

PANOPTICON meaning to observe (-opticon) all (pan-), is a metaphor encapsulating the numerous forms of surveillance used to watch and normalize social behavior.

This exhibition investigates systems of observation utilized to record our daily lives through the deployment of both physical and invisible panoptic structures. *Panopticon* explores how artists construe notions of the gaze in our technological era of image and data collection.

Originally conceived as a system of supervision for laborers by Samuel Bentham and later re-envisioned as a structure for confinement by his better-known brother, Jeremy Bentham, the Panopticon is imbued with ideas of control and obedience. French philosopher Michel Foucault further traces the implications of this disciplinary mechanism not only as a penitentiary, but also as an effective structure for schools, hospitals, factories, malls, etc., providing a diagram of power relationships that influence how societies establish law and order through concepts of vision.

Looking to the plurality of the Panopticon – as structure, theory, and icon – the works in this exhibition reveal the shifting relationships between discipline and governance, security and exposure. Contemporary panoptic structures expand the limitations of private versus public space, as populations freely share in the development and consumption of electronic devices that operate as a means for the few to observe the many, just as the many may observe the few.

Such reciprocal systems of data collecting and analysis outline the current form of participatory supervision resulting from the culture of the monitoring gaze. *Panopticon* draws on new media observational methods to critically reinterpret how Bentham's eighteenth-century design translates to concepts and representations of surveillance in the twenty-first century.

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PANOPTICON

Visibility, Data, and the Monitoring Gaze



Leopold Kessler, *Flying Police Capsule* (2011), courtesy of the artist and Galerie Andreas Huber, Wien

German artist Leopold Kessler focuses on notions of municipal maintenance by creating interventions that subtly undermine regulations and limitations imposed on public space. Repairing damaged subway signs, installing city lights controlled by a remote switch, or polishing and sharpening picket fences are just a few of Kessler's discreet gestures that defy protective measures meant to help the citizenry. *Flying Police Capsule* documents Kessler's intervention in Singapore where one pod of the largest Ferris wheel in the world is marked with the word POLICE. The political and social implications of the sign seem credible at first, yet the slowness of the turning wheel presents an absurdity as the rotating capsule is converted into a mechanism of transgression. Kessler playfully challenges the neutrality of the observation wheel by inserting a symbol of authority and control on an otherwise banal urban structure.

Adam Harvey, *Stealth Wear* (2013), courtesy of the artist

Brooklyn-based artist Adam Harvey focuses on modes of counter-surveillance by creating consumer products designed to protect individual privacy. For his project *Stealth Wear*, Harvey designed a fashion line of anti-drone garments, including a burqa, hoodie, and hijab, as a way to address the prevalence of surveillance, the power of those who surveil, and the growing need to thwart covert systems of authoritarian observation.

Jonas Lund, *Gallery Analytics* (2013), courtesy of the artist

Holding a humorous yet critical mirror to dominate systems of evaluation, Swedish artist Jonas Lund creates work by incorporating data and analysis of art world trends and behaviors. In his project *Gallery Analytics*, Lund turns a museum visit into a series of graphs and charts outlining visitor movements and interests. Using a mesh WiFi network, Lund tracks every WiFi-enabled device moving around the exhibition in real time. Similar to how a shopping mall tracks patrons to determine how well a window display entices customers, Lund provides in-depth analysis of visitors in the space in order to see how well the artworks in the exhibition perform. The WiFi mesh network is connected to an online, openly available gallery analytics website where the tracking information can be accessed. This interface is installed in UMOCA's lobby, giving visitors a first-hand look at the collected data and statistics.

Special thanks to Navizon.

Kate McQuillen, *X-Ray series* (2012), © Kate McQuillen, 2012, courtesy of O'Born Contemporary, Toronto

Chicago-based artist Kate McQuillen creates prints and installations that explore the relationships between military technologies and American culture. Engaging concepts of surveillance, government watchdogs and systems of analysis, McQuillen examines the culture of post 9/11 by irreverently acting out the very behaviors that Homeland Security uses to monitor public spaces. In her *X-Rays* series, McQuillen uses personal items of clothing and conceals cutout paper weapons within their folds. She then runs the apparel through a printing press, the results of which bear distinct resemblance to TSA screening protocols. McQuillen's pressure monoprints conflate ideas of intimacy and security by suggesting a form of voyeurism that is inherent to mechanisms of surveillance.

