

# ArtReview

INTERNATIONAL ART & STYLE

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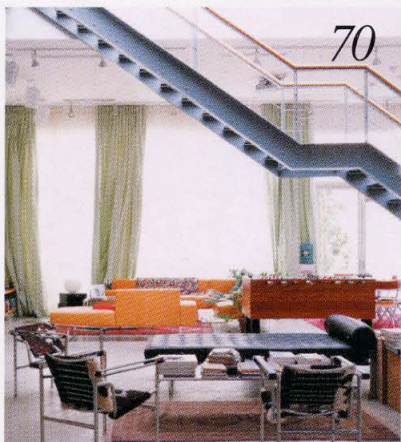
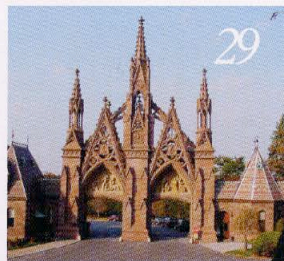
## *Diamonds in the rough*

*Cover art by Vik Muniz*

***SECRETS:***  
*stash, surveillance  
and a treasure hunt*

*Francesco Vezzoli stitches cinema icons  
Cornelia Parker digs up the past  
Candida Höfer photographs art in storage*





# April

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Art has always suffered from association with a certain type of secrecy – it is often (and often wrongly) thought to be the preserve of cognoscenti. But it also offers what might be called the allure of secrecy. Consider the hidden iconographic meanings in so many Renaissance paintings; long-forgotten works that suddenly come to public attention; or the very notion of discovering new talent: one might say art's pleasures are distinctly *sub rosa*. As Anthony Haden-Guest writes in his feature this month on the nexus of art and surveillance: “the growth of the Surveillance State has meant that the Secret is no longer a private subject matter”. Certainly one of this magazine's chief aims is exposing the secrets of art, as well as its often covert appeal, to a broader audience.

In this issue, for instance, the intrepid Marc Spiegler investigates Swiss freeports, where billions of dollars' worth of art is both stored and sold – very much on the QT. Helen Kirwan-Taylor presents the previously undisclosed inspirations of seven designers. And for our market column, gallerist Scott Zieher provides an insider's account of how the New Art Dealer's Alliance has altered the art-dealing landscape in North America.

That said, we're not only concerned with the shady and shuttered aspects of the art world. Secrecy also suggests a sort of glamour – lovers' assignations and the widespread infatuation with spies come to mind. As do unnoticed artists – diamonds in the rough – whose glamour tends to diminish once the secret of their existence becomes too widely known.

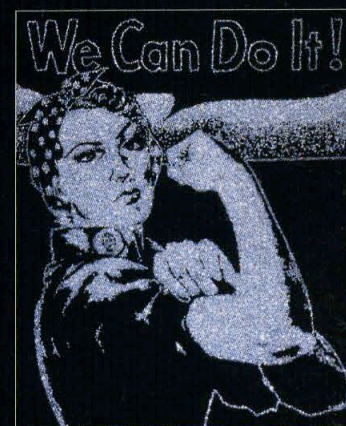
On the other hand, Vik Muniz – who frequently veils the source imagery of his works behind immaculate simulacra composed of such unlikely materials as motor oil, Boscò chocolate syrup, sand, dust and toys – is an artist whose charm seems only to increase with his fame. On our cover, you will find his rendition of the Second World War icon Rosie the Riveter in diamonds. With so many diamonds brought together to form a single image, we feel it must be the most valuable magazine cover ever created. Later this month, this original Muniz work will be auctioned for charity at... a secret location, to be revealed later. We have also included a treasure hunt – an art quiz followed by the challenge to seek out six diamonds we have concealed throughout the magazine – so that readers have the chance to win a diamond of their own. For all the gems in the issue, we would like to thank Steinmetz, “creators of the world's finest diamonds”.

At *ArtReview*, too, much has been going on behind the scenes. In order to expand our coverage of a now fully globalized art world, we have recently opened an office in New York City. And I've come aboard as US Editor. Funnily enough, the US office is on 14th Street, in New York's meat-packing district, while the UK office sits across the road from Smithfield, London's wholesale meat market. Perhaps in a future issue we should turn our attention to art and food...

