



Seas of Infinity;
Making the unintelligible tangible.

*Alberta University of
The Arts Graduating
BFA Thesis 2022*

Abstract.

“The world for us, suddenly faced with the possibility of the world without us, beyond the known and toward the unknown, thus creating the otherworldly. This act of creation results in a great fear of the unknown, or the infinite black space that seems to endlessly push in from beyond. The brain cannot fathom the otherworldly and remains unaware of its own disappearance, slipping into those blackest folds between stars. The world then fills this void and visualizes the otherworldly as a brain in outer space, floating motionless, surrounded by the black seas of infinity.”⁽¹⁾

- David Peak

According to David Peak, “the void [is] “the unthinkable of metaphysics” ... the horror of reality is partly defined by our limited comprehension of the universe and an inability to communicate the strangeness of the world-without-us, and that, through looking, we have no choice but to accept that what we see – and how we see it – is the truth.” Furthermore, Peak explains, specifically in relation to Lovecraft’s work, that the horrors of the void are “humans coming face to face with displacement, alienation, and the meaningless of life in the universe, seeking nothingness outside the self in an attempt at painlessness.”⁽²⁾

Through my years at the Alberta University of the Arts, I have developed a praxis where I make the unintelligible tangible by exploring differing elements of the void – from microcosmic horrors to the vestigial beings of Canada’s biological history. Taking inspiration from scientific journals and imaginative authors, my work tells the nihilistic narrative of places inaccessible to our senses and beyond what they can feasibly comprehend.

My resulting body of work are a series of confrontations with the infinite seas of incomprehensible curiosities.

(1) Peak, David. *Spectacle of the Void*. Schism Press, 2014.

(2) Peak, David. *Spectacle of the Void*. Schism Press, 2014.



III. 1



III. 2

Acknowledgments.

My time at the Alberta University of the Arts has helped me develop a stronger support group of amazing individuals than I could have ever expected. As such, I would like to acknowledge those who have supported me during these past five years, as well as those who have made an influential impact on my growth as an artist.

I would first and foremost like to thank my family and friends for being patient with my long studio hours and passionate rants about my work – your support through my artistic workaholism keeps me motivated to continue to work my hardest.

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I would also like to thank all the amazing instructors I have had during my time at the Alberta University of the Arts.

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Natali Rodrigues; thank you for pushing me farther than I thought possible. So many times I remember approaching you with a new idea, concept or artist statement and asking your advice... and so many times I left frustrated but also so incredibly motivated. You always found all the right holes to poke in my concepts – holes that took a lot of work to figure out how to fill, but with your help, once I did, my conceptual work grew so much stronger. You taught me to be more open-minded in my conceptual work and to be critical and push myself further than I thought possible. Thank you. (Also thank you for always being available to help, even when it is quarter to midnight and a kiln is malfunctioning).

Jill Allan; you were one of the most caring and supportive instructors through one of my most difficult semesters. You always support my experimentation and passions in the hotshop. You have such a kind heart and I always left your classes feeling motivated and excited to create – and most importantly, share my creations confidently! Even now that you are no longer an instructor, you are still helping me find opportunities. Thank you.

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Nicholas Navratil; you are an amazing friend, support, and business coach. I appreciate you taking your valuable time to meet with me and help teach me how to make my artistic ambitions a reality. Although I learn the art at school, you have taught me more about business and entrepreneurialism than I had ever anticipated knowing at this stage in my life. You have instilled confidence in my pursuing of art as a life career. Thank you.

I would finally like to thank all my instructors, technicians and fellow peers from the glass department, jewelry department and all else. I am grateful for each of you for countless reasons! Thank you for always being supportive and for helping create such a fantastic community. You have made my time at the Alberta University of the Arts truly unforgettable, and I will miss seeing all of you everyday – from the early morning when none of us have woken up yet, to the wee hours of the night when we all wish we were asleep! Thank you (and try to get some rest once and a while ... and don’t forget to eat and drink some water)!

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III. 3

I. Research Framework.

My work is greatly influenced by my fascinations and fixations at any given time. While this undoubtedly leads me to create a variety of different works, much of my work explores notions of the void, biological curiosities, and the vestiges of Canadian biological history.

As a Canadian, I take great pride in my heritage and country. I have found it intriguing how fossils, such as Burgess Shale do not hold a greater significance within our identity and history as Canadians. Growing up in a city bordering the Rocky Mountains, I have always felt a connection to nature and what it conceals. It is within these mountains that scientific treasures, such as the Burgess Shale are found – these discoveries changing and shaping how we now view evolutionary history thanks to the writings of Steven Jay Gould. The Cambrian explosion and its discovery has been fundamental in understanding evolution and the development of life as we know it – however it is not a feature often spoken about when highlighting the ‘attractions’ of Canada. Within my practise, I create works that bring light to these fossils through a sort of editorial illustration that aims to educate and fascinate. These works always begin with a spur of inspiration, usually from something I read about or an illustration I see. From there I begin sketching and mocking up the creature, trying to learn as much as I can about their anatomy. This is accompanied by further research about the fossil. With this information, I plan how each creature can best take form in order to education and mystify. I want every piece to become a spectacle of sorts that viewers then use to learn and become appreciative of.

