

International Conference

Can We Have Some Privacy?

7. / 8. May 2015 | ICI Berlin Institute for Cultural Inquiry

With the revelations of Edward Snowden, the question of the protection of the private lives of ordinary citizens has become one of the most pressing issues of public concern. Even before this dramatic scandal, the significant success of US internet companies in the global market caused worries about the security of individuals' information and about its use for commercial and potentially also political ends. The conference **Can We Have Some Privacy?** confronts this situation from a variety of perspectives. Guest speakers address the strategies of state security services past and present, as well as the relationship between privacy and other sometimes overlapping cultural and philosophical categories such as publicity and freedom. Among the invited experts are speakers who concern themselves with the legal right to privacy, and with the time-lag between the law and technological developments. The event also examines aesthetic innovations that have emerged from a putative destruction of the private sphere. We ask the following questions: should we live without the private sphere? Is it possible to enforce the right to privacy? What kinds of models of separation between social spheres are possible in today's world and in individual experience?

The conference begins with a discussion between Scott Horton and Tom Keenan on the theme **Privacy, Secrecy, and Publicity** on the evening of Thursday 7 May at 19:30 at ICI Berlin. The discussion is followed by a reception to which all attendants are invited.

Scott Horton is an expert on US security services and their development since the end of World War II. Through his internationally acclaimed book *Lords of Secrecy*, Horton provides us a look into the world of the CIA, an irresponsible elite, whose technological prowess and mindset pose a great threat to democracy. *Lords of Secrecy: The National Security Elite and America's Stealth Warfare* (2014) is regarded as a guide for new democratic movements.

Tom Keenan is Director of the Human Rights Project and Associate Professor of Comparative Literature at Bard College Annandale, New York. His main areas of expertise are human rights and their violations through modern technologies. His book *Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetics* (co-written with Eyal Weizman, 2012) and the accompanying exhibition have received widespread critical acclaim.

The conference continues the following day, beginning at 10:00, with contributions from Ben Wizner (lawyer, American Civil Liberties Union), Kerry Bystrom (Bard College Berlin), Christian Heller (author, *Post-Privacy*), Huberts Knabe (Scientific Director of the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen

Memorial), Ewa Majewska (ICI), Anna Kim (author, *The Visible Enemy*), Roger Berkowitz (Bard College), Alexander García Düttmann (Universität der Künste), Catherine Toal (Bard College Berlin). The full program can be found below.

Thursday May 7

19:30 Introduction

Opening Keynote Panel: *Privacy, Secrecy, and Publicity*

Scott Horton

Tom Keenan

Friday May 8

10:00-12:00 Panel 1: *Is Privacy an Essential Right in a Democracy?*

Kerry Bystrom

Christian Heller

Ben Wizner

Moderator: Agata Lisiak

14:00-16:00 Panel 2: *Is Privacy a Nostalgic Desire, and Have We Always Been Losing Privacy?*

Anna Kim

Hubertus Knabe

Ewa Majewska

Moderator: Ewa Atanassow

16:30-18:30 Panel 3: *Does Privacy Matter?*

Roger Berkowitz

Alexander Garcia Düttmann

Catherine Toal

Moderator: James Burton

Closing Remarks

The international conference is a cooperation between Bard College Berlin, A Liberal Arts University, the ICI Berlin, and the Hannah Arendt Center and the Center for Civic Engagement at Bard College New York. Further support is provided by the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius.

Further details: <http://conference.berlin.bard.edu>

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