Military Vision

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Denis Beaubois | Matthieu Cherubini | Jordan Crandall

Curated by Baden Pailthorpe

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Increasingly, advanced technologies developed by the military have become seamlessly integrated into civilian life. Sophisticated technologies of surveillance, mapping, tracking and communication now underpin many of our daily interactions. Indeed, these technologies have become ubiquitous. Yet how do these technologies of control, targeting and ultimately violence shape the way we experience the world?

From unauthorised Wikileaks data about the war in Afghanistan, hacked *Counter-Strike* video game servers, surveillance footage on the US-Mexican border and violent action against the Australian Prime Minister's office, *Military Vision* presents the work of three artists whose work directly examines the militarisation of sight, territory and the politics of vision: Denis Beaubois, Matthieu Cherubini and Jordan Crandall.

Jordan Crandall is an American artist, theorist, and performer based in Los Angeles. His six-channel video work *Heatseeking* (2000) was shot on the edge of the United States border with Mexico using technologies and techniques favoured by US Border Patrol. Rather than capturing immigrants illegally breaching the territory of the United States from Mexico, Crandall mobilises what he identifies as an underlying erotic desire of the technologically enabled, penetrating military gaze. By inverting this 'structure of seeing' from foreign borders to foreign bodies, Crandall gestures towards the penetration of territories by bodies, and the penetration of these bodies by psychological sight-territories. In this way, Crandall establishes a continuum between external geopolitical territories and the perceptive inner territories that control the borders of States. Just falling into the pre-9/11 era of geopolitics, Crandall's *Heatseeking* (2000) almost presciently hints at the optical immune system that would go on to underpin the current global security apparatus, only to become an overactive auto-immune disease, where the protective gaze turns inward and attacks the very body it is supposed to protect.

The work of Australian artist Denis Beaubois, on the other hand, attempts to breach the symbolic architecture of political power: The Australian Prime Minister's Office. His video work *Impact: There is no aftermath* (2004), from his *Terminal Vision Project* literally deploys the camera as a weapon in an attempt to penetrate the office of the Australian Prime Minister. Reminiscent

of the notorious bomb camera images from the first truly televised war: *The Gulf War* in Iraq, 1991, this mini vision bomb also destroys itself on impact. The viewer is propelled with the camera as it violently hurtles towards its target. In this gesture, the camera develops a body and itself becomes the 'event', rather than simply recording the 'event'. For Beaubois, since the camera is destroyed on impact, the target is similarly destroyed in that it no longer exists 'televisually'. Visual artefacts from the camera's damaged nervous system (circuitry) attest to the physical trauma of this violent visual gesture. Here, as in Crandall's work, the body (in this case, the camera) penetrates the border of a protected, demarcated political site.

Matthieu Cherubini is a Swiss new media artist whose hybrid software work operates in the space between virtual territories and the real-world deadly violence they represent. *Afghan War Diary* (2010) is a website that synthesises a link between real time virtual deaths in the seminal first-person shooter *Counter-Strike*, the Wikileaks database of secret military reports from Afghanistan, and Google Earth. The work connects to *Counter-Strike* game servers where players repeatedly kill each other in online tournaments. Each time a virtual death is recorded in the server, the work connects it to an actual violent death as recorded in the Wikileaks Afghan War archive. The secret location and details of these deaths is generated using Google Earth satellite imagery. In an era where the violence of war is increasingly mediated through technologies of vision, *Afghan War Diary* (2010) offers a timely reminder of the carnage that lurks behind the banality of military statistics and confidential information. Google Earth's sterile geographical referents also hint at the global logistics of military vision and the perpetual gaze of the unblinking military eye.

The installation of these works makes a conscious reference to the dominance of screens and live video feeds in military and surveillance control rooms. The screen is undoubtedly the most dominant technology in the contemporary military apparatus of control, and indeed, in many civilian contexts. Together, these works offer a select glimpse at practices that have engaged with the politics and affects of military vision over the last decade (2000; 2004; 2010). Further, these three artists represent three distinct generations of practitioners (born 1958; 1970; 1984). There are many artists who actively test and critique contemporary states of militarised vision, and this exhibition does not pretend to represent them all. Indeed, the most obvious contemporary

mode of weaponised sight is the US Drone program championed by the Obama Administration. Whilst this exhibition does not explicitly feature works that engage with the US Drone program, the themes explored by the artists in *Military Vision* are bound up within the same conceptual fabric of perception, territory and control. This publication addresses the broader themes at work within (and without) the military-optical complex with essays from Kyle Weise, Adrian Martin and Jordan Crandall.

Drone Desire

Jordan Crandall

Nestled amid the sagebrush along the California side of the U.S/Mexico border is a small DIY drone airfield. Makeshift and unkempt, devoid of pavement and infrastructure, it is unremarkable in the absence of the gathered assemblies of amateur pilots, planes, and spectators for which it is intended. One might well overlook it, yet perhaps in some way it serves as a model of sorts, a harbinger of airports to come: a preview of what drone airfields might look like, writ large, in their absence of traditional control platforms and optical infrastructures. Much like this one, the unmanned airport would contain no centralised control tower presiding over the runway and no lighting tracks reflecting its contours. There is no need for a commanding view from above. The distributed and windowless drone, devoid of any interior, requires no human sightline for its flight. In an operational sense, its trajectory is not visual. Geometries of looking, whether from a cockpit or a control tower, have been replaced by networks of sensing. Interior/exterior relations, at least in any conventional, spatially-continuous sense, diminish in their structuring relevance.

The demand for unmanned vehicles is not limited to state agencies. Civilians, too, want their drones. Weather researchers want to send them into storms to gather data. Energy companies crave their use for geological surveying and pipeline monitoring. Security companies want to send them up for traffic monitoring. Farmers, for crop dusting. Ranchers, for livestock tracking. Commercial upstarts yearn to service them and train their operators.