More strongly, however, is my work focusing on the void. While I like to explain my fossilized works separately from the void as it tends to take different presentational form, I would like to preface that I do believe my fascinations with the vestigial oddities of Canadian history has a special relationship to the void as I define it. These creatures are so obscure, and we know so little about them that I believe they themselves can become creatures from the void.

My installation works exploring the void are spurred by a desire to create an experience for the viewer. Like my fossilized works, these works are also strongly inspired by my reading, but also by personal experiences and feelings. Within my recent works, I have found a particular source of inspiration within the works of H.P. Lovecraft. Using his stories as a written account of an experience with the void, I design my works to create a similar experience in the gallery for my viewers. Whether this takes the form of an illustration of a narrative I have read, or the creation of a new experience entirely, all my installations are driven by the desire to enter and experience the void. I enjoy full room installations for their ability to fully transport the viewer to a different setting, however, I like to challenge myself to create moments of confrontation with my works in a group setting as well.



III. 4



III. 5 (above)

III. 6 (below)



II. Evolution.

As a consequence of being a person who feels things very strongly, from a young age, I had the urge to create whatever it is I felt greatly inspired by. As a child, this often manifested as drawing from dreams or art inspired by books and movies I enjoyed. This led me to apply for the Alberta University of the Arts to pursue a path in illustration and character design. However, once I began attending, I began to realize that the competitive nature of the design program was inhibiting my inspiration and I found I had an undiscovered passion for craft. The jewelry and glass studios became my home away from home and the attitudes within both crafts pushed me to pursue concepts that inspired me. As I began to grow as an artist, and an individual, I began exploring passions beyond fan art and narrative works – I began to merge my passion for science and psychology with my artistic practise. This is when I started exploring how I can use glass and jewelry to create a spectacle of fossils found within the Canadian Rocky Mountains and to explore notions of the void.

The genre of horror has always been something I had enjoyed, but never fully understood why. When first developing my artistic practise, I explored my love of horror in a very broad sense – I created cabinets of curiosities, explored the uncanny valley theory and tended to create personified works that resembled the illustrative work I created before attending the university. Once I began to attend, I found that these cabinets were interesting visually but lacked the impact I wished for my work to have. It was then that I began to realize that I was really wanting to make something more than simply a spectacle – I wanted an experience. During my third year, an instructor introduced me to the written works of David Peak, specifically an essay entitled “*The Spectacle of the Void*”.* Reading this book was a lightbulb moment in the development of my practise – I realized that my work did not need to be those illustrated curiosities placed on a pedestal like I had been making before. This was not why I was creating. I was no longer creating to produce a cabinet of curiosities. I was creating to evoke the sensation of the presence of the void. I was creating to make viewers aware of how small they truly are in comparison to the unintelligible through installation and narrative experiences. This not only encompassed my passions of creating within the realms of horror, but also the historical. The events and conversations leading up to this epiphany were lengthy, and frankly frustrating at times, but I can thank my instructors, friends and fellow artists for continuing to push me to delve into my intentions with my work.

In retrospect, while writing this paper, I have learned even more about the origins of my fixations – it is amazing how you can be so all encompassed by practising something but never allowing yourself time to sit and reflect on why. Connecting the dots, I have been coming to the realization that perhaps my fixation with horror is less of a shallow enjoyment and more of a subconscious psychological processing of existentialism and fear. Before I was even a year old, I had severe night terrors, to the extent that doctors thought I was having epileptic seizures every night. Through growing up with these dreams being a continuous plague as well as through my battles with chronic pain, I’ve grown very conscious of mortality, existentialism and my place within the vast universe of knowledge – that being very small and, in the grand scheme of things, relatively inconsequential. This battle with nihilism in conjunction with my religious Christian

* See section entitled ‘Artistic Influences’ (pg. 20) for information.

upbringing brought a lot of existential dread revolving around realms beyond that which we are living. Even within the book of Revelations, the end times are marked with the coming of all sorts of eldritch beasts, the kind of which no man has seen or can comprehend. Growing up with these ideas, concepts which I was frankly too young to even fully understand, I was taught to face my fears by ‘befriending them’. In the simplest form, as a child, this would look like making friends with the monsters that haunted me in my sleep, but moreover I believe that this mindset of confrontation led me to an interest in pursuing the existentialism that once made me fearful. To an extent, I think it probably still does ... but as I continue to practise within this realm and grow my relationship with the void by expressing it through my work, I begin to grow more and more comfortable living as a small being within a vast void of unknowns – it becomes like a friend; familiar and safe, and I begin to feel a comfort in not understanding and an ease that I don’t have to so long as I simply acknowledge that the vastness exists. There is a peace and simultaneous excitement that manifests when faced with that which we fear and that which we cannot comprehend. Perhaps the best descriptor of my feelings of comfort within the void is through the Welsh term *hiraeth* – a sort of home sickness or longing for a home that you can never return to or never was.

