



LEONARDO SELVAGGIO

LeoSelvaggio.com/LACMA

URME SURVEILLANCE

SURVEILLANCE

RESISTANCE

COMMUNITY

URME Surveillance protects the public from facial recognition systems by offering a 3D-printed photorealistic prosthetic of my face to wear in public, thus subverting surveillance systems through disinformation.



Full Description:

The LACMA grant will support the continuation and expansion of URME Surveillance from an individual artist project into a platform for community-based resistance against surveillance. To do this, URME Surveillance must diversify its strategies of resistance and its breadth of representation if it is to combat an exponentially evolving and technologically superior surveillance culture. Two of the strategies that URME will undertake with LACMA Art + Technology support are vital to this goal: collaboration with and support for other artists, and the provision of legal protection to those who would like to participate in URME's subversion of surveillance systems.

With the LACMA Art + Technology grant, I will commission artists to make work around the themes of surveillance, identity, and systems of oppression while using URME Surveillance as a platform to launch their projects. In addition to funding, artists will be provided with logistical support, exhibition opportunities as URME artists, and full access to my identity as material for their projects if they so choose. By implementing similar marketing techniques to those that made URME Surveillance a success, I will transform the momentum that URME has gained into a podium for other artists to address systems of power. In doing so, the voices – and, therefore, the concerns – that comprise URME Surveillance as a community will be amplified, as will our ability to examine, contemplate, and ultimately resist oppressive surveillance systems. I will use a portion of the LACMA grant to produce a group exhibition of these commissions, which will exhibit at LACMA before traveling to other institutions, including Columbia College Chicago.

As it stands, URME Surveillance offers prosthetics of a single face, my own, to the public. However, if I cannot expand the range of faces offered, URME Surveillance's effectiveness – both as a form of protection to the wearer and as a tool of subversion – will suffer.

As my face produces more and more disinformation, it will be criminalized and targeted by authorities. The only way to combat this is to ask the public to risk and resist with me by donating their facial likenesses to the project. Several individuals have already offered to do so. However, ethically, I can not accept their donations without making my donators aware of the legal ramifications of such an action. As such, I will use a portion of the LACMA grant to pursue legal protections for donators, which will include working with the ACLU, retaining legal counsel, and purchasing anti-identity theft services from security firms.

For the past two years, URME Surveillance has engaged the public through exhibitions, presentations, publications, and workshops that promote civic engagement. I will use a small portion of the LACMA grant to cover the travel and logistical expenses needed to continue this work, which includes participation in a paper presentation and exhibition as part of the "Art meets Radical Openness Festival" in Austria, research on Cold War human facial recognition practices at the Wende Museum in Culver City, CA, and workshops with the public at LACMA.



Bio

Leonardo Selvaggio is a Chicago-based interdisciplinary artist whose work examines the entanglement between identity and technology. He has shown work internationally in France, Canada, and Switzerland, and he exhibits broadly in the United States. He has been awarded an Albert P. Weisman grant for his work, URME Surveillance, and a DCASE IAP Professional Grant to present supporting research. In 2015, Selvaggio was a featured artist as part of Chicago Artist Month. His work was selected for the Art Souterrain festival in Montreal, the ISEA conference in Vancouver, and the Saint-Etienne Design Biennial in France. URME Surveillance was also adapted for television in an episode of CSI: Cyber titled "Selfie 2.0." Selvaggio's work has been featured in notable publications: *Hyperallergic*, *Makeshift Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *CNET*, *The Verge*, *The Creator's Project* and others. Selvaggio's academic work has been published in the *International Journal for Performance Arts and Digital Media* and as part of "Behind the Smart World - Saving, deleting and resurfacing data," published by LAFKON. He holds a BFA from Rutgers University and an MFA from Columbia College's Interdisciplinary Arts program. To review Selvaggio's CV, please click [here](#).



Artistic Vision

Inspired by the open-source movement in technology, I think of identity as data that can be upgraded, manipulated, hacked, or corrupted. Within the context of surveillance, my work examines how this data is subject to systems of oppression and patriarchal power, which exploit and co-opt our personal identities for institutional gain. I question how these security systems affect the performance of identity in public space.

My practice is a demonstration of defiance against such systems. I use my identity as material, both to explore the detrimental consequences these systems have on the supposed immutability of our identities, and to protect and empower the public to resist institutions like surveillance.

