

Traces of Gothic Spectrality in New Media Art

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Gothic simulations

Traces of Gothic spectrality emerge from a dynamic interaction between literature, cinema and new media, creating art that is both new, but also indebted to tradition. Contemporary Gothic projections inspired by 18th century literary convention, reveal their lineage from experiments in the limits of vision explored in pre-cinema and silent film. In 1781 Immanuel Kant identified a split in perception between the seen and the unseen.⁽¹⁾ Kant classified ‘phenomena’ as the nature of objects as they are perceived, distinguishing this from ‘noumena’, invisible, spectral, unreal ‘things-in-themselves’. Gothic culture has a particular interest in interrogating noumena, exploring the limitations of vision, valuing irrational visions and sensation beyond the visual. In new media art, digital technologies create and animate spectral visions, capturing attention and beguiling audiences, extending the ways that pre-cinematic technologies created images of wonder and fear for early film audiences. Tom Gunning describes how pre-cinematic attractions conjured illusions of wondrous worlds, inspiring curiosity, shock and fascination, producing an ‘aesthetics of astonishment’.⁽²⁾ Pre-cinematic optical technologies included magic lantern, phantasmagoria and spirit photography which projected spectral impressions onto smoke or clouds. These devices and illusions became popular in the nineteenth century for testing the limitations of apprehension. Further developments in optical devices included the thaumatrope, zoetrope and praxinoscope which used the ‘flicker fusion threshold’ of sixteen images per second to generate the illusion of motion. The aesthetics of astonishment encompasses the technological construction as well as the apprehension of the illusion. With the development of early cinema, George Méliès created ‘trick cinema’ by exploiting the potential for deception within film’s editing process. This incredulity at the spectacle and the apparatus is extended into unimaginable realms as technologies are used to create dimensions that challenge the limits of vision and comprehension from early optical technologies to digital art. Writing on the lineage between pre-cinematic devices and new media, Marina Warner argues, “[t]he coming of the camcorder has transformed the relationship between reality and image. By installing the spectral enigmas of appearance as familiar features of existence today, it has further destabilised those ancient boundaries between illusion and its opposite”.⁽³⁾ The art under examination here represents various approaches to the haunting of time, space, bodies and objects. Drawing from the history of cinema, particularly from experiments in pre-cinema, Gothic simulations produced by digital media create impressions of Kant’s noumena.

Misha Kavka argues “the Gothic does not “belong” to film, and the film medium must content itself with a home for the catch-all category of terror and spookiness, the horror genre.”⁽⁴⁾ Whilst the origins of the Gothic do not belong to the moving image, it has certainly created a presence on the screen. With the ability to reanimate history, infusing figures of the past with a spectral presence, the Gothic seems specifically suited to the possibilities presented by projection. The experimentation with image and sound in new media extends the Gothic beyond the limitations imposed by formulas of narrative or genre. Digital media provides a range of tools for exploiting the possibilities of haunting. Moving image projections inspired by the Gothic become simulations haunting the gallery space. Gothic simulations are hyperconscious projections, aware of the rich lineage, but focused on innovation and revision. Aware of their lineage, they reconfigure and transcend traditional conventions, themes and imagery, creating new ways of apprehending and experiencing the Gothic. As simulations, however, they lose nothing of their resonance. Recent screen based art and installations create and project impressions of the Gothic anew, creating unstable, haunted spaces, layered temporalities and surprisingly spectral effects.

Fred Botting argues that the ‘paraphernalia’ of Gothic modernity, particularly the uncanny, is not where it used to be, “[s]pectrality instead describes ordinary operations of new technologies and their hallucinatory, virtual effects.”(5) It is from installations in the gallery space that these hallucinatory, virtual effects are reconfigured as Gothic, creating striking apparitions for contemporary audiences. Inspired by the work of Jean Baudrillard, who perceives culture as full of the haunting of the separated double, Botting argues that Gothic simulations work “differentially and retrospectively in the play of imaginary and real.”(6) Gothic imagery, Botting suggests, works to “preserve the illusion of darkness, death and sexuality in a world given over to the omnipresence of virtual light and life on screens.”(7)

