Artist and Curator: An Exploration of the Impact of Digital Media in Museums
Through Media Art, Surveillance, and Selfies

by

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Abstract

*Artist and Curator: An Exploration of the Impact of Digital Media in Museums Through Media Art, Surveillance, and Selfies* is the accompanying exhibition catalogue to the *Movement Series* installation presented by me, Jenna Poczik at the Smith Warehouse at Duke University in late April and early May of 2017. In this exhibition, I act as both artist and curator, creating the new media works presented while also stepping away and applying a theoretical/critical curatorial response throughout this text. I begin with an introduction and artist statement, outlining my goals for the experiment, exploring themes that are present in the art world today, and intertwining critical theories in visual studies. Working in a non-linear manner, I look at media in museums, the connections between art and surveillance, and selfies in relation to self-portraiture. In particular, this work focuses on a larger notion of the self. Through this, I aim to explore ways in which the presence of digital media in the art world impacts various aspects of art including what types of work are presented and how visitors consume it. In addition to the videos projected on multiple walls, the gallery space will contain mirrors and signage that prompts visitors to take and share a selfie. This call to action is the final piece of the project, promoting direct engagement and creating a database of the images that are collected throughout.
I. Introduction: Artist and Curator

After spending significant time in museums, as a visitor and most recently as an intern over the past three years at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University and the Whitney Museum of American art last summer, I have become increasingly interested in museum theory and practice. In particular, I am fascinated in looking at how and why museums function the way they do. Beyond this, I have considered how visual studies and museum studies can become intertwined, especially focusing on how curators choose to present art. Exhibition making is about telling stories. In many exhibitions, there is one clear narrative that the curator wants to explore. She or he guides visitors along, revealing to the viewer where to look next.

With this exhibition and catalogue I aim to give viewers some agency. I want people to experience a story but find their own narrative. Potentially, an exhibition does not just tell one narrative, but instead there are many for the viewer to discover based on their own personal experience with the works and the background that they bring. My goal in this exhibition is to cultivate a conversational culture through chosen works. A conversational culture can be defined as a space for exchanging diverse ideas through communications with other people.

Much of what I have created is an experiment in which I have decided to take on the role of artist and curator, something that I argue is highly intertwined as the two have many roles overlapping – they both involve creating, expressing, and putting together associations to articulate a narrative. To do this, I created an installation, my “museum,” that is an abstract self-portrait composed of a collection of videos called Movement Series. Each of the five collections contains nine short repeating videos, about
Jenna Poczik, Still from #1 from the Movement Series, 2017.
five to ten seconds each, placed in a 3 by 3 grid. Before narrowing my choice down to these final video pieces, however, there were additional photographic collections featuring cropped body parts, abstracted to the point where they exhibited landscape-like qualities, as well as silkscreen prints based on these photographs. My process was to begin with more works and then narrow down my selection, just like a professional curator does when dealing with the art of chosen artists. With this in mind, I carefully focused the collections of videos that I created with an emphasis on the landscape-like quality of the body as well as movement. There is a long history to this body/landscape and body/movement related approaches including the works of Carl Warner,1 Miguel Ribeiro,2 Hannah Wilke3, and Arno Rafael Minkkinen.4 Most recently, the self-portrait videos have incorporated ideas about surveillance that were inspired by the form and function of the other videos. These themes of the digital, surveillance, and self-representation that came up in exploring the works of other artists are the ones that will be included in this catalogue.

I am passionate about the intersection of art and technology because technology has transformed the way that art is defined and consumed as new and wider audiences can be reached. This compelled me to focus on new media art, specifically exploring experimental video as my medium of choice. In addition to the actual exhibition that took place at the Smith Warehouse at Duke University during May of 2017, this exhibition takes the life of a portable museum, using a website as the platform that allows my visitors to see and interact with the works in their own way past the duration of the show.

This provides the an opportunity for the viewer or participant to engage with work outside of the gallery and anywhere else in the world, regardless of location. I have always been interested in audience interaction with artwork, so this digital version of my work (rather than just the gallery experience) is created because I want to give my audience the opportunity to interact with my videos and photographs that are included in my collections. I look forward to seeing the ways the physical and digital manifestations of my museum will take on different lives.
Shin Knee Valley (above) and Headless Horizon (below) from Carl Warner’s series Bodyscapes, 2013


Arno Rafael Minkkine, Maroon Bells Sunrise, Aspen, Colorado, 2012.

Stills from Hannah Wilke’s Gestures, 1974.
II. Guiding Questions

Throughout my exploration, I have focused in on a series of questions:

What defines a museum? What does it take to create an exhibition? How does it work when artists are the ones organizing their exhibitions? What are some historical examples of this? What are the questions I can ask about portraiture, one of the oldest art genres that exists? Where can I fit in? How is self-portraiture working in the digital age when people are constantly presenting themselves through selfies and on social media? What theories of visual studies do my artworks evoke? How can surveillance fit into themes of visual arts, especially new media art? How does the digital sphere impact the museum space and visitor experience? These are the guiding questions that have informed my practice and research.

Behind my experiment is the evolution of a new kind of relationship between artist and curator by attempting to disrupt this historic separation by acting as both. Professional curators with backgrounds in art history and expertise on a topic gained from their PhD research still wield the strongest influence on how institutions present art, but artists are increasingly taking on a larger role within museums and galleries. The art world is constantly looking for the next big thing. When asked about the new demand for artists as curators, Ryan Gander, a British artist, believes “I’m not sure it’s the artists’ choice…there is such an over-saturation of biennials and exhibitions now, organizers and institutions are looking for new and exciting twists.”

Artists can bring something to contemporary art that a professional curator cannot. The unique perspective of people who make art themselves generates a new story to tell contributing to the broad narrative

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of art history. I hope to be part of this story as I explore my own art practice and experiment with the role of curating.

