The dissemination of surveillance cameras grows in public and semi-public spaces, yet simultaneously restrictions on the use of cameras by artists, filmmakers and independent media-activists increase. In this dispute for the production of visibility in urban space, surveillance cameras have assumed a role of regulating behaviour and access, producing effects like social exclusion, standardization and gentrification. In our understanding it is necessary to be attentive to the political and poetic dimension of the image as a common construction, and the performance “Composição para Circuito de Vídeo-vigilância” (Composition for Video Surveillance Circuit), presented in this article, is an artistic answer to the ubiquitous phenomena of video-surveillance practices.

The performance is designed as a Live Cinema show, where images of a CCTV are projected in a theatre in the same way as a silent movie: accompanied by a sound track performed on the stage. Mixing sound archives collected and recorded for the screening, and a voice over performed live on the stage, we are expanding the fictional quality of every image, and questioning the value of reality attributed to CCTV images. The audience can watch the spectacle in two different ways: as a classic movie spectator sitting in front of the screen, or “entering” into the movie, by circulating in the space under surveillance, located near the projection area. With this project we try to understand how the activity of watching surveillance images is defined by our experience as spectators of narrative films, and how far social stereotypes on CCTV screens can also be understood as constructions of film industry, where suspicion and hidden clues tend to be in the centre of the attention. To construct an image of the world as a meeting place, as open to others and not as a place of peril, in which it is necessary to protect oneself: this is what we want to contribute from “Composição para Circuito de Vídeo-vigilância”. Works by artists such as Michelle Teran, who de-territorialise and re-territorialise images produced by dispositifs of surveillance in her original pieces Frilufts Kino and Life: User’s Manual1, and also the pioneering experiment by Manu Luksh in Faceless2, served to inspire and enrol our project in a list of works that seek a re-significance of video surveillance, understood as an inevitable facet of contemporary control society.

**Lessons of Video-surveillance**
The necessity for surveillance TV circuits to be analysed from different points of view is underlined by the studies of various authors on Surveillance Studies (Lyon, 1994, 2002; Norris and Armstrong, 1999; McCahill, 2002). The points most often cited are the social effects and political impact of these circuits,
along with the development of strategies for regulation and integration for urban planning of these spaces under scrutiny.

As a device that produces images, video-surveillance circuits also require evaluation from an aesthetic aspect. Artistic works such as urban intervention, performance and video art realised since the 60s (for example, Bruce Nauman, Nam June Paik, Peter Campus, Dan Graham, Bill Viola, Sophie Calle, Marie Sester) show us varied ways to deal with this device that reconfigures public and private spaces. With this in mind we propose the conceptualisation of an aesthetic of surveillance. Works by Thomas Levin (2003), Paul Virilio (1993) and Fernanda Bruno (2007, 2008) can help us understand the aesthetic dimension of this device.

A video-surveillance circuit, also known as closed circuit television (CCTV) or security camera system, we know to be a television complex, comprised of cameras connected to an analogue or digital monitoring network, in a given space, public or private. Video circuits are known tools of surveillance having gained strength in the context of WW2 and the Cold War. They have been increasingly used not only by the military, but also in industry, commerce, and personal relations.

The role of cameras in risk management is the principal point foundation for the rhetoric of video-surveillance circuits as a public and private tool capable of working with distinct activities such as communication, cost reduction, security and social control. However their effectiveness in deterring thefts, vandalism and crimes of aggression has been questioned by various pieces of research (see Hempel and Töpfer, 2004), after the 9/11 attacks, a rhetoric based on a culture of fear and insecurity has prevailed in the proliferation of these surveillance circuits.

Used to monitor traffic and guarantee the efficient management of roadways, detecting accidents and scrutinizing vehicles and people; assisting in the identification of criminals or serving as proof in legal judgements; observing certain traits of behaviour deemed incorrect or abnormal (mistreatment of children, dissatisfactory performance in the workplace, public disorder) or producing “best videos”, hot exclusives and snuff films (which outside the sphere of surveillance and control, are consumed as a spectacle), these images can be found everywhere.

