

IMAGI-MOVIES

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SPRING, 1994

CINEMAGINATION

"True beauty has terror in it," says Connors, the Irish sea captain in James M. Cain's *Serenade*—a quotation I mention by way of explaining the common thread running between this issue's two main features, which might otherwise seem ill-suited for each other. On one hand, H. R. Giger, of "Alienated," reveals beauty in terror; on the other, Lisa Temming, in "Haunt Couture," adds terror to beauty.

On a more prosaic level, the Giger piece examines another of Hollywood's ill-fated attempts to utilize the Swiss surrealist, whose work so far has been filmed to best advantage in *ALIEN*. If you saw Giger's credit in the theatrical prints of *ALIEN*³ or read articles in *Cinefex*, you probably got the impression that the film merely re-used his original *ALIEN* designs—a misconception perpetuated by every other magazine to cover the film. We document the real story, including faxes from David Fincher promising Giger total control over his creation—a promise which, alas, proved as substantial as a contractual agreement with Kim Bassinger.

"Haunt Couture" is our first fashion layout; given positive response, we may do more. Of course, you might be asking, "Why in *Imagi-Movies* instead of *Femme Fatales*?" Well, when I first suggested having genre actresses model this genre-inspired attire, the FF response was: "How revealing are the dresses?" Apparently, there is a concern that readers are interested only in lingerie-clad press kittens. Perhaps I'm naive, but I refuse to believe this. Not that I have moral objections to nudity, but many actresses feel, quite rightly, that they should not be required to remove clothing in exchange for publicity. We should respect this stance and profile them anyway. Part of our goal is to spotlight worthy talent, even if it isn't famous. This pictorial, accompanied by interviews with designer and actresses, is a splendid opportunity to do just that.

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Giger sets

By Les Paul Robley

On July 28th, 1990, Swiss surrealist H.R. Giger was approached for the second time to redesign his creature for ALIEN 3. Giger's services had previously been solicited by producer Gordon Carroll during Vincent Ward's ill-fated tenure as director, but the artist had not been available at that time. Next, David Fincher, the third director assigned to the troubled production, visited Giger in Switzerland, accompanied by Fred Zinnemann. Although the artist was not offered a script, which was constantly being rewritten, he accepted the offer, believing he would have total freedom to improve upon his creations and rectify some qualitatively inferior details from ALIENS (on which he had not worked). Giger was supposed to rethink the life forms from ALIEN, providing an aquatic face-hugger, a chest-burster, the Alien skin, and a four-legged version of the adult Alien. Because of his former close collaboration with Ridley Scott, Giger believed he would have the same kind of relationship with Fincher.

During the initial meeting, Fincher showed "some sketches made by people who would be responsible for the 'execution' of the work," Giger recalls. "These looked rather like a bird. There was no similarity to the Alien, and they were far from my ideas." Although Fincher would insist that Giger not feel restricted by such "reference points," adding, "We want you to feel free to give your Giger all," Giger now recognizes this as the first indica-

Giger's fantastic artwork for DEAD STAR (see Page 16), one of many unrealized projects to earn him the title "designer of development hell."

ALIENATED

the record straight on designing ALIEN 3.

tion that his was not the only design input being solicited.

The artist was employed for one month, faxing drawings to Pinewood Studios, England, where production was taking place. Fincher would fax comments back to Zurich (see *quotes*), where Giger could make adjustments. Giger adjusted his style for fax transmissions, which could not do justice to his famed airbrush technique. "For ALIEN 3 I started working in black-and-white with a Rapidograph drawing pen," he told journalist Jan Doense. "The various tones of gray in my drawings are conceived by drawing small stripes—the more, the darker. I think the fax machine is a great invention. I hardly have to leave my house anymore! So when I go to bed around 6:00 a.m., after having worked all night, I can transmit that night's work from my bedroom. So for the moment, the airbrush is out of work, but this is bound to change, because people keep asking me for it."

Though given little time, Giger came up with interesting improvements. "I worked like crazy on it," he now recalls. "I had special ideas to make it more interesting. I designed a new creature, which was much more elegant and beastly, compared to my original. It was a four-legged Alien, more like a lethal feline—a panther or something. It had a kind of skin that was built up from other creatures—much like a symbiosis. The skin was designed to produce musical tones; it had valves like a saxophone clap. How the Alien felt would be accompanied by sound."

The artist was perplexed, however, when Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis of Amalgamated Dynamics, the company re-



The original ALIEN remains the only film which utilized Giger as more than a concept artist, allowing him on set to realize his designs to his own satisfaction.

sponsible for the execution of the creature, said on the telephone that they had their own design. Giger, who received an Oscar for his original Alien creation, believed his only concern was the interpretation approved by the film's director, which was then supposed to be executed as precisely as possible. "The Alien has been my baby, so when I was asked to change the creature into a less humanoid beast, I hoped that my decisions would be done without other ideas," he complains. "I was naive about Hollywood. I thought, since I got an Oscar for my Alien, it would be me who gave advice on how it would look. When Woodruff and Gillis said they had their own ideas, I was very upset. They said that they liked my work and might use some of my sketches but that they would make their own interpretation. When I heard that Fincher listened to them more than to me, I wondered why."

In an interview with Mark Burman in England, Fincher said of his involvement with Giger: "We worked with him and used as much of his input and ideas as we could...More importantly, we thought: How can we make this thing scary again? On the second film they compromised on the actual mechanics of each of the creatures and made it more like a bunch of pissed-off Jacques Cousteaus. It worked because of the sheer scale and how little you saw of these fleeting glimpses in the strobes of the machine guns firing. We really wanted to do something that was more elegant and simple."

Once all of Giger's designs were submitted, the production severed contact, apparently under pressure to meet the film's rapidly approaching start



DEAD STAR

This black hole led Giger into development hell.

