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Article:

Wang, Zhixuan (2021) Watch Me Watching: Surveillance Art and the Politics of Observation. Aspectus (3).

https://doi.org/10.15124/yao-kdgx-a713

ASPECTUS

A Journal of Visual Culture

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades there has been a rising interest in surveillance in contemporary art. Artists have used different methods and techniques to respond to the rapid proliferation of mass surveillance systems. This article examines contemporary art practices that employ the technology and mechanisms of surveillance to critically reflect on and disrupt the ways in which these technologies dominate everyday life. Such an investigation will explore the capacity of art to reveal systems of control, the methods used to achieve this, and the extent to which art can unveil the viewer's role within these surveillance systems and in relation to each individual in society.

Throughout this article, I use the term "surveillance art" to categorise artworks that provide critical responses to the growing surveillance activities conducted by various authorities in different forms.[1] The methods and technologies employed by surveillance artists vary greatly, using various media including photography, video, livestream, surveillance footage, installation, performance, and theatre. Indeed, surveillance art encompasses a broad spectrum and covers every artwork that directly addresses concerns, or indirectly hints to the topic, of surveillance. Different attitudes and focuses can be found in surveillance art practices. Artists like Ai Weiwei pay attention to asymmetrical power structures created by the mechanism of state surveillance, showing an overtly politically charged stance, while others are less serious and even playful, as shown in Vito Acconci's *Following Piece* which concerns the interpersonal interaction that occurs during surveillance activities. Another frequently mentioned project, the *"Nest"* series by Jakub Geltner, shows the impact of surveillance in shaping the urban landscape by installing sculptures of surveillance cameras in cities and natural sites. The emerging and ever-prominent new technology of dataveillance is another theme for many artists, as seen in artworks such as Hasan Elahi's *Tracking Transience – The Orwell Project* and Eva Clouard's *Mont-réel*, which utilize smartphone geolocation apps and personal data collection.

More examples could be listed, but the artworks selected here are united by some common characteristics: that is, they reflect upon the theme of surveillance through the appropriation, intervention, disruption, and configuration of the very medium of surveillance technology itself. Artists use recorded surveillance footage, live feed

surveillance streams and cameras, and computer algorithms to remediate and re-imagine the medium. Drawing upon the writing of Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, remediation is the process of representing one media in another in order to refashion the older media, as well as "the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms".[2] This type of surveillance art seeks to dwell within the space created by the powerful, and absorb it and adapt it into their own use.[3] Through their artistic configuration, these artists intend to imitate and to satirise real-life surveillance systems in order to defamiliarise them and to throw them into question. Some artists, such as Eric Forman, even strive for the utopian ideal of democratised surveillance by transforming it from a paradigm of authoritarian control to one of personal empowerment.[4]

This article will delve into surveillance and human behaviour, giving special attention to issues of spectatorship within surveillance art. Perhaps the biggest similarity between "real life" surveillance and surveillance art is that they both invite viewers to watch.[5] There is extensive scholarship demonstrating the power dynamics of surveillance, including the theories of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, who both saw surveillance and observation as mechanisms of control that function through dissociating the dyad of the seeing and being seen.[6] This is to say, by viewing the subject remotely without the risk of being seen back, the surveillant can leverage anonymity into power. Surveillance cameras capture their subjects and turn them into objects to be watched, analysed, classified, and eventually controlled and modified.[7] Visual art, likewise, inevitably presents something to be seen and invites the audience to see it. This article asks: what ways of seeing are enabled by surveillance art, what is the role of the audience in surveillance art, and what kind of relations are embedded into the action of seeing and watching others.

This paper consists of three sections, each discussing a certain type of practice from within the domain of surveillance art. The first section discusses the efficacy of art's use of self-surveillance as a form of counter-surveillance practice, in order to protest and resist the overreaching of state control into the individual's private life. The second section investigates the ethics of using the surveillance camera as an artistic medium and surveillance footage as source material. The final section provides an analysis of two interactive artworks by Michael A. Robinson and David Rokeby who create active surveillance spaces for the audience to perform, rather than look at, surveillance activity. This article strives towards an overview of the effects and limits of surveillance art, and an assessment of surveillance art's impact on real life as a politically critical art.
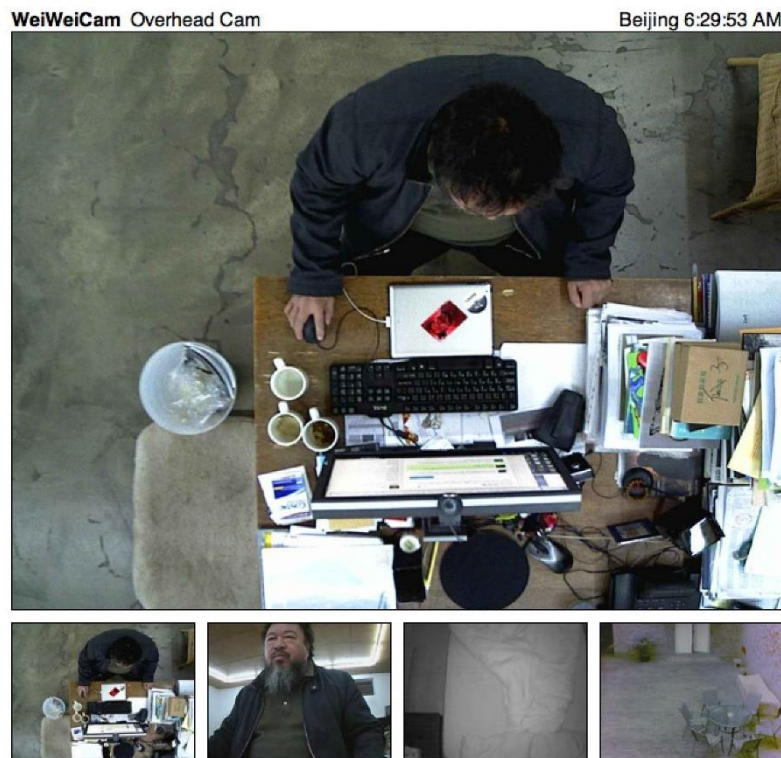
Figure 1. Ai Weiwei, *WeiweiCam*, 2012. Footage stills saved from the website *weiweicam.com*.
Image © Ai Weiwei. <u>Archived screenshots can be accessed here.</u>