Surveillance's long history of racial profiling and persecution of people of color has made it clear that it is a system that values cis-white men over all others. My work resists this homogenization by destabilizing my own privilege and distributing it to others. Furthermore, through workshops, social media, and dialogue URME Surveillance creates with the public, together we build community by producing platforms to collaborate on the deconstruction of such systems.



Exploring Technology

Despite its use of state of the art 3D printing methods, URME Surveillance's most significant exploration of technology comes from its cybernetic approach to exploiting the design weaknesses in emerging facial recognition technology. Facial recognition technology, as it is applied for practical use, operates on the assumption that faces are unique and inherently tied to individual persons. This assumption of stability when collecting data on faces (and their respective identities) is what produces our confidence in statistics and lends that data enough credibility to be considered as incriminating judiciary evidence. Rather than attempting to subvert this system through digital means, URME Surveillance turns the system's assumption of stability into a weakness by producing conflicting data sets in facial recognition databases.

If multiple users were to wear this prosthetic and become "Leos" in different areas of the same city at the same time, facial recognition systems would have conflicting locative information: the identity "Leo Selvaggio" would inhabit more than one space simultaneously. Additionally, as the body of each individual wearer is different, there is contradictory data gathered about "Leo's" height, weight, and gender. If done on a large enough scale, these conflicting data sets would call into question facial recognition systems' ability to accurately determine the true identity of any face captured in camera-based documentation. In this way, URME Surveillance engages and empowers the public as active collaborators and components of a larger network of human interaction and resistance.



Inspiring Dialogue

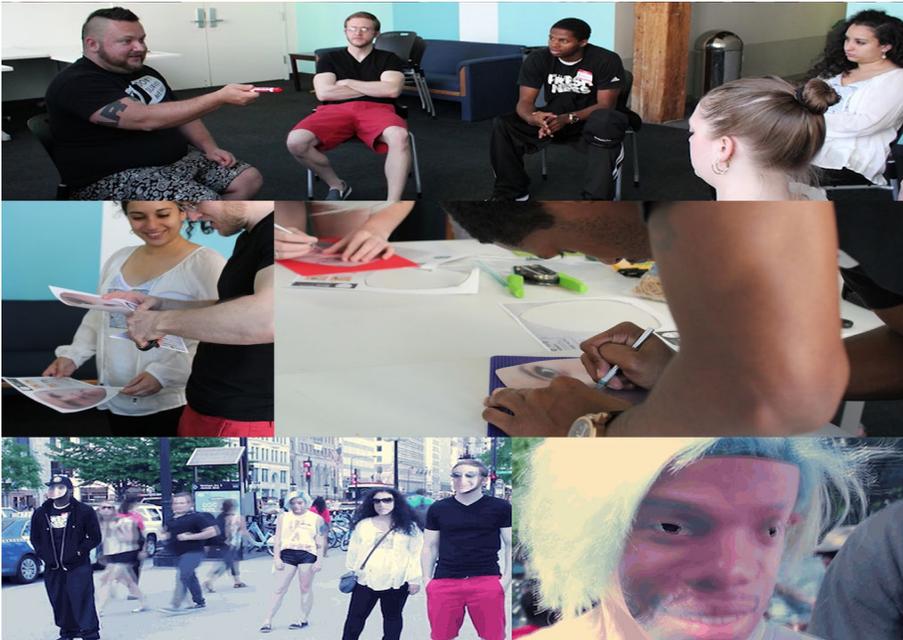
Surveillance, privacy, and governmental oversight have come to the forefront of American politics and public concern since Snowden's revelations of the NSA's illegal activities. URME Surveillance has continued to produce timely dialogue about technological practices that invade our everyday lives in magazine articles, interviews, local and international news, blogs, exhibitions, and workshops. By so doing, the project has helped produce a critical culture around emerging surveillance technologies.

Recently, URME Surveillance has shifted its focus from a concern with privacy and security to an examination of white privilege and other inequalities embedded within our technologies and systems of power. Part of the prosthetic's effectiveness derives from its visual assertion of whiteness within the public sphere. After all, nothing is more invisible to patriarchal power, of which surveillance is a tool, than another white man in a suit. URME Surveillance brings this prejudice to the surface and examines how these biases are embedded within our technologies and governmental systems.

