

# Dia:



**Jill Magid**  
**Homage CMYK**  
July 25, 2020–June 6, 2021

**Dia Bridgehampton**  
The Dan Flavin Art Institute  
23 Corwith Avenue  
Bridgehampton, New York

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**Homage CMYK**

A Conceptual artist, writer, and filmmaker, Jill Magid interrogates structures of power on an intimate level, exploring the emotional, philosophical, and legal tensions that exist between institutions and individual agency. For her exhibition at Dia Bridgehampton, Magid presents the series *Homage CMYK* (2019), eleven four-channel screenprints on linen hung to fit the gallery in an immersive installation. In dialogue with Dan Flavin's permanent display of fluorescent light works on the second floor, the layered, luminous surfaces of *Homage CMYK* call into question authorship, influence, and how an object changes in relation to its context over time.

*Homage CMYK* takes as its departure point two unlicensed screenprints on linen derived from Josef Albers's iconic painting series *Homage to the Square* (1950–75), which explores the relativity of color through minimal compositions of concentric squares in calibrated hues. The counterfeits were purchased by architect Luis Barragán for his Mexico City home, which is famed for the interplay of light and shadows on its geometric, brightly colored walls. An orange *Homage* still hangs in the living room, where it is bathed in natural light streaming in from a vast window overlooking the architect's private garden; a blue *Homage* is propped up on Barragán's former library desk, softly illuminated by a table lamp. Such was the mutual admiration between Albers and Barragán in their lifetimes that, rather than disapproving of the forgeries, Albers was said to have been pleased by them. Already substantially different from the paintings they purport to be, the counterfeits in Casa Barragán diverge further from Albers's series in published photographic reproductions, which magnify the changing effects of natural and artificial light on the surfaces of the prints. To make *Homage CMYK*, Magid scanned the photographic reproductions, cropped the scans, and manipulated them back into their intended square format, finally printing them again in their original size and support—now layered with multiple reproduction processes, including commercial printing, photography, publication, and Photoshop.

Glares, halos, and streaks of natural and artificial light unsettle the integrity of the modernist geometry in *Homage CMYK*. Lamplight draws arcs and ellipses on *The Library* prints, while glistening traces of sunlight chart the times of the day in *The Living Room* works. Local color mutates accordingly and these variations are supplemented by glitches carried through the relay of reproduction. The images are further destabilized by trompe l'oeil effects of light streaming through Dia Bridgehampton's gallery window. As a result, although each work in the series is self-contained within its recursive frame, specks of light and cast shadows registered on their surfaces respond to one another in counterpoint. Collectively, the eleven screenprints present a

range of moods and sensations associated with passing time. Hovering between legibility and abstraction, *Homage CMYK* sediments time on the wing, capturing the relative nature of color and the complex experience of inhabiting an architecture of light and shadow.

The series extends Magid's years-long investigation of private ownership over artistic legacy and the slippages that exist between exclusive control and caring protection. The artist first broached these topics through projects that took as their subject Barragán's contested archives, the Barragán Archives (2013–15) and the Proposal (2014–16), culminating in her award-winning film *The Proposal* (2018). Although Albers's and Barragán's respective legacies are now retained by private entities that restrict representations of their work, the mutual admiration between the two challenges the impersonal law by exemplifying an ethics of shared ownership over an image.<sup>1</sup> This ambiguity opens up space for Magid to insert herself into their relationship, weaving an interrogation of intellectual property rights into her textured works. Typical of her method, the artist finds an anomaly, loophole, or unclaimed space in an otherwise closely regulated system and embeds herself in it in order to intimately understand and push its boundaries. Like an earlier generation of Conceptual artists, Magid is interested in systems and institutions that rule over individual agency. Unlike her predecessors, however, who relied on strategies of distancing and reveal, her work takes shape through first-person negotiations, ultimately offering a poetic representation of the system under consideration. Unexpected encounters, findings, and research constantly recalibrate Magid's pursuits. This prismatic knowledge accrues in the visual and conceptual layers of *Homage CMYK*; different positions coexist in the array of halftones, wherein the artist has superimposed several authors, formats, and temporalities onto a single image.

