

Viva HemisFair: Reexamining a World's Fair in a Twenty-first Century

Museum Exhibit

Annie Daubert

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Suzanne Seriff, Department of Anthropology

Supervising Professor

Janet Davis, Department of American Studies

Second Reader

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Introduction

“The most important date in San Antonio’s history isn’t the fall of the Alamo or the date we were founded, but April 6, 1968.”

—Tom Frost, 1968

Viva HemisFair! Fifty Years of HemisFair '68 Memories is a recent temporary exhibition that was planned to coincide with the three hundredth anniversary of the city of San Antonio, Texas, and the fiftieth anniversary of the world’s fair that was held there in 1968. The exhibit, on view at San Antonio’s famed Institute of Texan Cultures from April 2018 to January 2019, was part of a city-wide celebration of the events. Unlike the rest of the city’s year-long celebration and commemoration, *Viva HemisFair* offers visitors an unusual postmodern peek into the backstory of the making of a world’s fair, with all of its attendant debates, controversies, financial troubles, personal traumas, contested messaging, and power mongering. In a very quiet and non-didactic way, this small, low budget, and relatively unassuming temporary display draws on original oral historical and primary document research to create a multi-voiced, multi-dimensional portrait of a phenomenally monumental extravaganza that took place in the middle of a phenomenally divided era.

In this thesis, I will analyze how this small temporary exhibit uses a handful of carefully written wall texts, facsimiled photographs and documents, objects, and digital stories to “remember” a world’s fair that forever changed the social, economic,

and cultural landscape of our nation's self-styled gateway city to the Americas. I will do this by first providing a background sketch of the political situation in San Antonio, the United States, and the Americas in the Civil Rights Era of the 1960s and how these factors shaped the creation of one of the most extravagant world's fairs of the late twentieth century. Chapter Two will focus on an analysis of the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit designed to commemorate—and critically explore—the fiftieth anniversary of the HemisFair celebration. Finally, Chapter Three will hone in on one section of the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit—the section about the neighborhood that was demolished to make way for the fair—which acts as the center of the exhibit. Throughout, I will quote the entire text of the exhibit panels, written by exhibit curator, Sarah Gould, in order to accurately showcase the arguments of the sections.

My thesis explores the multiple ways in which the seemingly modest exhibition of *Viva HemisFair* draws on the decidedly democratic and multi-voiced interpretive museum techniques of what museum critic Eilean Hooper-Greenhill calls the “postmuseum” of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries (125) to expose and upset the monolithic, authoritative, and decidedly hegemonic metanarrative of the world's fair trope of progress.

This narrative was promoted throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through a mode of public entertainment, education, and display which critical theorist Tony Bennett refers to as the “exhibitionary complex” (74). For Bennett and others, such public-facing institutions as world's fairs, public museums, and even department stores drew on the visual power of objects and people organized into classificatory systems from “primitive” to “civilized” to “form vehicles for inscribing and

broadcasting the messages of power throughout society” (74). In the mid-nineteenth century, when world’s fairs first began, such public spectacles, along with newly conceived government-supported public museums, both created and reinforced a kind of authoritative knowledge through their presentation of themed displays of power and progress to a seemingly undifferentiated and uneducated citizen mass requiring their benevolent teaching and guidance in terms of information and behavior (Hooper-Greenhill 125). Curators were considered to be experts and were the only ones responsible for knowledge production; visitors, upon entering the museum or fair, were in a space in which they were kept distant—physically and ideologically—from the objects. Both the logistics and the ideological and geopolitical consequences of this mode of exhibitionary spectacle will be explored in Chapter One through the case study of San Antonio’s post-World War II Civil Rights Era world’s fair, one of the last major extravaganzas of this type on the world stage.

In the following chapter, I explore the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit in the context of what some scholars define as a revolutionary shift in representation in a postmodern, postcolonial era. This shift began in the twentieth century and is continuing to morph today according to updated ideologies about pedagogical methods and the consideration of identity and empathy in the museum. Cultural theorist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill calls the museum of the twenty-first century which embodies this shift the “post-museum,” (125) which is defined primarily by a new relationship between curators and visitors. She explains that:

museums today are seen as sites of cultural struggle and as a result the stories that are told in museums of history, culture, science and beauty are no longer accepted as naturally authoritative. The modernist museum is being reviewed, reassessed, and reformulated to enable it to be more sensitive to competing

narratives and to local circumstances; to be more useful to diverse groups; to fit current times more closely. (Hooper-Greenhill 141)

As part of this new museum model, the relationship between curators and visitors has shifted into one that is more collaborative and open. In the twenty-first century, museums recognize their visitors as individuals who each have their own opinions, experiences, and ways of learning and pay attention to the “politics of address” (142). Museums are now conscious of whom they address in their policies, exhibits, and programming, which allows for more collaboration, integration of more voices, interpretations, and dialogues, creating space for subjectivity. The creation of knowledge now takes a different form as well. In an ideal twenty-first century museum, “specialist knowledge remains important, but it is integrated with knowledge based on the everyday human experience of visitors and non-specialists. Where the modernist museum transmitted factual information, the post-museum also tries to involve the emotions and the imaginations of visitors” (142). Incorporating the visitor involves tactics like inviting non-specialists to work collaboratively with curators on exhibits, asking for and considering their feedback, and presenting stories in exhibits that are diverse. Further, because the visitor is now involved in the museum’s work, “knowledge is no longer unified and monolithic; it becomes fragmented and multi-vocal. There is no necessary unified perspective—rather a cacophony of voices may be heard that present a range of views, experiences and values. The voice of the museum is one among many” (152).

Another important aspect of the twenty-first century museum is an embracing of stories that do not align with the celebratory or “easy” aspects of history. As museum scholar Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues,

Museums can no longer simply celebrate history. ‘A new honesty’ has encouraged museums to ‘open up for public interpretation the darker side of human society’ and to do so more reflexively and self-critically. In this spirit, all museums could become museums of conscience in relation to their own histories, collections, and audiences. (qtd. in Lau, et al. 22)

And creating space for outrage, anger, and sadness in a museum is necessary for new methods of community-building. In their article “Designing for Outrage: Inviting Disruption and Contested Truth into Museum Exhibitions,” co-authors Barbara Lau, Jennifer Scott, and Suzanne Seriff argue that museums can “catalyze more authentic conversations, encounters, and mobilizations around social justice and human rights issues” (20) in order to “create experiences and exhibitions that honor and mirror the fragmented, discordant, and disruptive narratives of our oppressive histories and our violent realities” (23). In so doing, the museum will create an experience that will reflect and incorporate the diverse, often discordant voices of the people it serves.

Viva HemisFair is a twenty-first century museum exhibit about a nineteenth century phenomenon that engages with many of Hooper-Greenhill’s standards of the post-museum. HemisFair, though taking place in the mid-twentieth century, is still a world’s fair, and it was the task of the curator of *Viva HemisFair*, Dr. Sarah Gould, to identify the elements of the nineteenth century exhibitionary complex in HemisFair and reframe them through the lens of the twenty-first century museum. In this thesis, I will highlight and expand upon the work that Dr. Gould did in creating her multi-voiced exhibit, identifying the core tensions between HemisFair and its portrayal in this exhibit. In so doing, I hope to contribute to a larger discourse both within and beyond the museum world about the significance of this shift in the methods of museum representation. Because museums, archives, libraries, universities, and other

institutions of cultural and social display bestow legitimization upon those populations whom they represent—whether in display or in collecting practices—it is essential in the twenty-first century that marginalized, underrepresented, and inherently heterogeneous communities are included in the cultural discourse that these institutions offer. If these institutions make space for the inclusion of all of their communities—and they must—we all will be able to see ourselves represented on the gallery wall, the archive boxes, and the lessons taught, reflecting the reality of the varied and ever-changing spectrum of identity in our world.

Chapter One:

The Political, Social, and Cultural Backdrop of HemisFair

HemisFair, a spectacular world's fair grandly titled "The Confluence of Cultures in America," was held in San Antonio, Texas in 1968 during a time of great social, cultural, and civil unrest around the nation, the world, and, more importantly, in San Antonio. It is not insignificant that the south Texas-sited fair was slated as a "HemisFair"—designed to celebrate and represent only "half" the world populations—those in particular of the Western hemisphere known as "the Americas" which are Texas' and San Antonio's closest neighbors to the south and north. According to newspaper reports and planning documents, the fair was designed "to promote and improve the cultural and economic ties between San Antonio and the nations of Latin-America" (Sinkin 2). Like all world's fairs since their beginnings in the mid-nineteenth century, this one went out of its way to hide the geographic, economic, racial, cultural and political upheavals surrounding its construction and implementation in order to promote and protect a grand metanarrative of progress, peace, and prosperity across the Americas and especially within Texas. In this chapter I will analyze the many representational modes by which this overarching narrative of progress is presented and reinforced through everything from the overall landscape of the fair, to the themes of individual pavilions, and finally through an analysis of the intangible activities, performances, foods, and entertainment at the fair itself. I will also explore the economic and political backdrop against which the fair was conceived and constructed in this highly charged decade of civil unrest in San

Antonio and Texas more broadly. Drawing on the works of cultural theorists and historians, I will demonstrate some of the specific ways in which this fair both responded to and reinforced the political agendas of its historical context, especially with regard to the struggles of white politicians and city architects to retain their positions of power and influence amidst the racially charged struggles of Mexican Americans and other minorities in south Texas and San Antonio, in particular, in this decade of heightened civil unrest. It is against this backdrop that Chapters Two and Three will focus on a reframing of this fair in the recent commemorative exhibition called *Viva HemisFair: Fifty Years of HemisFair '68 Memories*. In particular, I will explore some of the more recent and postmodern exhibitionary techniques that the recent exhibit employed which allowed its curator to both expose and contest the grand master narrative a half century after the opening festivities.

The social and political setting of the 1960s impacted every aspect of the creation and planning of HemisFair. The decade is characterized by the gendered and racialized struggle for equal rights amidst the rising tensions of the Vietnam War. Women and people of color fought for their rights to educational equity and inclusion, voting rights, equal pay, housing equity, health care, and desegregation in countless protests, sit-ins, and demonstrations throughout the US, both on and off university campuses. Segregation was still occurring even after it was outlawed in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, soldiers were fighting a war that many believed the United States should not have been involved with in the first place and the rising unrest was threatening to divide the nation.

In the midst of all of this political, social, and cultural confusion, emotion, and chaos, the city of San Antonio was undergoing its own unique struggles for civil rights, zoning redistricting, housing equity, educational access, water rights, antipoverty movements, and more. The generations-old Mexican-American communities were living in extreme poverty with very limited access to quality education, infrastructural resources, health care, and hospitals. According to Rodolfo Acuña in his book *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, in San Antonio, the average yearly income of Mexicans was roughly \$2,000 less than that of whites, and “42 percent of Spanish-surnamed families earned wages below the poverty line of \$3,000 per year, as compared with 16.2 percent for Euro-American families” (297). The situation was similar in many South Texas cities—in 1960, only in Corpus Christi did Mexicans have a lower income than those in San Antonio (297). Further, in all of San Antonio’s housing projects, Mexicans comprised 59.5 percent of the residents, and only 49.7 percent of Mexicans had housing with indoor plumbing, as compared to 94 percent of the white population (297).

The political situation in San Antonio in the 1960s was characterized by governmental oligarchy and corruption. According to historian Timothy Palmer in his seminal work on the politics behind the creation of HemisFair, the Good Government League (GGL) was a political machine that had had a firm grip on San Antonio politics since 1954 and thus had a major role in the creation of HemisFair (8). Primarily white, wealthy, and conservative, the GGL maintained authority over City Hall by controlling the money flow of the city, and if the financial backers of San Antonio aligned with the GGL, political opponents could not get enough money to

run campaigns. The GGL, then, controlled the politics of San Antonio, as they were the ones who chose the league's candidates for the council. The GGL quietly required that all of these candidates were wealthy enough to serve without pay, had no higher political ambitions, and represented no minority interests. "The GGL effectively took public politics into private hands," (Palmer 9) excluding minorities to further the interests of the white and wealthy. According to Palmer, "because opposition to the GGL came mainly from Mexican-American and African-American districts, the GGL maintained its power grip only so long as Anglos (the favored term in San Antonio for all whites) outvoted the minorities" (9). To retain this power there was a poll tax essentially prohibiting minorities and non-English speakers from voting, which ensured that the GGL won most of the council seats. The GGL would also include a small number of women and minorities on its slate, ensuring that the minority vote would be split and the GGL would win their seats. "The GGL remained an exclusive club; but by placing minorities in visible roles, it buried political tensions under an illusion of interracial unity" (Palmer 10).

The economy of San Antonio throughout the early part of the twentieth century, and up until the 1960s, had been essentially stagnant. Although tourism made up most of its economic base in the 1960s, it could not attract as many tourists or conventions as Dallas and Houston, and even if it could, it had no convention centers or hotels that could accommodate more than 550 guests (Palmer 11). And although San Antonio had the cultural links to its Latin American heritage—the Alamo, La Villita, the missions—strong marketing campaigns from other cities like Dallas, Miami, and New Orleans undercut its links to Hispanic markets (11). Tourism

was San Antonio's main economic industry because of its lack of natural resources and untrained workforce, so this competition from other cities that were more prepared for tourists hurt San Antonio's economic development. Further, the affluent residents of San Antonio began moving into suburbs to the north of the city, weakening the economic core at the center of the city, and, thus, the power base of the GGL (11).

