

Liam Gast is an artist based in New York who mounts installations and performances - what he calls "hauntings" - during stays in Airbnb rentals. He spoke to us over Skype from his apartment in Sunset Park, his voice occasionally fading out over the digital airwaves like a ghostly apparition.

Typically, when we think of an artist's medium, we think of something conventional, like oil paint or film. How did you get started using the Airbnb rental as your medium?

Honestly, I think the medium chose me. I had been sort of blocked with my work one summer and I went to stay at this Airbnb up in the Adirondacks. And once I got there I was immediately uncomfortable: there was this stark contrast between the first floor, which was this open plan with a big giant living room, and the upstairs, where there was this dark narrow corridor with the master bedroom at the end and what would be the kids' bedrooms off the sides. And in the ceiling of the master bedroom was a door which contained the attic ladder stair. It all felt very sinister and in a flash I'd imagined this entire narrative for the house: this seemingly very social family headed by an overbearing, insecure patriarch, and one day his black sheep son embarrasses him in front of guests. And later, in a fit of anger, he kills the child, but the family saves face, remains silent about the whole debacle, and hides the evidence. As soon as I saw that attic ladder, I just envisioned the whole thing.

But it felt really wrong to just write the story down and take it with me - it belonged to the house more than to me - so instead I imagined what physical remnants of this story the house would hold and I produced those: a toy with a tiny smattering of blood buried in the yard, a journal narrating the events half-burned and jammed between the floorboards of the attic, and so on. In theory, if the owners of the Airbnb explored the house and discovered these objects then this story I wrote would seem real to them, they wouldn't necessarily be able to tell it was a fiction. I effectively rewrote the history of the house.

Then I just started doing this on repeat: I'd rent an Airbnb, listen to the building for a story - not all houses had one, sometimes a stay would be a bust - and then produce the remnants of the story and inscribe them into the bones of the house.

But then later you moved away from the mystery story approach.

Right, yeah. Writing these tight narratives, then producing the objects, leaving the journal pages, essentially planting clues, it was a really fun way to work. But I started to feel that it was too caught up in narrative conventions. The well-written mystery story has to be so carefully structured: each clue gives a bit more information leading up to the final unveiling according to this almost set formula for suspense. Actual life is not like that. Usually nothing much happens; there's not a lot of forward progression, and there's certainly no big reveal at the end. We just kind of live. Sometimes houses tell the stories of their previous inhabitants in more banal ways, through just being repositories for the everyday detritus of living.

So I swung in almost the polar opposite direction: no plot, just scenery.

Like you'd build a stage set?

More like redecorate. I'd get to the Airbnb and first thing I'd do is remove almost all interior decorations - postcards on the fridge, framed photos, wall art, take off the bedspread, etc. - where possible, I'd remove the furniture too. Then I'd put all that out of sight - either up in the attic or condense it all into one bedroom or something - and then I'd redecorate the place entirely, as if someone else had lived there.

I'd put up new paintings on the wall, different magnets on the fridge, even different old soup cans in the back of the kitchen cabinets. I'd put a new rug in the living room, imagine what stains it would've acquired over time, purposefully create those. I'd stage some photographs in the house - get some friends to come up for a night, throw a fake birthday, take a few pictures, frame one of them, put it on the table in the study. I'd essentially imagine a character who lived in the house and try to imagine, as completely as possible, the stage set of his life.

I'd put to build up about five years of imagined habitation in the week I was there, really a whole other parallel life for the house. At the end I'd take it all down and painstakingly restore the home to its original state.

You refer to your works as "hauntings." Why do you use this term?

A lot of haunted house movies hinge on a tension between seeing a house as property - this abstract attitude towards space, of title deeds and prices - and then the lived aspects of space - all the memories, dreams, bad events that a house holds. And usually the narrative is one of condescension: the people who see the house just as real estate (the upwardly mobile family who move into the gothic mansion despite the bad rumors swirling about it) is bound to be punished by the house's lived history; they're bound to be terrorized by the ghosts of the house.

And Airbnb, to me, just seems to be so keyed into these tropes. I mean, it's the ultimate in the viewing of space as an abstract real estate entity: the Airbnb logic essentially turns the house into money, into a ratio between amount-of-space-to-time-available-to-price. But then there's the other side of the coin, the reality of strangers going into your house and living in it, with their bodies and their emotions and their baggage. So all the conditions for haunting are there, the abstract versus the lived.

