In the wake of recent events such as Edward Snowden exposing NSA's egregious breach of personal privacy and accusations of social media platforms such as Facebook controlling personal information, contemporary global citizens have come to realize that society has been re-constructed as a panopticon. The level to which our daily behavior conforms to the new structure of an ever watchful eye has infiltrated the zeitgeist of our time. The exhibition Profiled: Surveillance of a Sharing Society unites the practices of six artists who seek to operate within this new awareness of being watched.

The contemporary society of surveillance, where international boundaries are ignored in national data gathering and computer-operated drones have the ability to monitor communities thousands of miles away, is not what it appears. The quest to obtain data is counterbalanced by our willingness, even need, to share our personal information. At the heart of the shared “selfie” or constant status updates is a psychological phenomenon known as the cult of celebrity—the ability to have one’s image communicated to a network of hundreds of peers and potential admirers but ultimately set loose into the wide world of the Internet. The artists in Profiled work at the juncture of post-9/11 military concerns and the astronomical rise of social media technologies. Through their diverse practices, these artists analyze the paradoxes in sharing everything with our suspicion of those looking.

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