

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

OUR SPONSORS:



THANKS TO THE JAMES E. ROBISON
FOUNDATION FOR SUPPORT

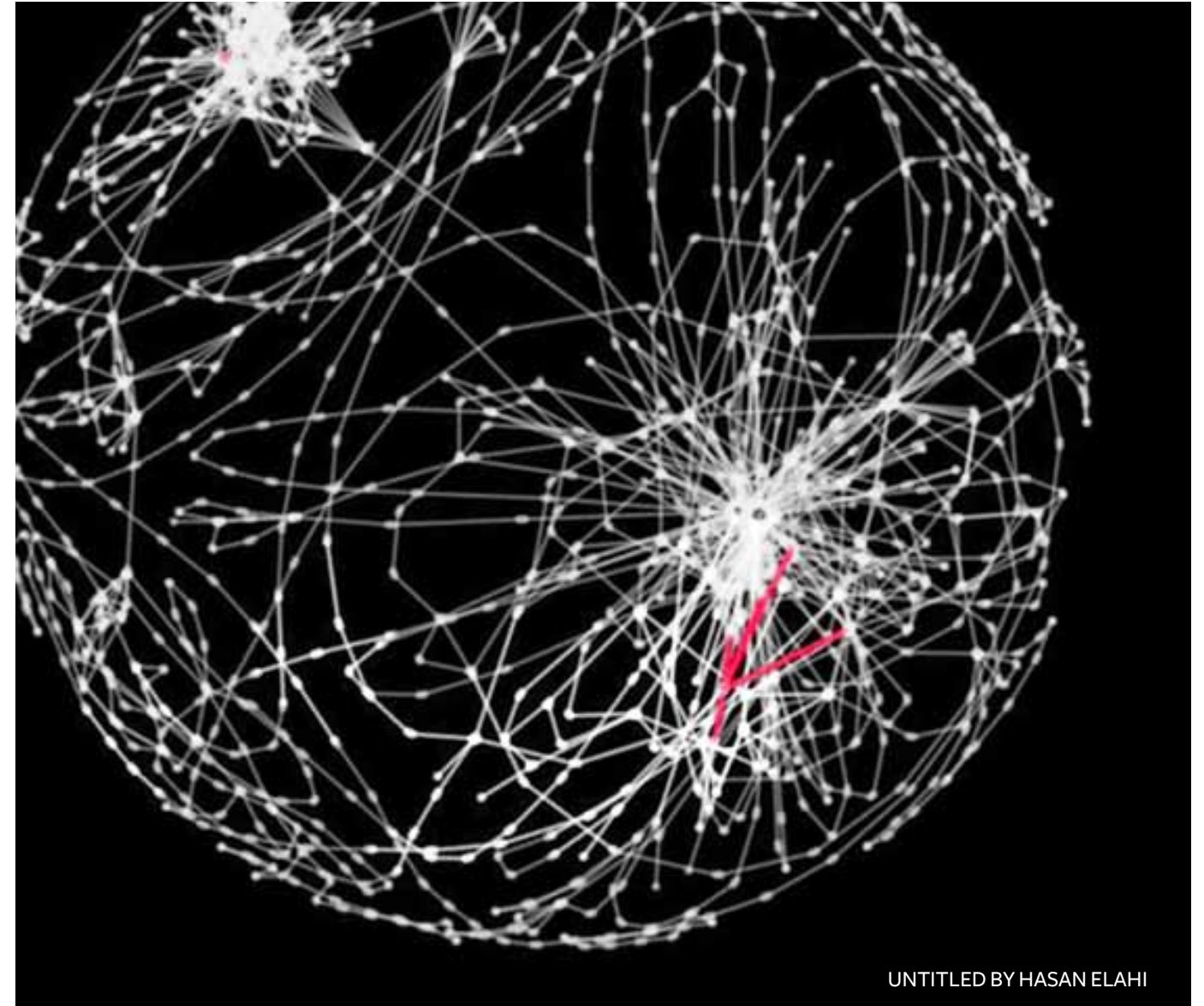


Helen Day Art Center

Copyright © 2014
THE HELEN DAY ART CENTER
STOWE, VERMONT
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Helen Day Art Center

SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY



UNTITLED BY HASAN ELAHI

JANUARY 24 - APRIL 20, 2014

**MARNIX DE NIJS
HASAN ELAHI
ADAM HARVEY
EVA AND FRANCO MATTES
DAVID WALLACE**

**CURATED BY:
NATHAN SUTER**

SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY

CURATORIAL STATEMENT

In a global context which shifts weekly with each new revelation from the flow of Snowden - NSA documents, the topics of surveillance, security, and privacy are in constant debate. We have long been accustomed to the ubiquitous eye in the ceiling in department stores protecting the business from "inventory shrinkage" and more recently to CCTV cameras extending their monitoring range further into the public space as we semi-consciously pass through monitored space on streets, in parks, and near banks and other securitized entities. Who are the watchers, and who is being watched? What information is at stake? Are we/they generating meaning? Is there a balance between safety and threat?

The internet, its near universal adoption, and our daily use of its connections for communication, business, consumption, and information has lulled us into trading information vulnerability for convenience. Cell phones apparently are similarly susceptible. Our cultural expectations for privacy regarding our phones is rooted in precedents and laws built over years with the land-line phone system. The ease with which the NSA -and presumably other government agencies, both domestic and foreign- can siphon information, analyze our networks, and draw conclusions has come as a bit of a shock. One collaborator involved with artist Hasan Elahi can predict most people's physical location at any future date and time with 80-90% accuracy based on past cell phone records.

The deployment of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) by the U.S. in war zones and over sovereign nations not at war has revealed the capabilities of drones for both surveillance and armed attacks. Their efficacy has piqued the interest of domestic law enforcement, the Department of Homeland Security, scientists, paparazzi, and other potential end users. As a result the FAA has approved testing in Alaska, New York, North Dakota, Texas, North Carolina and Virginia to explore using and regulating UAVs in domestic airspace.

The artists in **Surveillance Society** examine these developments, find visible evidence of surveillance practices, and at times reverse the strategies to watch the watchers.

Surveillance: privacy and safety, security and freedom, public and personal - Each of these dichotomies point to the gravity of the debate between public and private space. The prevalence of surveillance in personal, public, corporate, and governmental contexts is growing exponentially. These questions linger as do others. Do we feel safe? From whom? Have we found the balance between safety and privacy?

Curated by Nathan Suter the exhibit features six prominent artists: Hasan Elahi, Adam Harvey, Marnix De Nijs, Eva and Franco Mattes, and David Wallace

— NATHAN SUTER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

David Wallace Friends, Family, Neighbors 2013 projection and mixed media

Wallace's **Friends, Family, Neighbors** is a slideshow of quotidian scenes from David's community of people in the course of their lives. Each image is partially masked by a moving tableau of shadows - first of swallows flying by, then, in a sobering punch, the shadow of a Predator UAV (drone). The shadow theater he creates is low-tech - cut out shapes are suspended from a large plywood disc and rotated by an electric motor in front of a projector. This approach implies an everyman's reaction to the presence of drones and the impending insertion of same into U.S. airspace.



FRIENDS, FAMILY, NEIGHBORS BY DAVID WALLACE

Eva and Franco Mattes NYC <http://0100101110101101.org/> CCTV 2013 surveillance video, laptop, step ladder

This installation video shows the apparent theft of their laptop prior to an exhibition as captured by CCTV cameras in the gallery. The presence of video cameras in businesses, banks, and other semi-public areas has been common practice for decades in the U.S., and has extended into the public space as banks and other businesses seek to monitor their surroundings. A number of artists have taken advantage of these Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems to examine this aspect of surveillance society. Replicating the details of this incident here in this gallery presents the idea that we, too are vulnerable to theft.