At a certain point, I realized that this was what my works were about, this conflict. I find the abstract investment side of Airbnb to be quite troubling and I very much want to leave some trace of my inhabitation, either literally, through the objects of the



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murder narratives, or more indirectly, by the imagined-then-deleted pasts of the redecoration.

The emphasis on ownership makes me think of legal documents, title deeds, the paper trails of inhabitation. Do you think you'll ever go back to the more textual interventions of your earlier work?

Honestly, if anything, I think I've moved even further into the realm of the ephemeral, even further away from the strategy of planting objects or texts in the rental. My most recent works have just been performances, nothing concrete added to the house at all.

Almost like plays? With an audience?

No, no audience. Just the actors. And not really a whole play with a beginning and a middle and a moment of catharsis and the whole shebang. Really the attempt is to condense all of the drama of living into one single moment that hopefully has a lot of staying power. For example, we staged one performance that was just a single violent marital fight, maybe five minutes long. And then the actors performed just that scene, basically on repeat, for the duration of the stay. I think of it almost like scoring a piece of wood, just taking a knife and digging into the same spot over and over, until there's this irreparable scar. Or like how mediums talk about ghosts getting stuck in loops and repeating the same unfinished action over and over. That's what I hope these



performances create, this timeless psychic stain, this residue that forever affects the house.

Do you think you've ever successfully left these traces? That you've ever really haunted an Airbnb?

That's a good question, the one I ask myself all the time. I'm not sure. Can you believe so fully in a performance that a house takes it for real and writes it into the DNA of its walls?

The actors are very committed - they've moved to this new location, they're entirely cut off from their regular lives. And repeating the same short performance over and over is almost incantatory, it's like a mystical transmutation occurs; by the end of the stay the self melts away and the role takes over entirely; they become the character. But, in terms of leaving a trace, my concern is that this process has to end. The actors eventually leave the Airbnb and the fictional world I made there and become themselves again. Maybe the architecture doesn't truly absorb

our staged events because in the end we don't either.

Of course, the best way to ensure that a location will become haunted is through death: you know the tropes, someone was murdered in the house, or it was built on a graveyard, something like that. And if you think about it, death is the ultimate limit point for a performance. If you died in character - that would be the



complete unification of performer and role. Death of character, death of person, there'd be no difference. I think a house would definitely take up that psychic trace. We'd need to find a very dedicated actor to take on that role though. It wouldn't be a quick jaunt to some Airbnb upstate, pretending at country living for a weekend. Ghost: that's a role that lasts all eternity.



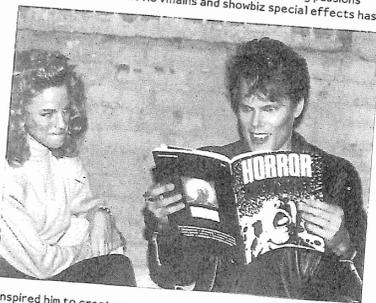
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Witch's Dungeon Rosa McElheny

Disclaimer: The Witch's Dungeon is a bonafide Halloween attraction, but it is not scary. If you're looking for Frights, this is neither the place nor the review for you.

High on a hill in an 1890s Victorian mansion that doubles as the headquarters of the Bristol Historical Society, you'll find The Witch's Dungeon - the longest-running Halloween attraction included a friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend who works at Best Video and grew up in Connecticut, which means he's an expert on things both Hollywood and Constitution State. I'd say The Witch's Dungeon is the best of those two worlds.

The museum, as I learned from the cheerful docent who greeted us in the lobby, is the creation of Cortlandt Hull, a genuine film fanatic and self-taught model maker whose lifelong passions for classic horror movie villains and showbiz special effects has



Inspired him to create seventeen or so life-size sculptures of mutants, demons, and other evil doers from wax, fine wire mesh, papier-mâché, and polymers. Hull has been displaying his creations - complete with sets, props and lighting - every Halloween season dating all the way back to 1966 (!). Cortlandt Hull may seem like an outsider artist, but he's got Hollywood in his genes: his great uncle, Henry Hull, starred in Werewolf of London in 1935.