SELF-SURVEILLANCE AS COUNTER-SURVEILLANCE

On 3 April 2012, exactly one year after his arrest by Chinese police at Beijing Capital International Airport for alleged economic crimes, Chinese artist Ai Weiwei launched his self-surveillance project *WeiweiCam* (Fig. 1) online. Setting up four cameras in his studio and courtyard, the artist allows every visitor on the now defunct <u>WeiweiCam.com</u> to see his daily activities on a twenty-four-hour-a-day basis. The project soon attracted a mass of attention: after streaming for forty-six hours, it received over 5.2 million views worldwide.[8] The website was subsequently forced offline by Chinese officials.

According to Ai Weiwei himself, *WeiweiCam* was a response to his encounter the previous year; the project was designed to mirror the eighty-one days of his detention during which at least fifteen CCTV cameras were installed around his house, putting him under strict police observation.[9] The Chinese authorities gave no reason for their decision to shut down the website. Indeed, the site's closure raises some questions; firstly,–the fact that webcamming has become a normal and even popular activity, and secondly that during his forty-six-hour stream the artist did not violate any laws or regulations pertaining to internet usage. What disquieted the Chinese authorities is

that through this project, the artist staged a rebellion, protesting against the opaque mechanism of state control over citizens, and openly challenged the rationality of secret surveillance against private citizens.

WeiweiCam not only provided a critique of public surveillance, but also turned the surveilled place into a stage for political resistance. According to the artist, the project represented an experiment in symbolically showing the transparency and visibility of Chinese governance.[10] *WeiWeiCam* raises questions of transparency in two ways: firstly, it refers to the fact that prior to his house arrest, the installation of cameras around the artist's studio was secretly carried out, and secondly, it also suggests that in the action of surveillance, the relation between the observer and the observed is non-transparent; surveillance cameras construct a one-way observation. The viewer is shielded behind a camera while those monitored are exposed to constant observation; the observer remains undetectable and invisible, and thus, occupies a uniquely powerful position.

Such a mode of surveillance clearly recalls Michel Foucault's theory of Panopticism. Consisting of two buildings, an annular building with a tower in the centre, the panopticon prison was designed to impose an axial visibility on the prisoners and actively dissociated the dyad of the seer and the being seen: "in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen".[11] And so the most important effect of the panopticon was a sense of invisible omnipresence: prisoners cannot know if there is anyone watching, or when and how are they watched; the only thing they know for sure is that they themselves are totally observable at any moment by anybody with access to the tower. Therefore, even if the surveillance itself is discontinuous, its effect is constant.[12]

The widespread nature of surveillance cameras in the contemporary world brings us ever closer to the Foucauldian notion of a prison-like society.[13] The visible yet unverifiable gaze behind this political technology constitutes an asymmetrical power structure; ubiquitous public surveillance is not only used as a tool for punishing or controlling criminals, but more importantly, as a means of regulation and the behavioural modification of ordinary people.

However, *WeiweiCam* runs counter to this expectation. Although Ai Weiwei claims that the cameras he set up in his studio performed the same function as the surveillance the Beijing police imposed on him during his detention, the purposes of the two actions are fundamentally different.[14] Government surveillance is an apparatus to make obedient those who are subjected to its observation, whereas *WeiweiCam* was a sarcastic gesture of rebellion.[15] There was no indication that he

Figure 2. Ai Weiwei, *WeiweiCam*, 2012. Footage stills saved from the website *weiweicam.com*. Image © Ai Weiwei. Archived Screenshots can be accessed here.

modified his behaviour for the presence of the cameras, he was neither overly cautious or disguised in his manner, nor did he do anything radical or striking. For the majority of the time, he did his routine work as though there was no one watching. Nevertheless, he did not completely ignore the camera. There were moments he deliberately looked up into the camera as if to provoke those who were watching (Fig. 2, 2012). By making visible the secretly conducted government surveillance in his recreation, Ai Weiwei forced his viewers into the position of the Chinese state authorities. By transforming unverifiable government surveillance into a live stream for public viewing, the project openly and publicly criticized the legitimacy of these social and political conventions in a very public manner.

