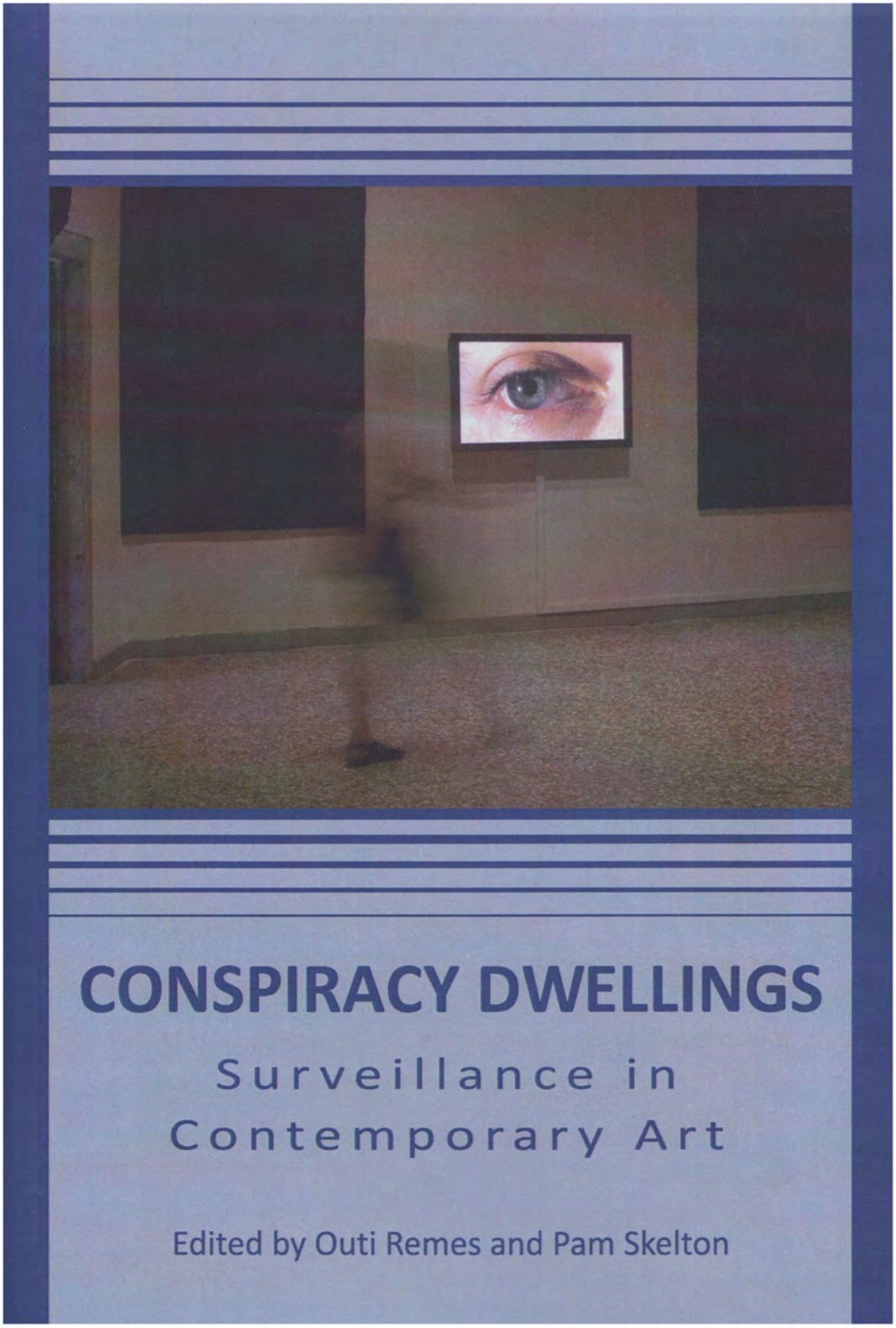

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CONSPIRACY DWELLINGS
Surveillance in Contemporary Art

