

## **Christian Kravagna**

### **Veiled Threats**

The point of departure for the video [...] is a series of fragments of the 35mm film with the title “Tuareg” which was found at a flea market and probably shot around 1970. Tim Sharp’s thoughts revolve around the significance of the discarded, excised images which were of no apparent value for the “real” product which itself remains unknown. Looked at more closely, especially in the light of Sharp’s montage-producing new scenes, these out-takes prove to be informative with regard to the plot for the production of a documentary film. In the first place they are the shots made immediately prior to the “official” takes. They show the clapperboard with scene numbers or the arms of the film crew reaching into the image and they show, above all, the depicted, the Tuareg, in a “preparatory” state, waiting for their cue. “Perhaps the makers claimed it reflected Tuareg reality, but their methods of making it turned the Tuareg into actors waiting for their cue to do ‘typically’ Tuareg things in an acceptably aesthetic way. What is interesting is that this remnant material becomes, like it or not, a documentary of the documentary.” (T.Sharp)

By its repetitions and mirroring scenes, Sharp’s video work directs the gaze to the level of the “dramaturgical” methods by which documentary reality is produced. It is in their negativity, faded-out from this reality, that the images inform us about the conventions of representing other cultures and peoples, to their implicit guidelines which include, for example, the denial of the presence of those represented. Sharp’s re-working shifts the documentary material in the direction of a feature film and opens it up for further imaginings about the character of an encounter between a travelling film team and a nomadic people. Thus, amongst other things, one can consider how different travelling routines collide with each other while bringing to mind stories of attacks by trans-national nomads on Sahara tourists or, turning it around, the threat to this way of living posed by the enforcement of (post)colonial borders.