

The Aesthetics of Drone Warfare

An International, Interdisciplinary Conference
Humanities Research Institute, University of Sheffield
7 - 8 February 2020

Keynote speakers:

Debjani Ganguly (University of Virginia)

Derek Gregory (University of British Columbia)

Drones have now become commercial and readily available, with innovators promising unprecedented solutions to sectors as wide ranging as agriculture, energy, public safety, and construction. But this multi-billion-dollar industry is founded upon the technology's origins in a military context, and drone warfare is rapidly redefining the meaning of war, peace, and their temporal and geographical boundaries. Combining surveillance with targeting, satellite imaging with ground-level intelligence, human observation with algorithmic apparatuses, drones have catalysed new ways of making and experiencing war. This international two-day conference explores the issues surrounding drone warfare through the prism of aesthetics: aesthetics understood as art, and as the relationship between the body, the self, and the material environment. How does drone warfare extend and augment the human sensorium? How have writers and artists engaged in new forms or genres to address drone warfare? What is the role of the human in future war? What opportunities and challenges does information-based warfare pose for human rights and peace work? Approaches from all fields are welcome, including literature, history, geography, philosophy, political science, and visual art.

We invite proposals for 20-minute presentations or for three-paper panels. Topics could include but are not restricted to the following:

- Literature and the arts which thematise or feature drone technology and drone warfare
- The history and pre-histories of drone warfare, such as aerial bombardment
- The relationship between war, technological innovation, and the entertainment industries
- Narratives of robotics, artificial intelligence, and information-based warfare
- The relationship between peace, surveillance, pre-emption, and human rights
- Drones, drone warfare, and social media
- Posthuman warfare

Please send 250-word individual paper proposals, or 350-word proposals for fully formed panels, along with short biographies, to Beryl Pong at artofdronewarfare@gmail.com

** There will be a workshop, for postgraduates and early-career researchers, led by Drone Wars UK: an NGO that conducts research, and maintains an up-to-date public dataset, on the U.K. use of armed drones. If you are interested in participating in the workshop, please indicate this in your application.*

Bursaries for postgraduates and early-career researchers will be shared after the CFP deadline.

Deadline: 20 October 2019

Conference website: artofdronewarfare.com

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