

### 2.3.2.7. Erotic paintings

#### **Erotomechanics**

The *Erotomechanics* series is perhaps the most sexually explicit of all Giger's works, as it depicts the act in a more explicit manner. *Erotomechanics* consists of seven striking airbrush paintings measuring 70 x 100 cm. The central theme is the representation of the sexual act and the monumental anatomies of the genital organs. The scenes that make up the series emphasise penetration and feature an abundance of penises and vaginas, captured at the moment of sexual intercourse. Scenes of fellatio, sodomy and coitus are depicted. *Erotomechanics VII* features two female bodies connected to machines, which appear to be engaging in cyber sex. The images have a finish reminiscent of engraving and screen printing, and the anatomies are monumental in nature. The figures have great volumetric force, resembling sculptural reliefs.

The organs are transformed into mechanical devices, sexual machines. These are erotic-sexual visions surrounded by a technified world. The human body and technology are perfectly synthesised, like components of a large machine, in which tubes, plates and mechanical elements emerge. They are mixed with real objects such as suspenders, but represented from Giger's particular biomechanical vision. The compositions present close-ups of the act. They possess dynamism in that one senses the movement that has been frozen as in a photographic snapshot. The common factor is penetration and tubular movements.

They can be interpreted as a metaphor for modern life and the future of humanity, in which bodies have been penetrated and transformed by technology. It is a dark and mysterious vision, which encapsulates the dangers of scientific progress. The abstract backgrounds enhance the imposing figures.

The inspiration came from his relationship with Mia, his first wife, and his work on the film projects *Dune* and especially *Alien*, in the anatomies and structures of the alien ship, which are traversed by taut lines that give greater volume to the bodies.

He does this through close-ups, in a similar way to the treatment of sexual intercourse in pornographic films. Pornography is often defined as obscenity in literary and artistic works, but in the case of this series, Giger more openly expresses his aesthetic curiosity and artistic expression than a premeditated representation of obscenity. Furthermore, the theme of reproduction and the sex-death-birth cycle is one of the central themes in his work. In other cases, he works with the theme of gestation, childbirth or even the interior of the body. In this case, he focuses on the sexual act itself.

However, he takes a "scientific" approach, attempting to explore ways of representing the sexual act. His aim is perhaps to show the reality of sexual intercourse through a naturalistic and biomechanical view of human anatomy and physiology. Therefore, by being naturalistic in this sense, it is less erotic and more scientific, as it is treated in the manner of anatomical illustrations. In this series, he creates erotographs, visual images that are obscene, thus producing plastic pornography. The obscene is associated with the dirty, and also with the repulsive.

Giger deals with the theme of the erotic from the dialectic of the nude, and in the *Erotomechanics* he focuses in detail on the act of copulation. His erotic repertoire focuses on the perverse. In this case, Giger is obscene/pornographic, as he shows rather than suggests. He is more direct in this series than in other works, where he also uses metaphor as a poetic device.

Giger projects his fantasies and nightmares onto the pictorial plane. But no description is pornographic unless the fantasies of

an observer are added; nothing is pornographic per se, as the American psychoanalyst Robert Stoller<sup>198</sup> points out.

Giger also brings certain childhood traumas into the visual arts. In a way, he represents male sexual potency. In fact, the penises that abound as an iconographic motif in his work are always erect, never flaccid, and are usually associated with weapons or metal objects. A rigorous aesthetic analysis must consider the repetition of motifs, forms and works, as well as the representation of the human body as a copulating machine.

Bruckner and Finkielraut, in denouncing what they call "male totalitarianism," conclude with this definition of pornography: "An attempt by the male body to annex the female body to its own fantasy, making it the universal norm of sexuality." Women are often depicted in Giger's work as enslaved by machines and harassed by monsters that seek to violate their bodies.

The female body is one of Giger's greatest sources of inspiration. He uses an ideal that we find when analysing his drawings and paintings, and which is close to the symbolist aesthetic ideal of the 19th century. Erotic representations are part of the work of almost all artists, who have continually been accused of obscenity.

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<sup>198</sup> STOLLER, Robert J. - *Perversion, the erotic form of hatred*, The Harvester Press, Sussex, 1976.

<sup>199</sup> BRUCKNER, Pascal and FINKIELRAUT, Alain. *El nuevo de-sorden amoroso*, Editorial Anagrama, Barcelona, 1979.



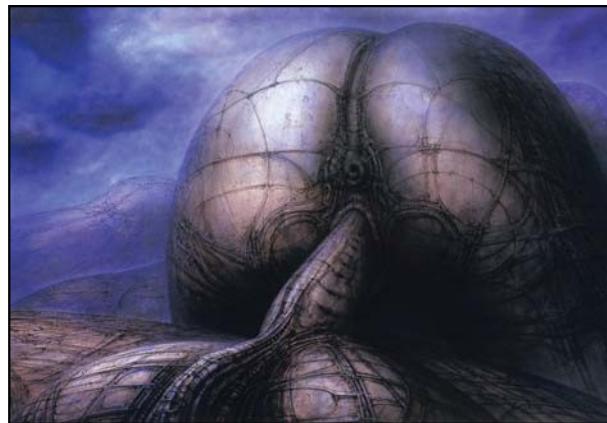
179- *Erotomechanics IV* (1979)



180- *Erotomechanics VI* (1979)



181- *Erotomechanics IX (Fellatio)* (1979)



182- *Erotomechanics V* (1979)



183- *Erotomechanics VII* (1979)



184- *Erotomechanics VIII* (1979)

### 2.3.2.8. *New York City* and the paintings of the eighties

Giger dedicated one of his pictorial series to New York City, due to his fascination with the metropolis. Based on various visits to the city, and especially his stay there for the American premiere of *Alien*, he developed the series using the stencil technique he had just experimented with when painting *Anima Mia* (1980-81). The series comprises 22 paintings measuring between 100 x 70 cm and 140 x 200 cm.

The series, produced in 1981, is one of the most interesting sets in his pictorial work. It marks the beginning of the period that spanned the 1980s, which would conclude with his abandonment of the airbrush technique.

It is the first series in which he worked directly with stencils, spraying through them, combining technological motifs from their structures with other freehand drawings that intertwine with the former. These small lead stencils came from electronic components and were provided by his collaborator Cornelius de Fries while searching through computer and electronic waste. De Fries worked alongside Giger developing his furniture programme. This produces a symbiosis of *Giger's* forms, that is, his characteristic style in which he develops his artistic discourse on biomechanics with other abstract resources. The use of stencils emphasises the verticality of the paintings. This resource is ideal for iconographically alluding to skyscrapers, the archetypal image of the American city.

He worked without sketches, drawing directly with the spray gun on paper. In his early works, he already used prints and borders as well as industrial waste. These built skeletons, faces, gargoyles, tubes, revolvers, snakes and cockroaches make up these large machines like grids, the product of a gigantic industry. It is yet another example of the mixture between the organic and the mechanical, which constitutes a terrifying document of our time.

This series continues the line begun by the temple paintings of the mid-1970s, executed before his foray into film projects, *Dune* and *Alien*. Modern architectural structures such as the facades of the

UN building and iconic buildings such as the twin towers of the World Trade Centre in New York. At this point, inspired by this, he began a series of small-format paintings. The series took shape in his studio in Zurich. He comments on it:

New York itself has been a constant presence throughout the project. Some memories of this magical city floated around whether I was painting or not. And I continue to try to control this abyss, this soulless city they call "New York," and articulate my own reactions and perceptions in the composition. But if anyone thinks that the stencil technique makes the work go faster, they will be disappointed: even more hours and days of endless searching, working and looking for solutions are captured in these paintings. I am afraid that in practically all my previous work" <sup>(200)</sup>.

In 1981, Giger published the book *H.R. Giger New York City*, which contained reproductions of the entire series and various texts. In his foreword, Timothy Leary commented: "I search for words to describe these scientific chronicles, so precise, that they are like pieces of my own body...Our primitive, pre-scientific language has few expressions to communicate the sinister and terrifying facts that Giger reveals to us (...) Clearly, he has managed to activate brain circuits that control the body's unicellular politics, botanical technologies, amino acid machines. Giger has become the official portraitist of biology's golden age. Giger's work confuses and disturbs us because of its enormous evolutionary dimension and makes a ghostly impression on us. It shows us too clearly where we come from and where we are going (...). Giger's art illuminates the exploration of biological intelligence down to the dark basements of our cities..." <sup>201</sup>

The series could be related to the theories of Ernst Fuchs and his work *Architectura caelestis*. Architecture acts as a scale for man, and the human body as an organising element of architectural space. In this case, Giger's vision is apocalyptic.

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<sup>200</sup>*H. R. Giger. N. Y. City*. Sphinx Verlag, Basel, 1981.

<sup>201</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

The series takes a dark look at contemporary civilisation, not only at its buildings but also at genetic structures and DNA chains and the larval nature of human beings. It is a highly personal pictorial ensemble dedicated to a city and modern architecture in a metaphorical and literary key, with allusions to various myths and themes of contemporary culture. It is a futuristic vision of the city that captures everyone's attention, reflecting technology, the myth of progress and Western society, a centre of avant-garde and tradition. A complex web, much like contemporary human life, with numerous dark areas in shadow. Skyscrapers and the idea of the metropolis of tomorrow run throughout the series. The biomechanical vision and the organic worlds that blend with the mechanical ones are very evident here.

Debbie Harry says of the series that "her paintings become traffic, buildings, skyscrapers... for me, all of that is New York... I understand perfectly what it's about"<sup>202</sup>

Most of the paintings are in vertical format. In them, different rhythmic bands run vertically or diagonally across the composition, into which skeletons, masks, zoomorphisms and anamorphisms are inserted. The feeling of many paintings is one of chaos, of an asphalt jungle. A nightmarish, post-industrial world is depicted.

With this series, Giger closes a cycle of architectural compositions that began with drawings such as *Stadt*, continued with his paintings of temples and film designs (*Dune*, *Alien*) and now returns to the theme of the city. In the 1980s, he transferred his spatial concepts to reality with the construction of furniture and bars.

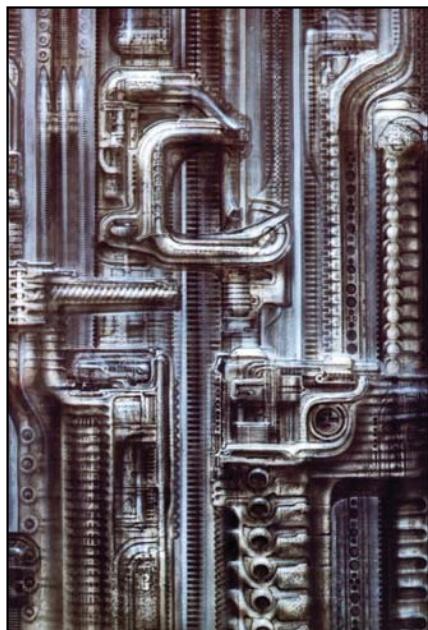
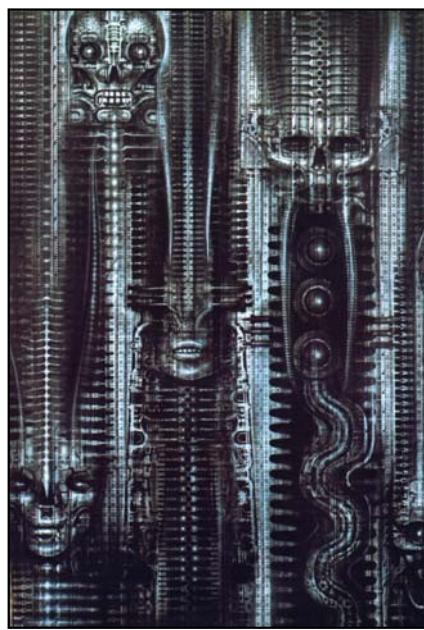
He explored the possibilities of stencils and their geometries not only in the New York series, but also in other series and paintings such as the large-format painting *Chinese Evolution* (1981-84). He continues to create monstrous figures that envelop female beauties and deal with themes such as evolution, reproduction, bodily fragmentation, and the body as victim.

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<sup>202</sup>Debbie Harry on a BBC programme.



185-New York City XII. *Science fiction* (1981) 186-New York X, *Chelsea Beasts*  
(1980-81)



187-New York XI. *Exotic* (1980-81)

188-New York XVIII (1981)



189- *Chinese evolution* (1981-84)

This period was dominated by commissions for the film industry (*The Tourist*, *Poltergeist II*) and furniture design (*Tokio Bar*). However, he continued to paint at intervals, especially around 1983 and in 1986-1987, when he was freed from his other projects and took the opportunity to paint. In the paintings from this period, his works reflect less literary inspiration (except for some works such as *Satan's Bride* and *The Redeemer*). He painted more landscapes and abstract structures than figurative works. He experimented with new forms using stencils, as he had done in the New York series, and with colours such as red. He now began to repeat himself and paint landscapes with similar compositions. The formats he used were similar, using paper for small formats and painting on wood for larger ones.

### **Red Paintings**

The red paintings are a striking ensemble in Giger's pictorial production, precisely because of their dominant tone. The series entitled *Victory* (1983) features works splattered with bright, phosphorescent colours, which would later lead him to create the so-called *Totems*, which are technical posters and nudes, crowned by a screaming head that stands out in a destroyed landscape<sup>203</sup>. The series consists of eight paintings in 70 x 100 cm format. Notable examples include *Victory V (Satan)*, *Victory VII (Punk)* and *Victory VIII (Homage to Max Ernst)*. At the same time, he created *Red Totem* and *Red Biomechanical Landscape*.

Giger created the red paintings before the Retrospective held in Pfäffikon in 1984. First, he filled the entire pictorial surface with fluorescent red spray paint. Then, using an airbrush, he creates a figure step by step, using lines and strokes. Behind the lines, a naked woman with her legs spread apart is revealed, looking at the viewer. Her pose suggests seduction, as well as triumph and inaccessibility.

The series takes on a diabolical quality, with nightmarish images that gradually merge. Giger uses stencils and red, white and black shading for the details. The nipples become thorns, the thighs seem to evolve into

<sup>203</sup> H.R. Giger's *Necronomicon II*, *Op.cit.*, p. 69.

duct structures. The woman resembles a queen who survives the powerful machines built by man. The artist then places the painting on the floor and splatters it with drops of red paint, running his fingertips over a brush dipped in paint. He then uses blotting paper to rub the red surface, creating a background that suggests storms of fire and clouds of smoke. The demonic figure appears surrounded by a magical aura. This effect creates a sense of mystery and unease. The woman seems to be separated from the continuity of space-time. Giger uses several tools in this series: airbrush, stencils, spray paint, blotting paper. Giger comments on the series: *"This must be the kind of perspective a newborn has when looking back after being forced out of its mother's body"*<sup>204</sup>. Once again, the idea of monstrous and apocalyptic childbirth is present.

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<sup>204</sup>H.R. Giger's *Biomechanics*, *Op.cit.*



190- *Victory IV* (1983)



191- *Victory V* (1983)

## Bombs

The *Bombs* (1983) consist of paintings of robotic skulls, designed with upward movements. They are bombs without a target and their shapes are threatening, like that of a monstrous foetus. They serve to frighten, like scarecrows and totems.

They are the result of many small signs, figures, dreams. They make up a small artillery. Those titled *Totem* have the same structure, perhaps reinforcing the phallic structure. A lithograph called *Pareja-Bomba* (1983) serves as the starting point for this series of paintings.

In 1985, he created a small series entitled *Magma*, four paintings on paper, with red tones, depicting views of an erupting volcano. *Magma I* was larger (70 x 100 cm), but with the same motif.

He also has some works of literary inspiration, such as *Las trompetas de Jericó* (The Trumpets of Jericho) (1983–1987) (airbrush on photographic paper on aluminium, square format, 100 x 100 cm). In this work, he depicts a biomechanical woman with symbolic implications. Between 1985 and 1987, he painted *La novia de Satán* (Satan's Bride) (no. 581), 100 x 70 cm. Also between 1983 and 1987, he created *El Redentor* (The Redeemer) (no. 600) and *Der Strahler*, two very similar figures (they are practically the same).

He titled work no. 599 *Ciudad I (City I)*, created between 1983 and 1986, on wood, 70 x 50 cm. His continuous commissions must have temporarily distracted him from his personal creations, which is why he completed them over several years.

From 1986 onwards, his paintings *Kreislauf* (circulation, cycle), in which he combines the female body, penis, dog and monster, all with symbolic content, and *En la red* (1987), an erotic painting with intertwined anatomies reminiscent of Bellmer's drawings, stand out.

In 1986, on the occasion of his projects in Japan, he created *Japanese Excursion I* and *II*, which closely resemble landscape structures. In 1988, he produced *Pump Excursion I* (No. 610), 140 x 100 cm, with hidden, symbolic and literary meaning. He has several versions of this painting.

Around 1990, he produced his last airbrush paintings.



192-Bombs I (1983)



193-The Redeemer (1983-87)



194-Magma II (1985)



195-Pumpexcursion I (1988)

### **2.3.2.9. Collaborations with other artists**

Giger has worked jointly with other creators. His most important collaborations were in the 1970s, with painters Sandoz and Wegmüller, and in the 1980s with painter Martin Schwarz. On both occasions, the result can be seen in paintings that are the fruit of Giger's joint work with these artists.

Another type of collaboration has been due to his relationship with the world of cinema, since, with the exception of *Alien*, where he designed and materialised his ideas, in his other films, teams of technicians from the special effects departments have translated Giger's concepts. In this regard, it is interesting to note his relationship with Steve Johnson and Amalgamated Dynamics, the latter responsible for the films in the *Alien* saga.

#### ***Tagtraum: collaboration with Swiss artists Claude Sandoz and Walter Wegmüller***

The three of them locked themselves away for two weeks in a country house in Sottens, which they used as a workshop to carry out a new artistic experiment with psychedelic connotations: the creation of the *Tagtraum* (*Daydream*) environment, which consisted of the joint creation of four paintings. In the first of these, they developed their worlds from silhouettes drawn on the floor. In the remaining three, each artist set the guidelines and directions to be followed by the other two; they worked practically 24 hours a day, discussing their opinions and observations about the works and exchanging ideas.

Giger proposed the experiment to the other two artists, with the intention of seeing if something new could emerge from this encounter. These are three very different artists: Wegmüller, who uses magic in his compositions; Sandoz, with his particular cosmic world acquired after trips to India; and Giger himself, with his morbid visions of human beings in the age of modern technology.

Giger himself with his morbid visions of human beings in the age of modern technology.<sup>205</sup>

The first work they produced shows the combination of different techniques and symbolisms, with Giger's surface clearly recognisable, with its fusions of flesh and metal parts and its characteristic elements: skulls, weapons, monsters, female figures



196- Sandoz, Giger and Wegmüller (1973)

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<sup>205</sup>H. R. Giger. *Passagen.*, Op.cit.



197- Sandoz, Giger and Wegmüller. *Tagtraum* (1973)



198- Giger/Martin Schwarz. *Passion* (1984)

### 2.3.3. Graphic design

Graphic design has been one of the most important facets of Giger's career. Noteworthy in this area are his commissioned works, particularly album covers and posters, which have been his two main areas of focus. Other objects have also served as a medium for his images, including designs for pins, diaries and wine bottle labels.

Giger's graphic design is closely related to illustration and advertising. In his early days as a creator, he produced illustrations for Swiss magazines and journals inspired by literary works, developing during his training the ability to adapt ideas and concepts when visualising his drawings. He would go on to make use of this skill in his designs. Around 1968, he became fully involved in the Swiss art and music scene, receiving commissions to design posters. Shortly afterwards, he also created the album covers for these same groups.

### **2.3.3.1. Posters**

With his training and extensive literary culture, Giger was able to transform ideas and concepts into visual messages, a skill he would also use to project his concerns throughout his work. He made a name for himself in the field of graphic design, which catapulted his career. Giger developed his skills as a poster artist from his early days as an artist. His vision as a graphic designer, producing images projected as headers to illustrate a film or event, gave him an important connection to pop culture and the world of advertising, creating designs related to the marketing of certain products (records, films). Giger's career, especially after the success of *Alien*, has been oriented towards more commercial aspects, as he has developed commissioned work, mainly for the world of cinema and music, in parallel with his personal creations. However, from his earliest works, he has combined both tasks, as these commissions have brought him fame and prestige. Since 1967, Giger has been known in the underground and rock cultures thanks to his designs and the international distribution of his posters. His style thus acquires a

very direct and striking visual imprint that aims to seduce the viewer. The impact of his images is one of the keys to the attraction and fascination that his works arouse among the avant-garde of the underground and in other sectors of popular culture.

Posters have the ability to attract attention and convey a message clearly and directly. As Joan Costa says, "a poster is a bi-media message (image-text), which is the result of graphic design work, that is, mental synthesis and creative abstraction to convey concentrated information instantly and with maximum effectiveness"<sup>(206)</sup>. This is repeated in the case of album covers, which are related to the musical content and aesthetics of the group. Both the poster and the cover have the mission of informing, but also of stimulating or convincing. In this sense, we will look at the artistic values developed by Giger in his work as a poster artist and their historical and contemporary significance. The poster contains special psychological aspects, formulating ideas and sensations. Giger continues, in a way, the German poster tradition, developing his interest in machines and mechanical elements by incorporating them into the poster as prominent artistic elements. In this sense, he connects with what Josep Renau states: "The precise interplay of volumes and the cold balance emanating from mechanical forms determine the stylistic basis of all advertising art. Men and things are mechanised, the entire cosmos is geometrised, dehumanised. The machine becomes the fetish of the advertising artist" <sup>207</sup>. Without a doubt, the machine and its interaction with the organic and the human are basic aspects of Giger's work, and he repeatedly applied this concept in his posters, maintaining a direct relationship with his personal work, as we can clearly see in *Birth Machine*. This work would become his first great success. Giger comments that in 1968 he was constantly being asked for reproductions of this work, which led him to the idea of producing posters so that young people could have access to his works at a low price <sup>208</sup>. He made a print run of 200 copies and thought about

<sup>206</sup> Various authors. *Los carteles del IVAM*, Generalitat Valenciana, Valencia, 2002.

<sup>207</sup> RENAU, Josep. *Op.cit.* p.46.

<sup>208</sup> H.R. Giger's *Necronomicon*, *Op.cit.*, p.48.

the way to distribute the posters, showing them to friends and acquaintances. This coincided with the opening in Zurich of Switzerland's first poster shop, Wizard & Genius, which distributed psychedelic paintings and American underground magazines. This shop was a meeting place for hippies and artists, in a space decorated in the fashion of the moment and flooded with posters. In approximately 1969, H.H. Kunz, collector and co-owner of Wizard and Genius, printed his first posters featuring Giger's paintings, which were distributed worldwide. Kunz served as artistic director of this shop and publishing house. He kept the entire print run of these *Birth Machine* posters, thus covering the printing costs. Kunz sold the entire edition and decided to print more of Giger's works in offset. He chose three works: *Birth Machine* again, due to its success, *Playmate (Head I)* and *Genius*, printing a run of 5,000 copies each. They were sold throughout Europe and America and were considerably successful, as Wizard and Genius continued to use Giger's designs and drawings on further occasions. Giger estimated that by 1976, around 100,000 posters featuring his designs had been sold worldwide<sup>209</sup>. This fact speaks to the popularity Giger achieved during the 1970s in certain circles, especially in the vibrant music scene of rock and pop culture.

In *Playmate* (1966) [199], against a background in which bone structures can be discerned, a female figure is depicted as a metaphor for the atomic bomb, rising above a field of destruction. Rather than an aesthetic ideal, the figure is the result of the artist's automatic production, mixing defined facial elements such as eyes, nose, mouth and chin and merging the rest with other structures. This work is linked to the airbrush portraits of his partner Li Tobler. In fact, one of them is very similar, but with much more elaborate forms and more sophisticated iconographic allusions. The figure recalls the atomic age in which we live, in a world at war and latent conflict, but with greater terror, since we know from television and photography what happened in Hiroshima and the radioactive effects it had on the skin and the human body as agents of physical degradation.

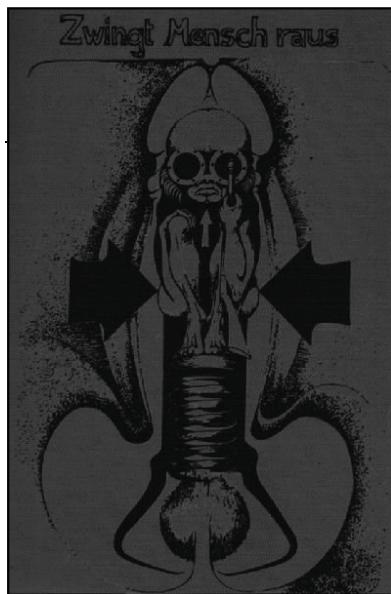
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<sup>209</sup>*Ibid.*

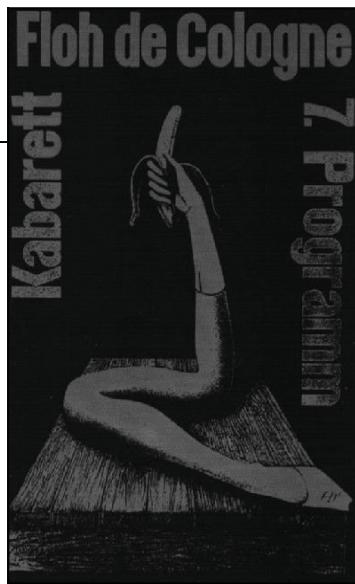
turning its victims into monstrous beings. Giger is inspired by these images of his time.



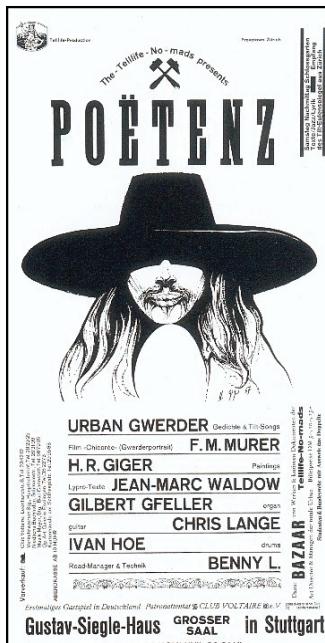
199- *Head I (Playmate)* (1966)



200- *Zwingt mensch raus* (1967)



201-Poster for the Floh group in Cologne (1968)



202-Poster for *Pöetenz* (1967)



203-Poster for the exhibition at the Petersen Gallery  
Petersen Gallery (1985)

One of his first commissions came from a friend of his, Markus Schmidt, guitarist with the Swiss political rock group Floh de Cologne (Flea of Cologne), for whom he designed the 1967 poster entitled *Zwingt Mensch raus (Get the man out)* [200], which became controversial and was censored during a concert by the band in Wuppertal (Germany) for being considered obscene. The drawing depicted a bullet boy inside a penis, flanked by an arrow on each side and resting on a spring, conveying the sensation of being expelled outwards. In addition to the image, the title is significant. In 1968, he also designed another poster for the band, featuring a biomechanoid figure holding a peeled banana [201].

Prior to these posters, Giger had already drawn the main image for the poster for Urban Gwerder's show, called *Poetenz* in 1967 [202], in which Giger would participate by exhibiting his drawings and short films. He has two posters featuring Gwerder, one with a hat covering part of his face and another in which he wears glasses, presenting him in both as an enigmatic figure of the Swiss counterculture movement.

The cover image for Emerson, Lake and Palmer's album *Brain Salad Surgery*, also designed by Giger, was widely distributed as a poster in the subculture circles of the 1970s, due to the great success of the work and the thousands of copies sold. In this way, Giger's work took on an international character.

Giger also designed posters for some of his exhibitions, such as the one held at the Sydow-Zirkwitz Gallery in Frankfurt in 1975, which depicts a child/biomechanoid typical of Giger's creations at the time, surrounded by machinery, tubed with it and with Gigerian iconographic elements such as straps and submachine guns [204]. Later, in 1988, the Petersen Gallery in Berlin held an exhibition for which Giger designed a new poster based on one of his 1985 paintings, *Satan's Bride II*, with erotic and demonic content [203]. The poster contains basic information about the exhibition, the artist's name, the dates of the event and details of the gallery, opening hours, address and telephone number. In 1990, he designed the poster for his first exhibition held in Gruyères entitled "Alien dans ses

*meubles*" (*Alien Among His Furniture*), which led him to fall in love with this town and its picturesque landscapes, a relationship that would culminate in the establishment of his museum in the castle. For this poster, he created a painting with a fantastical view of the city: on one side, houses can be seen with the castle in the background; behind them rises a mountain crowned by the head of an enigmatic sorceress who radiates energy as if she were the sun.

In other exhibitions, Gigerian figures have been adapted for posters, such as the figure of Baphomet <sup>210</sup>that appears in his painting *The Spell IV*, used in exhibitions in Japan and at the Kunsthaus in Zurich in 1977. One of the last major exhibitions dedicated to Giger, held in Milan in 1996, was headed by the famous skull from the cover of Emerson, Lake and Palmer's album *Brain Salad Surgery*.

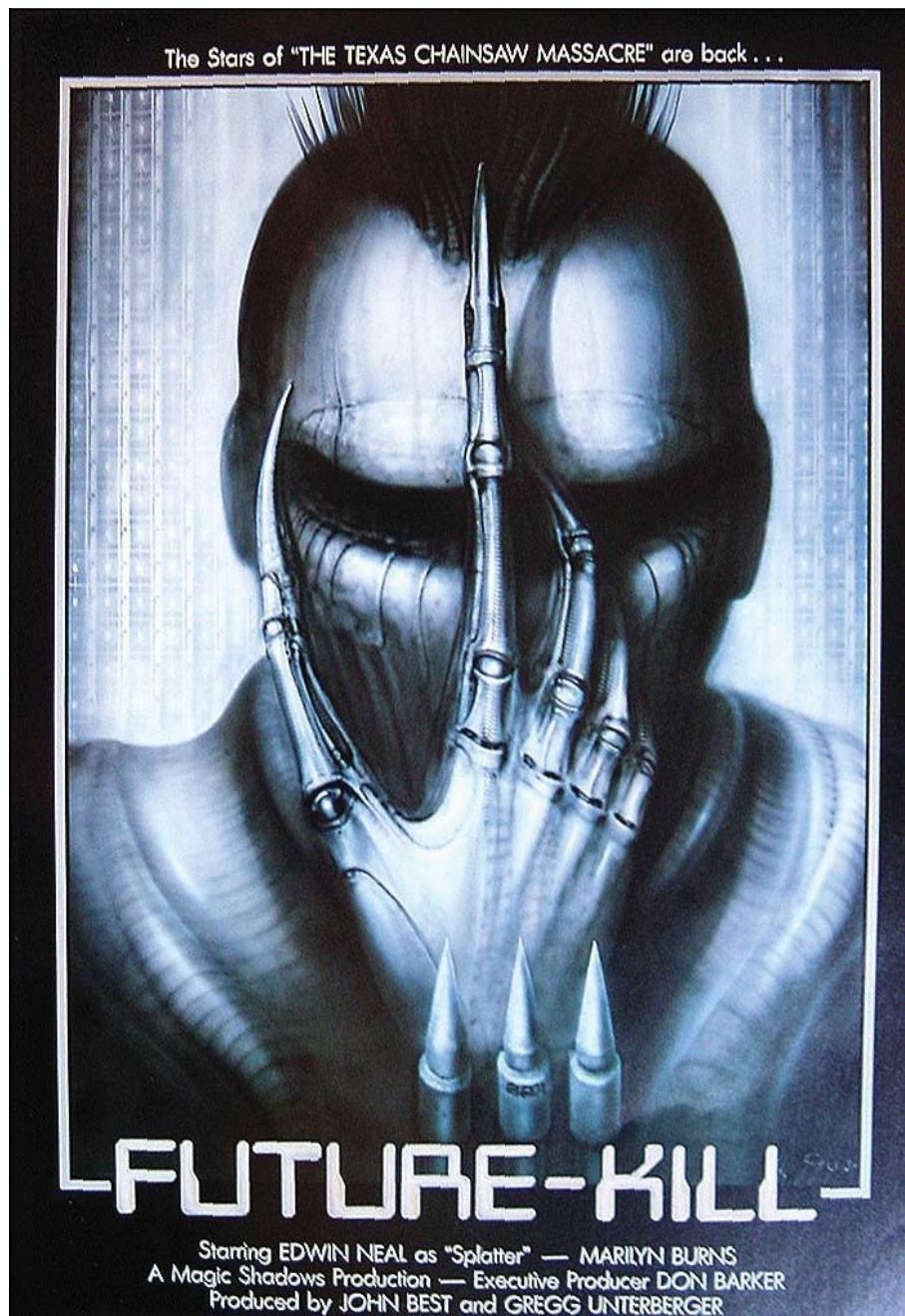
One of the most interesting creations in this section was the image that Giger created for the poster for the film *Future Kill* (Ron Moore, 1984) [205]. He created the poster on direct commission from the film's director, producing one version in red and another in grey and blue. The first has the same feel as the paintings he created during those years, specifically the *Victory* series, i.e. reddish tones, with the contours of the figure blurred against the background. The second, which would ultimately be the final version, bears chromatic and stylistic similarities to the stencil drawings he had been making since 1980 from the *New York City* series, which are characterised by a marked futuristic touch. Giger constructs the image of the prototype cyberpunk character, with the mohawk as an emblem of rebellion in punk iconography and the biomechanical touch in the composition of the hand, the sombre face and the attire. The background is reminiscent of the *New York City* series due to the stencil structures. Although the film did not go down in history, the image became an icon of the cyberpunk genre, which would pay various tributes to it in its novels and stories. The pensive attitude generates various interpretations, although the character may be covering his face.

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<sup>210</sup> This motif has been repeated many times since it was used on the cover of his book *Giger's Necronomicon*.



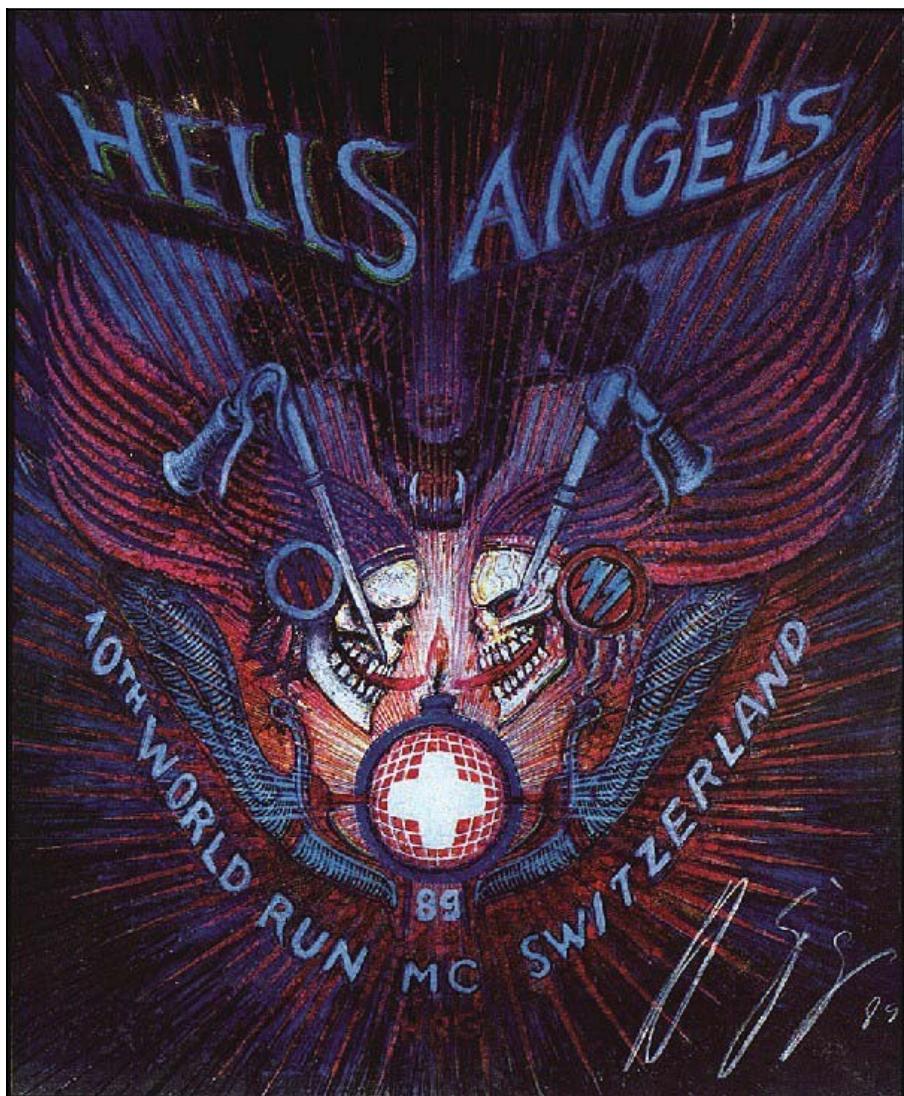
204- *Biomechanoid*. Poster for the exhibition at the Sydow Zirkwitz gallery (1975)



205- Poster for the film *Future Kill* (1984).

In 1989, he designed the poster for the Swiss *Hell Angels* [206] for the tenth international meeting of Hell's Angels in Agasul. He made several sketches using wax pencils and markers and created a poster combining the traditional iconography of these motorcyclists with skulls, long hair and the handlebars of their motorcycles. He also introduced a sensual female leg with high heels and spurs and the figure of a demon at the top of the composition. In the centre, he placed a round bomb with the fuse already lit, with the Swiss flag inscribed on it. This group had already caught Giger's attention in 1967, and due to his fascination, he made an ink drawing depicting a group of bikers stalked by vampires.

Giger has participated in various film festivals. He designed the poster for the Oulu Film Festival in Finland (1993), featuring designs of his biomechanoids, pins and other figures that appear in *The Mystery of St. Gotthard*. For the 13th Brussels Fantastic Film Festival held in 1995, one of Giger's images from a parallel exhibition was used for the festival poster, specifically the painting *The Saxophonist*.



206- Poster for the Hell Angels meeting (1989)

### 2.3.3.2. Album covers

Giger's relationship with the world of music goes back a long way. It began in his teenage years, when he was fascinated by jazz. At this stage of his life, he aspired to be a musician and learned to play the saxophone and piano, two instruments prone to improvisation, a facet he liked for its creative freedom and communication skills. He decorated a room in his parents' house to play jazz with his friends, the *dark room*, for which he designed a macabre and sinister set design, which he would also use to try to seduce girls. In 1965, he created the drawing *The Saxophonist*, a biomechanical figure with a saxophone embedded in his body. In many of his works, he has incorporated elements or characters related to music.

The meeting point between visual arts and music is undoubtedly the album cover. An entire art form has developed around the graphic and conceptual design of album covers, through which we find outstanding designers and artists who, at a specific point in their careers, took on this facet. As Gus Cabezas rightly points out: "since its origins, rock has had an undeniable visual and aesthetic component... rock is image. And for a long time, before MTV and CD-ROMs, this image found its most perfect embodiment, apart from the artists' own appearance, in those 12-inch pieces of cardboard called covers"<sup>(211)</sup>. Much of rock's iconographic arsenal has emerged from these covers. "The explosion of pop and rock in the 1960s paved the way for generations of musicians who were aware of the importance of the visual reflection of their work and the creation of their own codes. Many of these covers have been illuminated by some of the great artists of 20th-century mass popular culture, such as Andy Warhol, Mapplethorpe and <sup>Crumb</sup>"<sup>(212)</sup> Giger would join this list with his creations in this field.

Many covers have become true icons of pop culture and an artistic form unique to an era. Rolling Stone magazine, one of the

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<sup>211</sup> CABEZAS, Gus. *Op. cit.*

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*

most important rock and pop magazines, published a survey in 1991 on the best album covers according to the criteria of the most influential critics, specialists, journalists and people in the record business who formed a jury to create a selection of the 100 best covers of the century, "the most comprehensive ever made", according to them. This selection included two works by Giger, the cover for the Emerson, Lake and Palmer album *Brain Salad Surgery* and the cover for singer Debbie Harry's album *Koo Koo*. Both have become his most recognised works in this field.

Giger's connections with the musical trends of his time have been constant, mainly due to his work as a record cover designer, for which he has achieved a certain status among avant-garde artists and musical groups. His career began in 1969, when he designed his first cover for the Swiss group Walpurgis [207]. It reflects the aesthetic achievements of his *Biomechanical* drawings and is reminiscent of both the lithographs in the series and the oil paintings of the period, such as *Phallelujah* (1968-69). These beings populate the cover, whose expressive power is based on the contrast between black and white, with dramatic overtones, as well as the eroticism of the vampires.

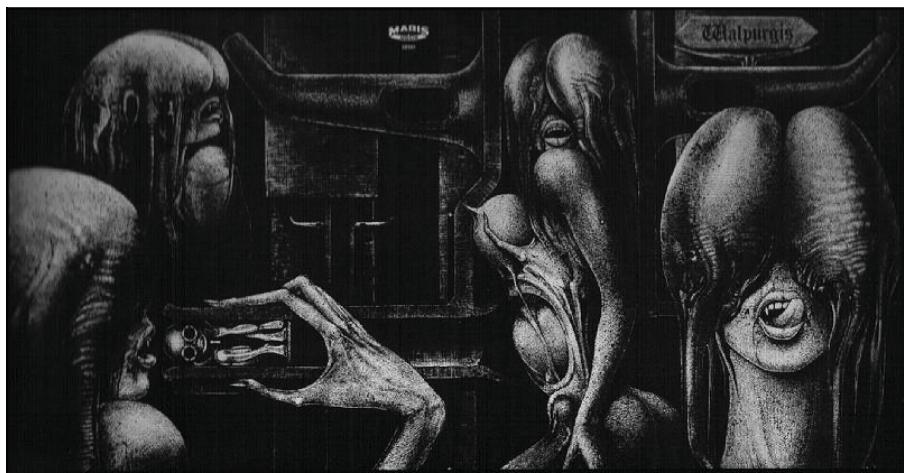
His next cover would bring him great success because the group that commissioned it, Emerson, Lake & Palmer, was very famous in the 1970s, and the album in question, *Brain Salad Surgery*, was widely marketed. Here we can see his technical and aesthetic evolution: he masterfully represents the contrast between the horrible, represented by death through a powerful symbol, the skull, and the beautiful, with the feminine face of a sorceress with hippie attributes, using sombre colours and metallic qualities in keeping with his biomechanical aesthetic.

Giger created two airbrush paintings: the one that forms the main cover and a second one that would be found underneath it and could be seen when the doors of the first one were opened. The visual and symbolic power of the image, with its macabre, gloomy and mysterious tone, is offset by the beautiful effigy of the woman, who appears to be sculpted in alabaster [208]. Once again, Giger plays with opposing meanings that seek to balance the composition.

The skull as a symbolic image of death is one of the iconographic motifs most frequently used by Giger in his painting. The image is striking and immediately captivates the viewer. The composition shows a skull in the centre between metal presses, reminiscent of the trepanations that took place in ancient cultures for magical and healing purposes. The skull reveals the mouth of a female figure. Giger considers the mouth to be one of the most attractive parts of the female anatomy [209]. On many occasions, her lips are parted, in mystical ecstasy that lends sensuality to the composition. In the inner image, which in the original design was seen opening the cover, we find a female face, in line with the beauty of the 19th-century symbolists, that is, a sensual, beautiful face with an enigmatic presence, usually with some symbolic attribute. In Giger's case, the image seems to refer to a sorceress, a recurring character in Giger's imagination, with a ribbon in her hair that gathers her biomechanical mane, reminiscent of hippie fashion.

The final image was altered to soften the "pornographic" tone that the painting originally had. The original title was going to be *Whip Some Skull On Ya*, but it was eventually changed to *Brain Salad Surgery*, and the cover reflected the gloomy and mysterious tone that the musicians wanted.

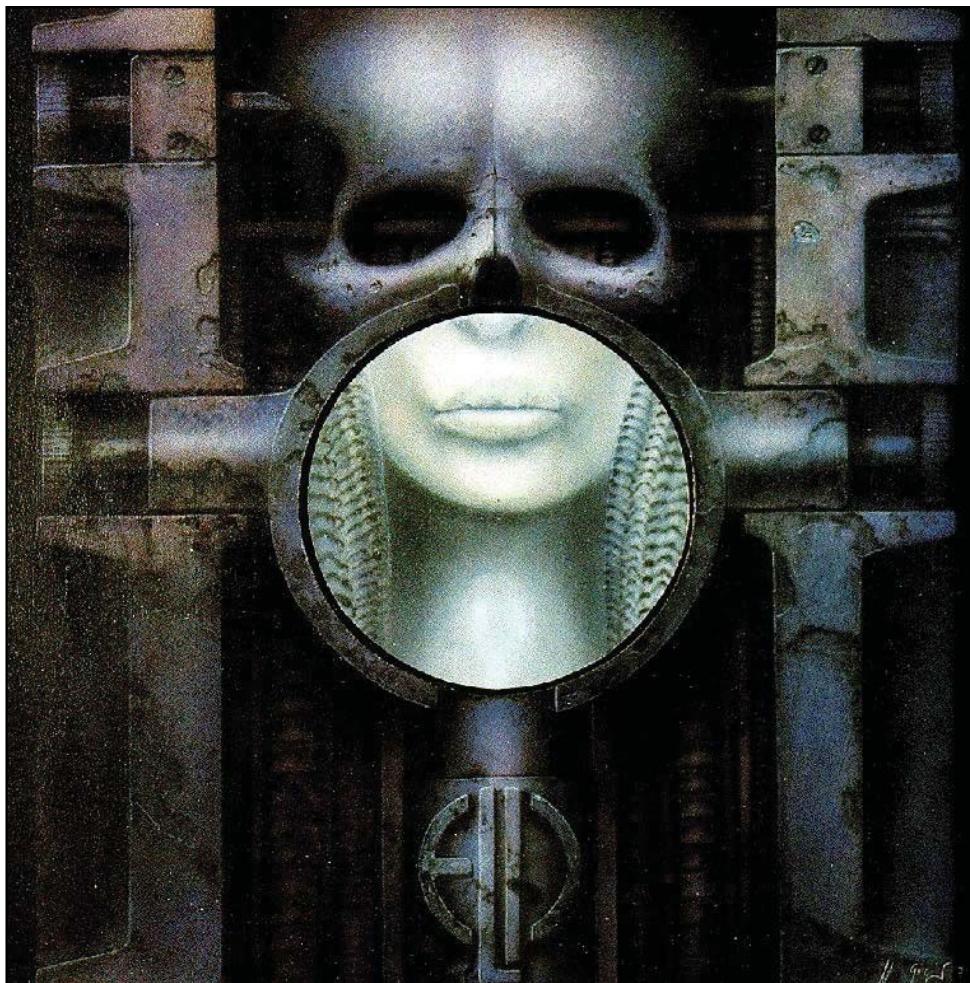
Giger emerged as an avant-garde designer for a sophisticated commission from a band that was, at the time, a champion of symphonic rock and enjoying great success and fame.



207- Cover for the band Walpurgis (1969)



208- *Brain Salad Surgery II* (1973)



209- Cover of *Brain Salad Surgery* (1973)



210- *The Magician* (1977)

In this work, he combines three recurring motifs in his work: skull-death/beauty woman/machinery. This interplay allows us to immerse ourselves in Giger's world, which is dominated, among other things, by these themes, sex and death as factors around which man revolves and his relationship with his environment, in an era marked by technological revolution and the constant presence of mechanical devices. In turn, Giger's art represents formal aspects driven by our inner selves, the psychological and cerebral, our intimate feelings that shape human actions.

In 1973, Giger and Li were living together in Oerlikon; he had finished the Passages series and was starting the temple paintings, intoxicated by the music of Miles Davis, Bowie and ELP. He created triptychs featuring babies, skulls and penises. For Giger, "this was my most productive period as a painter; then I received the news through ELP's Swiss manager that the band was interested in having me design a cover for their new album; the group was going to play two days at the Hallen Stadion in Zurich; I enthusiastically began the work; The title was supposed to be *Whip Some Skull On Ya*, which translates as fellatio, and the obvious thing for me was to combine lips, penises and skulls. The elements of my triptychs ended up on the cover. after the concert, Keith Emerson came to my house; I was excited because I had never dealt directly with a star before; suddenly the house was filled with people and the other two members of the group arrived, along with journalists, photographers, etc... Keith informed me that the title of the album was going to be different, *Brain Salad Surgery*, which almost made me faint, but he explained that this expression also conned fellatio"<sup>(213)</sup>.

Keith Emerson recalls when they visited Giger after their concert in Zurich: "The interior decoration was overwhelming, extremely gothic. From floor to ceiling, he had used his airbrush technique to transform a simple room into a cathedral that enveloped you... It was very dark and foreboding, and for me it represented the music of Emerson, Lake and Palmer... We saw the two paintings

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<sup>213</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 11-3-2003]. Available at: <[www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com)>.

by Giger; the second one was going to cause us problems with the record company because of the phallic object on the woman's face, with her explosive metal headdress. Finally, we asked Giger to soften the phallic object and he turned it into a ray of light"<sup>214</sup>. Giger would later include a fantastic figure playing the keyboards in his painting *The Magician* (1977) [210], in homage to the band's keyboardist<sup>215</sup>.

This success was followed by his most creative and productive period, during which he produced two of his most important collaborations with the film industry, *Dune* and *Alien*. Very soon he was commissioned to design a new album cover for Blondie, the queen of punk at the time. His relationship with this American pop star would include the concept for the new album, as well as the artistic direction for two of the music videos for two singles from the album. Giger used a photograph of the singer and made decorative modifications in a surrealist style, connecting her figure with the five elements, symbolically represented by acupuncture needles. The influence of Egyptian iconography is evident in his collaborations with Blondie. Giger recounts that for the cover design he worked in a surrealist manner without predetermining what he was going to do and interpreting it afterwards: "So Debbie's face was pierced by the needles, and it was only later that I discovered what they symbolised: the one piercing her eyes, fire; the one in the nose, air; the one in the mouth, water; and the one in the neck, earth; the fifth one seen in the video represents the spirit. I had worked surrealistically without realising it. Only afterwards does one understand the meaning and can explain it"<sup>216</sup>.

For Debbie and her partner Chris Stein, guitarist and composer for Blondie, the cover of the album *Koo Koo* represents a very important personal stage, with an explosion of fresh ideas with highly artistic content: "We enjoyed seeing how Giger got involved in the project without really considering the risk of creating an album with its commercial difficulties. The album itself, its production and creation... the image of Debbie pierced by needles, banned in the London Underground...<sup>217</sup>".

<sup>214</sup>*Ibid.*

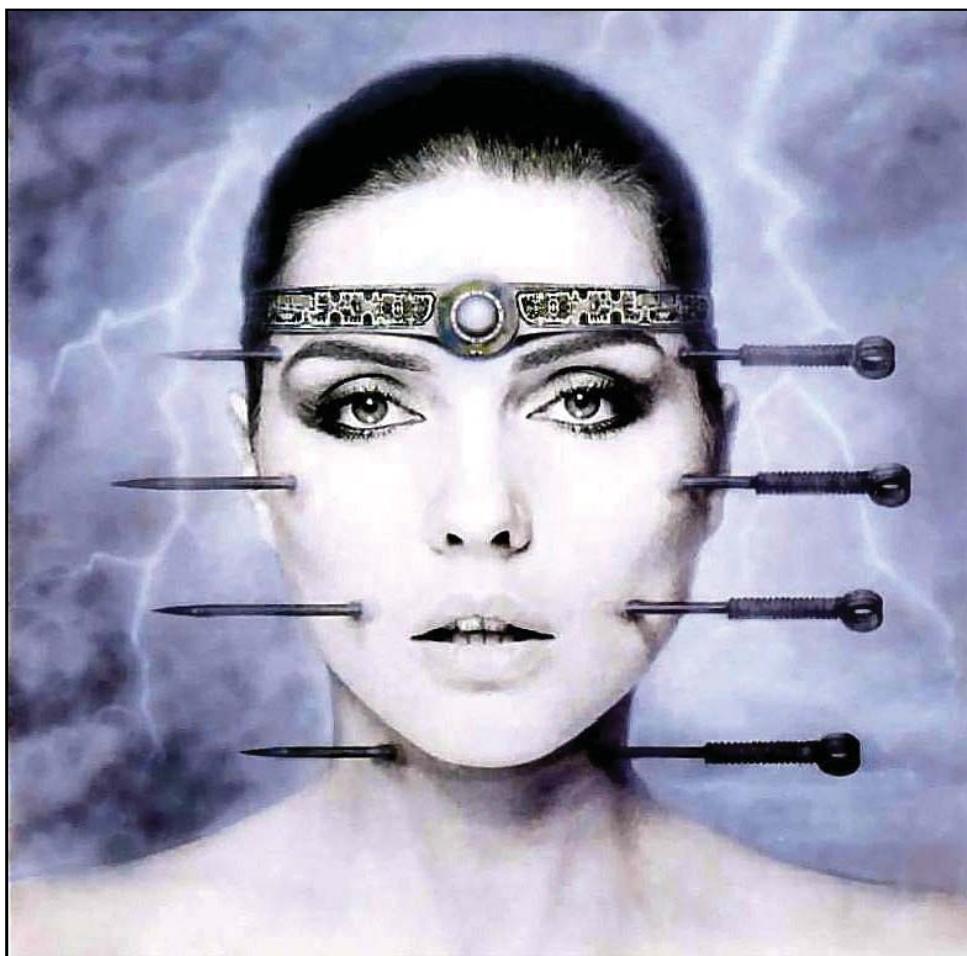
<sup>215</sup> This figure is frequently reproduced in tattoos.

