



how to draw a ghost

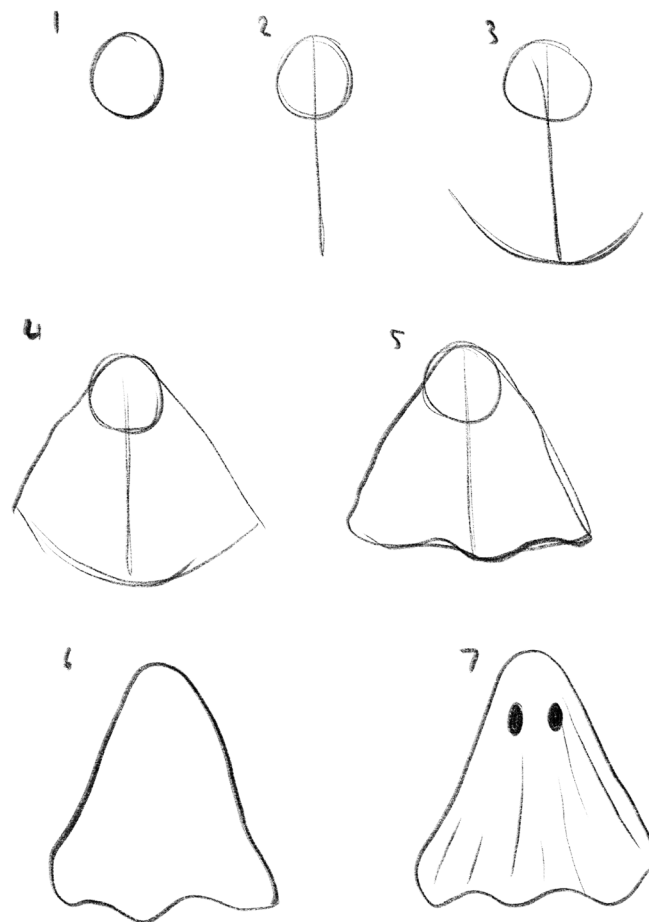


lauren hughes



# how to draw a ghost;

A design-led research project exploring  
Lovecraftian literature's Gothic landscapes  
through the theory of spatial agency and illustration.



*Figure 1.* Hughes, L. Drawing A Ghost, Digital Drawing, 2023.

This exegesis is submitted to Auckland  
University of Technology in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Master of Design.

I would first like to thank my sister Lucy for infecting me with a passion for reading and a fascination for fantastical worlds. Thank you, Lucy, for the never-ending book suggestions (& introducing me to Lovecraft himself) and for patiently spell-checking all my writing over the past 18 years – I owe you.

Thank you to my dad, Simon, for instilling a passion for drawing in me and being the best artist I know. Thank you to my mother, Karen and sister, Eleanor, for providing an infinity of support and calmness in my life. And thank you to my puppy-dog Leo, who, without, I would not know how to take a break.

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Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scencescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?

**Abstract** This practice-led research examines Gothic materiality, specifically Lovecraftian literature, to visually convey spatial agency. The research structure of this project works as a circular migration between architecture, literature, theory, and illustration. This framework reflects the transcendence of the Gothic through realms of culture, space, and time.

Spilt into four stages of practice, this research utilises literary and contextual reviews, drawing methods, exhibition enactment and object-spatial rendering. These methods once again depend on each other as informants and follow the migration pattern of this exegesis.

This exegesis is the written documentation of this research project and includes the evidence and reflections of the making practice. *How to Draw a Ghost* concludes its research for this project with the end artefact of *The Poet's Bureau*. This refurbished writing desk symbolises the migration of Gothicity and acts as a map of this project's journey through its contextual fields. *How to Draw a Ghost* exemplifies the crossroads between architecture, literature, theory, and illustration. The findings of this research show how different sections of culture and academia can be fused to close the dichotomy between fiction and reality, tangible and intangible, animate and inanimate. *How to Draw a Ghost* navigates abstract theory through drawn lines, capturing a visual portrayal of spatial agency.

1 How can we encourage haptic experiences of space by examining inanimate objects and their sensory elements? And how, through this examination, can we better understand object agency in relation to New Materialism and Gothic literature?

2 How can the motif of the haunted houses found within Gothic Literature reveal characteristics of New Materialist theory? And how, through material experimentation informed by these fictional structures, can we better understand matter agency?

3 How does Gothic Literature reveal examples of New Materialist philosophy through its materiality and symbolism? And how, through the physical reconstruction of these gothic elements, can we better understand matter agency?

4 How does Gothic Literature reveal examples of New Materialist philosophy through its corporality and symbolism? And how, through the material and spatial exploration of these gothic objects, can we better understand matter agency?

5 How does Gothic Literature reveal examples of New Materialist philosophy through its world mapping and spatiality? And how can we better understand spatial agency through the illustrative exploration of gothic landscapes?

6 How does Gothic Literature reveal examples of New Materialist philosophy through its descriptions of materiality and spatiality? And how can we better understand spatial agency through the illustrative exploration of gothic landscapes?

7 How might harnessing tropes from Gothic Literature reveal examples of New Materialist philosophy through its descriptions of materiality and spatiality? And how can we better understand spatial agency through the illustrative exploration of gothic landscapes?

8 Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?

Materiality.  
Narrative  
Spatiality

Agency.  
Gothic  
Illustration  
Lovecraft

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# Attenstatiön of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly mentioned), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

My art practice began with my father's aid; I remember his eclectic body of supplies, butter tubs filled with acrylic, and ice cream boxes of pastels. Our house was a castle of scrap paper, with colonies of empty jars lining windowsills, and stacks of repurposed takeaway containers in the cupboards. It was a quietly chaotic, humble hub of creativity. Bookshelves were a feature in each room, with the spines of Folio Society books alluring the fingers connected to the brains that couldn't yet read the words within. After dinner, I would finally learn the stories of pages within these magnificent covers, as my father sat us down and read aloud so perfectly that even Attenborough would be jealous. My father would evoke the voices of Bilbo, Hagrid and Aslan; sewing the tales of intangible worlds into our pillows where we could find them again in our dreams. It is unsurprising that growing up in a home where reading was a nightly communion had infected my sisters and me with a passion for reading that has not yet abandoned us.

The collision of fictitious chronicles and crayons transpired into my practice. My reading habits began to inform and parallel my drawing practice. Instead of drawing what I saw, I illustrated what I had read. As my reading taste developed with age, I loved the fruits of desolate estates, creaking floors, maddened women, and Gothic literature's haunting mysticism. Illustrations from George Cruikshank, Sidney Slime and Sir John Tenniel informed my approach to drawing, and ink pen sketches came to the forefront of my practice. The black-and-white, hatching and pointillism elements of my art create high-contrast drawings – reflecting the same dichotomous themes found within Gothic literature. The following research project portrays my love for reading, and my passion for art and design.

## The Prelude

“So why Gothic now?

*First*, we need to remember  
that ever since the enlightenment

*killed off Satan*  
in the eighteenth century,

the *artistic imagination*  
has relished filling

*the void.*”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jerry Saltz, “Modern Gothic,” in *The Gothic; Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 48–49.

# Introduction

## *how to draw a ghost*

I believe in ghosts. Not bodies clouded in white sheets or the Ghost of Christmas Past. Not Bloody Mary or Hamlet's Father, I believe in the ghosts whose intangible presence blur the lines of animacy. The spirits I speak of do not manifest as iridescent corpses; in fact, these entities could not be further from the Sapient form. Instead, you may find them entrapped in your floorboards or drying on the maiden. For these ghosts do not wander the earth in search of their graves, but exist just beyond our anthropocentric realm, hiding in plain sight on your dresser. It is foolish to discourage fear because fear you must as the words of Lovecraftian literature ooze from their pages, and everything you ever dismissed as scary stories becomes real to its reader.

*How to Draw a Ghost* asks the reader to leave the pragmatic world behind as it journeys through the terrain of specific Gothic literature, searching for an analogy between horror and inanimate agency, and embarking on this odyssey required, from the researcher, some detachment from anthropocentric thinking. From now on, the separation between us and things minimises to null as we begin to eradicate the 'life-matter binary'.<sup>2</sup> As a means of stepping aside from Westernised rationalisation, this project asks:

Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?

This project is an amalgamation of a personal infatuation for Lovecraftian literature and a childhood filled with the belief that one day my teddies would start talking back. This combination of spooky fascination and determined resistance against nuclear normality carried me into the occult woodland of New Materialism. As I traversed this passage, notions of spatial agency blossomed, and the surrounding flowers of theory began to inform my dissociation from the societal disregard for anything without opposable thumbs. This research outlined in this exegesis, residing in practice, illustrates childlike curiosity with a desire to reveal what is that unknown presence which follows you around the house.

<sup>2</sup> Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, UNITED STATES: Duke University Press, 2010), <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=1170671>.

A design lens has been employed to anchor the research around creative exploration and methods of making. Through investigative analysis, interpretative delineation, exhibition enactments and object-spatial rendering, spatial agency will be illuminated and explored. The artistic depiction approach of these methods awakens the dormant materiality and spatiality of Gothic landscapes through the articulative language of drawing. These methods work separately and together to capture spatial agency and understand the analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism. The final artefact of making is a product of all four methods, a reflection of all research, and a visual embodiment of the entire project.

Art and design run as a vascular system throughout this research, and are the forefront informer to the choices made and questions asked. The allegorical nature of this research and its alignment of scriptures and sketches creates a cross-stitch mode of inquiry – a pattern of constantly referencing the materiality of literature and vivifying the findings in the manner of drawing.

This project's aim of exploring spatial agency creates a dialogue between our conscious existence and the material realm. To rationalise these mystic concepts of New Materialism could recentre our world perspective and reevaluate the power of materiality. The alienation of inanimate entities can be reconciled through the dismantling of anthropocentrism. Moreover, as we enlighten ourselves with lines of Gothic poetry, we understand through its material characterisation that the human attitude can be adjusted for the relationship between subject and object to become equal.<sup>3</sup>

In a world crowded with waste and obsessed with consumption, Gothic horror has the potential to aid us in our pursuit of a maintainable world. Through this thinking, we could contemplate its tropes of personification in a more literal way and unmask the ghosts around us. It may be easier to bring forth the scientific fact that everything in our universe is made from atoms, the most basic units of matter. However, even deductive reasoning is not enough to quell current conspiracies and inflamed egos.

Modernity has both blessed and cursed us with the knowledge and moral regret of climate change as we are now in the 'paradoxical position' of realising the consequences of our consumption, while also 'experiencing a profound sense of loss and agency' when it comes to reconciling our habits with nature.<sup>4</sup> As author Dan Brown once wrote:

*"The human mind has a primitive ego defense mechanism that negates all realities that produce too much stress for the brain to handle. It's called Denial."<sup>5</sup>*

The 'human and non-human divide' has been the reckoning of irreversible damage: deforestation, pollution, species extinction, intrusive developments, chemical warfare and nuclear destruction.<sup>6</sup> But the Gothic genre provides a space for us to confront our denial, as it types out our dreaded anxieties and reflects a realm of dark reality which we can easily close a book on. The Gothic themes of environmental fear, the unknown, the past, religious disillusionment and cosmic doom create a fictional platform which allows this gloomy genre to communicate ideas about the climate crisis and human behaviours which other groups of literature cannot.<sup>7</sup> This metaphoric propagation found in Gothic literature makes it the perfect reference point of spatial agency and thus a starting point for this research project.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, Reprint edition (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Justin D. Edwards, Rune Graulund, and Johan Höglund, "Introduction; Gothic in the Anthropocene," in *Dark Scenes from Damaged Earth : The Gothic Anthropocene*, 1st ed. (University of Minnesota Press, 2022), 7–26.

<sup>5</sup> Dan Brown, *Inferno* (UK: Transworld Publishers Ltd, 2014).

<sup>6</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

<sup>7</sup> Edwards, Graulund, and Höglund, "Introduction; Gothic in the Anthropocene."



Figure 2. Hughes, L. Polaris, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

Positioning itself as the intersection between New Materialist philosophy, Gothic literature and spatial design, this research grapples with both sesquipedalian\* terms and experimental methods of making. Think of this project as an illustration of gothic materiality: a cauldron mix of theory, fiction, creative and exhibition practices.

This project shall begin with an in-depth, interdisciplinary review of existing Gothic literature and New Materialism research. Through this section, readers will be enticed by the proposed analogy between these two contexts and enraged by the need for creative (design-led) approaches to understanding spatial agency. Although do not fret; these lapses in academic ingenuity will be answered in the commencing methods and practice sections, providing ample evidence of the creative practices involved in this research. Concluding this body of work is the final exhibition artefact, *The Poet's Bureau*. This exegesis will provide the written analysis of the research's findings and intends to achieve this project's aim of exploring spatial agency through Gothic literature.

\*A word which is characterised by being long in length and containing many syllables.

# Contextual Review *a gothic excavation*

This research uses illustration to imagine a world without building it.<sup>9</sup> The drawings within this research parallel the written word and provide a powerful language to visualise ideas for which we do not yet have words.<sup>10</sup> This is a particularly central concept within this project as it aims to depict complex phenomenology, which theorises the intangible and invisible. Spatial agency is an abstract thing, and the method of illustration provides ‘marks that become vessels for meaning’, which enables this project to conceptualise New Materialist philosophy through optical symbolism and reference to known forms in literature.<sup>11</sup>

## *a gothic excavation*

*Gothic Excavation* is the beginning method of this project, acting as both a contextual review of existing research and a tool to unearth the materiality of Gothic literature. This practice of excavation and exhumation connects the theoretical and fictional worlds, posing the analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism. *Gothic Excavation* migrates from architecture to literature to theory to drawing, and relays between built and imaginary forms, reflecting the project’s broader migration pattern between reading and drawing. This method uses literature to analyse extant spaces and conceptualise fictional ones.<sup>12</sup>

Gothicity itself migrates in a circular motion as its architecture inspires the poets, whose words find harmony with theorists. Then these notions are rewritten in pictures which inspire building again. This research project and the Gothic genre’s rotation is continual, never-ending, as with each turn, another dimension, another conjoining layer, is made between spaces. Just as Mary Shelley inspired Edgar Allan Poe, who inspired H.P Lovecraft, who inspired Stephen King, who inspired Haruki Murakami, this research builds upon the ideas found in one realm and combines them with another, creating a Rose window of Gothicity.

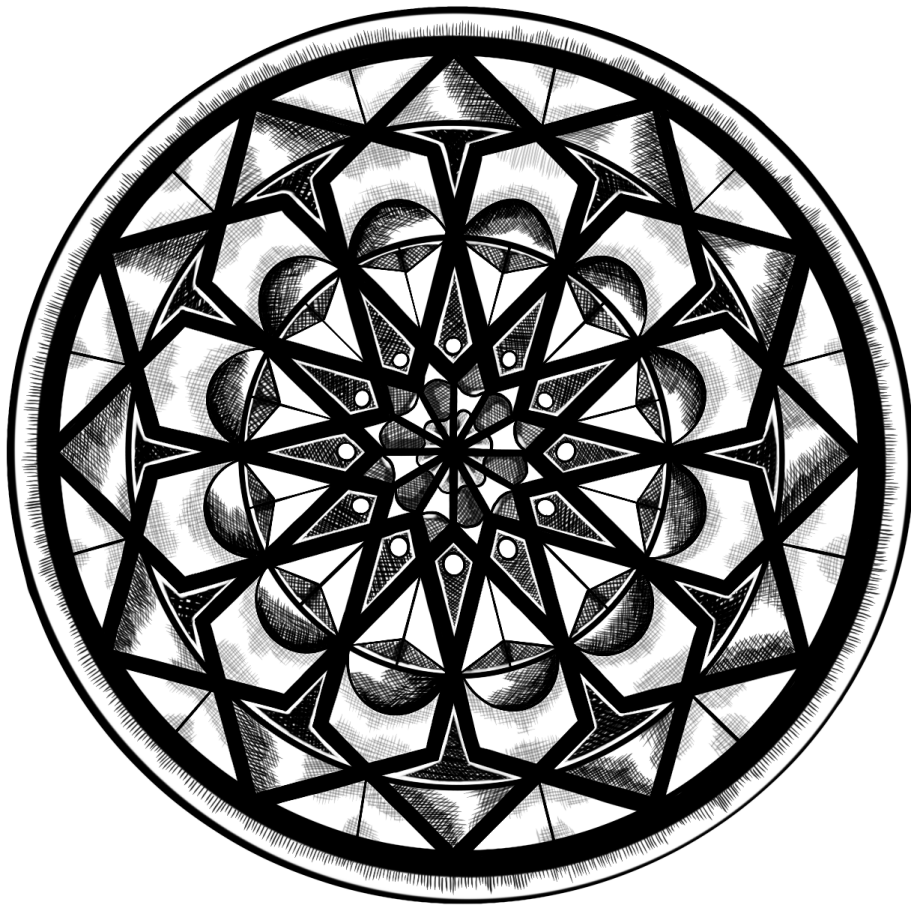
<sup>8</sup> Ray Bradbury, *The Veldt* (Dramatic Publishing, 1972).

<sup>9</sup> *How Drawing Helps You Think*, TEDxTUM, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqITSCvP-Z0>.

<sup>10</sup> *The Forgotten Language of Drawing*, TEDxFolkestone, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcdGiR3MFmY>.

<sup>11</sup> *The Forgotten Language of Drawing*.

<sup>12</sup> Christoph Grafe, Madeleine Maaskant, and Klaske Havik, “Editorial,” *OASE, Architecture & Literature Reflections/Imaginations*, no. 70 (2006): 3–7.



*Figure 3.* Hughes, L. Rose Window, Digital Drawing, 2023.

## ***cross-section into matter***

The alignment between New Materialism and Gothic literature can be seen in the writings of Edgar Allan Poe. This infamous author had his own 'materialist philosophy' as he often incorporated inorganic matter into his storylines – something which researcher Aspasia Stephanou has termed 'Gothic vitalism' and 'inhuman materiality'.<sup>13</sup> Poe's reflections on matter can be found within his 1844 letters to Thomas H. Chivers and goes as follows:

*'Man and other beings (inhabitants of stars) are portions of this unparticled matter, individualized by being incorporated in the ordinary or particled matter. — Thus, they exist rudimentally. Death is the painful metamorphosis.'*<sup>14</sup>

This scripture strengthens this project's proposed analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism, as the linkage of such ideas can be traced back to the Gothic godfather himself.

When examining the existing field of research for linkages between Gothic literature and New Materialism, one can find multiple references to the Freudian theory of 'The Uncanny'.<sup>15</sup> Fred Botting, Colin Dickey, and Susan Yi Sencindiver use this complex theory as an essential fixture in their research into the Gothic. The Uncanny\* relates to what is commonly thought of as childhood thoughts and beliefs, which we hide and overcome in our devotion to modern-cultish adulthood. Realism and rationality are essential factors in the theory of The Uncanny, as for something to be uncanny, it must 'pretend to move in the world of common reality'.<sup>16</sup> Fred Botting defines The Uncanny as reality's collapse to 'powers of hallucination or unconscious desire', as comfortability and reason are demolished by 'the return of known but hidden fears'.<sup>17</sup> There is no question why this phenomenology is so closely nestled next to Gothicity, as every reader knows the feeling of relief when opening a horror story that we can stop pretending to ignore every childlike fear we secretly feel lurking in the depths of our reality.

\* Uncanny is the English translation of the German word 'Unheimlich', 'Heimlich' meaning 'Homely' – meaning 'Unheimlich' directly translates to 'Un-homely'.

<sup>13</sup> Aspasia Stephanou, "Inhuman Materiality in Edgar Allan Poe's Stories," in *Inhuman Materiality in Gothic Media*, 1st ed. (Routledge, 2019), 22.

<sup>14</sup> Edgar Allan Poe, "Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore - Works - Letters - E. A. Poe to T. H. Chivers (July 10, 1844)," The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore, June 10, 1844, <https://www.eapoe.org/works/letters/p4407100.htm>.

<sup>15</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Uncanny*, trans. David McLintock, Illustrated edition (New York: Penguin Classics, 2003).

<sup>16</sup> Freud.

<sup>17</sup> Fred Botting, *Gothic*, 2nd edition (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon ; New York: Routledge, 2013).

To counter Freud's creation of The Uncanny, this project questions why we must fear the unknown and the return to childhood wonder. In this, we turn to more modern, congenial theorists. New Materialists, such as Karen Barad and Jane Bennett, have contributed to a dense research field surrounding the interdisciplinary, theoretical investigation into the 'post-constructionist, ontological, or material turn'.<sup>18</sup>

This project is explicitly investigating the idea of spatial agency within the realm of New Materialism, though the epistemological history of this term is born from *matter agency* – a phrase that we shall now dissect and define.

*Matter* is a commonly used physics and chemistry term for mass and volume.<sup>19</sup> This word has been adopted by theorist Jane Bennett, who uses it in her book titled *Vibrant Matter*. Bennett talks of a 'knotted world of vibrant matter', exploring self-expansion in understanding the material world.<sup>20</sup> Through Bennett's philosophy of materiality, things are understood as independent beings.<sup>21</sup> Jane Bennett also discusses how humanly biased our configuring of the world is, speaking on how our perspective of life 'places humans at the ontological centre or hierarchal apex'.<sup>22</sup>

The secondary word *agency* is used in an array of ways by multiple New Materialist theorists – though this research uses the notion of agency similar to that of Karen Barad, who focuses on the 'non-human aspect of agency'.<sup>23</sup> Agency, in this sense, is the ability to hold control over one's actions and thoughts, and understand their consequences. Meaning: when applied to matter, the phrase gives title to the autonomous capability of inanimate objects/spaces. Barad uses other specific terms like 'enactment' to understand agency, viewing it not as a possession but as a principle – Barad, like Bennett, also believes in the 'worldly re-configurings' which could arise from following the possibilities of agency.<sup>24</sup> These pontifications allow us to understand that the theories of agency and matter exist outside of the human subjectivity.<sup>25</sup>

This excavation into spatial agency and its parallels to Gothic materiality demystify the notion of The Uncanny as what we may not yet understand is not to be feared but to be explored. In this analogy between Gothicity and New Materialism, we can see the crossroad between fact and fiction, and how we can expand our world perspective through their language, ideas, and world renderings.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Yi Sencindiver, "New Materialism," *Obo*, July 26, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780190221911-0016>.

<sup>19</sup> The Simon Saunders and Harvey R. Brown, *The Philosophy of Vacuum* (Clarendon Press, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

<sup>21</sup> Erika Goble, "Beyond Human Subjectivity and Back to the Things Themselves: Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter*," *Phenomenology & Practice* 11, no. 2 (December 11, 2017): 70–78, <https://doi.org/10.29173/pandpr29352>.

<sup>22</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

<sup>23</sup> Felicity J Coleman, "Agency," *New Materialism - How Matter Comes to Matter*, May 17, 2018, <https://newmaterialism.eu/almanac/a/agency.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801–31, <https://doi.org/10.1086/345321>.

<sup>25</sup> Goble, "Beyond Human Subjectivity and Back to the Things Themselves."

## ***cosmic sediments***

Although this project appreciates the entirety of Gothic literature, it focuses explicitly on the Rhode Island author whose pose creates the most abundant examples of mystic materials and spatial agency through his sci-fi approach to Gothic horror.

As Gothic traits trickled through the tears of Edgar Allen Poe to the lyrics of Emily Dickinson and walked the British moors, it was during the early 20th century that it once again pronounced itself in the stories of Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Although in this revolutionary wave of literacy, Lovecraft withdrew from corpse brides and ravens, instead colliding science with fiction, terror and 'alternative archaeology' into a new genre of Cosmic Horror.<sup>26</sup>

In this subgenre, Lovecraft focuses on investigating themes of metaphysics and complex phenomenology, with many of his narrating and prominent characters being intrepid scientific discoverers themselves. This rejuvenated Gothic fiction with a new critical lens, as the voices of Lovecraft's tales are more investigative than scared – revealing how traditional Gothic forms were too suffocating for Lovecraft's prose.<sup>27</sup> Within his tale *The Shunned House*, Lovecraft highlights this character ingenuity as the narrator discusses how, with 'theories of relativity and intro-atomic action', recognising the autonomy of objects should not be so convoluted in the eyes of scientific theory.<sup>28</sup> These stories and their success at scaring us come from the power realisation, the unmasking of dangerous knowledge, radical thought, and revealing the insignificance of humankind.<sup>29</sup> The elements of Cosmicism and the fictional stories of Lovecraftian literature reflect a rebellion against comfortable normality, much akin to theories of New Materialism.

