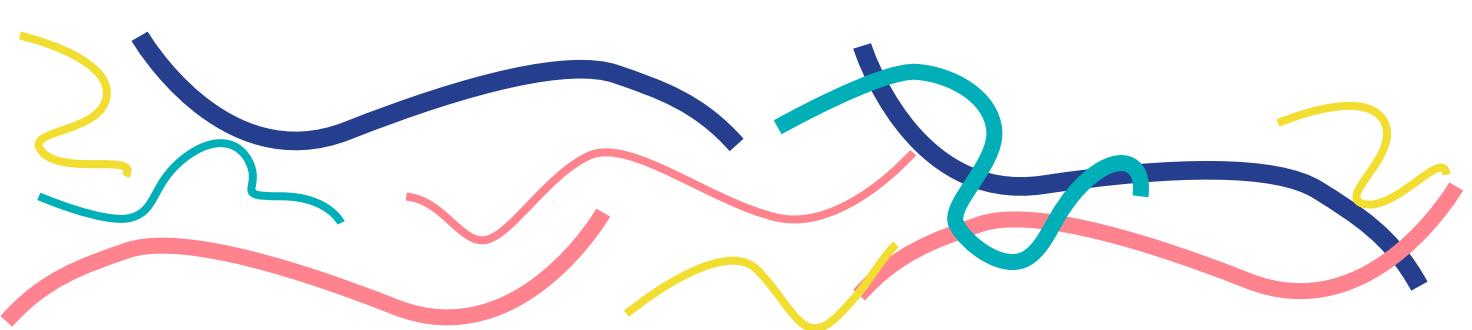




**for your safety
+ security**

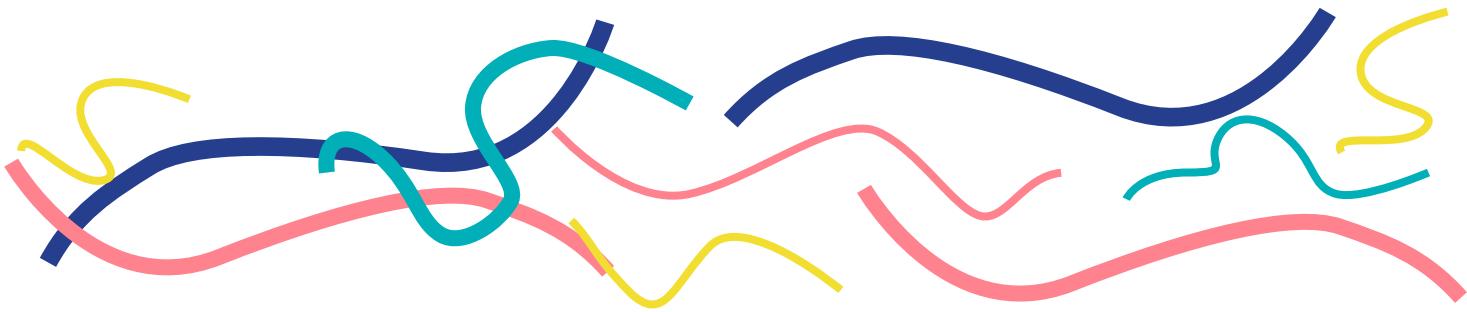
a museum of refusal

spaces + participation (3)
goldsmiths, university of london



spaces & participation (3)

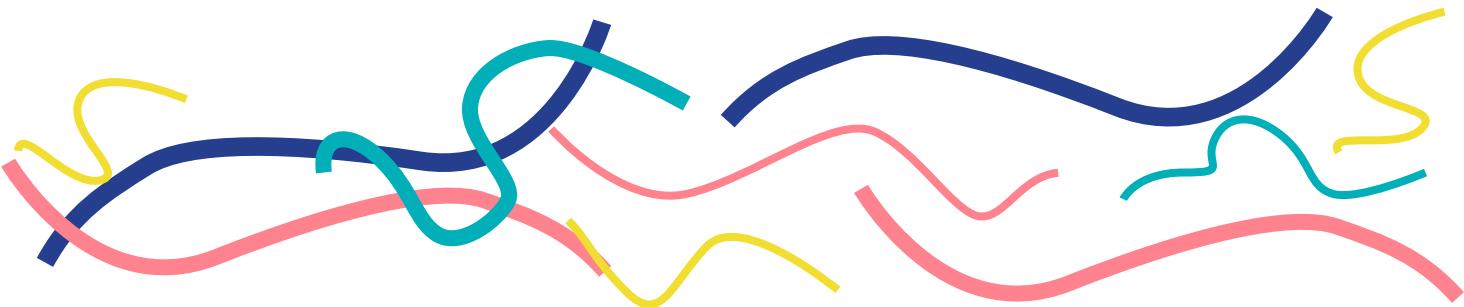
Fivos Avgerinos
Riya Gokharu
Wonji Jeong
Erin Liu
Anastasiya Vodolagina



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1



project brief

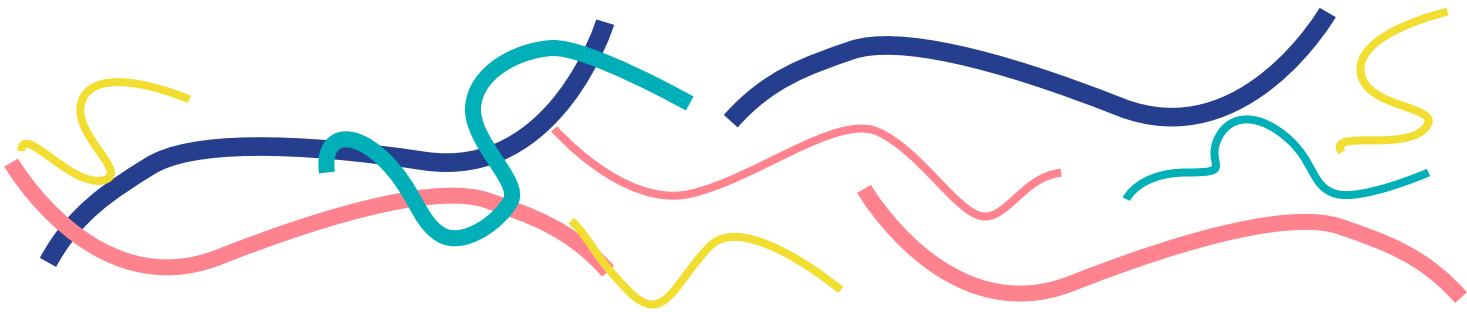
The brief asks to question the very idea of the Enlightenment museum and conceive and contribute to the founding of an alternative museum – viz. 'The Musée de Refusés'.

The Musée de Refusés is a space in which what is rejected or refused (by the museum, by cultural institutions generally and by society as a whole) may claim attention. There may be many reasons for the rejection; but essentially the 'refused' is not considered to be the sort of thing the museum and other societal authorities are looking for – because it is not the kind of thing that is of interest, concern or of use to the museum or indeed society at large determined not to be in society's 'best' interests to have it exhibited.

Any rejection is inevitably doubly, and reciprocally, constituted; the thing rejected in its very rejection rejects the authority that rejects it. So when an 'authority' (a museum) with an encysted (insisted) ideology, through an instituted juridical process, refuses to embrace in and to its constitution what a work is or does, the work, in turn in some way rejects the regular expectations, systems of validation and, ultimately, the constitution of that authority.¹

¹ Roberto Feo, Laura Potter, and Terry Rosenberg, "Musée des Refusés: Refusal, Renunciation, Resistance," in *Musée des Refusés: Refusal Renunciation, Resistance*, arranged by Roberto Feo, Ruby Hoette, Patrick Lacey, Laura Potter, and Terry Rosenberg, (London: Goldsmiths Design Department, 2017), 6-7.

2



framing orientation: surveillance + conduct-living

In her review of the Tate's 2010 exhibit on voyeurism and surveillance, Leah Borromeo writes that the state-funded museum "is wholly complicit" in normalising the panoptic gaze in everyday life. On this topic of surveillance in the museum, Tate photography curator Simon Baker remarks, "When people go into a gallery, they expect to be watched. There's a lot of expensive work here and it has to be protected."² Baker's statement not only acknowledges that surveillance pervades the state-funded museum space, it foregrounds surveillance as essential to the museum's operation.

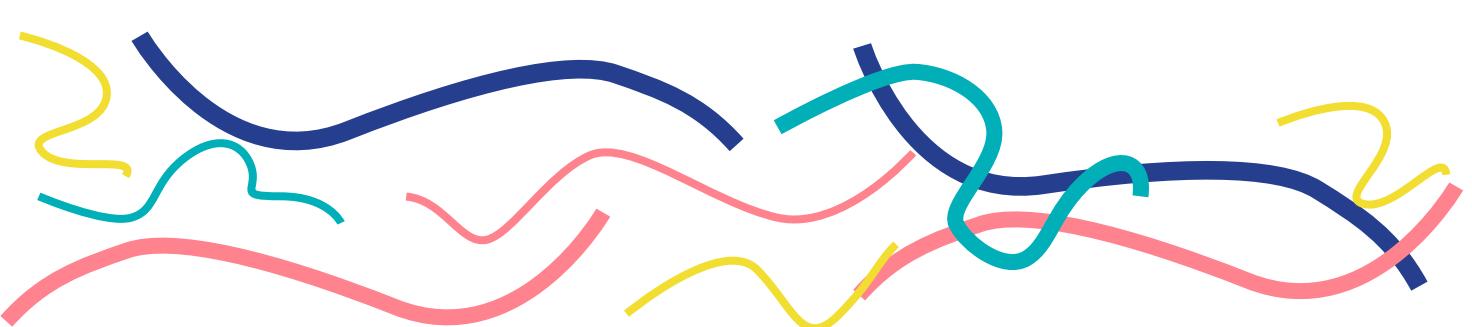
The 'security' of the work that the museum deems valuable appears to be integral to their preservation.³ For Baker, the care of museum holdings is obligatory: "it has to be protected."⁴ It is precisely through this language of care that a distinct security sector within the state-funded museum is legitimated.⁵ An entire workforce is carved out, one dedicated solely to monitoring the conditions under which these precious

² Leah Borromeo, "Tate makes surveillance an art form," *The Guardian*, May 28, 2010, accessed November 15, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2010/may/28/tate-modern-surveillance-art>.

