

Get Context

These **See For Yourself** cards highlight selected art and artists in the exhibition *Uncanny* (2nd floor, February 28–August 10, 2025) to prompt insights and encourage further exploration. Names in **bold** correspond to cards in this set.

If you've ever been disturbed by eerie dreams, abandoned spaces, or computer-generated humans, then you've encountered the uncanny. Certain imagery and experiences elicit a distinctive sense of unease associated with the concept. During your visit, consider the many ways artists engage the uncanny. Which works do you find most affecting?

Uncanny Connections

Surrealist Imaginings: Surrealism suggests “beyond reality.” Ponder the ways these artists conjure dreams, conceive fantastic creatures, and confound expectations to kindle uneasy thoughts and feelings.

- The body can be a powerful agent of the uncanny. Connie Imboden, **Frida Orupabo**, and others fragment and distort the human form to evoke intense emotions and challenge stereotypes. How do their diverse techniques affect your response to these works?
- We experience the uncanny when something feels familiar yet also alien. Leonora Carrington, **Meret Oppenheim**, and **Shahzia Sikander** merge and juxtapose recognizable objects and bodies to create hybrids that may puzzle, amuse, or unnerve. Which other artists created uncanny combinations?

Unsafe Spaces: Freud used the word *unheimlich*, German for “unhomely,” to designate the uncanny. What qualities make places and spaces distressing for you?

- Photographs by Vesna Pavlović and paintings by **Julie Roberts** present spaces that evoke human activity but are uninhabited. How does an artist's chosen medium affect your reaction to the locations portrayed?



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- Sama Alshaibi and Sheida Soleimani remind us that an insecure home can encompass an entire country or even planet Earth. How do their ideas connect with yours about the places you call home?
- **Fabiola Jean-Louis** mirrors and complicates conventional portraiture, revealing racial atrocities in unsettling detail. In what other ways might history be considered a perilous “space”?

Uncanny Valley: This contemporary concept extends the uncanny to encompass modern technology, addressing the troubling feelings often generated by repetition and doubling, fear of mortality, and robots that look almost, but not quite, human.

- Works by **Mary Ellen Mark** and **Gillian Wearing** invoke the uncanny by depicting apparently identical human beings. Tradition says we all have a *doppelgänger*, or someone who looks like us but isn't related. Have you spotted yours or that of someone you know? How did that encounter feel?
- Anna Gaskell, **Angela Strassheim**, and others present ambiguous narratives. How does the uncertainty of these scenes affect you?

Remix Connections

Discover the uncanny in the museum's collection galleries (3rd floor).

- Find additional works by Louise Bourgeois, Justine Kurland, Laurie Simmons, Janaina Tschäpe, **Remedios Varo**, and Gillian Wearing.
- Like Sama Alshaibi, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith and Beverly Penn comment on environmental change and its impact on nature.
- Consider the work of LaToya M. Hobbs, who, like **Martine Gutierrez**, questions societal assumptions about beauty and identity.
- Jane and Louise Wilson take inspiration from the built environment. Compare their approach to those of Beverly Buchanan, Sarah Morris, and Laure Tixier.
- What additional uncanny connections surfaced for you?

