

THE ARION PRESS ANNOUNCES

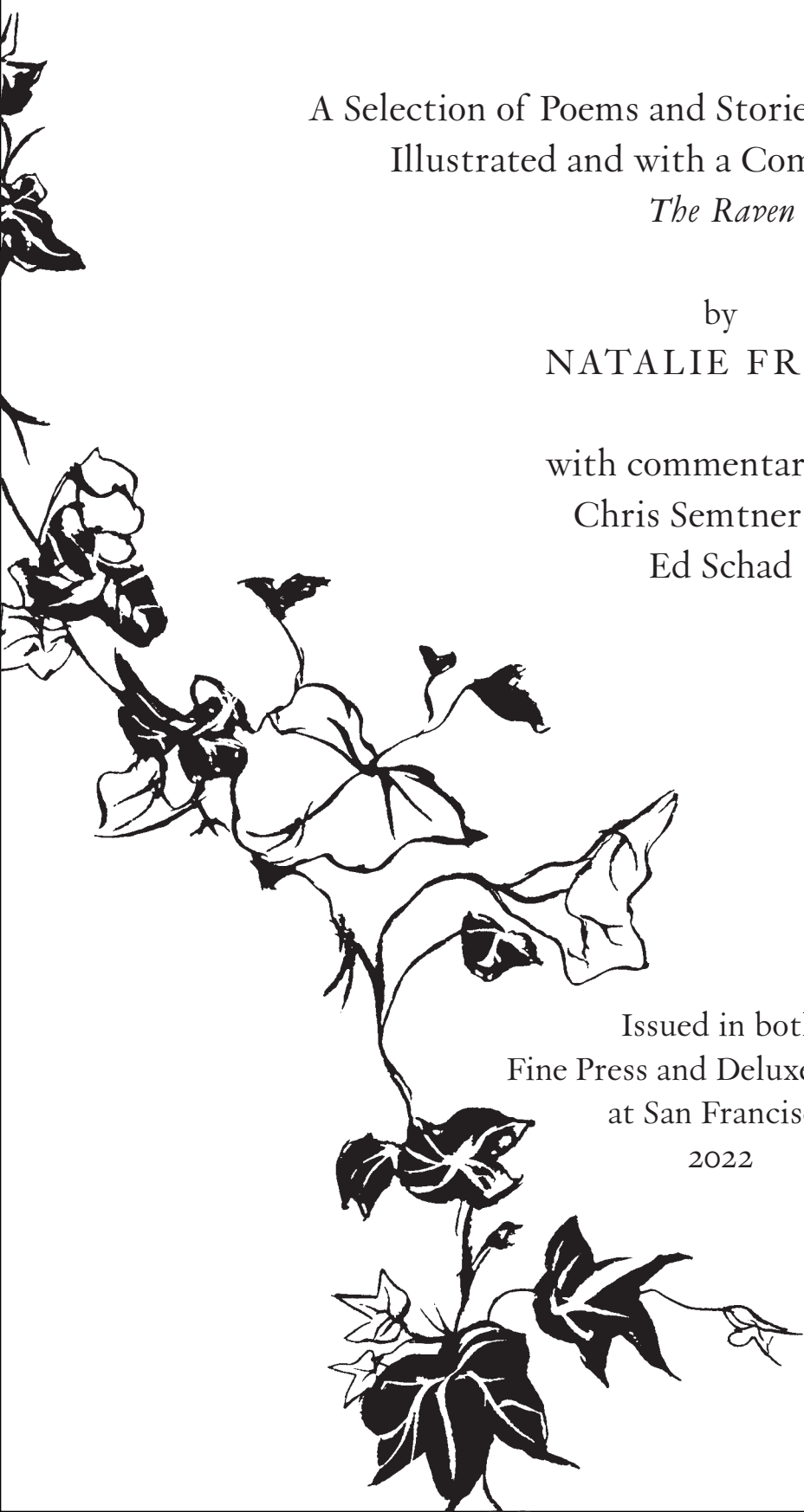
POE'S PHANTASIA

A Selection of Poems and Stories by Edgar Allan Poe
Illustrated and with a Companion Volume
The Raven

by
NATALIE FRANK

with commentaries by
Chris Semtner and
Ed Schad

Issued in both
Fine Press and Deluxe editions
at San Francisco
2022





THE GREAT MASTER OF THE MACABRE, Edgar Allan Poe, earned his living writing stories for American magazines between 1830 and his death at the age of 40 in 1849. In his short lifetime Poe penned scores of dark tales and elegiac poems that established his reputation as the pre-eminent chronicler of the unquiet mind. Fourteen of these unnerving tales and four poems are collected in a new edition curated with the director of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia. Presented in two volumes, *Poe's Phantasia* and *The Raven*, the Arion edition marks a fresh, psychologically acute interpretation of the writer's work. For what unites these tales is not just the familiar depiction of minds descending into madness, but an aspect of his oeuvre that has long been overlooked. In works ranging from *The Raven's* "sorrow for the lost Lenore" to laments for Berenice, Ligeia, and Annabel Lee, the thread running through this collection is an obsessive longing for lost love.

