

Pictures that go bump in the night.

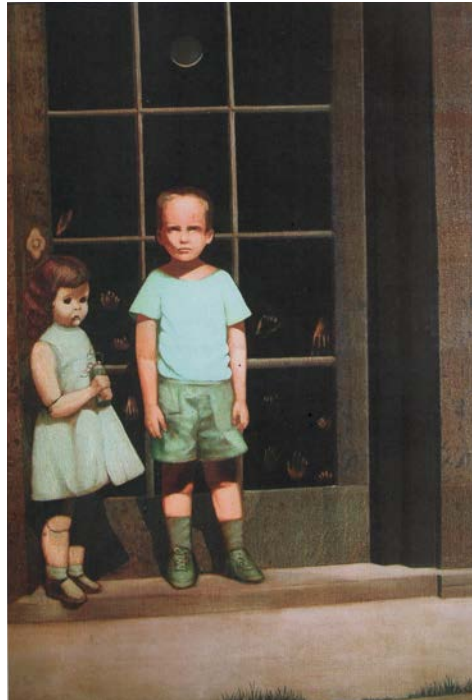
What makes us afraid, yet fascinated, by the strange and bizarre?

What methods are used by Illustrators to evoke these feelings with in us?



The uncanny refers to the familiarity of an object, a picture or an event. Why would we be disturbed by something that is familiar? Familiarity causes us to look within; a memory from our childhood, an unfortunate event may be associated with the image that is being viewed. Fear is one of the four basic emotions children experience, express and identify in others from very early in life. That same anxiety felt as a child still exists in our adult subconscious. No matter how logical the adult is, at night the illogical child, within, may convince us that there could be a monster under the bed.

A connected story adds to an uncanny feeling to an image.



'The Hands that resist him'
Bill Stoneman

Illustrators create works with a design or plan of how that work should be read and translated. Subject matter, through to the colour pallet play a vital role in depending how this message is received. Visual information is provided for the viewer to digest. What happens if this visual code is absent? What if only a written account of the illustration is given. Being 'kept in the dark' forces the imagination to fill in the gaps. Forced to use memories of past experiences to create a mental picture.

In the year 2000 when an eBay listing appeared stating 'There are no ghosts in this world, no supernatural powers. This is just a painting'. This ambiguous statement created great interest especially with the added disclaimer suggesting the painting that was for sale was actually possessed. The painting by the artist Bill Stoneman is entitled *The hands resist him*

A statement accompanying the eBay advertisement claimed that the boy and girl would come to life at night. They would argue and the doll would point a gun at the boy, causing him to flee the painting. The frightened seller claimed it terrified her children and included a request for help in cleansing her house of evil spirits. This painting is clearly quite disturbing and caused the children some distress. As is natural when confronted with an image, the viewer will read the information, and as these children have done, create their own narrative around it.

The power of its strangeness could be read about before ever seeing the picture. The

result in viewing this picture for the first time after hearing the rumours of possessions and deaths, would have quite a powerful impact.

'To make the invisible visible is uncanny'

'Das Heimlich' (The Uncanny) Sigmund Freud

This work looks at what makes us afraid. It is not a simple matter of being afraid of the weird or mysterious but it involves what is considered 'familiar' to us. Freud goes into depth about the human response to darkness. Here, it is explained, that the notion of being afraid of the dark is not simply a fear of the unseen but a fear of what is revealed to us when the light is turned on.



The Sandman by Paul Barry 1992

Freud's paper on the 'uncanny' theorises that the childhood fear of the dark is synonymous with the fear of the loss of sight. He uses E T A. Hoffman's story of *The Sandman* to illustrate this. The fear of being robbed of one's eyes creates a situation of being left in total darkness. With no visual stimuli, we are only left with our imagination to fill the void; imagination, with no visual context, could run wild. However, Freud's essay 'Das Heimlich' (The Uncanny) which examines theories about the psyche and psychoanalysis implies that the uncanny relies on other factors other than an unrestricted imagination. The uncanny needs visual, aural, textual stimuli to release suppressed memories that surface to the consciousness.

The animation 'Sandman' by Paul Barry had a profound effect on my illustrative path.



The Sandman by Paul Berry 1992



The Sandman by Paul Berry 1992



The Sandman by Paul Berry 1992



The Sandman by Paul Berry 1992



The Sandman by Paul Berry 1992





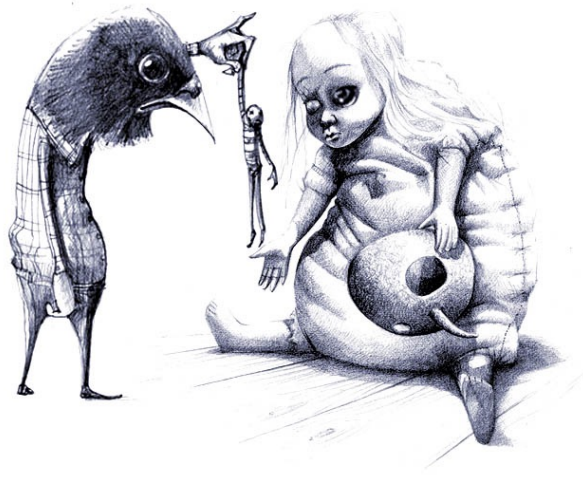
Masks-Narrative piece for Bologna Children's book fair (2012)











Monsters and Hybrids and Dolls, oh my!

Monstrous beings have always fascinated us... monsters whet our aesthetical sense: they belong to that wide and mysterious category that is called 'the Sublime'. You can't help being attracted by all things dreadful, horrible and even dangerous because they are 'productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling'.







