

# DISSENT

## WHAT THEY FEAR IS THE LIGHT

*DISSENT: what they fear is the light* is a group exhibition that explores the changing understanding of privacy and control in a world inundated with surveillance and oversharing. The political discourse of this century has been framed by the fear of “terror” and the subsequent need to police anything and everything that is deemed a threat. Under the promise of security, local and federal governments enhance surveillance techniques that seem capable of drilling into people’s thoughts and desires.

Today, individuals regularly engage in surveillance without much awareness or hesitation. Public life is shifting into the domain of social media, which is increasingly becoming the primary space where we communicate, socialize, and develop a sense of self. Once bound to CCTV cameras in public spaces, surveillance is now limitless and enabled by the daily use of digital technologies (smartphones, ipads, laptops). Additionally self-surveillance practices, such as selfies and the daily documentation of life online, promote a self that is constantly self-monitored and self-regulated for the public eye, turning what was once private information into collective data.

In 2013, whistleblower Edward Snowden revealed the National Security Administration’s collect-it-all aspirations to obtain records of phone calls, emails, chats, and telephonic metadata in the name of national security and the war on terror. The relentless collection of personal data amounts to a system that aims to monitor and categorize all subjects, where foreign and unrecognizable identities are marked harmful and predatory. Notions of terrorism and otherness are employed to expand surveillance and policing, which disregard the need for warrants or for suspicion of criminal activity. Misleadingly promoted as a means to protect citizens from foreign dangers and to promote democracy, surveillance ultimately serves to oppress internal dissent and censor political insurgency.

*DISSENT* takes LACE’s seminal 1987 exhibition, *SURVEILLANCE*, as its starting point. Curated by Branda Miller and Deborah Irmis, *SURVEILLANCE* considered questions of privacy and access around uses of technology, and delved into artists who exposed and discussed the policies around technology that affect individual constitutional rights. *DISSENT* brings together artists who explore issues of visibility and invisibility within surveillance and policing practices, including the NSA’s blind surveillance program and eradication of privacy, the increasing militarization of the border, and identity construction through digital technologies. The project casts a wide net to explore the gaze of surveillance and ask: *How are systematic forms of discrimination tied to surveillance technologies and practices? How do race, class, and sexuality play a role in surveillance? Is the value system we once placed on privacy and personal life relevant today? And what do we lose if we lose our private selves?*

***DISSENT* features works by Laura Aguilar, Barbara Ess, Coco Fusco, Juliana Huxtable, Metahaven, Carlos Motta, MPA, Sondra Perry, Christine Rebet, and Jimena Sarno.**

**Opening reception: September 13, 2016**  
**Exhibition: September 14-November 6, 2016**

*DISSENT: what they fear is the light* is curated by Shoghig Halajian and Thomas Lawson. Special thanks to Hannah Grossman, Giancarlos Campos, Benjamin Tippin, and Kai Daniels for curatorial support.

This project includes a catalogue designed by Still Room, available later this year.

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# LIST OF WORKS

(COUNTER-CLOCKWISE FROM GALLERY ENTRANCE)

## MPA

*Blood Moon*, 2016

Archival pigment prints, metal, copper, wood, stain; dimensions vary  
Commissioned by LACE

## Barbara Ess

*Surveillance Nightlights*, 2010

Single channel video, black and white, silent;  
3:52min  
Courtesy of the artist

Appropriated footage from a heat-sensitive surveillance camera installed by the U.S. government along the U.S./Mexico border

## Barbara Ess

*Wildcat Movie*, 2009

Single channel video, black and white, sound;  
2:00min  
Courtesy of the artist

Appropriated footage from a heat-sensitive surveillance camera installed by the U.S. government along the U.S./Mexico border

## Carlos Motta

*Public Domain*, 2004

Archival inkjet prints; 20"x30" each  
Courtesy of the artist

Photographs taken during the construction of the World Trade Center Memorial from the 8th floor window of the Equitable Building, which overlooks Ground Zero in Lower Manhattan.

## Metahaven

*Black Transparency*, 2013

Single channel video, color, sound; 5:00min  
Courtesy of the artists

## Metahaven

*Captives of the Clouds (Scalation Comic)*

6 panels of digital print on polyester;  
48"x94.5" each  
Courtesy of the artists

## Sondra Perry

*Lineage for a Multiple-Monitor Workstation: Number One*, 2015

2 channel video installation, loop, color, sound; 26:00min  
Courtesy of the artist and Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI), New York

## Laura Aguilar

*Grounded #106*, 1992

Archival inkjet print, 18.5"x13.5"  
Collection on deposit at the UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center  
Courtesy of the artist

## Juliana Huxtable

*Untitled (Casual Power)*, 2015

Archival inkjet print, 20"x30"  
Courtesy of the artist

## Jimena Sarno

*public address*, 2016

Wood, horn speakers, amplifiers, sandbags, field recordings of flagpoles at the Wilshire Federal Building, Los Angeles Police Department Headquarters and Inglewood Police Department; dimensions vary  
Commissioned by LACE

## Christine Rebet

*In the Soldier's Head*, 2015

16mm film, transferred to HD, sound;  
4:00min  
Courtesy of the artist and Bureau, New York

## IN THE STOREFRONT AND HALLWAY

### Coco Fusco

*Dolores from 10 to 10*, 2002

Video installation with multiple CCTV monitors, 1:39min  
Courtesy of the artist and Alexander Gray Associates, New York

Originally performed as a net.performance by Coco Fusco and Ricardo Dominguez in 2001. The artists restaged an incident told to Coco Fusco by Delfina Rodriguez, a maquiladora worker in Tijuana who was accused of attempting to start a union by her employer. *Dolores from 10 to 10* reimagines what surveillance cameras may have documented if they were present.