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HAIM STEINBACH

Shelly Silver, *in complete world* (screened at the Museum of Modern Art, New York) It's easy to feel alienated from one's fellow citizens; it's not easy to combat that alienation. But Silver does. Her film *in complete world* weaves together street interviews with a hundred or so New Yorkers; ages, accents, styles, and races mix as people respond to questions like, Are you satisfied? and, Are we responsible for the government we get? Deceptively simple in its formal rigor, the film focuses on timbres of voices and shapes of faces, investing without reservation in the extended, non-sound-bite take in which all the strangeness, pathos, tang, and perspicacity of demotic speech unfolds. Spliced between the interviews, black screens backed by city sounds both link and separate the speakers; the city is a matrix, but all will be drowned out if we don't listen carefully. If neither avant-garde silence nor infotainment cacophony can help us now, maybe what we need is Silver's skeptical but tender vérité.



Shelly Silver, *in complete world*, 2008, still from a color video, 53 minutes.