

# EMPAC

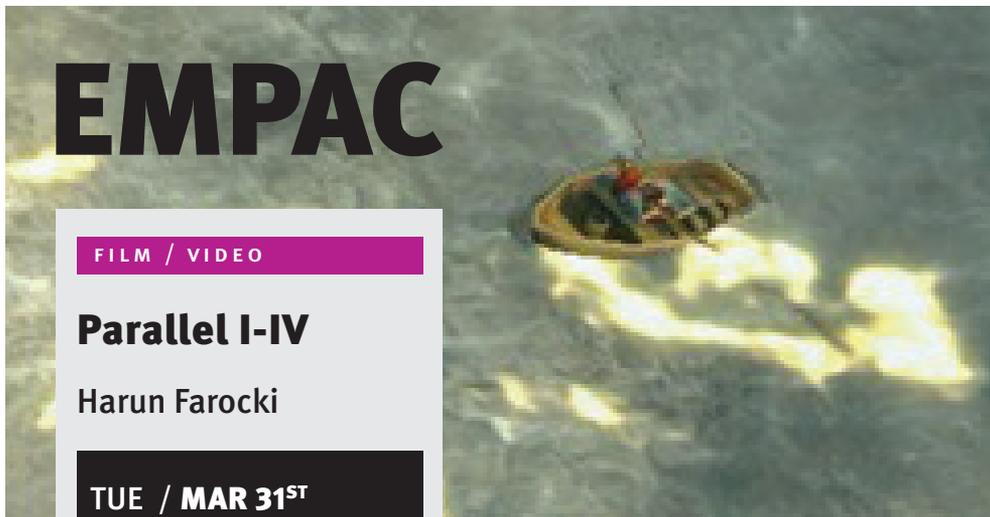
FILM / VIDEO

## Parallel I-IV

Harun Farocki

TUE / MAR 31<sup>ST</sup>

7:00 PM



## Parallel I-IV

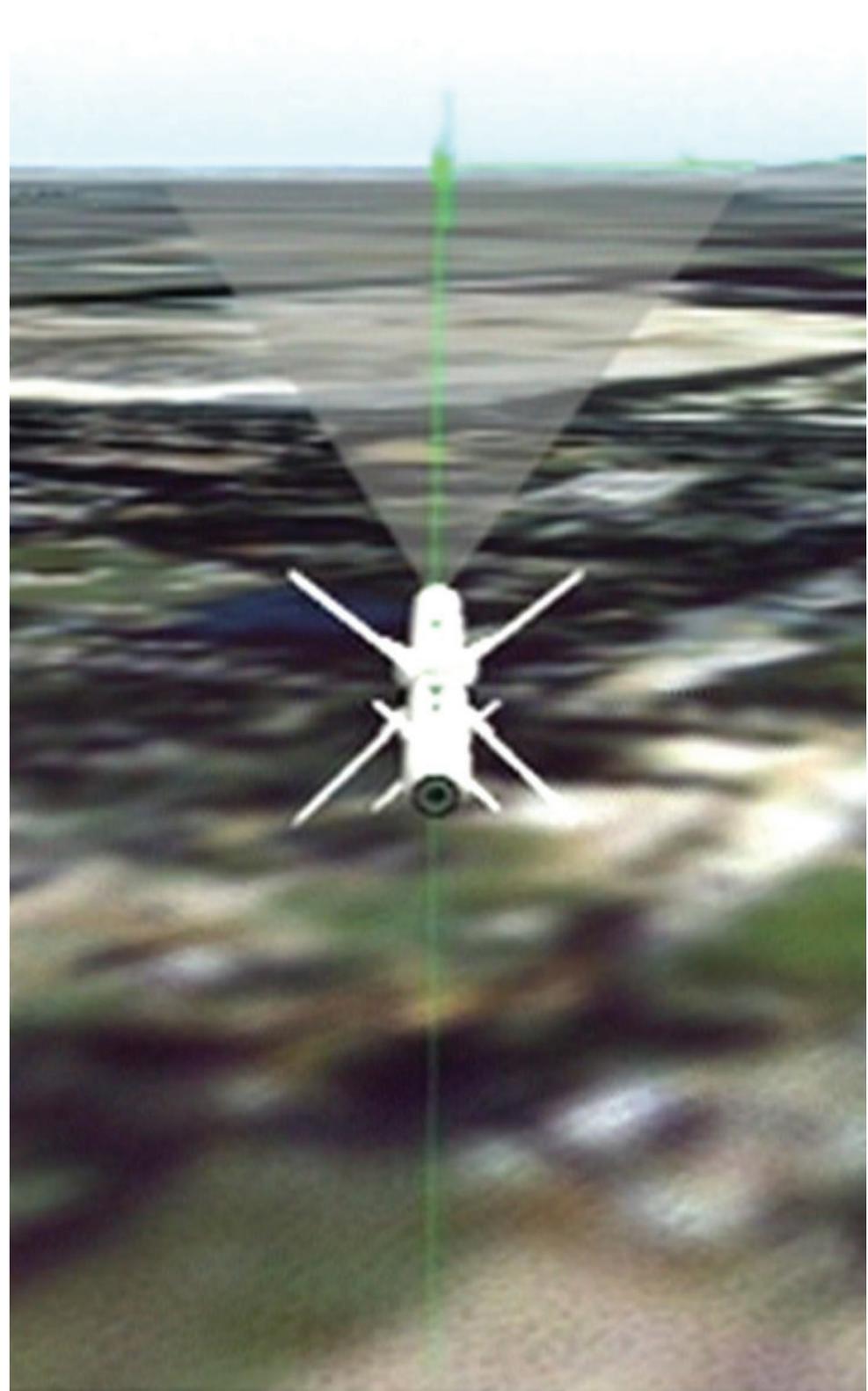
Harun Farocki

*“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.”*

—HARUN FAROCKI

This screening presents two cycles of short films that explore techniques of image making from the 20th century to the present day. Produced a decade apart by the late filmmaker Harun Farocki, *Eye/Machine I-III* (2001-2003) and *Parallel I-IV* (2012-2014) chart the development of imaging technologies from simulation techniques to CGI and computer vision. Through a close reading of archival, military, televisual, cinematic, and industrial images, Farocki uncovers the processes and means of production to test the underlying socio-economic and political conditions of their development.

Total runtime: 110 mins



## Parallel I-IV

A four-part cycle of essay-films made between 2012 and 2014, *Parallel I-IV* delves into the techniques and technologies involved in the making of contemporary moving images. Charting the development of computer animation through video games, industrial cinema, and military imaging, Farocki discards the cinematic notion of the “real” to uncover the unseen labor invisibly rendered into these on-screen digital worlds.

### *Parallel I*

2012, 15:53, HD video

Farocki’s cycle of films, *Parallel*, is introduced by sketching the stylistic history of computer graphics from the simple lines and squares of the 1980s to the photo-realism of today.