Artist Michael Oatman has been teaching and making art for over 30 years, but he is also a curator. He has held positions at Phillips Academy, Harvard, The University of Vermont, and SUNY Albany, and has now been at the School of Architecture at Rensselaer since 1999. When asked about some of the best examples of artist curators of today, he listed the following individuals: Mark Dion, J. Morgan Puett, Miranda July, Joe Ahmrein, Harrell Fletcher, Fred Wilson, Sina Najafi, Tom Phillips, Jeremy Deller, Michelle Grabner, Nina Katchadourian, Michael Craig-Martin, Jessica Stockholder, Robert Gober, and Ricky Jay. Each of these artist curators adds something new to the narrative as I hope to do.

As I attempt to fit myself into the world of artistry and curating, I have to explore what “curating” is today and what is means to be a “curator.” To do this, I am looking at the writing of Jens Hoffmann to create context. Hoffmann is a writer and exhibition maker based in New York. He is currently Director of Special Exhibitions and Public Programs at the Jewish Museum. He is the author of seminal text Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating. He draws on the expertise of other curators, presenting essays from ten curators that comprise each of the ten chapters. In each of these essays, the author asks and attempts to answer a question that he or she believes is essential to the curatorial field. This book aims to differ from previous attempts to define curating, straying away from an overview of the curatorial field, the historical trajectory, case

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studies, or the view of just one curator. Hoffmann wants to answer questions by returning to the basics of the field. He suggests that this type of introspective disciplinary critique is not just relevant to curators, but rather functions as a beneficial exercise for all professionals. Hoffman urges his writers and readers to reconsider and reconstruct, but acknowledges, “curating today can mean everything—or utterly nothing—depending on whom you ask.”

Some of the questions posed in the chapters are based on defining terms that outline the curatorial field: “What is a curator?” “What is art?” and “What is an exhibition?” Other questions deal with practice. “What about collecting?” “Why mediate art?” “What is the process?” The remaining questions outline the future of the curatorial field and ask about what comes next: “What to do with the contemporary?” “What about social responsibility?” “For whom do we curate?” and “How about pleasure?” These questions will guide me in my introspective look at my work as I attempt to remove myself as artist from the curatorial process in some ways while remaining present in others. The discipline of curating continues to evolve in uncertain ways, but it is certain that the expansion of curatorial degree programs and courses will in part create the future of the profession, ensuring the field’s continuation and growth as it also expands though artistic involvement.

There are other curatorial questions to consider concerning types of art and media for artist curators. Is there such a thing as new forms of art? Can art be collaborative? Can art be team-based? Can art be made without an artist? How does technology open new

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Jens Hoffmann. Ten Fundamental Questions of Curating. Table of Contents.
ways of thinking about making art? How does technology open new ways of thinking about presenting art?

The works presented in my exhibition are intended to be immersive. Immersive art is not a new concept, but is remarkably present throughout contemporary art exhibitions. Reflecting on the last year in art, Deborah Vankin of the Los Angeles Times wrote, “if there was an arts buzzword for 2016, it was immersive.”10 From immersive theater to immersive installations, this word is everywhere in the art world. Notable examples of this type of work include the following: Random International's Rain Room (2012)11, an immersive environment of perpetually falling water that pauses wherever a human body is detected. The installation offers visitors an opportunity to experience what is seemingly impossible: the ability to control rain; Pipilotti Rist: Pixel Forest at the New Museum;12 Dreamlands: Immersive Cinema and Art, 1905–2016 at the Whitney Museum of American Art13; and Yayoi Kusama’s current retrospective titled Infinity Mirrors at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.14 Other notable works, those that are immersive in terms of presenting an interactive viewing setting are those of Glorianna Davenport and Sharon Daniel. Davenport works are an interactive documentary dealing with media science, exploring fundamental issues related to the collaborative co-construction of digital media experiences, where the task of narration is split among collaborators.15 Daniel, on the other hand, curates interviews and presents

Installation view of *Rain Room* at (Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2015).


them in a digital museum setting.\textsuperscript{16} These types of works, because they are presented in a
digital, seemingly reproducible form, are not initially pictured when thinking of other
ephemeral, immersive exhibitions. However, they are equally successful in engaging the
participant.

To paraphrase Deborah Vankin, immersive art could best be described as a site
specific, non-traditional work and/or experimental art and/or entertainment, breaking the
fourth wall or enveloping the viewer. It means the work embodies a surrounding set of
forces; it’s all around you but it also goes through you. It’s not just a 360-degree set. It
makes you part of it.\textsuperscript{17} With this in mind, I set out to create an immersive experience that
did not just surround the viewer but instead got the viewer involved as an active
participant, or an interactant. In the gallery space, signage prompts visitors to take selfies
with the work, a call to action and the final component of the project. This promotes
direct engagement and creates a concluding database of the images that are collected
throughout. The video installation allows me to put forth an immersive experience that
allows for interaction, engagement, and communication. While people seek authentic
experiences that move away from screens, we are so saturated by screens that I want to
create an environment that directly confronts the screen in multiple ways through the
video, mirrors, and selfie signage. Perhaps this is a way to re-see this screen world we
live in and explore a defamiliarization process discussed by Viktor Shklovsky in his essay
“Art as Technique” in which he writes, “The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of
things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make
objects 'unfamiliar', to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of

perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.\textsuperscript{18}

As this experiment grows and evolves, I look forward to the ways it can continue to remain relevant, challenging what is possible at museums and other institutions where art is housed and presented to the public. Outside of this project, I want to continue to work in digital media at museums so I can help focus the trajectory of this field, ensuring that media is used in meaningful ways that enhance, but do not hinder the way we experience art. Ultimately, what I aim to do here is conduct an experiment where I myself create an installation where I am both the artist as well as curator. Through this, I am able to explore themes that are present in the art world today as well as intertwine key theories in museum and curatorial studies, eventually discovering how the presence of digital media in museums impacts all aspects of the museum from education to visitor experience to surveillance to what types of work are presented and how visitors consume it.

