

FREEDOM

Modern Art Oxford
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The politics of the future are pre-verbal desires. They germinate like aggressive invasive-species weeds—on the DL—in a vast field of unmet and unvoiced human needs. Humanity's struggles are a continuum of branches in the fourth dimension: time. Trajectories in possibility space. Rallying cries-in-waiting.

In the economic system we live under, the “market” sees a demand and through “emergent effects”—the competing working lives and press-ganged imaginations of billions of individual human beings—does its best to meet it. For a society whose shape is still largely sketched out by what used to be called “progress”—radical and relentless technological upheaval—the ideas, the arguments, and the stakes are largely defined by each era's technical abilities and potential. The invention of the birth control pill by two very real flesh-and-blood people made reproductive rights into a boots on the ground possibility in a world whose political machinery was and is inimical to women. The ability to place inexpensive miniature HD cameras in everyone's pocket turns us all into witnesses when Black and Brown people are murdered for carrying candy or walking the wrong way. In the same way that capitalism is not democracy, neither is science. Or art. Democracy is a way to manage and tame change. Claiming control over the possible.

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What are the possibilities of representative democracy in a time utterly penetrated by perpetual government and corporate surveillance? Our privately-owned public commons is a stealth vacuum cleaner with a pair of googly anthropomorphic emoji eyes. Noo-Noo the NSA cleaning drone lulls us into complacency playing cute and then sucks up the tiniest details of our days into its hundred million cloud-based black-site server bags. The NSA is reading out the poetry of our lives from credit card statements, text message archives, and social media feeds. Our lives are being sampled and absorbed, seeding an infinite number of information petri dishes. In them, the smallest crumbs and most microscopic dust grains shed from our words, images, activities, and bodies are frankensteined together by algorithms into induced pluripotent stem-cell profiles. The digitization of the self. Clones. As processing power becomes more potent, the ever more detailed simulations accumulating in these digital artificial wombs will take on lives of their own as extremely accurate personalized snitches.

Three commercial airplanes piloted by hijackers lit a match to the previous century's dry kindling on September 11, 2001. Our century's 1914 Sarajevo assassination multitasked as a burning Reichstag. An astonishing banquet of fresh disasters and human suffering laid out lavishly for a new millennium over and over again on video. While still on fire. The first decade's flavor of fear was spectacular terrorism, followed by an extensive matte-black tasting menu of economic crises. The sumptuous New Century Modern dining room—kitted out on Chinese credit—an endless distributed global war over energy resources.

Every theater of war needs its players. Whole peoples are assigned the roles of ally, enemy, victim, and security risk/traitor. In America, the birthplace of the #sharingeconomy, instead of concentrating suspicious minority populations in new internment camps like we did in the 1940s

—this time we deported our entire communications network to Manzanar, along the way liquidating our collective and individual privacy. A police back-door into every nascent political movement. The human race's intertwined whispers are caught as well as connected by the Internet's World Wide Web.

The Great Recession. The Global Financial Crisis. A moment of desperation and despair in the world's "developed" economies, but also one filled with sincere optimism. When you're plummeting towards what looks like rock bottom, there's nowhere to go but up. Reared in this anti-privacy transparency crèche and raised on a diet of poverty media fermented from aphasic dreams, the world's newest voters remain hopeful seekers. If the ballot box fails them, they go viral. Occupy hope and change.

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