Spectrality

The Gothic reincarnation in the moving image emphasises and extends its spectrality. In Derrida’s work, spectrality is neither alive nor dead but somewhere in between. It is outside classification, representing the “possibility and the limit of all idealization and hence all conceptualization.”(8) In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida explores the specter of a Marxist revolution haunting Europe.(9) The Gothic shares a similar interest in the influence of the specter, a notion central to Derrida’s counter-philosophy of ‘hauntology’. Hauntology implies disjointed time, an unstable definition of past and present, with the present existing in the shadow of the past. For Derrida, hauntology is “repetition *and* first time, but also repetition *and* last time.”(10) Time and histories are blurred and interrelated in this paradigm with the past casting a shadow over the present. The figure of the specter is ubiquitous, materialising in the form of otherness externalised, incorporated and internalised. This ‘in-between’ state is characteristic of Gothic simulations. In creating illusion and perceptual dislocation, screen media effectively incarnates a spectral in-between. From the 18th century, the Gothic literary form displays an interest in the persistence of historical and personal memory. Authors like Ann Radcliffe in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Matthew Lewis in *The Monk* (1796) and later Charlotte Perkins Gilman with *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892) produced work in which the past asserts itself with the revelation of secrets, the appearance of ghosts, uncanny apparitions and animated portraiture. Within the walls of the Gothic space, in early literature and later new media, chronological temporality is undermined by a past that ruptures the present. Kavka argues that the Gothic “represents the incursions and invasions of a semi-imaginary past into the present”.(11) By maintaining this continuum, the Gothic confirms the impossibility of the end of history.

Traces of spectrality are visible in the impressions and aural effects created by reanimating the past and creating new apprehensions in installations and digital projections. Spectral images appear as an incarnation of the restlessness of the past. As uncanny presences, they test boundaries between life and death, the inanimate and the animate. The ephemeral figures arising within seem to emerge from the past, representing an inability to forget the past. Traces of spectrality also affect spectatorship. Spectral images often create a curiosity to see images, or feel impressions of a time beyond the present. Impressions of spectrality intensify in screen media. Screen art creates and projects image based spectral effects. The artworks investigated here are impressionistic and spectacular. They emerge from imagery, effects and montages created for impact, unlimited by the formality of narrative or linearity. This is similar to the way subplots are interwoven in Gothic novels. Isolated images without a specific narrative context, introduction or resolution, intensify the effect of haunting. These traces can be understood in Julian Wolfrey’s terms as the “spectralization of the Gothic”.(12) The images are indebted to the conventions of the Gothic, but also appear as revisions, hauntings of the original form. Images on exhibition in the gallery condense spectrality. Wolfreys writes that, “[w]herever narratives cannot speak, there we may respond to the gothic fragment as one aspect of the enormity of haunting, or what might provisionally be described as the spectral sublime.”(13)

Wolfreys, following Derrida, suggests that the experience of haunting is accentuated and accelerated by modern technologies inhabiting a phantom structure.⁽¹⁴⁾ Haunting is the effect of modernity. Spectrality emerges from the reproduction and repetition of images, something that has never been more possible than with digital technologies; new technologies in the form digital cameras, software for image manipulation and projectors allowing increased screen ratios. Digital reproduction produces a specific type of aesthetic spectrality, one that is animated by the glow of light isolated by darkness, or by shadows projecting surprising and dangerous forms. Nature takes on new dimensions when represented through the tools for digital imaging, allowing manipulation and the creation of spaces that are layered as a palimpsest, impacting to defamiliarise the familiar. Created by digital technologies, the Gothic apparition doesn't require a referent in reality. Gothic inflected screen art prioritises the past and the imaginary, projecting images of memories, dreams and nightmares. In installation art, screens take on unexpected forms and ratios extend from the small and distant to the elongated and immersive.