<sup>216</sup> *Arh+*, *Op.cit.*, p. 63.

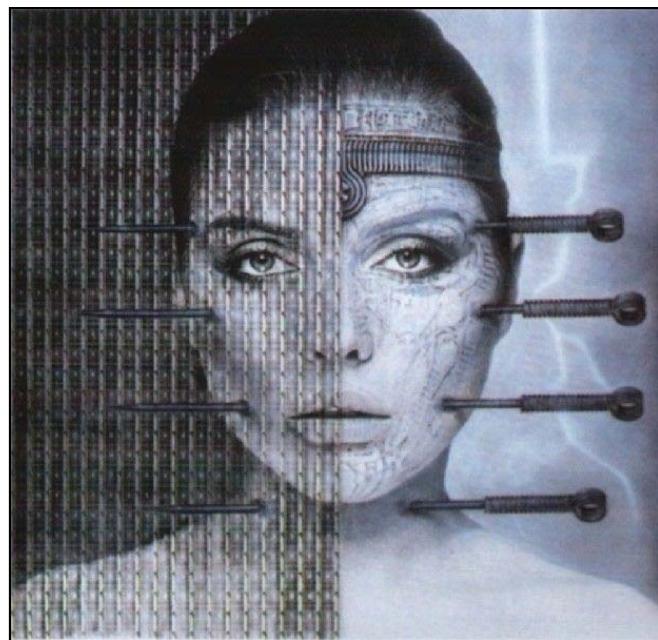
<sup>217</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 11-3-2003]. Available at: <[www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com)>.

A year later, Debbie Harry became David Cronenberg's muse for one of his most important films, *Videodrome* (1982), in which she played the female lead, the enigmatic Niki Brand.

His designs connect very well with the imagery of these music groups that operate in the underground scene and see some of their aesthetic ideals reflected in Giger's compositions. The biomechanical and the Gigeresque have an immense power of fascination and attraction among these avant-garde rock groups. They identify with many of Giger's characteristic symbols: the skull, the devil, the snake, the female body, the sexual act, the monster, the witch, death, weapons. This fascination extends beyond the aesthetic and visual realm, as numerous singers and musicians acknowledge being inspired by his paintings and characters in creating their musical compositions. As we will see in the third chapter when discussing the impact of his art, Giger's visual world has become an inspiration for musicians and creators over the last two decades.



211- Debbie Harry II. Cover of *Koo Koo* (1981)



212- *Debbie Harry I. Koo Koo* (1981)



213- *Debbie Harry III. Koo Koo* (1981)

Giger has designed six exclusive album covers and his images have appeared on several others. There are three types of covers:

- a- Those designed exclusively by him on commission from the groups E.L.P, Debbie Harry, Floh de Cologne, Attahk and Steven Stevens. These are undoubtedly the most important and famous covers.
- b- Those that use some of his images: Bands such as Sacrosant, Atrocity and Celtic Frost request the inclusion of one of Giger's images on their album covers. These covers are associated with heavy metal and thrash metal bands, which share a macabre and fantastical aesthetic that combines the techno-erotic with images of horror and monstrous beings. For this reason, he is also associated with the satanic, as these bands sometimes sing songs to the devil.
- c- Those who use his images in some way, such as on posters or in advertising, as in the case of the bands Dead Kennedys and Island.

For the cover design of Floh de Cologne (1974), *Mumien* [214] employed political content using images such as a grotesque soldier with symbols like the swastika, a submachine gun, a truncheon, bullets, belts and buckles. On the cover of Magma's *Attahk* (1978) [215], two figures appear dressed in what would become part of early *goth* aesthetics, so prevalent in the *dark* and punk trends of the 1990s<sup>218</sup>: two bald freaks, looking like children in science fiction leather suits (*Dune*), wear safety pin glasses that pierce their noses and hide their eyes. The background shows futuristic architecture with two towers. The landscape is techno-expressionist. It is the aesthetic of rock musicians, with a sickly appearance and expressionless, cadaverous skin. They are fantastic inventions created by Giger. The figures seem to correspond to an atomic future inhabited by inhuman beings, the product of scientific experimentation<sup>219</sup>. Another freak show character is the biomechanical child on Pankow's album *Freiheit fuer die Sklaven (Freedom for the Slaves)* (1987), adopted from a motif in a 1975 painting (which was used as a poster for the

<sup>218</sup> *Goth* and *dark* define a broad framework of trends that have developed since the 1980s in music, fashion, music videos and cinema and are related to what some critics describe as *new gothic*.

<sup>219</sup> These freaks are at the forefront of the apocalyptic aesthetic that would become popularised by the *Mad Max* films.

exhibition at the Sydow Zirkwitz gallery [204]), who is connected to a perverse machine by tubes and drips, in which the machine seems to feed on the child.

In 1986, he also created the ELP series on commission from the British group, alternating between various creations produced during these years, notably biomechanical forms applied with stencils and paintings with red tones.

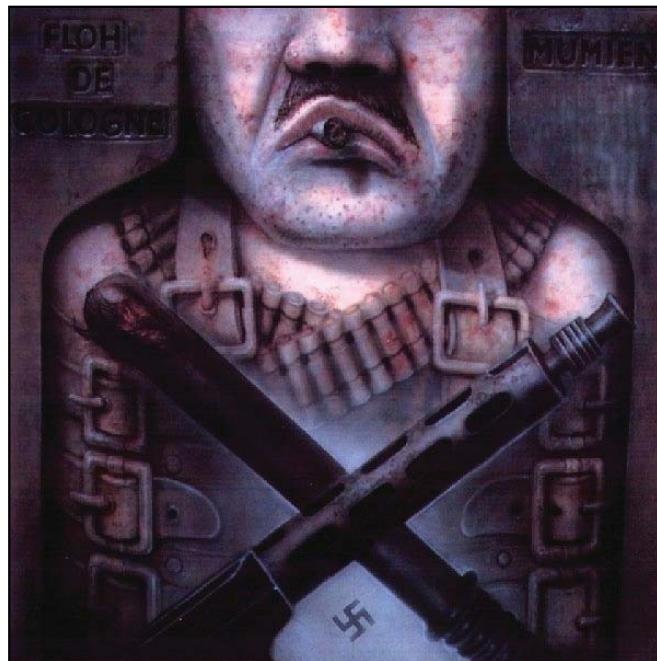
Later, in 1988, he was commissioned by guitarist Steven Stevens to design the cover for his album *Atomic Playboys* (1989) [216]. Here, Giger uses the figure of the jellyfish reinterpreted in a modern key, with biomechanical braids and her face tattooed with electronic circuits. The vision is very futuristic and technological. This is the spirit that the album seeks to convey with its new and overwhelming sounds. The lyrics of one of the songs, which gives the album its name, *Atomic Playboys*, read:

"I am an atomic mind, with a heart of gold... We are  
the Romeos of radiation..."

You build this body but you can't watch as the world explodes... Turn the city  
into sand."

It is a kind of cyberpunk prose, applied here to music. The metallic melodies and techno effects help to reinforce the message. Giger's image synthesises all this in the futuristic figure of the guitarist.

For the Carcass album *Heartwork* (1993) [217], he created an aluminium sculpture based on an earlier work from 1966-67 entitled *Receiving Life*, which depicts a biomechanoid formed by two arms with a drip, alluding to the crucifixion. But he replaces the cross with the hippie peace symbol.



214- *Mumien*. Cover for Floh de Cologne (1974)



215- *Attakh*. Cover for Magma (1978)



216- Cover for Steven Stevens, *Atomic Playboys* (1989)



217- Cover for Carcass, *Heartwork* (1993)

### 2.3.3.3. Adaptation of concepts and ideas

Giger connects with rock aesthetics, just as Andy Warhol had a close relationship with the New York music scene of the 1960s and 1970s (Velvet Underground). Giger's artistic relationship with music goes beyond cover design. Many musicians, such as the members of the German band Rammstein and the apocalyptic singer par excellence Marilyn Manson, have visited him at his home to meet him and seek inspiration. His biomechanical and futuristic aesthetic has elevated him to cult status among avant-garde transgressive rock cultures. He has also inspired the creation of music videos. He has been commissioned to create other objects, such as an iron mask to be included in a music video, and a microphone stand for singing and delivering messages to the audience. Stage sets have even been built based on his paintings, such as the stage built for singer Mylene Farmer's tour.

Giger's musical relationship encompasses a variety of styles, once again revealing the artist's eclectic nature and his ability to adapt his own style to the demands of bands, always seeking original solutions. From jazz to symphonic rock, from punk to heavy metal or trash, to electronic music and transgressive rock.

*In 1994, he created an iron mask to be used in the music video for Japanese singer and guitarist Hide, entitled *Hide your face*. He thus employs his iron sculptures representing metal funeral masks with straps and clocks.*

The stage design for Mylène Farmer's *Mylenium Tour 2000* world tour is based on the image of the sorceress she created for the cover of the album *Brain Salad Surgery* [208]. The stage is dominated by a gigantic sculpture of the sorceress; her face opens in the middle and the singer appears, descending a staircase inside the

woman [218-219]. The stage was created by the Paris Opera, inspired by this painting. The singer's staging is impressive: she descends on ropes invisible to the audience, as if landing from the sky, while the band accompanies her with music and the enthusiastic audience cheers her on.

One of his last commissions came from the heavy metal band Korn in 2000. The band's leader, Jonathan Davis, an admirer of Giger and his art, asked him to design a microphone stand for use in live performances [220-222]. Giger made several pencil sketches, based on his biomechanical figures and organic forms from the plant world such as stems, plants and vines, seeking stylised forms. The design is based on the stylised figure of a biomechanical woman made of aluminium, ideal for the staging that the band uses in their concerts. One leg and one arm held the microphone. From there, he went on to use the figure of the woman, combining the stylised curves of her figure with mechanical elements such as bullets, cables, tubes, keys and buttons. The result was a female figure standing on one foot on a circular support [223-224]. Giger made the sculpture out of lightweight aluminium so that it could be moved easily. The skull is sectioned off to accommodate the microphone.

Davis gave him free rein in the design, asking only for three conditions: that it be erotic, biomechanical and as manageable as possible. He was extremely satisfied with the result and has been using it in his latest tours and music videos (such as for the song *Thoughtless*).

For Jimmy Page, former guitarist with Led Zeppelin, "H.R. Giger's work is immensely powerful. Giger's wonderful cover for Emerson, Lake and Palmer's *Brain Salad Surgery* album has a gothic feel that suits any heavy metal band. Giger's *Koo Koo* cover for Debbie Harry is tremendously sensual, building on the image she developed as the Marilyn Monroe of rock and roll before anyone else tried. Debbie Harry's sexuality was aggressively concealed, thus continuing the fabulous extension of her image" (220).

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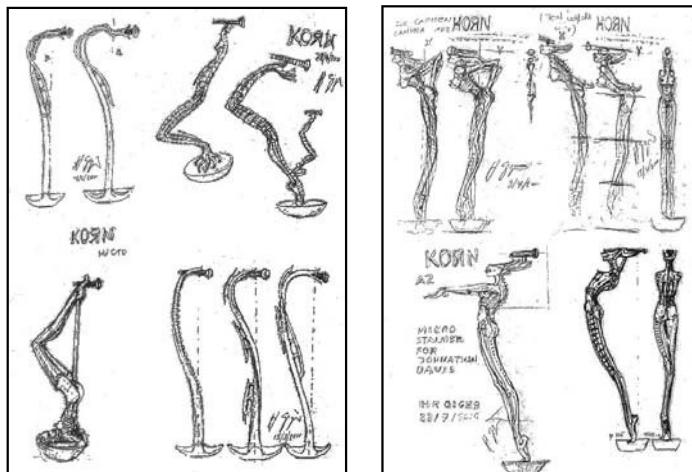
<sup>220</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 11-3-2003]. Available at: <[www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com)>.



218-219-Images from Mylene Farmer's Mylenium Tour 2000



220-222-Jonathan Davis and the microphone stand designed by Giger for Korn (2001)



223-224-Designs for Korn's microphone stand (2001)

#### 2.3.3.4. Other media

In 1986, he designed a label for the Lausanne wine bottle "Dolce vita" featuring a skeleton trapped in a mousetrap shooting fire from its mouth [225]. He later created an airbrush painting in 1991 with the same theme, which he titled *Death in a mousetrap*. Another interesting motif is the typographic design he has developed from his early works to the lettering on his museum. Naturally, he even applies the concept of biomechanics to painting the letters of his surname, as can be seen when contemplating his typographic evolution [227].

In the early 1990s, he designed pins featuring his biomechanoids based on the protagonists of his novel/comic *El Misterio de San Gottardo* (The Mystery of San Gottardo). He incorporated them into a five-pointed star-shaped case, with a hologram engraved on PVC in the centre. The star contained 25 pins. During those years, he also made pins featuring the design of his utopian *Swiss Transit* Tunnel project, which also features the five-pointed star. When he published his [bookwww.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com) (*The War of Beer in Chur*), he used the alien skier on the cover to produce a pin to give to members of his fan club. In 1993, he was commissioned by a member of the Chur carnival association to design a plaque with the title *The Beer War in Chur*. Giger attempted to merge the decline of the Church with that of the breweries in Chur, a topic that kept the local press in suspense for months. He produced a drawing that reflected both themes: on one side, a beer mug on the bishop's tiara with an inverted cross, both elements struck by lightning. The result shows Giger's humour and irony in dealing with ecclesiastical themes and subverting their iconography. Finally, the plaque was made of plaster and painted with metallic paint.

The latest media Giger has used to display his images are skateboards and skis, on which he has placed some of his best-known images, such as the figure of *Li* and the sorceress from the painting *Spell II*. In recent years, Giger has published new posters featuring some of his favourite images, such as the *Birth Machine*, *The Magician* and *Necronom IV*, which

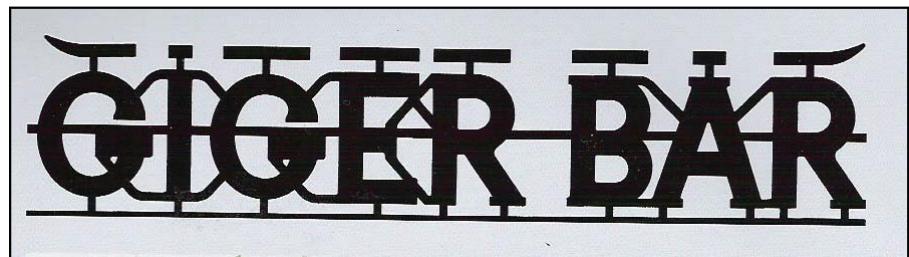
he releases to celebrate an event, usually related to his museum in Gruyères. One of his latest projects is an electric guitar that will feature images from the New York City series.



225- Design of the *Dolce Vita* wine label (1986)



226- Design of a bag for the Migros company (1990)



227- Different typefaces designed by Giger

### 2.3.4. Sculpture

As we have seen, Giger's most complete facet is pictorial, but he also has a very significant body of work in the field of sculpture. During the 1990s, he focused more on this field, producing interesting creations, partly due to his dedication to the design of furniture and three-dimensional architectural spaces, a task in line with his training as an interior designer.

#### Techniques and materials

He began working with polyester and fibreglass while he was still a student. For Giger, discovering and learning about polyester was the most important thing that happened to him while he was studying at the Zurich School of Arts and Crafts. It is the material he has worked with most, using it on numerous occasions. Giger works with polyester modelling and then reproduces moulds. In recent years, he has used aluminium more, giving his recent figures a metallic finish instead of the plastic look of his early sculptures.

The sculptural aspects he has worked on most are related to the architecture of the human body. Among the elements that make up his figures, busts and torsos stand out, although he sometimes uses new and original forms, such as the suitcase-uterus in his *Suitcase-Baby*.

Sculptural portraiture has been an aspect that Giger has occasionally worked on, recreating the human figure in a particular and unconventional way. He has made various masks, of Li, Timothy Leary and himself. This is probably due to the influence and fascination he feels for the funerary art of ancient Egypt. The human figure is transformed, taking on fantastical features, as if from another planet, developing an alien configuration as we see in his early works. He also combines body parts, arms and legs to create invented creatures, freaks of his imagination.

His sculptural language is in line with his pictorial and drawing language. It is a desire to give three-dimensionality to some of the figures he creates on paper, adapting these ideas to his plastic language in order to develop his personal poetics. Sculpture is a hybrid field of technologies that involves the sum of various disciplines. Giger developed a futuristic design, typical of science fiction. His humanoids connect with science fiction illustration and his figures with Egyptian statuary. With the application of biomechanics, he created very expressive forms, full of strength and with Giger's own sense of beauty.

His interest in sculptural creation lies in exploring the three-dimensional possibilities of some of the figures he drew. There are many parallels between his drawings and sculptures. The influence is reciprocal, and these plastic works consolidate the visualisation of figures and characters in his drawings and especially in his paintings, whose forms acquire a sculptural presence. He created sculptures sporadically, alternating with his paintings and drawings. He had two notable periods of sculptural creation, the 1960s and the 1990s, which are the periods in which he created most of his personal work in this field. In the 1970s, he worked on what would ultimately become his best-known three-dimensional work, *Alien*, but in this chapter we will focus primarily on his personal work.

#### 2.3.4.1. The 1960s

Earlier in his youth, he had created skeletons, skulls, sarcophagi, and macabre forms to decorate his room, the *dark room*. In 1964, he produced his first works in polyester, consisting of a table and masks. Between 1966 and 1969, he created his first plastic works during his summer holidays in Ticino, where his family had a house. There, he escaped the hustle and bustle of Zurich for a while and found time to work in peace and play with bodily forms.

The figures *Torso* (1965) [228] and *Mask* (1965) [229] connect with science fiction (especially with the figures of the Roswell aliens of the 1950s), as well as with his own style. He made all of them in black polyester, and we can observe a feature that would become characteristic of his artistic expression: the backward development of the skulls (influenced by Egyptian art from the time of Akhenaten <sup>221</sup>and also by Dalí and Kubin). The art of the Akhenaten period is expressionist and anti-naturalist, where the symbolic prevails, particularly in the anatomy. One of the most striking features is the hermaphroditism of the representations, with exaggerated features and elongated facial features, denoting a figurative stylisation. These characteristics would also be transferred to the pictorial figures of the 1970s.

From 1967 onwards, we find more personal works, such as *Baby-Suitcase* (1967) [232], which alludes to the maternal womb, which can even be carried from one place to another as luggage, like a commodity. Organic forms appear, such as spines, kidneys and bones, giving the impression of having a life of their own. This work is closely related to the drawing *Máquina paridora* (Birthing Machine), as both focus on reproductive motifs and touch on the theme of overpopulation.

Another work he produced in 1967 was *Beggar* [233], in which he created for the first time a form he would call *biomecanoid*, composed of an arm and a leg. It is also imbued with black humour, due to the title and the attitude of the body begging for alms. He would repeat this form constantly, as we see in the work *Amerika* (1968) [236], in which he duplicates the biomechanoid and adds political content. Both forms have pistols and are painted with the American flag.

In *Obtaining Life* (1966-67) [234], he depicts two arms crossed, a metaphor for the human body, which live through their connection to a drip. Instead of a cross, he depicts the symbol of peace. Let us remember his political stance committed to pacifism and environmentalism, typical of a left-wing and anti-war ideology (as we saw in *Amerika*).

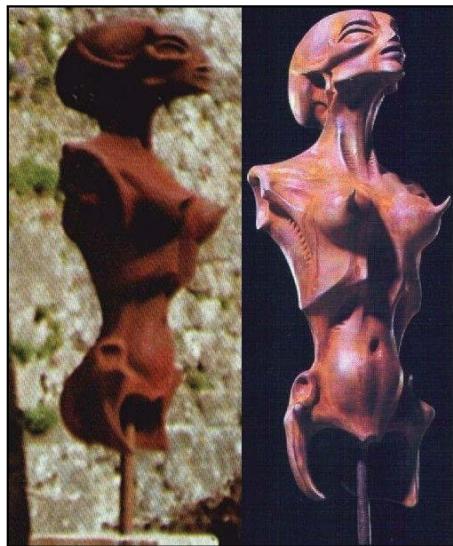
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<sup>221</sup> The skulls tilted backwards were a distinctive feature of court figures to differentiate them from other mortals.

In 1968, he created his first extraterrestrial being for cinema, this time on commission, for Fredi Murer's film *Swiss-made* and the *Polyester Tank for Dogs*, a frame for a dog to wear.

Influenced by his drawings of biomechanoids, he created these parallel forms. He worked on body shapes (arms, legs) and the plastic qualities of bones, using modernist, curved and sensual lines to give his creations fantastic forms that reveal the interior of the body on the outside. In his *Biomecanoide* (1969) [235], he creates a cross between human and animal form, an *insectoid* reminiscent of a phallus and an animal cub. This sculpture was produced at the same time as his series of *Biomecanoides* drawings and other graphic works with the same morphology, and is also reminiscent of the phallic figure in the painting *Homenaje a Beckett III*.

During the 1970s, the figures in his paintings took on a sculptural quality. He definitively transferred them to three dimensions when he worked on the *Alien* project in 1978.



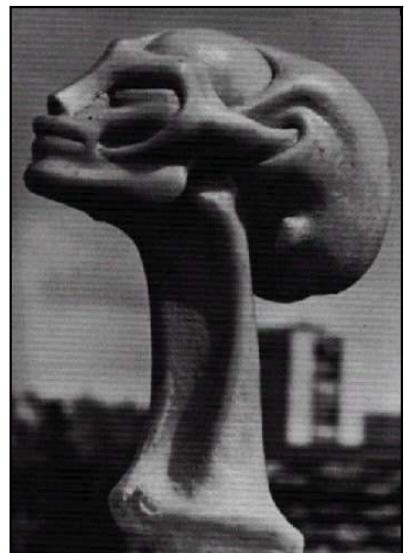
228-Torso (1965)



229-Mask (1965)



230-Big Head (1965)



231-Small Head (1965)



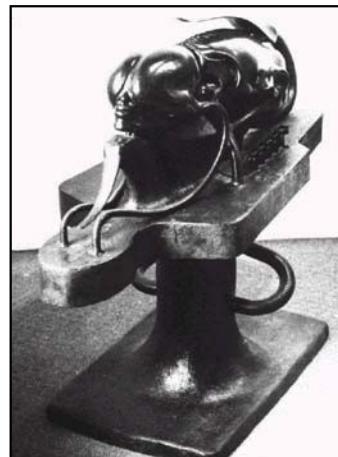
232-Baby Suitcase (1967)



233-Beggar (1967)

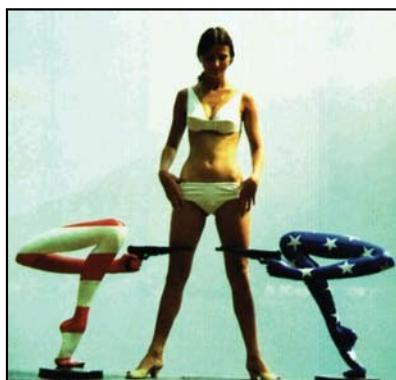


234-Gaining Life (1966/1967)



23

5-Biomechanoid (1969)



236-Amerika (with Li Tobler) (1968)

#### 2.3.4.2. The 1990s

His biggest project in the early 1990s was the design and construction of the *Zodiac Fountain*, with its 12 zodiac signs as sculptures. It is a large fountain originally designed to be placed in city squares. Through a complex hydraulic system, the water moves all the figures, which rotate on their own axes. Most of the sculptures are made of aluminium, such as the signs of Pisces [238], Capricorn and Taurus. These signs are another variation of his biomechanical figures, as they integrate human joints with some motif alluding to the symbol, for example the horns in the case of Taurus [237]. Today, the zodiac fountain is located in his garden, perfectly integrated with nature and its metallic objects. During the 1990s, he added sculptures until completing the twelve figures in 2003.

For the 1993 *Watch Abart* exhibition in Switzerland and New York, he developed iron clocks and masks with straps [240]. He has also created funerary or commemorative masks, such as those of Li and Timothy Leary. He even made a mask with his lead templates, with which he is sometimes photographed.

In 1996, he created the sculpture *Hoopla*. It consists of a female torso made of steel, with a guillotine hanging from the chest to castrate the penis, which Giger calls the *St. Gallen Tie (St. Galler-Krawatte)*. It is an object of torture and mutilation with a guillotine. Giger comments that he chose the female figure because the sensation is too harsh for men, evoking their castration complex. When a head is cut off and falls, or in this case a penis, Giger exclaims "*hoppla!*" and that is why he titles the sculpture thus.

In 1999, Giger produced a repetition of old personal motifs such as the *Birth Machine* [241], a 2-metre-high, 500-pound aluminium sculpture on display at the entrance to the Giger Museum, and the *Bullet Children*, which are 53 cm high reproductions of the motifs from the *Birth Machine's* gun, now with their own autonomy [239].

He also created sculptures such as *Guardian Angel* (1997) [243], in fibreglass and bronze, and *Kondor*, inspired by Egyptian forms from the Tell-el-Amarna period. These figures were designed for the ticket office and reception area of the Giger Museum. He later made them in aluminium and placed them on a base, in miniature. He integrates various concepts: on the one hand, biomechanics, as he fuses a mechanical object, a saxophone, with its keys, with a winged being; the facial features are reminiscent of the Egyptian figures of Akhenaten.

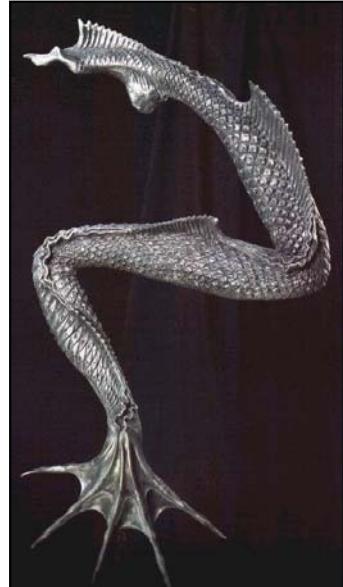
In 1998, he created *Baby Wall*, transferring his children's landscapes to sculptures made of fibreglass but with the appearance of a wall made of cement.

Commissioned by the Orbit computer fair in Basel, he created the sculpture *Virus* (2000) in fibreglass. Suspended by chains, it is a kind of monstrous mechanical contraption, with legs, arms and metal bones with a very cybernetic touch, hence the title. It is crowned by a double face of Timothy Leary. In the pencil sketch, it looked more like a vehicle.

His latest work consists of a reproduction of the motif from the second series of *Passages* (1971) in a large three-dimensional sculpture.



237-*Taurus* (1995)



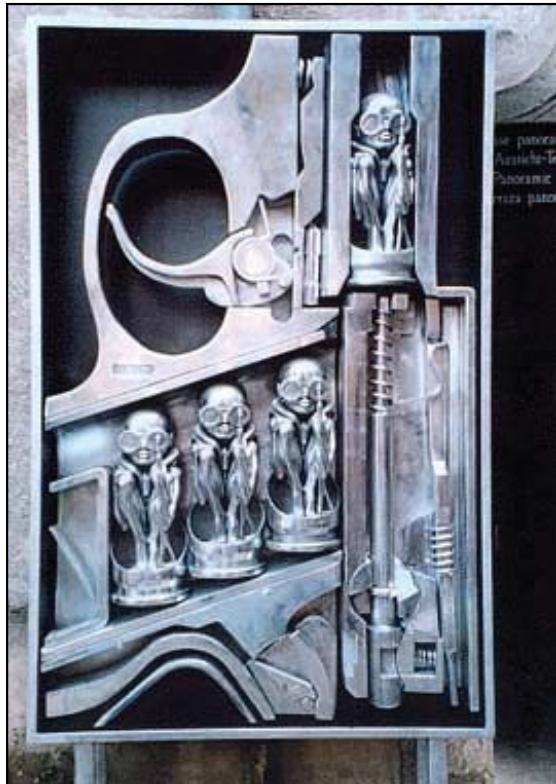
238-*Pisces* (1993)



239-*Bullet Boy* (1999)



240-*Watchguardian V* (1993)



241-*Birthing Machine* (1999)



242-*Biomechanoid* 2002 (2002)



243-*Guardian Angel* (1997)

### 2.3.4.3. Furniture

Furniture designs will be closely related to architectural elements and spatial constructions. In this sense, his training as a designer and his subsequent work at Andreas Cristhen's studio designing furniture and adopting and transforming modernist design into biomechanical design will play a very important role.

In his final degree project in Zurich, he worked on a model of the Zurich railway station underpass. In his subsequent personal development of the theme, he designed a rest complex for travellers, with rooms with beds and washing cubicles (with shower and washbasin), all in a 1:5 scale polyester piece.

His perception of forms was described by his interior architecture and design professor Willy Guhl as follows: "Giger, don't use such sick forms reminiscent of cow necks again" <sup>222</sup>. Even then, he had a predilection for the organic forms of modernism, similar to bone structures. In this sense, the designs of Gaudí and Guimard would constantly influence his creation of object and furniture designs, when Giger decided to transfer them from his paintings into three-dimensional space. His design line is modernist and functional, in line with the principles of Art Nouveau, which uses organic surfaces, in a way merging them with industrial objects such as street lamps, facades and furniture.

As a result of his collaboration on the film project *Dune*, he developed a programme that grew out of his creation of the *Harkonnen* chairs and culminated in the installation of his furniture in bars and spatial designs. As a precursor, he produced two paintings between 1976 and 1977 that anticipated his furniture designs, namely *Bed Station I (Bed)* (1976)

[244] and the *Smoking Chair* (1977) [245]. He would later construct furniture based on his own paintings, which reveal his futuristic design and

<sup>222</sup> [www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com), *Op. cit.* p. 10.

novel style, combining skulls and stylised lines. Both the bed and the chair are highly original designs.

In 1980, he airbrushed the design for the *Harkonnen Chair* [248]. He created two chairs, the normal one and the Capo, with three skulls stacked in the shape of a tower. He also designed the table.

His furniture designs came about in connection with his work in cinema. A friend, Conny de Fries, had asked Giger if he would agree to model a motif from his book *Necronomicon*. At that time, in 1980, he was working on the second *Dune* project, for which he designed the *Harkonnen* furniture. The project would fail for the second time, but Giger had included the furniture in the contract and wanted to build it anyway. He thus partnered with De Fries and they produced the first example of the *Harkonnen-Capo* chair with three skulls stacked in the shape of a tower. In a later version, it was presented as the Harkonnen chair with a built-in spine. A large table with legs representing skulls was then added to the furniture range (the legs were attached to the tabletop without screws). The painting [247] shows the evolution of the designs, the elongation of the shapes and the skull motif. He created a complete furniture range, adding new elements from 1981 onwards, such as a biomechanical-style wardrobe and chest of drawers

[246] with bones, skulls and organic shapes, oval and triangular mirrors covered with tubes and organic shapes [249] and, in the 1990s, a type of chair and table that was simpler and less cumbersome than the *Harkonnen*.

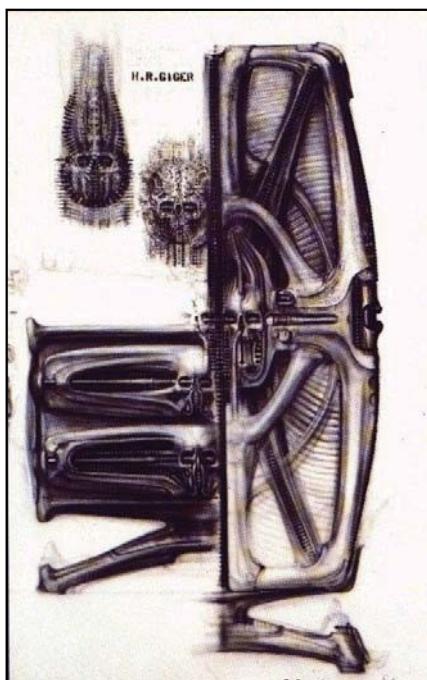
He also creates floor tiles, with motifs from his art screen-printed on them, on which his chairs and tables create a special atmosphere by blending into the space [250].



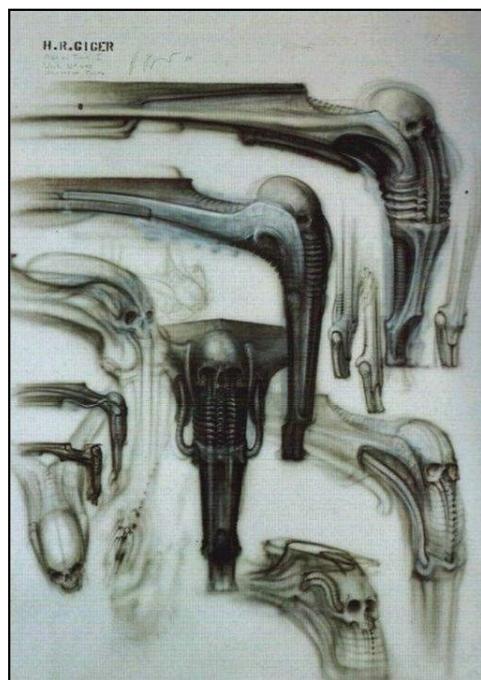
244- *Bed Station I* (1976)



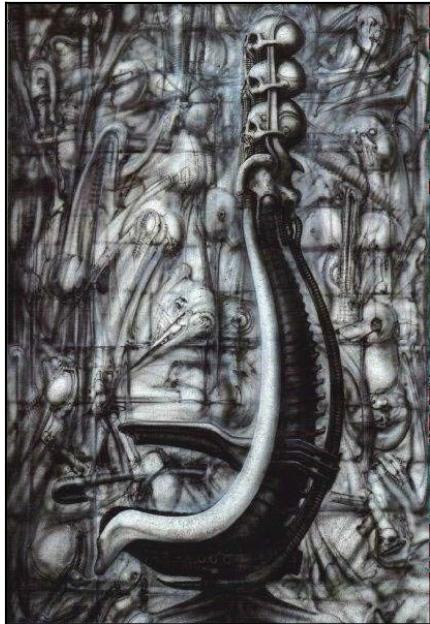
245- *Smoking chair* (1977)



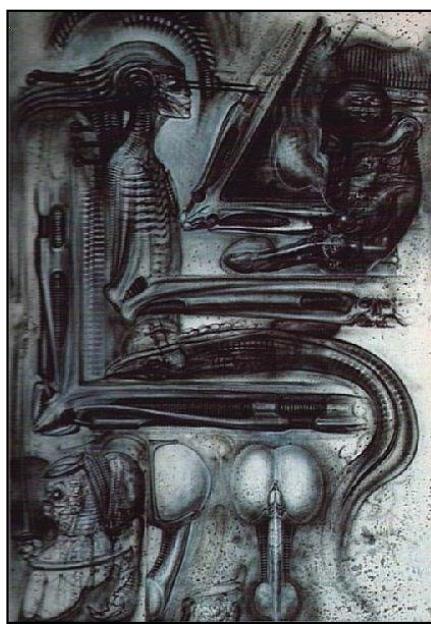
246- *Plan for wardrobe and chest of drawers* (1981)



247- *Plan for table leg* (1980)



248- *Harkonnen Throne* (1980)



249- *Frame and lamp* (1980)



250- *Harkonnen table, two Harkonnen-Capo chairs and four Harkonnen chairs*  
(1982)

### 2.3.5 Architecture

This is something he dreamed of as a child. He wanted to be the builder of the fantastic palaces and castles that roamed his imagination, inspired by literature and cinema. In recent decades, he has intensified his architectural projects, creating spaces and sets and trying to find a place for his furniture and sculpture designs. In this sense, he has a sculptural conception of his works, like the architects and designers of modernism.

Among his most important architectural influences are modernism, especially the figures of Gaudí and Guimard. Giger is interested in ornamental motifs and organic forms in stone or as decorative elements in different metals, such as bronze and aluminium. Giger mainly uses aluminium and polyester as construction materials, as he does in his sculptures.

In this sense, he has been fascinated by cities such as Vienna, which he visited as a young man, full of Jugendstil buildings with a great sense of the organic. Vienna contrasts with the model of cities with skyscrapers, which reflect mass construction, a product of mechanisation and mechanisation, the paradigmatic example of which is New York City with its skyscrapers, to which Giger would dedicate an entire pictorial series, *New York City*, which constitutes an interesting and suggestive vision of the industrial and postmodern metropolis where glass buildings are traversed by computer communication networks and become biomechanised skyscrapers.

The development of his architectural visions stems mainly from his collaborations with the seventh art, where he creates all kinds of fantastic architectures, transferring his biomechanical concepts into three dimensions. Giger has combined his creative activity for cinema with his own personal work and his architectural side. He developed his own projects based on his studies for film design commissions. In this regard, it is important to highlight the philosophy that permeates all his work, which is heavily influenced by the theories of Ernst Fuchs, developed in his book *Architectura Caelestis*.

His designs are created based on his futuristic aesthetic. The result is science fiction spaces, postmodern cyberpunk temples and avant-garde design. He creates designs that are impossible to carry out a priori, as they are very complex in principle, but time has shown that they are achievable. His training as an industrial designer has enabled him to sketch with great ease and find solutions to the spatial problems he encounters. Through these drawings, he quickly visualises his spatial ideas.

Giger has explored the theme of landscape and the city throughout his work, starting with his 1967 series of drawings, such as *City I* and *II*, in which he uses compositions of bones. In these two drawings of the city, he presents pessimistic visions of the metropolis as a pile of bones inhabited by beings of another race, or a degeneration of the human race, with mutilated limbs and tubes to help them breathe. They represent empty, uninhabited (urban) structures. It is a city of a post-nuclear future that has connections with science fiction. Throughout his work, Giger will work on fantastic architectures, using skeletons of all kinds as constructive elements. Also the labyrinthine spaces of his *Pozos* series, where he uses staircases and tunnels as formal resources to locate his biomechanical characters. In his oil landscapes, he also invents organic structures of imaginary places.

In his airbrush paintings, he again uses these structures in the series *The Spell*, configuring *cathedrals of bones*, as Fritz Billeter points out <sup>223</sup>. He also uses architectural forms in many of his paintings, notably in the *New York City* series, in which Giger displays his most futuristic designs. His paintings and architectural designs are imbued with a certain mystical sense, like sacred places for a new religion, a new liturgy.

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<sup>223</sup>H.R. Giger's *Necronomicon*, *Op.cit.*

In *The Spell* series, he frequently used ribs and bone-like structural elements with the intention of creating fantastic architectural frames in which to represent figures in the foreground, as if they were film stills. The scenography of some of his works is striking; his figures have sculptural qualities, and there is always a sense of three-dimensionality. This is similar to the effect produced by Gothic gargoyles. These concepts extend to his furniture and architectural spaces such as bars and films. The designs for *Alien* are a clear reference point with ribs, corridors and biomechanical rooms.

In his vision of a neo-Gothic New York at the end of the century, the sculptural elements have the quality of Gothic cathedral gargoyles. Giger achieves a union between medieval ritual, in the depths of this cathedral's niches, and futuristic science fiction. Billeter concludes that this is what Giger's ecclesiastical architecture is like, not to praise the glory of a God, but to invite us into the repertoires of horror and share the frozen gazes on the *cursed cathedrals*<sup>224</sup>. In this series, he again alludes to the irrational, to a nightmarish world reminiscent of the *Temple of Passages* series. Here, inspired by this city and its architecture, he depicts the components of machinery melting and creating themselves as biological organisms and organic elements metamorphosing into technological systems.

Giger's architecture has much in common with Gothic architecture, particularly in terms of its aesthetic aspects, among which the idea of darkness stands out. Giger has drawn on some of the ideal solutions offered by nature, translating them into his architectural language. For this reason, his constructions have an organic, living appearance, in full motion, with structural elements that seem to move. Giger creates fantastic forms by pushing his imagination to the limit. The result is the creation of original three-dimensional spaces.

During his training, he also acquired knowledge of the history of architecture, and in his early practical work in Chur with Stetter and Meisen.

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<sup>224</sup> H. R. Giger. *N. Y. City*, *Op. cit.*

For his diploma project, he designed and built a train station. In an interview, he cited the influence of Le Corbusier, the international Swiss architect, one of the most influential figures in the modern movement.

One of the most interesting connections is his relationship with the architecture of German expressionist cinema, with the designer and architect Hans Poelzig. He also has connections with the postmodern and cyberpunk city, according to a futuristic and gloomy vision<sup>225</sup>. In this sense, the post-industrial urban vision of films such as *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982), *Batman* (Tim Burton, 1989) and *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998) is related to Giger's sinister and organic architectural vision.

### **Designs for cinema: production of fantastic architectures**

For the first *Dune* project (1975), he designed the Harkonnen castle, complete with a drawbridge, reminiscent of a medieval castle. We have four pencil sketches that foreshadowed a fantastic design inspired by Eastern architecture and the sculptural figure of Buddha. The sketches are accompanied by explanatory notes, which are a frequent feature of Giger's designs.

Giger's designs for *Alien* included the sets, corridors, hallways, rooms and the entire ship from which the alien came. The ship is conceived as a great fantastical architecture, a kind of Gothic fortress that serves as a habitat for beings from another planet, who have built this complex. This fantastical world introduced the viewer to a mysterious and strange place characterised by the biomechanical aesthetic that permeated the cinematic atmosphere, typical of Giger's style. *Alien* thus subverted the technified model of a spaceship proposed by the film 2001, which marked the era. The ship conceived by Giger is dark, full of shadows, organic and derived from Gothic and Expressionist styles. In his latest project, *El misterio de San Gottardo* (*The Mystery of San Gottardo*), he also designs architecture and spaces.

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<sup>225</sup> See *La ciutat del cineastes*. Centre de Cultura Contemporània, Barcelona, 2001.

The architecture that Giger created in the 1980s and 1990s was marked by his biomechanical style, adapting it to the structural needs of each space.

### **2.3.5.1. Architectural designs and compositions. Bars**

#### **Garden train (1995)**

He recalls a childhood obsession that led him to build a ghost train in his home in Chur, which is a product of his constant fascination with trains. With the help of some of his workshop collaborators, he creates an installation in the garden of his home, representing an environment with a set design arranged around the track on which a wagon runs: different groups of sculptures, moulds and other elements make up this ensemble. The garden train is a work conceived as his own amusement, with its world traversed by different states: the psychedelic realm, fire, with burnt figures, another destroyed by atomic bombs.

#### **Limelight VIP Room (1998)**

On the occasion of the reopening of the Limelight nightclub in New York, Giger decorated the VIP room, devising a space called *the HR Giger Room*, an environment for a night-time atmosphere in which he placed sculptures and lithographs. The nightclub was open from 1998 to 2002.

The ensemble included four aluminium tables; six sculptures hanging on the sides of his *Kondor* figures; and windows containing his lithographs. This space is located inside a Gothic church in downtown Manhattan and had fascinated Giger for years, as he had visited it on several occasions (a dinner in honour of Timothy Leary in 1993, the presentation of the album Carcass *Life Support*, for which Giger designed the cover). The space is a mixture of gallery

art gallery, as it displays various original lithographs, and a meeting room for night-time visitors.

### **Tokyo Bar**

In the 1980s, he created his first real architectural space, the Tokyo Bar, which he designed according to his concept of biomechanics applied to three dimensions and architecture. In this bar, he used construction techniques such as spirals for the entrance, spinal columns, tongues and biomechanical organic structures.

The design of the bar came about spontaneously during his stay in Japan in 1987, after accepting the commission. He thought of using open lift cabins, like in the Rosario lifts, with tables for two people, going up and down the four-storey building <sup>226</sup>. Building regulations require a certain level of earthquake safety, which gave Giger a headache. In the end, the lift idea was rejected, so he had to leave the cabins fixed, like glass balconies opening onto the atrium. At that point, Giger abandoned the project, which was continued by his collaborator Connie de Fries.

Giger's design was respected in the entrance, with powerful spiral-shaped sides. They resemble tongues or tails opening up to visitors. Behind the entrance, a spiral staircase led to a four-storey atrium.

It appears that five years after its inauguration, it was closed because it fell into the hands of the Yakuza mafia. Today, we know about the construction through photographs and designs.

### **Chur Bar**

He later designed the Chur Bar in 1992, which still stands today and where his spatial concepts, configured from sculptural elements and furniture, can be analysed in situ. This bar was originally designed for New York City.

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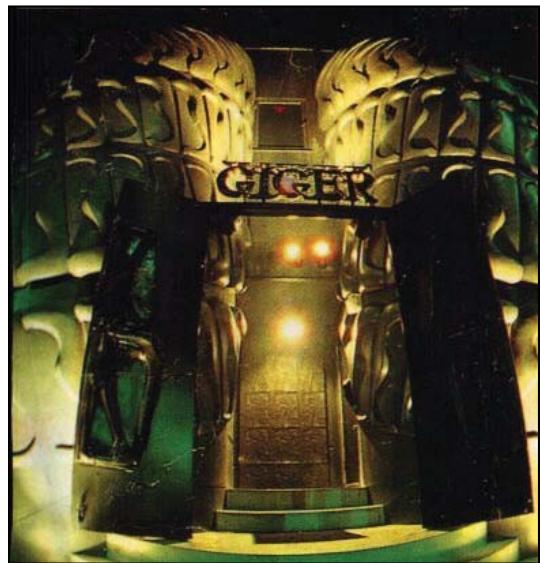
<sup>226</sup>[www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com) (The Future of the World), *Op.cit.*, p.86

A year later, he worked on the Swiss Transit Tunnel project, contributing various utopian ideas to try to alleviate Switzerland's future problems.

The bar was located in a shopping centre that was being built in his hometown. It has a rectangular shape. Black polyester Harkonnen chairs are arranged around a star-shaped bar. The bar has a very futuristic look and plays with the contrast between black and aluminium. Giger had to expand his furniture range, adding a chair, a glass-topped table and the aforementioned bar. For the entrance, Giger adapted his design for cupboard doors. He also designed an oval mirror, wall lamps and a special coat rack.



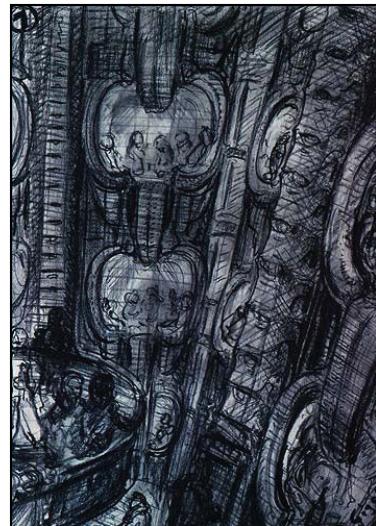
251-Bar Giger Tokyo, entrance  
design (1988)



252-Bar Giger Tokyo, entrance (1988)



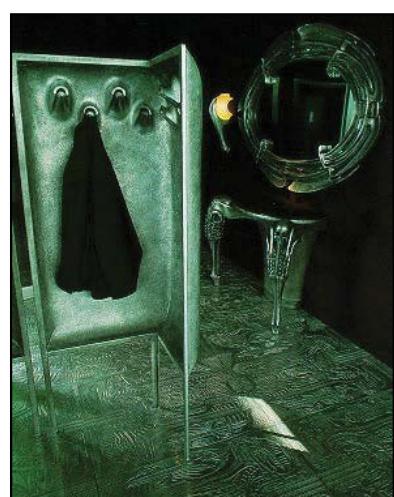
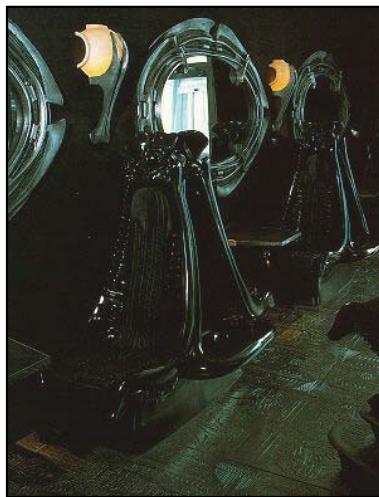
253-Bar Giger Tokyo, interior design



(1988) 254- Giger Bar Tokyo,  
interior decoration (1988)



255-Bar Giger Chur (1992)



256-257-Bar Giger Chur (1992)

### 2.3.5.2. The H.R. GIGER Museum

In 1990, an exhibition was held in Gruyères to mark Giger's 50th anniversary. A retrospective on the artist entitled *Alien dans ses meubles* (*Alien in his furniture*) was held at the castle, which was a great success and attracted 110,000 visitors. Giger fell in love with the picturesque surroundings. He learned that the 16th-century Château de Saint-Germain was for sale. This gave him the idea of creating his own museum, which would also be a centre for fantastic art. On 11 September 1997, he purchased the château. With the help of architect Roger Cottier and museum director Barbara Gawrysiak, the museum opened its doors on 21 June 1998. In this way, like Dalí and Fuchs, Giger established his own museum, which he himself would design and decorate<sup>227</sup>. According to Giger, the reasons were rather practical, due to the high demand from collectors and fans to admire his work in person. In addition, Giger needed a place to store his extensive production and private collection, and in his museum he could better control its exposure to the public.

The museum has gone through different phases since its inauguration. The museum is a labyrinth, irregularly constructed with different rooms housing many of the significant works of Giger's career. His most important works are displayed throughout the three floors, with an emphasis on his airbrush paintings and film designs, such as the special room dedicated to *Alien*. It also houses drawings, sculptures, models and lithographs.

Giger's idea was to install rails running throughout the exhibition space so that visitors could take a tour in a trolley, similar to those found in theme parks. This was partly a return to his fascination with trains and his teenage creation, *the ghost train*. This project has not yet been realised due to the cost of construction. Furthermore, although the museum has been very well received by visitors to Gruyères, there is a worrying lack of interest on the part of Swiss institutions, which are neither providing funding nor getting involved.

<sup>227</sup>ARENAS, Carlos. *Op. cit.*

in promoting the museum, which is why it is little known in artistic circles and even less so outside Switzerland. It is Giger himself who tries to promote it.

The museum has been the focus of Giger's efforts in recent years and can be considered a total work of art, as every corner contains details of Giger's designs and concepts: the staircase leading to the museum entrance has an organic design, and the bronze handrail is shaped like the tail of the alien. The façade has a decorative element reminiscent of modernism. The museum exudes the atmosphere of Giger's spaces.

The immense sculpture *Birth Machine* welcomes visitors. Once inside, at the ticket office, *biomechanical angels* made of black polyester greet visitors and give them a hint of the unique world they are about to encounter.

The private collection occupies a gallery in the museum called the *International Centre for Fantastic Art*, located on the third floor. Giger's collection comprises some 300 original works. A selection is on display.

The first work he acquired was a series of drawings by the Austrian artist Gunter Brus, dated 1973. "Almost all the pieces are wild, tension-filled works that give a glimpse of the expressive environment in which they were created" <sup>(228)</sup>. His collection revolves around contemporary fantastic art. He has an important collection of Swiss artists such as Friedrich Kuhn, Martin Schwarz, Claude Sandoz and Walter Wegmüller. He also has significant works by international artists, including Ernst Fuchs, Joe Coleman, Dado, François Burland, Gottfried Helnwein, Michel Desimon and Friedrich Schröder-Sonnenstern.

Among these artists, Giger highlights one in particular: "If anyone deserves to be called the Bosch of the 20th century, I think it is undoubtedly Dado (...). His name is only known among collectors and connoisseurs. A genius, little known, but nevertheless represented in museums and collections. Within a century, he will be recognised as one of the most important, if not the most important painter of the 20th century" <sup>(229)</sup>.

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<sup>228</sup> [www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com), *Op. cit.*, p.102

<sup>229</sup>*Ibid.*

There is also a gallery reserved for temporary exhibitions. Giger has already held the following exhibitions: François Burland (2000), Gunter Brus (2001), Claude Sandoz (2002), Martin Schwarz ("Amongst the Living" 12 April to September 2003), consisting of books, digital montages and paintings he created in collaboration with Giger in 1984. During 2004, original work by Ernst Fuchs was exhibited.

### **The museum bar**

Opposite the museum is the bar, which completes the complex and rounds off the Giger Museum project (apart from the carriages for the mobile tour). He has worked on it in recent years with the intention of integrating his architectural designs with the 400-year-old castle. To this end, he decided to manufacture the moulds and construction elements in a composite material of cement and fibreglass to achieve a grey stone colour. Giger made several sketches (see) and, together with his assistants Ronald Brandt and Wolfgang Holz, began modelling and sculpting the forms in his Zurich workshop. Construction began under the supervision of architect Roger Cottier.

The bar measures 7 x 10 metres with a ceiling height of 4 metres. The ribbed vault structures were built in lightweight, fire-retardant fibreglass. The floor is covered with Giger's well-known cement tiles. The bar is designed to seat 70 guests. This bar is the culmination of the process that began in the 1980s with the bar in Tokyo, and Giger plans to use it as a prototype for future bars around the world. In fact, the moulds have been preserved so that similar structures can be recreated.

The bar was inaugurated in April 2003 with a party attended by guests from five continents. The result is spectacular. Upon entering this bar, it feels as if we are inside a fossilised sea monster, in Jonah's whale, as Ettien Chaton pointed out in the bar's inaugural speech. The floor is covered with engraved plates that seem to belong to an

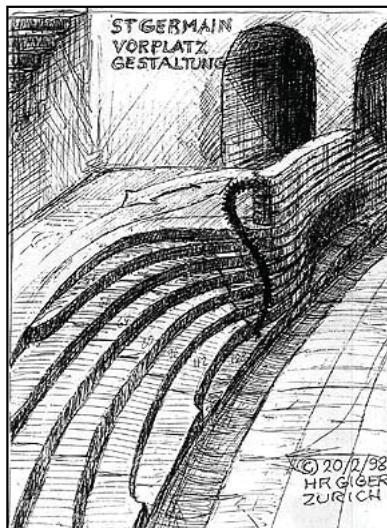
extraterrestrial civilisation. The space is covered by Gothic arches composed of ribs that run across the vault. The sensation is that of standing before a giant sculpture, in which the compositional elements seem to move. Giger says that "this new bar has many more of my works than any of the ones I have done before, and much more work in terms of design" <sup>230</sup>.

