The Arts of Surveillance

Module Outline
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ABOUT
In the wake of the 2013 U.S. National Security Agency surveillance revelations and the popular rise of whistleblowers Edward Snowden and Chelsea Manning, the reach and implications of global surveillance have become some of the most urgent and pressing issues that we face today. In this module, we will examine digital technologies’ historical impact on surveillance and its effects on society, through a consideration of technologies like GPS, biometrics, cryptography, and drones. We will give particular attention to how surveillance devices have become domesticated in the 21st century, with social media and smartphones, turning us into agents of our own surveillance. We will also explore how artistic practices operate at the vanguard of anti-surveillance, by looking at the artwork of Laura Poitras, Hito Steyerl, Trevor Paglen, Surveillance Camera Players, Heather Dewey-Hagborg, Adam Harvey, Harun Farocki, among others. We will also discuss activist groups like Anonymous, Wikileaks, Electronic Frontier Foundation, and TOR, focusing on how they mobilize the cypherpunk and masked protester. In addition, we will read a wide-ranging set of texts that span media theory, philosophy, artists’ writings, journalism, and art historical documents, including texts by Julian Assange, Gilles Deleuze, Shoshana Amielle Magnet, Paisley Currah and Tara Mulqueen, Michel Foucault, Alexander Galloway & Eugene Thacker, Toby Beauchamp, Simone Browne, and Philip Agre.

SCHEDULE

1 Surveillance, Society, Governmentality

Art:

Suggested:

2 **Panopticism**

3 **Control and Capture**
Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on Control Societies,” *Negotiations* (1992), pp. 177 - 182

4 **Datavaillance: Edward Snowden and the NSA**

Art:
Laura Poitras, *Citizenfour* (2014)

Suggested:

5 **The Cloud**

Suggested:
6 Biometrics

Art:

Suggested:

7 Security: Airports, Borders, Prisons

Art:
Harun Farocki, *I Thought I was Seeing Convicts* (2000)

Suggested:

8 Drones

Art:
Omer Fast, *5,000 Feet is the Best* (2011)

Suggested:
T.J. Demos, “War Games: A Tale in Three Part (On Omer Fast’s *5,000 Feet is the Best*)” (2012), pp. 77 - 87
9 Counter-Surveillance 1: In/visibility
Irving Goh, “Prolegomenon to a Right to Disappear,” Cultural Politics (2006), pp. 97 - 114

Art:
Hito Steyerl, How Not To Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File (2013)
Hasan Elahi, Tracking Transience v2.0 (2002 - present), http://elahi.umd.edu/track/

Suggested:
Hanna Rose Shell, Hide and Seek: Camouflage, Photography, and the Media of Reconnaissance (2012)
Metahaven, Black Transparency: The Right to Know In the Age of Mass Surveillance (2015)
Sean Dockray, Facebook Suicide (Bomb) Manifesto (2010), https://www.academia.edu/10423887/Facebook_Suicide_Bomb_Manifesto

10 Counter-Surveillance 2: Encryption
TOR, https://www.torproject.org/
HTTPS Everywhere, https://www.eff.org/HTTPS-EVERYWHERE

Suggested: