

SAFE AND SOUND

SURVEILLANCE AND PROTECTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

23 MARCH – 21 AUGUST 2016

PRESS KIT



Dejana Kabiljo, *Fences*, 2014. © Kabiljo Inc., Photo: Dejana Kabiljo

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Lausanne, March 2016

SAFE AND SOUND

SURVEILLANCE AND PROTECTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

23 MARCH – 21 AUGUST 2016

PRESS CONFERENCE: TUESDAY 22 MARCH AT 10.30

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE CURATOR AND SOME OF THE ARTISTS

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Safety instructions, safe driving poster campaigns, access control in company lobbies, X-ray tunnels at airports and protective gear for leisure activities are just some of contemporary society's many rules and procedures designed to improve security or prevent dangers. Insurers, lawyers, engineers, designers and scientists pay very careful attention to public safety. Over the decades, these measures have helped to prevent plenty of accidents. Nonetheless, we can find ourselves wondering whether security might actually have become an obsession over which we have sometimes lost our reason.

There is such a plethora of information aimed at ensuring our safety that we no longer pay any attention to it. But what is the point of these items? Are they a shield against fear, whether well-founded or fictional? A need for total control? Do consumers demand them? Are they a pretext for taking risks? Why do we devote so much energy to security these days? Why have certain States made them a virtual profession of political faith? Nowadays, ultra-security, the denial of the unexpected and the desire for total foresight are the norm and go together with a certain denial of death that characterises our society.

The exhibition *Safe and Sound* examines the current state of these phenomena, bringing together design works, everyday objects, photography and contemporary art. It touches on the interconnected subjects of safety, fear, protection and surveillance, four key terms which guided the selection of works in the exhibition. Its starting point is the conviction that these terms are inseparable in human psychologies and in the way society treats them.

Some projects present design solutions to very concrete problems, such as Anna Haupt and Terese Alstin's airbag for cyclists, which deploys in the event of a collision, or the \$1 gauge which enables the right amount of bleach to be diluted in a bucket of water to make it an effective disinfectant. The earthquake-proof table designed by Arthur Brutter & Ido Bruno can shelter two schoolchildren during an earthquake, and protect them from heavy falling debris.

Other artists and designers, by contrast, take the side of détournement, humorously pointing out the fantasies of security and control. The *Earthquake-Proof Table* by ECAL/Martino D'Esposito is a parody of this device, composed of all the necessary elements for survival in Switzerland: milking stool, fondue pot, sausage and a bottle of Henniez, not forgetting, of course, a military blanket, and leisure material – an adult magazine! The duo SUPERLIFE create dual-purpose objects, which enable us to face up to sudden threats of all kinds, such as a simple pencil case which transforms into a respiratory filter, echoing the constant research carried out by survivalists who aim to prepare their environment for catastrophes to come.

Other projects highlight all the ambiguity of our relationship with security and play on the discomfort it evokes. These include the spectacular installation *Fences*, by the designer Dejana Kabiljo: a bed enclosed by protective yet disturbing fences. *Happylife*, a domestic appliance by James Auger, Reyer Zwiggelaar and Bashar Al Rajoub, helps us identify the mood of family members; it is thus an aid to communication, yet it works by submitting them for profiling and regular evaluation by the machine.

Several designers and artists have developed a critical discourse around surveillance and control of the general population's deeds and actions, particularly in the public sphere. Nils Norman presents his project *The Urbanomics Archive*, an archive begun in 1995 inventorying street furniture aimed at controlling people's behaviour: anti-homeless benches or spikes, parking bumpers, surveillance cameras, urine-repellents, graffiti-proof walls, etc. Both Ruben Pater and Trevor Paglen address means of identifying threats from the sky. The former is the author of a poster identifying types of drone so that civilians living in the areas where they are used can recognise them and better protect themselves. The latter is a photographer and geographer who tracks and photographs secret satellites in orbit, thanks to data gathered by a vast international amateur network.

Fear – primitive, intuitive, universal – has always influenced human behaviour, for better and for worse. It has contributed to the survival of the species as we have developed natural reflexes, and put various protective devices in place. It has also given rise to ostracisation, exclusion, condemnation and over-protection. It is now advancing side by side with the notion of risk. Anticipating danger takes up an important place in everyday life. There is a tendency for protection to become a civic obligation, and surveillance is accepted because it is thought to have security

benefits. The urban environment and domestic life are chequered with features aimed at ensuring our safety. Surveillance, protection, safety and anticipating risk are given priority both on a private level and by politicians. If we briefly compare our over-protected society with living conditions for less privileged populations around the globe, a striking difference in treatment emerges, to the point where we might start to wonder whether protection is a duty or a luxury.

