

FILM  
CULTURE

IN TRANSITION



LABOUR IN  
A SINGLE  
SHOT

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON  
ANTJE EHMANN AND HARUN FAROCKI'S  
GLOBAL VIDEO PROJECT

EDITED BY

ROY GRUNDMANN

PETER J. SCHWARTZ

GREGORY H. WILLIAMS

Amsterdam  
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# Labour in a Single Shot



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*Critical Perspectives on Antje Ehmman and  
Harun Farocki's Global Video Project*

*Edited by  
Roy Grundmann,  
Peter J. Schwartz,  
and Gregory H. Williams*

Amsterdam University Press



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The publication of this book is made possible by grants from:



Cover illustration: Cristián Silva-Avária, *Concrete*, Labour in a Single Shot. Rio de Janeiro, 2012  
Back cover: Alice Creischer and Andreas Siekmann, *Icon of Deindustrialization (Berlin)*, from *Labour in a Single Shot / Eine Einstellung zur Arbeit*, by Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki, 2013

Cover design: Kok Korpershoek

Lay-out: Crius Group, Hulshout

ISBN 978 94 6372 242 1

e-ISBN 978 90 4855 021 0

DOI 10.5117/9789463722421

NUR 670



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For Harun Farocki and Thomas Elsaesser



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# Acknowledgements

This volume of essays is based in significant part on the international, interdisciplinary conference *Labour in a Single Shot*, held at Boston University and the Goethe-Institut Boston in November 2014. We would thus like first to express our gratitude to the various departments and programmes at Boston University that helped us in planning and executing the event. Our thanks go especially to the College of Communication and the Department of Film and Television as well as to the Department of the History of Art & Architecture, whose financial and logistical support made it possible for us to organize the conference in a manner that matched our original vision, and to our friends and partners at the Goethe-Institut Boston, which hosted part of the conference and lent vital organizational and financial support. We owe a special debt of thanks to Detlef Gericke, at that time the Director of Boston's Goethe-Institut, who played multiple roles in developing both the "Labour in a Single Shot" project and the conferences that followed it in Boston and Berlin. He initiated the *Labour in a Single Shot* video workshops together with Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki as part of the Goethe-Institut's Excellence Initiative;<sup>1</sup> he invited Ehmman and Farocki to teach one of the workshops in Boston; and he turned the Goethe-Institut into the most important financial partner and co-host for the Boston conference. Our sincere thanks go to Laurie Herschman and Jon Surmacz at the Boston University College of Communication, who designed the conference poster and website, and to Annette Klein at the Goethe-Institut Boston, who provided crucial logistical support. Magdalena Malinowska, who worked with us as conference manager, was indispensable at every step of the process.

Consistent with the international, interdisciplinary nature of *Labour in a Single Shot*, the Boston conference was envisioned as one of two major events designed to analyze and discuss *Labour in a Single Shot*. The second

1 The variation in the spelling of the project owes to the fact that our Boston conference title followed U.S. spelling (*Labor*) whereas the workshop project itself was conceived within a European framework and follows British spelling (*Labour*). The spelling of our book title follows the British spelling of the workshop title.

conference was held at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), Berlin, in February of 2015, but both events were conceived in close co-operation with all partners over months of Skype meetings and in an in-person planning meeting in Berlin in June 2014. Our wholehearted thanks go to our friends and partners at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt: Cordula Hamschmidt, Katrin Klingan, Sonja Oehler, Bernd Scherer, Anselm Franke, and Kirsten Einfeldt. Their enthusiasm for the double conference project and their collegiality and hospitality in Berlin were vital in helping us to develop our vision. Further, we would like to thank them for hosting the 2015 conference at the HKW, which gave us valuable impulses for taking our own project from conference to book publication.

We would also like to acknowledge two galleries that hosted exhibitions and events in conjunction with the Boston conference. Working with Antje Ehmann, the staff at the Mills Gallery of the Boston Center for the Arts (BCA) exhibited a substantial selection of videos from *Labour in a Single Shot* from September to November 2014. We extend our thanks to Randi Hopkins, the Associate Director of the BCA at the time, for her help in mounting the show. In addition, a small display of work related to the workshop ran from November to December 2014 at Boston University's Sherman Gallery; our appreciation goes to Lynne Cooney and James Hull for their support. Also at Boston University, we were fortunate to have the assistance of Chris Spedalieri, Visual Resource Manager in History of Art & Architecture, in producing still images from the *Labour in a Single Shot* videos.

Bringing a conference to publication can be an intricate process. We remain deeply grateful to the late Thomas Elsaesser, a long-time scholar of Harun Farocki's work, who, along with Tom Gunning, graced our Boston conference with a keynote address, and who encouraged us to produce a full-fledged book for his series with Amsterdam University Press, "Film Culture in Transition." We were profoundly saddened by Thomas's untimely death in December 2019, and we feel greatly honoured to have this book appear in the series, now edited by Malte Hagener, Patricia Pisters, and Wanda Strauven. We would also like to thank our editors at Amsterdam University Press, Maryse Elliot and Chantal Nicolaes, for steering us through all phases of the publishing process.

Our gratitude goes to those who have provided generous financial support for the book's publication. We are once again thoroughly indebted to Detlef Gericke, who secured funding from the Goethe-Institut head organization in Germany, and to the Boston University Center for the Humanities (BUCH), which provided completion funds. At the BUCH, we want to acknowledge the crucial support of Susan Mizruchi and Tamzen Flanders.



Finally, we are indebted to Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki. This book project would never have made it to publication without Ehmann's enthusiasm and support. Although Harun's sudden and unexpected death in July 2014 kept him from attending the two conferences on Labour in a Single Shot, we are grateful to have experienced his acute intelligence, warmth, and dry wit. We dedicate this book to him and to Thomas Elsaesser, in fond memory.





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# 1. Foreword: Eine Einstellung zur Arbeit/ Labour in a Single Shot

*Detlef Gericke*

Translated by Peter J. Schwartz

## Abstract

As a long-time director of various Goethe-Institutes and the principal investigator of the internal grant awarded by the Goethe-Institut's Excellence Initiative, Gericke recounts the history of the Labour in a Single Shot project from the first brainstorming sessions in 2010 between Farocki, Ehmann, and himself to the concrete planning stages and execution of the project on a global stage. The essay explains the Labour project's double mission – to train aspiring film-makers through the historically tested model of art and film workshops and to create a visual encyclopaedia of labour in the twenty-first century – in relation to the Goethe-Institut's history and mission as Germany's premier international cultural agency, and with special regard to its agenda of organizing events in the service of international cultural exchange.

**Keywords:** Goethe-Institut, workshop, Excellence Initiative, international cultural exchange

There is a long prehistory to the collaboration between Harun Farocki, Antje Ehmann, and me, which, however, contains all we needed for our later shared project, Labour in a Single Shot.

Our story began in 2002 in Jakarta, Indonesia with screeners that I had had sent to me by the Head Office of the Goethe-Institut in Munich. The Jakarta International Film Festival had wanted a competent and empathetic documentary film-maker from Germany to run a seven-day workshop

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Grundmann, R, P.J. Schwartz, and G.H. Williams (eds.), *Labour in a Single Shot: Critical Perspectives on Antje Ehmann and Harun Farocki's Global Video Project*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022

DOI 10.5117/9789463722421\_CH01



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for young Indonesian film-makers. I was enthralled by the first sample of Farocki's work, two minutes long, *The Words of the Chairman*, 1967. Farocki thought politically and could poke fun at himself at the same time – wonderful! It continued with *Videograms of a Revolution* (1992), which showed Harun Farocki's and Andrei Ujicá's ability to bundle the complex events comprising a social revolution into a single common thread. Then, there was the calm objectivity with which Harun commented on the images he thematized. The films, and the subtle differences between them, were far beyond what the Indonesian film-makers were capable of. But that's where they wanted to get to.

Harun Farocki was thus the ideal workshop leader, but I didn't dare to invite him. Directors that productive (four film projects per year) generally don't have the time for undertakings like the one we were planning: for a seven-day workshop in Jakarta, one needs two eighteen-hour flights to get there and back, plus two days to get used to the country, and then two days to get over the jet lag upon returning, so at least fourteen to twenty days total. Goethe-Institut honoraria can hardly pay for that. I was casting about for more realistic options when I received an unexpected email from Berlin, the original version of which I have lost, but which I still remember word for word:

Dear Mr. Gericke-Schoenhagen,

This is usually not how I do things and it may seem strange, but since I attended grade school in Jakarta for five years, I would very much like to show my wife where I spent my childhood. If you should happen to have some use for me or something I could do, please don't hesitate to let me know. I would be very happy to come. With best wishes, Harun Farocki

Harun Farocki was ideally suited to our project: he knew Indonesia, was a well-known documentary film-maker, and had a great deal of experience teaching and running workshops at multiple universities throughout the world. We immediately said yes.

The art of film and the practice of film production in Indonesia were in a difficult and laborious phase of reconstruction in 2002. A lot of people had to start from scratch following Indonesia's political turmoil, and this was precisely where the documentary workshop with Harun Farocki would need to begin. He wanted to meet the young professional film-makers where they currently were in their professional development and give them building blocks they could use to fight their way back onto the international market. What I saw in the eyes of the participants was that Harun Farocki



was an amazing teacher of video and documentary film-making. No one could possibly manage the task with more empathy than he did. We met ever more frequently, together with Antje Ehmann, but we didn't know at the time that this was the beginning of a friendship that would become ever deeper in the course of years of collaboration on a common project.

