Business Insider

Simon Denny

Modded Server Rack Display with Some Interpretations of David Darchicourt Designs as Freelance Designer

POSITIVE PRESS BOARDGAME
The game's visual identity and graphics were made by David Darchicourt. […] "Positive Press is a new board game that teaches school-age children to think positively while having fun and being creative. The game helps to prevent negative beliefs which can sometimes lead to depression. It engages children with its light and playful approach by incorporating a little adventure and exploration, with a journalism theme."

"DIVE INTO SOCIAL NETWORKING" AND OTHER SMART SHARKS CARD GAMES
These David Darchicourt-illustrated card games purchased from Franklin Learning Systems are intended to teach a variety of life skills. […] Players learn "netiquette essentials" with "social-networking diva" Tess Tiger. The game teaches principles such as "anything posted on a social networking site is public information" and "to be careful about revealing public information about themselves and others."

Marciana Library ceiling (1588) as Knowledge Visualization

Fra Mauro World Map (1448-53) as Data Visualization

Modded Server Rack Display with David Darchicourt Commissioned Map of Aotearoa New Zealand

Illustrative map commissioned from former NSA Creative Director of Defence Intelligence David Darchicourt, printed on Dibond. The map depicts New Zealand as the center of the world, oriented with the South at the top. In this work, Darchicourt has been commissioned to draw sites, moments, and figures frequently used to characterize New Zealand in the popular imagination. Labels picturing members of Great Britain's royal family, a Māori Village, and a hobbit—to name just a few such tropes—surround a scattering of cyber-themed surfers and Air New Zealand aircraft. Red lines trace the paths of the submarine communications cables that connect New Zealanders to the rest of the world.

Modded Server-Rack Display with Former NSA Designer/Guardian

Emblem used by NSA to refer to POISONNUT, a Virtual Private Network Attack Orchestrator (VAO) that enables attacks on users who have taken steps to guard against monitoring profiles online, here reinterpreted in paint on novelty plastic peanut. The logo was designed by NSA Creative Director David Darchicourt while he was working at the agency between 2001 and 2012. Charlotte Higgins from *The Guardian* newspaper spoke to Darchicourt about his role in designing this graphic […]. "My cartooning is something they found useful from time to time—it could be a good communication tool, helping express complex information in a very simple way." Darchicourt said he was "particularly involved in working on internal security and security awareness."

