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ANGELO VERMEULEN

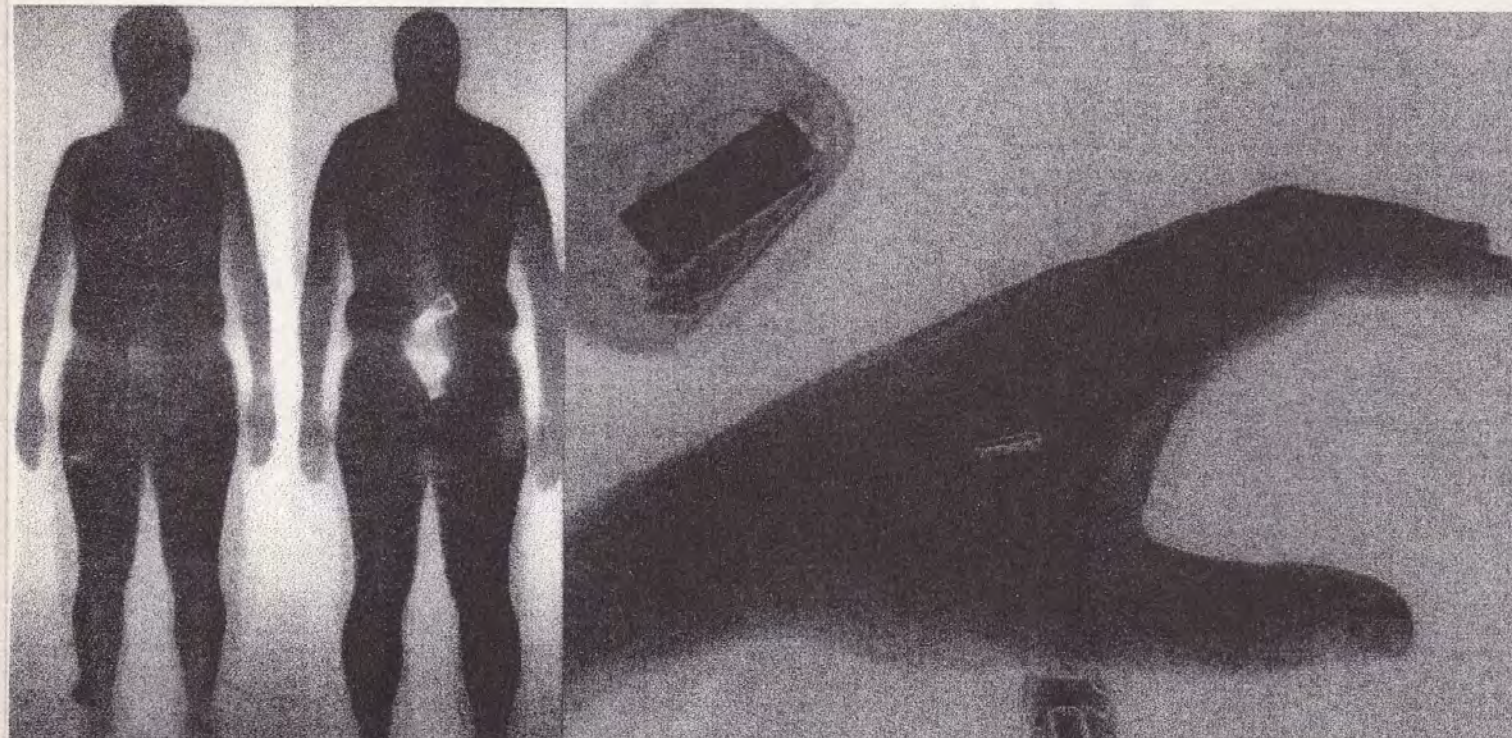
TRANSLUCENT FUTURES

ANGELO VERMEULEN

TRANSLUCENT FUTURES

UBIQUITOUS TECHNOLOGY AND THE ATTRITION OF CIVIL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY

Translucent Futures is an artistic/activist platform initiated by Angelo Vermeulen that deals with the increasing abrasion of civil liberties through ubiquitous, networked, miniaturized technology. Far-reaching use of techniques such as data mining, audiovisual surveillance, automated behavioural analysis, see-through body scanning, DNA profiling etc. is being legislated at a disturbing rate. While governmental and corporate use of these technologies is consistently pushed further into the realms of daily life, the opposite seems to be the case for civilians: technologies can only be used under firm restrictions, or are simply not accessible. Data mining for example is widely used by corporations, while the same activity when carried out by an individual is too easily labelled 'hacking'.



