

Pearson, Jordan. "Sex Cams and Voyeurism Make for Great Art," *Vice*, August 8, 2014. [motherboard.vice.com](http://motherboard.vice.com)



Be it ubiquitous surveillance, sex cams, even carefully cropped and filtered photos, we're experiencing each other's projected lives in new voyeuristic ways, on the internet and off. Our relationships with other humans are becoming increasingly complex and layered in the age of video screens and simulated experience.

To multimedia artists Pablo Garcia and Addie Wagenknecht, it's art.

Garcia, an architect and art historian and Wagenknecht, a digital artist, have been exploring the tension between humanity and technology together for several years, through works that blend the carnally profane with the artistically sublime—the intimacy of human relationships with the creeping coldness of digital connection.

Last year, the duo's commentary took the form of [Brbxxoxo](#), a website that streams the eerily empty bedrooms, kitchens, and garages of sex cam workers worldwide, and [Webcam Venus](#), which featured nude cam girls and guys in poses borrowed from classical art.

Taking these weirdly intimate zones of the web and making them public—not just public, but art—is what Wagenknecht and Garcia do best. "We're leveraging this hidden potential for creative inquiry in places that would be considered deep and dark and sexualized in some instances," said Wagenknecht.

"For me," she continued, "a lot of the artworks that we've been doing are kind of comments on, like, the digital versus the real... is there even a difference anymore?"

Our mode of self-representation has shifted through history, from analog methods like painting to the digital ones we're familiar with, added Garcia, chiming in via webcam. "It feels like digital access has given us all the ability to edit in a way that's really extreme. We're used to editing because we've watched movies for so long, but now it's like we're editing our lives in a very similar way."

"We're seeing each other as edited pieces."

The pair's recent work, largely completed separately, reflects this interest. Garcia's current project, [NeoLucida](#), for example, seeks to reinterpret a camera design from the 1800s and make it available to today's public at nominal cost. The goal, his website says, is to give today's digital natives perspective on, well, perspective: how we see the world, art, and ourselves.

Of course, we're not only peering at each other through the Internet. Governments and corporations are also keeping a watchful eye on our data and activities. Wagenknecht's recent project, [Loves Lies](#), features surveillance cameras encrusted with fake Swarovski diamonds, pointing to the tension between widespread, automated surveillance and the human beauty that plays out in the data collected by institutionally voyeuristic entities like the NSA.

"Ultimately, our relationships are forms of data. So these identities are ultimately starting to form our society and the schematics of our culture," Wagenknecht said. "The question for me is how does non-scarce data tie into surveillance? If data is ubiquitous, so is surveillance."

The web has thrown us all into a strange vortex of connection and disconnection, voyeurism and engagement. The very human practice of art is an oddly apt way to navigate our digital existence.



Photo: Addie Wagenknecht, *Anonymity*, 2007