

*Autonomous Trap 001* (2017) by James Bridle

*Autonomous Trap 001* is a trapping ritual for self-driving cars designed to raise questions about autonomous vehicles. The “trap” consists of a salt circle, a traditional form of protection – from within or without – in magical practice. By reproducing a “No Entry” road marking, the circle confuses the car’s vision system into believing it is surrounded by no entry points, and entraps it.

The car itself is a research vehicle built by the artist, who wrote the software, equipped the vehicle with cameras and built neural networks to transform it into a self-driving car.

The project is part of Bridle’s work and research on contemporary technologies of automation. It directs our attention to socio-technical issues such as the automatization of labour and the power asymmetries it creates, by allowing the imagining of a future where cab drivers chalk white lines on side streets to derail self-driving Ubers which are putting them out of work. In this respect, *Autonomous Trap 001* might represent a new possible form of socio-technical resistance.

*James Bridle is a writer and artist working across technologies and disciplines. His work can be found at <http://jamesbridle.com>.*