SURVEILLING THE SURVEILLANCE SOCIETY: THE CASE OF RAFAEL LOZANO-HEMMER'S INSTALLATIONS

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Introduction

Surveillance has become a common experience and practice of everyday life at the edge of the twenty-first century. With the diffusion of various technologies of invigilation, an evolution of surveillance as well as a change in social practices of monitoring, observation, and control can be observed. As David Lyon and Elia Zureik remark: "Surveillance is not an unmitigated evil, but rather a two-faced social phenomenon with which many cheerfully collude for the sake of the advantages that accrue to them."[1] The omnipresent, predatory gaze of Big Brother and the anonymous, invisible and disciplinary gaze of the guards of the Panopticon have lost their evil.[2] In the culture of simulacra[3] these symbols have lost their former meaning and their anchoring in the disciplinary and penitentiary context. They have become ambiguous, drifting freely among other floating signifiers on the oceans of market, politics, security and entertainment:

> While surveillance is now ubiquitous, it is also diverse, multi-faceted, and employed in such a panoply of projects that it is almost impossible to speak coherently about surveillance.[4]

The art of electronic and digital media plays a significant role in the landscape of the surveillance culture which is marked by ambivalence and contradiction. Especially, in the case when artists deconstruct and subvert the strategies, politics and ideologies of modern electronic surveillance, exploring myths, superstitions and common knowledge. As a form of critical reflection, analysis and description, art surveils the surveillance society and indicates its essential features. Simultaneously, it shows many hidden and vague dimensions of surveillance, contributing to the self-awareness of the surveillance society. The art of Rafael Lozano-Hemmer can be considered as an interesting example of this.

To be is to be watched

An analysis of the relationship between watching and being watched seems crucial for any attempt of understanding the surveillance culture. This issue constitutes one of the major themes of Lozano-Hemmer's works. His interpretation of the "surveillance gaze" joins analytical inquisitiveness with metaphorical ambiguity. It places the gaze within a relation to the questions of presence, control, and reflexivity.

The interactive installation *Make Out* (2009) analyses the relationship between the viewer's presence, in this case a viewer—interactor, and the activity of other people through visual representations in public space. The monitor screen is filled with hundreds of static images of couples taken from the net. They resemble a multicoloured and shapeless mosaic; a mass of media representations of people waiting for an inducing impulse or encouragement to be active. This impulse is provided by the shadow of the viewer—interactor who is being tracked by the surveillance camera. The images are set in motion; they portray couples kissing one another. Their activity depends directly on the presence of the viewer—interactor and lasts as long as her/his shadow covers a part of the screen.

Such a construction of the interface, a visual structure and a form of interactivity, is used in all Lozano-Hemmer's works within the *Shadow Box* series. Described by the author as "interactive displays with a built-in computerised tracking system," the series demonstrate the character of surveillance culture, stemming from dictating voyeurism to exhibitionism. As Paul Virilio says, modernity brings a democratisation of voyeurism, which is no longer perceived as a psychic deviation but has become a norm in the society of spectators.[5] In the universe of stars and celebrities,

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[1] David Lyon and Elia Zureik, "Surveillance, Privacy, and the New Technology," in *Surveillance, Computers & Privacy*, ed. David Lyon and Elia Zureik (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 6.

[2] The Panopticon was the eighteenth century architectural design for an ideal "house of security" (such as prison, hospital, madhouse, school or factory) proposed by the British philosopher Jeremy Bentham. As an architectural surveillance machine it worked on the principles of permanent visibility and spatial separation of inmates and constant possibility of observation conducted by anonymous and invisible supervisors. The panoptic institution was a new model of disciplinary mechanism that automatised and disindividualised power. However, the Panopticon was not just a new sort of architecture. Bentham regarded it as a general schema for the whole society. He thought that the panoptic principle was the core of disciplinary society. Although Bentham's design has never been realised, the idea of the "disciplinary power of the gaze" has appeared to be one of the most influential ideas of the Enlightenment. The figure of the Panopticon was introduced into the humanities and social sciences of the twentieth century by Michel Foucault who understood it as both a driving force and a key symbol of the modernist project. Miran Bozovic, ed., *The Panopticon Writings*: *Jeremy Bentham,* (London: Verso, 1995); Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

[3] After Jean Baudrillard, a sign or a reproduction which has neither relation to any reality nor is a copy of any reality becomes a reality in its own right. See: Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[4] Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, "The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility," in *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, ed. Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 22.

[5] Paul Virilio, "The Visual Crash," in *CTRL[SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin, Ursula Frohne and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM Centre for Art and Media, 2002), 108-113.

