Desaturation

Gentrification involves the forced removal of peoples from areas based on policies that they often have little or no say in. Their neighborhoods, that they call home, may be dubbed as blighted because outsiders do not have the same perspective on the cultural value of the communities, but rather are focused on the monetary value. The overall result of this is a removal of culture and vibrancy from these communities. Hannibal Square in particular is a historically African American community. The gentrification of the area can therefore be seen as a removal of specifically African American peoples, who historically have been referred to as “colored.” The series has been titled “Desaturation” in response to the idea that color is being removed from the area in terms of culture as well as specifically these African Americans. The series contain primarily photos of what is referred to as “Old Hannibal Square” which have been desaturated to serve as a metaphor for the forceful removal of color from the community itself. The desaturation also gives the photos an ominous feeling, which is meant to convey the rather serious matter of gentrification. The series contains multiple religious symbols meant to encompass an aspect of the traditional culture of Hannibal Square. There are also symbols conveying a sense of “the American dream” such as a white picket fence and the American Flag itself, which are meant to call to question if what we are doing to these people is directly contradicting the traditional American ideals of freedom and opportunity. The series is closed with the only picture of the “New Hannibal Square” area, which captures a sign that reads “sorry we are closed.” This is meant to provide a sort of bookend for the series, linking the new and old areas of town, while maintaining an ominous feeling representing the despairing nature of gentrification as well as the struggles that are specifically faced by the people of Hannibal Square. The series is meant to trigger questions about if what is being done is right and if it contradicts our ideals as Americans.