

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Mollie E. Holmes for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Art and Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Mathematics presented on August 25, 2008. Title: The Contemporary Artist's Working Relationships: Understanding Restriction and Authority.

Abstract approved:

Kirsi Peltomäki

In contemporary art, some artists enter into working relationships with other groups or institutions to create a final piece. For example, an artist may be invited by a museum to take part in an exhibition, or an artist may work with a city council to create a public artwork. However, these institutions/groups and the artist do not necessarily share similar views on what form the final work should take. Because both the artist and the institution/group possess authority over the project, the artist may encounter restrictions imposed upon him or her.

How then does the artist overcome these obstacles in order to achieve his or her goals? One possibility is for the artist to increase his or her creative authority over the artwork. An investigation of the different working relationships of contemporary artists such as Daniel Buren, Fred Wilson, Andrea Fraser, and Richard Serra indicates that the most successful method to achieve greater creative authority is modeled by Wilson. Wilson created a working relationship built on trust and thereby avoided potential restrictions and instead achieved greater creative authority in producing his project with the Maryland Historical Society.

Key Words: contemporary art, authority, working relationship, institutional critique

Corresponding e-mail address: mollie.holmes@lifetime.oregonstate.edu

©Copyright 2008 by Mollie E. Holmes
August 25, 2008
All Rights Reserved

The Contemporary Artist's Working Relationships:

Understanding Restriction and Authority

by

Mollie E. Holmes

A PROJECT

submitted to

Oregon State University

University Honors College

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Art (Honors Scholar)

and

Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Mathematics (Honors Scholar)

Presented August 25, 2008
Commencement June 2009

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in Art and Honors Baccalaureate of Science in Mathematics project of Mollie E. Holmes presented on August 25, 2008.

APPROVED:

Mentor, representing Art

Committee Member, representing Art

Committee Member, representing Art

Dean, University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

Mollie E. Holmes, Author

Acknowledgements

Kirsi Peltomäki, professor of art history, Department of Art, OSU – Kirsi has been an incredible advisor and mentor to me over the past two years. She always helped me to refocus my energy, showed great patience with me when I would ask for more time, and believed in this project from the very beginning. Thank you, Kirsi, for pushing me beyond what I thought I was capable of producing and for always challenging me to think more critically.

Jim Folts, professor of art, Department of Art, OSU, and John Frohnmayer, chairman of the National Endowment of the Arts from 1989 to 1992 and chairman of the Oregon Arts Commission from 1980 to 1984 – Thank you for taking the time to read my entire thesis, offer suggestions, and participate on my thesis defense committee.

My family: Dad, Mom, Emily, and Wander – Thank you for offering to read and comment on my many revisions, for being excited for me about my project, for coming to visit me when I was worn out from writing and thinking, and for always taking me out to and paying for lunch. And thanks for answering my phone calls at 1:00 A.M. when I was lonely and exhausted!

Thank you to all my friends who have supported and been patient with me when I became a hermit while writing this paper; Rebekah Lancelin for being a wonderful UHC advisor, continuously encouraging me through my six years at OSU; Bill Bogley, who has believed in me since my very first year at OSU; Eric Hill, who helped me become excited about and regain confidence in writing; Sandy Ryan and Andy Myers for teaching me how to draw; and Jim Folts and Harrison Branch for always challenging my ideas in photography.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	1
Daniel Buren: A Clash of Authorities	7
Fred Wilson: Building Trust	25
Andrea Fraser: Good Intentions, Poor Circumstances	42
Richard Serra: A Missed Opportunity	59
Conclusion	72
Bibliography	86

I dedicate this paper to Katrina Murphy, in remembrance of hours spent on lengthy term papers and projects, late nights that became early mornings, trips to WinCo for rice pudding, and for finally finishing college.

The Contemporary Artist's Working Relationships: Understanding Restriction and Authority

Introduction

It lasted for only a few hours, but from nearly any point in the museum, one could witness its grandeur. The extensive, blue and white striped canvas artwork that divided the central well of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York City stretched twenty meters high and ten meters wide. The piece hung vertically from the ceiling and spanned the height of the museum, commanding the attention of all who entered its presence. Across the neighboring 88th Street, a twin canvas, measuring ten meters by 1.5 meters, was planned to be hung horizontally. Both pieces were created by Daniel Buren to be part of the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, in which twenty-one different avant-garde artists from around the world intended to present their contemporary work. On February 10, 1971, this interior canvas was installed by a museum work crew, however, later in that same day this same interior canvas was removed, under the authorization of the museum administration, and the exterior canvas never exhibited. On February 11, the exhibition opened with neither work on display.¹

In response to these events, one may ask, what occurred to cause Buren's work to be eliminated from the exhibition? What would it have taken for his installation to have instead remained and been successful? And what does success even mean? These questions frame issues contemporary artists have faced and still currently face when dealing with institutions or other entities with potentially different interests from their own; this includes the museum, art history, art critics, the government, other artists, or

pockets of the general public. Artists must grapple with issues of what it means to enter into a working relationship with each of these different institutions or groups—they must deal with the restrictions, if there are any, placed on their creative authority by these groups, and as a result of these possible restrictions, some artists may need to deliberate how to achieve greater creative authority.

In this paper I shall discuss and define the terms *creative authority*, *success*, and *working relationship*. I shall then investigate the different types of relationships and situations artists may find themselves in and consider the decisions made, or not made, by each artist, along with the resulting effects on his or her creative authority. While other artists will be included as supportive examples, I will consider four main artists: Daniel Buren and his work for the 1971 Guggenheim International Exhibition, Fred Wilson and his 1992 *Mining the Museum* at the Maryland Historical Society, Andrea Fraser's *Recorded Tour* for the 1993 Whitney Biennial, and finally Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, which was installed in 1981 and removed in 1989 from Federal Plaza in New York City. Through this investigation I will argue that to achieve greater creative authority, the artist should form a working relationship built on trust.

To define *creative authority*, consider first the following definition of authority from *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Webster defines authority as the “superiority derived from a status that carries with it the right to command and give final decisions.”² The word authority originates from the same root as author, and from *Webster's Third New International*, authority is also defined as author.³ This then implies that when one is an author of a work he or she has the status of authority over the creation of his or her own work. Also, because an author is simply “the source of some

form of intellectual or creative work,”⁴ an artist, being the creator of a visual work, may also be considered an author. Therefore, I define *creative authority* as “the right of the artist to command and give final decisions in the execution of his or her piece”—it is the artist’s right to produce what he or she deems necessary to complete a work.

At what point, though, does an artist consider a work to be complete? One may say this occurs when an artist has achieved the goal or desired end for a piece. Goals can be defined very differently, though, for each artist. Some artists may recognize and solidify a goal at the very beginning of a project, approaching their works with an initial concept and method for solving or investigating a given issue. Other artists may focus on process and let a path of discovery guide them to a final piece, allowing the goal for the artwork to freely change as the piece progresses. And even others may consider the goal or desired end of a work simply to be the experience of creation. In all cases the artist is motivated to create and when the piece fulfills the artist’s vision or when the artist is satisfied enough with the piece to finish the act of creation, one may say that the artist has achieved the goal or desired end. Because Webster defines *success* as “the degree or measure of attaining a desired end,”⁵ when the artist reaches this goal, the artist may be said to have achieved success.

The definition of *creative authority* may then be extended to be “the right of the artist to command and give final decisions in the execution of his or her piece, so that the artist may complete his or her goal and therefore achieve success in the project.” What is considered success for an artist will change, depending on the situation and on the passage of time. Consider two different examples: In the first scenario, the only needs that must be met are that of the artist—the artist has created the piece for his or her

personal satisfaction and if this occurs the work is successful.⁶ As a result, the artist's creative authority remains unalloyed and the artist achieves autonomy, which may be defined as having ultimate authority over one's work and existing free from other authorities. The artist may then wish to present his or her work in a gallery or museum and perhaps even choose to offer it for sale; however, acceptance or sale of the work is subject to the gallery's, museum's, or public's interest and therefore of a secondary nature to the artist's intentions and goals. I shall term *personal success* the success of an entity (in this case the artist) when the personal goals of that entity are achieved.

In the second scenario, the artist's motivations begin to change. He or she may still create work for the personal satisfaction as defined above, but the artist's interest in its presentation, acceptance by, and potential sale to the museum, gallery, or public increases. As a result, the artist may find more satisfaction with an artwork if it is accepted by one of these institutions or groups. The artist continues to achieve autonomy because the he or she is still voluntarily and independently making choices about the work, even if the artist is taking others' interests into account. Nonetheless, personal success will be measured by a work that satisfies both the artist and the potential interests of a museum, gallery, or potential buyer.

As time passes, an artist's view of a work's success may change. Some artists may begin to dislike some of their earlier artworks and feel that those pieces did not accomplish what was hoped. It is also possible for a work to gain greater success over time, success that the artist may or may not have intended. For example, artworks that are censored or create controversy may bring attention, notoriety, or fame to a piece and its artist. This may occur particularly if a work gains historical significance or becomes

part of a larger discussion in art. If the artist is satisfied with the artwork's place in history and desires this result for the piece, the artist can achieve further success. Future reflections on an artist's satisfaction with an artwork are not guaranteed, and some artists may be more concerned with more immediate satisfaction. This paper shall mainly consider the satisfaction and success an artist can achieve at the end of producing an artwork, rather than success due to an artwork's later notoriety.

As explained in the examples above, an artist's creative authority can remain unhindered when the artist must only satisfy his or her own needs. Circumstances change when an artist enters into a working relationship with an institution or other party. A *working relationship* occurs when two entities are working on some common project, such as when an artist creates a commissioned work, takes part in a collaboration, or receives an invitation to exhibit. While an artist may be understood to have authority over his or her artwork, does this group or institution with which the artist forms a working relationship also hold authority over the project? In other words, does this other entity have "superiority derived from a status that carries with it the right to command and give final decisions" over the art piece? The institution or group may believe it has this status, but the artist may potentially disagree—the artist may contend that this entity's level of authority is actually less than what the entity thinks it has, or the artist may assert that the institution or group has *no* authority over the artwork. Additionally, it is possible that while the artist believes he or she has a specific amount of creative authority as the artist, the institution or group may disagree on how *much* authority the artist has.⁷

In some working relationships, an artist's and group's goals, means, or interpretations for an artwork may be the same, although, this is not required nor is it necessarily the case. If the group and the artist hold different goals, an artist could potentially find himself or herself in a situation where the other entity wields what it believes to be its authority in the project over the artist, so that that entity's goals are met and it achieves personal success.⁸ As a result of this action, the amount of creative authority an artist actually has may be altered or lessened. At times, these restrictions placed on the artist by the group may not hinder the artist's ability to complete his or her goals; still, at other times, restrictions placed on the artist could impede the artist's ability to reach such goals. To ensure that the artist achieves success, the artist may wish to increase his or her creative authority in the project, which would increase the artist's jurisdiction in the final outcome of the piece. I shall argue that achieving greater creative authority is possible for the artist if he or she forms a working relationship with the institution or group built on trust.

Daniel Buren: A Clash of Authorities

Let us first return to the censorship of Daniel Buren's striped canvas, entitled *Peinture/Sculpture (Painting/Sculpture)*, as part of the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition of 1971. Originally dating from 1956, the exhibition series had been designed to spotlight the most recent avant-garde trends,⁹ movements that rejected traditional forms of art. For the 1971 exhibition, curator Diane Waldman desired to make sure that each artist would have "ample 'breathing' space to make his contribution as effective as possible, thereby hoping to avoid the usual clutter and confusion typical of most group shows which evidence little or no consideration for the needs of the work."¹⁰ According to Waldman, Buren's hanging interior canvas came into conflict with her vision for the International, resulting in its exclusion from the exhibition.¹¹ The removal of *Peinture/Sculpture* reveals the conflicting interests and views of authority that may occur between an artist and an institution or group, and it illustrates just how many different parties an artist may find himself or herself in relation to, even when the artist seemingly enters into a single working relationship with just one institution. Buren found himself in the middle of a censorship controversy that included the museum's curator, the opposing artists taking part in the exhibition, and the art critics in New York.

As described earlier, Buren's installation featured two identical banners of cotton canvas woven in alternating blue and white stripes, a motif he had used over the previous four years since 1967.¹² According to Guy Lelong, author of *Daniel Buren*, a monograph on the artist, Buren had intended to reduce painting to its "degré zéro."¹³ By this, Buren meant to bring painting down to its most basic elements, creating a "minimum or zero or

neutral composition.”¹⁴ Buren writes in his 1970 translated article “Beware” that art at that time was

the illusion of something and not the thing itself ... painting should no longer be the vague vision/illusion, even mental, of a phenomenon (nature, subconsciousness, geometry ...) but *VISUALITY of the painting itself*. In this way we arrive at a notion which is thus allied more to a method and not to any particular inspiration; a method which requires—in order to make a direct attack on the problems of the object properly so-called—that painting itself should create a mode, a specific system, which would no longer direct attention, but which is “produced to be looked at.”¹⁵

As the material to which paint is so often applied, canvas is a fundamental part of most paintings; however, the canvas usually remains secondary to the applied paint, which commands the attention of the viewer. By painting a white stripe over the outermost white stripes of each patterned canvas, Buren allowed the canvas to govern the painting, rather than allowing the painting to govern the canvas. In this way the canvas was no longer hidden in the paint and the paint did not direct the viewer’s attention to a created image or formal problem. Buren’s paintings exist in their most elemental and honest form. According to Lelong, in this reductionism Buren soon discovered that this mode of painting “no longer had any value per se, [and] deduced that the striped fabric’s only value derived from the place where it was exhibited.”¹⁶ From this notion, Buren began to produce what he titled *in situ* works. *Peinture/Sculpture* was one of Buren’s very first of these works, in that the hanging canvas acted, as Buren calls it, as a “visual tool” to examine the attributes of the space in which it was placed,¹⁷ simultaneously revealing the space—the work’s location—as the work’s true frame.¹⁸ An *in situ* work is, therefore, created specifically for the space in which it will be shown, rather than created in a studio and hung in an environment not necessarily intended for its viewing.

So, when Buren was invited to produce a work for the Guggenheim International, he was presented with a unique opportunity to create an *in situ* work, for the museum's architecture is quite unlike any other in the world. Designed by American architect Frank Lloyd Wright, the architecture of the Guggenheim museum wraps around an axis as a seven-story spiral, guiding viewers along a circling ramp-balcony and projecting their gaze inwards towards the open central space of the museum and across to its other side. Because of the museum's powerful design, the Guggenheim creates a major obstacle to artists who wish to display their work in the museum, for the artworks literally hang marginalized at the edges of the building as the audience's attention directs inward towards the grandeur of the interior architecture. Lelong quotes Buren in describing that "the Guggenheim Museum is a perfect example of architecture which ... in fact excludes what should (normally) be on show there in order to exhibit itself instead."¹⁹ Buren seems to have considered this obstacle that confronts artists who wish to show their work in the Guggenheim when designing his *Peinture/Sculpture*, because his centrally hung canvas "painting" used Wright's own design to direct attention to itself from nearly every part of the museum. When visitors came to the museum, each person's gaze towards the central axis would no longer be met with an open void, but rather an enormous, blue and white striped canvas.

At first glance, by taking part in an exhibition at the Guggenheim, it may appear that the only entity with which Buren had a relationship was the museum administration. One-person exhibitions usually include only this single relationship between the artist and the administration, although this is not always the case. A group exhibition, on the other hand, encompasses multiple different relationships—in addition to his working

relationship with the museum administration, Buren would also have a relationship with each of the participating artists. By *relationship* and not *working relationship*, I mean that while Buren and the other artists may not have been working on the same project, Buren's choices could still potentially affect the other artists, and the choices of the other artists could potentially affect Buren. This does not mean that Buren was completely responsible for the effects of his choices on the other artists, for handling the inter-workings of an exhibition is part of the curator's responsibility. Nonetheless, these relationships exist. Thomas M. Messer, Director of the Guggenheim at the time of the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, confirms and elaborates on this concept of relationship in an April 1971 interview with art historian and critic Barbara Reise:

An exhibition is a complicated thing, both in its physical implications, and its balances and relationships between many people. In a group show in particular, the freedom of one becomes the coercion of another, so that an interrelationship of freedom has to be set up that protects, to a certain extent, everyone's visual stake."²⁰

Messer expands upon the idea of relationships by describing a balance that gives artists equal opportunity to produce and present work for an exhibition. He explains that this balance that may be affected by artists' actions—if some artists act with more freedom in a group exhibition, other artists must give up some freedom. It is this imbalance that the museum administration and some artists taking part in the exhibition felt Buren created when he installed his interior canvas in the museum.