Attentive to light in relation to architecture since a young age, Barragán once mused that, while horseback riding as a boy, he would notice “the play of shadows on the walls, how the afternoon sun gradually got weaker . . . and how the look of things changed, angles got smaller and straight lines stood out even more.”<sup>2</sup> He shared this sensitivity with Albers, who famously observed that “color is the most relative medium in art.”<sup>3</sup> Our perception of hue changes according to environmental light conditions and the afterimage of its neighboring color. The experimental study of color relationships fueled the permutations of Albers's *Homage to the Square* series—a defining influence on many artists in Dia's collection and beyond.

Flavin's fluorescent lights engage the optical nature of Albers's paintings while radically extending their material limits in relation to site. Flavin's affinity for ocean light on the East End of Long Island is reflected in his permanent installation at Dia Bridgehampton, *nine works in fluorescent light* (1963–81), which he selected and installed in relation to the intimately sized, vernacular building. Blending with natural light from the screened windows, the bulbs at once emit a dematerializing glow and bluntly expose their status as banal fixtures bound to obsolescence. While Flavin brought the ambiguities of color to bear on the architecture, *Homage CMYK* folds the architectural environment back onto the prints. Magid playfully literalizes Albers's dictum that "in order to use color effectively it is necessary to recognize that color deceives continually."<sup>4</sup> In her series, color deceptions are many times refracted by the mechanical eye of the camera, the color correction of book plates, and the approximation of the halftones.

Andy Warhol spent significant time in his Montauk estate between 1972 and his death in 1987. His keen interest in the psychology of color is evident in his work *Shadows* (1978–79), currently on view at Dia Beacon, where 73 from a total of 102 paintings hang edge to edge to fit the gallery. Uncharacteristically aniconic, each panel reproduces a fugitive shadow in two juxtaposed colors. Here the mechanical screenprint, a staple of the artist's practice since 1962, is engulfed by a viscous acrylic finish applied with a mop—deskkilled marks that tease the artist's presence. Lacking material substance of their own, shadows index transience, disappearing when the light source fades or when its projecting object is shifted. Magid's *Homage CYMK*, like Warhol's *Shadows*, dramatizes the temporal tension between a shadow and its referent. While Warhol insinuated himself in his late work through deskkilled, mechanical, and repetitive marks, Magid acts as a secret player in hers, triangulating Albers, Barragán, and their legacies while obfuscating the hierarchy of layers as well as the origin of each trace. Of her method the artist writes, "permission is a material and changes the work's consistency."<sup>5</sup> For her, the authorless replicas of Albers's paintings preserved in Barragán's home—homages rather than forgeries—model a logic of sharing instead of proprietary restriction. Unrepresentable, Barragán's architectural body emerges in Albers's reproductions in the guise of shadows—flickering in and out of photographs of Casa Barragán at different times of the day. Shadows are "a basic human need," Barragán once said.<sup>6</sup> Yet, "who authorizes the shadows?"<sup>7</sup>

## notes

1. The artist would like to thank Nicholas Fox Weber and Brenda Danilowitz of the Josef and Anni Albers Foundation for discussing Josef Albers's work with her in 2014.
2. Alice Gregory, "The Architect Who Became a Diamond," *The New Yorker* (July 25, 2016), accessed July 12, 2020, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/08/01/how-luis-barragan-became-a-diamond>.
3. Josef Albers, *Interaction of Colors*, rev. ed. (1963; repr., New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 65.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
5. Jill Magid, "Artist's Statements," artist's website, accessed July 12, 2020, <http://www.jillmagid.com/info/statements>.
6. Gregory, "The Architect Who Became a Diamond."
7. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Drawing Blanks: Notes on Andy Warhol's Late Works," *October*, no. 127 (Winter 2009), p. 11.

