

June 2020

Fraught!

Ian Park

Follow this and additional works at: https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses

Recommended Citation

Park, Ian, "Fraught!" (2020). *LSU Master's Theses*. 5161.
https://repository.lsu.edu/gradschool_theses/5161

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Scholarly Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Master's Theses by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Scholarly Repository. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

Fraught!

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

in

The School of Art & Design

by
Ian Park
B.A., University of Arkansas at Little Rock, 2013
August 2020

Acknowledgements

Thank you

Kelli Scott Kelley

Andy Shaw

Kristine Thompson

Mikey Walsh

Denyce Celentano

Tara Houston

Kitty Phenev

Jen Mayer

Aunt (Julia)

Mom (Cheryl)

Dad (Billy)

Mammaw (Elleen)

Grandma (Agatha)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	ii
Abstract.....	vi
Introduction.....	2
The Living Room.....	3
Vignette 1.....	5
The Tchotchke.....	7
Vignette 2.....	13
The Horror.....	14
Vignette 3.....	16
The Colors.....	17
Vignette 4.....	21
The Nostalgia.....	22
Vignette 5.....	25
The Second Hand.....	26
Vignette 6.....	27
The Sound.....	28
Conclusion.....	29
COVID-19.....	30
Vita.....	31

Abstract

Fraught! explores the visceral feelings and dreamlike memories from my earlier years of life. Through installation, I queer space [or the environment] through the aesthetics of camp and the uncanny, subconscious influences that have steeped inside of me for many years.

Introduction

It wasn't until the last couple years that I started to ponder how my past experiences with horror, film, and camp has helped make me into the queer creature I am today. Once I learned that I have always viewed the world through a lens as a queer spectator, I realized this enabled me to decipher queer coding seen in many films, especially horror flicks, and allowed me to create my own narratives. This is important because television and films were a thick part of my entertainment ingestion from childhood to teens. Living between two different classes, Christian denominations (Catholic and Mormon), states (Arkansas and Missouri), and families because of divorce, caused the realization that everyone was an actor in their own story, and everything I dwelled in was a set, like in a motion picture, theatre, or sitcom. I look back at that life I lived in, and still maintain some form of attachment to, and realize just how damned stressful it was. The purpose of *Fraught!* is to create an amalgamation of camp, anxiety, the uncanny, queerness, and my own nostalgia in a way that someone can singularly experience the visceral and intellectual feelings I have to offer them through my own vision.

The Living Room

The living room was a gathering place for us to all celebrate each other's company and of course live. When I think of both the living rooms of my mother and grandparents in the early 90s, I think of wood paneling. It was from ceiling to floor, enough brown to trick your brain into thinking you are in some form of a wannabe cabin. These were floors to make you question the choice of the person who even thought that mottled burnt sienna carpet or taupe linoleum were ever a good idea in the first place.

Ironically, our celebration of life and eating with merriment were often accompanied by gathering around a cumbersome television and watching people die in horror films. These kinds of flicks were never taboo for my parents or grandparents, if sex wasn't involved. It was as if this was something that tied us all together in some weird way. Getting comfortable to watch a video rental in this genre was always a performance. The overhead lighting had to be turned off with only one lamp on. The mood had to be set to have the utmost focus on the chills we were about to see on any given weekend night.

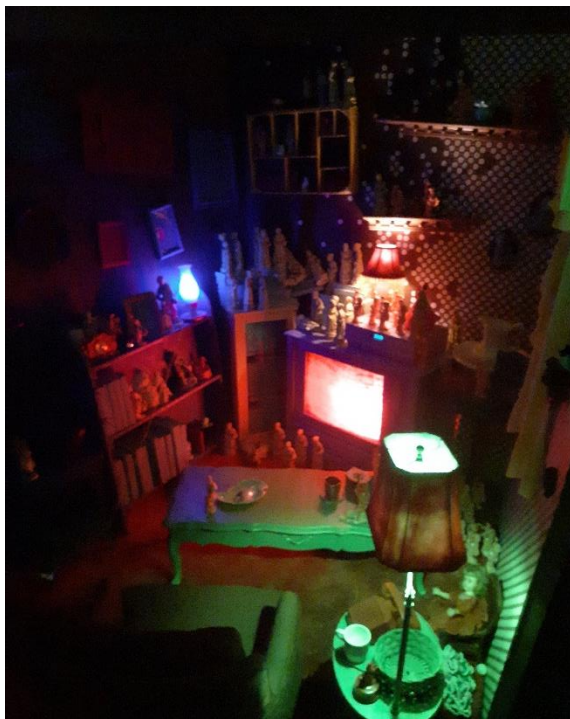
A large console television was the centerpiece of the room, only to be adorned with the video cassette recorder, cable box, trinkets or the occasional forgotten coffee cup. To keep our collection of VHS tapes in order, there was always a cabinet dedicated to them, not that they were organized, but they were at least put away. Framed family photos accompanied by store bought or secondhand home décor were scattered on the walls in no particular manner. Books and other knick-knacks were strewn on shelves not necessarily meant for anything specific. A coffee table for the sole purpose of my parent's dinner table sat with piles of different objects from around the house.

