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# Community, Preservation, and Street Art: A Proposal for San Francisco's Mission District

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Community, Preservation, and Street Art:  
A Proposal for San Francisco's Mission District

Keywords: Community, Cultural Activism, Gentrification, Latinx, Murals, Museum  
Studies, Preservation, Street Art

by

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Capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of  
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## Abstract

The **Latinx**<sup>1</sup> **community** is an integral part of San Francisco's rich history. From Mexican missions in the late 1700s to an influx of immigrants from various Latin countries starting in the early 1900s, the Mission District ('the Mission') of San Francisco has served as a hub for this mix of residents, fondly called "Raza," emphasizing the people of a community rather than the country they have come from. Wars and issues dealt in their homelands were close to the hearts of the entirety of the Latinx population of the Mission, and their voices and opinions were heard through a type of **street art** very important throughout marginalized communities: **murals**. Due to the economics of the region, **gentrification** becomes an increasing threat to the Latinx community in San Francisco; I believe that this form of mass communication starting in the 1970s was a way for the community's collective voice to be heard, and is now more important than ever within the neighborhood's pursuits of **cultural activism**. This capstone seeks to address the lack of historically and culturally accurate materials available to the public that address the murals of the Mission. Through the development of a multi-lingual foldable map and bilingual tours, tourists and residents alike will be provided information compiled by members of the community on the importance behind the murals to the **preservation** of the Latinx community. This proposal aims to provide new insight as to how **museum studies** can contribute to the discussion of the theorization of street art, and how this project can assist in the vitalization of the Latinx community of the Mission.

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<sup>1</sup> Latinx (la-teen-ex) is a gender-neutral term used as an alternative to Latino or Latina, "of, relating to, or marked by Latin American heritage," and will be used throughout this capstone as a neutral term in reference to the population in San Francisco's Mission District. / *Merriam-Webster*, s.v. "Latinx."

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

The Latinx community has deep roots within the history of San Francisco, especially within the Mission District, and has overcome a number of obstacles and displacements. The tech-boom of the late 1990s and early 2000s contributed to the gentrification that is ever-present in the neighborhood today. San Francisco city budget authorities predict that the Mission will lose 8,000 Latinx residents by 2025.<sup>2</sup> Historically, communities of Hispanic descent tend to lose their voices in mainstream conversations; murals have played a significant role in making sure that the Latinx community of the Mission has been noticed by the greater Bay Area (and thanks to the huge role that technology and social media plays in today's society, the world), making the Mission murals a major attraction for tourists flocking to San Francisco. My project proposal, a multilingual foldable map and bilingual tours surrounding these murals while incorporating historical context of the Latinx community whose culture is heavily reflected in the Mission, is an affordable resource that allows people to interact with locals (maps will be placed in the businesses of local merchants), and to understand the importance of these murals to the Latinx population.

My professional goals are to pursue curatorial work, focusing on how to transcend the walls of museums to not only make art more accessible and engaged with the public, but to push the boundaries of what society and tradition have deemed 'fine art.' I decided to pursue this topic based on my interests in street art and the concept of art about place.

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<sup>2</sup> Flores, Lori A. "Seeing Through Murals: The Future of Latino San Francisco." Boom California. March 6, 2017. Paragraph ('Para.')

This capstone begins with a literature review. Some key sources and names that will come up throughout this capstone are Cary Cordova, PhD; Lori A. Flores, PhD; Ocean Howell, PhD; and Professor Sondra Bacharach. Cordova's book, *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco*, was a major informant as a cohesive history of the Latinx community in the Mission. Flores' article, "Seeing Through Murals: The Future of Latino San Francisco," outlines the history of displacements that the Latinx community has been put through and how the murals act as a defense for Latinxs' presence in the Mission. Howell's book, *Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco*, constructs the idea of how the Mission feels like an entirely different city within San Francisco, and how the people and institutions have shaped the neighborhood over the years. Bacharach's article, "Street Art and Consent," presents an interesting theory on the basis of street art, and adds to the conversation about the preservation and canonization of street art, which applies to my insights as to how the Mission murals act as the collective voice for the Latinx community.

After conducting research, the lack of information on the historical and cultural roots of the Mission District and its Latinx community in conjunction with the murals provided by generic touring companies led to my project proposal, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3, followed by conclusions and further discussion in Chapter 4.

The appendices include a map outlining the parameters of my proposed map and an annotated bibliography, with sources such as the ones provided above, that have greatly impacted my research for this capstone and the development of my project.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review and Issue Background

“What best serves the permanency of art is, perhaps paradoxically, unpredictable forms of display.”<sup>3</sup>

### An Introduction to Murals in the Mission

The Chicano Art Movement began in the 1960s, going against the mainstream cultural tradition of art as an escape and commodity, and confronting viewers to respond to both the aesthetic object and the social reality reflected upon people of Mexican descent.<sup>4</sup>

Chicano muralism was a mass social movement, but the artists did not have the same kind of formal training as the more well-known Mexican muralists (such as Los Tres Grandes: Diego Rivera, David Siqueiros, and José Clemente Orozco).<sup>5</sup> The appearance of murals in the Mission District of San Francisco in the early 1970s responded to local and global events, as well as new city funding for public artwork. Two major events that spurred murals were the Chicano Movement, or El Movimiento, and multiple civil wars in Latin America.<sup>6</sup> Balmy Alley, a popular tourist attraction today,<sup>7</sup> came to fruition by the making of 27 murals addressing the U.S.’ intervention in Nicaraguan, Guatemalan, and Salvadoran civil wars during the 1970s and 80s, communicating the trauma and violence experienced through the affected communities.<sup>8</sup> The sense of internationalism within the Mission entered the scene via depictions of these liberation struggles in Central and

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<sup>3</sup> Sjöholm, Cecilia. "Beyond the Era of the Object: Towards an Aesthetics of Anti-Commodification." In *Curating and Politics Beyond the Curator: Initial Reflections*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2015. 106.

<sup>4</sup> Ybarra-Frausto, Tomas. "The Chicano Movement/The Movement of Chicano Art." In *Exhibition Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution, 1991. 128.

<sup>5</sup> Ybarra-Frausto. "The Chicano Movement..." 139.

<sup>6</sup> Flores, Lori A. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 9.

<sup>7</sup> Balmy Alley is parallel to Treat Avenue and Harrison Street between 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> street in San Francisco's Mission District.

<sup>8</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 10.



South American countries.<sup>9</sup> Organizations such as Casa Hispana de Bellas Artes (1966-83) and Artes 6 (1969-70), and La Galería de la Raza and Calle 24, which were still active as of the writing of this capstone project, were founded to foster awareness, appreciation, and growth of Chicano/Latinx art.<sup>10</sup> In today's discussions of who owns visual and urban space, historians will characterize the Latinx migration into the Mission as "recapturing past turf."<sup>11</sup> An example of such occurred in the late 1970s, when the Latinx youth culture had a positive movement that surpassed drugs and violence, taking form as 'Lowriders'<sup>12</sup>: though most did not live in the Mission – sons of Latinx immigrants who came to the Mission, their families were moved to suburbs of the Bay Area – this second generation rode into the Mission to return and claim their territory, analogous to American Indians and their 1969 Occupation of Alcatraz Island.<sup>13</sup>

As the threat of gentrification rose and continues to affect the Latinx population in the Mission, local organizations took to the streets to voice the community's frustrations and concerns. In response to self-proclaimed 'Missionites' decrying newcomers' ability to choose whether or not to interact with residents or stay distant through technology, disrupting the deeply rooted notion of community and connection, La Galería de la Raza and Precita Eyes Mural Center produced powerful anti-gentrification pieces.<sup>14</sup> This

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<sup>9</sup> Ybarra-Frausto. "The Chicano Movement..." 140.

<sup>10</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 9.

Cordova, Cary. *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017. 65.

<sup>11</sup> Howell, Ocean. *Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015. 126.

<sup>12</sup> Lowriders are customized vehicles with hydraulic jacks that allow for the driver to raise or lower the car.

<sup>13</sup> Susser, Ida, ed. "City and Culture: The San Francisco Experience (1983)." In *The Castells Reader on Cities and Social Theory*. Malden (MA) and Oxford (UK): Blackwell Publishers Inc./Ltd, 2002. 157-8.

<sup>14</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 18.

instant reaction by community leaders representing residents' concerns about the change in the neighborhood reflects the importance of murals, as this was the medium used to express the community's dedication to its survival.