Obscured by the overt theft of a computer in this video are central questions about art practice today: Are any ideas truly original, or are all artworks partly appropriated from ideas of others?



THEFT, BY EVA AND FRANCO MATTES

Adam Harvey Stealth-Wear Hijab 2013

The 'Anti-Drone' garments are designed with a metallized fabric that protects against thermal imaging surveillance, a technology used widely by UAVs/drones. The enhanced garments are lightweight, breathable, and safe to wear. They work by using highly metallized fibers to reflect heat, thereby masking the wearer's thermal signature.

Of the three 'Anti-Drone' pieces, two are inspired by Muslim dress: the burqa and the scarf. Conceptually, these garments align themselves with the rationale behind the traditional hijab and burqa: to act as "the veil which separates man or the world from God," replacing God with drone. -Adam Harvey



STEALTH-WEAR SCARF BY ADAM HARVEY

James Bridle
London, England
Drone Shadows Handbook

The Drone Shadow is a piece of public art, undertaken in public space, for the purpose of public debate, originating in work performed at public protests. For some time, I've wanted to open up the project, so that anyone can draw one. With this in mind, I've created a handbook, which gives guidance on how to draw a drone shadow, including advice on measuring and materials, and schematics for four of the most common types of drone: the Predator, Reaper, Global Hawk, and Hermes/Watchkeeper.



DRONE SHADOW BY JAMES BRIDLE

James Bridle
Drone Shadows

In February, Einar Sneve Martinussen and I were talking about drones. Einar is one of the team from AHO and Voy in Norway behind such wonders as Im-materials: Wifi Light Painting, and Ugle; both, in their way, visualisations of the invisible, instantiations of technological processes and communications.

I'll go into more detail in a moment about why drones, but the thing that bothered us the most then, staring at the little pieces, the models of drones which we had to hand, was trying to get a feel for what it would be like to stand next to one. To stand before, or under, it. I envisioned drones in tanks, a la Hirst, the ability to touch the cold metal of it, to measure oneself against it. Despite occasional appearances in the day-to-day world (air shows, for example, or museums), most people have never seen one IRL; in operation, their very point is invisibility.

So we drew one.

In the car park of the studio in London, we measured out the proportions of an MQ-1 Predator Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) with chalk and string, and we sketched its shadow on the ground: a 1:1 representation.

...

There is much excitement in many quarters about the possibilities of civilian, journalist, and DIY drones, but for the moment they remain primarily a military and law-enforcement tool. (My ongoing work with balloons is in part an explicit attempt to counter the potential use of police drones against peaceful protest, providing both independent aerial imagery, and a barrage.) As a military tool, the UAV allows its operator to act with complete impunity, which in turn leads directly to the moral vacuum of kill lists and double-tap strikes. UAVs are the key infrastructure of the 21st Century shadow war: unaccountable, borderless and merciless conflicts.

The drone also, for me, stands in part for the network itself: an invisible, inherently connected technology allowing sight and action at a distance. Us and the digital, acting together, a medium and an exchange. But the non-human components of the network are not moral actors, and the same technology that permits civilian technological wonder, the wide-eyed futurism of the New Aesthetic and the unevenly-distributed joy of living now, also produces obscurantist "security" culture, ubiquitous surveillance, and robotic killing machines. This is a result of the network's inherent illegibility, its tendency towards seamlessness and invisibility, from code to "the cloud". Those who cannot perceive the network cannot act effectively within it, and are powerless. The job, then, is to make such things visible.

We all live under the shadow of the drone, although most of us are lucky enough not to live under its direct fire. But the attitude they represent—of technology used for obscuration and violence; of the obfuscation of morality and culpability; of the illusion of omniscience and omnipotence; of the lesser value of other peoples lives; of, frankly, endless war—should concern us all. - James Bridle



UAV IDENTIFICATION KIT BY JAMES BRIDLE

James Bridle
UAV Identification Kit 2012
plastic models, plaques, pelican case

This kit consists of three models of contemporary military drones: the MQ-1 Predator, the RQ-170 Sentinel, and the RQ-4 Global Hawk. Human figures are included for scale.

