

OVERDUIN & CO.

PRESS RELEASE

Will Benedict
"Recent Video"
February 4th – March 10th, 2018
reception: Sunday, February 4th, 6-8pm

The Jains believe in either a seven or eight chambered model of hell. Each part of Jain Hell is colder than the last. Thankfully, this hell is not a final destination – instead, the Jains believe their hell corrects the moral failings that consigned people there, and after a time they are reincarnated to try again at living well. Ejected from the bowels of hell, the soul can, as a fresh poop, try and grow into a lighter and improved moral vehicle.

In his recent videos Will Benedict has created a fable of our own metabolic moral economy, a world-inside-a-stomach populated by embodied libidinal forces both earthly and celestial. Culminating in *The Restaurant*, Benedict (in collaboration with Steffen Jørgensen) zooms in directly on the hot locus where grotesque global inequality meets our daily lives – namely the food experience. How else to name the transformation of the most basic metabolic process, something fundamental to life since our mono-cellular ancestors drifted in plasmal seas, to an activity so overdetermined that in order to eat we need not just food but:

- the entire apparatus of the internet, with it's heavy breathing servers,
- all the ink and paper that newspapers, books and guides use up,
- all the air, water and calories we burn thinking,
- a state, with laws to defend our property, and militarized squads to enact and reinforce those laws, and finally,
- all the hours of time and effort we spend deciding and evaluating where, how and with what our experience is to be had.

Since the unveiling of the food experience our entire cultural economy is revealed as a market speculating in the future of our own feces. For this we created theatre, art and music. For this we have so thoroughly militarized the police. The god we have been venerating, that we created capitalism to serve and worship, has been inside us this whole time. THE CALL IS COMING FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE.

Benedict & Jørgensen's fable shows us that we are no longer eating to provide energy and motion to our organism, but rather the reverse: the shit is driving the body. If we try and assert ourselves, our waste answers back: "Do you feel like you're in charge?"

The world in Benedict's videos is not entirely without optimism. The resonant antipodean tones of the Snailien indicate the flexibility of the natural world, indulging us in our wild pursuit of our own waste. He is a reminder that this world is not a zero-sum system: his pliancy suggests a both/and scenario living alongside the apocalyptic coprophagia that otherwise rampages through *The Restaurant*. To compliment the inclusivity of both/and, Benedict also includes its reflection, neither/nor, in the haughty and removed figure of the Alien, a chaotic other whose goals lie beyond our comprehension. In these two non-human peripheral figures Benedict offers his escape hatch from the comparative violence of the human metabolic dungeon. One hopes that in the gaze of their otherness we can grow a sense of appropriate shame for our role in ruining a planet, forcing the majority of the world to crawl while we drive and raising our own fear of disappointment to such heights that we can no longer see the sky without peering through the telescope of our own expectations.

-Steve Kado, Los Angeles, 2018

Will Benedict (born 1978, Los Angeles) lives and works in Paris, France. Solo exhibitions of Benedict's work have been organized by Bergen Kunsthall in Norway and Halle für Kunst Lüneburg in Germany. His work is currently on view at the de Young Museum in San Francisco and has been included in exhibitions at the Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt and Künstlerhaus in Austria. His work was also exhibited in the 9th Berlin Biennale as well as the 31st Biennial of Ljubljana. Monographs of Benedict's work have been published by Mousse Publishing and Bergen Kunsthall.