
(Paranoid) Shelter

2012

Project by fabric | ch

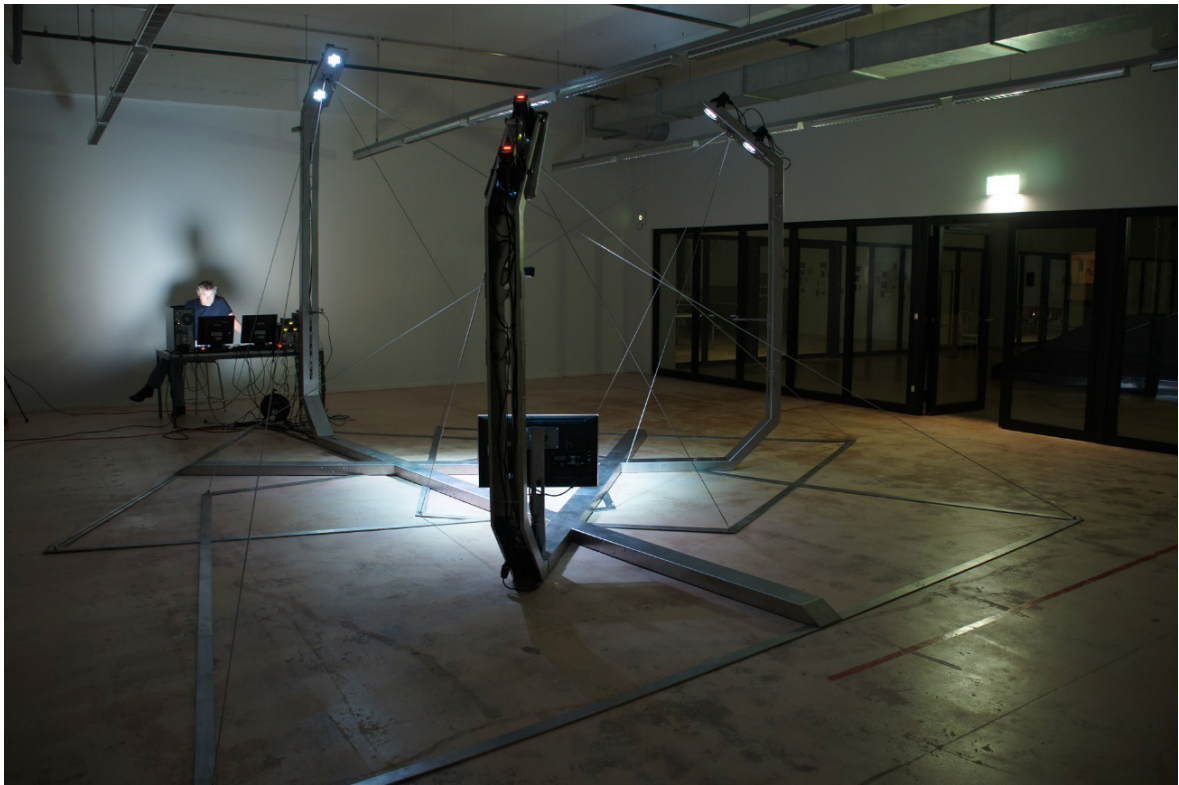
Locations: Caen (FR), Montbéliard (FR), Renens (CH)

With the support of Pro Helvetia, Sitemapping/Mediaprojects (Swiss Federal Office for Cultural Affairs), Ville de Lausanne and Canton de Vaud