In the midst of these political, social, and economic power shifts, the GGL seized upon the idea of hosting a world's fair that could strengthen the city core and boost the GGL to its former power:

HemisFair became its weapon of self-defense. The beauty of HemisFair was that it addressed both San Antonio's economic malaise and the growing challenges to GGL power. A world's fair would captivate the city and give it a sense of purpose and direction... Clearly, city fathers agreed, HemisFair '68 was good for San Antonio as a whole. And it would be particularly good for the Good Government League. (Palmer 13)

This is the backdrop against which San Antonio city officials, prominent patrons, and international agents came together in closed-door meetings to design and implement a world's fair to the tune of 107 million public dollars (Legacy of HemisFair Fact Sheet 2). In some ways this fits perfectly into the pattern of world's fair mania that scholars have tracked throughout the Western world from the inception of world's fairs in the mid-nineteenth century, always coming to the same conclusion that such fairs arise in particular cities, states, and countries at the exact historical moment when a geopolitical groundfire is at the point of needing a strong cultural diversionary or persuasive tactic for the larger populace. The struggle for equal rights was occurring in the United States, Texas, and San Antonio; the Vietnam

War was escalating; and the voices of feminists were rising throughout the state. In San Antonio, the racial tensions between disenfranchised Mexican Americans and empowered Anglo elites were beginning to escalate to a bursting point (Palmer 63). In terms of global politics, during the Cold War, “the goal in Europe and the United States was to win popular support for the crusade against communism and to promote the globalization of corporate capitalism,” (Rydell et al. 133) and world’s fairs, including HemisFair, took up the mantle of this role in the public sphere.

According to Robert Rydell, John Findling, and Kimberly Pelle in their book *Fair America: World’s Fairs in the United States*, world’s fairs have, since their inception in 1851, had an ulterior motive of promoting domestic strength and arguing for America’s domination over other countries: “Like the Crystal Palace Exhibition [the first world’s fair in 1851], the fairs that were staged in the aftermath served to stave off political unrest at home and to build support for specific national imperial policies” (8). For instance, the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition demonstrated to America and the rest of the world that “the American nation had been rebuilt and that American civilization now rivaled anything Europe had to offer” (8). By the turn of the century, fairs had the purpose of convincing Americans that “overseas economic expansion,” including military force, was necessary for the survival and success of the country’s aims (9). During the Great Depression of the 1930s, fairs promoted the ideal of America’s future progress, a vision which entailed encouraging Americans to increase their spending. Fairs post-World War II “proclaimed the existence of one world and a common humanity,” reflecting on the victory of the Allies and the creation of the United Nations while combating fears of nuclear energy and a hope for

the future. Postwar fairs “have been dominated by pavilions that represent the interests of transnational corporations” and the “globalization of horrifically exploitative forms of corporate capitalism” (13).

HemisFair, in 1968, fits into this post-World War II model of world’s fairs which strive to promote a portrait of a common humanity and unified global citizenry—in this case, focused especially on a portrait of a unified hemisphere in the Americas. San Antonio was ripe for such a public extravaganza as it was approaching its two hundred and fiftieth anniversary as a city in 1968. This was the same year that Mexico City was preparing to host the Olympic Games for the world, and the Inter-American Cultural Council was meeting in Maracay, Venezuela in February of that same year (Public Papers xix and Fox). Fair officials decided to capitalize on these three major events as a way to attract global tourism to the Southwestern United States and to prove to the nation and the world that the cultures of the Western hemisphere could peacefully coexist. In the words of William (Bill) Sinkin, President of the Board of Directors of San Antonio Fair, Inc. from 1963-1964,

The Fair of the Americas has for its purpose the reaffirmation of those basic ideals of indifficual [sic] liberty and personal dignity which constitute the foundation of friendship and peace that has endured in the Western Hemisphere through the years; and to the promotion of an even greater degree of unanimity whereby the peoples of the world may witness sovereign and independent countried [sic] working together in common accord for their mutual development and prosperity.

The Fair is dedicated to the achievements of the Americas in commerce and industry, in science, art, education and the professions; to the creation of a mart as a continuing showcase for the skills and trades and culture of the Western Hemisphere; to the celebration of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the City of San Antonio; to fine entertainment; to the establishment of a permanent program of industrial training for peoples of world areas, utilizing American ingenuity and skill to help develop their

countries; to the development of a legacy of permanent structures and facilities that will live on as a tribute to this community of nations. (Sinkin 2)

The language used in the planning and promotion of HemisFair contained multiple veiled references to a number of larger political and social goals, including, first and foremost, the United States' increasing involvement with Latin American commerce, trade, and politics.

Scholars have pointed out the many ways in which San Antonio's HemisFair was intimately connected to and influenced by the shifting political relationship between the United States and the countries of Latin America during the 1960s. In particular, they point to the US intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965 as a seminal moment in need of "massaging" in the public eye through a public focus on inter-American or trans-American cultural institutions. "Instead of restraining US intervention, the institutionalized inter-American system had become a mechanism to legitimize US intervention" (Dominguez qtd. in Fox 178) in Latin America. And after the Cuban Revolution, from 1953 to 1959, "many US-based cultural institutions were also looking toward Latin America with renewed interest" (Fox 179). In the midst of this frenzy were a number of influential Latin American artistic initiatives in the US: the founding of the Center for Inter-American Relations in 1965 and the Inter-American Foundation of the Arts in 1962, a renaissance of Latin American art events at various universities and museums, and the heightened platform for Latin American artists to share not only their art, but also their perspectives about a range of issues from politics to culture to economics.

One such initiative which would come to play a leading role in the development of San Antonio's HemisFair was the Alliance for Progress, an

organization founded by John F. Kennedy in 1961 and officially dedicated to promoting economic and political development in Latin America. Behind the scenes, its true political mission was to reconcile the problems in the region that allowed the Cuban Revolution to occur (Dunne). In her book *Making Art Panamerican: Cultural Policy and the Cold War*, Claire Fox expands on what historian Jeffrey Taffet says about the Alliance and its role in HemisFair's conception: "If free trade was the 'last big idea' of the Alliance for Progress, then HemisFair was the Alliance's 'last big party,' in which trade integration and development were made spectacular on many levels as the future of inter-American relations" (Fox and Taffet 180). HemisFair also occurred during a shift in the goals of the Alliance. Because of the increasing focus on the Vietnam War and the lack of success with his domestic Great Society programs, President Johnson "abandoned the initial social welfare orientation of the Alliance in favor of a more streamlined program of corporate investment and military assistance for Latin American countries... HemisFair occurred in the context of this second phase of the Alliance, as the United States worked to establish a Latin American Free Trade Association" (Fox 195).

HemisFair, as a government-funded event, was thus both reflective and constitutive of the relationship between the United States and Latin America. Fox states that "in the turbulent 1960s, visual art at HemisFair also served as a buffer between the ideal of universal liberal democratic citizenship and the harsh reality of increasing totalitarianism and socioeconomic inequality in the Americas" (181). In turn, it "threw into relief the inadequacy of older conceptualizations of the [US-Mexico] border as a cultural trench separating the Saxon and Latin Americas" (182).

Fox further explains the ways in which HemisFair was thus used as an extension of US domestic and foreign policy:

HemisFair was not merely a local event intended to transform San Antonio's politics and economy; rather, fair organizers interwove state, national, and international agendas into the event planning, theme, and logistics. In terms of its regional objectives, HemisFair highlighted San Antonio's Spanish and Mexican history, bilingualism, and business sector's self-fashioning as the 'Gateway to Latin America' as a means of cultivating a privileged trade and tourism relationship with Mexico. Fair organizers hoped to capture a potential ten million tourists residing within a 750-mile radius of San Antonio, a region encompassing seventeen Mexican states and eleven US states. (Fox 192)

These lofty political and corporate goals were incorporated into every aspect of the fair plans, from the national and industrial pavilions to the entertainment acts, amusement rides, and architectural choices—and represented equally through the educational programs, the entertainment spectacles, and the industrial complexes. According to Fox, the average visitor to the fair would not be aware of the complexity of these influences (198). Rather, as she notes, “the theme of *mestizaje*,” or the idea of racial and cultural mixture, “at HemisFair offered a cultural solution to the political and economic dilemmas that plagued US relations with Latin American countries during the 1960s” (Fox 188).

While neighborhoods throughout San Antonio were experiencing some of the worst problems that come with poverty, racism, and inequality, HemisFair attempted to mask these problems and prove to San Antonio, the United States, and the world that everything was not only under control, but thriving. This highly ideological and practical mission became especially urgent when viewed against the local and statewide backdrop of highly divisive and publicized protests, marches, public

criticisms, and activist struggles against the ongoing segregation, discrimination, war, injustice, hunger, and xenophobia in America and in San Antonio. According to Fox,

HemisFair presents an ironic twist... for at the same time that a neighborhood [German Town] and the majority demographic of San Antonio were rendered invisible or folkloric by the fair, fair organizers employed a rhetoric of emergent visibility, claiming space, and community building in order to advance their own version of cultural citizenship. (211)

Although there were many problems at home in San Antonio, HemisFair promoted the image of a diverse and thriving city, one that cared for each of its inhabitants equally, no matter their race. However, the reality of the situation was clearly different.

In many ways this stark disconnect was consistent with the overarching ideological goals of world's fairs writ large. Robert Rydell states in his book *All the World's a Fair* that "to alleviate the intense and widespread anxiety that pervaded the United States, the directors of the expositions offered millions of fairgoers an opportunity to reaffirm their collective national identity in an updated synthesis of progress and white supremacy" (Rydell 4). HemisFair, although over a century after the first world's fair, is part of this legacy of nation-building, white supremacy, and the construction of this narrative of progress.

While previous fairs had focused on the superiority and civilization of Anglos as a kind of "master race," the San Antonio HemisFair was explicitly designed to celebrate the friendship, mutual respect and collaborative spirit of the Americas—from Canada in the north to South America. The celebration of diverse ethnicities and cultures throughout the Western Hemisphere was part of an overarching ideological

design to encourage trade, commerce, and governmental relations across the Western Hemisphere.

One of the design techniques consciously employed by the fair architects was to spatially integrate culturally distinct pavilions and entertainment areas with each other, creating a happy cacophony of ethnic and racial spectacle. The Panama pavilion was located between a highly fantastical display of toys and ceramic figures from around the world curated by architect Alexander Girard called *El Encanto de un Pueblo* (The Magic of a People) and a historical exhibit about the history of paper (Abilene Reporter-News 20). The Japan Pavilion was situated directly next to a display called “Sermons from Science” which featured sermons about the interactions of spiritual ideas and scientific principles (Vickers 122). One of the most popular spectacles at the fair, *Los Voladores de Papantla*, sponsored by Frito-Lay/Pepsi-Cola, featured live costumed dancers recreating an ancient ritual dance in which they literally “flew” in circles from a tall pole. This exposition, in turn, was sandwiched between food service areas where visitors could purchase hand-held ethnic foods that they could carry next door to watch the spectacle (HemisFair 1968 Official Souvenir Guidebook 12). The hectic combination of all of these different attractions combined to create a fantastical spectacle which the visitor was meant to digest without critical thought. A quote from a commentator to the famous Midway of the World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 encapsulates the kind of performative, exotic mood which was created in this mélange of cultural spectacles at world’s fairs: “It will be a jumble of foreignness... It will be gorgeous with color, pulsating with excitement, riotous with the strivings of a battalion of bands, and peculiar to the last degree”

(Ralph qtd. in Hinsley 351). The overarching effect for HemisFair fairgoers, as for the millions of world's fair goers before them, was that of an exoticized, voyeuristic spectacle for consumption by the primarily Anglo visitors to the fair.

Indeed, every element of HemisFair was created to be sensorily consumed by its visitors—its food, its displays, and its activities. The signature attractions of HemisFair were the series of pavilions from various countries designed to showcase the foods, technologies, and architectures of each nation or region. In addition to the cultural displays, exhibitions sponsored by large corporations such as Coca-Cola and Eastman Kodak were designed to demonstrate the latest advancements in technology and consumer culture. And a wide array of entertainment options included participatory film screenings and Fiesta Island, a section of amusement rides. The *Los Voladores de Papantla* (also known as the Flying Indians of Papantla) exhibit previously mentioned was one of the most popular attractions in the fair. Sponsored by the the Frito-Lay/Pepsi-Cola company, it was described in the HemisFair guidebook as “a brilliantly colorful production climaxed by recreation of an ancient Aztec ritual sacrifice” (57).