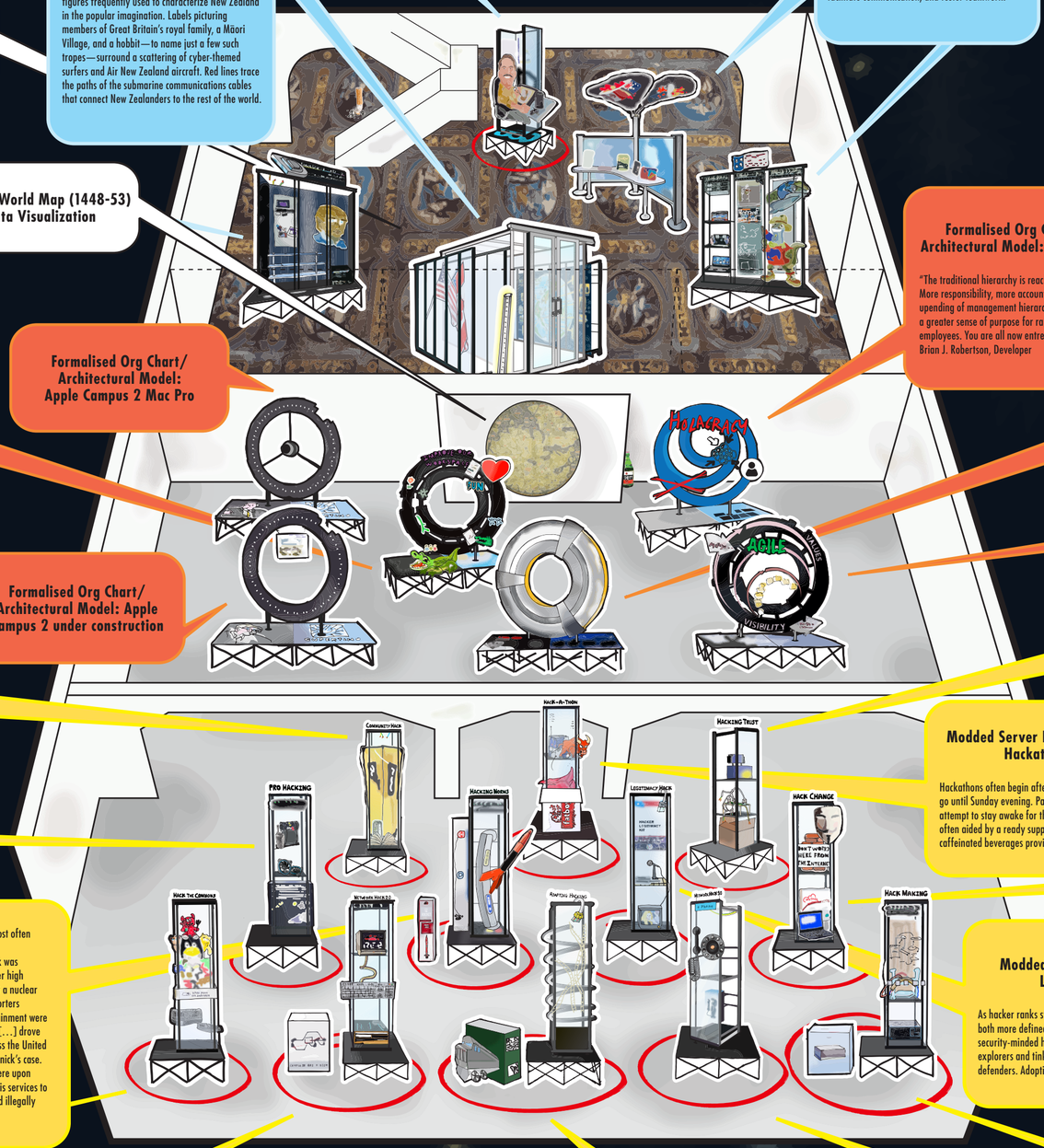
Custom-Ordered and Finished Herman Miller Resolve System Office Furniture with David Darchicourt Designs and Imagery from Slides

This modular office furniture system was designed by Ayse Birsel and introduced in 1999. It eliminates cubicles, replacing them with vertical poles from which desks and shelves can be hung to create workstation clusters. […] The "human-centred" design is intended to encourage social interaction, facilitate communication, and foster teamwork.

Modded Server Rack Display with Some Interpretations of David Darchicourt Designs for National Cryptologic Museum

Cartoon character design commissioned from David Darchicourt through the Behance platform during the research phase of the 2015 New Zealand Venice Biennale National Pavilion. Commission request specified a cyborg version of the tuatara, New Zealand's national lizard.

For [the second] version, Darchicourt depicts the anthropomorphic tuatara character waving a New Zealand flag while wearing hiking boots, a neck scarf, a slouch hat, and a t-shirt emblazoned with the kiwi, one of New Zealand's national symbols.



Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: GCHQ 3 Agile/Holacracy Workspace

"Don't allow cynics in, they can destroy a culture."

"Front line decision making with 'pre approval'. Because true delegation means accepting it won't be done as you'd do it." – Designed by [name censored], Lead Business Analyst/Developer, GCHQ

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: Apple Campus 2 Mac Pro

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: Apple Campus 2 under construction

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: Holacracy

"The traditional hierarchy is reaching its limits. More responsibility, more accountability, and the upending of management hierarchies will lead to a greater sense of purpose for rank-and-file employees. You are all now entrepreneurs." – Brian J. Robertson, Developer

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: GCHQ 1

"The workplace is essential infrastructure, closely aligned to work activities and organisational culture, making it possible for people to work in new and different ways and creating a strong visual expression of the organisation's values."

"Gensler counts GCHQ, Europe's largest private finance initiative (PFI) development, as one of its prominent successes." – Chris Johnson, Architect

"First we shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us." – Winston Churchill

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: GCHQ 2 Agile

RULES OF AGILE SPACE
STAND-UP MEETING SPACE: The stand-up meeting is a core activity of the agile process, space needs to be allocated for stand-ups. While there is nothing mystical about its spatial requirements, without a designated location, this vital activity can be made to suffer.