## about the artist

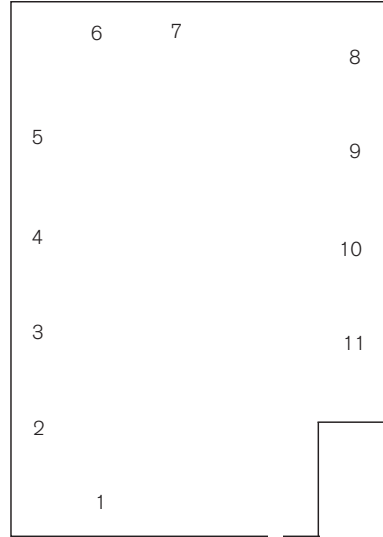
Jill Magid was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1973. She is an artist, writer, and filmmaker. Solo presentations of her work have been held at, among others, the Berkeley Art Museum; Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City; San Francisco Art Institute; Security and Intelligence Agency of the Netherlands in The Hague; Tate Modern in London; and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City. She has participated in Manifesta as well as the Bucharest, Gothenburg, Incheon, Liverpool, Oslo, Performa, Singapore, and Ural biennials. She is the author of four novellas and her documentary, *The Proposal*, premiered at the 2018 Tribeca Film Festival. Magid is an associate faculty member in the art, design, and the public domain program at the Graduate School of Design, Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and an adjunct teacher at Cooper Union in New York. In December 2019 she delivered a performative lecture on Belgian filmmaker and writer Chantal Akerman as part of Dia Art Foundation's Artists on Artists Lecture Series. Magid lives in Brooklyn and Amagansett, New York.

## further reading

- Hirsch, Nikolaus, Carin Kuoni, Hesse McGraw, and Markus Miessen, eds. *Jill Magid: The Proposal*. Critical Spatial Practice 8. New York: Sternberg Press, 2016.
- Lee, Pamela M. "Open Secret: The Work of Art Between Disclosure and Redaction." *Artforum* 49, no. 9 (May 2011), pp. 220–29.
- Magid, Jill. "Atlas of Intimacy: Jill Magid." By Jarrett Earnest. *Brooklyn Rail* (October 2013), <https://brooklynrail.org/2013/10/art/atlas-of-intimacyjill-magid-with-jarrett-earnest>.
- . *Becoming Tarden*. New York: New Museum, 2010.
- . *Failed States*. Portland: Publication Studio, 2012.
- . *Lincoln Ocean Victor Eddy*. Self-published, 2007.
- . *One Cycle of Memory in the City of L*. Liverpool: FACT, 2004.

## checklist and site map

1. **The Living Room, ISBN 978-607-7515-76-0, page 139**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
2. **The Living Room, ISBN 968-6533-82-6, page 54**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
3. **The Living Room, ISBN 978-1-9998218-4-5, page 45**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
4. **The Living Room, ISBN 968-6533-82-6, page 16**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
5. **The Living Room, ISBN 978-4-88706-143-9, page 191**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
6. **The Living Room, ISBN 978-607-7515-76-0, page 138**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
7. **The Living Room, ISBN 0-8478-1482-3, page 57**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
8. **The Library, Casa Luis Barragán Guide, 2004, page 22**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
9. **The Library, Casa Luis Barragán Guide, 2008, page 22**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City



10. **The Library, ISBN 978-607-7515-76-0, page 124**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City
11. **The Library, ISBN 978-607-7515-76-0, page 125**, 2019  
Screenprint on linen, edition 2/2 and 1 A.P.  
Courtesy the artist and LABOR, Mexico City

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Cover: *Jill Magid*, installation view, Dia Bridgehampton, Bridgehampton, New York, July 25, 2020–June 6, 2021. © Jill Magid. Photo: Bill Jacobson Studio, New York