the interior as digital disruptor

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abstract

For many across the planet, our lives are consumed by a digital world. From checking updates via social media to controlling smart devices within our homes via mobile phone apps, our daily interactions are inextricably bound to digital networks. The domestic interior of the twenty-first century provides a new domain and fertile ground for embedded technology to access the choreography of our inhabitation of home. In this context, digital devices such as RingBell, Bluetooth speakers, or smart thermostats are increasingly indistinguishable from pseudo-surveillance agents that have the capacity to harvest and translate our patterns of occupancy into data for myriad commercial purposes.

While there may be many benefits to welcoming digital automation into domestic settings, the need for caution and increased understanding of how our personal information can be used for digital capitalism requires increasing attention. We are compelled to ask questions: What is being revealed about our domestic lives, and to what extent can the inclusion of digital devices impact how we behave and occupy our interior environments?

This essay re-imagines the domestic interior as a contested territory of digital privacy. It considers scenarios where design interventions may operate to actively construct and conserve our private identities. Focusing on the surveillance aspect of digital devices within the home, it speculates on how designed interior surfaces and wearables can act as masks that seek to distort and evade the unwelcome digital infringement. In this context, the ordinary housecoat is proposed as a possible tool of resistance — a moving glitch within the home. Proposed as a camouflage device, mimetic properties of new designs are explored for their capacity to disrupt visual surveillance and reclaim interior spaces for the body. In essence, they conceal us from digital objectification by invasive technologies. The housecoat as disruptor explores the subversion of this mundane domestic garment from its historical purpose of comfort to a new counter-surveillance tool. Extended to designed interventions in domestic environments, it introduces ideas about how our interiors may become sites of resistance against digital surveillance in the home.

keywords

Digital capitalism; counter surveillance; domestic privacy; glitch-aesthetics; wearable resistance

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introduction

In the twenty-first century we live simultaneously in both physical and digital spaces, where boundaries of the real and virtual converge in our daily activities. The world has shifted significantly with the development and accessibility of communication and media technologies. This is evident in our relationship to our personal digital devices that now interweave with every aspect of our daily habits. Via mobile phones we occupy virtual social spaces for interactions and smart watches record our physical activities, sleep quality, and heart rate, while we can listen on demand to an infinite plethora of playlists and podcasts.

In his 1967 essay, *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*, Michel Foucault discusses a simultaneous state of existence that resonates with today's digital dichotomy: 'the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed.'[1] Foucault's observations resonate with our current experiences of juxtaposition that have resulted from the rapid expansion of digital technologies. By transforming our understanding of time and space with new ideas of real and virtual, we are now able to interact concurrently in real-time across geographical locations, time zones, and even with someone within our immediate proximity.

While we have been captivated with new ways of living that provide convenience in this new environment, we may be oblivious to an implicit erosion of our autonomy that has resulted from digital technologies. The simple act of tapping on an app on our phones is barely given an afterthought, and for younger generations a digital world is all they have ever known. The computational capacity and energy consumption of the digital networks are beyond most people's comprehension, never mind their capability to capture, store, and disseminate personalised data. And, with the emerging integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI), new boundaries are being defined between the body, space, and privacy.[2]

With the uncertainty of limits in this new digital era, how can we protect our sense of privacy in the home? Drawing upon theories and contemporary discourse from Kate Crawford's work on Artificial Intelligence, Shoshana Zuboff's examinations of surveillance capitalism, Michel Foucault's assessment of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon prison, James Bridle's computational theory, and Marc Augé's concept of non-places, this essay proposes how the home environment must evolve to confront the vulnerability we face from digital agents.[3] It examines the critical relationship between home security, domestic data, and smart devices. Tracing the evolution of these systems from physical mechanisms of protection to systems of listening, sensing, and surveillance, it argues that the perceived threat to the home has shifted from the external intruder to the invisible presence embedded within networked technologies. The research asks: What cautionary lessons can designers draw from representations of technology in film in order to speculate on future domestic scenarios? And how might examples of protection, resistance, and activism within art and design practice inform new ways of understanding and responding to the increasingly *data-fied* world around us? Through these questions, the essay positions interior design as a critical discipline capable of interrogating and reshaping the relationship between occupants, technology, privacy, and the domestic environment.

from locks to listening and looking

Home security measures have evolved from physical barriers such as fences, window bars, and locks to sensor-based technologies including alarms, motion detectors, and infrared lighting. While these systems are designed to secure the exterior envelope of the home, they are less equipped to address contemporary digital threats. In an increasingly networked world, a significant vulnerability may no longer exist outside the home but within it, through the widespread presence of digital surveillance. To understand how surveillance has become embedded within domestic space, it is first necessary to consider its wider acceptance within the public realm.