³ An analysis of whether the museum's valuation of works is sound in the first place is no doubt a worthwhile investigation; however, these considerations fall beyond the scope of this particular interrogation of the museum.

⁴ Borromeo, "Tate makes surveillance and art form"; emphasis added.

⁵ A chapter titled 'Visitors as Strangers' in a book on museum management/marketing standards notes: "Given their object-based orientation, it is not at all surprising that museums expended considerable resources on maintaining their collections and took 'accountability for objects' as a paramount responsibility. Conservation and preservation, security, and safety are givens in the museum environment, and collections management systems have kept pace with technological development." Richard Sandell and Robert R. Janes, *Museum Management and Marketing*, (New York: Routledge, 2007), 333.



works are observed.⁶

To be sure, the state-funded museum bears a unique capacity to converge two sets of gazes into one unified space: visitor engagement (typically visual in nature) on the one hand, and museum surveillance on the other.⁷ When taken together, these related gaze-sets draw forth a curious dynamic of 'observed observers'.

The juxtaposition of visitor engagement with museum surveillance in the 21st-century state-funded museum illuminates how visitors are themselves rendered objects of analysis in the museum space.⁸ Museum surveillance is not explicitly curated alongside the museum work so much as it signified through visual cues: bag checks, floor marking tape, invigilators, security personnel, and CCTV cameras all point to the presence of an overseeing force. As Charles Rice explains, "It is actually the signs of security strategically distributed throughout public space—the ever-present video surveillance cameras, for example—that most effectively bring threat from its looming future into the space of the present."⁹ These various surveillant features have

⁶ As Charles Rice notes in his interview with Brian Massumi, "Security produces its own conditions. It pre-emptively produces the threat environment it responds to—and needs to justify itself." Charles Rice, "The Space-Time of Pre-emption: An Interview with Brian Massumi," *Architectural Design* 80 (2010): 37.

⁷ The museum undoubtedly privileges the visual. Ann Hamilton meditates on this tendency: "The Museum is an institution of sight, a house of looking and seeing, a place where we behold with our eyes. We may be stirred, moved or touched by what we see but we rarely touch the thing seen." This privileging of the visual in the museum may stem in part from the association of vision with knowledge and the museum's origins in the Enlightenment. Rationalist philosopher Descartes described self-evident perceptions as "clear and distinct" (as opposed to obscure and confused). Mieke Bal destabilises this presumption: "What gives visuality its central relevance is the deceptiveness of its objectivity. Vision is by no means more reliable, or literal, than perception through the other senses; on the contrary, it is a semiotic activity of an inherently rhetorical kind." Ann Hamilton, *the common S E N S E*, (Columbus, OH: Ann Hamilton Studio, 2015), 4; Mieke Bal, "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting," in *A Performance Cycle.*, curated by Cecilia Canziani and Ilaria Gianni, (Rome: Nero, 2011), 61.

⁸ Terry Rosenberg describes how the orthodox 19th-century Enlightenment museum, as "a single real space," presented dis-located spaces and locations "in juxtaposition." In the 19th-century context, the presentation of this juxtaposition was played out in the act of museal curation, the explicit placing of objects from disparate places into a single, monumental display. Terry Rosenberg, "Notes for a Prefatory Lecture," in *Musée des Refusés: Refusal Renunciation, Resistance*, arranged by Roberto Feo, Ruby Hoette, Patrick Lacey, Laura Potter, and Terry Rosenberg, (London: Goldsmiths Design Department, 2017), 10.

⁹ Rice, "The Space-Time of Pre-emption: An Interview with Brian Massumi," 37.

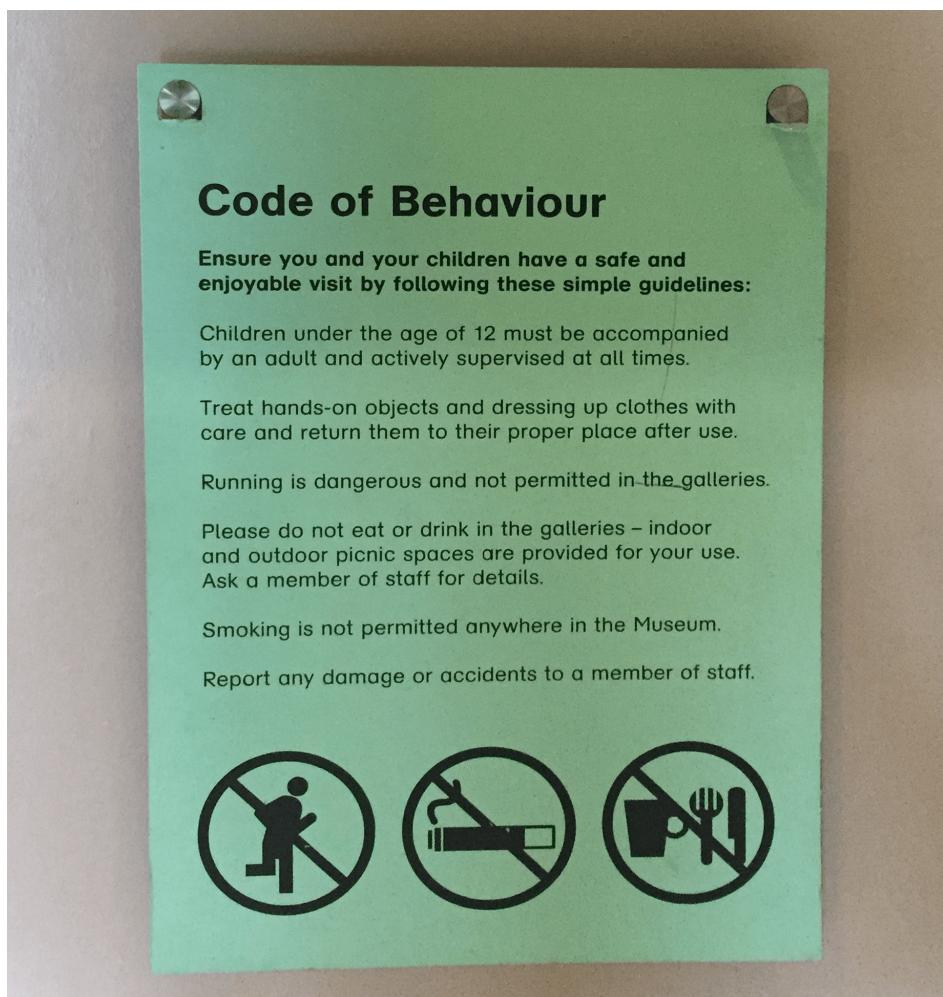
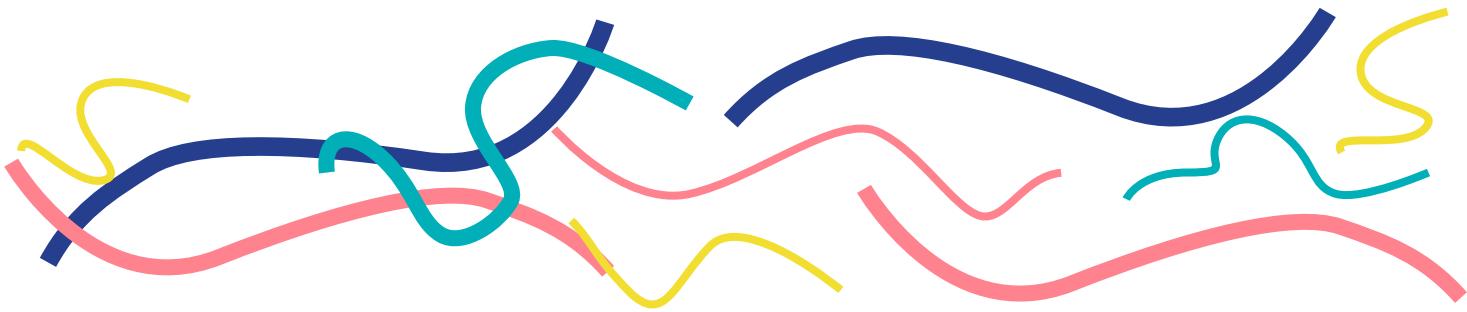
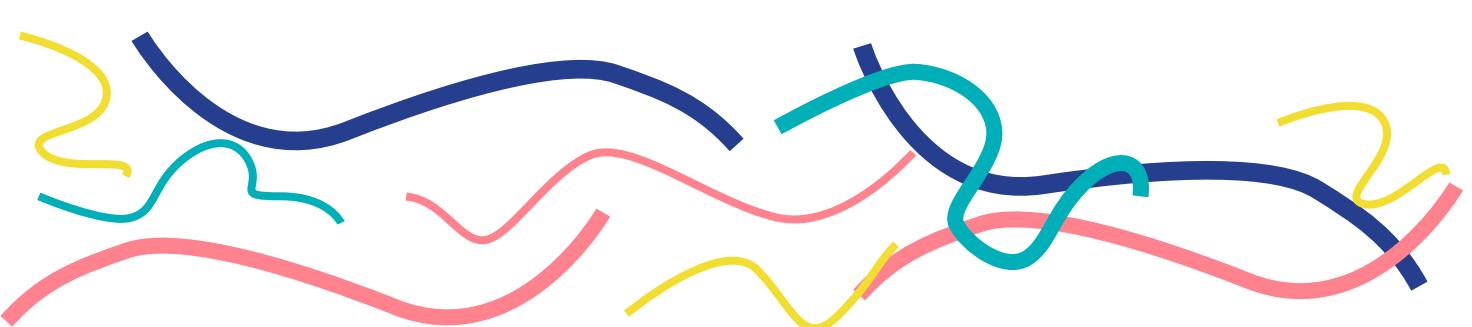


Figure 1: Code of Behaviour on display at the V&A Museum of Childhood.



become uniformly embedded in the logic of the museum space; consequently, the implicit perception of surveillance is not merely seen, but ever-felt.

