

G A S W O R K S

Filipa César & Louis Henderson
Op-Film: An Archaeology of Optics
27 April to 25 June 2017

Gasworks presents *Op-Film: An Archaeology of Optics*, a collaborative exhibition by artists and filmmakers Filipa César and Louis Henderson.

The exhibition comprises a newly commissioned film and installation based on ongoing research that explores how optical technologies of military and colonial design—from lighthouse Fresnel lenses to global satellite navigation systems—both inform and are informed by Western models of knowledge. Taking a critical approach to the ideologies behind the development of these instruments of guidance and surveillance, the artists consider how imperial gestures of discovery, revelation and possession are embedded in associations between seeing and understanding, light projection and enlightenment.

The film, *Sunstone* (2017), tracks Fresnel lenses from their site of production to their exhibition in a museum of lighthouses and navigational devices. It also examines the diverse social contexts in which optics are implicated, contrasting the system of triangular trade that followed the first European arrivals in the "New World" with the political potential seen in Op art in post-revolutionary Cuba. Incorporating 16mm celluloid images, digital desktop captures and 3D CGI, the film also maps a technological trajectory: from historical methods of optical navigation to new algorithms of locating, from singular projection to multi-perspectival satellitic visions. Registering these technical advances progressively through their film's materials and means of production, the artists develop what they describe as "a cinema of affect, a cinema of experience—an Op-Film."

Alongside this work, the installation *Refracted Spaces* (2017) collages together key documentary materials that underpin their research to date, including archival images, oceanic charts, lighthouse blueprints, lights and fragments of Fresnel lenses.

Op-Film: An Archaeology of Optics is co-commissioned by Gasworks and Contour Biennale 8, Mechelen and supported by Arts Council England, Fluxus Art Projects, Cristina Guerra Contemporary Art and the Gulbenkian Foundation.

Related Events

Screening: "There must be a connection between production and destruction"
Friday, April 28, 6:30–8:30pm

Off-site at Birkbeck Cinema, 43 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PD

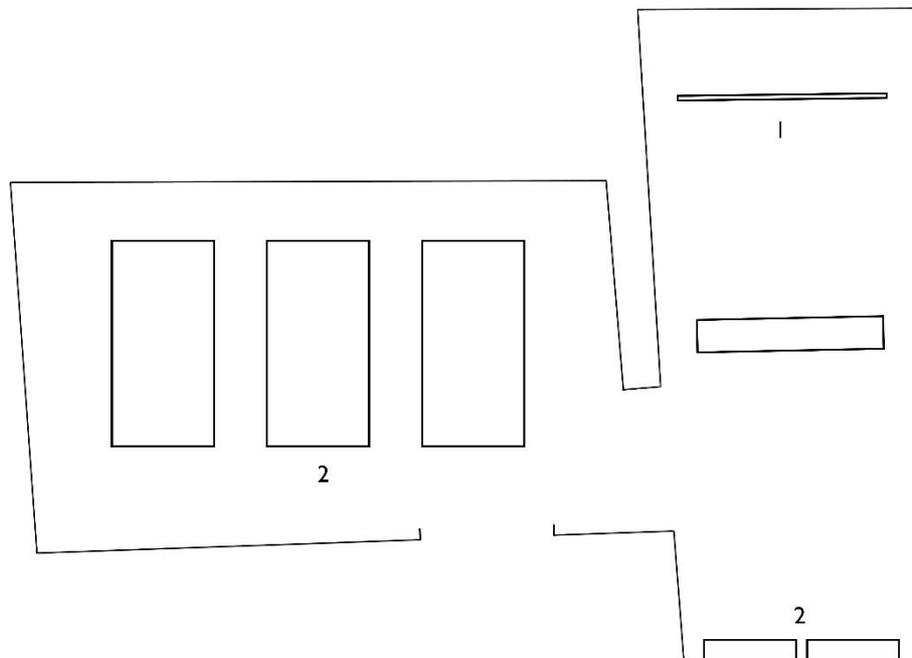
Filipa César and Louis Henderson present four films by Harun Farocki: *War at a Distance* (2003) and *Parallel I, II and III* from the four-part series *Parallel* (2012-14). Following the screening, they will be in conversation with Erika Balsom, senior lecturer in Film Studies and Liberal Arts at King's College London.

Research seminar: *Refracted Spaces*

Friday, June 2, 7–9pm & Saturday, June 3, 10am–7pm

Gasworks presents *Refracted Spaces*, a research seminar convened by Filipa César and Louis Henderson. Together with Zach Blas, Denise Ferreira da Silva, Ana Naomi de Sousa, Olivier Marboeuf, Margarida Mendes, Rachel O'Reilly, Roque Pina and Lorenzo Pezzani, the artists will discuss the themes of their exhibition in relation to topics ranging from indigenous sea-navigation methods and cartographic law to forensic research of the Mediterranean refugee crisis; from aesthetic strategies of nonlocality, opacity and obscurity that interrupt optical surveillance to systemic racism embedded within technological developments; and from the materiality and ontology of blackness and black light to afrofuturist narratives of submarine resistance.

All events are free to attend. Please check our website for further information and booking details.



1. *Sunstone*, 2017. Single-channel video, colour with sound, 34:43 min.

2. *Refracted Spaces*, 2017. Archival images, oceanic charts, lighthouse blueprints, lights and fragments of Fresnel lenses, dimensions variable.

155 VAUXHALL STREET LONDON SE11 5RH
T. +44(0)20 7587 5202 F. +44(0)20 7582 0159 INFO@GASWORKS.ORG.UK WWW.GASWORKS.ORG.UK

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