Because *Peinture/Sculpture* hung in the center of the Guggenheim, some artists believed that the canvas blocked the view of their work from across the museum on the opposing side. According to art historian Alexander Alberro, certain artists, including Michael Heizer, Donald Judd, and Dan Flavin,²¹ complained that Buren's work "visually

obstructed their installations.”²² According to Flavin, Diane Waldman, one of the Guggenheim museum curators at the time of the International, took these artists’ complaint into consideration before making her decision.²³ In a statement in the British art journal *Studio International*, Waldman explains that “[t]he Buren banner ... was in direct conflict with the work of the other artists in the exhibition and this factor alone prompted the removal of his work.”²⁴ Messer agreed with Waldman’s view that Buren’s piece obstructed the other works in the exhibition, and explains in his interview with Reise, that in order “to protect the balance of freedom among all participants,” Buren’s work needed to be removed.²⁵

In his article “The Turn of the Screw,” Alberro believes this argument of obstruction to be mainly false²⁶ and that these artists had instead different motivations for wanting Buren’s work removed. He explains that because of the nature and positioning of Heizer’s and Judd’s artworks, neither piece could have been seen from across the museum even if Buren’s work was *not* hung.²⁷ Therefore, Buren’s work did not obstruct the view of those artworks. Additionally, Alberro explains that it was ironic for Flavin to complain about Buren’s piece, since Flavin’s work also compromised the appearance of other artworks due to the colored lights he used—“the same objections Flavin had to Buren could have been legitimately leveled against himself,” writes Alberro.²⁸ Because of the faults Alberro finds in these artists’ arguments, he believes something else triggered these artists to object to Buren’s canvas hanging. Additionally, these artists’ complaint is weakened by the fact that, according to Waldman, Buren asked Mario Merz, whose work “would run around the interior balustrade of the museum,” if Merz would object to Buren’s project. Buren reported to Waldman that Merz did not object.²⁹

Because Merz's piece would run along the entire interior of the central axis and only be viewed from an opposing side of the museum, he would potentially be affected the most by Buren's project. However, no complaint was made by this artist at that time.

Alberro explains then that instead of the few artists complaining about Buren's work because it "obstructed" the view of their works (an argument that Alberro holds to be mainly false), the artists actually complained because they were injured by the success of Buren's work. By utilizing the existing architecture of the Guggenheim, Buren effectively reversed the relationship traditionally observed between the art shown in the Guggenheim and the museum's architecture—instead of the museum drawing attention away from artworks, now the museum directed attention towards an artwork. As a result, Buren epitomized what the organizers of the exhibition had requested: "that the invited artists produce site-specific work that used the context of display as a point of departure."³⁰ Alberro argues that these complaints by the other artists are only the result of their realization of "the inadequacy of their own site-specific installations."³¹ Additionally, according to Lelong, Buren's and Judd's projects approached similar issues and accomplished the same goals in each of their pieces.³² As a result, because Buren executed his solution more effectively, his piece "was above all a monumental slap in the face for Donald Judd."³³ Therefore it was not the viewing rights of the other works that were injured, but rather, according to Alberro and Lelong, it was the artists' own egos.

However, if both Alberro's and Lelong's arguments are valid and the artists' complaint held faults, then what influenced the museum administration to decide against Buren? The actions, or lack of actions, by both Waldman and Buren created an environment for this decision against the artist to occur and what influenced Waldman's

decision was potentially a combination of the complaining artists, the administration, and, following Alberro's argument, the art critics representing conservative societal values. It is first important to recognize that for the primary people involved in the matter, each person had a very different view of what occurred. For example, Buren claims that "[c]ertain participating artists, led by Dan Flavin, immediately threatened to withdraw from the exhibition if the work was not immediately removed."³⁴ But Flavin refutes this entire comment from Buren stating that "[h]e's still lying (and you can't 'censor' that, Daniel)—about what didn't happen and did happen."³⁵ Additionally, Waldman claims that the only artist who did withdraw from the show was Carl Andre "who withdrew largely because he was dissatisfied with his work in the show."³⁶ However, both Buren and Andre disprove this, for Buren states that Andre "took his own piece out of the show as a protest against the censorship that mine had suffered,"³⁷ and Andre states that Buren's explanation was true and that "Diane Waldman's assertion that I removed my work because of any dissatisfaction with it is not true."³⁸ Waldman's credibility is also weakened by the fact that participating exhibition artist Sol LeWitt similarly had to correct one of Waldman's published statements in *Studio International*. Waldman wrote that "Buren's insistence that he was the injured party was actually refuted by LeWitt, Merz, Long and Darboven the evening before the exhibition was scheduled to open when they told Buren that it was his work that was compromising their own."³⁹ However, LeWitt states in a later edition of that art journal that "Daniel Buren's piece did not compromise my piece since one could not see it from across the ramp, nor did it compromise my set structure which was in the well of the museum."⁴⁰

Furthermore, while Buren explains that he notified the museum with exact dimensions and specifications of his project in October 1970,⁴¹ Waldman states that “Buren was reluctant to provide details for his proposal” and that “no specific dimensions existed” for the project.⁴² Additionally, Buren claims that his work was accepted in writing in early January 1971,⁴³ a letter which is on file in the Daniel Buren Archives in Paris,⁴⁴ but Waldman claims that she was very uncertain about the piece from the beginning and told Buren that she could not allow his canvas banner in the exhibition if it “interfered” with any of the other artists’ works.⁴⁵ Waldman writes that “[a]t no time ... did I give Buren an unqualified commitment to show his banner since it remained to be seen in conjunction with the other work in the exhibition.”⁴⁶ However, Alberro notes that in a telephone interview he conducted February 21, 1989 with

Edward Fry, one of the two curators of the 1971 International, [Fry] acknowledged that the museum had been fully aware of what Buren’s work would consist of ahead of time. When [Alberro] researched the 1971 International at the Guggenheim Museum Archives, however, these documents were missing from the files, and [Alberro] was told that Diane Waldman had them in her office because they were “confidential.”⁴⁷

Because of these circumstances, Waldman’s credibility slips even more. With such differences in opinion about what occurred, it is difficult to know for sure what statements to believe and to determine the true reasons behind people’s decisions. Was Waldman trying to cover the truth behind her choices and evade public criticism for her decision to remove Buren’s work? Or, were there misunderstandings between the curator and Buren, along with different interpretations of events and the meanings behind what people stated at the time of the exhibition? Because of the accusatory atmosphere surrounding this situation, it is a possibility that instead of someone simply not telling the

truth, each person had a different view of what happened due to miscommunication or misunderstandings. For example, while Flavin may not have intended to, or indeed did not, lead a group of artists against Buren, it is possible that Buren perceived a higher level of antagonism from Flavin than others and interpreted this as leading. Between Buren and Waldman, it may also have been possible that she thought the earlier proportions for the piece were temporary, while Buren believed he had expressed permanent dimensions.

Aside from miscommunication or misunderstandings, it is also likely that Waldman was aware of the probable size and the potential effects of the banner (even without exact proportions). In addition to Fry's testimony that "the museum had been fully aware of what Buren's work would consist of ahead of time," according to Buren, "Waldman even told me the maximum size of canvas I could use (35 feet). A size that I adhered to."⁴⁸ By asking Waldman for a maximum size, Waldman could have imagined a potentially large piece that could affect the other works in the museum. However, if this did not occur as Buren describes, Waldman states that she knew Buren wanted to use the center axis of the museum for his project,⁴⁹ and she showed concern for how Buren's work might interfere with other artists' projects, specifically Merz's piece.⁵⁰ This implies that she had imagined some type of potentially large work. Waldman states that she also agreed to send Buren floor plans to the museum,⁵¹ which could imply a larger-sized work for the central well of the museum, or at least make one question the size of the intended artwork. Even before seeing the piece in its physical position in the museum then, Waldman could probably have pre-visualized it in the central axis.

In her account of events, Waldman states that there were multiple transatlantic phone calls made between her and Buren, "in which [she] repeatedly expressed [her]

hesitation about the indoor part of his project,”⁵² and that “Buren was reluctant to provide details for his proposal” and this “problem” was never resolved.⁵³ Although one may doubt Waldman’s credibility, even if Buren did not provide Waldman the necessary information for his project, as she claims, Waldman still could have directly asked Buren for finalized measurements and a diagram of the project, explaining that she would cancel his work if he failed to comply. According to Buren, he had already supplied her with these dimensions, so he likely would have been willing to submit them again. And although Waldman states that she explained to Buren she could not commit to his work being hung if it interfered with other pieces, Waldman could have encouraged Buren to contact the other artists in the exhibition, such as he did with Merz, to discuss the effects of his work on their projects. None of these steps seemed to have been taken. For a curator who was concerned with producing an exhibition that accommodated everyone’s needs, why didn’t she take more initiative to assure that a conflict would not occur? Instead, it appears that Waldman was unwilling to make a decision and did not plan ahead for potential reactions to Buren’s artwork. Rather than take the time to analyze the artists’ complaint, as Alberro has done, Waldman seems to have wanted to see how events would play-out and if artists would object to Buren’s canvas painting, which would then confirm her concerns about the work. If complaints occurred, she could then easily determine that the piece would need to be removed because it did not comply with her desire to give every artist’s work “ample ‘breathing’ space.”

However, Waldman is not the only person who could have approached the situation in a different manner. According to Waldman, “Buren delayed his arrival to New York until just prior to the opening of the exhibition.”⁵⁴ His banner was also

installed the day before the show was to open, and according to Flavin, its installation was not even finished until later in the day when many of the participating artists had already left the museum.⁵⁵ The problem these installation circumstances caused is that very little time was allotted for any artists to discuss their oppositions to the work and little time was available for the curator, director, and artists to settle upon an agreement or come up with an answer to the problem. Because of the lack of time to find a resolution, the museum administration chose the simplest and most obvious answer: to remove the “problem,” which was Buren’s work. Furthermore, if Buren had taken the initiative to discuss his work with the other artists before the installation, or had chosen to install his piece further in advance, then the conflict may have been diffused and/or the logical fallacies in certain artists’ arguments (as pointed out by Alberro) could have been considered, allowing Buren’s work to remain.

Additionally, it may have appeared to Waldman that Buren entered the exhibition with assumed authority. If communication between him and Waldman had occurred as Buren described, that his project had already been completely accepted, this assumption is understandable. For why should the museum administration object to a project after it had been accepted? However, to Waldman, who states that she expressed hesitation to Buren about his work multiple times, Buren’s actions may have appeared as blatant disregard for the other artists in the museum and for Waldman’s position as the curator. From the museum administration’s point of view, this assumed authority may have shown a lack of respect for the authority the administration believed it had over Buren’s piece.

However, this notion of disrespect for authority can easily be interpreted differently, depending on one's view of what rights pertain to an authority figure. Messer supports the notion of a museum's *right* to control. He states that "I think that a museum concerned with current art must exercise its inherent responsibility to commit itself according to its best judgment and then present its convictions to a public."⁵⁶ Messer explains that it is the museum's role to help determine what is constituted as art, and by using the term "inherent responsibility," he implies that it is the museum's right to control what it presents to be art. LeWitt offers a different opinion on a museum's right to control the art that it presents, specifically if this control involves the removal of an artwork after it has been accepted:

It is my belief that a museum cannot accept a work conditionally and that once it is accepted, it should be shown. Otherwise, the museum (or other institution) reserves to itself the right of censorship ... If Mrs. Waldman had reservations as to the feasibility of showing M. Buren's piece, she should not have accepted this piece, otherwise she was obligated to show it.⁵⁷

According to LeWitt, the museum (and Waldman in particular) had the *right* to accept or decline Buren's artwork, and since authority is defined as "superiority derived from a status that carries with it the *right* to command and give final decisions [*italics added*]," one may say then that the museum had the authority to accept or decline Buren's work. In that sense, LeWitt may agree with Messer that the museum has the authority to control what it presents as art. However, LeWitt also believes that if the museum administration accepts a piece, then the museum is required to show it—the museum does not inherently have the right to cancel that work. If the administration then chooses to not show the artwork, even after it has accepted the piece, LeWitt states that the museum has therefore given to itself the right, or authority, of censorship—it is the museum giving *itself* that

authority, not anyone else.⁵⁸ LeWitt's statement implies that while the museum may believe it has the authority to censor because of its authority to control its presentation of art, an artist may not believe that the museum or institution has that authority to censor.⁵⁹ Regarding the artist's perceived authority, Buren seemed to believe that he did have the authority to complete his work as he saw best. For example, while Waldman explains that "[t]he responsibility for his work rests with the artist; the responsibility for the presentation of that work rests with the curator,"⁶⁰ Buren questions "[i]s it not possible that the exhibitor might be responsible for his work and also for its presentation? Since when and by what right has the curator decided how the work should be presented?"⁶¹ Waldman views the roles of artist and curator in terms of defined roles and that the curator has certain rights in presenting the work. This notion is refuted by Buren and he believes he actually had the authority over his artwork's presentation, not the curator or museum.

This fundamental issue of authority may be interpreted completely differently by artists and institutions. In certain situations, differing views may not affect the outcome of the project; in situations where authorities come into conflict, though, such as for Buren at the Sixth Guggenheim International, the institution may be able to play its trump card of power. There is little doubt that a museum has the power and capability to control what art is shown in its space, even after a work or project has been accepted. For another example, consider Hans Haacke's planned exhibition for the Guggenheim museum that same year of 1971. For the exhibition, the artist planned to comment on and explore different social and political systems. Haacke's project had initially been accepted by the museum for a one-man exhibition, but when Messer believed the project

was extending past what Messer and the trustees of the Guggenheim believed the museum was designed for, the project was canceled.⁶² In a letter printed in *Studio International*, Messer states that “[w]e have held consistently that under our Charter we are pursuing esthetic and educational objectives that are self-sufficient and without ulterior motive. On those grounds, the trustees have established policies that exclude active engagement toward social and political ends.”⁶³ The administration was not only capable of controlling the museum’s space, but it believed it had the right do so. While there may be disagreements in who has what authority, whatever group has the control or power in a situation will ultimately have the final say.

Even if Buren felt the museum administration disrespected his perceived notion of creative authority over his work, because of the museum’s ability to control the outcome of the artwork, it is more critical if the museum administration felt Buren disrespected its perceived notion of authority. This situation is not necessarily fair for the artist, for he or she is indeed working from a disadvantaged position. The artist should work to recognize the control and power of the institution or group with which the he or she works. Because Buren entered the situation with what was likely perceived by Waldman and the administration to be assumed authority, and because Buren did not seem to acknowledge the administration’s perception of its own authority, the administration may have felt disrespected. As a result, the administrators of the museum may have been less inclined to offer allowances for and exceptions to Buren from the museum’s pre-envisioned goals and direction. Additionally, if the museum interpreted Buren’s actions as disrespectful, the administration would likely not be encouraged to help the artist find a solution to the conflict that would satisfy the artist. Because of Buren’s last-minute

actions, he created an environment that forced the administration to quickly make a decision without considering the faults in the other artists' complaint, and an environment that did not allow time for the conflict to potentially diffuse. Unfortunately for Buren, because he likely did not appear from the museum's point of view to consider the administration's view of its authority, an environment was formed that may have discouraged the museum from offering him any help or exceptions for his artwork.

