

Visitor
information

Digital Archives

12.03.–
29.05.2016

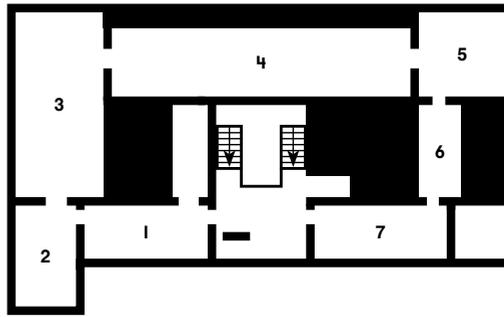


kunst
verein
hannover

Digital Archives

Arno Auer
Christoph Faulhaber
Ingo Günther
Ryoji Ikeda
!Mediengruppe Bitnik
Yann Mingard
Trevor Paglen
Superflux

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The infrastructure of modern societies is largely dependent on data streams. Our data are stored in clouds and maintained on server farms. The database as a digital archive stands both for the potential to gain insight as well as the information excesses in a media culture in which the collection, administration, and evaluation of digital information play an increasingly important role. Massive subsidies, private and public labor power, as well as entrepreneurial, government, and military capital flow into the generation, gathering, and analysis of data. The question of who possesses what data, how these are processed, and how this changes the economic power structure and social concepts of the private sphere, knowledge, and responsibility is becoming more and more urgent.

Against this backdrop, the group exhibition “Digital Archives” assembles works that deal in a multifaceted way with the networked world and the seemingly limitless possibilities for circulating, archiving, and processing digital information. Besides data and communications streams in global networks, the exhibition addresses the highly complex and invisible forms of political and economic shifts of power as well as exposes and reflects the omnipresence of surveillance and censorship. Concurrent with the CeBIT and the HANNOVER MESSE 2016, the presentation at the Kunstverein Hannover once again draws attention to the opportunities, visions, and dangers associated with digital change.

Room I

Works by **Trevor Paglen** (*1974 in the USA, lives in New York) deal with making things visible that are kept secret with the utmost effort. They focus on what is referred to as the “black world,” the infrastructure of surveillance activities in the United States that is kept hidden from the public. It is a gigantic military-industrial complex whose locations are not recorded on any official map. Using models of collective knowledge gathering as well as highly technical methods – such as astronomical precision telescopes – in his works Paglen succeeds in making remote, restricted military areas visible as well as the secret flight paths of spy satellites and drones or covert military operations.

The work “**Code Names: Classified Military and Intelligence Programs (2001–2007)**” (2009) features code words and names used by intelligence and military authorities to refer to certain units, programs, and operations and whose existence or purpose is secret. The first word of what are in part nonsensical and bizarre sounding two-part names makes reference to the respective intelligence or military department: the prefix “have,” for example, stands for the Air Force; the Army is assigned prefixes such as “capacity” and “gray.” As was made known in early 2014 – six months after the NSA disclosures – under the program code name of “Dishfire” the American intelligence agency gathered 200 million text messages every day worldwide and specifically analyzed them according to information such as contacts, travel plans, and financial transactions. For intelligence agencies, automated systems such as “FoxAcid” technically implement what the name implies, namely covertly obtaining access to external computers, routers, and data using tailor-made methods. Each year, at least 50 billion dollars from the United States’ military budget flow into projects that are furnished with such or similar code names, whose sense and purpose are not elaborated on in publicly accessible government reports and whose justification is up for discussion. Paglen’s nearly endless list of operations represents only a tiny part of the same and raises awareness for the excessive abundance of intelligence programs that operate in the background.

For Paglen, the sky, traditionally a symbol for freedom and boundlessness, proves to be a coded and colonized space. Based on recordings made by an international network of amateur observers, Paglen calculates the positions of surveillance satellites and renders them visible as thin trails of light in time exposures with the aid of special cameras. In the iridescent red photograph, the path of an optical reconnaissance satellite in space has been captured that orbits the earth every 97 minutes and is equipped with a face recognition system.