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voyeurism and exhibitionism are not only justified and "transformed from individual—psychological criteria to social categories," "from illegitimate to legitimate pleasures," but they also become desirable and normal, not to say necessary forms of behaviour in the mass media society.[6] Watching and being watched are the conditions of participation in surveillance culture. As a result, the appraisal of surveillance is changing. "Surveillance becomes the cost of engaging in any number of desirable behaviours or participating in the institutions that make modern life possible."[7] Existence in the media synopticon, as Thomas Mathiesen described it, and active presence on the stage of global spectacle depends on the presence of an audience.[8] The spectators' gaze enables action, but also forces activity.

A general outlook defines the relationship between the presence of the viewer and the viewed in the *Shadow Box* series. It is a hierarchical relation; the whole process seems to be controlled by the voyeur, and her/his presence and the direction of the gaze that determine the behaviour of the viewed. In *Reporters with Boarders* (2007), the monitored behaviour of the viewer-interactor sets in motion a sequence of TV news. *Alpha Blend* (2008) and *Close Up* (2006) show active video-clips of people who have interacted with the work, after their activity is stored in its "memory." In *Eye Contact* (2006), the spectator's presence leads to the awakening of the people on the monitor.

However, the relationship between the viewer and the viewed is modified by two factors that challenge the viewer's first impression. Firstly, the control exercised by the viewer is to a large extent limited. Secondly, the mosaic structure of the images on the monitors, along with the impossibility of isolating single video-clips, disallows precise observation. The experience of the viewer-interactor takes shape in meeting a vast amount of data: a chaotic mass. While the viewer's activity animates some of the video-clips, the viewer's only effective tool for influencing the form of their presentation is to body-cast a "digital" shadow on the screen filled with images. Although moving in front of the monitor, the viewer can change the position and the size of the shadow, the viewer has neither the choice nor the possibility of focusing on single video-clips. Paradoxically, on the one hand, the viewer-interactor experiences only a limited command of the fragments amongst the wide range of images. On the other hand, the aspiration to control the screen representations depends on the viewer's body, which cannot be fully mastered either. At the same time, both the viewer and the viewed depend on technology for the presentation of their meeting.

Through a relatively simple structure Lozano-Hemmer's works address the paradoxical nature of surveillance in the media age. We live in the age of "cam era" that democratises the tools of image production.[9] Whilst the Internet enables circulation of media images, the consequences of the Internet and cam era are often unpredictable and contradictory. The Internet dictates voyeurism and exhibitionism in which the effectiveness of both exhibitionistic exposing oneself to the public and the control exercised by the voyeurs becomes problematic. Lozano-Hemmer's shadow of the viewer-interactor is, in this context, an interface at a metaphorical level. The shadow allows activity but also screens it. The spectacle of invigilation resembles the shadow in nature. However, it also makes it difficult to see the details, as in the dimness the contours of the image blur, and its analysis becomes impossible.

The basis of the Enlightenment concept of the Panopticon, i.e. rational managing of reality by virtue of analysis and classification, fails in the world in which there is an acceleration of production of objects of perception through all kinds of seeing machines. The controlling gaze is unable to keep up with the affluence of media representations. Total transparency seems in this context to be an abstract idea: the fundamental utopianism of this project.

Arranging relations between light, darkness and shadow allows Lozano-Hemmer to question the relationship between the viewed and the viewer and also the character of the very act of surveillance in a media-saturated world. *Body Movies* (2001) and *Under Scan* (2005) demonstrate these questions. They reverse meanings ascribed to light and darkness. Strong spotlights, that brighten up public places, do not promote transparency but, on the contrary, are used as a screen which covers and makes invisible video portraits of people who are projected on the walls of public buildings (*Body Movies*) or on the ground (*Under Scan*). The shadow, which traditionally symbolises the unclear, the invisible, or the hidden, allows emergence of the projected images from the stream of light, limiting the sphere of visibility. In both interactive installations, the viewers-interactors are usually focused on their shadows. On one hand, in *Body Movies*, they often find themselves as actors in the shadow theatre, paying more attention to the shadow play than to the images that are revealed. On the other hand, *Under Scan* examines the close relation between the participant and the projected characters whose appearance is limited to the silhouette of shadows. The body of the viewer-interactor casts a shadow that generates borders of display that spatially restricts the presence of the image.

This limiting potential also has a time dimension: the presence and length of the projection depends on the attention that a random passer-by will devote to a virtual other met inside one's shadow, which is an example of dictating voyeurism. However, while observation can be understood as a kind of existential imperative, in Lozano-Hemmer's works observation is interpreted also as a process directed by the viewer rather than the object of the viewer's gaze. Thus, voyeurism becomes a form of narcissism. For Lozano-Hemmer, contemporary forms of surveillance are based on fluid hierarchies and interchangeability of the viewers and the viewed. The character of a celebrity replaces the figure of an invisible guard. The fear of invigilation changes into a desire of being watched.

