

**Surveillance Society: The Art of Watching**  
**An exhibition on the topic of Surveillance**  
**Helen Day Art Center**  
**Stowe Vermont**  
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The topic of surveillance is both a challenging and timely one for an exhibition and Nathan Suter, Executive Director at Stowe's Helen Day Art Center should be congratulated for attempting to bring such thought provoking work to Vermont.

Concerns over issues of privacy, security and freedom are not new; we first became aware of the dangers of surveillance in the 1930's, which escalated to the fears and threats, real and imagined during the Cold War and 1950's McCarthyism. Artists then and now have been on the frontlines, experiencing first hand the ramifications of covert surveillance and dangers to a society that has lost all trust in its self. It is logical that we might look today to artists to provide some insight to a world in part exposed by the new revelations of former NSA contractor, Edward Snowden.

Among the international artists featured in this show are; Jill Magid whose work has appeared at Gagosian Gallery in New York, Tate Modern Museum London, The Berkeley Art Museum, The Hague Netherlands, and the Whitney Museum of American Art; Marnix de Nijs, a Dutch installation artist whose pioneering work makes use of high-concept mechanics, software and evolving technologies to create interactive installations involving our perceptions of image, sound and movement; David Gregory Wallace, a New York based artist whose current work deals with the prevalence of Predator UAV or drones and warfare as it casts a literal as well as metaphorical shadow on our lives; and Hasan Elahi, an Associate Professor of Art at the University of Maryland where he is Director of Digital Cultures and Creativity. His work has received many awards and been shown at the Sundance Film Festival and the Venice Biennale. I found Elahi's conceptual work most appealing and subversive. Following an FBI detention in 2003 and subsequent monitoring, he decided to make all is private information public, thereby devaluing the currency of the information the intelligence gatherers have collected.

This is the kind of exhibition that demands audience engagement. The works challenge the art going public to get outside their comfort zones and engage with each piece through the window of the artist's own confrontations with surveillance.

—Cynthia L. Close

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