

Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins: Sculptural Surveillance

ED VIDEO, GUELPH & ELORA CENTRE FOR THE ARTS MAY 12 TO JUN 19 2011

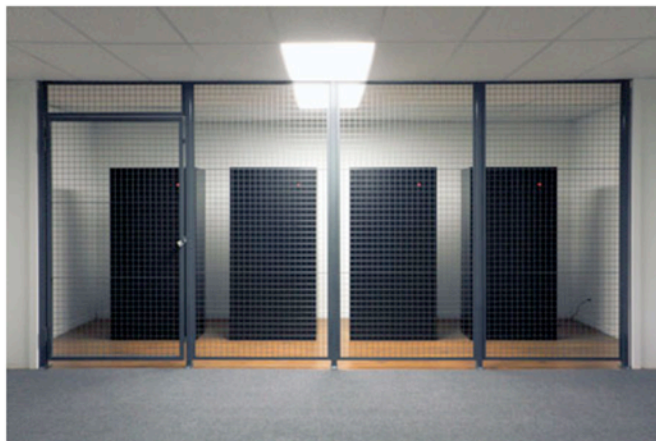
by BRYNE MCLAUGHLIN



Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins *Unknown Unknowns* 2011 Installation view at Ed Video Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects

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"Total Information Awareness" is a term that has become synonymous with the omnipresent security measures and surveillance of the post-9/11 era. Yet in recent years, with the advent of global social media and in the wake of the Wikileaks scandal, the rules of this all-inclusive, information-based playing field have radically shifted. Governments eager to ensure public safety now find themselves reeling under the scrutiny of secrets revealed thanks to the innately porous nature of the Internet. Official ideologies have changed too, with terms such as "cyberthreat," "cyberespionage" and "cyberwarfare" setting an escalating new tone for the control of knowledge.

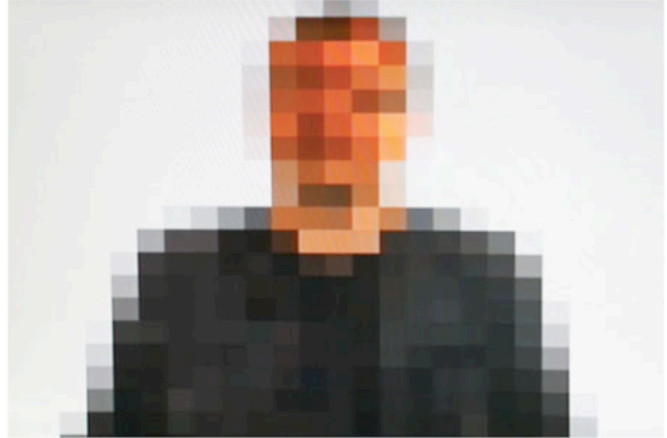


Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins *Unknown Unknowns Server Room* 2011 Installation view at Ed Video Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects

Toronto artists [Jennifer Marman and Daniel Borins](#) waded into this complex realm of information manipulation with "Unknown Unknowns," a two-part exhibition currently on view at [Ed Video in Guelph](#) and at the [Elora Centre for the Arts](#). Taking their title from former US Secretary of

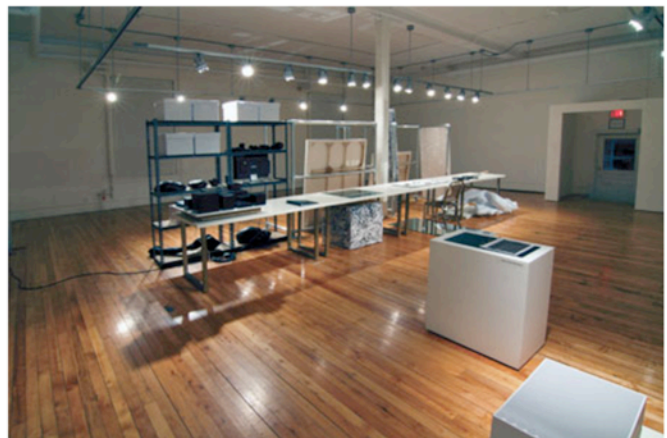
McLaughlin, Bryne. "Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins: Sculptural Surveillance," *Canadian Art Online*, June 2011

Defense Donald Rumsfeld's [famously vague justification in 2002 for the invasion of Iraq](#), Marman and Borins present an array of sculptures, paintings and videos designed not only to portray the abstract stratagems of institutional superstructures but also to suggest the underlying aesthetics of truth and power. The exhibition is the second of three shows in the duo's *Total Disinformation Awareness* series, which continues next week with their *Formulation Articulation Pixelation* installation at the [Volta7 art fair in Basel, Switzerland](#).



Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins *Unknown Interview* 2011 Video still Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects

At Ed Video, the gallery is transformed into a mock high-security data storage facility with a control room housing a bank of four monumental black computer servers ostensibly watched over by the video eye of a surveillance camera sculpture. Here the tropes of minimalist sculpture and conceptual art are embedded and perhaps renewed in the anxious quiet of a forbidden zone of information gathering. In Elora, the duo takes a seemingly opposite approach by assembling a sprawling, archive-like installation that offers abstract evidence of the inner workings of information (or in this case, disinformation) awareness. Sculptural forms containing shredded documents, a pair of empty magnetic tape reels and a chair with handcuffs, as well as visually distorted videos of a clandestine information exchange and an interview with a computer security expert, are among the visual clues to a larger narrative puzzle. Marman and Borins have charged the mechanisms of control and conspiracy with a sinister beauty, but truth and reality remain pointedly unknowable, suggesting that there are no answers here, only more questions. (40 Baker St, Guelph ON & 75 Melville St, Elora ON)



Jennifer Marman & Daniel Borins *Unknown Unknowns* 2011 Installation view at Elora Centre for the Arts Courtesy Georgia Scherman Projects