Trevor Paglen, “KEYHOLE 12-3 (IMPROVED CRYSTAL) Optical Reconnaissance Satellite Near Scorpio (USA 129)”, 2007

c-print
150 × 121 cm

Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York, Altman Siegel, San Francisco

Room 2

Paglen also traces the invisible networks of political power and control in the video installation **“89 Landscapes”** (2015) by showing what are in large part secret high-security zones of the NSA as well as the British intelligence agency GCHQ in long exposures. The film is based on material that Paglen compiled as a cameraman and researcher within the scope of Laura Poitira’s documentary **“Citizenfour”** (2014), which throws light on the days immediately prior to and after Edward Snowden’s disclosures. The sublime and at the same time sobering images focus on enormous buildings that have inscribed themselves into the vastness of idyllic landscapes and that change one’s view of the landscape as well as of the relationship between the government and its citizens. As an observer of the observers, Paglen develops a relentless geography of the 21st century at the interface between government secrets and the public’s right to information.



Trevor Paglen, “89 Landscapes”, 2015
2-channel video installation (still)
color, sound
24 min.

Courtesy Metro Pictures, New York, Altman Siegel, San Francisco

Room 3

The works by the London-based collective **Superflux** (founded in 2009 by Anab Jain and Jon Arden) moves within the field of tension between art and design and examine technological developments and their potential impact on our future everyday lives. The work **“Drone Aviary”** (2015) ties in with the emerging civilian use of unmanned flying objects that are affordable for private persons and is being widely discussed at the latest since their announcement by the online merchant Amazon to deliver packages by means of drones in the future. Using five specially designed and programmed civilian drones, Superflux develops the version of a **“Smart City”** that is equipped with innovative, networked technologies. From the perspective of the mobile data collection devices, the film shows a possible reality in which drones serve various purposes as part of people’s private lives as well as of the urban ecosystem. Drones are used, for example, for the early detection of civilian offenses or crowds of people or operate as advertising media that can analyze the reactions of bystanders in real time by means of face recognition. Another flying object is used in communications in order to be **“at the scene”** early on by evaluating social media and simultaneously filming or streaming it. **“Drone Aviary”** thus provokes questions concerning the possible sociopolitical and cultural significance of drone technology in urban space.

How does our secular society administer its legacy and thus its future as well? In his large-scale photo project **“Deposit,”** from 2009 to 2013 **Yann Mingard** (*1973 in CH, lives in Colombier, CH) dealt with this question by seeking out 21 sites at which things are in part covertly researched, classified, collected, and stored. Besides databases as networked communications systems on which the photographs in the exhibition focus, the overall series also directs one’s awareness toward biobanks (tissue, organ, blood, and gene banks). All of these are archives in which the digital and genetic (human, animal, and plant) legacy of the past is interwoven with future use perspectives and application potential. At the same time, the powerful darkness of the photographic series reflects the cold reality of our aspiration of controlling life even into the future and calls this into question.



Superflux, “Drone Aviary”, 2015
HD-video (still)
color, sound
6.33 min.

The presented photographs highlight those sites at which a plethora of highly explosive as well as everyday information is kept, of which more and more is being produced. They feature steel doors that weigh several tons, server farms, corridors, guards, and workplaces in high-security data centers that are located deep under the ground in former military bunkers and would withstand atomic explosions. According to data-centermap.com, there are currently 3,802 data centers worldwide.

The photograph **“Deposit Data (EBI, The European Bioinformatics Institute, Cambridge, 2013,”** for example, features an apparently empty sample tubule containing digital information that was stored in the form of DNA molecules. Among other things, it contains sonnets by Shakespeare as well as a short audio excerpt from Martin Luther King’s famous speech and corresponds with the storage capacity of a million CDs.



Yann Mingard, “Deposit (EBI, The European Bioinformatics Institute, Cambridge 2013)”, 2009–2013
fine art print on aludibond
40 x 33,2 cm

Courtesy Robert Morat Galerie

Room 4

The works by **Ryoji Ikeda** (*1966 in JP, lives in Paris) deal with the reference systems of science and technology. Ikeda has been one of the leading composers in the area of electronic music and the artistic examination of new digital technologies since the mid-1990s. The raw material and themes of his works are the plethora of information of the digital era and its underlying data structures. Based on mathematical principles, he examines sound-, time-, and space-related dimensions and develops compositions in which the musical and visual material is reduced to a minimum: sine waves, sound impulses, light pixels, and numerical data.