Scholar Nancy Raquel Mirabal termed the concept of “cultural deletion,”<sup>15</sup> which is exactly what is happening in the Mission. The whitewashing of murals – an ill-mannered act in the street art world, when a piece is completely whited out, leaving a blank canvas for someone new – illustrates the widespread presumption that outdoor murals are expendable.<sup>16</sup> From Chuy Campusano's 1998 *Lilli Ann* to Precita Eyes' 2015 mural reading “our culture is not for sale,”<sup>17</sup> the destruction of Latinx-produced murals has come to symbolize the whitewashing of a larger Latinx presence and culture.<sup>18</sup> There are 508 murals in the district, according to a 2016 report by the San Francisco Planning Department, making the removal of murals by newcomers into the neighborhood evidence of gentrification, attacking what Erick Arguello, co-founder of Calle 24,<sup>19</sup> deems as “the lifeblood of the neighborhood.”<sup>20</sup> The contributions Latinxs have made to the diversity and cultural scene in San Francisco is tremendous, yet the threat of their, as late-artist Rene Yañez has deemed, “cultural eviction,”<sup>21</sup> is imminent, and community activists and artists agree that the preservation, whether through restoration or revision, of

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<sup>15</sup> Mirabal, Nancy Raquel. “Geographies of Displacement: Latina/os, Oral History, and the Politics of Gentrification in San Francisco's Mission District.” *The Public Historian*. 31, no. 2 (Spring 2009): 23-4.

<sup>16</sup> Cordova, Cary. *The Heart of the Mission...* 136.

<sup>17</sup> Greschler, Gabriel, and Laura Waxxman. “Whitewashed Mural Reveals the Role Street Art Plays in the Survival of the Mission's Culture.” KALW. August 10, 2017. Para. 6.

<sup>18</sup> Flores. “Seeing Through Murals...” Para. 12.

<sup>19</sup> Calle 24 is a Latino community-based institution that has been around since 1999, when it began as a grassroots organization.

<sup>20</sup> Greschler and Waxxman. “Whitewashed Mural Reveals...” Para. 18.

<sup>21</sup> McClure, Sarah. “Benefit for Mission Artists Attracts Latino All Stars.” Mission Local - Local News for a Global Neighborhood. October 26, 2013. Para. 4.

the murals and the education for visitors of the Mission is integral to the security of Latinxs' presence in San Francisco.

### **History of the Mission and its Latinx Community**

The Mission – also known as Mission Dolores – has an immensely rich local history, spanning the last 200 years. Home to many different backgrounds and ethnicities, the Mission is deeply rooted in its Spanish colonialist beginnings, celebrating the heritage in the urban environment.<sup>22</sup> In fact, visitors to the Mission will no doubt notice the Spanish Colonial or Mission Revival architecture represented through long-standing buildings within the neighborhood, such as Mission High School. Though these Spanish beginnings are what is reflected throughout the Mission of today, the first residents of the area were the native Ohlone people, where they established their village of Chutchuii. Until 1774, the Ohlone lived off the rich land, an area that provided more sun than other areas of the fog-immersed land, and soil favorable to farming and raising animals; when a Spanish colonel came to explore the area for a presidio and a mission, there was no question that this was the best place to settle. In 1776, Colonel Juan Batista de Anza and his soldiers, along with two Franciscan friars, descended upon the valley, re-naming the village of Chutchuii to “La Mision San Francisco de Asis,” in honor of the founder of the Franciscan order – many of the native people willingly stayed with the new faith, but those who came into port commented on the decreasing number of Ohlone, due to diseases brought by the Spanish newcomers.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Howell. *Making the Mission...* 127.

<sup>23</sup> Hooper, Bernadette C. *San Francisco's Mission District*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006. 7.

When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the new Mexican government did not have the time or resources to support Californian mission lands, which eventually led to the secularization of the Mission to the status of a parish church in 1834. This change invited the settlement of people working in various trades, creating the second switch of the Mission's population. The next shift came during the Gold Rush (1848-1855), when the valley was "rediscovered" and an influx of working-class and wealthy citizens, mainly of European descent, built their homes in the Mission. At this point in time, anti-Latinx violence spiked – this statement can be gleaned through the urban development of San Francisco: the Latinx population moved north of the Mission to North Beach (known then as the Latin Quarter), and in 1875, a Spanish-speaking church was constructed in the newly Latinx neighborhood.<sup>24</sup>

Large cities throughout the U.S. were going through "rebirths" between 1890 and 1920, a period of time referred to as the Progressive Era. What makes San Francisco, and specifically the Mission, different from all the other redeveloping neighborhoods is that while neighborhood-based planning existed during this time period, and again later in the 1960s and 70s, the Mission has a longer, continuous narrative that is deeply rooted within its single lineage of development compared with other neighborhoods emerging from their respective urban crises.<sup>25</sup> The Mission's own crisis came about through a number of events: the 1906 earthquake, Mexicans fleeing the Revolution in 1910, and then in the 1920s, Puerto Ricans transitioning from Hawaiian plantations,<sup>26</sup> transforming the city and

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<sup>24</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Howell. *Making the Mission...* 6-7.

<sup>26</sup> Hooper. *San Francisco's Mission District...* 8.  
Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 5.

its urban development as immigrants came in hopes of finding sanctuary in a city that was in the midst of recovering from a natural disaster. This was another instance of immigrants adding diversity to San Francisco, as it was one of the few areas preserved from the fire that followed in the wake of the earthquake.<sup>27</sup>

The period of time prior to World War II held the same prejudice towards Latinxs, reminiscent of the Gold Rush, but to planners, lenders, and realtors (all looking to make a sale or develop a certain platform), Latinxs were regarded as “white.”<sup>28</sup> There was even a class division amongst Latinxs, between those who claimed European Spanish descent, and those considered *mestizo* (of mixed Indian [Native American] descent).<sup>29</sup> Latinxs’ ambiguous racial status within San Francisco is a key point in understanding censuses of the time, as the population was divided into race with options being “white,” “nonwhite,” and “other races,”<sup>30</sup> so many Latinxs were left undocumented, leaving the lineage of Latinxs’ move into the Mission fragmentary, at best.

Post-World War II, many long-time Mission neighborhood residents moved to the “suburbs” where larger new houses were being built, leaving space for new groups from Mexico and Central America to settle in the Mission. Rent increases and urban development pushed Latinxs living in North Beach to South of Market (SoMA) and the Mission, thus beginning the era of the *Raza*. *Raza* translates to “our people,” putting an

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<sup>27</sup> Susser. “City and Culture...” 140.

<sup>28</sup> Howell. *Making the Mission...* 21.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* 122.

<sup>30</sup> “San Francisco City and County - Decennial Census Data.” Bay Area Census -- San Francisco County -- 1970-1990 Census Data.

emphasis on people rather than a specific nation<sup>31</sup> – this identification can also be called *Latinidad*, which is explained as “a cultural interconnectedness between Latinxs that surmounts differences in nationality and citizenship status.”<sup>32</sup> A common theme for Latinxs’ relationship with San Francisco is displacement, specifically when it comes to the urban growth and development. From the Mission to North Beach, and back again to the Mission and its surrounding areas, the community felt constant pressure from city authorities that they were not entirely welcome. In the 1960s, President Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration’s War on Poverty initiatives were adopted by the city of San Francisco, creating an immediate feeling of distrust by residents who viewed the programs as a ploy to displace low-income people.<sup>33</sup> Specifically affecting the Mission were the plans to build two Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) stations, right off of Mission Street, the neighborhood’s equivalent to a Main Street of any small U.S. town. While city authorities saw it as a way to revitalize an area “well on its way to becoming a slum”<sup>34</sup> – based on Anglo citizens’ observations that more Spanish was spoken in certain areas, leading the perception of the neighborhood to be viewed under the lens as a poverty stricken area – concerned activists argued that the “land around the BART stations [would] become too valuable for poor people to occupy.”<sup>35</sup> In 1964, British sociologist Ruth Glass coined the term gentrification during her study of a West Indian neighborhood in London,<sup>36</sup> right as the Mission was about to head right into its own

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<sup>31</sup> Cordova. *The Heart of the Mission*...64.

<sup>32</sup> Flores. “Seeing Through Murals...” Para. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Cordova. *The Heart of the Mission*... 129.

<sup>34</sup> Flores. “Seeing Through Murals...” Para. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Cordova. *The Heart of the Mission*... 128.

<sup>36</sup> Flores. “Seeing Through Murals...” Para. 1.

spiral of young newcomers and a tech invasion, putting long-term residents at risk of losing their homes due to this new money.

