

Dragi opazovalec
Domenico Quaranta

Dragi opazovalec, naredi mi dnevnik in ga varno hrani. Zavedaj se, da je moj. Shrani to fotografijo mojega obraza. Imej vse vpise urejene. Pisma daj v dosje, podobe pa v omarico z dokazi. Vse druge osebe lahko izrežeš. Zapolnila bom vrzeli, dele mojega dnevnika, ki jih nimaš. Ker mi ne moreš slediti noter, bom notranjost snemala namesto tebe. Skrbno bom beležila čas, da me ne boš nikoli izgubil. Ne skrbi, kako me boš našel. Pomagala ti bom. Povedala bom, kaj sem bila oblečena, kje sem bila, ob kateri uri ... Če je bil določenega dne moj videz v čemer koli poseben, te bom obvestila. Moj dnevnik hrani vsaj sedem let. Prilagam ček. Znesek porabi za stroške. Tvoja, JSM

29. januarja 2004 Jill Magid prispe v Liverpool. Tam bo ostala 31 dni. Jill je umetnica in povabili so jo, da bi pripravila delo, s katerim bodo naslednjega septembra odprli liverpoolski bienale. Delo se bo nanašalo na nadzorni sistem mesta. V Liverpoolu sta namreč mestna policija in mestni svet nedavno namestila City Watch, največji videonadzorni sistem v vsej Veliki Britaniji: 242 nadzornih kamer, raztresenih po središču mesta. kontrolno postajo z nadzornikom in šestimi operaterji, ki 24 ur na dan spremljajo mesto na videosteni s 60 zasloni. Zgoščene posnetke vsakega dne hranijo 31 dni v računalniku postaje, nato pa jih uničijo. V tem času lahko zainteresirana oseba zaprosi za ogled posnetkov, tako da izpolni poseben obrazec (Subject Access Request Form), in plača 10 funtov za vsako prošnjo. Gradivo, ki ga prosilec želi za dokaz, se arhivira v omarici z dokazi in tam hrani vsaj sedem let. Posnetke, ki jih obravnava sodstvo, pa arhivirajo

v »jukeboxu«, digitalni arhivski enoti forenzičnega oddelka policije. Tam se podobe hranijo za vedno. Jill Magid vse to že ve. Izvedela je, ko je obiskala kontrolno postajo City Watcha nekaj mesecev prej, julija 2003, in nadzorniku predložila natančen vprašalnik, ki ga je uradniško goreče izpolnil. Ta skup informacij določa meje, znotraj katerih Jill lahko deluje. S projektom za liverpoolski bienale se začne naša zgodba. Toda to ni zgodba o birokraciji, nadzoru in umetnosti, temveč zgodba o spoznavanju, zapeljevanju in ljubezni, zgodba, v kateri ljubezen in zapeljevanje postaneta sredstvo spoznavanja. »Stvar lahko spoznam le tako, da se je dotaknem in pustim, da se ona dotakne mene,« je izjavila Jill Magid. Do zdaj povedano opredeljuje okoliščine, v katerih se lahko Jill in stvar, ki jo želi spoznati, dotakneta. Spoznanje se začne, ko se dotakneta.

Nisem te videla, toda nisem te še iskala.
Četrtek, 29. januarja 2004

Da bi se to zgodilo, se moramo odpovedati številnim postranskim informacijam in preoblikovati to, kar ostane, v like in scenarije. Tako Liverpool postane mesto L, umetnica Jill Magid pa preprosto Jill, dekle v rdečem plašču. Obrazec, s katerim zaprosiš za izbor in arhiviranje posnetkov v omarici z dokazi, postane ljubezensko pismo. City Watch postane opazovalec oziroma preprosto ti. Vsak dan, 31 dni, Jill živi svoje življenje v mestu L: zbujja se, zajtrkuje, hodi na fitnes, teče, obiskuje razstave, sodeluje na konferencah in srečanjih, preživlja večere v družbi, kadi, telefonira. In 31 dni, vsak dan, napiše dolgo pismo opazovalcu in mu podrobno opiše svoje gibanje, zaupa svoja čustva, komentira njuna srečanja.