The “effect of the real” (Barthes, 2004) is stimulated and procured by this device. With its’ low resolution, lack of continuity, panoramic views and displayed date and time³, a video-surveillance circuit produces “authentic” images, supplying a contemporary demand for images of “reality”.

Video-surveillance cameras, like those of the direct cinema⁴, pass themselves off as flies on the wall, camouflaged in the architecture of urban spaces. In Brazil, a study by Kanashiro (2008) shows how the legislative discussion deals more with the practical use of cameras than with regulating their utilisation. As far as the privacy, image rights, individual freedom and anonymity are concerned, there is much work to be done concerning legislation. Activist groups in various countries (e.g. Surveillance Camera Players, USA; Souriez vous êtes filmés, France; Zemos 98, Spain) draw attention to the presence of video-surveillance cameras, publishing maps revealing their location and demanding effective legislation that reflects a critical vision on their social and symbolic effects.

In their struggle against the installation of surveillance cameras in public spaces, the Spanish movement Asamblea por el Libre Uso del Espacio Público La Calle es de Todxs argue that the discourse for the installation of cameras treats the streets in Sevilla as if they were escarapates – display windows. Questions raised: Are the images for selling products? Do they serve to protect people? Which people? Do the images serve databases? What kind of images do we create when reality is consumed as a show? What kind of images do we create when suspicion is what mobilises our interest in the camera?

³ These comments are true for simpler systems of video-surveillance. Certainly technological development stimulated by the security market will produce cameras of higher resolution and with more transparent interfaces.
⁴ A movement of Documentary cinema that had its height in the 1960s in the U.S.A. It looked to establish a stance that supposedly did not intervene in the filmed environments.
Video-surveillance circuits recording images in video archives produce thousands of hours of raw material every day. This signifies that they produce a double image: that which is captured in each videogramme, and that which is a product of the videograms as a whole. The value of this huge amount of data depends on its capacity to be stored, replaced, transferred and processed in real time.

The human task of detecting incidents amongst enormous quantities of accumulating data is near impossible. This signifies that not only the recording but also the monitoring of this information must be automated. The idea of that which is normal and that which is not dictates the way in which the data from these cameras is read. The problem is placed in terms of the perfection of technology. The so called intelligent video is programmed to identify and isolate ‘events’, separating data deemed unimportant to the system, from that which is ‘relevant’, thus resolving the technical problem of storage, but producing other problems: what is normal? What is the profile of people and situations that represent a risk?

The kinds of filtering to which this material is submitted depends on who observes it. The problem is not the question concerning technology but one of the dispositif. Video-surveillance can be used to observe the banal, children playing in the rain⁵, plastic bags floating in the breeze⁶. The images produced need to be evaluated from a point of view and given a meaning thereby returning to the spectator (security guard, operator, algorithm). It is the actual act of seeing the images that should be taken as an act of producing significance, conscious of the possibilities installed by the presence of the camera and of the contemporary imaginaries within which it inscribes itself: celebrities, paparazzi, insecurity, fear, voyeurism, exhibitionism and other fields that interrelate every time a camera enters in scene.

One expects the images produced by video-surveillance to televise an ordered, antiseptic and silent space. Paradoxically the surveillance camera is there to assure that nothing significant occurs. If its’ repressive and preventative role functions, the recorded images shouldn’t contain anything outside this antiseptic normality. Visibility here is associated with deviation; the image only has perceptible value if something abnormal occurs. In this way, in an absolute control video-surveillance situation, the camera produces images where there is nothing to be seen. It is for this reason that Philippe Dubois (2004) affirms that TV images are always noisy, whereas video-surveillance images are silent. Video-surveillance nullifies movement, what is left is pure time. Thus the Deleuzian image-temps concept can be applied to them.

