

«Watching The World, The Encyclopedia Of The Now»

an **art** project by

KURT
CAVIEZEL + **zh**
aw School of
Engineering

Abstract:

"WATCHING THE WORLD, The Encyclopedia Of The Now"

This is an **art**, a **photography**, an **exhibition**, an **AI**, a **big data**, a **osint**, an **online** project and uses **open data** sources for this purpose.

It photographs around the clock and around the globe the world in **live** mode by means of publicly accessible **network cameras**, presents the images simultaneously on the project website in different modes and, with the help of **AI**, develops a new way of seeing, a new kind of photography.

"WATCHING THE WORLD" can be viewed as a standalone and **giant** online-camera.

By clicking a feature, the **simultaneous views** of the world can be **curated** by the viewers and used in their own way.

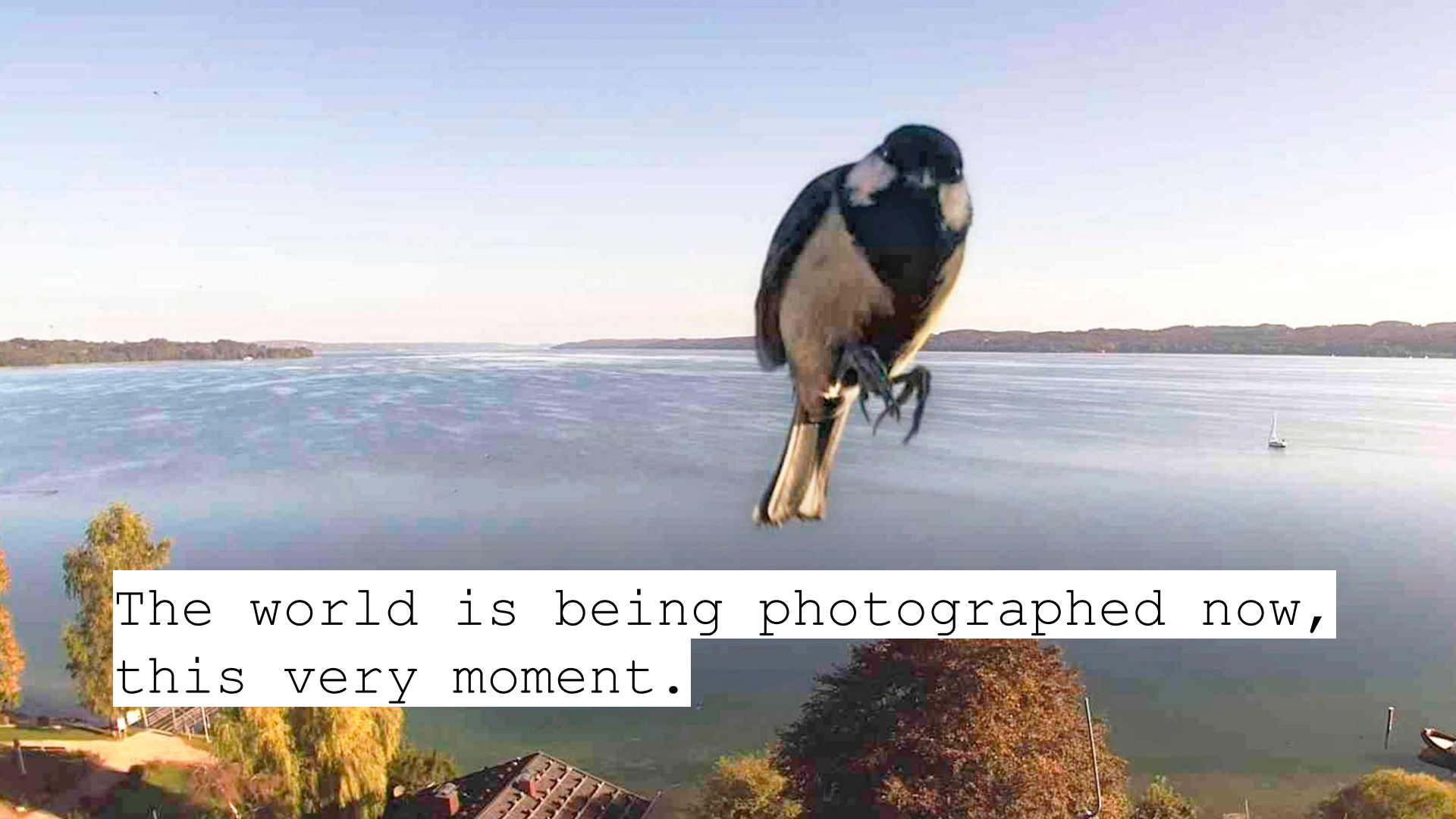
For example, this overwhelming stream of images can be sorted according to various criteria.

The network cameras look at **public** as well as at **private spheres**.

The fact that different cultures value **privacy** differently is just one of the insights we may gain.

What is seen in the pictures, determines the world and at the same time is in the eye of the beholder.

This can be **provocative**.



The world is being photographed now,
this very moment.

About us:

Kurt Caviezel:
Artist, based in Zürich

**ZHAW, Zurich University of Applied
Sciences**

Exhibitions (excerpt):

- International Center of Photography (ICP),
New York (USA)
- Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain,
Paris (F)
- Rencontres d'Arles Photographie,
Arles (F)
- Fotostiftung Schweiz, **Winterthur** (CH)
- Museum of Photography, **Lianzhou** (China)
- Foto Colectania, **Barcelona** (ESP)
- NRW Forum, **Düsseldorf** (DE)

School of Engineering:

Institute of Data Analysis and Process Design

- Prof. Dr. **Helmut Grabner**,
Professor of Data Analytics
and Machine Learning
- **Fitim Abdullahu**,
Research focus Data Analysis
and Statistics

WATCHING THE WORLD: about

Network cameras (webcams, surveillance, security, live and IP cameras) are constantly photographing what is happening and feeding the images **live** into the web.

The web is a camera, an incredibly **huge camera**.

The world puts itself in the picture; perhaps entirely in the sense of the established practices of **self-observation** for purposes of self-optimisation. However, net cameras are not only the eyes of the web; they work as **extensions** of our bodies. Because by means of the cameras, we look through the web, back at **the real world, at ourselves**.

This enormous image machine photographs live and simultaneously around the globe. Publicly accessible, these images show up somewhere on the net, photographed automatically, without the scrutinizing eye of an **author**. If we understand the web as a single personal camera system, the network cameras work as **lenses**. The screen becomes the **viewfinder** and the mouse the **shutter release**.

But if we let technology work by itself, an **algorithm** pushes the button. But does an algorithm take the place of the photographer, the author? Does it claim image rights? Is it **responsible** for the content? Or is it the operators, or perhaps even the technicians who installed the cameras and thus selected the image section? A **new mode of authorship** is emerging.

WATCHING THE WORLD: about

In the now, the world is photographically available.

The theorem of the **decisive moment**, which is constitutive of classical photographic history and is always bound to a place, is taken ad absurdum here: If this huge camera constantly photographs everything, this one decisive moment no longer exists. Rather, this moment extends spatially around the entire globe, it takes place **simultaneously**.

If we photograph thousands of these moments simultaneously and make them immediately visible online, we create an **encyclopaedia of the now**. Or in other words: we see everything thus assuming an almost God-like position.