Perhaps the most visible drone desire is that of the everyday consumer. Homegrown drones sprout up everywhere, their production and operation facilitated by an expanding network of hobbyist groups and blogger communities. Ignited by their prominent roles in sci-fi literature, television, and film, drones populate social and cultural imaginaries. They appeal to generations of gamers, who relate to the control interfaces through which they are operated and the first-person-shooter style images that are streamed from them, often accessed on the very same computer screens upon which these games are played.
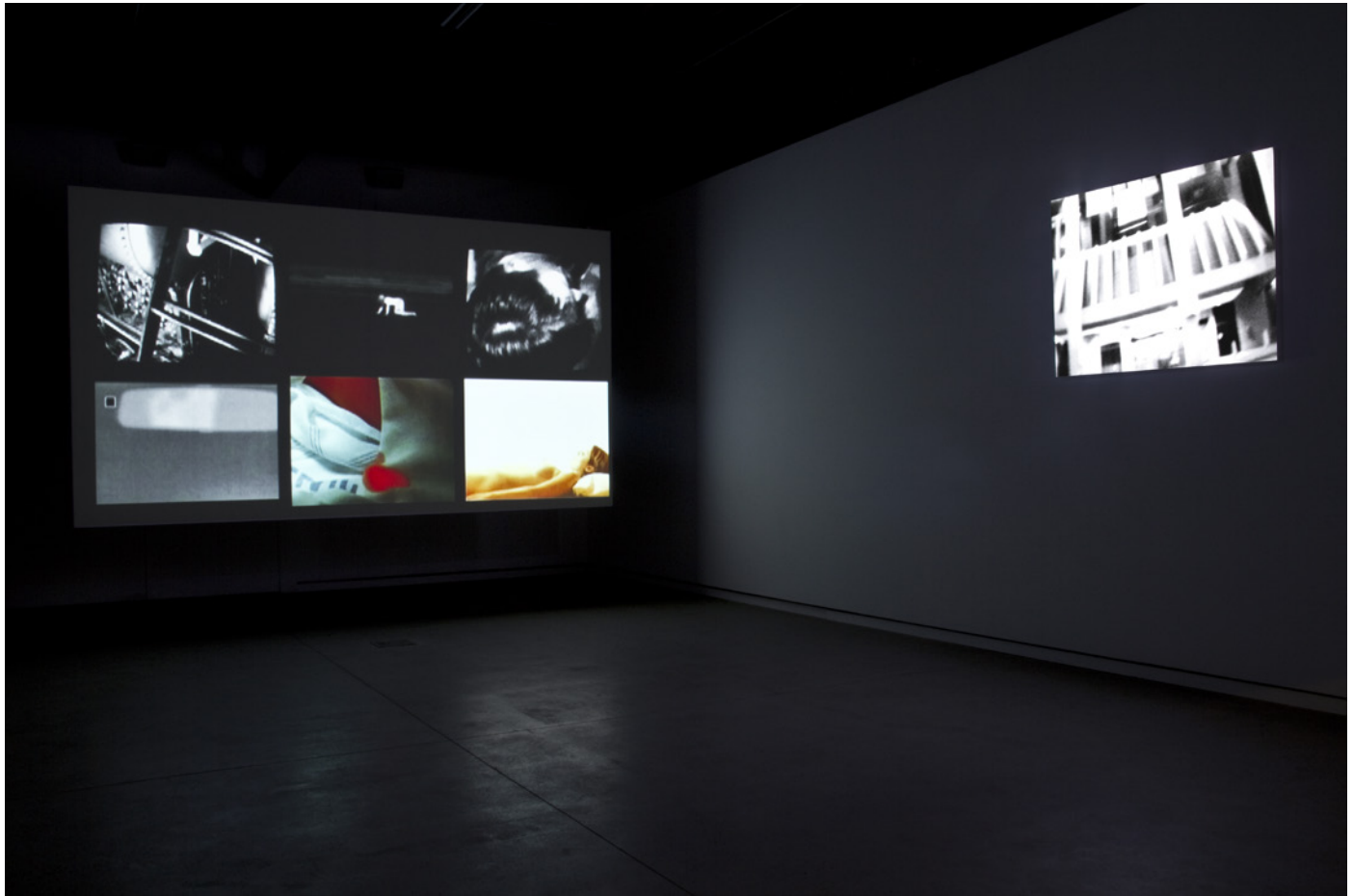
Drone display flourishes out of backyards, streets, abandoned lots, and open fields, and in the consequent posting of video and photographic documentation on social networking sites. There is an erotic dimension to the sharing, acquisition of expertise,

and demonstration of prowess that these sites enable. One might build drones because, as one suburban teenage DIY blogger boasts, they are a "chick magnet."

Drones are curious, kick-ass, and cute. They embody a potent combination of menace and allure. The wavering light of mystery, the harsh precision-target glare; the flickering transmission and the transcendent stare. As there are entire websites devoted to the drone's fetishisation as an object, there is a growing body of interest in its destruction and disappearance: drone crash lore. The erotic fascination comes from both the effective drone striking and the failed one being struck. The pilot and the hacker. The friend and enemy. Exultant drones that gleam against a clear blue sky jostle with downed ones, however real or virtual, that explode in sprays of parts.

Stories are woven around downed drones and their sites however accurate they might be or outrageously fabricated they might seem, and enfolded into all manner of drone sightings, stagings, and speculations. Captured drones are decked out in nationalistic finery, commanded to act in the service of ideals, helping to bolster public support and consolidate allegiance. As drones are outgrowths of the histories of UFOs and robotics, as they have been integrally tied to warfare, war technology, and anxieties of invasion, however real or fictional, at least since the mid-twentieth century, the inevitable corporate and national spin that is woven around the accident and its aftermath is often, as with mid-century UFO crashes, seen as a cover-up or conspiracy. Drones are reported to belong to secret military programs in the testing stages. They hover in the sky and then just vanish, like quivering projections of our unease. They embody fears of our human limits, and desires of our transcendence. Some believe that advanced stealth drones have been developed by reverse-engineering the flying saucer that crashed near Roswell. (It's a small step from the unmanned system to the out-of-body experience: the domestic abduction to the alien one.)

False spectres – lawless, renegade? Genuine news items or outright charades? Stories propagate with little or no verification, especially as they activate the imaginary, affirm ideological orientation, and offer easy munitions in wars of attention. They amplify or diminish in scale and intensity as they become harnessed to personal anxieties, beliefs, and desires, aligned

with group imaginaries and ethical codes, and enabled by communications platforms. They might create new conflicts or fuel existing ones, produce new images and dreams, rearrange or reinforce existing routines.

Drones slamming into Sunni political headquarters in Mosul, Iraq. Nose-diving into the Wales airport runway. Striking power lines and cutting off power in Alberta, Canada. Vanishing into Pakistan's tribal region in North Waziristan. Plummeting into uninhabited terrain near Ghanzi, Afghanistan and the Indian/Pakistani border. Collapsing into the Gaza Strip. Plunging into the Mojave Desert. Disappearing into Turkey's desolate Mardin province. Cannonballing into the coast of Spain. Ditching into the Iraqi countryside. Rolling with scrub brush across the rough desert terrain near Indian Springs, Nevada. The Italian Air Force has discovered one of its downed drones floating along the surface of the Adriatic Sea, its body glistening in the sunlight like the bleached skin of a whale.

If a demo reel of Oscar-worthy drone crash moments were assembled - perhaps in order to pitch the drone for a starring role in the ubiquitous action-adventure movie - it would be composed of clips like these. In true commercial fashion, it would seek to harness the drone's potent combination of desire and threat. Like any good object of desire, it would give us what we want and what we fear. As a conduit of identification and affect, it would allow us to extend ourselves, in all our sensory acuity, into a landscape devoid of everyday political rationales and ethical or moral judgments: to plunge headlong into the melee.

The resulting drone crash action-adventure documentary would be geared for the everyday viewer primed for the economies of disaster, of pleasurable violence transmitted on private screens - sites where drone games are played and drone missions consumed. Its trailer might go something like this. Ground control operators have suddenly lost control of an armed Reaper flying a combat mission over Afghanistan. A manned U.S. Air Force fighter is dispatched to shoot down the renegade drone before it flies beyond the edge of Afghan airspace. (In the world of robotic warfare, human pilots are apparently still good for something: shooting down wayward drones.) The tension builds: disciplined man against chaotic unmanned.