Participating in a fair meant submitting oneself to pure spectacle which acted as a form of social control and a tool of hegemony. Fairgoers simply had to enter the fair in order to find themselves caught up in the spectacular sights, sounds and colors of nation-building encoded in its very architecture, organization, and environment. And fairgoers to the San Antonio HemisFair, like all world's fairgoers everywhere, seemed happily oblivious to the economic, political, or ideological forces at work as they reveled in the cacophonous pleasure of seeing and being seen at the fair. While

exit interviews did not seem to be taken of visitors at HemisFair, researchers gathered data from fairgoers at a similar fair in Canada which reinforced this idea of visitors experiencing a kind of pleasure basking in the success of their own worlds and the exotic pleasure of those far away. At the end of the Vancouver world's fair in 1986, a city newspaper asked readers to answer a questionnaire about their impressions of the fair. Very few of the responses had to do with the fair's economic goals (10 percent) or its educational aim (3.5 percent). The majority of the responses concerned visitors' personal reactions to the fair, such as its friendly environment, exciting atmosphere, and entertainment and fun aspects (34 percent, 18 percent, and 17 percent, respectively) (Ley and Olds 233). For many of the fairgoers to Expo 86, the fair succeeded in the "displacement of reality" and "manipulation of consciousness" (236).

HemisFair was made up of six "theme exhibits," nineteen "industrial and institutional" exhibits, twenty-three governmental pavilions, eight entertainment areas (including eighteen amusement park rides), a convention center, merchandise stands, waterways, and twenty-eight food areas on 92.6 acres of land in downtown San Antonio. All of these elements make up what the Official Hemisfair Guidebook calls "a panoply of national and corporate imagination: industrial progress, the far reaches of imagination, the splendor of the arts, the humor and gaiety of people, the wit and consummate skill of the craftsman" (35). Lasting for six months, from April 6 to October 6, 1968, the fair included performances from popular national entertainers such as Louis Armstrong and Vikki Carr. Entertainment options included an adults-only puppet show called *Les Poupées de Paris*; Kino-Automat, an interactive

theatrical performance; an exhibit of Latin American toys and folk art called *El Encanto de un Pueblo* curated by Alexander Girard; a stage and film performance called *Laterna Magika*; and a Wild West-themed saloon. The governmental pavilions, collectively called *Las Plazas del Mundo*, included Arkansas, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, China, Costa Rica, El Salvador, France, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, Venezuela, and O.A.S. (the Organization of American States).

Like most world's fairs, HemisFair's exhibits contributed to its larger ideological goals of showcasing friendship, commerce, and unity among the different cultures within and across the Americas. For instance, the Texas pavilion, which came to be known as the Institute of Texan Cultures, sought to reinforce the fair's larger emphasis on ethnic and racial diversity and tolerance by creating a groundbreaking 360-degree architectural dome to showcase its signature film and exhibitions featuring the dozens of ethnic and racial groups that settled the great multicultural state of Texas. The building housed over a dozen mini-exhibitions featuring the clothing, history, traditions, and cultures of Texas' early settlers, from Japanese, German, and Irish, to Jewish, Polish, and African American. The United States pavilion, symbolically titled "Confluence U.S.A.," told the story of "the blending together of many peoples and many cultures into one nation" through three sections called "The Legacy" ("that heritage left us by individual effort"), "The Harvest" (the dynamic process of mutual assistance"), and "The Promise" ("the world of tomorrow which is the result of men's efforts today") (Guidebook 39). Many of the governments of the countries or states featured in *Las Plazas del Mundo* also

attempted to boil down their countries (or, in the cases of Arkansas and Texas, states) into an entertaining, easily digestible exhibition emphasizing their distinct cultural, natural, and technological contributions to the world. Canada, for instance, whose theme was “A Distinctive Folklore and its Subsequent Origins,” displayed its parliament, a canoe, wheat fields, and water wheels, attempting to portray its resources (Vickers 104). Mexico decided to tell its history of progress through an exhibit aptly titled “Three Steps to Mexican Civilization.” HemisFair also included some classic markers of a late twentieth century world’s fair—elements that are characterized by a faith in technology and progress and a look to the future, such as the mini-monorail, skyride, and the Tower of the Americas with its rotating restaurants in its tophouse. Every element of the fair—its governmental pavilions, industrial exhibits, souvenirs, and architecture—was a part of its mission as a representation of progress, multicultural confluence, commerce and manifest destiny in the late twentieth century.

Although many people who visited HemisFair accepted it for how it was, the fair did attract a significant number of protesters who were enraged about the insufficient representation of minority voices in the planning and execution of the fair. Along with the backlash against the forced eviction and razing of a culturally diverse neighborhood to make way for the fair, which I will discuss in more detail in Chapter Three, many Mexicans in San Antonio protested the enormous amount of money spent on the fair while San Antonians continued to suffer from extreme lack of resources. One person who marched from the Rio Grande Valley to Austin to protest the lack of a minimum wage with the Texas Farm Workers Union asked, “Why are

there millions for HemisFair but not even a living wage of \$1.25 for the farm worker?” (Palmer 54). San Antonio attorney Peter Torres, while campaigning for city council, argued against the city funneling funds into HemisFair rather than its own citizens: “They [the GGL] are playing with HemisFair while the city starves... [HemisFair belongs to] a small group of individuals who live in Alamo Heights, Olmos Park, and Terrell Hills,” which are wealthy, primarily white neighborhoods of the city (55). Claude Black, an African American community leader, criticized the planners for their neglect of the black community:

Even though it [HemisFair] abutted on the East Side, there was no spillover, jobs, or money. And for that reason we opposed HemisFair. On top of that, they built HemisFair with no back door to the East Side. You had to go all the way around Alamo Street to get into HemisFair. It was a message to us that this is not for the East Side. (qtd. in Fox 305)

On the opening day of the fair, protestors picketed outside the gates with signs that said: “After HemisFair Visit West Side San Antonio, Confluence of Poverty” (Palmer 62). *La Raza Unida*, translated as the United Race Party, and Mexican American leaders boycotted the fair because of its refusal to hire Hispanic employees (Fox 190). And to add insult to injury, the high price of admission (\$2 for adults, \$1 for children) prevented many of the city’s residents from even visiting the fair in their own backyard, a fact not lost on the picketers, one of whom protested: “HemisFair is not for the poor Mexican-American. Save your money. San Antonio must first pay the \$1.25 minimum wage, and equal opportunity for all” (Palmer 62). HemisFair claimed to be for all of San Antonio, but it clearly was only for the wealthy and Anglo.

In sum, we have seen how HemisFair, like all world’s fairs before it, quickly became a tool of the elite of the host city—primarily white, wealthy men—to bolster

the city's economy and public image in the face of cultural, social, and political tension in the city, state, and nation. While many of the Mexican residents of San Antonio were living below the poverty line, unable to feed, clothe, educate, or safely house their families, the Good Government League poured millions of dollars into a fair which they thought would strengthen their hold on the politics and economics of the city as an international tourist destination. Meanwhile, state and national leaders used HemisFair as a mechanism to improve the United States' and Texas' economic and political ties to Latin America. Experiencing the fair was a visual, auditory, and experiential smorgasbord of cultural, institutional, and governmental displays. All of these attractions—along with the dozens of food and entertainment options—combined into one big cultural and political spectacle for the visitor to consume. And placing the national exhibits directly next to food areas and industrial pavilions turned them into pure spectacle, more entertainment to be consumed. But not without its controversies, HemisFair faced significant backlash from Mexicans and African Americans about the lack of diversity and the cost of the fair while the city had so many continuing problems of poverty and hunger. With this background information about the politics of HemisFair and San Antonio, the next chapters will discuss the significance of the recent exhibition at the Institute of Texas Cultures in 2018 which commemorated the half century since HemisFair. In a new climate of inclusivity, engagement, and civic responsibility in museum representation, the curator of *Viva HemisFair! 50 Years of HemisFair '68 Memories* worked to expose these truths that the original HemisFair sought so fiercely to hide.

Chapter Two:

The Methods of Display in *Viva HemisFair*

Viva HemisFair! 50 Years of HemisFair '68 Memories is an exhibit that was on display at the Institute of Texan Cultures (ITC) from April 8, 2018 to January 6, 2019. In 2018 the entire city of San Antonio celebrated the three hundredth anniversary of its founding. One part of that celebration included a commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of HemisFair, the first world's fair in the Southwestern United States, that was held in San Antonio. Because it began as the Texas Pavilion at HemisFair, the ITC put on many events and programs about the fair, *Viva HemisFair* among them. Shortly after the close of HemisFair in October 1968, the ITC became a part of the University of Texas at San Antonio campus and its exhibitions remained in place and continued to function as a permanent, public museum whose purpose was to showcase the many cultures that made Texas what it is today. The museum has not been changed in any significant ways since its debut at the fair as the Texas Pavilion in 1968. The museum has a few temporary exhibition areas. *Viva HemisFair* inhabited one of them, a space consisting of three small rooms—1,300 square feet—near the front entrance of the ITC.

The *Viva HemisFair* exhibit is organized by thematic topics that situate the “memories” of the fair within the larger historical and sociopolitical context of the fair's contested construction and representation. In particular, the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit explores the many hidden ways in which the world's fair forever altered the landscape and cultural geography of the city of San Antonio, and the neighborhoods,

ethnic groups, and racial profiles of those whose paths it crossed or erased. Thematic sections are titled as follows: “Origins,” “Theme,” “Designing the Fair,” “Before HemisFair ‘68,” “A Fair to Remember,” “Hosts and Hostesses,” “HemisFair Performers,” “International Flavors,” “Rides and Amusements,” “Pavilions,” “Legacy,” and “Future.” Each section consists of a large flat graphic panel which includes photographs and text, as well as some objects in separate display cases. The bulk of the exhibit is made up of these graphic panels attached to the inner walls of the room. Because I am interested in exploring not only what information is conveyed, but how it is rhetorically conveyed, I will extensively reproduce the panels’ textual elements, as well as descriptions of the visual components throughout this chapter and the next.

The exhibit opens with an introductory panel that sets out the major points to be covered—points that focus not so much on a nostalgic commemoration of the fair itself, but on the geopolitical issues that underlay its extravagant construction on the San Antonio landscape. The exhibit title (*Fifty Years of HemisFair ‘68 Memories*) provides the first clue of the revisionist nature of the fair by suggesting a focus on the multiple memories of multiple individuals, rather than a single, unified story. The following introductory label makes explicit the contested terrain of some of these stories that have not previously been told:

On Saturday, April 6, 1968, the first officially designated international exposition held in the Southwestern United States opened in San Antonio. HemisFair ‘68 brought San Antonio to the world’s attention and forever changed the city’s landscape.

The 92.6 acres of fairgrounds located on the southern edge of downtown ushered in a new era of tourism and added the now iconic Tower of

the Americas to the city's skyline. Yet, the fair was not without controversy, and fifty years later its legacy continues to unfold.

Immediately below this label text is a quote by Tom Frost, civic leader and senior chairman of Frost National Bank, whose role as HemisFair spokesman provides a point of narrative tension for the stories that the visitor suspects are now to unfold: “The most important date in San Antonio’s history isn’t the fall of the Alamo or the date we were founded, but April 6, 1968.”

After first being told that the fair was “not without controversy,” the viewer reads this quote with a skeptical eye and a postmodern nod to the complicated, multiple histories behind such a singularly “patriotic” statement. If Frost’s goal for HemisFair—and the goal of the 1968 fair designers more generally—was to paint a hegemonic portrait of glory for the city of San Antonio, the *Viva HemisFair* label places this text in ironic tension with what came before, and compels the visitor to continue to uncover some of the untold stories behind the positivist progressive façade. Already *Viva HemisFair* is demonstrating its adoption of some of the pedagogical approaches of the twenty-first century museum in order to engage the visitor in a process of discovery of some of the erased or contested stories behind HemisFair’s spectacular production.

Introductory Timeline

Across the room from the introductory panel is a large graphic timeline that chronicles major events in the decade leading up to the 1968 spectacle. The top half of the panels defines a series of events whose relationship to HemisFair is not

immediately apparent. The bottom half of the timeline outlines events directly related to HemisFair. The timeline, although an admittedly overused tactic in historical exhibits, is an essential introduction to the tension of HemisFair, and places the fair squarely in the context of its historical controversy.

Most of the events included on the top half of the timeline pertain to the Civil Rights struggles of the nation during the decade: desegregation, anti-war protests, gender equity struggles, and some major cultural movements.

- “February 1-July 25, 1960— Greensboro sit-ins lead to a national movement for desegregation.”
- “November 1, 1961— Women Strike for Peace protests against nuclear arms held in 60 cities across the US.”
- “November 22, 1963—Martin Luther King delivers his ‘I Have a Dream’ speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.”
- “July 2, 1964—President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964 into law.”
- “February 21, 1965—Malcolm X is assassinated.”
- “August 11-16, 1965—The Watts Riots light up Los Angeles and television sets across the nation.”
- “October 15, 1966—The Black Panther Party is founded.”
- “March 1967—The Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) is formed on college campuses across Texas after the first chapter is founded at St. Mary’s College in San Antonio.”
- “January 31, 1968—Viet Cong and North Vietnamese Communist armies launch the Tet Offensive.”
- “April 8, 1968—British singer Petula Clark, singing on an NBC special, casually touches fellow singer Harry Belafonte on the arm during a song, the first time two races make contact on American television.”
- “May 16, 1968—Mexican American students at San Antonio’s Edgewood High School walk out in protest of discriminatory practices. The movement soon spreads to surrounding schools and towns across Texas.”
- “August 25, 1968—Arthur Ashe becomes the first black man to win a U.S. tennis singles championship.”
- “October 18, 1968—The U.S. Olympic Committee suspends two black athletes, Tommie Smith and John Carlos, after they raise their fists in protest while on the medal stand at the Mexico City Olympics.”