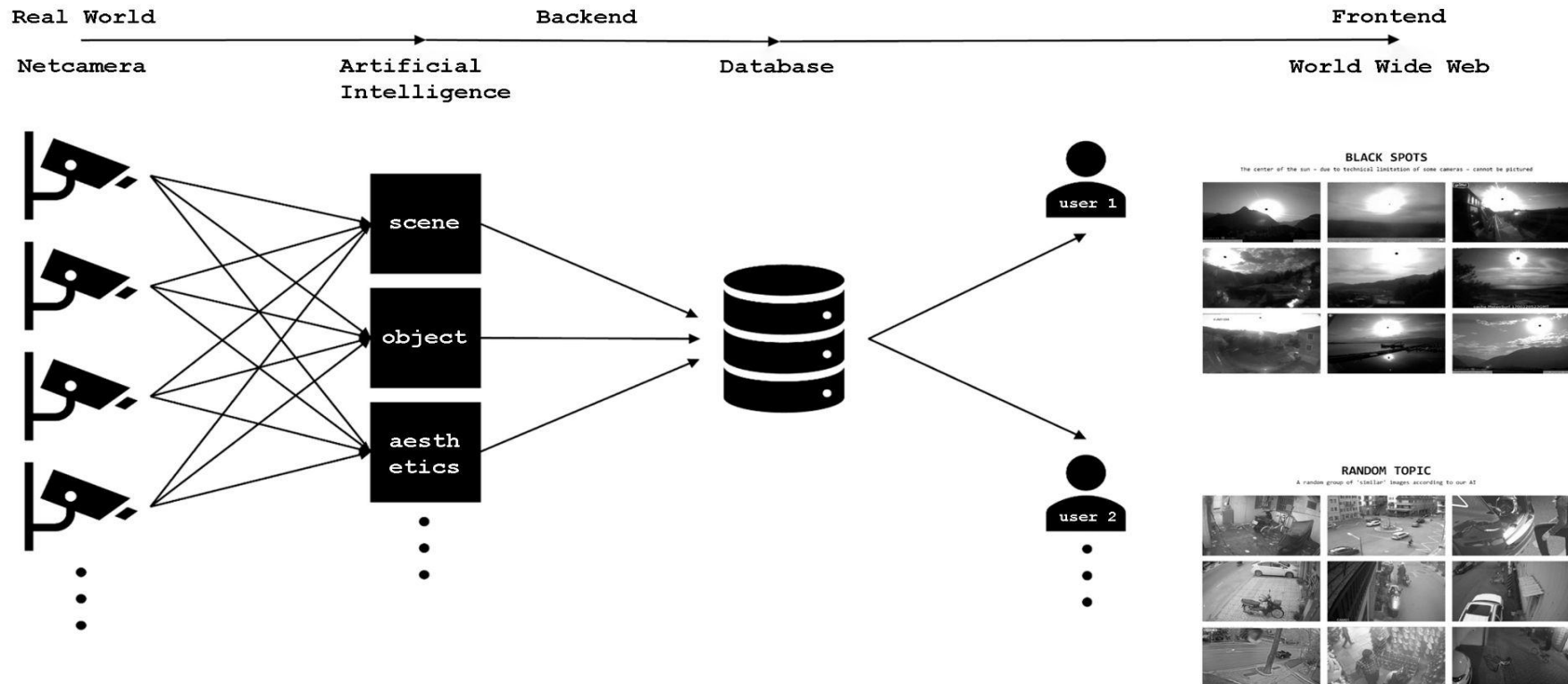
This project is also about manifesting this spatially extended global moment and creating something like a **map of the world**.

Surveillance is only one aspect. What is much more important and powerful here is **observing the world** - and **learning** from it.

For this purpose, technology is required; because as humans, we are trapped in space and time.

Kurt Caviezel and the **ZHAW**, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, as cooperation partners, have jointly developed and programmed this **giant camera**.

WATCHING THE WORLD: about



WATCHING THE WORLD: **about**

Thousands of netcams are recorded in **our system** new ones are added continually.
The algorithms download more than **a million images** from the web, every day.

Each image is analyzed by an artificial intelligence (**AI**) and archived in our storage for **48 hours** before being overwritten by the following ones.

As a user, you can now observe the world according to **predefined** criteria or according to **your own categories** by using the text search.

New features are constantly being developed and added to the world's largest camera.



Main page:



TEXT SEARCH

>> LIVE

>> STREAMS ▶

>> US
ELECTIONS

AFRICA

AIRPORTS

AMERICA

AMERICAN

SELFIES

ANIMALS

ASIA

AUSTRALIA

BEACHES

BIKES

BLACK SPOTS

BOATS

BRIDGES

CARS

CHAIRS

CHURCHES

CLICKED

● ● ● ● ●

COMPUTERS

CORRIDORS

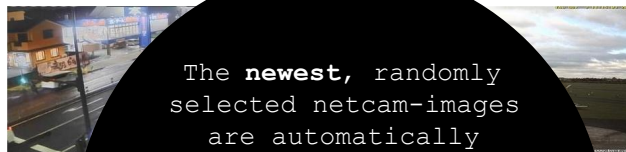
DEAD CAMS

DOORS

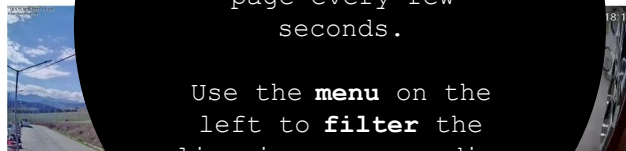
EMPLOYEES

LIVE

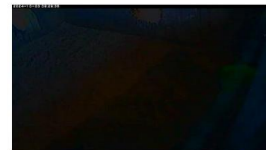
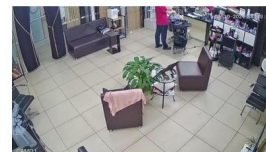
The world at this very moment (9 out of 10231 online cams)



The **newest**, randomly selected netcam-images are automatically displayed on the main page every few seconds.



Use the **menu** on the left to **filter** the live images according to **various criteria**.



Archive page:

KURT
CARTERS + 2010

PAST HOURS

TEXT SEARCH

>> LIVE

>> STREAMS

>> US

ELECTIONS

AFRICA

AIRPORTS

AMERICA

AMERICAN

SELFIES

ANIMALS

ASIA

AUSTRALIA

BEACHES

BIKES

BLACK SPOTS

BOATS

BRIDGES

CARS

CHAIRS

CHURCHES

CLICKED

COLORED CIRCLES

COMPUTERS

CORRIDORS

DEAD CAMS

DOORS

EMPLOYEES

EUROPE

FACTORIES

FISHEYES

FOG

FORESTS

HIDING

By **clicking** on a picture on the main page, the **archive** of this camera will open and you will see all the pictures of the **last 48 hours**.

This **image cluster** often appears as a bizarre and strange **pattern**.

Click on an image to **enlarge** it.

Archive page:

Looking for
patterns:

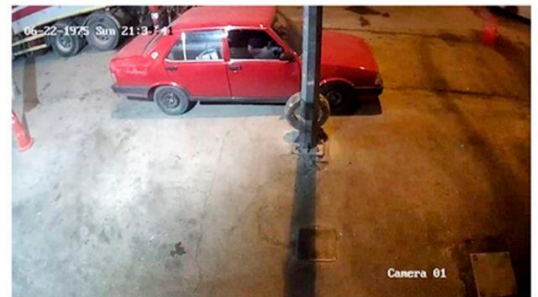
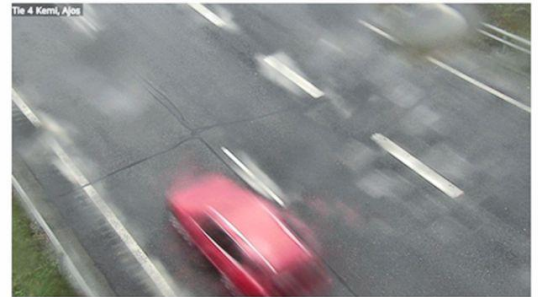
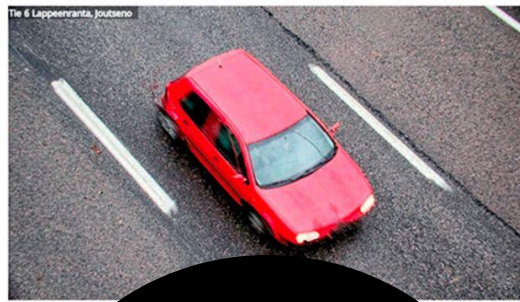
Text search:

TEXT SEARCH

The best match is found right now.

In **addition** to the predefined criteria, you can use the **AI-based text search** to find your **desired pictures** in this constantly flowing stream of images.

Text search:



Looking for
«red cars»:

Big Data:

Time sorted with 1782225 images from 03.10.2024

Random || All colors | Color only || **Time** || Photomosaic

Take a look at
all pictures we
have collected
from the last
day at once.

Here for
example:
1'782'225
pictures.