Plate 7.1. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Body Movies*, 2006. Interactive projection, Hong Kong, China. Photo by Antimodular Research. Courtesy of the artist.

[6] Peter Weibel, "Pleasure and the Panoptic Principle," in *CTRL[SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother*, ed. Thomas Y. Levin, Ursula Frohne and Peter Weibel (Karlsruhe: ZKM Centre for Art and Media, 2002), 208.

[7] Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, "The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility," in *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, ed. Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 12.

[8] Thomas Mathiesen, "The Viewer Society: Michel Foucault's 'Panopticon' Revisited," in *Theoretical Criminology*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1997 (Sage Publications), 215-34.

[9] Hille Koskela, "'Cam Era:' the Contemporary Urban Panopticon," *Surveillance and Society*, 1 (3), 2003, 292-313.

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To watch is to be watched

Nineteen Eighty-Four (1949) places technology in the centre of surveillance discourses as a tool that allows for invigilation but also defining a particular form of control. The idea of Big Brother, whose gaze is constantly present in every house, enabled by audio-visual technology, became the symbol of panoptic surveillance. At the same time, it introduced a notion of reflexivity: Big Brother combines the complementary features of screen and camera. In Orwell's anti-utopia, technology serves two different, though connected, purposes.[10]

Watching the screen is equivalent to being watched, and an agreement to be invigilated. Orwell's observation, made over sixty years ago, is one of the axioms of surveillance in the age of digital post-optic technology, and especially in the age of the Internet. However, it can also be seen as a characteristic of digitalised optical surveillance.

Plate 7.2. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Under Scan,* 2006. Public art installation, Leicester, United Kingdom. Photo by Antimodular Research. Courtesy of the artist.

Lozano-Hemmer's installations explore the effect of the reversed gaze that "creates an uncanny experience that questions who is the observer and who is the observed."[11] While most of his installations-systems react to the recipient's presence there also is much interactive off-handedness, insubordination and/or independence of technology. Lozano-Hemmer's interactive systems have an uncanny capacity for the observation of the viewers-interactors. In *Eye Contact*, *Surface Tension* (1992-1993) and *Under Scan*, the digital system has a gaze, reacting to the presence and behaviour of the viewer-interactor. This ability of artificial systems to watch and observe people's interaction can be seen as an expression of metainteractive discourse.[12] It can also be seen as a metaphorical interpretation of Deleuze's observation which pointed to the fact that the development of information technology leads to the emergence of the society of control. Deleuze noticed that in the society of control the gaze of invisible guards situated in the centre of a static architectonic structure is replaced by a changing, dynamic net of observation of everyone/all by everyone, taking the form of the rhizome.[13]

Lozano-Hemmer's interpretation also considers other properties of control in interactive systems such as a tension between the human gaze and the artificial gaze. The artificial gaze is based on automatism, a schematic character and a lack of flexibility. His works react to the presence of the viewer-interactor regardless of who she is, what are her/his motivations, or how one behaves within the space of the installation. Moreover, the process of interaction is restricted to tracing and following her/him or one's shadow. While the viewer-interactor can watch only the effects of movement, the reactions of the system are also minimal. The protagonists of *Eye Contact* awaken from a dream, open their eyes and look directly at the viewer-interactor. This is where their interactivity ends. In *Under Scan,* the virtual characters are less homogenous, predictable and simple in behaviour. However, the relation with which they enter with the viewer-interactor is also simplified. Appearing in one's shadow, they tease the viewer with their presence or disappearance.

Surface Tension presents the most radical limitation of interactivity in which a monstrous eye fills a screen and follows the viewer-interactor, moving within the space of the installation. The sequence of the system's actions remains the same; any individualisation of reactions towards specific viewers-interactors is impossible. Computerised surveillance is intensified because of the unnatural size of the media-enlarged screened eye. On the one hand, this creates an effect of being overwhelmed and dominated by the artificial eye that commands the space of the installation. On the other hand, there is discontinuity of the eye ball's movement, which increases the feeling of alienation towards the non-human gaze: invigilation that takes the appearance of the human eye and is controlled, manipulated and computer-managed. This "humanised" look of surveillance

Plate 7.3. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Surface Tension,* 2007. Venice Biennale, Italy. Photo by Antimodular Research. Courtesy of the artist.

equipment is common and often consciously or unintentionally accepted. However, such surveillance is often governed by its own and hard-to-define laws. *Surface Tension* becomes close to the Kafkian vision of the society of control.

