

Dark Data

September 11, 2021 - October 23, 2021

American Artist
Hannah Black
Stephanie Dinkins
Mimi Ọnụọha
Sondra Perry
E. Jane



curated by **Gee Wesley** with Curatorial Fellows **Bianca Dominguez** and **Mae Miller**

Opening Reception: Saturday, September 11, 4 - 8 pm

EFA Project Space is thrilled to present ***Dark Data***, curated by **Gee Wesley** with curatorial fellows **Bianca Dominguez** and **Mae Miller**, and featuring an intergenerational group of artists, with work by: **American Artist, Hannah Black, Stephanie Dinkins, Mimi Ọnụọha, Sondra Perry, and E. Jane.**

Dark Data presents the work of six artists who explore pervasive forms of data collection, mass-surveillance, and hypervisibility visited upon Black life through technologies of predictive policing, data-mining, algorithmic violence, and artificial intelligence. The project situates these emergent data technologies within a broader lineage of anti-Black surveillance and quantification. *Dark Data* highlights a host of artistic and social tactics exercised by Black practitioners to actively respond to these conditions through experimental archival strategies, inventive modes of technological encryption, and gestures of digital worldmaking.

The term “dark data” refers to information assets that are collected and stored by corporations and governments but which ultimately go unutilized due to constraints of storage or the expiration of the data’s relevance. While temporarily sourced and captured, these vast reserves of information are eventually purged, never to be monetized, analyzed, and assimilated into systems of control and profit. This exhibition explores the continuities between “dark data” and Black data, the latter defined by

scholar Shaka McGlotten as the forms of data collection and quantification which, or pertain, to Black bodies, citizens, and consumers for the purposes of commercial profit and social control. *Dark Data* invites viewers to consider current technological efforts to quantify Black life alongside a broader lineage of Black surveillance and racial capitalism. A trajectory that extends from the middle passage, in which the Black body was quantified as a unit of value, to our contemporary moment, in which the Black consumer is figured alternatively as revenue streams with consumer profiles, vectors of risk in algorithmic systems of control, and data points within predictive policing programs.

This exhibition proposes dark data as both a method for imaging and imagining forms of technological opacity, digital encryption, and online illegibility which challenge the surveillance and hypervisibility of Black life in the United States. As a term, “dark data” conjures the sinister ubiquity of involuntary and sanctioned data collection in contemporary society by corporations, social media, and the state, while also signaling the limits of technological omniscience. This project figures “dark data” as a metaphor for fugitive practices that elude the quantification of Black life. Pointing toward the latent potential of “going dark,” as a practice of digital refusal allowing Black Americans to evade, question, and undermine technologies of capture.

American Artist makes thought experiments that mine the history of technology, race, and knowledge production, beginning with their legal name change in 2013. Artist is a 2021 LACMA Art & Tech Lab Grant Recipient, 2021 Regents’ Lecturer at UCLA, resident at Smack Mellon in Brooklyn, and an instructor of critical theory at the School for Poetic Computation. Their previous residencies include Recess, EYEBEAM, and the Whitney Museum Independent Study Program. They have exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art; MoMA PS1; Studio Museum in Harlem; Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago; and Nam June Paik Center, Seoul. They have had solo museum exhibitions at The Queens Museum, New York and The Museum of African Diaspora, California.

Hannah Black is an artist and writer working across installation, video, performance and text. In her often collaborative work, she uses her own writing as a starting point and blends theoretical, historical and personal material. Black’s recent solo and collaborative shows include *Beginning, End, None*, Performance Space, New York (2019); *Some Context*, Chisenhale Gallery, London (2017); and *Screens Series: Hannah Black*, New Museum, New York (2016).

Mimi Ọnụọha is a Nigerian-American artist creating work about a world made to fit the form of data. By foregrounding absence and removal, her multimedia practice uses print, code, installation and video to make sense of the power dynamics that result in disenfranchised communities’ different relationships to systems that are digital, cultural, historical, and ecological. Ọnụọha has spoken and exhibited internationally and has been in residence at Studio XX (Canada), Data & Society Research Institute (USA), the Royal College of Art (UK), Eyebeam Center for Arts & Technology (USA), and Arthouse Foundation (Nigeria, upcoming). She lives and works in Brooklyn.

Sondra Perry makes videos, performances, and installations that foreground digital tools as a way to critically reflect on new technologies of representation and remobilize their potential. Perry was born in Perth Amboy, New Jersey and currently resides in Newark. She received her MFA from Columbia University and her BFA from Alfred University. In 2015, Perry’s work appeared in the *Greater New York*

exhibition at MoMA/PS1. Other exhibitions include *Resident Evil* at The Kitchen, New York, *Typhoon Coming On* at Serpentine Galleries, London; *Trigger: Gender as a Tool and a Weapon* at The New Museum, New York; and *Disguise: Masks and Global African Art*, Seattle Art Museum. The artist has participated in residencies including CORE at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and the Experimental Television Center.

E. Jane is an interdisciplinary artist and musician based in Brooklyn, New York. Inspired by Black liberation and womanist praxis, their work incorporates digital images, performance, sculpture, installation, and sound design. Since 2015, Jane has been developing the performance persona MHYSA, an underground popstar for cyber resistance. MHYSA operates in Jane's *Lavendra/Recovery* (2015-)—an iterative multimedia installation—and out in the world. Their new album *NEVAEH* came out in February 2020 on Hyperdub records in London. E. Jane received their MFA from the University of Pennsylvania and a BA in Art History from Marymount Manhattan College. They were a 2016 recipient of the Wynn Newhouse Award, a 2019-2020 artist-in-residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem, and are currently a Harvard College Fellow in New Media as a part of *SCRAATCH*.