Big Data:

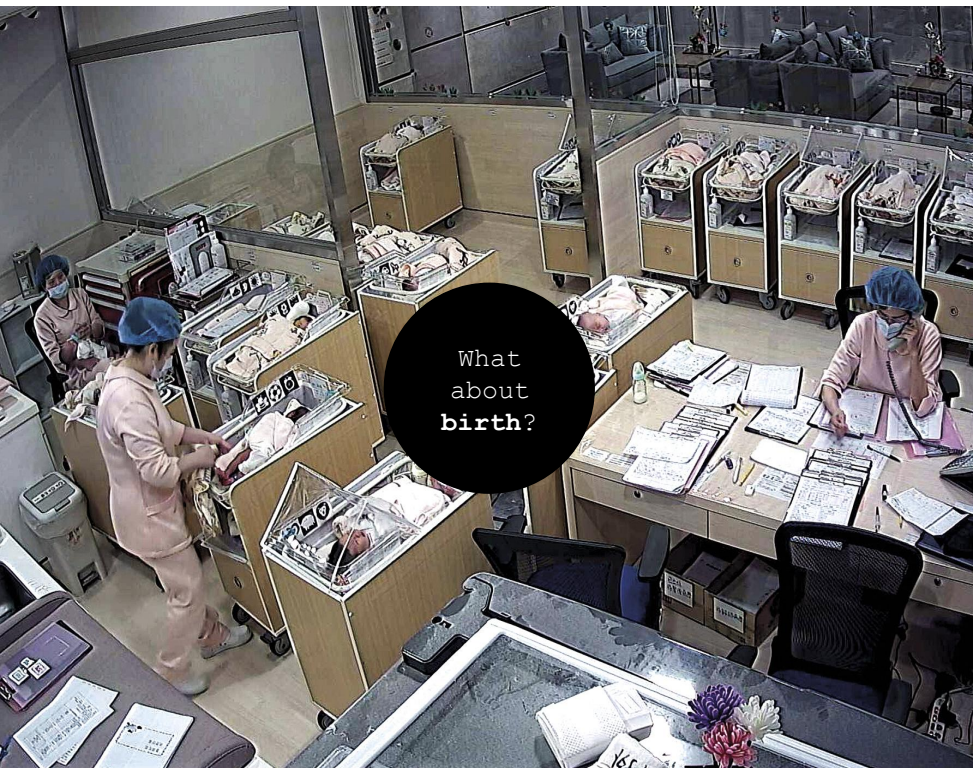
1'790'244 images photographed by the system over 24 hours.

Big Data:

1'790'244 images photographed by the system over 24 hours (part)

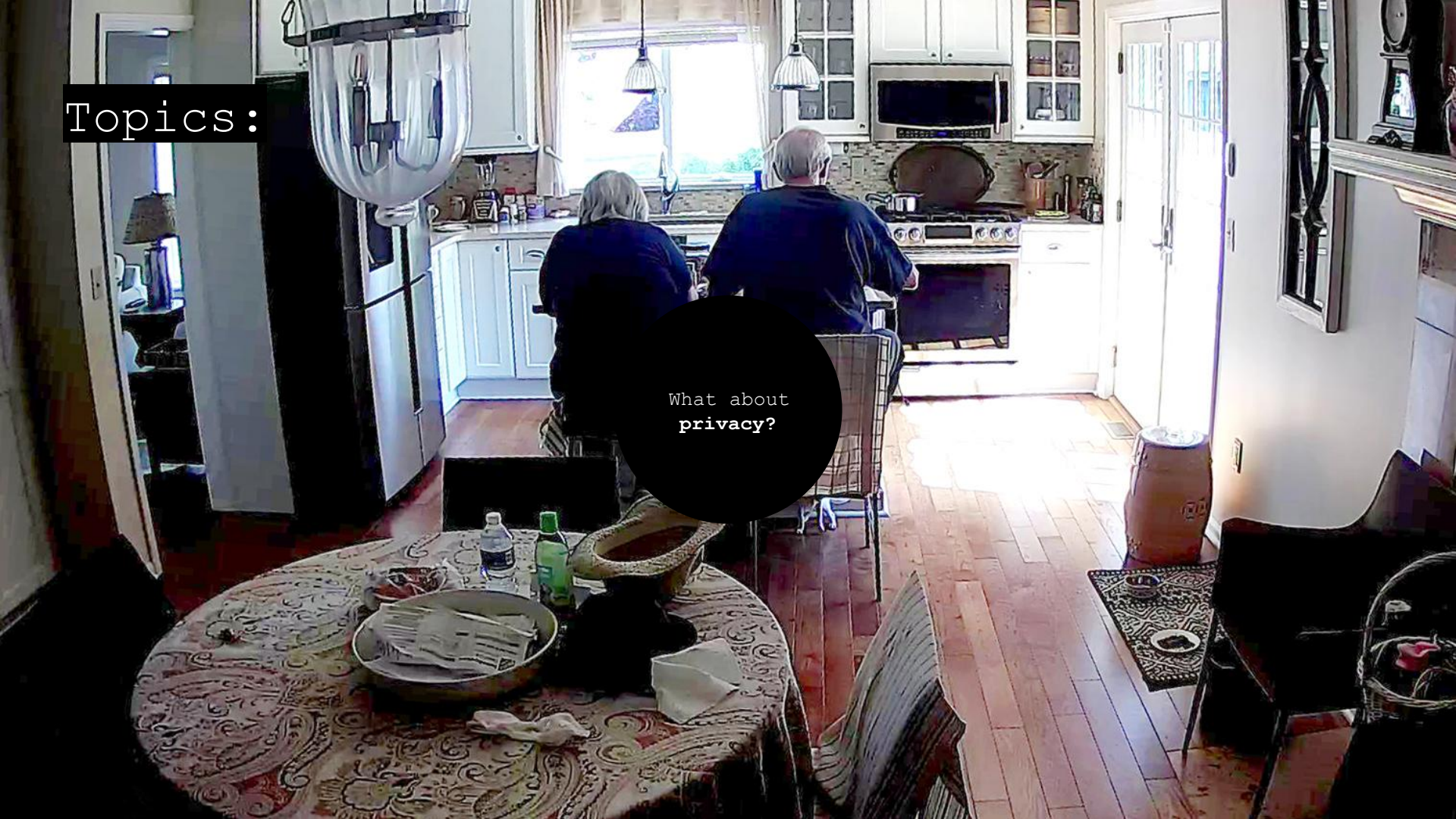
Topics:

Topics:



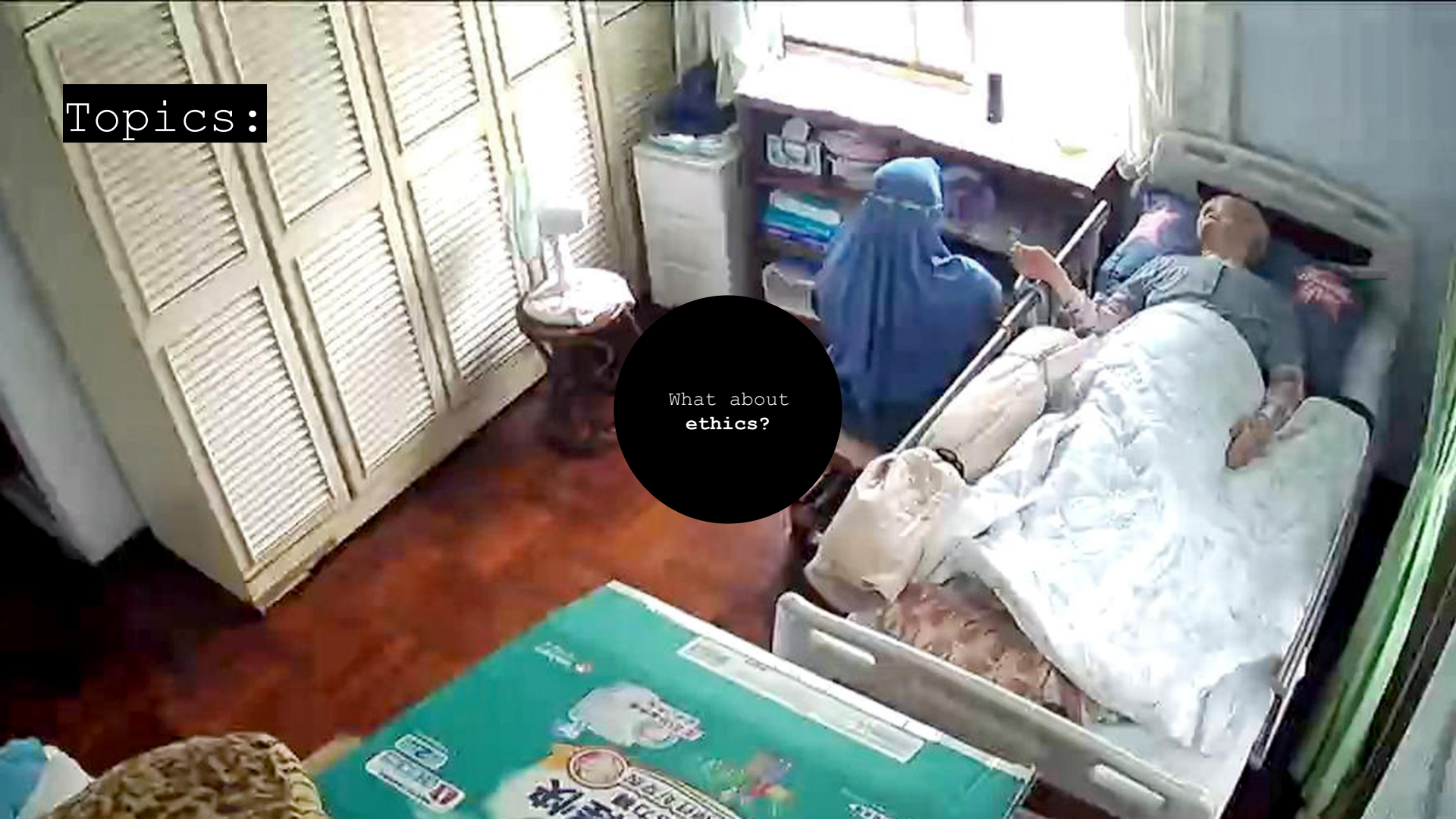
Topics:

What about
privacy?