## An Idea Is Born

The beginnings of the project can be traced to the year 2010. Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann had both been invited to Boston. Harun was supposed to give two seminars at Harvard University as a visiting professor, and Antje was to curate the exhibition *The Image in Question: War – Media – Art* at Harvard's Carpenter Center. When they arrived in Boston, they initially moved into my apartment with the intention of using it as a base to search for their own living quarters. We got along so well that they ended up living there – in the room of my son, who had just moved out – until the end of their stay in Boston.

This made it possible for us to have many conversations over shared meals and nocturnal cigarette breaks on the backyard deck of my apartment in Brookline. It quickly became clear that we wanted to develop a major transcontinental film and video art project. We discussed every imaginable aspect of the idea, returning repeatedly to the question of what constitutes a well-conceived and successfully executed event in the service of international cultural exchange. They had both travelled frequently for the Goethe-Institut and were able to provide important input; there had been retrospectives of Harun's films in all formats – some digital, and quite a lot in 16mm and 35mm format – since the early 1990s. It was easy enough to define a successful event on the abstract level, that is in terms of cultural goals agreed upon by the Goethe-Institut and the German Federal Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*), but how would it look from the point of view of everyday work?

I thought it best to begin with the question of audience expectations, in particular those of the public of a South Asian capital such as Jakarta, where I myself had worked for years and where Harun had once attended grade school. There, one needs roughly an hour and a half to get into the city and another hour and a half to get back home, three hours in total of driving by car or by bus, to take part in an evening event at the German cultural institute. The evening has to be worth the effort, or the visitors won't come back. The subject, the film showing, the performance, the concert has to





have something essential to do with people's lives and/or work lives, and it has to be organized and advertised in a clear way. If someone is going to decide to attend, they have to know what and whom they'll be getting, and why. It can be a film with discussion afterwards, preferably with the director and with the possibility of eating and drinking a little something and entering into personal conversation.

What makes an evening rewarding for the visitor? When does the guest say, "Absolutely! I'll be coming back again next week"? Probably when the room was full and the visitor left the event "richer" than before. That can be a matter of additional knowledge, a newly acquired perspective, a personal encounter, a recognition of something forgotten, a view of "what must be done," of having the opportunity to get one's bearings, to become more certain of oneself, but also of putting apparent certainties into question, of preparing oneself a bit to study abroad, and so forth.

What must a programme look like to fulfil these requirements? It has to have quality! It has to have relevance; that is, it has to have something to do with what people are currently talking about, both in the guest country and in Germany. And it must have sustainability; that is, it has to stay relevant beyond what happens in a single evening. Of course, it should be entertaining, but it shouldn't be a flash in the pan of flat gags and jokes, homeland schmaltz, or horror movies. Cultural institutes are, after all, neither agencies for state self-representation nor propaganda channels ("Look how lovely things are in Germany, what a wonderful health system we have and how well we have managed the reunification..."). Nobody is interested in official self-praise on the part of the state. Events like that produce yawningly empty rooms. What people are interested in, when it comes to Germany, is self-critical and socially critical reflection on how problems are solved in our country, and about how they might also be solved, in similar ways and with the same urgency, in other parts of the world. People think of the Germans as good problem-solvers.

Harun Farocki's ideas about quality were informed by his thinking about good films, and this thinking, in turn, was decisively shaped by Bertolt Brecht. Harun viewed film and the visual arts as art forms that were there both to narrate *and* teach, in which things that seem self-evident acquire the character of something strange thanks to techniques of estrangement: a cinema of critique and of reflection that does not permit viewers to check their wits at the door. A cinema in which the viewer says, "I hadn't thought of that. I've never seen it like that." A cinema that didn't feed viewers with illusions and make them forget the world... It was this side of Harun Farocki

that drew the interest of the students and young film-makers with whom I had – and still have – contact.

We found ourselves repeatedly discussing the question of how to develop a project that would include and represent this “Farocki style.” Cultural programming normally designates learning processes that put advanced artists together with younger artists just beginning their careers as “workshops.” This is the most intensive form of exchange and of information flow. There are result-oriented and process-oriented workshops. The result-oriented workshop involves having something to show for it, something to present or exhibit at the end, preferably in front of live TV news cameras. The process-oriented workshop dispenses with results, banking entirely on the exchange between the teacher and the taught. For international cultural exchange, the learning process as such is both most productive for participants and least perceptible to the public at large. The things participants take home with them, and the ways they transmute this into their own advancement, can change life trajectories, influence work styles, and open careers, but normally it’s only the participants themselves and the workshop leaders who are aware of how a workshop helped them. Personally, I believe that an aggregation of individual changes is where truly sustained cultural exchange finds expression, and that the changes thus effected in people are what really constitute its sustainability. This can come into conflict with institutional requirements and the necessity of public awareness. Nonetheless, I gave higher priority to the successful teaching and learning process than to snappy headlines – at least so far as I was free to make such decisions.

The Labour in a Single Shot workshops would later succeed in combining process- and result-orientation instead of setting them in tension. The task as assigned involved participants in a *process* of consolidation and reflective self-limiting: to tell something in a single shot no more than two minutes in length, to concentrate entirely on a single sequence of images to grasp the essence of a complex process or condense it into a compact statement. Making a two-minute shot can be compared with writing a haiku. The haiku is the shortest poetic form in the world. It has to deal with nature or with feelings, it must be concrete, and it has to have something to do with the present. The task set in Labour in a Single Shot is similar. The films were to deal with human labour, they were to be concrete, and they should address a present capable of being caught on film.

But how would the *results* of our workshops achieve a public effect? Would they be artistically and technically good enough to support an exhibition?



I wasn't the only one who was sceptical; it took the didactic self-confidence and the visual imagination of Antje Ehmann to be fully certain of this effect and to convince us all. In 2010, on our Boston backyard deck, we were not yet speaking concretely of Labour in a Single Shot. Instead, we got to know each other better and established the framework we wanted to work within if it should come to a common project. After four months of living together, we went our separate ways and kept up with each other through correspondence.

## The Institutional and Financial Framework

About half a year after our brainstorming sessions on the deck in Boston, Harun and Antje had arrived at the basic concept. Based on Harun's experiences as a video teacher and film professor, they sketched out the project Labour in a Single Shot. It would take place on five continents, in fifteen countries, and in twelve Goethe-Institut regions. The workshops would be combined with exhibitions of video art developed from them, and would be oriented both to process and to results. A unified theme and consistent task definition would make the project visible, recognizable, and also sustainable. The goal was a visual encyclopaedia of labour in the twenty-first century – paid and unpaid, material and immaterial, traditional as well as totally new. It would make reference to the method of the early films of the late nineteenth century, such as those of the Lumière brothers (*Workers Leaving the Factory*), to locate the project historically, but also so as to regain something of the decisiveness of the early films.

To host workshops in fifteen countries and exhibitions of video art in seven locations is expensive, exceeding the budget of any one Goethe-Institut. Fortunately, the Institut's "Excellence Initiative" had recently been established. The Goethe-Institut operates on the principle of decentralized programme autonomy. This had been its strength for decades, and had in recent years become its weakness. Since the 1990s, the world had become ever more globalized, but the 157 German cultural institutes in ninety countries continued to work locally, with small-format, spatially limited programming restricted by budget concerns and repeating itself all over the world. In these changing times, this programming format tended to reach an increasingly ageing audience and to bore younger people. It was not keeping up with the times.



The creation of the Excellence Initiative between 2006 and 2009 was one of the decisive steps taken to modernize the offerings of the Goethe-Institut, and it was from this initiative that the Labour in a Single Shot project would receive the financing and support that would make it possible. The Excellence Initiative was an idea of the Goethe-Institut general secretary at the time, Hans-Georg Knopp, who with the help of the Federal Foreign Office created a dedicated budget of several million euros to stimulate efforts to work innovatively and in new formats and – transcending the agendas of individual Institutes – to work regionally and, if possible, even transregionally. In short, the idea was to substantially raise the quality of cultural programming at the Goethe-Institut worldwide.

To complete our application for the Excellence Initiative, Antje, Harun, and I took a vacation together in India, where Harun's father was born and where some of my children were living. Harun and Antje would give the first workshop in Bangalore not long after our vacation. There, they would test out the basic features of the project. We used our time together to formulate the basic approach of the application and to identify the countries and the Goethe-Institutes that we wanted to co-operate with. We juggled so much with numbers, dates, and countries that, at some point, my son, walking by and casting a quick glance at the paperwork, asked us if we were doing our tax returns.

We had contacts to our favoured locations through either the Goethe-Institut or the Harun Farocki Film Production Company. Altogether, our network comprised fifteen prospective countries and twelve regions of the Goethe-Institut.

As far as content was concerned, I could assume that my colleagues at all of the relevant Goethe-Institutes would already be familiar with Harun Farocki's most important films. Back in Boston, I phoned everyone on our city wish list, spoke with my colleagues, and everywhere received only enthusiastic endorsement. If our application for an Excellence grant succeeded, all of these Institutes were prepared to contribute additional funding and then to take steps to secure the help of appropriate partners in the guest countries.

As early as that spring, we received the good news that a special fund had been set aside by the Foreign Office to help launch the project and to finance the development of a continually expandable website with the sum of forty thousand euros. Near the end of 2012, a decision was made, and the jury of the Goethe-Institut awarded us a budget of 180,000 euros, funded by the Excellence Initiative. Bingo!



## How the Project Was Integrated with the Global Infrastructure of the Goethe-Institut

Many first-rate partners would participate in the project during its first two and a half years (museums, galleries, film academies, cultural institutions, two biennials, and a triennial), and altogether they would contribute a further 680,000 euros to the project. In the end, the total project cost for fifteen workshops and seven exhibitions would reach nearly one million euros. By the middle of 2014, more than four hundred video artists had participated in the fifteen workshops, and later 200,000 people would visit the exhibitions in Tel Aviv, Lisbon, Łódź, Venice, Athens, Montreal, Bangalore, Mexico City, Essen, Boston, and Berlin.