**Daniel Kunitz**

Cover: Vik Muniz, *Rosie the Riveter*, 2004.

Right: the original artwork, which will be recreated in pink diamonds and auctioned for charity later this month



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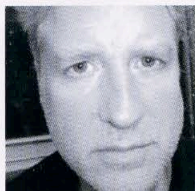
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Writer and broadcaster David D'Arcy once lived a short walk away from Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn. He now lives in Manhattan, a short walk away from Sotheby's.



### Gregory Garry

Gregory Garry has made a career of seeking out artists he admires, such as this month's cover artist Vik Muniz. He also writes on artists and celebrities for *Flaunt* magazine.



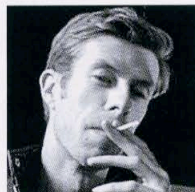
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Louise Gray is a critic who specializes in music and performance. Her writing has been published by *The Wire*, the *Independent on Sunday*, *The Times* and *The Guardian*.



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Anthony Haden-Guest is a journalist, author and cartoonist who has contributed to *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Details*, *The Observer*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Paris Review*.



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### Scott Zieher

Scott Zieher is a poet and co-owner (with Andrea Smith) of the Chelsea gallery ZieherSmith, where his most recent curatorial effort, "Important Canadian Art", opens in May.

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# The matrix men

What secrets had Mark Lombardi uncovered to draw the FBI's attention? Why did Danny Goodwin's fake satellite pictures cause a security scare? Anthony Haden-Guest asks what happens when art meets surveillance

Mark Lombardi's work consists of rococo flow charts that connect the names of individuals and institutions into complex financial-political skulduggeries that are as seductive as a scandal. Lombardi hanged himself in his Brooklyn studio in March 2000, at the age of 49. An intense man who would hand out a card bearing his name and the cocky slogan "Death-Defying Acts of Art and Conspiracy", he had had only two solo shows and was little known at the time of his death, even in the broader New York art world. But on 17 October 2001, an FBI agent rang the Whitney, asking whether it was possible to get a copy of a Lombardi drawing in the museum's collection. In his text for Lombardi's *Global Networks*, a catalogue published by Independent Curators International, Robert Hobbs observes: "When an FBI agent consulted a work of art for clues pertaining to terrorist financing, she unwittingly made history."

Lombardi's stardom was in the making. "That posthumous exposure is so much related to the way world events have caught up with Mark's obsessions about money and power and influence," says painter Fred Tomaselli, one of Lombardi's closest friends. "His work has just become that much more relevant based on what's happening." Joe Amrhein, a director of Pierogi, Lombardi's New York gallery, was likewise contacted by investigators into the September 11 attacks, checking out the Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda connections that featured in Lombardi's subject matter. "They were interested in how it was laid out, how he could put it all together," Amrhein says. "Then they called me, asking about a telephone call I had with somebody in New Jersey. We were talking about the work, so I suppose we were talking about Bush and Osama." The feds also enquired whether they could take over the artist's library of thousands of pink-and-green index cards, each a nugget of research, to help them build their database.

It has been pointed out that Lombardi's death was reminiscent of the hanging of the Vatican banker, Roberto Calvi, beneath London's Blackfriars Bridge in 1982, which was almost certainly an assassination, and which was itself grist for the artist's mill. Inevitably, Lombardi's death gave rise to similar speculations. The New York weekly *The Village Voice* called it an "apparent suicide".

