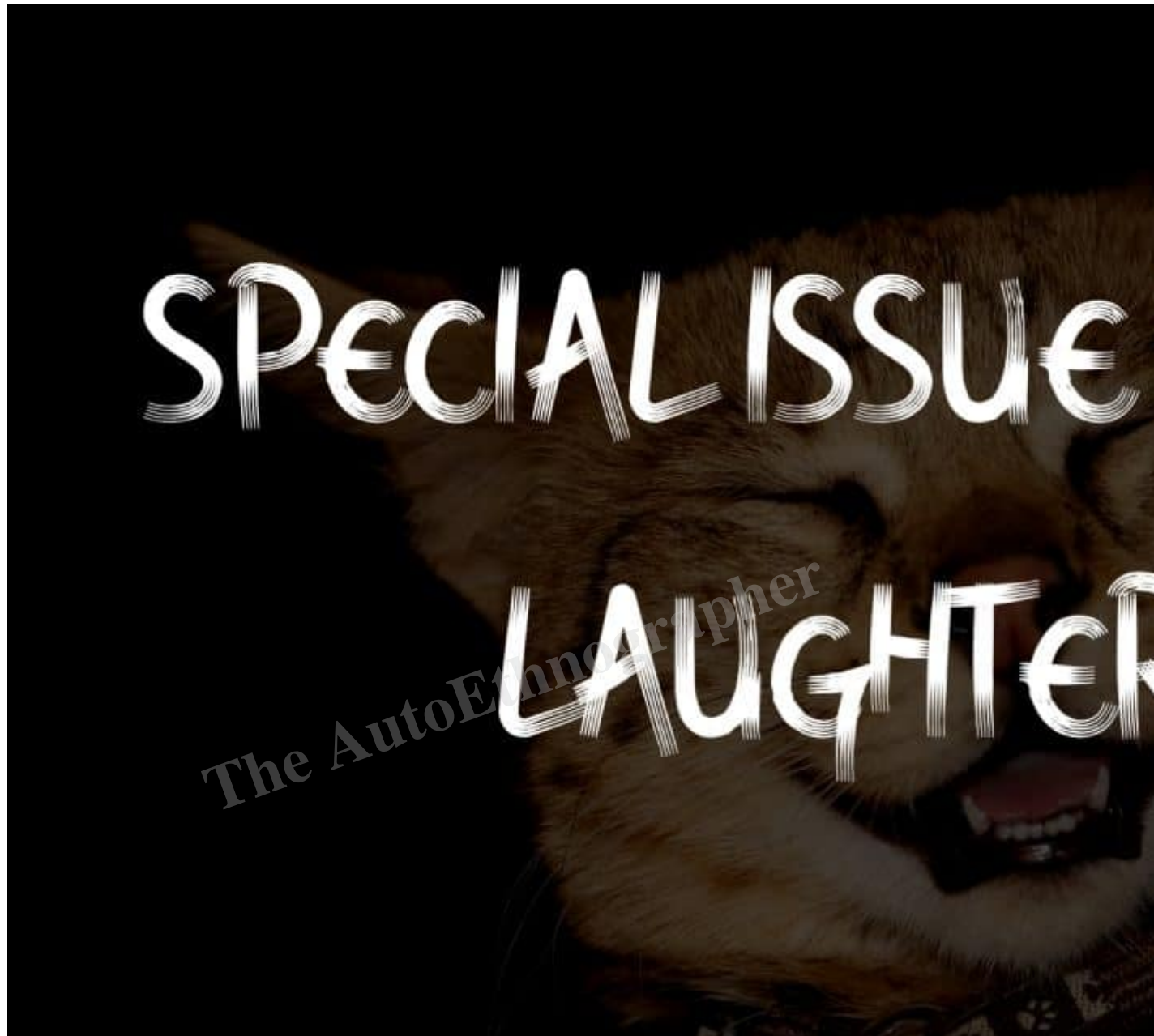


A Startling and Memorable Encounter at the Vet

Description





A Startling and Memorable Encounter at the Vet

Artist's Memo

I was born in Belgium and grew up speaking French. After emigrating to the United States, I adopted a cat I named Anaïs, after Anaïs Nin. This artwork is based on a startling and memorable encounter at

the local vet while attempting to get Anaïs spayed.

On my way to and from work every day, I passed a *centre vétérinaire* and decided this would be a good place to take her for her surgery. Upon arriving at the aptly-named “Vet Center” I opened the door with Anaïs in a carrier, only to come face-to-face with three large men, generously bearded and leather-cloaked with all sorts of military insignias on their jackets. They seemed as surprised to see me, as I was to see them. I blushed and walked backwards towards the exit with vivid flashbacks of *Full Metal Jacket* and *Apocalypse Now*.

Technically, the image also plays on the notion of Brechtian alienation through the use of Artificial Intelligence. Portions of the image are generated through text prompts that are interpreted visually through large sets of data and processing algorithms. Those are then combined and composited with my own “objective” imagery in order to establish a kind of stylistic tension and a point of ethnographic and autobiographical reflection.

Ethnographic discourse walks on a tightrope that divides the objective from the subjective. This is particularly significant in documentary films. My thesis, “Toward a Poetics of Film and Video,” written some thirty years ago, defined film and video as a poetic language through the properties of mode, vision, time, and voice. In my view, the ethnographic concepts of Jean Rouch and Trin Min-ha foster critical thinking and a sort of Brechtian distancing through “poetic” and literary means. My interest in the interplays of words and image, in transpositions, translations, and memories, has crept into all of my work under many different guises and is certainly at play here, in this image.

The AutoEthnographer

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Analys by Dominique Elliott

Credits

Featured Image by Dominique Elliott

Image by Dominique Elliott

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Author

dominiqueelliott