

ARTFORUM

FILM

BATTLE LINES

Tony Pipolo on “Currents” at the New York Film Festival
September 30, 2022



Daniel Eisenberg, *The Unstable Object II*, 2022, DCP, color, sound, 203 minutes.

As in recent years, “Currents” offers several features that could easily have been included in the documentary or main slate programs. One of the most impressive of these is *The Unstable Object II*, in which Daniel Eisenberg continues the ambitious project he began a few years ago to film factory workers in different parts of the world. Part two begins in a prosthetics factory in Duderstadt, Germany, where following the stages of producing artificial body parts is as eerily hypnotic as any sci-fi narrative, and far more instructive. Eisenberg’s camera is as precision-gearred as the meticulously executed labor it follows. In one unusually long scene, we watch the delicate, step-by-step fashioning of a human finger as it uncannily seems to come to life through the coordination, sensitivity, and finesse befitting a work of art. Intentionally or not, there is a disconnect between the visual excitement the film generates here—and later on in glove- and jean-making factories in Millau, France, and Istanbul, respectively—and the repetitive, unvaried nature of the labor that workers are engaged in hour after hour, day after day.