

# Pieces Of Dreams

Video von Michael Pilz  
Austria 1999, 55'

Im Herbst 1988 inszenierte Jack Garfein in Wien bei George Tabori vier Einakter von Samuel Beckett. Jack war in der Slowakei aufgewachsen, hatte Auschwitz überlebt und eine Theaterkarriere bei Lee Strasberg am New Yorker Actors Studio begonnen. Er inszenierte erfolgreich am Broadway, war mit der Schauspielerin Carroll Baker verheiratet, drehte zwei ausgezeichnete Spiel- und mehrere Dokumentarfilme, lehrte in den USA und übersiedelte Ende der 80er Jahre nach Paris.

Ich traf Jack bei einem Seminar über die Schauspieltechnik von Stanislawski, wir freundeten uns an und er hatte nichts dagegen, als ich während der sechswöchigen Proben filmen wollte. Um mir zu zeigen, wie er selbst am Text arbeitet, bevor er sich den Schauspielern widmet, lud er mich am Nachmittag des 3. September zu sich in sein Hotel. Ohne im voraus zu wissen, was geschehen wird, filmte ich, wie er dem Text von *Ohio Impromptu*, einem rätselvollen Zusammentreffen zweier Männer, auf den Grund zu gehen versuchte. Am nächsten Morgen begann die sechswöchige Probenarbeit mit den Schauspielern.

Seither habe ich nur einmal eine Aufnahme des insgesamt etwa vierzig Stunden umfassenden Videomaterials benützt, 1994 in *ALL THE VERMEERS IN PRAGUE*, eine kurze Szene, in der Jack mit den Schauspielern über *Ohio Impromptu* spricht.

Die Aufnahmen vom 3. September 1988 sah ich zum erstenmal im Juni 1999, während einer schwierigen Phase der Montage von *DA CAPO AL FINE* (1995/99), um mich etwas abzulenken. Ich hatte inzwischen vergessen, was damals passiert war und wie ich gefilmt hatte. Ich war überrascht, vor allem von der Tatsache, daß es kaum etwas zu ändern gab und daß die ungewöhnliche Ton- und Farbgestaltung, teilweise eine Folge der Alterung des Videomaterials, meinen Absichten, dem Dokument einen zusätzlichen Anstrich von Fiktion zu verleihen, entgegenkam.

Was wir heute sehen, elf Jahre nach den Dreharbeiten, entspricht bis auf wenige Kürzungen dem, was und wie ich damals filmte, als Jack versuchte, den rätselvollen Text zu entschlüsseln und seine eigenen, inneren Bilder dazu zu finden. In einem persönlichen Gespräch soll Beckett Jack auf die Frage, welche Absichten diesem Theaterstück zugrunde liegen, gesagt haben, "that's all there is".

Michael Pilz, Wien, Jänner 2000

An encounter between two men in a Viennese hotel room. An exciting and personal report from 1988 that was recently rediscovered by the maker. How the American director Jack Garfein tried to get into the recalcitrant text of Samuel Beckett's *Ohio Impromptu*. One director meets the other. An intimate moment.

29th International Film Festival Rotterdam,  
26 January – 6 February 2000

(...) **Pieces of Dreams** ist ein Portrait des Regisseurs Jack Garfein, der 1988 auf Einladung von George Tabori in Wien vier Stücke von Samuel Beckett inszeniert hat. Und wieder: die vertraute Geduld beim Hinschauen und Hinhören, die Vorliebe für die lange Einstellung, mit der eine Traditionslinie von Bresson bis Straub, von Tarkowskij bis Sokurov Widerstand leistet gegen die Atemlosigkeit von Hollywood und Videoclip. Kennzeichnend für die Arbeitsweise von Michael Pilz auch dies: Eher zufällig stieß er kürzlich auf das 1988 gedrehte, mittlerweile etwas verblaßte Material und beschloß nun, daraus mit geringen Manipulationen einen Film zu machen. Planung und Improvisation, Disziplin und Spontaneität, Ordnung und Zufall bilden das Spannungsfeld, in dem Michael Pilz seine Kunst produziert: unspektakulativ, frei von jedem Gedanken an Karriere, allein eben der Kunst verpflichtet. Ein Fanatiker im besten Sinn. Ein Narr. Es gibt heute zuwenig davon. (...)