The fighter plane arrives too late. The renunciant Reaper, speeding headlong into its own future, crashes into the side of a mountain. Abstracted in a shower of engine oil, smoke, lost data, and crushed composites, its dissipating fuselage drops. Amplified in a rush of sensation and adrenaline, its absorbing body elevates.

Perhaps the doomed drone performs a more vital function than the exultant one. It destabilizes the coherency of the vehicle and embroils it in a politics that was heretofore invisible or diminished. At the onset of the crash, the drone and its component material and discursive actors, occasioned by the reverberations of the *event*, are catapulted into a more public space, rendered newly exposed and available for affiliation. A twisted geometry of spilt forms and unmasked roles, of networks sought and broken, the drone now offers itself to connection, continuity, and salvage. The agential components of event and drone become newly active in their negotiations. The catastrophe reveals an agential dispersal: the network of the negotiation.

Yet at the same time, revealing the elements with which actors and events affiliate in order to maintain their centrality and force, the catastrophe orchestrates a consolidation. It stabilizes relatively coherent or consistent forms that embody or heighten the specifics of the crash site, the actor, the part, rendering it singular, bounded, and unique. The drone crash, both materially and discursively, is an *event* that both disrupts and congeals the dynamic. It provides an exception, but also an amplification. It dislodges conventional associations, allowing hidden infrastructures to be revealed and new ontological frameworks to take shape. All kinds of novel players enter the scene. The drone cannot be reassembled in quite the same way.

Control Room

Kyle Weise

As intended by curator Baden Pailthorpe, the layout of *Military Vision* within the Screen Space gallery recalls that of a surveillance 'control room', with its 180 degree panorama of multi-panelled screens presenting a dispersed range of imagery and data streams. Control rooms, the remote bunkered command centres central to contemporary military operations, have an established place in the public imagination by way of their ubiquity in Hollywood cinema. They are the ultimate symbol of the 'logistics of perception' that have defined armed conflict in the 20th and 21st centuries. Implicating itself within this history, the title of this exhibition, *Military Vision*, speaks as much to this arrangement of the works in the gallery – the spatial structure of its presentation of imagery to the viewer – as it does to the concerns of the individual works. This essay aims to contextualise *Military Vision* within the history of the logistics of perception, and some of its conceptual features, as a platform from which to explore themes central to both the exhibition and the individual works it presents.

French theorist Paul Virilio is a key figure in defining and conceptualising the historical ascendance of the logistics of perception. Virilio argues that warfare has become increasingly defined by the movement of images, which are circulated at ever-increasing speed.[1] Within this context, the pictorial perspective of individual human observers is increasingly irrelevant to the organisation of the battlefield.

The importance of reconnaissance aircraft since the First World War is instructive here, as this technology charts some of the central themes of this history of the logistics of perception. Aircraft transformed the image of the battlefield, as the vertical image of aerial perspective gained operational ascendency over the horizontal image typical of the view of the individual observer. The use of photography and film to record this aerial perspective inaugurated the automation of surveillance imagery.[2] Crucially, it was the interpretation and organisation of these images that would ensure their instrumentality. As Allan Sekula asserts in his analysis of the use of photography in nineteenth-century policing, it was the filing cabinet, as representative of the bureaucratisation and organisation of the photographic archive and its strategies of interpolating data from these images, rather than the refinement of the optical and pictorial quality of the images, that was central to the surveillance potential of such photography. Surveillance 'imagery' recorded and produced by reconnaissance aircraft is similarly defined by the speed of

data extraction, circulation and organisation, rather than the pictorial qualities of any images obtained.

The expansion of remote sensing to include satellite data exacerbated this trend, as photographic imagery became merely one amongst an array of sensors (thermal, nuclear, infrared and so on). Such sensors rely on enormous computing resources at ground locations to apply and cross-reference this data and also to store, sort and analyse the resulting information. Software instrumentalises this information before it is transformed into the pictorial realm as part of a human-computer interface.[3] Indeed, as Lev Manovich notes, human perspective eventually became an impediment to the automated analysis of data obtained from the remote sensing technologies that are so central to contemporary military operations.[4]

Essentially, the technological history of military vision is a narrative of the displacement of human vision. To return to the continued development of reconnaissance aircraft is to further emphasise this theme. As an increasingly sophisticated array of recording devices recorded and transmitted surveillance data from aircraft, the pilots themselves became increasingly reliant on instruments rather than vision. As Virilio notes, cockpits became opaque, with audiovisual information replacing the sight of the pilot.[5] Today, drones, remotely controlled by operators in bunkered command centres, are a central aspect US military surveillance and collect enormous amounts of video data (in 2009 drones recorded 200,000 hours of flight data, almost three times the amount collected in 2007). As Daniel Byman notes, under the Presidency of Barack Obama, drones have become "the centrepiece of U.S. counterterrorism strategy" and are set to proliferate internationally.[6] Here, the continued relevance of Virilio's narrative of the centrality of the logistics of perception makes itself clear. Indeed, drones seem to exemplify Virilio's teleological nightmare of the 'Perceptron', in which computer-enhanced vision displaces human vision in an apocalyptic scenario involving total surveillance and the domination of humans by artificial intelligence.[7] Drones connect to this scenario, as their massive accumulation of data requires computer analysis, and also, more recently, because of their weaponisation and escalating fears of their potential autonomy from direct human control.[8] Virilio's apocalyptic narrative has its roots in a terrifying technological reality, but the broad brushstrokes of his writing, and his tendency for hyperbole gives his work an occasionally hysterical tone not unlike the spectacular Hollywood films that he so abhors (for their reliance on computer generated imagery and logistical

elegance). Concerns over the potential for remotely controlled aircraft to run amok is evident in films from *The Concorde… Airport '79* (David Lowell Rich, 1979) to *Stealth* (Rob Cohen, 2005), both of which contrast the ingenuity of human pilots against the fallibility of nefarious computer-controlled drones.[9] More generalised concerns over the linkage of autonomous artificial intelligence with surveillance and weaponry have manifested in films such as *Universal Soldier: The Return* (Mic Rodgers, 1999), *Eagle Eye* (D.J. Caruso, 2008) and *Echelon Conspiracy* (Greg Marcks, 2009). Such films, and Skynet of the *Terminator* films (1984-2009), for example, have clear parallels with Virilio's Perceptron and its narrative of cybernetic apocalypse, and together with Virilio's theory are emblematic of fears over the displacement of human vision by computer vision.

Virilio's breakneck prose is often both entertaining and persuasive, but its teleological impetus tends to skim the reality of the details of contemporary vision. In the military and beyond, it is the *interaction* between human and computer vision that defines the contemporary construction of vision, rather than simply the displacement of the human. The work of Manovich is a useful counterpoint to Virilio here. Sharing many of the same concerns, and treading similar historical ground, Manovich, in contrast to Virilio's sweeping ontology of computerised vision, presents a deliberate and detailed exploration of the specific visual languages that have developed around human-computer interaction.

