

AKSIOMA
Institute for Contemporary Art
Ljubljana

Jakopičeva ulica 11
SI - 1000 Ljubljana

aksioma@aksioma.org
www.aksioma.org

Ljubljana, 18 September 2015

PRESS RELEASE

Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, presents:

James Bridle

Under the Shadow of the Drone

Solo Exhibition

www.aksioma.org/bridle

Aksioma | Project Space

Komenskega 18, Ljubljana

14 October – 20 November 2015

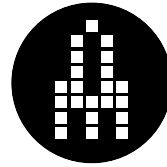
Opening hours: TUE-FRI 12 pm – 6 pm

Exhibition opening and artist talk: Wednesday, 14 October 2015 at 7 pm



Photos available for free download:

<http://www.aksioma.org/press/bridle.zip>



AKSIOMA

Institute for Contemporary Art
Ljubljana

James Bridle

Under the Shadow of the Drone

“The drone, for me, stands in part for the network itself: an invisible, inherently connected technology allowing sight and action at a distance. Us and the digital, acting together, a medium and an exchange. But the non-human components of the network are not moral actors, and the same technology that permits civilian technological wonder, the wide-eyed futurism of the New Aesthetic and the unevenly distributed joy of living *now*, also produces an obscurantist “security” culture, ubiquitous surveillance, and robotic killing machines. This is a result of the network’s inherent illegibility, its tendency towards seamlessness and invisibility, from code to “the cloud”. Those who cannot perceive the network cannot act effectively within it, and are powerless. The job, then, is to make such things visible.”¹

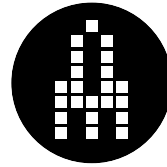
These lines effectively sum up the conceptual background that supports **James Bridle’s** ongoing work with drones and his artistic research in general. Filtering and editing the flow of information, making more visible and legible data that is available out there in rough form, but somehow hidden until somebody starts digging, categorizing and ordering it, is one of the main concerns of his work, which is itself emblematic of the attitude of a whole generation that has grown up in between the omnipresent cloud and the flying drones.

Bridle’s *Dronestagram* project (2012 - ongoing) is a good example of this approach. Bridle explores websites such as the Bureau of Investigative Journalism or Dronewars UK in search of reliable information concerning drone strikes in war zones. When he finds evidence of a drone attack, he goes to Google Maps Satellite, finds the attacked location, takes a screenshot and publishes the photo on an Instagram account that syndicates this feed to Tumblr and Twitter, adding information about the drone strike in the notes. All this is done in real time, using available yet hidden information and common tools, redistributing the information in ways that can be meaningful for the average audience. Bridle writes: “Drones are just the latest in a long line of military technologies augmenting the process of death-dealing, but they are among the most efficient, the most distancing, the most invisible. These qualities allow them to do what they do unseen and create the context for secret, unaccountable, endless wars.” With *Dronestagram*, he makes these remote, often-unknown locations “a little bit more visible, a little closer, a little more real.”

A similar concern with the visualization of the surveillance apparatus is reflected in all his drone-related projects, in many different ways. *The Light of God* is a manipulated photograph attempting to make visible to us something that only exists, so far, in the accounts of the military personnel who saw it. “The light of god” is a laser targeting marker emitted by a flying drone that can be seen only when wearing night vision goggles, used in Afghanistan and Iraq to point to the target of a hellfire missile strike. The image is an effective symbol of technology that has gone far beyond the human, and that manifests itself with the cold precision of a divine force.

A Quiet Disposition (2013) is instead a visualisation, in the form of a series of books and networked software, of the disposition matrix, the system used by the U.S. Government to make sense of masses of surveillance and intelligence information. Bridle turns this apparatus onto itself by constantly

¹ James Bridle, “Under the Shadow of the Drone”, in *Booktwo.org*, October 11, 2012. <http://booktwo.org/notebook/drone-shadows/>.



AKSIOMA

Institute for Contemporary Art
Ljubljana

scanning the Internet for information about the people complicit in drone strikes and involved with the Disposition Matrix. Bridle is literally *Watching the Watchers* (2013), as in the series of aerial photographs of military surveillance drones collected online. The information gathered about the drones is translated into new forms, as in the *UAV Identification Kit* (2012), containing three 3D printed models of military UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles), better known as drones.

Finally, *Drone Shadow* is an ongoing series of urban interventions in which Bridle draws a 1:1 shadow of a flying military drone on the urban soil. What's meant to be invisible is turned visible; a remote, distant reality is turned into something very close and present. While all of his previous works will be presented at Aksioma Project Space, on the occasion *Drone Shadow* will be presented in the form of a public intervention, for the first time in Slovenia, in three locations: in front of Hotel Park; in front of the Kino Šiška Centre for Urban Culture; and in front of the Kolosej multiplex, at the BTC shopping centre.

James Bridle is an artist, writer and publisher based in London, UK. His writing on literature, culture and networks has appeared in magazines and newspapers, including *Wired*, *Domus*, *Cabinet*, the *Atlantic*, the *New Statesman*, *Matter* and many others, in print and online, and he writes a regular column for the *Observer*. His artwork and installations have been exhibited in Europe, North and South America, Asia, and Australia and have been viewed by hundreds of thousands visitors online. He has been commissioned by organisations such as Artangel, Mu Eindhoven, the Istanbul Design Biennial, and the Corcoran Gallery in Washington DC, and he has been honoured by Ars Electronica and the Japan Media Festival. His formulation of the New Aesthetic research project has spurred debate and creative work across multiple disciplines and continues to inspire critical and artistic responses. He lectures regularly on radio and at universities, conferences, and other events, including SXSW (US), Lift (CH), dConstruct (UK), and the Milan Design Festival. He has been technologist in residence at Lighthouse Gallery and an Adjunct Professor in the Interactive Telecommunications Programme at New York University. In 2014 he was resident at the White Building in London and Eyebeam in New York and received the Graphic Design of the Year award from the Design Museum, London. James Bridle has a Master's degree from University College London in Computer Science and Cognitive Science, specialising in Linguistics and Artificial Intelligence. His work can be found at <http://booktwo.org>.

Production of the exhibition: Aksioma - Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, 2015

Artistic Director: Janez Janša

Producer: Marcela Okretič

Executive Producer: Sonja Grdina

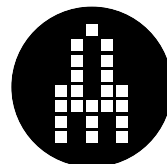
Assistant: Katra Petriček

Public Relations: Hana Ostan Ožbolt

Technician: Valter Udovičič

Under the Shadow of the Drone is realized in the framework of **Masters & Servers**, a joint project by Aksioma (SI), Drugo more (HR), AND (UK), Link Art Center (IT) and d-i-n-a / The Influencers (ES).





AKSIOMA

Institute for Contemporary Art
Ljubljana

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Supported by: Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, the Municipality of Ljubljana



Co-funded by the
Creative Europe Programme
of the European Union



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF CULTURE



City of
Ljubljana

The Project *Drone Shadow* is realised in partnership with: Kolosej Ljubljana, Center For Urban Culture Kino Šiška, Hotel Park Ljubljana



Contact:

Hana Ostan Ožbolt, 00386-(0)40 698 843, aksioma.org@gmail.com

Aksioma | Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana

Neubergerjeva 25, SI-1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

www.aksioma.org