ACTS OF REMEDIATION

Curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites

Lisa Martin
Increasingly, contemporary artists are invited to create artworks responding to and located in cultural heritage sites such as national parks, national monuments, historic landmarks, and historic buildings. This thesis examines the nature of contemporary art production, display, and encounter in cultural heritage sites. The research is directed by the question: What are the conditions of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites?

The analysis builds from the idea that the meeting ground of contemporary art and cultural heritage produces a curatorial zone, and explores the implications of the interplay between these two fields for curatorial labor in cultural heritage sites specifically. A set of conditions that are central to both curating and cultural heritage management forms the methodological starting point for a comparative analysis of ten contemporary art projects in cultural heritage sites, including one in-depth case study.

The comparative analysis reveals that this curatorial zone is characterized by conditions that arise from conceptual tensions between the fields of contemporary art and cultural heritage. Specifically, a set of conditions I have termed change, temporal, interpretive, site-specific, and instrumental conditions actively shape the act of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Sökord/Keywords: curating, cultural heritage, contemporary art, national park, Presidio of San Francisco, Jeannene Przyblyski
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INTRODUCTION

In the first, perhaps more contemporary, sense of the term, to remediate means to bring about a shift in medium, to experiment with alternative ways of describing, interpreting, and displaying...¹

Clémentine Deliss

Walking one day in the Presidio of San Francisco, a former United States Army base that is now a national park bordering the city of San Francisco, California, artist Jeannene Przyblyski (b. 1959) was struck by the sight of a woman ahead of her on the trail, carrying a yoga mat and water bottle. Granted, this is not a particularly uncommon site in this part of the world, but what captured the artist’s attention was the resulting “double exposure” in her mind’s eye of a soldier with a bedroll and canteen. This experience, fueled by her wish “that a visitor might discover these sorts of doublings themselves ... understanding that the past and future are always latent in the present, sort of the way that photographs develop,” was the catalyst for the creation of A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio (2008).² This multi-sensory, site-specific artwork—comprised of a printed wayfinding guide, trail signage, and audio tracks that participants listen to through headphones—is permanently installed in the Presidio and engages with collective and personal history, memory, and identity while exploring the past, present, and future of this cultural heritage site.

In creating A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio and similar works, Przyblyski joins a growing band of contemporary artists, such as Janet Cardiff (b. 1957), Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967), Andy Goldsworthy (b. 1956), Susan Philipsz (b. 1965), and Allison Smith (b. 1972), who have been invited to create artworks responding to, and located in, cultural heritage sites. The presence of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites builds on a number of existing artistic and curatorial practices, including site- and situation-specific art, public art, and attempts to “work outside of the museum’s walls,” and is linked to issues of history, memory, and identity that are highly relevant to contemporary discourse. At the same time, the phenomenon introduces conditions for production and display that are unique to cultural heritage sites.

A renewed critical interest in heritage has brought with it an interest in cultural heritage sites as a context for artwork, with new and different conditions for curatorial and artistic practice. It encompasses a contested terrain of alternately conflicting and overlapping expectations between artists and those who manage cultural heritage sites—a terrain that must be navigated curatorially.

² Email from Jeannene Przyblyski to the author, 18 August 2013.
Aim and Research Question

This thesis examines the nature of art production, display, and encounter in recognized cultural heritage sites, distinct from museums of cultural heritage. The research is directed by the question: What are the conditions of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites? The analysis builds on the idea that the meeting ground of contemporary art and cultural heritage produces a curatorial zone.

Material

In total, ten examples of contemporary art projects in cultural heritage sites are discussed. These were selected for their geographic span, their diversity of expression, and the availability of written accounts. Because these projects have not previously been researched as a distinct and cohesive group, this meant culling from a variety of sources, such as scholarly articles, art books, and personal contacts, in which the projects are rarely described in these terms.

These works are commissioned for specific sites, and as such one can only experience them in a certain place and sometimes only for a limited period of time. I have personally experienced only a handful of the projects I address. For those I have not, my inquiries examine written accounts such as press releases, project websites, reviews and scholarly articles. For those I have experienced directly, the written accounts are augmented by these direct, sited encounters.

The main case, Jeannene Przyblyski’s Lover’s Line in the Presidio of San Francisco, is introduced in the following chapter. The remaining cases, used as comparative examples, are as follows: 1) Janet Cardiff’s Lopud/Monastery Walk (2006) and 2) a proposed work by Olafur Eliasson, both for a privately owned monastery site on Lopud, a small island off the coast of Croatia; 3) Let me lose myself (2011- ), a group exhibition of sound works sited in a historic cemetery outside of Stockholm, Sweden; 4) the outdoor sculpture exhibition Presidio Habitats (2010-2011) and 5) Andy Goldsworthy’s Wood Line (2011), both for the Presidio of San Francisco; 6) Dee Hibbert-Jones’ Brush Pile Sculpture (2006) for Lands End, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area near San Francisco; 7) the Ruhr Triennale, an annual contemporary art festival in Germany’s Ruhr District that was founded in 2002; 8) Allison Smith’s The Muster (2004-2006) and 9) Susan Philipsz’ Day is Done (2014), both on Governors Island, New York.

The selection of material related to the Lover’s Line case study is wide-ranging. It encompasses public documents from the Presidio Trust, such as mission statements, annual reports, strategic plans, the art policy, the art collections manual, and website texts. It also encompasses project documents from the artist, an interview with the artist, and the artwork itself—its formal and structural elements, text and audio content, and my personal encounter with it on-site. Lover’s Line was selected as the main case because it lays bare a number of issues addressed in the thesis.
Method

A set of conditions that are central to curating as well as cultural heritage management, such as interpretation or an instrumental function, was used as a methodological starting point. Through this set of conditions, a comparative analysis of accounts of the works was performed in order to examine the interplay between curating, contemporary art, and cultural heritage management in theory and practice.

The comparative analysis forms the map upon which is plotted a more focused study of the specific conditions of the production of Jeannene Przyblyski’s *A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio* for the Presidio of San Francisco. While the larger map illuminates conditions at work in the main case study, this deeper examination of a particular artist, work and site serves in turn to problematize certain assumptions revealed in the analysis about the role of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Theory

By comparing and contrasting theoretical positions from the fields of contemporary art and cultural heritage, the tensions between the fields are illuminated. Thus, I have drawn from an eclectic pool of theorists within art history, cultural studies, heritage studies and tourism and juxtaposed them in order to reveal the ways in which cultural heritage, as concept and practice, affects the production and display of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites. *Performing the Curatorial*, a collection of essays on curatorial practice that contains the only scholarly texts I found that explicitly take up the links between curating, contemporary art, and heritage, provides the theoretical underpinning for my treatment of the curatorial function at play within cultural heritage management.3

Several texts helped to shed light on how cultural heritage sites differ from museums of cultural heritage and the various ways in which artists respond to them, which proved essential to the analysis. These include Goldsmiths professor of visual culture Irit Rogoff’s “Hit and Run,” and *Museum Culture*, edited by Rogoff and art historian Daniel Sherman.4

Artist Andrea Fraser, in interviews, performance scripts, and other writings, and curator and art historian Miwon Kwon, in *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, both map out opposing poles of artistic practice: one assimilative or integrationist, the other interventionist.5 This polarity parallels a conservative–progressive polarity within cultural heritage practice. These axes have been central to my understanding of the dynamics

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at play in curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites even as I argue that these projects more often than not reside somewhere in between these two extremes.

Kwon’s theoretical framework of site-specific practice clarifies artists’ interaction with cultural heritage sites as much more than a response to physical, spatial, and geographical conditions. In particular, her essay “Sitings of Public Art,” included in the book cited above, was useful in unraveling how the educational and professional background of Presidio Trust management staff has a strong impact on the instrumental practices at play in its art-in-the-park program. Additionally, Fraser’s analyses of power, legitimacy, and institutions, which build on Bourdieu’s theory of cultural production but through the eye of a practicing artist, help elucidate the critical processes explored in the chapter on interpretation.

Delimitations

My project examples are drawn from the United States and Europe. The shared base of heritage practice and similar sociopolitical conditions facilitates the comparative analysis. A study of conditions of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites in areas other than the United States and Europe could reveal or clarify culturally divergent forms of curatorial mediation of history and heritage, but this undertaking lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

It is an interesting dilemma to write about the interplay of contemporary art and cultural heritage while not including project examples from large areas of the globe whose representation in the Western world is often comprised of displayed (displaced) cultural heritage. Indeed, in the critical discourse on cultural heritage one important discussion concerns processes of exotification and constructions of the other. As I will argue, the focus in this thesis on cultural heritage sites means that it is primarily a local cultural heritage that is being constructed and mediated, rather than an exotic other. While otherness can and is also constructed locally, this aspect is beyond the scope of this thesis.

In my comparative analysis, I purposefully exclude historic buildings that have been converted exclusively or primarily for the display of contemporary art, a well-researched and popular reuse of old industrial buildings, exemplified by Berlin’s Hamburger Bahnhof, London’s Tate Modern, and MASS MoCA in North Adams, Massachusetts.

Further, the focus of the comparative analysis is to identify and examine conditions for curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites; thus, with the partial exception of the Lover’s Line case study, it is beyond the scope of my research to embark on in-depth analyses

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6 See, for example, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998.
of the individual artworks or the practices of the artists. When conclusions are drawn about the position or function of artworks within the context of my research, I do not mean to suggest that these are the fullest or only possible interpretations of these artworks.

While curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites is just beginning to be recognized and researched, the limited research field has the potential for significant expansion in the near future. As the presence of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites grows—which is likely considering the rich material these sites offer to artists and the various solutions art is thought to offer to cultural heritage managers—the potential “sample size” for a study of this phenomenon will also expand, and adjustments to this initial map will need to be made in future.

Previous Research

My research into curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites is informed by a number of broad research areas, including cultural studies, art history, contemporary art, site-specific art, public art, museum studies, ethnography, heritage studies, tourism studies, architecture, and urban planning. Because the presence of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites has not been widely recognized or researched, there are very few texts that deal directly with the subject. I have augmented these with additional texts that examine cultural heritage as a concept and cultural heritage management as a practice, and on forms of museum, curatorial, and artistic practice concerned with reaching outside the museum.

A number of sources were used to gain a broad understanding of major work in the field of cultural heritage and cultural heritage management. Juxtaposing the varied ideological positions in the field helped to unravel the interplay between art and heritage in cultural heritage sites. Accordingly, critical and political perspectives are joined by intradisciplinary texts with a focus on preservation methodology. Professor of heritage studies Laurajane Smith’s The Uses of Heritage, writer and curator Lucy Lippard’s On the Beaten Track, and scholar of museum and performance studies Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett’s Destination Culture and “Theorizing Heritage” are central to the field of critical heritage. Professor of historic preservation Ned Kaufman’s Place, Race, and Story offered a glimpse into the theories and methods of a progressive edge of preservation that is concerned with public space, class, race, and equality. Professor of cultural heritage management Dirk H.R. Spennemann’s

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critical reflections on heritage and social policy came from an unexpected source: the National Park Service's own scholarly research journal, *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship.*

The text most directly engaged with contemporary art in cultural heritage *sites,* specifically, is an edited transcript of a 2007 panel discussion on contemporary art, architecture and preservation organized by Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, a foundation which commissions site-specific contemporary art. It was founded by Francesca von Hapsburg, an art patron and collector who is also the founder of the ARCH Foundation, “dedicated to the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage.” The panel discussion, titled “Preservation, Contemporary Art, and Architecture,” featured, in addition to von Hapsburg, a mix of academics and practitioners in the fields of art, architecture, and heritage. This text provided project examples for the comparative analysis as well as insight into the emerging discourse around contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Previous research on the Presidio consists of historical and archaeological studies that generally focus on either the Spanish colonial era or the role of the Presidio as an Army base during the 20th century, particularly during World War II. One text was found that studied the Presidio in a contemporary context: Matthew Axtell’s “Pleasure Grounds and Iron Fences” scrutinized the history of the Presidio through the lens of the concept of the commons, with a focus on a critique of the open space policies that followed from the transition of the Presidio to a national park in the 1990s. This student text was useful in obtaining a critical perspective on the Presidio that contrasts with the near-heroic portrayals of the creation of the national park that are otherwise available from the Trust, National Park Service, and the popular press.

Thesis Structure

The thesis begins with a background chapter on the Presidio of San Francisco, Jeannene Przyblyski, and the production of *A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio* in order to frame the historical context of the main case study. This is followed by an overview chapter of key terms and concepts that must be delineated in order to be applied in my analysis. Thereafter, the analysis is divided into five chapters according to central conditions identified as present in curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites. Within each chapter, the *Lover’s Line* case study is analyzed in comparison to the other comparative examples in order to describe and problematize these curatorial conditions.

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THE LOVER’S LINE CASE STUDY

Some background on the artist, artwork, and site that together comprise the case study is helpful in grounding the coming analysis. The Presidio of San Francisco is a place that freely mixes wilderness with cultivation, natural with human history. It is a verdant park perched on the northwestern edge of the city of San Francisco, containing forests, meadows, rocky coastline, walking and biking paths. It encompasses thirteen native plant communities containing 330 native plants, including five endangered species. More than 600 animal species are found in the Presidio, and two complete watersheds are contained within its borders. But it is also a heavily exploited site containing freeway on- and off-ramps, parking lots, and more than 700 buildings—single-family homes, apartment buildings, offices, stores, an inn and a bowling alley. Thus, like many U.S. national parks, it combines developed areas with those we like to consider wilderness. Unlike other national parks, however, there are 3,000 year-round residents, not park employees, who occupy a mix of grand single-family homes and more modest apartment buildings on the upper end of the leasing market.

