

# POSTMASTERS

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for immediate release:

**January 29 - February 26, 2005**

## **GUY BEN-NER**

### ***"Wild Boy"***

**opening reception: Saturday, January 29, 6-8 pm**

Postmasters Gallery is pleased to present a first US solo exhibition of video works by an Israeli artist Guy Ben-Ner. The exhibition will include two videos: ***"Wild Boy"*** (2004) shown on a specially built set with a screen, and, in a second gallery, an earlier video ***"Elia - a story of an Ostrich chick"*** (2003). Ben-Ner, who currently lives in New York, has been selected to represent Israel in the upcoming Venice Biennale in June 2005.

Guy Ben-Ner is best known for his video ***"Moby Dick"*** (2000) shown at MOMA Queens last year - a silent slapstick conceptual comedy in which he reenacted the famous novel in his kitchen with his six years old daughter.

The new works in the show continue his unique style of "home-movies." Simultaneously serious and funny, tender and torturous, the videos again feature the artist himself and his two children. Decidedly low-tech, but ingeniously inventive in the do-it-yourself mode, they resonate with and built on history of cinema.

Guy Ben-Ner describes the two projects:

***"Wild Boy"*** (2004) tells the story of a wild child and his educator, a story of power relations and the fantasy of bringing somebody up after one's own image. It is the story of every parent-child rearing, but more than that, it is a story of a director and his child-actor, raising the question of what it means to direct a child, to contain a child inside a fixed frame, to command him in and out of the frame (as if it is his private room). On another level, it also raises the possibility of looking at early cinema (the "Cinema of attractions" as was coined by Tom Gunning), as a mute wild child that was tamed, eventually, by language (sound, narrative). *"Wild boy"* is based on several case histories, some myths, some educational manuals and is referring to a wide range of movies, from old photos left of the vaudeville acts by father and son, Buster and Joe Keaton, through Truffaut's *"Wild Child"*, to *"The Kid"* by Chaplin.

***"Elia - a story of an Ostrich chick"*** (2003) is a natural documentary movie, following a migrating flock of big, flightless, birds (performed by the Ben-Ner family). The story is told

*through the eyes and the conflicts of an eight years old chick, Elia. And it is being screened backwards, confusing the dominating relations between the male father and the imitating chicks.*

*If for Hermes, walking Apollo's stolen cows backwards was a way to lead Apollo in the wrong direction - the footprints leading the opposite way - in a reversed movie the footprints are actually being "swallowed back" by the walking feet that left them there. They disappear. (A good way for any immigrant to erase the traces that would lead you back to where he came from). Meanwhile the leaves raise themselves back up to the tree from which they fell.*

*In some ways "**Elia**" compliments "**Wild Boy**".*

*If the latter deals with a wild child, the former follows a very clever "animal". If the latter uses the fixed frame as a way to raise the problematics of commanding and exercising power over an unwilling child, in the former the camera follows the kids as if they were animals in a nature documentary movie, if the latter forces an adult world on a child, the former forces a child's point of view on the father-director, reminiscent of Disney TV specials of the 50's.*

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Postmasters Gallery, located in Chelsea at 459 West 19th Street (corner of 10th Avenue), is open Tuesday through Saturday to 11 - 6 pm. Please contact Magdalena Sawon at 212-727-3323 with any questions or image requests. Full documentation of the exhibition will be online by February 1.

**www.postmastersart.com**  
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