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Tokonoma Apartment  
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## **The Keys to the Kingdom**

Tokonoma Apartment and curator Jero van Nieuwkoop are pleased to announce the opening of 'The Keys to the Kingdom', a two-person exhibition by Seán Hannan and Steven van Grinsven in collaboration with r3boot. The exhibition explores through two intimate personal narrative structures the possibilities of retaining secrets in a world where privacy has become an outworn ideology.

'Do nothing secretly; for time, sees and hears all things and discloses all', Sophocles, wrote some 2500 years ago. He in his day could not have envisioned today's society which is subjected to mass surveillance on a unprecedented scale. In 2010, Mark Zuckerberg famously declared that privacy is dead. Still not long after these harrowing words, he bought the four adjacent houses bordering his Palo Alto home to create a zone of privacy.

Secrets are an integral part of the human make-up, they are the covered up remains of past experiences. Secrets, opposed to fantasies, which are to varying degrees dominated by variations on lust and desire, have a more sinister side to them. Secrets, when not concealing illicit dealings, serve as the parking garage for shame, sorrow and trauma to be dealt at a later date whilst we continue to outwardly live out our carefully constructed lives.

Outside the realm of privacy, humanity is subject to the graces of monitoring bodies that today trace our every step. The reasons for monitoring peoples lives, by above-the-law governmental agencies, commercial enterprises and those with real political power, are rife but all serve a singular purpose; to maintain and increase power in an environment where information can be used as a powerful weapon to direct and contain the actions and freedoms of society at large.

At Tokonoma Apartment, two carefully kept secrets hang side by side, each of one owned by one of the contributors to the show, separated only from the audience by a thin silk curtain. The exhibition goes against the inquisitive nature of mankind and requests constraint of its audience, even if that means not seeing all that is on show.

At the other end of the exhibition Hannan and Van Grinsven have solicited the help of r3boot, a hacker, whom they have given access to their secrets for encryption purposes. Subsequently, they have requested for these secrets to be dissolved into cyberspace in an attempt to reinstate ownership over what they consider to be theirs and theirs alone. By taking action to restore their privacy the makers of the exhibition question the legitimacy of current surveillance practices and seek to regain control over their own fortunes by circumventing the surveillance state.

By using a technique commonly known as 'hiding in plain sight', akin to the technique used by Julian Assange when safeguarding the Wikileaks cables, r3boot has restored the natural order of things. By dispersing these files they become unable to access for anyone but for those who hold the keys to the kingdom.

Seán Hannan & Steven van Grinsven, 2014.