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## Homeland, History and Tales: Narrative Strategies and the Moving Image in Contemporary Art

“There is no doubt fiction makes a better job of the truth.”

Doris Lessing (1994)

**Abstract:** This essay aims to understand how the question of narration became central in contemporary art moving image production paying specific attention to the relationship between historiography and fictionalisation. Starting from the so called “historiographical turn in art” (Roelstraete 2009) it embraces the analysis of several productions, showing how history has been fictionalised in contemporary art. The core of the essay is the identification of mechanisms in contemporary art that have made possible the transition or the passage from a state of non-fiction to a stage of narrative fiction. It tries to identify “epidemic” and “endemic” factors that have brought to this change considering social and political context of the last twenty years. In the text the attraction, monstration and narration in visual arts is going to be questioned starting from the concept of “documentality” (Hito Steyerl 2003) and in relation with hypertrophic production of documents in the context of mass media communication. Considering the use and the abuse of past for the definition and identification of homeland, the text aims to identify the twists of historiographic method in the mass media production. While doing that the notion of historical narration in contemporary art moving image will be considered in order to find if it might ever be an alternative or a mnemonic strategy that able to fight against reactionary storytelling. Thus the final question will lead the reader to consider how and why the relation between monstration and narration may create alternative attractions for themes of history and how the audience plays a pivotal role in the narrative construction.

**Keywords:** history, documentality, fiction, storytelling, audience.

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In one of the first frames of Omer Fast’s video *Continuity* (2012)<sup>1</sup> there are a table with a cake and two characters who soon will reveal themselves as the parents of a young German soldier coming back from Afghanistan. The cake is in the middle of the frame, both characters turn their back to the