Versifier

The ghostly apparitions that inhabit the screens in Gina Czarnecki's installation *Versifier* (2003) are an overt and confronting example of the impact of Gothic spectrality. These apparitions are created by traces of light exhibited within the darkness of an enclosed installation. In this installation a shrouded doorway leads to a dimly lit passageway lined with floor to ceiling screens. Inside the installation, the participant is confronted by spectral impressions of naked black and white humans who appear to be lit from within. These glowering human forms constitute the only light sources within the installation. Rear projection highlights their spectrality as the bodies appear to be suspended within the darkness. Impressions of human forms begin at a distance, appearing to approach the spectator. Effectively, the viewer becomes the participant as their presence generates the ghost – thus a profound connection is created between the participant and the specter in *Versifier*.

The monochromatic skin tones and the exposure of these bodies both reveals and depersonalises them. On one hand they appear as ghostly apparitions, biological specimens preserved in the past. With reference to the spectral bodies, Emma Crimmings asks: “[a]re they human, specimens or visual remnants of a neglected experiment to extract and preserve souls in the hope that such an endeavour would achieve immortality?”⁽¹⁵⁾ The lack of any colour beyond the spectrum from grey to black combined with the vulnerability of the flesh, reflects the coldness and precision of a scientific autopsy. The bodies appear to be suspended somewhere in the past. Crimmings describes them as “the revelation of a physiological memory.”⁽¹⁶⁾ But these bodies bear traces of memory and apprehensions about the future. In their exposure, they reveal both natural imperfections and evidence of slight visual manipulation. Some bodies have eerily spindly legs and elongated arms; others appear outlined by a strange aura. Some reveal gender indeterminacy, appearing androgynous and beyond binary classification. In these figures in particular, the flesh is decidedly post-human.

The impact of *Versifier* arises from the dynamic alignment it creates with the viewer. Looks, movement and gestures, like reaching out to touch the screen from within destabilise the boundaries between screen and spectator. The (over) proximity of the specter on the large screen, its human scale and gesture accentuates the visual connection with the ghost. The dimensions of the screen are beyond the scope of vision, intensifying the effect of encapsulation in the spectral world. Physical and virtual bodies are trapped inside the installation on either side of the screen mirroring one another in their restless movements of advance and retreat. This spatial alignment, however, is complicated by the silence of the spectral bodies as attempts at verbal communication are drowned out by what sounds like the deep and

elongated electronic tones of an underwater sonar on the soundtrack. Writing about how aspects of the Gothic confront the limits of apprehension, Wolfreys suggests, “[s]uch fragments and the silences which they generate, speak of the unspeakable, bearing witness to an absence or the unrepresentability at the heart, and as the very limit of meaning.”(17) The absolute exposure of these spectral bodies, their desire to connect, and the frustration of their silence creates a connection based on empathy rather than voyeurism.

Such a beguiling installation prioritises a visual proximity, encouraging an engagement that is embodied and experiential. *Versifier* offers a Gothic spectacle, images that are immediate and beautiful in their cold tones and strange textures. In relation to avant-garde cinema, Laura U. Marks describes ‘haptic optics’ as an ability to touch with the eyes, and a similar type of engagement could also be extended to describe the affect of *Versifier*. Haptic optics rejects visual paradigms defined by distance, mastering and domination, preferring instead a connection that is immediate and personified, “a bodily relationship between the viewer and image”.(18) Marks focuses on a mimetic connection arguing that: “[i]n a haptic relationship our self rushes up to the surface to interact with another surface”.(19) With connection and affect dependent on black and white impressions, textures and surfaces, these ghostly impressions create a dynamic engagement between the viewer and apparition. Spectators approaching this installation become participants involved in an interrelationship between presence, movement and proximity.

Gina Czarnecki perceives *Versifier* as an extension of the cinema. She extends the spectator/specter dyad to include others within the installation, revealing that: “I have always loved the cinematic experience and came to realize that I wanted this in an installation environment. There is something about being in the dark in a public space that focuses your eyes and attention onto small details, sounds, people in the space with you or your inner thoughts and solitude.”(20) The influence of the cinema on the installation creates a concentration of seen and the unseen in Gothic spectrality. *Versifier* is a striking example of the historical traces of the cinema in new media installations, drawing on the ability of the moving image to animate the spectral. With reference to Gothic literature, Emma McEvoy notes “[o]ne of the specialities of the Gothic novel is its power of rendering the material phantasmal and the phantasmal material”.(21) Such a slippage between the phantasm and the material is also evident in *Versifier*. The apparitions exhibited in this installation attract and confront audiences, encouraging a sensory, embodied, and haptic engagement with specters of the Gothic.

