

Harun Farocki Institut (HaFI)
Some Future Plans and Requirements,
2019/20 (and beyond)



Harun
Farocki
Institut

Berlin, December 2018

Dear Friends,

About to enter its fourth year, HaFI looks forward to a considerable number of projects and cooperations. Below we cursorily list some of them, many of which secured financially (not least thanks to HaFI's being part of the Arsenal-initiated *Archive außer sich* program under the umbrella of HKW's *The Whole Life* archive project), others yet waiting to receive funding.

Considering the largely voluntary work at the Institut—and the fact that, as a non-profit organization, HaFI does not have any commercial revenues—the scope and frequency of the activities in the nearer and more distant future will depend on our capability to attract support from public funding bodies and private donors and friends. Then again, HaFI from the outset tried to avoid turning into just another application mill, with all the nuisance and life draining bureaucracy this would imply. So how to stay healthy, without falling apart?

In order to find a lasting arrangement in the face of this conundrum we kindly invite everyone to give advice in matters of economical and existential survival. What is it that you can imagine—individually, or as a group/network of friends and supporters? What sustainable and sustaining models of support you know of and can share your experiences with us?

Beyond individual donations (which are, of course, highly welcome... and tax-free!)—would you be interested e.g. to participate in the formation of a society of HaFI friends, including regular membership, or something else along these lines of organizing

financial, social and intellectual backing, and crowdsourcing?

Please consider yourselves to be warmly encouraged to engage in this process of securing HaFI's thriving!

Research Projects

One of the cornerstones of HaFI's activities are research projects, often starting from conversations around particular concepts, themes and ideas related to Harun Farocki and his work, yet also taking their lead from other sources, currents and urgencies. As a non-academic organization run by people with pertinent affiliations to and experiences in academia, the HaFI research strands are deliberately pursued in a hybrid (and capricious) manner when it comes to fit academic protocols—moving between modes, forms and genres of discourse and production, sometimes erringly and in a slow pace, sometimes surprisingly quickly and timely. For 2019 and 2020 we plan to focus on (among others):

- issues and questions derived from the “Gefängnisbilder” (**prison images**) complex conducted by Farocki together with Cathy Lee Crane and others in the late 1990s. In the “Nachlass” (estate) in HaFI's basement storage space at silent green are various materials that were used and not used in the finished works. In April 2019 a workshop on carceral aesthetics, in part based on this material, is planned

- to be convened by Andrew Weiner and Evan Calder Williams at NYU in New York.
- our by now already long-standing theme of **navigation**, a notion underlying Farocki's *Parallel I-IV* project, and which appears to have been much on his mind in the months before he passed away. On April 6–7, 2019 we will co-organize the conference "Navigation Beyond the Visual" together with e-flux, celebrating the *e-flux journal's* tenth anniversary, at HKW, Berlin.
- the films and visual anthropology of **Skip Norman** (1933–2015) have triggered some interest after a screening of his films of the late 1960s and early 1970s in the course of HaFI's "Öffentliche Sichtung" slot at Arsenal last spring; a research group has begun to form which will look into Norman's work at DFFB and afterwards in West Germany, documentaries on various Black militant organizations in the USA around 1970 and his subsequent academic work as a visual anthropologist in the States and at the Eastern Mediterranean University Faculty of Communication and Media Studies in Cyprus.

Publications

The past three years have shown how effective and productive a tool of organizing and of shaping ideas the publishing of texts and images can be. HaFI uses its website (harun-farocki-institut.org) and Facebook page to announce, recommend, present, contextualize and comment. The website in particular has become a rich and regularly updated resource of current news and archival, bibliographical, and filmographical research. With "Rosa Mercedes," implemented in the website, a platform for online-publishing is available, open to host new contributions.

Outside, in the analog world of printed matter, HaFI met various occasions to act, which proved to be greatly rewarding as these publications seem to meet a particular interest among readers.

The Harun Farocki Retrospective in 2017/18 (organized together with n.b.k., Arsenal and Savvy Contemporary) marked the starting point for a comprehensive edition of Farocki's collected **Schriften** (writings). Up to now, three volumes were published in the n.b.k. series (with Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König; designed by Knut Wiese and with editorial support by Gerti Fietzek and Holger Glinka). Three more books that include the entirety of Farocki's assorted articles and essays from the period of 1976 to 2014 are scheduled for 2019 and 2020. In a next step, additional volumes with unpublished writings, letters and selected interviews shall follow suite.

