

ALIEN

INSURRECTION

H.R.GIGER VS 20TH CENTURY FOX

BY NEIL JOHNSON

In cyberspace, can anyone hear you scream?

If so, 20th Century Fox should be getting an earful of objections to the exclusion of H.R. Giger's credit from the latest *Alien* film. The Swiss surrealist, whose creation is the cornerstone of the *Alien* franchise, gets not even a whisper of recognition for *Alien Resurrection*, the fourth in the stupendously successful series.

In response, Giger's fans are staging an *Alien* Insurrection on the artist's official website, <http://www.hrgiger.com>. Since going on-line in November, the site has received more than 1,000 e-mail messages from Giger's supporters around the world. Whether they're checking in from the US or Finland, Colombia or Korea, their outrage over Fox's failure to acknowledge Giger's contribution is universal.

"For me, the *Alien*/Giger relationship is a unit, and one cannot get the movie without the artist's creation," writes a fan from South Africa. "At the first showing here in RSA, I eagerly awaited to see Giger's name emblazoned somewhere on the screen. To my great disappointment, it never appeared. Needless to say, I am appalled by the actions of the responsible film studio."

Another message, this one from the United Kingdom, reads, "I would like to know what right Fox has to exclude and ignore a major reason for the *Alien* movies' success."

A representative of Fox declined to comment about the issue.

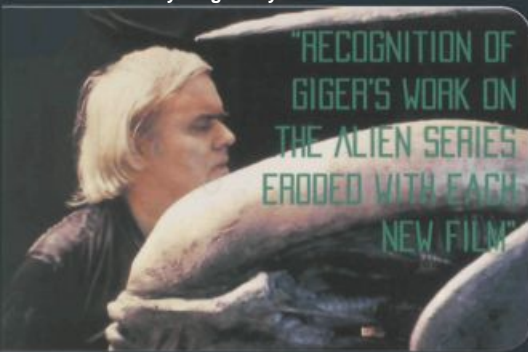
In the 19 years since the first *Alien* movie was released, Giger has been showered with undisputed acclaim as the person whose creations brought the film to life. In 1980, his visions of the creatures, the Alien planet and the derelict spacecraft with its mystery passenger won an Oscar for Best Visual Design.

Early in production of *Alien*, the film's screenwriter and co-producer, Dan O'Bannon showed director Ridley Scott a copy of Giger's just published, first book, *Necronomicon*. The artist had sent it to him personally—and directly from the printer's. It was the first copy to reach the United States. Although the text was in French, the artwork needed no translation. The space opera script had found its monster.

Scott admits this in the 1996 book, *H.R. Giger's Film Design*. "I immediately saw the potential his work had to offer the project," he writes.



Recalling that Giger wanted to design the creature from the ground up, Scott notes, "I was so impressed with his *Necronom IV* and *V* paintings from the *Necronomicon* book that I insisted he follow their form. I have never been so sure of anything in my life."



Photograph by Christian Alforer

Yet, recognition of Giger's work on the *Alien* series eroded with each new film. By the completion of the fourth picture, he had gone from receiving an Oscar to no mention at all, not even one buried so deep in the credits that only the usher sweeping up popcorn cups would see it.

Giger wasn't asked to participate in the second *Alien* film. At work in his Swiss studio, half a world away from Hollywood, he didn't even know the movie was being made.

"You can imagine Giger's surprise when we found out that the first sequel, *Aliens*, was well into production and we had not been informed," says Leslie Barany, Giger's agent. He did receive screen credit as creator of the original *Alien* design.



Photograph by Christian Alforer

When work began on a third film, Giger was hired to design new forms of the creature. However, the fact that he had actually been engaged to work on the film was not acknowledged in the credits. "Original Alien Design by H. R. Giger" was all that appeared on the screen, Barany, says, "which suggests to most people that he had no input on the film."

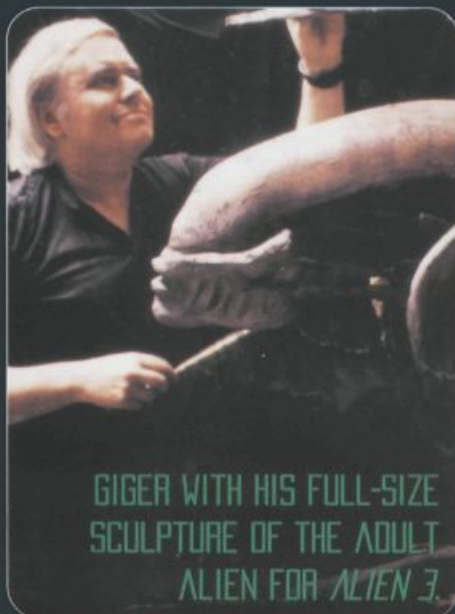
There's no denying that the visual image of the *Alien* was Giger's creation. In Fox's own film, *The Making of Alien 3*, Giger was given extensive credit for the genesis of the creature in the original movie that made the entire series such a hit.

"We really didn't think you could make this movie without having some kind of extraordinary ideas for the monster," producer/writer David Giler says in the promotional film.