Danes zjutraj sem ob desetih zapustila hišo, šla peš po Rodneyjevi ulici in zavila v Hardmanovo. Videla sem te, ti pa mene nisi. Obrnjen si bil stran.
Petek, 30. januarja 2004

Vrhunec narativizacije odnosa, ki se vzpostavlja med Jill in nadzornim aparatom mesta L, je počlovečenje opazovalca. Ko Jill pravi ali piše »ti«, se to nanaša na detalj tega aparata: videokamero, več videokamer, kontrolno postajo, operaterja, nadzornika. Včasih to zaznamo, včasih ne. Ko pa beremo njena pisma in analiziramo gradivo, arhivirano v omarici z dokazi, opazovalec dobiva vse konkretnije lastnosti. Postane oseba. Oseba, s katero Jill vzpostavi intimen odnos, ki ga sestavljajo pogledi, izrečene in neizrečene besede, uspeli in neuspeli zmenki, sprehodi v družbi, zaupanje.

Stala sem sredi ulice, v rdečem plašču in z dežnikom, in te pogledala. Postala sem in pogledala naravnost vate.
Sobota, 31. januarja 2004

Ko Jill gleda v kamero, vidi oči. Počlovečeni opazovalec ni več vznemirjajoč – ali pomirjajoč, odvisno od tega, kako gledamo na nadzor – kibernetiki organizem; je človek, s katerim lahko vzpostavljamo vezi. Jill bo morala 27. februarja v svojem predzadnjem pismu pomiriti opazovalca glede narave njegega razmerja. »Nisem kritizirala tvojega sistema, ljubila sem se z njim,« mu piše. V *Omarici z dokazi* ni kritike: je vzpostavljamo novega odnosa, tudi in predvsem za opazovalca. Ta je postal človek in ljubimec, s tem pa tudi izjemno ranljiv.

Na mojem zemljevidu si označil pot. Sledila sem ji. V Café Nero sem popila čaj in napisala razglednico. Gledal si me, iz dveh kotov, ko sem to počela.
Nedelja, 1. februarja 2004

Izjemna učest *Omarice z dokazi* je zgolj v tem. Projekt so umestili na »novo področje umetnosti in aktivizma, kjer se predvidljive oblike protesta proti vsemogočnim očem oblasti preobrnejo v dandijevski performans« (Geert Lovink) in ga večkrat primerjali s hipijevsko strategijo odziva na nasilje z miroljubnimi gestami (»v vaše topove dajemo rože«). Toda za Jill opazovalec ni vsemogočni veliki brat in ne sovražnik, proti kateremu se je treba bojevati; je neosebna

struktura, ki jo je treba zapeljati. »Iščem intimna razmerja z neosebnimi strukturami, pripravljam se na zapeljevanje. Ko je sistem zapeljan, izvajanje oblasti zamenja oblika izmenjave.«

Kako dolgo naj ti sledim? Kolikor dolgo želiš. Sledil bi ti do konca sveta.
Ponedeljek, 2. februarja 2004

Ta izmenjava je enakopravna in zahteva zaupanje z obeh strani. Ko Jill zapelje sistem, ta postane človeški in ranljiv. Kot vsak ljubimec stoji pred njo gol. Toda njeno zapeljevanje ni namenjeno napadu, temveč je pristna ljubezenska zgodba. V njenem zapeljevanju ni hlinjenja in prevare. In če v tej ljubezenski zgodbi oba nekaj iščeta in tudi najdeta, to ni nekaj, kar bi zadevalo njuno vlogo ali njuno poklicno področje. Je strogo osebno.

Sanjariva o tem, kaj bi bila, če bi bila kaj drugega kot to, kar sva, opazovalec in raziskovalka.
Sobota, 7. februarja 2004

Ni naključje, da se takrat, ko njuni vlogi posežeta v zgodbo, njuno razmerje znajde v zadregi. 12. februarja je Jill žrtev napada. Trije mladeniči na kolesih se zaženejo proti njej in ji strgajo torbico. Kamere dejanje posnamejo, mladeniče ujamejo in Jill pokličejo na policijsko postajo zaradi pričanja. Jill je v precepu: zaznava razhajanje med zgodbo, ki jo je doživela, in zgodbo, ki so jo posnele kamere in ki naj bi jo potrdila s podpisom. Tu opazovalec spet postane aparat, nadzorni sistem, namenjen varovanju prebivalcev, kategorije, ki ji Jill v tem trenutku pripada.

