

31 May –  
3 June 2012

THU 31.5.

# BERLIN DOCUMENTARY Forum 2

Assailed by the excesses of digital media and an art world ravenous for gritty realism, the documentary image today seems to be in a state of critical instability. This instability is, however, neither recent nor resolvable; it is in the nature of the signifier and thus inherent in the form. What's at stake is the means by which reality and history are represented, by whom and for what cause. New models of documentary are emerging that reject the fourth-wall illusion and instead embrace a collision of signs, referents, bodies, spaces, times and gazes.

The second Berlin Documentary Forum presents these new understandings of documentary in a program of live performances, screenings and presentations specially devised by a group of international artists, filmmakers, cultural historians and theoreticians. Four days of events at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt are complemented by a group exhibition of contemporary art entitled "A Blind Spot" and the launch of an experimental online magazine, "issue zero". At a time when some voices declare the complexities too slippery and the form moribund, Berlin Documentary Forum sets out to show how cross-disciplinary connections can revitalise the medium and re-establish its critical potential as a model for social agency.

HAUS  
DER  
KULTUREN  
DER  
WELT

4 – 7 pm

## A Blind Spot

Exhibition Opening – conversation between the curator Catherine David, the anthropologist Christopher Pinney and the artists

7.30 pm

## Festival Opening

with the artistic director Hila Peleg and Bernd M. Scherer, director, Haus der Kulturen der Welt

8 – 9 pm

## The Pixelated Revolution

Performance – Rabih Mroué

The Lebanese theater director, actor and writer Rabih Mroué presents a "non-academic lecture" about the role of mobile phones and social media in the Syrian revolts. To what extent are these electronic devices extensions of the participants' own bodies? How does the physical deterioration of a human body relate to how data deteriorates as it is sent across the Internet via unreliable connections, subject to censorship and viruses? And is the seen footage from the Syrian clashes just the tip of an iceberg of unseen material, the data which didn't make it onto that delicate nervous system, the global network?

9.30 – 11.30 pm

## Framing Death – How to Shoot One's Crime

Presentation – Sylvère Lotringer

In a series of three lectures cultural theorist Sylvère Lotringer will examine representations and changing attitudes to death. Once an event ritually shared with the family and the community, death has become invisible. It is now being collectively acknowledged only when it results from a crime, and even then the brute facts of mortality are presented to the jury in ways that borrow heavily from fiction. Drawing from police crime archives of the 1980s from the five boroughs of New York, gathered by the police videographer known as Johnny Esposito, Sylvère Lotringer looks at the different ways death is resurfacing in Western culture.

12 midnight – 2 am

## Dead Birds

Screening presented by Antje Ehmman and Harun Farocki

Seeking a more subjective and humanistic form of documentary film, Robert Gardner — under the auspices of Harvard's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology — set off to film the Dani people, warrior-farmers in the highlands of New Guinea for his movie "Dead Birds" (USA 1964, 35 mm, 120 min, OV). Influenced by psychoanalysis, Gardner had come to believe that there could be an anthropology that revealed the meaning of one's own life as well as those of its subjects: "I was sure that whatever film I might make about the world outside myself would have to be done with mirrors (as is virtually inevitable in the case of cameras) that also revealed me and my inner world".

## FRI 1.6.

### 12 noon – 1.30 pm Control and Contingency

Presentation – Harun Farocki

GER, S/I into EN

The documentary form is contingent, destined to chase after events, whereas feature films anticipate and control events. However, boundaries blur in interesting ways when these forms imitate each other. Unfocused images and erratic lighting, borrowed from documentary, give immediacy and relevance to a fiction film, whereas plotlines and aestheticized cinematography are legitimate devices for documentarists. Using visual examples which include a specially digitized version of “Der Reifenschneider und seine Frau” (Klaus Wildenhahn/Roland Hehn/Horst Schwaab, FRG 1968/1969), the filmmaker Harun Farocki’s presentation will look at hybrid forms between the two genres.