The kit was produced using 3D modeling software and desktop 3D printing technologies, with the assistance of Digital Fabrication Specialist Carlos Cruz.

All three UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) depicted here are in use at the present time to provide situational awareness in conflict zones around the world for a number of armed forces, as well as in domestic use, including border patrol, forest fire and storm observation, and humanitarian relief. These three UAVs are all configured as unarmed surveillance drones, although they may be weaponized.

The kit is based on military and civilian recognition kits: collections of models used to train gunners, radar operators and visual observers.

When I was 15 or so, I spent a week on an army cadet camp in the UK. One day, I saw Gurkha soldiers lying down in the grass with handbooks and binoculars, while an officer, twenty feet away, took small, inch-long lead models of tanks from a chest and placed them on a mound twenty feet away. They were practicing tank

recognition and identification. This image has stayed with me ever since.

Models for aircraft recognition and targeting have a long history. Ever since the development of aircraft, there has been a parallel industry in visualizing, representing and observing such vehicles, often on the basis of scant information. The wars of the twentieth century made such artifacts vital. Between 1942 and 1945, schoolchildren in the US, Canada and South America assembled hundreds of thousands of aircraft models for this purpose. (The Friend or Foe? Museum maintains an extraordinary collection of such materials centered around the Second World War, from which the images shown below are taken.)

There is also a long history of civilian observation worldwide. The Ground Observer Corps in the United States employed over a million civilians at the height of the Second World War, while the Royal Observer Corps in the United Kingdom, founded in 1925, deployed tens of thousands of civilian personnel during the same period, across a network of 1,500 posts, including one atop Windsor Castle. The latter were only stood down in the 1990s.

Models are still employed for recognition training today, as well as for strategic planning, battlefield, airfield and carrier management, and design testing. Meanwhile, the actual aircraft become ever harder to perceive. Based at remote airfields in conflict zones, and largely operating in other zones inaccessible to ground troops or journalists, the only direct wit-

nesses to their activities are those on the ground beneath them, disconnected from those who pilot them, those who issue their orders, and those in whose name they are directed.

The UAV Identification Kit is an act of visualization, a materialization of an unseen technology. As our technology grows ever more networked, ever more complex and interconnected, it both brings us together, and distances us. What we choose to do with these technologies is a function of our ability to see and read them, and to act with them: a literacy, a fluency, and an agency.

The Kit is intended to confer and facilitate these things, training the observer, enabling them to bear witness, and to act.

Hasan Elahi Tracking Transience: The Orwell Project 2004 - Present projection

Elahi was detained and questioned in June, 2002 by the FBI in the Detroit airport, released, and subsequently questioned over a period of months by the FBI office in Orlando, FL. He was eventually told by 'his' FBI agent that he had finally been cleared of suspicion after a series of interviews and a lie detector test. Out of concern for his travel schedule and the threat of future disruption Elahi began informing the FBI of his travel plans in advance to avoid delays, or worse complications like secret detention. For two years he emailed his whereabouts and even images of his location to the FBI. In 2004 he realized that he could share this with anyone interested by automating the process through his cell phone and personal website. Since then he has constantly tracked and recorded his own movements. Data logs from his website indicate frequent visits from the Executive office of the president, the CIA, and the DHS.

