The Haunted Frame

Friday, October 30, 2026
Shapeshifters Cinema, Oakland



Motion picture film is imbued with a hallowed energy that is magnified by the change of seasons and our turn towards dormancy, death and all things supernatural. For, just beneath the surface and between the frames there lurk the shadows of spectral beings, conjured alchemically and activated by light, that momentarily come to life as they flicker upon the screen. This special Halloween cine-séance convenes 6 haunting films (and 1 Frankensteinian remake) that mine the shadowy depths to show what lies within.

Secure the Shadow...'Ere the Substance Fade (1997)
by Kerry Laitala
16mm film, 9 mins

"... steeped in melancholia, involuntary schadenfreude and a sense of spoil that is both anachronistic and transcendental. A collection of stereoptic medical photographs, a menagerie of unseasonable decay, surfaces throughout the film, arriving in negative haloes of blue haze only to deetherealize into restored pictures of positive deformity. Flesh and spirit are pitted against the industriousness of corrosion with wearying vigilance, as owls transform from sentinel guardians into mocking gargoyles in the twinkling of an eye. The plangent correspondences between emulsion and mortal flesh, editing and surgical suturing and taxidermy, collecting and cataloguing as craft, science and mania, are established directly or in innuendo." – Mark McElhatten, New York Film Festival, Views From the Avant-Garde

The Magician's House (2007)
by Deborah Stratman
16mm film, 6 mins.

Sometimes the supernatural lingers plainly in the most ordinary places, secret only in so much as its trace goes unnoticed. Both a letter to a cancer stricken alchemist-filmmaker friend, and a quiet tribute to the vanishing art of celluloid, *The Magician's House* is full of ghosts. Including that of Athanasius Kircher, inventor of the Magic Lantern or "Sorcerer's Lamp". The music, "La lutte des Mages" (The Struggle of the Magicians) was composed by Armenian mystic Georges Gurdjieff and Thomas De Hartmann. Gurdjieff thought man was a "transmitting station of forces." To him, most people move around in a state of waking sleep, so he sought to provide aural conditions that would induce awareness.

Evil of Dracula (1997)
by Martha Colburn
Super-8 shown on 16mm film, 2 mins.

A hypno-physycho-vampiric spazzm of fanged advertisements with money-hungry, blood-thirsty grins. This animated film in FANGTASTIC color is enough to cause a line-up at your local blood bank. Made with home-spun special effects of funnel-vision and hand-colored film. With a blood draining soundtrack by the legendary lyrical monster song master Jad Fair and musical madman Jason Willett.

Tuning the Sleeping Machine (1996)
by David Sherman
16mm film, 13 mins.

"*Tuning the Sleeping Machine* resurrects the cinema projected on the unconscious, a series of images defined by the gaze of an eye, the presence in an empty room, the creeping darkness that shrouds a strange face. In this conflation of image and subject, the timeless dream of cinema finds its dreamer, and so do we." -- Brian Frye

Of This Beguiling Membrane (2020)
by Charlotte Pryce
16mm film shown on DV, 4 mins.

The story unfolds on the Eve of Midsummer: on the day when the threshold between worlds is porous, and an idle gesture can tempt fate. Inspired by Robert Kirk's *The Secret Commonwealth* (1671), this work takes the outward form of a nature film. But observation gives way to illusion and the surface gives way to murky waters strewn with debris of those who have succumbed to its lures (the Lady of Shalott, Ophelia). They remain trapped; menacing reminders of the dangerous seduction of beauty, and anger of the elusive spirits who resent being examined.

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She Sank On Shallow Bank (2005)
by Clifton Childree
16mm film shown on DV, 12 mins.

Miami artist and filmmaker Clifton Childree collaborated with performance artist Nikki Rollason in this dreamlike story of a girl who washes up on a beach and engages in a bizarre dance with the flotsam along the shoreline. Music by Dan Hosker.

Häxan, abridged (1922/2026)
Live sound accompaniment by Edan Mor (sax), Kaitlin McSweeny (cello) & Kevin Corcoran (drums)
35mm film shown on DV, 18 mins.

Benjamin Christensen's feature-length silent film *Häxan* (1922) blends historical fact and folk superstition using woodcut prints, diagrams and a series of highly-stylized and speculative vignettes—both humorous and horrific—to explore ideas about witchcraft—and more specifically, the mistreatment of women with physical and mental differences—through the ages. The amended version reconfigures the material into a condensed "taster" of the original and layers it with an improvised, live soundtrack performed by Edan More, Kaitlin McSweeny and Kevin Corcoran.