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[10] George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1949).

[11] Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/english/projects/eyecontact.htm (accessed September 29, 2009).

[12] The notion "metainteractive discourse" describes the kind of discourse within the realm of interactive art that focuses on critical analysis of interactivity and addresses the cultural conditioning and implications of interactive technology utilising this technology in an unusual, surprising and subversive way. It refers to the term "metacommentary art" introduced by Erkki Huhtamo. Erkki Huhtamo, "Seeking Deeper Contact: Interactive Art as Metacommentary," http://www.kenfeingold.com/seekingdeeper.html (accessed November 11, 2009). Maciej Ozog, "Krytyczny wymiar sztuki interaktywnej," in *Estetyka wirtualności*, ed. Michał Ostrowicki (Kraków: Universitas 2005), 195-210.

[13] Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Society of Control," *October,* 59, 1992, 3-7.

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Computerised surveillance, as David Lyon remarks, functions on the usage of searchable databases that allow collecting, processing and managing data, obtained as a result of observation.[14] Lozano-Hemmer encourages a debate about database usage for computerised surveillance and its cultural implications. There are two forms of databases: the closed one, composed of a limited number of elements; and the open one, developing in the course of the functioning of the installation. Both databases share the simplification of form and semantic content of particular components: their relations and the principles governing their usage. Semantic and structural minimalism of the content corresponds to minimalism in interaction design. As a result, the viewer-interactor is left helpless with the immensity of undiversified and unstructured information, emphasising the paradoxical situation of the viewer-interactor who, even though they can interact with the work, can neither control it nor use it effectively. The interaction becomes an alienating experience. Instead of allowing activity, Lozano-Hemmer's installations place the viewer-interactor in a situation in which the promise of freedom changes into a feeling of limitation or even helplessness with regards to the system which, although reacts to one's presence, does not offer access to its content.

While closed databases seem dependent on the activity of the viewer-interactor, such independence from the interactive invigilation system becomes fiction in the course of interaction. In *Close Up* and *Alpha Blend*, the viewer-interactor is helpless in front of the system that detects her presence, registers one's video portrait and adds the viewer on the database. This process is automatic, since the system is based on an uncomplicated tracking system, activated by the presence of the viewer in its space. This emphasises the relation between watching and being watched by the omnipresent, automatic digital tools of arbitrary invigilation. The viewer-interactor cannot influence the system; she can only refrain from interacting by avoiding a meeting with the digital gaze.

However, the decision to use technology, to interact, means accepting invigilation. It can be even said that approval of invigilation is a *conditio sine qua non* (an indispensable and essential condition) of using interactive technologies.[15] The process of surveillance is not connected to analysis of specific features of the viewer-interactor, but it is initialised and happens automatically. Similarly adding to the database, defining a place within this structure has nothing to do with individualisation. It is also free of any categorisations. A video file, being a record of a successive viewer-interactor's activity, is just another entry in the database. Its subjects are deprived of individual identity and homogenised; they become one of many recordings, forming an undifferentiated mass of data.

Plate 7.4. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Alpha Blend,* 2008. Interactive display with a built-in computerised tracking system. Photo by Antimodular Research. Courtesy of the artist.

This process is highlighted in the form of presentation of recorded video-clips. Among hundreds of representations of viewers-interactors, it is hard to find one's own image. Thus, the alienating power of the system reveals itself with its detachment from individual representations. The database takes the form of hyper-reality described by Baudrillard,[16] and consecutive visual representations of the viewers-interactors become simulacra; they are empty images, not rooted in the material and with no reference to real objects.

The process of transforming a person's image into one of many signs without the signified is analysed in the *Alpha Blend* installation. While in other realisations the image of the presently observed viewer-interactor is shown among hundreds of others as a video-clip awaiting activation, in *Alpha Blend* the viewer-interactor can observe her media reflection in real time. Her image appears among the previously recorded video portraits and is multiplied. Along with the image in real time, other images are shown, processed, stopped, delayed, displaced and blurred. While it is true that thanks to feedback it is possible to enter into a direct relation with the first image and consequently to control one's own reflection, the other ones are uncontrollably transformed, they become independent and distance themselves from the viewer-interactor who then takes on the position of a passive and un-influential spectator. The viewer becomes a witness of the alienation of one's own image which then transforms into a digital spectre, lacking independent existence.

