

# STARLOG

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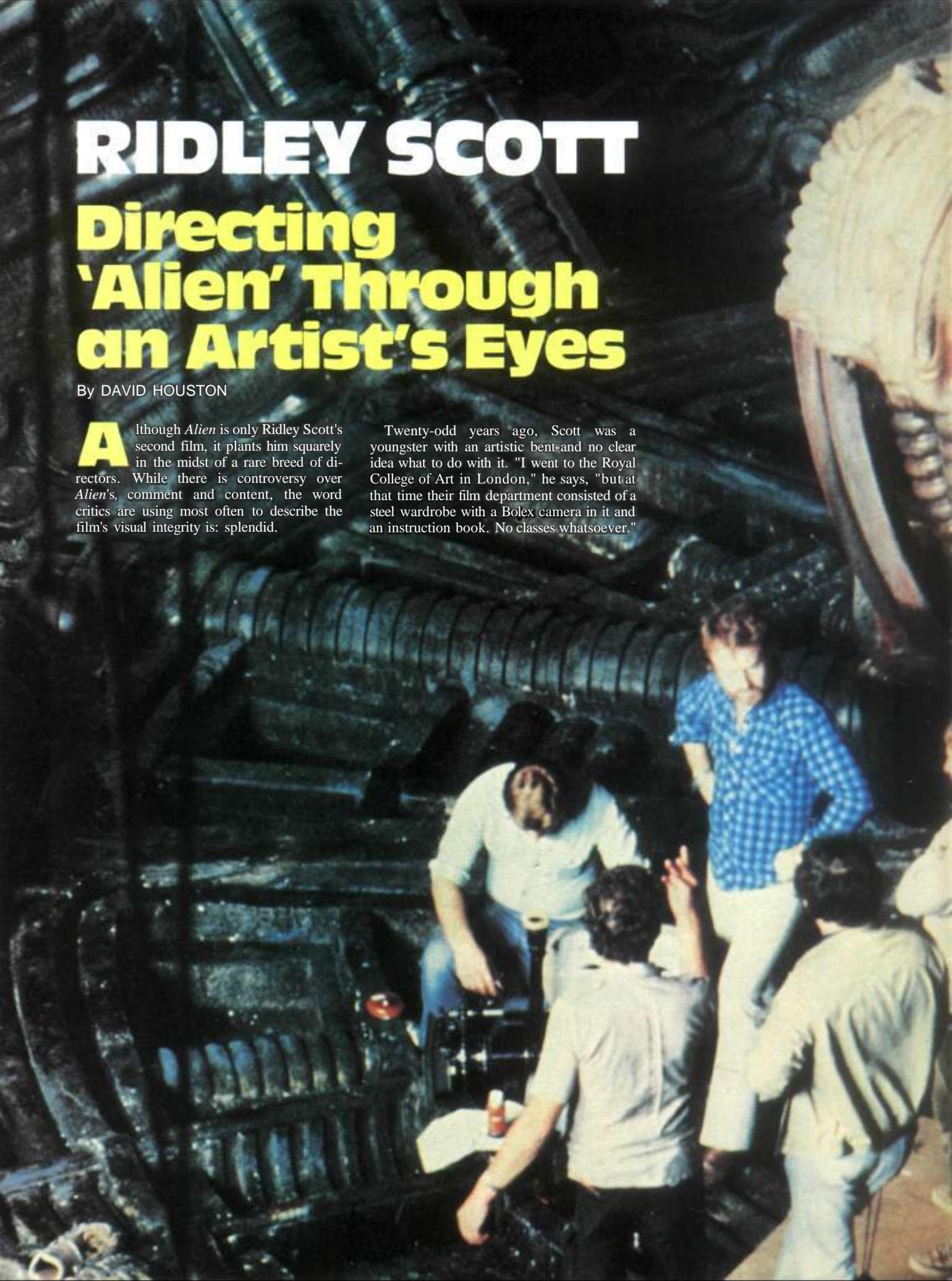
# RIDLEY SCOTT

## Directing 'Alien' Through an Artist's Eyes

By DAVID HOUSTON

**A**lthough *Alien* is only Ridley Scott's second film, it plants him squarely in the midst of a rare breed of directors. While there is controversy over *Alien's* comment and content, the word critics are using most often to describe the film's visual integrity is: splendid.

Twenty-odd years ago, Scott was a youngster with an artistic bent and no clear idea what to do with it. "I went to the Royal College of Art in London," he says, "but at that time their film department consisted of a steel wardrobe with a Bolex camera in it and an instruction book. No classes whatsoever."







PHOTOS: ©1999 20TH CENTURY-FOX

Overleaf: Ridley Scott supervises the construction crew on the starpilot set. With back to camera, H. R. Giger adds the finishing touch to the ossified alien skeleton. Above: Scott (center) and assistants on the *Nostramo's* bridge set.

His degree plan was in graphic design. "Halfway through I thought I might like to do a film." Using the Bolex 16mm, he began to work on what today would be considered a student film. "It was called *Boy on a Bicycle*. My brother was chief equipment carrier and the actor, and my father was in it playing a blind freak." The British Film Institute saw

the work in progress and "gave me a little more money. I then completed the film—which cost 250 pounds."

The film was used as an admission ticket into a television design course. "I figured it was at least one way to become a director." His experience with *Boy on a Bicycle* had crystalized Scott's talent and his goal. "Once

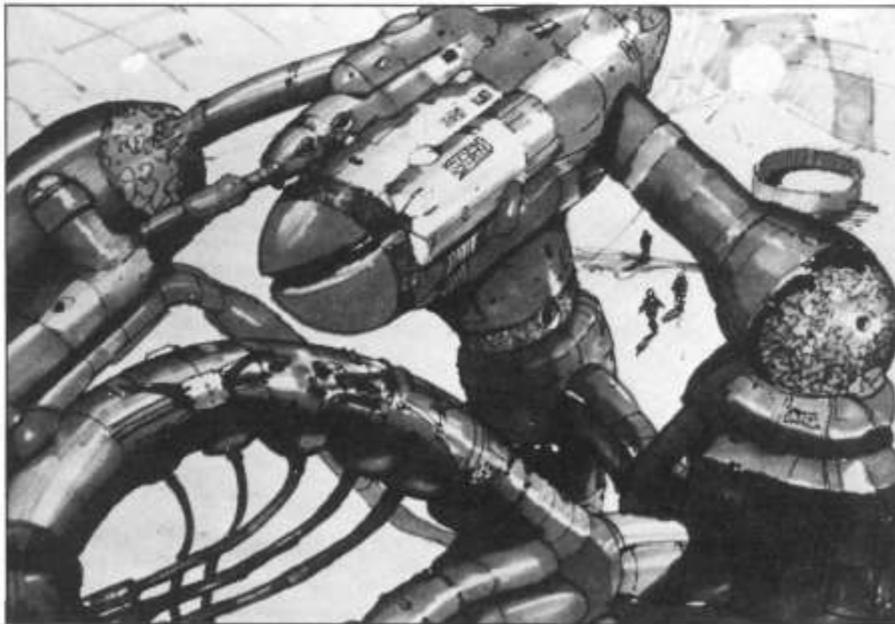
you've done a film, it's fatal. You don't want to do anything else." But there was a long wait.