Lessons of Cinema
The model of spectatorship by which the sequences are induced by a structure that makes the images function, anticipating the audience’s reaction leading them through a teleological narrative format, is the conventional Hollywood cinema, technically refined during the 20th century.

This symbolic and historic production of cinema constitutes the way in which we learn to view moving images, and it is in this way that we view video-surveillance. The classic-narrative-cinema codes we are accustomed to employing when consuming films (relations of spatial proximity, temporal continuity, parallelism, causal relations and other expressions established in this language of image-action) bring with them a discourse based on convergence, on the univocal. This “monoscopic”⁷ vision converges the look to one unique point, that of the epistemological figure of albertian perspective and Illuminism.

If, on the one hand, the assertion of supposed technical neutrality of cameras conceals a discourse to justify video-surveillance as a tool of social control, on the other hand classic cinema, with its narrative structure to which we are accustomed, also conceals its own discursive construction, which is also a form of control.

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⁵ The short film of Cão Guimarães, “Da janela do meu quarto” (Brasil, 2004)
⁶ The celebrated scene from American Beauty (Sam Mendes, USA, 1999)
⁷ Edgar Morin (1986) is an advocate for a ‘poliscopic’ vision, that multiplies and diversifies the points of view. This poliscopic vision can be seen in Chronique d’un Été (dir. Jean Rouch, France, 1960)
In our search for a perceptive epistemological rupture in the face of the video-surveillance image, we look for the construction of a new viewer situation that again re-signifies visibility based on suspicion and classic drama.

By analysing the so called crisis of image-action, Deleuze (1985) offers concepts for thinking of a new regime of the image, not driven by motor-sensory sequences closed by a desire for transparency, but by connections that continually reconfigure themselves in an opaque fashion, offering that which is called a ‘crystal’ clear regime, where the scene created is not independent of the camera, nor preceding it, but is established by it.

According to Gilles Deleuze, that which defines Neo-Realism is the utilization of purely optical situations, characterising “a cinema of clairvoyants”, in the place of action cinema. In this way, neorealist films made “inventories of places” (Deleuze, 1985:11), and the objects and means assume an autonomous material reality that makes them justify their own value. So, a neo-realist description ‘substitutes’ the object itself in such a way that a “strange invisible subjectivity” (Deleuze, 1985) positions itself to act in the regime of interchange between the imaginary and the real.

The distinction between objective and subjective tends to lose importance if, before the image, the optical situation or the visual description substitute the motor action. This interdependence between optical and scenic is a key point in our investigation. The scene establishes itself by the vision, not by action. The place is now valuable in its own right, which creates dead times and introduces a visibility of the banal quotidian, as observed in the cinema of Antonioni by Deleuze (1985) and by French filmmaker Agnès Varda:

I don’t like telling stories but rather what takes place between the key moments of a story; that’s what Antonioni does with his "weak times". I’d like to deepen those moments where we expect nothing – moments that reveal themselves to be more touching than all the rest. Weak times, dead times; the important thing is ‘between acts’.9 “ (Varda, s/d)

As Deleuze affirms (1985), for us to have pure time-space no “more than an address and a date” is needed. The images produced by the video-surveillance audiovisual continuum (Virilio, 1998), before passing through any type of intelligence (artificial or human) that qualifies and orders them according to an algorithm, are exactly this: an address and a date. The panoptic production of the images, without selective lenses, produces no information, is amorphous. As Deleuze (1985) says, regarding the image-temps, the “empty spaces, amorphous, lose their Euclidian coordinates”.

The use of empty spaces, that absorbs the characters and actions, produces a pressure of time and space, creating a scene where anything can happen. The director Peter Brook developed this question in his book Empty Space (1986) placing the pressure of time, of space and of bodies as forces of creation.

In the same way, the image of video-surveillance presented as a cinematic scene establishes itself like a zone of probabilities, an area where something may make itself seen. Vision is not guaranteed, there is no set visibility, but a possibility of seeing, an opening. What is at play is, more than seeing something, is to see if there is something to be seen and, at the same time, and overall, see oneself seeing.