Streetlights dimly shined through the cloth covered windows. Everything in the living room became less detailed, and more of a shadow when the lights went out and the glow of the television illuminated the room. At this point, we were completely ready to watch the film, after dad had paused the movie while we waited to gather around. He might as well of said, “Places people, places!” as we got nestled into our sofas. Now these moments were usually accompanied by a homemade dinner by mom served on paper plates with a plastic cup, most likely from a truck stop or restaurant. Occasionally, we’d have fast food in these moments, and that made it real special!

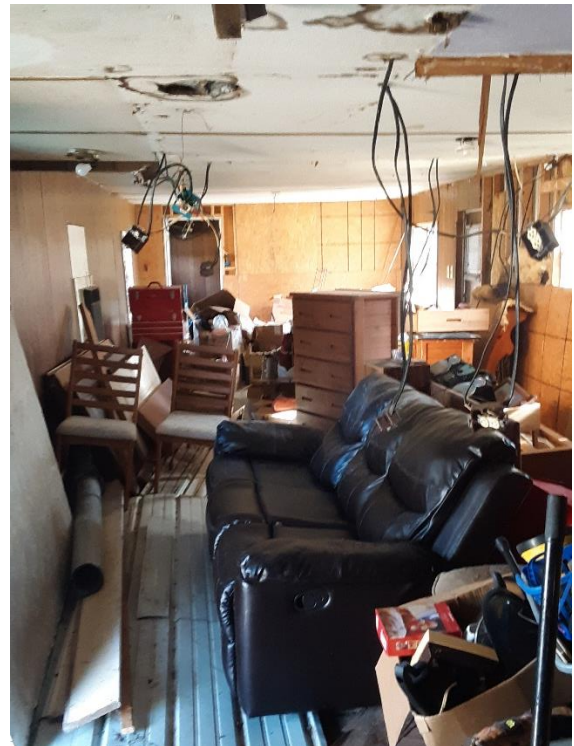
Fraught! is my creation of a tableau like living room installation that allows the viewer to approach the piece as a watcher in a voyeuristic sense. It is meant to be entered, as if it is not your space, but owned by someone else and you are getting to see a moment in time, just like when people see some of a set within an motion picture. Everything within this installation is a prop; it looks like it is in use or functioning, but is not. The mood is set by everything together as a whole within this living rooms quarters.

I made about ninety figurines, a handful I altered, and a few that I left as is. The handmade ones are the elderly ladies and the little girls that are taking over the space and staring at you as you enter the exhibition. Every other one was given to me or bought second hand. All the furniture has been altered by paint, adding pieces, or sawing pieces away. It is meant to fit tightly into the small room squishing everything together to create a sense of stress in a confined space. By coloring everything, I was able to brighten up the objects when under regular fluorescent bulbs, and then mute them with the installation’s new lighting, which causes everything to have a questionable color. The floor and walls were deliberately made to be the opposite of what are normally in a home. With the floor, I wanted it to have the different levels,

like a church altar but the television takes the place of a priest. The jagged diagonal walls create a sense of discomfort and play. Zigzag lines are usually representational of something wacky or sinister, so I combined both meanings of the line. I was able to use kitsch and camp in subtle ways. By altering pieces such as the telephone girls on the wall, the wallpaper, or the figurines, it mutes their original cute nature and makes them ominous leaving the kitsch at a level that is almost non-existent. I sprinkled in camp here and there, such as the fringe on the lamps, curtain canopy, dolls, and selection of furniture. I wanted a level of campiness that is like a gay secret within anyone's grandmother's house; subtle and unassuming. Overall, with this living room, I have created a space that is meant to have the qualities of usual comfort yet is objectionable to the viewer.