Topics:

What about
ethics?



Topics:

A wide-angle photograph of a snowy landscape. In the center-left, a snowman stands with a stick for a nose and a small crown on its head. In the lower right, two people are standing, looking towards the snowman. A large black circle is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the text 'What about photography?'.

What about
photography?

Topics:

What about
data
protection?



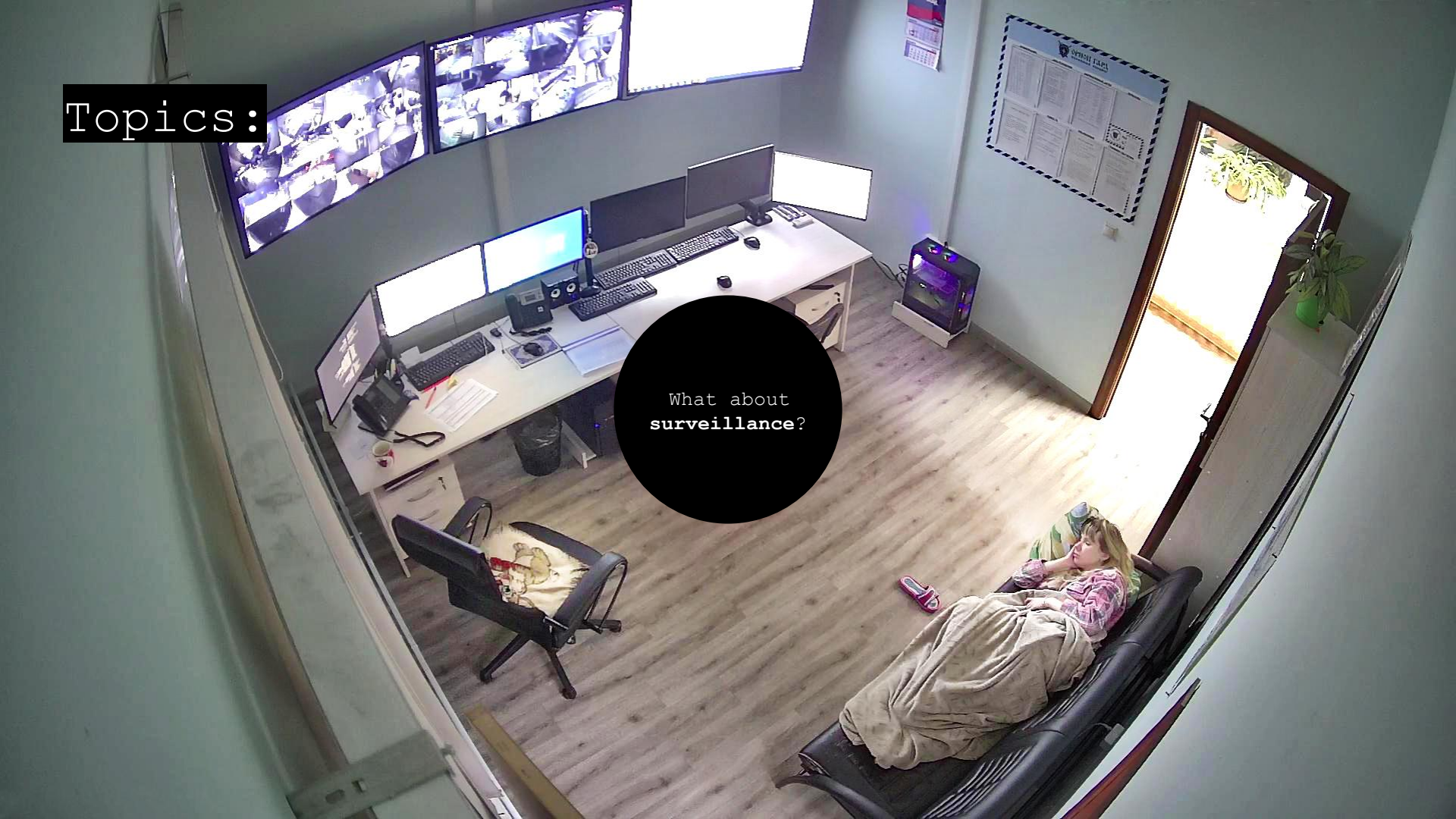
Topics:

What about
work?



Topics:

What about
surveillance?



Topics:

What about
technology?

Topics:

What about
freedom?

Topics:

What the
fuck?



Topics:



Watching The World is...

- a permanently changing online **exhibition**
- an **ai** playground
- a **research tool** on sociological, ecological, political, philosophical, legal, artistic and all possible aspects of photographic practice
- the **biggest camera** in the world
- a **pattern** generator
- a **big-** and **open-data** project
- a **reportage**
- an **authenticity** monster

- a **television**
- a **streaming** service
- a **surveillance** vehicle
- a cabinet of **curiosities**
- an image **floodgate**
- a **news** portal
- a data **collector**
- a **osint** (open source intelligence) tool
- an **encyclopedia of the now**...etc. etc....

From **single picture** to the **big picture**:

Insights about the world can be gained with “Watching the World” by **shifting the focus** from the single picture to the big picture.

This is done by trying to **read** and analyze the **data streams** and **metadata** of the cameras, their **infrastructure** and their **practices**.

Pattern recognition is also used here.

