



For Immediate Release



Sam Durant, *Untitled (drone)*, 2021. Photo by Timothy Schenck.

HIGH LINE ANNOUNCES FREE PUBLIC PROGRAMMING TO ACCOMPANY SAM DURANT'S *UNTITLED (DRONE)* COMMISSION

High Line speaker series, audio portraits, and materials to further contextualize the sculpture

New York, NY (June 10, 2021, updated June 11, 2021) — The High Line announces “The Normalizing Gaze: Surveillance from Drones to Phones,” an online speaker series presented in conjunction with Sam Durant’s High Line Plinth commission *Untitled (drone)*. Organized by High Line Art and the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project, and co-hosted by the High Line, S.T.O.P., and the Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy at NYU Law, the speaker series will take place online biweekly from July through October 2021. This series brings together artists, activists, scholars, filmmakers, journalists, and more to demystify the twinned histories of surveillance and drone warfare in the US and examine routine examples of surveillance in our daily lives.

The second High Line Plinth commission, *Untitled (drone)* is a large-scale fiberglass sculpture in the shape of an abstracted Predator drone, on view on the High Line through August 2022.

HIGH LINE ART



Public engagement organized in conjunction with *Untitled (drone)* aims to spark conversations around drone warfare and surveillance, to make visible aspects of these technologies that are invisible to most people in the US, and to share the expertise and stories of individuals and organizations who are closest to these issues.

The topics and speakers for each event in the series include:

• **Tactics and Technologies: Facial Recognition to Predictive Policing**

Wednesday, July 7, 2021, 6 – 7:30pm

Featuring artist **Lynn Hershman Leeson**; **Kade Crockford**, Director of the Technology for Liberty Program at the ACLU of Massachusetts; and **Ángel Díaz**, counsel in the Liberty & National Security Program, Brennan Center for Justice; moderated by **Albert Fox Cahn**

Surveillance technologies can take many forms: from the clunky phone bugs seen in black-and-white spy movies, to the location data that enables targeted ads, to predictive policing algorithms. The three speakers in this conversation examine different elements of digital and analog surveillance systems, from those employed by law enforcement agencies across the US to those installed in your smartphone or on your house or apartment building, to illuminate the software and hardware connections that follow us every day.

• **Artificial Intelligence & Algorithms: How we train surveillance tools**

Wednesday, July 21, 2021, 12 – 1:30pm

Conversation with **Meredith Whittaker**, Co-founder and Co-director, AI Now Institute, NYU; **Chris Gilliard**, writer, professor, and speaker; and others to be announced

What is artificial intelligence? What is an algorithm, really, and how does it work? In this conversation, speakers unpack how artificial intelligence is built, question the intelligence we project onto statistical calculations, and explore the ways that existing social relations are reproduced in the very algorithms often intended to remove human fallibility and emotions.

• **Art, Artists, and Conflict**

Thursday, September 16, 2021, 6 – 7:30pm

Featuring artists **Sam Durant**, **Coco Fusco**, and **Naeem Mohaimien**, moderated by **Melanie Kress**, High Line Art Associate Curator

Three artists discuss the roles, responsibilities, and tactics of artists around the representation and examination of conflict. Through examples of their own artworks and others', the artists consider the challenges of how to address conflicts, including questions of aesthetic and temporal distance. From the lenses of their distinct formal approaches and topical interests, Sam Durant, Naeem Mohamien, and Coco Fusco share insights from across their personal and artistic experiences, as well as other artists and models they each look to for guidance.

• **Digital Sanctuary Cities: Surveillance, Immigration, and Protecting Black Dissent**

Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 6 – 7:30pm

Featuring **Jacinta González**, Senior Campaign Organizer, Mijente; **Carin Kuoni**, Senior Director/Chief Curator, Vera List Center for Art and Politics at The New School; and **Mizue Aizeki**, Interim Executive Director, Immigrant Defense Project; moderated by **Myaisha Hayes**, Campaign Strategies Director, MediaJustice



While the borders of the US are often conceived as clear lines, in reality they manifest as a labyrinth of agencies, individuals, and surveillance technologies. Border surveillance encompasses numerous technologies: US Customs and Border Protection drones can observe the majority of American homes, flying anywhere within 100 miles of a land border or coast; immigrants awaiting court dates are forced to wear electronic GPS shackles; plans for a physical border wall increasingly give way to plans for an invisible wall of surveillance; and more. The speakers in this conversation will explain the variety of individual surveillance technologies used by Department of Homeland Security agencies, and how these technologies directly impact immigrant and BIPOC communities, as well as everyone living within the US.

• **Building Surveillance: Three Chapters in US History**

Wednesday, October 13, 2021, 6 – 7:30pm

Featuring **Simone Browne**, Associate Professor of African and African Diaspora Studies at the University of Texas at Austin (author, *Dark Matters: On the Surveillance of Blackness*); **Assia Boundaoui**, filmmaker and investigative journalist (director/producer, *The Feeling of Being Watched*); and **Aliya Hana Hussain**, Advocacy Program Manager, Center for Constitutional Rights; moderated by **Lilly Irani**, Associate Professor of Communication & Science Studies at University of California, San Diego

This panel discussion invites speakers to share important chapters in US surveillance history: analog surveillance in the early colonial era, FBI surveillance of Black and Muslim communities in the 1970s through 1990s, and NYPD and federal surveillance of Muslim communities after 9/11. The speakers will then weave the chapters together, showing the historical, tactical, and social connections between agencies, approaches, and philosophies and how surveillance undergirds the need for control and fear of the other in US society from its earliest days.