By Dennis Fischer

With DEAD STAR, director William "Bill" Malone hoped to create the first space epic of the '90s on a mere \$10 million budget; instead, he appears to have taken Hans Rudi Giger on another trip into the black hole of development hell. Backed by a talented team, which also included production designer Michael Novotney (GRAND TOUR) and low-budget special effects artists *par excellence* Robert and Dennis Skotak (ALIENS), Malone's brainchild centered around a black hole which could be a gateway for mankind to span the galaxy or a portal through which the legions of hell were unleashed.

Malone originally had planned to follow-up his ALIEN-

Malone's own design for the alien temple incorporated the "Thanatron" device designed by Giger.



inspired efforts SCARED TO DEATH with CREATURE with THE MIRROR [CFQ 18:4:32], a project based on Giger's book *Necronomicon*, which provided preproduction images for the world beyond the Mirror. The project was given a start date by Orion Pictures, but after George Romero's MONKEY SHINES failed at the boxoffice, the project was canceled; the reason given was that "horror films don't make money."

"It didn't work out, and perhaps that's just as well," Giger philosophizes. "It would have cost a lot of money to do it well, but Bill Malone usually makes his films on very small budget, and I couldn't think of a way to do this film as a low-budget production. He dropped by around Christmas [1990] and asked me to poster design for a science fiction film called DEAD STAR—sort of a HELLRAISER in space. I also did some production designs for the film, which I sent to him by fax. Frankly, I did it out of friendship, because Bill is such a nice person."

Giger's friendship with the director extends back to the time when Malone, while making monster masks for Don Post Studios, was sent to cover ALIEN. The pair developed a rapport based on a shared interest in sculpture and design. As a result, after the aborted MIRROR, Malone brought the talented and outre artist into his plans for his horror-in-space picture, the premise of which is that mankind encounters an alien machine capable of literally taking him to hell. "We actually meet



Giger's version of the devil, conceived for Malone's "HELLRAISER in space"...

the devil in space," was Malone's description. "The premise is that once somebody dies, his soul goes to an actual place, another dimension, and you can get there, physically, by using this machine."

DEAD STAR was to be set in 2239, when a starship commander named Tennison absconds with a spaceship to track down a demented archaeologist who murdered his wife. "The expedition finds an alien machine capable of reanimating the dead and transporting them to Hell," according to Malone. "One side effect is that you start having terrible, nightmarish hallucinations, so

the hero thinks he's losing his mind and doesn't realize this machine is generating these images."

Malone himself made extensive contributions to the production design: "I designed the spaceship interior. I worked with Giger on the design, although I don't want to take away from his work. We definitely worked closely. He's come up with some marvelous stuff, things nobody else would have ever thought of. Giger, of course, designed everything in the Hellish world. We asked him to design the demon in the picture and a few other elements, and he sent us

This early concept for one of DEAD STAR'S many demonic visions, unleashed by the Thanatron device, was painted by director Malone himself.



"This looks great! Finally, we are all excited again. We want you to feel free to give your all...I am doing everything in my power to ensure you have control over your creation."

date. Despite this, Giger continued to fax suggestions to Fincher because of his enthusiasm for the project. Working with longtime collaborator Cornelius de Fries, a specialist in model construction, Giger built maquettes based on his drawings. At his own initiative, he made a full-size, seven-foot sculpt of the Alien. He offered it to the production just for the cost of pulling the mold, not charging for his time; the offer was declined. Then a short film was shot for reference and accuracy, but the production did not want that, either.

At the time, Giger referred to such situations as "frustrating," adding, "for my own satisfaction, I made some life-size drawings based on the modifications I did on the creature. Hopefully, they will be published by the Dark Horse Company in a signed and numbered edition, as a portfolio. Thus, one will be able to compare my designs with those used for the film. You know, I think filmmakers are always afraid to collaborate with artists like me, because they think we will cause them trouble. Whereas I just want to be creative. Nevertheless, I'm looking forward to the finished film.

Giger's close working relationship with Ridley Scott on *ALIEN* misled him into believing he would have a similar relationship with David Fincher on *ALIEN 3*.



And don't get me wrong, I do hope it will be a success."

What Giger did not realize then (because he had not been told) was that ADI had been contracted during Ward's term not only for the execution of the new Alien but for its design as well. "David Fincher neglected to inform me that Woodruff and Gillis were also contracted to take care of the redesign of the Alien—I found out much later," Giger recounts. "I thought I had the job and that Woodruff and Gillis would work from my plans. On their side, they were convinced that it was their job and accepted my 'suggestions' with pleasure. They believed that all my effort was based on a huge love for the matter, because I worked hard even after my contract was over. Today, I am convinced that it was a game by Fincher to keep both sides happy and obtain the maximum for his movie."

Looking back, Giger believes that Fincher, a newcomer to the franchise, ultimately relied on advice from Woodruff and Gillis because of their experience with Stan Winston on *ALIENS*. "I can understand that they would not have wanted me as their 'boss'—I know



Director David Fincher discusses a scene with the noticeably bipedal man-in-a-suit, ADI's Tom Woodruff.

it's probably not everybody's wish to work with me," he laughs. "Because they worked longer on it, they could do their own things, so it was not necessary after the first month to engage me any more."

As a result, what reached the screen did not fully utilize Giger's work. "I wish Ridley Scott had come back. He had said to me, 'If we ever do another, you'll create a new monster.' Working with him would have been wonderful—not a man with no experience," he laments. "They told me that the Alien this time would be intelligent; it would be special. But, in the end, it was just a slimy creature."

During principal photography, ADI abandoned Giger's four-legged version of the Alien and instead opted for an upright-walking man-in-a-suit approach, as in the original film. Also abandoned was the spectacular first appearance Giger devised for the creature. Dubbed the "Bamburster," the newborn Alien was originally to burst from an ox and wobble unsteadily on all fours, like a fawn. Unfortunately, scenes filmed by ADI

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...one of his many unused designs.

reams of drawings and stuff which were great—he drew everything from the spaceship that the *good* guys were using to things we never even dreamed of having him design."

