

Document Citation

Title	Images of the world: the films of Harun Farocki
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Film Subjects	Bilder der welt und inschrift des krieges (Images of the world and the inscription of war), Farocki, Harun, 1988 Betrogen (Betrayed), Farocki, Harun, 1985 Ein bild (An image), Farocki, Harun, 1983 Leben--BRD (How to live in the FRG), Farocki, Harun, 1990 Zwischen zwei kriegen (Between two wars), Farocki, Harun, 1979 Jean-Marie Straub und Daniele Huillet drehen einen film nach Franz Kafkas 'Amerik' (Jean-Marie Straub and Daniele Huillet at work on Franz Kafka's 'Amerika'), Der geschmack des lebens (The taste of life), Farocki, Harun, 1979 Die teilung aller tage (The division of the days), Farocki, Harun, 1970

Wie man sieht (As you see), Farocki, Harun, 1986

Nicht lösches feuer (Inextinguishable fires), Farocki, Harun,
1969

Die worte des vorsitzenden (The words of the chairman), Farocki,
Harun, 1967

Etwas wird sichtbar (Before your eyes - Vietnam), Farocki, Harun,
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SAVAGE MESSIAH

BRITAIN 1972 100 MINUTES

DIRECTOR: KEN RUSSELL

CAST: DOROTHY TUTIN, SCOTT ANTONY, HELEN MIRREN

"The films I do best are films about people I believe in," Russell said, and he clearly believes in the subject of SAVAGE MESSIAH — the French sculptor Henri Gaudier-Brzeska, who died in the First World War at the age of 23, just as he was gaining recognition. In his characteristically overwrought style, Russell chronicles the affair between the young artist and the high-strung Polish woman, twice his age, with whom he had a stormy affair. Even the critics who dismissed the film as noisy and brutish admired Jarman's detailed visual design. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 9:15PM

ARIA

BRITAIN/USA 1988 100 MINUTES

DIRECTORS: DEREK JARMAN, NICHOLAS ROEG, KEN RUSSELL, JEAN-LUC GODARD, ROBERT ALTMAN, BRUCE BERESFORD, FRANC RODDAM, JULIEN TEMPLE, CHARLES STURRIDGE, BILL BRYDEN.

A daring, erotic anthology film in which ten directors visualize the work of ten opera composers. Some choose one aria, while others attempt to condense entire operas into ten minutes. Standouts include Godard's setting of Lully's *Armide* in a Paris body-building gym, and Jarman's surprisingly sweet vision of the "Depuis Le Jour" aria from Charpentier's *Louise*, starring his favorite actress Tilda Swinton and the 83-year-old Amy Johnson as a woman in the year 2045 looking back on a love affair from the summer of 1986. WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11 7PM

IMAGES OF THE WORLD

The films of Harun Farocki

"A major discovery . . . a sublime combination of the visually imaginative and the intellectually rigorous." — RICK GROEN

"There is more of Wenders in Farocki, and perhaps even more of Farocki in Wenders, than either might be willing to acknowledge; and in both, there is a good deal of German film history. . . . Film as a form of intelligence is Farocki's own guerrilla war."

— THOMAS ELSAESSER

ill recently, the history of New German Cinema has involved an often tedious incantation of the same names: Fassbinder, Herzog, Wenders, Syberberg, Schlöndorff, von Trotta, Straub, Kluge. The post-Fassbinder dissolution of the precarious (some would say fictional) movement known as the NGC has cleared a space in which critical excavation and reevaluation can take place. North American audiences, whose understanding of New German Cinema has rarely been allowed to extend beyond the holy trinity of Fassbinder, Wenders and Herzog, have suddenly been confronted with a "hidden history" focusing on German directors whose careers were largely unrecognized by the influential system of film festivals and distribution: for example, Werner Schroeter, Ulrike Ottinger, Eberhard Fechner, Herbert Achternbusch, and Rosa von Praunheim. This ground-breaking retrospective is designed to draw attention to the work of yet another German director whose importance seems to be in inverse proportion to his renown.