Regardless of activist groups continuously questioning these issues, the larger public does not appear well-informed. The complexity, diversity and speed of current technological developments can be daunting. Moreover, many of these developments and techniques are applied in secrecy and can hardly be discerned by an untrained eye. This automatically raises vital questions about contemporary civil liberties and the relation between civilians and government. If most techniques only become visible after we transgress the law (e.g. introduced as evidence), should we be worried at all? Or should we rather strive for a fully transparent society based on accountability, where the 'watchers' can also be watched, at all times?

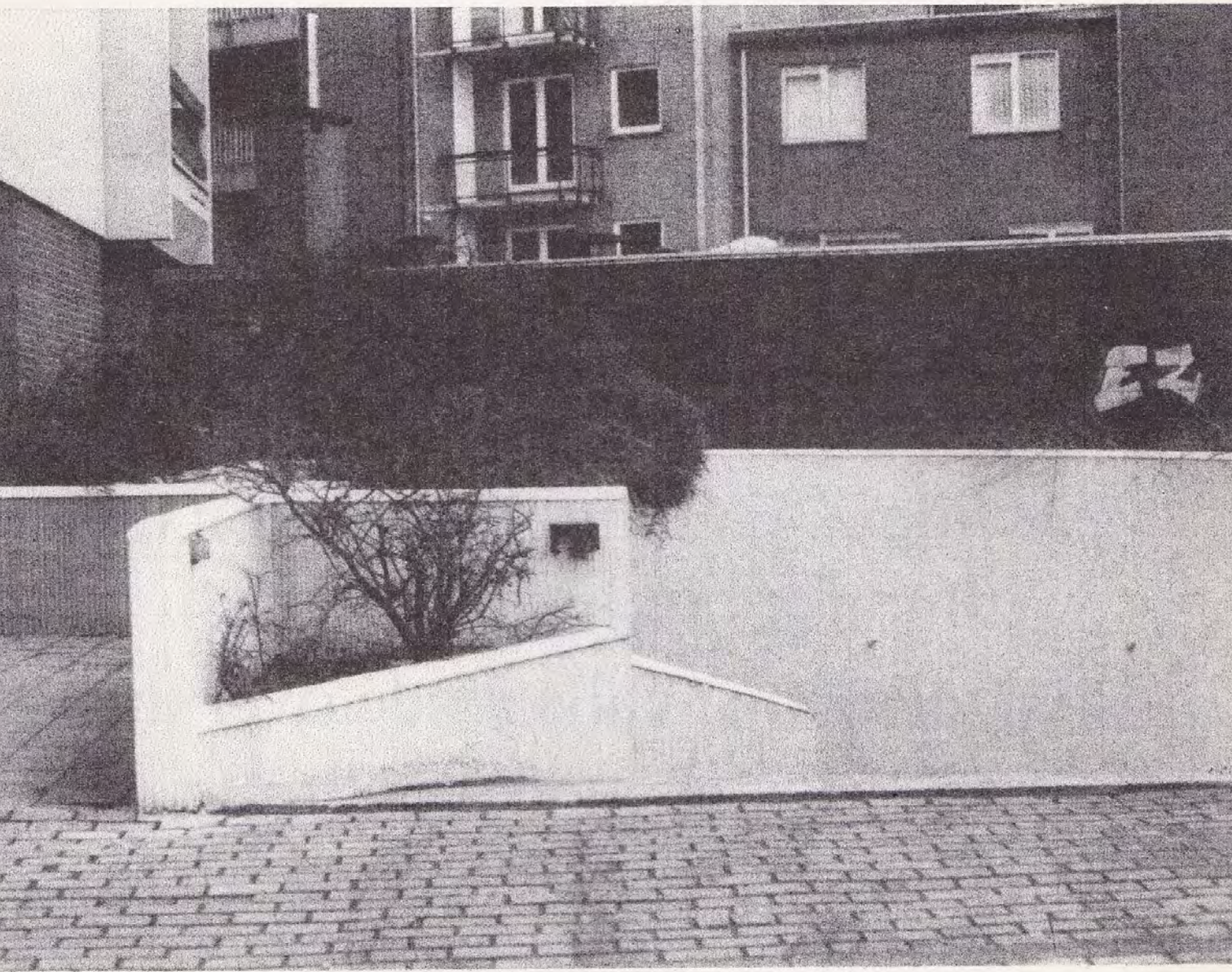
Translucent Futures hopes to keep the attention to the imperative problem of eroding civil liberties in modern hi-tech society. The project is set up in close collaboration with FoAM in Brussels and the support of a growing list of other cultural organisations (Nadine, Brussels; The Hub Brussels; Arteconomy etc.). The objective is to combine open collaborative research, multidisciplinary dialogue, artistic practice and activism.