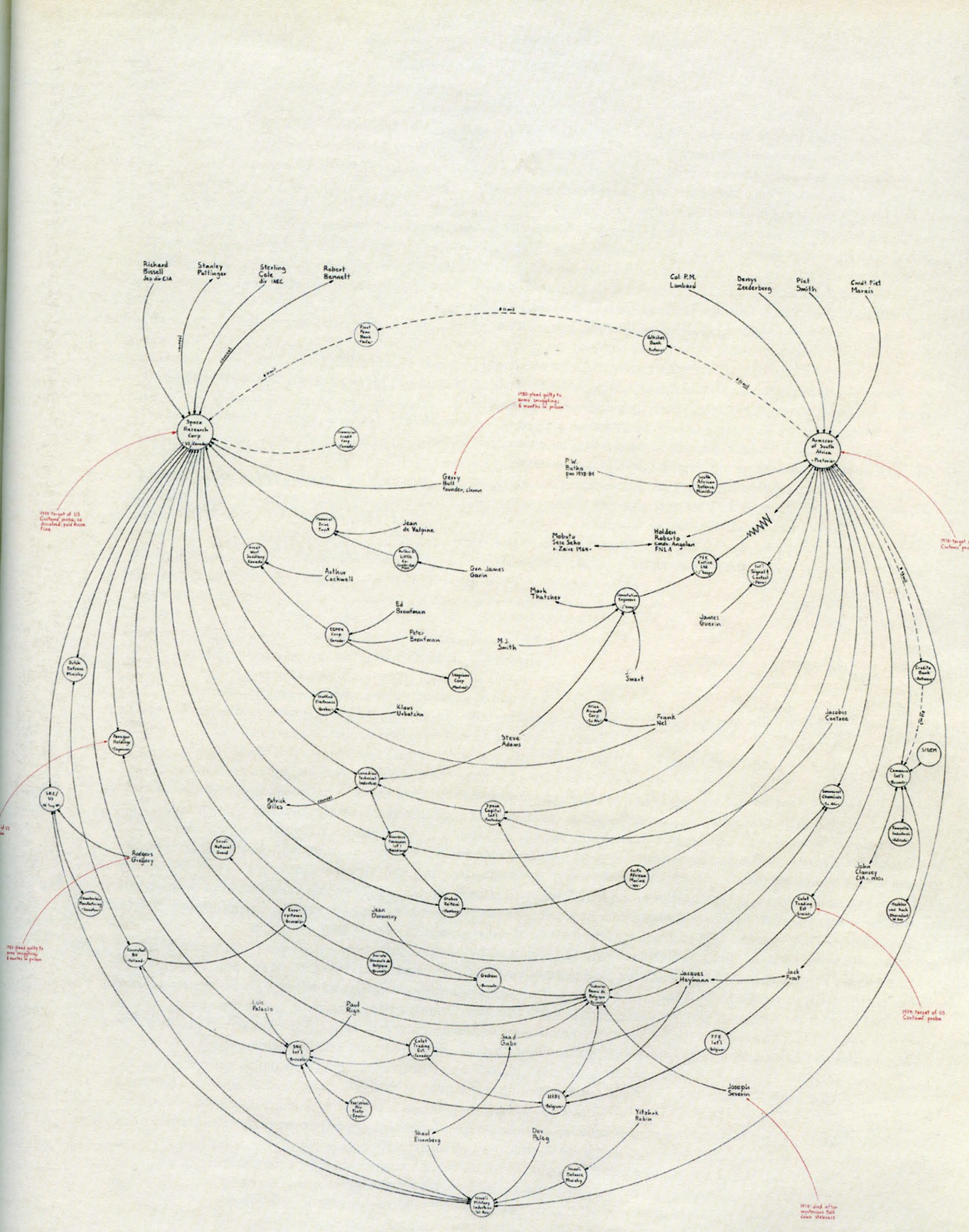
Joe Amrhein disagrees. "Because of his subject matter some people think there was foul play. I don't think so." The sprinkler system had been accidentally triggered in Lombardi's studio, showering a multi-panelled piece about the Bank of Credit and Commerce International scandal. The ruined piece is upstairs at Pierogi. Flecked with muddy brown splashes, it looks a bit like a Richard Long. "That is one of the reasons he was stressed out," Amrhein says. "It wore him out quite a bit. He wasn't in the right frame of mind. And he had a relationship problem." But it's no surprise that some should prefer the darker version of the story. In his death, Mark Lombardi has become a Mark Lombardi.

