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The Work of Art in The Age of Surveillance: Towards A Society of Civil Power

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ABSTRACT

State and corporate power have expanded and enforced their dominant territory and influence through the development of visual technology. Art and visual technology are inseparable. Thus, art has been utilized as an essential tool through which power glamorizes and visualizes its authority. Over the course of the modern age, power has increasingly adopted different strategies in order to conceal its appearance. In particular, the development of information and communication technology has enabled power to be not only invisible but also intangible. This thesis, "The Work of Art in The Age of Surveillance: Towards A Society of Civil Power," explores how art can be a societal tool of resistance and revolution against these powers. It does so through an examination of how these concepts have developed over time, including crucial historical developments in the realm of power and visual art. The thesis culminates with an analysis of how my body of work engages with these concepts. My work strives to both disclose and represent the invisibility and insubstantiality of power, focusing specifically on the practices of surveillance in the Information Age, as well as how interaction and solidarity among citizens can act as a means of civil resistance and empowerment. This thesis urges readers to become more aware of how power, whether seen or unseen, is present in their daily lives and the ways in which they can resist, react, and reform such practices.

INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2005, I got my first camera at the age of 14. The camera was a Sony Cybershot, which was a popular camera model at the time, though it has since been discontinued. As with most digital cameras, my camera was simple to operate, making it easy for beginners to use. It was smaller than the palm of the hand, so I could put it in my pocket and take it anywhere. My interest in photography bloomed after receiving this camera. In particular, I was fascinated by the act of seeing something through the viewfinder, especially people. Looking back on those early years of using the camera, I now understand why I was drawn to this art form. When I saw something or someone through the lens of the camera, there was a moment of liberation from my consciousness of other people's gazes that had plagued me during my teenage years. The camera bestowed a self-esteem that comes from being the viewer, rather than the person viewed. This momentary emotion was as short as the shutter speed of the camera, but it left an impression as lasting a photograph.

It was only after I went to college and transitioned from photography into filmmaking that I realized that the backdrop of my own life in Korea was shaped by a culture that is overly conscious of the gaze and recognition of others, a collectivistic culture that enforces social conventions and inspires excessive self-consciousness. The act of looking through my camera was my personal act of resistance to this world of social surveillance and internalized self-policing. Far from feeding into the cultural stereotypes of surveillance and the gaze, my work seeks to empower rather than oppress. Ever since, I have constantly utilized my art to explore these and similar topics, such as seeing, power, control, and surveillance.

This thesis serves as a record of this journey, both in terms of my own art making as well as the ideas that inform it, namely how power has used visual tools to control people and how art has resisted that power. In this thesis, "power" is typically used to describe state

powers in a political sense, but also economic power held by large corporations, especially as state and economic powers work so closely together. However, over the course of the thesis, I seek to understand various power dynamics within the Information Age, from aforementioned state and economic power to that of private individuals in a day and age when surveillance is no longer the privilege of an absolute monarch or supreme ruler but a common tool for the many. Today, issues of surveillance and power permeate our daily lives. With social media, anyone has the ability to mimic the act of surveillance once monopolized by larger powers, even as those powers continue to flex their authority in such matters.

This thesis consists of two main parts. The first examines how power has utilized visibility to control the public from the early modern period to the present by focusing on the development of visual technologies and their strategic use within systems of power. From the Camera Obscura to the Panopticon to the development of photography, I will demonstrate how such tools were used in the service of power, ideology, and propaganda. This historical overview will allow us to better understand how power now hides behind technology in the Information Age, no longer emphasizing its own visual existence but rather attempting to become invisible. Throughout this discussion, we will see how artists in turn utilized the technology of power to subvert such messages, from the Berlin Dadaist movement of the 1930s to contemporary artists working with algorithms. The result is a brief but significant examination of how power has policed and disciplined both physical and visual bodies over the course of centuries, only to become increasingly formless and unverifiable by the human eye. It is no less dangerous in this form, given the ability of data and surveillance to cause major problems in terms of inequality and discrimination of the masses.

Part Two focuses on how I have been exploring the current state of surveillance in the Information Age through my practice. My body of work is separated into two categories based on form and theme: sculptural installations that represent the invisibility and

intangibility of surveillance and interactive spatial installations that embrace elements of playfulness and participation inherent to modern day social surveillance systems. This collection of artworks demonstrates both the oppressive presence of surveillance in our daily lives, both on a macro and a micro scale, as well our potential reaction to such surveillance. Moving from one category of work into another, I examine the ways in which power operates on different levels in today's digital society, from the cameras that watch us on campus to the way we watch each other through social media. Much in the same way my original experiences with photography challenged societal constructions of the gaze, these works represent a move from acknowledging the power to recognizing how individuals might engage in acts of resistance against those powers. My work ultimately encourages citizens to assert their own power and recognizes the continued importance of art to such a process. In other words, my work recognizes the influence of the individual as well as of art against powers.

PART ONE

Visual Regime of Modern Power Realized through Camera Obscura

Power has expanded and enforced its dominant territory and influence with the development of visual culture. Having an inseparable relationship with visual culture, art has been utilized as an essential tool for politics in the domination of a nation or specific class. From the formation of ancient myths to portraits to cultural properties, associations between political power and art are omnipresent.

Surprisingly, the roots of visual technology in the service of power began in the fifteenth century with the development of the camera obscura. First used by artists, in the modern era the camera obscura became regarded as a metaphor to explain how modern power controls and manages the public through technology, allowing the public to only perceive a single objective viewpoint.¹

The camera obscura was a popular tool to help painters who tried to render three-dimensional, rationalized space of perspectival vision on a two-dimensional plane. This was made possible by the optical phenomenon created by the camera obscura, which involves a viewer standing in a dark room with a single hole. When light passes through this hole, it creates a projection on the opposite wall, producing an image of whatever is on the other side of the hole, but upside down. Painters would harness the upside-down image by painting and tracing it on a two-dimensional plane. Once they were done, they would turn the image they produced right side up, thus “righting” the view projected by the camera obscura. The camera

¹ Crary, Jonathan. ‘Modernizing Vision’ in *Vision and Visuality* Ed. Hal Poster, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, 30p

obscura helps fix a rational viewpoint of the object or scene that an artist wants to paint. This is because the linear perspective produced by the camera obscura organizes a three-dimensional subject around a single vanishing point. Since the fifteenth century, the camera obscura has been actively utilized by not only painters but also scientists and philosophers. For philosophers, this visual tool became a parallel through which to identify the inconsistent outer world through an objective truth.

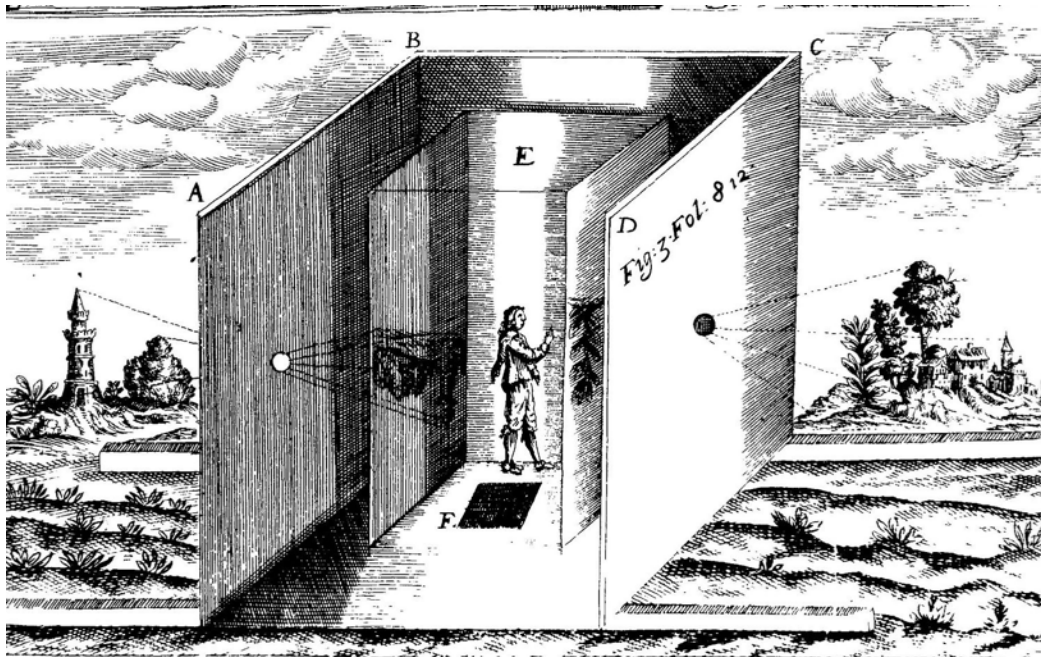


Figure 1. *Camera Obscura*, Athanasius Kircher, 1646

For example, seventeenth-century philosopher Rene Descartes called the camera obscura “a demonstration of how an observer can know the world uniquely by perception of the mind.”² Descartes substantiated his theory by claiming that one can receive an objective truth through vision. He suggested a precondition for knowing the outer world: the secure position of the self who tries to “see” the outer world and the self’s empty mind that has yet to achieve recognition. This precondition is embodied by the camera obscura’s enclosure, the

² Cray, Jonathan. ‘Modernizing Vision’ in *Vision and Visuality* Ed. Hal Poster, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, 32p

empty and dark interior space, and the observer within it. According to Descartes's precondition, the perspectival image that the camera obscura creates is no different than objective truth in relation to the outer world.

Martin Jay, an American art historian, created the term "Cartesian perspectivism," which combines linear perspective and Descartes's philosophy of the self to argue for the existence of a "scopic regime of modernity."³ That is to say, Jay claims that linear perspective and Descartes's philosophy of the self combine to form an ideology that explains how power harnesses visual systems to control and manage the masses' conception of the world. Because the visual regime of modern power is ideologically identical to the working method of linear perspective and Descartes's philosophy of the self, one's view of the world is determined by a single perspective: power.

In Cartesian perspectivism, the vanishing point of linear perspective, which Descartes equates to the self, becomes the perception of power in modern regimes. As an almighty and absolute force, power arranges, dominates and controls the construction of a viewpoint just as a vanishing point determines a composition's linear perspective. Similarly, in Descartes's philosophy, only power ultimately determines objective truth. As a metaphor of modern power, the camera obscura symbolically shows how visual technology and power are inextricably linked.

³ Jay, Martin. 'Scopic Regimes of Modernity' in *Vision and Visuality* Ed. Hal Foster, Seattle: Bay Press, 1988, 5p

Photography and Film as a Practical Tool of Power

Through the invention of the photographic camera in the nineteenth century, power started to utilize visual technology as a practical tool for domination rather than as a metaphorical one, like the camera obscura. Suddenly, the perception of the world could be framed and filtered through a camera lens rather than a single observer. The camera lens recognizes the object in front of it as something that can be measured mathematically. Namely, the subject of vision is materialized and objectified through the camera lens. In this situation, the person operating the camera becomes a metaphor of power in that he or she objectifies human beings and curates a specific perspective of them.