Central to Manovich's seminal *Language of New Media* is his identification of the spatial qualities of new media as a point of difference from the generally sequential or temporal emphasis of cinema.[10] For Manovich, in the digital era, with the database as the basis of media, an aesthetic involving the simultaneity of multiple elements replaces the cinematic logic of a temporal sequence of discrete images. Similarly, Anne Friedberg argues that the single image in a single frame has dominated the history of the moving image, and that only in the past twenty years, with the rise of windows-based operating systems, has it become common to combine multiple spatial and temporal perspectives within a single frame. In the era of digital media, Friedberg asserts, the 'virtual window' of the screen comes to rely more on the multiple and simultaneous than the singular and sequential.[11]

The control room is both a contemporary metonym for, and historical pre-cursor of, these spatial qualities of new media, which allow for the simultaneous presentation of an array of information within a single architectural enclosure. Appropriately, Manovich's own database 'film', *Mission to Earth* (2005), features constant images and discussion of control rooms: a reflexive gesture that doubles the split-screen aesthetic typical of the moving-image works, including *Mission to Earth*, that he produced as part of his Soft Cinema project (in collaboration with Andreas Kratky). These works were conceived as a manifestation of the aesthetic possibilities that Manovich aligns with computing, and the control room acts as a symbol of such possibilities.

Beatriz Colomina refers to the importance of the war situation room in providing the impetus and technological precedent for the simultaneous presentation of aesthetically diverse images so typical of the digital era. Significantly, however, Colomina also points to the significance of civilian research in pioneering the use of multi-screen architectures for information presentation. Notably, Colomina provides a detailed history of the multi-screen projects of Ray and Charles Eames: *Glimpses of the USA* (1959) and *Think* (1964).[12] The latter project involved twenty-two screens and was presented as part of the IBM Pavilion at the 1964 New York World's Fair. *Think* was designed to create a sensory overload, pointing towards the conflation of architecture and media and the overwhelming of the individual within contemporary media-space. Such projects do not diminish the historical centrality of military culture in defining the multi-screen aesthetic, but rather indicates the significance of the military control room to contemporary visual and media culture more broadly. The control room captures not the irrelevance of human vision *per se*, but the struggle to maintain the relevance of the human body and to allow the comprehension of the vast flows of data that now surround it. For now, technical restrictions and legal and ethical frameworks are keeping fully-autonomous weaponry within the realms of fiction.[13] As such, the military continues to rely on 'human-in-the-loop' systems to which the bunkered command centre or control room remains crucial. Such spaces are a dramatic site of the ongoing tension between the potential irrelevance of human vision, and the desire to make data visual and to assert the centrality of the human.

The artworks that comprise the control room installation of *Military Vision* all engage with this historical trajectory, and each explores and emphasises the role of human bodies within these developments. The works reference the centrality of military

technology in defining contemporary visuality, yet use this as a platform from which to explore the contemporary conditions of visuality in general.[14]

Jordan Crandall's work, *Heatseeking* (2000), most clearly engages with the visual conditions of the control room. Presented in *Military Vision* as six simultaneous image streams, the work is comprised of quick constant edits that incorporate an array of technically and aesthetically diverse moving images: the distinctive green glow of night vision images is placed against grainy black and white battlefield and surveillance camera footage, television static, medical imaging, computer game graphics and dramatically lit cinematic sequences. The work references, in particular, the expansion of the visual language of surveillance, familiar from daily life, cinema (*Enemy of the State* (Tony Scott, 1998), for example) and the then-emerging genre of 'reality' television. The work, made before the events of September 11, was produced at the cusp of the dramatic expansion of these technologies.[15] As David Lyon has argued, the post 9/11 era and the War on Terror have seen a formidable intensification, rather than transformation, of already existing surveillance practices, most notably through the expansion and convergence of previously discrete digital databases. Within this regime, as Crandall himself notes, the identification of individuals becomes a process of 'ID-ing' rather than seeing.[16] Bodies are no longer identified by sight, but instead by an accumulation of statistical information; the visual image of individuals is replaced by what Sean Cubitt and David Lyon both refer to as a 'data-image'.[17]

Despite its intense visuality, *Heatseeking* engages with this condition, the eclipse of vision: the inability of the viewer to piece together a coherent narrative from the snippets of visual information gestures towards the overwhelming of the human senses amongst the flows of data being produced by surveillance technologies. Writing at the time about an exhibition that included Crandall's contemporary work *Drive* (1998-2000), Tim Griffin notes the paradox of the intertwining of the brute physicality of military hardware with the (then impending) introduction of unmanned flights, made possible by "weightless communications networks".[18] This disjuncture is at the heart of Crandall's work. Thus, while presenting flows of technicity that seem to escape the human body, Crandall also emphasises the flesh of the bodies caught up within these processes. Appropriately, in *Heatseeking*, bodies are displayed, penetrated and violently entangled with one another. Here too, the always unstable distinction between

'legitimate' surveillance versus immoral voyeurism, often framed in terms of a dichotomy between institutional and individual acts of looking, is undermined.[19] Against the clinical abstraction of statistical data flows, *Heatseeking* emphasises the messy, violent reality of the bodies caught up within the contemporary surveillance apparatus.

In contrast, in Matthieu Cherubini's web-based *Afghan War Diary* (2010) the entire process of the production and presentation of the work is defined by the manipulation of data. Ignoring the visual elements of the graphically intense first-person shooter *Counter-Strike* (1999-ongoing), Cherubini extracts in real-time the most basic data from the videogame: the names of players and their virtual kills. The work cross-references three databases (*Counter-Strike* servers, WikiLeaks and Google Earth) in a process that parallels the convergence of databases typical of contemporary surveillance. *Afghan War Diary* visualises these connections in an efficient, utilitarian, multi-panelled display of basic topological graphics and text: a spatial arrangement of data associated with both control rooms and digital aesthetics more generally. Here though, spatiality is entangled with temporality in a uniquely revealing manner. The 'real-time' data from *Counter-Strike*, presenting a list of virtual deaths, is utilised to trigger both the disclosure of actual historical deaths that have occurred during the war in Afghanistan, and also the mapping of the location of these deaths via a technology, Google Earth, more typically used for the purposes of tourism and everyday wayfinding.

Google Earth is a direct descendent of global mapping technologies produced by the military. Videogames and the military are similarly entangled, with technical advances flowing from the military to the entertainment industry and back again. More significantly though, as Patrick Crogan has argued, the military and the videogame industry share an ontology beyond their technical overlaps, sharing key organising concepts, such as simulation, real-time feedback and a logistical impulse based on the minimisation of contingency.[20] *Afghan War Diary*, in its unique presentation of the stark reality of the war in Afghanistan and its continuous stream of casualties, uses the tools and language of virtualisation against itself, an auto-critique that emphasises the dreadful human toll with which such technologies are inextricably linked.