The local Goethe-Institutes were the essential link between us as producers and our many prominent partners. It was also useful that many people knew me, thanks to my twenty-five years of work for the Goethe-Institut, both in Germany and abroad. I had led the film, television, and radio section for six years, and during those years had maintained close contact with the fifty or so colleagues who specialized in film work, who had real professional expertise and whom we informally called “film representatives” (*Filmbeauftragte*). I knew all of them, and in most cases, I even knew when their birthdays were. Film representatives are usually local employees of ours who take the time to keep up with what’s going on in the world of cinema, which means that at least once a year, they take in what there is in the way of new German film production at festivals in Berlin or in Hof, Leipzig, Duisburg, Oberhausen, Osnabrück, or Munich, depending on whether their main focus is on feature films or documentaries, shorts or experimental films, or upon which festival they’re in the process of planning some kind of co-operation with. These people are almost always local, and something like 90 per cent of them are women. Some of them have become known internationally, such as, for example, Ingrid Scheib-Rothbart of the Goethe-Institut in New York, who had worked as a secretary to Hannah Arendt before joining the Goethe House (as the Goethe-Institut New York was then called) to become an ambassador of the New German Cinema in America, and making the movement famous. Ingrid Scheib-Rothbart was a model to us all, and to me as well.

The conceptual aims of the project were as important to us as the resources that we had in our local employees. These had to be formulated in such a way as to fit equally well into the regional concept of the South Asian region as into those of South America, eastern Europe, central Asia, or North America. The format of Labour in a Single Shot covered the





Labour in a Single Shot

A project by Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki

Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, February 26–April 6, 2015

Exhibition view

© Laura Fiorio / Haus der Kulturen der Welt

most important contexts and objectives of all the participating Institutes, and all of them could identify with it. Among the common objectives of Goethe-Institutes, whether in Europe, Asia, the Americas, or Africa, are the following:

- to expand and deepen international cultural exchange and access to culture in Germany, as well as to promote intercultural dialogue in a globalized world,
- to strengthen civil societies, and
- to develop co-operation and collaboration in the field of education.

With regard to the last point, it is worth mentioning that the Goethe-Institut understands itself as standing not only for culture but also for education. Within the purview of its sphere of action “educational co-operation,” it has contact with tens of thousands of schools and universities, mostly in the service of expanding German language teaching, but also with an eye to conveying other educational content. With our fifteen workshops in total, with the conferences planned in Boston and Berlin by Roy Grundmann and Gregory Williams and in Berlin by Katrin Klingan, Annika Kuhlmann, Cordula Hamschmidt, Anselm Francke, and Bernd Scherer, and with the

co-operation of major universities throughout the world, the educational aspect of the project was integrated into the project concept in a way that also convinced colleagues in other work sectors.

## Synergy between the Goethe-Institut and Its Local Partners

Here, I will cite a slightly abridged version of something our long-standing president Klaus-Dieter Lehmann has said in speeches:

At the Goethe-Institut, we work not only rationally but also through personal connection, that is, through human competence, closeness to each other, neighbourhoods, truly concrete projects and familiarity with each other – this is absolutely key. What the Goethe-Institut has is the ability to bring people together – that is to say, to create encounters. We don't work in isolation, but in partnerships, and when possible also as participants. We don't export culture and exhibit it, but act by means of voluntary cooperative partnerships.

Decentralized programme autonomy and the integration of local galleries, film schools, and other institutions as partners are essential for the work of the Goethe-Institut. That is our work philosophy! The question is how that works out in detail, and whether one in fact achieves what one has set out to do. How participatory is the project really?

One of the most convincing achievements of *Labour in a Single Shot* – for myself and for others – was the way it implemented its aspirations to be participatory. This involved working with local workshop participants to prepare their videos for exhibition, presenting *all* the results of each workshop on the website, and curating a selection of workshop films for exhibitions that would later travel around the world. All of the films were shown equitably side by side, equal in size and length: films from the first and the so-called third world, from industrialized and agrarian countries, from emergent and transitioning countries, from North and South America, from Africa, Asia, and Europe. Antje Ehmann came up with the basic visual concept, first realized in Tel Aviv with screens mounted on stelae with attached headphones. Within a year, she developed the visual concept further. The third exhibition, in Poland, involved large screens hanging from the ceiling with “sound showers” installed in front of them that made it possible for several people at once to watch the films without the sound of multiple films overlapping. The idea of hanging the screens from the

ceiling like a forest of pages made visible the aspiration and goal of the project to become a visual encyclopaedia of human labour in the twenty-first century. I think that even Harun Farocki was surprised at how intense an impression was generated by the fifteen hanging screens, each of them one and a half metres wide.

Of course, partners in guest countries each have their strengths and their weaknesses. There were some galleries for which the technological requirements were too much. There were partner universities whose regulations did not allow them to open the programmes they sponsored to students from other universities or to collaboration with freelance artists. These were, however, axiomatic ground rules of the workshops. Participants from multiple generations and various universities were supposed to be able to be there. In Boston, this was happily enabled by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), thanks to the efforts of Kurt Fendt.

Because the films had been made in various formats (most of them in PAL, but many also in NTSC), at the exhibitions, we needed players, projectors, and displays that would be capable of playing back both sorts of video file. For some exhibition venues, it was no problem to rent compatible equipment, but it was a big problem for others, which led to long exchanges about whether films made in PAL couldn't be converted to NTSC. For us, this was out of the question, because such conversions always reduce image quality. What to do? The solution was the company Eidotech and its expert Jan Imberi, who arranged favourable rental conditions for each exhibition venue and instructed the local technicians by telephone – whether in North America or in India – on how to operate the delivered playback equipment. Jan Imberi had studied Harun Farocki's work so carefully and was so familiar with his scenarios and forms of installation that the technical correspondence required to mount every exhibition that he supplied and oversaw was reduced by 98 per cent. He knew what it was all about and consistently demanded uniform standards worldwide. A real stroke of luck!

## What Was There Left for Me to Do?

We were a core team of three people: Antje Ehmman, Harun Farocki, and me. In addition, there were three colleagues from the Goethe-Institut Boston (Annette Klein, Iris Alcorn, and Karin Oehlenschlaeger), as well as two close collaborators from the Harun Farocki Film Production Company, Jan Ralske and Matthias Rajmann. Every workshop and exhibition also required collaboration with local partners, from curators to local media technicians.





The project had two coproduction partners, the Harun Farocki Film Production Company and the Goethe-Institut Boston. The production management tasks were split between us. Because the global subvention came from the Excellence Initiative of the Goethe-Institut, the Goethe-Institut in Boston was responsible for budgetary control and fiscal management. That meant that I spent Saturday mornings planning and initiating expenditures and justifying them in the budget. The project budget had to be monitored, honoraria paid, contributions remitted, flights booked, and initial account assignments issued. There are rules and standards governing the use of public monies (and such are the project funds of the Goethe-Institut). All money must be spent in an economical and accountable way, every bank transfer is checked by local, regional, and central budget controls, and sometimes randomly and without warning by external auditors. Here, as well, I had help from an experienced colleague, Matthias Feldmann, a former pastor from East Germany. He would come by the Goethe-Institut at eight in the morning, play sonatas for an hour on our Bechstein piano, then transfer the funds that I had prepared, while making certain that I hadn't made any errors. I have no training in business management, and in the first years of my professional life, I tortured myself working through such tasks, listlessly and overwhelmed – until I spent several years in a country I loved where a badly paid civil service skimmed its own personal share from the top of nearly every payment transaction as a matter of course. Watching how the quality of life and the development dynamics of an emerging country were time and again set back by years and slowed down by the corruption and nepotism of “civil servants” in public service transformed me into a furious proponent of transparent, rule-bound, continuously monitored budget management processes.<sup>1</sup> Where I was too slow or uncertain, I let myself be coached. Today, I can do in a morning what used to take me four times as long, with half that time spent complaining.

The grant was split into two annual instalments, 100,000 euros for 2013 and 80,000 for 2014. The grant for the second year, 2014, was to be paid out on the condition that the project accomplished as nearly as possible what it had planned for its first year. There was some scepticism that such an ambitious project, spanning multiple regions and continents, would actually succeed. The goal was thus always to demonstrate that we were entitled to receive the funds that were already earmarked for the following year. That was another reason why we kept such careful accounts and paid such attention to making reports and keeping within the budget.

1 A film director once told me how he had once won a state prize of \$20,000 (US). When he finally received the money, there was only \$7,000 left; the rest had gotten “stuck” along the way.

We continued with everything that managing a project involves: there were exhibition deadlines that had to be moved (Mexico), and there were surprising workshop cancellations (Beirut), where we had quickly to find new and equally relevant partners (Goethe-Institut Hanoi).

I tried to carefully keep to deadlines set for the reports on workshops and exhibitions that had already taken place. Better to be a month early than a day late. At the Goethe-Institut, we have a practical software program for project planning into which one enters single planning steps along with the financial information and then completes reports step by step. I executed these reports as precisely and as legibly as possible. I knew from my years of work at the central office in Munich how little effort some colleagues put into their reports, how incredible amounts of coffee were required to compensate for sloppily formulated reports, and how inspiring and action-inducing a concise, readable, and, if possible, amusingly formulated event report can be.

Because according to the logic of our institution I reported only on the events that we ourselves hosted and not on those hosted by other Institutes, I asked Antje Ehmann for descriptions from her perspective as curator and workshop leader. You can see how well she did that in the second chapter of this book.