Moreover, by the rhetoric of self-surveillance, Ai Weiwei allied with the surveillance camera in order to dissolve the unequal relation between the seeing and the being seen of the panopticon. In real-life state surveillance, asymmetrical power relationships are constructed by a hierarchy of observation; the power of the observer comes from his invisibility. In contrast, in *WeiweiCam*, the artist as the observed had the ultimate autonomy over his own body and final control of what was observed, he decided whether and where to install the cameras, and it was only by his volition that viewers were able to see him on the stream. In this way, Ai Weiwei removed the camera from the watcher's control and transformed it into one that empowered the watched. For instance, he cunningly placed the camera in his studio at such an angle that although the viewer could see him working at his computer, they could not see the screen.

Likewise, all four surveillance cameras he installed recorded only in low-resolution and no-audio footage, even though the audience could see Ai Weiwei's–and all his household visitors'–every move, it was impossible to find out what was said and done.

The shutdown of WeiweiCam.com reveals another characteristic of state surveillance: it has been incorporated into the mechanism of censorship, determining the right of the observed to be seen–or not.[16] It serves as a strong instrumental force to suppress speech, public communication and other information, and is therefore antagonistic to modern conceptualizations of democracy which is governed by freedom of expression, both politically and intellectually.[17] Censorship stipulates what can and what cannot be said, thereby consolidating the power of those who decide what constitutes acceptable forms of discourse.[18] This similarly exists within actions and surveillance: when one act or another is decried as undesirable, surveillance is the tool to supress it within the public. In this regard, *WeiweiCam* resisted public surveillance and censorship by employing the seemingly paradoxical livestream of the artist. By stripping himself bare under the gaze of the public, Ai Weiwei turned the webcam's cyber space into a place for free expression, and a space of silent, apparently open protest. The lack of explanation from the Chinese authorities regarding their actions towards the artist only served to strengthen the agency of the artist's protest.[19]

Of course, the protest staged in this performance was necessarily limited. If Ai Weiwei's accessibility was to be interpreted as specifically documenting the life of an artist, rather than an individual, and that artistic production itself was under surveillance, the shutdown of *Weiweicam* seems to demonstrate the vulnerability and incapability of art in the face of real-life surveillance and strict censorship: it has a provocative posture and ambitions to challenge state power, yet it is inescapably subjected to it.

The artist decided that even in cyber space he could not explicitly express his opinion with language, and chose to express himself merely through the recording of his banal everyday life. Regardless, his practice represents a form of counter-surveillance through self-surveillance and opens possibilities for democratising the surveillance system and transforming surveilled spaces into sites of resistance for the empowerment of the observed.

Figure 3. Cui Xiuwen, *Ladies Room*, 2000, video. Film stills from the video. <u>Full image can be accessed here.</u>

OBSERVING OTHERS: THE ETHICS OF SURVEILLANCE

Despite being a common practice by artists, using surveillance footage in art has been controversial, particularly as installing surveillance cameras and using public surveillance for personal use without consent raise legal issues. In Ai Weiwei's works, any invasion into people's privacy is minimised. The viewers know that the reason they can see Ai Weiwei's life is because he is allowing, and even inviting, them to. However, when artists focus their camera on people who lack the knowledge of – or have not consented to – their observation, concerns of exploitation and invasions of privacy are brought to the fore.

The purpose here is not to pass judgments or criticisms of such artworks on a moral level, or to accuse works of being unethical in their practices, but rather to analyse how unease is aroused in viewers by certain works which engage with surveillance technologies and materials. It is precisely the, if not illegal, at least "immoral" ways of recording that makes viewers conscious of the problems raised by using the medium of surveillance cameras *per se*. They challenge the idea of viewers and artists as "disinterested" or "objective" observers, and the camera as a device purely for filmmaking or documentary recording.

In the making of her video *Ladies' Room* (Fig. 3, 2000), Chinese artist Cui Xiuwen used a hidden camera to capture moments of intimacy of local call girls in the ladies' restroom. The video shows the sex workers changing clothes, counting money, and talking on the phone with their clients. Exhibited around the world, *Ladies' Room* caused great controversy and the artist was accused of exploitation and invasion of privacy.[20] The work evokes a strong sense of voyeurism–the odd shooting angle, the low resolution and slightly fish-eyed distortion created by a spycam lens–all enhance a feeling that we are surreptitiously peeping into other peoples' private and intimate lives. By presenting the sex workers in a sexualised way, Cui is not free from the charge that the sex workers exist in an asymmetrical power dynamic with the artist under a predatory gaze.[21] Furthermore, in 2005 Cui Xiuwen sold the work for ¥95400.[22] Not only did the artist profit financially, but the work also brought her international attention and made her one of the most notable Chinese female artists on the global art scene. In this case, placing hidden cameras for the purpose of creating art without consent, seems a further exploitation of an already vulnerable group of people.

In a justification of her work, Cui Xiuwen stated that she did not aim to make any comments or judgments on the scene, but to provide an alternative perspective in order to reveal a facet of China which is often neglected.[23] However, the camera is far from an objective apparatus of faithful representation, and the photographer's message does not reach the viewer without loss or deviation–especially as the artist presented a highly personal interpretation of what happened in the ladies' room. In fact, when first exhibited at Guangdong Museum of Art, the work incited controversy; there were public calls for it to be censored, and the museum was forced to defend the artist from claims that the work was obscene.[24] This reveals that in viewing surveillance footage and images, the boundary between voyeurism, surveillance, and exploitation is blurred, and how such images are perceived depends on who is using the technology and for what purpose. In *Ladies' Room,* it is almost inevitable that the audience's interpretation will deviate from what the artist wanted to express, or even go in the opposite direction: instead of paying attention to the living conditions of this otherwise unseen group, the workers in the scene are potentially exploited, degraded and othered.