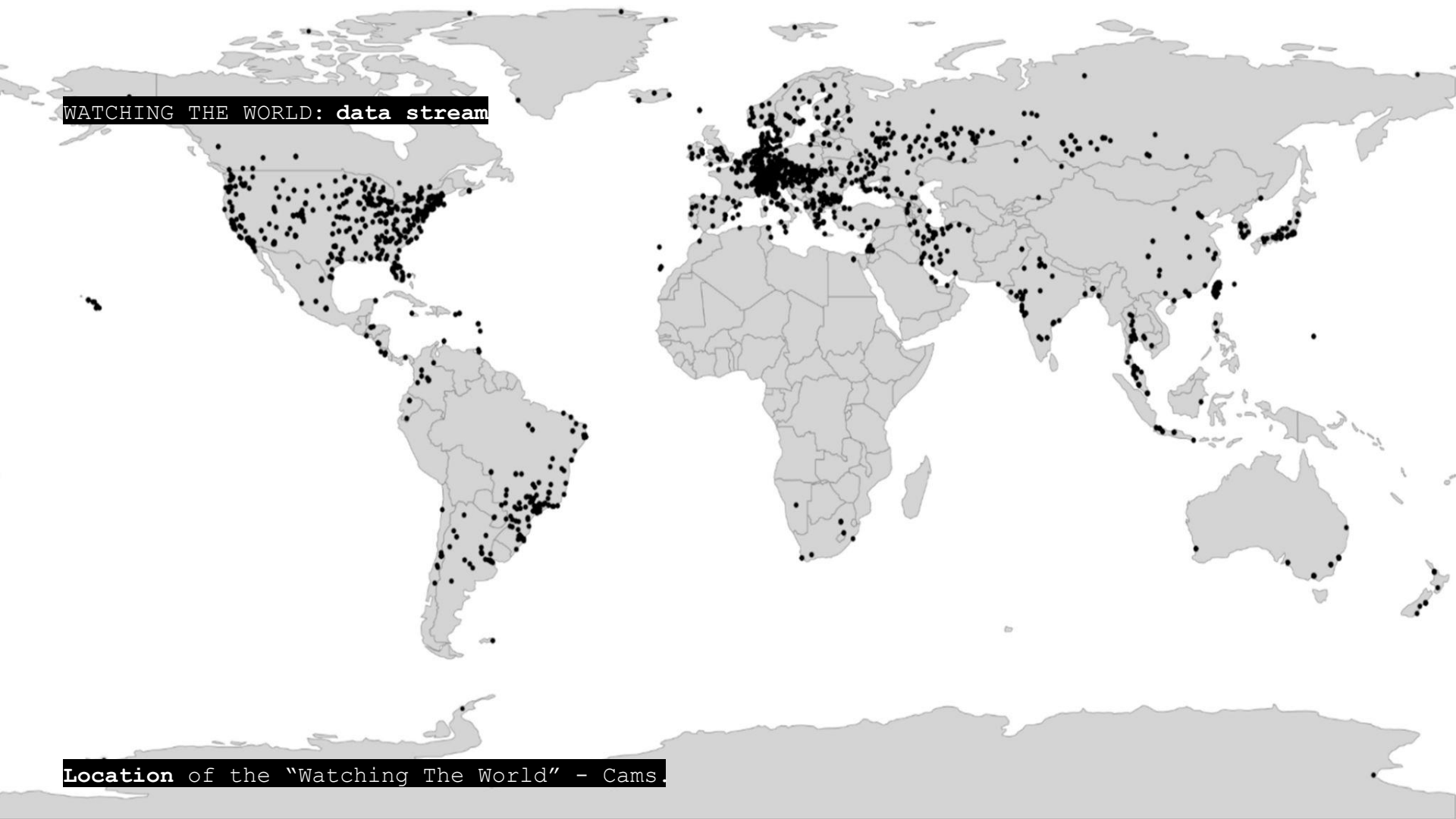
For example, to investigate

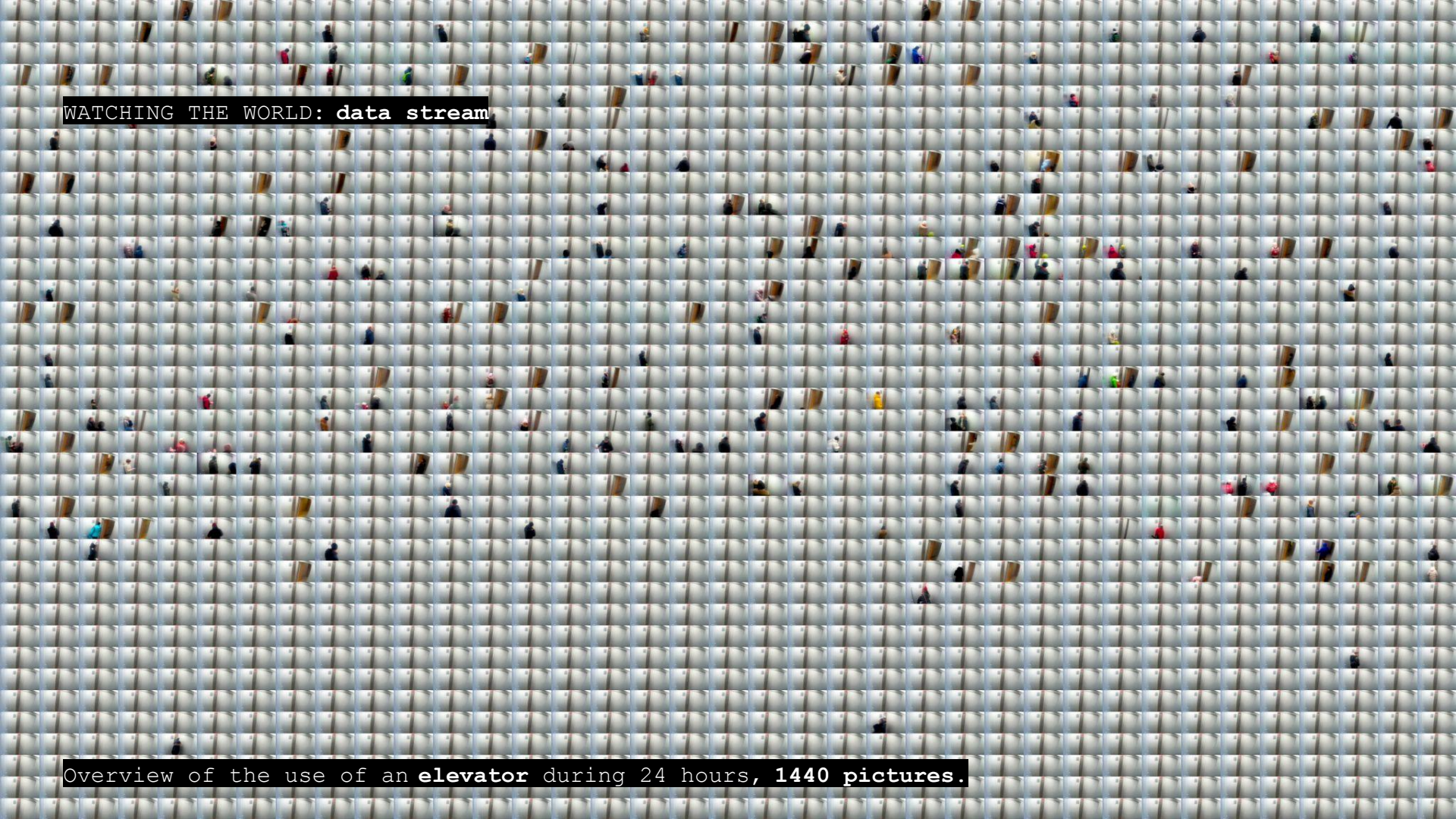
- where cameras are located - and where they are not.
- what kind of camera is used where and why.
- what is shown where - and what is not.
- where new cameras are connected to the network - and where they are switched off.
- what can be recognized in patterns of large image conglomerates.

"WATCHING THE WORLD, The Encyclopedia Of The Now" can in this way also be used as a **trend barometer** for changes and developments in the world, as a **seismograph of world sentiment**.

WATCHING THE WORLD: data stream

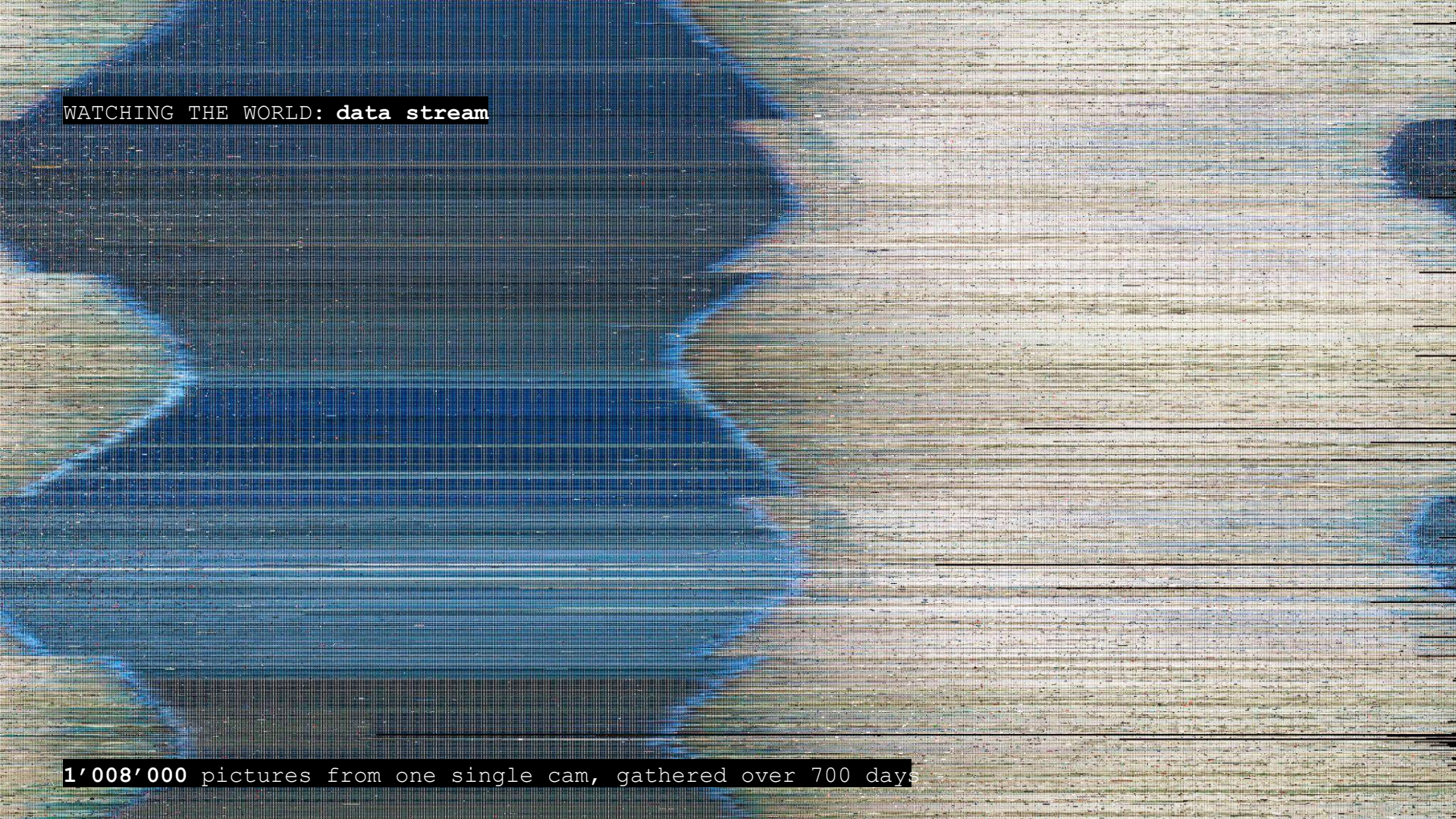
Location of the "Watching The World" - Cams.



