Welcome to the new Arts Forum section of *Surveillance & Society*!

This new section developed out of the general interest in expanding the arts content of the journal based on an increasing awareness of the significant contributions of artistic and creative practices to meaning-making and knowledge production in the field of surveillance studies. This interest in promoting, circulating, and developing arts practice within surveillance studies produced a new Surveillance Studies Network (SSN) Board Position, Arts Editor, and I am delighted to be the first elected representative to hold this role. By including and encouraging arts-based research and practices at scholarly, professional, and administrative levels, I hope to highlight a wide variety of creative engagements with surveillance technologies, policies, and structures.

This first published Arts Forum section and the contributions included here grow out of the winning artworks from the SSN’s Arts Prize, an award introduced in 2018 and dedicated to recognizing significant contributions of creative practices to the field of surveillance studies. Organized as a biennial competition that coincides with the SSN’s international conference, the Arts Prize aims to publicly support artwork that centralizes critical readings of surveillance, exhibits theoretical sophistication, produces innovative ways of thinking about modes of surveillance, and promotes audience engagement. Fittingly, the contributions that follow are from three of the four artists who had their pieces recognized by the 2018 Arts Prize competition: James Coupe’s *Watchtower (A Machine for Living)* (2017) was awarded the inaugural prize. Rose Butler’s *Come and Go* (2017) and Stefy McKnight’s *Hunting for Prey* (2016) received honourable mentions. Julia Scher’s *Predictive Engineering* (1993–present) also received an honourable mention, and I hope to include her thoughts on her work in a future section of Arts Forum.

Each of these art projects powerfully address the political, historical, and social contexts of surveillance structures. Significantly, these works not only reflect but also generate understandings about contemporary surveillance. At the SSN’s eighth biennial conference held in Aarhus, Denmark in June 2018, the four artists publicly presented their works at a Plenary Session. Here, three of these artists continue the conversations from their presentations and think through their own art project in relation to the contributions that creative works can make to larger studies on surveillance work: What does art do? How can art practices magnify larger issues at the heart of studies, policies, and debates about surveillance? Why is it important to include contemporary artists and their work within the field of surveillance studies? How can these inclusions be extended moving forward? Within surveillance studies, Coupe, Butler, and McKnight (as well as Scher) are claiming space through contemporary art by creating unique, innovative, and politically complex pieces that provide new ways of seeing the structures of surveillance in the present historical moment.