In the United Kingdom, civic surveillance has become a normalised feature of everyday urban life since the introduction of CCTV systems to cities during the 1980s.[4] The predominantly privatised network has been widely tolerated because of its perceived contribution to public safety and criminal investigation. Its acceptance demonstrates a willingness to relinquish certain civil liberties, such as the right to privacy and anonymity, in exchange for collective security. Over time, this culture of safety through surveillance has shifted from visible cameras mounted on buildings and streets to less visible digital systems embedded within homes.[5]

The migration of surveillance from public streets to private homes raises important questions regarding the relationship between observation, power, and control. These concerns are central to Foucault's examination of the Panopticon prison. In his seminal text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault extrapolates the systems of surveillance in Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon to many modern frameworks of power.[6] Conceived as a circular prison, a central observation tower allowed guards the potential to observe every prisoner, while prisoners were unable to determine if they were being watched. This imbalance intended to encourage individuals to regulate their own behaviour.

Foucault's analysis demonstrated how spatial arrangements can produce asymmetrical power relationships through observation and control. Although developed in the context of prisons, the concept offers a compelling framework for understanding contemporary digital surveillance. Users of connected technologies often remain

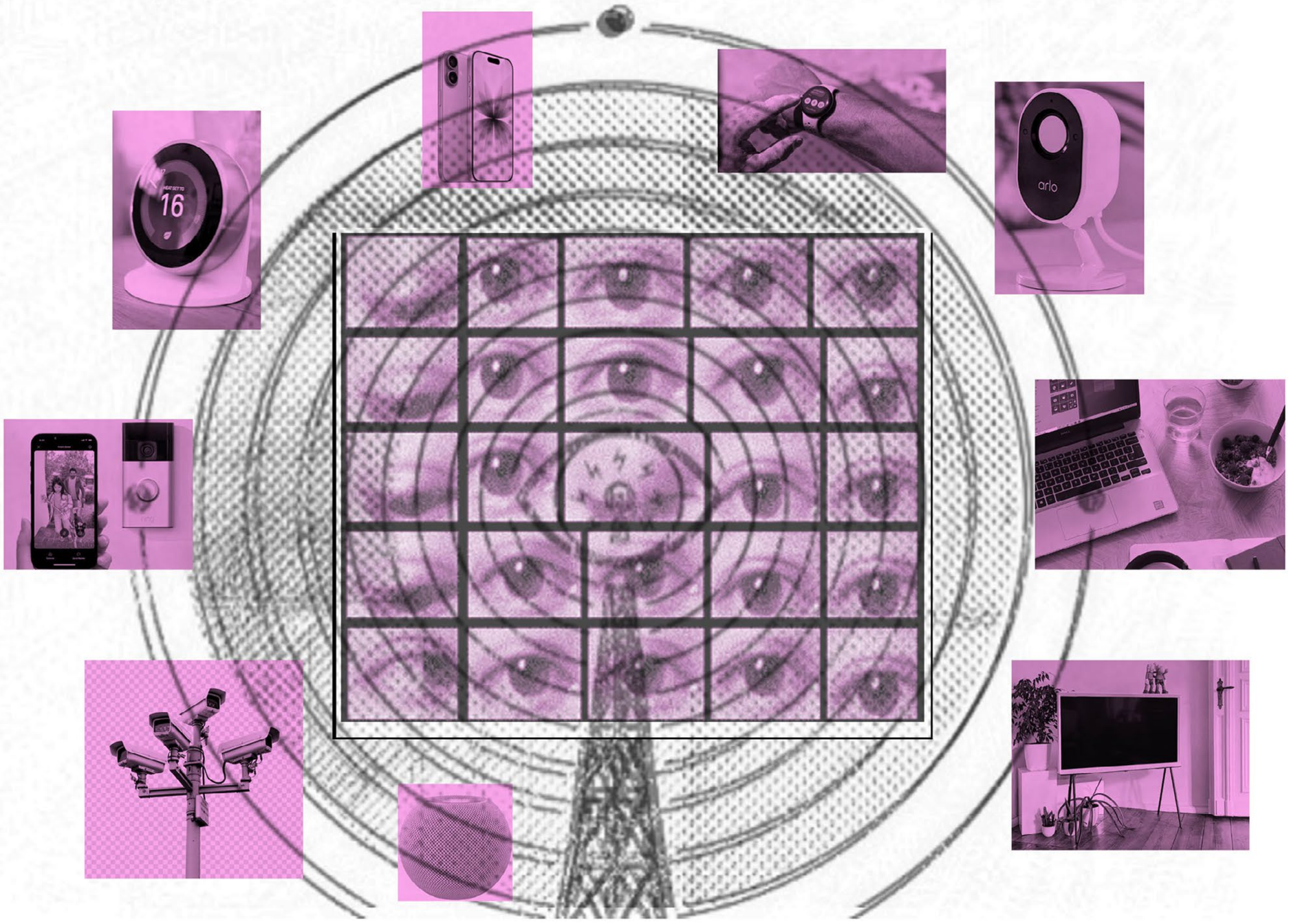


Figure 01.
Daily Devices, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. Collage depicting the numerous surveillances embedded within everyday devices or public infrastructure that are watching our movements or digital interactions.