- “October 22, 1968—During an episode of *Star Trek* (“Plato’s Stepchildren”), William Shatner and Nichelle Nichols have the first interracial kiss on U.S. television.”

These are just a selection of the events chronicled on the top half of the timeline.

While at first glance it may seem to the visitor as though none of these events have to do with HemisFair, a closer look reveals that they do, in fact, have everything to do with both its construction and display. The nation in this decade was in complete disarray, with protests and acts of war and violence occurring yearly. The timeline shows the tip of the iceberg of the racial, political, and social unrest in the nation, Texas, and San Antonio. Why include these particular events? At the very least, the exhibit’s curator conveys a message that such historical context is essential for us to understand and consider in terms of what was happening in the nation and city at the time of the fair in question. In the midst of such struggle, San Antonio held the fair to be a glowing, uncomplicated example of family fun, international celebration, and transnational goodwill in direct contradiction to the massively unsettling political and racial situation occurring just outside the fair gates.

The events on the bottom of the timeline seem to straightforwardly outline the history of the making of the fair.

- “February 1958—During a San Antonio Chamber of Commerce meeting, merchant Jerome K. Harris suggests a fair to celebrate the 250th anniversary of San Antonio’s founding.”
- “January 28, 1962—U.S. Rep. Henry B. González meets with William Sinkin to discuss the ‘Fair of the Americas.’”
- “January 28, 1964—A \$30 million bond issue including provisions for a new civic center and the city’s portion of the Urban Renewal land purchases is overwhelmingly approved by local voters in every precinct.”
- “February 1, 1964—A 92-acre site in downtown San Antonio is selected and approved, and site architects and engineers begin design work.”

- “October 22, 1965—The U.S. House and Senate agree on a HemisFair Bill. President Johnson signs the bill officially recognizing HemisFair and appropriates \$125,000 for a preliminary study and architectural fees.”
- “August 9, 1966—An agreement is reached to preserve 22 historic homes on HemisFair grounds. Tower of the Americas construction contract is awarded to Lyda-Lott.”
- “October 8, 1966—The final home on the site is turned over to the fair.”
- “April 6, 1968—HemisFair ‘68 opens.”
- “May 21, 1968—CBS airs an hour-long special ‘Hunger in America,’ which juxtaposes the opulence of HemisFair with the extreme poverty found in areas of San Antonio.”
- “September 15, 1968—The mini-monorail derails, killing one and injuring nearly 50.”

These are only some of the major HemisFair-related events included in this section of the timeline. Most of them, it seems, are straightforward, chronologically arranged facts relating to the planning and construction of the fair. However, the rest of the exhibition fleshes out some of the contentious debates and multiple voices behind some of these seemingly innocuous “facts” related to the building of this great tribute to the Americas.

Including the CBS documentary “Hunger in America” is extremely noteworthy. The documentary was national news. Telling the story of extreme poverty and hunger in the nation, the documentary selected certain cities to illustrate the situation, the first one being San Antonio. “Hunger is hard to recognize in America,” the narrator intones.

We know it in other places, like Asia and Africa. But these children, all of them, are Americans. And all of them are hungry... America is the richest country in the world, in fact the richest country in history. We spend a colossal amount of money—one and a half billion dollars a year—to feed the rest of the world. But this spring a private agency, The Citizens Board of Inquiry, consisting of distinguished leaders in many fields, released an

exhaustive report claiming that serious hunger exists in many places in the United States.

The focus then turns to the first of its cities.

San Antonio, Texas, is celebrating its 250th birthday with an international exposition, HemisFair '68. Thirty-two foreign countries with pavilions, restaurants, amusements and exhibits are helping San Antonio congratulate itself on its growth and progress. There is a skyride, a monorail, and, of course, the usual 600-foot tower with the revolving restaurant on top. Texas Governor John Connally says HemisFair has turned the downtown area 'from slum to jewel box.' But the jewels don't glitter very brightly on the other side of town where 400,000 Mexican Americans live, half the city's population. Most of them are crowded into what city officials refer to as 'poverty tracks.' Mexican Americans face a language barrier, and like most poor people, they suffer from lack of skills and unemployment. A hard time earning means a hard time eating. A quarter of San Antonio's Mexican Americans, 100,000 people, are hungry all the time. (Carr)

Although *Viva HemisFair* does not show the documentary, or include any more information than the short statement on the timeline, including it on the timeline is an argument about the revisionist nature of the fair. This example encapsulates the purpose of *Viva HemisFair*—to peel back the whitewashing nature of HemisFair to reveal the poverty, hunger, danger, and racism that was a part of the fabric of the city, the nation, and the fair itself.

The timeline, hiding in plain sight at the beginning of the exhibit, is easily missed. Although it inhabits a prominent place, it appears unimportant, the events being almost too small and numerous to read in full. However, the timeline is an introduction to both the content of the exhibit and its methods, and argues for a reading of HemisFair beyond the nationalist, hegemonic picture it presents.

In the timeline, as well as other sections throughout the exhibit, the philosophy of the curator who created the exhibit, Dr. Sarah Gould, is evident. In my

interview with her about *Viva HemisFair*, she described her curatorial philosophy. The ITC has “a history of curators interested in not just telling the shiny, glossy story” and instead chooses to showcase parts of San Antonio’s history that are more nuanced or controversial. Dr. Gould does this in such a way that lets the visitor develop his or her own point of view about an issue, employing the pedagogical methods of the twenty-first century museum. “I don’t want to tell people what to think,” she says, “I don’t want to hit people over the head [with my curatorial message]... I trust the visitor to make connections. I provide the information, they draw their conclusions.” (Gould). Thus *Viva HemisFair* presents facts, shows photographic evidence, and places contradictory opinions side by side but remains soft-handed on ideological pronouncements in order to let the viewer come to his or her own conclusions.

Considering the organization of the exhibit provides insight into the curatorial messages Dr. Gould is trying to portray. Each section offers a window into the backstory of the curation and representation of the fair: its planning, politics, financing, construction, and contestation. The thematic picture of these sections is a roadmap of how hegemonic narratives are created and maintained.

Origins

A small panel across from the timeline explains the origins of the fair:

More than ten years earlier in February 1958, Jerome K. Harris, Vice President of Frank Brothers department store, presented the Chamber of Commerce with the idea for a ‘Hemis-Fair’ to promote the city’s economic and social ties to Latin America. A popular tourist destination since the late-

19th century, San Antonio's recovery from the Great Depression had been somewhat disappointing and it was understood that the city's tourist potential was underdeveloped.

The idea languished for a few years before Henry B. González, newly elected to Congress, endorsed the idea in 1962 and local businessmen William R. Sinkin, H.B. (Pat) Zachry, and James Gaines formed the nonprofit San Antonio Fair, Inc. to organize the fair in time to celebrate San Antonio's 250th anniversary in 1968.

At a time when only two restaurants graced the banks of the River Walk, it was hoped that the fair would bolster the local economy, bring greater attention to San Antonio as a tourist destination, and provide infrastructure for future conventions and business investments.

In addition to the curator's explanatory text, a direct quote is added to the panel which illuminates the celebratory trope of the fair with the words of the author and historian Mary Ann Noonan Guerra:

I think HemisFair was probably the most important event in our history to highlight this place. We had beautiful, natural resources here. We had the river, we had the missions, we had the Alamo, but we had to bring people here to let them see it. And we attracted people from all over the world and I really think that this was the greatest advertising piece that we ever did, because we sold San Antonio—the HemisFair did.

This quote illustrates the exigency for creating the fair. Painting a picture of San Antonio as a picturesque, fun, worldly city was the point of the fair for those with the power to make it happen, and erasing all the problems of the city was part of forming an attractive advertisement. Confronting the viewer with this quote replicates the dominant narrative of the fair and forces the viewer to consider HemisFair in terms of its goal—to craft a singular, shining picture of progress, to show the world that San Antonio was thriving even in the midst of such powerful struggles in the nation and city. The quote acknowledges this fact to the viewer before continuing through the exhibit and situates the viewer's experience of the rest of the exhibit in this context.

Theme

On the next wall is a section simply titled “Theme.” The theme title of HemisFair, “Confluence of Cultures,” is printed in a large, conspicuous font on the panel, and underneath is a diagram of the fair’s logo. Beneath that is text about the theme as well as two quotes. The panel text states:

In keeping with Jerome Harris’ original idea to celebrate the shared cultural heritage of San Antonio and its Latin American neighbors, the theme of HemisFair ‘68 was ‘The Confluence of Civilizations in the Americas.’ The theme capitalized on San Antonio’s ethnically mixed cultural heritage and placed emphasis on the city as a hub of international commerce and cultural exchange between the United States and Latin America.

The fair’s logo unambiguously illustrated ‘the meeting and merging of the old and the new.’ Like any world’s fair the driving force was international commerce and trade, but HemisFair’s theme of different cultures coming together and becoming one—an idealized version of San Antonio’s past—was in some ways also a response to the widespread social turmoil of the 1960s.

The fair’s largest exhibit, the Texas Pavilion, now the Institute of Texan Cultures, also promoted this idea by showing visitors that Texas is more than just cowboys, and that indeed it was built by a diverse mix of peoples. In this way, HemisFair ‘68, like other world’s fairs before it, had an ideological message as well as an economic goal.

This text immediately brings up for the first time in the exhibit the hegemonic goals of HemisFair, deepening the discussion about the true aim of the fair. This argument is next to celebratory quotes of prominent local and national figures placed to either side which mirror the official narrative of the fair as a coming together of diverse cultures on both sides of the Rio Grande. From William Sinkin, Founding President of San Antonio Fair, Inc.:

This is really the first time that there was a total community effort for the good of San Antonio. And not only for San Antonio, we’ll make a contribution to a dialogue between Mexico and Central America particularly.

We'll build a chain of friendship—this was our constant theme, '*La cadena de amistad*,' chain of friendship. It just began, just caught fire.

and from President Lyndon B. Johnson:

Many thousands of guests from abroad will visit our shores, some perhaps for the first time, and we want to welcome them as ambassadors of peace and friendship. We hope they return to their native countries with a broader understanding of the United States of America and all the nations exhibiting at HemisFair '68.

The viewpoints expressed in these quotes illustrate the underlying ideological goals of world's fairs. Although on the surface they were about maintaining friendships and good relations with other nations, their purpose was economic and political gain, which is what the panel text points out. The quotes emphasize the more explicit aim of ambassadorship and friendship across the Americas, which was the public face of the fair. In other words, the economic and political goals were hidden beneath a mask of well-meaning friendship and innocent comradeship. Here the exhibit exposes the nationalistic truth of HemisFair and other world's fairs. Unlike how they represent themselves, they have ulterior motives that fair executives would have never told the public (Rydell).

The other essential point in the panel text is HemisFair creating an image of "an idealized version of San Antonio's past" as a "response to the widespread social turmoil of the 1960s" (exhibit text) because it touches on another crucial aspect of world's fairs. World's fairs are planned strategically. Every single one is held with an ulterior motive: to enforce the image of a nation or city in control (Rydell 3). In the case of HemisFair, the struggles for civil rights had already been occurring in the nation, state, and city before the planning of the fair had begun. HemisFair coincided

with the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of San Antonio's founding, and that became one of the main selling points of the fair. But the more important reason was to show the world that the leaders of San Antonio were in control of the contentious situation occurring and to portray an image of control, even when the situation was not in control (Palmer 13).

Another main point of this panel text is the part about the ITC itself: "The fair's largest exhibit, the Texas Pavilion, now the Institute of Texan Cultures, also promoted this idea by showing visitors that Texas is more than just cowboys, and that indeed it was built by a diverse mix of peoples." Here, the text acknowledges the role that the ITC had in promoting the image of the cultural melting pot during HemisFair and even now, since the exhibits have not significantly changed since 1968. By displaying exhibits of different cultures—like Polish, Japanese, and Scottish—with the goal of being a "lesson in diversity and show[ing] the uniqueness and beauty of the many cultures that came to Texas," (texancultures.org) the ITC continues to portray Texas as a cultural melting pot.

Designing the Fair

The next section, which is on the same panel as "Theme," is the section titled "Designing the Fair," which details the high-powered corporate and governmental sponsors behind individual exhibits, the fiscal appropriations backing the fair's construction, and the state-of-the-art hotel, restaurants and other permanent structures built to accommodate the millions of anticipated visitors and remain into the future.

In January of 1966, Governor John Connally announced the fair's first exhibitor, the State of Texas. Two weeks later Pearl Brewing signed on as the first of 19 industrial exhibitors, and by April Mexico became the first of 23 countries to announce its participation. In addition to the 22 historic structures that were repurposed for the fair, leading Texas architects were tapped to bring modern design sensibilities to the fairgrounds.

While each exhibitor paid for their own structure, the remaining expenses to build the fair were supported by two Congressional appropriations totaling nearly \$7 million, a Texas legislative appropriation of \$4.5 million, local bonds, and underwriting from 450 local businesses and individuals. With plazas, fountains, waterways, gardens, works of art from around the world, plus a mini-monorail and sky gondola, the fairgrounds were a feast for the eyes.

