ENCHANTMENT IN AMHERST: WHY VISIT AN ARTIST'S HOUSE?

Helen Hills

Abstract

This essay explores the appeal of visiting the homes of famous people long dead – a common but curious practice too often taken for granted – through the lens of a visit I made in 2014 to Emily Dickinson's house in Amherst, Massachusetts. I suggest that this practice is the secularized counterpart of Catholic pilgrimages to and devotion at saints' shrines, seeking grace or a miraculous intervention of some kind. And occasionally even now such things do take place.

Keywords: writer's house, Emily Dickinson, Austin Dickinson, Susan Gilbert, Jean-Luc Nancy; portrait; possessions of the dead; National Trust; temporality; haunting; ghost; secular pilgrimage; grace
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Biographical note

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Banner image: Detail from a view of the studio at the Barbara Hepworth gallery in St Ives, Cornwall. (Photo: Ed Clews / Alamy Stock Photo)

ENCHANTMENT IN AMHERST: WHY VISIT AN ARTIST'S HOUSE?

Helen Hills, University of York

Why visit the house of an artist or a writer – or indeed of anyone once they no longer live there? After all, it's a curious practice, if one thinks about it. To visit an artist's house, as opposed to engaging with their work, appears to depend on notions of the person as coherent, the past as reconstructable, and the house as a *representation* of its inhabitant or of their work – all assumptions which are, at best, questionable. Is it that, in some strange way, by stepping through the same doors, looking out at the same views, as the artist once did, one hopes to receive miraculous access to the secrets of inner lives and creative work? It is partly the impossible tension, the incommensurability between the mundanity of objects and the extraordinary writing that was produced there that haunts such visits. The house of an artist (like a portrait) is claimed as 'expression' of their 'inner life', as if that 'inner life' were magically instantiated into bricks and plaster and the chair by the window. This is to treat the house in terms of mimesis or representation, to assume at once both the difference of an original from a copy and yet the identity of a pure self-expression of inner life. But neither copy nor identity are adequate to the situation. A house clothes the subject, and presents the subject to the outside world, to intimates, family, and visitors. It stages and reveals, but it also betrays. As Freud pointed out, there is nowhere so uncanny as the bourgeois home.

In this essay, I visit two houses: one coherent, unified, and heavily imbued with *history as representation;* and the other, in many ways, its obverse, a place where history and the past seem to be curiously suspended and yet simultaneously cascading like motes in the air, a place of inattention, decay and disrepair, a place of relics and strange enchantment. In one, the order of time is linear, and place is static, while in the other, place and time emerge as brightly intensive, fluid, and mobile. This essay examines the curious compulsion to visit an artist's house in relation to the question of what set those two houses so sharply apart.

A strong degree of identification with the departed artist often drives such visits. 'It is not every day', writes Diana Fuss in her book about writer's houses, 'that one gets to sit in Emily Dickinson's cupola or lie on Sigmund Freud's couch […] a guilty pleasure, the culmination of a persistent desire to occupy, if only for a moment, the private lives of celebrated authors' (Fuss, 2004, p.v). Fuss conjoins house, furniture to the body and inner life of both artist and visitor, as if one leads necessarily to the other. This is not unlike visiting the home of aristocrats and to imagine oneself in their bed, chair, bath, or garden seat as their equivalent. As if the mere act of visiting such places were capable of dissolving the centuries of land grab that their estates represent, as if buying the entrance ticket could possibly dissolve the potency of accumulated power relations (rather than add to that asymmetry). Yet, that usurpation of the artist prompts in Fuss a 'guilty pleasure'. To what, then, are due the pleasure and the guilt?

The desire to inhabit the private life of the artist extends to searching for some sort of sign or miraculous visitation from them by occupying their haunts. There is in play a sort of mystical identification with them through what is assumed to be their everyday, that is sought through the visitor's own bodily experience of inhabiting the spaces the artist took for granted. As if the place where they felt 'at home' and that shaped them every day but unself-consciously might share its secrets, inform and form the visitor. And, as if, in the most mundane and quotidian aspects of the lost life, the most significant clues might be found.