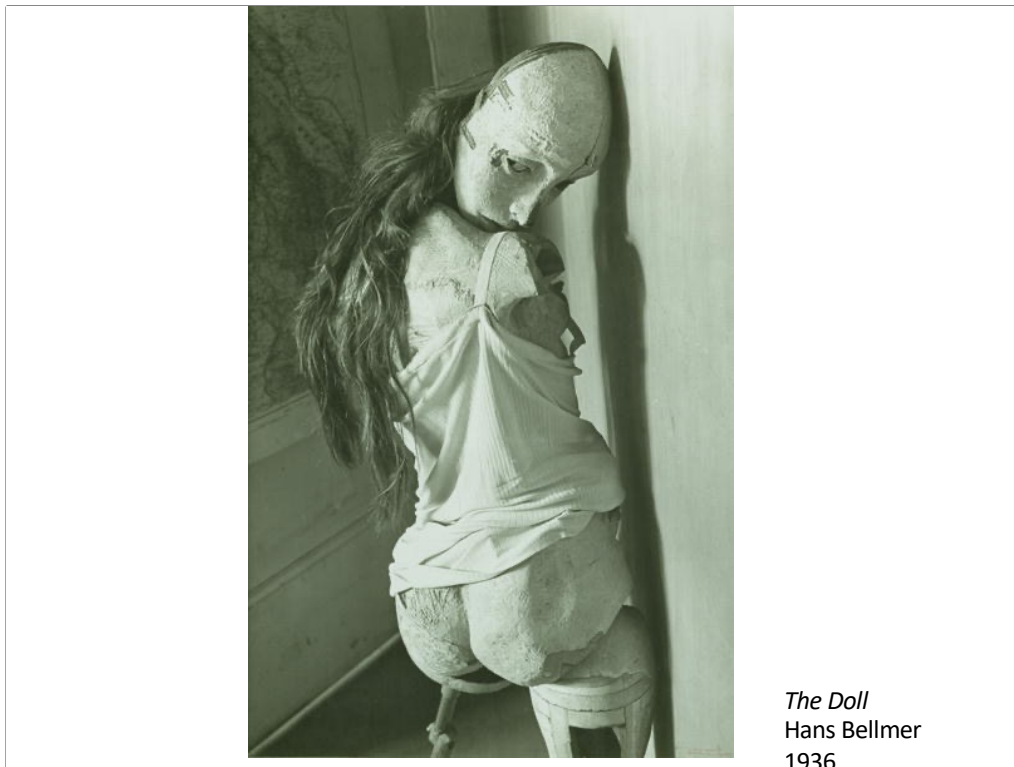
Annabelle



The Boy



Nadja



The Oxford Dictionary of English defines a monster as 'a large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature'. As children we are afraid of the monster under the bed or hiding in the closet. The child's mind may conjure a huge scaly beast with large teeth and sharp claws. As we get older and put away childish notions, for some, the imagination becomes more sophisticated (still maintaining a childhood wonder). Is a monster always large and is it always imaginary? Our fear (or repulsion) is not always in response to an unknown or unseen. It can often be a reaction to what we already know. Our beasts become darker and more threatening. Gone are the scales, claws and teeth. We dredge the dark corners of our mind and use forgotten experiences and encounters to make a Frankenstein's monster of psychological fear. We are left with a creature created from our experiences and psyche. The beasts from under our beds and those that lurk in the shadows can be far more terrifying than any physical manifestation. Most often though it is the form of something oddly familiar that can make our blood run cold. A doll is a model of a human being. Whether a child's play thing or a dressmaker's dummy for displaying clothes, its appearance will always maintain a human connection. It is hardly surprising that something so familiar can cause alarm. The doll's static composure and lifeless eyes are reminiscent of the dead, and as a species aware of our own mortality, we seldom wish to be reminded of death.

Uncanny valley- When something looks too human we fear it?
We respond more positively to prosthetic limbs when they look less like the

appendage they are supposed to be.



Graham Rawl
'The Wizard of Oz'

Something surreal and unsettling about Graham Rawl's work.



Graham Rawl
'The Wizard of Oz'



The Maker





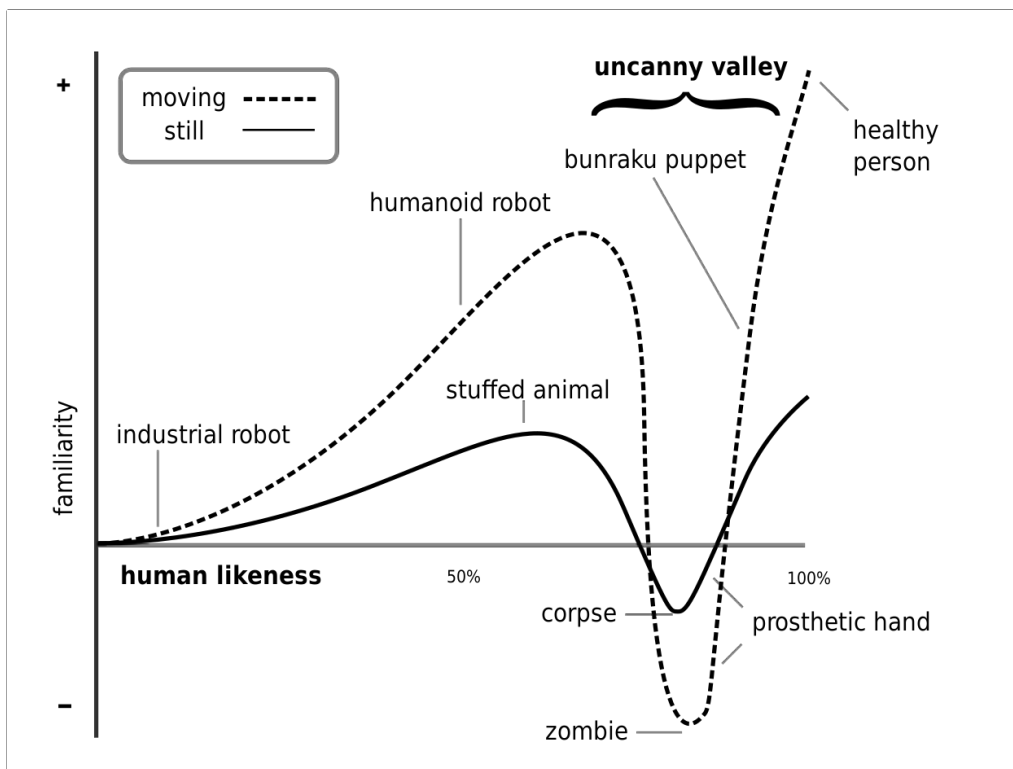


Art Spiegelman artist who created 'Maus'









The uncanny valley is a term used to describe the relationship between the human-like appearance of a robotic object and the emotional response it evokes. In this phenomenon, people feel a sense of unease or even revulsion in response to humanoid robots that are highly realistic.

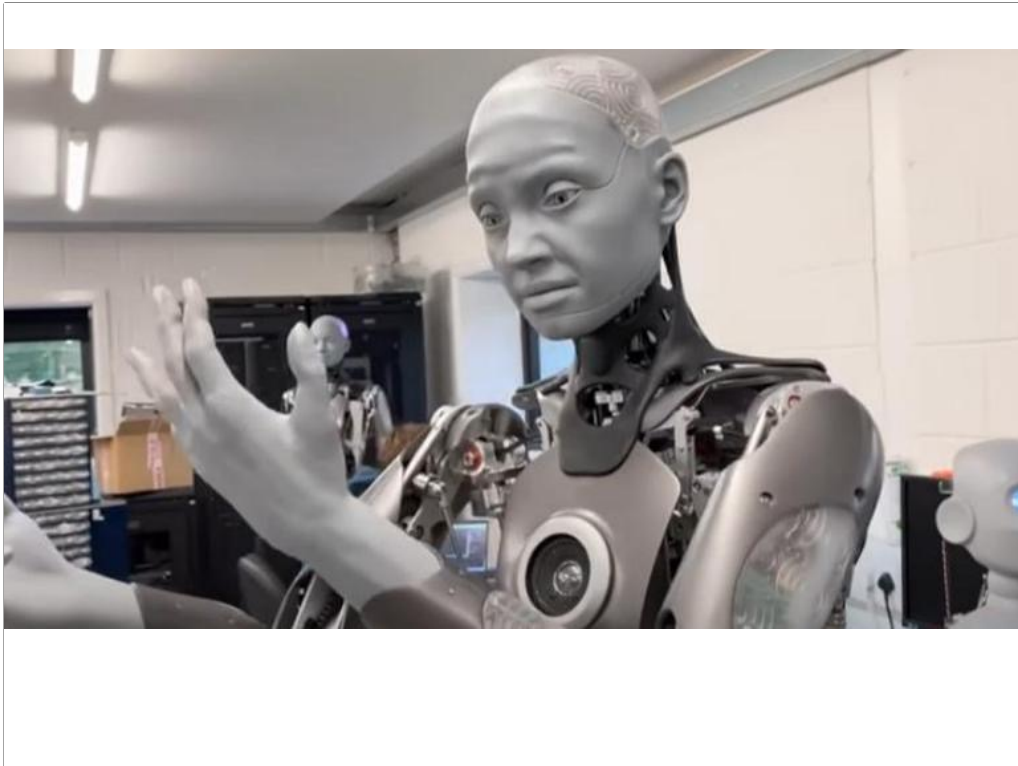


Bunraku puppet

Looking into the uncanny valley has led me down a rabbit hole of puppets







'AMECA'