Over nearly two centuries Poe has not lacked for visual interpreters. Hundreds of artists have illustrated his tales of horror, including Arthur Rackham, Gustave Doré, and Édouard Manet, to name just the most prominent. With the notable exceptions of Alice Neel and Dora Wheeler, nearly all were men. Now Natalie Frank joins these few female Poe interpreters to present an extraordinary new vision of the work. Under her dazzling technicolor gaze, Poe's fevered imagination for the first time reveals its object: the beautiful, dead woman the poet worshipped and now mourns. In seven full-page drawings in color for *The Raven* and multiple monochrome artworks for the main volume, Frank flips the traditional nineteenth-century rendering of Poe's work on its head, drawing out the missing woman at its heart.

In many of these stories, the repressed, often murderous, truth cannot be restrained and must out. This deep-seated need to confess to depravity or harm is partly a matter of conscience, partly "an innate and primitive principle of human action ... which we may call perverseness," Poe asserts in "The Imp of the Perverse." Natalie Frank's images, too, partake of this truth-telling, with woman herself—mourned, celebrated, put on a pedestal, or reviled—surging out of the poet's unconscious. In her previous work illustrating the *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, the *Tales of Madame D'Aulnoy* and the *Story of O*, Frank insightfully unearthed the psychosexual patterns underlying many Western myths and classic tales. She draws an equally startling history from the shadows here.

Like the author, Frank locates the viewer squarely in the tortured mind of the narrator of *The Raven*, blurring reality and delusion to insist on the female presence

FACING:

Gouache and chalk pastel drawing by Natalie Frank for "The Raven."

erased in previous, patriarchal visions. There are no demure Romantic maidens here. Out of a bare three adjectives—“rare,” “radiant,” and “sainted”—all modifying “maiden,” the artist conjures a passionate and sexual woman for whom the student-narrator pines. For the first time in the poem’s publishing history, Frank’s images center Lenore as the work’s driving psychological force, the flesh-and-blood beloved whose loss inspires perhaps the most famous refrain in English literature: *Nevermore*.

Poe’s fascination with the darker elements of the human psyche, alas, will never grow old. Uncontrollable impulses and longings rampage through his stories as they do through contemporary life—in the same way his unhinged narrators stalk their prey. For the collected tales in *Phantasia*, Frank’s memorable black-and-white gouache drawings likewise stalk the viewer, surging forth as unblinking eyes, manic bells, and hands bursting from walls. In a very particular sense, too, this new edition embodies what Poe termed “the disordered chamber of my brain.”

Like other of the Press’s recent books, the two-volume set incorporates physical historical material into the classic handcrafted codex. We were delighted to be able to use the raw matter of Poe’s life in a surprising way: original bricks from his home in New York City have been pulverized and incorporated into handmade pulp paper labels and cameo bas-reliefs. The bricks, the color of dried blood, themselves creepily recall the immuring central to several of the tales, including the gruesome “Cask of Amontillado,” written in 1845 at the height of Poe’s fame, in the very house built from these selfsame bricks.

THE ARTIST

NATALIE FRANK (b. 1980) is an American artist whose practice spans painting, drawing, paper making, opera, and ballet, in media from the book page to the theater stage. Her work focuses on themes of feminism, sexuality, and power, through vivid, expressionistic interpretations of seventeenth- to twentieth-century tales. Based in New York, she received her BA at Yale University and MFA from Columbia University. She was encouraged to explore the world of fairy tales by her mentor, Paula Rego. After publishing an acclaimed illustrated edition of *Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, which she later developed into costumes, scenic design, and animations for Ballet Austin (Texas), she collaborated with the renowned scholar Jack Zipes on an illustrated anthology of magical tales, *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*; a collection of tales of *Madame d’Aulnoy*; and forthcoming, *The Tales of E.T.A. Hoffman*. She also drew

the *Story of O*. According to Ed Schad, curator at The Broad museum who writes an appreciation for this edition, Frank is rapidly becoming “one of nineteenth-century literature’s most astute interpreters.”

The seven images Frank created for *The Raven* trace a narrative arc of the student-poet’s yearning for his lost love, picturing her as the true protagonist of the poem. In bold strokes of gouache and thick chalk pastel, Frank’s high-key color mimics both what she calls “the dense, unexpected complexity of female lives” and the raven’s high-pitched psychological cry. The resulting images—of women, birds and figments of the interior landscape—toggle between concealment and revelation. It is noteworthy that the artist realized only when she began to draw literature that she experienced synesthesia, the perception of one sense through another. Her colors are mesmerizing and physically active, as are the smaller black-and-white drawings of the main volume that erupt in the manner of Victorian vignettes onto the page.

THE COMMENTATORS

CHRIS SEMTNER (Foreword) is the curator of the Edgar Allan Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia. He has written several books and articles about Poe, visual art, and the paranormal. His exhibits for the Poe Museum have earned awards and honors; *Haunting Poe*, his most recent book, is a collection of allegedly true sightings of Poe’s ghost over a century and a half. Semtner has discoursed on Poe for PBS, the BBC, NPR, CSPAN, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, and has spoken about dark literary history at venues from the Library of Congress to the Steam-punk World’s Fair.