Entering the park is like entering another world. Upon passing between the two stone pedestals that mark the Presidio Gate, for example, Presidio Boulevard is dramatically transformed from a straight city street lined with parked cars, sidewalks and multi-story houses into a gently curving road descending gradually through forested slopes. Once on the Main Post in the center of the park, one encounters large expanses of lawn dotted with groves of trees and palms and orderly rows of historic buildings of red brick and cream-colored wood siding. Framing the lawns are walls of dense forest. The Presidio has been cultivated to conform to the ideals of pastoral and picturesque landscape.

The majority of the Presidio, 1,100 acres, is managed by the Presidio Trust, a government agency formed in 1996 for this express purpose. In a unique financial and political arrangement, the Trust, unlike the National Park Service, is a financially self-supporting government agency. Rather than rely on federal funding, it must generate enough income to cover its expenses. Thus, it can rightly claim to be in a league of its own: “[w]ith nearly 800 structures, 1,200 residences, and the infrastructure of a small town, the Presidio has unique assets and challenges, in response to which the Trust was established. The Presidio is the only national park that is managed in this way.” Further, the Trust “seeks to become a model of park management” through, among other things, its “groundbreaking” financial structure including “public-private partnerships.” In its communication with the public, the Trust promotes a profile of cutting-edge innovation.

Beginning in 2008, artists have been invited to work in, and with, the Presidio as part of an art-in-the-parks program. One of the first artists invited to produce art for the Presidio was Jeannene Przyblyski, a San Francisco-based artist, art historian, urban strategist, and educator. She is the founder of the San Francisco Bureau of Urban Secrets, described as a “visual arts and urbanism think tank that promotes art as a mode of civic engagement and creative problem solving,” and through which she creates artistic interventions in city life. Her previous positions include a lengthy career in teaching and administration at the San Francisco Art Institute (SFAI), during which she also served on the board and advisory council of the San Francisco Planning and Research Association and as an arts commissioner for the San Francisco Arts Commission. In 2012, she was appointed the provost of the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California.

This brief biography indicates the artist’s interest in project-based, community-driven, site-specific public art as opposed to the creation of autonomous artworks for institutional exhibition. In a 2006 essay accompanying a half-in-jest “public art manifesto” she writes that “because public art has been so thoroughly institutionalized, it may well need to be subjected to a newly invigorated critique, especially as we look to it now more than ever to define place, build community, and affirm a broad civic commitment to culture.” Przyblyski is concerned with the role of public art in society. As an artist, historian, and former public arts commissioner, she holds a unique position within the phenomenon of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites in which artistic, curatorial, critical, conceptual, administrative, economic and civic perspectives converge.

*A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio* was initially produced in conjunction with *Ground Scores*, a group exhibition of works “playfully and conceptually investigating the historic and contemporary geography of San Francisco.” *Ground Scores* was presented as a component of the 2008 edition of *Bay Area Now*, a triennial exhibition held at the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) in San Francisco. Sculptural reference was made in the YBCA galleries to the works in *Ground Scores*, but the actual works resided outside the walls of the museum, in the form of guided or self-guided walks.

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The artwork is meant to be experienced during a walk on Lovers’ Lane, the Presidio’s oldest trail. Dating from the 1700s, the footpath was the most direct route between the Spanish presidio, or fort, and the civilian settlement at Yerba Buena, the predecessor to the city of San Francisco. The trail is approximately one kilometer long and stretches, over a creek and past a sloped area of eucalyptus trees, between the Main Post and the park’s boundary with the city at the Presidio Gate. The work offers a multi-sensory, site-specific encounter with the past, present, and future of the Presidio. Visitors engage with the work, and by extension the site, through a printed wayfinding guide, trail signage, and audio tracks listened to through headphones.

While the YBCA is the formal commissioner of Lover’s Line, in practice the institution provided very little funding or other forms of support. In contrast, the Trust provided staff time and expertise, historical and environmental reports, and a production budget for the signage and publication. For these reasons, this thesis treats the Trust as a commissioning agency to a greater degree than the YBCA.

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19 Skype interview with Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
20 In the case of Lover’s Line the park agencies were working with an artist with whom they had an established relationship, but this sort of external institutional imprimatur and legitimacy could be particularly important in a project with an artist previously unfamiliar to the Trust.
The various meanings assigned to the broad concepts contemporary art and cultural heritage, and the position of cultural heritage sites vis-à-vis heritage display practices in general, strongly affect the curatorial practice examined in the thesis. Questions that arise include:

What is cultural heritage? Should contemporary art be considered a form of cultural production, or is it something other? Is “contemporary” a simple temporal descriptor, or are certain other qualities ascribed to contemporary art? A mapping of these terms and their contestations helps to illuminate the conditions of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Cultural Heritage

Once one starts to list the immense variety of objects, behaviors, and lifeways—abacuses and artworks, bar mitzvahs and buildings, customs and kolaches—that make up cultural heritage, the idea of defining the concept seems overwhelming. Rather than attempt, and fail, to construct an exhaustive definition, I will outline some basic concepts, inquiries, and shifts in the field of cultural heritage that are pertinent to my analysis of the conditions of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Unesco, a division of the United Nations charged with preserving heritage around the world, describes heritage as

our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. ... What makes the concept of World Heritage exceptional is its universal application. World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world, irrespective of the territory on which they are located.21

This definition identifies cultural heritage as encompassing not only the past but also the present and future. It emphasizes the irreplaceability, universality, and “long-lasting value” of heritage.22 Further, as noted by Dirk H.R. Spennemann, cultural heritage is recognized as having “the potential to contribute to social cohesion and democratic citizenship.”23 These definitions can be said to focus on heritage as a fixed, stable, uniting entity. Cultural heritage exists out there, and it is Unesco’s charge—along with many other organizations and individuals—to identify, preserve, and maintain it.

This is one way of viewing heritage. However, the fact that understandings of and approaches to heritage have shifted over time points to another idea: that heritage is constructed and

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mutable. What today falls under the umbrella of cultural heritage and is deemed worthy of preservation is not the same as that which would have been preserved in the 1970s, Spennemann notes: back then, the emphasis was on architectural masterpieces, while more mundane buildings representing the customary building practices of an area would not receive attention. Thus, what we value as cultural heritage is the result of a process of selection and omission, whether conscious or systemic. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett asserts that “heritage is a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past,” while professor of architecture and historic preservation Frank Matero states that “all preservation is a critical act that results in the conscious production of ‘heritage.’” Who decides what qualifies as cultural heritage, where, and when, is at core the result of power hierarchies along the entire spectrum from local to global. In a 2007 debate on the contemporary interplay between preservation, art, and architecture, artist Albert Heta observes that “heritage is politics, politics is memory, and heritage is used to either erase a part of our memory or to create a forceful image that didn’t exist before.” His accusation is evidence of heritage’s intrinsic ideological cast.

The process of constructing heritage—consisting of selection, preservation, and, often, public display and other forms of communication—goes by several names; historic preservation, heritage conservation, cultural heritage management, and cultural heritage stewardship are common. While “cultural heritage managers tend to be firmly wedded to ‘tradition’ and ‘custom,’” it is also true that there have been significant shifts in the past few decades. Heritage values have shifted from an appreciation solely of architecture, monuments, and master narratives of history to an increasing acknowledgment of social and community values. This shift may be reflected in the nomenclature: the narrower “historic preservation” is falling out of favor, while use of the broader term “cultural heritage stewardship” is spreading. While the field is fundamentally conservative and marked by a guarding mentality, it is increasingly demonstrating an openness to experimentation with alternative methods and philosophies of heritage and preservation.

When I write of cultural heritage sites in this thesis, I am not using an official, globally-recognized term. This is my designation for a number of government-recognized and/or publicly-accessible sites and areas that go under different official names, including but not limited to: national parks, national monuments, historic landmarks, historic buildings, heritage areas, heritage sites, and interpretive sites. They are managed by a heterogeneous mix

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25 Spennemann, 2011, p. 11.
28 Smith, 2006, p. 11.
31 See, for example, Spennemann, 2011 and Iain J.M. Robertson, Heritage From Below, Ashgate Publishing, 2012.
of private nonprofit foundations, public museums, loosely-knit volunteer groups, and local, regional, and federal government agencies.

What unites these sites is the presence of cultural heritage, in tangible or intangible form and in a bounded geographical area, and the existence of some form of organized interpretation of the heritage represented there. Thus, artists working in these sites must be prepared to contend with strong pre-existing institutional conditions and expectations regarding representation. What distinguishes them from museums of cultural heritage—such as history, ethnography, and, to some extent, art museums—is the absence of displacement of displayed objects from the site of their meaning-construction. The heritage values they represent are intact, in situ, rather than being "wrested from the culture it was originally created in" for display elsewhere.32

Contemporary Art

Taken on its own, “contemporary” simply means “happening or beginning now or in recent times,”33 but in relation to the art world the word is more than a temporal descriptor—it is also an ideological one, though its ideology is well masked.34 The simple fact that not all art made today is given the term “contemporary” is evidence of this.35 Entangled with the various positive connotations—“to be contemporary is to be savvy, reactive, dynamic, aware, timely”36—are unspoken positionings in relation to aesthetic and conceptual quality, modernity, capitalism, and globalization.37

The undertone of dynamic currency in contemporary art stands in marked contrast to cultural heritage’s connotations of history and legacy, suggesting an essential discontinuity between them. Boris Groys notes Kasimir Malevich’s iconoclastic view that all that is old can be destroyed: “Do we need Rubens or the Cheops Pyramid? ... Do we need old copies of clay towns, supported on the crutches of Greek columns? ... [C]ontemporary life needs nothing other than what belongs to it; and only that which grows on its shoulders belongs to it.”38

dramatic assertion of an absolute divide between the Russian avant-garde—Malevich’s contemporary art—and the legacy of the past.

Another claim for their discontinuity is found in the writings of Andrea Fraser (b. 1965), a conceptual artist known for her use of institutional critique. Her analysis of the relationship between “artistic practice” and “cultural production” helps to illuminate the shifting relationship between contemporary art and cultural heritage. Fraser argues that cultural production is not the same as artistic practice: the former is assimilative, the latter interventionary. She describes this divide in characteristically precise and critical language:

Artistic practice, as I understand it, is something other than cultural production. Artistic practice resists, or aims to resist, functioning as the representative culture of a particular group ... It resists, or aims to resist, serving as the means of reproduction of particular competencies or dispositions. Instead, it functions, or aims to function, as analytical and interventionary. It can be distinguished from other analytical and interventionary practices—such as, for example, psychoanalysis, activism, and critical pedagogy—by its specific object of engagement: cultural production.39

For Fraser, artistic practice is undeniably linked to cultural production (because cultural production is its “object of engagement”), but it is fundamentally “something other.” She equivocates only slightly on the matter of their absolute separation in her observation that, in rejecting as true art much of what we generally consider to be, she herself engages in precisely the enforcement of norms she identifies and criticizes. Her “stomach turns a little” when she reads her own words.40

In an analysis of cultural heritage tourism in rural France, ethnographer Susan Carol Rogers writes from a very different vantage point but reaches similar conclusions about the essential discontinuity between contemporary art and cultural heritage. She describes local political leaders’ tendency to give lip service to contemporary art’s ability to “move us to reconsider our complacent assumptions about the world,” but her case study demonstrates that, in reality, they and the other local residents believe that “contemporary art has very little to do with local history or lifeways, it touches no nerves and therefore has none of the power to activate the debate.”41 Rogers’ case study underscores the popularity of the view that contemporary art is separate from everyday life and traditional cultural forms. In an almost farcical demonstration of Andrea Fraser’s argument, her study also reveals a sense of obligation on the part of community leaders to express the exact opposite opinion in order to achieve cultural legitimacy. Taking the discussion of art versus heritage further into the sphere of museology, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes that, by “restaging as art that which might otherwise be treated as ethnographic object,” non-Western cultural expressions lose the

39 Fraser, 2005, pp. 41-42.
40 Fraser, 2005, p. 43.
“ethnographic” label and gain the status of contemporary, avant-garde expression. Here, too, the notion of cultural product is set in opposition to contemporary art.

On the other hand, it can be argued that all artistic production is a form of cultural production, rather than being something apart, and that contemporary art has historicity. This point of departure is exemplified by Amelia Jones in her assertion (in a text with the rhetorical subtitle “writing contemporary art into history, a paradox?”) that “the visual arts are now arguably one of the most crucial areas of cultural practice in terms of understanding what and how people convey, contest, or otherwise negotiate aspects of contemporary life.”

In a discussion of the etymology of contemporary art, art historian Dan Karlholm writes that “[t]he contemporary ... is itself a cultural product.” This view mirrors the position within visual culture and cultural studies that extensive cross-pollination occurs between “high” and “low” forms of cultural expression, that each is influential and worthy of study, and that their juxtaposition can prove illuminating.

As will be demonstrated in the following chapters, contemporary art in cultural heritage sites does not follow Fraser’s prescription for artistic practice as an “interventionary” force resisting and analyzing cultural production, nor does it capitulate to purely deterministic demands. In fact, the artists, curators, and the agencies that manage cultural heritage sites enact—and the artworks display—a combination of critical and assimilative approaches.

Curating Contemporary Art in Cultural Heritage Sites

This thesis builds on the idea that the meeting ground of contemporary art and cultural heritage produces a curatorial zone. The process of constructing heritage—selection, preservation, and, often, public display and other forms of communication—demonstrates a striking similarity to curatorial functions in the art world, both by curators in charge of collections of objects and in concepts of curating that are detached from institutional collections. As curator Maria Lind writes, “cultural heritage can be seen as a curated cultural past.”

Further, critic Johan Öberg observes that

[the] connection between philosophy, social sciences, and the arts seems to have been lost today—and, in my opinion, heritage studies is one of the fields where the dialogue can be restored. ... Here, in the activity of the reader, the viewer, the listener, and the performer is the artwork—and the world—which is created, reinterpreted, and reconstructed. Artistic

processes and curating thus have a critical and a metaphorical relationship to heritage and heritage studies.47

Building upon this reflection, this thesis explores the implications for curatorial labor of the interplay between contemporary art and cultural heritage in cultural heritage sites specifically.

