

isthisit?





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ISSUE 5

EDITED BY BOB BICKNELL-KNIGHT

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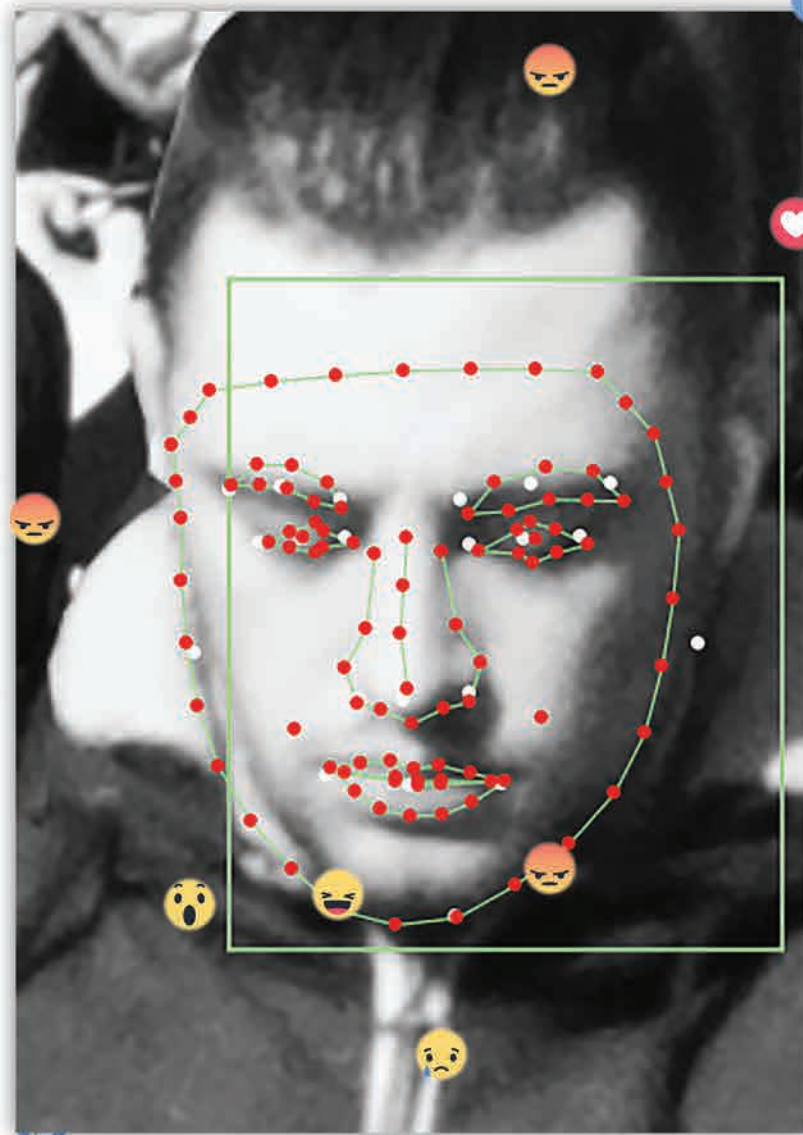
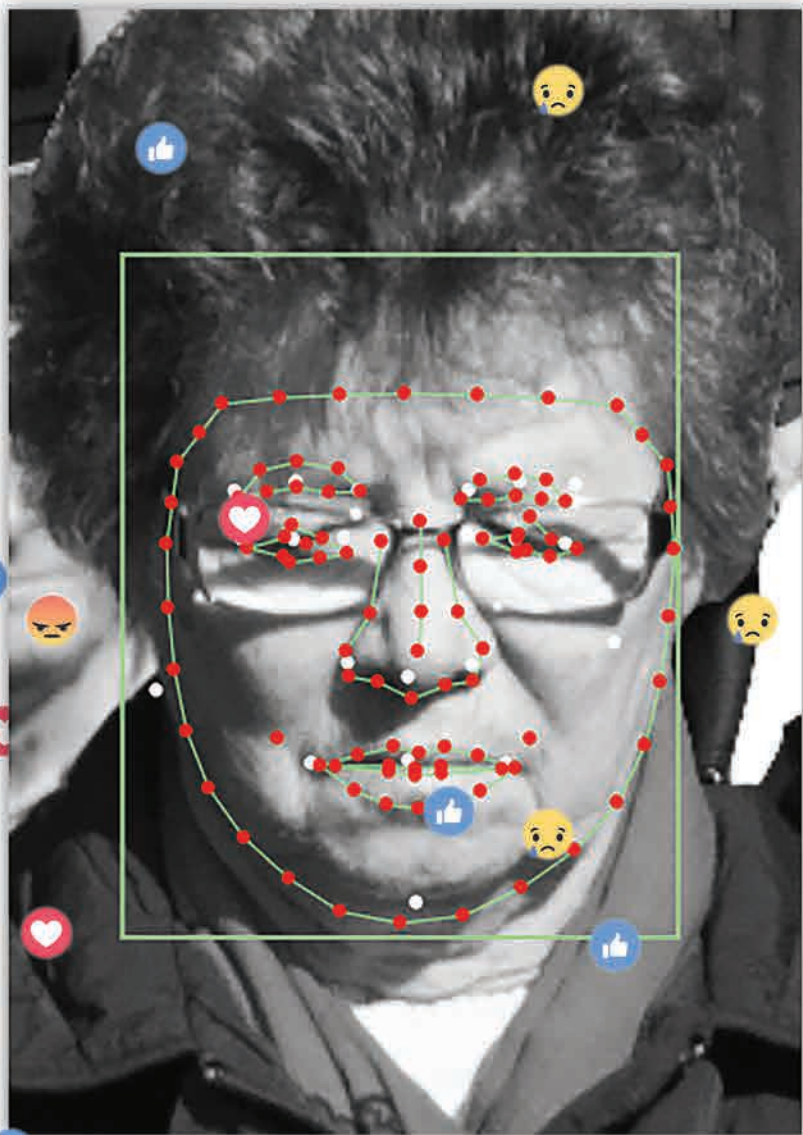
isthisit? issue 5 concerns the current state of surveillance, striving to find a balance between the offline, overtly analogue monitoring of the past with the inherently online, data mining manipulation of the present. The series of texts, interviews and accompanying artworks in the book attempt to explore how and why our lives have become increasingly observed by and mediated upon by corporations and government bodies.

Is a surveillance state something to be sought after, enabling the young and old to traverse dark streets late at night, or would this swiftly turn into a thinly veiled dystopian nightmare, built on elegant rhetoric subliminally insinuating that minority groups are the problem, forcing the lower classes out of cities and into oblivion? Or has this not already happened on a world-wide scale? Is it ethically and morally correct to use a data-mining company to manipulate and seduce voters? Who makes the rules in a society that increasingly resembles a totalitarian paradise? The following book seeks to investigate and question these fundamental and increasingly pertinent issues.

Bob Bicknell-Knight, director of *isthisit?*

The following book includes contributions from Aaron Vergult, Addie Wagenknecht, Adrien Grigorescu, Alyssa Davis, Amber Clausner, Ben Sang, Bob Bicknell-Knight, Bryant Girsch, Caitlin Dick, Caitlin Dick, Cansu Topaloglu, Caroline Elbaor, Chantal Zakari, Chloe Patricia O'Neill, Christopher Aque, Dawoon Kim, Fabio Lattanzi Antinori, Gideon Vass, Girls unawares™, Helena Kate Whittingham, Jakob Rowlinson, James Irwin, Jameson Johnson, Jason Isolini, Jillian Mayer, Joseph Whitmore, Julio Rodriguez, Katharina Joy Book, Lotte Rose Kjær Skau, Lukas Schmeck, Marion Balac, Mathias Jansson, Michaela Nettell, Mike Mandel, Moises Sanabria, Nadim Abbas, Natalya Serkova, Nex (Claudio Guarnieri), Off Site Project (Elliott Burns & Pita Arreola), Owen Thackeray, Patrick Colhoun, Phett Waivv, Robby Toles, Romain Curnier, Ronnie Karfiol, Rosa Nuutinen, Roxman Gatt, Samantha Harvey, Santiago Muedano, Shamus Clisset, Stelios Ilchouk, Tamara Kametani, Teresa Hunyadi, Tom Galle, Trevor Paglen, Vanessa Kowalski and Wade Wallerstein.





Natalya Serkova

Peas, Pots, and Butter on Toast, or How to Get Away According to a Dolphin

I am a dolphin. I somersault, I swim and I make sounds that you cannot discern. Some of the sounds I make, you can hear, though. I say 'you' but I do not quite understand who is it that I am talking to. Where is this 'You'? I call myself a dolphin specifically for you, so that you could understand that I am a dolphin, and that a dolphin is what I am. Quite a straightforward logic. The logic of a dolphin. Eyes of a dolphin, skin of a dolphin, tail of a dolphin, head of a dolphin. There was a time when I used to be something else, not a dolphin, once there was a time when I was not the one who could claim that he was a dolphin. In other words, I have not always been a dolphin. Perhaps, at first glance it may seem strange—a dolphin who claims that he knows about the times when he was not a dolphin. At this point several questions may arise. The first of them is this: how come the dolphin knows about the time when he did not exist? The second question, which follows immediately after the first one, is why the dolphin knows something about time in general. Perhaps, those of you who are smart enough will also ask the third question: why is it that the dolphin who possesses this awareness of himself suddenly decides to share this knowledge with us? Being a dolphin, I think that answering the third question would certainly be more interesting for me personally. In the very least, while answering it I will also get a better sense of who you are. I have to warn you: I can be really slippery.

The most slippery creature that I have ever seen was a jellyfish. A jellyfish is something like a glue that has been squeezed out of its tube and left to dry stiff, unused. Now this clot is completely useless: you cannot glue anything with it, but it is a pity to just throw it away because it is such a waste. So all you can do is to be sitting there pondering your predicament: 'Damn, I have bought the most expensive glue in that damn store, just to be sure it would glue anything I need. And I was really careful not to use too much of it lest it goes to waste, and now what? I have squeezed all of it out of the tube so that there is nothing left in it now, and ended up with a mess of glue on the table. Maybe I should try to shove it back into the tube? Yeah, right, not happening. I am such an idiot'. Perhaps, a dolphin talking about glue resembles the talking cutie from the Disney cartoon rather than a real serious dolphin. Oh, I am sorry. Perhaps, there is something that you do not know about dolphins, although, of course, there is a lot I do not know about you either. Say, can I really argue that I know exactly what each of you spreads on toast at breakfast? Of course, I have no clue. More than that,

there is really no way for me to know it. This has nothing to do with me living in water (I guess this is what you would like to think: he knows nothing about us exactly because he lives in water). No, this is because even if I were to learn what is it that each of you spreads on toast every morning, I have no way of forcing all of you to spread exactly the same thing, so that at any given moment I could say: "Hey, Chipcha (that is the name of my friend, Chipcha), have you heard that today they have spread butter on their toasts? I can bet anything, but this is butter". The problem is that each of you spreads your bread with something different. And if you spread your bread with something yesterday, it does not really mean that you would use the exact same thing tomorrow. It is all very complicated.

Let us talk about something else for a change. Let us talk about whether I was glad to be born a dolphin. I can answer that unequivocally: of course, not! Who would I like to be born as? This is a misleading question. The correct one would have been this: which properties would I like to possess that could have made me content about who I am? My answer is: I would like to possess a single quality (which I, sadly, do not have at the moment), the ability to transform into anything in the world, into anything at all. A stupid desire, is it not? But to be frank, I do not find this desire stupid at all, and here is why. As you might have understood by now, I am well aware of the fact that a dolphin's skin, eyes, head and tail are in fact my very own skin, eyes, head and tail. A shark's tail cannot become mine, and the holes of a sea urchin cannot become my own. I am fully aware of where I end and where I begin, I am aware of the boundaries of my body. I cannot say that such knowledge about myself brings something particularly good into my life. I think I would have been so much happier if I could try on the holes of a sea urchin, if I could become these holes myself. For a while, my traces would have become elusive, impossible to detect. I say "for a while", because someone is certainly bound to figure out pretty soon that now I am a sea urchin with all the holes that come with it, and that from then on I can be treated as a sea urchin. But that period of time during which everyone around me is still convinced that I am a dolphin, could have become the time of real freedom for me. The master's skills consists of this ability to infinitely extend the time when everyone around you is certain that you are a dolphin while in reality you have been a sea urchin for quite some time now.

Why do I insist on being elusive? Look at me and give yourselves an answer. I am a dolphin. Everyone is convinced that he or she knows everything there is to know about me. Even you are sure that you know at least something about me. In short, even those who know nothing about me are bound to learn at least something, provided that they take time to observe me for a while. The only thing that it takes—a dolphin (that is, myself) to remain a dolphin for the duration of the entire observation period. In doing so I can do a million things at once. I can turn into plastic, dead or alive, can paint myself black or blue, can glue seahorses onto my skin and pretend that I am just a pile of seahorses. In short, I can do a lot about myself so as to no longer resemble myself. But one thing will remain the same: I will still be a dolphin. I am sure you have seen plenty of dolphins in your life. I am also sure that they were all very different from one another. However, (I guess by now you have already guessed what I am driving at), all of them were dolphins. While a dolphin is still a dolphin, you feel pretty confident, do not you? You hardly expect a dolphin to suddenly split into a thousand little pieces, each of which will unexpectedly grow in size really quickly, grow spikes all over and pierce your body in millions of places for no reason at all? However, those of you who upon seeing a dolphin secretly expect such turn of events to happen can congratulate themselves on being able to foresee the future. The future is the time when dolphins will be able to split into millions of little pieces and grow spikes, but I would really love to be able to learn to do just that right now.

But do you think that elusiveness, the ability to avoid a stranger's gaze, grants freedom? I have been thinking a lot about it lately. If you look at me and do not see a dolphin in my place, do I become any less of a dolphin for that? Yes and no. "Yes", because I no longer exist for you. And "no" because I still am what I am for myself. The problem is that in order to cease being a dolphin for myself I would have to invent some new language, in which the very word "dolphin" will mean being and not being a dolphin at the same time. Let me give you a simple example. I have already mentioned my friend Chipcha, we have known each other for a very long time. Whenever I call him by his name he always turns around because he knows that he is Chipcha. But Chipcha 2.0, the Chipcha liberated, emancipated from himself might as well not turn around. And this is, of course, not because he does not want to see me, but because he would not be 100% sure that this Chipcha is necessarily none other but him being called by his

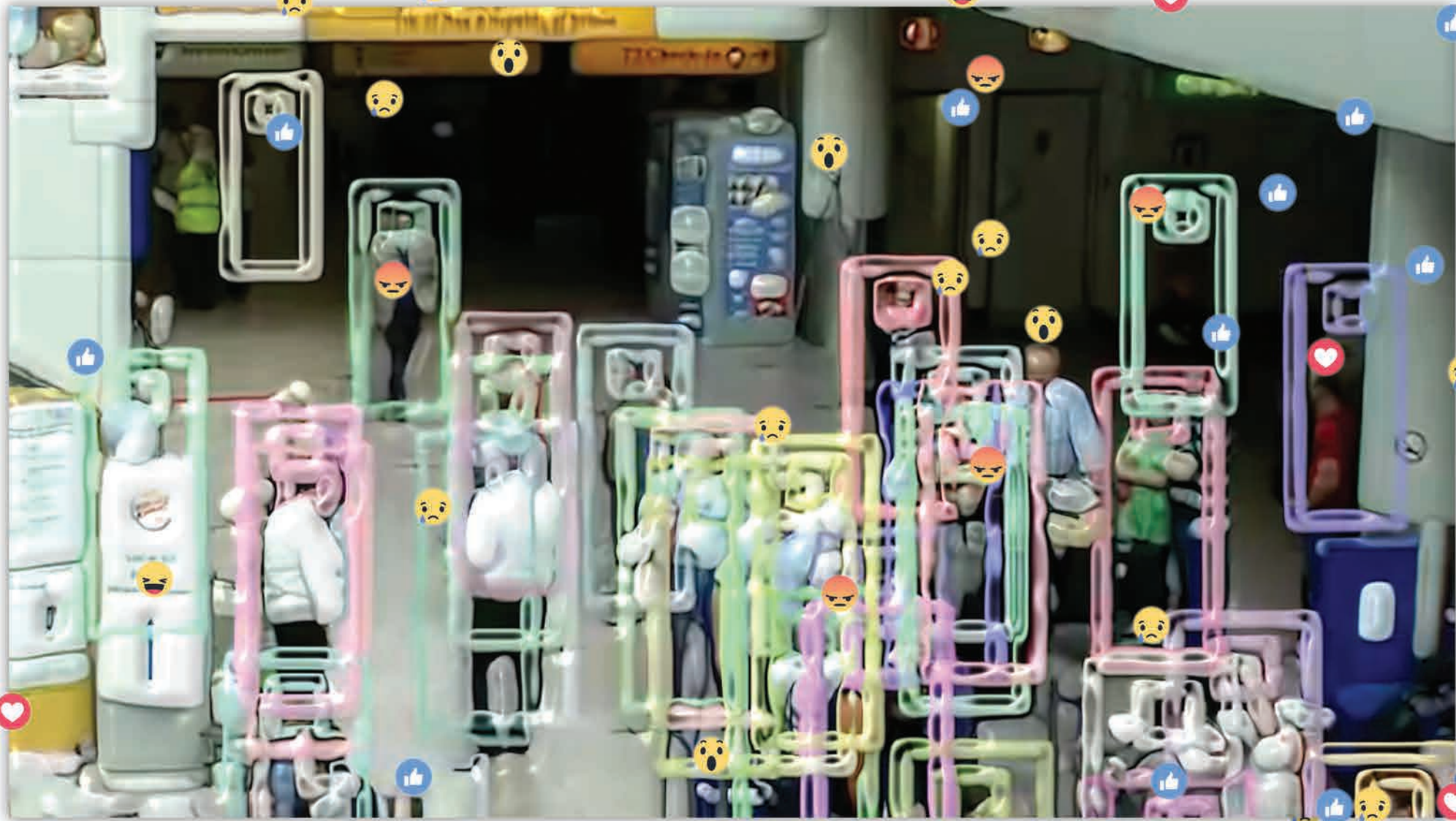
name. Or, let us put it even clearer: the moment I called him by his name, the very same moment he would not be a Chipcha. So it is as if I see and not see him at the same time, as if he exists and does not. Funny, is not it? Of course, I would then have had to construct a totally new logic of my relationship with Chipcha. I would have had to take into consideration my friend's utter elusiveness. Chipcha would have become the air I breathe, because although I do not see the air I still breathe it. There is even something romantic to it. Yet, is not that the very core of romanticism—to remain in the state of constant elusiveness? We live in very romantic times.

I am an optimist, as you may well see. I renounce my claims to understanding who you are. I can turn the fact that I do not understand who you are, into an advantage for myself, not a disadvantage or a flaw. I take that ignorance and shape a completely new foundation for the relationship that we have between you and I. Just like Chipcha, you become something that is devoid of definite boundaries, sprawls and expands infinitely in any possible direction, can transform itself into this or that entity. I have acknowledged that you possess that absolute elasticity of yours, the ability to split into millions of pieces. I see and not see you at the same time. If you understand what I am talking about, you can do the same in relation to me. Then you will be able to divide me into millions of pieces and then to piece me back together while I would be infinitely happy that we both were able to pull it off. That may sound paradoxical, but perhaps, after these mutual splittings and divisions we could become closer, than we have ever been before. At least because we recognize the mutual presence of each of us in any possible point at any possible moment in time. We will acknowledge that each of us can be sprayed or dispersed like gas while retaining something that will still be “us”. Gases have the ability to constantly mix with each other, and this too, is purely romantic.

Let me tell you one final story to wrap it up. When I was little, my mum used to give me different names: a little pot, a little pea, a little pebble, a little tooth. But once I got lost and she used the single name to find me: a little dolphin. This is who I became once she lost sight of me: I became an ordinary little dolphin and ceased being a little pot or a little pebble stone. I drew one crucial conclusion from this experience: if I want to stay a little pot or a little pebble and a thousand other things forever, I should not hide, but remain very much present and under the eyes of as many people who

can potentially see me as possible. This is the only way for me to really hide myself one day, having acquired the desired ability to transform myself into anything and everything in the world. I will be able to move with lightning speed while simultaneously standing still, I will be able to disperse and deceive myself, since in my new language deception will be equal to the most durable physical law. I will be seen by everyone, yet everyone will see something else in my place. I will cease being a dolphin, while still remaining one. And that is when the future arrives.

Natalya Serkova (b. 1988, Omsk, Russia) is a writer and art theorist. She is currently studying philosophy in RSUH, Moscow. She is also the co-founder of TZVETNIK, a project exploring and promoting the newest contemporary art from around the world.





Vanessa Kowalski

Watch on for Snakes

Hare-footed attention span eyelids dart around the room like the peskiest of fruit flies come fall, when the kitchen sink drain is still full of the rot of summer fruit skins. Swatting and flailing, each of your neck-breaking movements are recorded, then like deli meat processed, archived, backed up, stored, stacking, creating the very materials necessary for building the data depository of the future. Your movements pile up like bricks and are sold back to you when you construct a fortress to hide in. How to protect yourself from yourself? The consumed consuming and the consumer being consumed. The user is using, using, used.

The Internet is a snake with its tail in its mouth. A visualization of linear progress, one that holds true to the laws of the horizon as both the body of the snake and the Internet taper and thin into a vanishing point that promises beyond, or elsewhere at the very least. McLuhan's railway stretches toward the greener pastures of innocence. The present went that-a-way, right into the hole in the wall. Like a tromp l'oeil cartoon tunnel still dripping, a mouth widens.

With a hinged jaw, the digital cavern bellows with a resounding echo back to the first click, the first fang encounter. The devil embodied hisses its own sweet chorus, a bifid tongue gathering data on potential lovers, predators, prey in a 100km radius. Walking its mouth across its prize, a snake can ingest another that exceeds its own size. It cradles its own rattle in its gob. Its jawline rigged with tendons and muscles, contrary to popular belief, does not detach from its skull when agape. It expands like a toothy elastic, stretches out, and snaps back into place. Swallowing you whole without having to re-apply lipstick. With a serpentine writhe, it scrolls between boulders to reveal a new skin.

Just when you thought that a pattern revealed itself as an encoded yet decipherable language, the way to read it shifted, the alphabet updated—the old skin left behind to be recycled by hands or winds or machines, if at all. The shedding of snake skins is as much of a ritual as the necessary software updates we pause to perform on our devices. You've outgrown your parasite laden model. We allow ourselves to update when we feel safe, when we feel that we won't miss or be missed—most often when we sleep (and our software has evolved to make this 'presence optional' update possible). The snake too discards its outdated bodily

technology when nobody is watching, but when it slithers away anew, it leaves behind the palpable marker of time, renders it imperfect, dry, cracking, obsolete. Out with the old and in with the newer model! Display the carapace above your mantle next to your 1st generation iPhone.

I've never had a dangerous encounter with a snake, but we've touched many a time before, the garden snake, the circus boa constrictor, the lamp-warmed house pet, and I. But those were censored snakes, snakes with parental settings, supervised, trained, restrained, blocked domains, on invisible leashes. The only thing that attracts me in the way that snakes do is the World Wide Web, and the closest I've ever come to an encounter with a poisonous snake is having a Facebook profile.

Watch on for snakes, not out. There is no off, there is no out. A warning to beware the quiet slithering ground worm stiff with imminent strike, and for the silent attacks inflicted on our digital docile bodies. We play with snakes every day; prodding their armor puzzled bodies with computer mice to pierce through to the tender inner soft, convincing ourselves that we will at last bring to boil the cold blooded—just a few more minutes. Our adrenaline and dopamine receptors fire on all counts watching the snake recoil and assume the strike position, double-tapping the like button, inviting attack with every 140 characters. An ancient alien charms us to get close, to lean in and touch the space where we might find the vestiges of once propelling limbs, to refract in the eye slime of the second lid—how fitting that it too is called the spectacle. You came to see yourself here, not in a mirror, but in the inexorable void.

Upload the encounter. Would you like to share this information with other users nearby?

Inch forward in the pursuit of narcissism, move toward your reflection and let yourself consign to oblivion the fact that it is housed in the eye of the body of the serpent. It is what we have been trained to look beyond—we see the Internet as a boundless pool of democratic black potential. We forget that the eye is just a container, its function, shape and cognitive influence ultimately determined in the pulsating centralized data center, or brain. It does not see, but it senses. Do not forget: venom runs through this blood. In a face to face encounter, we are eager to see if the digital grass is any greener on the other side, or if we should add

magenta. Its poison is not of the fatal kind, but cues the onslaught of a particular kind of death, a virus, expanding a network of the inflicted, a cult you cannot leave just because nobody has figured out how, yet. Like we cannot become uncharmed, we can never revert back to a state of the offline.

How to reconcile this fatal attraction, how to sustain the stand-off between safety and the serpent? And why bother staying safe? You cannot cast blame on Adam or Eve because you too have succumbed to the serpent's rhetoric and have chosen to eat from the tree of knowledge, of good and evil. Our collective guilt can be traced back to a Google search.

Both indigenous and contemporary populations have injected themselves with small doses of poisonous venoms in efforts to build up immunity, to sustain ideas of youth and health, and out of sheer boredom and curiosity. Like a homeopathic cure, wherein the toxin which troubles the body is ingested in a smaller dosage to fight its symptoms, we reconcile our physical bodies with the seemingly intangible presence of the web by inserting ourselves. We simultaneously become porous receptacles. We put ourselves online—reduce our individuality to an algorithm, to a subset of data: name, birth weight, password, address, answers to personal questions; it is a willed synchronization. At the same time, not in exchange for the data we provide, but rather as a byproduct of our collective obsession to upload, the online has put itself in us. Our bodies physically respond to and feel media remarks—pockets perpetually buzzing, the email refreshing carpal tunnel, the vibration of a rare phone call.

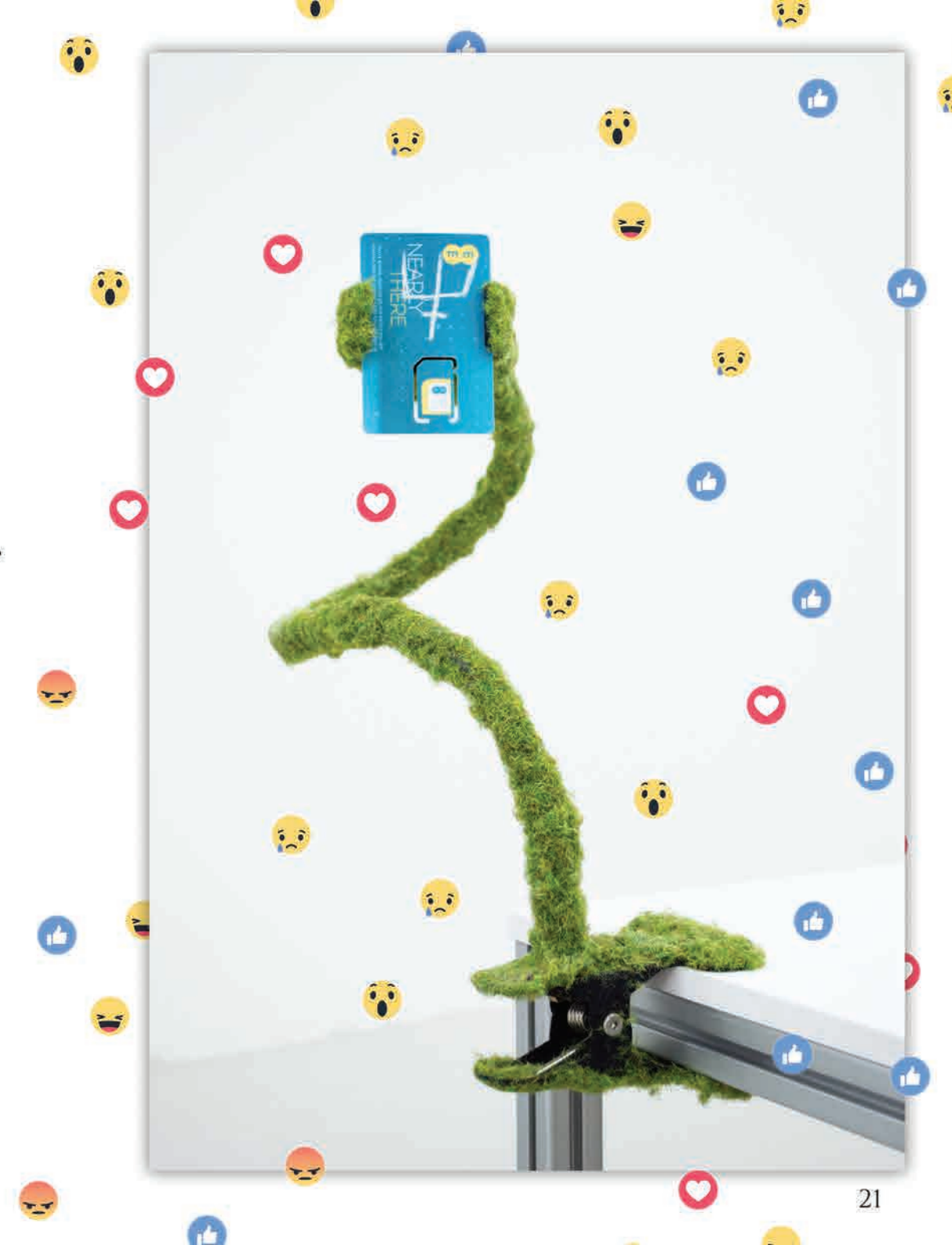
Are we doomed to dance like this forever?

Kicking up dust in the desert surrounded by snakes, we have several options: the first is an exercise in complete avoidance of these snakes, like those who have never logged on (too late for you). Another option is to look on from a safe distance, getting close enough to make a photograph and reblog it, but not close enough to warrant serious threat. If we move in any closer, the tempo of the dance piques—the snake is swift, smart, tastes your smell with its tongue, anticipates or even provokes your next move. This is where the line of no return lies. We have encroached a guarded territory, trespassing with the risk of humiliation,

pain, punishment, and poison, and with the goal of heroism, the possibility of a celebrated individualism—imagine yourself as the proud fisherman posing with your record-breaking catch, your blue fin tuna a fibre-optic submarine cable still writhing and dripping with sea salt.

But no matter how we dance, the reality is that we do. Pay attention, the strike comes when we stop staring the snake in its unblinking eyes.

Vanessa Kowalski (b. 1991, Connecticut, USA) is an independent curator, visual artist, writer and editor currently living in Helsinki who keeps bees but never gets stung. She recently finished her Master's thesis about curating online, or rather, how to buy time in the middle of nowhere. She writes about the Internet because she's infatuated with the tangibility of invisibility and thinks that if she does so long enough she might accidentally learn how to live forever.





Phett Waivv

An Extract From: The Art of Warring Networks

Accelerated growth has led to the birth of the hybrid producer-consumer; the 'prosumer,' who actively constructs their own identity as well as consuming others'. This feeds into the wider artistic phenomenon described by Claire Bishop as the 'social turn'. Bishop's original contextualisation of the social turn was seen in the shift towards participatory modes of art with an "aim to place pressure on conventional modes of artistic production and consumption under capitalism...part of an ongoing history of attempts to rethink art collectively."

The development of the internet has created a situation wherein high and low culture are inseparable, web presence and physical presence have become conflated, and temporal and spatial distances have been collapsed. Building on the writings of Walter Benjamin, Hito Steyerl claims that authenticity, originality, and the masterpiece are no longer relevant to online artistic processes today, given the speed new work is made and its equally fast-paced obsolescence. Long-debated enquiries concerning authenticity, originality, and the masterpiece have been replaced by copyright laws, reproduction rights, and limited edition runs respectively—all in the service of maintaining an art market rather than prioritizing radical work.

