

HAMMER THEATRE CENTER AND NATIONAL  
GEOGRAPHIC ANNOUNCE  
“NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LIVE  
BACKSTAGE”

**Free streaming on Facebook Live**  
**STORIES AND Q&A SESSIONS WITH AWARD-WINNING**  
**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORERS AT HOME**  
**10:00am, Wednesdays, April 29 – May 27, 2020**

SAN JOSE, CA (28 April 2020) – Social distancing may prevent audiences from gathering at San Jose’s **Hammer Theatre Center**, but the excitement of its *National Geographic Live* events can now be experienced directly at home with a new five-part series on Facebook Live. In *National Geographic Live Backstage*, audiences will meet and interact with National Geographic Explorers streaming live from their homes around the world including underwater photographer **Brian Skerry**, photographer and filmmaker **Bertie Gregory**, Egyptologist **Kara Cooney**, wildlife filmmaker **Filipe DeAndrade**, and carnivore ecologist **Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant**. These thrilling presentations and live Q&A sessions with audience members will be held **10:00am PDT every Wednesday, April 29 – May 27** on National Geographic Live’s Facebook page. For more information and the full schedule of events, the public may visit [www.hammertheatre.com](http://www.hammertheatre.com).

Each program lasts about 40 minutes, followed an opportunity for fans to participate in a live Q&A

**Brian Skerry (10:00am, Wednesday, April 29)**

Live from his home studio on the coast of Maine, underwater photographer **Brian Skerry** will share never-before-told stories from his expeditions and what he has learned about being courageous and resilient in the face of challenging times. Skerry is a photojournalist specializing in marine wildlife and underwater environments. Since 1998 he has been a contract photographer for *National Geographic* magazine covering a wide range of subjects and stories from the harp

seal's struggle to survive in frozen waters, to the alarming decrease in the world's fisheries, to dolphin intelligence. For the February 2017 cover story on protecting special underwater ecosystems in US waters, Skerry produced the first ever images of a U.S. President underwater. Skerry's work has also been featured in publications such as *Sports Illustrated*, *The New York Times*, *BBC Wildlife*, *GEO*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Smithsonian*, and *Esquire*. He is the author of ten books, including the acclaimed monograph *Ocean Soul*. His latest book, *SHARK*, was released in June 2017. Skerry is an 11-time award winner in the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition, and in 2010 *National Geographic* magazine named one of Skerry's images among their 50 Greatest Photographs of All Time.

### **Bertie Gregory (10:00am, Wednesday, May 6)**

Wildlife filmmaker and photographer **Bertie Gregory** has channeled his childhood obsession with wildlife into photography. Photos from this obsession earned him recognition early on in his career, including being named a National Geographic Young Explorer, Youth Outdoor Photographer of the Year, and Zenith Scientific Exploration Society Explorer. After graduating with a zoology degree from the University of Bristol in 2014, he began assisting legendary big cat photographer Steve Winter on assignment for National Geographic. Gregory has since shot television shows for *Planet Earth*, as well as *Nat Geo WILD*, for which he covered Mumbai's urban leopards and caiman hunting jaguars. His first solo assignment for National Geographic—tracking and filming the illusive coastal wolf on the west coast of Vancouver Island, Canada—became *Nat Geo WILD*'s first digital series, *wild\_life*. All of this was completed before his 24th birthday. Gregory's most recent *wild\_life* assignment takes audiences on an adventure to the iconic South Georgia Island, sailing through the roughest ocean on the planet in a 50-foot boat to explore the sub-Antarctic island known for its breathtaking scenery and wildlife.

### **Dr. Kara Cooney (10:00am, Wednesday, May 13)**

Women in power have come a long way...or is that nothing new? **Dr. Kara Cooney**, professor of Egyptology, takes a look at a time in ancient history when women ruled the world. Often neglected in the history books, these women were considered exceptions to the rule, political pawns in a patriarchal society—but their power and influence is undeniable. Cleopatra used her

sexuality and her wealth to build alliances with warlords of the Roman empire. Neferusobek was the first woman to definitively take the title of King. Nefertiti is known more for her beauty than for her talent as a ruler in bringing a fractured Egypt together. Dr. Cooney shares some illuminating answers on what we can we learn from how these women ruled.