Baker's statement indicates our knowledge of this reality, portraying it as almost banal: visitors "expect to be watched" upon entering the museum.¹⁰ It is precisely this expectation of being watched that links museum surveillance so closely to the panoptic gaze, as Borromeo highlights in her article. In Bentham's original panopticon design, an asymmetrical arrangement was crucial to its function: a prison guard located in a central watchtower held clear sight-lines into prison cells, but prisoners could not see back into the watchtower. The resulting style of observation was unequal, arbitrary, and seemingly constant; it compelled prisoners to behave as if under permanent watch. Indeed, in its production of 'good' conduct, the panopticon was designed as a moralising project.

This correlation between surveillance and conduct control is not lost upon the museum. Museums articulate their expectations for visitor behaviour in written codes of conduct. These codes are often displayed near the entrance of the museum space and framed under a banner of 'visitor safety' (fig. 1 and 2). Codes like these work in tandem with visual cues that point to the presence of museum surveillance; the visible CCTV camera, for example, enforces the code of conduct. This rhetoric they use is striking when considering that it is the safety of museum work rather than visitors that justifies museum security in the first place, as previously discussed. The affective language of care imbues the dialectic of observed-observers: the museum watches you watching its work, *for your safety*.

At this stage, a meaningful objection: to draw attention to the correlation between museum surveillance and its conduct does little more than point out the obvious. Perhaps museum surveillance is self-evident (Baker seems to think as much), and if museum surveillance affects behaviour in any capacity, that consequence is merely symptomatic of how surveillance functions in a broader surveillance landscape.

The tenor of Borromeo's review resonates at the point where she contextualises the Tate show in the wider surveillance field of CCTV-saturated London. She writes,

¹⁰ Borromeo, "Tate makes surveillance and art form."

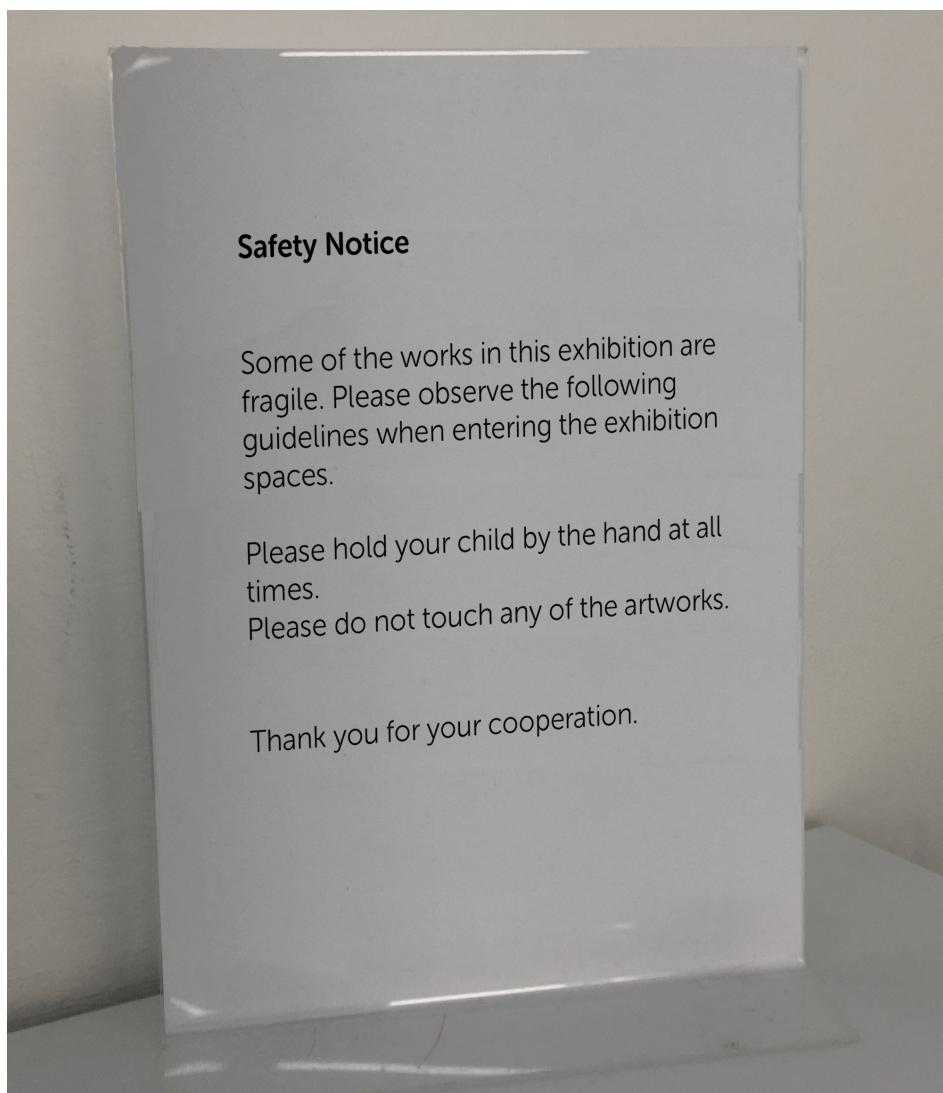
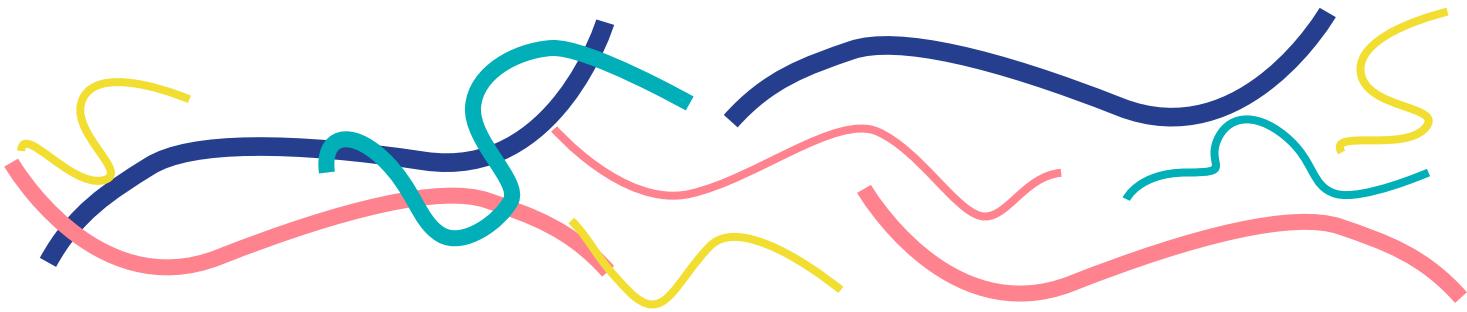
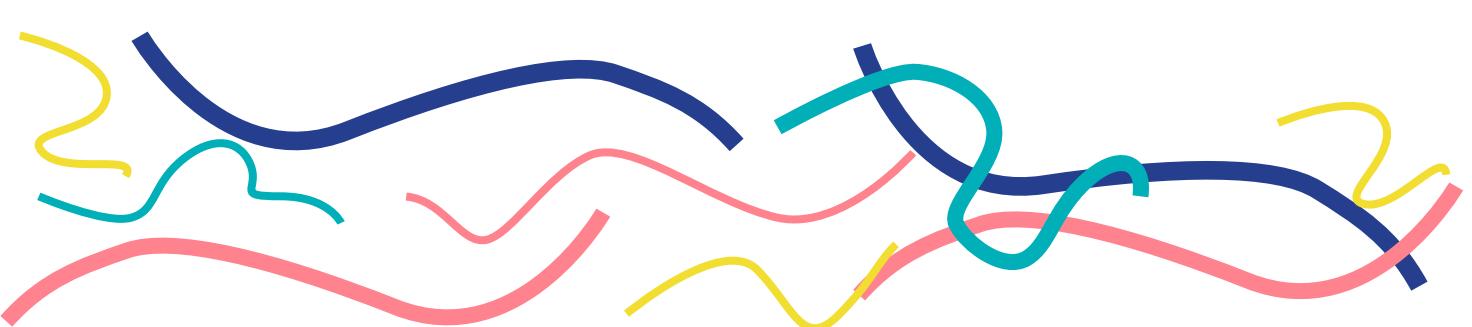


Figure 2: Safety Notice at the White Cube.