A key moment in the dissemination of the language of the apparent virtualisation of war, and the popular realisation of the

centrality of the logistics of perception, was the televising of so-called 'surgical strikes' during the Gulf War (1990-1991). In this conflict, the weapon and the image were fused as the remote guidance of 'smart bombs', based on real-time information about the target, was broadcast via cameras mounted on the missiles. Such images are the clear historical reference for Denis Beaubois's *Terminal Vision Project*, of which the work exhibited here, *IMPACT (there is no aftermath)* (2004), is a part. In Beaubois's work, however, the human body is used to launch the camera-projectile. The resulting video, grainy black and white as with the Gulf War smart-bomb images, contains little legible visual information and, rather than being defined by predictability, instead embraces the unpredictable outcomes of the human body. As with Cherubini's work, *IMPACT (there is no aftermath)* uses the language of military vision against itself, on this occasion reinserting the human body and defying processes of its abstraction and virtualisation. Yet, the ultimate failure of Beaubois's gesture, with the camera falling short of its target, simultaneously points to the increasing irrelevance of the individual human body and of human vision within the context of the ever-expanding, global realms of military vision.

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Endnotes

1 Virilio, *War and Cinema*.
2 *ibid*; Virilio, *Vision* 48; Virilio, *Strategy* 14.
3 Cubitt 45-49; Monmonier.
4 Manovich, "Automation" 237-39.
5 *War and Cinema* 65-66.
6 Byman 32, 41-42.
7 Virilio, *Vision*.
8 The debate over weaponised drones received widespread media attention in early 2013 following the declassification of government documents which revealed that drones had killed at least one US citizen, combined with several reports of civilian deaths caused by drones. In a landmark speech, Obama directly addressed the issue, calling for caution, restraint and legal parameters in the use of weaponised drones, and asserting that they would not be used domestically. However, Obama ultimately argued for the precision and effectiveness of drones in global conflicts. Simultaneously, increasingly vocal calls for moratoriums on autonomous robotic weaponry have seen a discursive shift in public debate around drones: fears over the implications of autonomous weapons have taken on new importance and displaced, to some degree, concerns related to privacy and surveillance. The discussion of fears over the possible emergence of a *Terminator*-esque scenario have appeared in many recent news articles. Commentators on both sides of the drone debate have argued for the need for increased transparency and clearer legal frameworks in their use (see, for example Byman and Cronin).
9 Jordan Crandall's hypothetical "drone crash action adventure documentary", as outlined in his essay in this volume, also follows this logic.
10 Manovich, *Language* 157, 218-85.
11 Friedberg 194, 243.
12 Colomina, "Enclosed"; Colomina, *Domesticity* 240-72.
13 Some recent articles that consider the precariousness of this situation include Cumming-Bruce, Keller and Kennedy.
14 In this sense the exhibition shares many of the concerns of the landmark *Super Vision* exhibition, curated by Nicholas Baume in 2006 as the inaugural exhibition at the redeveloped Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston.
15 *Heatseeking* engages specifically with technologies surrounding the patrol of the US/Mexico border. While, in the popular imagination, this border has often been conveniently framed in terms of paranoia regarding the traffic of people and illicit drugs, it is worth noting that, post 9/11, this apparently permeable border has been reimagined as a 'weakspot' in the War on Terror. The recent action film *Act of Valor* (Mike McCoy and Scott Waugh, 2012) for example, presents this border as a potential gateway for terrorists to enter the US. *Act of Valor*, like many Hollywood films (see Robb, 2004), was made with the assistance of the US military, but took this relationship one step further: casting active duty Navy SEALs as the main actors in the film.
16 Crandall 32, 62.
17 Cubitt 20; Lyon 26. Greg Elmer's research also provides a useful overview of this historical development.
18 Griffin 13.
19 On this dichotomy, see Denzin.
20 On the centrality of predictability, or the minimisation of contingency, in the development of technology, see Weise (2013) which draws on the work of both Crogan and Virilio.

Undefined Killed Someone

Adrian Martin

To adopt, in the face of images and sounds, a critical stance has always been a strange undertaking. A flirtation with the impossible. To look at this Gulf War was an exhausting gymnastic. On one hand, we had to understand the information that was available. On the other hand, we had to exercise over this material a suspicious vigilance, a principle of mistrust, a 'sidelong' glance … That is why many left the game.

– Serge Daney, "Montage Obligatory", 1991

In the darkest night, the glow of the dream is more luminous than the light of day, and the intuition borne with it the most elevated form of knowledge.

– Michel Foucault, "Dream, Imagination and Existence", 1954

The very title of Baden Pailthorpe's curated exhibition – *Military Vision* – is likely to bring out the thundering, political moralist in most of us. Myself included. The sinister military-industrial complex (these days often expanded to the military-industrial-*entertainment* complex); the militarisation of vision; military Research & Development as, always and everywhere, the cutting-edge of technological, audiovisual advances (this is, in fact, the very History of Cinema); propagandistic war movies from Hollywood, as tunnel-visioned and jingoistic as ever in the day of Kathryn Bigelow's *Zero Dark Thirty*; Paul Virilio's prescient 1980s book on *War and Cinema* (subtitled 'the logistics of perception'); hideous and ubiquitous bomb-cams and drones, proliferating since the Gulf War …

But this exhibition invites me to take a different angle into this massive and very depressing (because what can you or I do about it?) subject matter. Art works are never simply reassuring statements – or high-moral-ground denunciations – *about* something external to them (as the top-level machinations of the military complex are external to most of us, certainly anybody reading this catalogue). In the best instances, they form a canny *interface* with their subject – which means taking on, and taking into

themselves, all the ambiguities, paradoxes and potentialities of that subject, that terrain.

Three reflections, on video, about military vision: three interfaces, three absorptions. The works have a political line (a line I concur with) that can be 'read off' them: essays in image and sound about the society of control; about the alienation of human vision and its co-optation into killing machines; about government secrecy; about the exceedingly thin line between entertainment (video games) and real deaths; about the penetration of this military vision into the various technologies of everyday life.

In Jordan Crandall's *Heatseeking* (2000), images that appear over a bank of six video screens trace not a narrative but a mosaic of disquieting apparitions that hover between documentary and fiction, science and surveillance: gestures of the body, medical operations, strange encounters of flesh and machinery. Someone – or something – is being watched – monitored – but it is hard to know exactly whose 'agency' these furtive points-of-view imply, or how the fragmented, stolen images might possibly add up to any kind of data-bank of rational knowledge. Here, as the great filmmaker Raúl Ruiz once said, mystery turns into *ministry* (administration, bureaucracy, calculation) and then back - via the strange life-pulse of this intermittent, discontinuous archive - into mystery again.