Other than the clash of authorities and views on authority, the removal of Buren's work also reveals how many groups Buren found himself in relation to. Each of these groups, artists, the administration, and art critics, were all able to influence Waldman's decision to remove *Peinture/Sculpture*. If no complaints had been made by any artists in the exhibition, it would have appeared that the canvas banner did not interfere with anyone's work and *Peinture/Sculpture* would have most likely remained. However, because there were complaints about this interference, Waldman chose to remove Buren's work. Additionally, the influence artists have in numbers may be observed. Flavin notes that Walter de Maria didn't like Flavin's work for the exhibition.⁶⁴ But Flavin's work did not have to be modified nor was it removed to please another artist. Having more artists complain about a single work could put more pressure on a curator to consider their views, even if pressure was not intended by the complaining artists. Buren also recognizes the influence other artists have over institutions in art: "this censorship was enforced by the reaction of a number of artists, and not of what is often called the System (i.e. the museum) ... inside the art world the system is the artist."⁶⁵ In the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, a few artists exercised their creative authority, claiming the right for their works to be viewed, to influence the museum curator to censor

Buren's work. If Buren had attempted to communicate with the other artists about his work, then perhaps they may not have felt so affronted by it. This shows that the relationships built between the artist and the parties other than the institution he or she deals with, such as artists, are important, for these relationships can determine how the authority over a work is distributed and how those authorities will exercise their powers over a piece.

When Waldman made her decision to cancel Buren's piece she was influenced by more than just the other artists and her personal curatorial statement of purpose: to give "ample 'breathing' space" to each artist's work; she may have been influenced by other members of the administration. Messer states that there "is an emotional and individual decision for those who take the responsibility for the work within the museum—the curatorial staff, the director, and by implication the trustees."⁶⁶ Messer breaks the museum administration into three components that can all influence a final decision for the museum. Even in the cancellation of Haacke's show, Messer explains that "the trustees have established policies that exclude active engagement toward social and political ends."⁶⁷ The decisions made by a museum administration are not solely determined by one person—the authority in any institution actually belongs to a set of individuals. An institution or group is not an objective entity with which one works, it is a subjective environment filled with human beliefs, values, priorities and biases. It is only a reflection of the humans who govern it and those same people have the potential to change what that institution or group symbolizes. If different people are in those positions, different decisions may be made, which will change the appearance of the institution's direction to the public. Messer continues by stating that some one eventually

must make a final decision: “Eventually somebody in a position to make such a decision has to be convinced that what he sees is, as far as he is concerned, relatable to his comprehension of art.”⁶⁸ Waldman’s decision was indeed influenced by her own vision for the exhibition, so, if a different curator or director had been in charge of the Guggenheim at the time of the 1971 International, it is possible that Buren’s work would not have been censored. Within the administration of the museum, the artist may be affected not only by the decisions of a curator or a director, but also by the individual decisions of a board of trustees that may govern the direction of the museum and its role.

Following Alberro’s argument, the third group that may have affected the outcome for Buren’s *Peinture/Sculpture* comprises the art critics representing a conservative society. Alberro writes that the early 1970s witnessed a general return to conservative politics and traditional values in the United States,⁶⁹ which left little support for the boundary-pushing avant-garde. According to Alberro New York art critic Hilton Kramer wrote multiple articles in *The New York Times* with the effect to rally “support against the new, ‘subversive’ avant-garde trends, which supposedly dealt ‘crushing blows to bourgeois tastes and values.’”⁷⁰ Alberro argues that essentially two main forces acted during the Sixth International: the curators of the major museums, who “accepted outright the new, more international avant-garde trends with a lack of any kind of judgment,” and people like Bell and Kramer who blamed societal ills and decay of traditionalism on the avant-garde.⁷¹ The Guggenheim International organizers were unfortunately caught in the middle. In the midst of this cultural controversy, they needed a successful show, and any weakness in the exhibition would give people like Bell and Kramer an excuse to argue against the event.⁷²

Unfortunately, not only did Buren's work cause upheaval within the museum, he also made controversial comments according to Alberro to *The New York Times* reporter Grace Glueck, for example, that he "not be referred to as an artist,"⁷³ and "that 'both artists and museums in the traditional sense are obsolete.'"⁷⁴ Already facing a neo-conservative society, comments like this brought increased criticism of the International by Glueck, according to Alberro.⁷⁵ And as the museum was trying to remain out of a potentially controversial argument over traditional and avant-garde values, Alberro shows that the museum felt these comments pulling them into the exact controversy they were trying to avoid.⁷⁶ Alberro concludes that when the museum made the decision to remove Buren's interior piece from the show, it was a reaction to the pressures felt from art critics and was their attempt to keep control of the situation.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, there was little Buren could do to control these social influences, a situation other artists may find themselves in as well.

Because participating artists, the museum administration, and art critics representing certain societal values all influenced the presentation of Buren's work, Buren found himself in multiple relationships with these groups, including a series of relationships with those who made up the museum administration. His working relationship with the museum curator is not his only relationship. For most artists who enter into a working relationship with a group or institution, they may easily find themselves in relationships with other groups or individuals that can influence the outcome of their work.

Fred Wilson: Building Trust

Changing the notion of what an artist is capable of—what his or her responsibilities may include—was an issue that Buren began to explore with his *Peinture/Sculpture*. He believed that as an artist, he had a right to determine the presentation of his artwork, a task traditionally handled by the curator. Buren is not the only one to challenge the role of the artist, though, for by the 1990s artists were more commonly investigating the issue. Beginning in 1991 and continuing through 1997, artist Renée Green had attempted to take on the roles of curator and exhibition designer in her project with the Drawing Center, a non-profit museum in New York City.⁷⁸ In artist Andrea Fraser's article "How to Provide an Artistic Service," which was first presented in 1994, Fraser notes the changing responsibilities and roles of the artist. In what she describes as "project work," which includes "post-studio, site-specific and/or public art activities," an artist's work may comprise "the work of presentation and installation; the work of public education in and outside of cultural institutions; [and/or] advocacy and other community based work, including organizing, education, documentary production and the creation of alternative structures."⁷⁹ Messer recognized in 1971 that art is an evolving expression and stated that "what may be art tomorrow may in fact not yet be art today. Art is a changing concept, and the whole history of art proves that its boundaries have been expanded from decade to decade, from century to century."⁸⁰ Although Messer acknowledged the ever-changing nature of art, it is possible that the Guggenheim administration was not prepared to adjust to changes in art that challenged the structure of the art world and role of the artist. This is also evident in Haacke's situation, for Messer

and the museum's trustees were unwilling to view the Guggenheim's role differently from the museum's Charter to pursue "esthetic and educational objectives."⁸¹ It is very possible that Buren and Haacke were both twenty years ahead of the change.⁸²

One artist stands out from the rest when challenging the role of the artist. In the early 1990s, The Contemporary—an un-housed museum that produces site specific works throughout Baltimore, Maryland—invited Fred Wilson to create a work in one of the city's permanent museums. Wilson chose the Maryland Historical Society and entitled his piece *Mining the Museum*, for which he was able to acquire the multiple roles of curator, archivist, designer, and educator. To obtain so many roles from the museum, what did Wilson do differently from Buren? The answer is that while Buren showed little interest for understanding the Guggenheim's view of its authority, Wilson assertively worked to understand and respect the Maryland Historical Society's view of its authority. If the artist wishes to change his or her role, attempting to take on roles that the museum traditionally holds with authority, then the artist is wishing to take authority away from the institution that the institution may believe it rightly possesses. From the museum's perspective, there must be a reason for it to give up some of its authority to the artist. This can happen when the artist respects both the institution's perceived authority and the fact that the institution is releasing its authority to the artist.

While Wilson did approach his project with the Maryland Historical Society with an attitude of respect, what is most intriguing about this situation is that to accomplish his project, Wilson used institutional critique. This method, if not handled well, potentially places a museum on the defensive side, making a working relationship difficult to build.

However, not only did Wilson build a working relationship with the museum, he and the museum both achieved their goals for the work, resulting in a very successful project.

Institutional critique, a direct questioning of museum authority and its intentions, has increasingly been used by artists since the 1960s. As an example, consider the museum tours of Fraser, in which she presented the “silent agenda of the museum” by touring the nontraditional and unexposed parts of the museum as “alias ‘docent, Jane Castleton.’”⁸³ In 1989 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Jane Castleton remarked upon the men’s restroom, separated by a single wall from a 1625 English Paneled Room. In this and other parts of her tour, Fraser, through Castleton, commented on how the museum makes distinctions between what spaces deserve a clean environment—the art and those who come to view it—and what spaces can be ignored.

On this side of the wall is a family inclined to dirt and disorder because of its unperfect social education.... Cleanliness of persons or rooms is wholly forgotten. The floors become littered with filth, for no one feels the desire or obligation to have it otherwise ... On the other side of the wall only a few inches away, the floor, neatly carpeted, is spotless.⁸⁴

The museum presents itself as a place of sophistication where visitors receive lessons in taste and culture, and anything of less sophistication is given less attention. Ironically, while the realities of unsophisticated education or taste are valued less, the museum still presents, for example, paintings, drawings, and photographs of these conditions as pieces of artwork to be valued. The patron can then sophisticatedly, and safely, take part in a less sophisticated world without endangering his or her own self-image as a clean and cultured person. As a result, the museum separates itself from the “real world,” growing more and more detached from the reality that exists outside of its walls.

As the subject of institutional critique, the museum is naturally placed at a disadvantage; the museum becomes passive—it is in a position to be examined for strengths and for weaknesses—rather than active. The “power” can be seen in the hands of the person performing the critique. Traditionally, the museum has control and the artist is in a disadvantaged position, but with institutional critique the roles are completely flipped: the artist has control and the institution is in a disadvantaged position. As a result, the feeling of a loss of power might place the museum in a defensive position. Will the critique ridicule or hurt the museum’s reputation? And if so, what will this mean for future funding and the job security of its employees? Or, will the critique focus on improving the museum and educating its employees, administrators, and audience, which can benefit the museum in the long run? To be an artist that uses institutional critique and enters into a working relationship with a museum, trust between the two parties is crucial for the project to even begin and then again to proceed.

In *Mining the Museum*, Wilson commented on the Maryland Historical Society’s practices by choosing to use artifacts and items already owned by the museum and re-present them in a show completely designed by himself as the curator. Some of the items he used had been previously shown, some had never been shown and were in great disrepair, and some items had existed hidden in storage to a completely unaware museum staff. Wilson redisplayed, reframed, and re-referenced these chosen items, analyzing what had been included and what had been excluded from museum exhibits, for example, racial historical issues of the region. In one piece, Wilson placed three specific busts owned by the museum on display columns—Henry Clay, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Andrew Jackson, all of whom had very little influence on Maryland’s history. Then on

three other columns, no busts were found and instead the titles for each were labeled Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, and Benjamin Banneker, three Marylanders. The fact that the museum owned three statues of less important individuals to the area and did not own three busts of African Americans important to Maryland prompts questions from the viewer, such as these offered by Lisa G. Corrin, editor of the *Mining the Museum* exhibition catalogue and curator at The Contemporary who coordinated Wilson's exhibition with the Maryland Historical Society: "Where are the busts of these prominent personages? Did no one see fit to 'collect' or commemorate them? Whose truth is on exhibit at the Maryland Historical Society? Whose history is being told? Who writes it? Who owns it?"⁸⁵ Wilson desired that the audience begin to ask these types of questions of the museum as they explored the third floor of the Maryland Historical Society where Wilson's exhibit was located. In another piece entitled "Metalwork, 1793-1880," Wilson juxtaposed slave shackles with silver vessels in a single display.⁸⁶ By placing these two items together, Wilson brought attention to the separations in class, race, and human condition that occurred within the same Maryland society. However, this presentation also commented on the museum's curatorial practices and choices in how art or exhibits are displayed. Under "normal" circumstances, slave shackles and silver vessels would never be displayed together, which raises the question: Are there certain relationships or truths that the museum chose to ignore or forget about? This reaffirms the fact that there are biases and subjectivities in every museum curation.⁸⁷

According to Corrin, the Maryland Historical Society had originally been designed to gather and preserve items from Maryland's history including issues such as "colonization, slavery and abolition," but the museum "intended to tell those histories

from the point of view of the society's all-male founding board."⁸⁸ In a contemporary world, the museum found itself to be out of touch with the community in which it resided. Situated in Baltimore, the museum lay in a culturally diverse community,⁸⁹ yet the museum had "ignored the histories of people of color."⁹⁰ Corrin writes that "[s]cant attention is paid to nonaffluent or nonwhite communities," for example, the museum never acknowledged the Baltimore civil rights riots that occurred between 1968 and 1969.⁹¹ According to art critic Maurice Berger, Wilson came to the Maryland Historical Society hoping to make "the institution more relevant to people who had never been regarded as an important part of its audience—particularly the poor residents, most of them black, who lived in nearby housing projects."⁹² This goal would entail taking a serious look at the museum's practices. Wilson would need to consider what the museum both presented and did not present in its exhibitions and also search for new ways to help the museum reach out to its community.

To accomplish this goal, Wilson designed his piece to shed light on the biases and agenda of the museum, its board of directors, and its curators. He placed the museum face to face with the reality of its situation—its discrimination of many of its community members and its ignorance of its privilege to control the education of those who enter the museum. Presenting any of this to the public could place the society, its curatorial staff, and its board of directors in an embarrassing situation. It would seem reasonable then for a museum to hesitate in accepting such a project proposal. However, the Maryland Historical Society not only accepted the proposal from Wilson, but gave him almost complete authority over its execution. One may naturally then ask, why? Wilson was able to accomplish his goals in *Mining the Museum* because of initial support for the

project from the Maryland Historical Society, and because Wilson developed a working relationship built on trust with those at the museum.

According to Corrin, Charles Lyle, director of the Maryland Historical Society, had a “desire to bring his traditional historical institution ‘up-to-date,’”⁹³ meaning that he wanted to address the museum’s past failures to include its nonwhite communities in its relationships and exhibitions, a goal that matched Wilson’s. This idea of both of Lyle and Wilson would involve reaching out to the entire surrounding community and addressing the museum’s educational, curatorial, and public relations practices, activities that would reach deep into the make-up of the museum. Wilson not only recognized this intrusive aspect of his work, he also understood the importance of having the director believe in his project. Wilson explains that “[b]ecause my work is so invasive, they have to want me to be there. Someone at the top has to want me to be there. Otherwise, I would not be able to do what I’ve done.”⁹⁴ If Lyle had had a different idea of what he wanted accomplished, Wilson’s project may not have been accepted, or may not have been accepted under the same terms. Having an authority figure back up an artist’s project is very important to the initial start-up of that artwork. The society accepted Wilson’s proposal because Lyle and Wilson had the same vision for the museum’s future. Wilson fit as the right piece in the puzzle.⁹⁵

Lyle and Wilson held similar visions for the museum and Lyle wanted Wilson to pursue his project at the society, but the project still carried uncertainties because Wilson would be critiquing the museum in *his* idea of what was appropriate and not what Lyle or the board felt was appropriate. It would seem natural for a museum in this position to restrict the artist or retain what it believed to be its authority in the project. However,

according to Corrin in the agreed upon rules, “The Maryland Historical Society would not refuse Wilson access to any part of the collection and would accommodate whatever requests he made, and Wilson would become part of the project staff, wearing whichever hats were required: curator, registrar, archivist, director, or trustee.”⁹⁶ Instead of keeping some authority as a sort of “checks-and-balances” system with the artist, the Maryland Historical Society willingly gave up nearly all voice in the project and granted Wilson almost complete autonomy. As a result, Wilson had great control over how the museum critique was presented and how the museum would be held accountable for its disregard of the local community.

