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From Goosebumps to gore: Exhibition explores horror genre and its younger audiences

An expert in horror cinema from Northumbria University has co-curated a new exhibition which reimagines a young horror-enthusiast's bedroom to discuss the influence of the genre.

Fear in the Bedroom draws on an archive of films, television, books, magazines, music and video games from 1970 to 2000 and was curated by Dr Kate Egan from Northumbria University and Dr Catherine Lester from the University of Birmingham, who together lead the Arts and Humanities

Research Council-funded [Youth & Horror Research Network](#) project.

The exhibition aims to examine how horror has shaped young people's understanding of the world, whilst challenging the notion of the genre's harmful influence. It is being hosted by Birmingham City University and coincides with [Flatpack Festival](#), an international film festival based in Birmingham, which runs across the city until Saturday 17th May.

Dr Egan, an Assistant Professor in Film and Media at Northumbria, hopes the exhibition will ignite plenty of nostalgia. "Despite ongoing debates about children's access to horror, the early 1970s to the late 1990s was a period of plenty for the young horror fan," she explained. "This exhibition is not so much envisaged as a snapshot of a bedroom at a given moment in a given year, but rather as a time-capsule of children's horror media."

The exhibition features special items on loan from personal collections, archive footage examining the impact of horror films over the past few decades, and recollections of the BBC's notorious horror drama, *Ghostwatch* taken from Dr Egan's current research on the programme and its relations to childhood memory. The relationship between childhood and horror has persisted throughout the history of youth culture, from fairy tales and nursery rhymes to the ongoing popularity of Halloween and recent worldwide phenomena including *Goosebumps* and *Stranger Things*.

Dr Lester, an Associate Professor in Film and Television at University of Birmingham, added: "By bringing together an assembled archive collection of horror-themed products aimed at children, this exhibition takes viewers through the history of children, youth and horror media. It's engaging visitors in the multifaceted world of everyday horror through the eyes of a child and challenges notions of horror's harmful influence.

"We want people to consider the relationship between innocence, play and horror that these exhibits encompass, to bathe nostalgically in their own memories and to introduce a new generation to horror toys, books and games of the past."

- *Fear in the Bedroom* is free to visit and open until Saturday 17th May. Discover more [here](#) about the exhibition.

Northumbria University is internationally renowned for horror studies and is home to one of the largest collectives of horror researchers in the world. The research specialism was introduced at Northumbria by the late Professor Peter Hutchings, who worked at the University for 27 years and studied British horror cinema. Today, [Northumbria's Horror Studies Research Group](#) formalises the University's concentration of experts in this area, with a team who are widely recognised as leaders in horror studies, regularly presenting keynote lectures at major conferences, delivering talks at European film festivals and publishing field-defining monographs.

The research group, which features [Dr Egan](#) as well as [Dr Steve Jones](#), [Dr Johnny Walker](#), [Dr Russ Hunter](#), [Professor Stacey Abbott](#) and [Dr Damien Pollard](#), are currently joined by Visiting [Professor Adam Lowenstein](#) from the University of Pittsburgh. He will be working with the team over the next three years.

- Together they are preparing to host the two-day *Horror Studies Now 2025* conference at Northumbria University on Thursday 29th and Friday 30th May. Registration closes on Thursday 15th May. Discover more and register [here](#).

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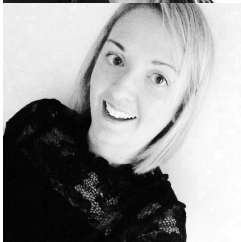


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