

'Surveillance' Artist Hasan Elahi comes to Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park as August's Resident Artist

VOLCANO, HAWAII, US, August 16, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park and The National Parks Arts Foundation are proud to announce that Hasan Elahi, a world-renowned installation artist —whose artwork explores issues around technologies of surveillance, and sousveillance (the practice of using technology for documenting one's own life) —is August's Artist in Residence.

Elahi will provide a free presentation for visitors on Aug. 24, 2018 at 10 a.m., at the Kahuku Unit of the Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park. Enter Kahuku on the mauka (uphill) side of Highway 11 near mile marker 70.5. This event is

made possible with support from the National Park Service, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Friends of Hawai'i National Park. This event is a unique opportunity to hear from a globally celebrated artist and energetic public speaker, about his life and art practice, which are intertwined in unusual and evocative ways.

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Hasan Elahi, NPAF Hawai'i Volcanoes Resident Artist

PRISM surveillance program by half a decade, the project questions the consequences of living under constant surveillance and continuously generates databases of imagery that tracks the artist and his points of transit in real-time. Although initially created for his FBI agent, the public can also monitor the artist's communication records, banking transactions, and transportation logs along with various intelligence and government agencies who have been confirmed visiting his website.

This led Elahi to champion a philosophy termed radical transparency, which has a profound impact and reach. The internet, for example, is in effect a massive data harvesting operation, where human activity is minutely tracked and sold for economic advantage, all in the guise of

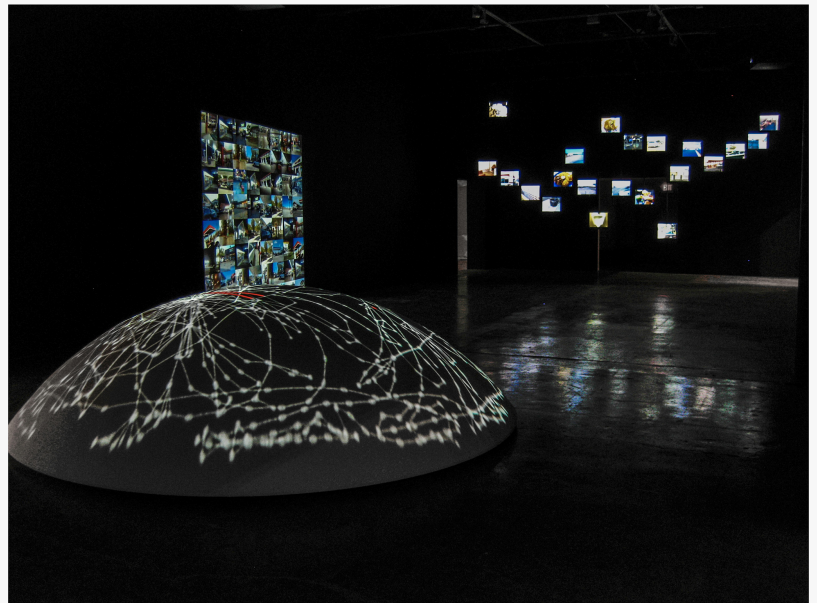


'customer service. This ecosystem of information is based on the very human tendency to desire privacy, and in a way, to live in secret. But wonders Elahi, does it make sense to live this way in the global electronic village? "In considering surveillance we tend to think of it as a very 21st century concept, yet we've always been watched. We've had several thousands of years of being watched from above; G-d —all knowing— as the original surveillance camera. This might sound sarcastic, but there's a very similar omniscience that a lot of these data companies have about us. I think we don't consider many things as surveillance until it's put in that context for us. Similarly, when you hyper aestheticize an image your brain no longer reads it as surveillance, but reads it as landscape and I think there's something that also happens when you take that Google Street View image and you aestheticize it.," says Elahi.

"I never associated my practice with a certain medium or particular discipline or technique and I've always looked at it as how can I find the most appropriate method for my idea and that's how it came about." And for this, his first project on the Island of Hawai'i, Elahi will be using satellite metrics and other technology to 'recreate' some of the famous early artwork done by 19th century landscape artists as an adjunct to the United States westward flow of Manifest Destiny, which particularly for the Hawaiian Islands and its people, became a contested and fraught imperialist and Colonial landscape.

Says Elahi about this project: "In the nineteenth century, enormous landscape paintings by such figures as Frederic Edwin Church and images by such photographers as William Henry Jackson became the visual expression of Manifest Destiny. Many of the paintings that I am proposing to recreate with new technologies of surveying and measuring were created at a time when landscape paintings were often commissioned by the government to take inventory of the natural resources of the country at a time as we were growing into a world power. This work will not only explore the then and now aspect of these locations, but will also question what the genre of landscape means today in a political context."

Elahi, an interdisciplinary artist, was born in Rangpur, Bangladesh, but raised in New York City. Currently, he is an Associate Professor, in the Department of Art, University of Maryland, at College Park, in Maryland and has a studio in the D.C. area. In addition, Mr. Elahi has been invited by organizations as diverse as the Tate Modern in the UK, the American Association of Artificial Intelligence, the International Association of Privacy Professionals, National Geographic,



TED, and World Economic Forum to discuss his work.

NPAF is a 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to the promotion of the National Parks of the U.S. through creating dynamic opportunities for artworks that are based in our natural and historic heritage. This project is supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and other generous benefactors. All NPAF programs are made possible through the philanthropic support of donors of all sorts ranging from corporate sponsors, small business, and art patrons and citizen-lovers of the Parks. NPAF is always seeking new partners and donors for its wide-ranging artist-in-residence programs.

John Cargill
National Parks Arts Foundation
5057156492
[email us here](#)

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