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Objet: short films for possible inclusion in AI Fiction / Artificial Intelligence and Fiction  
Date: 22 octobre 2020 à 00:59  
À: ia.fiction.2021@gmail.com

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hello,

I hope you are all well and safe during this uncertain and worrisome time.

I want to start by apologizing for my late email -- your deadline was September 30, I know, but someone share the cfp with me only last week and I am only just now finding the time to reach out to you.

would you be interested in including a series of short near future fiction films as part of the programming for *AI Fiction / Artificial Intelligence and Fiction*? given the theme and name of your conference, I think my project is a really great fit!

**Screening Surveillance** is a project I recently completed during a postdoctoral fellowship for the Big Data Surveillance project with the Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University (Canada). it is a series of **three short, near-future fiction films** is based on research output from the centre and more mainstream reporting of big data surveillance issues. you can view the films and more info here: <https://www.screeningsurveillance.com/>.

while the main motivation for these films was to highlight the effects of big data surveillance, the manner of that surveillance highlights the role that AI decision-making plays in algorithmic big data surveillance both in propagating surveillance and, as a result, in disrupting everyday life. the films address the theme of *AI Fiction / Artificial Intelligence and Fiction* quite directly.

at the end of this email is a more detailed description of the project and each film -- each is about 12 minutes long, so not a huge commitment to watching. I would submit an abstract, but that doesn't seem appropriate since these are films, and I wasn't sure if this was something you would be interested in. since the films are really great prompts for discussion, I am happy to consider conducting a workshop built around them, or just having them screened during the proceedings. I'm open to different approaches depending on what you'd like to do :)

thank you for your time, and do let me know what you think!  
regards,  
sava

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#### Screening Surveillance

In light of recent surveillance developments — social media breaches, smart city projects, workplace monitoring — we need to consider the implications and critically examine the logics and practices within big data systems that underpin, enable, and accelerate surveillance.

As part of an international multiphase project on Big Data Surveillance, in 2018- 2019 the Surveillance Studies Centre, led by sava saheli singh, produced three short films speculating surveillance futures and the effects of deeply embedded and connected surveillant systems on our everyday lives. Intended as public education tools to spark discussion and extend understandings of surveillance, trust, and privacy in the digital age, each film focuses on a different aspect of big data surveillance and the tensions that manifest when the human is interpreted by the machine.

Each film is approximately 12-15 minutes long, and here are short descriptions of each:

1. *Blaxites* follows the story of a young woman whose celebratory social media post affects her access to vital medication. Her attempts to circumvent the system lead to even more dire consequences.
2. In *A Model Employee*, an aspiring DJ has to wear a tracking wristband to keep her day job at a local restaurant. To her annoyance, it tracks her life during and outside of work, even using location-based surveillance to nudge her. She figures out a way to fool the system, but a new device upgrade means trouble.
3. In *Frames*, a smart city tracks and analyzes a woman walking through the city. Things she does are interpreted and logged by the city system, but are they drawing an accurate picture of the woman?

The films raise issues in our understandings of trust and surveilled relations. *Blaxites*, highlights issues that arise when different data systems are connected; *A Model Employee* examines data ownership and the need to earn a system's trust; and *Frames* highlights the problems in trusting sensor data and facial recognition to interpret human behavior. The films can be viewed online at [screeningsurveillance.com](https://www.screeningsurveillance.com/).

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sava saheli singh, PhD