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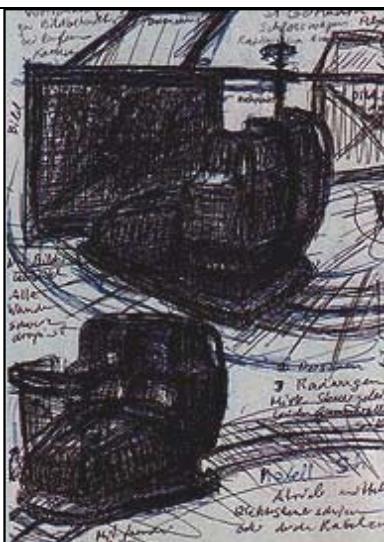
<sup>230</sup> Interview with H.R. Giger, August 2003.



258-Giger Museum. Façade design (1998)



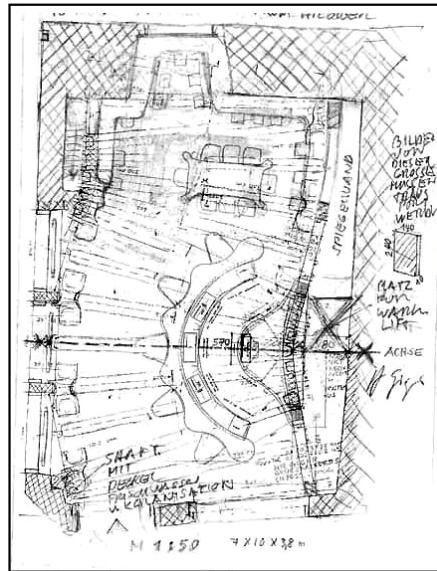
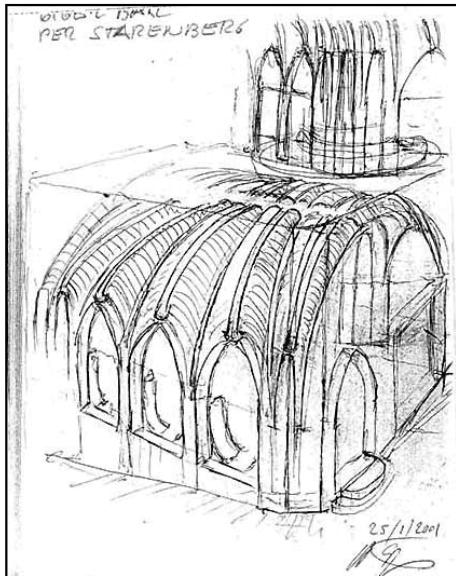
259-Giger Museum. Staircase design (1998)  
staircase (1998)



260-Giger Museum. Design of the wagons (1995)



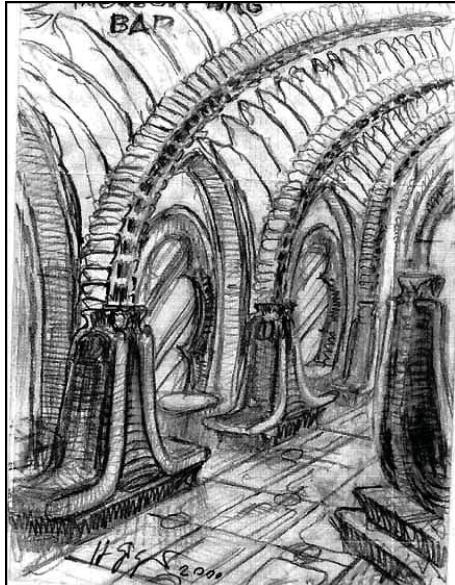
261-Giger Museum. Façade (2002)



262-263-. Designs for the *Gruyères Bar* (2001)



264-Giger Bar, designs. Gruyères (2003)



265-Giger Bar. Gruyères (2003)

## 2.3.6. Cinema

### 2.3.6.1. Alien

There is a before and after *Alien* in Giger's career. It is undoubtedly his best-known work, as his name will always be associated with this film, which brought him international recognition that he had not previously enjoyed. From then on, he specialised as a designer of cinematic monsters. On the other hand, he produced fewer personal works, which revolved around the construction of spaces such as futuristic bars and three-dimensionality (furniture, sculptures), as most of his time was taken up with commissions, mainly from the world of cinema.

*Alien* is situated within the context of the contemporary film scene under the influence of New Hollywood cinema and the postmodern culture of the 1970s. *New Hollywood* emerged in the 1970s with the advent of the multimedia market, which transformed the communications landscape. One of its main characteristics was the reformulation of the popular genres of classic Hollywood<sup>231</sup>. In the 1970s, science fiction cinema underwent a profound transformation as a result of the impact of Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) and, in many cases, merged with the horror genre, starting precisely with films such as *Alien*.

*Alien* represented a thematic and aesthetic shift in the genre, which at that time had been anaesthetised by the harmless aliens of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and the commercially successful fantasy films *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) and *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* (Robert Wise, 1979). It was a kind of antidote to the optimism generated by these films. *Alien's* dark and aggressive approach became a visual benchmark for the following decade.

Giger worked primarily in the genres of horror and science fiction, becoming a highly specialised "genre designer". His collaborations have focused mainly on science fiction productions, with some work in fantasy thrillers (*The Killer Condom*). On the other hand

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<sup>231</sup> SÁNCHEZ-NAVARRO, Jordi, *Tim Burton: cuentos en sombras*, Glénat, Barcelona, 2000.

*Alien* is, along with *Blade Runner*, one of the most studied films in academia<sup>232</sup>. Both constitute two of the fundamental bases on which postmodern fantasy is founded<sup>233</sup>.

Two factors stand out in *Alien* that help to explain its commercial and critical success and its artistic achievements, which in our opinion are Ridley Scott and Giger, since the story was not particularly new or original. In the 1950s, there were many models with this structure (alien or monster attacks) in films such as *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (Jack Arnold, 1954) and *Terror in Space* (*Terrore nello spazio*, Mario Bava, 1965).

Scott's involvement in the project was one of the determining factors in its final outcome, as he understood the possibilities that science fiction had at that time to express contemporary issues and the potential of the script. Therefore, one of his most successful decisions was to push for Giger to be hired as the designer. Scott orchestrated and took advantage of the entire team that had gathered around the film. He drew the storyboard and was undoubtedly one of the architects of the film's visual achievements. Giger would provide the necessary dose of fantasy and imagination to bring the project to fruition. Scott studied *Giger's Necronomicon* in depth, using it almost as a manual to incorporate ideas into the film, and asked Giger to design things that resembled his paintings.

Giger's designs were radically different from the others being considered in the pre-production phase, produced by artists Ron Cobb and Chris Foss. This was particularly true in terms of concept, due to the overall biomechanical treatment of all aspects involved, i.e., the biomechanical vision that permeates and is present in all designs related to the ship and the alien creature, making the style of the designs consistent and providing great unity. This is one of the most original aspects of the film compared to what we have seen before in other films with alien monsters, which

<sup>232</sup>*Blade Runner* ranks first by far, while the *Alien* saga ranks fifth. The study focuses on American universities. In Spain, we are not aware of any lines of research focusing on science fiction. See KUHN, Annette, ed. *Alien Zone II: The spaces of Science-Fiction Cinema*. Verso, London, 1999.

<sup>233</sup> *Alien*, *Star Wars* and *Blade Runner* are, in our opinion, the three fundamental films that shaped the science fiction genre in the 1980s and 1990s.

Their monster designs were based on the classic BEM (Bugged Eyed Monster) and the staging of a *man-in-a-suit*. Furthermore, here the creature stands out as the true protagonist of the film, partly due to its great realism and plausibility as a living organism with its evolutionary and developmental stages. This is truly innovative, as it combines the themes of gestation, pregnancy and childbirth at an unknown biological level. Never before had the evolution of the monster been shown in such detail and with so many visual references on screen. This realism and scientific rigour (exaggerated, of course, as it must be in a science fiction story) undoubtedly contribute to the impact the film had at the time, which continues to amaze today despite its 25 years of existence and the multitude of films that the genre has produced<sup>235</sup>.

The fact is that *Alien* is basically about gestation and birth. The sexuality of the film has strong reproductive allusions that distinguish it from most films of the genre and make it comparatively original. According to Cobbs, since *Flash Gordon* (1940s) no film had been so evocative of sexual motifs:

Birth as the central theme of the film is already apparent in the advertising logo, the cracked *alien* egg, which is transparent and reveals the creature, its gestation as a being. The film contemplates the creature's progression from the egg to the placenta (which is the breast of a human being) that forcibly welcomes it, and its birth, with which it bursts into the world brutally, bursting a man's chest. Finally, the cycle is completed with the adult lizard. In addition, motifs referring to birth abound in the film, such as the vaginal-shaped entry holes to the ship, the scene of Kane's birth in which the little monster emerges, the phallic shape of the fossilised pilot and the darkness of the intrauterine canal. But above all, it is the penetrating imagery that most evokes birth.

### The script

<sup>234</sup> A bug-eyed monster with an insect-like appearance, characteristic of classic science fiction cinema, also known as B movies due to their low budget.

<sup>235</sup> In the documentary *Alien, a science fiction myth* (2003), an experiment was conducted in which young viewers were confronted with the monstrous birth scene from *Alien*. Most viewers reacted with horror when they saw it.

<sup>236</sup> COBBS, J.L. *Alien as abortion parable*. *Literature Film Quarterly*, 1990, vol. 18, no. 3.

The advertising campaign promoted it as a horror film set in space: "In space, no one can hear you scream." Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the space race and space travel developed. These were topical issues that fascinated creators and writers at the time. Dan O'Bannon had worked with John Carpenter on the film *Dark Star* (1974), in which a trapped crew is attacked by a murderer. O'Bannon would resurrect *Dark Star* as a horror film when he wrote the screenplay for *Alien*.

They were undoubtedly heavily influenced by the film *2001: A Space Odyssey*, but according to O'Bannon, the idea of a futuristic film inspired by the past had not yet been considered. The idea was to create a low-budget B movie, but with an attractive alien.

After the failure of the *Dune* project in 1975, a dejected and depressed Dan O'Bannon worked on a script titled *Memory*, which he was unable to finish until he did so at the home of his friend Ron Shusset, who helped him complete his story. When O'Bannon thought of the alien monster in his script, he imagined it as one of the creatures that sprang from the mind of Giger, whom he had met on *Dune*: "I hadn't been able to get Hans Rudi Giger out of my mind since I left France. His paintings affected me very deeply. I had never seen anything so utterly horrible and, at the same time, so beautiful as his work"<sup>237</sup>.

O'Bannon later changed the title of his script to *Star Beast*. In it, he referred to the monster as "the alien". With the help of his friend Ron Shusset, he made changes to the script. The story revolved around astronauts trapped in a technological space with something terrible coming towards them. They wanted to make a psycho-sexual horror film, not one with a simple devouring monster. They had the first part of the script set on an unknown planet, where the crew of a spaceship encounters a terrible organism. The creature had to enter the ship in an interesting way. Shusset came up with the idea of the monster impregnating one of them. It would jump on his face and leave its seed in him. The theme of the film was alien rape.

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<sup>237</sup> RIERA, Jorge. *Alien, terror in space*. Midons, Valencia, 1997, p. 21.

between species, which was frightening because human bodies and feelings were involved.

O'Bannon recalls about Giger that "we were in a hotel room in Paris, where I spent the afternoon with him and Jodorowsky. I took a couple of his books home and studied them, and I remember thinking that Giger could do an incredible job on a horror film. Later, when I was writing *Alien*, I was so sure I wanted a monster from Giger that it wasn't even worth trying to visualise it myself" <sup>238</sup>.

The story takes place in three locations: inside the Nostromo, on an inhospitable planet called Level 426, and on a crashed ship found on the surface of that planet. Giger would work on the planet's terrain and all aspects related to the alien ship and the monster, both of which were his original creations and, from our point of view, are the most interesting and appealing aspects of the film.

The theme of arriving on an alien planet and confronting aliens had been explored in the plots of some classic science fiction films of the 1950s and 1960s, such as *The Thing from Another World*. O'Bannon's script also alluded to other films such as *It, the Terror from Beyond* (Edward L. Cahn, 1958), *The Thing from Another World* (Christian Nyby, 1951) *Planet of Blood* (1962), *Queen of Blood* (Curtis Harrington, 1966), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (Don Siegel, 1956), and *Planet of the Vampires* (Mario Bava, 1965). Almost all of them were also inspired by the science fiction literature of writers such as John W. Campbell, author of *Who Goes There?* (1938) and A.E. van Vogt, who wrote the much-imitated *Black Destroyer* (1939).

The script for *Alien* would vary considerably. Initially, the astronauts of the Nostromo spacecraft discovered a pyramid on a strange planet. They entered it and discovered a large chamber that housed the alien eggs and was decorated with hieroglyphics recounting the reproductive cycle. This idea was

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<sup>238</sup> SHAY, Don; NORTON, Bill. *Alien, the special effects*, Titan books, London, 1997.

rejected, but the same concept will be reused for the fifth film in the series, which will be titled *Alien versus Predator* and will be released in 2004.

O'Bannon also called on another friend, illustrator Ron Cobb, to visualise some of his ideas. Cobb drew pictures of the ship, the characters and the alien. Shortly afterwards, O'Bannon and Shusset began to make the rounds of Hollywood offices in search of producers. A small production company, Brandwyne, formed by writer David Giler, writer and director Walter Hill, and producer Gordon Carroll, decided to sponsor the script. They improved the script and got a major studio, 20th Century Fox, to finance the project with eight million dollars. Giler and Hill's tweaks were aimed at achieving a more commercial, *mainstream* production. They rewrote parts and added subplots and characters such as two women to the crew, the android Ash, and the cat Jonesy. Co-producer Gordon Carroll accurately defined the initial plot and its copious implications: "It's really a combination of classic film genres: the Gothic horror story, where the characters are trapped in an isolated setting, plus the traditional science fiction confrontation between man and the unknown terrors of space" (239).

#### Pre-production phase

Walter Hill was initially the most suitable choice to direct the film, but he began working on another project, *The Warriors* (1979), and recommended Ridley Scott, who had only made one feature film, *The Duellists* (1976), but which won the award for best debut at the Cannes Film Festival, promising a bright future as a filmmaker. Scott had extensive experience directing commercials, a field in which he had achieved prestige in his country. He had trained at West Hartlepool College of Art and London's Royal College of Art. He was a filmmaker with great attention to detail and a talent for design, hence the detail in his storyboard. His obsession with the visual has even caused him criticism throughout his career. These skills allowed him to make suggestions on Cobb's designs. "I realised during the

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<sup>239</sup> MAHIEU, José Agustín. *Alien*, another spectacular space odyssey. *El País*, 23-9-1979.

pre-production that we had a very special film on our hands "<sup>240</sup>". He read the script and was captivated, creating his own vision of what the film would be like, which had to be convincing and realistic. His mission was to orchestrate a large team of specialists and visualise the script, making it credible for the viewer. He developed his talent in this film, with total control over the visual aspect, thanks to his mastery of photography, lighting and movement.

Scott accepted the commission. "The script was simple and straightforward; that's why I made the film." He abandoned the project he was working on, the film adaptation of *Tristan and Isolde*, because after the preview of *Star Wars* in 1977 he was amazed and thought that science fiction would be the ideal field in which to develop his creative abilities, as it required a high degree of detail. Scott made his entire team watch films such as *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Steven Spielberg, 1977) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), which he planned to use as visual references.

Despite the futuristic setting in which the action takes place, the ships had to be realistic and functional. Illustrator Ron Cobb speculated on the technology and ships of the future and produced numerous designs, drawing on his experience in *Star Wars*, where he designed characters for the cantina scene. The Leviathan ship, which ended up being called Nostromo in Scott's tribute to writer Joseph Conrad, was a kind of galactic tugboat with the capacity to transport large volumes. Cobb and Foss worked on the designs for the ships and the interior of the Nostromo [267]. The filming date was approaching and there was still no acceptable monster. Ron Cobb had made sketches of an octopus-like creature and others of a small dinosaur [274-276].

Another of the designers, who had worked on the *Dune* project, was Moebius, a well-known comic book artist whose real name is Jean Giraud. He designed the costumes through sketches and drawings. To create the space suits, he was inspired by medieval Japanese armour. John Mollo was responsible for creating

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<sup>240</sup> H.R. Giger's *Alien*. Sphinx Verlag, Basel, 1980, p.18

these suits and those worn by the crew aboard the Nostromo. Moebius is one of the artists who has collaborated most with cinema. His work in *Tron* (Steven Lisberger, 1982), *Willow* (Ron Howard, 1988) and *Abyss* (James Cameron, 1989) is particularly noteworthy.

The team's main concern was what the monster, which was to be the star of the film, would look like. Scott had already seen some preliminary drawings, but he found them too conventional and wanted to move away from them. Then O'Bannon showed him *Giger's Necronomicon*, and he was perplexed, overcome by claustrophobia. Scott says that the figures seemed to be alive, giving a feeling of oppression and shock; everything was original and strange. His drawings show a dark side, but in a beautiful way, showing the 'beauty of horror'. For actor Tom Skerrit, what bothers him is the grey, as the textures and shades of grey are not pleasant, they are not easy to digest, people like colour and familiar surroundings.

Giger joined the project thanks to O'Bannon and Ridley Scott, despite the producers' reluctance due to the obscene nature of his designs. He eventually became the lead creative designer.



266- Giger and Ridley Scott during the filming of *Alien* (1978)



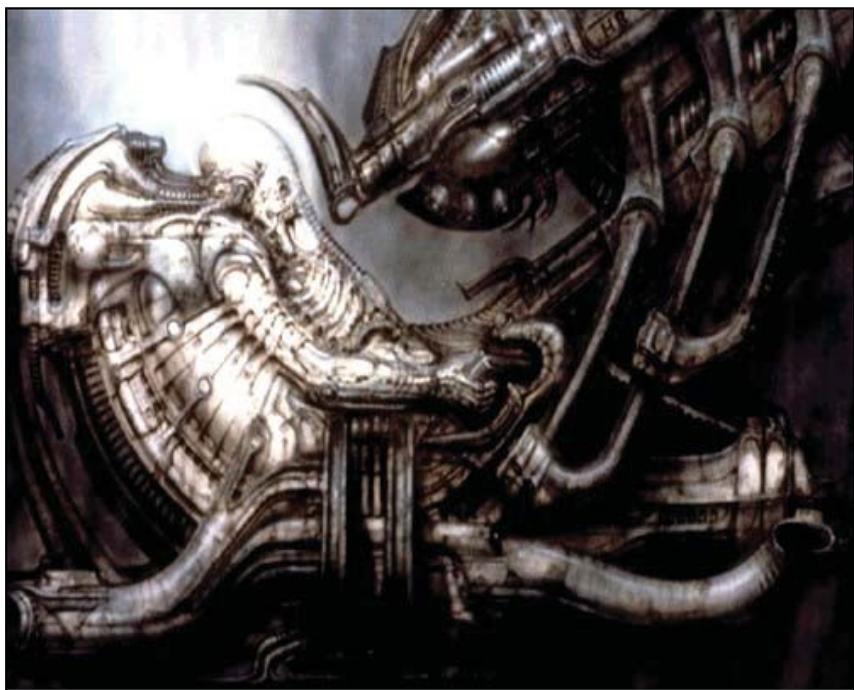
267- Chris Foss. *Alien spacecraft* (1977)



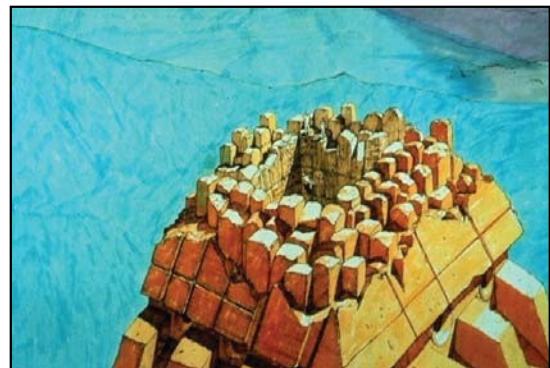
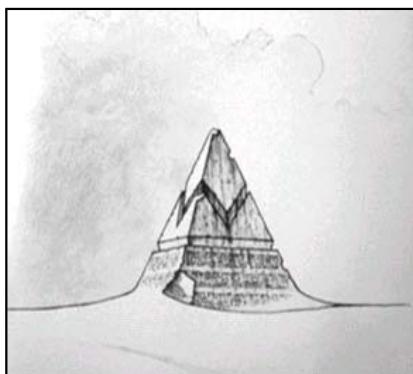
268- Giger. *Alien spacecraft* (1978)



269- Ron Cobb. *Alien pilot* (1977)



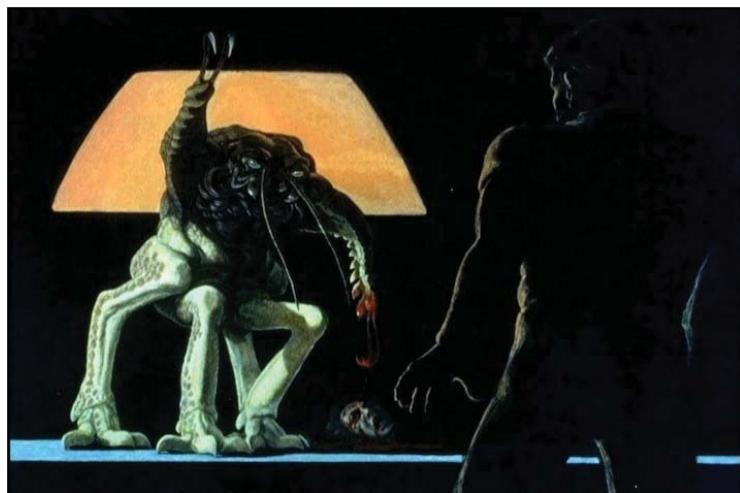
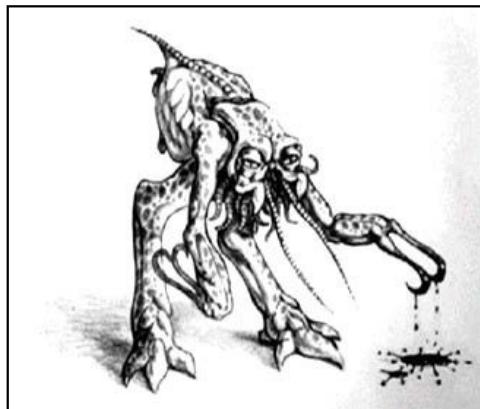
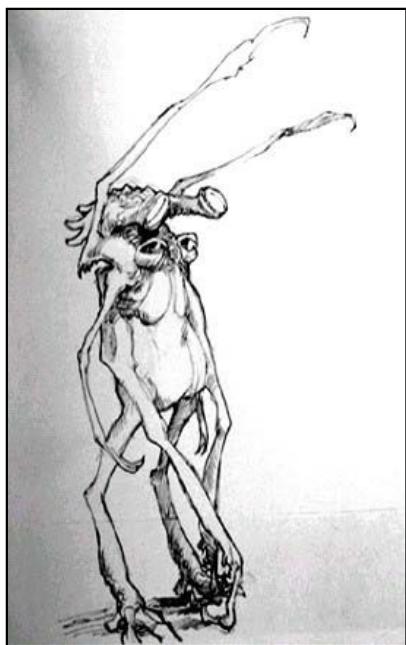
270- Giger. *Alien pilot* (1978)



271-272-Chris Foss. *Egg silo* (1977).



273-Giger. *Egg silo* (1978)



274-276-Ron Cobb. *Designs for the alien* (1977)

### 2.3.6.1.1. Giger's designs

O'Bannon telephoned Giger to discuss the *Alien* project and told him that he would send him a cheque for \$1,000 and more information about the project by post to see if he might be interested. On 11 July 1977, he received the package containing the script in English and German, some explanatory sketches by Ron Cobb and O'Bannon himself, and the promised cheque. The production company Bradwyne was at that time looking for the necessary funding.

The letter contained a list of items to be designed<sup>241</sup>:

- A) The exterior of a temple that should suggest an ancient, primitive, and cruel culture.
- B) The interior of the temple where the spore pods would be found, located around an altar in the centre of the room.
- C) The pods, which would be egg-shaped and one metre tall; they would contain the alien larva with an opening at the top that could burst open if a victim approached.
- D) The first phase of the alien: it would be small and octopus-like; it would wait inside the pod to jump on the victim, clinging to their face.
- E) The second phase of the alien: after embracing the victim, it deposits an egg in the stomach. The new creature will bite its way out.
- F) The third phase: after leaving the victim, it grows to human size and becomes more dangerous; it is dynamic and capable of tearing a man to pieces; it feeds on human flesh; the creature must be an abomination; the producers suggested that it could be a deformed, terrible and unpleasant child.

He was also told that he would have creative freedom in any of the designs.

Initially, Giger was only going to create the three evolutionary stages of the alien monster: the *facehugger*, the *chest burster* and the alien

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<sup>241</sup>*Ibid.* p. 10.

adult, as well as the pods and the temple, but he ended up designing everything related to the alien world, such as the planet's surface, the exterior and interior of the crashed ship, and the dead *space jockey*.

Giger acknowledges that Scott gave him a lot of creative freedom. The two discussed the story and used his book as a reference. Giger believes that "if you make a scary film, the monster has to convince people. Most don't succeed. Only the alien's head was right. It was my first big film and I wasn't familiar with these things. I learned a lot"<sup>242</sup>

Giger's first designs consisted of:

- A) the *Eggsilo*, inspired by a female breast, creating a pyramidal structure. Once again, he used anatomical forms.
- B) Inside are the eggs, but there is no altar; it has been removed. Giger opted to create a large chamber that houses hundreds of eggs.
- C) design of the eggs.
- D) He made several versions of the adult alien. At first, it looked more like an insect, with two black eyes, but later the whole head became black, like a helmet, with no eyes. According to Giger, this made it more terrifying because you couldn't see what it was thinking or how it was going to attack.

The pods were found inside a pyramid. This gave Giger the idea of using a standard egg carton as the formal structure of the pyramid, where he would place the eggs. For the first sketches of the alien in its initial phase, Giger created a tail to allow it to jump, as the function in the design had to be clear and visible. The alien jumps on its victim, wrapping itself around its neck and lunging at its mouth, into which it inserts something. To better visualise the sketches, he painted two airbrush works that better illustrated the idea. Once firmly attached, the alien inserts a tube into the victim's mouth.

He made slides of the paintings and sent them to O'Bannon along with the sketches and one of the first copies of *Giger's Necronomicon*, which he had just printed.

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<sup>242</sup>BARKER, Clive, JONES, Stephen, *Clive Barker's A-Z of Horror*, BBC Books, London, 1997.

In October, he received a reply from O'Bannon, who was enthusiastic about the idea of the eggs. Giger had to wait until February 1978 for another call, which he thought would never come: O'Bannon told him that<sup>20th</sup>Century Fox was taking over production with an investment of \$7 million and that he would be hired as a designer. The book he sent them had convinced the producers, especially Ridley Scott, who was going to be the film's director: "Giger was 'selected' from the outset to design all aspects of the extraterrestrial landscape and the alien itself" <sup>(243)</sup>. He would therefore be responsible for creating all aspects of the alien world.

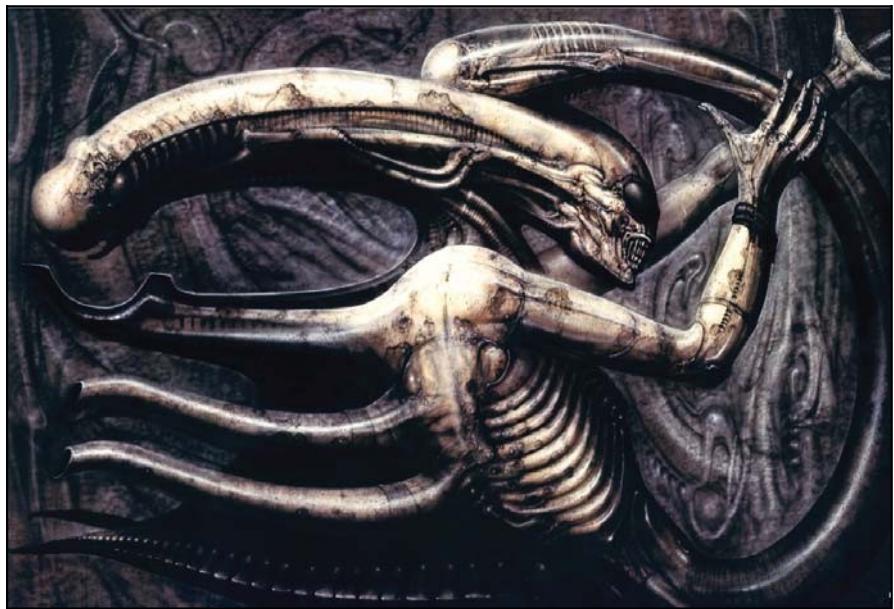
That same month, Giger received a visit at his home in Zurich from producers Gordon Carroll and David Giler and director Ridley Scott, who explained the details of the project to him, including the changes to the original script. One of the main problems they faced was the deadline, as production was set to begin in three months and time was running out, especially with regard to the design of the great alien, which was to be the star of the film and had everyone very concerned. Finally, Giger turned to his paintings *Necronom IV* and *V* [277-278], which Scott exclaimed upon seeing, "This is it! I can't believe it, I've never been so sure of anything in my whole life," when he was looking for ideas for the image that the adult alien could take on. Giger would design and build all aspects related to the alien world, assisted by the team of model and set technicians. The only thing he did not have time to physically sculpt was the chestburster. Production was carried out in absolute secrecy at Shepperton Studios in London. Even Giger had his own workshop where he kept the construction of the adult alien a secret, so that the actors would not see it until the scenes were shot, thus making them even more uneasy [313-316].

Other notable designs in the film include the costumes conceived by Moebius and created by John Mollo, and the spaceship designs by Cobb and Foss. The latter also created designs for the alien, but these lacked originality and the depth of Giger's designs, which were richer and more original from a formal and symbolic point of view and open to many more interpretations and readings [267-276].

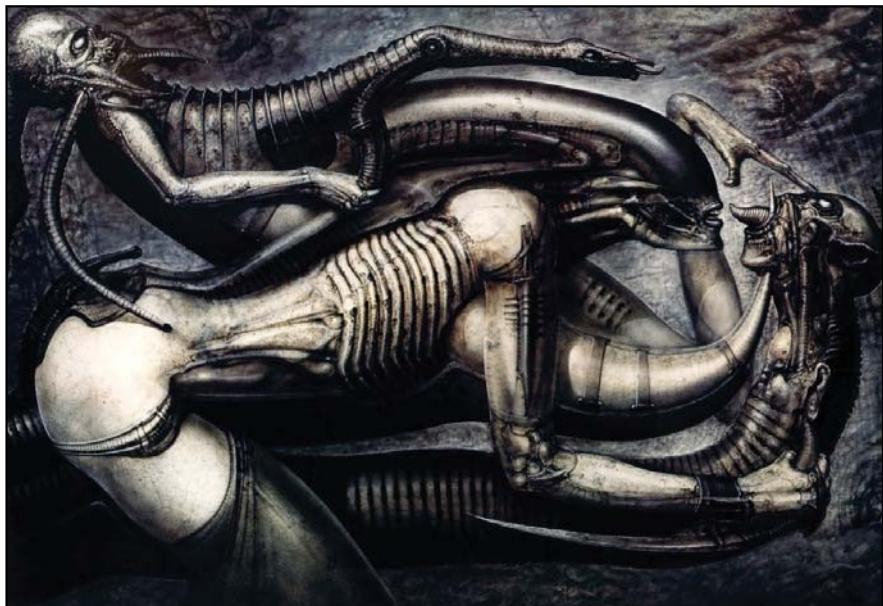
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<sup>243</sup>H.R. Giger's Film Design, *Op. cit.* p. 18

In Cobb's design, the pilot was not integrated into the chair as Giger's was [269-270]. As we can see, the creation of ships and technological devices dominated over creature and organic designs. Perhaps, along with Syd Mead, they are pioneers in this type of conceptual design for technology and spaceships. The cat box and the astronauts' props were also created based on their designs.



277- *Necronom IV* (1976)



278- *Necronom V* (1976)

Planet scene:

This sequence lays the foundations for the design of the alien planet and the culture from which the monster originates. Let's look at the sequence as it appears in the original script, from which Giger would develop his designs.

Lambert, Dallas and Kane have landed on the inhospitable planet. Ash (the android) supports them from the ship. A gigantic construction rises above the rocks, clearly not of human manufacture. The astronauts are frightened. Shrill sounds can be heard. The astronaut explorers shout into their microphones.

Kane: It's some kind of spaceship. Lambert:

Are you sure? It's very strange. Dallas: Ash,  
can you see this?

Ash: I've never seen anything like it, and neither has

'Mother'. Dallas: Keep checking the transmission. Ash:

Whatever it is, it's coming from inside.

Kane: I'll go and take a look.

Dallas: Hold on, I don't see any lights or movement. What

about you, Ash? Ash: I can't see it clearly.

Dallas: It looks deserted from here. We'll move closer to its base. (They walk towards the ship.)

Ash tries to adjust the image to rock formation. Suddenly, a large skeleton, fifteen feet long. He zooms in on the image. Dallas's voice is muffled, coming and going. Ripley joins the transmission.

Dallas: No signs of life, no lights, no movement. The lower part of the entrance is full of dust and rocks. Kane: It looks like an entrance.

Dallas: Let's go inside (they climb through one of the openings and enter).

Inside, they walk through a chamber with high ceilings. The walls are covered with dark bars. A ghostly light filters through and fills the air. There is only darkness.

Dallas: You can't see the bottom.

Kane and Lambert follow him. They try to see something with their lights. The ghostly light filters through dusty air. A few metres away, an opening appears. Dallas leans over and looks into the hole. It is completely dark. The light is not enough. Kane and Lambert peer in.

Dallas: Let's take a look.

Dallas shines his light and sees... a shiny bronze-coloured urn. It is empty and has a rounded opening at the top. Dallas approaches the grate

Dallas: Over here! They approach. They shine their lights on the floor. A machine. Above the mechanism, a small bar moves back and forth, sliding silently.

Kane: It still works

Lambert: Automatic recording Dallas:

Let's look further down;

Kane, don't disconnect from the cable. Get out within 10 minutes

Dallas places a tripod on the floor of the opening and releases the cable. He attaches himself to his chest unit. He descends into the hole, hooked by the cable, and finds a vertical wall. He shines his light into the depths. The beam of light penetrates about 30 feet and is lost.

Kane: It's warmer here, warm air rises from the bottom. He begins to descend in small jumps, stopping to catch his breath. Looking up, Kane can see the mouth of the hole. A beam of light.

Dallas: Everything okay over there?

Kane: I haven't reached the bottom yet. Keep going down, taking longer jumps.

Meanwhile, Ripley follows the transmission on her console and looks concerned.

Ripley: Ash, tell Dallas that Mother speculates that the sound could be some kind of warning.

Ash: I can't tell him anything, I've lost contact. Ripley: I'm going out to look for them.

Ash: That's not a good idea, we can't risk more people. That's why Dallas left us on board.

Ripley: I think I'm going out anyway. They need to know that the signal is a warning.

Meanwhile, Kane finally reaches the bottom. It is dark beneath him, a cavernous space.

Dallas: Can you see anything?

Kane: No, the tunnel has ended. It's like being in the tropics. He checks his instruments.

There is a high nitrogen content, no oxygen. He continues to float and suddenly his foot touches the ground. Kane is surprised and loses his balance. He shines his lights and realises he is in a large chamber. This is very strange!

Dallas: What do you mean?

Kane: There's something all over the walls. Kane walks around and examines the organic protuberances. He approaches the centre of the room. There are rows of oval shapes on the floor. He walks between them. It's like a storage area. Is anyone there? It's full of leather items, sealed, soft to the touch. Dallas: You can see what's inside them.

Kane: I'll take a look. He tries to open one, but can't. It's all very strange!

Dallas: Don't open it, you don't know what's inside.

Kane looks closely at the oval shapes. The areas where he was touching them rise up. He shines his torch along the rows. He turns to the one he was examining and sees that something has changed. The opaque surface is now clear and an object can be seen inside. Kane focuses on it and observes. He sees entrails and a jaw. The inside is spongy and irregular. With tremendous violence, a small creature jumps out and attaches itself to his mask. The creature merges with the mask and sticks to Kane's face. He struggles with the creature, but cannot prevent it from opening its mouth and falling.

Dallas: Kane, can you hear me?

Lambert: No response.

Dallas and Lambert reel in the cable until they retrieve Kane. They realise that something is stuck to his face. Dallas: Don't touch it!

They pull Kane's body out. The storm continues outside. The atmosphere turns the colour of blood.



279-284-*Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Sequence on the alien planet.

### The alien planet

It was Giger's idea that the planet should be covered in bone-like shapes. The alien landscape is biomechanical and sinister, with a terrain full of bones fused with other organic shapes and protuberances. The silo where the eggs were originally found was inspired by the pyramid shapes of egg cartons. In the middle of the planet's desolate landscape is a pyramid-shaped structure with rounded contours reminiscent of a female breast. This idea was abandoned and the concept was changed to that of a stranded ship.

Giger modelled the surface of the planet with bones, engine parts, tubes and cables, combining them and using plasticine. The result is surreal, creating a threatening, hostile space [285]. The surface of the planet was another added problem, as in science fiction films it was painted. In *Alien*, the surface was constructed more realistically using monumental scale sets.

Les Dilley and Roger Christian were responsible for translating Giger's designs into three dimensions. They say that "it was not easy to translate the designs into three dimensions; normally these constructions are determined on the drawing board, with the designs being made to the appropriate scales. In the case of the alien planet, we had to make clay models" <sup>244</sup>.

### Ship

The ship, with its organic structure, has arms that embrace it, with the cockpit located in the centre centre is the cockpit. These arms resemble female legs. The structure of this ship is original and innovative; it has little to do with the spaceship designs seen in other films, influenced by the aesthetics of NASA ships and space rockets launched into space in the 1960s and 1970s. This shape breaks with what had been seen previously in films and drawings (and is a departure from what Cobb was doing). It is organic, blending the artificial and the natural.

We have a top view in which the parts can be distinguished; in the centre is the circular cabin and on either side are two arms like joints [288]. The

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<sup>244</sup> SCALON, Paul; GROSS, Michael: *The book of Alien*. Titan books, London, 1993.

The ship rises above the mountains with its large horns. Seen from above, the ship's design also resembles a bent bone.

The painting [286], which shows the ship stranded on the rocks, was done by Giger one early morning when he couldn't sleep: "The ship doesn't really belong to my work, but I had a vision of it and had to do it. The paintings that come to me spontaneously give me very good vibes. I was sure that Scott and the others would accept it. Scott immediately asked me for a detailed view of the entrance" <sup>245</sup>.

Giger modelled a plasticine model to convey his ideas to the team of technicians who were to make a larger model, on which the final shots would be taken.

The entrance [289] has a voluminous shape, composed of three organically shaped, vaginal doors with rounded shapes as if they were a womb. He uses anatomical shapes on a monumental scale and gives them functionality. He uses braces to highlight the volume of the structure.

#### Interior

The interior of the large ship has something familiar that is disconcerting, which is the presence of bones that form giant ribs. But overall it is something inhuman, with a strong erotic charge. It is an eroticism provoked by the sexual forms that the machines take on. Humanoid structures can be recognised.

The interior corridors are formed by bony ribs [290], which means being inside the monster or inside oneself, since the impression, despite the rarefied and gloomy atmosphere, is that we recognise the shapes, as they are bones and combinations of bones like those found in our bodies. The vaults are formed by bones, kneecaps, joints, ribs [291]. It is a vision of the interior of the human body, but emptied, without organs, only the skeleton remains. It is a monstrous, disturbing vision.

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<sup>245</sup> H.R. Giger's *Alien*. *Op. cit.*, p. 22.



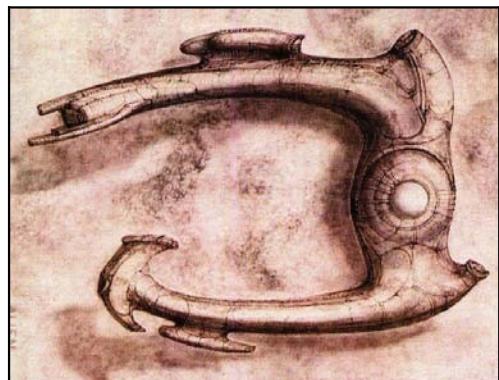
285-Landscape (1978)



286-Landscape with the Shipwrecked Ship (1978)



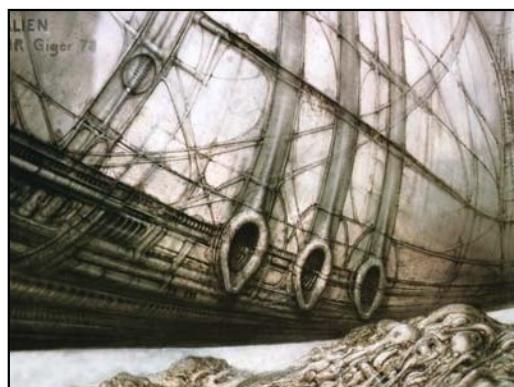
287-Detail of the nave (1978).



288-Top view of the ship (1978)



289-Entrance to the warehouse (1978)



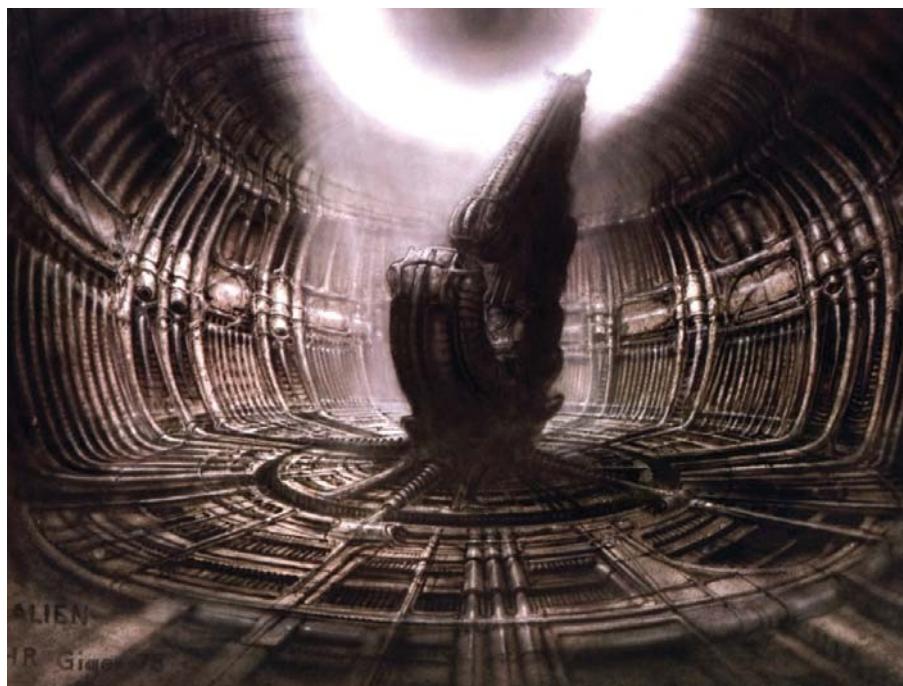
290-Interior corridor of the warehouse (1978).



291-Passageway with membrane (1978)



292-Egg silo, version I (1978)



293-Cockpit of the alien spacecraft (1978)

### Cockpit and space pilot

The cabin, with its bone-like morphology, has the appearance of a mysterious chamber and follows the constructive logic of the spacecraft [293]. In its centre is a protuberance that turns out to be the fossilised, petrified pilot. We do not know whether he was always attached to the chair or separate from it. The final appearance is determined by the organic and modernist design that he also applied to his furniture designs. Freudian symbolism is evident in the design of the telescope or cannon. The design of the space pilot fused with the chair was radically new and had little to do with previous designs [270]. This pilot, in contrast to the monster, has a more benign character, since he is a seated figure, while the monster is more terrifying, a nightmarish figure. The designs, imbued with the concept of biomechanics, were original as they were being revealed on a large scale for the first time. The machines appear organic and the organisms have a mechanical quality. But above all Giger remarks, "I like working with bones."

### The room with the eggs

The first versions were inspired by a standard egg cup and chicken eggs [294]. They are found in a large room or chamber that houses them; in Giger's original design, there are some bottoms [292] that do not appear in the film, even though we have photographs of models, so they must have been removed when the full-scale set was built. The sketches show diagrams of the egg, which was inspired by surprise boxes with a spring at the top that, when opened, causes the contents to jump out.

The egg represents the beginning and end of the alien cycle, which begins when the first victim approaches it. It is also the sequel for the victim, who, after being captured by the alien, is wrapped in a viscous thread and drained of fluids. The pod is then transported in front of the alien egg, where the cycle begins again. In painting [296], Giger creates a virtually definitive vision of the egg, with its transparent interior, where the facehugger breathes and moves. In the final version, he had to retouch the opening, its vaginal morphology [295], with a cross, because the producers

felt that it could offend the sensibilities of some viewers, especially in Catholic countries<sup>246</sup>.

### Facehugger

Inside the egg, the facehugger can be seen with its tentacles, thanks to the transparent qualities of its organism [296]. The facehugger is inspired by his own work. Specifically, by his 1967 drawing entitled *Alpha*, which depicts a creature with legs attached to a woman's skull [391], and also by another work from the same year, *Astreunuchen* [119]. In the early designs, the creature is much larger and larval in nature [297].

O'Bannon sent Giger a sketch showing his idea: "As an idea of what he wanted, Dan O'Bannon sent me a sketch he had done of this thing hatching out of an egg (which looked like a flying omelette). For me, the appearance of something must be determined by its function, and since this creature has to jump out of an egg and grab someone's face, I thought about what it would need to be able to perform this action. I started with a body that resembled an elongated sexual organ and added two hands to hold the head and the long coiled tail that functioned like the spring in a jack-in-the-box" (247). Scott wanted something smaller, about the size of a face. After further modifications, Giger commented: "The creature now looks more like a spider with a tail. Its body is very small and its hands and tail are larger. The hands grab Kane's face and the tail coils around his neck" (248). Giger's new design is much more sophisticated and stylised; a mixture of species such as crab and arachnid, with eight tentacles, a tail and a reproductive organ to insert its eggs into the victim or host. It is a parasite that carries the alien seed and deposits it in humans and other beings, ultimately killing them when the creatures are born. It leaves the victim in a coma when it wraps itself around their neck and deposits the egg in their throat. In painting [300], we see the terrifying creature from different angles. In another painting, it is seen attached to the astronaut's helmet, which has a phallic shape in its structure [299].

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.* p. 46

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>248</sup>SCALON, Paul; GROSS, Michael. *Op. cit.*



294-*Alien Egg*, (1977)



295-*Alien Egg, II*, (1978)



296-*Alien Egg, III* (1978)



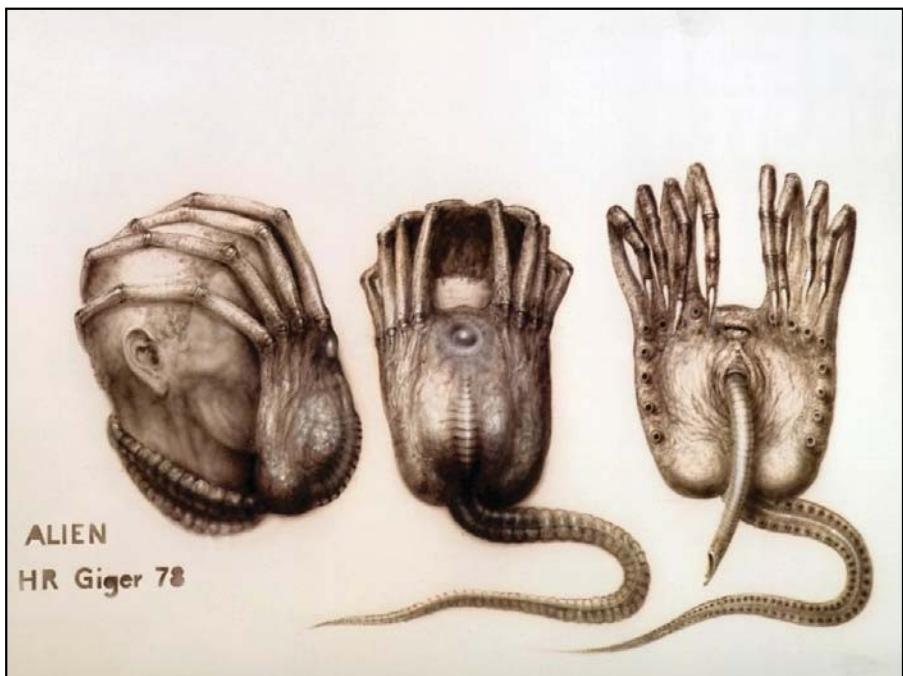
297-*Agarracaras, version I* (1977)



298-*Agarracaras, version II* (1977)



299- *Astronaut with helmet and facehugger* (1978)



300- *Alien I, Claw* (1978)

### Chestburster

For the second evolutionary phase, Giger initially drew something he self-critically called 'the Christmas turkey' [301], an unsatisfactory design that would be replaced by the chestburster, which bursts onto the scene in one of the most shocking scenes in modern cinema (comparable to the shower scene in *Psycho*) [302-303]. According to Giger, the final design was inspired by a crucifixion painting by Francis Bacon from 1945 [55].

The chestburster matures rapidly inside the victim's body, in their chest, from where it will make its way out by gnawing through it. The head, with its small skull, is reminiscent of that of the adult alien, and the tail is reminiscent of a figure in a painting by Giger (*The Magician*, [210]). It is therefore the result of a symbiosis of his own figures.

### Adult alien

Inspired by the Lovecraftian paintings *Necronom IV* and *V* [277-278], it is the absolute protagonist of the film and gives it its title. The first designs for Cobb's alien are reminiscent of other films, with a humanoid appearance [274-276]. Something more radical, original and different was sought. Giger's early designs are reminiscent of a hybrid human-insect being.

Combining the *Necronom* paintings, Giger modified his designs until he achieved the final result. Given the complexity of the drawings and the difficulty of translating them into three dimensions, he himself built the suit that the actor playing the role would wear: it was made of latex and he retouched it daily with an airbrush.

"At first, we weren't sure what the alien would look like, but Scott didn't want one of those traditional, rigid, clumsy monsters from the movies that walk heavily. In Scott's office, we did tests with a group of contortionists, including children. Scott believed that a tall man with a child strapped to him, both stuffed into a rubber suit, could be a monster with movable limbs. We tried this idea and realised that it caused a lot of problems. The possibility of building a large

robot was also ruled out for the safety of the actors, who could be injured when shooting the action scenes"<sup>249</sup>.

After much discussion, it was decided that the alien would have an insectoid appearance and an air of elegance despite its terrifying nature, a duality very present in Giger's work, which seeks to combine opposing qualities such as ugliness and beauty, repulsion and attraction. It provokes terror through its lightning-fast deadly attacks and the way they are filmed, revealing very little of the creature and triggering frightening images in the imagination.

The main problem for Giger was the limited time he had to construct the alien suit, but above all, he wanted its appearance to be convincing and terrifying. "Creating a believable monster seems almost impossible to me. I always see a man in a better or worse disguise behind the monsters in films, which does not terrify me at all" <sup>250</sup>.

Giger had designed an elongated alien head [305] and thought of giving it a functionality that would become one of the monster's original features: it would conceal a long tongue equipped with crowded teeth that the alien would use to eat, like an anteater, quickly deploying its tongue [310]. This feature is also original and has become one of the emblematic attributes of the alien race, in addition to its head. It will be widely imitated in monster design.

Giger also linked the design of the large alien to that of the chestburster, in terms of the head and eyes, as they are the same creature, one more evolved than the other. The effect of the double set of teeth was cleverly exploited by Scott to give the beast a more aggressive character [311-312]. Of the two mouths, the second is more like a tongue. This creature is so evil that even its tongue is deadly. Another inhuman feature is its fingers.

In the painting [304], in which the alien is seen from the front, its eyes are too reminiscent of a motorcyclist's goggles, so Giger chose to remove the eyes from the design to raise a new question, as the beast has no eyes and its opponent does not know how it will act. Giger's idea was for the skull to be semi-transparent, as it was. The brain has a shape

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<sup>249</sup> H.R. Giger's *Alien*, *Op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

similar to its head. When looking at the skull, you can see its interior, where worms seem to be moving. Scott wanted the alien to be completely transparent, like Giger's biomechanoids that show their insides.

Giger placed cables, animal flesh, bones, tubes and technical elements on the alien's skin, in line with his biomechanical ideas of biological fusion with industrial devices, forming a robust outer shell (exoskeleton). The suit was made up of 15 separate pieces.

It is the evolved stage of the being, a giant predator that kills to survive. Instead of blood, it has corrosive acid and can only be confronted with fire and flamethrowers. It uses the blood of its prey to turn it into a host and start the alien cycle. This idea is very present in Giger's art: birth-death, also produced in a violent way, both childbirth and death.