<sup>26</sup> Jason Colavito, *The Cult of Alien Gods: H.P. Lovecraft And Extraterrestrial Pop Culture*, Illustrated edition (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 2005).

<sup>27</sup> Botting, *Gothic*.

<sup>28</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, "The Shunned House," in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 312–35.

<sup>29</sup> China Miéville, "Introduction," in *At the Mountains of Madness: The Definitive Edition*, by H. P. Lovecraft, Definitive Edition (New York: Modern Library, 2005).

In his collection of short stories, Lovecraft created numerous material profiles, all evidence of spatial agency. From *The Shunned House* to *Cthulhu*, we can find spectral entities which all depend on their 'non-materialistic premises' to scare us.<sup>30</sup> In his tale *The Picture in the House*, Lovecraft describes abandoned buildings as follows:

*'Only the silent, sleepy, staring houses in the backwoods can tell all that has lain hidden since the early days; and they are not communicative, being loath to shake off the drowsiness which helps them forget. Sometimes one feels that it would be merciful to tear down these houses, for they must often dream'.<sup>31</sup>*

This Lovecraftian prose champions this project's analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism, combining metrical adjectives, Gothic symbols, and abstract theory. Lovecraft's use of descriptive language creates a parallel to Jane Bennett's vocabulary of 'thinginess', 'thing-being', and 'ownness'.<sup>32</sup> Through this correlation between haptic horror depictions and design science, notions of New Materialism can be demystified.

<sup>30</sup> Dustin Geeraert, *Spectres of Darwin: H.P. Lovecraft's Nihilistic Parody of Religion* (University of Manitoba, 2010).

<sup>31</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, "The Picture in the House," in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 103–10.

<sup>32</sup> Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*.

## ***haunted exhumation***

Before Lovecraft and his cosmic approach to horror, it was the eighteenth-century writers who began to toil with what is now known as the 'Gothic mood', and there is an apparent parallel between their obsession with dramatic, decaying landscapes and the abandoned skeletons of Gothic architecture.<sup>33</sup>

Gothic literature began with authors such as Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, and Matthew Lewis, who wrote in detail about the mystery, design and grotesqueness of Gothic landscapes built 500 years prior. Within Radcliffe's 1794 novel, *Mysteries of Udolpho*, Montoni's castle\* is described as follows:

*'Though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object'.<sup>34</sup>*

This scripture reveals Gothic architecture's prime role in creating atmosphere and how these writers rely on our fear of the unknown to spook us to our core. Colin Dickey uses the term the 'language of ghosts' as a title for the specific and 'abstract' way we discuss these ominous vibrations that reside in spaces and places.<sup>35</sup> The spirits fade away through the climatic renderings of space within Gothic literature, and materiality becomes the true monster.

\* Signor Montoni (an Italian nobleman) is the owner of the Castle of Udolpho, and takes the on the role as the typical Gothic antagonist within Radcliffe's novel. Married to the protagonist's (Emily St. Aubert) aunt (Madame Cheron), Montoni possesses the classic villainous traits of selfishness, greed and frigidity. It seems in this way, Montoni's stoney abode somewhat reflects and embodies his own temperament, depicting the form of evil within novel both in character and in landscape.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Clark, "Literary Influences," in *The Gothic Revival*, 3rd ed. (London: John Murray, 1962), 28–45.

<sup>34</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 59276th edition (London ; New York: Penguin Classics, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> Colin Dickey, *Ghostland: An American History in Haunted Places* (New York, New York: Viking, 2016).

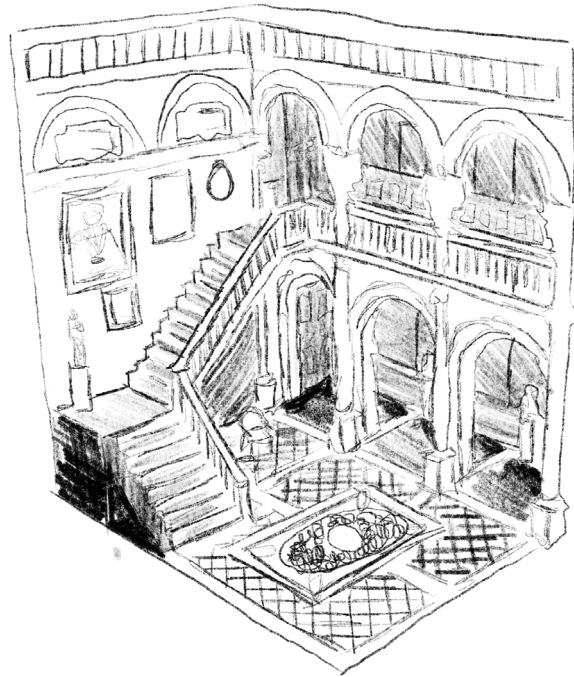


Figure 4. Hughes, L. Interior, Digital Drawing, 2022.

The structure of a house is a symbolic parasite within Gothic literature. Stories revolve around the human connection to buildings and the entrapped spirits found within. Dwellings themselves become characters.<sup>36</sup> American poet and author of supernatural fiction, Emma Frances Dawson, describes the 'expression' of houses and their capacity to react to our presence in her book, *An Itinerant House*. Dawson goes on to specifically mention 'bible buildings' and how they 'had life of their own and human diseases; the priests cursed or blessed them as men'.<sup>37</sup> In this way, Gothic literature surpasses its commonly thought limitation of ghosts and ghouls, and suggests what can be identified as spatial agency. Outside of its atmospheric descriptions, the storylines surround themes of dichotomy, life, and death, inanimate and animate. Through this, they provide a place to explore existential thoughts about our relation to the world.<sup>38</sup> Facing these queries through the devouring of Gothic scripture unsettles our perceived view of humanity and unravels our justification of anthropocentric living.<sup>39</sup> This reflection of Gothic structures within the literature shows the migration of Gothicity, which this project harnesses and expands through illustration.

<sup>36</sup> Susan Yi Sencindiver, *Fear and Gothic Spatiality* (Akademiet for Æstetikfaglig Forskeruddannelse, 2010).

<sup>37</sup> Emma Frances Dawson, *An Itinerant House* (Jazzybee Verlag, 2017).

<sup>38</sup> Prof. Roger Luckhurst, *Gothic: An Illustrated History*, Illustrated edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

<sup>39</sup> Susan Yi Sencindiver, "It's Alive," in *The Palgrave Handbook to Horror Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 483–97, [https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/publications/its-alive-new-materialism-and-literary-horror\(dba0e877-e6b2-4c51-ab8c-0d02c7cd5cd2\).html](https://pure.au.dk/portal/en/publications/its-alive-new-materialism-and-literary-horror(dba0e877-e6b2-4c51-ab8c-0d02c7cd5cd2).html).

## ***lithic diffusion***

This project's movement from literature to drawings reflects the Gothic genre's migration between different realms of culture. The idea of Gothic was first crafted into stone architecture long before it darkened the ink of writers and blotted the parchment of artists. What comprised and separated the Gothic style into its subgenre of design were its structural systems, symbolism, and religious promotion. The typical floorplan of Gothic cathedrals and churches follows the form of the Latin Cross (originating from Romanesque churches), though Gothicism adopted rounded Apses and built higher, more ornate structures.<sup>40</sup> The implementation of stained-glass windows was achieved through the new exterior strength of Flying Buttresses; this meant the structures no longer relied on plain, thick walls, allowing the outside of the building to be decorated. The windows and exterior sculptures served for more than just aesthetics; the stories and imageries which they portrayed were a way to teach the (mostly) illiterate public about Biblical stories. The vertical lines towards the heavens, symbolic divinity, pointed arches and geometric patterns all work together to create a space close to God. It seems ironic that buildings built to be holy are now used as a typical horror symbol of unsanctified space. The term itself, *Gothic*, has also transgressed meaning throughout history, with its original epistemology coming from the Renaissance; *Goth* was a derogatory term for eastern Germanic people of medieval Europe – essentially calling them primitive.<sup>41</sup> Although now *Goth* and *Gothic* refer to a popular, appreciated aesthetic in literature, fashion, film, and art. While the Gothic era ended mostly during the rise of the Renaissance, buildings such as King Henry VII's Chapel still exemplified the Gothicity of the previous century. Gothic architecture had few revivals, never eclipsing its previous notoriety until the mid-18th century when it once again migrated – this time from concrete structures to the fictional tropes of poets.

<sup>40</sup> 6 *Gothic Architecture & Decor*, Lecture Video, vol. 6, What We Leave Behind: The History of Fashion & Decor (Fairfield University, 2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcUASUGTLZo>.

<sup>41</sup> John Mullan, "The Origins of the Gothic | The British Library," Archive, The British Library, May 15, 2014, <https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-origins-of-the-gothic>.

## ***circular seriation***

This project purposefully uses anthropological terms such as migrates and excavation to describe its circular mode of inquiry and practice. It does so to evoke the notion that this transfiguring concept of Gothicity has agency as it moves between different territories of history and space. Much like the Gothic element of the Rose Window, this project exemplifies the theory that fragmented, contributing parts can collect to form a harmonious whole and achieve unity.<sup>42</sup> The project's creative-making side also reflects this concept as it accumulates over 25 drawings, each featuring different aspects of Lovecraftian literature, which gather to form a spanning narrative of spatial agency. Each drawn line, dot and hatch then went on to inform the final artefact of making, *The Poet's Bureau*. This concluding object symbolises the final return in this project's circular rotation as illustration migrates back into the form of a built structure, no longer a stone castle but, this time, a writer's desk to signify the infinite circuit between architecture, literature, theory, and drawing.

To rationalise this concept, think of the Gothic stained-glass windows that portray ancient Biblical stories whose subjects are no longer alive. The makers of these glass imageries use illustration methods to transform oral and written language into a composition of shapes that mean something – they turn abstract concepts into recognisable stories through visual thinking. Religious art is often linked to the term Iconography, which is the use of symbols and motifs within an artwork. For example, in Christian artworks, iconography can be seen in the depiction of a lamb which is a representation of Christ.<sup>43</sup> In this way, illustration has always accompanied science and humanities. Each theory, concept, process, and morphology is passed over to artists who analyse, describe, and visualise their ideas through religious iconography, political cartoons, cartography, and anatomical/ architectural/ engineering/ geological drawings.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Rose Windows: History, Design, and Symbolism*, Study lesson video, 2022, <https://study.com/learn/lesson/rose-windows-origin-symbolism-design>

<sup>43</sup> Tate Modern, "Art Terms: Iconography," Tate, accessed May 3, 2023, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/i/iconography>.

<sup>44</sup> Alan Male, "Introduction," in *The Power and Influence of Illustration: Achieving Impact and Lasting Significance Through Visual Communication* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019), 9–17, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=6939678>.

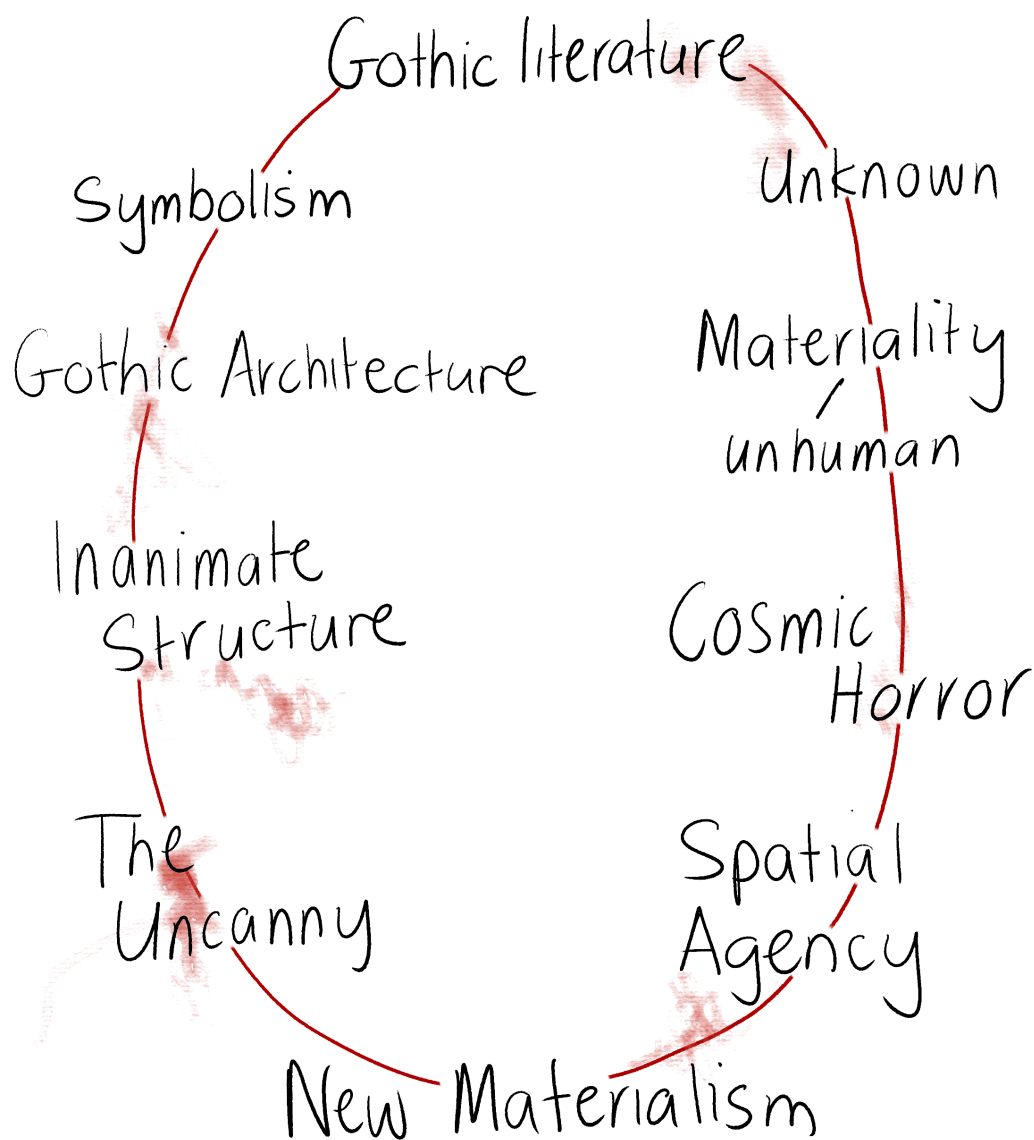


Figure 5. Hughes, L. Circular Seriation, Digital Drawing, 2023.

## **assemblage**

An example of an illustrator who follows this same ideology is British artist, Oliva Kemp, who creates large-scale, hyper-detailed drawings of imagined places with 'architecture rooted in reality'.<sup>45</sup> These drawings are an accumulation of thousands of smaller elements which come together to create a complete scene of spatiality. Kemp's medium is pen and paper, featuring black-and-white imagery of mythical places. *Only Then We'll Leave The Woods* features a forest scene crammed with impossible treescape architecture, while *Losing The Current* portrays a bustling sea, only water is absent, and the seeming waves are tiny intricate nautical objects. Kemp also uses literature to inspire her drawing, citing references such as Edward Thomas, Kathleen Jamie, Sara Maitland, Nan Shepherd, and Roger Deakin – all authors who use nature and spatiality as a crutch.<sup>46</sup> Kemp's intensive drawings reflect this project's same circular migration from architecture to literature to drawing, as these artworks' contexts stem from other realms of culture, which all come together to create her practice. Similarly, like how all of Kemp's intrinsic details join in creating a harmonised, thematic final work, akin to this project's final artefact of *The Poet's Bureau*.

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**Figure 6.** Kemp, O. *Only Then We'll Leave The Woods*, Ink Pen Drawing.  
Sourced: <https://www.oliviakemp.co.uk/large-works>

<sup>45</sup> Olivia Kemp, "Large Works," OLIVIA KEMP, accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.oliviakemp.co.uk/large-works>.

<sup>46</sup> Olivia Kemp, Olivia Kemp Artist Interview - MoMa UK | MoMa UK, Webpage, accessed April 29, 2023, <https://www.moma.co.uk/olivia-kemp-interview/>.

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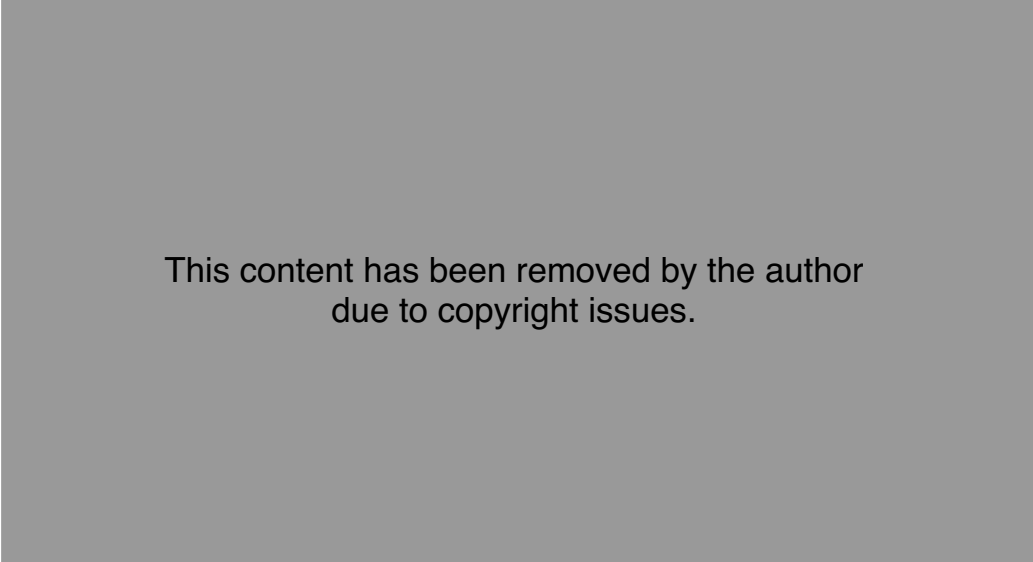
**Figure 7.** Kemp, O. Loosing The Current, Ink Pen Drawing.  
Sourced: <https://www.oliviakemp.co.uk/large-works>

## ***flotation***

Another artist who parallels this project's investigation into Gothicism and spatial agency is British artist, Mike Nelson. Nelson achieves haptic horror through his spatial story-telling exhibits. An installation entitled *To the Memory of H.P Lovecraft* inspires this project by more than just its name. Mike Nelson's spooky, spatial intervention installation was initially exhibited in 1999 in Edinburgh, but made a new appearance in 2008 at the Hayward Gallery in London.

In this install, Nelson essentially destroys the gallery space, although the work suggests something more obscene is responsible for the wreckage. The overall installation is creepy; it presents the unknown – a concept that Lovecraft himself mastered to scare readers.

Nelson's practice focuses on creating immersive environments, dealing with space and narrative.<sup>47</sup> As he conjures 'spatial alchemy', the rooms he operates transcend realities and produce feelings of irrationality.<sup>48</sup>



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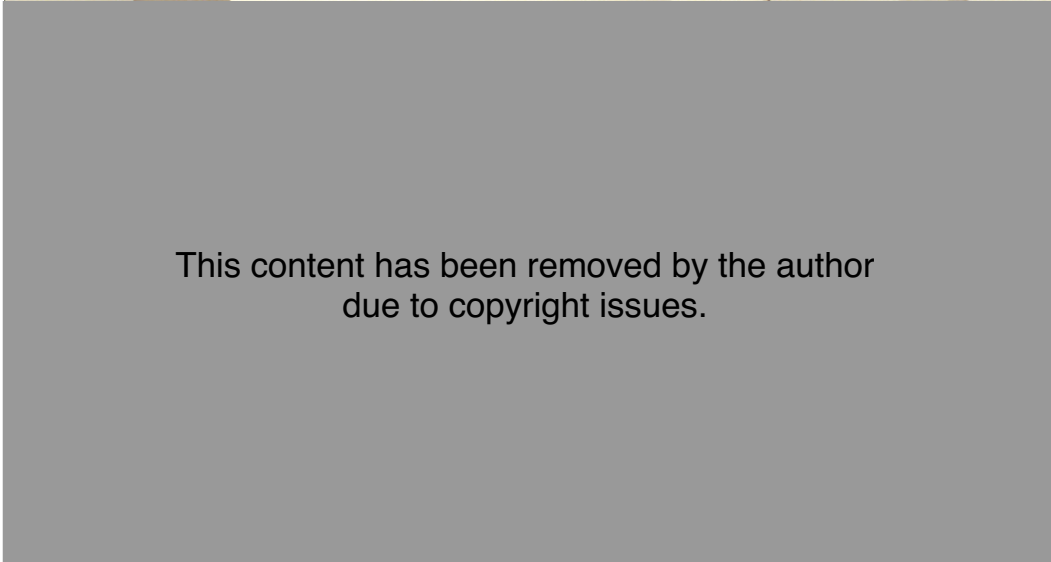
**Figure 8.** Nelson, M. *To the Memory H.P Lovecraft*. Installation, The Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, 1999. Sourced: <https://www.collective-edinburgh.art/programme/1999-mike-nelson->

<sup>47</sup> Mike Nelson, *Space Stories: An Interview with Mike Nelson*, interview by Robert Enright, Website, December 2012, <https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/space-stories-an-interview-with-mike-nelson>.

<sup>48</sup> Nelson.

Lovecraft himself heavily inspires the ambiguity of Nelson's work, admiring the writer's ability to create atmosphere.<sup>49</sup> In Nelson's work, we only see the aftermath; we are left with questions and forced to develop our narrative of events, making the installation so eerie as we project our nightmares onto the cause.

This project aims for the same reaction as Nelson's can enact. Through the power of pure spatiality and materiality, Nelson can cause fear – to unsettle the viewers. Although this project and its end installation of *The Poet's Bureau* does not want to scare people explicitly, it does aim to portray the capacity and spatial agency of inanimate objects through exhibition design. *To the Memory of H.P Lovecraft* possesses notions of spatial agency as it uses nothing more than a room to personify people's fears, granting the inanimate space the possibility to be an entity within itself. This project's exhibit of *The Poet's Bureau* hopes to encapsulate the same complex theory that the dichotomy between animate and inanimate beings is not so definite.



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**Figure 9.** Nelson, M. *To the Memory H.P Lovecraft*, Installation, The Collective Gallery, Edinburgh, 1999.  
Sourced: <https://www.collective-edinburgh.art/programme/1999-mike-nelson->

<sup>49</sup> Nelson.

## ***stratigraphy***

This project's interest in exploring spatiality through illustration can also be seen in designer Piero Fornasetti's work. Fornasetti (1913-1988), an Italian artist and designer, used screen-printing techniques to produce décor, furniture and artwork. The circulation between architecture and illustration can be seen in Fornasetti's style as he brings exterior structures into interiors through his printing process.

This research project takes direct inspiration from Fornasetti's 1953 work entitled, *The Architettura Trumeau*. This piece is a cabinet-style dresser with interior shelving, a drop-front writing desk with illuminated light, and three-compartment drawers – all concealed by two exterior closing doors. *The Architettura Trumeau* exemplifies Fornasetti's interest in architecture and illustration, as the interior compartment is printed in the style of the colonnade of the Brera Academy courtyard. In this piece, Fornasetti combined architecture, art and design into a seamless object, toying with spatial illusions, and using black and white to suggest the abundance and absence of space.<sup>50</sup> Through linework and tonal imagery, Fornasetti created a secondary interior within a home and brought exterior architecture inside through furniture design.



**Figure 10.** Fornasetti, P. *The Architettura Trumeau*, Cabinet.  
Sourced: <https://www.fornasetti.com/ae/en/furniture/categories/trumeau/trumeau-architettura-white-black-M33X004FOR21BIA.html>

<sup>50</sup> Jennifer Scanlan, "The Rise and Fall and Rise of Piero Fornasetti," Pamono (blog), n.d., <https://www.pamono.co.uk/stories/fornasetti-revealed>.

This project's concluding artefact, *The Poet's Bureau*, portrays the same concepts of interior and exterior, dark and light, reflecting the dichotomy found within Gothicity. The form of the desk itself possesses many of the same features as Fornasetti's cabinet, with three-compartment drawers, a drop-front writing desk and interior shelving. This model of the writing desk is purposefully chosen as this research is interested in the idea of thresholds; the opening and closing of a book, a door, a life – again reflecting the concept of the dichotomy in Gothicity and between animate and inanimate objects.