From the lobby, we met our guide Carmilla, who wore corpse paint and a long black skirt. She led us through the arched entryway (a piece from the set of The Phantom of the Opera on Broadway, apparently) and into the first exhibition hall, a narrow room packed cheek by jowl with movie villains. As we walked through, Carmilla described the salient details of each movie monster:



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there was Gill-Man (the Creature from the Black Lagoon's real name) wading out from between the Fly (played by David (Al) Hedison) and a Mole Person. Across the way the Abominable Dr. Phibes (Boris Karloff).

Past the Mummy (Lon Chaney Jr.) and through the door, we met our second guide, Farnsworth, dressed, Dracula-esque, in coat tails and top hat. He explained who we were facing in the second room, including Nosferatu (Max Schreck), Erik, The Phantom of the Opera (Lon Chaney Sr.), and Maleficent, from Sleeping Beauty. Also present were the scarred and unscarred states of Professor Henry Jarrod (Vincent Price), from the original House of Wax. In that film, Farnsworth explained, Jarrod, a sculptor and burns down. Unable to sculpt, Jarrod sets about creating new wax figures by murdering people and dipping their bodies in wax for the movie myself.

Thankfully, we were led away from the world of the un-living and into a makeshift cinema, where two 16mm projectors rattled away playing classic films. Cortlandt Hull himself was there as show you how to load the film, or trade movie trivia. That night he was playing Mystery of the Wax Museum, the 1933 film that is the basis for House of Wax - how Frightfully appropriate. Luckily, I lived to tell the tale and to say that for anybody interested in classic horror, Vincent Price, Bristol CT, wax museums, Hollywood, Halloween, mole people, model-making, or the history of cinematic projectors, The Witch's Dungeon is well worth a visit! Located at 98 Summer St in Bristol, CT. Open 7 to 10pm on weekends in October. Admission is \$6 cash.

October 2, 2018

Yale School of Architecture
Alim, Matthew Wagstaffe
180 York Street
New Haven, CT 06511

Dear Matthew,

Stephen would like to thank you for the invitation to do an interview with him. He is flattered that you thought of him, but unfortunately, his schedule is full for the next 18 months.

Stephen would like to wish you good luck with your education.

Sincerely,

Julian Engley
Assistant to Stephen King

stephen king 1380 Hammond St., Bangor, ME. 04401
visit our website at www.stephenking.com

MAIL FROM STEPHEN KING

Midwestern Demonology Maia Simon

Twice a year, on Halloween and the spring equinox, the devil allegedly manifests in Stull, a small, unincorporated town in Douglas County, Kansas. Eastern Kansas in the spring certainly looks apocalyptic, the site of a controlled burn create a blackened landscape of quietly smouldering low hills along I-70. But why an otherwise undistinguished rural community midway between Topeka and Lawrence offers the location of one of seven alleged gates between hell and earth is, however, unclear. Local legends alternately assert that the town was home to a cabal of witches, the site of a brutal murder, or the burial site of a werewolf-like infant born to the devil and a witch. The pastor of Stull Church and several University of Kansas professors, however, attribute the proliferation of legends surrounding Stull's "diabolical, supernatural character" to a November 1974 story in the University Daily Kansan by then-student Jain Penner. Invented or not, stories of Stull's demonic visitor quickly gained traction, attracting thrillseekers and ghost hunters. In 1988 over 500 people - a number exponentially larger than Stull's population - travelled to the town on Halloween hoping to catch the devil on one of his yearly visits. Pope John Paul II, while on a papal visit to Denver in 1993, allegedly insisted on a flight path that would avoid passing over Stull due to its unholy nature.**

History is littered with sites purportedly offering access to the underworld. In Greek and Roman mythology these passages were typically associated with natural features - rivers, lakes, and caves. Medieval gates were anthropomorphic, imagined as not just passages but as the mouths of monstrous creatures. Modern passages primarily follow the Greek and Roman tradition, located within environmental conditions in desolate locations, they typically imply a direct connection to an underworld. One such site, the Darvaza "door to hell," north of Ashgabat in Turkmenistan, visually exemplifies this: a collapsed crater in an oil field, Soviet scientists set fire to the methane gas escaping from the pit at some point between the 60s and the 80s, hoping to burn it off. The plan failed, however, and the fire has been burning ever since.

Stull, in its explicitly architectural composition, represents a significantly rarer hellmouth typology. If in Christian biblical exegesis the gates of hell are said to represent the powers or temptations of hell, against which the Church stands as a bulwark, Stull inverts that formulation. Most descriptions of the Stull hell-gate position it either directly inside of the long-abandoned ruin of the Evangelical Emmanuel Church or in the adjacent cemetery.



