

Gothic Ambience Abounds at Rye Arts Center

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The allure of dark romanticism, the macabre and the supernatural has fascinated writers, artists and composers for centuries. Creative energies that capture the Gothic spirit allow entry to the dark sides of fantasy and irreconcilable levels of reality.

Rye Arts Center (RAC)'s current exhibition, *Artists of the Night: Gothic Literature Scenes, Songs and Stories*, showcases these artistic expressions from January 28 through March 25 with 58 works inspired by Gothic literature.

The exhibition has been over a year in the making, says the show's curator, Gothic writer Maureen Amaturio. She explains: "The Gothic literature persona is such an intensely psychological form. It's about the battle of humanity and other forces that could be either evil, manmade or sometimes supernatural. There's always that sense of the present being haunted by the past."

In the show, Gothic ambience abounds with paintings, illustrations, watercolors, paper-cut art, literature, fashion, photography, music and dance.

Particularly significant are rarely exhibited works by author, costume designer and artist/illustrator Edward Gorey, including his original set sketches for the 1977 Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *Dracula*. Though Gorey's works are rarely loaned out, the Edward Gorey Trust has allowed seven original illustrations to be included in the show.

Works by iconic cartoonist Charles Addams, known for his famed pop culture *Addams Family* characters, are also displayed, along with works by Greg Hildebrandt, whose *Unexpected Guest* features a cadaverous opera ghost.

A crisp, hand-cut Tyvek piece by Beatrice Coron entitled "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," is created especially for this exhibition. Photographer Matthew Christopher's abandoned buildings are eerily haunted. Sean Power's digitally projected pastel images are like apparitions as they rotate in the gallery.

A story by Amaturio, who was a 2020 nominee for The Bram Stoker Award for her anthology *The Dark Sire*, can also be heard, along with other known contemporary Gothic authors. Gallery visitors can listen via a QR code with their cell phones.

The show includes not only works inspired by Gothic literature, but also original music accompanying a debut dance performance on its opening night. The night will feature a literary performance/reading of Edgar Allan Poe's works by author John Kiste, who will be dressed as Poe. A mini gothic dance drama by choreographer Megan Williams, *of the trees*, was inspired by composer Ben Turner. The dance work was a collaboration between Williams, Turner and the director of RAC's music school, Anne Fumasoli.

Abby Luby is a local journalist who has reported on breaking news for more than 20 years. She has written for *The New York Daily News*, *SolveClimateNews*, *The Real Deal*, and *the Record-Review*. Her art and food reviews have been featured in *The Villager*, *Hook Magazine*, *Valley Table Magazine*, *Edible Hudson Valley*, *Roll Magazine*, and *Living@HomeCT*. abbyluby.com

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