Stephanie Dinkins is a transmedia artist who creates platforms for dialog about race, gender, aging, and our future histories. Dinkins' art practice employs emerging technologies, documentary practices, and social collaboration toward equity and community sovereignty. Dinkins is a professor at Stony Brook University where she holds the Kusama Endowed Professor in Art. Dinkins earned an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and is an alumna of the Whitney Independent Studies Program. Dinkins is a 2021 United States Artist Fellow and Knight Arts & Tech Fellow. Previous fellowships, residencies and support include the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, Data and Society Research Institute Fellowship, Sundance New Frontiers Story Lab, and The Laundromat Project. Her work has been featured in the *New York Times*, *Hyperallergic*, *Wired*, and the *BBC*.

Bianca Dominguez is an artist, curator, healing arts practitioner and educator residing in Brooklyn, New York. She founded *Medicine For the People*, an ongoing curatorial project bringing together BIPOC healers and artists to cultivate communal sacred spaces and to engage in the intersectionalities of social practice and healing through the arts. She was a collaborative artist alongside Tanya Aguinia at the MAD Museum, located in Manhattan, performing *Performance Crafting: Backstrap Weaving* in 2018. She also has showcased at Arts Gowanus in Brooklyn, NY and in Staten Island at the Newhouse Center of Contemporary Art. Currently she is attaining a BA in visual arts at Columbia University and is the lead teaching artist at Church Street School for Music and Art in TriBeCa.

Mae Miller is a researcher, curator, and museum educator. Her work engages the politics, histories, and aesthetics of global Black freedom struggles. Miller is currently a Postdoctoral Fellow at UC Berkeley. She received her Ph.D. in Geography from the Graduate Center, City University of New York in 2020 and recently completed the Museum Professionals Institute at the Studio Museum in Harlem. She has previously lectured at Vassar College, and developed youth educational programming at the Museum of the City of New York, Gunnersbury Park Museum (London, UK), and Columbus College of Art and Design (Columbus, OH, USA). Her first solo-curated exhibition, *A Thousand Secrets*, will open at Apexart Gallery in New York City in June 2022 and explores themes of relational worldmaking through oceanic crosscurrents.

Gee Wesley is an arts organizer born in Monrovia, Liberia, and based in New York where he works as a Curatorial Assistant in the Department of Media and Performance at The Museum of Modern Art. Prior to joining MoMA, Wesley held roles as Program Director at Recess (Brooklyn, NY), Curatorial Fellow at SculptureCenter (Queens, NY), Curatorial Fellow at the Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia, PA), visiting instructor at Bard College (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), and adjunct faculty in the Curatorial Practice MFA at the Maryland Institute College of Art (Baltimore, MD). Wesley is a co-founder and board member of Ulises, a nonprofit art bookshop based in Philadelphia. He received his M.A. from the Center for Curatorial Studies, at Bard College

Exhibition Events

Opening Reception:

Saturday, September 11, 4 - 8 pm [RSVP](#), Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required for Entry

Closing Reception and Catalog Release:

Saturday, October 23, 2021, 6 - 8 pm [RSVP](#), Proof of Vaccination and Masks Required for Entry

PRESS INQUIRIES

Judy Giera, Program Manager

EFA Project Space Program

[212-563-5855](tel:212-563-5855) x 233 / judy@efanyc.org

EFA Project Space, launched in September 2008 as a program of **The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts**, is a collaborative, cross-disciplinary arts venue founded on the belief that art is directly connected to the individuals who produce it, the communities that arise because of it, and to everyday life; and that by providing an arena for exploring these connections, we empower artists to forge new partnerships and encourage the expansion of ideas.

The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts (EFA) is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Through its three core programs, **EFA Studios**, **EFA Project Space**, and **EFA Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop**, EFA is dedicated to providing artists across all disciplines with space, tools and a cooperative forum for the development of individual practice. EFA is a catalyst for cultural growth, stimulating new interactions between artists, creative communities, and the public. www.efanyc.org. EFA Project Space has received public funding from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in Partnership with the City Council, The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, as well as from generous individuals in our community. EFA Project Space's SHIFT: A Residency for Arts Workers is supported by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF), Teiger Foundation, the Willem de Kooning Foundation.

ACCESSIBILITY AND COVID-19

Online reservations are recommended 24 hours in advance of your visit, via efaproject.space/reservations.

Reservation slots of 30 minutes each can be made for parties of up to 5 people at a time. *Note that masks are required to view the exhibition and must be worn at all times.*

EFA Project Space is located on the 2nd floor of 323 West 39th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues. The building has an ADA wheelchair accessible elevator that provides access to the gallery from the ground floor. There are all-gender single stall bathrooms and an ADA approved bathroom on the 3rd floor. The space is not scent-free, but we do request that people attending come low-scent. Admission to the building does not require an ID, but you will be asked to sign-in and out to facilitate contact tracing, as necessary. The closest MTA subway station is the Port Authority A, C, E stop which is ADA wheelchair accessible. Texts and programs are in English. Large format texts can be provided with an advance request. EFA Project Space is committed to nurturing an intergenerational environment and we encourage children & kid noise at our events. Please notify us of any accessibility needs by email to projectspace@efanyc.org, or by phone at (212) 563-5855 x 244.



A Program of The Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts
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