

STEVEN COTTINGHAM

April 1–May 26, 2023

e/ ENTRE
Burggasse 24/4
1070 Vienna

EXHIBITION OPENING
31 March | 17–21h

DISCUSSION w/ @Appliedhumanrights
27 March | 16.30–18h
Vordere Zollamtsstraße 7, Seminar 20

GALLERY TOUR
20 April | 18–19h

Human Resources is an exhibition considering surveillance in relation to human rights, using computer rendering and animal camouflage to situate predatory vision within an increasingly datafied world. As advanced extraction algorithms require less and less realtime oversight, the data they gather is not necessarily used for observation but to fuel predictive simulations—resulting in a conflation of actual and virtual conditions, thus manifesting new and ambiguous spaces for human rights violations to occur.

At the center of this exhibition is *Chain-link* (2021–2023), a feature-length film set in a futuristic prison under total and constant surveillance, where prisoners develop new forms of crypsis to elude the omnipresent gaze of their AI surveiller. Filmed inside the virtual world of *Grand Theft Auto V*, the artist uses hacks and mods to stage scenes in existing environments, subverting the game's own camera and narrative to produce a story of liberation. In this way, *Chain-link* deals foremost with the game's stereotypical depictions of penitentiaries in order to reflect on the role and portrayal of incarceration and surveillance within our societies.

Other work makes use of emerging AI image generators to produce urban camo patterns specific to the gallery's neighbourhood, illustrating the latent environmental pressures that inform societal behaviours and systematically embody our values in order to reflect them back to us in new form. Elsewhere the artist produces simulations of animal camouflage techniques like the spectacularly adaptable skin of cephalopods to point to the recursive relationships between humans, animals, and machines: a cipher for how our acts of domestication come home to domesticate us in turn.

Digital surveillance and data mining have become ubiquitous practices in an extremely profitable industry, turning daily routines and private interactions into commodifiable resources, while the balance between surveillance and privacy has yet to be enshrined as a human right. Ultimately, the work in *Human Resources* proceeds from the reality that surveillance and predatory vision have long been present as environmental pressures in our societies, with each novel iteration ever-prompting new ways of refracting the predatory gaze.

HUMAN RESOURCES

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