Tool's Life, Cage for Kage, Shadow Monsters

Whilst *Versifier* uses a monochromatic lighting palette and the darkness of the enclosed installation space to explore the ways that Gothic spectrality tests the limits of vision, exhibits like *Tool's Life* (2001) and *Cage for Kage* (2003) created by the Minim++ partnership and *Shadow Monsters* (2005) developed by Philip Worthington, use shadow play to project dimensions beyond the visible, projecting new impressions of Gothic spectrality which emerge from familiar surfaces. Bodies, movement and touch figure prominently as the viewer is required to generate the spectral shadows produced by these interactive installations. Each of these installations creates projections of unfamiliar images emanating from familiar objects and forms.

Japanese artists Kyoko Kunoh and Motoshi Chikamori (under the name Minim++) illuminate everyday objects with customised software to create an interactive installation that asks the participant to question the logic linking objects with the shadows they cast. In *Tool's Life* touching an ashtray creates a shadow of a lizard that scampers around its rim, touching a trowel transforms its shadow into a bird as it sprouts wings and flies off. A small watering can responds to the touch by generating an elaborate shadow of

sprinkling water that causes a flower to grow and burst into bloom. The object and the projected shadow are surprisingly disconnected in *Tool's Life*. Conventionally representative and static, shadows take on a form that transforms the meaning of the original object. Shadowy presences reflect the magical possibilities of the object and extend its function into the realm of Gothic illusion. In *Cage For Kage* viewers take the place of the objects in *Tool's Life* casting the shadows of birds, snakes, lizards, fish and even school children as they walk past a series of large, magical columns. In *Cage for Kage*, animated shadows generated from the proximity of humans appear as reincarnations of the spectral. Minim++ investigate the boundaries of perception and apprehension as impressions of the noumena are projected as fleeting shadows.

Philip Worthington's interactive installation, *Shadow Monsters* (2005) extends the shadow into pre-history. Without human interaction, *Shadow Monsters* appears as a simple light box and white screen but when the human steps into the space in between, technologies cast shadows creating dynamic impressions that reveal traces of a monstrous past. This interactive exhibit encourages participants to see themselves as an imaginary monster as the outlines cast from their bodies sprouts teeth, hair, eyes, beaks and claws. Stylized shadows take on menacing proportions, some resembling wolves or crocodiles with razor sharp teeth, others appearing as birds or prehistoric dinosaurs. Vision recognition technology is used to read an impression of the outline, which then transforms the human into the prehistoric monster. The soundtrack layered with the deep drones of animal noises and guttural howls amplifies this impression. Here the traditional shadow play is recast within the fantasy of the digital realm, collapsing spectral impressions of prehistoric histories with the body in motion. Such an expression of the monstrous offers a subversive fantasy, blurring boundaries between the monster and the human. Participants are offered temporary license to become monstrous in their shadow play, allowing an expression of primitive rage during this rebellious ritual. *Shadow Monsters* creates the space for an interactive experience of Gothic carnivalesque. But these interactive links to prehistory are ephemeral and the monstrous shadow is confined to the subversive space between the light box and the screen, dematerialising as the participant steps away from the installation

House II: The Great Artesian Basin, Pennsylvania, Haynes/Hinterding, 2003

The first impression of David Haynes and Joyce Hinterding's *House II*, suggests a neo Gothic house in danger of being swept away by a torrent of water. Quickly, however, it is revealed that the water is gushing from inside the home. The torrential force of the water threatens to splinter the house from within, perhaps even to wash it away. A neighbouring house, visible at the edge of the frame also appears under threat. The water surges out of the neo Gothic house with the ferocity of an oil gusher. The spectacle emerges from the intersection between the beautiful swirling pristine blue of the water and its potentially devastating effect on the material world. Writing about the haunted house as a tenet of the Gothic, Wolfreys argues that "[h]aunting cannot take place without the possibility of its internal eruption and interruption within, and as a condition of a familiar everyday place and space."⁽²²⁾ The swirling water surrounding the home sets the landscape against the image of American Gothic. The awe of the watery landscape depicting the extreme forces of nature suggests the inability of the architecture to withstand such an uncontrollable force. The spectral sublime is incarnated here in the water that threatens chaos. The house in *House II* is suspended at a temporal imminence representing the moment between existence and obliteration.