Uncanny valley- When something looks too human we fear it?

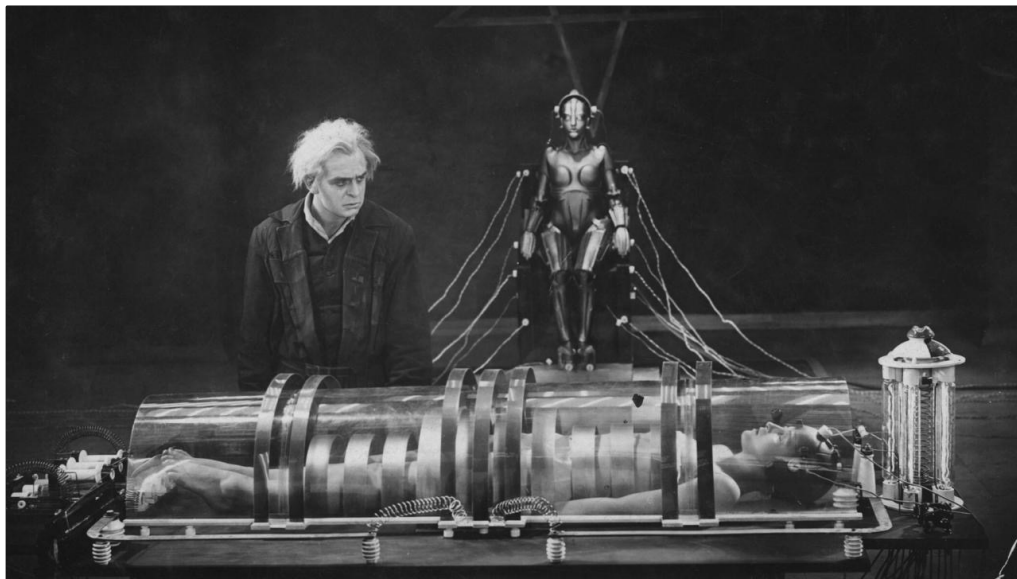


But I love robots!

Un healthy upbringing of sci-fi?