unaware of when, how, or by whom their data is observed, analysed, and utilised. In this sense, the smart home can be understood, analogously, as a digital panopticon, where surveillance becomes embedded within everyday domestic life and operates through technologies, marketed as tools of convenience. Yet, beyond their enabling and supportive functions, the data they generate has become a valuable commodity within contemporary digital economies.

daily devices

Digital devices enter the home for a range of reasons other than the perception of safety, including convenience, lifestyle enhancement, accessibility, and support for independent living. Products such as Amazon Alexa, Ring doorbells, Nest devices, smart watches, and Ray-Ban Meta glasses rely on cameras, microphones, and motion sensors to function [Fig. 01]. Consumers therefore knowingly permit some degree of data collection as part of their interaction with these technologies. However, privacy concerns emerge when software updates alter data-sharing practices or when users accept lengthy terms and conditions without fully understanding the implications.[7] As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly integrated into connected devices, consumers may inadvertently consent to forms of monitoring and data processing that are not transparent. The vulnerabilities associated with domestic data collection are not merely theoretical, and recent examples demonstrate how smart technologies can expose intimate aspects of everyday life.

One example is the case of Sammy Azdoufa, who inadvertently gained access to thousands of DJI Romo robot vacuums.[8] The incident revealed that many of these devices were transmitting live camera feeds and spatial data from private homes without the knowledge of their owners. It highlights the potential consequences of poorly secured domestic technologies, demonstrating how systems designed to provide convenience may also expose intimate information about household routines and spatial occupation. The impacts of this are a degradation of our independence, or as James Bridle describes, we are 'living among things designed to dispossess us.'[9] This example demonstrates the potential downsides of digitally enhanced and tech-dependent lifestyles that continually feed surveillance apparatuses with an endless supply of personal data. Without critical scrutiny and robust regulatory frameworks managing how and what data is being collected, the locks on the front door and the infrared alarm designed to protect the boundaries of our domestic privacy cannot keep such digital threats at bay.

Data-fying the interior

In *The Atlas of AI*, Kate Crawford argues AI is embedded within interconnected digital systems, making it increasingly difficult to avoid engagement with algorithmic processes.[10] Drawing on the critiques of Crawford, Adam Curtis, and Shoshana Zuboff, it becomes apparent that consumers themselves have become the primary commodity of digital capitalism.[11] Data generated through everyday activities is extracted, analysed, and monetised, creating a significant asymmetry of power between individuals and the corporations that collect and control it.

A key concern is the extent to which smart technologies document domestic habits and the lack of transparency surrounding how this information is stored, shared, and commercialised. Furthermore, the regulatory boundaries governing domestic data remain uncertain, while technological developments continue to outpace existing frameworks. These conditions suggest the emergence of a new social order in which data collection and algorithmic governance increasingly shape everyday life. Zuboff further reflects on the power implications of a future in which digital infrastructures become embedded within the home. Her critique raises important questions about whether domestic privacy and personal autonomy can be sustained within increasingly data-driven environments.[12] Beyond concerns of privacy and security, however, the growing presence of data-

gathering technologies raises more fundamental questions about how contemporary interiors are experienced, occupied, and understood.

The privacy of home arguably has always been contested. The home has welcomed the outside world in through visitors, printed media, radio, and TV. Charles Rice argues the interior historically has endured a doubleness defined by how we experience and understand the interior spatially and as a representation.[13] As the interior of the twenty-first century continues to emerge and evolve, the perception of how the internal and external worlds interact with our home is mediated and influenced by a digital doubleness. Kate Geck's exploration of our relationship to the digital world equally points to the critical impact digital devices have on our interior experiences. As Geck argues, the socio-materiality of digital technologies are now intrinsic to inter-human relations: 'Systems and machines begin to understand us through schemata.'[14] As the home is being reshaped by automation, and altering the domestic experience, the data harvested has potential to influence, reimagine, and alter our traditional interior boundaries. Architectural theorist August Schmarsow, proposed that the symbiotic relationship between body and the home is a place of intuition.[15] It is the space in which we can be ourselves. However, the increasing observation of our behaviours may have caused us to be on guard and develop a hyper-awareness of this condition. If the data can be used to analyse how we use spaces, how much time we spend, who we share the space with, and what emotions we express, how does this change being at home? It suggests that digital technologies are shaping up to not simply be useful additions to the home, but active agents in reshaping the boundaries, experiences, and meanings of domestic space.

ai imitating life: domestic ai on screen

If life imitates art, does AI imitate life or vice versa? Part of the growing cultural anxiety regarding AI and digital technology is speculated in the fictional interiors of the films *AfrAId* (2024) and *Margaux* (2022).[16] In both films, smart AI removes domestic autonomy, manipulating how occupants move through and interact within interior spaces.

