

Speculatorum Oculi

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Speculatorum Oculi, © 2014 Erik Brunvand.

Description

Speculatorum Oculi (The Eyes of Spies) comments on current surveillance activities of governments and corporations through an installation that includes an architectural model surveilled with looming video cameras providing live feeds to a set of video monitors. These monitors show views of the model and of other video cameras placed around the installed site.

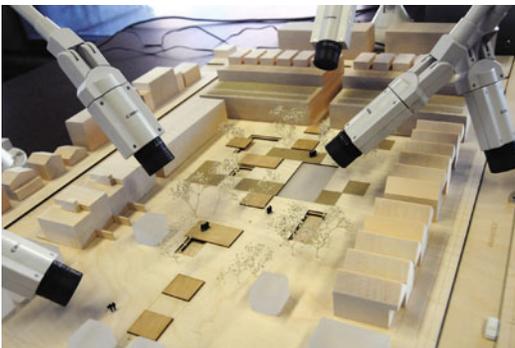
Artist Statement

Quis custodiet ipsos custodes? Attributed to the Roman poet Juvenal in the 2nd century, this question is as relevant today as ever. Who guards the guards themselves? Who watches the watchmen?

In this installation, a model of an urban environment is intruded upon with a set of menacing, looming cameras. The resulting surveillance is shown on a set of high-resolution CRT security monitors. Other monitors show feeds from other cameras around the installation. Is constant covert surveillance our new reality, or is it a reflection of some abstracted meta-reality playing out on secret security monitors? How is this reflection and translation of our daily lives used



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and interpreted by the watchers of this mundane drama? To what end are the minutiae of our daily lives being archived?

Speculatorum Oculi are the eyes of spies, the ways of seeing of the watchmen, the guards, as spectators. These impersonal, omnipresent eyes translate our daily existence into data. These data are archived and catalogued, tucked away into vast arrays of bits in data warehouses. In this piece the viewer is presented with an omniscient view of this data collection, but also becomes part of the unfolding drama on the security monitors. This can lead to questions and contemplation of the role of surveillance, data collection, and privacy in a free society.