

Curatorial Statement

Detroit Facial Recognition Probes (2022–2023) extends the mission of the Clay-Gilmore Institute for Philosophy, Technology, and Counterinsurgency (CG-IPTC) to expose the racialized architectures of algorithmic governance that define the modern security state. Using data from the Detroit Police Department's facial recognition reports, the work visualizes a persistent and structural targeting pattern: over ninety percent of probe photographs identify Black males. This disproportion is not an aberration of technology but the expression of a historical logic that fuses racial surveillance with statecraft. The infographic's design draws on the chromatic restraint and visual argumentation pioneered by W. E. B. Du Bois in his 1900 Paris Exposition infographics—an aesthetic genealogy of data as resistance. Yet the work extends Du Bois's sociological empiricism through the philosophical lens of Black Male Studies and Leonard Harris's concept of necro-being, particularly its descriptivist insistence on depicting phenomena without collapsing them into abstract explanations. Within this framework, the visualization documents the ontological negation under which Black populations exist—perpetually exposed to surveillance, containment, and premature death. By merging quantitative analysis with visual philosophy, this project transforms the infographic into a tool of counter-insurgent scholarship. It challenges the neutrality of data visualization and reclaims it as a medium for Black humanistic inquiry—where representation becomes a form of resistance, and description becomes an act of critique. As part of the CG-IPTC's ongoing research on artificial intelligence, policing, and the militarization of perception, Detroit Facial Recognition Probes demonstrates how the technical archive itself can be turned outward: not to optimize control, but to reveal the political, ontological, and ethical boundaries of the human that such systems continually redraw.