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Rather than simply appearing in the church, the devil allegedly ascends via a concealed staircase. Disappointingly, none of the many legends circulated about the town clarify the type or composition of this staircase: is it a single run, a spiral staircase, what is the occupant load of an egress to hell?

Other facets of the church, which was eventually torn down in 2002, supposedly offered further proof of supernatural activity. When the building lost its roof to a microburst in the mid-90s, stories began to claim that rain never fell within the confines of its limestone walls. Glass bottles thrown at the thrower never broke, or if they did, would immediately trigger the thrower's death. Some stories report experiences of electrical disturbances, distortions of time within the church and its immediate surroundings, or the smell of sulphur and a generally pervasive "sick, overwhelming feeling of negativity."***

While it's highly unlikely that a small town in Kansas literally connects to the underworld, for many residents, Stull on Halloween became its own type of hell; overrun by the sudden apparition of groups of drunk teenagers tossing beer bottles at the church walls and ghost hunters crouching in the cemetery bushes, keeping an eye out for both the Douglas County sheriff and the devil himself.

**Paul Thomas, Haunted Lawrence (Charleston: Haunted America, 2017), 118.

**An equally believable theory might posit that the diverted flight path was a snub to the Belvue, Kansas headquarters of the Vatican in Exile, established in 1990, when David Bawden was elected to the papacy by his parents and several neighbors.

***The latter reported by Ariana Grande, who allegedly also came away from her visit with a photo featuring the faces of three "textbook demons." Lisa Gutierrez, "Ariana Grande says she met demons during KC trip" The Kansas City Star, 9 November 2013, https://www.kansascity.com/news/local/article313384/Ariana-Grande-says-she-met-demons-during-KC-trip.html.

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HALLOWEEN II

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Michael Myer's House
d: John Carpenter HALLLOWEEN (1976)

A lot of horror films in the past were set in a haunted house or some dark environment to begin with, so that you're immediately alerted to the fact that, oh this is going to be scary.

Laura Palmer's House
d: David Lynch TWIN PEAKS (1990)

Well, the harder thing to do then is to take a horror movie and put it into a suburban atmosphere, with a nice little row of houses and beautiful manicured lawns and some place that you can assume is very safe. Because if horror can get there, it can get anywhere...

Nancy Thompson's House
d: Wes Craven A NIGHTMARE (1984)
ON ELM STREET

Suburbia is supposed to be safe. Your house is supposed to be a sanctuary. Nowadays, maybe because of conditions beyond our control, there is no sanctuary. (John Carpenter, as quoted in Bernice M. Murphy, *The Suburban Gothic in American Popular Culture* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 143.)

10/18 THURSDAY
"Make friends with lawyers, they'll be your clients" - Sean Godsell

10/19 FRIDAY
"Staff Lounge" opened for 150 students. Bathroom sinks ON THE GROUND
breathed a sigh of relief. pt. 2

10/21 SUNDAY
- YSOA CF provides tea, cookies, donuts and a TV screen fireplace ahead of mid reviews.

10/22 MONDAY
- "Eww!!!" - Maya Sorabjee when Pik-tone revealed her favorite color was lemon yellow.

10/23 TUESDAY
- "I was trying to be playful, but maybe that's not in my nature"
- Thomas Mahon presenting his Restorative Justice Center.

Don't Look Now David Turturo

Nicolas Roeg's 1974 film *Don't Look Now*, based on a short story by Daphne du Maurier, follows a young married couple to Venice as they grapple with the psychological rollercoaster of their daughter's death. The mother, Laura, is portrayed by a chic Julie Christie, whom the audience first encounters reading a book written by her husband John, played by a striking Donald Sutherland. John is an architect restoring the 12th-century Byzantine-Venetian church of San Nicolò dei Mendicoli. [1] Throughout the film, John repeatedly notices the color red - reminiscent of the red coat his daughter was wearing when she drowned - and the film features allegorical and fragmentary use of color, cutting, cho-prophetic theme, which is personified through characters ant, comically referred to by du Maurier as a "monstrous" blind clairvoyant. The movie also features a feminist sub-plot, a hallucinatory sexual procession featuring three sentinel women standing on the prow of a distinctly Venetian water hearse.