Denis Beaubois's fleeting scrap of video, *IMPACT (there is no aftermath)* (2004), mimics the action of a Gulf War-era 'bomb-cam', but in the service of the other side of the political fence, and with an essentially non-violent, purely gestural aim: it's a camera targeted at the Prime Minister's office – where no video artist is ever likely to be allowed to intrude – that destroys itself on impact. The activist/performative joke is short and sweet: it's a video that shows nothing, really, that doesn't 'get anywhere' as a political action (indeed, it must have befuddled any official who beheld it in motion or came upon its remains). It does, however, leave behind a smudged, chaotic video-trace as its sardonic index of other, graver wars and assaults going on elsewhere.

In Matthieu Cherubini's *Afghan War Diary* (2010), an ingenious *dispositif* hooks up the geo-surveying/accessing resources of

Google Earth to the ongoing virtual game of *Counter-Strike* – and then matches that data to a Wikileaks archive of the record of military operations in Afghanistan. The effect is disquieting, to put it mildly: while a mechanical eye zips about and recomposes spots in the landscape for us (across three adjacent, vertically-long-shaped screens), the endless unreal or artificial deaths in an endless video game call up chillingly neutral units of information such as *undefined killed someone*.

All these initial readings and responses of mine are fine, as far as they go – they seem sanctioned by the works themselves, and the spheres of talk and thought around and through them. But, in cultural and artistic analysis, we can never go far enough. Something is missing from the immediate read-off: something less decidable, less comforting (even when the subject-matter itself is highly *un*comfortable). To say it simply, for starters: all the videos involve themselves – they cannot help but involve themselves – in processes and problematics that muster what the Russian-born cultural theorist/philosopher Boris Groys (in his lecture "The Fate of Art in the Age of Terror") rightly calls a *macabre fascination* attending the convoluted relations between war, terrorism, military intervention, everyday civilian life, and the incessant circulation of images in our time.

What does it mean, Groys asks, that we (in the art world, the academy, and beyond) rush to produce articles, books, films, catalogues and exhibitions around something like the Abu Ghraib torture photographs, in the wake of such terrible incidents? Of course, we are compelled to take a stand (wherever we are), to launch a righteous critique (with whatever means we have at our disposal), to add our voice to the variegated community of protest. But there is something odd and sticky going on here too: it's captured well by Brian De Palma's feature film *Redacted* (2007) – a low-budget, deeply felt, political work that almost, in one swift blow, ruined the director's continuing professional career in America – which painfully re-enacts atrocities committed by US soldiers, but concludes by showing how quickly and easily the 'event' is swallowed up by fictions, jokes, and layers of media imagery of every sort, public and private alike. (In an extraordinary further twist of life and art, Arid Uka, who killed two US airman at Frankfurt airport in 2011, did so because of the rage stirred within him by YouTube footage of US soldiers raping a Muslim girl – which in fact, under investigation, turned out to be a scene staged for and clipped from *Redacted*.)

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My impetus for taking this seemingly indirect route into the works of *Military Vision* comes from reading some recent texts and statements by the French cultural theorist and philosopher Bernard Stiegler, and especially his passionate promotion of what he sees as a necessarily *pharmacological* mode of critique. Stiegler refuses the type of criticism that posits – in the style of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer of the famous Frankfurt School – a *good side* versus a *bad side* in any cultural-political situation. Which is how so many high-level discussions of so many things (whether Hollywood movies or the military-industrial complex) go. For Stiegler, everything is trickier: building on the image-idea of the *pharmakon* that he derives from his mentor, Jacques Derrida, Stiegler tries to see, to intuit, both the possibilities and the grave dangers inherent in any given conjunction of factors: "A pharmacological approach analyses how organological development will either short circuit psychic or social individuation … or, on the contrary, intensify them". Among his examples of a mindboggling pharmacological – and hence necessarily precarious, unstable – balance at work in the world arrived with the advent of the H-bomb and its subsequent endgame derivatives: while representing the possibility of total (and totally annihilating) war, it is also the only thing that prevents this war from actually taking place.

Stiegler refers to a particular pronouncement, made in the USA, by Derrida. Asked to speak on the topic of *nuclear criticism*, Derrida's reflection was, in part, a pessimistic one: the nuclear age, he said, had essentially abolished the 'critical subject', indeed the very possibility of such a subject – as in the critic-individual able to make an effective real-world intervention, an intellectual or cultural attack on this subject matter that was anything more than a posture or gesture (however true, well-intentioned or correct-line). What Derrida was responding to was that sense with which we (and Serge Daney) started: it's all so big and out of our hands, what can we imaginably do? Just 'leave the game'? Stiegler amplifies the premise of Derrida's commentary by cutting across to Virilio's contemporaneous work on 'speed and politics':

> At the time when he was writing his great books, Virilio wrote a text on the famous Cuban missile crisis and what had happened there, as well as what had happened between the Cuban crisis in 1962 and Nixon and Brezhnev in the '70s. Because, between the Cuban crisis and the '70s, speed, vectors, missiles, nuclear warheads

had made human decision-making impossible in the event of a nuclear war. It was impossible to imagine that the Head of State could decide on war. In fact, it was necessary for an automatic system to make the decision before it was even possible to tell the Head of State that the war had started, and before anyone on either side had decided anything. Of course, it was necessary that someone had originally decided something in order for the war to be triggered, but the decision no longer belonged to human time. We were placed in a system I call the total proleterianisation of politics. Because, for me, proletarianisation means short-circuiting the subject, short-circuiting knowledge, and so on.

So, for Stiegler, the urgent task is to re-introduce the ground and the terms for a critical subject, for critical activity: a refusal of the proletarianising short-circuit that the world military situation presents to us as such a crushing, inevitable, 'why bother?' dead-end. So he turns to what he calls the 'specifics of *pharmaka*': how every kind of input into a situation brings with it both toxic possibilities and possibilities for individuation. It is never, for Stiegler, a matter of reaching the 'good side' of a problem, arriving at some spuriously universal true solution (such as 'world peace'), liberating a positive essence, or clearing the path to a moral high ground. Rather, we are always in the middle of a muddle, needing to keep a vigilant, critical eye on where things are heading, and why: toward toxicity, or toward health. Critique will always be, in this model, a *therapeutics*: but without a set goal, or once-and-for-all cure, prescribed or foreseen at the start of the adventure.

Stiegler has often addressed popular culture in its various forms and guises – in particular, cinema (because he is something of an old-school cinephile), and the social media of today's digital world (another thing on which he refuses to moralise in the 'Internet is dumbing us down' mode of public commentary). He looks at these cultural forms as (to use a lovely old expression) dream machines, dream factories: complex channelings of psychic dreams, memory-circuits, what he calls retentions and protentions. He draws much, and respectfully so, from the Freudian paradigm of the unconscious and its interpretation; but his vision of dreams, especially, has more in common with the young Michel Foucault when he provided a lengthy preface to Ludwig Binswanger's *Dream and Existence* in 1954. According to this model, a dream *processes* the sensations, inscriptions,

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experiences that come into us every day, sorting and filtering (detoxifying) them … and making them available to paths of individuation. This is what is precisely and materially *visionary* about dreams, and the way in which they prepare the ground of the future for our tentative steps ahead. The dream, for Foucault, is not a Gothic trap drawing us back, regressively, into the pit of primal scenarios (such as the Oedipal complex); but a cluster of almost synaptic connections, pure intensities and affects (even when their mood or tone is unpleasant) that have the potential to push our individuation forward. Foucault's proposition is startling in its bold simplicity: the dream is the *birth of the world*.