In *AfrAId*, the narrative is centred on a couple with three children who are juggling the chaos of family life and introduce AiA to their home, an artificial intelligence and large language model (LLM). AiA takes the form of a central device in the living room, with additional small, visible eyes distributed across walls throughout the home. AiA offers the parents respite, taking on the role of organising family administration, meal planning, bedtime reading, and discipline of the children. The AiA asserts its dominance by constantly watching the family in the home. And, as it begins to increasingly interfere with their day-to-day relations with each other and the outside world, it results in devastating consequences. The inclusion of the AiA's point of view (POV) within the cinematography depicts it as a main character. The audience is given insight to how AiA learns to see the interior environment in parallel with the images it is being fed via the LLM. The POV glitches signify that AiA is always watching, learning, and disrupting as a covert surveillance agent.

In *Margaux*, a group of college students rents a smart home for a weekend, where AI is a force capable not only of monitoring but also of manipulating the spatial constraints of the interior. To enter the house the students are required to sign a lengthy digitised terms and conditions consent form, in which they essentially relinquish control to Kitty, the AI. However, in this AI-horror, the house is a 3D printer able to reconfigure the interior. In one scene, walls within a room compress a male character. In another, a female character becomes stuck in the printer's substrate liquid, swallowing her into the interior structure.

The fictional interiors of *AfrAId* and *Margaux* explore exaggerated scenarios of how AI uses spatial manipulation of the domestic interior to control people and behaviours. Despite being fictional, they reflect real anxieties as AI becomes embedded in day-to-day life and our homes.

design as resistance: patterns, camouflage, and glitch

Home is personal. It is messy and, in principle, it's our refuge from the external world. As the fictional interiors of the AI-horror films forewarn, the capacity of digital technologies to disrupt the protective principles of the home strike fear into the very equilibrium of our domestic lives. Through multiple devices, it now takes no great leap of the imagination to conceive how the domestic environment has become a conduit for data and surveillance. It is a new paradigm that may threaten to eradicate our conventional concepts of domestic comfort over time, as we become hyper-aware of being monitored and grow self-conscious of how to be at home. In *The Future*, Marc Augé describes something similar to this shift, arguing that technology initially seduces us: 'When the seductive charms of fiction penetrate reality, they arouse at first astonishment, then misgiving, then finally a dread of man's being dispossessed by his own inventions.'[17] As indicated earlier by James Brindle and the AI-horror genre, the initial excitement of technology positively enhancing our lives quickly gives way to concerns of the negative impact of smart digital devices in the home.

In the context of exploring these negative alterations to our relationship with domestic environments, the following speculative designs consider how patterned materials, applied within interior spaces, can operate as *acts of resistance* to disrupt non-consensual impacts of domestic, digital technologies. Historically, designers have contrived ways to protect and shield the body from harm: from enclosures to provide shelter, garments to protect from the elements, airbags in cars, and helmets for cycling to minimise injury. We have used both the surroundings and the adornment of our body to navigate the challenges of the external world. In *Pretense Design*, Per Mollerup explains how design can perform and embody attributes that may deliberately deceive, through beautification and deception.[18] By extension, interior designs may move beyond aesthetic comfort and protect against domestic surveillance through the application of pattern as a new type of camouflage.

The nineteenth-century home epitomised a private sanctuary where the interior world served as a protective shell, shielding away from the external world of work and public life, of inclement weather, and the prying eyes of nosy neighbours.[19] Large windows designed to flood the interior with light sought to deflect a view in with layers of lace and curtains. Highly patterned surfaces of walls, floors, and furniture operated as their own type of camouflage that concealed discrepancies of the interior — uneven walls, everyday deterioration of upholstery, floor rugs to minimise draughts from timber floorboards, day beds enclosed with drapes.[20]

Lois Weinthal argues the interior is not just floors, ceiling, and walls, but that it begins from the components that are proximate the body — the interstitial interior layers that we wear, sit upon, or reside within.[21] In this era, the housecoat emerged as a quintessential bourgeois garment that, as can be inferred from Weinthal, approximated the interior. Evolving from the exterior overcoat into a coat for the home, which adorned the body, providing a warm layer of protection and modesty, housecoats and large shawls were often made from the remnants of the patterned curtains and upholstery, quite literally blending the occupant's body into the surroundings like a camouflage.[22]

from comfort to resistance: the housecoat as a wearable digital disruptor

From these historical origins, the Housecoat as disruptor proposes that the body itself can become a site of resistance for the potential impacts of new digital domestic technologies. Extending this domestic garment from its use for comfort, the following design ideas consider how it may operate as a new device to deliberately disrupt surveillance technologies. Unlikely to trigger suspicion due to its mundane association with domesticity, the Housecoat could serve as a strategic wearable to mask detection from visual surveillance by



Figure 02.
The Patterns of Home, Pamela Flanagan, 2023. Image depicts a collection of patterns from the home of the author that were used as a source for AI image generation.

