

780 nm - beyond perception

A story telling performance on how to dream a future with infrared light

780 nm to 1mm, is a tool to travel in perception and time. I will bring you to deepest space in search of exoplanets and to the past where a young woman dances at an abandoned military training ground. We will look at a how the wind frizzles the surface of a crocodile pound and how sensitive hands forms cold snow into the first humans.

Our human eyes perceive only about 0.0035 percent of the electromagnetic spectrum, between around 380 to 780 nanometers (nm). The infrared (IR) light spectrum lies just above the wavelengths of visible red light, from 780 nm to 1mm. This form of light can be measured and visualized with various infrared and thermal camera technologies. These camera technologies are as they can depict heat and used in night vision widely used for various forms of surveillance. They have as many other image technologies actively been refined and used in military technologies. Nowadays IR is also used in space imaging, heat detection in facilities reparations, remote sensing, agriculture, and for medical imaging techniques and by IR enthusiast photographers. Some animals such as spiders, bedbugs, and goldfishes can also see the infrared light waves, which humans can only visualize with the help of image technology.

In my research I use techno-feminist strategy to repurpose the IR images inherited purpose of warfare and surveillance. I (miss)use the expanded vision that infrared technologies provide. It becomes a tool to rethink the current world order and speculate on other possible ways of seeing that can prompt story telling about other potential world orders.

For Helsinki Photomedia, I propose to present a performance with storytelling around the infrared, its military heritage, the animal vison, and dreams on how the enhanced version of reality it visualizes can also create an enhanced imaginative world. A world where one can dream up other possible ways of being. This story will be told together with a video with infrared images and videos from my archive juxtaposed with infrared images from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope—a tool partly used in search for new exoplanets. The images presented in the performance will be used as 'tools' to reimagine the worlds they depict and to narrate stories about alternate futures.

