

## Artist's Statement

Traditionally, photographs have represented single moments in time, but the photographs in this series represent a compression of many moments into a single frame, in a way similar to Peter Funch's *Babel Tales* series. In each of my images, I have combined up to twenty-six different photographs, taken of the same location over a period of ten to thirty minutes, to create a digital tableau. After removing all human figures from the scene using bits and pieces of several photos, I repopulate the composite with individual characters selected from the original series of photos.

My intent with these photographs is to evoke an uncanny feeling from the viewer and raise questions about the actions and interactions of the characters in the scene. How did these people come to be in this situation? What will happen next? What is happening between a particular set of individuals? Why did the photographer choose this perspective? In order to achieve this effect, I have removed all figures except for the ones that are actively involved in the scene (i.e. figures that I have placed into the scene with a specific purpose) and I have repeated a few characters throughout some scenes. Both elements are intended to be subtle hints that this photo is not just an ordinary photo, but has been heavily modified.

More specifically, I also want to connect my work with the increasing amount of governmental and corporate control over public spaces. This control may take the form of active video surveillance, police presence, and even repression of public gatherings such as the Occupy movements. I encountered this control of public space several times throughout my project, when I was asked to stop photographing because it could supposedly lead to some unrest. More likely, owners and operators of places like shopping malls are concerned that I might capture something that could later be used to incriminate them. Paradoxically, these spaces are often already monitored by surveillance cameras and security guards, whose purpose is to capture or prevent unwanted or illegal behavior of the public. Working with this idea, I use a wide and elevated perspective in my photographs in an attempt to create some space between the viewer and the characters, as if the scene were being observed from a watch-tower or security camera. I have further included characters such as security guards or police and used locations such as Westlake Park in Seattle (known in relation to Occupy Seattle) to introduce aspects of police presence and remind of public demonstrations.

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When I shoot, I watch what is happening below me very carefully and I often see interesting people and interactions. Some people may be doing something different from everyone else, such as running instead of walking, some people may look different or act differently. While I'm watching, and in post-processing as well, I think of stories I could tell with particular characters and of interactions I could create among them. Once I decide on a few interesting characters to work with, I try to create some tension within the scene, such as the young couple confronting (or being confronted by?) the security officer in *CabridgeSide Galleria*. I look for patterns in how people use the particular spaces that I'm photographing and try to highlight these patterns by extracting and amplifying a particular group of characters that is exhibiting the pattern. Again, in *Galleria*, I saw many people leaning over the bannister and looking down, in a similar manner to what I did with my camera, and decided to select those characters, multiply some of them, and place them in the scene. As a result, I can imagine a detailed narrative taking place, and I hope that other viewers can do the same.