Giger's creature evokes a sickening eroticism with its design. It is a drooling creature with phallic jaws. Giger creates a frontal view, a profile view and a detailed view of the head [306-307]. With the tongue, Giger tests his biomechanical theories. Given the elongation of the skull, it could house a retractable tongue. The use of this tongue in the film would be problematic. For this reason, an expert in animatronics and special effects, Carlo Rambaldi <sup>251</sup>, was hired. Rambaldi would be responsible for the functioning of the head in the close-up shots in which the alien attacks using its deadly retractable tongue [311].

Giger says he tried to create images that are not seen elsewhere, coming from his own world. "When I see those images, I don't think too much about what I'm doing or whether someone will be offended... when you draw or paint, you have to be able to do what you want, and I don't waste time on self-censorship"<sup>(252)</sup>.

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<sup>251</sup>Rambaldi was responsible for the special effects and make-up in *King Kong* (John Guillermin, 1976) and *Flesh for Frankenstein* (Paul Morrissey, 1974), among other films. He achieved fame with the creature in *ET the Extra-Terrestrial* (Steven Spielberg, 1982).

<sup>252</sup> Documentary *Alien, a science fiction myth*, broadcast on the Calle 13 channel.

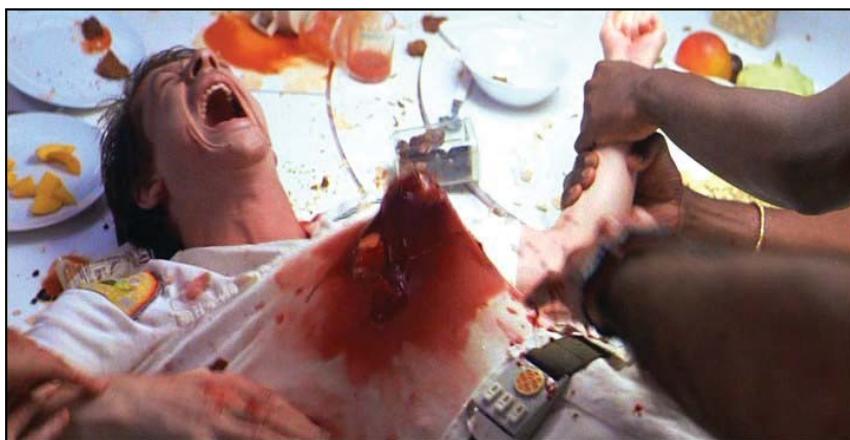
The stylised design of the alien world and the beast suggests a certain eroticism, marked by sexual provocation. From the outset, the planet and spaceship sets maintain sexual allegories throughout the film (the alien spaceship is a huge womb, the pilot's seat resembles an enormous phallus, as does the alien's skull), and its lack of eyes recalls Lovecraft's descriptions of fears materialising into monsters. Lovecraft wrote about the fear of the unknown, and explains the terror in his stories with creatures lacking a defined form; monsters without eyes, with tentacles where their arms should be, a huge stomach where their brain would be, and a large mouth where their head should be. In short, *is la carencia de identificación, de antropomorfismo.*

The film is based on the fear of the unknown, of that which cannot be seen (the characters are trapped alongside 'something' that moves freely but only shows itself when attacking). The alien is only shown to us in a few, dimly lit shots, so that the viewer receives very little descriptive information about what is in front of them, following the reasoning that less is more, and giving the viewer the chance to fill in the gaps for themselves. To this end, it also exploits the primal fears inherent in human beings and their survival instinct, such as the fear of suffocation, claustrophobia and the fear of being devoured.

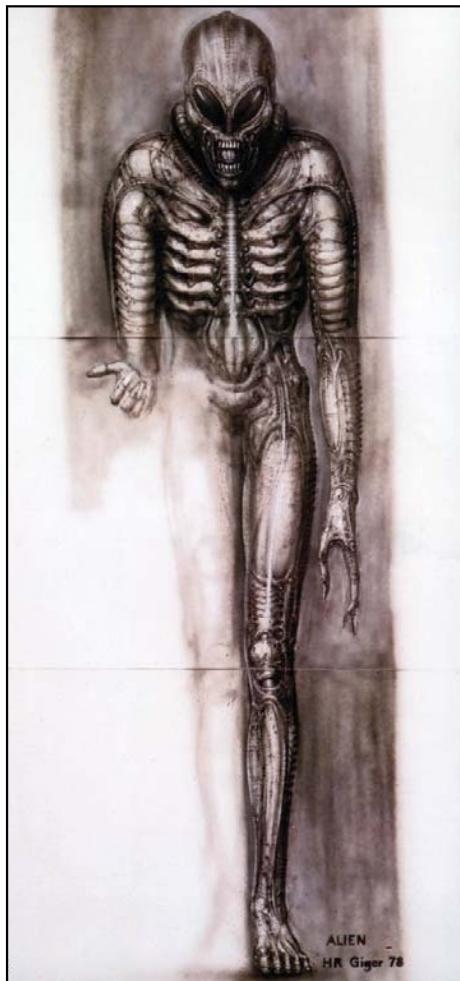
These three fears are clearly represented: suffocation: a parasite that jumps directly onto the face, clinging to it while imprisoning the host's neck with a huge tentacle to insert something into their throat; claustrophobia: seven characters trapped in a prison from which they cannot escape; being devoured: a terrifying alien gestating inside a human body, lacking eyes but retaining an enormous mouth with sharp teeth from which double jaws emerge. Although, as we know, we are shown little information about the morphology of the alien, what is clear to us is what its mouth looks like, thanks to the abundance of close-ups of it poised for an imminent and ferocious attack [311-312].



301- *Alien II, Chestburster* (1978)



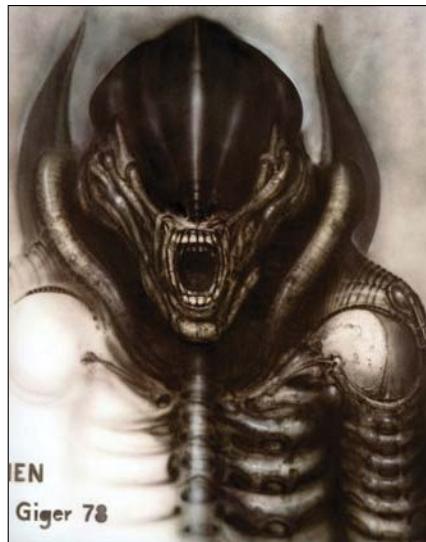
302-303- *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Monstrous birth.



304-Alien III, front view (1978)



305-Alien III, side view (1978)



306- *Alien III, front view V* (1978)



307- *Alien III, side view V3* (1978)

### Deleted scenes

Once again, Giger's concept created a new dimension in extraterrestrial evolution that would be reused in other films, such as *Aliens* and *Alien Resurrection*. It deals with the captivity of prey captured by the alien in eggs. In frame [309], we see the pod with a victim entangled in it that is completely deformed, with only its very blurred features visible. The scene in which these pods appeared, specifically Dallas's body, was not included in the film and was added in the *Director's Cut* released in 2003.

### The film

The US premiere was on 25 May 1979 at the Egyptian Theatre; replicas of the alien nest and the set of the 'Mother' ship were built, as well as a scale model of the space jockey, which was later set on fire by an arsonist. In 2003, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the premiere, the director's cut was released, which includes the deleted scene in which Ripley sprays the pods deposited by the alien with a flamethrower. However, the action is slowed down and there is a lack of interesting shots such as the entrance to the alien ship.



308- Ron Cobb. *The Outer Reaches* (1977)



309- Giger. *Cocoons* (1978)



310- Alien head (1978)



311-312-Alien (Ridley Scott, 1979). Attack of the alien.



313-316- Giger working on Alien. Shepperton Studios (London)

## Biomechanical paintings inspired by *Alien*

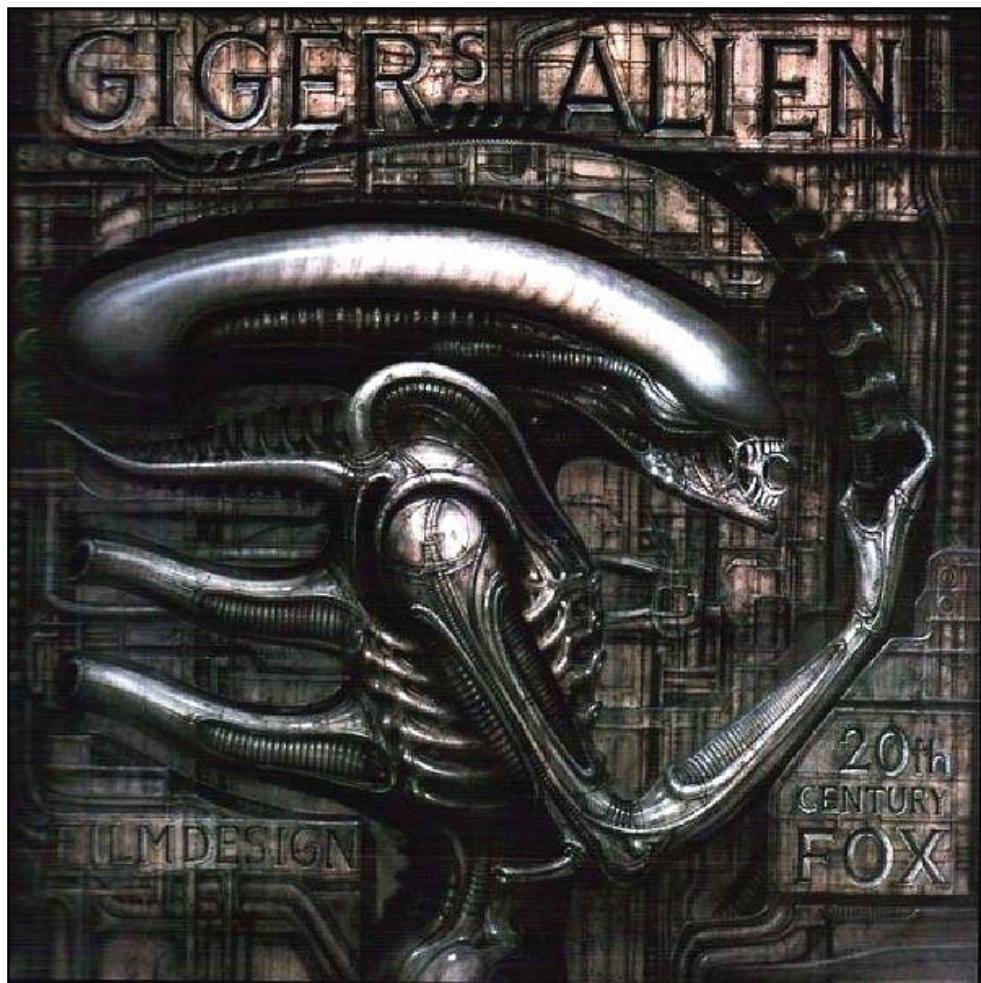
Giger drew a series of biomechanical paintings inspired by *Alien*. They show different manifestations of the alien life form, drawn from various angles and with different morphologies, always emphasising its biomechanical composition. The last painting he would do on *Alien* was the one used for the cover of the book *H. R. Giger's Alien* [317], which contained extensive documentation on Giger's collaboration on this film.

*Alien* culminates the monstrous theme begun in the *Necronom* series. This is the series of paintings he made at the end of filming: five paintings and the painting that opened (cover) the book *Giger's Alien*.

These are six paintings dominated by the alien world from which the Alien monster comes, which are in tune with the works he was creating in previous years, with their biomechanical landscapes and monstrous figures [319-320]. He creates a repertoire of alien illustrations typical of a science fiction and surreal world with organisms in the larval stage, enveloped by a biomechanical or techno-organic world.

The monster has references to animals, insects, snakes and worms, snails and slugs, cockroach shells, and multi-legged marine organisms in a typically Gigeresque landscape with interconnections, symbiosis and metamorphosis, a surrealistic combination. Only on the cover do we see the film monster in its final state, as it appears in the film in its adult phase, the result of the evolution of the designs.

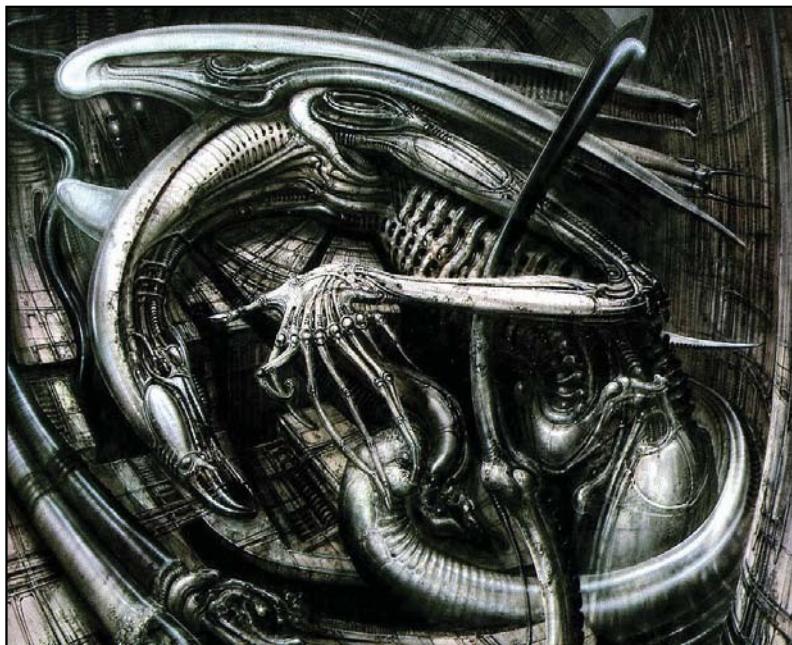
The hieroglyph painted by Giger reflects the evolutionary cycle of the species [318]. In principle, it would appear inside the pyramid. Inspired once again by Egyptian funerary culture. The composition features a pyramid inscribed within a rectangle, which is itself an alien structure. There are three levels (egg, facehugger and monstrous birth).



317- *Alien* Monster I. Cover of the book *Giger's Alien* (1979)



318- *Hieroglyphics* (1978)



319- *Alien Monster IV* (1978)



320- *Alien Monster V* (1978)

## Interpretations and criticism

This film, which had a huge impact at the time and continues to captivate many viewers, has generated a multitude of opinions and interpretations.

Unlike the pristine cleanliness and stylisation of Kubrick's work and its conceptual complexity, *Alien* is dominated by the dirt and darkness of an ornate setting full of multiple details within a simple plot, while replacing the epic sense of adventure in Lucas' film with a powerful disturbing effect typical of the horror genre.

Positive/clean science fiction with *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and *Star Wars*. In contrast, the arrival of *the dark*, a visual style in which darkness, dirt and impurity prevail.

For Telotte, Giger is a figure who has undoubtedly had an impact on science fiction cinema. Like other illustrators and artists such as Chesley Bonestell and Frank Frazetta, he has played a decisive role in defining the way we see the extraterrestrial 'other', the future and the technology that awaits us there<sup>253</sup>.

Of course, in *Alien*, Giger's imagination, despite only being shown for a few minutes of the film, manages to define the overall visual aspect of the film and creates the atmosphere of anxiety and claustrophobia that will be experienced on board the *Nostromo*, in the midst of the struggle for survival.

For the author of *Lord Jim* and *The Shadow Line* (Conrad), adventure was above all an inner odyssey, a tragic projection of man lost in the mystery of an inscrutable world, which sweeps him away in a desperate search for self and generally confronts him with death and frustration. *Alien* follows the path laid out by its recent counterparts: visual splendour with realistic technological displays, fantasy and suspenseful plotlines, and a spectacular structure reminiscent of comic books. As its own contribution, *Alien* showcases its philosophy of the hero facing nameless terror and ethics itself, in the manner of Conrad.

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<sup>253</sup> TELOTTE, J.P. *El cine de ciencia ficción*, Cambridge University Press, Madrid, 2002.

This, like the vision of man within the cosmos, is already a more complex philosophical approach, whose most important cinematic representatives continue to be Stanley Kubrick's 2001 and Andrei Tarkovsky's Solaris<sup>254</sup>.

For Jorge Riera, "none of the other supposed icons of our most immediate cinema has turned out to be as original and deadly as the drooling, filthy creature spawned by H. R. Giger" (note). He names Alien as one of the masterpieces of science fiction and fundamental to the conception of modern horror cinema

In 1997, Antonio Trashorras wrote in Fantastic Magazine, "Working with bones, fibreglass, wood and rubber, the hard-working production team managed to give three dimensions to the splendid nightmarish images emanating from Giger's brush...Giger achieved a disturbing morphological synthesis between crab, spider and snake when designing the terrifying alien...to create the facehugger..."<sup>255</sup>

In Acción magazine: "After finding a director, the next problem was to come up with an alien with its own personality, different from anything that had appeared on screen before; Finally, they had to turn to the Swiss artist Giger, who understood from the outset that the monster was the real star of the film. Transformed into a new postmodern Dr Frankenstein, he built his creature using human bones as raw material and drawing inspiration from reptile skeletons, until he managed to create a being never seen before with a terrifying appearance. Scott skilfully handled the creature to make the most of its fleeting appearances and not reveal its anatomy completely, as part of the magic and terror lies in the monster remaining a mystery, even after the film itself ends. Part of that magic was lost in the second instalment, which opted for spectacle, replacing psychological terror with warlike exploits.

The truth is that even today, the Alien creature continues to fascinate and has given rise to a whole series of theories developed by critics and fans about the nature of the beast. Few contemporary film creatures have aroused so much interest. Even the film series delves into its anatomy

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<sup>254</sup> MAHIEU, José Agustín. *Op.cit.*

<sup>255</sup> TRASHORRAS, Antonio. *Alien Chronicles*. Fantastic Magazine, no. 7, Sept. 1992, pp. 28–33.

and alien races, creating new monsters that adapt and transform in each film.

*Alien* (1979) is a masterpiece of psychological terror that combines science fiction with pure horror in a perfectly solid whole. It achieves this by perfectly manipulating the immensity of infinite space and the claustrophobia of enclosed space to create a very effective contrast of sensations. The monster that moves throughout the nooks and crannies of the Nostromo, a Gothic space cathedral, becomes an unknown threat to beings faced with a relentless killing machine and their own fears that arise from the disconcerting extreme situation that suffocates them. Scott, an author whose fascinating visual ability cannot be denied, was accompanied by the priceless creations of the perfectionist and imaginative Swiss artist H.R. Giger. Giger, whose alien designs, both of the predatory creature and the gigantic being dissected in its pilot's chair, as well as the sinister and suffocating appearance of the Nostromo and the overall aesthetic, were one of the elements that contributed decisively to propelling this film as the *pinnacle* of originality in the visual department. His designs, together with those inspired by Moebius, possess a dazzling, sinister force and give the impression of truly belonging to a hostile alien civilisation. Add to this the director's dense staging, and the result is a product that is impeccable in terms of atmosphere and formal appearance.

The idea was not new, but what set *Alien* apart was its large budget, which allowed it to bring together a technical and artistic team made up of the crème de la crème of the moment: Giger, Moebius, Cobb, Foss, Rambaldi... Scott's desire for aesthetic uniqueness was satisfied when he discovered the images in *Giger's Necronomicon*, who produced a type of painting he called biomechanical, consisting of dark greyish-green images evoking poverty, violence and deformity. The pairing of organic and inorganic matter, his creations and the way Derek Vanlint and Denis Ayling photographed them make *Alien* the powerful visual experience we all remember.

The first designs for *the Alien* were produced by Ron Cobb; the aim was to achieve a look that was far removed from the typical B.E.M. (bug-eyed monster) of previous films. Giger would achieve this; the first biomechanoid appearances (the alien ship and the pilot) convey an impression that is alien to the human way of life. Working with bones, fibreglass, wood and rubber, the production team managed to give three dimensions to Giger's nightmarish images. He is responsible for the three repulsive evolutionary models of the creature. The facehugger, a morphological synthesis of a crab, spider and snake. The bone-crusher and its staging are one of the most striking images in contemporary cinema. A rubber and fibreglass suit was needed to bring the adult Alien to life.

Cobb and Foss collaborated on the ship designs, giving them the appearance of heavy vehicles. Alien garnered praise for its aesthetic conception and artistic direction, as well as for its script and the human profiles of its protagonists.

### 2.3.6.2. Film designs

Without a doubt, Giger is best known as a film designer, largely due to his work on *Alien*. However, he has collaborated on numerous audiovisual projects throughout his career. Due to the international fame and reputation gained by *Alien*, Giger has intermittently been involved in various film projects related to horror and science fiction, becoming a prestigious and sought-after genre designer. However, the result has not always been what the artist wanted, and in most cases he has felt mistreated by studio policies that have often ignored his ideas and failed to properly value his input. On the other hand, the *Giger-Alien* association has served as a draw for some of the productions he has been hired for, such as *Species*. The idea of the directors and producers who hire him is that his designs influence the atmosphere of the film, preferably going beyond the design itself and having a psychological impact on the viewer. The level of collaboration he achieved with Ridley Scott would never be matched again.

His training as an industrial designer and interior architect provided him with the ideal complement to visualise ideas and capture them in sketches, a facet that was already evident in his early designs for cinema (*Swissmade 2069*). Based on the knowledge of photography and cinematography he acquired during his time at the Zurich School of Industrial Arts (1962-65), either in a subject or through his friendship with other classmates, such as the filmmaker Fredi Murer, Giger developed his skills as a self-taught artist through his own experiments in the medium, which he would later feed into his collaborations on certain film projects. Since *Alien* (1978), his work has only been seen on the big screen in the film *Poltergeist II* (1985) and, more significantly, in *Species* (1995), for which he designed the alien creature *Sil*, the film's protagonist. His career has been littered with failed projects, but thanks to the designs he created for these films, his contribution to fantasy cinema can be considered significant.

Giger has worked on the creation of fantastic characters, especially extraterrestrial monsters, creating a modern bestiary, full of monstrosities and strange beings. In addition, with his conceptual designs, he recreates disturbing atmospheres typical of a nightmare. As a result of these commissions, Giger has become a designer specialising in monstrous creations: aliens, beasts, spectres and creatures from the underworld make up his CV in this field. In this way, he has achieved a certain status and reputation in the medium, which has led to the creation of the term '*Gigeresque*' to describe his creatures, a term that is used in specialist film criticism. It is even applied to designs that imitate him, as he has influenced numerous directors and designers both visually and conceptually. Giger has a special ability to capture his monstrous visions and create menacing and destructive beings.

A distinction must be made between projects that never came to fruition and films that were made but, for one reason or another, did not make use of his ideas. In any case, he has always been fully involved in his work and has often designed more than was initially requested, as he aims to contribute all his ideas to improve certain aspects of the films he collaborates on.

Films made that incorporate his ideas and designs: *Swissmade 2069* (1968), *Alien* (1978), *Poltergeist II* (1985), *Teito Monogatari* (1988), *Species* (1995).

Unrealised projects: *Dune* (1975 and 1979), *The Tourist* (1982) *The Mirror* (1983), *The Train* (1989), *Dead Star* (1990).

Projects in which he collaborated occasionally but which did not ultimately incorporate his designs: *Alien III* (1991), *Batman Forever* (1994), *The Killer Condom* (1996) and *Species II* (1997). In any case, his influence is evident in all of them.

He was also approached to work on the adaptation of Michael Ende's novel *Momo* (1983), which has not yet been made and for which he did not design anything. In addition, Giger has his own projects that he has not yet managed to bring to fruition, such as *The Cross and the Blade* and *The Mystery of*

*San Gottardo*, based on his biomechanical figures, for which he has already published a storyboard/novel (1998).

In addition to *Alien* and *Species*, his two most famous collaborations, the projects *Dune* and *The Tourist* also stand out, as both occupy an important place in contemporary cinema. In projects such as *Poltergeist II* and *The Tourist*, Giger produced a multitude of paintings and designs that convey a hellish imagery and are among some of his most important works, constituting examples of his terrifying creatures and his work as a creator of atmospheres and worlds. International productions allowed him to come into contact with other artists working in the film industry, such as designers, make-up artists and special effects creators, which meant that Giger quickly gained experience in character construction, although his greatest learning experience was the film *Alien*. It is interesting to analyse the breadth of his collaborations in this field, as they constitute one of the most attractive facets of Giger's creative universe and have been more widely discussed than the rest of his work in critical articles, especially in the English-speaking world. Regarding his film collaborations, Giger comments: "I have worked on enough films to say that none has satisfied me as much as my collaboration on *Alien*. In it, I had complete freedom to do everything myself, from conceptual design to physical sculpture. I made myself a prisoner (locked myself away) on that occasion, which is just what is necessary to work on the development of a successful creative process. I must have my hand on the creature from the beginning or have an excellent sculptor in my workshop in Zurich"<sup>(256)</sup>.

Apart from creature and character designs, Giger has other links to the world of cinema. He recently designed the trophy awarded at the Neuchâtel Film Festival (Switzerland), called "Narcissus", which consists of a sculpture representing a biomechanoid composed of an arm and leg joined together, holding a film camera at one end to film itself, reflected in a mirror at the other end.

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<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

Let us review his filmography chronologically, focusing on his role as a designer, and then comment on his role as a director/producer and the documentaries and video projects that have resulted from his work. Our study will focus on the evolution of his monstrous creatures and fantastic creations for architecture and set design.

### **Swissmade 2069**

He took his first steps as a film designer in Switzerland, thanks to his connection with Zurich's underground culture. Director F.M. Murer commissioned him to create props for the film *Swissmade 2069* (1968). This film is now forgotten in Switzerland, but it remains a peculiar work, as it is considered by specialists in the genre to be the only science fiction film made in Switzerland<sup>257</sup>. It is a futuristic film, within the subgenre of anticipation, in the vein of films such as *Fahrenheit 451* (François Truffaut, 1966) and *Alphaville* (Jean Luc Godard, 1965). The plot revolves around an alien who makes a documentary about the country, recording what he sees with his body-integrated camera. There is a perfect society controlled by a central computer, but there is also an irreducible minority that has not integrated into the system. After a great cataclysm, Switzerland will be turned into an almost flooded island, where the only survivors are those who have not integrated. Basically, it is an extrapolation of Switzerland in 1969.

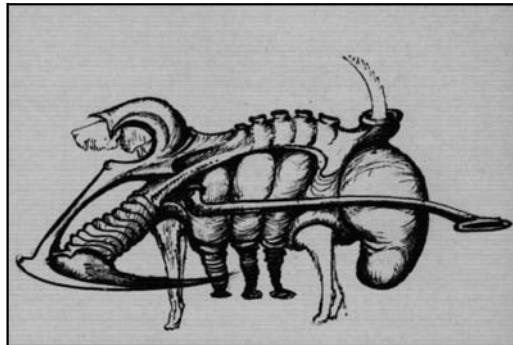
Giger designs the alien that comes to Earth to film and record and the armour suit worn by a dog. He makes sketches drawing his initial ideas for the designs, which he later constructs in three dimensions. He makes both elements out of polyester and white vinyl, giving them a bony appearance and a futuristic finish. The dog's armour is reminiscent of a painting by Bosch in which a dog is seen wearing similar attire. This design bears a visual resemblance to his sculpture *Baby Suitcase* (1967), as it combines organic elements such as kidneys, vertebrae and nipples. In addition

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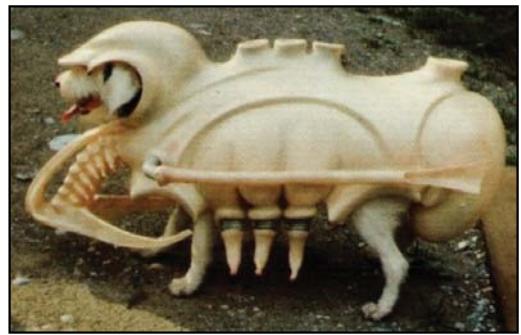
<sup>257</sup>MOESCHLER, Olivier, *2069 dans le nouveau cinéma suisse: OVNI ou reflet de la société?* in *De beaux lendemains?*, Editions Antipodes, Lausanne, 2002.

Giger incorporates a stylised exhaust pipe. These are undoubtedly very original designs for the time, featuring elements that Giger incorporated into his drawings during those years, such as pipes and the manipulation of bones to achieve new shapes. The result is striking and fantastical. The alien's costume has been preserved by Giger. The dog's armour caught the attention of Salvador Dalí, who wanted it for display in his museum. During a visit by Giger to Cadaqués, in an attempt to get Dalí to write an introduction for his book *Necronomicon*, Dalí saw a photo of the dog in its outfit and asked Giger for the piece. On his return to Switzerland, Giger sent it to him, but it disappeared in Spanish customs.

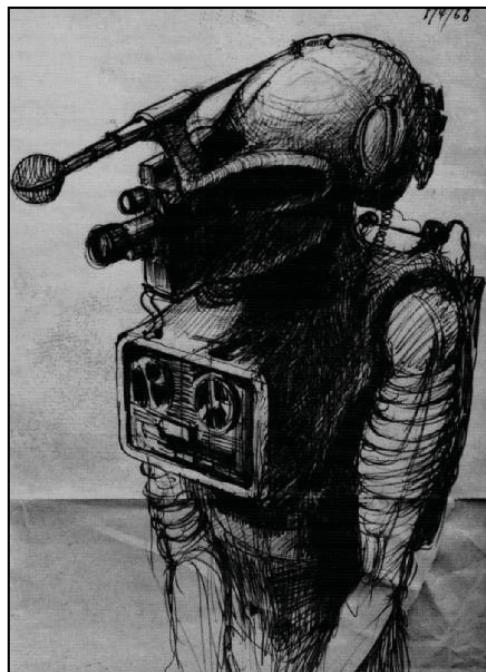
This was his first collaboration on a film and his first extraterrestrial design for cinema (the next extraterrestrial would be *Alien*). The extraterrestrial in *Swissmade 2069* is a biomechanoid being with a black suit, black boots and gloves, and white armour covering its chest and head, with an organic and bony appearance. The head is very large and elongated, a feature that is repeated in many of his figures. In his sketches, he develops the idea of an organism attached to the head (nape of the neck), which he would also work on in *Alien*.



321- *Costume for a dog* (1968)



322-*Swissmade 2069* (Fredi Murer, 1968)



323- *Alien for Swissmade 2069*



324- *Swissmade 2069* (Fredi Murer, 1968)

## Poltergeist II: The Other Side

A ghost story.

After seven years, Giger reappeared in the credits of a film, and surprisingly it was not in the sequel to *Alien*, *Aliens*, but in the second part of *Poltergeist*. Giger recalls that "nobody called me, I didn't even know there was going to be a sequel to *Alien*. They didn't even tell Ridley Scott" (258). Giger was unable to work on *Aliens*, as he was not informed and the director, James Cameron, did not count on him, preferring to develop the designs according to his own ideas, contributing his personal vision.

After the failure of the film project *The Tourist*, Giger returned to work with the director who was going to direct it, Brian Gibson. At Gibson's insistence, the two reunited in 1986 for the film *Poltergeist II: The Other Side*. The sequel to the successful *Poltergeist*, the film told the story of a family who moved house in an attempt to escape previous paranormal phenomena. In their new home, they would live on top of an ancient sacred Indian burial ground and have to face vengeful spirits and demons. *Poltergeist* became a classic of contemporary horror cinema in the 1980s and a much-imitated film. Richard Edlund was responsible for producing the special effects for both films (Boss Films). His challenge in this second instalment was to create the monsters and ghosts based on designs by H.R. Giger.

*Poltergeist II* is basically a film about scares, ghosts and spirits, with special effects playing a major role. The monstrous characters appear towards the end of the film, but only for a few seconds, which prevents them from taking centre stage in the plot or allowing Giger's laborious designs to be fully appreciated. Dead bodies, monsters and skulls recreate a world of darkness, a sinister underworld described only in broad strokes that bursts into the life of the protagonist family. The texture of the beasts is viscous,

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<sup>258</sup> H.R. Giger's *Biomechanics*, *Op. cit.*, p. 44

as are the aesthetics of *Alien* and *Species*. Giger is credited as a conceptual artist.

Giger produced numerous paintings visualising an underground cavern, the worm and the creature vomited by one of the protagonists, the Vortex and the Great Beast, glimpsed towards the end of the film.

The worm is inside a bottle and will cause the vomiting. This would be the second worm designed by Giger after his participation in *Dune*. Giger created the designs despite disagreeing with the idea of the worm, that is, that it would penetrate the body in that form and then turn into a beast, adopting a very different morphology. The vomiting marks the beginning of the monstrous transformation and is the most spectacular scene in the film. It is a representation of a monstrous and unpleasant birth, probably inspired by the birth of *Alien*. Actor Craig T. Nelson vomits a viscous mass, which is the enlarged worm sliding out of his mouth. Giger designed the entire concept of the sequence, from the worm and the bottle to the final transformation.

The primitive creature has an amphibious appearance with underdeveloped or mutilated limbs, lacking arms and legs. The character has a slimy appearance, with a latex suit and sticky substances. In his airbrush paintings, Giger detailed what this creature would look like, its final appearance, which underwent some modifications and retouches in the film. Giger sent the sketches to Los Angeles without being present in the production and modelling process, as was the case with *Alien*, and this is noticeable in the final result.

In his sketches, Giger also describes the underground cavern that appears in the final scenes of the film. The special effects are of high quality and carry the weight of the story. The company responsible for them was Boss-Film Corporation, with John Bruno as artistic director of effects, Richard Edlund as visual effects supervisor, and Steve Johnson in charge of creating the creature. Edlund and Johnson would later work with Giger again.

The beast, painted by Giger, takes centre stage at the end of the film. It is an anthropomorphic being with a head that resembles a jellyfish, with snakes and worms moving around. It also has large jaws and fangs (painting P-13,

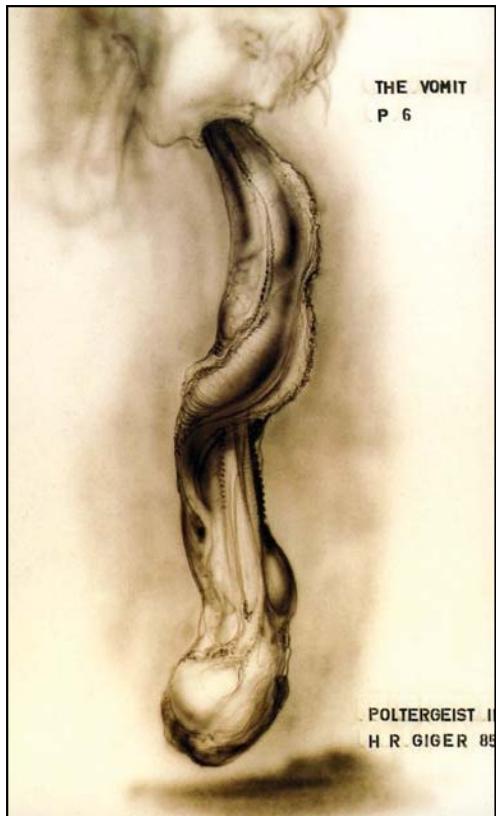
the great beast), and tentacle-like hands. Overall, it is very Gigeresque and reminiscent of the biomechanical designs of *Alien*.

The character of Reverend Kane is perhaps the most terrifying in the film due to his sinister and demonic nature. He was the leader of a cult and led its members to their deaths a century ago by locking them in a cave to await Armageddon, and now he returns to kidnap the film's protagonist, a girl named Carol Anne. Giger paints a picture (P26 *The Reverend*), inspired by the actor who plays the role, Julian Beck.

Giger believes that most of his designs were misinterpreted by special effects director Richard Edlund's team. Despite this, the film received an Oscar nomination for its special effects. Giger's creations are seen very briefly in the film. The technicians did not understand why Giger painted his pictures in vertical format if they were going to be transferred to the big screen. Giger therefore suggested that his monsters could be filmed diagonally, but he believes that Gibson did not have much knowledge about special effects. Giger preferred not to leave his studio in Zurich, so he sent his assistant Conny de Fries to Los Angeles to represent him in a dignified manner. As they agreed on the sketches, he painted them with an airbrush, photographed them and sent them off. But this process was slow, and each specialist interpreted the drawings in their own way. Giger believes that "there are many ways to ruin a film, even if the special effects are magnificent; the quality of a film depends fundamentally on the producer and, above all, on the director's skills. So for me, it would have been better to work on Aliens with Cameron than on Poltergeist II" <sup>259</sup>.

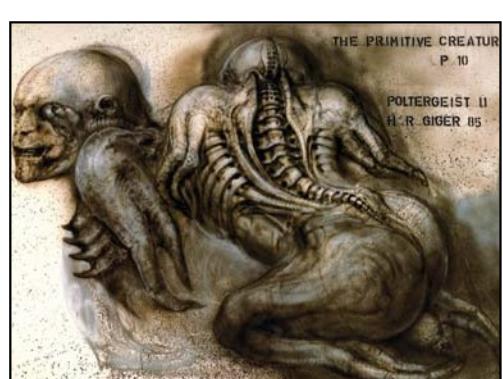
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<sup>259</sup>H. R. Giger. *Filmdesign*, Op. cit. p. 56



326-Poltergeist II: *The Metamorphosis* (1985)

325-Poltergeist II. *The Vomit* (1985)



327-328-Poltergeist II. *The Primitive Creature* (1985)



329-330-Poltergeist II. *The Great Beast* (1985)



331-332-Poltergeist II. *The Cave* (1985)



333- *Poltergeist II: The Smoke Beast* (1985)



334- *Poltergeist II: The Vortex* (1985)



335-338-*Poltergeist II* (Brian Gibson, 1985)

### **Teito Monogatari (in Europe *Tokyo, the Last Megalopolis*)**

Following Giger's success in Japan, with exhibitions, translations of his books and a commission to design a bar, Gigermania broke out in the country. He was asked to design a character called Goho Dohji for the film *Teito Monogatari*, who embodies the god of vengeance.

Based on the anime *Doomed Megalopolis*, the film tells the story of Kato, a man who communicates with death and seeks to destroy Tokyo. The film features demonic possessions, fights and reincarnations of gods, such as Goho Dohji.

The story is about an earthquake that shook Tokyo in 1923 and is expected to repeat itself every 70 years. Giger painted two airbrush paintings in 1987 and made sketches with instructions for constructing the monster, as he could not control the execution of his design. The monster is a demonic being with rounded shapes, whose body is organised around a ball, with sharp and pointed elements. It also carries a saw wheel and other mechanical devices. According to Giger, the technicians used the wrong scale in the construction, making the monster twice as large and thus obtaining an unfortunate artistic result in the film, in which the creature "seems to act like a frightened chicken" <sup>260</sup>.

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<sup>260</sup>*Ibid.*



339-340-Goho Doji (1987)

## Species

This is after *Alien*, the best-known film production Giger has worked on, creating the conceptual designs for the film's monster protagonist, called Sil. *Species*, released in 1995, was a huge commercial success, so work began immediately on a sequel. The most appealing part of the film, which mixes thriller with science fiction, is the alien protagonist, Sil.

The plot of the film is a science fiction story: a series of extraterrestrial codes are picked up by a telescope and, following instructions, are combined with human genes. These experiments produce a human-looking female with an accelerated growth capacity. But the scientists decide to end the experiment for fear of this new species. The girl then escapes from the laboratory and is pursued by professionals, as she appears to be dangerous to the human race. On a train bound for California, the girl experiences the trauma of her evolution and transforms inside an egg. Once the metamorphosis is complete, Sil is a beautiful woman who has a mission in her genes: to mate and perpetuate her species. Her final destination is Los Angeles, which will become both a place to reproduce and a battlefield for the fate of the human race. When threatened with the possibility of fertilisation, Sil reveals her true hybrid appearance, metamorphosing into a lethal creature with great agility and strength, whose body is riddled with deadly biomechanical weapons.

The film's producer and director thought that Giger was the best person to develop the image of this new alien race. Below are the instructions from producer Frank Mancuso Jr. and director Roger Donaldson regarding the monster protagonist, Sil<sup>261</sup>:

- In its human form, it will be a beautiful young woman between the ages of 20 and 25. The monster to be created must have some visual connection to the actress who will play the role in its human form. In other words, the monster must have eyes and a face that make it clear that it is the alien form of Sil:

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<sup>261</sup> These are collected in a letter sent to Giger on 9 February 1994, as a summary of previous conversations. See *H.R. Giger's Film Design*, *Op. cit.* p. 114.

- A height between 225-240 cm.
- It must be able to move easily and quickly.
- Physically, it must have the means to kill effortlessly (to avoid things like guns or knives). Above all, it must have a very organic appearance
  - Some parts of its body could be translucent, so that the monster's internal mechanism can be seen.
  - It must be a mixture of beauty and horror.
  - It must be able to dig into the earth, as it escapes in this way in one scene in the film.

It must have extrasensory abilities. It can create a dark image of what is behind walls. Something must happen in its mind when this process takes place.

Other instructions cover more aspects related to Sil:

- The egg, where Sil transforms from a girl into a woman. The egg is a living thing that allows Sil to change. According to the film's script, the girl vomits something, a pasty substance that forms moulds around her until it creates the egg.
- Her victims: when Sil kills, she must do so by leaving an identifiable mark. For example, by breaking bones, showing that the body was killed under extraordinary circumstances and that it must have been done by some extraterrestrial being.
- Secretions: Sil must leave evidence of where she has been, clues for the pursuit team to follow her trail (such as bodily fluids, saliva).
- Laboratory sequence: a clone of Sil is created in the laboratory. A small version of the monster grows rapidly inside a glass cup, breaking it and chasing everyone. This monster must be between 60 and 90 cm tall.
- Vulnerabilities: The monster must show some weakness since it will ultimately be defeated. For example, it may be uncomfortable in sunlight. The producers were not too clear on this point and are hoping for some new input.

- Sil's dreams and thoughts: when little Sil flees on a train, she has strange thoughts that reveal her origins. There is also a dream about the transformation of the egg and sexual fantasies. Sil dreams of mating scenes, which could be between alien beings, and are very strange and erotic.

Given the large number of requirements from the director and producer, Giger's work was complex, but he would ultimately solve all these issues by creating a multitude of designs and contributing ideas to represent his vision of Sil.

The idea was for Giger to undertake a task similar to the one he had done for the film *Alien*, that is, to design the alien creature that was the film's protagonist and to advise on the visual aspects and staging. Director Roger Donaldson had discovered Giger's work through *Giger's Necronomicon* and wanted a design for *Sil* that was both terrifying and sensual. Giger was not particularly fond of the script, as he saw many similarities with the *Alien* saga, and for this reason he tried to ensure that his designs were different from those in the *Alien* films. Giger spoke out against certain aspects of the production that he did not agree with and thought would damage the artistic finish of the film, even suggesting ideas to tweak the script, which he considered unoriginal, such as the ending with the flamethrowers and death by fire, identical to films from the 1990s such as *Alien III* (1990, David Fincher) and *Terminator II* (1991, James Cameron). Giger did not understand why the same ending was being repeated and did not want people to see him as a redundant artist. He was also very concerned about how his designs would be visualised in three dimensions and hoped to be able to advise directly on the specifications, as he had done on *Alien*. Despite promises from the director and producers that Giger would have creative freedom, his suggestions, which he believed were in line with the logic of the designs and the creature, were not accepted. Giger wanted the creature to have a translucent appearance and claimed that its construction was possible, so he decided to carry it out in his workshop in Zurich and thus convince the producers. He also undertook the construction of a ghost train that appeared in Sil's dreams and which ultimately only appears briefly in the film.

seconds. Furthermore, they do not follow the guidelines indicated by Giger for their inclusion in the film.

The script for *Species* had many shortcomings from Giger's point of view: "The elements of the *Species* script that did not appeal to me were those that closely related it to the Alien films, such as the creature attacking with its tongue or its death in fire. I expressed that I had no interest in working on a remake and was assured that this would not be the case. I do not accept the task as someone who is only trying to follow a series of limited instructions" <sup>262</sup>.

Despite everything, Giger produced a multitude of designs for Sil and for some scenes in the film. Giger always tries to be original and go a step further than other artists. For example, we have the case of Sil's design for the science fiction film *Species*, in which Giger tried to highlight his ideas about a translucent design with transparencies for the alien. Faced with the producers' refusal due to the impossibility of such a design, he built a model in his own workshop in Zurich. His experience in various disciplines such as sculpture, painting, design, and interior architecture has been very beneficial and useful in his film collaborations such as *Alien* and *Species*.

Giger conceived Sil using his biomechanical style: a creature that is half human, half alien, with a range of possibilities for defence and aggression. Giger's idea was to design a transparent being, a notion that can already be seen in many of his airbrush paintings. He drew inspiration from Maria in *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927) and from his own creations such as the painting of *Lilith*, whose design shows many similarities.

Giger designed the alien monster as a transformation or metamorphosis of Sil from human to extraterrestrial. He also designed the egg in which it undergoes its first transformation, some scenes of attacks on its victims, and the dreams/thoughts that go through its mind, which Giger developed into a scene in which Sil dreams of a train.

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<sup>262</sup> *Ibid*, p. 114

The problem arose when it came to creating his designs, as Giger intended to build them himself, as he did in *Alien* (pre-production and final production). He wanted to work on the ideas from an artistic point of view, on a full scale, following his sketches. The Hollywood technicians wanted to build them themselves based on the designs. Ultimately, Giger was unable to be present during construction due to the death of his mother in 1994.

His long experience in designing film characters gives him a broad vision of the project he is working on. The suggestions Giger sent to Metro sought to eliminate the similarities between *Species* and the *Alien* trilogy.

The ghost train was an idea that Giger had had since childhood. He tried to incorporate it into previous projects such as *Dune* and *The Train*, and Giger thought that *Species* was a new opportunity to visualise (build in three dimensions) his desire. This sequence was Giger's suggestion (it did not appear as such in the original script) and, after many problems, was finally included in the film, although it only lasts 8 seconds. The idea came to him after reading the script, when he made a connection between his escape by train and the strange dreams that haunt him. The budget did not include money for this sequence, but after Giger's proposal, he was promised that it would be taken into account. Giger had to finance the construction of the train in order to convince the producers. The sequence is undoubtedly one of the most original aspects of the film. Giger built a large model inspired by his ideas, which mixed skulls and bodies with the structure of a train.

The train moved like a caterpillar, with each section moving independently and connected by accordion bellows. Arms with suction tubes extended from its sides. Animal skeletons appeared in the final carriages. Giger based his design on a biomechanical sculpture from the 1960s and added large teeth. Giger built and animated this large model with the help of various workshops in Switzerland that specialised in train construction. Giger's idea was to convince others of the viability of the project without the use of computer-generated effects and for the scene to last about thirty seconds. In the end, it lasted 8 seconds and he was not given any credit in the titles, which

leaves the authorship up in the air in the eyes of the viewer. Giger insisted that the train scene appear in some form in the film (and had to finance it almost entirely himself) as he believed it would bring the film to life and add new sensations. After this minor disappointment, Giger built a train that he installed in his garden, which harks back to his youthful image of the ghost train.

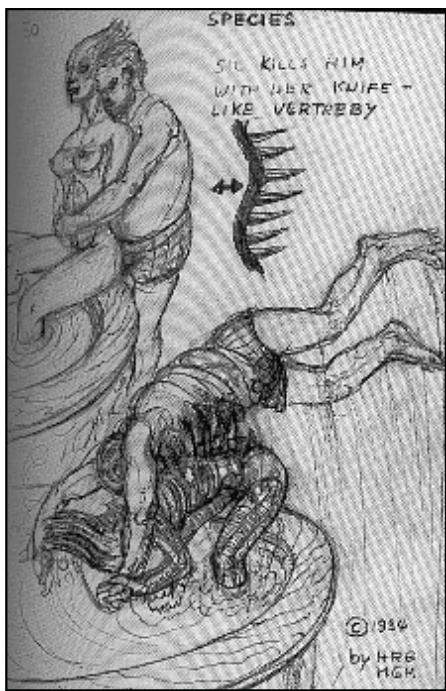
After seeing the film, Giger believes he was hired because his name is synonymous with *Alien*. The film features a Sil full of transparencies and beautiful as Giger had imagined, an animatronic doll built by make-up and special effects specialist Steve Johnson, and another that is opaque and lacks that sensuality and charm, which is computer-generated and with which Giger does not want to be associated as it shocks him. Johnson's animatronic is magnificent, according to Giger himself, as are many of the special effects seen in the film, such as the transformation of Sil's eye or a dreamlike scene hinting at sex between alien species underwater. In the scene of Sil's birth, Giger believes they were inspired by a performance by La Fura dels Baus, in which a naked woman emerged upside down from rubber tubes.

Despite everything, the film was a success in the United States and did well at the box office, which led to thoughts of a sequel. The film is heavily inspired by *Alien* and is a conceptual attempt to approach it, which is why Giger was hired. The subtext is a metaphor for 'deadly sex', for malevolent sexuality, and can be related to other films of the time such as *Basic Instinct* (Paul Verhoeven, 1992), in which the protagonist is a psychopath who murders men, just like Sil. The plot of *Species* is also not original, as it repeats the plot of a British series from the 1960s called *A for Andromeda* (1961).

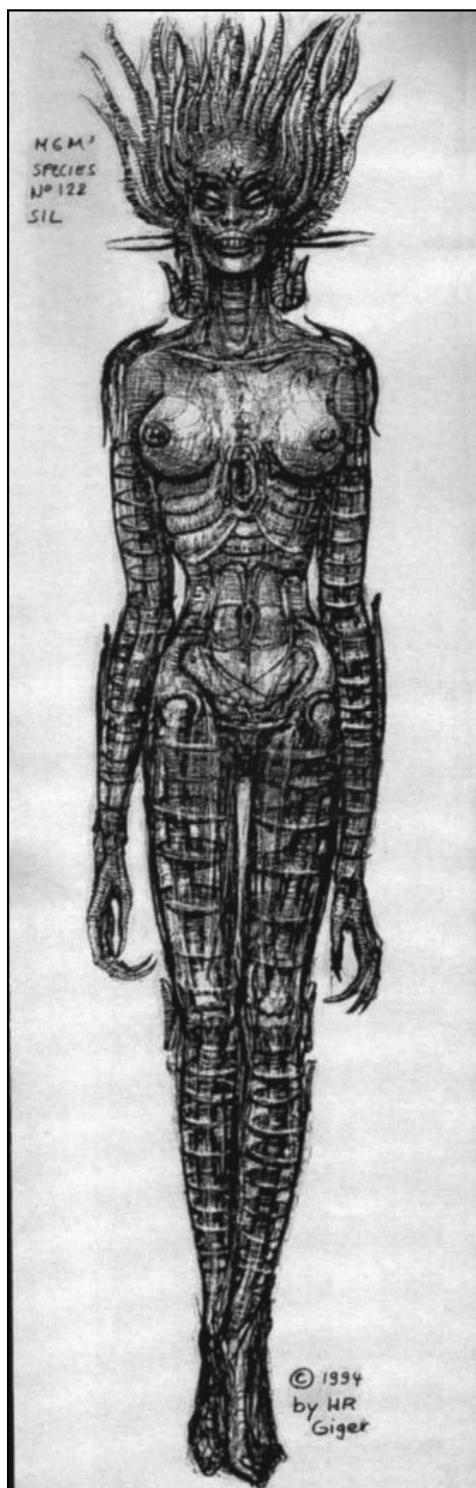
For Spanish critics, Giger continues to capitalise on the design of his *Alien* creature, which is the highlight of this predictable film in which the iconography of the castrating woman, predator of men, stands out<sup>263</sup>.

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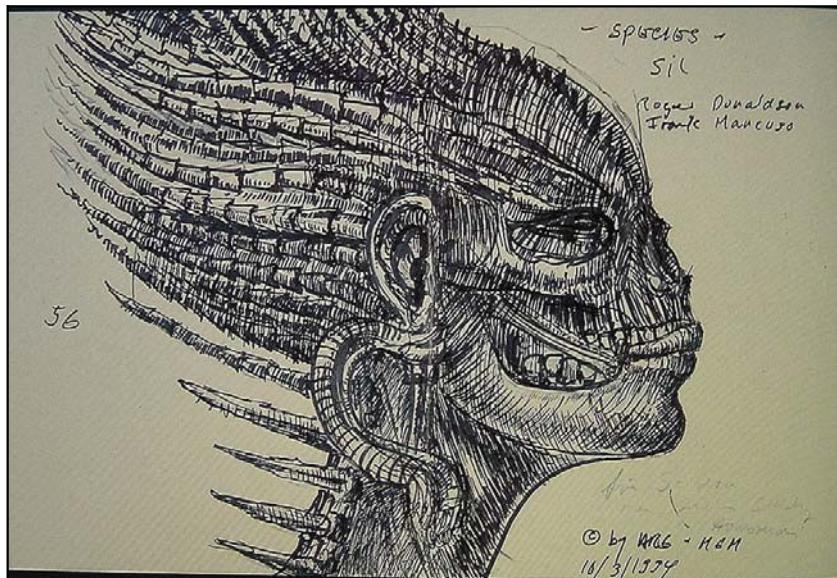
<sup>263</sup> TORREIRO, M. Donaldson disappoints with a boring film. *El País*, 8-10-1995.