The objectified subject is then perpetuated in physical form via photographs, the result of an effort to fix and maintain a temporary image in the tradition of the camera obscura. Photography occurs through the process of triggering consecutive operations of the camera by focusing the image in the viewfinder and pushing the shutter button. Pushing the camera's shutter button captures a stationary image of a split second, regardless of movement. Philosophically, this action makes permanent and materialized a specific perspective through the photograph, which can be distributed as physical evidence of one person's version of the truth.

In the early nineteenth century, reproductive technology, first made possible by lithography, advanced to photography and film. These new genres of art were popularized with rapidity. Unlike the camera obscura, which was a metaphor for the visual regime of power, photography and film were practical tools of power to glamorize itself.

German Jewish philosopher and aesthetician, Walter Benjamin, argued that power not only materialized its existence but also expanded its strength through photography and film. In his essay, "Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction (1935)," Benjamin suggests the

possibility of utilizing photography and film as a tool for transforming politics against power, which utilizes it for its propaganda.

The expansion of modern power's influence through photography and film began with the public's changing attitudes towards art. Benjamin claims that the reaction of the masses to traditional arts differs from their reaction to film.⁴ For example, with paintings, the public uncritically enjoys conventional aspects of the medium like traditional portraiture and still life paintings, though the public will criticize new things such as new political themes or genres that they have not seen before. As Benjamin explains, compared to changes in established media, the public was especially receptive to film, which could be enjoyed with others and seemed to replicate reality.⁵ Film thus gained an incomparable influence on the public in comparison with previous art forms. Power took notice.

Regimes of power quickly utilized photography and film in the service of politics beginning with the Nazis. In the twentieth century, the Nazis tried to make the public accept fascist politics by portraying their politics in photography and film. The Nazis made Hitler's public speeches and rallies into a dramatic documentary that gripped the German masses. Through photography and film, they glamorized war and attempted to convince the public to regard destructive politics and war as an art form, which obscured the cost of sacrifice through pleasant and sublime imagery.

Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 documentary, *Triumph of the Will*, is an example of film used to raise fascist politics to glamorized status. Though the film was created in the 1930s, it is

⁴ Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*. Ed. H. Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1969[1936], 234p

⁵ Benjamin, Walter. 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' in *Illuminations*. Ed. H. Arendt. New York: Schocken, 1969[1936], 239p



Figure 2. *Triumph of the Will*, Leni Riefenstahl, 1935

still acclaimed as a high-quality film for its use of sophisticated techniques, such as utilizing aerial filming technology, which was a groundbreaking at the time, and an almost musical, rhythmic editing style. These aesthetic techniques advanced the medium of film but also showed how film could be utilized to praise of Hitler and in the service of Nazi propaganda.

For example, in the first scene of the film, Hitler's airplane flies over German villages from the perspective of God overlooking the world. When the airplane cuts through a foggy cloud to land, Hitler disembarks like a descending god, and the camera angle gazes up at him from below. Subsequently, a public crowd welcomes Hitler with raucous applause. The hospitality of the public, viewed from Hitler's point of view, allows the film viewer to feel the love and support that the crowd feels, and thus feel their respect and admiration for Hitler who did indeed receive this treatment from the German public during World War II. Also, in this film Riefenstahl portrays German soldiers as paragons of physical beauty and refinement by focusing on their muscular bodies and elegant marching choreography. These soldiers were a part of the Nazi war efforts, and in the documentary, they stand in as emblems of beauty in order to rationalize and glamorize the war in which they were fighting.

Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* demonstrates how a political power could use art to achieve

a public relations goal. This deliberate act was not lost on contemporary theorists and critics like Benjamin, who condemned the act as a way of justifying Nazi politics.⁶

⁶ Benjamin, Walter. "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." *Illuminations*. Ed. H. Arendt. (New York: Schocken, 1969[1936]), 242p

Art as a Tool of Political Resistance

Benjamin saw the possibility that art in the age of mechanical reproduction can be harnessed as a tool of power, thus rendering politics as aesthetics. But Benjamin also argued that photography and film can be tools for fighting back, starting new political movements and transforming politics.

In support of his claim, Benjamin discusses the concept of “the Aura” or the uniqueness of art, which is lost when reproductive technology is used. Before the creation of photography and film, for example, art primarily had cult or ritual value. That is to say, art pieces were objects of worship that accumulated meaning and value over time and could only belong to a privileged few. However, reproductive technology emancipated art from this existence. Ritual value was thus replaced by exhibition value, meaning that artwork became reproducible and widely distributed through photography and film.

As a result, art that was owned and appreciated by a privileged class in the past became common to the public as a form of social communication. Benjamin insisted that the social function of art was thereby transformed. Art had been used by many powerful entities as propaganda to glamorize and advance their agendas, but as reproductive technology developed, art could be a powerful medium against power. As Benjamin suggests in the conclusion of this essay, it was in this direction that art had to proceed: Art as a tool of political resistance and social transformation, distributed through such media as photography and film.

German visual artist John Heartfield’s works are example of art that actualized Benjamin’s claim. Heartfield utilized political art against the Nazi who created it. In 1918, Heartfield organized the group Berlin Dada with Berlin-based visual artists, Raoul Hausmann and Hannah Höch. They each created photo montages by cutting apart images from

newspapers or magazines, both of which were popularized through reproductive technology. The artists then arranged and combined these pieces with other images. The visuals that Dadaists chose for their work were mostly those made by Nazis to glamorize themselves to the public. By cutting apart these images, artists subverted the original political context of propagating Nazism and instead utilized them to criticize Nazism by arranging and combining them with other images and texts. Berlin Dadaists thus overturned photography's function as a tool for propaganda by the Nazis and turned it into a tool of political revolution.

When images that have different perspectives are gathered and combined, one loses the ability to have a single linear perspective, thus disrupting the longtime authority of this visual schema. In suggesting different viewpoints to understand the world, the downfall of the linear perspective challenged the dominant visual regime of modern times. Ultimately, the various perspectives presented by a photomontage meant the mastery, control, and subjecthood of power faced a crisis.

Adolf Hitler The Superman: Swallows Gold And Spouts Junk and *Göring: The Executioner of the Third Reich* are two of the collages that Heartfield made while in Berlin. Heartfield harnessed Nazi-produced portraits of Adolf Hitler and Hermann Göring, another Nazi leader, in which these men are shown to be powerful and charismatic figures of authority. By cutting up these portraits and adding images of coins and an ax, Heartfield accuses and satirizes Hitler's and Göring's political corruption and conspiracy. Also, Heartfield utilized shifts in perspective and scope to make the figures appear ridiculous. For instance, in *Adolf Hitler The Superman*, Hitler's face and body are portrayed from a different perspective than the coins, which are, perspectively, seen from above. Similarly in *Göring: The Executioner*, the Göring's body is standing towards the front, but the perspective of his face is entirely facing east. Through these exploits, Heartfield turns these once charismatic

images of Hitler and Göring into brutal, covetous, and silly figures, showing them as a lying spokesman for capitalism and a Nazi murderer, respectively. The finished works were made into a poster and the cover of a magazine. Utilizing reproductive technology, Heartfield ensured that the public could have access to this satire of political ideology.



Figure 3. *Adolf Hitler The Superman- Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk*, John Heartfield, 1932

Figure 4. *Goering- The Executioner of the Third Reich*, John Heartfield, 1933

By demonstrating that reproductive technology, which had been used for propaganda, could conversely be used as a tool for criticizing that power, Heartfield and the Berlin Dadaists suggested the possibility of photography and film as media of political revolution. They used politically-charged source material to create their own artworks or compositions, which criticized Nazi rule. The Berlin Dadaists' photomontages subverted a technology that was exploited by systems of power and repurposed it as a tool to criticize that very power, but they also suggested different aesthetic possibilities for the technology. Their works show

that technology can produce different effects depending on how and by whom it is used. This working method is still adopted by contemporary artists as a strategy to reveal and criticize invisible power systems in the Information Age.

Unverifiable Power in Panopticon

Since the late eighteenth century, power has utilized different visual strategies from past eras to remain unverifiably hidden in plain sight. This unverifiable visibility was initially realized through a specific architectural structure. In *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, French Philosopher Michel Foucault reveals the common features he observed in the design of public facilities such as hospitals, schools, factories, and prisons built after the eighteenth century. Each of these facilities creates a separate space for each person. Divided spaces for individuals break up the formation of groups so that each person is recognized as an individual entity. The central area functions to control, manage, and supervise all individuals. Here, it is possible to both supervise single individuals as well as multiple separated spaces. Between separate individuals' spaces and this central space, there are conduits connecting the two spaces such as nurses, teachers, or other supervisory roles. Through these conduits, a guard in that central space can receive reports and know all about each individual through these relays of knowledge. These conduits are proxies for the supervisor. Though the existence of the guard in the central space cannot be verified, individuals know that they are managed, controlled, and watched over by seeing these conduit proxies.

In this closed space, the guard holds the position of omnipresent observer, since he watches over the individuals everywhere, but the guard is not directly seen by individuals. Aware of this surveillance, individuals are forced to submit to the disciplining power of public facilities, and carry out the demands of such spaces.

To explain, how power can be at once visible yet unverifiable through this architectural structure, Foucault analyzes the panopticon, a circular prison designed by English philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham in the eighteenth century. The