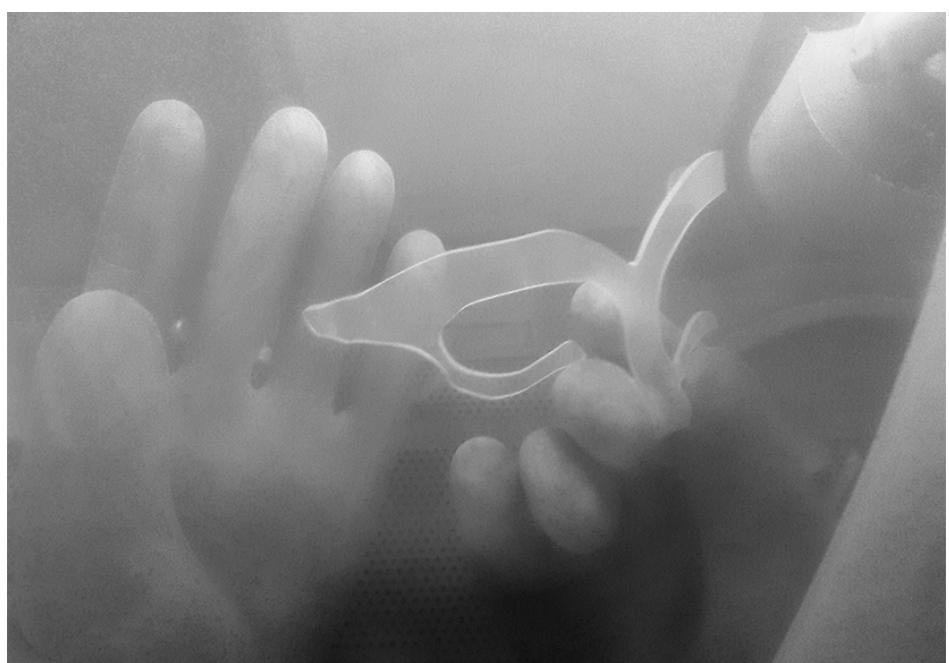
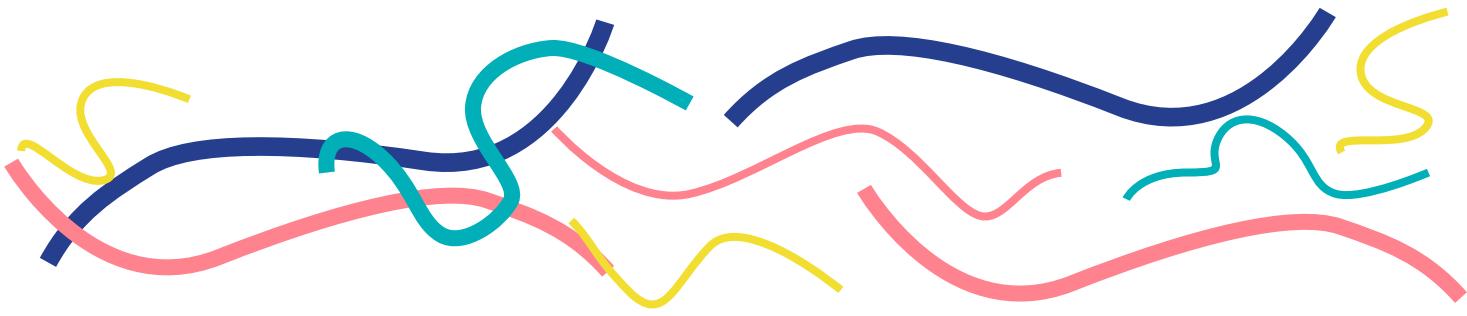


"Launching the show in London highlights and mocks our current indifference to surveillance."¹¹ From this view, the attitude fostered in the state-funded museum space—one that takes surveillance and the behaviour it coerces as given—is transposed onto urban life. individual faces), and as trackers penetrate personal devices for both state and corporate interests (registering locations visited, archiving internet searches and social media interactions), the state-funded museum takes its place along a continuum of conduct-living.¹² With regard to the non-trivial objection then, the relation between surveillance and behaviour is by no means specific to the museum; but the museum—shrouded beneath its ostensible impotence as a mechanism of control—elicits and preserves an impulse to accept surveillance as a necessary feature of everyday life.

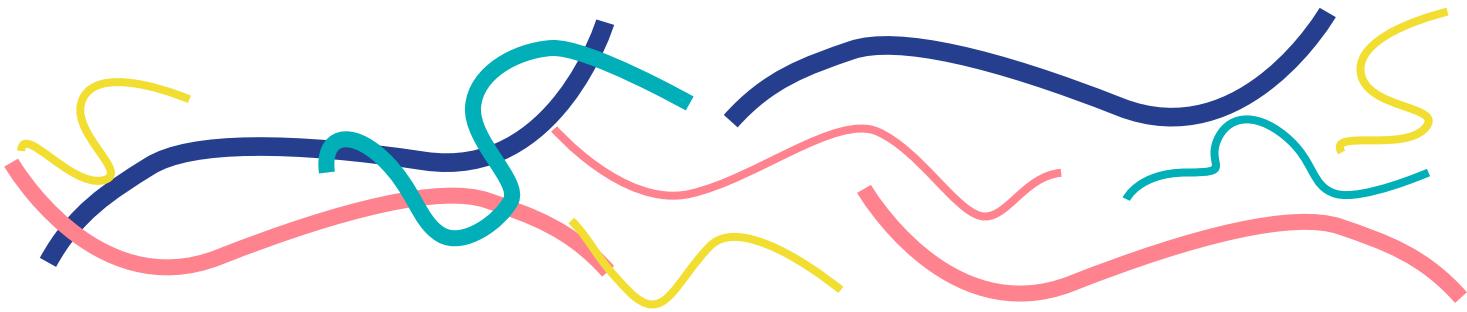
For your safety + security attempts to subvert the structure of surveillance both within and beyond the state-funded museum. The project refuses the state-funded museum's presumption that the safety of its work is predicated on the close monitoring of visitor behaviour. *For your safety + security* acknowledges that surveillance has calcified within the state-funded museum to the status of 'essential to museum operation'; sensitive to the broader context of mass surveillance societies, the project refuses the impulse to accept surveillance as a necessary feature of the museum space and beyond.

¹¹ Borromeo, "Tate makes surveillance and art form."

¹² Deleuze rearticulates Foucault's disciplinary society of the 18th- and 19th-centuries in the 20th-century context as "societies of control." He explains that in the period Foucault describes, "one was always starting again," while in societies of control, "one is never finished with anything." Deleuze describes this constant state of modulation as one defined by codes: "The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become 'd'ividuals', and masses, samples, data, markets, or 'banks'." Gilles Deleuze, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," October, 59 (1992), 5.



3

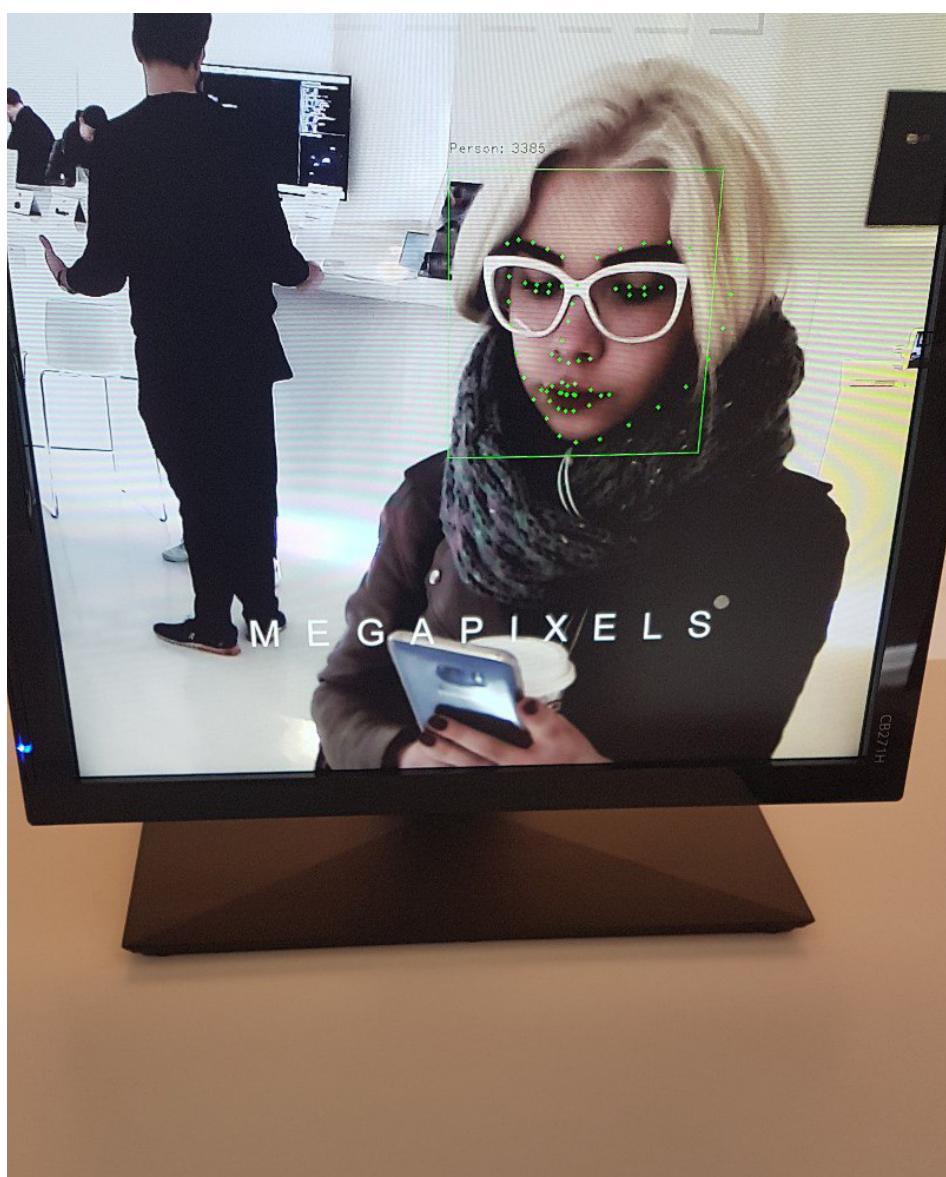
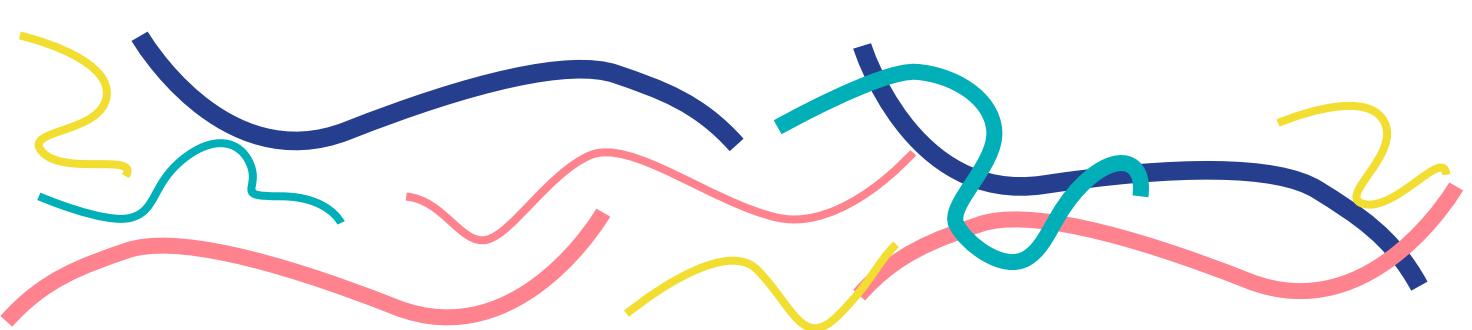


