

“Thin Blue Lines” Jill Magid

“I seek intimate relationships with impersonal structures.” Jill Magid uses this plain, concise sentence to define her artistic work. *“The systems I choose to work with, such as police, secret services, CCTV and forensic identification, function at a distance, with a wide-angle perspective, equalizing everyone and erasing the individual. I seek the potential softness and intimacy of their technologies, the fallacy of their omniscient point of view, the ways in which they hold memory (yet often cease to remember), their engrained position in society (the cause of their invisibility), their authority, their apparent intangibility and, with all of this, their potential reversibility.”*

As “the protagonist of someone else's novel”, Jill Magid returns to her home city after having lived abroad for five years. Living in Brooklyn she often takes the subway and it never fails to amaze her when she hears the announcement over the PA that any passenger may be subject to a search “for security reasons”. Without hesitation, Jill approaches a police officer and asks him to search her. The officer's refusal leads them to reach an agreement: the opportunity for the artist to accompany the officer on his late-night surveillance rounds. The worlds to which the protagonists of this story belong could not be more different: a young independent and enterprising artist and a Staten Island policeman who has only left New York once in his life to visit Disneyland. However, there is a mutual fascination between them: she writes a diary of all of her thoughts and impressions during the surveillance shifts; he goes about his daily routine reciting the names of all the presidents of the United States “because the world is the way it is thanks to them”. She represents interrogation and constant search, he represents continuity. She manages to understand his codes (the alphabet used by the police to spell out words); he senses that her complexity could be problematic. Lincoln Ocean Victor Eddy. *L.O.V.E.*

It looks like a love letter but it is actually a contract. *“Make me a diamond when I die. Cut me round and brilliant. Weigh me at one carat. Ensure that I am real.”* Meticulously introducing each of the clauses stipulated in the contract, Jill Magid writes a love letter asking to be turned into a diamond when she dies. The display cabinet shows the structure and setting of the ring but without the stone, the diamond required to complete this currently unfinished self-portrait.

Death, danger, insecurity and chaos are values that are unaccepted by society. We create apparently objective systems that protect us, that organize us, that pacify our fears, that stop us from asking too many questions, that transform the things we don't dare to examine too closely into something pleasant, something that lasts forever, something material, objective. Jill Magid uses these systems to show to their internal mechanisms, to reveal their poetic potential and, ultimately, to unleash new forms of human interaction.

This exhibition is called *Thin Blue Lines*. The “thin blue line” is an Anglo-Saxon expression that defines the fine line separating police protection and anarchy. Magid also uses blue lines to underline quotes from a novel by Jerzy Kosinski. *“Let's say I am protagonist from someone else's novel.”*

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