• **Public Health, Vaccine Passports, & Surveillance**

Wednesday, October 27, 6 – 7:30pm

Speakers to be announced

This conversation explores the tensions between privacy and public health surveillance, following the contours of both contemporary and historical debates. As COVID-19 brings incredible weight to every public health decision, we must closely examine novel tracking technologies such as smartphone-based contact tracing, electronic vaccine credentials, and new vaccine passports for international travel. Frequently, the public is presented with the dichotomy of privacy vs. public health, but the reality of this schism in practice is unclear. New technologies raise pressing concerns not only around equity, but also efficacy, as public health officials, technologists, and advocates debate whether these systems actually work to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Crucially, as both the public and private sectors race to respond to the emergency, they are building systems that may become part of our technological landscape in perpetuity.

Registration information for each event and additional speakers will be announced at thehighline.org/sam-durant-symposium. “The Normalizing Gaze” is organized by High Line Art and Albert Fox Cahn, executive director of the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.). Advising partners include the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Immigrant Defense Project, MediaJustice, Mijente, Mpower Change, and Reprieve.



In addition to “The Normalizing Gaze,” the High Line will present additional free public programming to contextualize *Untitled (drone)*, including a second speaker series in 2022, organized with Arthur Holland Michel and presented with the Vera List Center for Art and Politics at the New School; workshops; and a series of online audio portraits, interviews with individuals whose personal experiences speak to the impacts of drones and surveillance. Produced by Gilded Audio, the interviews will be released in chapters over the coming months and touch on topics including the effects of military drones, US domestic use of drones and aerial surveillance, technology and drones, and histories of surveillance in New York City. Additionally, High Line Art has produced a zine designed by Alejandro Delcosta that maps the history and uses of drones and domestic surveillance, available online in Arabic, English, Mandarin, Pashto, Spanish, and Urdu, and in print in English.

Public engagement for *Untitled (drone)* is organized by Melanie Kress, High Line Art Associate Curator, and has been developed in consultation with an advisory group of experts, including Center for Constitutional Rights, Immigrant Defense Project, MediaJustice, Mijente, Mpower Change, Reprieve, and the Surveillance Technology Oversight Project (S.T.O.P.). In addition to the formal advisory group, the High Line would like to thank the dozens of individuals and organizations who have spoken with the organization over the past months of planning, offering their expertise, insights, and suggestions.

The zine, links to related resources, and more information about our advisors are available at thehighline.org/sam-durant-resources.

ABOUT THE HIGH LINE

The High Line is both a nonprofit organization and a public park on the West Side of Manhattan. Through our work with communities on and off the High Line, we’re devoted to reimagining public spaces to create connected, healthy neighborhoods and cities.

Built on a historic, elevated rail line, the High Line was always intended to be more than a park. You can walk through the gardens, view art, experience a performance, enjoy food or beverage, or connect with friends and neighbors—all while enjoying a unique perspective of New York City.

Nearly 100% of our annual budget comes through donations. The High Line is owned by the City of New York and we operate under a license agreement with NYC Parks.

For more information, visit thehighline.org and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#).

ABOUT HIGH LINE ART

Founded in 2009, High Line Art commissions and produces a wide array of artworks on the High Line, including site-specific commissions, exhibitions, performances, video programs, and a series of billboard interventions. Led by Cecilia Alemani, the Donald R. Mullen, Jr. Director & Chief Curator of High Line Art, and presented by the High Line, the art program invites artists to think of creative ways to engage with the unique architecture, history, and design of the park, and to foster a productive dialogue with the surrounding neighborhood and urban landscape.

For more information about High Line Art, visit thehighline.org/art.

ABOUT SURVEILLANCE TECHNOLOGY OVERSIGHT PROJECT (S.T.O.P.)

The Surveillance Technology Oversight Project is a non-profit advocacy organization and



legal services provider. S.T.O.P. litigates and advocates for privacy, fighting excessive local and state-level surveillance. Our work highlights the discriminatory impact of surveillance on Muslim Americans, immigrants, and communities of color.

ABOUT THE ENGELBERG CENTER ON INNOVATION LAW & POLICY

The Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy provides a unique environment where scholars can examine the key drivers of innovation as well as the law and policy that best support innovation. By fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative research on innovation law and policy, the Engelberg Center attracts legal scholars and practitioners, technologists, economists, social scientists, physical scientists, historians, innovators, and industry experts who study the incentives that motivate innovators, how those incentives vary among creative endeavors, and the laws and policies that help or hinder them.

SUPPORT

Major support for the High Line Plinth is provided by members of the High Line Plinth Committee and contemporary art leaders committed to realizing major commissions and engaging in the public success of the Plinth: Shelley Fox Aarons and Philip E. Aarons, Jennifer and Jonathan Allan Soros, Elizabeth Belfer, Suzanne Deal Booth, Fairfax Dorn, Steve Ells, Kerianne Flynn, Andy and Christine Hall, Hermine Riegerl Heller and David B. Heller, J. Tomilson and Janine Hill, The Holly Peterson Foundation, Annie Hubbard and Harvey Schwartz, Miyoung Lee and Neil Simpkins, Dorothy Lichtenstein, Amanda and Don Mullen, Douglas Oliver and Sherry Brous, Mario Palumbo and Stefan Gargiulo, Susan and Stephen Scherr, Susan and David Viniar, and Anonymous.

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