Treatise as Exhibition

A conversation with Simon Denny - Part One

by Amira Gad

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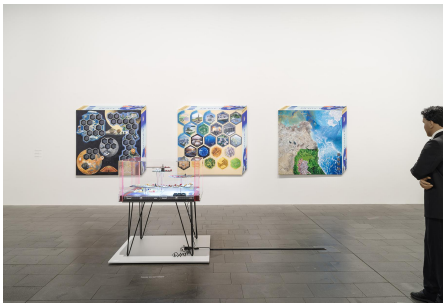
Simon Denny, installation view, *Security Through Obscurity*, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, 2020. Photos by Phil Bond. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher purchased by Simon Denny, 109 x 107,5 cm. Photos by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist.



Simon Denny, *Power Vest 4*, 2019. Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher, Patagonia M's Down Sweater Vest parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, Salesforce and Quip embroidered logos, wood, glass, photo paper, cardboard, 134 x 153 x 23 cm, Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, installation view, *The Founder's Paradox*, Michael Lett, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.



Simon Denny, *Ascent Above the Nation State Board Game Display Prototype* (detail), 2017. Customised "Descent – Journeys in the Dark" game pieces, UV print on Butler Finish Aluminium Dibond, UV print on card, LEDs, moulded electronic wiring, Dell PowerEdge 1950 server casing, Linoleum, MDF, powder coated steel, Plexiglas, 105 x 103 x 103 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.

This is part one of a two-part conversation between Rotterdam-based curator Amira Gad and Berlin-based artist Simon Denny, catching up on Denny's recent projects since they collaborated on his exhibition at London's Serpentine Galleries in 2015, where Gad worked as a curator. You can read part two here.

AMIRA GAD A lot has happened since we worked together on your show *Products for Organising* at the Serpentine Galleries in 2015 and the expanded HACK SPACE group show that made its way through China the following year. A fond memory I have of this collaboration is the 'Improve our Workspace' banner work you did

for the K11 Art Mall in Shanghai. I've recently been thinking about this banner a lot as we had been homebound for weeks during the Covid-19 pandemic and employers are turning to thinking about workspaces and working culture more broadly. The pandemic is changing a lot, including the way we work and organise ourselves. What kind of impact has it had on you? I wanted to take this opportunity to think about this for a moment as well as talk about a few recent shows and works you've made over the last few years.

SIMON DENNY I have fond memories of the 'Improve our workspace' banner also – a GCHQ (UK intelligence agency) internal graphic describing their workspace-optimising practices for the most iconic state surveillance brand in the UK, which I took and displayed proudly at scale over a mall in Shanghai. More than workplace optimisation, I'm reminded of the role of context, class, race and other forces that differentiate play in this situation. Due to the pandemic I, of course, had my disruptions – an exhibition postponed, another cancelled, a collaboration agreement that had felt solid fray. But I was reminded of how lucky I am – I was able to put energy into teaching, into working with students and thinking harder about my role at the HFBK University of Fine Arts in Hamburg and the mentoring program I run, Berlin Program for Artists. Unpacking the situation with artists in these contexts focused me on things I think are really important, and on relationships with people.



Simon Denny, *Workspace Improvement Banner (GCHQ workspace model)*, 2016. UV print on PVC BlockoutPremium, 2300 x 90 cm. Photo by Simon Denny. Installation View, *K11 'Art Mall'*, Shanghai, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New York.



Simon Denny, *Workspace Improvement Banner (GCHQ workspace model)*, 2016. UV print on PVC BlockoutPremium, 2300 x 90 cm. Photo by Simon Denny. Installation View, *K11 'Art Mall'*, Shanghai, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne/New York.

AG Earlier this year, you opened your first solo show in San Francisco titled *Security Through Obscurity* at Altman Siegel. The show included a collection of scarves that you acquired from an auction of the estate of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. What made you acquire those scarves? Were you looking for them? I would love to zoom in on that particular work, there are many layers to be unpacked like the Patagonia vests morphing with those scarves. Can you talk a bit about how you've repurposed those scarves and the symbolisms that lie within?