*The Poet's Bureau*, similarly to *The Architettura Trumeau*, explores spatial agency through sourced and adapted materiality. Although this project focuses on the fictional, and Fornasetti replicated his environment, both structures create their realities through the kaleidoscope of referenced illustration and transcendence of forms.



**Figure 11.** Fornasetti, P. The Architettura Trumeau, Cabinet.  
Sourced: <https://www.fornasetti.com/ae/en/furniture/categories/trumeau/trumeau-architettura-white-black-M33X004FOR21BIA.html>

## ***field notes***

Through this *Gothic Excavation*, the migration pattern of Gothicity can be seen. Another shift occurs as it travels through built and imaginary forms with each rotation. This project looks at how Gothic tropes can be seen as evidence of spatial agency through its characterisation of inanimate objects – looking exclusively at Lovecraftian material profiles and how these reject notions of hauntings; instead, exploring a reality removed from Anthropocentric behaviour. It uses supporting theories such as The Uncanny and New Materialism to solidify the idea of material entities. It manipulates them into spatial thinking by methods of illustration and spatial-object rendering.

As this project slips between architecture, literature, theory, and illustration, it finds stability in its final symbolism through spatial-object rendering. *The Poet's Bureau* is the assemblage of all this research's contexts as it provides tangibility of an analogy which hovers between fiction and fabrication, word and line, object and image. This final artefact of making entirely embraces the circular motion of the project and embodies the fossil of the archaeological site, which is Gothicity.

## ***gap in research***

Although the link between New Materialism and Gothic literature has already been established, it is a topic discussed primarily by philosophers or academics in social/political sciences. This project combats the gap in research as it takes this analogy and investigates it in a design-driven approach. Creative practices, including methods of *Gothic Excavation*, Illustration, and Exhibition Practice, contribute to this fascinating divide from classical academic perspectives. The following sections provide a review of the creative influences and practices that informed the design and execution of this project.



## ***research question***

Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?

This project has been divided into four research stages: investigative analysis, interpretative delineation, exhibition enactment (I, II, III, IV) and object-spatial rendering. The stages are sequential in their methods and rely upon one another as informants due to the research's synergetic framework. Working as a four-part investigative regime, the following stages of practice are tailored to the project's posed question and provide design artefacts which reflect the research's findings.

## a gothic excavation

As an investigative analysis of Lovecraftian literature, *Gothic Excavation* is an intensive review and textual analysis method. The contextual review relied heavily on the findings from this initial stage to produce the project's analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism. This method required in-depth surveying and transcribing across thirteen Lovecraftian stories in search of material that reflect notions of spatial agency. From these found inanimate narratives, a detailed archive was compiled and became the fundamental point of reference for the method of illustration. *Gothic Excavation* is used as a database of Lovecraftian materiality, formulated to address and build upon the beginning section of this project's research question: *excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes*.

Fieldnotes

Lovecraftian Database

<b>Project Area:</b> Gothic Literature	
<b>Date:</b> 08.09.2022	<b>Site#:</b> 1
<b>Site Manager:</b> Lauren Hughes	
<b>Story Title:</b> The Tomb	
<b>Author:</b> H.P. Lovecraft	<b>Page Count:</b> 5



Site Summary:

*Jervas Dudley discovers an entrance to a mausoleum belonging to the Hyde family as a child, this place becomes his area of play. As he grows older he becomes transfixed on entering the tomb, even though the padlock physically derps him. Jervas's fascination with the tomb becomes so intense he begins to sleep outside of it, one night while he is doing so he awakens to light within the mausoleum being quickly extinguished. Once he returns home, Jervas finds a chest within which is the key to the tomb.*  
*When Jervas enters the tomb he discovers a coffin with his name on. He begins to sleep inside the coffin. Over this time he develops a fear of storms.*  
*One stormy night, Jervas goes against his fears and ventures to the tomb. He sees there is a party inside, he joins. Suddenly lightning strikes and the space is set ablaze. Jervas awakens to two men holding him as he struggles in the entrance of the tomb.*  
*A box is unearthly by the storm, inside there is a porcelain miniature. It is the reflection of Jervas.*

Place Names:	Material Artefacts:	List of Characters:
Hyde Mausoleum Burnt Hyde Mansion	Padlock Chest & Key Jervas Coffin Antique Box Figurine	Jervas Dudley Hiram

**Scale of Spatial Agency:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (5)

**Scale of Material Descriptions:**

\_\_\_\_\_ (5)

**Overall Rating of Story:**

1    2    3    4    5 (5)

Figure 13. Hughes, L. Lovecraftian Database, File 1, Archival Document, 2022.

The traversing of Lovecraftian prose to find treasures of spatial agency meant taking arms against ornate, lengthy passages of archaic colonialist-type writing – to ignore the excessive sentences of eloquent adjectives and observe only the most vivid specimens of inanimate forces (though one cannot help but feel that after a year of dedication to the author, perhaps his style may have seeped, unconsciously into one’s own writing). In this poetic jungle of spaces, some significant verses shall be quoted here to expose the reader to the written gothic relics that this project seeks.

*‘For some time, apparently, the curious angles of Gilman’s room had been having a strange, almost hypnotic effect on him; and as the bleak winter advanced he had found himself staring more and more intently at the corner where the down-slanting ceiling met the inward-slanting wall’.*<sup>51</sup>

### ***The Dreams in the Witch House***

*‘My rather original ideas regarding life and death had caused me to associate the cold clay with the breathing body in a vague fashion; and I felt that the great and sinister family of the burned-down mansion was in some way represented within the stone space I sought to explore’.*<sup>52</sup>

### ***The Tomb***

*‘Those later spectral legends, I made plain, related to monstrous apparitions more frightful than anything organic could be; apparitions of gigantic bestial forms sometimes visible and sometimes only tangible, which floated about on moonless nights and haunted the old house, the crypt behind it, and the grave where a sapling had sprouted beside an illegible slab’.*<sup>53</sup>

### ***The Unnamable***

<sup>51</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, “The Dreams in the Witch House,” in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 924–957.

<sup>52</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, “The Tomb,” in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 15–25.

<sup>53</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, “The Unnamable,” in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 274–281.

## ***mapping ghosts***

In hermeneutic reflection of the lyrical passages quoted from the database of Lovecraftian materiality, this second method of illustration is the counterpart to the literature excavation. *Mapping Ghosts* is the act of illuminating the text descriptions of mystical, ominous spaces through the practice of drawing.

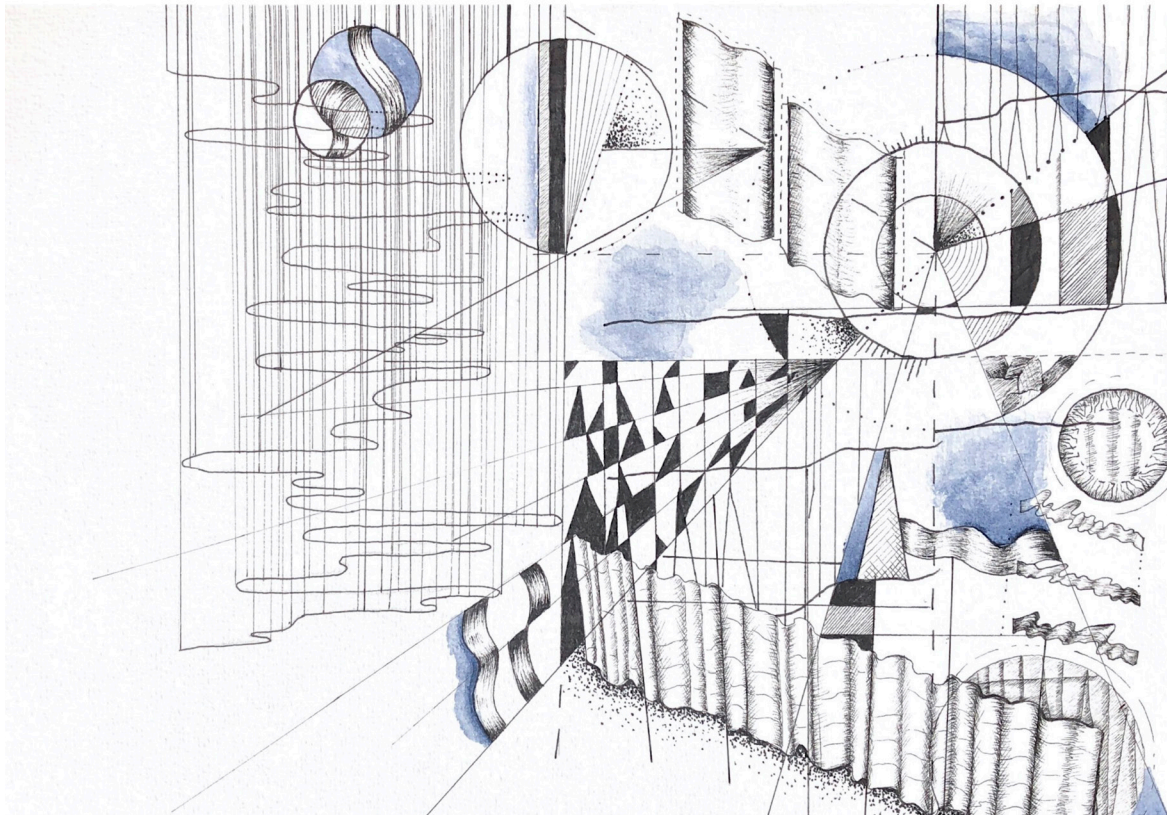
This succeeding method aids the *Gothic Excavation* in concluding the introductory part of the research question. It provides the visual interpretation, response and depiction of intangible, fictional landscapes and their objects. These drawings act as individual odes to each Lovecraftian story, bringing form to fruition by illustrating realities different to our own. This method also adheres to iconography\*, a term first referenced in the 16th century in a catalogue of illustrative compositions of symbols and emblems reflecting existing literature of the time.<sup>54</sup>

*Mapping Ghosts* and its iconographic agenda also commences the secondary part of the research question: *how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?* By using the archival database of the previous method to evoke imagery of Gothic objects and scenescapes, *Mapping Ghosts* aims to visualise spatial agency through drawing. Hence, this is a method of interpretative delineation as it uses conceptualisation skills to enact sketches of fictive materiality and portray intangible entities of New Materialist theory.

*Mapping Ghosts* is a counter-commentary to the vernacular tongues of the early 20th century. It reveals themes of spatial agency through ocular language, and completes the anatomisation of the analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism.

\* Originating from Ancient Greek language 'Eikōn' meaning 'Likeness' and 'Graphia' meaning 'Writing'.

<sup>54</sup> Alan Male, "The Language of Drawing," in *The Power and Influence of Illustration: Achieving Impact and Lasting Significance Through Visual Communication* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2019), 59–121, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/aut/detail.action?docID=6939678>.



**Figure 14.** Hughes, L. Gilman's Attic, Ink Pen Sketch, 2021.

## ***galerie des fantômes***

The third commencing method, *Galerie des fantômes* (Ghost Gallery), consists of four exhibition enactments – including the final assessment of this project. The exhibits feature various series of illustrations produced in the *Mapping Ghosts* research stage. Framing, gallery promotion, exhibit layout and installation, and spatial thinking are all elements of this method.

The first exhibit is a public display of work at the Lakehouse Art Centre (10.02.2023 – 17.02.2023); the second is a digital projection located at AUT in a test-space gallery (9.03.2023); the third is another public exhibit at the B: HIVE Building, Takapuna (24.03.2023 -12.05.2023); and the final exhibit is the concluding assessment of work at AUT St Paul St Gallery which migrates from the previous installations as it features the last method of making: *The Poet's Bureau*.

This method of exhibition practice engages this project's research question as it not only exhibits illustrations aimed to portray spatial agency, but enacts it through the spatial thinking of gallery spaces. *Galerie des fantômes* is formulated to create a secondary investigation into the illustration of spatial agency through these drawings' actual display and placement narratives. This method creates a larger story of separate works through exhibition practice, thus turning two-dimensional drawings into a spatial experience.



*Figure 15.* Hughes, L. B:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 16.** Hughes, Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

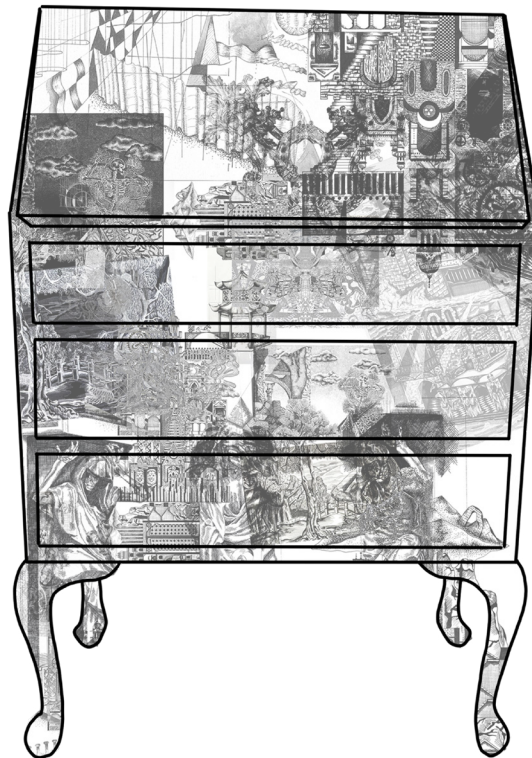


*Figure 17.* Hughes, Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

## ***the poet's bureau***

The concluding method of this project is an artefact of making, embodying the three previous stages and symbolising the research found within the entirety of this work. *The Poet's Bureau* is a method of object-spatial rendering consisting of an antique Rimu writing desk, which has been repurposed through engraving, pyrography, and illustration.

This final artefact incorporates the database of Lovecraftian materiality, the illustrations found from it, and the spatial thinking of exhibition enactments. *The Poet's Bureau* is a visual and symbolic embodiment of this research as it references all previous methods and produces an object, which signifies spatial agency when posed in a gallery. The form of a writing desk is purposeful to conclude this project's circular migration through Gothicity, as it refers back to the field literature which birthed this research, while also reflecting the continual shift of Gothicity through different realms of culture. This writing desk visualises the analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialist theory.



**Figure 18.** Hughes, L. Desk Mock-up, Digital Drawing, 2023.

## **methodology**

*How to Draw a Ghost* is a phenomenological study; it relies on relativist ontology and interpretivism to gather research. Although this project anchors itself on an analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism, it rejects the notions of proof and cause, as it exists in a context-bound reality. The creative methods surrounding the practice of iconography and illustration are employed to show the emic approach, and embrace the subjectivity of interpretation and delineation. It even goes as far as to recognise spatial agency as an abstract theorem; whose **true** definition and depiction are inexistent, as its **truth** relies on the meaning you attach to it.

Rather than purposing the scientific formula of spatial agency, this research tries to understand its meaning through the contextualisation of Gothic literature, New Materialism, and design methods. These contexts reference anti-anthropocentric thinking, which is a paradigm of this research. *How to Draw a Ghost* aligns with the belief that the capacity of materiality has been convoluted by the thought that only human beings have moral worth or intrinsic value.<sup>55</sup> This project combats this ideology by unmasking gothic tropes like ghosts/hauntings (human rationale for The Uncanny) and rectifying them as evidence of material capability (something beyond the interaction of humans). It does so through the carefully articulated research question and methods.

The project's research question 'Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?' considers and employs the previously existing interests and skills of the research practitioner. As discussed in the introductory paragraphs, Gothic literature is a familiar field to the researcher and with undergraduate knowledge in spatial design, the connection between Gothicity and material profiles was quickly made. This research created a well-founded body of contextual resources through *Gothic Excavation* and harnessed existing knowledge across interdisciplinary fields. This strong foundation created a perfect scope for design-led practice to investigate.

<sup>55</sup> Philip J. Cafaro and Richard B. Primack, "Environmental Ethics," in *Encyclopaedia of Biodiversity*, 2nd ed. (Elsevier Inc., 2013), 267–77, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/B9780123847195000125>.

*How to Draw a Ghost* also utilises the researcher's drawing skills. *Mapping Ghosts* is purposefully employed as a bridge between contextual research and design, as illustration/iconography vivifies the written word and intangible theories into visual language. It is also included as a research method to ensure this project produced a body of work that could be used in exhibition practice. This is important to the research as the method of exhibition enactment introduced spatiality outside the context of literature, thus creating a real space for viewers to explore fictive worlds. This method of *Galerie des fantômes* again mobilised the practitioner's experience in spatial design and completed a fulfilling migration from page to place. The concluding assessment exhibit was not finalised in form until deep into the project's timeline; it transitioned from being a display for all drawings, to a cabinet of curiosity, to a largescale picture, but settled in becoming the last method of *The Poet's Bureau*. The open-mindedness of this final exhibit is purposeful, as it allowed the natural flow of ideas and sequence of making to drift in and out. The finalisation of *The Poet's Bureau* reflects a harmonious gathering of concepts and contexts into one object, both in symbolism, research and practice.

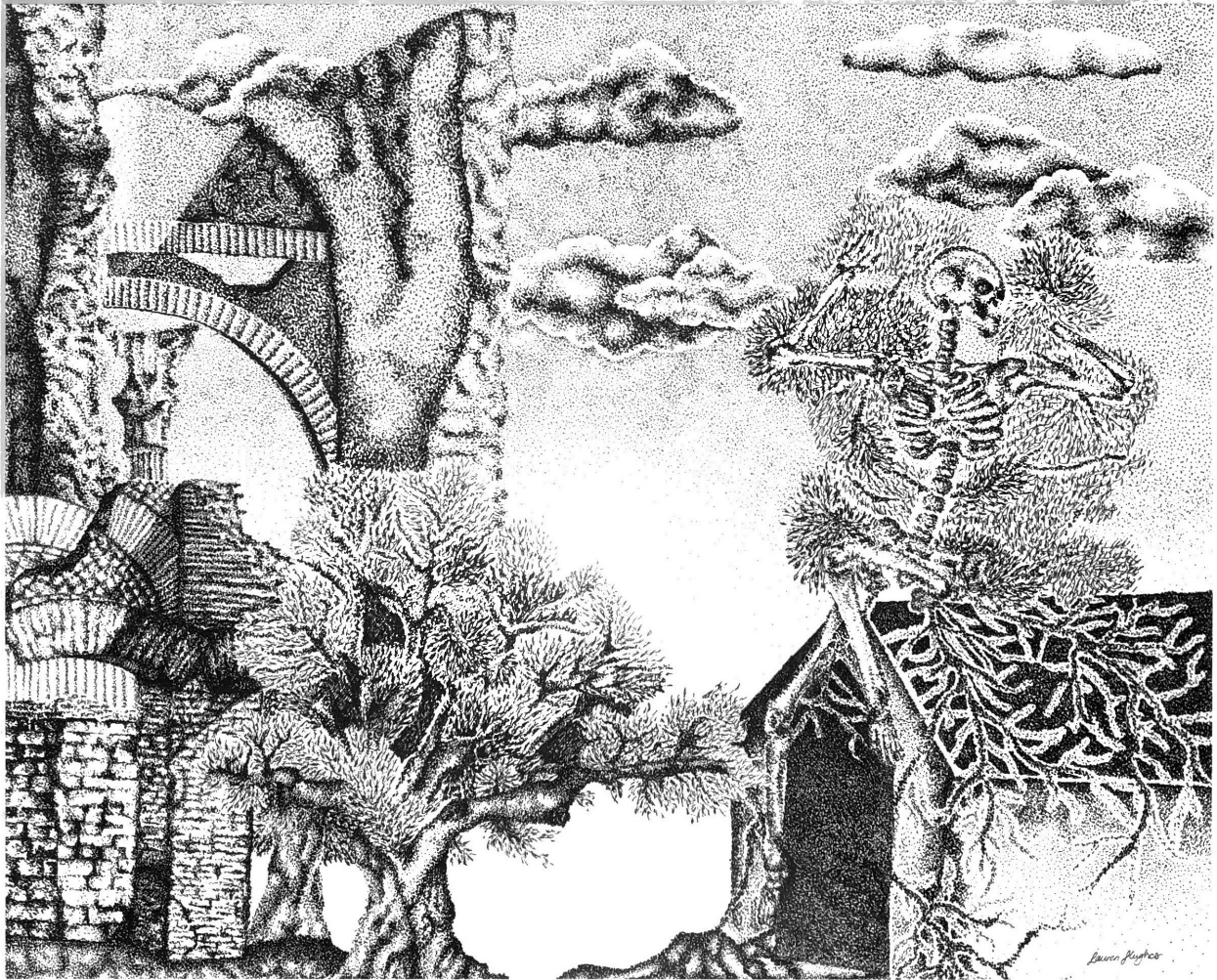


Figure 19. Hughes, L. The Grove, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

## Practice *discussion of making*

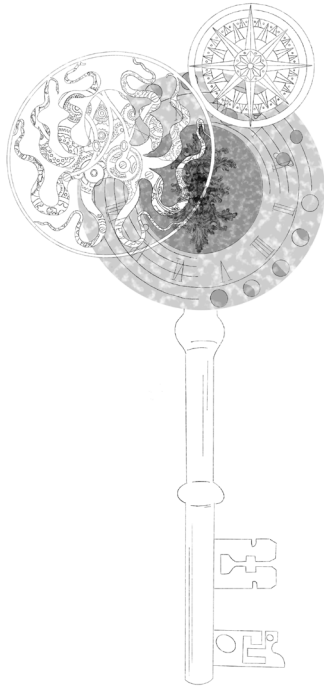


Figure 20. Hughes, L. The Tomb Key, Digital Drawing, 2022.

Art critic Gilda Williams wrote, 'Like a Gothic novelist, the artist sets the scene in an unfamiliar and frightening place'.<sup>56</sup> The practice section of this research project aims to justify this quote and create objects of making that communicate a conscious spatiality. This section will discuss the creative choices, techniques, overall making behaviour, and accompanying photographic documentation of the making practice.

### ***interpretative delineation***

The first step in the creative-making process is the method of interpretative delineation: *Mapping Ghosts*. As previously explained, this iconographic illustration method references and reflects found material descriptions in Lovecraftian literature. The reliant relationship between *Mapping Ghosts* and *Gothic Excavation* cannot be reiterated enough as though architecture conjures the sensory experience, it is literature that can describe it.<sup>57</sup>

This project's illustrative method began with depicting small objects from the Lovecraftian database of materiality. The first drawing produced is a door lock and key, featured in the story, *The Tomb*. These initial sketches were to experiment with the type of style and medium in which this practice would be continuing. The second group of illustrations depicted the Monoliths of the Ancient city Ib from the story *The Doom that came to Sarnath*.

<sup>56</sup> Gilda Williams, "How Deep Is Your Goth?," in *The Gothic; Documents of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2007), 12–19.

<sup>57</sup> Klaske Havik, "Lived Experience, Places Read: Toward an Urban Literacy," *OASE, Architecture & Literature Reflections/Imaginations*, no. 70 (2006): 37–49.



*Figure 21.* Hughes, L. The Tomb Lock, Digital Drawing, 2022.

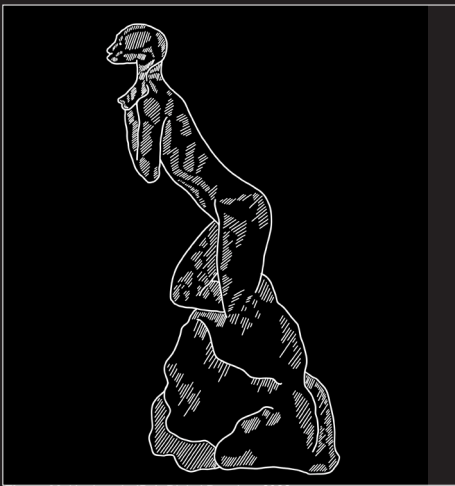


Figure 22. Hughes, L. IB 1, Digital Drawing, 2022.

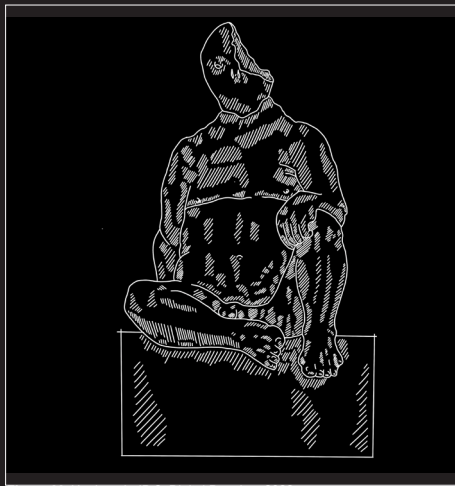


Figure 23. Hughes, L. IB 2, Digital Drawing, 2022.