HEINZ SHULTZ-NUEDAMM-Designer of the poster



Metropolis
Fritz Lang 1927

Written in 1927

Robot given a human appearance (Maria) to bring about chaos and ruin to humanity

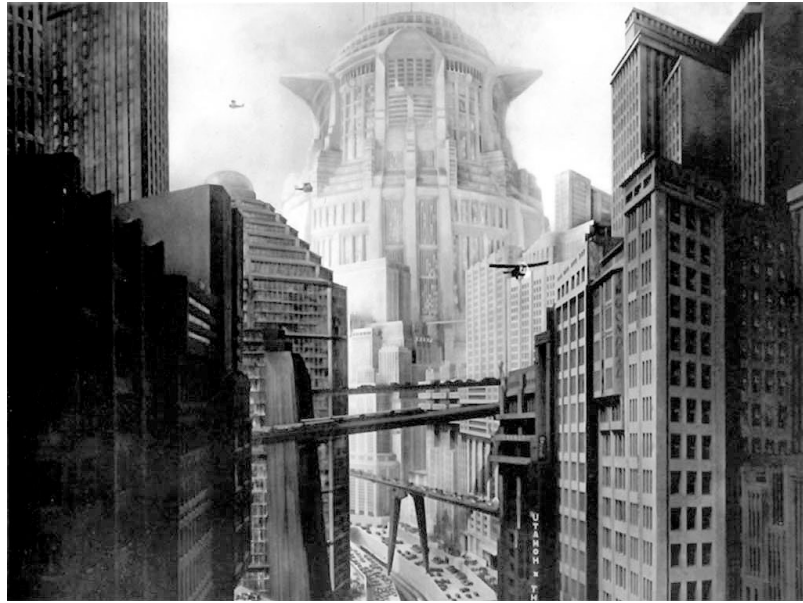


Metropolis
Fritz Lang 1927

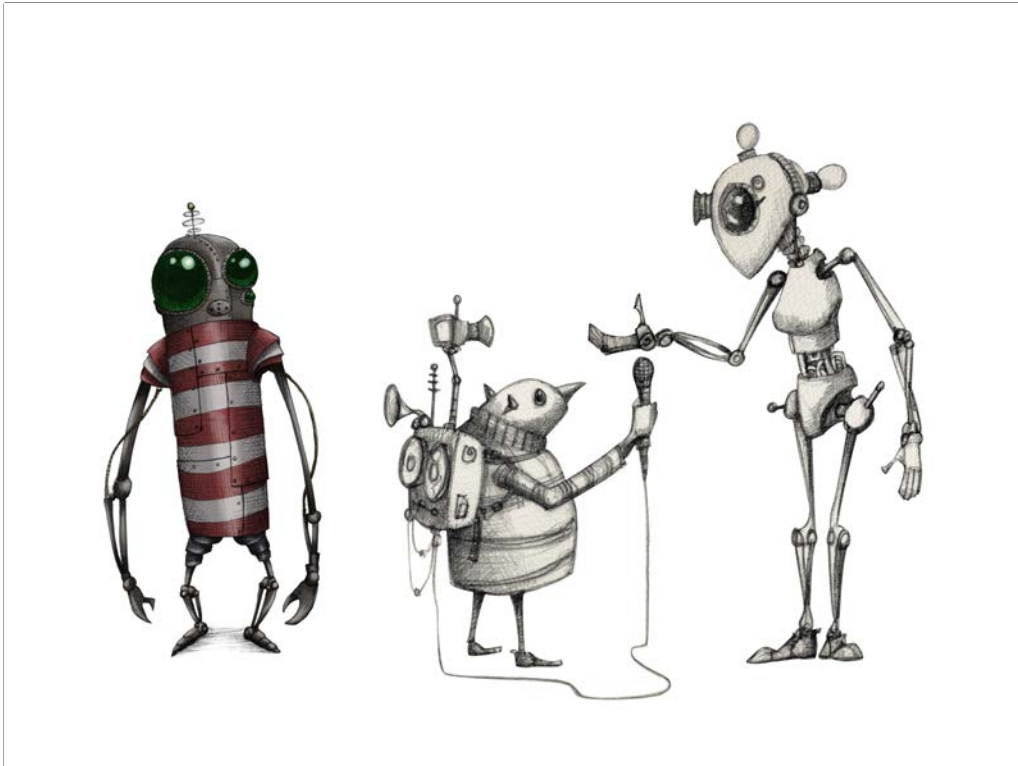
Written in 1927

Robot given a human appearance (Maria) to bring about chaos and ruin to humanity

Humanity triumphs-They burn her at the stake

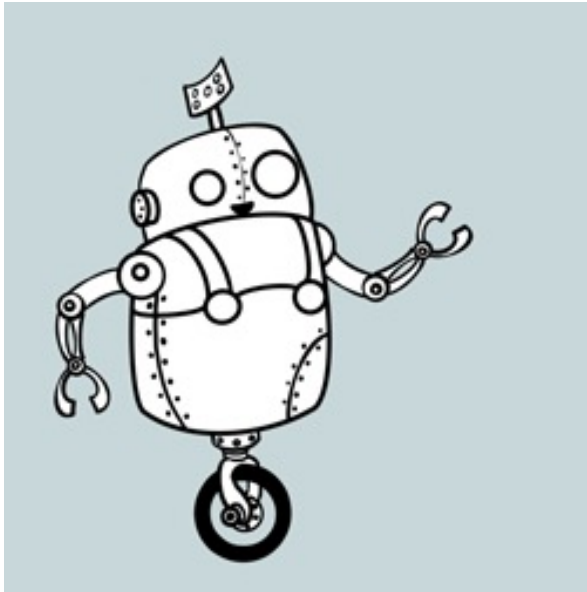


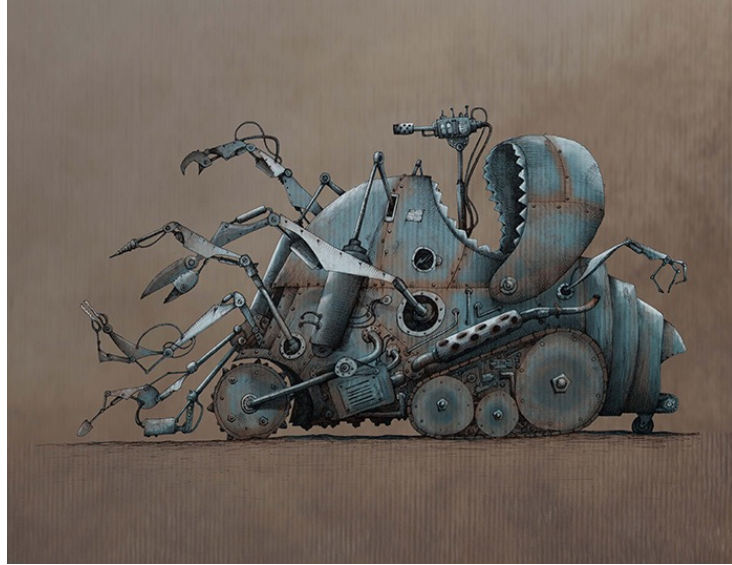
Metropolis
Fritz Lang 1927

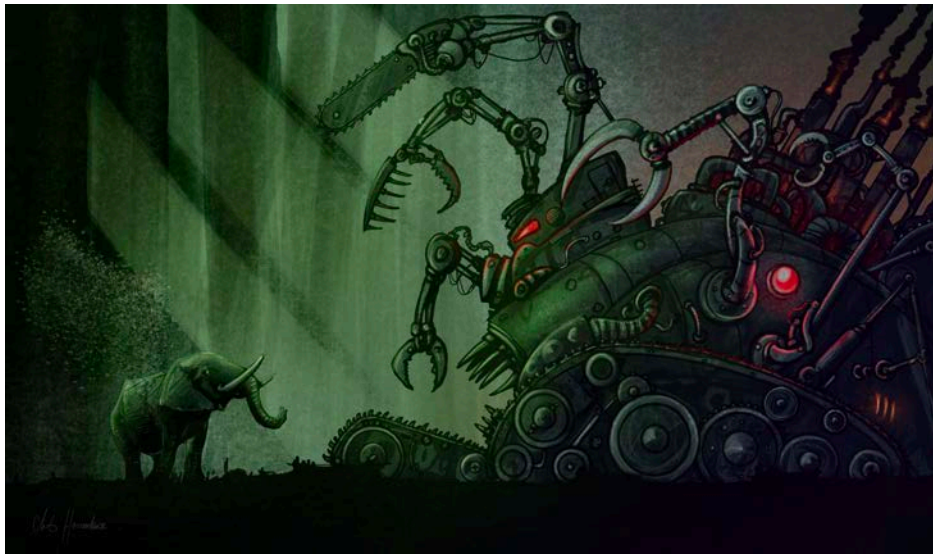


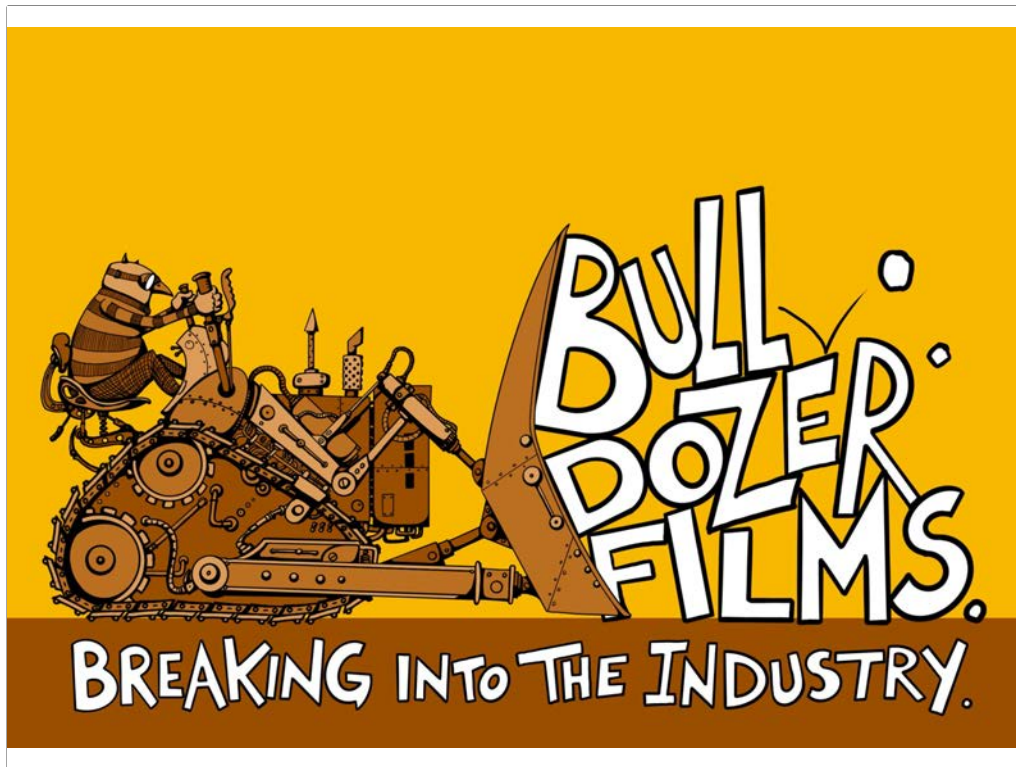
Robotics and machinery feature a lot in my work.