Producer Gordon Carroll can be heard chiming in, "That's the first question you ask: 'Well, what is the alien going to look like?'"

Oddly, however, the promotional documentary makes no mention of Giger's work on *Alien 3* itself. He had been engaged to design an aquatic "Facehugger," baby Alien, adult Alien, and Alien skin. According to Barany, Giger completed his work in one month's time, building maquettes and delivering expensive drawings and full scale blueprints of his designs. At his own expense, he even made a full-size sculpture of his new adult Alien, which he offered to the studio for just the cost of the mold. The studio declined. Then, says Barany, they broke contact with Giger during production of the film. Giger had no idea he'd been exorcised from the end credits until a press screening of the movie.

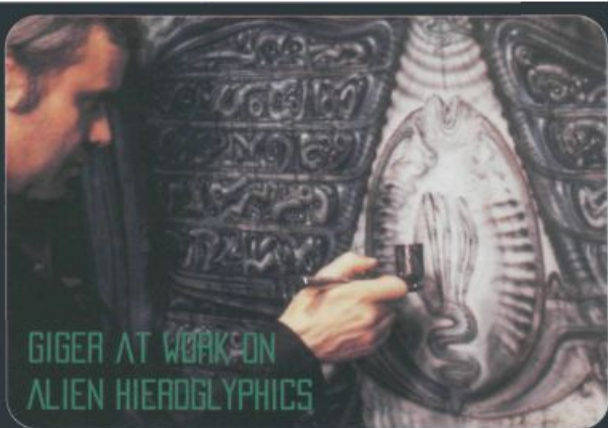
When Giger protested that there was not one word about his work in *Alien 3*, the studio said it was too late to change the film, posters and press materials. The best they could offer was to run ads in trade publications praising Giger's contributions to *Alien 3*. Giger rejected that.



Photograph by Christian Alforer



ALIEN HIEROGLYPHS ©1978 H.R. Giger



GIGER AT WORK ON
ALIEN HIEROGLYPHS

Photography by Mia Bonzanigo

Eventually, Fox agreed to undertake the costly process of reworking the master negatives so that Giger's credit could appear on laser disk and video releases. Ultimately, the main title credit stated what Giger had always been promised, in essence, in his contract—"Alien 3 Creature Design by H.R. Giger" The credit at the end of the film read: "Original Alien Design by H.R. Giger"

That was still too little and too late, according to Barany. Most people start rewinding videos before the credits roll. No one sees them, he says. Besides, the main impact of credits is in the theater, not the living room.

Worse yet, Giger didn't receive his second Oscar nomination because his name was never submitted as a member of the team that created the effects for *Alien 3*. According to Fox, the studio had no control over that. Submitting names for Academy Awards was up to the director.

This omission probably cost Giger money, his agent says. "Just getting a nomination is a tremendous boost in every category. Giger didn't work on another film until *Species* came along nearly five years later."

After all the 'wrangling over *Alien 3*, not mentioning Giger's contribution in connection with *Alien Resurrection* seems particularly baffling. With the dispute now in the hands of lawyers, Barany does not want to speculate on specifically why credit for Giger's designs was left out of the latest movie completely. However, part of the problem may go back to the original contract for *Alien*.

Back then, no one knew what a huge success the film, with the help of Giger's creatures, would become. Nobody guessed it would spawn three sequels. "It was before the era of sequels," Barany says. "And certainly, none were planned for this movie." After all, the monster died at the end. Now a whole slew of legal questions could be raised about rights and credits stemming from the fairly simple contract Giger agreed to for the first film.

Giger simply wants the recognition due him and its potential financial rewards, Barany points out. He isn't after glory for its own sake or another go-round in the celebrity spotlight. Even a prestigious award like the Oscar can have an adverse effect on one's fine art career, Giger discovered.

"It was something special, but later I realized it would be better to have a prize as a painter," Giger says in an interview for NBC Europe. In his book *Necronomicon II*, Giger writes; "After *Alien I* did not work on movies anymore. I like to be a painter. But one cannot paint and shoot movies at the same time, because as soon as one works on a movie one stops being an artist in the eyes of the public."



Some people look down on an artist who does work for movies, Giger noted in the NBC Europe interview. For a time, museums stopped buying his work. And when he did exhibit, his celebrity as the creator of the *Alien* began to overshadow the artwork he'd spent years developing. At galleries and other art world events, the press only wanted to interview him, not the other artists. "That was terribly embarrassing," he says. "There were other people around."

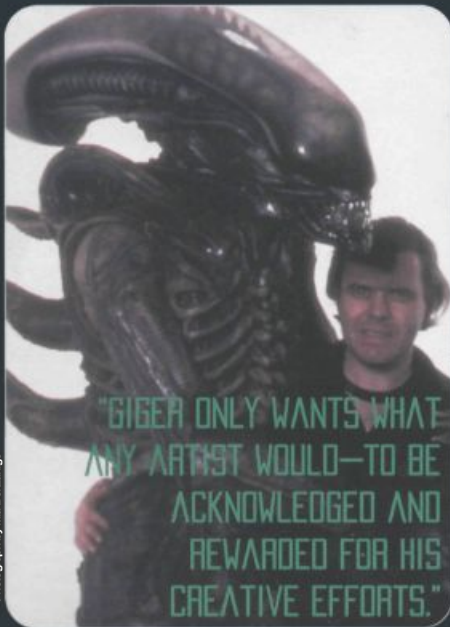
Despite his film work, Giger is primarily a fine artist, Barany says. "Giger was being shown in galleries and selling all his paintings long before *Alien*. In any given month of the year, there's a Giger exhibition going on somewhere."