The dream of the absolute transparency of surveillance leads to simulation (Bogard, 1996). One of the characteristics pointed out by Dubois (2004) in the simulated image is that it offers itself as a surface for navigation, in simulated space it is possible to stop time, jump to the future or go back to the past.

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8 The movement which characterised Italian cinema after WW2.
Michael Haneke explores this very aspect in the opening of *Caché* (2005), when the image we are watching, which we believe to be the film, suddenly pauses, rewinds and advances. This effect is used at various moments throughout the narrative, creating constant doubt for the viewer: am I watching the image of the film being watched or am I watching the film itself? In this operation the viewer is forced to watch him/herself watching, removes him/herself from the act of watching the film and perceives this as construction, exactly like his/her viewing activity.

In the feature film there are situations in which suspense is produced that impels us viewers, and the character George, who is also watching the images, to look for something. By exposing nothing, or rather by generating this expectation with the insistence of a fixed frame, “charged” scene, that may or may not happen (in a motor-sensory sense), the image provokes us, challenges us to reveal something hidden, *caché*, that happens in us viewers.

The extent to which it is the collective dimension, social and historic, the condition of possibility for the images to take on meaning, the notion of authorship needs to be refined. In her film “*Unfinished*” (1998-2005, USA) which shows images from a surveillance circuit monitoring clients using the ATM of a north-american bank, the French artist Sophie Calle admitted she didn’t know what to do with the images. After a series of failed attempts, in the artist’s opinion, she admitted that one of the factors impeding progress on the work was that the resulting film had no recognisable “author”. The problem is that segregation, sterilization and paranoia are inherent in video-surveillance systems to an extent that makes artistic interpretation difficult. The fact that the cameras are in place “because of the money and not of the people”, observed the artist, “contaminated” the images to the extent that this dimension became unavoidable. From this work we learn the following lesson: the production of films that use surveillance images must imply a discussion about the element of control built into the processes of surveillance and cinema. Questions raised: How to work with optical images and pure sounds in a state of fundamental stuttering? (Deleuze, 1992) How to disarticulate them from the language codified by industrial narrative cinema and by the culture of fear and insecurity?

**Lessons of Composition**

Thought of as an action *sousveillance* (Mann, 1998), the “Composição para Circuito de Vídeo-vigilância” (CCVV) takes on the apparatus commercialised by the security industry, and reconfigures it for public exhibition in galleries, theatres or cinemas, making explicit “seeing” as a structure of knowing and power. The result is the creation of a live cinema show, of variable duration, which we can analyse as follows.

We can consider it as cinema because the format of exhibition is made up of a projection in a dark room with the spectators in the half-light facing a screen. Even though the big screen is now on a control panel with multiple monitors and an operator, we understand CCVV as a form of expanded cinema.

What differentiates live cinema from normal cinema is the ability to improvise the narrative or concepts, to alter their course as the performance progresses, perhaps even interacting with the audience or present site-specific elements. (Makela, 2007)

The central idea of the CCVV performance is to confront the cinema spectator – understood as a subject for whom a unique focus of attention is demanded – and the visualization of surveillance images – usually offered in a multiscreen format.

Multiple points of view make up one of the principal expressive elements in an operating video-surveillance circuit. The British filmmaker/director Peter Greenaway, with some exaggeration, would affirm that television freed cinema to assume its true vocation, but in our understanding, it is by

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10 Brecht’s notion of the meta-text can help here. In opposition to the Stanislavskian ‘sub-text’, it is not about something hidden in the psychology of an individual, but of the epic, social and historical dimension that constitutes the machinery of the scene.


12 Mia Makela, [http://www.vjtheory.net/vjamtheory.html](http://www.vjtheory.net/vjamtheory.html)
combining contemporary apparatuses of vision with the tradition of cinema that we can liberate images and sounds.

