

Chris Hancock

Artist Statement

My work revolves around the subjects of copying, dissemination of information, and surveillance.

The series of digital works titled “Necropolis of Pan-op-ticawn” are pieces worked from photographs of the abandoned NSA listening station at Toyfelsberg, Germany. The bright exploding shapes and empty backgrounds are at once an illustration of hopeless chaotic isolation, and fantastical destruction of an invasive, criminal organization.

My manipulation of these images, like the mono-prints, is meant to invoke the idea of a surrealistically “bad copy” or of malfunction of an off-set printing machine. It’s a fantasy of mine to see the now-exposed global surveillance network “glitch” out of existence or explode into something wonderful or useful, that people might say what they want without fear of a powerful someone listening.

The swarms of simple geometric shapes present in the “Necropolis of Pan-op-ticawn” series, as well as the painting “Billions and Billions” are the result of my perceived parallels between artificial and natural phenomenon - A bustling city as viewed from the air versus the view of bacterium under a microscope, for example.

The process for the two series of paintings called “Sye-fi Portraits” and “Devices” involved a low-fi Camera-Obscura projection of digital images to be traced on paper. Once an initial drawing was made, a piece of plexiglass was laid atop the paper and traced again - this time with acrylic paint mixed with glycerin solution to keep the paint open. The original drawing was then sprayed with water and pressed onto the painted side of the acrylic to make a print. Around the quaeaseye-random globs of color, I drew dark ink contour lines.

Copies of copies of copies... This is what the “Sye-fi Portraits” series is about. The subjects are all movie characters who are copies of humans, and bad copies at that. They bring chaos and confusion wherever they go, but are also as innocent as any machine can be.

The current political environment involving digital rights, issues such as SOPA and the Trans-Pacific Partnership, government surveillance, censorship, and the cultures and attitudes which have arisen from these issues is a major influence of my current work. The continued efforts and struggles of people like Chelsea Manning, Jacob Appelbaum, Julian Assange, “Anakata”, and Aaron Swartz are a sort of philosophical influence. All of these people have been found guilty, or were treated as guilty, of what are essentially crimes of information - not misinformation, or lying to people, but of copying the truth through technological means and spreading it around.

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