Thomas Elsaesser, pre-eminent commentator on the New German Cinema, focused on this irony by calling his influential article about the filmmaker "Two or Three Things Not Known about Harun Farocki." As a *Cahiers du Cinéma* critic mused when confronted with his first Farocki film: "Who is Farocki? - I don't know. Or to be exact, I know very little about him. He is one of the twelve editors of *Filmkritik*, the austere and compelling German magazine on the cinema, and BETWEEN TWO WARS has been recommended to us by Jean-Marie Straub. The film is beautiful, very beautiful, and that should be enough." Even critics familiar with Farocki's work have not had an easy time characterizing it. He has been compared to Bresson and Dreyer, Marker and Godard, Straub and Kluge, and, most often, to Wenders. This difficulty is compounded by Farocki's status as an "all over" artist. A central figure of the Berlin art scene as critic, theatre director, filmmaker, publicist and provocateur, Farocki finances all of his films by writing magazine features and children's television programmes. Self-financing has allowed him the freedom to develop a "counter-cinema" which deals with a series of controversial subjects in a highly personal, often idiosyncratic manner. Less documentaries than cinematic essays, his films make surprising and often disturbing connections between seemingly unrelated events.

As Thomas Elsaesser has pointed out, Farocki's films are distinguished less by their subject matter, be it a *Playboy* photo shoot, the Vietnam War, or the connections between the German steel industry and Hitler, than by their intense interrogation of images. His cinema is a kind of pressure chamber designed to make photographs (and their cinematic analogues) yield their hidden meanings. (Note the emphasis on sight in his titles: AS YOU SEE; BEFORE YOUR EYES; AN IMAGE; IMAGES OF THE WORLD...) Memory and metaphor are central to Farocki's often dense and ascetic meditations on "images of the world," proving, as do the films of the masters to whom he is often compared (Bresson, Godard, Marker), that rigor does not preclude poetry. - JAMES QUANDT

THIS RETROSPECTIVE AND THE PRESENCE OF HARUN FAROCKI ARE MADE POSSIBLE BY GOETHE INSTITUTE, TORONTO.

IMAGES OF THE WORLD AND THE INSCRIPTION OF WAR (BILDER DER WELT UND INSCHRIFT DES KRIEGES)

1988/89 75 MINUTES

Perhaps the only film of the past decade which can be compared to Chris Marker's *SANS SOLEIL*, this brilliant visual essay analyzes photos taken at Auschwitz by the SS and aerial shots of the camp taken by Allied bombers. Meditating on the nature of photography and its ability to hide as

much as it reveals, to simultaneously preserve and destroy, IMAGES builds inexorably into "an unforgettable poem of anxiety" (J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*). The only other Toronto screening of this film met with great popular and critical acclaim. "Riveting, a sublime combination of the visually imaginative and the intellectually rigorous. . . . How rare for a film so cerebral to have an impact so visceral" (Rick Groen, *The Globe and Mail*). FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15 7PM



HOW TO LIVE IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (LEBEN - BROD)

1989/90 83 MINUTES

A freewheeling portrait of everyday life in contemporary Germany, Farocki's latest film treats "social reality" as a kind of elaborate system of organized game-playing. Shot in 46 different locations, the film envisions life in the FRG "as a school and every inhabitant of the FRG a special, star pupil. . . . Women enact childbirth, policemen the arrest of tenants, bank employees the calming of angry customers, passers-by being trapped in an overturned car, soldiers war, a woman depicts the yellow porridge overflowing from the pot of the stove." Funny, illuminating, and not a little scary, this film confirms Farocki's astonishing ability to get at the hidden meanings behind images and social rituals. SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16 7PM

BEFORE YOUR EYES - VIETNAM (ETWAS WIRD SICHTBAR)

1981 114 MINUTES

CAST: BRUNO GANZ, ANNA MANDEL, MARCEL WERNER
The German title of this film translates as "Something Coming to Light," a phrase that could stand for the whole of Farocki's work. A meditation on the images produced by the Vietnam War, and on the experience of the war from a privileged distance, BEFORE YOUR EYES is also very much about personal loss and the ephemeral nature of love. Ranging from a portrait of a disintegrating relationship, to analyses of newspaper photos of the war, to reenactments of battles by Vietnamese children and German actors, BEFORE YOUR EYES becomes a stirring essay on the differences between personal and official memory. MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18 7PM

BETWEEN TWO WARS (ZWISCHEN ZWEI KRIEGEN)