SD I wasn't looking for them. The Thatcher auction wasn't something I was following specifically. But when I saw them, I was totally compelled by the economy with which the scarves seemed to embody her politics in material. I have made artworks that focus on politically conservative figures in the past: Kim Dotcom, Peter Thiel, etc. These are figures with connections to right-wing libertarian worldviews, and those views have scaled through products they've worked on, and contexts they're part of. Thatcher as a figure, to me, rhymed with that – a sort of iconic

precursor to some of the technology entrepreneurs' worldviews and ideologies that I've been so invested in unpacking.



Simon Denny, installation view, *Security Through Obscurity*, Altman Siegel, San Francisco, 2020. Photos by Phil Bond. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher purchased by Simon Denny, 109 x 107,5 cm. Photos by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist.



Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher purchased by Simon Denny, 88,5 x 88,5 cm. Photos by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist.



Simon Denny, *Power Vest 1*, 2019. Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher, Patagonia M's Down Sweater Vest parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, Salesforce and Quip embroidered logos, wood, glass, photo paper, cardboard, 134 x 153 x 23 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, *Power Vest 4*, 2019. Scarf formerly owned by Margaret Thatcher, Patagonia M's Down Sweater Vest parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, Salesforce and Quip embroidered logos, wood, glass, photo paper, cardboard, 134 x 153 x 23 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.

SD (CONT) Thatcher is an icon of governmental legitimation and state integration of neoliberal values and practices – of the normalisation of Hayekian thinking. Her slogans, "There's no such thing as society" and "There is no alternative" set the stage for the kind of targeted individual that Surveillance Capitalism/Platform Capitalism frames its platforms and software development around. And the scarves were this amazing cipher of those values – the fact that they're the flair in her authoritative outfit, and the themes that they symbolised. There's a graphic scarf with Forbes slogans

and logos all over them: “No guts no story” and “Capitalist Tool”. Dollar signs. There’s another by Burberry – arguably a brand totally synonymous with British capital, its ‘conservatism’ and force. There are scarves which are diplomatic gifts, some bearing the signatures of the Prime Minister of Thailand, some with the insignia of US military related philanthropic organisations, and even others with essentializing stereotypes like a leopard skin print with the word “Africa” on it.

When thinking of formats to carry some of this Thatcher relic material from the recent past into the present, and thinking about how to re-situate it in San Francisco, I couldn’t not intersect it with the Patagonia down vests – referred to as ‘power vests’, until mid-2019 they were commonly co-branded with various tech and finance firms’ internal tat stores. I had also picked up a Patagonia x Salesforce ‘power vest’ on eBay, before Patagonia withdrew from all of its collaborations with tech and finance (due to bad optics). Patagonia is a brand that signifies the luxury end of recreational outdoors – which, to its customers, including the tech finance cohort, likely signifies liberty and a rugged, pioneering independence crossed with a kind of high-tech material agility and elegance. They also have a resonance with the ‘outside’, a libertarian notion that one can exit systems of governance and organisation and ‘build’ an alternative. Fine. So I hired a talented Berlin tailor to make a Patagonia x Salesforce vest from Thatcher’s scarves and filled them with down collected from second hand jackets from San Francisco.

But then there are other products in the Patagonia line which are not just reminiscent of elite power in San Francisco but also are associated with the other end of the neoliberal landscape: those who don’t choose to be ruggedly and heroically ‘outdoors’. Patagonia’s sleeping bag collection is also weirdly reminiscent of sarcophagi. The shape is really uncannily similar. I also hired a specialty outdoors company in Brandenberg to produce sleeping bags from the Thatcher scarves. The result hopefully synthesises these tendencies of neoliberal individuating software systems and policy to exacerbate division and inequality. But they are also just incredibly uncanny objects to stand in front of. I made them stand up, erect and proud. They’re a bit taller than a tall person, so one looks up into this empty hood, of an empty yet standing sleeping

bag. One has quite a feeling of absence staring into that head cavity, in this tall, Thatcher sarcophagus.