In the second year, when the German media began to pay attention to the project, we had to write more and more journalistic texts; building blocks for speeches by the Goethe-Institut president Klaus-Dieter Lehmann at the annual press conference; texts for the local, regional, and central websites; and also opening speeches for the crowning exhibition in Berlin in 2015.

To keep the productive tension of such a major project at a consistently high level of energy, one has to know everyone involved and be in a position to answer questions from one's own institution, from funding sources, and from the Foreign Office, at short notice and in real time: queries from directors, department and section heads, participating Institut and regional directors, or the press division. To give myself a sense of the thing overall, I attended the opening exhibition at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the exhibition held at the Museum Sztuki in Łódź, and the exhibition and workshop at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City. I was in Boston anyway, so together with my colleague Annette Klein, I co-ordinated the workshop at the MIT Media Lab and the exhibition at the Boston Center for the Arts. After Harun Farocki's sudden death, I represented both curators at the Ruhrtriennale in Essen. I was able to travel to the crowning exhibition at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) in Berlin – splendidly organized by Bernd Scherer and his team – and to answer the surprising invitation to the Venice Biennale in 2015 from my new posting in Vilnius.



I have described the project many times on my own and on other websites, so that the world will understand what we wanted to do and achieve: namely, a visual encyclopaedia of human labour in the twenty-first century. I had hoped that more exhibitions would be mounted than just the seven that we planned and already had financed. This hope has been fulfilled to an extent that I could not have dreamed of. At the moment I write these lines, *Labour in a Single Shot* has been presented in thirty-six exhibitions worldwide. Further exhibitions are being planned, and a second series of workshops has successfully been started, run variously by Antje Ehmann, Eva Stotz, Cathy Lee Crane, León de la Rosa, and Luis Feduchi.

For me, and naturally for Antje and Harun, it was intellectually gratifying to see the project grow and develop as it had been planned in our heads. It was also fun to refute the sceptics who thought it hardly possible to carry out the whole thing, and it was a pleasure for me to follow individual workshop participants as they developed careers, earned institutional appointments, won prizes, or became film professors. The project achieved worldwide recognition, and the results surpassed our expectations.

Meanwhile, I had worried that all that travelling around the world might be physically too exhausting for Harun Farocki, who was approaching seventy. He answered a question of mine to this effect with his own method of calculation. He had deducted the twenty-two trips in total that this project had required of him from the two and a half years in which he had cancelled everything that didn't have to do with *Labour in a Single Shot*. So, on balance and quantitatively, his travel quotient had come out to the same. Only this way he got to travel with his partner Antje. For this reason, the project was for both of them the most beautiful project of their lives.

And what was the point of the whole thing? By way of answer, Harun sent me a poem by Bertolt Brecht about the journey into exile of Lao Tzu, who wanted to rest – but who, stopped by the toll keeper, in the end wrote down what he had discovered, in eighty-one sayings, among which this one was to be found:

[...] that with time, soft water in motion  
will conquer the mightiest stone.  
You understand: what is hard, succumbs.<sup>2</sup>

2 Bertolt Brecht, "Legende von der Entstehung des Buches Tao Te King auf dem Weg des Laotse in die Emigration" (Legend of the Origin of the Book Tao Te Ching on Lao Tzu's Journey into Exile), *Die Gedichte von Bertolt Brecht in einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981), 660–663.

This was Harun Farocki's favourite poem. And it also describes the philosophy behind the work of the Goethe-Institut.

### **About the Author**

**Detlef Gericke** directed the Goethe-Institut Lithuania from 2015 to 2019 and the Goethe-Institut Boston from 2009 to 2015. During his tenure in Boston, Gericke collaborated with Harun Farocki and Antje Ehmann in conceptualizing *Labour in a Single Shot* and also oversaw its financing through the "Excellence Initiative" of the Goethe-Institut.





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## 2. Labour in a Single Shot: Critical Perspectives – Editors’ Introduction

*Roy Grundmann, Peter J. Schwartz, and Gregory H. Williams*

### Abstract

The introduction sets the history of the Labour in a Single Shot video workshop in relationship both to Ehmman and Farocki’s artistic trajectories and to the twentieth-century tradition of the politically committed film documentary. Noting the academic and public interest the project has received, the editors introduce the essays that follow.

**Keywords:** video workshop, gallery exhibition, online archive, curatorship, media pedagogy, Goethe-Institut

Labour in a Single Shot was the last project undertaken by the German film-maker Harun Farocki in collaboration with his partner Antje Ehmman before his untimely death in July 2014. Conceived and executed over the course of four years (2010–2014), the project’s ideological and aesthetic roots extend deep into the soil of Farocki’s decades of development as an artist and as a teacher and into Ehmman’s as a curator. In the form of international exhibitions, additional workshops, lectures by Ehmman, and an online web archive, it continues to bear fruit to the present day. This volume of essays is the product of two inadvertently posthumous scholarly conferences, one held at Boston University in November 2014 alongside an exhibition at the Mills Gallery at the Boston Center for the Arts, the other – again complementing an exhibition of videos from the project – at Berlin’s Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) in late February 2015. Both sets of events were initially planned in concert with Farocki and Ehmman: the Boston conference by Roy Grundmann and Gregory Williams together with Detlef Gericke, then

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Grundmann, R, P.J. Schwartz, and G.H. Williams (eds.), *Labour in a Single Shot: Critical Perspectives on Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki’s Global Video Project*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2022

DOI 10.5117/9789463722421\_CH02



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director of the Goethe-Institut Boston; the one in Berlin in collaboration with Grundmann and Williams, the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Gericke and the Goethe-Institut, and the international research centre Work and Human Life Cycle in Global History (re:work) at Berlin's Humboldt University. Although the tone of the Boston conference was deeply affected by the shock of Farocki's passing, its overall shape remained true to the original plan of assessing the Labour project; in Berlin, a day of talks and events commemorating Farocki and his legacy was added to two days of lectures discussing the project.

Aside from two texts combining talks given in Boston and Berlin (Elsaesser, Schwartz), and three written specially for this volume (Barker, Hudson and Zimmerman, Navarro), the essays that follow are all revisions of papers given at the Boston conference. We have prefaced this critical work with a translation of extended extracts from previously unpublished journals kept by Antje Ehmman during the project workshops held in multiple cities worldwide between December 2011 and April 2014. It is our hope that Ehmman's account will give readers an organic sense of how the hundreds of videos now comprising the project's archive came into existence as the product not only of two-week tutorial workshops on the art and craft of documentary film-making in twenty cities worldwide<sup>1</sup> but also of an exceptional set of human and institutional relationships: between Farocki and Ehmman as a remarkably symbiotic pair of artistic collaborators; between the two of them, workshop participants in fifteen countries, and the local landscapes of the workshop cities; and, not least, between Farocki and Ehmman, the project, and numerous representatives of Germany's premier international cultural agency, the Goethe-Institut, chief among them Detlef Gericke. Our request for a foreword, graciously obliged, is but a small token of the debt owed Gericke's ongoing interest and dedication by both the Labour project as a whole and the grateful editors of this volume.

Planning for the Labour project began in 2010, when Farocki, about to retire from teaching at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, decided with Ehmman to respond to multiple teaching and lecturing invitations with

1 The cities in which Farocki and Ehmman held workshops together were, in chronological order: Lisbon, Bangalore, Geneva, Tel Aviv, Berlin, Cairo, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Łódź, Moscow, Hanoi, Boston, Mexico City, Hangzhou, and Johannesburg. This series was preceded by a limited workshop in Sligo, Ireland in 2011, and has been followed since Farocki's death with workshops led by Cathy Lee Crane and León de la Rosa in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, by Eva Stotz in Vilnius, Lithuania and Marseille, by Antje Ehmman and Eva Stotz in Chicago, and by Antje Ehmman and Luis Feduchi in Warsaw.



a co-ordinated international teaching effort centred on documenting the subject of labour. Yet the various strands of interest informing the project can be traced much farther back, through multiple phases of the film-maker's long career. As Thomas Elsaesser observes, an “interest in work, work routines, and work practices – often associated with the human hand and manual labour” – was one of Farocki's “abiding preoccupations.”<sup>2</sup> Following more than two decades of films documenting production processes in a direct observational mode, especially of cultural artefacts (light bulbs, a model's make-up, film posters, an artist's painting, a recorded pop song, a Playboy centrefold, a film by Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet)<sup>3</sup> and of labour accomplished by talking (the work of shoe salesmen, the conduct of classes training executives in self-presentation and salesmen in giving sales talks),<sup>4</sup> the 1995 film *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik/Workers Leaving the Factory* marks an inflection point in Farocki's approach to the problem of representing labour in film. Its declared task was to reflect on the relative invisibility of labour processes in cinema and of the relations of money and power to which labour is subject, a lacuna marked at the very inception of the medium by one of the first films ever shown, the Lumière brothers' *Sortie de l'usine Lumière à Lyon/Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895).<sup>5</sup> As Farocki declares in his 1995 film's

2 Thomas Elsaesser, “Harun Farocki: Filmmaker, Artist, Media Theorist,” in *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight Lines*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 22, 34–35.

3 *Die Teilung aller Tage* (1970); *Make Up* (1973); *Plakatmaler* (1974); *Sarah Schumann malt ein Bild* (1977); *Ein Bild von Sarah Schumann* (1978); *Single. Eine Schallplatte wird produziert* (1979); *Ein Bild* (1983); *Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet bei der Arbeit an einem Film nach Kafkas Romanfragment >Amerika<* (1983).