BE MESSY IN A GOOD WAY: Call it a backlash against the abstract nature of software development, but agile teams are particularly obsessed with stuff: post-its, burndown charts, whiteboards in every format known. Agile environments must embrace the messiness.

Modded Server Rack Display: Pro Hacking

Hack to Pro: The growing body of techniques discovered by hackers to infiltrate computer networks for any variety of reasons has led to many different approaches and organizational forms. Some hackers banded together into hackspaces, working together to develop new tools capable of breaking down or building up network security. Many of these became full-blown companies, applying their skills to help businesses and states secure themselves by understanding where they were most vulnerable. Others continued to share knowledge through underground text-based magazines, or sell the vulnerabilities they discovered on black markets to the highest bidder—be they criminal organizations or state intelligence wings.

Modded Server Rack Display: Community Hack

From Camping to Conventions: Founded in 1981, Germany's Chaos Computer Club (CCC) is one of the oldest hacking organizations in continued existence. Every four years members are joined by hackers from all over the world at the Chaos Communication Camp, an informal retreat held on the fringes of a major city in Germany and suited to philosophical debate, political discussion, and community building.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking Trust

Code as Law: Cryptography is not only useful for rendering messages inaccessible to unwanted parties, it can also be used to guarantee the validity of a piece of information. Drawing upon this application, hackers active on the "cypherpunks" mailing list began discussing the possibility of entirely electronic forms of currency in the late 1980s. After several failed but educational attempts to create such a system, a mysterious entity known only as "Satoshi Nakomoto" released the open-source Bitcoin software in 2009. Suddenly, a very specialized and esoteric field of activity was catapulted into the broader hacker community—alongside discussions of the radically disruptive social, economic, and political transformations such a technology could enable.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hackathon

Hackathons often begin after work on Friday and go until Sunday evening. Participants sometimes attempt to stay awake for the entire duration, often aided by a ready supply of pizza and caffeinated beverages provided by organisers.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hack Change

Demonstration Without Identity: In the 1990s, technology-minded activists like the Electronic Disturbance Theater began to translate practices of civil disobedience into digital networks. Around the same time hacker groups like Cult of the Dead Cow began creating technologies such as Back Orifice, which simultaneously disclosed security vulnerabilities in the Windows operating system and also enabled users to exploit them. In so doing they motivated increased security awareness not by political or legal advocacy, but rather by trollish provocation and theatrics—creating a pressing need for the risks to be addressed. Such tactics reached new heights in the mid-2000s with the emergence of hacktivist groups like Anonymous […] While at first characterized in the media as "hackers on steroids," many Anonymous activities combined technical expertise with sensationalist media savviness, inclusive organizational principles, hardcore activist politics, and a willingness to adopt masks and take their concerns to the streets.

All text quoted from works by Simon Denny, written by Matt Goerzen.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking Norms

Social Advocacy Bumper: In the 1980s a new wave of hackers […] played across computer networks with impunity— accessing any system they could find, often merely for the challenge and sometimes also for the sensitive data they contained. Concerned by the innumerable breaches to sensitive military, state, and corporate systems, US law enforcement began "Operation Sundevil," arresting many individuals, raiding nascent hackspaces, and creating new legal regimes […] to hone their powers. To hackers more interested in exploration than destruction or profit, the punishment most often did not seem to fit the crime.

Notorious network infiltrator Kevin Mitnick was arrested in 1995 and detained for years under high security, due to the belief that he could "start a nuclear war by whistling into a pay phone." His supporters believed the conditions and length of his detainment were excessive. The publishers of *2600* magazine […] drove a de-commissioned phone company van across the United States to raise awareness and support for Mitnick's case. Ultimately Mitnick was released in 2000, where upon he founded a security consultancy, offering his services to many of the companies whose systems he had illegally accessed only years earlier.

