The Proposal

A film by Jill Magid

**Official Selection – 2018 Tribeca Film Festival**
**2018 Hot Docs Film Festival - Documentary**

Directed by Jill Magid
Executive Produced by Laura Poitras
 Produced by Jarred Alterman, Charlotte Cook, and Laura Coxson
Edited by Hannah Buck
Direction of Photography by Jarred Alterman
Original Music by T. Griffin
Consulting Editing by Nels Bangerter

83 Minutes

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TRIBeca FILm FestivaL SCREENINGS

Sun. 4/22, 6:30 p.m., Cinepolis 08 - Premiere  
Mon. 4/23, 1:15 p.m., Cinepolis 04 - P&I  
Mon. 4/23, 7:15 p.m., Cinepolis 04  
Tue. 4/24, 5:45 p.m., Cinepolis 05  
Wed. 4/25, 8:00 p.m., Regal 09  
Sat. 4/28, 9:00 a.m., Cinepolis 06 - P&I

LOGLINE
Part thriller, part romance, THE PROPOSAL follows the making of a radical artwork that explores the contested legacy of the late Luis Barragán, Mexico’s most famous architect.

SHORT SYNOPSIS
Conceptual artist Jill Magid grapples with the contested legacy of Luis Barragán, Mexico’s most famous architect. Unfolding with the suspense of thriller, THE PROPOSAL follows Magid as she develops an unorthodox project exploring the nature of artistic legacy and who ultimately controls it. As she progresses, Magid interacts with Barragán’s family, admirers, and the Swiss copyright holders who aggressively “protect” his work, in a kind of a love triangle with Barragán at the apex. Ultimately, Magid creates her own startling, provocative work that forces the viewer into reckoning with how an artist’s story is told, and who is permitted to do the telling.

LONG SYNOPSIS
The Proposal follows conceptual artist and writer Jill Magid as she develops an unorthodox project to explore artistic legacy. It takes as its subject the work of the Pritzker Prize-winning Mexican architect Luis Barragán, which is aggressively “protected” by its Swiss copyright holders, at the expense of public access. Barragán’s professional archive—including the rights to his name and work—was acquired in 1995 by Swiss furniture company Vitra, under the auspices of the Barragan Foundation. The foundation is directed by the wife of Vitra’s chairman who allegedly bought his then-fiancée the archive as an engagement gift.

The project that The Proposal documents has provoked an extended debate in Mexico on the limits of artistic freedom, and the accessibility of Barragán’s archives.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT – JILL MAGID

As a visual artist and writer, I use my work to create new perspectives to long-established structures of power in society.

During the past eighteen years, I’ve trained as a spy, a police officer, and as a war journalist. Gaining access to power systems takes research, trust, and a series of unorthodox requests, requiring constant
negotiation. From the inside, I engage these systems in personal dialogue. From there, I’m able to raise questions and concerns on how we live in relation to them.

The Proposal is my first feature film and the last chapter of a larger project I began in 2013 called The Barragán Archives. The project explores the contested legacy of Luis Barragán, Mexico’s most famous architect, and how his legacy is affected by the fact that a private corporation, Vitra, owns his archives and controls the rights in his name and work. For more than twenty years, this corporation has made his work largely inaccessible to the public. The film questions whether a single actor should be exclusively in control of how the world can engage with Barragán’s work.

As the film’s protagonist, I am aware that I am entering a story that has not previously involved me, and that my presence could affect its future, or a retelling of the past. I believe that it is crucial to discuss how artistic legacy is constructed, shaped, and manipulated. Does allowing the public to engage with an artwork in various ways and from multiple perspectives threaten its integrity, or make it more integral to society over time?

Almost as an invitation for image-making, Barragán was known to adjust a buildings’ design so that it would photograph better. With this film, I wanted to capture the overwhelming beauty of his work while simultaneously questioning the legal challenges one faces to do so. The film is in itself a proposal: A way to elicit dialogue about access to legacy and its proprietary nature, and not simply if the proposal will be accepted.