Ian Park, Scene from *Fraught!*, 2020,
Mixed Media. Photo by Ian Park



Ian Park, Current state of my childhood trailer,
2019, Photo by Ian Park

Vignette 1

I was probably about seven years old and had watched the film *Child's Play* a couple times. One morning I was just waking up under the covers and something fell on top of my bedsheets from the top bunk. I was scared that it was Chucky that had jumped and fallen on top of me that I stayed under the covers for maybe a half hour. I knew that if I removed the sheet, he would murder me! Thankfully, my mom called me for something, and realizing that she was alive made me run out of my room safely.

The Tchotchke

Both my mother's home and grandparents' homes were decorated with different types of tchotchkes, most of which were ceramic. Whether they were sitting in a cabinet that had closed glass doors or in a printer's drawer that was fashioned into an old wall shelf, there was a variety of them to be found. These figurines were always something I loved to pick up, look at, ponder, and try to figure out their origins. Many of my mom's tchotchkes were ducks, horses, dolls, animals, really an array of different things. My grandparents had a much wider variety of them since my grandfather was in the Air Force and Navy during the 70s and 80s. My favorites were the ones they claimed were from Europe, such as a statuette of the *Manneken Pis*, which I was curious about from a very young age since it was a boy holding his penis for the world to see. They had a variety of knock off Hummels. It wasn't until my late teens that I even knew what an original Hummel figure looked like, because my aunt in New Jersey owned some from her mother who had passed. Later down the line I looked up the value of these prized figurines and was quite surprised to find out they are very valuable.

Something more important to me was the origins of Hummel figurines. Maria Innocentia Hummel was a German nun who drew very cutesy pictures of little children and sold them on post cards. Franz Goebel, a porcelain factory maker, noticed the illustrations and collaborated with Ms. Hummel to create the well-known figurines.¹ They became very popular all over Germany, and around the world, especially in the United States after soldiers discovered them. Ms. Hummel died in 1946 from tuberculosis due to Hitler forcing the convent to live without basic means. Though she had passed after the war was over factories began producing these

¹ Förtsch, B. (2017). The M.I. Hummel Story. Retrieved from <https://hummelgifts.com/blog/the-mi-hummel-story/>

figurines again and they were popular in the mid twentieth century. I find it amazing that the love for these tchotchkes prevailed through the awful circumstances surrounding their creations during their early years. I can't help but think about the connection to my family being mainly German immigrants in the late 19th century and Catholic as well. I was the only Catholic in my little rural town of 600. We had to go a couple towns over to attend Catholic church.

I am fascinated by the need for humans to have any type of ceramic figurines in their home. There is an element of preciousness to them since they are fragile, and I suppose that is what makes them beloved. I spent Thanksgiving at my Uncle's in-laws last year. As I was wandering around the house, I noticed one Hummel-like figurine, amongst many on a shelf, that had its head broken off, and a piece of paper towel that was shoved in it to create a makeshift head, still showing the need for this precious figurine, even though it had been rendered completely valueless. After that moment, I thought about how tchotchkes are supplemental to a home. Supplemental is defined as: *provided in addition to what is already present or available to complete or enhance it.*

The supplemental aspect of completion is necessary to a home once moved in, and part of that necessity is ceramic figurines. There is more to a home that provides comfort than good furniture and family photos. There is a connection to the tchotchke and the humans living inside their dwelling that ties in a story, time, place, history, class, and setting. Me discovering the history of the Goebel Hummel and its connections to Catholicism, Germany, misery, and immigration is not a coincidence. There is a reason my family had these trinkets in their homes, whether they knew the connection or it was subconscious. Grandmother had knock off Hummels in her curio cabinets to remind her of the times she was in Germany, to think about her ancestors that had traveled here from that very country decades ago, to provide her comfort in times of

sadness, to reminisce of old memories, and to keep her company in the future when she didn't know she would be getting a divorce after fifty years and living single.

Though mass produced pieces of porcelain for cabinets of homes might be comforting (such as the one I bought at a thrift store the other day which is a secretary woman from the fifties that reminds me of my grandmother in her younger years) I think that too many of them, especially in multiples, can be overwhelming, anxiety inducing, abnormal, or downright uncanny. For example, *Womanhouse* from the 1970s, which was a feminist art installation and performance space organized by Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro. Female artists reclaimed women's craft making, domesticity, and space to make it into their own installations. Faith Wilding's piece *Crocheted Environment* or Robin Weltsch's and Vicki Hodgetts's collaborative *Kitchen with Eggs to Breasts* come to mind in terms of anxiety and the abnormal within a filled space.



