

AKSIOMA
Zavod za sodobne umetnosti
Ljubljana

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Ljubljana, 4 January 2016

PRESS RELEASE

Aksioma – Institute for Contemporary Art, Ljubljana, presents:

Amy Suo Wu

The Kandinsky Collective

Solo exhibition

aksioma.org/kandinsky.collective

Aksioma | Project Space

Komenskega 18, Ljubljana

18 January – 17 February 2017

Opening hours: TUE-FRI 12 pm – 6 pm

Exhibition opening: Wednesday, 18 January 2017 at 7 pm

Artist talk *Tactics and Poetics of Invisibility*: Tuesday, 17 January 2017 at 12 pm

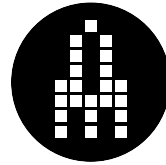
The Academy of Fine Arts and Design, University of Ljubljana

Erjavčeva cesta 23, Ljubljana, classroom n. 7, 1st floor



Photos available for free download:

<http://www.aksioma.org/press/kandinsky.collective.zip>



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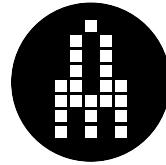
In 2013, the CIA declassified WWI invisible ink recipes from 100 years ago. The disclosure was based on the belief that these methods no longer pose a threat to national security due to advancing digital encryption technology rendering invisible ink obsolete. But are such old techniques as innocuous as they're considered? In light of the fact that a majority of people conduct their communications digitally, making most of their online activities trackable, recordable and commodifiable, perhaps resorting to analog paper and invisible ink may be indeed safer. The 'dumb' medium of paper does not inadvertently leak your information behind the scenes, and for the very fact that it's considered unthreatening makes it an interesting alternative. After all, in the last scene of *Citizenfour* (2014), Laura Poitras' documentary on Edward Snowden, journalist Glenn Greenwald resorts to paper and pen to communicate privately.

Invisible ink is a form of secret writing also known as steganography, it is the art and science of being hidden in plain sight, which has been the subject of Amy Suo Wu's research *Tactics and Poetics of Invisibility* for the last two years. In her research she has been working on resuscitating analogue steganography as a tactic to evade digital surveillance because it is potentially more effective over digital cryptography due to its subversive offline simplicity, and possibility a more democratic and accessible solution for those who are less technically privileged. Her research project also aims to revive obsolete, low-tech and forgotten media, encouraging alternative and experimental modes of communication and (co)creating tactical and poetic ways of communicating as a way to protect ourselves from surveillance while still being visible to our peers.

As a part of her ongoing research, for the upcoming exhibition *The Kandinsky Collective*, Amy Suo Wu will use speculative fiction as a strategy to shed light on the discourse that surrounds her analogue steganography research; privacy, surveillance and the instrumentalisation of art and graphic design in media activism. Departing from the rumour that during WWII the artist Wassily Kandinsky was recruited by the British Intelligence to smuggle secret communication by encoding it into his abstract, systematic and symbolic artworks, *The Kandinsky Collective* exhibition will explore the subversive potential of using the formal language of art as a means to embed hidden messages. Set in the near future when privacy has become a crime, the exhibition is in fact a staged exhibition of privacy activists posing as a contemporary art collective, where they co-opt abstract art as a cover to form an underground communication channel.

Amy Suo Wu, born in China, raised in Sydney and based in Rotterdam, is an artist, designer and educator researching how technology, language and media shape people and vice versa. Her research based hybrid practice is an exploration into how to activate and intervene in critical and playful ways. Since 2013 she has been working at the Willem de Kooning Academy (Dutch Academy of art and design based in Rotterdam) teaching Design Research, Concept and Image in the Graphic Design department and the Hacking minor to students across all disciplines. In the same year, she co-founded Eyesberg, a (graphic) design studio motivated by conceptual and experimental approaches. She has also facilitated and organized zine making workshops and festivals in the Netherlands.

Her work has been shown at ISEA Istanbul, Mine Yours Ours festival Croatia, Gallery 12 New Media Hub Belgrade, 55th Venice Biennale, Gogbot Enschede, SIGN Groningen, TENT Rotterdam, Showroom MAMA Rotterdam, Art Rotterdam, WORM Rotterdam and V2_ Rotterdam.



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