### 2 – 3.30 pm Heiligabend auf St. Pauli

Screening and conversation – Antje Ehmman, Harun Farocki  
with Klaus Wildenhahn

GER, S/I into EN

Klaus Wildenhahn’s film “Heiligabend auf St. Pauli” (FRG 1968, 16 mm, 51 min, OV, English subtitles) condenses ten hours of observation of the people in a Hamburg bar on Christmas Eve. We see drivers, prostitutes, policemen, a coach and an amateur boxer, all avoiding the family holiday and instead seeking alcohol, sex and solitude in the city’s docklands. Although the film seems haphazard, rambling, unshaped by directorial cuts, Farocki points out that Wildenhahn has first chosen a prime spot for his camera, allowing it to dissect and then reassemble events. “After that it is possible to let something slip a little bit off track”.

### 4 – 6 pm Fremd

Screening and conversation – Antje Ehmman, Harun Farocki  
with Miriam Fassbender

GER, S/I into EN

“Foreign” (Miriam Fassbender, Germany 2011, Digibeta, 92 min, OV, English subtitles) follows two African migrants, Mohammed and Jacques, as they head for Europe, hoping to cross into the continent illegally by swimming. Subplots show a Nigerian woman, Hope, who runs a restaurant, and an Algerian-Congolese man called Jerry. Mohammed has the key role, linking the various plotlines, a structural role assigned to him by Fassbender. Although the documentary has a semi-fictional feel, it’s offset by the Direct Cinema-like approach of issuing the protagonists with their own cameras. By accumulating on the screen the subjective self-imaging of her characters, the director hopes to break down the idea of foreignness itself.

### 6.30 – 8 pm The Gesture of Panning

Lecture – Volker Pantenburg

GER, S/I into EN

Despite the plethora of books about film, surprisingly little work has been done on the phenomenon of camera movements. Perhaps because, as David Bordwell put it, “Camera movement has usually been considered too elusive to be analyzable”. Using the example of the horizontal pan, film scholar Volker Pantenburg will propose some thoughts about the way the camera pan structures space and time into the semantic worlds proposed by documentary and fictional films. In particular, he addresses the special ability of panning shots to juxtapose and contrast a controlled form of portrayal with the contingency of what is being depicted.

### 8.30 pm – 10.30 pm Framing Death – Crime is Everywhere

Presentation – Sylvère Lotringer

Sylvère Lotringer looks at the impact of video-surveillance cameras on crime: its identification, definition, legal re-assembly and investigation. Police videographer Johnny Esposito, described by Lotringer as a pioneering “semiotician of crime”, met up again with the theorist twenty-five years later, an encounter recorded in a taped interview made

especially for this event. In the conversation the two revisit old themes (the use of video as a source for court-ready “neutral evidence”, the construction of narrative) in the light of the new technological developments employed by today’s control societies.

### 11 – 11.30 pm Disquieting Nature Screening with live concert – Christine Meisner

“Disquieting Nature” evokes a sense of moving through the memory of a landscape and its music. The first Delta blues songs told the story of black agricultural laborers and how they regained their liberty in a segregated and increasingly racist society. The rhythmic cadences, structures and narratives of those early songs were the starting point for artist Christine Meisner’s cooperation with composer William Tatge, during which the artists developed ideas of an “abstract blues” in the form of a video piece. “Disquieting Nature” will be expanded here into a video screening with a live concert by five musicians.

With: William Tatge (composition and piano), LD Brown (vocals), Anders Nilsson (guitar), Craig Akin (bass) and Kenneth Salters (drums)

# SAT 2.6.

**12 noon – 4 pm**

## **Amidst the in-between – Documentary films from Japan**

**Screening and conversation – Eduardo Thomas with Günter Nitschke**

OV, English subtitles

Eduardo Thomas will present a fragment of his ongoing research into the Japanese concept of “ma” (a structuring absence), screening short films by Matsumoto Toshio and Ito Takashi and a feature film by Kawase Naomi. In conversation with Günter Nitschke — an iconoclastic Kyoto-based architect and urban planner — and the filmmakers, Thomas will address this specifically Japanese concept, which challenges such binary distinctions as space/time, inside/outside, emptiness/fullness, and foregrounds the spaces between elements. The three filmmakers have employed strategies like unusual montage techniques, off-centre framing and abstract electronic music to examine traditional subjects in distinctly non-traditional ways.