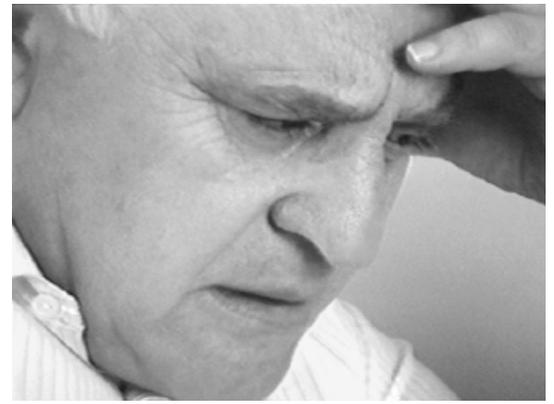
Thomas Rothschild,  
*DIE PRESSE*, Wien, 9. September 2000

(...) Geschehen lassen, was geschieht, die Aufmerksamkeit nicht fokussieren, sondern schlicht aufmerksam sein, das Kameraauge als wachsamer Registrator des Momentanen, der sich im Augenblick der Aufnahme selbst vergißt. Wie in **Pieces of Dreams**, wo Pilz den Theaterregisseur Jack Garfein in dessen Hotelzimmer bei den Vorbereitungen eines Beckett-Stückes beobachtet. Der Raum ist angefüllt mit Sprache und Konzentration, das manische Repetieren einzelner Textfragmente wird abgelöst durch lange Passagen gespannter Stille. Zuweilen gerät Pilz selbst ins Bild und wird zum Impresario und Mitakteur einer kammer-spielartigen Versuchsanordnung, in der das Dokumentarische fast fiktionale Züge bekommt. (...)

Mark Stöhr,  
*Nothing left to tell*,  
*SCHNITT*, Das Filmmagazin, Nr. 23, 3/2001, Bochum

(...) Dass Pilz bis heute nur einer Gemeinschaft von Eingeweihten ein Begriff ist, liegt wohl daran, daß er, rigoros am Markt vorbei, etablierte dokumentarische Formate umgeht: *Prisjadim na dorozku*, ein Reisefilm, dauert etwa nicht weniger als zehn Stunden. Außerdem öffnet sich bei ihm das Dokumentarische oft hin zum Experimentellen. (...) Seine jüngsten Arbeiten setzen diesen reduktionistischen Kurs konsequent weiter fort. In **Pieces of dreams** beobachtet Pilz den Theaterregisseur Jack Garfein dabei, wie er in einem Hotelzimmer über *Ohio Impromptu*, einem späten Beckett-Drama, ins Grübeln gerät und schöpft dabei ganz im Sinne des Dichters alle Möglichkeiten eines Raumes aus. (...)

Dominik Kamalzadeh,  
*Wie sich die Dinge ereignen*,  
*DER STANDARD*, Wien, 10./11. Februar 2001



He lived his early years in a German concentration camp. Even there he was like a darling of the gods. It was there also that he learned the art of discrimination.

What amazed me about him on our first meeting was the range of his knowledge and his mastery of English, a foreign language to him. When we meet the sparks fly. He is not only most affable, charming, exciting, but a great raconteur who holds you spell-bound.

His career as a director began quite early, in New York City, with O'Casey's first play, *THE SHADOW OF A GUNMAN*. The school which he later established has turned out a number of excellent actors.

One is not long in his presence before one realizes that, next to the theatre his passion is women. He loves them as a gardener loves flowers. He makes no bones about it, he is a sensualist. And as such, he is like a famous violinist.

Like Napoleon, he believes that the best defense is the attack. He attacks everything with the same gusto. He is endowed with an enormous appetite for life. He devours things, human beings as well.

Talking to him, one feels he had an extraordinary education. He gives the impression of knowing anything and everything – and thoroughly! He probably has prejudices, as do we all, but he does not reveal them. He seems more like a "master" from the Middle Ages than a contemporary individual.

When he talks he sets everything in motion. He says things which stun, startle and confuse you momentarily.

One of his characteristics is that he seems to be beaming, always infatuated with whatever he is doing.