The extensive audiovisual installation “**data.matrix [n°1-10]**” (2009) translates the speed of data streams and structures into three-dimensional landscapes comprised of abstract patterns and sound compositions full of strange high-frequency tones. Pure data that are transformed into audiovisual images in real time serve as the starting point of the individual projections—for example, of biological macromolecules such as chromosomes and proteins, hard drive crashes, or NASA’s astronomical coordinates. Ikeda allows viewers to submerge themselves in immersive data landscapes, endless data streams out of bits and bytes, abstract computing processes, and numerical data columns that find their equivalent in sound spaces generated by the meticulous layering of acoustic components.



Ryoji Ikeda, “**data.matrix [n°1-10]**”, 2009
audiovisual installation
dimensions variable

photo: Ryuichi Maruo

Room 5

Under the label of “Ocean Earth,” in the early 1980s **Ingo Günther** (*1957 in DE, lives in New York) began acquiring data from civilian reconnaissance and surveillance satellites that he evaluated, processed, and interpreted in order to shed light on ecological facts and covert armament. As early as in the mid-1990s, with his “Refugee Republic” project he pursued the idea of a worldwide cooperative that is connected by the Internet: refugee policy as a supranational and supraterritorial model state whose citizens were to use their collective experience.

Within the ongoing “**Worldprocessor**” series (since 1988), Günther surveyed and designed the image of the earth, rendering it visible by means of static data complexes and abstract developments. Very different kinds of data are gathered, condensed, and specified for the purpose of throwing light on the state of the earth from a political, sociological, economic, military, technological, or ecological point of view. Based on social development issues (e.g. the distribution of wealth), economic transformations (e.g. special economic zones), or military strategies (e.g. rocket bases, arms trade), an encyclopedia of different snapshots in time is created that urges to think the world in its global networks.



Ingo Günther, “**Nuclear Range [Worldprocessor 357-2]**”, 2012
mixed media, ∅ 30 cm

Courtesy Galerie Brigitte Schenk

Room 6

The film “**Jedes Bild ist ein leeres Bild**” (2014) by **Christoph Faulhaber** (*1972 in DE, lives in Hamburg) documents the recalcitrant activities of an artist suspected of being a terrorist, whose projects time and again seek out and examine the boundaries of prevailing systems. Faulhaber deals with the question of how the hidden practices of power can be pointed out by means of the artistic strategies of provocation and intervention in public space and what role images play in the process. Who actually has the right to create, disseminate, and interpret images? For example, with the self-professed assignment to monitor security in public space, in 2005 Faulhaber founded the fictitious security service “Mister Security.” The associated activities ultimately led to his scholarship in the United States being revoked after extensive questioning by the FBI and that he had to leave the country. In a blend of real and virtual elements, documentary images fuse with virtual recordings from the video game “Grand Theft Auto.” At the same time, the avatar “Niko Bellic” developed by the game manufacturer serves as the artist’s alter ego, who reflects on the events. Accompanied by music and effectively exaggerated time after time, Faulhaber’s film avails itself of precisely those strategies on which he simultaneously critically reflects: he uses the seductive power of video clips and the power of media images to stylize the artist into a hero and advance the blending of the real with the virtual world.



Christoph Faulhaber, “**Jedes Bild ist ein leeres Bild**”, 2014
HD-video (still)
color, sound, 68 min.

©VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2016

Room 7

In terms of the works by the Swiss artists' collective **!Mediengruppe Bitnik** (founded in 2003 by Carmen Weiskopf and Domagoj Smoljo, Zurich and London), "hacking" is seen as an examination of the medialized reality that is created through the intermeshing of online and offline networks for the purpose of revealing the operating mechanisms inherent in the system. For example, the artist duo traced surveillance camera signals in public space and replaced them with their own video signals, which challenged those being surveilled to a game of chess. Or in 2013 they sent a package to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange in which a camera had been installed and documented its mailing route live, even as it passed the gates of the heavily guarded Ecuadorian embassy.

