

ethical position within any understanding of this ceremonial relic. While the original purpose of the Kula was magical, it also reveals, among other things, race's connection with class, the social potential of ancient economies in contemporary culture, and the ways in which dominant historical narratives are constructed.

In his role as a photographer, Millar self-consciously connected with the museum collection and with each painting's performance of a historical event, in Pacific exploration, the seafaring tradition, travel, exchange or cultural memory. Rather than dwell on specific colonial histories, Millar's portraits of members of a tribe from New Guinea show how he 'wields' a camera and the 'power' of photography to reveal uncertain moral ambiguities around exchange and equality, between the photographer and each sitter. Whereas Malinowski's images inhibit complexity around the interior world of the individual and focus instead on social activity, Millar's do the exact opposite: there is a visible and active sense of defiance on the part of both the artist and sitter, which allows the power relationship between viewer and subject to become more transparent. ■

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■ Jill Magid: Authority to Remove

Tate Modern Level 2 Gallery London

2 September to 3 January

In 2005, the Dutch intelligence agency (AIVD) commissioned Jill Magid to produce a piece of work for its new headquarters; its post-9/11 budget increase carried such a commission as a stipulation under Dutch law. Magid's brief was 'to find the human face of the organisation'. She received this commission having previously engaged with institutional structures in a number of other projects, such as *Evidence Locker*, 2004, in which she worked with CityWatch, a surveillance operation run by the Merseyside Police. Texts describing the process of Magid's association with AIVD are intensely gripping, and yet the sculptures and text-based pieces on show are highly restrained. On the wall, as you enter the gallery, is a quote from Magid's *Report for the AIVD on the Subject of Its Face*, 2008: 'The secret itself is much more beautiful than its revelation.' The

challenges of this commission, now positioned between two institutions – AIVD and Tate – demanding some kind of tangible outcome, are encapsulated in this gap between secret and truth, process and object.

Visual strategies of rendering text illegible frustrate the viewer in a manner which surely reflects Magid's experiences with the AIVD. Much here is drawn from a novel Magid wrote describing her experiences of meeting various Dutch spies, *Becoming Tarden*, 2009, and as with all work for this commission the manuscript required AIVD approval before exhibition. It was returned as a heavily edited document to 'protect' those working within the organisation, effectively gagging Magid's own thoughts and feelings regarding those operatives. The artist has subsequently extrapolated several works from this act of censorship. As a compromise, the AIVD agreed to allow Magid to make the novel public through exhibition, but only if it was treated as a sculpture and encased in a vitrine, prohibiting it from being read. Now displayed as a seemingly benign artwork, the main pages of *Becoming Tarden* have been ripped out and laid on top of an official Tate document which gives the AIVD 'Authority to Remove' this central section of the novel. Placed next to the body of the text are the prologue and epilogue – still bound to the book's cover – alongside an emotive letter from Magid to JC Goet, deputy director general of the AIVD, detailing her compliance with the conditions for exhibition. Then one notices Tate's wall label which credits the work's owners as 'Private Collection, Mexico'. This intriguing piece of information alongside the official document invites questions about truth and the realities of ownership.

While working at finding 'the human face of the organisation', Magid began to recognise how inconsequential she was to the AIVD. The neon sculpture *I Can Burn Your Face*, 2008, suggests the power the AIVD is able to harness, flashing up a term used by the organisation when an agent's identity is exposed. Other neon works, *I Can Burn Your Face: Vincent II* and *I Can Burn Your Face: Miranda III*, both 2008, are tangled jumbles of indecipherable, oppressively red neon text, buzzing with electricity. Only partially visible via a gap in the wall, they become fully visible through an exterior window only once outside the gallery. These shifting levels of accessibility allude to how our ability to scrutinise institutions is determined by the position we hold either inside or outside such structures.

