

## PRESS RELEASE

### OUTER SPACE

Trevor Paglen

**3 October 2014 – 22 February 2015**

In cooperation with the exhibition „Outer Space,“ which is organized by Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Kunstmuseum Bonn will be presenting a room with photographic works by Trevor Paglen (\*1974 in Maryland). Paglen, who holds an academic title in geography and in addition to his work as a photographer is also the author of several publications, has been engaged in the subject of the control and monitoring systems used by globally operating superpowers for years. For these superpowers, we have turned into objects of observation and surveillance satellites and drones have meanwhile become able to document all of our steps and actions. High-resolution cameras are made use of for these purposes and this is not without consequence for the definition of the medium of photography. While it once represented the individual’s sovereign view of the world, the direction of view has changed: Secret authorities whose existence can hardly be legitimized democratically are watching us and draw from us even our most private secrets. Paglen’s photography uncovers this development and reclaims our rights as we have to regain our control over these instruments of power.

Paglen’s work thus transports a political message without bluntly forcing a focus on it. Instead, the opposite is the case. His highly aesthetic photographs are sensual and cite the nature pathos of romanticism which sees in nature a place of yearning for the free development of the individual. This place, however, is occupied by products of the war industry today, by aforementioned satellites and drones which can often only be recognized as marginal interruptions of an overall picture that seems so harmonic at first sight. These interruptions, however, don’t impose themselves on the viewer, they require a second, more critical look in order to be recognized. And this is exactly what Trevor Paglen’s photography asks for: To take a closer look and not content ourselves with a superficial glance.

This exhibition continues Kunstmuseum Bonn’s series on American photography and will be followed by a substantial presentation of Larry Sultan’s work to take place from February 2015.

This exhibition was realized with kind support of Galerie Zander, Cologne.

**Curator**

Dr. Christoph Schreier

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