For the work "**Random Darknet Shopper – The Bot's Collection**" (2015) the artists programmed software that sends automatic orders in the "Darknet" and thus creates a connection to the encrypted networks. Markets flourish in the hidden underground of the Internet, which cannot be accessed by means of conventional

browsers and search engines, in which one can buy anything imaginable. With a weekly budget of 100 dollars converted into bitcoins – an anonymous, digitally encrypted currency – the so-called Bot browsed different product categories and randomly ordered various articles. The products visible on the screens and their sculptural counterparts document the orders, which were delivered to the Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen. These include a credit card, fake sneakers and brand-name jeans, a cap with a built-in camera, a set of master keys to unlock different warehouse gates, and ecstasy pills. Following the exhibition, the Swiss public prosecution department confiscated the Bot and the products that had been bought, igniting a legal debate on artificial intelligence. What does it mean for society when automated computer programs act independently, and who is liable when a robot breaks the law?



!Mediengruppe Bitnik, "Random Darknet Shopper – The Bot's Collection", 2015
installation view, Helmhaus Zürich

Foyer

The work "**To be installed within reach of a public webcam**" (2016) by **Arno Auer** (*1977, lives in Hanover) addresses censorship in the Internet and communicates ways to circumvent it. Auer combines two contrary aspects of the digital public sphere: the reconnaissance and surveillance of public space by, among other things, webcams as well as the uncensored DNS servers in the Internet that enable access to blocked online contents. Auer uses an existing webcam in public space as well as a camera installed in the exhibition space for the purpose of transferring live images to the Internet (www.tobeinstalled.com). These show the events taking place in the foyer of the Kunstverein as well as in urban space and at the same time display the access codes to uncensored DNS servers that Auer placed at precisely these sites. The access codes can consequently be easily propagated via email as a link to the webcam without causing the recipient to seem suspicious.

More information about the work by Arno Auer as well as Ingo Günther and Yann Mingard is available in the respective exhibition space.

With the assembled works by selected artists as well as an interdisciplinary symposium on the challenges posed by (digital) archiving on April 30, 2016, the Kunstverein Hannover wants to promote and expand the current discourse. All of the exhibition dates can be found on the next page.



Arno Auer, "to be installed within reach of a public webcam (Bremen I)", 2015
installation view, Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst (GAK), Bremen

Accompanying Program

Concert

Friday, March 11, 2016
8:00 pm

“Santronic”
Arsalan Abedian and Ehsan
Ebrahimi (santur and electronic)

in cooperation with the electronic
Studio Incontri, HMTMH

Lecture

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
7:00 pm

The price of the future – a conversation about the algorithmisation of the financial markets.

with **Gerald Nestler**
(artist and scientist, Vienna)
and **Dr. Gunter Dunkel**
(CEO, NORD/LB)

Symposium

Saturday, April 30, 2016
2:00 pm to 6:00pm*

Potentials and challenges of
(digital) archiving – how is information collected and knowledge generated?

Focused are four literal remains, that save, display and connect knowledge in a special way:
Fragments of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s collection “Mathematica”, the pictorial atlas and library of Aby Warburg, Niklas Luhmanns’ slip box and the source code of Friedrich Kittlers.

Presentations:

Paul Feigelfeld (culture and media scientist, Leuphana Universität Lüneburg)

Katharina Hoins (art historian, Warburg-Haus Hamburg)

Prof. Dr. Michael Kempe and **Matthias Wehry** (historian and librarian, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Bibliothek, Hanover)

Johannes Schmidt (sociologist, Niklas Luhmann-Archiv, Bielefeld)

Guided Tours

Art in Dialogue

Wednesday, March 18, 2016
7:00 pm

with **Dr. Jürgen Rink** (Editor Chief, “c’t Digitale Fotografie”)

Curator’s Tours

respectively 7.00 pm

Wednesday, March 30, 2016
with Kathleen Rahn (Director)

Wednesday, April 20, 2016
with Ute Stuffer (Curator)

Wednesday, May 11, 2016
with Ute Stuffer (Curator)

Jour-Fixe

Every Sunday at 3:00 pm
(free with entry)

Lunchtime tours at the Kunstverein

Every Wednesday at 12:30 pm
brief tour (30 minutes)

There is no catering during this exhibition

all tours are free with entry

Kunstparkett

Salon

Wednesday, March 2, 2016
7:00 pm

“Mehr Sehen?”