One might argue that *Ladies' Room* is too particular an example for effectively discussing such a broad issue, as the female toilet, nightclub and sex workers are three, if not taboo at least sensitive, subjects within Chinese culture. Nonetheless, the issue it brings to the fore is universal: it cannot be guaranteed that the audience will see an artwork in the way the artist expects; therefore, what is the position of the audience in surveillance art? Are they given supremacy within a hierarchy of observation? When artists claim that they want to provoke and stage a resistance to mass surveillance

systems, how efficient can art ever be as a medium for resistance? Do artists, however unintentionally, inherently exploit those who are subjected to their surveillance, at least to some extent, and at the same time pre-set the audience in a privileged panopticised position which elides the audience with state and corporate surveillance in the objectification and othering of those surveilled?

These questions can be further explored in Dries Depoorter's *Jaywalking*. Created in 2015, it foregrounds the audience's role as an observing subject and aggravates their privileged position in the hierarchy of observation by endowing them a great power–to the extent that they can determine the fate of pedestrians by reporting them as wrongdoers. The installation takes advantage of open video feeds from surveillance webcams at city intersections. The artist designed an algorithm which, when any pedestrian crossing the street without the proper signal was detected, would automatically take a screen shot and ask the museumgoers in front of the screen if they wanted to report the jaywalker (Fig. 4, 2015). By pressing a button in the gallery, an email with the screenshot would be sent to the closest police station.