The image is a large grid of 1600 small, square surveillance camera frames arranged in 40 rows and 40 columns. Each frame shows the interior of an elevator, which has white walls and a wooden floor. People are seen at various times, standing or moving within the space. The frames are taken from a fixed high-angle perspective. The overall effect is a dense, continuous stream of visual data.

WATCHING THE WORLD: data stream

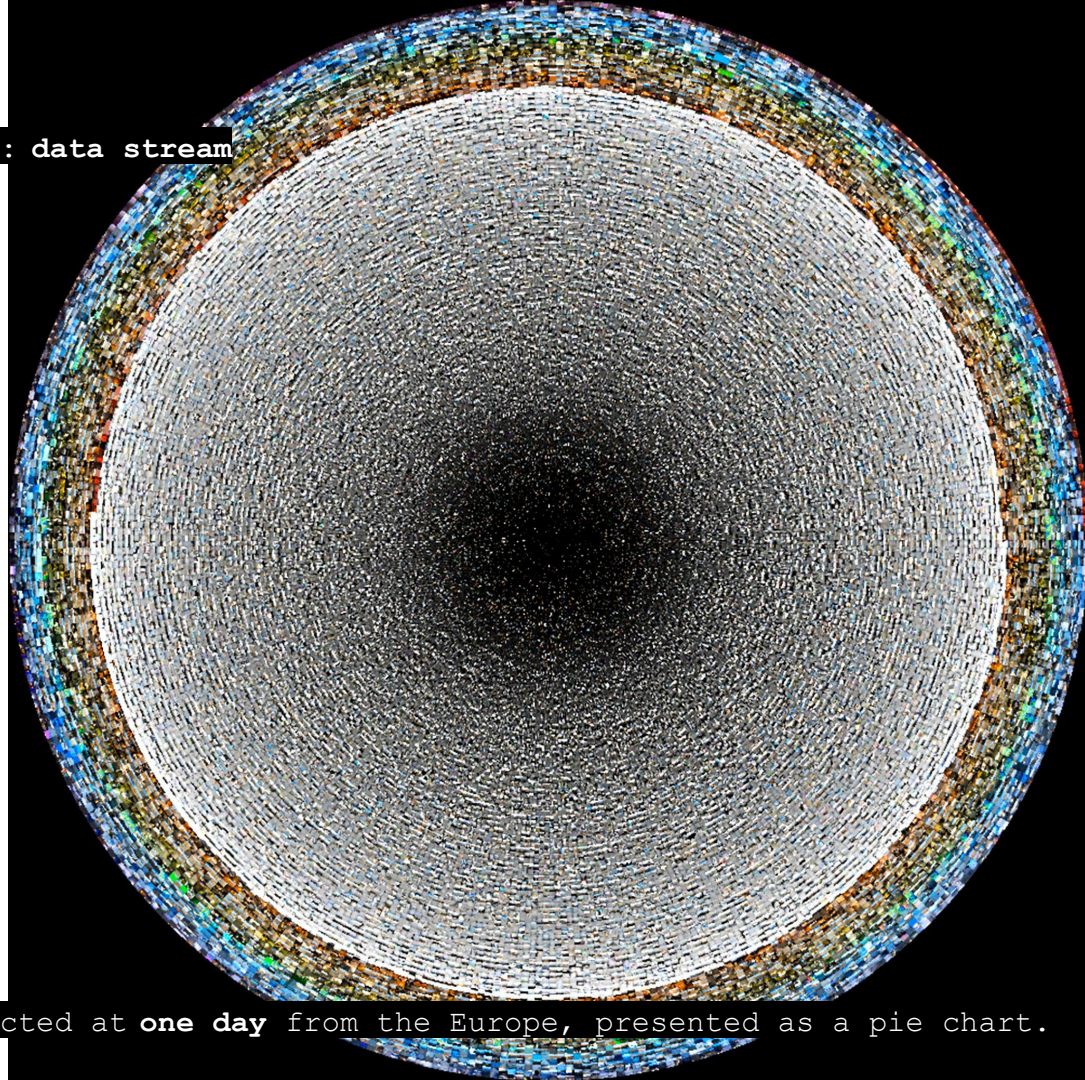
Overview of the use of an **elevator** during 24 hours, 1440 pictures.



WATCHING THE WORLD: **data stream**

1'008'000 pictures from one single cam, gathered over 700 days

WATCHING THE WORLD: **data stream**



All pictures collected at **one day** from the Europe, presented as a pie chart.

Presentation:

How are all these **images** and **data** displayed?

A wide variety of presentations are possible in **exhibitions** and **installations** - from prints in frames, wallpaper and videos to “big visual data” presentations on screens or as projections.

These image streams can now be made visible. Via our servers, these live images can be bundled in various modes and streamed in real time via the web **directly into the exhibition rooms**.

A Netflix of the real, so to speak.

Hundreds of thousands of images - in different modes - can be shown **simultaneously**.

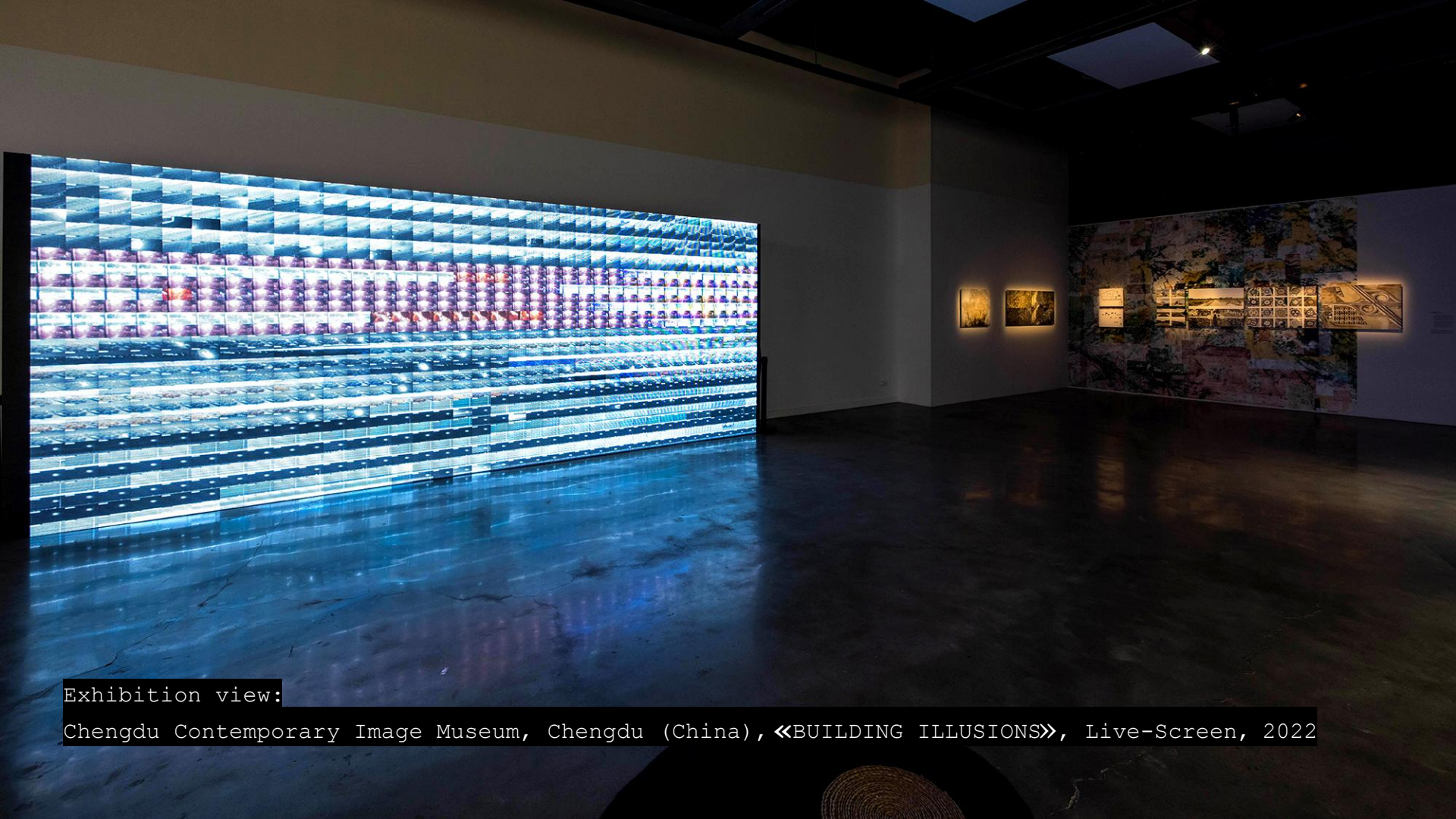
For example: The blanket coverage of an **entire room** with images, including the floor and ceiling. An “all over” concept, so to speak.

