

*Comprehensive Evaluation of Los Angeles' Historic Preservation Policy & Equity of
Culturally-Representative Monuments*



Ian Zunt
Occidental College // Senior Comprehensive Project, 2020
Department of Urban & Environmental Policy

ABSTRACT

Historic-cultural sites and monuments have always maintained a unique centrality within our cities, often yielding the power to connect people with their spaces and communities. Because of their importance, cultural sites are often both controversial and uplifting to different histories within society, and therefore their role in representation must be frequently analyzed and reformed. This study, with a focus on Los Angeles' Historic-Cultural Site designation program, aims to analyze Los Angeles' current status of monumentality and how they represent, or fail to represent, the cultural diversity that is prevalent within the city's population. The research question is as follows: ***How does the current Los Angeles historic-cultural designation policy impact iconic historic-cultural sites within the city, and how can it be adapted to further guide development of such sites while deepening our city's representation of its diverse cultural history?*** In order to pursue answers to this question, this study relies on the perspectives of three distinct groups of interviewees: those involved with urban design and art theory, those involved with community groups in protecting historically and culturally important sites, and those who work professionally alongside the city's preservation efforts. With a synthesis of this range of perspectives, the study hopes to gain a deep perspective on the current state of Los Angeles' preservation and representation of its diversity through monumentality. The findings, while diverse in their own ways, point toward a flawed state of representation, along with many critiques on how to improve our preservationist systems.

Because of the unfortunate context that is the COVID-19 Pandemic, in which our senior comprehensive projects are being conducted, many of my intended interviews were unable to be seen through, and I am forced to rely on less data than I would otherwise hope.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Introduction.....	4
- Literature Review.....	5
- Background.....	10
- Methods.....	18
- Findings & Analysis.....	19
- Recommendations.....	42
- References.....	44
- Appendix.....	48

INTRODUCTION

“In its oldest and most original sense a monument is a work of man erected for the specific purpose of keeping particular human deeds or destinies alive and present... in the consciousness of the future generations”. Through this phrase, from Alison Riegl’s “The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin”, the author introduces the important role that monumentality maintains in our society. These spaces, often based in historic-cultural significance - be that at the time of design or assigned after their value was realized with age - are key parts of a city’s identity, existing as constant reminders of the worlds that left them behind. The value of monumentality and the memory that is inherently tied to physical spaces has been recognized throughout time, and continues to be recognized around the world today. The *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) dedicates strong effort to conservation and preservation of cultural and historical heritage through protection of sites world-wide. In a statement about their “World Heritage” philosophy, UNESCO states that “Heritage is our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration” (“World Heritage List”, n.d.). This beautifully mimics the famous phrase from Riegl, above. The alignment between art historians and international governmental agencies speaks to the weight these spaces carry in our societies today, and the importance of our relations to them in the future.

UNESCO's international preservation efforts are imitated by comparatively smaller communities, like the city of Los Angeles, in order to sustain the identity of the metropolis and all of its overlapping cultures and histories. Los Angeles's *Office of Historic Resources* functions to protect so-called "historic-cultural sites" from future disturbance or destruction, establishing policy that allows individuals and groups to defend the cultural line of consciousness that translates through these spaces. Unquestionably, Los Angeles has been branded as the city of the entertainment industry- film, fashion, art- and its monumentality is arguably representative of this, leading to a lack in portrayal of the much deeper cultural diversity for which Los Angeles could be known. Iconic sites like the Hollywood Sign or the Griffith Park Observatory capture the minds of exterior perspectives and effectually serve as monuments to a specific Los Angeles that is arguably not the most accurate depiction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

IMPORTANCE OF MONUMENTALITY

The focus on public monuments as spaces of stored historical and cultural pasts has gained more and more traction in our public mindset, most contemporarily taking the form of the removal of offensive monuments rooted in the ugly American history of colonialism and racial oppression. Since prehistoric times, public monuments have reserved spaces for recognition and honor, an accepted precedent to which we must hold today's monuments. In her piece, "The Power of Place: A Proposal for Los Angeles", author Dolores Hayden introduces the idea of a multi-ethnic tour in order to explore Los Angeles through a deeper historic-cultural lens. Here, the author is articulating the importance of these sites as tools for understanding the cultural history of our space. Hayden continues, arguing that "it is also possible to celebrate the historical experience of ethnic minorities and women, often underrepresented in architectural preservation"

further expressing the idea that monumentality and preservation have distinct roles in a city's representation of its full history (Hayden, 1988). Parallel ideologies regarding the importance of representative spaces have permeated journals around the world, including the *Journal of Architectural Education*, in which Hayden makes another appearance. Here, the author expresses this idea of a so-called "theory of place" that develops through historical research and connections to current-day situations. Hayden argues that this development has the power to transform our urban identities, centering preservation and future culturally-oriented design at its heart. While this understanding of the impact of preserved historic-cultural spaces and monuments resurfaces through the critical eye of social equality, we face an interesting concept of equity within public spaces through the discussion of representation and its relationship to monumentality.

DEFINING SUSTAINABILITY - ECOLOGICAL & SOCIAL

As the concept of diversity, and through it the importance of contextuality of design, necessitates definition, so too does the concept of sustainability in both its ecological and sociological meanings. Author Elizabeth Meyer comes in with a widely accepted definition that "sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Meyer, 2008). Other authors echo this concept, stating that "Sustainable development aims to achieve the optimum use of local resources, while obtaining and maintaining strong local and external relations ('social capital')" (Gulumser, Baycan, Nijkamp, 2009). These authors also tie these definitions of sustainability back to a more social sense, in which we see the importance of cultural context again articulated: "The sustainability of settlements is determined not only by local ecological quality or availability of green spaces, but also by a wide array of architectural and heritage

parameters that contribute to local quality of life and the beauty/attractiveness of settlements in both rural and urbanized areas” (Gulumser, Baycan, Nijkamp, 2009). This idea of historic and cultural significance translated through visual aspects of a city relates directly to historic-cultural landmarks, inherently tying these sites to social sustainability. While sustainability gains traction in the public consciousness as a parameter of design, it is important that we understand it in all of its dynamism, from ecological resource conservation to social and cultural depth.

THE ROLE OF PRESERVATION IN SUSTAINABILITY

Author Brent Toderian writes about the way that beautiful spaces have deep roots in the lived human experience. In his essay, “Great Cities Need Beauty”, the author explains that “good cities need infrastructure, efficiency and economic activity, and smart cities give equally strong attention to sustainability, arts and culture, and social compassion” (Toderian, 2005). Here, the author is deepening the definition of sustainability from that of solely ecological design and functionality, adding an appended focus on the impactfulness of humanity and cultural input in city design. Sustainability, Toderian argues, is a multi-faceted concept that has everything to do with the lived experience of the population, largely impacted by our designed spaces and the context they add to our lives.

Authors Forte and Fusco Girard, in their piece “Creativity and New Architectural Assets: the Complex Value of Beauty”, tie together the ideas of beauty and historic-cultural contextuality. The authors state that “Beauty is a subjective soft value that promotes also many objective (hard) impacts” (Forte & Fusco Girard, 2010). The authors go on, noting the importance of cultural contextuality of design, stating that “Beauty exists when it is possible to establish a strong and deep relation between an immaterial idea and a material reality in which we identify these relations” (2010). The authors further express this concept of the necessity of

contextuality, arguing that architects must not neglect the “cultural echo” that comes from a dialogue with a structure’s surrounding context, as contextuality essentially “contributes to the urban resilience” of a space (2010). Through these authors, the idea of sustainable design and resilience is pushed deeper, this time with regard to the importance of considering the historical and cultural contexts in which a space is designed, relating directly to monumentality.

Other authors offer adjacent ideologies regarding beauty and cultural spaces. While speaking to the benefits of investment in thoughtful city design, Richard Florida draws a line between governmental roles and development and protection of culturally-significant spaces. He first makes the point that beauty often comes naturally in ways of physical landscapes and climates, but then he also states that “beautiful places do not just occur naturally: They are the product of public policy and investment” (Florida, 2019). Continuing, the author articulates that “cities can and do make themselves more beautiful-- and thus more attractive to educated and affluent people-- by investing in parks and protecting landmarks and historic spaces” (2019). Here is where the author delivers the overarching point that contextual and preservative design have a space in governmental policy, and that a lack of attention to purposeful beauty and cultural representation translates to an ignorance about many concepts that we know contribute to great cities.

