



Lyonel Feininger, *In a Village Near Paris (Street in Paris, Pink Sky)*, 1909, oil on canvas, 39 3/4 x 32".

the menace stalking Weimar society by the 1930s, Feininger's painting still appeals to local color; the portly jester in *The Red Clown*, 1919, reappears—more gaunt and in more threateningly spectral company—in *The Red Fiddler*, 1934.

Notwithstanding its charm, Feininger's painting assimilated more worldly, hard-nosed tendencies, Cubism chief among them. It is Cubist faceted that, in 1911, tidied up the artist's Expressionist forms. His *Study on the Cliffs: Early Attempt at Cubist Form*, 1912, guilelessly announces that transformation. The streets scenes that follow—whether the angular *Jesuits II*, 1913, or the near abstraction of *Trumpeters*, 1912—revise space into cleaner lineaments, even as they insist upon an interpenetration of bodies and their environment, whether structures or more metaphysical surroundings. Epitomizing that tendency are the "Gelmeroda" paintings, 1913–36, named after a small village near Weimar, whose church spire attracted Feininger as early as 1908 and held his attention over several decades and through evolving styles. A range of these works in the penultimate gallery demonstrated the importance of the motif, which straddles an early adaption of Cubist shards and later, persistent uses of architecture as a hitching post for more flighty intuitions. Even Feininger's photographic experiments from the 1920s—influenced by both his time at the Bauhaus and the careers of his two photographer sons—cast an eye on twilight corpses and shimmering streetlights.

The sharp refinement of that sensibility devolves somewhat in the late 1920s and after, verging at times on kitsch; textures reveal an almost airbrushed luminosity rather than the hard-edged mordancy through which his best work distinguishes itself. Even later works such as *Sunset Fires*, 1953, evoke a brooding haze more topical than formal. Incisive apprehensions of the city still occupied Feininger after his return to the US, however. Traced on a small white canvas, *Courtyard III*, 1949, consists of a spare lattice of intersecting lines, a humble architectonics that captures something of the unassuming relevance of Feininger's career to postwar American abstraction. Whether through his Bauhaus contributions and their shaping of an international modernist canon, or the particular morphologies of his prismatic architectonics and geometries, Feininger's work feels as abidingly consequential to American modernism as to the European avant-garde, in which it took definitive shape.

—Ara H. Merjian

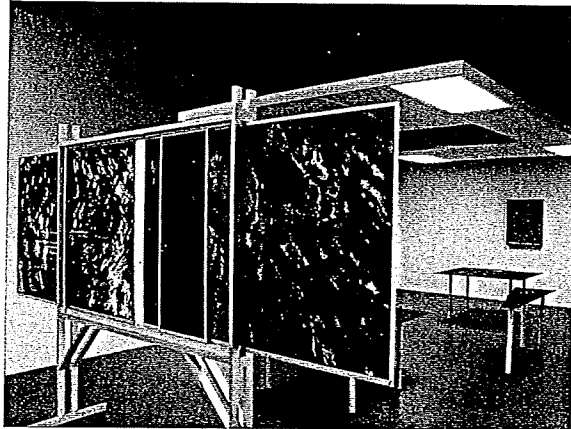
Joe Winter

THE KITCHEN

You raise your hand in your intro-to-astronomy class. "Do the galaxies and nebulae *really* look as psychedelic as the posters on the walls? How do they know, if these are all radio telescope pictures anyway, that galaxies are color-saturated swirls of cotton candy?" The TA shrugs. "They assign colors to the images afterward." "Arbitrarily?" you ask, choking back the word *luridly*. He nods. Suddenly you lose major respect for the whole field of astronomy. Who *are* these people determining colors? Do they have, like, staff colorists at the lab? Do they know about Delacroix, about Cézanne, about Albers . . . ? No doubt it's amateur hour over there, not a trained artist or art historian in the lot. You feel betrayed.