In **live-online mode**, every new image added **changes the look** of the whole.



Exhibition view:

Chengdu Contemporary Image Museum, Chengdu (China), «BUILDING ILLUSIONS», Live-Screen, 2022



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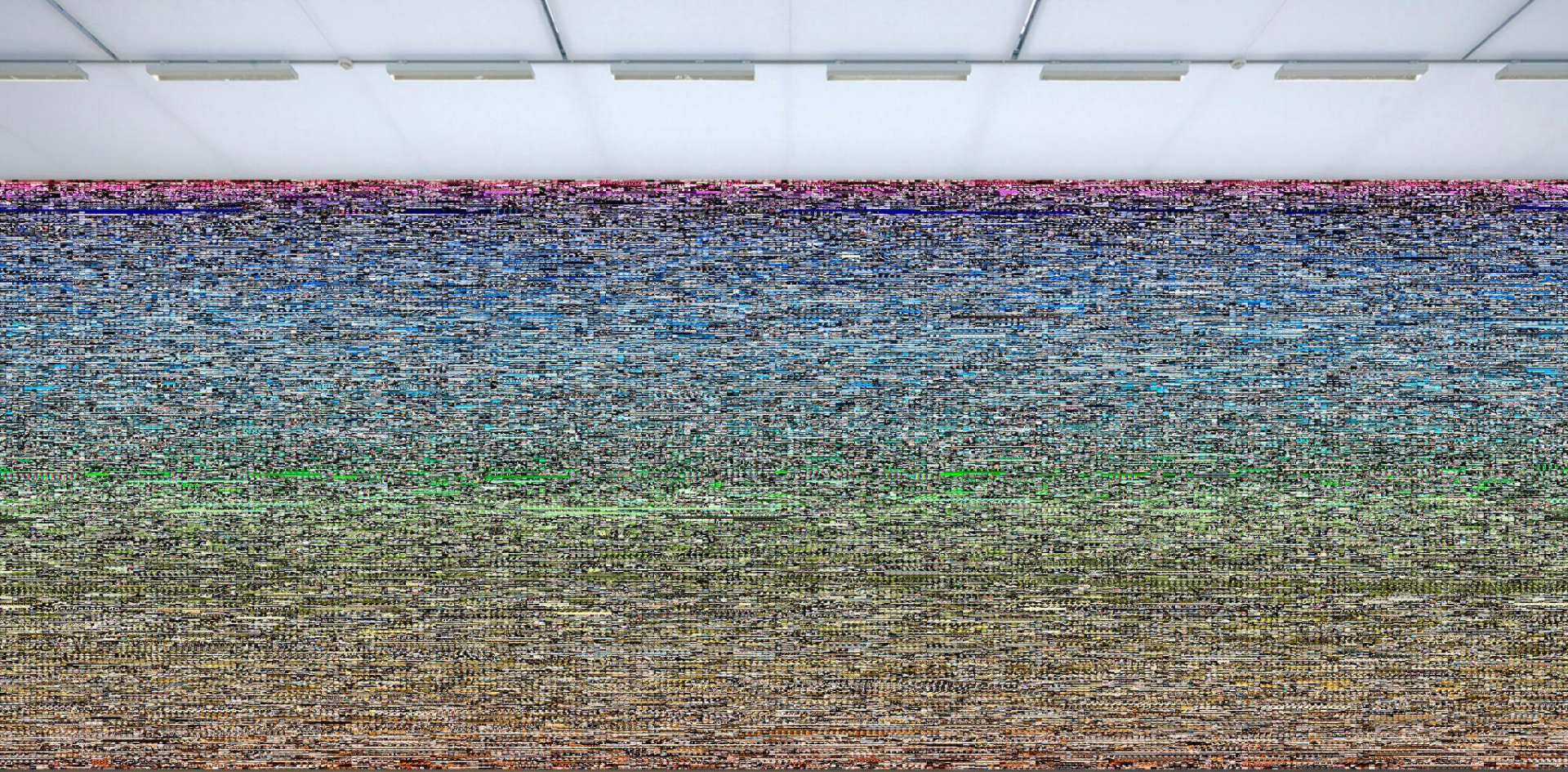


Exhibition view:

Chengdu Contemporary Image Museum, Chengdu (China), «BUILDING ILLUSIONS», Live-Screen, 2022



One day, 1'368'212 images, 21.10.2024 / Wallpaper.



One day, 338'955 images, all color, 21.10.2024 / Wallpaper.



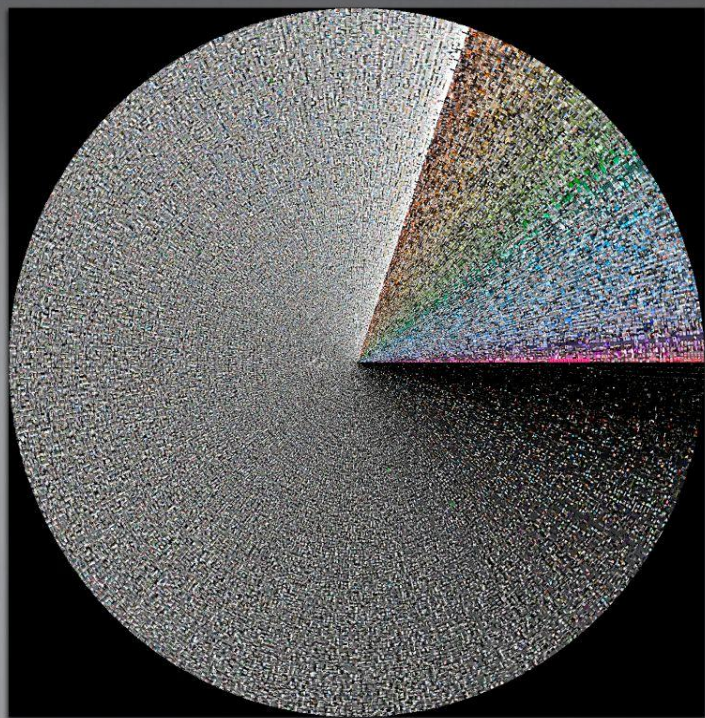
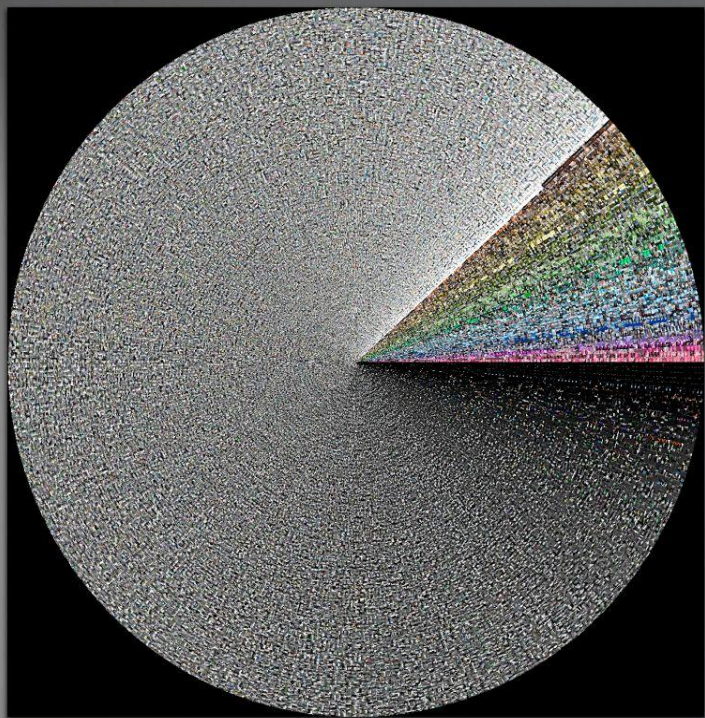
Street surface, live / screens.