Simon Denny, *Remainder 1* (detail), 2019. Margaret Thatcher scarves, Patagonia 850 Down Sleeping Bag 30 F/-1 C - R parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, carbon fibre, glass fibre, wood, 210 x 55 x 40 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, *Remainder 2*, 2019. Margaret Thatcher scarves, Patagonia 850 Down Sleeping Bag 30 F/-1 C - R parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, carbon fibre, glass fibre, wood, 210 x 55 x 40 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, *Remainder 2* (detail), 2019. Margaret Thatcher scarves, Patagonia 850 Down Sleeping Bag 30 F/-1 C - R parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, carbon fibre, glass fibre, wood, 210 x 55 x 40 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.

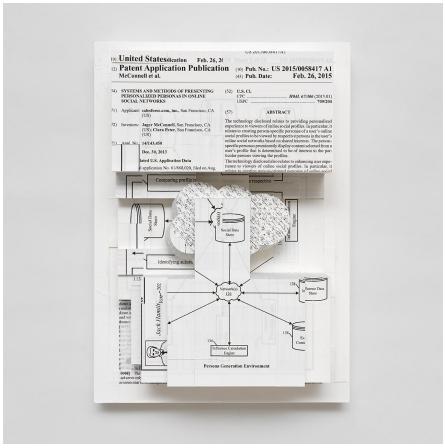


Simon Denny, *Remainder 2* (detail), 2019. Margaret Thatcher scarves, Patagonia 850 Down Sleeping Bag 30 F/-1 C - R parts, Ripstop Nylon, Down sourced from second hand San Francisco garments, carbon fibre, glass fibre, wood, 210 x 55 x 40 cm, Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.

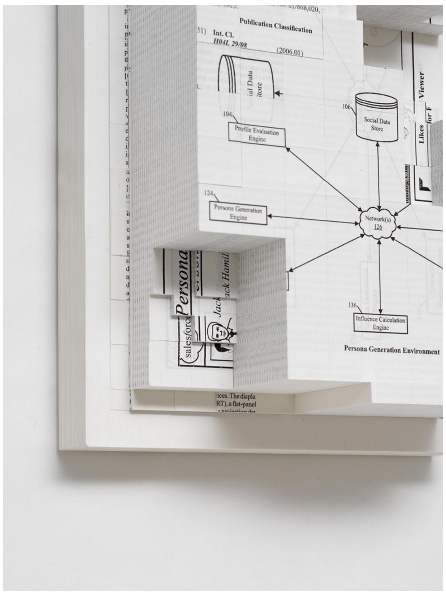
AG With almost every show where you've had the opportunity to produce new work, you've come up with a work related to the local context where it would be presented. With *Security Through Obscurity* – an exhibition title taken after a security engineering concept to elucidate that a system of any sort can be secure so long as nobody outside of its implementation group is allowed to find out anything about its internal mechanisms – this is the case in the sculptural relief works you produced out of salesforce.com Inc. patents, Salesforce being the largest employment company in San Francisco and one that has been using patents as a tax avoidance procedure. These reliefs are made from stacks of patent application documents sourced online presented as 3-dimensional panel works where some parts are carved into various geometric forms resulting in the appearance of a picture diagram of words such as 'community' and 'targeted data storage'. You allow a look into a specific company but at the same time provide a more global outlook into the issues that lie at its core and that you unravel. Can you give us an insight on this work?