To bring Giger's two-dimensional drawing to three-dimensional "life," Malone planned to bring him to the set to work on the material himself, which he was quite willing to do. Malone considered Giger's own textual values essential in order to obtain the proper look, both fascinating and believable. Giger's only hands-on experience in a major film remains *ALIEN*; subsequent projects, like *POLTERGEIST II* and *ALIEN 3*, have failed to fully realize his designs on film.

"Giger has come up with some really remarkable ideas for this picture, things nobody's ever seen before," Malone enthused at the time. "In fact, I spent 10 days with him in Switzerland, and he would have so many ideas that you had to keep slowing him down. 'Giger, please, let's concentrate on this one,' because he would throw out so many ideas that a few would get lost in the shuffle—you had to grab them while they were still there." •

Quotes from H.R. Giger provided by Jan Doense.



ALIEN EFFECTS

ADI claims to have redesigned Giger's Alien.

By Tim Prokop

Central to director David Fincher's concept for ALIEN 3 was the premise that the Alien take on some of the characteristics of its host. It was initially planned that the Alien would develop within an ox, but this was later changed to a dog. As a result, the Alien that terrorizes Fiorina 161 is a quadruped, equally at home on both two and four legs.

The task of realizing the new Alien and showing its evolution from birth to maturity fell

ADI's immobile mechanical version of the new Alien, which was used for close-ups of the drooling head.



to Tom Woodruff and Alec Gillis of Amalgamated Dynamics Incorporated (ADI), who had been key members of Stan Winston's effects team for ALIENS.

"The Alien was so well known that there wasn't a lot we could do with it except try to make it look even more alien than in the first two films," explains Woodruff. "Most of our changes were stylistic, because we really wanted to go back to the original paintings and designs for Giger, which hadn't been fully realized."

Giger's paintings tap into something that's frightening and at the same time very fascinating," adds Gillis. "Things like car parts and mechanical features are integrated loosely into his original designs for the Alien, and I think this weird combination of human, machine, and bone is one of the things that makes it so unique and terrifying. We tried to suggest these same shapes, but in a very organic way."

Gillis and Woodruff were in London preparing for the film when they were surprised by a telephone call from Zurich. "When we were told it was Giger on the line, we really didn't know what to expect," says Woodruff. "We'd been fans of his work for years, but we'd heard a lot about him being temperamental, and we didn't know whether he liked or hated what we did on ALIENS. We didn't know if he was calling to congratulate or abuse



Lane Liska (standing) and Craig Talmy puppeteer the agile, panther-like version of the Alien added in post-production by Richard Edlund's Boss Film.



us," Woodruff laughs. "As it turned out, he couldn't have been nicer."

Gillis concurs, "The Alien is Giger's baby, and he was calling to find out what we planned. After that we stayed in contact and he faxed through drawings and ideas that proved very helpful when

we were deciding how the Alien was going to develop. We all seemed to be on the same wavelength in terms of the direction in which we were taking the character."

One example of this is the decision to dispense with the long extensions of bone that had adorned the Alien's back

in the first two films. Woodruff and Gillis made the decision to remove the "tailpipes" for practical reasons, because with the Alien on all fours, they interfered with the movement of the head. The day they made this decision they received another call from Giger. "He called to say that he hoped we'd get rid of the tailpipes. He'd just put them there to break up the human form of the suit and had never liked them. It was a very welcome coincidence."

The suits for ALIEN 3, which were worn by Woodruff, were created absolutely skin-tight to prevent any wrinkles or bulges that might betray their foam latex origins. For the same reason, there were no zippers or flaps on the body section, which meant that Woodruff would sometimes go up to 10 hours at a stretch without being able to relieve himself. Woodruff, a veteran suit performer, accepted the hardship as an essential part of ADI's effort to create a truly classic screen monster.

The scenes where the Alien rampages through the flaming prison complex were among the most difficult that Woodruff had to perform. Gillis recalls, "They laid down a lot of flame bars, and at times it got so hot that the slime was evaporating right off Tom's suit. A couple of times we had to call a stop and pour cold water over him to stop the heat from penetrating. To supplement the suit, a striking head with the inner jaw operated by a pneumatic ram was created for close ups of the Alien's attack on its victims, while the task of creating an Alien that could stand up to a wider camera angle fell to the special effects experts at Boss Film Studios, under the supervision of four-time Oscar winner Richard Edlund.

Woodruff and Gillis created a mould for a 40-inch (1/8th scale) Alien rod puppet, which was cast in foam at Boss. An armature made from bicycle chain was installed to provide directional, easily controlled movement for each limb. Laine Liska, a former stop-motion animator, was chosen as lead puppeteer because of his experience at creating life-like

API ON GIGER'S INPUT

"Giger's main influence on us was through his work on ALIEN. We really wanted to go back to his original paintings and designs, which hadn't been fully realized."



Bill Hedge, one of the Boss Film puppeteers, introduces actress Sigourney Weaver to the miniature version of Ripley's newest Alien antagonist.

movement. Two weeks of intensive testing allowed Liska to determine the best arrangement to operate the puppet.

"We initially tried it with the body of the Alien on motion control, but it moved more like a bunny rabbit than an alien," explains Liska. "It really started working when we started doing everything by hand, including running the puppet along a ramp so it covered distance as it moved."

Liska adds, "Most of the time there were four of us working the puppet—one person on the front legs, another on the back legs, another operating the tail and me on the head and the torso. For the upside down shots of the Alien on the ceiling we had to have a person for each limb, so there were six of us clustered around this little puppet, all moving as fast as we could."

To create longer shots of the Alien in motion, the puppeteers sat in a dolly, which

was pushed along as they ran the Alien down an adjacent platform. "The puppet worked best when we were going as fast as the guys pushing us could run, because that's when we started to get those slight imperfections that are part of nature," says Liska.

When it came to deciding precisely how the Alien would move through any given scene there was no shortage of suggestions from Fincher. "He suggested a lot of different animals for us to copy, often in combination because he wanted it to move like something from another world," recalls Liska. "He wanted the running to be very predatory, very cougar-like and at other times he wanted it to move more spidery, almost like an insect."