4 This series continues through Farocki's last film, *Sauerbruch Hutton Architekten* (2013).

5 Films that show actual work processes (rather than depicting related but more general themes such as labour conflicts, the class system, or working-class culture in general) are surprisingly scarce. The body of scholarship on films showing work processes is also small. One of the first books focusing on media's representation of work and working-class culture of the 1960s and 1970s was *WDR and the Arbeiterfilm: Fassbinder, Ziewer, and Others*, ed. Richard Collins and Vincent Porter (London: British Film Institute, 1981). For a recent study of industrial films and other non-theatrical films about labour, see *Films that Work: Industrial Film and the Productivity of Media*, ed. Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009). This wide-ranging essay collection analyzes films made by and about the auto industry, films about trade unions, corporate management films, and films about affirmative action in the workplace. Among the publications devoted to various aspects of Harun Farocki's work, two books have dealt with his representation of work processes and his filmic analyses of work-training films. Tilman Baumgärtel's monograph, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm: Harun Farocki—Werkmonografie eines Autorenfilmers* (Berlin: b\_books, 1998), places its valuable critical analysis of Farocki's films about work in the context of his overall



voice-over, “The factory the workers are streaming out of is unadorned, without any company signboard. Nothing is visible of the power and money of industry. And also nothing of the workers’ power. Still, at the time these images were recorded, the governments of Europe had reason to fear a workers’ rebellion in case of war, like the one that had happened in Paris in 1871.”<sup>6</sup> The second in a series of found-footage films and installations in which Farocki endeavoured to archive and analyze selected visual tropes in cinema,<sup>7</sup> *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* deploys visual imagery from a century’s worth of narrative and documentary films to show how at the moment in which moving pictures first seemed to promise to make the world visible in a new way, the Lumières’ first film would initiate a tradition of rendering labour invisible – in this case, precisely the labour that had made cinema possible. Labour in a Single Shot is in effect the counter-archive to this found-footage testament to missing imagery: explicitly setting the Lumières’ film as a formal and substantive cornerstone to the project, it encourages both a filling of this historical lacuna (in the project’s manifold direct representations of labour, especially manual labour) and continued reflection on its persistence to the present day (in the project’s remakes of *Workers Leaving the Factory* and in its thematization – sometimes overt, sometimes by omission – of the policed sequestering of some forms of labour from view).

This genealogy of the Labour project has been declared in several of its gallery exhibitions (Berlin 2015, Barcelona 2016, Marseille 2017, Seoul 2019) with an updated version of a separate work created in 2006, a twelve-channel video installation entitled *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik in elf Jahrzehnten/Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades*, which recycles, without verbal commentary, much of the source material from the 1995 film, while also adding more. Several exhibitions to date of selected videos made in the workshops have also included a separate installation of

trajectory as a film-maker, educator, and media activist. More recently, the art historian and curator Monika Bayer-Wermuth published *Harun Farocki: Arbeit* (Munich: Silke Schreiber, 2016), a book that is entirely focused on Farocki’s career-long engagement with the theme of work, though she does not discuss *Labour in a Single Shot*.

6 Voice-over, Harun Farocki, *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1995), our translation.

7 Films: *Ein Tag im Leben der Endverbraucher* (1993); *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* (1995); *Der Ausdruck der Hände* (1997); *Gefängnisbilder* (2000). Installations: *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik in elf Jahrzehnten/Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006/2014); *Zur Bauweise des Films bei Griffith/On the Construction of Griffith’s Films* (2006); *Fressen oder Fliegen/Feasting or Flying* (2008); *Tropen des Krieges/War Tropes* (2011). Cf. Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki, “Cinema like never before,” in *Kino wie noch nie/Cinema like never before*, ed. Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki (Cologne: Generali Foundation, 2006), 20–21.

some subset of workshop videos intended as remakes of the Lumière factory film (thirty-one of the current tally of 568 films by some 300 workshop participants),<sup>8</sup> and the project website includes “workers leaving [...]” as one of three subset selection criteria (the others are “type of work” and “dominant colour”). A fourth component of all the exhibitions, adorning both gallery walls and publicity material, has been the series of prints by Andreas Siekmann and Alice Creischer representing each workshop city through an iconic image of some signal aspect of its economy; local statistical data assembled by Bernd Heitmann also complement the online videos on each city web page.

In their return to the Lumières’ *Urszene* of labour’s erasure from cinematic view, Farocki and Ehmann were not content to limit themselves to matters of content: they also tasked their workshop participants with rehearsing some of the formal constraints under which the Lumières made their seminal film. Each video was to be one to two minutes long, taken in a single shot with no cuts, addressing the subject of labour; such post-Lumière features as camera movement, colour, and sound were, however, allowed. This, too, was not entirely new: as Elsaesser has observed, Farocki had already “reinvented” the tableau shot of early cinema as the basic building block of such earlier films as *Zwischen zwei Kriegen/Between Two Wars* (1978), *Etwas wird sichtbar/Before your Eyes – Vietnam* (1982), and *Leben – BRD/How to Live in the FRG* (1990).<sup>9</sup> Linking static vignettes through montage into paratactical chains of visual metaphor, this last film especially left much of the activity of meaning-making up to the viewer: “precisely because no commentary is offered, and no verbal paraphrase links the one sequence to the other, or compares the animate with the inanimate, the viewers are given ample room for their reflections”<sup>10</sup> – reflections ideally embracing not only the subject matter of the film but also the very conditions of filmic narrative. In a similar manner, one of the Labour project’s intentions is both to reveal and evade cinema’s ordinary narrative conventions, a function that falls in one way to the formal constraints, and in another to

8 To date, these remake exhibitions have appeared in Tel Aviv (2013), Lisbon (2013), Łódź (2013), Bangalore (2013), Essen (2014), Boston (2014), Berlin (2015), Seoul (2015), Barcelona (2016), Madrid (2016), Marseille (2017), São Paulo (2019), Chicago (2019), and Timișoara (2020). The number of videos (and channels) in these separate installations ranged from six to fifteen; in each case, the installation included the Lumières’ film (representing Paris) alongside workshop videos from a range of other cities. In all the other exhibitions, remakes of *Workers Leaving the Factory* were included in the looping sequences on the individual city channels.

9 Elsaesser, “Harun Farocki,” 20.

10 Elsaesser, “Harun Farocki,” 21.

the conditions of exhibition. While the formal directive “one shot, single subject, one-to-two minutes” tethers the project symbolically to 1895, a moment preceding cinema’s fall into what film scholars call narrative integration and its ideological consequences, the selection criteria that organize viewer experience on the project website (and, in a different way, Ehmann’s curatorial practice at the exhibitions) compel the viewer to undertake a kind of aleatory editing across the project as a whole, and to reflect on that undertaking.

The Labour in a Single Shot project may thus be seen as a culmination of Ehmann and Farocki’s shared preoccupation with the technological, aesthetic, and political conditions of making labour visible through filmic documentation. To understand the project as such, we must situate it within the overall history of political film theory and practice. The manner in which the Labour project engages its workshop participants and represents itself to the public signals its place within the twentieth-century tradition of the committed documentary. Its pedagogical structure taps the legacy of early and midcentury left film collectives and their dedication to using film as a tool for social change. As a direct artistic implementation of the revolutionary ideal of mass empowerment, such collectives as the Soviet Kinoks in the 1920s; the Nykino and Frontier Films cadres of 1930s United States; their disciples in the American Newsreel Film Collective, founded in the late 1960s; and the Dziga Vertov Group, also founded in the late 1960s (by Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, in France), all embodied the idea that art should not only be made for the masses but also by them. This agenda influenced many subsequent art- and film-making endeavours for decades to come, including the literature initiatives of the early Soviet *Proletkult* and the writers’ workshops launched in West Germany in the 1960s. The desired transformation of participants from art recipients to art makers was widely (and, as it turned out, naïvely) assumed to be unproblematic. Collectives that taught film-making, however, found themselves faced from the outset with the challenge of overcoming the difficulties that inhere in film-making as an art and a craft. Negotiating this challenge turned out to require extensive teaching and mentoring, a fact that explains the historical prominence of elite instructional cadres within revolutionary film collectives.

Labour in a Single Shot shows its debt to this tradition in the care Ehmann and Farocki took in developing their approach to the task of teaching students to make films with an eye to social impact. But the political vision behind Labour in a Single Shot differs significantly from that of the Kinoks, Nykino and Frontier, Newsreel, the Dziga Vertov Group, and other radical



film-making collectives that understood their task as a struggle with a capitalist state engaged in class domination and imperialist warfare. Unlike these collectives, the Labour project, a nonprofit undertaking sponsored by the Goethe-Institut, a cultural association mostly funded by the German government, operates within the realm of state-sanctioned cultural work. This institutional framework shapes the workshops' pedagogical mission not only in its funding structure and organizationally – all the workshops were co-ordinated by regional Goethe-Institut employees – but also in their ideological alignment with the twin goals of *Völkerverständigung* (fostering understanding between different peoples and cultures) and providing alternative structures of education, particularly for adults.

