

METRO PICTURES

Trevor Paglen

September 10 - October 24, 2015

Opening reception September 10, 6 - 8 PM



Mid-Atlantic Crossing (MAC), NSA/CGHQ-Tapped Undersea Cable, Atlantic Ocean, 2015. c-print

For his second exhibition at Metro Pictures, Trevor Paglen presents new photographs, a video and a sculpture that continues his ongoing investigation of covert military and intelligence operations. Using his signature strategy coupling exhaustive research with formal explorations of color and abstraction, Paglen's new works focus on the geography and aesthetics of the National Security Agency's (NSA) global surveillance programs.

Included in the exhibition are photographs of shoreline sites where the NSA taps transcontinental communications cables, underwater images of transoceanic cables, a sculpture connected to the internet-anonymizing Tor network, and a dual-channel video installation comprising material Paglen filmed for "CITIZENFOUR," Laura Poitras' Academy Award-winning film about Edward Snowden.

Paglen's most recent works include shimmering photographic views of bucolic shorelines coupled with collages of maritime maps and documents

pointing to their status as NSA-tapped telecommunications cable "choke points." The seemingly benign looking seascapes depict some of the NSA's most controversial surveillance activities. In another series Paglen learned scuba diving and underwater navigation, venturing to the ocean floor to photograph undersea cables that top-secret documents show are tapped by the NSA. These undersea photographs, composed of deep blue and green color fields punctuated by the unnatural presence of internet cables, are meditations on vision, form, representation and the material networks that invisibly shape our world.

Paglen's sculpture, *Autonomy Cube*, created in collaboration with digital civil rights activist Jacob Appelbaum, is a secure Wi-Fi hotspot that offers visitors an opportunity to communicate beyond the reach of the surveillance system. Computer mainboards housed inside a thick transparent cube are programmed to route traffic over the Tor Network—an international web of anonymous servers that forms a secure data sharing system that intelligence agencies have found immensely difficult to surveil.

Paglen's earlier photographs have been deceptively beautiful visions of drones that appear as incidental specks in vast and colorful skies, distorted views of military black sites taken from dozens of miles away and subsequently warped by desert heat. The coastal photographs, along with his images of night skies and landscapes, are themselves covert images of black ops, surveillance drones, satellites, military installations, and intelligence complexes. They are the culmination of an extensive investigation to uncover physical markers of otherwise invisible activities. In his distinctive practice, Paglen regularly interacts with non-art communities ranging from government watchdogs, astronomers and the academic field of geography, a subject in which Paglen holds a degree.

Paglen's many cross-discipline lectures include a dialogue with filmmaker Werner Herzog in New York City's Bryant Park, an appearance on *The Colbert Report* and *Rhizome's Seven on Seven* conference at the New Museum.

Trevor Paglen received an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a PhD in Experimental Geography from UC Berkeley. He is the author of five books including "Blank Spots on the Map: the Dark Geography of the Pentagon's Secret World" and "Torture Taxi", which investigates the CIA's "extraordinary rendition" program. In 2012 Paglen, with Creative Time and MIT, realized his project "The Last Pictures," in which he launched a capsule containing 100 micro-etched images into Earth's orbit on the satellite EchoStar XVI.

He has had one-person exhibitions at the Secession, Vienna; the Berkeley Art Museum; Kunsthall Oslo and Kunsthalle Giessen, Germany. His work has been included in group shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Tate Modern, London; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead, UK; Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA; Haus der Kunst, Munich; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. He participated in the 2009 Istanbul Biennial, 2012 Liverpool Biennial and 2013 ICP Triennial, New York. He has received numerous awards, including the 2014 Electronic Frontier Foundation Pioneer Award for his contributions to counter-surveillance.

519 W 24TH ST NEW YORK, NY 10011 T 212 206 7100 F 212 337 0070
WWW.METROPICTURES.COM GALLERY@METROPICTURES.COM