The importance of contextuality is not solely based upon the appeal of a city, but also holds deep roots in the relationship between social sustainability and preservation of cultural history. In his piece, “The Links Between Historic Preservation and Sustainability: An Urbanist’s Perspective”, John C. Keene articulates, as the title states, his professional perspective on the inherent connection between preservation and cultural sustainability. Keene argues that “the field

of concern for us can be conceived of as the intersection of... the culture and social institutions through which our values are transmitted from one generation to the next [and]... the built environment that embodies the social and aesthetic traditions of the past” (Keene, 2001).

Through Keene’s widely-accepted perspective, the necessary centrality of social sustainability within preservationist efforts is explicated. Keene continues, describing the historic preservation and cultural conservationist movements, making the argument that these movements “can be seen as... efforts that seek to maintain variety and difference in both the built environment of buildings and places and the cultural environment of values as they are reflected in distinct societies and neighborhoods” (2001). Here, Keene expresses the importance of diversity and variety within our built environments as tenets of sustainability. While looking at the historical and cultural representation within Los Angeles, it is important to explore the intersection between diversity, sustainability, and environmental design.

Author Setha M. Low, former president of the American Anthropological Association, continues this train of thought in her “Social Sustainability: People, History, and Values”. Low starts off her piece by defining social sustainability, stating that it is “a subset of cultural sustainability; it includes the maintenance and preservation of social relations and meanings that reinforce cultural systems”. She continues on, arguing that “specifically, [social sustainability] refers to maintaining and enhancing the diverse histories, values, and relationships of contemporary populations” (Low, 2001), directing her views toward this idea of “place identity” in which we have a spatial consciousness that connects us to our cultural histories. Following this line of identity through space, Low states that “cultural conservation and sustainability require place preservation. This rather obvious point is crucial when dealing with the material

environment and issues of cultural representation at heritage sites”, tying identity into equality of representation (2001). Over a 10 year study, Low has also worked to express why this equal representation deserves our attention, finding multiple reasons: the first being that “if people are not represented in historical national parks and monuments and, more importantly, if their histories are erased, they will not use the park”, along with the finding that “symbolic ways of communicating cultural meaning are an important dimension of place attachment that can be fostered to promote cultural diversity” (2001). Through this, Low beautifully articulates the concrete implications of physical representation and the societal threats if cultural sites and their histories undergo erasure.

Monuments function as physical representations of the histories and cultures that have created our societies, and they play an essential role in forming a sense of place consciousness. Diversity and sustainability are inextricably linked to preservation and equal representation, and therefore attention must be given to the ways by which Los Angeles is represented. While the government of Los Angeles attempts to protect historic-cultural sites, there is a clear lack of representation of the city’s deep cultural diversity, and with that comes an opportunity to reevaluate the dominative industry-oriented consciousness of Los Angeles as opposed to a deeper, more authentic cultural representation. This leads me to my evaluative research question of *how does current LA historic-cultural designation policy impact iconic historic-cultural sites within the city, and how can it be adapted to further guide development of such sites while deepening our city’s representation of its diverse cultural history?*

BACKGROUND

HISTORIC-CULTURAL SITE DESIGNATION IN LOS ANGELES

The city of Los Angeles, though it lacks a serious Land Acknowledgement Policy that many other major metropolitan cities offer, does currently have some policy in place regarding historic-cultural sites. These policies, which fall under the work of the *Historic Cultural Commission*, function within our city to recognize and protect “Los Angeles’ most significant and cherished historic resources” (“Historic-Cultural Monuments”, n.d.). The *Cultural Heritage Commission* is a branch of the *Office of Historic Resources* and maintains a membership of five mayoral-appointed individuals, designating over 1,000 Historic-Cultural Monuments since the commission’s inception in 1962 as part of The City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance (“Historic-Cultural Monuments”, n.d.).

Essentially, designation of sites through the *Cultural Heritage Commission* is used to postpone or prohibit demolition or “substantial alteration” to the space in order to protect it and its cultural memory from development or damage. Applicants for formal designation must follow an 11-step process that goes through the *Office of Historic Resources*, then to the *Cultural Heritage Commission* if primary requisites are met, then, if the nomination is approved of, it eventually moves on to City Council and its *Planning and Land Use Management Committee* (PLUM). Through this lengthy and detailed process, communities are able to protect heritage sites from exterior forces and help fight for the identity captured in these spaces.

Essentially, the *Cultural Heritage Commission* designates spaces as historically and culturally important as having a “special aesthetic, architectural, or engineering interest or value of a historic nature” (“Historic-Cultural Monuments”, n.d.). An application for historic-cultural designation must also meet at least one of these criteria: the space is identified with important

events or exemplifies contributions to cultural, economic, or social contextual history; the site is connected to historic personages or; the site maintains stylistic character of a specific period, or represents the genius of an influential individual” (“Historic-Cultural Monuments”, n.d.).

The *Office of Historic Resources* acknowledges many benefits to designating a site as historic and culturally significant. Of these benefits, there are many incentives in place to encourage designation and investment in these spaces. One of these incentives comes in monetary form, as preserved sites are able to abate taxes, while studies have shown that property values are expected to rise with designation. There are also many programs in place that support designated sites in adapting to new building requirements and energy efficiency standards, allowing these spaces to extend their lifespans in ever-changing contexts (“Preservation Incentives, n.d.). The benefits of historic-cultural designation speak to the importance of equitable investment in diverse, culturally representative monuments.

LOS ANGELES PLANNING POLICY - PERSPECTIVES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

The Los Angeles Department of City Planning also has interesting and relevant guidelines that relate directly to preservation and historic-cultural maintenance of specific areas. These areas, of which there are 35, are deemed *Historic Preservation Overlay Zones* (HPOZ) that function as additional filters that add onto any existing building code. Each HPOZ has a board that meets twice monthly to discuss new construction proposals, essentially working together to identify any development that might not maintain the space’s identity and historic character. All 7 of the board members are appointed by the HPOZ board itself, the mayor, the Cultural Heritage Commission, and the City Councilmember of the aligned district, each functioning to provide “technical expertise and guidance” (“Local Historic Districts, n.d.).

Through the HPOZ program, the city is able to implement additional control over the planning process of new development, taking into account an increased number of perspectives.

WORKING DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

While discussing the populations that make up Los Angeles, it is important to first settle upon a well-rounded definition of the concept of diversity. Diversity is a fundamental quality of any population, based upon variance of a group made up of dissimilar identities. Diversity can translate into the contexts of ethnography, nationality, gender and sexual orientation, or any other background that is shown to have a disparate entity from others around it. Many accepted dictionaries define diversity as a trait based in variance (“Diverse: Definition of Diverse by Lexico”, n.d.; “Diverse”, n.d.; “DIVERSE: Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary”, n.d.). While this piece may focus on representational forms of ethnic-cultural diversity, it can also be applied to any group that adds to the bricolage identity of Los Angeles.

LOS ANGELEAN CULTURAL & ETHNIC DIVERSITY

The deep cultural diversity of Los Angeles comes as no surprise to any resident of the city. As a major metropolis situated in the first U.S. county to reach 10 million residents, Los Angeles is home to individuals from more than 140 countries with 224 identifiably different languages. The city has even been shown not to have a racial majority, further emphasizing the diversity that underlies every part of the city (“Discover Los Angeles, n.d.), a fact that is arguably ignored by most exterior perspectives. The battle against this lack of attention given to Los Angeles’ cultural diversity is well worth fighting as it effectively erases the historical and current populations that form what we know of the city today.

Many authors emphasize the diversity of the city within the larger context of the state of California. A study by WalletHub, a major economic analyst, ranked the most-diverse top five

cities of the US as falling within California, with Los Angeles ranking first. Through this ranking based largely on ethnic-racial diversity, the study found that Los Angeles has the “largest communities outside their home countries...: Korea, Iran, Thailand, Mexico, El Salvador... Armenia” and many others (Wells, 2016), further emphasizing the great ethnic and cultural diversity that courses through the city.

Other studies have also analyzed the diversity of the metropolis, again finding an unprecedented range of populations. The Los Angeles Times’ “Diversity Index” effectively measures ethnic diversity within the 265 neighborhoods of Los Angeles, measuring “the probability that any two residents, chosen at random, would be of different ethnicities” (n.d.). Essentially, 148 of Los Angeles’ neighborhoods were found to have residents from two or more ethnic groups, while only 117 showed more homogeneous populations (“Los Angeles Diversity Index, n.d.).