So notions of multiplicity of frame are rising - and of no longer having a flat space that stands in a dark cinema, so that we all have to look in one direction, which are things of the past now.13 (Greenaway, 1997)

It is not possible for us to conceive visual form as given, but as constructed, conceptually and technically. CCVV operates with the creative power of editing (Vertov, 1923; Eisenstein, 1949) in an exercise in which the principles of operation and construction of images is explicit. In this way, the intention is that the images produced by CCVV contribute to the aesthetic emancipation of the viewer,14 to the extent that the very structure of narrative control based on notions of authorship and chronology are questioned.

Live Cinema with direct video-surveillance material is factual, combining visual elements, “cine-cells” (Vertov, 1923) in a given sense, and “life through improvisation” (ibid) prevailing over simulation. Thus, we can mix passers-by, actors, performers, dancers, and other theatrical players, from the stage to the street, from cinema and from spectacles in general, strategically included in the area under surveillance15. These figures, in turn, combine rehearsed repertoire with casual and impromptu stimuli that arise during the performance by interaction with one another, with the public or by chance, “under the risk of the real” (Comolli, 2001). The result is a hybrid scene, where the question “what is real and what is fiction” is paramount.

With this creative method accords are formed and then undone. The figures in scene do not crystalize into characters, in a classic-narrative sense, but assume roles, and these roles are nothing more than the stereotypes that compose a memory shared by the viewers, performers and operators, stereotypes that are in turn updated by the images of this “society of the spectacle” (Debord, 2000) and by the video-surveillance apparatus itself.

The way to escape this vicious cycle is not by jumping away from one’s own shadow in search of an impossible transparency, but on the contrary, jump into the cycle and toy with the crystalline and opaque chain. The causality, which in the classic narrative regime is the link, gives way to the casualness, which governs the attention in this crystalline order.

The registered images are not taken as content of a re-presentation, but as presentation of a space and time. The fact that they are not organised around an event, a “where from”, a “to where”, frees them to make connections other than the motor-sensory. However this does not signify that a CCVV session has no beginning or end. Being outside a script, which organizes them, these images point to themselves in an obscene manner. There is no plot to lean on. The images brutally demonstrate the gratuity of the scene, revealing the search for motor-sensory chains to which we turn in an attempt to invest meaning. Therefore, in a surveillance camera drama, we cannot establish a hierarchy among the images in function of that which we normally call order and that constitutes a teleological narrative.

The lesson that all things are “agents of double ontology: pieces of art and mere objects of the world” and that “the common is, in itself, extraordinary”16, is Zen knowledge that can be awoken by the attention dedicated to video-surveillance images. The camera device gives the status of film, a quality of both documentary and fiction to any scene that establishes itself in its presence. The automatic treatment of the reality of visual facts by video-surveillance, without data mining or the application of filters, produces this equivalence between the real and symbolic in all things filmed.

15 Precisely the method used by Manu Luksh in Faceless (UK, 2007).
16 Fluxus Exhibition Catalogue, Centro Cultural, Banco do Brasil.
The video-surveillance image, removed from its preventative or repressive functions, allows a poetic of the ordinary to bloom. In reference to the feature *Der Riese* (dir. Michel Klier, 1984), Françoise Parfait wrote:

> Or, justement le recyclage qu'opère Michel Klier produit sur le spectateur un effet très surprenant: dans le défilement des images sans style, le regard cherche, avec une attention très affûtée, le moindre élément qui pourrait faire sens ou naître un début d'histoire, surgir du flux indiscernible, amorcer un mouvement. (Parfait, 2001: 281)

In an experiment by Michel Klier that uses surveillance cameras as the raw material, the incessant activity to give significance to the image into which we are thrown is conducted by the soundtrack. The director gives potential to this phenomenon in function of the presence or absence of music. Entering into dialogue with the musicality inherent in the flux of images, the added melody induces a possible dramatic reading for the material being registered by the visual apparatus. Even before the invention of the synchronized recording and playback of sound with moving images (1929), the combination of optical and acoustic was part of the dispositive of cinema. The expansion of the image by means of sound montage were experimented by various authors of cinema, finding in Jean Luc Godard its strong exponent. Whether in consonance or dissonance with the image; whether synchronous or out of synch; whether within the frame or creating an extra-field, whether to reiterate an idea or introduce conflict, the discourse of sound activates other dimensions in the image.

