



# MAX AND IRIS STERN INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM 14

## TERROR CONTAGION

March 12 and 13, 2022  
Entirely online

March 12 and 13, 2022, the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MAC) presents the 14th Max and Iris Stern International Symposium, *Terror Contagion*, which explores themes addressed in the exhibition of the same name presently on view at the MAC. Taking projects by the London-based research collective Forensic Architecture and the documentary filmmaker Laura Poitras as its starting point, the event brings together activists and journalists who have been targeted by the NSO Group's Pegasus malware, along with opponents of digital surveillance and political violence (lawyers, information technology researchers, members of human rights organizations). Participants will also reflect on the emergence of a forensic aesthetic in contemporary art practices and the role of the museum as a civic forum.

# PROGRAM

## SATURDAY, MARCH 12

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2 p.m. (EST)

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### OPENING REMARKS

**John Zeppetelli**, Director and chief curator, MAC  
**François LeTourneau**, Curator and head of public programs, MAC

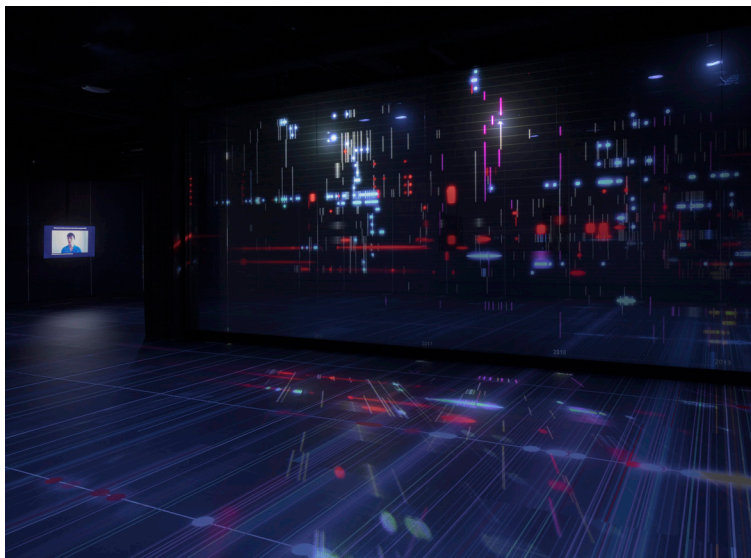
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### KEYNOTE LECTURE

Ronald Deibert on the NSO group, cybersurveillance and the global escalation of digital violence, and on Citizen Lab's collaboration with Forensic Architecture

**Ronald Deibert**, Director, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto

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Exhibition views of *Terror Contagion* presented at Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal from December 1st, 2021, to April 18, 2022.  
Photo: Richard-Max Tremblay

## SUNDAY, MARCH 13

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10 a.m. (EDT)

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### CIVIL SOCIETY AND CYBERSURVEILLANCE

Human rights defenders from around the world speak about their experiences with Pegasus and state surveillance and examine the impact of cybersurveillance on the work of global civil society.

**Carmen Aristegui**, Journalist (Mexico City)  
**Shalini Gera**, Human rights lawyer (Chhattisgarh)  
**Laura Poitras**, Filmmaker, producer, journalist (New York City)

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11 a.m. (EDT)

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### INVESTIGATING DIGITAL VIOLENCE

Lead investigators of the NSO Group's Pegasus malware speak about the proliferation of cyberweapons, available tools for documenting cybersurveillance and the global landscape of accountability for this rising form of state violence.

**Santiago Aguirre Espinosa**, Director, Centro Prodh (Mexico)  
**John Scott-Railton**, Senior researcher, Citizen Lab, Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto  
**Eyal Weizman**, Founder and director, Forensic Architecture (London)

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12 p.m. (EDT)

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### BREAK

12:30 p.m. (EDT)

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### DIGITAL OCCUPATION: FROM WALLS TO FIREWALLS

Legal experts and investigators of human rights violations and surveillance in Palestine discuss the NSO Group as part of an ecosystem of Israeli cyber-weapons that have been exported to other governments around the world.