It is impossible to know exactly why Lyle agreed to these terms with Wilson, however, what is evident is that there had to have been a very high level of trust in the artist. In order for the museum administration to give Wilson so much independence and authority over the project, the administration would have had to have some level of confidence and faith in both Wilson and what he wanted to create. The administration would also need to believe that Wilson would be truthful in creating what he claimed was his goal for the project. Without trust, why would the museum administration give Wilson so much authority? Wilson acknowledges the importance of trust in building a strong relationship with a group or institution: “I create strong and lasting friendships, and we earn each other’s trust ... My projects are only as good as the relationships I build.”⁹⁷ It is likely that the type of working relationship Wilson formed was a relationship built on trust. With this trust, Wilson was then able to receive greater authority from the museum to accomplish his goals for the project (goals which he shared

with the museum's director Lyle). To build the trust for such a relationship, Wilson spent his time working to understand, respect, and collaborate with the museum.

If Wilson understood the limitations of the museum, the situation the society was in, and the goals of the institution, then it would be easier for the administrators to believe Wilson took their needs into honest consideration and that he would not try to embarrass them. The administration could then build confidence in his character and motivations, which would help build trust. One of the ways Wilson built this understanding was by entering his project with no assumptions. Wilson explains that "I go in with no script, nothing whatsoever in my head. I try to get to know the community that the museum is in, the institution, the structure of the museum."⁹⁸ By entering the museum without any pre-judgments, he created the opportunity to first listen and learn what the limitations and needs of the museum were. Wilson also built understanding because he believed the knowledge of everyone who worked at the museum to be invaluable.

I interviewed all the staff people at the museum, from the executive director all the way to the woman who cleaned the silver. I wanted to get their sense of the museum, to find out how they felt about their jobs and to learn about the institution and its hierarchies and internal relationships ... Because I am not within the museum structure I become the sounding board for a lot of problems and, in a way, become very much a part of the institution. Some have said I become a kind of museum therapist.⁹⁹

Interviewing everyone at the museum not only showed Wilson's interest in appreciating from where those at the museum were coming, but the act of listening showed that he valued both their needs and the museum's needs. He let the institution and those who work there grow in their own space and timing. Additionally, through Wilson's actions to listen and understand those at the museum, those same people might have then become inclined to listen and understand Wilson. As a result, the people who would be affected

by Wilson's work may have then begun to build a relationship with his project, which could have encouraged support for the artwork and confidence in Wilson, leading to trust. This act of listening by Wilson also allowed him to become a member of the museum, rather than an external curator or artist. By not seeing Wilson as an outsider, those at the museum may have felt more comfortable around him and started to believe in his character and vision. By lacking any assumptions, valuing the ideas of those at the museum, and also listening to them, Wilson was able to build understanding with those at the society.

Wilson also worked to recognize and respect the authority the Maryland Historical Society believed it had over the museum and over Wilson's project. By demonstrating respect for this perceived authority, Wilson showed that he valued and honored the museum's right to make decisions. This would help the museum administration build confidence in Wilson, for the administration might then further believe that Wilson was not interested in embarrassing the institution. This confidence in Wilson and his motivations could then bring trust into the working relationship. Wilson demonstrated respect for the museum's perceived authority when he explained of the administration that, "[y]ou can push them to the edge, but in the end they have control over their own voice."¹⁰⁰ Wilson understood the museum's likely view of its own authority: that it had the final say in Wilson's work. By recognizing this authority over him, he showed the administration honor and respect. Wilson also showed respect by accepting restrictions on his own authority. As an example, Wilson states that "I have to give up certain things. For example, I can't talk about everything that I learn about an institution because if I did, the next institution would probably not allow me to do what I

want to do.”¹⁰¹ This acceptance showed that he was content with restrictions and therefore was not searching to take authority away from the institution. As a result, the museum administration likely felt less threatened by Wilson as an incoming artist and was more willing to engage in his vision for the work.

Additionally, Wilson explains that he is “not interested in blaming any particular curator or museum professional,”¹⁰² and states that “[t]hat’s the reason my projects are accepted by the museum in the end. Though our views may differ, I respect everyone too much to make fun of anyone.”¹⁰³ Wilson transparently explains that his motivations are not to injure a museum and that he wants to respect everyone there. If his statements are genuine, then these motivations will influence his attitude towards a museum, and his attitude will influence his actions. His motivation should, therefore, show through in his decisions pertaining to a project and how he relates to those at a museum. As a result, his actions will honor his statement, proving that he is not interested in blaming or injuring a museum and instead wants to value and honor the administration, a sign of respect.

Wilson was also sensitive in how far he pressed the museum. According to Wilson, “I try to ease people into these juxtapositions in a way that they can ingest. I take people to the precipice, and I don’t take them any farther ... I push them gently to a point a little beyond where they were, which makes them realize, ‘I’m beyond where I’m comfortable, and I can go further.’”¹⁰⁴ His sensitivity to the museum’s authority and state of development also showed respect for the position the administration was in. By recognizing the museum’s view of its authority over his work, his acceptance of restrictions placed on him, his own statement of respect towards the museum, and his

sensitivity towards the museum's situation, Wilson showed great efforts to respect the Maryland Historical Society's administration and employees.

Wilson also employed collaboration in building trust. As an act of unification, collaboration acts as an intersection of ideas and efforts from different parties and points of view. But it is more than that—true collaboration requires each party to give up something so that an agreement can be reached. Giving up a need or desire so that another party may achieve some of its goals is an act that places value on the other's ideas and points of view. This is an attitude that creates an atmosphere of respect, and through this respect, unification and trust may then be built.

To recognize his collaborative actions with the museum, recall that Wilson spent hours interviewing and listening to everyone who worked at the Maryland Historical Society. Wilson explains that

I need time to get to know how the museum works, to get some sense of the people there. I don't make generalisations. I work from the place of understanding and go from there ... The reason why I prefer to spend time is so that there is personal contact with the curators, time for them to come to understand what I am doing and why, time for me to relate what I am doing to ... the local community.¹⁰⁵

Listening is an action that places importance on the other person and values his or her

ideas, which is an important aspect of collaboration. Writer and art critic Reesa

Greenberg comments that “[t]he extraordinary amount of time Wilson has spent with the people who work on all aspects of his exhibitions helps personalize the issues of exclusion and facilitates collaborative rather than confrontational responses.”¹⁰⁶

However, while it is observed by Greenberg and others that Wilson participated in collaboration, Wilson worked to extend his relationships past collaboration. In fact,

Wilson notes that his relationships are not even collaborations: “I never approach museums to do a collaboration: I wait for them to approach me. And they are not actually collaborations at all. I create strong and lasting friendships, and we earn each other’s trust.”¹⁰⁷ When Wilson explains that his relationships are not collaborations and are instead friendships, he is moving past the notion in collaboration that requires one to “give up” certain things. In friendships the focus is not on giving up, but rather on giving. Wilson was not concerned with what he had to let go of so that he could accomplish his project, he was concerned with what he could offer the museum in order to accomplish his and the museum’s goals. And because friendship is reciprocal, the museum administration would likely also be interested not in giving to Wilson so that he could complete his project.

As an artist, Wilson was probably not interested in creating *Mining the Museum* for any arbitrary reason. He had a vision and a goal for the project: he likely wanted to change the way the public viewed museums and how the museum viewed itself. But Wilson probably also knew that in order to see this vision come to fruition, he would need greater creative authority over the work. Collaboration may help create a working relationship built on trust, but it does not insure that the institution will grant to the artist greater creative authority. A friendship means that the group or institution will *want* to give the artist something, perhaps more authority in the project. In building a friendship, Wilson was probably very interested in giving his time and energy to the museum so that the administration and its employees might benefit from his project. However, he may have also realized the benefit to his own work and the better chance of achieving greater

authority if he created a friendship rather than a collaboration—the administration would want to give back to Wilson what he needed to reach his goals for the project.

There were moments, though, that Wilson put the museum in a precarious situation with his work. He explains that the administration “could have just closed the floor if they didn’t like it, and there were moments when I didn’t know what they would do.”¹⁰⁸ For example, some of his projects included decisions that were potentially problematic to the institution. Wilson discovered multiple items in disrepair and badly conserved by the museum, which he showed in their tattered state.¹⁰⁹ Showing these items violates a museum taboo, since according to Corrin, “[d]amaged goods are an institutional shame hidden in the recesses of vaults, discreetly out of public view.”¹¹⁰ Presenting these objects made the museum’s practices and priorities very transparent to the public, creating a potentially embarrassing situation for the administration. Wilson also found items in the museum that few of the staff had ever seen or even knew were parts of the museum, such as a wooden tourist box with a ticket to Africa and objects made by Africans from Liberia.¹¹¹ That the museum was unaware of its own collection showed negligence on their part, a circumstance that the museum would traditionally and typically not want to be advertised to the public. The museum administration had the power to cancel Wilson’s show, and likely in its view, also the *authority* or right to cancel. The administration could have not allowed Wilson to use certain objects, or rejected the way he presented items because he was operating in the museum’s space and using the museum’s items. Without trust in the artist, the museum administration could have doubted the outcome of certain aspects of *Mining the Museum*, and any of the above examples could have prompted the administration to cancel parts of Wilson’s work.

It can be concluded, then, that cancellation did not occur at least partially because of the trust that Wilson had built between himself and the museum administration. Recall Wilson's statement from earlier: "I create strong and lasting friendships, and we earn each other's trust ... My projects are only as good as the relationships I build."¹¹² It was likely through Wilson's actions and motivations to achieve understanding, respect, and friendship with those at the Maryland Historical Society that he was able to form a working relationship built on trust with the museum administration. As a result of this trust, the museum could then grant Wilson greater creative authority. This creative authority not only helped Wilson reach his goals for the project, but because his goals were the same as the museum's director, Wilson also helped the museum administration achieve its goals.

While creating a working relationship built on trust may not be the only means to achieve greater creative authority for the artist, it is an important means and the idea is discussed by other artists, such as curator and modern art critic Iwona Blazwick when she describes her 1993 work in Antwerp. Blazwick, Yves Aupetitallot, and Carolyn Christov Bakargiev, all three curators, were invited to Antwerp, which had been named the Cultural Capital of Europe, to create a project for a festival that aimed to celebrate European unity.¹¹³ In the article "Serving Audiences," which was a roundtable discussion between her, art educator Susan Cahan, and artists such as Fraser, Blazwick discusses this project by focusing on how she and her team worked to successfully engage the wide range of different communities and interest groups of Antwerp in their project. These groups included the European Economic Community, which had their own economic motivations; multiple different cultural communities in Antwerp, some of

which were ignored, such as the Moroccan community, by the “cultural and intellectual ‘departments’” of the festival, as Blazwick states; and the museum in which Blazwick, Aupetitallot, and Bakargiev would work offered its own agenda for the project.¹¹⁴ To help show European unity and successfully deal with the issue of serving the multiple different communities that existed in Antwerp, the three curators invited three different groups into the museum to exhibit and discuss issues of gentrification of the city, neighborhood activism, and public participation in events.¹¹⁵

Blazwick felt the exhibit was a success, because not only did it bring in the Moroccan youth to participate in the project, a group that had been ignored by parts of the festival, but the exhibit also addressed different communities in the city and the theme of European unity by bringing different people from different backgrounds together into one location.¹¹⁶ However, Blazwick also notes that “the museum felt intruded upon.”¹¹⁷ In this situation, she may have viewed success solely in terms of her and the other two curators’ ability to accomplish the goal they had set out to accomplish: to create a project that celebrated European unity. The museum probably felt its perceived authority threatened because the curators came in and did what they wanted with the space, without regarding the needs or values of the museum’s director or staff. The curators had been so focused on serving the communities and the people that they seemed to neglect the needs of the institution. Blazwick recognizes that while their actions to serve the communities had been successful, their relationship with the museum had suffered.

Blazwick recognizes the lack of success on the museum’s side and understands that, “[i]t’s not enough to just parachute into a situation. You’ve got to have a long-term working relationship to generate a dialogue, and some kind of faith in a project.”¹¹⁸

Blazwick's comments reiterate the importance of creating those relationships with the institution with which one is working in order to find success. If a working relationship of trust had been built based on understanding, respect, and collaboration, which would have required the curators to spend more time with the museum, then the museum might have had more faith in the project.

However, forming a working relationship built on trust should not be confused as a simple formula to achieve personal success—the success achieved solely by and for a single entity. If an artist is only searching for personal success then he or she is not concerned with the needs of the other group. This lack of concern for the other party will likely become transparent through the artist's actions or lack of actions. This will make it difficult for the artist to form a working relationship built on trust with the other entity, causing the artist difficulty in increasing the likelihood of receiving more creative authority from the institution or group; this may cause achieving personal success to be more difficult. Granted there will be artists who are uninterested in forming a working relationship built on trust—for example, their goal may be to directly challenge the authority of the institution. For other artists who wish to achieve greater creative authority, it is important to consider the authority and needs of the other party. It is also important that this motivation and concern to be reciprocal—the other group or institution also needs to be concerned with the success of the artist. For even if an artist attempts to build a trusting working relationship, if the other entity does not reciprocate this then the artist will have to strive to make the project successful on his or her own, or choose to no longer take part in the project with that group or institution.

Andrea Fraser: Good Intentions, Poor Circumstances

As stated in the preceding chapter, not always do working relationships built on trust emerge from one's attempts to create them. As an example of this, consider Andrea Fraser's experience with the administration of the Whitney Museum of American Art when she produced an audiotape tour for the 1993 Biennial Exhibition. According to Fraser, she had attempted to collaborate with the administration's interests, but even with her efforts, she still faced strong opposition to her project ideas.

Fraser's audiotape tour, entitled *Recorded Tour*, was an edited series of interviews with curators of the Whitney Biennial, the museum's education director, and also its main director.¹¹⁹ The audiotape was a forty-five minute recording offered on individual headsets and cassette players, which was exhibited at a kiosk built specifically for the audio tour in the museum's front lobby.¹²⁰ Visitors could then have the opportunity to choose to take part in the project. Audio tours for other exhibitions at the time commonly featured the curator or artist explaining each work so that visitors to the museum might experience a tour personalized to each person's interests and pace. For example, a visitor could spend more time at one artwork than other visitors and not have to worry about a tour guide moving ahead of him or her, or a visitor could skip certain works he or she might be uninterested in learning about. However, instead of the voices on *Recorded Tour* providing information about the artworks, Fraser instead posed questions about the biennial for the curators and directors to answer. For example, she asked "Who do you think the audience of the biennial is? What do you think they want from the exhibition? Why did you select this particular work for the exhibition? What do you think that work

offers the biennial audience? What does that audience need to know in order to gain access to that work?”¹²¹ According to Fraser, writing in the early 2000s, what visitors to the museum heard on the audiotape tour “were the curators of the exhibition speculating on who you were and what you wanted, what you know and didn’t know and needed to know.”¹²² She added that “[r]ather than creating a fiction of intimacy and access, the tape made the distance between museum professionals and their audiences explicit.”¹²³ By observing the museum administration’s distance from the public and also its authority in decisions about how a work was exhibited, what information was offered to the public, and how this information was dispersed, *Recorded Tour* acted as an institutional critique.

While the audio recording acted as an institutional critique, Fraser’s original purpose was to create a work that would accomplish the directors’ and curators’ goal of “making a statement with the exhibition about the new administration at the museum and how the museum was changing.”¹²⁴ In other words, Fraser would be exploring what the new administration was about, its core ideas, principles, values, and vision for the future. In essence, Fraser would be exploring the museum’s identity: the qualities and characteristics that defined the museum. Fraser recognized that the museum’s identity was made up of a community of individual identities. It was the amalgamation of different beliefs and values that would influence the direction of the museum and its exhibitions. To investigate this concept of identity, Fraser wanted to engage the administration in her project, hoping to bring the museum’s identity to a more personal level with the audience. According to Fraser, she made several presentations to the administration on her audio tour proposal and discussed the matter multiple times with the curators of the museum.¹²⁵ Fraser explained that she “supported their ambition to

change aspects of the museum ... [and] wanted to collaborate with them on addressing their audience.”¹²⁶ Additionally, she “felt that the premise was that they wanted to collaborate with [her] as well.”¹²⁷ Not only would interviewing the director and curators directly address the issue of identity, the collaboration would act as a way for the museum administration to actively participate in a piece on its own identity.

