

Expose Surveillance Art Build

SFPC Detroit 2019 taught by Andrea Cardinal, Danielle Aubert

Class Description

This class will be a practical exercise in screen printing posters and painting a banner for the Talking Dolls banner lending library, calling attention to surveillance methods being used in Detroit without the consent or oversight of the community.

The Detroit Police Department has been using facial recognition technology in their million-dollar “crime-fighting” surveillance entitled Project Greenlight for the past two years and have greatly expanded the installation of high definition cameras throughout the city. This type of facial-recognition technology that has been banned in other cities around the US: San Francisco, Oakland, and Somerville, Massachusetts.

As the practice has come under scrutiny from a coalition of concerned citizens, new governing policies restricting, but still allowing the technology, will be voted on the first week of August 2019. This coalition of Detroit area civil rights groups has issued a letter urging the Detroit Board of Police Commissioners reject the use of all facial recognition technology in monitoring communities. A press release from the group states, “The software the DPD purchased is capable of running real-time facial recognition scans on hundreds of live Green Light video feeds, which means the police could keep track of who comes and goes from medical clinics, churches, schools, hotels, political rallies, AA meetings, and countless other sensitive locations throughout the city. And to use its facial recognition technology, the DPD has access to the Michigan State Police’s (MSP) vast database known as the Statewide Network of Agency Photos (SNAP). SNAP began in 1998 and contains mugshots, more than 40 million driver’s license and ID photos from the Michigan Department of State, and even photos the MSP culled from Facebook and other social media sites. Last year alone SNAP expanded by 2.7 million photos.” No citizens consented to the use of their images for this type of surveillance.

Studies have shown that “facial recognition software can return more false matches for African-Americans than for white people, a sign of what experts call ‘algorithmic bias.’” (New York Times, 07/08/19) “Facial recognition technology is racially biased and poses a grave threat to privacy,” said Rodd Monts, Campaign Outreach Coordinator for the ACLU of Michigan. “It will disproportionately harm immigrants and communities of color, who already bear the brunt of over-policing. A city like ours should be taking the lead in resisting the use of dangerous and racially biased surveillance technology — not advocating for it.”

Many people in Detroit are not aware that facial recognition technology is being used, or of the threat it poses to their communities. In this class we will print signs that can be posted in area businesses and we will make a banner that can be used at actions.

Class Agenda

Total class time: 2.5 hours

Introduction 5 mins

Banner demonstration 5 mins

Screen printing demonstration 10 mins

Printing/painting/tracing 110 minutes

Clean up 20 mins

Further Reading:

A Critical Summary of Detroit's Project Green Light and its Greater Context

Detroit Community Technology Project

https://detroitcommunitytech.org/system/tdf/librarypdfs/DCTP_PGL_Report.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=77&force=

Facial Recognition Policy for Public Comment

Board of Police Commissioners Policy Directives

<https://detroitmi.gov/document/facial-recognition>

As Cameras Track Detroit's Residents, a Debate Ensues Over Racial Bias

Amy Harmon, July 8, 2019

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/08/us/detroit-facial-recognition-cameras.html>

Project Green Light Map

<https://detroitmi.gov/webapp/project-green-light-map>

Just Say No to Facial Recognition, says Detroit Coalition of Civil Rights Groups

Steve Neavling

August 1, 2019

<https://www.metrotimes.com/news-hits/archives/2019/08/01/just-say-no-to-facial-recognition-says-detroit-coalition-of-civil-rights-groups>