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Designing Your Haunt with Creative Perspective

By John Hawkins

Designing your Haunt with creative perspective, will take some *thinking outside of the Haunt* in terms of a creative layout. It is imagining unique predicaments to get your patrons into that are completely out of the norm. It is making sure your guests are walking *through things* and *in* things... not *by* things. It is a way to further disorient your customers setting them up for great scares and lasting memories. It is furthering the idea of putting them in situations they would never experience in everyday life thereby changing their perspectives about how they experience their world... or in this case your Haunt!

Each year when **Oak Island Entertainment Group** polls patrons on their favorite experiences in our attractions, a large portion of the most positive comments center around rooms designed with creative perspective. No matter how great the scares are or how great the scenic design is, it seems that when there is a twist on the experience of *how* the rooms of the Haunts are presented it leaves great lasting impressions. I believe this is because it further suspends guests' disbelief by adding yet another element of things being "off kilter" in the Haunt. Suspending disbelief creates the best startles and the best form of advertising there is... *word of mouth!*

Challenge yourself this year to look at every room in your Haunt and put something in it that changes the perspective of the experience. It doesn't have to be a complete reworking of a room either... it can be simple additions to bring guests *through* the experience.

Layout Principles



Perspective improvements to common room themes could include entering or exiting a bathroom through the shower. Force guests to walk through tons of hanging dirty laundry. A kitchen could be entered or exited through the refrigerator or through the pantry. In standard hallways, think of something creative like having guests travel "behind the walls" so that they are looking into the hallways from inside the walls through cracks and holes in the wall.



Send your guests through your Haunt on the “backside” of the walls instead of in a Hallway In a bedroom, enter the room through the bedroom closet (of course have tons of old clothes to wade through). Exit the room through an armoire.

Send your guests through your Haunt from perspectives they are not familiar with such as walking “through” a closet These are a few basic ideas... now think of all the creative ways you can apply these concepts to your Haunt!

Now that you’re thinking about designing your Haunt with creative perspective... don’t forget the icing on the cake... the details! Details will add the final touch in transporting your guests to a perspective experience they will never forget!

Let’s take a look at our example rooms again and add details:

Scenic Detail Principles

In the bathroom, add the smell of mildew and a mister for a “steamy” feeling in the shower; make all of the laundry soiled with disgusting stains that smell of urine, etc. Also, use a drip machine (a pump with reservoir that slowly drips water) to make linens such as underwear “wet” in all the right places- forcing guests to feel the cold and wetness in their faces.



A huge pair of “under-scare” hanging in a bathroom scene is a perfect sensory perception detail for guests to wade through. Don’t forget to soil them, make them and make them smell really gross!

In the kitchen, the refrigerator and the pantry can be stuffed to the brim with rotting disgusting food (and maybe severed heads?) that smells of rot and decay. In the hallways... just think of all the sensory perception experiences one would face inside a wall... insulation rubbing on your face (stuffed mattress material), complete darkness, electrical wires dangling everywhere and the smell of burning wires. In the bedroom closet make sure the clothes smell of old moth balls... what else is in the closet? Are there shelves with old hat boxes hiding performers and animations?

In closing, if you were creating a Haunted attraction with a junkyard theme, would you walk your customers by a dumpster or *through* a dumpster? Would you let them look at a huge trash compactor or would you bring them *into* a huge trash compactor? If you are creating a Haunted Mansion do you walk your customers by a large river-rock fireplace or do you walk them *into* the fireplace? Do you walk them down a standard hallway or do you force them to make passage through a coat closet in the foyer? No matter your theme ask yourself these types of questions and you will be on the right track to designing your Haunt with creative perspective.

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Obtained from
Omarshauntedtrail.com