While considering the cultural and historical diversity of Los Angeles, it is incredibly important to look back at the city before it was founded as the metropolis we know it as today, allowing us to also look at how it could have been and, in some aspects, perhaps how it should be. Before Spanish settlement, the land that Los Angeles county sits upon was populated by multiple indigenous groups. The spaces we know as Los Angeles were an overlapping region between the Tongva, Chumash, and Tataviam peoples, each with distinct cultures but with arguable influence over each other (“Los Angeles Almanac, n.d.). Acknowledging this part of Los Angeles’ history, pre-arrival of the Spanish in 1781, is central to our understanding of the city today and our understanding moving forward into the future. Los Angeles’ history has been

eclipsed by European colonialism, and therefore effort must be made in order to recall a multi-tribal consciousness to add to our understanding of the city's diversity.

As it is important to explore and discuss ethno-racial history of our land, it is also important to bring social diversity into the conversation regarding Los Angeles' diverse population. LGBTQ+ populations have long maintained a large role in the city: the *Los Angeles Conservancy* states that the "history of LGBTQ spaces in Los Angeles is as diverse and complex as the people who make up this unique community" ("History of LGBTQ Los Angeles", n.d.). The conservation non-profit continues, stating that LGBTQ+ acceptance has not always been the way we may see it in the city today, and that "For decades, non-heteronormative behavior in Los Angeles was either illegal or cause for investigation", further articulating the oppression that has faced queer people in this city for years (n.d.). After the second World War, the queer population has seen a shift in acceptance and positive visibility, arguably from the presence of the entertainment industry (n.d.). This shift has had large effect on the spaces that were established by queer populations as they have lost popularity among the queer community while gaining popularity among others (n.d.). LGBTQ+ people have helped shape Los Angeles in numerous ways, and therefore their existence must be acknowledged as adding to the incredible diversity the city sees today, much in the same way that ethnic-cultural communities must be.

It is easy to see that Los Angeles has a profound, rich history in many contexts, creating the bricolage city that we know today. While considering any sort of representative spaces or policy that affects the representation of this city, it is crucial to look at its diversity and history of populations. Without this background, it is impossible to escape erasure and misrepresentation of what it really means to be a Los Angeleno.

INCOMPLETE REPRESENTATION - THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN & GRIFFITH OBSERVATORY

In pursuit of a deeper understanding of Los Angeles' representation of cultural diversity through monuments and public spaces, I find it important to look at the current symbols most often associated with the city. One of the most prominent symbols of Los Angeles is the Hollywood Sign that perches high on the hillside of Mount Lee, overlooking the city and visible from nearly all angles. The sign, once reading "HOLLYWOODLAND" in its 45-foot-tall block lettering was constructed in 1923 as an advertisement for Herry Chandler's *Hollywoodland* Real Estate development ("A Star is Born: 1923", 2017). Originally constructed to exist for only two years, the Hollywood Sign gained so much appreciation that it has now lasted nearly eight decades. The organization that maintains the sign states that "The Hollywood Sign was... a high-profile beacon... for the fast growing Los Angeles metropolis" (2017). Since its inception, the Hollywood Sign has served as a symbol of the growing city, and eventually of the cinematic scene that would come to dominate the world's understanding of Los Angeles. Author Leo Braudy, in his "The Hollywood Sign: Fantasy and Reality of an American Icon", articulates this perfectly, calling it "a landmark whose white block letters are familiar around the world as the prime symbol of the movies" (2011, p. 4). Here, we see that the landmark has created an overwhelming sense of place that guides the world's consciousness of the metropolis. Braudy continues, stating that "The Hollywood Sign gathers its meanings from where it is placed and what people think of it, more than what it is in any intrinsic way" (2011, p. 7). Through this, Braudy is continuing on to address the privilege of visibility held by the sign and the inherent presence it is able to maintain due to this, further empowering it as an emblem of Los Angeles while representing the film industry.

The Hollywood Sign is not the only outstanding symbol of Los Angeles that may mislead Los Angelean representation. Another icon of the city is the Griffith Park Observatory that dominates the views surrounding Griffith Park. The park was donated to the city of Los Angeles in 1896 by Colonel Griffith J. Griffith after being privatized by the Spanish Land Grant, “Rancho Los Feliz”. After Griffith’s death, the land became a public space as Griffith had intended, as “a place for recreation and rest for the masses, a resort for the rank and file, for the plain people” (“Griffith Park”, n.d.). The Griffith Observatory foundation is quoted, speaking to the monumentality of the space, saying that “Griffith Park stands today as a monument to the dedicated vision of one man— Griffith Jenkins Griffith” (n.d.). The foundation continues, stating that “The Observatory is a Los Angeles landmark and worldwide tourist destination for over a million visitors a year” (n.d.), deepening this idea of the iconic space the observatory holds in the city, while also situated upon the hills that were once seized by the Spanish. As a monument to scientific exploration and, with that, the dominative role of Los Angeles in the future, we must ask if the Griffith Observatory functionally represents an accurate depiction of our city, and why this conceptual building is able to dominate our perception of Los Angeles.

In no way does the historical discussion of the Hollywood Sign and Griffith Observatory mean to suggest that these spaces do not carry important roles in our city or that they do not have value - their exploration here is meant to function as exemplary of the common representation of Los Angeles that dominates our spatial consciousness, without fully representing any deeper cultural perspective that arguably deserves representation. While these sites sit upon the hillsides that dictate the form of Los Angeles, they do hold higher regard in the public eye and lead us to

the question of how we can increase representation of the diversity of Los Angeles in similar ways.

Through the background information on the current policies in place to protect historic sites, the formulation of a well-rounded definition of diversity in the Los Angelean context, and a brief discussion on the misleading representation of the city, this research has footing in the current reality in which Los Angeles' monuments and cultural sites exist. This understanding is central to the following discussion on the sustainability of city design and the overlap with heritage preservation, leading to an exploration of Los Angeles' monumental representation and how policy can adapt to guide a more accurate portrayal.

METHODS

In an attempt to gain a deeper, well-situated understanding of the complexities of urban design, I plan to conduct comprehensive interviews. My interviews will be taken from a broad variety of professionals in order to attain a well-rounded conceptualization of the dynamic between Los Angeles' historic-cultural designation policy and the city's ethnic-cultural history. These individuals will function as representatives from the architectural design field, the Los Angeles city planning department, other professionals from fields with regard to urban sustainability, as well as individuals involved with sites deemed historically and culturally important to the city. Through these interviews I hope to realize a deep understanding of the intersections of viewpoints, while gaining a sense of how these varied perspectives overlap when it comes to the intricate relationship city planning has with potential cultural sites that represent Los Angeles.

I intend for my research to serve the purpose of developing dialogue between public policy professionals and the greater public that interacts with these cultural spaces, as well as to document an exploration of where the line could be drawn between restrictive developmental policy and culturally-significant spaces.

As for my intended audience, I hope to reach professionals involved with city planning and historic-cultural sites, as well as architects and individuals concerned with the future branding of Los Angeles as a city and cultural hub.

I do not expect to need a large budget for this research, and do not believe it necessary to apply for funding. As I pursue interviews, I may need to provide incentives for time spent and to maintain strong, positive relations post-interview. These costs could summate to approximately \$200 if I provide 10 interviewees with gifts of \$10 value. I have filed an IRB report, which has been approved to ensure ethical conduct of research, and I plan to receive positive written affirmation from each individual interviewed.

My interview questions are listed in the Appendix, below.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The findings of this comprehensive analysis are divided into three sections to compare and contrast varied perspectives. Primarily, the analysis will synthesize the professional perspectives of individuals involved with architectural and urban design theory, functioning to set a robust foundation on top of which to consider others' views. In addition to the outlooks of design professionals, it is also critical to rely heavily on the perspectives of individuals and communities involved with cultural sites, comparing them to the viewpoints of individuals

concerned with public policies that affect historic cultural sites. The goal is to pursue a clear juxtaposition between these three categories of perspectives to supply effective recommendations that can bridge any barriers along the path to identity protection.

PERSPECTIVES OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH ARCHITECTURE, URBAN DESIGN & THEORY

In a study that relies so heavily on social experience and qualitative research, it is important to attempt to ground the work in spatial design theory and cultural studies. To lay this central foundation, we will rely on the perspectives of two individuals in the hopes that they can substantially represent the larger thoughts of different but overlapping fields. This study will compare and contrast the perceptions of William Davis, a current Art & Art History professor at Occidental College and pursuant of a PhD in Architecture at University of California, Los Angeles, and Sandra de la Loza, who currently sits as the Artist in Residence with Los Angeles County's Department of Parks and Recreation, where she is working to formulate stronger arts programming for the public sector. Davis will function as a representative of the larger design world, lending insight into the processes and perspectives of art historians and contemporary designers, while de la Loza will function to represent a Los Angelean perspective from the world of arts advocacy.

