

PANOPTICON

—A microcosmic re-interpretation
of the Panopticon as conceptualized
by Jeremy Bentham.

Multimedia Installation
MASS Gallery
2007

Jeremy Bentham conceptualized the Panopticon around 1791 as a circular prison designed around a central guard tower from which prisoners could be surveyed from behind venetian blinds, at any moment, without their knowledge. The omnipresent threat of surveillance was designed to keep prisoners in check even when they were not being watched.

This installation utilizes video projections, video installations, two-way mirrors and peephole cutout paintings set within a network of corridors. One may discreetly watch others interacting with the space through the two-way mirrors or peephole paintings while potentially being spied on oneself. This situation of the watchers watching the

watchers ad infinitum is reminiscent of the contemporary panoptic model that has evolved from Bentham's original concept. This contemporary model is more reminiscent of the Panoptic model as explored in *Discipline and Punish* by Michel Foucault.

A true Panopticon prison was never actually constructed. However, many aspects of its concept have surfaced in contemporary life thanks to technologies Bentham never could have envisioned, rendering the actual construction of such a prison superfluous.

It is important to note this model of the Panopticon contains no doors. You are free to leave at anytime.



Production Credits

Artist

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Design and building supervision

Metal Estevez

Video Direction and Installation Lighting:

Rebecca Rodriguez

Video Editing and Postproduction

Matt Choi
Mike Dow

Sound Design

Erich Ragsdale

Prisoner and Guard:

Aaron Rentrope

Photography

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Thanks:

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Jacob Villanueva
MASS Gallery
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Patrick Healy
Rebecca Rodriguez
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