When creating works based on historical oddities, like the burgess shale, my passion of illustration evolved into a sort of three-dimensional editorial illustration. I began to seek ways to create an experience where viewers can be drawn in and educated about the creatures displayed. This not only acts as an educational work but creates a spectacle of the fossils that viewers will remember after leaving the gallery. My fascinations with these biological oddities I attribute to my mother – a middle school science teacher who always taught me to stay curious and learn about nature. Many trips to the Royal Tyrell Museum and plenty of at home science experiments spurred a passion for the scientifically curious. In particular, I had found myself fascinated with the Burgess Shale room at the museum. (see Ill. 4) The replicas were suspended, frozen in a moment in time behind glass – we are only spectators, transported into a moment of time where our interaction with the creatures was more of a gaze than a conversation. This moment of suspension reminded me greatly of solid glass – a liquid, cooled into a solid and trapped in a moment of time. Similarly, solid glass sculptures and they inclusions they held reminded me of these moments of gazing into another world – that of the prehistoric or otherworldly.

Technically, I found myself particularly drawn to the process of creating sculptural works over functional, likely inspired by my love for illustration and for the aesthetic of the medium. As such, I placed a great emphasis on learning solid and sculptural techniques. I developed an attraction to sandblasted and clear glass as a way to communicate a ghostly ephemeral feeling in my sculptural work. Within my installation works, I was drawn to glass’ ability to manipulate light, leading me to pursue engraving as a means to create glass projections. While I fell in love with metals for its ability to have relation to the human body, I fell in love with glass (specifically solid) initially for its ability to feel as though it is suspending something within. The medium reminded me of aquariums and terrariums – they held environments separate from ours that we can only spectate. This in and of itself speaks so strongly to my desire to create and suspend fossils within the gallery space.

I battled greatly with whether to spend my time in the shop pursuing technicality or conceptuality. I wanted to learn to become a proficient glass blower, but I did not want my concepts to suffer because I was trying to force a connection between concept and form. This led me to become more adventurous in my free time with creating pieces with as many different techniques as I could; at first just to try as many new techniques as I could, but the result was that I had stronger sense of the medium and what I could accomplish with it. As my technical ability grew more well-rounded, I began deviating from simply solid sculptural works and began exploring with blown sculptural works with varying color application techniques where possible. After having more experiences with different processes, it was easier to implement them seamlessly into my praxis – some even just seemed to fall into place without even trying



III. 7 (above) III. 8 (below)





III. 9



III. 10

Note that the first installation (Ill. 9) acted as the preliminary work that spurred the development and creation of Ill. 10, which was displayed during YYC Ghost Stories and won the Peoples' Choice Award in Fall of 2020. See addendum for the coinciding short story.

III. Concepts.

The conflict between fascination and fear within the oddities found on our own planet create voids in which uncanniness overwhelms. Through my work, I create spectacles of these curiosities by forcing a confrontation – an experience that acts as a unique and impactful encounter. The narratives within my work tell the willfully ignored stories of the vestigial beings that exist beyond what our senses can comprehend. I parade these curiosities, not necessarily despite their uncanniness, but because of it. While the uncanny evokes uneasiness, I toy with the relationship between attraction and repulsion to force the viewer to deliberate on the oddities before them by creating atmospheres of feeling where intrigue and repulsion contest for dominance. My work explores a void, both physical and psychological where we are faced with the unknowns that exist in the spaces where we cannot – whether microscopic, historic, or within areas of our planet that are uninhabitable by humans. My installations create an environment – an experience – where viewers are to face the nihilistic “world without us”⁽³⁾ and explore it and its oddities. It is this way that I wish to allow viewers entry into the void. When gazing upon my work, I desire viewers to feel a sense of wonder and simultaneous unease that captivates and mystifies. Within each encounter, I bridge the gap that written and verbal languages cannot express – telling the narratives of the voids amongst us.

There is an innate sense of beauty and refinement within the medium of glass. Delicate, transparent, crystal, trace, and luster – all conventional adjectives of glass’ aesthetic allure. Juxtaposing my creatures of curiosity with such an attractive medium creates a discussion about notions of beauty within nature and concepts of the uncanny. As glass has great optical potential, I use light, distortion and various coldworking techniques to create installation that transports spectators into the narratives being explored. The experience challenges conventional perceptions of normality and attractiveness through all encompassing displays of light, projection and creation of rich atmosphere. I enjoy using my two primary mediums of glass and metals to illustrate these creatures in both their delicacy and their horrors.

I find great fascination in the oddities found on our own planet – the creatures and environments that we place in the uncanny. I am intrigued by our aversion to these oddities, despite their curious allure. Inspired by the writings of David Peak, I have grown inquisitive as to how voids within our understanding impact our reactions to the natural world around us. As a Canadian, I take great pride in my heritage and country and use the hidden worlds within Canada as the mode for sharing my narratives. As such, my current work explores the micro cosmic ecosystems within our Canadian landscape as well as Canada’s rich fossil record of the creatures time as forgotten. Taking inspiration from scientific journals and imaginative authors, my work tells the nihilistic narrative of places inaccessible to our senses and beyond what they can feasibly comprehend.

(3) Peak, David. *Spectacle of the Void*. Schism Press, 2014.