Wilding, F. (1972-95). *Crocheted Environment* [installation]. Retrieved from icaboston.org. Photo by Charles Mayer



Weltsch, R. & Hodgett, V. (1972). *Kitchen & Eggs to Breasts* [installation]. Retrieved from blogs.getty.edu. Photo by Lloyd Hamrol

With *Fraught!* I created a mold of an elderly woman porcelain figurine and discovered a dusty mold of a little girl sitting in an apple tree. The girl is very much a generic version of the original Hummel 141 *Apple Tree Girl*. With both figurines I considered their portrayed ages and their gender. I've chosen females figurines as part of the focus within the installation. Women were the people I most revered while growing up, especially the domestic aspect that comes along with running a home as a matriarch. I have had a lot of female family role models in my life; my mother, mammaw, aunt, grandmother, stepmother, step-grandmothers, and women who I was able to see as mother figures later in life too. I don't remember a time when I ever felt like I was looking up to my stepfather or father. It was never at all as much of a powerful admiration as I had for the women in my life. The installation is also a nod towards the women creators of *Womahouse*, gratitude for their original creations. I would not have thought of this concept today without them. When creating molds or casting them, I find myself thinking about how the process can be linked to hobbyists. There are still a lot of ceramic mold hobby shops open to this day. I found the apple tree girl mold at the local Baton Rouge store called Creative Crafts.



Hummel Apple Tree Girl Figurine 141 (n.d.).
Retrieved from hummelsatadiscount.com



Ian Park, Scene from *Fraught!*, 2020,
Porcelain on table. Photo by Ian Park

By focusing on multiples of the child and the geriatric figurines, I am displaying their ages in contrast with one another. These are the cute innocent child verses the wise old innocent adult. I dive into my interests in Freud's writings in *The Uncanny*² when he describes his phenomenon of "the double". According to Freud, the double refers to a representation of the ego that can assume various forms (shadow, reflection, portrait, double, twin), all that applies to this installation. People are often intrigued by twins. Rather than doubles, I chose to make multiples of the figurines and then place them within my constructed room. They are meant to take up excess space beyond the what they would usually occupy, causing the viewer to question them. The figures are meant to be related to one another, maybe even having a telepathic connection in which they are taking over the space, no longer being supplemental, but rather becoming part of the space literally and metaphorically. These repetitive characteristics cause one pause and to question their meaning or purpose. Are the girls and women working together, or are they against each other?

As a queer spectator, I draw repetition inspiration from films such as *Children of the Corn*, *Village of the Damned*, and *The Children*. These films display children who are not identical but have the same repetitive features. This not only causes the viewer to have an overwhelming sense of the uncanny, but it also scares the viewer because the characters are a threat to the survival of the adults within the film. On a queer level, the children are a menace to the heterosexual normative future of present living parents and adults, because they are seeing their once innocent children turned into slaying demonic figures. The kids no longer are acting in ways the parents want them to and become uncontrollable to the adults. Similarly, in the films *Rabid Grannies*, and *The Children of the Night*, the angelic innocent grandmother figures we are

² Freud, S. (2003). *The Uncanny*. United Kingdom: Penguin Books Limited.

used to become monstrous figures and threaten the lives of the younger adults, with ghoulish campy acting and costuming.

In the installation, the tchotchkes put multiplied versions of the old and the young in the same place, while the viewer can get a sense of the past and the future.



[Scene from *Village of the Damned*]. (1995). Retrieved from film.avclub.com

Vignette 2

Around 1996, my mom, dad, and I were watching *Children of the Corn IV*. There was a scene where two of the corn children were in a clinic riding on a gurney. As one of the doctors stood looking at them in fright, the kids plowed the gurney, with a piece of thin metal attached, into his waist causing the man to be cut in half as his legs fell to the floor and his torso laid on the stretcher. Frankly, this scared the shit out of me, and I had to go back to my room until the movie was over!

