

*Oceans of Time*

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“I have crossed oceans of time to find you.”—Francis Ford Coppola, *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, 1992

The gelid paradox of the vampire—in which life is invited into eternity through its cold suspension in death—is a negative construct that is familiar to artworks and their states of being.

*Oceans of Time* is an exhibition that follows what circulates in and around the mythological and metaphorical imaginings of vampirism and runs into questions of suspension, duplication, necromancy, desire, and the nocturnal.

“My God, who are you? I know you.” —Ibid.

The artwork might recognize itself in the vampire: both creatures arise at the point of indistinction between the illusory and the Real. They are both thieves of form that supply their spoils to the business of reification. The artwork and the vampire have a material constitution that is lacquered with supposition. Not born, the vampire is transformed, its condition designated—a commanding and quick process of transformation that resembles the nearly magical remodeling of a banal object into a Readymade.

“Death is the reality of the impossible, making fictions of us all, and it is only in fiction that we separate ourselves from it.” —George Bataille, *Oeuvres Completes*, 1970

Vampirism is a narrative binder that casts presence in absence, duration in stasis, and life in death. It is the impossible made immanent; or, what Julia Kristeva terms the “abject,” that which “disturbs identity, system, order . . . what does not respect borders, positions, rules.” The vampire is a workaround for death’s insistent materiality.

“Love does not happen without loss of vital self. The lover is the loser. Or so he reckons.” —Anne Carson, *Eros the Bittersweet*, 1986

By Anne Carson’s estimations of Eros, as well as by most vampiric lore, desire is conditionally insatiable because acting on it eliminates its object. Desire demands triangulation, which is to say a distance, a spacing. Consuming the object of desire eliminates the distance and the boundary that frustrates desire into existence. Most vampire fictions play out the internal rivalry of the lover in exaggerated terms: the vampire longs for the lifeblood that it extinguishes when it acts on desire. And the triangle collapses.