“For over 100 years, photography and film were the leading media. From the start, they served not only to inform and entertain, but were also media of scientific research and documentation. That’s also why these reproduction techniques were associated with notions of objectivity and contemporaneity—whereas images created by drawing and painting indicated subjectivity and the transrational. Apparently, today computer animation is taking the lead. Our subject is the development and creation of digital animation. If, for example, a forest has to be covered in foliage, the basic genetic growth program will be applied, so that “trees with fresh foliage” or “a forest in which some trees bear four-week-old foliage, others six-week-old foliage” can be created. The more generative algorithms are used, the more the image detaches itself from the appearance as found and becomes an ideal-typical. Using the example of trees and bushes, water, fire, and clouds, we compare the development of surfaces and colorings over the past 30 years in computer animation images. We want to document reality-effects such as reflections, clouds, and smoke in their evolutionary history.”

—HARUN FAROCKI

### *Parallel II*

2014, 08:38, HD video

In following video game characters through their attempts to escape the boundaries of their animated worlds, *Parallel II* seeks to reveal what lies outside of defined spaces and digital borders.

### *Parallel III*

2014, 07:21, HD video

An investigation of how the backdrops to video-game worlds are imagined and built as discrete elements unchallenged by the rules of the game, *Parallel III* traces a lineage through theatrical stages to film sets, in doing so providing a close reading of what we understand as peripheral.

