

No kittens.

DAILY SCREENS

Other Worlds Austin Review: *Ghost Rockets*

In search of UFOs and meaning

BY RICHARD WHITTAKER, 1:45PM, SUN. DEC. 4, 2016



Watch the skies for Ghost Rockets, which received its Texas premiere today at Other Worlds Austin.

There's a supreme arrogance in pretending there is no life beyond Earth. But isn't it equally hubristic to think they would traverse inconceivable interstellar distances just to see us scarcely upright apes?

And yet, as Fox Mulder would say, we want to believe.

Scandinavian documentary *Ghost Rockets* catches that inner contradiction through the work of Clas Svahn and UFO-Sweden, a nonprofit dedicated to sorting the wheat from the chaff of airborne sightings. Only, so far, it's all been chaff. "My working day is all about misinterpretations," says one of the team, as he rattles off a list of reasoned explanations that debunk every single sighting.

Well, almost every sighting.

There's a certain charm to how Svahn's work colleagues seem to accept his obsession. In that way it's very similar to 2012's ***The Final Member***, a behind-the-scenes glimpse at the Icelandic Phallological Museum. He is undoubtedly obsessed, but it's not the fixation of the delusional: There are people who are convinced that they saw something, and it's his accepted task to work out what it was they really saw, whether it is a toy or the moon.

And yet, and yet, there are the ghost rockets. The Spökraketer was the name given to an epidemic of over 2,000 near-identical sightings that swept across Sweden just after World War II. The successor to the foo fighters (not the band) spotted by wartime pilots, they are Svahn's best chance of finding something that's not just a dust mote.

Documentarians Michael Cavanagh and Kerstin Übelacker aren't as interested as UFO-Sweden in solving the enigma of the ghost rockets. With delicacy, and without judgment, they portray a much simpler and immediate story: a group of UFO-obsessed boys who became UFO-fascinated men, and now, after 40 years, wonder whether the club they have founded will live beyond them. Solving the ghost rocket enigma is the way to validate their decades of effort, and maybe establish a legacy. Plus, if they get to spend some time with good friends, that's all for the better.

Other Worlds Austin SciFi Film Festival runs Dec. 1-4 at Flix Brewhouse, 2200 N. I-35, Round Rock. Visit www.otherworldsaustin.com for more info.

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"But isn't it equally hubristic to think they would traverse inconceivable interstellar distances just to see us scarcely upright apes?"

Not at all. According to your line of thought there is no Fermi Paradox and it is only human hubris that makes us think there is. This paper disagrees, <https://arxiv.org/abs/1307.164...> . It concludes "that the question underlying the Fermi Paradox is well-posed." A number of scientists who have studied the issue and are skeptical of UFOs explain what they perceive to be the non-arrival of aliens by the existence of a Great Filter and not "inconceivable interstellar distances" as you state.

As for your last bit ie. scarcely upright apes, I would submit even the lowly apes are intelligent and the development of intelligent life over time is the most interesting thing to observe in this galaxy.

Once you've observed black holes, supernova and any other physical phenomenon in the galaxy it gets boring pretty quick after a few millenia.

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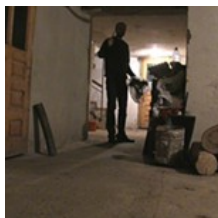


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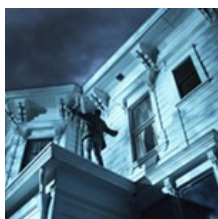
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