The availability of affordable apartments near the BART in the 1980s brought another wave of youth into the area, and internally, intra-Latinx tensions arose in the fight for work, as well as branches of local gangs engaging in open violence.<sup>37</sup> With the major 1989 earthquake came yet another displacement for the Latinx community living in the Mission: due to the extensive damage throughout the city, there were not many viable properties. The Mission came out the most unscathed, sending white and Asian residents flocking to the area, ultimately beating out Latinxs because they were able to pay more. With the prospect of more money seen by the landlords and the dot-com boom, the 1990s became reminiscent of post-U.S.-Mexican war era, as rent increased, landlords evicted tenants through the Ellis Act<sup>38</sup>, and buildings were chopped into multiple units or converted into large spaces for tech start-ups.<sup>39</sup> At this point in time, the Mission had the highest concentration of renters in the city (70%), and Latinxs were slowly being pushed out once more.

As of 2005, San Francisco became the only major city in the U.S. to experience a loss in Latinx population, with an estimated loss of 8,000 Latinx residents in the Mission by 2025.<sup>40</sup> This is partly due to newcomers taking advantage of low-income renters of color,

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<sup>37</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 11.

<sup>38</sup> The Ellis Act is a California state law which says landlords have the unconditional right to evict tenants because they're "going out of business," but in order to do so they must evict *all* tenants.

<sup>39</sup> Flores. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 11.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* Para. 21.

as undocumented residents or those who cannot speak English are more vulnerable to intimidation. The 2010s brought yet another wave of public offerings from tech firms which puts the Mission right back in the middle of gentrification issues,<sup>41</sup> backing up the predicted statistic of the slowly dwindling population of Latinxs in the Mission.

### **Theorizing Street Art**

In order to understand the importance of murals within the Mission, a brief dive into the history of street art and its relationship with institutions, as well as mural-making within Hispanic cultures, is necessary.

While theorists of street art have not come to a conclusive answer as to whether street art can be classified as a movement of art – Martin Irvine explains how street art and artists fit perfectly within our current state when there is no true period identity for contemporary art – what many can agree on is the influence of earlier movements such as Dadaism (early 20<sup>th</sup> century) and Situationism (1960s) on the early graffiti artists of the 1970s.<sup>42</sup> In fact, graffiti was not considered “art” until its association with New York City’s hip-hop culture.<sup>43</sup> Moving forward with the reasonings of Pop Art (mid-to-late 1950s)<sup>44</sup>, street art applies them to new territories of visual engagement and what is

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<sup>41</sup> Howell. *Making the Mission...* 3.

<sup>42</sup> Irvine, Martin. “The Work on the Street: Street Art and Visual Culture.” In *The Handbook of Visual Culture*. London and New York: Berg, 2012. 237, 241.

Molnár, Virág. “Street Art and the Changing Urban Public Sphere.” *Public Culture*, 82nd ser., 29, no. 2 (May 1, 2017): 394.

<sup>43</sup> Birnbaum, Paula J. “Street Art: Critique, Commodification, Canonization.” *Revisioning the Contemporary Art Canon: Perspectives in a Globalizing World*, London: Routledge Publishing, 2017, 156.

<sup>44</sup> The movement presented a challenge to the traditions of fine art by including imagery from popular and mass culture, such as advertising, comic books and mundane cultural objects. Street art use post-Pop and postmodern strategies, such as photo-reproduction, repetition, and appropriation, that have become common of contemporary art, as well.



referred to as “visual culture” (the de-aestheticization of what is considered fine art and aestheticizing spaces that are not traditionally viewed by institutions as recognized art spaces, such as alleyways and subway stations).<sup>45</sup> Street art is context dependent, usually explicitly used as an engagement with a city and often within a specific neighborhood, becoming political because its causing a rift in ordinary forms of experience, presenting an alternative way of experiencing the space it occupies.<sup>46</sup> The 2000s brought a generation of highly recognized street artists that differ from their underground, private-property-trespassing predecessors. The most recognizable case for these new wave of artists can be seen through Banksy’s rise, from vandal to vied after by collectors and auction houses. Though this can be a case for the commodification of his work, Banksy has not let his mischievous beginnings vanish completely: on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Banksy’s 2006 stenciled spray-painting *Girl With Balloon* sold for over \$1 million, and just moments after the piece was sold, the painting self-destructed, shredding the not-so-priceless canvas onto Sotheby’s floor.<sup>47 48</sup>

Distinctly defining terms used within the theorization of street art can be difficult, but as an art form being pushed to create a new canon within art history, some definitions

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<sup>45</sup> Irvine. “The Work on the Street...” 241.

<sup>46</sup> Bacharach, Sondra. “Street Art and Consent.” *The British Journal of Aesthetics*. October 01, 2015. Section 4.

Irvine. “The Work on the Street...” 238.

Molnár. “Street Art and the Changing...” 409.

<sup>47</sup> BBC. “Banksy Artwork Shreds Itself after £1m Sale at Sotheby's.” October 6, 2018.

<sup>48</sup> Some observers, such as Sotheby’s Alex Branczik, argued that ironically, the work subsequently increased in value after the publicity surrounding the self-destruction. The initial shock of a shredded Banksy print dissipated quickly and was replaced with a new excitement for its potential in the art market: the market essentially adapted for Banksy’s reclaimed and renamed piece, *Love is in the Bin*, and when translated to the art forms focused on in this capstone, one could argue that the white washing of the murals in the Mission will increase the value of those that remain. / Freeman, Nate. "Is That Banksy Worth More Now That It’s Shredded? We Asked the Experts." Artsy. October 10, 2018.

Jacob, Preminda. "Banksy and the Tradition of Destroying Art." CNN. October 23, 2018.

succinctly describe the differences between public art, street art, and graffiti. Simply stated, as New Zealand art historian Sondra Bacharach notes, public art is protected, sponsored, supported, and generally funded by the government; street art is ephemeral and used for an intended, activist purpose; and graffiti is territorial, specifically targeting other graffiti writers to establish notoriety.<sup>49</sup> Public art typically ignores the opinion of those who inhabit or use the space, while street art aims to challenge the viewer's experience with the space, and tends to include signifiers that evoke special meaning to the locals, but might go unnoticed among the public at large.<sup>50</sup> Another interesting theory by Bacharach is the concept of "aconsensuality" – consent that was not requested, not that it was not requested *and denied*. Street art is aconsensual in the sense that with each new act of making a work and inserting it into a street context as a response and a reply to a specific event or movement,<sup>51</sup> no one might have specifically requested the piece, but, over time, the piece's ability to stand the test of time is evidence of the community's acceptance as a representative of themselves. Street art challenges the public to reclaim the urban environment and to give back the space to its inhabitants, a major initiative taken on by the Latinx community of the Mission and their constant battle against displacement and gentrification.

Street art has been a traditional means of communication in the Hispanic world, allowing groups an opportunity to disperse their voice when otherwise they could not comment

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<sup>49</sup> Bacharach. "Street Art and Consent."  
Molnár. "Street Art and the Changing..." 389.  
<sup>50</sup> Bacharach. "Street Art and Consent."  
Cordova. *The Heart of the Mission...* 136.  
<sup>51</sup> Irvine. "The Work on the Street..." 241.

upon or support current or perceived social problems based on their own social status.<sup>52</sup> Street art is a form of low technology with the capacity for mass communication in an age of high technology. In fact, many theorists reflect on the effect of street art's capability of reaching all corners of the world thanks to our online society.<sup>53</sup> Street art is a highly adaptable medium with the ability to alter or evolve its direct expression based on the community's values and reactions.<sup>54</sup> This medium is popular amongst groups – such as the Latinx community within San Francisco – who may lack access to conventional media or the financial means to engage in high-tech propaganda, offering a way to achieve recognition in the grander socio-political scheme.<sup>55</sup> As an area with a family income below the city's average (as of 2017, \$96,000 compared to San Francisco's "low income" threshold of \$117,400, and the average being \$104,879),<sup>56</sup> street art as a mode of expression in order to respond to issues and gain attention when their voices usually would not be heard is the perfect format for lining the streets of the neighborhood and gaining exposure through San Francisco's influx of tourists. The late Dr. Lyman Chaffee's book, *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries*, is in alliance with Bacharach's context dependent application of street art based on his recognition of street art's continued

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<sup>52</sup> Chaffee, Lyman G. *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993. 3-4.

<sup>53</sup> Birnbaum. "Street Art: Critique..." 154.

Irvine. "The Work on the Street..." 236.

Molnár. "Street Art and the Changing..." 385, 400-8.

<sup>54</sup> Bacharach. "Street Art and Consent." Section 3.

Chaffee. *Political Protest and Street Art...* 9.

<sup>55</sup> Chaffee. *Political Protest and Street Art...* 12.

<sup>56</sup> Nunn, Ryan, and Jay Shambaugh. "San Francisco: Where a Six-Figure Salary is 'Low Income'." BBC. July 10, 2018.

