

For Immediate Release

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Pop-up Library of State Secrets Opens in New York

September 22, 2014 -- New York, NY -- The Clandestine Reading Room, an interactive exhibit documenting the history of government surveillance and the suppression of dissent, opens Tuesday, October 7 at 7 pm, at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art. The exhibit is part of the show "Monument to Cold War Victory," organized by Yevgeniy Fiks.

Featuring a library of leaked and declassified documents, along with a workshop and expert panel discussion, the Clandestine Reading Room confronts visitors with a provocative and politically charged archive, a compelling slice of the much larger archive that remains hidden from public view. From the FBI's notorious Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO) through the National Security Agency's sweeping surveillance of email and Internet traffic (codenamed "PRISM"), the state has used a wide array of tactics to police political activity. These tactics, which range from monitoring and infiltration, to intimidation and entrapment, remain largely secret. But through the efforts of journalists, lawyers, scholars, whistleblowers and others, part of this secret history can be told.

Among the secrets on display in the Reading Room are documents obtained by the National Security Archive that show the US government spying on students and civil rights leaders; selections from the files leaked by Edward Snowden, which expose the NSA's wiretapping program; and evidence of the US government's covert actions against Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid movement, drawn from an ongoing FOIA lawsuit against the CIA, FBI, NSA, and DIA by historian Ryan Shapiro.

The Clandestine Reading Room will host an expert panel discussion of these issues on Friday, November 7. Panelists include Heidi Boghosian, executive director of the A. J. Muste Memorial Institute and author of *Spying on Democracy* (City Lights, 2013); Kevin Gosztola, a journalist acclaimed for his coverage of the Chelsea Manning trial; Lisa Lynch, a scholar of journalism and new media, and co-founder of the Guantanamo Project; Ryan Shapiro, a PhD candidate in history at MIT whose dissertation FOIA research has been dubbed "a threat to national security" by the FBI; and Carey Shenkman, a First-Amendment and human-rights attorney. The panel discussion will be held at 6 pm in the Rose Auditorium at the Cooper Union.

In addition, a workshop on declassified history and the FOIA process will be offered on Thursday, November 6, led by Nate Jones, a FOIA specialist with the National Security Archive.

"The United States, like other modern states, inherits the conflict between liberty and security," said Dolsy Smith, a librarian, poet, and part of the creative team behind the project. "From the Bill of Rights through the Civil Rights Movement, history attests to the importance of freedom of expression and association, open dialogue, and transparency to the health of civil society. But the privilege and power of elites remains immured in institutions, padded by capital and cloaked in red tape. As recent events in Ferguson and elsewhere show, this conflict plays out between the vulnerable bodies of ordinary people and the armed forces of the state. Institutions and bureaucracies, on the other hand, can become vulnerable to critique and change through the very

documents they create. The Clandestine Reading Room targets this vulnerability, lifting a corner of the veil on what the state does without our knowledge but in our name."

The Clandestine Reading Room will be open from October 7 through November 7, 2014 in the Herb Lubalin Gallery at the Cooper Union, 41 Cooper Square, New York, NY 10003. The exhibition and events are free and open to the public.

For more information on the Clandestine Reading Room, please visit www.clandestinereadingroom.org.

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