The visual characteristics of the image is, on the one hand, shown against the same background, which can be read as a suggestion of continuity and coherence of virtual space. It is also a sign of the homogenising power of digital monitoring. On the other hand, the media representation of the former viewer-interactors are captured and closed off in the database and now show their fragmentary, incomplete, dematerialised body. This can also be read as a sign of passing from the flesh and bones sphere to the area of digital representation and simulation: simulation as they are actors in someone's theatre; a representation of a particular person, once added to the database, detaches itself from its carrier, becoming one of the elements of the database and a subject of manipulation whose rules and course are determined by the system. Thus, the process described by Tizianna Teranova of complementing one another, intermingling and merging of spectacle, simulation and observation into a new hybrid form is shown.[17]

I used the notions "captured" and "closed" in relation to "viewer-interactor" with reference to the police and penitentiary context. In *Alpha Blend*, the mechanisms consider interpretations of digitalised surveillance, highlighting the constant presence of oppressive panoptical logic of the relationship between discipline and punishment. Lozano-Hemmer addresses the problem of mechanisms that define the post-optic data surveillance.

[14] David Lyon, "Surveillance as Social Sorting: Computer Code and Mobile Bodies," in *Surveillance as Social Sorting: Privacy, Risk and Digital Discrimination*, ed. David Lyon (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 13-30.

[15] Interactive technology refers to hardware and/or software which reacts and/or responds to the input from humans. The basic and indispensable condition of interactivity is the monitoring of the human activity by the technological partner.

[16] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, op. cit.

[17] Tiziana Terranova, "Demonstrating the Globe: Virtual Action in the Network Society," in *Virtual Globalization: Virtual Spaces/Tourist Spaces*, ed. David Holmes (London: Routledge, 2001), 95-113.

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To watch is to be processed

The formation of global networks of information exchange presents changes in the strategies and practices of surveillance, along with the dissemination of information technologies. It creates a kind of hyper-base which enables sharing of separate information resource, stored by different subjects for different purposes. This facilitates access to heterogeneous information concerning people, social groups and institutions. The characteristic of this new form of surveillance, defined as "surveillance assemblage," is a widening, diverse and globalised spectrum of monitored spaces such as work, entertainment, health or consumption.[18] The emergence of digitalized, data-oriented surveillance is characterised by the shift from physical observation of a real person in real space to new forms of invigilation based on tracing the activities in virtual space, monitoring data (dataveillance) and profiling a virtual data-double of the subject.

Lozano-Hemmer neither uses technologies designed for data mining nor refers directly to the issue of dataveillance. However, he analyses the ways we function in digitally augmented systems of surveillance, focusing on the consequences of monitoring automation. Lozano-Hemmer encourages debate about the influence of this global, networked surveillance on individual identity and social relations.

The installations *Third Person* (2006) and *Subtitled Public* (2005) consider invigilation technologies that serve not only to collect information, but to create new reality. As Lozano-Hemmer puts it: "I ask what would happen if all the cameras became projectors and gave us words and images rather than take them away from us?"[19]

This can be materialised in a motion tracking system and a text generator which creates words for a spectator. Its linguistic definition is constructed from verbs in the third person singular. Thus, every person monitored inside the installation is ascribed one or many potential activities. The process of tracing and designation is smooth. However, the system functions attractively rather than effectively. Its efficiency can be questioned when the choice of words has nothing to do with the current behaviour of spectators and is arbitrarily. Therefore, the system does not recognise and reveal, but stigmatises, marking visitors with accidental definitions. It is based on faulty reasons for invigilation. They impose questions: what is characteristic of their work and what is the reality created in this way?

They function on the basis of constant assumptions which are realised automatically and definitely. Thus, a semantic network is almost (or entirely) detached from the reality imposed on it. It is a virtually irremovable network, as portrayed in *Subtitled Public*. Its definitions adhere permanently to its carrier; they are impossible to deny; they can only be passed on to another spectator while adopting one's verbal stigma. The free transfer of words from one person to another is the essence of the process of "creative invigilation" is not adequate in defining reality, but rather in the process of defining itself. It results in a digital shadow of reality, existing and expanding in the infinite rhizome of databases.