III. Digital Media at Museums

Museums are struggling today to see where digital media fits. Things that years ago may have seemed impossible are happening in museums today: digitizing complete collections, wayfinding in the galleries, specialized apps, virtual reality, augmented reality, and assistive technologies for those with disabilities. As exciting as these technologies are, their integration in museums is complicated. There are so many undeniable benefits as art is made more and more accessible, but the uninterrupted gallery experience is special, and that sacred experience could disappear. Because of this, I believe that these technologies are best used in specialized departments of museums rather than the museum as a whole. Museum education has the most to gain from these technological developments, and teen programs specifically have the audience that is most prepared to and excited about implementing these technologies.

In the book *Best of Both Worlds Museums, Libraries, and Archives in a Digital Age*, G. Wayne Clough, former Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, discusses what digitization will do for the future of museums.\(^{19}\) He asserts that in institutions today, if you want to be a leader in the museum world, you will have to also be a leader in the digital world. He emphasizes how technology must be used “appropriately” and “well.” I question how these can be measured and want to explore this in the context of education and media.

The Smithsonian’s Digital Access Agenda draws on Clough’s book and outlines the goals of Smithsonian institutions, highlighting priorities and a digitization plan. The four priorities are the following: 1. Use technology to enhance the visitor experience; 2.

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Digitize the collections; 3. Make Smithsonian digital content easy for the public to find and use; and 4. Spark engagement and participation among learners everywhere.\(^2\) As the world's largest museum and research complex, with 19 museums, 9 research centers, and affiliates around the world, what the Smithsonian does matters. An increasingly digital Smithsonian will allow the institution to share our knowledge with billions, bridging the opportunity gaps and promoting cultural enrichment through learning. As the Smithsonian does this, others will follow. Further, perhaps the curator of the future will follow and devise new forms of computer programs that might enable intelligent searches that bring multiple relevant works into juxtaposition by a user, curating a digital experience.

Building on the work of the Smithsonian, social media is the perfect vehicle for furthering engagement at museums. It is an approachable first step for entry into the world that may feel intimidating to some. At the dedication of the Whitney Museum of American Art’s new building on April 30, 2015, Michelle Obama stated, “there are so many kids in this country who look at places like museums and concert halls and other cultural centers and they think to themselves, well, that’s not a place for me, for someone who looks like me, for someone who comes from my neighborhood.”\(^2\) Following this statement, she focused much of her speech on the importance of programing that aims to break down those barriers, especially educational programs for adolescents. Teen engagement in museums fosters lifelong connections to arts and culture and as a result creates a more diverse audience for future museums. Social media can act as a gateway


for increasing teen interest in museums, while social media and other technologies can function as forces that help make museums accessible to everyone.

Today, younger audiences are digital natives, having grown up immersed by technology in all aspects of their lives. As museums and the contemporary art world decipher where technology fits in and where it distracts, there are many places to look at for cues of where to turn next. The first place to look is social media.

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III. Social Media and Art Startups

The power of social networking is vast; the number of worldwide users is expected to reach some 2.95 billion by 2020, around a third of Earth’s entire population. As of 2016, 78 percent of the United States population at least one social networking profile. Looking at specific age groups, teens are truly the experts on social media. In the Pew Research Center’s Teens Relationship Survey, 1,016 teens ages 13 to 17 were asked about their social media use. Of the group surveyed, 71% used Facebook, 52% used Instagram, 41% used Snapchat, and 33% used Twitter. 76% of teens used at least one social media site regularly but most do not stick exclusively to one site as approximately 70% have multiple social media accounts. These statistics make it clear that technology, specifically social media, is present in the daily lives of teens.

Incorporating social media can act as a gateway for increasing teen interest in museums, creating a diverse, future audience of museums and institutions.

Museums are a visual place by nature, so they are able to take advantage of photo and video centered social media platforms like Instagram or Snapchat. Internally, museums generally have social media accounts run by the marketing team that highlight the museum in its entirety. For visitors, even for those who only visit a museum once, social media allows for ownership. Posting photos on personal accounts gives visitors to museums possession of what they are seeing and the power to frame it how they want. In the same way that museum shops have the goal of giving each visitor a tangible

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takeaway, snapping photos allows visitors to commemorate their visit to the museum in a way that is meaningful and personal.

The artwork in this exhibition, like social media, allows for a particular quality of ‘ownership’ related to heightened experience. They are presented in a way in which the viewer has agency. The viewer is not passive, just looking at art, but rather has the opportunity to interact and be immersed. Organized in a familiar way, through a desktop-like screen, complete with a mouse, the visitor has the chance to control what they see and how they see it. In terms of my own goals, museum experiences should be active ones where the viewer is constantly being engaged. This is easier to be achieved with new media art, in that digital media provides opportunity for all artworks to have immersive components in the right setting.

Further, I am relating the works here to social media as the medium itself. First, digital video is a new media art form. The videos are all only five to fifteen seconds long. This speaks to the social media landscape we are living in where everything is quick and we are consumed by so many images and videos. Platforms like Instagram have fueled the demand for less-engineered, "micro-videos" that are 15 seconds or less. While online, especially on mobile devices, users are more likely to engage with many of these short videos than one longer, more stylized video on YouTube or Vimeo. While these longer videos have their benefits and are the right choice for many people ranging from advertisers to filmmakers, the shorter videos have a power over people as they watch so

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Jenna Poczik, Still from #2 from the Movement Series, 2017.
many in such a short amount of time, almost unaware of how consumed they are
becoming by the videos. Today, almost 60% of total online time happens on mobile
apps and more than 50% of searches are done on mobile devices.27 This reinforces how
important interactions with media on our smartphones are. A study led by Nottingham
Trent University asked participants aged 18 to 33 to estimate the amount of time they
spend on their phone and compared their self-reports to their actual usage.28 It was
concluded that the average person checked their device about 85 times per day, spending
an average of five hours browsing the web and using apps. The research also showed that
smartphone use was typically confined to short bursts, with more than half of uses lasting
less than 30 seconds.

Further reflecting on the culture of phones, the videos are all shot by an iPhone 7
as indicated in the wall labels. This is commentary on how frequently we use our
cellphones but also deals with the idea of “the media is the message,” a term coined by
Marshall McLuhan in his book Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man.29 This
statement means that the form of the medium and actual content are both equally
important in how a message is perceived. In the case of the videos in this exhibition, the
fact that these short videos were shot on an iPhone is equally important to those images
that are displayed within the videos.