There were many notable similarities between these two professionals, made clear within the first few minutes of our interviews, in which they responded to the question "how do you view the role of monuments in our city?". Both responded by first attempting to define what constitutes monumentality and how we can further expand the term. Davis notes that "the problem with the word is that it is used to describe something that sticks out of the ground, is fairly large and has text on it that tells the viewer what to think about. It is a very distilled and

prescribed word” (Davis, 2020). He continues, tying the term into a Los Angelean context, stating that “many of the monuments in Los Angeles already do not fit into this preconceived notion of what a monument is” (Davis, 2020). De la Loza shares her aligned insight, stating that “traditionally, monuments are plaques, statues, fountains, benches - there are many types and forms of monuments [and that] oftentimes, monuments are officially sanctioned” (de la Loza, 2020). She then deepens this understanding beyond the institutionalized conception, showing her idealized definition that “monuments can be gardens... pathways. Monuments don’t have to be dead objects with a fixed narrative telling us what happened in that event, but they can be active, living sites... [that] continue the legacy of someone or a group’s work that we are inspired by and grow from” (de la Loza, 2020). Through this, de la Loza is expressing a non-traditional conception of monumentality that affords much more room for alternative spaces which, as she argues, deserve just as much respect and protection. Again, we see a shared sentiment, as Davis also argues that “for any city, monuments should, in theory, be open to interpretation, open to perspectives, because... something that should be remembered in a particular place is going to depend on that place, the people, and the history there”. He completes his argument by stating that, “by definition, a monument is something that changes time and time again” (Davis, 2020). Through these statements, it becomes clear that both Davis and de la Loza follow similar open-ended thought processes when it comes to the defining lines of monumentality.

Once a steady definition was reached, the two interviewees went more in depth on the roles taken on by monuments within Los Angeles, again showing overlapping ideologies of renewed openness. While he acknowledges that the city’s monuments are very contentious, Davis makes a strong point that, when speaking about what takes up space in our city, it is

“really more a question of what the histories are that the city might be interested in remembering”, alluding to the room allowed for bias within our representational spaces. He continues on, stating that “the role of monuments is very two-dimensional, really: to recall the histories of moralism” (Davis, 2020). He again brings this idea into a Los Angelean context, stating that “there’s a history of murals here... Chicana history that is tied really closely to moralism, that being one of the defining aspects of what you could call monuments and memorials” (Davis, 2020). Here, Davis is explicating a central conception of historic-cultural sites in that they are often deeply educational spaces that catalyze the development of morality and societal standards. De la Loza conjures a very similar, but different ideology, speaking more toward the space for self reflection, along this recurring idea of animism. She states that “monuments provide a space for us to reflect on ourselves. They also can give us insight into the places we live and inhabit... In an era of movement [in which] we’ve seen massive migration and displacement, building a relationship to a place, a culture, takes time and monuments can provide entrance. They can help deepen those relationships” (de la Loza, 2020). Both professionals, one from a design perspective and one from a remediative community arts perspective, come to similar conclusions that monuments and cultural sites function heavily within society as spaces that inspire a deeper understanding of society and sense of oneself within a larger net of lives. Morality and group consciousness are uplifted as central roles within our understanding of the relationship between historic-cultural sites and community.

The conversations eventually veered toward the popular representations of Los Angeles as a city dominated by the entertainment industry, leading to some very interesting perspectives from Professor Davis, as someone who is not native to Los Angeles, and from de la Loza who

has had deep family ties to these spaces for generations. A concept that was proposed was the competition between historic sites that gain traction in the public eye. As spoken to above, spaces like the Hollywood Sign or the Griffith Observatory seem to create a dominative hierarchy as they are placed high upon the Los Angelean hills, visible to millions, while spaces like community murals can be viewed by many fewer. Davis lends a unique perspective in this dichotomy of visibility, explaining the inherent tie between monumentality and capitalist property. He states that “Griffith Park is a property, it was a gift... [and murals also must be considered in terms of property] because they’re on the sides of buildings - you need the building or the wall just by definition to have a mural” (Davis, 2020). Davis does an amazing job of tying his arguments into the context of Los Angeles, along with that of the entire United States, stating that “The very nature of a capitalist city is that all land is property... It kind of helps to provide this understanding of memory - can you make any money out of memory? What are the forces central to memory?” (Davis, 2020), explaining that these are the often debilitating realities and systems in which cultural sites exist. De la Loza departs in an interesting way, while explicating another reality of the city. She states that, “Los Angeles, being the birthplace of the image factory of Hollywood, is a city that is constantly represented and also misrepresented” (de la Loza, 2020), introducing this idea of the dominative effects had by the centrality of entertainment in the city. She continues on: “As an artist who was born and raised here and who has very deep roots here... Oftentimes I have experienced that Los Angeles is defined by the outsiders, more so than the people who have deeper roots here. I found that to be the case academically and artistically, [and] I have experienced first-hand the violence of those representations and fabrications” (de la Loza, 2020). De la Loza then goes into a discussion on

the extremely difficult realities of Latinx stereotypes in Los Angeles, fabricated by the entertainment industry, describing the implications on the larger society in relation to the image production of the city's various groups. Through the perspectives of drastically different backgrounds, we begin to formulate a more robust understanding of the role of monumental spaces and cultural sites within our city.

Following this discussion on the dominative representations of Los Angeles, the next question posed was “do you believe that there is sufficient representation of the cultural diversity within Los Angeles?”. Davis and de la Loza arrive at this question in different manners, Davis primarily focusing on the complexity of diversity and the overall missteps of the city, while de la Loza hones in on a lack of support for many communities and an ideology of the necessity of changing the larger culture's perceptions of cultural productions. Davis, holding the outsider's perspective in relation to the United States, points out that there is a very interesting American view of diversity. He states that “one example of this fixity of diversity in the American psyche is how major cities have particular regions named after a nation or ethnicity”, listing neighborhoods like Chinatown and Koreatown as sites that display this “American vision of diversity” (Davis, 2020). He continues on, stating that these distinct regions “hold that everyone has a place in society”, outlining a beautiful ideal of American cities and their diversity. After uplifting this unique asset, Davis continues on to state that “representation is rare and contentious just by the nature of how fluid diversity can be... Representation of diversity is a regime of images and image making”, tying our discussion back into the concreteness of monumentality and historic-cultural sites. Davis finalizes his point, setting his focus on the city's missteps in forming a wholesome representation: “There's a level of erasure in the history of Los Angeles...

[and] the city would never formally recognize those things... It is based on dispossession. This land was propagated on dispossession” (Davis, 2020). Through this, Davis means to express that full representation is quite difficult to achieve due to population fluidity, and that Los Angeles’ history makes it an even more difficult goal.

Davis’ note of the necessity of resources and concrete creation is in conflict with some of de la Loza’s views, although they come together in some interesting ways when it comes to the forces of continued marginalization. Firstly, de la Loza brings us back to our reevaluation of our conception of monuments and cultural sites, stating that “communities and cultures have modes of telling their stories, whether they are recognized or not”. She continues on to touch on the lack of resources, using her own experience as an example of greater absence: “I became an artist but I never really had access to art and art education... I grew up around a lot of cultural richness, and definitely our stories [were] told through song, popular art forms, through youth organized spaces... that impetus toward representing and telling our stories is there, but it is institutionally marginalized and remains unsupported” (de la Loza, 2020). Through this personal anecdote, de la Loza allows us a viewpoint of the difficulty of pursuing artistic representation that many communities face. De la Loza then leads us into a very specific and applicable conception about American society, in a similar way that Davis does, but with a focus on the pitfalls of artistic individualism. She argues that “our institutions tend to exalt the individual and because you have that one artist who is represented, it is dangerous”, going on to explain that there can be icons of groups without any uplifted voice of entire communities (de la Loza, 2020). De la Loza explains that she is more interested in the acknowledgement and creation of spaces and spheres that can be used as tools for democratizing representation and artistic accessibility. She ties a bow on this

concept, stating that we must “disseminate and popularize” the “great wealth of storytelling” in order to reach a more horizontal understanding of diverse groups and communities (de la Loza, 2020).

Preservation and institutionalization are inherently linked in our society, a finding that is supported by both Davis and de la Loza as they explain the complications of this necessity of fitting into a structure. When prompted to speak on the importance of preservation, Davis states simply that “without preservation, you don’t have institutionalization of memory”, continuing on to argue that “Cultural preservation really is the ability to put a mark on memories and identify a memory as doing a certain thing” (Davis, 2020). Here, Davis introduces this concept of memorialization as a form of annotating history.

