“Leopards in the Temple”

SculptureCenter, through Mar 30
(see Elsewhere)

Latifa Echakhch’s installation, 
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Erratum
}, a line of broken Moroccan 
ten glasses arrayed on the floor 
against a wall, is a good indication of 
what you’ll find at “Leopards in the 
Temple.” The exhibition is a mixed 
bag of handsome pieces, the most 
interesting of which employ 
conceptual frameworks that hinge 
on state change or a breach of 
formality.

The labyrinthine lower level is 
used to exceptional effect, with a 
series of slide projections, films and 
videos nested in its cavelike enclaves. 
The sense of a snug, private viewing 
area enhances the intimacy of three 
pieces in particular, which seem to be 
whispering secrets about the hidden 
life of objects.

Nina Hoffmann’s Motiv—a series 
of black-and-white slides depicting 
grainy close-up shots of almost- 
touching arms, drawn from her own 
images of social gatherings—focuses 
on the deeply personal coding present 
in casual moments. Kathrin 
Sonntag’s brief video Tango, also 
black and white, is a quick, dreamy 
loop of a pair of hands whisking a 
checkered tablecloth from beneath a 
sparsely set table. João Maria 
Gusmão and Pedro Paiva’s three 
short silent films, each set in a 
windswep landscape, include a 
re-enactment of snake charming with 
a piece of rope, and a humorous 
segment on the power of pendulums.

The upstairs installation of often-
monumentally scaled, mostly 
abstract sculptures and paintings, 
while well suited to the physical 
space, seems a bit lacking in 
emotional subtlety next to the 
nuanced offerings downstairs. In 
any case, it’s nice to see, for once, 
more women than men in a group 
show.—T.J. Carlin