



A medium-sized package departs from the artist's studio in Vienna, traveling to Dundee, where it is received at the exhibition venue. This everyday logistical process becomes the core of Julian Palacz's investigation. Equipped with a hidden camera, microphone, GPS tracker, and motion sensors, the package autonomously gathers data throughout its journey, revealing the otherwise invisible transit spaces and logistical infrastructures that govern global commerce. Palacz's work offers an unfiltered view into expansive, nearly deserted halls, where automation dictates the movement of countless parcels, efficiently coded, scanned, and redirected. His installation dissects this mechanized choreography, questioning the role of human agency in an increasingly automated system. By transforming collected data into a multimedia installation – including video, sound, and plotted movement records – Palacz makes tangible the hidden spaces and rhythms of modern logistics. The work raises questions about efficiency, anonymity, and the materiality of digital exchange, offering a rare glimpse into the infrastructure that underpins contemporary consumption.

Julian Palacz

Media Artist
Vienna, Austria
julian@palacz.at

Keywords Logistics, Parcels, Shipping Industry, Surveillance

DOI [10.34626/2025_xcoax_022](https://doi.org/10.34626/2025_xcoax_022)

Introduction

A medium-sized package, inconspicuous in its exterior, embarks on a journey. From Vienna, it makes its way through an intricate network of distribution centers, conveyor belts, and sorting facilities, before reaching its final destination. Yet, unlike any other package, this one does more than just travel – it observes, records, and exposes the hidden spaces of global logistics.

Julian Palacz's *Parcel Series* is an artistic intervention into the vast and largely invisible infrastructure of contemporary commerce. Through the package's built-in sensors – camera, microphone, GPS tracker, and motion detectors – Palacz captures the rhythms and structures of logistics: endless halls, automated scanning processes, and the seamless, yet eerie choreography of goods moving through depersonalized distribution centers.

The Logistics of Visibility

The rise of e-commerce has radically reshaped supply chains, with record-breaking volumes of parcels being transported worldwide. In Austria alone, annual shipments have surged from 50 million a decade ago to over 165 million today. Despite the scale and complexity of these operations, our understanding of how they function is minimal. Palacz's work sheds light on these hidden processes, making the unseen visible.

With his package as a passive observer, we gain access to near-empty warehouses the size of multiple football fields, designed solely for maximum efficiency. Packages glide along conveyor belts, sorted and directed through a finely tuned system that minimizes human intervention. Here, the human role is reduced to the final step – the so-called “last mile” – where precariously employed couriers shoulder the responsibility of ensuring delivery, often becoming the sole visible actors in an otherwise automated chain.

Materializing Data

Beyond video documentation, Palacz transforms the collected data into tangible forms. One key element of the exhibition is a plotted seismographic record of the package's journey – an analog visualization of its physical encounters along the way. Every vibration, impact, and directional shift is transcribed onto a long paper roll, revealing the otherwise imperceptible movements the package endured. By giving form to this ephemeral data, Palacz bridges the gap between digital abstraction and physical reality, challenging the notion that logistics exist purely in the realm of the immaterial.

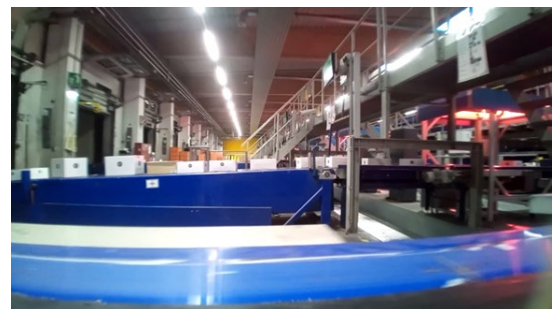
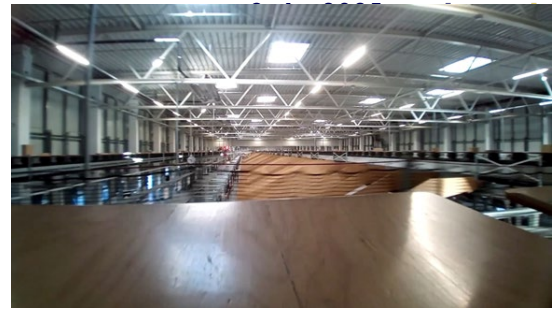


Fig. 1. Video Stills *This Side Up*, Bildraum 07, 2022.