With the advent of social media, discussions about museum participation have
taken a new direction. As museums currently embrace social media, they change the

28 Woollaston, Victoria. "Average User Picks up Their Device 85 times a DAY." Daily Mail
meaning of visitorship and who the audience of the museum is. Someone can never step foot in a museum but interact with the museum daily through exchanges online.

Expanding visitorship digitally is another opportunity for people from all over the country and the world to get involved at a museum where they may otherwise never have the chance.

Digital media allows museums to attract people beyond their traditional art audiences by integrating exciting, new media opportunities. Someone who never previously believed that he was interested in art may be able to see her/himself fitting into a museum profession by developing museum apps. Those who love virtual and augmented reality may see these technologies at museums and feel compelled to visit and try it out. A student without the means to visit museums now has complete access to the collection in the digitized versions on the museum websites. As websites continue to grow and the design is refined, the web experience will begin to feel more and more like the actual visitor experience. Ultimately, there are endless possibilities of who and where a museum can impact when focusing on innovation and digital creativity. With this digital, museums have the ability to reach everyone.

Beyond the traditional museum space, this is where discussion of the digital museum falls into place. Looking at the main players here, there are a few websites and digital spaces that should be considered. Artsy, a site with mission is “to make all the world’s art accessible to anyone with an Internet connection.”

350,000 images of art, architecture, and design and 50,000 artists represented. A major part of the website is the Art Genome Project, a classification system and technological
framework that powers Artsy. The Project has over 1,000 characteristics including art historical movements, subject matter, and formal qualities to classify art. These components allow users to create a collection of their favorite works, thus essentially becoming a curator. Next is ArtStack, with a tagline of “Discover the world's art online.”

Built on discovering art through other people and creating their own collections, every user of ArtStack has the ability to become a curator. Also significant is Artsicle, a platform that aims to make it easy to discover new artists from around the world. On this site, Artists can share their creations by simply adding a profile and reaching a large audience. After identifying these players, the questions are the following: what role might they play? Are these online spaces sufficient alone? Or must they act in combination with physical spaces? How can accessibility, connectivity, and authenticity be achieved?

III. Surveillance and Artveillance

Visitors get so much from the additional presence of media in museums but it is also worth considering what they have to give. As the presence of technology increases, visitors become more vulnerable to being tracked, having each move of their behavior in museums recorded and analyzed. Just as Facebook makes people feel that they are being watched, with ads popping up similar to things that recently searched or even spoken out loud, museums have the potential to become a place where one feels as if the museum knows them personally, catering to individual preferences. A seemingly impossible situation requiring cost-benefit analysis emerges, forcing players to consider the strengths and weakness of each decision and its alternative.

Museums are beginning to partner with Google Tango, a technology Google markets with the following tagline: “Tango lets you see more of your world. Just hold up your phone, and watch as virtual objects and information appear on top of your surroundings. So no matter where you are, there's always a richer, deeper experience to engage with, explore and enjoy. You'll see.”33 This has benefits in museums, especially historical ones, as augmented reality has the capability to add information that may not be available otherwise, enhancing the visitor experience. Google wants visitors to explore museums in a new way with Tango.34 They argue that display signs and audio guides can only do so much and want people to have access to more: more to see, more to hear, more to learn. Currently, Tango services are available at a small number of museums including the Detroit Institute of Arts and Barcelona's Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya, but there are plans to bring it to all museums around the world. Google says this is just the

Photographs of Google Tango technologies in use at museums at the Detroit Institute of Arts and Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya.
beginning, but with these location-based services tracking each movement in the museum, what is next?

At the Whitney Museum of American art, I worked on a related research project that acts as a case study about technology and surveillance capabilities.\textsuperscript{35} From June 22 through July 17, 2016, the Visitor Experience intern and I, the Digital Media intern conducted an in-gallery assessment of visitors’ usage of the mobile site developed for the \textit{June Leaf: Thought is Infinite} exhibition in the lobby gallery. The goal was to determine if and how visitors were using the mobile site, how the mobile site impacted visitor experience, how visitors navigated the exhibition, and whether or not a similar feature should be developed for future exhibitions. Three strategies were used to evaluate visitor use of the mobile site: observation, exit poll/survey, and directly pointing visitors to the site. We then conducted a focus group to increase the amount of qualitative data. For observation, we developed a few questions that we wanted to answer: Are people using their phones? Are people reading the wall text? How much time on average does a visitor spend in the galleries who is using their phone to access content versus not? We additionally tracked the path that visitors took within the gallery. For our in-gallery strategies, we found that most visitors (73\%) did not use smartphones while in the exhibition. Moreover, 65\% of visitors did not read the introductory wall text, which is where the mobile site URL was located (in addition to another sign in the gallery). We also found that the percentage of people that both read the wall text and were using their smartphone was only 12\%. Subsequently, such a small number of people saw the URL and also had the capability to enter it into their smartphone. In fact, half of visitors neither

read the introductory wall text nor were using a smartphone. These findings reveal that perhaps the signage needed to be in more visible and numerous locations in order for the mobile site to be useful and accessible to the people that did have their smartphones out. Moreover, maybe the population entering the June Leaf exhibition did not represent the profile of a visitor who would have found the site helpful, since the majority of June Leaf visitors were not even using their smartphone.

All of this information came from surveillance, tracking visitors. Though these research strategies relied on human observation to track visitor behavior, the human eye may not be necessary in the near future. As technology continues to be integrated, this type of data will be collected naturally, understanding visitor behavior better and in turn attempting to enhance visitor experience. Again, we must ask: what is next?