Wenus, Laura. "Survey: Latino Families in Mission Struggle, Many Earn Below Poverty Level." Mission Local - Local News for a Global Neighborhood. March 23, 2017. Para. 11.

utility: as a cultural-historical factor, street art acts as an historical memory imprinted within visual culture and history, contextualizing the local politics of the local urban culture.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Debate on the Preservation of Street Art**

But what of preserving these pieces that are ephemeral by nature? While some argue that street art can no longer be considered a viable movement as it has received art institutional recognition,<sup>58</sup> others advocate for the preservation, restoration, and development of urban canvases.<sup>59</sup> Since the late 1990s, street art is the first truly post-Internet art movement,<sup>60</sup> making the continued practice in unknown territory with the ease at which now it can be dispersed. Dr. Paula Birnbaum concludes that the sense of urgency and social critique inevitably becomes neutralized as soon as it enters the art world as its latest commodity.<sup>61</sup> Dr. Lori Flores argues that “defending murals is shorthand for defending Latinxs’ presence, diversity, and deep history,” therefore any sense of preserving a minority community lies within what they have placed on their walls as their only means of letting their voice be heard. Both Dr. Cary Cordova and John Pitman Weber believe that over time, just as communities and the urban landscape change, so will murals to keep up-to-date with the voices behind their creation.

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<sup>57</sup> Chaffee. *Political Protest and Street Art...* 161.

Molnár. “Street Art and the Changing...” 398.

<sup>58</sup> Birnbaum, Paula J. “Street Art: Critique, Commodification, Canonization.”

Irvine, Martin. “The Work on the Street: Street Art and Visual Culture.”

<sup>59</sup> Drescher, Tim. “Priorities in Conserving Community Murals.”

Flores, Lori A. “Seeing Through Murals: The Future of Latino San Francisco.”

Weber, John Pitman. “Politics and Practice of Community Public Art: Whose Murals Get Saved?”

<sup>60</sup> Irvine. “The Work on the Street...” 260.

<sup>61</sup> Birnbaum. “Street Art: Critique...” 166.

A street artist himself, Weber dives into the politics and decision-making within a community in regards to its “public art”. He has experienced the sandblasting of one of his 1970s murals in Chicago, and promotes repainting and re-planning, over whitewashing and destruction. Weber’s defense rides on his statement that the loss of murals has everything to do with the “short life span of urban America,” rather than their “aesthetic quality” to a community.<sup>62</sup> Just a couple of years after a mural is created, it might lose its importance to the ever-changing urban landscape, so a community has the option to revise and move in the same direction of its developing values and opinions, but acknowledges that in 50 years or so after its initial creation, the original mural could have been historicized and celebrated. For those entering the community and deciding the fate of a mural, what Weber considers most important is understanding the context, and involving the community and the original artist.<sup>63</sup> On the same note, Tim Drescher, an independent scholar from Berkeley, California, and collaborator with Artstor<sup>64</sup> in the digitization of his photographic archive of American community murals, defines community as “the daily audience of the mural as well as its producers and to the painting itself...whose interests generated the mural.”<sup>65</sup> Drescher contributes to Weber’s plea for protection for street art, pointing out that many murals preserve marginalized histories that are not placed in mainstream media and education.<sup>66</sup> He discusses problems that might come along the way (if there is a difference in interests between the community at

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<sup>62</sup> Weber, John Pitman. “Politics and Practice of Community Public Art: Whose Murals Get Saved?” Keynote Respondent Panel, Mural Painting and Conservation in the Americas, Los Angeles, CA, May 17, 2003. The Getty Conservation Institute. 5.

<sup>63</sup> Weber. “Politics and Practice of Community Public Art...” 13.

<sup>64</sup> Artstor is a non-profit, digital resource with images in the arts, humanities, and sciences.

<sup>65</sup> Drescher, Tim. “Priorities in Conserving Community Murals.” Keynote Respondent Panel, Mural Painting and Conservation in the Americas, Los Angeles, CA, May 17, 2003. The Getty Conservation Institute. 4.

<sup>66</sup> Drescher. “Priorities in Conserving...” 5.

hand and the civic institutions), as well as pointing out that due to the inability to categorize murals within the institutional market<sup>67</sup>, their value needs to be calculated in other ways than by money.<sup>68</sup>

Though there may not be a definitive answer as to whether or not street art should be preserved within their urban setting, art theorists will continue to argue that preservation will only ruin its very essence of ephemerality and urgency, and artists and local activists will argue that through preservation and restoration, the voice of the communities can be heard and adapted for years to come.

### **Street Art's Continued Utility**

The atmosphere of the Mission can be characterized as *la cultural de la necesidad*, murals being created for “tactical, strategic, and positional necessities.”<sup>69</sup> The rise of murals in the 1960s became a symbol for the *necessity* of the minority community to communicate their values amongst one another and the greater city. Both residents and visitors alike would describe the Mission as “a city within a city,” having the ability to build a cohesive urban identity distinct from the larger city.<sup>70</sup> On October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, Balmy Alley’s newest mural, “Women of the Resistance,” was unveiled to the public during a block party. The mural, headed by Lucia Ippolito, features prominent female activists from around the world, both past and present. Ippolito explains, “We’re all

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<sup>67</sup> Written and presented in 2003, Drescher is correct in deeming that murals and public art lack the “traditional market value,” as at this point in time, well-known street artists were just beginning the transition from off the streets to the walls of galleries and auction houses.

<sup>68</sup> Drescher. “Priorities in Conserving...” 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ybarra-Frausto. “The Chicano Movement...” 147.

<sup>70</sup> Howell. *Making the Mission...* 4.

angry right now...So we decided to represent the faces of the women fighting for the cause.”<sup>71</sup> The artist’s inspiration for Balmy Alley’s latest addition vocalizes for a change in gender and equality rights, combining the aesthetics of Hispanic art with the political advocacy of early Mexican/Chicano/Latinx murals. Ippolito is one of many muralists who continue to carry on the traditions of the 1960s and 70s grassroots organizations and artists that emerged to become a larger force to save their neighborhood. To reiterate Flores’ position on this matter, she believes that defending murals is a way in preserving Latinxs and their deep-rooted history in the Mission, allowing the only way they’ve been able to properly advocate for their rights, opinions, and values to San Francisco, and in the age of modern technology, the world.

Minority populations have always dealt with prejudices and ignorance by the ‘dominant’ population, that take form as authority figures, but the Latinxs of the Mission have drawn on their ancestral ties to make sure their voices are heard within the mainstream discussions. The collective works of murals underlines the importance of community for this neighborhood, a medium that has been used for almost 50 years. The Mission and its people’s resilience shine through when the neighborhood comes together to celebrate their heritages, but San Francisco and the Bay Area’s draw for techies worldwide threatens these long-standing traditions and celebrations. The Mission murals are not just paint on street walls and garage doors, but a visual record of the people who have been struggling to make this land their home, with constant interferences by civil legislations and, much more pressing now, gentrification.

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<sup>71</sup> Rodriguez, Abraham. "In Art-heavy Balmy Alley, a New Mural Comes to Life (PHOTOS)." Mission Local - Local News for a Global Neighborhood. July 5, 2018. Para. 3.

Based on the literature on Latinxs in the Mission, their struggle against gentrification, and how (or if) street art translates into a contemporary art canon, there is a need for a project solely dedicated to aiding in the preservation of the Latinx community. The public must understand these murals are not just decorative to liven up the buildings and alleyways of the Mission. Without these murals, the Latinx population will rapidly decline, with their history wiped away by a simple stroke of a brush and risk being commodified for others' benefit.



## Chapter 3: Proposal

### Project Description

The following chapter will discuss my project proposal, *Mapping the Mission (MM)*, which consists of a foldable map and a walking tour. The premise of this project came about when I was looking for tours in San Francisco's Mission District to attend out of personal interest in street art. What I found was either institutions providing tours specific to pieces they've commissioned, or generic touring companies that did not seem to have a clear path or idea, but seemed to me to be finding another way to cash in on San Francisco's tourist revenue. As I continued to research the Mission and discovered how resilient the Latinx community has been, I was perplexed as to why the focus of these tours wasn't on the history behind mural making and its importance to the voices of its community. As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 2), there are large issues at hand that threaten the vitality of the Latinx community in the Mission, most prominently gentrification. While already stated in the previous chapter, the statistic provided by San Francisco city budget authorities predicting that the Mission will lose 8,000 Latinx residents by 2025,<sup>72</sup> is worth repeating. In fact, while I was writing this capstone I learned that one of the oldest community-based arts organizations in the Mission that started as a grassroots organization in the 1970s, La Galería de la Raza, has been forced out of their space that they have occupied for 46 years due to a 100% rent increase, effective as of August 2018.<sup>73</sup> If a longstanding organization such as Galería, whose contributions to the community would fill volumes, has to succumb to the greatest force

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<sup>72</sup> Flores, Lori A. "Seeing Through Murals..." Para. 9.