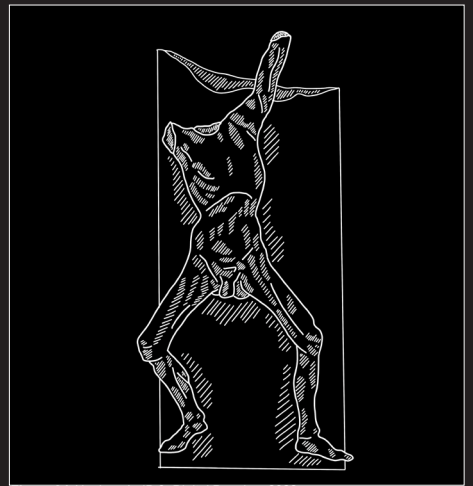


Figure 24. Hughes, L. IB 3, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 25. Hughes, L. IB 4, Digital Drawing, 2022.

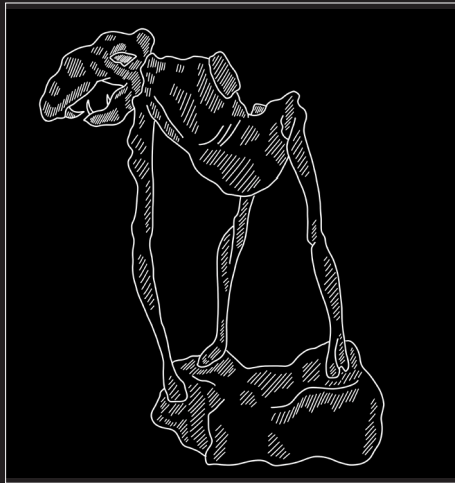


Figure 26. Hughes, L. IB 5, Digital Drawing, 2022.

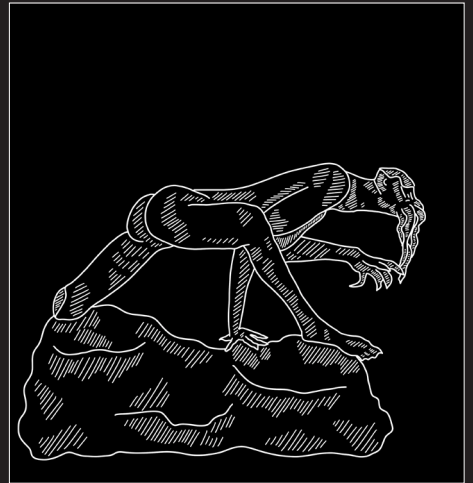


Figure 27. Hughes, L. IB 6, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 28. Hughes, L. IB 7, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 29. Hughes, L. IB 8, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 30. Hughes, L. IB 9, Digital Drawing, 2022.

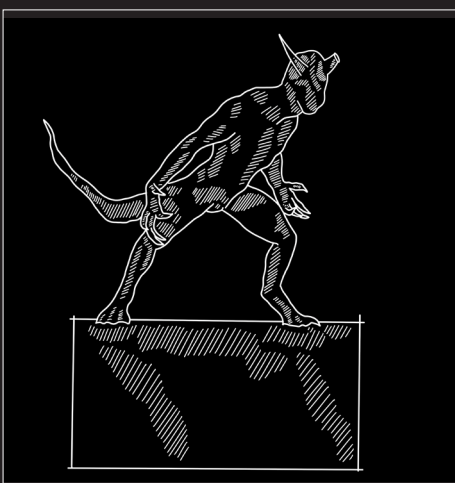


Figure 31. Hughes, L. IB 10, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 32. Hughes, L. IB 11, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 33. Hughes, L. IB 12, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 34. Hughes, L. IB 13, Digital Drawing, 2022.

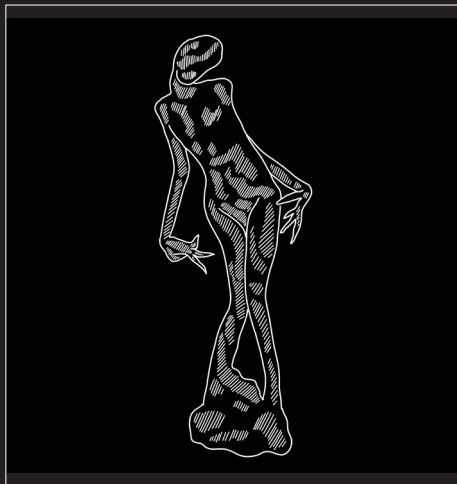


Figure 35. Hughes, L. IB 14, Digital Drawing, 2022.

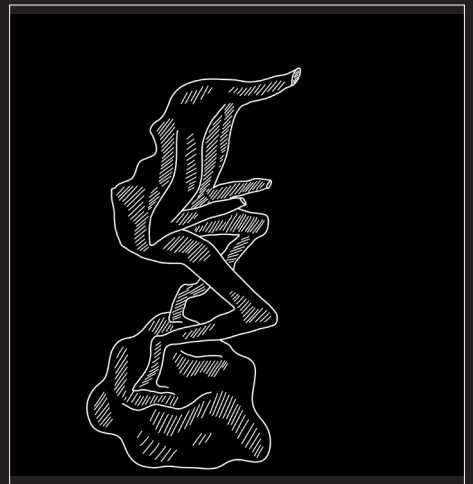


Figure 36. Hughes, L. IB 15, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 37. Hughes, L. IB 16, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 38. Hughes, L. IB 17, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 39. Hughes, L. IB 18, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 40. Hughes, L. IB 19, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 41. Hughes, L. IB 20, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 42. Hughes, L. IB 21, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 43. Hughes, L. IB 22, Digital Drawing, 2022.

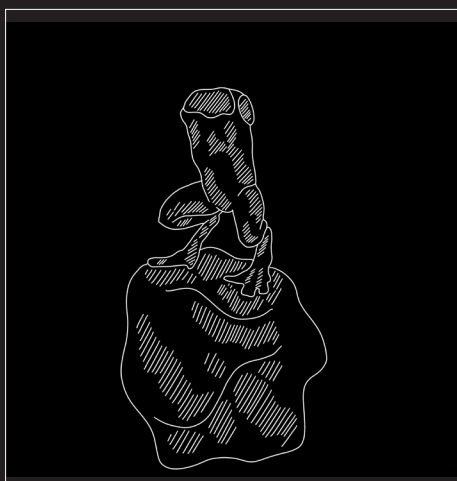


Figure 44. Hughes, L. IB 23, Digital Drawing, 2022.

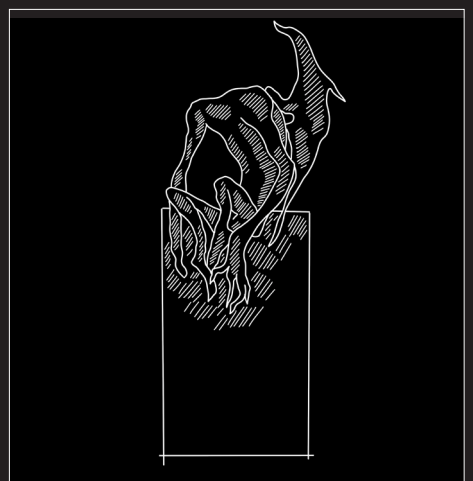
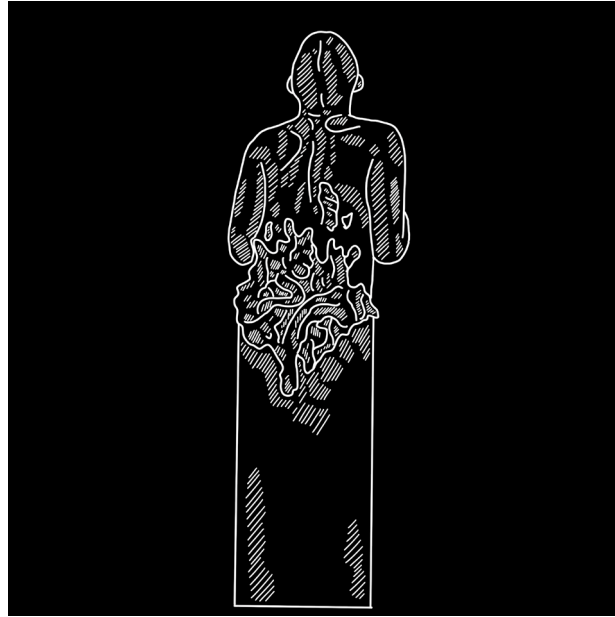


Figure 45. Hughes, L. IB 24 Digital Drawing, 2022.



**Figure 46.** Hughes, L. IB 25, Digital Drawing, 2022.

These initial drawings were an immediate indicator that the commencing illustrations should focus on full-body scenescapes, including detailed material descriptions, rather than depicting each material object separately. This decision to draw the entirety of Lovecraft's scenescapes ensured the delineation of spatial agency, as the architecture and materiality within his stories rely on their surrounding contexts to expose their intangible capabilities.

The following sequence of illustrations focused on portraying full spatial descriptions, intending to show Lovecraft's potent use of exteriority and interiority to represent the separation between reality and the unknown. 19th century authors largely adopted this juxtaposition between the placidness of the outside and the Uncanniness of the inside as it played into the overall Gothic themes of migration and dichotomy.<sup>58</sup> This collection of illustrations is entitled *Exteriors and Interiors*.

This collection comprises 12 scenescapes from Lovecraftian literature and 24 digital line drawings. These drawings' digital, monochrome approach is purposeful as the projected next step is to manipulate these sketches into a 3D form. This intended practice progression was concluded after the discovery of German artist, Alexandra Leykauf.

<sup>58</sup> Anthony Vidler, "The Architecture of the Uncanny: The Unhomely Houses of the Romantic Sublime," *Assemblage*, no. 3 (1987): 7–29, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3171062>.

# Exteriors & Interiors *scenescape rendering*

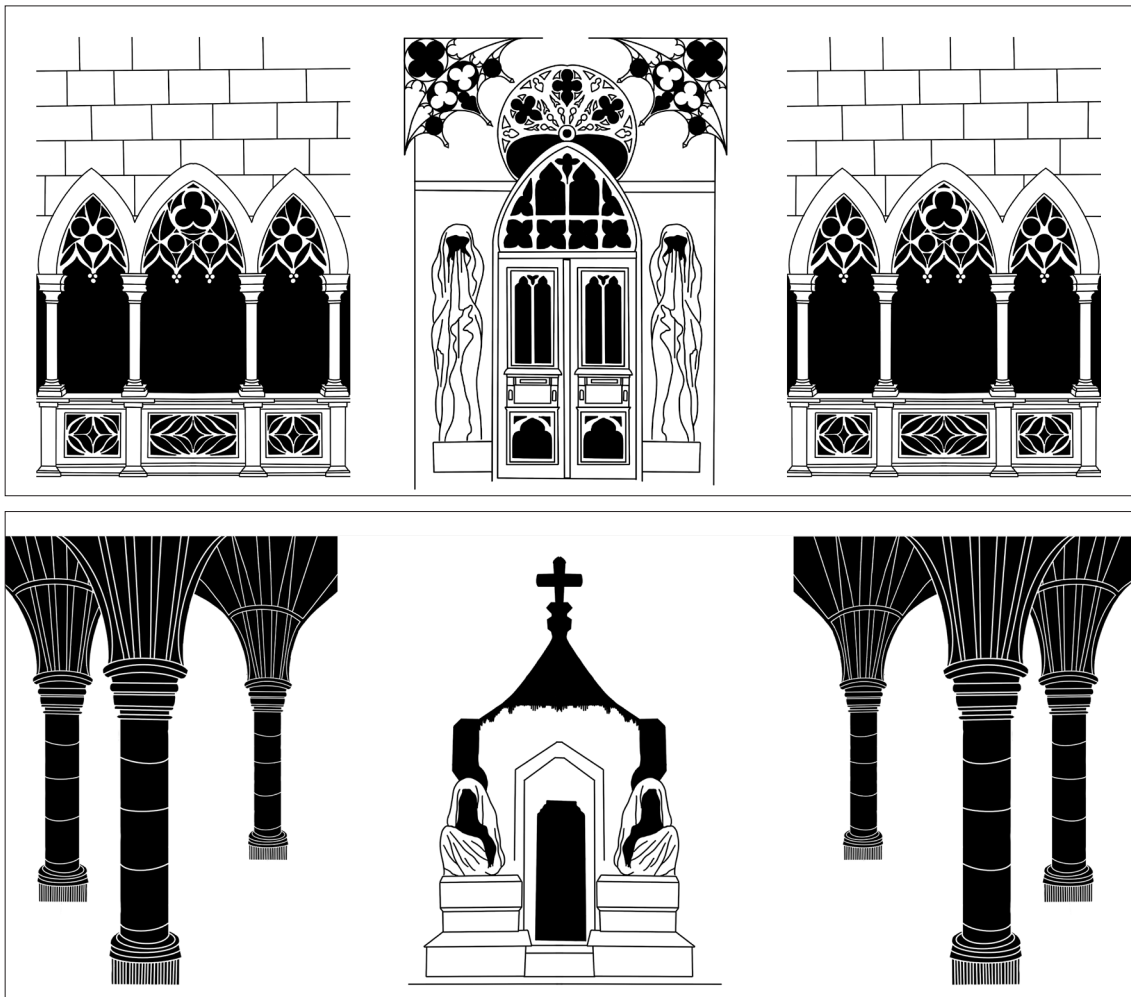


Figure 47. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 1, Digital Drawing, 2022.

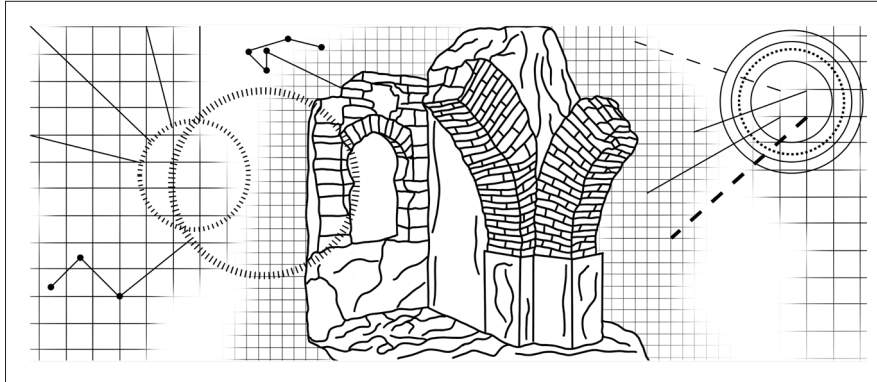
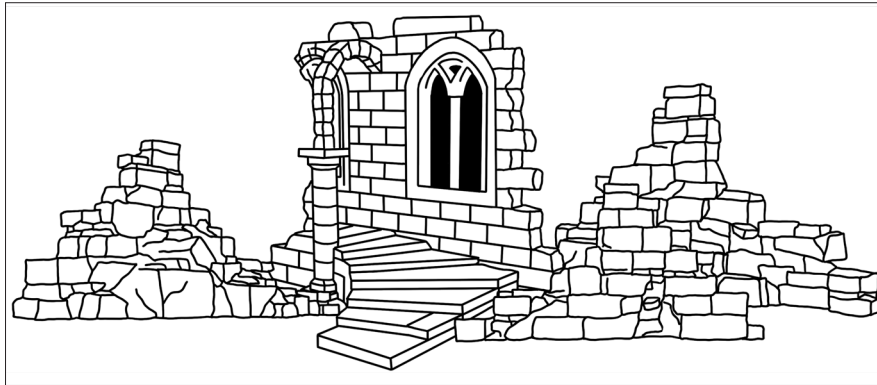


Figure 48. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 3, Digital Drawing, 2022.

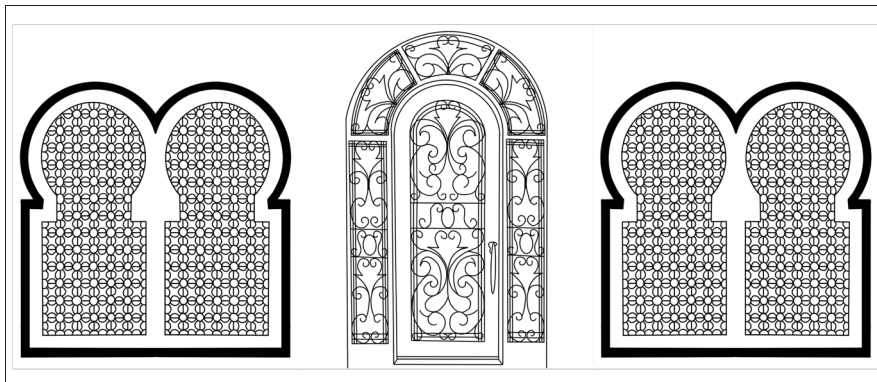
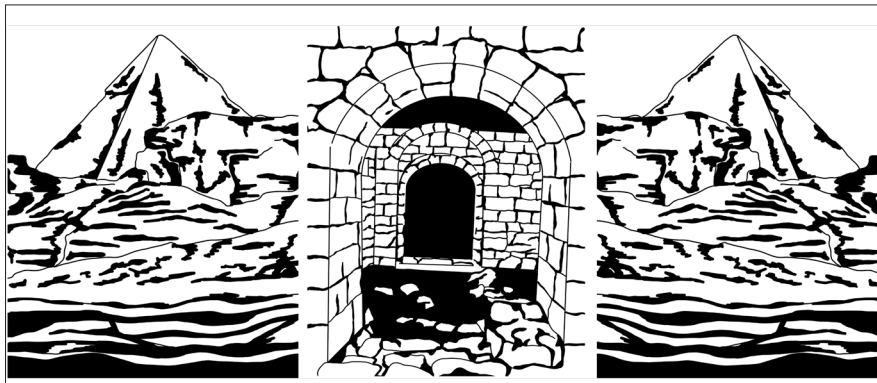


Figure 49. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 4, Digital Drawing, 2022.

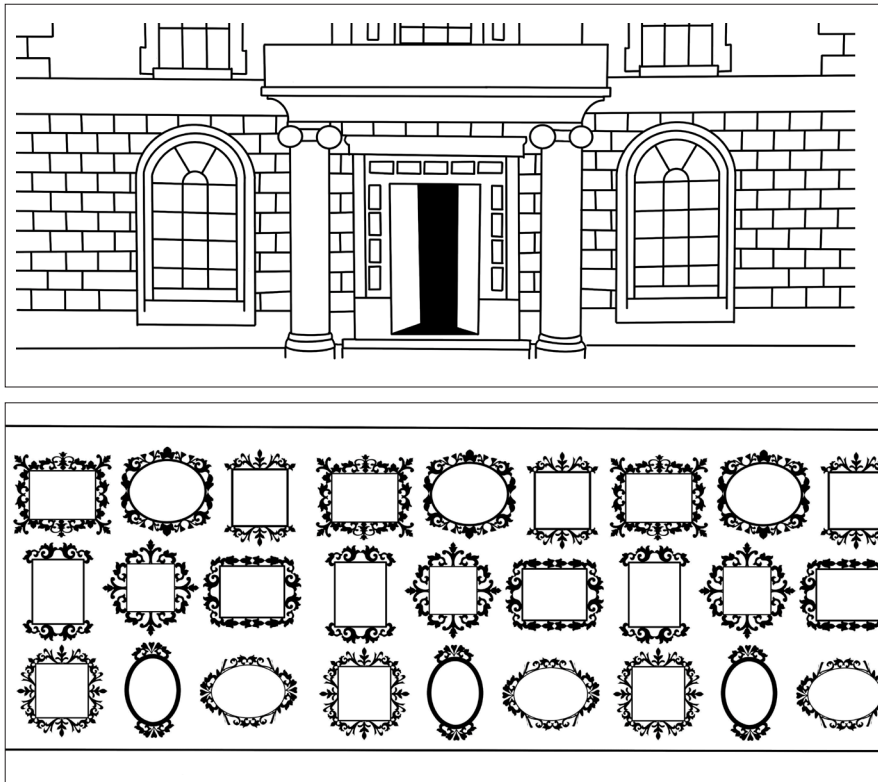


Figure 50. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 5, Digital Drawing, 2022.

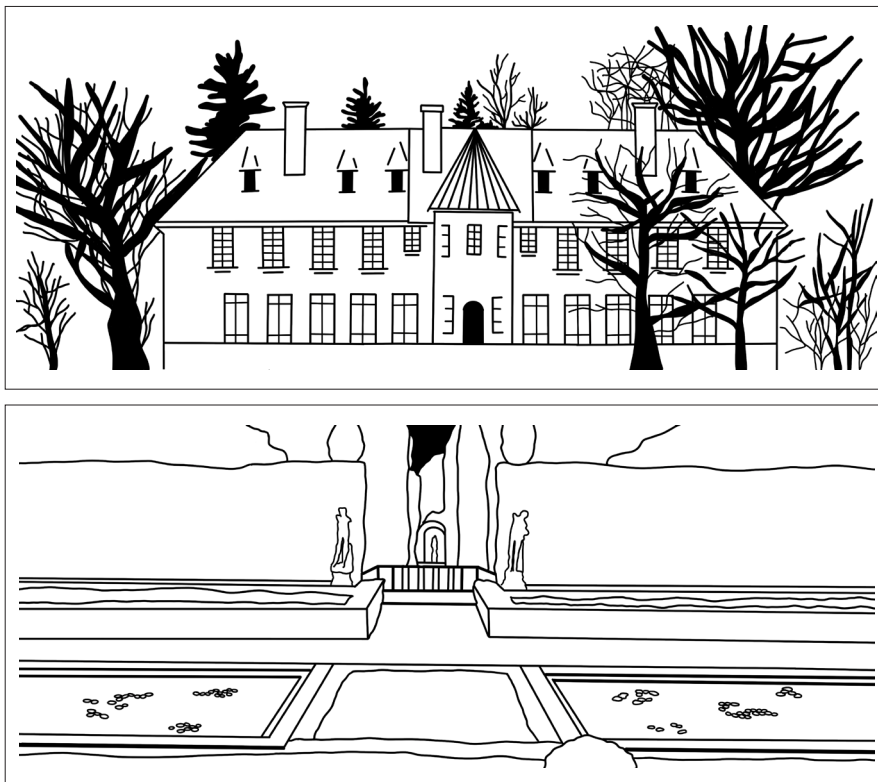


Figure 51. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 6, Digital Drawing, 2022.

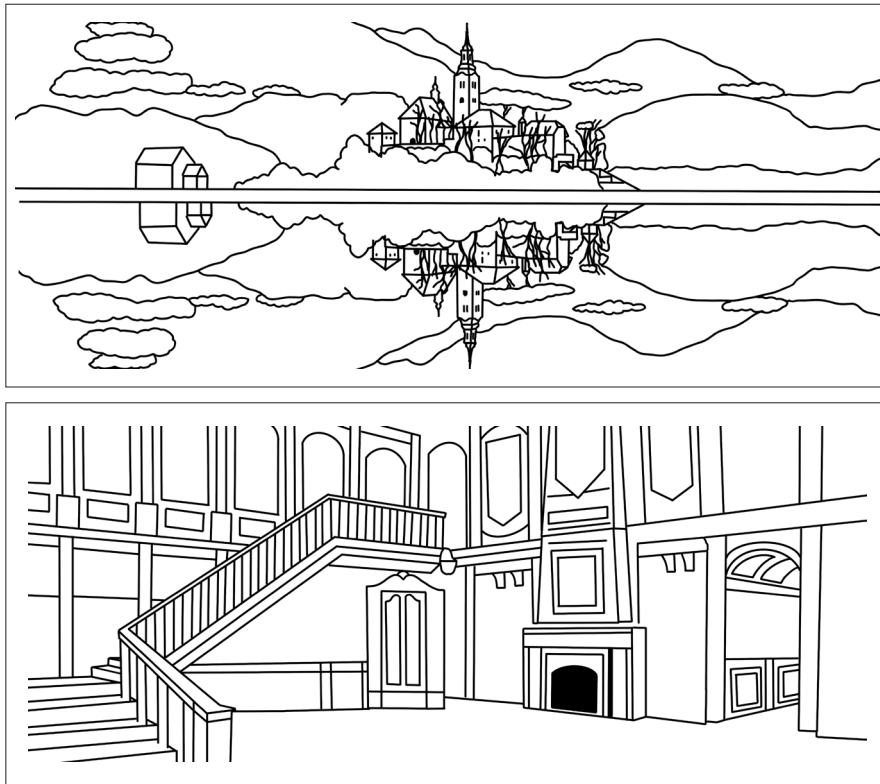


Figure 52. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 7, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 53. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 8, Digital Drawing, 2022.