341- Sil kills a victim with her spinal spikes (1994)



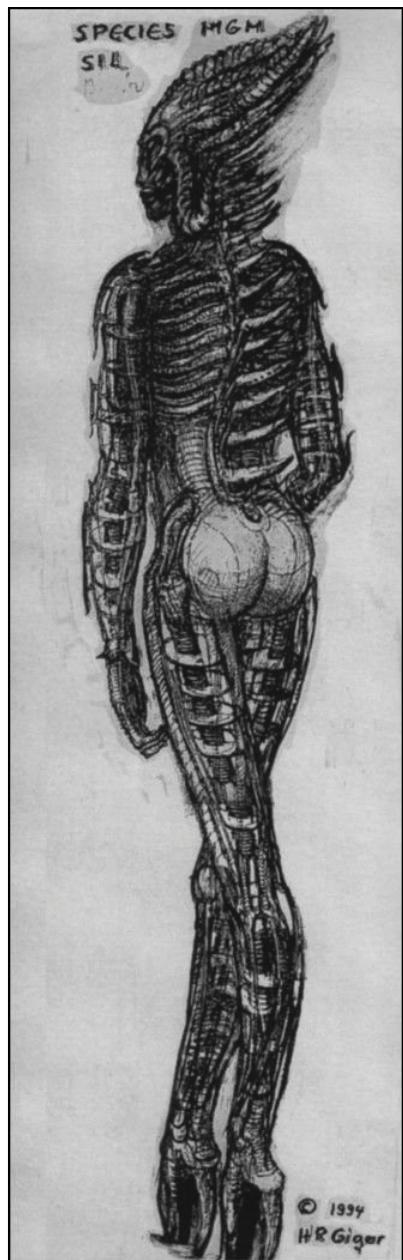
342- Sil  
(1994)



343- Sil (1994)

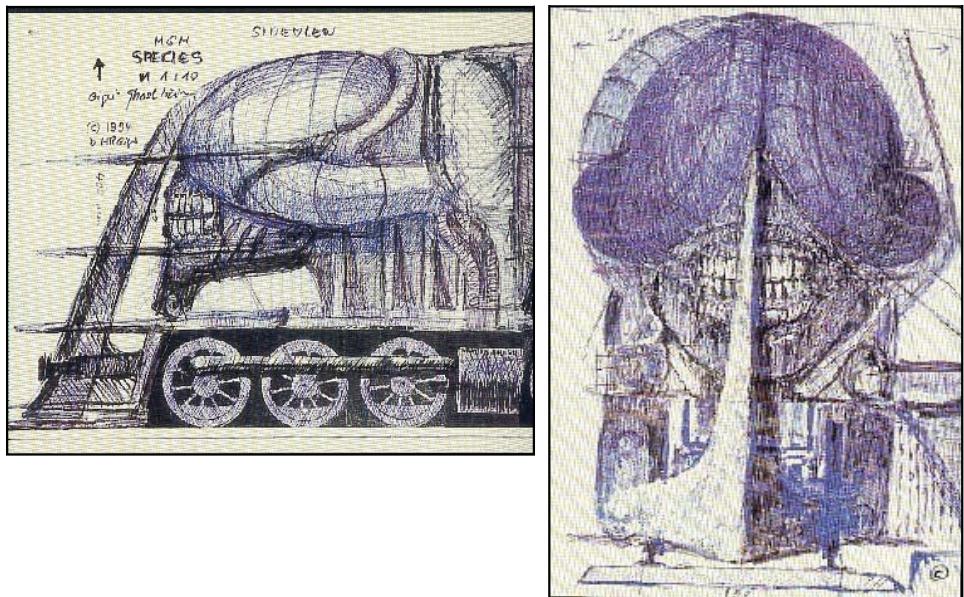


344- Sil (1994)



345-

346- Sil  
(1994)



347-348 Ghost Train (1994)



349- Ghost Train (1994)

### 2.3.6.3. Unrealised film projects

There are a number of major projects in the world of cinema that, for various reasons, never came to fruition but which, given their scale, could have altered the history of cinema, especially the fantasy genre. The stories surrounding these projects are mostly tortuous, but at the same time fascinating. They reflect a series of unfulfilled dreams within the film industry. Even some of the big names in contemporary cinema have seen their ideas and plans vanish, such as Ridley Scott and his project *I Am Legend*, Terry Gilliam and *Don Quixote*, Tim Burton and *Superman Lives*, and James Cameron and his idea to film *Spider-Man*, among others.

Giger has taken part in a series of projects that ultimately did not come to fruition, but which are nonetheless interesting, as he produced works that were outstanding from a conceptual and formal point of view. In most cases, he made numerous sketches and conceptual paintings that allow us to interpret and get an idea of how they could have been visualised on the big screen and what their impact would have been, as these designs have greatly influenced other productions in the genre.

Among these projects, *Dune*, in which he was involved on two occasions, and *The Tourist* stand out, two productions that could have changed the history of postmodern fantasy cinema in some way. A subchapter in this section will consist of a series of films in which Giger collaborated but which, for various reasons, did not include his original ideas or altered them, moving away from his previous concepts.

#### ***Dune***

In 1963, Analog magazine began publishing Dune World, a three-part story by writer Frank Herbert. The following year, the same magazine published Prophet of Dune, the three-part continuation of the story. It was a complex sociological, ecological, political, and theological saga set in a world thousands of years in the future.

Both stories were collected in *Dune* in 1965, for which Herbert won the Hugo and Nebula awards, the most prestigious in science fiction. Five sequels have been written so far (*Dune Messiah*, 1969, *Children of Dune*, 1976, *God Emperor of Dune* (1981), *Heretics of Dune* (1984) and *Chapterhouse: Dune* (1985), a trilogy of official prequels written by Herbert's son Brian (*Prelude to Dune*), three unsuccessful film adaptations, a 1984 film by David Lynch and a television miniseries adapted by John Harrison. Herbert's legacy is comparable to Tolkien's work as the architect of one of the most important science fiction sagas of the 20th century.

Giger has been linked to the project of adapting *Dune* to film on two occasions, in 1975 with Alejandro Jodorowsky and in 1980 with Ridley Scott. In 1975, *Dune* was Giger's first collaboration on a major international film project, as his only experience to date had been the experimental Swiss film *Swissmade*. Now he would have the opportunity to work with world-renowned artists, as the artistic ambitions of the project were enormous. Not surprisingly, *Dune* brought together the most relevant figures of the underground culture of the time such as Alejandro Jodorowsky, Moebius, Chris Foss, Dan O'Bannon and Giger himself.

This was the second attempt to adapt *Dune* to film<sup>264</sup> and had generated great excitement due to the popularity of the novel (as a result of its success among the hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s), the large budget that was being considered, around £14 million, which was enormous for that time, and the cast of prestigious figures who were going to participate in the film. In addition to the most representative artists of the underground for the visual creation of the film, the project would feature Salvador Dalí and Orson Welles in the roles of Emperor Padishah IV and Baron Harkonnen respectively, with

<sup>264</sup> Alejandro Jodorowsky had become a cult figure in underground cinema with his first two films, *El Topo* (1971) and *The Holy Mountain* (1974), praised by Salvador Dalí and John Lennon, among others. His fantastical imagery placed him close to avant-garde filmmaker Kenneth Anger, considered one of the fathers of the modern music video, and his staging made him a visionary auteur.

<sup>265</sup> The APJAC corporation (short for Arthur P. Jacobs), producer of the *Planet of the Apes* films, attempted to shoot *Dune* in 1973, but Jacobs' death that same year led to the project's failure.

Pink Floyd (at the height of their career) to compose the soundtrack and Douglas Trumbull to supervise the special effects<sup>266</sup>.

The film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968) gave a big boost in the 1970s to the production of science fiction films that required sophisticated special effects, as was the case with *Dune*. For this reason, the 1970s were years of experimentation and change within the fantasy genre that would underpin the revolution experienced by traditional cinema and lead to a new conception of filmmaking from the 1980s onwards.

But the complexity of the adaptation and Jodorowsky's ambition caused the project to fail. The third attempt came in 1979, this time led by Ridley Scott, who was euphoric after his success with *Alien*. Scott also hired Giger, but the film was not made either. Finally, producers Rafaella de Laurentis and David Lynch took up the project, attempting to put an end to the 10-year controversy, and released the film in 1984. Lynch's film was a financial failure and was underrated by critics.

#### Jodorowsky's Dune

In 1975, French producer Michel Seydoux acquired the rights to *Dune*, eager to break into film production. To adapt the novel for the cinema, he chose Jodorowsky, who had a special vision for the novel: "Dune is much more than a science fiction novel; it deals with themes such as the creation of a Messiah and his ascension through different levels necessary to overcome circumstances that are harmful to humanity. There is also the theme of the search for eternity, superior mental powers, drug addiction and basically loneliness"<sup>267</sup>.

Jodorowsky's choice was a risky one due to his manifest eccentricity, but at the same time a hopeful gamble, as *Dune* was intended to revolutionise the genre.

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<sup>266</sup>Trumbull was the most prestigious in the field at the time after being responsible for the effects in *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

<sup>267</sup>HUGHES, David, *The Greatest Sci-Fi Movies Never Made*, Titan Books, London, 2001, p. 82.

His first step was to try to conceptualise the visual elements of the book, for which he chose three artists: French cartoonist Moebius would be responsible for designing creatures and characters; Dan O'Bannon would supervise the special effects, drawing on his experience in Carpenter's first film, *Dark Star* (1974, John Carpenter); British illustrator Chris Foss would work on all aspects of the hardware (creating exotic machinery). Months later, Giger would join the project, thanks to his connection with Salvador Dalí.

The highlight of Jodorowsky's project was the artists and designers. *Dune* would undoubtedly have been a revolution in contemporary fantasy cinema, as it sought to bring together for the first time a series of artists who have subsequently had a notable influence on science fiction today. Without Moebius, Chris Foss and Giger, it would be impossible to understand the fantasy cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. Moebius is perhaps the most important science fiction comic book artist of today<sup>268</sup> and has also participated in fundamental films of the fantasy genre such as *Alien* (1979), *Tron* (1982) and *The Abyss* (James Cameron, 1989). Foss has been the most imitated illustrator in magazines and films when it comes to visualising spaceships, satellites and planets. We will analyse Giger's influence on contemporary culture in the third chapter of this study.

As we have also seen, the *Alien* project was conceived in *Dune*, as it brought Dan O'Bannon into contact with Giger's work. Another relevant fact is that Giger was introduced to Dalí, the artistic personality most admired by Giger, and whose encounters in the 1970s had a profound effect on the Swiss artist.

Herbert's novel (1965), which was quite lengthy, posed one of the greatest challenges due to the complexity of the plot and the cost that such an undertaking could entail. Jodorowsky proposed the *Dune* project around 1973, secured a budget of \$20 million, and managed to assemble one of the most ambitious artistic teams ever assembled for a film. For Jodorowsky, the

<sup>268</sup> The graphic novel series *The Incal*, written by Jodorowsky, has sold over a million copies. For *Dune*, he drew the storyboard and numerous character designs.

<sup>269</sup> FERNÁNDEZ DELGADO, Miguel Ángel, Alejandro Jodorowsky's film version of Dune in *Stalker*, no. 15, 2001, citing CLUTE, John and NICHOLLS, *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction*, Peter, St. Martin Press, New York, 1993.

Herbert's novel was a magnum opus, with strong mystical and mythological connotations.

Analysing Giger's designs gives us an idea of what the film might have looked like.

Giger's task was to design the world of the Harkonnens, the planet Geidi Prime, one of the most striking visual aspects of the film, due to its horrible habits and unpleasant sexual practices. Giger had a certain amount of freedom to visualise this decadent world, associated with magic and sexual perversions. According to Giger: "My planet was ruled by the forces of evil, black magic was practised, there was freedom of aggression and other perversions were the order of the day. In short, I felt right at home. The only thing that couldn't be included were sex scenes; I had to plan as if it were a children's film. [Jodorowsky] said he was tired of his films always being banned. A team of thirty specialists would be responsible for bringing my ideas to life. I was totally excited" <sup>(270)</sup>.

I also had the opportunity to design costumes and masks. Giger produced several airbrush paintings, six in total, in which his biomechanical and fantastical style is evident, revealing an original vision of Harkonnen Castle, as well as surfaces covered with bone structures.

For the first Dune project (1975), he designed Harkonnen Castle, which had a drawbridge, like medieval castles. We have four pencil sketches that foreshadowed a fantastic and innovative design, in addition to the six airbrush paintings that visualise the ideas Giger had prepared for the mysterious and cruel world of the Harkonnens. The sketches are accompanied by explanatory notes on the drawings, which are a frequent feature of Giger's designs.

The design of the castle is based on the baron's voluminous figure, creating a grotesque image resembling that of a Buddha; it takes the form of an egg buried under a mound, covered with sharp bones and surrounded by excrement that soon turns to dust. His large arms

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<sup>270</sup> Arh+, *Op. cit.*

support energy generators and weapons to repel attacks from the ground (he appears to be wielding a machine gun). The body rotates on a circular rail surrounded by a 70-metre-wide moat. It can only communicate with the outside world via a drawbridge which, when lowered, resembles an erect penis. The walls of the bridge can be closed, crushing unwanted visitors. The head is a defensive tower to protect the castle from possible attacks; the face section can be lowered mechanically, revealing a skull with defensive weapons (daggers, cannons).

Jodorowsky was fascinated by Giger's designs and planned to make three-dimensional models based on his ideas. Regarding the character of the baron, he thought, "I see him as a vision of a contemporary man, a vision of a world where nothing is sacred, where man is born in a rubbish bin, where the whole world is rubbish" <sup>271</sup>. The Baron was an immense man weighing 300 kg and with a huge ego, living in a castle built in his image. The palace was located on a sordid planet (...) Giger, the Swiss artist whose catalogue Dalí showed me... his decadent, sick, suicidal, brilliant art was perfect for creating the planet Harkonnen... he created a design for the castle and the planet that truly achieved a metaphysical horror" <sup>272</sup>.

The designs created by the ambitious technical team suggest ideas of what Jodorowsky's film could have been, which at the time could have revolutionised the genre as Star Wars did two years later.

In Dune, Giger demonstrated his creative potential with innovative fantasy designs that captured his own visions adapted to the story of Dune. The desolate landscape with human bones and the anthropomorphic castle are examples of the ideas Giger had planned for the depraved world of the Harkonnens. Despite the failure of the project, Giger became known to some of the most influential authors in contemporary science fiction cinema, such as Dan O'Bannon (*Total Recall*) and Ridley Scott (*Blade Runner*). They were keen to hire him for the film they wanted to make, *Alien*, for which his participation was essential and a priority.

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<sup>271</sup> *Ibid*, p.82

<sup>272</sup> JODOROWSKY, Alejandro. *The movie you will never see* [online]. [Date consulted: 26-1-2004]. Available at: <<http://www.hotweird.com/jodorowsky/dunestory.html>>.

Furthermore, the *Dune* film project is very important to Giger, even though it was never realised. There are several reasons for this:

- He meets Salvador Dalí in person, whom Giger considers to be the artist who has had the greatest influence on him.
- This was the first major film in which he participated.

The project never came to fruition. Jodorowsky believes it was sabotaged by Hollywood, which considered it a European (French) product rather than an American one, and because of the competition it would pose to *Star Wars*, which was produced a few years later. The French production company could not finance the film on its own, so Seydoux and Jodorowsky travelled to Los Angeles before Christmas 1975 to seek Hollywood's interest in a co-production, but they were unsuccessful. Jodorowsky had already spent a lot of money on pre-production and, according to Herbert himself, his script was excessively long, enough for an 11- or 12-hour film<sup>273</sup>.

By 1977, the project had failed, but for Jodorowsky, the *Dune* project changed their lives: "I enjoyed working on *Dune* so deeply that for me, in a way, the film was made." Interestingly, *Star Wars* and, to a greater extent, *Alien* benefited from the team that Jodorowsky intended to direct.

#### Ridley Scott's project

After the success of *Star Wars*, which was heavily influenced by Herbert's novel (desert planet, religious groups and a young hero with mystical powers), the adaptation of *Dune* was back in the spotlight. Dino de Laurentiis acquired the rights to *Dune* in 1978 and chose Ridley Scott to direct the project after he demonstrated his ability for science fiction production in *Alien*. Scott contacted Giger again to direct

<sup>273</sup> HUGHES, David. *Op. cit*, p. 83.

<sup>274</sup> A producer with extensive film experience who acquired the rights to *Dune* for \$2 million and dared to take on the project. In 1980, he said, "I don't know why other people haven't been successful with *Dune* before, there's no logical reason for their failure. Maybe they were scared off by the money."

Production design. At that time, Giger had in mind to develop a series of furniture together with his collaborator Conny de Fries, starting with a bed he had already designed. It was an opportunity to create something in three dimensions that he had been working on for some time. For this reason, in his new contract he secured the copyright to his designs so that he could produce them. Thanks to this, once the project was abandoned, he was able to create them years later.

Scott began work on the project in January 1980, setting up his headquarters at Pinewood Studios in London and beginning to study the storyboard and special effects. He chose Rudy Wurlitzer as screenwriter, who recognised the work as one of the most complex adaptations he had ever worked on: "I made three drafts of the script before I was satisfied with its structure, even the initial result was more of an outline than a script"<sup>275</sup>. But Scott and Wurlitzer had many ideas that brought a new sensibility to *Dune*, staying true to the spirit of the novel but making it more surreal. The producers, however, were hesitant to embark on a project that Scott estimated would cost around \$50 million and ultimately rejected the idea. Dino de Laurentis transferred power to his daughter Rafaella, who failed to reach an agreement with Scott due to the high cost and cancelled the project. She eventually hired David Lynch, who finally managed to bring *Dune* to the big screen. Curiously, the film cost more than £35 million and was a financial failure. After giving up on *Dune*, Scott worked on the adaptation of another science fiction novel, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* by Philip K. Dick, which became the film *Blade Runner*.

For this occasion, Giger visualised the worms of *Dune*, with fangs and phallic connotations. The most important consequence of this second collaboration would be his design of the Harkonnen chair, which he painted inspired by his previous works (*Smoker's Chair*) and which would culminate in the execution of a furniture programme consisting of several objects.

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<sup>275</sup>*Ibid.*

## David Lynch's Dune

In 1981, a director who was emerging in underground culture after his cult film *Eraserhead* (1980) rejected George Lucas's offer to direct *Return of the Jedi*, opting instead for the new project *Dune*, as it was a new film that did not continue any saga and posed a greater challenge given the aforementioned controversy and his artistic ambitions. But *Dune* coincided with another major production by Rafaella de Laurentis, *Conan the Barbarian*, even having to share the shoot and some locations. Toni Masters, chosen by Lynch to direct the production design for *Dune*, tried to move away from previous designs, which could have been a handicap, and to approximate the graphic style of the *Dune* books illustrated by John Schoenherr. The artist Ron Miller was responsible for visualising the ideas of Masters and Lynch<sup>276</sup>. Lynch rejected Giger's previous designs, claiming that he did not like his approach. Obviously, Lynch wanted to distance himself from previous creations in order to contribute his personal vision.

In any case, the influence of *Alien* and Giger's designs influenced Lynch's film, which softened some ideas such as the character of Baron Harkonnen, pustular and degraded by the industrial chaos of his planet. The characters accompanying the Navigator at the beginning of the film, bald and dressed in black leather, are reminiscent of the cover Giger created for the rock group Magma in 1977. Illustrator Chriss Foss points out that "the *Dune* that finally made it to the screen was pitiful compared to Jodorowsky's vision"<sup>277</sup>.

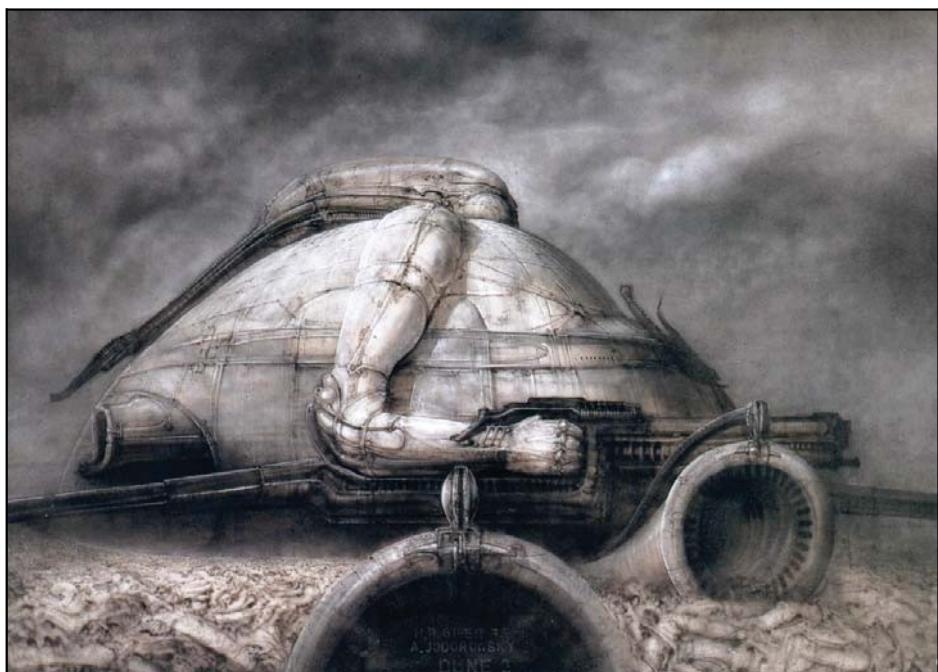
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<sup>276</sup>HISPANO, Andrés. *David Lynch, claroscuro americano*, Glenat, Barcelona, 1998.

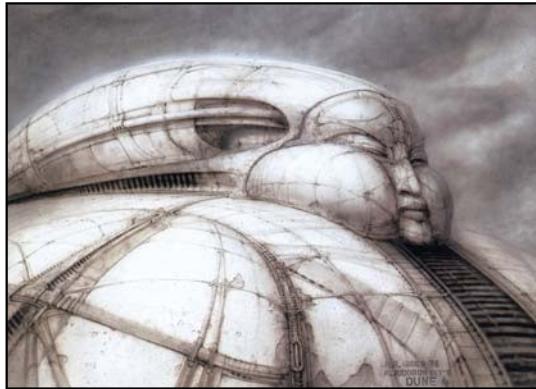
<sup>277</sup>*Ibid.*



350-Dune I (1975)



351-Dune II (1975)



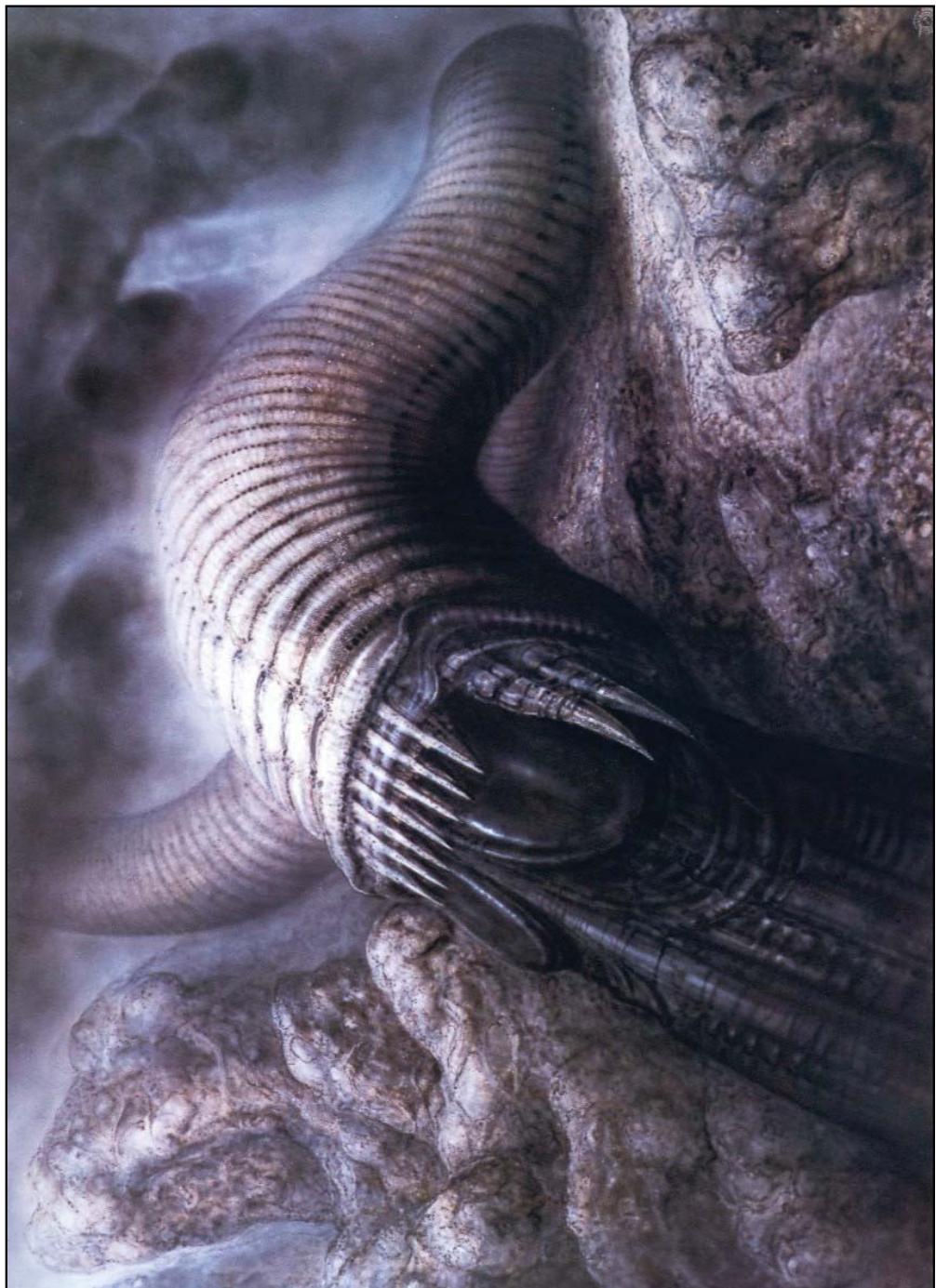
352-*Dune IV* (1976).



353-*Dune V* (1976).



354-*Dune VI* (1976)



355- *Dune Worm XII* (1979)

## The Tourist

In the early 1980s, Giger participated in a new film project after his success with *Alien*. In 1980, writer Clair Noto completed the screenplay for *The Tourist*, which in the following years would become the most famous "unproduced/unadapted" screenplay of the era<sup>278</sup>. This film could even have preceded the release of *Blade Runner* and become the first film noir of science fiction. It was a relatively simple story: the alien invasion of Manhattan. The attractive Grace Ripley is part of a group of aliens living incognito on Earth, having taken on humanoid form. Ripley intends to return to her world, following the trail of another alien named John Taiga, as she believes he has found a way to leave Earth.

Noto wrote the script for Universal Pictures, drawing inspiration from photographs by Helmut Newton and Robert Wise's classic *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), in which the alien Klaatu and his robot Gort visit Earth to warn humanity about its fate. "I loved the idea of a man from another planet walking around Washington without his race being recognised, because he doesn't look like one" <sup>279</sup>. Noto was also inspired by more stylised science fiction and the fantastical illustrations of artists such as H.R. Giger, and wanted to create a film for adults, "combining a dramatic story with the fantasy effects of science fiction, especially in terms of sex, romance and adventure; she wanted to depict sexual agony and ecstasy as never before, and science fiction seemed to her to be the ideal terrain"<sup>(280)</sup>.

Ridley Scott became interested in the project while working on *Blade Runner* and was about to film *The Tourist*. Noto even believes that the famous Chinatown scene in *Blade Runner* was heavily influenced by *The Tourist*.

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<sup>278</sup> HUGHES, David. *Op. cit.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

Scott eventually completed *Blade Runner*, which went on to become a success and have a significant cultural impact, and Universal lost interest in *The Tourist*, considering it too dark.

The script passed through various hands, including Coppola's production company Zoetrope, until it reached Brian Gibson, who was struck by the originality of the idea of creating an existentialist film about the human race in which Earth is invaded daily by monstrous aliens from other galaxies. Gibson also realised the difficulty of making a film of this nature with the low budget that Universal would allocate to such a project.

Gibson invited Giger to participate in *The Tourist* as a conceptual artist to design the alien creatures in the film and develop the visual appearance of these beings. Giger produced a multitude of designs, around ten airbrush paintings, most of them large format (180 x 100 cm and 140 x 100 cm) and around 40 conceptual sketches. All these creations offer a glimpse of the alien world, populated by monstrous characters. Giger visualised the ideas in the script to create a terrifying and sinister atmosphere: tentacles, darkness, transformations, insectoid beings resembling worms, biomechanical robots. The creatures have varied morphologies and represent different alien races, unlike in *Alien*, which was the evolution of a new being [356-359]. In *The Tourist*, they are different beings, and Giger works on several concepts at once. The final result could have been surprising if it had materialised, considering that 1980 was the early years of character development and cinematic effects in fantasy and science fiction films. In this sense, Giger brought the rewarding experience of his collaboration on *Alien* and the creation of a novel alien environment, which, following in the footsteps of *Alien*, evolved and diversified, presenting creatures related to the past, with ancient cultures combined with futuristic biomechanical monsters. In painting [360], a being hangs upside down like a vampire, spreading its wings. Its mouth is visible, but its face has no eyes and resembles a helmet. Other beings are found in a kind of coffin or bathtub, regenerating and feeding. Giger designed the

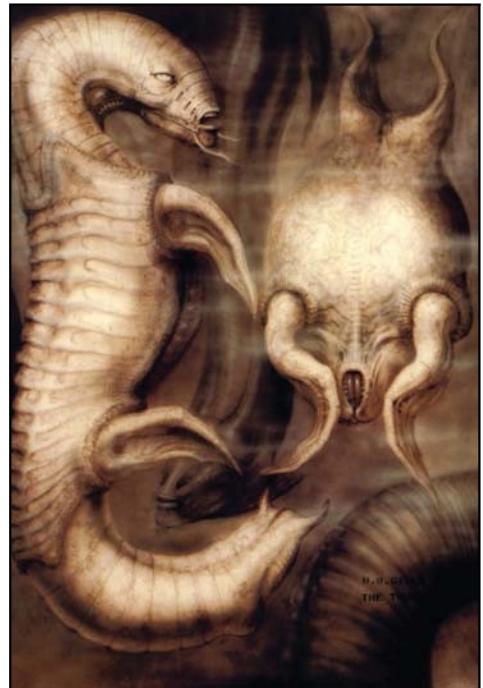
the imprisoned aliens who inhabited "the corridor", a kind of underground concentration camp, concealed in a clinic dominated by an alien species. One of the aliens is described in the script as "a humanoid being with a grotesque cleft lip" <sup>281</sup>and in one scene attacked the protagonist Grace Ripley with its tentacles.

The film was never made, as some producers deemed it "too dark," and the script spent nearly two decades being passed from office to office without anything coming of it. Universal preferred to release another film about extraterrestrials, *E.T.*, which was a huge success given the film's child-oriented focus, making it even more difficult to secure funding for a film about extraterrestrials aimed at adults. Brian Gibson, who was going to direct the film, thinks that the problem with *The Tourist* was that "it was a unique combination of existentialism and punk, and that combination results in a sensibility that is very difficult to translate into a *mainstream* film. In addition, Noto's script was too complex for a large audience to understand, as it was strange and contradictory, without a clear structure" <sup>(282)</sup>. Clair Noto believes that what did not convince the producers was the film's dark sexual theme, which was taboo for some. Even producer Joel Silver (*The Matrix*) was interested in the script for a while. With the release of *Men in Black* (Barry Sonnenfeld, 1997), which had a very similar theme to *The Tourist*, with aliens living in Manhattan, but with a treatment more digestible for the general public as pure action cinema, the vicissitudes of *The Tourist* came to an end. Many believe that the creators of *Men in Black* were partly inspired by the script for *The Tourist*, as it was well known in Hollywood after so many years without being filmed and its premises have already been consciously or unconsciously reflected in other films in recent years.

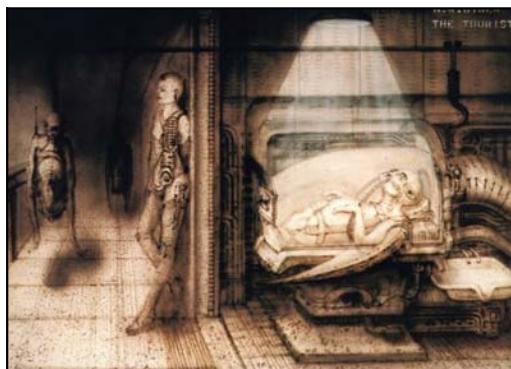
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<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*



356- *Tourist I. Biomechanical Birds* (1982) 357- *Tourist VII. Aquatic Aliens* (1982)



358-*Tourist II.* (1982)

359- *Tourist IV. Tentacled Creature*

(1982)



360- *Tourist IX. Alien* (1982)



361- *Tourist XI* (1982)

## The Mirror

Film project inspired by *Giger's Necronomicon* paintings. In the early 1980s, William Malone produced and directed two films, *Scared to Death* and *Creature*, which featured monsters "deeply influenced by Giger's work".<sup>283</sup> This filmmaker, an admirer of the Swiss artist's work, was going to direct the film. Malone had already brought together some of the best technicians and specialists in effects and design in the film industry, such as the Skotak brothers (*Aliens*) for special effects and Doug Beswick (*Star Wars*, *Terminator*, *Aliens*) for make-up. Giger was to supervise all the designs for the film.

The basic idea was to transfer *Giger's Necronomicon* imagery to the big screen and turn the images into three-dimensional figures and characters. After the first major film adaptation of Giger's work in *Alien*, Malone believed that there were images more powerful than *Necronom IV* and *V* and was fascinated by the sense of horror and elegance that emanates from his creations. Some producers rejected the possibility of making the film given the complexity of the project, in which the scenes would be very strong, strange and realistic at the same time. In any case, Malone would work with Giger again years later. This once again reveals the importance of Giger's books as great disseminators of his work and the attempt at a film adaptation based on images.

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<sup>283</sup>H.R. Giger's *Film Design*, *Op. cit.*, p.102.

## Dead Star

The *Dead Star* project arose from William Malone's screenplay of the same title written in 1990, conceived as a low-budget film that would conclude in 2000 with the release of *Supernova*, a \$65 million film involving five screenwriters, numerous directors<sup>284</sup>, lawsuits, and which became a more mysterious and intriguing production than the film itself, representing one of the most problematic productions in the history of science fiction cinema<sup>285</sup>.

Malone's original project, with a rather modest budget, was a futuristic rescue film with the team from his previous film, the science fiction/horror hybrid *Creature*. The original script was about the first spacecraft capable of two-dimensional travel, which discovers artefacts from an alien civilisation and brings them back. One of the objects collected by the crew is a portal "to death", which is a place one can go to. The portal, located in a distant world, is actually a sophisticated alien machine called the Thanatron, capable of reviving the living and opening a door to the world of the dead, hell. The curious astronauts activate the machine, releasing Satan himself on board the ship. Giger created designs for the Thanatron, a kind of infernal door, composed of chains and tubes reminiscent of the structure of a church organ. Inside is a capsule, which is where the rebirth phase takes place. To stimulate the organs, the machine has spikes that pierce them. The airbrush painting he created, one of the last of his production, shows all the iconography necessary to present the complex scenography of the film: the infernal machine with its system of tubes and holes and the devil with his wings spread. Bats, skulls and biomechanical creatures complete this painting, created by combining stencils for some details and areas executed freehand.

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<sup>284</sup> The credits listed Thomas Lee as director, a pseudonym for Walter Hill, the well-known director of *48 Hours* and co-producer of the *Alien* saga, who was supposed to have finished editing the ill-fated film. The project even passed through the hands of Francis Ford Coppola.

<sup>285</sup> HUGHES, David. *Op. cit.*



362- *Dead Star* (1990)

## The Train

In 1989, the production company Carolco (*Terminator*, etc.) planned to finance the film. Ridley Scott had in mind to make a new science fiction film in collaboration with Giger. This idea greatly appealed to Giger, given the excellent results achieved in *Alien* and Giger's admiration for Scott as a director. Giger began his work in Zurich with only vague instructions: the story would take place in a devastated future. Giger had to capture his ideas in sketches. He designed the train and an underground station with several interconnected tunnels. Bodies that appear to be sodomised (anal intercourse) can be seen on the train in a scene intended to illustrate the passengers' erotic dreams. He also made several drawings showing the train, made up of skulls, human bodies and biomechanical elements. The carriages have skulls on the front. When the train stops, they connect with the skull of the carriage behind them like an accordion. Scott was very busy at the time with his film *Thelma and Louise* but kept in touch with Giger by phone. Scott did not find the necessary support to have artistic and creative freedom in the new project, so he abandoned it. Despite the rejection, Giger was not frustrated, as he understands Scott perfectly and always hopes to work with him in the future.

Giger has also collaborated on a number of projects that did not ultimately incorporate his designs: *Alien III* (1991), *Batman Forever* (1994), *The Killer Condom* (1996) and *Species II* (1997).

## Alien III

The third instalment of *Alien* became a complex project involving different screenwriters and directors, until David Fincher shot the final version. Different plots were considered, and even the writer William Gibson wrote a script for the film.

Finally, a story was created in which the ship on which Ripley is travelling arrives at an inhospitable planet called Fury 161, which is a maximum security prison, full of convicts and without weapons. Upon analysing the wreckage of the ship, there are signs that an unknown organic form was travelling on it, which will cause terror among the prisoners. The film plays with the concept of terror produced by claustrophobia and the horrible death caused by the alien, which slowly devours the inhabitants of the prison. The aesthetic is dominated by the mystical atmosphere similar to that of a medieval monastery found in the corners of the prison. The criminals seem to be organised according to a highly secretive religious cult and their appearance is like that of medieval monks.

For many critics, this is the weakest film in the series, despite the fact that Fincher, who has extensive experience in music videos and advertising, achieves certain visual feats at times, the result of his concept of intrigue and unease, which is common in all his films. Fincher has developed his own visual style and is considered by some critics to be one of the architects of the 1990s thriller, with the creation of oppressive and dark atmospheres being a characteristic feature of his cinema.

The idea of returning to the concept of the first film, in which there is only one Alien, adds more tension to the plot. For this reason, the film is closer to Scott's than to Cameron's. The focus is once again on the monster and its evolution. This time, the creature is the product of genetic fusion between the alien race and a dog. The result is an alien with a more feline appearance and greater mobility than in the other films, with fast and deadly movements.

Fincher visited Giger in Zurich to discuss the project. Giger thought that his level of collaboration on the film would be similar to the relationship he had with Ridley Scott on the first *Alien*. Giger's task would be to redesign his 1978 creation, adding an aquatic facehugger, a new chestburster called *the Bambi-alien*, new skin for the monster and, most importantly, a four-legged version for the adult alien. Giger enthusiastically became involved in the project

in order to improve his creature and make corrections and modifications to the original design of the first monster, also contributing new ideas according to the requirements of the script. He designed and built his own version of what would be the new alien in his own workshop after a few tweaks. The monster would have a feline appearance and be endowed with greater agility, so its anatomy would be transformed. He removed parts such as the exhaust pipes on its back that did not allow for fluid movement and developed new claws, more sensual lips, a tail ending in a sting, and a tongue to attack its victims. He built the adult alien in his own workshop to refine his designs and specifications, as well as the *Bambi-alien*, the small creature that emerges from the dog's body and evolves into the monster that is the protagonist of the film. Giger's goal was to create a more functional being with a more elegant aesthetic than *Alien*, which had too much of a human appearance. The new creature was envisioned as a terrifying predator with a great sense of movement, so his ideas were oriented in this direction. "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 monster. It was a four-legged alien more like a lethal feline, like a panther. It would have a kind of skin forged from other creatures, like a symbiosis. The skin was designed to produce musical tones; it had valves like a saxophone. The alien's movement would be accompanied by sound"

<sup>286</sup>

Giger developed new ideas for the metamorphosis of the new Alien. As can be seen in his designs, he conceived a baby alien, called *Bambi-Alien*, which has four legs and is its postpartum appearance [363]. It later evolves into a creature that moves on all fours and is more agile than previous versions of the alien race [364].

The reality was that Amalgamated Dynamics, led by Tom Woodruff and Patrick Gillis, who were responsible for creating the creature, had their own designs. It was frustrating for Giger to see others redesigning his original creature without consulting him. In addition, this company also had a contract to design the creature as well as create it. Giger had to settle for giving

<sup>286</sup> ROBLEY, Les Paul. *Alienated. Imagi-Movies*, 1994, vol. 1, no. 3.

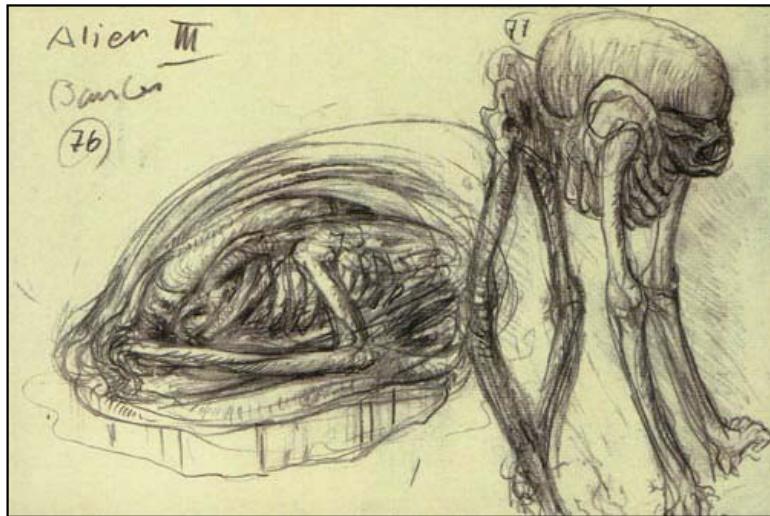
suggestions for the creature, as he was very involved in this project and wanted to improve his own original designs. Fincher would eventually accept Woodruff and Gillis' suggestions. Regarding *Alien III* and *Alien Resurrection*, Giger states: "Copies of my work are sometimes better than my own designs... but when people add their ideas to my own designs, it's more horrible than if they copied me" <sup>287</sup>.

The controversy arose after a preview screening in Geneva, when Giger saw that the credits did not mention his contractual relationship with the film, limiting themselves to "Original design by H.R. Giger" and concealing the fact that he had worked as a designer on *Alien III*. After receiving the news from Giger, Fox replied that it was too late to change the credits as the promotional campaign was already underway. At the film's theatrical release, Giger noticed that the credits omitted any connection to *Alien*, which angered him even more. Fox tried to make up for its mistake by including the correct credits on the video and laserdisc copies, but it was too late, and viewers were left with serious doubts about Giger's involvement in this new film. In fact, Giger recalls that no one interviewed him after the release of *Alien III* because they thought he had not been involved. In addition, some members of Amalgamated Dynamics downplayed Giger's role in the film in interviews, arguing that they had been more faithful than Giger in their interpretation of his paintings.

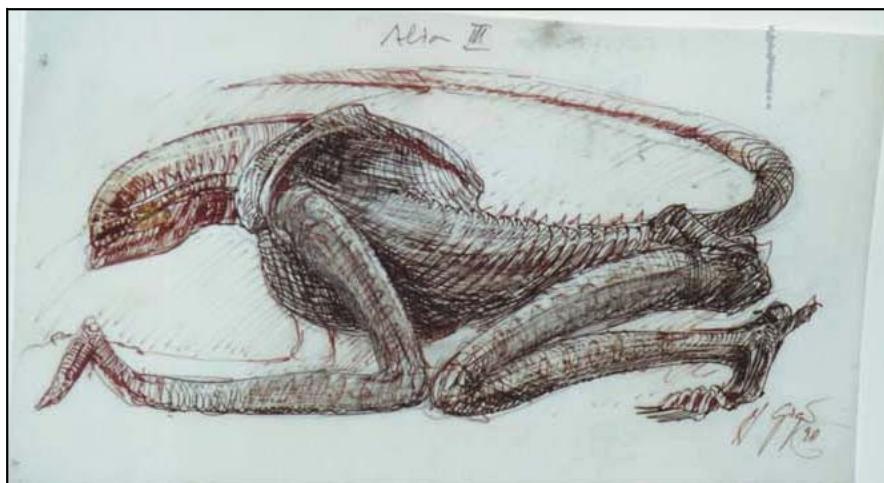
The controversy continued with the Oscar nomination for the special effects in *Alien III*, where Giger's name was also omitted. Since then, Giger and his representative Leslie Barany have been engaged in a legal battle with Fox over Giger's copyright. The fight has spread to the Internet (*Alien Insurrection*), where thousands of users have supported Giger as the undisputed creator of *Alien*, which in our opinion is more than evident. The controversy also arose in the last film of the saga, *Alien Resurrection*.

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<sup>287</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 2-2-2003] Available at: <<http://www.hrgiger.com>>.



363- Designs for *Alien III* (1991)



364- Designs for *Alien III* (1991)

### **Batman Forever (1994)**

Joel Schumacher, the director tasked with continuing the Batman film series started by Tim Burton, was an admirer of Giger's work and was interested in having him design Batman's vehicle, the Batmobile. Schumacher wanted a more organic car, with a bat-like texture, to relate it more closely to the protagonist. Although Giger had never designed cars and was working on *Species* at the time, he accepted the proposal. Another added problem was that he only had a week to submit the designs. The concept Giger presented was radically innovative compared to previous vehicles. Following the structure of a pair of scissors, he designed a vehicle that could unfold sideways. In the centre of the car, the cabin would be a sphere that regulates the opening and closing of the tips with its movements, allowing the vehicle to assume a resting position and a speed position. He made several sketches with side and top views, as well as pen and ink drawings. In the end, Giger's participation in the film did not materialise due to time constraints and Giger's unwillingness to modify his Batmobile designs. Ultimately, the vehicles in the Batman films may have been inspired by Giger's art. "It looks like a medieval instrument that could easily have been used in the film *Dead Ringers*"<sup>288</sup>. This aesthetic is certainly very present in other comic book adaptations such as *Blade* (Stephen Norrington, 1998) and *Daredevil* (Mark Steven Johnson, 2003) and in films such as *Underworld* (Len Wiseman, 2003).

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<sup>288</sup>LOH, Keith. *Giger's Batmobile design*. [online]. [Date consulted: 26-1-2004]. Available at: <[http://www.keithloh.com/news/2003/june\\_wk1\\_03.htm](http://www.keithloh.com/news/2003/june_wk1_03.htm)>.



365- *Batmobile* (1994)

### **The Killer Condom (1996) (Kondom des Grauens)**

In 1995, Giger was asked to work as a designer on the adaptation of the German comic book *The Killer Condom*, which was to be directed by Martin Walz and feature special effects by gore film director Jürg Buttgereit. Giger was a fan of the comic book and gladly accepted the offer. The film was based on the comic by Ralf König, a famous German cartoonist and author of several black humour graphic novels whose protagonists are generally homosexual. In *The Killer Condom*, Inspector Luigi Mackeroni investigates a series of murders in New York caused by a mutant condom that has the city in a state of terror.

Giger's task was to design the condoms and the laboratory where they are created. Giger had already used this iconographic motif in many of his paintings and used a morphology similar to that employed in his design of the *Dune* worm. The condom has large fangs for castration and is capable of straightening up and performing many movements. He also made pencil sketches entitled *Breeding of the Killer Condom with Nutrient Solution* and *Bottle Rack for Killer Condoms*, once again employing his sense of black humour. The laboratory where the condoms are bred was a complex composition with many objects and assembly machines, like a factory production line. In the film, hospital equipment was ultimately used, and Giger's suggestions were not followed. Giger even built models of condoms using condoms, animal skulls, and silicone.

Giger wanted to enrich a script that he considered weak, as he was unable to introduce his visual humour. In one of his letters to the authors of *The Killer Condom*, he says: "The more I think about it, the more I am convinced that the fourth script should have been condensed, some dialogues should have been deleted, and that the film, in general, should have been more realistic (more believable) and at the same time more exaggerated and comical...Humour should permeate the entire film, from beginning to end, in the form of unconsciously exaggerated details"<sup>289</sup>.

Among the details Giger suggested for the film were excessive sexual practices using hardware or armoury items, as well as decorating the laboratory with slot machines interspersed with images of castration from Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

Giger was unable to impose his ideas because he was not present during filming: "This work proved to me once again that even the most brilliant ideas and the best designs are useless if you are not present on set and able to impose your concept with energy. Naturally, everyone involved in the shoot tries to contribute their ideas to the film. If there is no authority to decide what is included and what is not, as an artist you can only hope for mercy."<sup>(290)</sup>

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<sup>289</sup>[www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com) (The Art of Film Direction), *Op. cit.*, p. 190.

<sup>290</sup>*Ibid.*

At least Giger introduced two accessories into the film, two "partial murder devices" that are castration guillotines reminiscent of Giger's collaboration on the film. They resemble a medieval instrument and are related to sadomasochism.

Another of Giger's interesting proposals was his idea of replacing the bound and inert victims lying on the pond with condoms with moving gymnasts. They swung on a kind of swing and below them was a raft full of condoms that would jump at them like piranhas. Furthermore, according to Giger's concept, the victims would only be wearing a shirt and would be naked underneath, making the impression even more grotesque.

The artistic result of the film was not as expected and did not even satisfy the author of the comic and screenwriter of the film, Ralf König, who said in an interview: "The film failed because the director was very bad and the production company did nothing but constantly hinder us: they cut any scene that was a little sexy or daring, they wanted it to be for 14-year-olds. Even though the script was good, the special effects were great and the whole team had a lot of fun with the film, the end result was not what we wanted, so I really regret having done all that publicity. The best thing about this whole story is that I met Giger. Although I realised that the production company hired him just so they could use his name, like mine, on the billboards. But they didn't let him work the way he wanted to either. So I'm glad the film was a flop. They haven't even paid me yet! – laughter"<sup>291</sup>.

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<sup>291</sup>YEXUS. *Interview with Ralf König*. [Online]. [Accessed: 26 March 2004]. Available at: <[http://www.dreamers.com/ddlv/Konig\\_konig\\_2.htm](http://www.dreamers.com/ddlv/Konig_konig_2.htm)>.

## Species II

The May 1998 issue of *Cinefantastique* magazine featured *Giger's Species* on its cover alongside Giger's new creation, the monster *Eve*, as they considered Giger's alien design to be the most interesting aspect of the film. Giger was surprised that producer Frank Mancuso Jr. contacted him to work on the sequel to *Species*, as Giger had strongly criticised the digital incarnation of his monster *Sil* in that film. The director of the new film in the series, Peter Medak, was also interested in Giger's participation: "Giger has that incredible dark vision, particularly when it comes to the alien" <sup>292</sup>. Giger sent hundreds of drawings and sketches, creating designs that, as in *Species*, would be executed by Steve Johnson. Giger created a male version of the original design, which would be called *Patrick*, and contributed ideas for the appearance of the female alien *Eve* and for the transformation of the extraterrestrial creatures in a scene in which they make love. He also made drawings for the transformation of the child's hair into tentacles that ascend towards the ceiling, transforming into a cocoon where the new being is gestated.

The plot of the film was about a team of astronauts who land on Mars on a research mission. Unbeknownst to them, they become infected by an alien virus that transforms one of their crew members, Captain Joseph Ross, into a monstrous creature whose mission is to reproduce his species, for which he brutally rapes numerous women. Finally, *Eve*, another alien being, descendant of the first *Sil*, helps a team hunt down the killer alien.

The scene that marks the climax of the film is the extraterrestrial intercourse between *Eve* and *Patrick*. Peter Medak wanted it to be poetic. To achieve this, Giger thought that the hair should float in the air and turn into jellyfish tentacles to complete the transformation of the aliens.

When Giger was offered the contract, Steve Johnson (who created *Sil* in *Species*) was already working on the designs, and Giger believes that some decisions

<sup>292</sup> SCAPPEROTTI, Dan. Making "Species 2". *Cinefantastique*, May 1998, v. 30, no. 1, p.28.

important decisions regarding the designs had already been made when he joined the project, and he even had to work according to established parameters. In other words, Giger had to watch as another designer created Eva in *Species II* based on his designs for Sil in *Species*. Giger had to rework Steve Johnson's *Gigeresque* designs, which is quite frustrating. For Giger, working on a film means designing from scratch based on the premises and constraints of the script, not trying to improve on designs that others have made. Giger had to follow the ideas of others so as not to have to change everything.

He doubts that he was called in because of his reputation as a designer, although he also believes that both the producer and the director wanted stylistic continuity between the two films.

Giger had to work with the effects technicians (XFX) and the director via fax and telephone. He was only able to visit the studios in Los Angeles a couple of times. Giger was pleased that, unlike the previous film, this one would not use computer-generated effects, but instead would employ animatronics and other special effects. He suggested few corrections to his previous design of Sil for the new alien, only that her legs be lengthened, as in *Species* they were too short and did not correspond to his design. Eva has an opponent in this film, Patrick, an astronaut infected by alien DNA, who quickly turns into a monster. Giger received the first designs for Patrick and found them to be very derivative of the Alien monster, as well as lacking in style. Giger tried to improve on those designs by creating a new Patrick using previous designs that were not used in *Alien III*, which could work in *Species II*. Giger added a humanoid phase to Patrick's transformation, which basically consisted of a male adaptation of his design for Sil. The transformation takes place when the two aliens mate. "I advised that the Patrick creature be constructed entirely as a puppet, but it seems that they only made it from the waist up<sup>293</sup>." This is evident in the film when he tries to walk and the effect is too noticeable, causing the creature to lose intensity. In any case, the scene is memorable because the

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<sup>293</sup>*Ibid.*

animatronic has no legs and its movement appears fragmented and overly artificial, limiting the director's creative capacity.

Giger designed a quadrupedal Patrick, similar to the feline alien he designed for *Alien III*; in his drawings, it can be seen in profile, from behind and from the front. He also made designs of Patrick's hair transforming into tentacles and joining with Eva's in a whirlpool in the love scene that takes place in a barn. The hair transforms into snakes, like a Medusa, enveloping her partner's head.

He also designed how Patrick's children form their cocoons, weaving them <sup>294</sup>. A kind of worm emerges from their cranial orifices, eyes, mouth, and ears and weaves towards the ceiling where it forms a semi-transparent chrysalis.