Modded Server Rack Display: Legitimacy Hack

As hacker ranks swelled and their capabilities became both more defined and more misunderstood, some security-minded hackers began to see their role less as explorers and tinkerers and more as experts and defenders. Adopting the mantle of "white hat" to differentiate themselves from the "black hat" label frequently applied to the criminal and self-interested elements of the underground community, rather than hoarding discovered security vulnerabilities for private profit or personal use, these hackers advocated public "full disclosure": the publication of any discovered security flaw in the interest of prompting governments and institutions to safeguard the critical services and hardware infrastructures their users depend upon.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking the Commons

While advocates of free software and open source software exist in a shared ecosystem, philosophical differences abound. However, on one point there is an undeniable consensus: most projects feature a cartoonish animal as their mascot, plush toy versions of which stand on the desks of many developers, keeping them company during late night hacking sessions.

Perhaps one of the biggest challenges facing free and open source communities has been a historical reliance on hardware manufactured by large corporations. […] While open hardware has long been a dream of hackers, the high costs of customized hardware production have so far limited their activities almost exclusively to the domain of software.

Modded Server Rack Display: Network Hack 2.0

With the development of the modem and the mass availability of personal computers such as the Commodore Amiga, computer networking over phone lines became accessible to average citizens in the 1980s. Some direct connection computer bulletin board systems (BBSes) and ARPANET, the precursor to the Internet, still required institutional credentials to access, but clever hackers could always find a way […]. Hackers also honed their skills and defined their communities by accessing and sharing files on personal—and sometimes very secretive—BBS systems, some of which advertised their unique services by commissioning ASCII and ANSI text-based artworks from members of the burgeoning "art scene," refining hacker jargon, hacker communities, and hacker aesthetics in the process.

Modded Server Rack Display: Adapting Hacking

The Tech Model Railroad Club (TMRC), a student organization formed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1946, is often considered the birthplace of hacking culture. Known to repurpose telephone system switches to create complex train networks, […] TMRC members showed similar inventiveness in accessing the institution's treasured TX-0 and PDP-1 computers. Drawing on the MIT student tradition of clever pranksterism, which they called "hacks", the TMRC programmers adopted the term to describe their methods of computer use and exploration that went far beyond the usual number crunching. Their […] early hacker ethos [was] defined by total access (the "Hands-On Imperative"), freedom of information, decentralization, sharing, and a desire to improve the human condition.

Modded Server Rack Display: Network Hack 1.0

Pay telephone used to place calls from public locations. By using phones like these instead of home telephone lines, phone phreaks preserved their anonymity when using the phone system in illegal or semi-legal ways.

Modded Server Rack Display: Hack Making

The hacker imperative to open and explore all systems has long been constrained by the unique challenges posed by hardware and physical manufacturing. The contemporary maker community seeks to defy these limitations by subverting proprietary, mass produced hardware capabilities or, increasingly, by collaborating to build open hardware systems and free libraries of 3D-printable designs. Such commons have been seized upon by both idealists and captains of industry as tools with the potential to radically disrupt processes of production and distribution, as well as the social and political systems they support.

Simon Denny is fascinated by technology, not as an end in itself, but as a force that reflects and shapes our society, our ideas, our understanding. In this body of work, he traces the emergence of hacker culture and its subsequent co-option by and collaboration with government and big business as a catalyst for innovation.

Taking a journalistic approach to his research – editorializing rarely – Denny recounts the origins of the hacker movement as groups of people who quickly adopted a variety of positions and practices: from pranks played by computer scientists within universities, to protests by early digital activists. Avoiding either the demonization or the glorification of hacking, Denny reveals some of the ways it has become interwoven in global politics. He maps the activities of both "black hat" and "white hat" hackers: those working against and those working within the dominant structures of power (whether governmental or corporate). In doing so, he suggests the interdependency of seemingly contrary forces.

Denny is a visual artist and locates himself within the lineage of conceptual art and institutional critique. The forms that he employs to share (and to further) his research are familiar to the realm of visual art and museum display, while also embodying the aesthetic of digital technology's soft- and hardware. In Denny's hands, museum vitrines with their explanatory labels take the form of modified server racks. These racks contain objects that the artist has bought to illustrate his story, but also products (and their fictitious packaging) that he has created. The narrative – written by Denny in collaboration with artist and researcher Matt Goerzen and artist and brand consultant Emily Segal – shifts from the glass panels of the vitrines to the objects contained inside. The books presented in the platforms (on which the vitrines stand) are custom-printed, their titles and back-cover summaries highlighting the key theme or story of each work.