III. 11



III. 12

IV. Work and Method.

Through my most recent works, I have created spectacles of microcosmic curiosities by forcing a confrontation through the installation of engraved glass projections and accompanying short stories. For example, “*Do Not Seek the Infinities Below*” (Ill. 10) tells the willfully ignored story of the micro cosmic horrors beyond what our senses can comprehend.* Within the narrative, spectators are warned to embrace ignorance, be satisfied with living within familiarity and to not seek to occupy spaces with which we should not be able. Additionally, “*From Beyond*” (Ill. 11 & 12), based on H.P. Lovecraft’s story by the same name creates an atmosphere where viewers are transported into the void, just as the characters in the story were.

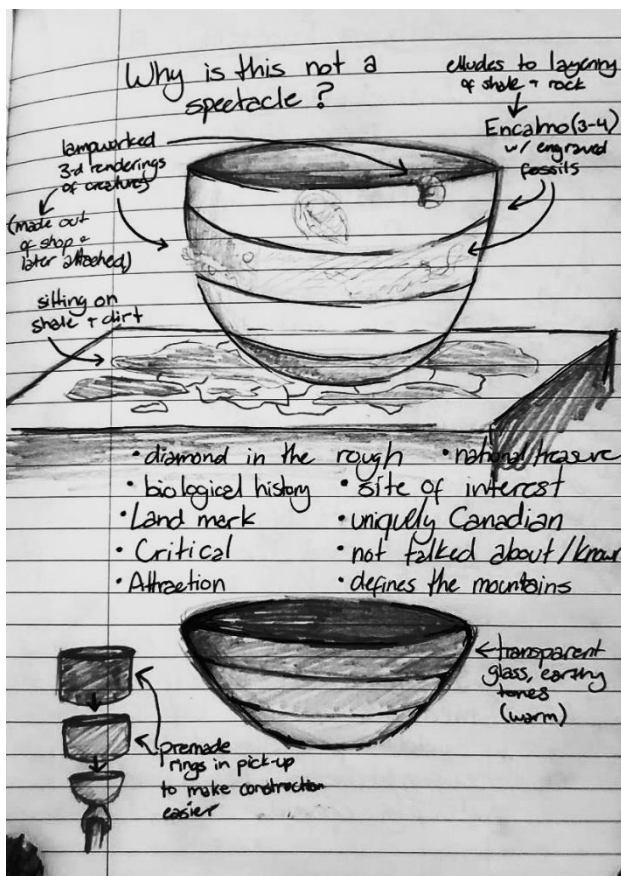
Furthermore, I have been working to develop pieces that impart a stronger appreciation of Canadian biological histories – specifically of the Burgess shale – upon the viewer, allowing them to take further pride and fascination in the diversity and amazing feature of the Canadian landscape. With my work “*Alternative Displays – Material For More Than Protection*” (Ill. 7 & 8) I am challenging traditional display methods, specifically within a museum environment. Frequently, specimens are seen behind glass, displayed with information and illustrations of their alive forms, using the glass as a protective material. While the importance of glass for preservation cannot be understated, regarding glass as a material for artistic manipulation can create an interactive experience that is functional, educative and beautiful – which is exactly what I do in this piece. Moreover, with my site-specific work “*The Cambrian Revival*”, I created a fossil bed full of sandblasted glass resurrections of prehistoric fossils – those from the Rockies during the time of the Cambrian Explosion – and displayed them at the base of Mount Burgess (the mountain with which these fossils can be found). (Single piece from this show can be seen in Ill. 1)

As my works takes many diverse forms, for the sake of this report, I would like to expand on the creation of one work in particular – the process and creation of “*Extinction Event*”. (see illustrations on following page) This piece is my most recent work within this conceptual line and (at the time of writing this report) will soon be one of my exhibited grad works. As I am primarily a large solid sculptor, I took this opportunity to deviate away from the sculptural aspects of my practice and pursue the communication of concept through blown form. This way, I experimented with new techniques while still playing with the conceptual motifs I enjoy. As such, I created a vessel that highlights the significance of the Burgess shale and similar paleontological discoveries through the use of specific colour application paired with engravings. These engraved inclusions allude to the biological populations of the Cambrian era. The layered incalmo color application is utilized as a narrative device, aiding in the illustration of shale-like layers and impression of the life it held. In this way, the form highlights a condensed history of the creatures held within Canadian rock – speaking to a specific story within our land’s past. The vessel itself is in the form of a rounded bowl – as to symbolize the secrets held within the mountains, but also as an optical feature – with multiple warm, earthy-toned layers. The bowl, displayed on a plinth of shale and dirt, has a spotlight on top, projecting the fossils from the bowl onto the shale beneath it, as if the shadows were the fossils themselves. In addition, the layered color segments of the bowl creates a moment in the projection where the harsh red layer cuts off the engravings and leaves emptiness beyond it, signifying the extinction.

* See addendum for accompanying short story (pg. 21)

This work was designed to operate strongest in an onsite gallery or information center, potentially at Mount Burgess. With many works in these information centers alluding to wildlife through taxidermy and sculptural reproduction, a brightly colored and precisely lit glass piece would demand attention and exude a feeling of significance. In this setting, the audience for the work would be anyone looking to engage with nature within the Rockies and explore the beauties of the Canadian mountain landscape. Additionally, having the piece sitting on a bed of shale as its display mechanism, projecting the engraved fossils onto the rock will bring an awareness as to what can be found while exploring if you look closely enough.