Paying a visit to an artist's house, then, is more uncannily akin to visiting a saint's shrine or holy relic than one might care to admit. In the Catholic economy of the relic, a relic is a trace which guarantees aura. What is temporary is not physical distinctiveness, but the decay of material being. A saint's relics – the remains of the saint or *brandea* (anything that had direct contact with the saint) – offer a connection between a mortal life lived on earth and the glorified saint in heaven. It can even bestow *virtus*, a form of grace, on the devout pilgrim. The relic is believed to possess *virtus*, transmitted by touch. Thomas Aquinas even justified the cult of relics in terms of sacred housing and as a consequence of the cult of saints, 'temples and organs of the Holy Spirit which lived in them and worked through them'.[1] Gregory the Great suggested that the *virtus* of the saints works through their living bodies and their mortal remains, and sanctifies the places marked by their contact (1979, pp.246–8). That virtus, although apparently spontaneous, is derived from God and faith in God. It is above all

1 Saints should be accorded religious honour 'quae fuerunt templa et organa Spiritus Sancti in eis habitantis et operantis' (Aquinas, ST, 3a, q.25, art.12).

Figure 9.1: *The Homestead*, Amherst, exterior in the snow, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

through place, especially the *sanctus locus* – where the saint died or lies buried – that this grace occurs. Hence, the shrine-relic-reliquary is a privileged site of *dislocation* that allows access to and works analogically in relation to the divine.

Relics become relics through their staging in a reliquary: a relic without a reliquary is just another bone. The artist's house corresponds to the reliquary or shrine that seems merely to house the precious remains, but in fact confers that preciousness upon them. Hence, visiting artists' homes might usefully be seen as a secularized form of the ancient religious practice of paying pilgrimage to saints and their relics. Against rhyme or reason, it is hoped that insights into and epiphanies from the glorified artist might emanate from their home and possessions and be bestowed on the pilgrim. Arguably, this is also part of a wider cultural practice that tends to elevate artists to the modern equivalent of glorified saints.[2]

In 2014, I was lucky enough to visit Emily Dickinson's house in Amherst, Massachusetts (Fig. 9.1).[3] Dickinson's poems have long enthralled me, and I expected to find her home immensely moving. The conditions were right for a pilgrimage: it was snowing; the roads were treacherous; I had to rely on public transport in the land of the motor car; the bus timetable was unpropitious. A real pilgrimage, then. I was full of expectation.

Diana Fuss examines Dickinson's house in relation to her poems, in order to unpick the well-entrenched legend of the poet as reclusive neurotic, who shunned intimacy, locked herself in, peering out to incoherent glimpses of heaven (Fuss, 2004). That is the poet of Joseph Cornell's magical box, *Towards the Blue Peninsula – for Emily Dickinson* (1953), in which we look from a whitewashed, partly-caged, quasi-institutional interior,

2 For the Romantic myth of the artist as genius and misunderstood isolated figure 'outside' society, yet as uniquely gifted to express universal truths, see Battersby (1989).

3 The Homestead was built by Emily Dickinson's grandfather Samuel Fowler Dickinson in about 1813. When Emily Dickinson was born here in 1830, it was a two-family dwelling, in which Samuel Fowler Dickinson and his younger children lived at the east wing and his elder son Edward Dickinson and his family, including Emily, on the west side. In the 1830s, Edward Dickinson moved his family to a house in Pleasant Street, but they returned to The Homestead in 1855 and Emily Dickinson lived there until her death in 1886 (Fuss, 1998).