"Eighteen years later, I was finally allowed to direct something. I'm serious."

Following his employment at BBC, largely working in videotape, Scott opened his own agency for making commercials—and ultimately longer pieces of film. This led him to his first feature, *The Duelists*, and to *Alien*.

"*Alien* came to me out of the blue, from (20th Century-) Fox. I think it had been turned down by about six directors. I don't know why they turned it down. It was their misfortune, or perhaps they just missed the elements that appealed to me, personally. I was knocked out by the simplicity, the energy and drive of the story. The thriller aspects of it just leapt off the page. I found it very pure.

"It's odd to hear that it's my visual enlargements that make the film interesting. One must never underestimate the quality of that script. Hill, Giger, O'Bannon, Shusett—whoever—\* had even put in enough characterization to make all the characters interesting—which I think is unusual in many thrillers, where characters are secondary. Characterization was in the attitudes, in the very spartan choice of language—and what they talked about. Like the first conversation after they wake up; it's about shares of stock



Ron Cobb's early conception of the alien derelict starship is one of many that were abandoned before actual production.

\*Walter Hill, co-producer; H.R. Giger, concept artist (see interview in this issue on page 26); Dan O'Bannon, screenwriter; Ron Shusett, screenwriter.

in the company. It seemed to me a very natural, very human kind of character painting."

But, at the time, Scott was at work on another project, a "post-holocaust treatment of the story of Tristan and Isolde," and had to shelve *Alien*. He assumed he would not do it at all. That was in November 1977.

"About Christmastime I had quite a problem with the Tristan thing. The writer dropped out. I thought: I've got to do something, got to do a film. So I called up Fox and asked what had happened with the *Alien* script. They said nothing was happening with it, and I said I'd like to do it. And I was standing here in Los Angeles about two weeks later.

"At that time the budget was something like \$4.5 million. And I was very well aware that we couldn't do it for that. There was a preliminary period of about a month or six weeks during which we had to work up a new budget."

During that short time Scott took the script and drew storyboards for every key sequence in the film. "I felt *obliged* to do storyboards," the artist-director stresses. "This was prior to the employment of any of the several artists who were later to contribute to the visual concept of the film.

"We originally told Fox we wanted \$13 million, and they nearly died. Then we came back with the storyboards and asked for \$9.5 million. And we said 17 weeks of shooting. That was totally objected to. We negotiated and finally arrived at \$8.5 million and 13 weeks. Incidentally, it ended up taking us 16 weeks—which was closer to my original estimate. We slid a bit during the first three weeks of filming."

Once money and time were agreed upon, the next phase involved the gathering together of an unusual number of artists and art directors.

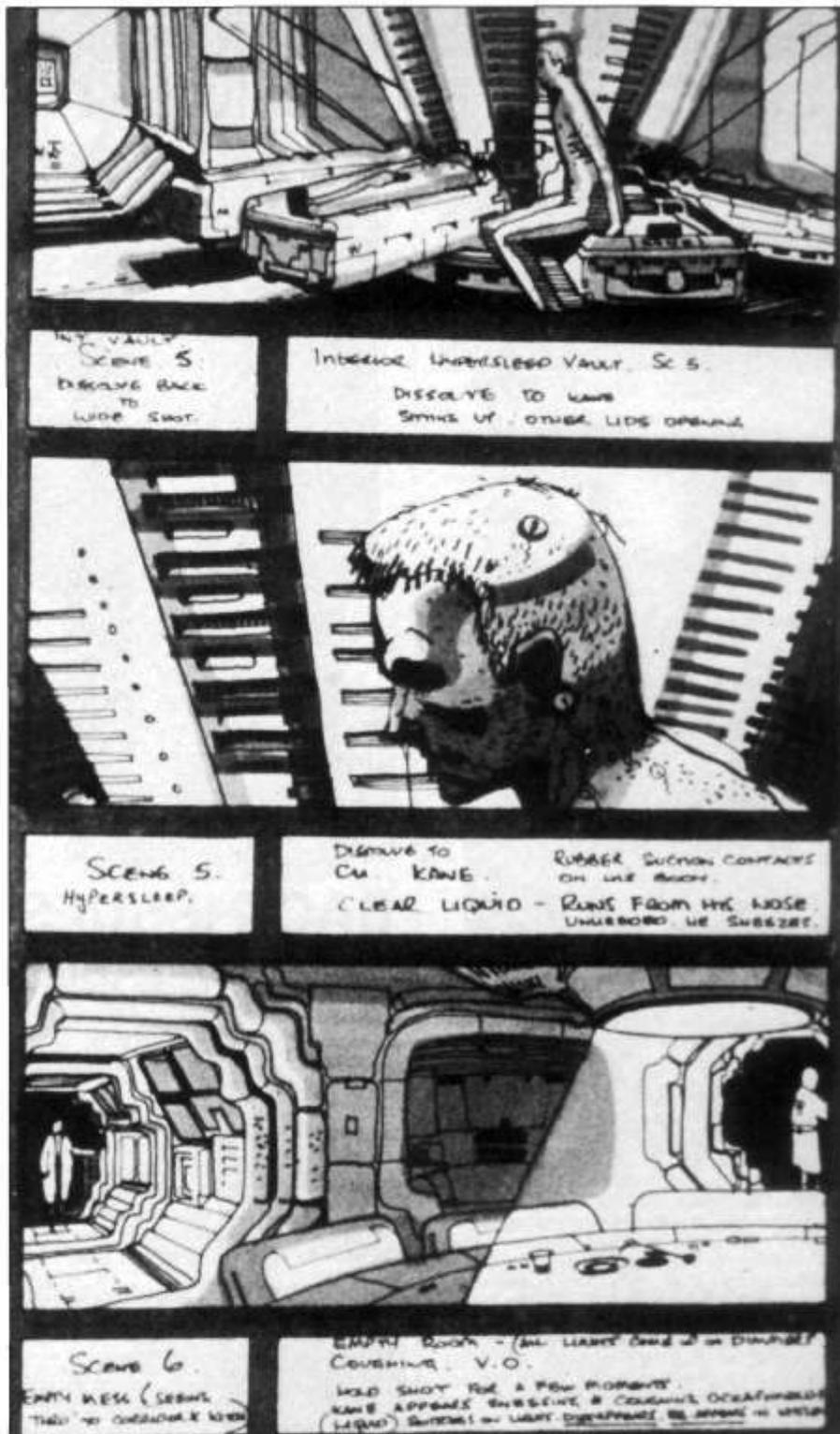
"The biggest problem, of course, was: What's the alien going to look like? I mean, you could screw around for two years trying to come up with something that wasn't all nobs and bobs and bumps and claws, or like a huge blob, you know? When I went in to Fox for the first meeting, they had a book there by H. R. Giger, *The Necronomicon*. I took one look at it, and I've never been so sure of anything in my life. I was convinced I'd have to have him on the film.

