

OF A FIRE ON THE MOON
curated by
Boaz Levin and Tobias Zielony

Opening Wednesday 19 June, 6-9pm
Galleria Lia Rumma | Via Vannella Gaetani 12 | NAPLES
Gallery opening hours: Tuesday-Saturday 11am-1.30pm / 2.30-6.30pm

Lia Rumma Gallery is pleased to present *Of a Fire on the Moon*, a group exhibition of works by Yalda Afsah, Sohrab Hura, Gwen Smith and Tobias Zielony curated by Boaz Levin and Tobias Zielony which opens on June 19 in Naples.

Of a Fire on the Moon takes its title from Norman Mailer's book documenting the Apollo 11 moon landing and brings together four artists whose work stands at the intersection between realism and estrangement. Nocturnal, these works seem to view their subjects through flashes and flickers, or dream-like and distant.

Gwen Smith's *Fuck, Cook, Look: the first and last time I remember being in Naples* (1993/2017) juxtaposes a series of silver gelatin black and white images from 1993, taken during the artist's first visit to the city, with color inkjet prints from her most recent trip. The images become mnemonic devices, highlighting the changing nature of photography with the transition from analog to digital, leading to ever more instantaneous archiving.

A cloud of thick foam floats across a dark arena, artificially lit. For a moment, time seems to be suspended, and sounds—of running and panting, the scraping of hoofs, of splashing, spraying, lunging—are heightened. Yalda Afsah's video *Tourneur* (2018) documents a bullfight in the south of France that becomes a stage for a strange performance of masculinity and animality. Bubbles envelope both the teenagers and the bull they pursue, becoming a screen through which the scene is revealed, and concealed. At once realistic and relentlessly contrived, *Tourneur* becomes a ritualistic experiment in representation and its dissolution.

In Tobias Zielony's photo animation *A Fire on the Moon* (2019) rather than outer space, here we viewers are sent to Gibellina—the Sicilian town destroyed by the Belice earthquake in 1968, a year before the Apollo 11 mission—now a ghost town, where Ludovico Quaroni's large concrete orb shaped church, the Chiesa Madre, looms large. Through the darkness and flicker of Zielony's stop-motion sequence we find a city as-if frozen, now animated. Reminiscent of both early experiments in cinematic illusionism such as Georges Méliès' 'A Voyage to the Moon', as well as Italian Neo-Realism's post-war urban social portraits, in *on the moon* fact and fiction, illusion and document, seem to converge.

Sohrab Hura's video *The Lost Head & The Bird* (2019) explores life at the extremities of Indian society through an explosive profusion of images and stories, facts and fictions. Employing a dizzying montage of excess, alternating between absurdity and abjection, his work tests the thresholds of legibility and affect. Violence lurks as a constant undercurrent—of caste, sex, religion, political alliance—erupting with increasing frequency and virulence.