SD Salesforce was an interesting touch point for me in San Francisco – its founder and CEO Marc Benioff, has a reputation as the 'good billionaire' as he is so involved with philanthropic projects. He's quite vocal about the city and, for example, issues around housing and inequality. He supported 'Proposition C', which is one legal attempt to try and grapple with the scale of houselessness in the city. Salesforce has a big physical footprint and is very visible in the city as well – there are two large towers downtown that they occupy, and there's a kind of skyline-like urban raised park that they also erected in the area. I was looking into tax patents, a method for reducing or deferring taxes, and also the kinds of patents that were being filed by Salesforce, and I happened upon a number of patents that describe communities and individuals, which map 'persona' formation and look at targeting individuals in social media structures. I felt these were resonant with the 'individual' formation of the Thatcher scarf sculptures, with a kind continuation of her worldview through software, so I started to experiment with using these patents to form layered paper reliefs. The reliefs collage layers of diagrams, figurative imagery and text contained in a giant stack of the

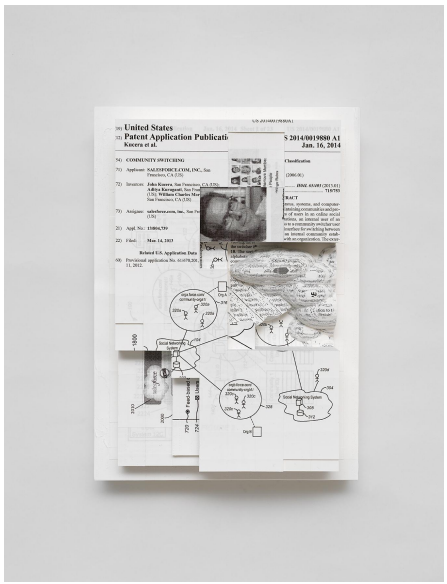
printed patents – so like profile picture diagrams with words like ‘community’ and ‘targeted data storage’ – stack up on top of each other. I use this interesting rapid-prototyping tool that was designed to produce small 3D prints by stacking, cutting, and gluing sheets of paper in multiple layers. This tool was designed in the last decade and was found to be commercially unviable due to its extremely time-consuming and labour-intensive process. Using this tool, I created paper stacks of the patent documents, and milled out several cloud shapes based on the Salesforce logo as well as a common ‘cloud’ schematic that is used in software diagramming.



Simon Denny, *Document Relief 14 (Salesforce.com, inc patent: SYSTEMS AND METHODS OF PRESENTING PERSONALIZED PERSONAS IN ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS)*, 2019. Ink Jet Print on Archival Paper, Glue, Custom metal wall mount, 29,7 x 21 x 14 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, *Document Relief 11 (Salesforce.com, inc patent: SYSTEMS AND METHODS OF PRESENTING PERSONALIZED PERSONAS IN ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKS)* (detail), 2019. Ink Jet Print on Archival Paper, Glue, Custom metal wall mount, 29,7 x 21 x 11 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.



Simon Denny, *Document Relief 16 (Salesforce.com, inc patent: COMMUNITY SWITCHING)*, 2019. Ink Jet Print on Archival Paper, Glue, Custom metal wall mount, 29,7 x 21 x 10,5 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artist and Altman Siegel.

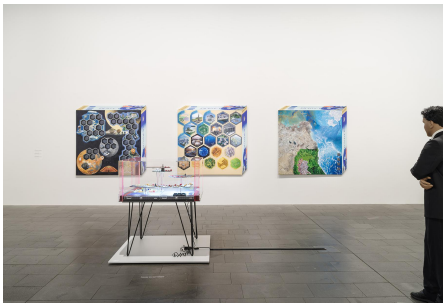
AG Vanessa Friedman in a review of your show in *The New York Times* wrote, “The result is a visual treatise on income inequality, global capitalism and the digital world built on shared fashion references”.[01] Indeed, your work is known for exploring the culture of technology and its effect on society. For me, I also see your work as cultural relics. If the apocalypse hits tomorrow, and your sculptures survive, future societies would be able to gain

an understanding of our society by decoding your work like hieroglyphics. Can you elaborate more on this idea and how the "visual treatise" of this show relates to your previous shows and work?