SSN –

The surveillance society is better thought of as the outcome of modern organizational practices, businesses, government and the military than as a covert conspiracy.

2006



LONDON –

A European Union directive, which Britain was instrumental in devising, comes into force which will require all internet service providers to retain information on email traffic, visits to web sites and telephone calls made over the internet, for 12 months.

2009



WASHINGTON –
Congress halted plans for a controversial plan called Total Information Awareness to create the world's largest surveillance database to track your phone calls, purchases, Internet usage, reading material, banking transactions.

2006

WASHINGTON –

The National Journal has now revealed the Total Information Awareness program has quietly continued inside the NSA.

2006



NEW DELHI –

The Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2006 passed by the Indian Parliament recently allows the government to intercept messages from mobile phones, computers and other communication devices to investigate any offence. Not just cognizable offence, the kind you witnessed in Mumbai 26/11, but any offence.

LONDON –

Shami Chakrabarti branded

Prevent the biggest spying

programme in Britain in modern

times and an affront to civil

liberties.

2009

MANILA

The plan of the Land

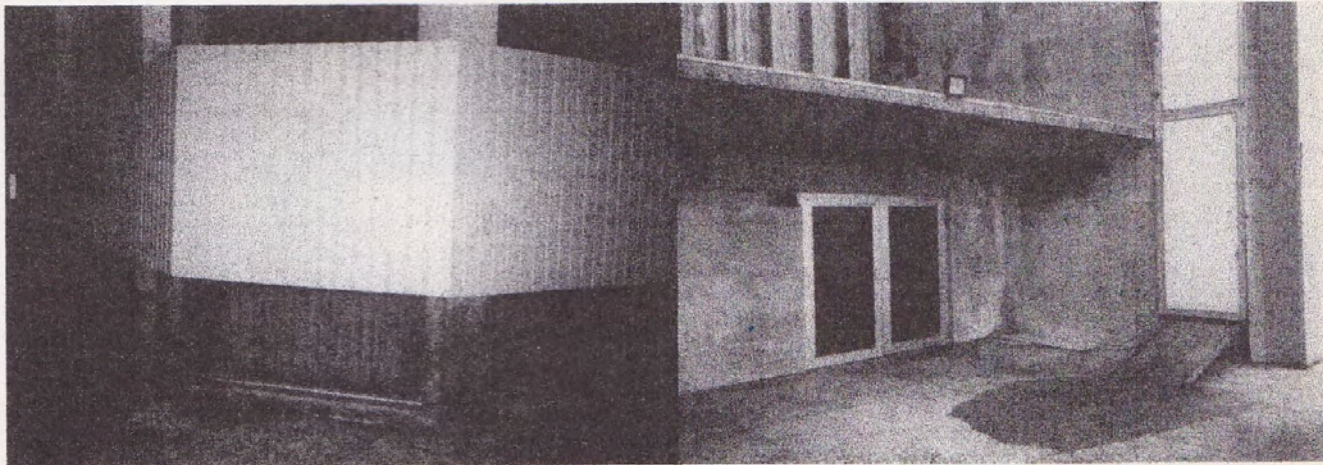
Transportation Office to tag

vehicles with microchips might

in turn be used for government's

efforts to track those critical of the

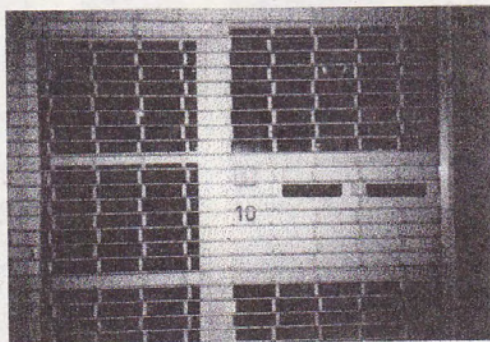
government



MANILA –

The plan of the Land Transportation Office to tag vehicles with microchips might in turn be used for government's surveillance to those critical of the current administration.

2009





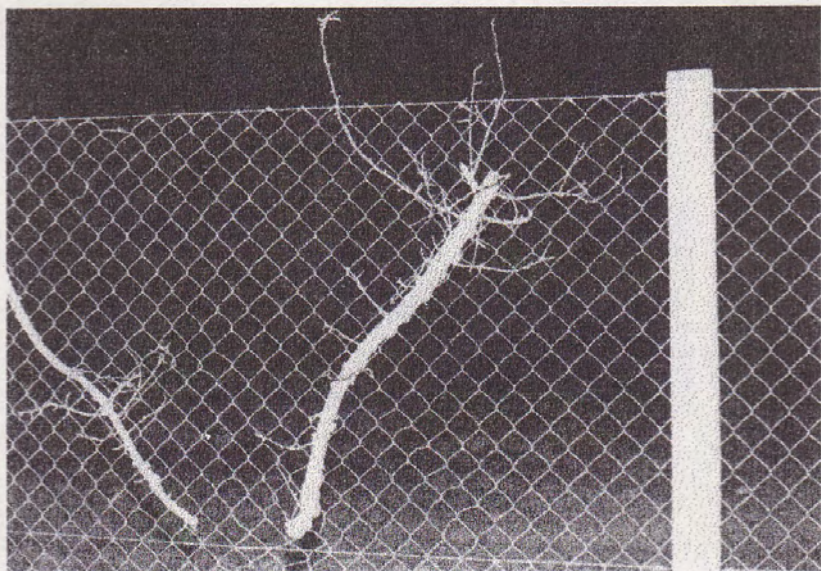
WASHINGTON –

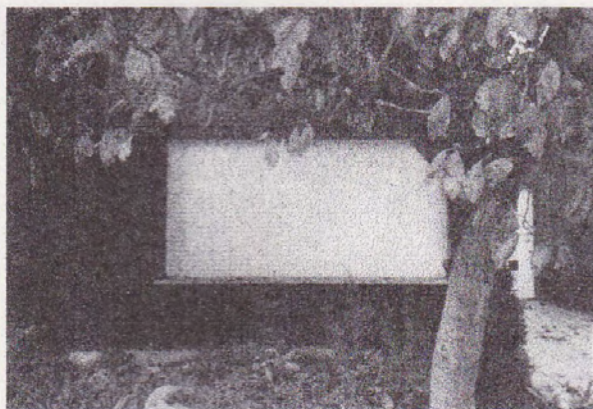
The Federal Bureau of Investigation has incorrectly kept nearly 24,000 people on a terrorist watch list on the basis of outdated or sometimes irrelevant information, while missing people with genuine ties to terrorism, according to a Justice Department report released Wednesday.