"Another illustrator—who had been working on *Alien* in America before I was brought in—was Ron Cobb. I liked a lot of the stuff he'd done. But while they were very nice drawings, good concepts, I felt they were a bit too NASA-oriented, not far enough into the future, too *2001*-ish. But Ron has a really good technical mind for this sort of material, and I knew we'd need him. So he came along with us.

"I was fascinated by various French illustrators, and one in particular, Jean Giraud—known as Moebius. I thought, my God, I'll get *all* these great illustrators!"

For *Alien*, the whole crew, prior to production, was a vast art department operating in London. "It was then that I hired the production designer, an Englishman named Mike Seymour."

In that unusual art department, a division



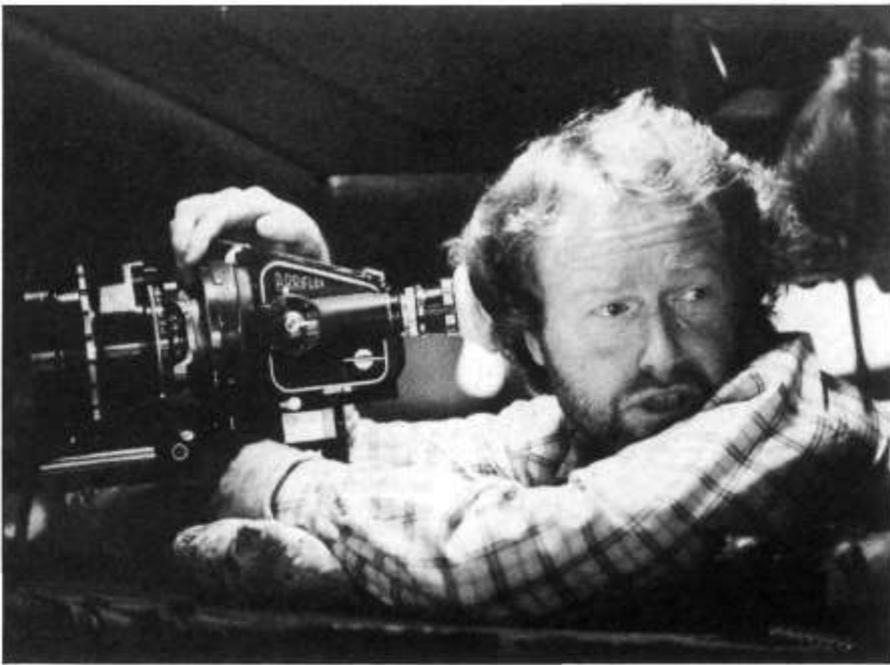
Himself an artist, Scott drew a storyboard covering the entire film, incorporating the designs contributed by Giger, Cobb, Giraud and Foss as well as his own.

of labor resulted. "As the film involves three specific aspects—the planet, everything to do with the alien and the Earth ship—we decided that any one of those elements should be a full-time job for a designer." Giger worked primarily on the alien and the planet; Cobb on the Earth ship *Nostromo*; and Moebius on costumes and space suits.

"We had a constant battle—you always do, actually—to stretch the budget. There were certain script cuts we became obliged to make, to come within budget."

The principle cut involved the removal of an entire scene—with its settings and special effects—from the action on the alien planet. "It's the setting the original script refers to as a pyramid. Actually, it was to be more like a silo. It was a huge architectural structure like a beehive, a honeycomb. When the party landed to investigate the alien transmission, first they found the derelict with the dead alien crew, but *not* the alien. It needed a prognosis scene. Then one of them discovers on a

(continued on page 24)



Part of Scott's control of the "look" of a film derives from his double role as cinematographer and director. His next film, *The Knight*, is a tale of heroism and mysticism in the 12th century.

(continued from page 21)

scanner this strange surface feature. They investigate and find the hive. They go down into it and *that's* where they find the alien eggs—originally. What we did was combine the two, put the eggs on board the derelict.'

The preproduction phases were, miraculously, accomplished in only four months. "You ought to have a bloody year! We were railroading along, trying to involve the best people, toward the start date of July 5 [1978].

"While all that was going on, it became apparent that we'd need some quite sophisticated mechanisms for the alien—to make his face work. We brought in Carlo Rambaldi—just by the skin of our teeth. He came in for a limited period and then left a marvelous guy there, Carlo de Marcis, who then refined and honed the mechanisms Rambaldi had decided he'd need to make the thing function."

When July 5 arrived, shooting did in fact begin—if a bit sluggishly. "We had a big problem in that we only had five sound stages. *Star Wars* had 13. It means you can't shoot in sequence. We had to do it right the first time. There was this army of stagehands with hammers who would come and knock the bloody thing down immediately after we were through with it. Really—an army!"

Further complicating things, Brian Johnson's miniatures department was operating at a different studio. "That's never a good idea—being so separated from the action. Not for me, anyway, because I like to be involved in everything that's going on. Brian was off doing miniatures while I was working with Nickie Allder on the floor effects.