Returning to surveillance as a larger picture in the United States, it is easy to frame a battle between two parties as a simple disagreement. One is right. One is wrong. One is the winner. One is the loser. There is a solution that requires compromise. In the discussion of surveillance and privacy, the government has framed the argument as a simple trade-off, which is that “you must surrender a little privacy if you want more security.” The trade-off, however, is not that simple. There is much more at stake than just surrendering a little privacy. Surrendering privacy can be a slippery slope, giving away our freedom and giving everything we have to the government. In visual culture, there is much to be discussed in terms of what information the government can and cannot have access to. As a frame for surveillance through the lens of visual studies, I will focus Foucault’s panopticon and then question what the future of surveillance will be.

and what this will mean for individual privacy. Building on this, I will consider the intersections of art and surveillance, focusing on the genre as a whole while also discussing specific artists and the works present in this exhibition.

The lines of surveillance are blurry and are impossible to define in a concrete way. Imagine living in a world where the camera on your phone or laptop is always on and there is always someone out there who can see you. This is characteristic of Foucault’s panopticon model, a prison layout in which there is a circular building with a tower at the center that can see all prisoners in their cells surrounding the tower. Each individual is not locked into their cell, but they cannot communicate with the wardens or other prisoners. Because prisoners can always see the tower, they live knowing that they are constantly being watched and are therefore deterred from disobeying rules and regulations. The future that we are looking at with government intervention can make the world a lot like this panopticon prison. When the reality of life begins to mirror Foucault’s panopticon, government control becomes unlimited. Just as the prisoner cannot see whom, if anyone, is in the tower, citizens will not know when they are being watched and who is watching them. This is why the panopticon instills so much fear about the nature of being watched; it is always uncertain who is watching whom.

Discussing government surveillance, it is worth examining museums as institutions that are largely funded by government organizations. Government support of museum exists at the federal, state, and local level. The typical U.S. museum derives over 24.4 percent of its operating revenue from government funding, coming primarily from

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Foucault’s Panopticon

American Association of Museums
state and local governments, but also a small percentage from the federal level. Interestingly, though, this percentage has decreased over the years. In a 1989 survey, it was revealed that the average U.S. museum received 38 percent of its funding from government. Regardless of the downward trend, it is still significant that about a quarter of a museum’s funding relies on the government to operate. This quarter is essential; museums could not exist without government funding. Consequently, this makes them institutions that are prone to government surveillance. Security cameras are present in museums for obvious reasons, such as preventing theft and visitors from touching the art, but they are also part of a larger picture of surveillance that is determined by government control.

Surveillance is not only present within the organization of museums, but also in the art that museums collect and display. Andrea Mubi Brighenti coined the term “artveillance” in an essay “Artveillance: At the Crossroads of Art and Surveillance.” Through reviewing artworks and installations dealing with topics surrounding surveillance, Brighenti compares how different artists “interrogate, question, quote, or criticize the surveillance society” while also examining the collective imagery that is presented throughout. Many notable artists have tackled surveillance as a major theme in their artwork. I want to consider the Art and Surveillance Project, CTRL[SPACE], and the works of select artists from these collections.

The Art and Surveillance Project is an online database\textsuperscript{40}. The database is a participatory, living archive. Its creators hope to create a web-based community space where multidisciplinary researchers, artists, and cultural practitioners can engage broadly with the topic of art and surveillance. Though it focuses on just a singular topic, this database relates directly to those on museum websites that document collections and digital spaces previously discussed like Artsy\textsuperscript{41}.

\textit{CTRL[SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother} is a book that aims to investigate the state of panoptic art at a time when issues of surveillance, security, and civil liberties are on the mind of many.\textsuperscript{42} This book accompanies an exhibition of the same title that now has a digital home on a website.\textsuperscript{43} Beginning with photographs taken with hidden cameras by Walker Evans and moving forward to contemporary examples of conceptual art and installation work, the text covers a wide range of artists and artworks pertaining to ideas of surveillance. Notable artists that I will discuss from [CTRL]SPACE are Julia Scher and Dan Graham. Others not mentioned that fit into the realm of my work are Jenny Holzer and Rafael Lozano-Hemmer.

Julia Scher is notable because even beyond CTRL[SPACE], her body of work primarily deals with themes of surveillance. She uses a variety of mediums but is best known for her installation art and performances. Drawing on inspiration from Michel Foucault, her works explore power, control, social dynamics, and seduction with a focus on the public space. Two of her notable projects are \textit{Securityland} and \textit{Wonderland}. Both of these projects examine issues of scopophilia, control, and personal privacy, immersing

\begin{thebibliography}{99}

\bibitem{41} Artsy. Web. 03 Apr. 2017.
\bibitem{42} Levin, Thomas Y. \textit{CTRL[SPACE]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother}. Karlsruhe: ZKM, Center for Art and Media, 2002. Print.
\end{thebibliography}

the viewer in a way that is subtly threatening.\textsuperscript{44} Similarly, Dan Graham explores issues of surveillance but with a focus on the relationships between people and their environments.\textsuperscript{45} His work in CTRL[SPACE], \textit{Yesterday / Today}, focuses on image and sound. The monitor in the installation projects two videos: one of what is present at the current moment in the exhibition space and one of what had been recorded exactly 24 hours prior in that same space. The work combines the past and present, also creating a subtly threatening aura of being watched when visitors realize that footage of them will be presented to others in the future.\textsuperscript{46}

Moving away from CTRL[SPACE], Jenny Holzer’s work \textit{Ribs} was featured in the 2014 exhibition \textit{Covert Operations: Investigating the Known Unknowns} at the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art.\textsuperscript{47} Using LED displays, the piece streams real US government documents across a set of “ribs”, protesting data collection through visual display tools that force visitors to confront realities of surveillance.\textsuperscript{48}

Rafael Lozano-Hemmer is a Mexican artist focusing on interactive installations that are at the intersection of architecture, performance, and surveillance.\textsuperscript{49} So many of his works tackle surveillance, but three notable ones include \textit{Zoom Pavilion}, \textit{Cardinal Directions}, and \textit{Blow Up}. \textit{Zoom Pavilion} is an immersive projection installation on three walls that obtains its materials from 12 computerized surveillance systems looking at the

Installation view of Dan Graham’s *Yesterday / Today* (Generali Foundation, Vienna, 1995).

