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Night of the Living Dead Reanimated

Reviewed by Jorge de la Cova, © 2011

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When I thought I had seen every iteration and interpretation of George Romero's 1968 classic *Night of the Living Dead*, while browsing at Wizard World Atlanta, I chanced upon something truly new. At the booth of artist Sam Flegal (here's [his website](#)), he sold beautiful comic-style prints of the stairway scene. Flegal is one of the artists featured in *Night of the Living Dead: Reanimated*.

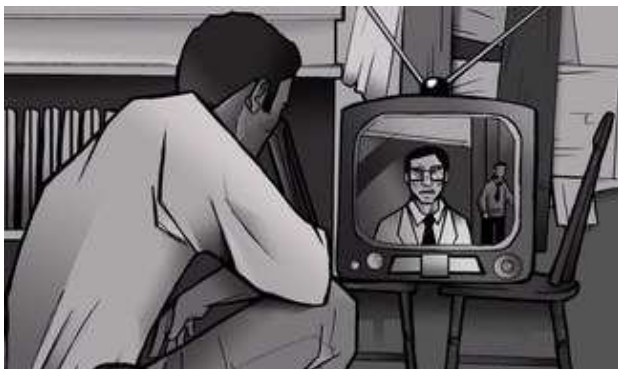
The movie presented the work of over a hundred artists, reinterpreting Romero's classic in a variety of styles. Appropriately, the work explores the concept of the "Exquisite Corpse," a technique pioneered by the Surrealists in the 1920s, that combines a vast spectrum of different artists' media and styles into one work.

These artists layer their disparate styles over the original movie's audio track to mine new depths from the iconic movie.

Curated by Mike Schneider, who compiled the artists' works into this presentation, the movie showcases wildly varying styles. Some styles work well with the subject, such as Flegal's own haunting, graphic comics style culminating in the half-skeletal corpse at the top of the stairs. Others are ridiculous, such as the sock puppet newscast.

In one of the weirder scenes, computer modeling (faceless mass models repeating the action in looped footage three or four times) juxtaposes abruptly with the soundtrack. Another artist more successfully employs action figures, including the Mego-style [Graveyard Zombie](#).

In one extreme case, figures are replaced with solid, angular silhouettes over which the artist has superimposed abstract, expressionistic scrawls. The effect fails to elicit anything but a sense of wonder at the artist's motives.



There is plenty of stop-motion animation, including a goofy Claymation rendering, reminiscent of *Wallace and Gromit*, of Barbara running through the abandoned farm house. Another stop-motion oddity is a hybrid live actor/stop motion bit of Barbara and Johnny in the car at the cemetery. Almost as jarring as the *Cloverfield* Jitter-Cam, this scene was the only one that moved me almost to nausea, an irony considering the gore in the source material.

[This trailer](#) has snippets of a bunch of the scenes.

This juxtaposition of animation styles is the movie's greatest strength as well as its monumental



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failing. Any emotional resonance produced by the many strong scenes is undercut by the less successful, even amateurish, bits. Even in some of the better segments, I was left with a sense that I was appreciating a well executed craft, rather than being drawn into an intense story.

The effect lies somewhere between a democratic exercise in artistic collaboration and the few precious gems of real talent. Unfortunately, while the brain, the logic, of the movie remains intact, this tension rips the heart out of George Romero's story more effectively than any zombie.

The film would have been more successful the film with more selective and thoughtful editing. I recommend it only for die-hard completists, and maybe for film students, as an example of what to do, and more importantly what not to do.

Here's the movie's [official site](#). Jorge de la Cova is still working on his ZhD.

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