When I speak of curatorial labor in this context, I do not refer to the work of one person with a clearly identified role as curator. Rather, the curatorial zone that is created in the production of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites has undefined borders; fully discerning it is a challenge. Curatorial functions are split between various actors, such as the artist, employees of the agency managing the site, and employees of external partner organizations, such as art museums and public art commissioning bodies. Authority over interpretive and administrative choices shifts from case to case within the group of projects examined.

The distribution of curatorial tasks in the case study, for example, is not straightforward: the curatorial input of the YBCA and the curator of Ground Scores is surpassed by that of the Trust and the artist. In her account of the realization of Lover’s Line, Przyblyski makes little mention of the YBCA or the exhibition curator. As a former public art commissioner, the artist is cognizant of the role of the curator, and so this absence should be read as an indication of their limited curatorial involvement. In others of the comparative examples, on the other hand, a collaborative partner institution is closely involved in the selection, production, and communication of artworks, while the heritage management agency has a less active role. While there is no status quo, this thesis argues that a common set of curatorial conditions is at work when contemporary art is invited into cultural heritage sites.

Having given a brief outline of the concept of cultural heritage and the practice of cultural heritage management, the relationship of contemporary art to the notion of heritage, and the curatorial function within cultural heritage sites, I will, in the chapters that follow, delve more deeply into several central conditions within cultural heritage and unravel their effects on curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

PRESERVATION AND CHANGE

It seems unnecessary to point out that historic preservation involves the act of preserving. But what, exactly, does that act entail? Surprisingly, it has often meant making a lot of changes to a site. These can be as practical as adding infrastructure to accommodate public restrooms, or as fraught with sociopolitical connotations as removing, in a cottage outside of Washington D.C., evidence of prolonged residence by personnel at a home for aging military veterans with immigrant backgrounds in order to reinstate the cottage’s brief life as a summer residence of Abraham Lincoln during his presidency.48

Preservation has always included practices that involve adaptation and change. At one end, the unavoidability of introducing change to a historic site is regarded as marginal in comparison to the recovery of an envisioned original, authentic state: change is downplayed, devalued, or disregarded. A description of Chesterwood, the Stockbridge, Massachusetts home of American sculptor Daniel Chester French (1850-1931), now managed by the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation, serves to illustrate this unreflective approach to change within preservation practice. Thayer Tolles, Curator of American Paintings and Sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, notes that several buildings on the site have been “adapted to serve new functions,” while in the same breath describing it as a “time capsule” that is “virtually unchanged” from the artist’s day.49 Tolles acknowledges but downplays changes to the site, maintaining that it retains an authentic and continuous ur-condition.

The opening-up of the concept of cultural heritage noted by Spennemann—re-evaluating and expanding the tangible and intangible cultural products that qualify as heritage—has also brought with it an increased focus on the latter approach to change within preservation practice. Today a wide variety of practices fall under the rubric of preservation. Preservation has even come to encompass some forms of adaptive reuse, an increasingly popular and highly praised architectural practice that involves the adaptation of existing historical sites and structures for modern uses.50

Adaptive reuse involves some measure of acknowledgement of, even critical reflection on, processes of change and adaptation within preservation practice. The creation of Emscher Park provides an example. This cultural heritage area stretches over a vast portion of Germany’s formerly heavily industrial Ruhr region and was created from 1989-1999 through a

large-scale development effort that utilized adaptive reuse of derelict industrial sites and buildings to stimulate the area’s economy in a post-industrial age. The park includes commercial and cultural facilities, as well as an Industrial Heritage Trail.\textsuperscript{51} Ingerid Helsing Almaas, a practicing architect, author, and editor of \textit{Arkitektur N, the Norwegian Review of Architecture}, describes “new use with only a minimum of alteration to the old fabric”:

A gas tank is filled with water and becomes a new home for a diving club. Youngsters are practising rock-climbing on the concrete sides of a redundant furnace. ... Late at night, the Landscape Park Duisburg Nord fills with the voices and distant laughter of people disappearing on mysterious torch-lit guided tours through the gargantuan installations of the former Duisburg-Meiderich steel works, only dimly lit by Jonathan Park’s coloured light installation.\textsuperscript{52}

Almaas’ account aligns with the adaptive reuse approach of preservation practice that regards new use as welcome modification as long as \textit{structural} changes are minimized. Contemporary art in the form of a light installation is one of the uses that can be accommodated while preserving the “industrial identity,” the heritage value, of these sites.

The Presidio of San Francisco is subject to the same shifting interplay between change and preservation in its management as are other cultural heritage sites. The Presidio Trust embraces the concept of adaptive reuse as a preservation strategy. It also positions itself at the forefront of evolving and progressive approaches to preservation. The introduction to the Trust’s 2009 annual report states that “it could be argued that preservation is still in its early stages in America, but work at the Presidio has helped advance the importance of preserving our historic places, and has contributed to new ways of thinking about how to do it.” It asserts that preservationists acknowledge that historic buildings “are best preserved through reuse.”\textsuperscript{53} A survey of annual reports produced by the agency, available from 1999 to 2013, pinpoints the use of verbs such as \textit{restore}, \textit{sustain}, \textit{rescue}, \textit{remediate}, \textit{revitalize}, \textit{rejuvenate}, \textit{rehabilitate}, \textit{improve} and \textit{enhance} to describe acts of preservation. These words stand for a wide range of actions, involving differing levels of intervention and adaptation, supporting the notion that preservation is flexibly and expansively defined by the Trust.

The Change Condition

Practitioners and theorists of preservation, architecture, and urban planning vary in their awareness, or acknowledgment, of the contradictions and complexities between change and preservation inherent in cultural heritage management. Artists and curators of contemporary art, meanwhile, see this contradiction as essential to the artistic potential of these sites. The \textit{change condition} for curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites revolves around the

\textsuperscript{52} Almaas, 1999.
unresolved tension between change and stasis that underlies the practice of preservation and the management of cultural heritage sites.

Francesca von Hapsburg brings a contemporary art world perspective to cultural heritage management in her position as art patron, collector and founder of both Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary and the ARCH Foundation, with headquarters in Vienna, Austria but active internationally. In the late 1990s, von Hapsburg purchased a property on Lopud, a small island off the coast of Croatia.\(^{54}\) The property includes an ancient Franciscan monastery, and von Hapsburg had the intention of opening it up to private and public use through a “sensitive restoration” that “combines a home with a retreat for scholars to be creative and develop ideas, ... [and] includes use of some of the larger spaces for contemporary art interventions.” She wished “to preserve ... the memory of the monument with all its different layers, also including part of the condition that it’s in now,” after 150 years of neglect and looting. Instead, the local conservation authorities insisted on a “complete restoration”—which, it can be imagined, meant a preservation approach that unreflectingly makes enormous changes in the name of restoring an authentic \textit{ur}-condition.

To mitigate this loss, von Hapsburg invited artist Janet Cardiff to produce a “video walk” through the monastery during the preservation process in order, she states, “to see the process of change.” Cardiff, well-known for creating audio walks in which participants navigate a prescribed route while listening to a narrative through headphones, filmed all over the monastery over the course of multiple visits. For von Hapsburg, “working with a contemporary artist has been the most efficient way to keep this memory alive.”\(^{55}\) Here, contemporary art has a documentary, memorial function: Cardiff’s work serves to preserve layers of history that, somewhat ironically, will disappear as a direct result of preservation work in this cultural heritage site.\(^{56}\)

This example strikingly upends the notion that preservation is necessarily conservative, and artistic practice radical. Here, it is the preservationists who are, in a sense, radically transforming the site, while the artist’s mission is to preserve its history intact. Mark Wigley, architect and dean of Columbia University’s Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation in New York City, notes this difference of perspective in his admonition that

\begin{quote}
as long as we think of preservationists as morticians, preserving the past, versus artists and architects as the revolutionaries who change the future ... we fail to see the more-or-
\end{quote}

\(^{54}\) Speaking in 2007, von Hapsburg notes that she first “walked into the building ten years ago.” The date of purchase could not be more precisely determined. “Preservation, Contemporary Art, and Architecture,” 2007, p. 76.


\(^{56}\) It was not possible conclusively to determine whether this work has been completed. The work is not included on the artist’s current website. An out-of-date, but still accessible, page of her site lists the work as \textit{Lopud/Monastery Walk} (2006), but the link to further information is broken: http://www.cardiffmiller.com/artworks/index.html (29-06-2014).
less conservative nature of architects and artists and the more-or-less radical nature of preservationists. The rub, however, is that those engaging in these “radical” actions are precisely those within the profession who strongly downplay, devalue, and disregard the presence of change within preservation practice. Their absence of critical reflection on these radical acts of change endangers progress in embracing change within preservation, as more progressive heritage managers react with ever more cautious strategies. Where contemporary art can have an effect, then, is in raising awareness of the potential for progressive cultural heritage management. This suggests that, under the change condition, contemporary art in cultural heritage sites functions as an advocacy tool within the cultural heritage management field.

The Change Condition in the Lover’s Line Case Study

The change condition is at work in the production of A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio in the Presidio of San Francisco. Recall that the artwork consists of an audio component, outdoor signage, and a printed wayfinding guide. A look at the hierarchy of importance and meaning-making between the three components sheds light on the artwork’s possible role as an advocacy tool for art in the parks and, by extension, for a more flexible and progressive preservation approach in the Presidio.

Certain aspects of the work and its display support the idea that the printed guide is primary, with the signage and audio serving as supportive elements in accessing the work. According to the artist, the audio component functions as a “prompt” or “spur” for a “walking story” from the maps in the wayfinding guide. Likewise, the fact that the work continues to exist in the Presidio despite the removal of the outdoor signage in late 2008 indicates that the signs were not conceptually essential. In contrast, the wayfinding guide is cohesive, rich in content, and thoughtfully produced. It could stand alone as an alternative kind of guidebook to this portion of the park, or even as a freestanding artist book completely separate from the site.

58 Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
59 As the end date of Ground Scores neared, the Trust expressed interest in keeping the work available on its website as an “ongoing trail experience.” The project was “relaunched” in a format that could live on with the Presidio Trust’s website as its sole platform. The outdoor signage was removed, the cellular audio guide access was discontinued, and the contents of the publication were cut down and adapted into a format that would be easier to read on a screen and were made available as a downloadable pdf on the Trust’s website. San Francisco Bureau of Urban Secrets [Jeannene Przyblyski], “Valentine’s Day on Lover’s [sic] Lane: A Project to update and re-launch A Lover’s Line Thru the Presidio,” 4 December 2008. San Francisco Bureau of Urban Secrets [Jeannene Przyblyski], “Lover’s Line Audio Tour Map,” http://www.presidio.gov/map/Documents/Lovers Line Audio Tour Map accessible.pdf (21-07-2013).
60 An idea that the artist herself finds very attractive: “I really would like the Comings & Goings book and the Lover’s Line book to serve as sort of prototypes for an engagement with artist-commissioned trail guides for the park. That it would become a series, and other artists would do them, there would be formats, and things that would be experimented with.” Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
Allison Stone of the Trust states that these guides were primarily handed out to the general public during public programs such as the relaunch of the work in early 2009.\textsuperscript{61} Przyblyski, on the other hand, states that they were primarily used within the Trust, the National Park Service, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy (the local nonprofit fundraising partner of the NPS and the Trust) as an internal advocacy tool for art in parks.\textsuperscript{62} There are several possible reasons for these incompatible descriptions from two people central to the production of Lover’s Line. The fallibility of memory may be to blame, or one or the other of them may deliberately be giving misinformation. Alternatively, they may truly hold different interpretations as to the target group for the publication. The change condition, however, suggests that it is likely there is a certain degree of truth to Przyblyski’s impression. If the target audience of the work was fully the public, then the experiential, on-site experience should naturally have been most important. Instead it is the wayfinding guide that is central—a site-independent, easily shareable object that was sent to stakeholders and decision-makers at high levels within the agency and related agencies, and is no longer available to the public in its beautifully-produced printed form.

Chapter Conclusions

The change condition of curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites builds on the unresolved tension between change and stasis that underlies the practice of preservation and the management of cultural heritage sites. It posits the function of contemporary art in these sites as an advocacy tool for a more progressive cultural heritage management. Thus, its impact is internal, within the discipline of cultural heritage management and amongst and between its practitioners, rather than manifesting in an external engagement with the public in the form of visitor access or education.

As noted in the previous chapter, curatorial tasks in the comparative examples were found to be spread between multiple and varying actors. In the case of Cardiff’s Lopud/Monastery Walk, curatorial management of the change condition is negotiated between the Croatian conservation authorities and the private owner of the site, who balances an intimate knowledge of the art world with a passion for progressive cultural heritage preservation. The curatorial zone in Lover’s Line, meanwhile, is occupied primarily by the artist and the site’s cultural heritage managers. The change condition appears to arise within curatorial arrangements in which cultural heritage and contemporary art perspectives intersect.

\textsuperscript{61} According to oral information from Allison Stone, Associate Director, Presidio Trust, 7 January 2014. Since its relaunch, the work has continuously been actively promoted and available at “A Lover’s Line - Audio Art Experience,” Presidio Trust website, http://www.presidio.gov/map/Pages/a-Lovers-Line-audio-tour.aspx#.UzEu4l6thBZ (25-03-2014).

\textsuperscript{62} Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
When Jeannene Przyblyski describes her wish that visitors to the Presidio become aware of “doublings ... that the past and future are always latent in the present,” she identifies a central issue in cultural heritage, namely the dynamic relationship between past, present, and future.

