

Harun Farocki

Serious games

04.02.11 > 30.04.11

Opening: Friday 4th of February at 20 h. / Artist talk with Carles Guerra at 19.30 h

This is Harun Farocki's second solo exhibition at ángels Barcelona and in Spain, after the one held in 2007. On this occasion we present the video installation *Serious Games* (2009/10), a work that has been recently presented at his solo exhibition *Soft Montages* at the Kunsthaus / Bregenz, in the Sao Paulo Biennial and as part of a group exhibition *The Image in Question: War - Media - Art* at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts / Cambridge (MA), curated by Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann.

Harun Farocki has made over 100 feature films, documentaries, essay films, agit-prop films, educational videos and video installations. His work raises questions about issues that range from political and social themes to the theory of film within the field of art.

Serious Games (2009/10) consists of four video installations that explore the technology used to train soldiers through simulated combat situations. Farocki filmed these videos at military facilities in the U.S. and combines the real footage with material from computer simulations.

Serious Games 1: "Watson is Down" was recorded at the Marine Corps base 29 Palms in California, USA. Farocki filmed a sequence of four marines that sat on a row with their laptops, simulating the crew of a tank on a mission in Afghanistan. They steer their own vehicle and watch their unit while driving in a Computer-Animation-Landscape environment. The simulated terrain originates from an actual geographical data. The vegetation on the ground, the trees, the mountain ranges and the streets that appear on the screen of the computer are an exact copy of the Afghanistan terrain. This computer program also simulates death scenes, but can be death simulated?

Serious Games 2: "Three Dead" shows a military exercise filmed in Twentynine Palms, California with extras interpreting scenes of conflict in Iraq or Afghanistan. The landscape scenes and situations create the impression of images from a computer game.

Serious games 3: "Immersion" shows a variation of the same training program. In this case it is recreating the traumatic experiences of soldiers during the war for therapeutic purposes. The soldiers are being trained and rehabilitated through virtual reality recalling their memories. *Immersion* was filmed in Fort Louis, near Seattle, during a treatment of PTSD.

Serious Games 4: "A Sun with no Shadow" takes us on a tour within the two simulation programs, which are used both for training and therapeutic purposes. In the simulation for training, the shadow of armored vehicles is determined by an imaginary sun that moves like the real sun in Afghanistan. The simulation program is very precise and detailed and its images are intended to prepare the soldiers for the war. In the second half it shows images with the intention of stirring memories in the therapeutic process. Both images are very similar, only in the program for therapeutic purposes nothing and no one has a shadow. The system for remembering is a little bit cheaper than the one for training.

Harun Farocki (Nový Jicin (Neutitschein), 1944). Attended the Deutsche Film und Fernsehakademie in Berlin (1967-68) and was visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley (1993-1999) and he is also Visiting Lecturer on Visual and Environmental Studies at the Harvard University, Massachusetts. He has made more than 100 feature films, documentaries, essay films, agit-prop films, educational videos, and video installations. His work raises questions about issues that range from political and social themes to the theory of film within the field of art. Farocki has also worked in television and as editor of the magazine *Filmkritik*. His great importance to the visual arts is reflected not only in the retrospectives of his films at institutions like Tate Modern in London, MACBA or MNCARS in Spain, but also in solo exhibitions at the MUMOK Wien, the Jeu de Paume in Paris, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Raven Row, London and the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Farocki's participation in the São Paulo Biennial in 2010 and in the Kassel documenta in 1997 & 2007 is a strong indication of the impact of his films and installations.

+ Film screening (19:30 h.):

08.03.11 - *Nothing Ventured*, 2004, 50 min.

05.04.11 - *Respite*, 2007, 40 min.