Intertwined with these pressing social questions is a quieter rumination on mortality and the relationship of the artist’s body to his or her body of work. Mortality permeates, in the aging of the architecture and within the intimate presence of three generations of the Barragán family. I wanted to present legacy as something potentially alive, and full of possibility. Transforming ashes into a diamond is an expression of possibility.

My work has long provoked questions about access to power and power relations, in a similar realm as the work of Adrian Piper, Tanya Bruguera, Trevor Paglen and The Yes Men.

**TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

1902 Luis Barragán is born in Guadalajara, Mexico

1980 Barragán receives the Pritzker Prize

1981 Barragán signs a will bequeathing his work and copyrights to his business partner Raúl Ferrara, and asks architect Iganacio Diaz Morales and two other commissioners to bequeath his library to an institution devoted to architecture.
1988 Barragán dies in his home in Mexico City. His cremated remains are interred in the family vault at Mezquitán Cemetery, Guadalajara.

1993 Ferrara dies. Widow, Rosarario Uranga inherits Barragán’s professional archive.

1994 Casa Luis Barragán is established as a museum, co-owned by the Fundación de Arquitectura Tapatía Luis Barragán (FATLB) and the Government of the State of Jalisco. Holdings of the FATLB include Barragán’s personal archive and the library.

1995 After Rosario Uranga attempts to sell the professional archive in Mexico she consigns it to gallerist Max Protetch in New York. Rolf Fehlbaum, owner and CEO of Swiss furniture company Vitra buys the professional archive for approximately $2.5 million from Max Protetch. Fehlbaum allegedly gifts it to his then fiancee Federica Zanco as a wedding present.

1996 The Barragan Foundation, directed by Zanco, is inaugurated at Vitra headquarters, in a publicly inaccessible location.

1997 The Barragan Foundation acquires Armando Salas Portugal’s negatives and photographs relating to Barragán’s architecture and landscape design, along with the rights to them.

1998 Fehlbaum and his brother Raymond submit an application to trademark Luis Barragan (without accent) in the United States.

2000 US Trademark application is accepted and registered.

2012 Artist Jill Magid visits Casa Luis Barragán and is told the story of Barragán’s controversial legacy by its director, Catalina Corcuera.

2013
Jan 10 Jill reaches out via Art Basel to the Barragan Foundation for access to the archive.
Jan 30 Magid meets Barragán family patriarch Hugo Barragán Hermosillo in Guadalajara to discuss her idea for The Proposal. Barragán Hermosillo agrees to help on the condition that his family is also supportive.
Jan 31 Zanco declines Magid access via Art Basel to the Barragan Foundation citing that the foundation is closing a major publication on the archives, and that in the next months it will be completely unable to allow access to the collection, nor be of any help to third parties.
April 22-27 Magid explores Barragán’s personal archive at Casa Luis Barragán
September 16 via letter Magid invites Zanco to collaborate on her upcoming solo exhibit at Art in General in New York.
**September 25** Via email Zanco declines Magid’s offer to collaborate, comparing the differences she sees between Magid’s “eminently artistic approach” to Barragán and her own “scholarly research, which is based on a thorough investigation of original sources, documents and testimonies.” Zanco cautions Magid that the professional archive is protected by ProLitteris Copyright Society and reproduction of its contents is unlawful.

**October 31** Via email, Zanco wishes Magid luck for her upcoming exhibition at Art in General, remarking that the project is fostering quite a dialogue -at a distance- with Zanco’s own work on Barragán.


**November 18** Magid sends Zanco her marked-up copy of *Climates*, a novel by André Maurois, and invites her to her upcoming show in Paris.

2014

**June 2** by mail Hugo Barragán Hermosillo introduces Magid’s idea for The Proposal to members of his family.

**July 19** Magid invites eighteen members of the Barragán family, chosen by and including Hugo Barragán Hermosillo, to preview “Mujer con Sombrero” at Museo de Arte de Zapopan (MAZ). Afterwards, she continues to explain her idea for The Proposal to the family members. They unanimously agree to support the project.