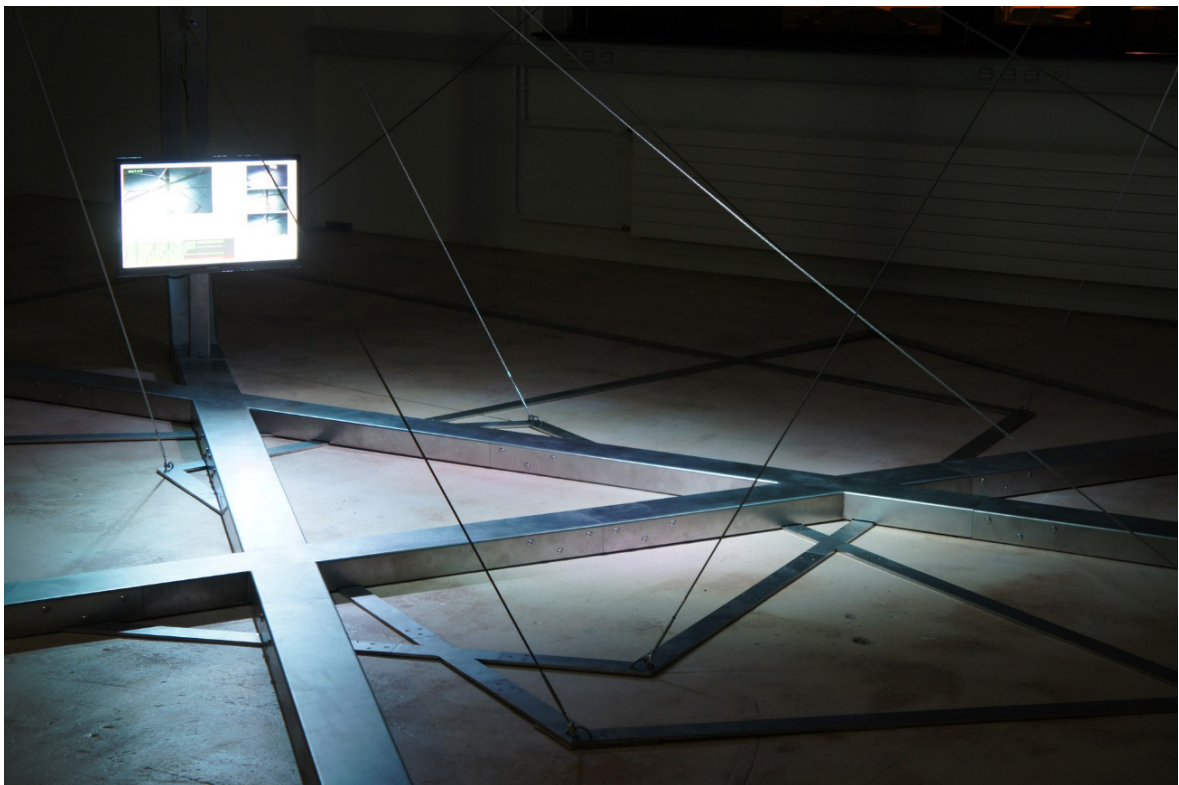
Exhibited during a creation residency at the EPFL-ECAL Lab (Renens, CH) and Globale Surveillance's theatrical (Caen, Montbéliard FR)

- Transparent shelter, determined and shaped by surveillance and monitoring technologies
 - Architectural device built on algorithmic codes & behaviors
 - Autonomous/learning architecture
 - Variable environment
-

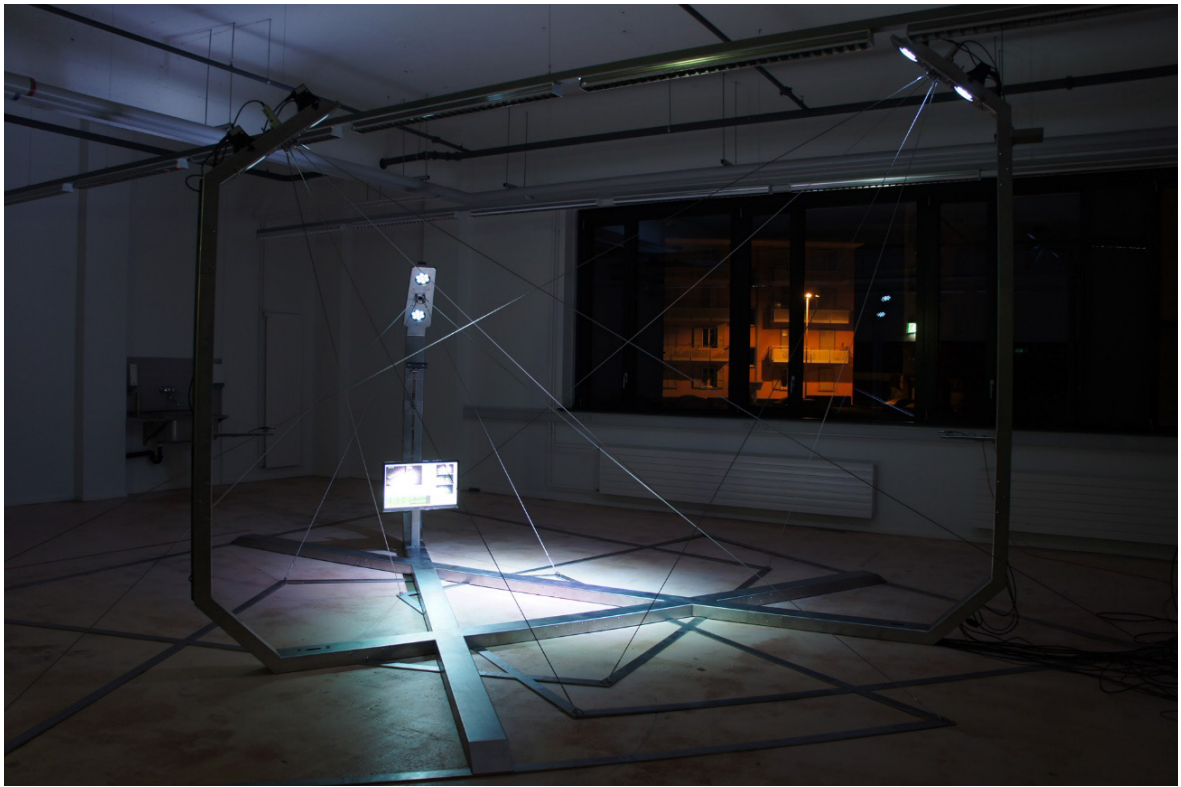
- Interfaces & software for (Paranoid) Shelter