ED SCHAD (Introduction) is Curator and Publications Manager at The Broad in Los Angeles, for which he most recently curated broad survey exhibitions of Shirin Neshat, Takashi Murakami, and William Kentridge. He also curated Carlos Cruz-Diez’s large scale public project in downtown Los Angeles, *Couleur Additive*, and was host curator for *Jasper Johns: Something Resembling Truth*, co-organized by The Broad and The Royal Academy in London. Schad’s writing has been published in *Art Review*, *Frieze*, *Modern Painters*, *Flash Art*, the *Brooklyn Rail*, the *L.A. Weekly* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and he has contributed essays to catalogs on the work of Robert Irwin, Sterling Ruby, Kaz Oshiro, Enrique Martinez Celaya, and other artists.

A Dream Within A Dream



TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
 And, in parting from you now,
 Thus much let me avow—
 You are not wrong, who deem
 That my days have been a dream;
 Yet if hope has flown away
 In a night, or in a day,
 In a vision, or in none,
 Is it therefore the less *gone*?
All that we see or seem
 Is but a dream within a dream.

THE EDITIONS

The set is composed of *Poe's Phantasia* and the companion volume *The Raven*. The former contains three sections: “Fantasies,” “Fantasias,” and “Fever Dreams,” each of which is introduced by a celebrated poem. This curated selection includes, among other classics, “The Tell-Tale Heart,” “The Pit and The Pendulum,” “The House of Usher” and the poems “The Bells” and “Annabel Lee.”

Each volume in the set is a large quarto, 12-1/8 x 9-1/8, *Poe's Phantasia* 176 pages and *The Raven* 32 pages, set in Monotype Van Dijck, with Legend handset for display. The nearly two dozen images for both volumes have been printed by offset lithography directly onto mouldmade Magnani Ingres and the metal types subsequently overprinted by letterpress.

Volumes in both the Fine Press and Deluxe editions are Smyth-sewn with headbands affixed. The main volume is bound in boards with gray paper sides and light blue cloth spines featuring a creeping ivy motif by the artist; *The Raven* volume is full-cloth with foil-stamped decorative titling. All copies of the edition are signed by the artist.

THE FINE PRESS EDITION

The Fine Press edition is limited to 250 copies for sale and 26 lettered copies *hors commerce*. A recess on the cover contains a portrait of Poe imprinted on custom made pulp paper ovals with inclusions and pigments of bricks excavated from Poe's home, now demolished. These are presented in handmade slipcases covered in full cloth with spine labels and more creeping ivy.

THE DELUXE EDITION

The Deluxe Edition is limited to 50 copies for sale and 6 printer's proofs. The cover recess of these special copies contains a three-dimensional paper cameo crafted by John Sullivan at Logos Graphics, San Francisco, from pulp that incorporates brick fragments and pigments. The cameo visage was reconstructed from a 3-D digital model prepared by a team at Virginia Commonwealth University from a plaster bust of Poe whose original bronze was sculpted by Edmond Thomas Quinn. The books are presented in lidded boxes that protect the bas-relief covers.

The Deluxe edition is accompanied by an additional color print of one of Frank's seven images for *The Raven*. These are reproduced in specialty acrylic inks at a larger scale than in the book on 14-3/4 x 11-1/8 inch Somerset and signed by the artist.

FACING:

“*A Dream Within A Dream*” facsimile page with gouache vignette by Natalie Frank.



Poe Vignettes

Original black and white gouache drawing,
22-½ x 30 inches on Fabriano smooth, signed.

Depicted are all of the vignettes included in *Poe's Phantasia*,
including additional imagery that does not appear in the book.



Drawing No. 5

Acrylic print on 250 gsm Somerset,
14-¾ x 11-⅛ inches, signed.

Deluxe edition copies are accompanied by an additional color print of
one of Frank's seven drawings for *The Raven*, shown above. These are
reproduced at a larger scale than in the book and signed by the artist.
Edition: 50 (sold together with Deluxe edition copies).

ORIGINAL ARTWORK

We are pleased to offer Frank's original drawing "Poe Vignettes" for sale: black and white gouache on Fabriano smooth, 22-½ x 30 inches. Depicted are all of the vignettes of *Poe's Phantasia*, including additional imagery that does not appear in the book. The drawing is signed and suitable for framing. Please inquire for pricing.



HOW TO ORDER

We reserve a copy of the Fine Press edition for each of our current Subscribers. Subscribers are also offered the first opportunity to order the Deluxe edition instead, at an additional charge. Pricing varies depending on the type of subscription and is generally 20-30% below the retail price.

A supplementary fee of \$2,055 will be charged to Annual Subscribers who elect to purchase the Deluxe edition. All other subscriptions are priced as follows—

FINE PRESS EDITION

250 copies, two volumes in slipcase
\$945 with Subscription (\$1,350 retail)

DELUXE EDITION

50 copies, two volumes in box with bas-relief and extra signed print
\$3,000 with Subscription (\$3,750 retail)

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