It has been argued that John's attempts to repress the supranatural are foiled by his own paranoia, hysteria, and repressed psychic-feminine imaginary. [2] In other words, by undermining the narrative of a youthful male hero in the face of an older woman, du Maurier used veiled monsters to interrogate masculinity in a queer gothic tale of mistaken identity. Apparently aware of this,

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The Dwarf of Furka Blick
Nicholas Miller & Peter Eisenman

It was a Tuesday morning. Though the rain poured down, it was unseasonably warm for October in New Haven. I took my usual route to Rudolph Hall and upon arriving went to the sixth floor to retrieve an audio recorder from the Digital Media Office - the night before I had attempted to install a call-recording app on my phone with little success. Walking up the stairs to the seventh floor I found room 706 thankfully unlocked and unoccupied.

Peter had told the story once before - something about a commission in Switzerland, John Hejduk, and a hideous red dwarf that recalled the haunting character from *Don't Look Now*. It all sounded too strange to be true, but Peter insisted: "That is what he saw."

I took a seat at the end of the long table among refuse from some class or another and searched for the number for Eisenman Architects, waiting until the clock struck ten before dialing.

"Hi Peter, this is Nick," I said as I turned the recorder on.

"Hi. Do you have a good line?" Peter answered back, his voice cracking through the blown-out speakers.

"Yes, yes," I responded, though that was not entirely true.

"So," Peter began, "I'll just tell you straight what I know, but I would like to hear what you have on the tape and correct it, just to make sure. Can you get it back to me later today?"

"Of course," I replied.

"Tell me whenever you are ready," said Peter.

"I am ready whenever you are."

So Peter began...

"Sometime around 1979 a man from Switzerland, from the Engadine I believe it was, contacted me to tell of an old chalet that he wanted to remodel into a luxury hotel. It was on the Furka Blick, crumbling old chateau which had laid abandoned since the war. It was on an isolated mountain ridge inaccessible by normal means for six months of the year - impossible to reach when the snow-banks heaved and thickened deep within the desolate stretch of the alpine pass.

The owner requested three architects to compete for the project: John Hejduk, Rem Koolhaas, and myself. We all agreed to his offer, to which he replied with an invitation:

"You must come meet me here, at the site. I am sure that you would like to see how interesting it is here, all of the obstacles and the blessings that are involved with redoing my hotel."

Again, we all accepted.

John was the first to go. As far as I remember, he was not accompanied by his wife, Gloria. I believe he went alone. You should know that John had a habit of having strange hallucinations. He lived in a world of bizarre, fantastical narratives, and would describe these visions in great detail. His dreams were populated by angels, devils, witches and all kinds of tenebrous beings. He shared these peculiar, exotic worlds through his drawings.

John departed from New York and landed in Geneva where he rented a car to take him to the Engadine. He stopped in a small village below the chalet to ask for directions and make arrangements at a local inn before continuing up the mountainside.

Roeg elaborated the psychic/rational tension fourfold on film. Roeg's picture moves erratically through time by collapsing innocent girlhood onto an elderly dwarf-murderer, and pulling dolls of fidelity and hysteria from beginning to end. The grisly apparition of the drowned daughter's red, pixie-hooded raincoat appears monstrously throughout, from a mud-drenched John clutching his dead daughter to the blood-soaked slaughter scene.

Four thousand miles away and one year later, the haunting content of *Don't Look Now* had a similarly profound effect on another John, the recently appointed dean of the new school of Architecture at the Cooper Union. The New York architect John Hejduk, who viewed the film while renovating the Cooper Union's Foundation Building in 1975, also traveled to Venice to participate in the first architecture biennale the next year, titled *Europa/America*, and again returned to Venice in 1978 when ten architects were brought there for six weeks to design Dieci starting renovation to the Molino Stucky pasta mill on Giudecca Island. His plans remoted the interior and left an empty facade shell, much like the construction site of his recently gutted school in New York or Roeg's San Nicolò film. Outsider, Hejduk indicated a new cemetery with long parallel walls to contain what he called "the ashes of thought," labeled with the names of great authors, and motivated by Gloria Fiorentino Hejduk. Away from this columbarium for burnt books, Hejduk also proposed a replica strangely perched on a small barge/island in the Giudecca Canal, *Now*.