Whether the objects in the exhibition are inconspicuous aspects of contemporary life, or were created by artists and designers to express a particular point of view, they combine to form a revealing panorama of these inseparable issues and their everyday ubiquity.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, edited by mudac and Editions Infolio, which brings the exhibits together with texts by Claire Favre Maxwell, mudac's deputy director and the exhibition curator, David Le Breton, professor of sociology at the University of Strabourg and Claus Gunti, art historian, teacher and researcher at Unil, EPFL and ECAL.

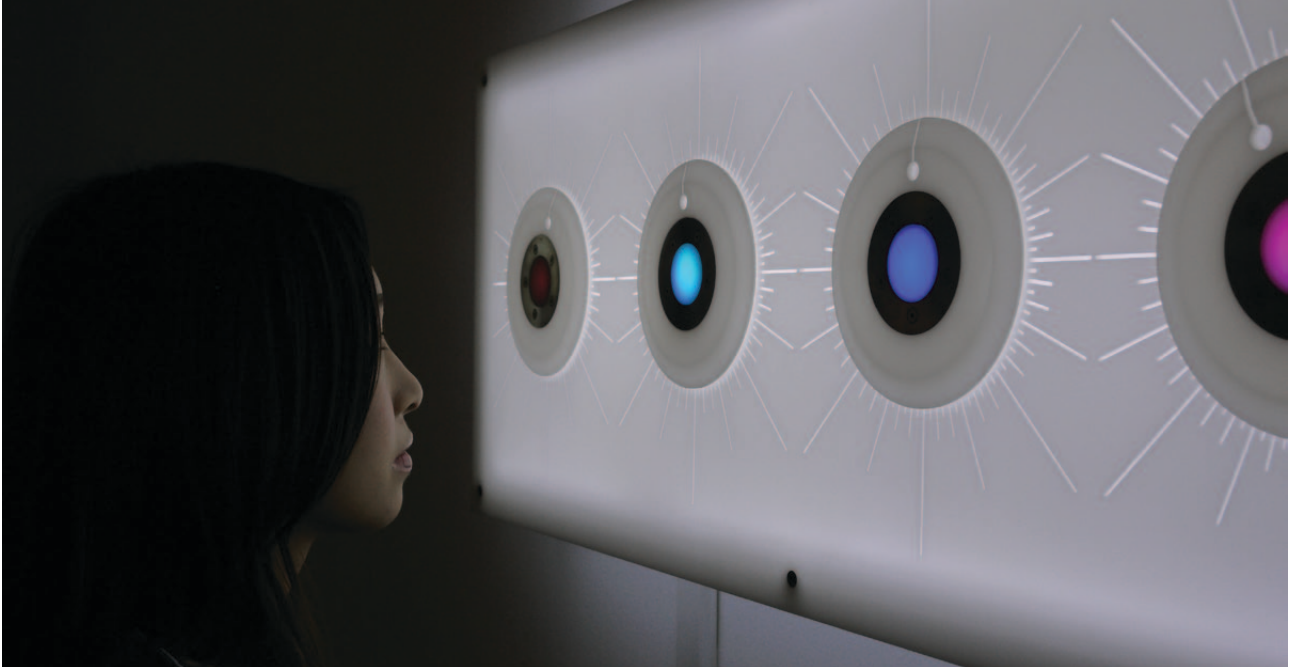


Inigo Minns & Onkar Kullar, *Risk Centre Lausanne*, 2016

SELECTED PROJECTS

James Auger, Reyer Zwiggelaar & Bashar Al Rajoub, *Happylife*, 2010

Happylife is a concept design composed of a thermal imaging camera, a facial recognition system and computer algorithms. Meant for the home, it detects the mood of each family member in order to smooth their interactions.



Dejana Kabiljo, *Fences*, 2014

Fences is a fenced-in bed. Two white pillows placed inside the enclosure contrast with the black metallic structure of the bed. This piece represents protection taken to extremes and symbolises all the rules and constraints that keep us confined behind barricades.



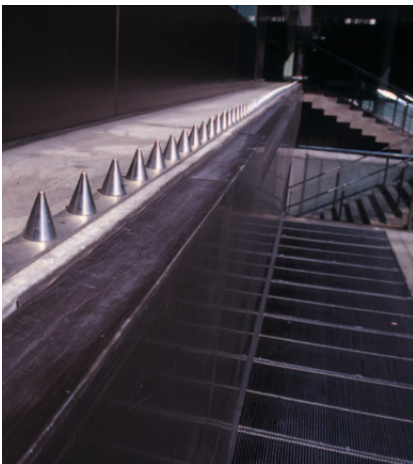


Humans since 1982, *Surveillance Chandelier*, 2011

Humans since 1982 have reworked the chandelier: theirs is equipped with surveillance cameras, offering an ironic take on the ubiquity of surveillance in our society.