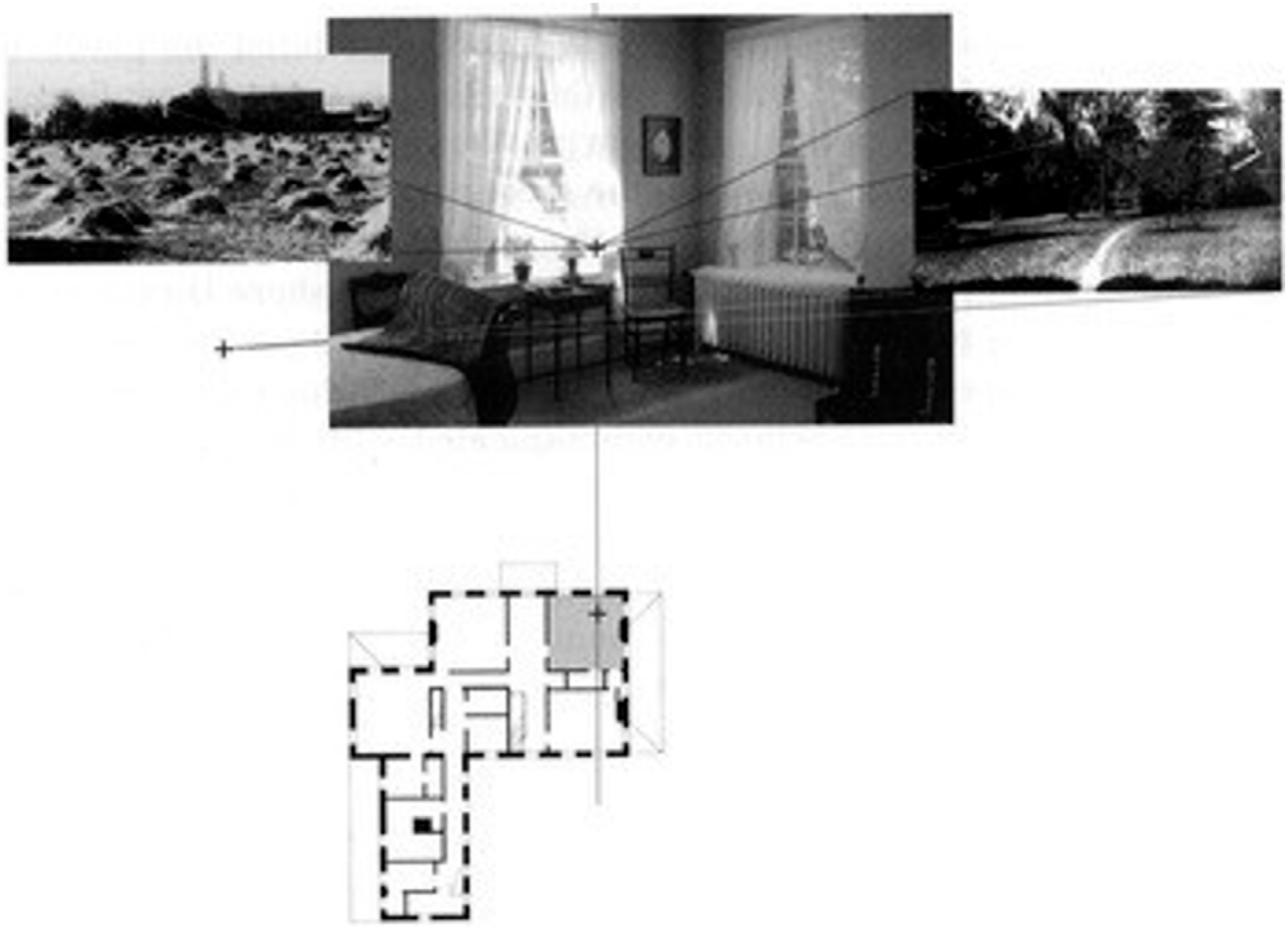

Figure 9.2: Diana Fuss, 'Interior chambers: the Emily Dickinson Homestead', diagram tracking Dickinson's views from her room. Architectural drawing by Joel Sanders, architect, for *The Sense of an Interior: Four Writers and the Rooms that Shaped Them* by Diana Fuss, 2004. (Courtesy of Diana Fuss and Joel Sanders)

through an opened window to a celestial blue sky. Fuss makes connections between the threshold, windows, doors, and views of the house and the openings in Dickinson's poems, even linking particular poems to specific architectural elements. For Emily Dickinson, suggests Fuss, as for Marcel Proust, Sigmund Freud and Helen Keller,

> the architectural dwelling is not merely something we inhabit, but something that inhabits us. They understand interiority itself as a built structure, as 'image merely made.' Nowhere is this more the case than in the modern conceptualization of the recesses of human memory, depicted in Emily Dickinson's poetry as the interior of a house:
>
> Remembrance has a Rear and Front.
> 'Tis something like a House –
> It has a Garret also
> For Refuse and the Mouse –
> Besides the deepest Cellar
> That ever Mason laid –
> Look to it by its Fathoms
> Ourselves be not pursued –[4]
>
> (Fuss, 2004, p.2)

If Dickinson's poem warns against being driven unaware by the dark depths of the house, Fuss is not so easily deterred. She treats Dickinson's home rather like a detective, searching for clues, for traces of the rumpled lives that shaped and inhabited it, rather as Walter Benjamin suggests in his famous essay, but without his awareness of the necessity of reading against the grain (Fuss, 1998).[5] Using photographs taken from Dickinson's bedroom window, Fuss seeks to pinpoint what the poet might have seen (Fig. 9.2). But the views and lines of sight emerge like pins in dead butterflies: what they identify they leave lifeless.