Še vedno ti moram pokazati Godardov Prezir, saj ga še nisi videl. Zate sem naredila izbor prizorov. Potem mi boš znal slediti, tako kot kamera sledi njej.
Sobota, 7. februarja 2004

Drugi trenutek zadrege nastopi, ko se Jill 27. februarja sestane z opazovalcem in jo ta vpraša o »tem

njenem umetniškem delu«. Vprašanje spet zvede njuni identiteti na običajni vlogi – kritične umetnice in aparata, ki se mora braniti pred kritikami – in potrebne je veliko rahločutnosti, da se spet vzpostavi ravnotežje. Umetnost, ki je iz zgodbe izključena kot identiteta, je njen del kot pripovedno dejanje. Ko Jill opazovalca enkrat počloveči, ga prosi, da sodeluje z njo pri ustvarjanju zgodbe, v kateri sta oba protagonist in prvoosebni pripovedovalec. Zgodba je njuna romanca, je zgodba, ki jo Jill živi tistih 31 dni bivanja in razvoju neke zgodbe. Hkrati pa ostaja komunikacija na daljavo motna in ima lahko dramatične posledice, če poseže v razmerje, ki ne temelji na trdnem zaupanju. Daljši molk postane komunikacijsko dejanje, ki porodi dvome in vprašanja. Zakaj ne odgovori? Že pred desetimi minutami ga je videl. Nima časa? Ima težave s signalom? Ali pa ...

Ta kraj je anonimen; nihče me ne pozna; gledaš me od zgoraj. Sem predmet tvojega opazovanja; do mesta vzpostavljam odnos v skladu s tem, kako me ti kadriraš v njem. Vem, kdaj me vidiš in kdaj ne. Ne moreš me slišati ali vohati ali se me dotakniti. Veš, kaj sem oblečena in kam grem. Ko se oglasim na telefon, ne veš, kdo govori z mano, razen če govorim s tabo. To mi je všeč.
Torek, 10. februarja 2004

Od danes zjutraj sovražim lasuljo in želim si, da bi jo lahko izbrisala.
Torek, 10. februarja 2004

Želela sem kavo in želela sem, da bi me videl. Nič od tega se ni zgodilo.
Sreda, 11. februarja 2004

Je zgodba, ki jo skupaj živita in pišeta dva, zgodba, v kateri se postopno osvajanje intimnosti izmenjuje s trenutki oddaljenosti, napak, spodrseljav, drobnih dejanj, namenjenih temu, da pri drugem izzovejo določen odziv. Je banalna in obenem izjemna zgodba – ta izjemnost je danes vse manj opazna, saj so občutenja in čustva, ki jih tu vidimo prvič, postala običajna za številne ljubezenske zgodbe. V dobi pametnih telefonov in posredovane komunikacije je postal nadzor na daljavo sestavni del odnosa vsakega para. Vsak ljubimec je potencialno opa-

zovalec. Nimamo sicer 242 kamer kot City Watch, imamo pa nešteto možnosti za nadziranje ravnanja partnerja. Programi zapišejo čas, ko je zadnjič dostopal do njih, v vsakem trenutku lahko preverimo, ali je videl naše zadnje sporočilo ali ne, ali je povezan s spletom ali ne, kakšni so njegovi drugi družabni odnosi. Opazujemo druge in drugi opazujejo nas. Vemo, kdaj nas opazujejo, in to zavedanje vpliva na razvoj neke zgodbe. Hkrati pa ostaja komunikacija na daljavo motna in ima lahko dramatične posledice, če poseže v razmerje, ki ne temelji na trdnem zaupanju. Daljši molk postane komunikacijsko dejanje, ki porodi dvome in vprašanja. Zakaj ne odgovori? Že pred desetimi minutami ga je videl. Nima časa? Ima težave s signalom? Ali pa ...

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Četrtek, 12. februarja 2004

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Sreda, 11. februarja 2004

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Šla bom tja, ti boš prišel in se sestal z mano, zaprla bom oči in ti me boš prijel. Rečem ti, da preišči moj obraz. In moje telo. Želiš, da ti preiščem telo? Ja, preuči me. Ni treba, da je invazivno.
Petek, 20. februarja 2004

... in se prepusti očesu, ki jo gleda.