This development has been catalysed by the rise of Network Culture as discussed by Kazys Varnelis. Varnelis claims that Network Culture is the successor of postmodernism, subtly displacing its dominant cultural logic from the 1990s onwards; "No new "ism" has emerged: that would lay claim to the familiar territory of manifestos, symposia, museum exhibits, and so on. Instead, network culture is a more emergent phenomenon." This displacement is driven by global shifts in technology's increasing mobility, an advance of "aesthetic populism" resulting from the closeness of markets and culture, and a greater participation in the media—the social turn has been granted through a greater accessibility of information than ever before.

Some argue that the digital image is emerging is the new readymade; one which is produced, transmitted, and modified through the network. Steyerl's notion of the poor image as a "copy in motion," captures the hyper-compressed and over-distributed nature of such images; "poor images are poor because they are heavily compressed and travel quickly.

They lose matter and gain speed.” These images are part of a larger phenomenon regarding the privilege of visibility, according to Groys:

In order to make visible himself or herself in the contemporary context of mass artistic production, the artist needs a spectator who can overlook the immeasurable quantity of artistic production and formulate an aesthetic judgment that would single out this particular artist from the mass of other artists...If contemporary society is, therefore, still a society of spectacle, then it seems to be a spectacle without spectators.

The spectacle of the poor image sees it sparring against other mass-produced images to gain spectators, collectively realised as economies of attention, in the larger battlefield of competitive networks. This is a symptom which Jonathan Crary refers to as “the end of sleep,” in his eponymously titled book *24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep* from 2009, which posits that the needs of late capitalism has driven its labour force into an atemporal realm where the idea of running for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is treated as ‘business as usual.’ He posits that the constant burden of work has been neutralized as a new form of normativity which we accept rather than endure. Crary writes specifically on how normativity is determined by our use of the network and the data we submit, which contributes to the making of Big Data and continues our own exploitation. In all of this, the image is aggressed by these nullifying modes while its producers are denied autonomy by networks of distribution.

Mobilization of identity disrupts conventional usership and sees the mediated construction of identity turned into a tool for political change. This is not a political change which emphasises the labour of single revolutionaries, but rather draws attention to a network of artists working today. Identity is used on the network as a call to arms to interrogate the commonplace and reclaim the purposes of self-representation.

Crary acknowledges that there is much political leverage which cannot be ignored; a contextual backdrop of information wars, data crises, and new identity politics provide the artillery, the grounds, and reason for critical political engagement. This backdrop has become a new breeding ground for a selfhood which Horning defines as “infinitely malleable,” within the constraints of the network’s system; this online self is one which is composed of images and their metadata. To participate in a network is

social engagement, with some aiming to expose the network’s unseen processes in order to instigate social change rather than make a quick turnover; seeking audiences and gaining their economies of attention in order to change how the network is perceived.

In 1997 Matthew Fuller, Colin Green, and Simon Pope –a critic, programmer, and artist respectively– created Web Stalker under the name of I/O/D 4. Born out of interests in distribution and freeware on the internet, this was a rupture to the conventional mode of viewing access granted through corporate browsers available at the time, mapping data into “neighbourhoods” and providing an interface in pure HTML rather than graphics. Fuller’s branding of the project as “not-just-art,” saw the beginnings of an audience who were no longer just spectators but participants in creating their own content and manipulating their own images.

The agenda to network the masses was continued in 2001 by Eva and Franco Mattes of 0100101110101101.ORG who pioneered the Life Sharing Project. In creating a promiscuous setting which forced computers to share data, privacy on the network was could not be taken for granted any longer. From digital artwork intended for display, to the personal email, the forced compression of the network was claimed to be:

A matter of politics more than of ‘psychology’...the user can utilise what he finds in our computer, not only the documents and software, but also the mechanisms that rule and maintain 0100101110101101.ORG; the relations with the Net; the strategies; the tactics and the tricks; the contacts with institutions; access to funds; the flow of money that comes in and goes out...concrete knowledge– that which is normally considered ‘private’– can be transformed into a weapon, a tool that can be reused.

The mobilisation of the network as ammunition against corporations has its legacy in formal networks of distribution, which could be considered to be a type of body in themselves. An example of this can be seen in JenniCam, which began in 1996 as a webcam based “site about real life,” according to its protagonist, Jennifer Ringley, who would be broadcasted carrying out mundane, daily tasks. Capitalising on her ordinariness and the growing network around her, Ringley began charging her viewers a subscription fee for a more personalised experience.

Credited by many for the introduction of the camgirl, reality television, and the beginnings of internet celebrity culture, Ringley brought to light major structures which underscore network culture and the post-surveillance condition– the potency of normality, its networks of distribution, as well as the exploitation of unpaid labour. Groys claims that the spectacle of the everyday still appeals to mass audiences, gaining economies of attention for the spectacle’s candidness, expressions of authenticity and vulnerability in raw, uncensored form.

Krissi Jimroglou’s essay, ‘A Camera with a View: JenniCam, Visual Representation, and Cyborg Subjectivity,’ examines JenniCam’s visual representations and cyborg subjectivities which offer “a constant window...Jenni integrates flesh and machine in the formation and display of a cyborg subjectivity, a hybridised identity (re)presented through the new technology of the digital camera.” The use of the unenhanced, ‘real’ body as weapon is a form of powerplay in a private space of Ringley’s bedroom which blurs the binary between IRL and URL, and in effect stake out her position of as human in the face of emerging technology. The malleability of female identity online demonstrates how self-expression can be tactically used to construct subversive, queered personas. Jimroglou claims that JenniCam’s viewers were homogeneously voyeurs baited by the project’s potential to spark desire, however, it is necessary to remark that Ringley’s adoption of the webcam provided a prototype for the widely disseminated personal image which is still seen today. Ringley’s project inevitably provided some of the devices which antagonise the network today, rather than antagonising it herself.

Michael Connor sees the arrival of Web 2.0 as a shift from a read-only to an infinitely rewritable interface of the network, heralding the beginnings of the ‘prosumer’ and the post-surveillance condition. We see Bishop’s social turn come about through these new digital contexts of image saturation and enhancement. Web 2.0’s networks provides its users with both the tools and an audience to respectively enhance and project one’s image, echoing Rob Horning’s suggestion that the creation of successfully authentic versions of an ideal self online is a common aspiration of the masses. Jonathan Crary’s writings expand this idea, claiming that the generic user is a participant performing on the internet arena 24/7 to generate information in endless streams. With the growth of

social networks, this data is stratified and becomes Big Data, feeding back into the network to channel products, services, and maintain interest. Horning claims that this results in our versions of self being dictated by Big Data and belonging to a wave of normativity which has been algorithmically stratified by our own input. Hito Steyerl further argues that this wave of normativity circulating the network affects the content generated by new modes of image-production– as a result of this, the user profile and its content on the network becomes underscored by an algorithmically determined normativity.

Mass individuality is a pre-packaged oxymoron which popular social networks such as YouTube, Instagram, and Tumblr sell by the minute. They allow users to post their own works as well as reposting or ‘liking’ that of other users to form social connections. The inception of such networks in the last few years has attracted artists looking to self-publish, self-brand, and reach a global audience. There is however, a growing sense of discontent with the restrictive and primarily affirmative functions provided by the social network according to critics like Groys who view social networking is a form of unpaid labour affirming and acquiring labour forces through outsourcing to the user. Users consent to being part of a network given its benefits of connectivity, communication, and companionship– these however, maintain what has been described as the “logic of Late Capitalism.” Networked communities attempting to express individuality en-masse results in a greater homogenisation through algorithmic classification.

Endless, accelerated image-production becomes ‘normal,’ and every prosumer becomes a provider of material for other projects. Before, power exchange was visible but the internet and its devices of creative labour have flattened the time and spaces these processes can occur in. File sharing became Life Sharing, and now it has become fully transformed into life.

Despite this, the creation of networked identity is not as deterministic as it seems; artists are actively forging their own positions of resistance against the network. An assault on the network is made possible through practitioners’ use of technologically mediated identities. The selfie is a mode of self-representation which has grown out of mobile technology

and the networking platforms supported on these. Of recent, it has become recognised as an artistic phenomenon closely associated with the post-surveillance condition. The selfie is a definitive trope of Network Culture given its brevity as a form of representation, providing transparent, documentary evidence for internal or external states of their author. These are treated as inherently authentic artefacts and so, are invested with legitimacy for their supposed candidness of representation.

Phett Waivv (b. 1993, London, UK) is an interdisciplinary artist and designer with a degree in Art History and an interest in methods of digital production (visual and ambient). Currently based in South-East London, Phett's practice centres around the interrogation of text, the body, and the spaces they occupy. Has worked and consulted on over two dozen theatre productions. Phett has a background in digital research to complement an IRL focus on large-scale abstract pieces within their body of work.





Caroline Elbaor

In conversation with Christopher Aque

In the several decades that have passed since George Orwell first introduced the enigmatic, omniscient presence of “Big Brother” in his classic dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the name of the would-be totalitarian leader has morphed into something less frequently associated with Orwell’s tale than with the rhetoric of today’s fear-mongering politicians—or depending on who you ask—the immensely-popular international television franchise of the same name.

Generally speaking, the word surveillance tends to carry dirty connotations, conjuring images of corrupt governments or Peeping Toms. Yet, in a seemingly bizarre twist, despite the fact that the collective Western attitude towards “surveillance” in the broadest sense is one of disgust, we also seem to directly contradict ourselves by continuing to welcome it, with the tacit agreement that we remain hush-hush about its pervasive nature.

The work of New York-based artist Christopher Aque deftly manages to navigate this delicate divide, at once acknowledging the severe and lasting consequences of surveillance tactics while simultaneously managing to present the act in a somewhat softer—if not less threatening—light. He achieves this by focusing on the role of the incredibly-human experience of desire (in both the sexual and emotional senses) that is embedded within the act surveillance. Further to this, Aque creates what is arguably a meditation on how the desire impulse might be changing form in today’s circumstances, with surveillance as ubiquitous as it is. Surveillance is, arguably, deeply intimate, potentially even capable of linking us back to ourselves.

By factoring desire so heavily into the equation, Aque reorients the angle from which one might approach the issue of surveillance, opening up a highly original space in which to explore this contemporary phenomenon.

Caroline Elbaor: Could you explain for me how you personally connect the dots from today’s prevalence of surveillance to gay men in particular? Are you looking at this in contemporary circumstances or the history of gay men being surveilled/persecuted? I’m not meaning to ask a pointed question, but rather just genuinely want to know your thoughts.

Christopher Aque: Surveillance, in my work, can be thought of as a structure in which we are always (knowingly, complicity, but

unconsciously) being watched, that our identities are always being deduced algorithmically based on our choices. And I find it very interesting that in that way, the private is always, repeatedly, continuously being made public. (All the more obvious with the recent Cambridge Analytica news.) I also started thinking about desire, similarly, though maybe more from the perspective of the surveillant—always looking and taking in data and processing it. There's a way in which all bodies are abstracted, then, or at least depersonalized, a sort of weighing of various factors. It's a bit inhuman but simultaneously carnal, or primal.

When I conceived of the body of work that I developed for my last show (the "Identity Intelligence" photos), I was very much engaged with certain historical narratives of surveillance. And, of course, part of that narrative is that "being watched" is also feeling controlled. A few years earlier I had bought a 1950s spy camera, and it was really interesting to me to think of how the persecution of gays during the Cold War (aka the Lavender Scare) had this weird historical overlap.

But all that in a way is just sort of the backdrop to the work—like the known set of historical preconditions. And strangely, the tenor of this work really changed after Trump was elected—"difference" really came to the fore again as something that was threatening, and all these feelings of "complicity" that I was engaged with became a lot more charged.

The new film that is part of the show at Regards, called "Idling," engages these feelings. Certainly there's a connection to "surveillance," in that I, with a camera, am watching men sunbathing in Prospect Park. But there are numerous tensions exposed here—the public space for private acts; by whom this public space is used; and even what the conditions are for my engaging as the surveillant.

To describe the film a bit more, it's composed of 4 scenes, shot as the full duration of a Super 8 cartridge—just still shots of men sunbathing in the park. Doing nothing. They are all white, more or less my age, and shot during weekday afternoons when I was off from work. During the three-and-a-half minutes of each cartridge, my body would shake and move slightly as I tried to hold the camera in place. This is all labour-intensively, frame-by-frame, edited in post-production so that the body stays centred, as the frame sort of jitters around the empty space of the monitor.

I had moved to Bed-Stuy the year before, and thought a lot about these shifting demographics of Brooklyn, how much whiter the neighbourhoods around me were getting, how I as a young artist was only fuelling and perpetuating these changes. I would go to the park a lot—obviously in part because I had the idea to make this video—but it also just gave me the sense that I was doing something. Walking around the wooded area between the Long Meadow and Flatbush Ave, I realized I had stumbled into a still active cruising ground. Doing some further research later, it had been a common spot for black and Latino men from the neighbourhood. Suddenly there were so many other narratives at play in the video—of what gets to be visible, who gets to be seen, what acts are permissible, when and by whom.

CE: When you discuss surveillance and say that we are "always being watched," who exactly are you claiming is the surveillant in this scenario? Who would you say is ultimately responsible for this invasive, frightening type of surveillance you describe? I can guess in a vague way, but I'd like to pin it down a bit more and hear it in your own words.

CA: The main surveillants who are "always watching" in this case are corporations like Google and Apple. (And this level of watching is ubiquitous and maybe even largely innocuous—I don't mean to make it sound like a surveillance conspiracy. I might have the camera taped off on my computer, but I don't truly believe that there's an NSA agent accessing my footage 24/7 on the other side.) I mean more that our behaviours are always being tracked—and surveillance is probably more used to sell us services and commodities based on our proclivities than for any sort of political or law enforcement angle. It is indeed a form of policing, and one I think we will see more and more politicized.

In other words, being watched is constant, but maybe as much about others trying to figure out our desires.

CE: In talking a little bit more about surveillance, you seem (in my opinion) to be casting the act of surveillance in a neutral—or even negative—light, especially when it comes to the history of surveillance, and in particular, its history with gay men. But then you do something interesting: you assume the role of surveillant yourself. How do you navigate this? You mention this very tension. Can you expand on it a bit?

CA: I think my own role as a surveillant can be thought of in a few ways. In one, I feel very complicit within these powerful systems, as I think we almost all are. After all, we willingly hand over a tremendous amount of information about ourselves to these corporations.

But in another way, I feel that looking (specifically, “desirous” looking) isn’t so different—if I see a cute guy on the street, I’m probably reading for codes to know whether or not he’s gay. It’s always a certain algorithm being processed in order to determine who someone is and what they want.

CE: I’ve been particularly interested lately in ideas of how fantasy and desire function today, and how they are impacted by the advent of affective technologies (this, of course, is all within the context of capitalism, and I should specify that I am referring in this case to life in contemporary Western society). I wonder how these questions might play out in your work?

I’m thinking specifically about how you say, “our identities are always being deduced algorithmically based on our choices” that you then followed that up by bringing in desire. Desire is painfully human—completely and inextricably tied to the most private and vulnerable parts of us—yet is simultaneously, in some ways, a product of affective technologies.... Which is, bottom line, the product of capitalism. Do you have any interest in exploring the role of desire as influenced by capitalist constructs?

CA: This is a really good question, and actually articulates the roots of my work more than you would ever know. (A lot of my earlier work was really obviously engaging these issues—thinking through melodrama and these almost campy things as this weird cycle of homosexual affect.)

Absolutely, desire is both the ultimate selling tool but also what we are being sold. And this is absolutely human. I think that is why you see so much hand in the work, or so much of me. All of this in a way is about my own desire, my own inhabiting of the world, how someone is sold to themselves.

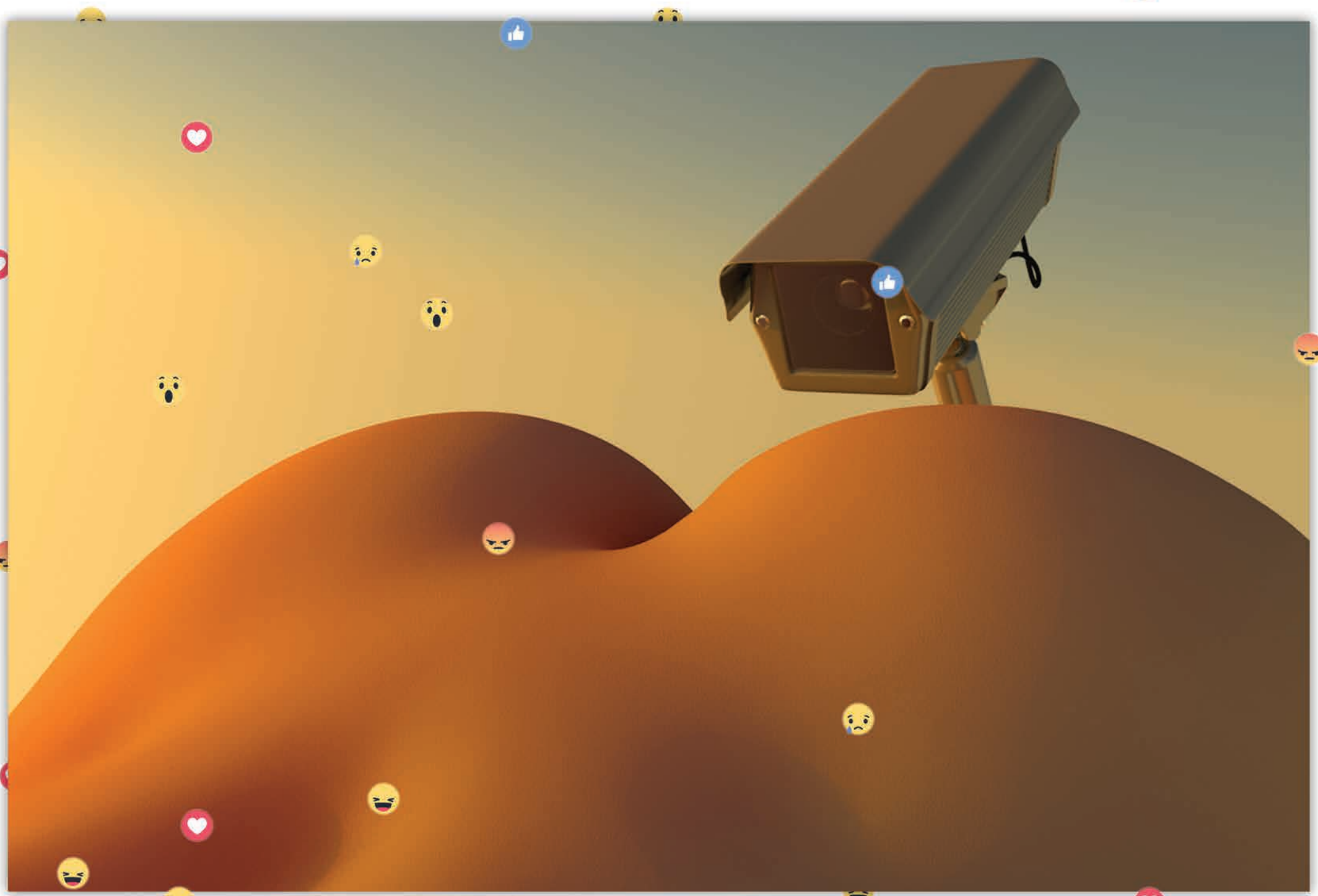
A really obvious correlation can be made between the decline of cruising and hook-up apps. But it’s also a weird problem—a

desexualisation of space simultaneous with wide-spread gentrification in the city and the takeover of properties by banks and other huge corporations. (Maybe it’s interesting to know more about me in the work here—I’ve had the same partner for 10 years. I haven’t participated in any of this. So maybe that’s a bit where the voyeurism comes in, but it’s also a way of looking for myself in others, as I’ve said. Sort of seeing yourself reflected, or your desire acknowledged. Some recognition of yourself as a desiring/desirous body).

In that way, I think desire is really constant, but maybe becomes increasingly passive. I’m not sure if that “kills healthy experiences of desire,” but I think it sort of renegotiates these terms... There’s something impersonal about it... And in that way, feels very contemporary.

Christopher Aque (b. 1987, Chicago, USA) is a New York-based visual artist. His work addresses intimacy, desire, and sexuality in relation to surveillance, data collection, and other expressions of power. He received his BA from the University of Chicago in 2009, his MFA from Hunter College in 2016, and was a participant at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in 2012. His work has been included in exhibitions at SculptureCenter, New York; Laurel Gitlen, New York; Motel, Brooklyn, NY; and Regards, Chicago, among others.

Caroline Elbaor (b. 1989, Dallas, TX) is a curator and writer. She is on the curatorial team at Dallas Contemporary, and her writing on contemporary art has appeared in various publications including ArtReview, Bomb Magazine, VICE, Flash Art Online, Curating the Contemporary, Young Artists in Conversation, and artnet News, among others. She holds a BA in Art History from New York University and an MFA in Curating with Distinction from Goldsmiths, University of London.





Jakob Rowlinson

Manifestations of Deceit in Surveillance Societies

There is a deception at work in our society, and it pertains to the need for surveillance to ensure our personal and national safety. The deception endures because of the long-held impression that mass observation prevents harm to the individual. In reality, such surveillance demonises 'the other', marginalising groups along ethnic and economic lines, and is only concerned with the good of the collective. Its real agenda though – perhaps obviously – is to control, direct, and manipulate the people it claims to protect, increasingly for more opaque political purposes by third party operatives in ways we haven't fully comprehended. Observation however is not a new phenomenon, and there will be few who are unaware that such surveillance exists. But its evolution from general CCTV into more intrusive formats such as digital and online surveillance, mean we as a society have undergone some form of self-deception to ensure we can get on with our daily lives.

To 'deceive' is to convince a person of something contrary to what you believe is true. Belief in a certain fact or cause determines whether your words or actions are deceitful. At its core, deception is synonymous with the act of lying and distortions of the truth, and in the current climate of fake-news and political fact-bending, deception of this kind appears to have become ever more prevalent in the institutions once regarded as trustworthy. Naturally however, deception is 'good' for us and commonplace in our daily activities; communication necessitates the subtle use of white lies as 'social lubricants' and lies can be justified if their intention is to protect or shield an individual from harm. Furthermore as an artist, deception has been a fundamental tool for my practice. What this essay hopes to set out is ways of utilising deception as a means of staying afloat above the continuing erosion of privacy and individual agency. In surveillance societies, it also feels particularly relevant to understand deception, especially as the internet has such a grip on our personal lives and can be so easily monitored or used in a negative way. To this end, this valence between being deceived and not fully being deceived, otherwise known as the suspension of disbelief, is fundamental for navigating our lives. Moreover, it is especially necessary for artists working within the parameters of late capitalism, the internet era, and surveillance societies.

The dawning of the Age of Control

From his historical studies into eighteenth and nineteenth century penitentiaries, Michel Foucault sought to unveil what he saw as “the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms... throughout society”.³⁸ Inspired by Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, Foucault became concerned with highlighting the deceptive ways in which the structure of society governed individual behaviour. He noted how a “panopticism”¹ was applied by governing bodies not just in prisons but across institutions, affording them greater power and efficiency at the cost of greater personal freedom: for “the panoptic schema makes any apparatus of power more intense”².

In this way, Foucault demonstrated how historical methods of control flowed over from prisons into hospitals, factories, and boarding schools. By using similar structures of confinement, these disciplinary bodies ensured obedience in their workers/patients/students whilst simultaneously increasing their productivity. Terming these forms of manipulative environs 'discipline societies', Foucault noted how they “operate by organising major sites of confinement”. To Foucault, “individuals are always going from one closed site to another”³, rolling on from their boarding school to the army barracks, and thus existing within a perpetual society of deception - where the individual's actions appear to be independent and free whilst in reality are being subjected to continued scrutiny and manipulation. This spawned his obvious comparisons between the factory foreman, tasked with overseeing the workers and regulating productivity, and the guard tower set inside the prison, watching for disobedience amongst the inmates.

As an historian and social theorist, by referring to the historical systems of control implicit in early forms of capitalism, Foucault sought to draw attention to the manipulation he saw in governments and societies around the world in his own time. It is no small leap to equate the panopticism of the nineteenth century prison yard to the CCTV heavy public spaces he saw developing in major cities both in the US and in Europe.

Building upon this work Gilles Deleuze developed a theory to outline how 'discipline societies' gradually came to be replaced by 'control societies'. In *Negotiations* he argues that through a variety of deceptive

techniques, 'control societies' found ways of producing even greater means of guiding the actions of citizens and manipulating people. These new control societies were signified by the breaking down of former penitentiary sites of confinement into apparently more free and democratic ones. For example, he noted how prisons went from sites of containment to instead advocating “the use of electronic tagging to force offenders to stay at home between certain hours”⁴, whilst high walled lunatic asylums of the 19th century broke down into a range of new spaces: the “community psychiatry, day hospitals, and home care... [all of which] initially presented new freedoms, while at the same time [they were] contributing to mechanisms of control as rigorous as the harshest confinement”⁵. Perhaps most pertinently, Deleuze notes how assessment became an active tool for states to ensure conformity. Unlike qualifications and examinations from the past he argued, assessment continued throughout one's career, forcing the workforce to meet ever more stringent targets, and less individual decisions. By offering this apparently more liberating and flexible format of existence, it simultaneously ensures a continual assessment on a local, personal and an ever more intrusive scale, becoming therefore fundamentally more deceitful.

II

Interfaces, the Internet, and Surveillance Society

It is not hard to see how Deleuze's ideas of 'control societies' have been taken by some as prefiguring the rise of deception and observation in the internet age. Today's use of online accounts and avatars has created a set of second identities that are curated and edited and by users, but which allows for external forms of manipulation to take root. Due to its ubiquity and veiled observational potential, the internet has in fact become the most devastating form of surveillance to date. As the internet has encroached into schools, the workplace, our homes, and into our pockets, in some ways it makes it the culmination of the types of society first etched out by Foucault. However, it is far more widespread, and has ultimately precipitated the collapse of the private into the public sphere.

Initially, the internet was a voluntary incursion, but it has now become a necessity to living; Ken Loach's 2016 film *I, Daniel Blake* exemplifies how far such digitisation has spread and its controlling nature,

as it charts the struggles of the titular character, who, being computer illiterate, struggles to access his employment and support allowance. Another hallmark of the internet's infiltration into contemporary life can be seen by Barack Obama's enshrinement of access to the internet as a fundamental human right. Meanwhile since 2014, it has been the British government's Digital Inclusion Strategy to get 90% of the adult population online by 2020. Few would disagree with the need for such aims, but the ramifications for control and surveillance now allow an unprecedented degree of observation into private lives that is easily overlooked. As Evgeny Morozov observed with regard to Arab Spring uprisings, where governments would previously spend time and effort interrogating people to obtain information, now a list of a suspect's Facebook friends or browser history provides often more fruitful avenues of information to the investigative agent.

Despite its aura of independence and liberty, as Seth Price notes, "the structure of the World Wide Web should not itself be taken to be some rhizomatic utopia; it certainly would not be difficult for a government agency to hobble or even shut down the Web with a few simple commands"⁶. It is perhaps an oversight on our part then, to view the internet as an idealised virtual space. For is it not in fact run by huge servers which are physically housed in the real world, and are therefore vulnerable to the same fluctuations in fate as ourselves? Tis vulnerability is rarely admitted but was seen during the 2011 Egyptian revolution, where governmental forces tried to impede the communication methods of the rebel factions by forcing the four main internet service providers (over the course of only a few days) to switch of their servers, thus dismantling the internet space. Tis shutdown perhaps demonstrates a new range of inherent deceptions at work in this age of screens and interconnectivity. A cyber-utopianist's notion of the internet promotes it as an extension of our own dimensions; where research, communication, and production occur at an accelerated pace, to produce some beneficial technology. And yet this virtual space is still man made, and so there is perhaps a deception present in allowing this sense of futurity.

In communicating online through an interface, "we indicate ourselves to it, and in doing so the world materialises in our image"⁷, and the multiple identities one has to adopt - countless usernames, passwords,

and profiles – ensure the methods of control described by Deleuze remain pertinent today. For just as he described the breaking down of traditional institutions, almost everything now is mediated through our online experience and thus represents an extension of that dismantling: education can be taught via the computer screen, whilst banking, shopping, communication, healthcare as well as more obvious forms of entertainment and news, increasingly necessitate (or prompt us to favour) an online presence. And this assimilation, apparently more liberating, again contributes to methods of control subtler and yet still as manipulative as ever before.

III

The Suspension-of-disbelief

Despite Foucault's and Deleuze's desire to reveal the overwhelming methods of control amassed by societies (efforts supported or corroborated by history's various whistle-blowers, who have also sought to expose specific intrusions by governments and international corporations alike into personal privacy etc.) they seem at first sight to offer no means of escape or resistance to these powers of deceit. Through a close reading of *The Logic of Sense* however, Deleuze appears to hint at a means of surviving within a society designed to impede or manipulate its citizens, by utilising what we have come to know as the 'suspension of disbelief'. Tis form of deception, a willing self-deceit or a belief in the unreal, is familiar to us from our experiences in the theatre or watching a film, and offers an avenue of relief from being deceived and simultaneously not deceived. To illustrate his point, Deleuze looks at Lewis Carol's depiction of Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and examines the slippage at work between sense and nonsense, and how it might create a space for existing in forms of control societies. After falling down the rabbit hole, Alice is of course initially incredulous at being trapped in such an absurd and confusing "wonderland". As she plays absurd and nonsensical games that have no apparent beginning or end, Alice comes to accept her strange new environment through her fascination and love for its characters. Despite not believing in the prophecy or her true role in the "Frabjous Day", by suspending her disbelief at its absurdity and deciding to

help her newfound friends, she vanquishes the Jabberwocky and frees her the people of underland from tyranny.

This decision shows the duality of her position: she both 'plays the game' and refuses to abide by the Red Queen's rules, and consequently, is able to return to her own world. Deleuze notes how this push and pull between Alice being deceived by the absurd environment, and not being deceived from her innocence and good heartedness, manifests as her constant suspension between being "larger than she was... [and] smaller than she is now"⁸, never fitting the proportions of her environment; "it pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once: Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa"⁹.

The deception Deleuze saw within control societies, (i.e. that they appear liberating but in actual fact offer a basis of surveillance that is more manipulative than before), can be mediated by adopting this same approach. Artists especially, should be aware and take advantage - now more than ever - of the power of deception within their practice. Amalia Ulman tackles this problem by utilising deceptive practices not to reveal wider deceptions (for who is truly unaware of the the impact the internet has on social interactions) but to resist the deceptions by producing a 'becoming' between being deceived and not deceived: "it pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once"¹⁰. For her Instagram performance *Excellences & Perfections*, Ulman sought to riff on the trend of "selling one's lifestyle, of building one's brand"¹¹ by creating an identity which trod the grey area between truth and fiction. Initially lasting for three months (though it is now still on-going), the performance was geared towards a semi-fictitious story line, with Ulman posting glamorous selfies alongside photographs of food, cats, and other common Instagram tropes, to depict her makeover to become a "Hot Babe"¹²; the assumed epitome of social media expectations. Through the use of hashtags such as #cutegasm and #beauty, she also pertinently emulated the privileged lifestyle of other successful Instagrammers, sharing the banal aesthetic familiar to those feeds. However, rather than merely imitating or spoofing those popular motifs or ending after three months with a 'grand reveal' of the deception, Ulman constantly maintains a position between acknowledging her performance as charade, and having truly embraced the methods of the lifestyle she photographed. For

instance, though her breast enlargement surgery transpired to be pure fiction - achieved through the use of a convincing hospital shawl and some accomplished photoshopping of her cleavage - other aspects of the performance required Ulman to actually participate or follow the lifestyle she sought to parody; thus she actually did go to pole dancing lessons and follow the Zao Dha Diet. Furthermore, during *Excellences & Perfections* her friends were purportedly confused by her sudden change in behaviour, indicating perhaps the subtleties with which she undertook this deceitful performance, and showing, much like Alice in Wonderland, how she refuses to fit neatly into her surroundings: "becoming does not tolerate the separation or distinction of before and after, or of past and future"¹³; the performance apparently, ongoing.

Symptoms of the digital age, such as mass surveillance and the breaking down of social institutions to become more accessible and ever present (via the internet) in our homes, are reminiscent then of the worries outlined in control societies. Thus, it could be said that Deleuze heralded the effects of an increasingly intrusive and deconstructed society, epitomised now by the internet and the computer screen. For to even exist online requires one to possess countless identities - not only usernames but also a whole range of new habits in refining one's image to be a 'perfect' version of oneself - and being forced to relinquish increasing amounts of information and independence. Deleuze's thinking though has also prepared us for ways in which to attempt to deal with this somewhat perfidious deception in today's society; and it pertains to this 'suspension of disbelief' as a creative version of self-deception. Ulman's practice for one, indicates a contemporary artist who utilises this very necessary paradox, and in doing so is able to resist these society-wide deceptions - forcing people to question their own environment and how our identity and self-worth is a construct of societal expectations. And this relationship with deception is noticeably different to the artists of the past, who, such as Cindy Sherman and Sherrie Levine, revealed deceptions whilst becoming reabsorbed into the late capitalist mechanisms of manipulation. By simultaneously trying to deceive and not deceive, artists today would be less fallible to these wider forms of societal deceit described by Deleuze. For today we exist in a different climate where there appears to be more at stake with the advancements of interfaces into almost every aspect of our lives. So it is not just about the figure of the artist as God-author, or the

deception of the viewer that matters anymore, so much as it is something far more political and wide reaching. Now more than ever, manifestations of deceit are a necessary tool for artists to resist and escape the “intricate snake’s coils”¹⁴ of control societies.

(Endnotes)

¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*, trans. by Alan Sheridan, (New York: Vintage Books, 1975), p.211

² Ibid. p.206

³ Gilles Deleuze. *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.177

⁴ Gilles Deleuze. *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 182

⁵ Ibid. p.178

⁶ Seth Price, *Dispersion* (2002) < <https://bit.ly/2JfPdMS> > [accessed 14/4/18]

⁷ Alexander Galloway, *The Interface Effect* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2012), p.13

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Charles Stivale (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), p.1

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Charles Stivale (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), p.1

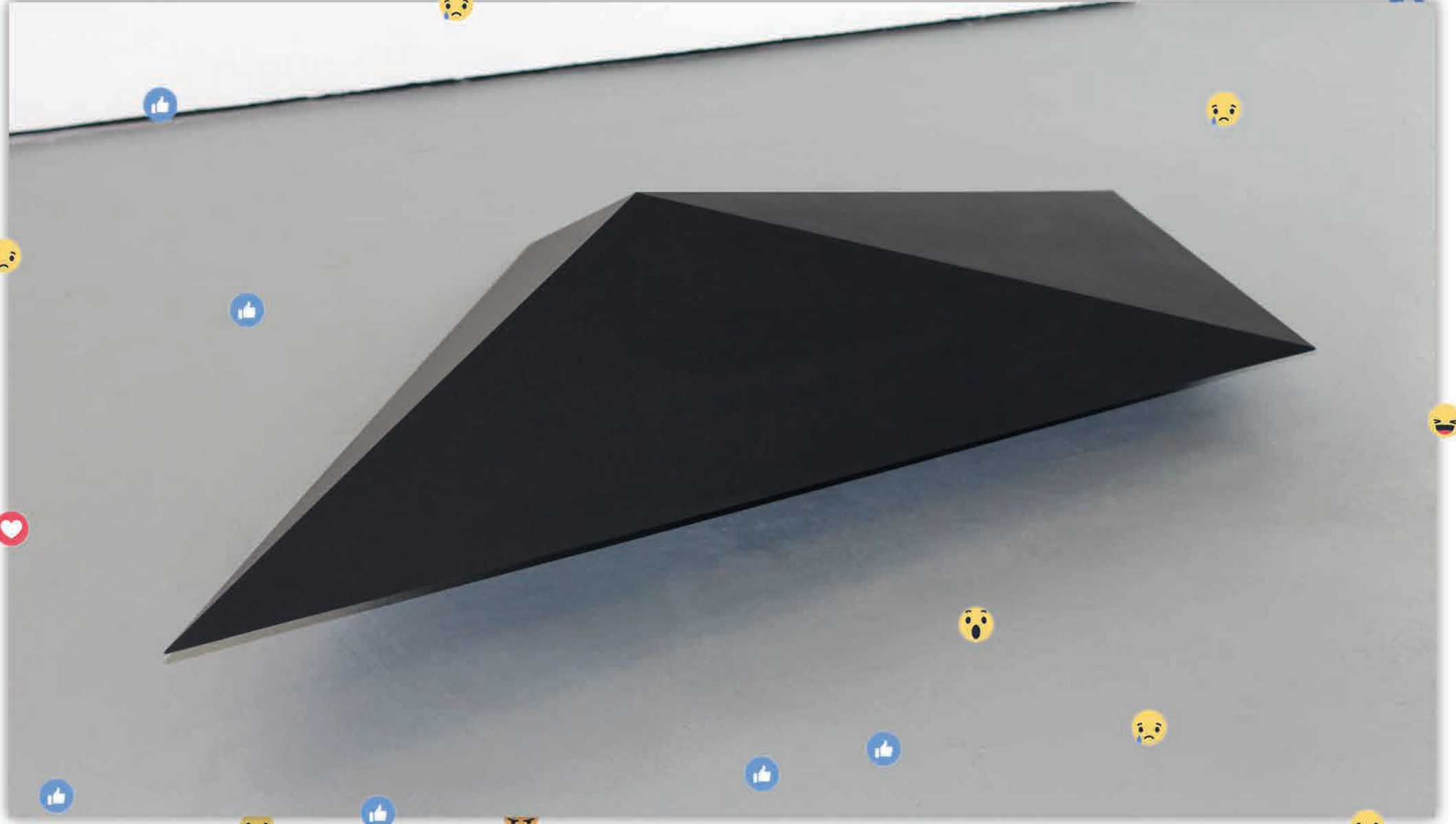
¹¹ Michael Connor, *First Look: Amelia Ulman – Excellences & Perfections*. < <https://bit.ly/2maiMWX> > [accessed 24/05/2018]

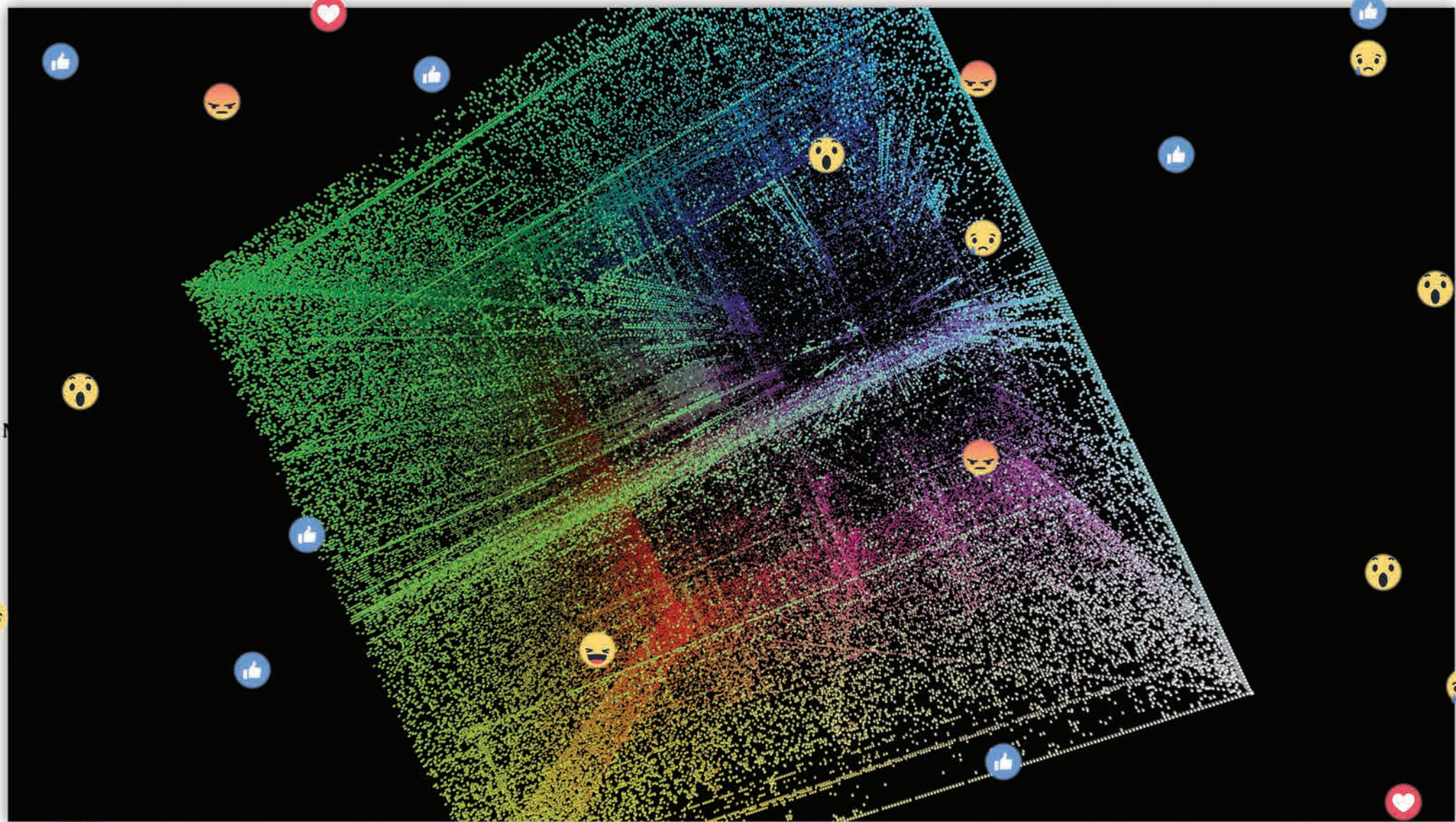
¹² Ibid.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. by Charles Stivale (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), p.1

¹⁴ Translator's note by Martin Joughin in *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) p.209

Jakob Rowlinson (b. 1990) is an artist and writer producing work focusing on research into recent historical events, such as unresolved crimes or small stories from the footnotes of newspapers. By interweaving personal and fictional accounts into these unearthed narratives, Rowlinson is interested in blurring the lines between fact and fiction, with his research manifesting as video works, poetry, performance lectures and archival installations.





Mathias Jansson

What are you looking at?

I don't know what would have surprised the author George Orwell most. That the concept Big Brother from his dystopian novel 1984 is used in a tasteless reality show or that our surveillance society has transformed into a wet dream for governments and corporations as he predicted.

When the company Cambridge Analytica harvest Facebook data from 87 million users and used it in the American president campaign and perhaps influenced the election, it was really no surprise. The user's data is there on-line, often poorly protected in databases. Skilled hackers can access them, or in the case with Cambridge Analytica and other big data brokers, we voluntary trade the information in exchange to know which Superhero we are most like. Advanced analytic programs can thereafter build profiles to monitoring and foresee every step we take. There are no longer any need to install surveillance cameras in public places. Today we bring our own surveillance device with us in our pocket, our constantly connected smartphones, with which we eagerly share every step we take.

After the terror attack 911 the security and surveillance tightened around the world which affected many people. Hasan Elahi was one of them. Elahi is an American artist travelling around the world in his profession. When he in June 2002 landed in Detroit his was held in custody. The government suspected that he was a terrorist. They were soon proven wrong, but Elahi realised that with his name, and his background, born in Bangladesh, and the fact that he was not a white middle class American, it was likely that this situation could happen again. He decided to make his life transparent and give the government the possibility to track every step he took. Tracking Transcience is an art project about self-surveillance, or as it also could be called sousveillance, when you use surveillance technique either to examine government's actions or to record your own life. On Elahis homepage you can follow every step he takes, exact location with help of a GPS, a steady stream of images of places and rooms he has visit, bed he has been sleeping in, plates with food he has eaten, toilets he has been using, and so on.

Jill Magid used another approach when she in 2004 created the Evidence Locker. She used the surveillance cameras in Liverpool to create a diary of her life. For 31 days she walked the streets in Liverpool wearing a red trench coat. Accordingly to law the footage from CCTV is stored for

31 days, but if you fill in an incident rapport to the police with details of how and when an 'incident' occurred the footage is stored as evidence for much longer time and you have the possibility to get a copy of the material. Magid filled in the forms as they were love letters and these letters were later used to create the diary *One Cycle of Memory in the City of L*- an intimate portrait of the relationship between herself, the police and the city.

But perhaps we should blame Bentham for all this? The British philosophy Jeremy Bentham who created a model of a prison called Panoptikon, after the Greek words for all and seeing. A prison where a guard in a tower could observe every prisoner in his cell but the prisoner could never know if he was observed or not, and would therefore behave with the knowledge that he always could be watched. The three Danish artists Martin Pingel, Niels Bonde och Mogens Jacobsen did 2002 an artwork called *Bentham: A Web Cammix*. It's a homepage with three comic frames where every frame is filled with a random feed from a web camera and below you could read a random text from a database. You can then click to continue the series with three new frames creating a story based on live feeds from web cameras all over the world creating a kind of comic reality show. You will never know when you walk the streets if you will end up in comic series in the world of Bentham.

The idea of surveillance has now been existing in the art world long before the digital age. We can recall early examples of surveillance art as Vito Acconci the *Following Piece* from 1969 where the artist chose a random pedestrian in New York and followed him until he entered a building. Acconci took photos of his "victims" and made rapports with observations and maps with the route they had taken during the walk. Another example is Sophie Calle who in *The Shadow* 1981, let her mother hire a private detective to shadow her in Paris. The detective was unaware that Calle knew that she was followed and she used the detective to document her life in something that we can call *sousveillance* by proxy. It's also an artwork that we can see as a precursor to Jill Magids project which uses the police to make a diary of her life.

With the raise of surveillance cameras in public places new opportunities for broadcasting was also created. In 1996 a group of artist

in New York formed the *Surveillance Camera Players*. A theatre group who played small adopted dramas in front of surveillance cameras. The group urged others to do the same and even used the name *Surveillance Camera Players* to protest against the destruction of constitutional rights and the opinion that only the ones who are guilty of something are against the cameras. Their artistic statement ends with the exhortation: "Down with Big Brother".

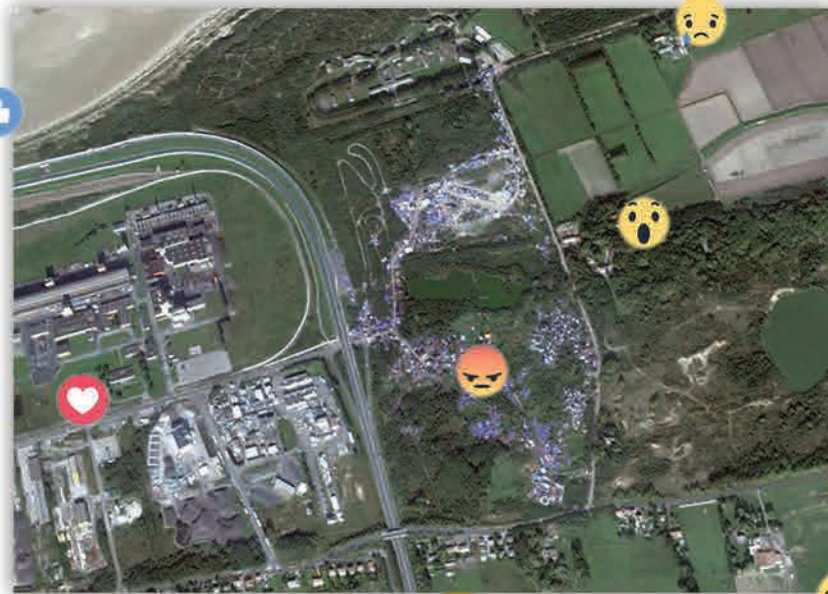
Today the groups statement sounds rebellious but also a bit naive. How many surveillance cameras were there in New York in the end of nineties? Not so many I would guess. Today the battle of must CCTV stands between the two cities London and Beijing with around a half million each. The surveillance cameras are so many and so common today that we no longer notice them. To demonstrate that the Czech artist Jakub Geltner has made the series *Nest* where he has placed a flock of cameras on walls and buildings. By the sea you can for example see something that resembles white seagulls sitting on the rocks, but on a closer look you realize it's surveillance cameras pointing at different directions. The many cameras create the illusion of being something else, in this case a flock of white birds. Paradoxically a single camera is easier to spot in the city than a hundred which get more anonymous and invisible in the city landscape.

One way to make us aware of the cameras again is perhaps to decorate them. During the 15th Istanbul Biennial the Turkish artist Burçak Bingöl created a series of sculptures titled *Günebakan [F(ol)lower]* in which he recreated surveillance cameras in ceramic and painted floral ornament on them. He then placed the cameras around the biennial area and in the Pera museum for public view. Jill Magid didn't satisfied with making replicas of cameras, instead she started a company in 2002. *System Azure* was a company specialized in security ornamentation and she offered her service to the Amsterdam Police Department to hire her to decorate its CCTV cameras at Police Headquarters. In the beginning the police were sceptical. Why should cameras be decorated and be more visible? Magid pointed out that the purpose with CCTV was to prevent crimes, as in the case with Bentham's Panopticon prison to remind the citizens that they were watched all the time and therefore should behave. It took six month of persuasion before she could decorate the cameras with glass beads in green, red, blue and white.

It's have gone more than ten years since Ars Electronica in 2007 choose to label that year's edition with: "Goodbye privacy" to discuss a new culture and era: "in which everything seems to be public and nothing's private anymore." It now sounds like a disillusioned prediction of our time. But their resistance isn't over. Artist continues to make art work in the spirit of the Surveillance Camera Players with the motto "Down with Big Brother!" And we can only conclude with a work from the street artist Banksy. On the opposite wall to a surveillance camera he has written the text "What are you looking at?"

Mathias Jansson (b. 1972) is a Swedish art critic and poet. As an art critic he's mainly focused on new media art and specifically Game Art with particular reference to contemporary art inspired by video games. Writing for Swedish and international magazines and blogs such as *DigiMag*, *Gamescenes*, *Konsten.net*, *Konstperspektiv* and *isthisit?*.





Cansu Topaloglu

I Spy with my Little Eye

I Spy with my Little Eye: The Notions of Alternative Voyeurism and Souseveillance₁

Everyday life is, in our contemporary world, subjected to constant surveillance of its participants. Modern state, unlike its predecessors, holds great amount of information about its subjects, its citizens. According to the text “Legibility, Privacy and Creativity: Linked Data in a Surveillance Society” by Christopher Brewster and Doughald Hine, it is said that;

“Privacy and anonymity, while distinct, have historically been an anomaly, the result of the coincidence of the creation of large cities and the lack of appropriate technological means for the state to track all people and activities in its area of concern. In the village there is no privacy. In McLuhan’s “Global Village” yet again there will be none. Privacy is merely a specific type of freedom, the freedom to act or think in a manner that may or may not be approved of in wider society without its knowledge.” (Brewster and Hine)

Privacy and personal security are basic rights in order to feel secure in a society. However, it seems like both public and cyber spaces give humanity a panoptic atmosphere. According to Spinello, “Personal data are being made available in these online databases, which are accessible to search engines without our knowledge and consent. Further, there is more going on here than a mere conversation of data from hardcopy to digital format. The internet makes this data globally and instantaneously accessible” (Spinello, 2006).

Marketing of every single new improvement -especially in communication- is based on the illusion or advertisement of the human freedom yet the outcome is excessive amount of surveillance and voyeurism of private life. Privacy is as a concept, heading in a pathway for its own disappearance.

Cyber-ethics and Misconception of Independency

State authorities aim to control over the society by urbanization with a panopticon model (Bentham) and desire to rule by creating particular features in order to suppress possible the rebellions and resistances in modern societies. It is inevitably observed that society is imposed to certain systematics and “the state insists on treating people

according to its schemata” (Scott, 1999). People are monitored and recorded by the modern state either digitally or manually which creates closures in a society.

For instance, almost every new technology advertised on behalf of human emancipation, beneficiaries of the age of information and technology are inevitable. Yet, many technologies which are introduced are mostly serving as the means of control and surveillance.

Butchering the cyber-ethics through escalating a neo-panopticon model, the state has more power on people by creating a monotype to handle the society easier. Individuals in a society might have an understanding that they are more freed compared to pre-modern state model. However, they, in reality, happen to have less private sphere and more closures. What is one of the most striking aspects of our contemporary society is, in this sense, the illusion of freedom.

Reversing and Deterritorializing

As we are all surrounded by face recognition technology, our private sphere is severely limited within the control society (Deleuze). 'Sousveillance' allows the audience to explore a counter understanding of a surveilled society from an individualistic point of view, and discover how the control society is naturalized by being monitored in a daily life circle. Pursuing the notion of private sphere and sense of privacy in an individual's daily life circle, sousveillance proposes a deeper understanding of individual's will power to be unidentified in the public sphere.

In order to make people have self-empowerment in both in public and private sphere digital technologies can help people to invert their situation from being gazed into “watch the watchers” as an act of resistance to surveillance. It is indicated that, “the act of holding a mirror up to society or the social environment, allows for a transformation of surveillance techniques into sousveillance techniques in order to watch the watchers.” (Mann, Nolan and Wellman, 2003)

“I Spy with My Little Eye”₂: Offline-Online Reversal Gaze Project

From offline mediums to web art, “I Spy with my Little Eye” is an interdisciplinary project that creates a web based utopian anonymous cityscape with full of manipulated/distorted imagery and sound in order to spark a deeper approach on the counter perspective of being monitored in the public sphere as an individual.

Sousveillance is the recording of an activity by a participant in the activity, typically a way of small wearable or portable personal technologies. Based on this idea, investigating through a camera and choosing photography as a medium builds the base of the project in order to draw much emphasis on the subject by snapping shots in public places as 'reflectionism' -mostly art galleries, tubes and random streets in the heart of London.

Since facial recognition system is based on algorithms to define identity and facial features, creating colour patches, mosaic shapes and distorted images with different layers in a non-symmetrical way of bold tonal contours is essentially prioritised to be able to create a particular exposure for getting anonymous & protecting the identity.

Anti-tagging and blocking the faces of people who are casually roaming in public sphere, has been applied as a camouflage from face detection technologies in order to embark on opposing the dominance of surveillance systems and the 'naturalization of the camera' (Merritt) in everyday life.

Additionally, to the ever-glitching, distorted moving image series, a bold sonic piece with electromagnetic high-pitched sounds with non-rhythmic beats of public phone calls and human voices, which reflects a looping everyday life in the public sphere of an individual, accompanies to support the imagery.

Incorporating with the intertwined notions of surveillance-sousveillance, the project allows the audience to understand how an individual has the will power to be unidentified by focusing on the notion of 'anti-tagging' and inverting the face detection algorithms.

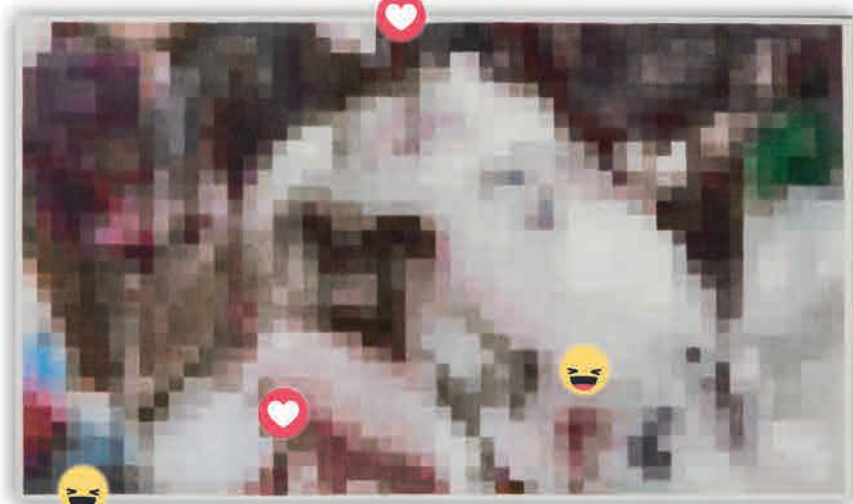
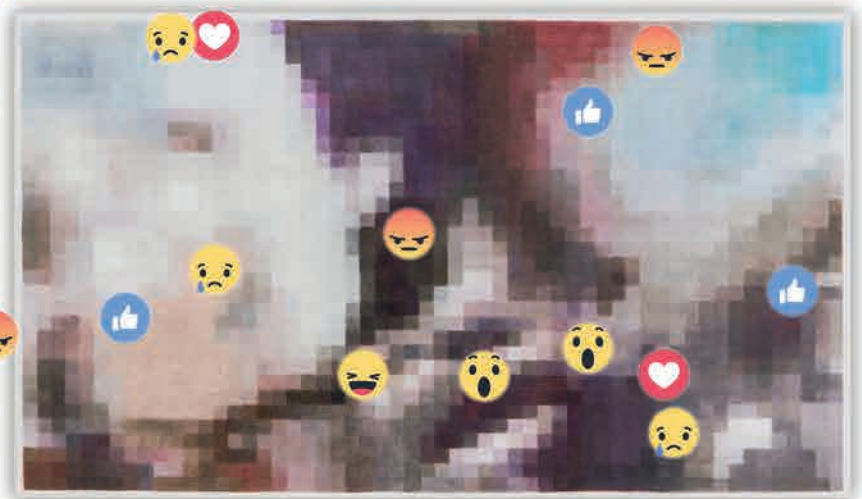
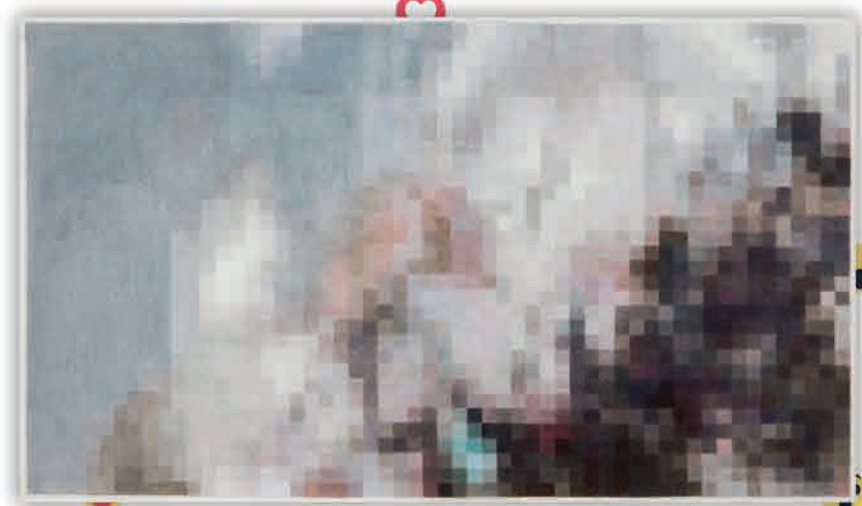
(Endnotes)

1 The term "sousveillance", coined by Steve Mann, stems from the contrasting French word "sur", meaning "above", and "sous", meaning "below", i.e. "surveillance" denotes the "eye-in-the-sky" watching from above, whereas "sousveillance" denotes bringing the camera or other means of observation down to human level, either physically (mounting cameras on people rather than on buildings), or hierarchically (like ordinary people doing the watching, rather than higher authorities or architectures doing the watching).

2 The project and the details can be found by visiting <https://bit.ly/2La5C7a>

Cansu Topaloglu (b. 1989, Ankara, Turkey) is an Istanbul-based multi disciplinary artist, aiming to create distinctly ambiguous visuals by the hybridity of various disciplines. She seeks to connect digital & analogue forms with a sentimental & intimate whilst fluid & dynamic gaze. She is integrating the notions of body and posthumanism, and human-machine interaction by an embodied narration through the alliance of society-power-struggle. Her work constitutes an intuitive fashion by compounding experimentalism. Her interests consist of blending organic/analogue visual techniques with machinic technologies, and creating digital media through the agency of technology. She has been establishing online & offline presence as a digital media artist / visual designer / author / editor / curator / researcher through conferences, social media, magazines, journals, and has publicly exhibited visual artefacts internationally.





Jameson Johnson

Surveillance in Reverse: In Conversation with Chantal Zakari and Mike Mandel

There is a peculiar banality in contemporary surveillance culture as the lines between public security and rights of privacy have been blurred. The superfluous nature of image making and image sharing has further distorted the active and passive roles we play in surveilling. The ubiquitous nature of documentation and databasing (our images, our locations, our browsing) goes generally unchecked—as a kind of nonverbal agreement or ‘pay to play’ that comes with the territory of living in a post 9/11 society. Because this kind of surveillance is pervasive, it can be easy to overlook its unlawful, invasive tendencies.

When I visited the home of Chantal Zakari and Mike Mandel, I was instructed to find the purple house on the corner. It was hard to miss. In Watertown, MA, the houses are eclectic—varying in shape, evident age, and building material, but there was only one purple house. It seemed most fitting to meet in Watertown, the location from which their collaborative piece, *Lockdown Archive* (2015,) was created. *Lockdown Archive* is a collection of images that have been organized, categorized, and curated to provide an encyclopedic overview of the manhunt that followed the Boston Marathon Bombing in 2013. When suspected brothers, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, fled the scene and made way towards Watertown, the local police asked citizens to “shelter in place.” This was an unprecedented decision that quickly forced an entire community into a mandatory lockdown which felt eerily close to martial law. The collection of images that Zakari and Mandel have curated in *Lockdown Archive* invites viewers to engage in a kind of reverse surveillance—one where the citizens have turned their eye to the intrusive nature of their government in the wake of compromised security.

This series of work was recently displayed at the Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston’s exhibition “Art in the Age of the Internet, 1989 to Today.” *Lockdown Archive* was aptly placed beside artists such as Lynn Hershman Leeson and Trevor Paglan—drawing attention to the forms that surveillance technologies can take while simultaneously reconfiguring these forms and considering paths of resistance.

Zakari is a professor at The School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts. As a Turkish-Levantine artist and designer, she creates work that uses imagery, symbolism, design, and language to construct hyper-realized

depictions—usually in the form of an art book. Mandel on the other hand, is a conceptual photographer and artist whose individual work and collaborations explore the nature of photography and images in contemporary, neoliberal culture. Together, their work employs poetics in curating, archiving, and contextualizing. They have created several works together, including *The Turk and the Jew* (1998) and *The State of Ata* (2010.) Beyond their art, they actively engage in local and global social activism that provokes dialogue. The following interview is one small portion of a nearly three hour conversation between Chantal Zakari, Mike Mandel, and myself.

Jameson Johnson: Could you share about the events that led to the creation of *Lockdown Archive*?

Chantal Zakari: Let's see, back to 2013. The Boston Marathon bombing happened on April 15th—a Monday of course—and then on Thursday evening the two brothers are caught driving down Memorial Drive and end up here in Watertown, just beyond the other side of Mount Auburn. With the police following, they park in the neighborhood about four blocks down from here and that is when the shooting begins. *She points out the window in the direction of the area*

JJ: Were you home at the time when this was all happening?

