

“The Personal Films of Su Friedrich” by Ed Halter,  
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## Tracking Shots

### The Personal Films of Su Friedrich

September 27 through 30,  
Museum of Modern Art

**S**u Friedrich created her latest experimental documentary, the half-hour *Seeing Red*, from just three elements: video diaries, shot from the chin down, in which she wears a red top; seemingly aleatory footage, often taken on the sly, of red things found on streets, in parks, or in backyards; and snatches of Glenn Gould's rendition of Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. At times, red bits of the world dance ecstatically to Gould's cascading keys. Alone, to her camera, Friedrich confesses a string of related fears: Having turned 50, she faces the stubborn constancy of her self-identified “control freak” patterns and insecurities and wonders if she still has time to change for the better. Friedrich is one of the most accomplished avant-garde filmmakers of her generation, with a career of films and videos whose masterful construction and precise beauty attest to the positive aspects of her self-criticism, and her stature only makes the humbling existential crises in *Seeing Red* more poignant. Yet she has always found ways to create beauty that resist the illusion of transcendence by sticking close to the grounds of hard reality—an influence and logical extension of her feminist politics. *Seeing Red* premieres at MOMA's mid-career retro, organized to coincide with her five-DVD compendium, along with her early silent-film works—gorgeously grainy black-and-whites exploring lesbian identity and gender differences—and later featurettes taking on memories of both her father (*Sink or Swim*) and her mother (*The Ties That Bind*), collective experiences of lesbian childhood (*Hide and Seek*), and her own mortality (*The Odds of Recovery*). ED HALTER