

# SCREAM

## screen

### zine



ISSUE 02  
OCT 2020

# EDITORIAL NOTE

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Allison M. Low

Moon Malek

Modiszy

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This October issue of Screen Zine goes full scream in celebrating 100 years of horror with arguably the first horror film ever made – *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Since striking visual terror upon filmgoers in 1920 with a diabolical mix of murder, mayhem and cautionary consequences of fake news, the film has solidified its legacy across a full century and beyond – from the gothic pallor of Tim Burton to the surrealist dreamscapes of David Lynch, there is always a little Caligari in every horror film found.

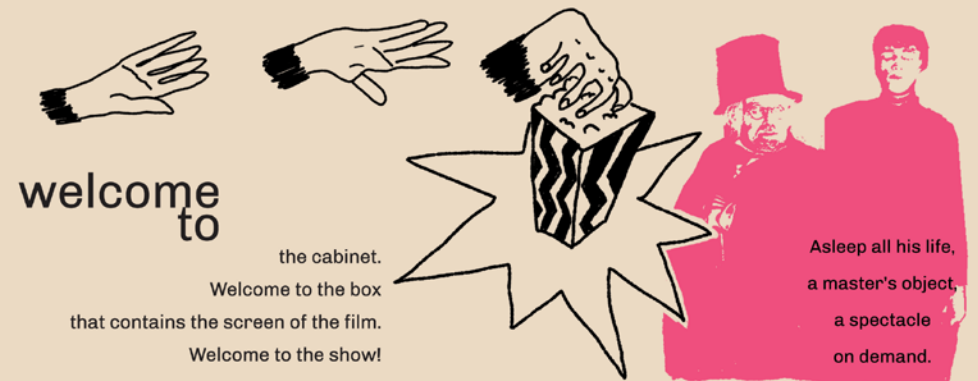
And in this issue, we dive deeper into the visual and academic legacy of this prolific Expressionist icon through the lenses of architects, writers, and artists. Joshua Comaroff and Ong Ker-Shing of LEKKER ARCHITECTS tap into their vast, otherworldly knowledge of creepy buildings in tracing the expressionist architectural legacy of Caligari. An unholy quartet of Singapore illustrators – Djohan Hanapi, Allison M. Low, Moon Malek and Modiszy – will attempt to transmute the Compendium Of Somnambulism (featured in the original film) from screen to page, reimagining the film as local historical folklore. How would murderous sleepwalking look through the cultural kaleidoscope of *wayang kulit*, Chinese opera, and more? Read on!

Also, an experimental graphic essay collab between film scholar / filmmaker Sarah-Tabea Sammel and artist Hanae Gomez see the duo uncover the minutiae iconography of Caligari hidden within the cultural shades of Escher, Harry Potter and... Red Hot Chili Peppers?

See you on the Otherside!



TEXT SARAH-TABEA SAMMEL  
IMAGES HANAE GOMEZ



The political metaphors of the horror genre have grown vast and steadily, historically embracing their films as sociological studies, as critiques, as mysticism, as bland entertainment; as a mirror. Horror films are versatile. Where you scream, they listen. Where you creep away, they respond. Where you eat popcorn, the good ones, will leave a message on your salt-crusted fingertips. Fairy Tales also have this capacity, as demonstrated by the secret political filmmakers during the Prague Spring, who used the 'for children only' categorized genre as a new language of their revolution.

Where GODZILLA (1954) united thousands in the fight of an external threat (let's remember, it was a living being) crushing the skyline, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD (1968) addressed the American family as the rotten core of the economic and happy family lifestyle advertisement-drowning community, when the zombified child attacked the



parents; where GET OUT (2017) is presenting slavery and racial divide on the silver tea spoon of the modern plantation owner, the shell of the political, un-political-made subject – ridden of its agency as subject – goes back to DR. CALIGARI and the long shadows cast by German expressionism.



Spikes, sharp,  
don't touch the thorn,  
don't touch the spindle,  
sleep, sleep,  
don't wander,  
don't wake,  
don't talk,  
don't command,  
wait; awake.



THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI has influenced a multitude of creative works across the arts. German expressionism, established in the 20th century before the first world war and popular way into the Weimar Republic, paints the blacks in Disney's SLEEPING BEAUTY (1959) darker, the spindle sharper, and the fight of the dragon more aggressive. Walt Disney himself collected a Disney Studio library, including expressionism, gothic and modernist influences for artistic reference, influencing the studio features' aesthetic. The stage of pop culture has received the magic box!

Where perspective and angles are bend à la CALIGARI, the infinite and impossible stairs of MC Escher continue the cosmic spectrum of the surreal with graphic design and illustration as the implicit beneficiary of the film's look, continuing its legacy into the typography of the HARRY POTTER (2001) title font, and The Red Hot Chilli Peppers welcome you to the OTHERSIDE (2000) in their respective music video that references Wiene's production design and narrative of the Gesamtkunstwerk in story and set design.



The cabinet is opened – yet remains a mystery in its inside and outside dimensionality and relationship with the audience, both within and outside the film. As of the beginning of the film, we are both on the inside and on the outside of its framework, the first bend of the (story-) line occurs. We are asked to engage in the story a friend shares with a friend while the film announces its act transitions – its own narrative structure – while denying any such knowledge through the show, which must go on, elevating its structural layers beyond the classic Hollywood's usual approach to on-screen titles and chapters.

Following the cinema visitor's ticket validating experience of the fun fare entertainment machine that sets free the horror during distraction, this film is a self-referential, multi-layered metaphor unfolding along its run-time and, loaded term trigger warning; projection.

The uncategorizable monster of the sleepwalker carries traces of ghost, vampire and zombie genre alike, fusing the symbols into the empty shell of the WW1 soldier; the individual who loses agency, the replica without authenticity, brushing off dust-like traces of Benjamin's Marxism-influenced worries about the absence of the artist; the ownership of the genuine process of creativity, resulting in the aura of the artefact, as the automated non-subject is presented as entertainment, in a horrific way.

Yet, the horror unfolds when its agent awakes and looks as if he had just seen a monster. The shock is reverberated with the true horror moment in the nested corruption of agency and social meaning making.

ENDE



## More About...

**HANAE GOMEZ** works mainly with illustration, animation and collage, and anywhere these intersect. Artmaking to her is a means to pierce through a dull world with dauntless, unfounded cheer.

**SARAH-TABEA SAMMEL** is a filmmaker, film scholar, writer, artist and educator and pursues projects through practice-as-research across video, photography and writing. She is the founder of a Singapore-based production house as social enterprise with an inclusive capacity building program using the power of story.

# Somnambulism

A Compendium of  
The University of Uppsala

Published in the year 1726.  
The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari

In the year 1703, a mystic by  
the name of Dr. Caligari, together  
with a somnambulist called Cesare,  
used to frequent the fairgrounds ...



... and for months he kept  
town after town in a state of  
panic by a series of murders,  
all of them perpetrated in  
similar circumstances ...



Midnight Supper  
Moon Malek



... for he caused a somnambulist,  
whom he had entirely  
subjected to his will,  
to carry out his fantastic plans.



*Sumpah Dukun Kaligari*  
Modiszy



By means of a puppet figure,  
modeled in the exact likeness  
of Cesare, which he laid in the  
chest when Cesare was away,  
Dr. Caligari was able to allay  
any suspicion which might fall  
on the somnambulist.



Dr. Caligari's Monster  
Allison M. Low

# MORE ABOUT

## ALLISON M. LOW

Dr. Caligari's Monster

Inspired by the performative aspect of Chinese opera, Dr Caligari's manipulation of Cesare (the somnambulist) is represented as a wide-eyed monster.

Guided unconsciously by Cesare's glaring eyes - the strange creature is puppeteered by phantom limbs which belong to an unseen influence - the hypnotist - the manipulator - Dr. Caligari himself.

The red string of fate connects all hands that bear culpability while the imprisoned mind of Cesare remains innocent, slumbering peacefully inside the belly of the beast.

**Allison M. Low** is an artist based in Singapore. She works primarily as an image-maker, fascinated by the human condition. Since 2010, her works have been showcased in galleries such as Taksu Gallery (Sg, KL), Robin Gibson Gallery (NSW), Air space Projects (NSW) and Keep Contemporary (Santa Fe, NM) among others.

📸 [allisonmlow](#)

## DJOHAN HANAPI

*Bila Bunyi Bersatu. Kau Milikku.*  
(When Sounds Collide. You're Mine.)