Installation view of Jenny Holzer’s *Ribs* (Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, 2015).
Some of the shots are presented as recognizable urban landscapes, while others are abstracted and zoomed. *Cardinal Directions* is a sculpture featuring a surveillance monitor. Though the material on the monitor is not directly surveillance related, the shape and form of the monitor is a visual cue that there are themes of surveillance present. *Blow Up* is a shadow box interactive display that fragments the view from a surveillance camera into 2400 virtual cameras that zoom into and capture the exhibition space. All exploring different dimensions of surveillance, it is clear that Lozano-Hemmer recognizes the importance of surveillance works.

The grid-like presentation of my videos works in #1, #2 and #3 evokes ideas of surveillance. They are neat and structured. They look the way that one would imagine the surveillance cameras from a parking garage or mall would present what they capture to the security guards behind the scenes. In the case of these three videos, what is presented is seemingly nothing like the images captured by security cameras at the surface level. However, this intends to raise the question of surveillance and what is being watched. Each small movement is being watched in some way. As technological advancements make surveillance possible in unimaginable ways, it is time to reconsider who and what are being watched, even on the smallest and seemingly unimportant of levels.

The grids in #4 and #5 tackle surveillance more directly. These videos are more reminiscent of traditional surveillance footage. Here, self-surveillance is the subject. I film my own movement, watching from above in a way that is unnatural. I am the subject, in some ways making these works a self-portrait, but in many ways there is a disconnect. Self-surveillance and self-portrait intersect, but there are also various elements of each that allow for manipulation of who the true self actually is. While I am

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Installation view of *Zoom Pavilion* (Art Basel 47, Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland).

Installation view of *Blow Up* (Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo, Mexico City, México).

Installation view of *Cardinal Directions* (Galería Max Estrella, Madrid, Spain, 2012).
being “watched”, I am aware of this watching so I am able to manipulate what version of me is presented. Surveillance and self-portraiture begin to intersect in the digital age, as people are able to curate the image of the self that they present to the world.

Traditional surveillance in museums is expected. Monitoring activity is essential as museums are the home of extremely valuable collections on display and in storage. Without a proper surveillance system, museums become vulnerable, a prime target for theft and vandalism. Now, however, we have to look further than this. Surveillance is not only part of museum security, but also part of the art. Artveillance works will continue to tackle how the emergence of new technologies causes surveillance to evolve beyond protection of the institution and towards the scrutiny of individual behavior and actions.

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Jenna Poczik, Still from #3 from the Movement Series, 2017.
Jenna Poczik, Still from #4 from the Movement Series, 2017.
Jenna Poczik, Still from #5 from the Movement Series, 2017.
IV. Self-Portraits, Selfies, and the Self

A self-portrait is a representation of an artist by an artist. This genre has existed as long as art itself, but rose to prominence during the Early Renaissance in the mid-15th century. This is when artists began frequently depicting themselves. They depicted themselves alone, as the main subject of the work, or inserted themselves within their works as characters in a scene. Self-portraiture is of interest because of the unique freedom created by the dual roles of one person taking on subject and creator. The artist has the opportunity to be represented in his or her own terms. This relationship between the two roles parallels the distinct product that occurs when one person takes on the role of artist and curator. Through this exploration of self-portraiture relating to the works in this exhibition, I will focus on female self-portrait artists and artists using mirrors as a vehicle for representation.

As a female artist, it is impossible for me to fail to mention that women artists are notable producers of self-portraits. Almost all significant female painters produced some type of self-portrait. Notable examples include Caterina van Hemessen, Artemisia Gentileschi, Mary Beale, Marie Ellenrieder, Mary Cassatt, Frida Kahlo, and Cindy Sherman. Much of the prominence of portrait work with women is due to the fact that until the 20th century, women were usually unable to train in drawing the nude. In turn, it was difficult to master the figure, instead leading female artists to specialize in portraiture. Women artists have historically embodied a number of roles within self-portraiture. From presenting the nude to capturing the act of painting sitting in front of an easel, the types of self-portraiture by female artists are wide and prolific.

I want to draw attention to several notable self-portraits by women and note what they add to the art historical cannon. Caterina van Hemessen's self-portrait from 1548 is perhaps the oldest self-portrait of a female oil-painter, though much earlier examples of female manuscript painters exist. Artemisia Gentileschi’s *Self-Portrait as the Allegory of Painting* from the 1630s features a pulled-up sleeve on the arm holding the brush, displaying a woman in the act of painting. Mary Beale’s *Self-portrait* from the late 17th century is significant because she became one of the most important portrait painters of 17th-century England. She is described as the first professional female English painter. Marie Ellenrieder painted a noteworthy self-portrait in 1819. She was a German religious artist and the first woman to enter the Academy of Munich, importantly breaking male-dominated barriers. Mary Cassatt was an American portrait painter who specialized in portraits of women and children. She painted her own portrait in 1878. Frida Kahlo’s, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird* was painted in 1940 after her divorce from Diego Rivera and the end of her affair with photographer Nickolas Muray. It is one of the 55 self-portraits she painted throughout her lifetime. Kahlo created a habit of painting a portrait of herself whenever she was troubled, documenting her life through emotion.53 Finally, Cindy Sherman established her reputation as a unique type of self-portrait artist with “Untitled Film Stills” (1977-80), a series of 69 photographs of the artist enacting female clichés of 20th-century pop culture.54 Her work continually re-examines women’s roles in history and contemporary society, but she leaves the meaning largely open to interpretation.


Frida Kahlo, *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*, 1940. Oil on canvas.

Some of these artists as well as many others were celebrated in *Mirror Mirror: Self-portraits by women artists*, an exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, DC from September 12, 2001 to January 20, 2002. Claiming that “the self-portrait has always been an artist's most intriguing vehicle for analysis and self-expression,” this exhibition brought together all of the self-portraits by women artists from the National Portrait Gallery's collection.\(^5\) There were works included by 40 artists ranging from mid 17\(^{th}\) century to present day. It featured works across different media, including oil painting, photography, printmaking drawing, and sculpture. The exhibition contained works by the following female artists, some well-known while others lesser-known to the public: Mary Beale, Gwen John, Barbara Hepworth, Lee Miller, Eileen Agar, Laura Knight, Maggi Hambling, Lallie Charles, the Zinkeisen sisters, Helen Chadwick, Susie Cooper, Yolanda Sonnabend, Elizabeth Blackadder, Victoria Crowe, Jennifer McRae, and Daphne Todd.