De la Loza displays a unique view of Los Angeles’ historic-cultural site preservation program, explaining its significance within our constantly-evolving city. She clearly states her views on preservation programs, arguing that they “add a decolonizing act” in that they allow for protection of often-sacred spaces (de la Loza, 2020). While she acknowledges that this is a fantastic opportunity for cultural and historical recognition and remembrance, de la Loza also points out some deep issues within our system. As we use a single institution to represent many cultures, de la Loza argues that neutralization of radical spaces is an inherent byproduct of registration into this system. Using *Plaza Olvera* as an example of radical activism that spans three decades, de la Loza argues that spaces’ narratives change when they become memorialized and that “there can be an erasure of the dissident and radical histories” central to these sites that go against the status quo (de la Loza, 2020). With this, de la Loza presents a series of questions that can lead us away from a program that potentially increases passivity: “Does the history get

neutralized? How do we activate those memorials and monuments? How do we memorialize in a way that isn't co-opted, that isn't neutralized, [and] that can radicalize us?" (de la Loza, 2020). Essentially, what de la Loza is proposing is a reanalysis of our understanding of the impact preservation can have on sites when they enter an institutionalized space, and while a program that promotes protection is important, there is work to be done to preserve the spirit of places and monuments.

After exploring the complications of historic-cultural site preservation programs, the discussion shifted to focus more on sustainability in both ecological and social senses. Both Davis and de la Loza came to very similar conclusions about shifting our perspectives toward a more animistic way of thinking in which we see ourselves amidst a web of life. When prompted to speak on the difference between social and ecological sustainability, Davis argues that "It's not that they're separate realms, it's just one realm. Social ecology is ecology. Environmental ecology is just social ecology". He continues on, pointing a finger at the damaging nature of our society, stating that "we're programmed by capitalism to think against this way" of seeing ourselves as part of a working ecosystem in which humans and our histories are part of a larger story (Davis, 2020). De la Loza mimics these sentiments on the importance of shifting our perspectives and reimagining ourselves, posing some thought provoking questions: "How do we really critically look at our social modes of organizing, our relationship to this land, and really think about the violences embedded in that? What are the implications of our existing social structures in terms of control? Where do we move from there?" (de la Loza, 2020). Through these responses, it becomes clear that these individuals share a distaste for our current modes of

self-conscience, arguing that a shift must be made to view social and ecological sustainability with a much more interwoven mindset.

A concept that arises frequently is that of how to support contemporary development of cultural spaces in addition to the preservation of pre-existing ones. To Davis, increased support of artistic production could be a very powerful tool. He makes his perspective clear, stating that “it would be great if there was more of an understanding of the role that art can have across the board... art can and should flourish... It should be more of a general part of everyday existence that is important for people’s psychological well-being” (Davis, 2020). Through this, Davis is outlining the potential for art to be better integrated into our city physically, but also how it could integrate into our greater social consciousness and bring awareness of others into our psyche. He finalizes this thought, stating that “art helps you see how things could be done differently, to see different perspectives and different ways of framing history, memory, and the past” (Davis, 2020). Another interesting concept that Davis uplifts is temporality in relation to monumental creation. De la Loza brings a similar focus but draws artistic creation into the context of our malleable future. In relation to whether the city should put more effort into supporting groups’ creation, de la Loza states that she is “less interested in waiting for institutions to make things happen - [she is] more interested in unsanctioned popular activations of sites and creating actions [and] events that find creative ways of connecting with our past [in order to] visualize our future” (de la Loza, 2020). Through both of these perspectives, we are shown the transformative quality of artistic production that can empower a more diverse range of cultural sites, having deep impacts on both our remediation with the past and progression into the future.

As Davis has long standing and continuous involvement on the scene of urban planning and architecture, his final question focused on his perspective, reading “are there any ways that the urban planning and architectural fields could support visibility of marginalized groups?”. To perhaps one of the most important questions when pursuing substantial recommendations, Davis provided a very grounded response. While acknowledging that community participation has begun to take on a more central role in newer urban planning programs, he states that there could still be much more community input. Davis argues that this emphasis on communication can take on the “role of having a sort of urban humanity, to see community participation as part of the job [and] as part of the responsibility of being a planner” (Davis, 2020). Beautifully put, Davis is proposing an evolution in the urban planning field into which community participation and open communication can, and should, have a transformative quality. He continues on to hone in to architecture as a discipline, and while acknowledging that there is an underlying energy of artistic liberty that can pull away from outsider input, architecture and urban planning “have different capabilities but have very similar responsibilities” (Davis, 2020). Through this, Davis provides a concise analysis of the two fields and their roles within shaping society - urban planning must respond to the needs of the people, while architecture maintains a more creative freedom- Both, he argues have the responsibility to listen and respond in ways that uplift communities.

PERSPECTIVES OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH CULTURAL SITES

A key perspective within this assessment of Los Angeles’ Historic-Cultural Designation Policy is that of the marginalized communities within the city. Due to a history of colonialism and racial injustice within the United States, many standards have shifted to put indigenous,

Black, and Latinx people at the lowest rung, creating many artistic standards as byproducts of this inequality. This has translated into a system that deems some monuments as more important, and therefore more worthy of protection and space in the urban consciousness, than others.

Brenda Perez, of Highland Park's *Restorative Justice for the Arts*, articulates the impactfulness of this marginalization of Mexika (Aztec people that settled in Mexico) art in Highland Park that is in a constant battle for survival. When speaking of protecting cultural identity and spatial consciousness, it is crucial to direct our ears toward those who were here first. Perez explicates this clearly in regard to so-called "positionality", stating that indigenous and decolonized methods must take our attention in order to reorient our priorities (Perez, 2020).

"Lo llevamos en la sangre. It's in our blood" states Perez when prompted to speak of the importance of monumentality. Brenda Perez "see[s] monuments as very important, especially cultural monuments that have a specific tie to the rich history [and] the cultural history of Los Angeles". She continues, stating that "the beauty of Los Angeles is [that] it is extremely diverse", and therefore that we must view artistic creations as direct monuments to the cultures that populate the city (Perez, 2020). In the case of indigenous Mexika art, which has undergone major erasure and white-washing in Los Angeles, Perez argues that "the survivors of our culture depend on these memories" that are translated through the murals and other spaces that stand against the walls of Highland Park. She punctuates this concept beautifully, arguing that these spaces are "essential to our survival... because we're not in history books... We never get educated on our ancestors and ancestry. So, the way that these murals help us is by keeping our memories alive - Therefore, art for us is not therapy. Art, for us, is survival" (Perez, 2020). Perez touches upon two concepts here that necessitate acknowledgement: marginalization within

education and the importance of cultural memory. Perez goes on, explaining that these cultural sites are stories for the Mexica people that teach the current and future generations. She states that “they’re our treasures, they’re history, and they’re sacred imagery that we need to survive” (Perez, 2020). She relates this “sacred imagery” to a retroactive remediation, stating that art is “our medicine” as an erased group (Perez, 2020). Perez, as she pursues a Master’s in Clinical Psychology, also sees a profound importance in cultural consciousness, believing that there is a dormant consciousness within all of us that connects us to our history, and that finding and connecting to that consciousness is essential for Mexica reconciliation. She believes that connecting to a mural in front of her is “a very spatial consciousness - a very gentle consciousness, a very compassionate consciousness” (Perez, 2020). One of the murals Perez has fought to protect is the Tenochtitlan Mural in Highland Park, and the passion that powered her becomes incredibly clear as she reflects on the mural’s personal impact. Perez states that “learning about Quetzalcoatl (a legendary snake-like figure amidst the mural) personally helped me realign myself... I have been so disconnected, [and] our people have been so disconnected from our ancestry for more than 500 years” (Perez, 2020). Perez continues, explaining that Mexica people are undergoing a very deep reconciliation with the past, and present, and that these murals play an incredibly important role in this reclamation. She ties this back to the dormant consciousness, stating that “a lot of our youth are in the streets, doing nothing, but when we’re out there doing murals, they come and are very interested because it’s a consciousness that is dormant” (Perez, 2020). All of this is to articulate the power Perez sees within murals and monumental spaces, pulling communities together and harnessing a deep cultural identity and remembrance that fights against ongoing marginalization.

