

DRONE CULTURES

an interdisciplinary
symposium

30 April - 1 May 2020

UNSW Sydney

Keynote: Caren Kaplan (UC, Davis)

Abstracts due 30 November 2019

Call for Papers

Drones swiftly moved from the margins of the military to reshape war and surveillance, but they have also had wide-ranging effects on fields as diverse as wildlife conservation, agriculture, visual art, climate activism, urban policing and television production. Drone vision is rapidly transforming visual culture, generating novel aesthetics, changing how the world is witnessed and enabling new capacities to see, know and control. At the same time, drones themselves have become objects of significance, eliciting anxiety and hope, fear and desire. Unsurprisingly, diverse cultures have sprung up alongside and in response to their proliferating presence and growing accessibility. All this makes it crucial to understand the similarities, differences and complexities of these technologies and their impacts on how we sense, feel, know and act in the world.

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This two-day symposium brings together academics, artists and researchers to explore drone cultures from multiple perspectives and practices with the aim of generating dialogue across disciplinary boundaries to better understand the diversity of drones and drone cultures. How has drone vision influenced contemporary visual culture? How do practices, aesthetics, techniques and technologies move back and forth between military and non-military contexts? How have artists, writers and filmmakers critiqued, adopted and innovated drone technologies? How have drones changed how power is exercised and experienced? What cultures have sprung up around drones in conservation, activism, amateur photography and other contexts? How are drones and other remote sensing systems shaping and shaped by our desires and imaginaries? What does the proliferation of drones mean for the future of the human?

While approaches from across the humanities and social sciences are invited, this symposium also warmly welcomes perspectives from information science, engineering and robotics.

We invite proposals for academic papers, creative works and short documentaries. Academic papers can be full length (20 minutes) or provocations (7 minutes). Creative works and documentaries can be presented in panels alongside traditional papers if appropriate (20 minutes) or screened, displayed or performed outside typical panels. Fully formed panels (3 x 20-minute presentations) can also be submitted.

Topics might include the following, but can be on any topic related to the symposium theme:

- Drone vision and perception
- Drones in literature, cinema, theatre, art and elsewhere
- Cultures of satellite and other remote sensing technologies
- Drones in practice from war to science to activism
- Cultures of drone design and development
- Drone witnessing
- Drone aesthetics
- Politics and policy of drones
- Drone futures and imaginaries
- Drones and the posthuman
- Ethics and care in drone design, use and development

Please send 200-word individual proposals, or 300-word proposals for complete panels, along with 100-word bios for all presenters, to Michael Richardson at **dronecultures@gmail.com** by **November 30, 2019**.

Link to CFP: dronewitnessing.com

This symposium is funded by an Australian Research Council Discovery Early Career Researcher Award and hosted by the UNSW School of Arts and Media.

Drone Cultures acknowledge and pays respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and live, particularly the Bedegal, Bidjigal and Gadigal Peoples, and their elders past, present, and emerging. Sovereignty was never ceded, and the struggle for justice continues.



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