

# NIGHTMARE 26

## Call for Papers

### Nightmare '26

The Northern School of Art: Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026

Submission Deadline: Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026

**CFP: "*If our lives are already written, it would take a courageous man to change the script*"- The reciprocal relationship between horror cinema and video games**

The organisers invite proposals for 15-minute papers to be presented at the second Nightmare conference, a biennial event concerning the practical and research development in the horror genre. Hosted by staff, post-graduate and final year undergraduate students aligned to the Stage & Screen Faculty of The Northern School of Art, this event will take place in person on the Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2026. The theme for this year's conference will explore the holistic relationship between video games and the horror genre with a focus on development, narrative and player/audience perspectives.

A key series of texts will be the *Silent Hill* series. Long considered a classic of the medium, the 2024 remake of *Silent Hill 2* (and unofficial companion piece *Silent Hill: The Short Message*), the recent new release *Silent Hill f* and Christophe Gans' forthcoming cinema release *Return to Silent Hill*, demonstrate the reciprocal nature between gaming and cinema.

The CFP will broadly look at three key strands:

- The contextual and reciprocal relationship of the horror genre in gaming and cinema
- Narrative and Performative Structure in horror gaming and film
- Recontextualising Mental Health through horror narratives

This conference seeks to align video game developers, film-makers and academics to create a working dialogue across the industry. The themes of this year's conference will shed light on the navigation of the horror genre between mediums but also how audiences respond to these texts. The conference will aim to develop our understanding of artistic, social and psychological attitudes to the genre across video games and cinema.

This will be an in-person conference but we will consider some online papers as part of specific panels if appropriate (the former is preferred though). There will be a request that any online papers will be pre-recorded so as to avoid any technical issues. The conference will be recorded and the stream will be available after the event. There will also be a strong student presence to the conference both organisationally but also as part of the audience of the events, a forward move to de-mystify both academic and professional artistic discussions.

There will be two keynote speakers at this event who will investigate the relationship between horror cinema and video games from the two differing perspectives. Firstly, we will welcome Dan Pinchbeck, one of the UK's leading games writers/directors and who was the founder of The Chinese Room. His games include *Dear Esther* (2012), *Everybody's Gone to the Rapture* (2015) and the multiple award-winning modern classic *Still Wakes the Deep* (2024) which combined evocative narrative, body horror and compelling voice performances.

Secondly there will be Matt Glasby, an international film journalist and author. His work has been published by the likes of GQ, Radio Times and Total Film, and his books have sold nearly 40,000 copies worldwide. His latest, *The Book of Horror: The Anatomy of Fear in Film*, is an illustrated guide to the scariest movies ever made and has recently been republished in an updated edition.

The evening event will see the keynotes screen a film of their choosing that aligns to the conference strands followed by a live Q&A conducted by *Fortean Times* columnist Bob Fischer. The event will end with a drinks reception where the winners of the Nightmare '26 illustration prize will be announced.

We would particularly welcome contributions on the following:

- The legacy of *Silent Hill*
- Madness or Sanity: How does the genre approach mental health conditions
- The Politics of the Abject Body in gaming and film
- Recontextualising narratives between mediums
- The Slasher as Representative Patient in gaming and film
- The creation of character through mind, body and voice within the genre
- Horror & gaming – audience perspectives
- Horror gaming and cinema as therapist
- “Your mind and your body don’t belong to you” – Body Horror and Concepts of the Self

**The deadline for proposals is Friday February 13<sup>th</sup> 2026**

When submitting your abstract, please:

Include ‘Nightmare26’ in the title of your email

Submit abstracts in .docx format with the title ‘Nightmare26 – [Surname]’

Please state if you will attend in person or if this will be an online proposal (again, in-person is preferable but online will be considered if appropriate)

Submit abstracts (300 words maximum) and biography (100 words maximum) on the same document

Please include name, the title of the paper and institutional affiliation (independent scholars are welcomed)

Please direct any formal enquiries to the conference organiser David Edwards at [david.edwards@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:david.edwards@northernart.ac.uk)

All proposals should be emailed to David Edwards ([david.edwards@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:david.edwards@northernart.ac.uk)), Alyson Agar ([alyson.agar@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:alyson.agar@northernart.ac.uk)), and Olivia Burton ([olivia.burton@northernart.ac.uk](mailto:olivia.burton@northernart.ac.uk))



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