Twelve years later one of Hejduk's Venice colleagues, Rafael Moneo, sponsored an exhibition of the Cooper dean's Italo-themed drawings titled *Bovisa* at the Harvard Design School. Hejduk's work had departed the Wall House phase and entered his so-called pessimistic phase, culminating in an overly figurative barge, titled "The Canal/Kanal." [3] Hejduk was apparently still du Maurier's "Gorgon-like" psychic on a boat, "who fixes him with her sightless eyes." [4]

Unlike Fictional John, real John Hejduk was mortified by the girl/ghoul in the red cloak but motivated by the women on the boat. Hejduk's fascination was borne out in a series of densely designed masques that he designed throughout the 1980s, featuring Fortunes-tellers, widows, and Medusa herself. Hejduk was an architect infatuated with the vitality of forms and his work was supranatural. Beyond an historical anecdote, this film/architectural comparison also indicates something scary about inequities of gender, sexuality, class, and cosmopolitanism liquidate vibrant avenues for inquiry.

[1] Nicolas Roeg, dir. *Don't Look Now*. Performed by Julie Christie, Donald Sutherland, et al. 1974; UK, Italy: Casey Productions, 1974, DVD.

[2] Avril Horner and Sue Znosnik, "Murdering (M)others: Deaths in Venice: 'Don't Look Now'" in *Daphne du Maurier: Writing, Identity, and the Gothic Imagination* (New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc. 1998), pp.173-186. references pp.181-182, 185-186.

[3] John Hejduk and José Rafael Moneo, *Bovisa* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 1987).

[4] Daphne du Maurier, "Don't Look Now," in *Not After Midnight and Other Stories*, (London: Victor Gollancz Limited, 1971), pp.7-58. References pp.11, 14.

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A Haunting at the Beinecke Interview with Kathryn James

Housed within the Beinecke's hyper-rational gridded walls are all manner of strange texts - from alchemical recipes to notes written shortly before their authors' deaths. What strange forces might these manuscripts hold? Ought we be fearful of unleashing their ancient wisdom? On a crisp morning in mid-October, we descended into the library's basement to speak with Kathryn James, the curator of the Beinecke's Early Modern and Osborn Collections, about the spectral life of texts.

Why do you think we see so many narratives in which a text is the holder of a curse or some other evil force?

I've thought a lot about this issue - the ways in which a manuscript is this unknown strange object that can also be something you're frightened of, that can have this affective power.

The stories of M.R. James are great for thinking about the relationship between the text-object and the kinds of power that it might have. He was the provost of Eton College in the early 20th century, a very tweedy man who wrote ghost stories about a scholar, antiquarian, or cataloguer who in some way ends up with a manuscript that has a kind of spectral life. And they're always



set in these particularly charged spaces: the library, or the church, or the gentry household.

Often there's a kind of spatial narrative - much like you see in these horror stories - surrounding certain texts. They're unleashed from innocuous circumstances, like the chest in the corner, and then acquire their own life.

Can an ancient text still retain its aura when it's in such a pristine, modern space like the Beinecke?

The architecture does contradict the working life of the library. You have this statement from 1963, but the library itself is a laboratory. The tremendous energy that is at work here is in many ways at odds with the building's appearance of tranquility. The manuscripts are living objects; they're still used as text, as evidence and we now also increasingly see them as material structures that connect to a remote textual past.

One of the objects in the collection that reminds me of this is Thomas More's annotated prayer book from when he was held in the Tower of London before his execution. On the one hand

it's interesting as a historical document, but then there's also the aura of the book - its emotional or affective significance. The Tower of London and More's execution have no bearing on this book as a physical object, and yet they surround the book intellectually as you encounter it. So I have had this question: why do books that were written in moments of extremis - when the author is in prison or about to die - seem to be granted this additional power? How does a book become a carrier of this emotional charge?

Do you get a lot of seekers here - people whose interest feels less than purely scholarly, who want to see an object like this to attain these hidden energies, so to speak?

There is often a pilgrimage aspect to research. It's intensely impassioned. I had this terrible experience at Cambridge at the Fitzwilliam Museum. M.R. James worked there, actually, and it's this 15th-century space, formal and almost fictional in its English-gentry cleanliness. The manuscript of Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is housed there, and I visited to see this. When the librarians brought it out to the reading room - I had no idea this was going to happen - as soon as I started reading her handwriting I heard her voice in my head, and just burst into tears. And not in a decorous way, but this huge, loud, coughing sob. The entire library had this quality of shocked silence. I had to pretend that I had a cold to escape the moment.