A diptych of the prologue and epilogue of *Becoming Tarden* submits the text to another process of obfuscation. Reversed, one could read the prologue with a mirror, as a spy

Jill Magid
I Can Burn Your Face 2008



Terry Smith
Hands photograph from the series 'Doors' taken at Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted (formerly the Foundling Hospital) 2009

might. Just legible are a few lines describing Magid's task that metaphorically place her as a potentially corruptive force to the AIVD's corporeality. *The Directives*, 2009, five large posters located in the far room of the gallery, detail snippets of experience in large ballpoint lettering. The quality of mark making allows for a subtle gradation in strength; text fading and reappearing as positioned against the AIVD's brutal erasure. The phrases veer from the confrontational to the complicit, always intimate in tone: 'Lecture me on Islam', 'Says it's just a day job', 'Get straddled in the driver's seat'.

Projects such as these require institutional validation through the exhibiting of objects – often an inherently problematic task through which the visual necessarily plays second fiddle to process. Magid's work is powerful in successfully making public a complicated and private process. Equally, her work provokes questions on the need for objects – with their primary value being that they allow entry into another institution, Tate in this instance. Magid's work generates the need for an enquiry into what such validations mean. Despite objects often lacking the complexity and nuance of process, their status is higher because of their ability to become public, and thus to enter the market. ■

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■ Terry Smith: The Foundling

The Foundling Museum London

7 October to 3 January

The Foundling Museum in London's Brunswick Square, although open to the public only since 2004, is located on the site of the original Foundling Hospital, established in 1739 as the first home in the UK to care for abandoned babies. William Hogarth, who was an early benefactor of this institution, was responsible for setting up within it the UK's first public art gallery. The building houses an important library devoted to another famous benefactor, the composer George Frideric Handel, as well as a large collection of paintings and antiques. Terry Smith's installation involves three components: a quartet of short video works, collectively titled *The Foundling*, 2009, displayed in the museum's dedicated exhibition space, a sound piece, *String*, 2009, located in the museum's central stairwell, and a series of photographic prints (also 2009) housed in the institution's cafe.

Although made especially for the museum, the works presented here were derived from a series of projects held in London and Venice, and Smith is keen to emphasise not only their evolved – and evolving – form but also their collaborative nature. Smith worked on this project with the composer and sound designer Ian Dearden and several other musicians, including Miguel Tantos Sevillano, as well as with the filmmaker Jonathan Callery. The critic and poet Mel Gooding supplied a new poem, parts of which are employed within *The Foundling's* third and fourth sections, notably the intriguingly titled 'Orpheus in Shoreditch'.

Despite the number and diversity of contributors involved,

and regardless of *The Foundling's* quartered form, Smith has produced a video whose coherence is apparent, though its division into black and white and colour sections might have made it bitty and discontinuous. A better way to think about the piece would be to consider the four sections as being akin to a four-part musical score. Not only do the four parts of the work have strong individual moods, they also have compact zones of sound and silence, a clever mixing together (and holding apart) of imagery and aural event. Beginning with a number of bright abstract patterns that turn out to be out-of-focus streetlights, the viewer is taken through a complex weave of branches and trees, followed by a sequence of mostly still images of doorways, corridors and institutional bathrooms – the trees and corridors staged in a stately but restrained black and white. In the closing part of the work a further stratum of blurred streetlights is eventually replaced by a ghostly image of a bridge, upon which the shadow of a figure slowly materialises. This is actually a fragment of a video made in Venice that has been cut into the mix of London imagery. The soundtrack moves from slowed down (and reversed) Vivaldi to a muted but suggestive drone formed by doctoring a fast fragment of Handel. At an early point during the forest scene a saxophonist (Sevillano) walks into the picture and begins to play, becoming one more silhouette among the black trees of Epping Forest, at the same time breaking the spell of the illusion, since one can clearly see that he is not so much within the video as in front of a projection of it. It is, for a moment, as though Sevillano is in the gallery in which the viewer is located. This musician is literally lost and found, as though entangled in the woodland tracery yet outside it too.

Tris Vonna-Michell 'No more racing in circles – just pacing within lines of a rectangle'

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