Farocki and Ehmann thus clearly still subscribe to the modernist ideal that art should be an agent of political change, a conception that regained urgency in the 1960s, when Farocki's generation of artists became politicized in response to the decade's sociopolitical upheavals. This process also entailed an intensive theoretical engagement with the relationship between art and politics. The call for art to break down the walls that bourgeois capitalist society had erected around it became a baseline agenda, regardless of the artists or media in question.<sup>11</sup>

Film was poised to play an important role in the politicization and fraying of the arts (*Verfransung*, to use Adorno's term for the intermixing, or blurring, of media) in the late 1960s.<sup>12</sup> But because of the tainted role film was felt to have assumed as a capitalist mass medium and as a tool for the advancement of totalitarian ideas during the first half of the twentieth century, in the late sixties and early seventies, much of the political left regarded cinema with a certain amount of ambivalence or with outright scepticism. In the wake of the student riots of May 1968, a debate erupted among left-wing film-makers and critics in France, Germany, and other countries (including many developing countries) as to how cinema could be joined with other arts to bring about political change. Following Victor Shklovsky and Bertolt

11 Tilman Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 37. European avant-gardes of the 1960s took inspiration from early Soviet art, but it should be mentioned that the call for breaking down the barrier between the space of art and the space of the audience (and thus between art and life) also owed a significant debt to Dadaism, which had attacked the hubris and ignorance that had led to World War I. Dadaism became a central inspiration for such sixties movements as Situationism and for new art forms including Happenings and performance art, which attacked Western consumer society and its economic and military imperialism. Baumgärtel explicitly links Farocki's approach to political documentary to Situationism, with which Farocki was briefly involved in the 1960s.

12 Theodor W. Adorno, *Über einige Relationen zwischen Musik und Malerei. Die Kunst und die Künste* (Berlin: Akademie der Künste, 1967).

Brecht in espousing the notion of aesthetic estrangement, the two leading French film journals, *Cahiers du Cinema* and *Cinéthique*, proclaimed that for film-makers to take part in this political task, they needed to make visible the devices that film uses to create illusion. Guided by the historical models of the Soviet Futurists and Formalists at the journals *Lef* and *Novy Lef* and by the work of the Soviet film-makers Sergei Eisenstein and Dziga Vertov, who argued that a transformation of cinema had to include the relationship between film and spectator, *Cahiers* and *Cinéthique* also embraced the concept of the alert, active viewer.<sup>13</sup> Yet neither French journal was able to explain why directors like Godard had so far failed to reach the working-class audiences on whose behalf they purported to make their films.<sup>14</sup>

As noted by Silvia Harvey, whose summary of this debate remains the most detailed and comprehensive available, the formalism of *Cahiers* and *Cinéthique* required emendation by another line of thought, exemplified by Walter Benjamin and Brecht. Both these writers had warned against neglecting a culture's popular elements and underestimating the public's need for entertainment and its desire to combine learning with pleasure.<sup>15</sup> Benjamin and Brecht helped artists on the left expand their focus from the internal structure of a literary or cinematic text to the question of how the text functions within "a particular apparatus, within a system of consumption, distribution or exchange specific to a particular society and a particular historical moment."<sup>16</sup> This epistemological shift is exemplified in statements by Godard and Brecht that, while overlapping in their concern about the limited truth-bearing capacities of the image, set different emphases. Godard, articulating the thinking that defined the approach of the Dziga Vertov Group as a materialist strategy of art making, declared: "A photograph is not the reflection of reality, but the reality of that reflection."<sup>17</sup> This view elevates formalism to a materialist strategy of

13 Sylvia Harvey, *May '68 and Film Culture* (London: British Film Institute, 1980), 69.

14 Ibid., 66. See also D. N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Theory* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

15 Harvey, *May '68*, 69–70.

16 Harvey, *May '68*, 70. Harvey here draws specifically on ideas formulated by Benjamin about Brecht's theory of Epic Theater in Walter Benjamin, "The Author as Producer," *New Left Review*, no. 62 (London 1970), 1–9, reprinted in Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. Peter Demetz and Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken Books, 1986), 220–238. See also Walter Benjamin, "What is Epic Theater?," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 147–154.

17 Godard, cited in Harvey, *May '68*, 71. Godard made an almost identical statement with regard to film: "A movie is not reality, it is only a reflection. Bourgeois film-makers focus on the



film-making, whereby the constant defamiliarization of aesthetic codes is the only safeguard against film's tendency to naturalize the things it shows. By contrast, Brecht's scepticism about the relationship of images to truth seems to leave no room for solutions. Already in the 1920s, he laconically observed that "[a] photograph of the Krupp factories doesn't tell you very much about those factories."<sup>18</sup> Brecht's statement has encouraged artists such as Farocki to shift their focus from an exclusive concern with the image (and its formal treatment) to other points of interest, including such questions as why images privilege or omit certain things, from where images issue forth, in what contexts we encounter them, and so on.

In the 1960s and 1970s, West German artists and intellectuals were struggling just as much as their French counterparts to reconcile their political investment in and love of film with their distrust of it – and just as in France, this struggle was stoked by an ideological war between duelling camps of film critics.<sup>19</sup> What made things even more volatile in the German context was that these two sets of critics did not represent two distinct publications: all of them wrote for a single journal, *Filmkritik*. One camp of the *Filmkritik* critics, the so-called "political left," hewed close to an iconophobic Marxist view of film shaped by Frankfurt School critical theory, while another, eventually called the "aesthetic left," proceeded in a quasiheretical manner to advocate for what they called the "productive consumption" of films.<sup>20</sup>

On a theoretical level, Farocki, who wrote for *Filmkritik*, was deeply engaged with both of these duelling critical camps. As someone who also made films, he avoided choosing sides and tried instead to chart a middle path between these positions. This nonpartisan stance would inform all of Farocki's subsequent works. As a film-maker, Farocki had initially used film as a blunt weapon, for overtly propagandistic purposes. By the early 1970s, however, he had abandoned the stance of the militant provocateur seeking to eliminate the boundary between art and direct action. Instead, he began to see himself as an artistic agent of the Enlightenment engaged in

reflection of reality. We are concerned with the reality of that reflection." See Kent E. Carroll, "Film and Revolution: Interview with the Dziga Vertov Group," *Evergreen Review* 14, no. 83 (October 1970), reprinted in R. S. Brown, ed., *Focus on Godard* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1972), cited in Harvey, *May '68*, 66.

18 Bertolt Brecht, cited in Harvey, *May '68*, 71.

19 Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 51–52. For assessments of Farocki's work as a theorist and his affiliation with *Filmkritik* see Olaf Möller, "Passage along the Shadow-Line: Feeling One's Way Towards the *Filmkritik*-Style," and Rainer Knepperger, "The Green of the Grass: Harun Farocki in *Filmkritik*," in Thomas Elsaesser, ed., *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight-Lines* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), 69–76 and 77–82.

20 Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 51–52.



a political struggle. He accepted that “filmmakers cannot make revolutions but can only provide ‘working tools’ for those who can.”<sup>21</sup> Within these parameters, however, Farocki would continue to develop his understanding of this complex role in relation to the projects he undertook, which included Brechtian films that formally foregrounded work processes, more widely ranging essay films about the cultural and filmic conventions of representing work, experiments with analogue video that sought to reach spectators in new ways, later experiments with digital video and installations, and finally *Labour in a Single Shot*, which integrates and further develops many of the tendencies and strategies of his earlier works. Farocki’s complete oeuvre reveals that, over the course of his artistic career, he came increasingly to imagine the viewer as an agent of meaning-creation, gradually shifting away from using film as an illustration of his own thought processes and towards turning his films into constructs that offered a loose web of concepts for viewers to use to chart their own connections.<sup>22</sup> This arc, too, finds an endpoint in *Labour in a Single Shot*, which allows viewers to meander freely through its array of videos (none made by Farocki himself) to educate themselves and enjoy their discoveries.

Farocki’s artistic trajectory may thus be seen as an evolving response to Brecht’s observation that a photograph of the Krupp factories does not tell us much about the factories. As the title of one of his films suggests – *Etwas wird sichtbar/Before your Eyes – Vietnam* (1982) – Farocki’s work aims to make complex contexts visible and to teach audiences how local processes function within larger systems. His thematic focus all along was not only the operations of labour and industry (as systems unto themselves and in relation to each other and to society) but also how such abstract phenomena as history and culture are the result of human thought processes meriting critical investigation rather than simple acceptance as natural givens. This complex didacticism is already evident in Farocki’s 1969 anti-Vietnam War film, *NICHT löschesbares Feuer/Inextinguishable Fire*. This scripted film features a scientist character who is employed by a chemical plant to produce napalm. The stilted dialogue between the scientist and his team didactically foregrounds the interconnections between napalm’s destructive effects and the complex set of industrial relationships informing its production,

21 Thomas Waugh, “Introduction: Why Documentary Filmmakers Keep Trying to Change the World, or Why People Changing the World Keep Making Documentaries,” in *“Show us Life”: Towards a History and Aesthetics of the Committed Documentary*, ed. Thomas Waugh (Metuchen and London: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984), xiv.

22 Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 125.

including the exploitation of its raw materials and byproducts – a set of relationships that Farocki, ever interested in how the flow of industrial products could be maximized by means of multiple interlocking systems of production and exploitation, termed *Verbund* (a new coinage suggesting “linkage, network, feedback loop, compound structure”).<sup>23</sup>

Farocki assessed the public impact of the film *NICHT löschbares Feuer* with the same sobriety that he used in the film to analyze napalm's manufacture and circulation. Commenting on its positive reception by festival and student audiences, he laconically surmised that its agitational impact owed solely to the fact that there simply were no other films like it at that moment.<sup>24</sup> Keenly aware that a film's effect depends on how it manages to insert itself into the public sphere, Farocki began to subject his films to laboratory-like testing of the effectiveness of formal devices with regard to both their didacticism and their dissemination.<sup>25</sup> Labour in a Single Shot must be regarded as a logical outcome of this mode of assessment. Farocki's intention of circulating his work as effectively as possible is evident in the workshop's strategic doubling of its exhibition modes, while his pedagogical ambitions register clearly in the workshop's continued commitment to the long take as the primary tool for capturing the intricacies of work processes and of labour's relationship to social life.