Philosophers may debate the nature of time—whether it is sequential, absolute, and divided into past, present and future, or a mental construct, an eternal *now* colored by projections of memory and expectation—but for most of us time is intuitively a flow: the past fixed, the present unique, and the future undefined and unknowable. This intuitive perception of time is a defining factor in cultural heritage, predicated as it is on the idea that past, present, and future exist as real, sequential, and differentiated phases. Perhaps this is precisely because of cultural heritage’s focus on *lived experience*. Laurajane Smith describes this focus in terms of the sense of “embodied memory” intrinsic to heritage. Similarly, historian Iain J.M. Robertson argues that the explosion of interest in heritage arose out of a reaction against an academicization of history, in an effort to bring the profession “more closely into alignment with people’s lives.” Instead of studying the past for itself, or for dryly academic ends, the focus is on connecting people with the past and, especially, with popular culture and forms of “unofficial knowledge” that have supposedly been ignored by the academic field of history.

While many historians may take issue with this claim, it sheds light on the way heritage is framed as being particularly concerned with *lived experience* in and through time.

The treatment of the relationship between past, present and future varies along the spectrum of heritage approaches outlined in the chapter two. On the conservative end, heritage is considered fixed and stable, and is perceived to be of the past, not something happening now. Hand in hand with the aim of preservation, cultural heritage sites have a clear memorial function: a wish for remembrance. This memorial interest in the past is, admittedly, joined by strong interest in the present and future: arguments for making heritage and preservation relevant to the general public include ubiquitous appeals for “preserving the past for the future” and calls to actively “tie past to present.” But this impulse stems, always, from the idea that heritage is of the past, and serves to underscore it.

On the progressive end—which reacts against precisely this idea that heritage is something of the past, that it encompasses “the obsolete, the mistaken, the outmoded, the dead, and the

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63 Jeannene Przyblyski, 18 August 2013.
65 Smith, 2006, p. 65.
defunct”—heritage can instead be described in temporal terms as being of the present, selecting the past. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett succinctly describes heritage as “a mode of cultural production in the present that has recourse to the past.” Advocating this view, architecture critic and curator Andreas Ruby expresses the hope that architects and preservationists can adopt a “sovereign” approach to the past that “deals with history by incorporating its material traces while giving them a new programmatic trajectory”—essentially an expanded notion of adaptive reuse. Curatorial practice in the art world, too, is often equated with just such processes of selection, juxtaposition, and recontextualization, and so this progressive heritage approach aligns with Maria Lind’s assertion, noted in chapter two, that cultural heritage is a “curated cultural past.” In an odd parallel with the conservative approach, in its framing of heritage as a contemporary interpretation of the past, the progressive approach serves to reinforce the pastness of the past and the presentness of the present. Both approaches assume that there is a discontinuity between past and present cultural expressions: a divide that must be overcome through various methods of activation.

Contemporary art holds a similarly central, yet contradictory, relationship with time. As noted in chapter two, the notion of the contemporary is terminologically defined in contrast to the past; at the same time, contemporary art is held to have the potential to encourage active and critical engagement with past, present and future. Art historian Rosalyn Deutsche asserts that “the state and other institutions ... treat artists (and architects) as ‘memory experts.’” Of his work Der Bevölkerung (2000), Hans Haacke (b. 1936) states

it not only commemorates but makes us think about the present—and the future. ... Memorials tend to direct our thoughts primarily to the past. Rarely do they cause us to consider the present and how we want to shape what’s to come.

Implicit in these statements is the claim that contemporary art can perform a powerful triad: negotiation of the past (through more than just unreflective commemoration), the present (with more than complacent assumptions), and the future (beyond passive imaginings).

The Temporal Condition

Within the temporal condition, cultural heritage sites offer ways for the past to be experienced in the present, and for the present to meet and activate the past. This encounter is staged under the assumption that past and present cultural expressions are not otherwise continuous. Contemporary art is one activation method among others used to bridge this divide. Through multi-sensory, embodied encounters, the project examples identified as working under the temporal condition create resonances between past and present. Janet Cardiff’s Lopud/

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70 “Preservation, Contemporary Art, and Architecture,” 2007, p. 73.
Monastery Walk, discussed in the previous chapter for its nuanced and non-invasive approach to preserving and documenting processes of change, clearly functions within the temporal condition as well. Time is the dimension in which change is manifest, and Cardiff’s video walk attempts not only to preserve the various shifts in the history of the site but also to engage a present-day public with them through a time-based, embodied art experience.

Another example of the temporal condition is found in Day is Done (2014), a recent work by installation artist Susan Philipsz sited on Governors Island, New York. This site has several features in common with the Presidio of San Francisco: the 172-acre island just off the Brooklyn coastline in the New York harbor was a closed military base until 2003, when the majority was sold to the City of New York for redevelopment into a public park and the remainder designated a U.S. National Monument managed by the National Park Service. Now it is the site of a public park and other recreational facilities, educational programs, and commercial tenants, alongside contemporary art projects.73 The sound installation conjures the traditional military evening bugle call known as Taps and plays from speakers on the island every evening at 6pm, when the island closes to the public for the night. Art critic Blake Gopnik writes that “the piece evoked the era when ‘Taps’ would have been played daily on the island, while it also triggered thoughts of military funerals and loss of life. (On Sept 11, those on the island were able to see the collapse of the twin towers.)”74 Elsewhere, Day is Done is described as a “haunting and elegiac catalyst to memory.”75 Clearly, the work has both strong historical resonance and unmistakable contemporary resonance, and is intended to link past and present through collective lived experience.

Let me lose myself (2011- ), a series of sound installations by various artists in Skogskyrkogården, the Woodland Cemetery outside of Stockholm, Sweden, also engages with temporal concerns both structurally and conceptually.76 The Woodland Cemetery, a Unesco World Heritage site, is both a cemetery in active use and a popular tourist destination with a staffed Visitors Center, brochures, and guided tours.77 The works include Landningsbana för tidsresande (I) (Landing-strip for time travelers (I)) (2012) by artist, sound designer, and actress Mira Eklund (b. 1981). The sound works are experienced individually, through

76 Contributors to the exhibition thus far are: Erik Bünger (b. 1976), Nadine Byrne (b. 1985), Steven Cuzner (b. 1975) and his son Eliot Hemmingsson Cuzner, Mira Eklund (b. 1981), Leif Elggren (b. 1950), Jacqueline Hoang Nguyen, Tobias Sjöberg (b. 1979), Linda Tedsdotter (b. 1975), and James Webb (b. 1975).
headphones, as visitors wander through the cemetery along self-selected routes. The first “episode” of the exhibition was launched in the spring of 2011, and five such episodes have been released thus far. This serial structure “echoes the way the cemetery was built [sic] by the architects Gunnar Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz in various stages and over many years.” Listeners to Eklund’s work “find themselves in a state where the boundaries between body and soul, then and now, you and I are suspended and everything flows together into one.” She is one of several participating artists whose work explores life, death, and memory. Mourning the dead is something people have done throughout human history, and artistic reflections over forms of private grieving and public commemoration are, potentially, a powerful way of questioning the assumption that past and present cultural expressions are not continuous.

The Temporal Condition in the Lover’s Line Case Study

The treatment of past, present, and future in the Lover’s Line case study reflects the general findings of the temporal condition: that cultural heritage sites aim to activate their heritage values by facilitating personal connections between past and present, and that contemporary art is used as one of these methods of activation. As the observation by Przyblyski at the beginning of this chapter indicates, Lover’s Line is explicitly concerned with the dynamic between past, present and future and, particularly, with visitor experience of their interplay. Like Let me lose myself, the work is structured around the spatiotemporal act of walking through a landscape and contains a combination of visual, aural, and proprioceptive modes. In addition, the work contains numerous allusions to time, many of which accentuate a lack of distinction between past, present, and future. Other phrases contain constructions of the future and backward glances to the past, further emphasizing their latency in the present:

...the constant fog makes it difficult to tell the present from the past.
...the fog even smells like timelessness.
...the voices that I hear don’t always sync up with what I see in front of me, or behind me. It was missing for several days, or maybe several minutes...
...chronological order, but of course that depends on when you happen to be listening...
For yesterday, or maybe it’s tomorrow...

Lovers Lane, as it was today.

...immortality (or at least a place in collective memory)...
...reported irregularities in the space-time continuum in and around Lovers Lane. The lane holds its many histories within a continually evolving present. Its general straightness allows for an unusually long view of the trajectory between here and there, [and] intermittent glimpses of the connections between now and then.

78 The works continue to be available at the exhibition website, “Let me lose myself,” CCSeven website, http://ccseven.org/wp/let-me-lose-myself/ (03-08-2014).
79 “Let me lose myself,” CCSeven website.
80 “Let me lose myself,” CCSeven website.
I turn toward the Mission and see an open landscape, waiting to give up its blessings...
...we will bring civilization to this new and wondrous land, and a great city will rise here one day.  

...maybe, even though I cannot write my own story, or even my own name, history will remember me all the same.  

I wonder if our efforts will even be remembered when we are no longer around to tell our stories to our grandchildren...  

The concluding portions of both audio and publication hammer home the temporal condition. The last audio track is listed as dating from “circa yesterday and tomorrow.” On the last page of the guide is a note on the typeface like those often found in books. It states: “The text in this book is printed using Century and Futura typefaces—Century so that we know where we’ve been, Futura so that we keep on going, indefinitely.” Together, all of these overt and implicit references to time create a sense of connection between today’s visitors to the Presidio and the lived experience of its historical residents, thus activating the heritage values of the site.  

However, these stories about the past are constructed for our present-day appetites. The sense they engender, of the universality of lived experience, is most likely a reflection of our time rather than an absolute condition. Lover’s Line demonstrates that, in reality, there is no way for us to escape the bias of the present—despite the rhetoric that contemporary art challenges our preconceived notions about the world, and that critical heritage studies lays bare the hegemonic forces at work in the construction of heritage. Our understanding of the past is always colored by the filter of the present, and contemporary art in cultural heritage sites does not transcend this.  

Chapter Conclusions  
The relationship between past and present takes different forms across the spectrum of cultural heritage approaches. Conservative approaches take heritage to be of the past, while progressive approaches consider it to be of the present. Both, in their own way, work under an assumption of discontinuity between past and present cultural expressions. The temporal condition manifests the desire on the part of cultural heritage managers for the past to be experienced in the present, and for the present to meet and activate the past. The view that contemporary art has a unique ability to encourage critical reflection on the past, present, and future informs the activation methods used by cultural heritage managers. Through both form and content, the project examples create opportunities for present-day visitors to cultural  

87 Przybyski, A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio, wayfinding guide, 2008.
heritage sites to enact connections with the lived experience of the past. Nonetheless, the case study demonstrates our inability to escape the bias of the present.

The distribution of curatorial tasks within the temporal condition is in keeping with the findings from the analysis of the change condition. Curatorial labor is divided among multiple actors and shifts from case to case. The curatorial work of producing and communicating the exhibition *Let me lose myself* was undertaken primarily by CSeven, a Stockholm-based group of independent curators, while the city of Stockholm, which manages the Woodland Cemetery, was only peripherally involved on a logistical level.\(^8^8\) The production of Philipsz’ *Day is Done* is also characterized by a strong “art world” curatorial presence: the work was produced in collaboration with the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, New York, and the curator—Tom Eccles, executive director of the Center—is named in the press release. But the city’s *Percent for Art* program, the private trust that manages the site, as well as the landscape architecture firm that designed the recently completed park spaces on the island, also played key roles in the siting and communication of the work.\(^8^9\) Add Cardiff’s and Przyblyski’s works to the mix and it is clear that these works display a wide range of curatorial arrangements. All except *Let me lose myself* demonstrate a strong curatorial overlap between the fields of contemporary art and cultural heritage. This exception may be a reflection of the maxim that an exhibition curator holds a stronger authorial position in the context of exhibitions of multiple artists, as opposed to solo exhibitions. The autonomous and centralized curatorial mode found in the context of group exhibitions is, at least in this case, replicated in cultural heritage sites.

\(^{88}\) Anneli Bäckman, personal conversation, 13 December 2013.

\(^{89}\) “Trust for Governors Island Announces New Public Art Commissions” (press release), 2014.
INTERPRETATION

Jeannene Przyblyski’s decision to structure *Lover's Line* as a self-guided tour plays with formal conventions of museum interpretation. The three components that make up the work—audio tracks, outdoor trail signage, and printed publication—each take on a form typical of interpretive material produced for exhibitions and heritage sites. Indeed, interpretation is a central aspect of cultural heritage management, artistic practice, and curatorial practice. The methods of activation discussed in the previous chapter can even be understood as one form of interpretation. Thus, it is fruitful to examine more closely the ways in which interpretive processes play out in the context of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

What we mean when we talk about interpretation varies widely depending on the context. In her classic essay *Against Interpretation*, Susan Sontag notes that the concept of interpretation can be understood broadly or narrowly, philosophically or directly. The broadest sense of the term—the sense, she writes, “in which Nietzsche (rightly) says, ‘There are no facts, only interpretations’”—references the limits of human knowledge of the world and underlies constructivist theories of experience. This is distinct from a narrower sense that denotes “a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain ‘rules’ of interpretation.” Sontag dissects this narrower meaning as it pertains to the art criticism of her day, but its scope of implementation is of course far wider than this, encompassing the whole arena of the humanities.

Interpretation is central to the study and curation of art, but also to its practice. Art critics, art historians, and curators interpret artworks through texts and exhibitions. These attempts to understand works of art, and to communicate that understanding, are joined by the interpretive actions of artists. On the broad philosophical level, artists can be said to interpret the world through their work. In the narrower meaning of the term, artists engaged in practices of institutional critique can be said to offer alternative interpretations of—to re-interpret—the representational choices made by museums and other institutions.