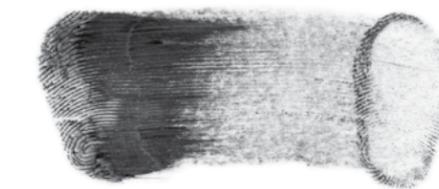


Trevor Paglen, *They Watch the Moon* (2010), courtesy of Cynthia and Armins Ruis

Trevor Paglen is a New York-based artist whose practice draws on science and journalism as means to construct multifaceted views of contemporary life. His work *They Watch the Moon* engages with themes of surveillance through the depiction of a secret NSA listening station in the forest of West Virginia. Paglen's documentation of this military operation reveals a contentious form of surveillance created through the capture of telemetry signals from around the globe. Similar to the controversial NSA data storage facility located in Bluffdale, Utah, Paglen's work presents an image of governmental secrecy that strides a precarious line between security and invasion.

Evan Roth, *Slide to Unlock* (2014), courtesy of the artist

Evan Roth is an American artist living and working in Paris who creates sculpture, video, prints and websites in order to visualize cultural production through inadvertent uses of technology. By exploring relationships between hacker communities and philosophies of power, Roth reveals how both digital and non-digital systems affect public domains. *Slide to Unlock* is part of his *Multi-Touch Paintings* series, in which the artist maps out routine tasks performed on handheld computing devices. Roth's amplified thumb print suggests the ways in which an index of a simple action becomes an all-important sign of privacy and access.



Addie Wagenknecht, *brbxoxo.com* (2013); *XXXX.XXX* (2014), courtesy of bitforms gallery, New York

Based in New York and Austria, artist Addie Wagenknecht examines cultural connections between technology and social interaction. Looking to anxieties of post-Snowden information systems as a departure point, Wagenknecht merges conceptualism with traditional forms to express tensions between power and beauty within networks of consciousness. *XXXX.XXX* is from her sculptural series *Data and Dragons*, in which custom circuit boards are programmed to intercept and log anonymous data captured from surrounding WiFi signals. Assembled as an austere array of cables and metal, *XXXX.XXX* manifests "the cloud" and social networks by visualizing invisible data into a series of green lights and blinking patterns. For her work *brbxoxo.com*, Wagenknecht collaborated with artist Pablo Garcia to create a website that searches online sexcam sites, which only broadcasts feeds when the performers are absent from the rooms.

ARTISTS

- Shin Seung Back and Kim Yong Hun
- Erik Brunvand
- Mahwish Chishty
- Paolo Cirio
- Heather Dewey-Hagborg
- Willie Doherty
- Constant Dullaart
- Pablo Garcia
- Adam Harvey
- Leopold Kessler
- Jonas Lund
- Kate McQuillen
- Trevor Paglen
- Evan Roth
- Addie Wagenknecht

Shin Seung Back and Kim Yong Hun, *Nonfacial Mirror* (2013), courtesy of the artists

Since 2012, computer specialist Shin Seung Back and artist Kim Yong Hun have been working together under the dual portmanteau Shinseungback Kimyonghun. For this project, the Korean duo plays with notions of the nonface, a term referring to face-recognition software used in security systems. Rather than reflect back, the mirror is programmed to detect and subsequently avoid facial recognition. By contradicting the mirror's function, the artists bring to light anxieties of what happens when technology begins to question its own purpose.

Erik Brunvand, *Speculatorum Oculi* (2014), courtesy of the artist

Utah artist Erik Brunvand visualizes practices of surveillance through a system of video cameras and monitors situated around an architectural model of a city. Referencing the Roman poet Juvenal's famous phrase *Quis custodiet ipsos custodiet?* (Who guards the guardians?), Brunvand's installation engages questions of control and security in a contemporary context. The looming cameras act as omnipresent spies who watch and record the urban environment below. Yet Brunvand adds another layer to this exchange of vision, as video cameras pointed at the viewer in the space are displayed on security monitors included with the installation. Visitors simultaneously become both the watchers and the watched, as their privileged view of the miniature city is confronted with the gallery's own all-seeing surveillance system.