CZ: Mike and I apparently slept through a lot of the gunfire in the middle of the night, though the whole neighborhood claimed to hear it. A friend from Cambridge called and said “Don't go out, you're on lockdown.” So at 8 a.m. we turned on the TV and radio, and I sat with two open laptops so that I could have several news platforms open and try to make sense of what was going on. There was very limited [knowledge] as reporters had little access to the scene. I found most of my information from sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Reddit, as people from around the neighborhood shared updated information from right outside their front doors.

JJ: Could you get a sense of how exactly your neighborhood was being affected during that time?

CZ: It wasn't until the following day that we finally got a sense of the chaos. SWAT teams were coming through the streets checking yards and basements— even pulling people out of their homes. From our point

of view, however, all we could see were helicopters, tanks, and police outside of our home or down the street. SWAT Teams, police and investigators self deployed from all over the surrounding areas; New Hampshire, Cape Cod, and Western Mass which added to the confusion and ultimately ineffective manhunt.

Mike Mandel: These police came in and automatically made an assumption that this guy was headed towards a part of the community that has a larger Middle Eastern population. In reality, he was hiding a block and a half away from where he abandoned the vehicle. So, after a long day of searching with thousands of personnel, they end the day with a press conference saying that he must have fled for New York. At this point, the lockdown ended and the whole neighborhood went looking in our own in our own backyards for spots unchecked. And it was almost immediately after the lockdown ended that a man peered inside a boat in his backyard and found the guy half dead.



Mike Mandel & Chantal Zakari, *Lockdown Archive*, 2015

Print on demand artists' publication, 8.25x10.25", 80 pages, limited edition of 250

Courtesy of the artists

JJ: So of the thousands of personnel proved to really be ineffective.

CZ: Right. At the end of the day, it wasn't the police who found the man, yet they received all of the praise and applause.

JJ: Could you share about what led you to make work in response to this event?

CZ: As artists, that went through this traumatic experience, we realized that the collective photographic archive from this event might provide a better picture of what actually happened. A tremendous amount of images were uploaded onto the internet by people who were isolated in their homes. Mike and I saw one piece, the neighbor down the street saw another, and so on. That collective archive is the only true representation of that event.

By creating an archive in a physical form, we wanted to illuminate the events in a way that might facilitate questioning, rather than acceptance of the events that happened on that day.

JJ: Can you tell me more about what that process was like? What led you to undergo that kind of intense documentation and curation?

CZ: It was very interesting for us to go through Google search. We used very basic search terms; 'Watertown lockdown' or 'Watertown Manhunt' and a massive repository of images that people had uploaded would appear.

JJ: Did social media aid in your search?

CZ: Certainly. Most people would upload images to their personal blogs, Reddit accounts, Facebooks, Twitter, Instagram.

JJ: What about press or news images?

CZ: Those were interesting because after compiling the press images, you could see exactly where the press were and weren't allowed to go. They were generally surrounding the periphery of the neighborhood so the press photos were far less telling than the personally uploaded photos.

MM: And the photos that people uploaded were like ours—taken from directly outside their windows. Or for some, from inside their homes.

There's a photo we found of a few guys sitting on their sofa and behind them are men with giant AR-15s.

JJ: What was the most shocking image you found?

CZ: One man was brought out of his house completely naked. There was no answer to why. Why was he stripped down and led out of his home? Chaos. No one knew what the answer was. This is where those complex lines of involuntary safety and surveillance come about.

MM: Yes, so at the ICA, our work is shown within the category of surveillance. Yet, the irony here is that this kind of act wasn't really surveillance at all. When you think of surveillance, you might think of police or government surveilling the populus—hidden cameras, tapped phones, and the like. But here, we, the citizens of Watertown actually surveilled the police.

JJ: Do the two of you have photos from your home in Lockdown Archive?

CZ: We have one particular set of photos that we took from our dining room. You can see there are let's see, three... four... five of them crouching beneath our deck, guns drawn. The photo we produced from just about where we are situated now. Our photo, like many others, contributed to a documentary that truly could have only been produced by the community's efforts.

MM: When we show this archive to friends, especially foreign friends, they are shocked.

CZ: I mean even I can speak to this. I went through the 1980 military coup in Turkey, and there are images from that time that are similar in nature to the photos from our Watertown event.

JJ: Moving back to the process, what happened after you started to gather these images and information from your community?

CZ: Artistically, once we had collected the images, we thought it was a pretty complete collection. But the internet is an imperfect archive. It isn't static—things are added and erased on a daily basis. If you used the same search terms we used back in 2013, you would find that not all of the

images in our book are available online anymore. We did find some new photos that had been uploaded and so we added these to the projection that is at the ICA. That piece is perhaps a more complete archive, but lacks the same curation and organization as the book. But the book is powerful in that it cannot be erased or changed in the same way the internet can.



Mike Mandel & Chantal Zakari, Shelter in Plates, 2013

A collection of six stoneware 10.5 inch commemorative plates

Courtesy of the artists

JJ: That begs the question, what does it mean to have a physical collection of these photos that cannot be erased or censored by our government?

CZ: Funny you ask that. In addition to the book, we made a companion piece which were a series of commemorative plates. And we actually did get into a bit of a disagreement with the police over this project. The idea was to make these mass-produced commemorative plates and

distribute them to the neighbors. After the lockdown ended, people went into the streets and celebrated, which to Mike and I, felt very strange. These plates, in addition to the book, were an effort at pushing back against the “feel good” attitude that ensued after the search was over. To ask people to question more deeply the events that occurred on that day.

MM: We were inviting them to hang the plates in their dining rooms among other porcelain plates. Of course, hanging a decorative plate that showed a man with his hands up in front of his home was an entirely sardonic act. We call the series, “Shelter in Plates.”

CZ: What happened though is that the moment we put up the Shopify for these plates, the Watertown chief of police caught wind of it and immediately knew what it really meant. It meant an acknowledgement that the police had broken a lot of rules and ultimately failed on that day. So the next day, he contacted the dean at my university and essentially threatened me to stop this project by going through my university. Which of course, he had no authority to do.

The police in Watertown certainly should not have any right to involve themselves with my work as an artist or as a professor at an art school in Boston. We are not criminals, we weren’t doing anything wrong. We were simply documenting and distributing.

JJ: Moving back to the book, can we talk a little bit about the actual organization of the book? Were there copyright issues associated with the production?

CZ: This idea of collecting images from the internet is now very common now amongst artists. We have come to recognize that the Internet is this huge archive of images with instant access. With that, appropriation of images has become a very accepted medium despite its legal complexity. In creating this book, we of course, wanted to be within the legal means of appropriation and organization. So the integrity of each page is of significant merit because what we’re doing is putting together pages. The significance of the artwork is in the sequencing.

The book begins and ends chronologically, for contextual purposes, but in between, there are several categories or classifications. Some of the photos are arranged by color, the blue team (FBI) or the Green Team

(SWAT). This classification creates a kind of pseudo-comprehensive understanding of the events that day. I say pseudo because, it's all our own interpretation and organization. There's no scientific classification to it, but instead an aesthetic and theoretical classification.

JJ: Showing this work in Boston means that a lot of individuals who witness this piece, especially at the ICA, can relate to or recall their own experiences on that day. How has the work been received in this iteration of it's presentation?

MM: I think that because this is the only place where people can go and see all of these images in one standing—a thirty minute viewing experience— rather than scattered across the web, it holds a very special role in that they can be experiences in a new way.

CZ: Personally, I'm very pleased with how the ICA presented the projection. It isn't very big, but it is very bright—very similar to that of a computer screen. The book accompanies the projection so that viewers can actually interact with the physical work too.

JJ: Have notions of surveillance influenced your work?

MM: I don't think so. I mean, not directly. I'm not, per say, interested in artwork that directly deals with surveillance. I think that's where the wonderful humor in this show lies. It's not them who are surveillancing us, but instead we, the people, who are surveillancing them (the military) and their actions without even realizing it. But through my earlier work, I think it is evident that I am more interested in archiving and images.

CZ: I have created a lot of work that deals directly with viewership. I'm less interested in surveillance than I am in the power of imagery, symbols, and language.

JJ: You've mentioned before that Lockdown Archive took on an activism role directly in the community in Watertown. It speaks to the unraveling of civil liberties under the guise of "safety." At a more national level, do you think that this work strikes a similar chord?

MM: There are probably minority communities everywhere in the United States that feel a stronger police presence and a concurrent loss of

civil liberties in their lives than in other communities. We saw this in Watertown during the Lockdown most of the house searches (without warrant) were conducted in neighborhoods where the demographic was strongly Middle Eastern. Whenever there is a significant terrorist event, when we feel like "this could happen here" there is a spike in trading off our civil liberties in favor of safety. In Watertown, even though the thousands of police/military were not successful in finding the second Marathon bomber, once he was found hiding in his boat the police were still celebrated as heroes. We were not the only ones engaging our community about these issues, there were a series by WGBH reporter Phillip Martin "Rethinking The Marathon Bombing Manhunt." His work reports on the community meeting sponsored by the National Lawyers Guild. The NLG has held three previous meeting focused on questions about alleged constitutional violations during the Lockdown and within the larger context of the Patriot Act in the post 9/11 era.

JJ: Chantal, your book, "Web Affairs" similarly utilized the internet as a platform for garnering content. Do you think that in a neo-liberal society, surveillance is something we both want and reject? A kind of double edged sword?

CZ: webAffairs could be considered a precursor to this idea. It was published in 2005 but most of the images and dialogues were collected between 2001 and 2003. This was the very early days of video chatrooms when people naively thought that whatever took place on their computer was private simply because the computer was in a private space, their home, their bedroom, their living room. We had not yet realized that the internet is another kind of public space. It is ironic that we want to expose ourselves through social media, we post our private lives on Facebook, Instagram, snapchat all the time and yet we are so concerned about our privacy when we see an image of ourselves on someone else's feed. I think at the core of it lies the desire to control our own brand. We see ourselves and our lives as a product that needs to be branded; the happy young adult that travels around the world, the mother showing off her kid's accomplishments, ski vacations, new cars, Broadway performances... all about fabulous experiences which create the visual summary of our lives. However when a company keeps track of our shopping habits, or a chip traces our movement within an urban space we are worried about our

privacy, perhaps because it might also expose a part of us that we don't want to reveal. At the core is the desire to control what is known and unknown about our lives. Lockdown Archive collects images that are personal, a shared traumatic moment in a town's history, through the eyes of its residents, including pictures of their homes and backyards. The image of SWAT teams searching through homes actually reveals our private spaces, invaded by military agents of the government. And the act of making the picture exposes the actions of the same government, and posting it becomes a reversed surveillance.

JJ: This event was already five years ago, and you of course, responded to it because these events were quiet literally in your own backyard. A pre-Trump era. To me, the images presented in Lockdown Archive feel even more ominous as police violence has become an everyday headline. Where do you see Lockdown Archive going in the future? Are either of you interested in continuing to pursue this kind of work?

CZ: This project literally landed in our own backyard. We have in the past made work that has had a direct connection and effect on our community. Right now we are working on a book about the activist performance piece that we did seven years ago, 2011, to mobilize Watertown residents to stop a proposed Walmart that was slated to be built in the center of town. When we learned that two weeks before a city wide election for Town Council that the some on the Council supported this idea we organized a write-in campaign with Mike as the protest anti-Walmart candidate. We worked everyday for two weeks to mobilize support for the candidacy and when the votes were tallied Mike had lost by only 91 votes. This created great momentum to continue the fight. We raised money for billboards against Big Box development and we worked with a local community organization, Sustainable Watertown to keep the pressure on. Eventually Walmart withdrew their proposal and their is a new commitment to development consonant to a Strategic Plan that the town commissioned. The book titled Campaign will be published in September, 2018.

Chantal Zakari (born 1968) is an interdisciplinary artist, designer and art educator; a Turkish-Levantine, and now a US citizen, residing

in the Boston area. In her work, she draws upon contemporary social issues by making connections through personal narratives, history and popular culture. Inspired by social phenomena she positions herself in relationship to a public or a sub-culture. Her studio practice freely combines research methodologies and artistic strategies borrowed from various disciplines such as photography, documentary, performance, storytelling, installation, graphic design and social interventions. Zakari is currently a Professor of the Practice at the SMFA at Tufts University. She is the Assistant Director at Kingston Gallery in Boston's SOWA neighborhood.

Mike Mandel (born 1950) is an American conceptual artist and photographer. His work questions the meaning of photographic imagery within popular culture and draws from snapshots, advertising, news photographs, and public and corporate archives. Since the 1970s, Mike Mandel has been deeply engaged with photography, using its changing tools to pursue projects that question the nature and uses of a medium too often taken at face value. He has published nine photo-based books since the early 70's . In 1977 Larry Sultan and Mandel authored Evidence, a photo narrative comprised only of found images that has been recognized as a seminal artists' book and a precursor to subsequent postmodern strategies of photographic practice.

Jameson Johnson (born 1996) is a writer based between Boston, New York, and Los Angeles. She is the founder and editor in chief at Boston Art Review, a new publication committed to facilitating discourse around contemporary art in Boston and beyond by emphasizing the importance of diverse perspectives. Her non-art ramblings can be found at her sporadic newsletter, Discordant Daily.





Caitlin Dick

Nothing to Hide, Everything to Fear: Surveillance in Contemporary Art

Introduction

The maxim “nothing to hide, nothing to fear” has been a continual justification by society when discussing surveillance, whether it is enacted by the government or by business. Although this may to an extent be true, why are members of our society so prepared to give away their rights of privacy? It is either by ignorance or in the belief that surveillance is of some benefit to them. CCTV cameras and dataveillance were firstly installed under the guise of watching over and protecting citizens from harm and wrong doing, being able to rightly prosecute and hold to account those who commit crime. However, what is unknown to the public is the extent to which surveillance takes place, it is not just about justice within society, it is also about control and power over people. In response to increased levels of surveillance, artists such as Kirkup/Naldi, Long and Elahi have examined this unequal level of power between the surveyor and the surveyed within their work, hoping to contribute to societal discussions surrounding surveillance. We find ourselves becoming ever more reliant on the internet as part of our daily life, as Ulman and Maclean have expounded in their works. The internet has become more accessible and cheaper so that more people can be found to have access to the internet within their own homes, changing the boundaries to which surveillance can access the privacy of our homes, no longer does surveillance have to take place within a public space.

Communication with others has become effortless since the invention of social networking sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat, not only do these websites allow for fast communication it allows us to broadcast our lives online; documenting what we choose to show to the world. As a result, not all of which we put onto the internet is directly true, creating an incomplete persona which has often more embellishment or extravagance, creating a life which is more of what and who we want to be rather than who we actually are, usually in terms of the superficial. Artists Amalia Ullman and Rachel Maclean have created work which seeks to examine this phenomenon, displaying both the misleading aspects of the online personality as well as the contrast between the real and the digital and how this contrast is in fact perpetuated by the user. The work also inadvertently depicts reasons for inaction or ignorance to

internet surveillance; our increasing reliance on the internet to manage our life or support our ego.

Artists that create surveillance art must address the morality of their actions when creating their work to discuss aspects of surveillance. They may find themselves using certain technologies to document people, in order to prove and discuss power inequalities or reveal the ease of access to a subject's intimate details. Artists using surveillance art to create social and political conversation must inevitably face up to questions on ethical and legal grounds; whether art can be an invasion of privacy although its objective may be to open the eyes of the otherwise indifferent public. The very nature of surveillance art has been described as "the use of technology intended to record human behaviour in a way that offers commentary on the process of surveillance of the technology used to survey" (William 2016) which invades privacy as part of the artistic concept. Artists like Svenson, Wolf and Yoshiyuki can find themselves in either legal or moral battles, but have also set precedence for surveillance art. As such a key question in surveillance art as a subject is the moral boundary of the artist and whether these constraints affect the artistic outcome or power of their work.

Though many artists have used surveillance as part of their work either to explore the nature of surveillance or to achieve other aims, typically the common denominator is the human form; the physical representation or the suggestion of human presence. Acconci, Long, and Naldi & Kirkup have used either photography or film to capture the human form as part of surveillance, yet as analogue moves to digital surveillance and dataveillance, the mode for achieving the same exploration must also change, using data instead of the human form.

The Evolution of Surveillance

The origins of surveillance pre-date the birth of Christ as a method to gather information on the enemies of a society (Laidler 2008), usually termed espionage. As the typewriter and photography were invented, the ease of recording volumes of information allowed greater detail to be captured and stored, especially in wartime. Yet infamously, authoritarian states such as National Socialist Germany, communist East Germany and the former USSR collected information on average citizens in a 'carrot and

stick' approach to implementing their domestic policies (Laidler 2008) the 'stick' representing the risk of punishment for holding a belief contrary to the ideology. This represented a shift from espionage to surveillance. Even democratic nations like the USA used surveillance against ordinary citizens and politicians, evident in the Watergate Scandal and the activities of former FBI director J. Edgar Hoover. This model generally assumes that power is unequally distributed between those watching and those being watched, as the subjects have no control of what is recorded. Although the concept of surveillance had been discussed in philosophy with Bentham's Panopticon, in literature with Orwell's 'Big Brother' and in cinema with Hitchcock's 'Rear Window', surveillance as an art form did not take root until the 1960s and did not proliferate as its own artistic subject until the 1990s. The motivation for this new art form ranged from voyeuristic interest to the examination of societies under the microscope and outright criticism of governments. The artist Vito Acconci is arguably one of the early influences on this new art form although he was not explicitly examining surveillance, rather using photography and note taking to voyeuristically observe body language.

Acconci's 'Following Piece' (Acconci 1969) is a representation of early surveillance art, in which for one month Acconci surveyed randomly selected strangers of New York, documenting their every move by following, photographing and note taking. His main focus was the body language of people in public spaces which was then contrasted with body language in private. Acconci's piece creates a very raw, voyeuristic relationship with the viewer allowing them to question the curiosities of the habitual voyeur. Acconci stated "I might be following people, all day long, every day, through all the streets in New York City. In actuality, following episodes ranged from two to three minutes — when someone got into a car and I couldn't grab a taxi, I couldn't follow— to seven or eight hours — when a person went to a restaurant, a movie..." (McMahon 2016). This suggests that Acconci did not consider premeditating certain aspects of the performance (with the exception to his predetermined set of rules which consisted of not continuing his study of the individual into private spaces, through his own moral judgement) so that the actions of his subject were beyond his control. This allowed the subject to be in complete oblivious control of where he went and how long he went for, shifting the balance of power from the spectator, where the power of surveillance is

thought to reside, to the spectated. Alberro and Stimson state that “[Following Piece] is mechanical and irrational, it does not require the artist to make choices” but instead relies upon “an a priori scheme that generates itself once the person to be followed is (randomly) selected” (Alberro and Stimson 1999, p.21). Again, it can be found that the subject is in control, creating the art work as they progress, a concept that is applicable to surveillance art in general. Acconci’s work displays an almost quizzical examination of human voyeurism and curiosity but had an unintended effect of displaying the power relationship between the artist and the subject. Yet with the introduction of newer technologies for surveillance, artists interested in the subject examined surveillance that had a more dehumanising effect, one that exerted its influence on a massive scale and one which had the ability to alter the balance of control in favour of the viewer.

The concept of mass surveillance, defined as “the subjection of a population or significant component of a group to indiscriminate monitoring” (Privacy International 2016), was first developed by the 18th century philosopher Jeremy Bentham, who designed a cylindrical prison structure for 360-degree observation of inmates – the Panopticon. Bentham himself described the Panopticon’s architectural style as “a new mode of obtaining power of mind over mind” (Bentham 1843) in which a watchman would be allowed a direct line of sight into any cell within the prison from a central viewing platform far removed from the reach of prisoners, allowing a handful of prison officers to observe manyfold their own number in prisoners. The purpose of the design was to allow maximal control with minimal possible resistance to observation, thus creating a direct power inequality between guards and prisoners. Through constant surveillance and the imbalance of power, the Panopticon intended to limit all personal freedoms so that constant punishment could be enacted upon prisoners, as Bentham stated in his letter ‘Idea of the Inspection Principle’ “the more constantly the persons to be inspected are under the eyes of the persons who should inspect them, the more perfectly will the purpose of the establishment have been attained” (Bentham 1843, p40). However, although Bentham envisioned the Panopticon as an architectural concept, it was reimagined as an existing social construct by social philosopher Michel Foucault.

Foucault’s interpretation of the Panopticon moved beyond Bentham’s purely architectural construct and stated that the Panopticon could be seen as a power structure within society, between those who exercise control and those who are controlled. The perfect state of this societal control would require no input from authority as subordinates would exert control over themselves: “Perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it” (Bridges and Watson 2010). CCTV can be thought of as the reimagined modern day tool that Foucault depicts as a ‘perfection of power’; it represents mass surveying with minimum surveyors, a mechanism of power distributed subtly throughout society. There is an estimated 1.8 million private and local government CCTV cameras in the UK alone (Reeves 2016), worldwide there is an estimated 245 million video surveillance cameras active and working globally in 2014 (Translation 2015). This form of surveillance is visible to the eye and we have become accustomed to the forest of cameras watching us, yet we have become oblivious to who is watching. Tony Porter the surveillance commissioner for the UK stated, “The lack of public awareness about the nature of surveillance troubles me” (Weaver 2015) suggesting that individuals are blind to the extent of surveillance. The generations after the introduction of CCTV have been raised with surveillance and as such have adopted it into their normal environment so that its absence would seem unusual rather than its presence. Along with this, there is a belief that CCTV surveillance is used to prevent crime and allow justice, in which those who have nothing to hide would have nothing to fear. Yet a society that accepts total surveillance to prevent crime by the same token also accepts total control and loss of freedom, or as stated by Laidler “zero crime... zero freedom” (Laidler 2008). Society accepts living in this gilded cage, one that protects them from crime but one that also indiscriminately records information about their life. In the 1990s, artists Pat Naldi and Wendy Kirkup used this mode to demonstrate a boundary between the public and the authorities enforced by CCTV.

Naldi and Kirkup’s 1993 live performance ‘Search’ (Naldi and Kirkup 1993) alludes to the idea of constantly being watched, the piece was trying to achieve an understanding of the unequal power distribution between the spectator and the spectated (Cadwallader 1993). The work

also explored concepts of boundaries between the general public and the controlling authorities and the suggestion that the margins of privacy between the two groups were narrowing, or as Naldi stated “coalescence of public/private space” (Naldi, 2016). Naldi also commented that the driving force behind the limitation of private space was “based on sociologically and politically motivated constructed anxieties of personal security and insecurity” (Naldi 2015) arguably unopposed by the majority of the public for the sake of feeling secure. However, Naldi and Kirkup focused on a technology that was reasonably static and existed in the public domain; streets, public transport hubs, shops etc. Yet, since the advent of the internet and its propagation throughout the globe, a new opportunity for mass surveillance both in the public and private domain has arisen in the form of internet mediated data collection. Unlike Naldi and Kirkup’s ‘Search,’ my ‘Untitled’ Performance was live online, the CCTV camera capturing the event pre-existed the performance, which was linked to an online website that freely accessible. My intentions were to broadcast the performance through social media and advertisement. This was achieved through posters and stickers that contained the website link, date and time. This allowed people to decide whether or not they wished to become the viewer. As a result, participants who took part would have to go online, log in to a computer and wait for the performance to start. The content of the performance was focused on myself as the subject matter. There was no particular movement planned, except with keeping within the light of sight of the CCTV cameras. The act itself was not the important aspect of this performance, it was the role of the participants who freely decided to take part and become the surveyor, the person in power. However, like Naldi and Kirkup’s ‘Search,’ my performance intended to examine and generate discussion over this unequal power distribution, that via their physical actions and perhaps curiosity, they consciously or unconsciously exerted a viewer’s power over myself as the subject.

A recurring theme in the evolution of surveillance from Bentham to Naldi and Kirkup is the balance of power between the spectator and the subject. Foucault asserted that power is held by those in control, those who can exert surveillance upon the masses, a concept that Naldi and Kirkup used in Search. However, Acconci’s work suggests that power can be held by the oblivious subject, as the random actions of citizens influenced the course of the work, thereby altering the balance of power. After the

invention of the internet and the subsequent growth of internet-mediated communication, a new opportunity for surveillance, that would favour Foucault’s theory, arose and allowed an even greater penetration into the personal lives of the population, but it also provided an uncharted territory for surveillance art to explore and alter the traditional power distribution.

The Power of Dataveillance

With advances in digital technology since the advent of the internet and the increasing availability of internet capable devices both in the developed and developing world, the opportunity for individuals to communicate, conduct business and be entertained has increased exponentially. These developments have permanently changed the way in which we as a society conduct ourselves, managing everyday tasks via the internet from shopping to online petitions and discussing our personal opinions in online forums. As a result of our increased online activity and the potential for internet communication to be used for criminal purposes, an evolution in surveillance has taken place, moving from the archetypal CCTV modality to the more latent and aptly termed ‘invisible surveillance’ – dataveillance, “the surveillance of a person’s activities by studying the data trail created by actions such as credit card purchases, mobile phone calls and internet use” (Collins English Dictionary 2016). The number of people who have access to the internet within their own home is estimated to be around 2.4 billion in 2012, accounting for one third of the world’s population (Dutton 2014). Google Boss, Eric Schmidt voiced his expectations that he expects the “entire world will be online by 2020” (Ezerzer 2016). If the entire world’s population was online in the next three years, the opportunity for dataveillance would be limitless, the possibility that a mass collection of the world’s personal information could be accessible and potentially exists indefinitely without safeguard makes it susceptible to corruption, opening the door for government abuses in what is becoming, as the UN Commission for Human Rights sees it, a “dangerous habit rather than an exceptional measure” (United Nations Commission for Human Rights 2014). The true extent of this ‘dangerous habit’ was discovered after US intelligence officer Edward Snowden exposed the activities of British and American national security agencies in an attempt raise mass surveillance as a human rights issue.

Over the past decade there has been allegations and speculation to the governments' use of its surveillance systems, Edward Snowden first uncovered countless documents revealing just how legitimate these claims were. It was discovered that America's National Security Agency (NSA) had been spying on their citizens; through hacking mobile phone conversations, text messages and internet use by monitoring Google and Yahoo data centres without the company's authority (Rushe, Ackerman and Ball 2013). This revelation was exceptionally essential as it initiated debates over mass surveillance, questioning the balance between national security and privacy of information. Not only did this occur in the US it took place in the UK, Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) used 'Tempora', to spy on the public through tapping fibre optic cables intercepting data flow which gained access to vast amounts of internet users' personal data, which was also shared with USA's NSA. Snowden stated, "I can't in good conscience allow the U.S. government to destroy privacy, Internet freedom and basic liberties for people around the world with this massive surveillance machine they're secretly building" (Starr and Yan 2013). Consequentially, Snowden's leaked documents started a chain of investigations that uncovered further evidence of the abuse of surveillance and the lack of safeguarding for collected data in the UK. The actions of British security agencies were declared by a judiciary tribunal to be in disregard of the European Convention of Human Rights when medical, financial and communication data were collected in bulk and stored indefinitely (Travis 2016).

Although, even with such damning evidence freely available, society still regards dataveillance with ignorance, a cultural trait that is argued by Lightfoot and Wisniewski (2014) to be induced by the system through divisions of power and control between social levels. However, an alternative argument is that our consumerist demand for ever cheaper or more advanced technology to satisfy our society's lust for on demand entertainment and fast telecommunications has overshadowed the need for privacy and liberty, a subject that artists Rachel Maclean and Amalia Ulman have used extensively in their works on self-image and the internet.

Ignorance of Dataveillance

Amalia Ulman created an experiment exhibiting how effortless it is to 'fake it' online. The performance on Instagram which consisted of 175 photos she took, entitled 'Excellences & Perfections' discusses the "role of the female artists and how women represent themselves online" (Furedi 2016). The work also looks at the information she is contributing to the internet and from the online perspective you only see the luxuries and not the realities of this online persona. Ulman's work is an exploration of "of identity, domesticity and fantasy... in the era of social media's generic 'new normal'" (Morse 2015), yet also an exploration of feminism and the perception of women on social media. *Excellences and Perfections* inadvertently displays the addictive quality of social media; the ability to exist in the form of your own design and a reliance on social media as support of the ego. However, Sweeny (2005, p.248) suggests that the ability to alter the identity online "seems to counteract the potential for surveillance technologies to normalise behaviour, to force individuals into binary positions". Sweeny establishes that embellishment or falsification of the identity can subvert the data collection process, ironically the online persona can mask users from accurate data collection. On a similar topic to Ulman, Rachel Maclean also uses photography to portray the perverted perceptions of the human form in cyberspace, yet Maclean's work does not have the realistic quality of Ulman instead opting for a grotesque contrast of emoji based characters as can be seen in 'We Want Data!' (Maclean 2016). The series places deliberate overemphasis on the modification of the persona influenced by the internet, exposing a reality of an "attention seeking technology fetishizing generation" (Tichborne 2016), done by contrasting beauty in the availability of internet access, yet horror in its absence. It is a representation of the 'digital human' whose history and experiences, as Maclean states, are not "that of ancestral lineage, bound up in a family history... but instead a very recent series of clicks, purchases and views" (Artpace 2016), essentially the internet as a means of social interaction is in fact dehumanising; creating false identities, hiding character flaws and seeing humans as a series of clicks on an internet page.

As can be seen from Ulman and Maclean's work, there is a reliance on the internet to provide entertainment and to bolster the ego, which perpetuates inaction regarding data safety. Society's disregard for mass data collection is understandable; dataveillance is abstract and the details of collected data are never seen by the user, the user's gratifying online

experience justifies its everyday use and the common belief that if you have nothing to hide, you should have nothing to fear. However, there has been reaction to dataveillance from the artistic community; Hassan Elahi performed surveillance on himself in response to every aspect of his life being subject to monitoring by the FBI.

Reaction to Dataveillance

The multi-disciplinary media artist Hasan Elahi was subjected to FBI Surveillance after being put on the American terrorism watch list in 2002 after returning to the USA. During this time Elahi stated that “It was clear who had the power in this situation. And when you’re face to face with someone with so much power, you behave in an unusual manner” (Elahi 2011a), in this situation the surveillance enacted upon Elahi changed his normal behaviour so that he lost spontaneity and feared his own actions; power over his thoughts and actions rested with the FBI. In response, Elahi began documenting every aspect of his life and making it accessible to the FBI and the public. In doing so, Elahi was able to shift the power balance in his favour: removing any need for surveillance and proving his innocence. Elahi has made everything transparent, no longer must the government look for his private information it is now online, available to everyone. Elahi eventually turned the collection into an art project called Tracking Transience (Elahi 2005-2017) a massive database of information of 46,000 images available on Elahi’s website. In taking control back from government surveillance he was able to devalue the worth of restricted information to security agencies, an idea that was symbolic in his work, though he feels that if it were to be done on a national or globe scale; security agencies would have to redesign their approach to internet surveillance (Elahi 2011b). This work, although extreme, creates an interesting alternative to self-censorship, instead using hyper-transparency so that the power of information is no longer held by governments. However, Elahi had nothing to hide from the US government, yet in countries like Belarus where political opposition is suppressed, hyper-transparency is unlikely to be liberating. Instead, self-censorship appears to be the only method to retain privacy, opting not to use telecommunication or the internet (Franco 2016). In my work, I have collected data from normal communications between myself and others

who are not self-censoring nor being hyper-transparent, unaware of what is being recorded to give a natural set of data.

