

MARTOS GALLERY

The New York Times

FRIDAY, MAY 2, 1997

Michel Auder

*AC Project Room
15 Renwick Street, near Canal
Street
South Village
Through May 17*

For nearly three decades, Michel Auder has toted around a video camera the way other artists carry sketchbooks, casually recording scenes that attract his mind and eye. These might include the frolics or quieter moments of friends, family or even unwittingly cooperative neighbors, the evening news or other bits of broadcast life, images clipped from magazines or scenes of the places he has visited.

The results of Mr. Auder's peripatetic image making are under constant editorial consideration and are sometimes reformulated into new pieces: scenes from a trip to Bolivia that constituted the whole of his last solo show in New York City figure again into his latest effort, "Five-Ring Circus," in which five monitors sit in a row, each playing a different 54-minute tape.

The nonstop collage that results feels both random and carefully orchestrated, and it is surprisingly effective. At times it is lyrically seductive, especially when Mr. Auder concentrates on landscape scenery. But at other moments there is so much going on that the eye boggles. Mr. Auder's young daughter mugging for the camera in the early 1970's shares time and space with the Palio in Siena, a riot in South Africa, Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon and prostitutes on 10th Avenue in Manhattan; color alternates with black and white, moving with still.

In the end, "Circus" offers a random accounting of the kinds of images that bombard you, orchestrated into something resembling a self-portrait of the artist as father, traveler, voyeur, diarist and restlessly observant citizen of the late 20th-century.

ROBERTA SMITH