

S D R A N E S

The film *2 Lizards* by Orian Barki (b. 1985) and Meriem Bennani (b. 1988) depicts a surrealist view of the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic as it unfolded in New York. Originally released in real time as an eight-part episodic series on Bennani's Instagram account, it is presented here as a narrative film that spans the period from March 17 to July 5, 2020.

Bennani and Barki combine 3-D animation, iPhone videos, and footage of global events to create a backdrop against which the film's two protagonists, anthropomorphized lizards voiced by the artists, move through a city that is simultaneously strange and familiar. Episodes show them talking on a Brooklyn rooftop; nervously venturing out into ominous, silent streets; checking on friends through socially distanced stoop encounters; remembering the past intimacy of dinners and nights out; and joining the protests that swept the world in the wake of George Floyd's murder. The film highlights the helplessness and uncertainty experienced by many during this time as well as the unexpected moments of shared community and connection in a city gripped by a pandemic, extended isolation, and cries for social justice.

Orian Barki (b. 1985; Tel Aviv, Israel) and Meriem Bennani (b. 1988; Rabat, Morocco), *2 Lizards*, 2020. Video, color, sound; 22:43 min. Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; purchase with funds from the Chemla Family 2021.91

Generous support for *2 Lizards* is provided by the John R. Eckel, Jr. Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Artists Council.