

THE FANTASTIC

COLT 420, 22048, Spring 2013, Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00-3:20 pm, THH 214

The fantastic is one of the most complex of genres, indeed, a genre which suspends and questions our assumptions. In this course we will investigate fiction, film, and theoretical work to explore different approaches to the fantastic. We will begin with fairy tales and study in detail Angela Carter's 20th-century re-writing of Charles Perrault's fairy tales in *The Bloody Chamber*. We will also examine the rich tradition of fantasy book illustration, including work by Arthur Rackham and the Danish artist Kay Nielsen. We will then explore the weird and the uncanny through Jeff and Anna Vandermeer's rich historical anthology, *The Weird*, where we will read works by writers such as Franz Kafka (*The Penal Colony*) and H. P. Lovecraft, among many others. We will also watch *Curse of the Cat People* (dir. Jacques Tourneur). In addition, we will consider work by artists of the fantastic such as the Symbolists (Odilon Redon, Max Klinger, Alfred Kubin, and James Ensor) and Surrealists (Salvador Dali, Leonora Carrington, and Dorothea Tanning). We will also examine contemporary visual versions of the fantastic in the work of feminist artist such as Louise Bourgeois, Annette Messager, and Kiki Smith. In the final section of the course we will speculate about speculative fiction through a close reading of Samuel R. Delany's *Flight from Nevèrÿon*, a text which self-reflexively combines theory and fiction. We will end the class by watching and discussing Ti Smith's recent (2011) film, *The Innkeepers*, to think about the ghostly persistence of the fantastic in the digital age.



James Ensor, *Skeletons Fighting over a Hanged Man* (1891). Oil on panel.

COLT L/M/CT Track: This is a **Literature** concentration course.

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