4 Diana Fuss, 'Sense of an Interior', p.2.

5 See Benjamin's discussion (1973) of the nineteenth-century bourgeois interior in relation to the detective novel.

Figure 9.3: Basilica of Sta Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome: shrine to St Cecilia, with Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia* (1600), marble sculpture, and polychromatic marble intarsia adornment, including porphyry roundel dedicated to Cardinal Paolo Sfrondato. Photo: Helen Hills

What my camera shows is what Dickinson saw. I see what she looked out at. Far too reductive; far too literal. An obstinate hope that representation might in some way both resemble and reveal. Benjamin's starting point for his investigations is not a reality whose appearance is already 'true', but rather 'the object riddled with error (doxa)' (1973, p.103). For him, the object is not 'in truth', but a means of excavating a reality disguised in delusion and myth. In particular, Benjamin is at his most suspicious where the world view is presented as stable, ordered, decisive, and systematic.

I approached Dickinson's house without believing in either house or history in terms of stability or representation.[6] But how disappointing my visit was. And how stupidly predictable: although I was alert to flaws in notions of the 'authentic' and of an unmediated surviving witness, all the same, in my soul, I craved the whole, the inviolate miraculous relic and the miracle. As if stepping over the threshold, trespassing into her space, spying, and eavesdropping on an intimate life – the life that both was and was not disclosed in the writing and the daily living that supported it – might be partly (painstakingly) glimpsed, or miraculously revealed, as if my visit might somehow return to me something lost, restore the poet, and restore my faith in the place of writing.

It was, then, a strange, slightly furtive, uneasy act of would-be pilgrimage, undertaken in bad faith, as it were. In many ways, it has its counterpart in the shrine of St. Cecilia in the basilica of Sta Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome (Fig. 9.3). Here saint Cecilia's miraculous relics are preserved, and here she lived, her house reputedly below the later basilica. Stefano Maderno's seductive sculpture of 1600 brilliantly encapsulates the dream of finding the saint at once within reach, at home, dead yet uncorrupted, of time stopped still (Fig. 9.4). When St. Cecilia's body was miraculously rediscovered in 1599, Cardinal Paolo Sfrondati commissioned the sculpture to celebrate the saint, and his own miraculous *inventio*, or finding, of her relics.[7] A flurry of contemporaneous publications insist that the sculpture shows Cecilia's body exactly as it was revealed in the excavation by Cardinal Sfondrati. In other words, the body really

6 The issue of representation is complex. Briefly, it implies that the visual represents something that already exists or existed somewhere else. For discussion of this, see Hills (2016, pp.14–22, 26–9).

7 For a reading of this sculpture as a 'fulfilment of contemporary liturgical concerns,' see Kämpf (2001). For an early study of the statue, see Muñoz (1913–14). For a discussion relating the sculpture to the basilica, see Nava Cellini (1969).

