



2018.04.18

## The Experience

How does it feel to be watched? That's the raw feeling we want you to experience. You step into our world and it's just mirrors... Little warm lights over top each one of them, giving you an eerie feeling as soft sounds beckon you closer. You walk around this mostly dark room staring at reflections and they are all that you see... It makes you feel very isolated as you notice there's a blinking light that intrigues you to investigate it, so you start walking towards it. You eventually get to the back and you notice yourself on several large CRT monitors, your face all mangled and distorted. You realize someone has been recording you, makes you wonder who is watching? And what do they want to do to you...

## The Gallery

Person is a Data Structure is an interactive installation that captures the eeriness of surveillance. The installation takes place in a dimly lit room where spotlights cast only on the main objects of the piece - the mirrors with small cameras attached to them, and the hallway of CRT TVs. Faint, unsettling glitch noises are heard all around the room to further invoke the unsettling feeling as one enters the room.



The first interactive component is triggered by the mirrors at the front of the TV hallway. The front mirrors invite its audience to stand in front of the camera and look at themselves for a few seconds. Parametric speakers will output faint whispers as an indicator that the person in front of the mirror is successfully being captured by the face recognition software to be used later once the person reaches the end of the hallway.



The hallway of TVs is arranged like a funnel. TVs are placed far apart from the left side and the right side close to the entrance but then narrows down into a straight hallway leading to a single mirror at the end of the hallway. As the TVs await output, their screens will display close-up images of people's eyes, implying the feeling of being watched. However, once the user reaches the end of the hallway, the second part of the interactive component begins. The TV screens display a combination of live and pre-recorded footage; footage of past visitors are digitally transformed and augmented along with the current visitor using the installation. The screen displays different pre-recorded footage to be augmented based on similarities between the face of one person from another.



## The Context

Using previous visitors and the current visitor to augment screen effects makes all individuals play an active role in the piece even in their absence. This interactive experience emulates the paranoia-inducing aspect of surveillance in the real world. One can never fully know when they are being watched nor who will use their information and in what way those who have access to them will use it. Some visitors will leave the piece without thinking about the information of them gathered by the systems while some will do.



The system for grouping individuals based on their similar qualities such as facial expression, gender, and the accessory one has on their face is left entirely by the face recognition API's capabilities. It presents a notion that automated surveillance sees a person as an accumulation of several matching parameters and is devoid of the social and cultural contexts used by people to distinguish others.

## **The Software**

The pieces software are what drives the interactive aspect of the installation. The parametric sensors used to output the whispers and the ultrasonic sensors used to detect proximity have their behaviours programmed via Arduino. Microsoft Azure's Face API is the facial recognition software used to detect certain properties on a visitor and have their data stored in a local server. Finally, Max/MSP is used to display eyes on the TV screens as a default state and outputs several video effects once the visitor reaches the end of the hallway of TVs.

## **Video**

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WfExGJ7A4ssCBvcXjHuV8GOjgs9dI0V6>

## **Website**

More details on : <https://personisadatastructure.com/abstract>

# Inspiration

Below are the references that inspired the aesthetics and concepts behind the project.

*test pattern [times square], Ryoji Ikeda*



*Perceptual Sonic Landscape / Midnight Blink, Richard Garet*



*A Trap for Your Intention, Gabor Lazar*



*Hydra, Tasman Richardson*



*TV Garden, Nam June Paik*



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