



## Misty Keasler Gives Quite a Scare

Her eerie photographs of haunted houses make them creepy in a different way.

BY PETER SIMEK PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER 2017



Mind your manors: Keasler's Blackthorne Manor, Terror on the Fox, Green Bay, WI (2016)  
Courtesy of Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

Photographer Misty Keasler often finds subjects in vacant spaces whose emptiness has much to say about the people who normally occupy them. Trash dumps in Nigeria filled with computer debris. Fantasy-themed hot-sheet hotel rooms in Japan. Keasler's images—often fittingly bathed in eerie light that evokes a David Lynch-like dread—capture eccentric manifestations of consumer culture that are charged with a sense of repression and fetishism.

For her latest series, *Haunt*, a solo exhibition that opens Sept. 23 at the [Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth](#), Keasler has documented 13 haunted houses located around the United States, including images of Terrell's Thrillvania that first appeared in *D Magazine* in [October 2015](#). (*D* was the first magazine to publish her work, beginning in 1999.) These people-less scenes of horror and violence are swollen with suggestion, insinuation, and innuendo. Meticulously staged tableaux of murder, poltergeists, and zombies are drained of the sense of terror they are intended to evoke, instead appearing like surreal abstractions, a kind of campy archaeological photo documentation.

What is most suggestive—and delightful—about them is the way the missing information forces the viewer to complete the scene. What kind of imagination went to such pains to create these intricately detailed pastiches? Who are the people that seek them out? What are they really looking for?