



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
MĀNOA

College of Arts & Humanities
Department of Art & Art History
University of Hawai'i Art Gallery

PRESS INFORMATION: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ART EXHIBITION

***Musings of Mystery and Alphabets of Agony:
The Work of Edward Gorey***

The University of Hawai'i Art Gallery in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i Library presents work by celebrated, prolific American author and artist Edward Gorey (1925–2000), revered for his distinctly elegant, enigmatic, and eerie black and white illustrations. This exhibition features over 700 books, book jackets, prints, posters, drawings, postcards, handmade dolls, and other ephemera from the John A. Carollo - Edward Gorey Collection in the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library's Special Research Collections, with special loans courtesy of The Edward Gorey Charitable Trust, New York City and the Edward Gorey House, Yarmouthport, Massachusetts.

LOCATION

University of Hawai'i Art Gallery
Art Building, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

DATES

September 26 – December 10, 2010

SPONSORS

Sponsored by the University of Hawai'i Department of Art and Art History and the College of Arts and Humanities and University of Hawai'i at Manoa Library; and supported by grants from the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities and by the "We the People" initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities; Rianna Williams; anonymous donors; and Manoa Arts & Minds, a partnership that cultivates the mind and spotlights the best of art, music, theater, dance and special performances at UH Mānoa.
http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/chancellor/arts_minds/



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OPENING PROGRAM Sunday, September 26, from 2:00–3:00
Keynote speaker Andreas Brown, Co-Trustee, The Edward Gorey Charitable Trust, will talk about Edward Gorey, his career and relationship with the famed Manhattan bookstore and cultural landmark Gotham Book Mart in New York City.

OPENING RECEPTION Sunday, September 26, from 3:00–5:00 p.m.
The public is invited.

HOURS & ADMISSION Monday – Friday 10:30-5:00; Sunday 12:00-5:00. Closed Saturdays; November 11, Veterans Day; and November 25 & 26, Thanksgiving Day.
Admission is free. Donations are appreciated.
Parking fees may apply.

PANEL DISCUSSION Thursday, November 4, from 7:00-8:30 p.m.
Looking for Edward Gorey
A panel discussion with Rick Jones, Director of the Edward Gorey House, collector John A. Carollo, and University of Hawai'i at Mānoa humanities scholar Dr. Joseph Stanton.

FREE TOURS Sundays, October 3 – December 5, 2:00-3:00 p.m.

HALLOWEEN EVENT Sunday, October 31, 12:00-7:30 p.m., Miss D. Awdrey-Gore presents ***An Edward Gorey Haunted Mystery Family Soirée***, a fun day of hands-on art activities, films, and costume contests for children and adults.

EDUCATIONAL SPECIAL EVENTS (Details forthcoming.)

The UH Art Gallery is collaborating with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa Library, the Hawai'i State Public Libraries, and Barnes & Noble Booksellers to organize special events in conjunction with this exhibition. Specific information for educational sessions featuring Gorey's alphabet book genre, film series, children's story time and activities, Gorey-inspired drawing demonstrations by artists will be announced soon.

EXHIBITION SUMMARY

In homage to the unique vision of Edward Gorey (1925–2000) and in honor of the tenth anniversary of the artist's death, the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery in collaboration with the University of Hawai'i Library presents ***Musings of Mystery and Alphabets of Agony: The Work of Edward Gorey***. This exhibition showcases the John A. Carollo - Edward Gorey Collection from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library's Special Research Collections and features a selection of more than 700 of the over 1,500 Edward Gorey books (many signed and first editions), fine art books, original prints, posters, note cards, handmade toys and other curious objects collected by John Carollo, Honolulu composer and dedicated Goreyphile for over 35 years. Special loans of rarely seen original drawings and personal items from The Edward Gorey Charitable Trust and the Edward Gorey House will also be featured.

Known for its excellence in exhibition design, the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery will create a unique "Gorey-esque" environment that includes a library and reading room and signature architectural elements and characters, where Gorey's life and imaginary world will come alive. Themes that will be explored include mystery and murder, creatures and objects, children's books and menaced children, Gorey alphabets and poetical play, Surrealism, theater and ballet, and Gorey as a fine artist with international fame. Created in deference to Gorey's iconic alphabet book *The Gashlycrumb Tinies*, a scavenger hunt for its 26 young characters in unlucky and disastrous circumstances is a special aspect of the exhibition that will appeal to visitors of all ages.

"This exhibition honors the timeless, remarkable talent of Edward Gorey," said Lisa Yoshihara, director of the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery. "This collaboration between the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library and the UH Art Gallery is an opportunity to celebrate and share the rich holdings of our campus for the educational enjoyment and enrichment of our students and the community. The exhibition will please Gorey fans with an interpretative look to his intellect and artistic talents and introduce a whole new generation to this internationally acclaimed American genius. Many will find his mixture of whimsy and mystery darkly humorous, his word craft incredible, and his elegantly drawn depictions just divine. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see such a vast range of Gorey's works."

THE WORK OF EDWARD GOREY

Edward Gorey invented a gothic world that spanned from the Victorian/Edwardian era to the Roaring Twenties. Settings of desolate mansions and remote landscapes are filled with menacing objects, threatening topiaries, falling masonry, gloomy large-scale urns, and carnivorous plants. Through witty writing and illustrations Gorey depicts hapless children and elegantly dressed women and men entangled in tales of mystery and peril. Books that are sometimes wordless, sometimes deftly rhymed, display ingenious narratives of evil adults, mischievous children, and incredible creatures. With a worldwide cult following, Gorey's signature obsessively crosshatched pen and ink drawings illustrate comically bizarre dark tales that have amused, delighted, and provoked generations of readers for over 50 years. His well-known anthologies: ***Amphigorey***, ***Amphigorey Too***, ***Amphigorey Also***, and ***Amphigorey Again*** brought his work to a larger audience.