The LACMA grant will allow me to inject the project with a disruptive dose of diversity in both thought and skin tone. Inviting artists of different backgrounds will make URME Surveillance's perspective on technology more whole and nuanced; new donators will ensure that URME can offer prosthetic identities of every race, gender, and design, further encouraging subversive civic engagement in the United States and abroad.

Proposed Public Engagement

- I will continue my program of exhibitions, presentations, and workshops, which I will share with the LACMA audience onsite.
- URME Surveillance, which sells anti-surveillance devices at cost, will prefer to commission projects that have similarly-considered strategies for public distribution and open accessibility, i.e. democratic multiples, open-source software, etc.
- I will implement my skills in marketing and social media to promote each artist's commissioned project to the public and press.
- By providing legal protection to donators, URME Surveillance invites the public to share ownership of the project, transforming URME into a civically engaged public platform of resistance.



Proposed Data Collection

- First, a collection of qualitative data will come directly from the workshops that URME Surveillance will implement in the form of an open-ended survey given to participants. Participants will share their personal experiences with surveillance and answer some metrics about how much surveillance affects them. I will consult with program evaluation specialists to design an effective survey to capture such data. This survey could also be adapted to collect data at future exhibitions and other events, and it will be published anonymously on URME's website.
- I will produce a mobile-device mapping tool that I will offer as a "perk" in an Indiegogo marketing campaign. Using an NFC trigger, the one-step tool (most likely a keychain or ring) will allow participants to track surveillance cameras in their area. Touching the tool to smartphones will cause it to capture and publish an image of the surveillance camera along with its GPS data to a public Google map automatically.
- Using the LACMA grant, I will collaborate with programmer Benjamin Grosser to develop my URME Surveillance Facial Video Encryption software, which effectively replaces the faces it finds in video files with digital images of my own face. Currently, the software is run in a Max MSP with Jitter environment: a helpful platform for non-coders, but ultimately a somewhat closed environment. URME will translate this into software written in a more universal language like C# and then provide it as open-source software for others to develop and share.



In-kind Contributions

There are several opportunities for in-kind support during the grant cycle:

- I will run an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign; while primarily a part of my media marketing strategy, this campaign will also produce funds. For example, in May of 2014, I launched a 2-month crowd-funding campaign for URME Surveillance, in which I produced all media, copy, and strategies. By the end of the campaign, URME had raised 256% of its funding goal, with 6,304 views on the Indiegogo platform alone. This led to over 200 mentions, blog posts, and articles, and a total of 163,300 views within the first three months of the project's inception. I expect this new campaign to raise between \$2,000-5,000.
- I have some institutional support from Columbia College Chicago, which has shown preliminary interest in hosting a URME Surveillance group show.
- URME Surveillance has in-kind contributions from the manufacturer of the 3D Printed Identity Prosthetic, who gives my audience a \$100 discount on their product: a 30% price reduction.
- Use of LACMA's spaces for both workshops and the exhibition, as well as access to the Art + Technology Lab's resources and research libraries, will be contributions in-kind.

Total Amount Requested

\$47,483



Budget

URME Surveillance Commission Project:

I will partition the funds allotted by the LACMA grant into eight sums of \$1000 each, to be distributed over two separate commission cycles (four per cycle). Commission proposals will be considered by a panel consisting of myself and at least three other jurors. Currently short-listed jurors are artist Paul Catanese and curator Jessica Cochran. I intend to approach other Chicago creatives such as Felicia Hollman, Krista Franklin, and Tiffany Funk to join the panel. I will offer each juror a \$100 stipend for their participation. Artists that are selected will be given a period of six months to complete their projects. During this time, they will be

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
URME Commission Funds	\$1000	8, with four to be distributed each cycle for 2 cycles	\$8000
Juror Stipend	\$100	4 jurors not including myself	\$400
Web Support (additional storage for URME Website, possible creation of additional website, web services to accept submissions, etc)	\$250	1	\$250
Marketing related to submissions (fees for posting calls on websites like NYFA, Facebook campaign, etc).	\$225	1	\$225
			\$8875

given logistical support, marketing promotion, and opportunities for exhibition. This expansion of URME Surveillance will require additional web support and, possibly, the creation of multiple websites. This first phase of the URME Surveillance Commission Project, supported by LACMA, will act as a proof-of-concept prototype. Once complete, this phase will serve as a working model whose demonstrated success will help me to procure funding from additional sources in the future. In this way, I will make the URME Surveillance Commission Program sustainable.