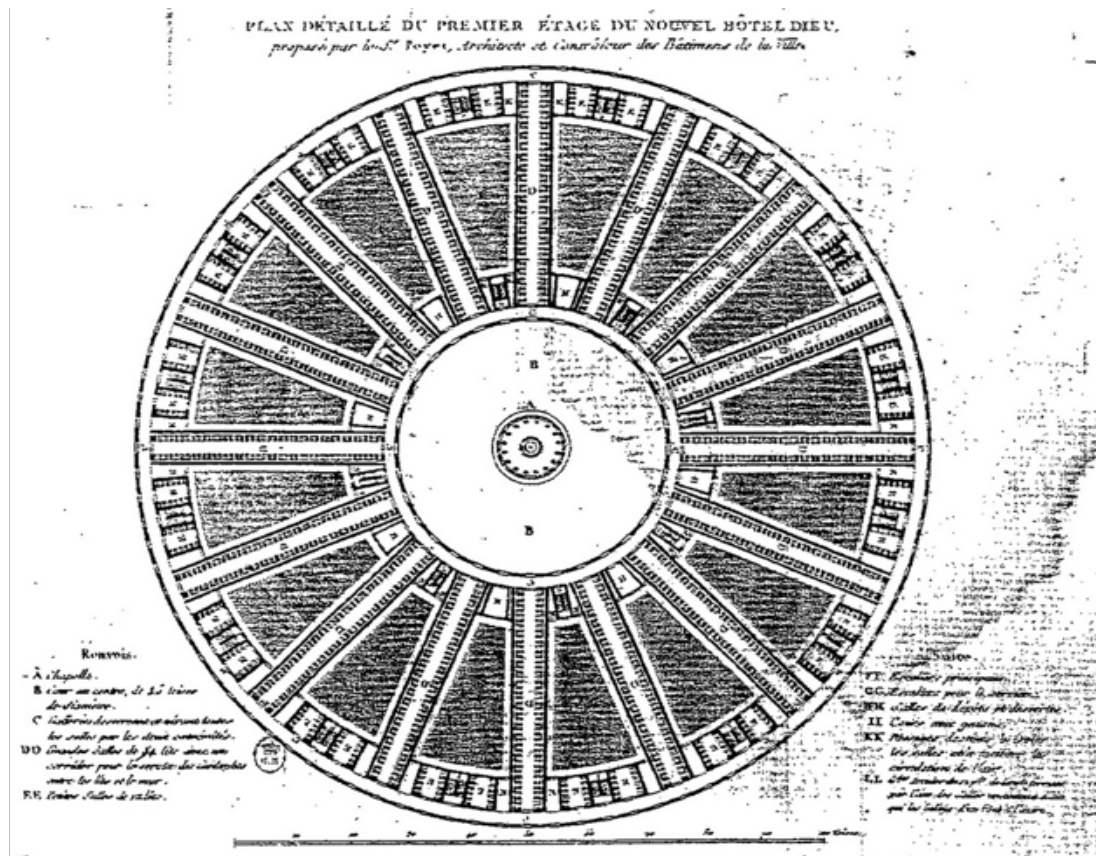


Figure 5. A detailed circular plan of the second floor of the New Hôtel-Dieu ('marguerite' of the hospital) in Paris, Bernard Poyet, 1785.

panopticon consists of a circular tower of cells built around a central surveillance tower. The surveillance tower at the center has omnidirectional windows so that the supervisor can see all prisoners' cells individually and also all at once. Each inmate cell has two windows, one on the inside corresponding to the windows of the tower; the other, on the outside allowing the light to cross the cell from one end to the other.⁷ The effect of this back lighting in the prison cell makes an inmate's shadow stand out so that the supervisor can observe all prisoners and understand what they are doing. Contrary to the bright prison cells, the tower is dark so that prisoners cannot verify whether the monitor is undertaking surveillance or is perhaps not even in the tower at all. Instead, whenever the inmates see the tower, they are

⁷ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1977 [1975], 200p



Figure 6. Interior of the penitentiary at Stateville, United States, twentieth century

reminded that someone may always be watching them. The gaze of surveillance cannot be verified but it always exists in the consciousness of inmates, thus making it virtually omnipresent.

As a result, the inmates internalize this gaze of surveillance by watching over themselves. Namely, they begin to surveil themselves. The purpose of the panopticon is to make the inmate a docile, obedient, and manageable object through this internalizing procedure.⁸ Once that occurs, the supervisor no longer has to man the tower because the effectiveness of surveillance remains with or without the supervisor's presence. This system ultimately allows for effective supervision of a large body of individuals.

⁸ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1977 [1975], 201-202p

By observing the structure of public facilities in modern times, Foucault saw through that architectural structures were designed to control and discipline people by considering the way space was constructed. In other words, the state or other official powers, which had once wielded force visually, now controlled the consciousness of people by concealing its existence. Rather than rely on a display of force, the state now uses modifications of space, structure, and division to exert control.

Foucault called this module a new paradigm of power, which developed in the eighteenth centuries as a new way of disciplining society.⁹ The panopticon not only showed the working principle of disciplined society influencing of the state police on people to self-discipline but also was an actual architectural model of public facilities. Its influence continued into the formation of an Information Age. Particularly, the asymmetry of in the panopticon allows people to be seen at all times without them ever seeing power in turn: power sees everything without ever being seen.¹⁰ This would be completely realized through the invisible and insubstantial data in the Information Age.

⁹ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1977 [1975], 209p

¹⁰ Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1977 [1975], 202p

Surveillance in the Information Age

According to French philosopher, Paul Virilio, the development of telecommunication technology has led individuals to increasingly engage in the digital world over the material world, thus undermining the importance of physical space.¹¹ Virilio's argument aligns with the definition of Information Age, in which the circulation of information has been faster than the physical one, shifting from traditional industry to an economy primarily based upon information technology. In this age, it is possible to communicate and share information and services through technology without physical, in-person meetings. If Virilio's argument is true, how does it develop Foucault's arguments about physical space? That is to say, did technology emancipate people from the dominance of panopticonic power structures or did it extend the power of the panopticon's surveilling gaze?

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze argues that the retreat from physical space results not in one's freedom from control but, ironically, results in more severe reinforcement of that control.¹² While the age of early modern enabled surveillance by organizing physical space in a particular way, the Information Age instead regulates and controls how individuals receive certain information. Rather than disciplining the physical body in enclosed spaces, power in the Information Age controls the flow of information to people, which a state or other power may manipulate or alter at any time. This "information" includes everything from public opinion to the manipulation of stock prices by large companies and by big government. In order to control and manipulate this flow of information, those in power need only to alter digital data consisting of numbers and codes. When this data is made available to

¹¹ Virilio, Paul and Lotringer, Sylvère. *Pure War*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008 [1983], 126p

¹² Deleuze, Gilles. 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', *October* Vol. 59. Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1992, 3p

state and corporate power, the scope of surveillance and control extends beyond physical space to a global dimension through digital data without time and space restrictions. In this form of control, exploitation and domination become more elaborate and thorough. For example, workdays and productivity are accurately recorded and accumulated as data, which directly affects promotion, workload, and potential disciplinary action. Furthermore, certain people's behavior may be reported to the government through credit card details, public transportation usage record, and mobile phone history, and the government can use this data to identify and discriminate people of a particular demographic, be it political, racial, or economic. These examples prove Deleuze's theory about the consolidation of power and control through digital means, which continues to occur today, even at this very moment.

An interesting aspect of such a surveillance system is that many people do not think of this system of control as oppressive. This is because power in the Information Age is invisible and intangible. In the words of Deleuze, the power of an Information Age is like a gas.¹³ It is omnipresent and felt, but it is often considered “unremarkable.” This invisibility and insubstantiality represent an unprecedented strategy made possible by the advancement of technology. This form of power can be regarded as a more extreme version of the panopticon, in which one could visually confirm the potential presence of surveillance. With this newfound invisibility and intangibility, power not only renders people unaware of acts of surveillance and control as they occur, but are led to believe that such measures are positive, given that these powers are controlling the flow of information and therefore public perception.

In order to persuade people that surveillance system are productive and helpful, those

¹³ Gilles Deleuze. ‘Postscript on the Societies of Control’, October Vol. 59. Boston, MA: MIT Press, 1992, 4p

in power argue that surveillance guarantees security, safety, convenience, and fairness. In order to emphasize these benefits, public media such as advertising utilizes visual images such as peaceful families, encouraging people to pay attention only to positive aspects of surveillance. When people see these images circulated through mass media, they are likely to accept surveillance and control as measures that are essential to lead a safe life, especially in the present era when various dangers are rampant, such as global terrorism, financial crises, and especially the spread of pandemic diseases. Indeed, contemporary surveillance in the Information Age presents itself as an answer to the hope of ‘never again being alone’ (abandoned, ignored, neglected, and excluded.)¹⁴ With security, however, comes the invasion of privacy, but when faced with the fear of not being protected from various dangers or being alienated from society, people often choose to sacrifice their privacy. At this time, invasion of privacy is considered the price paid for protection. Thus, surveillance in the Information Age is made possible not only by power, but also by the voluntary servitude of the people.

Social media is another place where the public voluntarily participates in the sacrifice of privacy. If security-related surveillance has led to voluntary obedience on the basis of fear, social media sees people giving up their privacy for the pleasure of getting attention and peeping into the daily lives of others. Such joy has stifled the fear of exposure to surveillance. In social media, where people can observe each others’ whereabouts and behavior, a new system of power naturally emerges. This is because people themselves watch over each other and take on the role of a surveilling power, policing and criticizing the behavior of others. Surveillance, which once belonged to a privileged class, is now individualized and generalized. Taken together, the privileged pleasure of surveillance is offered to public at the

¹⁴ Bauman, Zygmunt and Lyon, David. *Liquid Surveillance*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, 26p



Figure 7. advertisement of home security service, ADT

expense of their privacy, while the expense also has been designed to be recognized as the pleasure of getting social attention. Social media operates as a mutual surveillance system, but it presents itself as a place of entertainment with no reason not to enter voluntarily.

What is the result of this new surveillance system, one that produces voluntary servitude to a power? We need to look at the consequences of this surveillance and why people accept it without major suspicion. In addition to being potentially watched by millions of our peers, the lack of critical acceptance of social media does not end with us voluntarily giving up our personal privacy as we go about our daily lives. It also allows large governments and businesses to extract, process, exchange and trade the personal information without penalty, which can exacerbate to social and economic inequality and discrimination. American security expert Bruce Schneier says this kind of mass surveillance is able

to classify people based on multiple criteria, including political inclination, class, and race.¹⁵ In other words, the public surveillance based on personal information is a means of strengthening the social divisions that result in people being classified and ranked. In the case of large corporations, those in power can increase their profits by making different prices depending on one's economic class, and in the case of government, people can be controlled on the basis of certain political beliefs. For example, with the help of surveillance data, insurance companies have managed their risks and achieved great success by ranking customers according to their projected health outcomes and setting different premiums for lower-risk clients. In addition, as of 2020, the Chinese government utilizes surveillance camera and data surveillance system to rank its citizens and the degree to which they obey government policies. As a result, this method of ranking can impact things such as employment and credit ratings. These two examples demonstrate that surveillance can have unfair outcomes and disadvantages for certain classes and ultimately can lead to social inequality.

¹⁵ Schneier, Bruce, *Data And Goliath the Hidden Battles to Collect Your Data and Control Your World*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2015, 4p

The Role of Art in an Information Age: Uncovering the Invisibility of The Power of Surveillance

What is the role of art and what forms can it take in this information-based age? What can artists do to combat the strong likelihood of the tyrannical use of data surveillance by the powerful? In order to begin considering these questions, we need to return to Benjamin's assertion affirming the political potential of art.

In the realm of information delivery, power is rarely perceived. It is thus necessary to take a different visual strategy from the era of Nazism when power could be visually confirmed and glamorized. Today, art can not only reveal the existence of power, but also expose strategies of invisibility and intangibility. Art can help people perceive their unconscious state of surveillance and thereby recognize the omnipresence of power. In their daily lives, people will only see, feel, and think about the ubiquitous system of surveillance that power has put in place if it is no longer invisible and intangible.

The *How-To-Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File* by Berlin-based media artist, filmmaker, and media theorist Hito Steyerl is a good example of an artwork that reveals the invisibility of power in the Information Age. Steyerl's work exposes the reality that we face as individuals who are constantly seen by an ironically invisible power structure. She shows how our reality of constant surveillance is at odds with the reality of the invisibility of power. Steyerl's work encourages a new way of seeing and a new way of not being seen.