<sup>73</sup> Mark, Julian. "Breaking: SF Mission's Galería De La Raza Forced out of Longtime Space by Rent Hike." Mission Local - Local News for a Global Neighborhood. October 12, 2018.

pushing the Latinx community out, then how can anyone expect any single individual to fight off these hikes in rent? I intend for this project to be the beginning of a process towards preserving the long-standing culture and people of the Mission; my hopes are for this project to become a resource on the rich, historical context of the Latinx community, for those who interact with the map or take a tour, so that this neighborhood does not become another extension of the Financial District.

*MM* consists of a number of programs beyond the map: there will be guided tours by members of the Mission community, and monthly events free of charge to the public in collaborative spaces with local community centers. Maps will be distributed to these local centers as a free resource for visitors. For the most part, maps will be available for purchase from local participating merchants, at a reasonable price. Tours will be led twice a week (once during the “work” week and once during the weekend), at an estimated \$10-20 with discounts for locals (proof of residency), students (valid ID), etc., and will be offered in English and Spanish. Tours are an essential part of the development and continued authenticity sought after by *MM*; while the map will pinpoint specific murals and locations, the tours will provide additional information based on the knowledge of the guides and contributions by community members, allowing for accurate historical and contemporary information to be relayed to tour attendees. The dispersal of up-to-date information will ensure *MM*'s efforts in promoting the Latinxs' community, culture, and support of events. Programs will include an initial launch event followed by monthly recurring programs for families, such as a craft activity for children encouraging them to make maps of their own neighborhood, will create a greater connection with the

general public and provide another audience to share *MM*'s missions. My vision for *MM* is not just about involving tourists, but also providing a cost-effective activity for residents of the Bay Area.

### **Logistics of the Map:**

- Folded, on recycled paper, four color<sup>74</sup>; the dimensions, when unfolded, will be 24 inches x 36 inches.
- Parameters: 18<sup>th</sup> Street to the North, Guerrero Street to the West, 25<sup>th</sup> Street to the South, and Bryant Street to the East (Appendix A).
- Points of interest: murals, sites, and buildings that are integral to explaining the history and importance of the Latinx community, picked by team members with counsel from the Advisory Committee and insight from community members.
- Accessible for purchase by visitors to the Mission at a reasonable price from local merchants and institutions.
- Available in five languages (English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese).<sup>75</sup> The Bay Area is one of the most linguistically diverse regions in the country, with a report from 2005 tallying 112 languages.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> The Four Color Theorem – also referred to as Four Color Map Theorem or CMYK for the inks: cyan, magenta, yellow, and key (black) – states that no more than four colors are required to color the regions of the map so that regions sharing a common boundary do not share the same color. / Weisstein, Eric W. "Four-Color Theorem." From *MathWorld* – A Wolfram Web Resource.

<sup>75</sup> The top 5 languages spoken in California households based on the 2000 Census. / "California Languages." City-Data.com.

<sup>76</sup> Hendricks, Tyche. "BAY AREA / Report: 112 Languages Spoken in Diverse Region." SFGate. March 14, 2005.

## **Goals and Objectives**

The two main goals of this project are to:

1. Create an understanding of the importance of murals in relation to the vitality of the Latinx community in the Mission and,
2. Emphasize the historic, deep roots the Latinx community has within the Mission.

Objectives for these goals are to:

1. Interview members of the community (long-standing families, muralists, etc.),
2. Hold meetings open to the community so that their voices, thoughts, and values are accurately depicted in the development of the map and tours,
3. Develop a map with insight from local cultural institutions and community leaders, and,
4. Create related programs – as mentioned in this project’s description – free of charge, for visitors and community members, alike.

## **Potential Stakeholders**

- The Latinx community of the Mission

With each year, Latinxs’ homes are becoming increasingly unaffordable, leaving them no choice but to move farther out into the Bay Area. The death of the vibrancy and pride in its history to the Mission would be a tragedy; allowing members to contribute to this project ensures an accurate portrayal of history and everyday life, giving the Latinx community another outlet to be heard throughout mainstream San Francisco. Built and developed by a collaborative effort with community members, the effects of this project are ultimately for Latinxs of the Mission.

- Muralists/street artists
- Cultural activists

As discussed in Chapter 2, street art's ephemerality as a key characteristic for this form of art is largely debated. While *MM* is not advocating for any one particular point of view, the murals that will be included will display how the voices of the Latinx community are represented through this form of mass communication (seen by passersby and tourists who will upload images to the Internet, and from there anyone in the world has access to these messages). The muralists whose work that is included on the map or within the walking tour will be notified, and their requests and communication will be another resource for the project's development. This project creates a new topic for discussion in the world of street art, amongst street artists and street art theorists, of whether street art's short-lived nature is the most important characteristic, or if the message is enough to try and preserve that piece of work.

Muralists/street artists and cultural activists have been placed together because in the case of the Mission, both groups are interrelated. Murals are generally created by collectives, not by a single hand; these groups come together out of a similar interest in fighting from a specific angle. This has always been the case since the emergence of murals in the Mission in the 1970s, from Jesús "Chuy" Campusano, Luis Cortázar, and Michael Rios' 1974 commissioned mural "Homage to Siqueiros," located above the counter in the Bank of America on 23<sup>rd</sup> and Mission, asserting their ability to communicate directly with the people of the neighborhood regardless of the commercial interests of their sponsor,<sup>77</sup> to

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<sup>77</sup> Cordova, Cary. *The Heart of the Mission...* 130-1.

the recent “Women of the Resistance” mural in Balmy Alley advocating for a change in gender and equality rights. This project can create a channel for muralists and activists to continue their pursuit in displaying the concerns and wants of their community by literally putting them on a map, while consulting team members for future revisions. This proposal might also serve as a model for activists and artists in other urban neighborhoods in the U.S. experiencing similar challenges.

- Local cultural and historical institutions
- San Francisco historians

This project will benefit from and be beneficial for these types of institutions and individuals. Historical institutions will be of great importance when obtaining photographs from the past, while also providing more information to the research already in the possession of the project’s team (where San Francisco historians also come into play). This project will be an accessible history lesson for those who participate, and can stir interest into reaching out to local historical societies to learn more. Cultural institutions will play a major part in the distribution and housing of programs – my hopes are to connect and maintain relationships with local centers, such as the Women’s Building and the Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, as their work for the community is parallel to the expectations for this project. By hosting *MM*’s programs and allowing us to leave maps in their most accessible areas, more visibility will become apparent for them as people who might not generally visit these places come and see what they have to offer.

## **Funding and Resources**

My vision is that *MM* will seek a fiscal sponsorship through the Oakland-based organization, Community Initiatives (CI). CI's mission to "...sponsor projects for the benefit of communities in service to social change," directly aligns with this project's big ideas in creating awareness and an understanding of the importance of the Mission murals, and how this understanding can prevent the whitewashing of these important elements and the people they represent. In addition to the parallel interests, CI is one of a few non-profits that does not have an exceedingly high fundraising minimum<sup>78</sup> – the estimated total for this project is \$70,000, accounting for: staff and resources listed below; the development and printing of the maps, plus probable transportation costs depending on the location of the printing press; the creation of a website; obtaining photographic rights for historical photos to be used; and associated programs.

## **Team Members & Roles**

Project Manager (PM): This position will double as a Head of Communications.

*Duties and Responsibilities:*

- Manage and support the requirements and implementations laid out by CI.
- Work with CI's Grant Support to identify available grant opportunities, and perform grant writing.
- Update the staff about upcoming deadlines and deliverables to ensure the successful completion of work responsibilities.

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<sup>78</sup> All projects must fulfill an annual fundraising minimum of \$24,000. / "Fees and Minimums." Community Initiatives.

- Conduct quarterly meetings with the Advisory Committee, with the Head of Tours in attendance.
- Work with CI's Financial Management to oversee invoicing, accounting, reporting, and other administrative functions as well as maintain records of all payments and receivables, and prepare financial or budget plans.

Head of Tours:

*Requirements:*

- Bilingual preferred (Spanish and English).

*Duties and Responsibilities:*

- Development of a tour outline based on the map and work with the Spanish translator chosen by the PM for the Spanish-led tour.
- Recruit tour guides and lead training.
- Prepare the tour outline and work with the Spanish translator to produce an accurate script.
- Maintain communication with tour guides to understand how the audience is reacting towards the tour, and see what developments can be made.

