



Unorthodox will introduce Old Louisville to a whole new world

By [ELI KEEL](#) | April 29, 2016 8:45 am



Cathe Crabb with the devil squirrel | Photo by Eli Keel

“People keep telling me it’s super haunted down here. I don’t see anything yet, but you never know,” says Cathe Crabb during a recent interview with Insider Louisville.

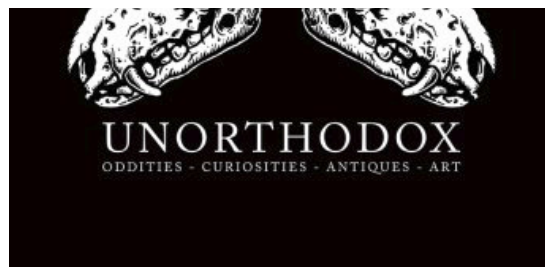
It might not be haunted, but even with sunlight coming through the window of her Old Louisville shop, **Unorthodox**, eight days before its grand opening — and even with many of the shelves still empty as Crabb preps the store between shifts of her regular job — there was a ghostly air, macabre and more than a little creepy.

For some, that would be a reason to stay away, but for the many Louisvillians who love the strange and unusual — those who are drawn to dark things like inverted moths — the many disconcerting sights inside this small shop would beckon



them to enter and see.

There's a dog heart in a glass case, suspended in the air as if floating. There is a deer tongue in a phial filled with viscous liquid. There is a peacock lording over the small jars containing unknown bones. There is a tiny taxidermy mouse, dressed in a witch's garb. And there is a devil squirrel, his eyes overly large, his fur red, with a wicked pair of horns affixed to his head.



Unorthodox opens Saturday at 1207 S. Sixth St.

Sadly, the devil squirrel is not for sale.

Those are just a few of the things visitors can see starting Saturday, April 30, when the store opens at 1207 S. Sixth St. But it's not all taxidermy and osteology.

"I kind a seek out things I find interesting, like the casket plaque that came from a retired funeral director," says Crabb as she gestures to a brass plate on an old oak table.

In the days before the store opens, some local artists like Dan Lerner and Kathleen Lolley will add pieces to display and sell. There is a little bit of a lot of different things.

"I got it boiled down to what's in the logo: oddities, curiosities, antiques, art," says Crabb, describing her oeuvre.

She can't place the beginning of her obsession with strange things. "It was kinda gradual, it just kinda came about," she says. But the history major recalls that even when she was in college, she already had certain predilections. "With history, I always liked the stranger stuff — odd history, things like that."

Crabb has been selling her wares at the [Flea Off Market](#) and The Cure Lounge's [Mischief Market](#). She says she made valuable connections, but those venues were not an ideal showcase for her pieces. "So much of the stuff is fragile. It's hard to, like, load it into the car." Crabb says some delicate things were occasionally broken in transport. A freak rainstorm also could easily destroy some of the more majestic taxidermy, like the peacock.

And that's when she stumbled upon the Old Louisville storefront.

Stuffed peacock? | Photo by Eli Keel

"I've always had an eye out for a perfect little space, and this kind of opened up suddenly," says Crabb of the Old Louisville location in a building that's 136 years old.

The individual oddities come from a variety of sources, though much of the newer taxidermy comes from her fellow odditer Kyle Howell. "It's kinda nice to have a pocket taxidermist," she says.

She's on a sleepy section of Sixth Street, but that portion of the long struggling

neighborhood might be just around the corner from a commerce boom. Recent businesses like [Coco's Cakes](#) and [The Seafood Lady](#) have gotten positive press, and with the opening of [Genscape](#) just a few blocks away, there might be an increase in local traffic.

Crabb enjoys her corner's current laid-back pace. "I love looking out the window and seeing houses and trees, and it's not really hard to find parking. And it's a tiny store, so it's not like it's gonna be overrun."

Still, she hopes to do plenty of business, though she quickly confesses the shop has yet to become a money maker. "I buy all this stuff with my work paycheck. I'm still in that thing where I have to work full time, but I'll be here on weekends, and hopefully it'll grow."

Crabb's plans don't end with
Unorthodox.

Let your curiosity run wild. | Photo by Eli Keel

"Eventually I'd like to have a little museum," she says, "to have a separate little space, because I don't wanna bring stuff in and be, like, 'That's not for sale.'"

Until there's a Louisville Oddity Museum, you can visit Crabb, the devil squirrel and all the rest starting Saturday, April 30.

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