It is important to acknowledge that there is both naivety and ignorance surrounding how much surveillance intrudes on our everyday life, playing an important role in the disintegration of our privacy. In my practice, I wanted to explore this subject of naivety and ignorance surrounding surveillance by performing my own data collection; phone calls, details of emails, text messages, social networking and online activity, then present this bulk data to the viewer on paper, stored in a steel filing cabinet (Collection), an almost archaic object in a time of computerised or ‘cloud’ data storage. I feel this presentation gives a sense of surveillance that is pre-internet, a mode which could be likened to East German Stasi, Soviet KGB or J.Edgar Hoover’s FBI; the antiquated storage of data in filing cabinets juxtaposed with the contemporary method of data collection – recording of internet communications. My practice focuses on the ignorance and consequences of surveillance, the idea that society does not have a clear knowledge on a subject which affects every aspect of their daily lives, the concern that society no longer has to be in a public space to be surveyed, it can take place in the privacy of the home. When presented with the work, I should wish the viewer to realise the extent of what can be collected; opinions, locations, emotions etc. without having to be in personal contact to do it, having captured the subjects’ unguarded natural selves. In such a way, the power of information is with myself, the surveyor, yet like Acconci’s *Following Piece* the nature of the work is directed (unwittingly) by the subject, giving them a degree of power. As with Elahi’s *Tracking Transience* the balance of power can be adjusted to favour the subject but only if the subject is informed of the surveillance and has been empowered enough to take action against it. However, both Ulman and Maclean have produced art works which suggest reasons for ignorance or inaction, the fact that internet technologies provide a means of comfort or entertainment to the subject. Although for my own work I sought the permission of my subjects, many artists interested in surveillance have not gained explicit consent to photograph or document members of the public leading to outrage and legal proceedings. It is an issue that is largely dependent on the personal ethics of the artist - how far they intend to use surveillance to achieve their artistic aim and whether they feel that the artistic value to society outweighs their responsibilities.

The Ethics of the Surveillance Artist

Artists have an important role in society, their work provokes discussion about subjects which need to be brought to the public's attention, this allows people to make their own opinion and decisions rather than given one or as art philosopher Arnold Berleant asserts "[Art] lays bare the world and gives us the vision to see it" (Berleant 1997). On occasions the work of an artist can cause outbursts of disagreement. However, any sort of publicity good or bad is beneficial to the discourse of the artist's work, spreading discussion outside of the art community. Art not only seeks to document social change, but can be used to promote, inform and shape contemporary discussion, as such artists have used surveillance as one of their subjects - raising awareness of a continually developing and growing issue which is becoming one of the most pressing questions of the digital age. In some cases, the artist may over step ethical boundaries to promote their statement, occasionally causing public and legal outrage in the process. Artist Arne Svenson caused outrage through his photography of New York citizens without their permission but also set legal precedence for surveillance art in the process.

The work of the artist Arne Svenson provides a perfect example of ignoring ethical boundaries in Svenson's photographic series 'The Neighbors' (Svenson 2016). The series was a daily social documentation of Svenson's downtown Manhattan Neighbours, "tiny nuances of gesture and posture that define who we are, collectively. The subjects are to be seen as representations of humankind, non-identifiable as the actual people photographed" (Weingart 2015). Svenson gazed into the lives of the general public through their transparent windows, a voyeuristic, uncomfortable view point which raises questions about what it really means to breach the privacy of others in the name of art. Regardless of the invasion of privacy, Svenson's work was met with positive reaction from art scholar Roni Feinstein; "his photographs raise voyeurism to the level of high art as well as imbue it with a large dose of humanism" (Feinstein 2013), suggesting that the artistic merit of the work outweighs the obvious invasion of privacy. Although Svenson's intentions were an exploration of the human condition or as Svenson stated "the tiny scenarios and actions reveal a humanness that is unconsciously truthful and tender" (Mallonee 2015), the subsequent legal process that ensued raised much larger

questions pertaining to the ethical boundaries on art and impacted on surveillance art as a concept.

Svenson came under legal scrutiny when the family sued the artist after discovering that in one of Svenson's photographs they recognised a depiction of their two children, which caused great discomfort and anger as Svenson did not have the consent of the family to photograph the children. However, a supreme court ruling decided that Svenson's actions were defensible under the First Amendment's guarantee of free speech, and that such art needs no consent to be made or sold (Weeks 2013). Svenson's defence of his work was that "for my subjects there is no question of privacy; they are performing behind a transparent scrim on a stage of their own creation with the curtain raised high" (Zhang 2013); the subjects had their curtains open for anyone in adjacent building to see into. The Svenson case set legal precedence in New York for artists making work that invades privacy, essentially stating that artistic expression is guarded by the 1st Amendment to the Constitution, regardless of inherent right to privacy within one's own home. Although the ruling was in Svenson's favour, the presiding Judge Dianne T. Renwick acknowledged that Svenson's methods were disturbing and intrusive and called upon the Legislature to "revisit the issue" (Mallonee 2015). It seems that although Svenson was protected by law, he was not favoured by the public, with many brandishing him a 'peeping tom', a fate that no doubt awaits any artist interested in contributing to surveillance art regardless of their intentions, even if it is to attempt to lead the public to the realisation that larger bodies with greater resources are conducting their own subtle mass surveillance on details that are far out of reach of any independent artist. Photographer Michael Wolf used a similar method to Svenson, using photography to detail the lives of his neighbours in Hong Kong.

Another artist who is challenging the interface of privacy and intrusion is the photographer Michael Wolf. His voyeuristic approach to his series 'Window Watching' (Wolf 2013) questions the boundaries between art, ethics and privacy. The series could be argued to violate the privacy of Hong Kong residents, obtaining intimate moments which Wolf used in his photographs, subsequently there has been some criticism. The images were already online and it became very difficult to remove them, so it could be said therefore that there is a financial inequality between people,

between those who have the money to go to court to regain their privacy and those who cannot. Although Wolf has not yet been to court the public opinion is not in favour of his photographs, artist Michelle Kuen Suet Fung disagreed with Wolf's chosen subject stating "Does artistic merit and talent give him the right to violate people's privacy? No, I don't think artists should hurt lives to make art" (Chiu 2013). Not only does the public criticise Wolf's work but artists disagree with his ethical decision making. The photography magazine Foam interviewed Wolf questioning his opinion of "peeping" in photography, Wolf stated: "I'm not sure how comfortable I would feel if I knew someone would come into my room while I was sleeping and take my picture. I think, spontaneously, I wouldn't feel comfortable." But he added that "strong [photography] ... can make me think" (Chiu 2013). Though Wolf was able to easily document and expose unsuspecting individuals freely, without thought, he continued to do this regardless, although it seems that even he is ethically conflicted. However, when comparing the two photographers; Wolf's photographs have a darker more intense voyeuristic approach, there has been no attempt to distort or hide the subjects' identities making them identifiable and therefore infringing on their privacy. There is also no dreamlike state in contrast with Svenson's photographs, where an element of staging controls the imagery, it could almost be set up as a performance, Wolf creates a gritty realism to his photos and as a result the viewer may feel more uncomfortable looking at Wolf's series than Svenson's. Both photographers invaded privacy within the home, yet Japanese artist Kohei Yoshiyuki displayed a voyeuristic approach to his work, documenting subjects in an environment that doesn't lend itself to privacy, yet committing acts which require it.

There is a whole different level of invasion of privacy by the photographer Kohei Yoshiyuki, renowned for *The Park* (Yoshiyuki 1973) series which captured unaware voyeurs watching couples share intensely intimate moments in public parks in Tokyo which Yoshiyuki documented through infrared film and flash so as not to disturb or spook the ongoing activity that he would not have been able to obtain otherwise. Not only did Yoshiyuki document the events, he himself became a voyeur for a period of one month to fit in with the other onlookers. As he frequently visited the public park, Yoshiyuki became recognised and thus accepted as a regular onlooker, allowing for unobtrusive documentation of intimacy. Though the

voyeurs were aware of his presence the couples were in fact oblivious to what was taking place around them. When questioned if there had been any complications after making his work public, Yoshiyuki said, "I thought I would need to respond to some complaints from the subjects, but no one contacted me. Sometime later, I heard that one of the voyeurs said very proudly, 'Look at this photo; this is me!'" (Coppelman 2016). It is fascinating to discover that Yoshiyuki did not encounter any participants who recognised themselves and sued for indecency and intrusion upon privacy, to only receive a comment which showed enthusiasm and pride suggests an alternate public reaction to what may be considered the norm in the Wolf/Svenson cases. However, due to the sexual nature of this and the nature of sexual voyeurism, those photographed may feel less inclined to think that this is an intrusion of their privacy. Conversely, the taboo of watching unaware lovers in their intimate throws without their knowledge would generate the idea that national display of their identity or likeness would cause shame and humiliation that would motivate them to challenge the artist, however Yoshiyuki did not receive anything to this effect. This may be due to cultural differences between East and West; the well documented Japanese 'shame culture' (Lee 2013) may have led subjects to deny or ignore their involvement for fear being recognised and thus face public humiliation or shame. Also, the year in which the work was originally shown, 1971, was pre-internet and wide distribution would have been difficult considering Yoshiyuki was not a well-known artist: his only known work was the series *The Park*. Yoshiyuki's contribution presents an interesting reaction to surveillance or the invasion of privacy; at least one of his subjects was pleased to have been photographed and Yoshiyuki was not challenged for his work, in contrast to Svenson and Wolf. Yet, when taken together Svenson, Wolf and Yoshiyuki all breached what most would consider inherent rights to privacy – Svenson and Wolf documenting subjects in the supposed safety of their own homes and Yoshiyuki capturing socially taboo moments in a public space. The artists may have done this to create dialogue about different subjects from one another, but have unknowingly (or inadvertently) raised an important issue of ethics within art, especially within surveillance art, forcing the individual with an interest in surveillance art to create their own stance and to set their own boundaries, as both social and legal restrictions appear to be ill defined.

The ethics of art are being set by the artists. Artists should feel free to express themselves in their work, however, there needs to be some limitations put in place to safeguard what an artist can and cannot do. The power an artist can hold in certain circumstances may be detrimental to contemporary life, but as Berleant suggests “discomfort is never a reason for suppression but rather one for support” (Berleant 1997 pp. 197), the unease that surveillance art can create for the public should not prevent the production of art, but should lead society to a greater understanding of the subject. The role of the artist in this situation is not to deliberately harm, but in contributing to discourse, harm may be collateral. However, perhaps it is necessary to engage the public without their consent, to create outrage as a means to introducing the subject of surveillance but at the same time acknowledge that the focus may be drawn from outcome and placed solely on the method of the artist, losing the value to discourse in the process. Artists must therefore make their own ethical decisions and thus bear the weight of responsibility for their actions and/or the legal ramifications when producing surveillance art, yet be aware that the provocative power, and possibly the artistic value thereof, may be diluted in socio-legal limitations.

The Human Form in Surveillance Art

Surveillance art continually uses the human form as the focus point of its subject matter when discussing and questioning matters of surveillance in contemporary society. However, due to the transition from analogue to digital surveillance, the representation of the human form in surveillance art has changed. Surveillance art that was pre-internet, focused on the human body making note of nuances and behaviour under observation as can be seen in Naldi and Kirkup's *Search* and Laurie Long's *The Dating Surveillance Project* (1998). *Search* intended to discuss the ramifications of CCTV used by society, its ability to remove individual's privacy and to show the extensive power that surveillance holds. To achieve this both artists walked the streets of Newcastle, playing out a detective-based scenario to which the viewer is the spectator. The title of the work already sets the theatricality of the situation and the viewer is forced to use visual clues from the body language and expressions of the subjects on film to follow the work (Cadwallader 1993). The physical human form is the main focal point within *Search*, giving the viewer a

narrative to follow and displaying the human aspect of surveillance. Long's *The Dating Surveillance Project* uses a similar narrative; the artist secretly films a series of dates partly playing the role of the detective in, as Long describes as an “investigation into romantic role-playing, self-disclosure vs. privacy and the presence of surveillance in everyday life” (Long 2003). Some of the dates were aware they were being filmed, however others were not, so that all human nuances could be recorded: awkwardness, shyness and nervousness. The focus of the work is on the human form, on expressions and realities that we as the viewer can relate to and as such the majority of work features representations of the human form as a way of approaching issues of surveillance. Art which deals with data collection may be considered to not have a connection with the human form, yet to create data you must first have an individual or persons to generate that given information. When individuals interact with data it allows for the surveillance to become invisible, turning everything into digital coding, entering a digital non-visual space, a virtual world.

In contrast with Naldi & Kirkup and Long's work, Joe McAllister's work *You Probably Live in Horsham* (McAllister 2015) does not contain the human body in the work itself, however a presence is suggested in the information displayed. The work looks at blurring the boundaries between the human and the machine through data collection from a downloaded program created by McAllister. The program records internet searches, locations and saved files from the user's computer, then presents the data back to the user stating likely occupation, hobbies and travel interests. This process takes information that is put into the program by a human then tries to give a representation of a human life by compiling the information. Although technically accurate, it obviously cannot portray the detail that separates humanity from machinery. McAllister's work represents the shift in surveillance art from the body being the focus to data being the focus. This change in surveillance art is argued by Barnard-Wills and Barnard-Wills (2012) to more effectively portray the dehumanising effect of surveillance by removing the depiction of the visual self. Yet, in contemporary art there is a distinct lack of work in the area, with ridged attachment to traditional methods of producing surveillance art, namely photography and film. Barnard-Wills and Barnard-Wills (2012) suggest that this is due to both the central role that the human form takes in Western art as well as the difficulty in representing non-visual phenomena.

The increasing access to the internet, our reliance on the internet to achieve our everyday tasks and the fantasy characters we can create of ourselves, all signal a move toward coalescence of the human and the digital, a state of being which “transcends human corporeality and reduces flesh to pure information” (Haggerty and Ericson 2000). This transition is clearly present in the move from analogue surveillance to digital dataveillance, no longer video or photographic surveillance but surveillance that reduces the human form to a data set. It is a subject within surveillance art that has not been expanded on and warrants further exploration, leaving aside the human form and photography to develop alternative ways to contribute to discourse surrounding dataveillance.

Conclusion

Surveillance has and always will be one of the most detrimental forms of power. A concept that since its formal inception has shifted the balance of power from the citizen to the higher structures and has reduced the complexities of the human form to mere ink or bytes. Our continued reliance on the internet has served as fuel to allow surveillance to proliferate to such an extent that the smallest detail of our existence can now become scrutinised. In recording online activity, the human form is lost and we become represented by data lacking the idiosyncrasies of the human; a dehumanising process. Artists interested in surveillance have accordingly shifted their focus from the analogue to the digital to explore the dehumanising effect of dataveillance. More worryingly it has been assumed that as surveillance becomes more intrusive, it reinforces societal castes assigning greater or less worth to individuals based on their data (Lyon 2003), a theory that keeps in line with Lightfoot and Wisniewski’s concept of higher structures inducing societal ignorance at different levels to maintain overall power.

On account of the evolution of the internet, surveillance can now access more information than ever before through the use of dataveillance which permits surveillance to become invisible, no longer must surveyors vigorously pursue the information that they require, it is merely handed to them by unaware internet users through online searches and communication through social networks. Surveillance has moved from the street into the home and our reliance on the internet, as depicted by Ulman

and Maclean, has aided its reach. This has caused an inequality in power between those who exercise control of information and those who generate the information, yet Elahi’s artistic reaction to dataveillance has proved that information as a currency can be devalued if total control is taken by the subject.

One of the by-products of surveillance art is that it has generated a wider argument about limitations to artistic freedoms and ethical boundaries of artists. The purpose of surveillance art is to contribute to societal discourse about surveillance, yet if limitations are imposed on the artist, the value of their work to discourse is reduced. Berleant (1997) suggests that if art creates discomfort then it should be supported, however public outrage may also dilute the artistic value, shifting focus from the art to the artist as was the case with Svenson. There is obviously some balance required between extremes, but a level of public discomfort appears to be necessary to generate and perpetuate discussion.

To explore the issues of mass surveillance in art it appears that the human form is a necessary element for surveillance artists to create a successful and relatable piece of work which clearly communicates the artist’s thought process. Photography and film have been the mediums of choice for surveillance art as they display all of the subtle nuances of people under the microscope and how human behaviour is affected by surveillance. However, as surveillance has a new domain on the internet, artists such as McAllister have challenged the conventional methods to produce surveillance art by using computer based programs to collect data. The results show a more binary representation of the subject lacking a visual depiction, rather lines of data that are in place of the human form. As a relatively new field for surveillance art, dataveillance warrants further exploration using alternative methods to what was used previously to produce surveillance art and as Bernard-Wills and Bernard-Wills suggests, by abandoning the human form, a greater depiction of the dehumanising effect of surveillance may be possible.

There is general lack of concern that minute details of our lives are being used without our explicit consent, that our rights to privacy are slowly being eroded by our technology fetish and need for instant gratification and by law under the guise of protection from abstract

persons that wish us harm. The end product of such sale of liberty may be the complete coalescence of the public and the private and the digitisation of the human form. The options remaining being hyper-transparency or complete self-censorship. Perhaps a more honest maxim for surveillance may be “nothing to hide, everything to fear”.

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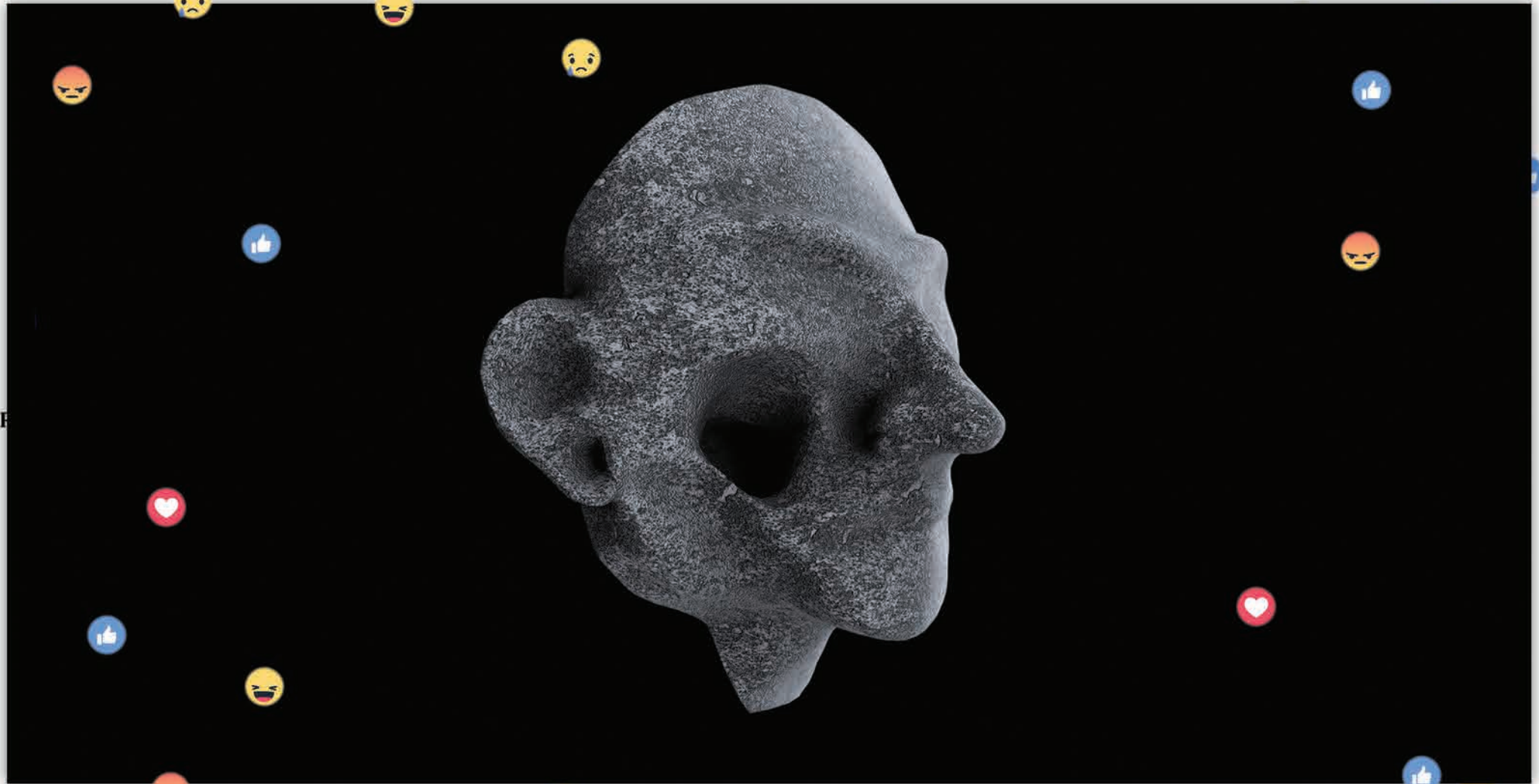
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Caitlin M Dick (b. 1994, Edinburgh, UK) is an artist and writer currently completing an MA in contemporary art at Edinburgh College of Art. Her work considers technology of the flesh as a state of posthuman which is ever bonded to consumerism and the capitalistic form.





The background of the entire page is decorated with a variety of social media icons and emojis. These include blue thumbs-up icons, red hearts, and several different yellow and orange face emojis such as sad, angry, surprised, and laughing. The icons are scattered across the page, creating a digital, social-media-themed atmosphere.

Chloe Patricia O'Neill

NEGATIVE ECSTASY: New Expansion of the Internet and Extreme Fantasy

Negative Ecstasy is an energy that catches us on the balancing point of several extremes. It occupies the space between world tragedy, violent protest, and personal crises like deactivating your Facebook. All ecstasy is a negative, dissolving force that ruptures and flattens the perimeters of the body. Scaled up to a systemic level, Negative Ecstasy nullifies time, logic, and geography, threatening to make fantasy of all social relations.

Take this as a guide for survival in the age of Armageddon. It is one part-trend forecasting report and one-part manual for the present. I attempt to build a mythology that illustrates the expansion of possibility and fantasy rooted in our changing relationship with the internet. This relationship is a hybrid one, where digital systems crystallize into cultural happenings and political events model themselves in internet-space. Here, a new species of psychic force is created: Negative Ecstasy is the magnetism that pushes our technological systems to their limits.

The Problem: Oversaturation

Think of Oversaturation as the feeling of existential dread that you get after looking at your social media for too long. The problem is a loss of depth perception. Your grip on reality starts to fade and the stream of digital content becomes numb and meaningless.

Oversaturation is a cultural condition, not a state of mind. It is closely tied with the viral internet economy, or the system where digital content becomes viral and then disappears into a void as other viral media takes its place. The problem is that going viral doesn't mean much when anyone can have 15 minutes of fame. Coming from this, oversaturation is partially a long-lasting effect of the viral content cycle and its monopoly over the way that digital media has been consumed.

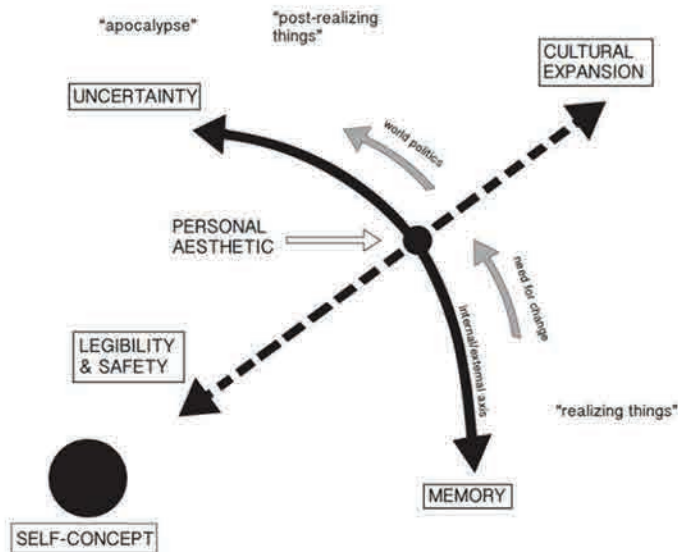
The popularity of memes has shifted viral internet content into a new direction. Once a meme becomes viral, it doesn't become irrelevant like the viral image. Memes exist as a system of symbols. Their close proximity to language make them instantaneously retrievable to consumers. The more a meme is (re)produced, the more meaning it has. This means that no one cares about the virality of an image anymore because its consumption is no longer linear or able to fade into irrelevance.

Every time a consumer shares or creates a meme it immediately develops a viral quality.

As memes change the way that we consume digital content, oversaturation becomes a symptom of a chaotic new expansion of the internet, created by the dying economy of corporations like BuzzFeed, paired with heightened identity politics and the enormous size of social media infrastructures. The expansion of the internet is one of presence.

On one hand, when live documentation of an event on Instagram or Snapchat becomes a part of the event itself, that event exists just as much digitally as it does physically. At the same time, when digital events and trends affect physical events, the vast breadth of the digital landscape lend those events an immense and crushing power. This hyper-global and interconnected state could be imagined as a waterfall, where the pounding water is digital content, and the ringing in your ears is the feeling of oversaturation the content creates.

The impact of oversaturation on contemporary culture is widespread and dynamic. In order to understand how oversaturation affects cultural production, aesthetic identity needs to be outlined, because any way that oversaturation affects an individual mirrors the larger aesthetic system.



Identity is a fluid reflection of our self-concept, constantly fluctuating between four forces: memory, uncertainty, legibility and safety, and cultural expansion. Memory and uncertainty are two opposing forces of the past/future, but without any pretence of time. We are what we know, but what we know is constantly changing. Style, markets, and social media platforms shift under our feet. Intersecting this is cultural expansion and the opposing force of legibility and safety. A culture's need for progressive change is mediated by a general need for things to make sense and be supported by certain technology and language.

Our state of oversaturation has created a thinly-veiled illegibility. What happens to personal aesthetics when cultural expansion overpowers the forces of legibility and safety, catapulting us into overwhelming uncertainty? We are now sitting somewhere around Post-Realizing Things.

Post-Realizing Things

Post-Realizing Things is knowing too much combined with chaotic powerlessness. It feels like watching the world move around you through Facebook video auto-play. There is no choice, or even illusion of choice. You click on a cute cat video and immediately after it ends, a video about penguins suffocated by trash in New Zealand begins. It's impossible to be naive anymore because the underbelly of our cultural machine is always unknowingly exposing itself. Next a WorldStarHipHop video of a girl dragging another girl down a street by her hair plays. Wait. Is that your street? You look outside expecting to see the fight still happening. Like good TV, you are a part of the show.

At the same time, the further you move into Post-Realizing Things, the less things seem to matter. The oversaturation of content on your digital media feeds makes it impossible to engage with anything meaningfully. Ironic detachment from world events and the images you interface with is self-protective. In the same way, your intimacy and simultaneous extreme distance from world events leaves you feeling disengaged with reality. You call your representative and then eat an entire pint of ice cream. There aren't enough angry reacts to go around.

Post-Realizing things also messes with your internal clock. Because the world around you is connected with some incoherent logic that is

completely out of your reach, you stop wondering where things come from. Things seem to just happen. Trends, videos, cultural movements, and think pieces pop up without explaining themselves. You walk outside and people are crowded in front of your house playing the new Pokémon GO. Almost as quickly as it becomes viral, it disappears into memory. The future travels back in time and confronts you from all directions.

Negative Ecstasy

Negative Ecstasy is the future. Negative Ecstasy is a state of overpowering rapture, a joy that takes over the body and overwhelms logic, reality, and self-control. It destroys boundaries between the physical and spiritual planes. The word “negative” points to this rupture of ego, a negative psychology in contrast to a positive or generative one. Negative Ecstasy also refers to the trance state that prophets, oracles, and seers have entered throughout mythology and history.

In a large scale, Negative Ecstasy is a psychic force that unites a mass of people with a radical and fantastic vision of the future. Ecstatic vision is the secret ingredient that forms world religions, cults, political and nationalist movements. It unites a group by raising up an idea and making it something worth living and dying for. In contemporary digital/physical augmented reality, it allows time travel, mind control, and the gift of prophecy.

Negative Ecstasy is a form of magic that creates reality. Instead of working like chaos magic, which is the ability of something to exist through the decision to believe in it, Negative Ecstasy creates a reality by pulling together disparate elements alchemically in a frenzied state. In contemporary culture, this frenzied state is hyper-capitalism, which is a model for the high intensity and speed of global capitalist social organization.

In hyper-capitalism, internet aesthetics and memes become food for trolls, think pieces, scripts for reality TV shows, and political events simultaneously. Live-streamed videos become news material just as quickly as they are aestheticized on joke Twitter accounts. Practical jokes on Facebook work in sync, making a feedback loop as they dissolve into moral panic and wild goose chases.

As the line between digital and physical content dissolves, hypercapitalism places itself in hyperreality. Did you really put on a face mask if you didn't post a selfie on your Instagram story? If not, how much of your daily routine is actually on social media? This hyperreal space is a state of Negative Ecstasy, and one that shows the internet's ability to fully realize contemporary cultural and political systems in cyberspace (and vice versa).



The expanding power of the internet is what gives Negative Ecstasy its ability to drive political movements, give brands immense popularity and influence, and give call-out culture its teeth. One step further, Negative Ecstasy models the spiritual power of new technology, which underlines contemporary trends in nationalism and the reintroduction of magic into pop culture. To highlight these movements in contemporary culture, I present two case studies: Gucci and Donald Trump's Twitter account.

Case Study 1: Gucci

Keywords: post-truth, time travel, hyper-colonialism

Gucci is one of the most sought-after brands in fashion. Recently, Gucci has featured campaigns of illustrated mermaids, vintage sci-fi monsters, Gucci-made memes, aliens and anthropomorphic fantasy hybrids, classic Americana, a questionably colonialist campaign with lions and tigers, a campaign highlighting trans model Hari Nef, and a show that included a “fake” Gucci tee. Any given Gucci look may incorporate Disney characters, oriental patterns, net art, and ancient Greek mythology all on the same sweater. Gucci works across geography, time periods, and cultures, as well as across class and gender, without a second thought.

As an aesthetic empire, Gucci is a perfect example of a brand positioning itself to model the developing qualities of the internet, placing it ahead of its competition while reaching a new, massive younger audience. The next step of this is the brand's ability to take on the power of the internet (virality, relevance, ability to present itself outside of history and traverse time at will) and use it for profit.

Recent Gucci seasons and campaigns are indiscernible from each other because they all feature an intense, clashing mashup of different aesthetics, references, and objects in hyperdrive. It's a genius that solidifies the chaos of internet culture, taking contemporary identity politics and turning them into opulent branded objects. The cultural colonialism of this works because it mimics the globalism and hyper capitalism of the internet.

This is post-truth fashion, no honesty or authenticity needed. In this way, Gucci uses Negative Ecstasy to create its coolness. Their indiscriminate mining of culture places the brand in a flattened sense of time and space, which in turn becomes an ecstatic utopia of politicized aesthetics that anyone can fit into.

Kellyanne Conway wears a red, white, and blue Gucci suit to Trump's inauguration, telling a NBC reporter "...this is just Gucci! Trump revolutionary wear!" A few months later, Gucci releases a campaign with an all-Black cast, equal parts Afrofuturist and a tribute to 1960s Black dandyism. The magic of malleability, allowing Gucci to be both a symbol of American (white) nationalism and Black identity politics, is only possible through Negative Ecstasy. However, it's no coincidence that Gucci's New York headquarters are located in the Trump Tower...

Case Study 2: Donald Trump's Twitter

Keywords: mania, internet magic, white nationalism

Trump's twitter works kind of like a digital invocation room; the surreal yet persistent narrative sparks social media firestorms, global events, witch hunts, and virtually anything else that the president might desire. It sets the tone for political debate in the US, and likewise creates a parallel democratic space where any Twitter account can participate in American politics.

Trump's twitter vitriol feeds the mania of his followers, stabilizing a certain type of anxiety and anger that anyone who retweets shares. This was perhaps the strongest weapon in Trump's arsenal as he gained political power. It worked ecstasy magic to collect the political fringes of the internet, trolls, and meme admins into a unified force that did his bidding during his 2016 presidential campaign.