Strindberg is one of his favorite playwrights. He is particularly fond of *MISS JULIE*, *THE STRONGER* and *CREDITORS*. He knows his characters inside out. Just to mention Strindberg or Dostoevsky is to set him talking for hours. Of his students he expects the most. He himself always gives the utmost. Besides, he is never through explaining. No matter how well you may think you know a book, a scene, a character, Jack can explain what you failed to see or understand. He is as ruthless with his pupils as with himself. He can talk as interestingly about the Talmud or the Old Testament as about modern or ancient drama.

He is tenacious as a bulldog, a perfectionist – no letting go until a thing has been mastered.

He is also possessed of great tenderness as well as reverence. In a man whose tastes are so varied and whose intellect is so keen this tenderness of his is or is not a great surprise. One thing he is not and that is an intellectual snob. He is so many things, always involved, always searching for answers, usually for the truth of a situation, that he has become the compleat human being. He is like an organ from which one can wring the finest, noblest music.

He lives on a grande scale, whether he can afford it or not. His heart is abundant and the range of his interests is simply staggering.

If I have not seen him for a few weeks he will in that time have read all the great Russian authors, for example.

Or the Scandinavian playwrights. Or perhaps he will have done some research on the Gnostics. I am always surprised to learn what he has just been up to. He is, to put it simple, a cosmological man. His world is the cosmos.

His female pupils are always falling in love with him and he with them. All for love is his motto.

As a conversationalist he is one of the most stimulating men I have ever known. He is always full of surprises, sometimes erotic ones, other times erudite ones.

He is deeply religious without belonging to church or synagogue. He would have made an excellent rabbi, for example, particularly because of the way he can split hairs.

Being a perfectionist he is somewhat hard on his pupils. He has the endurance of a giant and the knowledge of an encyclopedist.

I mentioned his readings. He is a voracious reader with a retentive memory. When he reads a book he knows it by heart. He retains a memory of books read which is nothing less than phenomenal. And such diversity of reading material! Myself, though I am no longer a great reader, I can seldom relate the story or the plot of the book I have just read. But I can talk about the book – endlessly, it seems.

Jack has two wonderful children in their late teens. The product of a stormy marriage, they show no neurotic strain. Half the year they live with their mother, the actress Carroll Baker, and half the year with Jack. Living with the mother they have seen something of the world. They speak several languages fluently. They are a remarkable tribute to both parents.

Jack's life with Carroll Baker reminds me somewhat of my life with one of my wives. Stormy, tumultuous, fascinating.

He is deeply religious without going to synagogue as I said before. Again, like myself, I feel. I repeat this bit about his religiousness because at first blush he gives the impression of being non-religious. A great Jewish writer said somewhere – "the man who constantly talks about God is an ungodly man." Precisely. It's when Jack is talking about some simple thing that one feels his godliness. To me he is similar to Krishnamurti, who is against masters and gurus and all so-called holy people. Was it Krishnamurti who once told his disciples not to follow in his footsteps, confessing that his love for God was a vice?

I hope I have made my point clear. To put it more simply still I would say that Jack is in love with his life. But he includes all of his life. There is no "holier than thou" in his make-up. All is holy, and out of evil often springs good. Voila a man after my own heart.

I mentioned earlier that Jack gives the impression of being a well educated individual. Oddly enough it began in the concentration camp. One of the guards took a liking to him and made it his business to teach him what he may have learned at school. A strange business, this tenderness among the killer Nazis, but a true paradox. On Christmas day, for example, he was treated to a piece of cake and a glass of wine by his jailers. Apparently even monsters

have a heart. As a result of these occurrences Jack has a most forgiving and understanding heart. I believe it was he who once quoted a line of Eckerman's CONVERSATIONS WITH GOETHE. Said Goethe one day: "I doubt that there is crime, however heinous, that I have not felt capable for myself". This from "the first European".

Jack has a mind like a razor's edge and a heart to match. A rare combination. If he had followed his head he might have become a celebrated rabbi; if he had followed his heart alone he could have become a saint, a JEWISH SAINT, BIEN ENTENDU! But he is, as I mentioned earlier, the whole man, the rounded man, the man of a by-gone epoch. Today we turn out great scholars, great pundits, great scientists, even great musicians, but no great men of heart. We turn out men of learning who can also be monsters, masters (in a religious sense) who turn out to be fakers. Everything we touch in this world of today has something phony about it. It's the age of plastics, nothing being what it seems to be.

And now I feel like saying something that may shock some of my readers. I think that Jack Garfein's experience as a boy in a Nazi concentration camp demonstrates that sometimes out of evil springs good. Certainly I know no other way to explain his benevolence, his sense of humanity, his understanding and compassion.

