



T J Watson 01.03.2017

To dream of islands, whether with joy or in fear, is to dream of pulling away, of being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone.

In standard design software, a grey and white chequered image is used to signify transparency. Paradoxically, the opaque, gridded pattern represents absence. Through the design's formal regularity, the appearance of non-transparent things, opaque and alienable, is supposedly rendered obvious: image-makers register interruptions in tessellated squares.

As computerized shorthand for non-appearance – a contradictory form of imaged negativity – the “checkerboard” background is relatively recent. Historically, it emerged as European socialisms disintegrated, gaining international popularity while the twin processes of financialisation and digitisation underwent rapid acceleration.

Considered materially, financialisation and digitisation are most meaningfully understood at transnational levels. Proceeding by abstraction, the two produce seemingly discrete objects without fixed geographical centres. Financialisation does so through the production of new commodities; digitization through the conversion of continuous data into simplified and mobile numerical identities. The concepts thus reflect on the effects and means of commodification. Recto and verso, as it were.

The work enclosed consists of a colour document and its circulation. The document was printed on light paper, double-sided at 800x516mm and cross-folded to 200x130mm, map-like. Copies were distributed to passers-by in the City of London one Sunday morning. Included are the two sides of the document, accompanied by a photograph of its dispersal. The photographs featured in the fold-out were taken in Britain and the Cayman Islands, two once-dreamed-of islands.

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Distribution (City of London)

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PDF, folded paper, distribution
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