**Shawan Jabarin**, General director, Al-Haq Legal Center (Ramallah)  
**Eitay Mack**, Human rights lawyer (Jerusalem)  
**Alaa Mahajna**, Human rights lawyer (Jerusalem)

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1:30 p.m. (EDT)

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### INVESTIGATIVE PRACTICES IN CONTEMPORARY ART: THE EXHIBITION AS FORUM

Artists and curators discuss the possible uses of exhibitions for investigative practices, as well as the social, political and activist role of art institutions that present them.

**Emanuel Licha**, Artist and documentary filmmaker, associate professor, Art History and Film Studies, Université de Montréal  
**Charles Stankieveh**, Artist, associate professor in the Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design at the University of Toronto  
**Lisa Stuckey**, Independent cultural theorist and art critic (Vienna)

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# PARTICIPANTS

## **SANTIAGO AGUIRRE ESPINOSA**

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Santiago Aguirre Espinosa is the director of Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez A.C. Human Rights Center (Centro Prodh), a non-profit civil society organization in Mexico City, where he previously served as deputy director. He has spent more than fifteen years advocating for human rights in Mexico. The Centro Prodh, founded in 1988, is one of the most acclaimed human rights organizations in Mexico. Among other activities, it provides free legal aid and representation to victims of human rights abuses in the context of the violent crisis caused by the war on drugs. Between April and July 2016, three members of Centro Prodh, including Espinosa, received SMS messages with hyperlinks associated with the infrastructure used to implement Pegasus spyware. In the case of Centro Prodh, this illegal surveillance was likely prompted by their role as lawyers in the so-called Ayotzinapa case, related to the enforced disappearance of forty-three young students in the state of Guerrero and the ensuing irregular and fraudulent official investigation conducted by Mexican government officials linked to the acquisition of technology manufactured by NSO Group.

## **CARMEN ARISTEGUI**

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Carmen Aristegui is one of Mexico's most influential investigative journalists and a specialist of the nation's politics, well known for her critical investigations of the government. Over the course of a lengthy career she has worked on major radio (MVS, W Radio, Grupo Imagen) and television (MVS, Televisa) programs, as well as publishing in the print media (*Reforma*) and taking part in numerous university and political forums. She is currently anchor of the news program *Aristegui* on CNN en Español. She has received the Mexican Press Club's National Journalism Award (2001, 2002, 2004), the title of Best National Anchor (2003) and the Gabriel García Márquez Prize for her research on "The White House" (2015). She has also been awarded the PEN Mexico Prize (2014), been named one of the BBC's 100 Women (2016) and been selected as one of "50 World's Greatest Leaders" by *Fortune* magazine (2017). In 2005 the National Institute of Indigenous Languages honoured her contribution toward the defence of the Indigenous languages of Mexico.

## **RONALD DEIBERT**

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Ronald J. Deibert is a professor of political science and director of The Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, University of Toronto. The Citizen Lab undertakes interdisciplinary research at the intersection of global security, ICTs and human rights. The research outputs of The Citizen Lab are routinely covered in global media and over the past decade have been the focus of dozens of reports receiving front-page coverage in such forums as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. Deibert is the author of *Black Code: Surveillance, Privacy, and the Dark Side of the Internet* (Random House, 2013) and *RESET: Reclaiming the Internet for Civil Society* (House of Anansi, 2020), based on the 2020 CBC Massey Lectures. In 2013 he was appointed to the Order of Ontario and awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for being "among the first to recognize and take measures to mitigate growing threats to communications rights, openness and security worldwide."

## **SHALINI GERA**

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Shalini Gera is a human rights lawyer, providing free legal aid to Indigenous communities in the conflict-ridden areas of Central India. She is a co-founder of the erstwhile Jagdalpur Legal Aid Group (JagLAG), an organization that helped document extra-judicial killings and mass sexual violence by state police and paramilitary forces in the tribal districts of Bastar, Dantewada, Sukma and Bijapur. She is currently working with Indigenous communities affected by mining operations and other extractive industries. She is also on the legal defence team in the Bhima Koregaon Conspiracy case, which has riveted public attention with the arrest of sixteen internationally renowned human rights activists from all over India on grave charges of terrorism and sedition.