Several large-scale structures were intended to outlive the fair, including the convention center, Women's Pavilion, Texas Pavilion, US Pavilion (John Woods Federal Courthouse), and Tower of the Americas.

Across the street from the fairgrounds, in anticipation of millions of fair visitors, the first downtown hotel built in over 20 years was assembled in 202 days by the H. B. Zachry Construction Company. The Hilton Palacio del Rio, a prefab modular construction marvel in which each completely finished room was trucked in, lifted with a crane, and stacked on top of each other, remains one of HemisFair's most iconic structures.

Offering this background information of the planning and designing of the fair's infrastructure lets the visitors gain a more complete understanding of the economic investment of the fair and the high-powered stakeholders behind it. This section showcases the incredible amount of money that was put into the fair as well as the reach of the industrial and international participants. The inclusion of the exact dollar amounts in the text is especially potent when compared to the point about the CBS documentary "Hunger in America" in the timeline at the beginning of the exhibit, which demonstrated the poverty in San Antonio's minority communities in the face of the immense spending for HemisFair.

This section also includes images of planning documents and some of the buildings and features of the fair which show the original intentions of the fair planners and the origins of some buildings which still remain today. An image of the United States Pavilion includes a quote from President Johnson which exemplifies the image-oriented goal of HemisFair:

I hope that every visitor will see the United States Pavilion. Through our exhibits on the theme 'Confluence U.S.A.' we are devoted not only to a chronicle of the American past, but to a confrontation of the American future. This panorama of history tells the story of the various ways in which Americans have wrought challenge into opportunity.

The quote again demonstrates that the point of world's fairs is to present a cohesive, triumphant image of the host country, past, present and into the future. Placing the quote above images of the fair buildings reminds the viewer of the underlying nationalistic purpose of each of them.

Before HemisFair '68

On the opposite wall is the most effective and poignant part of the exhibit: the site of HemisFair before it was HemisFair. It engages with the most critical reflection and most employs the pedagogical methods of the contemporary twenty-first century museum to uncover a hidden history which completely dismantles the celebratory perceptions of HemisFair a visitor might have had. Dr. Gould gathered opinions from various figures who were affected by the forced eviction of a historical and diverse neighborhood and grounds them in the context of the event. Because this section is so

rich for analysis, I will devote my next chapter to a thorough examination of the issue.

Designing the Fair Continued

The “Designing the Fair” section continues on a separate wall, with a focus on the Tower of Americas, the signature architectural feature of the fair’s landscape:

The fair’s ‘theme structure,’ the 622-foot tall Tower of the Americas was designed with a 1.4 million pound tophouse containing an observation deck and revolving restaurant, which was built on the ground and then lifted to the top, inch by inch, with 24 oil field drill stem pipes. The process took 20 days. It would be another year before scientists at the Southwest Research Institute devised a way to clean the windows. A contest chose the structure’s name. Entries included numerous variations honoring John F. Kennedy, as well as others riffing on popular culture such as the Purple People Steeple.

The panel includes photos of the tower and other buildings in progress, various construction and planning photos and documents, sketches of buildings and costumes, and photos of HemisFair executives. In this section of the exhibit the photographs reveal that the leadership of the fair was mostly white, and mostly male, which affected every aspect of the fair. In a photo labeled “HemisFair ‘68 staff, November 1964,” ten people are shown, four of whom are women, and most of whom appear to be white. Another photo with fair leaders is labeled “Governor John Connally; H.B. Zachry, fair board chairman; Frank Manupelli, fair executive vice-president; and Mayor Walter McAllister prepare to present the plans for the fair at a press conference at the New York Hilton Hotel.”

The inclusion of these photos of the leadership of the fair is meant to highlight the lack of diversity in those who curated, financed, organized, and promoted the fair. Without expressing any opinion or argument, Dr. Gould is subtly pointing out the obvious overrepresentation of white men. These photos visually reveal for the first time in the exhibit the people behind the fair and provide insight to the contentious topics the rest of the exhibit discusses. The photos of the now-iconic Tower in the process of being built are a testament to the ways HemisFair changed the city. Signals of HemisFair's legacy remain in San Antonio today—the Tower is just one of the most famous. This section is characteristic of Dr. Gould's curatorial strategy of letting the visitor come to his or her own conclusion and providing the tools for discovery.

A Fair to Remember

In this section the tone shifts back to considering HemisFair in the context of the sociopolitical landscape of the fair, the city, and the nation, placing the opening of the fair in the context of the tense events of the time.

Five days before the fair was to open, as tensions around the Vietnam War escalated, key fair supporter President Lyndon B. Johnson announced he would not seek reelection and then, three days later, Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. Amid national turmoil, Lady Bird Johnson delivered an inaugural address at the April 6th HemisFair opening in which she made an appeal for understanding and brotherhood while anti-war and pro-equality protesters picketed outside the gates. The realities of life beyond the fairgrounds would continue to shake the nation, but inside the fair visitors experienced a kaleidoscope of entertainment, traditional arts, and cutting-edge technology.

For six months, from April 6, 1968 to October 6, 1968, a \$2 ticket (\$1 for children) gave fairgoers access to food from faraway lands like France, the Phillipines [sic], and India; entertainment from aerialists from Mexico, street

troubadours, actors who emerged from a movie screen in *Laterna Magika*, the adults-only puppet show *Les Poupées de Paris*, big-name entertainers, gunslingers facing off in a duel, water skiers, opera singers, clowns, flamenco dancers, and local bands; and a glimpse of industrial ingenuity from titans of industry such as Southwestern Bell, General Electric, IBM, General Motors, Ford, RCA, and Eastman Kodak.

This text immediately juxtaposes the fun, festive, safe environment of the fair with the turbulent and tense events that occurred around the nation just as the fair was preparing to open. The first paragraph mentions the Vietnam War, the ending of the LBJ Presidency, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s assassination, and protestors picketing outside the gates, while the second paragraph describes the glitzy entertainment the fair performed even amidst these events—providing a complete contrast to what was happening in the world and building a picture of strength and peace. These tragedies may have strengthened HemisFair's nationalist purpose in this way, but they also harmed it—later in the exhibit, the text explains that these events negatively affected the turnout of the fair.

Although the President did not attend the opening of the fair due to the national tragedy of Martin Luther King's assassination, Lady Bird Johnson was in attendance and made a speech congratulating the city and arguing for promoting the spirit of cultural confluence despite the chaos in the country. The entirety of the speech is included in the exhibit in a text panel and in an interactive telephone audio recording, along with a display of the dress she wore to present it. The second paragraph of her speech begins with:

No one is seeking and striving for that peace and that calm for our troubled nation more than he [President Johnson] is. I have talked to the President and he has asked me to keep the commitments I have made, which were undertaken to perhaps in some small way contribute to better understanding

between people. That is what this ceremony is all about. With the calm and prayerful work of all of us, we will mend our wounds and move ahead. So let us not set the fires of hatred, but quench them.

Here, Lady Bird is acknowledging the tumultuous events in the nation and attempting to downplay them by highlighting the nationalistic purpose of the fair. She is acting as an extension of the leadership of the fair and the nation—advertising it as a destination of safe, sanitized fun as a counter to the real tragedies outside the gates. From this section of the exhibit the dominant message—from the President of the United States to the fair officials themselves—seems to encourage visitors to cling even more tightly to the fair and its message of hope and unity because of these events. HemisFair’s purpose was marketed as even more important in these turbulent times, even though the fair itself didn’t succeed as monumentally as backers had hoped.

“A Fair to Remember” also includes many pictures of the opening of the fair. Senator Henry B. González is shown cutting the ribbon at the opening day ceremony; a long line of mostly white, male HemisFair planners get their picture taken; the mini-monorail zooms by the Tower of the Americas; people wait to get through the gates. The most interesting photos, however, are of the briefly-mentioned protestors. One photo depicts people holding signs saying “Connally: Our white, Anglo governor...” (the rest is illegible) and “Hemisphere is for the rich only.” In another photo men in suits hold signs saying “San Antonio Committee to stop the war in Vietnam,” “Silent vigil for Peace,” and “War is not healthy for children and other living things.” The caption for both photos is simply “protestors along Alamo Street on HemisFair’s opening day.” The inclusion of these photos is significant—it shows that HemisFair

was not universally well received and contrasts the lofty goals of HemisFair as described by Lady Bird with its real reception. This is also significant because most, if not all, of the other portrayals of HemisFair, especially during the celebratory time in San Antonio while this exhibit was on display, were completely positive. Even though these protests are briefly mentioned, they are still included, which broadens the discussion of the fair and includes a more varied, multi-narrative view of the fair. The inclusion of these photos, along with the entirety of the “Before HemisFair” section, lends legitimacy to the memories of HemisFair that don’t align with the “official” memory of HemisFair, which is the purpose of the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit.

Hosts and Hostesses

This section of the exhibit is made up predominantly of photos of some of the women who served as hostesses during the fair. The brief text states that “Some 90 young men and women served as HemisFair hosts and hostesses. Each spoke English and a second language such as Spanish, French, or German in anticipation of visitors from around the world. The hostesses are particularly memorable for their uniforms.” A quote from the San Antonio Express News further emphasizes the uniforms: “In these uniforms, the official HemisFair hostesses are easily identified... As greeters and aides, they have the paramount task of creating in visitors a good impression of HemisFair.” Although both men and women served as guides, only women are pictured on the panel. Along with the panel, an item in a display case is also part of

this section—a small bag labeled “prototype handbag made from the same fabric used for the VIP hostess uniforms.”

This information included in this section, though brief, is pointed and meaningful. All of the photos chosen contain young women wearing short uniform dresses, happily posing at various fair locations. Dr. Gould explained her goal for this section: “the photographs selected were intentional... [I am] showing the overrepresentation of women [as hostesses] and hoping people figure it out” (Gould). By selectively choosing photos to be included in the section, Dr. Gould makes an argument about how the fair was publicized. “Marketing the fair by showing cute young girls wearing the fashion of the day... there is intention behind things like that,” she says, arguing that the fair capitalized on the abundance of young women workers to portray the fair in a certain light (Gould). The photos chosen for *Viva HemisFair* point to that fact without blatantly stating it, again allowing the visitor to make what he or she will of the photographs. Further, some museum visitors to the exhibit might have at least a basic understanding of the intense struggle for equal rights women underwent in the period of the 1960s and would see the dichotomy between the picture of subservient women presented in this section and the nuanced and complex picture of what women were doing in protesting for their rights throughout the 60s. These photographs were selected so that the visitor might recognize that the ways HemisFair represented women were starkly different from the ways women would have represented themselves.

HemisFair Performers

This section shows some of the entertainers that performed at the fair. It is another short panel mostly made up of photos. The short label text describes a single attraction among the many entertainments at the fair. According to the text, “‘*Los Voladores de Papantla*,’ sponsored by Frito Lay/Pepsi-Cola, was a crowd favorite. An ancient indigenous rite, the *voladores* climb a 114-foot pole and, tethered at the waist by a rope, fly into the air, swirling around the pole on gradually unwinding ropes.” A visitor might read this and move on to the next panel with no hesitation. But upon further inspection, this panel subtly points out the voyeuristic, racist tradition of world’s fairs requiring people to perform their rituals and ceremonies for the benefit of fair audiences (Grindstaff 247). *Danza de los Voladores* is an ancient ritual, still being performed today by indigenous peoples in Mexico, connected to native conceptions of fertility and harmony between the natural and spiritual worlds (Ianni et al). Part of the HemisFair version of the ritual included a mock sacrifice of a woman naked to the waist. This recreation of an ancient ritual for the delight and fascination of mostly white, middle class visitors hearkens back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when these types of sacrificial performances of seemingly “primitive savages” were a staple of world’s fairs. The *Voladores* performance at HemisFair is reminiscent of the faux Philippine reservation at the St. Louis Exposition in 1904 in which Filipino natives lived on fairgrounds in replicas of their villages (Grindstaff). This specific performance at HemisFair was singled out in the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit in order to subtly demonstrate to visitors that HemisFair

was not free of the racism of earlier world's fairs. The panel does not explicitly condemn the *Voladores* performance, but instead lets the visitor come to his or her own conclusion about it. Further, traditionally, a sacrifice was not a part of the ritual (Ianni et al.). The performance for HemisFair, thus, was a constructed product that combined different rituals from different cultures created not to be authentic but to be entertainment.

International Flavors/Rides and Amusements

The next panel contains two sections. The first one, "International Flavors," describes the food options offered at the fair:

HemisFair '68 featured four major food courts, with Swiss pastries, Belgian waffles, Mongolian beef, Southern fried chicken, shish kebabs, burritos, pizza, hot dogs, hamburgers, and more. Restaurants included the Tower of the Americas, the Bavarian Beer Garden, the Old Frontier Steak House, *Casa Manila* featuring Filipino dishes, the French *La Maison Blanches*, and Mexican-themed *La Fonda Santa Anita*.