Advisory Committee: This committee will be comprised of three (3) community leaders and members of the Mission to act as a non-binding body for *MM*.

*Duties and Responsibilities:*

- Advise on the designs for the map and plans for programs.
- Assist in the creation of policies to provide direction and support for *MM*.



- Provide assistance and counsel on issues raised by the staff.
- Make recommendations about public awareness strategies and resources, as the targeted community's insights are important to the authenticity of this project.
- Provide insights and ideas.
- Monitor the performance of each staff member.
- Provide networking platforms for the organization.

Map Development Team:

Geographic Information System Analyst (GISA)

Graphic Designer (GD)

Local Historian (LH)

The above individuals will be working together to develop the physical map. Along with the Head of Tours, this team is essential in choosing the best route from Point A to Point Z. The LH will be of great help in pinpointing exact locations and providing insight to the research already in *MM*'s possession. The GISA will be of assistance in the cartographic design – their specialty lies in map-making and finding the best routes, which will be of great use as we do not want tours going for miles on end. The GD will come into play on the creative development of the GISA's designs – they will provide multiple designs to be considered by main staff members and the Advisory Committee.

### Translators (4) - Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese - and Secondary Consultants

The individuals working on the translations for Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese will be in communication with the PM to ensure the vision of the map remains intact through the process. A secondary consultant will be necessary as those on staff will not be fluent in all languages to ensure correct translation.

### Website Designer

This individual will create a website as a base for all information on the project; pinpoint on Google Maps where *MM*'s maps can be purchased; tour dates, times, and prices; and links to social media.

## **Checklist of Tasks for Project Development**

### **PROJECT MANAGER**

- Apply to Community Initiatives for Fiscal Sponsorship.
- Make contact with community leaders and institutions to fill positions within the Advisory Committee as well as the Local Historian.
- Conduct on-site evaluations of potential merchants to place the map within their shop. Once a relationship is made, continue communication to ensure both parties understand the agreement.
- Secure a website designer, graphic designer, GIS analyst, and translators. They will remain in contact with the individuals listed above to ensure the developmental process is completed in a thorough and timely manner.
- Secure a printing press in the Bay Area.

- ❑ Develop programs in conjunction with tours, or separately, to provide resources for the community and visitors.
  - ❑ Potential programming for children: creating maps of their homes, showing what is important to them and aiding in the understanding at a young age the importance behind this project.
- ❑ Create Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram profiles in order to promote the project on multiple platforms, and maintain the accounts by posting regularly and engaging in online conversations and threads.
- ❑ Connect with local middle/high schools and community centers to inform them of the map and programs, and ask to provide maps (free of charge) for students/visitors.
  - ❑ For community centers: explain programs and see possible collaboration for use of space.

## **HEAD OF TOURS**

- ❑ Conduct interviews for potential tour guides – *MM* will be offering tours in English, Spanish, with an emphasis that guides are local historians/residents of the Mission.
- ❑ Prepare the tour outline and work with the Spanish translator chosen by the PM to produce an accurate script.
- ❑ Work with the PM to come up with a fair price for the tours, and payment for the tour guides.

- ❑ Lead Tour Guide training (will meet over 2 [nonconsecutive] days): Day 1 will include explaining the project and meaning behind its inception, handing out the outlines, and going on the route. Day 2, Tour Guides will be encouraged to invite family and friends to come on a tour so that the part of the tour they are assigned to can be tested on an audience.
  - ❑ Lead these trainings as new tour guides join the team.
- ❑ Conduct bi-monthly meetings with the tour guides to hear feedback from their tours, and see if the tour outline can be updated to fit the needs of its audiences.

## **Chapter 4: Summary and Conclusions**

As discussed in Chapter 3, this project stemmed from personal interests that developed into compassion for a neighborhood just a 15-minute bus ride away from where I live. The Mission is a unique area, a city within a city, that reflects its Hispanic beginnings as well as many transformations. The Latinx community has overcome many displacements but made every neighborhood their home, whether it was in North Beach, South of Market (SoMA), or the Mission, where large numbers of immigrants from Central America and Mexico finally settled post-WWII. With the population consisting of immigrants from a variety of countries, the neighborhood came together as one, as *la Raza*. Grassroots organizations sprung up as the need for representation of community opinions and values were necessary to defend what they had built from city policies and authorities. The Chicano Art Movement and multiple civil wars in Latin America of the 1960s stirred the Latinx community, and thus murals began to appear on the sides of the buildings in the 1970s as a collective effort amongst muralists. Today, these colorful and artistically sophisticated and engaging murals are important works of art, attracting tourists and sustaining artists. What is not apparent in viewing these murals are the people and meaning behind their presence; as this form of art is out on the streets, there are no labels to explain to the greater public the issues that are being represented within each piece.

In addition to the proposal I have laid out in the preceding chapter, I envision two future steps for this project once it is up and running, and evaluated. The first is to develop a map and tour for the deaf/hard-of-hearing and blind/visually-impaired communities. The second is to develop an audio tour.

1. *MM* is dedicated to ensuring all individuals can participate in tours and enjoy the maps. Due to expenses and not a full understanding of those that will be truly interested in our services, *MM* will conduct a year of trial runs for tours offered in English and Spanish, and during the bi-monthly meetings for tour guides, as stated in Chapter 3, the Head of Tours will be sure to note any kinds of access issues that come up. After the trial year, the Project Manager and Advisory Committee will convene, and if the needs are high, the position of Head of Accessibility will be created, and *MM* would contract with a company that provides American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters.

The following is a description of what the position of Head of Accessibility would entail:

*Requirements:*

- Understands and can communicate in ASL.
- Experience working with deaf/hard-of-hearing, blind/visually-impaired, and/or handicapped communities – understands the specificities these individuals might need.

*Duties and Responsibilities:*

- Work with the contracted company for ASL interpreters.
- Connect with and develop relationships with local institutions for the deaf/hard-of-hearing and blind/visually-impaired.
- Conduct relevant research to make sure *MM* is doing all it can to foster inclusivity with the project and associated programs.

**Checklist of Tasks would include:**

- Ensure the chosen route for the walking tour is wheelchair accessible.
- Work with the contracted company for ASL interpreters to secure a tour guide for ASL-led tours.
- Work with a Brailist to create a map that would create a proper experience for the blind/visually-impaired community.
- Reach out to local deaf/hard-of-hearing and blind/visually-impaired institutions to inform them of our services and ask if we can provide maps (free of charge) to be placed in their lobbies.

2. Just like with the possibility of ASL-led tours and a Braille map, an audio tour will be considered after a year of production. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Mission District is a neighborhood with a family income below San Francisco's average. Due to this data, *MM* is not initially considering an audio tour, because a need for a mobile device and ample access to the internet (and unlimited data, as audio tours tend to take up a lot of space) would be necessary to take part in an

audio tour, and many of the residents might not be able to take part in this free activity in their own neighborhood because of low income and resources. It might be possible to make a solid connection with a community institution to house audio devices that are free and accessible to those who wish to take the audio tour, and therefore can participate if they do not have access to a mobile device. There is much to consider when developing an audio tour, especially when *MM* does not have a home base and relies heavily on the community. After a year, the Head of Tours can provide feedback from tour guides if people are asking about an audio tour, and the Project Manager and Advisory Committee can discuss the best route in developing one.

At the end of the day, *MM* is all about accessibility, affordability, representation, and community. After a year of trial runs and connecting with the people and institutions of the Mission, I hope to develop *MM* to provide resources for anyone who might have interest in what we have to offer.