## **SHAWAN JABARIN**

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Since 2006 Shawan Jabarin has been the general director of Al-Haq, the first human rights organization in the Arab region. He was appointed to the Human Rights Watch Middle East Advisory Board in 2011, elected vice president of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Paris, in 2013, and elected as FIDH secretary general in 2019. In 2013 Jabarin was elected as a commissioner for the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), Geneva, and in 2018 was elected as a member of the ICJ Executive Committee. He started his career at Al-Haq in 1987 as a field researcher, documenting human rights abuses by the Israeli occupying authorities throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. He later shifted to legal research and accepted a leadership position in international advocacy, lecturing in numerous academic programs and conferences on international criminal law and international human rights law around the world. Shawan Jabarin is the recipient of many awards, including the Reebok Human Rights Award for his defence of human rights.

## **EMANUEL LICHA**

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Emanuel Licha is an artist and documentary filmmaker. His films and filmic installations focus on selected spatial objects, which he utilizes as social, historical and political signs. His most recent feature film, *zo reken* (2021), explores the politics of humanitarian aid through the prism of the 4x4 vehicle that is the most popular among NGOs and international aid organizations – the Toyota Land Cruiser. The film has earned a number of honours, including the Best Canadian Feature Award at Hot Docs and the Grand Prize for Best National Feature at the RIDM. In 2015 Emanuel Licha received a PhD from the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London. He has taught in a number of schools of art and architecture and is currently an associate professor in the department of art history and film studies at the Université de Montréal / Tiohtià:ke.

## **EITAY MACK**

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Eitay Mack is an Israeli human rights lawyer and activist working to expose and put an end to the State of Israel's military connections with regimes that have committed genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and severe violations of human rights.

# PARTICIPANTS

## ALAA MAHAJNA

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Alaa Mahajna is a human rights lawyer based in East Jerusalem. His wide-ranging human rights practice handles cases related to housing and planning rights – especially litigation against illegal land grabs by government and settlers – data protection and privacy rights. He earned LLB and LLM degrees (with distinction) in constitutional law and administrative law from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he worked as a teaching and research assistant. He also has an LLM in international law from the University of Virginia, which was funded by a Fulbright scholarship. Since he first started practicing law in 2004, Alaa Mahajna has worked at a range of institutions, including Adalah – Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel (2007-2010) and United Nations Development Programme/Negotiation Affairs Department (2010-2011). Since 2019 he has been an associate researcher at Mada al Carmel – Arab Center for Applied Social Research, and he also serves as an external legal advisor for Negotiation Affairs Department and other international organizations in Jerusalem. Alaa Mahajna is lead counsel in two cases representing political activists, journalists and lawyers who are suing NSO Group for the illegal use against them of the Pegasus hacking system.

## LAURA POITRAS

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Laura Poitras is an American filmmaker and journalist. *Citizenfour* (2014), the third part of her 9/11 trilogy, won an Oscar for best documentary. The first film in the series, *My Country, My Country* (2006), which documents the US occupation of Iraq, was nominated for an Academy Award. Part two, *The Oath* (2010), focuses on the Guantánamo Bay prison and Al Qaeda. Poitras's reporting on NSA mass surveillance and Edward Snowden received the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service. She is also the recipient of many other awards, including a MacArthur Fellowship.

## JOHN SCOTT-RAILTON

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John Scott-Railton is a senior researcher with The Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy. His work focuses on technological threats to civil society, including malware and disinformation. Some of his notable achievements include a collaboration with colleague Bill Marczak that uncovered the first iPhone zero-day and remote jailbreak seen in the wild, as well as the use of NSO Group's Pegasus spyware to target human rights defenders, journalists and opposition movements around the globe. Other investigations with Citizen Lab colleagues have resulted in the first reports of ISIS-led malware operations and of China's "Great Cannon" – the Government of China's nation-scale DDoS attack. Scott-Railton has also investigated Russian and Iranian disinformation campaigns, and the manipulation of news aggregators. He has been a fellow at Google Ideas and Jigsaw at Alphabet, and was the founding editor of the Security Planner, an online digital advice tool. Previously, he founded the Voices Projects, collaborative information feeds that bypassed internet shutdowns in Libya and Egypt.

