

Friday, October 18th, 2:00-4:00 pm
Munk School of Global Affairs
Room 208N, North House
1 Devonshire Place (at Hoskins Ave.)

LISA PARKS

Life in the Age of Drones

Co-sponsored by the Centre for the Study of the United States, and the Cinema Studies Institute, Innis College, University of Toronto.



Since 2004, the CIA has conducted a secret drone war in the FATA region of Pakistan, a difficult to access rural region on the border of Afghanistan that is inhabited by Pashtun tribes, controlled by the Taliban, used by Al Qaeda operatives, and occupied by the Pakistani military. The CIA has shrouded this ongoing drone war in secrecy, waged war without declaring it as such, killed hundreds of Pakistani civilians, and violated international law in the process. This set of circumstances, yet another “US state of exception,” demands new ways of thinking about the power of images and networks, and imagining how transnational opposition to such state actions can be catalyzed and organized. Parks’ presentation begins with a contextual discussion of the US drone war in Pakistan, highlighting its endorsements from mainstream media, logistical challenges, legal controversies, and casualty counts. She then moves to a discussion of several

examples of “drone media”—including drone attack scene photos, declassified aerial assault videos, and drone protest media that have circulated on the Internet. Drawing on the work of Michael Hardt & Antonio Negri, Tiziana Terranova, Derek Gregory, and others, she argues that these media: 1) draw attention to a vertical field of biopower—a ground to air domain of life, labour, histories, technologies, and mediation—that is increasingly integrated within the flows of network culture; 2) expose the logics of speculation and uncertainty that underpin drone warfare; and 3) make legible a new class of the disenfranchised which she refers to as “the targeted”—people who are the intentional or incidental victims of aerial violence.

Lisa Parks is Professor and former Department Chair of Film and Media Studies at the University of California - Santa Barbara, where she is currently the Director of the Center for Information Technology and Society. Parks has conducted research on uses of media and information technologies in various transnational contexts. Her work is highly interdisciplinary and engages with fields such as geography, communication, international relations, and art. Parks is the author of *Cultures in Orbit: Satellites and the Televisual* (Duke UP, 2005), and *Coverage: Aero-Orbital Media After 9/11* (forthcoming Routledge, 2014), and is working on a third book entitled *Mixed Signals: Media Infrastructures and Cultural Geographies*. She is co-editor of: *Down to Earth: Satellite Technologies, Industries and Cultures* (Rutgers UP, 2012), *Planet TV* (NYU, 2003), *Undead TV* (Duke UP, 2007), and, *Signal Traffic: Critical Studies of Media Infrastructures* (U of Illinois, forthcoming). She is currently a PI on two major research grants in the fields of ICT4D and Internet Freedom.

Registration is strongly recommended for this event. Seating is available on a first-come, first-seated basis. To register, please go to the Munk School Events website at: <http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/events/>