[Img. 1]



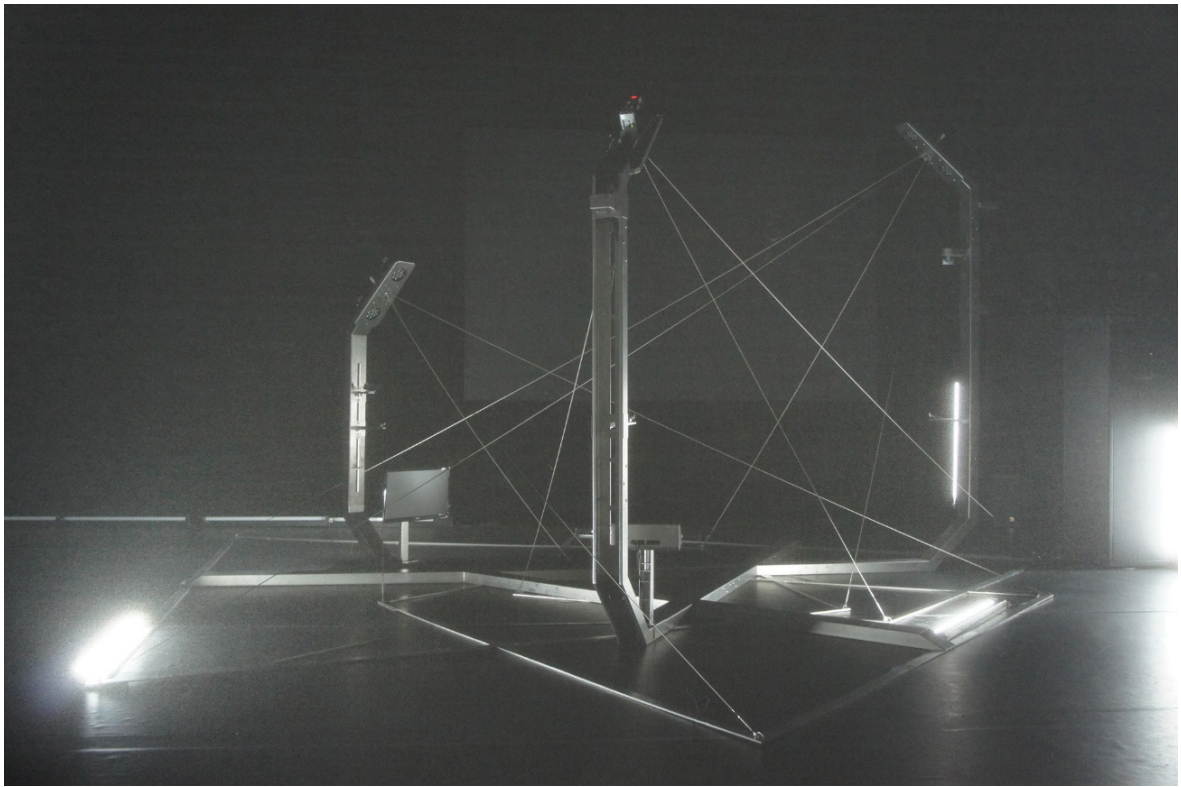
[Img. 2]