## CHARLES STANKIEVECH

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Charles Stankieveh's award-winning body of work explores the notion of "fieldwork" in the embedded landscape, the military-industrial complex and geopolitics. Stankieveh has exhibited internationally at institutions that include the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark; the Palais de Tokyo, Paris; HKW and KW, Berlin; the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna; and the CCA, Montreal. He has shown in biennials from Venice to Santa Fe and participated in programming for dOCUMENTA (13) and the Berlin Biennale. In 2019 he curated *The Drowned World*, the sound and video program for the inaugural Toronto Biennial. He is currently an editor of the *Afterall* journal (University of Chicago Press). In 2007 he was a founding faculty member of the Yukon School of Visual Arts in Dawson City (under joint governance by the Indigenous sovereign nation of Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in) and later became director of Visual Studies at the University of Toronto, where he is currently an associate professor.

## LISA STUCKEY

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Dr. Lisa Stuckey is a cultural theorist and art critic with research foci on artistic epistemologies, contemporary media aesthetics, institutional critique, and cultures of the curatorial and of law. Her dissertation *LAW ON TRIAL: Art and Jurisdiction in Investigations of Forensic Architecture and in Exemplary Contemporary Art* (honoured with the Austrian State Prize "Award of Excellence 2021") will be published by De Gruyter in spring 2022 under the title *Forensische Verfahren in den zeitgenössischen Künsten*. As a fellow abroad of IFK\_Vienna she conducted research at the Department of Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths, University of London (UK). She has published in journals and magazines such as *ZfM*, *CAI* and *JAR*. Recently, she co-convened the symposium "A Commonplace Is Not a Cliché" in the context of the Biennale for Freiburg (Germany). Lisa Stuckey also has an artistic research background and has presented video works at AASFF (US), Diagonale (Austria) and mumok kino (Austria), as well as curatorial projects at xhibit (Austria) and TSA Los Angeles (US), among others.

## EYAL WEIZMAN

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Eyal Weizman is Professor of Spatial and Visual Cultures and founding director of the Centre for Research Architecture at Goldsmiths, University of London. In 2010 he founded the research agency Forensic Architecture and directs it ever since. The work of the agency is documented in the exhibition and book *FORENSIS* (Sternberg, 2014), as well as in *Forensic Architecture: Violence at the Threshold of Detectability* (Zone/MIT, 2017) and in numerous exhibitions worldwide. Weizman is on the editorial board of *Third Text*, *Humanity*, *Cabinet* and *Political Concepts* and is also on the board of directors of the Centre for Investigative Journalism (CIJ) and on the Technology Advisory Board of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague. He previously sat on the advisory boards of the ICA in London and B'Tselem in Jerusalem, amongst others. He graduated in architecture in 1998 from the Architectural Association in London and completed his PhD at the London Consortium/Birkbeck College in 2006.

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Since 2006, the prestigious international symposiums held by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal have been known as the Max and Iris Stern International Symposium. From the time the Musée was founded in 1964, Max and Iris Stern contributed significantly to its growth by enriching the Collection with many gifts, including works by Hans Arp, Paul-Émile Borduas, Emily Carr, John Lyman and Jean-Paul Riopelle. The goal of this annual event is to provide a public forum for research by practitioners and theoreticians working in diverse fields, in connection to the Musée's programs. Through this commitment, the Musée wishes to foster a greater understanding of contemporary art and pay tribute to the Sterns by carrying on their vision on the international scene.

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#### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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Please note that owing to the current public health situation, the symposium will take place entirely online.

The talks will be given in English.  
Simultaneous translation service will be available in French.

Because space is limited, advance registration is strongly recommended. To receive full details on symposiums and lectures at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, simply add your name to the mailing list for the Musée's e-newsletter, at [www.macm.org](http://www.macm.org).

Each panel is a 30-minute conversation followed by a 15-minute discussion period.

Information: [info@macm.org](mailto:info@macm.org)

Purchase your tickets online:  
<https://macm.org/en/activities/max-and-iris-stern-international-symposium-14/>

Fees: 20\$  
The tickets give access to both days of the symposium.

**The ticket office will close on Friday March 11 at 1 p.m. EST.**

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