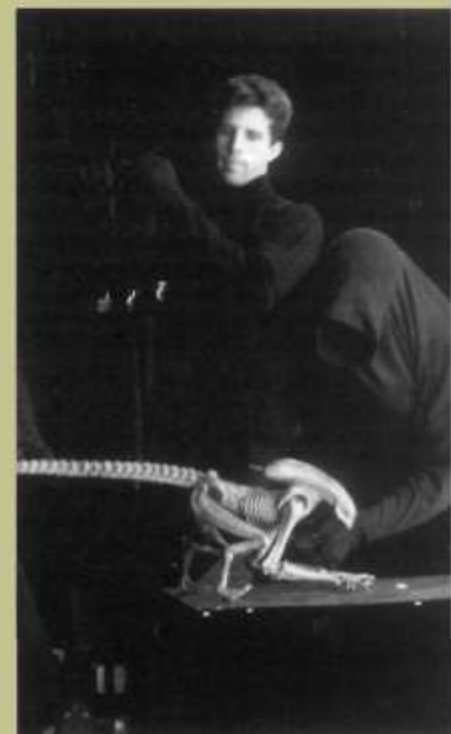
"One of the advantages of doing it with puppetry is that we were able to create lots of versions in the same set-up, where with CGI and stop-motion you're more restricted to a

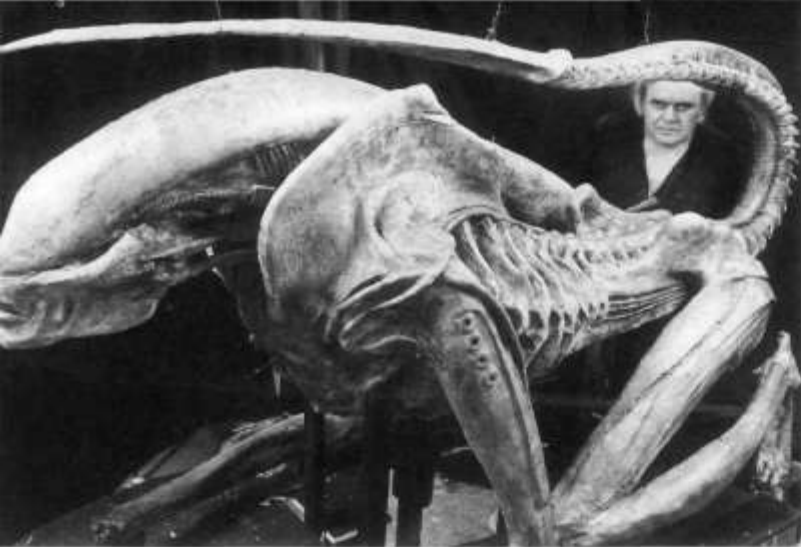
single finished product. We sometimes did as many as 60-70 takes of a single scene, with Fincher directing the puppet just like it was an actor."

An instant playback system allowed the puppeteers and the director to see how effectively the puppet was integrated into the live action which had already been shot. Liska explains, "We double exposed the puppet over the principal photography to give us a feeling for how it was moving through a scene, how fast it was going and whether it was floating or in contact with the surfaces around it. We could tell right away whether it was locked in and make immediate adjustments if it wasn't."

When Fincher had a version he was happy with the rods were removed by roto-scoping and the puppet was optically composited to the scene. Digital effects supervisor Jim Rygiel then used computers to add the shadows that place the Alien firmly within the scene. Woodruff is particularly pleased with the end result. "I think we came very close to Giger's original designs in terms of making the Alien look real," he enthuses. "And together with Boss Film we were able to make it act real."

Puppeteers often wore black velvet to make the Alien easier to roto-scope into the final composite.





Above: Giger's quadruped ALIEN 3 sculpture. Below: Boss Films' post-production puppet. ADI calls the similarity of design a "welcome coincidence."



were dropped. Fincher and crew tried many techniques, including CGI enhancement by Richard Edlund's Boss Film, until what ended up on screen was only a quick cut.

In a letter to 20th Century-Fox, Giger's agent, Leslie Barany, stated, "That not all of Giger's ideas were implemented in the final film was their, perhaps mistaken, decision.

Equally, [it was] their decision not to take advantage of Giger's availability to work on-set with the Visual Effects team, as it was specified by the contract. It was, perhaps, for these reasons that much of Messrs. Woodruff and Gillis's design 'improvements' and effects had to be trashed and that Mr. Woodruff himself had to slip into the Alien suit to

GIGER VIA FAX TO FINCHER

"I am incessantly working out the details of ALIEN 3, which I do not want to withhold from you. Although I am not asked to go on with my work, please accept my design."

bring it to life, in spite of all the early assertions that it would be an unacceptable solution."

Noted Fincher: "We did what we had time to do, and we had a lot more interesting ideas that we would have liked to do...and we ran out of money. Unfortunately, when you have no prep time you spend a lot of money on stuff that never gets shot or does get shot and isn't properly thought out. It never moved quite as quickly as I wanted it to. But we wanted it to be fast and big and powerful and *dumb*." (This, of course, runs contrary to what Fincher had told Giger via fax: "The creature is a...mixture of intelligence, curiosity, and viciousness.")

After 18 months, the film finally neared its summer 1992 theatrical release date. When Fox in Geneva organized a screening for Giger's friends and co-workers, the artist was horrified by the credit he saw on the screen, which was not the one specified in his contract. "In the contract it states exactly how I should be credited, and this was a mistake," Giger says regretfully. "They break the contract because they're saying in

the movie that it's only 'original design by Giger' and not ALIEN 3, so it looks like I didn't work on it."

Immediately a letter was written to Fox, Geneva, who made no attempt to clear up the matter with Fox, L.A. Their comment was: "All press materials and posters have already been produced, so it would be too late for changes now." Then, after a second screening for the press on September 3, 1992, Giger realized that his name was also missing from the movie's end credits.