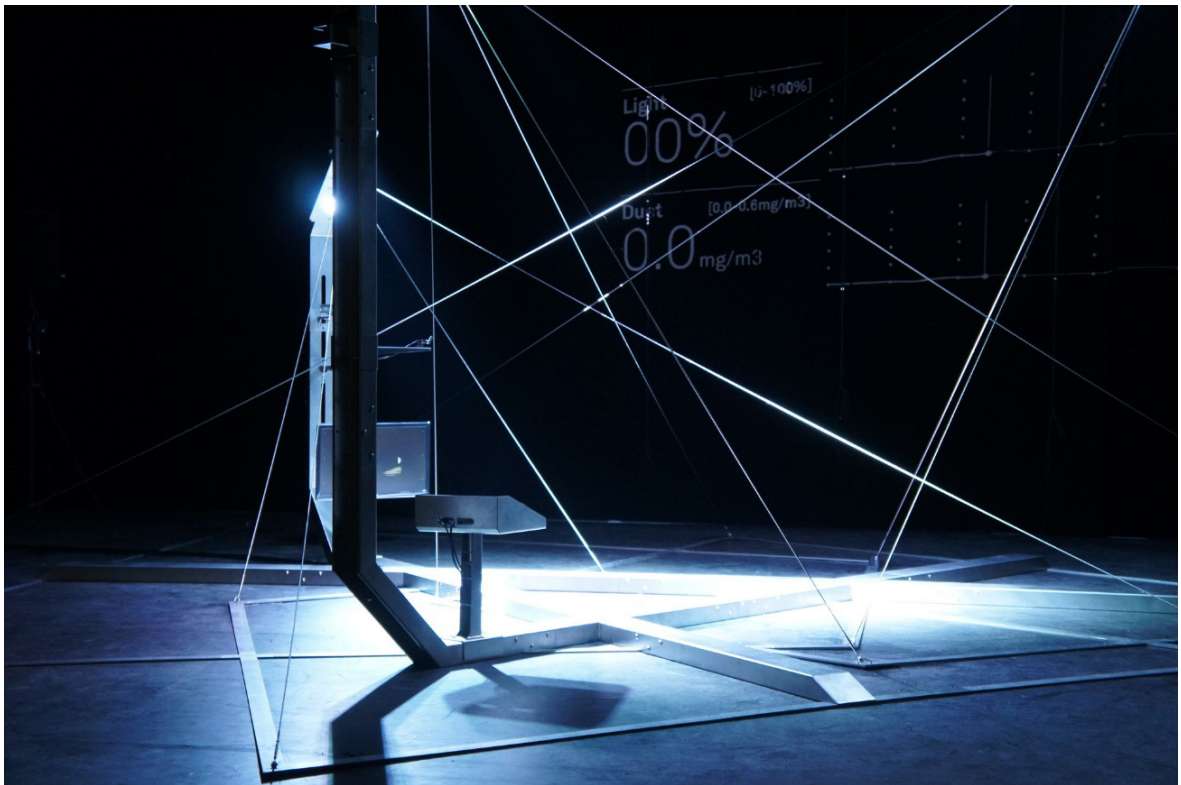
[Img. 3]



