

## Press Release

Harun Farocki  
*Harun Farocki und die Musik*

September 16 – November 4, 2017  
Opening Friday, September 15, 5–8 pm  
Gallery hours, Tue–Sat, 11 am – 6 pm

The relationships between image and sound, text, script and commentary play a central role in the films and installations of Harun Farocki. And the question of what form to choose for which subject matter was one that Farocki always carefully considered. There is a wide spectrum of moving images in his oeuvre: direct-cinema films, with only live sound and without commentary, essay films with voiceovers, sound films, silent films and mute installations with text plates.

A great formal diversity is encountered in Farocki's more than 100 works – but music appears to be unimportant. So it's all the more interesting to look at where and how music occasionally is featured. In the film *Images of the World and the Inscription of War* (1988) there are experimentally interspersed sound sequences which came about by chance. Sometimes music can be heard, played on location from a radio, television or smartphone (e.g. in *In Comparison*, 2009). In *The Interview* (1997) Farocki quotes a short sequence of music from Jim Jarmusch's film *Dead Man* (1995, composed by Neil Young), although the music is used more as the abbreviation of a quotation than as a commentary; the musical quality itself is irrelevant. The same applies to *Words and Games* (1998): Harun Farocki commissioned a melody after Johannes Brahms – 'Denn es gehet dem Menschen wie dem Vieh', the first of his Four Serious Songs opus 121 – from the composer Markus Spies, as can be read in the closing credits. Farocki's critical view of the usual forms of television and feature films (see the early *The Trouble with Images. A Critique of Television*) not only applied to visual conventions and editing practices but also to the all too often manipulative, even corrupt use of music as an atmospheric effect. He was much amused by commissioning editors who on acceptance of a film would exclaim 'Boring! It needs music ...' You won't come across music as an atmospheric effect in Harun Farocki's work. His aim was more to find a *Counter-Music* – as the title of an installation from 2004 suggests.

The exhibition *Harun Farocki und die Musik* shows five works by Farocki in which music is anything but in the background:

In *White Christmas*, from 1968 of his early agitprop, Farocki thwarts Bing Crosby's mawkish song with footage of the Vietnam War, which is thus denounced. *Remember Tomorrow is the First Day of the Rest of your Life* (1972), is his only road movie and demonstrates how listening to music on the car radio becomes the soundtrack to one's own life story. *Single. A Record is Being Produced*, from 1980, is about the production relations and time economies involved in the recording of a song in a music studio. *Music-Video* (2000) is ironically silent, and shows a sequence of Berlin street signs with names of composers. Farocki commented: 'In Seoul there are about 60 large electronic billboards showing advertising spots. The curator Hans-Ulrich Obrist had the idea of exhibiting the work of around 40 artists and film-makers on these tennis-court-sized surfaces, interspersed within the programme of adverts. Schönberg wrote the *Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene*, a piece of music to which you have to imagine the film. So the idea suggested itself of producing a silent film referring to music.'

For us it's a special pleasure, finally, and for the first time in a gallery, to show Harun Farocki's only actual music video, which he made in 2013 for the band *Homewreckers*. For the four-minute *Confusion* Farocki montaged material from his extensive research relating to the history of the animated image in video games.

Antje Ehmann

On view:

- *White Christmas*, 16mm transferred onto video, b/w, 1968, 3 min.
- *Remember Tomorrow is the First Day of the Rest of your Life*, 16mm transferred onto video, colour, 1972, 10 min.
- *Single. A Record is Being Produced*, video, colour, 1980, 49 min.
- *Music-Video*, video, colour, 2000, 1 min.
- *Confusion*, music video for the band Homewreckers, colour, 2013, 4 min.

The exhibition *Harun Farocki and Music* accompanies the Harun Farocki retrospective. Other venues, screenings and events:

*Harun Farocki: Mit anderen Mitteln – By Other Means*

Neuer Berliner Kunstverein (n.b.k.), Chausseestraße 128/129, 10115 Berlin.

14.09. 2017 – 28.01. 2018.

Opening: 13.09. 2017, 6 p.m.

Curators: Antje Ehmman and Carles Guerra.

*El Usman Faroqhi Here and a Yonder – On Finding Poise in Disorientation*

With Candide Breitz, Ariani Darmawan, Fehras Publishing Practices, Shilpa Gupta, Ho Tzu Nyen, Samson Kambalu, Olaf Nicolai and Michael Zheng

Savy Contemporary, Plantagenstrasse 31, 13347 Berlin

14.09. – 21.10. 2017

Opening: 13.09. 2017, 6pm.

*The Complete Cinematographic Works of Harun Farocki*

*In Sequence / In Parallel*

Kino Arsenal, Potsdamer Strasse 2, 10785 Berlin.

15.– 30.09. 2017

21.– 31.10. 2017

20.– 30.11. 2017

*Farocki Now: A Temporary Academy*

Silent Green Kulturquartier, Gerichtstraße 35, 13347 Berlin.

19.– 21.10. 2017, with an opening event on 18.10. 2017, 7 p.m. at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10, 10557 Berlin.

Conceived and organized by the Harun Farocki Institut.