Manmade architecture is the vessel for this disturbance. Haunted by natural forces, the home is depicted as giving rise to environmental disorder. The home becomes the site of catastrophe, water spewing out through doors and windows. This neo Gothic house internalises disaster. Coral Ann Howells describes the

Gothic diegesis as, "a shadowy world of ruins and twilight scenery lit up from time to time by lurid flashes of passion and violence".(23) In the Gothic, storms herald danger, a change in the weather signifies a climactic confrontation. Iconic signifiers of the Gothic are reinvented by new media art such as David Haynes and Joyce Hinterding's *House II*. The space of the home as a site of shelter and comfort is questioned as its boundaries are made permeable, becoming redefined as a site of haunting and disturbance. Wolfreys describes the effect of haunting as the destabilisation of the domestic, powerful in that it displaces us in the space that we feel most secure, "that place where we apparently confirm our identity, our sense of being, where we feel most at home with ourselves."(24)

Haynes and Hinterding modeled their imaginary house on an actual dwelling in Pennsylvania. This house was located on Petroleum Street, Oil City, the site of the discovery of oil in the US. Its collapse of distances and spaces is evident in the compositing of visual impressions of Central Australia's Great Artesian Basin erupting within the Pennsylvanian landscape. *House II* contains a clear and alarming warning about the potential for humans to unleash environmental chaos. This version of the iconic haunted house, the home resonant with malignancy, uses Gothic signifiers to create a warning about the environment.

Enola

This tension between the hypervisible and the invisible creates an unnerving effect in Susan Norrie's *Enola* (2004). In this eight-minute digital video two anonymous hooded people are glimpsed at the periphery of the frame looking onto an illusory cityscape. The film is set in Tobu World Square, Fuji-wara-cho, Tochigi Prefecture. This Japanese theme park is built from 102 models of famous edifices at a fraction of their actual size. This constellation of iconic buildings creates an imaginary urban space rendered at one 25th of its original size. This miniature city is further defamiliarised by the similarity of its surfaces. Buildings are primarily identified by shape, surface and texture. Hooded people who offer a sense of scale and astonishment as they look onto the scene with wonder mediate this unsettling Disneyesque landscape.

Whilst the imagery suggests a futuristic miniature cityscape, an imaginary impression of the proximity promised by new communications technologies, the soundtrack implies imminent chaos. The incessant sound of an airplane flying above, the *Enola Gay*, creates an unnerving reminder of the devastation of Japanese people and cultures in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. Furthermore, the soundtrack featuring elevator 'muzak', including a kitsch version of 'It's a Small World After All', creates an ironic clash. The dislocation of image from sound, the haunting of the miniature city by traces of tragedy and memories of destruction introduce a spectral temporality. Gayatri Spivak refers to 'trace' in the preface to Derrida's *On Grammatology* as an impression of absence in presence.(25) Traces of sound reveal the impact of the past on the present, referring to something beyond itself. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida questions whether this sensation of absence, the "spectrality effect" is involved in undoing dialectical oppositions of time.(26) *Enola* is an audio-visual example of history haunting the present and threatening destruction in the future.

Going Places Sitting Down and Dwelling

Gothic screens create new imaginings of spatial and temporal dynamics, fusing public histories with private memories and extending the Gothic into unexpected realms. Space is reconfigured throughout the videos created by Hiraki Sawa when nature invades the home, providing evidence of the instability and the permeability of spatial and temporal boundaries.(27) Kavka notes the plasticity of Gothic space as it is transformed from the page to the screen where paradoxically, "the effect of fear is produced through the

transformations, extensions and misalignments of size and distance.”(28) Exhibiting the influence of hoax photography of the Victorian era, Sawa’s art revises Gothic spatiality and temporality, producing new impressions of domestic spaces that transform when miniature worlds spring to life.