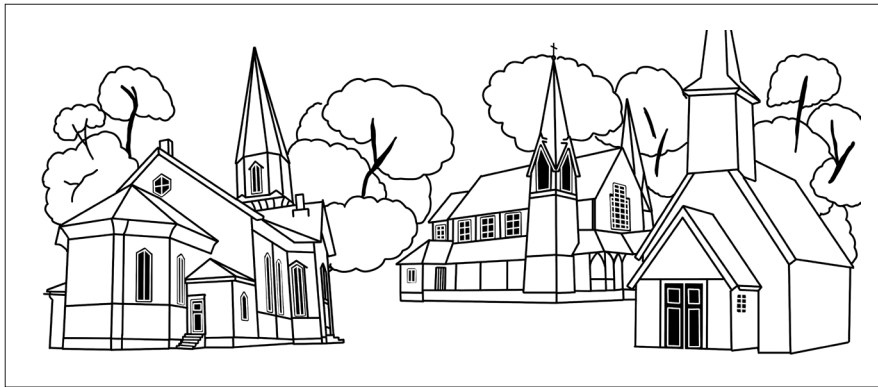


Figure 54. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 9, Digital Drawing, 2022.

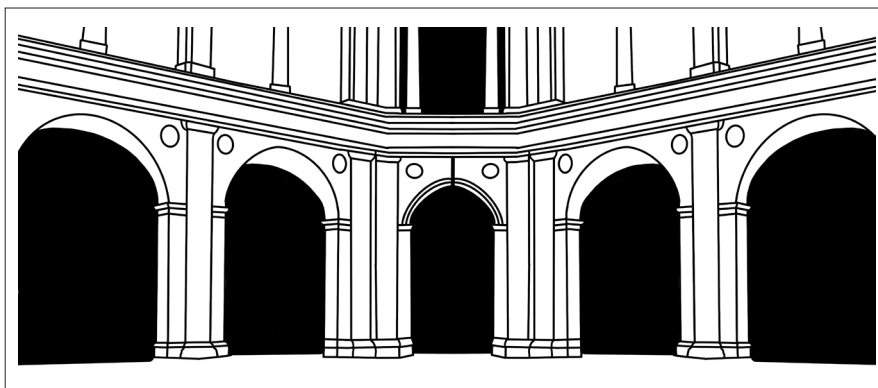
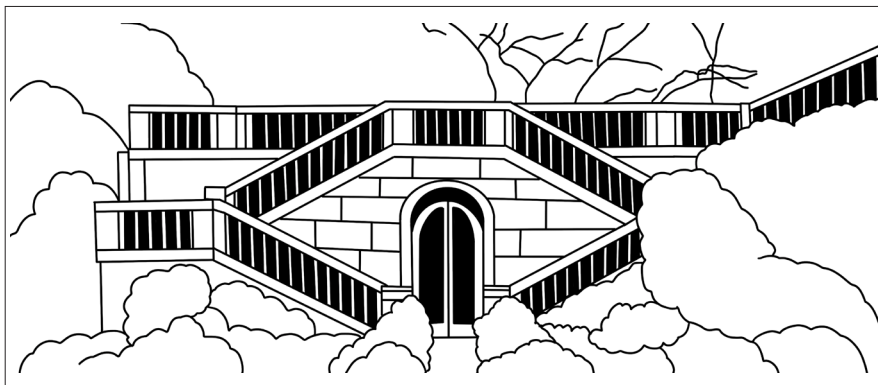


Figure 55. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior10, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 56. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 11, Digital Drawing, 2022.



Figure 57. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 2, Digital Drawing, 2022.

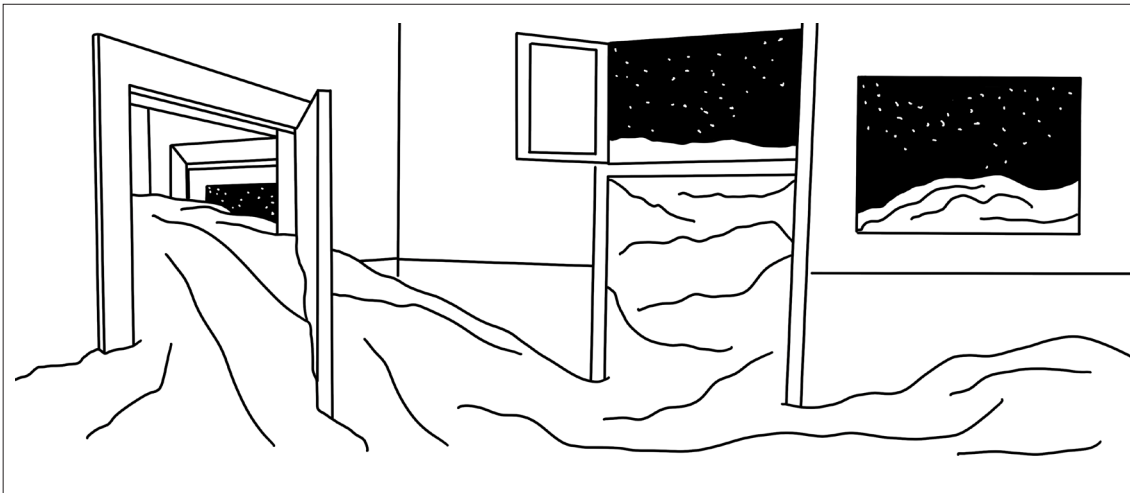
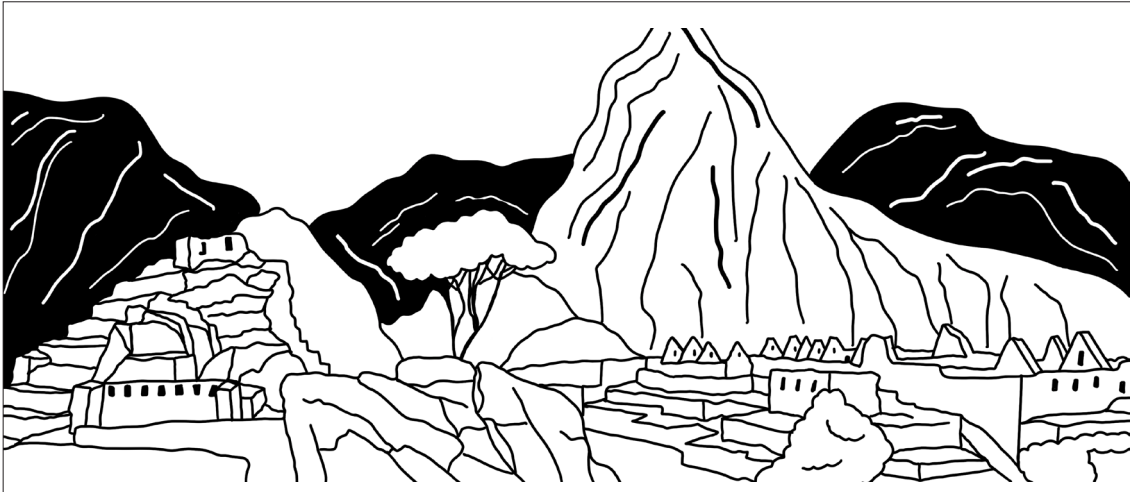
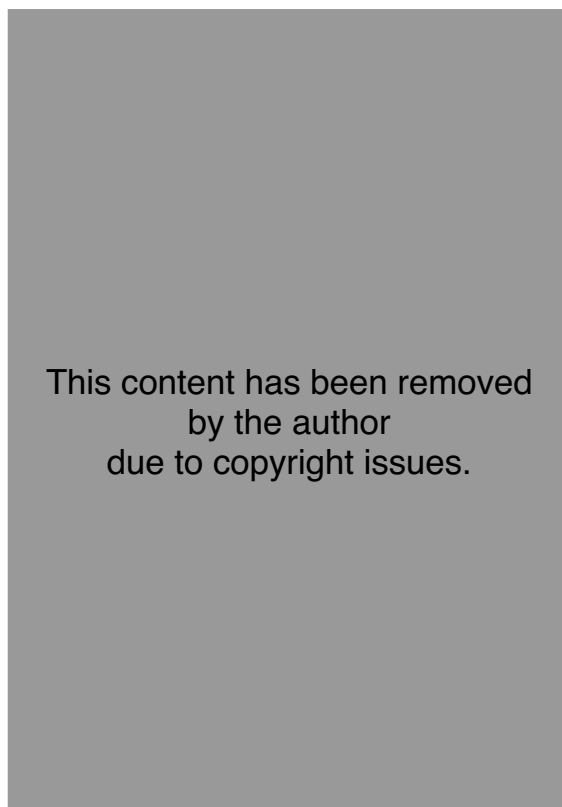


Figure 58. Hughes, L. Exterior/Interior 12, Digital Drawing, 2022.

Alexandra Leykauf's interdisciplinary work harmonises her photographic prowess and installation practice. Leykauf's installation works embody themes of perspective, deception, and illusion.<sup>59</sup> Working frequently with monochromatic photography, Leykauf adapts her imagery into 3D forms by screen-printing them onto abstract structures.

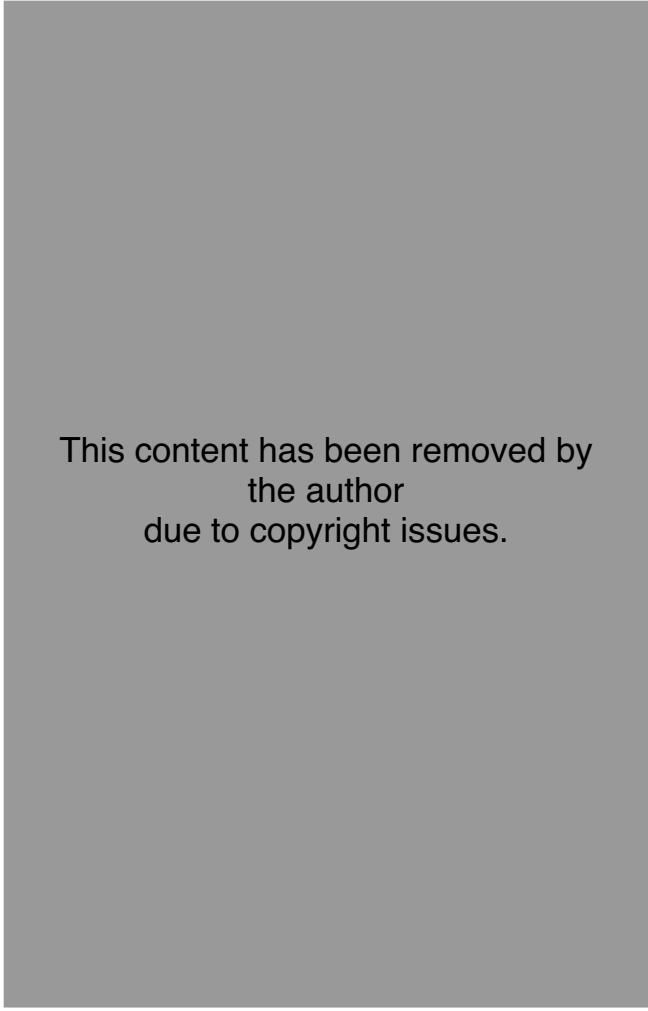
A work which directly inspired this practice is Leykauf's 2012 group exhibit, *Lieber Aby Warburg, Was Tun Mit Den Bildern*, which features an array of 3D aluminium structures; one being *Bureau-Cabinet*, a similar artwork to that of the previously cited Piero Fornasetti. The artwork *Zeit* is a particularly impactful piece to this research, as it exemplifies the idea of interiority through its print and form. This piece creates a pocket room inside the gallery by contorting the aluminium sheet into a house-like shape with three walls and a ceiling. Leykauf describes this manipulation of photography as turning them out like a glove, and these metal objects transform into origami-esque structures which migrate the once-2D photograph into a haptic space.<sup>60</sup> Leykauf often uses the imagery of architecture in her pieces to almost relocate the spatial scene through 3D manipulation.



**Figure 59.** Leykauf, A. *Zeit*, Silk Screen on Aluminium, 2012. Sourced: [https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/i/Dear\\_Aby\\_Warburg\\_\\_\\_\\_/i\\_IMG\\_13/1](https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/i/Dear_Aby_Warburg____/i_IMG_13/1)

<sup>59</sup> Cornerhouse Publications, "Alexandra Leykauf," Publication House, Cornerhouse Publications, 2010, <https://www.cornerhousepublications.org/publications/alexandra-leykauf/>.

<sup>60</sup> Sophie Berrebi, "Exposing the Seams of Pictures," *Kehrer Verlag Heidelberg*, Lieber Aby Warburg, was tun mit den Bildern?, 2012, [https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/t/Dear\\_Aby\\_Warburg\\_\\_\\_\\_/Exposing\\_the\\_seams\\_o](https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/t/Dear_Aby_Warburg____/Exposing_the_seams_o)



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the author  
due to copyright issues.

**Figure 60.** Leykauf, A. Bureau-Cabinet, Silk Screen on Aluminium, 2012.  
Sourced: [https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/i/Dear\\_Aby\\_Warburg\\_\\_\\_\\_/i\\_IMG\\_13/5](https://www.alexandraleykauf.com/i/Dear_Aby_Warburg____/i_IMG_13/5)

In this way, Leykauf's use of exterior and interior, as well as spatial adaption, reflects the work of Piero Fornasetti, as both artists were able to enact a secondary interior within a space. The following screen-printing practice follows these artists' exploration of space within space, as the images produced in *Exteriors and Interiors* migrate onto aluminium sheets to become artefacts of spatial agency.

# AI Houses *exterior/interior exploration*

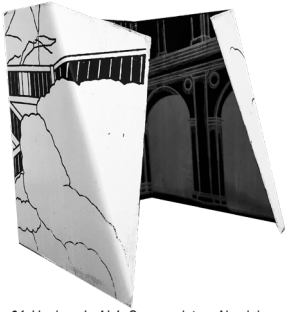


Figure 61. Hughes, L. AI 1, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.



Figure 62. Hughes, L. AI 2, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

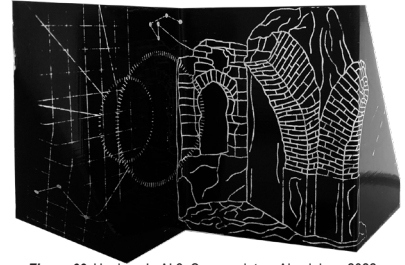


Figure 63. Hughes, L. AI 3, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.



Figure 64. Hughes, L. AI 4, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

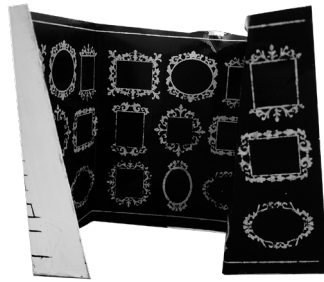


Figure 65. Hughes, L. AI 5, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.



Figure 66. Hughes, L. AI 6, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

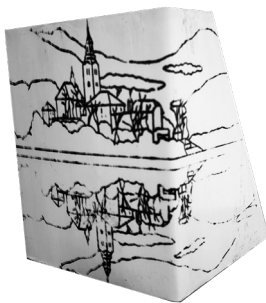


Figure 67. Hughes, L. AI 7, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.



Figure 68. Hughes, L. AI 8, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

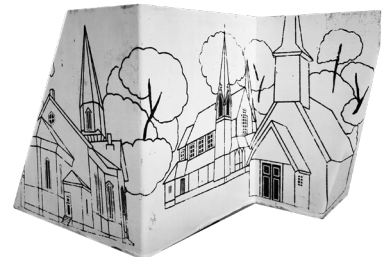


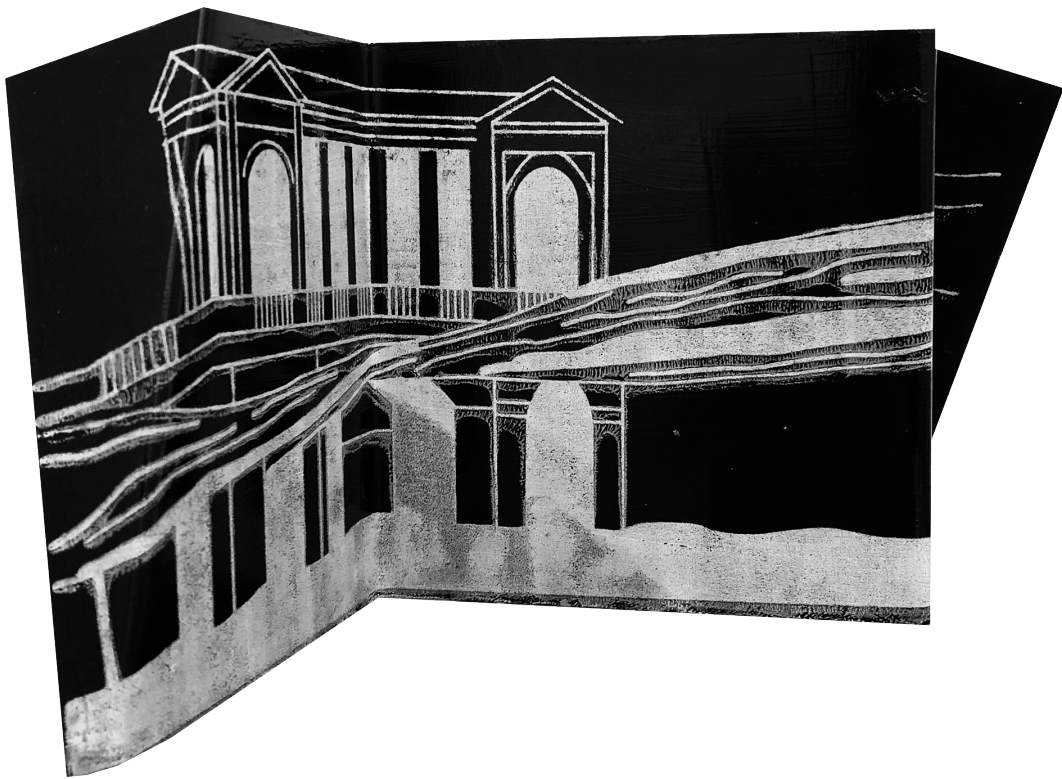
Figure 69. Hughes, L. AI 9, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

This series of 3D models is entitled *AI Houses*. These 12 models were created through a screen-printing process, where the images were transferred onto a coated (primed with a porous topcoat) sheet of aluminium and then contorted by a plate-rolling machine. The operation of *AI Houses* was successful, with only three prior trials using different or no metal primers. The results achieved the projected goals, and the artefacts embodied a pocket of spatiality. The two-sided illustration and bending of angles created a 3D separation between the exterior and interior. This contrast is made particularly potent by the inverted black interior; symbolic of the enclosed, darker space of houses.

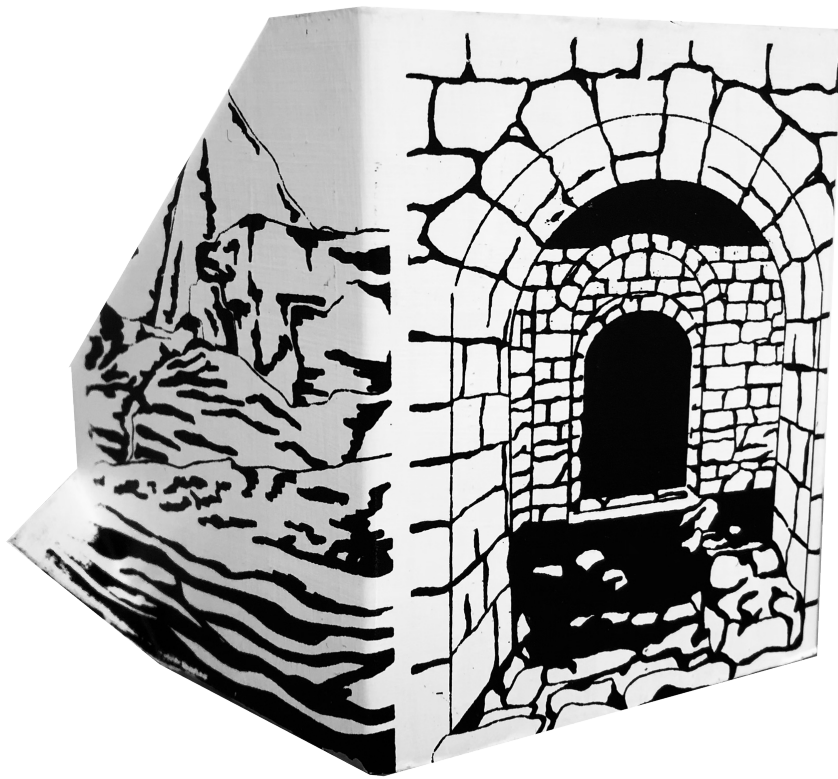
The next step in *Mapping Ghosts*, informed by these *Exteriors and Interiors* and *AI Houses* collections, is a return to traditional illustrative methods (pen and paper). This migration to hand drawing reflected on the segregation between early 20th-century writing and digitalised line drawing. Lovecraft's material descriptions clashed with the modernity of this illustration technique and style. Drawing did not achieve the immense detail and frivolous nature of Lovecraft (the traits that secured him as the literature informant of this project); the return to traditional drawing is enacted to achieve a body of work which reflect the stylistic period of Cosmic horror to ensure detailed portrayal of Lovecraft's descriptions.



**Figure 70.** Hughes, L. AI 10, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.



*Figure 71.* Hughes, L. AI 11, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

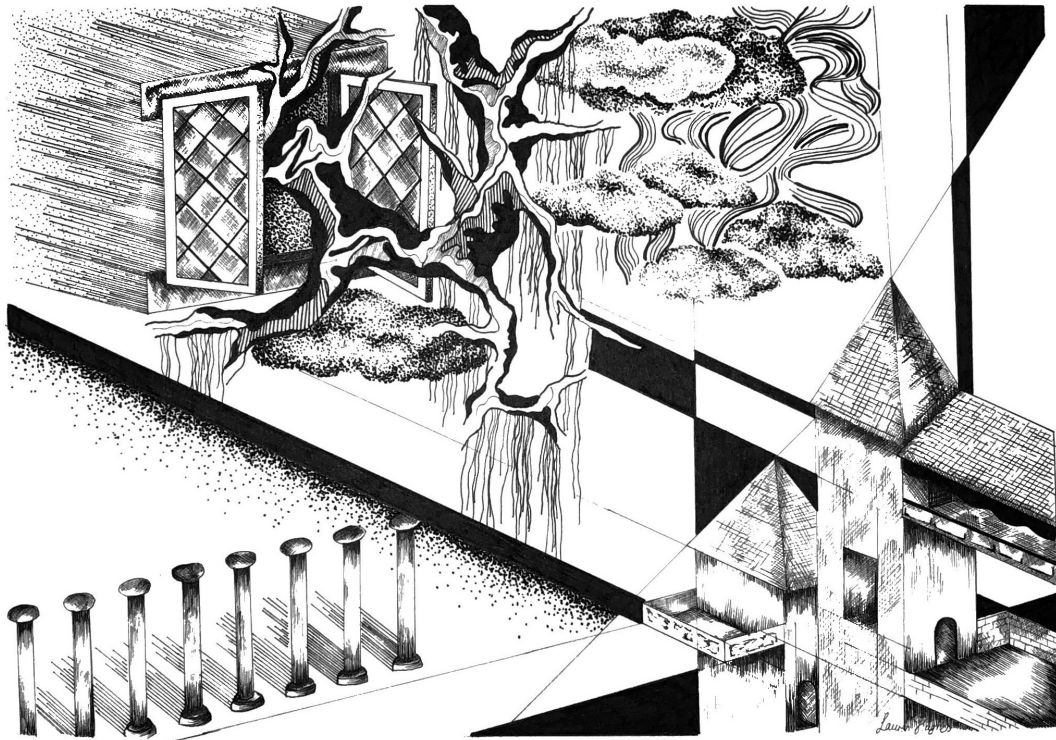


*Figure 72.* Hughes, L. Al 12, Screenprint on Aluminium, 2022.