One of America's most eclectic and eccentric artists, Gorey is a master of visual and literary ambiguities where provocative imageries are created and unspeakable conclusions are left to the reader's imagination. With a satirical dry humor, Gorey places his protagonists in situations of perceived peril or horror. He provides ominous clues to tease the reader—outstretched legs of the recently deceased, inanimate objects that terrorize, and alphabets of caution and demise. In ***The Awdrey-Gore Legacy***, Gorey spoofs Agatha Christie's detective novels with all the traditional makings of an English mystery. Maps, characters, murder weapons are provided as clues, however, the reader soon realizes that the open-ended array of mysterious materials oddly leads to no solution.

The best of Gorey's clever, woeful, devious, and delirious tales appeal to young and old and have become classics of American culture. Upon opening the cover of one of Gorey's books a reader is drawn into a ghastly chain of events where characters are mysteriously abducted, sacrificed, or lost through chance meetings with strange creatures or bizarre twists of fate. For instance, ***The Gashlycrumb Tinies***, his renowned primer of alphabetical angst, chronicles the ill-fated mishaps of 26 excessively unfortunate children:

A is for AMY who fell down the stairs
B is for BASIL assaulted by bears
C is for CLARA who wasted away
D is for DESMOND thrown out of a sleigh

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ABOUT THE ARTIST

Born in Chicago in 1925, Edward St. John Gorey taught himself to read at about the age of three-and-a-half. Between the ages of five to seven he had read Lewis Carroll's *Alice* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. He began to draw before the age of four and considers himself mainly self-taught as his only formal training consisted of a few classes at the Art Institute of Chicago. After a short stint in the U.S. Army (1944–1946) Gorey enrolled in Harvard University, earning a B.A. in French in 1950.

Gorey's career spanned work as a graphic designer, illustrator, typographer, playwright, set designer, costume designer, and toymaker. In his lifetime Gorey wrote more than 100 books and illustrated more than 60 books by other authors including Samuel Beckett, Edward Lear, John Bellairs, H.G. Wells, Alain-Fournier, Hilaire Belloc, Muriel Spark, Florence Parry Heide and John Ciardi. With delicate control and sensitivity to the nuances of calligraphy, Gorey filled his volumes with time-consuming hand-lettered type that provided a distinctly elegant style for his fine art books. His illustrated version of T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* is a perennial best seller widely appreciated for Gorey's whimsical depictions of his favorite pets.

Gorey was commissioned to design the sets and costumes for the Broadway production of *Dracula*, for which he won a Tony Award for his costumes in 1978. A great fan of Agatha Christie, Gorey is perhaps most recognized for his 1980s animated introduction to the long-running PBS television series *Mystery!*, produced by WGBH Boston that featured a fainting woman and sleuthing trench-coated detectives with flashlights. Both his words and images have inspired many writers, visual artists, musicians, and filmmakers to create compositions, interpretive theatrical productions, graphic design, and animations. Gorey has influenced various Goth subcultures and numerous communities host annual Edwardian costume parties dedicated to his style. He has garnered an international fan base and his works have been translated into Japanese, German, Italian, Dutch, and French.

Extremely erudite, Gorey was a voracious reader who owned more than 25,000 books, including many by nineteenth century British writers. His personal library ranged from his favorite Japanese classic *The Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki Shikibu to volumes by Jane Austen. Other interests and genres that informed his work included Surrealism; black and white silent films; an avid dedication to George Balanchine's New York City Ballet, where he never missed a performance; weekend yard sales to fuel his eclectic collection of objects; and television pop-culture.

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UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII LIBRARY'S SPECIAL RESEARCH COLLECTIONS

The University of Hawai'i Library's Special Research Collections includes a number of separate collections of materials that are rare, unique, or otherwise extraordinary. All of them require distinct, often unique, policies and procedures for acquisition, processing, storage, and patron use to preserve them for future generations. The John A. Carollo-Edward Gorey Collection began in 1998 when John Carollo donated the first of his books authored by or illustrated by Edward Gorey. A Gorey fan and collector since his youth, Carollo has increased the collection's holdings to more than 1,500 items over the last 12 years to shape this strong and significant collection. Through ***Musings of Mystery and Alphabets of Agony: The Work of Edward Gorey*** the public has an exceptional opportunity to see and learn from large number of works that are not always readily available.

PUBLICATION

A full-color catalogue will feature an essay by Dr. Joseph Stanton, humanities scholar and specialist in art history and American studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.

PUBLICITY PHOTOS

High-resolution digital images are available upon request.

WEBSITE

An educational website will be developed for ***Musing of Mystery and Alphabets of Agony: The Work of Edward Gorey***. Please visit the University of Hawai'i Art Gallery website <http://www.hawaii.edu/artgallery> for more information.

University of Hawai'i System

Established in 1907 and fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, the University of Hawai'i is the state's sole public system of higher education. The UH System provides an array of undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees and community programs on 10 campuses and through educational, training, and research centers across the state. UH enrolls more than 50,000 students from Hawaii, the U.S. mainland, and around the world. For more information visit www.hawaii.edu.

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