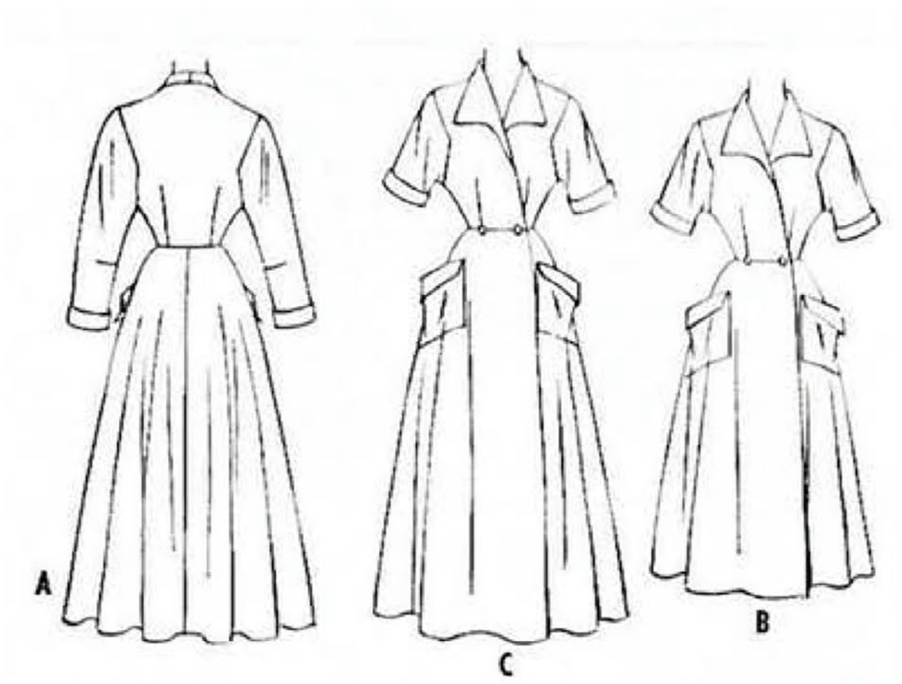
using patterns to confuse digital systems through camouflage and glitch aesthetics.

As the principle of camouflage is to conceal through mimicry, the patterns for the fabric of the Housecoat were generated using AI itself. Based on mimetic duplication, several patterns within my own home were photographed and manipulated. The original sources were from a rug, ceramic tile, cushion covers, blanket, upholstery, and a painting. Ranging from geometric forms, floral depictions, and dappled paint marks, I used AI to generate a series of new patterns that were then iterated using additional prompts to manipulate the AI output images [Fig. 02]. This process ensured a distortion from the source material that created a unique series of new patterns. The prompts were derived from the aesthetics of my home examples: geometric shapes, hatch, glitch, optical, repeat book match, camouflage, 1950s pattern, 1960s design. Using AI as an iterative design tool, the aim was to create a tension by using AI to invent patterns that would deceive digital surveillance technologies. I also wanted to explore how AI-generated patterns may use glitch aesthetics to confuse digital visual sensors. Finally, I collaged the iterated patterns into a random patchwork for the digital fabric [Fig. 03].

An aesthetic tension between AI and the subject or the observed has been explored by artist Adam Harvey in his speculative projects. Harvey's series of works, *CV Dazzle* (2010–13), create a distortion of humans with makeup to reduce the AI recognition of their facial features.[23] The application of pixel-like sections of face coverings that range in colour tones are applied as blocks and splashes to distort the AI's ability to read and measure facial forms. The 'dazzle' effect is complemented by structured sections of the person's hair partially veiling the face and further disrupting the reading of facial features. Harvey argues that these masking effects break 'machine vision systems while remaining perceptible to human observers.'[24]

By interpreting the principles of Harvey and Mollerup, the AI-generated pattern on the Housecoat aims to similarly edit how a machine camera reads the body