The *Patrick* created by XFX Studios is not very convincing in the film. Giger thought that this monster did not respond to the evolutionary logic of the character in the script, which can be seen when watching the film. At least in this film, the technicians made greater use of animatronics, to the detriment of computer-generated effects. There are also more gore horror scenes.

After viewing some shots, Giger decided not to take part in the credits for this film, as he felt ignored and that his ideas had been wasted, so he insisted on being credited as the creator of the "original design of Species" rather than the designer of the new film<sup>295</sup>. He had accepted the commission to participate in the film in order to improve on the original designs from the first instalment and had already produced a multitude of drawings and sketches for the film, such as the new male alien, revisiting designs not used in *Alien III*.

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<sup>294</sup> Scenes with lots of cocoons and eggs have been common since *Alien*, in films such as *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999) and *Van Helsing* (Stephen Sommers, 2004).

<sup>295</sup> The promotional posters for the film featured the credit "Creature design by H.R. Giger", but at Giger's request, the credit was corrected to "Original Species design by H.R. Giger" when the film was released.

#### 2.3.6.4. Short films and documentaries

##### **High and Heimkiller (1968)**

These short films were shown during Urban Gwerder's 1968 exhibition, which toured various Swiss and German cities. The first short film, *High*, is a documentary made by Fredi Murer and produced by H.R. Giger himself in June 1967, reviewing his early work, from his time at the Zurich School of Industrial Arts to the works he produced up to 1967. It is a journey through his images without commentary, accompanied by music.

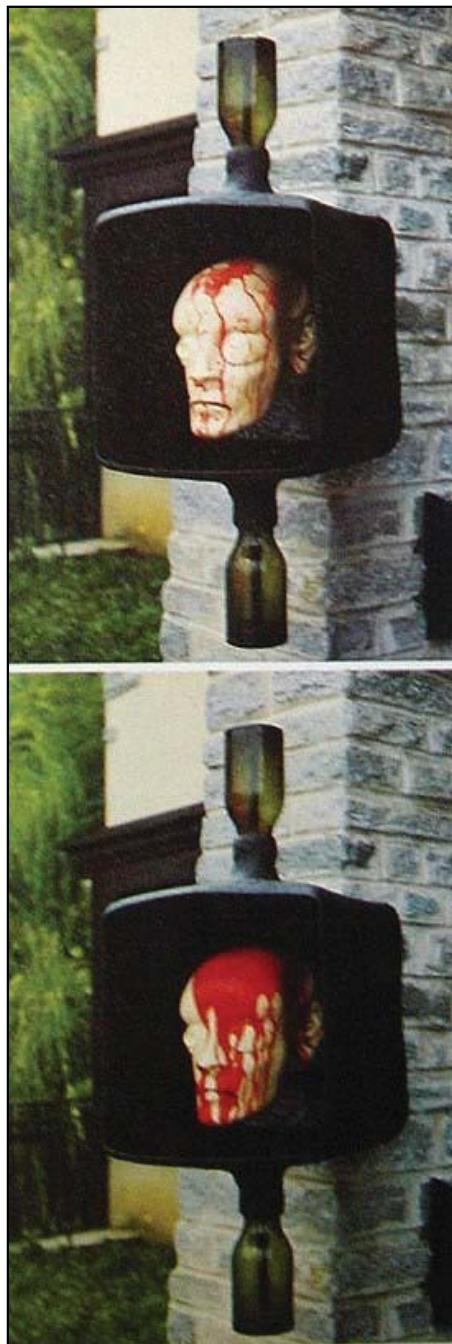
The *Pozos* series and the illustrations for *The Feast for the Psychiatrist* are the first personal works in which he began to develop his world. These ink drawings are his first steps as an artist; in his work as an illustrator, he also reflects his visions in the service of other stories (as he would do with film scripts). During these years, he was immersed in the avant-garde scene in Zurich and the artistic groups in nearby Switzerland, which gathered in Zurich as a cultural and cosmopolitan capital. At the end of the short film, there is an image of a young Giger, dressed in black, with a bohemian character, who was already established in Zurich at that time. His face appears in close-up with photographs of his profile.

*Heimkiller* is a short film for which Giger constructed a kind of bloody hourglass with a wax head embedded in it, which may be related to his readings of Leroux's *The Cabinet of Curiosities* or *The Phantom of the Opera*. When the mechanism is turned after the sound of a telephone, blood runs down the head as it does with hourglasses. This action is accompanied by the sound of a shrill saxophone, an instrument he played in those years (it is possibly Giger himself who plays it here). Added to this is the laughter of the artist himself, an accomplice to this macabre act. The bleeding head with the blindfold is reminiscent of images of torture or execution, which is what this invention seems to reflect. Years later, Swiss critic Fritz Billeter

asked Giger what prompted him to recreate blood in this way. Giger believes that this is related to the image of the blood of Christ that remained engraved in his mind when he was at Catholic school as a child: "In the Catholic kindergarten, where we always had to pray when we misbehaved, they put us in front of a bloody Christ and reminded us that we were to blame for his pain"<sup>(296)</sup>.

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<sup>296</sup>*Arh +, Op. cit.*



366- *Heimkiller* (1967)

## **Passagen**

A documentary by Fredi Murer that bears the same title as the series of paintings produced by Giger around the same time. Made in 1972, it won the special prize for best television film at the Mannheim Film Festival. It covers his first major creative period (ink drawings) to his early work with an airbrush. It shows the complexity of Giger's work and its enormous visual power. His paintings have a significant meaning in an era in which men and bombs coexist. His works are influenced by both reality and the subconscious and are not only artistic objects but the product of the artist's work and experiences. It includes various opinions and Giger's own thoughts and reflections. It attempts to demystify the idea of genius creating out of nothing. It shows that Giger's art is a response to his environment.

## **Giger's Necronomicon**

This documentary complements the previous one, as it deals with Giger's production between 1972 and 1975. It was made by Giger himself, who often filmed with the camera hanging from his chest while he painted or cooked, and by J.J. Wittmer. The film shows all the classic imagery from the artist's most productive period, covering the years when he discovered the airbrush and produced many of his most important works. It coincides with the use of themes rooted in earlier productions but closer to symbolism and the world of the occult, characterised by a dark tone that is characteristic of all Giger's work.

### **The second celebration of the four**

The first celebration of the four was an event to celebrate an opening at the Stummer and Hubschmied galleries in Zurich, at a time when Giger was deeply interested in the magical and esoteric, with the literature of Aleister Crowley, Agrippa of Nettesheim and Eliphas Levi. As a result of a nightmare, he became fixated on a gas heater that contained the four elements: fire, water, air and earth. The fifth element, spirit, represented Friedrich Kuhn.

The second celebration of the four was an event with a deeper meaning, as Giger paid tribute to his beloved Li, who had committed suicide a year earlier, consecrating a room specially designed for the occasion. The film features a young woman covered in paint, painted in a biomechanical style. The short film has a music video feel to it, with gloomy organ music and careful staging.

Giger had already experimented with body painting on Li's body on other occasions, and would later do so on a young model covered with a fabric bodysuit. This experience would influence tattoo artists who would apply ink under the skin using biomechanical structures.



368-369-*The second celebration of the four* (1975)

## **Giger's Alien**

Giger compiled a 30-minute short film documenting his collaboration on *Alien*. It is a kind of "making of" *Alien*, showing the entire process of designing and producing the sets, make-up and effects used in the film. We see how Giger works, sculpts, models and talks with other technicians at Shepperton Studios in London.

## **Koo Koo**

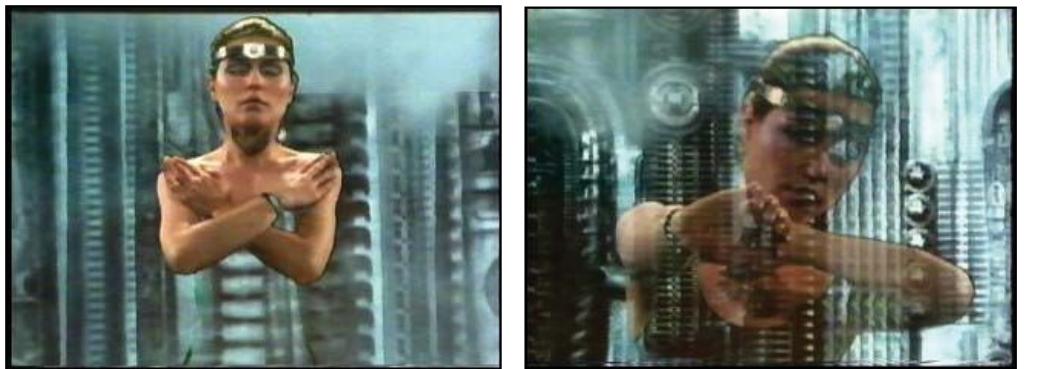
During his stays in the United States, he met singer Debbie Harry, better known as *Blondie*, the pop star of the moment, who was considered the queen of American punk. He designed the cover for her album *Koo Koo*, which was a huge success. He was also commissioned to do the art direction for two music videos for the songs *Backfired* and *Now I Know You Know* (produced by Chrysalis Records Limited, London), which were related to the design of the *Koo Koo* album cover, as they were intended to reflect the same aesthetic as the album cover. The original director of the music videos left the project and Giger was forced to take on the directing duties as well. The videos were shot in Giger's own studio in Zurich with the help of his regular collaborators. *Blondie* and Chris Stein (the band's musician and Debbie Harry's partner) lived with Giger for a while during the filming. Obviously, they got involved in the work he was doing. Giger made some storyboards for the clips and used works from the *Spell-Tempel* and *New York City* series as a backdrop, thus creating a Gigeresque atmosphere. Giger drew on Egyptian aesthetics, as a sarcophagus painted in the biomechanical style using stencils appears, as he did in the N.Y.C. series; Giger pierces the sarcophagus with four needles, evoking the album cover. *Blondie* appears in a fully painted Lycra bodysuit, giving the impression of being tattooed. Debbie herself comments on this experience: "Yes, Giger painted me, he airbrushed my face; I was wearing a bodysuit that he painted completely" <sup>297</sup>. This clip which

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<sup>297</sup> Documentary about Debbie Harry

must have been widely broadcast in the United States, it may have served as inspiration, along with the film *Alien* and Giger's book *Necronomicon*, for some American tattoo artists who were amazed by the display of this new mysterious aesthetic and who, from the 1980s onwards, began to tattoo these motifs.

Fredi Murer filmed the process of this work and used the material to make a 30-minute documentary entitled *A New Face for Debbie Harry*. The result was the creation of a Gigeresque and gloomy set design with a sinister character. For the occasion, Giger airbrushed the singer's body over a mesh. He even airbrushed her face.



370-371-Images from Debbie Harry's music video *Backfired* (1981)



372-375-Images from Debbie Harry's music video *Now I Know You Know* (1981)

## 2.4. Gigeresque images

Among the varied number of figures represented by Giger in his paintings, we can establish different symbolic/aesthetic categories, in which the most representative creations are grouped, such as the human being, the monster and the man-machine hybrid. He has also included various portraits of friends and acquaintances as a tribute or homage.

Human beings are a central concern in his work. When he depicts them, the body loses its plasticity and becomes a two-dimensional image, a photographic motif, although Giger always tries to give his images a sculptural presence. In fact, his latest works consist of creating sculptures based on his paintings and motifs, as in the case of his *Bullet Children* or the *Birth Machine*. The images created by Giger are nightmarish and have hellish qualities. In this regard, Giger recalls an anecdote: "Once, the Dutch customs police thought my paintings were photographs. Where could I have taken photos of such subjects?

In hell, perhaps? They brought in an expert to certify that they had been made with a spray gun, and only then did they allow me to pass them."<sup>(298)</sup>

### 2.4.1. Woman

Far from the misogyny that prevailed in the culture of the 1970s, especially in cinema, Giger extols the figure of women, whom he considers magical, goddess-like beings. The women he depicts are modelled on photographic models (contemporary representation) in terms of their body shape and facial features. In contrast, the male figures are hideous and timeless. Giger's intention here is to express his fascination and admiration for women. Giger continually works with the archetype of "Beauty and the Beast". He contrasts women and monsters, thus highlighting the marble-like beauty of the female figures, which almost always have sculptural qualities.

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<sup>(298)</sup>Arh +, *Op. cit.*, p. 44

2 groups: tortured women and mythological women.

Throughout Giger's work, women appear assaulted, raped by monsters (*Departure for Sabbath, 1976*), tubed, bound and tortured. Their bodies are constantly attacked by horrible beings or subjected to gloomy machinery.

On the other hand, Giger also treats women as goddesses, as mythological figures, giving them an imposing and captivating value in his representations. This is the case with his characters of magicians, priestesses and witches (*Dance of Witches*), normally associated with the occult and magic. In this sense, Giger constantly works with the image of the goddess and the principle of female divinity, which have been very influential in 20th-century art and culture, as Shahrukh Husain<sup>299</sup> points out.

Giger depicts this figure with an air of solemnity, reinforced by the use of sacred and royal iconography, such as crowns, headdresses and jewellery (bracelets, necklaces, earrings). For Giger, the goddess represents duality, opposites, and is well suited to representing contrasts, good and evil, beauty and horror, a facet that Giger has constantly cultivated in his work. Opposing meanings, the evil and the divine, converge in the figure of the goddess. The priestess and the sorceress welcome these concepts, as well as relating to the carnal and sexual. The ancient civilisations that Giger has researched considered sexual union to be the supreme expression of human creativity. For this reason, women often play a crucial role in creation. Sex scenes such as those in the *Erotomechanics* series can be interpreted as an exaltation of sexual expression, as the bodies and organs take on a monumental scale and resemble architecture. In this series, the female body does not appear violated as in others

<sup>299</sup> "Despite their many attributes, titles and powers, all female deities emanate from the same source: the fundamental reality that we can describe as the goddess, wherever she appears or whatever her appearance. The goddess manifests herself in very different ways, some of which shatter the stereotypes popularly associated with femininity... She is autonomous, sexual and strong... Her essence lies in her all-encompassing nature: she contains within her all opposites, including the masculine and the feminine, creation and destruction. She recognises that life and death are equally important and maintains balance in order to sustain the order of the universe. Husain, Shahrukh. *The Goddess: Creation, Fertility and Abundance. Myths and Female Archetypes*. Cologne, Taschen, 2001.

type of erotic representations that could be described as sadistic, in which monsters and hellish creatures copulate violently with women.

The figure of Lilith, representing depraved sexuality and women as succubi, would be a more threatening form of the mythological woman, who is also a hunter and warrior. In the *Victory* series, Giger recreates a hellish vision of women, with a majestic figure covered in bright, intense red. This vision is closer to the apocalyptic and destruction. Giger has even gone a step further to speculate about the extraterrestrial woman, an alien goddess close to Lilith, who horrifically destroys men once she has obtained their semen to conceive her children. These visions are linked to the concept of monsters and the castrating woman.



376- *Departure for Sabbath* (1976)



377- *Begoetterung* (1979)



378-*Dance of the Witches* (1977).



379- *Entrance* (1972)



380- *The Sorceress* (1975)

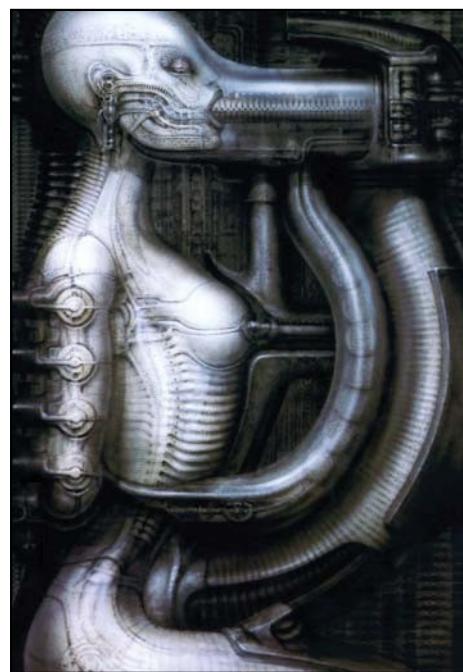


381- *The*



*Trumpets of Jericho* (1983-87)

382- *Biomechanoid* (1976)



383-*Biomechanoid I* (1975-83)



384- *Biomechanoid 75* (1975)

Also in relation to mythology, Giger has often depicted female vampires, or vampires. They are recognisable by the fangs seen in some figures and by their bat wings. They are linked to the phenomenon of the femme fatale. These figures have a symbolist sensuality with an idea of beauty close to *fin de siècle* decadence and romantic art. The *Biomechanoiden* series is interesting in this regard, as is the cover for the group Walpurgis, which features vampires with their tongues out, licking their lips or in a state of ecstasy. As Billeter points out, this is a mystical ecstasy, related in a certain way to religious worship<sup>300</sup>. It is also worth remembering the painting *Phallelujah* (no. 110), which depicts sexual suckers with phallic skulls. The priestess in *Spell II* and one of the figures on the side of *Passagen-Tempel III* also have fangs. This animalistic quality can be seen in a fantastic creation he designed for *The Tourist* (IX) project, in which a winged figure hangs upside down. Sometimes the women have horns and are associated with the satanic, such as in the portrait he dedicated to his partner Li.

In general, Giger's female figures are highly eroticised and represent a certain ideal of beauty, a Gigeresque beauty. His women are a cross between futuristic beauties and archetypal goddesses represented with a particular sensuality. Two important features for Giger that he works on in these figures are the exaggeratedly elongated necks stretched backwards (reminiscent of Kubin and Egyptian art from the Tell-el-Amarna period) and the mouth, which is one of the most beautiful parts of the female face for Giger, particularly the corners of the lips.

Another concept that Giger worked on extensively is that of motherhood, usually conceived as monstrous, which is also associated with the iconography of the child. In fact, the concept of the female body associated with rubbish is relevant in one of his early pictorial series, *Passages II*, in which the entrance to the body, the vagina, is associated with the disposal area of a rubbish truck. This theme is closely related to contemporary art.

<sup>300</sup>H.R. Giger's *Necronomicon*, *Op. Cit.*

postmodern and has been frequently addressed in cinema *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer* (John McNaughton, 1986) is a good example<sup>301</sup>.

#### 2.4.2. Children

The children he depicts are consistently unhealthy and sickly. They also metamorphose into condom children and biomechanical children armed with machine guns. They were the central theme of his first notable series, *Atomic Children*, turning them into monsters, freak show attractions, and oddities of nature. Due to the nuclear effect and radiation, physical and chemical mutations occur, children become monsters, and Giger develops them with his particular black humour.

Another icon of his early period is the *Bullet Children*, armed with rifles, parachutes to fall onto the world, and protective goggles because the light bothers them since they are in the womb and have not yet come to the surface: they are embryos. Here, it is also interesting to note the comparison Giger makes, through metaphor, between a weapon and the body, with their respective sexual connotations. The body expels bullets or children, depending on how it is interpreted. Bullets are symbols of death, as their purpose is to end someone's life (the person who has been targeted and shot). Bullets become a metaphor for babies. In the work *Supermarkt*, children parade like merchandise.

In other works, the child-phallus association is evident, such as in his sculptures and drawings from the 1960s entitled Biomechanoids, which may have been inspired by the image of a child in an incubator. According to Freud, the child is a substitute for the mother's penis.

One of the most emblematic works of his early artistic period, *Birth Machine* (1967), directly alludes to this theme. In this work, we see the handle of a Walter pistol represented on a large scale, showing the internal mechanism, as if in an X-ray, with meticulous details of the mechanical components of the weapon (trigger, magazine, start of the

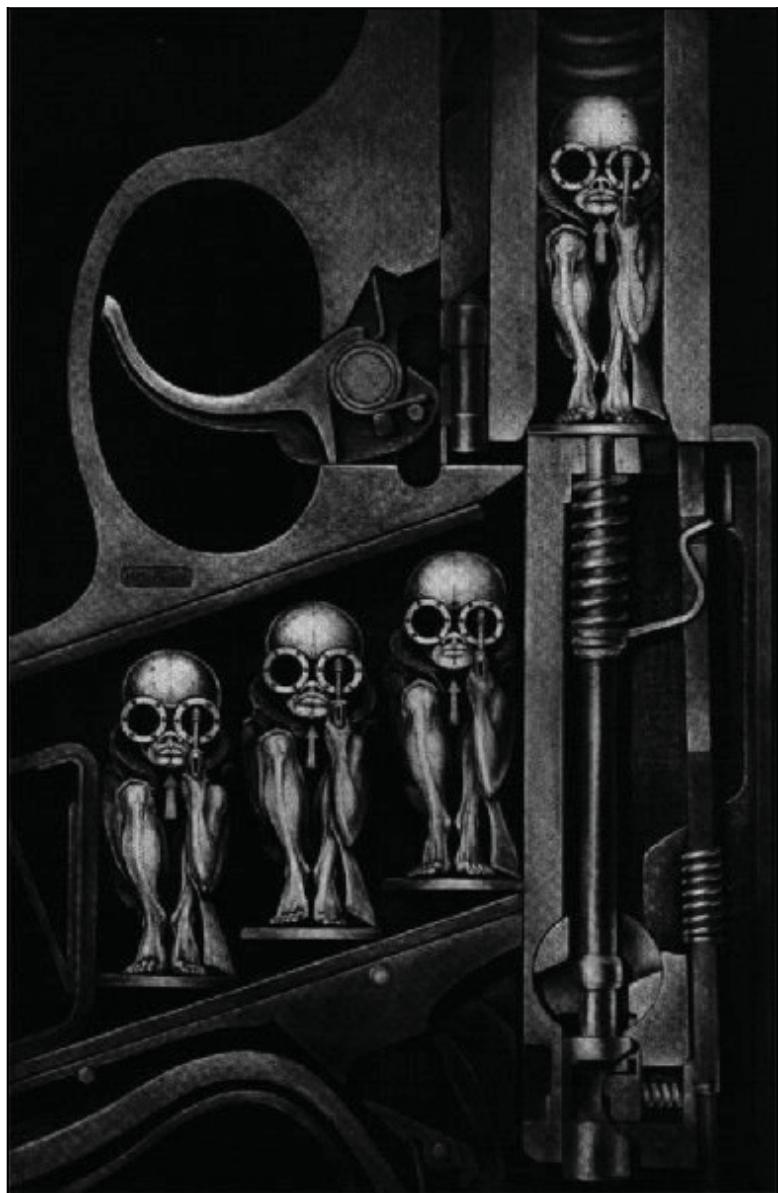
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<sup>301</sup> See PEDRAZA, Pilar, *Máquinas de amar*, Valdemar, Madrid, 2000.

cannon) demonstrates the artist's profound knowledge of these objects, which he himself collected. Inside, the bullets in the magazine have been replaced by little men, *bullet children*, with childlike appearances, armed with rifles, ready to go to war as soon as they enter the world. It is therefore a metaphor for a womb that procreates destruction and represents birth as something negative.

Another striking set of works consists of landscapes with children's heads, created around 1973, using the airbrush technique. Here, the caricature and critical satire of the previous work have been abandoned in favour of a more realistic and impactful representation of the themes of overpopulation and children as a source of cataclysms. The babies have skin malformations and aged facial features; they are embedded in a kind of repulsive mud or sludge; in some cases, hands, arms and part of the torso protrude. The multiplication of anatomical elements is a common feature in many of Giger's paintings (here specifically alluding to overpopulation). In this case, one wonders what these children or elderly people represent; given the precise technique of great realism, they could be portraits of babies aged due to the 'contamination' of our society. For Giger, they are a symbol of death; he sees children as bearers of evil and a danger to humanity, as they multiply problems; in the same way, he repeats the motif of heads filling the pictorial surface.

The theme ties in with the degradation that affects us deeply. As a result, human beings contract diseases and physical problems. Skin and, above all, flesh are two common areas of work for Giger, as are his manipulations: malformations and mutilations. In Landscape XXVIII, a dead or petrified child appears on an erect member or phallus. Babies are seen as an evil army, just like bullet children.



385-*Birthing Gun* (1968)



386-*Landscape with Children XVIII* (1973)



387-*Landscape with Children XIV* (1973)

In the 1974 series *Passagen Tempel*, we see a large erect phallus dressed in trousers and suspenders, clearly masculine attributes, with children's faces embedded in it; These gradually transform or disfigure into skulls, as a reference to man's final destiny, death, which, due to the form of representation, constitutes a cycle: phallus as beginning/babies with Indian feathers playing/transformation into monsters/skulls-death.

He continually depicts foetuses with closed eyes, as in *Paisajes de niños* (*Landscapes of Children*), *Biomechanoid I* (1974) (again related to bullet children, as they have their arms amputated and replaced with machine guns) or in other birthing machines, such as *Deathbirth Machine I* (1976) and *Deathbirth Machine* (1977). This iconography ties in with the theme of birth and is also related to the female body. In this case, it combines reproductive function and tortured body. The representations of the theme are claustrophobic. She even began by depicting her own memories of childbirth and intrauterine landscapes in red/pink. These paintings also allude to a technological birth, carried out through machines that control the female body, tying it down and restraining it for procreation. The iconography of tubes, cables and springs is used in these paintings. The theme of technological motherhood is very present in modern culture, particularly in avant-garde art and science fiction cinema, as seen in films such as *Demon Seed* (1977). The interpretation that can be drawn from this is the enslavement of human beings, especially women as childbearing machines (see the influence of these visionary images in films such as *The Matrix*, 1999). In addition to the theme of artificial insemination. In *Deathbirth Machina I*, we see the flow of semen, but the man does not appear; he is not necessary, but the woman is. Another interpretation could be the theme of cloning and genetic engineering, since the heads of children are repeated in his landscapes (this theme terrifies Giger, as he states in a text in *Arh+*, and is directly related to the worrying problem of overpopulation on the planet).

These children are seen as something abnormal, monstrous; children are normally depicted as something beautiful and pleasant. His representations of children or babies are shocking and unpleasant. His idea is that with a child, a new weapon is born, so he views birth with pessimism, since it also leads to overpopulation, which is not good for the functioning of the ecosystem, of Gaia. Giger believes in the Gaia theory, which would be the intellectual reasoning behind the presence of this iconographic and thematic programme in his work. According to this theory, developed in the last decades of the 20th century by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, Gaia would be the self-regulating system that maintains the right conditions for life on the planet's surface. It is a terrestrial superorganism on which we depend. There must be a balance; for Giger, the unbridled increase in population breaks this balance and is capable of causing major catastrophes, since the Earth, Gaia, compensates for births with deaths. Perhaps for this reason, he represents children as something degrading, as carriers of diseases or viruses and therefore deadly agents. Our era has been shaken by deadly diseases such as AIDS, which would perhaps manifest itself in his work formally as babies, and conceptually through sex, death or drugs (heroin).

It is also related to war, as the children are armed. This can be linked to children fighting in wars, as documented in the press in recent years. Giger made this observation back in the 1960s. In the poster for the exhibition at the German gallery Sydow-Zirkwitz, the foetus appears with a cigarette between its lips and machine guns in place of its amputated arms. It has a metal band fixed over its skull, on which it wears an Indian feather. This foetus has no limbs and is standing on a technological phallus, as in another painting featuring three foetuses with grenades and machine guns. During the 1960s, children began to be portrayed as evil in horror films, as we see in the film *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960).

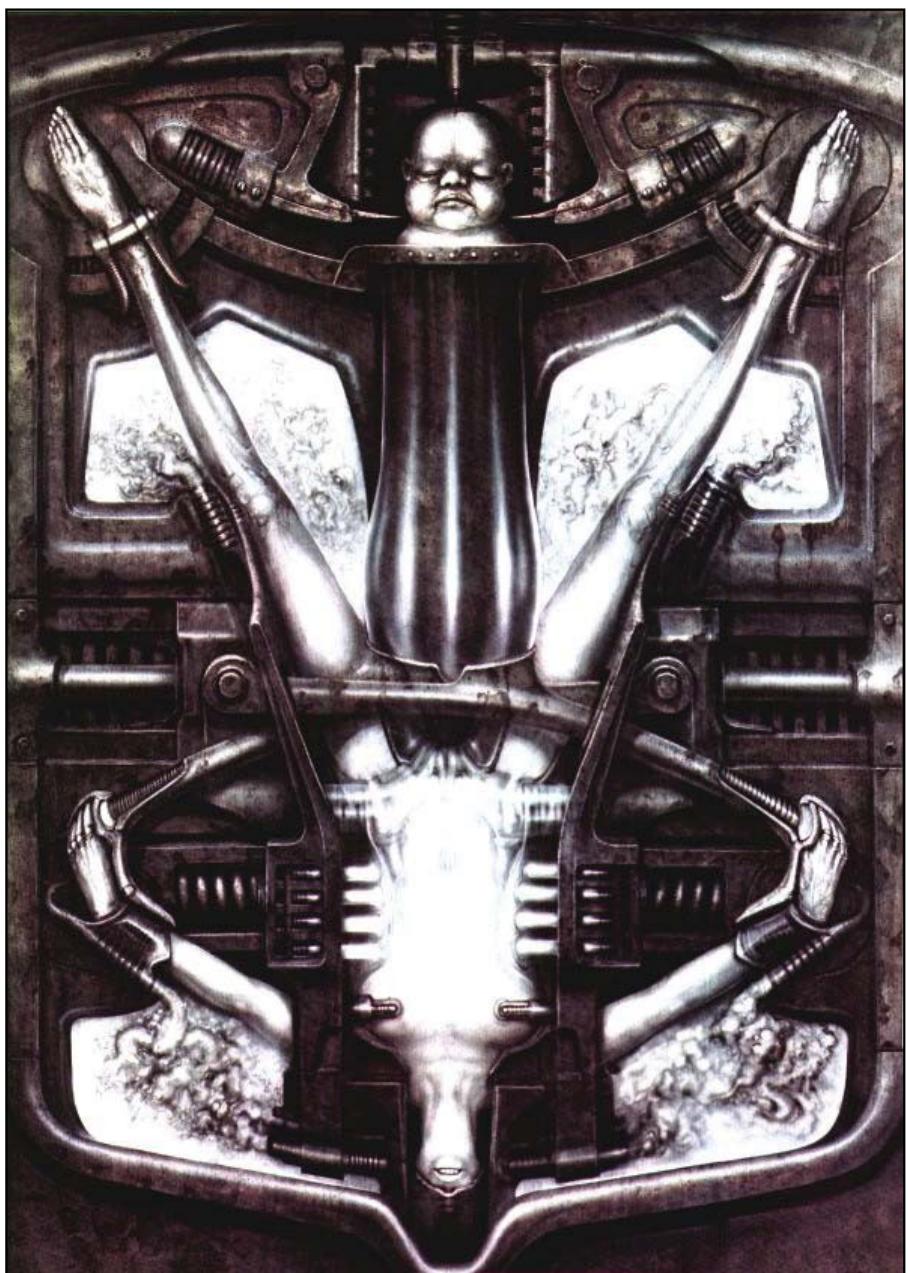
In this regard, Stanislav Grof comments that the images of foetuses and babies are self-portraits of Giger himself<sup>302</sup> (compare his childhood photos with these images) and that Giger reveals with this type of imagery the events and forces that

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<sup>302</sup> *Icons. H.R. Giger*. Taschen, Cologne, 2002.

precede our entry into the world. The terrible experience of birth is evident in this type of painting, as well as in the paintings *Birth Machine I* and *II* and *Deadly Birth Machine*. These are perinatal experiences. According to Grof, Giger goes beyond Freud and the surrealists in representing the early stages of being and the trauma of birth at its most critical moment

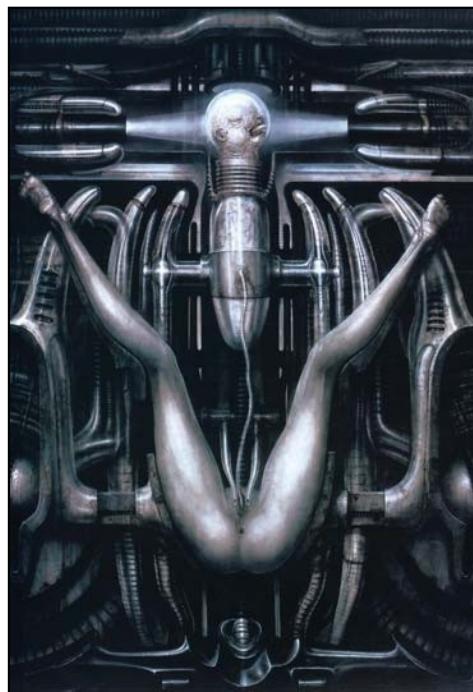
The child also appears tortured in the *Children's Landscapes*, in which the heads are surrounded by bloody substances, faeces, urine and other liquids, with which Giger creates examples of what Julia Kristeva described as abject in art, and which other postmodern artists have worked on in recent decades.



388-*Death Birth Machine I* (1976)



389-*Biomecanoide I* (1974)



390-*Death Bearing Machine III* (1976)

### 2.4.3. Monster

Perhaps the most striking aspect of his work is the multitude of monsters and imaginary creatures that move through his paintings, as well as a powerful iconographic use full of symbolic references. This world is dreamlike and unreal, populated by diabolical beings, with a strong presence of skulls and bones, with transformed anatomies in which their limbs multiply vertiginously, with numerous phallic signs, mutilated beings, like passages from the unconscious. We see human bodies covered in blisters, welded together with corroded machinery, broken skin, viscera, monstrous human machines, women carrying machines on their backs, the human race reduced to mutants. In addition to being symbolic, Giger's art exudes decadence and pessimism about the current world: death, war and disease, slavery to science, torture...

Many of Giger's figures seem to emerge from the abyss or plunge into it, as if it were their habitat. It is an area from which monsters often emerge. Giger's monsters emerge from the realm of shadows, with a threatening character.

The phenomenon of monstrosity has long attracted the attention of philosophers and intellectuals from other eras. There is even a branch of medical science that has studied monstrosities, called teratology. According to Cortés, "The monstrous is that which defies the laws of normality. Some monsters transgress the norms of nature (physical aspects), others transgress social and psychological norms, but both come together in the field of meaning, insofar as the physical normally symbolises and materialises the moral" <sup>(303)</sup>. Giger's monsters are metaphors for modern man.

Humans are exposed to a large number of modifying factors that are normally subject to variations in the physical and psychological environment. The impact of the Industrial Revolution and its successive phases has led to an acceleration in the social and cultural environments surrounding humans. In recent years, the technological revolution has led to a myriad of events that are challenging humans to confront these advances in one way or another.

<sup>303</sup> CORTÉS, José Miguel G., *Order and Chaos: A Cultural Study of the Monstrous in Art*, Anagrama, Barcelona, 1997.

scientific and technical advances. All these changes are propelling human beings into a new field of action in which they will have to develop in the coming years. Giger has represented his particular vision of the changes that are taking place and that affect us all deeply in a very expressive and artistic way. These monsters can be interpreted as an image of contemporary moral degradation, projecting human flaws onto an 'other'.

#### **2.4.3.1. Biomechanoids and cyborgs**

The creatures coined by Giger as biomechanoids are one of the leitmotifs throughout his work. He drew the first of these beings in 1963, and since then they have permeated all his work, from drawing and painting to his graphic and sculptural work.

They are related to his concept of biomechanics. It has partly to do with the ideas developed by Jugendstil/Modernism, which have crystallised in industrial production when creating the shapes of engines, radiators, pipes, steel sheets and, ultimately, all kinds of machines. Various concepts from biology have been adapted in relation to the diverse morphologies that exist in nature. It is also related to the repetition of ornaments produced in technology (circuits, plates, chips), that is, in serialisation.

Since the 1960s, the physical union of man and machine has been studied and represented in different artistic media.

In the 1960s, he created his first *Biomechanoids*, beings born from the symbiosis of organic anatomical elements with mechanical parts and devices that are integrated into the body. The *Biomechanoids* were initially beings composed of arms and legs, but he would later use this name for most of his biotechnological creations. These are the emblematic creatures of Giger's iconography, present in his different stages and characterising most of his compositions. The *Biomechanoids* are endowed with the surrealist component that brings them to life in our imagination, that is, a dystopian vision of reality, which would allow, through genetic manipulation and cloning techniques,

create these monsters. Giger explores these facts from a perverse and diabolical point of view and believes that "in an age when the classic phrase of the surrealists, '*beautiful as the encounter of an umbrella and a sewing machine on the dissecting table*', can become reality, and in which the atomic bomb exists, the *Biomechanoids* are relevant"<sup>(304)</sup>. In this way, the human body is intertwined with pieces of metal and machinery, giving rise to tortuous figures and creations that evoke spectral and demonic characters that normally operate in sinister atmospheres, Gigerian spaces.

With these figures, he proposes the hybridisation of the body and the machine through pictorial metaphors. He thus develops the concept of *the cyborg* in a visual way, a figure that had been used since the development of cybernetics in the field of technological and scientific research and in science fiction literature. This treatment of the body will lead to a technological or cybernetic teratology, in which his creatures move.

The confluence of flesh and metal is evident in his paintings, in which Giger creates nightmarish images that he also transfers to his other architectural and sculptural creations. Throughout his career, Giger has configured a new bodily anatomy, a sinister architecture of the body, based on the juxtaposition of objects, metamorphosed forms, and the symbiosis of organic and inorganic surfaces. Not in the form of a collage, but through subtle transitions in which the parts merge together.

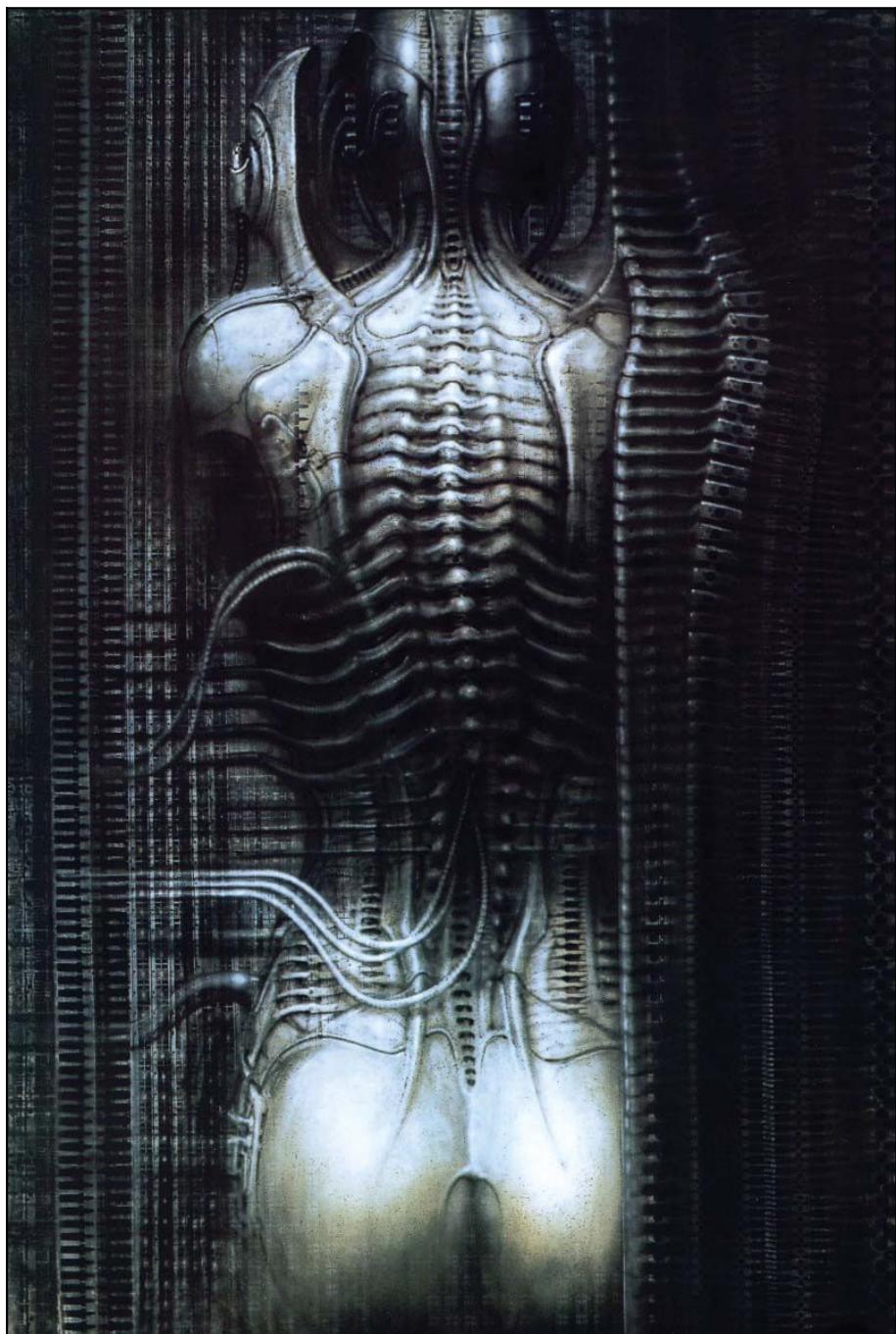
Examples of *Biomechanoids* and biomechanical structures are scattered throughout Giger's worlds. Tubes emanate from the flesh, which are organic joints assimilated by the physiology of the being, such as *Alpha* (1967), which represents a symbolic aesthetic ideal of female beauty, with deep sexual associations. His *Biomechanoiden* series (1969) delves deeper into this aspect, in which the female skull has been associated with organs resembling phallic elements, among metal presses and industrial machinery. His drawing *Atomkinder* (1967-1968) depicts a couple with evolved and sophisticated anatomy featuring tubes, antennas and cables, advancing with mannerist elegance in a futuristic-surrealist landscape. One of his visionary images is captured in

<sup>304</sup> H.R. Giger, *op. cit.*, p. 44

Painting *Torso*, from the *New York City* series (1981), an advanced version of the cyborg that is closely related to cyberpunk literature and 1980s science fiction cinema. The painting is an enigmatic futuristic vision of modern man fully integrated with electronic circuits and cables and with implants in his skin, such as metal vertebrae and other mechanical prostheses. As in *Alien*, which showed the interior of the technological womb, the image suggests a body penetrated by technology to the spinal cord, which seems to keep man in slavery.



*391-Alpha* (1967)



392- *New York City VI. Torso* (1981)

## The construction of the cyborg image

In recent decades, the *cyborg* has been actively represented in popular culture. This term was coined in the early 1960s and has evolved to become one of the genuine icons of postmodernity. A multitude of images and visions have developed around this concept, transforming the idea of what it means to be human in our era, a time in which technology is inseparable from our society, which is highly influenced by the impact of machines on our daily lives.

The figure of the *cyborg*, one of the central themes of postmodern science fiction, has been widely studied in the field of cinema, following the impact of films such as *Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984) and *Robocop* (Paul Verhoeven, 1987), which made a strong impression on audiences and critics alike. However, its iconography was developed earlier in the pop culture of the 1960s and 1970s, a lesser-known phenomenon, but one that is essential to understanding cyborg creations and the numerous images that have been generated by the audiovisual arts over the last two decades. Fantastic illustration and science fiction comics in the 1960s, and later body art, painting, film and television, have been the main vehicles for the construction of the cyborg image. The fertile ground for this conceptual and aesthetic evolution has undoubtedly been science fiction and visionary art. In this sense, Giger is one of the first artists to work continuously on this theme, as can be seen in superhero comics. Science fiction art plays a role that goes far beyond supporting literature, since in a society as visually oriented as ours, images reach where words cannot<sup>305</sup>. The artist must translate ideas and words into persuasive and convincing images.

This interest in *cyborg* themes is marked by concerns and anxieties about the position of the human body in the biotechnological era and its transformation into a technobody, a new hybrid being formed by the connection of flesh with machine. The impact of technoscience on our society has become one of the main

<sup>305</sup> FATE, Vincent Di. *Infinite Worlds: The fantastic visions of science fiction art*, The Wonderland Press, New York, 1997.

motives for reflection in postmodern culture and art, with the body playing a prominent role. A body assaulted and transformed by the effects of science and technology, which is being altered through implants and prostheses as never before. In this sense, radical innovations in medicine, in the field of artificial organ transplants and prostheses, have made thousands of people dependent on electronic devices to live<sup>306</sup>. But coexistence with machines goes even further. As Bruce Sterling, a prominent cyberpunk writer, comments, "the technology of the 1980s sticks to the skin, responds to touch: personal computers, Sony Walkmans, mobile phones and contact lenses"<sup>(307)</sup>. Indeed, technology is very close to us, even under our skin, redefining human nature.

A *cyborg* is, by definition, a cybernetic organism. Specifically, it is used to refer to a human being who has certain physiological processes aided or controlled by devices.

mechanical or electronic<sup>308</sup>. It is a being whose body has been completely or partially taken over by electromechanical devices, with which it coexists. Basically, cyborg imagery represents the fusion of humans with technology. *Cyborgs* are often confused with robots and androids, largely due to the free use of the term, especially in cinema<sup>309</sup>. The concepts of robots, androids and automatons have influenced the creation of *the cyborg*, but the latter is a hybrid of flesh and metal; at least part of it has to be organic. We would therefore rule out robots, which are entirely machines, and by extension androids and derivatives (replicants, humanoids).

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<sup>306</sup> The 1960s marked the impetus for these medical advances, beginning with the implantation of the first artificial heart in 1969. The first pacemaker had been implanted in 1958.

<sup>307</sup> STERLING, Bruce, *Op. cit.*, p. 22

<sup>308</sup> *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition*  
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<sup>309</sup> One of the most famous cyborgs, *Terminator*, is a robot with human appearance, that is, an android, a machine, but in the film and in film criticism there are constant references to the thermal cyborg.

## Early graphic representations

The figure of *the cyborg* has been depicted since the 1960s, the product of a fascination with the improvement of man with the help of technology and, in parallel, technophobia, an aversion to machines. This ambivalence will be the driving force behind the development of the main graphic and visual representations of the subject.

Perhaps the first graphic representation of the *cyborg* was created by Fred Freeman in the July 1960 issue of the American magazine *Life*, illustrating an article entitled "*Man remade to live in space*". The image depicts a hybrid of human and robot. It shows connections between the heart and various devices. However, the medium that featured the most cyborgs in this decade was American science fiction comics with their superhero characters.

Giger's images are examples of the wide range of reflections on the influence of technology in the postmodern era and, specifically, on the transformations to which the human body is being subjected. The fictional cyborg is very useful as a metaphor for certain aspects of human behaviour and condition. The figure of the cyborg attempts to give shape to, to anthropomorphise, something as abstract and difficult to understand as electronic technology. Operations such as substituting, replacing, modifying, penetrating, grafting, in short, altering, will be frequent when discussing this concept. Implants, prostheses, grafts and the penetration of industrial objects into flesh have constructed the image of a new being, which is also in the process of evolution and has clear connections with real life, in which medicine, surgery and scientific research (Warwick, Dobelle, Cyberman) offer us references for the implantation of the cyborg in our society. Art and cinema are the artistic fields that have most explored the construction of this being, which has become an emblematic figure of cyberspace.

We currently coexist with the cyborg, which is present in everyday life and floods the audiovisual arts scene, appearing on television and in magazines. While writing this text, I came across a Sunday newspaper with the following headline: *Revolution in the operating theatre: 40 days ago, Adelina had Parkinson's. Now she can sew.* The text explained the complexity of this type of operation in which, thanks to technology, a disabled person is able to become a normal person again, capable of performing various domestic tasks. The miracle was made possible by a cranial trepanation, electrodes, a metal scaffold (stereotactic) and highly advanced software. The result was an electrode implanted in the brain, wired to a neurostimulator implanted in the chest, which activates functions that are impossible for people with Parkinson's.

Scientist and inventor Ray Kurzweil believes that due to the unstoppable acceleration of technological development, we will soon become robots or merge with them. The union of humans and machines is highly developed, and there are many artificial organs that can replace natural ones (knees, shoulders, teeth, skin, arteries, arms, fingers, etc.)<sup>310</sup>.

Science fiction and art prepare us for the future that lies ahead, and have created striking images in advance to reflect on and think about cyborgs.

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<sup>310</sup> *We are becoming cyborgs*

#### 2.4.5. Portraits and tributes

In his work, Giger has included portraits of some of the people/friends/characters who have influenced him, such as the Swiss mythologist Sergius Golowin, the philosopher Timothy Leary and the occult writer Aleister Crowley.

Facial expression also adapts to the concept of biomechanics in Giger's universe. He has created self-portraits using a photo of himself and painting over it with an airbrush. Starting from the photographic reality provided by the camera, he superimposes another "reality" that is the product of his biomechanical interpretation of the human face. It is like a world different from the real one, a product of his imagination, a kind of mental image that exists in his brain and represents his vision of the world, a unique and personal Weltanschauung. Giger sees himself as a human being influenced by science and technology, with a grey metallic tone. He depicts a sequence [395-398] in which his face is transformed, mutating into a biomechanical being, with structures running beneath his skin, forming a new body. He also applies this biomechanical vision when introducing real-life characters into his paintings.

Giger dedicates a painting to Crowley entitled *Crowley, the Beast 666* (1975). [394] which includes a portrait of the magician, with a cadaverous, bulging face, placed on the left side of the painting wearing a pointed hat. In accordance with the dogma "as above, so below" or "Macro-Microcosmos", he holds the inverted hat in his hand, along with an ice cream cone<sup>311</sup>. The portrait is based on a photograph of Crowley as an elderly man, when he caused a sensation with his exhibition of drawings and paintings at the Pforzheim Gallery in Berlin. The pointed hat represents Crowley's first ascent of

<sup>311</sup> [www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com) 2 October 2003

K2 mountain in the Himalayas. For Crowley, the number 666 represented the sign of the beast that comes from the abyss. That is why Giger depicts him with Satan's number inscribed on his forehead. "The beast" was a nickname he had since childhood and which accompanied him throughout his life.

Giger met Tim Leary in the early 1970s. Leary took refuge in Switzerland, as he was considered public enemy number one in the United States due to his censored statements against the Vietnam War and his advocacy of drug culture. Between 1970 and 1972, Carl Laszlo and painter Walter Wegmüller gathered support for his political asylum, and Giger joined them. Later, when *Alien* premiered in Los Angeles in 1979, Giger visited him. Leary wrote the preface for the books *New York City* and *Giger's Alien*, taking an interest in his work.

In the 1978 painting *Illuminatus I* [393], a portrait of Leary appears alongside mythologist Sergius Golowin. In addition, on the right side of the painting is the face of Lovecraft, completing Giger's tribute to these three figures, whom he deeply admired. He has another portrait of Golowin (1976) [399], with a biomechanical interpretation of his face, with tubes that look like worms running through his head and deforming it, producing a grotesque vision.

He has also created symbolic portraits of Li, who was his partner for almost nine years, in paintings and funerary busts. These biomechanical portraits of Li represent a certain aesthetic ideal, as her features frequently appear in his female figures from the 1960s and 1970s (*Playmate...*). They could be considered prototypes of Gigerian beauty. The portraits of Li, *Li I* and *Li II* [403], both from 1974, are very important works within the concept of biomechanical portraiture. Giger applies his biomechanical vision to the human face, resulting in a fantastic image.

In his book *Giger's Necronomicon*, there is a portrait of art critic Fritz Billeter (1976) [400]. On occasion, he has created portraits as tributes to

friends, such as Friedrich Kuhn. This is a special painting, as it is a posthumous tribute. There are two versions of the painting.

The painting "*Hommage à Friedrich*" (1973) [402] hangs above Giger's bed, reflecting Kuhn's emotional significance. He is depicted as a magician, with a mystical aura. He possesses a light that makes him shine above the whole. On a photograph of Kuhn sitting on the sofa, taken by Giger a month before his death, Giger displays his iconographic world through airbrushing, featuring children's heads, a stylised female figure that is almost mannerist in its elongation, biomechanical creatures and the alien designed by Giger for the film *Swissmade 2069*. Around Kuhn, whom he depicts as a magician, we see the heads of children with skin diseases, Gigerian elements and symbols.

It is a curious composition in Giger's career from a chromatic point of view (his paintings generally tend towards monochrome), as it features all the tones he used in his airbrush years: pinkish, grey, metallic blue, psychedelic green.

What is interesting about the work lies in the different shades used, which perhaps make it unique in Giger's production, given the uniform chromatic character of most of his works (green tones, sombre and dark greys). Here, however, the fleshy tone of the heads, the blue-grey tone behind the sofa and the psychedelic green on the left are mixed, producing a new effect in Giger's composition. (There is another version of this painting). Giger has some original works by Kuhn in his private collection due to his great admiration for the painter.

She has also incorporated real-life characters into her paintings, such as her friend Manon, who is portrayed with her cat Minou: Manon ran a fashion shop in Zurich, where she sold her own designs: she suddenly decided to devote herself to art and exhibited her own home in a gallery, as an installation. Other artists also participated in the exhibition, including Giger, who painted a picture entitled *Minon* (1974) [401],

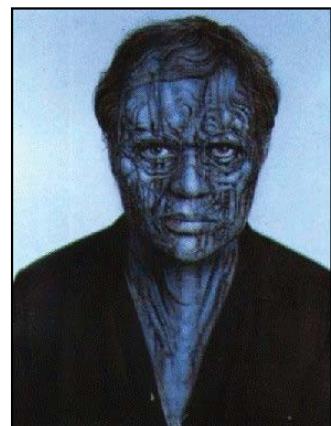
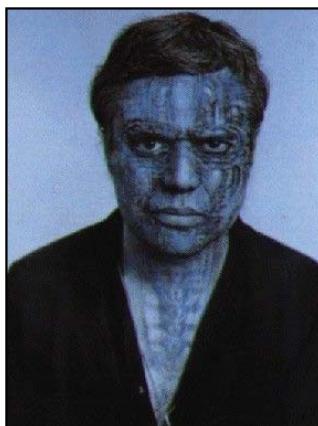
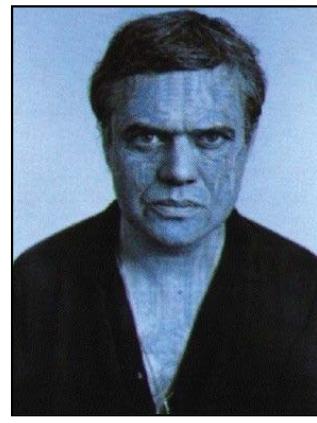
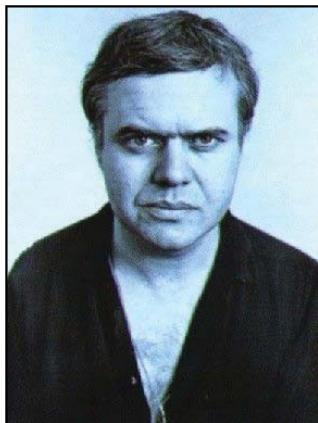
a mixture of Manon and Minou, her Siamese cat. Manon appears surrounded by bony tentacles that frame her bust.