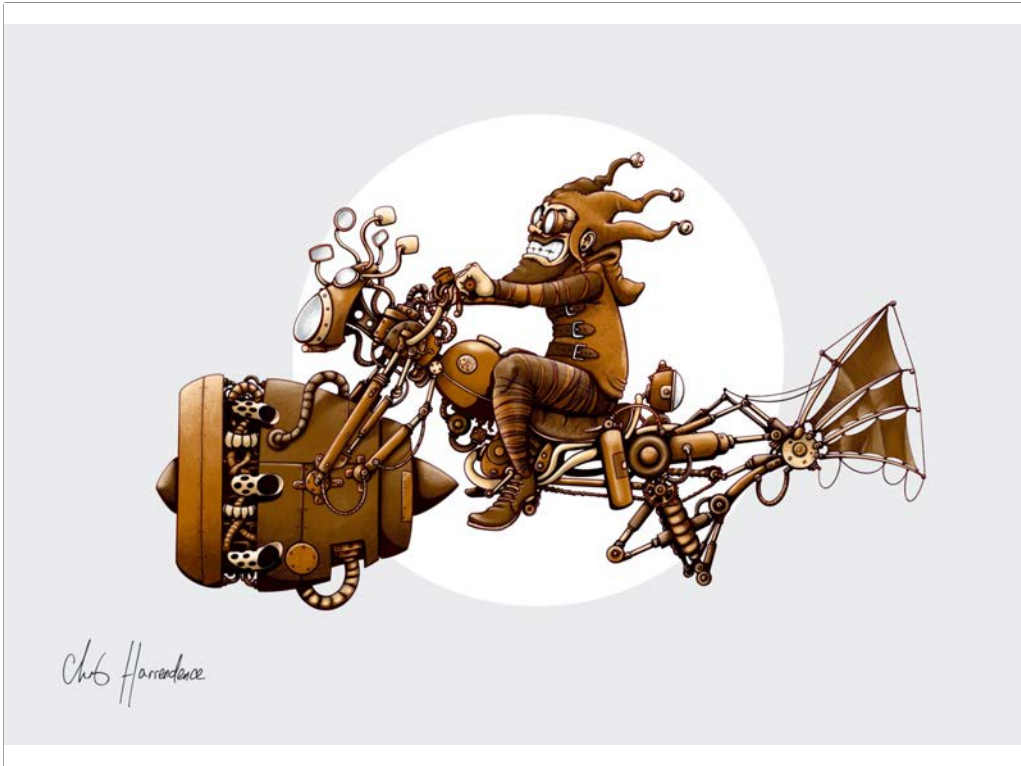












Monsters





'Not all Creatures are gelatinous blobs'

Frightening, strange and weird creatures, are not always represented as gelatinous blobs from space. We react more to the things we know and from experiences we remember. For example, by adding human characteristics to a creature we immediately identify with it. **If they physically resemble us could they be thinking like us?**



The Garden of Earthly Delights
Hieronymus Bosch 1503

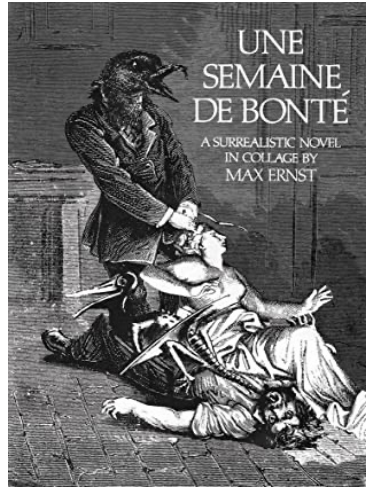
Artists have been creating animal/human hybrids in works for centuries. The 15th century painter Hieronymus Bosch created many works depicting Heaven and hell



In the painting of '*The Garden of Earthly Delights*' (fig5) Bosch has created demons that were then and still are familiar to the viewer. Bird headed men and various other hybrids stalk this nightmarish landscape, rounding up and persecuting sinners. Throughout the composition everyday objects are included which are being used as devices of torture. Instruments that would bring joy and entertainment have taken on a far more sinister role. Bosch's work acted as a spiritual guide, and used unsettling imagery and fear as a way of informing a medieval society on how to live their lives. These works act as a set of instructions for a God fearing medieval society. 'Live your life in sin and this is what will happen to you'.



Over 400 years later the Surrealist movement looked at Bosch as the Father of surrealism



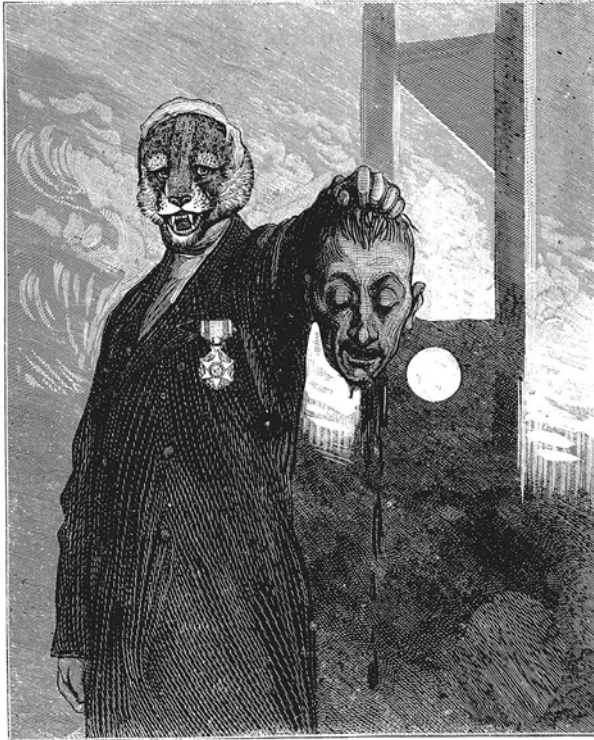
Une Semaine de Bonté

Max Ernst, a former psychology student, employed psychoanalytical methods to create his work. Ernst used his art work as a way of attacking a post world war I society. His sometimes unsettling and unusual images (fig 6) were created in response to the violation, he felt, society had inflicted on him.

Ernst's art was psychological warfare in response to the social warfare created by the fathers to destroy their sons. (22) He felt his work was a way of violating society itself. Ernst explored the use of psychoanalysis to create works that in some way reflected the self and its place in society



Max Ernst
Une Semaine de Bonté



Max Ernst
Une Semaine de Bonté



J J Grandville
'What do you mean these people are getting on as well?'
Engraving (reprinted 1854)

Decades before the surrealist movement
Grandville producing work which was also used as a social commentary



JJ Grandville



JJ Grandville



The works of Grandville and Ernst has heavily inspired my work. Though mine lacks the fortitude of social commentary. Steeped in whimsy and nonsense.









