

26 & 27 November

A
Weekend
of
Weird

Programme

The Weird encompasses literature, film, music, art and performance. Its world is subtly strange, uncanny, irrational, inexplicable, questioning our everyday environments and perceptions and implying that our world is far more bizarre and disturbing than we would like to believe.

A Weekend of Weird brings together writers, performers, filmmakers, artists, publishers, academics, enthusiasts and celebrants to ask: What is the Weird? Where did it come from? Where is it going?

Contributors

Radar commissions

Sidsel Christensen
Pauline Curnier Jardin
Tai Shani
Ben Judd
Reactor
Joey Holder

Loughborough academics

Nick Freeman
Dan Watt

Panel members

Catherine Spooner
Ray Russell
James Machin
Rosalie Parker
Timothy Jarvis
John Hirschhorn-Smith
Alison Moore
Mark Valentine
Andrew Michael Hurley

Saturday 26 November

All sessions taking place in Martin Hall Theatre unless stated otherwise

10.30 – 11.30am

Panel Discussion: *Welcome to the Weird*

Nick Freeman, Dan Watt

Old maps marked unknown lands ‘Here Be Dragons’. *A Weekend of Weird*, organised by Radar, Loughborough University’s contemporary art strand, in collaboration with Nick Freeman and Dan Watt from Loughborough University’s School of the Arts, English and Drama, explores these strange realms in the company of writers, artists, critics, publishers, performers, and puppets. Nothing will be quite as it seems once you step through ‘The Door in the Wall’. Meet ‘The Gold Ones’. Be menaced by ‘a horrible hopping creature in white’. Experience the Phantasmagoregasm. Discover what lurks in ‘The Inner Room’, and enjoy readings from Weird writers past and present.

Screening

The Door (20:00)
Andrew Steggall (Wells)

11.30 – 12.30pm

Panel Discussion: *Machenalia*

James Machin, Nick Freeman, Dan Watt

The Welsh novelist Arthur Machen (1863–1947) is widely regarded as a founding father of Weird fiction, with stories such as *The Great God Pan* (1894), ‘The White People’ (1904), and his account of the ‘Angels of Mons’, ‘The Bowmen’ (1915). H.P. Lovecraft hailed his ability to create ‘cosmic fear’; subsequent admirers include the film director, Guillermo del Toro, the musician Mark E. Smith, and the comedian Stewart Lee. This session will examine the reasons for Machen’s enduring influence and consider his current importance for Weird writers.

Reading

Rosalie Parker

12.30 – 1pm

Break

1 – 1.45pm

Performance: *Who Can Separate Us Now?*

Netball Badminton Centre, Towers Way

Ben Judd's new commission will consider the university as an institution that encourages students to be both free thinkers and part of the student body. This paradox of belonging and not belonging, of being together and separate, will be explored in a performance on campus that tests this position through a series of orchestrated movements and song. Structured movement and choral singing are suggestive of the choreographed, synchronised elements of religious ritual; incorporating handmade costumes that refer to the university's gowns, the work will examine the blurred boundary between a dramatic performance and a liturgical drama.

1.45 – 2.30pm

Performance: *The Gold Ones*

Leonard Dixon Studio

Look through the walls of the Cosmic Care Home, and listen in on voices from the other side. The place the Gold Ones inhabit resembles what **Reactor** would describe as a 'total institution'. They appear to be predominantly cut off from a wider community, and lead an enclosed and bureaucratically controlled existence. Here, now, you can step inside the Cosmic Care Home, where the real action is, surrounded on all sides by the Five Gold Ones.

2.30 – 3.30pm

Panel Discussion: *European Weird*

Timothy Jarvis, Dan Watt, John Hirschhorn-Smith

European literature and folklore are Weird in many ways, and strikingly distinct from those of the English-speaking world. This session will involve discussions of key figures of the European Weird, including Gustav Meyrink, Hanns Heinz Ewers and Stefan Grabinski, and their influence.

