

**COURTAULD
INSTITUTE**

MA Curating

**Substance and Surface at
Strawberry Hill: The Heritage
and Legacy of Walpole's
Gothic 'Paper Castle'**

Friday 19 June 2026, 14.00–17.30



STRAWBERRY HILL
House & Garden



We welcome you to Substance and Surface at Strawberry Hill, a symposium convened by the Courtauld Institute's own MA Curating students, in partnership with Paper Castle, a contemporary art exhibition at Strawberry Hill House.

Substance and Surface at Strawberry Hill brings together academics, curators and creatives in a half-day programme. The aim is to explore the tension between the physical materiality and imaginative legacy of Horace Walpole's Gothic villa. Talks by esteemed scholars will delve into the heritage of Strawberry Hill House as the blueprint for the 18th century Gothic Revival, and its ongoing legacy as an inspiration for gothic literature and film into the 19th and 20th centuries. A panel of creative voices will explore how contemporary interventions can transform historic spaces in the present.

*"My buildings, like my writings, are of paper,
and will blow away ten years after I am dead."*

Programme

- 13.30–14.00 **Registration opens**
Courtauld Institute, Vernon Square
- 14.00–14.10 **Welcome**
Introduction by MA Curating Students
- 14.10–15.10 **Session 1**
- Curating Nightmares: Making a Space for the Gothic at Tate Britain (2006)
Martin Myrone, Head of Research Support & Pathways, Paul Mellon Centre
- ‘A complete genius and a complete rogue’: History, Romance and the Eighteenth-Century Gothic
Dr James Lesslie, Lecturer in English Literature, St Mary’s University.
- ‘Gloomth’ and the manipulation of illumination at Strawberry Hill
Dr Rebecca Tropp, Archivist at Crosby Moran Hall and Affiliated Lecturer, History of Art, University of Cambridge.
- 15.10–15.30 **Comfort Break**
Coffee and Tea
- 15.30–15.40 **Welcome**
Introduction by MA Curating Students
- 15.40–16.40 **Session 2**
- Contemporary Art and the Heritage House: A Pitzhanger Perspective
Rebecca Lyons, Director of Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery
- Horace Walpole’s Gothic Closet
Kleanthis Kyriakou, Associate Lecturer, Architecture, Central Saint Martins
- Spatial Labyrinths in the Gothic fiction and film, Otranto to Backrooms
Professor Roger Luckhurst, Geoffrey Tillotson Chair of Nineteenth-Century Studies, Birkbeck, University of London
- 16.40–16.50 **Poetry reading by Rupa Latif Rupa**
- 17.00–17.30 **Panel conversation**
Artists Kleanthis Kyriakou and Annemarieke Kloosterhof, and poet Rupa Latif Rupa
- 17.30–19.00 **Drinks Reception**

Session 1

Curating Nightmares: Making a Space for the Gothic at Tate Britain (2006)

Martin Myrone, Head of Research Support & Pathways at the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art.

Martin Myrone is a specialist in late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century British art history. Currently, he oversees fellowships, grants, and research networks at the Paul Mellon Centre. Before this, he spent over twenty years as a senior curator at Tate Britain, where he spearheaded the landmark 2006 exhibition 'Gothic Nightmares: Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination'. He has authored major publications and worked extensively on the supernatural, the sublime, and the horror genres.

'A Complete Genius and a Complete Rogue': History, Romance and the Eighteenth-Century Gothic

Dr James Lesslie, Lecturer in English Literature, St Mary's University.

Dr James Lesslie is a Lecturer in English Literature at St Mary's University, where he leads courses on Gothic cultures and Romanticism. He holds a PhD from Birkbeck, University of London. A specialist in the long eighteenth century, his research investigates travel writing, historiography, women's writing, and the natural world. He is the author of foundational work on Ann Radcliffe in *Wild Romanticism* (Routledge).

'Gloomth' and the Manipulation of Illumination at Strawberry Hill

Dr Rebecca Tropp, Archivist at Crosby Moran Hall and Affiliated Lecturer, History of Art, University of Cambridge

Dr Rebecca Tropp holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge and a BA in the History and Theory of Architecture from Columbia University. Her research investigates the Picturesque movement and British country houses, specifically focusing on changing relationships between architecture, fenestration, and landscape. She is also the Archivist at Crosby Moran Hall in London and has published in the journals *Architectural History* and the *Georgian Group Journal*.

Session 2

Contemporary Art and the Heritage House: A Pitzhanger Perspective

Rebecca Lyons, Director of Pitzhanger Manor and Gallery

Rebecca Lyons is an art historian and the Director of Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery where she oversees public contemporary art programmes. She previously spent six years as the Director of Collections, Library, Archive, Learning, and Public Programmes at the Royal Academy of Arts. Lyons is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries and an expert in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century art markets, collecting history, and museum interpretation. She has published extensively on historical art agents, royal patronage, and the legacy of Sir John Soane.

Horace Walpole's Gothic Closet

Kleanthis Kyriakou, Associate Lecturer, Architecture, Central Saint Martins

Kleanthis Kyriakou is a multidisciplinary artist, spatial designer, and co-founder of Wet-Hard Agency, a

research and design practice operating at the intersection of queerness, architecture, and the internet. Kyriakou is a recipient of the prestigious Graham Foundation Grant for digital monument projects. His practice integrates performance, digital media, and radical making into architectural pedagogy. Kyriakou's projects focus heavily on queer spatial histories and community advocacy.

Spatial Labyrinths in the Gothic fiction and film, Otranto to Backrooms

Professor Roger Luckhurst, Geoffrey Tillotson Chair of Nineteenth-Century Studies, Birkbeck, University of London

Professor Roger Luckhurst is a leading cultural historian and literary scholar. His expansive research bridges Victorian literature, contemporary fiction, and film studies. He has authored ten monographs, including the global bestseller 'Gothic: An Illustrated History' (Thames and Hudson, 2021). A former Distinguished Visiting Professor at Columbia University, he is widely recognised for editing seminal volumes of classic horror and science fiction for the Oxford World's Classics series.

Poetry reading

Rupa Latif Rupa

Rupa Latif Rupa is a London-based contemporary poet who explores the boundaries of language, memory, and spatial form. Her work is deeply engaged with the visual, material, and physical life of poetry. She is also an educator and has led specialised masterclasses on Ekphrastic and Oneiric writing during her residency with The Papers School. She was shortlisted for the prestigious The Dart Prize. Her poetry, including her piece 'Arc', has been published in leading literary platforms like *Wet Grain Poetry*.

Panel

Creative voices respond to *Substance and Surface at Strawberry Hill* and MA Curating's exhibition *Paper Castle*.

Kleanthis Kyriakou, Rupa Latif Rupa and Annemarieke Kloosterhof

Annemarieke Kloosterhof is a London-based multidisciplinary artist and designer known for transforming simple sheets of paper into highly detailed, three-dimensional worlds. Originally from the Netherlands, Kloosterhof is an alumna of Central Saint Martins and winner of the Dutch *Cultuurschone* for *Young Talent*. A passionate advocate for the preservation of paper craft, her portfolio features recent major milestones including, *Ghost Objects*, a solo exhibition at Leighton House, London. Kloosterhof has collaborated with the Courtauld Institute's MA Curating programme and Strawberry Hill House in an exciting new commission: a paper recreation of the Gibbon's Cravat.

Acknowledgements

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