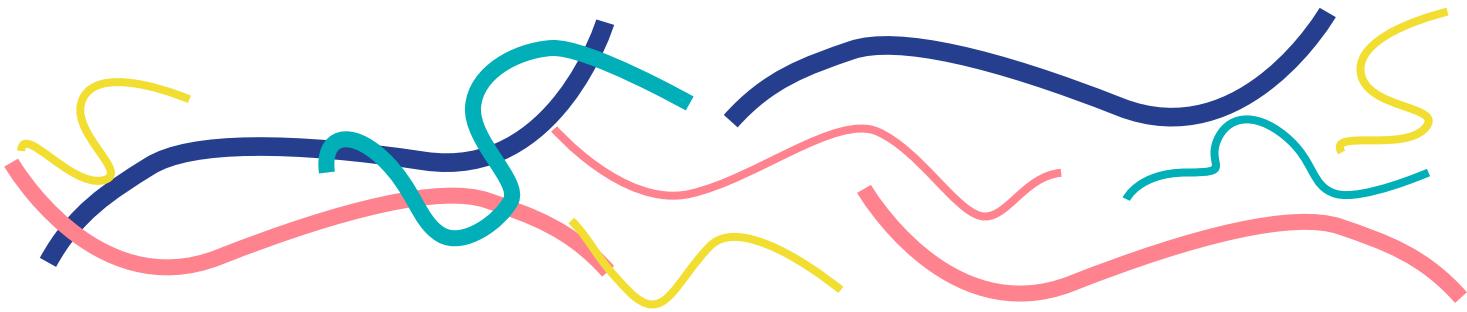
field research (selection)

a machine they're secretly building

A performance piece developed by Andrew Westerside and Proto-type Theater and performed at Southbank Centre. The work offered an account of the historical development of surveillance in the western world. It also disclosed the rhetoric of care pervasive in justifications for surveillance, often concluding scenes with the punchline: "It's to keep you safe." The title of *For your safety + security* draws inspiration from this disclosure.







visit to the glass room

Curated by Tactical Tech and produced by Mozilla, The Glass Room exhibition and event programme was a pop-up hosted in central London for a few weeks in autumn. The exhibition illuminated the various layers of tracking that pervades the web and how personal information is easily disclosed by way of social media interactions (likes, sharing, etc.), online shopping, web searches, and the like.

One of the displays at the exhibition was about facial recognition systems. «Something to Hide» by Adam Harvey from MegaPixels explains how the facial recognition system, which is installed in airports, sporting arenas and border checkpoints, works. Algorithms in the systems have been trained to recognise facial features, they also can estimate age, mood and IQ of the person.

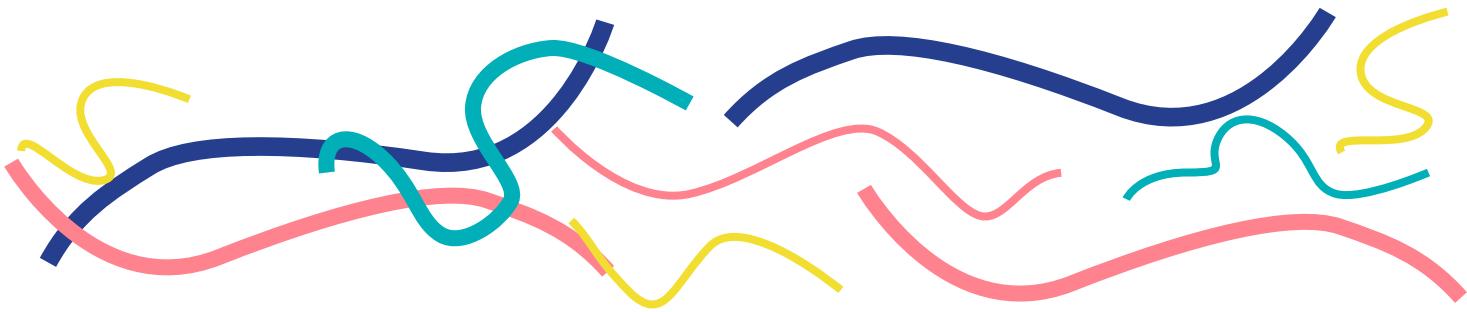
This display was one of the starting points of the masks project. The idea was formed around the facial recognition application, which can estimate the age, nationality and gender through the photo.

meeting with visitor feedback coordinator

In order to better understand how the museums collect data about their visitors, we met with the visitor feedback coordinator from the Tower of London. They shared information about their questionnaires, where visitors have the opportunity to rate their experiences and expectations. These questionnaires help to improve future exhibitions and align with 'common interests'.

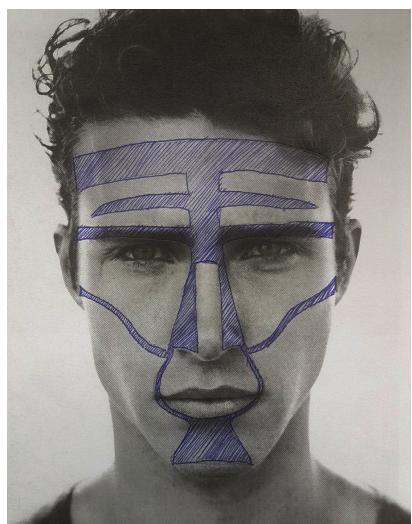
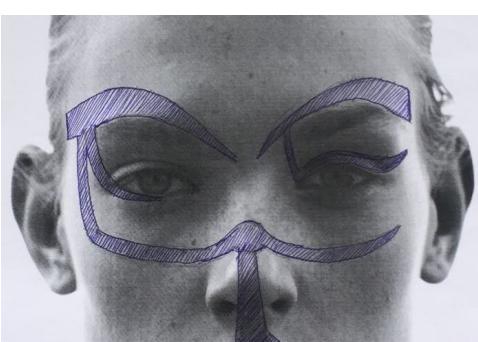
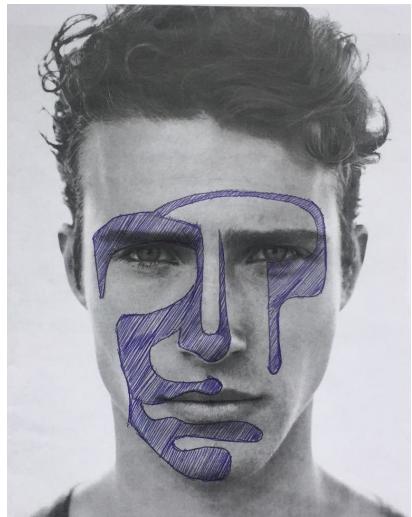
They also disclosed their usage of heat mapping in the space, which helps to distribute objects throughout their exhibitions so as to be seen from perspectives they consider ideal. While many museums such as the Barbican Centre, tally numbers of visitors multiple times in a day, the Tower of London does not itself invest in this practice.