"*Nothing* was easy. We had, for instance, endless arguments about ceiling heights... especially as Gordon Carroll [co-producer] is seven-foot-six and I'm more like four-foot-two. We'd actually stand inside these corridors with Gordon saying, 'I think we've got a big problem here, Ridley: these ceilings are

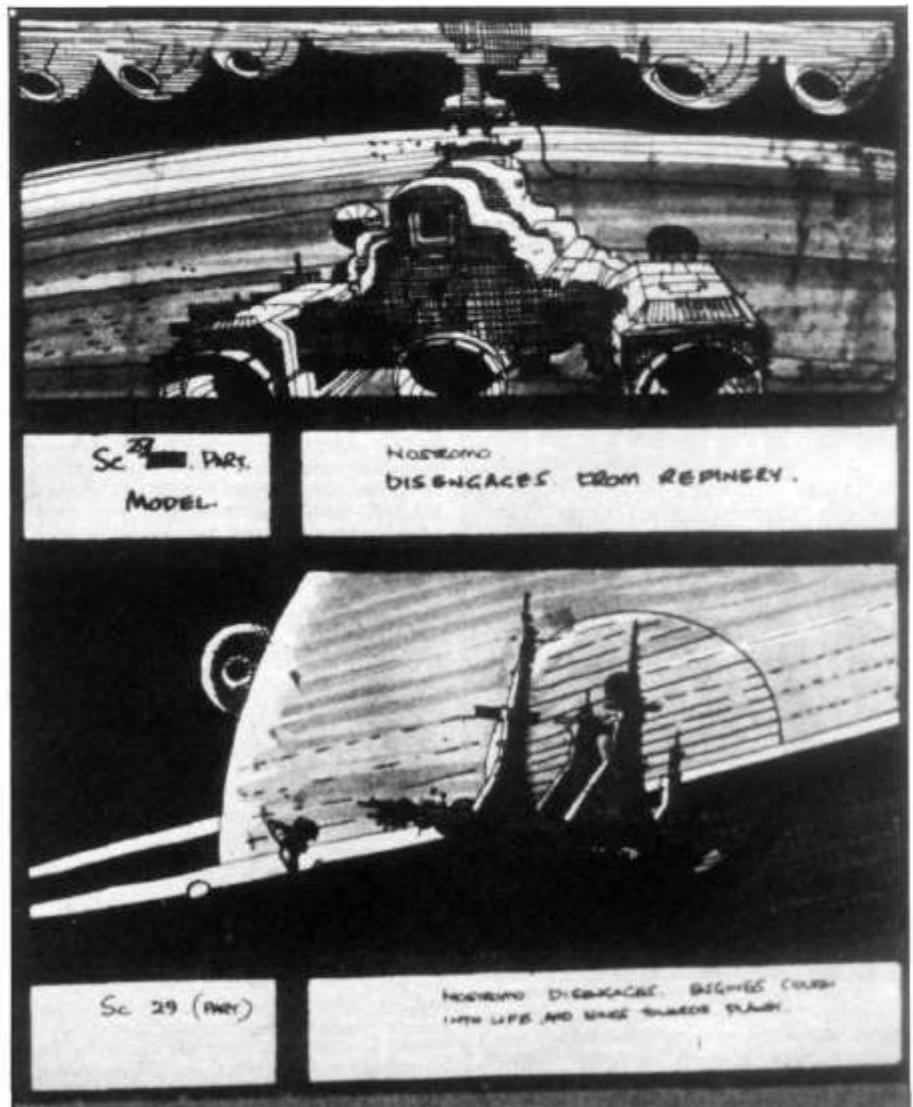
too low.' I tried to explain that we were going after claustrophobia.

"Every step of the work had to be justified in my own mind—or to other people. Absolutely everything."

Scott enjoyed the making of *Alien*, though, and names Kane's death as the scene that delighted him most. (John Hurt plays Kane.) The filmmakers call this "the kitchen scene" or "the scene with the chest-burster"—in which the alien hatches out from within the rib cage of the dying Kane. (Their "pet" names for the various stages of the alien were: egg, face-hugger, chest-burster and the big chap.)

Scott explains the design, operation and shooting of that scene:

"It wasn't physically possible for Giger to do all the stages of the alien; there just wasn't time. But he had done some specific drawings of the four stages. He worked backwards; he designed the big chap first, then asked himself what a baby version of it would look like. Giger did the big chap and the egg—not the thing that comes out of it, just the egg. We finally chose a guy named Roger Dicken, an English special-effects man, specifically a model builder, to work on two of the alien



Scott's rendition of the disengagement sequence. The director hopes to someday direct a straight SF film, without the horrific elements of *Alien*.

elements—the face-hugger and the chest-burster, the baby, as it were. We worked for weeks on the baby. I knew I didn't want something with bumps and warts and claws. You know, I find that most horror films have never really frightened me; and I tend not to be convinced by a lot of science-fiction films—specifically because of the effects. So I knew it had to be good, this baby. We decided that the big chap, in embryo form, would have a head either tilted down or tilted back. We tilted it back because it seemed more obscene that way, more reptilian, more phallic.

"Mechanically, it was dead simple, as it turned out. It was virtually puppetry—you know, hand-held.

"The actors kept wanting to see it, and I wouldn't let them. They never actually saw anything until we were filming and they were involved with it. What you see on film is their genuine surprise and horror!

"We played the scene to a point, walked the actors off, got ready, walked them back on and took up the scene again from where we'd gotten to, and worked up to the progressive point of frenzy that was needed. And bingo! The actors' reactions were really extraordinary.

"I also kept it back from the actors on Brett's death. I rehearsed the actor, Harry Dean Stanton, usually without having the alien there at all—just talking in the abstract about chalk marks on the floor for position."

Typically, a director will work closely with the cameraman, take a squint or two through the lens from time to time, and stand beside the camera during the filming. Not Ridley Scott.

"I do all the camera work. That's why I so seldom use more than one camera. Usually there is only *one* position—from the light or



And Sigourney Weaver prepares for her final confrontation with Galactic horror.



Scott's ability to elicit fine performances from his cast is illustrated in several harrowing sequences: Ripley confronts the inhuman Ash. . .



Scott elicits a fine-edged hysteria from Veronica Cartwright as Lambert

the look or the angle of the shot. I find it's swifter if I operate the camera, swifter to get the exact detail I want, the detail that is in my head."

Scott is also essentially his own film editor. "There's so often a fine edge for the director to decide about—particularly if you're operating the camera as well. I mean, you might bang off a couple of elements within a scene not knowing whether or not you'll ever use them, but there's an instinct about them when it comes to editing."

The editing process was constant and proceeded throughout the shooting. "When we wrapped, we were right up to date on the editing. I was able to show a cut of the film to Fox eight days after we finished shooting. Every time we showed any of it to Fox—and they came in continuously during the filming—we had to go through quite a sophisticated tap dance to make it look polished, even down to using dummy music tracks."

But that cut, eight days after, was far from

a ready-to-release movie. Model work was still being filmed at Bray Studios, and there were numerous inserts—close ups, special effects, etc.—to be filmed and added. "So we decanted the whole unit to Bray and started really getting into the special-effects work—which I was looking forward to. I hadn't done miniature work before, and I very much wanted to be involved in it.

