

ALTMAN SIEGEL

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Simon Denny

Security Through Obscurity

January 14 – February 22, 2020

Altman Siegel is pleased to present an exhibition of new sculptures, wall reliefs and framed works by the New Zealand born, Berlin based artist Simon Denny. This will be the artist's first solo show in San Francisco. Addressing the intersection of technology, society and aesthetics, Denny sources the material for his work from within the objects, documents, and images produced by technology companies and states.

In preparation for this exhibition, Denny acquired a collection of scarves from an auction of the estate of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. A towering figure in the former British colony of New Zealand during Denny's formative years, Thatcher is synonymous with the neoliberal agenda advocating free markets, deregulation and privatization that is under increasing scrutiny as signs of rampant economic inequality become ever more visible on the streets of our globally connected cities.

Denny repurposes Thatcher's scarves as a sculptural material to create knock-off, bespoke Patagonia, Inc. sleeping bags and Nano Puff "power" vests. These socio-politically loaded forms designed for individual insulation have become the de facto uniform of tech and finance culture, while the sleeping bag has simultaneously moved from the camping kit to the homeless encampment. The quilted forms are constructed from secondhand down filling, extracted and upcycled from used sleeping bags and garments sourced around San Francisco.

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A series of Global Charge sculptures employ used British army blankets as tools to “charge” plastic tablecloths with static electricity in order to adhere them to the wall. The tablecloths, originally produced in China, were printed over by the artist with the Thatcher scarf motifs.

Salesforce.com Inc. patents describing software that targets individual users and configures network community protocols are repurposed into hybrid document and sculptural collage reliefs. The patents are printed and layered in stacks of glued paper, assembled and then sculpted using an out-of-date 3D printer tool. The paper Document Reliefs bring the legal language and diagrammatic conventions of patenting – a form of idea enclosure – into poetic layered forms as cloud-like shapes emerge from the sculpted paper. Technical descriptions of individual and community within the found language of the patent are collaged using intricate outmoded machinery into an interpretation of the aesthetics of bureaucracy that encode power and property in an increasingly automated economy. Salesforce, the largest employer in San Francisco and an active voice in civic conversations about space, has also been recently highlighted by Wired magazine as utilizing patents as part of a common tax avoidance procedure used by many companies to avoid paying any taxes, at the same time that their CEO, Mark Benioff, has been a vocal advocate for increased corporate and private philanthropy.

The specifically loaded materials and forms of the sculptural objects throughout *Security Through Obscurity* and the ways in which they are gathered together elicit discourse about community, individualism and visibility.

Simon Denny is an internationally recognized artist with previous solo exhibitions at MoMA PS1, New York; Serpentine Galleries, London; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; OCAT, Shenzhen; MONA, Tasmania among many others. He also represented New Zealand with their National Pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale. His exhibition catalogue/board game Extractor is available to play and for sale at the gallery. A related body of work will be included in *Uncanny Valley: Being Human in the Age of AI* at the de Young Museum, San Francisco in February 2020.

For more information please contact 415-576-9300 or info@altmansiegel.com.