The most elaborate reinvention of the Gothic in Sawa’s oeuvre is evident in *Going Places Sitting Down* (2004). Here Sawa produces spectral effects of microworlds emerging within an empty home. The middle screen of this triptych opens the video by featuring a keyhole image of a blue sky dissected by electrical power lines spied from a low angle. An antique rocking horse appears in this landscape, seemingly gliding on the wind. The still images that establish the background of an English-style home create a sense of entrapment. This comfortable, light home appears distant from the archetypal Gothic haunted house. In his analysis of the literary Gothic, David Punter writes of the unspoken and unrepresentable in Gothic architecture: "The castle represents a world which is terrifying because its limits cannot be known, but the rituals which govern its occupants' everyday life are even more terrifying in that they represent a kind of knowledge, but a neurotic knowledge which is condemned to circularity."(29) The neurotic, paranoid knowledge that Punter refers to is firmly embedded within Sawa’s homes. But it is in the stillness and spatial enclosure that the home can be interpreted as a site of daylight Gothic. It is in the magical animation of tiny worlds that the effect of Gothic spectrality manifests. Sawa’s installation shows the home animated by small spectral presences. In the stillness of the interior, exotic miniature worlds manifest and shift the home into a spectral dimension.

Inanimate objects give rise to tiny landscapes as nature invades the house. A close up of a bathroom sink reveals miniature trees magically sprouting from its inhospitable porcelain surface. An extremely low angled shot reveals a train of camels making a journey across the textured surface of a rug covering a series of leather bound books, the surfaces doubling as an arid red desert. A convergence of spatial and temporal oppositions is created in the same shot as miniature ships which crest waves on their nautical journey in the foreground.

Miniature worlds introduce specific ecosystems to the interior spaces in *Going Places Sitting Down*. Scenes on the left screen are distinguished by their wintry aesthetic. In this screen tiny rocking horses travel across the textured pile of a sheepskin rug. Snow falls over trees that appear to sprout magically from the pile. Miniature landscapes create their own temporal zones; forests germinate rapidly, coming to life in the interstices of time between human presences. The water in the sink becomes an ocean with rippling waves and rhythmic tides. Sinks support bodies of water with tidal rhythms. By accentuating snow, rain, wind, tides and floods, this screen’s miniature ecosystems transfer the rhythms and traces of nature to the interior.

Sawa uses digital compositing, layering microworlds over the domestic background, drawing the eye towards the detail of miniature environments sprouting from inhospitable surfaces, creating new spatio-temporal alignments. This layering results in a matrix of journeys written across the domestic space. In *Going Places Sitting Down* specifically, the wonder of animation as the miniature is written over the stillness of the home reveals connections between the immediacy of the abandoned home and imaginary projections of ancient histories, mythologies and journeys. Miniature animations act as an incursion into separation of the domestic and the exotic, distance and proximity, old and new technologies. The inscription of the dynamic microcosm representing past journeys within the home defamiliarises rational time and space. The focus on in-between times and fantastic spaces, illuminated by the miniature in *Going Places Sitting Down*, represents an elaboration of Sawa’s earlier interest in exploring apparitions beyond conventional vision in the experience of wonder in ordinary spaces.

Throughout his video art, Sawa exhibits a fascination with disruption, movement, ritual, migration and travel by situating transient spaces within the home. Literary theorist Tzvetan Todorov identifies the apprehension that movement in Sawa's videos seems to generate. Writing about the fantastic in literature he argues that the "fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty [...] The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event"(30) It is also the initial and overwhelming response to the uncanny. The uncanny vision hesitates in the inability to comprehend the defamiliarisation of what was once familiar. The uncanny rejects linear time and cohesive space, it manifests as an intrusion of an imagined past into the present. This hesitation is a response to an abundance of almost incoherent, but eerily familiar signifiers.