Matsumoto Toshio: “Ginrin”, Japan 1955, 35 mm, 16 min | “The Song of Stone”, Japan 1963, 16 mm, 24 min | “Atman”, Japan 1975, 16 mm, 12 min | “Sway: Yuragi”, Japan 1985, 16 mm, 8 min | “Engram”, Japan 1987, 16 mm, 12 min

Ito Takashi: “Spacy”, Japan 1981, 16 mm, 10 min | “Ghost”, Japan 1984, 16 mm, 6 min | “Venus”, Japan 1990, 16 mm, 5 min | “The Moon”, Japan 1994, 16 mm, 7 min | “Unbalance”, Japan 2006, video, 5 min

Kawase Naomi: “Tsuiooku no dansu”, Japan 2002, Beta Sp, 65 min

**4.30 pm – 6 pm**

## **Objectifiction**

**Lecture – Hito Steyerl**

Filmmaker and theorist Hito Steyerl’s presentation examines the relation of objects to objectivity and objectification. How do 3D technologies affect our notion of space and material reality? What are the affinities between these new tools and early photography, with its ability to freeze life? And what are 3D’s blind spots and white shadows? Case studies will include 3D-mapping based on videos and other live-gathered data. Once a scan is produced — for instance, of a battlefield — the event can be revisited and observed from an infinite number of angles. However, the data does not simply provide evidence but also introduces ambiguities, interpretations, confusion. “If you want to establish the truth,” Steyerl says, “then you establish at the same time the contradiction”.

**6.30 – 8 pm**

## **A Blind Spot**

**Screening presented by Catherine David**

OV, English subtitles

### **Les mains négatives**

Marguerite Duras, France 1978, 35 mm, 18 min

Taking as her motif mysterious prehistoric hand-prints discovered in southern European caves, Duras juxtaposes against this narrative a series of blue-and-black filmed images of Paris boulevards at dawn. “The word is not yet invented”.

### **Le Sphinx**

Thierry Knauff, Belgium/ France 1986, 35 mm, 12 min

Using on its soundtrack fragments from a Jean Genet text about massacres committed during the Lebanese civil war in the Palestinian refugee camp Shatila, “Le Sphinx” dwells visually on the figure of the stone sphinx.

### **Toute révolution est un coup de dés**

Danièle Huillet/Jean-Marie Straub, France 1977, 16 mm, 10 min

In the rigid, objective poses of Brechtian epic theater a series of actors recite, under a plaque commemorating the “valiant dead” of the 1871 Commune, Mallarmé’s poem “A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance”. For Straub, the challenge of this film was, he said, to “combat opacity”. Dedicated to the dead of the Paris Commune, the film and its voices turn into a rhythmic equivalent of the poem’s experimental typography.

### **Les Photos d’Alix**

Jean Eustache, France 1980, 35 mm, 18 min

Alix Cléo Roubaud, a photographer, talks to Jean Eustache’s teenage son Boris about her photographic manipulations and the reasoning behind them, confessing cheerfully to many instances of “trucage”, although always in the name of some kind of truth. The film’s themes of mismatching, manipulation and masking are underlined when it emerges that the photographs described are not the ones seen on screen.

**8.30 – 10 pm**

## **Opium, Indigo, Photography**

**Lecture – Christopher Pinney**

In this lecture Christopher Pinney, an anthropologist specialized in the visual culture of South Asia, looks at Joachim Koester’s work “Calcutta Served as a Basis for British Expansion in the East” (2005–07). Koester flags up topics occluded from official photographic histories of the city of Calcutta: its role in the illicit opium trade with China and its trade in indigo dye. Both were controlled by the East India Company, an early Anglo-Saxon multinational corporation exercising military and administrative as well as trading power in India. Pinney’s political analysis of photography’s “optical unconscious” is complemented by the more delirious, subjective approach of Thomas de Quincey, for whom opium was a “marvellous agent” able to reveal “secret inscriptions”.

