

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac presents its fourth solo exhibition by Harun Farocki (b 1944), video artist and essay filmmaker living in Berlin.

In 2007, Harun Farocki, whose work has had a decisive influence on the history of the political film since the late 1960s, was the first artist and filmmaker featured at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac. Besides over 100 productions made for television and cinema, Farocki – curator, long-time author and editor of the magazine *Filmkritik*, and visiting professor at Berkeley, Harvard and Vienna – has set out his reflections on the relation between society, politics and the moving picture. His importance in the visual arts is reflected in retrospectives of his films in institutions such as Tate Modern/London, and solo exhibitions in the MUMOK [Museum of Modern Art]/Vienna, Jeu de Paume/Paris, Museum Ludwig/Cologne and more recently in the Kunsthhaus/Bregenz. The significance of his films and installations is demonstrated not least through his participation in the documenta in 1997 and 2007, as well as in the Venice Biennale this year.

For the first time, the Paris exhibition features Farocki's new four-part *Parallele I-IV* (2012-14), which the artist has been working on for the past two years. It coincides with a solo exhibition at the National Gallery in Berlin (Hamburger Bahnhof), which will be held from 5 February to the end of July.

The question of how technologically produced images influence and define our social and political spheres, our consciousness and our habits, has been a leitmotiv in Farocki's work for many years. In his new cycle, Farocki describes the 30-year-long developmental history of computer graphics, with a special focus on the aspect of animation. The work is based on the assumption that we live in technologically produced image worlds, which Farocki characterises as *ideal-typical*. It seems that soon reality will no longer be the criterion for the imperfect image, but rather the virtual image will be the criterion for imperfect reality.

The four-part cycle *Parallele* deals with the image genre of computer animation. Computer animations are currently becoming a general model, surpassing film. In films, there is the wind that blows and the wind that is produced by a wind machine. Computer images do not have two kinds of wind.

*Parallele I* opens up a history of styles in computer graphics. The first games of the 1980s consisted of only horizontal and vertical lines. This abstraction was seen as a failing, and today representations are oriented towards photo-realism.

*Parallele II* and *III* seek out the boundaries of the game worlds and the nature of the objects. It emerges that many game worlds take the form of discs floating in the universe – reminiscent of pre-Hellenistic conceptions of the world. The worlds have an apron and a backdrop, like theatre stages, and the things in these games have no real existence. Each of their properties must be separately constructed and assigned to them.

*Parallele IV* explores the heroes of the games, the protagonists whom the respective players follow through 1940s L.A., a post-apocalyptic, a Western or other genre worlds. The heroes have no parents or teachers; they must find the rules to follow of their own accord. They hardly have more than one facial expression and only very few character traits which they express in a number of different if almost interchangeable short sentences. They are homunculi, anthropomorphous beings, created by humans. Whoever plays with them has a share in the creator's pride." (Harun Farocki)

To mark Harun Farocki's 70th birthday this year, as well as the monographic exhibition in Paris and Berlin, Walter Koenig is publishing the book *Harun Farocki – Diagrams*, which for the first time approaches Farocki's work through the specific disposition of images – stills from a total of 15 films and installations.

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