SD That article was a big help in framing the subjects around the show and, published in the style section of the *Times*, the image of Thatcher next to a well-known CEO in a Patagonia branded vest was priceless, it really summarises and broadcasts the territory of the exhibition. I can certainly relate to the idea of a treatise-as-exhibition. Presenting an in-depth exposition of, or investigating the principles of a subject was exactly my aim in working on our Serpentine exhibition in 2015. In that case the subject was not a kind of political lineage of individualism from neoliberal policy to software design like the San Francisco exhibition has been, but more a taxonomy of organisational structures servicing the internet – an Amazon owned online shoe retailer, a British state surveillance organisation and a group of informal structures focused around the development of the idiom of the hacker. Another recent show which is now travelling, called *Mine*, compares data extraction practices to mineral extraction practices, in a distillation of the extractive tendencies of industrial enterprise across paradigms… I could list more. I guess selecting a subject and teasing out interconnected themes through researched material such as a document, a photo, or a quote is what I do.

AG To create these visual treatises, your practice can also be perceived as investigative, or a digital/technological type of anthropology. Your research often leads you to unexpected corners, which in turn leads to surprising encounters and wildly interesting anecdotes that I've enjoyed hearing about over the years. Would you share one of them with us? Perhaps about Peter Thiel, who went to see your show *The Founder's Paradox* at Michael Lett Gallery in Auckland in 2017? Do you think Peter Thiel is 'camping' out at his residence in New Zealand these days?

SD I would imagine he's probably in LA actually – it's a time of crisitunity (when crisis presents opportunities for some actors), and Palantir, one of the companies Peter Thiel co-founded, is getting a huge amount of Covid-related business regarding expanding data mapping and tracking. I made *The Founder's Paradox* exhibition from secondary sources, trying to map Thiel's libertarian politics onto a geopolitics that included New Zealand and unpacked the 'exit' narratives I came across in my research into the ideological underpinnings of crypto and the politically conservative side of Silicon Valley. There are quite coherent predictions of end-of-nation-state events coinciding with an acceleration of the 'sovereign individual' figure, belonging to nobody but themselves, unbounded by any form of negative liberty from superstructures like states. In the show these narratives were mapped onto board game prototype sculptures that brought together imagery and narratives common in games like *Settlers of Catan and Game of Life*, and other fantasy games with this libertarian content. It also contrasted these games with artworks by a hero (and sometimes professor) of mine, Michael Parekowhai – who has used the game idiom to reflect on and critique colonial histories of Aotearoa New Zealand since the early 1990s. Thiel actually visited the exhibition a few weeks after it opened and from there we had a conversation about his thoughts on the show and my way of mapping these politics. It was refreshing because oftentimes I make exhibitions speculating on contexts or people I'm never able to be in touch with directly. Thiel was interested and really willing to spend time talking to me about the context and his interests and the way he saw those politics from his perspective, which was quite rare, and I think rewarding for both of us.



Simon Denny, installation view, *The Founder's Paradox*, Michael Lett, 2017. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.



Simon Denny, *Canvas Work Game of Life Cover*, 2017. Royalpainting.com commissioned painting (oil on canvas), UV print on canvas, custom stretchers, 115 x 165 x 2 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.



Simon Denny, *Ascent Above the Nation State Board Game Display Prototype* (detail), 2017. Customised "Descent – Journeys in the Dark" game pieces, UV print on Butler Finish Aluminium Dibond, UV print on card, LEDs, moulded electronic wiring, Dell PowerEdge 1950 server casing, Linoleum, MDF, powder coated steel, Plexiglas, 105 x 103 x 103 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.



Simon Denny, *Ascent Above the Nation State Board Game Display Prototype* (detail), 2017. Customised "Descent – Journeys in the Dark" game pieces, UV print on Butler Finish Aluminium Dibond, UV print on card, LEDs, moulded electronic wiring, Dell PowerEdge 1950 server casing, Linoleum, MDF, powder coated steel, Plexiglas, 105 x 103 x 103 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Michael Lett.