**10.30 – 12 midnight**

## **Melodrama**

**Performance – Eszter Salamon**

“Melodrama” is a solo “documentary performance” in which Eszter Salamon re-enacts interviews she made in 2006 and 2012 with a woman living in a small village in Southern Hungary who happens to share her name. Reading her homonym like a choreographic script, Salamon performs the 62-year-old woman’s gestures and intonations, reproducing them on stage to the music of Terre Thaemlitz. The result is a meditation not just on the possibility of getting inside another person’s skin, but the extent to which personal hopes and desires exceed the determinations of class, age, geography and religion.

# SUN 3.6.

**12 noon – 5 pm**

## **On Continuity**

**Screening and conversation – Florian Schneider with Thomas Heise**

GER, S/I into EN - OV/English subtitles

Continuity in the cinematic sense involves fabricating the illusion of consistent time and space. When cinema deals with the history of colonialism and fascism it is confronting continuity of a different kind: historical continuity that is hijacked to reveal the presence of the past in the here-and-now.

## **Der lachende Mann – Bekenntnisse eines Mörders**

Walter Heynowski/Gerhard Scheumann, GDR 1966, 35 mm, 66 min

“The laughing man – Confessions of a murderer” is a documentary about the German mercenary Siegfried Müller, known as “Congo Müller”. In 1964 Müller was involved in the suppression of the Simba rebellion in the Republic of the Congo (now DR Congo). The GDR film crew place Müller against a black background, letting him get increasingly drunk on Pernod as they intersperse their questions with covertly obtained photographs and tape recordings.

## **Notre Nazi**

Robert Kramer, France/FRG 1984, 116 min

“Notre Nazi” is a making-of documentary filmed between takes of another film, Thomas Harlan’s “Wundkanal”. Harlan managed to cast Alfred Filbert in “Wundkanal” as an 80-year-old Nazi officer kidnapped and interrogated by a filmmaker. The former city commander of Vilna, “actor” Filbert was in fact a Nazi directly responsible for thousands of deaths.

## **Tod und Teufel**

Peter Nestler, Germany 2009, Beta Sp, 56 min

“Death and Devil” examines the legacy of the director’s grandfather, Count Eric von Rosen, a Swedish aristocrat, ethnologist, explorer, hunter and adventurer whose racism and Nazi sympathies (he was brother-in-law to Hermann Göring) were counterbalanced by a personal fascination for Africa, evidenced by his travels to the former Belgian Congo in the aftermath of colonial genocide.

**5.30 pm – 8.30 pm**

## **Framing Death – the Unmaking of Lightning over Water**

**Presentation – Sylvère Lotringer**

The last of Sylvère Lotringer’s three presentations focuses on the making of “Lightning Over Water”, Nicholas Ray and Wim Wenders’ film (USA/FRG 1980) about Ray’s final days of life. The director of “Rebel Without A Cause”, Ray had been diagnosed in 1979 with terminal cancer, and Wenders offered to help him direct his last film. But the attempt to turn the film into a fiction failed, raising ethical questions about the entire project. Featuring “Lightning Over Water”, rare videos of the film and re-enactments of key scenes as well as audio interviews with all the participants in the production, this session will explore a film seen by Paul Virilio as a latter-day Greek tragedy, with the technical crew in the role of chorus.

With the voices of: Gerry Bamman, Stefan Czapsky, Bernard Eisenschitz, Tom Farrell, Laurie Frank, Jim Jarmusch, Becky Johnson, John Houseman, Edward Lachman, Peter Przygodda, Betty Ray, Tim Ray, Susan Ray, Chris Sievernich

**9 – 11 pm**

## **Montage Interdit**

**Eyal Sivan in conversation with Ella Shohat**

“issue zero” — an online magazine designed to examine documentary practices in networked environments — is launched in pilot form during the festival. The magazine will experiment with new forms of production, presentation and viewing on the Internet. The first special project is by filmmaker Eyal Sivan. Entitled “Montage Interdit”, this online archive explores the language and possibilities of montage in documentary work through the prism of Jean-Luc Godard’s films. The archive consists of film materials accompanied by interpretive commentaries from various thinkers. One of the commentaries will, however, take the form of a live on-stage event: Eyal Sivan in conversation with the theoretician Ella Shohat, whose book “Israeli Cinema” discusses Sivan’s work examining historically revisionist documentaries about Palestine.