How Not To Be Seen is a witty parody of a "how-to" instructional video. The video outlines practical tactics to avoid being seen by an omnipresent power, which exerts control all over the world through surveillance in the Information Age. The work begins with a photo resolution target (calibration target) in the California desert. Regarded as an early form of the

pixel, which is the smallest element of a digital image, this resolution target was utilized by the US Air Force to test the focus of airplane cameras and to get an accurate photo of geographical areas for war and surveillance before the development of more high-end digital technology. Zooming out from the resolution target in the California desert, the video shows territories all over the world starting from the US, alluding to the fact that there is nothing physical on the planet that cannot be captured and recorded. Now the resolution target is deserted in the middle of a bleak desert like an old artifact. However, this does not mean that surveillance has stopped but rather that a more advanced visual technology has been developed, which no longer needs to be tested there. The advent of pixel resolution shows that surveillance is being expanded into a digital world beyond physical space.



Figure 8. *How Not to Be Seen- A Fucking Didactic Educational .MOV File*, Hito Steyerl, Video (color, sound), 14 min, 2013

Steyerl suggests strategies for how “not to be seen” by the state surveillance instruments. One suggestion is to hide in plain sight. For this demonstration, Steyerl smears green paint on her face that can be chromakeyed into invisibility. Another strategy she

presents is to be shrunk down to a unit smaller than a pixel. To demonstrate this, three people appear on camera wearing pixel-like black or white boxes on their heads and dance.

Other methods include living in a gated community, in a military zone, being a female over 50, and being a "disappeared" person as an enemy of the state. These strategies are outlined through visual effects and performance, combining reality and virtuality. Her tactics, of course, range from improbable to impossible and her means of showing these tactics are humorous.

Steyerl, however, treats all strategies of invisibility seriously as if these funny and unreal things are possible. To reinforce this sense of seriousness, a narration of a slow, droning, automated male voice plays over the entire video. This consistent presence of seriousness prevents viewers from enjoying Steyerl's comic performance because humor exists alongside the real fear referenced in her examples. We become suspicious as to whether these funny tactics could actually work in real life, which they realistically cannot. When faced with reality, humor turns to unease and makes us question: if it were possible, who would activate this invisibility and how?

At the end of the film, the narration of the automated male voice says, "Today the most important things want to remain invisible. Love is invisible. War is invisible. Capital is invisible." This narration provides hints about what can be invisible, supplementing Steyerl's performance. Whoever watches this video until the end can easily understand that it is power that insidiously conceals war and controls capital. However, Steyerl does not finish the film by exposing the invisibility of power. As the narrator says, "In the decade of the digital revolution 170,000 people disappeared. Disappeared people are annihilated, eliminated, eradicated, deleted, dispensed with, filtered, processed, selected, separated, wiped out." By layering this narration over her performance, Steyerl reveals another aspect of invisibility:

there are people who are rendered invisible by those in power. These forcibly invisible people are just as important as invisible power because these people can make invisible power visible through their very absence. Those who love them certainly continue to "see" these disappeared people despite their absence, as love is something felt not seen. These invisible people and power structures are what we must "see." Rather than hide from power, as Steyerl does in her performance, we must instead strive to make power visible.

The Role of Art in an Information Age: Reverse Usage of Surveillance Power

Technology

Art has been exposing power and its strategies for many years. As the strategies of power change, however, art must also adapt. How can we continue to ensure art continues to reveal power? Deleuze argues that we should not just expose power's surveillance, but that we also need to take an active resistance. In particular, considering that the power of surveillance is exercised using advanced information and communication technology, Deleuze emphasizes that resistance must also be electronic. He proposes that we must utilize technology to understand how power manages and controls us through the digital world, so we can then disturb the circuits of that flow or interrupt those systems of information that power monopolizes. These techniques include viruses, hacking, piracy and interactive ART.

Sterling Crispin's series of *Data Masks* are good example of embracing Deleuze's claim into art. Sterling Crispin, a media artist and software developer in the US, gives form to things that are formless by purposely misusing or reverse-engineering established technology. In his work, *Data Masks*, Crispin visualizes invisible structures of power and the way that power deals with individuals through 3D masks. He does this by adapting facial recognition and detection algorithms, which are typically used for either producing human-like faces or recognizing them—ie. the Deep Face AI system of Facebook. Crispin used the same algorithms utilized to make unclear images of faces clear, but in reverse. In his algorithm, the coding for getting a clear face made the image of a face into a ghastly disfiguration, with its features dismembered. He then printed these images of faces as three-dimensional masks.

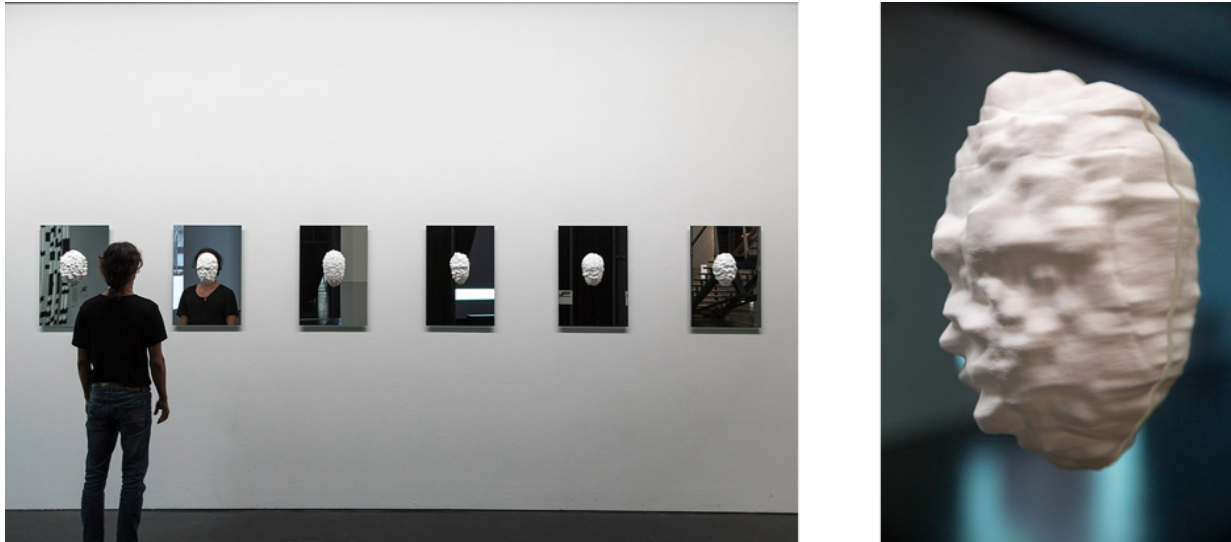


Figure 9. *Data-Masks* (Series), Sterling Crispin, 3D Printed Nylon, Mirror, Facial Recognition and Detection Algorithms, Genetic algorithms, 18 x 26 in each, 2013-2015

In his thesis *Data-Masks Biometric Surveillance Masks Evolving in the Gaze of the Technological Other*, Crispin said these images of faces answer the “what” of a person rather than the “who” of a person, much in the same way governments and Facebook “recognize” faces.¹⁶ This is because the image of a face is obtained numerically through measurements generated by algorithms.

Such measured data of facial recognition is used to represent, identify, and verify individuals' identity such as their race, age, or sex. For example, a similar method has been used by police to visualize those who have committed crimes through mock ups that they then distribute to the public in order to identify the criminal. Furthermore, governments can use this database with this technology of facial recognition for surveillance and control. While this technology can be used to find a criminal, the possibility of

¹⁶ Crispin, Sterling. “Data Masks: Biometric Surveillance Masks Evolving in the Gaze of the Technological Other” MA thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, December 2014. Accessed February 25, 2015. http://www.sterlingcrispin.com/Sterling_Crispin_Data-masks_MS_Thesis.pdf

inaccuracies or generalities can cause many innocent people to also be presented as suspects for crimes in which they had no involvement, because they may fit the generated visual description. Much in the same way, we are watched and analyzed by similar systems of data and their associated algorithms, which affect our privacy, identity, and even social interactions.

Data Masks gives form to the powers that utilize such technology, which controls networks and identification systems. In doing so, Crispin makes one means in which invisible power acts on civilians tangible and visible. The forms of the 3D faces visualize the inhumane way governments and the systems utilized by them identify individuals. Above all, this work is remarkable in that it reveals the abuse of power effectively by subverting information technology typically used as a means of surveillance.

PART TWO

Representation of Power of Surveillance

As the works of Hito Steyerl and Sterling Crispin show, art can provide people with the opportunity to think about the increasingly sophisticated power of surveillance. In doing so, they offer examples of how artworks can function as tools of resistance.

My art practice also engages with ideas about surveillance, and my artworks can be broadly organized into two categories. One is installation that represent the invisible and intangible power of surveillance in the Information Age. The other is spatial and interactive installations that foster solidarity and interaction among spectators, and show how these social connections as a method of resistance to the power of surveillance.

The installations, *Finding A Way Through Maze, Hide and Seek* and *Surveillance Light Box*(Fig.10), explores invisible and intangible power based on personal experience. I have worked as a technical assistant in the Teaching Center of Washington University in St.Louis since 2018. One of my tasks is to visit all buildings on the campus and check the status of the electronic equipment of each classroom. While traveling around campus to carry out this task, I frequently notice the number of surveillance cameras all around campus and make a game of counting them. Over the course of my job, I have counted close to one hundred cameras, some of which are obvious--such as those installed in the Blue Light posts that line the streets--and others that are disguised, such as those on rooftops, which are often hard to recognize. When I asked to see the security footage from these cameras, I was informed that such access was forbidden.

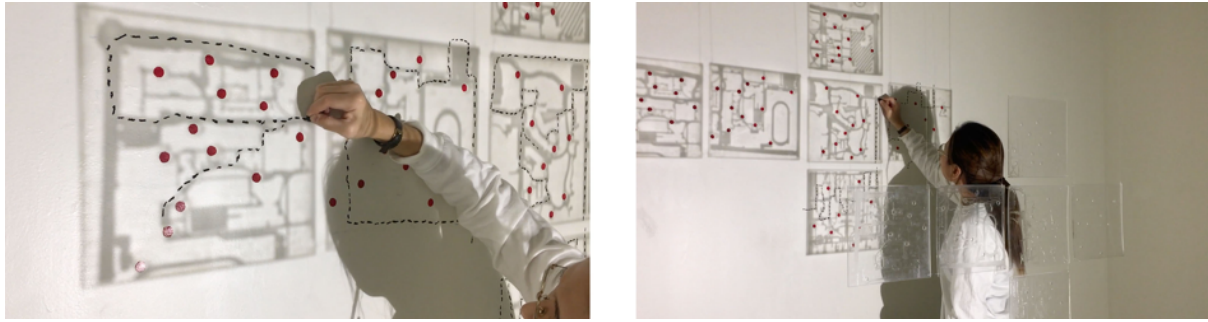


Figure 10. *Finding Way Through Maze*, Grace Eunhae Cho, laser cutting on plexiglass, red paint and black oil pastel on the wall, 60cm L x 90cm H x 1.1m W, 2019.