Immerse yourself into your projects. Become your artwork!!













In the dark dark wood there was a dark dark house



The creepy house features a lot in my work.

More later about Randolph Carp

It is not subject matter alone that defines an image's mood and feeling. Location and space are vital to evoke certain feelings of exposure, claustrophobia and isolation. The house or family home, is a comforting and safe place. The front door is a welcoming portal, an invitation to enter and a barrier to protect the house's inhabitants. Alternately the unfamiliar house offers no comfort. Here the closed door offers no clues as to what is on the other side. This barrier is closed off and contains secrets. The unfamiliar house is a physical representation of darkness and shadows. It covers the mysteries and potential threats that lay inside.



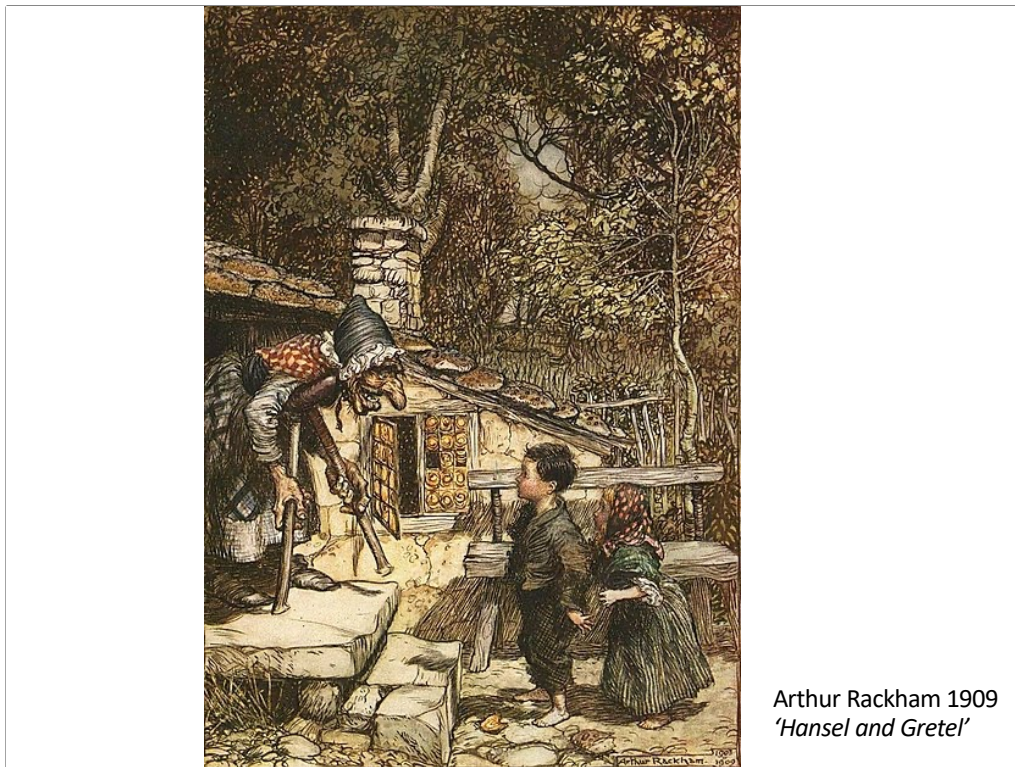
Edward Hopper
House by the railroad

A late-afternoon glow pervades Hopper's *House by the Railroad*, which features a grand Victorian home, its base and grounds obscured by the tracks of a railroad. The tracks create a visual barrier that seems to block access to the house, which is isolated in an empty landscape. The juxtaposition of the house and the railroad tracks may be read as a confrontation between the fixity of tradition and the possibility of mobility in early-twentieth-century America



Alfred Hitchcock's *'Psycho'*

Hoppers work was an inspiration to the film maker Alfred Hitchcock when creating the home for Norman Bates



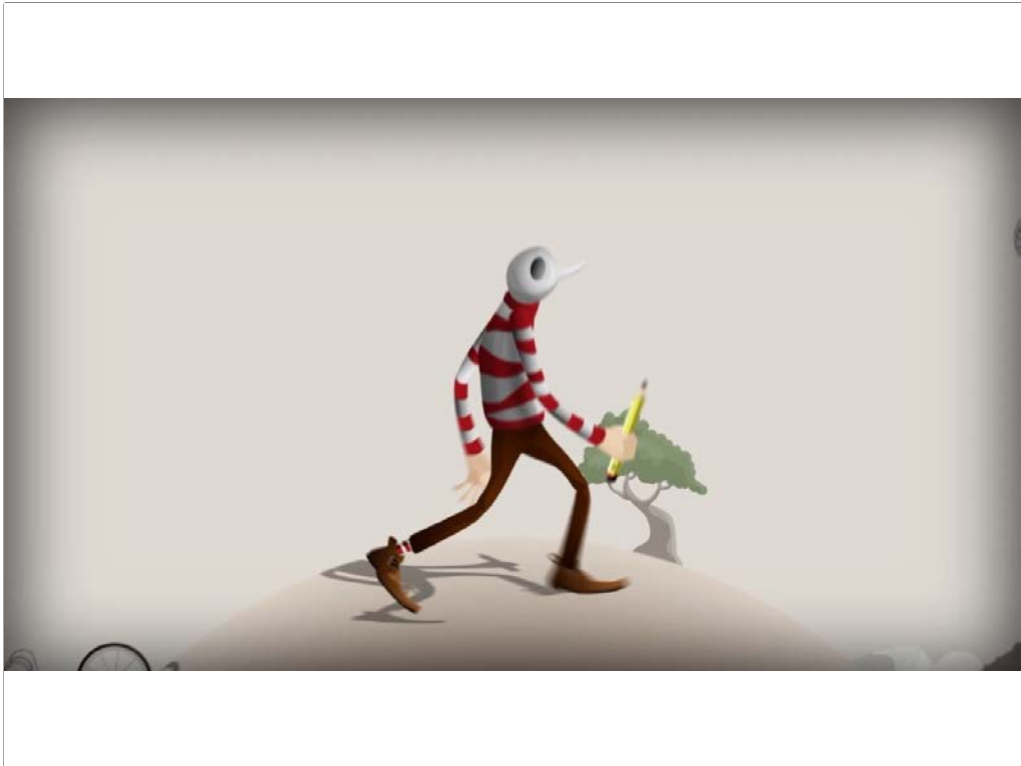
Arthur Rackham 1909
'Hansel and Gretel'

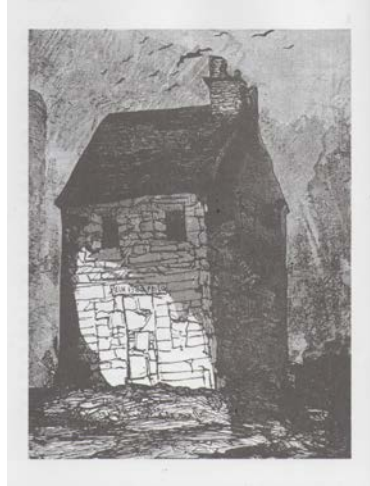
The house can be a trap set for the unsuspecting



Babba Yagga

Houses can have a life of their own.