Interestingly, the title of this exhibition, *Mirror Mirror*, relates to the second topic in self-portraiture that I will cover. Mirrors emerged early in portrait painting and continue to be present in contemporary art. Diego Velázquez is perhaps best known for his painting *Las Meninas*. This painting has been contemplated extensively as it makes the viewer question reality and illusion, creating uncertainty of who and what the subject of the painting really is and if there even is one. This painting is of the royal family during the reign of King Philip IV. It depicts the Infanta, Margaret Theresa, surrounded by her family members and servers. The king and queen are not standing in the painting, but instead are seen in a mirror, indicating that they are standing on the outside. This is


Ernst Oppler, *The painter and Jo*, 1928. Oil on canvas.

the main question of the painting and what is real and what is not. In manipulating and challenging the viewer, Velázquez demonstrates one power of himself as painter, but goes further than this by including himself in the painting on the left in front of a canvas. Velázquez’s decision to do this was likely influenced by his desire to be noble.56

While Las Meninas is likely one of the most famous self-portraits with a mirror, there are a few other historical and contemporary examples I would like to draw attention to. In Parmigianino’s, Self-portrait in a mirror from 1524, the artist actually painted on a convex surface, similar to that of the mirrors of the period. Johannes Gumpp’s self-portrait 1646, shows how most self-portraits were painted. He presents the back of his own head in the center, his face in a mirror to the left, and the canvas on the right where he paints exactly what is shown in the painted mirror. Ernst Oppler’s The painter and Jo, from 1928 is both a self-portrait and portrait. Oppler paints Jo as the main subject, but he himself is also a subject shown painting in a mirror behind Jo. Combining female artists and the use of the mirror is Marcia Painting her Self-Portrait, a 15th century painting where Marcia sits at an easel painting herself with the aid or a mirror.57

Mirrors and reflective materials in art have become ubiquitous since the sixties with the heavy use of mirrored surfaces in the work of Robert Rauschenberg, Gerhard Richter, Dan Graham and Robert Smithson. This trend has continued and even grown in the contemporary art world. Artists using reflective surfaces today include Anish Kapoor, Yayoi Kusama, Jeff Koons, Alyson Shotz, Ryan Everson, David Atmejd, Jeppe Hein,

Anish Kapoor in Lisson Gallery at the Armory Show 2017, New York, NY.

SPRING/BREAK Art Show. New York, NY.


Leah Piepgras, Claudia Wieser, Brandon Lattu, and Daniel Horowitz.\textsuperscript{58} While materiality and the complex meanings behind reflective surfaces are interesting, it is hard not to look at these artworks today without one thing coming to mind: selfies.

Moving away from self-portraiture and towards selfies, I do not want to discuss selfies as a fine art form equal to self-portraits but rather explore the implications of selfies within the museum space. Relating to selfies and self-portraiture, a notable controversy in museums in recent years is the use of the selfie stick. The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Museum of Fine Arts in and the Metropolitan Museum of Art are just a few of the museums that have decided to ban selfie sticks. On the other hand, Tate Modern, the National Gallery in London, and the Louvre all continue to allow selfie sticks in the museum.\textsuperscript{59} Whether selfie sticks are allowed or not, however, all museums seem to be pro-selfie. Selfies are specifically encouraged in museums such as the Whitney, that had an initiative during the Jeff Koons retrospective that had the hashtags #KoonsSelfie and #ArtSelfie all over the museum’s Instagram account.\textsuperscript{60} Selfies like these, especially taking advantage of the reflective surfaces found in so much of Koons’s work, allows visitors to bond with art. In addition to creating this unique relationship with an exhibition, selfies and social media posts create free advertising for a museum as people see their friends tagging photos visiting new shows. Ultimately, it seems that museums have something to learn from social media trends. The culture of


photographing and sharing can promulgate art to audiences that traditional advertisements may not reach.

While in some ways superficial, using reflective surfaces in artwork to take selfies creates a lasting connection to the work. Visiting an exhibition is an ephemeral experience. Visitors enter a museum, see the works, and exit the museum, perhaps buying a souvenir in the gift shop in the lobby to commemorate the experience. Selfies bring another potential dimension to this. While on the surface, they are just a quick snapshot or another fleeting action, there is more at stake. They create a lasting connection between artwork and viewer through the lens of a camera. This relates directly to what Roland Barthes outlines in *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Barthes discusses the essence or noeme of a photograph, arguing the connection between the photograph and the photographer created by an encounter through the lens. He argues, “every photograph is a certificate of presence” on the grounds that someone was there and took the photo. The selfie-taker creates noeme as the experience they document is proof of his or her being there, exploring a museum and viewing the transient exhibition. Discussing the eidos of photography, Barthes separates the photographic experience into the Spectrum and the Spectator: the Spectrum as the experience of being photograph and the Spectator as the desire and emotion aroused by the act of looking at specific photographs. The selfie-taker in a museum has the opportunity to explore the role as Spectrum and Spectator, having complete agency over the photo they take and the viewing experience that takes place after leaving the museum. Here, there is room to bring in the ideas of Walter Benjamin and the notion of aura discussed in *The Work of Art*

62 Ibid.
in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. He describes aura as something bigger than life, a power that can create a feeling, emotion, and proximity. Applying his ideas, I argue that selfies capture aura. A photograph such as a selfie captures proximity of the subject and the artwork. It creates a connection and captures the emotion of a being at the time when the photo was taken. Benjamin argues that aura is tied to presence, meaning there can be no replication of aura. This is true, but selfies in connection to art creates a new aura: one that is not identical but still significant.