Coming to the rescue of disillusioned art students everywhere—those weirded out by the trippy decor of their basement Astro 101 classrooms—is Joe Winter, who thinks anew about conventions of display in science, finding that subjectivity haunts both the presentation and the perception of ostensibly objective scientific information. In *The Stars Below*, 2011, Winter creates an environment based on a science classroom, complete with a grid of white drop-ceiling panels and fluorescent lights suspended over tables made from slate repurposed from old schoolhouse chalkboards from eastern Ohio. The installation bears another hallmarks of educational spaces in our era of budget slashing: The ceiling leaks. Drips of water fall upon sticks of white chalk stuck vertically to the slate tables like tiny towers. As the droplets fall, they dissolve the chalk cylinders, leaving white residue on the tables in dusty splashes. The work's title evokes imaginative projections on the part of this classroom's now-absent students, of their daydreams of far-flung constellations and nebulae in chalk dust. The slow erosion of the chalk also speaks to a kind of geological time, in which classroom boredom is measured not in minutes but what can feel like decades or even millennia, as a student imagines a chalkboard covered in data gradually becoming a mess of illegibility.

Adjacent to this work is another fixture of the science classroom—the sliding dry-erase panels of the lecture hall here on freestanding aluminum track. Though often covered with calculations and equations, in the case of Winter's *A Record of Events (II)*, 2011, the panels are almost entirely obscured, front and back, with black dry-eraser marks, leaving but a few streaks of white. Walter Benjamin claimed in 1917 that the essential condition of drawing, unlike painting, was that its lines must be defined against a background with a judicious use of



View of "Joe Winter," 2011. Foreground: *A Record of Events (II)*, 2011. Middle ground: *The Stars Below*, 2011. Back wall: *Untitled Model for a History of Light (Void)*, 2010

contrast. "A drawing that completely covered its ground," he wrote, "would cease to be a drawing." Yet when drawings partake in excess mark-making, becoming murky and indistinct and eventually covered over completely, they turn into new backgrounds upon which to put contrasting marks. In Winter's case, the obscurity feels symbolic—who has not glanced at an excited professor's palimpsest of scribbles creeping steadily over the surface of a whiteboard and had the panicky thought, "My God, I'll never be able to follow this endless gibberish"—as well as pictorial, representing deep space with washes of light and the gloom of vast distances. What appears to be a record of scientific events is in fact the record of aesthetic events. Winter evokes the ways in which scientific "evidence" is necessarily produced and received through subjective perception, which can efface, manipulate, or masquerade even as it tries to explicate.

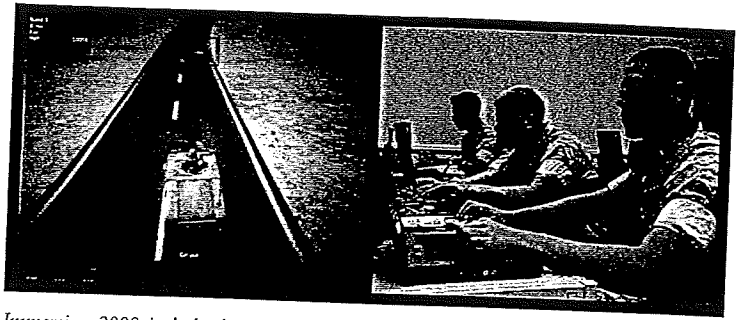
—Eva Díaz

Harun Farocki

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Harun Farocki: Images of War (at a Distance)," Farocki's first museum survey in the United States, features thirty-six films, videos, and installations recently acquired by the Museum of Modern Art. Organized by chief curator of media and performance Sabine Breitwieser, the exhibition offers an illuminating view of the artist's development over the decades, beginning with his emergence in post-1968 West Germany and moving through his subsequent engagements, over some forty years, with filmmaking, writing, editing, and curating. Consistently in his work, Farocki deploys strategies to foreground the discursive constructedness of film and video, applying critical pressure to traditional structures of narrative cinema, questioning ideologies of cinematic authorship, and contesting documentary's claims to objectivity. Paired with footage procured from institutions in the military-industrial-corporate complexes, these maneuvers allow Farocki to examine the politics of representation within late-capitalist scopic regimes—the interpenetrations of mass media, technology, the body, vision, commerce, gaming, surveillance, discipline and punishment, and militarism and war.

