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William Betts Creates Art from CCTV Footage

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William Betts, Executives

you get on CCTV footage in a nod to a world in which we're constantly being captured by watchful, mechanical eyes. With smartphones in every pocket and CCTVs on every street corner, it's something that's so ubiquitous we've become oblivious to it—and Betts' work addresses this ever-present technological gaze and our complacency to it.

Even though the images are painted Betts, who previously worked in the software industry, uses a CNC machine to create his work, deconstructing and translating the images into files using custom software. The files are then processed by the machine and the pixels of the images become dots of acrylic paint—turning the act of painting into a mechanized process involving the precision of industrial machinery. "I look at images as a collection of data and I use that data, either abstracting it or modifying it or manipulating it, to arrive at the image that I want" says Betts.

It's a fact of life that we're constantly spied on by CCTV, those electronic eyes peering down at us and monitoring everything we do. But as Orwellian as all the machine-vision seems, this invasion of privacy and erosion of our civil liberties can serve as a source for art. Art like Time Arnall's short film *Robot Readable World* culled from found footage and art like the paintings of **William Betts**.

Betts uses CCTV stills, traffic cams, and photographs as the sources for his unsettling, blurry paintings which look like low-res, pixelated digital images. The paintings even include details like the time and date stamp