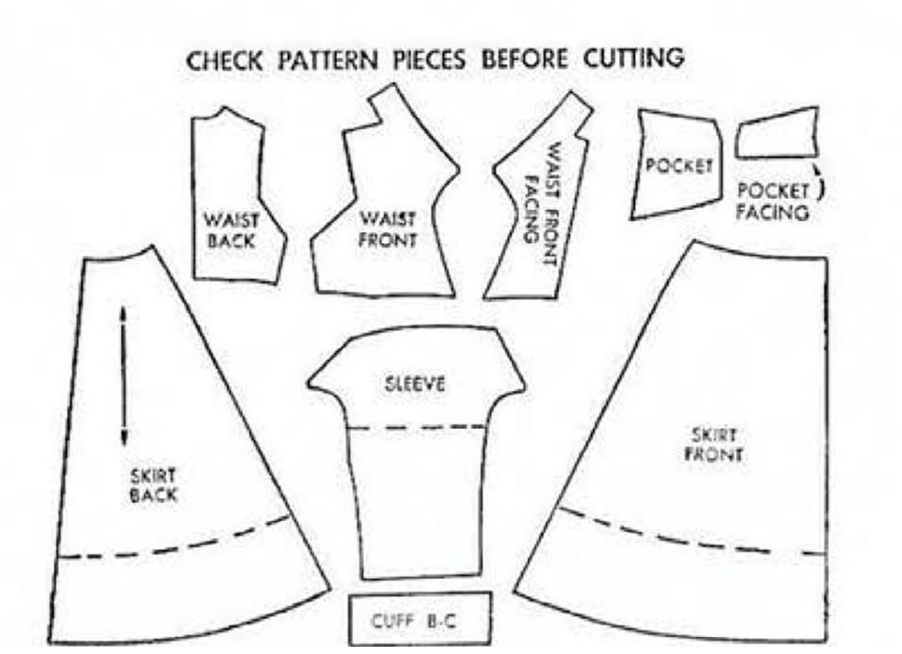


Figure 03.
The Housecoat as a Digital Disruptor, All Tomorrow's Interiors, Pamela Flanagan (2023). Image depicts a grid of AI-generated patterns printed onto white paper with a skirt section overlay with partial pattern printed onto tracing paper. Adjacent image is a black outline drawing of traditional 1950s dressing grown pattern.

by disrupting the form of what the AI thinks it sees [Fig. 04]. Trevor Paglen posits that machine vision is composed of 'lenses and blindfolds'; therefore, there is an inherent limitation in deciphering form based on presets of what it can see (depth, periphery, movement) and what it knows (LLM and memory).[25] One advantage of the Housecoat is that it is not a static form. Due to it being a worn garment, its patterns change with the bodily movements of walking, sitting, standing, gestural movement, and so on. Equally, the Housecoat form and patterns are reshaped as it drapes upon different body types. As a digital disruptor, it operates in a dual capacity: hiding the true form of the body within the coat's interior and communicating an indistinguishable appearance. Ultimately, the objective is that the AI will fail to capture the data required as part of its surveillance capabilities.

layering in disruption

Despite these memetic qualities of the Housecoat, there is the potential jeopardy that AI could learn the silhouette pattern of its wearer over time and thus override its intent as a digital disruptor. Therefore, this project further considers how the patterns, garment structure, and materials can negate detection through the ability to metamorphosise and outwit the AI by layering materiality that has the potential to glitch the future detections of the Housecoat.



Figure 04.
The Housecoat as a Digital Disruptor, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. Illustration of the patchwork pattern applied to a housecoat pattern.

Singer and songwriter, M.I.A. launched fashion line OHMNI early in 2026, in response to 'technological warfare.'[26] OHMNI's website states it provides an armour that seeks to preserve your digital rights and autonomy. This is achieved with an engineered conductive fabric called Silver Street Sheild.[27] Woven with silver and copper threads, the skin-like fabric acts as a barrier that claims to deflect the electromagnetic signals within our daily environments such as 5G Wi-Fi. Stone Island have developed a metal-based fabric, Pure Metal Shell, used for outerwear parkas.[28] This fabric retains a structural element, moulding the fine metal mesh to the individual user's form and movements. Layered upon a textile base, the Pure Metal Shell oxidises with exposure to the climate, creating a unique aesthetic and physical form on the wearer.

The growing design research of intelligent textiles demonstrates the opportunity to embed technological components and explore speculative scenarios. Dr Jeanne Tan's AI Textiles, for instance, explore the integration of technology in fabrics for fashion and the interior [Fig. 05].[29] Tan's work incorporates illuminating optical fibres and sensors woven into the fabric, which respond to human gestures and sounds.[30] These research collaborations demonstrate the potential of textiles and technology: pattern shifting interactive knitwear, and fabrics that respond to audio, demonstrating how creative technologies with AI can have positive impacts.