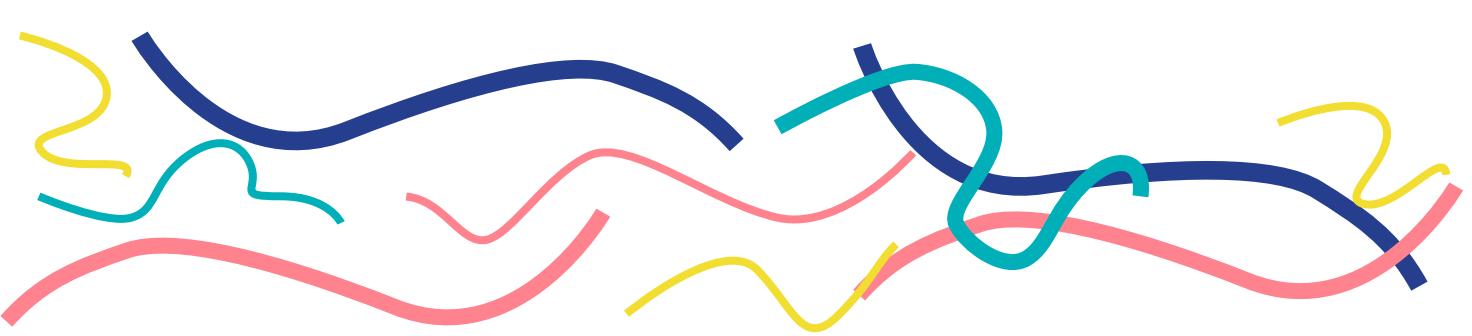
4



material experimentation

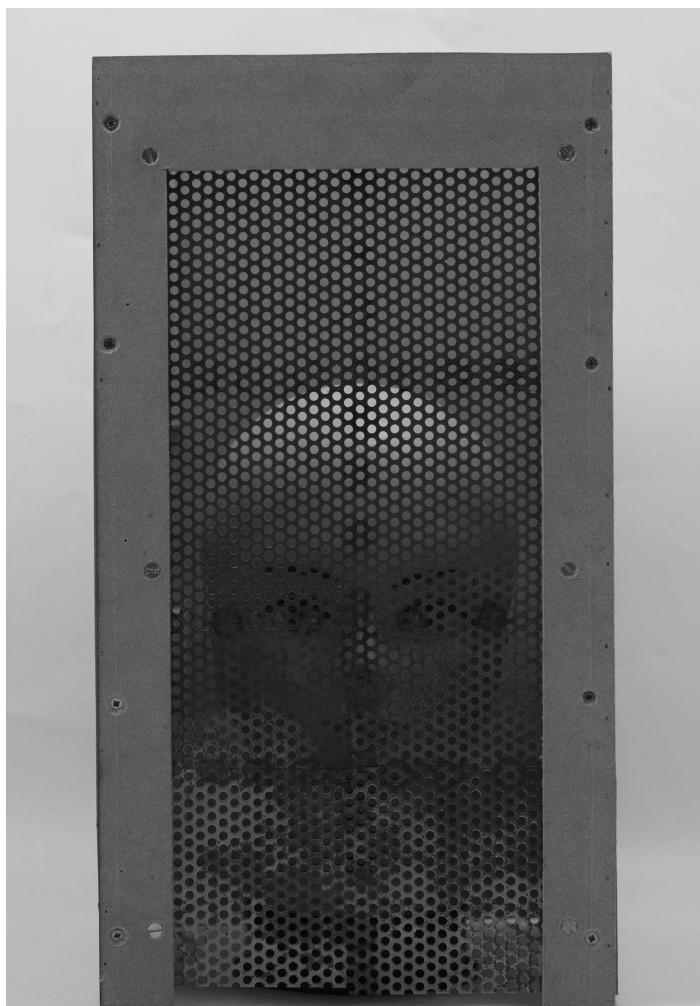
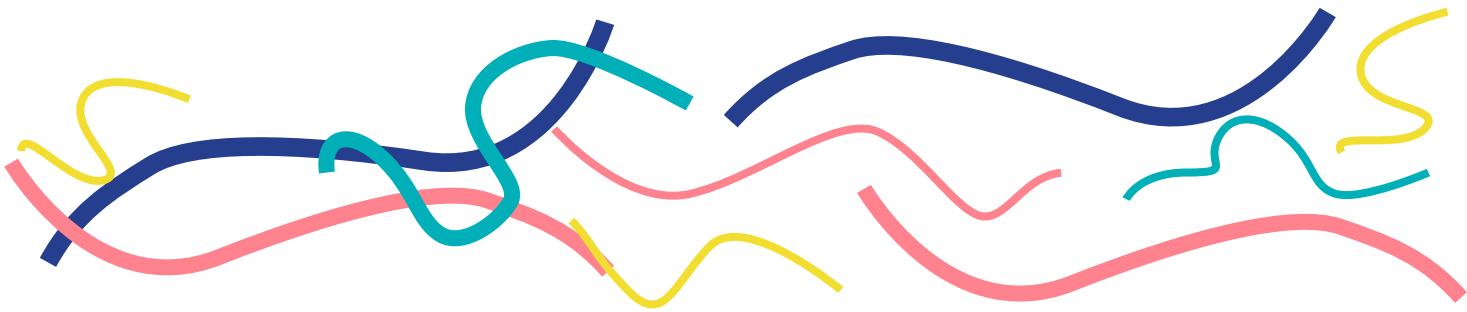
sketches for mask concept



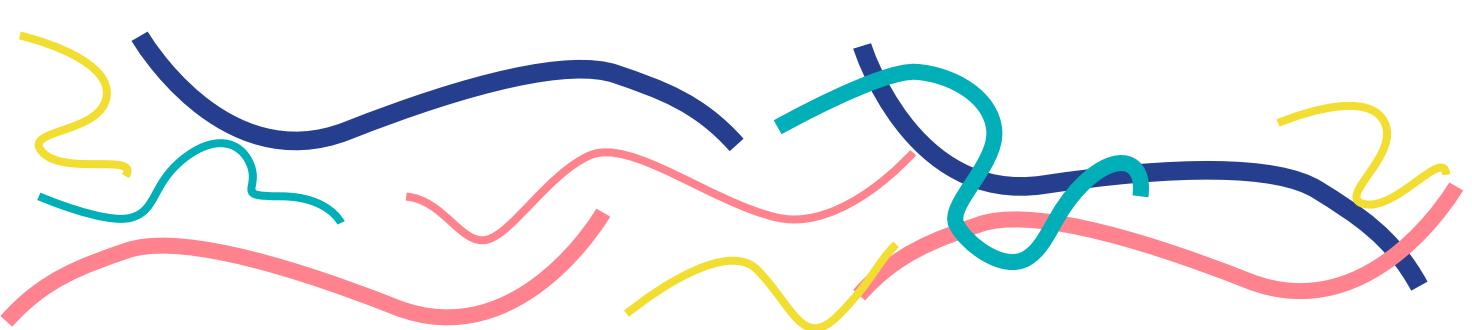


mask iterations





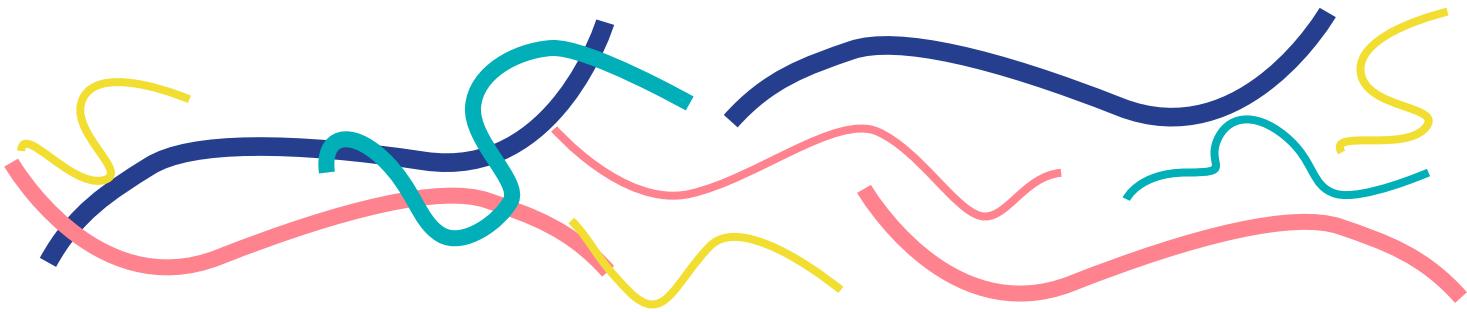
At various points during the materialising stage, we were confounded by the alleged distinction between imagination and practicality. Wonji, Foivos, and Ana's 'enclosures' may have stretched this line most forcefully, probing the question: how much can we hide in plain sight? Incidentally, both pieces mimic the notion of the mystery-enshrouded man behind the box, the penetrative male gaze of the cameraman.



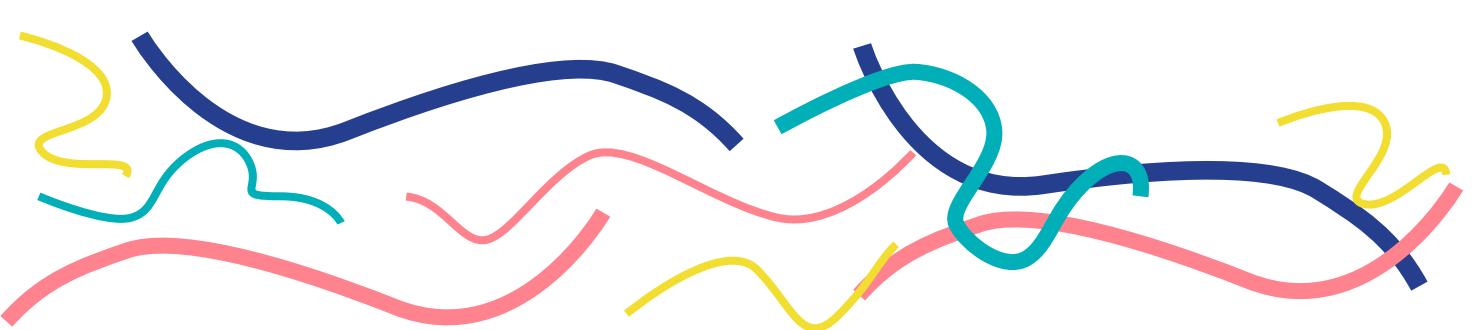
full body protection



The initial idea was to fully protect the human body from surveillance. The identity of someone can be recognised from their posture, movement while walking as well as specific parts of their body such as their hands.



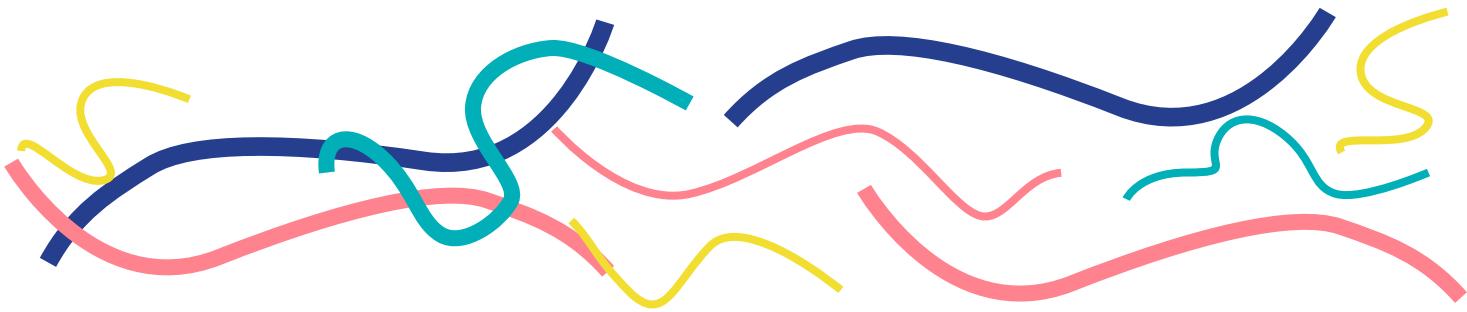
The first steps were to cover the human body with a cloak or a gown-like dressing. However, those tests revealed that the person can be identified. Therefore, the next step was to cover one fully and allow them to blend with the museum environment. Columns are common elements in museum spaces. Hence, their structure is suitable for this purpose. Making the column mobile, gives the person 'wearing' it the ability to move freely around the space and stay unrecognised.