Within the context of institutional display, such as in museums, the directive notion of interpretation also connotes the act of communicating to a public the representational ideology of the museum and its curators. This activity, often called interpretive, educational,
or pedagogical programming, is as central to the mission of most museums today as is the display of objects.\textsuperscript{93}

Like museums, cultural heritage sites take on the task of interpretation in addition to display. While it would be incorrect to claim a direct equivalency between cultural heritage sites and museums—as noted in chapter two, cultural heritage sites differ strikingly from cultural heritage museums, and museums generally, in the absence of displaced representation—a museal interpretive function and structure extends into cultural heritage sites. The groups that manage these sites engage in interpretation of cultural heritage to an audience. Heritage sites are sometimes even described as “interpretive sites.”\textsuperscript{94} Interpretation is a central aspect of cultural heritage management.

The activities and materials that fall under the umbrella of interpretive programming in cultural heritage sites are varied in form and content. They can include commemorative plaques and other informational signage, printed brochures and books, audio guides, self-guided and docent-led tours, lectures and other talks, small displays or elaborately produced exhibitions, “living history” performances and reenactments. They can also include commissioned works of contemporary art (which may, in turn, adopt the form of any of these interpretive channels).

The Interpretive Condition

The interpretive condition for curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites is found on every interpretive level, from philosophical to directive, and is enacted by both cultural heritage managers and contemporary artists. For the managing agencies of these sites, it describes the aspiration to introduce broader, more open-ended lines of inquiry into interpretive efforts—an aspiration often stymied by an inability to move beyond directive interpretation.\textsuperscript{95} At the same time, the condition describes the critical re-interpretations by artists of the ways in which cultural heritage is represented and interpreted by those agencies—the “alternative mappings,” as Irit Rogoff describes them, that wrest control over representation from hegemonic institutions and give it to the “resistance.”\textsuperscript{96} These re-interpretations, in turn, are often compromised by the necessity of collaboration. Artists working within the interpretive condition thus evidence the lack of agreement, identified by

\textsuperscript{94} Usage has been noted for numerous sites in the United States, Canada, and Australia. A U.S. National Park Service example can be found in Dennis Frenchman, “International Examples of the United States Heritage Area Concept,” 2004, http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/REP/intlexamples.pdf (29-06-2014).
\textsuperscript{95} Many historians face a similar challenge when attempting to incorporate visual culture into their accounts: “More often than not ... they remain more comfortable bringing images to the table only insofar as they serve as illustrative evidence for another kind of historical study (about politics, economics, everyday life, etc.).” Schwartz and Przybyski, 2004, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{96} Irit Rogoff, “Hit and Run: Museums and Cultural Difference,” \textit{Art Journal}, Vol. 61, No. 3 (Autumn 2002), College Art Association, p. 71.
Miwon Kwon, over how to define “interventionist” versus “integrationist” models of public art.\textsuperscript{97} They also display the difficulty of holding to Andrea Fraser’s strict definition of criticality in “artistic practice” versus “cultural production.”\textsuperscript{98}

There exists a long tradition of artists addressing museological issues. In 1968 Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976) created a conceptual artwork in the form of a fictional museum, the \textit{Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Algès, Section Financière}, in order to question museum practices by appropriating and altering them.\textsuperscript{99} And since at least the late 1980s, contemporary artists have been invited to make artistic “interventions” within history, ethnographic, and art museums. Fred Wilson’s (b. 1961) installation \textit{Mining the Museum} (1992) at the Maryland Historical Society, for example, involved constructing an alternative historical narrative from the society’s collection in order to address “how museums consciously or unwittingly reinforce racist beliefs and behavior.”\textsuperscript{100} Susan Hiller’s (b. 1940) \textit{From the Freud Museum} (1991-1996), installed at the Freud Museum in London in 1994 and consisting of a display of 50 archive boxes packed with artifacts of personal or historical value, addresses a central issue in museums, namely “the need for viewers to establish their own rapport with what is presented.”\textsuperscript{101} Andrea Fraser characteristically spares no aspect of the museum from her scrutiny in \textit{Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk} (1989), a performance conducted in the Philadelphia Museum of Art that “develops a social history of the art museum in the United States, focusing on the relationships between class and taste, private philanthropy and public policy.”\textsuperscript{102} These contemporary art interventions in museums, then, provide artists with a way to perform institutional critique of implicit power hierarchies and conventions of representation, and to highlight ethnic and cultural inequities in the museum—all \textit{from within}.

Further, Lucy Lippard has shown that artists have long used the infrastructure and material signs of tourism (which is, often, linked to cultural heritage sites) as fodder for critical artwork. In \textit{Travels with Mona} (1978), Suzanne Lacy (b. 1945) performs the role of “Woman Artist recreating the world’s most famous painting of a woman [the \textit{Mona Lisa}] through a follow-the-dots kit in new contexts, at various tourist sites around the world.”\textsuperscript{103} Renee Green’s (b. 1959) \textit{Site/Scene} (1990), in a play on the non-siteness of the scenic overlook, is a sculptural installation consisting of a series of five scenic postcards and plaques mounted on the wall and five binoculars on stands allowing visitors to view the scenes.\textsuperscript{104} What distinguishes this practice from the trend examined in this thesis is that artists are now being

\textsuperscript{98} Fraser, 2005, pp. 41-42.
\textsuperscript{101} McShine, 1999, pp. 13-14.
\textsuperscript{102} Fraser, 2003, p. 114.
\textsuperscript{103} Lippard, 1999, p. 74.
\textsuperscript{104} Lippard, 1999, p. 142.
invited to make works by the agencies that manage these cultural heritage sites: rather than working from a critical distance, they now contend with these agencies’ expectations and conditions from within.

In other words, by working in cultural heritage sites artists should not be thought of as escaping the confines of the museum in order to freely create art in everyday life. As noted, cultural heritage sites parallel museums in that their interpretive efforts reflect their ideologies of representation, and museums are often involved in the production of art in the projects addressed in the comparative analysis. Accordingly, within the interpretive condition, artists are performing a similar institutional critique as they have done in museums—revealing underrepresented histories, exposing power hierarchies, and addressing inequities of representation—but have now relocated outside the physical walls of museums and into cultural heritage sites.

Artist Allison Smith’s participatory performance project *The Muster* (2004-2006) on Governors Island, New York exemplifies the compromises necessary to this act of re-interpretation. With the question “What are you fighting for?,” Smith mustered artists and non-artists, friends and strangers alike to participate in a weeklong performance event in May 2005 that “embodied the complexities of its political, aesthetic and cultural moment”105—a moment which must have been informed by increasingly problematic wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, making the use of battle metaphors particularly poignant and effective.

There are differences in the way the project is described by the artist versus how it is described in promotional material made available to the general public by the commissioning organizations. Generally, the sharpest edges of her critical activist approach—her re-interpretation of this cultural heritage site—are dulled in the public material, which at times strikes a booster-ish tone. The act of “marshaling” for a “cause” is diluted into an “open-air celebration,” for example.106 This dilution is a practical necessity of the reality of collaboration with the partner organizations involved in the project, which included not only the City of New York but the Public Art Fund, whose public art program is funded by a large number of private and governmental grantors including the National Endowment for the Arts. In such a context, it is unsurprising for politically sensitive topics to be subject to shaping by factors external to the artist and her team.

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The Muster further suggests that collaborative practices may provide critical possibilities to artists and curators working in cultural heritage sites. Miwon Kwon has observed the “discursive slippage” around the term “community,” whereby the term is used contradictionily—“antithetically”—to represent groups holding vastly different sociopolitical positions. Loose definitions of community and collaborative practice can be used to artistic advantage. Participants in The Muster can be said to have comprised a temporary community, and the existence of community, Kwon suggests—whether truly “politically-coherent” or merely created “through the delegate-artist” for the production of the work—causes an “unquestioned presumption” of collective oppression which then can be addressed through artistic processes. Governmentally-managed cultural heritage sites, at least, may feel obliged to permit such projects to move forward once they have been initiated. By creating the appearance, if not the reality, of community, Smith is able to push the boundaries of what sort of content is acceptable, though communication to the public about the project is to a great extent determined by the commissioning agency.

With this potential for artistic and curatorial “activism” in mind, why would cultural heritage sites take the risk of inviting artists to make works that respond to their sites? Andrea Fraser notes that power relations are never truly disrupted: there may be shifts in what groups have authority and control, but never a rejection of systems of control. Dissecting her own position as an artist commissioned by museums to make work critical of those same museums, Fraser concludes that these institutions are not destabilizing their authority by commissioning her to critique their institutions from the inside out, but rather affirming it. In their ability not only to weather but to invite her critique they gain art world prestige and legitimacy. So too can cultural heritage sites benefit from the institutional critique proffered through artists’ reinterpretations within the interpretive condition, not only in the art world but in the heritage community and the local area. Benefits include increased cultural cachet, showing an awareness of social and cultural issues, and addressing questions of inequitable representation without making actual changes to staff, structure, or other interpretive processes—while simultaneously demonstrating their unassailable position of authority.

But for cultural heritage sites, the interpretive condition takes on more than just this reactive form. As noted, interpretation is a primary function in these sites, and the interpretive condition describes the aspiration to offer to visitors a sense of open-endedness, a multiplicity of meanings, and a multisensory experience—the “sensuous immediacy” that Sontag contrasts to dry content-based interpretation. Philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer’s idea of the fusion of horizons, a process of interpretation in which the subjective (self) and objective (other) merge in order to develop a rich understanding of an experience, may point to yet another intended function of art within the interpretive condition: that of sparking in visitors a

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personal connection with the heritage values represented by a site as an element of interpretive efforts.

Art historian Françoise Forster-Hahn argues of exhibitions of art, “As visual narratives of mental constructs, be it of nationalist, modernist, or any other ideology, they often crystallize specific historical moments by imprinting images in the public mind that are more powerful than texts.”111 This suggests a unique ability of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites within the interpretive condition to surpass text-based interpretation in constructing narratives for the site. In contrast, art historian W.J.T. Mitchell observes that images display a fundamental “silence,” “reticence,” and “nonsensical obduracy” as compared to texts,112 which challenges the notion that artworks in cultural heritage sites would necessarily fulfill a supportive function for existing interpretation. Their relative “wildness,” to use Mitchell’s term, makes artworks difficult to harness for a fixed meaning or purpose. These polar arguments illuminate the struggle between open-ended and directive aims within the interpretive condition as practiced by cultural heritage sites. At the same time as images—artworks—are ascribed an openness and flexibility, a unique ability to house a multiplicity of meanings, they are likewise thought to be especially suited to construct narratives that are more ideologically powerful and convincing than texts.

The Interpretive Condition in the Lover’s Line Case Study

As the managing agency of a cultural heritage site, the Presidio Trust has the responsibility to educate visitors about the natural and cultural history of the park. But as Dominique Poulot, professor in art history and cultural heritage at the Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, observes of contemporary history museums,

it is the explicit intention ... to develop specific pedagogies of historical understanding and thinking in ... visitors by establishing a stronger resonance between the past and the present. It is a matter of using the experience of each and everyone to develop their capacity to interpret history...113

In an echo of the temporal condition, then, museums and cultural heritage sites feel that, in order to perform their interpretive function, they need to prompt visitors to connect their own personal experience of the past and present with the historical past. For the Trust, this

takes the form of a vision of the Presidio as a public forum for important discussions on a wide range of topics relevant to our lives today. “The Presidio allows for broad discussions about history and culture, art and nature, their interconnections as well as their incongruities. ... Activities [in 2008, the year Lover’s Line was installed] included exhibits that posed important questions about art and history.” This vision positions the Trust within the broadly philosophical sense of interpretation and notes the introduction of art exhibits (by which is meant the presence of site-specific artworks such as Lover’s Line) as central to this vision.

But the Trust’s attempts at open-endedness are in part undermined by its difficulties in abandoning directive interpretation. In annual reports produced by the Trust, art in the park is actively linked with subjects of particular importance within the agency’s conventional interpretive efforts: the trail system, significant periods in the Presidio’s history, the Trust’s efforts at preservation of natural and cultural resources, and the interplay of nature and culture in the formation of the park landscape including the historic forest. In the Trust’s 2008 annual report, for example, both Lover’s Line and Andy Goldsworthy’s Spire (2008), also installed in the Presidio that year, are directly linked to the park’s natural and cultural history:

This year, the Presidio provided an extraordinary venue for artists Andy Goldsworthy and Jeannene Przyblyski. Goldsworthy’s sculpture, Spire, stands sentinel to the historic forest, while Przyblyski’s work invoked early life in the Presidio with stories about what might have occurred along San Francisco’s oldest trail, Lovers’ Lane.115

Later in the same report, Przyblyski’s work is mentioned in relation to an improved and expanded trail system and enhanced historical value in the park.116 Similarly, in the Trust’s 2009 annual report, Goldsworthy’s Spire is promoted as having “used trees from a reforestation project for recyclable art in the Presidio’s forested area,” thus emphasizing preservation efforts by the Trust.117 In 2011, this artwork is described in grander terms as a symbol of “the renewal and rejuvenation of the Presidio forest.”118 The Trust is caught in what Sontag might call a fixation on content, despite aspirations to embrace sensuous immediacy. The agency may spin the introduction of contemporary art into the Presidio as an opportunity for broad philosophizing—alternative, more open-ended forms of interpretation—but in practice it inhibits this potential through a continued application of directed language that ties these works to specific interpretive bullet points.

Przyblyski’s Lover’s Line displays the combination of critical re-interpretation and institutional compromise characteristic of the interpretive condition. In a move pulled right out of Andrea Fraser’s playbook, the work’s premise of being a self-guided tour addresses formal conventions of museum interpretation head-on. The components that make up the

work mimic forms of typical interpretive material produced for exhibitions and heritage sites. The trail signs were purposefully designed to mimic existing official park signage, and the artist even received the necessary logos, typefaces and color charts from the Trust’s communications department in order to do so.\textsuperscript{119} The publication is described as a “wayfinding guide” that includes fold-out maps of the site explored in the artwork, quotations, historical material and fictional narrative. At the back of the guide is a list of sources, an acknowledgements page, and a ruled page for notes, all in the spirit of a trail guide or exhibition brochure. During the initial phase of the work, in fall 2008, the audio tracks were accessed through a cellular telephone access system hosted by Guide by Cell, a San Francisco-based company that produces and hosts audio guides for museums and cultural heritage sites such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia, the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and Valley Forge National Park.\textsuperscript{120} Further, Przyblyski describes audio guides as identifying markers of “who wants authoritative content, and who doesn’t,”\textsuperscript{121} and notes that she was intrigued by the “indeterminacy,” sense of “insider knowledge,” and layer of secrecy or “mystique” that was produced through the use of private technology to access the audio component. With these elements the stage is set for institutional critique, from within, of the interpretive structure and authority of the cultural heritage site.