After all, it is so very strange what I have just written. Do not the Christians owe their god Jesus to the treachery of his disciple Judas?

Only the other day, from the lips of a physician who had served in the war, was I informed of the fact, according to him, that over half the guards in the concentration camps were volunteers from other countries than Germany.

But enough of this ... one may begin to think I am making a plea in behalf of the Nazis, than which nothing could be further from truth.

What I am stressing, I must repeat is that good and evil are mixed in the human being. We have not yet seen the perfect man, though we have had some noble examples of a human being. Suffice to say, they were not all saints. We also know that there were so-called saints who were nearer to being monsters.

To change the subject abruptly ... To see Jack Garfein putting his arms around a woman and kissing her is a very special treat. If it was lust which inspired his behavior then lust has to be regarded as one of the virtues.

This is only a feeble example of why I said before that Jack is a holy man. Perhaps a holy man who, out of the greatness of his heart, permits himself to sin on occasion. (And not go through the farce of repenting afterwards). No, his behavior reminds one more of that of a Zen master whose religion is no religion. No repentance, no guilt, no shame! How refreshing!

#### MY BIKE AND OTHER FRIENDS

Volume II, "Book of Friends", Chapter Six: JACK GARFEIN  
by Henry Miller

#### Jack Garfein

director, writer, producer  
(state of 1988)

#### FILM

*The Strange One* (Columbia) with Ben Gazzara and George Peppard

*Something Wild* with Carroll Baker, Ralph Meeker and Mildred Dunnok

A Tribute by Cinémathèque Française October 1984

#### THEATER

##### Broadway

*End as a Man* with Ben Gazzara (Show Business Award for best Director on Broadway)

*Girls of Summer* with Shelley Winters and Pat Hingle

*The Sin of Pat Muldon* with James Barton and Elaine Stritch

*Shadow of a Gunman* by Sean O'Casey, with members of the Actors Studio

##### Off-Broadway

*The Lesson* by Eugene Ionesco (combined with the film *California Reich*)

*Rommel's Garden*, 1985

##### France

*Master Harold and the Boys* by Athol Fugard,  
French Premiere at the Renaud-Barrault-Theater,  
Paris, 1985

##### England

The Beckett Plays (*Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe*, *What Where*), Edinburgh Festival, 1984 and the London Premiere at the Warehouse Theater, 1984

##### Israel

The Beckett Plays (*Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe*, *What Where*), Jerusalem Festival, 1985

##### Austria

The Beckett Plays (*Ohio Impromptu*, *Catastrophe*, *What Where*, *Nights and Dreams*), Der Kreis (George Tabori), Vienna, 1988

##### Regional Theaters

*Don't go Gentle* by William Inge, Premiere,  
and *How Tall is Toscanini* by Calder Willingham,  
at UCLA Theater, Los Angeles

*The Sponsor* with Joseph Wiseman at the Westhouse Playhouse

*Anna Christie* with Carroll Baker, at Hintington Hartford Theater, Los Angeles and Tappan Zee Playhouse, New York

*Arms and the Man* by George Bernard Shaw, with Carroll Baker, at Drury Lane, Chicago



#### TELEVISION

*The Marriage* with Hume Cronyn and Jessica Tandy, NBC  
*The Dwarf* by Ray Bradbury, NBC

#### DOCUMENTARY

*Journey to Kenia* and *On Acting and Directing*,  
writer, director, photography  
*The Journey Back*, writer, actor

#### WRITER FOR FILM

*Something Wild*, screenplay, co-writer  
*The Farm*, screenplay

#### WRITER FOR THEATRE

*August, August, August* by Pavel Kohout, english version

#### ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Professor in Cinema Department, USC, 1969–1973  
Founder of the Actors and Director's Lab, Los Angeles  
and New York  
Founder of The Actor's Studio, Los Angeles  
Lectured at Harvard University, UCLA, NYU and Pacific  
Archives, San Francisco  
In addition, Jack Garfein directed the following actors  
in various productions: Herbert Berghof, Jean Stapleton,  
Uta Hagen, Bruce Dern, Gary Merrill, Steve McQueen,  
Susan Strasberg, James Dean, Pat Hingle, Alvin Epstein