Jaywalking raises a central question for surveillance studies: under what circumstances and to what extent is an individual viewed as a potential criminal?[25] The answer given in *Jaywalking* is simple: everyone captured by the street surveillance camera is deemed a potential wrongdoer, regardless of their behaviour. The work operates on the assumption that the surveilled will commit an infraction. The installation is designed in such a way that "waiting for jaywalkers" (Fig. 5, 2015) is written directly above the live feed surveillance footage. With these words, the artist has in effect pre-determined the identity of anyone who might appear on the screen; passers-by are no longer passers-by with unique individuality, instead, they have all become potential jaywalkers. Throughout each interaction they are reduced to jaywalkers and not-jaywalkers. Just as in Louis Althusser's famous example, it is the moment when a policeman hails "hey you" to someone, that a person realises she is a subject caught in the power relation of a social and political institution.[26] The transformation of the individual from passer-by to jaywalker happens in a similar way. In *Jaywalking* the audience are made more conscious of their role as the policeman through the combination of text and surveillance footage. Through Dries Depoorter's system, the audience interpolates the pedestrian as a subject of wrongdoing, only this judgement is silent and the subject is unaware.[27] From the moment the pedestrians appear on the screen, they become subjects in this game of waiting for and identifying jaywalkers; the visibility of them on screen is already an interposition into their subject's world. Further, *Jaywalking* actively incorporates the audience by asking "Would you like to report the jaywalker?". Unlike the pedestrian, on receiving the question the museumgoer becomes fully aware of this subjectivation and realise that their role is
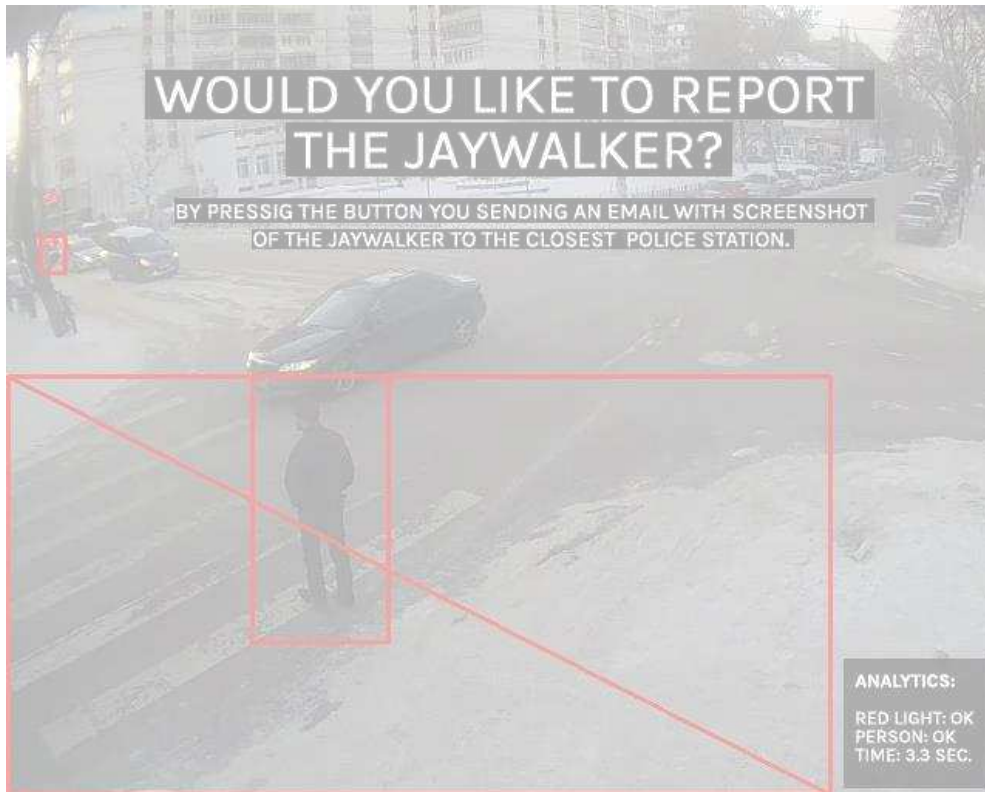
Figure 4. Dries Depoorter, *Jaywalking*, 2015, installation. Screenshot of the installation when a jaywalker is captured. The texts on the screen saying: "would you like to report the jaywalker? By pressing the button, you are sending an email with screenshot of the jaywalker to the closest police station". Full image can be accessed here.
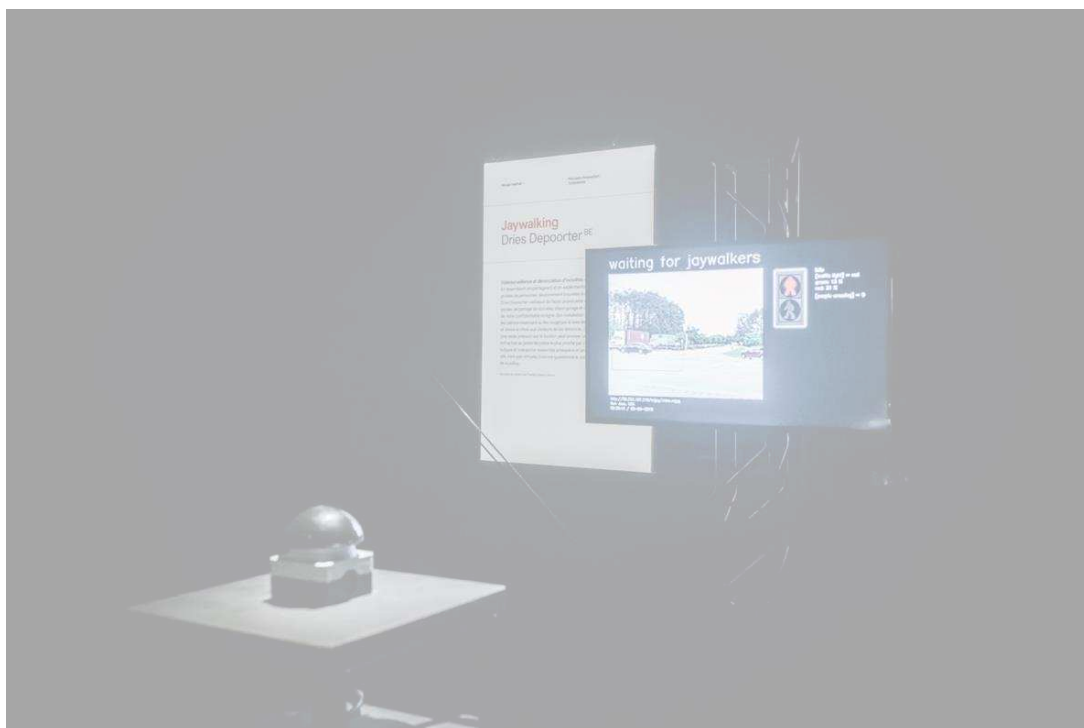

Figure 5. Dries Depoorter, *Jaywalking*, 2015, installation. Photograph showing the installation, including the button and the screen. The text on the screen showing: "waiting for jaywalkers". Full image can be accessed here.

internalised by the system of surveillance; the unilateral interpellation leaves them only two choices, to press the button or refuse to do so. As Torin Monahan argues, in this moment, the viewer "must recognise that he is an agent".[28]

Furthermore, *Jaywalking* reveals the functions of alienation and jurisdiction in surveillance by foregrounding the position of the audience as those in power. As John McGrath points out in *Loving Big Brothers*, crime scene footage also contributes to the psychological process of distinguishing the self and the other: by showing criminals or violators on screen, the audience is led to believe that "I am not seen by the camera because the camera sees only criminals and I do not look like a criminal".[29] It functions in the same way as the cameras in *Ladies' Room*, which implies "I am not shown in the video because I am not a prostitute." In both cases, the viewer becomes the surveillant or in practical terms, the police. Nevertheless, there are fundamental differences in *Jaywalking*. Firstly, it clearly informs the audience of the power they have when looking at the surveillance footage. By forcing people to decide whether or not to report jaywalkers the artist also underscores the responsibility of the audience when interacting with the surveillance system by informing the audience that at least one aspect of the outcome is in their hands.

