

# ARTFORUM

## New York

### CRITICS' PICKS

#### Matthew Buckingham and Joachim Koester

##### THE KITCHEN

512 West 19th Street

April 26–June 18

As in Matthew Buckingham's most recent film, which centers on the Hudson River and its "discovery" by European explorers, his collaboration with Joachim Koester, *Sandra of the Tuliphouse or How to Live in a Free State*, 2001, moves laterally rather than chronologically through history. The subject here is the anarchistic "free city" of Christiania in Copenhagen, colonized in 1971 by squatters who broke into an abandoned seventeenth-century military base. Framed by the perspective of the fictional character Sandra, the city-within-a-city becomes a springboard for meditations on a variety of phenomena: The military history of Copenhagen, the three-dot flag (inspired by the three "i"s in Christiania), the demise of armor after the introduction of gunpowder, wolves in Europe, *Beowulf*, and the case of Mehran Karimi Nasseri, the Iranian refugee who arrived in France without a passport in 1988 and became a long-term squatter at Charles de Gaulle Airport (thereby inspiring several films, including Steven Spielberg's *The Terminal*). Spread out over five channels, the film underscores the fact that history can be narrated from multiple perspectives, and that citizenship itself, no matter how fixed it seems, is essentially a form of squatting.



Still from *Sandra of the Tuliphouse or How to Live in a Free State*, 2001.

—Martha Schwendener

TALK BACK (0 messages)