Commission Marketing Campaign

I will run an Indiegogo Campaign to promote The URME Surveillance Commission Program. Crowdfunding campaigns require two elements in order to be successful: a well-produced, convincing pitch video and intriguing and relevant “perks” given in exchange for monetary donations. I have all the equipment required to make a good pitch video, but I will hire a

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Production Assistant budget	\$15/hr	15 hours	\$225
Flashforge Creator Pro 3D Printer	\$1300	1	\$1300
Glowforge Basic Desktop Laser cutter	\$2300	1	\$2300
Miscellaneous materials for perks	\$140	1	\$140
Shipping Budget for perks	\$200	1	\$200
			\$4165

production assistant during filming and post production. I will also purchase two key pieces of equipment to produce the perks myself: a 3D printer and a laser cutter. By purchasing this equipment, I can produce a larger quantity of perks, which can then be used as marketing giveaways for exhibitions, workshops, etc. These two tools will also support my other artistic projects. The funds gained from the crowdfunding campaign should significantly offset my project’s costs while marketing and branding the project. This will also lay the groundwork for promotion of the commission projects after their completion.

Budget cont.

URME Commission Project Exhibition

I will produce a group exhibition consisting of the commissioned projects, my own work, and contextual didactics. As contributions in-kind, the labor provided by the staff of each institution – including LACMA, Columbia College Chicago, and others – will not be reflected below. Costs associated with this stage of the project will mostly entail exhibition production, shipping, and travel. I will travel to LACMA for the week of installation through the opening reception.

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Travel to LA (flight)	\$200 round trip	1	\$200
Lodging (Airbnb)	\$100 per night	5 days	\$500
Shipping of commissioned work to LA	\$300 per artist x 4 artists = \$1200	1	\$1200
Production of contextualizing didactics (printed on foam board)	\$900	1	\$900
Packing materials for shipping full show to Columbia College Chicago	\$250	1	\$250
Shipping full show back to me in Chicago	\$1500	1	\$1500
			\$4550

Protection of Donators:

This section will be an ongoing part of my research, and much of the process details are still unknown. However, I am budgeting \$10,000 towards this stage. I will approach the ACLU to best understand the legal ramifications of donation, procure legal protections and/or representation for donators, and hire legal assistance to draft a general contract between

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Partnering with ACLU	Unknown		Unknown
Legal Counsel	Unknown		\$8,000
Lifelock membership	\$9 per month x 2 years =\$216/donator	8	\$1728
			\$9728

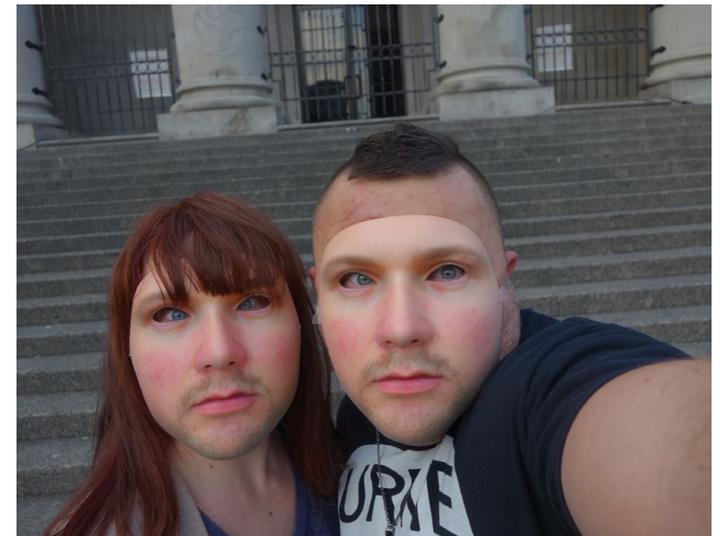
URME Surveillance and its donators. Historically, the ACLU does much of its work pro-bono. As such, there may not be a cost associated with this pursuit. However, if the ACLU does not accept my case, I will obtain legal counsel from Lawyers for the Creative Arts. Lastly, as a stop-gap measure should these efforts fail, I will provide donators with a membership to Lifelock, an identity theft security service, for the period of two years.

Budget cont.