I began this capstone with a quote: “What best serves the permanency of art is, perhaps paradoxically, unpredictable forms of display.” What I learned in analyzing the theory of street art is that this “permanency of art” is reflected entirely through the Mission murals and their effect on those who encounter or curate the content; in addition, thanks to technology, these pieces of art that are by nature ephemeral are further preserved in a virtual manner, remaining ever present on the Internet. While the debate on the preservation of street art includes cases of street artists that have become commodified in

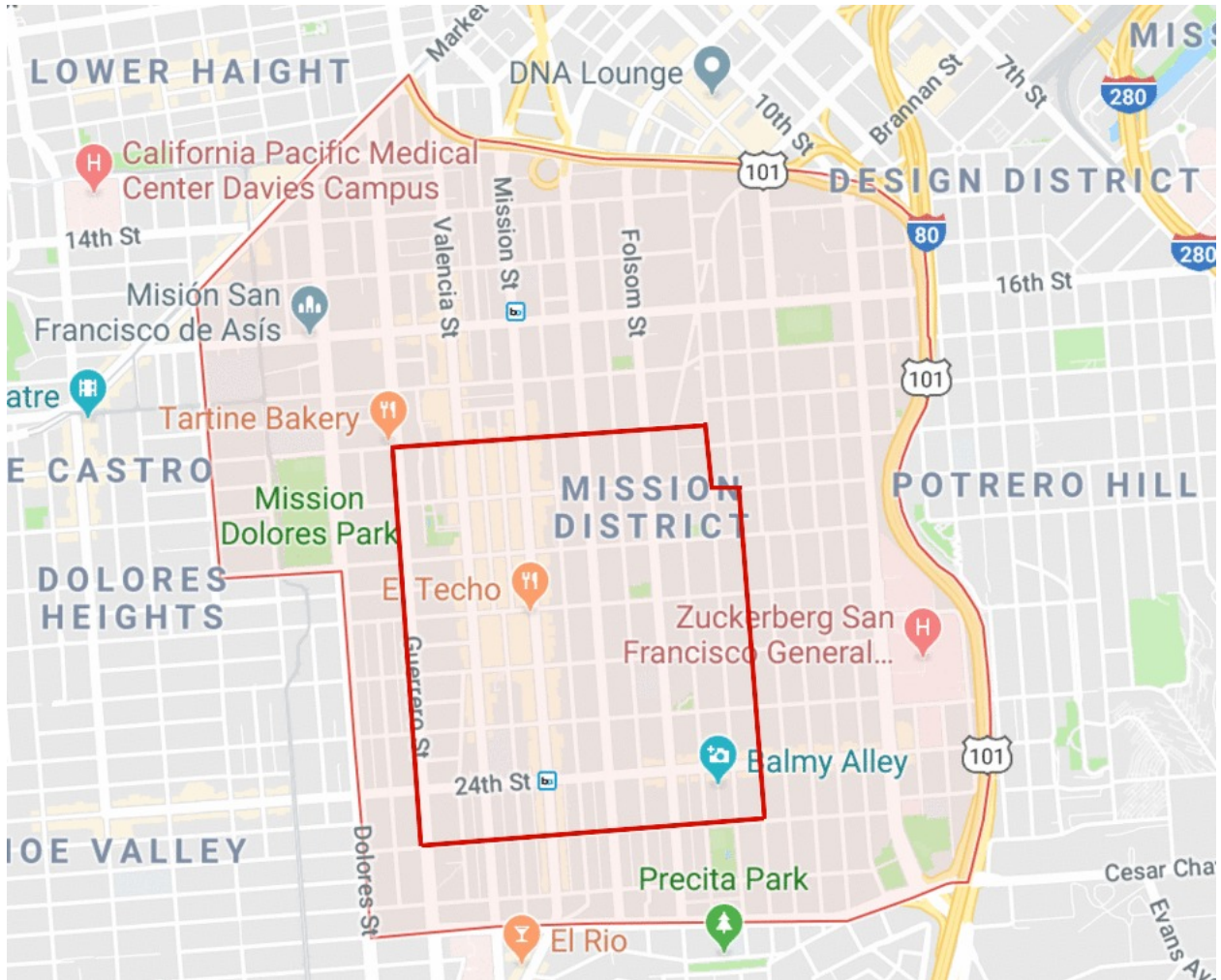


order to fit into a nonexistent art history canon (such as Banksy, Mr. Brainwash, Shepard Fairey, Stik, etc.), understanding the importance behind the street art of the Mission adds to the conversation as the disappearance of these murals is a symbolic metaphor for the depletion of the Latinx community.

Gentrification is heavily changing the Mission District, and I believe that *MM* can be a start towards the preservation of the history and values of this neighborhood. It is my hope that this project will not only be an important resource for the public, but a respected outlet for the Latinx community.

## Appendices

### Appendix A:



*Parameters for “Mapping the Mission” in bolded red outline: 18<sup>th</sup> Street to the North, Guerrero Street to the West, 25<sup>th</sup> Street to the South, and Bryant Street to the East.*

## Appendix B: Annotated Bibliography

Abel, Ernest L., and Barbara E. Buckley. *The Handwriting on the Wall: Toward a Sociology and Psychology of Graffiti*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1977.

Abel and Buckley have a Freudian approach when diving into the topic of the making of graffiti (one of the first chapters is titled “Freud, Smearing Impulses and Human Curiosity: the Why of Graffiti”). They focus on the aggressiveness and sexual content of graffiti – all made by men – constantly referring back to Freud’s development theories for explanations of marking public walls. It’s interesting to read 41 years after Abel and Buckley’s book has been published, to note the evolution of the understanding of psychology since the 70s. While evidently not so much on street art or the politics behind it, Abel and Buckley’s book add to the definition of graffiti and, within their chapter entitled “Female Graffiti,” they include insight from a female graffitiologist while shedding light on as to why they believe women find different outlets to express their intense emotions. Though a bit-outdated, this source gives insight into the mindset of academics during the time women were creating murals in the Mission.

Bacharach, Sondra. "Street Art and Consent." *The British Journal of Aesthetics*. 55, no. 4 (October 01, 2015): 481-95.

In her essay, Bacharach outlines the distinctions between public art, street art, and graffiti in order to provide a clear case for street art as an alternative way of experiencing the urban space surrounding us. She provides definitions of street art from other academics, most notably Nicholas Riggle, to show the different thoughts dispersed throughout the field and to ground her argument on the most important aspect of street art. Bacharach adds to the conversation by stating that street art is distinguishable from the other forms mentioned above by its aconsensuality – “consent that was not requested, not that it was requested and denied” – allowing to be used for an intended, activist purpose. Understanding Bacharach’s theory and applying it to my project allows for insight into the motives of certain artists and collectives who created murals during the times that they did, and to properly represent the urgency behind each mural’s message at the time of its creating and its effect on the Mission of today.

Birnbaum, Paula J. “Street Art: Critique, Commodification, Canonization.” *Revisioning the Contemporary Art Canon: Perspectives in a Globalizing World*, London: Routledge Publishing, 2017, pp. 154–170.

Birnbaum discusses street art exhibitions held within leading art institutions and case studies of two prolific street artists – Banksy and Swoon – to analyze how street art has come to enter the global art market, and the development of its canonization, as her title anticipates. In the case of the exhibitions, Birnbaum concludes that due to the controversies that arose in response to the exhibitions (focusing on *Art in the Streets* at MoCa in Los Angeles in 2011), street art has yet

to recognized by the “institutional art world”<sup>79</sup> as a canon of art. The absorption of street art by popular culture has created a strain on the discipline, while opening up other questions as to how street artists like Banksy and Swoon will be described in this realm of art. Birnbaum believes that once their work is translated to the museum setting, it becomes a commodity and will inevitably become neutral in comparison to its once urgent and politically charged nature. Birnbaum’s projection of street art from social critique to a commodity within the museum setting questions the very nature of street art and what the future holds. Examining this uncertain timeline puts the current murals of the Mission into perspective in terms of the messages the murals convey to the public.

Chaffee, Lyman G. *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993.

Chaffee’s main thesis for studying street art is that in many countries, collectives and governments use it as a means of informing and persuading the public. He goes on to provide what he believes to be the characteristics of street art, along with motivating factors to use street art as a mode of communication. Chaffee uses four Hispanic case studies – Spain, the Basque Country, Argentina, and Brazil – to assess the relevance of street art as political expression by using a historical, sociopolitical approach. Despite dedicating most of the book to these case studies, Chaffee ends by explaining why street art will continue to be used as a means of disseminating information to the public despite living in an age of high technology, providing six key factors to back his research. Chaffee’s book provides insight as to why street art is utilized that is parallel to that of the Mission: often used by communities who, for one reason or another, do not have access to technology in the high tech society we live in; it’s a cheaper means of dispersing information than most; and in a historical context, street art has traditionally been used as a means of communication in the Hispanic world.

Cordova, Cary. *The Heart of the Mission: Latino Art and Politics in San Francisco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.

Cordova hones in on the fact that the Mission does not, nor ever has, represented a single Latinx identity. She examines the Latinx arts movement – the Mission Renaissance – from the late 1960s to the 1990s, linking the creation of art with politics and other major events that, for instance, instigated the appearance of murals in the 70s. Chapter 3, specifically, defines “Raza” and the Mission’s implementation of the word, as well as offers a cohesive history of collectives that stemmed from the Chicano movement of the late 60s (some are presently active). As one of the most comprehensive books dedicated to the history – and the heart – of the Mission, Cordova’s book is an excellent source in understanding the major factors that developed the community and the area to how it stands today.