Reading

Timothy Jarvis

3.30 – 4pm

Break

4 – 5pm

Performance: *Phantasmagoregasm*

For *A Weekend of Weird* a chapter from **Tai Shani's** 'Dark Continent' is told through the *Phantasmagoregasm*, a supernaturally sensitive creator of daring gothic fictions. Both humanized buildings and a plastic body double becoming decay, becoming violence. A Frankensteinian creature of concrete and flesh in eternal flux of promethean self-actualization. Dark Continent Productions is an ongoing project, currently iterated through character-led installations, films, performances and experimental texts.

5 – 6pm

Panel Discussion: *Sounding His Horn – The Weird World of Sarban*
Nick Freeman, Ray Russell, Mark Valentine

1950s' Britain was unprepared to imagine worlds in which the Nazis had won the Second World War, women were married to bears, the goddess Artemis appeared to Yorkshire schoolboys, and sinister doll-makers animated wooden bodies with human blood. That these fantasies were those of one of Her Majesty's diplomats makes them all the Weirder. This session considers the author of these bizarre tales, John William Wall (1910–89), alias Sarban, with contributions from his biographer, Mark Valentine and Ray Russell of Tartarus Press.

Reading

Alison Moore

6pm

Performance: *Casting the Runes*

Leonard Dixon Studio

Award winning Box Tale Soup invite you to the edge of your seat, on a journey to the darkest corners of the night. Expert on the so-called supernatural, Edward Dunning, is a scholar and a sceptic. But when he crosses paths with the mysterious Mr. Karswell, Dunning's life becomes a waking nightmare. Join us for a chilling new adaptation of M.R. James' classic supernatural thriller, *Casting the Runes*. Our advice? Don't come alone...

Sunday 27 November

All sessions taking place in Martin Hall Theatre unless stated otherwise

10.30 – 12.15pm

Panel Discussion: *Aickmania*

Nick Freeman, Ray Russell, Dan Watt

The writer and anthologist Robert Aickman (1914–81) is increasingly recognised as one of the most original proponents of the Weird Tale. His fiction entwined the fantastic with the mundane in bold and startling ways, transforming the familiar into the bizarre and uncanny. In what Aickman called ‘strange tales’, everyday objects and events – clocks, telephones, church bells, trains – assume menacing new guises. This session features discussions of Aickman’s work and influence.

Screening

Robert Aickman: Author of Strange Tales (45:00)
Tartarus Press

12.15 – 12.30pm

Break

12.30 – 1.30pm

Screening

The Inner Room (60:00)
Didier Haudepin (Aickman)

1.30 – 2.30pm

Break

2.30 – 4pm

Panel Discussion: *Where are we? Being Weird Now*

Catherine Spooner, Timothy Jarvis, Alison Moore,
Andrew Michael Hurley

Writers and critics consider the current state of the Weird. What is it? Where is it going? And what sorts of relationship do today’s Weird writers have with their predecessors? Expect lively discussion and debate! This session will also feature readings by Andrew Michael Hurley from his Costa Prize-winning novel, *The Lonely*.

4pm

Closing Session

Weird World

All weekend

Joey Holder has taken on board influences of H P Lovecraft to modify the institutional environment of the foyer and cafe by installing ‘*cyclopean*’ imagery of strange aquatic creatures and beasties. The work is inspired by the symbolism from Lovecraft’s ‘The Call of Cthulhu’ in which ‘fact’ and ‘fiction’ entangle and disintegrate. Rather than adhering to binary definitions, everything here becomes mutated mesh, not limited to human systems of definition and categorisation.

Weird Films

10.30am – 5pm

Stanley Evernden Theatre

Artist collective **Reactor** present *Day is Done*, a selection of films offering interpretations and regurgitations of culture; from dancing bird-headed humanoids, to fantasy roleplay, Goths, hillbillies, mimes and demons. Each work uses dance and performance as a backbone, reconfiguring and replacing body parts and cultural identities as required.