Bila sva povezana in bilo je nevidno. Rekla sem ti: »Imam zamisel. Zdaj bom zaprla oči in ti me boš takole pospremil tja.«
Sobota, 21. februarja 2004

V *Trustu*, videu, ki dokumentira ta nežni in obenem nasilni trenutek popolne prepustitve opazovalcu, zadnji dobi glas: moški, topel, pomirjujoč. Proces počlovečenja se izpopolni in naredi še en korak v smeri poosebljenja. Do tega trenutka se je aparat, čeprav počlovečen, vedno manifestiral v množinski obliki. Ti je enkrat moški, enkrat ženska, enkrat videokamera. Od tega trenutka pa je tisti moški. »Ti, Ti z veliko začetnico. Ti, ki hodiš zame. Ti, ki ti popolnoma zaupam,« kot piše 27. februarja. Je tista oseba, tisti glas, tisto telo, tisti, ki jo v zadnjem prizoru povabi na svoj motor in se tudi sam podvrže očesu kamer.

Rada bi bila večno rešena.
Torek, 24. februarja 2004

Živeti zgodbo pomeni pisati zgodbo, pustiti sled svoje poti. In napisati zgodbo pomeni vstopiti v širšo časovnost. Ločiti sebe od množice. Postati posebnost, ne eden od mnogih, in trajati dlje. Po Borisu Groysu je to ena od vlog umetnosti in muzeja: osamiti vsakdanji predmet in mu pripisati »razliko onkraj razlike« ter mu tako podeliti daljšo trajnost, ki je kot predmet ne bi premogel. Po Jillinem mnenju je to ena od vlog ljubezni: »Ljubezen je odvisna od sposobnosti ločiti nekoga od vseh.« Ali kot piše opazovalcu 14. februarja: »Jaz ločim tebe in ti ločiš mene.« Jill ve, da ima njen ljubimec sposobnost, da to naredi zanj. Sistem 242 kamer je potencialno idealen filmski studio, ki lahko njeno življenje v mestu L spremeni v *Jillin šov* in ohrani vsak njegov trenutek. Toda gibanje pred očmi opazovalca ji podeli le 31 dni trajanja. Uporaba obrazca (Subject Access Request Form) za pisanje ljubezenskih pisem ji omogoča, da vstopi v omarico z dokazi in ostane v njenem spominu vsaj sedem let. Pridobitev posnetkov in njihova uporaba v umetniškem delu pa ji podeli potencialno večnost, o kateri govori Groys. Omarica z dokazi je

zdaj del redne zbirke muzeja Whitney v New Yorku in je tako dosegla svoj cilj. Ko je Jill medtem od opazovalca pridobila pravico, da se nekaj njenih podob arhivira v »jukeboxu«, si je zagotovila še eno vrsto večnosti. »Če jih kdaj želiš videti, so v 'jukeboxu', za vedno, v mapi z mojim imenom, v mapi, imenovani februar 2004. Ni treba hiteti. Trajna sem.«

Vsakič, ko sva šla mimo kamere, sva pomahala. In potem si rekel: Tamle je kamera št. 7. Zadnja, mimo katere greva.
Sobota, 28. februarja 2004

Lahko bi pomislili, da od ljubezenske zgodbe ne moremo pričakovati več kot to. Toda vedno lahko ponudi še kaj več. Jill ponudi vožnjo z motorjem po ulicah mesta L. Za krmilom je opazovalec in skupaj z njo pozdravlja nadzorne kamere, na koncu pa jo odpelje z območja nadzora. Prvič, čeprav le začasno, se opazovalec loči od svojega pogleda in aparata, ki ga uteleša in predstavlja. Vendar ne gre le za to. To zadnjo vožnjo namreč še naprej pripoveduje neosebno, a prijateljsko oko kamere. Jillino pisanje, ki je sicer neformalno, pa je vseeno namenjeno temu, da zadnji dan njenega življenja v mestu L pride v omarico z dokazi. Bolj kot znamenje ločitve od lastne vloge je ta beg opazovalca znamenje popolnega sprejetja vloge, ki mu jo je Jill namenila v svoji zgodbi – vloge opazovalca, ljubimca, pripovedovalca pa tudi predmeta opazovanja in preučevanja.