Shadows and spirits intersect in a theatrical ritual - Dr. Caligari is reborn in *wayang kulit* the traditional Indonesian shadow puppet theatre.

**Djohan Hanapi** is a full-time illustrator running Knuckles & Notch, a Risograph publishing and print studio, based in Singapore. He has always been fascinated and obsessed with analogue printing since his youth.

Even during his earlier days, he was always trying to break the creative norm. As he dives in further into the creative industry, his passion for analogue printing pushed him to experiment the infinite possibilities of Risograph and thus give birth to whacky, mind-blowing and sometimes controversial artworks.

📸 [djohahn](#)

## MOON MALEK

Midnight Supper

For this interpretation, Cesare is portrayed by a well-known asian legend a banshee which is also known as *Pontianak*. I feel both of them possesses the same characteristics of madness and insanity.

Inspired by a old school Indonesian film called *Sundelbolong (Pontianak)*. There was a scene where she was eating satay and her back was actually hollow and you can see her guts spilling from behind.

So in the artwork, the story goes like this: After she (Cesare) went on a killing spree, she decided to have her "supper" only to realise her guts were spilling from the back.

Muneera Malek also known as **Moon Malek** is an illustrator, graphic designer and an art director at a local agency, Studio 155. Majority of her artworks are fuelled by her fascination of pop culture. Faile art, D'ana of COVL and CJ Hendry, Walt Disney just to name a few, play an important role and are largely responsible in moulding her love for illustrations and mixed media.

📸 [moon\\_malek](#)

## MODISZY

*Sumpah Dukun Kaligari*  
(The Curse of Dukun Kaligari)

A reimagining of "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" set during the heights of the craze of the 'Orang Minyak' (Oily Man), in 1957. The village elders uncovered the mystery behind the exploits of the notorious 'Orang Minyak' that have been terrorising their *kampongs*. The *Dukun* (Shaman) Kaligari had cursed the man and subjected to him to his will. Forcing him to carry out his nefarious plans.

📸 [modiszy.art](#)

# ARCHI-HORROR



Reflections At Keppel Bay – by architect Daniel Libeskind

Photo by @thistlemorse

## Interview with Joshua Comaroff & Ong Ker-Shing (Lekker Architects)

### 1. Quick-fire introductions – compare yourself to an iconic horror film character/director.

For Josh, most likely it's Jack Torrance, Jack Nicholson's character from *The Shining*. He often feels like buildings are driving him slowly nuts. Also, Stanley Kubrick was the most architectonic of directors; in our design practice we steal things from him all the time.

Shing wishes she was Eleven from *Stranger Things*.

Otherwise, we tend to relate to horror flicks that are urban and seedy, like *Jacob's Ladder*, and David Fincher's *Se7en*.

### 2. So your book 'Horror In Architecture' – give us a quick lowdown on it! How did it start?

It started as a bunch of conversations that we had while driving to work. We were watching a lot of *Walking Dead* at the time. But we both like horror films—and monster films—and we started noticing that many of the buildings that we love most have a somewhat “monstrous” (or scary) qualities... at least, they are not normal. At the same time, we felt that using monsters as metaphors was a great way to talk about buildings. We would always talk about “Frankenstein's monster buildings,” or “mis-proportioned creature buildings.”

### 3. What do you think is the chill factor behind buildings/sets/structures? Is it the form triggering buried terrors or troubling histories plaguing the space?

Definitely, human notions of what is creepy are highly sensitive—at least, human cultures have very clearly defined expectations of what is normal. This is true in aesthetics as much as it is in behaviour. Very often the sense of claustrophobia, or of disorientation, or having something looming over your shoulder is a very chilling feeling.

We do think that all of us carry very basic fears from our childhoods—and these are mapped into kinds of spaces. The French writer Gaston Bachelard wrote a book about this, called *The Poetics of Space*; which is not so much about poetry but about nostalgia and fear. He talks about basements and attics and dark spaces. Most of us in Singapore don't have basements. Josh remembers being terrified of spaces like this, growing up. He still is, frankly.