An0nymoose

[SFM] *Berdst friend*, 2016 (01:40)
[SFM] *Trunk Trumpets*, 2015 (00:46)
[SFM] *We like to party*, 2014 (00:43)
[SFM] *Off Limits*, 2014 (01:20)

An0nymoose’s YouTube videos take characters and objects from the video game world using the Source Filmmaker [SFM], and bend them into various forms, replacing heads with those of a bird, making an elephant-humanoid play their own trunk, and mashup usually straightforward video game forms. Operating outside the artworld, these works appeal to the joy of seeing normality rearranged, with An0nymoose’s YouTube channel clocking up over 36 million views.

Carmen Argote

Everything is in its place, but Everything is everywhere, 2016 (28:12)

The work is a portrait of Alejandra Argote, the artist’s sister. Surrounded by visual and physical clutter, props, stacked boxes and various creations, we are allowed a glimpse of the siblings’ relationship and that of Alejandra’s fantastical otherworld. The re-arrangement of objects in the confined room presses home that her fantasy is a complex lexicon, and hints at the possibilities presented by various alternate identities. The video is part of a body of work entitled ‘Alex’s Room’, an ongoing collaboration between the two women.

Mike Kelley

Day is Done, 2005–6 (169:00)

Kelley's carnivalesque opus is a genre-smashing epic in which vampires, dancing Goths, hillbillies, mimes and demons come together in a kind of subversive musical theatre/variety revue. This riotous, feature-length theatrical spectacle unfolds as an episodic series that forms a loose, fractured narrative. The video comprises parts 2–32 of Kelley's multi-faceted project 'Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstructions', in which trauma, abuse and repressed memory are refracted through personal and mass-cultural experience. The source materials are high school yearbook photographs of 'extracurricular activities', or what Kelley terms 'socially accepted rituals of deviance', Kelley then stages video narratives around these found images. Here the re-stagings take the form of 'folk entertainments' that Kelley memorably subverts.

Simon Raven

The Crippled Gherkin, 2015 (05:53)

Golden Rage, clips, 2015 (01:52)

Noise Tent, 2013 (03:53)

These three video works span varied collaborations, impromptu and evolving performances, and workshop outcomes. We see crude provocations garnering responses from festival goers using typical camping gear, or using literal puns such as 'Charity Gherkins', performed in front of the Damien Hirst sculpture 'Charity' and iconic London building 'The Gherkin' bring cultural cliches together into visual tableaux that address topics such as cuts to disability benefit.

10.30am – 5pm

Martin Hall

Sidsel Christensen

A Conversation at the Edge of the Object, 2014 (18:00)

This work centres on a conversation between the artist Sidsel Christensen and the art collector Thomas Frankenberg. We hear their philosophical reflections on his collection, including the status of certain objects in terms of their texture, proximity, meaning, preservation and disappearance. The two voices enter from different vantage points: the artist from a hypnotic state, whilst the collector takes an analytical and descriptive approach. While the camera travels through the collection, and the conversations unfold, we are presented with a journey through a landscape bordering on abstraction, in which fragments of art objects and natural elements join in unexpected ways, suggesting their own logic of encounter.

