

Updated: August 17

SITE-RESPONSIVE EXHIBITION CONVENES 18 INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS TO REFLECT ON HUMAN IMPACT AND INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF NATIONAL SECURITY IN OUR TIME

FOR-SITE Foundation's *Home Land Security* Opens September 10, 2016

Artworks Activate Historic Military-Defense Structures in the Presidio Overlooking San Francisco's Golden Gate and Celebrate National Park Service's Centennial Year



San Francisco, CA, June 23, 2016—Continuing its focus on art about place, the [FOR-SITE Foundation](#), in partnership with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and the Presidio Trust, presents *Home Land Security* (September 10 through December 18, 2016). Curated by FOR-SITE Foundation Executive Director **Cheryl Haines**, the thematic, site-responsive exhibition will be installed in former military structures overlooking the San Francisco Bay—some open to the public for the first time—and brings together work by 18 contemporary artists and

collectives from around the globe to reflect on the human dimensions and increasing complexity of national security, including the physical and psychological borders we create, protect, and cross in its name.

“The recent experience of presenting artworks by [Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz Island](#) has furthered my interest in working with artists whose ideas create dialogue around social change,” says Haines. “By placing art that examines security’s human cost inside former military sites, *Home Land Security* provides a powerful context for considering the perceived need for defense and surveillance, and looking at how fear of ‘other’ can obscure commonality of human experience and contribute to cultural misunderstanding.”

New commissions and recent works in various media—sculpture, painting, installation, performance, and video—will take over five historic structures at Fort Winfield Scott, the former headquarters for coastal defense of California at the Golden Gate. The complex of deactivated military buildings includes a series of gun batteries and a regimental chapel—all located in the heart of the world’s largest national park in an urban area, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The exhibition sites are part of a former US Army post and represent distinct chapters in the region’s coastal defense history.

The participating artists have roots in twelve different countries, and each provides a unique lens on universal themes: definitions of home and safety, ideological extremism, forced migration in the wake of conflict, the constant shift of weaponry and targets, and the unwavering belief in the necessity for defense.

Highlights include videos from **Bill Viola**’s immersive *Martyrs* series, about the endurance and infliction of suffering for beliefs (*Earth Martyr*, *Air Martyr*, *Fire Martyr*, and *Water Martyr*, 2014); **Propeller Group**’s sculptural freeze-frames of bullets fired into ballistics gel designed to simulate the effect of wounds (*Universe of Collisions* series, 2015); **Liza Lou**’s hovering, gatelike sculpture covered in millions of gold-plated beads and providing no real

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protection (*Barricade*, 2007–8); and a commissioned wall drawing by **Tirtzah Bassel** (*Concourse*, 2016) that examines how familiar emblems of airline travel—freedom, adventure, global connection—have become entangled with notions of vulnerability and disempowerment.

The full list of exhibition artists: **Shiva Ahmadi** (born Iran, based in United States); **Tamman Azzam** (born Syria, based in Dubai); **Tirtzah Bassel** (born Israel, based in United States); **Yashar Azar Emdadian** (France); **Al Farrow** (born and based in United States); **Díaz Lewis (Cara Megan Lewis and Alejandro Díaz-Perera)** (established Cuba, based in United States and Cuba); **Liza Lou** (born United States, based in United States and South Africa); **Mandana Moghaddam** (born Iran, based in Sweden); **Trevor Paglen** (born and based in United States); **Shahpour Pouyan** (born Iran, based in United States); **Michele Pred** (born and based in United States); **Propeller Group (Matt Lucero, Tuán Andrew Nguyễn, and Phunam Thúc)** (established Vietnam, based in Vietnam and United States); **Luz María Sánchez** (born Mexico); **Do Ho Suh** (born South Korea, based in United States, United Kingdom, and South Korea); **Bill Viola** (born and based in United States); **Alexia Webster** (born South Africa); **Krzysztof Wodiczko** (born in Poland, based in United States); and **Yin Xiuzhen** (born and based in China).

Home Land Security is the latest in a series of collaborations between the FOR-SITE Foundation, the National Park Service, the Presidio Trust, and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy that create new models for engaging park visitors through site-specific art presented on public land. The project also helps commemorate the National Park Service’s 100th anniversary, activating historic sites for broader public appreciation and signifying the innovative use of urban lands that the park service envisions for the future.