As a way of correcting the mistake, Fox at first suggested purchasing trade ads, congratulating Giger's work on ALIEN 3—a suggestion Giger rejected. Later, on the grounds that they valued their relationship with the temperamental artist, the studio relented, promising to go back and make expensive changes to the master negative of the film, even though the prints had already been shipped. Credits on the laserdisk and videocassette copies now reads: "Original Alien Design by H.R. Giger," with the additional "Alien 3 Creature Design by H.R. Giger." His credit lies between the line mentioning Edlund for "Visual Effects", and Gillis and Woodruff for "Alien Effects."

But it was too late to correct the impression left with those who had seen the film in theatres. "I got a lot of publicity on the first movie, but when ALIEN 3 was here, I remarked that nobody made any interviews with me," Giger says. "It was then I realized that I was not in the film as ALIEN 3 designer! Mr. Fincher never gave me any credit. That did not just happen; it was made to happen. I never heard from the man responsible, and I don't know why he did it."

Even press releases limited Giger's involvement to the con-

Giger's maquette of the abandoned version of the newborn "Bambi-burster," so called because of its awkward stance.





BIOMECHANICAL WATERING HOLE

The Giger Bar puts you in the artist's work.

By Les Paul Robley

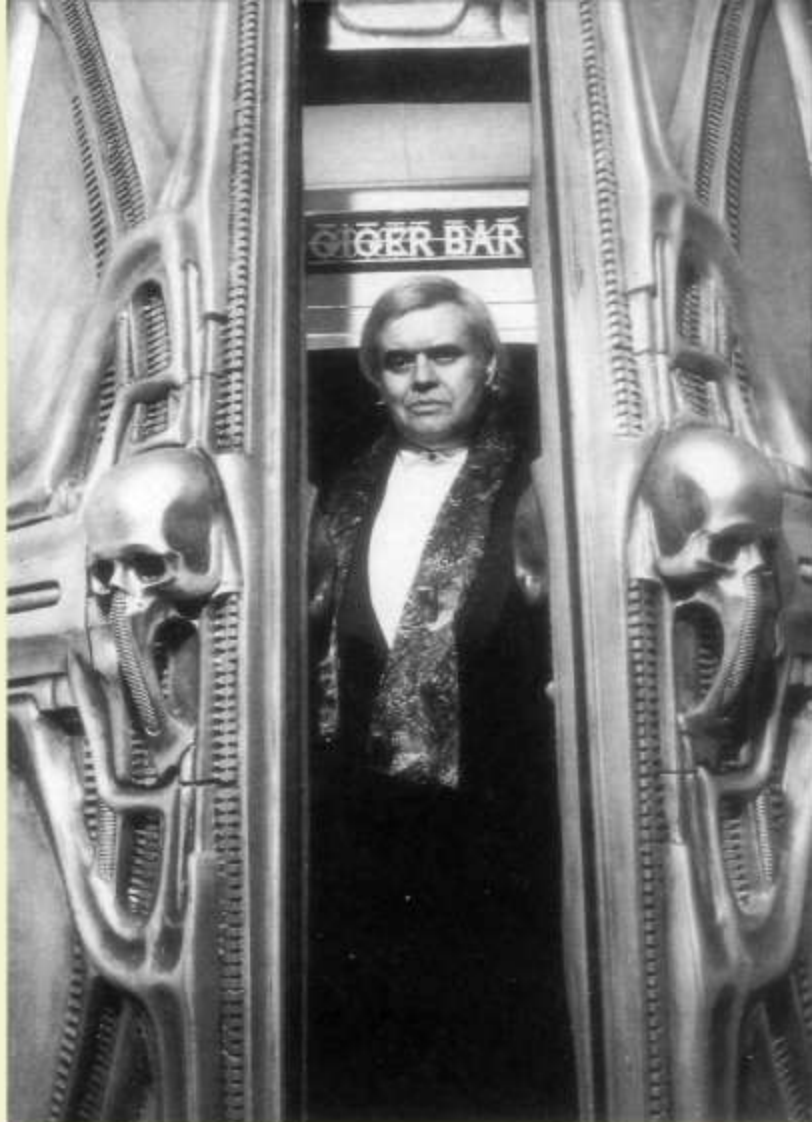
The Giger Bar, located in the artist's hometown of Chur (pronounced 'Koor'), sits unobtrusively below the Alps in the unlikely domain of the Kalchbühl Center Mall. Opened in February 1992, the "bar of the fantastique" was built by city architect Thomas Domenig, based on furniture designed by Giger himself. Stepping inside for a drink is akin to hopping aboard the Alien mothership: customers sit in Baron Harkonnen-type chairs (from Alexandra Jodorowsky's unproduced version of DUNE) which look imposing but are strangely comfortable; white death masks spy on drinkers from beneath the counter; silkscreens of famous Giger landscapes rest beneath clear tabletops; ALIEN lithos adorn

the high walls, and a maze of hieroglyphic aluminum floor plates greet each visitor's step.

The idea stemmed from a four-level version constructed in Japan by fans of the artist in 1988. "The Japanese are fans of fantastique art," Giger says. "The Vienna School of Fantastique Art is very well-known in Japan. They have a special sense for cruelty I'm horrified about. They asked me what I would like, and I said, 'A bar...Why not a bar!' And as soon as I got home they built something almost overnight."

Giger wasn't satisfied with the Tokyo version due to the inadequate rendering of his designs, which he termed, "wet spaghetti," adding, "I was horrified at first. I've never seen it finished. They made everything smaller and changed the dimensions to small uncomfort-

The Giger Bar is not a museum with the artist's paintings adorning the walls; rather, the very decor of the bar itself is the artwork.



Alien designer H.R. Giger stands in the entrance of the Swiss bar-restaurant that bears his name. Giger would like to design a similar venue in New York.

able seats. I've heard a lot of mafia [Yakuza] go there because it's a labyrinth. I prefer the one in Chur because everything is my stuff."