Nevertheless, both *Ladies' Room* and *Jaywalking* illustrate the potential power the surveillance camera has over people to internalise the role of the observer in a panoptic vision–whether it be as operator behind the camera, the artist as the superintendent or the audience as spectator, and how easily people allow and accept our collective complicity in surveillance culture despite its dangers. However, *Jaywalking* also gives the audience the opportunity to redefine their relations with the panoptic power: instead of pushing the button and reporting the jaywalker captured, one might choose not to do so. As Judith Butler notes, "perhaps there is a possibility of being elsewhere or otherwise, without denying our complicity in the law we oppose."[30]

WATCH ME WATCHING: THE AUDIENCE AS ENGAGED OBSERVERS

Imagine you are entering an exhibition hall, a typical dimly lit, silent space with blank white walls; ahead you see this gigantic installation constructed of over 100 cameras on tripods, a sea urchin-looking mechanical monster waiting for its prey (Fig. 6, 2013). As you move closer, this spherical being is now fully activated, and you are exposed to its multifaceted vision, surrounded by an overwhelming burst of flashes and the sound of camera shutters.

Figure 6. Michael A. Robinson, *Subject to Scrutiny*, 2013. Camcorders, cameras, tripods. Image courtesy of artist.

Almost everyone would feel disturbed in the presence of such an artwork. Yet the feeling of unease differs from that which people might feel with *WeiweiCam* and *Jaywalking* where the audience is disturbed by the privilege they wield over the observed individuals, a power they can decline by choosing not to watch the webcam or not reporting the jaywalker. However, in Michael A. Robinson's *Subject to Scrutiny* (2013), the audience are unwillingly exposed under the gaze of the mechanical eyes of this grotesque entity—and they cannot refuse to be looked at. What is more, the audience's uneasiness is reinforced by a sense of being ensnared, as this installation effectively reverses the viewing relation they wish to establish: the audience walks into the exhibition hall with the intention of seeing, but it is only after they enter that they realise the installation is inescapably looking back at them.

This work constructs a very different spectatorship that is marked by two characteristics: it is both "participatory" and "involuntary". As the title *Subject to Scrutiny* suggests, this installation produces a compulsory surveillance system which leaves the audience no choice but to participate. While one might argue that in a sense, all surveillance art is "participatory", as participation can include seeing or to be seen,

as most audiences and artworks relate to each other, there is a fundamental difference between participation in works like *Subject to Scrutiny*. The audience cannot bypass the snare set by the artist and remain as an outsider of the ecosystem of surveillance he creates; everyone who walks into the exhibition hall, intending to view the work or not, becomes subject to its scrutiny and is both seen and seeing.

Subject to Scrutiny produces a spectatorship that runs counter to the notion of the "passive spectator" theorised by Jacques Rancière in *The Emancipated Spectator*.[31] For Rancière, a "passive spectator" fits the popular accusation that an audience is held in a "passive" position–which is a bad thing.[32] Rancière argues that viewing is the opposite of knowing and acting, and that "to be a spectator is to be separated from both the capacity to know and the power to act."[33] In the case of *Subject to Scrutiny*, this opposition is dissolved, as it not only represents surveillance as a spectacle to be watched and a subject for commentary, but also turns the gallery space into a theatre and the audience into an active spectator who is charged to perform in the gallery-theatre.

The function of this spectatorship can be compared to Jean Baudrillard's notion of "simulation", a technology and strategic model reproducing the real as "hyperreal"– a false reality that feels "truer-than-true".[34] To some extent, the experience of being surveilled simulated in *Subject to Scrutiny* is also a sort of hyperreality which excessively and critically mimics public surveillance systems to the extent that it becomes disconcerting and monstrous. This strategy allows the artist's critique of surveillance to be conveyed through sensory perception and the emotional reactions of the audience, rather than relying solely on intelligent reflection, and could provoke more specific and much stronger feelings in the viewer. The audience no longer passively or indifferently receives the artist's manipulations. Instead, they are more likely to be discomforted by and even reject the device's gaze, and therefore actively– if not intuitively–reconsider normalised understandings of the disciplinary powers produced by surveillance.[35]

Another example of compulsorily participatory surveillance art is Eric Forman's *Auto-surveillance Encounter* (Fig. 7, 2004 & 2015). In this performance, the artist invites each audience member to stare into the eyes of every other audience member for one minute in turn. With a strap-on micro-camera on their forehead, the viewer's sight is projected onto the screen behind him and shared to all. By doing so, all participants rotate through each role in the surveillance system: the viewer, the viewed and the bystander.

Figure 7. Eric Forman, *Auto-surveillance Encounter*, 2004 and 2015. Miniature surveillance camera, video projector. Timed performance. Variable dimensions. Full image can be accessed here.

This work explores the possibilities for constructing new relationships between the observer and the observed in surveillance systems. In the space *Auto-surveillance Encounter* creates, the panoptic observation is completely dissolved. No one is an invisible watcher hiding in a central tower; to see once again means being seen. This viewing relation is closer to the one that functions in the "society of control" than that of Foucauldian disciplinary society.[36] Conceived by Gilles Deleuze, society of control is a renewed disciplinary mechanism which can overcome the limits of the panopticon. Following the idea that the panoptic model relies too much on environments of enclosure to enable control, Deleuze suggests an involving mode of discipline which moved from enclosed structures to the sophisticated networks of entangled systems.[37] In societies of control, the gaze of an invisible guard from the centre tower is replaced by "a changing dynamic net of observation of everyone/all by everyone".[38] He also noted that this system led to a craving for monitoring, that "many young people strangely boasted of being 'motivated'".[39] Surveillance art also exhibits

this craving. Either as a form of entertainment, or as a form of emancipation or enlightenment, it enthusiastically invites people to see and to partake in roles in the surveillance system and is complicit in generating pleasure through seeing.