Photographs of people eating are included, as well as a map of all of the restaurants of HemisFair. "Rides and Amusements" is a similar section: mostly photos with a short text. "During HemisFair the Tower was surrounded by a mini-monorail, a sky-ride, water park, and other amusements. Today, paths and a new water park skirt the base of the Tower and the expanding convention center lies just to the north." Photos of a wedding in the Tower, people walking around the fair, the monorail, water skiing demonstrations, and the skyride make up the rest of the panel. As with "International Flavors," this part of the exhibit describes the assortment of activities at the fair.

The subtle argument of this section of the exhibit points out the variety of cultural food options. According to the HemisFair 1968 Official Souvenir Guidebook, there were foods available from Southern, Western, Indian, Philippine, French, Mexican, Italian, Chinese, American, Swiss, Southwest, Belgian, Irish, and South Pacific cultures. These foods from a wide variety of cultural groups are related to the idea of cultural consumption. In his article about the food options at HemisFair, John Carranza states that “food and drink companies were, in the instance of HemisFair ‘68, tied to the consumption of culture and the culture of consumption that included eating ethnic foods and purchasing the right, in essence, to see displays of other cultures.” Visitors are able to access and consume the foods of other cultures and thus are able to consume the cultures themselves. Eating the foods of “others” is a way to control and subdue them. The HemisFair Guidebook states it outright: “HemisFair ‘68 spreads the cuisine of the world before its visitors” (107). And Carranza argues that the abundance of food areas on the site “helped to facilitate the fairgoer’s desire to experience the cultural identity of other countries.” This brief mention of the foods at the fair is a subtle reference to this idea of cultural consumption and HemisFair’s perpetuation of the notion of exotic others arrayed for the consuming pleasure of the hegemonic majority culture.

Pavilions

The “Pavilions” panel includes text about the variety of exhibitions at the fair and many photos. The primary text states:

Snapshots of cultural pavilions: World's Fairs necessarily include representation from across the globe and HemisFair '68 was no exception. The 'confluence of civilizations' attracted participants from nearly two dozen countries, each operating their own pavilion and hosting special events to showcase their cultural and material contributions to the world.

With this, the exhibit again subtly connects HemisFair to the long lineage of world's fairs throughout history. Reminding the viewer plainly that HemisFair was a world's fair makes it impossible to forget that HemisFair's purpose was to display cultures for political and economic gain. Another paragraph focuses on one specific pavilion:

In January 1967, a group of prominent women met to discuss and organize their own civic participation in the World's Fair. It developed into the Woman's Pavilion, a principal attraction of the 1968 exposition.

The Pavilion celebrated women's historical role as torchbearers of culture and tradition. While the exhibit was not a part of the larger women's movement per se, it did acknowledge the changing world and asked visitors to consider how the roles of women might expand and change in the future.

The purpose of this text is to highlight the fact that women had to create their own separate space to implement their ideas. Instead of being included in the planning and execution of the fair, women were relegated to a separate, smaller, isolated pavilion. Dozens of pavilions were at HemisFair. The Woman's Pavilion is highlighted in this section to point out the dichotomy between the "normal" exhibits about all people and the "special" exhibit just for women. Even so, it is noteworthy that the women depicted in this section are, again, predominantly the upper class Anglo elite of San Antonio, rather than the female folk artists, mothers, nurses, and storytellers of much of San Antonio's population.

Two other texts describe some of the industrial pavilions: "The Bell System, IBM, General Electric, RCA, Eastman Kodak, General Motors, and Ford Motor

Company displayed their latest innovations at HemisFair '68" and one more specifically about one technological innovation:

The Bell System Pavilion at HemisFair featured touchtone technology and electronic switching. Most of the phones for visitor use were stylish Princess models (introduced in 1966) that offered touch buttons in the telephone base. The older heavy, square desk phone with removable square faceplate (introduced in 1964) was a popular model with businesses. Note that these early telephones had only a ten-button touch pad. By 1968 new Trimline phones started to reach the market. These had a touch pad in the handset, the newest versions providing two extra buttons for asterisk (*) and pound sign (#).

These texts provide more detailed information about the industrial pavilions at the fair. The long description of Bell telephones is included because the ITC has a Princess Bell telephone in their collection, which is displayed by itself in a case directly next to the paragraph about the Bell pavilion. The inclusion of the telephone illuminates what the text describes and connects a modern day visitor with the groundbreaking technology of the 1960s. And though this section does not mention the historical realities of structural inequality throughout San Antonio, visitors would be able to connect the information in this section about the technological innovations of the 1960s with the knowledge offered in other sections that thousands of San Antonians were in poverty and thus lived without personal phones or other modern electric conveniences in their homes, offices, and schools.

Legacy

The second to last section of the exhibit is one of the most crucial, as it strives to further uncover some elements of HemisFair's history that have remained hidden

and create a picture of the fair that is more multidimensional and inclusive. The panel is made up of a main text, photos, and several quotes from people with differing viewpoints of the fair. The main text reads:

The fair's success was mixed. Some 6.4 million people attended the fair, below the original 7.2 million projection and the fair lost over \$6 million. Attendance was likely impacted by the violence and unrest that punctuated 1968, including the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, and was further marred by a tragedy at the fair on September 15th when the mini-monorail derailed killing one and injuring 48. Around town some criticized the fair planners' inattention to ongoing struggles for racial equality. However, HemisFair also led to improvements across the city. New conservation regulations were implemented following the razing of German Town to better protect the city's historic landscape, and improvements to the River Walk in anticipation of the fair and the fair's convention center have continued to sustain a thriving tourism industry. In retrospect, mistakes were made, but HemisFair is understood as an important turning point in San Antonio's history and for many locals remains one of their most exciting memories.

From its beginning the text shows the side of HemisFair that is different from the celebratory side that the rest of San Antonio embraced for its fiftieth anniversary (and the three hundredth anniversary of the city). The text mentions the underwhelming economic performance of the fair, the national and local tragedies that affected attendance and tone, and the racialized tensions surrounding the displacement of thousands of citizens and the loss of hundreds of historic structures in the process of its construction. The second half of the paragraph turns optimistic, arguing that even though "mistakes were made" HemisFair forever altered San Antonio's history and remains a happy memory for many locals. The reason for this shift in tone is undoubtedly due to the fact that this exhibit is, after all, part of an institution which itself came out of HemisFair and is a governmental agency. The exhibit can only go so far, in other words, but by including the contentious and negative aspects of the

fair Dr. Gould is arguing that these negative memories are just as important as the positive ones.

Several quotes are also included, giving voice to people whose memories do and do not align with the “official” memories of HemisFair. The quote “they built HemisFair with no back door to the East Side. You had to go all the way around to Alamo Street to get into HemisFair. It was a message to us that this is not for the East Side” from Rev. Claude W. Black, Jr., civic leader, Pastor of Mt. Zion First Baptist Church (1949-1998) and City Council member (1973-1975) is an excellent example of this tactic as it is not positive of the fair at all, but is critical of how the fair excluded minorities even by something as seemingly mundane as where the gates were placed. This quote uncovers a part of HemisFair history that has never been featured, much less put on display in a museum, and in that way it legitimizes the dissatisfaction communities of color had with the fair, a viewpoint that differs from that of some of the other quotes included. Directly next to that quote is one by Gerald Lyda, HemisFair general contractor, with a celebratory viewpoint of HemisFair: “Did it change the city? It made a new world out of it. I think all the people of San Antonio ought to recognize that and be proud of it, because we couldn’t stay a small sleepy town forever, you know.” It reflects the ideology of the fair itself: creating a new world from the two worlds of the Western hemisphere, coexisting in unity. An idea often expressed in popular remembrances of HemisFair is how it transformed San Antonio for the better, from a dusty cow town to a bustling metropolis, and this quote from Nelson Wolf, a County Judge, supports that idealized memory:

When HemisFair came I was 28 years old. I had been out of law school two years, and the lumber business was beginning to build up and grow. You

could feel some of the changes that were occurring in San Antonio then. But prior to that, San Antonio—I don't care whether you were black, brown, white, or gray—was a relatively closed society from the economic standpoint.

This quote seems to reflect the same ideology as the previous quote, that HemisFair expanded the city culturally, socially, politically, and economically, and therefore upholds the “official” memory of the fair. “It [HemisFair] was the best loss I ever had!” by Tom C. Frost, civic leader and senior chairman of Frost National Bank reflects on the fact that HemisFair was unsuccessful in numbers, but, as Frost argues, successful in less easily measured areas of growth. This quote echoes his quote that is at the beginning of the exhibit: “The most important date in San Antonio’s history isn’t the fall of the Alamo or the date we were founded, but April 6, 1968.” The next quote, by William Sinkin, is extremely celebratory and completely diminishes the controversies surrounding the fair:

HemisFair, I want to reiterate, was a watershed of economics and tourism growth for San Antonio. It’s a permanent legacy that will be hard to match, because for the first time there was a confluence not only of civilizations, which was our theme, but there was a true confluence in the community. There was a very, very minimum of disgruntlement or criticism of HemisFair. It was truly a cooperative symphony of harmony for San Antonio.

Sinkin was one of the original planners of the fair. Since the success or lack thereof of HemisFair reflected upon him, his quote being entirely celebratory makes sense. Even after the fair was over Sinkin still had to promote its legacy. The architect Boone Powell’s quote is much more ambiguous: “I don’t think the San Antonio we have today would have occurred without the fair, and I don’t mean that in a minor way.” It neither outwardly celebrates nor criticizes HemisFair but instead offers an almost unarguable fact—that HemisFair changed San Antonio forever. This inclusion of this

quote makes the claim that HemisFair is a worthy topic of an exhibit as it did change the political, cultural, and economic landscape of the city, for better or for worse.

The rest of the panel includes a photograph of the Tower of the Americas and the Riverwalk with the caption, “The HemisFair River Walk extension brought the popular river barges to the new convention center.” A photo of the Tower and what is now the courthouse is captioned “The Tower of the Americas and the John H. Wood Federal Courthouse, two of the most distinctive buildings in downtown San Antonio.” Both of these photos serve to demonstrate the influence of HemisFair in terms of some of the physical structures that are still part of the city. These photos were chosen in order to focus on the positive effects of the fair rather than any of the negative ones, like the loss of German Town.

Future

The last section of the exhibit is titled “Future” and includes an introductory label that situates the memories of HemisFair in the context of its present state. The panel text reads:

While the Institute of Texan Cultures, Mexican Cultural Institute, and Tower of the Americas continue to be popular destinations, it has been difficult to attract consistent visitorship to the park. Over the years various plans to reanimate the area have come and gone including ideas to use the site for the main library, the campus location for the new UTSA, year-round weekend fiestas, an amusement park, a fine arts institute, and a German Heritage Park.

The HemisFair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, created in 2009 to manage and redevelop the site, unveiled a new master plan in 2012. The future of some areas of the park remain unclear. Many of the buildings of the original world’s fair have either disappeared (like the arena) or are in poor

condition (like the Women's Pavilion). The John H. Wood Jr. Federal Courthouse, previously the U.S. Pavilion, will be retired soon and its fate remains unknown. Other areas are quickly being redeveloped. Yanaguana Gardens, a children's park in the southwest quadrant was completed in 2015, and a 9-acre Civic Park is underway in the northwest quadrant. Public-private partnership deals for residential development are also planned to restore housing in the area to its approximate pre-1968 population, although in high-rises rather than the earlier single family homes. One thing is certain, the city has high hopes for the future of HemisFair.

This text acknowledges the struggles the HemisFair site has been enduring in the twenty-first century and contextualizes the site in the many tensions surrounding its future. The text continues the thread developed throughout the exhibit that HemisFair followed a contentious and complicated path before, during, and after 1968, the effects of which are still being felt today. The final impression of a pivotal period in San Antonio's history is not an altogether positive one: the paragraph mentions the lack of engagement with the current site, the neglect of some of the remaining structures, and the tragedy of the loss of German Town. The text makes a small attempt to show the current site in a positive light by including the newly developed park and housing areas, and ends simply with a vague wish for the future.

Also included in this section are several images concerning the various uses of the HemisFair arena after the fair. A poster advertising an event has the caption:

After the HemisFair festivities officially came to a close, the HemisFair arena continued to host a variety of concerts and events. Just a month after the fair Janis Joplin was slated to grace the stage, though the concert was cancelled. She returned a year later, whiskey in hand, with Austin unknowns ZZ Top as her opening act.

The next photo is of "a rodeo at the HemisFair Arena, 1972," and the next one is "the HemisFair Arena, shown here during HemisFair, later housed the San Antonio Spurs

from 1973 to 1993.” A poster of “the first game in San Antonio history” between the Spurs and the San Diego Conquistadors in 1973 is next, and then a photo taken during a Spurs game at the arena in 1977. Two tickets from this game are included in a frame. The last piece of this section is “HemisFair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation’s plans to revitalize HemisFair Park,” which is a birds-eye view of a modern park plan.