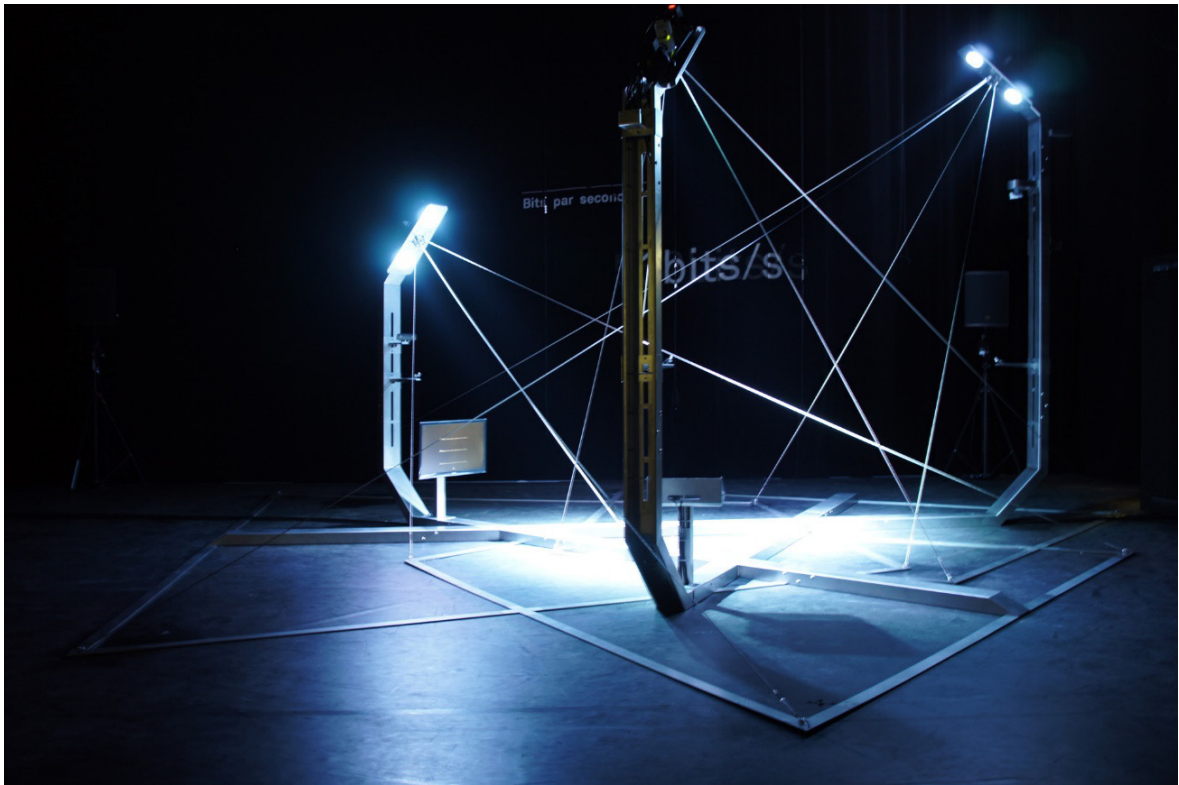
[Img. 4]



[Img. 5]



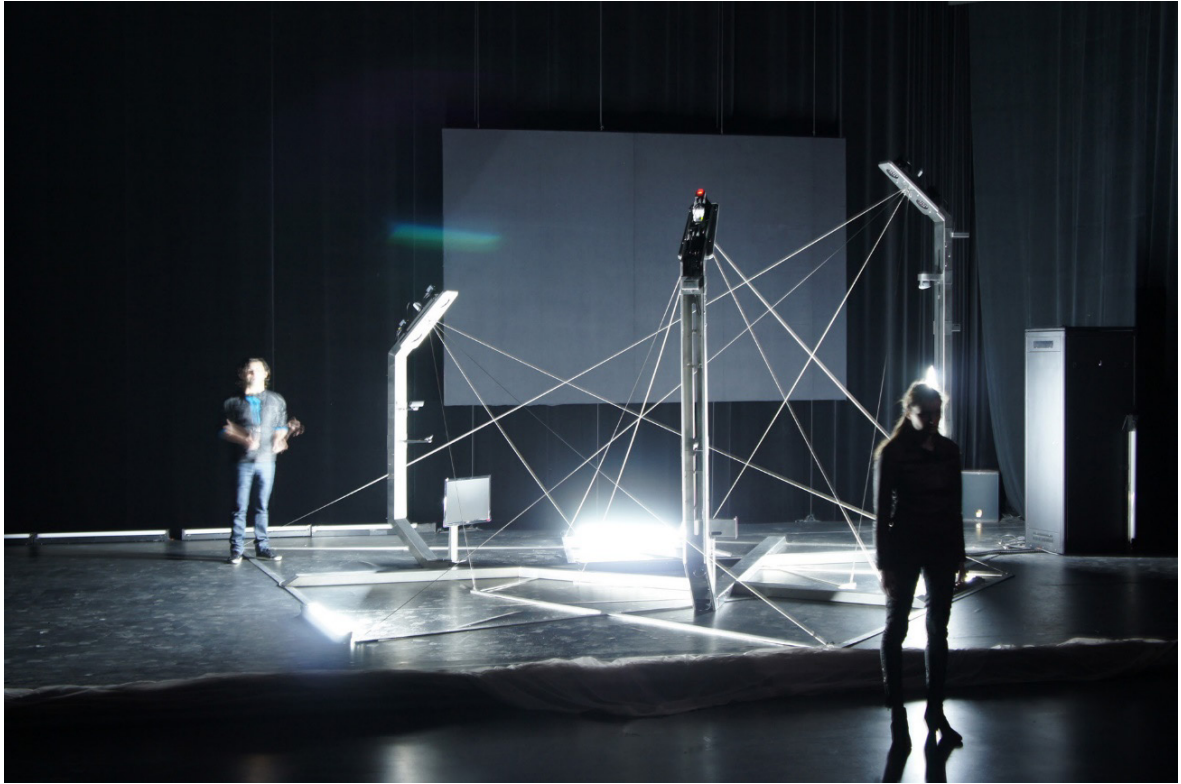
[Img. 6]



