



List



Map

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The Austrian filmmaker Ruth Beckermann takes a distinctive approach to this historical documentary about Kurt Waldheim, the former U.N. Secretary-General, who ran for the Presidency of Austria in 1986. During the campaign, Waldheim was found to have concealed his activities as an officer in the Second World War, which placed him in close proximity to—and possibly in an administrative role in—massacres of Jews and resistance fighters. Beckermann narrates the documentary in the first person, and is also a participant: she took part in local protests against Waldheim at the time, and videotaped them, using early-generation equipment. The movie is constructed entirely of a remarkable array of archival footage, including Beckermann’s recordings, that spotlights unresolved national traumas and unabated anti-Semitism. Several journalists perform keen off-the-cuff political analyses; several Austrian politicians bravely defy local orthodoxies; and free, frank hearings in the United States Congress add a painful element of nostalgia.

— *Richard Brody*

In limited release.