The hand-drawing section of *Mapping Ghosts* utilises the method of ink pen sketches depicting Lovecraftian scenscapes and materiality. This collection of drawings is not enacted to produce beautiful images (although the achievement of which would be gladly welcomed), as this project views the act of drawing as being less about artistic excellence or talent, being about more than art itself; rather, it uses drawing as means of language, a way to think in pictures.<sup>61</sup>

This method's perspective comes from an observer lens; it does not aim to fabricate drawings or bend them to stylistic will, but instead aims to create imagery that serves its purpose as accurate illustrations of Lovecraftian materiality. In this making section, the process is easily explainable as putting pen to paper and drawing the scenes that Lovecraft evokes in his writings. The focus on exterior/interior carries through, and all small elements of each story congregate together to form a larger drawing of spatiality.

<sup>61</sup> *How Drawing Helps You Think.*



**Figure 73.** Hughes, L. Polaris, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

This ideology of smaller images collecting to create a greater one reflects the Rose Window analogy made in the *Gothic Excavation* section. It also aligns with famous writer John Ruskin's theory of Gothic architecture; as in his book *The Nature of Gothic*, he writes:

*'And it is so in a far greatest degree to make the abstraction of the Gothic character intelligible because that character itself is made up of many mingled ideas and can consist only in their union. That is to say, pointed arches do not constitute Gothic--nor vaulted roofs--nor flying buttresses, nor grotesque sculptures; but all or some of these things--amid many other things with them--when they come together so as to have life.'*<sup>62</sup>

This method of illustration also reflects an aspect of Ruskin's drawing practice, as he drew not for the sake of art, but used it as a tool of observation and investigation.<sup>63</sup> Much like this project's dedication to studying the materiality of Lovecraftian literature; Ruskin's drawings were informed by only his passion for architecture, geology, and for studying the world around him.<sup>64</sup>

The drawings produced in the method of *Mapping Ghosts* reflect its informant literature in multiple ways. Firstly, and most obviously, through iconography, but also in the way architecture and literature have structure and transition. Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes discuss this through the idea of a passage; how a passage in architecture is a 'transitory space' which takes us from one place to another.<sup>65</sup> In contrast, a passage in literature is more comparable to a 'room' which situates a moment in the text.<sup>66</sup> Although a book symbolises an architectural passage, it carries readers through narratives, perspectives, time, and space. These illustrations aim for the same transitory effect, as they vivify Gothic materiality and situate spatiality.

<sup>62</sup> John Ruskin, *The Nature of Gothic: A Chapter from The Stones of Venice* (United Kingdom: Allen, 1900).

<sup>63</sup> *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*, YouTube Video (National Gallery of Canada, 2014).

<sup>64</sup> *John Ruskin: Artist and Observer*.

<sup>65</sup> Katja Grillner and Rolf Hughes, "Room within a View: A Conversation on Writing and Architecture," *OASE, Architecture & Literature Reflections/Imaginations*, no. 70 (2006): 56–69.

<sup>66</sup> Grillner and Hughes.



Figure 74. Hughes, L. Hypnos, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

Mapping Ghosts  
*interpretative delineation*

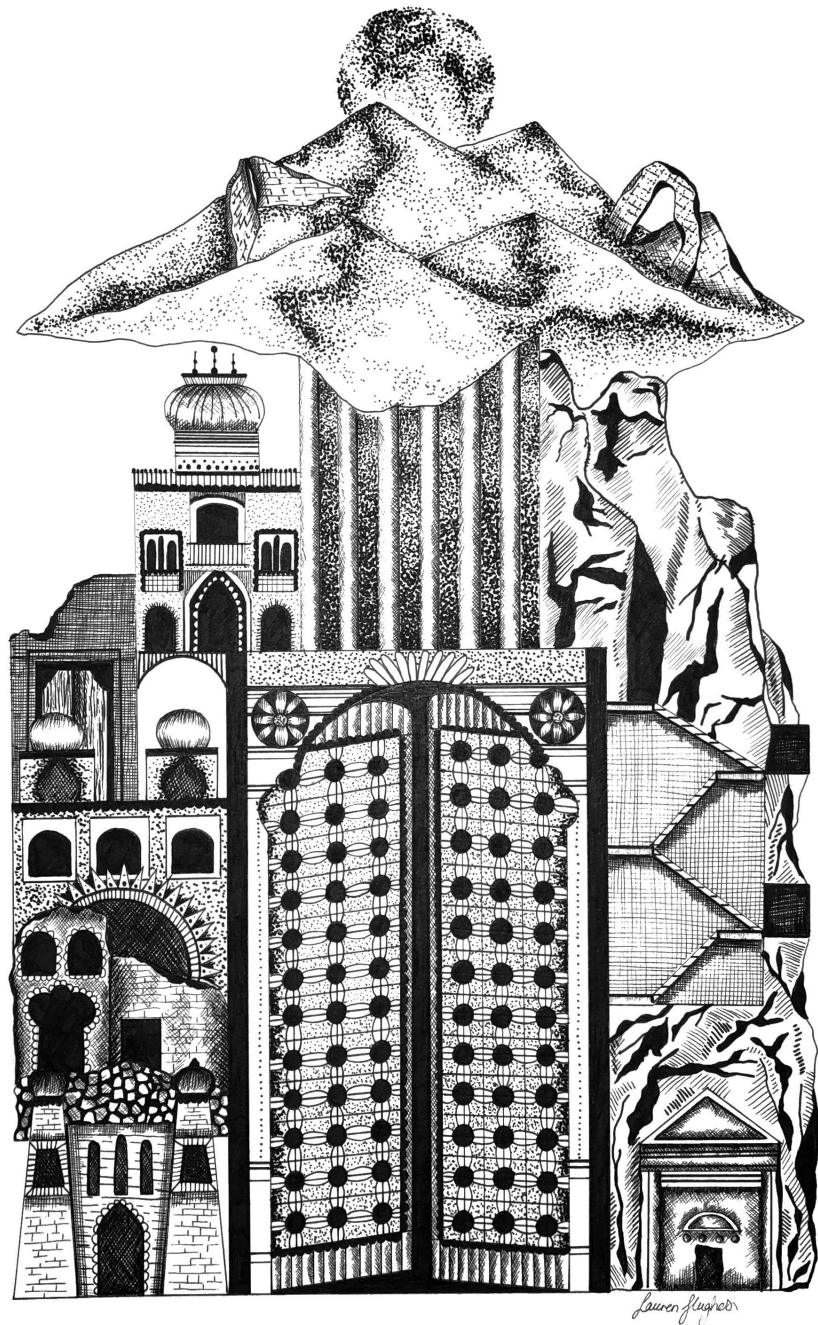


Figure 75. Hughes, L. Abduhl Alhazred's Poem, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.

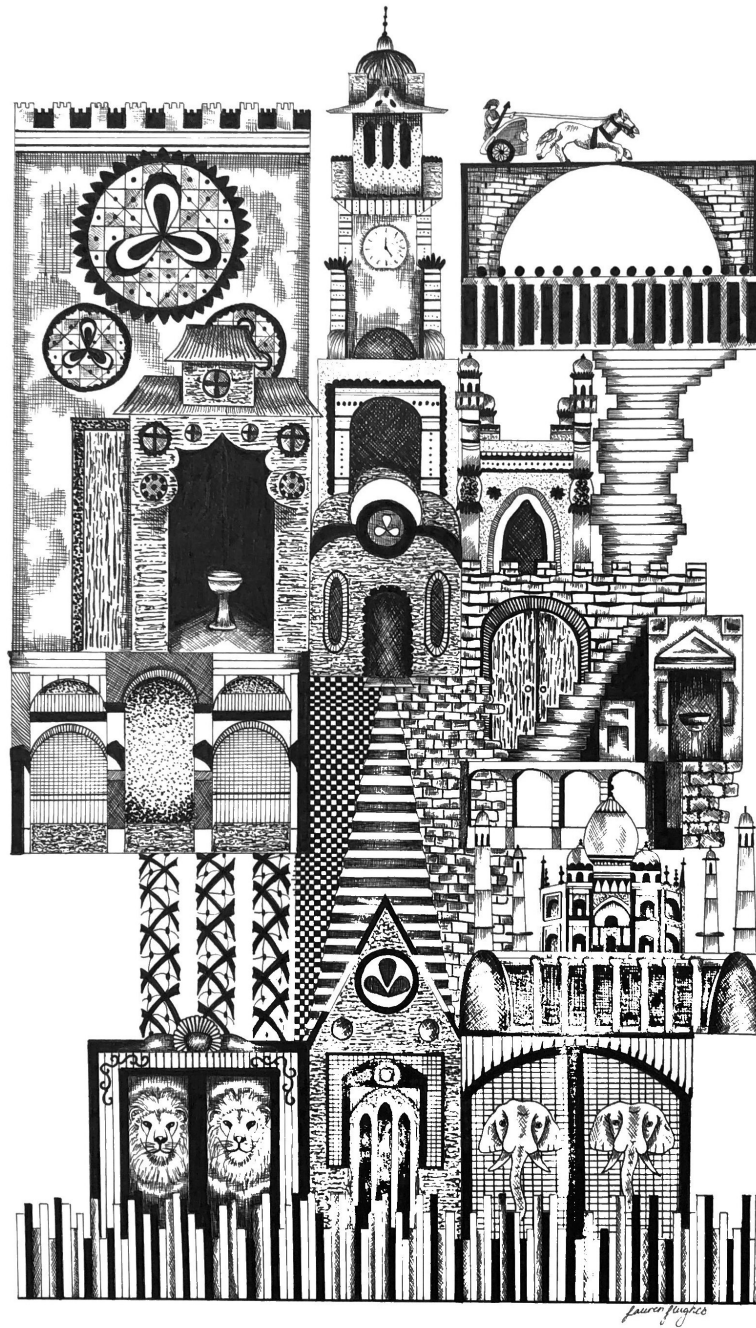
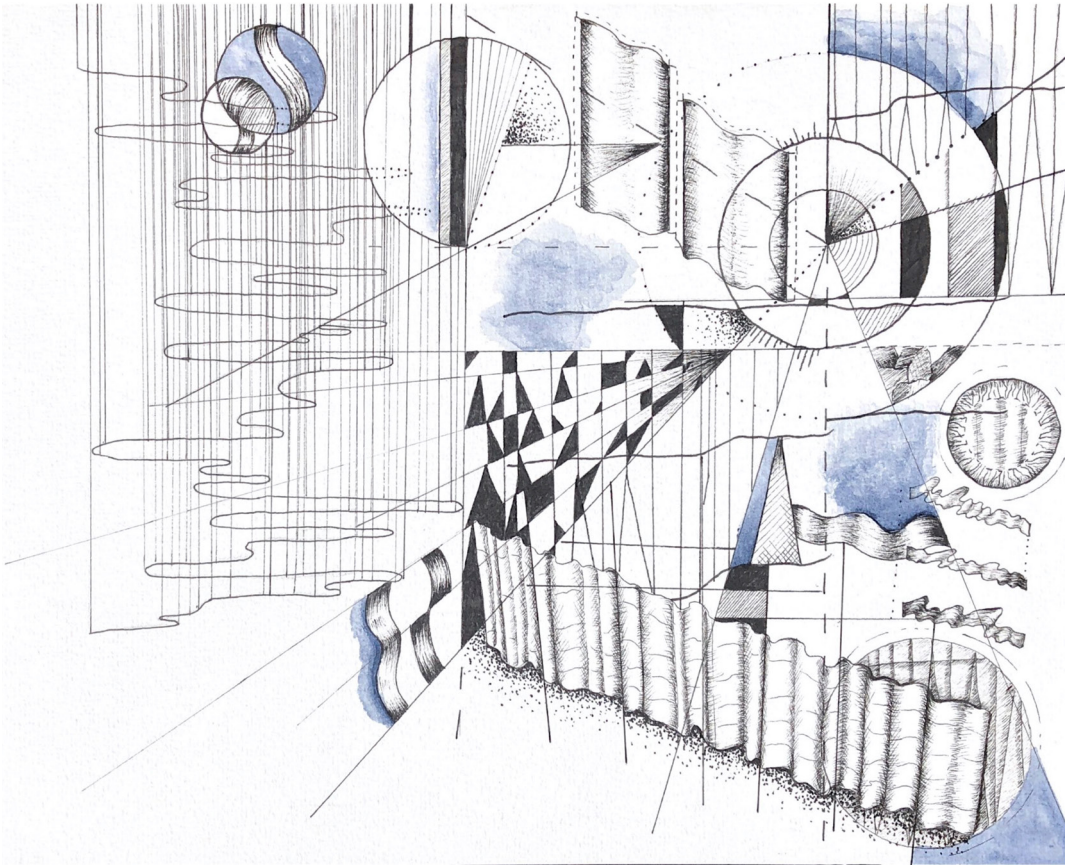


Figure 76. Hughes, L. Sarnath, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.



Figure 77. Hughes, L. Dream in the Witch House, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.



**Figure 78.** Hughes, L. Gilman's Attic, Ink Pen Sketch, 2021.



Figure 79. Hughes, L. What the Moon Brings i, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

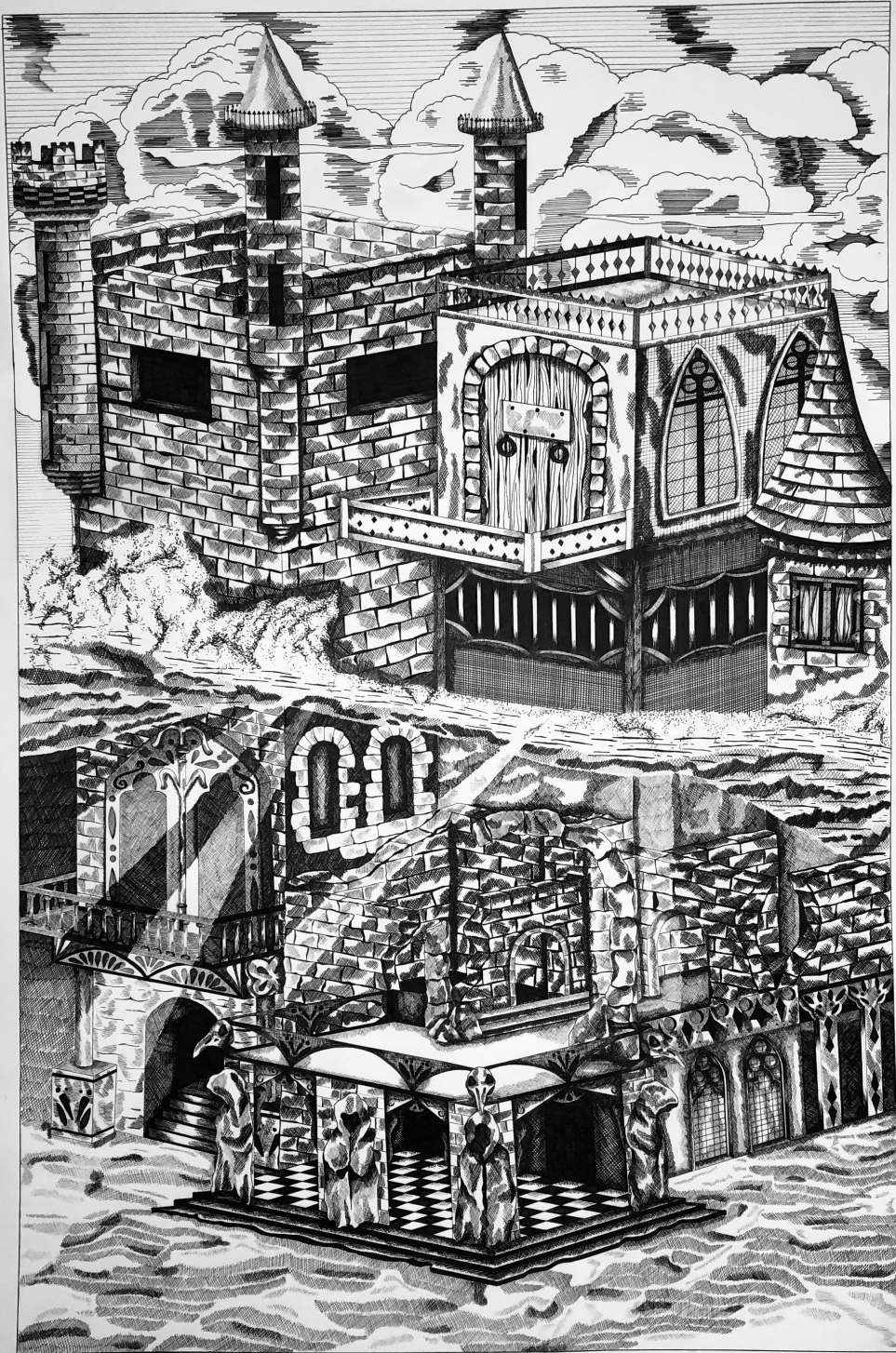


Figure 80. Hughes, L. What the Moon Brings ii, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

## **exhibition enactment**

The second practice section is commenced from the collection of drawings produced in the *Mapping Ghosts* stage, the method of exhibition enactment - *Galerie des fantômes*. Divided into four gallery installations featuring four collections of artefacts, this stage of practice moved as a continual growth of work. This research stage is closely linked to the project's key phrase of spatial agency, as it is in this section of exhibition enactment that 2D illustrations became a spatial experience.

## Galerie Des Fantômes **lake house art centre**

The first exhibit was enacted at the Lakehouse Arts Centre from the 10th of February to the 17th of February. This exhibition was arranged through a call for entries advertisement from the gallery\*.

The framing of the artworks was an enormous task, as there were over 25 drawings, including two oversize works (*What the Moon Brings I & II*). The decision to use plain 50mm black frames separated the white paper, white mats, and the gallery's white walls. The two larger pieces used black border mats to dramatise their size and detail. This exhibit's preparation included gallery promotion, which was achieved through flyers, posters, and social media, and included an opening night. Although this gallery space had been set in motion since September, and all publications and set-up were prepared months in advance, the exhibit's opening and entire timeslot occurred the same week as the Auckland floods. This was highly unfortunate and entirely unavoidable, and it did regrettably impact on the exposure of the work.

The installation process required spatial thinking and prior planning. The exhibit preparation included multiple site visits before installation, and acquisition of gallery floorplans with room measurements. The collection layout was adapted slightly on the day, although it followed the proposed room plan almost precisely. The method of hanging is adjustable hooks suspended from a wall line which are then attached to the D-rings on the back of the frames. This hanging process is highly efficient as frames could be easily adjusted and even moved against the wall. The installation of all 28 pieces took three hours with two people hanging\*.

\* Once this project's proposed drawing collection was accepted, the Lakehouse Art Centre offered to cover the entire cost of the exhibit through lottery funding, which this research and its practitioner could not be more thankful for.

\* Please note that not all artworks exhibited were in relation to this project. Five pieces were from the practitioner's personal drawing collection.

Excluding the tragedy of the Auckland floods, the Lakehouse exhibit is a great success and project (and personal) milestone, as it secured a public exhibition outside the university's involvement. This event allowed this research to begin its secondary investigation into spatiality through the layout of gallery spaces and the migration from 2D fictional spaces to real spatial agency and navigation.

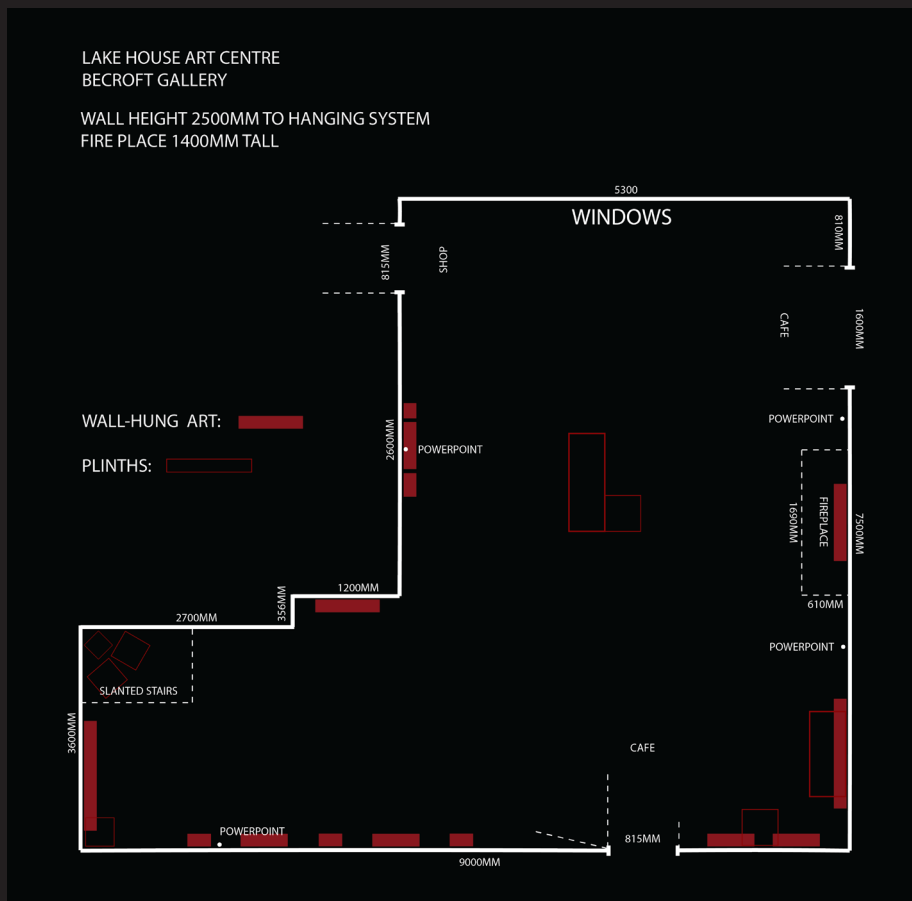


Figure 81. Hughes, L. Proposed Floorplan, Digital Drawing, 2023.

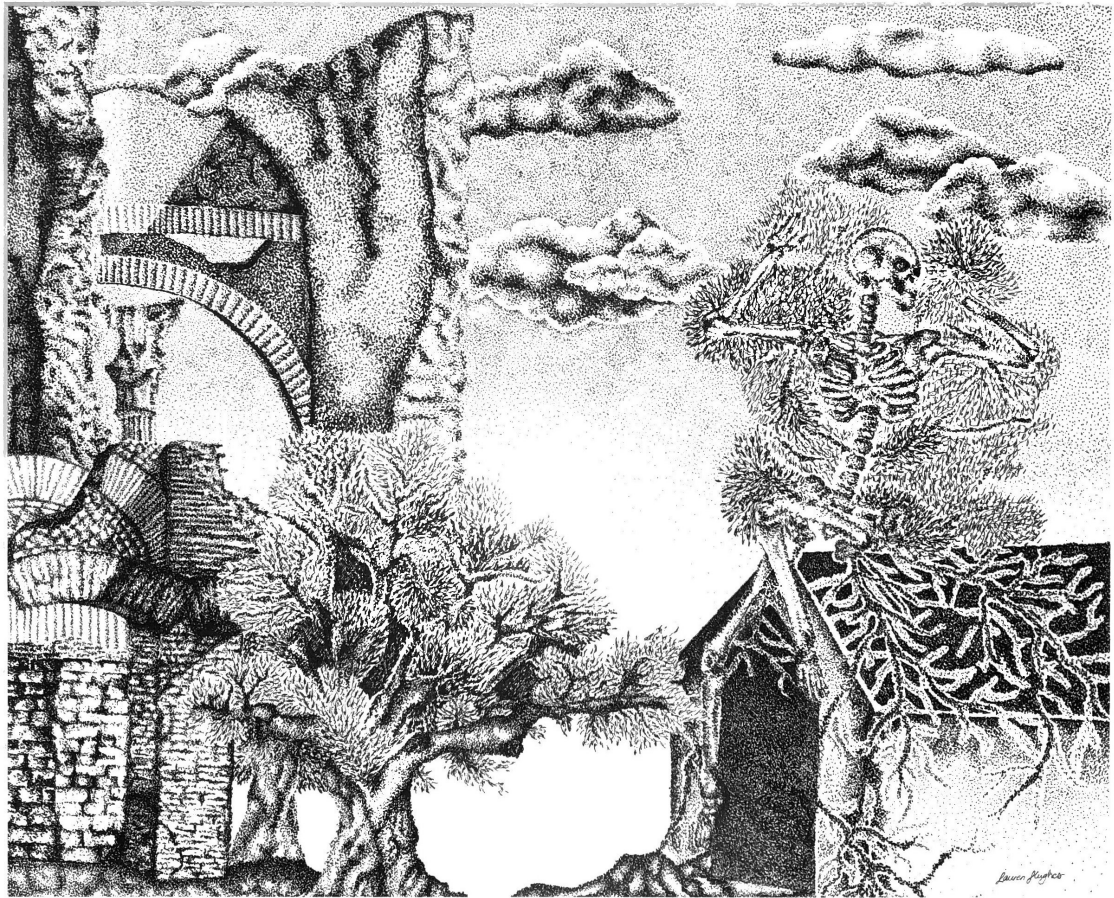


Figure 82. Hughes, L. The Grove, Ink Pen Sketch, 2022.