2015

**January 6** Magid proposes a project to the president of FATLB to sleep at Casa Luis Barragán for one week as an attempt to “turn the museum into a house again by returning a body to it.”

**April 22** Hugo Barragán Hermosillo sends an official letter to the Municipal President of Guadalajara requesting “a small symbolic amount of ashes from the Rotonda.” Two days later, the letter is forwarded to the Secretary General of Guadalajara.

**April 23** The first version of “The Family Agreement” is drafted between Magid and Hugo Barragán Hermosillo, Alfredo Vásquez Barragán, and other members of the Barragán family.

**May 8** The Barragán family’s request to exhume ashes from the Rotonda is heard before the Congress of the State of Jalisco.

**May 12** After approval from the Congress of the State of Jalisco, the Secretary General of Guadalajara grants permission to remove ashes from the Rotonda.

**July 10** After a month of negotiations, Magid and the Barragán family cosign the Spanish version of “The Family Agreement.” outlining the artwork, and expressing the family’s strong desire that Barragán’s professional archive return to Mexico.

**September 23** Filming for The Proposal documentary begins.

A total of 525 grams of Barragán’s cremated ashes are removed from the Rotonda and given to Magid. She immediately brings the ashes to Algordanza in Chur, Switzerland to begin the process of transforming the ashes into a diamond.

2016
May 31 Jill proposes *The Proposal* with the ring to Federica Zanco on Vitra’s campus. The exhibition featuring The Proposal opens at Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen a few days later

### ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

**Jill Magid, Director**
American artist and writer Jill Magid’s work is deeply ingrained in her lived experience, exploring and blurring the boundaries between art and life. Through her performance-based practice, Magid has initiated intimate relations with a number of organizations and structures of authority. She explores the emotional, philosophical and legal tensions between the individual and ‘protective’ institutions, such as intelligence agencies or the police. To work alongside or within large organizations, Magid makes use of institutional quirks, systemic loopholes that allow her to make contact with people ‘on the inside’. Her work tends to be characterized by the dynamics of seduction, the resulting narratives often taking the form of a love story. It is typical of Magid’s practice that she follows the rules of engagement with an institution to the letter – sometimes to the point of absurdity.

With solo exhibitions at institutions around the world including MUAC, Mexico City: Tate Modern, London; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Berkeley Museum of Art, California; Tate Liverpool; the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam; Yvon Lambert, Paris and New York; Gagosian Gallery, New York; and the Security and Intelligence Agency of the Netherlands, Magid has received awards from the Fonds Voor Beeldende Kunsten, the Netherlands, the American Foundation Fellowship Fulbright Grant, and most recently the 2017 Calder Prize. Magid has participated in Manifesta, the Liverpool, Bucharest, Singapore, Incheon, Gothenburg, Oslo and Performa Biennials. She is an Associate of the Art, Design and the Public Domain program at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University, and was a 2013-15 fellow at the Vera List Center for Art and Politics. An adjunct teacher at Cooper Union, Magid is the author of four novellas. Her work is included in the collections of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Fundacion Jumex, and the Walker Art Center, among others.

**Jarred Alterman, Producer and Cinematographer**
[https://jarredalterman.com](https://jarredalterman.com)
Jarred Alterman is a New York based documentary filmmaker and cinematographer, who won best cinematography at Tribeca Film Festival for *CONTEMPORARY COLOR*, a multi-cam David Byrne concert/doc film dir. By Ross Bros.
He has worked in music, art and dance related projects for over two decades, including Charles Atlas and Merce Cunningham Dance Co. He has recently lensed two Sundance premieres: Project X, a film by the Academy Award-winning director, Laura Poitras (*CitizenFour*) and Bisbee’ 17 by Robert Greene. His first feature, *Convento*, has played all over the world and won a special jury prize at IFFB.