The Horror

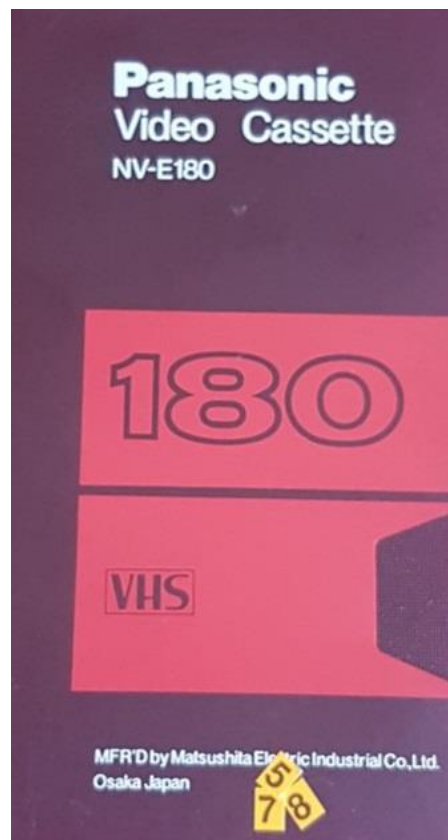
Originally, I would watch horror films at a young age for the shock factor. There were many flicks that caught my attention because I thought they were cool due to their gore-tastic nature, such as the *Friday the 13th* series, *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, and *Final Destination* series. For a young person, these creations feed into cheap thrills, tacky plots, and comical melodrama. After I took a historical motion picture film class in my undergraduate university, I realized that there are hundreds of layers and interpretations that can be seen in any movie. With that knowledge, I decided to start actively watching scary genre films like I never had before.

There is a plethora of reasons why people love this genre, whether it is tapping into the instinctive characteristics in our subconscious, visceral feelings, getting to see bad people defeated, escapism from our own lives, or discovering connotations from the creators that may or may not be purposeful. I, for one, love the genre for all these reasons.

With *Fraught!* I am creating an interpretation of themes I have seen in these films with hints of camp, uncanniness, dramatic lighting, nostalgia, and humor. These components take on personal meanings as well, but the trick for was to discover a way to make this installation seem eerie and portray feelings of how I've felt about the genre my whole life.

One of the reasons I particularly feel close to genre is because of a squatty faux wooden cabinet that my grandparents kept in their living room that contained dozens of 1980s Panasonic VHS tapes with bootleg films on them. My grandfather was military stationed in Germany during the early 80s and the family would buy these tapes from someone that had recorded North American movies on them since my family didn't speak German and couldn't watch much television there. My mammaw kept an organized small booklet of each tape's number and movie

like a library. It had so many horror films in it. Since I spent almost every Friday night at my grandparents' house, I would try to pick out one of the scary ones every so often. It was like a secret visual treasure chest I never knew they had until I was an adolescent and boy did it ever fuel my fascination for the macabre! Since my memory of those times is blurry, there is a feeling that even the room I was in while watching movies became part of the television and I was partaking in a type of voyeurism.



[1980s Panasonic VHS]. (n.d.). Retrieved from reddit.com

Vignette 3

I once found a copy of *I Spit on Your Grave* at my grandparent's house. I asked them about it, and they said I'd have to ask my mom if I could watch it since I was only a pre-teen at the time. Later, mom sternly declined any curiosity I had about watching this revenge horror flick. Saddened by her choice, I snuck the film from my grandparents' house and watched it on my VCR in my bedroom when my parents weren't paying attention. This movie is when I learned how awful men could treat women, and that women could cut their dicks off if they wanted too, just like Lorena Bobbitt.

The Colors

Within this artwork, I specifically thought about my color choices connected to distant memories and nostalgia. The wall I constructed had to be in a brown hue. There was a lot of wood paneling from the 70s that was still in my family's homes during the early 90s. In fact, I currently live in an apartment that has wood paneling and hasn't been updated in 40 years, so I have a constant tie with the walls of my current and past home.

I know that during the 1970s the home trends switched to earth tones, especially a wide variety of browns because people were going for what they thought of as natural. This had a totally different feel to a five-year-old in 1993. I remember thinking that the old trailer we lived in at the time was always very dark no matter which room I was in. When the lights were off, the brown colors made everything that much darker, with no white for any light to refract from, it was cabin or cave like. Even in my grandparents' home, the living room walls were brown with mottled burnt sienna carpet, well past its prime. As I walked through the cinnamon colored French doors to enter the dining room, java tones became even more daunting. There was a giant wooden dining table with matching chairs, cumbersome wooden buffets and curio cabinets, a freakish dark suede painting of a monk with candlelight, dipping his pen into an ink well, chocolate colored candle holders hung on the wall. The brown was endless! The dining room was the scariest place in their house, damn near crypt like. Thankfully it has been updated today so that even a 2-year-old would be happy to run around it.