A specific drawing within this exhibit is entitled *The Grove* (640"490mm), and its accompanying Lovecraftian story is *The Tree* which is about two sculptors in Ancient Greece. The opening line is 'Fata viam invenient' which translates from Latin to mean 'fate will find a way'.<sup>67</sup> The two men, Kalos and Musides, live together in a villa on Mount Maenalus, the men are good friends but enjoy different pastimes as Musides enjoys festivities, while Kalos prefers the calmness of the olive grove. The sculptors are given a commission from 'the Tyrant of Syracuse', and they are both asked to create a bust of Tyche, but only the most beautiful sculpture is erected in Syracuse.<sup>68</sup> Soon after the Tyrant's visit, Kalos falls ill, which makes his beloved friend depressed, although Musides vows to make a marble sculpture of Kalos. Not long after, Kalos dies in the olive grove, previously requesting that olive twigs be placed near his head when he is buried. Musides builds the tomb and places the twigs, which results in a large olive tree blossoming over the grave, hanging over the villa and Musides sculpture of Tyche. On the night that the Tyrant comes to collect Musides' sculpture, a large storm occurs. The next day, they find the villa and statue are completely destroyed by an olive branch, and Muside is also missing.

The inspired drawing features villa ruins, an olive tree and a skeleton-like tree growing from a tomb. The illustration is symbolic of the themes of death, damage, and transcendence. *The Grove* is the only work in the exhibit which is made from pointillism techniques. This is to reflect the marble sculpturing technique which Kalos and Musides would have used – the act of chipping away bit by bit/dot by dot. The imagery within the drawing, specifically the skeleton tree, reflects the characterisation of olive trees within the story and stays true to Lovecraft's descriptions of the human-like tree. Overall, *The Grove* aims to show the story of a sculptor who died in the middle of his work and returned to his home as a sculpture, becoming, in essence, a product of his own making.

<sup>67</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, "The Tree," in *The Complete Tales of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Rock Point, 2019), 93–97.

<sup>68</sup> Lovecraft.



**Figure 83.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 84.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 85.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 86.* Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 87.* Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 88.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 89.* Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 90.* Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 91.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



**Figure 92.** Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 93.* Hughes, L. Lake House Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

# Galerie Des Fantômes *test space gallery*

The second exhibit enactment is located at AUT, in the Test-space gallery (WM201c). This is a flash exhibit and lasted only the entirety of the day (9.03.2023). This installation differs from the other three within *Galerie des fantômes*, as it uses digital projection and image distortion methods.

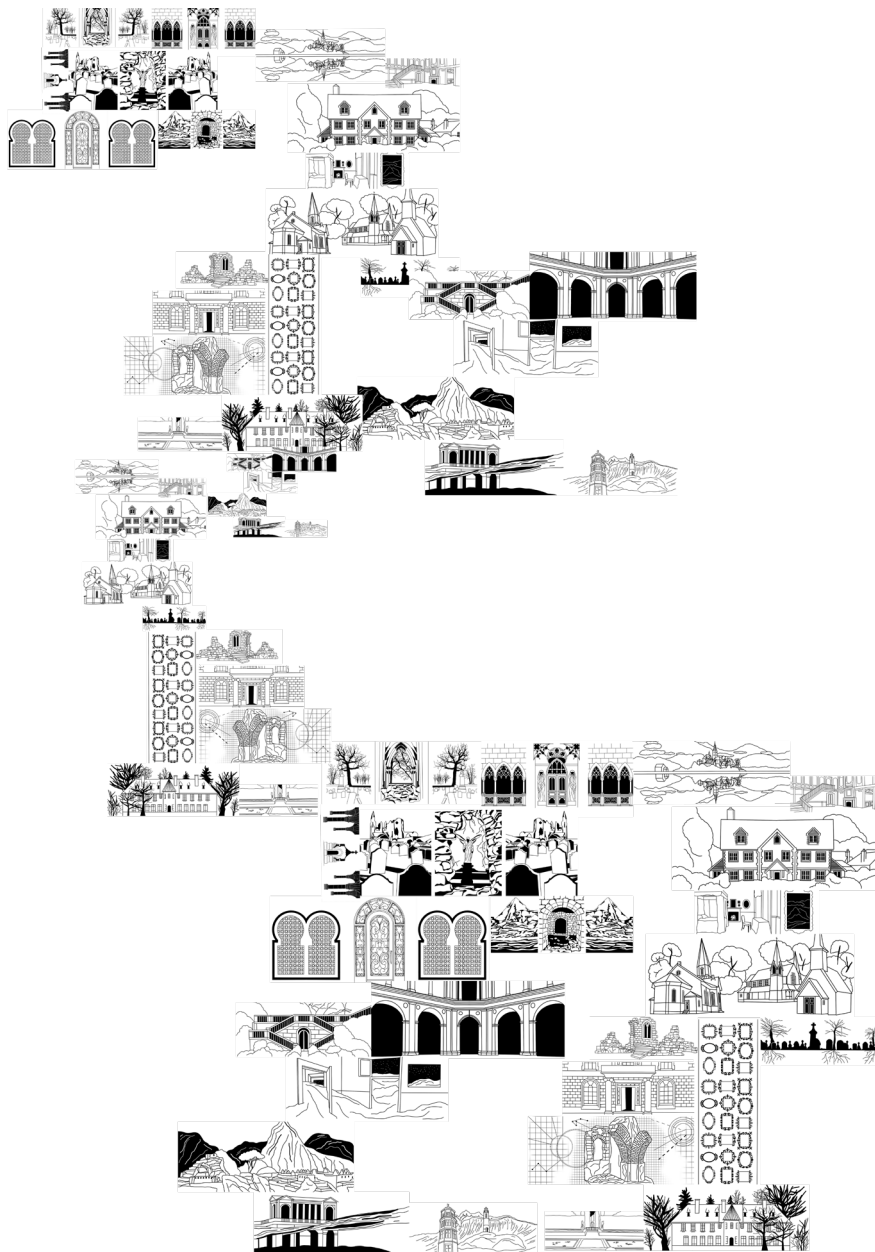


Figure 94. Hughes, L. Collage 1, Digital Drawing, 2023.

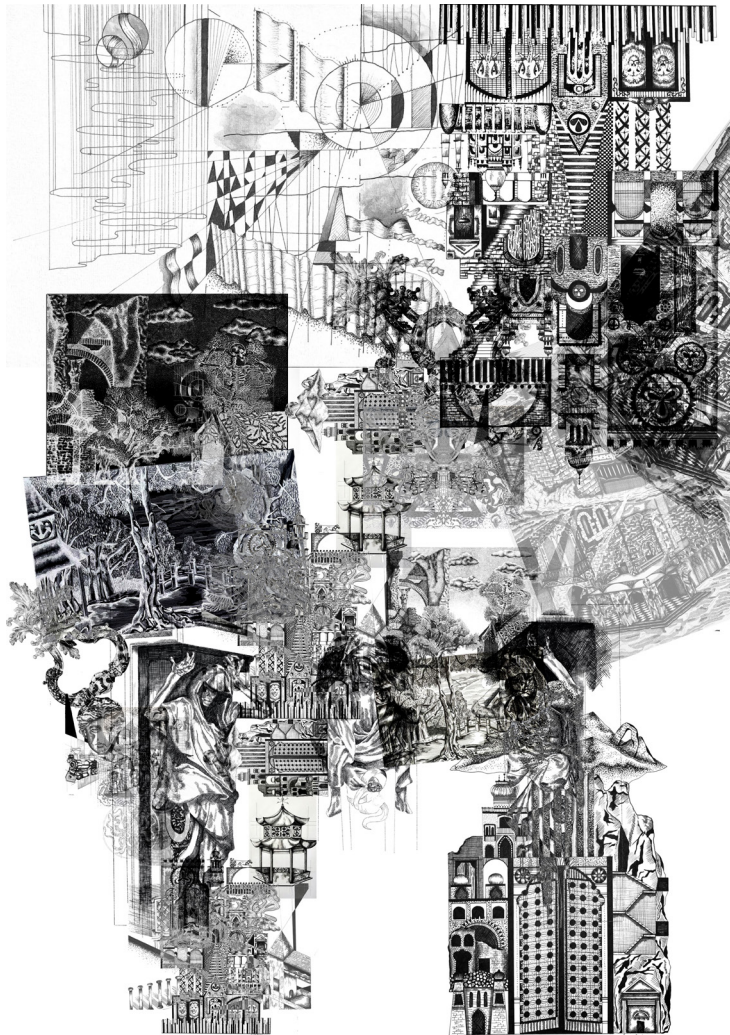


Figure 95. Hughes, L. Collage 2, Digital Drawing, 2023.

The work projected in this exhibit are three digital images compiled of all drawings created in *Mapping Ghosts*. This means the work used is the same as the exhibit enactment I & III but displayed differently. The Test-space installation is intended to be less polished than its counterparts, and this is due to its pure experimental nature. This installation aimed to progress the exhibition practice and begin thinking about the final assessment exhibit and its form. Instead of frames, paper and traditional gallery set-up, this projection played with ideas of scale, collage, lighting, and surface. The walls became the artefact once the image had been projected. The pictures displayed were distorted and messy, contrasting against enactment I & III's more rigid approach to gallery layout.

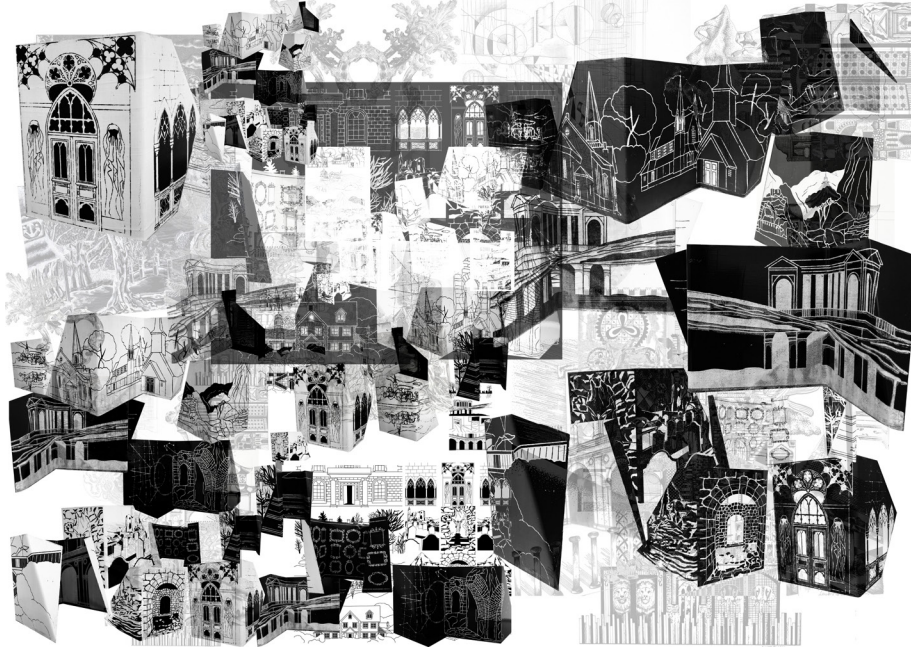


Figure 96. Hughes, L. Collage 3, Digital Drawing, 2023.

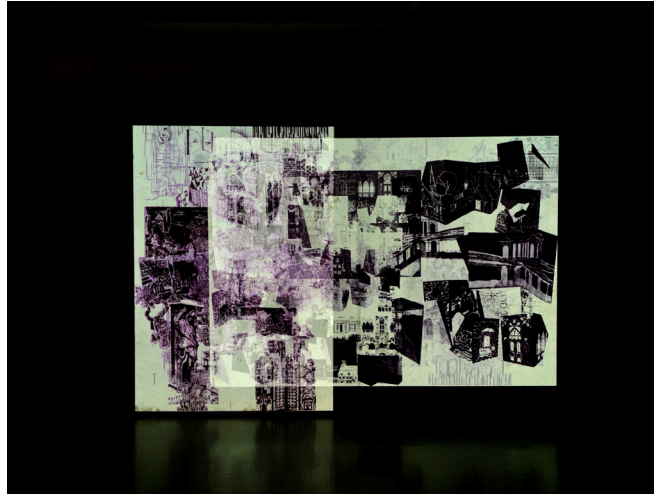
This installation was performed to change the pace from the previous exhibit and explore different modes of display. Although successful in juxtaposing their original forms, the images were created to test the method of projection rather than being the enactment's focus. The projection made a vivid arrangement which worked well in the Test-space gallery as it is a dark, closed-off room. After reflecting on this exhibit, it is determined that this exploration of projection would not commence in the final assessment exhibit. This is because of its inability to symbolise the project's material narrative and migration patterns from 2D to 3D, fictive to structural, and interior to exterior. The digital approach of this installation reflects the same problem highlighted in the beginning stages of *Mapping Ghosts*, where the modern technology involved does not pay homage to the aesthetic, Gothic nature of this project or possess the same haptic spiritedness of made objects. In the pursuit of spatial agency, the elements of materiality and staging are integral. The Test-space gallery highlighted this through its lack of dimensionality.



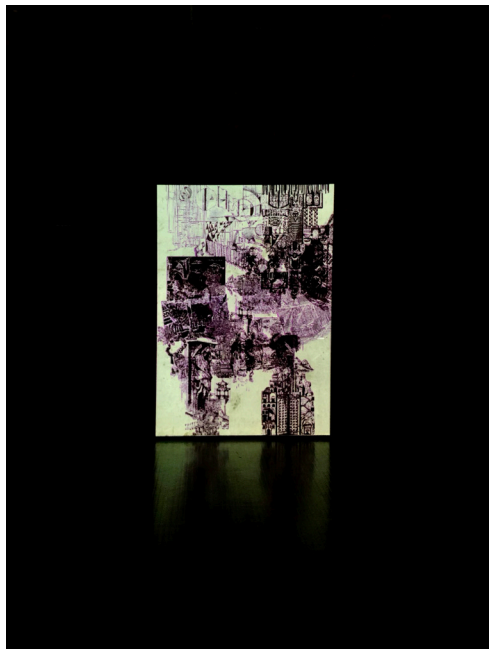
*Figure 97.* Hughes, L. Test Space Exhibit, Digital Projection, 2023.



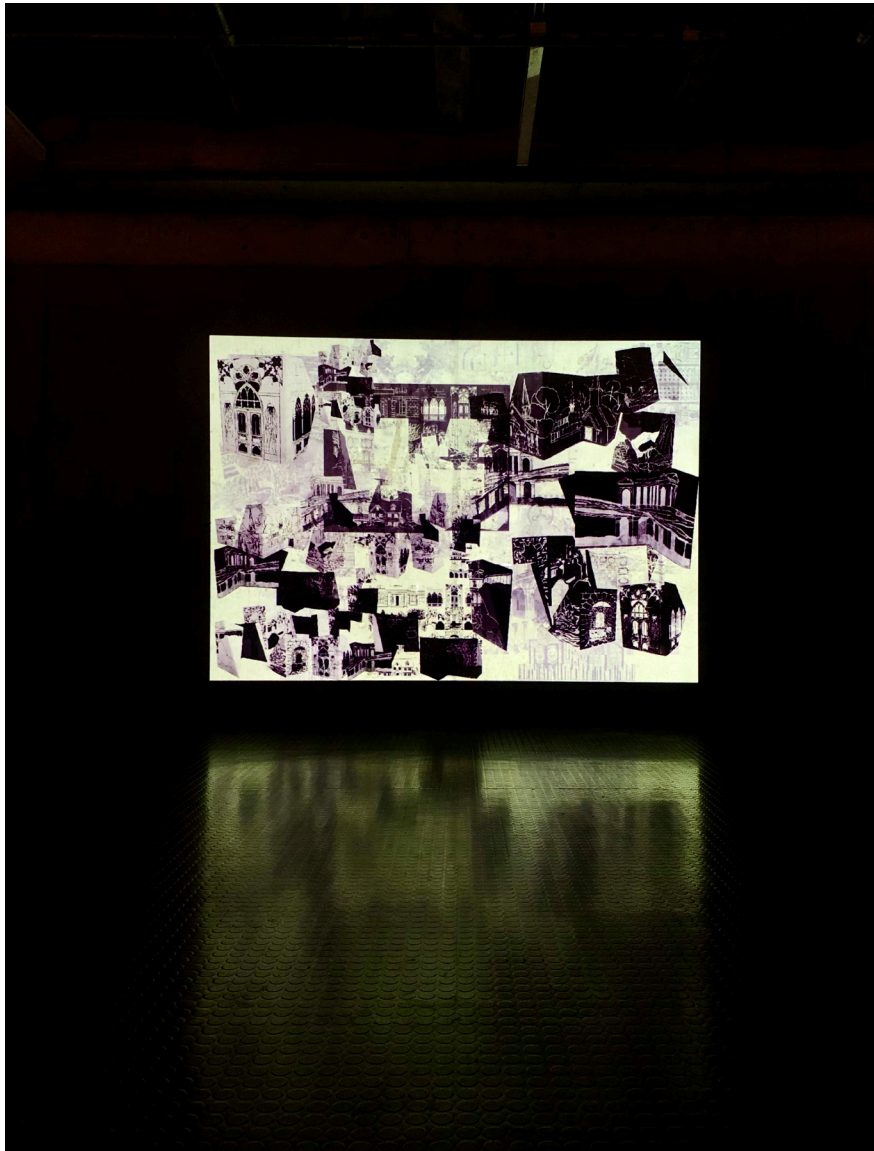
*Figure 98.* Hughes, L. Test Space Exhibit, Digital Projection, 2023.



*Figure 99.* Hughes, L. Test Space Exhibit, Digital Projection, 2023.



*Figure 100.* Hughes, L. Test Space Exhibit, Digital Projection, 2023.



*Figure 101.* Hughes, L. Test Space Exhibit, Digital Projection, 2023.

# Galerie Des Fantômes

## ***B:HIVE building***

The third exhibit enactment is a second public display at the B: HIVE Building in Takapuna. This installation's timeslot ran from the 24th of March to the 12th of May. Once again, this exhibition is organised through the Lakehouse Art Centre, as they extended an offer of a satellite exhibit\* free of charge. The B: HIVE Building is a co-working space where companies or individuals can rent desks and offices without entering into a property agreement – like a hotel for business.

The exhibit space within the building is located in the front foyer, next to the entry café and reception. The nature of this exhibit is different to enactment I, as the Lakehouse's agreement with the B: HIVE company means that staff correspondents install the work and that publications are limited to an artist bio. This meant the personal involvement within this display was much more limited than the previous.

Unlike the Lakehouse Gallery, this B: HIVE exhibit has one wall within a larger corporate space. This time, the work is displayed against a black wall with a pillar in the middle. The introduction of this black wall is welcomed as it suited the overall Gothicity of the work and brought a darker atmosphere to the collection. The space had the exact hanging mechanism as the first exhibit, alongside some directional lighting – though the larger corporate lights still overruled the area. These factors of a non-gallery space can be felt in the exhibit's less spatial quality. However, this second public installation is still a significant step in the exhibition practice, as it exposed this project's illustrations, research and inquiry.

\*A satellite exhibit is an event hosted in a non-gallery public space and is usually a place where the body of work is interchanged through a separate provider. In this instance, the Lakehouse Art Centre and the B: HIVE Building have an agreement that allows the Lakehouse to promote and exhibit artists outside of their own gallery using the B: HIVE's foyer space.



*Figure 102.* Hughes, L. B:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

The B: HIVE exhibit also featured four new illustrations not previously displayed. This smaller collection, entitled *Entry*, focuses on threshold objects within Lovecraftian literature rather than individual stories (for example, windows, doors, passages). They use gold and silver to reflect the usual hardware of latches, knobs, hinges, etc.



Figure 103. Hughes, L. Straße, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.

These illustrations communicate Lovecraft's use of opening and closing, locked and unlocked, as he frequently describes blocked spaces or ones with somewhat perplexing entries. This project views these literary threshold moments as the first evidence or moment of spatial agency. They are the passage from exteriority to interiority; they must be engaged in this migration. Two of these illustrations, *Stadt* and *Straße\** use black paper and border mats to symbolise the mysticism of the interior – the B: HIVE's black wall aided in this pursuit, as the gold and silver linework is made more prominent in surrounding darkness; much like how the characters in Lovecraftian literature are drawn to keys, locks, and handles.

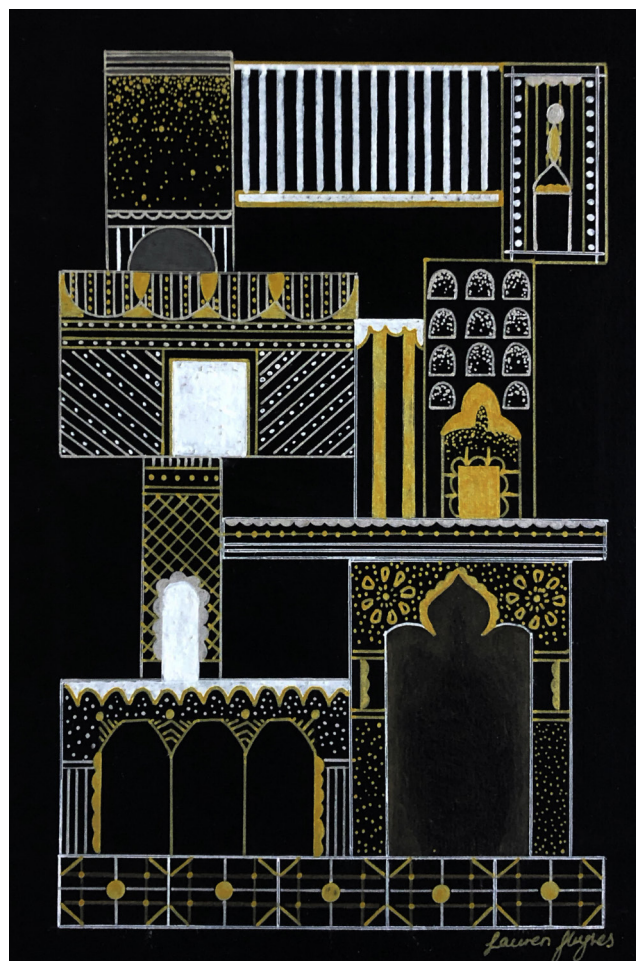


Figure 104. Hughes, L. Stadt, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.

\*The German words for 'Town' and 'Street' in homage to The Uncanny - 'Unheimlich'.



*Figure 105.* Hughes, L. B.:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 106.* Hughes, L. B:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

*Fensterlandschaft* (435"540mm) is one of the drawings from the *Entry* collection. This drawing consists of various threshold descriptions from an array of Lovecraftian stories. Some features in this illustration include a lamp, entry arches, window details, hallways, etc. *Fensterlandschaft* is the first drawing that included gold and silver penwork, and uses a collage-type layout to reflect the layering of threshold moments within the collection of Lovecraftian literature.