#### 4. So what do you think makes *Dr. Caligari* particularly spooky for its time?

It's still spooky, we think. Maybe it's the way that the Expressionist movement brought everything—the sets, the costumes, the typography, and the concepts—together. They're all spooky in the same way, which is modern but also gothic. The sense of the town as a kind of madhouse writ large, as an inescapable machine for the production of insanity, just radiates. Of course, we really appreciate the discord in the architecture: those oblique, clashing angles and narrow alleys... it makes so emotive the sense of entrapment by a ruthless and predatory power. Particularly scary if we understand that this was the cultural atmosphere in which Nazism was emerging.

#### 5. What would you say is the architectural parallel to *Caligari* in Singapore?

No question: it's Daniel Libeskind's *Reflections* (near Harbourfront). It's like techno-caligari. The geometry is similar, and it looks like some sort of contorted hand reaching up into the sky. We call it *Addams Family at the Beach*.

If we want to compare something to *Caligari*'s creation of a total environment and thematic for scariness, then it's *Haw Par Villa* all the way. Not the same aesthetic, but it was imagined as a 3D horror show in its own right.

#### 6. A24 drops you 5 mill to create your own *Archi-horror* film. Who stars in it, who designs it, who directs it? Why?

Only 5 million???? Man, it's going to have to be the *Blair Witch Project* (or maybe shot on iPhone). We've always wanted to make a zombie movie set in one of Singapore's shopping centres. Many of the great American zombie moves (like the ones by Romero) were set in malls—the mindless zombies who just wanted to devour endlessly were used as a critique of consumption culture in the US. Seems like it would fit our own situation.

It could be directed by Apichatpong, or by Amanda Nell Eu from Malaysia. We think they'd kill it.

#### 7. Care to doodle the sneakpeak poster of this dream *archi-horror* film of yours? (kinda like the *Selby*)

For the poster sketch we asked our daughter Mila (11) to do it:





# LEKKER ARCHITECTS

Joshua Comaroff is an architect, landscape architect, and academic geographer. Ong Ker-Shing is an architect and landscape architect. Together, they are the founders of Lekker Design, an experimental design office in Singapore and the USA, and also the authors of 'Horror in Architecture' (2013). Their work combines professional practice with analysis of built environments in Asia and Africa.



**Shing** spent much of her childhood in Singapore and the UK. For university, she left for Harvard, and completed three degrees: a B.A. in Fine Arts, as well as Masters in Architecture and Landscape Architecture (the latter two with distinction).

Shing relocated to Shanghai as a Wheelwright Fellow in 2002 to research the Art Deco housing of the French Concession. Excited by small-scale innovations occurring in socialized interiors, she documented residents' living spaces and personal histories. She worked with Josh to produce a catalogue of photographs, drawings, and interviews. Shing founded Lekker Design in 2002, and Lekker Architects in 2015. She is a registered architect in Singapore.



**Josh** was raised in Chicago, and studied literature, linguistics, and creative writing at Amherst College before joining the Master of Architecture and Master of Landscape Architecture programs at Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He has worked for and studied under Rem Koolhaas, Rafael Moneo, Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silvetti, Preston Scott Cohen, Luis Rojo de Castro, and David Adjaye.

In 2009, Josh completed a PhD in cultural geography, writing on the subject of haunted landscapes and state power in Singapore. He has published writing in the fields of architecture, urbanism, and politics, with a focus in Asia. Josh is interested in the intersection of art and architecture, and in multi-disciplinary design practice.

## About ArtScience on Screen

ArtScience on Screen explores the intersection between art and science using moving image, video and film. ArtScience on Screen forms the backbone of the museum's dedicated film programming, and is part of Marina Bay Sands' ongoing commitment to the local and international film culture and community. In addition to screenings, Level 4 of ArtScience Museum will also host regular press conferences, dialogue sessions and masterclasses with acclaimed filmmakers and artists, with the aim to inspire audiences to discover art and science through film and moving image.

## About ArtScience Museum

ArtScience Museum is an iconic cultural landmark in Singapore. Our mission is to explore where art, science, culture and technology come together. It is here at the intersection of art and science that innovation and new ideas are formed. We have held large-scale exhibitions by some of the world's best known artists including Leonardo da Vinci, Salvador Dalí, Andy Warhol, Vincent Van Gogh and M.C. Escher since opening in February 2011. In addition, we have presented significant exhibitions that explore aspects of science including big data, particle physics, paleontology, marine biology, cosmology and space exploration.