The first room of the MOMA survey includes vitrines displaying a selection of film journals that the artist has contributed to or edited, in addition to a sequence of single-channel monitors presenting 16-mm films and videos, from *Inextinguishable Fire*, 1969, to *Images of the World and the Inscription of War*, 1988, to *War at a Distance*, 2003. These provide context for the room's main attraction: the multiscreen video installation *Serious Games I–IV*, 2009–10. Composed of four looped parts—each projected onto a separate screen—the work centers on footage taken from (or relating to) computer-generated combat simulations used by the US military, which the artist apparently obtained directly from the military itself (suggesting that transparency can be a PR strategy). Rather than subject us to heavy-handed ideological critique, Farocki allows the appropriated visual materials to speak compellingly for themselves; brief descriptive texts interspersed among the footage provide the only explication. The work's first part, *Serious Games I: Watson is Down*, 2010, features soldiers at their computer terminals conversing in military jargon, and clips of the simulated battlefield, wherein armored vehicles endeavor to maneuver around IEDs; one of the textual descriptors is THE INSTRUCTOR PLACES EXPLOSIVE DEVICES. In *Serious Games II: Three Dead*, 2010, a mock town (akin to a TV set) at a military base in the US serves as the site of a training exercise and achieves an uncanny real-world virtuality. Here, war as simulacrum and war as "reality" approach a kind of representational and psychological-perceptual conflation. *Serious Games III:*



Harun Farocki, *Serious Games I: Watson Is Down*, 2010, still from a two-channel color video installation, 8 minutes.

Immersion, 2009, includes footage of a workshop on using virtual reality to administer therapy to sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder, while *Serious Games IV: A Sun With No Shadow*, 2010, incorporates footage from those very simulations. Farocki allows the military to indict itself; yet by reminding us of the deep economic and technological interpenetrations of military culture and entertainment (specifically, video games) in America, he subtly implicates us (and perhaps even himself) as enablers.

Housed in the adjoining room are the earlier installations *I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts*, 2000, and *Eye/Machine I–III*, 2001–2003. Utilizing prison-surveillance footage of a guard shooting an inmate (and, separately, of a prisoner interacting with a woman during visiting hours), the former work explores the ways in which surveillance technology has become the primary instrument of control within institutions of discipline and punishment—and reminds us, too, that these "rationalizing" scopic regimes have also penetrated deeply into our quotidian social space. The latter piece reflects on connections between the first Gulf War and the mass media, demonstrating that technologies of vision (such as guidance systems for missiles) have become surrogates for human sight in both military and civilian contexts.

Farocki's work archives, indexes, reassembles, and deconstructs the representational systems of late capitalism in order to engender critical knowledge. Avoiding pious didacticism, Farocki suggests that we are all caught up in these cultural contradictions. Yet as we quasi-distracted cultural tourists are ported, under surveillance, through the institutional environs of MOMA, one wonders whether it is truly possible to imagine a cultural experience that is not mediated by the very mechanisms of control that Farocki critiques.

—Joshua Decker

Hilary Lloyd

ARTISTS SPACE

Thighs, 2011, by Hilary Lloyd, appeared to have legs, as did nearly all of the works in her exhibition at Artists Space last summer. Pairs of slender silver poles, set close together and running from floor to ceiling, supported monitors, giving the works a somewhat humanoid presence and stature. In *Thighs*, the effect is particularly pronounced: The two poles are formally echoed in actual thighs shown in close-up on a split-screen monitor set near to the ground; the limbs are mostly still but occasionally slip apart, revealing sunlight streaming between them. And there is another echo as well, abetted by the viewer's orientation, looking south from the SoHo gallery to the place where a pair of towers used to stand.

This echo, however deliberate, introduces a somber note to Lloyd's conflation of body, architecture, and artwork, a motif she examines from various angles. Sometimes, bodies behave more like buildings, as