These images reflect an effort to demonstrate the various uses of the HemisFair arena after the fair closed. However, this section does not go into detail about the recent controversies surrounding the reintroduction of housing to the HemisFair site. A new apartment complex called The ‘68 is currently being developed, ready for tenants beginning in early 2019. It is near the part of the HemisFair grounds called Yanaguana Garden, a playground area for children. Andres Andujar, CEO of the HemisFair Park Area Redevelopment Corporation, says about the project: “the neighborhood that was demolished to make way for San Antonio to host the World’s Fair in 1968 will never be replaced, but the next step in restoring the sense of community that was lost will open this spring at HemisFair” (qtd. in Petty). Part of the exigency of the apartment project, according to Andujar, is to hearken back to German Town and the site’s original purpose—to house people. A high-scale, high-rent apartment complex is not quite the same as the housing that German Town offered, though, so although ten percent of the units must be “affordable” due to an agreement with the HemisFair Park Public Facility Corporation (Olivo), Angujar’s goal is to “bring some element of affordability to well over 50 percent of its apartments” (Petty). The irony of attempting to restore the pre-HemisFair

neighborhood over fifty years after it was demolished is not explicitly discussed in the exhibit, but a visitor who is familiar with the current HemisFair site would have brought that knowledge to their understanding of the exhibit.

Other Elements

There are a few elements of the exhibit that seem to belong to no particular section but instead offer more information about the fair as a whole: a continuously playing video, display cases of souvenirs, and a wall with remembrances of HemisFair visitors.

In the middle of the exhibit there is a wall onto which a projector plays a video of the fair. The footage appears to be home video footage, with clips of the amusement rides, an elevator going up in the Tower of Americas, a woman riding the mini-monorail, and visitors strolling around the grounds. Audio of a promotional news report plays from a speaker: “If you and your family are looking for fun, come to Fiesta Island when you visit the world’s fair in San Antonio—that’s HemisFair, 1968,” the narrator proclaims. The audio can be heard throughout the small, interconnected rooms of the exhibit and serves to remind viewers that the commercial, promotional side of HemisFair was its main function—advertising itself and San Antonio as a respite from the political and social chaos in the United States and the city.

In the final room of the exhibit there are four display cases containing souvenirs, promotional materials, brochures, and objects from some of the

governmental and industrial exhibits. The sheer abundance of souvenirs that were available for purchase at the fair and which are represented in the exhibit is overwhelming: plates, models, patches, saltshakers, and many more. The uniform of the US Pavilion hostesses is also included in one of the cases—a short, high-necked, navy blue dress. These cases full of the dazzling array of promotional products and materials like brochures and postcards provide a small glimpse into the enormous effort of promoting and advertising the fair, as well as ensuring that fairgoers had enough of an assortment of items with which to remember San Antonio. A small label in the box describes this wealth of objects:

What better way to remember something as monumental as a World's Fair than with a souvenir? HemisFair souvenir shops sold many such items including cigarette lighters, tee-shirts, dishes, flags, stickers, glasses, toys, postcards, medallions, and even \$120 gold cufflinks!

This text, when considered against the context of the rest of the exhibit which points out the poverty of many San Antonio residents, demonstrates how the city and its fair were offered up to be consumed by wealthy visitors. The paragraph subtly invites viewers to compare the exorbitant amount of money—\$120—some visitors could afford to spend on souvenirs while some San Antonians could not afford to feed their families. Another paragraph in a case describes the promotional materials made for the fair:

HemisFair '68 produced a stunning variety of flyers and brochures for promotion and visitor information. In accordance with the official standards of design, bright colors and bold graphic elements were used to communicate the excitement of the event.

Educational exhibits presented by nations, religions, art connoisseurs, and cultural groups hailed from around the world, not just the Western Hemisphere. Sponsoring pavilions included the governments of Japan, Norway, Bolivia, Thailand, El Salvador, and many more. Other participants

included the Alexander Girard Folk Art Collection, *Laterna Magika*, the Mormon Church, O.A.S., and the states of Arkansas and Texas. Seeking to impress fairgoers, exhibitors put forward monumental and striking products.

This text, along with the variety of brochures in the case, showcases the effort that went into marketing the fair and describes again some of the pavilions at HemisFair to remind the visitor of the hegemonic and nationalistic purpose of the fair.

The final wall at the end of the exhibit is made up of photographs, postcards, and a metal sign advertising HemisFair souvenirs. At the beginning of this exhibit's time on view, this wall contained a visitor engagement section in which visitors were invited to write or draw their memories of HemisFair on a small slip of paper and add them to the collective memory of the fair. But at some point during the view period, this section was replaced with the photographs and postcards. When I talked with Dr. Gould, she was unaware that this change had been made. Although maintaining the visitor response section required some work—removing irrelevant responses and shifting new ones to the front—she was happy to have visitors interact with the exhibit in any way. At the end of the exhibit's tenure, however, the wall was a space for visual materials that perhaps did not fit in any other section. Some of these photographs are accompanied by a caption by the person who took the photo or who is pictured in it. One is a photo of the Tower of Americas with a caption describing how the photographer had the day off school to visit the fair. Another photo pictures the view of the ITC from the Tower. The caption explains that the eleven-year old photographer wrote about her experience at the fair in a postcard to her friend, a fascimilie of which is nearby. She writes that “many things [at HemisFair] are good but I can't remember them right now and I'm in a hurry. I bought a Japanese fan, in a

Japanese shop. I'll tell you about more things at HemisFair later. We're having fun."

This wall incorporates some more of the positive remembrances of the fair by fairgoers and workers and serves to leave visitors with a positive feeling of the fair at the end of the exhibit.

Conclusion

Viva HemisFair is an exhibit that takes the "official," hegemonic, nationalistic, simplified remembrances of HemisFair and warps them, shifting the focus to the "unofficial" stories of racism, poverty, and hypocrisy that permeated the fair and the political, social, and cultural landscape of San Antonio. Dr. Gould's words and the photos and documents she chooses to supplement them always leave the issue open for the visitor to make what they will of them. The exhibit refuses to tell a single, unified story about the fair, instead utilizing multiple and sometimes differing memories of the fair to create a more nuanced and complex picture of it. In this way Dr. Gould is doing the work of a twenty-first century museum curator—providing the tools for the visitor to find their own takeaways from the exhibit. *Viva HemisFair*, though small in size and the length of its duration, succeeded in its mission of dismantling the official story of HemisFair and giving a voice to those who refused to accept it.

Chapter Three:

The Representation of the Destruction of German Town in *Viva HemisFair*

One section of the *Viva HemisFair* exhibit, titled “Before Hemisfair ‘68,” is the largest and in some ways the most thoroughly researched and emotionally impactful section of the exhibit. In addition to objects and label text, this section incorporates facsimiles of primary source documents, as well as quotes from firsthand accounts which express the points of view not only of the fair organizers and funders, but of those everyday citizens who were forcefully displaced by the fair’s construction in downtown San Antonio. This section explicitly employs the pedagogical methods of the civically engaged twenty-first century museum to uncover a hidden history which complicates the monolithically celebratory metanarrative which the original HemisFair attempts to conjure through its architecture, its exhibits, and its featured stories. Because this exhibit section is so rich for analysis I have given this discussion its own chapter.

The section begins with an extensive introductory panel text that offers background information about HemisFair’s construction at the same time that it establishes the core arguments about the heritage and neighborhood displacements that lay behind the multi-million dollar enterprise:

With projected attendance at over 7 million, the planning committee sought a large site for the fair. An undeveloped area near Lackland Air Force Base and a site near Municipal Auditorium were considered, but ultimately a neighborhood southeast of the downtown core, convenient to the existing center-city tourism attractions was selected in July 1963. Notably, this area was eligible for federal urban renewal funds. Far from a slum, the area

included one of the most compactly historic and ethnically diverse neighborhoods in San Antonio.

It was an area that in the 1850s was known as German Town and which became home to German Americans, Mexican-Americans, Polish Americans, Catholics, Jews, and just about everyone in between. It was a mix of working to middle-class homes; a variety of stores, small businesses, and social halls; and two schools, two parks, one synagogue, and four churches. This 147-acre area was selected with 92.6 acres for the fair itself. Using urban renewal, the entire area was condemned and two dozen streets were either significantly altered or disappeared completely while approximately 1,600 people were forced to move away.

The San Antonio Conservation Society developed a list of 117 historically significant buildings on the site with the hope that they could be saved and incorporated into the fair. Ultimately only 22 were saved. Among the hundreds of properties lost were St. Michael's Catholic Church, a congregation founded in 1866 by Polish immigrants that was the heart of Polish San Antonio; the 1816 Baron de Bastrop house, the oldest building in the neighborhood; and numerous 19th century caliche stone houses.

Not only do these paragraphs identify the core tension surrounding the selection of the HemisFair site, they also highlight the monumental loss of a thriving multicultural community and the rich heritage of San Antonio's multiethnic history. The text also hints at the irony of this area being destroyed for a fair which proclaimed to celebrate the many cultures of Texas. The tone of this panel text, while still seemingly "factual" and non-emotional, introduces the most critical story of the entire exhibit, with the focus on the hundreds of people "forced to move away" and the loss of the "historically significant buildings" (exhibit text). This story, along with the fact that this section is the largest of the exhibit, seems to make this section a kind of case study for the exhibit as a whole, which makes sense as it is the one which gives the greatest sense of the irony of HemisFair. If the fair could be reduced to any one issue in terms of the complexity of the social, economic, and political determinants at its core, it would be the destruction of German Town.

In addition to the strongly worded introductory text, the rest of the exhibit section serves to back up its claims with personal quotes and photographs, as well as primary documents such as letters and diary entries in panels against the wall. It is through the stories of two families—the Toudouze family and the Gieniec family—who were impacted by the destruction of their neighborhood that the feelings and facts of the overall displacement are brought to life.

The small subsection about the Toudouze family incorporates photographs and diary pages to present a compelling and tragic story. These sentences form the center of their section: “Frank and Mary Toudouze resisted the call to move out of their home at 123 Wyoming Street, and were forcefully evicted on April 7, 1966. Their home became the site of the HemisFair Arena ticket office.” Below this text are “pages from Frank Toudouze’s diary,” one of which is a letter dated August 15, 1963 that reads:

Mr. John Kennedy: President of the United States of America. Sir: We the intersigned do not want our homes taken away from us for a Hemis Fair, urban renewal or any other reason. All we ask is to live in peace in our homes. Our area is not a slum (blight) area as our city officials claim it to be. Please help us.

It is not clear if the letter was ever sent—perhaps this is a draft written in a page of his diary. The bottom of the page reads “9 Nov. 65 Aunt Rose moved out of Her home at 131 Wyoming St. ‘Her house tore down 16 Dec. 65.’” This diary page is incredibly difficult to read. Including a first-hand account of a family being forced to move out of their home puts the exhibit viewer in the place of the German Town residents who had to leave their homes and forces the viewer to confront the difficulty and tragedy of their situation.

Another diary page is included which contains a photograph of a couple and the caption handwritten below:

Picture taken 14 March 1966. Frank and Mary Toudouze standing in front of our Home at 123 Wyoming Street San Antonio, Texas. This was my 'JAIL' from 13 December 1965 to 7 April 1966 because Bexar County deputy Sheriff's (24 hours a day) were trying to catch me off of our property there, if they had (but they didn't) they would not have let me go back on our property, Mama and Mary were free to go as they wished. Frank G. Toudouze.

This diary page again illustrates the heart-wrenching situation of the Toudouze family and the hundreds of other families forced to leave their homes and creates a picture of stark contrast between the subjugated residents and the powerful city managers and fair officials making them leave.

The last diary page included is a hand-drawn diagram of Wyoming Street. Number 123 is labeled as "our home of 52 years was here." Number 135 is "now a toilet." Below the street is the label "The above property was once owned by my Great Grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Wietzse" and is signed by Frank G. Toudouze. The page illustrates how much time and energy Frank Toudouze spent trying to protect his home and mourning its loss. More information on the diary, such as what else is in it and whether it is in the ITC collection, is not included on the panel.

Along with these diary pages are photographs presumably of the Toudouze family being forcefully evicted from their home: a uniformed woman leads a crying woman from a house; a man in a suit escorts a frowning man in a plaid jacket; a group of men leads an elderly woman from a house; the man in the plaid jacket is pulled from his chair inside a house. In all of these photos the residents are being

physically dragged away from their home. The photos are a visual tool for demonstrating how HemisFair negatively affected some residents of San Antonio in its mission to create its own megalithic structure.

A second story about German Town is told through the feature on the Gieniec family, who are introduced to the viewer with these sentences from the label text:

Peter and Mary Juraschek immigrated to San Antonio from Silesia in 1892 with daughter and son-in-law Victoria and Emanuel Morawitz and infant Mary Morawitz. In 1908 Emanuel built a home for the family at 215 Rose St. Baby Mary grew up, married, divorced, and moved in with her parents to raise her own infant daughter, Elizabeth Gieniec.

Elizabeth entered the convent at age fifteen and became the nun Sister Alexandrine. At age seventy-four Mary Morawitz-Gieniec was still living in the house her father had built when it was condemned by urban renewal to make way for HemisFair '68.

