



Ingrid Wildi, *¿Aquí vive la señora Ellana M...?*, 2003, still from a DVD, 68 minutes.

intensify the ambiguity between innocence and cynicism elsewhere in the exhibition.

After a room presenting landscape photographs and one large gouache collage, all dominated by tones of blue, *Untitled (Cross-Eyed)*, 2001, came as a surprise as the sole work in the large white gallery, viewed diagonally from the entrance. Two circular wooden panels, like black inlaid pupils surrounded by the amber shades of their irises, transformed the room into a face that gazed back at the viewer. The subdued tones of this final work contrasted with the explosion of bright color elsewhere in the exhibition, while the structures in the marquetry created a final flourish to the formal pattern-making and symmetries that link Uklański's works. Simulating lightning, the installation *Untitled (Riders in the Sky)*, 2004, completed the choreography of the exhibition with a tongue-in-cheek destruction of the skylit gallery, the jewel in the crown of the kunsthalle. This dramatic gesture was impressively constructed but lacked the edginess necessary to make it more than just elegant.

—Felicity Lunn

## AARGAU, SWITZERLAND

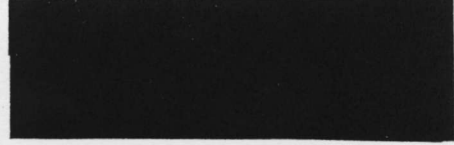
### INGRID WILDI

#### AARGAUER KUNSTHAUS

An elderly woman sits on the edge of a bed, smoothing down a knitted sweater. "I predicted the Berlin Wall, too—five years ahead of time." With these words, spoken almost as an aside, a journey begins, leading from Santiago to the desert in the north of Chile. In her sixty-eight-minute-long DVD *¿Aquí vive la señora Eliana M...?*, 2003, Ingrid Wildi interviews her way through relatives

and acquaintances in search of her mother, with whom she had lost all contact since childhood. The camera follows the search closely but never relinquishes some last crucial bit of documentary distance. Tension is created through the curiosity aroused by the search for clues from a great range of interviewees who are just as likely to offer anecdotes, great and small, from their own daily lives. From this search for the mother emerges a subjective portrait of a society. The film, document of both memory and prophecy, ends at the front door of a house but doesn't wait for it to open.

Wildi adopts documentary strategies typical of much current art meant to be political, but only to expand on them, to interrupt and differentiate them with fictions. Here documentary functions as a mindset, a way of showing people themselves rather than an abstract, predetermined agenda. A journey takes its origin from encounters with people, with their premonitions and viewpoints, with the objects they use to explain some part of their world. *De palabra en palabra* is the title of the exhibition catalogue, and indeed, word for word, world-pictures are created whenever someone explains the choice of some personal effect or recounts a memory—when a projectionist, for instance, rattles off his account of the film playing in the cinema and comments on the reactions of the audience. Only occasionally does the artist enter the picture, in voice off. Her questions seek precision while also leaving room for digressions. Because of her own history as a migrant between South America and Europe, between languages—Spanish, German, and French—she also moves between different narrative modes. Fiction and reality cannot be readily separated.



Peter Piller, *untitled*, n.d., digital  
"Durchkämmten" (Com

With the concept of the video essay, Wildi lends her work a status somewhere between objectivity and inwardness; thus the unobtrusive but highly conscious editing of the individual works. Likewise, her still photographs take the documentary conceit of the medium as their departure point, showing subjective moments in urban spaces from a neutral distance. In both cases, Wildi works to trace changes at the margins of history, the kind of details from which Walter Benjamin developed his interpretation of the nineteenth century in his unfinished *Arcades Project* (1927–40). This attention to particulars determines the film's duration and its gently slowed-down rhythm of perception. Through a simple series of conversations there gradually emerges a portrait of the missing mother, an absent image that merges with the memory in the opening sequence. It is as if filmic time could abandon its linear nature and forever change the borders running between real time, memory, and fiction.

—Hans Rudolf Reust

Translated from German by Sara Ogger.

## COLOGNE

### TINO SEHGAL

#### GALERIE JOHNEN + SCHÖTTLE

As I write these lines, I can't help but wonder if I'm betraying Tino Sehgal, a Berlin-based artist whose performances—he doesn't even like them to be called that—have been garnering attention for around three years. For while performance art depends on having a witness to its existence, be it a photograph, a written report, or carefully preserved relics, Sehgal eschews