Lozano-Hemmer points out that digitalised surveillance leads to alienation and harassment of the individual. Along with automatic designation, the subject's social status changes; one's identity is seen through the prism of a digital shadow, imposed from the outside, which becomes more real and difficult to question. This process is reflected in the installation *Alpha Blend* (2008) which invites the spectator to view automatic manipulations of his/her image, captured by the CCTV camera and added on the database. Lozano-Hemmer visualises these processes that are not spectacular and happen discreetly, but still have consequences that are no less real than if they were being locked in the cell of the Panopticon. The data-double created as a result reminds us, as Maria Los remarks, of an individual profile from totalitarian files.[20]

Although it is difficult to find apocalyptic motives and nocturnal atmosphere in Lozano-Hemmer's works, they address a danger resulting from digitalisation of surveillance. Information is both the most important

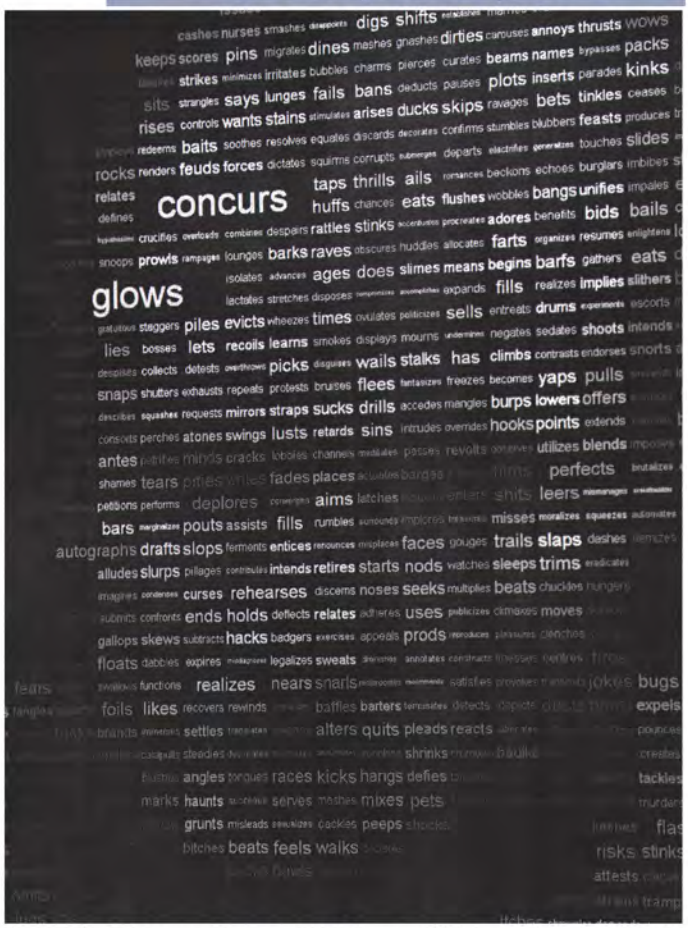

Plate 7.5. Rafael Lozano Hemmer, *Third Person*, 2006. Interactive display with built-in computerized tracking system. Photo by Antimodular Research. Courtesy of the artist.

value and the most dangerous weapon in the society of control. The basic mechanism of control is analysis and processing of the data. In consequence, what emerges is no longer an image that is an adequate representation of reality, but a hypothetical profile of the future. Profiling and simulating of future behaviour and events takes the place in observation that depends, on the one hand, on the accuracy of accumulated data and, on the other hand, on productive processing.

In this context, popularising all forms of invigilation leads to an increase in data collection. This makes the profiling process more precise, but also enforces a reductionist approach and schematisation; blocking and channelling the flood of diverse, unconnected and contradictory information. Popularising and spreading electronic digital surveillance has resulted in data overflow while, simultaneously, creating simplified images and profiles of reality.

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[18] Kevin D. Haggerty and Richard V. Ericson, "The Surveillant Assemblage," in *British Journal of Sociology,* vol. 51, December 2000, 605-622.

[19] José Luis Barrios and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, "A Conversation between José Luis Barrios and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer," edited transcription of a teleconference which took place in the Sala de Arte Público Siquieros (SAPS), Mexico City, April 20, 2005, and was moderated by the director of SAPS, Itala Schmelz. Translation from the Spanish original by Rebecca MacSween, http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/english/texts.htm (accessed September 30, 2009).