**Composition nº1 - 15 e 16/08/08 - Caixa Cultural – Mostra Live Cinema**

The fundamental feature of live presentation is operating in risk of the real, in a state open to stimulus. Peter Brook (2001) points to what he calls tripartite attention required for the construction of this scene: paying attention to internal impulses: paying attention to other performers; paying attention to space (external impulses).

The potential of each element of the scene creates what the author calls an invisible network (Peter Brook, 2001), defined as a state of connectivity and the capacity to respond to a given field. With CCVV this state of alert is shared with the other performers in scene, the audio and visual operators and the audience, themselves virtual operators. The operators mix and edit the images and audio conforming to sketches rehearsed with the performers. The viewers in turn are free to enter in scene at any given moment of their choice at their wish, transforming themselves into performers, and with a little training and orientation from a monitor, there is nothing impeding them from piloting the images and sounds in an intuitive manner. Anyone who directs their attention to the mixing desk can act as operator. With the mixing console it is possible to view the images on TV monitors of all the cameras that integrate the system. On the screen the images from 4 separate cameras are displayed in succession, or all together as a grid. Sounds are whispered into a microphone (live P.A.), excerpts of dialogue from famous films in the history of world cinema, street interviews, urban and rural ambient sounds, noises, frequencies and beats juxtaposed, producing a soundscape.

The contribution of the image and sound operators is part of the spectacle, creating a new layer of observation: watching the watchmen, literally watching the operators watching. This invariably leads to discrepancies between the expectations of the viewers and the choices made by the operators. One of the results observed at the end of the performance the audience were tempted to operate the mixing console, motivated by voyeurism, by false leads in the narrative, by curiosity or even by the desire to construct their own narrative, among many of possible stimulus. The grid of cameras gives us a map of the area under surveillance, which can be navigated by means of a television system.

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17 Early cinema had relied on live performance of music, and the accompaniment of piano in particular become common.
18 *Composição para Circuito de Vigilância nº 1* was presented over two nights. Those who cam on the second day could also observe the previous days viewers at the Caixa Cultural.
19 For Composition nº6 we are working with this possibility, and in the place of operators it will have only monitors that the public will be helped to operate,
The principal is the same as that of a television mixing console, but the fact that the raw material is the “life through improvisation”, in a Vertovian sense, mixed with audio and theatrical performances, and that the equipment was originally designed to scrutinize and punish, creates new significant layers for this CCVV project.

In this way, the vigilance of the cameras forces us to beware. This wariness, does not solely determine an orwellian or panoptic way of looking. Its attitude, its veto or its permissiveness, in a Heideggerian sense, can point to a totally diverse poetry.

When we appropriate video-surveillance images, one of the tools for the creation of diagrams with the performers consists exactly in suspending the action, creating pauses, producing fissures and ruptures in the real time perceived on the. That which is being watched is real time, the present, or playback of a past scene? Relying on this indiscernible movement, the bodies of the performers in scene simulate variations in velocity, suspension and actions in reverse, creating an optical illusion, which gives the effect of establishing doubt before the image.

The dramatization of video-surveillance, that which is defined here, transfers the action – in the case of the action-image and its motor-sensory chain – to vision, to the perceptual activity of seeing, to the action of accessing the memory (individual and collective) in order to update the image in the present, producing, with this operation, significance. All drama gives itself to this side of the image. What we present ourselves with is purely gratuitous, that we actively seek to dramatize, live, combined with sounds at our disposition and with certain designs of movement of the cast previously studied in the spaces under surveillance. The wait, frustration, desire and other feelings stimulated by the suspense of the quotidian make up the prime material when dealing with video-surveillance images.