A conversation about types of exhibitions, expectations and backgrounds with **Christina Végh** (Director Kestnter Gesellschaft), **Dr. Reinhard Spieler** (Director Sprengel Museum Hannover) and **Kathleen Rahn** (Director Kunstverein Hannover).

Monday, April 18, 2016
7:00 pm

“Die documenta – Geschichte, Hintergründe und Organisationsformen”

A conversation about the realignment of the documenta as a event and research organisation with **Anette Kuhlenkampff** (manager of the documenta and the Museum Fridericianum gGmbH)

Sophie’s Afterwork

Happy Hour with Art

Thursday, May 26, 2016
7:00 pm

Participation: 20 € / 15 € for Members

Registration kindly requested
by March 22, 2016
mail@kunstverein-hannover.de

Kunstkontakte

Workshops

Keine Angst vorm Programmieren

for children, youths and adults
at the age of 10 and above

Saturday, May 7, 2016
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Programming I – Sonic Pi
(music and sound)

Registration requested
by May 2, 2016

Saturday, May 21, 2016
10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Programming II – Processing
(graphics and animation)

Registration requested
by May 16, 2016

Participation 6 € /
4 € for children and members

conceived and conducted by Pit
Noack (media artist Hanover)

Workshop during Easter break
for youths at the age of 12 to 16

Monday, March 21, 2016 –
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
10:00 am to 2:00 pm

“LICHTSPIELE: analog & digital”
stop-action, animation or lightart
– we are going to create and
direct lights in analogue and digital
to project them onto the rooms
of the Kunstverein.

Material expenses: 8 €

Registration requested
by March 7, 2016

Registration and information
service@kunstverein-hannover.de

Kunststoff

The Young Art Club
of the Kunstverein

Wednesday, March 16, 2016
7:00 pm

Guided Tour with Kathleen Rahn
(Director)

Entry 3 € / free for members

Friday, May 13, 2016
7:00 pm

RaumKontakt II
Introduction of young art and
cultural projects in and around
Hanover.

Entry 3 € / Free for members

kunststoff@
kunstverein-hannover.de
www.facebook.com/kunststoff.
kunstverein.hannover

School Programs

The Kunstverein is offering various
creative workshops designed for
school children (grades 1–13).

Registration:
service@kunstverein-hannover.de

Wednesday, March 16, 2016
5:50 pm

Evening for teachers

Kunsttauchkurse

For children at the age of 5 to 8

12:00 pm to 1:00 pm

March 12, 2016
March 26, 2016
April 9, 2016
April 23, 2016
May 7, 2016
May 21, 2016

for children at the age of 8 to 11

2:30 pm to 4:00 pm

March 26, 2016
April 23, 2016
May 21, 2016

5 € / 3 € for member’s children

Registration:
kinder@kunstverein-hannover.de

**During CeBIT and HANNOVER
MESSE the Kunstverein will be
open until 9:00 pm**

* in cooperation with Basis Zwei:
a Series of Events by Pit Noack

Kunstverein Hannover

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Opening hours

Tuesday–Saturday

12.00 pm–7.00 pm

Sunday and public holiday

11.00 am–7.00 pm

during CeBIT

(March 15–18, 2016) and

HANNOVER MESSE

(April 26–29, 2016)

until 9.00 pm!

Reduced entrance with CeBIT-
and HANNOVER MESSE-Ticket

Entrance fee

6 € / reduction 4 € /

members free

The Kunstverein Hannover is sponsored
by the Culture Office of the Landeshaupt-
stadt Hanover



We thank for their generous support:



Niedersächsisches Ministerium
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The educationw program is
also sponsored by:



Cooperation partners:



Deutsche Messe

Front:

Ingo Günther, "Horizon of Ubiquitous
Computing [Worldprocessor 347-2]" 2013

Mixed media, © 30 cm