Paolo Cirio, *Persecuting US* (2012), courtesy of the artist

Paolo Cirio is an Italian artist living and working in New York. His project *Persecuting US* looks to the aftermath of the 2012 presidential election, in which data harvested from one million Twitter accounts was used to survey and persecute people based on their comments, opinions, and affiliations. The project questions boundaries of privacy by alluding to the practice of wiretapping the Internet as a means of identifying and scrutinizing political activities. The audio component allows audiences to listen to a robotic voice recite numerous statements of Americans sorted by their political involvement. The participatory platform of the work speaks to the extremes of surveillance used to monitor the simultaneity of possessing and surrendering information through technological forms of civic engagement.

Heather Dewey-Hagborg, *DNA Spoofing* (2013); *Invisible* (2014), courtesy of the artist

Heather Dewey-Hagborg is a transdisciplinary artist whose work often takes form as research and critical practice. Using biological materials such as hair, saliva, fingernails and skin, Dewey-Hagborg investigates relationships between scientific inquiry and cultural artifice. For her projects *Invisible* (2014) and *DNA Spoofing* (2013), Dewey-Hagborg employs biometrics – biological identifiers of a person's behaviors, movements, and characteristics – to engage issues of genetic surveillance. *Invisible* plays with concepts of genetic privacy by turning paranoia into a commodity, while *DNA Spoofing* provides tips on how to scramble one's genetic material as a way to "protect" their identity. Dewey-Hagborg's humorous counter-surveillance techniques reveal the shifting forms of information collection in which data trails are no longer only done through computerized means, but also through biological analysis.

Willie Doherty, *Fixed Parameter* (1989); *Remote Control* (1992), courtesy of Alexander and Bonin, New York

Willie Doherty is an artist from Northern Ireland who primarily works in photography and video. Doherty's work often references his experience of Bloody Sunday, the infamous massacre of protestors and bystanders by the British Army during a Northern Ireland Civil Rights march in 1972. By focusing on decrepit urban or suburban spaces and the perimeters defining inside versus outside, his representation of Northern Ireland's political situation invokes themes of borders and violence, discipline and governance. In *Fixed Parameter* and *Remote Control*, Doherty captures the border lands between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, revealing how the city of Derry, once a zone of surveillance, now stands as a reminder of the crumbling structures that shape and haunt a cultural identity.

Constant Dullaart, *Untitled Security series* (2015), courtesy of Future Gallery, Berlin; *Balconism manifest projection* (2014) and *Terms of Service 2014* (2014) courtesy of CarrollFletcher, London

Dutch artist Constant Dullaart explores contemporary modes of access, visibility and representation associated with global spread of information technologies. For his series *Untitled Security*, Dullaart uses a common window glass, also known as float glass, which slightly deforms reality due to its irregular thickness. This distortion of reality whilst looking through glass easily compares to the distortion of information caused by electronic modes of communication. Dullaart plays with the analogy of 'windows' within the computer environment by referencing web services with different types of 'algorithmic' glass. The different structures of information along with their political and commercial motives ultimately reveal the skewed ways in which we experience and decipher digital information.

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Mahwish Chishty, *Untitled* (2013); *MQ-9/5* (2013); *MQ-9/3* (2013); *X-47B* (2012), courtesy of the artist

Chicago-based artist Mahwish Chishty visualizes the impact of drone strikes in her native Pakistan. Responding to relations between the U.S. and Pakistan, Mahwish questions what is seen in the media and how imagination must compensate for the unobserved. Chishty references a popular style for decorating everyday modes of transportation, particularly trucks and public buses. She then transfers the motifs to drone forms in order to make public the classified and hidden. Her use of the floral designs brings playfulness to the darker implications of drones, as the indigenous décor undermines the stark realities of unmanned aerial vehicles continually deployed throughout the Middle East.