As Deleuze acknowledges, "control" is the most important characteristic of the type of societies considered here, yet within them liberating and enslaving forces confront each other.[40] In mechanisms of control, there could also be new expressions of freedom. Arguably, Forman's performance proposes a utopian promise to democratise the mechanics of surveillance.[41] In real life, surveillance is used as a tool for gathering knowledge and centralising power. When dataveillance is conducted by corporations for commercial use, people's online data is treated as a free raw material to be extracted and utilised. For state surveillance, the physical body is viewed as information to be analysed, it's actions potentially made criminal. It is unlikely that either body will share what they have gathered with the public. However, in *Auto-surveillance Encounter*, the watcher is no longer held in a privileged position and his vision is shared to everyone. In a sense, the watcher is even at a disadvantage: not only is he himself watched back by the person being seen, but what he records is also available for all. As the subject of the crowd, the observer cannot comprehend and quantify who is watching him, only that he is available to be observed from his position; thus the threat of the panopticon remains. Moreover, when participants make eye contact, the line between seeing and being seen is blurred, what they are doing is not so much "watching"/ "being watched" but more equally and amiably communicating with each other by making eye contact. Viewed from this perspective, in the surveillance space created by the artist, surveillance's function of control is replaced by a function of sharing, and the surveillance space is shifted from a site of discipline to a space of communication.

The two artworks above represent a tactic of surveillance art which blends elements of performance art, participatory art and digital installation. They generate a theatrical environment for the audience in which they can become actively engaged in the surveillance system which opens the viewer to re-experiencing, re-imagining and re-establishing the relation between the watcher and the watched, the seeing and the not-seeing. In both works, the audience no longer stand singularly as the privileged observer. *Subject to Scrutiny* expands the role of the audience from the one to see to also encompass the one being seen, whereas *Auto-surveillance Encounter* establishes a new observation relation marked by the interchangeability between the watcher, the watched and the bystander. By doing so, it offers a newly-democratised usage for surveillance technologies, transforming them from paradigms of control into tools for sharing and communication.

CONCLUSION

This article examined three different forms of surveillance art, each of which constructed a different model of observation. By means of self-surveillance, artists have made visible the secret and invisible state surveillance conducted on them. By manipulating surveillance footage that recorded the activity of people other than the artist themselves, artists have deliberately placed the audience as the privileged panoptic observer and the power such a position entails over the observed. The third form represented surveillance systems as theatre. Artworks of this kind not only represents surveillance as a spectacle to be watched and a subject for commentary, but enthusiastically invited people to actively engage in and perform surveillance.

All of the above works offer critical reflections on contemporary surveillance systems with a similar gesture: by means of performative mimicry, they visualise and hence expose the hidden mechanism of surveillance systems. By reconfiguring and re-mediating such systems, these works aim to defamiliarise the normalised surveillance culture and awaken us to the problematic and disturbing nature of omnipresent surveillance and a potentially bleak future for its use.[42] However, mimicry is a strategy with limitations.[43] While surveillance art has the potential to generate forms of resistance to the asymmetrical power constructs of state and corporate surveillance systems, the overall and lasting efficacy of the artists' resistance is questionable; most of the artists discussed here have failed to disrupt the principle function of surveillance: to dissociate the seeing/being seen dyad.[44] Hence, the use of surveillance technology in these works risks simply internalising and perpetuating the role of the observer in a panoptic vision, albeit for different outcomes.

Nevertheless, it would be arbitrary to claim that the self-reflexive and critical use of surveillance has no effect at all, as there are artists who continue to explore the possibilities for constructing new types of relations between the observer and the observed in surveillance, new types of relations that are fundamentally different from that in the panopticon model, and relations that can subvert the hierarchy of observation. Although it cannot, and may never, be guaranteed that surveillance art, with its multiple practices and strategies, is capable of effectively resisting contemporary surveillance systems, nor could its criticisms be conveyed without any loss or deviation, the emergence and blossoming of such art is highly significant.

Art is expected to react to the changes in the real world in a rapid and radical way which inherently precipitates the question: what are the criteria for "successful"

politically charged art? Must an artwork actually effect real-world change, and if so, what might that look like, how would we know it? Surely these are inappropriate demands to make of works of art. I argue that the criteria for "success" of surveillance art is not simply the extent to which it effects real-world change but rather, the degree to which it makes visible what is hidden in all our daily lives, throws into question what has become normative, and, critically, makes such things available for critical discourse. When our every move is being watched, collected, processed and formulated into a product—be it commercial or artistic—what surveillance art presents is not merely theoretical, but a key character of our social lives; and it has the power to influence individuals' responses as seers—and those being seen—beyond the gallery space.

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[1] For examples of the term in use see: Thomas Y Levin, et al. *Ctrl (Space): Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*. Torin Monahan, "Ways of Being Seen: Surveillance Art and the Interpellation of Viewing Subjects". Andrea Mubi M Brighenti, "Artveillance: At the Crossroad of Art and Surveillance".

[2] Bolter, J. David., and Richard A. Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. First MIT press paperback ed., MIT Press, 2000, p.273.

[3] This also runs parallel to John Fiske's observation of popular culture. See Fiske, John. *Understanding popular culture*. Routledge, 2010, p. 33.