Moreover, an **English translation** of Farocki's unfinished autobiography (*Zehn, zwanzig, dreißig, vierzig. Fragment einer Autobiographie*) as well as translations of the collected writings (in cooperation with Archive Books) are on our to-do list. Naturally, funding will be needed, in particular to cover translation fees.

In the ongoing, multi-format, multi-color **HaFI series of pamphlets** (of which eight issues were released so far, all of them designed by Daniela Burger, and co-published and distributed by Motto Books), we plan to dedicate the upcoming issues to

- a collection of short essays by London and Delhi-based novelist, filmmaker and columnist **Ruchir Joshi**;
- Ingemo Engström's and Gerhard Theuring's 1977/78 essay film *Fluchtweg nach Marseille* (Escape Route to Marseille) and the trope of **transit**;
- the late WDR editor and influential facilitator of documentary and auteur film practices **Werner Dütsch** (1939–2018);
- email exchanges between **Matthias Rajmann** and Harun Farocki, while developing and conceiving *Ernstes Spiele* (Serious Games);
- the **Post-1989 Condition**, in both West and East Germany, the starting points of which would be *Ein Tag im Leben der Endverbraucher*, *Die führende Rolle* and

Die Umschulung as well as an aborted project from the early 1990s on West German salesmen roaming the former GDR in search of the ultimate deal.

Estate/Para-Archive

Is it an archive? Wary not to misuse elaborate concepts such as “the archive,” HaFI tends to call those parts of Harun Farocki’s estate it is taking care of a para-archive, i.e. an archive that lingers beyond the properly archival, a collection of supplementary remnants, vestiges, working material, rough-cuts—nothing final and finished, and thus a trove of unexpected findings, speculations and encounters, an open source to generate research errands and projects from.

Exercising our responsibilities with regard to the estate, and after a first period of intense ordering work (by Wolfgang Schmidt, Clément Coucoureux, Alima de Graaf and others) several tasks lie ahead, some of which to be attended sooner, others to be considered as mid- to long-term projects, among which are

- continuing with the **digitization of selected items**;
- launching the **digitization of selections from Harun Farocki’s correspondence** (the largest part of which held by Antje Ehmann at Pfarrstrasse);
- working towards a **partial merging of the archives at Pfarrstrasse and at HaFI/ silent green**;
- **migrating the digital archive** of Farocki’s projects from the hard-drives of Jan Ralske, Matthias Rajmann and Antje Ehmann to HaFI’s server/magnetic storage;
- **improving the infrastructure** (archival maintenance, further acquisition and indexing, visits by researchers, overall accessibility, etc.);
- **developing the searchable digital database**, linking the digital copies from the estate with filmography, bibliography, website content, etc.

Residency

We were lucky and privileged to host three 3-months residencies in these first three years, beginning with video essayist **Kevin B. Lee** (2016–17), who was followed by documentary filmmaker **Shirin Barghnavard** (2017), and film curator and writer **Ali Hussein Al Adawy** (2018). These first instalments of HaFI’s residency were supported by Goethe-Institut in the course of its Residency Program, for which we are and will be always grateful. However, since Goethe-Institut can only support the launching stage of domestic residency programs, from now on we have to look for new funding sources to continue with the residency. And this is clearly what we want: continue. For the residencies have proved to be of great importance not only for the conversations and collaborations ensuing from it, but also in terms of HaFI’s development as an operating structure.

Structural Tasks/The Future

Speaking of which, we are last but not least to return to the structural tasks mentioned at the beginning, as it is of utmost necessity to find ways to maintain the **basic elements of HaFI’s operation**:

- the (for the time being) one paid position, i.e. **the indispensable Elsa de Seynes’ employment**;
- the **running costs** such as the rent of the office at silent green Kulturquartier, electricity, insurances, and various administrative costs (escrow agent’s fees, tax accountancy, etc.);
- the **funding of projects, workshops, publications, research, translations, residencies ...**

We will attempt, in the knowledge of the immensely important support that we experience continuously from Antje Ehmann, Anna Faroghi and Lara Faroghi and HaFI’s

Institutsrat (foundation council/advisory board), to apply for and to collect the necessary funds. However, HaFI may also rely on help and backing that comes unforced, voluntarily, charitably, whimsical from everyone interested in the work we do and in its continuation.

For now, we would like to thank all of our collaborators, comrades, friends, supporters (that is: you), for keeping a critical, if benevolent eye on HaFI, whilst often acting as co-producers and companions of this very special endeavor.

Yours,
Harun Farocki Institut

(Tom Holert, Doreen Mende, Volker Pantenburg, Elsa de Seynes...)

www.harun-farocki-institut.org
info@harun-farocki-institut.org