**Charlotte Cook, Producer**
Charlotte Cook is a producer, curator, and writer from London, based in New York. Charlotte is a Co-Founder and Executive Producer of Field of Vision, a film unit that commissions filmmakers and artists to make short form, episodic and feature length creative visual journalism. Prior to Field of Vision, she was
the Director of Programming at Hot Docs, North America’s largest documentary festival. In addition to her work at Field of Vision, Charlotte is currently a programmer at CPH:DOX and recently produced the films Our New President (Sundance ‘18) and The Gospel of Eureka (SXSW ‘18).

**Laura Coxson, Producer**

[www.lauracoxson.com](http://www.lauracoxson.com)

Laura Coxson is an NYC-based documentary producer. Her film, *Iris* (2015), premiered at the 2014 New York Film Festival, was released by Magnolia Pictures and has grossed almost $2 million theatrically. She was an archival producer for a 2016 National Geographic TV series “I Am Rebel” Executive Produced by Doug Liman. Coxson produced *The Love We Make* (2012) with Paul McCartney for Showtime; *Muhammad and Larry* (2009) for ESPN’s 30 for 30 series; and a Documentary Yearbook piece for the 81st Academy Awards. She previously worked for Janus films, notably on the theatrical release of *The Great Beauty* (2013 Academy Award Winner- Foreign Language Film) as well as a July 4, 2014 re-release of *A Hard Day’s Night*. In 2010, the IFC’s “Stranger than Fiction” chose her as one of the “Top 20 People Under 40” working in Film. Most recently she produced *Chef Flynn* which premiered at Sundance and the Berlinale.

**FIELD OF VISION:**

Field of Vision was launched in September 2015 at the New York Film Festival. Field of Vision is led by Academy Award-winning filmmaker Laura Poitras and curator & producer Charlotte Cook and is a filmmaker-driven documentary unit that commissions and creates original short-form, episodic, and feature-length nonfiction films about developing and ongoing stories around the globe.

Work created by Field of Vision has been featured at major international film festivals, including Sundance, Cannes, SXSW, and Rotterdam, and has received the Best Short Form Series award at the International Documentary Association, a number of festival Grand Jury Prizes for Short Documentary, and a News and Documentary Emmy nomination. In addition, Field of Vision won the Webby Award for Online Film & Video – News & Politics: Series. Field of Vision is a unit of First Look Media.

**Hannah Buck, Editor**

Hannah Buck is a New York-based editor who received her BA in Media Arts from the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia. She has worked as an editor on the award-winning feature *An Oversimplification of Her Beauty* (Sundance, 2012), the impressionistic documentary *Triptych* (PBS, 2015), and *195 Lewis* (Rotterdam International Film Festival, 2016). In 2014 she was awarded a MacDowell Colony Residency Fellowship to edit *Memories of a Penitent Heart* and in 2015 was a fellow at the Sundance Edit and Story Lab.

**T. Griffin, Composer**

T. Griffin has composed scores for over 40 feature length films, and dozens of live and multimedia projects. Notable titles include the Academy-Award nominated LIFE, ANIMATED and multiple festival award winners QUEST, THE OVERNIGHTERS, and WELCOME TO LEITH as well as the recently Oscar
Shortlisted ONE OF US. He has composed and toured live film/music events with filmmakers including Sam Green, Jem Cohen, Brent Green and Esther Robinson. These shows have toured internationally and been presented by The Barbican, BAM Next Wave, The Walker Art Center, The Melt Down Festival, Big Ears Festival, and dozens of other festivals and museums. Besides his work as a film composer and solo artist he has worked as a player and/or producer with luminaries of the independent music world including Patti Smith, Vic Chesnutt, Mary Margaret O’Hara and members of The Ex, Dirty Three, Fugazi and Godspeed You! Black Emperor. He was a fellow at the Sundance Composers' Lab in 2008, and has twice been nominated for Cinema Eye Honors for Original Music Score. He is based in Brooklyn, New York.