Perez also had a very interesting outlook on the potential for negative impacts of monuments. In relation to the controversy regarding monuments to Christopher Columbus, which has recently received much attention, Perez states that “for some people, [Columbus] is a heroic figure, but for us, [viewing] it is reliving trauma”. She goes on, speaking to the emotional response elicited by such monuments: “It is so dehumanizing, and it is a reminder [of an ugly past]. It is very insulting” (Perez, 2020). Here, Perez does not depart from her views on the importance of monumentality, but rounds them out with a deepened perspective that monuments hold a lot of power, and therefore their emotional impact must be assessed. Edgar Ollin Garcia, another Clinical Psychology student pursuing his Master’s at Pacifica Graduate Institute, maintains aligned views, making the argument that different monuments have different perspectives, and therefore impacts. Garcia, too, relates this theory back to colonialist monuments, forming a relevant point that there is a lot of privilege involved with monumentality. Garcia states that “murals exist in mostly marginalized communities... larger monuments only exist in privileged communities” (Garcia, 2020), articulating another intricacy within this conversation while fundamentally questioning who has the opportunities to represent, and remember, their past.

Perez elevates this discussion on marginalization with a conversation about a lack of respect for monumental spaces that translates into erasure and further outsider-dom. Perez opens this up, stating that there is a general problem in which cultural monuments are disregarded, regardless of the culture that produced them. She argues that “a lot of people are disconnected from the sacredness [of monumental spaces]”. She continues, tying this to the so-called whitewashing that has permeated her community, arguing that it is not only “extremely

sacrilegious”, but also “hurtful and adds to the collective trauma” that Mexica people are facing with displacement from Highland Park (Perez, 2020). Beautifully vocalized, Perez dives into colonization as a force of destruction, stating that this erasure is “a type of colonization”. She continues, prompting thought with: “what does settler colonialism do? It erases all things indigenous and hides them as if they were never there. They go directly for the visuals [and] the literature” (Perez, 2020). Here, Perez leaves no room to doubt that this continued erasure necessitates a focus on decolonization.

A contemporary force that coincides with this erasure of cultural monuments is the production of what Perez calls “McDonald-ized murals” as a byproduct of gentrification. By this, Perez means that “murals are popping up today without cultural substance” (Perez, 2020). She states that her classic community murals are being “replaced by these modernized concepts of art that have nothing... to invoke memories of [the artists’] ancestors or anything spiritual” (Perez, 2020). Perez takes this a step further, saying that she views these new murals as completely selfish and entirely nonregenerative in contrast to her community’s historical monuments. Finally, in relation to a mural on 50th Avenue in Highland Park, Perez speaks to the implications of erasure and replacement of cultural murals by these new spaces: She makes the point that the land owners are essentially saying who they want to attract to their spaces, and *who they do not want* (Perez, 2020), further emphasizing the traumatic effects of gentrification and displacement of indigenous populations, enacted through cultural spaces.

Illegal erasure of Highland Park’s murals is a constant battle, according to Perez, but she makes it clear that one side is fighting simply for survival, a concept that should seem oxymoronic. In the recent efforts to protect the Tenochtitlan mural, the community played a

major role. Perez states that the building owners had been planning to erase the mural in order to add more windows to their building, but quickly the artist of the mural was tipped off. The whistleblower was a member of Los Angeles' Mural Conservancy, a group that Perez says used to be a great political ally for the Highland Park murals, but the foundation has recently become so politically connected that it is rarely vigilant. This whistleblower, however, was a part of the Highland Park community, and Perez views his role in the efforts to protect Tenochtitlan as symbolic of the power and *necessity* of community networks: "The only way our art is safe is through community. That's it... The power of community coming together really saved this mural [because] there are really no real protections" (Perez, 2020). In relation to her foundation, *Restorative Justice for the Arts*, Perez states a new mindset formed in reaction to this lonesomeness of the community, saying that "we're no longer taking chances" (Perez, 2020). Perez reflects further on the momentum that created *RJFTA*, commenting that "I wanted to write about how hurtful [whitewashing] was, how painful it was. It wasn't just me and I found out there were other community members that were devastated" (Perez, 2020). Through this, Perez articulates the absolute pressure caused by lack of legal protections that forced the creation of the community-led organization. Perez ties together this criticism of lack of protection with an unfortunate one-liner: "Murals are like children, you can't leave them alone outside" (Perez, 2020), punctuating her emphasis on community protection.

Another factor that both Perez and Garcia speak to, in relation to this thread of lacking respect, is the barring of cultural art from what Perez calls "epistemic spaces", like art galleries or other hierarchical spaces (Perez, 2020). She continues, exploring her theories on why Mexican murals undergo continued ignorance, stating that the murals "trigger [newcomers'] psychic

defenses, and [that] they don't like to see [them] because their psychic defenses are protecting them from guilt" (Perez, 2020) that comes from colonization. It is truly a profound understanding of psychology and colonialism in relation to indigenous art, articulating her beliefs on the deep impacts of harmful societal standards. This neglect is not only reflected in galleries, but also largely in education. Mexica art is often left out of textbooks used in common curricula, a fact that further emphasizes both Perez and Garcia's views on the importance of public murals and cultural monuments. Garcia continues along this line of thought, expressing how their indigenous murals function to express community values and educational mythology. He states that, "in school, they don't teach us about mythology, but [that] if we don't understand where we came from or where we're going, how can we move toward a different future?". Garcia ties this back to the dormant consciousness that Perez speaks of, stating that "mythologies are important, and if we exclude them out of our psyche then there is no forward movement" (Garcia, 2020) as a society seeking reconciliation. All of this is to emphasize the gravity of the lack of respect within our society for indigenous cultural monuments and historic spaces.

Perez believes that this disconnect between vulnerable communities and outsiders is also reflected in the relationship between policy and people. She puts it clearly, stating that she "can see the misalignment with the community, [and that] there is no connection" (Perez, 2020). She continues, stating that this disconnect is a product of limited communication, a source of major frustration for her community. She poses the question, "If you are coming into my neighborhood, wouldn't it be great if you had a conversation with me that showed you are interested in being transparent?". Continuing along this line of miscommunication, Perez states that she "is versed in restorative practices, but [she] just need[s] someone to be accountable" (Perez, 2020) for

upkeeping a working relationship that protects cultural history and identity. She boils down what she is asking for: “There needs to be some kind of intermediary, some voice in the conversation that is grassroots and community based - Someone who is in direct contact with the community. It’s very easy [to communicate], but they make it hard” (Perez, 2020). This disconnect is especially visible through the Highland Park community’s relationship with their city councilmembers. In relation to the Tenochtitlan mural, Perez states that the city was unable to be supportive of RJFTA’s preservation efforts without city council approval, which has proven to be difficult to receive (Perez, 2020). Perez also states that some of their cultural and historical spaces have been “erased because the council gave them permission to do it, although they were legally registered [murals]” (Perez, 2020), further emphasizing this dysfunctional relationship between policy makers and community. Through all of this, Perez is telling a story of miscommunication that has drastic ramifications for her community.

Another concept that Garcia and Perez both focus on is the importance of education and the power of changing our societal outlooks. Perez begins this conversation by speaking to the complete misrepresentation of Los Angeles that she sees. Perez places Los Angeles’ image under the term “manufactured narratives”, from which Mexica people are “constantly left out”, again pulling up that idea of marginalized communities (Perez, 2020). She continues this line of thought, making the argument that Los Angeles is situated in this Latin American context, being originally named “La Reina de Los Angeles”, but that no one is willing to acknowledge this origination. This may seem trivial, but Perez emphasizes that the misrepresentation of the city’s history is functionally “killing this [indigenous] knowledge, [by] not representing the hidden,

occult knowledge” (Perez, 2020) and therefore placing the burden of education and awareness onto the indigenous communities.

Along the lines of challenging accepted outlooks, Perez also critiques our views of sustainability. She states that “the ecological model [of sustainability] is Eurocentric in nature, [and] does not represent indigenous cosmo-visions”, continuing on to argue that “it is exclusive to indigenous spiritual beliefs [that include] plants, animals, spirits and so on” (Perez, 2020). Here, Perez is speaking to an exclusionary mindset that does not leave room for deeper connectedness to our surroundings, something that she sums up by stating that “the Americanized way of sustainability is that we’re not connecting ourselves to the web of life” (Perez, 2020). Through this, Perez is pointing to a direct flaw that she sees within the way we approach sustainability, arguing that it does not take into consideration diverse mindsets. To this lack of diversity within outlook, Garcia argues that education is the answer to our disconnected nature. He reflects, stating that “education, on all different levels” is the way we must change the multigenerational strictness of beliefs in relation to sustainability (Garcia, 2020).

In summation, there are three major points that each interviewee outlined as the most important changes that must occur in order to pursue equity in regard to cultural monuments. Brenda Perez argues the importance of communication, foremost, between marginalized communities and public officials or those capable of uplifting the cultural voices of the city. Perez’s views continue on to overlap with those of Garcia’s in their views on the necessity of spaces for indigenous art. As marginalized communities are continuously barred from higher spaces, Perez and Garcia argue that the first step should be providing spaces for expression and cultural consciousness. Finally, Garcia puts a lot of weight upon the importance of education,

making sure that not only are cultural histories and foundational myths taught, but also that their diversity is taught at multiple levels of education, broadening our societal points of view.