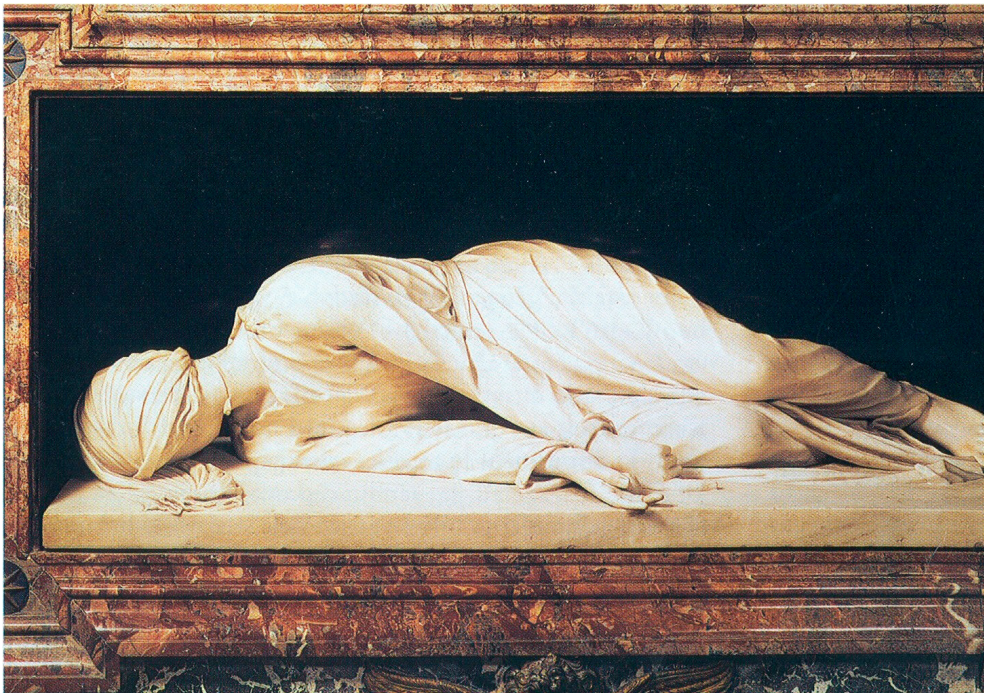

Figure 9.4: Stefano Maderno, St. *Cecilia*, 1600. Marble, Sta Cecilia in Trastevere, Rome. (Photo: Helen Hills)

is there; the saint really was exactly like that (Bosio, 1600, pp.170, 172–3; Boldetti, 1720, p.300). The seventeenth-century texts insist upon the authenticity of the sculpture as much as on the authenticity of the relic: 'Vidimus, cognovimus, et adoravimus' (we saw, we recognized, we adored), claimed Cesare Baronio's *Annales Ecclesiasticae* of 1604 (pp.507, 604). It's the seventeenth-century equivalent of Fuss' carefully aimed photographs. And Cardinal Sfrondato celebrated his own discovery and witness with a prominent porphyry roundel (Fig. 9.4). Shrines do not celebrate saints alone.

Maderno's sculpture assumes the appearance and role of a relic (Fig. 9.4). Relics are magical objects in that they can be simultaneously past and present, alive

Figure 9.5: *The Homestead*, Amherst, ground floor rooms, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

and dead. They testify to the saint's deeds, connect to the saint in heaven in glory, and yet are also humble bone, mortal remains on earth here and now. Hence the sculpture, standing in for the relic, works to hold in place the claim that the saint's miraculously intact and uncorrupted body and its equally miraculous *inventio*, her resting place, her home, and the saint in glory might somehow be unified in this special, singular place, at once touched and touching, in the special economy of the relic, in which part is whole, a saint at once in heaven in glory and also on earth in the bone.

It was perhaps something like a secular version of this marvellous conjunction that I sought at Dickinson's house: a magical unmediated access to the writer *as she really was* before fame reduced her to representation. As if standing in that room, seeing the chair where she used to sit, touching her desk where she wrote, might, like *brandea,* through simple bodily contact, through humble touch, magically impart *virtus*. A shard of *integritas* somehow make it through.

It was not just that the bus dropped me off long before the house was open, and I had to kick my heels in the icy cold. Even once inside, the house seemed remote, curated, and busily inhabited, not by Dickinson – or her poems or her family – but by the carefully controlling museum eye. Her bedroom, where she used to write, was austere and sparsely furnished, but institutionally so. The whole house was as if done up for sale, estate agent approved, spick and span, entirely respectable. It was National Trustified, everything polished, preserved, and compromised (Fig. 9.5). The house had withdrawn into itself, and in its place everything was just an object, scrupulously sourced. Governed by a belief in time as unstoppable and linear, here was underway a curiously exacting make-believe of time stopped still. Objects were treated as authentic guarantors of truth charged with holding in place lives that might be measured and where the past and present might meet along a straight line of continuous stable time.

