28 October 2017 - 14 January 2018

HARUN FAROCKI
PARALLELE I-IV

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Exhibition realized in collaboration with MOVIMENTA Biennal of the image in movement
MAMAC presents in its contemporary gallery a major video installation of the filmmaker Harun Farocki. Designed as a study on video game, the history of its iconography and its dazzling progress, the cycle offers an analysis of the passage from a merely pixilated world to a virtual ultra realistic universe. This fantastic exploration of video game universe also tests its limits and setbacks.

Parallele I seeks out the representation of certain natural elements from the creation of the video game in the 1980’s and the first tentative steps of the digital image to the ultra sophistication of contemporary universes. In the confrontation mode, he studies the different steps of the evolution of trees, flames, skies or water surfaces. Thus, the spectator witnesses an evolution leading us from a system of abstractions and symbols, embodying a landscape to representations challenging the real. Thus, while the tree is nothing but a heap of green pixels, and water, a blue static surface in the video game Zelda in 1986, the digital landscape goes so far in imitation that it is now able to allude to the interaction with the hero (branches that bends to the passage of a character, shimmering of the light on the water), or to atmospheric phenomenon (leaves rustling under the action of the wind). Farocki then plunges us into the other side of the stage, highlighting the work of graphic designers in charge of the creation of video games, revealing the precision of computer programs that generate these autonomous and sensitive landscapes and the extreme decomposition of the elements.

Parallele II and III, continue this exploration and question the virtual and symbolic limits of this mimetic relationship to the world and to the real. Thus Harun Farocki tries to go throughout these spread out territories, including their borders: rivers, cliffs, hills, or cinder blocks in cities as in Grand Theft Auto. So many invisible and impassable borders, revealing the determined and closed character of the virtual world. Once more plunging us into the reverse side of the scene, he tries to show us this limiting and bounded space of the frontier: rocks without thickness, impenetrable soil, stretch of water without depth, reduced to its surface.

These topographical limits echo the behavioral limits of the characters in Parallele IV. Harun Farocki explores the possible interactions between the different characters of Grand Theft Auto, probably one of the most accomplished games on the subject. If the protagonist can at random shove passers-by, attack them, how do these same characters react to this contact? Farocki highlights the range of possible reactions: protest, cry, escape in the event of persistence, resistance until the arrival of the police, possible presence or interaction of other passers-by in the same way. Relatively subtle and developed these reactions are limited by the lack of memory of the characters that can forget the aggression or undergo it repeatedly without evolution of behavior, like automatons.

Renowned for his researches on the relationship between society, image and politics, led since the 1960’s, Harun Farocki proposes here a forceful analysis of the digital universes. A philosophical analysis offering an allegorical vision of the contemporary world. For, beyond the virtuosity and Mimetic dimension that go through these artificial worlds, how can we imagine these spaces of simulacrum and proxy life shown in games? What meaning can we give to these closed boundary universes, which values attribute to the stereotyped human feelings (fear, indignation, passivity, anger, defense) of the characters and what prospects do these products of the entertainment industry reveal about today’s society and our relationship to the real?

In the context of MOVIMENTA, first biennial of the image in movement of the city of Nice, Harun Farocki’s work allows us to study at the same time the power of virtual images, the fascination for technology and its continuous progress, inviting us get some distance with them and not being fooled by their attractiveness.

Parallele I, 2012 Video, col., sound, 16 min. (Loop), Germany 2012
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.
Parallel IV, 2014
Video, col., sound, 11 min. (Loop), Germany 2014

Parallel 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, anthropomorphic beings, created by humans. Whoever plays with them has a share in the creator’s pride.


Harun FAROCKI
Harun Farocki (1944-2014), German director of Czech origin made more than 90 films, mostly experimental documentaries. From 1966 to 1968 (between the age of 22 and 24), he studied at the Deutsche Film-und Fernsehakademie in Berlin before teaching in Berkeley (California) from 1993 to 1999. Regarded as a major character of the contemporary experimental cinema, he has constantly questioned the power of images and questioned, and even defeated, the stories they support. Social relationships, war, production, but also the world of entertainment (‘spectacularisation’ of football, video games), were his favorite fields of exploration
MAMAC CONTEMPORARY GALLERY

Exhibition presented until
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Place Yves Klein - Nice
Every day from 11h to 18h
except on Mondays
+33 (0)4 97 13 42 01
mamac@ville-nice.fr - www.mamac-nice.org

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10 euros : Access to all municipal museums and galleries
for a period of 24 hours.

7-day ticket :
20 euros : Access to all municipal museums
and galleries for 7 days

Ticket Group : 8 euros :
Access to all municipal museums and galleries for groups from
10 people for a period of 24 hours

Free admission : see the conditions on the museum's website

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Harun Farocki  Gbr

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