What is it about a manuscript that seems to offer this possibility of a connection with people from past, to this person, on the other side of the threshold of the physical object?

Is the cursed object narrative of an M.R. James story an allegory for that connection?

The figure of the ineffectual scholar, antiquarian, or cataloguer who is always chasing after ghosts comes up often, both in reality and in fiction. For example, take the Shakespeare scholar Delia Bacon. She was obsessed with the idea that Francis Bacon was the author of Shakespeare's works, to the point that she went to Stratford to try to open Shakespeare's grave and prove that he wasn't buried there at all. She actually spent the night in the church, but couldn't bring herself to excavate the grave. She was haunted by Shakespeare and his absence. She's also buried in Grove Street Cemetery, so there's a way in which she's corporeally here.

If you're looking for the voices of the past and the object that can incarnate them, the search will often lead to a book. Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, which was the first gothic novel, centers around a lost manuscript that shows up in a tower. Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* is similar: the heroine looks to find what she's read in a gothic novel.

Why this constant searching? Does a collection have a different energy when it's encountered in its place of origin?

What is gained from seeing an archive in situ? Why do I go to the places that people write about, the places where things happened, or the places where authors sat and wrote their books? I do think that there is a subjective power to those places of origin. A text's original changes the way in which it is understood; somehow these places convey back to the text object. There is a fetishistic quality to it all, the aura of the place where the author once was.

So do I think that there is a sort of occult power - in the broadest sense of the term - to encountering a collection in its original space? Logically, no. And yet in practice of course there is.

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Night Scream
Steven Rodriguez

I pulled out my phone to take a picture of what Marek was showing me on his phone. Hesitated to ask for permission. Took the picture in agreement that his photo wasn't going to be shown to anyone. The image shocked me; or it was like something you'd show someone when you want to know if you should see a doctor. Marek said it was his tenth or eleventh paranormal investigation as part of Rose Porto's team. He said he's known her since he was six, which was about as long as Rose had told me she's been doing these things. This was our first real conversation and we were talkative with anxiety. We were at a stranger's cramped beachfront house, five hours deep into the night. We had spent the last hour in the pitch black, only-visible-through-infrared-cameras living room, while Rose and the others tried to lure useful details from a male and female ghost. The ghosts' signal was being deciphered through equipment noise (a rainbow LED device called a Spirit Box and some sort of iPhone feedback loop app) and the noise of what I was told was ten other ghosts. We were being watched from the dining room basecamp. Two of Rose's team members kept watch on seven infrared closed-circuit cameras that they had trained on the house's hallways, bedrooms and basement. The night had begun at a restaurant, but really began when Rose sprayed holy water in our faces and said a prayer that washed us in the blood of Christ. We met the family. Listened to their personal accounts of full-bodied apparitions. An empty stairway creaked as something no one saw climbed up into an attic full of Christmas decorations and a standing pile of shotguns. The strangers seemed totally adjusted to living with these ghosts in a way that led me to mostly avoid them.

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A few weeks before this, I was asking Rose leading questions about the prevalence of New England's paranormal investigator subculture, thinking it was connected to Connecticut's Ed and Lorraine Warren. Rose was certain that the area's saturation of limestone and granite - known to absorb spectral energies - was what made it such a paranormal hotbed.

At some point in the night, one of the strangers began to cry in the pitch black living room. Rose and half her team were downstairs beyond earshot asking the ghosts questions. The stranger whimpered out answers from the pitch black living room. Babies. An Irish or black servant. Peas in a basket. Or peas and a basket. Margaret. Mary. Marsha. She called for Rose. Got louder. Demanded that the camera's flashes be turned off. Cussed a bunch. The stranger refused to shut the spirit out of her head. Refused to ask the spirit if it needed help. I thought Rose and her team would provoke the spirit further, but instead they flew upstairs to control the rising chaos. The strangers soon left the room in state of utter calm. We were left in their house to finish investigating.

* If you are experiencing paranormal activity in New England, Rose Porto can be contacted at www.ctspiritinvestigators.com. Her two books *Tormented Souls: When Spirits of the Dead Refuse to Rest in Peace* and *Mingling with Spirits: A Paranormal Awakening* can be purchased on the internet and in Connecticut bookstores.



When he arrived he parked his car outside this forsaken gothic structure. He took his little suitcase, got out of his car, and walked to the front door. John knocked twice and waited, but there was no reply. He looked around and peered through the minutes he knocked again. The door slowly creaked open.