[20] Maria Los, "Looking into the Future: Surveillance, Globalization and the Totalitarian Potential," in *Theorizing Surveillance: The Panopticon and Beyond*, ed. David Lyon (Portland: Willing Publishing, 2006), 69-94.

Plate 7.6. Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, *Standards and Double Standards,* 2004. Art Basel Unlimited, Basel, Switzerland. Photo by Peter Hauck. Courtesy of the artist.

Lozano-Hemmer's interactive sculptures and installations address the data overflow and over-stimulation of digitalised surveillance systems defined by Lozano-Hemmer as "subsculptures." *Wavefunction* (2007), *Homographies* (2006), *Glories of Accounting* (2005), *Synaptic Caguamas* (2004) and *Standards and Double Standards* (2004) present standardised objects of everyday use (chairs, fluorescent light tubes, belts, empty bottles) which are multiplied to build large-scale interactive landscapes. They work on two levels: one is triggered by the presence of the viewer-interactor; the other is generated by the inherent dynamics of the system. All objects react to the audience and influence each other. Their behaviour oscillates between slow, systematic, wave-like movements and chaotic spasms of disorder. The second state is intensified in relation to the number of the viewer-interactor's whose movements are subject to observation and tracking. These projects suggest that the more pervasive surveillance is the less effective it is. The urge for total observation and transparency results in an overflow of data and system overload. This fact could be regarded as a promising paradox; yet, the omnipresence of digitalised invigilation and its unquestionable influence on the lives of individuals do not allow us to neglect the negative aspects. As Lozano-Hemmer states in reference to Manuel Delanda:

> It is literally about technologies designed to discriminate based on a series of innate prejudices. This new intensification of surveillance is extremely problematic because, in the words of Manuel DeLanda 'it endows the computer with the power of executive decision making.'[21]

Lozano-Hemmer's works are systems which, in a miniaturised, schematic and synthetic form, reflect the mechanisms of the post-optic, digital Panopticon. In their visual form they directly refer to Foucault's description of panoptic society in terms of institutional control. While the chairs in *Wavefunction* may be inspired by minimalism, the fluorescent lamps in *Homographies* are a symbol of bureaucracy that can be interpreted as a sign of the constant presence of oppressive invigilation in the era of interactive technologies. The penitentiary context is directly evoked in *Standards and Double Standards* which consists of paternal leather belts, majestically floating in the air. As a symbol and a tool for preventive control and punishment, those belts are not ascribed to any particular person. They function independently, automatically and in isolation from the context. Through such a construction of artworks, Lozano-Hemmer points out that the normalising power of panoptic architecture is transferred to the twenty-first century in the form of limitless trust in the efficacy of artificial intelligent agents, enabling action and managing our digitalised surveillance systems.

Conclusion

Lozano-Hemmer uses digitally enhanced and augmented optical tools of surveillance, as well as post-optic devices to create interactive installations that map the hybrid reality of surveillance culture. Employing surveillance technology, at the same time he comments on its very nature. He points out that the present state of surveillance is mirrored in the core of interactivity and in the very construction of interactive technology. Although built on principles of participation, activity and the freedom of the users, interactivity depends on the voluntary exposure to technological observation. In this respect, to be an agent of control is to be controlled, to use technologies of invigilation equals being a subject of observation, and to participate in the spectacle of surveillance is to be both a member of the audience and an actor.

Analysing Lozano-Hemmer's rich creative activity, I have identified four main topics within his discourse, concerning surveillance culture:

1. The issue of gaze and redefinition of vision in the post-panoptic surveillance.
2. The issue of democratisation of voyeurism and exhibitionism in the culture of surveillance spectacle.
3. The influence of digitalisation and the rise of new forms and strategies of surveillance in the digital sphere.
4. Re-contextualisation of surveillance and new prospects for surveillance in information society.

The subject matter and the form of Lozano-Hemmer's works mirror the complex and ambiguous nature of contemporary surveillance. The issues of privacy and identity are contrasted with the question of changes within the public realm, caused by the overflow of information and inflation of surveillance; analysis of contemporary strategies of control and discipline adjoins a reflection on the post-panoptic, post-disciplinary mode of surveillance; critical commentary and distanced observation develops in parallel to the use of surveillance for self-expression and play. Therefore, Lozano-Hemmer's work can be seen as a form of a practical survey in the labyrinth of the surveillance culture.

[21] José Luis Barrios and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, "A Conversation between José Luis Barrios and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer," op.cit.

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