"We were also filming our inserts at Bray. We had to do it that way, unfortunately. For instance, when Ripley's hand is on the destruct fuse of the *Nostromo*, that's really Ripley's hand, but it was shot five months after we'd wrapped and torn the set down. I know it's pretty much standard procedure to do your inserts that way, but it's murder to go back over old ground. Like the egg stuff. That was all done later at Bray, all the close shots. The process of re-psychoing yourself is what's so terrible about it. You get yourself psyched up to do a particular scene in just such a way, and you know that the special-effects bit is as key to it as the acting; so you see all the old footage and re-psych yourself later when you do the rest of it."

Now *Alien* is finished. The headaches are over, and Ridley Scott—concept and storyboard artist, cameraman, editor, director—sees an *Alien* that is, in many ways, better than the version he had in his mind before the real work began. "But there are always things you wish could have been better, or different." Like the missing prognosis scene.

What's next?

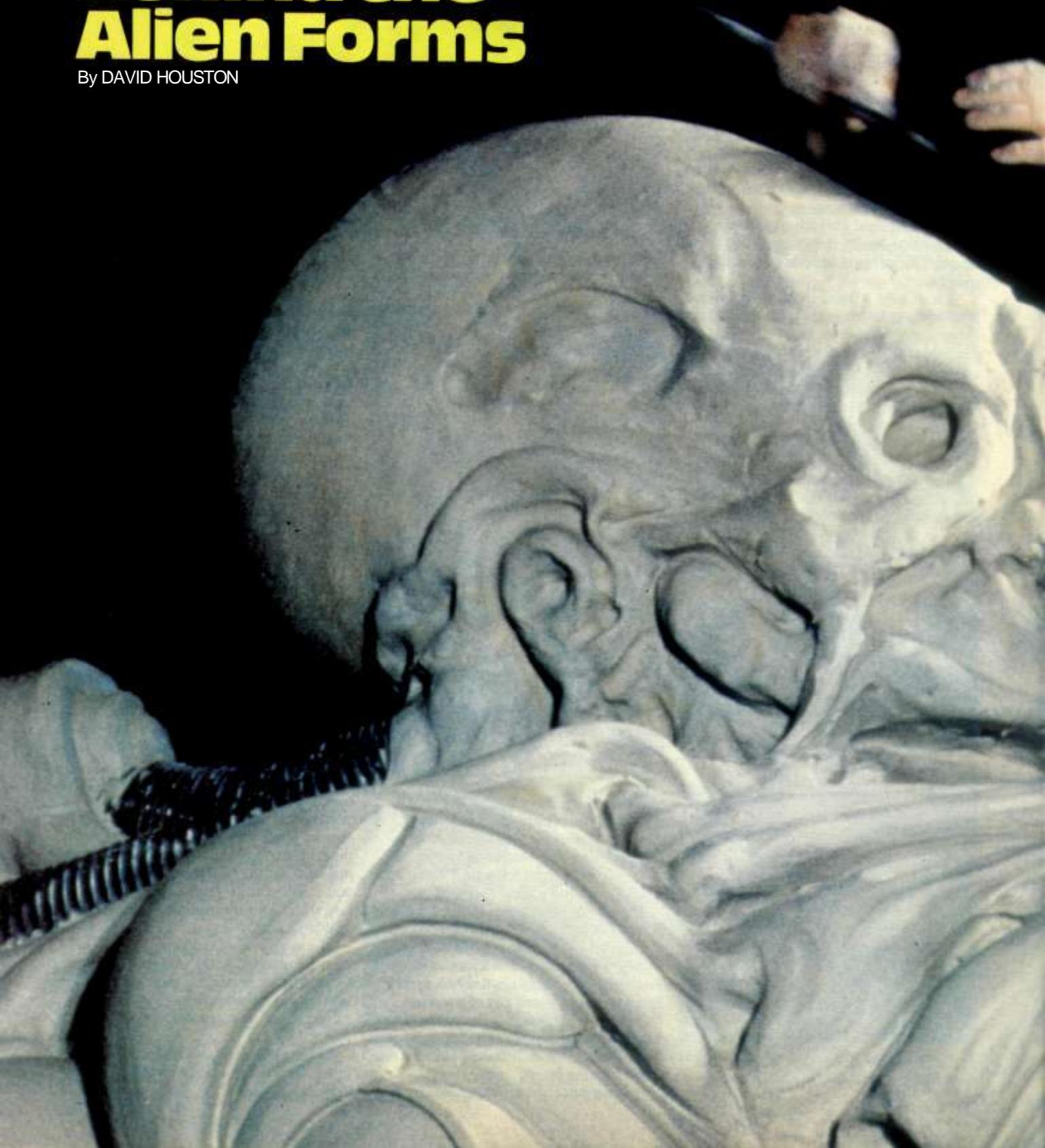
"I am now reading like a maniac—have been for months. And I've narrowed it down to about four projects. I most certainly am looking for another fantasy/science-fiction subject. Not next, necessarily, but in the future.