This interplay between data and materiality underscores a broader tension: while digital infrastructures promise seamless connectivity, their operations are deeply physical. Vast spaces, precise coordination, and intricate logistics networks underpin our daily transactions, yet they remain largely outside our field of vision. The project not only exposes these structures but also invites us to reconsider our role within them. Are we mere spectators of this automated spectacle, or do we bear responsibility for the systems we continuously reinforce through our consumption habits?

In a world where digital transactions mediate our relationships with material goods, Palacz's project disrupts the illusion of frictionless exchange. The journey of a single package becomes a case study in the mechanics of contemporary mobility, revealing the labor, infrastructure, and decision-making processes that remain obscured behind the veil of convenience.

By monumentalizing the aesthetic of logistics, Palacz's *Parcel Series* challenges us to look beyond the package at our doorstep. It compels us to acknowledge the spaces and mechanisms that make such deliveries possible and to question the consequences of a system where efficiency trumps human presence. In doing so, Palacz offers not just a critique, but a moment of revelation – one that urges us to reconsider the invisible yet omnipresent networks shaping our world.



Fig. 2. *Handle With Care* video installation, Forum Stadtpark, Graz, 2021.



Fig. 3. Custom shipping labels with algorithmic haikus, Bildraum 07, 2022.



Fig. 4. Vibration (acceleration) protocol, *This Side Up*, Bildraum 07, 2022.

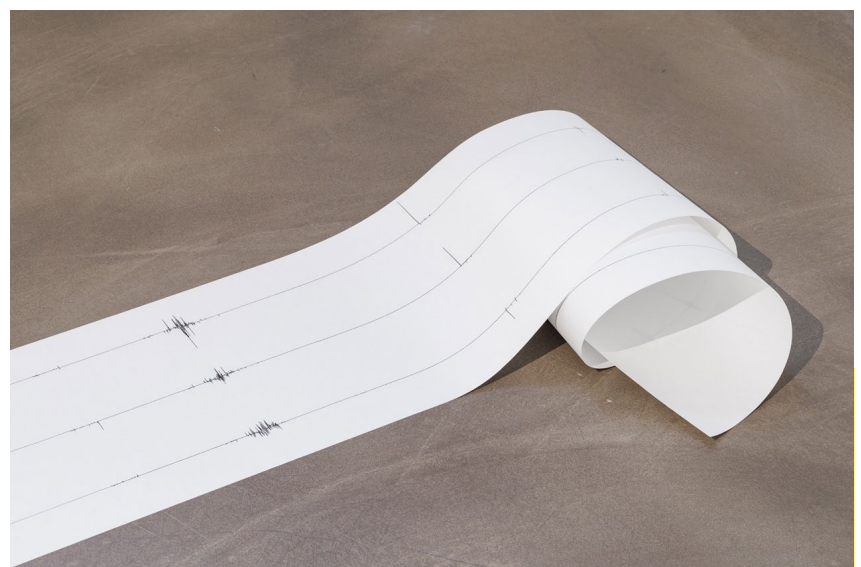


Fig. 5. Vibration (acceleration) protocol (detail), *This Side Up*, Bildraum 07, 2022.



Fig. 6. Vibration (acceleration) protocol, *Handle with Care*, Forum Stadtpark, 2021.

Further information on the series:

<https://julian.palacz.at/handle-with-care/>

<https://julian.palacz.at/this-side-up/>