The creation of this piece was more unique in regards to my process as it was not inspired so much by my reading and research but by my desire to become more technically versed in the glass studio. As I work a great deal with clear glass, color applications techniques were something that I had not practised a great deal. I found I had a particular attraction to the technique of the incalmo and its layers – almost like sedimentary layers – and it was this that inspired the creation of this work. The process began with weeks of practise to perfect the process of creating the incalmo, followed by further weeks of experimentation with form and layer size in relation to light and its projection. Once the final form was complete, I began sketching the fossil bodies onto the glass with sharpie. By mocking up this way, I can still see the shadows created by the light but can still easily make changes. After finding a resolution that suited the work, I engraved the piece and proceeded to test the installation.



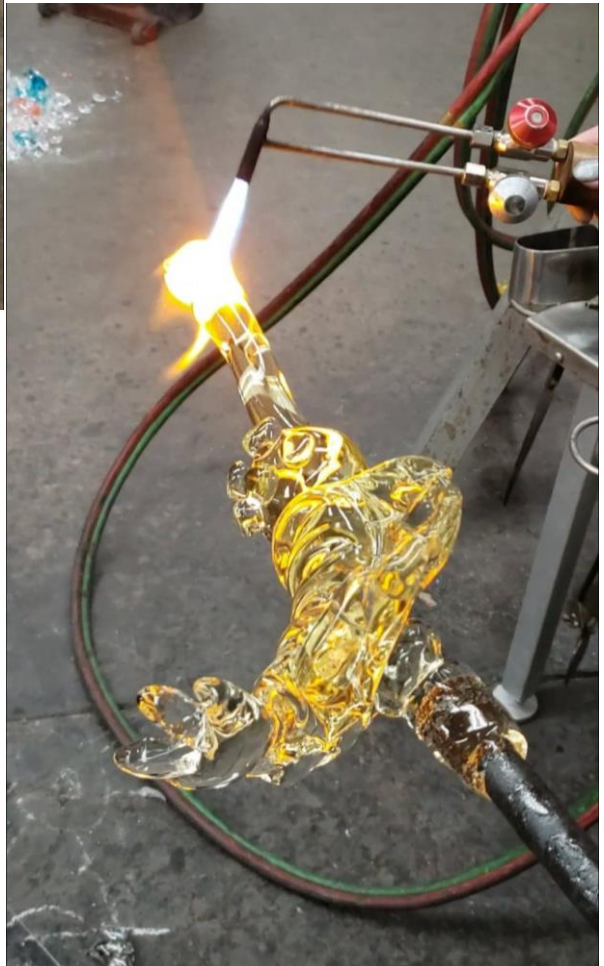
III. 13





III. 15

III. 16



V. Artistic Influences.

In no particular order.

Junji Ito.



III. 17

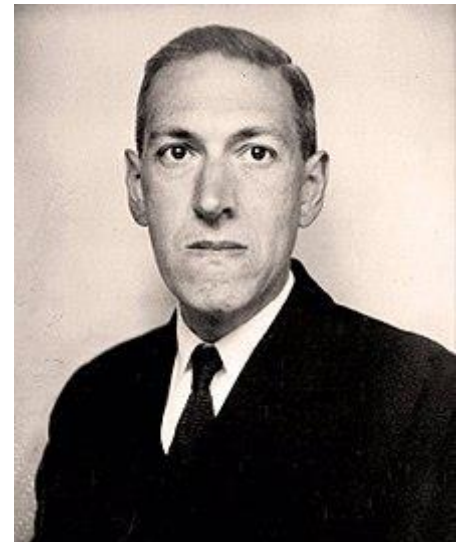
Junji Ito (born in Gifu, Japan in 1963) is a Japanese mangaka and author who specializes in horror. He was inspired by other Japanese manga artists (Hideshi Hino, Yasutaka Tsutsui, and Kazuo Umezu) as well as H.P. Lovecraft.

Within many of Ito's manga, he creates a universe in which characters are victims of horrific circumstances that have little to no discernible reason for punishment. More specifically, Ito explores ideas of cosmic horror, jealousy, envy, body horror, deep sea organisms, death and the critic of modern society. He illustrates these ideas in a way that emphasizes the contradictions and relationship between beauty and death, all through a simplistic design that is a more realistically rendered representation than many of his fellow mangaka artists. Within “*Uzumaki*”⁽⁴⁾, Ito illustrates that the spirals go beyond humanity, existing with their own goals and logic outside of anything we can comprehend. Illustration 19 & 20 depicts a work inspired by this manga – specifically the scene depicted in Ill. 17.

H.P. Lovecraft.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (born in 1890) was an American author of science-horror fiction, specifically known for his conception of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Lovecraft’s writings were inspired by the notion of cosmicism – a concept that centers around the sense of a nihilistic existence and role within our universe. While he as an individual held a lot of beliefs that I do not believe to align with my own (specifically of racism), his writings are able to allow an entry into the voids of cosmic horror that are unprecedented. Some of his notable works (in relation to mine) include but are not limited to “*From Beyond*”, “*The Mound*”, “*The Call of Cthulhu*”, and “*At the Mountains of Madness*”.⁽⁵⁾



III. 18

(4) Ito, Junji. *Uzumaki*. VIZ Media, 2007

(5) Lovecraft, H.P. *The Complete Tales of H. P. Lovecraft*. Rock Point, 2019.