The text is accompanied by multiple photos with captions. A family portrait is labelled "Four generations of a Polish family who lived in the neighborhood that became HemisFair '68 in 1918." A mustached man with a baby is "Emanuel Morawitz and his granddaughter Elizabeth Gieniec in 1919, next to the house he built at 215 Rose Street in 1908." A baby in a yard is "Childhood photos of Elizabeth Gieniec in the family yard at 215 Rose St., 1919 & 1923." A woman and a dog is "Mary Morawitz Gieniec on the porch of her home at 215 Rose Street in 1957. She had to move after nearly 60 years when her house was condemned for HemisFair '68." The next photo is Elizabeth and her mother Mary. A family photo is the "Wedding reception for newlywed Mary Morawitz Gieniec held in her family's backyard at 215 Rose St., 1916." The next one is "Newlyweds Mary Morawitz and Jacob Gieniec celebrate at 215 Rose St., 1916."

The section about the Gieniec family serves to illustrate the long history of the German Town neighborhood and again demonstrates the injustice the residents felt at being forced to move. The Gieniec section traces the history of the family in the neighborhood for decades. The reason this story is so detailed is because the ITC's twenty-fifth anniversary exhibit about HemisFair focused on the Gieniec family, and because the ITC has her oral history in its archive. Dr. Gould said that Sister Alexandrine "wanted someone to tell her story" because she was "devastated" about having to leave her family home, so an exhibit whose purpose is to tell about the memories of HemisFair was a natural fit.

These two family-focused stories within the "Before Hemisfair '68" section deepen the argument made in the introductory text and make the issue more concrete for exhibit visitors. With these close investigations, the pain of the loss of German Town can be more clearly seen and felt and the almost criminal "misuse" of urban renewal federal funding is brought to light. Timothy Palmer, a HemisFair scholar, shed some more light onto the issue of urban renewal in his dissertation *HemisFair '68: The Confluence of Politics in San Antonio*. He states that "urban renewal was a tool created by the federal government to revitalize inner cities by rehabilitating or removing blighted areas" (15). Urban renewal was not limited to San Antonio, however, but was national in scope, and contributed to the fragmentation of urban communities (Talen 233). HemisFair planners and city leaders such as Mayor McAllister chose to use an urban renewal site instead of a more accessible, bigger, and unpopulated area of land so that the city would receive government money for the fair, and so that the central business district of the city would be revitalized with

public money instead of private (Palmer 14). In order for urban renewal to use an area, it had to be categorized as a “blight.” But the term “blight” was never defined in the legislation, creating an ambiguity that allowed local powers to decide if the term meant an area that was truly abandoned or simply in the way of progress (Palmer 17). The neighborhood selected for the HemisFair site was called Urban Renewal Project 5, and it qualified for urban renewal because 28 percent of the housing in the area was classified as “sound,” 70 percent “deteriorating,” and 2 percent “dilapidated” (Palmer 17). Nationally, these categories were often highly racialized, targeting areas where people of color lived disproportionately not a word. Scott Greer in his book *Urban Renewal and American Cities* critiqued the inherently biased process, arguing that “the definition of blight is, simply, that ‘this land is too good for these people’” (Scott qtd. in Palmer 17). Residents of Urban Renewal Project 5, also known as German Town, and other critics argued that the neighborhood was not a blight as it contained a thriving multi-ethnic community and many architectural gems such as St. Michael’s Catholic Church. Ultimately, however, the housing on the land was declared at least half “dilapidated beyond the point of feasible rehabilitation” (Ordinance 32738 qtd. in Palmer 17) and all 1,600 residents were forced to move. Urban renewal law required that two-thirds of the cost would be provided by the federal government, and the final one-third would come from the city. In October 1964 the federal Housing and Home Finance Agency awarded San Antonio a \$12.2 million grant for Project 5, and in order to proceed with the local funding, the Good Government League underwent a campaign to sell the fair to voters. “Not until a year later did the voters read about the families turned out of their homes to make way for the fair. By that time, however,

planning for HemisFair was well underway and urban renewal funds [were] coming in” (Palmer 18). By August 1967, all the residents had been relocated.

In the “Before HemisFair ‘68” exhibit section, several quotes from other stakeholders in the controversial bulldozing of German Town make up more of the content of the panel reflecting perspectives from other people involved. The first one is from Marvin Eikenrot of the Bexar County Historical Survey responding to a letter from O’Neil Ford: “I’m afraid that most of the damage was done when that area was selected for the HemisFair and Convention Center site... My attitude toward the whole business, since the bulldozers knocked everything down, has been guided by a desire to salvage as much as possible of what is left.” The next quote is by George Waitz, whose father ran the Red & White general store at 548 Goliad Street: “I was partners with my daddy. When they tore the store down, Daddy retired. He’d had enough. He was in his 70s. That store was built in 1886. It was a landmark.” Violet Ruiz, a former neighborhood resident, said: “It wasn’t in decline. It wasn’t a slum. People took care of their houses... this was a residential, family neighborhood. Everybody communicated with everybody in the neighborhood. Everybody said hi and good morning. I was blessed. It was really a wonderful place.” Lewis S. Fisher of Fisher Heck Architects said: “It was a real mix of people, and architecturally, the neighborhood took a little of La Villita, a little of what’s now called Lavaca, and a little of King William. It was a real San Antonio neighborhood.” A quote from the first architect of HemisFair, O’Neil Ford, paints a poignant side of the story from someone who was in a position to warn those in power not to select this area for the building of the HemisFair: “The shame of destruction on the HemisFair site is

something I couldn't believe would ever happen... Others could have followed my advice—heeded my pleas—but they didn't, and I will never forgive them.” A quote from Sister M. Alexandrine Gieniec, “whose mother had to leave her home of nearly sixty years,” said:

It was traumatic—her whole world fell apart. She just couldn't believe this was the price she had to pay for progress. The most traumatic thing was when the workmen came to appraise the house. They couldn't believe it was that old. They said it was good for another fifty years at least, yet here it was going to be torn down!

The last quote is another by Sister M. Alexandrine Gieniec:

My grandfather built our house. It was a little gray wooden house with a screen door and a wooden door that had a smoky glass pane with designs. Later he added a room at the back as a kitchen. It had a closed-in back porch with shutters and a trap door leading down to the basement.

All of these quotes serve to illustrate the real effects of demolishing a flourishing cultural neighborhood to make way for HemisFair from the perspectives of residents and HemisFair and city officials. All of the quotes support the argument of the panel text—that the destruction of German Town was a racially and culturally charged political event.

There are a few more elements of this section. A photograph shows a “bird's eye view of the area demolished for HemisFair '68. Before HemisFair, its 92 acres were home to a diverse community of San Antonians.” A map depicting the neighborhood used by the Urban Renewal Agency shows many blocks that were destroyed. Another, less detailed, map is captioned “the area street grid before HemisFair '68. To make room for HemisFair, some streets were completely wiped off of the map.” Photos of the exterior and interior of “St. Michael's Church, which was

demolished to make way for the Tower of Americas” are the last photographs on the panel.

A display case containing a few items is pushed against the wall next to the panel. A single label describes the objects: “Remembrances of home: This toy sad iron, rosary, garden pruning shears, doily, and missal belonged to Sister Alexandrine Gieniec and her mother Mary Morawitz Gieniec, longtime residents of the neighborhood that became HemisFair ‘68.” These objects are placed on small clear shelves within the case.

The last element of the “Before HemisFair ‘68” section is a StoryMap on an iPad on a stand next to the display case. The label states that the program was made by Garrett Bader, who, on the ITC website, is identified as a graduate intern. The StoryMap is a much more detailed look into the neighborhood, its buildings, and its residents, as well as the fair itself and the future of the site. It incorporates photographs, maps, newspaper articles, and links to a documentary about HemisFair. The focus of this StoryMap is clearly German Town, as it mostly details what was lost in order to make way for the fair, but depictions of the fair itself are also included. The presentation is detailed and descriptive, although there is no credit given to the creators of the maps, photographs, or videos included. The creation and inclusion of this iPad display in the exhibit further demonstrates the significance of the “Before HemisFair ‘68” section. It is obvious that a lot of time and effort went into this section of the exhibit. Dr. Gould explains why telling this story was so important. In asking people what they remember about HemisFair, she noted that “many San Antonians remember the demolition of the neighborhood.” In order to

portray the story of HemisFair as accurately as possible, she knew she had to tell this story. Another reason for the strength of this section is that the ITC already had the narratives of Frank Toudouze and Sister Gieniec in their archive, and it made sense to include them in this section.

The “Before Hemisfair ‘68” section of the exhibit is the most detailed, narratively supported, and emotional section in the exhibit, and it peels back the celebratory theme of HemisFair to tell a story not often told. Dr. Gould toes this line carefully: “As a state employee,” she says, “there are certain lines I’m willing to cross. I can push people in a certain direction” without arguing outright how a visitor should feel. Instead, her strategy was to present information without “point[ing] any fingers” so that visitors might pick up on the point she was making. “I trust the visitor to make connections. I provide the information, they draw their conclusions,” she says, an idea which encapsulates the goal of the twenty-first century museum—the visitor makes his or her own meaning from the exhibit (Gould). In her view, the curator’s job is to provide the tools for the visitor to make what they will of the information. This strategy, along with the presentation of several first-hand perspectives, led to an exhibit section which asks the visitor to consider an image of San Antonio that is nuanced and complex.

Conclusion

Viva HemisFair is a twenty-first century museum exhibit that seeks to dismantle the celebratory metanarrative of San Antonio's 1968 HemisFair, instead presenting a multi-voiced, thoroughly researched body of text and images that invites the exhibit viewer to come to his or her own conclusions about the fair, the city, and the nation in the 1960s and today. The exhibit often directly contradicts the nationalistic and hegemonic narrative of the fair and its popular remembrances, but the exhibit's curator, Dr. Sarah Gould, would have liked to have gone even further. Her role as the employee of a state institution—the Institute of Texan Cultures, which began as part of HemisFair—required that she maintain a degree of “neutrality” or “factuality” in both exhibit design and content that effectively limited the nature and style of critique. Another major element that prevented Dr. Gould from telling an even wider, more multidimensional story was the small space she had available to work with. At only 1,300 square feet, almost every available wall space was filled with graphic panels, but if she had had the opportunity, she would have included more content. When planning the exhibit she noted that she constantly had to ask herself if she could tell a story with just a photograph, or if the narrative needed additional explanatory text to get the point across. In essence, though, she made the point that every element in the exhibit—every photograph, diary entry, and paragraph—was carefully scrutinized for its effectiveness and economy of space. Every part of the exhibit somehow adds to the overarching purpose of the exhibit, even if it is not immediately obvious to the visitor.

When Dr. Gould planned the exhibit, she included a visitor engagement section—an area in which visitors were encouraged to leave their personal stories, memories, or responses to the specific themes raised in the exhibit. At some point during the exhibit’s tenure, Dr. Gould left the ITC to explore another job opportunity at the *Museo del Westside*, and this section was subsequently removed. She does not know why it was removed—part of her goal was inviting the visitors to interact directly and personally with the exhibit and, in her opinion, this was a crucial element of the visitor’s experience. Perhaps the remaining staff no longer wanted to continue the upkeep of maintaining a visitor response section. However, letting the visitor have a space for reflection, personal storytelling and commentary is a crucial part of community engagement and of the twenty-first century museum. According to cultural theorist Graham Black,

The museum must build-in opportunities for users to reflect and review the experiences of their visit and potentially augment their understanding... providing opportunities to respond directly to content—for example through comment cards, recorded content or online, and ensuring that other users can read and respond to those comments in turn—makes the museum a centre for dialogue. (Black 216)

However, despite the loss of the visitor response wall, Dr. Gould excelled at incorporating multiple perspectives and voices throughout the exhibit, another element of creating an engaging and accurate exhibit. In his book *Transforming Museums in the Twenty-first Century*, Black states that “museums must ensure that the display content is inclusive, and is representative of local communities” which involves “researching diverse cultural aspects of sites and collections and integrating diverse aspects of history and heritage into displays and ensuring representative

interpretation,” among others (Black 215). Dr. Gould’s use of including differing opinions about the legacy of HemisFair, for instance, reflects this strategy—by including both negative and positive memories of the fair, she is creating a space in which visitors can come to their own conclusions about the material. And the use of oral histories from the ITC collection to enhance the exhibit text, particularly in the “Before HemisFair ‘68” section, “is one way the museum represents those previously silent or ‘spoken for,’” (215) which is certainly the case with the Toudouze and Gieniec families as their stories were finally told over fifty years later.

Taken as a whole, the various components of the *Viva HemisFair! Fifty Years of HemisFair ‘68 Memories* exhibition create a multidimensional, complex portrait of the racial, political, and social conflicts that surrounded the planning and creation of HemisFair. It situates the memories of the fair—memories from a variety of stakeholders from both the 1960s and after—within a framework that dismantles the celebratory, hegemonic, and nationalistic portrait of the fair that fair and city officials propagated then and still continue to today. Although the exhibit was researched and completed by one curator, Dr. Sarah Gould, it incorporates multiple perspectives and opinions from a variety of community stakeholders without over-determining a single takeaway for visitors to leave with. Although some sections are more multi-voiced than others, Dr. Gould’s aim was to create a dialectical experience for the visitor throughout. “I trust the visitors to make connections,” she says. “I don’t want to tell people what to think” (Gould). *Viva HemisFair* succeeds in portraying the many faces of San Antonio’s controversial HemisFair spectacle, a fair which forever changed the physical, cultural, and emotional landscape of San Antonio.

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