The color name of the paint I chose for this installation is java, which was appropriate since my family was always drinking coffee. It perfectly matched the dark brown wallpaper that is clad with a simple white daisy pattern, enabling me to create an effect where the daisies

eventually break away from each other in their pattern to try and leave their glued down home. Floral wallpaper was on my mother's living room walls, so I chose something even more kitschy than what I grew up with to create a dramatic effect. Being a fan of Doris Day, I couldn't help but connect her film *Please Don't Eat the Daisies* based on a book of the same title by Jean Kerr. It is one of the chapters, and its meaning comes from mothers sending their children out to play and get them out of their hair in hopes that the children won't do anything stupid, such as eating daisies. I was able to make the flowers on the apple tree figurine into daisies to tie them in with the theme, along with the mug that sits on the coffee table.

As for the figurines, I chose a chartreuse and hunter green distressed combination for the grannies I made, and an orange & yellow distressed mix for the little apple tree girls. I knew that this choice would put them far from the normal shelf sitter design, going the opposite direction of the typical conventional soft muted pastel colors to a more vibrant contrasting color palette that looks rather toxic, causing them to look as eerie as possible. With the different colored lighting, it forces the viewer to get closer and see what the actual colors of the figurines are, in addition to the furniture.

Each piece of furniture has been altered to be a solid color to erase detailed features of each object and give it more mystery. I want those objects to be seen in a way that makes them look like a prop or pulled from a painting or story board. The idea of the set being a prop is important. There is a temporary element to everything in this space, just like moving into a house and having to move out. The lighting again draws the viewer in closer to try and guess what color the furniture is painted.

I draw light inspiration from films such as *Creep Show* and *Twilight Zone: The Movie*. These films use hued bulbs to create an effect that is more dramatic and rather playful or comical

compared to traditional dimly lit or high contrast white lighting. Colored lighting is used in many horror films for various reasons. Even in the black and white silent film *Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the creators later went in and placed a green and orange filter on some of the scenes. Speaking of that motion picture, I love how German expressionism was brought to the cinema through its style. The jagged lines, shadows, and painted wall are a reference to that artwork. I had the idea of color combinations and line in a mixed form of *Caligari* with campiness of *Pee-Wee's Playhouse*. Just as shadows were important in German expressionism, I chose to black out objects such as the plants, laundry basket, and some figurines to give the illusion of a 3D shadow.



[Scene from *Creepshow*]. (1982). Retrieved from horrorhomeroom.com



[Scene from *Twilight Zone: The Movie*]. (1983). Retrieved from allhorror.com

Red carpet was something I always wished we had in our living room, but much too fancy for anyone like my family to ever think about installing. I knew the carpet had to be some form of red but decided that a blotchy blood type of red would be best. I needed it to remind me of the aged thirty something year old carpet my grandparents had in their living room before the millennium. In addition, red is such an important color within horror in general as the abject, which is translated as the state of being cast off.

For writer Julia Kristeva, in *Powers of Horror*³ the abject refers to the human reaction (horror, vomit) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of distinction between subject and other or between self and other, kind of like “the double”. For example, in *The Shining* when bright red blood comes pouring out of the elevators and all through the hotel halls, or in the film *Carrie* when she is covered in pig’s blood on the stage as prom queen. These scenes are an example of abjection in horror where the viewer is seeing a separation from one’s self and the other, not wanting to feel the human connection that comes with the blood because it is so frightening. This unfortunate event in *Carrie* is connected to menstruation and the abjection of menstrual blood being a cast off from something that naturally happens to humans. That ending scene is correlate with the beginning of the film when she begins menstruating for the first time in the locker room shower.

For the reason of abjection, the red carpet is cut into curvy lines and little islands to suggest liquidity, like blood. There are several figurines I glazed solely in red as a nod to blood as the abject, with thinking about how these figurines would look if they were covered in blood like Carrie.

³ Kristeva, J. (1982). *Pouvoirs de L'horreur* (English). Germany: Columbia University Press.