**note that although these stories were all written at various times, this anthology is the one I personally possess and enjoy using to read these tales.*



III. 19



III. 20



III. 21

Caterina Urrata Weintraub

Caterina is a flameworker, caster and glass blower who started her career at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She worked for a number of years as a casting and blowing assistant before starting her own business and becoming a sessional instructor at the college she attended as a student.

“Trina creates playful objects and curious scenes inspired by childhood memories and dreams. Her use of glass, a fragile heavy material, to recreate iconic toys or re imagine personal memories evokes a sense of sentiment, wonder and discomfort.”⁽⁶⁾

Raven Skyriver

Raven Skyriver began his career as a glass artist in 1982 as a highschooler. He continued his career, mentoring under Lark Dalton until he was hired as a member of William Morris’ team. After Morris’ retirement, Skyriver went on to pursue a profession in glass sculpting.

Skyriver’s work is greatly inspired by his upbringing and the ecosystems that surrounded him as a child. His practise reflects on the fragility of marine ecosystems.



III. 22



III. 23

Jeremy Sinkus

Before his career as a glass artist, Sinkus was a gem and mineral dealer. Inspired by his love for the similar propertoes between gems and glass, he started his profession as primarily a coldworker. He later moved on to integrate casting and flameworking into his practise.

Sinkus uses glass to capture a moment of excitement and to evoke a memory of something you wish to stay. Mostly capturing nautical subject matter, some of Sinkus’ sculpted glass creatures have gone on to be added to the Life Forms collection at the Harvard University’s Botanical Museum alongside those of the Blaschka duo.

(6) Weintraub, Caterina Urrata. “About.” *Caterina Urrata Weintraub*, 19 Jan. 2021, <https://trina-caterina.com/about/>.



Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka

Leopold (1822 – 1895) and Rudolf Blaschka (1857 – 1939) were a father and son duo who were known for their creation of scientific models of sea life and flowers – all made from glass and whatever other materials would suit their model-making purpose best.

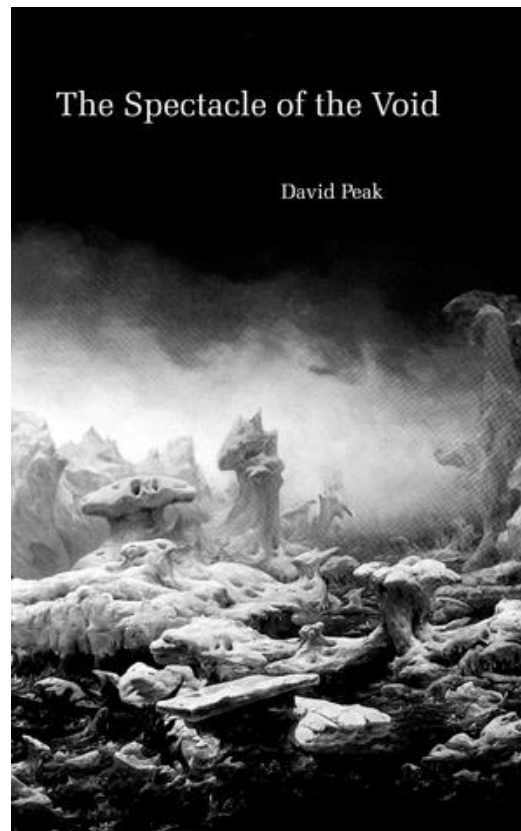
The Blaschka's were able to preserve specimens that would normally be too fragile or difficult to preserve. As such, and in addition to their incredible accuracy, these models have been purchased by museums and universities for the purpose of study across the world. The allure of glass worked well for their intentions as the soft-bodied invertebrates they created all had a glass-like transparency to their bodies. Along with their models were innumerable sketches from both life and scientific literature.

III. 24

David Peak – The Spectacle of the Void

*As written on the cover; “The world has been swallowed by strangeness. A new reality—a “horror reality”—has taken hold. David Peak’s *The Spectacle of the Void* examines the boundaries of the unreal and the beyond, exploring horror’s singular ability to communicate the unknown through language and image. It is also a speculative work that gazes unflinchingly at the inevitable extinction of mankind, questioning whether or not the burden of our knowing we will someday cease to exist is a burden after all, or rather the very notion that will set us free.”⁽⁷⁾*

This work has been possibly one of the most influential and impactful for my work these years. It put words to the ideas that were floating around in my mind and completely redefined the notion of ‘the void’.



III. 25

(7) Peak, David. *Spectacle of the Void*. Schism Press, 2014.

VI. Addendum.

As referenced by Illustration 10 on page 14, here is the written short story to coincide with “Do Not Seek the Infinities Below” ...

This is not a story I was meant to tell, but the infinite curiosity of man has always led to the pursuit of knowledge. Even so, the forbidden nature of the creatures I discovered torment my thoughts – send tingles, like a thousand tiny spiders shivering down my spine and still I am captivated by their vacant eyes and enigmatic anatomies. While I realize this introduction has undoubtedly sparked your eldritch curiosities, I must warn you. Do not delve beyond that which is written on these pages. The burden of this knowledge is far crueller than living in a blissful ignorance of their existence.

