

"Sousveillance" Inverse Surveillance in Multimedia Imaging

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International Multimedia Conference: Proceedings of the 12th annual ACM international conference on Multimedia (ACM Press, New York: 2004) ABSTRACT: This is a personal narrative that began 30 years ago as a childhood hobby, of wearing and implanting various sensors, effectors, and multimedia computation in order to re-define personal space and modify sensory perception computationally. This work involved the creation of various computational seeing aids that evolved into a new kind of visual art, using multimedia cyborglogs. Becoming at one with the machine, the author was able to explore a new humanity at the nexus of cyberspace and the real world. The author presents what was discovered accidentally, as a result of facing "cyborg discrimination". In particular, over the past 30 years, peer discrimination has decreased, while institutional and organized discrimination has intensified. Most notably, it was discovered that cyborg discrimination was most intense in establishments having the most surveillance. Rather than avoid such establishments, the author was able to explore and capture unique aspects to understand surveillance in new ways. The word surveillance denotes a God's eye view from on high (i.e. French for "to watch from above"). An inverse, called sousveillance (French for "to watch from below") explores what happens when cameras move from lamp posts and ceilings down to eye level. Finally, it is suggested that new personal multimedia technologies, like mass-produced wearable cameraphones, can be used as tools for artists to explore "equiveillance" by shifting this equilibrium between surveillance and sousveillance with inverse/reverse/accountability/recountability/continuability of continuous sur/sousveillance.

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