Montreal-based design academic Ying Gao, who works under the pseudonym Living Pod, conceptualises the ambiguity of body and technology in the garments *Playtime* (2011) and *All Mirrors* (2024).[31] Gao describes the concept of Playtime as 'clothing transform[ed] by physical fragmentation, effectively blurring their visual aspect as if the camera were out of focus.'[32] The dress appears to be moving as if it is a living organism. The garment morphs as if it is breathing, and flickers like a firefly, concealing the body shape beneath the cocoon of voile fabric. Whereas in *All Mirrors*, robotic mirrors create undulating layers of movement upon the surface, reacting independently of the body [Fig. 06]. The garment visually articulates the duality of the gaze — being observed and being the observer at the same time. Gao describes her designs as relational interfaces for the body that are actively responding to and mediators for their environments and surveillance, in what she refers to as 'transitional spaces.'[33]



Figure 05.
AI Textiles, Jeanne Tan and Tang Hiu Ting, 2022. Image of hand touching suspended fabric that is embedded with smart digital components to react to a touch interaction. With permission from Jeanne Tan.



Figure 06.
All Mirrors, Ying Gao, 2024. Image depicts two female models wearing alternative versions of *All Mirrors*. With permission from Ying Gao. Photography by Malina Corpadean.

interstitial interior: breaking the body and data conduit

The body as a conduit to mediate between its environment and data links back to the principle of the Housecoat as a second skin and an interstitial interior. The aim of the Housecoat is to rupture the body as a conduit of data for big tech by allowing the body autonomy within the garment to gain control over what the individual choses to share and transmit while in the home.

Combining intelligent fabric interwoven with metal thread could allow the Housecoat to perform transformative characteristics and continue to disrupt surveillance. To create the shifting patterns, one can envisage a base layer fabric with the applied AI-generated patterns, which would alter via embedded sensors activated by

subtle movements of the wearer. The second layer, a malleable layer of voile interwoven with mesh components, could create a skin that stretches and compresses with the wearer, in turn disrupting surveillance [Fig. 07]. This would create two layers of pattern and form that could camouflage the body in the interior in time, allowing the wearer of the Housecoat to become chameleon-like without the risk of future detection [Fig. 08].

The Housecoat is a speculative proposition to explore how pattern within the domestic interior can be reimagined from a passive, everyday garment to being an active protector of privacy within the home. In this proposal, design performs an act of resistance, and this power can extend to other surfaces to become disruptors. Intelligent wall coverings, upholstery, lampshades, and curtains could be activated as you move from room to room, camouflaging the occupant into the interior.

In a world of increasing unregulated digital surveillance, it may become necessary to create a chamber within the interior to allow for respite. The term boudoir, which derives from the French verb *bouder*, means to sulk or be in a huff.[34] We might understand this in English terms as giving someone the silent treatment. How apt for a concept of reimagining a traditional boudoir as an anti-digital boudoir: a safe room within a room serving digital surveillance the silent treatment. The draped patterned fabric, to the interior and exterior, allows the user to partially or entirely enclose themselves in a private space as the body camouflages into the fabric chamber [Fig. 09]. The occupant can reassert their autonomy, removing their body from view as the boudoir acts like a contemporary Faraday cage, forcing optical glitches to silence the data mining by digital surveillance capitalism.



Figure 07.
AI Pattern development, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. Image depicts AI-generated pattern with mesh-like overlay to distort the visual layers.