PERSPECTIVES OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITH POLICY & PRESERVATIONIST EFFORTS

Like the perspectives of art historians, theorists, and individuals involved with Los Angelean cultural sites, the perspectives of professionals that have direct connection to conservation and preservation are incredibly important. I had the chance to interview Rosalind Sagara, the Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator at LA Conservancy, to pursue a perspective from the other side of this city-community communicative relationship. The LA Conservancy plays a central role in the preservation of historic and cultural sites within Los Angeles, as the foundation “works through education and advocacy to recognize, preserve, and revitalize the historic architectural and cultural resources of Los Angeles County”, as noted in their mission statement (Los Angeles Conservancy, 2020). After hearing the perspectives of community organizers and people on the ground fighting for the protection of their own cultural spaces, it was incredibly interesting to hear about Ms. Sagara’s side of the preservation efforts.

There was a lot of value alignment found between Sagara and the other interviewees, made clear by the first discussion, as she responded to the question: “How do you view the role of preservation in maintaining cultural identity and sustainability?”. Sagara laid out her views immediately, stating that “at the local level, preservation of historic places and resources allows people to protect places that are meaningful to them and that have helped define [their] neighborhoods” (Sagara, 2020), displaying her own, along with the LA Conservancy’s, views on the importance of neighborhood identity and cultural memory. Along with her clear prioritization of sentiment and memory, Sagara continues on to speak to preservation’s role in a sustainable

context, stating that “preservation of buildings, along with preservation of building materials... helps us maintain our affordable housing stock” (Sagara, 2020). Here, Sagara dives into the very specific problem with Los Angeles that is the lack of affordable housing. She rounds out this concept by saying that “demolishing buildings creates a lot of waste, and so being able to preserve some of our older buildings is a sustainable strategy” (Sagara, 2020). Sagara’s perspective took a much more concrete form, in that there is a major argument in support of preservation of older spaces that comes in the name of sustainability.

As a professional that works within city matters, Sagara’s perspective on the current representation of diversity within Los Angeles was of extreme interest. When prompted to speak on whether or not she feels that Los Angeles’ diversity is well represented by the current sites that hold designation as culturally and historically important, Sagara stated that, while there are many factors to be considered, “the short answer would be ‘no’” (Sagara, 2020). Sagara continues, arguing that, because the percentage of designated sites that represent communities is very low, “our monument program is not representative of Los Angeles’ diverse history, not only in terms of ethnic diversity but across the board of gender and other areas” (Sagara, 2020). Through this response, it is clear that the lack of representation is not only perceived by individuals outside the professional sphere, but also by those that are working for preservation professionally. Following this, Sagara continued on to speak of the role the government currently has in this lack of representation, stating that she thinks “the city could do more to encourage more nominations of places that reflect these histories and this heritage” (Sagara, 2020), alluding to a relevant problem of unrepresentative numbers of nominations.

Sagara continued along this line, demonstrating her perspective and theories on potential flaws in the system that keep marginalized groups at a distance from the process. While acknowledging that the Historic-Cultural Site Designation policy allows anyone to apply for designation - with or without building owner consent - there are a few hurdles that could be making the process difficult for community members. When it comes to community spaces, as opposed to commercial sites, Sagara expects that both time and lack of resources would inhibit many potential applications. She argues that “it’s going to require some time spent on historical research that may or may not be some people’s area of expertise”, referring to community applicants, while continuing on to state that she would “venture to say that a lot of applications have been submitted by consultants” that can be funded by the disposable incomes of building owners (Sagara, 2020). This outlines a relevant problem, and while Sagara notes that the city aims for accessibility, the resources available to general community members may disallow diverse and representative applications.

As the Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator at LA Conservancy, Sagara ties this hypothesis into real implications and potential room for improvement on the city’s part. Sagara argues that there is a lacking public awareness in regard to the designation program, and she places this knowledge gap into the city’s lap, stating that “if the city is trying to implement an inclusive monument program, there needs to be more work done to educate the public about designation itself and maybe to identify ways that [the city] can do more to increase the number [of applicants and designated sites]” (Sagara, 2020). Here, Sagara makes the point that there is more work to be done in order to reform the program to be more accessible and therefore representative of Los Angeles’ population.

As Sagara spoke to before, sustainability is central to preservation and plays a large role in the work that LA Conservancy does. When prompted to speak on social sustainability, in addition its ecological counterpart, Sagara states that “social sustainability is an important part of what makes neighborhood communities liveable”, continuing on to make the point that these historic and cultural sites “help to create a sense of place in a neighborhood - It helps to give people a sense of pride in where they live and where they’re from and I think that has an impact on people’s individual identities” (Sagara, 2020). Through this, Sagara is displaying her shared view on the importance of fostering social sustainability when doing work that implicates larger communities, as historic-cultural sites do.

Preservation is an incredibly important force in the maintenance of cultural history and consciousness, but there also seems to be a growing focus on the creation and support of commemorative sites. When comparing the importance of artistic preservation and artistic development, Sagara displays a very interesting focus on the duality of their importance, stating that “It is not one or the other. Preservation helps to maintain what community members feel, but it is also important to celebrate those places [currently]” (Sagara, 2020). When prompted to speak on how the government could encourage more artistic and culturally-representative sites, Sagara stated that “it would be great to see more collaboration between artists and folks in the field of historic preservation to activate those places [in order for] the public to become more aware of the value of these spaces”, tying development into this concept of group consciousness by arguing that through this collaboration “we can start to develop a greater preservation ethic in our communities” (Sagara, 2020). Sagara leaves us with an extremely important concept, arguing that there not only needs to be continued reformation of the policies that impact historic-cultural

sites, but that reformation of our larger consciousness must be seen in regard to the Los Angelean sites that define and remember our population's histories.

Rosalind Sagara's perspective, as LA Conservatory's Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, lends incredibly important insight into the ever-changing relationship between our city and its communities in the context of historically and culturally important sites. Sagara is able to not only display her grounded hypotheses on the lack of representation, she is also able to display the consciousness of such a lack within governmental bodies and those with the power to protect historic-cultural sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Increase community input and communication in both urban planning processes and policy development.

Throughout the process of this study, a recurring criticism was the perceived lack of communication between community members and those involved with the protection of cultural sites. This sentiment was proposed by both Davis and Perez, in different ways, but both arguing that there must be more opportunity for community input in both urban planning processes and also within policy development and preservationist processes. If the goal is a greater and more equitable representation of Los Angeles' diversity, ears must first turn toward the voices with deep roots in the city.

2. Education reform that uplifts diverse art.

Another recurring concept was that of reformed educational spaces for diverse art. Perez and Garcia, as community activists with a focus on the transformational power of art, believe that a lack of public education on indigenous art leads to a deep and continuous marginalization

of indigenous peoples and their histories. In order to combat this marginalization, education on all levels must be reassessed and tweaked to better display the diversity of ideologies, mythologies, and practices of a range of groups of Angelenos. Sagara emulated a similar ideology when it came to educational reform, arguing that we have a lot to learn in terms of rounding out our understanding of preservationist efforts.

3. Creation of spaces for underrepresented art.

An additional concept that took on a lot of focus within this interviews was the necessity of creation of spaces for underrepresented art forms. De la Loza argues that this is necessary in order for us to deal with temporal circumstances, while Perez and Garcia make the argument that creation of these spaces is ideal in combating the overwhelming marginalization from epistemic spaces that dominate the creative world. Finally, Sagara shares her mindset that there should be more collaboration between preservationists and artists to further develop a mindset of artistic creation.

4. Continued work to increase accessibility, resources, and outreach for applicants.

Sagara lent an extremely beneficial perspective as a professional involved with preservationist efforts. With a substantial critique of the historic-cultural site designation program, she explicated the deep need for ongoing efforts to increase accessibility and resources for applicants, along with greater outreach to potential community members in order to reach a more diversified body of protected sites.