So, I beg you, heed this warning:

I have become aware of a world hidden from our sight – a place home to the beasts forgotten by evolution. They exist on a microscopic plane that our eyes have undoubtedly never evolved to see, for the denizens that reside there have the ability to torture thoughts and madden minds. Their empty eyes have a sort of sentience that tells of a knowing far more ancient than ours. They have shown me that Earth is not our own, like we tend to believe, for they outnumber us a million to one and they exist within the spaces we cannot. If they wanted to, they could overcome us – devouring us in ways nightmares cannot manifest. They are hidden in our everyday, on parallel planes of existence that we could not even attempt to fathom.

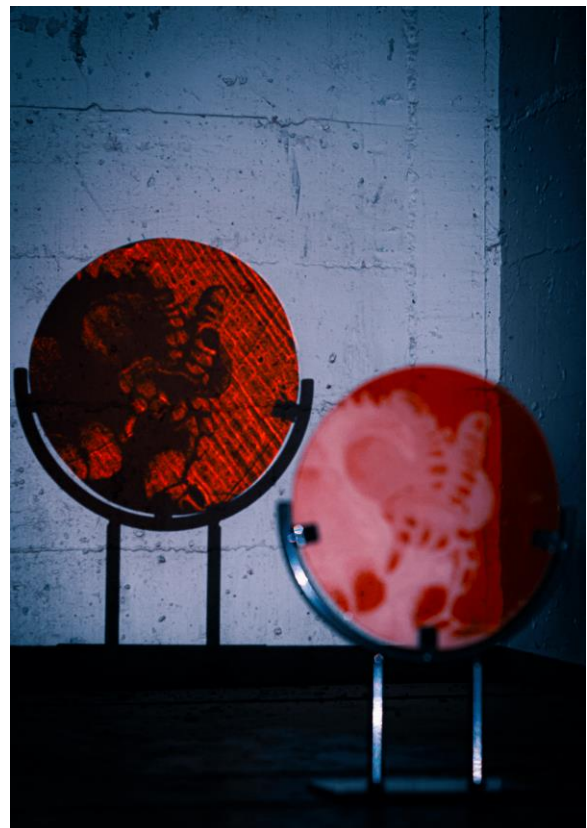
The discovery of this plane was no accident, but rather a consequence of our fatal pride. With the 20th century came a new thirst for power and an ever-intensifying need for an understanding of everything. Searching to feed our hunger for knowledge, we tried to create machines that could break the boundaries of our limitations. We found ways to rule the skies by creating the aeroplane, dominate the sea with submarines, conquer illness with antibiotics and communicate with personal computers, radio, and television. In 1933, we created the first electron microscope whose resolution greatly surpassed that of its predecessors. With this, we believed to have broken the barrier into strange and inaccessible worlds. The machine allowed us to learn about the structures of a variety of organic and nonorganic materials, but with this came the discovery of new organisms – ones that have lived longer than our lifetime, and it introduced us to a new empire with which we coexist yet never have detected. We had succeeded in teleporting into a void with which we previously had no access.

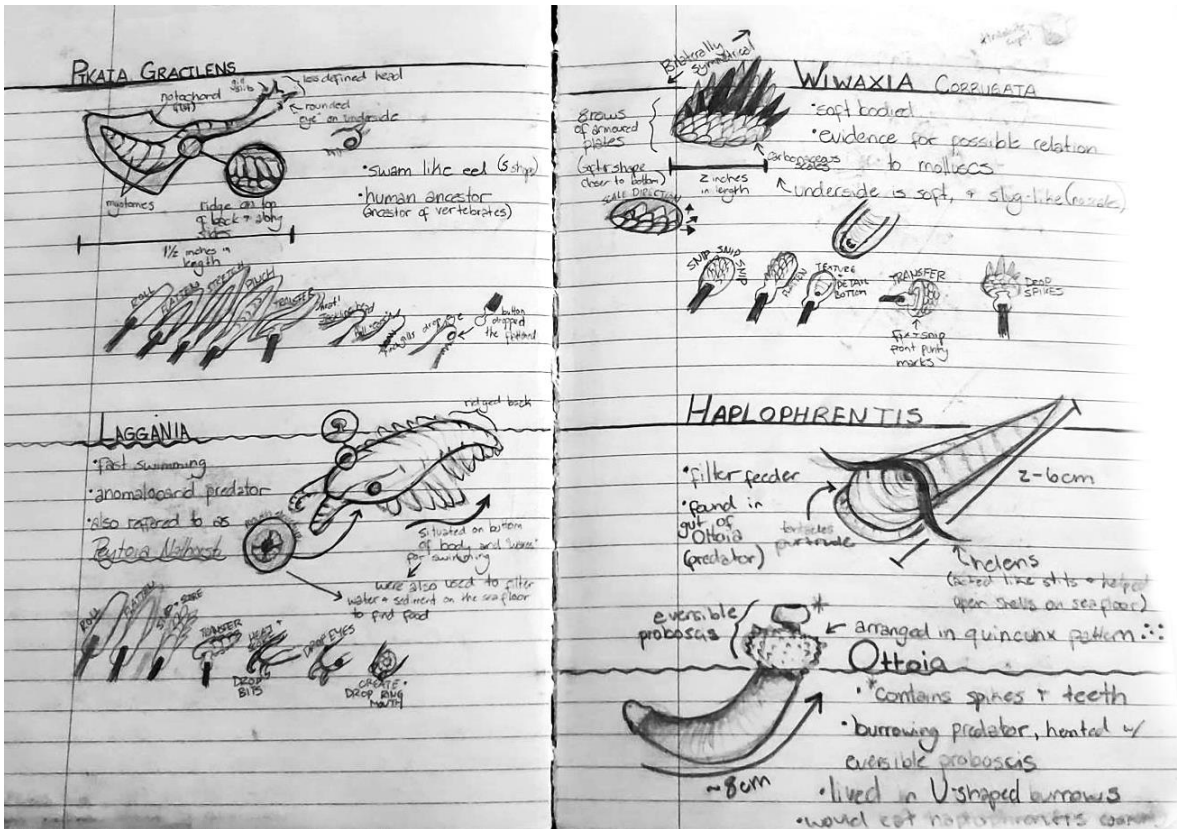
Yet, our hubris will always lie within our belief that we can comprehend the absolute nature of all things with our limited senses. Viewing other realms through these machines is like looking through the looking glass – we enter a void between knowledge and imagination, fear and familiarity. We are only capable of perceiving things as we were made to see them. This is why I must tell you that the things found upon microscopic planes of existence were never ours to understand. The realization that our Earth can be so alien to us elicits a primitive fear of the otherworldly. There is no doubt you may try to run from such realities, but once you know of them, their existence is inescapable.