Amira Gad, curator of Denny's recent solo show at the Serpentine Galleries describes how Denny establishes a means of reading that is analogous to reading online: "Denny's use of appropriation and copying can be understood to mirror our current usage of the Internet; we move from one of his vitrines to the next, just as we browse from one window to another to complete the information being transferred to us. Denny's practice, as part of an age of digital reproduction, blurs any possible distinction between original and copy […] reflecting the uncontrollable nature of online information dissemination."[1]

1. Amira Gad, 'Culturehacking: Inside (and Outside) Simon Denny's Work', in *Products for Organising*, Serpentine Galleries & Koenig Books, London, 2015, p.188

Winston Churchill – with his talent for aphorism – once declared: "First we shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings shape us." Denny quotes the global architectural firm Gensler using this phrase of Churchill's in one of the pieces presented here. These works explore how large organizations are adopting management practices – and architecture – based on models of radical flexibility and open collaboration.

Denny takes as his case studies the new headquarters of Apple (Campus 2) currently under construction in Cupertino, USA, and the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Cheltenham, England. Both buildings have an open, circular floor-plan: Campus 2 is nicknamed "the Spaceship" while GCHQ is known as "the Doughnut." The latter can be seen as the architectural embodiment of the management structures it employs: Holacracy and Agile. As Amira Gad explains, Holacracy is "a new way of running an organization that aims to remove power from management hierarchy and distribute it across clear roles that are dynamic and allow room for autonomous execution. 'Circles' replace teams and 'Roles' replace job descriptions. Agile, a highly flexible methodology that grew out of software development methods, emphasizes flexibility and evolving collaborations between teams prompted to constantly reassess themselves."[2]

Denny is intrigued by the way that two very different organizations – one of the world's most successful technology companies, the other a government intelligence agency – adopt similar organisational structures that are built upon ideologies which were initially fundamental to counter-culture movements. Hacker collectives were early adopters of working methods and spaces that were closely connected to – and replicated by – the software they were developing.

Denny explores the motives behind such organisational structures and the way in which they can be appropriated and formalised through architecture. His sculptures take the form of architectural models, whose display method is reminiscent of a commercial trade fair, with easily demountable and standardized platforms, and graphic design that features quotes from management gurus and property developers. These wheel-like forms also function as noticeboards, suggesting the outcome of a brainstorm session, full of motivational catchphrases, bullet points and diagrams. Like a visual anthropologist, Denny employs – and in doing so, reveals – the aesthetic of the contemporary workplace.

In examining GCHQ, Denny's work touches upon questions of national security, the culture inside powerful organizations, the invasion of privacy, and the mapping of knowledge, topics explored in the works in the following gallery space. His reproduction of the Fra Mauro map acts as a frontispiece to his earlier project: *Secret Power*.

2. Amira Gad, 'Culturehacking: Inside (and Outside) Simon Denny's Work', in *Products for Organising*, Serpentine Galleries & Koenig Books, London, 2015, p.188

Products for Organising: Modded Server Rack Displays

For all 12 *Modded Server Rack Displays*:
Narrative by Matt Goerzen, suggested product title by Emily Segal

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking the Commons (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Modded Server Rack Display: Network Hack 2.0 (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display: Adapting Hacking (2015)
Courtesy: Alastair Cookson Collection, London

Modded Server Rack Display: Network Hack 1.0 (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Modded Server Rack Display: Hack Making (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display: Pro Hacking (2015)
Courtesy: Collection Matthew Gorson

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking Norms (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Modded Server Rack Display: Legitimacy Hack (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Modded Server Rack Display: Hack Change (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display: Community Hack (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display: Hackathon (2015)
Courtesy: Daskal Collection

Modded Server Rack Display: Hacking Trust (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Products for Organising: Formalised Org Charts/ Architectural Models

Formalised Org Chart/Architectural Model: Apple Campus 2 under construction (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Formalised Org Chart/Architectural Model: GCHQ 1 (2015)
Courtesy: collection Si Shang Art Museum, Beijing