Vignette 3

Around 1998 my mom stepdad and I were watching episode 18 of the second season of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*. An invisible monster would go into the hospital rooms of children who had fevers. He would climb on top of them as they were sleeping on their backs and his eyes would suck the life out of the kids and they'd be dead the next day. Thankfully Buffy defeated the creature, but from that night until current day, I began sleeping on my stomach so that no monster could murder me way of sucking my soul through my forehead.

The Nostalgia

Nostalgia can be defined as a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations. I must disagree with the definition partially, because of negative nostalgia. Nostalgia is important because it can bring a lot of emotions to mind; joy, melancholy, fright, regret, anger, gratitude and so on. For example, the smell of stale cigarettes and light mildew remind me of the old trailer I lived in before second grade, both a sour and pleasant feeling. Also, the smell of the wood as I constructed, placed me in the time when I used to visit the homes my grandfather would remodel, and then I ultimately think about how he is now estranged from the family. For some, looking back at their senior prom photographs brings back great and happy nostalgic memories, but I would associate that point of my life as ridiculous, comical, confusing, annoying, and limiting-- especially as a queer person. My nostalgia as a queer individual is different than that of a hetero individual since I mostly grew up within a small southern Arkansan town in the 1990s and 2000s, before being gay was not mainstream, popular, or cool. Even after the American society has embraced anything considered liberal, it takes much longer for it to catch on in small rural towns.

In Kathryn Stockton's book *The Queer Child* she discusses the theory of growing sideways.⁴ This basically means that queer children cannot grow up in the way they want, they can only grow sideways, because their hetero parents push heteronormative beliefs and expectations on them. Metaphorically, I grew sideways because there was always an expectation of having a female partner, getting married in the Catholic church on my mammaw's side of the family, joining the Mormon church on my father's side of the family, and having a future career

⁴ Stockton, K. B. (2009). *The Queer Child, Or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century*. United States: Duke University Press.

that was of the heteronormative small town nature. Basically, I had to assimilate until I was eighteen years old, pushing any growing up sideways until I became an adult. I couldn't begin growing up in my own queer way until then. Literally, I was growing sideways because I was always a fat kid due to watching movies and eating food as comfort. What was a queer kid to do in a country town when they couldn't be part of a heteronormative social circle of the boys in their school, and hanging with girls would cause jokes and jeers? I would say this is a type of nostalgic horror. Many queers could say that their lives before adulthood were a horror story due to the straight culture they must live in, and I know I certainly can say that.

During Christmas season of 2019, I visited the old gutted trailer I used to live in. It is literally and metaphorically like nostalgia. My family has thrown boxes of things they no longer want in there, lots of furniture, books, videos and more. It is such a cluttered uncontrollable mess; I could barely walk around in it without fearing I'd hurt myself. Nevertheless, I looked through many things. It was if the structure represented a mind full of old memories that has the capability of showing up sometimes, but not in the same way they happened. The boxes that had brown glazed ceramic ducks were certainly in a much happier state of existence the last time I saw them over a decade ago on a shelf. As I went through things, old experiences came to my mind. The building was charging my nostalgia. Its shell was like a skull, and the objects inside were the thoughts and old days of the brain. I found a polyresin cast of four wise monkeys there and decided it would be the one thing from the trailer I would put in my installation.

I look at my own nostalgic times through my queer lens. I can't think of any moment in my upbringing that wasn't bittersweet, but I will say that I cherish all the moments that my family was supportive before I ever came out of the closet. Hell, I would assume my family was just waiting for me to say I was gay since I was a feminine boy who always said I wanted to be

an artist when I grow up. Anyway, those times long ago in front of the television watching a horror film with my Arkansas family are probably my most favorite. It was a moment we could all sit down and agree on something that was unconventional and seemingly queer, whether they liked to admit it or not. It's through those moments I am thankful because nostalgia allows me to cherish parts of my upbringing and show how past experiences were formative for me.



Ian Park, Scene from *Fraught!*, 2020, Mixed Media. Photo by Caleb Bourque

Vignette 4

I've lost count of how many times I've seen *The Lost Boys*, my stepdad's favorite vampire film. Regardless, I remember thinking of how beautiful all the men in it were with their porcelaneous vampire skin, tight faces, and fluffy long 80s hair. Come to find out, the director is a complete homo.

