economies to light, describes the fight of groups such as the Zuni against the despoliation of the land, and presents striking examples of land use art that is helping to galvanize public opinion against the undermining of the West."#151;Ashley Dawson, professor of English, CUNY Graduate Center *Praise for The Lure of the Local* : "Lippard overwhelms us with the breadth of her reading and comprehensiveness with which she considers the things that define

place."#151;The New York Times "Interesting and thoughtful. . . . Her critiques are often delightfully acidic. . . . A solid contribution to popular geography."#151;Kirkus "An excellent reference guide to recent and historical place-oriented art and activism."#151;Preservation Praise for Mixed Blessings : "Lucy Lippard's intellectual devotion to the power of women and persons of color enacted and idealized within their works of visual art has brought her to level of discourse that is rich in democratic possibility and promise. I love this book, in short, and recommend it highly."#151;Robert Farris Thompson, professor of African and African American art history, Yale University

Lucy R. Lippard is an internationally known writer, activist, and curator. She has authored twenty-two books, has curated more than fifty major exhibitions, and holds nine honorary degrees. Lippard is the recipient of numerous awards, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and two National Endowment for the Arts grants. She lives in New Mexico.

Another thought-provoking book by Lucy Lippard, a most original thinker and art critic. She establishes a dialog between the appalling facts of land (ab)use in America and the way many artists have addressed those issues. Along the way the reader is taken from gravel pits in the mythologized Great American West all the way to the Ground Zero 9-11 memorial in New York City. It may seem like the "wild ride" of the title, but the author holds firmly your hand (and your mind) through it. Thoroughly enjoyable -- and you'll learn a lot of new things as well.

Lucy Lippard is in touch with the universe and shares the relevant facts of life for this day and age. Activism is alive and well but of course it's easy to see who's winning. I'm blown away by how much territory Undermining covers, sweeping over the landscape we all know and love. Lippard articulates the web of connections that profoundly describe what nature has become, and how humans continue to plunder the future of the planet. The images that support the text are great, and she includes the facts that matter but they don't bog you down. It's an important document of now."Pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will"-that's it in a nutshell. Of course, there's no giving up.

Never disappoints. I cherish all my Lippard books.

info needed to save the planet

Superb. Great and important book.

great book, am writing about it in the Brooklyn Rail!

Are you joking? This book serves up sermon language, ominous pronouncements, and brainless assertions. It reads like a seldom-viewed lecture on local-access cable. The printed "slideshow" of images that grace each page actually detract from the writing, in that their captioning and relevance to the text are usually nonsensical. I live in New Mexico, near the author in fact, and I wish that this book had been successful. But take a New York City transplant, infuse her with feminist fury, allow her precisely ONE metaphor: "pits and erections", and publish her rambling gibberish? Come on. The first third of the book is unreadable. "...fissures in the capitalist narrative..." "... dialectical take on the relationship between..." "... increasingly contextualized frameworks..." "amidst a topography of unfettered capitalism, a geology of socioeconomic stratification, and an architecture of unapologetic hubris." This book is great for New-Age-y white people looking to gobble up some pseudo-Indian spirit babble. It's great for showing how "monstrous" capitalism can be blamed for devouring the land. A reader interested in land use in the West? Keep looking. A few outright errors: The legislator's name is JEFF Flake, not Jake Flake p. 63 The quotes on page 75 are unsourced. The "abandoned scenes" on page 188 were built for bombing tests during the Cold War. High Country News is not the "paper of record" for the west (p. 138); it is HIGH Country news - a marijuana mouthpiece. 148, the caption does not match the photo. And oh goodness, enough with New Yorkers and their 9/11 stories and their Hurricane Sandy stories (pp 121-129, p. 184). This is a book about the west, right? After all the author's complaints about "Irresponsible expansion" in the west... she MOVED here. Does that represent "responsible expansion," or what?

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