The artist goes so far as to reject the idea of representation entirely, stating that she wants to provide an “iterative” rather than a representative experience.\textsuperscript{122} Each track of the audio component is intended to be listened to along the same stretch of lane, the visitor looping back multiple times. The physical walking of the path becomes a durational marker of generative variation rather than of empty repetition—an iterative layering of multiple re-interpretations of the site’s history. The notion of the iterative provides an exciting alternative to art history’s worn binary of the representative and the exceptional.\textsuperscript{123} The creation of an experience that is both aesthetic and iterative suggests an expanded notion of what has historically constituted an aesthetic experience. Beyond the search for a representative, abstracted view, lies the unearthing of the particular, the local.

The critical re-interpretation falters, and the institutional compromise comes into play, in Przyblyski’s selection of historical characters and narratives. While the work highlights somewhat underrepresented histories and figures from the past—thus, it can be argued, attempting to nuance reigning master narratives of California history—this effort never moves beyond the realm of vague multiculturalism into more critical zones of opposition. For example, Przyblyski notes that the Trust expressed concern about the inclusion of certain topics, especially “anything touching upon Native American history, because the Native American stakeholders felt such ownership of that history. So it’s extreme ... sensitivity

\textsuperscript{119} Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{121} Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{122} Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
\textsuperscript{123} Schwartz and Przyblyski, 2004, p. 6.
around that.” But while she insists that she “wouldn’t be put off from it” simply because the Trust was wary, thus acknowledging issues of creative control, there are only a handful of oblique mentions of Native Americans in the narrative. In creating Lover’s Line, Przyblyski evidences the subtle negotiations between artistic re-interpretation and institutional compromise that arise for artists within the interpretive condition.

Chapter Conclusions

For artists, the interpretive condition builds on long-standing practices of institutional critique while providing a new arena, outside the museum, in which displacement of cultural heritage is absent but the trappings of institutionality remain. In entering this arena, the artists examined in this chapter accept a certain level of negotiation and compromise with agencies that manage cultural heritage sites. Collaborative practices involving art production by community members may provide a way of circumventing institutional compromises, at least partially. The interpretive condition confirms the challenges of defining integrationist versus interventionist artworks.

For the agencies that manage cultural heritage sites, the interpretive condition describes an aspiration to offer open-ended, experiential forms of interpretation that spark the curiosity of visitors. In doing so they reveal a tension between the desire to leave the experience of the site open for visitors to form their own interpretations and the need to offer a controlled and powerful ideological message. In inviting artists to re-interpret heritage, these agencies give up some measure of control over the stories told about the site and invite critical perspectives on their activities. In exchange, they receive additional legitimacy and may in some measure be seen to compensate for a lack of cultural representation.

The actors inhabiting curatorial zones within the interpretive condition are as diverse as those in the change and temporal conditions. For Smith’s The Muster, it includes the artist, the artist’s New York gallery (which sponsored the project website), the New York City Public Art Fund (the formal commissioner), the City of New York, the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation (precursor to the Trust for Governors Island), and the National Park Service. Thus, like Lover’s Line and most of the comparative examples examined thus far, it displays an intersection of curatorial actors from the fields of contemporary art and cultural heritage.

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124 Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
125 In “A Map of Misperceptions” and “A Map of Making Do, & Then Some,” both in Przyblyski, A Lover’s Line thru the Presidio, wayfinding guide, 2008.
126 “The Muster,” official project website.
SITE AND AUTHENTICITY

With its art-in-the-park program, the Presidio Trust aspires to commission artworks that “are uniquely suited to the Presidio (site-specific).”127 Similarly, Jeannene Przyblyski notes, “I really take the notion of site-specificness seriously. ... [T]rying to figure out how the site elicited a project.”128

Perceptions of site and authenticity are closely bound together. Cultural heritage sites are perceived to contain a sense of authenticity and direct experience—this, arguably, is what makes them attractive to tourism, in which “authenticity is what is sold as the content.”129 The perception is, of course, linked to the centrality of the site itself as a component of the heritage value, and the absence of displacement as compared to museums. The illusion of being, rather than representing, is supported in these sites by the absence of the “museum effect.”130 Of The Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center, a U.S. National Historic Landmark and a member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Historic Artists’ Homes and Studios program, art historian Ellen Landau describes “the solemnity of encountering a venue where true creativity took place.” She effuses that “those who make the trek ... often exhibit the attitude of pilgrims traveling from afar to observe a holy relic. ... Firsthand experience ... allows extraordinary insight” and “provide[s] exciting direct evidence.”131 Francesca von Hapsburg, attempting to put into words her initial attraction to the Franciscan monastery in Lopud, Croatia that she purchased in the late 1990s, says: “I felt the stones were alive and there was still an incredible vivacity to the place.”132 In a popular article describing the home and studio of architect and craftsman George Nakashima (1905-1990), recently added to the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, cultural heritage manager Joe Flanagan emphasizes the confluence between the experience of the place and the essence of the man: “Nakashima’s fullness of spirit is very much alive here, as is his legacy.”133 Descriptions of the experience of visiting cultural heritage sites recurrently underscore the idea that being there yields deeper, authentic understanding.

Further, site-specific artistic practices are often viewed as having a particular claim to authentic cultural representation of the places in which they are situated, simply by virtue of

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128 Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
this response to site.\textsuperscript{134} In a discussion of globalization’s pressures to homogenize cultural difference, Miwon Kwon observes that the rise of site-specific artistic practices is a symptom of efforts to “retrieve lost differences,” to reconnect to uniqueness of place—or more precisely, in establishing authenticity of meaning, memory, histories, and identities as a differential function of places. This differential function associated with places ... is the hidden attractor in the term ‘site-specificity.’\textsuperscript{135}

Museums, in contrast, are often ascribed a lack of authenticity. Efforts by museums over the last several decades to reach out to communities and “work outside the museum’s walls” are often seen as helping to resolve the issues of displaced representation inherent to the museum and to help it attain a higher level of cultural authenticity.\textsuperscript{136} This perception underlies Irit Rogoff’s countering of the efforts of the director of the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum in Rotterdam, Netherlands “to, in his words, ‘bring into the museum’ the large Surinamese community” in order to make itself “more fully culturally representative” with her admonition that the museum should instead “go out and slightly unravel its own boundaries.”\textsuperscript{137} The phenomenon of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites can be understood in this light as being, in part, one of a number of strategies employed by museums and other institutions to work outside of their walls. As noted in chapter two, many of the contemporary art projects discussed in this thesis involve not only the artist and an agency managing a cultural heritage site, but also a third collaborator, often an art museum or public art commissioning body. Recall that Lover’s Line was technically commissioned by the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, a visual and performing arts venue in San Francisco, and Allison Smith’s The Muster was a co-production with New York City’s Public Art Fund. Through collaborations with cultural heritage sites, museums and other agencies hope that some of the authenticity ascribed to these sites will rub off.

The Site-Specific Condition

Given this confluence of site, authenticity, and cultural representation, then, perhaps it is no surprise that site-specific practices are prevalent when contemporary art is invited into cultural heritage sites. The site-specific condition for curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites calls upon artworks to support the claims of unique authentic experience in these places—to “retrieve lost difference” or “reconnect to uniqueness of place,” to borrow Kwon’s language. The result is a sort of positive feedback mechanism: by virtue of the presence of site-specific artwork, the perceived authenticity of a cultural heritage site is enhanced; by virtue of association with artwork that responds to the conditions of a cultural heritage site, art world actors are legitimized as culturally representative.

\textsuperscript{134} Kwon, 2002, p. 159.  
\textsuperscript{135} Kwon, 2002, p. 157.  
\textsuperscript{137} Rogoff, 2002, p. 65.
Many of the artworks discussed thus far are site-specific works that serve to highlight the unique characteristics of the sites in which they are installed—those characteristics that define their identity as cultural heritage sites. Further, the managing agencies of these sites describe the value of these artworks in terms of their site-responsiveness. Janet Cardiff’s Lopud/Monastery Walk, previously examined for its demonstration of the change and temporal conditions, can, in its response to the monastery as a multi-layered historical site, also be productively viewed as a demonstration of the site-specific condition. The artist’s multiple visits and elaborately edited video and audio resonate with the site’s role as a nexus of myriad historical eras and events, all ambiguously and unclearly manifest in the archaeological layers of the site. Francesca von Hapsburg is most interested in artists “who have an unusual sensitivity and approach to the context of a site” and observes of the project: “We needed to trigger an interaction. ... how does it resonate with the landscape as well as the community?” Similarly, the organization that manages Governors Island—site of Susan Philipsz’s Day is Done and Allison Smith’s The Muster—states that “[a]rtists selected for the program create work that responds to the Island’s unique vantage point on the Harbor and Statue of Liberty, its landmark and newly designed landscapes, its chapters of history and its nascent democratic culture.” Works are “site-specific” and “contribute to the unique qualities of the Island.” Let me lose myself, the group exhibition of sound works in Skogskyrkogården, the Woodland Cemetery outside of Stockholm, Sweden, is described on the cemetery’s website as consisting of “site-specific soundworks that in different ways build upon the unique cultural heritage site that is Skogskyrkogården, with its multiplicity of meanings.” The exhibition underscores the presentation of the overall cemetery design as a sensitive response to the site: “Its architecture has its origins in the place itself and in the expressions of the landscape—hills and hollows, earth and sky, forest and glade.”

The Site-Specific Condition in the Lover’s Line Case Study

Perceptions of authenticity feed and build off of each other within the site-specific condition. This simple positive feedback mechanism, however, conceals a complex negotiation of the very notion of authenticity in cultural heritage sites, which a closer look at the case study elucidates. As a cultural heritage site that is also a national park, the Presidio navigates a complex terrain of public expectation. In addition to the notion that authenticity is to be found in a direct encounter with a cultural heritage site, as a green space the park must negotiate the “untouched wilderness” paradigm, exemplified by Yosemite and Yellowstone, in
which national parks gain legitimacy because of a perceived natural, “unmediated” state. The Presidio combines cultivated and built landscapes with more “natural” areas, and its designation as a heritage site is based upon both natural and cultural resources. The Trust is obliged to convey to the public the appropriateness of its cultural assets within a national park context—that its man-made features are just as authentic to the site as its natural ones. It accomplishes this task by complicating notions of natural and man-made, emphasizing a dialectical relationship between nature and culture.

Thus, the Presidio Golf Course, which at first seems easy to dismiss as an unwelcome modern addition that impinges on the Presidio’s park essence, is in fact a major contributing feature of the park’s National Landmark status. This is a favorite observation by Trust staff on guided tours and in other communication efforts. Meanwhile, the mature forest that covers the rolling hillsides is described as “the most dramatic example of how people have shaped the Presidio’s character.” A forestation campaign taken up by the army in the 1880s aimed to make the area more inhabitable, to mark its border with the expanding city of San Francisco, and also to beautify it according to reigning landscape ideals. Mass plantings of blue gum eucalyptus (an Australian native), Monterey cypress, and Monterey pine would bind the shifting sand and act as wind breaks. Sited on ridges and as framing elements to the military parade grounds, the trees would be used to create a pastoral landscape. This is the landscape feature most often described by the Trust in terms of human intervention. In present-day descriptions, the forest is nearly always preceded by the adjective “historic” to distinguish it as a man-made artifact. Further, one of the Trust’s annual reports is structured around seven landscape types: forest, dunes, serpentine (a distinctive type of rock that underlies the Presidio and drove the evolution of distinct native vegetation), riparian, domestic, ceremonial, and recreational. “The Presidio is a mosaic of forest and grasslands; dunes and gardens; playing fields and parade grounds.” Here, natural and cultural landscapes are equivalent, intertwined, and together identify the park as a site whose authenticity emerges from this complexity.

Art-in-the-park projects in the Presidio have been a part of this effort to redefine notions of authenticity. For example, Presidio Habitats, an outdoor exhibition in 2010-2011 of eleven sculptural “animal habitats” designed by a group of artists, architects and designers, featured habitats intended for a mix of both “native” and “introduced” animals, “wilderness”

146 “Landscapes of the Presidio: The Presidio Trust 2011 Year-End Report.”
and “garden” dwellers, while underscoring the shifting and unstable nature of these constructed categories. The installation sites, too, ranged from a “natural” meadow (in truth a former military parade ground) to a cultivated community garden (which, it turns out, forms an ideal habitat for certain native creatures). The notion that nature and culture are closely linked is reinforced, while upending ideas of what denotes a proper, natural, authentic habitat for animals once or currently found in the Presidio.

In Lover’s Line, too, a complex notion of authenticity is supported. Przyblyski achieves this both by emphasizing a dialectical relationship between nature and culture, as does the Trust, and through a nuanced interpretation of the nature of truth. The work highlights the cultural mediation that is inherent in our experience of nature and the subjectivity of what we unreflectingly take to be natural, true, authentic.

Climate and geography are described in the work as forming not only the natural landscape but the experiences, even identities, of the people who settled in and around the Presidio. Recurring mentions of the wind-blown sand and fertile soil define two extremes of the range of natural conditions that affected their safety and physical, mental and psychological health. In addition, Przyblyski emphasizes the ways in which the landscape of the Presidio has been changed and adapted by humans for various purposes over the centuries. The planting of the “historic forest” is deemed so important that she proposes it as the transition point between two defined epochs in the Presidio: one marked by natural landscape and one by cultural landscape.