Victor Hugo
Maison visionnée
1866

The house is a place we can seek solace and safety. It is a cave we retreat to for protection and yet it can also be a place we fear to tread. Often an abandoned house can appear lifeless. A lifeless house that has been 'killed by emptiness' gains the reputation as being haunted

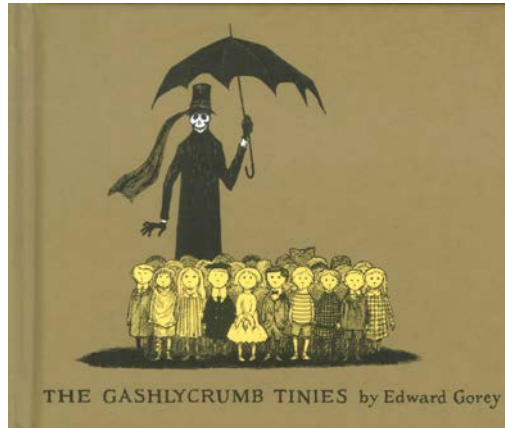
Inspired by such a house was the French writer Victor Hugo. After spending 19 years in exile on the island of Guernsey, Hugo made several sketches of a house that was central to his novel *Les Travailleurs de la mer* (*Toilers of the Sea*)

Drawn in brown ink and wash, this small two-story stone cottage seemed to have little out of the ordinary about it. The house was an archetypal child's house. However its location, although beautiful, was isolated which added a quality of the sinister.

This, in part, added to the local legends of it being haunted. The walled up windows of the bottom floor in contrast to the open upper floor windows gives the building a 'quasi-anthropomorphic' air to the structure. Hugo wrote of the building 'One would say that the empty holes were two gouged-out eyes'

Skull like

But once inside...



Once inside the house, dangers lurke...

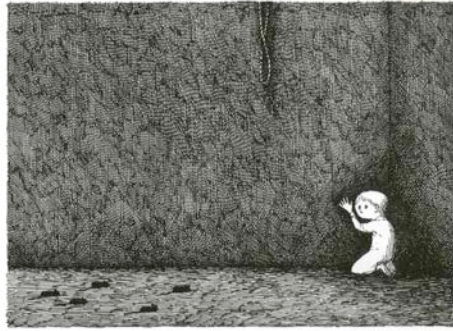
I've spoken a lot about the content of an illustration but nothing on the execution of.

How materials are applied is crucial in giving an image a personality. The illustrator Edward Gorey's macabre tales may not have had the same impact had it not been for his distinctive style of black scratchy lines. His skilled draughtsmanship with pen and ink enabled him to create menace and despair to his dark tales and whimsical narratives.



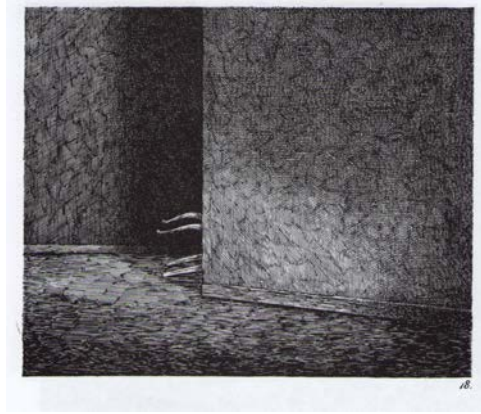
A is for AMY who fell down the stairs

Edward Gorey
The Gashleycrumb Tinies

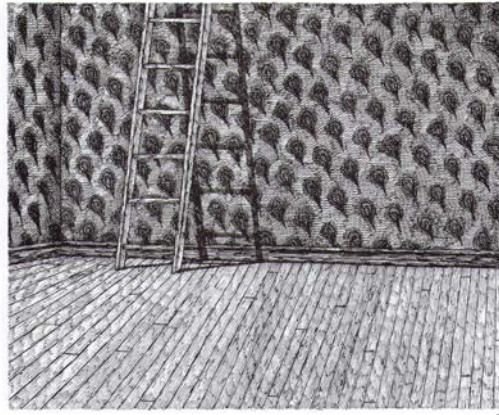


X is for XERXES devoured by mice

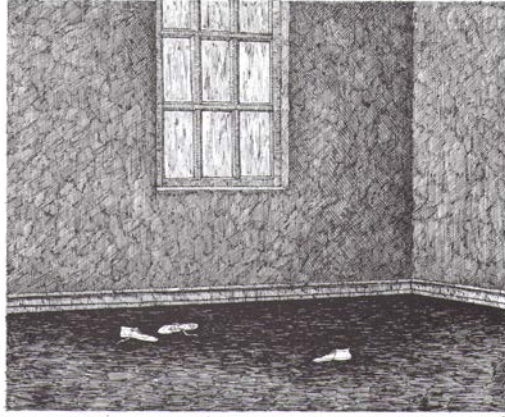
Edward Gorey
The Gashleycrumb Tinies



Edward Gorey
The West Wing



Edward Gorey
The West Wing



Edward Gorey
The West Wing

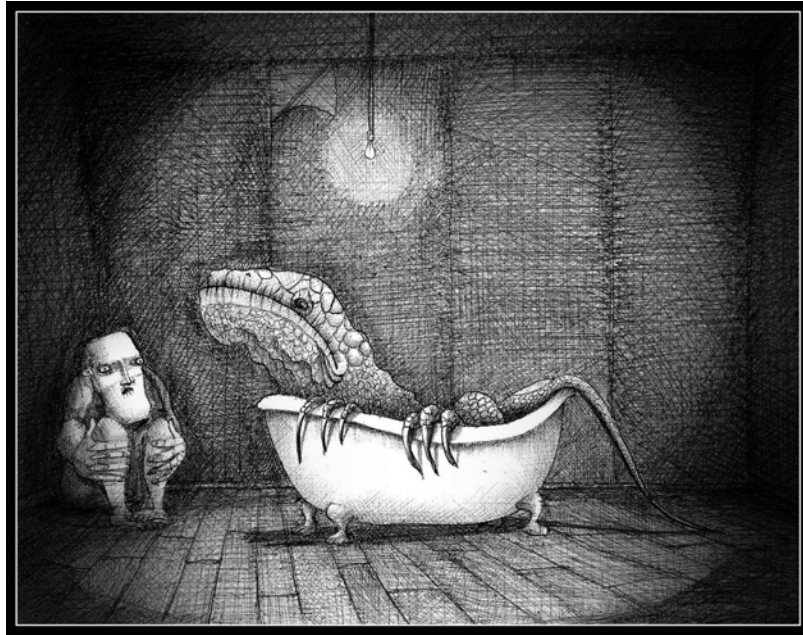
And Finally...

Let's talk about Randolph Carp.