20 Jonathan Crary considers that Goethe’s Farbenlehre “There are no optical illusions, only optical truths”  
21 Zemos 98’s text, Videosurveillance as Genre, adds to this analysis.
The spatial proximity, the field x counter-field, the temporal continuity, the space outside the screen and other figures of language of classic narrative cinema are parodied, probed, expanded, creating new layers of significance for the cinema image parting from video-surveillance material that as we have seen, also presents its own questions.

For obvious security reasons, it wasn’t possible to use the cameras and surveillance system of the Caixa Cultural (it being the cultural centre of a federal bank). However we were authorised to install 4 of our own cameras in locations of our choice, approved by the institution. The low cost cameras produced black and white panoramic images of low resolution and gave an “aesthetic of surveillance”, to the public these were images from the official circuit in the building. 250 meters of coaxial cable transmitted the camera signals to a simple 4 channel quadbox analogue mixer, operated as a switcher during the performance. 10 performers shared the 4 screens with the public visiting the cultural centre. Scenes of transgression, disobedience, nonsense, terrorism, voyeurism, illusionism and cinematographic imaginary interchanged amongst themselves during the 15min presentation. The audio was reproduced by a separate computer, which was not connected to the image mixer. Some sequences were agreed upon, various with success, but chance, the reactions of the audience and the happenings during the presentation exercised an equal role in the dynamic of the show.

Presented with the smaller narrow “dirty” spaces of the Glaucio Gil theatre, we encountered some difficulty in finding camera placements that would provide the strategies and aesthetic of surveillance, in comparison to that which we realised at the Caixa Cultural with its ordered spaces, extensive corridors, expansive marble patios and pragmatic architecture. The architecture of the Teatro Glaucio Gil with its
low ceiling and small interiors remembered nothing of the sterile surveillance ambience with repeating spaces of our repertoire. The theatre had no surveillance system of its own, so with no reference we started from zero.

One camera we installed on our control desk at the rear of the projection room itself. Positioned facing the projection screen, in frame an empty chair facing the camera with its back to the audience. Along with the feedback of the projection screen in shot, the empty chair in the foreground was an invitation to test new relationships with the camera. Like in an interview booth it would be possible to directly meet, encounter and front up to the camera. Like in a confession booth or tribunal, admit blame or error; in an election, used as a podium for oratory, for political ends. Like a rear window or a peep show, to give access to diverse impulses. Armed with these ideas we elaborated a few characters: prostitute, politician, pregnant woman, tramp, terrorist, Marlene Dietrich and a Joker. The other three cameras were placed in two passageways and a gathering point: the entrance to the theatre, a stairway and the bar. The fact that the spaces were contiguous, presented a few challenges, because without blind spots it would be harder to establish our own topography.

The performers in costume exercised their predetermined roles and the actions and interactions of their agreed repertoire were fixed to a timescale. The operators did not appear as maestros at the foot of the projection screen as in composition 01, but behind the public in the projection cabin with the first camera. Despite some good ideas, the apparatus did not seem to configure well and the screened performance lost itself in the rigidity of the partial script.

composition nº 3 - 05/11/2008 - CPM/ECO/UFRJ

At the Central de Produção Multimídia - ECO - CPM/ECO/UFRJ (School of Communication, Rio de Janeiro State University) it was possible to work with the actual campus surveillance system (in operation since 2008). The school director, Ivana Bentes, authorised the creation of a temporary mirror of the system.
at an FTP address, which allowed, after typing in a password, access and navigation in real time of 16 cameras during the performance. Without risk of interfering with the official surveillance system, the control equipment this time was a PC in the auditorium connected to the Internet. The audio came from MP3 archives plugged into a sound mixer. The system was piloted by multiple operators, all students of audio and video editing, who created small narratives/sketches with the rest of the students who took on the acting.

