



Press release Fotomuseum Winterthur

SITUATIONS/Strike

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Fotomuseum Winterthur

The thematic cluster SITUATIONS/Strike takes eight artistic, scientific and curatorial works as a basis for discussing photographic and digital practices that have their origins in military technologies and applications. The eight projects are being presented online over the course of eight weeks.

Almost every day we may use online map services to help us navigate areas we're not familiar with or select a new face filter to produce a creative selfie. Although we now take digital applications for granted, we are often oblivious to the fact that they are based on practices which are inextricably tied up with the military. From the early days of aerial photography to drones fitted with cameras, from camouflage to modern facial recognition, from agriculture to the exploitation of other planets, the military has played a major role in developing photographic methods and elaborating the uses to which the visual data they yield can be put.

SITUATIONS/Strike focuses on eight artistic, scientific and curatorial positions as a means to examine the increasing entanglement of civil and military technology. Where did these technologies originate? What happens when photographic media are deployed operatively for the purposes of tracking (and tracing), identifying and monitoring individuals or controlling machines engaged in surveillance and military activities? What are the options for getting rid of these mechanisms?

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, Fotomuseum Winterthur has decided to present SITUATIONS/Strike exclusively online. SITUATIONS is an experimental exhibition format that the museum has been running for over five years both on-site and online, enabling a sustained focus on the idiosyncrasies of digital space, on the possibilities it offers for showcasing ideas and on the audience it attracts. Eight positions will be put out on consecutive Tuesdays over a period of two months at situations.fotomuseum.ch. This also means that the cluster SITUATIONS/The Right to Look, which was affected by the lockdown in Switzerland, can be shown in the museum's exhibition space for an extended period (until 18.10.2020).

With works by Lisa Barnard, Michael Kempf, Jussi Parikka and Abelardo Gil-Fournier, Kate Rose, Annika Schwarzlose and Shinji Toya.



Selected Positions and Works

Shinji Toya, *Paint Your Face Away*, 2020, online tool

In his browser-based online app *Paint Your Face Away*, Japanese artist Shinji Toya probes the issues of surveillance and privacy in the context of facial recognition data, whose use by government and corporate concerns is on the rise. With the help of a few brushstrokes, users can use the free app to make their face unrecognisable, thus protecting their identity from being misused.

Lisa Barnard, *The Non-Logistical Mother*, 2020, lecture performance

The *Non-Logistical Mother* by British documentary photographer and artist Lisa Barnard focuses on how “operative images” function as a means to track (and trace), identify, and monitor – with specific reference to the spheres in which women are active and the ways they are represented. In the process, she demonstrates how these methods can be seen as an extension of the military complex, which spills over into everyday structures and thus also monitors the private lives of women together with the role they occupy in society. In her lecture performance, Barnard guides us through different artistic and theoretical approaches that critique and subvert the ongoing invisibility and silencing of women in theatres of war, which photography also plays a role in documenting.

Kate Rose, T-Shirt, 2020, product launch

This limited-edition T-shirt, which was specially produced for SITUATIONS/Strike, is not only chic and comfortable but also shields you from surveillance by the state. The patterns used by British hacker and designer Kate Rose for her fashion label Adversarial Fashion set off automated number plate readers, thereby infiltrating the surveillance systems with junk data. The T-shirt thus serves as a statement protesting against the misuse of power, driven by the exploitation of photographic data, while also being an everyday fashion item that can hack the seemingly invisible mechanisms of the surveillance state.

About SITUATIONS

SITUATIONS is an experimental exhibition format that reacts dynamically to current photographic and cultural developments. A SITUATION may take the form of a photographic image, a video or a performance, an essay or quote aimed at an in-depth exploration of a topic. Numbered consecutively, SITUATIONS are presented as thematic clusters in the physical space and online at situations.fotomuseum.ch.



About the Museum

Fotomuseum Winterthur is at the forefront of presenting and discussing photography and visual culture. As part of its repertoire of temporary exhibitions devoted to individual artists and group shows, the museum displays works by young photographers as well as those with an established reputation. In addition, it examines photographic phenomena in the context of new technologies and digital media, exposing them to critical scrutiny. A broad range of artistic, applied and cultural forms of photography are explored, with a primary focus on dialogue and the exchange of ideas. The institution is committed to the considered, autonomous and creative use of media. Its collection (which dates back to 1960) has helped to shape the history and narratives of photography as well as our understanding of it as a medium in all its different forms.

Fotomuseum Winterthur was founded in 1993. In 2002, it combined with Fotostiftung Schweiz to create the Fotozentrum – Switzerland's foremost centre for photographic expertise.

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