

THE NEW YORKER

July 1, 2019

ART

Julia Scher Ortuzar Projects

DOWNTOWN With soothsaying acuity and a campy faux-corporate aesthetic, this American Conceptualist—born in Hollywood and now based in Germany—has spent the past forty years illuminating the insidious implications of the conflation of surveillance with safety. This career-spanning show is Scher’s first in New York in fifteen years. A site-specific, motion-sensing audio piece welcomes visitors in a robotically convivial voice; marble sculptures of a police hat and a watchdog convey her interest in symbols of security. But closed-circuit video is the artist’s true métier. The installation “Information America,” from 1995, is composed of a patriotic-looking company logo, a shabby desk for a guard to sit at, and a bank of messily wired monitors. “Mothers Under Surveillance,” from 1993, intercuts a live feed of the gallery with grainy surveillance footage of women in an elder-care facility. Both works suggest the banal horror and titillation of being watched—and also of watching.—*J.F. (Through July 26.)*