Nils Norman, *The Urbanomics Archive*, 1995-présent

the defensive architecture that is increasingly pervasive in big cities: objects of urban design meant to discourage skating, public urination, picnics, etc. With this work, he highlights one expression of the commonly felt need to create a controlled, risk-free environment, a need that extends all the way down to urban design.





Abri de poche, 1983

Produced in 1983 by the Martin Luther King Centre in Lausanne during the nuclear arms race, this resolutely ironic bag gives instructions on what to do in case of a nuclear attack: "This bag is a pocket shelter – if you are afraid of nuclear weapons, then take the bag with you wherever you go – instructions in the event of a nuclear attack: 1 open the bag; 2 Put it over your head; 3 Wait for the end! – Guaranteed to be just as effective as your local bunker!"

James Bridle, *Dronestagram*, 2012-2015

Between 2012 and 2015, English artist James Bridle used social media (Instagram, Tumblr and Twitter) to post images and information on drone attacks in Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia. He got his data from Google Maps Satellite, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism in London and newspaper articles. He is critical of the drone wars and sought to raise people's awareness of these risk-free, remote-controlled – yet highly deadly – attacks.





Mathieu Lehanneur, *L'Âge du monde*, 2013

Mathieu Lehanneur's *L'Âge du monde* is a series of sculptures that represent the population pyramids of various countries in three dimensions. The size of each of the approximately 100 strata indicates the number of people per age group. Taken together, they give a visual summary of life expectancy. Each vase has a unique shape depending on the country it represents.

Sam Hecht & Kim Colin / Industrial Facility, *Geneva HQ Security System*, 2015

Geneva HQ wireless security system is the first professional security system meant for home use that meets strict European standards. Its easy-to-use design includes motion sensors, a smoke detector, a siren, a mobile phone charging station and a video camera.



Leopold Banchini & Daniel Zamarbide / Bureau A, *Maidan*, 2014

Maidan Survey is the result of a collaboration with BURØ in Ukraine. The idea emerged out of discussions between Bureau A and the Ukrainian architects during the demonstrations in the winter of 2014. *Maidan Survey* offers shelter to Ukrainian pro-independence demonstrators from attacks by the pro-Russian camp. Leopold Banchini and Daniel Zamarbide redesigned their colleagues' initial pieces, turning them into architecture. Their structure is built of metal components comparable in size and shape to the shields wielded by the Ukrainian anti-riot police.



Sébastien Mettraux, *Sans titre (série «Dernier paysage I»)*, 2010

In his work, Sébastien Mettraux looks at the prevailing climate of fear and the various types of behaviour it begets. In the series of paintings called "Derniers paysages I", he produces hyper-realistic images of places that offer refuge in the event of a crisis (nuclear attack, natural disaster, war, etc.). He puts an ironic twist on our paranoid tendencies by avoiding any human presence in his paintings.



Simon Menner, *Spies Watching Spies*, 2011-14

German photographer Simon Menner indulged his fascination with the topic of surveillance by plunging into the archives of the Stasi, the East German secret police (1949-1990). He selected a large number of photos documenting the Stasi's work. The series *Spies Watching Spies* shows, with a dash of humour, agents from the East and West spying on each other.



SUPERLIFE design studio (Edris Gaaloul & Cyrille Verdon), *Méduse*, *Blackout*, *Alive*, *Poumon*, 2015

The pair of artists behind SUPERLIFE invented four objects for use in specific crisis situations. *Alive* is an emergency whistle attached to the underside of a table. When used, its base lights up and can be seen by rescuers, even under rubble. *Blackout* is a battery-powered floor lamp that keeps on working if the power goes out. The upper part can be removed and used as a torch. *Poumon* is a penholder with a filter. It can be worn like a mask in the event of a fire or a dust storm. If a natural disaster strikes, the *Méduse* rug turns into a buoyancy aid.



USEFUL INFORMATION

Opening	Tuesday 22 March from 18.00. Screening at the Cinéma Bellevaux at 20.30
Dates and hours	23 March – 21 August 2016 March-June: Tuesday-Sunday 11.00-18.00 July-August: Monday-Sunday 11.00-18.00 Open on every bank holiday, Mondays included Free admission on the first Saturday of each month
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SUPPORT

The exhibition has received generous support from:



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