<https://vimeo.com/383413751>

Based on this experience, I made a campus map, which indicated locations of surveillance cameras on campus for my installation *Finding A Way Through Maze*. I then laser-printed this map on transparent plexiglass, producing an image that was difficult to see given the transparency of the support. When light was projected onto the plexiglass, the map appeared as a shadow against the wall, but when viewers approached to look at it further, their shadow interrupted the light source, causing the map to disappear. That is to say, the shadow map on the wall is both invisible but also physically intangible, much like the invisibility and intangibility of the network of surveillance cameras on campus.

On the plexiglass that produces the shadow map against the wall, I marked the locations of surveillance cameras with red painted dots. By highlighting them in red rather than their original blue, the security that the blue light system provides is thus undermined, replaced with a red mark of warning. Contrary to the invisible and intangible shadow map, the locations of surveillance cameras marked in red are visually and physically apparent. Further, I attempted to find a surveillance camera-free pathway by drawing with a black oil pastel between the red markings in order to demonstrate how one might move between places without being seen by cameras. Such paths explore ways in which individuals might escape from the control of surveillance by avoiding cameras altogether.

Installation *Hide and Seek*(Fig.11) adopts the same plexiglass piece in *Finding A Way*

Through Maze. However, *Hide and Seek* shows a completely different visual result from *Finding A Way Through Maze* by utilizing a different environment.

Contrary to *Finding A Way Through Maze in white cube*, *Hide and Seek* is placed in the dark room. The shadow map disappears, but the marks showing the cameras and the camera-free paths remain the same. I then utilized a projector focused on the plexiglass to layer a video over the top. This video comprises a large red dot of light as well as the dark silhouettes of people. When projected onto the plexiglass, the 4.5 inch red dot slowly moves around the map, consuming the smaller red dots indicating the locations of the on-the-ground surveillance cameras. As a commentary on power, the larger red dot represents the singular power that controls the individual cameras, which although scattered in many places around campus represent a singular surveillance effort. Silhouettes appear as the large red dot passes across the plexiglass, as if this were one great game of hide and seek: although people may be hiding to escape the red dot, it always wins the game. This game is then replicated for the viewer, who must watch as the silhouettes of people appear and disappear in the red light, creating an intense visual tension that reflects the conflict between the power of surveillance to control people and people's willingness to escape from its influence.

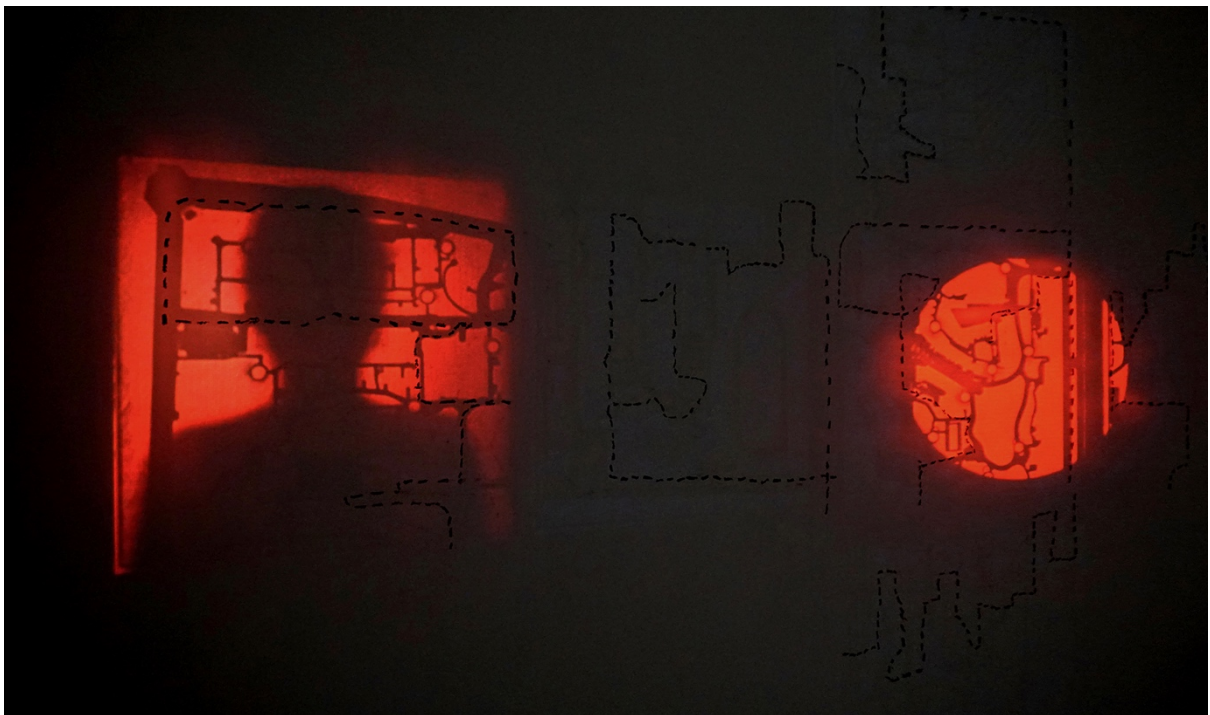
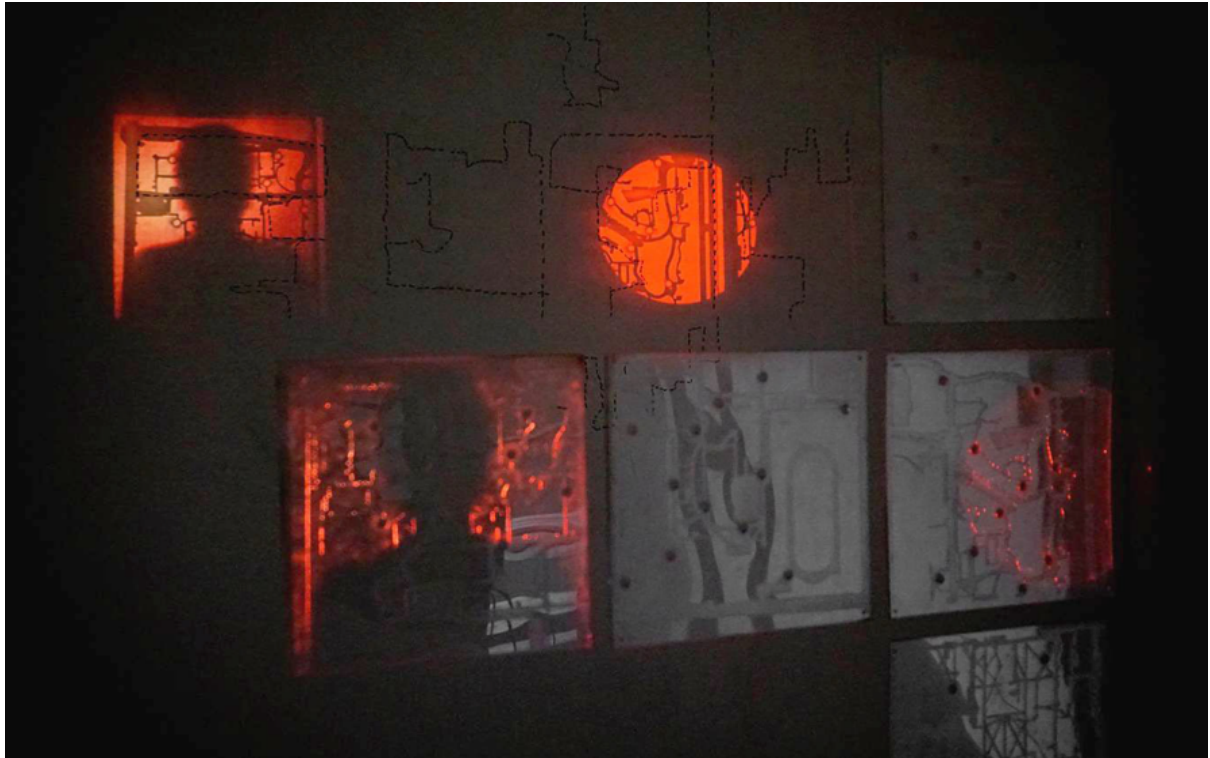


Figure 11. *Hide and Seek*, Grace Eunhae Cho, laser cutting on plexiglass, a projector, moving image via projection mapping, and oil pastel on the wall, 1.5m L x 1.3m H x 1.1m L, 2019.
<https://vimeo.com/381255265>

Surveillance Light Box (Fig.12) demonstrates the unimaginable scope of power and its ability to reach not only physical spaces but also digital ones. Images that are applied to the box are enlarged to the campus surveillance camera map until the image became a mere arrangement of pixels. The pierced holes on the box are corresponded locations of the surveillance. Interestingly, this process of exposing the underlying pixelation used to create this map looked like a QR code, one of the most common media tools used to connect the digital and physical worlds, including location tracking, identity inquiries, and e-commerce.

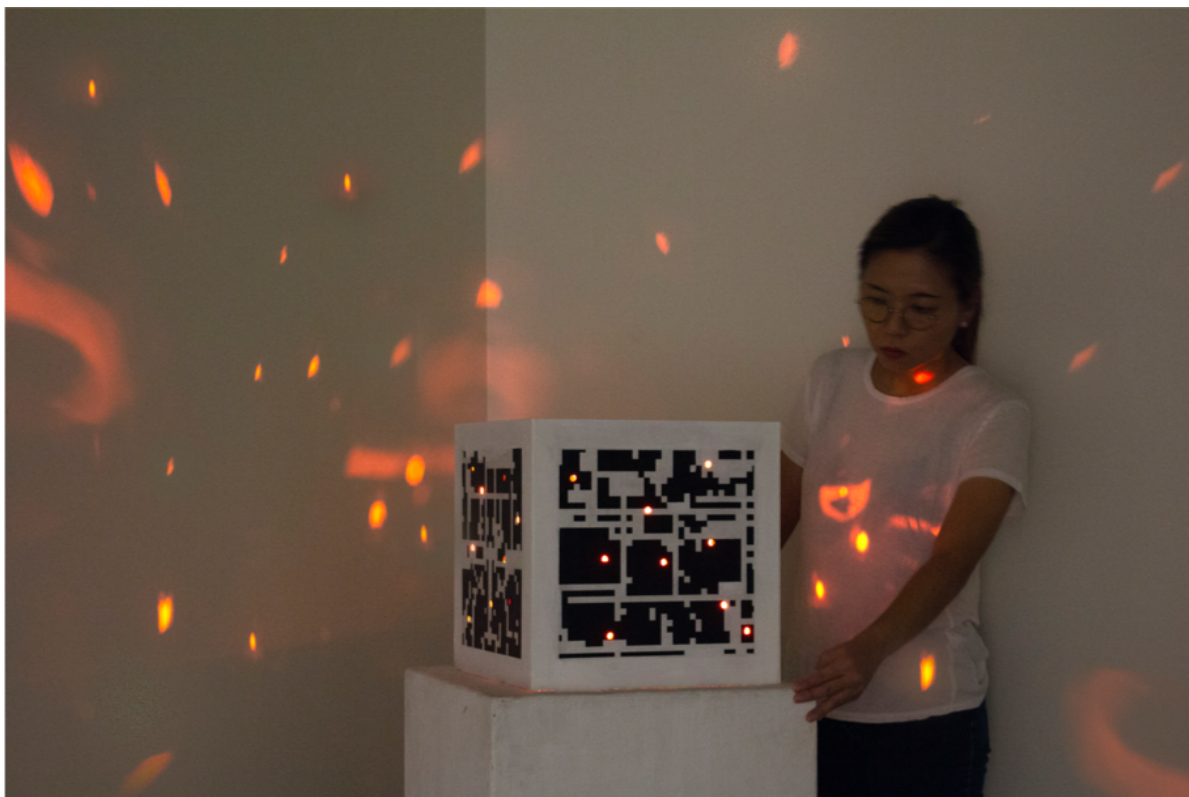


Figure 12. *Surveillance Light Box*, Grace Eunhae Cho, drill on the plywood, contact papers, and a siren, 38cm L x 38cm H x 38cm L, 2019. <https://vimeo.com/385037443>