Sawa's first Flash animation, *Dwelling* (2002) signals an early fascination with imaginary impressions of travel from home. An apartment created by black and white photographs transforms into an airport as small planes take off from horizontal surfaces like the kitchen table or the carpet, shrinking the magnitude of giant airplanes into a scale that allows graceful flight throughout the apartment. Planes glide through the bathroom, kitchen and hallway, filling the (air)space and avoiding collision by seemingly following predetermined flight paths. This animation establishes a sense of impeding chaos, perhaps even the threat of terror as black and white images of an apartment are animated by small airplanes that bring the exterior and movement into the stillness of the interior. In this video the 'non place', the site of transience and anonymity, as defined by Mark Augé is reimagined as part of the home.(31) The apartment becomes a hybrid of personalised and depersonalised spaces. *Dwelling* ends with vapor trails across the ceiling and tiny planes that fly off into the sky, uninhibited by windows. It is only in the final image that the perspective matches human vision. Airplanes in the home appear on a similar scale as those sighted from the ground. *Dwelling* questions scale and perspective and it also represents Sawa's experimentation with the penetration of interior surfaces, introducing spectrality to the home.

The impact of the Gothic on new media installations is evident in the fluidity of blurred boundaries between disparate spaces, past and present, memory and reality in Sawa's videos. Sawa draws from Gothic tradition to reimagine the home alive with apparitions of animated microworlds and miniature objects. Homes in Sawa's videos seem to function according to laws, rhythms and possibilities influenced by the miniature worlds. Inspired by Eadweard Mybridge's experiments in the use of photography to capture movement, Sawa's videos revise the illusionistic style of pre-cinema, depicting imagined journeys from home, some barely registered in black and white, or as shadows or traces.

Every Shot, Every Episode, Every Anvil, How We Met, Double Fantasy and Soft Rains

Brooklyn-based artists Jennifer and Kevin McCoy use new technologies to undermine the primacy of a single vantage point, splitting and fracturing spectatorship, creating new ways to imagine and see space, projections and narrative form. Their installations reveal a Gothic inflected revision of time, space, narrative form, scale and memory. The early work produced by the McCoy's focused on television and serial narrative, questioning the influence of the database and the potential offered by new media to intervene and organise narrative form differently. These works pivot on the revision of two popular television shows. In *Every Shot, Every Episode* (2001), the McCoy's reorganised the *Starsky and Hutch* serial, creating two hundred and seventy-eight new categories. Ten thousand shots are reconfigured into new aesthetic, textual and thematic categories including: 'Every Plaid', 'Every Yellow Volkswagen', 'Every Sexy Outfit' and 'Every Blue'. The rejection of a diachronic, linear narrative in favor of synchronic organisation is also a feature of *Every Anvil* (2001). This exhibit reconfigures *Looney Tunes* animations, presenting a deconstruction and reconstruction of narrative form, prioritising theme, shot

scale, angle, colour, props and *mise-en-scène*. These early works display an interest in narrative incursions, exhibiting interventions in the influence of the database on linear form. Rather than evoking fear or trepidation, this defamiliarises popular imagery and narrative form.

In 2004 the McCoy's focus shifted from public to personal memory. The artworks that emerged investigated the differences and similarities of the memories of both artists. Doubling became a feature of the artwork, explorations of individual and shared memories, dreams and projections. Wolfreys understands doubling as a figure of haunting beyond all else. He writes, "[i]t is itself not only itself but already other than itself, every instance of doubling being the singular instance of the 'ghostlike manifestation'" (32). *How We Met* (2004) is a personalised narrative of Jennifer and Kevin's first encounter reaching for the same suitcase at an airport in France. The centrality of this gesture within the diorama suggests a convergence of identities. The miniature dioramas are conceived and developed as exploded, fragmented spatial impressions of their memories. The dioramas that form the base of *How We Met* is a constellation of small gestures of figures and actions suspended in time. The tiny figure of Jennifer waits for her bag to emerge. A disembodied hand reaches for a suitcase circling a carousel. A cab waits outside the airport. When projected on the screen, these tiny gestures create narrative events as the story is built from the juxtaposition of traces of memory.