### *Parallel IV*

2014, 11:20, HD video

In his final short of the *Parallel* series, Farocki throws into relief the coded behavior of the central “heroic” characters of the video-game world. Exploring the relationship between the game developer’s set of rules and the players’ own agency in controlling the action, Farocki noted that the characters are “homunculi, anthropomorphist beings, created by humans. Whoever plays with them has a share in the creator’s pride.”

## Eye/Machine I-III

Harun Farocki's three-part series made between 2001-2003 utilizes a vast collection of image sequences from laboratories, archives, and production facilities to explore modern weapons technology. This trilogy examines "intelligent" image processing techniques, such as electronic surveillance, mapping, and object recognition, in order to take a closer look at the relationship between man, machine, and modern warfare.

### *Eye/Machine I*

2001, 25:00, video

The film centers on the impossibility of distinguishing between the photographed and the computer-simulated images of projectile targets during the Gulf War of the 1990s. *Eye/Machine I* tracks the effect of this "loss of the genuine picture" through the philosophical disorientation that ensued, as well as the public outcry that made way for the development of new military imaging technologies, which, in turn, made their way into the surveillance and counter-surveillance techniques and tactics now common to contemporary civilian life.

### *Eye/Machine II*

2002, 15:49, video

"How can the distinction between 'man' and 'machine' still be made given today's technology? In modern weapons technology, the categories are on the move: intelligence is no longer limited to humans. In *Eye/Machine II*, Farocki has brought together visual material from both military and civilian sectors, showing machines operating intelligently and what it is they see when working on the basis of image processing programs. The traditional man/machine distinction becomes reduced to 'eye/machine,' where cameras are implanted into the machines as eyes. . . . Farocki shows us computer-simulated images looking like something out of science-fiction films: rockets steer towards islands set in a shining sea; apartment blocks are blown up; fighter aircrafts fire at one another with rockets and defend themselves with virtual flares. . . . These computer battlefields—will they suffice or shall we need further rationalization drives for new wars? *Eye/Machine II* is the continuation of a wider examination of the same subject: intelligent machines and intelligent weapons."

—ANTJE EHMANN

### *Eye/Machine III*

2003, 25:00, video

"The third part of the *Eye/Machine* cycle structures the material around the concept of the operational image. These are images which do not portray a process, but are themselves part of a process. As early as the '80s, cruise missiles used a stored image of a real landscape, then took an actual image during flight; the software compared the two images, resulting in a comparison between idea and reality, a confrontation between pure war and the impurity of the actual. This confrontation is also a montage, and montage is always about similarity and difference. Many operational images show colored guidance lines, intended to portray the process of recognition. The lines tell us emphatically what is all-important in these images, and just as emphatically what is of no importance at all. Superfluous reality is denied—a constant denial provoking opposition."

—HARUN FAROCKI

## Biography

German filmmaker **Harun Farocki** (1944–2014) made close to 120 films, including feature films, essay films, and documentaries. He worked in collaboration with other filmmakers as a scriptwriter, actor, and producer. In 1976 he staged Heiner Müller's plays *The Battle* and *Tractor* together with Hanns Zischler in Basel, Switzerland, and wrote for numerous publications. From 1974-84 he was editor and author of the magazine *Filmkritik* (München), and regularly lectured in Berlin, Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Manila, Munich and Stuttgart, as well as being a visiting professor at the University of California, Berkeley. In his teaching and his essays, in journals, books, and exhibitions conceived and produced with Antje Ehmann, Farocki was a powerful critic, editor, theorist, and curator. 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), as reference points. His impact and influence on culture, within and beyond Germany, is undisputed.

## Credits

With special thanks to Abina Manning and Ruth Hodgins at Video Data Bank, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

## On Animation and Workflow Film Series

This series takes as its starting point the long co-history of animation and workflow (the sequence through which a piece of work passes from initiation to completion), from early cinema to contemporary moving images, including art film and video, Hollywood productions, and video games. From Georges Méliès' pre-digital compositing techniques at the turn of the 20th century to CGI, and artists' experiments with gaming software, this series investigates the technical and aesthetic conditions that manifest through the process of constructing moving images.