Unfortunately, Fraser faced opposition from the museum, not only in arriving at this final project proposal (her three earlier proposals had been rejected), but also in the tape’s final form; according to Fraser, the “idea of collaboration disintegrated completely into threats to ‘postpone’ the piece if I didn’t hand over the script for review, and then demands that I reedit the final tape.”¹²⁸ However, this process was described slightly differently by Elisabeth Sussman, head curator of the 1993 Whitney Biennial. Sussman wrote in the biennial’s exhibition catalog that for the final recording, Fraser had “written and produced an audiotape, gleaned from interviews with the curators and the director.”¹²⁹ Fraser describes a process that forced her to edit the tapes, while by using the word “gleaned,” Sussman portrays a situation where information was gathered together in a collective manner and sifted down to present only the most poignant clips. Additionally, this makes it appear that Fraser chose to edit the tapes in her best judgment and that the museum was cooperative, instead of Fraser’s view that the museum’s administrators forced her to edit the tapes to meet their approval and that they were less than cooperative in creating her project. If the museum did not, as Fraser claims, plan to postpone her audio tour if she did not hand over the script for review and make her reedit the tape, Fraser would be in a position of lying. It is much more likely that the museum acted as Fraser claims, for while they do not affirm her accusation, they also make no

denial of it in the exhibition catalog for the biennial. Additionally, it would act as an effective public relations method for the museum not to advertise its censorship of Fraser's work, given the at-the-time current wide-spread public contention with and disapproval of contemporary art. The museum's actions can, therefore, be best explained by the events surrounding the biennial.

Appearing in 1993, the biennial occurred during a period of intense antagonism towards contemporary art. American journalist Arthur Lubow explained in his 1999 feature article for *The New York Times Magazine* that "it is hard not to feel that the venom spat at the Whitney [in 1993] was really directed at the larger art scene it represented."¹³⁰ While the 1980s experienced a boom in the art market, attracting people with more formal aesthetic values, by the early 1990s questions of identity became the motivating subject matter. Lisa Phillips, one of the Whitney curators at the time of the 1993 Biennial, described in the biennial's exhibition catalog that

[n]ow a new cry has arisen. The dictates of the [art] market are said to have been replaced by those of the political arena. ... Today everybody's talking about gender, identity and power the way they talked about the grid in the late sixties. The issues of context and presentation are paramount and formal invention has taken a back seat to the interpretive function of art and the priorities of content.¹³¹

For what some referred to as "identity politics,"¹³² these issues caused frustration for those who were accustomed to the more formal art of earlier decades. Sussman confirms this when she writes that at the time of the Whitney Biennial, "this was a moment of confusion and change to which critics were charged to respond."¹³³ As a result of the biennial occurring during this time period, and for pursuing its goal to reflect the recent developments in contemporary art, the Whitney Biennial was placed in a position to be

easily criticized for its continuation to produce “offensive” and “wasteful” art that had “no aesthetic value.” In reference to what the biennial presented then, according to independent scholar Charles A. Wright, Jr., “reviewers vehemently revealed a century old Kantian trump card of aesthetic value, rather than rigorously examining the rancorous discomfort the exhibition produced.”¹³⁴ Additionally, conservative art critic Roger Kimball wrote in 1993 that “the Whitney must be seen as yet another casualty of the Culture Wars,”¹³⁵ wars in which conflict over the subject matter in art that dealt with such political issues of identity and representation garnered a heated level of animosity.

The museum’s director and curators had predicted such a backlash against contemporary art. Phillips wrote that “[b]ecause the Whitney is more than any other big museum devoted to cutting-edge contemporary art, it is a lightning rod for change and makes some people uncomfortable.”¹³⁶ While the administration recognized it would be criticized, to still create a biennial that would focus on contemporary art that already invited more animosity than in years past would make the administration more hesitant. Fraser notes that “it was pretty clear that everyone at the museum was quite anxious about [the biennial].”¹³⁷ As a result, the director of the Whitney and his curatorial team would likely want to present a unanimous image of the administration, one that demonstrated authority over its decisions to determine what constituted art. Anything that made the administration appear uncertain or weak would create opportunity for critics to lambaste the administration of the museum for being misled and unknowledgeable about contemporary art.

Because the issue of identity was being explored by the rest of the exhibition, it would make sense for the administration to address it in itself, considering the museum’s

own identity as an institution governing contemporary art. This issue of identity did not only affect the art world, though. Artists were reflecting on the changes and issues that contemporary American society was facing. Heartney wrote that “[i]f, as it would seem, the purpose of this Biennial was to take the pulse of America, its vision is of a nation mired in racial, ethnic and sexual conflict.”¹³⁸ David A. Ross, director of the Whitney, confirmed this view of the country when he stated that “[t]he ‘1993 Biennial Exhibition’ comes at a moment when problems of identity and the representation of community extend well beyond the art world. We are living in a time when the form and formation of self and community is tested daily ... and the *politics* of identity hang heavy in the air.”¹³⁹ As an issue, “identity” was intricate, political, and sensitive, and affected not only many Americans, but as a result also this biennial. If the administration of the Whitney was to investigate its own identity, it would be offering itself as subject matter, (within an already sensitive and complex discussion of representation and identity), to be critiqued by the public and art critics. Because of the animosity already directed towards the biennial, placing the administration as subject matter within a contentious issue would put the director and his curators in an even more vulnerable position to be criticized. Already trying to appear unanimous, it is likely that the administration would want to take precautions in how its identity was portrayed by Fraser.

Additionally, change was occurring within the museum that would place the administration in a “perfect” location to be analyzed by the critics; according to Sussman the Whitney was facing its very own “identity crisis.”¹⁴⁰ Even as the museum had been searching for decades for its identity as the museum for American art,¹⁴¹ a history that journalist Arthur Lubow described as “tangled and tortured,”¹⁴² the Whitney had recently

changed directors and was also formulating a new direction in its curatorial practices. For Ross, this exhibition would be his very first Whitney Biennial¹⁴³ since he became director after Tom Armstrong left in 1990.¹⁴⁴ As a result, the administration as a whole had no history or experience in producing the Whitney Biennial and so they would likely be watched by critics to see what they would offer in this new stage for the Whitney. Additionally, the museum made curatorial changes from what had become a standard practice over the earlier twenty years. According to Ross, “[i]nstead of selecting works by a consensus vote among a curatorial team, this year’s Biennial was determined by a group of curators lead by a single curator-in-charge,”¹⁴⁵ in this case Sussman. But not only was Ross and his vision for the museum new, his vision for the museum was practically a rejection of the direction created by Tom Armstrong over the previous sixteen years (1974-1990)¹⁴⁶ of Armstrong’s tenure. Lubow writes that

[w]here Armstrong had been criticized for mounting midcareer shows of artists like Julian Schnabel, David Salle and Cindy Sherman, whose gallery prices were rising even faster than stocks in the go-go market, Ross was pilloried for spotlighting art that was tendentious—motivated by political concerns about gender, race or sexual orientation, rather than by “artistic values.”¹⁴⁷

Armstrong had been concerned with creating a permanent collection based on recognizable “household names” to help gain a larger audience for the museum based on the popularity of artists.¹⁴⁸ These actions appeared as discriminatory and elitist, refusing to show works of other issues emerging in contemporary art. Although Armstrong had faced criticism, by completely rejecting what Armstrong had worked to build Ross placed his new administration in a precarious position to be critiqued by the art critics. Would Ross’s vision help the museum find an identity? Was it creating a change in the

museum's direction that was necessary? Or, by abandoning what had come before, was this decision by Ross preparing the museum to be itself rejected as a legitimate museum of American art?

Additionally, just prior to Armstrong's firing, Armstrong had stated at a museum dinner, according to Lubow, that "I really don't know where we're going," understandably unnerving some trustees and donors."¹⁴⁹ Ross, then, would likely also be under the auspicious gaze of the board of trustees who had fired Armstrong. As the primary supporters of the museum, they would want to see Ross make decisions that created a future for the museum. Although Ross likely knew his direction would create controversy, this added pressure by the board may have made him and his team more anxious about the biennial. And, if this new direction did not eventually succeed, it would be one more cause not only for criticism of Ross and his curators, but the removal of Ross from his position. Therefore—because the biennial was occurring during a period of antagonism towards contemporary art; because the museum administration chose to place itself as subject material to be critiqued within a sensitive discussion on identity; and because the museum was going through its own "identity crisis"—the administration would probably want to appear to the public, the critics, and the board of trustees as a unified team that had direction and a plan for how to achieve its goals.

So, when Fraser decided not to follow the administration's initial idea about how to explore its own identity, it is not surprising that the administrators were hesitant and became anxious about what she wanted to do differently. According to Fraser, the administration had wanted her to do "something with the permanent collection and/or about the history of the museum."¹⁵⁰ However, Fraser did not feel this would be the most

effective and appropriate way to approach the topic and instead she created a series of proposals that differed from what the administration initially wanted.¹⁵¹ They finally agreed on her fourth proposal, which was the audio tour.¹⁵² Ironically, this was one of Fraser's first ideas, although she thought they would never have accepted it so she did not initially propose it.¹⁵³ According to Fraser, "[i]t may have been accepted partly because, after the rejection of my earlier proposals, things were getting a bit tense."¹⁵⁴ The museum probably realized that some decision was going to have to be made, or else the project would not happen at all. Another explanation is given by artist Stephan Dillemath: "[n]o wonder the curators of the Whitney Biennial agreed to Andrea's third proposal: guilt over their own authority and the wish for transparency."¹⁵⁵ The administration recognized the authority it believed it had over the project or the administration recognized the control it possessed. The administrators probably also recognized that for a project to occur, the artist needed to have some control in what happens and that the artist had a right to some control, otherwise the artwork would no longer be the artist's work but rather the administration's.

Even though the administration finally accepted Fraser's project, Fraser's recordings, in addition to the environment the biennial was situated in, likely caused the administration to become nervous about the final form and potential effects of her work. Fraser described that "[a]s I proceeded to do the interviews, it became clear that there was a lot of anxiety about my project, as well as about the exhibition as a whole, and that became a limit in their discussions with me and in proceeding with the project."¹⁵⁶ Fraser explained that she had given presentations to some of the members of the administration, participated in discussions with the curators,¹⁵⁷ and as said earlier, she felt they originally

expressed that they wanted to collaborate with her on the project. However, when Fraser began the interviews she discovered that there were conflicting views being recorded on tape.¹⁵⁸ Because conflicting interests would not present a unified image to the critics and the public, it is not surprising that the museum would want to take a second look at what the final tape would contain.

Additionally, Ross explained that the new mode of curation for the biennial, with one head curator, was occurring because “[i]t reflects our desire to produce an exhibition that projects a personal curatorial perspective within an institutional framework—an organizational structure reflective of the issues of individual and community identity embedded in this Biennial.”¹⁵⁹ Having conflicting interests would seem to take away from the new curatorial experiment of having a head curator and an exhibition that reflected her individuality. However, having different points of views also represented an aspect of the community identity the museum wished to reflect, and this aspect was what Sussman focused on in the exhibition catalog. Sussman explained Fraser’s *Recorded Tour* as a piece that allowed “unanimity, disjunction, and contradiction to simultaneously appear in a museum text ... offer[ing] a paradigm of the hopes and fears of community life.”¹⁶⁰ Sussman pointed out that conflicting ideas are a natural part of a community and recognized that this was part of the identity of the Whitney museum. In explaining the project to the readers, Sussman took what potentially could be seen as a weakness in the administration and explained it as a natural part of any community, something to be understood and embraced.

So, who was successful? Fraser and the Whitney administration were successful in only select ways. Fraser did end up with an audio tour that featured recorded answers

from the director and curators to the questions she had proposed to them, although the manner in which the answers were given did not satisfy Fraser's vision. According to Fraser, "[m]y interpretation of ... how the tape was perceived during the exhibition, is that, because the interviewees knew that the material would be made public, what you hear is how they are trying to represent themselves. You hear an effort at self-presentation, and behind that you hear anxiety."¹⁶¹ These recordings, in a way, defeated the purpose of the project which was to examine the true identity of the museum and what it was about. Although, it may have succeeded at that same goal, because it captured the anxiety that the administration truly did feel about the exhibition, it just didn't explore their ideas and opinions more deeply as Fraser wanted to. For the museum, a part of the project was successful because something was produced about their identity, but it was also not what they necessarily had envisioned. Ironically, Wright states that the 1993 Whitney Biennial "neglect[ed] to address the identity of the inquiring institution[—the Whitney]."¹⁶² While the museum wanted to investigate its own identity for the exhibition, by censoring Fraser the administration and the artist ended up creating a piece that did not even appear to satisfy that very goal of self-reflection.

The problem that occurred to create this only partially successful work is that from the very beginning, Fraser and the administration of the Whitney had two very different ideas about what a project on the museum's identity should entail and how it should be constructed. Fraser did not want to participate in the museum's initial idea, and because of the circumstances, the museum was uninterested in pursuing Fraser's ideas. This situation differs from Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum* precisely because

Fraser lacked initial support from the institution for her project. This difference may be attributed to the timing, an aspect that an artist may have less control over. The Maryland Historical Society was ready to take some risks in changing the way it related to its community, but because of the circumstances in the early 1990s and the issues surrounding the biennial, the Whitney placed certain restrictions on the degree of risk it was willing to take in the presentation of itself to the public. Perhaps Fraser would have been better off waiting until the next biennial to produce her project once the administration felt it had more confidence in its ability to curate a biennial and last through intense criticism. However, while postponing Fraser's project until later might have increased the likelihood of the museum accepting the project, would it have been the best timing for her to produce the work? If she had done it later, would the project have been as poignant and appropriate with the other works in the exhibition? If she waited longer would the issue of identity have lost its significance? Would Fraser have even been interested later in pursuing this project idea? These are all speculations, and we shall never know. We can see that while the artist may have control over when to propose certain projects, he or she does not necessarily have control over the surrounding circumstances, such as current events or societal issues and attitudes. All that the artist can do then is choose to work with a different institution that may be more receptive to his or her work, or the artist can attempt to influence a museum's vision for a project, which may or may not yield cooperative results for the artist.

While Fraser had limited control over the timing of the biennial and produced the work that she felt best fit the needs of the museum and the biennial, we can still observe what aspects of her project she had control over, such as her motivations behind her work

and the efforts she took to form a working relationship with the museum built on trust. In the article “Serving Audiences,” Fraser explained the motivation behind her project, her intentions, and how she thought by doing her audio tour she was pursuing the museum’s vision for the project.

I thought it could be liberating for an audience to hear, for example, how even the representatives of the institution could not identify with that institution completely ... I didn’t want to misrepresent them. I just wanted to represent things that were not necessarily consistent with maintaining authority as legitimate representatives of that kind of institution. But I thought that was consistent with their own intentions. I thought that engaging in a critique of the institution and its history, of the legitimacy of the culture that it represented, was consistent with what they wanted to do. Maybe all those social contradictions are just a little too much for five individuals to represent personally to an audience of thousands.¹⁶³

Fraser states that she honestly meant to fulfill the museum administration’s desire for a piece on its identity. She never intended to place the museum administrators in a position they were unwilling to take. While it might have been liberating for an audience to hear the genuine truths behind the administration’s identification with the museum, though, it was probably not what the museum administrators wanted, since they would likely want to show a unified and consistent identity to the public and to the critics. For the administration, it seemed important for them to maintain an appearance of authority over the exhibition, and Fraser’s wish to “represent things that were not necessarily consistent with maintaining authority as legitimate representatives of that kind of institution” would have opposed the administration’s needs at the time of the biennial. It is more likely that those “social contradictions” were too much for the administration to handle, not because they were a group of five versus a public of thousands, but because they could not afford to appear vulnerable in a period of such antagonism towards contemporary art and the

Whitney. This is likely why the museum wanted Fraser originally to do something about the history of the museum, because that aspect of the museum's identity would not put the administration in a place to be analyzed and critiqued by the public. There appears, then, to have been some sort of miscommunication or misunderstanding between Fraser and the administration with regards to what the needs of the administration were—the museum did not effectively help Fraser understand what its needs were, and/or Fraser misunderstood what those needs were. So, one aspect of building a trusting working relationship did not exist: the understanding of each group and its needs. This is not to say Fraser did not attempt to understand the museum's needs, for she did state that she had had discussions with them over her project proposals, but miscommunication and misunderstandings are still possible even with the best intentions.