Events in German with simultaneous interpretation are indicated as GER, S/I into EN

# A Blind Spot

## Exhibition

31 May – 1 July 2012

The blind spot of a photograph refers to something not visible or shown but nonetheless latent in the image. Dismissing the dominant pictorial regime, the images in "A Blind Spot" preserve an openness and indeterminacy that precludes reducing them to a description or illustration of a specific reality. This is the point of departure for questioning the documentary aspect in contemporary artistic and photographic practices.

The exhibition, curated by Catherine David, includes works by Eric Baudelaire, Elisabetta Benassi, David Goldblatt, Hassan Khan, Joachim Koester, Vincent Meessen, Olaf Nicolai, Melik Ohanian, Efrat Shvily, Jeff Wall and Christopher Williams.

**Thu 31 May – Sun 3 June**

**10.30 pm and 12 midnight (West Garden)**

**DAYS, I See what I Saw and what I will See**

**Video installation – Melik Ohanian**

Projected on either side of a screen, "DAYS, I See what I Saw and what I will See" is a two-channel video installation of a labor camp in the United Arab Emirates. Over the course of eleven days in 2011, Melik Ohanian laid camera tracks through the camp, shooting 100 meters during the day and at night to make a sequence which, once edited, became a continuous track showing the whole camp in 42 minutes. One side of the specially constructed screen shows night, the other day.



## Peripheral Vision

Artist and curator Ben Russell misreads an architectural schematic as a diagram of the eye and constructs a peripheral cinema space within the permanent viewing structure that hosts the Berlin Documentary Forum. Occupying a field just outside the direct line of sight, this theater-within-a-theater will host a 7-part program of 20 contemporary video works presented in looping halfhour segments throughout the course of the festival. United through a singular vision that claims the expansion of the documentary form as a defining characteristic of artists' video works within the last decade, this meta-program functions as both highlight and counterpoint to the mainstage program.

With video works by Basma Alsharif, Neil Beloufa, Jacob Ciocci, Mary Helena Clark, Mati Diop, Kwon Hayoun, Oliver Laric, Laida Lertxundi, Dani Leventhal, Makino Takashi, Shana Moulton, Takeshi Murata, Charlemagne Palestine, Steve Reinke, Michael Robinson, Eva Marie Rodbro, Sylvia Schedelbauer, Phil Solomon and Michael Snow.

## issuezero.org

Today's global digital networks claim a capacity to document, log, store and capture everything. Deregulated production and uncontrollable dissemination of images and other data are establishing new relationships between image and text, still and moving image, hypertext and video. In this age of digital media and networked distribution, what distinguishes documentary from traditional strategies of storytelling and representation? How can the documentary resist annihilation by data visualization? Could a new networked vision emerge which approaches documentary differently? "issue zero" is a new online magazine originated by the Berlin Documentary Forum. Its aim is to develop, produce and distribute thematically curated documentary works online.



# BERLIN DOCUMENTARY FORUM 2

## 31.5. – 3.6.2012

Thu 31.5.  
Opening "A Blind Spot" 4 pm | Festival Opening 7.30 pm  
Free admission

Festival tickets: 6 €/4 € per event  
Day tickets: 15 €/12 €  
[www.hkw.de/tickets](http://www.hkw.de/tickets)

Lunch, dinner, cake and drinks on the roof terrace  
Free W-LAN

[www.berlindocumentaryforum.de](http://www.berlindocumentaryforum.de)

A Blind Spot  
Exhibition: 31.5. – 1.7.2012  
Wed – Mon and public holidays: 11 am – 7 pm  
During the festival days: 11 am – 12 midnight  
Admission: 5 €/3 €  
Mon: free admission (closed on 25.6.)  
Guided tour: 1.7. 3 pm