fingerprint protection



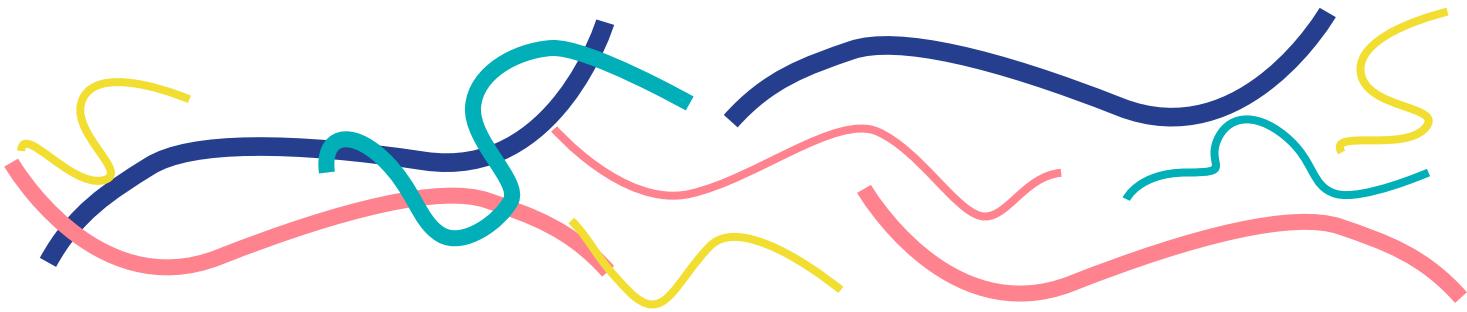
The idea was to protect one's fingerprints from fingerprint scanning by designing a wearable accessory.



- Started experimenting with clay; easy to form shapes.
- Experimented with the basic shape of a ring.
- Wood was another material that was explored during the process.

5





chosen iteration, its presentation

Biometric registration is an increasingly essential arm of mass surveillance. Those seeking access to new countries through visas or citizenship undergo scans of their irises, fingerprints, and faces; these scans are subsequently added to a centralised database. This process is compulsory in affording access to places.¹³ Whilst 'confirming identity', biometric registration also determines the limits of possible movement.

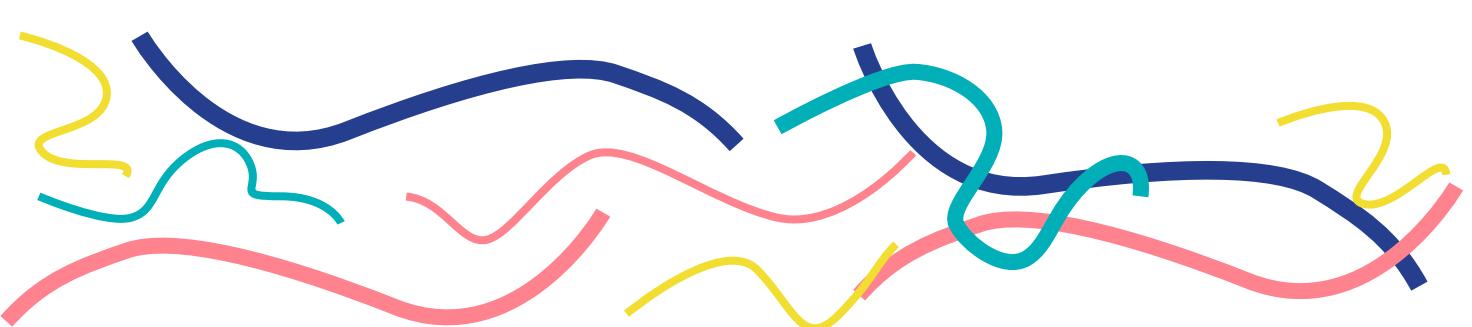
In protest against biometrics as a form of currency that affords (or excludes) access, seventeen wearable anti-biometric masks were produced. Biometric facial recognition functions by mapping landmarks ("nodal points") onto the face: the distance between eyes, width of nose, depth of eye sockets, shape of cheekbones, length of jawline.¹⁴ These masks confuse facial recognition scanners by displacing nodal points. Consequently, facial traits are read as 'other' than the wearer's.

The masks are made from transparent acrylic, sanded down to a matte, translucent finish.¹⁵ The subtlety of the mask—in colour, weight, shape—complicates its status as

¹³ "Changes to biometric collection categories," gov.uk, accessed December 7, 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/changes-to-biometric-collection-categories>.

¹⁴ Kevin Bonsor and Ryan Johnson, "How Facial Recognition Systems Work," HowStuffWorks, September 4, 2001, accessed November 19, 2017, <https://electronics.howstuffworks.com/gadgets/high-tech-gadgets/facial-recognition1.htm>.

¹⁵ Zach Blas notes how agencies that manage data for the state and corporations give an impression of transparency and absolute clarity of vision.



making process for chosen iteration



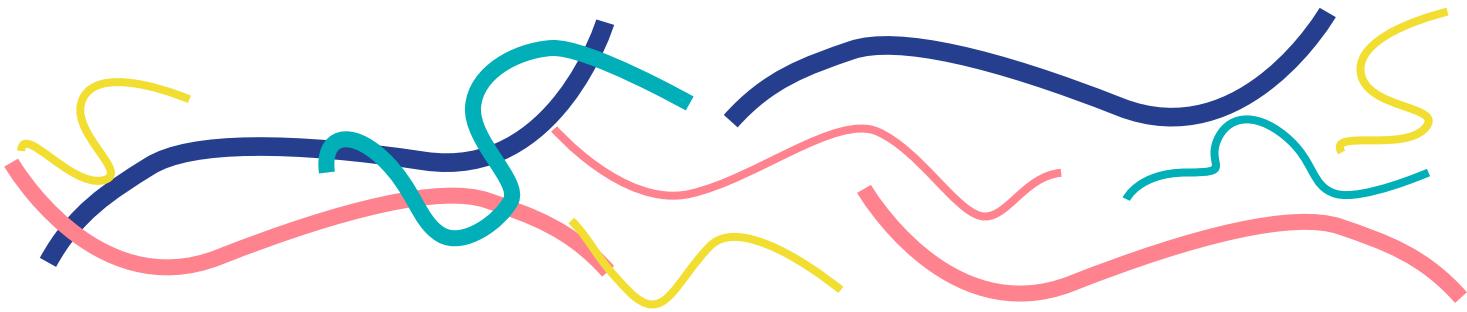
Cutting the plastic material for the mask.

Heating the plastic in the oven to mould the shape.

Forming the hot, malleable plastic onto a head form.

Sanding the mask to achieve a matte texture.

Fastening elastic bands to the mask with bolts.



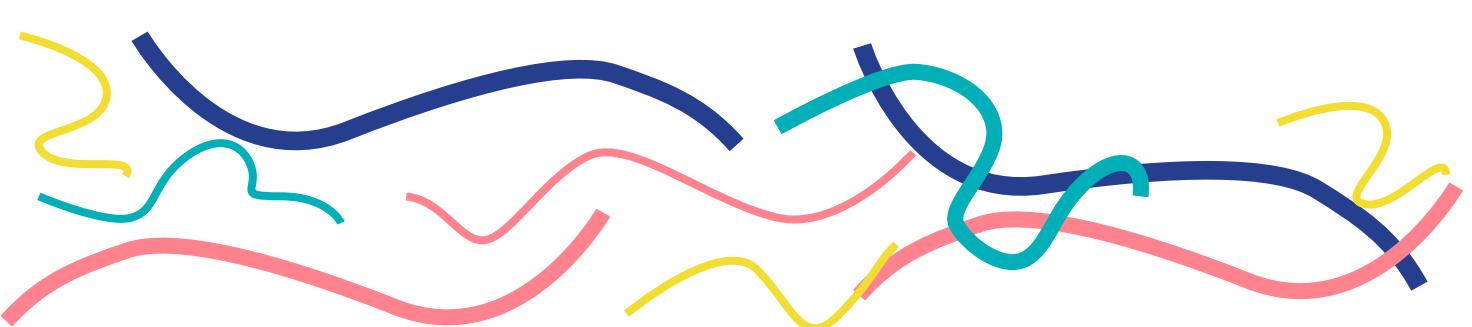
a mask (is it jewelry?).¹⁶ The material effect is such that vision is blurred without blinding; the face is still recognised as such, but the particular details of the face are diffused. In the museum context, wearing the mask plays into the observed-observer dialectic: my adornment signifies my awareness of being observed while observing. In a broader context, the mask plays along with biometric scanners without surrendering exactly what the scanner seeks: you are welcome to read my face as something else. In these methods of play, the mask subverts surveillance structures from within.

The precise quantity of seventeen masks is incidental and bears no particular significance in itself. The general amount resulted from two superficially incompatible desires: (1) the desire to demonstrate the possibility of multiple wearers and (2) the desire to avoid needlessly creating more of an item that already bears an obvious potential for mass production (and mass production's terminal counterpart, eventual waste). The former desire, the impulse to create for the many, is not insignificant to the project. Drawing inspiration from Zach Blas' Facial Weaponization Suite, the masks were produced in the spirit of "embrac[ing] the power of the collective face."¹⁷ Just as the caricatured face of Guy Fawkes has become a rallying image for movements like Anonymous to critique corporate states, these anti-biometric masks harness the potential for identifying allies, becoming tools for collective protest, and "cultivat[ing] forms of living otherwise."¹⁸

¹⁶ Wearing masks is technically restricted, as outlined by the visitor policies at the Science Museum. It would be worthwhile to test whether this mask would be permissible, as facial jewelry is not restricted. "Visit us," [sciencemuseum.org](https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visit-us), accessed November 30, 2017, <https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/visit-us>.