1977 83 MINUTES

In his best known film, which J. Hoberman has described as "like a '70s Godard film with a melancholy Wenders beat," Farocki examines German fascism by exploring the connections between industry and Nazism. Opening with

a nurse asking German soldiers on a battlefield what they are dying for, this characteristically personal essay on his country's dark past includes sequences of the director working on pornographic "strokebooks" to finance the film, references to Lang and Eisenstein, "eruptions of graffiti, recurring dreams, bits of Mahler, languid dollies by factory walls and a cameo of the filmmaker that shows him touring some ruined ironworks as though it were the Parthenon. Farocki... has a knack for making every pared-down, ultradeliberate image look positively excavated" (J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*). TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19 7PM

TASTE OF LIFE (DER GESCHMACK DES LEBENS)

1979 29 MINUTES

A lovely rendering of the routine of street life "as it appears at a glance."

and

AS YOU SEE (WIE MAN SIEHT)

1986 72 MINUTES

A provocative inquiry into the ways we "earn our daily bread," and the lies we tell ourselves to make life bearable. "My film AS YOU SEE is a feature film, it is full of action. It tells of girls in porno magazines who are given a name and of the nameless dead in mass graves, of machines which are so ugly that it is necessary to shield the workers' eyes, and of motors which are too beautiful to be hidden by the radiator bonnet, of working techniques which train the collaboration between hand and brain or wish to dispense with it" (Farocki). Farocki is particularly interested in the

connections between daily life and the military profession, and manages to include in his meditation a history of the autobahn in National Socialist Germany, and notes on the design of machine guns.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20 7PM



BETWEEN TWO WARS

FIVE BY FAROCKI

AN IMAGE (EIN BILD)

1983 14 MINUTES

A devastating "nuts and bolts" portrait of a *Playboy* photo shoot. With a dispassionate, unyielding gaze, the camera captures every detail of the making of "an image:" the building of the set, the preparation of the model and the constant touching up and repositioning of her anatomy, the callous deliberations of the photographer and the art director, the tortuous shooting and reshooting of the "spread." "What's fresh here is not the message but the method — its succinctness, its brevity. Stripped of narration, impeccably edited and scored, this is the German answer to a Fred Wiseman documentary, yet with a crucial difference: Wiseman would have taken three hours to develop his essay; Farocki does it in 14 exhilarating minutes" (Rick Groen, *The Globe and Mail*).

and

WORDS OF THE EXECUTIVE (WORTE DES VOSITZENDEN)

1967 2 MINUTES

A metaphoric film about words as weapons, inspired by the student protests which greeted the Shah of Iran when he visited West Berlin.

and

UNEXTINGUISHABLE FIRE (NICHT LUSCHBARES FEUER)

1969 22 MINUTES

The fire of the title refers to Napalm. Farocki admits that this "punk film" about the bombing of Vietnam still disturbs him for its minimalist portrayal of total destruction.

and

THE DIVISION OF EVERY DAY (DIE TEILUNG ALLER TAGE)

1970 40 MINUTES

"This is an educational film. Before the fall of the labour movement in times of fascism, there were thousands of workers who would study history, culture, politics, and economics, as a way to develop their intellect. Times have changed. Nowadays, workers are interested only in not doing anything after work" (Farocki).

and

JEAN-MARIE STRAUB AND DANIELE HUILLET MAKE A FILM BASED ON KAFKA'S "AMERIKA" (JEAN-MARIE STRAUB UND DANIELE HUILLET DREHEN EINEN FILM NACH FRANZ KAFKA'S "AMERIKA")