“The exhibition resonates with a key theme of the National Park Service’s centennial year, which is to connect our individual lives with the larger world around us through meaningful experiences on park land,” says Christine Lehnertz, superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. “Carefully selected artworks installed in the long-abandoned coastal gun batteries of the Golden Gate invite reflection on the timely subject of border defense in the United States and beyond.”

“The Presidio Trust has been embracing place-based art as an innovative way to welcome the community to explore and connect with their national park,” says Michael Boland, acting executive director of the Presidio Trust. “*Home Land Security* represents an extraordinary opportunity for visitors to rediscover a lesser-known sites in the area while experiencing thought-provoking art about important contemporary issues.”

“Bringing public art and public lands together through this unique partnership makes possible new perspectives on the significance of our national parks for each of us individually and for our society as a whole,” says Greg Moore president and CEO of the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy.

To encourage dialogue about the exhibition’s multilayered themes, *Home Land Security* will provide a team of art guides positioned at the installation sites, offering background about the artworks and the history of the area. FOR-SITE is also bringing wi-fi to the sites, allowing visitors to delve deeper into the exhibition online and to interact through social media (#ArtAboutPlace). Additional facets of the project will be shared on FOR-SITE’s blog, [Field Notes](#), and through videos available both on site and online for audiences unable to visit in person.

Art in Conversation with Historic Sites

Fort Winfield Scott and the coastal artillery batteries were built in the western part of the Presidio at the turn of the 20th century, when the United States Army took on greater responsibility for coastal defense. The fort housed 17 large gun batteries—among the first modern military installations using concrete and electricity—that overlooked an underwater minefield at the Golden Gate; they were armed and manned between 1891 and 1946. By the end of World War II, coastal defense had changed dramatically and the artillery system was replaced by modern air power, amphibious warfare, and nuclear weapons. In 1956, Fort Scott officially closed as a military post.

Battery Godfrey, a partially underground, reinforced-concrete bunker, held the largest of the defense-system guns, the first of their size to be mounted in the US—a sign of the importance placed on the defense of San Francisco’s harbor, which was second only to New York in strategic value.

Battery Boutelle, a two-story concrete structure, was armed with three 5-inch guns that could fire up to 30 rounds per minute to defend against minesweepers and fast torpedo boats. A shell fired from Battery Boutelle could reach seven miles out to sea.

Battery Marcus Miller housed three above-ground, large-caliber guns and a 43-man crew during wartime. A local news report from 1907 describes how the city's notorious weather affected firing exercises: "The tests were stopped at noon by a heavy fog which settled down where the targets were anchored off the entrance to the harbor."

The **Nike Administration Building** was headquarters for the Military Intelligence Group Detachment and its Nike Missile Program. With 12 launch sites surrounding the bay, the program was part of a sophisticated national security system spawned by Cold War tension between the United States and the Soviet Union as they competed for advantage in weapons technology.

Fort Scott Chapel was built in 1941, when military infrastructure was under rapid construction in the Presidio as the expanding army mobilized for World War II. With a capacity for 300 worshippers, the symmetrical wood-frame chapel was intended to serve various denominations.

Diverse Voices Address Contemporary Issues

Krzysztof Wodiczko's multimedia account of war and sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan fills the long-silent chambers of Fort Scott with the voices of soldiers once again (*Veterans' Flame*, 2009); **Mandana Moghaddam's** haunting video of abandoned baggage floating on the ocean recalls the human lives adrift and displaced through forced migration (*Exodus*, 2013). San Francisco-based sculptor **Al Farrow** uses scale models of a church and a mosque fashioned from spent ammunition and weapons' parts to turn a spotlight on the role religious extremism plays in instigating violence (*Mosque III*, 2010).

Korean artist **Do Ho Suh's** larger-than-life suit of armor—composed of thousands of military dog tags—embodies the idea of power in numbers and the tension between individual and collective identity (*Some/One*, 2013). Chinese artist **Yin Xiuzhen** contributes a suspended installation of projectiles made from used clothing and other found textiles, contrasting the objects' material softness with their suggested designation as instruments of harm (*Weapon*, 2003–7).