You probably remember this "dark" part of the internet as the alt right, a loosely tied nazi group that started on anonymous message boards in the mid 2000s. During the election, the alt right emerged from liminal internet-space and twisted the viral Pepe the Frog meme into a fascist symbol that damaged Hillary Clinton's campaign and put a megaphone to Trump's viral presence during critical campaign moments.

When Trump won and made alt-right celebrity Steve Bannon White House Chief Strategist (if only for a short period of time), everything seemed strangely orchestrated. What happens when American politics start to mirror the hyperreality of the internet? Meme versions of Trump's tweets are shared just as widely as the tweets themselves, skewing the already surreal American political field. Even if you don't share Trump memes, you are still captive to his ability to flex the muscles of viral meme admins and larger digital communities.

The Future: New Extremism

New Extremism is Cardi B showing up to the AMAs in a green Gucci scuba suit at the same time as rising tides are putting homes in Florida underwater. Watching the show at home, you multitask and impulse buy a Wicca starter kit on Etsy. You aren't sure that you will use it because moon magic makes you feel like a white feminist, but 1) the world is out of control, and 2) you have to do something to ease your obsession with astrology.

This is seeking a way out through the easiest means possible. It's less about buying into wearable gadgets and more about giving yourself up to the algorithms and systems that guide your every movement. After realizing that Soylent is not that different from Pediasure, you invest in algae-based nutrition bars. However, you can't pretend to give up human

food forever. The trick of New Extremism is understanding that you were born into a cyborg world.

For example, take viral Kid's YouTube videos. The genre is dominated by content generation studios that use fully-automated systems to produce hundreds of children's cartoons each week. Every bot and generation Z child who watches a video of Peppa Pig generates the same amount of revenue for that company. As more videos are produced by computers using repurposed and cheap animations, they become more and more weird, off, and extreme.

Children watching compilation cartoons of kids being tortured at the dentist are tapping into the same mode of New Extremism of their raw vegan cousins wearing Druid gear. If technology + late capitalism = extremism, then consumers today need identity and stability more than ever.

New Extremism recognizes that consumers seek safety above all else. When things stop making sense, we rely on magical thinking, mystical tokens, and unreliable news sources to create sense for us. Think: Everyone remembers Kendall Jenner's distasteful ad for Pepsi, and the backlash that ensued. If the ad had worked, would teens be marching on Washington drinking Diet Pepsi, the same way that their moms marched with pink beanies?

Notes on Magic

Maybe in 20 years we'll think of this time as the second Cold War. While there is something to be said about international puppetry between the US, Russia, and various countries in the Middle East, the vacuum that neoliberalism made when it ended has created an open playing field where the elite 1% are more interested in capital than national borders.

Between anonymous Twitter accounts and nazi marches in Europe, the geopolitical state of this second Cold War is completely integrated with the internet. It happens on a micro scale with the same crushing impact that it has on a macro level.

The Cold War was a period of technological fantasy and looming dystopia, as much as it was a time of behind-the-scenes political movement.

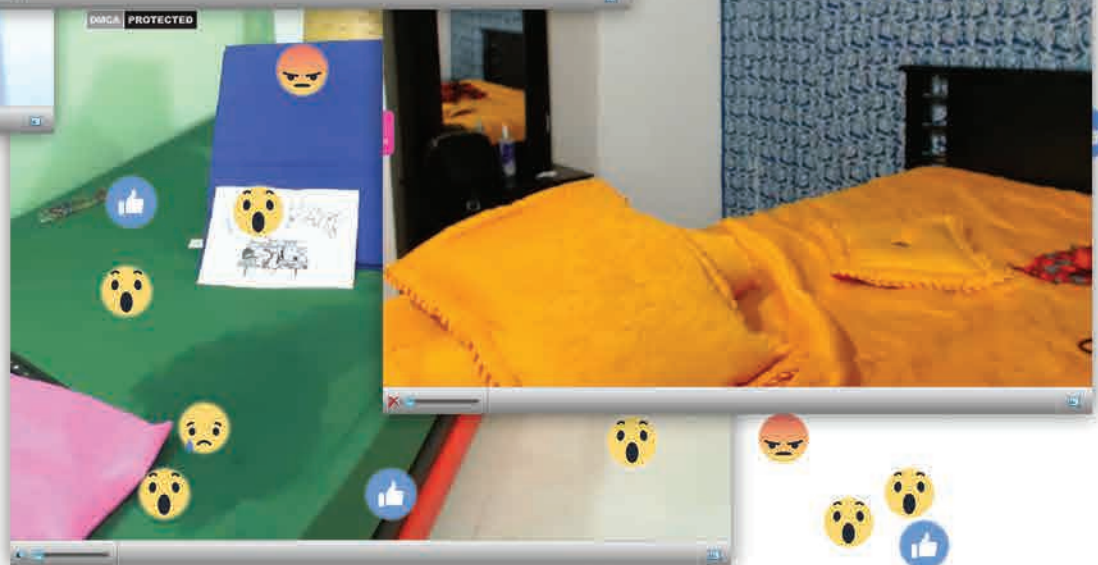
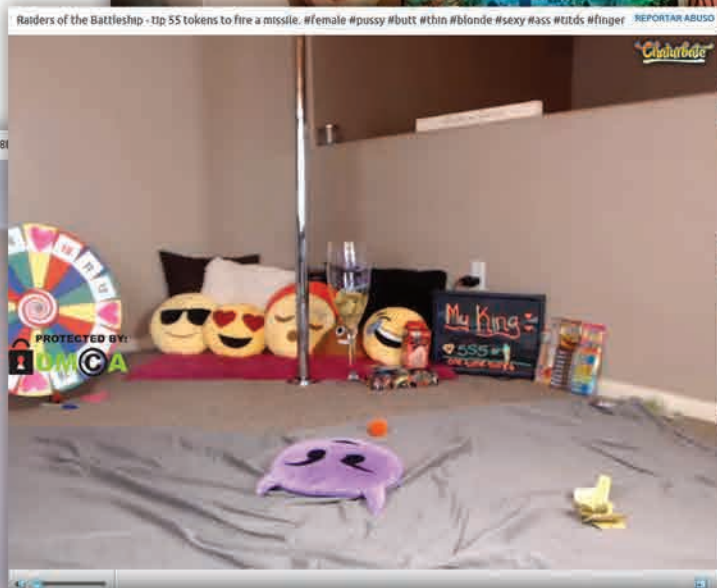
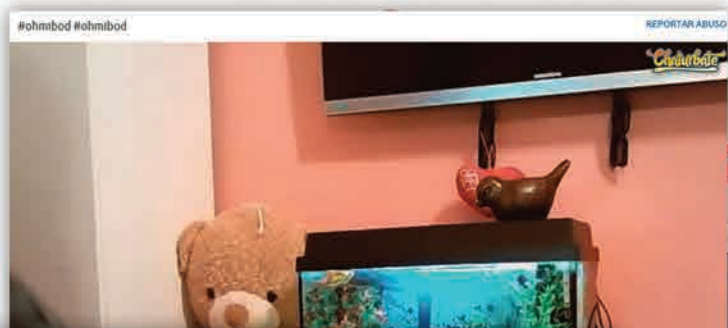
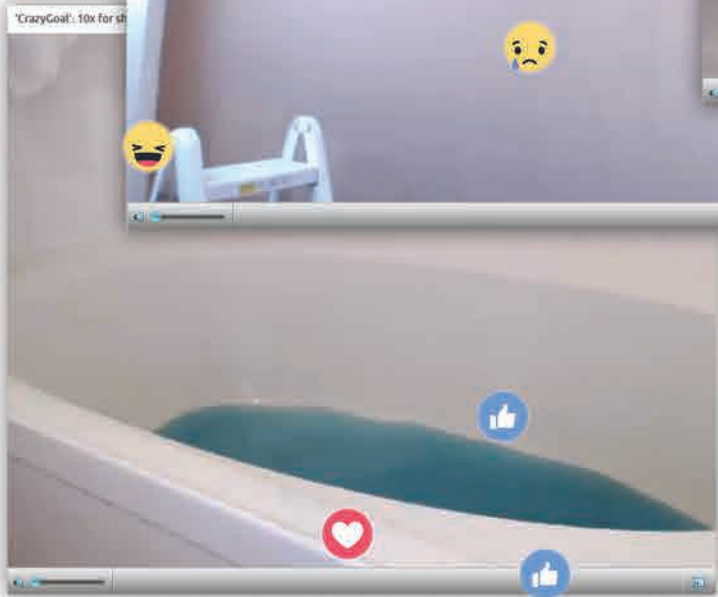
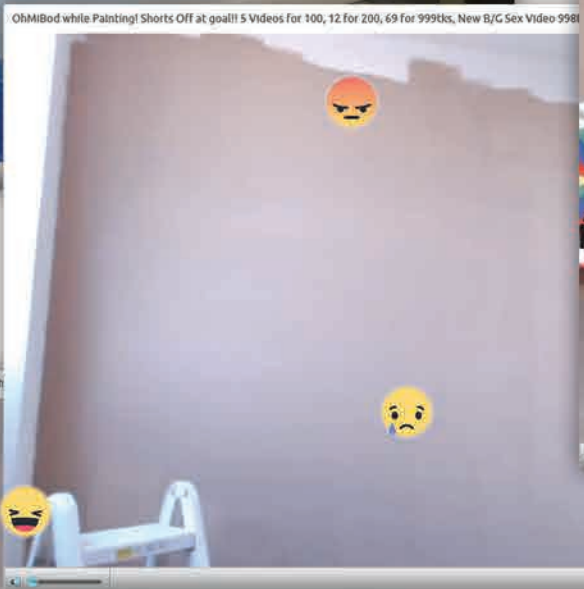
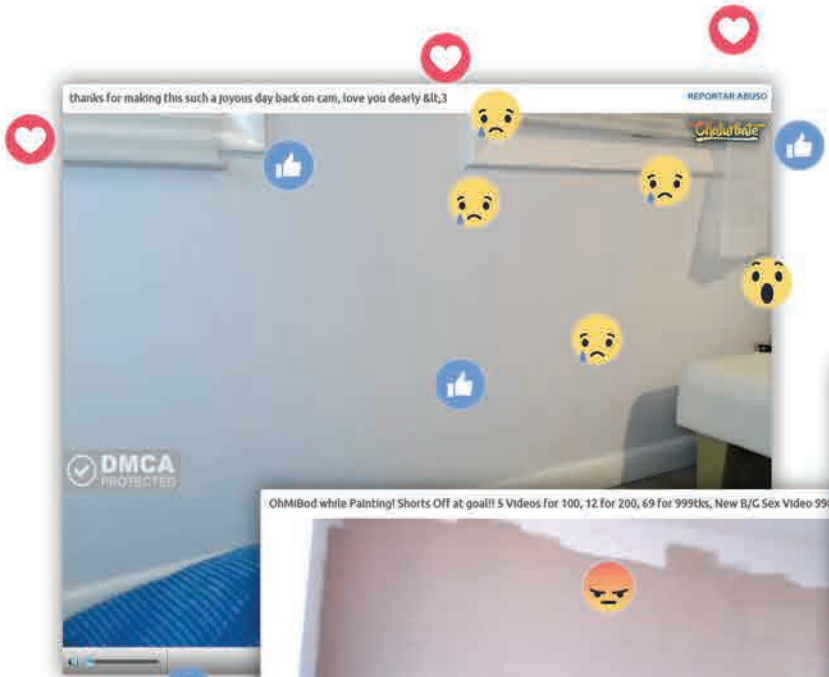
Satellite, drone, and cyborg technologies developed for military use carried themselves over to popular culture, giving your grandparents dreams of pacemakers, apocalyptic video games, and nuclear weapons. The magic space of technological possibility was terrifying and immense because no one understood what was happening, but everyone was in a rush to figure it out.

What does this mean for you? If we really were in Cold War II—with ourselves, with history, shifting economic structures, and ecology—then that would explain our contemporary turn to magic. Magic is a tool that directly links our bodies with salvation. It raises us up, and in ceremony unites us with the limits of imagination. It is Negative Ecstasy in action. If you can believe that religion and mysticism are deeply ingrained in human culture, you can also see that contemporary mysticism gives us the spirituality that we desperately crave, that which postmodernism killed off.

Global culture continues to look for ways to connect with a higher power. While white witches in Bushwick listen to experimental electronic and perform magic rituals, white nationalist social media gurus meet in Greenpoint to talk about buying Twitter bots and mind control. The question remains: what do we do with global psychosomatic mania and the euphoria it produces?

Chloe Patricia O'Neill (b. 1996, New York) is a conceptual visual artist and writer currently based in Chicago. She works across sculpture, performative video, and text-based media, and explores themes of post-humanism, technology, identity, and mythology. Her work has been exhibited at Museum of the Moving Image, Queens, The Knockdown Center, and POWERPLNT, Brooklyn, among others.





Wade Wallerstein

Radical Innocence and Digital Purity - Living with Networked Surveillance

William Gibson's trio of sci-fi thrillers in *The Sprawl Trilogy*¹ have been revered for decades for introducing the term 'cyberspace' and the concept of 'the matrix' to a popular lexicon. In his prescient vision of Internet totality, almost all facets of society rely on the network. The complexity of this digital-neural network is unthinkable, existing as a 'non-space of the mind' that is experienced by billions of people every day as a 'consensual hallucination.' The network is tightly monitored and controlled by corporations, who, in this vision of our future society, have more power than governments.

The arc of the trilogy traces the birth and subsequent evolution of artificial intelligence. At the end of book one, *The Neuromancer*, two different ultra-powerful AI programs fuse together, becoming an omnipotent and all-encompassing intelligence that dissolves seamlessly into the totality of the network that Gibson has envisioned. In subsequent books, this intelligence develops different consciousnesses or subprograms that manifest as deities, modelling themselves after the loa of Haitian Vodou² in order to interface with humans.

One such cyber-god, referred to as Papa Legba³, acts as the gatekeeper to all cyberspace: he is 'the master of roads and pathways.' According to the Haitian tradition, Legba facilitates all kinds of communications—similar to St. Peter in the Christian tradition or Hermes from Greek mythology. One might conceptualize Legba as metaphor for the ultimate form of surveillance—every action in cyberspace being surveilled by this omnipotence whose being actually comprises the materiality of the net itself. His power and presence subsumes that of the corporations, whose

During the climax of the final novel, *Mona Lisa Overdrive*, Legba passes judgment upon a girl named Mona: a prostitute and stimulant drug addict who has lived most of her life in obscurity on the streets. Gibson writes:

"Mona's life has left virtually no trace on the fabric of things, and represents, in Legba's system, the nearest thing to innocence."

This line immediately stood out to me—it stands so counter to the way that we conceptualise visibility and surveillance today. To fly under

the radar is often seen as an act of rebellion—a countermeasure that makes a radical impact against the compulsory surveillance that signifies our contemporary paradigm, often associated with hacktivism and other digital counterculture movements. What if resisting surveillance is not radical in a revolutionary, ‘fight the man’ kind of way—what if resisting surveillance is actually an act of purity, or benevolence?

There is a whole can of worms to be opened up here. If resisting surveillance—leaving no trace or impact upon the network whatsoever—is the ultimate form of innocence, then this implies that the network itself is both corrupted and corrupting. I can’t help but envision the first ever dial-up user as Eve, biting the apple and losing her innocence as her first connection is made to the World Wide Web. Virginal qualities are lost in the posting of a selfie, the participation in an online forum or the remixing and dissemination of a meme. Here, viral Internet content becomes a metaphor for sexually transmitted disease, running rampant across the network and infecting those who engage with it. The phrase that Gibson uses to describe cyberspace as a ‘consensual hallucination’ gains a whole new meaning—compared to the rhetoric surrounding sexual consent—in this context of consensual online participation across the network.

But what is to be gained from this understanding of online participation? Are we to completely log off, swearing away from online communications in the digital culture equivalent of nuns locked in a convent? Absolutely not. I think most people would agree that there is something to be said for losing one’s innocence—something else, equally valuable, is gained.

Look at the *sousveillance*⁴ movement, for example. Rather than slipping underneath the radar, choosing to have no impact whatsoever on the shape of the network through covert participation online, *sousveillance* allows the user to take matters into their own hands, turning surveillance measures back against the forces that be. Think of right now as being like a second coming of the sexual liberation movement, but for digital culture. *Sousveillance* is like the ultimate sex positive movement.

Let’s stop looking at counter surveillance activities as rebellious acts—the behaviour of criminals—and instead start looking at counter surveillance measures as acts of innocence, ways of cleansing ourselves of

the corrupting influence of privatised networks and reverting to a simpler time when we could just be in and connect through online spaces without thinking about how we are being monetised and surveilled.

Digital culture paradigms change rapidly, and our current moment is no exception. For example, proposed legislation in Europe, Article 13⁵, would effectively force the online platforms that allow us to connect with each other across time and distance to become police states. The law would require Internet Service Providers to become responsible for content across their platforms which breaches copyright law. Essentially, any meme or song remix becomes an illegal material which platforms would be responsible for confiscating and eliminating from the network. Should this legislation pass, every user would be subjected to a forced loss of innocence; all of their content—which previously might have not even made the most brutal of algorithms bat an eye—subject to minute scrutiny.

There is something problematic here. In the context of Article 13, innocence equates to not throwing stones in the digital pond. Creating content and sharing in collaborative image making becomes a criminal activity. The connection to Gibson’s conceptualize of the net, Legba’s omnipresence and control over all pathways of communication, is clear. The very act of presence becomes akin to the idea of leaving traces in the virtual world. To participate, in this new world, is to sin. How do we reconcile this with the artistic urge, the need to create, and the human urge, the need to participate? It’s sex education that teaches an abstinence only curriculum—it just isn’t going to work.

No matter what, both corporate and government surveillance are—and have been for quite a while—a given in almost any online space. Two options seem to present themselves at this point. The first is to submit. Understand that you are being transformed into monetizable data by an unknowable number of forces in almost any online encounter. Be okay with this, because it’s not like you’re not being surveilled in physical space, either. Use your voice and your presence to try to make an impact on your online community. The alternative, is to practice radical digital innocence: resist the ever-watchful algorithms of Sauron⁶ embedded into the very fabric of the network. Rather than making waves with your content, and in

turn making money for our corporate overlords, think about what it might mean to unplug, evade and slip in between the cracks.

Abstinence surely works with a 100% success rate, but I've heard using a condom does a pretty darn good job too.

(Endnotes)

¹ <https://bit.ly/2md6Jbk>

² <https://bit.ly/2eSPIUq>

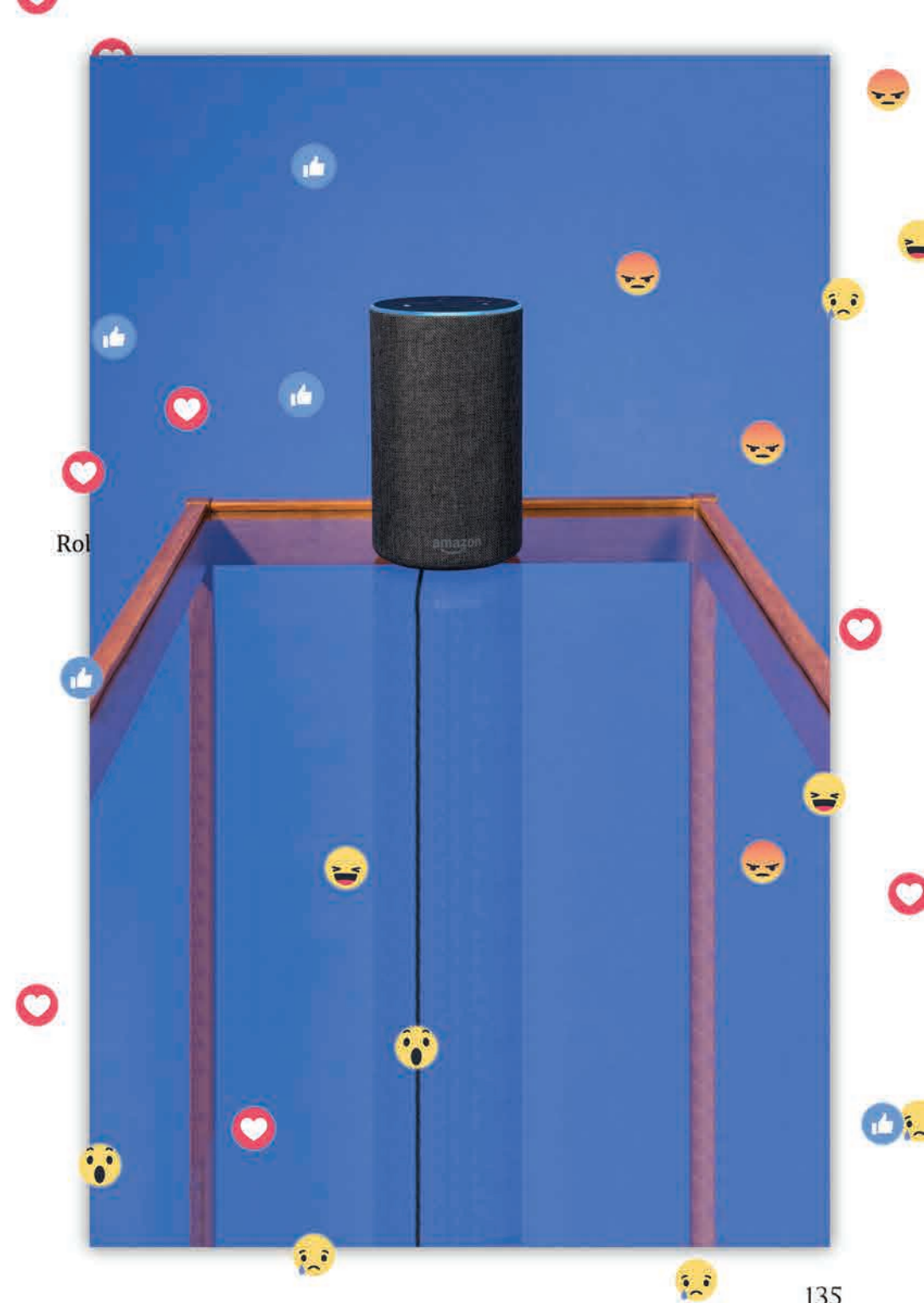
³ <https://bit.ly/1Y0rje5>

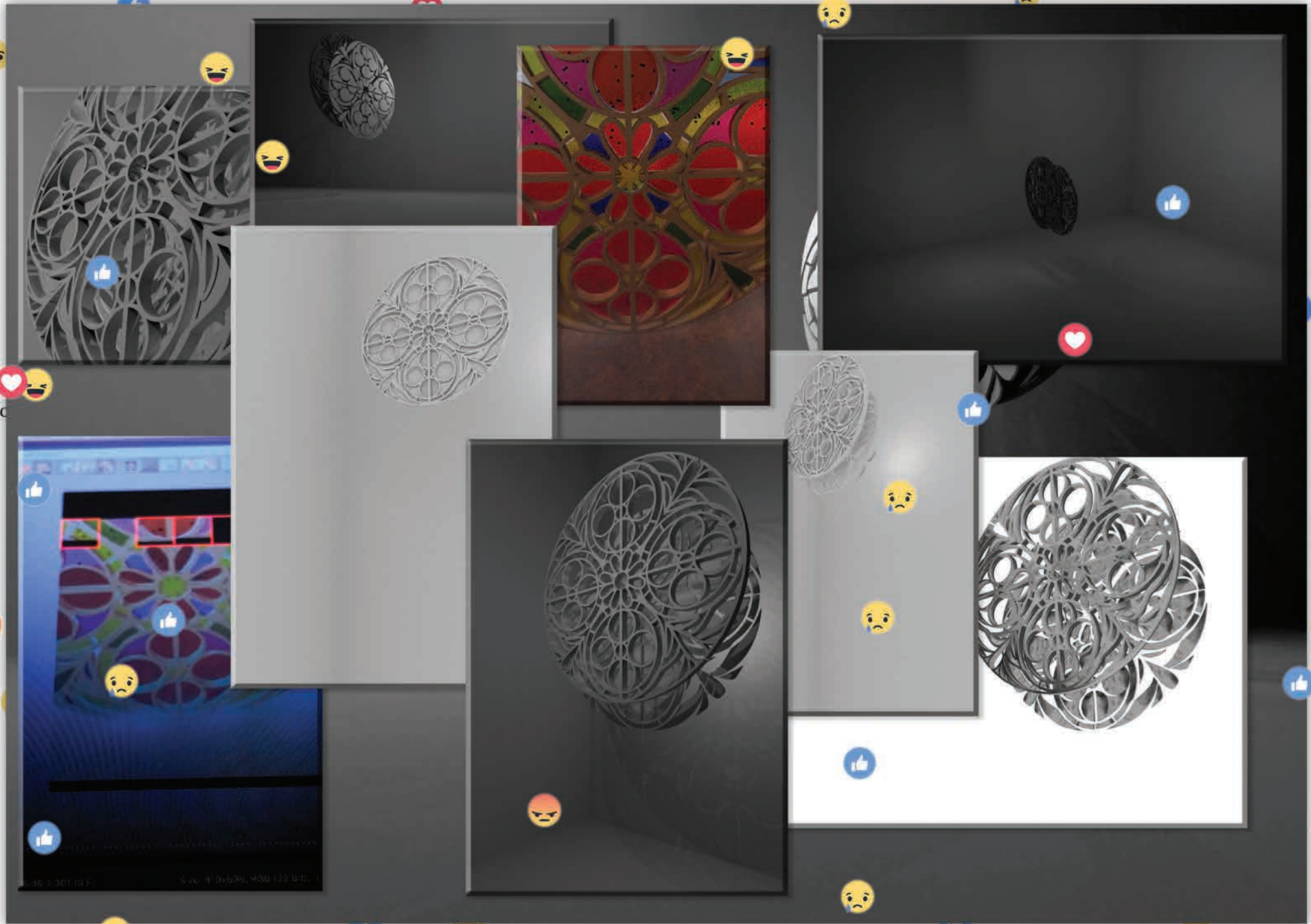
⁴ <https://bit.ly/1JWRfR6>

⁵ <https://bit.ly/2qG2syX>

⁶ <https://bit.ly/2NMZUtw>

Wade Wallerstein (b. 1995, Philadelphia, USA) is a current MSc Digital Anthropology candidate at University College London and the curator of UCL's Multimedia Anthropology Laboratory and Exhibitions. Working at the intersection of digital visual culture, contemporary art, and science and technology studies, he takes a phenomenological approach to the study of digital artistic and curatorial practices. Recently, Wade curated a downloadable ZIP file exhibition entitled *The Finder: Ethnography of the Personal Interface* in collaboration with Off Site Project, which sought to uncover the relationship between interface design and creative practice.





Bob Bicknell-Knight

In conversation with Helena Kate Whittingham

Docile Bodies at Vitrine Gallery, London is a group exhibition curated by Helena Kate Whittingham featuring Benjamin Edwin Slinger, Georgia Lucas-Going, Hardeep Pandhal, Jesse Darling, Liv Preston and Sam Blackwood, exploring the theory of Panopticism in relation to VITRINES unique exhibition conditions; the ability to be viewed 24/7.

Bob Bicknell-Knight: So, I thought we could begin by deconstructing what Panopticism means to you as the curator and within the context of this exhibition, one that focuses highly on ideas of the body and being docile, or in fact becoming complicit in our human actions, foregrounded within the age of the panopticon, where one has the ability to be constantly watched, be it through their computer's camera or via their Facebook data. I guess what I'm intrigued by is this idea of complicity in the digital age, how that feeds into the title of the show and as a foregrounding for the artworks?

Helena Kate Whittingham: My research into Panopticism has been ongoing since 2016 when I wrote my dissertation during my BA. I became obsessed with the notion of being watched and our understanding of that. I think as a generation it's pretty normalised how visible we are and we don't fully know or understand the consequences of that, we have no understanding pre-cctv for example, so it's really a very interesting and poignant time for this theory to be flirted with in my opinion.

Foucault said the perfect situation for influencing behaviour is the creation of docile bodies, 'bodies that not only do what we want but do it precisely in the way we want.' This is where the title 'docile bodies' came from. Each work has quite a literal link to the body which actually was rather unexpected, but the title or the theory is really still quite ambiguous. Where there is the quite direct link with the gallery space and panopticon architecture, (being able to be viewed 24/7, and segmented in some way) I still think it's ambiguous as to who are the ones being watched. Initially by observing this exhibition you are the authoritative figure, because you are not the ones 'in the cells', but then, the realisation comes full circle and you are also being watched. There are huge cameras throughout the square, echoing the city and our society, and the cameras in our hands and ourselves reflected in the glass. There's a sardonic duality there which I'm really interested in.

BBK: I like this idea of the artworks being trapped in a set of cells, both literally due to them being shown behind a pane of glass, but metaphorically too, being watched but also watching. I guess there's a power associated with an object or individual that simply watches, keeping quiet in a conversation whilst observing a discussion play out in front of them.

The exhibition feels incredibly site specific, with the works being monitored/monitoring 24/7, and probably wouldn't work as successfully in a traditional gallery space. Do you see the show being led by the space or the artwork? Which came first?

HKW: The show was definitely led by the nature of the unique VITRINE gallery architecture. The fact it is viewable 24/7 and has the well-lit segments just rang so strongly to the Panopticon architecture. Liv Preston, Benjamin Edwin Slinger and Sam Blackwood all made new works for the exhibit after having a conversation about the theme. I chose Jesse Darlings *Untitled (waiting room poster/municipal hospital series)* as the hospital institution also has a link with Panopticism. Hardeep Pandhals bodily cardboard cut-outs and Georgia Lucas Going's performative work just tied it all together. I wanted each artist to have two segments of the window each to play with, 6 solo shows next to each other.

Usually, in the shows at VITRINE the artists/curator ignore the panels but I wanted to highlight these. It's also a very interesting space to work with as you often read the show like a comic book, from left to right, then as well you can get such distance with the lead up to the square, and also such changes throughout the day, the morning the glass is quite reflective, the evening there's shadows and the night its lit with fluorescent.

BBK: I'd be interested to see which kind of works would have been decided upon if the exhibition had been presented in a different gallery space, so much of the theme seems to depend on this idea of being watched from afar. I don't know how other people in the arts community make their decisions about which show to visit on a given day, but usually I look at the artist list, rather than the gallery or curator, apart from when I've been to that gallery countless times and trust their programming.