#### PRODUCER

Broadway  
*Avner the Eccentric*, 1985  
*The American Clock* by Arthur Miller, 1980–1981  
*The Price* by Arthur Miller, 1979–1980

#### Off-Broadway

*Childhood* with Glenn Close, 1985  
*For No Good Reason* by Nathalie Sarraute,  
World Premiere, 1985  
*Rommel's Garden*, 1985  
*Ekkehard Schall*, Berliner Ensemble, American Debut, 1985  
*Kurt Weill Cabaret* with Alvon Epstein  
and Martha Schlamme, 1985  
*Endgame*, 1984  
*Rockaby* with Billie Whitelaw, 1984  
The Beckett Plays (*Ohio Impromptu, Catastrophe,*  
*What Where*), 1983–1985  
*Hannah* with Blanche Baker, 1983  
*With Love and Laughter*, 1982  
*Chuck's Hunch*, 1982  
*A Chekov Scetchbook* with Joseph Buloff  
and John Herd, 1981  
*These Men* directed by Zoe Caldwell, 1980

*Paris was Yesterday* with Celeste Holm, 1980  
*Flying Blind*, 1979  
*California Reich* and *The Lesson* by Eugene Ionesco,  
1978–1979

Founder and Artistic Director of the Harold Clurman  
Theater, 1978

#### Regional Theater

*The American Clock* and *The Price* by Arthur Miller,  
Spoleto Festival, Charleston, South Carolina, 1979–1980

#### Off-Off-Broadway

Produced eight productions by new playwrights and  
a revival of *Two Character Play* by Tennessee Williams,  
1979–1981

#### England

The Beckett Plays (*Ohio Impromptu, Catastrophe,*  
*What Where*), The Warehouse Theater, London, 1984

**Ohio Impromptu**

by Samuel Beckett

World Premiere on 9 May 1981,  
Drake Union, Stadium 2 Theater, Ohio.  
Vienna Premiere, 20 October 1988,  
Der Kreis (George Tabori), featuring Klaus Fischer  
and Rainer Frieb, directed by Jack Garfein.

(L) *Listener and (R) Reader*  
*As alike in appearance as possible.*

*Light on table midstage. Rest of stage in darkness.*  
*Plain with deal table, say 8'x4'.*  
*Two plain armless white deal chairs.*

*L seated at table facing front towards end of long side  
audience right. Bowed head propped on right hand. Face  
hidden. Left hand on table. Long black coat. Long white  
hair.*

*R seated at table in profile centre of short side audience  
right. Bowed head propped on right hand. Left hand on  
table. Book on table before him open at last pages. Long  
black coat. Long white hair.*

*Black wide-brimmed hat at centre of table.*

*Fade up.*

*Ten seconds.*

*R turns page.*

*Pause.*

*R reading:*  
*Little is left to tell. In a last –*

*L knocks with left hand on table.*  
*Little is left to tell.*

*Pause. Knock.*

In a last attempt to obtain relief he moved from where they  
had been so long together to a single room on a far bank.  
From its single window he could see the down-stream  
extremity of the Isle of Swans.

*Pause.*

Relief he had hoped would flow from unfamiliarity.  
Unfamiliar room. Unfamiliar scene. Out to where nothing  
ever shared. Back to where nothing ever shared. From this  
he had once half hoped some measure of relief might flow.

*Pause.*

Day after day he could be seen slowly packing the islet.  
Hour after hour. In his long black coat no matter what the  
weather and old world Latin Quarter hat. At the tip he  
would always pause to dwell on the receding stream. How  
in joyous eddies its two arms conflowed and flowed united  
on. Then turn and his slow steps retrace.

*Pause.*

In his dreams –

*Knock.*

Then turn and his slow steps retrace.

*Pause. Knock.*

In his dreams he had been warned against this change.  
Seen the dear face and heard the unspoken words, Stay  
where we were so long alone together, my shade will  
comfort you.

*Pause.*

Could he not –

*Knock.*

Seen the dear face and heard the unspoken words, Stay  
where we were so long alone together, my shade will  
comfort you.

*Pause. Knock.*

Could he not now turn back? Acknowledge his error and  
return to where they were once so long alone together.  
Alone together so much shared. No. What he had done  
alone could not be undone. Nothing he had ever done alone  
could ever be undone. By him alone.