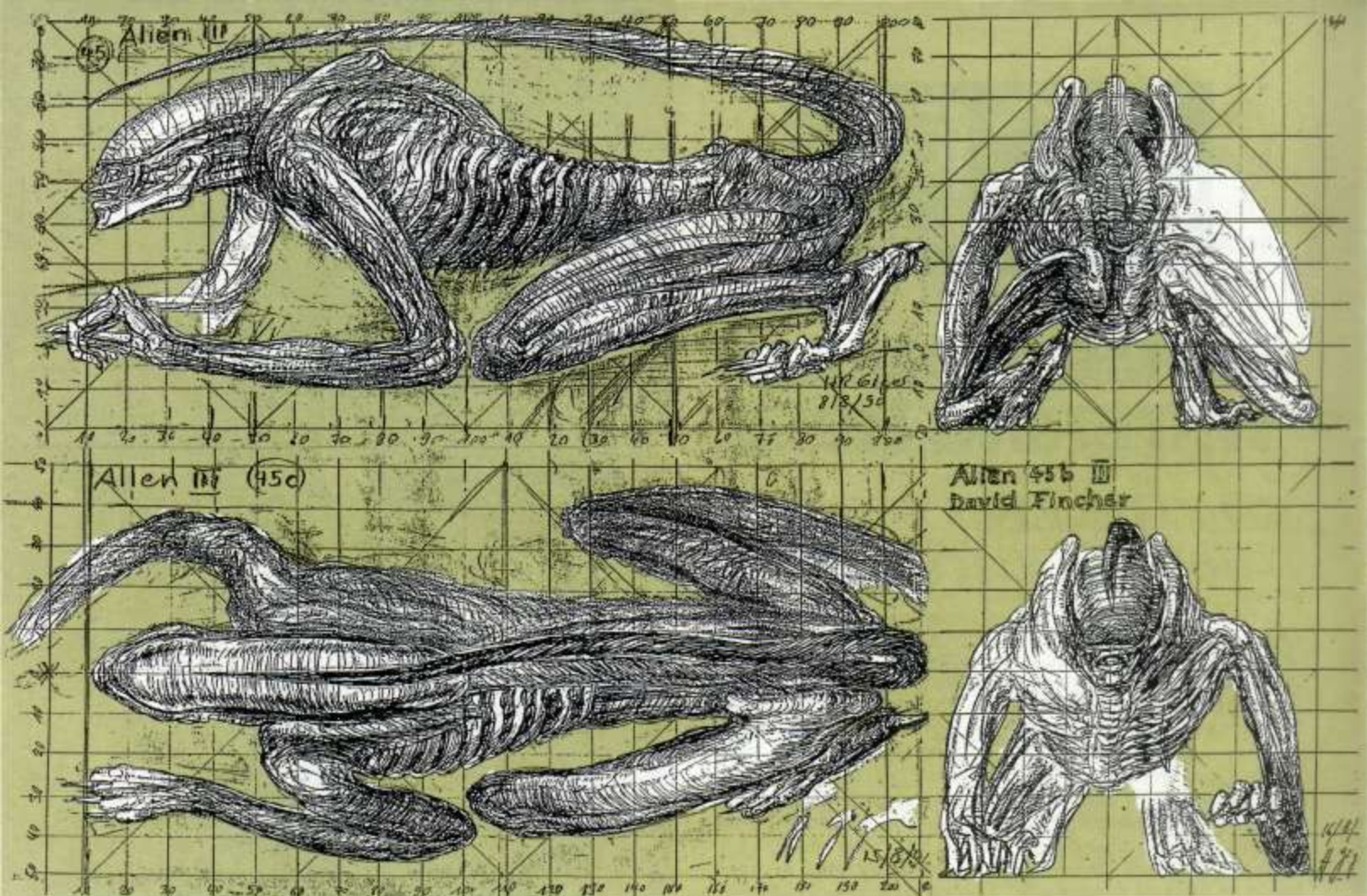
Although Giger has no financial interest in the restaurant-bar in Switzerland, he does have a personal interest. "I did it to realize some new designs," he says. "Herr Domenig, an old friend who's an architect in Chur, was building a shopping complex, and there was a place for a coffee shop. So, we planned this bar. I didn't take money—I worked free—but now I have the bar the way I want it. Unlike ALIEN 3 and the movies I've been involved with in general, this Giger Bar is exactly as I designed it, and the final execution has made me very happy. It's not at all like the Tokyo bar where, again, others interpreted my designs very freely. The light is not okay and several things are not perfect, but the inside looks

better than the one in Tokyo. People like it very much."

Giger would like to design a similar club in New York City, if he would be able to realize it the way he would like. "Sex and death for me are so integrated," he adds, concerning erotic art and his preoccupation with dead babies and phallic symbols. "I'm mystified why other people aren't doing it. That's a very important part of life: death."

Even the rest room bears the unmistakable imprint of the artist.





"We need to see it in 3 dimensions...but barring any problems, I'd say you're finished," wrote Fincher of Giger's design, before the production cut off all contact.

text of the first film. The 20-minute American promotional films, sent to Giger by his agent, gave the impression that he had worked only on ALIEN. *Cinefantastique* managed to secure an interview through European correspondent Jan Doense, but when competitor *Fangoria* asked to question Giger on the making of ALIEN 3, they were told by Fox's publicity department that the artist was not involved. Giger quickly sent a fax pleading: "Tell me this isn't true?"

Meanwhile, the ADI personnel gave a series of interviews [see sidebar] that minimized Giger's ALIEN 3 contribution by praising him only as the Alien creator while claiming that their version was "truer" to his original design paintings than the suit he himself had constructed on ALIEN. Giger considers this claim "bizarre." (It is rendered even more bizarre when one observes the similarity between Giger's ALIEN 3 designs and the four-legged rod puppet added in

post-production by Boss Film. Though details like the saxophone-type valves in the skin were omitted, Giger's basic structural ideas were clearly incorporated. This is not a better realized version of the old alien but a new creature redesigned by its creator.)

