

A Tree Fell on It

Graeme Patterson

2021

A Tree Fell on It is a semi-autobiographical body of work that explores the physicality of a home and its emotional connection to its occupant. This experimental multi-media project consists of several miniatures, kinetic sculptures, 3D- printed models, interactive video, music, and virtual reality.

The House

2021

72"H x 60" W x 48"L

wood, matboard, vinyl, metal, plexi-glass, textiles, acrylic paint, LEDs, Arduino, mini-HD monitor, media player

VR component (PC, Vive Pro)

The House model and its VR component are the primary pieces for this project. Inspired by a true-life experience of a tree falling on his house, Patterson created a highly detailed 1:10 scale model of his home with the intention of experimenting with VR and creating various psychologically charged environments. Several of the sculptural pieces within this body of work use sections of this fallen tree as a base. The House sits on the stump of this 60-year-old tree. Two sentient characters exist within *A Tree Fell on It*. The artist physically exists as a costumed anthropomorphic space disco starling who is present through green screen captured video sequences featured in a VR landscape and several of the sculptures that include video. In a way this character is intended to act as a supernatural presence haunting its own home with a variety of gestures including dancing, melancholy, and states of confusion. The secondary character is a stop-motion animated fox that acts as reference to nature as it observes and reacts to the emotional energy of the starling and its connection to the house. Within *The House* model 3D printed versions of the starling and fox characters are placed to suggest some of the scenes found within the VR environment.

The VR component is intended to give the viewer access to the interior of the artists home. The virtual house was produced by taking 3D scans and photos of the model home and its contents. As the participant explores this model, they will not only come across the starling and the fox, but by opening doors and walking up stairs they will come across fictional spaces that abstract the physicality of the home and confront the viewer with a variety of emotionally charged environments. A range of instrumental music was produced by the artist to act as a soundtrack for these experiences. It is intended that participants of this VR component have unique experiences as they choose where to go, what doors they open, and how long they stay.

The Trailer and The Billboard

There are 2 large models that accompany *The House* as a response to the pandemic that occurred during the creation of this project. One is an abandoned trailer, the other a tarped billboard. Both suggest an apocalyptic narrative which leaves the house as a place of refuge leaving the starling in a state of lockdown.

The Trailer

2021

52"H x 66"W x 13"L

wood, metal, aluminum tape, acrylic paint, video projector, media player, headphones

Within *The Trailer* multiple instances of the starling are present through video projection reacting to a slow-paced drone like soundtrack through a range of emotional gestures. One dances, the second stumbles awkwardly, and the third rests in a state of melancholy.

The Billboard

2021

82"H x 52"W x 18"L

wood, metal, matboard, astro-turf, acrylic paint, LEDs, Arduino, 4K TV

On the backside of *The Billboard* an abstracted form based on the negative space of the house covers a large monitor that displays an abundance of starling characters performing unnatural gestures. These awkward movements are intended to create an uncomfortable space which the fox must manoeuvre through much like an 80's platform-based video game. In a sense these two works are cages in which the inhabitants are locked in a never-ending loop.

The House Abstractions

Two wall mounted pieces entitled *House Abstraction #1* and *House Abstraction #2* were created to explore the idea of a home becoming strange and confusing to its occupant. These sculptures feature exact hand-made replicas of the furniture found in the model house which have been fixed together in an abstract manner. A video monitor exists behind this multi-plane environment featuring a scaled down starling character who is responding to the awkwardness of the space.

House Abstraction #1

2021

20"H x 24"W x 6"L

wood, matboard, metal, plexi-glass, acrylic paint, HD monitor, media player

House Abstraction #2

2021

23"H x 24"W x 8"L

wood, matboard, metal, plexi-glass, acrylic paint, HD monitor, media player

The Window Formation and The Coo-Coo Clock

The Window Formation and *The Coo-Coo Clock* are small wall mounted sculptures that references a fictional space within the virtual reality environment.

The Window Formation

2021

13"H x 12"W x 8"L

wood, matboard, plexiglass, textiles, acrylic paint

The Window Formation is a sketch of the cave-like formation found in the virtual reality landscape. This hand-made construction was the first piece to explore the creation of physical work stemming from a digital origin.

The Coo-Coo Clock

2021

28"H x 18"W x 18"L

wood, matboard, plexiglass, metal, acrylic paint, servo motors, Arduino, motion sensor

The Coo-Coo Clock references a fictional space featuring a variety of multi-plane doors swinging back and forth in an unnerving manner. This interactive kinetic piece consists of 10 replicas of the screen door found on the model house. When approached the doors swing open in a sequence that creates squeaks that reference a starling call.

The Starling Formation, The House Core, and The Chair Tunnel

These 3D printed sculptures were created with the intent of exploring the process of bringing digitally created content into the physical world.

The Starling Formation

2021

52"H x 12"W x 12"L

3D printed PLA, metal, textiles, paper, acrylic paint, motorized stand, wood base

The Starling Formation features 11 hand painted 3D printed versions of the starling character representing a variety of gestures derived from the live action video sequences found in the virtual reality and video works. These figures are all connected to each other by their feet creating a random formation. This piece consists of a motorized base that slowly spins the starling figures allowing the viewer to inspect the multiple gestures and giving a sense of animation to these inanimate objects.

The House Core

2021

68"H x 10"W x 10"L

3D printed PLA, metal, acrylic paint, wood base

The House Core represents an 8-inch core sample of the 3D house model used in the VR component of this project. Using 3D print technology this digital core sample was brought back into the physical world. In reference to the hand-made original house model this piece is intended to feel cold and stark like a skeleton of its origin.

The Chair Tunnel

2021

38"H x 9"W x 9"L

3D printed PLA, metal, acrylic paint, RGB LEDs, Arduino, wood base

The Chair Tunnel features 10 stacks of 5 3D-printed chairs in a loop. This hand-painted object sits on a base with a built-in mirror and a row of sequenced RGB LEDs that direct the viewers eye in and out of the piece as though it is an endless tunnel.

The Space Disco Starling Costume, The Tree, and The Dancer

The Space Disco Starling Costume

2020

72"H x 20"W x 9"L

textiles, felt, leather shoes, mannequin

Designed for dancing and performance *The Space Disco Starling Costume* was hand made by the artist and references both the starling and costumes from the space disco/funk era of 1970's music. Patterson has referenced starlings in his previous work and continues to identify with the history and behaviour of the bird.

The Tree

2021

86"H x 28"W x 23"L

fallen tree, matboard, acrylic paint, wood base

The Tree refers to the factual event that inspired the body of work entitled A Tree Fell on It. Using matboard the artist has attempted to mask the organic nature of a small fallen tree that matches the same 1:10 scale used for the model house.

The Dancer

2021

video projector, mini-pc, joystick, headphones

The Dancer is an interactive video game that features the space disco starling and 50 unique dance moves. Viewers can control the dancer with a combination of buttons while listening to original music created by Patterson. This work was produced with the intention of not only dissecting and understanding the movement of an individual's free form dance style but to also bring the viewer in to the act of play that inspired the project.