Additionally, Fraser commented in reference to her audio tour that while “I knew that that wasn't the way they would want me to engage those issues [of what the administration wanted to address in the biennial], I still felt that I did it in good faith.”¹⁶⁴ Here, Fraser acknowledges that she intentionally did a project counter to what she thought the museum would want. While she still thought her approach satisfied the goal of the museum, the museum might have viewed this distinct choice by Fraser as an attempt to disregard the museum's situation and authority over its identity. The administration might therefore have regarded Fraser's choice as refusal or apathy of the artist to collaborate with the museum. Additionally, Fraser came into her project with assumptions in regard to her freedom as an artist. “I had agreed to participate in the exhibition as an artist, and, as an artist, I'm accustomed to a certain kind of autonomy and a certain kind of control. There's an assumption that any form of direct interference in the

production or presentation of an art work amounts to censorship.”¹⁶⁵ Fraser assumed that she had some type of ultimate authority over her work. In reaction, the museum administration may have become apprehensive towards Fraser’s project proposals.

While the museum may have found it difficult to work with Fraser, as noted earlier Fraser believed she *was* collaborating. Additionally, as an artist, she had a personal vision for the outcome of her work. Artists do not generally create works arbitrarily or without a reason; they invest themselves in their projects with purpose. As an artist who takes her work seriously, Fraser would have likely wanted to produce a work she believed was the best she could produce, a piece with which she felt satisfied and a piece she felt had effectively addressed the issue of identity. When the Whitney administration invited Fraser to do a piece on their identity, she likely made it her goal to create a work that honestly and genuinely addressed this issue. Unfortunately for Fraser, the museum administration seemed to hold an expectation for the work different from the expectation Fraser likely held for herself. When Fraser did not meet the museum administration’s expectation, the administration seemed to be unwilling to give Fraser the space and flexibility that many artists need in order to produce a work that reflects the artist’s vision and purpose. In this sense, from Fraser’s perspective, she likely felt that the museum administration was not willing to collaborate with her as an artist.

However, Fraser also recognized some important issues that collaboration brings into question. As an extension of the above quote Fraser states the following:

There's an assumption that any form of direct interference in the production or presentation of an art work amounts to censorship. And yet, the premise of collaboration calls some of those assumptions into question. If I am asking representatives of an institution to speak to me, and to allow me to use their voices directly, then perhaps I can't hold on to all of those artistic prerogatives without there being a danger of violating

the trust implied by that participation. I wasn't clear on that, and I'm still not clear.¹⁶⁶

When Fraser refers to collaboration, she recognizes that it may require one to give up certain things, in this case “all of those artistic prerogatives” that she was accustomed to. It may have been this aspect of collaboration that the museum administration expected of Fraser.

Because of the possibility for such different interpretations of events and of people's motivations and actions, it is very likely that miscommunication and misunderstandings occurred between Fraser and the Whitney administration. In situations like the one in which Fraser found herself, where she was not only working with an institution/group, but where that institution disagreed with her vision, it becomes even more important for both sides to recognize the reasons behind each other's needs. The museum administration could have better attempted to understand why Fraser needed more space and flexibility to work, and they could have asked Fraser why that space and flexibility was so important to her. In exchange, Fraser could have worked more to understand *why* the museum hesitated in letting her have greater creative authority like what she was accustomed to. However, Fraser also notes that she found it difficult to continue discussions on her project with the administration. As quoted earlier, Fraser states that “it became clear that there was a lot of anxiety about my project, as well as about the exhibition as a whole, and that became a limit in their discussions with me and in proceeding with the project.”¹⁶⁷ Discussions are the responsibility of both parties not a single entity, so to create this important in-depth discussion, both the administration

and Fraser would have needed to be willing to offer to the conversation this type of information asked of them.

Conversations like these can help the artist and the administration pinpoint the real factors responsible for guiding each other's decisions and also help them understand one another's reactions and attitudes towards the other. If this had occurred, Fraser might have had a better understanding of the pressures the administration was facing and been able to come up with a project that, while satisfying her goals, would more likely be accepted by the administration. While the circumstances surrounding the biennial may have influenced the museum's hesitation towards and censorship of Fraser's *Recorded Tour*, both the administration and Fraser could have encouraged more discussion that investigated the needs of each person and group, the differing perspectives of one another, and the reasons for the different decisions that were made.

Richard Serra: A Missed Opportunity

While in Fraser experienced a certain amount of censorship from the Whitney, she ultimately was able to have her work shown. For Richard Serra, complete censorship prevailed over his structure *Tilted Arc* when the U.S. Government tore it down at its location in Federal Plaza in Lower Manhattan. In 1981, according to Serra, he installed what was contracted to be a permanent installation at the request of the General Services Administration (GSA) Art-in-Architecture program.¹⁶⁸ In 1989, after a lengthy political battle that went through the Federal Court of Appeals,¹⁶⁹ *Tilted Arc* was finally removed.

Art critic Douglas Crimp describes Federal Plaza by writing that “[t]he Jacob K. Javits Federal Building and its plaza are nightmares of urban development, official, anonymous, over-scaled, inhuman. The plaza is a bleak, empty area, whose sole function is to shuttle human traffic in and out of the buildings.”¹⁷⁰ Surrounding the plaza are different federal buildings, including New York City’s federal and state courthouses and the United States Court of International Trade.¹⁷¹ Because *Tilted Arc*, a 120-foot-long curved, steel wall was placed in the center of the plaza, Douglas Crimp explains that “*Tilted Arc* was thus situated in the very center of the mechanisms of state power.”¹⁷² However, the sculpture was also situated in the plaza to effectively cut the public space in half, dividing a space that had been designed, according to Crimp, for traffic control. While Serra’s design did not obstruct this normal flow of people,¹⁷³ Crimp explains that its positioning “engaged the passerby in an entirely new kind of spatial experience that was counterposed against the bland efficiency established by the plaza’s architects.”¹⁷⁴ The arc made people reconsider the space around them—no longer an open and generic

plaza, people were daily confronted with a divide, an object, a sculpture that forced onto them a new landscape. Instead of the wall adorning the plaza, adjusting its position, size, and imagery to fit the needs of the space and the symbolism of the federal government, the wall restricted the public's viewing ability of the space. As a result, *Tilted Arc* made people adjust to *it*, and consequently, the arc overwhelmed the plaza with its presence. According to Serra, this was not a poorly designed sculpture, as some people came to believe. Serra had specific reasoning for the decisions he made on *Tilted Arc* and had intended for the work to be site-specific. Serra explained that "I want to make it perfectly clear that *Tilted Arc* was commissioned and designed for one particular site: Federal Plaza. It is a site-specific work and as such not to be relocated."¹⁷⁵ However, this intention of site-specificity was also part of the root of what caused some of the public, primarily those that worked in the buildings adjacent to Federal Plaza, to respond negatively towards the sculpture.

When the structure was installed in 1981, according to Serra, there were few complaints and for the following three years "there were no protests whatsoever against *Tilted Arc*."¹⁷⁶ But in late 1984 complaints began to increase, spearheaded, according to Serra, by Chief Judge Edward D. Re, who worked in the Court of International Trade and who complained about the sculpture's "aesthetic distaste"¹⁷⁷ and that it was "responsible for the plaza's accumulation of graffiti, waste, and litter."¹⁷⁸ Additionally, according to Serra, in January 1985 a new New York regional GSA administrator was appointed, William Diamond, who agreed with Re's position against *Tilted Arc*.¹⁷⁹ A hearing was arranged by Diamond, and written in a letter from him to announce the public hearing he explained its purpose was "to decide whether or not the art work known as *Tilted Arc*

currently on the east plaza of the Jacob K. Javits Federal Building in Manhattan should be relocated to increase public use of the plaza.”¹⁸⁰ While not all employees of the federal buildings surrounding Federal Plaza opposed Serra’s work, Re effectively campaigned to have the piece removed, gaining support from employees of the plaza buildings. Unfortunately, the actual legal battle that ensued and the process by which it was carried out was done, according to some, in a less than honest manner. For example, according to Serra, “Diamond acted as both prosecutor and judge in this case. He assembled what was in effect a vigilante group, without legal status, to overturn a binding contract that had been concluded three years earlier.”¹⁸¹ Also, U.S. Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum wrote in a letter to the acting GSA administrator Ray Kline that “the convening of a hearing by an administrator who, according to news accounts, has already made up his mind about the art, appears to be a breach of proper procedures and violative of the explicit agreement with the artist as to the display of the sculpture.”¹⁸² But even with these reservations and complaints about the process, the hearing proceeded.

Arguments from those who wanted the sculpture’s removal included, according to art critic and curator Juli Carson, that “*Tilted Arc* was a security hazard ... [it] was an index of the government’s wasteful insanity ... [and it] was, simply, ‘the Berlin Wall of Foley Square.’”¹⁸³ One testimony, from Vickie O’Dougherty, physical security specialist for the GSA, went into a long account of how the arc could act as a blast wall for terrorists and violent activists, how the arc was used for graffiti (mostly on the side of the wall not viewed by security personal from the federal buildings), and how the inability to view the other side of the wall also offered the problem of drug dealings.¹⁸⁴ According to Serra, prior to the sculpture’s installation, a GSA study was done on the arc’s potential

“effect[s] on existing pedestrian traffic patterns, about whether it would inhibit surveillance, about what additional lighting would be needed, about whether it would interfere with drainage, and so forth,” and Serra made the requested changes.¹⁸⁵

According to this study and the fact that Serra adjusted his work to any surveillance problems, *Tilted Arc* should not have caused the significant surveillance problems that O’Dougherty claims. It is also possible that the study did not find these issues to be persuasive, or that they did not take them into account. There were also those that simply did not like the aesthetic nature of the piece, an issue Serra explains would likely arise with any work of art.¹⁸⁶ Finally, according to Serra, Diamond complained “that since *Tilted Arc* was installed the plaza could no longer be used as a place to hold public events such as military band concerts and art shows.”¹⁸⁷ However, Serra points out in response to Diamond’s complaint that the plaza had hardly been used for any such events, numbering less than twenty in the seventeen years the plaza had existed.¹⁸⁸

Unfortunately for Serra, in the end the campaign against his sculpture won. However, the intensity of the campaign against *Tilted Arc* seems out of proportion to the face-value complaints. It can be better understood by recognizing the purpose of the sculpture’s site-specificity and the relationship the public had with the sculpture.

Tilted Arc had emerged from a history of site-specificity that began with the minimalists in the 1960s. These artists were concerned with the relationships that developed between the viewer, the artwork, and the space between the two, and also how the context of that relationship changed as the viewer moved through space.¹⁸⁹ Art historian Miwon Kwon explains that “[s]ite-specific work in its earliest formation, then, focused on establishing an inextricable, indivisible relationship between the work and its

site and demanded the physical presence of the viewer for the work's completion."¹⁹⁰ In this form, the site was interpreted as a physical place. As time progressed, according to Crimp, Richard Serra, as well as other artists such as Daniel Buren, Hans Haacke, and Robert Smithson wanted to take this notion of site-specificity further.¹⁹¹

Kwon explains that a new concept of site emerged which was the critique of the systems that control the parameters and environment of what and how art is considered. In other words, the site is institutional critique. She writes that the site was "conceived ... not only in physical and spatial terms but also as a *cultural* framework defined by the institutions of art."¹⁹² If we apply this concept of site-specificity to Wilson and Fraser, we can see that both critiqued the institution. Wilson commented in *Mining the Museum* on how and what the museum presents to the public, revealing the control the museum has in determining what information is dispersed. Fraser explored this authority and control of museum curators and directors in *Recorded Tour*, presenting what the administration of the Whitney museum thought of its audience and what the audience should see. Kwon further explains this new concept of site to not only be a critique of art institutions, but also to challenge the economic aspect of the art world and the idea that art should be "autonomous."

To be "specific" to such a site, in turn, is to decode and/or recode the institutional conventions so as to expose their hidden yet motivated operations—to reveal the ways in which institutions mold art's meaning to modulate its cultural and economic value and to undercut the fallacy of the "autonomy" of art and its institutions by making apparent their imbricated relationship to the broader socioeconomic and political processes of the day.¹⁹³

This new idea of site also acts then as a reaction to earlier modernist theories, which view art as autonomous and which, as a result, promote the economic exchange of artworks as commodities. Crimp explains this idea of modernism by stating that

[i]f modern art works existed in relation to no specific site and were therefore said to be autonomous, homeless, that was also the precondition of their circulation; from the studio to the commercial gallery, from there to the collector's private dwelling, thence to the museum or lobby of a corporate headquarters. The real material condition of modern art, masked by its pretense to universality, is that of the specialized luxury commodity. Engendered under capitalism, modern art became subject to the commodification from which nothing fully escapes.¹⁹⁴

According to Crimp, Serra's artwork rejected art as a commodity, which is controlled by the capitalistic system. Crimp writes that "[f]or Serra, the whole point of sculpture is to defeat this surrogate consumption of art, indeed to defeat consumption altogether and to replace it with the experience of art in its material reality."¹⁹⁵ Because of this rejection, Serra's sculpture took part in this conceptual discussion of site. Crimp also finds that Serra participates in this discussion by challenging the institutional environment that sets limitations on the capabilities and definitions of art. According to Crimp, "[i]n reorienting the use of Federal Plaza from a place of traffic control to one of sculpture, Serra once again used sculpture to hold its site hostage, to insist upon the necessity for art to fulfill its own functions rather than those regulated to it by its governing institutions and discourses."¹⁹⁶ In this way, Serra's *Tilted Arc* denied the commercial gallery, the museum, and the art buyer their abilities to participate in the selling, moving, and circulation of art, effectively moving himself and his artwork outside the institutional and economic systems that control so much of the art world.

In defense of his work, Serra established very strongly that his work was site-specific and could not be moved: “I want to make it perfectly clear that *Tilted Arc* was commissioned and designed for one particular site: Federal Plaza. It is a site-specific work and as such not to be relocated. To remove the work is to destroy the work.”¹⁹⁷ But which site was Serra discussing? He may have been referring to the site of institutional critique that only occurred when his piece was situated physically in the plaza. For only when the arc was placed to physically divide a plaza surrounded by symbols of power could its arrogance and refusal to be tamed by authorities such as the museum, the gallery, and economic commodification be witnessed. Or could this quote also be interpreted and understood to mean physical site-specificity? For the person who walked through the plaza became the viewer of art and his or her spatial relationship with the plaza was altered in reference to the sculpture. In reality, Serra’s piece satisfied both readings of site-specificity. The work was about the viewer’s relationship with the wall and the physical space around it and it was also physically tied to the plaza because of the critique it created on the ruling institutions over art. The site of institutional critique occurred only when the arc was present in Federal Plaza. Removing the structure would remove *Tilted Arc*’s subject of physical site-specificity, consequently destroying the work, and its site of institutional critique, therefore also destroying the work.¹⁹⁸

This explanation of site-specificity is important in order to understand Serra’s motivations in creating his work. However, it became evident through the legal battle over *Tilted Arc* that there was a general misunderstanding or limited view of site-specificity. Dwight Ink, acting administrator of GSA, explained his view that “[t]he *Arc* was planned very carefully and specifically by the artist for the Plaza. In that sense, it is

site-specific. I am not persuaded, however, that it would be destroyed if it were moved to another compatible place with adequate viewing space.”¹⁹⁹ Ink is presenting a view of physical site-specificity, but does not recognize that removing the sculpture destroys that subject of the work. Additionally, Ink does not recognize the view of site-specificity to mean institutional critique. This limited view is the first problem for why people were able to be persuaded against Serra’s sculpture. With complaints about a lack of aesthetic taste in the structure and the inability to use the plaza, in addition to potential security hazards caused by the sculpture, the decision by many to oppose *Tilted Arc* was determined by physical, tangible, and observable information.

