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Lehman College Art Gallery

Presents

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**For
Immediate
Release**

Dark and Stormy Night

Gothic Influence in Contemporary Art

Curated by Bartholomew F. Bland, Executive Director

"Experience the 'Nightmare Before Christmas'"

33 Artists Explore the Moody and Mysterious

at Lehman College Art Gallery

On View through Feb 10, 2018

On canvas and in sculpture, photographs, stained glass, and media, thirty-three artists at the Lehman College Art Gallery revel in gothic motifs — once beloved by 19th-century authors and artists, and increasingly popular today. These visual artists have adapted the strange fruits of gothic literature: the haunted castle, the deserted graveyard, the ominous black-feathered bird, the lone woman in desolate mourning, and brings them to us in recognizable and powerful vocabulary that calls up deep emotion.

Dark and Stormy Night: Gothic Influence in Contemporary Art, on view through February 10, 2018, presents a contemporary and elastic view of foreboding, the worrisome state that Victorians found in a haunted house or in threatening fog, but today's artists find in the environments of everyday as well as those of the unreachable supernatural. Bronx-based artist Lisa Lebofsky, finds foreboding in bleak landscapes that lack sun or a rainbow and are threatened by global warming. Zane York pictures the feared future —death— in paintings suffused in green, at once the color of life and the color of death's decay. Rachel Stern, though, in her site-specific installation, *Yes, Death!* turns to pastels to compose a cheery cemetery, its tombstones bedecked with pompons.

The art in *Dark and Stormy Night* engage acts as *memento mori*, "remember that you must die," and its artists explore head on the threats of the unknown, and, perhaps, always unknowable, as we continually search for an intuitive sixth sense. Their works reflect our mortality and also demonstrate the courage of the creative act as a weapon against the existential dread of the unknown. Donna Diamond, whose monotypes show a carousel of grimacing horse heads, said, "There is value in visiting the dark and untamed parts of our thoughts."

The word "Gothic" carries double meaning. In architecture Gothic refers to the soaring medieval churches that emerged in the 12th century, and in *Dark and Stormy Night* we

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10 AM - 4 PM

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see the pointed arches of these churches in *Amidst Thy Glooms Profound*, an installation by Alison Collins. However, since art historian Horace Walpole published his novel *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, the word Gothic has been associated with sinister literature — *Frankenstein* to *Dracula* — stories that show us lurking evil. Visual artists are often inspired by their literary counterparts, and for Collins the gothic novel *The Romance of the Forest* was the spur. Bronx artist Daniel Hauben turned to the master of the American horror story, Edgar Allan Poe, himself, who, he paints, tongue-in-cheek, in 19th century dress and walking across the borough's Grand Concourse today. Adriana Marmoreck's photographs of a wedding gown engulfed in flames brings instantly to mind Charles Dickens's forever famous Miss Havisham from his 19th-century novel *Great Expectations*. Jilted, she wore her wedding dress for half a century, until catching fire, it killed her, bringing grim closure.

Are we most frightened by threat or by the unexpected coming together of unnatural elements? Creeping disaster is embedded in Isabelle Menin's series photographs of dark clouds, "I'm Made of Rain," and in Adrien Broom's high-ceilinged parlors and columned halls. The materials artists employ also hold warnings and grim recognition. In snowflakes Michiyo Ihara finds the delicate tracery of skulls and owls, while Heide Hatry creates gentle portraits from the ashes of the men and women she portrays. Enrique Gomez de Molina, like Mary Shelley's classic creator Dr. Frankenstein, makes new life from the parts of others. His creatures in *What If* and *Inevitable Impact*, furred, feathered, hooved, and beaked emerge from his mind to lodge fitfully in our own. The exhibition highlights more than 70 works by Pavel Acosta, Jeffrey Ampratwum, Adrien Broom, Alison Collins, Donna Diamond, Lauren Fensterstock, Angelo Filomeno, Gregory Halili, Stephen Hannock, Heide Hatry, Daniel Hauben Jeanne Heifetz, Michiyo Ihara, Heidi Lau, Lisa Lebofsky, Adriana Marmorek, Alexandra Forsyth Martinez, Isabelle Menin, Enrique Gomez de Molina, Patrick McGrath Muñiz, Bill Murphy, Amy Myers, Paulina Olowska, Lina Puerta, Judith Schaechter, Holly Sears, Deborah Simon, Marie Sivak, Rachel Stern, Adam Straus, Barbara Earl Thomas, Jason Weller, and Zane York.

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**Council on
the Arts**



Lehman College Art Gallery was founded in 1984 to serve as an arts center for the people of the Bronx that would play a significant role in the cultural life of the borough. Today, the gallery is an innovative center of contemporary art where visitors from the

Bronx and the greater New York area can experience thematic group exhibitions that bring together famous artists with emerging talents.