We have looked at scary things. Robots, monsters and haunted houses. How does this tie in to my practice? It's a need to understand how you can get more out of your work and ideas. To truly understand what I'm trying to illustrate and communicate to an audience.

Ask yourself 'How do the areas of your research tie into your practice?' 'Am I genuinely interested in the area that I am researching and will it improve my illustrative skills?'





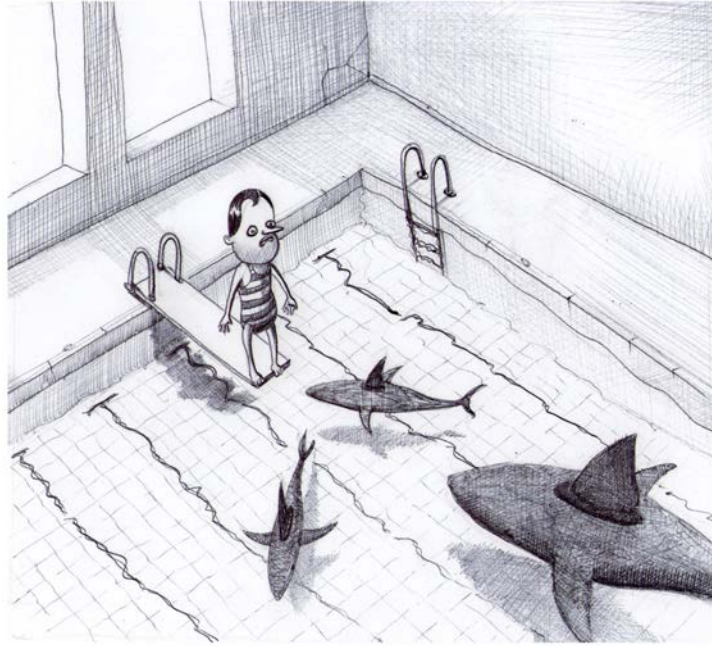
Randolph Carp found
Great Uncle Bailey's
musky animal smell a
little unsettling.

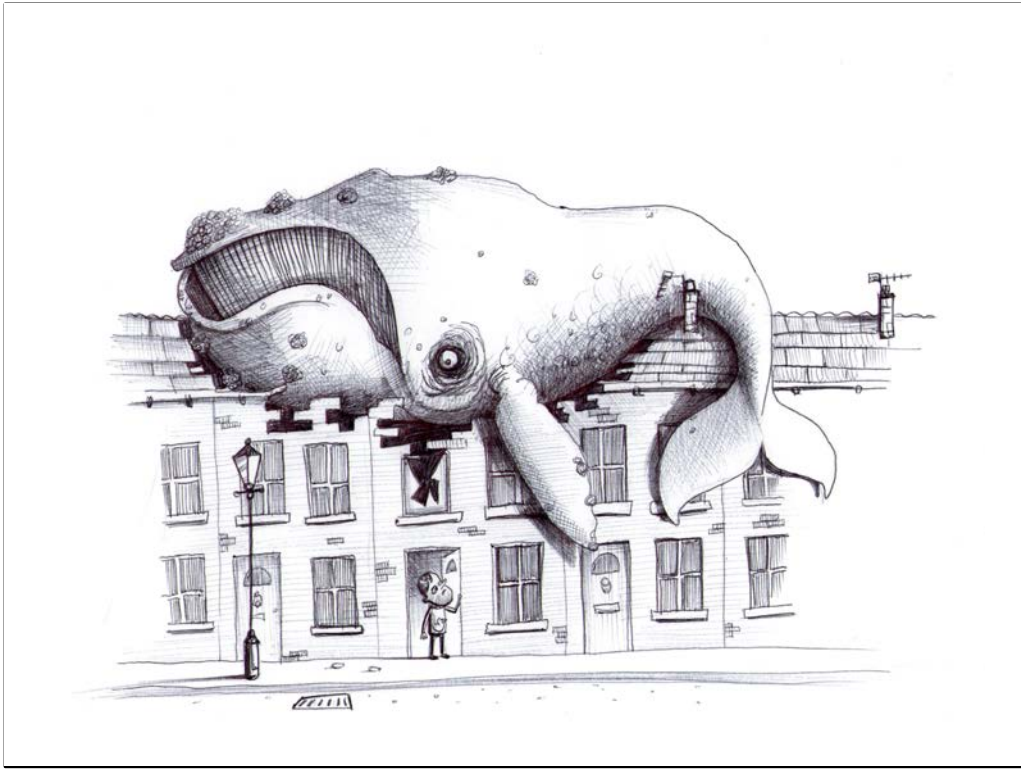


Susan was surprised to find that Randolph was
much shorter than he appeared on his profile picture.

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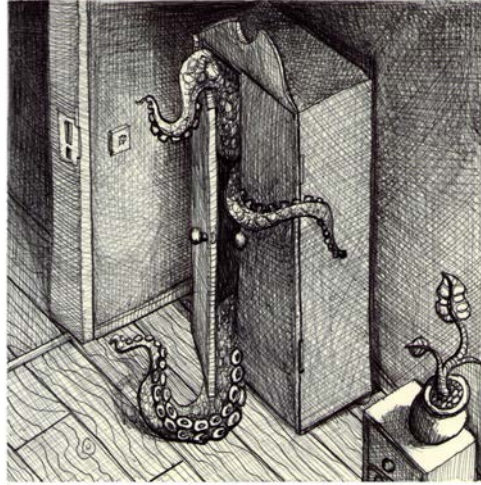




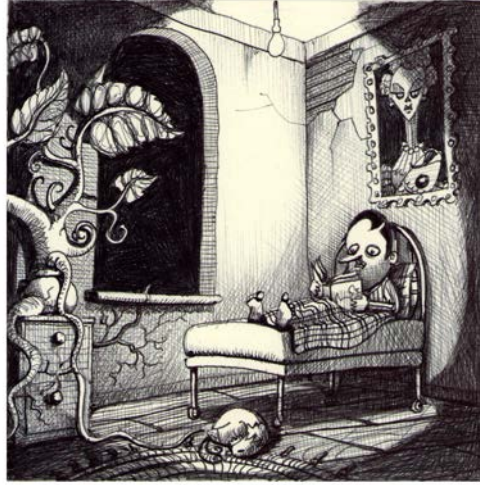




72 days of Covid drawings





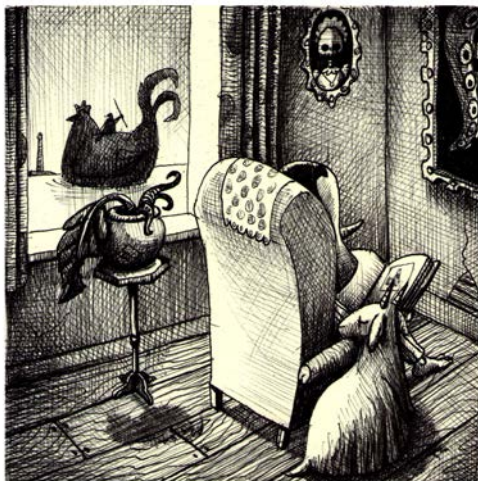
















Thank you for listening and staying awake.