As sensorial machine-human assemblages, drones are involved with cultural affects, technological materialities, and political discourses. Hence drones are not just technical instruments; they are interconnected with discourse. This talk will trace the world-making powers of drone technology in order to address how the sensorium of the drone can work as a model for imagining communities. The military drone is often characterized as shaping communities based on exclusion. This lecture, however, focuses on the civilian drone. Although the boundaries between the war drone and the ‘good drone’ are always blurred, artistic negotiations with the civilian drone can unleash the creative and speculative potential of this surveillance technology. By disrupting the predictive and networked operations of the drone, artworks about drones can break, reuse, and recycle the drone’s community-modelling powers in the contexts of social activism, eco-criticism, and post-humanism. Examples of contemporary aesthetic drone imaginaries that are connected with planetary, pandemic, and swarm-like communities will be discussed.

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