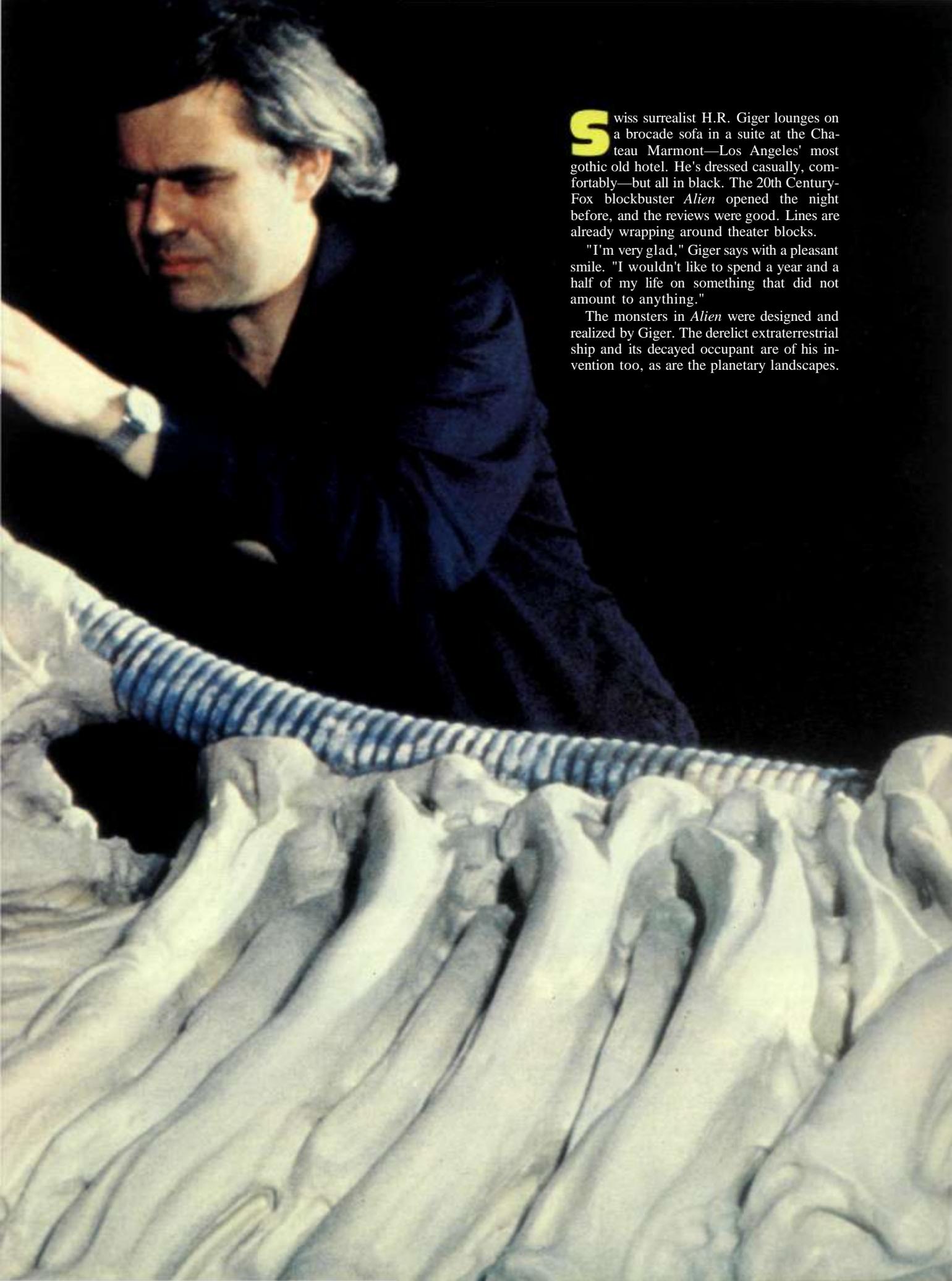
"I quite like working with special effects. I love it. That's the old art director coming out in me again." \*

# H.R. GIGER

## Behind the Alien Forms

By DAVID HOUSTON

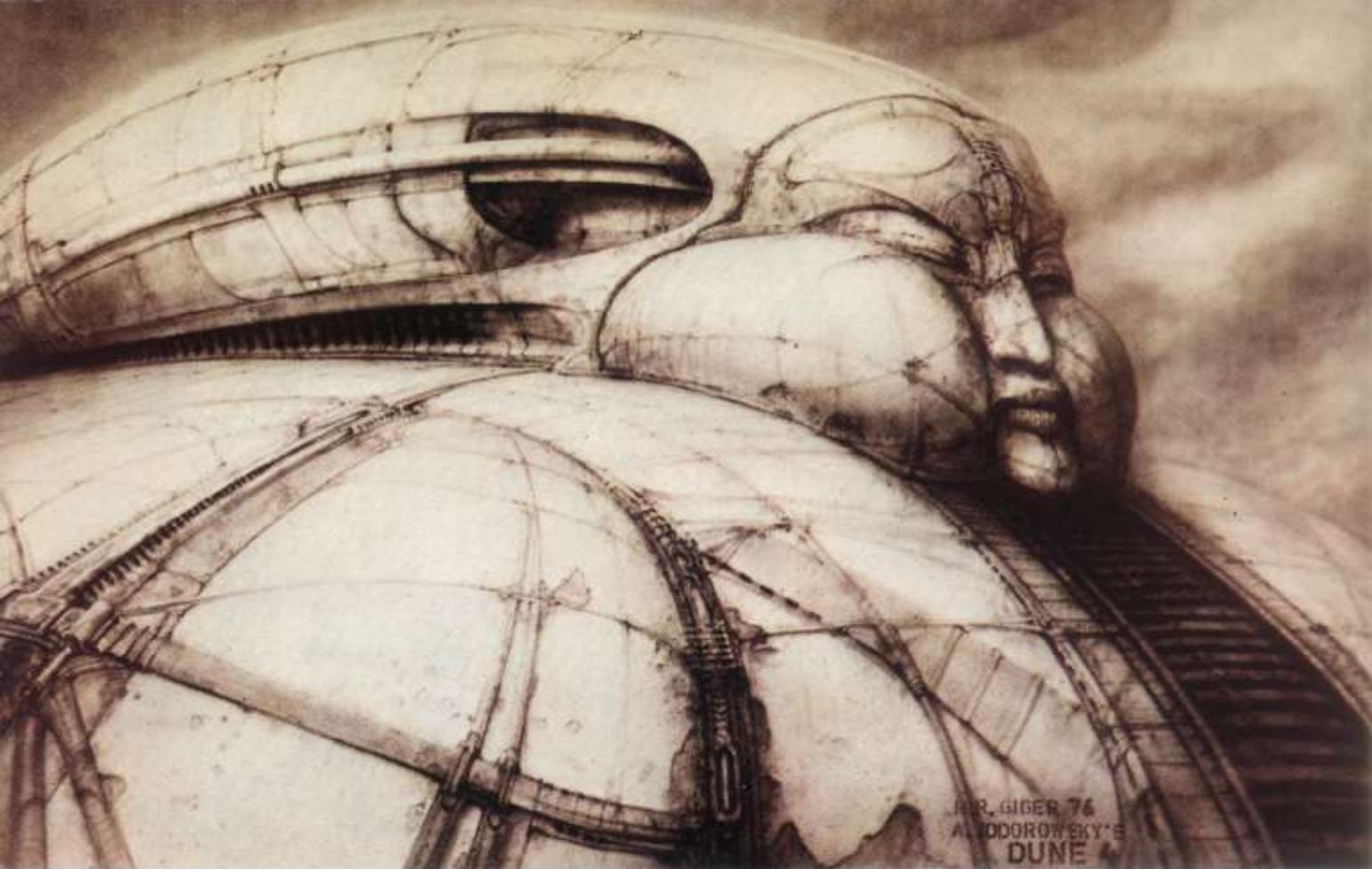




**S**wiss surrealist H.R. Giger lounges on a brocade sofa in a suite at the Chateau Marmont—Los Angeles' most gothic old hotel. He's dressed casually, comfortably—but all in black. The 20th Century-Fox blockbuster *Alien* opened the night before, and the reviews were good. Lines are already wrapping around theater blocks.

"I'm very glad," Giger says with a pleasant smile. "I wouldn't like to spend a year and a half of my life on something that did not amount to anything."