Then I put a siren inside the box. When siren spins, the lights of the siren are spread through the pierced holes indicating location of surveillance cameras and projected on all sides of walls and spectator's bodies with many red dots, which act as a target referring to domination and violence. It is not easy for spectators to escape the light spreading from all

sides and projecting onto their bodies. These effects represent vulnerable people who cannot escape physical and data surveillance and cannot help but be passive before it.

Solidarity and Interaction as Resistance to Power

In *Finding A Way Through Maze, Hide and Seek* and *Surveillance Light Box*, a viewer is asked to be a passive participant who is policed by the power of surveillance. These individuals, however, can transform from passive bodies to active participants in more interactive installations, such as *The Great Dictator* (Fig.13) and the spatial installation *Synopticon*. As part of these works, participants come to resist power through interaction and solidarity with other people.

The Great Dictator is a spatial and interactive installation wherein participants trigger sounds. On the ceiling of the space, surveillance cameras detect motion and each sensor triggers a sound track. These tracks appropriate and adopt sequences from film *The Great Dictator* created in 1940 by Charlie Chaplin. This film satirizes Hitler's tyranny, with Chaplin turning Hitler, the vilest dictator in history, into a subject of laughter. By mimicking Hitler's gesture and rendering it in comedy, Chaplin caricatured the greatest mass murderer in modern history. The soundtrack melds sequences of speech focusing on the meaning of dictatorship and alters the pitch of these voices into musical tone. The following list records the soundtracks installed in the space:

- * Speech Melody for "They Will Adore You and Worship You like God"¹⁷
- * Speech Melody for "Leave Me I Want to Be Alone"¹⁸
- * Speech Melody for "To Remain Great We Must Sacrifice"¹⁹

¹⁷ <https://vimeo.com/371030637>

¹⁸ <https://vimeo.com/371030535>

¹⁹ <https://vimeo.com/371030168>

* Morse Code for Inaugural Speech of President Donald Trump 2017²⁰

* Morse Code for Inaugural Speech of President Donald Trump 2017 with Clap²¹

Speech melody is a technique that uses the pitch of a person's voice as a source to make music. The speech melodies of this work were made by adapting a couple of lines of the dictator's speeches in the film conveying the meaning of totalitarianism. Additionally, I used Morse code to add rhythm to the music. Morse code was a means by which some dictators conveyed confidential commands in particular German forces used Morse code with a telegraph during World War II. In this work, I transcribed and layered the inaugural speech of President Donald Trump from 2017 into Morse code. Embracing these various contents, the resulting sound tracks are mostly lively tunes featuring fast and exciting rhythms.

Contrary to systems of power in 1940, which glamorized power with obvious visual images, this installation explores how power in the Information Age wields its influence through advanced technology rendered invisible. Like the shrinking cameras that watch us daily, these modes of power are becoming increasingly unverifiable.

²⁰ <https://vimeo.com/371031941>

²¹ <https://vimeo.com/371031255>



Figure 13. *The Great Dictator*, Grace Eunhae Cho, Steinberg Gallery, Washington University in St.Louis, 12m L x 14.5m W x 4m H, webcams, motion sensors, stereo sound, 2019.
<https://vimeo.com/370564929>

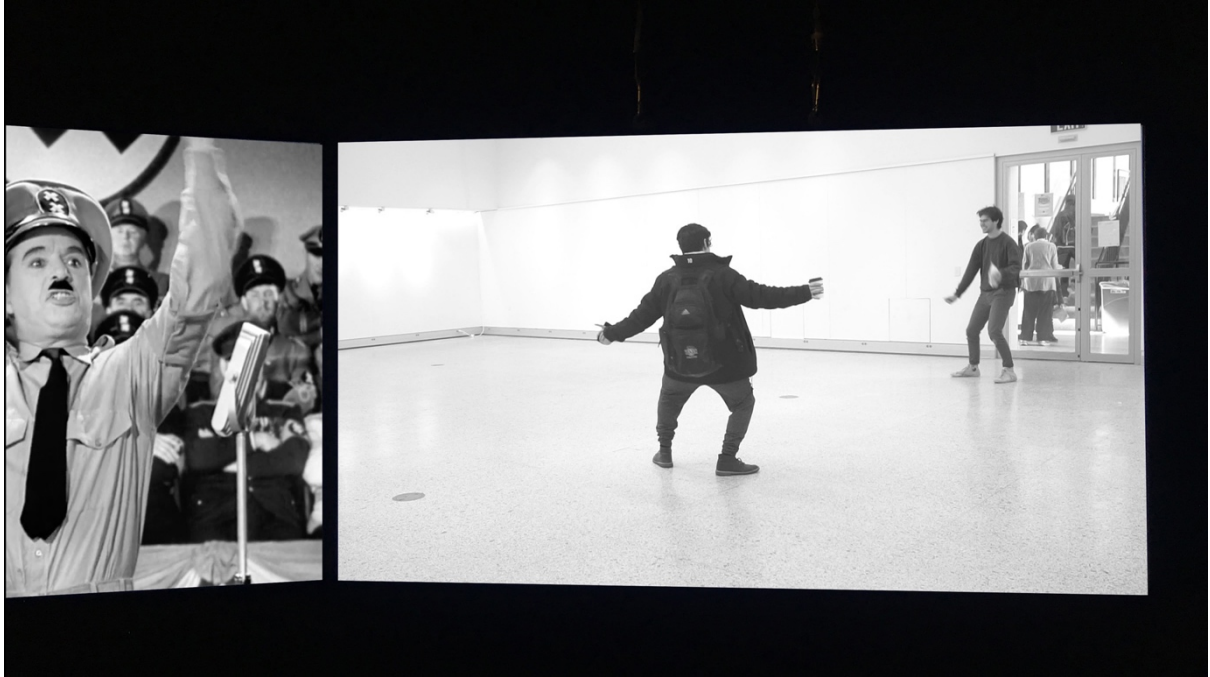


Figure 14. *The Great Dictator* - film installation, Grace Eunhae Cho, 2min 31sec, 15 1/2 x 19 1/4 x 1 1/2 " each, 2 channel videos, stereo audios in Des Lee Gallery, St. Louis, USA, 2019

The surveillance camera, however, is utilized differently in this work. By combining the cameras with motion detection sensors and converting participants' motion, which are captured by the cameras, into sounds, surveillance technology becomes a tool of play and solidarity, respectively allowing people to dance and encouraging interaction with others by making sounds together. Those caught in the camera are not passive objects of surveillance anymore, but active bodies. Like the gestures of Chaplin caricatured Hitler, the participants' gestures can be interpreted as satire on the power of surveillance.

The work shows that technology exploited by systems of power can produce different effects depending on how and by whom it is used. This work encourages participants to reflect on technology in the Information Age and urges them to consider how to use that technology against those who wield it. The installation *The Great Dictator* highlights solidarity and interaction among people as a method of resistance to the power of surveillance. In such surveillance-heavy societies, it is critical for citizens to band together, as doing so weakens central authority while simultaneously consolidating civil power.

In a centralized monitoring system, power monopolizes information and utilizes this information in order to successfully realize aspects of security, safety, and fairness entirely dependent on the power of surveillance. Centralized surveillance, however, is not the only way to realize these benefits. If citizens become masters of information themselves, sharing and interacting with each other based on factual information, then they can maintain their security and safety without relying too heavily on centralized power. A self-motivated and well-informed population is usually far more powerful and effective than a policed, ignorant

one.²² This solidarity and interaction does not force people to choose between privacy or safety, but rather allows them to have both. *The Great Dictator* shows that technology in an Information Age should be used in a way that supports this sense of community between individuals by empowering citizenship.

The nature of this specific form of solidarity and interaction shown by *The Great Dictator* and the possible results is further explored in the spatial installation, *Synopticon*. The installation *Synopticon*, although yet to be realized physically, is a labyrinth made from two-way mirrored film. Designed with an entrance, exit, and two dead ends, the labyrinth is formed around a central open space. Attached to frames that function like walls, two-way mirrored film is specially made and commonly deployed out of necessity for the purposes of security in the Information Age. The film functions much like a two-way mirror, with one side acting as a window and the other as a reflective surface or barrier. Namely, a person on one side of the film can see through to the other side, while a person standing on the opposite side sees only a reflection of him or herself. As a participant moves through the labyrinth, he or she will encounter both sides of this two-way mirrored film. Each participant can serve as either observer or observed, depending on which side of the mirrored film he or she stands. Those who are able to observe themselves in the mirrored surface may also be observed by others participating in the labyrinth. Outside of the installation, on the outer walls, QR codes are posted so that participants can scan them.

The installation *Synopticon* is a commentary on social media, which is the representative outcome of the Information Age. As mentioned, social media is a new

²² Harari, Yuval. "The World After Coronavirus", Financial Times, March 20, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/19d90308-6858-11ea-a3c9-1fe6fedcca75>, Accessed March 21, 2020

surveillance system, which entices people to voluntarily expose their private lives for the pleasure of getting attention and as a way to ward off the fear of alienation. In this system, all users are guards and mutually police each other.