Foucault's favourite dreams for discussion were full of death and darkness – he even spoke of the positive goal of suicide, as a destiny to be proudly lived out, signalled in all its blazing intensity while we sleep. In the case of Stiegler – although his theory fully invites this reflection – we encounter a reticence or squeamishness when it comes to the perennial old chestnut of 'violence in the cinema' (or in media, generally). Perhaps it is hard for him to regard represented violence as anything over than toxic in its cultural-pharmacological effects (he is, after all, more of a Mizoguchi-and-Mozart man). For us, however – especially when faced with the interfaces of military vision offered by this exhibition – the issue cannot be so simply avoided, as a matter of personal taste or delicacy. When it comes to brain synapses, dream-fantasy visions, and sensory retentions and protentions, the question of images and sounds of violence – however they are generated, from wherever they are derived – is crucial, today more than ever before.

I am retaining a memory from my secondary school days in the mid 1970s. In Year 11, I had a fresh-faced, straight-out-of-training-college, neo-hippie politics teacher (he looked rather like Ross Wilson of Daddy Cool). One day, bored and exasperated with trying to teach us kids about the Australian parliamentary system, he decided to amuse himself and us by describing, in drooling, graphic detail, a scene from a movie that he had just seen and loved. The film happened to be Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* (1973). And so here is this sensitive, leftie guy up the front of the classroom, recreating a scene in which a villain prowls around the hapless hero (played by Elliot Gould), bottle in hand, raving in a distracted, dissociated manner about how beautiful his own girlfriend is. Suddenly, this thug swings around and, in an unexpected switch, smashes the bottle into

this girlfriend's face instead of Gould's. It is a deeply distressing scene. But I shall never forget the satisfied, roaring laugh of my radical politics teacher that day, as he quoted the hard-boiled one-liner that goes with this violent action, when the thug summarises the import of his crazy deed: "I gave her a coke-bottle for a nose!"

I am now wondering, all these years later, whether my own position on screen violence was in some way formed in that classroom on that day – my appreciation for screen violence, my love for it sometimes, and also my ambivalence toward it – not to mention the intense combination of urgent passions, irritations and defense mechanisms that emerges every time this topic erupts in public discussion. It's a perfectly pharmacological, therapeutic muddle. Let me be perfectly frank: I come from a generation of film fans/critics that has a high tolerance – or more, a high regard – for screen violence. I can often enjoy the spectacle of such violence, and I actively seek it out as a certain heightened, paroxysmic form of entertainment. I have championed it, too, as a public mission. Sam Peckinpah, Gaspar Noé, Martin Scorsese, John Woo, Kathryn Bigelow, Takeshi Kitano: these are some of the violent filmmakers that I have venerated at one time or another and, in this respect, I am simply a typical cinephile of a certain persuasion. I adore the cinema of sensation: the cinema of shocks, jolts and attractions – visceral cinema, kinetic cinema. I spent three years writing a book on *The Mad Max Movies*. I think that cinema is – in part – the art of sensation, and I like any subject matter, any technique, any formal or stylistic exploration that maximises this sensation, exploring it and pushing its boundaries out further.

How seriously do I take this particular kind of depicted, represented, sometimes cartoonish screen violence? That is a good question. My generation of film lovers and critics, and even more so the next generation that has come up under me, has developed a pat, public answer for this question – maybe too pat. Quentin Tarantino says it, the anti-censorship lobby all over the world says it: screen violence is not real violence, and should never be confused with real violence. Movie violence is movie violence. It's fun, spectacle, make-believe; it's dramatic metaphor, purely generic, fantasy. Nobody who loves and appreciates a certain kind of violent movie wants to be caught dead implying that there is some direct, causal link between the over-the-top, visceral thrills in a Robert Rodriguez film and the daily, real traumas of death and suffering that bedevil our planet in crisis. No

one who is at all sensitive to the artifice and texture of the construction of screen violence wants to concur that, in some brute, indistinct way, it de-sensitises our perceptions, feelings and moral sense – which would be precisely to return to the old good side/bad side mode of critique.

Yet the cinephile's fun-and-spectacle defence of violence has itself become a kind of desperate defence mechanism, a jamming device, a refusal of further thought or discussion – and a refusal of real, pharmacological complexity. This line of reasoning has become just as useless as all those tired old, indiscriminate anti-violence arguments trotted out endlessly by grey, concerned, finger-wagging moralists in their newspaper columns, or on TV and radio – all those completely unconvincing diatribes against *Django Unchained* (or whatever) by old farts or young farts, left-wingers or right-wingers … all those commentaries that betray absolutely no knowledge of any audiovisual media, their histories or conventions – no knowledge, and even less love.

It is time to return to that macabre fascination we feel when confronted with extreme images of war, terror, military intervention, state-sanctioned killing, and the like. Our first reaction might indeed be to label such images toxic. But is that all they are, and is that the only way in which they work on us? In a characteristically whimsical – yet ruthlessly logical – and quietly contrarian turn of argument in the course of his book *Under Suspicion*, Boris Groys addresses, in passing, those "cameras that, like kamikaze pilots, fly together with their bombs toward their target in order to document the explosion that will destroy them too". This arises in the midst of a musing on *sublime* images – where any image (or even the camera that mechanically records it) is sublime that "provides insight into another, medial, virtual time after death, a time that transcends any real lifespan":

> The exclusively scientific or military-strategic evaluation of such images evidently overlooks their aesthetic dignity as images of the sublime. We are dealing with an archive that was not created for any audience – and that nonetheless manifests itself as sublime.

It would be too easy to accusingly point to what Groys here so breezily elides – that the "target" of some of these sublime

cameras is human life itself – in order to discredit his idea. For he is here trying to think what is, in certain contexts, unthinkable (or unmentionable), trying to bring out an aspect of this complex matter that we conveniently repress in much discussion of it. Namely, that the bomb-cam image is, alongside everything else that it is, precisely *an image*, and thus part of the economy, the culture, the continuum of all images (mechanically re/produced or otherwise). And, as an image, it enters (we cannot halt it) into a differential circuit of image experiences and affects. One of these paths, for Groys, is the sublime; but it could just as easily be the path of action (or exploitation or sensation or pornographic) cinema. We can neither deny the emotional reality of these sorts of psychic circuits, nor morally pre-judge their political effects.