Formalised Org Chart/ Architectural Model: GCHQ 2 Agile (2015)
Courtesy: Eugenio Lopez

Formalised Org Chart/Architectural Model: GCHQ 3 Agile/Holacracy Workspace (2015)
Courtesy: Rubell Family Collection

Formalised Org Chart/Architectural Model: Apple Campus 2 Mac Pro (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Formalised Org Chart/Architectural Model: Holacracy (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Secret Power

Fra Mauro World Map (1448-53) as Data Visualization (2016)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display with David Darchicourt Commissioned Map of Aotearoa New Zealand (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server Rack Display with Some Interpretations of David Darchicourt Designs as Freelance Designer (2015)
Courtesy: private collection

Modded Server Rack Display with Some Interpretations of David Darchicourt Designs for National Cryptologic Museum (2015)
Courtesy: Lewben Art Foundation

Custom-Ordered and Finished Herman Miller Resolve System Office Furniture with David Darchicourt Designs and Imagery from Slides (2015)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Modded Server-Rack Display with Former NSA Designer/Guardian (2016)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Marciana Library ceiling (1588) as knowledge Visualization (2016)
Courtesy: Galerie Buchholz, Berlin/Cologne

Simon Denny Business Insider

ENGLISH

WIELS

In 2013, the whistle-blower Edward Snowden leaked to *The Guardian* and other international newspapers a large number of secret documents produced by the American National Security Agency (NSA) and its partner countries of the Five Eyes intelligence alliance: United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. The documents – predominantly internal memos and PowerPoint presentations – revealed the extent to which the intelligence agencies of these countries were monitoring the private communications between their citizens domestically and with foreigners. When invited to represent New Zealand at the 2015 Venice Biennale, Denny proposed a project that would investigate these slides as visual expressions of a broader culture of surveillance.

Denny worked together with graphic designer David Bennewith in examining the iconography of these documents that were never destined to be made public and which thus do not adopt the tone or appearance of official national statements. Indeed, as Keller Easterling notes of the slides: "In addition to the usual eagles and globes, there are cartoon animals or cartoon bad guys wearing bandit costumes or a clip-art leprechaun and four-leaf clover to decorate materials about BLARNEY, an NSA telecommunications surveillance programme."[3]

Intrigued by the unexpected aesthetic of the NSA's designs, Denny and Bennewith sought for their author figure and discovered David Darchicourt, Creative Director at the NSA between 2002-2012. Denny commissioned Darchicourt – now working as a freelance designer and illustrator – to create a new map of New Zealand, featuring several elements related to the country's participation in the Five Eyes alliance (such as the location of a listening station, or the points at which optical cables reach the country) together with tourist-related features. The resulting map appears in the large module that we encounter on entering the space. Other designs by Darchicourt are presented and/or appropriated in the other large server racks, to the left and the right. In the one single server rack, Darchicourt himself appears, drawn in his own cartoonish style, with information taken from his LinkedIn profile and website. The work incorporates quotes from an interview with Darchicourt by *The Guardian*, who approached him when Denny's project became public, revealing to him for the first time the context in which his newly commissioned design was being shown.

Such a feedback loop is typical of Denny's approach, which is analytical but never polemical. As Robert Leonard, curator of the Venice Pavilion in 2015 notes: "The vitrines include evidence Denny has found, but also evidence he has commissioned. Indeed, nothing is unprocessed. Denny has treated almost every item, determining its scale, sheen, and placement, translating it from one medium to another."[4] The result is information overload, putting us – the viewer – metaphorically into a similar position to the NSA: trying to sift through data to make sense of it all. For Leonard, this is Denny's implicit critique: "The NSA does not like complexity. It needs to defeat information overload in order to distill complexity into simplicity, into goodies and baddies, us and them. Denny, by contrast, revels in such information overload for the uncertainty it brings. He uses it to exercise us, to stretch us, to make us more suspicious, self-conscious."[5]