The artist was additionally insulted by a paid advertisement in *Cinefex*, wherein Fincher congratulated the magazine's coverage and "all who made it necessary—and possible." He then mentioned the main individuals responsible for the special effects—that is, everyone except Giger, even though his Alien was pictured on the page. Fincher declined comment on this.

Giger's lawyers had all this time been fighting a costly legal battle with Fox, who were trying to foist off a very simple work-for-hire contract on the artist, contrary to the agreements made on July 28.

"You proceed on the deal memo, and then once the work is done and in their hands, they send you the contract," according to Barany. "From day one, Giger had said that basically he wanted the same contract he had on ALIEN. We fought for months on that, and it involved legal costs and merchandising royalties. At one point, they had the audacity to say that they don't give merchandising points to 'craftsmen.'"

Giger finally won the merchandising royalties after accruing \$9,000 in legal fees, which the studio refused to reimburse. When Fox sent a film crew for a behind-the-scenes ALIEN 3 documentary, Giger refused to be interviewed until the company finally sent a check for the legal expenses.

But the final blow occurred when the Academy overlooked Giger's contribution to the film in last February's Oscar nominations for Best Visual Effects. Even though his screen credit for ALIEN had not included the

word "effects", Giger was one of the recipients in the category in 1980, because director Ridley Scott had the good judgment to include his name along with nominees Carlo Rambaldi and Richard Johnson. Giger and his lawyers contended that, because he was engaged under the same contract and for the same purposes on ALIEN 3, then it seemed only logical that he again be nominated.

In a letter to the Academy's Visual Effects Committee, Barany made the omission sound like part of a conspiracy: "In all likelihood, the members of the Committee were no more aware of Giger's involvement in ALIEN 3 than the general movie-going public... You have read no interviews with Giger, seen no published sketches, photos or accounts of his work in the numerous magazines that would normally be very interested in such coverage. As we were later told, *no one knew.*"

The effects committee's re-

"I require no convincing about the full-grown Alien 3 monster. I think it's wonderful. Mssrs. Gillis and Woodruff are waiting for your maquettes before they begin their work."

sponse was that they are not responsible for adding names; it was up to the production company or the director to decide which people should be nominated. The fact that Giger did not actually work on the set mattered not at all, but unless he worked directly on the effects, and not strictly in the capacity of a production designer, he would not have been eligible anyway.

Chapter 22 of the Academy's Special Rules for the Visual Effects Award states: "The producers of the films selected for award consideration (or their designers) shall be requested to provide the committee with: the names and titles of the primary individuals—not to exceed four in number—directly involved with, and principally responsible for, the visual effects achieved and a description of their contributions. Additional names will not be considered...Eligibility of the contributor(s) to the achievement, for nomination purposes, shall be determined by the Visual Effects Award Rules Committee."

Giger sent Bonnie Bogin, senior litigation counsel for 20th Century-Fox, a hand-written fax stating: "As you know, I got an Oscar for ALIEN in the category of visual effects....I am still the creator of all the creatures, and I worked very hard on ALIEN 3...[yet] 20th Century-Fox denies intentionally my contribution to the visual effects....I am absolutely convinced that 20th Century-Fox and/or the ALIEN 3 team planned from the beginning to use me as co-operator, but to prevent in all ways that I receive appropriate recognition, including this nomination."

Giger was so upset that at one point he sent Academy president Karl Maiden a fax with this closing comment: "I am under the strong impres-

sion that my contribution to the visual effects of the nominated movie has been intentionally suppressed," signing the letter with a large black pentagram.

Less than two weeks before the Academy Awards, Fox's legal department responded with a letter pointing out that studios are precluded from submitting nominees in the effects category directly to the Academy. "We understand that David Fincher, the director of ALIEN 3, prepared the nomination," the letter stated. "It seems clear that Mr. Fincher was aware of both your client's contribution to the Picture, along with the contributions of other design and special effects participants...the Director appears to have included in the Visual Effects nominations only those artists whose work directly produced the logic-defying illusion that inanimate objects—objects that are nothing more than plastic, foam, metal and wires—actually live, breathe, think and feel in the context of the Picture...please note that Fox had no input into this nomination, that this nomination occurred outside of Fox's control, and Fox does not even have a right under the circumstances to request Mr. Giger's inclusion."

Barany answered back with the following fax (briefly stated): "You are right. You cannot speak for Mr. Fincher. It is high time that Mr. Fincher spoke for himself... Mr. Fincher owes Giger, the Academy and the Visual Effects community an explanation for the bizarre omission of [Giger's name]... The denial of Giger's Academy Award nomination is just the last example of the effort to totally erase his relationship to ALIEN 3."

Although efforts to include Giger's name among the nominees continued up to the day before the awards show, in the



According to Giger's liner notes for the ALIEN laserdisk, director Ridley Scott "inspired me to realize my vision exactly the way I had imagined it....For this reason, my first film experience was also my most satisfying one."





DARK SEED

The biomechanical computer game.

By Les Paul Robley

Dark Seed is a computer game developed by Cyberdreams Entertainment Software, using art by H. R. Giger. The game was produced by Patrick Ketchum, former president of Sullivan-Bluth Interactive Media—the team responsible for the coin-operated *Dragon's Lair* and *Space Ace* arcade games.

Giger became involved in the project when Cyberdreams asked to incorporate his artwork into a science-fiction/fantasy adventure for home computers. After stipulating that only high resolution graphics be used, he entered into an exclusive agreement whereby Cyberdreams' artists scanned his paintings into the computer, then cut and pasted them to construct a biomechanical world. Approximately 50% of the game consists of Giger's art, which was not used for the normal world.

When the project was near completion, Cyberdreams made a trip to Switzerland to



show the work to Giger and solicit his input. The artist offered advice which took Cyberdreams an additional six months to incorporate into the final version of the game.