The past. It's a risky business. It is often hyperbolically construed as either reconstructable or as sheer absence and utterly meaningless. But any engagement with the past requires recognizing the dubious nature of ultimate solutions and recognizing instead that a fragment holds more than any whole. Dreams of recovery or reconstruction overlook the fact that life and survival themselves already depend on ellipses, aporia, and loss, such that historical investigation of any kind faces radical disjuncture and discontinuity. And indeed, in a strange way, ellipses, aporia, and loss are what bind one to the past, spread the shimmer of enchantment, the last gasp of the imperilled. Rather than a lost integral whole, one is searching for the relation between a boundary and an opening, between an orbit and a hole.

And, in a way, I found it. For, just as I was about to leave *The Homestead*, someone mentioned that *The Evergreens*, the house next door was open (Fig. 9.6). This was a rare event. In that house had lived Emily

Figure 9.6: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, exterior in the snow, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

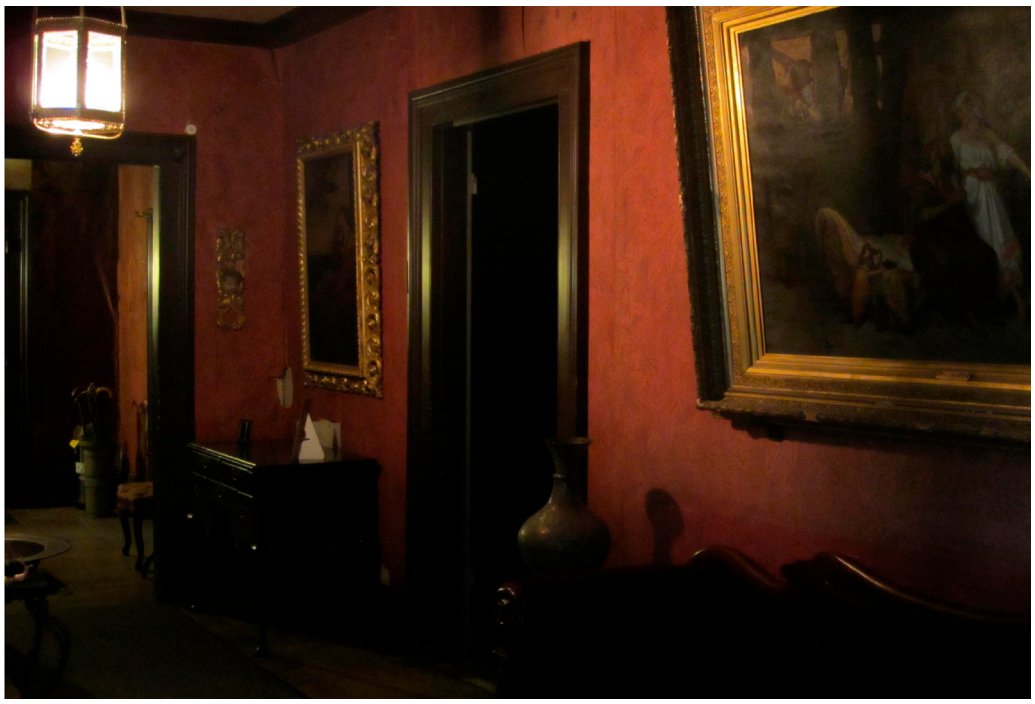

Figure 9.7: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, the entrance hallway, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

Dickinson's brother, Austin, and his wife, Susan Gilbert Austin, who was also, almost certainly, Emily Dickinson's secret lover (ED Museum, n.d.).

I did not expect much. But as I stepped inside, the appealing peeling state of the house hinted that it would offer what *The Homestead* had denied (Fig. 9.7). In a state of semi-collapse, the house presented a kaleidoscope of time and light and what was left behind. Ceiling laths lay like ribs exposed where plaster had fallen in great chunks on the floor; around the light switches, blind fingers searching, had traced dark smears; papers spilled over the edge of a drawer; a radio in the kitchen, just where you'd want it, its knobs butter-stained (Fig. 9.8).

