



Harun Farocki, *Inextinguishable Fire*, 1969, 16 mm transferred to video, black-and-white, sound, 28 minutes.

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Harun Farocki

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From the “first television war” to the algorithmic surveillance of the twenty-first century, Harun

Farocki’s filmography turns media

back on itself, untangling the work that images are made to do.

Unfolding across Hantarex monitors lining the perimeter of this gallery,

“Gegen Krieg (Against War)” foregrounds Farocki’s critique of

Vietnam-era reporting, though it’s printed matter, not broadcast, that

comes under fire here.

In *Their Newspapers*, 1968, Farocki appears in front of the camera as one of several young radicals campaigning against popular dailies for their biased reporting on the war in Vietnam. His “combative collective” plan their reign of sabotage against the fourth estate, communicating among themselves by other means: kissing (true to the spirit of ’68!) and sending messages by way of paper airplane. Likewise, in *The Words of the Chairman*, made a year earlier, a page from Mao’s writing is folded into a star-shaped dart and lobbed through the air—talk about weaponized media!—landing in the soup bowl at a bourgeoisie dinner.

In *Inextinguishable Fire*, 1969, it’s cigarette paper, not newsprint, that serves as the kindling for change. The filmmaker, sitting at a table in a tweed jacket, smokes languidly while discussing war atrocities, indicting a system that invented napalm, used it, and sold it for profit. How to convey the suffering it causes, he asks, without rendering it consumable? Staring straight into the lens, he stubs out his burning cigarette—directly into his own arm.

— Adina Glickstein