AG Peter Thiel said it was a "work of phenomenal detail".[02] What do you think of this? Is your correspondence with him having an impact on your views or portrayal of tech / venture capitalist culture?

SD His response was gratifying – that my research and sculptural output had framed the territory in a format that was legible outside of my own schematic. One of the things I am always thinking about is legibility, how I'm able to at once be in-depth and expository, works that are like a treatise, without being

hermetic and alienating to a viewer that has different aesthetic frames of reference or only a certain amount of energy and attention. But then of course the proximity to him that came from the dialogue we had, the insight into the context in which he operates was a different kind of information than reading about it. I actually discovered there was a lot more crossover between his universe and others I had already encountered in the crypto world through earlier projects. While I had thought it might provide more material, it actually coincided with me ending that particular vector of work and developing other stories and other research. It became more contextual information than direct input into producing artworks. I think it did allow me to be sure that some of my instincts and research was correct – so that for example when I saw the Thatcher connection, I was sure that it was really meaningful with regard to that cohort of entrepreneurs. Last time I visited California to open the *Security Through Obscurity* exhibition, I went to a meeting of the neoliberal Mont Pelerin Society at the Hoover Institution, and Thiel was giving the keynote speech. It's a very important society, founded by the economist Friedrich Hayek, and was deeply influential on Thatcher and Reganite policy. Thatcher was referenced several times by members of the society and Thiel's position is highly respected there. I'm not sure I would have been able to join those dots culturally or politically in quite the same way had I kept a bit more distance from the context and from Thiel himself.



Simon Denny, installation view, *Blockchain Visionaries* [with Linda Kantchev], Berlin Biennale, 2016. Photo by Hans-Georg Gaul. Courtesy of the artists, Berlin Biennale and Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/ Berlin/ New York.



Simon Denny, installation view, *Blockchain Visionaries* [with Linda Kantchev], Berlin Biennale, 2016. Photo by Hans-Georg Gaul. Courtesy of the artists, Berlin Biennale and Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/ Berlin/ New York.



Simon Denny, *Blockchain company postage stamp designs: Digital Asset, 21Inc, Ethereum* [with Linda Kantchev], 2016, 15 x 15 cm. Photo by Nick Ash. Courtesy of the artists, Berlin Biennale and Galerie Buchholz, Cologne/ Berlin/ New York.

AG In this great article published by The Guardian in 2018, Mark O'Connell, who also visited your show *The Founder's Paradox*, writes about the book *The Sovereign Individual* by James Dale Davidson and William Rees-Mogg: "Out of this wreckage will emerge a new global dispensation, in which a 'cognitive elite' will rise to power and influence, as a class of sovereign individuals 'commanding vastly greater resources' who will no longer be subject to the power of nation-states and will redesign governments to suit their ends." Don't you think this is already the case and that the pandemic has only sped up that process?

SD Yes I do. I recently had a brief back and forth with Quinn Slabodian, the author of *Globalists*, a book detailing the Mont Pelerin Society and the growth of neoliberal supra-national infrastructure which enables this class. He's also written a piece recently in The Guardian about strong voices trying to leverage the conditions of the crisis into more evidence for future fracturing of a nation state system, very much in line with the 'Sovereign Individual' take on the future I referenced in *The Founders Paradox* and *Blockchain Future States* exhibitions.

Quinn's summary paragraph in that piece points to what you're saying here: "Nobody can tell what the world will look like after the pandemic. But what we can be sure of is that some investors appear to be already placing their bets on a vision of the future where the wealthy are freed from tax constraints. As nations are divided into different zones according to their respective stages of viral and economic recovery, the well-off could follow Elon Musk's recent threat to relocate from California to Texas, voting with their feet for locations that elude redistributive taxation. In our post-pandemic future, the flight to safety, away from contagious 'red zones', could be a flight from the nation state as we know it." He also identifies the libertarian thought leader Balaji Srinivasan, who I featured in *The Founders Paradox* and a number of blockchain related works like *Blockchain Visionaries* at the 2016 Berlin Biennale. It's a very coherent worldview and one that appeals to many who see states as the enemy through a negative liberty lens.