There have always been artists who have used clandestine energies to charge their work. Leonardo da Vinci might serve as their patron saint (at time of writing, Dan Brown's novel *The Da Vinci Code* is perched on *The New York Times*' best-seller list). Sometimes an artist's allusions may be sly jokes, as when Aubrey Beardsley poked fun at Oscar Wilde; as when Al Hirschfeld routinely tucked a 'Nina' – his daughter's name – into his curvilinear caricatures; or as with the innuendoes of Jasper Johns. Sometimes signs carry meanings of deeper import. Malevich, Kandinsky and Joseph Cornell are just three artists whose work is believed to wire into religious systems as a power source. Of the first two it might be added that such artworks – like the dreamings of the Australian Aborigines – can at once be seen as abstract and as stabs at painting portraits of the unseen and unseeable.

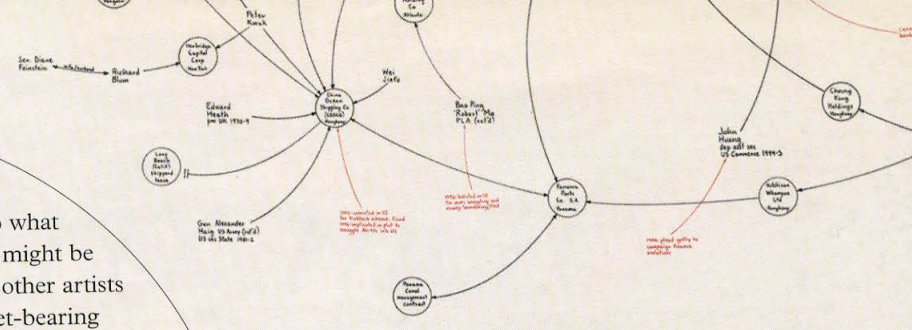
But the growth of the Surveillance State has meant that the Secret is no longer a private subject matter. Nor is the Secret mystical, or even Kafkaesque. It has become mundane, part of the threatening furniture of the real world, and certain artists are drawn to deal with it accordingly.

You might call it a New Realism. Arnold Mesches, an American painter in his 80s, had used family documentation in his work and was looking for fresh material. A communist in his youth, he assumed he had a file. "I had seen some friends' FBI pages and they looked like Franz Kline colour sketches to me," he says. Mesches sent away for his own. "It took about three years to get them. I finally got 760 pages

.. Whatever they don't want you to read, they black out. So the pages were, of course, ▶



This page: Mark Lombardi, Gerry Bull, Space Research Corporation, and Armcor of Pretoria, South Africa c.1972-80 (5th Version), 1999, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 148.5 x 181.6cm