The monsters in *Alien* were designed and realized by Giger. The derelict extraterrestrial ship and its decayed occupant are of his invention too, as are the planetary landscapes.



Two preproduction paintings for the *Dune* project. The topmost peak of Harkonnen Castle is a defense installation. The likeness of the matriarch is lowered to reveal a death's head. Reprinted from H. R. Giger's *Necronomicon*. Big O Publishing, London.



Giger's involvement in the film was assured when its director, Ridley Scott, arrived for his first meeting at Fox and was shown a new art book called *The Necronomicon*. "I took one look at it," says Scott, "and I've never been so sure of anything in my life." He flew to Zurich to secure the talents of its artist, H.R. Giger. (See the Ridley Scott interview on page 18.)

It is easy to imagine what the director responded to in *The Necronomicon*. The paintings are exquisitely, sensually hideous. In stylized photographic realism, they show beautiful women being eaten by worms or impaled on a devil's horn, landscapes that look like coils of intestines, bits of machinery that, in the colors of dull moonlight, are really human genitals, half-eaten rats and ghastly mythic demons. The backgrounds and wall surfaces would look like electronic circuitry if they weren't made of bones and sinews and tendons—all cast in some impossible kind of translucent metal.

H.R. Giger (pronounced Geeger) was born February 5, 1940, in Chur—a little valley town further miniaturized by the surrounding snow-white Alps. His father owned a pharmacy and hoped that the boy would one day run it. But Giger's "mark in Latin convinced him that there would be little point in it." Giger claims he was an all-round bad student. His brainpower was reserved for his hobbies.

In his childhood, Giger developed a serious aversion to snakes, worms, maggots and so on; and this state of affairs paralleled his growth as an artist—and the usual adolescent preoccupation with sex. "During the long years at school, I had always distinguished myself as an illustrator of pornographic fantasies."

He retains to this day a fascination with bottomless shafts and corridors—which stems from a childhood obsession with the dark and ancient shaft between buildings that he could see from a "secret window" in his home. His nightmares about that shaft and what it might contain led to a series of horrendous paintings.

From an early attempt to exhibit Giger's work in Chur, Switzerland, all the gallery-owner got for his trouble was "the task of wiping the spit off his windows every morning." Indeed, the artist was not well received in his own land.

"Chur is an unbearable dump for someone like me."

Following a stint in the military, Giger obtained a degree from the School of Arts and Crafts in Zurich—where he then worked as an industrial designer. During the 70s, his fame as a fine artist began to spread. There were best-selling posters (for which he was paid next to nothing), occasional exhibits and, at last, in 1977, *The Necronomicon*. Which brings us to *Alien*.

"The whole thing really started in Salvadore Dali's house," Giger says, delighted to have surprised his listener with the revelation. "I have a friend in Spain who is often in Dali's house, and he brought some of my work to him. Dali always has a lot of people around—sometimes 30 or 40 persons. And he

showed my books and catalogs all the time because he likes my things.

"Once Alexandra Jodorowsky came to Spain to ask Dali to play the Emperor in his film of *Dune*. So Dali showed him my work and Jodorowsky was impressed and thought I could do something for his film. So they called me and I came to Spain. But too late; Jodorowsky wasn't there. So I met Dali.

"I always need a reason to go somewhere. Jodorowsky was the reason, but I was able to meet Salvadore Dali. He was very nice. Two months later I went to Paris to visit a friend, and I went to see Jodorowsky, who said, 'Could you do some designs for me?'

"I did designs for *Dune*—of Harkonen Castle—and made slides of them. Jodorowsky went to the States, but at this time there was no money for science-fiction films—in 1975. I think the film was to have cost about \$20 million. That was a lot of money.

"Dan O'Bannon was also working for Jodorowsky. After this disaster, he went back to Los Angeles. And that's when he wrote the story of *Alien*.

"In August of '77, I got a call from O'Bannon. He asked if I would like to do some work for a film called *Alien*. I said yes, why not. But I thought that this time I should be careful to get money, because I never have seen any money from Jodorowsky. He never even called to say, 'I'm sorry, the film is no more.'\*

"I made the first designs for *Alien*, even before Ridley Scott was the director." But the extent of Giger's contribution and whether he was to continue on the project was not decided. "When *The Necronomicon* was printed, I had hand-bound copies in French, and I sent the first one to Dan O'Bannon. And that was just the moment when Ridley Scott arrived in Los Angeles."

On the coffee table between Giger and his interviewer are numerous color photos of scenery and monsters that were constructed for *Alien*. These have been compiled for a forthcoming book—from Big O Publishing in London—called *Giger's Alien*. As we leaf through the photographs, he comments on the various designs, problems and solutions:

## The Derelict

In *Alien*, the crew of the Earth ship responds to an extraterrestrial signal, lands on an alien world and finds an enormous ship that has been abandoned, the crew of which is dead. The design of the derelict is typical Giger in its suggestion of an organic technology; most remarkably, at a single glance one is sure that it is not the product of *human* builders.

Is the artist satisfied that his concepts were appropriately translated from his two-dimensional canvases to the three-dimensional forms seen in the film?

"Mostly. Time was very short—time and

\* Jodorowsky's production of *Dune*—from Frank Herbert's modern SF classic novel—became officially defunct when the screen rights were obtained by Dino DeLaurentiis, reportedly for \$1 million. DeLaurentiis' budget is undecided, as is the form of the final script. One possibility is a two-part film. Herbert is writing the screenplay.



Giger at work. Big O Publishing will soon release a complete book of the major paintings and drawings the Swiss artist executed for the film.

money; too short to make everything good. I'm a perfectionist. Peter Boysey built the derelict, and we worked very closely together. He was one who could understand my... my visual language. I am happy with the derelict."

In still photos, there is much more fascinating detail evident on the derelict than was visible in the film.

"Yes. It was filmed very dark. It's more imposing to backlight the object. It seems more sinister."

The model of the entire derelict was, Giger says, "huge—about four meters. And the landscape they set it in was a whole room, the whole studio! The ship is made of plasticene and polystyrene over metal arms."

The entrance to the derelict was built—matching the detail on the model—full scale on a sound stage. In the film one sees only a small section of it and the astronauts climbing aboard, but footage was shot and discarded which involved an elaborate matte painting extending to the ship's surface, and establishing that the entrance was in the curved wall between the two great tubular sections of the ship.

"They did not use the matte shot because, well, it just wasn't necessary. We needed the close shot and there just was no point in showing it both ways."

The matte paintings for *Alien* (several of which were executed but not used) were painted in detail by Giger and converted into mattes by Ray Caple.