When it comes to the *Alien* films, Giger only wants what any artist would—to be acknowledged and rewarded for his creative efforts. "He expects credit where credit is due," Barany says.

Reaction on the Internet has been profoundly in Giger's favor and may be causing a possible backlash against Fox.

"I have just a word about that: SHAME... I won't go to see the movie," writes a fan from Italy, echoing the sentiments of many on the website.

"I wish to add my voice to the many fans of the *Alien* films who know that these movies would be nothing without the brilliant and haunting designs of H.R. Giger," writes a supporter from Korea. "If Twentieth Century Fox wishes to maintain the series and the income it creates, it had best do everything in its power to draw Mr. Giger back into its studios."



TO ADD YOUR VOICE TO THE ALIEN INSURRECTION,
VISIT THE OFFICIAL GIGER WEBSITE AT
WWW.HRGIGER.COM.

WWW HR GIGER COM

By: Craig Fraser

"Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the book store . . ."

Although this opening comment may seem a little melodramatic, it does capture the general feeling of fear and uncertainty that attracts many of us to the macabre. The dark side of life may frighten us straight to the core of our souls, yet we still find it oddly compelling. That's certainly the case for the bizarre, forbidding biomechanical art created by H. R. Giger. Those of you familiar with his fantastical works will be happy to hear that he's published a new compilation book; the most comprehensive of his books currently in print.

Already a renowned artist throughout Europe, Hans Rudi Giger (it's pronounced Geeger), gained worldwide fame in 1980 when he won an Academy Award for his creative work on the visual effects in the movie, *Alien*, and his design of the film's title character—or creature, if you will. His new book is titled *www HR Giger com*, also the internet address for one of his two official websites. The other, *www.giger.com*, is parented by Morpheus International, his US publisher.

Smaller in dimension than his other print books, *www HR Giger com* actually fits on a standard bookshelf. However, with 235 pages of color photographs, prints, and biographical information, the volume's diverse, detailed content more than makes up for its conveniently reduced size. I highly recommend it as a jump-off point for the as yet uninitiated to discover the artist and his work. It is also ideal for the seasoned connoisseur of art-biomechanical. With many previously unpublished photos and prints of his earlier works, *www HR Giger com* fills in gaps left by previous books, making it an excellent addition to anyone's Gigeresque arsenal.

I was fascinated by the book's coverage of the interior designs and furniture work that Giger has been involved with over the years. While earlier books have taken a peek at this avenue for Giger's talent, none have provided as many details on actual buildings, furniture, or preliminary designs. It also gives a refreshing update of pieces that were mere concepts in Giger's last book, *Necronomicon II*. Several architectural works in progress are featured—the much anticipated Giger Museum, opening in Grye'res, Switzerland in May 2000, the "Schlossbahn" HRG Bar in the same complex, and the Giger Zodiac fountain.



Another area highlighted in the new book is Giger's "Watch Abart" exhibit of biomechanical sculpture-art that is both beautiful and horrific in its extraordinary use of wristwatch images. The "nightmare train" prop from the movie, *Species*—and the focus of Giger's *Species* book—takes on a whole new perspective when viewed here as an operating attraction in HRG's personal garden. Stunning color pictures give a trains-eye-view of the nightmarish landscape he has created.

The vast variety of material contained in *www HR Giger com* definitely captures the artist's wide range of ability and the broad scope of his talent. The book is no more and no less than what you would expect from a man whose identities include Artist, Sculptor, Oscar winner, and father of the most frightening movie creatures and visual effects to ever reach the silver screen. Like it or leave it, HR Giger has had, and with this book, will continue to have a huge impact on individual airbrush artists and our industry as a whole.

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H.R. Giger



Barry Jackson



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H.R. Giger is the creator of one of the best known and most successful science fiction creatures ever to chill movie audiences—the title character in the film. *Alien*. In addition to the horrific creature itself, the Swiss artist designed the landscape of the alien's planet and the interior and exterior of the ancient, egg-laden spacecraft Ripley and her crew discovered. The "face hugger" and gruesome "chest burster" also sprang from his imagination. And in 1980, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences rewarded his efforts with an Oscar for best visual effects.

Although everyone believed that the creature, which died at the end of the movie, would be the villain of a single film. Giger's *Alien* spawned three sequels. It has become a horror movie icon as well known as King Kong or Godzilla.

While Giger's work on the *Alien* movies brought him celebrity, he has also earned worldwide accolades for many of the other haunting, inventive and groundbreaking works he's created throughout his career. Giger's true trademark is his "biomechanical" style, a dark, looming mixture of machinery and nature that is instantly recognizable and emulated by artists everywhere.