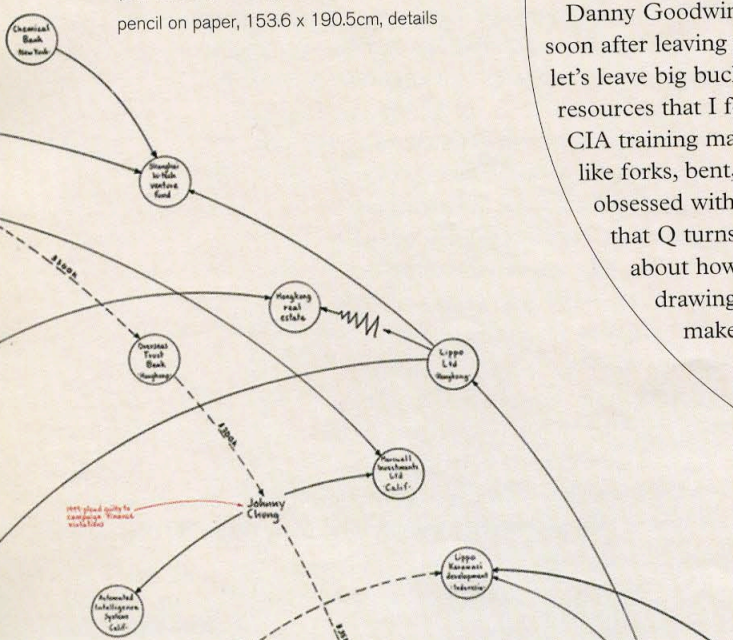


◀ quite beautiful. Aesthetically beautiful.” Mesches has turned his old files into what he calls “illuminated manuscripts”, which might be described as a *détournement*. But the work of other artists dealing with current information and with secret-bearing technologies still in development tends to be more raw. “In the late 1970s, I was seeing that things like Earth Art weren’t getting very far in an ecological or real-world scenario,” says Peter Fend, an American artist of Lombardi’s generation, pale and intent, with a clipped, guarded manner. “A number of artists felt that it would be quite normal to handle observation satellites. Civil satellites, by the way. Not military. There was no real notion of challenging the state. It was rather more that the technology was under way, the laws had been set up by Congress for public access. The notion was open skies. And it was in line with Futurism and Suprematism and many of the theories of 20th-century art. So we developed this idea. We were going to be a group called Space Force. We were going to have this material, and use it, and we were going to make it available to the public. There were four or five artists coming together on this. It was an example of American education and American culture. “In this climate, where we were all going to be part of a global civilization, we thought it would be just fine to work with people from foreign

*There have always been artists who have used clandestine energies to charge their work. Leonardo da Vinci might serve as their patron saint*

countries. And that was a mistake. To put it plainly, some – a couple of Germans – felt it was quite appropriate to cooperate with people from their government. Things got very messy and sticky. I have learned that there are national differences when you’re doing stuff that involves real world activity.” The project – of which Fend is the most visible member – is now called Ocean Earth. Their high-minded programme is to use art ideas and available technology to create specific environmental changes (laudable ones, such as savannah restoration), but, despite Fend’s prudent disclaimer that they are not challenging the state, the state has not always welcomed their efforts. Ocean Earth’s attempts at satellite monitoring have met with repeated interference. Their Falklands project was seized by British naval officers, on US soil. Their Chernobyl project was thwarted by agents from the German, French, US and British governments. The Iran-Iraq surveys led to a complete contravention of effort at highest levels in the UN. And so on. Danny Goodwin is another artist using covert technologies. He began researching weaponry soon after leaving graduate school. “I imagined this hypothetical scenario where I thought, let’s leave big buckets of weapons out for a homeless insurgency. There were two research resources that I found. One was documentation of confiscated prison weapons; the other was CIA training manuals. So after making a few of these really rudimentary prison weapons, like forks, bent, with the prongs sticking out, and a roll of duct tape with nails in it, I got obsessed with the CIA stuff on a formal level. These were not so much the weapons that Q turns over to James Bond, but more like pamphlets dropped on a beachhead about how to fabricate these things to overthrow a democratic government. The drawings and photographs were so crude and unsatisfying that I wanted to make them sexier .. More eye-popping, more sinister, more real. “At that time, I was a studio assistant for a big commercial photographer in New York City, so I had the means to produce very seductive images of these props I was making. After several

**These pages:** Mark Lombardi, Bill Clinton, the Lippo Group, and China Ocean Shipping Co, aka COSCO, Little Rock-Jakarta-Hong Kong c.1990s (5th Version), 1999, graphite and coloured pencil on paper, 153.6 x 190.5cm, details



conversations with other artists, I realized that nobody cared about my obsession with being accurate. I started looking at surveillance and satellite imagery and reading about the National Reconnaissance Office and the National Security Agency and all of these agencies that collect information. These images, which contain so little actual description, convey so much meaning.