The player controls a character by the name of Mike Dawson, a sci-fi writer who has just purchased an old Victorian mansion on the outskirts of a sleepy town called Woodland Hills (Cyberdreams' home base). During a nightmare, evil biomechanical creatures implant an embryo into Dawson's

head. He has three days to discover this, or the embryo will hatch and replace him. *Dark Seed* challenges the player to enter the "Gigeresque" world, fight the biomechanical creatures, and prevent them from destroying humanity.

Made for IBM, Macintosh and Amiga computer platforms, *Dark Seed* targets an older audience, rather than the dedicated video game system users. Incorporating stunning color graphics, the game features realistic voices, music, and sound-effects,

with over 1,000 frames of real-time animation and more than 60 locations to explore. The three-dimensional packaging by Bright & Associates utilizes Giger's *Li II* painting on the cover. The game won the Software Publisher Association's 1993 "Codie" award for Best Role-Playing Game, vanquishing such biggies as LucasArts, MicroProse, and Sierra On-Line. *Dark Seed II*, featuring more diabolical art from H.R. Giger, will be available later this year.

end they proved futile. In any case, *DEATH BECOMES HER* received the Best Visual Effects award that year.

Despite his David-and-Goliath battle, what does the father of the Alien think of the direction the franchise has taken? "I like it," Giger admits. "The critics said it's terrible, but I think it's okay. I like the Alien head very much; that was nicely done, but not the neck. Also, I liked the claustrophobic feeling and the quick cutting. The Alien is better than in the second film. In the second, they changed the Alien, and finally, in the last one, they brought it back to my original design."

Like many reviewers, Giger was not satisfied with the ending, but his objections were more technical than aesthetic. "[Ripley] should go with the camera backwards. She gets smaller but never ends in the molten fire. The thing I don't like really is when [the alien] opened its mouth and the silly tongue comes out. I never liked this tongue. I always wanted to eliminate it, but Ridley Scott wanted it. It was okay in his movie because it [shot out]. But in the third it comes out slowly like false teeth. I made a very long tongue like a sword and the Alien's mouth should look beautiful. With the monks this time there's an erotic fascination, and when it kisses them, you only see the mouth close-up. Then the tongue comes and you only see blood running..."

Fincher said of his work with the Alien's mouth: "We definitely made it totally asexual, although we did give it Michelle Pfeiffer's lips. That's what they're based on. It always had these little thin lips, and I said to Giger, let's make it a woman when it comes right up to Ripley. So it has these big, luscious collagen lips."

ALIEN 3 is not the first time Giger has had trouble with legalities. Many post-*ALIEN* films have "borrowed" his biomechanical look without giving him the credit or money he deserves. At first he was flattered, but now it upsets him.

For the home computer game *Dark Seed*, Cyberdreams scanned such Giger artwork as "Li II," "N.Y. City III," and "Homage a Bocklin" into the computer, in order to create a nightmarish world filled with biomechanical monsters.





Fincher: "If this creature loped through the halls of *ALIEN 3*, we would have no choice but to accept that a new life form had been found to play the monster."

"Sometimes the [rip-offs] look even better than I design," he laughs. "But when people add their own ideas it looks more horrible than people who just copy my work." One Dutch forger even tried to make a fake of his famous *Necronom IV* painting, the one which inspired *ALIEN*.

"They tried to sell it in Zurich at an auction for 18,000 Swiss Francs (\$13,500). It was already in the catalog, but the measurements were wrong. The gallery alerted me. At first I didn't do anything, but the police came and took it away. I had a case, but nothing happened to them. I got the painting, so now I can sign it myself and give it back to the market," he jokes.

Despite his disappointing cinematic experiences since *ALIEN*, Giger still holds some hope for the medium. "I have no illusions about Hollywood and the movie-making process anymore, but I'd still like to work in movies, preferably with a challenging concept and a

quality director like Ridley Scott, David Cronenberg, or David Lynch," he remarks.

Upcoming film projects include Giger's own property, "The Mystery of San Gottardo," which Giger describes as a unique love story. "It is about a man and his love for a freak of nature, Armbeinda, which is really a sentient limb combining an arm and a leg. It is the further development of a recurring image in my work over the last thirty years." The concept stems from a 1963 creation called "The Beggar," his very first sketch, featuring a leg and an arm holding a hat. Giger made several drawings of this reduced human being, releasing it in the form of a French comic book in 1990. The story concerns a race of biomechanoids created by a military organization. The premise: your arms and legs are slaves that do your bidding, but what if they had a mind of their own? Ink drawings in the comic depict the disembodied parts attacking their creator (Giger's

self-portrait) in the San Gottardo border tunnel which links Switzerland with Italy. He is currently seeking financial backing for the horror project.

Giger would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with horror novelist and producer-director Clive Barker on a film. "He liked the idea and did a very nice introduction to my new *Necronomicon*, but he is very busy," Giger laments.

Bill Malone's once enthusiastic "The Mirror" project seems now dead and buried for good. There was not enough money to see it done properly, and in Giger's opinion, without suitable financial backing, it's probably just as well. Universal's *THE TOURIST*, at one time to be helmed by Brian Gibson, is likewise officially buried.

Also planned is a new documentary slated for October release on cable or home video, entitled *BROTHER TO SHADOWS: THE ALIEN WORLD OF H.R. GIGER*. Meanwhile, Giger's *Alien 3 Design Book*

has been abandoned by Dark Horse Comics, publishers of the Fox-licensed *Alien* comic book series; instead, ARH+ Publications hopes to release it in the near future.

Finally, looking back on the whole *ALIEN 3* fiasco, is it possible to say that any good came out of it for the artist who created the Alien? According to Barany, "We managed to insist on the merchandising royalties again, and one of the jokes to this day is—whenever Giger received a royalty check, we knew that within a week we'd get a request for something. He has gotten the highest royalty payments he ever received on *ALIEN*. We always thought they were fudging the numbers. We think that with this new *ALIEN 3* contract it may have put that on a good track."

Additional material provided by Jan Doense and Mark Burman. H. R. Giger may be reached through agent Leslie Barany at (212) 627-8488.