

staircase

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San Francisco, CA



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Teeth of the Wolf

Jenna Garrett

April 7–May 21, 2023

Opening Reception:
Friday, April 7, 7–10 pm



Jenna Garrett, *Cabin*, 2022, Hahnemühle Photo Rag Pearl.

San Francisco, CA. March 27, 2023 – staircase is pleased to present *Teeth of the Wolf*, an exhibition of work by San Francisco artist Jenna Garrett. This is the second exhibition in staircase’s inaugural series. *Teeth of the Wolf* traces the story of the Bald Knobbers, a group of vigilantes who wreaked havoc in the Ozarks after the Civil War. The exhibition features contemporary photographs mixed with archival imagery altered by the artist. *Teeth of the Wolf* also includes a limited-edition risograph zine, printed by GRL GRP.

Men in groups. Groups of men with ideas. Ideas about other groups of men. Men they perceive as weaker. Weakness the everlasting enemy. Enemies everywhere. Everywhere a war front.

The most dangerous people envision themselves as both David and Goliath. The paradox—they believe in their righteousness as a blameless victim, but they move with the unconsidered force of an aggressor. Like a chemical reaction, this combination leads to a lethal blindness. No one is immune to such thinking, but when we see it writ large—in militias, in nations, in any group with any weapons—what is the most frightening is the human capacity for cruelty costumed as justice.

And what is the origin of such violence? And what causes ordinary fear to metastasize into chaos, into conspiracy, into war? The only way to answer these questions, even provisionally, is to look, to catalogue, to observe in silence.

Jenna Garrett's *Teeth of the Wolf* is such an investigation. As an artist she is capable of finding stark beauty in the ordinary—a lake, a forest, a boulder, a room. And her lens has a way of capturing an unguarded, childish stare of a grown man's face, or the sense of a ghost, just out of frame, just out of sight.

Her subject here is the way a place holds onto a story, and how history is a conflict between histories. How easy it is to be in love with a ghost; a ghost never changes.

– Essay by Catherine Lacey

Further history: The Bald Knobbers were a vigilante group that sprung up in the Ozark Mountains in the aftermath of the Civil War. They were everyday citizens—shop owners, preachers, and sheriffs—who swore to protect their community from lawlessness. In just five short years, their numbers swelled from 13 to an estimated 500. Seventeen people died, plus countless reports of floggings, arson, jail escapes, and lynchings. The Bald Knobbers became the terror they swore to defeat.

About the Artist

Jenna Garrett is an artist living in San Francisco. Her current practice focuses on the Ozarks in southwest Missouri where she was born. Her work has shown at the Aperture Gallery, Bristol Photo Festival, Photoville, Photo Vogue Festival, Silver Eye Photography Center, and Slideluck Stockholm. She graduated with an MA in Fine Art Photography from the London College of Communication. She can also ride a unicycle, but only in a straight line.

About the Essay

Catherine Lacey is the author of five books, most recently *Biography of X*. She lives in New York and Mexico.

About staircase

staircase is an experimental space from curious collaborators (Lindsay Albert + Ivana Colendich). The inaugural series is born out of the need for more alternative and affordable art spaces in the Bay Area. The project will showcase various art forms and host events centered around the visual arts. Established in 2023, based in San Francisco.

Teeth of the Wolf, risograph zine printed by GRL GRP.

Address

staircase gallery
148 Clement St
San Francisco, CA 94118

Hours

Opening Reception: April 7, 2023, 7–10 pm
Thursday and Friday, by appointment
Saturday and Sunday open, 12–5 pm

Contact

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