Perhaps if those who opposed the artwork had fully understood Serra’s more conceptual site and also the development of this type of site in the context of art history, a different outcome might have occurred at the hearing. However, Crimp notes that

[the defenders of *Tilted Arc*] could not be expected to explain, within the short time of their testimonies, a complex history that had been deliberately suppressed. The public’s ignorance is, of course, an enforced ignorance, for not only is cultural production maintained as the privilege of a small minority within that public, but it is not in the interests of the institutions of art and the forces they serve to produce knowledge of radical practices even for their specialized audience.²⁰⁰

Crimp is describing a general attitude from museums and other art institutions towards the public, those who do and those who do not go to the museums, that denies them the deeper understanding of artistic practices. For producing this knowledge would result in patrons of the museum and others to no longer feel a need for the guidance offered by the museum. In an effort to control the knowledge of the public and perhaps also the dependency of the public on the art institutions, Crimp claims that these institutions have denied this deeper understanding from reaching more people. The knowledge to

understand the concept behind *Tilted Arc* had been made unavailable to the public and there was not enough time to explain these ideas thoroughly enough in order to convince the opposition of the legitimacy of conceptual site-specificity.

In addition to rejection based on physical characteristic of the work and a lack of understanding of site-specificity, it is also possible that people rejected the arc because of the alienation it created. Because of the way *Tilted Arc* interacted with the plaza, according to Crimp it “was considered an aggressive and egotistical work, with which Serra placed his own aesthetic assumptions above the needs and desires of the people who had to live with his work.”²⁰¹ This is not to say that because *Tilted Arc* appeared to overwhelm the plaza and not take into account the views of the employees in the surrounding buildings, that Serra should never have built his sculpture. To create such an overwhelming work was one of Serra’s intentions. He designed this work to create discomfort, which would force the viewer to reconsider his or her relationship with the artwork and the space in which it resided. Additionally, it is likely that similar to Fraser, Serra had been accustomed to a certain level of creative authority in his work. He had a vision for his project and wanted to execute it in a way that he felt best critiqued his working environment and responded to issues posed by the commodification of art. However, while Serra entered into an effective working relationship with the GSA to make sure the parameters of his contract were clear and that his project was approved, making any adjustments he was required to, he never consulted the public. He did not speak about his project with those who worked in the federal buildings and who would encounter the sculpture every day. This does not mean he should have received their approval to do his sculpture, but without any contact from the artist, and then to receive

such an overwhelming sculpture in one's work environment is bound to elicit a sense of subordination from the employees of Federal Plaza. Feeling a lack of influence over their own work environment and seeing decisions come down from the federal government that showed no concern for their interests might cause people at Federal Plaza to feel alienated from the government, the artist, and also the artwork. Why would the employees appreciate *Tilted Arc*, if to them it represented oppression and government control? Ironically then, while Serra's efforts to overcome institutional control were accomplished by his artwork, at least seemingly for the period before his work was removed by the government, his actions actually just displaced the control, moving it onto the Federal Plaza employees. In addition, the employees also likely felt oppression from and resentment towards the art world. According to Crimp, "[w]ith accusations that an elitist art world had foisted its experiments upon them, many office workers signed petitions for *Tilted Arc*'s removal."²⁰² By creating a work that was out-of-reach from the general public's understanding, and then by not offering an understanding to them, Serra helped form an environment in which the public felt both ignored and controlled by the art world, only being used and never informed. Serra and *Tilted Arc* may have alienated the employees then, because he never appeared to contact them and explain his ideas—the work represented to them impersonal government authority and an elitist art world. Just as Serra rejected control from higher institutions, so too the employees would want to reject what symbolized to them to be control: *Tilted Arc*.

While the hearing proceedings seemed to be suspiciously handled, and certain people, such as Judge Re, would likely have complained about the sculpture no matter what Serra had done, the artist missed out on one golden opportunity that could have

helped him keep *Tilted Arc* in its location: public support. In the proceedings, the public's authority became evident in its ability to influence government through "democracy," for if the public had held overwhelming support for the sculpture, Re's case would have lost its fervor and a hearing may have never even occurred. Because of the influence the public had over the artwork and Serra's creative authority, and because Serra's actions affected the employees at the plaza, a relationship existed between him and the public. Unfortunately, Serra seemed to have ignored this relationship. For the employees and other public to have supported Serra's sculpture, they needed to have some sort of relationship with the artwork, perhaps what one could even call a feeling of ownership of the sculpture. As a result of this relationship, the public may have been more likely and willing to defend *Tilted Arc* rather than oppose it.

The problem with creating a sense of ownership by the public for the sculpture is that the concept defeats Serra's goal to create art that is free from commodification. John Beardsley, who wrote a book on art in public spaces for the National Endowment for the Arts and is quoted by Crimp, explains other ways to help the public create a relationship with a public artwork: "An artwork can become significant to its public through the incorporation of content relevant to the local audience, or by the assumption of an identifiable function. Assimilation can also be encouraged through a work's role in a larger civic improvement program."²⁰³ However, Crimp criticizes this policy because it asks the artist to give "[the public] something with which they can positively identify"²⁰⁴ which may not accurately reflect the truth of their situation. Additionally, Crimp explains that with this policy, by providing a positive symbol, the artist is in reality providing "a symbolic form of consumption."²⁰⁵ Again, this counters Serra's goal for

commodity-free sculpture. There is another type of relationship that can be encouraged and created between the public and a public artwork that does not follow the idea of ownership—it is a relationship of respect and understanding. In this relationship, the public is not required to embrace the artwork or approve of it, but they may come to value it for the ideas the artist is trying to explore.

By simply speaking to those that would be affected, Serra could have changed many attitudes. Wilson points out that “[s]ometimes, just interacting with artists can enlarge a community's view of the world and become a value to a community. If such a relationship develops, whatever you produce becomes more important.”²⁰⁶ If Serra had spent time to develop a relationship with the people who would be affected by his work, he could have shown them understanding, which might have encouraged the public to try and understand Serra, his artwork, and his ideas. Additionally, by spending time to educate the public on his art, Serra could have encouraged people to value the piece.²⁰⁷ As a result, employees of Federal Plaza could have started to build a relationship with *Tilted Arc*. They may have started to value and support the work, even if they did not agree with it.

Educating the employees of Federal Plaza would not only have informed them about the work so that they might value it, educating them would also have shown that Serra valued both them and their education in the arts. In this way, he would have shown respect for the employees and potentially helped change their attitudes away from animosity towards a supposed elitist art world.²⁰⁸ This could have decreased the intensity of antagonism against *Tilted Arc*. Additionally, Serra could have worked to educate the public on site-specificity, a key concept in his work and a poorly understood issue, a

problem which influenced the removal of his work. Education on this topic may then have helped Serra's case when and if it eventually reached the hearing. By meeting with the public and educating them on his art, Serra would have employed two of the concepts that help form a working relationship built on trust—understanding and respect.

Although Serra did not enter into a working relationship with the public, but rather only a relationship, these actions by Serra would have encouraged the public to support his work. Understanding, respect, and collaboration can yield positive results in many different situations and relationships, not just in a working relationship.

In terms of his own goals, then, was Serra successful in *Tilted Arc*? An obvious answer to this is “no” since his work was destroyed. And not only was it destroyed, but in being destroyed it fell subject to the commodification that Serra worked to overcome. However, even in its destruction, Serra may have found some level of success. One could say that it was because Serra's work so successfully moved outside the confinement of institutions, that to regain control over the artwork the government had to remove it. Additionally, Serra's work is today well-known for its removal by the government, and it is possible that if it had never been removed, *Tilted Arc* would be far less recognized. Although removal was likely not an initial vision Serra had for his work, if he is satisfied with its significance in art history, then he has achieved success.

Conclusion

While the removal of *Tilted Arc* may not have been one of Serra's original goals, as explained earlier, its place in history may be a sign of success for the work. As a result, the artwork also employs a new form of site-specificity that extends beyond institutional critique. According to Kwon,

the distinguishing characteristic of today's site-oriented art is the way in which the artwork's relationship to the actuality of a location (as site) *and* the social conditions of the institutional frame (as site) are both *subordinate* to a *discursively* determined site that is delineated as a field of knowledge, intellectual exchange, or cultural debate. Furthermore, unlike previous models, this site is not defined as a *precondition*. Rather, it is *generated* by the work (often as "content"), then *verified* by its convergence with an existing discursive formation.²⁰⁹

This site is really an extension of the already conceptual "institutional frame" site, but it is not a "precondition"—in other words, this new site is a secondary concept to the primary concept of the work. This means that it may not have been the intentional idea behind the piece, but it becomes part of a greater discussion of another subject matter.

Take for example Fred Wilson whose *Mining the Museum* participated in all three sites. This project was physically site-specific to the Maryland Historical Society, and it was site-specific in its critique of the institutional framework of the museum. Wilson also satisfied this third site because his work entered into a dialogue about the African-American and Native American position in recorded history and with how the Baltimore community viewed its citizens of these minorities. The dialogue on these issues is a site of his work—his project is specific to the site of this discussion. As other examples of this type of site, Kwon continues by explaining that "different cultural debates, a

theoretical concept, a social issue, a political problem, an institutional framework (not necessarily an art institution), a community or seasonal event, a historical condition, and even particular formations of desire are deemed to function as sites now.”²¹⁰ What happened in Serra’s case is that his work, because of its censorship, entered into a new site-specificity. Crimp writes that “when the radical aesthetics of site-specific sculpture are reinterpreted as the site of political action, public sculpture can be credited with a new level of achievement. That achievement is the redefinition of the site of the work of art as the site of political struggle.”²¹¹ Serra’s work is now discussed in terms of its “political struggle,” unintended by the artist, but now a site important to the work. Crimp continues by explaining that “Serra runs the risk of uncovering the true specificity of the site, which is always a political specificity.”²¹² As a result, in addition to the earlier mentioned possibility of success, Serra may also find success in the fact that through the removal of *Tilted Arc*, his work achieved a new level of site-specificity.

Serra’s ability to locate success in the face of his work being destroyed puts him in a unique position. If he can find success regardless of the work’s outcome and his original goals, does this mean that he can lack any concern for the institution’s or group’s ability to achieve its goal to reach success? Indeed, it would seem that Serra did not need to work with the public to achieve his goals the way Wilson or Fraser needed to work with their respective institutions. However, in most cases an artist cannot depend on a work’s removal or censorship to create the type of success found in *Tilted Arc*. Instead, the success of a project may be determined by the completion of an artist’s goal for the piece. As a result, when an artist enters into a relationship or a working relationship with an institution or group, the artist will find that that entity plays an important role in the

final outcome of the artist's project. Because an institution or group may have control over the artwork's outcome, that entity may use what it believes to be its authority to restrict the artist's creative authority. The artist may disagree with the institution's or group's perceived right to limit his or her authority, but because the artist is in a disadvantaged position of less power, this complaint will likely not affect the outcome. As a result, the artist will need to respond to those ideas of the partaking institutions and also respond to the limitations and restrictions imposed by these new authorities over the artwork.

What the artist chooses to do in response is entirely his or her own choice. The artist may choose to ignore the perspectives of the institution or group, particularly if the artist believes his or her goal can be reached regardless of another entity's influence on the work. But if the artist finds that the entity can influence his or her ability to achieve his or her goal for the work, the artist may wish to achieve greater creative authority. To do so, the artist should consider the needs of the institution or group with which the artist works and attempt to form a working relationship built on trust through understanding, respect, and collaboration.

Unfortunately, even if the artist attempts to build trust in a working relationship, if his or her efforts are not reciprocated by the institution or group, the artist must either work with such obstacles or leave to find a better opportunity. In order for a trusting working relationship to form, not only must both sides wish to work together, but an authority figure from the institution or group needs to support the artist's vision for the artwork. Without this support, a project may never begin or it may be destined from the very beginning to not achieve the artist's desired end.

Notes

1. Daniel Buren, "Gurgles Around the Guggenheim: Round and About a Detour," *Studio International* 181, no. 934 (1971): 246. Logistical descriptions of Buren's work and noted dates are gathered from this source.

2. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, unabridged, 3rd ed., s.v. "authority."

3. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, unabridged, 3rd ed., s.v. "authority."

4. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, unabridged, 3rd ed., s.v. "author."

5. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, unabridged, 3rd ed., s.v. "success."

6. Creating a piece for oneself as the primary motivation is not selfish in a negative sense, for creation can be a very personal process.

7. The exercising of the perceived authority by a new party may take different forms. For example, it might be seen as the signature of an institution's formal approval of an artwork and artist, such as when the National Endowment for the Arts chooses to which artist to offer a grant. However, in other situations a perceived authority may take the form of censorship. Censorship may occur when the artwork does not fit the needs of the group, or is not successful in a group's opinion; however, censorship may also occur when an artist's work threatens the authority of a group, such as the government or a museum's board of directors. Censorship then acts as a reaction to a possible loss of control, and so these groups fight to keep or gain control by denying the artist freedom in his or her work.

8. Because the institution or group will likely have an interest in the final outcome of the project, success can be defined for more than just the artist—it is defined for each group involved in the project. If the artist completes what he or she sets out to accomplish, then the artist is successful. If the other group's goals have been achieved or values have been honored, then that entity or institution is successful. However, only when *all* groups involved in the artwork are satisfied that their goals have been achieved and find personal success does the piece achieve *complete success*—personal success for all primary parties involved in producing the finished artwork. Goals for the artist and other entity may be altered along the way as a means to accommodate the other group's or person's needs, yet to achieve complete success, both the artist and the institution or group must, in the end, be satisfied that their final goals have been reached.

9. Alexander Alberro, "The Turn of the Screw: Daniel Buren, Dan Flavin, and the Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition," *October* 80 (1997): 63.

10. Diane Waldman, "Gurgles Around the Guggenheim: Statement by Diane Waldman," *Studio International* 181, no. 934 (1971): 247-248.

11. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.

12. Guy Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, trans. David Radzinowicz (Italy: Flammarion, 2002), 34.

13. Guy Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, 34.

14. Daniel Buren, "Beware," trans. Charles Harrison and Peter Townsend, in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1999), 148.

15. Buren, "Beware," 147.

16. Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, 37.