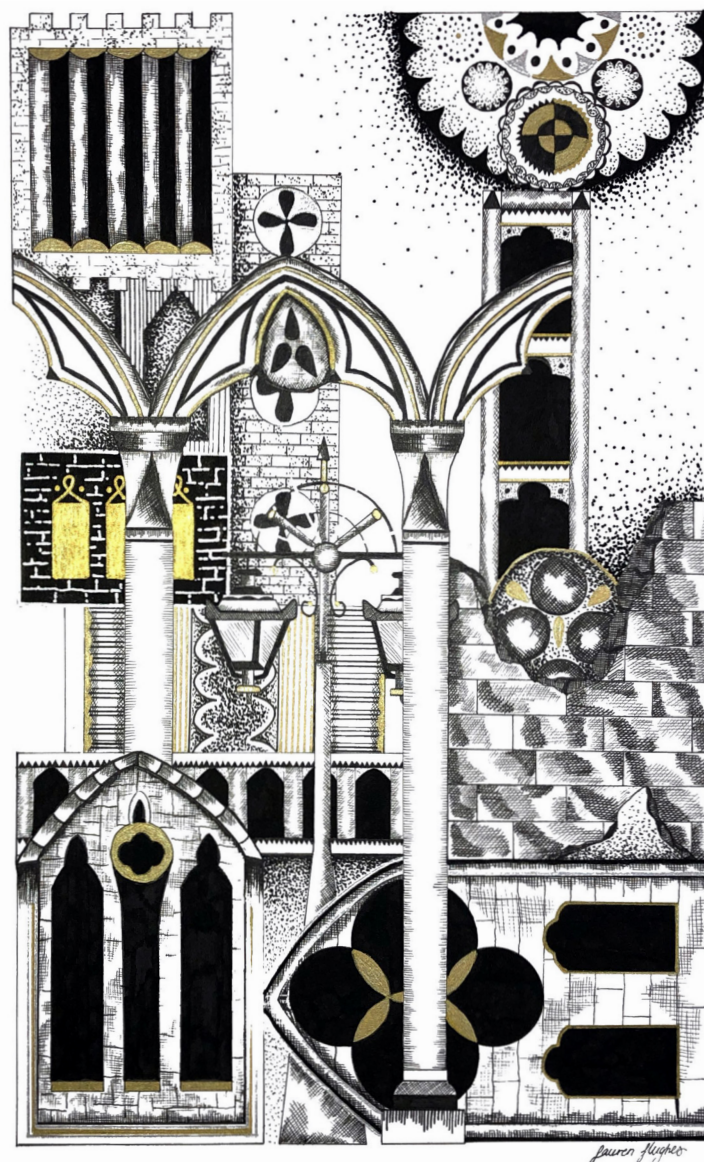


Figure 107. Hughes, L. Fensterlandschaft, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.

Although the set-up of this satellite exhibit possessed less spatiality and opportunity for intervention, this practice section heavily developed this project's end artefact of making. From the illustration series *Entry*, made for this exhibit, the project discovered that the idea of threshold moments and the action of entering/opening/unlocking captured an essence of spatiality and the dichotomy between exterior and interior, which had been previously missing. Moving forward, this project saw that opening a door is a form of migration from one space to another; it acts as a guard, a barrier between worlds. *How to Draw a Ghost* saw the connection between this idea of thresholds and the migrational pattern of this research; the final artefact of making would symbolise the project's analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism through its interiority, illustration, materiality, spatiality, and threshold.

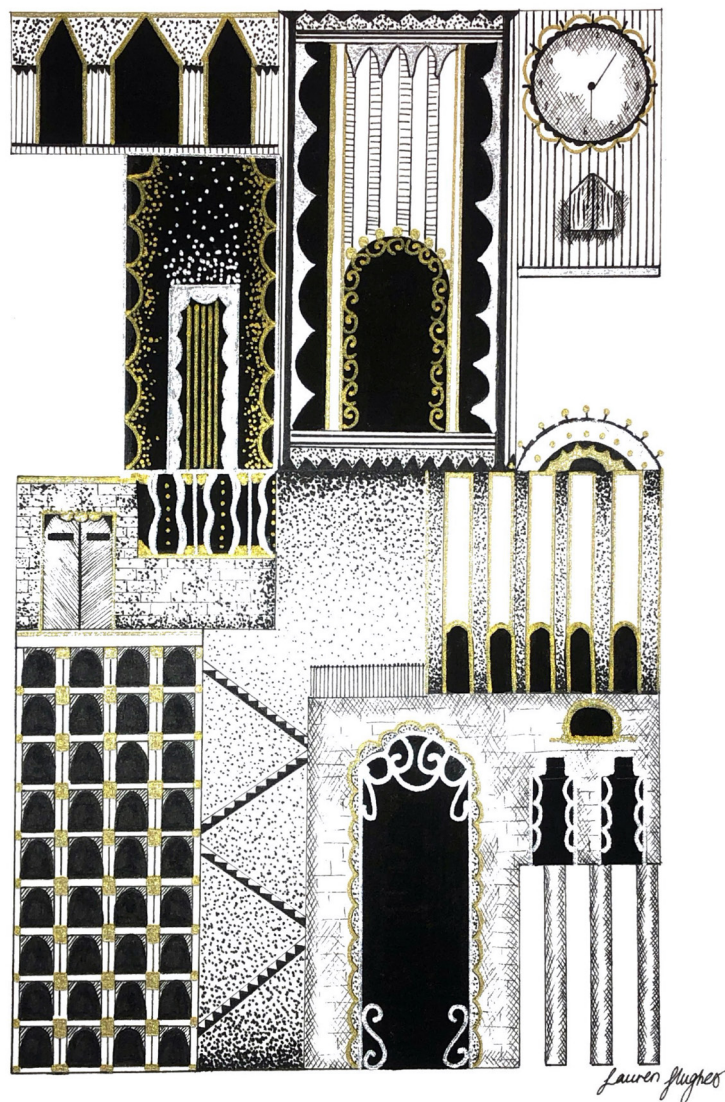


Figure 108. Hughes, L. Turen, Ink Pen Sketch, 2023.



*Figure 109.* Hughes, L. B:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.



*Figure 110.* Hughes, L. B:HIVE Exhibit, Photograph, 2023.

## ***object-spatial rendering***

*The Poet's Bureau* marks the final milestone of the practice, acting as the conclusive artefact for the exhibition. The writing desk completes the circular migration of this project and reflects the analogy between Gothic literature and New Materialism. It is the symbolic amalgamation of the project's methods, contexts, research, and findings. The desk serves as an object of spatial agency and reflection of the movement of Gothicity. The design phase of the bureau refurbishment consists of four parts: preparation, pyrography, engraving, and colour. This section uses a metaphor of an archaeological site to show the sequence of these stages, and how *The Poet's Bureau* situates this project as it slips between architecture, literature, theory, and illustration.

## The Poet's Bureau ***preparation***

The Rimu desk is sourced from a second-hand furniture store; it features three drawers and a fold-out writing desk. The top section of the bureau is secured with a lock and key, and hides inside a collection of small shelving units. Upon collection, the desk is in good condition for its age (suspected to have been built before 1980), with slight chips and scratches. The sanding process is time-consuming, as it appears to have been coated with a wax-like sealant and colour varnish. The varnish itself (a deep crimson brown) is mostly removable through various sanding layers, although some areas of the desk have been stained with the varnish's pigment – particularly the back side of the desk, which is a less-finished piece of wood. The sanding is done sectionally, with each part receiving 80 grit sand, followed by 400 grit. The entirety of the sanding is approximately four days. After the desk is fully sanded, the entire object is deeply cleaned in preparation for the following stage of pyrography.

## The Poet's Bureau *mapping*

The inclusion of pyrography in this refurbishment was secured when the decision was made to leave the base of the desk's exterior unpainted. This choice was made through the *Mapping Ghosts* stage, as it explored the dichotomy between exterior and interior. Lovecraftian literature uses the idea of the outside and inside to divide the known and unknown. Open nature, within his work, is often a place of indifference, with the source of horror coming from the inside, whether that be a cave, house, cemetery, etc. Leaving the desk's exterior mostly unpainted, exposing the natural Rimu grain reflects this transparency of the outside – signifying the natural, known world.

In contrast, the inside of the drawers and top section cabinets are painted with dark Gothic-Victorian wallpaper designs to parallel Lovecraft's unsanctified interiors. Although the bureau's outside will be left in its natural shade, pyrography will burn the surface with illustrations of material descriptions. Pyrography is a carefully chosen medium as the wood-burning technique mirrors the natural world. Using heated pokers, pyrography burns the desk's surface, creating a darker and deeper mark, much akin to the behaviour of forest fires in the way they take away a layer of the trees. This project views the patterns of pyrography as the earth's surface, indicating a migration of time, evidence of past places, hiding artefacts of lost colonies, and locating an excavation area. The exterior of the bureau and its burnt lines is a map of a geological site, suggesting a buried spatiality underneath, a dark expanse of which can be found within its very drawers.

## The Poet's Bureau *digging*

Commencing the pyrography stage is the act of engraving. This differs from wood-burning, as the engravement tool uses an angled or sharpened metal head and varying pressure to remove layers of material – it is an excavating method, rather than the marking method of pyrography. If the bureau's burnt lines are the geological map, then its engravings are the act of digging into the site.

The engraving stage is the tunnel from the exterior to the desk's interior, following its fault lines and entering its inside. The term engraving seems contradictory in this method, as it is used as a highlighting tool to contrast brightly against the burnt lines and to bring dimension to the dark interior. Thus, this project frames this medium as an excavating dig, which uncovers something rather than taking it away. It buries into the core of the desk, looking for passage. This stage of refurbishment may appear to be secondary to the other mediums due to its humbler results, but the trenches of engravement enact the different mediums, they provide the spatiality for them to exist, and they turn the 2D surfaces of the desk into haptic planes of agency.

Engraving the desk reflects the real-life practice of an archaeological dig. As the scientists dig into the earth's surface, lifting its dirt, they find passages into a buried space. They enter a portal lost in time and begin to discover objects of great scientific discovery or simply of people who once were. Archaeologists plot the world's migration between evolution, environment, and cultural practices through engraving the settled dirt. This section of refurbishment does the same. The excavating tool finds the entrance and reveals the treasures of *The Poet's Bureau*.

## The Poet's Bureau *treasure*

The last stage of refurbishment is the element of colour, enacted through painting. As the pyrography and engraving methods map and dig into the desk, the colour is its treasure. There are two different approaches to colour within this stage: exterior and interior.

The exterior's featuring colour is minimal with highlights of goldleaf acting as archaeological indications. This approach to highlighting is implemented to create a contrast to show the contours of the desk's landscape. Perhaps it is easier to think of these blots of gold as the map landmarks left behind by pyrography. As these metallic highlights situate detailed material descriptions, they symbolise specific areas of interest - marks of treasure. The choice of goldleaf refers directly back to the idea of treasure while also paying homage to the historical practices of interior decor. The use of goldleaf for aesthetics can be seen as early as the ancient Egyptians, and lived on throughout the gilded details of Gothic architecture.

As the element of colour moves inwards inside the desk, it changes form. The interior is a different colour, painted black in contrast to the exposed exterior to signify the buried space of the drawers; and the unknown of Lovecraftian spaces. Painted on top of the black are Gothic-Victorian wallpaper designs which add another layer of interiority, sectioning the drawers themselves to be rooms of their own. The fault lines of the engraving also change inside, as they are pigmented with gold and silver. The choice of these metallic, reflective colours is a homage to the threshold context of this research. Gold and silver represent the hardware of entry moments: handles, locks, keys, and hinges. These moments of passage and discovery symbolise the activation of space; as the drawers are pulled open, a second spatiality appears. This action of opening the desk reflects the act of crossing the threshold from one space to another. In this way, the architectural concept of walls transitions as their 'constructive value' fades, and the dichotomy between interior and exterior blends.<sup>69</sup> These glittering lines are the archaeological treasures that communicate this project's migration.

<sup>69</sup> Havik, "Lived Experience, Places Read: Toward an Urban Literacy."

# The Poet's Bureau

## *notes*

Space and migration are integral elements of this research in context and making. The desk symbolises the situating of spatial agency, the movement of Gothicity, and the circular pattern of this research structure. *The Poet's Bureau* is a sitemap of this project's findings, and these refurbishment methods act as the stages of an archaeological dig.

Both fictional and real worlds need navigation and context to understand their environments. A sitemap is often limited to a geological, physical rendering of space. However, maps are like music; they have no proper answer, just a series of symbols, lines and suggested meanings.<sup>70</sup> Our reactions and readings of maps give them meaning, for when given a map, it is our imagination of space that orients us. British geographer, Nicolas Crane, once said, 'Maps codify the miracle of existence'<sup>71</sup>, and it is through this poetical lens that this project utilises *The Poet's Bureau* to map Lovecraftian literature, the migration of Gothicity, and situate spatial agency.

<sup>70</sup> Miles Harvey, *Island of Lost Maps: A True Story of Cartographic Crime* (Random House, 1999).

<sup>71</sup> Nicholas Crane, *Mercato: The Man Who Mapped the Planet*, New Ed edition (London: Phoenix/Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2003).



Figure 111. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



Figure 112. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.

The migration from 2D illustrations onto the 3D surface of the desk marked a critical shift within the research. After almost a year of drawing, moving from the flat virgin medium of paper to the angled desk was a shock. Illusions of having a perfectly smooth sanded desk dissipated quickly. It was important to remember that this desk had lived my lifetime two times over and that it would never fully escape the appearance of this. Its dents, scratches and strange flecks of glue and varnish that just would not come off still live on, and these marks, themselves, show an aspect of spatial agency – how objects follow our pattern of ageing, wearing it on their skin and feeling it in their function. Perhaps as this project used the desk to charter Gothic waters in modern time, it means these traces of wear are the original celestial map. Molecular marks from back when we were stardust.

The modification of the illustrative style into pyrography and engraving was also a point of navigation within the project. Though the wood burned beautifully as a whole, the surrender of hatching detail felt foreign at first. Shading with a pyrography tool meant abandoning the method of pen pressure and adapting to the calefaction of heat. Outlining remained an essential part of the drawing process as a way to divide the illustration from the wood surface. It was a strange realisation that this wooden material was partaking in collaboration with the pyrography pen and me. There were sections where it felt like the wood was actively aiding in the illustration and parts that felt painful to burn. As a trio, we negotiated the surface and mapped accordingly, working in unison to reveal Gothic materiality.

The bureau's design consists of numerous spatial scenes that reference Lovecraftian materiality; these scenes are divided by black lines that run along each face of the desk. Like the outlining technique, the black lines create a divide between images; they provide a sense of space and time, acting like barriers between worlds. Like the Estonian artist Anastasia Parmson, who refurbishes furniture and then repaints it to appear in 2D, this project uses outlining and maximised high contrast to create illusions with shape, texture and space. Parmson takes any 3D object and strips it of material identity and colour, leaving it as a white form, outlined and highlighted with black. *The Poet's Bureau* aimed to imitate this object dysmorphia as its black divisions between spatial/material illustrations enact the same barriers found in a bookcase. The books and the worlds within them that sit upon shelves, living within the same bookcase, are separated by bindings. Though they work as a collective while they are confined next to each other, once removed from the shelf, they are entirely isolated. The black lines of the bureau create threshold moments, and the illustrations within them are the snippets, the spines of stories on display. Artists like Parmson, alongside others such as Katharine Morling and Joseph Cornell, play with our perception and understanding of space and form by removing our known context of things and reimagining it. *The Poet's Bureau* aimed to be a matrix of materiality as it stands as a desk but acts as a bookcase; it is a 3D object, yet it reads as a 2D map. This dichotomy and duality of the bureau enable the illustration of spatial agency in the imagery and through the material they are drawn on.



Figure 113. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.

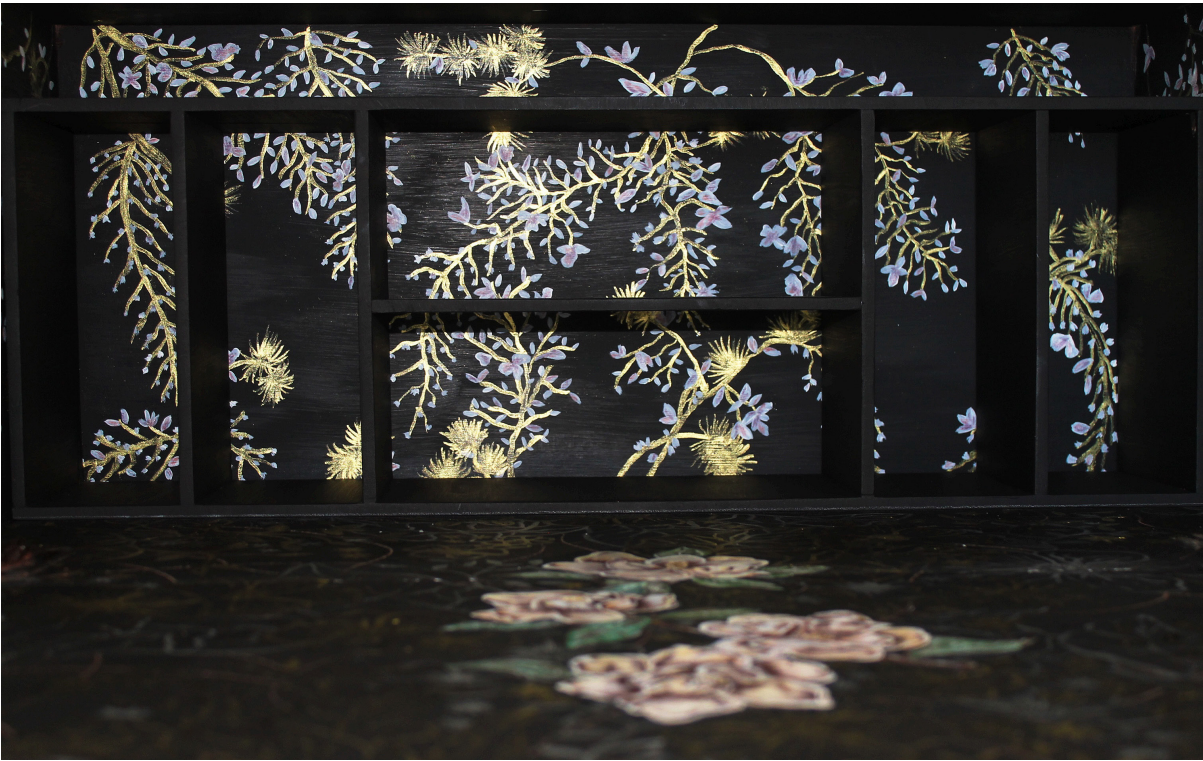


Figure 114. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023



Figure 115. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



*Figure 116.* Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



*Figure 117.* Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



Figure 118. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



Figure 119. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



*Figure 120.* Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



Figure 121. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.



Figure 122. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Rimu Writing Desk, 2023.

## Findings

### *how to draw a ghost*

*How to Draw a Ghost* is a design-led investigation into the research question:

Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?

The project initiated with an in-depth excavation into Lovecraftian literature, which revealed bountiful examples of New Materialist philosophy in its personification of inanimate materiality. These text passages were then illustrated through various drawing methods, which vivified the intangibility and invisibility of spatial agency. Exhibition enactment then proceeded to display the drawings to show the transition from 2D to 3D explorations of spatiality. Concluding the entirety of this project is the investigation of object-spatial rendering, where the existing contexts, research and methods are collected into one artefact of making: *The Poet's Bureau*.

*How to Draw a Ghost's* findings address the posed research question by exemplifying the informative relationship between its architecture, literature, theory, and design contexts. Although this project deals with abstract, relative ideas (such as spatial agency and fictional scenescapes, which depend on context to exist), the findings from this investigation show that the contexts of this research inform one another through their migration between time and space.

The relationship between literature and spatiality is particularly potent, as written words capture the ambiguities, aura and agency of space, something which reality architecture represses through its definitive calculations.<sup>72</sup> But this project followed architect Wim Cuyver's perspective that not all use of language is literature and not every space is architecture.<sup>73</sup> For writing to be considered literature, it must 'transcend usefulness and gain', go 'beyond amusement and pleasure', and 'cast doubt on everything and inquire into everything'.<sup>74</sup> Lovecraftian literature does just so, and this project built on his horror-driven ideas by visualising them into optical language. In doing this, this research created a new insight into complex theories of New Materialism. Through the illustration of Lovecraftian materiality, spatial agency is also transcribed into a composition of shapes that are recognisable to viewers. *How to Draw a Ghost* extended these illustrations into a 3D object to visually symbolise spatial agency and enact it through threshold moments and interaction.

To once again quote the articulate tongue of Wim Cuyver:

*'Literature continues to be a means, or at least an attempt, to pose the big, existential questions, to investigate, question and explore the existential condition. It is the individual writer's profound distrust of the unending and horrible senselessness of a life that hurries toward death. Each book is the writer's personal stepping stone in the doubt-ridden adventure through the chasms of despair towards understanding.'*<sup>75</sup>

*How to Draw a Ghost* has contributed to this desire to understand by providing a body of work investigating spatial agency through the migration of architecture, literature, theory and illustration.

<sup>72</sup> H Grafe, Maaskant, and Havik, "Editorial."

<sup>73</sup> Wim Cuyvers, "From the Dream of the Novel Turned to Stone to the Acknowledgement of Public Space," OASE, Architecture & Literature Reflections/Imaginations, no. 70 (2006): 20–29.

<sup>74</sup> Cuyvers.

<sup>75</sup> Cuyvers

Graduating Exhibit  
*the poet's bureau*



Figure 123. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



Figure 124. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.

The Master of Design Graduating Exhibitions took place in the St. Paul Street Galleries from the 22nd to the 24th of June. *How to Draw a Ghost* found its current conclusion in this installation, which consisted of three products of making that vivify this project's posed research question:

*Through figurative excavations into Gothic literature's material objects and scenescapes, how can the exhumed literary descriptions inform the illustration of spatial agency?*

The exhibit simply entitled *The Poet's Bureau* featured 11 drawings hung in salon style display against the gallery wall, these drawings are the same collection created in this project's previous research stage of interpretative delineation. The framed artworks were brought back into the final exhibit to conclude the exhibition enactment sequence which this research has followed, making this exhibition the fourth gallery display of these drawings. The inclusion of the frames was essential in communicating the project's migration from 2D to 3D forms. As the writing desk was posed underneath the original drawings it visualised the transition of themes and adaption of drawn imagery. The black frames act as a threshold moment, as their borders embody a window – an entry point into the drawing and story. The frames themselves also represent a divide much like the themes of dichotomy found in the research between fiction and reality, tangible and intangible, animate and inanimate.

These black divides follow through to the floor tiles which the desk sits upon. The tiles were included as a third component of the exhibit to create a harmonious narrative from wall to object to floor. With the inclusion of these tiles, the project's themes of migration were enacted once more in its final form, as the lines and imagery trickled down from the frames onto the desk and then were reflected on the ground. The tiles are painted again with Gothic-Victorian wallpaper designs to reflect the parallel between floor and wall, vertical and horizontal, paper and stone. The tiles also featured the same divisive black lines that are seen in the frames and desk. The layout of the tiles tries to mimic the sequence of frames on the wall as the breaks of the gallery floor reflect the spaces of blank walls between the hung drawings, showing another element of separation. The solidness of the tiles, in comparison to the floating of the wall frames, represents the gravity of tangibility and the etherealness of ideas.

The final third element of the exhibit was the writing desk itself, *The Poet's Bureau*. The desk stood in the centre of the display, posed between the drawings and tiles – acting as a separation between the two forms. The desk's exterior is fractionated by solid black lines akin to the frames and tiles, though *The Poet's Bureau* is divided more like a bookcase with the individual shelves/pockets and their imagery acting as snippets into Lovecraft's stories. The drawings carved and burned into the desk all reflect a material or spatial scene pulled from Lovecraftian literature, and many are previously shown in the initial sketch drawings. The illustration of these scenes on the desk represents opening a story off of a bookcase and entering the threshold of intangible Gothic materiality. The idea of opening and closing is carried through into the interior drawers. The pulling of drawers and turning of keys create threshold moments within the desk's immediate tangibility and divide the object once more into four interior sections.

The final exhibit of *The Poet's Bureau* continues the project's context of migration as it brings together the entire timeline of making and creates a new wave of circulation. Instead of viewing each research stage as separate, divided entities, this exhibit contrasts its dichotomy theme and combines these art artefacts. This collision of ideas and making reflects the collection of short Lovecraftian stories, which ultimately influenced this whole project. Instead of secluding each tale, Lovecraft inter-references his different worlds and creates a vast material realm from many small, cryptic stories. The collection of these tales makes them great; they live not together but alongside one another, each entering a different room within the house of Gothic materiality. This end installation mimics this metaphor of a house as it unites the entirety of this research project. The contexts, themes, methods and practices of *How to Draw a Ghost* migrate in a final cycle and, in unison, create a new realm of Gothicity.



Figure 125. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



*Figure 126.* Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



Figure 127. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



*Figure 128.* Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



Figure 129. Hughes, L. The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit, 2023.



**Figure 130.** Hughes, L. *The Poet's Bureau, Examination Exhibit*, 2023.

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