

AS WE MAY SEE

Tracking and Tracing the Image after Farocki

October 30–November 01, 2024
Zurich

In 1945, Vannevar Bush published his landmark essay *AS WE MAY THINK*. In the age of computing, he argued, traditional forms of organizing, addressing, and processing information by “indexing” will be replaced by a much more flexible and associative machine-driven method he called *memex*. “Wholly new forms of encyclopedias will appear, ready-made with a mesh of associative trails running through them, ready to be dropped into the memex and there amplified.”

In 1986, Harun Farocki finished his film *AS YOU SEE*, a mesh of associative trails in which the Jacquard loom, the invention of the machine gun, and manifold alternative histories of technology are woven into a complex pattern of thoughts. What do Bush, Farocki, and other thinkers and practitioners of the image have to tell us today, when digital platforms, ubiquitous computing, and so called “generative artificial intelligence” are the norm?

The event *AS WE MAY SEE* pays homage to Farocki by discussing the complex and contradictory state of the technical image today. Ten years after Farocki’s premature death, we invite everyone to convene, think, and discuss—with, about, along with or against Farocki and Bush.

AS WE MAY SEE is organized by the Farocki Forum at the Department of Film Studies at the University of Zurich in cooperation with the Center for Arts and Cultural Theory (UZH and ZHdK).

Concept: Volker Pantenburg and Roland Meyer in collaboration with Anselm Franke (ZHdK), Ute Holl (University of Basel), Johannes Binotto (Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts), Kevin B. Lee (Università della Svizzera italiana) and the Harun Farocki Institut, Berlin (Tom Holert, Doreen Mende, Clio Nicastro, Elsa de Seynes).

Venues

October 30
Kino Xenix
Kanzleistrasse 52, 8004 Zürich

October 31
University of Zurich, Asien-Orient-Institut
UZH RAA-G-01, Rämistrasse 59,
8001 Zürich

November 01
Filmpodium
Nüscherstrasse 11, 8001 Zürich



University of Zurich^{UZH}



hdK

Zürcher Hochschule der Künste
Zurich University of the Arts

ZKK

filmpodium

KINO xenix

October 30

20:15

Kino Xenix

Kanzleistrasse 52, 8004 Zürich

AS WE MAY SEE kicks off with an evening at the Xenix cinema. Farocki’s film *IMAGES OF THE WORLD AND THE INSCRIPTION OF WAR* (1988) will be presented together with the lecture performance *PIECING THINGS TOGETHER* by media scholar Estelle Blaschke and artist Armin Linke from the context of their joint exhibition “Image Capital” (2022/23).



Armin Linke and Estelle Blaschke for Image Capital, CNRS Notre Dame Scientific Action, laboratory for the study of timber remains, Paris, 2023

October 31

09:30–17:00

University of Zürich

UZH RAA-G-01

Rämistrasse 59, 8001 Zürich

09:30

Welcome and coffee

10:00–12:30

The Labour of Images

Under the conditions of “artificial intelligence,” almost every image has become operational—as an element in automated data processing. How does this change the work with and of images, and what forms of work on the image become invisible in the process?

— Hosted by Ute Holl, Roland Meyer, and Volker Pantenburg

— Guests: Ranjodh Singh Dhaliwal and Laliv Melamed

14:30–17:00

The Operational Image before the Law

“Operational images” know no authors. They are thus in a specific non-relationship to the “legal operations” (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.) of property. At the same time, they are used in jurisprudence, police work or the penal system—as well as in critical forensics. The panel is dedicated to this contradictory entanglement of “operational images” in the “legal form” of the present.

— Hosted by Tom Holert, Doreen Mende, and Clio Nicastro (Harun Farocki Institut, Berlin)

— Guests: Katja Müller-Helle and Noam Elcott

November 01

09:30–17:30

Filmpodium

Nüscherstrasse 11, 8001 Zürich

09:30

Welcome and coffee

10:00–12:30

The Haunting of Image-Systems

Harun Farocki’s interest in image systems was above all an interest in the historical relationship between social struggles, technologies, myths and systems of domination. Based on Farocki and Sylvia Wynter, the artist Blaise Kirschner and the author and curator Anselm Franke examine the current reproduction and reconfiguration of the world-making, “mythopoeitic” function of modern and a-modern image systems: materials for the anatomy of a newly consolidating fascism.

— Hosted by Anselm Franke and Blaise Kirschner

14:30–17:30

Decoding or Re-encoding?

Video essays on media environments in which the decisive takes place beyond the screen. Political and technological infrastructures challenge established notions of critique and resistance. Featuring Harun Farocki’s *INTERFACE* (1995).

— Hosted by Johannes Binotto and Kevin B. Lee

— Guests: Occitane Lacurie und Hito Steyerl

18:30

Filmpodium

Nüscherstrasse 11, 8001 Zürich

Closing Film

WAR AT A DISTANCE

FRG 2003, Director: Harun Farocki, 58 min



“In war, death is always someone else’s death,” writes Harun Farocki about the use of operational images in cruise missiles. “The pattern of recognition and object tracking of seeing bombs threatens with infallibility.” In *WAR AT A DISTANCE* and the three-part installation *EYE/MACHINE* (2000–2003), Farocki starts from the media images broadcast on television during the 1991 Gulf War: Camera images with crosshairs from the perspective of the bomb crashing into the military target and detonating there. From this he developed the concept of the “operational image,” which is only an image in a secondary sense; the algorithms and computing processes are more important. Today, the operational image has gone from being the exception to the norm—in both military and civilian contexts. What ought to be done?

— Introduction: Tom Holert