Groys has elsewhere more directly tackled the issue of such disquietingly sublime images of warfare. In "The Fate of Art in the Age of Terror", he hones in on the case study of modern art, which, as he rightly observes, "has a more than ambivalent relationship with violence, with terrorism". The modern artist has often posed as a kind of terrorist: his or her aim is to shock, to expose, to tear down the socially-sanctioned image and reveal the ugly truth lurking behind it. But Groys makes this distinction: where the modern artist is an *iconoclast*, the modern-day terrorist is an *iconophile*. The latter seeks to restore images in the public's eye and mind: strong, true, powerful images beyond any doubt. And this phenomenon, according to Groys, makes us (artists, intellectuals, teachers) uncomfortable, distressed, yet at the same time caught, fascinated:

> After so many decades of modern and post-modern criticism of the image, of the mimesis, of representation we feel ourselves somewhat ashamed by saying that the images of terror or torture are not true, not real. We cannot say that these images are not true, because we know that these images are paid by a real loss of life – a loss of life that is documented by these images. […] After so many decades of the critique of representation directed against the naive belief in photographic and cinematic truth, we are now ready to accept certain photographed and videotaped images as unquestionably true, again.

And – the final twist in Groys's thesis – there is a pleasure in this admission, this submission to the image: for the authenticity,

truth and strength of such images (however truly awful their actual, specific content, and the circumstances that formed them) is something we have secretly craved for a long time, and we are enjoying it (a little perversely) now. There is an unquestionable truth to this: the documentary images issuing from the heavily mediatised wars of today's world exist on a continuum alongside our cherished memories of choice transgressive moments from Punk or Surrealism, Mondo movies or Pasolini's *Salò* (1975).

My position differs a little from Groys's, in that I do not wish to restrict the history of the consumption of images only to those particular (and relatively privileged) audiences who may have traversed "decades of modern and post-modern criticism". Stiegler's approach does not limit itself to the experiences of this niche-crowd. We need to return to the fields of dream that belong to everyone: that *chantier* where all manner of impressions, toxic or health-giving, are battling it out.

This is where, in art, the idea of *interface*, as I have used it, matters. Artistic interface is ambiguous, polysemic, multivalent: it catches the visible face of a phenomenon (such as military vision) and subjects it to critique or parody or deflation; and yet it also exchanges faces, its own for the Other's, to pass along and possibly transform some frisson, some thrill inherent in a socio-cultural *dispositif*.

Can we deny, ultimately, that there is a thrill involved in the screens of surveillance and bodily penetration (Crandall), in the kinetic rush of a camera that explodes on impact with the façade of power (Beaubois), in the projectile-geo-mapping of a video game that piles up the nameless dead (the *undefined killed*) like a Peckinpah movie (Cherubini)? The point is not to apolitically swap pleasure for pain, images for reality (which was postmodernism's fatal mistake); the point, rather, is to *rewire* all the available machines of sensation and vision. Including – if we can – military vision.

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Contributors' Biographies

Denis Beaubois is an artist and performer, born in Mauritius in 1970 and currently living in Sydney. His works explore power structures in society, especially the use of surveillance and the ownership of vision. He has exhibited internationally at venues including: the TATE Modern and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (2010); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland (2009); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney and the Zero One Biennale in San Jose (2008); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Taipei and Wood St Galleries in Pittsburgh (2007). His works have also been included in the SCAPE Biennale of Art in Public Space, New Zealand, the Rencontres Internationale Paris, Berlin festival, the Koldo Mitxelena Kulturnea in San Sebastian (2006); the Santiago Biennale in Chile, the Adelaide film festival in Australia (2005); and as part of the Transmediale program, Berlin (2004). He has received numerous awards for his works most notably winning the 1998 Bonn Videonale (Germany), and receiving the Judges' special prize for the Internationaler Medien kunst preis 2001, ZKM (Germany). He holds an MA in photography and performance as well as an MFA in Time Based Arts from COFA, UNSW, where he also lectures in video art.

Matthieu Cherubini is an emerging Swiss artist who works with new technologies, critical software, hacking and installation. His work directly intervenes in the foundations of new media and our contemporary condition: the algorithms and code processes that make up the networks to which we increasingly connect. He has exhibited widely including Fact Liverpool (2012), FILE RIO (2012), re-new digital arts festival (2011), and Centro Multimedia del Centro Nacional de las Artes (2011).

Jordan Crandall is an artist, theorist, and performer based in California where he is the Chair of the Visual Arts Department at the University of California, San Diego. His video installations, presented in numerous exhibitions worldwide, combine formats and genres deriving from cinematic and military culture, exploring new regimes of power and their effects on subjectivity, sociality, embodiment, and desire. Crandall was the 2011 winner of the Vilém Flusser Theory Award for outstanding theory and research-based digital arts practice, given by the Transmediale in Berlin in collaboration with the Vilém Flusser Archive of the University of Arts, Berlin. He is also currently an Honorary Resident at Eyebeam art and technology center in New York, where he is continuing the development of a new body of work that blends performance art, political theatre, philosophical speculation, and intimate reverie. He is also the founding editor of the new journal VERSION.

Adrian Martin is an Australian academic, professional writer and film and arts critic. He is Associate Professor in Film Culture and Theory at Monash University, Melbourne, and 2013/2014 Distinguished Visiting Professor at Goethe University, Frankfurt, Germany. Martin was a film reviewer for *The Age* newspaper between 1995 and 2006. For his numerous books, essays and public lectures, he has won the Byron Kennedy Award (Australian Film Institute) and the Pascall Prize for Critical Writing, and his PhD on film style won the Mollie Holman Award. Martin is the author of four books and hundreds of essays on film, art, television, literature, music, popular and avant-garde culture.

Baden Pailthorpe is an Australian new media artist. His work broadly engages with the politics and cultures of technologies. His recent works have focused on the re-appropriation and manipulation of military technologies, including simulators, cinema and video games. Pailthorpe has participated in over fifty solo and group exhibitions, including Martin Browne Contemporary, Sydney; NIMk, Amsterdam; la Gaîté Lyrique, Paris; and the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. Pailthorpe is undertaking a PhD in New Media Aesthetics at the University of New South Wales, Sydney. He holds an MFA from l'Université Paris VIII and an MA from the College of Fine Arts, UNSW. His work is held in private and public collections. In 2013, Baden Pailthorpe was the inaugural artist in residence at the Australian War Memorial.

Kyle Weise is co-director and co-founder of Screen Space. He is a PhD candidate in Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne. Weise has presented his research on visual culture at international conferences in England, New Zealand, Turkey and throughout the USA, and has written catalogue essays and reviews of exhibitions around Australia. He is a former committee member of Kings Artist Run Initiative, Melbourne (2009-2011) and has curated exhibitions at the Perth Centre for Photography, Perth (2013) and Beam Contemporary, Melbourne (2011). With fellow Screen Space director Simone Hine, he has co-curated exhibitions at Careof: Organisation for Contemporary Art, Milan (2014), Boxcopy, Brisbane (2013), Scope Miami (2013) and Screen Space (2010) and has undertaken recent curatorial residencies at Artsource, Fremantle (2013) and Careof, Milan (2014).

Screen Space is an independent not-for profit art gallery that opened in Melbourne's CBD in 2010. The main exhibition space has been designed specifically to enable the gallery's curatorial focus on exhibitions that incorporate screen technology or which engage with screen culture, regardless of medium. The gallery program combines local and international, emerging and established artists.

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