-
17. Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, 37.
18. Buren, "Beware," 154-155.
19. Daniel Buren, *Les Écrits, 1965-1990*, ed. Jean-Marc Poinot (Bordeaux: capcMusée d'Art Contemporain de Bordeaux, 1991), 1:432, quoted in Guy Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, trans. David Radzinowicz (Italy: Flammarion, 2002), 39.
20. Thomas M. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened': Thomas M. Messer in an Interview with Barbara Reise 25 April, 1971," interview by Barbara Reise, *Studio International* 182, no. 935 (1971): 37.
21. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 72-75. Within these pages Alberro states that these three artists, Heizer, Judd, and Flavin, offered a complaint in regards to Buren's work. However, the petition Buren sent around in an effort to keep his work from being removed was intentionally *not* signed by five artists. "The petition, in Daniel Buren Archives, Paris, reads: 'We want to be showing the [*sic*] Daniel Buren's work in the GIE as it was installed before the opening.' It is signed by all of the artists in the exhibition except for Dan Flavin, Donald Judd, Walter De Maria, Michael Heizer, and Joseph Kosuth, who refused to sign" (69 n. 57). By not signing, it is implied that these five artists had a problem with Buren's work. However, not signing the petition does not necessarily mean that each of these five artists actually voiced a personal complaint to the administration of the museum.
22. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 72.
23. Dan Flavin, "The Guggenheim Affair: Letter to the Editor," *Studio International* 182, no. 935 (1971): 6.
24. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
25. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened,'" 37.
26. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 72.
27. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 73-75.
28. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 75. Alberro finds that Dan Flavin is the only artist who had legitimate reason to complain, for his work was a site-specific light sculpture that consisted of thirty-two fluorescent lights and utilized the entire sixth ramp of the museum. Because of the extensive nature of Flavin's work, Alberro notes that "Buren's banner suspended in the central well of the building would have obscured some of [Flavin's installation's] vantage points." However, Alberro also points out that Flavin's installation "flooded a vast expanse of space with emanating colored light and compromised its surroundings, including the works that were adjacent to it as well as Buren's painting suspended from the building's dome."
29. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
30. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 65.
31. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 72.
32. Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, 43. As referenced by the title, Buren's piece works as both a painting and a sculpture. As the first and last stripes of the canvas were painted white, it could be seen as a painting, however, because of where and how it was hung, it also became a sculpture because of its relationship to its space. From one perspective, the canvas appeared flat and wide, blocking the entire view of what was behind it. However, as the Guggenheim visitor traveled up or down the ramp, the observed width of the

canvas shrunk until it became a single line and what was behind the canvas could then be seen (Lelong 39). Like Buren, Judd was interested in exhibiting items that were both two and three-dimensional.

33. Lelong, *Daniel Buren*, 43.
34. Buren, "Round and About a Detour," 246.
35. Flavin, "Letter to the Editor," 6.
36. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
37. Buren, "Round and About a Detour," 246.
38. Carl Andre, "The Guggenheim Affair: Letter to the Editor," *Studio International* 182, no. 935 (1971): 6.
39. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
40. Sol LeWitt, "Guggenheim 2: Letter to the Editor," *Studio International* 182, no. 936 (1971): 61.
41. Buren, "Round and About a Detour," 246.
42. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
43. Buren, "Round and About a Detour," 246.
44. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 68 n. 55. Alberro notes to "[s]ee Diane Waldman, letter to Daniel Buren, January 6, 1971, in Daniel Buren Archives, Paris."
45. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
46. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
47. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 68 n. 55.
48. Daniel Buren, "The Guggenheim Affair: Reply to Diane Waldman," 5.
49. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
50. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
51. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
52. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
53. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
54. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.
55. Flavin, "Letter to the Editor," 6.
56. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened,'" 35.
57. LeWitt, "Guggenheim 2," 61.

58. It is important to note that LeWitt is not stating that a museum does not have the authority to censor at all. He just states that once the museum accepts a work and the artist has produced that work, that museum does not have the right to cancel the piece.

59. These conflicting views of authority raises the following questions: Even if an institution has the *capability* and *power* to make a decision about an artist's work, does that inherently give it the *right* or *authority* to do so? Even if an artist has the *capability* to create a work according to his or her liking, when working with a group or institution does that capability give the artist the *right* and *authority* to do it? The answer to this is again very subjective and complex, for as an author, an artist naturally has some level of authority over his or her project.

60. Waldman, "Statement by Diane Waldman," 248.

61. Buren, "Reply to Diane Waldman," 5.

62. Thomas M. Messer, "Gurgles Around the Guggenheim: Letter to the Editor," *Studio International* 181, no. 934 (1971): 249.

63. Messer, "Letter to the Editor," 248-249.

64. Flavin, "Letter to the Editor," 6.

65. Buren, "Round and About a Detour," 246.

66. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened,'" 35.

67. Messer, "Letter to the Editor," 248-249.

68. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened,'" 35.

69. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 61.

70. Hilton Kramer, "Art and Politics: Incursions and Conversions" (1970), reprinted in *The Age of the Avant-Garde: An Art Chronicle of 1956-1972* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), 528, quoted in Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 67.

71. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 67.

72. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 81.

73. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 81.

74. Daniel Buren, as quoted by Grace Glueck in "Museum Presents Wide Media Range," *The New York Times*, 10 February 1971, sec. 4, p. 26, quoted in Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 81.

75. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 81.

76. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 68, 82.

77. Alberro, "Turn of the Screw," 81. Because Buren's work had triggered an inner controversy for the museum, the addition of his comments in the newspaper would reflect negatively on the museum. The museum's choice to censor Buren can then be seen as an attempt to keep power and control of their reputation (their authority), but also it can be seen as a way to avoid being censored by the public and art critics so that they might keep their freedom to do future contemporary art works that would still be accepted by the society.

-
78. Green in Barry, Green, and Wilson, "Serving Institutions," *October* 80 (1997): 123.
79. Helmut Drexler and Andrea Fraser, "Services: A Proposal for an Exhibition and Topic of Discussion," 1993, quoted in Andrea Fraser, "How to Provide an Artistic Service: An Introduction," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 69.
80. Messer, "'Which is in fact what happened,'" 35.
81. Messer, "Thomas M. Messer's 'misgivings,'" 248.
82. If challenging the role of the artist and the institution was an intention of both Buren and Haacke, time has revealed that they may have successfully been important in the changing concept of roles. As explained in the introduction, this type of success that relies on the passage of time may have been unforeseen in 1971, so in the moment of the exhibition, it likely appeared that both artists were unsuccessful. Neither Buren nor Haacke were able to show their work in the Guggenheim.
83. Lisa G. Corrin, "Mining the Museum: Artists Look at Museums, Museums Look at Themselves," in *Mining the Museum: An Installation by Fred Wilson*, exh. cat., ed. Lisa G. Corrin (Baltimore: The Contemporary, 1994), 4.
84. Andrea Fraser, "Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk," *October* 57 (1991): 112.
85. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 13.
86. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 13, 15. Descriptions of artworks were referenced from these pages. For descriptions of all individual artworks in *Mining the Museum*, please reference pages 13-18. Additionally, Wilson's art is found in how he arranges and exhibits the individual items, their relationships with each other, and the new found meanings that result. The individual items themselves do not necessarily constitute a piece of art in this specific exhibition.
87. It is important to note that Wilson's exhibit works the same way, for his curation is also just his idea of how these objects should be presented.
88. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 11.
89. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 10.
90. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 8.
91. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 12.
92. Maurice Berger, "Viewing the Invisible: Fred Wilson's Allegories of Absence and Loss," in *Fred Wilson: Objects and Installations, 1979-2000*, exh. cat., ed. Maurice Berger (Baltimore: Center for Art and Visual Culture University of Maryland, 2001), 10.
93. Corrin, "Mining the Museum," 10.
94. Fred Wilson, "Collaboration, Museums, and the Politics of Display: A Conversation with Fred Wilson," interview by Maurice Berger, in *Fred Wilson: Objects and Installations 1979-2000*, exh. cat., ed. Maurice Berger (Baltimore: Center for Art and Visual Culture University of Maryland, 2001), 34.

95. Having the other party's initial support is something artists may have very little power over. It is in someone else's hands whether an artist's project is approved, whether a grant is given to him or her, or whether an artist is invited to present in an exhibition. The museum has the ultimate control and seemingly also the ultimate authority to determine if it will even accept an artist's proposal. All an artist can control is his or her own actions and reactions in dealing with the other entity.

96. Corrin, "*Mining the Museum*," 12.

97. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 34.

98. Fred Wilson, "Making the Museum Mine: An Interview with Fred Wilson," interview by Donald Garfield, *Museum News*, May/June 1993, 49, quoted in Corrin, "*Mining the Museum*," 13.

99. Wilson in Barry, Green, and Wilson, "Serving Institutions," 120-121.

100. Wilson in Iwona Blazwick, Susan Cahan, and Andrea Fraser, "Serving Audiences," *October* 80 (1997): 136.

101. Wilson in Barry, Green, and Wilson, "Serving Institutions," 121.

102. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 34.

103. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 34.

104. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 35.

105. Wilson in Reesa Greenberg, "Making Up Museums: Revisionism and Fred Wilson," in *Parachute* 76 (1994): 38.

106. Greenberg, "Making Up Museums," 38.

107. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 34.

108. Wilson in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 136.

109. Corrin, "*Mining the Museum*," 14-15.

110. Corrin, "*Mining the Museum*," 14.

111. Corrin, "*Mining the Museum*," 17.

112. Wilson, "Conversation with Fred Wilson," 34.

113. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 132.

114. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 132.

115. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 133-134.

116. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 133-134.

117. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134.

118. Blazwick in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134.

-
119. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
120. Andrea Fraser, "Recorded Tour: An Introduction to the 1993 Biennial Exhibition of the Whitney Museum of American Art," in *Andrea Fraser: Works 1984 to 2003*, ed. Yilmaz Dziewior, (Hamburg: Kunstverein, 2003), 141-142.
121. Fraser, "Recorded Tour," 141.
122. Fraser, "Recorded Tour," 141.
123. Fraser, "Recorded Tour," 141.
124. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134.
125. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
126. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
127. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
128. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
129. Elizabeth Sussman, "Coming Together in Parts: Positive Power in the Art of the Nineties," in *1993 Biennial Exhibition*, exh. cat., ed. Elisabeth Sussman (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1993), 24.
130. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney," *The New York Times Magazine*, 11 April 1999, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9C03EEDE1F39F932A25757C0A96F958260> (accessed 30 July 2008).
131. Lisa Phillips, "No Man's Land," in *1993 Biennial Exhibition*, exh. cat., ed. Elisabeth Sussman (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1993), 52, quoted in Charles A. Wright, Jr., "The Mythology of Difference: Vulgar Identity Politics at the Whitney Biennial," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 195.
132. Eleanor Heartney, "Identity Politics at the Whitney," *Art in America*, May 1993, 43.
133. Elisabeth Sussman, "Then and Now: Whitney Biennial 1993," *Art Journal* 64, no. 1 (2005): 75.
134. Wright, "The Mythology of Difference," 191.
135. Roger Kimball, "Of Chocolate, Lard, and Politics," *National Review*, 26 April 1993, 55.
136. Lisa Phillips, as quoted by Arthur Lubow in "The Curse of the Whitney."
137. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134.
138. Heartney, "Identity Politics," 43-44.
139. David A. Ross, "Preface: Know Thy Self (Know Your Place)," in *1993 Biennial Exhibition*, exh. cat., ed. Elisabeth Sussman (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art in association with Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1993), 9.
140. Sussman, "Then and Now," 79.

-
141. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 142. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 143. Sussman, "Then and Now," 75.
 144. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 145. Ross, "Know Thy Self," 10.
 146. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 147. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 148. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 149. Arthur Lubow, "The Curse of the Whitney."
 150. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134.
 151. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134. "My feeling was that it would not be appropriate to deal with the history of the museum in an exhibition devoted entirely to contemporary art and during which the permanent collection would be taken down and put in storage."
 152. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 134-135. For a full account from Fraser on her project ideas and why they were not used, see pages 134-135.
 153. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
 154. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
 155. Dillemath in Renate Lorenz, Jochen Becker, and Stephan Dillemath, "Serving Communities," *October* 80 (1997): 141. Dillemath refers to Fraser's third proposal as the one that the museum finally accepted—it was actually the fourth, according to Fraser. However, because of how Fraser described her first three proposals, it is very easy to accidentally count her fourth proposal as her third.
 156. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
 157. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
 158. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
 159. Ross, "Know Thy Self," 10.
 160. Elizabeth Sussman, "Coming Together in Parts," 24.
 161. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 136.
 162. Wright, "The Mythology of Difference," 188.
 163. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 136.
 164. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 136.

-
165. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
166. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
167. Fraser in Blazwick, Cahan, and Fraser, "Serving Audiences," 135.
168. Richard Serra, introduction to *The Destruction of Tilted Arc: Documents*, eds. Clara Weyergraf-Serra and Martha Buskirk (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1991), 4; and General Services Administration Factsheet Concerning the Art-in-Architecture Program for Federal Buildings, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 24.
169. Judge Jon O. Newman, decision, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 246.
170. Douglas Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," in *Richard Serra*, eds. Hal Foster with Gordon Hughes, OCTOBER Files, eds. Rosalind Krauss and others (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 2000), 167.
171. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 167.
172. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 167.
173. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 167.
174. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 167.
175. Richard Serra to Donald Thalacker, 1 January 1985, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 38.
176. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 5.
177. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 5.
178. Edward D. Re to Ray Kline, 5 November 1984, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 28, paraphrased by Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 5.
179. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 5.
180. William J. Diamond, letter to announce the public hearings concerning *Tilted Arc*, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 45.
181. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 7.
182. Senator Howard M. Metzenbaum to Ray Kline, 25 February 1985, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 44.
183. Juli Carson, "1989," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 339.
184. Vickie O'Dougherty, statement at the public hearing for *Tilted Arc*, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 117.
185. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 4.
186. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 8.
187. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 8.
188. Richard Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 8.

-
189. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 149-151.
190. Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, eds. Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Malden: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2005), 33.
191. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 151-152.
192. Kwon, "One Place After Another," 34.
193. Kwon, "One Place After Another," 34.
194. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 151.
195. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 159.
196. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 168.
197. Richard Serra to Donald Thalacker, 1 January 1985, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 38.
198. Is it not also possible then to destroy the *Tilted Arc* by tearing down one of the buildings surrounding the plaza, or to add a new structure to the plaza? This change of the physical site could possibly not only change the arc's physical site-specificity by changing its relationship to the plaza, but a change of the physical site could potentially alter *Tilted Arc*'s institutional critique. Serra argues for moral rights to his work (Serra, introduction to *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 17) so that *Tilted Arc* not be destroyed. But if tearing down a building or building an additional structure can alter or destroy the site-specificity of his work, does Serra's moral right to *Tilted Arc* extend to include the physical nature of the buildings surrounding the plaza? No, he cannot claim to have authority over federal buildings. Therefore, his moral right can only reach so far, if one claims it as a legitimate right.
199. Dwight Ink, decision on *Tilted Arc*, *Destruction of Tilted Arc*, 168.
200. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 149.
201. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 168.
202. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 169.
203. John Beardsley, "Personal Sensibilities in Public Places," *Artforum*, June 1981, 44, quoted in Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 165.
204. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 166.
205. Crimp, "Redefining Site Specificity," 165.
206. Wilson in Lorenz, Becker, and Dillemath, "Serving Communities," 147-148.
207. Educating the employees at Federal Plaza could in itself have become a conceptual site *Tilted Arc*, where the artist takes on the roles of what the institution is presumably supposed to be providing the public, but in fact does not provide.
208. Restating one of Crimp's earlier quotes, Crimp writes that "[t]he public's ignorance is, of course, an enforced ignorance, for not only is cultural production maintained as the privilege of a small minority within that public, but it is not in the interests of the institutions of art and the forces they serve to produce knowledge of radical practices even for their specialized audience."²⁰⁸ Different artists, such as Wilson and

Fraser, have performed institutional critique to point out these exact fallacies, complexities, and hypocrisies facing institutions in regard to their biased and standardized methods of educating the public—an education that considers only the museum’s perspective. But must artists only resort to commenting on and critiquing these situations, and then expect the institution to change by itself or expect others to do the work to change the institution? Why should the artist also not take advantage of an opportunity to solve this problem? Why could Serra not have spent time to educate the public on his ideas concerning *Tilted Arc*? The discussion of artistic concepts and development in contemporary art generally occurs only at the academic level, in essays written by art critics and artists and published in scholarly journals that have a defined academic circulation. When will these discussions and explanations of the processes in art reach the general public? And how will the public know to be interested in these discussions if they only identify such artistic topics to represent an elite art world? Additionally, even if people are interested in the subject matter, how many actually have the resources or knowledge to locate such published discussions? By not educating the public and keeping this information in a small circle of academia, artists and art critics help to perpetuate the notion of an elite art world that only wants to use the public and “foist its experiments upon them.”

209. Kwon, “One Place After Another,” 37-38.

210. Kwon, “One Place After Another,” 38.

211. Crimp, “Redefining Site Specificity,” 170.

212. Crimp, “Redefining Site Specificity,” 171.