In NYC, the NYPD's demographics unit was the primary unit in charge of "counterterrorism." The unit expanded their authority to deploy undercover agents by marking mosques & student organizations as terrorist organizations. These agents often utilized "create and capture" tactics to "create conversations about politics or 9/11 to capture people who spoke even the slightest against the American government." Additionally, the NYPD followed the federal government in its use of NSEERS, or "Special Registration Program," detaining & deporting many New Yorkers under unfair circumstances.

The USA PATRIOT Act (implemented 45 days after 9/11), the newly-founded Department of Homeland Security, & the newly fully-funded Immigration and Naturalization Service (currently ICE) disproportionately targeted South Asian, Arab, & Muslim communities across the U.S in their unchecked use of unconstitutional surveillance & deportation.

Youth Director East's exhibit historicizes federal & local surveillance in NYC from the eighteenth century to post-9/11.

feat. new archival donations from DRUM (Desis Rising Up & Moving)!

New York-based organizations "hosted demonstrations, community forums, cross-religious prayers, and performing arts collectives," in the years following 9/11. South Asian advocacy groups, such as SAALT, called attention to heavy policing in the South Asian communities of Little Pakistan (Midwood) & Jackson Heights. The Taxi Workers' Alliance (TWA)'s member surveys provided testimonials to NYPD harassment. The Sikh Coalition, founded in 2001, managed a discrimination lawsuit against the MTA for their employee turban ban. East's exhibit points to the sometimes-conflicting modes of activism in South Asian & Muslim American communities.

Read more of East's words here!

"This history of forced compliance in America has given institutions the notion that communities of color cannot stand up for themselves. This notion is entirely unprecedented, as these communities have struggled and persevered more than anyone. As we have seen through the efforts made by immigrants to drive our country to greatness, it should be asserted that submission is not an option. Oppressive campaigns can and will be met with resistance."

Post-9/11 Surveillance of South Asian & Muslim Communities in NYC

by East Kaufhold