

# Hamburg

## Roman Signer

HAMBURGER KUNSTHALLE

Glockengiesserwall

June 5–September 27

A rich trove of twenty-nine films and videos dating from 1975 to the present demonstrates Roman Signer's talent for constructing ever-curious short works about time and meter. Conceived of as moving images, Signer's self-described events result from maneuvering materials in specific environments. His films document these temporary sculptures as they undergo transformations. Kayaks, bicycles, and his renowned model helicopters are recurring sculptural elements that regularly endure Signer's spectacularly humorous routines. Yet a welcome respite is found in *Elastic Rope*, 1980, which depicts an ordinary snow-covered conifer standing in the forest. Here, a medium-size tree has a rope tied to its trunk. The cord is tugged. The tree shakes and sheds its snow. The film repeats. Less innocent but equally poetic is *Balloon on Railroad Track*, 1982. In it, a red balloon tied to a track hovers guilelessly in the breeze; then a train rides by, jarring the vignette. The locomotive passes, and the balloon, caught in the train's draft, bursts.

A video from 2008 conveys a profound wonder sorely missing from all the sophisticated engineering and scientific research churned out of the Olafur Eliasson studio as of late. Titled *At the Radio Station Beromünster*, it depicts an illuminated fluorescent tube that is dragged along the ground by an unseen cable in an icy mountain landscape. The contrast of the blue nighttime atmosphere with the dancing and glowing linear shape is profoundly mysterious and beautiful. Projected side by side, and gallery after gallery, the thirty-plus years of films that comprise this survey prove Signer's mastery at converting his own curiosity into universal wonderment.



**Roman Signer, *At the Radio Station Beromünster*, 2008**, still from a color video, 1 minute 4 seconds.

— Michelle Grabner