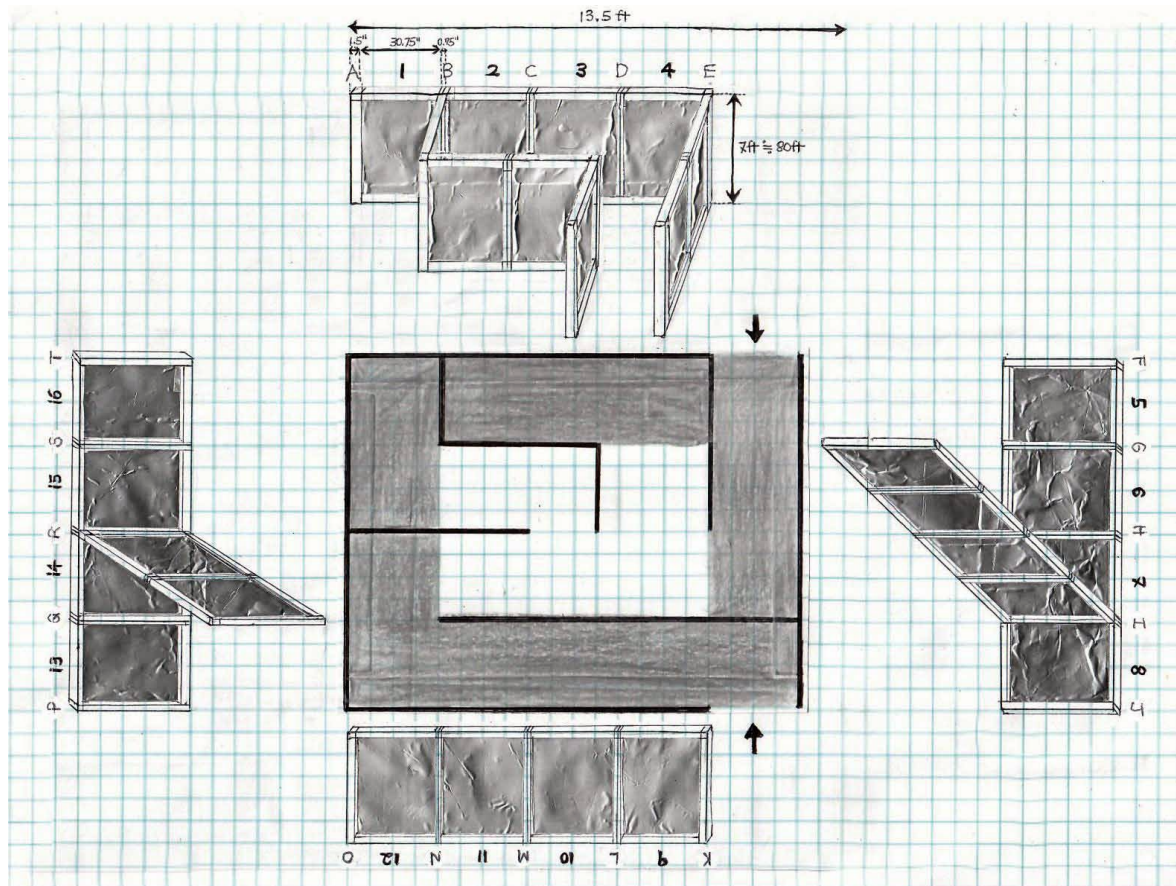


Figure 14. Sketch of an installation *Synopticon*, Grace Eunhae Cho, two-way mirrored film, pen, and color pencils, 2020

The installation *Synopticon* visually, physically, and spatially represents such social media as a system of surveillance through the physical form of a labyrinth. Designed to trap someone but, ironically, in such a way that they enjoy the process of their imprisonment, the labyrinth reflects the characteristics of social media as it recreates a surveillance system in which participants spontaneously attempt to derive pleasure from their narcissistic self-exposure as they attempt to gain attention from others. In addition, the design structure mimics that of the panopticon, with a central open space surrounded by a labyrinth, thus echoing the characteristics of social media as a surveillance system.

Walls of the labyrinth made of two-way mirrored film allow participants to mutually police each other by occupying the role of both viewer and viewed as in social media. Furthermore, when a participant sees him or herself in the reflection of film, he or she might know that other participants may be watching and thus adjust their behavior to meet the expectations of those viewers. Much like prisoners of the panopticon or users of social media, participants in the labyrinth begin to internalize the gaze of others. In some circumstances of *Synopticon*, participants might interact with each other by playing a game of hide and seek as they attempt to determine whether or not they can see each other through the two-way mirrored film or by simply exploring the labyrinth together.



Figure 15. walls before attached the two-way mirrored film of an installation *Synopticon*, Grace Eunhae Cho, each: 3 x 7 ft, overall: 13.5 x 12 ft, black painting on stud woods, 2020

Such interaction, however, is superficial in that paired participants just experience the installation together rather than share their opinions or thoughts. The same is sometimes true of social media in real life: interactions that express interest in each other's daily lives and receive responses are not a strategy of resistance against the powers of surveillance, but rather a mechanism by which to passively accept control as users begin to enjoy the surveillance system.

In fact, such superficial interaction is often purposely encouraged by systems of power. According to the American philosopher Noam Chomsky, power is like a huge company or government that fabricates factitious desires in order to dominate the public's mind and manipulate the public to blindly pursue those desires.²³ However, the more that people satisfy these desires, the more deeply alienated they feel. The reason that many people feel inferiority or alienation rather than affinity or a sense of solidarity by using social media proves that interactions in social media are based on the same factitious desire explored by Chomsky. The irony is that the more alienated people are, the more obsessed they become with those factitious desires, as if gaining the object of desire will allow alienation to cease. This theory is similar to that of a labyrinth: the more one enjoys exploring a maze, the more deeply one enters it; and the more deeply one enters, the harder it becomes to escape. The outcome of this desire mostly leads to unnecessary consumption or obedience to the system, ultimately benefitting power rather than the consumer. In other words, this act of mutual surveillance among social media users can also become a tool that empowers rather than critiques a centralized surveillance system. It is ironic that interaction, which some have proposed as a method for resisting power, can become a mechanism of power, providing just one example of just how sophisticated the strategies, which are utilized by state or corporate power in this era. In order for interaction and solidarity to become a tool against the power of surveillance, they must go beyond the level of factitious desire.

²³ Chomsky, Noam. *Deux heures de lucidité: Entretiens avec Denis Robert et Weronika Zarachowicz*, Les Arènes: Paris, 2001

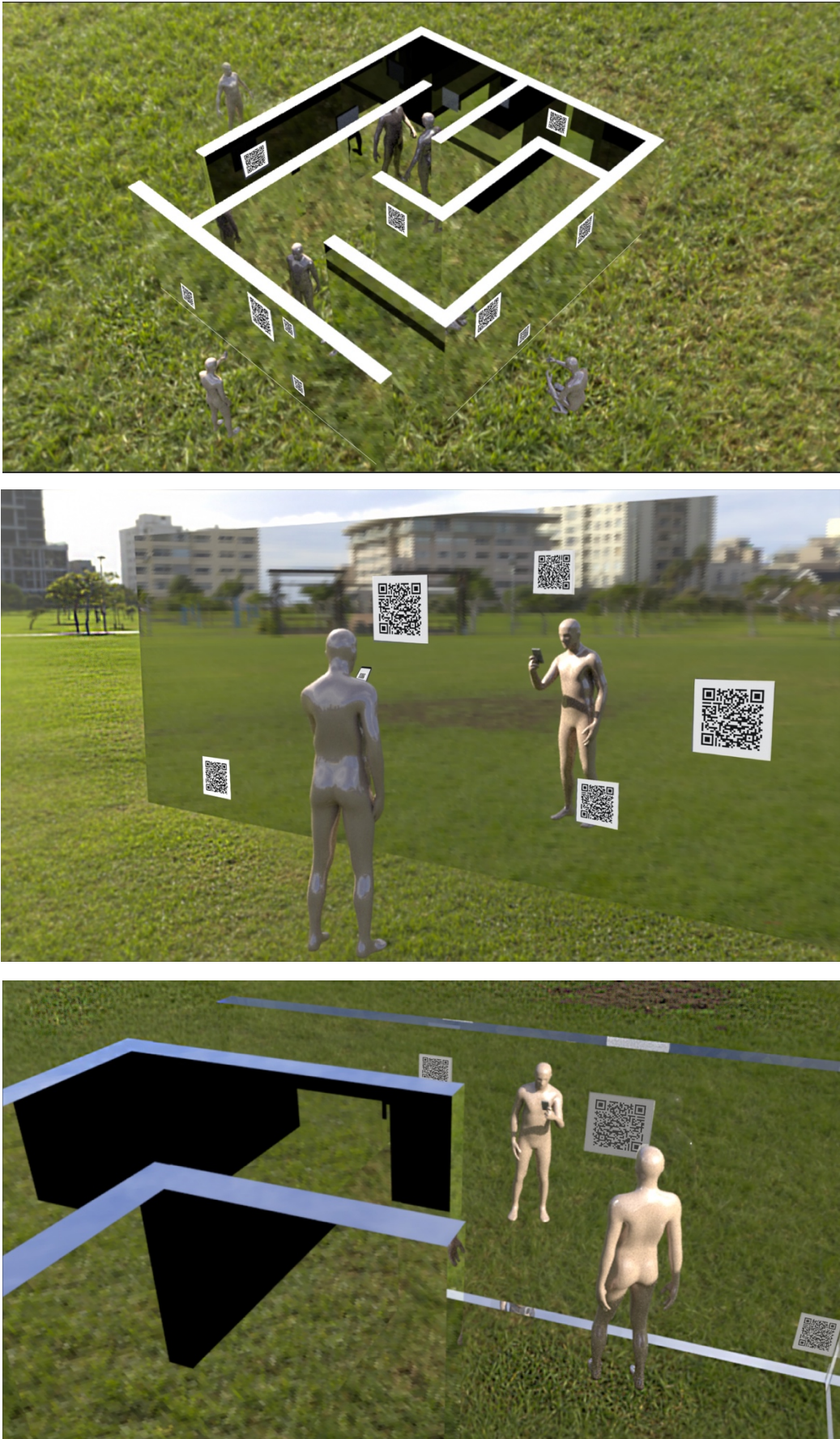


Figure 16. 3D modeling of installation *Synopticon*, Grace Eunhae Cho, 3D maya, 2020

How we can overcome such superficial interaction in order to engage in productive interaction as a resistance to power? To return to the installation *Synopticon*, sixteen QR codes on the exterior walls of the labyrinth are my answer to this question. The following list records the contents of some QR codes installed in the space:

1. Collateral Murder

Collateral murder is a classified US military video released in 2010 by WikiLeaks, which is an international, non-profit organization that publishes secret information, including news leaks, from anonymous sources. WikiLeaks exposed how US military had indiscriminately slain over a dozen people in the Iraqi suburb of New Baghdad.

2. Document of the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court requiring Verizon Communications to hand over telephone data to the FBI

Edward Snowden copied and leaked highly classified information from the National Security Agency (NSA) in 2013 when he was a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) employee and subcontractor. This information demonstrates how the U.S. Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court required Verizon Communications to hand over the telephone data of its millions of users to the FBI. As a result of this and other leaks, Snowden was forced to flee the United States and has lived in exile ever since.