Elevator, live / screens.



Pattern, live / 24 screens.



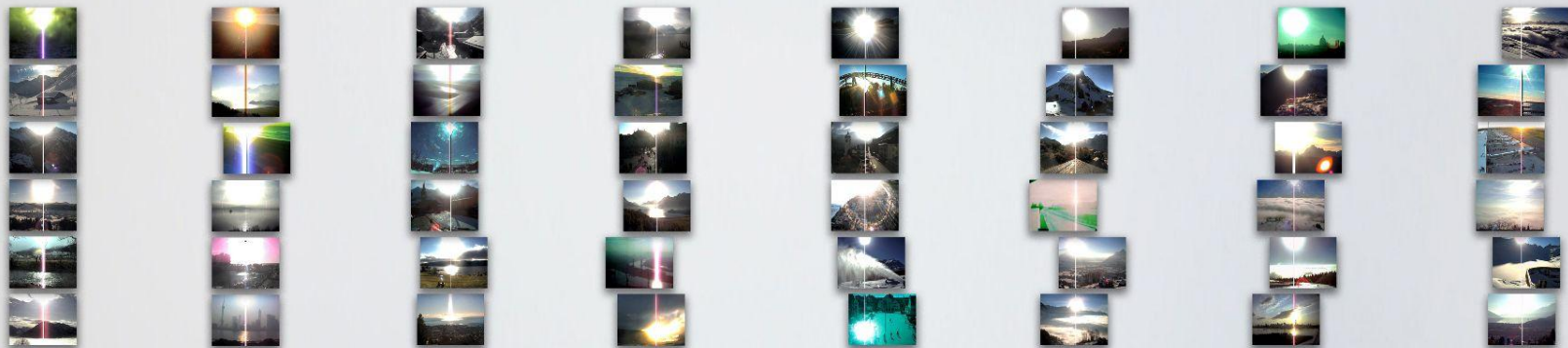
One day Asia, One day America / Wallpaper.

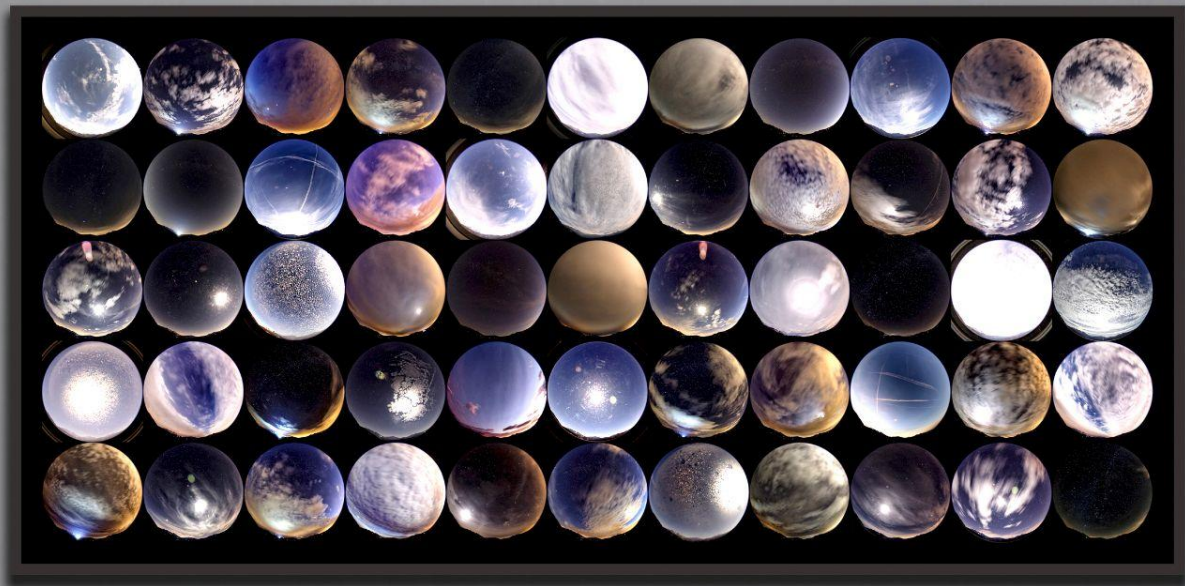


Birds / prints.



Light Stripes / prints.





Heaven / print, 150 x 320cm, framed.



The Gatekeeper, 1'008'000 pictures, one cam, 700 days / Wallpaper.

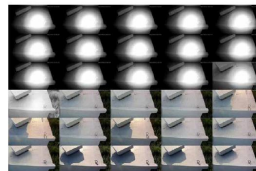


ART REVIEW

 Share full article

A view of Natalie Bookchin's "My Meds," from the artist's "Testament" series. Bookchin's work is featured in the International Center of Photography's "Public, Private, Secret," the inaugural exhibit at its new space in Manhattan.

Kurt Cawiezal *Watching the World*
Born in 1964 in Chur, Switzerland. Lives in Zurich, Switzerland
[kurtcawiezal.ch](#), [instagram.com/kurtcawiezal](#)



The World at this very moment. Screenshot, September 5, 2014, 10

[illegible]

Ukraine. Screenshot, September 5, 2022, 17:05.

The project is made possible through the Zurich University of Applied Sciences Design developed the software necessary computing power and strong.

A central aim of *Winning the World* is collected images permanently and processed with a sustainable economic "ecosystem".

Book:

THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF KURT CAVIEZEL

Author: Kurt Caviezel

Publisher: Rorhof, Bolzano, Italy

Foreword by Joachim Schmid

e/i/d

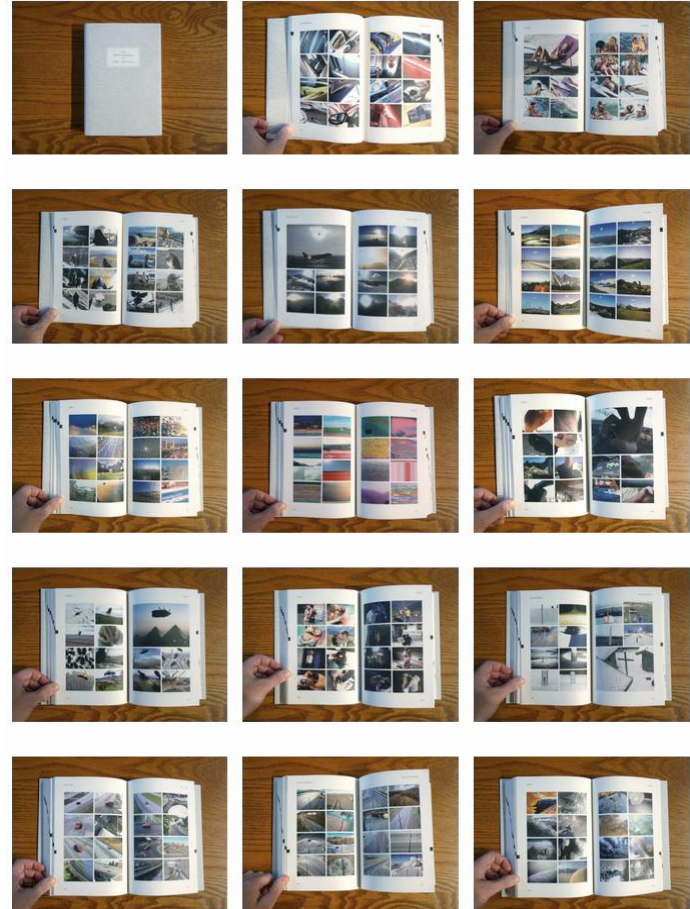
Format: 414 pages, hardcover, 16x24cm

First editions

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The
ENCYCLOPEDIA
of
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Go **live** and watch the real cctv-view on our **lives**:

<https://webcamaze.engineering.zhaw.ch/>