[Img. 7]



[Img. 8]



[Img. 9]

Image captions:

- [Img. 1] (Paranoid) Shelter, residency installation at the EPFL-ECAL Lab (Renens, CH), February 2012. The overall design of the pavilion is determined mainly by the made-visible shapes of the three cones of vision from the surveillance camera and their projection on the floor, as well as by some other surveillance/monitoring devices. The pavilion remains mostly transparent, open, and lightly materialized.
- [Img. 2] "Central" part of the shelter, where the highest density of monitoring systems is active. A screen displays the current state of the Paranoid Shelter (level of awareness, views from camera, activities from the different sensors and algorithms at work, analytics, and mining) as well as where the user(s) can scrutinize him(them)self(s). The entire space can also be seen as only three flat images.
- [Img. 3] While mainly and only "framing the air", with sensors and different technologies (high level of monitoring redundancy), it is nonetheless a totally different space/experience inside the frames than outside. Even so, the exact limits or "area of influence" of the Paranoid Shelter remain blurred due to the use of other technologies, such as microphones (so-called "gunshot tracking"), wireless atmospheric sensors, a dedicated access point, and so on.
- [Img. 4] Sitting still in the data shelter.
- [Img. 5] (Paranoid) Shelter on stage, in use as a theatrical device with additional lighting systems. All lighting systems are driven by data and monitoring inputs.
- [Img. 6] On stage in Caen (FR), the Paranoid Shelter is equipped with additional devices as a background projection of inner data mining.
- [Img. 7] On stage in Caen (FR).
- [Img. 8] Two actors inhabit the shelter during an act.
- [Img. 9] Two actors inhabit the shelter and its vicinity during an act.

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(Paranoid) Shelter

(Paranoid) Shelter is a recent installation / architectural device that fabric | ch finalized late in 2011 after a 6-month residency at the EPFL-ECAL Lab in Renens (Switzerland). It was realized with the support of Pro Helvetia, the OFC, the City of Lausanne and the State of Vaud. It was initiated and first presented as sketches back in 2008 (!) in the context of a colloquium about surveillance at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

Being created in the context of a theatrical collaboration with the French writer and essayist Eric Sadin around his books about contemporary surveillance ("Surveillance globale" and "Globale paranoia"--both published back in 2009--), (Paranoid) Shelter revisits the old figure/myth of the architectural shelter, articulated by the use of surveillance technologies as building blocks. It seems to state that contemporary surveillance is in a "de facto" relation with the old myth of the shelter and that it can be considered as a contemporary way to build it, yet in a totally different, somehow problematic way because it usually mixes public and private interests, freedom and penalty or censorship, and remains unclear.

Therefore, filled with monitoring technologies and exploring their formal potential (the main formal aspects are "autological": the materialization of the cones of vision from the surveillance cameras fixed on a frame that evokes public infrastructure) as well as their functional incidence (a tele-"neo-nomad" condition?), the project also comments on "smartness," as (Paranoid) Shelter is composed of the same ingredients : active, mediated, monitored or scrutinized, possibly robotized and sometimes "intelligent." Consequently, it points out the links between "smartness" and surveillance which can't be undervalued (What is the status of the data that are collected? What are the inner natures of the codes and software that drive the behaviors of the architecture?).