Through her use of “artistic truth,” too, the artist problematizes a straightforward understanding of the concept of authenticity. There are a few indications within Lover’s Line that the stories include some fictional material, created by the artist with existing written correspondence and historical record as a springboard. But with most of the material it is impossible to discern what is fiction and what is fact. This blurring process is deliberate and of central importance to the artist. With a background as a historian, she understands the importance of historical fact but also acknowledges its limitations:

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152 In the audio track “The Missionary & the Native Plants, c. 1778,” for example, the padre is leaving a message for the monsignor of the Mission Dolores, in which he says he is “on my way home.” This phrase only makes sense in a world with instant communication by telephone or digital means. The padre will see the monsignor when he arrives home and a letter could not possibly reach the monsignor before the padre does. So we understand that these are not direct quotations from historical documents; rather they have been adapted or invented by the artist.
One of the reasons I became an artist, as a historian, is because I recognized ... what historians did, which was to try to assemble ... the documentation. They couldn’t tell a story that couldn’t be supported by documentation. So, if you ran into stories where you knew where things happened, but for example you only have a Spanish explorer side of it, and you just can’t have the Native American side of it ... [then] you had to take an imaginative leap. And you couldn’t take an imaginative leap as a historian. But you could as an artist, and you could still be accountable to history ... [I]t’s a different kind of truth.\(^{153}\)

For Przyblyski, the artist as compared to the historian has a freedom to imagine, to move away from what is known and documented, to reveal another kind of truth. This relativization of the nature of truth can even function to counterbalance cultural misrepresentations or absences, as she observes of “the Native American side” of the story. The blurring of nature and culture in the Presidio’s identity construction and Lover’s Line, as well as the work’s blurring of what constitutes truth, can be read as methods for defining the “true” condition of the site.

In its amalgamation of material from multiple sources to achieve a sort of artistic truth, the work could be said to create an idealized experience. Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf has shown that the classical landscape paintings of Carracci, Poussin, and Lorrain, known as ideal landscapes, were typically composed from plein-air sketches made from multiple viewpoints. The placement of trees and houses could be adjusted for compositional or dramatic effect, and weather and lighting conditions combined as they never would be in nature.\(^{154}\) These works are not true, in the photographic or realistic sense, to the landscapes they claim to depict. They offer a sort of augmented or enhanced reality, but always with the aim of showing a somehow more essential truth. In this, they can be compared to Przyblyski’s practice. A central difference between these two approaches, however, is that the total effect of Lover’s Line is fragmentary and local rather than coherent and universal.

Artistic Mediation in a Mediated Landscape

Voices raised in opposition to art in the Presidio, both in the general public and internally within managing agencies such as the Trust, can be understood as a reaction to the mediating function of art, which is perceived to create a barrier between the visitor and a direct experience of nature. Thus, the reaction arises from an understanding of the park as primarily a “natural” place, rather than one formed through a symbiosis of nature and culture. The public reception of art in the Presidio is, then, positively impacted by the park’s complex negotiation of site, authenticity, nature and culture. Because the Trust tones down the idea that visitors will have an unmediated encounter with nature (as they might expect to have in a national park that more closely adheres to the “untouched wilderness” paradigm), and instead highlights the heavily mediated condition of the site, visitors may accept the presence of

\(^{153}\) Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.

artwork that would otherwise be rejected for being an unwelcome filter between the visitor and direct experience.

This suggests that opposition to similar outdoor art programs would arise in national parks that better fit the “untouched wilderness” paradigm, in which nature is less clearly impacted by development. While over 40 national parks in the U.S. currently offer artist-in-residency programs, these seem to involve a retreat model, in which artists spend time creating in national parks because of their perceived qualities of seclusion, beauty, and transcendence, rather than a site-specific model for these sites. But the generally positive public response to the Presidio’s program may open the door to other such programs. The tension between wilderness and development in national parks—essentially, the desire for unmediated experience in a mediated landscape—could form the jumping-off point for a study of contemporary art in national parks.

Chapter Conclusions

The site-specific condition is closely linked with ideas of authenticity and cultural representation. It calls upon artworks to support the claims of unique authentic experience in these places, and results in a positive feedback mechanism in which the authenticity of the site and the artwork reinforce each another. Building on the intricate negotiation of models of authenticity in the Presidio, Lover’s Line evidences this mechanism of mutual authentication. At the same time, the case study reveals the complexity of notions of authenticity through its dual role as a cultural heritage site and national park.

All but one of the projects examined thus far in this thesis are characterized by a division of curatorial tasks between practitioners of both contemporary art and cultural heritage. The group exhibition Let me lose myself is the exception, which, I concluded in the chapter on time, may be a reflection of the differences in curatorial autonomy in the context of a group versus a solo exhibition. The Presidio Habitats group exhibition, introduced as a comparative example in this chapter, calls into question that conclusion. The exhibition displays an equal distribution of curatorial functions such as siting and communicating the works between the FOR-SITE Foundation (a private nonprofit foundation that commissioned and funded the project), the Presidio Trust (its project planning staff as well as its natural and cultural resource staff), and the participating artists, architects, and designers. Further study of projects by solo artists versus group exhibitions in cultural heritage sites is warranted.

156 This information is drawn from my personal experience as administrator of the Foundation during the planning and production of the Presidio Habitats exhibition.
INSTRUMENTALIZATION

Cultural heritage sites, museums, artists and artworks are all, to varying degrees, subject to instrumentalization. An examination of instrumental processes at work in the context of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites identifies both expected and surprising outcomes.

In a critique of Nicholas Bourriaud’s *relational aesthetics*, professor of contemporary art Claire Bishop notes a trend of artists invited to “design or troubleshoot amenities within the museum, such as the bar ... or reading lounge ... and in turn present these as works of art.”157 She cites Apolonija Sustersic’s lobby for the Kunstverein Munich and Jorge Pardo’s bar at K21 in Düsseldorf, both from 2002, and many further examples exist. By being given an explicit function these artworks are instrumentalized.158 But beyond these pointedly functional museum lobbies and seating solutions, the instrumentalization of art can also refer much more broadly to certain cultural policy approaches based on the notion that art has tangible social and economic effects. Since the mid-1970s, many nations, regions, and cities have created and implemented such cultural policies, and this practice is growing.159 Cultural historian Geir Vestheim defines instrumentalization within cultural policy as the use of cultural ventures and cultural investments as a means or instrument to attain goals in other than cultural areas. Such goals may be investment and profit, creating places of work, preventing depopulation, creating attractive places to live, strengthening the creative ability of the society (locally and regionally), attracting highly skilled labour, etc. The instrumental aspect lies in emphasizing culture and cultural venture as a means, not an end in itself.160

It describes a shift towards market-based and results-based cultural policies.161 The instrumentalization of art places the focus not only on economic value but on “use value”: art as a problem-solver, used to reactivate underused places, to revitalize troubled neighborhoods, to strengthen communal networks, and to develop tourism and commercial investment.

As a term, instrumentalization is broadly used, but its meaning is unstable, shifting, and ambiguous.162 The term is often used positively by government administrators, cultural policy-makers, and funders working pragmatically with one foot within and one without the

158 These are, of course, works with multiple complex meanings and functions. The instrumental aspect is the most relevant to the concerns of this chapter.
Cultural venues such as museums are encouraged, through governmental policy and through funding decisions, to work as “vehicles for positive social change.” From this perspective, instrumentalization is viewed as a process that helps to retain relevance, invite participation, and promote social justice. In contrast, the term is often used negatively by theorists protesting the dominance of neoliberal market-based thinking within the arts. From this perspective, instrumentalization is deterministic and utilitarian, and replaces artistic concerns with economic ones.

Cultural heritage sites, separate from any presence of contemporary art within them, are often subject to instrumental policies that urge economic justification for their existence. Spennemann notes that there is “widespread use of cultural heritage sites as tourist attractions” and that heritage is linked to sustainable development on the highest political levels within the European Union. In the United States, the National Park Service not only funds annual economic impact reports on heritage areas, it also promotes its findings on the start page of its National Heritage Areas website. There, the most prominent heading reads “Economic Impacts,” and the first-time visitor to the site can learn that “[a] recent economic impact study indicates National Heritage Areas ... contribute $12.9 billion annually to the national economy.”

The Instrumental Condition

Within cultural heritage sites, the instrumental condition for curating contemporary art manifests itself in various types of instrumentalization. They include the provision of physical improvements for visitor comfort, improved (or restricted or redirected) visitor access, forms of audience engagement and outreach, and not least efforts to attract tourism, thus benefitting not only the site itself but even the local community or greater region.

Evidence of these conditions are found in numerous examples of contemporary art in cultural heritage sites. At a symposium in 2007, Francesca von Hapsburg describes her invitation to artist Olafur Eliasson “to create [on her Lopud, Croatia property] a hanging bridge that creates an essential new public access to the fortress from the monastery,” explicitly linking art with a desire for improved visitor access. Similarly, Day is Done, the sound installation by

166 Spennemann, 2011, p. 18.
167 Economic impact studies were commissioned by the National Park Service in collaboration with the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and conducted by an external consulting firm in both 2013 and 2014. “National Heritage Areas,” National Park Service website, http://www.cr.nps.gov/heritageareas/ (29-06-2014).
168 “Preservation, Contemporary Art and Architecture,” 2007, p. 77. It has not been possible to determine whether this commission has moved beyond the planning stage.
Susan Philipsz introduced in the chapter on time, serves in part to redirect visitors. By playing from speakers on Governors Island every evening at 6pm, the sound installation not only evokes the traditional military evening bugle call but also performs the task of announcing when all remaining visitors must depart on the last ferry of the day.¹⁶⁹

In an example from the Presidio, the siting of artist Andy Goldsworthy’s permanent sculptural installation *Wood Line* (2011), running through a grove of trees alongside a popular trail, was informed not only by the artist’s desire to work in this specific stand of trees but also in part by the Trust’s wish to alter visitor behavior on this site.¹⁷⁰ Some adventurous motorcyclists and cyclists forged paths on the steep, wooded hillside rather than using the road or trail on either side of this grove, thus destabilizing the slope and potentially endangering themselves and others. While the existence of *Wood Line* did not prevent (in fact encouraged) walkers from leaving the formal trail in order to interact with the work, it created a formidable set of speed bumps for anyone trying to traverse this area on wheels. In nearby Lands End, like the Presidio an area of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, artist Dee Hibbert-Jones (b. 1963) and students from the University of California, Santa Cruz created *Brush Pile Sculpture* (2006), a work that transformed newly-cleared brush, debris from the construction of new trails, into a 172-foot long sculpture that prevented trailblazing and maintained animal habitat in addition to encouraging aesthetic contemplation of the landscape.¹⁷¹

Allison Smith’s *The Muster* project at Governors Island, previously discussed for its handling of the interpretive condition, is also a fine example of the audience engagement manifestation of the instrumental condition. Governors Island first opened to the general public in 2004; in early 2005, before the project took place, general knowledge of the island’s relatively new accessibility would still have been minimal. *The Muster* thrust the island into the limelight: the project was promoted widely by the city and the Public Art Fund, and received media coverage in the *New York Daily News, New York Times, Time Out New York, Artforum* and *Frieze*.¹⁷² It was the most well-attended event the island had experienced up to that time, and included visitors from across the city, country, and as far away as France.¹⁷³ At a time when the political fate of the island was still far from clear, this extensive public promotion lent support to advocates of the development of a public park.

The Ruhr Triennale, an annual contemporary art festival located in Germany’s Ruhr District, the former industrial region mentioned in chapter two, exemplifies the tourism development and regional growth function within the instrumental condition:

¹⁷⁰ According to oral information from Allison Stone during the installation of the work, 2011.
[In 1999, the Emscher Park international architectural exhibition ... comes to an end after ten years, raising the issue of the future of the industrial monuments it had rediscovered for the arts. At the same time, the government of the state ... is working on plans to raise ... [its] international profile in a lasting way. The discussions take into account changes in economic, social and cultural structure. One key suggestion to emerge ... , the creation of a decentralized and project-oriented art festival for the Ruhr District, opens up a historic opportunity. Saved from dereliction and now the focus of aesthetic awareness, the fascinating halls, decommissioned power stations and collieries prove to be predestined for new forms of artistic debate.]

The Ruhr Triennale sprung from a regional redevelopment project, links the artistic attraction of the site with its industrial heritage, and attempts to put this un-touristed region on the cultural map by raising its “international profile.”

The Instrumental Condition in the Lover’s Line Case Study

An examination of the case study through the lens of the instrumental condition identifies an audience engagement function at work but also complicates the aspects of instrumentalization discussed thus far. These complications may be unanticipated by the managing agencies of cultural heritage sites, but they make these sites even more interesting places for artists and curators to work.

Discussions of instrumentalization often focus on the actions of governments or institutions. The case study, however, demonstrates that artists are equally willing and able. Jeannene Przyblyski can be said to show an embrace of the instrumental condition in her selection of a site for the artwork, which responded to park improvements already underway at the Presidio. Improvements to the Lovers’ Lane trail were planned and the historic and cultural resource reports required for such improvements had already been produced, therefore making extensive fresh research material available to the artist as inspiration:

it was not only the ... instrumental sense that ‘Oh, the park needs something, these would be optimal sites’ but because they were under study by the park. They just downloaded amazing amounts of information for me. So, rather than having to cobble together things completely from scratch, ... I had everything. ... [T]he reward for working on the sites they wanted me to work on was that there was a very rich archive of supporting documents to excavate in conceptualizing the project.

Przyblyski acknowledges the instrumental use by the Trust in encouraging the selection of a certain site, but seems to reject the idea that her own conditions for selecting the site are in part instrumental.