The Secondhand

Nearly everything within *Fraught!* is either second hand or third hand usage. All the furniture was found around Baton Rouge, whether it was lying in one of the many dump piles around my neighborhood, or from the Christian thrift store down the road. The figurines were bought at secondhand stores, estate sales, charities, given to me, or created by me in a secondhand manner. Even the wallpaper and carpet are cast offs from what people no longer wanted. As I glued the paper to the walls, I would sniff it sometimes to remind me of the scent of old vinyl furniture that filled my great aunt Georgie's house.

It was important to take advantage of these used objects and give them a new life. To me, it speaks about class and connection. My family's lineage goes back to immigration from Europe to the United States of course, but specifically in the early 1900s. They all existed as lower-class coal miners on both sides of my mother and father's family. They lived in poverty and never threw away anything that could be used; even as we cleaned out my great grandma Ella's house after she died, everything was used to its fullest extent. I'll never forget the broom handle that she tied rags to as a makeshift mop. I don't think she ever bought anything brand new in her life. This mind set continued into my family over the generations, and I remember going to the salvation army and other thrift stores with my mammaw quite often, as she loved discovering objects that were new to her and old to someone else. It's something I carry on to this day, I never buy new furniture, cars, or appliances and always try to find secondhand bedding and clothing whenever possible. It's my way of keeping in touch with the humble history of my family. I want the objects in this installation to aid in an uncanny new life for themselves, while letting them know they are still worthy of existing and functioning within space.

Vignette 5

My grandma Agatha used to keep plastic dolls sitting around her houses. I think she would crochet their dresses too. I remember playing with them every time I would visit her when I was a kid. I'd make sure their hair was just right, stab sewing pins in their ear lobes to look like earrings, change their dresses, and make sure they looked pretty when I sat them down for the next time I'd visit. I would even get pissed if another grandkid came over and messed with them! These dolls were probably my introduction to campy objects that were obtainable. I'll never forget the last time I saw the dolls; Grandma had just gotten this lavish new wallpaper with giant green leaves in the guest room. There was a floral duvet on the bed, and the doll was sitting on a dresser near it. I thought, "This is the best home this doll has ever had!"

The Sound

What is any film without sound? Even silent films have sound! Anytime I watch a scary film, I purposefully turn my phone off, have all the lights dim, and the volume way up on my television because I want to hear everything the movie has to offer. There might be a secret unidentifiable thing I have heard that I can't quite put my finger on within the motion picture, but later, it gets tied back into the plot just like foreshadowing for my ears. There are particular sounds used for the purpose of creating unease and fright. The *Friday the 13th* series would not be as popular without its common sound effect throughout each one. It wouldn't create a build up giving the viewer a hint that something dastardly is about to happen.

Even in real life, just the slightest thing we hear out of the ordinary can change our mood rapidly. When I stayed home alone during the summer of '99, I got scared because I heard noises from other rooms thinking someone was in the house. From that, I always had a sharp knife near me when I was watching TV until my parents got home.

Within *Fraught!* I have used the element of sound to create an immersive experience so that it resonates in the viewer. I specifically chose things such as the sound of TV static, a VCR rewinding, and creaking. It amplifies the mysteriousness of the set as a whole and causes more questions to arise during the viewers experience.

Conclusion

Fraught! was made to materialize an amalgamation of my own nostalgia, camp, anxiety, the uncanny, and queerness. By creating this installation, I was able to remember adolescence in a different way and fill in the blurry aspects with my own queer and horrific ideas of what I think are interesting and beautiful. I hope that it can give everyone a common visceral feeling that allows people to reflect on their own ideas of the subjects that I have explored.

COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Louisiana State University had to have a complete school lockdown, which included the original gallery my thesis show was going to be placed. As a form of improvisation, I decided to leave my installation within its original construction site and work with what I had. I think that it just so happened to work out for the better because the exhibit now forces its viewing to be one person at a time per day for sanitary reasons. Viewers can have a more intimate experience with the art than they originally would have, and I was able to paint the wall shadow however I wanted. I especially love the puce color that is meant to hint to a *Hellraiser* color palette. By visiting it alone with a mask on, it creates even more tension because we are forced to be uncomfortable with our newly acclimated face masks while exploring a site that is not our own, getting into someone else's personal space.

Vita

Ian Park is originally from the small town of Hartman, Arkansas. Ian earned their BA at The University of Arkansas at Little Rock and then went on to do a residency at Flower City Arts center in Rochester, NY. Ian will soon be graduating from Louisiana State University with a Master of Fine Arts in the Art & Design department August 2020.