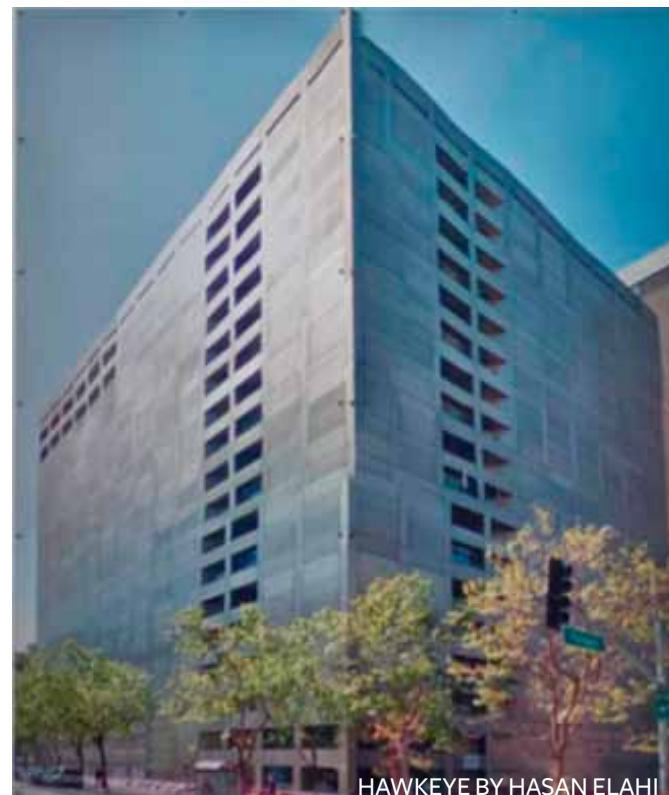
More details on Tracking Transience can be found on Hasan Elahi's website, www.elahi.umd.edu.

Hasan Elahi Untitled

With Professor Albert-László Barabási, Elahi created this visualization of an algorithm that predicts the location of an individual on the basis of past phone and gps records. This visualization is for Elahi for whom Barabási's algorithm is only .05% accurate. For most people Barabási can predict our location with 80-90% accuracy.

Hasan Elahi Hawkeye

This large scale photograph of the AT&T data center in San Francisco was assembled using images borrowed from Google Street View. One of AT&T's databases, known as "Hawkeye," contains 312 terabytes of data detailing nearly every telephone communication on AT&T's domestic network since 2001, according to a suit filed in 2006 by the Electronic Frontier Foundation against AT&T.



Hasan Elahi An Undisclosed Location

an interior view of Dick Cheney's D.C. area residence on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The artist identified the property by studying "no fly" zones in the region and researching real estate transactions. Elahi comments that if he is able to conduct such "reverse surveillance" with limited tools, imagine what is possible for organizations / corporations / governments with far greater resources.



Marnix de Nijs Rotterdam, Netherlands PHYSIOGNOMIC SCRUTINIZER, 2008/2009

The first version of the Physiognomic Scrutinizer was developed and presented under the title "Match & Smile" for the Touch Me Festival 2008 (Feel Better) in Zagreb. The design is based on principles employed in security gates seen at airports, shopping malls, football stadiums and other protected public spaces.

Equipped with biometric video analysing software,

the installation detects and scrutinizes the faces of the people wishing to pass through the door. Rather than try and identify the person, the software probes for facial features and characteristics that are similar to one of the 150 pre-selected persons in the data base: all chosen for controversial or infamous acts. Based on what the software detects, the visitor passing through the entry point will be accused according to the disrepute of their match and an audio fragment regarding this controversy.

Physiognomy is the skill of interpreting a person's personality from looking at their external features and in particular the face. These practices date as far back as ancient Greek civilisation and throughout history this pseudo-science has been accepted with mixed degrees of credibility.

Face-recognition software is mainly developed for surveillance and security applications which are commonly referred to as "biometric systems". Introduced to improve security, these biometric methods depend on cross matching the face of the traveller with that in their passport or in forensic and immigration facial databases. The same such software is currently employed in city centers, stadiums, and malls to recognize criminals, shop-lifters and other troublemakers.

Produced by Marnix de Nijs
Co-produced by Kontejner, bureau of contemporary art practice
Biometric software implementation, V2_lab, Rotterdam
Proces visualisation, Brecht Debackere, Antwerp
Thanks to Alex Davies and Hans Beekmans