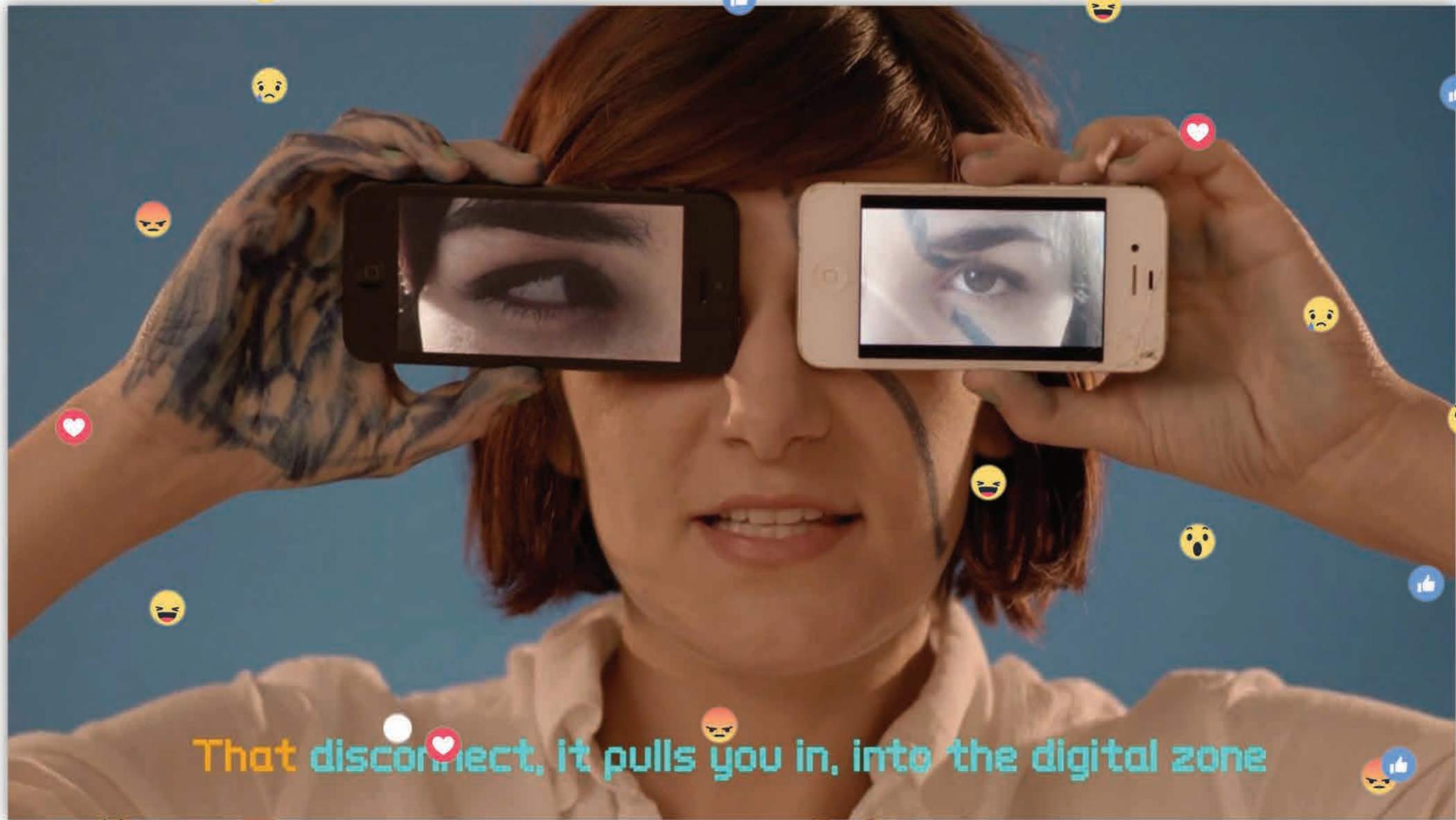
Liv Preston's work usually concerns video gaming culture and the certain niche worlds that the stereotypical 'gamer' inhabits, both on and offline. What new work was produced for the exhibition, and how did it tie into the overriding theme of Panopticism?

HKW: Yeah, I had the thought as soon as it was up that it would be such a different show is it wasn't segmented! I would love to reconfigure the same exhibit again and again. With Preston's work, stereotypical is an interesting word you use, Preston's work I actually think is applicable to many other situations, not just gaming.

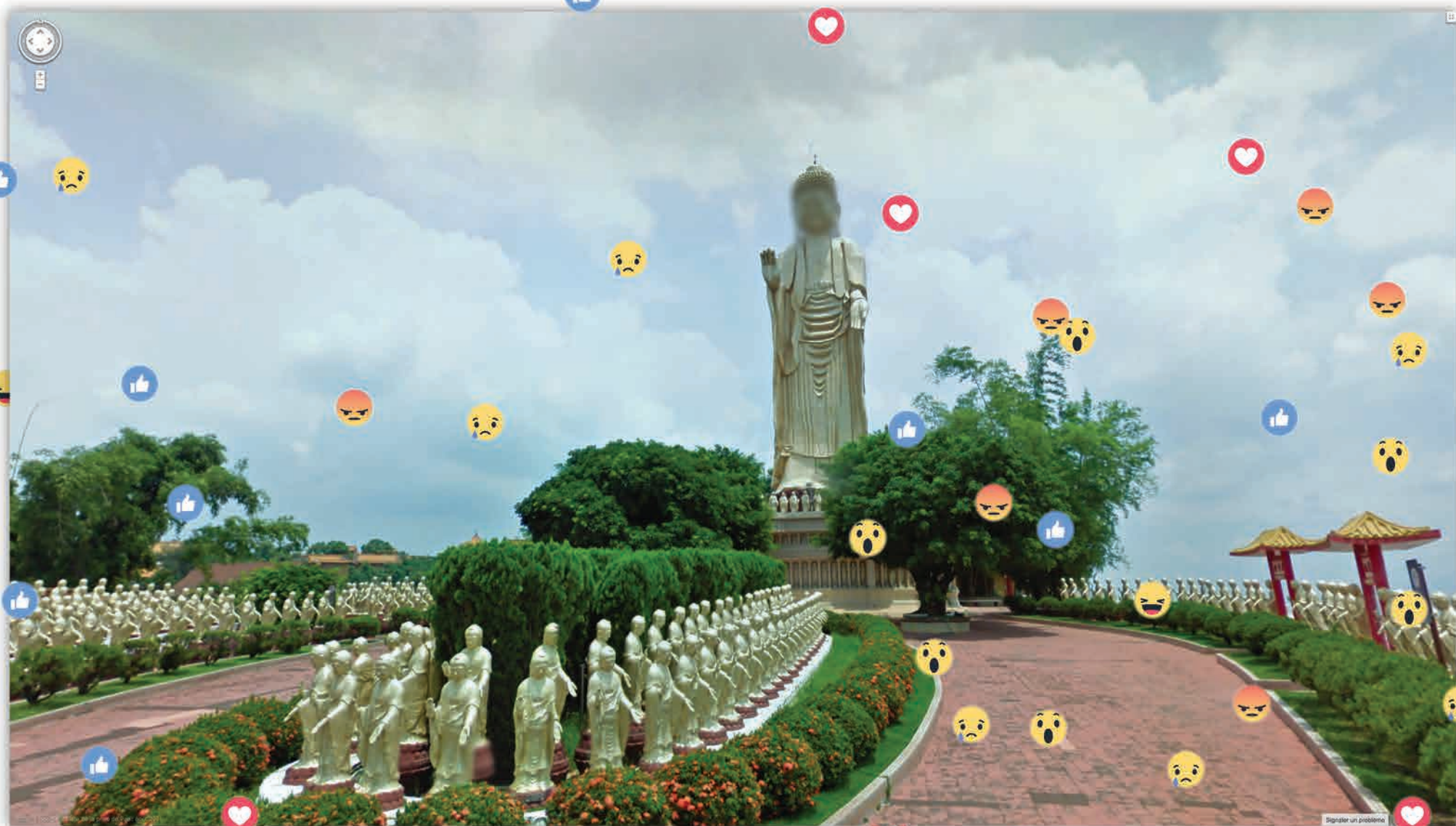
The whole sprue system is a new format for Preston, the works themselves that are being hosted are a mixture; some previous works and some not even works but (often autobiographical) references. This is the most digital reference to Panopticism in the exhibit, exploring gaming tropes that link to the theory in the age of digital surveillance.

BBK: So a number of works reside within this sprue system, usually the 'waste' piece in the mould/cast making process, a process that's inherently analogue and has been used for centuries. When referencing gaming it makes me think of Games Workshop and the painstaking process that goes into the creation of scale model making. I'm intrigued by how this very physical manifestation of one's own reality has a digital reference, perhaps you could speak more about this and the content of the piece?

HKW: In Preston's work the digital reference comes from a tiny screen she made herself embedded in the sprue system hosting an image of her dog with a knife. Also, from the various gaming references that have both analogue and digital counterparts, like Pokémon. But on a wider context, its gaming link's with the online and therefore the digital. Panopticism's core themes are 'the systematic ordering and controlling of human populations through subtle and often unseen and/or unknown forces'. Today society continues to understand and manipulate the bases of enacted control through the fear of being observed. On a generation level, I'm not sure how much we are aware of being observed because we don't really know life without CCTV. There's even left-wing memes being PRO FBI agents watching you through your computer's camera...



That disconnect, it pulls you in, into the digital zone



Amber Clausner

Omniscient Pixels: A moment on the lips, forever on the hips

“it is fashionable to suggest that cyberspace is some kind of island of the blessed where people are free to indulge and express their individuality. some people write about it as though it were a 60’s utopia. in reality, this is not true.” (humdog, 1994)

In Thomas More’s 500-year-old vision of Utopia, he imagined a society ruled by idyllic equality and productivity. Alongside the equal distribution of labour and goods, the population of this society was encouraged to pursue their individual thirst for knowledge in their spare time. Since the dawn of the Internet, cyberspace has often been heralded as a new horizon of virtual utopia for all mankind.

In 1991 Loren Carpenter conducted a live computer network experiment that seemingly proved this notion. Set in a large shed with a collection of uninformed participants, Carpenter initiated a collective game of pong. The audience was split and condensed into two halves, left and right, and each individual had the power to effect the position of their side’s vertical bar. As a collective consciousness, without verbal communication or instruction, the group managed to successfully play a game of pong. For many, this proved the inevitable ability of the mass to self-organise without the management of politics or law;

“Carpenter believed that what he had created was a model of a society where there was no hierarchy. Where everyone made their own decisions without guidance, yet because they were linked by the machines, out of it came a stability and an order.” (All Watched over by Machines of Loving Grace, episode 1, 2011)

Many years prior to this artist Nam June Paik wrote his renowned 1974 Roca Foundation proposal ‘Media Planning for the Postindustrial Society – The 21st Century is only 26 years away’, where he coined the term ‘Electronic Super Highway’. In this proposal Paik envisioned the Internet as a “springboard for new and surprising human endeavours” that would function “not only to serve our daily needs, but to enrich the quality of life itself”. Paik was so confident in his utopian view of future digital technologies, that a decade later, on the 1st of January 1984 he televised the first ‘international installation’; Good Morning Mr. Orwell (Paik, 1984). To do this Paik connected multiple geographic locations from New York, Paris to South Korea via satellite in order to critique George

Orwell's vision of the year to come. In the opening sequence the presenter George Plimpton opens the 'global disco' with the following introduction:

"George Orwell, of course, made 1984 what it is today when he wrote the book in 1948. It was a warning against totalitarianism and the dangers of electronic technology, all summed up in that famous, sinister phrase; "Big Brother is watching you." What you're about to see however, are positive and interactive uses of electronic media which Mr. Orwell, the first media prophet, never predicted." (Nam June Paik - Good Morning Mr. Orwell (1984), 2013)

The general consensus of the programme comes under the scathing approach of; look at how wrong Orwell was and look at how great electronic technologies are, which in retrospect seems somewhat naïve.

Fittingly, at the 1984 super bowl the first Apple Macintosh commercial was aired to the public. The minute long ad directed by Ridley Scott uses the same technique as Paik, critiquing Orwell's vision to demonstrate the positive and liberating potentials of electronic technologies. Throughout the advert there is a prevailing voice over, which is seemingly just aesthetic jargon used to suggest the figure of the omniscient 'big brother'. The occasional word is recognisable such as; 'ideology', 'purification', 'pests', 'contradictory', 'weapon', 'confusion' and 'enemies', words that seem to echo German propaganda from the 1930's, but without forming a comprehensible meaning. One phrase stands out clearly from the others; "We are one people". Shortly after this, a woman devoid of the totalitarian costume that confine the other 'characters', charges toward the screen with a large hammer followed by several guards in hazard suits. She spins with the weapon, like a hammer throw, before releasing it into the air. As the hammer is consumed by white light on contact with big brother's leering face on the larger than life screen, a voice-over announces; "On January 24th, Apple Computer will introduce the Macintosh. And you'll see why 1984 won't be like Nineteen eighty-four." (Apple 1984 Super Bowl Commercial Introducing Macintosh Computer, 1984) (Friedberg, 2006:228). The destruction of the one way TV screen with the propaganda spouting, all knowing and controlling, leader metaphorically illustrates how personal computing promised consumers

liberation from control. This new technology, therefore, was considered by many as proof that the future would disprove Orwell's imaginings.

It is not surprising to find that the consensus of the 1980's heralded the developing electronic technologies as inherently good progress. Because the real, historical, year of 1984 for the majority of the Western world was under capitalism rather than totalitarianism, Orwell's vision of technology did not, at least aesthetically, match up to the reality of it. Therefore, because advanced technology had not created the dystopian nightmare that was previously envisioned, perhaps it could be said that thinkers in the 1980's overestimated the positive aspects of electronic technologies, leading to the societal faith in machines that we find present and troubling today.

By the early 90's the World Wide Web was beginning to integrate itself into the commercial arena, with many online users committing their time to virtual realities such as Second Life and forums such as 'the WELL'. In 1994 WELL user humdog posted an essay titled 'pandora's vox: on communities in cyberspace' which gives us a first hand insight to the functionality of the web in its earliest commercial days. Despite being written within a year of the Internet's adoption into everyday life, many themes in humdog's informal essay resonate with how the Internet functions today. From reflections on the Internet's capacity to distort and fragment identity, to the commodification of self and human interactions alongside Jean Baudrillard's theories of simulacra, it is evident that humdog grasped the darker underbelly of cyberspace's lasting implications. Most fittingly though, humdog noticed that the reality of equality and liberation that Carpenter, Apple and Paik celebrated, was in fact an illusion;

"the rhetoric in cyberspace is liberation-speak. the reality is that cyberspace is an increasingly efficient tool of surveillance with which people have a voluntary relationship." (humdog, 1994)

Here humdog is referring to the FBI's ability to download and collect "pretty much whatever they damn well please" of our online interactions and expressions. Since 1994 there have been many instances of online surveillance being used in increasingly intimate ways to track and spy on suspects without warrants. Most recently we can look at examples

from Edward Snowden to Canadian native activist Cindy Blackstock and the surveillance of dozens of 'Black Lives Matter' protesters. This is possibly one of the most alarming ways in which modern day technologies expose us to the same kind of surveillance that Orwell forewarned us of. In both cases the big brother figure has gained sufficient power to track and discipline members of society that express ideas against the designated 'order of things', in Nineteen Eighty-Four such behaviour is referred to as 'crimethought'. It is worth noting that with our unprotected online sharing and searching habits being potentially logged and scrutinised, it seems evident that modern cases of 'crimethought' would be increasingly easy to prove.

The implications of this form of surveillance should frighten and horrify us, this is a direct threat to our freedom of expression alongside our ability to come together to fight for justice and change in a progressively unjust and exploitative society. In short, this use of surveillance demonstrates an ability of higher powers to force us into political polarization and stagnation. These may be the most alarming examples of online surveillance's abilities to suppress the needs of society, but it is also important to reflect on how all of our online participation is leading to a mass form of surveillance and control which we may not be immediately aware of or threatened by. Whether or not we feel worthy of the FBI or government's attention we should all be wary of the exchange we make when click accept on the infamous HTML cookies pop-up.

Cookies have been used widely throughout the web since 1994 but were not publicly known about until Tim Jackson's article 'This bug in your PC is a smart cookie' in the Financial Times. Here, Jackson describes cookies as software that:

"increases the power of companies to track which Web pages an individual looks at, when, for how long, and in what order. That information can be tallied against information the customer provides of his own free will – for instance, when he "registers" for membership by giving a name and e-mail address, or provides a credit card number and a address when ordering a delivery – to produce a comprehensive record of individual behaviour. Most extraordinarily of all, this information can be stored on customers' own PCs without their knowledge. It can be kept in a

form so that only the company that collected the information can benefit from it. And when the customer connects to the Web site later, the site can silently interrogate his PC and pick up the information." (Jackson, 1996)

Jackson's article is riddled with the same bitterness that caused such controversy amongst Internet users at the time. Nowadays, since laws were placed in 2011 it is common practice to open a web page for the first time and come across a pop up that informs you that 'This website uses cookies. By continuing to browse this site you are agreeing to our use of cookies'. Despite this, it is still not widely known what cookies do, as most Internet users rarely research and readily accept them in order to access the content that they want as quickly as possible. Cookies benefit web surfers by making the Internet easier to navigate in many ways, remembering our passwords, predicting our web searches and logging when we paused a programme on Netflix. (Un)Equally, cookies benefit corporations and businesses by tracking and collecting our personal information such as our address, online browsing habits, likes and dislikes and selling it to data mining companies, in order to more precisely target us with advertisements. This is a disproportionate exchange of goods where we are willing to exchange personal data for fleeting pleasures and accessibility, to the benefit of corporations whose gains only increase as time passes. We should all be concerned by this as it threatens our right to privacy, and although we may feel like this has no immediate impact on our lives, we cannot guarantee that these terms and conditions are not subject to change in an increasingly unknowable future.

Although the use of cookies and government participation in online surveillance to gain omniscience parallels the power of Orwell's Big Brother, the methods utilised by our cyberspace 'big brother' to gain power and control is the opposite of how Orwell imagined he would. Where the character's Winston and Julia are punished for pursuing the most primal human instinct, sexual relations, the online society is encouraged to play out and explore their wildest Freudian fantasies. Where the Orwellian big brother maintains order with the threat of violence and deprivation, 2018's version of 'big brother' focuses on the accumulation of data value, which is done by seducing us into values of individualism and consumption. The concerning similarity here is that both big brother characters are

omniscient, omnipotent and use their powers to follow, censor and penalize those who are inclined to fight against oppression.

The evidence outlined here suggests that the Internet is not an alien utopia, but merely an immaterial extension of reality under the dogma of capitalism, pulled into commercial use because of its potential to be used to pursue unrestricted dopamine fuelled pleasure. As Orwell predicted, the advancement in electronic communication technologies is being used in immoral and unrestricted ways that benefit corrupt powers with every click, whilst simultaneously threatening the peoples right to protest and express alternative opinions and ideas to the current political regimes. Unfortunately it seems that fleeting pleasure is more important to us than these long-term repercussions concerning our privacy. Whether it be sexual, egotistical or immoral, online we continue to indulge ourselves in pleasures that are not accessible in the offline world. This temptation of pleasure seduces us into a disproportionate exchange of our data, which is used, in turn, as fuel to maintain the unbalanced distribution of power that sustains Capitalist order.

Perhaps it would be good practice for us to keep in mind an image of Winston in room 101 when we hastily click accept when confronted with the predicament of HTML cookies. This should serve as a reminder to us that as long as those in economical and political power can keep track and cater to our desires and pleasures, they also have the ability to create nightmares catered to our deepest subconscious fears.

(Endnotes)

All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace: Love and Power, Episode 1 [television programme online] Pres. Curtis. BBC UK (2011) 53 mins At: <https://bit.ly/2N6YVU6>

Apple 1984 Super Bowl Commercial Introducing Macintosh Computer (1984) Directed by Ridley Scott: America

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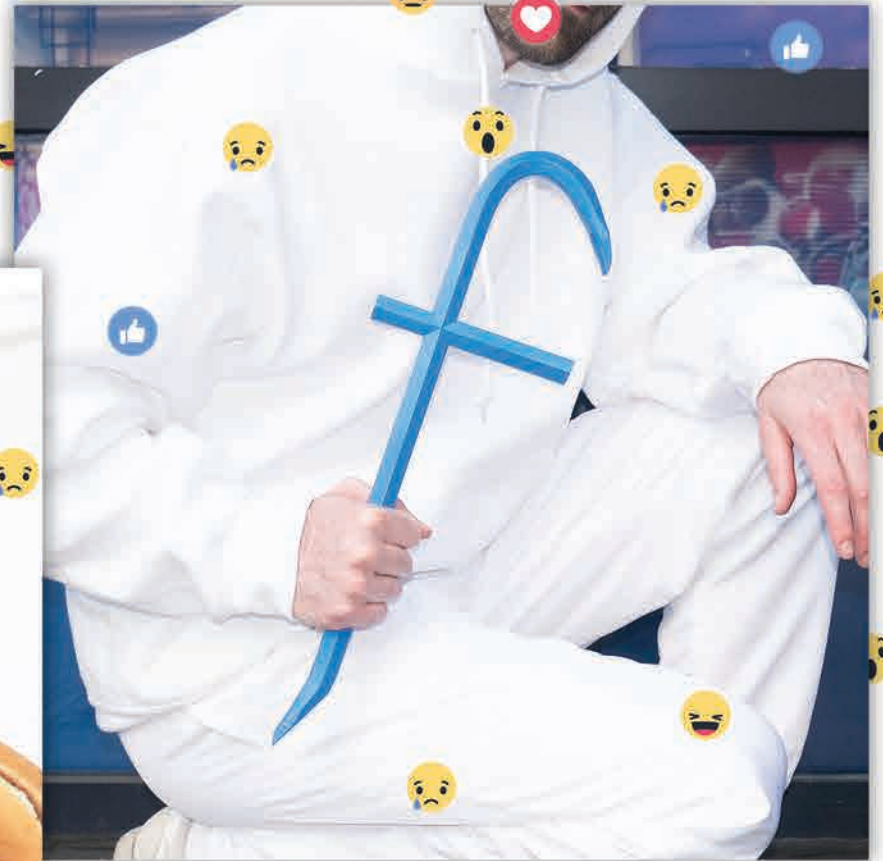
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Amber Clausner (b. 1994) is a multi media artist currently living and working in the UK. Clausner's practice is focused on the proliferation of digital technologies and their physical and cognitive effects on both the individual and global society. Her practice is underlined by anthropological modes of research alongside ecological concerns; her belief is that due to the rise of science and technology we (those living in a technologically dependant reality) have become emotionally disembodied from the sensuous landscape of the natural world, which has allowed us to inadvertently cause extreme changes to global ecology.





Julio Jandro Rodriguez

On Queerness and Surveillance in Mexico: The Internal Panopticon

Being openly Queer in Mexico is to go against a patriarchal, macho and religious society. It is a sign of resistance and bravery. It is a political act to confront the established powers and institutions. It is to be in constant danger.

In a country where at least two members of the LGBTQ+ community are brutally murdered every week (Letra S, 2016) many Queer people live in constant danger. This ostracization and violence is not new. It has been around since before the 1900's. In 1871 a reform to the Mexican Constitution abolished the criminalization of same-sex acts, however under the pretense of enforcing laws that would protect the good morals and costumes of the time Queer people were still prosecuted. Many were sent to the penitentiary of Belem in Mexico City.

Belem was founded as a prison in 1863 by president Benito Juarez. This institution saw many Queer men come in and out of its doors. Many imprisoned for being overtly feminine, openly Queer, crossdressing or any other behavior considered to go against the good morals of the time. In other words anything that defied heteronormativity and homogenic masculinity.

"Perverted and depraved beings, sunk at the bottom of irritable ignorance... Their manly faces contrast in a repugnant manner with their feminine voices and mannerisms." - La Carcel, Heriberto Frias.

Famous Mexican author Heriberto Frias wrote about some of the Queer men he met during his time at the penitentiary of Belem. He wrote about Juan Gonzalez, "La Turca", and how his feminine manners seem to heighten with each passing day as some sort of disgusting virus. Yet somehow, as repugnant and grotesque as "La Turca" seemed to the other prisoners they seemed to be fascinated by him.

Belem closed its doors in 1933 but another penitentiary opened long before and began to replace it. On September 29 of 1900 the penitentiary of Lecumberri opened its doors under the ruling of president Porfirio Diaz. This particular building is heavy with myths regarding the Queer community, although many have proven to be untrue. However when speaking about Mexico myths are not only woven throughout all of our history but are celebrated by many. From the myth of La Malinche to

the eagle eating the snake on top of the cactus that is branded on our flag, these myths like many more have been essential to the formation of our cultural identity. Lecumberri has seen many Queer men come in and out of its doors; some who openly lived Queer lives and were punished for it. Many argue that the word “joto” (fag) originated here as a letter play on the word jota (j in Spanish) as those imprisoned for being effeminate or queer were sent to this cell. This however has been proven to be untrue, but the myth remains. Some historians say that many men of the Dance of the 41 (Baile de los 41) were sent to Lecumberri to serve time. This particular dance marked an important event in Queer Mexican history; a night when the police raided a party in Mexico City and found 42 men dancing, some in female attire. Even the famous and openly gay performer, Juan Gabriel, saw the inside of this institution.

Lecumberri, now the National Archive, is more than a prison or an archive. It symbolizes the always present and vigilant gaze of society and of political and public institutions towards Queer communities. The penitentiary was constructed using Jeremy Bentham’s panoptic model. Hosting a 35 meter high panoptic tower in its center, the prisoners within Lecumberri were always at risk of being watched. This constant surveillance inside the jail ensured the prisoners would self-moderate their behavior and eventually correct themselves.

Lecumberri and Belem have both ceased to function as prisons, however the impact they have had in Queer communities has prevailed. The panoptic tower that once existed inside Lecumberri is now present within every member of society and within every Queer individual. For many of us in the Queer community, feeling the constant gaze of society acts as the panoptic tower once did in Lecumberri. To live as we are, to dress as we want, to be who we are are things that many times we find ourselves self-limiting from doing. We become alarmingly aware of how those around us perceive us, who they are and how they may react to our bodies, our presentations, our mannerisms and voices. The act of doing or being freely can mean being attacked, excluded, beaten or killed.

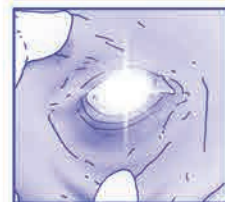
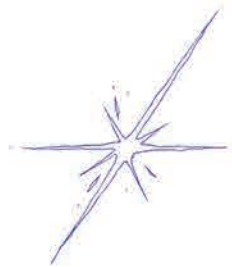
The panoptic tower migrated to the interior of each of us. We are hyper-aware of our existence; of the space our bodies take, of the pitch of our voice, but most importantly we are hyper-aware of who is around. We

must, in many cases, self-moderate because we are in presence of individuals that pose a direct and clear threat to us due to our deviation from hetero/cisnormativity. The ever present gaze of these individuals comes many times from within ourselves. For decades we have been under threat of psychological, physical or institutional violence. Years of being watched, silenced and threatened has driven us to act exactly as how a prisoner from Lecumberri would. We are aware of the gaze, we are aware of the panoptic tower looming over us and regardless if there is a watchman within it we act as if there is, because the price to pay for acting otherwise could be our lives.

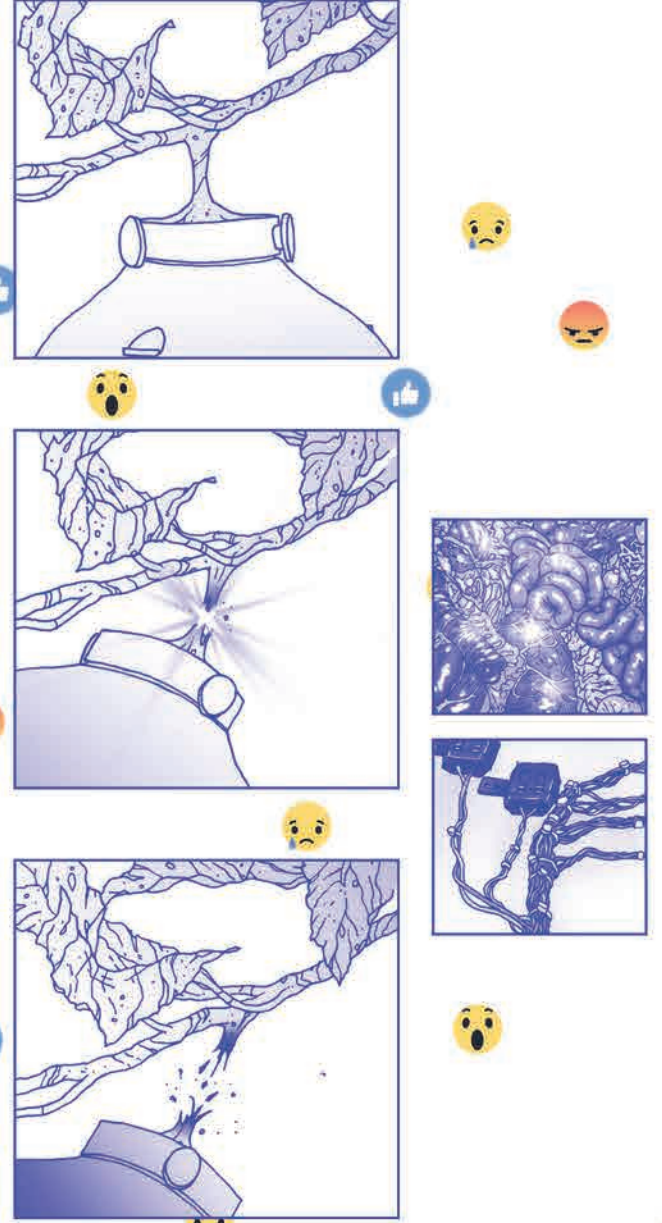
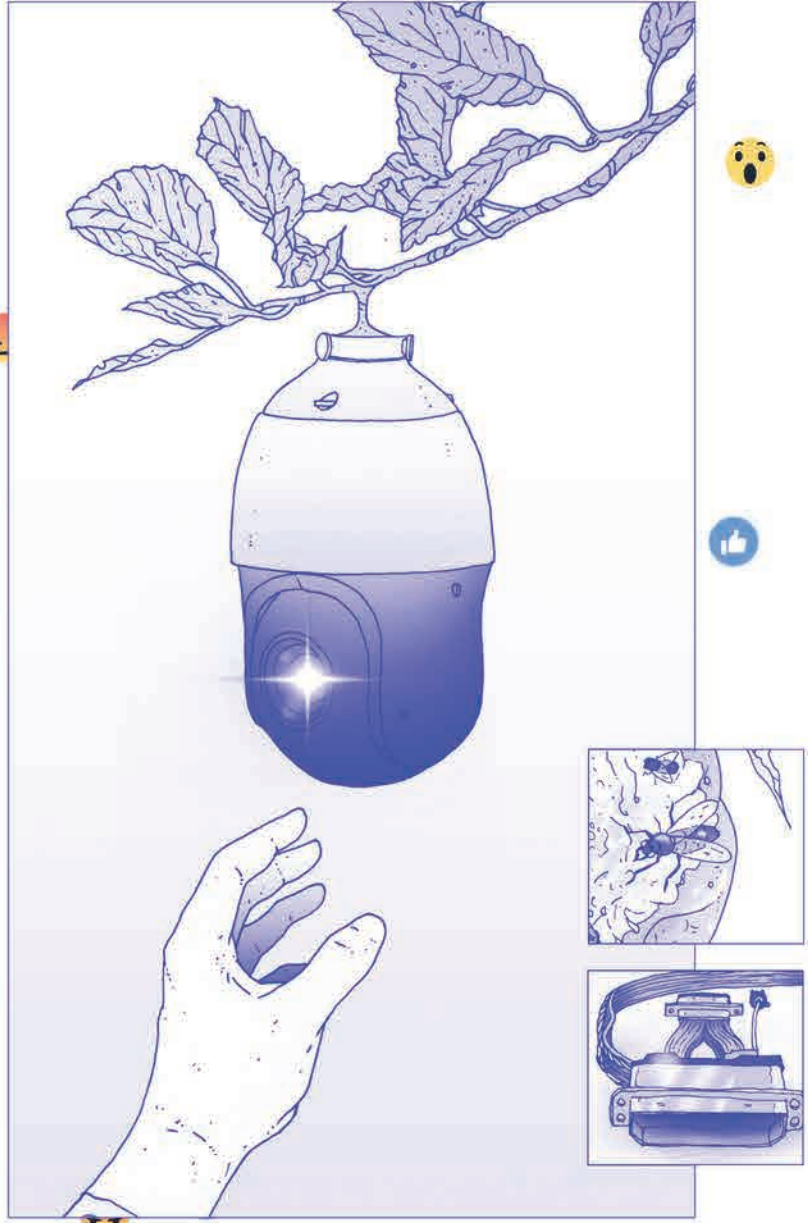
Roxanna Hernández, May 17th. Unknown Transwoman in Chiapas, May 29th. Yamileth, May 24th. These transwomen were killed in the past two weeks. Many more like them have died and not been reported. They were brutally murdered because of who they are. On May 10th a Queer migrant refugee center in Tijuana was burnt down almost killing 20 people because neighbors claimed they “do not want Queers in the neighborhood”. This is what we are up against. Every day.