Bay Area artist **Michele Pred's** assemblage of sharp or combustible items collected from airline passengers at San Francisco International Airport captures how the events of 9/11 transformed innocuous household items into symbols of threat (*Encirclement*, 2003). In **Yashar Azar Emdadian's** video performance *Disintegration* (2012), the artist shaves his torso in a public space, his body becoming the boundary between a migrant's molting of personal identity and his integration into another culture. **Shiva Ahmadi's** animation *Lotus* (2013) addresses abuses of power and corruption in a delicate, ornate, watercolor style that recalls the Persian and Indian traditions of miniature painting.

Trevor Paglen's *Code Names of the Surveillance State* (2014) traverses vast distances and diverse landscapes to investigate the shadowy realms of government intelligence. **Alexia Webster** presents a photo series taken in mobile portrait studios she set up in streets of refugee camps around the world (*Bulengo Studios*, 2014). **Luz María Sánchez** attempts to quantify the number of individuals who lost their lives crossing the United States–Mexico border between 1993 and 2006 in her sound installation titled *2487* (2006).

In the performance piece *34,000 Pillows* (2016–ongoing), artist duo **Díaz Lewis** takes on the US Congress's mandate that government immigration agencies maintain a "bed quota" of 34,000 detained immigrants per day in their facilities. Inviting participation from exhibition visitors, the artists will sew pillows on-site from used clothing donated by undocumented immigrants and former detainees.

Creating new work for the exhibition, Syrian artist **Tamman Azzam** returns to his roots as a painter with a triptych that conveys the magnitude of devastation in his homeland through abstract cityscapes ravaged by war. Also presenting commissioned work for *Home Land Security*, **Shahpour Pouyan** continues his ongoing "projectile"

sculpture series, which, informed by his childhood experience of living through the Iran-Iraq war, merges forms resembling missiles and drones with those of artisan-crafted Iranian helmets and elegant antique chainmail.

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About the FOR-SITE Foundation

Established in 2003 by curator Cheryl Haines, the FOR-SITE Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the creation, understanding, and presentation of art about place. Recent projects encompass commissions, artist residencies, and educational programs, and include the acclaimed exhibition [@Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz; International Orange](#), a group show honoring the 75th anniversary of the Golden Gate Bridge; [Presidio Habitats](#); and a series of land-art installations by [Andy Goldsworthy](#) currently on view in the Presidio. More at [for-site.org](#).

About the Presidio Trust

The Presidio Trust is an innovative federal agency created to save the Presidio and employ a partnership approach to transform it into a new kind of national park. Spanning 1,500 acres in a spectacular setting at the Golden Gate, the Presidio now operates without taxpayer support; is home to a community of residents and commercial tenants; and offers unique recreation, hospitality, and educational opportunities to people throughout the San Francisco Bay Area and the world. The trust's *Art in the Presidio* program welcomes a wide range of artists to respond to park sites. Ten exhibitions to date have encouraged more than 100,000 visitors to see the park's natural and cultural treasures in a new light. More at [presidio.gov/trust](#).

About the National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) is a federal agency within the US Department of the Interior charged with managing the preservation and public use of America's most significant natural, scenic, historic, and cultural resources. The NPS manages the coastal areas of the Presidio and Golden Gate National Parks, as well as 400 other park sites across the United States. More at [nps.gov](#).

About the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy is the nonprofit membership organization that supports the most-visited outpost in the US national park system. The conservancy provides aid for site transformations, trail improvements, habitat restoration, volunteer and youth engagement, and interpretive and educational programs. Conservancy-funded projects, in partnership with the National Park Service and Presidio Trust, are visible across the parks' 80,000 acres—including the Presidio, Crissy Field, Muir Woods, Lands End, Alcatraz, and others. More at [parksconservancy.org](#).

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

FOR-SITE Foundation presents *Home Land Security*

Eighteen artists and collectives from around the globe converge on the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, activating former military sites with artworks that examine security and the physical and psychological borders that we create, protect, and cross in its name. Includes work by Bill Viola, the Propeller Group, Trevor Paglen, Tirtzah Basel, and more. Organized in partnership with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and the Presidio Trust.

Exhibition dates: September 10 through December 18, 2016

Location: Fort Winfield Scott and the Presidio, in San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area

Hours: Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Admission: free

Information: [for-site.org](#)

Photo credit: Battery Boutelle, one of five *Home Land Security* exhibition sites overlooking San Francisco's Golden Gate; photo: Nina Dietzel

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