All that three-dimensional relief work at the entrance to the derelict is real—actually modeled out of plaster, not painted to seem rounded. The curved walls—interior and exterior—were built of lumber, covered with lathe and webbing, and built up with pre-cast plaster forms. Final layers of plaster were added—often by Giger himself—and then the surfaces were painted.

## The space Jockey

Inside the derelict is the decayed body of a large alien creature. It reclines in something like an acceleration couch at the controls of something that might be a canon.

"I modeled it myself, in clay. It was then cast in polyester. I worked particularly on the head, and I painted it. To make the pieces of skin, I put on some latex and then scrubbed it off. Then painted some more. If we had more days, we could have made it better—but I think for the film it's okay."

Giger reaches for a copy of *The Necromicon* and runs to the painting on page 64, at the top. "Every day Ridley Scott asked for this book. He'd say, I'd like to have it look like this painting, or that one. This was what he wanted the space jockey to look like." The painting, while not of a space jockey, is indeed similar. On the same page is a creature not unlike the adult monster that appears in the climax of the film.

"That was very good for me. I only had to copy my own ideas, to change a little of my own designs."

Director Ridley Scott is an artist himself. Was this a source of friction or an advantage?

"I enjoyed working with Ridley. If I had a bad feeling about something, felt that it was wrong, he could let me know what I had to change."

## The Egg Chamber

"I had no experience with a big film. I assumed all this could be done with models, miniatures. But you can't do it. If someone is walking around you have to build it full size."

The floor of the chamber—with the alien eggs under a layer of blue light (produced on the set with a pulse laser)—and the section of curved wall above it were fully constructed. In one long shot, the diminishing vault of the huge chamber is a matte painting. Giger points to a sketch that was to have been a guide for the wall section.

"These shapes here... what do they look like? The stomachs of pregnant women." They do but they fit into the overall biomechanical design so skillfully that one might not fully recognize them as such. "But we couldn't use them—although I always liked the symbol. We were over budget and had to simplify the walls. I did much of the plaster work here, too."

## The Egg

The main egg—out of which the alien

emerges—was constructed from Giger paintings out of various plastics, and ...

"Here I'm working on a rubber casting that was attached to the outside, wrapped around it. And here—that stuff oozing out is that Slime, you know, the toy you can buy. And there is also some real flesh inside. Flesh—meat."

## The Cocoon Scene

In the shooting script (and in Alan Dean Foster's novel taken from it) there is a scene toward the end in which Ripley, as she plans to escape, comes upon two cocoon-like shapes—one containing the dead Brett, the other containing the dying Dallas. "What can I do? How can I get you down?" Ripley asks frantically. Dallas replies, "Kill me!" Realizing it's the only favor she can do for him, Ripley does. This scene is not in the movie.

But there on the coffee table is a shot from it. On close inspection, it's not a painting; it's a frame blow-up from film footage. You mean this scene was actually shot?

"Oh, yes. They did the scene. I asked Ridley why he didn't use it, and he said that in the running of the film, the scene would slow down the action. I think he's right. Now the action goes straight through."

## The Face-Hugger

"I worked as an industrial designer in Zurich, so when they told me what the alien had to do, I could see the beast in terms of its functions. I designed the face-hugger with a spring-like tail—so it could jump out of the egg." One sketch shows a child's jack-in-the-box to suggest this function. "And it has two great hands to hold the man's head. It is a practical biological form."

"We were having troubles, so I spent most of the time working on the egg and the big alien. We got Roger Dicken to build the face-hugger and chest-burster—and he did them very well. They are taken from my paintings."

"But I also made a face-hugger. It had a skeleton inside that you could see through a translucent skin. But there was no time for me to finish it. I think now that what we do have looks very good." He adds with great relish: "It's real ugly!"

## The Chest-Burster

Executive-Officer Kane endures two of the most gruesome agonies ever filmed: The face-hugger burns its way with body acids through the face-plate of Kane's space helmet and attaches itself to his head, and a later "larval" stage of the thing erupts out of his chest where it has been incubating—unknown to Kane or anyone else.

"You know the painter Francis Bacon?" (A modern Irish expressionist—also known for his grisly subjects.) "He did a crucifixion in 1945, and there is a kind of beast in it that has a head that is only a mouth. Ridley said he wanted something like that. It was logical. This beast has to come out, to chew and claw its way out of a man's chest. The only important thing is teeth."

"I tried to do several things with the chest-

burster. He started out with arms and legs, but later we made them only small. Now he's like the long skull of the big alien—a long skull with teeth and a tail."

## The Adult Alien

Those working on the film called him "the big chap," or "the big fellow." The nickname is not affectionate. The adult—as seen in the film—is huge and menacing and dark and loaded with teeth. Had the sets been more brightly lighted, though, audiences would have seen a tall, slender, half-lizard-half-man creature with a tusk-shaped, extruded skull and an almost equally long tongue, a tongue that was equipped with a full set of vampirish teeth. And he has no eyes!

"In the first design for the alien, he had big black eyes. But somebody said he looked too much like a... what do you call it... a Hell's Angel; all in black with the black goggles. And then I thought: It would be even more frightening if there are no eyes! We made him blind! Then when the camera comes close, you see only the holes of the skull. Now that's really frightening. Because, you see, even without eyes he always knows exactly where his victims are, and he attacks directly, suddenly, unerringly. Like a striking snake."

"Then I started thinking. That long skull ought to have a function. I thought: I can make a long tongue come out. The end of the tongue even looks like the head of the chest-burster. See the muscles and tendons of the jaw? We made them out of stretched and shredded latex contraceptives."

"There was a tall black person, and we made a cast of his body to build the alien suit on. We built up details with plasticene and even some real bones—for the rib cage. And we used tubes and piping and other technical stuff. This is my way, you see: he is half organic and half technical. The alien's biomechanical."

"Then we made the suit out of rubber, for a stuntman to wear. After we had the pieces of the skull, we gave it to Carlo Rambaldi, and he made the mechanics inside to make the tongue work. And I think it works wonderfully."

What is H.R. Giger's future? Will he work on another film?

"You know, many people think cinema is a third-class art form. Dali worked mainly for the theatre, for opera and ballet. He did that dream sequence in *Spellbound* for Hitchcock, but little else for cinema. But I don't think this is so. Cinema is today. We have to change the thinking of these old-fashioned people. I would very much like to do another film. I like *Alien*, and I like my work in it. Next time, I would like to do more of the film."

"But I don't want to do film often. It takes too much time. It is painting that I do. I must get back to it."

Who does Giger paint for?

"My paintings seem to make the strongest impression on people who are, well, who are crazy. A good many people think as I do. If they like my work they are creative... or they are crazy." \*