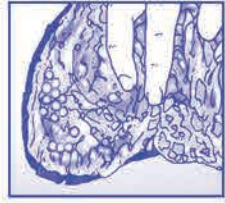
From the young boy in Jr. High that has to pretend to not be Queer in order to be safe from school bullies to the transgender woman who puts her life at risk every day by walking to work, Queer people in Mexico live in constant awareness of how others perceive us. In a country that is ridden with drug and political related violence and the hypermasculinity that comes with these lines of work we are forced to perform and look a certain way. Not only to protect ourselves from a hyper-macho society, extremely religious groups, conservative society, and political powers but also from the exacerbated violent figures produced in areas overpowered by drug cartels. This heightened awareness of our existence puts us in a state of being and feeling constantly surveilled, much like what the panoptic tower created on the prison inmates in Lecumberri.

Julio Jandro Rodriguez (b. 1992, Mexico City) is a writer and artist influenced by his existence as a queer Mexican man producing work within a traditional “macho” country, intertwining his own lived experiences with that of Mexico’s queer history.



HARVEST





Off Site Project

The Big Five Online Personality Test

Introduction

This is a personality test, it will help you understand why you act the way that you do online and how your personality is structured on the internet. Please follow the instructions below, scoring and results are on the next page.

Instructions

In the table below, for each statement 1-50 mark how much you agree with on the scale 1-5, where 1=disagree, 2=slightly disagree, 3=neutral, 4=slightly agree and 5=agree, in the box to the left of it.

Test

Rating I....

- 1. Post the most exciting content.
- 2. Disregard GoFundMe campaigns.
- 3. Read the terms & conditions updates.
- 4. Enter into arguments on Tasty videos.
- 5. Can code... or so my CV says.
- 6. Go through my feed everyday, but don't frequently post.
- 7. Look at recommended friends, even if I don't know them.
- 8. Post personal photos and videos.
- 9. #YOLO.
- 10. Often enjoy the New Yorker cartoons.
- 11. Love commenting on my friend's Instastories.
- 12. Trollololol reguarly.
- 13. Can spot FakeNews.
- 14. Am concerned that my iPhone is constantly listening.
- 15. Believe FB is listening to everything I say.

- 16. Update all my profile background images simultaneously.
- 17. Use FB emoji reactions appropriately.
- 18. Rarely organise my desktop.
- 19. Constantly have a #FOMO when scrolling at Instagram.
- 20. I don't understand or care about Blockchain.
- 21. Often pm people I find interesting online.
- 22. Never help when friends ask for recommendations on FB.
- 23. Reply to emails/messages right away.
- 24. Quickly skip war news videos when I find them on my feed.
- 25. Express my political opinions regularly.
- 26. Got a Twitter account, but barely use it.
- 27. Sign lots of online petitions.
- 28. Automatically download images from WhatsApp conversations.
- 29. Frequently unfollow people that don't like my posts.
- 30. Prefer to share posts than to write them.
- 31. Often invite my people to events on Facebook.
- 32. Never scroll down my Fb feed.
- 33. Always organise the files I download in folders.
- 34. Update my status a lot.
- 35. Only read the clickbait headlines.
- 36. Rarely post, always like.
- 37. Will do people's questionnaires.
- 38. Can watch Instastories for a long period of time.

- _____ 39. Constantly follow/unfollow...follow/unfollow...people on Instagram.
- _____ 40. Love to update Wikipedia pages from time to time.
- _____ 41. Update Fb status in a daily basis.
- _____ 42. Can read emoji.
- _____ 43. Always show up to Tinder dates on time.
- _____ 44. Respond to trolls.
- _____ 45. Draft replies to spot grammatical errors.
- _____ 46. Won't comment on posts/comments by people I don't know.
- _____ 47. Always get comments on my Instastories.
- _____ 48. Keep my LinkedIn profile up to date.
- _____ 49. Leave depressing status updates.
- _____ 50. Respond to recommendation requests.

$$E = 20 + (1) _ - (6) _ + (11) _ - (16) _ + (21) _ - (26) _ + (31) _ - (36) _ + (41) _ - (46) _ = _$$

$$A = 14 + (2) _ + (7) _ - (12) _ + (17) _ - (22) _ + (27) _ - (32) _ + (37) _ + (42) _ + (47) _ = _$$

$$C = 14 + (3) _ - (8) _ + (13) _ - (18) _ + (23) _ - (28) _ + (33) _ - (38) _ + (43) _ + (48) _ = _$$

$$N = 38 - (4) _ + (9) _ - (14) _ + (19) _ - (24) _ - (29) _ - (34) _ - (39) _ - (44) _ - (49) _ = _$$

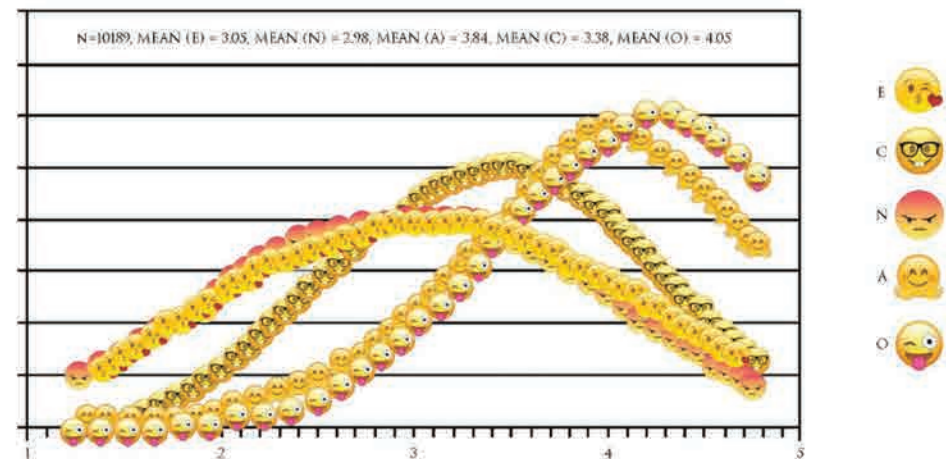
$$O = 8 + (5) _ - (10) _ + (15) _ - (20) _ + (25) _ (30) _ + (35) _ + (40) _ + (45) _ + (50) _ = _$$

The scores you calculate should be between zero and forty. Below is a description of each trait:

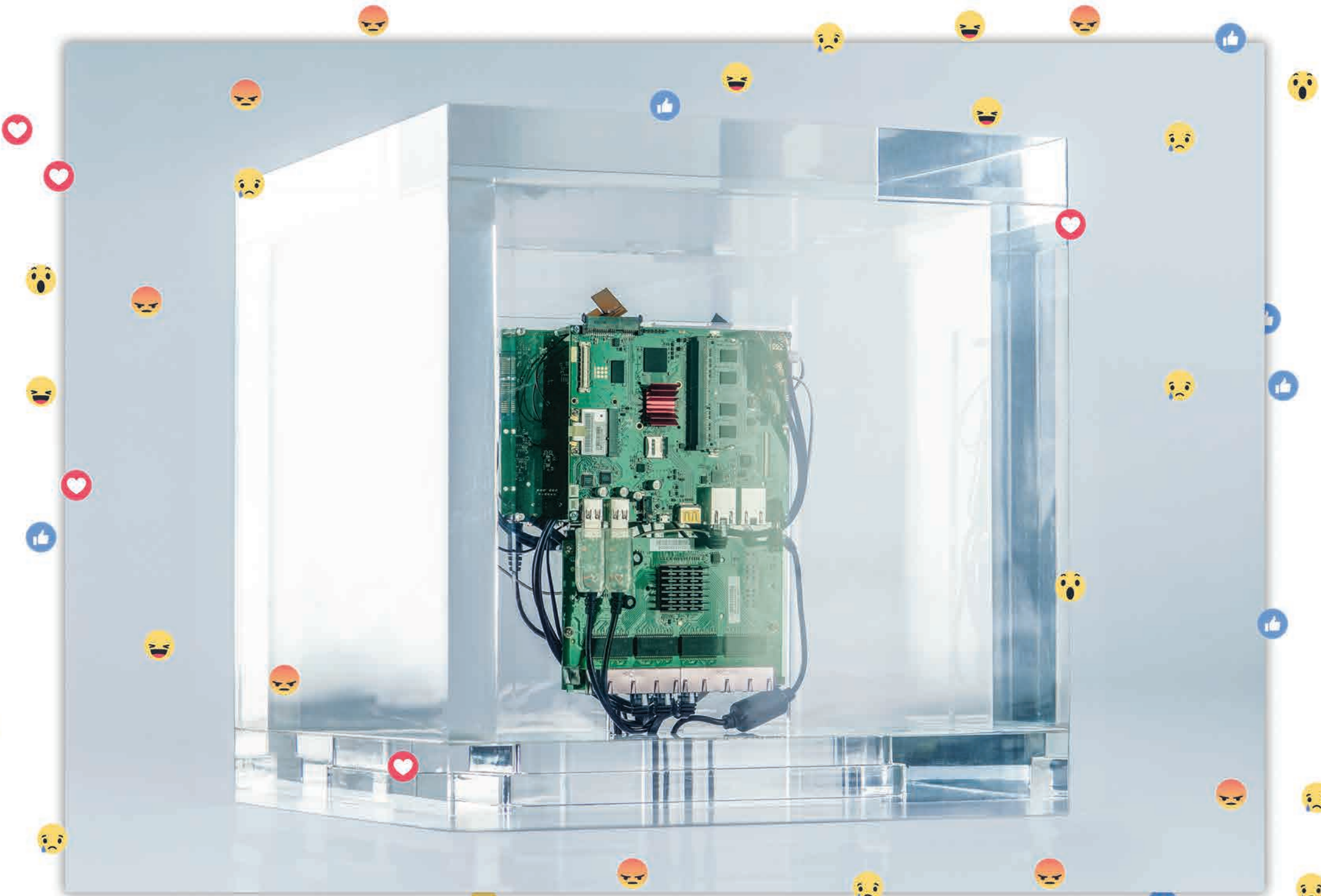
- Extroversion (E) is the personality trait of seeking fulfilment through likes, hearts and positive comments from others. High scorers tend to be very social while low scorers prefer not to reply to comments on FB at times.
- Agreeableness (A) reflects much individuals adjust their posts to suit others. High scorers are typically polite commenting and liking other people's posts. Low scorers tend to 'post it as it is'.

- Conscientiousness (C) is the personality trait of being honest and hardworking. High scorers tend to agree on terms & conditions and prefer tidy computer desktops. Low scorers may have messy download folders and flirt online whilst having a boy/girlfriend.
- Neuroticism (N) is the personality trait of constantly unfollowing and following people on loop.
- Openness to Experience (O) is the personality trait of following new people and online reading sources. High scorers may day-dream a lot whilst scrolling. Low scorers may be very down to earth when checking out other people's posts on Instagram.

Below is a graph of how other people scored when test was offered on the internet.



Off Site Project is an online exhibition space founded and curated by Pita Arreola (b. 1989, Mexico City, Mexico) & Elliott Burns (b. 1989, Stevenage, England). Established in 2017, following a gallery model, it has successively expanded from hosting singular exhibitions to running three parallel programs including downloadable monthly micro-ZIP-file-exhibitions and an embedded bi-monthly Google Maps Residency Program.



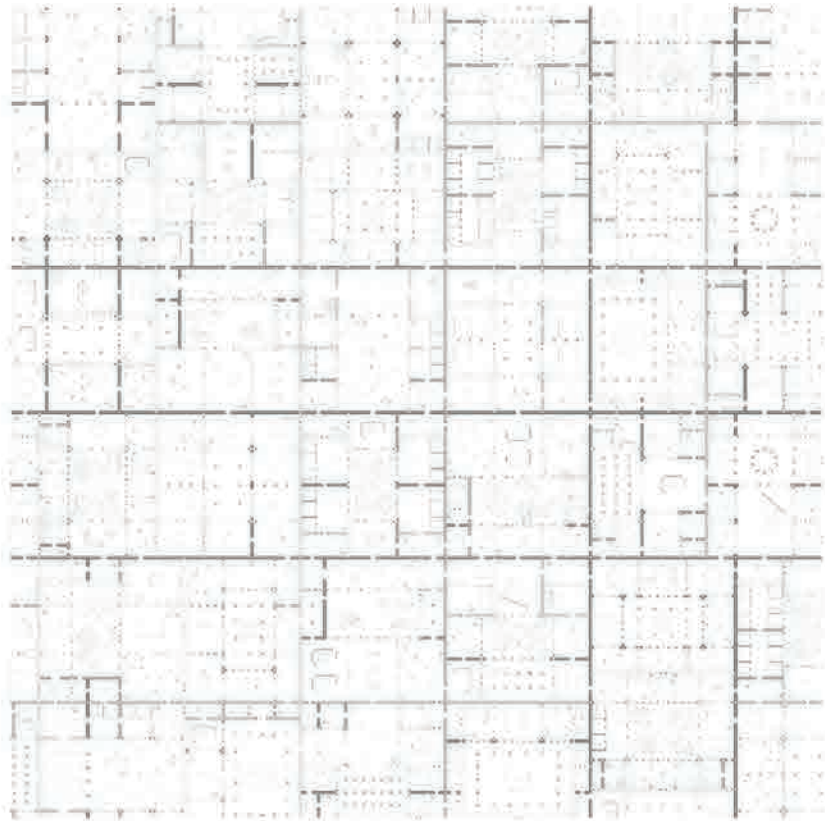
Romain Curnier & Adrien Grigorescu

HYPERWWWORk: Twelve ideal offices towards a labour without work

The constant improvement of automation, coupled with global neoliberal policies, have made work necessary to the survival of the individual, thus allowing it to become an instrument of order and control. However, the advent of smart objects and data monetization radically changes our methods, organization principles, lifestyles and desires, up to the point of challenging the very idea of “work” and “labour”. With the introduction of high resolution devices harvesting large-scale data and algorithmic management systems, the workplace becomes a space where constant performance and behaviour monitoring turn every aspect of one’s life into an optimizable quantity.

But more than a representation of power and capital, the architecture of the workplace and its principles of spatial organization act as mechanisms of value creation and control. Since its birth in the late 18th century, the white-collar workplace has constantly improved its efficiency in response to particular technological innovations, as well as social ecosystems, workers struggle and design principles. Indeed, the first office buildings answered the need to separate management and administrative activities from industrial production, made possible by the First Industrial Revolution. While the invention of the elevator, air conditioning and artificial lighting turned the Typical Plan – and its ideology₁ – into the dominant typology of the white-collar workplace in the 20th century₂, the counterculture movement of the 1960’s infiltrated office buildings thus giving birth to multiple experimentations aimed at simultaneously improving workers’ efficiency and well-being. These experimentations ranged from furniture design to new organization models, with projects such as the open plan of the office landscape or Theory Y₃. The development of information and communication technology in a globalized service economy, and especially the ubiquity of the network, progressively spread work outside of the office, to the home or to “third places” like Starbucks cafés and co-working spaces. Most manual labour turned into cognitive labour, radically changing worker’s methods, lifestyles and skills₄.

Recently, the ability to collect and store data at a reduced cost marked a shift in economic models. By incorporating the accumulation and analysis of massive amounts of user data, firms are turning into platforms providing the hardware and software foundation for others to operate on,



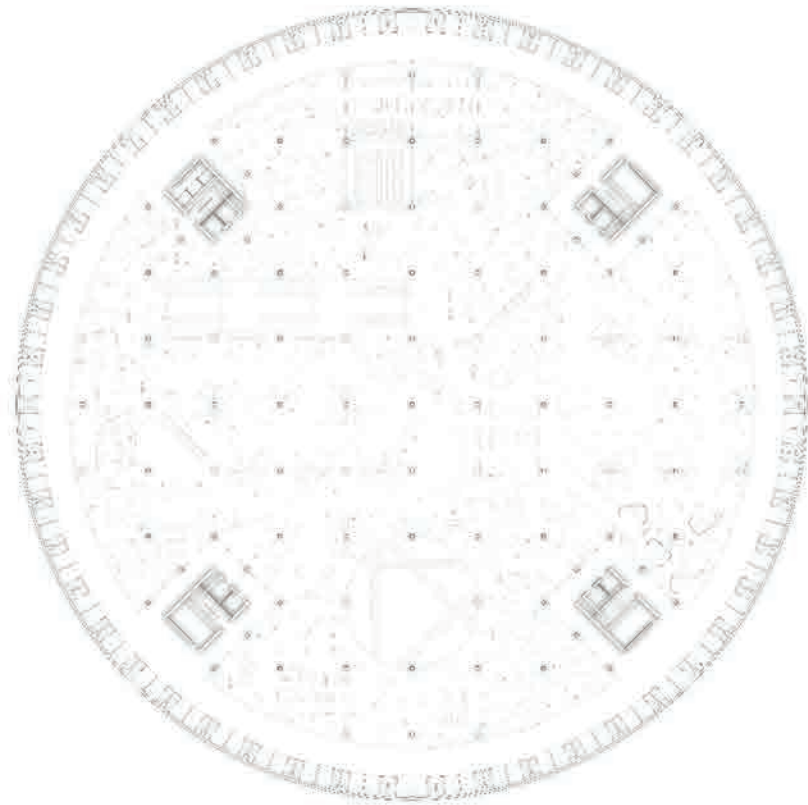
alexa, meet palladio
contiguity x interactions



such as Facebook, Amazon or Predix⁵. Despite their differences, each of these platforms share the same goal: to mediate and monetize every aspect of our lives. Initially supposed to “augment” our capacities, they progressively became a necessary intermediary for all the activities and interactions of everyday experience. In this context, the Internet of Things (IoT), understood as the network of physical objects, facilitates the harvesting, the analysis and the monetization of data coming from multiple sources. It implies the transformation of every action or interaction into a valuable resource and the integration of control into everyday life – from the optimization of the body and its biological processes to the predictive analysis of urban phenomena in the “smart city”⁶. Any connected space and the data it produces can then be used to build users’ profiles in order to customize services and anticipate their desires. There is a tendency to systematically incorporate the IoT in any digital service, despite its ethical implications in new forms of labour, the erosion of privacy and the monopolization of control.⁷

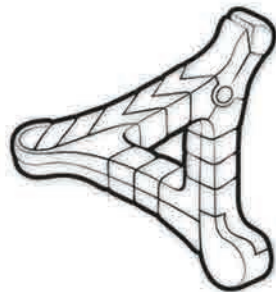
In 1971, the Italian architecture collective Superstudio published “Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas”, better known as “Twelve Ideal Cities”⁸, in which twelve illustrated novels investigate the relationship between mankind and architecture as a tool of political and economic oppression. Exaggerated portraits of a present condition and describing the consequences of their absolute application, these “Ideal Cities” offer a critical analysis of architecture as an embodiment of power. Through their content and their format, these twelve parables question architecture and its practice in a time marked by the decline of modernist principles. The twelve cities are not mutually exclusive but are to be read in their globality. It is their juxtaposition which reveals space as an instrument of power, giving the publication a sense of awareness and call for action.⁹

Inspired by the caricatural approach of Superstudio which focuses on the internal contradictions of an entrenched system, the HYPERWWWORk project, through historical analysis and prospective fictional thinking, invites one to take a step back so as to evaluate the consequences and the risks of the implementation of smart technologies. Using architecture, HYPERWWWORk thus extrapolates a social, technical and architectonic context in which these technologies are embedded, channelled by regulations, ideologies and aesthetics. In order to shed light



tokenarchy Dapp

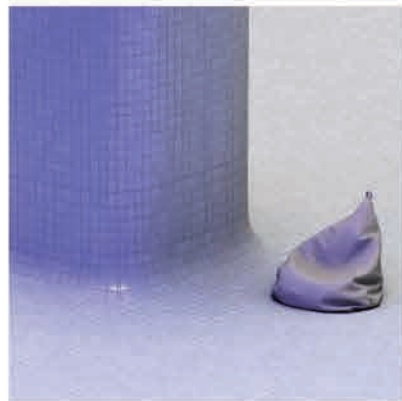
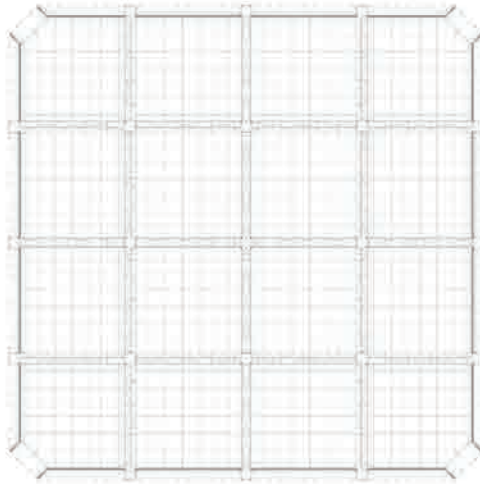
continuity x decentralization



on existing phenomena otherwise hardly perceived, the project seeks to reveal the role of architecture in this new paradigm. However, while Superstudio favoured a mechanical interpretation of control, therefore turning architecture into a machinic complex, HYPERWWWORk considers architecture as the support of a new type of production and control, qualified as “soft”.

The historical background and technical benchmark at the core of this project highlighted the importance of interactions over individual efficiency, the delocalization of workspaces helped by virtualization, the redefinition of the notion of intimacy, or a tendency to decentralization. These phenomena forecast a new type of work, blurring the differentiation between workplace and domestic space, work and leisure, action and interaction - think Google offices, co-living and Youtubers. We are currently witnessing the rise of a new kind of space of indeterminate nature, a “neogeneric” space, in which the individual simultaneously engages their whole identity, leveraging at the same time their hard and soft skills, their producer and consumer status. Every action or behaviour that can be recorded, analysed and used by third parties eventually creates value, consciously or unconsciously, in the name of efficiency and well-being. In this context, the commodification of the self and every aspect of one’s life is facilitated by an increasing panel of high-resolution smart objects and technologies such as the blockchain and machine learning. The individual is no longer a manual workforce, nor even a cognitive one. Where the IoT and large-scale adoption of smart objects participate in the creation of a spatialized information economy through their networked sensors and actuators, space itself creates value. The IoT materializes information in space, turning every connected place into a “soft-production” space, in which the individual becomes a “presence workforce” who creates value unconsciously or without mobilizing any specific abilities.

But smart objects, by invoking a complex mesh of technical, social and political actors, embodies power relationships which surpass spatial or economic dimensions. More than ever in the information era, architecture as the design of spatial experience becomes closely related to value creation and mechanisms of control. “Twelve Ideal Offices” focuses on spaces as well as interactions or behaviours which are usually not associated with value creation or able to escape any form of control. While



about:blankspace
genericity x consensus



consumer capitalism,¹⁰ used architecture to showcase and glamorize commodities, the architecture of soft-production uses a familiar, domesticated, contemplative language which dissimulates the productive aspect of space and the labour it involves. Using plan drawings as an expression of spatiality, each of the twelve projects investigates the spatial logics prone to maximize the implementation of a smart object or IoT system, while emphasizing the trends associated with “smartness”, such as the quantified self, custom space experience, or 24/7 activity. Far from the machinic discipline of Superstudio, soft-control casually flirts with emancipation, using self-improvement, creativity stimulation, decentralized consensus or morality as a veneer of legitimacy.

To learn more visit www.hyperwwork.life

(Endnotes)

- ¹ Pier Vittorio Aureli, “The Barest Form in which Architecture Can Exist”, in *A-TYPICAL PLAN: Projects and Essays on Identity, Flexibility and Atmosphere in the Office*, edited by Jeannette Kuo (Zurich: Park Books, 2013).
- ² Rem Koolhaas and Bruce Mau, « Typical Plan », in *S, M, L, XL* (New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), pp 334-353.
- ³ Nikil Saval, *Cubed : A Secret History of the Workplace* (New York: Anchor Books, 2014).
- ⁴ André Gorz, *L’immatériel : Connaissance, valeur et capital* (Paris: Galilée, 2003).
- ⁵ Nick Srnicek, *Platform Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2017).
- ⁶ Adam Greenfield, *Radical Technologies : The Design of Everyday Life*. (London / NY: Verso, 2017).
- ⁷ Justin McGuirk, « Honeywell, I’m Home ! The Internet of Things and the New Domestic Landscape », *e-flux*, April 2015, <https://bit.ly/2Io53F0>. [consulted 04/20/2018]

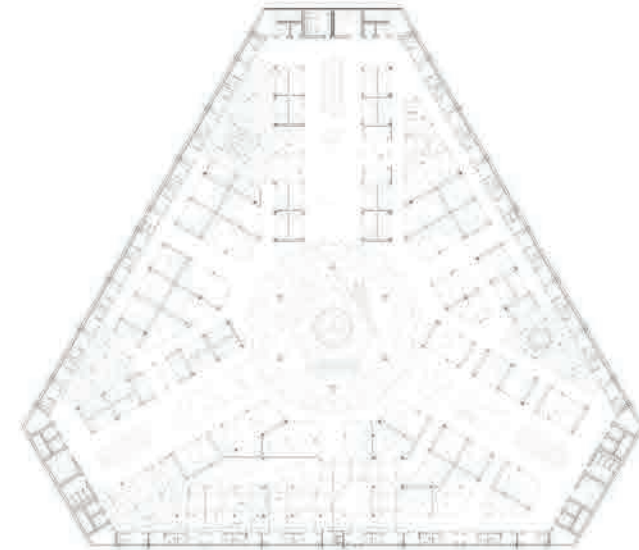
8 Superstudio, « Twelve Cautionary Tales for Christmas (12 Ideal Cities) », in Architectural Design, AD #12, Standard Catalogue Co. / Academy Editions, 1971.

9 Maria Sheherzade Guidici et Davide Sacconi, ed., The Supreme Achievement. (Milan: Black Square, 2016).

10 « Capitalisme(s) ». Ars Industrialis, 2012. <https://bit.ly/2Lh5JSK> [consulted 05/15/2018]

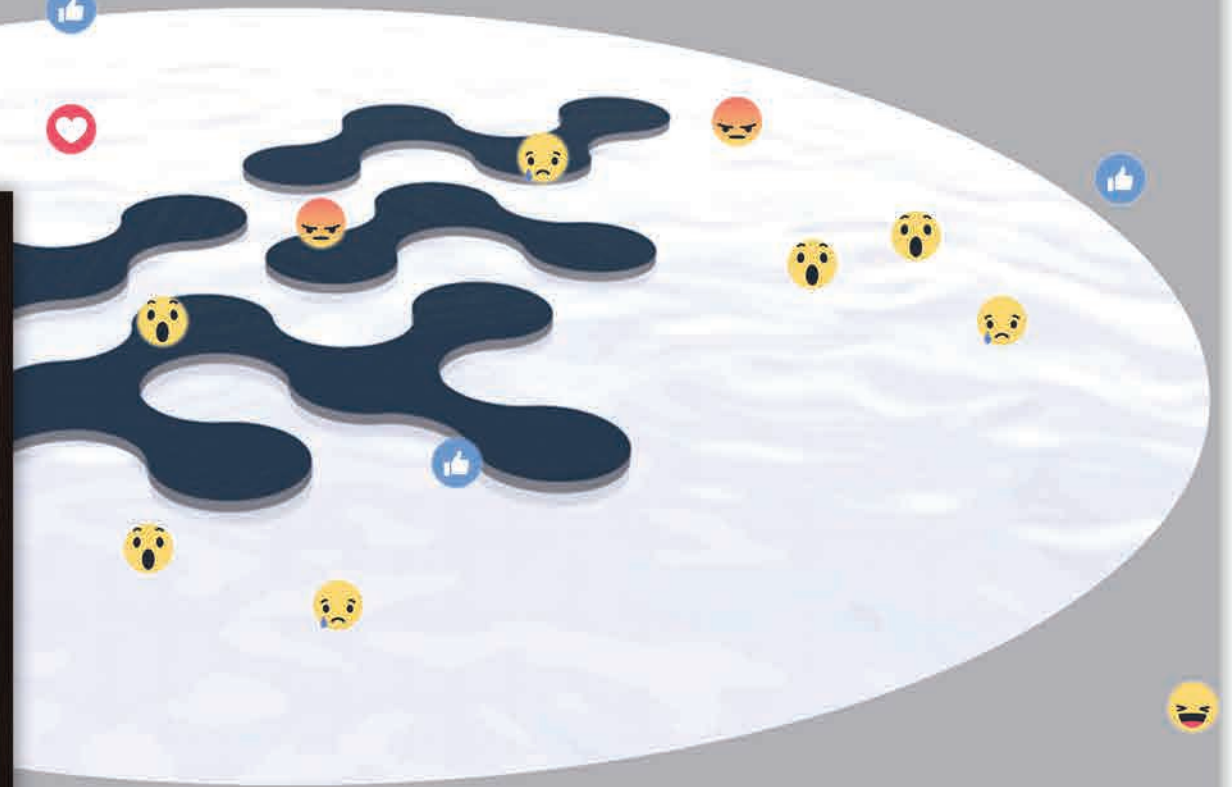
Romain Curnier (b. 1994, Paris, France) obtained his Master of Architecture at ENSA Paris Malaquais in the Digital Knowledge Department in 2018. In 2015 he studied abroad at the Universität der Künste under the supervision of Jean-Philippe Vassal. He has worked for the French architectural review D'ARCHITECTURES and for the architecture firm AWP.

Adrien Grigorescu (b. 1992, Montpellier, France) obtained his Master of Architecture at ENSA Paris Malaquais in the Digital Knowledge Department in 2018. In 2014, he graduated from École Centrale Paris and University of California Berkeley in Structural Engineering. Throughout his studies, he has worked in architecture and engineering consulting firms such as EZCT/XtreeE, MU Architecture, and RFR éléments.



souvenirs from home

artificialization x customisation



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Coloured pencil on Tito paper

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Coloured pencil on Tito paper

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Julio Jandro Rodriguez // www.juliojandro.com
On Queerness and Surveillance in Mexico: The Internal Panopticon, 2018
Essay
Courtesy of the writer

166 - 170

Stelios Ilchouk // www.steliosilchouk.com
Sentinel Harvest, 2018
Illustrations
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of the artist

171 - 175

Off Site Project // www.offsiteproject.org
The Big Five Online Personality Test, 2018
Interactive personality test
Courtesy of the writers

176 - 177

Trevor Paglen // www.paglen.com
Autonomy Cube, 2015
Plexiglas cube, computer components
40.01 x 40.01 x 40.01 cm

Courtesy of the artist, Metro Pictures New York and Altman Siegel San Francisco

178 - 187

Romain Curnier // www.instagram.com/trek.jpg

Adrien Grigorescu // www.instagram.com/griigg

*HYPERWWWOR*K, 2018

Essay

Courtesy of the writers

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Bryant Girsch // www.bryantgirsch.com

Spline 2, 2018

Oil on canvas

76.2 x 91.44 cm

Courtesy of the artist

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Aaron Vergult // www.aaronvergult.com

Root, 2018

Virtual Reality, Oculus Rift, HD

2 mins 56 sec

Courtesy of the artist

ONLINE

Katharina Joy Book // katharinabook.wixsite.com/72qs

Lukas Schmeck // www.instagram.com/LUKAS8K

LINK IS WORKING!!!, 2018

Interactive website

www.isthisitisthisit.com/link-is-working

Courtesy of the artists