The proposal of an observation space projected live onto the screen of the CPM auditorium served the various fictional performances, creating an over-flowing release of activity from the students in relation to the school space and the characters they could interpret there.

The result was 16 images comprising a diagram of extra-terrestrials, sessions of group sex, striptease, gang violence and other surprising acts. We can conclude here, paraphrasing Jean Rouch, that “the more extravagant and dishevelled the fiction, the more real the painting of a given reality”. 22

Overall the excessive activity of the scenes inhibited the appearance of the more subtle dimension of the work, the “life through improvisation”, responding to the unexpected, the alertness, playing with chance, the pressure of time and space and other elements with essential traces of a surveillance aesthetic. This is always a risk run by the operators, viewers and performers of a composition.

22 Rouch, 1967: 18; citado por Da-Rin, 2006, 163)
This time the creation was oriented by the plastic relation between the human body and the architecture of the spaces under surveillance. The locality was a medium sized music venue constructed with metal tubing and canvas, containing tall palm trees and situated next to a viaduct. The surveillance system in place was completely obsolete, employing VHS recording, and attempts to make it function were to no avail. Once again we created our own installation, permitting us to design our own diagram of images that own their own had a harmonic geometric value.

We opted for a non-dramatic, non-psychological representation of the characters, producing a kind of biomechanical study parting from the trajectory of the bodies through the circuit of images. Three cameras were installed in the interior of the Circo Voador and one camera was directed to the exterior on the venue capturing the pedestrians and street scenes.

Just two performers - a dancer and a cyclist produced the in-scene movement. The result was an exercise where we observed the time the performers took to travel through the frame. The velocity, intensity, tensions and form of the body in relation to the space, therein lay our interest in the work.

The soundscape: pneumatic drills, clothes rustling, the tube/subway, skin brushing against the wall, rain, shaving, building interiors, keyboard typing, distant rumbling, a cigarette being lit, shopping mall, bus stop chit-chat, speech in various languages, a telephone ringing, a rowboat, a horse galloping and others totalling 40 in all.

**Conclusion**

The fact of taking on the force of video-surveillance is not to say that we embrace it as a tool of social control, much to the contrary. We refuse to delegate the responsibility of observing others – and ourselves, to mechanisms based on suspicion. One of our intentions with this work is to redefine relations between people, the look and image, overcoming fear and insecurity. By the same measure we propose the re-thinking of the experience of cinema, video and television starting from this presence en masse of cameras.

When we offer the images from surveillance cameras for a live cinema performance, we are inviting the viewers to enter into this game where it is their own speculative capacity that is in scene, repositioning the place of the cinematographic director, of the narrative omniscience and the authorship of the images and questioning in a Brechtian fashion the narrative structures convened in the 20th century and the forms of visual representation historically constituted. The responsibility – that Peter Brook would “decoupage” as responsibility – of each of us to be at the ready, with spirit, senses alert, reflexes tuned, assume a vigilant posture, that has no intention of assuming control of the scene in a previously given direction, but simply play, or to use a term fond to musicians, to jam. In this way in CCVV various forms of intuition are stimulated and developed - through listening to the body, through the observation of life, through inherited cultural memory. (Bogart, 2001)

Performers and the public collaborate in the narrative construction, which forcibly creates itself by fusing the collective audio-visual imaginary and the real time occurrences before the cameras. Playing with codes of cinema, sounds and stereotyped characters, memory and history, we place in check the actual functionality of the images – which, in video circuits that are incessantly recording, most of the time have no function whatsoever – creating a game of construction deconstruction where nothing is what it appears to be.

Thus the work retakes the questions posed throughout the article. On one side the relations between image and truth, and image and reality, contextualised in the tradition of fictional cinema and documentary; and on the other the relations between suspicion and expectation, analysing the consumption of reality as a show, and the value of the image as proof and evidence at the service of control, of transparency and of simulation.
Baretto Leblanc: From Closed-circuit Television to the Open Network of Live Cinema

References

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