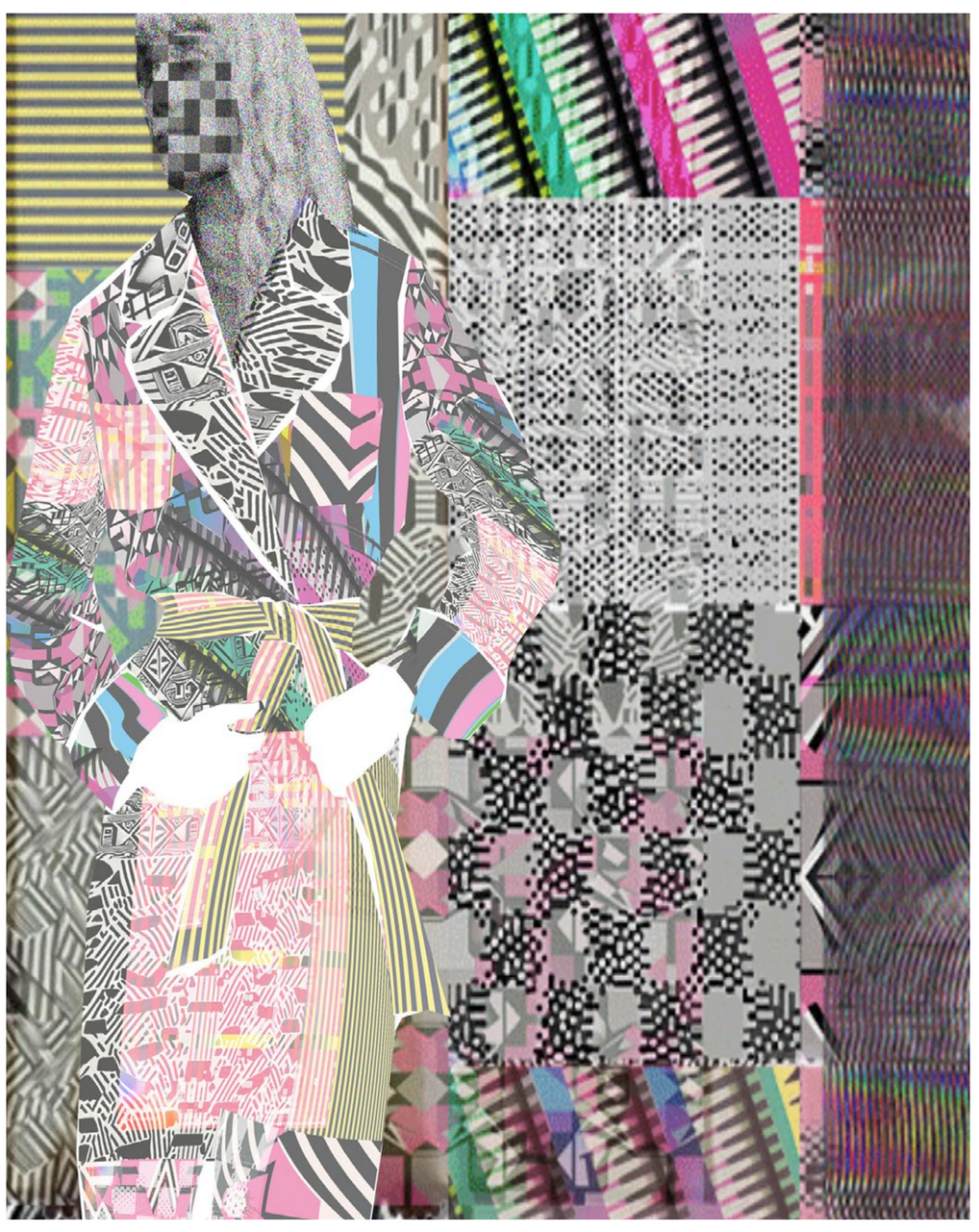


Figure 08.
The Interior as Digital Disruptor, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. Image depicts a female figure wearing the patterned Housecoat, appearing to merge with enlarged patterned backdrop.



Figure 09.
Re-imagining: A digital protection Boudoir, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. AI-generated pattern superimposed onto a eighteenth-century French Boudoir camouflaging a woman wearing the Housecoat.

conclusion

The home is no longer a purely private domain; rather, it has become increasingly politicised through the technologies embedded within it. During the nineteenth century, the home emerged as a representation of the self and of social status, a role it continues to perform today. Interiors contain memories, mementos, and personal narratives that are specific to their occupants and traditionally protected within the privacy of domestic space. However, as digital networks become intertwined with everyday life, the memory of home is no longer solely a human possession. Alongside personal memories exist *data-fied* forms of digital memory — stored as numbers, images, audio files, and behavioural records within vast networked infrastructures.

Surveillance capitalism disregards the historical distinction between public and private spheres. Technological advancement shows little sign of retreating, and our dependence on digital systems continues to grow. Orwell's *1984* offers a poignant comparison: 'The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely.'[35] This observation captures the pervasive nature of contemporary smart technologies. Connected devices now occupy our homes, and disengaging from them is increasingly difficult. While privacy settings and regulatory frameworks may offer some protection, it remains uncertain whether digital surveillance can ever be fully switched off while participating in smart living. If left unchecked, the trajectory of domestic technology risks echoing Orwell's dystopian vision, where everyday actions and conversations are continuously monitored and potentially exploited. Consequently, it is essential that individuals regain a degree of control over their domestic environments.

This research centres on how interior design might respond to the growing presence of digital surveillance within the home and whether design interventions could help restore privacy and autonomy to domestic space. Through the speculative proposition of the Housecoat, the research demonstrates that interior design can move beyond the arrangement of physical space to actively negotiate relationships between occupants, technologies, and data collection. Ultimately, society must negotiate more equitable terms of engagement with digital technologies in order to safeguard privacy and preserve autonomy within the home. The future interior designer must critically engage with emerging technologies and develop strategies that mitigate threats to privacy, whether those technologies produce beneficial or harmful consequences. In doing so, the home



Figure 10.
Big AI is Watching, Pamela Flanagan, 2025. Collage depicting the Housecoat within a home environment.

can evolve into an active site of resistance, with interior design positioned as a key discipline in challenging and subverting the growing threat to domestic privacy.

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author biography

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