**HAUS  
DER  
KULTUREN  
DER  
WELT**

John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10  
10557 Berlin  
+49 (0)30 39 78 71 75  
[www.hkw.de](http://www.hkw.de)

### BERLIN DOCUMENTARY FORUM 2

Artistic Director: Hila Peleg | Research and Program Coordination: Koen Claerhout, Nadja Talmi | Coordinator "A Blind Spot":  
Elsa de Seynes | Festival office: Andrea Schubert | Interns: Nathalie Küchen, Leonie Riek | Stage Manager: Quirin Wildgen |  
Assistant "Framing Death": Astra Price | Architecture Berlin Documentary Forum 2: Kooperative für Darstellungspolitik |  
Architecture "A Blind Spot": Kuehn Malvezzi | Documentation Production: Jörg Karrenbauer, Mich'ael Zupraner | "issue zero"  
Team: Pierre Becker (TA-TRUNG), Norbert Pöllmann (KEIN TV), Florian Schneider

### Imprint

General editors: Cordula Daus, Silvia Fehrmann (V.i.S.d.P.), Franziska Wegener | Engl. text editor: Nicolas Currie | Engl. copy  
editor: Helen Ferguson | Engl. proofreader: Mandi Gomez | Press: Anne Maier, Henriette Sölter | Internet: Eva Stein, Jan Köhler |  
Public relations: Christiane Sonntag, Sabine Westemeier | Graphic design: Double Standards

Haus der Kulturen der Welt is a business division of Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes in Berlin GmbH. Managing Directors:  
Bernd M. Scherer (Director, Haus der Kulturen der Welt), Charlotte Sieben (Managing Director, KBB GmbH)

### Image Credits

Ito Takashi, "Venus", Japan 1990 | Jeffrey Silverthorne, "Lovers, Accidental Carbon Monoxide Poisoning", 1972–74

### Credits

"The Pixelated Revolution" by Rabih Mroué is co-produced by: Berlin Documentary Forum, The Spalding Gray Award,  
Performing Space 122/New York, The Andy Warhol Museum/Pittsburgh, On the Boards/Seattle and The Walker Art  
Center/Minneapolis, dOCUMENTA (13)/Kassel.

"Disquieting Nature" by Christine Meisner is produced in cooperation with The Walter Collection.

"Melodrama" by Eszter Salamon is supported by The Capital Cultural Fund Berlin and co-produced by Berlin Documentary  
Forum, Festival des Arts Vivants/Nyon, Next Festival/Valenciennes.

The screening of "Ginrin" (Matsumoto Toshio, Japan 1955) has been made possible thanks to support from the National  
Film Center, The National Museum of Modern Art, Tokyo. The screening of "Der lachende Mann" (Walter Heynowski/Gerhard  
Scheumann, GDR 1966) has been made possible thanks to support from the Stiftung Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, Potsdam-  
Babelsberg. The screening of "Notre Nazi" (Robert Kramer, France/FRG 1984) has been made possible thanks to support  
from the Filmmuseum München. Digitalization of the film "Der Reifenschneider und seine Frau" (Klaus Wildenhahn/Roland  
Hehn/Horst Schwaab, FRG 1968/69) has been made possible thanks to support from the Deutsche Film- und Fernsehakademie  
Berlin (dfb), and the Deutsche Kinemathek - Museum für Film und Fernsehen, Berlin.

"Montage Interdit" is a project by Eyal Sivan in cooperation with Audrey Maurion, Robert M Ochshorn, Dafydd Harries, Patrick  
Hepner, Felix Boggio, Gabriele Urbonaitė.

"DAYS, I See what I Saw and what I will See" by Melik Ohanian was co-produced by Sharjah Art Foundation, courtesy: the artist  
and gallery Chantal Crousel, Paris.

"issue zero" is supported by the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht.

With the kind support of

the Embassy of the United States of America,  
the Embassy of the French Republic, Culturesfrance  
and Goethe-Institut Ramallah



"A Blind Spot" is supported by



Presented by



Supported by



Haus der Kulturen der Welt is supported by