In Farocki's early films, long takes had a Brechtian function: films such as *NICHT löschbares Feuer* featured lengthy, unedited takes of “model situations” (scripted interactions between characters whose didacticism makes them slightly artificial) that Farocki repeated within each film with minimal variation. Gradually, however, Farocki repurposed the long take by freeing the act of filming from preconceived political agendas. This becomes evident in films such as *Erzählen/About Narration* (1975), *Zwischen zwei Kriegen/Between Two Wars* (1978), and *Etwas wird Sichtbar*, which combine scripted scenes with uncommented shots of physical reality (including shots of natural scenery, such as rivers).<sup>26</sup> This move away from a Brechtian aesthetic made Farocki's long takes more observational and sensual, an aesthetic that would figure centrally in his essay films of the 1980s and 1990s. His agenda of making captured reality legible through context-based interpretation would continue to depend on the long take's ability to create

23 On *Verbund* as feedback loop, see Thomas Elsaesser, “Harun Farocki: Filmmaker, Artist, Media Theorist,” in *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight-Lines*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser, 16.

24 Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 94.

25 See, for example, Roy Grundmann's discussion of *Wanderkino für Ingenieure* in “One Shot, Two Mediums, Three Centuries.” Published in this volume, 155–157.

26 Baumgärtel, *Vom Guerillakino zum Essayfilm*, 112–113.



ambiguity, a feature we also see at work in many of the videos of Labour in a Single Shot. The workshop videos are notable for how they celebrate physical reality in its full complexity, using the camera in ways that are reminiscent of the films of the Lumières and other early cinema pioneers to whom Farocki was drawn.<sup>27</sup>

To understand the logic behind the workshop's exhibition modes, we must consider the impact of the digital revolution of the 1990s. While it made film-making equipment more accessible, the advent of digital technology had an even bigger impact on film exhibition modes, particularly of experimental nonfiction and avant-garde films. Digitization made it easier for galleries and museums to integrate film exhibition into their regular programming and thus to bring experimental nonfiction film into the purview of the art world on a broad scale.<sup>28</sup> This process occurred in tandem with the rapid expansion on the art scene of urban galleries, museums, and biennials. The art world had no interest in exhibiting film simply for the sake of contrasting it with fine art. On the contrary, museums and galleries began to openly celebrate film, as part of a much broader cinephilic turn that swept the visual arts in the late 1990s, when large parts of film history were digitally archived and re-exhibited in celebratory fashion in the context of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of cinema.<sup>29</sup> Farocki seized on this digital shift by reorienting his mode of production from film to digital video and by making the gallery his favoured site for developing new films and installations, both alone and together with Ehmann. What his work of the 1990s and beyond reveals is that installations became a new way for Farocki and Ehmann to continue the politically charged strategy

27 Baumgärtel reminds us that in the late 1960s, when much of the left was suspicious of film as part of mass culture, the long take gradually came to function as code for aesthetic ambition, and as an antidote to commercialization (48). While Farocki's long takes were initially austere didactic rather than playful (98), from the late 1970s on, he used them in a more "sensibilist" manner, that is, to capitalize on cinema's capacity to record the irreducible flow of life (113).

28 Strictly speaking, this interest in film and moving images on the part of the art world did not originate with the advent of digital technology, but goes back to video art's appropriation of the genre of the essay film in the 1980s, spearheaded by such multimedia artists as Isaac Julien and Trinh T. Minh-ha.

29 See Erika Balsom, *Exhibiting Cinema in Contemporary Art* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013). Much of Balsom's insightful book is concerned with the art world's embracing of cinephilia as part of a broader shift towards large-scale spectacle-oriented exhibitions frequently involving an engagement with certain film genres, directors, and selected aspects of film history. For a specific discussion of the art world's discovery of nonfiction film, see chapter 4. As a key moment and institutional event in this development, Balsom cites Documenta 11 (2002), whose director Okwui Enwezor is credited with being a major proponent of what has come to be known as "the documentary turn" of contemporary art (162).



of Farocki's essay films, which involved defamiliarizing established and naturalized conventions of representation through an innovative formal structure that challenged audiences to engage with moving-image media in analytical ways.

As Christa Blümlinger has observed, Farocki's first multichannel video installation, *Schnittstelle/Interface* (1995), which confronts the spectator with sequences of images shown simultaneously on two monitors, extends the ability of montage to generate meaning. As Farocki explains in voice-over: "In the past, it was words, sometimes pieces of music that commented on the images. Now images comment on images."<sup>30</sup> *Schnittstelle*, as Blümlinger argues, reflects critically on that process by invoking "an apparatus that permits one to experience the simultaneity of images which film usually orders as a succession."<sup>31</sup> Made the same year as *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik* and using some of its material, this installation prefigures the Labour project's design as a multichannel archive. In its exploration of a cryptographic randomization of image sequences intended to evade easy narrativization, *Schnittstelle* anticipates the aleatory montage effect produced in the Labour project by the unsynchronized image streams of the exhibitions and the website's randomized ordering of videos both on its home page and in the video subsets selected by its sorting rubrics. Farocki's decision there to construct montages of half-second and three-second shots likewise signals a quasi-Oulipian understanding of a priori formal constraint as a way of resisting traditional narrative form. However, *Schnittstelle* stops short of the degree of randomization achieved in the Labour project through unsynchronized multiple image streams. Whereas the "horizontal" or "soft" montage produced by the interplay of the image sequences on the installation's two screens is precisely timed, as it would also be in such later multichannel installations as *Eye/Machine* (2001–2003), *Serious Games I–IV* (2009–2010), and *Parallel* (2012–2014), the workshop project follows the lead of two installations in which parallel image flows are *not* synchronized: *Arbeiter verlassen die Fabrik in elf Jahrzehnten/Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* (2006/2014), already mentioned, and *Tropen des Krieges/War Tropes*, a six-channel installation of 2011. In their movement away from editor-controlled to aleatory, viewer-effected montage, both of these works

30 Harun Farocki, cited in Christa Blümlinger, "Incisive Divides and Revolving Images: On the Installation *Schnittstelle*," in *Harun Farocki: Working on the Sight Lines*, ed. Thomas Elsaesser, 63.

31 Farocki, "Incisive Divides and Revolving Images," 62.

adumbrate the notion of the image archive as public toolkit that would later inform the Labour project.

Farocki and Ehmann's installations are possibly best understood as components of a series of co-curated museum projects stretching back to the late 1990s and culminating in three major multi-artist exhibitions: *Kino wie noch nie/Cinema Like Never Before*, held in Vienna and Berlin in 2006–2007, for which *Workers Leaving the Factory in Eleven Decades* was made; *The Image in Question: War – Media – Art*, an exhibition at Harvard's Carpenter Center in Cambridge, Massachusetts that saw the première of *Serious Games I: Watson is Down* (2010); and *Serious Games: War – Media – Art* (Mathildenhöhe, Darmstadt, 2011), at which *War Tropes* and the full four-part *Serious Games* installation were shown.<sup>32</sup> Thematically, the latter two projects anticipated the Labour project in the way they attended to the problem of what Elsaesser has called the *military labour of invisibility*, a category that includes not only multiple varieties of military secrecy and disinformation and the invisibility of casualties in armed conflict but also “the invisibility of the psychic wounds that especially the long drawn-out wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have inflicted on thousands of young men [and women] and their families.”<sup>33</sup> (Indeed, the perfect absence of military labour from the Labour project's archive would seem to testify by omission to this sort of invisibility.) Formally, the Labour project fulfils, and exceeds, the pedagogical ambitions of the earlier museum shows, both in the extent to which it delivers the operation of image montage into the eye and intellect of the beholder and in the immensely extended reach of its complex and ongoing workshop and exhibition strategy.<sup>34</sup>

These operational and semantic shifts, which deliberately transferred agency to the viewer, proceeded in tandem with Farocki's evolution from film-maker/author to contributor/collaborator and finally to mentor/teacher. To note Farocki's centrality, as an individual author, to an inherently collaborative project such as Labour in a Single Shot may appear

32 Ralf Beil and Antje Ehmann, ed., *Serious Games: Krieg – Medien – Kunst/War – Media – Art* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2011), 199.

33 Thomas Elsaesser, “Simulation and the Labour of Invisibility: Harun Farocki's Life Manuals,” *Animation: an interdisciplinary journal* 12, no. 3 (2017): 223.

34 In 2002, Farocki wrote of *Schnittstelle*: “When *Interface* was shown at the Centre Georges Pompidou for more than three months in a wooden box structure, with a bench for five people in front of two monitors, I worked out that it would reach a greater audience than in any film club or screening venue that relates more to cinema.” Harun Farocki, “Cross Influence/Soft Montage,” in *Harun Farocki: Against What? Against Whom?*, ed. Antje Ehmann and Kodwo Eshun (London: Koenig, 2009), 73. By now, the number of visitors to the Labour project's thirty-six exhibitions to date and to the project website must have exceeded that audience many times over.

contradictory, but it isn't. Until his untimely demise, Farocki remained the workshop's public face. His prominent position in the art world was a major incentive for institutions to cosponsor the project, which they often did in return for Farocki giving public lectures or teaching master classes at their venues. Several workshops were held in conjunction with retrospectives and exhibitions of Farocki's films and installations. But it is easy to overlook the change of roles that *Labour in a Single Shot* required him to undergo. He not only went from maker to teacher but also from having sole answerability for a project to sharing its vision, control, and execution with others. The most important "other" is, in this case, Farocki's personal and professional partner Antje Ehmann, whose decision to continue the workshops after his death further complicates the question of authorship, even as the project carries on his legacy.