[4] Elise Morrison, "performing citizen arrest".

[5] Surely, some might argue that surveillance is not just for watching, but for recording, collecting, processing, analysing…some footage and data might remain unwatched and untouched at all, at least by human eyes, but still, I take dataveillance as a way of watching conducted by the disembodied sight of AI.

[6] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, and Deleuze, Gilles. "Postscript on the Societies of Control." October 59 (1992): 3-7.

[7] See Zuboff, Shoshana. *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for the Future at the New Frontier of Power*. Profile Books, 2019.

[8] Laura Poitras, *Astro Noise: A Survival Guide for Living Under Total Surveillance* (2016): 77.

[9] Alexis Lai, "Chinese artist Ai Weiwei Places Himself Under Home Surveillance", retrievable at https://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/04/world/asia/ai-weiwei-webcams/index.html [accessed 25/07/2019]

[10] Lai, "Chinese Artist Ai Weiwei Places Himself Under Home Surveillance", retrievable at https://edition.cnn.com/2012/04/04/world/asia/ai-weiwei-webcams/index.html [accessed 25/07/2019]

[11] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979): 201-202.

[12] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1979): 201.

[13] For instance, see Haggerty, Kevin D. "Tear Down the Walls: on Demolishing the Panopticon" (2006): 37-59.

[14] Chinadigitaltimes.net, "Ai's Weiweicam Forced Offline After 46 Hours", retrievable at https://chinadigitaltimes.net/2012/04/ais-weiweicam-forced-offline-after-46-hours/ [accessed 25/07/2019]

[15] Louise Nørgaard Glud, Anne Sofie Christensen Stenbøg, and Anders Albrechtslund, "The (dis) appearance of Ai Weiwei: Translations and (in) visibilities", retrievable at https://pure.au.dk/portal/files/51967292/The_Dis_appearance_of_Ai_Weiwei_Liss_Louise_N_rgaard_Glud_Sofie_Stenb_g_Anders_Albrechtslund_.pdf [accessed 25/07/2019]

[16] David Lyon ed. *Surveillance as Social Sorting: Privacy, Risk, and Digital Discrimination*. Psychology Press, 2003

[17] Geoff Kemp, *Censorship Moments: Reading Texts in the History of Censorship and Freedom of Expression* (2015): 1–8.

[18] Foucault argues that power comes exactly from the control of accepted forms of knowledge and regimes of truth. See Foucault, Michel, *Archaeology of Knowledge*.

[19] Sophie Williamson, "The Artist as CYNIC", In *Art Monthly*, no. 360 (2012): 13-16.

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[20] Zoey Zha, "Inside the Exhibit: Takashi Kuribayashi and Cui Xiuwen - Reverse and Reincarnation", retrievable at http://www.thatsmags.com/shanghai/post/7235/reverse-and-reincarnation. [accessed 19/08/2019]

[21] Jacque Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.* Vol. 11. WW Norton & Company, 1998.

[22] Auction result of Cui Xiuwen, retrievable at https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Cui-Xiuwen/67CE488A3DC53ED3 [accessed 10/06/2021]

[23] Jennifer Wagner-Lawlor, "Regarding Intimacy, Regard, and Transformative Feminist Practice in the Art of Pamela Longobardi" in *Feminist Studies* 42, no. 3 (2016): 649-771.

[24] Guangdong museum of art, "in defense of *Ladies*", 2003. Retrievable at http://ftp.gdmoa.org/xueshuyanjiu/more/7578.jsp. [accessed 10/06/2021]

[25] Roy Coleman, and Michael McCahill. *Surveillance and Crime*. Sage, 2010.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] Various scholars extend the idea of interpellation in visual culture and claim that it can be operated though non-verbal systems. For instance, see Mitchell, WJ Thomas. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. University of Chicago Press, 1995. And Gunders, John. "'Here's Lookin' at You': Video Surveillance and the Interpellated Body." *Social Alternatives*, vol. 19, no. 1, (2000): 22–25.

[28] Torin Monahan, "Ways of Being Seen: Surveillance Art and the Interpellation of Viewing Subjects", In *Cultural Studies*, vol. 32, no. 4, (2018): 574.

[29] John McGrath, *Loving Big Brother: Surveillance Culture and Performance Space* (2004): 33.

[30] Judith Butler, "Conscience Doth Make Subjects of us all", *Yale French Studies* 88 (1995): 6-26.

[31] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*.

[32] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 2.

[33] Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, p. 2.

[34] William Bogard, "Simulation and Post-panopticism", pp. 35.

[35] Viktor Shklovsky uses the term "defamiliarization" to describe this artistic technique which "impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known", as to challenge the "habitual" and the "unconsciously automatic". See Shklovsky, "Art as Technique", pp. 15-16.

[36] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", pp. 3-7. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

[37] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", pp. 3-7.

[38] Maciej Ozog, "Surveilling the Surveillance Society: The Case of Rafeal Lozano-Hemmer's Installations", p. 102.

[39] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", p. 7.

[40] Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control", p. 2.

[41] Greg Elmer, "Panopticon-Discipline-Control", pp. 21-29.

[42] Hal Foster, "Mimetic", *Bad New Days: Art, Criticism, Emergency*. (2015): 63-96.

[43] *Ibid*

[44] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, (1979): 201-202.