### **Filipe DeAndrade (10:00am, Wednesday, May 20)**

Brazilian-born and Cleveland-raised, filmmaker **Filipe DeAndrade** has had a longtime passion for wildlife and adventure. DeAndrade graduated from the University of Florida and co-founded Comfort Theory, a production house that aims to inspire others to fall in love with the natural world through conservation and natural history films. Comfort Theory has produced countless films and commercials for National Geographic, Nat Geo WILD, Direct TV, Dodge, Fitbit, and Garmin, among others. In 2015, DeAndrade won National Geographic's Wild to Inspire short film competition at the Sun Valley Film Festival, and he is a 20-time New York Emmy Award winner as both a producer and photographer. He is currently producing the National Geographic YouTube show, *Untamed*, in which he and his two best friends travel throughout Costa Rica in search of the most diverse, iconic, and unexpected animal species the country has to offer.

### **Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant (10:00am, Wednesday, May 27)**

A native Californian, **Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant** is a large carnivore ecologist with expertise in using statistical modeling to investigate how anthropogenic factors can influence the spatial patterns of carnivore behavior and ecology. Unapologetic about her passion for charismatic megafauna, Dr. Wynn-Grant studies the ecological and social drivers of human-carnivore conflict, and the influence of fine-scale human activity on the connectivity of suitable carnivore habitat. Her current field system is on the American Prairie Reserve in eastern Montana. She has worked on similar research questions with African lions in Kenya and Tanzania, grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, and has worked extensively with black bears in the Western Great Basin. Dr. Wynn-Grant attributes her interest in wildlife and conservation from the television shows she watched as a child, and was introduced to the field of conservation biology as an undergraduate. She received her B.S. in Environmental Studies from Emory University, an M.S. in Environmental Studies from Yale University, and her Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolution from

Columbia University. She now holds adjunct faculty positions at Johns Hopkins University and Columbia University, and a visiting scientist position at the American Museum of Natural History.

The **Hammer Theatre Center** is a distinctive, state-of-the-art performance venue in the heart of downtown San José. Owned by the City of San Jose and operated by San Jose State University (SJSU), the Hammer Theatre's mission is to serve the community through artistically and educationally excellent programming that is expressive of the unique characteristics and diverse cultures that comprise Silicon Valley. The broader vision of the Hammer includes arts, innovation, and technology programming on the Paseo de San Antonio, creating a vibrant pathway between SJSU and the Tech Museum and bridging the urban spaces from Saint James Park down to the South of First Avenue cultural district. The Hammer also aims to connect SJSU's more than 37,000 faculty, students, and staff with the downtown cultural and economic corridors.

### For Calendar Editors

**WHAT:** Social distancing may prevent audiences from gathering at San Jose's **Hammer Theatre Center**, but the excitement of its *National Geographic Live* events can now be experienced directly at home with a new five-part series on Facebook Live. In *National Geographic Live Backstage*, audiences will meet and interact with National Geographic Explorers streaming live from their homes around the world including underwater photographer **Brian Skerry**, photographer and filmmaker **Bertie Gregory**, Egyptologist **Kara Cooney**, wildlife filmmaker **Filipe DeAndrade**, and carnivore ecologist **Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant**. These thrilling presentations and live Q&A sessions with audience members will be held **10:00am PDT every Wednesday, April 29 – May 27** on National Geographic Live's Facebook page.

**WHERE:** ONLINE – Visit [www.hammertheatre.com](http://www.hammertheatre.com) for details.

**WHEN:** **Brian Skerry (10:00am, Wednesday, April 29)**  
**Bertie Gregory (10:00am, Wednesday, May 6)**  
**Dr. Kara Cooney (10:00am, Wednesday, May 13)**  
**Filipe DeAndrade (10:00am, Wednesday, May 20)**  
**Dr. Rae Wynn-Grant (10:00am, Wednesday, May 27)**

**PRESS:** Contact Steph Keay, Carla Befera & Co.  
(650) 327-1200 | [steph@cb-pr.com](mailto:steph@cb-pr.com)

**PHOTOS:** Media may download high-res photos at:  
<http://cbpr.co/press/natgeobackstage>