THE WANDERING SOAP OPERA

In 1990, Ruiz conducted six days of acting workshops and filming in his native Chile, yielding a small wealth of 16mm footage that was never edited together until Valeria Sarmiento, Ruiz’s wife and chief collaborator, found the footage in Duke University’s Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library and completed the film, nearly six years after Ruiz’s death in 2011. The result is a wildly inventive, episodic work of political satire born of Ruiz and Sarmiento’s vision of “Chilean reality” as a grand pastiche of soap-opera tropes—in other words, that the best way to understand the political and economic realities Chileans face is to view their situation through the sublime and ridiculous prism of the telenovela.

--- Introduced by Craig Breaden (Audiovisual Archivist, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library)

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