WASHINGTON –

Prisoners have no constitutional right to DNA testing that might prove their innocence, the Supreme Court ruled on Thursday in a 5-to-4 decision.

2009

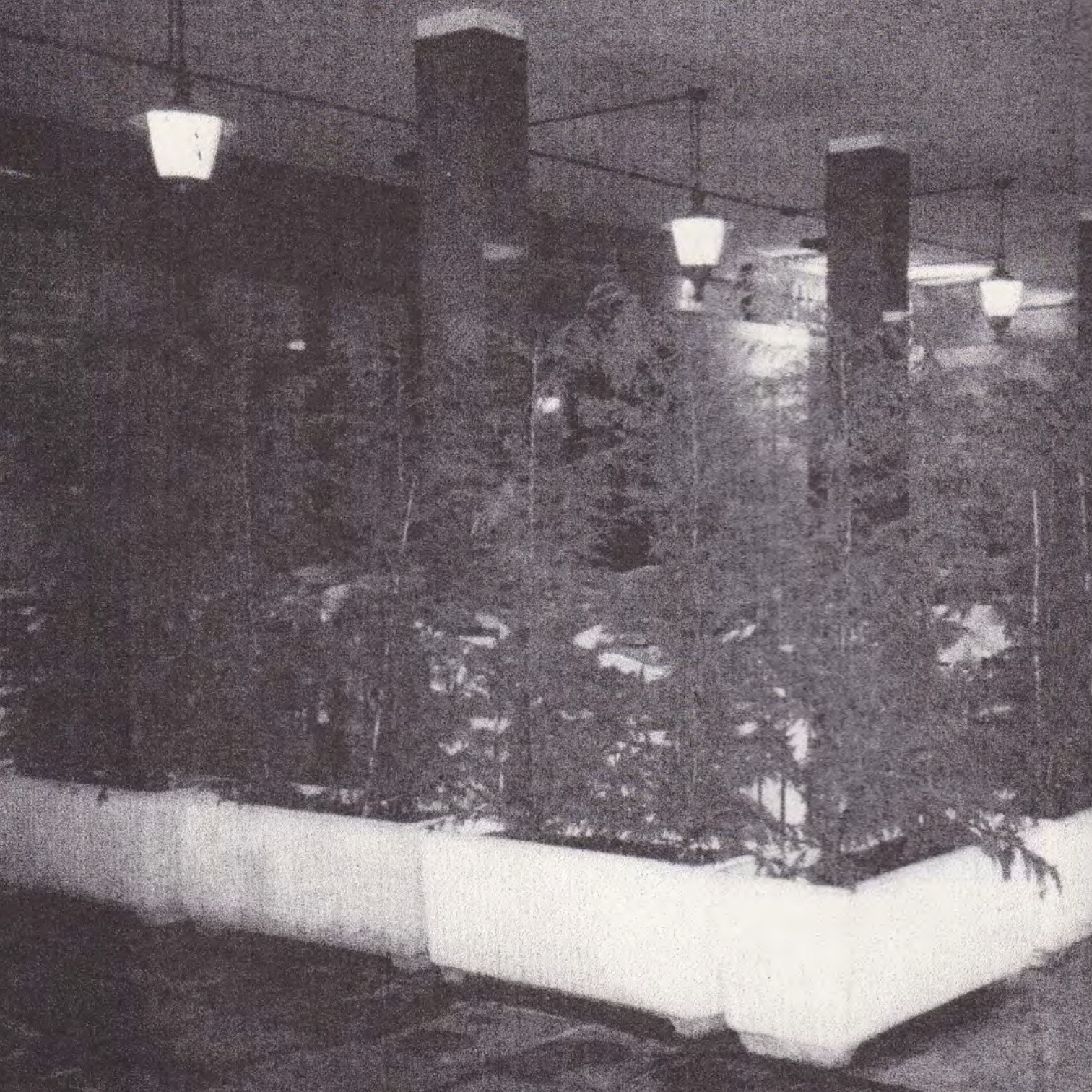




LONDON –

LF: Even government officials don't know what controls are put in place to regulate the surveillance system.