As the workshop diary Ehmann kept until Farocki's death reveals, their collaboration was based on the principle of equal partnership. Their relationship was one of mutual trust and respect, and their division of labour structured itself according to their diverging fields of expertise. Farocki's career in film-making and his knowledge of nonfiction film history seem to have placed him in the position of "head lecturer," while Ehmann's career as a curator put her in charge of developing a vision for the project's exhibition component. But her diary indicates that she was also involved in all aspects of workshop instruction and critique. Meanwhile, her creative collaboration with Farocki on several earlier video installations suggests that she shared with Farocki a strong cinephilia, a sensibility that clearly underpins the workshop.<sup>35</sup> While there is little detail in Ehmann's diary about the minutiae of instruction, this document does yield an impression of the scope of her responsibilities, while also giving the reader a sense of their somewhat different approaches to teaching.

Farocki's lecturing on the craft and history of nonfiction film appears to have focused on imparting established norms, histories, and practices, a task requiring a high degree of personal identification with the material and a certain conception of documentary's purpose and scope.<sup>36</sup> Ehmann, by contrast, took a somewhat different approach to teaching. Her diary is filled with perceptive observations about many of the workshop participants,

35 See, for example, their collaborative installations *Fressen oder Fliegen/Feasting or Flying* (2008), *Tropen des Krieges 2: Wozu Kriege/War Tropes 2: Why Wars* (2011), and *Tropen des Krieges 4: Verbindung/War Tropes 4: Connection* (2011), most recently exhibited at n.b.k. in Berlin. For a discussion of these works, see Antje Ehmann and Carles Guerra, "Mit anderen Mitteln: Trennen—Verbinden—Übersetzen," in Harun Farocki, *Retrospektive: Mit anderen Mitteln—By Other Means* (Berlin: n.b.k., 2017), 5–8.

with whom she seems to have had a relatively close rapport. On occasion, she mediates between them and Farocki, who tends to present his ideas, in eloquent English, as fully fleshed-out concepts, sometimes exceeding the linguistic and cultural competence of students. Thus, for example, she observes in her diary entry for the Hanoi workshop:

In discussions with the participants, I can always understand even the ones who speak English badly. Often I have to tell Harun what they've said. This produces an odd accomplice relationship, in the manner of "Antje will understand what we're showing and saying." Sometimes they give me a thumbs-up when I've understood some Vietnamese cultural specificity that Harun's reacted to with a "What was that?"<sup>36</sup>

With her "translations" of Farocki's ideas, Ehmann appears to try to negotiate the gap between stated rules and practical reality. Shielded from public view, this task is less conspicuous or prestigious than the teaching processes ostensibly at the centre of the workshop's daily routine. As a description of work behind the scenes, Ehmann's diary is a valuable source of information for understanding the overall dynamics of the workshop.

Ehmann's contribution to *Labour in a Single Shot* is thus complex in nature. The more workshops that were added to the project, the more she became its discursive manager, with her efforts directed both inwards (in helping Farocki to select videos from prior workshops for participants to study) and outwards (in her work of organizing the videos into public exhibitions whose scope and structure evolved along with the project). Ehmann has thus done for *Labour in a Single Shot* what *Labour in a Single Shot* set out to do for labour: she has enhanced the visibility of work by facilitating its representation in innovative ways. We thus see a gradual widening of agency away from Farocki's singular authorship towards collaboration, both with Ehmann and with their students. Not only did this project entail a shift in his role from film-maker to teacher, but in it he also shared pedagogical agency and responsibility with Ehmann, while the videos that the workshops have produced are not directly their work, but the work of their students. This widening of agency helps define the position that *Labour in a Single Shot* is poised to claim within the tradition of politically committed cinema. Although the workshop videos differ in mission, format, and tone from the films of the classic film collectives of the heroic revolutionary

36 Antje Ehmann, "Labour in a Single Shot—Antje Ehmann's Workshop and Exhibition Journals, 2011–2014," trans. Peter J. Schwartz. Published in this volume, 77.

period, the workshops in which they were made must still be regarded as taking part in this longer tradition.

The essays in this volume reflect upon the aesthetic, epistemological, and political consequences of the Labour project and situate it within an international history of cinematic representations of labour. Organized into four thematic sections, the essays consider the workshop's structure and explore its historical precedents, its aesthetic and poetic responses to contemporary labour, its affective and embodied engagement with workers, and its embeddedness within networks and digital platforms. These thematic divisions are intended to help guide the reading experience, but they are not strictly determinative of the authors' arguments, which developed independently and with only minimal suggestions in advance from the editors. Although the majority of the texts began as conference papers, all of which have been substantially rewritten and expanded, at this point the collection has only a tenuous connection with the conversations that took place in Boston and Berlin. The writers, all of them working as instructors at universities, approach the project videos from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including film studies, German studies, art history, film-making, and studio art. At the same time, most contributors have explored the videos from positions beyond their customary disciplinary boundaries, resulting in a wide array of critical responses to the Labour workshop and the project's distribution platforms.

The first three essays take the long view by situating the Labour project within three increasingly narrow frames of historical context: the centuries-old European tradition of producing images of labour, the twentieth-century legacy of cinematic representations of work, and Farocki's own committed investigation into these themes since the late 1960s. Peter Schwartz traces a history of picturing labour in the West with the aim of determining the various *Einstellungen* (the primary word in the project's German-language title) or "attitudes" towards work expressed by image-makers since Roman antiquity. He unpacks the multiple modern resonances of the notion of *Einstellung* to measure the project's degree of success in prompting a change in perspective on the subject of labour. Describing the evolution of film as a medium over the course of the "long" twentieth century, Roy Grundmann also considers attitudes towards work, but he does so with the goal of asking what the Labour project gains by employing the relatively new technology of digital video as part of a response to the history of cinema. He identifies ways in which the videos respond to and employ codes and strategies that come from cinema, and he looks to moments in film theory to analyze the viewing experience of the Labour project as well as its political impact.



As one of Farocki's most thorough and attentive interlocutors, Thomas Elsaesser likewise assesses the artist's films about work, but he does so by focusing on Farocki's influential contribution to the discourse on cinema's emancipatory potential. In particular, Elsaesser reads Farocki's evolving treatment of labour with reference to his recording of the human body, the senses, and play. These three historical takes on the Labour project set the stage for the other writers' close readings of specific aspects of the workshop's structure and of its distribution platforms.

The next three essays, grouped under the rubric of poetics, explore the linguistic and aesthetic categories that define the Labour project. Dale Hudson and Patricia R. Zimmermann structure their essay as a series of ten "propositions" that allow them to test the usefulness of different terms (archive, collaboration, gender, or industry, for example) in precisely articulating the impact of the workshop. They concentrate especially on Labour films that highlight women in work situations, noting that the project website does not include the theme of gender among its search categories. A similar interest in identifying overlooked elements in the project motivates the essay by José Gatti, who examines several videos to explore the idea of what he calls "videopoetics." Gatti argues that certain forms of labour resist visualization, which, in his view, raises the political stakes of the matter of representing the working class. David Barker's essay also treats the theme of picturing the working class, but it does so through close observation of the camera's position and movement in specific Labour videos. Having worked as a researcher with Farocki on *Workers Leaving the Factory*, Barker uses his own perspective as a film-maker and editor to assess the Labour workshop model in relation to Farocki's larger body of work.

The following two essays examine the theme of embodiment in the project as part of an effort to bring the reader a step closer to the labouring subjects, the workshop participants, and the inanimate objects recorded by the camera in a number of the project videos. Jeannie Simms, a practising artist and film-maker, compares Labour videos with works by other artists (including herself) who collaborate directly with labourers to help them generate their own opportunities for self-representation. Simms looks specifically to moments of caregiving and child labour in the project videos, asking how much information is conveyed about each given context while acknowledging the distance that separates the viewer from these often intimately filmed scenes. Gregory Williams explores the haptic element in several videos in which the camera is attuned to the physical movements of the workers, though he does so by focusing attention on the role of tools



as visible forms that guide the viewing experience, and finds that physical objects often occupy the frame in a way that mediates the relationship between the camera and the labouring subjects.

The book's final section on networks takes a more expansive view to think broadly about the related issues of access and distribution in the Labour project as a whole. Thomas Stubblefield links the workshop model and the online database to broad questions about the spatial and temporal parameters of global labour today. He thinks critically about the potential of the website to gather and tell stories about the activities of workers in the post-Fordist economy during a period in which it seems impossible to conceive of a totalizing account of labour. Gloria Sutton is similarly interested in comparing the different components of the Labour project, but in her essay she concentrates on the distinction between seeing the videos as works of art encountered in galleries and museums and understanding them as digital artefacts embedded in a web-based network. In thinking about how the Labour project might be situated within the expansive context of present-day digital culture, Sutton discusses several new-media projects by other contemporary artists who represent labour in ways that both intersect with and depart from the Labour videos; together, the artists and video-makers reveal the challenge of reliably documenting work. Finally, Vinicius Navarro evaluates the online catalogue through which the majority of viewers will gain access to the Labour videos, both now and in the future. He describes the database as a "dynamic system" that adopts randomization processes and promotes unique routes into the video collection, ultimately arguing that new information and conceptions of work can emerge when individual viewers are allowed to make choices while navigating through the website. Collectively, the essays in this volume analyze Labour in a Single Shot both in terms of its specific recording of localized scenes of labour around the world and with regard to its continuing relevance as a model for teaching and developing documentary video practices.

NB: All Labour in a Single Shot videos mentioned in the essays receive footnotes containing the relevant web address. The URL links take the reader directly to Vimeo, which hosts the videos from the workshop project. To understand the full context of Labour in a Single Shot, readers should also consult the project's standalone website: <https://www.labour-in-a-single-shot.net/en/films/>. The video frame grabs printed throughout the book are provided courtesy of Antje Ehmann and the Harun Farocki Institute.





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