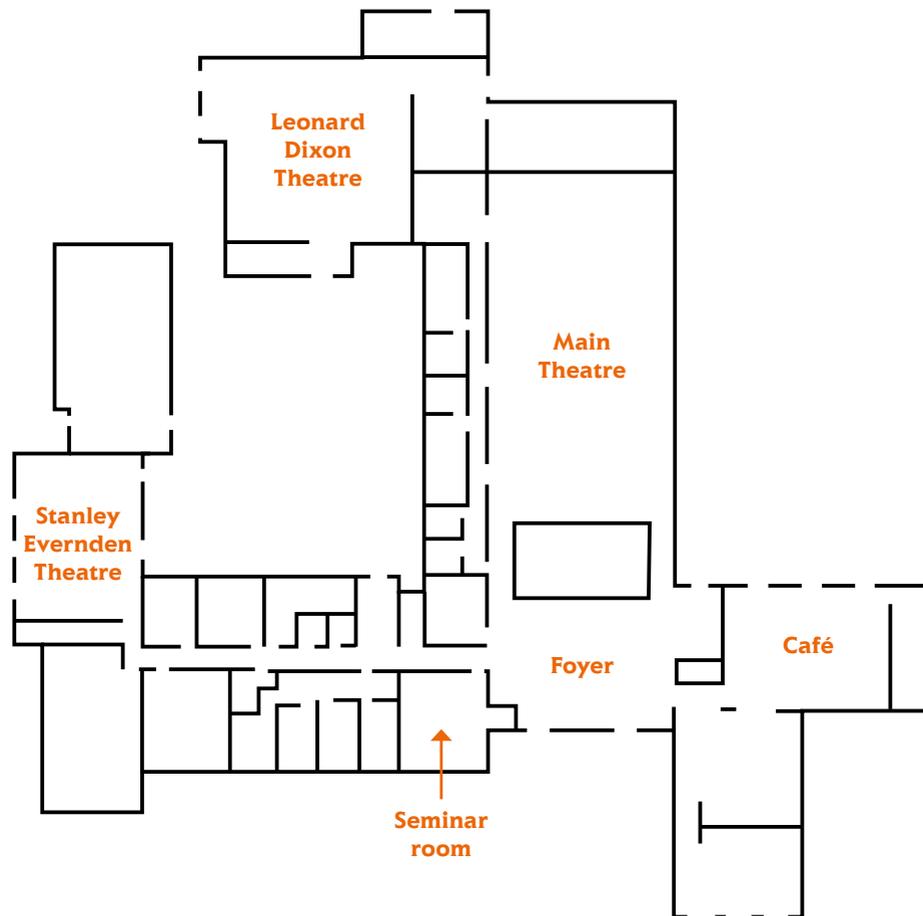
Pauline Curnier Jardin

Le Salon d'Alone – Opera for 8 objects, 2010 (34:06)

Music by Fred Bigot & Catriona Shaw

This film work investigates a woman's increasing loneliness and desperation as the only human left on earth. The protagonist lives alone in what was formerly a veterinary clinic. Eight hybrid objects, including a "log-flute" and "hair-pear" begin to narrate their own stories 'speaking' through the music written for the film by Fred Bigot and Catriona Shaw.

Martin Hall Theatre Floorplan



Practical Information

Booking

Some of the performances will have limited capacity – we will operate space allocation on a first come first served basis.

Location & Parking

Parking is available on campus and accessible via the entrance to Loughborough School of the Arts. If you are driving to us please use postcode LE11 3BT.

Parking is FREE all weekend and located a short walk away from the entrance to Martin Hall. Please note you will be required to cross Epinal Way in order to get to the side of the campus where Martin Hall is. There is also a Pay & Display car park on the right as you enter onto the campus from the main entrance before you get to the Security Office.

Refreshments

Martin Hall has a café which will be open and serving hot and cold drinks and snacks throughout the weekend, Saturday 10–5pm and Sunday 10–3pm.

Getting To Martin Hall, Loughborough University from the Railway Station

Loughborough railway station is well served with regular trains from Nottingham, Leicester and London. In order to get from the station to the university we recommend you use public transport. The Kinchbus Sprint service can be caught from Loughborough train station and the town centre and stops outside Loughborough College Radmoor Centre / The Cope Auditorium from which you will make a short walk across Epinal Way to Martin Hall. Timetable: www.kinchbus.co.uk/services/sprint

If for any reason you are not able to catch a Kinch bus local taxi fare is £5–6. The railway station sells light refreshments, has toilets and a cash machine.

Accessibility

Martin Hall is situated on the ground floor and is fully accessible.

Accommodation

We recommend Forest Rise (www.forestrise.co.uk) or Number 88 (www.laterooms.com/en/hotel-reservations/239673_number-88-guest-house-loughborough.aspx)

Enquiries

Please contact: luarts@lboro.ac.uk or call: 01509 222899

Map

- 1 Cognito, Loughborough Students' Union
- 2 Martin Hall Theatre
- 3 Cope Auditorium & LU Arts Project Space
- 4 Netball Badminton Centre, Towers Way
- P Car Parking