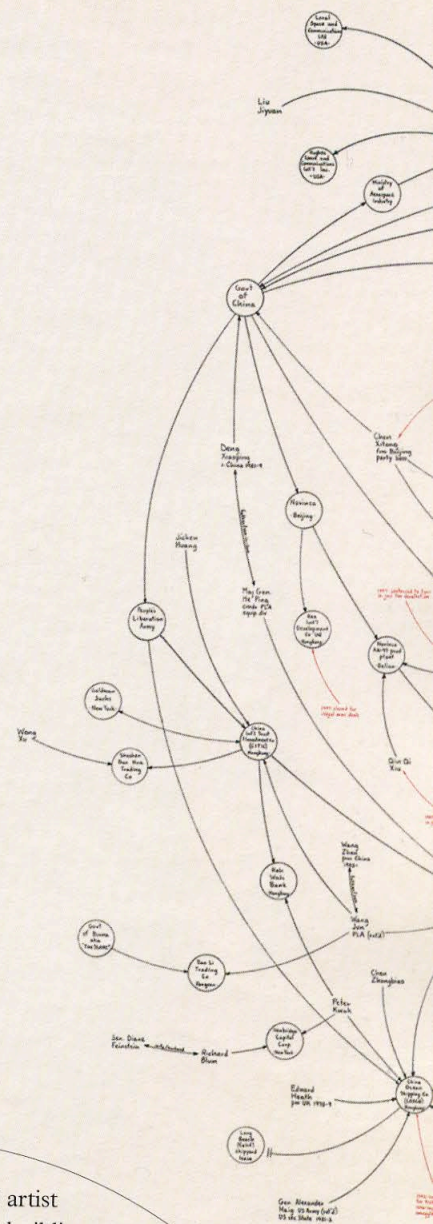
“So I started building fake cameras – goofball devices – and sending them up in balloons and documenting those performances on video, which usually involved sending them into power lines and having these failures. I would show the photographs of the devices, the videos of the failures and the photographs that the things supposedly made. And in doing that – loading up my car with a helium tank and balloons and a camera – I started putting in real cameras because it was not that much more difficult than just faking it. That was what led me to this work now.”

Goodwin’s most recent show – at Jack the Pelican, a Brooklyn gallery, last November – included aerial photographs of the (supposed) dwellings of members of the Bush administration. “The first thing I would do is imagine where these people live through a triangulation of various snippets of information,” Goodwin says. “I was using Microsoft Terraserver. I would plug in an address that I had made up – like Cheney, Dallas, Texas. You go to these sites where you can plug in someone’s name and a city and you pay a little money to get an address. It’s probably not *the* Dick Cheney. But it’s a Dick Cheney in Dallas, Texas. So I would get a satellite image of that house and build a model from that. The video looks exactly like satellite pictures because I would take them with a video camera overhead.”

This mélange of high-tech, low-tech and make-believe – not a bad description of much real-life intelligence data – earned Goodwin some close attention from military and government sources. “Don Carroll [of Jack the Pelican] called me,” Goodwin says.

Mimicking the gallerist, his voice sinks to a near-whisper. “I don’t want to talk about it! Do you have a lawyer?”

Artists continue to probe the cultures of secrecy, security and covert communications. Bill Brown of the Surveillance Camera Players gives weekly tours of surveillance cameras in New York



*‘Do you think anybody is going to come along and shoot you in the base of the skull one night?’ asked the interviewer. Lombardi gave out a bark of a laugh. ‘I’ve been asked that before’*

City. The Chicago-based artist Gregory Green, best known for building working (but unarmed) models of bombs, has set up a pirate radio station. Web-based collectives like RTMark and the Yes Men put up replicas of political and corporate websites that float in cyberspace like lobster pots in the ocean.

Recently, I watched what may be the only Mark Lombardi video. With his straight, stiff hair, fixed eyes behind rimless glasses and a manner of manic ordinariness, he seems to have stalked out of a Robert Crumb cartoon. The interview covers such subjects as the \$5 billion lent to Saddam Hussein in the early 1980s by the Atlanta Branch of the Banco Nazionale di Lavoro, a loan guaranteed by the US Department of Agriculture. “It went towards his nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programmes,” Lombardi says. Such are the dark materials of Lombardi’s art. He got his data from newspapers and books and was dismayed by the torrents of info poured out by the internet.

“Do you think anybody is going to come along and shoot you in the base of the skull one night?” asks his unseen interviewer.

Lombardi gives out a bark of a laugh. “I’ve been asked that before.”

“What did you say?”

“I guess my line on it is that there’s nothing on any of my charts that I cannot substantiate with a major published source,” he says. “The people who have written the stories that I have derived my information from are still walking around. In a few minor instances, there have been journalists assassinated.”

The New Realism requires that one at least be realistic.