The Evergreens presented itself as a haphazard assemblage, as if someone had just stepped out or as if someone had always stepped out, a place of fragments, dust, and trivia. A place where time was

Figure 9.8: *The Evergreens*, Amherst: 'Someone has just stepped out', 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

Figure 9.9: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, prints from Europe, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

far from still, but on the gallop, limping, disintegrated, sidling, leering. Exoticizing photos of European tourist spots and African animals turn yellow in the sunlight (Figs. 9.9 and 9.10); lustres on the mantelpiece glisten dimly under a soft coating of dust; a marble sculpture swoons (Fig. 9.11), while the wallpaper unfurls from the wall in a great arc, like a peacock opening up its tail, like Rapunzel letting down her hair. The fine dust of friendships, flirtations, and secret yearnings still hung in the air. I cannot entirely explain the charm of the house, but it still weaves a spell over me.

'All old things are the property of the dead', writes Maria Stepanova in *In Memory of Memory*, her kaleidoscopic reflection on her family's history after her aunt's death (2021, p.482). And the old things in *The Evergreens*, unlike those in *The Homestead*, are unmistakably someone's possessions, while those who owned and used them seem at once close by and

Figure 9.10: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, exoticizing prints, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

Figure 9.11: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, mantelpiece, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

yet definitively absent. They're not coming back, but furniture and objects await them, just as they were, trapped in a sudden end state, because their previous owner, the only person who could have freed them, is no longer amongst the living. As if, at any minute, someone might come back in, *as if I almost might be that person.*

I feel it is my duty to write about the house, which is alive with ghosts and their possessions (Fig. 9.12). But why is it my duty? To whom do I owe this duty when those people choose to stay in the shadows? Perhaps it is the enchantment I felt in that strange house that I want somehow to prolong and share by evoking that encounter, that shimmer again; perhaps it is a sense of possession; more likely it is the sense of loss, a loss that is not hidden or papered over, or repaired. A house not ruled by a puritanical belief in authenticity, but squatted in by contradiction, fragmentation, and riddles that launched themselves at some unknowable time ago carelessly into the air.

The Evergreens, unlike *The Homestead*, is unburdened by fame and reputation. Liberated from the task of representing Dickinson, it is not a representation of its inhabitants' lives, even less of their work, and instead is free to be a *figure* of it. Objects and furnishings and rooms encounter each other in a forgotten but not obliterated human constellation.

The Evergreens comes to stand in almost like a face, to offer the sense of the other, such as is given truly only in the portrait, as conceived by Jean-Luc Nancy (2006). For Nancy 'the object of the portrait is, in the strictest sense, the *absolute* subject: the subject detached from everything that does not belong to it, withdrawn from all exteriority' (2006, p.220). This is precisely not a hermeneutics of depth; that is, it is not the revelation of something secret, interior or anterior from behind a superficial presentation. For Nancy, interiority takes place *within* exteriority:

> 'Exposition' is this *setting within* and *taking place* that is neither 'interior' nor 'exterior' but *set toward* or *in relation*. We might say that the portrait *paints exposition*, *that it puts it (in) to (the) work*. [But] here […] 'work' does not refer to the particular 'painting' as an object or thing. Rather, it refers to the painting *as relation*. In this sense, then, it is *the subject* that is *the work of the portrait*.
>
> (Nancy, 2006, p.227)

Figure 9.12: *The Evergreens*, Amherst: 'Why Visit an Artist's House?', 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

'The value of the face as the sense of the other is truly given only in the portrait (in art)', writes Nancy.[8] Maggi Hambling's unusual self-portrait, *Maggi Hambling* (oil on canvas, 1977–78, National Portrait Gallery), is particularly apt here (Fig. 9.13). In a constellation around Hambling's face are objects – the sort of things one imagines one might come across in her house – each charged with a significance that is intimated but not made explicit.

By extension, Nancy's discussion of the portrait may be used to suggest that the artist's house brings into visibility something that was actually hitherto veiled and occluded by the life and even by the work. A paradox of a presence precisely through absence. As if the person in herself is in the house, remains in the house. And has just stepped out.

The house does not resemble anyone. Resemblance depends on absence, as Maurice Blanchot's discussion of the portrait insists:

> It gradually becomes clear that a portrait does not resemble because it looks like a face; rather resemblance begins and exists only with the portrait and in it alone; resemblance is the portrait's work, its glory or its disgrace, expressing the fact that the face is not there, that it is absent, that it only appears by way of the absence that resemblance precisely is.
>
> (1991, p.32)

And certainly, during my visit, *The Evergreens* was a house of veils and screens, of lace curtains partially drawn across windows, of silvered mirrors barely able to bear reflections anymore, their work done, their lustre like an insect husk (Fig. 9.14).

