

SFGATE

For-Site Show Coming to the Presidio

By Sam Whiting
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Battery Boutelle is one of five Presidio sites that will host the “Home Land Security” installation in September.

Three concrete gun batteries that once protected the Golden Gate will soon be populated by site-responsive artworks put there by the For-Site Foundation, a San Francisco nonprofit that promotes “art about place.”

The exhibition, “Home Land Security,” will open in the Presidio on Sept. 10. Sixteen artists will examine national security, in an era when it is more complex than building a concrete fortress at a port of entry, For-Site Executive Director Cheryl Haines said Thursday, June 23.

“‘Home Land Security’ provides a powerful context for considering the perceived need for defense and surveillance and (for) looking at how fear of ‘other’ can obscure

commonality of human experience and contribute to cultural misunderstanding,” said Haines.

The art, in the form of video, sculpture, performance, painting and installation, will occupy Fort Winfield Scott, once headquarters for the coastal defense system in the Presidio of San Francisco.

The exhibition will be a thematic follow-up to another recent show from For-Site on national parkland overlooking the bay: “@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz.” That show, in which the Chinese dissident artist addressed political imprisonment, ran for seven months in 2014-15, attracting international attention and hundreds of thousands of visitors.

As part of its own centennial celebration, the [National Park Service](#) is a presenting partner in the show, along with the [Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy](#) and the [Presidio Trust](#).

A decommissioned [U.S. Army](#) missile administration building will serve as the main gallery. Next to it is the Fort Scott Chapel, which will premiere metal sculptures inspired by projectiles witnessed by artist [Shahpour Pouyan](#) while growing up in Iran.

From there it is a short walk to the gun batteries. Here you will find San Francisco sculptor [Al Farrow](#)’s scale model of a church and a mosque, fashioned from spent ammunition and weapons parts. Another example of ammo art will be sculptural freeze frames of bullets fired into ballistics gel by the Propeller Group, an international collective.

The video component will include works from Bill Viola’s well-known 2014 series “Martyrs,” about suffering for one’s beliefs.

The show will combine existing work with new commissions and features artists rooted in China, Cuba, Iran, Israel, South Korea, Syria, Vietnam and Oakland.

It will bring For-Site full circle in its use of the Presidio as a temporary exhibition space. Its work therestarted with “Presidio Habitats,” which was the first site-based art exhibition in a national park when it opened in 2010. It was followed by “International Orange,” which took over the brick garrison at Fort Point for a show that honored the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge, in 2012.