RB: Yeah. The government will just point to the Information Commissioner, who looks after data protection. He would say that he does not have enough power or enough people.



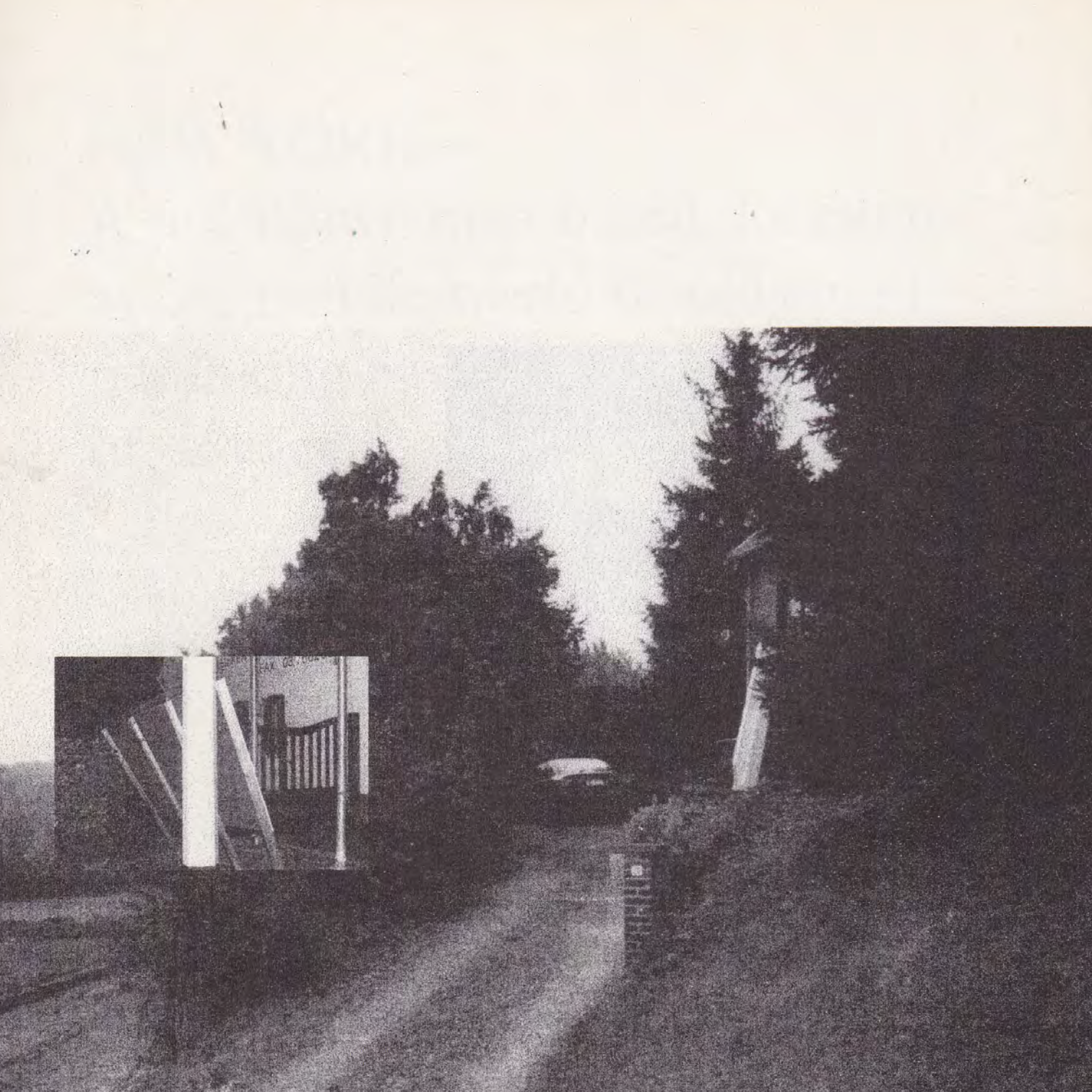
BERLIN –

Arbeitskreis Vorratsdatenspeicherung warned of a surveillance avalanche in Germany: according to the group, the German Parliament has tightened surveillance and control over citizens at least 21 times in the past 10 years.