The artist's house becomes another subject, both insofar as the house is the subject (the object) and insofar as the house is the place in which a subject (the artist) comes to light. The house becomes the depository par excellence of collected possessions, and betrayer of the trace, the indexical (the marks on

8 'Of course,' writes Nancy, 'there is nothing to prevent the portrait from showing the rest of the body so long as its sole function is to carry the face, so long as it remains, in short, in reserve, a resource on which the look can draw. […] Indeed, we could perhaps go so far as to say that the portrait marks a break with nudity (without repressing it) since it exposes another sort of nudity altogether, that of the subject' (2006, p.222-3).

Figure 9.13: Maggi Hambling, *Maggi Hambling,* 1977–78. Oil on canvas, National Portrait Gallery. (NPG 1562)

Figure 9.14: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, screened window, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

the wall around the bedroom light where fingers have stumbled in the dark), the hidden. The house may hold the subject insofar as they comported themselves to themselves, precisely – in private, in distraction. And it does so precisely because it is not a composition of the self, but an accretion. It holds the subject, not as a *representation* of the artist (staged in terms of what is already known), but rather in terms of what is unintentioned, *in addition*, and hence a self-relation mediated through a departure from the self. The house offers an opening to an undisclosed interior. An interior that exceeds the oeuvre, the individual works, even the face. 'The relation that makes up the portrait comprises three moments: the portrait resembles (me), the portrait recalls (me), the portrait looks (at me)', writes Nancy (2006, p.228).

The house resembles, recalls, and looks. Perhaps the artist's house emerges as secret depositary, place of enchantment, only when the artist has left it carelessly behind.

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A pilgrimage to the house, that special homage, is the insertion of the self, a form of intercession and veneration in relation to the saint / artist. It is not about how it was; it is, rather, about what we see when we look back; how the contours of the past appear. Even how the corpses are exposed as the snow melts.

Figure 9.15: *The Evergreens,* Amherst, objects everywhere, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

Yet, if reconstruction, however painstaking, inevitably falls short of the mark, to conceive the past in terms of sheer absence or utter annihilation is also a mistake. Something of the past always remains, if only as a haunting presence or revenant.

Secular society takes the idea of salvation, which is what drives the pilgrimage to the saint's shrine, out of the equation and in one stroke the whole construction loses its balance. Without a belief in salvation, the 'conservation' of the artist's house becomes no more than an institutional archive: a museum, a library, a warehouse, allowing a sort of conditional and limited immortality – a greatly extended single day, the only version of eternal life that is possible in the emancipated new world.

'What unites all the minorities, puts them in the same boat', writes Maria Stepanova,

> is other people's sense that their subjectivity is incomplete: women *who need to be looked after*; children who *don't know what's best for them*; black people who are *like children*; the working classes *who don't know what's in their own interests*; the dead for whom *nothing matters any more*.
>
> (2021, p.374)

In our present age, despite shrill concern with our own ostensibly renewed sensibilities and professed alertness to the difference of others, how readily we still trample on the dead. 'The dead have no rights', Stepanova bluntly reminds us, 'their property and the circumstances of their fate can be used by anyone and in any way' (2021, p.373).

The two houses are differently possessed by possessions which belonged to the dead: Emily Dickinson's home contains objects that belonged to her and others deemed to fit historically; *The Evergreens* is strewn with objects and furniture, some new, some old, a wireless and a rocking horse, and it is all in keeping, keeping something open (at least until the curators come creeping in) (Fig. 9.15).

The more I think about *The Evergreens*, the more it seems like a series of unfulfilled dreams. Maybe such a house, that enchanted enchanting house, can reveal only in so far as it exposes an absence, an absence that, in turn, is a condition of presence – though one that has never quite stepped through into the clean order of history (Fig. 9.16).

Figure 9.16: *The Evergreens*, Amherst, 2014. (Photo: Helen Hills)

Postscript: I am not concerned with what has happened to The Evergreens since my visit or whether it is or is not anything like it was that day in 2014. It is not the place, but the sense of the encounter that interests me. Enchantment is not set in stone or bricks and mortar and was never meant to be.

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