REFERENCES

- A Sign is Born: 1923. (2017, July 28). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from <https://hollywoodsign.org/announcement/1923-a-sign-is-born/>.
- Braudy, Leo. *The Hollywood Sign: Fantasy and Reality of an American Icon*. (2011). *Yale University Press*. Doi: https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=eEnLlfsGfGkC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=history+Hollywood+sign&ots=PVvWc2YHAz&sig=vd2x13Wr2Vx4dz_AemTNmhyBR SY#v=onepage&q=history%20Hollywood%20sign&f=false
- Curating the City: LGBTQ Historic Places in L.A.. Los Angeles Conservancy. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2019, from <https://www.laconservancy.org/lgbtq>.
- Davis, William. *Professor of Art & Art History at Occidental College; Pursuant of PhD in Architecture, UCLA*. (2020, April 15). Personal Interview.
- de la Loza, Sandra. *Artist in Residence at Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation*. (2020, April 16). Personal Interview.
- Deioma, K. (2019, June 26). Visit These American Indian Museums and Cultural Centers in L.A. Retrieved November 12, 2019, from <https://www.tripsavvy.com/native-american-los-angeles-1586770>.
- Diverse: Definition of Diverse by Lexico. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/diverse>.
- Diverse. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diverse>.
- DIVERSE: meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/diverse>.
- Edwards, A. (2017, September 1). New Census figures show nation is following Los Angeles in diversity. Retrieved November 8, 2019, from <https://www.presstelegram.com/2015/06/25/new-census-figures-show-nation-is-following-los-angeles-in-diversity/>.
- Facts About Los Angeles. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2019, from <https://www.discoverlosangeles.com/media/facts-about-la>.
- Florida, R., & University of Toronto's School of Cities and Rotman School of Management. (2019, May 15). *The Beauty Bump: How a City's Beauty Affects Its Economic Growth*.

- Retrieved October 16, 2019, from
<https://www.citylab.com/life/2019/05/beautiful-cities-economic-growth-data-beauty-premium/589480/>.
- Forte, F. & Fusco Girard, Luigi. (2010, April 22). Creativity and New Architectural Assets: The Complex Value of Beauty. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*. Doi: 10.1504/IJSD.2009.032776
- Garcia, Ollin. *Pursuant of PhD in Clinical Psychology, Pacifica Graduate Institute*. (2020, February 14). Personal Interview.
- Griffith Park. (n.d.). Retrieved November 3, 2019, from
<http://www.griffithobservatory.org/about/griffithpark.html>.
- Gulumser, A.A., Baycan, T., Nijkamp, T.. (2019). Beauty is in the Eyes of the Beholder: A Logistic Regression Analysis of Sustainability and Locality as Competitive Vehicles for Human Settlements.
<https://research.vu.nl/en/publications/beauty-is-in-the-eyes-of-the-beholder-a-logistic-regression-analy-2>.
- Hayden, D. (1988). Placemaking, Preservation and Urban History. *Journal of Architectural Education*, 41(3), 45–51. doi: 10.1080/10464883.1988.10758490
- Hayden, D. (1988). The Power of Place: A Proposal for Los Angeles. *The Public Historian*, 10(3), 5–18. doi: 10.2307/3378526
- Historic-Cultural Monuments. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from
<https://preservation.lacity.org/commission>.
- History of LGBTQ Los Angeles. Los Angeles Conservancy. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <https://www.laconservancy.org/history-lgbtq-los-angeles>.
- Wells, Jane. (2016, March 18). American diversity: Cities where it works. Retrieved November 10, 2019, from
<https://www.cnn.com/2015/05/21/american-diversity-cities-where-it-works.html>.
- Keene, John C. “The Links Between Historic Preservation and Sustainability: An Urbanist's Perspective.” *Managing Change: Sustainable Approaches to the Conservation of the Built Environment*, vol. 4, 2001, pp. 11–19. *GoogleScholar*,
https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/49171668/managing_change_v1.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline;filename=Managing_change_v1.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A/20191210/us-east-1/s3/aws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20191210T224213Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host

&X-Amz-Signature=085128a99da904b708844814e1c91a90974033edde2eb1b19430a075d7f36c12#page=56.

Local Historic Districts (HPOZs). (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from <https://planning.lacity.org/preservation-design/local-historic-districts>.

Low, Setha M. "Social Sustainability: People, History, and Values." *Managing Change: Sustainable Approaches to the Conservation of the Built Environment*, vol. 4, 2001, pp. 47–65. *Google Scholar*, https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/49171668/managing_change_v1.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline;filename=Managing_change_v1.pdf&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A/20191210/us-east-1/s3/aws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20191210T224213Z&X-Amz-Expires=3600&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Signature=085128a99da904b708844814e1c91a90974033edde2eb1b19430a075d7f36c12#page=56.

Los Angeles Conservatory. (2020). *About*. Retrieved April 15, 2020, from <https://www.laconservancy.org/about>.

Los Angeles Diversity Index. (n.d.). Retrieved November 8, 2019, from <http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/diversity/neighborhood/list/>.

Meyer, E. K. (2008). Sustaining beauty. The performance of appearance. *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 3(1), 6–23. doi: 10.1080/18626033.2008.9723392

Original People of Los Angeles County. (n.d.). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <http://www.laalmanac.com/history/hi05.php>.

Perez, Brenda. *Founder of Restorative Justice for the Arts; Pursuant of PhD in Clinical Psychology, Pacifica Graduate Institute*. (2020, February 14). Personal Interview.

Preservation Incentives. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from <https://preservation.lacity.org/incentives>.

Riegl, Alois. (1903). "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origin," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, in *Oppositions*, n. 25 (Fall 1982), 21-51. Doi: Alois Riegl The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and ...[https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/files/preview](https://courseworks2.columbia.edu/courses/courses/files/preview)

Sagara, Rosalind. *Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator, Los Angeles Conservancy*. (2020, March 17). Personal Interview.

The History of the Sign. (2018, October 30). Retrieved November 9, 2019, from <https://hollywoodsign.org/the-history-of-the-sign/>.

The Importance of Beauty: A Personal and Professional Perspective. (n.d.). Retrieved October 15, 2019, from <https://www.planetizen.com/node/24087>.

UNESCO World Heritage Centre - World Heritage List. (n.d.). Retrieved November 10, 2019, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/>.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- **For individuals involved with historic preservation policy:**
 - *How do you view the role of preservation in maintaining cultural identity and sustainability?*
 - *How do you view pieces of Los Angeles like the Hollywood Sign or the Griffith Observatory? Do you think they are important spaces to preserve?*
 - *Los Angeles is an incredibly culturally-diverse city - do you feel that this is represented well by the current sites designated as historically and culturally important? Do you believe that there could be unequal representation that impacts our city's consciousness regarding diversity?*
 - *Are there ways that the urban planning field could support the visibility of marginalized groups, perhaps through the use of monuments?*
 - *How do you, as part of an urban planning field, view social sustainability in addition to ecological sustainability? Is there much overlap?*
 - *Assuming that there is unequal dispersion of designated sites, do you think that there should be more attention given to artistic/cultural development in addition to preservation?*
 - *How do the goals of Los Angeles' historic-designation policy apply to the future? Is there any way to develop them to future cultural creation and development?*
 - *Do you have any suggestions of other people who you think would have interesting perspectives on these issues?*

- **For individuals involved with a historically designated site:**
 - *Do you believe that there is sufficient representation of cultural diversity in Los Angeles?*
 - *How do you view the role of monuments in our city?*
 - *Can you describe how you view the impact of your site? Do you think there are ways to increase its influence?*
 - *How do you think Los Angeles is portrayed and represented? Do you think it is an accurate depiction?*
 - *Regarding the specific community that your site represents, do you believe that there is currently enough physical representation?*
 - *How do you feel about the work the city does with historic-cultural site preservation? Do you feel that they are doing enough in terms of representation?*
 - *How do you view social sustainability in addition to ecological sustainability? Is there much overlap? Do you think that there should be more attention given to artistic/cultural development in addition to preservation?*

- *Are there any ways that you believe policy should adapt to support development of culturally representational spaces?*

- **For individuals involved with urban planning/city design:**
 - *How long have you been working in your department?*
 - *How do you view the role of preservation in maintaining cultural identity?*
 - *How do you view pieces of Los Angeles like the Hollywood Sign or the Griffith Observatory? Do you think they are important spaces to preserve?*
 - *Do you think that Los Angeles, as it is currently, represents its diversity well? Are there ways that the urban planning field could support future visibility of marginalized groups?*
 - *How do you, as part of an urban planning field, view social sustainability in addition to ecological sustainability? Is there much overlap? Do you think that there should be more attention given to artistic/cultural development in addition to preservation?*
 - *What are the goals of the historic-cultural preservation policy, and how do they apply to the future? Is there any way to develop these to future cultural creation and development?*
 - *Do you have any suggestions of other people who you think would have interesting perspectives on these issues?*

**Questions can be adapted to specific interviewees, depending on their roles and positions.*