"Hello?" John bellowed out from his towering frame.

"Come in Mister Hejduk" a voice croaked from below.

John shifted his gaze down. Beneath his height stood a little red dwarf cloaked in a crimson shawl with a gnarled red beard and ruddy, furrowed face. John stood in the doorway and attempted to mask the fear that had suddenly overtaken him. Snow began to drift down from the frigid peaks that reared overhead.

"Of course, Mister Hejduk, you will stay the night and have dinner with us," the dwarf continued.

John hadn't planned on staying - he had reserved that room at the inn in town before driving up - but, silenced by the fear that had overcome him, he could but nod.

"And now, Mister Hejduk, I will take you to your room." The dwarf gestured inside, beckoning the architect to enter. "You can prepare for dinner."

So John followed this red dwarf - only red, if you can imagine - up the creaking stairs.

"We will have dinner in one half hour Mister Hejduk. You will get yourself ready." He closed the door and went off. The room was barren, smelling of dust and the peculiar, fetid odors that hang heavy in only the most debased structures.

Shaking, John put his ear to the door. He waited until he heard the steps of his loathsome host recede downstairs. John did not stay to unpack. He took his bag, opened the door, tiptoed down the stairs, went from the mouldering building to his car and drove back down the hill at a quick speed. He arrived back at the inn, the keys, hurried to his room, and locked the door.

Unbeknownst to John, his hasty departure had not gone unnoticed. The dwarf had seen him leave, got into his own car, and pursued the architect to the village below.

And so, an unmistakable, pleading call came from outside the hotel.

"Mister Hejduk! Mister Hejduk! Come back! Come back! We want to talk to you!"

But John would not leave his room.

And that was the end of the story.

Now fast forward. The same man calls me up and says "You are next Mister Eisenman. When are you coming?"

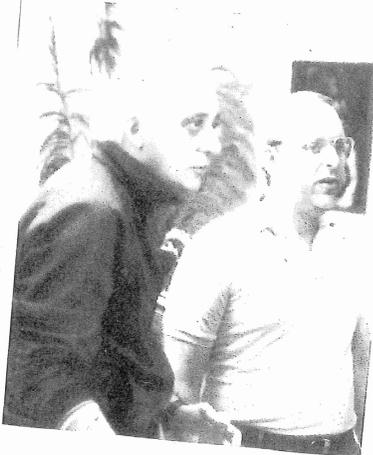
I had talked to Kurt Forster and told him that I would not go there by myself, so I asked if he would come with me, as a kind of protection to make sure that nothing would happen, and he said that he certainly would. But in the end I never went. John had really scared me with his story.

So I told the man, "No, no, I'm too busy, etc. I'm not coming. I don't want to do the project."

"Oh, I am very sorry to hear that," he said. "We were very anxious to have you."

The next thing we knew, Rem had not only gotten the project and gone there, but done the project and it was published somewhere - the hotel that Rem did. That's the basic story.

"Wow, I spoke again in astonishment. "That was great."



"Yeah," said Peter. "You'll send this to me on email by the end of the day?"

"For sure," I replied.

"Okay, Nicholas. See you Thursday."



10/10 WEDNESDAY
The Incredible Tim Newton smashes tiny chair models.

10/11 THURSDAY
Lyndon Neri & Rosanna Hu deliver their lecture "Reflective Nostalgia" followed by a feisty "Chrysanthemum 3" cocktail which included the likes of vermouth and absinthe.

10/12 FRIDAY
BE2 holds its second event of the year in the pit with Atelier Ten's director, Ben Shepherd discussing his work on resilient buildings and cities. You could smell the pungent (but free) Junzi from the 5th floor.

10/13 SATURDAY
Jackson Lindsay bribes student volunteers with coffee and McDonald's to stay an additional hour on the BP site.

10/14 SUNDAY
Helen Farley stations herself patiently in the pit to assist with voter registration. You have until October 30th to register in Connecticut. Get to it!

10/15 MONDAY
Many spaghetti trussures were obliterated. The 2018 Jim Vlock Building Project officially opens. Students were delivered to and from site in a "swanky" (Richard DeFlumeri) limousine.

10/16 TUESDAY
"Professor Garvin will talk about historic preservation next week" - Professor Garvin

10/18 Thursday
"I'm not coming in Monday. It'll stress me out. It'll stress you out." - Peter deBretteville

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