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<sup>79</sup> Birnbaum, “Street Art...,” 157.

Flores, Lori A. "Seeing Through Murals: The Future of Latino San Francisco." Boom California. March 6, 2017.

Flores maps out Latinx presence in San Francisco and the multiple types of displacement their community has felt as early as 1875. She tracks the rise and (current) fall of Latinx population in the Mission, pointing out key moments, such as the 1989 earthquake and the tech boom of the late 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries adding to these moments of displacement. Despite it seeming like the city wanted to keep pushing out their Latinx population, this community is resilient and speaks to their injustices through the murals, which launched in the 70s in response to the Chicano Civil Rights Movement and multiple civil wars in Latin America. Flores' overarching message is that "[the defense of] murals has become shorthand for defending Latinxs' presence, diversity, and deep history in the Mission." Murals are imminently a part of the history of the Mission, and the community coming together to protect these pieces of street art can be considered an act of resilience against what artist Rene Yañez has called "cultural eviction." This source hits right at home, pulling from newspaper articles on gentrification and the decrease of San Francisco's Latinx population. Not only is a thorough history provided, especially pertaining as to *why* murals matter, but Flores explains the interconnectedness of the community and the murals that seem to adorn every building of the Mission.

Gleaton, Kristina Marie. "Power to the People: Street Art as an Agency for Change." Master's thesis, University of Minnesota, 2012.

In her MLS thesis, Gleaton explores the development of street art based on its placement in society, beginning with the origins of graffiti in the mid-1960s. She focuses on how street art can be a method for instigating public action and as a means of empowerment to the people (usually directed towards the community of the neighborhood). Gleaton argues that street art draws in active participants to help redefine the public space to make it one's own, and while many believe that the commercialization of street art weakens its message, Gleaton views it as a contribution to street art's current power. Gleaton's contesting thoughts provides the other opinion compared with a majority of my sources that do not conflict with one another. These contradicting ideas allow for my research to be viewed from all sides and aspects when considering the placement of murals and their intended audience.

Hooper, Bernadette C. *San Francisco's Mission District*. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2006.

Hooper has many books dedicated to the different neighborhoods of San Francisco – what makes this book more of a personal project for Hooper is that she is a Mission native and gets to tell the history of her neighborhood. Much of the book is filled with photographs donated from the likes of the California Historical Society to families who are now into their 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> generation in the

Mission. Getting a look into the origins of San Francisco's first established neighborhood transports the reader back to a time when the streets weren't packed tight, and no one would believe what the Mission is like today. This history and access to moments captured that would not be considered momentous, but a part of the livelihood of the Mission, is important to my project to maintain historical accuracy and be able to correctly represent the intricacies of what makes the Mission so unique.

Howell, Ocean. *Making the Mission: Planning and Ethnicity in San Francisco*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015.

Howell shows just how independent and capable residents of the Mission are by laying out the events following the 1906 earthquake by first, throwing away the citywide development plan and announcing that they'd be the ones in charge of rebuilding their neighborhood, and then continuing to claim their right to plan everything out – from city blocks to politics – by themselves. He provides a historical perspective of how the Mission is able to meet externally motivated changes with internally-operated resistance, and how far back the fights against gentrification are rooted within a neighborhood and its city. Howell shows just how the Mission has felt like a separate city within a city, a mentality that is still shared by long-time residents. This development, not just of the Mission but how the people and institutions of the Mission have influenced the development of San Francisco, is important to my project because every addition since the once-Native Ohlone people populated the land plays into the character of the Mission.

Irvine, Martin. "The Work on the Street: Street Art and Visual Culture." In *The Handbook of Visual Culture*, edited by Berry Sandwell and Ian Heywood, 235-78. London and New York: Berg, 2012.

Irvine discusses the importance of street art's redefining of visual culture. He brings in the disagreements pertaining to this medium, that's position within the institutionalized art world remains unclear; rather than arguing against them, Irvine uses them to shape the context of street art as a "connecting node" of various disciplinaries and domains within society. Irvine does insist that we must expand these normalized regimes that control the public, and by doing so we can reconfigure societal norms to form a new way of controlling what is being seen and represented within our communities. Irvine's statements ring true to the motivation of the muralists of the Mission, in that despite living in a technologically-overridden society, this traditional art form transcends the boundaries of the Internet to send a message far and wide.

Jacoby, Annice. *Street Art San Francisco: Mission Muralismo*. New York: Abrams, 2009.

Jacoby brings together around 500 photographs of over 3 decades of street art in the Mission. She captures the energy and emotion behind the art that pays tribute to the past while envisioning a better future (or a likely scenario based on current events – think Juana Alicia’s 1993 *Las lechugureas/The Lettuce Pickers*). In collaboration with Precita Eyes, this book is not just about the community murals, but how the community murals live within a space of mixed messaging and intention, that reflects directly onto the community. This collection exemplifies the ever-changing urban landscape I am trying to connect with the history of the Mission’s people and movements.

Lefebvre, Henri, Robert Bononno, and Neil Smith. *The Urban Revolution*. Minneapolis; London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.

In this translated version of Lefebvre’s classic text, he discusses the urbanization of society, dedicating much of the book to “the urban” rather than referring to a city of sorts. This source is important when it comes to understanding how becoming silent users within public spaces can transform our surroundings radically. Lefebvre criticizes urbanization as a means to create repressive, neutral spaces, with passivity of the user playing a key role in developing, or therefore preventing the development of, their city.

In many of the scholarly articles I have read, Lefebvre has been quoted or paraphrased when defining and understanding what characterizes an urban space, and our association with such spaces. This source adds value to my project as he seems to be the go-to read on the development of cities, and how active users are in a public space determines the role of that space in the community.

Molnár, Virág. "Street Art and the Changing Urban Public Sphere." *Public Culture*, 82nd ser., 29, no. 2 (May 1, 2017): 385-414.

Molnár brings in two questions that are probably the biggest in the discussion of street art: what is public space, and who has the right to shape and utilize this space? The two main ideas Molnár argues in his essay are that street art plays an important role in contemporary developments of the public sphere, and its popularity is largely due to the Web 2.0 revolution, making it extremely easy to capture these ephemera and disperse worldwide. He insists, though, that despite fundamentally changing the preservation of street art, the circulation of these images pulls focus towards a fuller topic: the future of a city, and its potential to grow creatively, culturally, economically, and technologically. In evaluating the Mission murals to see how they impact their community, Molnár’s ideas will be important to consider in the areas of defining the future of this street art, and its intended and actual effect.

Phillips, Andrea, Heidi Bale Amundsen, Gerd Elise Mørland, Reesa Greenberg, T.J Demos, Cecilia Sjöholm, and Ekaterina Degot. *Curating and Politics Beyond the Curator: Initial Reflections*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2015.

The essays in this book focus on curatorial politics in which the “exhibition-maker” has little to no control over, with perspectives of the individual curator that reveal the level of these politics. For instance, Sjöholm’s essay, *Beyond the Era of the Object: Towards an Aesthetics of Anti-Commodification*, is practically the antithesis of Elaine Gurian’s opinion on object-centricity, trying to find a way to avoid the commodification of an item to serve the value of a collective force. Sjöholm’s conclusion is that “what best serves the permanency of art is...unpredictable forms of display.”<sup>80</sup> The academics that contributed to this collection of essays and the viewpoints and experiences they provide add to the conversation on how to represent a collective voice, especially when you might not be a part of that voice, which will come in handy as I prepare a publically accessible tour throughout the Mission.

Reilly, Maura, and Lucy R. Lippard. *Curatorial Activism: Towards an Ethic of Curating*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2018.

Reilly thematically divides this book into sections on feminism, race, and sexuality, using exhibitions that pioneered the mindset that new approaches are always possible. “Curatorial Activism” is a term she decided upon “to designate the practice of organizing art exhibitions with the principle aim of ensuring that certain constituencies of artists are no longer ghettoized or excluded from the master narratives of art.”<sup>81</sup> A thesis that propels the content of this book is that the voice of the art world is dominated by the Western white male, with little room for anyone else to add to the conversation without struggle. Addressing discrimination is a driving force behind the content of the book, with the solution (thus far) is that there are in fact other approaches to curating than what has been done in the textbook past. I will be working with people and materials that are not a part of my culture, nor did I have the same struggles as historically Latinx communities have gone through, so learning from previous examples dealing with similar topics can aid my thought process as well as how I interact with interviewees.

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<sup>80</sup> Sjöholm, Cecilia. "Beyond the Era of the Object..." 106.

<sup>81</sup> Reilly, Maura. "What Is Curatorial Activism?" ARTnews, November 7, 2017.



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