*Pause.*

In this extremity his old terror of night laid hold on him  
again. After so long a lapse that as if never been. *Pause.*  
*Looks closer.* Yes, after so long a lapse that as if never  
been. Now with redoubled force the fearful symptoms  
described at length page forty paragraph four. *Starts to  
turn back the pages. Checked by L's left hand. Resumes  
relinquished page.* White nights now again his portion.  
As when his heart was young. No sleep no braving sleep  
till – *turns page* – dawn of day.

*Pause.*



Little is left to tell. One night –

*Knock.*

Little is left to tell.

*Pause. Knock.*

One night as he sat trembling head in hands from head to foot a man appeared to him and said, I have been sent by – and here he named the dear name – to comfort you. Then drawing a worn volume from the pocket of his long black coat he sat and read till dawn. Then disappeared without a word.

*Pause.*

Some time later he appeared again at the same hour with the same volume and this time without preamble sat and read it through again the long night through. Then disappeared without a word.

*Pause.*

So from time to time unheralded he would appear to read the sad tale through again and the long night away. Then disappear without a word.

*Pause*

With never a word exchanged they grew to be as one.

*Pause.*

Till the night came at last when having closed the book and dawn at hand he did not disappear but sat on without a word.

*Pause.*

Finally he said, I have had word from – and here he named the dear name – that I shall not come again. I saw the dear face and heard the unspoken words, No need to go to him again, even were it in your power.

*Pause.*

So the sad –

*Knock.*

Saw the dear face and heard the unspoken words, No need to go to him again, even were it in you power.

*Pause. Knock.*

So the sad tale a last time told they sat on as though turned to stone. Through the single window dawn shed no light. From the street no sound of reawakeing. Or was it that buried in who knows what thoughts they paid no heed? To light of day. To sound of reawakeing. What thoughts who knows. Thoughts, no, not thoughts. Profounds of mind. Of mindlessness. Whither no light can reach. No sound. So sat on as though turned no stone. The sad tale a last time told.

*Pause.*

Nothing is left to tell.

*Pause. R makes to close book.*

*Knock. Book half-closed.*

Nothing is left to tell.

*Pause. R closes book.*

*Knock.*

*Silence. Five seconds.*

*Simultaneously they lower their right hands to table, raise their heads and look at each other. Unblinking. Expressionless.*

*Ten seconds.*

*Fade out.*

Originaltitel .....	<b>Pieces of Dreams</b>
Produktionsland .....	Österreich
Drehzeit .....	3. September 1988
Drehort .....	Deutschmeister Hotel, Wien
Fertigstellung .....	Juli 1999
Produzent .....	Michael Pilz
Produktion .....	Michael Pilz Film
Konzept und Realisation .....	Michael Pilz
Bild .....	Michael Pilz
Originalton .....	Michael Pilz
Montage .....	Michael Pilz
Featuring .....	Jack Garfein
Literatur .....	Samuel Beckett, <i>Ohio Impromptu</i>
Musik .....	Franz Schubert, <i>Winterreise</i> (Auszüge)
Vokalist .....	Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau
Originalformat .....	Video 8, PAL, Farbe, mono, 4:3
Vorführformat .....	Beta, DV, PAL, Farbe, mono (Ch1 = Ch2), 4:3
Sprache .....	Englisch
Untertitel .....	keine
Laufzeit .....	55'
Empfehlung .....	Der Video-Ton und die darin enthaltenen Rauschanteile sind dramaturgisch beabsichtigt. Um den Intentionen des Regisseurs gerecht zu werden, empfehlen wir, den Ton über eine Stereo-Anlage oder eine PA-Anlage anzuhören.
Förderung .....	Österreichisches Bundeskanzleramt, Sektion Kunst
Erstaufführung .....	30. Jänner 2000, 29. Internationales Filmfestival Rotterdam
Festivals .....	Rotterdam, 29. Internationales Film Festival, Jänner 2000 Graz, <i>Diagonale</i> , Festival des österreichischen Films, März 1999 Duisburg, <i>Duisburger Filmwoche</i> , November 2000 Antwerpen/Belgien, Museum of Contemporary Art, 17.–19. November 2006 Shahrecord/Iran, SUREH/Institute of Art, University of Esfahan, 14. Oktober 2007 Esfahan/Iran, SUREH/Institute of Art, University of Esfahan, 15. Oktober 2007
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