AK VORRAT –

Registering the telecommunica-
tions behaviour and movements of
the entire EU population in the ab-
sence of any reasonable suspicion
is clearly disproportionate and vio-
lates human rights.

2008





NEW YORK –

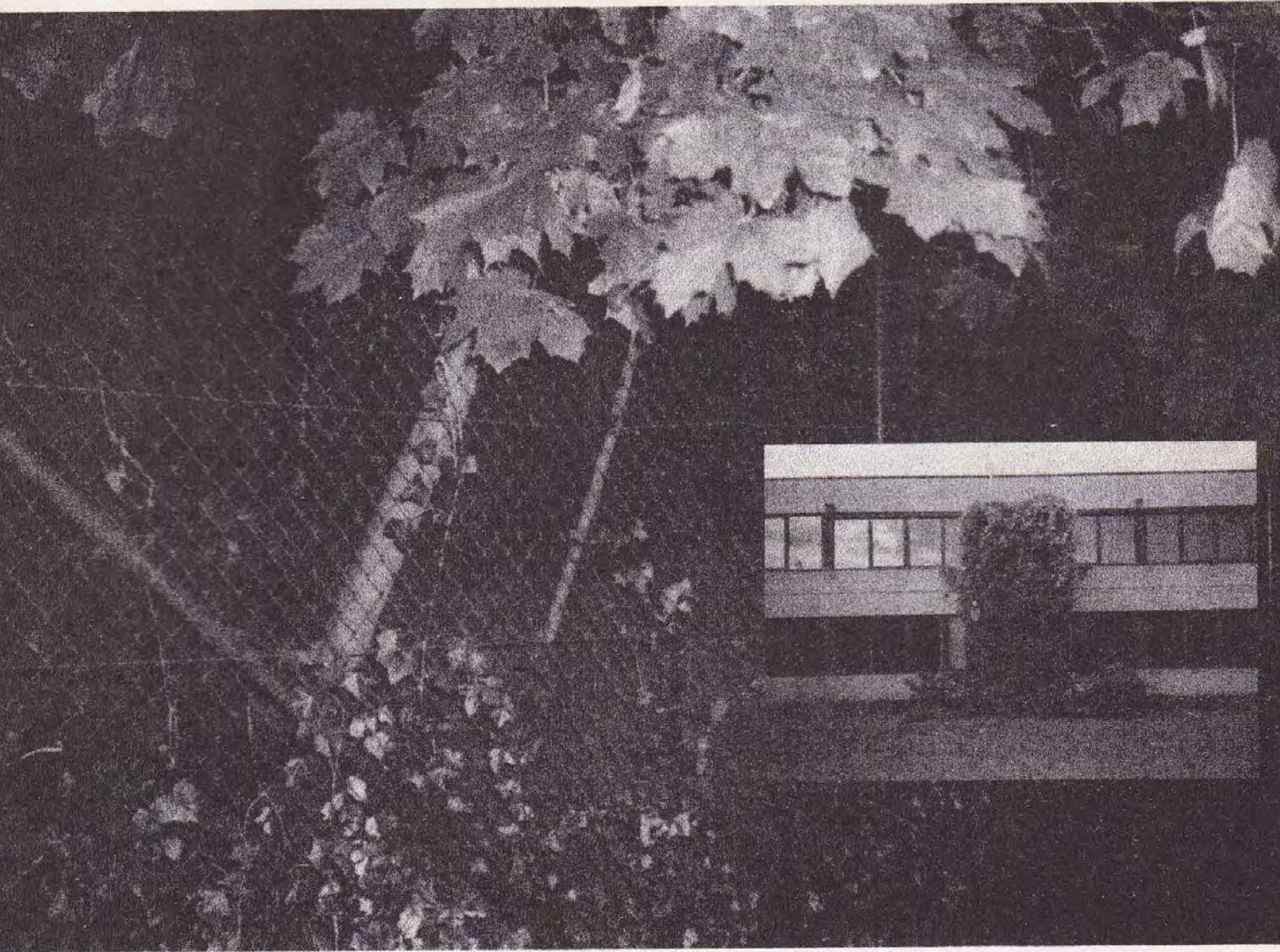
A full-blown map-based, location-aware mobile world would entail rethinking basic American notions of privacy.

