SOMAMETER

PORTABLE AROUSAL UPLOADING SYSTEM
FOR IMAGING SENSATION WITHOUT CONSCIOUSNESS

Somameter is portable arousal uploading device for imaging sensation without consciousness. Somameter has been created to open an interface onto a covert domain of sensory life: the domain of sensation-without-accompanying-consciousness. The central idea informing Somameter comes from research on perception and sensation; this research shows that our senses take in roughly 250 times the amount of information than can be represented to us by consciousness. Somameter seeks to develop an interface onto this domain of sensation with the aim of bringing some moments of sensation-without-consciousness into our perceptual awareness.

Comprised of a microcamera embedded in a device that can be worn as a pendant and attached to a galvanic skin response sensor, Somameter furnishes a "technical surrogate for consciousness." As the wearer moves around in the world during her daily routine, the device will take pictures whenever the galvanic skin response sensor, which measures bodily arousal, is triggered. The device will be set at an optimal threshold to generate roughly 50 pictures per day. These pictures will function less as indexical testimonies to some past experience than as tags marking certain experiential moments in the wearer's lifeline.

While many of these pictures will correspond to events that are accompanied by consciousness, some of them will mark moments of sensory arousal – events that occur at the level of bodily sensation – that are not accompanied by conscious representation or experience. Wearers of the device will have the opportunity to consult these pictures at the end of each day and will be invited to alter their experience in any way they see fit. Whatever the outcome of this experience, the device will bring some key moments of sensation-without-consciousness into the awareness of the wearer and afford the wearer the capacity to bring such awareness into play when she next negotiates similar tasks in her everyday life.