

Harun Farocki

4 films from 1967-1997. An homage curated by Antje Ehmann

09.10.14 > 05.12.14

Opening: 09.10.14, 20 h.



àngels barcelona is delighted to announce the upcoming exhibition, HARUN FAROCKI: 4 FILMS FROM 1967-1997. This exhibition offers audiences an idiosyncratic insight into the stylistic variation and ambition of Harun Farocki's early films and videos.

Recalling the impetus for **The Words of the Chairman**, one of his first films (1967, 3 Min.), Farocki wrote: "I was on a ship –this sounds like a novel: I had just embarked for Venezuela on June 2, 1967 as the Shah of Iran was arriving in West Berlin. There were protests, a student was shot, and a new form of opposition movement came into existence. The idea for this film came to me while I was still aboard the ship. The film is structured like a commercial. The film takes a metaphor literally: words can become weapons. However, it also shows that these weapons are made of paper. Weapons spoiled everything for the Shah and his wife, they are wearing paperbags on their heads with faces drawn on them –the kind of bags worn by Iranian students during demonstrations to hide their identity from the Savak, the Iranian Secret Service. When I showed this film to the audiences in the late 60s, it was highly praised. I think people understood then that over obviousness is also a form of irony. This capacity was lost a few years later. I think it's coming back today".

This film will be presented with another political statement from the late 60s entitled: **Some problems of anti-authoritarian and anti-imperialist urban warfare in the case of West Berlin or: Their Newspapers** (1968, 17 Min.). The film participates in the 1968 West Berlin student campaign against the Springer press group that dominated Germany's post war media landscape.

The film **Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet at Work on a film based on Franz Kafka's Amerika** (1983, 26 Min.), introduces another dimension of Farocki's work. It is a homage to Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Farocki's mentors and a detailed study of their working methods that reinvented standardized industrial cinema as new forms of cine marxism.

The Expression of Hands (1997, 30 Min.), is a stunning analysis of the trope of hands in the history of cinema. Cinema's initial close-ups were devoted to the face of the actor, it took some time to discover the gestural drama of manual and mental labour enacted by the hand. The Expression of Hands can be regarded as one of the most important works in Farocki's proposed, encyclopedia of filmic expressions' which he continuously worked on throughout the last two decades.

We would like to quote Kodwo Eshun's words as they appeared on Harun Farocki's Homepage on July 31. 2014:

For HF

We regret to announce the passing of Harun Farocki on 30 July 2014. He was 70 years of age. From 1967 onwards, Harun Farocki directed more than 120 films and installations that analysed the power of images with an originality, foresight and gravitas that renewed itself, year after year, project after project. In his teachings and essays, in journals, books and exhibitions, conceived and produced with Antje Ehmann, Farocki was a powerful critic, editor, theorist and curator in his own right.

*Generations of artists, theorists and critics have taken Farocki's films such as **Inextinguishable Fire** (1969) and **Images of the World and the Inscription of War** (1988) and installations such as **Deep Play** (2007) as reference points. His impact and influence on culture, within and beyond Germany, is undisputed. He was, and remains, a commanding figure of contemporary culture.*

Despite his numerous commitments, Farocki was always generous with his time, his ideas and his attention. Unlike many other artists from the 1960s, Farocki was neither nostalgic nor bitter. He was forward-looking, youthful, humorous, restless, unpretentious, enquiring, skeptical, stylish and handsome. He loved football, a drink of beer and smoking his favourite cigarettes, with his friends from his travels with his life partner Antje Ehmann.

Harun Farocki was and is, irreplaceable. We are proud to have counted ourselves among his many, many friends. We admired him, loved him and we'll always learn from him, always.

To say that we will miss him is an understatement that he would have appreciated.

BIO

Antje Ehmann (b.1968, Gelsenkirchen, Germany) is an author, curator and video artist. Between 1995 and 1999 she worked on the team organizing the film festivals Duisburger Filmwoche and Internationalen Kurzfilmtage Oberhausen. Between 1999 and 2003 she collaborated on the DFG project *Geschichte des dokumentarischen Films 1895 bis 1945* (History of Documentary Films 1895 - 1945).

Her recent curatorial projects include, *Harun Farocki. First Time in Warsaw*, Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warsaw (2012), *Between Eye and Hand. Video Installations at the former Hotel Pythagoras*, Samos (2012), *Serious Games. War – Media – Art*, Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt (2011), *The Image in Question. War – Media – Art*, Carpenter Center for Visual Arts, Cambridge, Mass. (2010), *Three Early Films* (with Kodwo Eshun & Bart van der Heide), Cubitt Gallery, London (2009), *Harun Farocki. 22 films 1968–2009* (with Stuart Comer & Kodwo Eshun), Tate Modern, London (2009), *Cinema like never before* (with Harun Farocki), Generali Foundation Vienna (2006), Akademie der Künste, Berlin (2007). Since 2011 she co-founded with Harun Farocki the project *Labour in a Single Shot*, in which workshops were initiated in 15 different cities worldwide in order to produce 1-2 min single-shot videos where the subject of labour was being investigated. Antje has been the curator of the exhibitions accompanying this project, amongst the most recent ones we find: *Labour in a Single Shot* at the Folkwangmuseum Essen, Germany (2014) and at the Mills Gallery Boston / USA (2014).

Amongst her video installations we can include *War tropes* (with Harun Farocki, 2011), *Loud and Clear* (2009), and *Feasting or Flying* (with Harun Farocki, 2008).

Her publications include, *Harun Farocki. Against What? Against Whom?*, ed. with Kodwo Eshun, (Walther König, Köln, 2009), *Amos Gitai. News from Home*, ed. with Anselm Franke and Katharina Fichtner (Walther König, Köln, 2006) and *Geschichte des Dokumentarischen Films in Deutschland*, Bd. 2, Weimarer Republik 1918-1933, with Klaus Kreimeier and Jeanpaul Goergen, (Reclam Philipp Jun., 2005).

Kodwo Eshun (b.1967, London, UK) is a writer, theorist and filmmaker. He currently lectures in Aural and Visual Cultures at Goldsmiths College, University of London. In 2002 he co-founded, with Anjalika Sagar, The Otolith Group, a collective working across use an eclectic range of media and materials in order to explore the nature of perception and to analyse the role of documents and images in the construction of narratives of the post-colonial world. He is the author of *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (Quartet, 1998) and has written for publications including The Guardian, Sight and Sound, The Wire, and frieze.