"Smartness" is undoubtedly a coming trend in architectural space still debated largely in specialized circles. Whether this will be the work of the architect or the engineer is still to be decided (following the heritage of the architectural critic from the 60s, Reyner Banham, we state that it should y be designed mainly by the architect and implemented in close relation with the engineer). It is, along with parallel questions about sustainability, digital design & fabrication, code, weather, robotics and possibly "geo-engineering," one of the hot topics within the recent architectural debate which will drive the evolution of the discipline.

As with surveillance, "smartness" will generate data, it will leave "traces" and "tracks." This latter leads inevitably to the same issues of the privacy (or not) of personal data. The statuses of data, codes and technologies are, in fact, a real issue for society, in general, and for architecture. To envision the question, just think about a public

space monitored by a private company that owns and uses the data for marketing purposes (we all know this already) or a private home in which all the data and images are released openly on the networks (next frontier for some hackers). Worse: a state that sells its monitored, but non-nominal, public information to companies for these companies to build commercial products. We are confronted with a confusion of gender, at best a hybridization.

(Paranoid) Shelter articulates and objectifies the idea of surveillance/smartness as one of the main vectors of transformation in our contemporary space: while responding to none of the traditional ways of describing a shelter – (Paranoid) Shelter doesn't protect you from rain or cold, it doesn't really protect you from any physical danger but can maybe anticipate it - and at the same time being nearly totally transparent and mostly immaterial, it is nonetheless totally different to stand inside its layered frames and limits than to stand outside of them. If an outside does, indeed, still exist. The space is changed and architected by the means of invisible codes and behaviors and is mediated through the channels of technologies and networks.

With (Paranoid) Shelter, the code is obviously an integral part of the architecture, and its status tries to be clear: custom created by the design team (architects and scientists) for the project along with its physical parts, in this case, the code is part of the structure and the author's work. The raw data, generated by the public and driving the reactivity of the spatial device, are public and fully open to any other public use. It is a shared common space in which the infrastructure is made available to the public but doesn't belong to them, the space and data do.

(Paranoid) Shelter demonstrates the fact that a piece of code and technology should indeed be considered as architecture, that it transforms the nature of space and our experience of it, just like previous technologies did (electricity, artificial lighting, heating, air conditioning, elevators, and so on), but also like walls and windows can do. It suggests new ways of living too; nearly tribal within an equally new, partly immaterial, open, and mediated shelter.

(Paranoid) Shelter can be displayed either as an architectural installation on its own (museum), in which its programs will let it behave in an autonomous and "intelligent" way, or as a scenography architecture, on stage (in a theatre) in the context of collaborations and where it is driven by different programs that are (mostly) controlled remotely.

(Paranoid) Shelter's building blocks are (hardware):

- 3 network (surveillance) cameras with night shot functionalities
- 1 network (surveillance) PTZ (Pan Tilt Zoom) camera
- 3 embedded microphones
- 2 Libellium wireless network sensors boards
- 3 temperature sensors
- 2 light sensors
- 1 humidity sensor
- 1 pressure sensor
- 1 CO₂-level sensor
- 1 O₂-level sensor

- 1 pollution sensor
- 1 dust sensor
- 1 dedicated Wi-Fi access point ("paranoid hotspot")
- 6 DMX controllable LED lights
- 1 LCD LED screen (1920x1080), 2nd optional
- (optional) 1 beamer 1280x800, 4000lm
- 1 air-conditioned server cabinet
- Servers, Lanboxes
- A set of stainless cables
- An overall stainless frame
- Some books
- Some blankets

(Paranoid) Shelter's other building blocks are (custom software, codes & data):

- Quantity of movement & camera tracking
- Areas' occupation, heat zones
- moving objects' locations
- Presence/absence counting / per overall object and surrounding / per sub zones
- Normal/abnormal behaviors
- Sound patterns recognition, "gunshot tracking"
- Noise level
- Sound location
- Atmospheric monitoring
- Normal/abnormal atmosphere
- Wi-Fi monitoring ("snooping")
- "Intelligent" behaviors, sets of rules, scripts and codes
- Spatial use data

fabric | ch, March 2012

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