

EUROPLEX

A videotape by Ursula Biemann and Angela Sanders



Documentary
2003
20 min
Color
Switzerland
Subtitled

Directors: Ursula Biemann and Angela Sanders



Synopsis

The fourth in Ursula Biemann's critically acclaimed series of video essays that investigates migration across borders, this collaboration with Angela Sanders tracks the daily, sometimes illicit, border crossings between Morocco and Spain. At a rare intersection of the first and third worlds, we witness a fascinating, often hidden layer in the cultural and economic landscape between Europe and Africa. Paying off officials to look the other way, workers smuggle contraband across the border, sometimes crossing up to 11 times a day. In a now common scenario of global economics, Moroccan women work in North Africa to produce goods destined for the European market. And in perhaps the most surreal example of border logic, domesticas commute daily into Ceuta, a Spanish enclave in Moroccan territory, and lose two hours as they step into the European time zone to care for other women's families. With a mesmerizing soundtrack and a dizzying blend of video footage, digital graphics and text, Biemann illuminates the complex balance of power between these interdependent actors who rely on each other for their survival. Motivated by economic gain to move across countries and cultures, they explode the notion of borders as fixed lines of separation, revealing the new rules and profound implications of globalization.

About the Directors

Ursula Biemann studied art and cultural theory in Mexico and New York. Her curatorial and art practice relates to gender and geography in posturban zones such as the US-Mexico border, Istanbul's periphery, and military zones in Southeast Asia. Her prior works *Performing the Border*, *Writing Desire*, and *Remote Sensing* focus on the sexualisation of transnational labor in material, technological and virtual geographies. She was co-curator at independent art space Shedhalle Zurich from 1995-1998, and curated "Geography and the Politics of Mobility" at the Generali Foundation in Vienna and "Stuff It: The Video Essay in the Digital Age," at the Institut für Theorie der Gestaltung und Kunst. Among her most recent publications is the artist book "Been There and Back to Nowhere - On Gender in Transnational Spaces." She is also a guest professor at the Art Academy in Geneva and researches at the Institute for Theory in Art and Design at HGKZ, Zurich.

Angela Sanders, visual anthropologist and videomaker, studied at the Universities of Zurich and Edinburgh. At present, the main focus of her research is on the living and working conditions of Moroccan women who work as "domesticas" (housemaids) in Andalusia and Northern Morocco (Ceuta, Melilla). In addition to *Europlex*, Sanders has made films such as *Irina*, a portrait of a Ukrainian migrant woman in the south of Spain and *Domestic Scapes*, an insight into the daily life of Moroccan domestic workers in Sevilla and in the Spanish enclaves Ceuta & Melilla. She publishes on a regular basis and has written a number of articles on the subject of gender, identity, film, and media. Sanders is also on the editorial team at "FRAZ," a Swiss feminist magazine, where she recently produced an issue on the Mediterranean.

Festivals

- Biennale de l'Image en Mouvement, Geneva
- Nürnberg Human Rights Film Festival
- Femme Totale Film Festival