Miwon Kwon theorizes three historical models of site-specific public art, two of which are useful as a framework for understanding the various instrumental conditions at work in the

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175 Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
case study. The “art-as-public-places” model equates art with environmental design: it provides public amenities such as benches and shade while supporting an experience of leisure and harmony. It is so well integrated into the site that it is nearly invisible.\textsuperscript{176} The fields of architecture, environmental design, and urban planning are thus explicitly linked with the notion that public art is “better” the more it provides concrete use for the public.\textsuperscript{177} Changing views on community and participation then gave rise to the “art-in-the-public-interest” model, which is “distinguished for foregrounding social issues and political activism, and/or for engaging ‘community’ collaborations.”\textsuperscript{178} As site-specific public art practice shifted from the former to the latter model, in Kwon’s view, concerns with relevance to everyday life and social responsibility came to the fore. The instrumentalization of art became less concerned with the physical body and focused instead on sociopolitical conditions, participation, and change. The production of Lover’s Line in the Presidio aligns with aspects of both of these models, supporting the notion that instrumental conditions are at work there.

Kwon’s art-as-public-places model asserts that “design thinking” has a causal effect on the type of artwork that is selected. Applying this model to the Presidio reveals the same dynamic at work. In the Presidio, the occurrence of instrumental conditions may be partly explained by a look at the Trust’s organizational structure and the professional backgrounds of the people who manage its art-in-the-park program. Art in the park falls under the supervision of the department of Planning, Projects & Programs, which manages six areas: cultural and community programs; transportation; heritage programs; park projects; conservation, stewardship and research; and construction management services.\textsuperscript{179} This confluence of project areas literally groups art with visitor comfort, access, and audience outreach. Department director Michael Boland, who decides the strategy for all non-operational park programs and was a driving force behind the introduction of art in the Presidio, is a landscape architect and urban planner by education and training.\textsuperscript{180} Associate Director Allison Stone, the main point of contact for art-in-the-park projects, has a background in geography and urban planning with a focus on environmental issues.\textsuperscript{181} Boland, Stone, and their team are educated professionals with a deep knowledge and engagement of urban planning trends, cultural heritage, landscape and ecology, and their educational and professional backgrounds can be assumed to have a large influence on their work generally and, Kwon’s art-as-public-places model suggests, reinforce instrumental conditions for inviting contemporary art into the park.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{176} Kwon, 2002, pp. 69-72.
\item \textsuperscript{177} Kwon, 2002, p. 66.
\item \textsuperscript{178} Kwon, 2002, p. 60.
\end{itemize}
Furthermore, the artwork’s relationship to site suggests that it resides within the art-as-public-places model, in which artworks are so seamlessly integrated that they disappear into the site, while also providing concrete public benefit. *Lover’s Line* has a very light footprint on the site to which it responds: other than the (temporarily installed) trail signage, the artwork has left no physical trace. Rather, it now exists in a purely virtual realm. Respect for and seamless integration with site conditions are a hallmark of *Lover’s Line* and Przybłyski’s artistic practice. Somewhat cynically one can imagine that a park planner would place great value on just such an artwork. A bit of artistic cool and cultural cachet—desirable for a government agency with the ambition to be at the forefront of innovative development of public space—can be achieved within this scenario with little investment of time, money, or physical/spatial accommodation. Kwon’s analysis, however, highlights the potential negative implications of this approach. When an artwork does not demand attention, and when it functions neatly and comfortably within existing structures, opportunities to question and challenge are lost.

Now, the public benefit offered by *Lover’s Line* is rather more abstract than the seating, lighting, and shade identified by Kwon as characteristic of this model. It also cannot be said to serve as an instrument for improving or redirecting visitor access (despite the artist’s designation of the publication as a “wayfinding guide,” Lovers’ Lane is too straight and clearly marked actually to need such a navigational aid). Instead, the public benefit is to activate the history of the site for a modern audience. To do so, the work includes stories from a variety of points of view in terms of age, ethnicity, and gender. The artist notes her conscious attempt to select or construct stories with a diversity of perspectives when she describes her process of choosing characters:

> Some of it was, you know, you wanted different periods in time ... you wanted diversity of voices and experiences ... I thought about families more too, and so I wanted some things that would appeal to children as well as adults, some things told from a child’s perspective. So it was a sort of sense of wanting variety ... that would acknowledge the richness of the different histories that would pass through [the site] ...  

The deliberate inclusion of a diverse selection of historical figures, people who seem “just like us,” encourages personal identification with history. In this respect, *Lover’s Line* is better understood through the art-in-the-public-interest model, with its focus on everyday life and community representation. But the identificatory merger between artist and community identified by Kwon as central to the art-in-the-public-interest model is absent in *Lover’s Line*, thus complicating the work’s implicit assertion of community representation. Kwon writes of the relationship between artist and community within this model that

> the meaning or value of the art work does not reside in the object itself but is accrued over time through the interaction between the artist and the community. This interaction is considered to be integral to the art work and equal in significance ... And this ‘becoming one,’ no matter how temporary, is presumed to be a prerequisite for an

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182 Jeannene Przybłyski, 13 August 2013.
With *Lover’s Line*, in contrast, the artist has interacted deeply with the history of the site, not its current users (its “community”). While cultural heritage managers often make the argument that past, present and future are linked through cultural heritage, and *Lover’s Line* can be said to attempt to activate the past for the present, the work exhibits an absence of direct engagement with the present-day community that speaks to larger problematics of identity and autonomy within instrumental approaches.

**Autonomy, Identity, Instrumentalization**

The Trust’s wariness regarding the inclusion of certain topics, such as Native Americans, was discussed in the chapter on interpretation. This wariness hints at the potential dangers of Kwon’s art-in-the-public-interest model, with its instrumentalized forms of community engagement. When the artist describes her intention to include a diversity of voices in the work, she remarks that “[v]ariety’s a better word than diversity, diversity sounds sort of like you’re checking off boxes.” Clearly, she does not want to appear to be “checking off boxes” in order to fulfill some official diversity quota. She also carefully distances herself from the idea that the Trust had any creative control. Przyblyski’s nuanced negotiation of different “sides” within the Presidio and its community stakeholders marks the tangled relationship between instrumentalization, diversity, and artistic autonomy.

In her observations on relational art, quoted from at the start of this chapter, Claire Bishop implies that the artists who create “amenities” for museums are, by being instrumentalized, also compromising their artistic autonomy. The denial of autonomy is a recurring critique of instrumental approaches. Rimi Khan notes that

> [p]revailing economic justifications for the arts are ... seen to deny agency. By casting populations as ‘consumers’ or ‘spectators’, rather than ‘creative producers’, an opposition is established between an empowered (and participatory) cultural citizen and a passive (and culturally deprived) consumer.

Questions of identity, too, are raised in discussions of instrumentalization. Instrumental processes are often charged with forming consumers rather than individuals, lifestyles rather than lives. Vestheim argues that the desire “to create and ‘give’ the audience identity” is inherent to instrumentalization, but that this identity is in fact a “mass-produced” and “effectively marketed lifestyle myth”—not an identity developed within a self-identified community or constructed by an individual. Gray notes that cultural policy, as it becomes increasingly instrumental, experiences “a change in focus in terms of who is identified as the

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184 Jeannene Przyblyski, 13 August 2013.
186 Vestheim, 1994, p. 66.
beneficiaries of public policies (from the social collectivity to the individual consumer).”

While Gray argues that instrumentalization means a greater emphasis on the individual, the focus is on the individual as consumer, rather than integral self.

Dominique Poulot explores the tangle of autonomy, identity, and instrumentalization in cultural heritage sites in his essay on the development of the community-focused and participatory “ecomuseum” in 1970s France. The ecomuseum concept has commonalities in subject matter and structure with the places I designate cultural heritage sites in this thesis. “[B]orn as a sort of French adaptation of foreign models of the national park, the visitor center, and the outdoor museum,” the ecomuseum’s founding idea was to develop self-understanding and individual and collective identity.188 During the 1980s the aims and practices of ecomuseums shifted due to declining industry and changing demographics in France, and the local community, which was meant be at the heart of the ecomuseum’s activities and participate in shaping it, was instead excluded “except as a client.” Poulot argues that this mutated ecomuseum “deviate[d] ... from the spirit of a project originally conceived in a context of confidence in the future: it represents ... a poor remedy for social crisis.”189 These critiques strike at the heart of the aims of instrumental cultural policies as described by Vestheim, calling into question the primacy of the instrumental condition for curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites.

Performance artist and writer Andrea Fraser has long been engaged with institutional critique and issues of individual autonomy, legitimacy, and instrumentalization. After concluding, as was discussed in the chapter in interpretation, that her institutional critique was in fact strengthening, rather than weakening, the authority of the institutions who commission her work, Fraser altered her approach. In A Project in Two Phases, commissioned by the Generali Foundation in 1994, Fraser can be said to be testing the Foundation’s exploitation of her artistic autonomy to enhance its own legitimacy and ultimately its autonomy. She attempts to resist this instrumentalization by deliberately withholding her artistic autonomy.190 Fraser’s critical engagement points to the potential for artists and curators to work critically, not only within, but with, the constraints of the instrumental condition.

Chapter Conclusions

Curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites requires the negotiation of shifting and fragmented understandings of instrumentalization. Concrete forms of instrumentalization such as directing visitor access are accompanied by more abstract forms that include educational objectives and policies intended to develop local and regional economies. The case study complicates the instrumental condition by revealing connections and tensions

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188 Poulet, 1994, p. 77.
189 Fraser, 2003, p. 174.
between instrumentalization, identity, and autonomy—a relationship that provides rich material for further curatorial exploration, such as examining the possibility or even advisability of curatorial autonomy when contemporary art is invited into cultural heritage sites.

Previous chapters have already addressed the distribution of curatorial tasks in several of the comparative examples further analyzed in this chapter. The composition of the curatorial zone varied from case to case but was found, on the whole, to be strongly influenced by conditions arising from the intersection of contemporary art and cultural heritage in concept and practice. The projects introduced in this chapter reflect these general findings. I was not able to determine whether Olafur Eliasson’s hanging bridge on Lopud has progressed beyond the planning stage, but were it to be built it is likely that the process would follow the pattern of Cardiff’s work at the old monastery: that is, curatorial choices would be divided between the artist, von Hapsburg, and the Croatian conservation authorities involved in the restoration of the site. In the production of Goldsworthy’s Wood Line in the Presidio, essentially curatorial choices such as selection, siting, and communication of the work were made through processes of negotiation between Presidio Trust staff and the FOR-SITE Foundation, the arts organization that commissioned the project. The same can be said of Hibbert-Jones’ Brush Pile Sculpture in Lands End, in which the siting and communicated narrative for the work was determined by the artist in close collaboration with staff from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (a subdivision of the National Park Service of which Lands End is a part) and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

Previous chapters have identified the rich interplay of history, time, and change in cultural heritage sites, along with the issues of representation and interpretation integral to them. These characteristics of cultural heritage sites make them potentially very interesting sites for artists and curators to explore the unresolved issues of identity and autonomy within instrumentalization.

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191 Since the analysis of the Ruhr Triennale focused on the development of the triennial as a whole, rather than the production of a single artwork or exhibition, and because the festival’s curatorial team changes every three years, I will abstain from drawing any conclusions as to the make-up of the curatorial zone in this example.

192 As with Presidio Habitats, this information is drawn from my personal experience as administrator of the Foundation during the planning and production of Wood Line.

CONCLUSION

The intersection of contemporary art and cultural heritage produces a curatorial zone, and this zone is characterized by conditions that arise from conceptual tensions between the two fields. The projects examined in this thesis are shaped by conditions involving preservation and change, time, interpretation, site and authenticity, and instrumentalization. Curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites involves a complex negotiation of these conditions, which manifest themselves in alternately overlapping and conflicting ways between the various actors.

The change condition builds on the unresolved tension between change and stasis that underlies the practice of preservation and the management of cultural heritage sites. Here, contemporary art is an advocacy tool for a more progressive approach to cultural heritage management.

The temporal condition describes differing relationships between past and present across the spectrum of cultural heritage approaches, all of which, however, work under an assumption of discontinuity. Cultural heritage sites offer ways for the past to be experienced in the present, and for the present to meet and activate the past. Here, contemporary art creates opportunities for visitors to cultural heritage sites to enact connections with the lived experience of the past, but also demonstrates our inability to escape the bias of the present.

The interpretive condition reveals tensions within cultural heritage management between the desire to encourage visitors to form their own interpretations of heritage and the need to offer a controlled ideological message. In inviting artists to re-interpret heritage, these agencies give up some measure of control over the stories told about the site and invite critical perspectives on their activities. In exchange, they receive additional legitimacy and may in some measure be seen to compensate for a lack of cultural representation. Further, contemporary art in cultural heritage sites provides artists with a new arena, outside the museum but with the trappings of institutionality intact, in which to practice institutional critique. In entering this arena, artists accept a certain level of compromise with the agencies that manage cultural heritage sites.

The site-specific condition is closely linked with ideas of authenticity and cultural representation. It calls upon artworks to support the claims of unique authentic experience in these places, and results in a positive feedback mechanism in which the authenticity of the site and the artwork reinforce each another. The case study demonstrates this mechanism, while also revealing the complexity of notions of authenticity through the Presidio’s dual role as a cultural heritage site and national park.
The instrumental condition indicates that curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites also necessitates the negotiation of shifting notions of instrumentalization, both concrete and abstract. The case study reveals connections and tensions between identity, autonomy, and instrumentalization in cultural heritage sites that point to potential ways of turning curatorial constraints into possibilities.

The rich interplay of history, time, and change in cultural heritage sites, as well as their integral issues of representation, interpretation, and instrumentalization, make them understandably interesting as material and context for artists. Moreover, the tensions between contemporary art and cultural heritage management create a dynamic context for curatorial practice. Curating is often described as a mediating process between art and audience. Artworks, too, can be seen as mediations between artist and world, and cultural heritage management involves a high degree of mediation of cultural products and expressions. Accordingly, curating contemporary art in cultural heritage sites can fittingly be described as an act of remediation.
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