2009

SSN –

Surveillance may be viewed as progress towards efficient administration, in Max Weber's view, a benefit for the development of Western capitalism and the modern nation-state.

2006



Angelo Vermeulen is a visual artist, filmmaker, biologist, author, activist, and DJ. His research in ecology, environmental pollution and teratology informs his art, which includes bio installations, experimental setups incorporating living organisms and sci-fi references. His projects include 'Blue Shift', a Darwinian art project in collaboration with biologist Prof. Luc De Meester, and 'Biomodd', a worldwide series of cross-cultural, symbiotic installations fusing game culture, ecology and social interaction. Next to developing a new experimental cinameproject based on biologically infected electronics, he currently also collaborates with the MELiSSA life support division of the European Space Agency. Vermeulen co-authored the book 'Baudelaire in Cyberspace: Dialogues on Art, Science and Digital Culture', with art philosopher Antoon Van den Braembussche, and lectures throughout Europe, Southeast Asia and North America.

Although the “guild for Reality integrators and generators” may have been active for centuries, since November 2006 six cultural organisations have begun to open the doors of the guild. The current gRig members share a mutual purpose; to mix separate realities, as well as bring whole new realities into existence. They are committed to research and create situations in hybrid (or mixed) reality, where digital media and physical materials, objects and spaces are increasingly intertwined. It is on these fuzzy edges that experimental technology and contemporary culture amplify each other’s potentials. We have found these edges to be the most fertile ground for innovative social and cultural advances, in which the Guild for Reality Integrators and Generators can be best called into service.
gRig sites 2006-2009

FoAM (Belgium) is a transdisciplinary laboratory committed openness, resilience and a holistic approach to life. FoAM seeks out and connects people in the interstitial spaces between professional and cultural boundaries, encouraging them to mix realities of art and science, digital and physical, nature and technology, adopting the motto - “grow your own worlds”. <http://fo.am>

nadine (Belgium) is an arts laboratory aimed at developing research focusing on transdisciplinary experiments in the fields of new media and live arts. *nadine* is a flexible and evolving project that doesn’t shy away from questioning itself to be able to stay on top of the constantly changing needs of artists.
<http://www.nadine.be>

Time’s Up (Austria) is a research institute using experimental situations as a means of investigating the behavior of the public individual in everyday and nearly everyday situations. <http://www.timesup.org>

Performing Pictures (Sweden) works in the area of moving images and new technologies for media delivery as part of the Interactive Institute – a Swedish experimental IT-research institute that combines expertise in art, design and information technology. In their artistic practice Performing Pictures explore and develop responsive film art. <http://performingpictures.se>

KIBLA (Slovenia), a multimedia artcentre, is focused on the new (contemporary) educational, cultural and artistic praxis, connecting education and research, culture and technology, arts and sciences, emancipating and demystifying media as a creative tool in education and new forms of art. <http://kibla.si>

InterMedia (Norway) investigates the intersections between design, communication and learning in digital environments. Their approach is multidisciplinary and involves critical research, development and experiments. <http://intermedia.uio.no>



Education and Culture

Culture 2000

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