Rekel si: Ko si sedela na tisti klopci, bi se lahko ljubil s tabo. In rekla sem: »Saj si se.«
Sobota, 28. februarja 2004

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Umetniški vodja / Artistic Director: Janez Janša
Izvršni producentki / Executive producers: Marcela Okretič, Sonja Grdina
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Kontakt / Contact: Marcela Okretič
Aksioma | Zavod za sodobne umetnosti, Ljubljana
Neubergerjeva 25, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
aksioma@aksioma.org
www.aksioma.org

Design: Kontrastika

Dear Observer
Domenico Quaranta

Dear Observer,
Make me a diary and keep it safe.
Take care it is mine.
Hold this photograph of my face.
Keep all our entries in order.
Put the letters in your desk file and
the images in your evidence locker.
You can edit everyone else out.
I will fill in the gaps, the parts of my
diary you are missing.
Since you can't follow me inside, I
will record the inside for you.
I will mark the time carefully so you
will never lose me.

Don't worry about finding me. I
will help you. I will tell you what
I was wearing, where I was, the
time of day... If there was anything
distinguishing about my look that
day, I will make sure you know.
Hold onto my diary for at least seven
years.
I am enclosing a cheque. Use it for
whatever expenses you have.
Sincerely,
JSM

On 29 January 2004, Jill Magid arrived in Liverpool, for a 31 day stay. Jill is an artist, and she had been invited to work on a project for the Liverpool Biennial that September. In Liverpool the City Police and City Council had just installed the City Watch System, the largest video surveillance system in the whole of Britain: 242 video cameras dotted around the city centre, a control station with a supervisor and six operators who monitor the city 24/7 on a video wall with 60 screens. The film shot each day is converted into a time-lapse video and stored on the station's computer for 31 days before being destroyed. During that time people can request to see the recordings by filling in a specific form, the "Subject Access Request Form", and paying £10. The material requested is stored in an "Evidence Locker" for at least seven years, while images under judicial scrutiny are archived in the "Jukebox", a digital storage unit in the police's Forensic Imaging

Unit. The images stored there are kept forever. Jill Magid already knew all this, after visiting the City Watch control station a few months before, in July 2003, and asking the supervisor to fill in a detailed questionnaire, something he readily did. This is the framework for Jill's project and the Liverpool Biennial was the catalyst. But this is not a story about bureaucracy, surveillance and art. Rather it is a story of a meeting, a seduction and a love affair; a story in which love and seduction become tools for *knowing*: "The only way I know a thing is to touch it, and to let it touch me", Jill Magid has declared. The set-up in Liverpool establishes the terms within which Jill and the thing she wants to know can come into contact. They start to get to know one another when they first make that contact.

I did not see you, but was not looking
for you yet.
Thursday, January 29, 2004

To get to this point, we have to forgo a lot of supplementary information, and turn the rest into characters and scenarios. Liverpool becomes the "city of L". Jill Magid the artist becomes simply Jill, the girl in the red trench. The "Subject Access Request Form", by means of which material is selected and stored in the Evidence Locker, becomes a love letter. City Watch becomes the Observer, or, simply You. Every day, for 31 days, Jill lives her life in L: she gets up, has breakfast, goes to the gym, goes jogging, visits exhibitions, attends conferences and meetings, spends an evening with someone, smokes and makes phone calls. And every day, for 31 days, she writes a long letter to the Observer, detailing her movements, talking about her emotions, commenting on their meetings.

This morning at 10am I left the
house, walked up Rodney, and
turned at Hardman Street. I saw
you; you did not see me. Your back
was turned.
Friday, January 30, 2004

The narrative that forms around the relationship between Jill and the surveillance system of L. culminates in the humanisation of Observer. Each time Jill says or writes "you", she refers to a part of the system: a camera, a set of cameras, the control room, an operator, the supervisor. Sometimes we can make it out. As we read her letters and analyse the material stored in the Evidence Locker, the Observer begins to take shape, becoming a person. A person with whom Jill forges an intimate relationship built on glances, spoken and unspoken words, dates and let-downs, trust.

