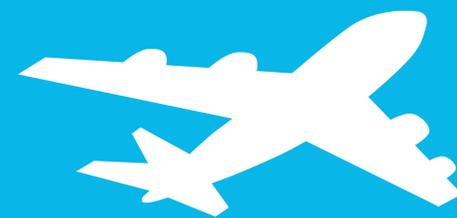


EXTRAORDINARY RENDITION



ARTIST STATEMENT

“The role of the artist is to transcend conventional wisdom, to transcend the word of the establishment, to transcend the orthodoxy, to go beyond and escape what is handed down by the government or what is said in the media.” [Howard Zinn, Artists in Times of War].

Extraordinary Rendition, a collaboration between artists Tim Guthrie and Doug Hayko, is a multi-space installation that will divide an exhibition space into four distinct rooms. The installation includes a performance (Interrogation Room with performers throughout the exhibit), a wall of surveillance monitors showing various videos along with a large video projection (Surveillance Room) juxtaposed with a group of traditional portraits rendered simply in graphite on paper (Gallery Room). At the opposite end of the gallery from the surveillance and interrogation rooms is a fourth room where kids are removed from the violence of the performance, where ironically, they watch an equally violent cartoon.

While visitors contemplate the work in the Gallery Room, surveillance cameras

attached to the frames above the drawings simultaneously record their re/actions. These videos display live on monitors in the Surveillance Room and digitally download to an online database for future examination and analysis. During the entire opening reception, there is a performance in the Interrogation Room that takes place while other performers circulate in areas throughout the entire exhibition space.



The term extraordinary rendition is used to describe the practice of secretly capturing suspected criminals or terrorists without the knowledge of anyone else, including the governments of the

countries in which individuals reside. They are then secretly rendered to other countries, secret detention centers or “black sites.” This way individuals can be transferred to other locations to be tortured by proxy without ostensibly violating the United Nations Convention Against Torture and without the writ of habeas corpus.

The National Security Agency’s (NSA) warrantless electronic surveillance program was created by the government to monitor individuals inside and outside the U.S. without the judicial oversight mandated by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA).

This exhibit aims to encourage discourse about the practice of extraordinary rendition.

A man walks down the street in a foreign city. A car stops, men dressed in black with masks over their faces jump out, grab him and spirit him away to where a private plane — usually a Gulfstream jet — is waiting. The man is shackled, perhaps hooded, perhaps drugged. The plane takes off and travels to somewhere in Poland or Romania, Egypt or Syria. The man is held captive, perhaps for months. What he endures is often physical and mental degradation and pain.

The scenario may sound like a spy thriller or a video game, but extraordinary rendition is all too real.

This 2005 account of extraordinary rendition from Human Rights Watch shows how real the program can be: “The CIA has regularly transferred detainees without legal proceedings to countries in the Middle East, including Egypt and

Syria, known to practice torture routinely. In one case, Maher Arar, a Syrian-born Canadian citizen in transit in at John F. Kennedy Airport in New York, was detained by U.S. authorities and sent to Syria. He was released without charge from Syrian custody ten months later and has described repeated torture, often with cables and electrical cords. In another case, a U.S. government-leased airplane transported two Egyptian suspects who were blindfolded, hooded, drugged, and diapered by hooded operatives, from Sweden to Egypt. According to the two men, they were held incommunicado in Egypt for five weeks and were tortured.

In a third case, Mamdouh Habib, an Egyptian-born Australian in U.S. custody, was transported from Pakistan to Afghanistan to Egypt to Guantánamo Bay. Now back home in Australia, Habib alleges that he was tortured during his six months

in Egypt with beatings and electric shocks, and hung from the walls by hooks.”

Media accounts, information from Amnesty International, the American Civil Liberties Union, the International Red Cross, other human rights groups and CIA documents themselves paint a picture of a program that violates international treaties and U.S. law and has been called betrayal of American values. The legal basis for the rendition has been called into question by many, including organizations of lawyers. And, yes, there’s more.

So, how many are we talking about?

The exact number of people who have been subject to extraordinary rendition and torture isn’t known. Officials have admitted to about 30. Egypt officials say at least 60 to 70. Some human rights advocates say 150. It could be more. Many more.