¹⁷ For his work Facial Weaponization Suite, Zach Blas fabricated four 'collective masks' using the composite biometric facial data of multiple faces from four specific demographics. On the Fag Face Mask, which composed the facial data of multiple queer men, Blas explains, "The Fag Face Mask aims to make our face non-existent to any available algorithms. This non-existence produces its own autonomous visibility and ways to find one another. Becoming non-existent turns your face into a fog, and fog makes revolt possible." Zach Blas, Facial Weaponization Suite, 2011-14, accessed October 24, 2017, <http://www.zachblas.info/works/facial-weaponization-suite/>.

¹⁸ Ibid. Against the stratifying force of surveillance, Rice articulates how this social stratification can be reoriented against the "oppressive dynamic of authoritarian power." He explains that "the body, and its related practices of action poised on the cusp of potential can be seen from this inventive angle of collective re-individuation." In emphasising collective action, the critique of surveillance can go beyond the limited (often rights-based) discourse of privacy. Rice, "The Space-Time of Pre-Emption: An Interview with Brian Massumi," 37.



testing masks with face++ facial recognition software



Upload Image URL Go

► Response JSON

▼ Face Landmarks & Attributes

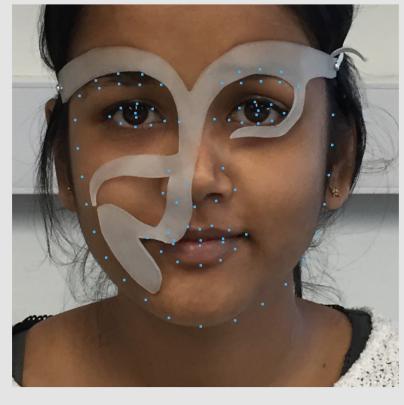
Age
59

Gender
Male

Smiling
value: 5.99; threshold: 30.1

Head Pose

Emotion
happiness



Upload Image URL Go

► Response JSON

▼ Face Landmarks & Attributes

Age
37

Gender
Female

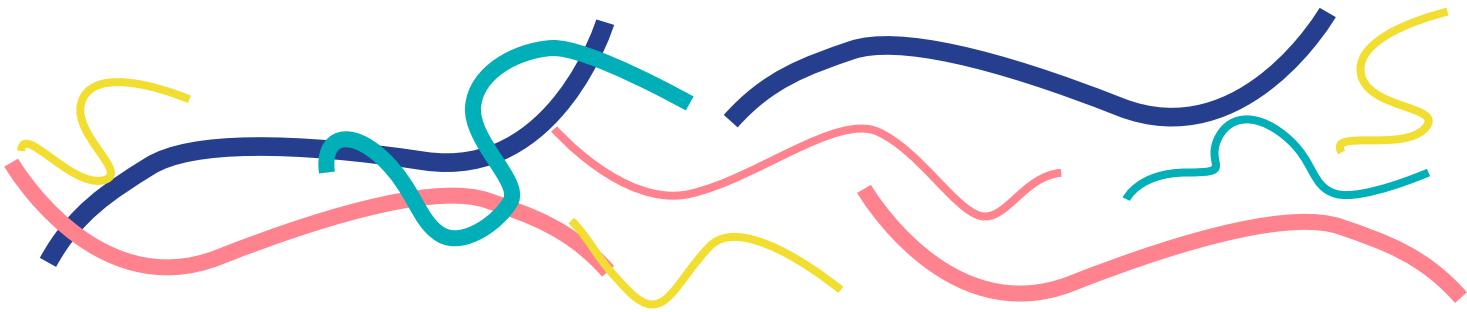
Smiling
value: 28.37; threshold: 30.1

Head Pose

Emotion
disgust

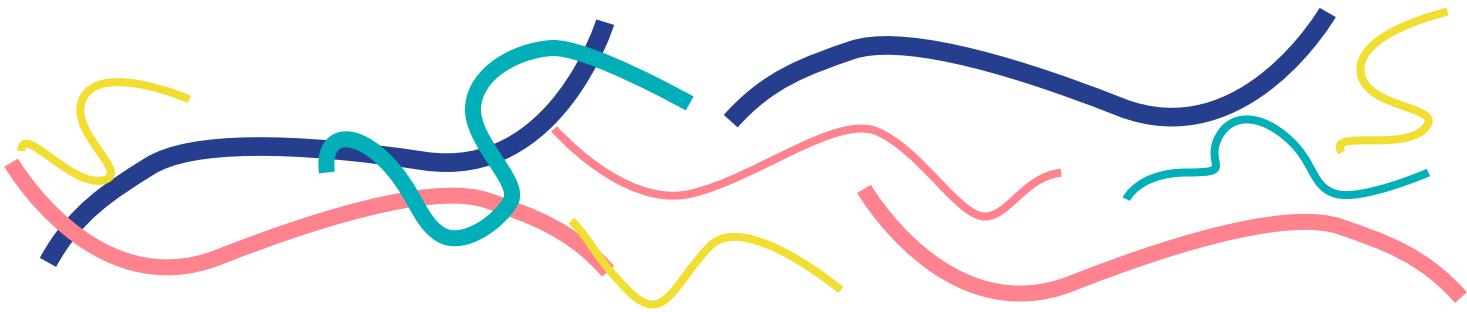
Ethnicity
White

Left Eye Status



While the political aspirations of this project are weighty, the dimension of play is crucial. Play is integral not only to the operation of the mask, but also to how the mask is performatively presented. The mask is shared with participants through the re-enactment of a familiar configuration: the biometric registration desk. The desk, two facing chairs, a laptop, a webcam, a registrar; with the exception of a fingerprint scanner, which lacks relevance in this particular scene, the stage is set for a biometric reading. But the familiar lexicon has a few disruptions that are museal in nature: its contextual dislocation (exhibition), a display of rules (museum code), and a slideshow projected in the background (art object). The resulting performance is an uncanny mash-up of mass surveillance and the museum. The hope is that the continuum of conduct-living, upon which both mass and museum surveillance stand, is brought to life through this interplay.

6



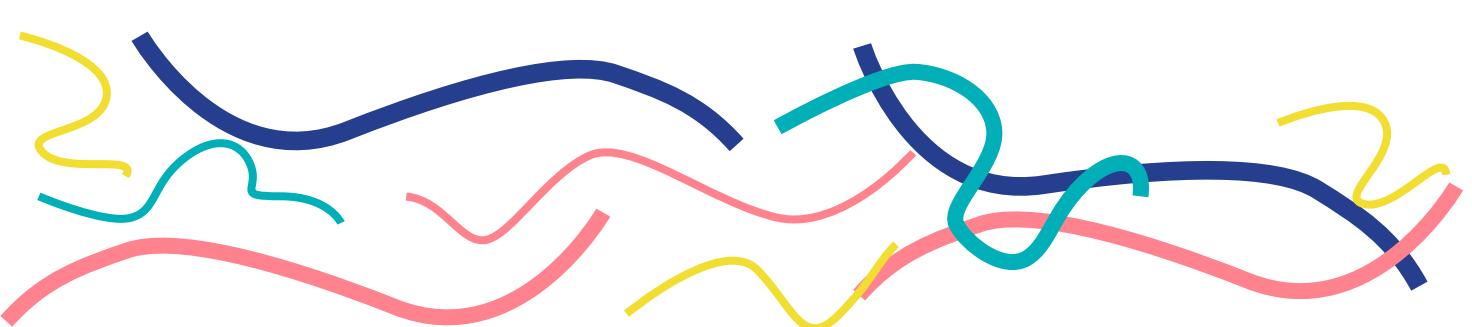
possible future of project

In order to move forward with the mask prototyping it would be good to test them out of different material and also try to make the landmarks of the mask misread the face as an animal face.

Meanwhile the different protection from surveillance is getting developed. The idea of syncing with the surrounding space by special hoods and cloaks, which are in shape of architectural forms (columns, telephonebox). Those gadgets hide the posture of the person completely and makes it impossible for CCTV or a human eye to recognise who is wearing it.

Also test those wearebales with different materials (reflective fabric) will give another result in the recognition system.

Prototypes of finger prints should be done as final jewelry and act as an accessory to hide the original finger prints.



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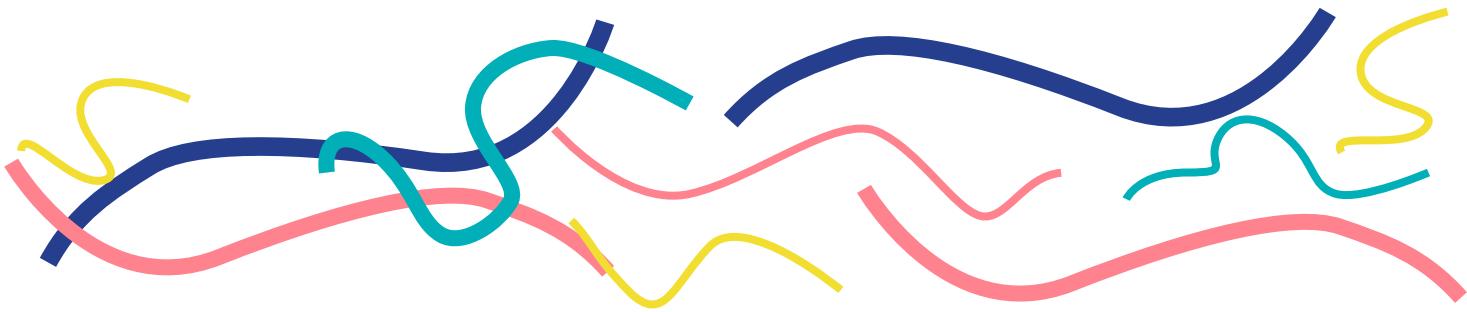
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