

# Theta

## **Militant Joy**

November 4 - December 17, 2022

Loretta Fahrenholz

Gritli Faulhaber

Nicole-Antonia Spagnola & Bedros Yeretjian

SoiL Thornton

For a 2006 episode of BBC's *Planet Earth* a crew of wildlife cinematographers spent one month filming the world's largest concentration of cockroaches inside the Gomantong Cave in Borneo. The aboveground cave is blanketed meters high with guano, or bat shit, on which the roaches and other vermin feed. The crew dutifully ascends to the heart of the cave in duct tape-reinforced paper suits to set up a weight and pulley system with a flashlight and camera to provide us with one continuous shot along the glittering mountain of shit-eating bugs.

*Planet Earth* and related television programs\* are profoundly empathic works of assumed objectivity that feel ambiently good. The bat/guano/cockroach segment of the cave episode does not hit the same, but its BTS documentation is delightful. Highlighting the camera team's hidden labor discloses the grotesque conditions (a landscape of nightmarish darkness) of inventing a portal into a new world of perspective. Like most documentary footage it also anticipates its reception, with good humored direct-to-camera pleas on Day 26 from men covered in feces to not force them back into the cave again. There's a masochistic pleasure in their painful comradery that feels uncomplex, comforting, like they're doing what they love, like the shame of recognizing our own ridiculousness is rewarding.

\* Specifically those narrated by David Attenborough

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**Loretta Fahrenholz** (b. 1981, Starnberg) lives and works in Berlin. Recent solo exhibitions include Kölnischer Kunstverein, Cologne (2022); n.b.k. [Neuer Berliner Kunstverein], Berlin (2021); Lumiar Cité, Lisbon (2021); Company Gallery, New York (2020); mumok, Vienna (2018); Galerie Buchholz, Berlin (2017); Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Amsterdam (2016); Fridericianum, Kassel (2016); Kunsthalle Zürich (2015); Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (2015); and Reena Spaulings Fine Art, New York (2011). Recent group have been held at the Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin (2021); Fundación Banco Santander, Madrid (2020); Kunsthalle Bern, Bern (2019); MoMA PS1, Long Island City (2015); KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin (2015).

**Gritli Faulhaber** (b. 1990, Freiburg im Breisgau) lives and works in Zürich. She has recently held solo exhibitions at Sangt Hipolyt, Berlin (2020); Cherish, Geneva (2019). Recent group exhibitions include Swiss Art Awards, Basel (2022); Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, Fribourg (2022); Artgenève, Geneva (2022); Fonda, Leipzig (2021); Galerie Lange + Pult, Zürich (2021); Kunsthaus Langenthal, Langenthal (2021); Kunstverein Leipzig, Leipzig (2020); Museum im Bellpark, Kriens (2020); Cité des Arts, Paris (2019). She is a 2022 recipient of the Swiss Art Award as well as the 2022 Working Grant of the City of Zürich.

**Nicole-Antonia Spagnola** (b. 1991, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo exhibitions have been held at Artists Space, New York (2022); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2021). Other group exhibitions include Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2022); Claude Balls Int, Maison R&C, Marseille (2021); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2020); Reena Spaulings Fine Art, Los Angeles (2019).

**Bedros Yeretzian** (b.1989, Los Angeles) lives and works in Los Angeles. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions at 100 Bell Towers, Montreal (2022); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2022); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2018). Group exhibitions at Claude Balls Int., Maison R&C, Marseille (2021); Commercial Street, Los Angeles (2020); Reena Spaulings Fine Art, Los Angeles (2019)).

**SoiL Thornton** (b. 1990, Macon, GA) lives and works in New York. Their recent solo exhibitions include Kunstverein Bielefeld, Bielefeld (2022); Galerie Neu, Berlin (2021); Morán Morán, Los Angeles (2021); Maxwell Graham/Essex Street, New York (2020); and Modern Art, London (2019). Recent group exhibitions include Kunsthalle Friart Fribourg, Fribourg (2022); SculptureCenter, Long Island City (2021); Neuer Kunstverein Wien, Vienna (2021); Museum of Contemporary Art Busan, Busan (2021); and The 2017 Whitney Biennial, New York (2017).