I stood in the center of the street, in
the red coat under my umbrella, and
looked at you. I paused and looked
right at you.
Saturday, January 31, 2004

When she looks at a camera, Jill sees eyes. Once humanized, the Observer is no longer a disquieting – or reassuring, depending on how you feel about control – cybernetic organism; it is a person, someone we can relate to along familiar, atavistic dynamics. On 27 February, in her second-last letter, Jill finds herself having to reassure the Observer about the nature of their relationship, writing, "I did not critique your system; I made love to it". In *Evidence Locker* there is no criticism; there is a budding relationship, something new, especially for the Observer. Now a man and a lover, the Observer shows his vulnerable side.

You marked a path on my map. I
followed it. I got a tea at Café Nero
and wrote a postcard. You watched
me, from two angles, when I did this.
Sunday, February 1, 2004

This is where the power of *Evidence Locker* lies. The project has been described as belonging to a "new field of art and activism in which predictable forms of protest against the almighty eyes of power are turned into a dandy-like performance" (Geert Lovink); it has often been compared to the hippy strategy of responding to violence with gestures of

peace ("we put flowers in your cannons"). But for Jill the Observer is not an omnipotent Big Brother or an enemy; it is an impersonal structure she sets out to seduce. "I seek intimate relationships with impersonal structures, and prepare for our seduction... Once seduced, a system moves from an exercise of power to a form of exchange."

How long should I follow you? Just
as far as you want to. I would follow
you to the end of the world.
Monday, February 2, 2004

The exchange takes place on an equal footing, and implies trust on both sides. By seducing the system, Jill makes it human and vulnerable. Like any lover, it is naked before her. But her seduction is not part of an attack strategy: this is an authentic love story. There is no faking or deception in her courting. If both parties are looking for something from this affair and find it, that something has nothing to do with their specific role or occupation, but is strictly personal.

We fantasize about what we would be,
if we were something else than you,
an observer and me, a researcher.
Saturday, February 7, 2004

It is no coincidence that when their customary roles interfere with the story things get awkward. On 12 February Jill is attacked. Three young men on bikes crash into her and yank her bag. This incident is recorded, the men are arrested and Jill goes to the police station to give evidence. She is torn: she feels there is a dissociation between her experience and what the cameras filmed, that she is asked to confirm. The Observer has become a system once more, a system designed to protect civilians, the category Jill belongs to in that moment.

I still need to show you Godard's Le
Mépris since you have not seen it. I
have selected parts of the film for you.
Then you will know how to follow me
like the camera follows her.
Saturday, February 7, 2004

There is another awkward moment when, on 27 February, Jill meets the Observer and he questions her, worried, "about this artwork of yours." This question pulls them both back into their usual roles again – the critical artist and the system defending itself from criticism – and the situation has to be handled with great delicacy to get things back on an even keel.

Excluded from the story as an identity, art is an integral part of it as a narrative act. Once she has humanized the Observer, Jill asks him to work with her on a story in which they are both lead character and first person narrator. The story is their love story, the relationship that Jill experiences during her 31 day stay in the city of L. Jill portrays the Observer in her letters; the Observer depicts Jill in the material stored in the Evidence Locker. Like any love story, it takes shape day by day, an interplay of decisions, chance events, alternative perspectives, literary references and narrative devices.

I liked you telling me how to move;
it made me feel more confident, like
I was not alone, or the idea was no
longer only mine.
Tuesday, February 10, 2004

Since this morning I hate the wig and
wish I could erase it.
Tuesday, February 10, 2004
I wanted a coffee and I wanted you to
see me. Neither happened.
Wednesday, February 11, 2004

The story is jointly experienced and written, and their gradually developing intimacy is interspersed with moments of distance, mistakes and misunderstandings, little acts designed to elicit a specific reaction in the other. It is at once banal and extraordinary – but extraordinary in a way that is now increasingly inconspicuous: the sensations and emotions traced here for the first time characterise many contemporary love stories. In the age of smartphones and mediated communications, remote surveillance is now a component of most relation-

ships. All lovers are potential Observers. We do not possess the 242 eyes of City Watch, but we have dozens of ways of keeping an eye on our partners. Applications keep track of their last access, and at any time we can check if they have read our last message; are online, and if and how they are handling other social interactions. We observe and are observed. We know when we are being watched, and this awareness conditions how relationships develop. But at the same time, remote communications remain basically obscure, and can have dramatic consequences if they intervene in a relationship that does not have a firm basis of trust. A prolonged silence can become an act of communication that generates doubts and raises questions, eliciting an emotional response. Why isn't he answering? He opened my message 10 minutes ago. Is he busy? Reception problems? Or...