Collaborations

I have two outstanding collaborations with artists *Megan Pitcher* and *Benjamin Grosser*. Pitcher is a movement and new media artist; we have collaborated previously and will continue our partnership. We are currently developing a lexicon of anti-surveillance movement-based choreography, which we hope to produce both as performance and as publicly available instruction under the label of URME Surveillance. This project will be performed at LACMA along with a corresponding workshop for the public (the costs associated with the workshop will be addressed in the workshop portion of the budget). Grosser is a programmer and new media artist. I will work with Grosser to translate my URME Facial Video Encryptor into an open-sourced software, which will then be distributed under open-source license to the public. Because I do not possess the programming skills to assist Grosser, I will be paying him a stipend.

Megan Pitcher Collaboration			
Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Travel for me to Cleveland (Weekend flight)	\$175	3 x over the course of a year	\$525
Lodging (hostel)	\$100	3 x over the course of a year	\$300
Performer fees (3 performers workshoping two weekends)	\$100 each	2 weekends	\$600
Purchase of 3 additional URME Prosthetics for performers.	\$225 each including shipping	3	\$675
			\$2100



Benjamin Grosser Collaboration			
Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Travel for Ben to Chicago (Train)	\$60 round trip	2 x over the course of a year	\$120
Lodging (motel)	\$125	2 x over the course of a year	\$250
Artist Fee for programming skills	\$1000	1	\$1000
			\$1370

Budget cont.

Workshops at LACMA

I plan to hold three workshops at LACMA over the course of the year. The first will be at the beginning of the grant process. The second will be six months afterwards and will include my collaborator Megan Pitcher. As part of this workshop, we will produce a small performance of our collaboration for the participants and LACMA's audience. The last workshop will occur in conjunction with the URME Surveillance Commission Group Exhibition at LACMA. The majority of the costs associated with these workshops relate to travel and lodging. All workshops will be free to the public.

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Leo's Flights to LA	\$200 round trip	3 x over the course of a year	\$600
Megan's Flight to LA	\$370 round trip	1	\$370
Lodging (Airbnb)	\$100 per night x 3 days per trip = \$300	3 x over the course of a year	\$900
Food	\$15 per meal x 9 meals = \$135	3 x over the course of a year	\$405
Performers in LA (3)	\$100 each x 3 = \$300	1	\$300
Hiring a program evaluation specialist to design a workshop survey	\$200	1	\$200
			\$2775

URME Surveillance at "Art meets Radical Openness Festival" and other travel:

URME Surveillance has been invited to present a paper and exhibit at the "Art Meets Radical Openness Festival" in Austria this coming May. My lodging has been donated as a contribution in-kind by the festival coordinators. Costs for this pursuit are primarily associated with travel and food for the 10 days I will be participating in the festival. I will also budget a small portion of the LACMA grant for other travel associated with the presentation and promotion of URME Surveillance during the grant cycle.

Item	Cost	Quantity	Total
Flight to Austria	\$1200 round trip	1	\$1200
Additional bags for the transportation of work for exhibition	\$60	2	\$120
Food	\$20 per meal (\$15 after Euro conversion)	30 meals over 10 days	\$600
Other travel during grant cycle	\$500 per trip	4 trips anticipated	\$2000
			\$3920

Budget cont.

Artist Fees

Below are approximations of my time spent on each of the budget-related activities above. For the sake of this budget, I will describe my time in how many weeks – working 35 hours a week – it will take me to accomplish each task. These hours will be spread over the course of the grant cycle year. My rate is \$500 per week, which includes preparation work, design, coordination, travel time, research, production, documentation, etc. I am not including an artist rate for “Art meets Radical Openness Festival” and other travel, as those artist fees should be paid by the respective institutions.

Project	Cost per week	# of weeks	Total
URME Surveillance Commission Project	\$500	8	\$4000
Commissions Marketing Campaign	\$500	2.5	\$1250
Exhibition	\$500	3	\$1500
Protection of Donators	\$500	2	\$1000
Collaborations	\$500	3	\$1500
Workshops at LACMA	\$500	2.25	\$750
			\$10000

Timeline

Months 1-3

1. Develop and launch Indiegogo campaign, which includes purchasing of equipment for perks, creation of pitch video, and implementing marketing campaign.
2. Develop call for submissions and determine any additional web based support that is needed.
3. Begin researching and pursuing legal avenues including reaching out to ACLU
4. Travel to LACMA for first workshop and developing surveillance survey for participants.
5. Have initial meeting with collaborator Megan Pitcher.