For these works, Giger has clearly used photographic references. However, throughout his vast production, the configuration of fantastic images predominates to form beings with manipulated anatomies and deformed or altered faces. Another eloquent example of the use of photography is the cover he created for Debbie Harry or the two biomechanical portraits of *Barbara* in 1983.



393- *Illuminatus I*, fragment. From left to right: Golowin, Leary and Lovecraft. (1978)

394- Portrait of Crowley in *The Beast 666* (1975)



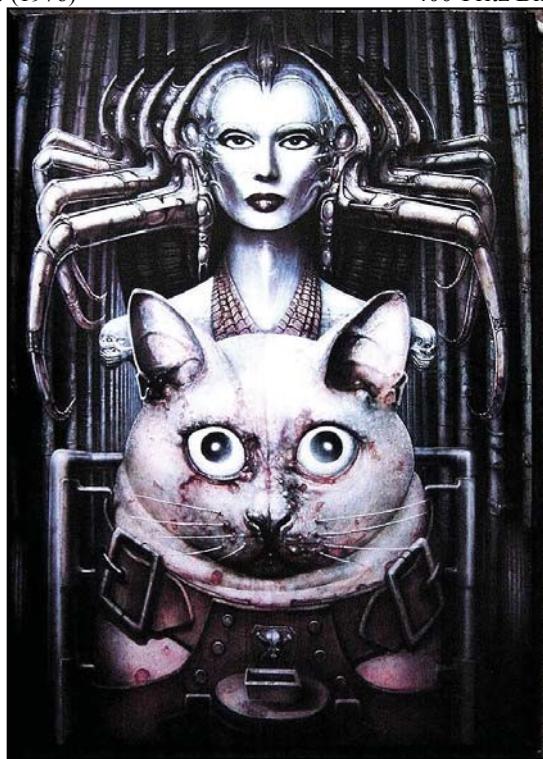
395-398-Self-portrait of Giger (1981)



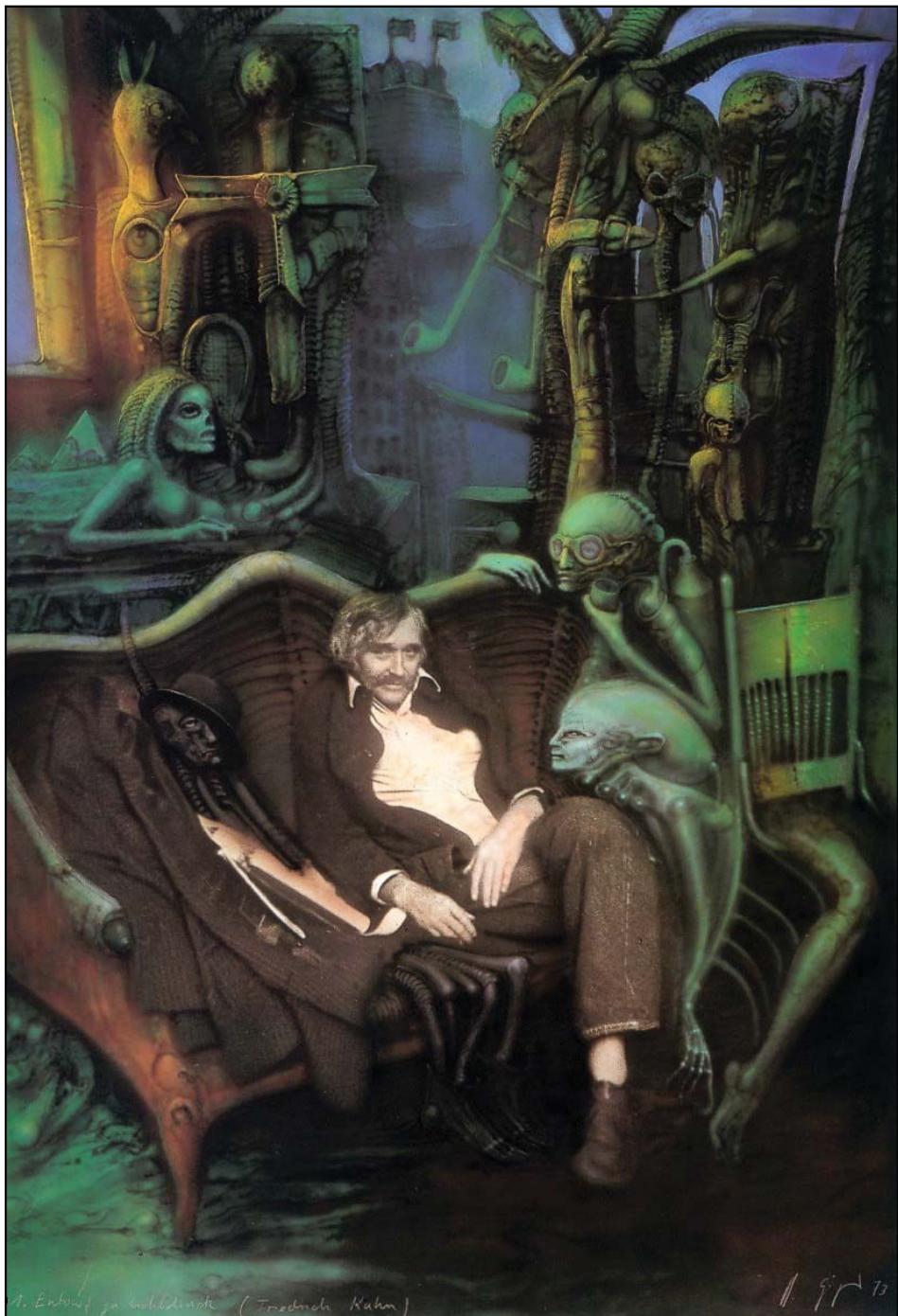
399-Sergius Golowin (1976)



400-Fritz Billeter (1976)



401-Minon (1974)



402-Friedrich Kuhn I (1973)



403-Li II (1974)



## **Chapter 3**

### **REPERCUSSIONS**



### 3.1. Influence of Giger's work on popular culture

The impact of HR Giger's work has been notable in many manifestations of recent contemporary culture since the 1980s. After reviewing the current landscape and analysing the traces we find in different fields of artistic expression, we can affirm that Giger has been and continues to be an influential artist. Due to his multifaceted nature, his cultural influence spans various creative fields ranging from art and cinema to literature and music. His influence can even be seen in new sectors such as video games and music videos. His impact is felt in unofficial culture, in the underground, where the most avant-garde and experimental creators reside.

Giger burst onto the scene in the 1970s and 1980s with an aesthetic of the ugly and the monstrous, which had a profound impact on avant-garde movements. His poetics of the carnal and the macabre, his grotesque creations and the development of alien cultures and biomechanical beings have contributed intensely to the creative activity of artists in recent decades.

Cinema is perhaps the medium where his influence is most evident, due to the multitude of examples in which Giger's creations have had an impact in one way or another, especially in the creation of characters such as monsters and aliens and oppressive and sinister atmospheres. Literature, and specifically the cyberpunk subgenre, which influenced artistic creation in the 1990s in all its ramifications, has developed many of his concepts, especially biomechanical theories and the union of man and machine. The latest example can be found in the impact of the film *The Matrix*, which has exerted its influence on audiovisual manifestations in recent years<sup>312</sup>.

Graphic design and pop culture have also been influenced, affecting a considerable number of artists and musicians who admit to being inspired by Giger's paintings. The art of tattooing has generated a biomechanical language. Based on Gigerian imagery, it has

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<sup>(312)</sup> Especially in cinematographic techniques and advertising.

become a distinctive style that explores new forms of expression and is unique in the history of this discipline. Some people have even had Giger's face tattooed on themselves, which is an extreme example of the fascination that the artist inspires.

Furthermore, his influence on the visual arts constitutes a peculiar chapter in the *dark*, gloomy and sinister aesthetics of the end of the century, in the so-called *apocalyptic culture*<sup>313</sup>. One need only look at some icons of popular culture, mainly from cinema, but also from rock, pop and comics, to detect Gigerian features in a multitude of manifestations. The well-known Pinhead from the film *Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987), the sinister aesthetics of the film *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998) and the look of the leader of the pop-rock group *Smashing Pumpkins* are just some of the most obvious examples of this revival of neo-Gothic fashion, inspired in part by Giger's work.

In recent years, his works have gained new interest with the emergence of digital culture in our society and the influence of new technologies that are transforming our environment and the way we perceive things. This fact is turning Giger into a cult artist for certain sectors and a permanent source of inspiration for groups of artists ranging from tattoo artists, filmmakers, and musicians to designers and writers.

His image has been used as a literary reference, as a motif in a video game and even in television programmes and short films (Com & Com). Giger has become a mythical figure who enjoys a certain status among the postmodern avant-garde, just as his alien monster is a reference point for science fiction films.

We will review the different fields in which the impact of Giger's work can be seen, commenting on how it has influenced them.

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<sup>313</sup> A cultural phenomenon produced by the arrival of the end of the century, mixing religious symbolism with the aesthetics of ugliness, tattoos, scarification and artistic expressions that champion bad taste and perversion. An emblematic example is the singer of the band Marilyn Manson, an icon and media image of this phenomenon.

### 3.2. Fantastic art. New postmodern trends

Over the last two decades, fantasy art has experienced an incipient revival with exhibitions in various museums and international galleries, the publication of magazines<sup>314</sup> and the establishment of art centres that are emerging as standard-bearers for the movement, notably the Ernst Fuchs Museum in Vienna and the HR Giger Museum in Gruyeres<sup>315</sup>. In Los Angeles, the Morpheus International Gallery, which specialises in the genre, holds exhibitions and dedicates books to contemporary fantasy artists. An important database is currently being created, called the Fantastic Art Centre, which is linked to a major research project carried out by Christian De Boeck that aims to create a network for collaboration and dissemination among fantasy artists.

Following the fantasy tradition, one of the moments of greatest proliferation of these trends coincided with the development of surrealism in the first half of the century with figures such as Salvador Dalí and Max Ernst. After the dominance of abstract painting, the bridge to the second half of the century was built by the representatives of the Viennese School of Fantastic Realism, led by Ernst Fuchs, a painter who was very influential on the new generation of fantastic painters. Some of the leading representatives of this new generation, such as Mati Klarwein, Giger and Bob Venosa, were decisively influenced in their respective styles by Fuchs.

Fantastic realism is an artistic movement that has revitalised interest in fantastic art. It is a genre that has been manifesting itself for centuries, with the paintings of Bosch, who can be considered its initiator. Symbolism and, above all, surrealism gave new impetus to this movement, which has been underlying the history of art. Within the genre, painting is the most representative manifestation

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<sup>314</sup> Such as the Australian Art Visionary.

<sup>315</sup> There are plans to establish an International Museum and Academy of Arts representing visionary artists. The work is being carried out in Austria and the USA and is led by Ernst Fuchs.

This trend of international fantastic realism, also called or referred to as *Visionary Art*<sup>316</sup> or *the School of Transpersonal Artists*, brings together a number of artists from different countries who have developed their own personal mythologies, with roots in artists from other eras such as Bosch, Brueghel, Böcklin and Kubin.

In the contemporary era, or rather in postmodernity, one of the most influential artists has been Giger, who is often cited as a renovator of the fantastic. He is currently enjoying widespread popularity due to the growing interest in this aesthetic trend, often associated with the world of cinema, a medium that many artists have approached, in many cases transcending their work to the big screen. Many artists have moved within these coordinates at different moments in history, and countless fantastical elements have emerged in the work of many artists not specifically associated with this movement.

Notable in the bibliography on the subject is Marcel Brion's book *Art Fantastique*, which systematises the main themes and assesses the most outstanding contributions and representatives. It abounds with works featuring fantastical components, unusual motifs and the individual mythologies of many creators. However, the term '*fantastic art*' still lacks a precise definition, which means that it is sometimes used inappropriately, leading to frequent confusion with science fiction illustration or surrealism, as both trends place great value on fantasy and imagination.

Certain aspects of movements such as symbolism, modernism, surrealism, and metaphysical painting can be included in the overall line of fantastic art. It is certainly a historical constant that spans different countries and eras and can be seen as a reaction to the fatigue caused by

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<sup>316</sup>Visionary art seeks to show what lies beyond the limits of vision, through dreams, trances or other altered states. Visionary artists are characterised by their search for a new visual language. See CARUANA, L. *A Manifesto of Visionary Art* [online]. 2001 [Date of consultation: 26-1-2002]. Available at: <http://visionaryrevue.com/webtext/manifesto1.html>.

a particular style or as pure escapism from everyday life. Religious art often drew on the fantastical aspects of terror, using them as a repressive and moralistic method. Its origins can be traced back to late 15th-century Europe, specifically to the figure of Hieronymus Bosch. Brueghel, Arcimboldo and Dürer continued to cultivate this tradition during the 16th century. Blake, Fuseli and Goya are also other notable creators of disturbing images during the 19th century. In the last century, the 1960s and 1970s gave new impetus to fantastic art, when many artists influenced by psychedelic culture, countercultural movements and experimentation with drugs created new concepts and forms of expression.

Contemporary fantastic art has expanded its territory and its boundaries intertwine with neo-surrealism and science fiction. Today, there are clear signs of a return to figuration as the dominant trend in the art world, a weariness with abstraction, a trend that has marked the last few decades, and a desire for escapism, which is being fuelled by the development of digital technologies, virtual reality and new Hollywood cinema.

#### New trends

According to artist and critic Vincent Di Fate, Giger and Syd Mead (the conceptual artist behind *Blade Runner*) completely redesigned the look of modern science fiction cinema<sup>317</sup>. In Giger's case, his designs for the *Alien* monster have been used as a reference when painting new creatures, and his figures have been constantly imitated by other creators. Artists working in this medium, clearly associated with fantasy, had received very little recognition until the emergence of *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977), when designers and illustrators who collaborated on the film, such as Ralph McQuarrie, took centre stage. On the other hand, fantasy illustration has not been well regarded in intellectual art circles and is dismissed as popular art, as if it were neither creative nor interesting.

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<sup>317</sup>DI FATE, Vincent. *Op. cit.*

In addition to science fiction, a new fantasy movement has emerged at the end of the century, which we could call postmodern fantasy. Giger is the emblematic figure of this movement. The movement is made up of a group of painters and illustrators of various nationalities who frequently exhibit in international galleries, such as Yacek Yerka and Zdzislaw Beksinski, or who participate in film design, such as Wayne Barlow, and who show influences from Giger's work.

The influence of Giger's art is evident in the visual arts, particularly in painting and sculpture that follow the guidelines of fantasy art. It is difficult to discern between plagiarism and homage, as the formal and aesthetic elements are very evident and many artists end up copying Giger's style. Such is the case of the painter Diabolus Rex, who calls himself satanic, whose paintings can cause confusion as to authorship as they attempt to imitate Giger's airbrush works. A recently created association of French science fiction illustrators called Art and Fact also draws inspiration from the Swiss artist's work. Among these artists, Jean-Yves Kervevan develops a plastic universe similar to biomechanical fusions. Various illustrators working in comics and film, such as Sylvain Despretz, Brom

[407] and John Bolton, adhere to the aesthetics of the sinister and owe a great deal to Giger's art. Daniel Oullete [409] depicts open bodies and alien beings with bony textures, fitting well into the *new flesh* genre. Australian artist Demetrios Vakras [408] recreates apocalyptic series influenced by Dalí and Giger. His dismembered human anatomies and profusion of skulls, skeletons, and machinery immediately evoke Giger's universe, as he basically creates variations on biomechanics.

There are numerous young artists seduced by Giger's art and aesthetics who take him as a reference when creating their own works. These are artists who plagiarise Giger's style, even using his same technique, the airbrush, such as the British artist Trevor Partington, who confesses to being obsessed with Giger's art and techniques, unapologetically imitating the biomechanical style through the use of the airbrush. Dutch artist Daniel Staal is also influenced by Giger's macabre art. Turkish painter and graphic artist

Kerem Beyit recounts Giger's influence on his work. As we can see, Giger has stimulated the creativity of many artists.

Two artists who have recently caught our attention are David Ho and Joachim Luetke. Ho uses digital technology to create his illustrations, which focus on the body represented with nails, chains and spikes [404-405]. His iconography is reminiscent of Giger's: skulls, monsters and the dark tones of his figures, which lack colour, are in keeping with Giger's use of colour.

Luetke is a German artist who works with themes similar to those of Giger and develops biomechanical theories in his own way [406]. Luetke recalls: "During my training in Switzerland, I came across the first catalogue of

H.R. Giger. It was before he became famous with *Alien*. For me, it was like a kind of divine inspiration; it was everything indescribable (in the Lovecraftian sense) represented quite naturally, as if it were the most normal thing in the world. Through him, I found the strength to formalise my own visions without worrying about convention <sup>318</sup>. His creations seem to come from a post-apocalyptic era; they are disturbing, and his repertoire includes fertility goddesses, skulls, masks, and mannequins. His latest art book is entitled *Posthuman*, in which he shows a repertoire of images that almost always refer us back to Giger. It is no surprise that Luetke declares himself an unconditional admirer of the Swiss artist. When asked about his artistic influences, he replies: "practically none, except for Giger, because he suddenly appeared within an established trend with a new theme and perspective, took a big step and showed that there are other things besides elves, fairies, flowers and fantastic gossip"<sup>319</sup>.

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<sup>318</sup>HOFFMANN, Dirk. Interview with Joachim Luetke [online]. *Zillo* 2000 [Date consulted: 19-7-2004]. Available at: <[http://www.luetke.com/intro/luetke\\_com.html](http://www.luetke.com/intro/luetke_com.html)>.

<sup>319</sup> BALLHAUSEN, Thomas. Das Ende der Beliebigkeit, Ein Interview mit Joachim Luetke. [online]. *CARL*, 2000 [Date of consultation: 15 May 2003]. Available at: <[http://www.luetke.com/intro/luetke\\_com.html](http://www.luetke.com/intro/luetke_com.html)>.

## Sculpture

We also find examples of his influence in the field of sculpture: the Dutch artist André Lassen and the French artist Jean Fontaine.

Fontaine and his series *Mecanolocuras* (*Mécanofolie*, 1997) [410-411] are influenced by Giger's art and his world of images. In the exhibition held at the Museum of Science Fiction (Yverdon-les-Bains, Switzerland), Fontaine exhibited his Mecanolocuras, sculptures on themes such as cyborgs and body-machine hybridisations. As a whole, they are closely related to Giger's biomechanical objects, particularly his sculptural pieces for the Zodiac Fountain project, such as the figure of Taurus.

Lassen is a Dutch sculptor whose work is inspired by medieval, Western and Japanese art and Tolkien's cosmos. In an interview with the American magazine International Tattoo Art, he comments that he evolved from jewellery to large-scale sculpture thanks to the works of HR Giger, which he discovered at the 1981 Basel Art Fair. He was deeply impressed by his sense of scale and perspective on the arts, "I realised that if I wanted to be something in life, I would have to work like hell. Without Giger, I probably would never have decided to broaden my field of operations"<sup>(320)</sup>.

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<sup>320</sup>MARINO, Veronica. The sculpture of Andre Lassen [online]. *International Tattoo Magazine* 30-12-2000 [Date of consultation: 15-9-2002]. Available at: <[http://www.andrelassen.com/articles/tattoo\\_text.htm](http://www.andrelassen.com/articles/tattoo_text.htm)>.



404- David Ho. *Fallen Angel* (2000)



405-David Ho. *Silent Scream* (2000)



406- Joachim Luetke. *Marilynmachine 1* (1999)



407-Brom. *Grafter* (1997)



408-Demetrios Vakras. *Breathing Apparatus*

(1996) 409-Daniel Oullette.

*Disease Licking the Temple of  
Beauty* (1994)



410-Jean Fontaine. *Interior Garden* (1999)



411-Jean Fontaine. *Typewriter*

(1999)

### 3.3. The cyborg theme

Giger is one of the pioneers in the visual representation of the technological body from a conceptual and artistic point of view. With his creations, Giger has become a pioneer in the development of cyborg characters, beings that are half human, half robotic, floating in a peculiar universe full of dangers and challenges. This theme of the human body and its relationship with machines is one of the realities that are among the main concerns of society at the end of the century. Advances in science, particularly in medicine and genetics, have had an impact, together with technological achievements, on many aspects of contemporary culture. These hybrid beings of flesh and metal have become popular thanks to science fiction films.

Like Giger, other artists have explored the cyborg theme from different artistic disciplines, making it a characteristic subgenre of late 20th-century postmodern culture. In addition to comics, the main fields of creation have been fantasy illustration and body art.

Illustrators working in the field of science fiction, such as Kevin Murphy, have depicted sinister portraits of cyborgs. In contrast, we find images of female cyborgs as objects of desire. The Japanese artist Hajime Sorayama has developed the erotic cyborg by combining robots, techno-fantasies and futuristic visions through an intense hyper-illustrated style. His series of *gynoids*<sup>321</sup> (female androids) represent his vision of the cyborg, of an eroticised woman with mechanical attributes [412-413].

One of the leading exponents of cybernetic body art is the Australian Stelarc, an artist who uses his own body as a "design object" and who has gone so far as to claim that "the body is obsolete". As Mark Dery says, "Stelarc anticipates the man-machine hybrid that we are all metaphorically becoming"<sup>322</sup>. With his body amplified through laser eyes, robotic arms, microphones, cyber gloves and cables, he has begun an investigation into our current evolution [414]. Other artists

<sup>321</sup> Term coined by British writer Gwyneth Jones.

<sup>322</sup> DERY, Mark., *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

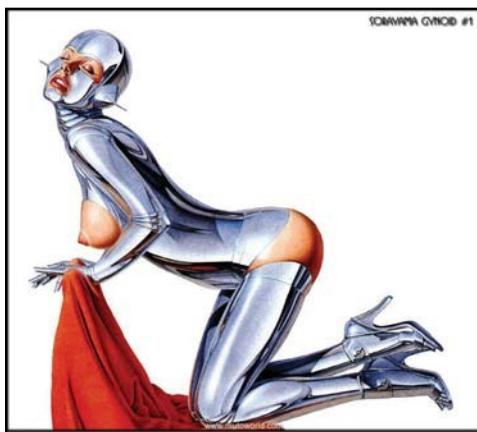
Radical artists created intangible sculptures with their performances in the 1960s and 1970s, captured on video and in photographs, redefining their bodies (and creating new images of them). Marcelí Antúnez, a prominent multidisciplinary and intertextual performer, follows in Stelarc's footsteps. In his work *Epizoo*, he interacts with the audience via a computer, which allows viewers to remotely control the movements of an exoskeleton worn by the artist, moving his ears, nose and pectorals. The exoskeletons<sup>323</sup> of Stelarc and Antúnez reveal the postmodern artist's fascination with medicine and technology<sup>324</sup>.

In contrast to these technological visions of amplified mechanical giants, we find a poetic cyborg such as that developed by Spanish artist Marina Nuñez. In the 1990s, she produced several series of cyborgs that promise emancipation from the Adamic body created by God. Inspired by the dreams of cybersculture that challenge the classical idea of corporeality with the creation of a utopian body transformed through surgery, prosthetics and genetic engineering, she has produced paintings of cybernetic creatures that reflect her visions. In the prologue to her latest catalogue, she writes: "Some bodies are defined in negative terms: ...like the hybrid bodies of cyborgs, impure because of their heterogeneity, illegitimate because they are constructions without a certificate of origin or guarantee of originality, unstable because of the prostheses and connections that redraw their boundaries, inhuman because they attack the old essences and natures"<sup>325</sup>. He visualises monsters, fluorescent beings, female figures, which reveal his interest in the anomalous and imperfect body. Cables and connections, and digital computer bodies with biotechnological prostheses, make up an alternative and transgressive image of the cyborg.

<sup>323</sup>Medieval armour was the inspiration for exoskeletons, orthopaedic support devices, illustrated in the work *Opera Chirurgica* by the 16th-century Italian anatomist Hieronymus Fabricius. Likewise, the notion that man is made of replaceable parts is shown in the work. For more information on medical advances, see O'MAHONY, Marie. *Cyborg the man-machine*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 2002.

<sup>324</sup>These are inspired by those created in aerospace research.

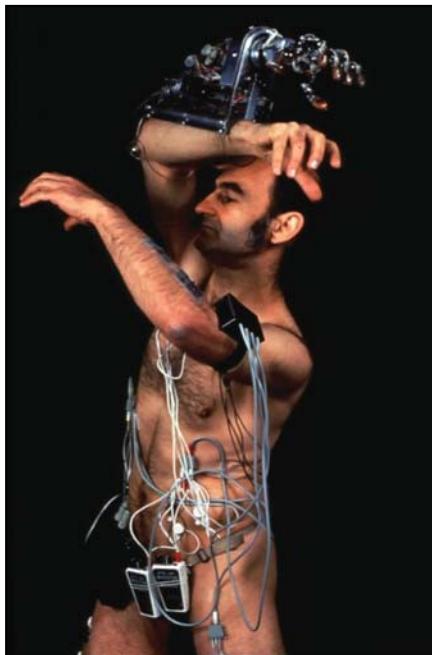
<sup>325</sup> NÚÑEZ, Marina. *Marina Nuñez* [Catalogue] Salamanca Art Centre, Salamanca, 2002.



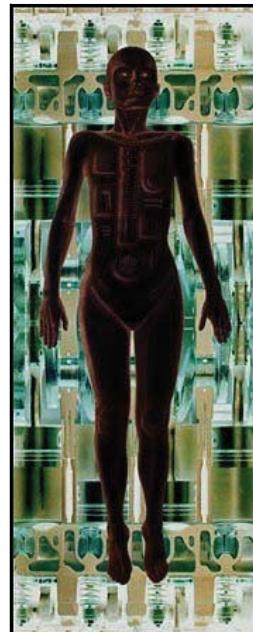
412-Sorayama. *Gynoid 1* (1983-1985)



413-Sorayama. *Sexy Robot 3* (1983-1985)



414-Stelarc. *Multiple Arms* (1982)



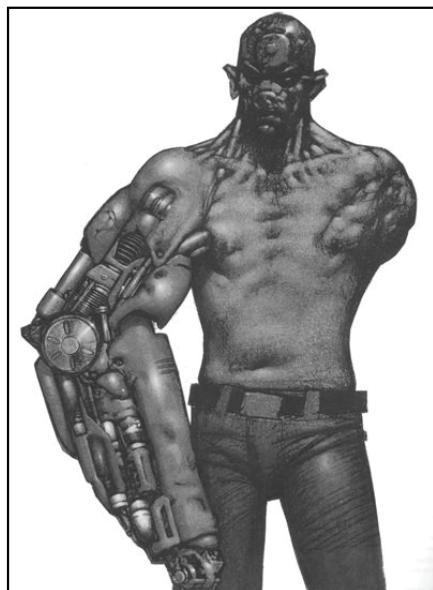
415-Marina Nuñez. *Untitled (science fiction)* (2000)



416-Queen Borg (1996)



417-Edward Scissorhands (Tim Burton, 1991)



418-Chris Cunningham. *Mean Machine* (1995)



419-Judge Dread (Danny Cannon, 1995)

## Cyborg cinema

Science fiction cinema of the 1980s and 1990s has been one of the media that has generated the most cyborg proposals and images. Within the fantasy genre, framed within action cinema, characters have benefited from spectacular staging and the sophistication of special effects and make-up departments. These departments employ cutting-edge artists who have pushed their creations to the limit to make them more believable, combining conceptual designs, models, make-up and computer technology to achieve highly realistic characters. The cyborg became one of the dominant themes in postmodern fantasy cinema, featuring in science fiction stories set in apocalyptic futures or surreal scenarios.

According to Telotte, the fundamental interest of the science fiction genre (since the early 1980s) will focus on the impact of intelligent machines and robotic automation<sup>326</sup>. During this period, the figure of the robot/cyborg/replicant/android took centre stage in American films exploring technophilia and technophobia. Since *Blade Runner*, there has been a growing fascination with the human synthesis industry, which involves replacing organs and implanting prostheses. These characters will dominate contemporary science fiction cinema. There is a kind of fascination with these beings, as well as fear and phobias. As Telotte points out, these types of creations (robots, cyborgs, androids) represent images that dissect and meticulously analyse the emptiness of the modern self, highlighting the extent to which we all seem to have become mechanised, transformed into programmed bodies, into bodies with an indifferent spirit<sup>327</sup>. These images perhaps respond to the need to know ourselves better, to perceive our humanity and reconstruct our idea of the self. The cyborg genre will attempt to examine our ambivalent response to technology and our anxieties about our own nature in an increasingly technified environment.

<sup>326</sup> TELOTTE, J.P. *Replications: a robotic history of the science fiction film*. University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1995, p. 129.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

Of the different visions of the cinematic cyborg, such as the military cyborg (*Terminator*, *Robocop*) or cyberpunk, Giger's work has had the greatest influence on the configuration of the monstrous cyborg. This is a grotesque representation, with many examples such as the Borg from Star Trek who appear in *Star Trek First Contact* (1996, Jonathan Frakes) and *Edward Scissorhands* (1991, Tim Burton). The Borg are biomechanical alien characters with a cadaverous appearance, wired and connected, who seek to assimilate the human race and make it perfect. Their queen is closely related to Giger's concept of beauty and the mythological goddesses he paints, as well as his female figures in general [416]. *Edward Scissorhands* offers a neo-Gothic vision of the cyborg. Characterised by Stan Winston based on the conceptual designs of the film's director Tim Burton, he has a pale, dead-like appearance, with a post-industrial aesthetic featuring black leather, straps and scissors, a mechanical part attached to his arms by his creator [417]. It is the story of the creation of an artificial being, and of the mutilated and unfinished body.

In this section, we can include comic book creations such as the cyborg Mean Machine [418], who fights Judge Dread in *Judge Dread* (Danny Cannon, 1995), designed by conceptual artist Chris Halls<sup>328</sup>. He has a mechanical arm and makeup with several metal prostheses on his chest and skull, as well as a helmet embedded with a clock [419]. Another grotesque cyborg is the space pirate Mecano from the film *Space Truckers* (Stuart Gordon, 1997). Mecano was once a scientist specialising in robotics who is torn apart by his own creations. "I rebuilt my body," "I'm made of parts," he confesses. His characterisation is reminiscent of pirates with hooks and metal legs, but in addition, his skull is made of metal, his eye has been replaced by a glass one, and half of his body is made of metal, including his buttocks and his penis, which functions like a chainsaw.

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<sup>328</sup> Pseudonym used by Chris Cunningham, one of the great innovators of music videos in the 1990s, who has also developed a career collaborating on the special effects of various fantasy films such as *Hellraiser 2* (1988), *Nightbreed* (1990), *Alien 3* (1992) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997), and the aforementioned adaptation of the comic book *Judge Dread*. He has also created many androids, robotic beings and grotesque creatures in the field of illustration and design. One of his latest projects is the character design for the adaptation of William Gibson's seminal cyberpunk novel *Neuromancer*.

### 3.4 Cinema

The significance of *Alien* and his collaborations with the world of cinema have made Giger a prestigious artist in this field, and his influence is important in postmodern cinematography, particularly in the horror and science fiction genres, where his biomechanical vision and his designs of fantastic spaces and creatures have had an enormous influence and generated a multitude of imitators. His work has served as a reference for the creation of fantastical spaces and elements, and his ideas have been transferred to the big screen by some of the most renowned filmmakers.

According to *Cinefantastique*<sup>329</sup>, an American magazine specialising in science fiction and horror films, Giger is the artist who changed the look of contemporary science fiction cinema and is undoubtedly the most important monster designer of today. In fact, his designs and ideas have had a significant influence on the invention of monsters and strange beings. Numerous creators from the world of cinema and various artistic fields such as design, animation, make-up and special effects have been inspired by Giger's work, including Stan Winston, Rick Baker, Rob Bottin, Patrick Tatopoulos and Steve Johnson, who are fascinated by the influence of his art and biomechanics. All of them are considered to be the wizards of special effects (make-up artists, designers and special effects supervisors) and are at the creative forefront of character design and construction for cinema. Over the last twenty years, their creations have dominated the fantasy and action film scene.

Since *Alien*, a new dark and sinister look has been established in this genre, as discussed in numerous specialised magazines<sup>330</sup>. *Alien* is now considered a masterpiece of the science fiction genre and has become one of the most important works of contemporary cinema in recent decades. It has given rise to

<sup>329</sup> *Cinefantastique*, vol. 15, no. 4, May 1988.

<sup>330</sup> In 1988, *Cinefantastique* cited a dozen films that in one way or another imitated Giger's concepts in *Alien*. Other magazines highlight the role played by Giger's art in recent fantasy. See also the magazines *Image-Movies* (1994), *Cinefex* (1997), *Fear* (1996) and *SFX* (1998).

It gave rise to several sequels and new scripts due to the success it enjoyed with audiences and critics from the outset. Today, both the *Alien* saga (a tetralogy, for the moment) and the *Star Wars* film series are two cornerstones of contemporary cinema and culture, mainly due to the scrupulous attention to graphic detail and the imagination that permeates these films. Both sagas have revolutionised the science fiction genre, which has gone from low-budget B movies to big-budget A movies, thanks to the huge box office takings that they all generate and their success. They have also altered the visual production of films in general and the designs for them in particular.

Giger's film design has been characterised, among other things, by his ability to create monsters and fantastical creatures that are highly realistic and terrifying. This has led to the development of a new sensibility for the creation of monsters and beings from other worlds. Within the fantasy and science fiction genre, a subgenre has emerged around monster films, in which monsters take centre stage. There are a large number of films whose designers and collaborators have imitated and plagiarised Giger's style, either by recreating biomechanical worlds with their disturbing atmospheres or by copying his monsters.

Giger's creature became Hollywood's favourite model of destruction. *Alien* caused a sensation in the film industry during the 1980s and influenced other films in the genre, both B movies and big-budget productions. A formula was established: a hero or group of heroes fight against an enemy that kills them off one by one. This enemy is usually a monstrosity, a variation of the alien. Under this formula, the action takes place in Antarctica (*The Thing*, John Carpenter, 1982), in the jungle (*Predator*, John McTiernan, 1987), under the sea (*Deepstar Six*, Sean S. Cunningham, 1989) and *Leviathan* (George P. Cosmatos, 1989), on an oil rig (*The Intruder Within*, Peter Carter, 1981), in the sewers (*Scared to Death*, Bill Malone, 1980) and, above all, in space (*Galaxy of Terror*, B.D. Clark, 1981, *Inseminoid*, Norman

Warren, 1981). The list is endless, and we can add to it those films that even plagiarise the title, such as *Alien Predator* (Deran Sarafian, 1987) or *Alienator* (Fred Olen Ray, 1989). Most of them are of poor quality, except for *The Thing* and *Predator* [422], which are much more elaborate and have prestigious directors.

In *The Galaxy of Terror*, the production design was done by James Cameron, who was unknown at the time. The murky, futuristic atmosphere, the colouring of the film, the pyramid and the sets seem to have been taken directly from Pinewood Studios in London and the remains of the *Alien* shoot. The biomechanical component and the spirit of terror of *Alien* are present in this film. Another regular collaborator of Cameron's, special effects technician Stan Winston, was clearly inspired by *Alien* when creating the monster in his film *Pumpkinhead* (1987), with its pointed head and deformed skeletal body.

Recent films such as *Mimic* (Guillermo del Toro, 1997), *The Relic* (Peter Hyams, 1997), and, as we have seen, *Species*, have maintained the formula. In *Deep Rising* (Stephen Sommers, 1998), a sea creature appears that is clearly reminiscent of Giger's alien. In the science fiction film *Pitch Black* (David Twohy, 2000), based on Isaac Asimov's novel *Nightfall*, the protagonists are flying bats with clear Gigerian reminiscences [423]. Designer Patrick Tatopoulos, known for his work on Roland Emmerich's films *Independence Day* (1996) and *Godzilla* (1998), designed monsters based on altered models of Giger's alien. The visual style and action of the film are also reminiscent of *Alien 3* with its rapid camera movements and filming style.

Even the aesthetics of the video clip appropriates Gigerian motifs, as can be seen in Michael Jackson's *Captain Eo* (1986), where a character (played by Angelica Huston) wears a biomechanical suit reminiscent of *Alien*.

In recent years, the lack of creativity in monster design has led to the repetition of previous models and the reinterpretation of existing designs. In this sense, the

Gigerian archetypes are very present in the design of creatures and monsters. The dominant model consists of beings that attack individually or in groups, hide in the darkness and feed on human flesh. They are also configured by combining elements taken from animal anatomies such as reptiles or insects and bone structures. These characteristics are referred to by critics as typical of the Gigeresque style. Another element that predominates in many films is the disturbing, gloomy and dark atmosphere, an ideal setting for developing plots based on terror and violence. Giger and his work are a source of inspiration for ideas and designs for this type of film.

Giger's influence on the film *The Matrix* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 1999), one of the most acclaimed films of recent times, can be seen in the special effects and production design. Yannak Sirrs, supervisor at the effects company Mannix Effects, comments: "We based ourselves on H.R. Giger's drawings, with a more aquatic look and emphasising the biomechanical nature of the landscapes, as in the sequence where the mechanical spiders harvest humans".<sup>331</sup> Biomechanical beings called *sentinels* appear, which are machines with tentacles and are very reminiscent of Giger's art. Other elements developed in this film refer to Giger, such as the vision of children connected by tubes to machines that suck the vital energy from their bodies in order to subjugate the human race. This idea is evident in many of Giger's works. The third instalment of *The Matrix*, *Matrix Revolutions* (Andy and Larry Wachowski, 2003) is perhaps the most inspired by Giger's work.

### 3.4.1. The *Alien* saga

The Alien tetralogy [*Alien* (1979), *Aliens* (1986), *Alien III* (1991) and *Alien Resurrection* (1997)] would not exist without Giger's worlds, on which the three films that complete the saga are based, developed from the concepts and morphologies proposed by Giger and his worlds in the first

<sup>331</sup> ALBORECA, Luis and DÍAZ MAROTO, Carlos. What is Matrix? *Stalker*, no. 6, Sept. 1999. Quoting Ángel Sala, FX of Matrix in *Imágenes de actualidad*, no. 182, June 1999, p.56.

film. A film has recently been released, *Alien versus Predator*, which is more of a mixture of the Alien saga and the Predator films.

The success of the film *Alien* in 1979 sparked a veritable phenomenon in popular culture in the 1980s, taking the media by storm and winning approval from a large sector of the film world. This success with audiences and critics led to a sequel years later, *Aliens* (1986), directed by James Cameron. A host of imitators and fans led to *Alien's* consolidation as a cult film within the genre, elevating its main designer, Giger, to pop star status, with commissions flooding in from sectors such as rock, art, graphic design, interior design, cinema and, more recently, tattoo art, and the creation of a true mythology around the monster and everything that has originated from the iconography and aesthetics of the film. As a result of this success, new films have been made, which now constitute a tetralogy and have transcended the world of comics. Since then, Giger and his gloomy biomechanical worlds have been an essential reference for a whole generation of artists and creators who have positively valued Giger's contribution to the contemporary art world. His ideas and designs have been sought after and imitated, so we can consider Giger the true architect of the biomechanical world that changed the look of science fiction films and the way we view the future, warning us of its complexities and follies.

One of the most significant aspects of the saga is its ability to reinterpret Giger's style and Gigeresque elements over and over again, generating new discourses and expanding the aesthetics of the Alien films. The biomechanical aesthetic combines beauty and terror with a sense of stylisation influenced by modernist lines and design. The realism and attention to visual detail, as well as the psychological effect created by the staging and the presence of the menacing creatures, are among the most valued qualities in these films, which have undoubtedly developed a whole style and a peculiar mode of production, focusing on psychological terror, costumes, fantastic imagery, the

construction of large sets in studios and film sets to shoot the sequences, and the introduction of special effects created by high-tech experts.

The importance and interest generated by the *Alien* films has even transcended the world of comics and the production of toys for adults, such as figures that recreate the aliens or spaceships.

It is surprising that after his acclaimed work on *Alien*, he did not participate in the films of the saga, except for a brief collaboration on *Alien III* (David Fincher, 1991). Other artists prefer to develop Giger's designs themselves, based on their own concepts of biomechanics and redesigning the alien world, as in *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986) and, more clearly, in *Alien Resurrection* (Jean Pierre Jeunet, 1997), both inspired by Giger's worlds.

### *Aliens*

Cameron's approach to the Alien world is different from Scott's, as he favours war and action cinema (in vogue in the 1980s) over the psychological horror proposed by the first film. At least the approach is original, as it does not copy the basic concept, but rather attempts to offer a personal vision, replacing the anguish of *Alien* with confrontation and action. In addition, the focus shifts to the race rather than a single monster, and the theory of its biological evolution is expanded by introducing the character of the alien queen.

Cameron came from the Corman factory and after the end of *Alien*, in which the Nostromo was destroyed, he had freedom in the creation of environments, characters and relationships between them. The only sacred element was the alien, in its previous forms. Giger's creatures were recycled; the rest were redesigned. Stan Winston was responsible for bringing the new aliens to life. The facehugger now had the ability to run and climb with its eight fingers. Cameron gave this creature a more prominent role. The original design was not modified, but it was given joints to make it more agile. Changes were also made to the aliens' suits. Now leotards would be used, covered in some

areas with rubber and plastic pieces. This allowed the actors greater freedom of movement, choreographing their movements to more closely resemble those of an insect. One of the greatest achievements in character creation was the design of a new protagonist, the Alien Queen, who was designed by Cameron himself, inspired by Giger's work, thus closing the cycle of the creature [420].

The concept of *cooconing* designed by Giger and filmed by Scott was not used in the first film. The adult alien places its victims in a kind of cocoon, depositing eggs or pods inside that consume the victim until the new alien is born. It would be taken up again and taken to its ultimate conclusion by Cameron. Cameron based his concepts on Giger's original designs.

While *Alien* focused on suspense and atmosphere, *Aliens* is dominated by action, becoming a war film in line with other productions of the time (*Rambo*, *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, etc.). It opts for explicitness and violence, including marines with all kinds of weapons (which barely appear in the first film).

### *Alien 3*

The third instalment of the series has traditionally been the most criticised of all, although the truth is that thanks to director David Fincher's visual style, he manages to prolong the tension and unease of the saga with the decadent and depressive air of the characters, as well as the mystical tone of the prison where the action takes place. The concept of the alien's physical characterisation is expanded by mixing it with other species, in this case the canine [421]. Problems with the script and its multiple rewrites<sup>332</sup> affected the film's final outcome.

### *Alien Resurrection*

Giger's eroticism is captured once again in *Alien Resurrection*, especially in the scene where Ripley manages to caress her captor. The

<sup>332</sup> See DÍAZ, Lorenzo F. *Aliens*. Alberto Santos ed., Madrid, 1997.

digital aliens are combined with animatronics using sophisticated hydraulics, radio control and other mechanical enhancements.

*Alien Resurrection* returns to the original designs, attempting to improve them: eggs, facehuggers, chestbursters, alien warriors, even the alien queen. According to Woddroff and Gillis, concept designers for the aliens, they made them more aggressive, their heads are longer, they tilt and turn more, they are more dynamic. For the designers, the key to the consistency of the *Alien Resurrection* designs is to stay within the limits set by Giger. In *Alien 3*, the colour and texture of the creature was changed because it was born from a dog. In this film, its DNA is not mixed with a human or a dog, but is the result of medical experiments.

Despite not having Giger on board, his influence was an important factor in the new creature designs; it is certainly evident in the alien lair, the *Viper's Nest*, which is heavily inspired by Giger's biomechanical landscapes: according to Woddroof, "it's as if an HR Giger painting has come to life and enveloped Ripley" <sup>333</sup>.

Chris Halls produced drawings and designs for the conceptual work on the *Newborn Alien* creature. He also carried out studies of Ripley's cloned embryos. In this scene, a failed embryonic creature from Ripley appears, clearly reminiscent of a figure from Giger's painting *The Magician* (1977) [210]. Another conceptual artist used was Sylvain Despretz, who illustrated the captives in the alien eggs, inspired by Giger's drawings for the same sequence in *Alien*.

Among the greatest achievements of *Alien Resurrection* in terms of artistic results is the computer animation of the aliens. Giger's credit did not appear in the theatrical release of *Alien Resurrection*, but it did appear on the VHS and DVD versions. The delay in the appearance of the credit is puzzling, as it had already occurred in other films. This has generated a great deal of criticism, starting with the artist and his agent, which can be found on Giger's website, in the *Alien Insurrection* section, and in various Internet forums.

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<sup>333</sup> JAMIESON, Stewart. Alien 4, Creature comforts. *Sfx*, no. 32, December 1997.

### *Alien 5*

Rumours about a new version are growing. There is talk of a script already in progress by Joss Whedon and of the project being offered to Ridley Scott, who is currently in vogue after his films *Gladiator* (2000) and *Hannibal* (2001). There is no doubt that, after pointing to Scott and Giger as the main architects of Alien's originality, and given the friendship between the two (see joint projects), the possibility of Giger returning to design for the Alien saga would gain strength. But in the end, neither of them will be involved in the new film.

### *Alien vs. Predator*

*Alien vs. Predator* was released in the US in the summer of 2004 (in Spain in November). After years of speculation and rumours about this film, shooting began in Prague in late 2003. The director finally chosen was Paul Anderson, a filmmaker specialising in science fiction (*Event Horizon* (1997), *Soldier* (1998), *Mortal Kombat* (1995)), whose work in adapting the video game *Resident Evil* (2002) to the big screen, or rather the commercial success of that film, made him the director of choice for the studios after Ridley Scott declined, preferring to direct *Alien 5*, a continuation of the saga he himself had started, rather than a *crossover* (mix) of films. But more than the weight of the film itself or the cinematic evolution of the characters, what has prevailed, as has been the case in recent years, is an adaptation of a successful comic book that is also a best-selling video game.

Hollywood has found a new way to exploit ideas. It is no longer necessary to be original, but rather to mix and remix something already seen. In this case, pitting two of the most iconic monsters of contemporary science fiction, Alien and Predator<sup>334</sup>, against each other. Let's be clear: an icon of fantasy cinema, Alien, against a monster born under the influence of the former. It is not the first

<sup>334</sup> It has actually exploited this formula in the past, but now it takes on a new meaning due to the merchandising that has emerged around the characters in the films, developed mainly in comics and video games. In 1942, he pitted Frankenstein against the Wolf Man (*Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*), then King Kong against Godzilla (*King Kong vs. Godzilla*, 1963), and in 1971, Frankenstein against Dracula (*Frankenstein vs. Dracula*).

This is not the first time this has happened, nor will it be the last. The experiment already took place in 2003 with Freddy Kruger versus Jason Vorhees, two icons of 1980s horror with their respective film sagas, who face off in the same film. Warner Bros. is already preparing another colossal confrontation, that of the two most famous comic book superheroes of all time, Superman versus Batman (which looks set to be directed by Wolfgang Petersen).

Dark Horse Comics published the comic *Alien vs. Predator* [424] in the 1990s, basing its characters on their cinematic counterparts. The series became a success and, consequently, in 1999, a division of Fox, Fox Interactive, created a video game, *Alien versus Predator*, which has already had a sequel. In this game, the user can play as an alien, a predator or a marine.

The original idea of pitting the two monsters against each other has its origins in the second Predator film, *Predator 2* (Stephen Hopkins, 1990). At the end of the film, an alien head is seen in the Predator's trophy room, giving rise to the idea of a hypothetical confrontation. The project has put on hold a future *Alien 5*, which would have starred Sigourney Weaver, who has been left out of this film, which focuses on young and unknown actors. In Anderson's words, "the film is designed as a sequel to the Predator films and a prequel to the Alien saga, so it does not contradict the philosophy of either series<sup>335</sup>." The film will mix concepts from previous films, especially the first two Alien films (Scott and Cameron) and the first Predator film.

The plot revolves around an archaeological expedition exploring a mysterious pyramid sunk beneath the Antarctic ice. The scientists will unwittingly activate a mechanism that will bring the predators back to their ancient ritual site to do battle.

According to Anderson, his idea is based in part on Ron Cobb's designs for the first film, *Alien*, which features a pyramid containing alien eggs and a room with hieroglyphics that seem to refer to an ancient culture. This concept fascinated the director and led him to develop a confrontation between alien cultures. Another inspiration for Anderson is the

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<sup>335</sup> WHITEHEAD, Dan. *Set visit. Alien vs. Predator* [online]. Chud.com [Date consulted: 26-11-2003]. Available at: <<http://www.chud.com/news/dec03/dec18avp.php3>>.

Aztec culture, as he sees reminiscences of this culture in the designs of the predators' ship, as well as in the designs of Frank Lloyd Wright. In addition to the video game that inspired the film, there are a dozen video games in different formats based on the characters from *Alien*, created since 1983 and frequently updated.



420-Alien Queen. *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986)



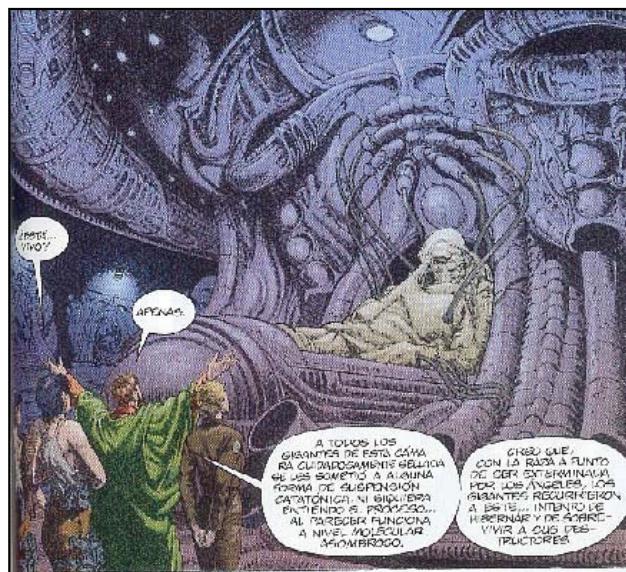
421-Alien 3 (David Fincher, 1991)



422-Predator (John McTiernan, 1987)



423-Patrick Tatopoulos. Designs for *Pitch Black* (2000)



424-Comic *Aliens Apocalypse* by Norma, issue no. 2 (2000).

### 3.5. The New Flesh: visions of the body in the postmodern era

During the 1980s, a film subgenre developed that falls within the framework of postmodern fantasy. A series of films and new filmmakers created new concepts and icons that shaped a different creative universe, in keeping with the sensibilities of their time. Science fiction and horror are the genres in which this body of films was developed, whose narratives propose a redefinition of the term '*human*' in stories in which the protagonists gradually deteriorate until they fall into the abyss. Their treatment of the human body and the iconography of flesh in the technological age shapes a new genre. David Cronenberg and Clive Barker are two of the filmmakers with the most coherent filmographies in this regard, whose films reflect personal worlds and obsessions, which is why a certain authorship and style is recognised in their works, making them pillars of this genre.

Both filmmakers synthesise in their work a series of influences and contributions from other creators who visionarily addressed similar issues and concepts in their work. In addition to Giger, avant-garde comic book artists and science fiction writers such as Philip K. Dick sowed the seeds for new sensations. Another science fiction writer, James G. Ballard, published a series of novels in the early 1970s, among which *Crash* (1973) stands out. This apocalyptic story develops new ideas about the relationship between sex and machines, between the weak body and the heavy metal of cars, establishing suggestive metaphors between sex and death enveloped by technological landscapes<sup>336</sup>. It is not surprising that Cronenberg took the risk of making the film adaptation of *Crash* in 1996, a work that Ballard himself described as "the first pornographic novel based on technology".

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<sup>336</sup>Ballard comments in his prologue to *Crash*: "Science and technology are multiplying around us. Increasingly, they dictate the language in which we think and speak." BALLARD, James G. *Crash*. Minotauro, Barcelona, 1996, p. 10. This type of reasoning is common in Giger's work, which relates technoscience to sex and death in his plastic fusions of elements.

H. R. Giger's relationship with the sensibility and philosophy of New Flesh is marked by his pioneering creations within this new artistic discourse and by the parallels we find with other great architects of this creative movement, which he has influenced. Giger's biomechanics constitute a decisive style and concept in the configuration of this postmodern sensibility, as his work raised discourses and ideas that would be explored by other creators from the 1980s onwards. Giger's world provides an inexhaustible repertoire of ideas for artists working with postmodern bodily themes and the figure of the monster in particular. Giger's flesh is sickly and combined with greasy, rusty metal, suggesting metaphors for the inexorable passage of time in post-industrial society. Giger depicts evil, sinister beings, like cancer, related to bodily fragmentation and its restoration in biomechanical matter.