Of the major transformations in image production, one of the more significant involves the shift away from filming on naturalistic sets or on-location—filming live, so to speak. In this mode, which has been familiar for nearly a century, figures and surroundings are captured in the same shot; even significant processing and manipulation of the film does not alter that close bond. The last two decades, however, have seen the increasing dominance of moving image productions that rely almost exclusively on post-production. More shots are now digitally composited from various sources, some shot on green-screen, some built from digital scratch. They are, for all intents and purposes, animations, in which each sequence renders a montage of disparate elements, produced at different times and often on different continents, into a single surface and flow of frames. In this situation, categories used to understand cinematic space and time that developed over a century of viewing and discourse have become increasingly inadequate, especially insofar as they reinforce a long-held divide between the filmed and the animated. To make better sense of these contemporary images, we have to instead read back through that history of the animated, constructed, and built, and so too through the history of the technique and workflow from which it cannot be separated.

# EMPAC

The Curtis R Priem Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC) is where the arts, sciences, and technology interact with and influence each other by using the same facilities and technologies, and by breathing the same air.

EMPAC hosts artists and researchers to produce and present new work in a building designed with a sophisticated architectural and technical infrastructure. Four exceptional venues and studios enable audiences, artists, and researchers to inquire, experiment, develop, and experience the ever changing relationship between ourselves, technology, and the worlds we create around us.



## STAFF

Johannes Goebel / Director  
Geoff Abbas / Director for Stage Technologies  
Eric Ameres / Senior Research Engineer  
Argeo Ascani / Curator, Music  
David Bebb / Senior System Administrator  
Peter Bellamy / Senior Systems Programmer  
Michael Bello / Video Engineer  
Victoria Brooks / Curator, Time-Based Visual Arts  
Eric Brucker / Lead Video Engineer  
Michele Cassaro / Guest Services Coordinator  
John Cook / Box Office Manager  
Roxanne De Hamel / Web Developer  
David DeLaRosa / Production Technician  
Zhenelle Falk / Artist Services Administrator  
William Fritz / Master Carpenter  
Kimberly Gardner / Manager, Administrative Operations  
Ian Hamelin / Project Manager  
Katie Hammon / Administrative Specialist  
Ryan Jenkins / Senior Event Technician  
Shannon Johnson / Design Director  
Pamela Keenan / Production Technician  
CathyJo Kile / Business Manager  
Eileen Krywinski / Graphic Designer  
Carl Lewandowski / Production Technician  
Eric Chi-Yeh Lin / Lead Stage Technician  
Stephen McLaughlin / Senior Event Technician  
Josh Potter / Marketing and Communications Manager  
Alena Samoray / Production Technician  
Candice Sherman / Business Coordinator  
Avery Stempel / Front of House Manager  
Kim Strosahl / Acting Production Administrative Coordinator  
Jeffrey Svatek / Audio Engineer  
Dan Swalec / Master Electrician  
Todd Vos / Lead Audio Engineer  
Pete Wargo / Manager, Information Systems  
Michael Wells / Production Technician

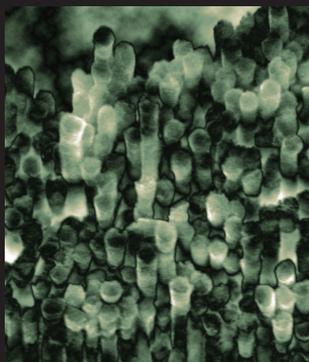


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# EMPAC

## Upcoming Events

An updated schedule for the 2015 Spring season is available online at [empac.rpi.edu](http://empac.rpi.edu). Check back often for more information.



TALK

### **CURT BRENEMAN**

Changing the World by Mining  
the Materials Genome

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Tuesday, April 07 / 12:00 PM

FREE



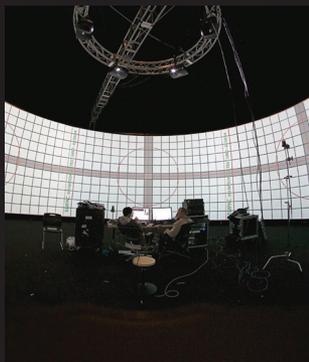
MUSIC / SOUND

### **PIANOPLY**

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Saturday, April 11 / 7:30 PM

\$18 / \$13 / RPI STUDENTS \$6



TALK

### **EMPAC FROM THE INSIDE**

Behind the Scenes of Production and Research

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Tuesday, April 22 / 7:00 PM

FREE