Laura Poitras, Executive Producer
Laura Poitras is a filmmaker and journalist. Her film CITIZENFOUR won an Oscar for best documentary, as well as awards from BAFTA, Independent Spirit Awards, and the Directors Guild of America. The first film in her post-9/11 trilogy, My Country, My Country, was nominated for an Oscar. The second film, The Oath, was nominated for two Emmys. Her reporting on NSA surveillance received the George Polk Award for National Security journalism, and shared in the 2014 Pulitzer Prize for public service. Her most recent film, Risk premiered at the Cannes film festival in May 2016. She recently exhibited her first solo museum show at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

End Credits

Director
Jill Magid

Producers
Jarred Alterman
Charlotte Cook
Laura Coxson

Executive Producer
Laura Poitras

Editor
Hannah Buck

Director of Photography
Jarred Alterman

Original Music
T. Griffin
Associate Producer

Pamela Echeverria

**Multicards Begin**

Voice of Federica Zanco
Carin Kuoni

Voice of 1980 Pritzker Prize presenter
Carlton Smith

Featuring in order of appearance
Max Protetch
Rosario Uranga
Catalina Corcuera
Juan Palomar
Patrick Charpenel
René de Diego
Cuauhtémoc Medina

The Barragán Family **collaborators**
Alfonso Barragán Gortázar
Cristina Barragán Salín de Barragán
Hugo Barragán Hermosillo
Juan José Barragán Hermosillo
Lorenza Barragán Salín
Liana Barragán Gortázar
Luisa Barragán Gortázar
María Cristina Barragán Salín
Martha Barragán Hermosillo
Miguel Barragán Gortázar
Oscar Barragán Gortázar
Rafael Barragán Morín
Sylvia Elena Barragán Hermosillo
Tania Barragán
Teresa Barragán Hermosillo
Celina González de Vázquez
Silvia Rickmann Barragán
María Cristina Salín de Barragán
Alfredo Vásquez Barragán
Luis Vásquez González
Ricardo Vásquez González
Paulina Vasquez Hernandez-Uritz

in memorium Hugo Barragán Hermosillo

Line Producer Sam Linder

Post Production Supervisor Jean Lane

Consulting Editor Nels Bangerter

Additional Editor Jarred Alterman

Assistant Editor Claire Ave'Lallemant

Main Title Design & Graphic Sequences Teddy Blanks, CHIPS

Additional Camera Jiří Makovec
Oliver Santana
José Villalobos
Nelson Walker

Script Consultants Anna Craycroft
David Kim
Jessica Loudis

Research Assistant Megan Wallace
Production Coordinators
Meg Murnane, New York
Barbara Singer, Switzerland
Liora Spilk, Mexico

Production Assistants
Carlos Ivan Ramirez Dueñas
Alejandra Labastida

Translators
Ana Andrade
Carola Berjón
Daniel Carrejón
Ricardo Cazares Grana
Jessica Julieta

For Field of Vision:
Bryce Renninger
Managing Editor

Farijah Zaman
Production Manager

Mark Lukenbill
Data Manager

June Jennings
Editorial Coordinator

DI Facility
Nice Dissolve

Colorist
Joseph Mastantuono

Online Editor
Ben Federman

Supervising Online Editor
Chris Kenny

DI Producer
Pierce Varous

Flame Artist
Maryanne Butler
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<td>T. Griffin, Bowed Banjo, Guitars, Accordion, Electronics</td>
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<td>Reut Regev, Trombone</td>
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<td>Matana Roberts, Saxophone</td>
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<td>Ryan Rumery, Drums for &quot;Controversy&quot;</td>
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<td>Sophie Trudeau, violin</td>
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<td>Jim White, Drums for Jazz band</td>
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Convento de las Capuchinas Sacramentarias. Tlalpan, Mexico. 1955. Architect: Luis Barragán,
Day of the Dead clips are excerpts from the film by Charles and Ray Eames, and are copyright © 2018 Eames Office, LLC.