3. Mobile phone video of Sandra Bland

This video footage was taken by Sandra Bland on her cell phone during her arrest by a white Texas state trooper in 2015 during a traffic stop. Three days later, the 28-year-old Sandra, who was black, was found dead in her jail cell. The video footage shows the state trooper threatening to tase her as he pulls her from the car.

4. Photo of demonstrators holding a “#BlackLivesMatter” banner at a protest against American police brutality

As a reaction to Sandra Bland's treatment as well as those of other Black Americans by police, the Black Lives Matter movement criticized the abusive government authority and racism often inflicted on members of the black community in the United States. These events respectively led to protests against war crimes, the invasion of privacy, racism, and police brutality.

The described contents of these QR links show the possibility that citizens also are able to police state and economic powers just as those powers surveil people. Social media served as the primary platform where these and other content were shared by the public with the public, leading to shows of resistance to power through solidarity. The body of links demonstrate how social media can function not only as a panopticon, a centralized form of surveillance in which people are surveilled by power, but also as a synopticon, a flipped system in which citizens take the initiative of policing the actions of power.

The installation *Synopticon* attracts participants into the labyrinth by promising the pleasure of exploring the space as bait, but ultimately reveals the issue of surveillance systems in the Information Age and allows participants to think about ways they might subvert those systems of power. The QR codes and their linked contents transform the labyrinth from a space of play into a place of contemplation. When participants activate the QR codes through their mobile phones, they are encouraged to recognize how their phones could be used as a tool for shifting surveillance from themselves to those in power. The behavior of participants in the labyrinth thus transforms, no longer reading as a superficial

interaction but as a journey from entrance to exit that can be interpreted as an escape from the panopticonic centralized surveillance system.

Like in *The Great Dictator*, the installation *Synopticon* also shows that different results and interpretations can be produced depending on how and by whom a particular tool of power is utilized. After all, whether society would be a panopticon or synopticon is dependent on the awareness and choice of citizens: us. The installation *Synopticon* thus reflects the desire for a synopticonic society, in which power is owned by citizens, achieved through productive interaction and solidarity through social media.

CONCLUSION

Towards a Society of Civil Power

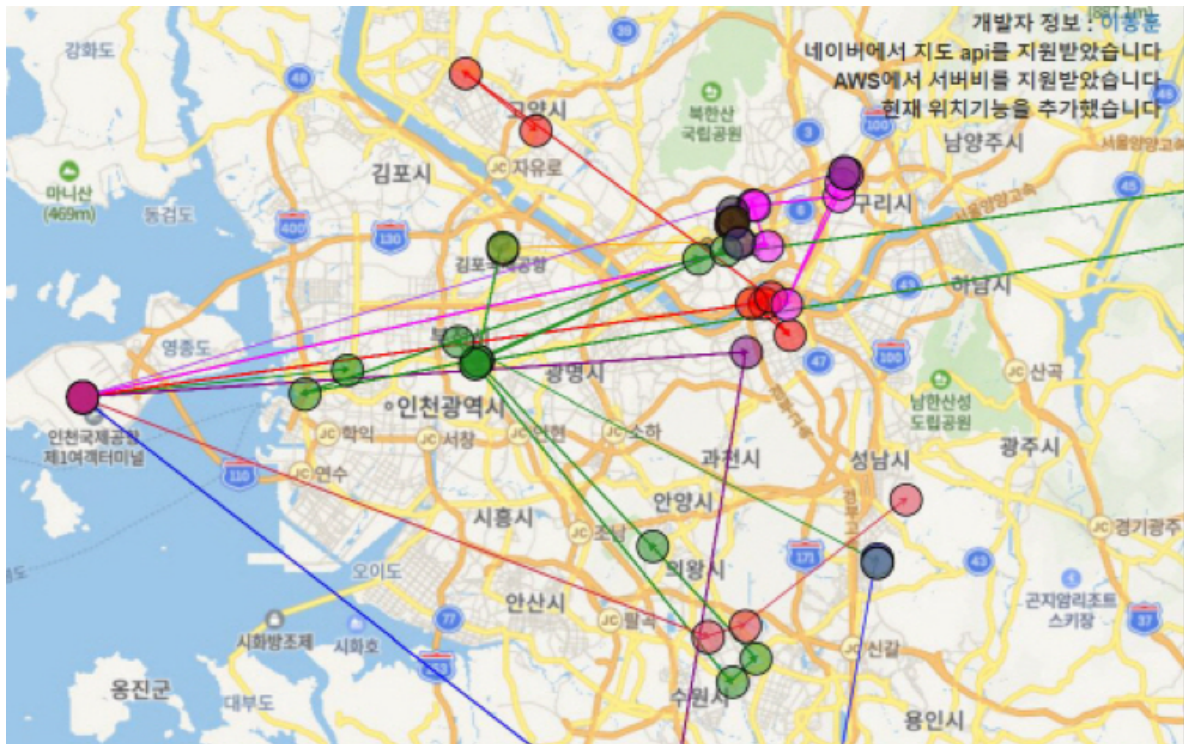


Figure 17. Screen shot of Covid19 Map application of South Korea in 2020 that shows tracks of confirmed cases.

The respiratory syndrome Covid19, which broke out in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and spread around the world, has paralyzed world's politics, society, economics and, even daily lives. Because of the characteristics of the virus, which spreads between people during close contact via small droplets produced by coughing or talking, all public and commercial places have been closed and many governments have imposed social distancing measures and ask people to be in lockdown. The pandemic is ongoing as I write this thesis.

Figure 17 is one of image source for a QR code of an installation *Synopticon* showing a map that tracks the number of confirmed cases of covid19 in South Korea in 2020, which has emerged as an exemplar of how to effectively respond to and contain Covid19. In 2018 when the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) pandemic happened, the government

of South Korea passed a bill that allowed the government to use data containing personal information without user consent in order to manage infectious patients and prevent infectious diseases.

Based on this legislation, the Korean government has been able to act quickly on this outbreak of Covid19. Specifically, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (KCDC) identified an infector's movements and tracked contacts by securing his or her personal information, such as location information by tracking mobile phones, credit card usage, and surveillance cameras. Furthermore, the KCDC could release an infector's health information, including the body temperature and other health conditions, to the public so that citizens could avoid areas potentially infected by the virus.

What is Figure 17 and its accompanying description saying? Israelite historian Yuval Harari predicts that the Covid19 pandemic will be a watershed moment in the war that surveillance has been waging in recent years over our privacy. It means that the powers that have been policing people's whereabouts, preferences, and interests can now require and acquire even a person's biometric information. It is a transition from "over the skin" to "under the skin" surveillance.²⁴

Of course, the biometric data en masse that government and companies harvest will be helpful to suppress various public health crises related to health issues. However, the problem is that biometric surveillance may become more elaborate and systematic in form as time goes on, transforming into something incomparable to the current surveillance by electronic information. Specifically, state authorities may soon be able to predict and manipulate our

²⁴ Harari, Yuval. "The World After Coronavirus", Financial Times, March 20, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/19d90308-6858-11ea-a3c9-1fe6fedcca75>, Accessed March 21, 2020

feelings and accrue monetary benefits by knowing what we want. They can know us better than we know ourselves. For example, state power can detect whether a subject tells the truth or lies simply by tracking a heart rate. Also, state power can use a person's hormonal response to better understand their thoughts, feelings, and reaction to certain things. These biometric data points about a person's past can be influential in deciding important issues related to a person's present and future. The more data power entities have, the bigger their monopoly. When this data is misused, issues of discrimination, benefits and losses would be even more severe than increasing and widening the inequities that already exist. This will cause a crisis that shakes the principles of democratic societies in which people exercise the authority of government.

However, if we have to choose between privacy and safety in the face of a life-threatening pandemic, most people would choose the latter. In addition, if one's choice affects not only oneself but also the society he or she belongs to, he or she cannot help but to choose safety rather than privacy. The current situation of a global pandemic can lend validity and support for the transition from "over the skin" to "under the skin" surveillance. Even if and when this emergency is over, the fear about the possibility of mutation and a secondary spread of the virus will make people continue to sacrifice their privacy in favor of their safety. Should we give up the rights to freedom like this?

The essential problem here is not that people choose between privacy and safety but rather the posing of a false question by forcing people to choose between privacy and safety. We can lead a safe and private life and we should be able to decide that on our own. This is because safety and privacy are basic human rights for all citizens of Democratic society. How we can enjoy both?

Yuval Harari also emphasizes solidarity and interaction as a method for securing

privacy and safety simultaneously, as my work does. But he argues that this means not just interaction among citizens but also interaction between public power, the media and citizens, and global solidarity without borders.

In fact, the reason that Korea was able to become an exemplary model for responding to Covid19 was that ordinary citizens were able to engage with and react to the information revealed by the government. Rather than allow the government to monopolize the personal information of infectors, citizens checked if the information that the government shared was true and, if so, tried to help fellow citizens listen to and find information about the track history of infected persons. Especially, the map application that helped individuals tracks the path of infected people or seek out stores selling masks created by college students or sharing information about the rules of prevention through social media were instrumental steps to interrupt the virus's spread. Citizens voluntarily supported efforts to deter the outbreak of the pandemic. Such civil partnerships showed that the citizen is the owner and rightful holder of information within a structured a system where certain large corporations or government cannot make unfair profits through the information. Though the outbreak of Covid19 is still ongoing and there are constant and various developments regarding its spread and management, these movements of solidarity and interaction are also continuing and bringing about positive results in the effort to suppress the virus. If the government had dealt with the outbreak by itself, such incredible results would have never been achieved.

This example of South Korea urges people to consider what we need in order to adapt to an upcoming society of biometric surveillance. If there is a question that forces us to choose between two things, it is not safety or privacy but solidarity or obedience. If we do not make the right choice, we might find ourselves signing away our most precious freedoms,

convinced that it is the only way to safeguard our health.²⁵ This is especially crucial for artists who work on the premise of freedom of expression, which allows artists to freely convey messages of criticism to society and protect them from political pressure. In order to protect freedom of expression, artists will also have to be in solidarity. For example, they can not only support each other but also collaborate with various experts in different fields such as science, engineering, and sociology so that artists can expand the social influence of their art works.

Thus, the body of my work, which reveals the powers of surveillance and argues for the productive nature of solidarity and interaction as a means of resistance, speaks volumes about this upcoming new system of surveillance. If the current series of work provokes participants to take specific actions and such actions accumulate for long enough, it ultimately will enable us to move forward in a society of civil power managed and operated by citizens. It is because of these initiatives, which are more important now than they have ever been before, that I will strive to complete the installation *Synopticon*, which is temporarily stopped due to the outbreak of Covid19.

²⁵ Harari, Yuval. "The World After Coronavirus", Financial Times, March 20, 2020, <https://www.ft.com/content/19d90308-6858-11ea-a3c9-1fe6fedcca75>, Accessed March 21, 2020

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