In Venice, Denny selected the Biblioteca Marciana as one of the venues for *Secret Power*.[6] This library is a repository of knowledge, but also a representation of power. Designed by Jacopo d'Antonio Sansovino in 1537 and decorated by painters such as Titian and Tintoretto, the library uses classical mythology to celebrate the divine destinies and the civil and military duties of man. Its holdings include the Fra Mauro map, which charts the geopolitical knowledge available to the Republic of Venice when it was at its most powerful. Of this symbolically and visually charged space,

Denny says: "It's revealing to compare those maps and globes with the icons and graphics in the Snowden slides, which describe the most sophisticated geopolitical tools available to the United States and its Five Eyes partners today."[7]

For his exhibition at WIELS, Denny has transformed the Marciana's ceiling into a floor sticker. In this inversion, the gods are brought down to earth, perhaps suggesting that the seemingly all-powerful NSA can also be brought down to earth, or made more tangible, by the revelation of its internal language, structure and iconography.

3. Keller Easterling, 'KOH-wa-ee' in *Products for Organising*, op. cit., p.184.
4. Robert Leonard, 'Too Much Information', in *Secret Power*, Mousse Publishing, Milan & Koenig Books, London, 2015, p.15
5. Ibid., p.16
6. The second venue for Secret Power in Venice was the Marco Polo airport, the first airport to be built post-September 11.
7. 'Mary Barr Talks to Simon Denny' in *Secret Power*, op. cit., p.96

Simon Denny (b. 1982 in Auckland, New Zealand) lives and works in Berlin. Solo exhibitions include: Serpentine Gallery, London; MoMA PS1, New York (both 2015); Portikus, Frankfurt (2014). Recent group shows include: 13th Lyon Biennale (2015), *After Babel*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm (2015); *Europe, Europe*, Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2014); *Art Post-Internet*, Ullens Center, Beijing (2014). Denny represented New Zealand at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015).

19 May 2016, 19:00,
Opening & conversation between Simon Denny & Zoë Gray (EN)

1 June 2016, 19:00,
Look Who's Talking guided tour by Zoë Gray, WIELS senior curator (FR)

14 June 2016, 19:00,
Look Who's Talking guided tour by Vivian Ziherl, Amsterdam-based critic and curator (EN)

28 June 2016, 19:00,
Lecture *Speaking law to power – about secrets, cowboys and spies in a data-driven world* by Mireille Hildebrandt, Research Professor at the Vrije Universiteit Brussels (EN)

14 August 2016, 14:00,
Film screening: *CITIZENFOUR* (2015), Laura Poitras' portrait of Edward Snowden
EN (Subtitles in French)

Simon Denny: *Business Insider*
20.05 – 14.08.2016
Curator: Zoë Gray

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Open from Tuesday until Sunday, 11am-6pm
Closed on Mondays
Every first and third Wednesday of the month open until 9pm

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Design: David Bennewith / Colophon, with Bram van den Berg (citing the WIELS house style developed by Sara De Bondt)
ER / VU: Dirk Snauwaert — Av. Van Volxemln 354, 1190 Brussels

In his work, Simon Denny explores how power, politics and aesthetics are intertwined. With a critical eye, he unpicks the structures that shape our lives, be they governmental, corporate, architectural, legal or rhetorical. Questioning how changes in technology alter our experience of the world, Denny's work is as multi-layered and complex as the reality in which we now find ourselves.

Sometimes labelled "post-internet", Denny's practice is reflective of the systemic societal changes that have taken place in recent decades, referred to as the digital revolution. In his installations, he adopts techniques such as "drag and drop" or the zooming in and out of layers of information that the Windows-like interface has made commonplace. Yet his work remains determinedly sculptural in its materiality. He uses his skills of synthesis and image-making to render immaterial information tangible.

The exhibition appropriates the title of a popular US-founded global news website, which features business, technology and celebrity stories: *Business Insider*. Its CEO and editor is a former Wall Street securities trader, who was charged with fraud and banned from trading. Using a title that is anonymously corporate yet politically charged, Denny raises the question of his own complicity with the fields that he investigates.

Given Denny's interest in how information is shared and visualized, and his fascination for maps as both tools and symbols, we decided to produce a map as a guide to this exhibition. Conceived together with David Bennewith – a long-term collaborator of Denny's – it contains an introduction to the three distinct but related bodies of work in the show. The map features quotations taken from the works themselves.