1983 26 MINUTES

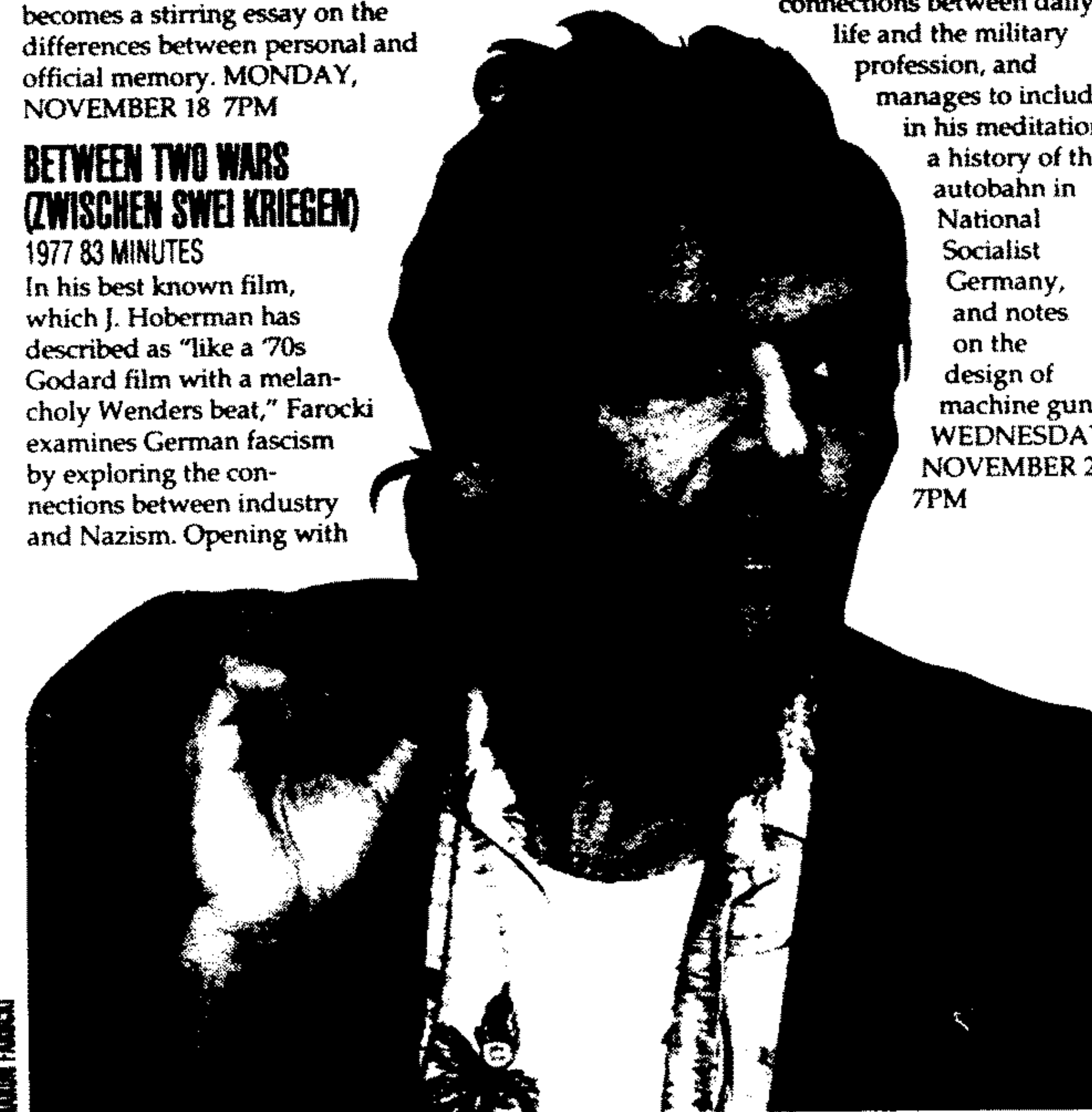
A profile of the famous film-making team of Straub and Huillet as they shoot their film CLASS RELATIONS, based on Kafka's *Amerika*. FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22 7PM

BETRAYED (BETROGEN)

1985 90 MINUTES

CAST: ROLAND SCHAFFER, KATJA RUPE

A major departure for Farocki, BETRAYED is a fiction film based on a true story, but one which seems to have been derived from the "double-identity" thriller. A man accidentally kills his wife, who has been in a psychiatric clinic. He confesses the crime to his sister-in-law with whom he has been having an affair. The lookalike sister assumes the identity of the dead woman, going so far as to adopt her children. Farocki is less interested in the thriller elements of this entanglement, than in the opportunity it offers to examine the ease with which identities are shed and new ones assumed. "For the film buff captivated by images and mannerisms, [Farocki's] unique approach to cinematic art deserves to be better known" (Ronald Holloway, *Variety*). SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 23 9:15PM



RAINER FAROCKI