This place is anonymous; no one
knows me; you watch me from above.
I am your subject; I relate myself to
the city by the way you frame me in
it. I know when you see me and when
you don't. You can't hear me or smell
me or touch me. You know what I
wear and where I go. When I pick
up the phone, you don't know who is
speaking to me, unless I am speaking
to you. I like that.
Thursday, February 12, 2004

What remains extraordinary about Jill's story is that she does not restrict herself to loving *through* the device, she loves the device itself. And in doing so she understands that building trust is key, and looks straight into the camera. She puts herself out there...

I will go there, you will come and
meet me there, and I will close my
eyes and you will hold me. I tell you
to search my face. And my body.
You want me to search your body?
Yes, study me. It does not have to be
invasive.
Friday, February 20, 2004

... and abandons herself to the watching eye.

We were connected, and it was
invisible. I told you: I have an idea. I
will close my eyes now, and you will
walk me there like this.
Saturday, February 21, 2004

In *Trust*, the video that documents this episode, which is both subtle and violent, she surrenders herself to the Observer's arms, and the latter acquires a voice, that is male, warm and reassuring. The process of humanisation is complete and now starts to get personal. Up till now the system, however human, has always manifested itself in plural form: "You" has variously been a man, a woman, a video camera. From that moment on You becomes that specific man: "You, You with a capital Y. You who walks for me. You who I trust completely", as she writes on 27 February. You is on camera himself.

I want to be saved forever.
Tuesday, February 24, 2004

Being in a relationship means writing a story, leaving a trace of one's presence. And writing a story means placing oneself in a more extended time frame. Standing out from the crowd. Becoming an individual, not one among many, and consigning oneself to a longer duration. According to Boris Groys, this is one of the functions of art and the museum: isolating a common object and attributing it a "difference beyond difference", making it last longer than it normally would. According to Jill, this is one of the functions of love: "Love depends on the ability to separate a someone out of the everyone." Or, as she writes to the Observer on 14 February: "I separate you and you separate me." Jill knows that her lover has a special ability to do this for her. 242 cameras are potentially the perfect film set for turning her life in L. into the "Jill Show" and recording every moment. But appearing before the Observer's gaze only guarantees her a duration of 31 days. Using the "Subject Access Request Form" to write the Observer love letters gets her into the Evidence Locker, to be stored in its memory for at least seven years. Getting

a copy of the recordings to use in her work consigns her to the potential eternity that Groys talks about. Now part of the permanent collection of the Whitney Museum of New York, *Evidence Locker* has accomplished this aim. By getting the Observer to store some of her images in the Jukebox, Jill has earned herself another kind of forever. "If you ever want to see them, they are in the Jukebox, forever, in a folder with my name, in a folder called February 2004. No rush. I'm permanent."

Every time we passed the cameras
we waved. And then you said, *There
is camera number 7. It's the last one
we pass.*
Saturday, February 28, 2004

You might think there is nothing more we could want from a love story. But a love story always has something more to give. Jill's love story gives her the chance to take a motorbike ride round the streets of L. She is the passenger while the Observer rides, and together they wave at the surveillance cams before they leave the monitored area. For the first time, albeit temporarily, the Observer is separated from his incessant gaze and the system he embodies and represents. But there's more. This *Final Tour* continues to be recorded by the impersonal but friendly eyes of the cameras, and Jill's writing, informal in style but nevertheless destined to put the last day of her stay in L. into the Evidence Locker. Rather than showing him breaking out of his role, the Observer's escape appears to be a sign of his complete acceptance of the part Jill has asked him to play in her story: observer, lover, narrator, but in turn also a subject for study and observation.

You said, You know, when you sat on
that bench I could have made love to
you. And I said, You did.
Saturday, February 28, 2004



JILL MAGID

OMARICA Z DOKAZI EVIDENCE LOCKER