

[FID Marseille](#)

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## FID Marseille 2022: 'The Unstable Object II'

A masterclass in observation and process. Daniel Eisenberg documents and explores workers and their labor in this year's FID Marseille's Grand Prize winner, *The Unstable Object II*.



*The Unstable Object II* (Dir. Daniel Eisenberg, France, Germany, Turkey, USA, 204 min, 2022)

11 years after his last feature film, *The Unstable Object*, Daniel Eisenberg continues his on ongoing archive of this series with a second installment, *The Unstable Object II*, at this year's Marseille International Documentary Festival (FID), which deservedly won the Grand Prize of the International Competition. Continuing his effort observing the workers in selective vocations such as the BMW, analog clock, and cymbals manufacturers, whether it being in a global scale factory, small town building, or a warehouse, Eisenberg continues to present the workers and their process to their product. With the process being observed, Eisenberg allows the viewers to experience the setting, materials, conditions, rules, and many more without dialogue drawing parallels with artistic practices. With this subjective point of view, this leaves an unbiased impression on the type of business it is subjected to.

Using the same structure as his first film, the one difference is time. The first film lasted approximately 70 minutes, while this iteration being 204 minutes with each section being about 65 minutes long. Quite a big leap duration wise, but with observation at settings, nuances and details are to be discovered. The first manufacturer is at the Ottobock factory, located in Duderstadt, Germany. Ottobock specializes in orthopedic technology, but the segment shown focuses on manufacturing prosthetic legs and arms. We see different workers specializing and producing each segment of a prosthetic leg. Each item of the prosthetic has a specific specialization. In particular, metals and silicone are constructed to be used as the mold and finishing touches are done to the prosthetic. Tightening screws, hammering metals, pouring silicone into the mold device, and lastly, the sculpting of the leg/arm. The parallels between sculptures stemming from Michelangelo to the sculpting of a prosthetic is an uncanny comparison in the modern age.

The second and third section focuses on garments of the arm and leg, specifically, gloves and jeans respectively. The second brings us to the boutique shop, Maison Fabre in Millau, France. A small scaled manufacturer house, consisting no more than 10 seamstresses, mostly women, who cut, sew, and stitch each panel of the leather together creating a simple, elegant glove. This section was also the most rigorous due to its attention to detail. There is a moment where the camera is focused on the stitching needle of the sewing machine, blurring out the background, while the seamstress performs a round stitch to piece together the tip of the finger at end of the glove. It's suspenseful as it portrays an expertise where one wrong move can ruin the glove, where these professional seamstresses calmly maneuver precisely. The last section inversely critiqued the second section. We are now observing the workers in the denim jeans factory by Realkom, in Istanbul Duzce, Turkey. If Maison Fabre was a gentle opera, Realkom was a rock concert. Mass producing thousand of jeans by automated machines, pre-cutting the molds, while workers took and place the jeans on a conveyor belt style system to move over to the next station. Brash machines, imprecise cuts, and quick robot like-movements through the sewing machine felt like a burst of negative energy. Divided into sections from cutting, stitching, washing, painting, and thread checking, workers finished up their stations by placing their completed quantity in jeans, leaving the factory.

As for the second installment of *The Unstable Object* (during the credits, mentions it is an archive), Eisenberg lays down another subjective analysis of the manufacturers of products that we may not think of which the extended time from the first definitely drove the intimacy to a higher degree. It doesn't give us a clear picture on worker satisfaction, contentment, or passion, but more looks at the process from a material, beginning to end. It can be argued that each worker is artist in their own right, from creating a tangible with time and care, but often that process is forgotten by

the consumer. A truly remarkable piece that Eisenberg provides the consumers as a time capsule in this unstable world, due to the evolution of automation and capitalism of labor observing and questioning products all around.

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