Competing with these ideas is Guy Debord’s The Society of the Spectacle. Rather than accepting the connection made through a camera, Debord focuses on mediated experiences. Debord writes, “In societies where modern conditions of production prevail..everything..directly lived has [become] a representation…The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images.” He argues that experiences are not lived, but rather mediated. This speaks directly to the idea of taking photographs in museums, mediating the viewers direct experience with art and instead creating a world in which visitors experience art through a smartphone. Both of these theorists’ ideas have merit when it comes to the selfie-experience. I argue that despite the superficial connections of seeing art through the screen, there is a meaningful, long-lasting connection that can be made, adding to the museum experience. It is important for visitors to engage with the art without a phone as well, but there is no harm in augmenting the experience with photography as long as it is not the only form of interaction. The balance between these two theories is delicate and becomes increasingly blurred as technologies transform the way we photograph and are photographed.

Furthering the discussion of the place of the selfie within the genre of self-portraiture is concepts of high and low culture. This discussion will aim to unpacking high and low contemporary digital culture practices within this context. Within the context of Kirk Varnedoe’s *High and Low: Modern Art and Popular Culture*. Self-portraiture is part of high culture while selfies are part of low culture. Selfies, low culture, with art that is part of high culture allows selfie takers to legitimize their practice through an incorporation of the ideals that the high culture art connotes: transferring meaning from one to the other. Art forms will always contain hierarchy, but combining forms can lead some qualities to be intertwined, giving selfies with art a sense of the elite in a medium that is in reality just mundane.

When considering the composition of an art exhibition, it is not only important to define the similarities between the pieces and the way that they appear pleasing to the human eye, but it is also imperative to consider how the art interacts. This creates a visual conversation between works that allows the pieces to complement and enhance one another. The visual conversation is created by shadows and reflections on and in the artwork allow the works and the viewers to interact more directly. Use of light leads items in the room, including the viewer, to appear on the painting in the form of shadows, further displaying their interconnectedness. Just as these shadows physically demonstrate how the pieces in the room are connected, reflective surfaces play a similar role. Viewers can see himself or herself in the mirrors. Shadows and reflections connect the pieces of art in the exhibition a physical level that enhances the visual conversation and makes the viewer play a clearer part in this conversation. Connection with the exhibition is created

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not only by shadows and reflections but also by other characteristics of the artwork, specifically interaction. Which is interesting as traditionally, viewers are prohibited from touching the artwork in an exhibition. These desires for knowledge that the works generate both demonstrate the curiosity of human beings that is intrinsic to their nature.

In this exhibition, mirrors and shadows both encompass the visitor part of the work. This plays in a similar way to the work of Dan Graham\(^{66}\) mentioned earlier and Ja Young Ku\(^{67}\) where the viewer is captured in delay. The set of nine mirrors, hung on the wall adjacent to the projected videos, parallel the grids of videos. Here, instead of me being the subject, the visitor becomes the subject. However, the videos are also reflected in the mirrors, engaging the visitor with the videos and me. In this way, the visitor becomes a key part of the exhibition. The exhibition therefore takes on a different life when no one is present and when someone steps inside the room. The viewer is key. Similarly, the light from projectors leads to the creation of shadows. These shadows are different when no one is present and evolve further when visitors move around inside, their bodies blocking different parts of light and creating different shapes. Form was something that was a key consideration when filming movements of the body, so these additional forms created by viewers mirror the work, echoing the importance of the negative and positive spaces created by the human body as it moves.

Further, touch is an interesting element at play here and with an installation that is composed of video projections. There is no forbidden object here, nothing but walls, a projector, and mirrors. None of these objects are fine art and can be impacted by contact


with human beings. There is no reason not to touch the walls, but the visitor feels compelled not to because of the norms that have been inscribed into visitors of museums. People know that it is not allowed in a traditional museum setting, and this translates here.

The exhibition also has a life on a website where none of these considerations that occur in the gallery space come into play. The website is a different home for the work to live after the exhibition, relating to the ideas of portable museums and digital ideas. I’ve always been interested in audience interaction with artwork and how works can take on multiple lives in different contexts. I want to present a digital version in addition because I want my audience to be able to interact with my videos, curating their own experiences rather than relying on the story that I have chosen to tell through the video series that are presented in loops in the gallery space. Beyond just visitor control, this website is permanent. Exhibitions are ephemeral. They are remembered by exhibition catalogues, photographs, and most recently by installation shots on museum websites and social media accounts. However, they themselves are not permanent. The website and this exhibition catalogue give the work the chance to have a life beyond the short installation, letting it become part of a larger narrative.
V. Conclusion

Throughout this experiment, it became clear that digital media wields unlimited influence over the art and museum sphere. From the simple integration of social media to the more complex realities of surveillance through new technologies, the power of technology to influence how art is presented and consumed is multifaceted and endless. This installation allowed me to explore these digital concepts within a controlled space that I was able to imagine, design, and theorize: a unique relationship that could not come from any other sort of project.

In the future, what I have learned in this project will translate directly to new research. I want to continue to explore topics such as what it means to be a curator today, the digital sphere of museums, and making art accessible through curatorial and digital means. Though my research jumps from time to time, this is representative of my wide range of passions, only adding to what I want to explore and conclude. What comes next? I will continue to explore these concepts within the museum profession, working within institutions as well as individually to grapple with the implications of the digital in this evolving field and even within the larger picture of the art world.

This project will continue to evolve for the duration of the exhibition. The final element of the experiment is the collection of selfies taken by visitors to the gallery space. This final database serves as an important piece of the puzzle, documenting visitor experience through the framing of the visitors and allowing visitors to make a lasting connection with the work.
Bibliography


Jenna Poczik (b. 1995)
Movement Series, 2017

#1, #2, #3, #4, #5

Video projection
10 second loop

Take a selfie. Send your selfie to jenna.poczik@duke.edu or use the hashtag #mymovementseries to be included in the collection.

Visit online. See these works online at www.sites.duke.edu/duke_jennapoczik/videos

Read more. Read the accompanying exhibition catalogue essays at www.sites.duke.edu/duke_jennapoczik/thesis