Pritzker Prize audio, 1980.

The Quiet Revolution-REMOVE THIS

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Anndra Neen
Arte en Flores
Cerámica Suro
Direct Dimensions
Downing Frames
Kelsey Knight Mohr
Krypton Neon
Lower East Side Print Shop
Pfister Modellbau

Graphic Design for artwork
Philipp Hubert of Hubert & Fischer

Tapete de Flores fabricators
Mario Arturo Aguilar Gutierrez
Elesban Ernesto Sandoval Díaz

Silver Artisan
Maestro Reyes Batalla Villa

Ex-Voto painters
Alfredo Vilchis

Legal Advisors for artwork
Jonathan Freiman
Daniel McClean
Miguel Jáuregui Rojas

Artwork in gallery at Museo de Arte
de Zapopan
Los Carpinteros

Featured Exhibitions

Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen, 2016
Giovanni Carmine, Curator
Maren Brauner, Assistant Curator
Fabienne Lussmann, Administration
Timo Bockstaller, Installation
Sebastian Schaub, Installation
Anna Beck-Woerner, Art-education
Cornelia Harp, Supervisor

Museo Universitario de Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC), 2017

Cuauhtémoc Medina, Curator
Alejandra Labastida, Assistant Curator
Graciela de la Torre, Director
Luis Vargas, Panel Coordinator
Mauricio Cuevas, Panel assistant
Alejandra Monroy, Panel assistant
Magdalena Morales, Panel assistant

Special Thanks
Leah Alterman
Oona Alterman

Banks Bauer
Jonny Bauer
Linus Bauer
Charlotte Farrell
Jake Perlin

Thanks
Ana María Albor
Irma López Albor
Anne Barlow
Alex Bayer
Olivier Belot
Claudia Bestor
Mauricio Cadena
Florent Chauvin
Mathieu Cénac
Colby Chamberlain
Tyler Coburn
Aaron Cooper
Keiko Deguchi
Florence Derieux
Leonardo Diaz-Borioli
Beth Earl
Mia Egerstrom
Gustavo Enriquez Méndez
Molly Epstein
Damian Figueras
Christopher Fraga
Fundación de Arquitectura Tapatía Luis Barragán
Hebe Garibay
Eva Franch i Gilabert
Mariana Güell
Jennifer Friede
Beatrice Galilee
Lucy Gallen
Leah Giblin
Alice Gregory
Anna Gritz
Andrea Herrada
Jenny Jaskey
Nikolaus Hirsch
Koran Kendig
Randy Kennedy
Adam Kleinman
Labor, Mexico City
Cheri Magid
Jan and Dennis Magid
Rebekah Maysles
Sarah McKinnon
Marsha Meredith
Museo de Arte de Zapopan
Dennis Paphitis
Sarah Nakano Purgett
Elizabeth A. Povinelli
Jonathan Oppenheim
Jorge Otero-Pailos
Maria Palomar
Beat Raeber
Jack Ramm
Ismael Reyes Retana
Pedro Reyes
Othiana Roffiel
Bob Rubin
Gabriela Ruiz
Pavka Segura
Richard Stephen
Alan Sierra
Annette Stephens
Phoebe Stephens
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Katrina Taylor
Nader Tehrani
Gediminas Urbonas
Danielle Varga
Ana Maria Sanchez
Yolanda Silva
Matthias von Stenglin
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Vera List Center for Art and Politics, The New School
Jorge Volpi
Ines Weizman
Lana Wilson
Zoe Whitley
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Cameron Yates
Julie Zommers

In Memoriam
Hugo Barragán Hermosillo

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Aesop
Aimée Labarerre De Servitje
San Francisco Art Institute

The Proposal artwork is commissioned by San Francisco Art Institute.

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Charles Desmarais, President
Rachel Schreiber, Interim President
Katie Hood Morgan, Assistant Curator
Robin Beard, Chief Preparator
Benjamin Ashlock, Technology Manager
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