Incidentally, Mark O'Connell has just now released a book, *Notes from the Apocalypse*, which spun out of his Guardian Long Read piece. The Thiel story and my exhibition are central to it.

This is part one of a two-part conversation. In the second part, Amira Gad and Simon Denny discuss his recent exhibitions including Mine*, at the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA) in Tasmania, and* Proof of Work*, shown at Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, as well as upcoming projects the artist is working on.*

Footnotes

01. Vanessa Friedman "Tech Bro Uniform Meets Margaret Thatcher. Disruption Ensues." *The New York Times* (14 January 2020) www.nytimes.com/2020/01/14/style/Patagonia-vest-margaret-thatcher-art.html, accessed 14 July 2020.

02. Matt Nippert, "Billionaire Peter Thiel makes rare visit to New Zealand" *New Zealand Herald* (10 December 2017) www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11956668, accessed 14 July 2020.

Biographies



Simon Denny (*1982 Auckland/New Zealand, lives in Berlin) is an artist whose work explores the cultures and values behind contemporary technologies. In recent years, Denny has looked at the exploitation of information in data-economies, using his work to visualise systems of competing political and economic visions, interrelationships of labour, capital, developments in technologies, and impacts on the biosphere.

He studied at the University of Auckland (2005), and the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main (2009). Denny's work has been exhibited recently in solo exhibitions in the K21 in Düsseldorf (2020); Museum of Old and New Art, Tasmania (2019); MOCA, Cleveland (2018); OCAT, Shenzhen (2017); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2017); WIELS Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2016); Serpentine Galleries, London (2015); MoMA PS1, New York (2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014); Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (2014); MUMOK, Vienna (2013); Kunstverein Munich (2013). He represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015. His works are represented in institutional collections including MoMA (New York), Walker Art Centre (Minneapolis), Kunsthaus Zürich (Zürich), Sammlung zeitgenössischer Kunst der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Berlin) and Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington). Denny co-founded the BPA//Berlin Program for Artists, an artist mentoring program in 2016. Since 2018, he is a professor for Time Based Media at the HFBK, Hamburg.



Amira Gad is a curator and writer based in Rotterdam, currently working as Head of Programmes at Light Art Space in Berlin. Prior to her appointment, she was curator at the Serpentine Galleries in London from 2014 to 2019, and Managing Curator & Publications at Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art in Rotterdam where she worked from 2014 to 2019. She is also a regular guest lecturer at Sotheby's Institute of Art, London.

Gad has curated exhibitions of works (and edited accompanying publications) by Albert Oehlen (2019); Hito Steyerl (2019); Sondra Perry (2018); Torbjørn Rødland (2017); Arthur Jafa (2017) for which the catalogue she co-edited won the Richard Schlagman Art Books Award and the show toured to Galerie Rudolfinum in Prague and Moderna Museet in Stockholm as well as the Julia Stoschek Collection where it won an AICA Award for Best Exhibition of 2018 in Germany; John Latham (2017), Zaha Hadid (2016); Simon Denny (2015); Jimmie Durham (2015); and Lynette Yiadom-Boakye's show (2015) that received the Sky Arts Award for visual arts, Julio Le Parc (2014) and Reiner Ruthenbeck (2014). Gad also worked on the Serpentine Pavilion 2019 designed by Junya Ishigami, Serpentine's Beijing Pavilion designed by Liu Jiakun, and the 2016 architecture programme that included architects Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG), Asif Khan, Kunlé Adeyemi (NLE), Yona Friedman, and Barkow Leibinger.

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