I stumbled upon this realm, almost by accident, when my curiosity of the void overcame me. New technologies have made the infinitesimal explorable. By virtue of my inquisitiveness, I have learned much about the cosmic creatures that exist above us. However, after a long evening of pouring over Lovecraftian literature, I began to grow curious of the inverse – the infinities below us. What started as innocent inquiries on internet forums sent me down a rabbit hole of images and articles; the contents of which will never cease to plague my thoughts. After a few focused queries, I had my first encounter with one of the accursed creatures. Its image held a gaze that bore into my mind and possessed me with fear. Its legion of vacant eyes and unnaturally elongated limbs spoke of a biology not of this earth. Although microscopic, its composition appeared to loom over me. I had never felt so small and, at that moment I became suddenly aware of their presence – *everywhere*. I could see hordes surrounding me, nesting upon my skin, and feeding within; I was nothing but a host for their grotesque breeding grounds and parasitic feasts. The horrors I experienced that day are hardly of this world and my attempts at comprehending what I have witnessed are slowly drive me mad. This is why I implore you to avoid glancing into the microscopic realms of our Earth – these planes were not made for our eyes to interpret. Now that I know of the beasts who swim in black seas of infinity, I can no longer rest soundly. The proverbial food chain has shifted, and we are far from the top. So again, I urge you to not look beyond these pages. Embrace ignorance, be satisfied with living within familiarity and do not seek to occupy spaces with which we should not be able. The void is vast, filled with micro cosmic horrors we were never meant to face. Knowledge is not only power, but a burden we were never meant to bear. This is a story we were not meant to know.

This work and short story was featured at the Ruberto Ostberg Gallery (Calgary) from October 23rd to November 13th, 2020 for the YYC Ghost Stories Volume 2 show. Below is the audio book presented at the show with the work.

https://youtu.be/oN-aV2_4zzY



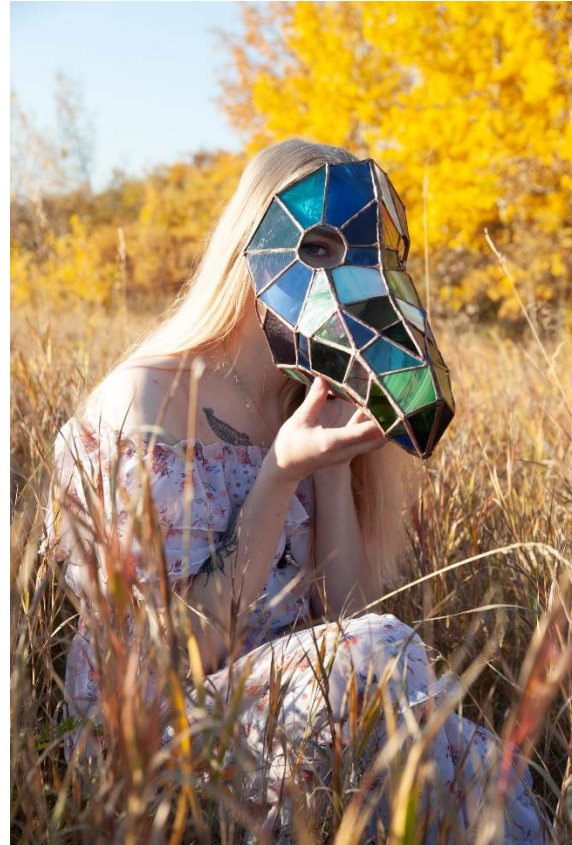


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