The recreation of real and imaginary spaces plays an important role in the projection of the fantasy in these installations. The 'non-place' that Sawa introduces to the home becomes the location of *How We Met*. Marc Augé argues that non-place is created "through the excessive logic of 'supermodernity'." (33) The 'superabundant' sources of new media, for Augé, contribute to excess in time, space and ego. The 'non-place' arises as urban spaces of little or no distinct identity or particular history. These spaces, epitomised by the airport, are temporary, provisional spaces of solitude, even when populated. These are spaces of transit without community or connection. Manifestations of non-place are petrol stations, supermarkets, freeways, but particularly airports and transit lounges. In *How We Met* the McCoy's situate personal memories within the non-place of the airport creating a dislocation between the public and the private.

The revelation of technology also creates new ways of perceiving and appreciating the construction of illusion, a dynamic that is made clear in *Double Fantasy* (2005). *Double Fantasy* is an installation featuring two miniature dioramas positioned back to back and placed on top of a pedestal. The dioramas are surrounded by a matrix of flexible metal arms, each containing tiny cameras and pinpoint lights. One scene depicts a bloodthirsty medieval battle with castles and horses, spears, bodies and shields strewn across the ground. The other side features a tranquil, romantic, ordered kingdom of brides and grooms. Colours are vibrant with the green of the grass and the red of the blood both a shade beyond the natural. Images filmed by the micro-cameras are sent to a central computer where they are juxtaposed, forming part of a montage which is projected on the screen. The computer is driven by various formulas that create multiple versions of cause and effect, resulting in an inability to predict the order and the images that will appear on the screen. Chance is a fundamental structural element of the McCoy's installations. These miniature worlds are an intricate recreation of the childhood dreams of each artist suspended in time and projected onto a screen. New media art introduces its own form of hypertextuality to the Gothic.

In *Soft Rains* (2004), the imagery becomes decidedly Gothic. A diorama reveals a suburban setting where a woman in a kitchen stares longingly out of the window, suggesting entrapment and the desire for escape. A car traveling down a road indicates her travel to a remote cabin where a couple is murdered with an axe. The installation references the suburban Gothic by incorporating imagery signifying isolation,

alienation and the projection of murderous fantasies. The films of David Lynch and slasher films like the *Friday the 13th* series inspired the creation of *Soft Rains*. Exposing sets, lights and cameras, as well as the fantasy projected deconstructs the illusion. Neoformalist film theorist Kristin Thompson writes about 'baring the device' as a strategy that defamiliarises form.⁽³⁴⁾ Exposed and hidden technologies create the illusion of movement and construct a narrative that defamiliarises and reinvents Gothic narrative. The artworks incorporate the technology and the McCoy's recognise it as part of the spectacle. This is reminiscent of Gunning's description of the incredulous spectator fascinated by both the image and its projection.

Conclusion:

Gothic simulations in new media art forms reveal allegiances with, but also radical interrogations of, traditional Gothic. New composite spaces, depth cues, layers, objects, creatures, shadows and visual attractions result in images of multiple dimensions and seemingly disparate temporalities. Gothic simulations also create embodied connections to the spectator/participant. The film theorist Linda Williams has linked horror, melodrama and pornography beneath the heading of 'body genres', genres that she argues offer pleasures that are visceral, producing changes to the body that can be seen, felt and measured. ⁽³⁵⁾ Much of the attraction of the Gothic emerges from the imagination of danger. Pleasure in watching is provoked from an attraction to images of dislocation and the indeterminacy of boundaries, emphasising the potential for transformation, instability and, importantly, offering a spectacle of danger. Gothic simulations offer a form of visceral pleasure, but one that manifests as a different set of symptoms. Whilst Gothic simulations in the gallery prioritise the visual, they often also offer attractions for senses beyond the visual. The Gothic draws from a tension between the seen and the unseen to create spine-chilling effects. Simulations of spectrality produces surprise when shadows create unexpected connections, images of sublime natural forces create wide-eyed anticipation of apocalyptic destruction, glowering ghosts cause pupils to dilate and illuminated projections of dioramas produce a beguiling split vision. With the use of new media technologies, Gothic simulations emphasise traces spectrality, using new digital technologies to illuminate the noumena - invisible, spectral, unreal 'things-in-themselves'.

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