Months 4-6

1. Market call for submissions, juror submissions, begin 6 month commission period for artists.
2. Deliver perks to Indiegogo funders.
3. Continue pursuing legal avenues.
4. Have initial meeting with collaborator Benjamin Grosser.
5. 2nd Workshop at LACMA with Megan Pitcher.
6. Begin exhibition curation and design.

Months 7-9

1. Support artists through the last three months of their cycle including marketing projects
2. Develop contract for donators and begin to publicize a call for facial donations.
3. Have final meeting with collaborators Benjamin Grosser and Megan Pitcher
4. Begin production of exhibition and finalize where the show will travel after LACMA.

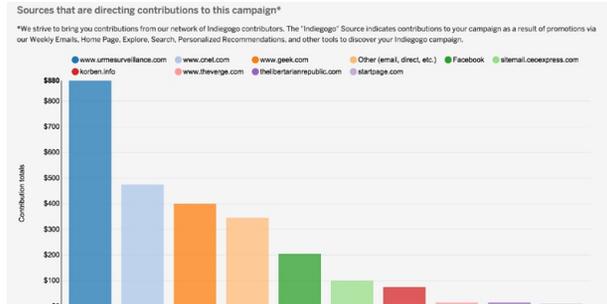
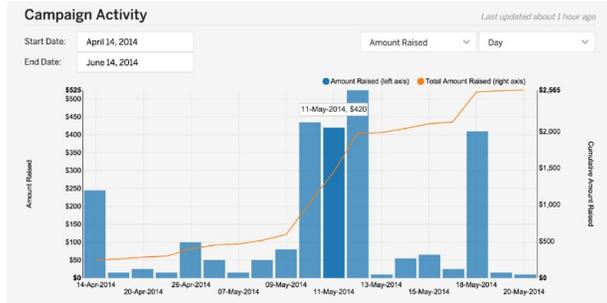
Months 10-12

1. Install exhibition .
2. Make arrangements for exhibition to ship.
3. Finish cycle 1 of commissions and begin cycle 2.
4. Research and apply to funding sources for commission cycle 3.
5. Distribute URME Facial Video Encyptor open-source software from collaboration with Benjamin Grosser.
6. Take a vacation.

Documentation

URME Surveillance Indiegogo Pitch Video (5 min):

Despite being over 2 years old, this pitch video is still one of the best ways I have been able to contextualize my work to the general public. Furthermore, as it is hosted on the indiegogo campaign page, LACMA will be able to see exactly how I run a crowdfunding marketing campaign. You can view the video by clicking or navigating to <https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/urme-surveillance-developing-devices-to-protect-the-public#/story>



Sources (Last updated about 1 hour ago)

All Sources | Export as CSV

Source	Amount	Contributions
www.urmesurveillance.com	\$880	5
www.cnet.com	\$475	8
www.geek.com	\$400	1
Other (email, direct, etc.)	\$345	14
Facebook	\$205	8
sitemail.ceoexpress.com	\$100	1
korben.info	\$75	2
theibertianrepublic.com	\$15	1
www.theverge.com	\$15	1
www.holesinthenet.co.il	\$10	1

Contributions by Country (Last updated about 1 hour ago)

All Countries | Export as CSV

Country	Amount	Contributions	Visits
United States	\$1,515	34	4,382
Australia	\$400	1	135
Europe	\$400	1	122
France	\$95	4	369
Denmark	\$50	1	25
Netherlands	\$35	2	136
Italy	\$25	1	40
United Kingdom	\$25	1	280
Israel	\$10	1	23
Germany	\$10	1	303



Webpage (optional):

Because I have included several images in this pdf, I have instead curated some supporting materials into a webpage for your to peruse. You can visit the website by visiting www.leoselvaggio.com/LACMA

LEONARDO SELVAGGIO Recent Projects Other Work About Updates FF@916



Thank you for considering my application to the LACMA Art + Technology Grant. I look forward to hearing your response to my work.


Leo Selvaggio

SUPPORTING MATERIALS:

Thank you for considering my application to the LACMA Art + Technology Grant. Below you will find:

1. An online version of the submitted PDF for reference.
2. A recent work sample of URME Surveillance (please feel free to explore the rest of my website for other works)