Giger participates alongside contemporary creators such as David Cronenberg, Clive Barker, and Joel-Peter Witkin, among others, in a new aesthetic and conceptual sensibility that has led them to cultivate a new form of plastic beauty based on the abject<sup>337</sup> in recent decades. This term, used in the wake of Julia Kristeva's theories, has had a profound impact on contemporary criticism. The abject defines that which lies at the physiological boundaries of the body and provokes revulsion and disgust when contemplated. The iconography of abjection is made up of fluids and substances that are released from the body, such as blood, saliva, semen, vomit and other viscous substances that cause the alteration of the ideal human body. The abject has been a frequent theme in the culture and art of the last two decades, through atrocious and devastating visions of the human condition such as bodily degradation, monstrosity and carnal degeneration<sup>338</sup>, reflecting fears and obsessions that have haunted mankind for centuries. From an audiovisual point of view, this subgenre is where the theme of postmodern abjection has been most forcefully represented. Giger's paintings, Cronenberg's films, Witkin's photographs and the texts of

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<sup>337</sup> See KRISTEVA, Julia, *Powers of Perversion*, Siglo XXI, Madrid/Mexico City, 1988.

<sup>338</sup> See CORTÉS, José Miguel G. *Op. cit.*

Barker constitute a set of visions and images that subscribe to this sensibility.

Giger's investigations into the body and flesh and their relationship with science and technology are shared by Canadian filmmaker David Cronenberg. Film critics have considered Cronenberg to be the architect of the birth of this genre known as the *New Flesh*, coined by one of the phrases uttered by the protagonist of his film *Videodrome* (1982): "Long live the new flesh." The development of bodily iconography and the problems of human beings as a product of the technical-scientific revolution are one of the basic driving forces behind Cronenberg's cinema. For Cronenberg, as we see in Giger, electronic media and mechanical devices are not so much extensions of man as agents of perverse mutations. Therefore, they approach the subject with a dark view of technological advances. Furthermore, the physical transformations of organic matter fused with mechanics give rise in their works to new beings, usually deformed and monstrous. Both develop a new teratology based on encounters between the past and the future, relating ancestral fears to present-day problems that arise in failed experiments, malformations, the consequences of drug use and technological manipulation.

*Videodrome* is the culminating work of Cronenberg's first creative period <sup>339</sup>. Gigeresque images are evident in this film: in the use of sexual iconography, such as the vaginal shape that emerges from the stomach, or in the biomechanical transformation of the hand into a phallic gun that forms part of the organism and is connected by cables [425]. This image alludes to various paintings by Giger from the 1970s, such as *The Way of the Magician* (1976), in which weapons appear as prostheses, incorporated into the body in place of arms, or as in his biomechanical children and other monsters (machine guns, rifles and pistols, demonstrating the aggressive nature of his creatures). This fusion of flesh and technology is a constant feature of Giger's airbrush work. Cronenberg and make-up artist Rick Baker

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<sup>339</sup> See GONZÁLEZ-FIERRO SANTOS, José Manuel, *David Cronenberg. La Estética de la Carne*, Nuer, Madrid, 1999.

also used the biomechanical look to create the flesh television in *Videodrome* [426].

The symbiosis of metallic elements and organic forms and the transformation of natural forms into mechanical ones, as if they were spreading diseases, are Gigerian elements that Cronenberg shares in his films, as well as other iconographic elements such as intestines, viscera, orifices, viscous substances, sexual organs, and organic machines made of flesh and metal. We find another example of a biomechanical object in the fighting typewriters in *Naked Lunch* (1991), a fusion of mechanics and insects, another frequent association in Giger's works. *Der Existenz* (1998) feature elements such as bioports and wiring that serve to connect man with machine. This iconography was proposed by Giger in 1967 in his ink drawings. Both authors even share a fascination with medical instruments and the fantasies they generate. Several of Giger's paintings allude to technological birthing machines that use the female body and its fragmentation to harness its energy. In *Dead Ringers* (1988), the gynaecological device devised by the Mantel brothers has something of this enigmatic aesthetic, a motif that is also alluded to in the film's presentation and credits.

The development of biomechanical figuration in Giger's paintings, in which metal structures grow like plants and other biological organisms, is echoed in the ideas of early Cronenberg, who was concerned with the spread of disease as if it were an uncontrolled virus causing processes of degeneration and bodily decay. Films such as *Shivers* (1975) and *Rabid* (1977) deal with these issues, which Cronenberg describes as mechanisms of destruction of bodily plasticity, such as *uncontrollable flesh*.

Cosmetic surgery alters human flesh, retouching and transforming the body, attacking its nature. In his quest to improve, to live longer and better, and to enjoy greater comforts in social and domestic life, man embarks on this unbridled race in search of a new race, in which the union of man and machines is real and palpable. Giger is concerned

concerned about the perverse manipulations of these technologies and sees the emergence of a cybernetic race, in which man carries implants that improve his sensory qualities. However, he observes the misuse of these advances and inventions, which degenerate into monsters and atrocities full of terror and pain. According to Giger, his world is dominated by negative news over positive, catastrophes, wars, violence and torture<sup>340</sup>. This feeling leads him to represent an apocalyptic vision of our society and to glimpse a future with a multitude of dangers lurking for human beings, such as genetic manipulation, viruses, sexual assault, mass murder, children of war, disease and endless *bad vibes* that are seen every day in the world and affect us in one way or another. This sinister vision predominates in his work, which is why his expression is dominated by macabre themes and unusual representations that affect human beings.

One of the most influential authors in shaping this new sensibility is the British writer Clive Barker. Like Giger, he is a multifaceted creator, primarily a writer, and has been involved in the film industry as a screenwriter, director and producer, as well as producing interesting graphic work. Barker has explored the fantasy genre, delving into the mysterious and the fear of the unknown, emphasising physical terror in his most important literary work, *Books of Blood* (1984). In creating the Cenobite mythology that features in his best-known film work, *Hellraiser* (1987), he uses Gigerian references to create some of the new icons of fantasy cinema. The demonic figure of *Pinhead* [427] is reminiscent of Giger's cover for the band Magma (*Attahk*, 1977) [215] and other biomechanical archetypes. Barker found inspiration in Giger's pictorial world, sharing a fascination with his monsters and punk iconography. Black leather, screws, pins, straps, chains, blades and nails are part of the symbolism used by Barker to draw the viewer/reader into unhealthy atmospheres dominated by

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<sup>340</sup> "No, I don't like to hear the news, it makes me panic. It doesn't give me good feelings. But I create my works with that bad (negative) feeling. If someone asks me why my paintings appear so terrifying, dangerous and creepy, I always answer that one day the world could be like that. I think the era we live in is the best," says Giger in an interview with Debbie Harry and Chris Stein in *H.R. Giger's Necronomicon II*, *Op. cit.* p. 36.

unease. It is no coincidence that Barker declares himself an admirer of Giger in several texts and wrote the introduction to the latest edition of *Giger's Necronomicon*<sup>341</sup>. The cover Giger created for singer Debbie Harry's album *Koo Koo* (1981) is another example of the use of this iconography (she is depicted as a punk queen, with her face pierced by acupuncture needles) and is one of the genre's most iconic compositions. Examples of pierced bodies are numerous in Giger's paintings, such as *Illuminatus I* (1978). This type of imagery is not new, but it is treated in a massive and modern way from a conceptual point of view; images of pierced flesh are abundant in Western religious iconography, from the crucifixion to the martyrdoms and tortures of saints, such as Saint Sebastian, who suffers pierced by arrows. Punk aesthetics emerged in the 1970s as a fashion imposed by a musical style derived from urban rock, led by groups such as the Sex Pistols and characterised by their aggression against the system and their radical image: spikes, nails, chains, mohawks, leather, safety pins, needles...

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<sup>341</sup> In the introduction, Barker notes: "Giger has one of the most original visions in late 20th-century art." *H.R. Giger's Necronomicon*. *Op. cit.*



425-426- *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1982)

Giger and Barker use the human body as a canvas, where marks or tattoos can be made, tearing and fracturing it to penetrate its interior. The body becomes a sinister-looking corpse. Mark Dery points out that the tradition of *cyberhorror* dates back to the work of Giger and *Hellraiser*<sup>342</sup> and that it is a reference point for heavy metal and industrial rock bands, which highlight the connections between this genre and this aesthetic in pop culture. These types of infernal characters are influential in modern cinema and are evoked in various films such as *Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998) [428-429], which features dark beings, the *occult*, who participate in the iconography of the Cenobite universe with leather suits with buckles and straps that hide their cadaverous bodies. Other psychopaths in postmodern fantasy have much in common with this cybernetic horror, in which piercings, tattoos and bodily pain form a whole philosophy and ritual<sup>343</sup>.

Through the use of special effects in their films, Cronenberg and Barker have created a new visual discourse that is far removed from the aesthetics of mainstream cinema. With their shocking images, they seek to reformulate our sensibilities; they not only want to present a new morphology of flesh through its manipulation, but also to evoke new sensations in the viewer. The film *Hellraiser* serves as an example of this philosophy: it seeks to redefine the limits of pleasure and pain (as in *Crash*) as new sensations in a highly controlled world. Its mission is to explore new forms of expression by recreating the inner landscapes of human beings. In this way, they construct new forms of bodily transgression.

The influence of New Flesh can be seen in the cinematography of the late 1980s and 1990s, as observed in the cult film *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (1989) [430-431] by Japanese director Shinya Tsukamoto, which revisits the figure of the cyborg as a synthetic entity made up of organic elements that can absorb objects of flesh and metal, thereby revaluing its body. The film also abounds in mechanoerotic elements and male phallic symbolism, so present in Giger's work.

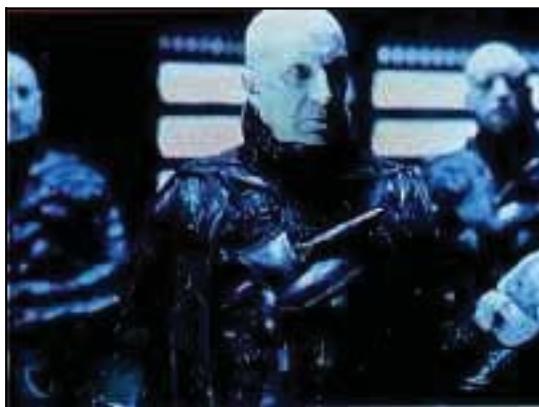
<sup>342</sup> DERY, Mark. *Op. cit.*, p. 94.

<sup>343</sup>Recent films have used this apocalyptic iconography, such as *Strangeland* (John Pieplow, 1998), *The Cell* (Tarsem Singh, 2000) and *Ghosts of Mars* (John Carpenter, 2001).

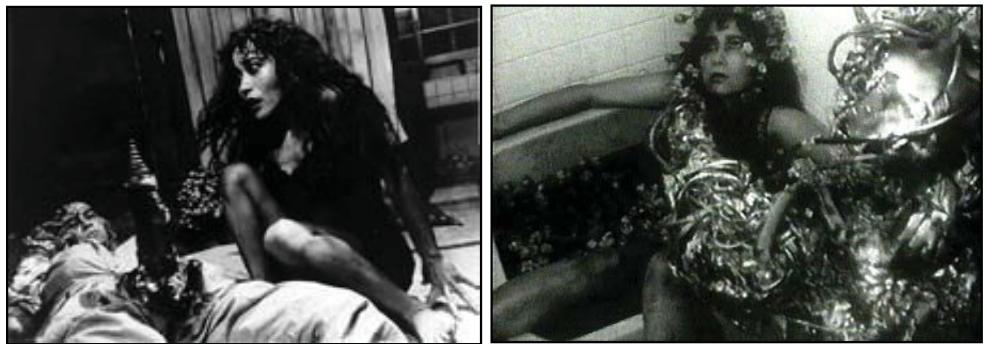
Giger's Tetsuo and the *Biomechanoids* are connected to Ballard's ideas, demonstrating that technological modernity offers no protection against psychological maladies such as desires, dreams, or dissatisfaction. These works reveal the sinister nature of machines as a visionary example of the complex relationships of cyberspace, such as the body/mind and body/machine relationships. These reflections can also be seen in the world of music videos, with the creation of sinister scenes in which the body is attacked and torn apart as if it were hated, as can be seen in the provocative video that the techno-rock group Nine Inch Nails made to illustrate their song *Happiness in Slavery* (1992) [432].



427-*Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987)



428-429-*Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998)



430-431-Tetsuo: *The Iron Man* (Shinya Tsukamoto, 1989)



432-Nine Inch Nails. *Happiness in Slavery* (1992)

### 3.6. Literature

Giger's work has influenced various areas of the literary world. Several writers have referred to Giger in their works, citing him as a tribute, as in the case of William Gibson and Joe Pulver. In other cases, his paintings have been used to illustrate the work of established writers, with the fantasy and science fiction genres showing clear signs of his influence. In addition, some comics reflect features of biomechanical structures, such as those in the Alien series.

#### 3.6.1. The cyberpunk movement

Giger is undoubtedly one of the most influential artists in cyberpunk culture, a socio-cultural phenomenon that took shape in the 1980s and consolidated in the 1990s. Futuristic projection and the impact of technology are two of its basic premises, which suggest that they will continue to shape topics of study in this new century.

This term, which emerged as a label for a literary subgenre formed by a new wave of young science fiction writers, spread to all cultural manifestations of the 1980s: art, cinema, music and, ultimately, popular culture, on which computers have had and continue to have a decisive influence. "In the mid-1980s, a small group of writers emerged within Anglo-Saxon science fiction, who were untimely dubbed cyberpunks. From there, the movement expanded its influence exponentially, basing its aesthetic on a stark description of the problems of our reality, its unreasonableness and the possibility of questioning the idea of Progress that has led us to our dystopian present"<sup>(344)</sup>.

At its origins are two important cultural references: on the one hand, some science fiction writers, such as Ballard and P.K. Dick, among others, who delved into the description of decadent and dark futures in the

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<sup>344</sup> MORENO, Horacio. *Cyberpunk: más allá de Matrix*. Barcelona, Círculo Latino, 2003

that technologies play a dominant role over the human race, giving rise to a new sensibility; on the other hand, a series of artists explored new iconography and new forms of expression in a graphic manner, such as the French illustrators Moebius, Druillet and Mézières, or Giger himself. The transfer of ideas and concepts between art, cinema and literature will create a new sensibility that will take shape in the 1970s and give rise to what we know as the cyberpunk movement, a concept that reflects the arrival of the computer age in society, the great era of computers. But as great advances were made in the field of science and technology, a feeling of pessimism and panic invaded society, creating tension and insecurity due to the danger of machines, the attempt to elevate the human race to the status of gods, the unpleasant dangers of genetic experiments and cloning, the growing control and dependency created by computers, the impact that the imminent arrival of artificial intelligence may have, and a host of other problems and controversies. Furthermore, if we analyse the 20th century, we find a period of destruction and barbarism unlike anything ever experienced by humankind.

Since his artistic beginnings, Giger has explored the relationships between biology and technology, between the organic and the inorganic, rewriting forms and concepts. The truth is that the influence of his art on cyberpunk culture has made him a cult artist for lovers of cinema, comics, tattoos and, of course, painting and drawing.

Giger's visions are innovative because his treatment is novel; he touches on problems that will arise in the future, such as cloning and robotics, which are seen in our time as creators of dystopias, that is, producing intentional alterations and fantasies that range from the morbid to the putrid, with an organic touch that makes his style easy to associate with his work.

## Cyberpunk

The neologism cyberpunk first appeared as the title of a novel by Bruce Bethke in 1980 and was published in 1983 in *Amazing Stories* magazine. The term became popular after an article by critic Gardner Dozois published in 1984 in the *Washington Post* discussed new trends in science fiction.<sup>345</sup>

The cyberpunk movement is an artistic trend that emerged strongly in the 1980s, but has its roots in the previous decade. Its theoretical foundations include certain philosophical and sociological reflections on the role of new technologies in the computer age and the role of man in this revolution. This movement initially brought together a group of American science fiction writers led by William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. Gibson's novel *Neuromancer* (1984) is considered by critics to be the cornerstone of this literary subgenre. In it, the term cyberspace is defined as a virtual place that exists inside computer monitors. Subsequently, the term defines an entire aesthetic that ranges from cinema to fashion and a series of artists (multimedia, video art, literature, music, painting and illustration) who champion this form of postmodern expression. Recurring themes in this new sensibility include bodily modification through technology and all its iconography (tattoos, piercings, mutations, implants, cyborgs), as well as the relationship with the Internet and techno/sadomasochistic fetishism (visual arts and music). It is currently an international artistic movement, with artists and authors in different countries. The most notable feature is the presentation of a future world dominated by corporate entities in which human beings are so influenced by technology that they carry implants and other devices inside their own bodies.

Cyberpunk bears some similarities in its approach to characteristics of Giger's work, especially in its characters, who are mainly beings equipped with mechanical implants and components.

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<sup>345</sup> DERY, Mark, *Op. cit.*, p. 79.

through which they enhance their abilities. The poster for the film *Future Kill* [205] could be an archetype of the cyberpunk character. In Gibson's book *Virtual Light*,<sup>346</sup> there is a dialogue in a tattoo shop of the future that pays tribute to Giger's influence on the cultural spectrum, alluding to his style as an example for tattoo motifs:

- *Lowell... has a Giger.*
- *Giger?...*
- *A painter. Nineteenth century or something. Very classic. Bio-mec. Lowell has a Giger on his back, a copy of a painting called "N.Y.C. XXIX".*
- *Chevette said x, x, i, v. It's like this city. Everything is hazy and dark. But he wants sleeves that match, so we've been coming to look at other Gigers.*

What was fiction in 1984 became reality in the 1990s, with the emergence of a tattoo style called biomechanical or *techno tattooing*, in which the main reference is Giger's iconography and aesthetics.

### 3.6.2. Illustration of novels

His images have illustrated books by Sade, Lovecraft and Leary. Giger's iconography is well suited to the texts of Lovecraft, which inspired the Swiss artist in his day. The relationship between Giger and Lovecraft has continued with Giger's illustrations being used as covers for the American writer's books. In the 1990s, the Madrid-based publisher EDAF published a series of books that made up the 'Lovecraft Library' [433-434]. The covers of all of them feature illustrations by Giger:

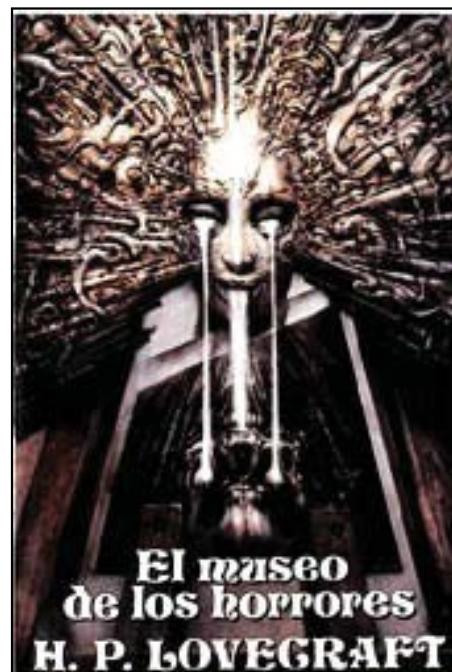
<i>Supernatural Horror in Literature and Other Writings.</i>	Li II (1975)
<i>The Museum of Horrors.</i>	<i>Spiegelbild</i> (1977)
<i>The Night-Haunted Sea and Other Unpublished Writings.</i>	<i>Alien</i> <i>Hieroglyphics</i>
(1978)	
<i>Those Who Lurk in the Abyss.</i>	<i>Necronom IV</i> (1976)

<sup>346</sup> GIBSON William, *Virtual Light*. Minotauro, Barcelona, 1994, p. 236

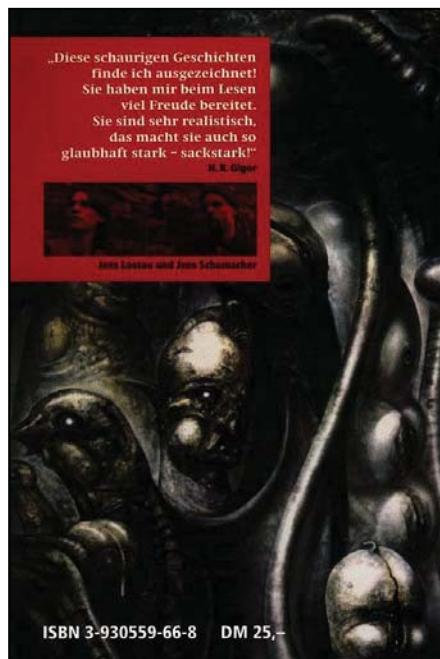
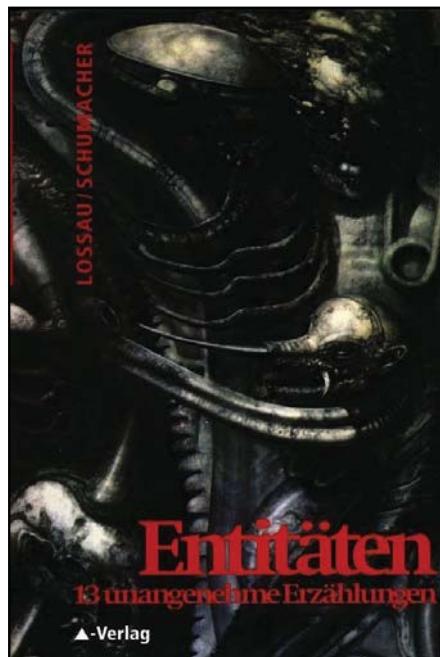
<i>The Intruder and Other Fantastic Tales.</i>	<i>Poltergeist II (1985)</i>
<i>The Call of Cthulhu and Other Tales of Darkness.</i>	<i>Katarakt (1977)</i>
<i>The Dunwich Horror and Other Tales from the Cthulhu Mythos.</i>	<i>Jericho (1987)</i>
<i>The Whisperer in Darkness.</i>	Cover by E L & P.

In 1982, a book by Frank Herbert was published in Munich, *Der Gottkaiser des Wüstenplaneten*, with colour illustrations by Giger that he created for the first *Dune* project. In 1988, a 10-volume edition of A. Crowley, Lovecraft and T. Leary was published with motifs by Giger.

In 1997, the book *Entitäten: 13 unangenehme Erzählungen* (*Entities: 13 Unpleasant Stories*) was published in Mainz (Germany). These are stories by two German writers, Jens Lossau and Jens Schumacher, in the fantasy genre (horror and science fiction). Giger's airbrush painting entitled *Nationalpark I* (1975) is reproduced, divided into sections to accompany the stories [435-436].



433-434-Covers for the *Lovecraft Library* series



435-436-Cover and back cover of *Entitäten* (1997)

### 3.7. Body art. Biomechanical tattooing

The biomechanical style, coined by Giger and expressed visually in his paintings and drawings, has been transplanted to the art of tattooing. This artistic expression, with a tradition dating back thousands of years and deeply rooted in various cultures, has taken on a new prominence since the emergence of pop culture in the 1960s.

This form of expression, as old as cave paintings, offers different interpretative possibilities given its variety of forms and its presence in ancient cultures (Egypt, Rome) and in civilisations in exotic latitudes (Japanese, Maori). Given the multitude of meanings and styles, the common feature is that it is a decorative art in which the canvas is replaced by human skin, which becomes the bearer of marks, symbols and images that in most cases respond to religious beliefs and profound meanings. Tattooing is a permanent commitment, since more than a mere skin mark, it represents an ideology or philosophy. The need to decorate the body is universal, and tattooing, due to its permanent nature, represents a subversive and defiant attitude. The fascination with this art is evident in the younger generations, who easily identify with a sign, a character or a drawing. In recent decades, pop culture has promoted this plague of images and symbols, giving many of them a magical character.

Following the release of the film *Alien* and the publication of Giger's illustrated book *The Necronomicon*, artistic biomechanics spread throughout the United States, where Giger's work became known. Some tattoo artists found Giger's images aesthetically appealing and used them as a source of inspiration to develop their own artistic parameters. In this way, they began to develop an iconography of mechanical and technological elements that they combined and adapted to the expressive possibilities of human skin, on which they drew cables, tubes, motors, metal parts, wires, or a combination of all these elements. This style, also known as biomechanical or techno, appeared in the mid-1980s and spread in the 1990s in

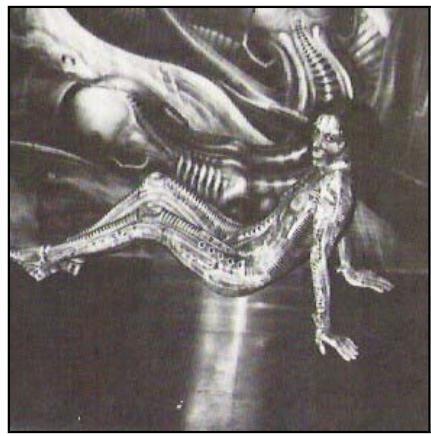
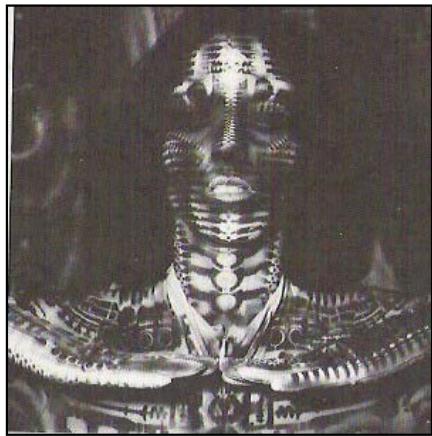
various conventions and magazines that illustrate bodies with this type of tattoo. Giger's face [440] has also been depicted as a tribute to the inspiration behind the style that many of these tattoo artists are truly fascinated by. As Giger says, they are his most unconditional fans, as they wear his works on their skin for others to see on a continuous basis.

### Body art

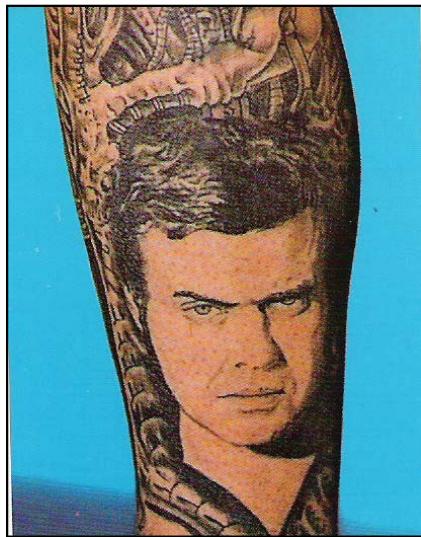
As background to this style, it should be noted that Giger painted on the human body on several occasions, using it as a medium on which to express his anatomical research. He first used his partner Li as a model, painting her first in ink and then with an airbrush, achieving surprising and striking results [8]. Later, he painted other models using stencils to highlight anatomical parts, as in many of the figures that appear in his paintings, which feature decorations that look like tattoos [437-439]. Giger is fascinated by tattoo artists because they are able to work directly on the skin with precision and accuracy. There are numerous references to this in film and literature.

Biomechanical tattooing is one of the most extreme cases of admiration for an artist. Never before has someone's work provoked such a profound response of enthusiasm from fans who engrave this artist's motifs and works in ink on their own skin. It is permanent, literally transferring the work from the canvas to the skin as a medium. This was uncommon in other eras and has now spread as a phenomenon among groups of young people. Others take motifs and copy them onto their skin. There are tattoo artists who assimilate the influence into their own style and transform it into a new one with roots in biomechanical tattooing.

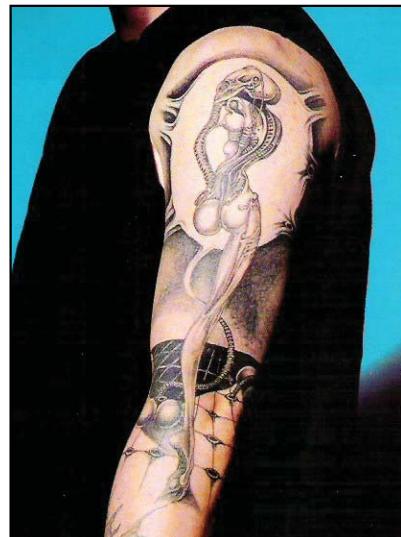
Biomechanical tattooing combines an obsession with body iconography, tribal concepts and a certain mysticism. This has given rise to a trend known as "modern primitives", an urban culture that wears these tattoos and consumes certain types of cinema, music and fashion. Tattooing has become a way of singularising the body, which involves pain, as in an initiation ceremony. It has a very important mystical and fetishistic component.



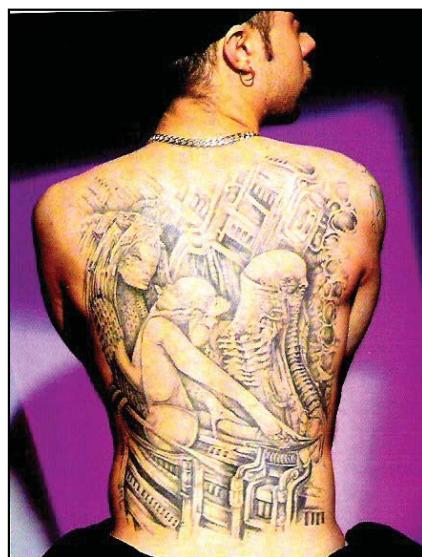
437-439-*Leotard art*. Model painted by Giger (1981)



440-Tattoo by Elio España (1995)



441-Tattoo by R. Hoelzer (1996)



442-Tattoo by Andrea Elston (1996)

### 3.8 Music. Music video aesthetics

Giger's connections to the world of rock have been constant since the beginning of his career. The graphic design reflected in the images in his books, posters and album covers has also generated a certain fascination with Giger in music culture. Symphonic rock, punk, heavy metal and electronic music cultures have requested his designs, and different musical trends have adhered to Giger's aesthetics. Giger's relationship with music stems from the artist's own vocation, as in his youth he wanted to be a jazz musician and played the saxophone and piano. A style as striking as biomechanical art was bound to attract the attention of musical groups seeking to enhance their image with innovative designs and create new aesthetics. Throughout his career, he has designed more than a dozen album covers, directed music videos, and created masks and accessories such as a microphone stand for the band *Korn*.

Not only has he influenced the aesthetics of rock, but his paintings also inspire the musical creations of electronic and industrial rock bands such as *Skinny Puppy* and *Front Line Assembly*. The music video for the technorock band *Nine Inch Nails*, *Happiness in Slavery* (1992) [432], reflects Giger's impact on underground and cyberpunk culture and is a paradigm of late 20th-century techno-eroticism: it depicts a sadomasochistic relationship combining mechanics, sex and torture with the penetration and destruction of the human body from a pornographic perspective. It is an erotic mechanical machine that turns the body into waste, describing one of the fears of cyberculture: the obsolescence of the body. Giger inaugurated the tradition of cyberhorror in contemporary culture, cultivated by these groups and by artists such as Clive Barker. Viscous substances, semen, worms and organic decay were used by Giger in his airbrush paintings as iconographic elements full of symbolic meaning. The image of creatures enslaved by machines is very present in contemporary visual culture and in Giger's paintings such as *Stillbirth Machine* (1976), *Birthmachine* (1967) and the airbrush series *Erotomechanics* (1980).

There are a number of bands with tendencies close to heavy metal and trash metal that share Giger's aesthetic and his adoration of the monstrous and skulls as aesthetic motifs. The bands for which he designed album covers also have an obvious admiration for Giger's work. Giger's aesthetic is closely related to music and fascinates these bands, for whom Giger is a cult figure. In fact, popular rock bands such as Marilyn Manson and the German band Rammstein recently visited Giger to meet him and admire his work up close, undoubtedly seeking inspiration.

Some musicians have even collaborated closely with Giger himself on their compositions, as in the case of the German Peter Frohmader.

Shine is the pseudonym used by the musician Schahram. Together with other musicians, he developed the *Shine* project, the result of which is the concept album *In the Centre*. Its characteristic feature is the process of immersion and blending with the music, to listen and feel, uniting human existence with sound. To record the album, the natural voices were unfamiliarised, becoming pieces that would create new sound structures. The lyrics arise spontaneously during recording and create a certain atmosphere that becomes a fundamental part of the recording. The compositions *Biomechanics* and *The Primitive Creature* are musical transpositions of Giger's paintings of the same name. When Schahram read Wolfgang Hausmann's article in the book *Giger's Necronomicon II*, he decided to transform some of Giger's paintings into music. He was particularly inspired by the following passage:

H.R. Giger masters the hierarchy of light and *backlighting* in a way that no artist before him has ever done. He conducts an orchestra of the most delicate lights and shadows, as well as broad patches and deep darkness. No one has written the music for this marvellous orchestra until <sup>now</sup>.

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<sup>347</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 2-10-2002] Available at: <<http://www.hrgiger.com>>.

## Music video

Giger directed two music videos for Blondie around 1980, coinciding with the cover designs for the album released that same year by singer Debbie Harry, the result of a friendship forged through successive trips to North America.

Singer Michael Jackson has a music video that was screened at Disney theme parks in North America from 1986 onwards and later in Tokyo and Paris, entitled *Captain Eo*, produced by George Lucas and directed by Francis Ford Coppola. The special effects were created by Industrial Light & Magic. It is a 17-minute 3D video in which the lyrics of the song allude to aliens. The aesthetic of the costume worn by one of the main characters in the video, played by actress Angelica Huston, is based on the concept of biomechanics [443].



443-Michael Jackson's music video, *Captain Eo* (1986)

### 3.9. Other fields: graphic design, comics, short films, animation

Video game: *Darkseed*

Biomechanical aesthetics have transcended the world of video games and, with it, the world of entertainment. *Dark Seed* (1994) [444] is the title of the first computer game based on Giger's imagery. The American company Cyberdreams decided to transfer Giger's world to a computer game to create a parallel world known as the "World of Darkness". Giger's biomechanics provide the look for a race of aliens who seek to destroy the real world. The protagonist, a science fiction writer named Mike Dawson, lives in an old Victorian house and suffers from headaches and nightmares. The parallel world is inhabited by an alien race called "The Old Ones". Mike discovers a portal to access the World of Darkness through a mirror and finds out that his headaches are caused by an alien embryo implanted in his head by the Old Ones. The game consists of guiding Mike through this world and managing to destroy the implant.

Due to the success of the video game, a sequel was created years later, *Darkseed II* [445], which was again inspired by Giger's aesthetics. This new game has higher graphic quality obtained with photorealistic techniques, so that Giger's works are better reproduced [446]. In this story, the protagonist Mike Dawson once again faces the ancients, who have a new plan to destroy humanity. The game won an award in the United States. Cyberdreams also created the *Hr Giger screensaver* and possibly intended to adapt the film *Species* into a video game.

In recent years, this field has undergone significant development, and many artistic and creative sectors are involved in the configuration of games. Many of them create their settings and scenery with sinister atmospheres, populated by monsters and malevolent creatures, which are very reminiscent of Giger's atmospheres and scenography.

## Digital animation

In addition, his work has been reinterpreted in recent years by digital animation artists, such as in the American animated short film *The Spell of Sixtina* (1998, Mark Kyle), in which the painting *Spell* appears superimposed on the ceiling of an imaginary building. This painting is reconstructed using rendering and 3D effects. Even more interesting is a German short film entitled *Walking with Giger* (2001), with incredible morphing effects. Some audiovisual creators have experimented with 3D techniques based on his motifs and images.

Other artistic expressions such as graphic design, applied for example to the decoration of cars and motorcycles, have been inspired by Giger's work.

## The Giger guitar: Gigerstein

Chris Stein, the musician from Blondie, commissioned Lieber Instruments to create an instrument based on Giger's art. After luthier Tom Lieber thoroughly studied Giger's style, he used the concept of the alien's hand design to place it on the guitar's headstock. Following a meeting between Lieber, Stein and Giger himself, the necessary modifications were made for the final finish. The body of the guitar is biomechanical and asymmetrical, made of wood with bronze inlays [447-448].

## Television

Giger has been the subject of several documentaries and television programmes. Notable examples include Robert Kopuit's report, *Die Traumwelt H.R. Gigers* (The Dream World of H.R. Giger, 1981) and Alex Bohr's *Das Phantastischen Universum H.R. Giger* (The Fantastic Universe of H.R. Giger, 1986).

Giger has appeared on several Swiss television programmes such as *Benissimo*. This is a programme in which contestants can win a million and which often features artists. The aim is sometimes to give a

comprehensive explanation for the public about paintings and works by artists such as Dalí, Warhol and Picasso. The first Swiss artist invited was Giger, and a six-minute video was produced in which his paintings were brought to life by actors and moving figures. It had a choreographed arrangement and a three-dimensional aspect that featured Giger's collaboration.

Giger starred in a 15-minute Swiss short film, *Debilita's* (Psyko Muus and Claudia Rindler, 2002), in which he plays a madman in a straitjacket. The short film has a cyberpunk and hallucinatory aesthetic. He also played an oracle in a video montage by the Swiss art group Com & Com, who made a kind of "Making of", a fake documentary about a film based on the figure of William Tell that was never made.

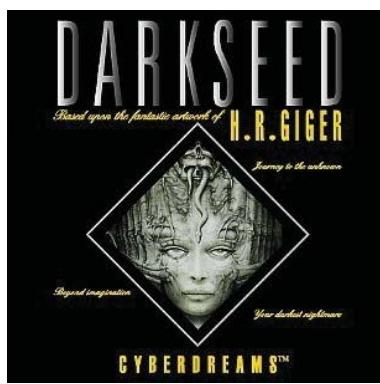
## Comics

The influence of *Alien* is evident in the world of comics, as stated by Randy Stradley, editor of Dark Horse Comics, which since 1988 has published a dozen comics based on the *Alien* saga: "One of the most interesting aspects of the creature is that it lends itself to various artistic interpretations, and many artists delve into it and work with it (...). Much of the success of the *Alien* film series is due to Giger's original designs. They are so elegant, beautiful and horrible that they have been copied many times, but no one has surpassed them. There is always that fear of the unknown in people, and Giger has given it a very effective face" <sup>(348)</sup>. Dark Horse has recently been specialising in the creation of comics that open up new thematic avenues for film series such as *Predator*, *Aliens* and *Terminator*. A new addition to the Spanish market in this editorial line is *Aliens Sacrifice*, written by Peter Mulligan and illustrated by Paul Johnson. The work shows that H. R. Giger's monstrous creation has far surpassed the stardom that Lieutenant Ripley enjoyed in the three films <sup>(349)</sup>.

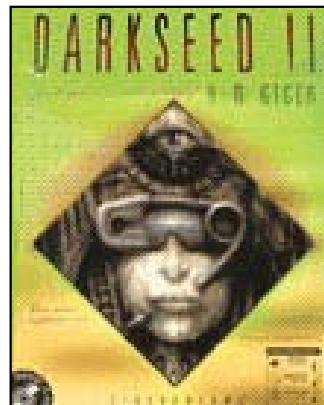
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<sup>348</sup> [Online], [date consulted: 4-12-2003] Available at: <<http://www.hrgiger.com/alien4a.htm>>.

<sup>349</sup> VIDAL, Jaume. Comics open up new storylines to continue Star Wars. *El País*, 9 August 1994.



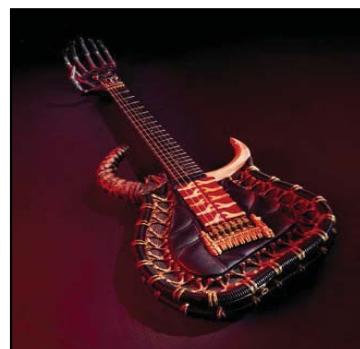
444-Cover of *Darkseed* (1994)



445-Cover of *Darkseed II* (1995)



446-Darkseed



447-448-Gigerstein (1998)

## CONCLUSIONS

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As we have pointed out on numerous occasions, Giger's work has given rise to a multitude of interpretations and opinions ranging from the strictly artistic to the psychological, due to the various levels of interpretation that can be established. It provokes fascination due to its futuristic aesthetics, the impact of its images, the artistic quality of its technique, the particular themes it chooses, and its profound exploration of human existence and its vicissitudes. At the same time, the contemplation of his paintings produces in some people incomprehension, unease, rejection and repulsion, due to the treatment of certain themes or his artistic approach. His work is a continuous evolution towards a mode of reproduction of his subconscious, of his inner world influenced by various aesthetic and iconographic constants such as his particular obsessions.

Already in the 1960s, his work had a notable impact on Swiss cultural circles, with his first exhibitions and the distribution of posters and lithographs of his works. In the 1970s, he was a famous figure in Zurich, quoted and interviewed by the press, whose work was featured in the country's leading galleries and museums. Following the international success of the film *Alien*, a paradoxical situation arose: on the one hand, he was acclaimed and recognised throughout the world (Europe, America and Japan) as one of the most original and innovative artists of recent times, bringing new life to the art world and possessing powerful creative potential; on the other hand, some sectors of the official cultural establishment viewed his continued collaboration with Hollywood critically, vetoing the entry of his works into their most important museums. There are also certain artistic sectors that reject the airbrush technique as a means of expression, associating it with advertising or car painting. At the heart of this debate should also be the rejection by official art of manifestations of pop culture, such as comics, cinema, tattoos and other forms of expression, which are precisely those that enjoy the greatest popular acceptance.

His work has also been rejected for representing an aesthetic based on the horrible and the macabre, and for expressing sociological and cultural concerns that disrupt the established social order by touching on topics that are considered unpleasant, even though they exist in any cultural medium or era. Other authors have suffered misunderstanding and rejection in various historical periods for displaying transgressive values and violating established moral norms. Controversy and accusations of obscenity and pornography have often accompanied Giger's career, and on some occasions he has had to self-censor his own work in order to continue exhibiting it.

In Giger's case, there are countless varied opinions that show that his work provokes diverse and multiple reactions, which we must attribute to its communicative power and its dissemination through cinema, which has allowed it to reach a wide audience directly, something that did not happen in other eras when only a limited number of viewers had access to works of art. He has achieved his greatest success in this medium with *Alien*, but he has also experienced many disappointments and has not always been satisfied with the artistic results of productions that in most cases are more commercially than artistically oriented.

Among the latest interpretations of his work, Dr Stanislav Grof's in the field of *transpersonal psychology* stands out, highlighting the importance of perinatal images in our subconscious. The traumatic memory of birth involves regression to the state we were in at birth. Birth involves moments of great violence, and these critical moments surface in our minds throughout our experiences. According to Grof, Giger perfectly describes these experiences in his paintings, through his powerful archetypal images with a special sensitivity, which lead him to continually address the themes of birth, sex and death, the central themes of his work. For Grof, this triad of themes are important paths to transcendence and spirituality. Giger therefore goes beyond the surrealists in exploring the unconscious in its perinatal phase. Surrealist paintings have alluded to the torment of birth, sexuality and death. In Giger's art,

artistic representations of the physical and emotional suffering endured by the foetus during the trauma of birth reach their peak in their symbolic and realistic expression.

An interesting biological and philosophical view of Giger is offered by Timothy Leary, who suggests that his art is typical of the 21st century in the prologue to the book *New York City*:

"He draws on our biological memories. Gynaecological landscapes, intrauterine postcards (...) Giger's work confuses and disturbs us because of its enormous evolutionary dimension and makes a ghostly impression on us. It shows us almost too clearly where we come from and where we are going (...) By all accounts, he has managed to activate brain circuits that control the body's unicellular politics, botanical technologies, amino acid machines... Herein lies Giger's evolutionary genius. Although he takes us back to our murky *insectoid* vegetative past, he propels us forward, towards the cosmos. His vision is, in fact, post-earthly. He teaches us to appreciate our crawling, sticky, embryonic insectoid bodies, so that we can then transform them"<sup>(350)</sup>.

All these opinions serve to balance the current state of affairs surrounding Giger and to assess his contribution to the visual arts of the modern world. Our purpose in proposing this thesis and everything set out in it is to raise awareness in the academic world and for this research to open up new avenues for reflection.

Nor can we overlook his technical limitations. Despite what we have noted throughout the study regarding his ability to draw, and especially to do so using an airbrush, Giger is largely self-taught. It is striking how he disciplines himself and evolves stylistically despite having little academic training in the fine arts, but it should be emphasised that he does so on the basis of a "style" that prioritises the effect of the image itself over the poetics or expressive possibilities that the

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<sup>350</sup> *HR Giger N.Y. City. Op. cit.*

use of traditional drawing methods and the observation techniques associated with their use have been passed down to us. In this sense, it seems that Giger is well aware of his limitations. It is therefore not surprising that his figures are almost always shown from the front, without foreshortening or complex positions that are difficult to resolve on paper. Giger, as was the case in his admired ancient Egyptian art, does not have a thorough command of anatomical drawing nor does he have a foundation in pictorial procedures. Regarding the former, it should be noted that he skilfully avoids the issue by reproducing the body with schematic reductions of its surface anatomy. The latter helps us to interpret his constant experimentation with different techniques until he manages to define his style and achieve what he wants through processes that are as unorthodox as they are effective. In reality, he is not interested in academic concepts to express his art, as what he seeks is to realise his imagination however he can and as quickly as possible. Something that, in our opinion, he achieves effectively.

With his chosen training as a designer and creator of architectural spaces, we might think that he was someone who aspired optimistically to improve our lives by creating objects for everyday use and living spaces, but from the outset he has devoted himself to the representation of macabre figures in drawings and illustrations that show deformed and mutilated men, suffering the threat of nuclear danger, and throughout his career there will be an abundance of monsters and scenes of rape and torture.

One of Giger's most interesting contributions to modern art is the plastic concept associated with the term *biomechanics*. Through his airbrush paintings, film collaborations and graphic works, he has developed his own style, which he calls biomechanical, as it represents the synthesis of the biological and the mechanical/technological. This symbiosis is treated iconographically through the union of the organic with the inorganic, of flesh with metal. But it is sickly, putrid flesh. It is not a pleasant union, but rather a complicated one that seeks to generate fear and anxiety. For Giger, the dialectic between the natural and the artificial represents a latent danger that cannot be ignored.

may divert attention, even though deep down he believes that the relationship could be beneficial for humans. Giger represents the dark side of this relationship with a feeling of physical decay that leads to the disintegration of the body, as happens when entering cyberspace. This vision is a revealing postmodern metaphor for integration with machines, which has been accelerated by the impact of computers.

He develops the concept based on his anatomical analyses and personal interpretations of the human body. The development of his particular symbolism leads him to represent a *new anatomy* that is divided between the figure of the monster, the alien and the *cyborg* and which, ultimately, will constitute his main artistic hallmark.

To achieve this style, Giger fused bones and machines, metals and organs, and explored this symbiosis first in his drawings and designs, and later in his airbrush paintings, which represent the culmination of his concept of *biomechanics*. Albert Glaser<sup>351</sup> believes that Giger's artistic style is similar to psychedelic consciousness. He uses it to distort his images of people, machines and architectural structures, turning them into a kind of surrealist synthesis. His friendship with Timothy Leary, known as the *drug guru*, his hallucinatory nightmares described in relation to the first series of *Passages*, and the psychedelic qualities of some of his paintings have led many to speculate about Giger's relationship with drugs between approximately 1968 and 1973.

In *biomechanics*, his concept of organic landscape merges with the architecture of the city. This occurs on different scales: between the body and artificial and natural nature, and between organic and mechanical nature. On the one hand, his *biomechanical* figures (archetypal, deformed and grotesque figures) will emerge, and on the other, the biomechanical landscapes that will be two of the motifs he will represent most. Giger's landscape is organic, alive, in motion. The raw material, nature in its primordial state, has been altered by human action. It is a technified and polluted nature. Giger collects

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<sup>351</sup> H. R. Giger [Catalogue]. Sydow-Zirkwitz Gallery, Frankfurt, 1976.

impressions of what is happening around him and introduces them into his works. This is why there is sometimes confusion, a multitude of figures and themes intertwined in the same work. Giger introduces everything he has at hand into his paintings: templates, a literary quote, the anatomy of a girlfriend or her face, a nightmare, a news story that has happened in the world, food or animals, such as his cat Mucki. To approach his work, we must do so with a sense of humour and irony; there may be a hidden joke in some of his paintings, and the interpretation does not have to be so profound.

If we analyse the works from a specific period, we will decipher the fantasies, anxieties, fears and concerns of those years. Undoubtedly, the most recurring themes and images constitute his main focus: pollution, war, death, sex, overpopulation, magic, *cyborgs*. Giger's world is obviously full of negative perceptions, chaos, the Apocalypse, torture and violence, which are nothing more than reflections of our society. These facts torment him and provoke in him the need to give vent to his ideas, an escape valve, to paint a picture, to create, in short. This is how Giger evokes his relationship with the world, through biomechanoids, landscapes, grotesque figures and macabre jokes. Without a doubt, his capacity for synthesis is astonishing, as is his concreteness in images.

Giger speaks clearly about his time, without limiting himself. He deals with themes from the collective unconscious and brings them to light. They may cause horror and revulsion for some, and in fact he has been condemned for this on numerous occasions. In his early days, he was a committed artist and his works had strong political content, but he later became more mystical. This was possibly due to the influence of some of his friends, such as Li and Golowin, when he became saturated with readings on magic and the occult.

His archetypal creations, used in numerous icons and fetishes, the *biomechanoids*, are scattered throughout his work and represent metaphors for man in a technified environment. They feature tubes and other mechanical components such as metal plates, motors, implants and transformations of penises

and skulls into metallic objects. These imagined creatures are modern variations on the fantasies of Hieronymus Bosch.

Giger records the spirit of his time like a seismograph. In his era, he saw wars ravage the world, racism, hunger, torture and brutality emerge. A sensitive witness to the deterioration of the environment due to pollution, he is convinced that the world at the end of the 20th century was characterised by fear of the future, and that man has gradually become a prisoner of technological progress, paying the consequences of a process of industrialisation fraught with dangers such as pollution and stress.

His work represents, in a way, the *Zeitgeist* of the end of the century. Stanislav Grof comments on the term *biomecanoid*: "It would be difficult to find a better word to describe the *Zeitgeist* of the 20th century, characterised by astonishing technological progress, which has enslaved modern man in a mutual symbiosis with the world of machines. Throughout the 20th century, modern technological inventions became extensions of our muscles, nervous system, eyes and ears, and even reproductive organs, so that the boundaries between biology and mechanical devices have disappeared" (352).

The hybridisation of the body with mechanics is a constant in his works, in which the transition is subtle and harmonious, thus creating a powerful imagery of *the cyborg* in which the organic is confused with the inorganic. This feature makes Giger's work very interesting, since one of the central themes of cyberspace is the breakdown of boundaries between man and electronic technology. Giger connects with current sensibilities and, throughout his artistic career, has configured a new bodily anatomy, a sinister architecture of the body, based on the juxtaposition of objects, metamorphosed forms and the symbiosis of the biological and the technological: a disturbing and devastating new 'artificiality'.

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<sup>352</sup> H.R. Giger. *Icons*. Taschen, Cologne, 2002.

First through drawing and sculpture, and then in the 1970s with airbrush painting, with which he developed and perfected his particular realistic style, Giger has managed to synthesise in his art the symbiosis of concepts and the assimilation of different artistic traditions, such as surrealism, symbolism and fantastic realism, capturing them visually with great mythological force and enigmatic symbolic value.

Giger's work bears striking similarities to that of Salvador Dalí, as both artists recreate their imaginary worlds through their art, using every means of expression at their disposal, particularly drawing, painting, sculpture and design. They are multifaceted, prolific artists who do everything from furniture to film design. They have an easily recognisable personal style that makes them unmistakable. They constantly repeat their fetishes: Dalí the space elephant, the melting clock, the crutch of reality and butterflies; Giger the bullet boy, the biomechanical woman and the post-industrial landscape. Both are very visual, representing the images that haunt them and in many cases using literary references (Dalí to Cervantes, Rabelais, Walpole; Giger to Poe and Lovecraft). Their relationship with alchemy and fascination with scientific discoveries is common.

The universe created by Giger is a sinister world born of the nightmares of the present: wars, death, cloning, all related to technology (man exposed to the abyss of risks and possibilities opened up by genetic engineering). In Giger's work, we see the rise and dominance of technology and machines. The critical and human content of his work stands out, depicting man intertwined with machines, in captivity and dependence on the artificial. In addition, his work has dealt with themes as diverse as illness in his paintings of children's landscapes, technological motherhood in his illustrations and designs for *Alien*, and magic and esotericism in his series of triptychs, such as *The Spell*.

His icons are recurrent; we see them represented obsessively over and over again, such as the skull and the phallus. There is a constant reaffirmation of his iconography, which leads to the repetition of images, characters and

even works. This has to do with his obsessions and the nightmares that torment him and do not disappear so quickly, but also because Giger is a commercially minded factory artist who reproduces his motifs everywhere, whether in paintings, posters, sculptures or pins.

In 1988, *Cinefantastique*, a magazine specialising in science fiction and horror films, pointed out that H.R. Giger was the most famous monster designer of the day. It also emphatically stated that he was the artist who changed the look of contemporary science fiction cinema. Without a doubt, the monster from *Alien* and the alien creature *Sil* from the film *Species* have transcended the cultural medium, becoming modern myths and icons.

Since the success of *Alien*, he has received numerous commissions, and his most developed facet has been that of designer, which is more closely linked to his original training in Zurich in the early 1960s. However, this has affected the quantity and quality of his personal work, particularly during the 1980s, as he had very little time available. For better or worse, Giger has been labelled as the artist behind *Alien*, and as a result, the rest of his work is often overlooked. However, he insists that his participation in *Alien* is just another job.

*Alien* undoubtedly revolutionised the aesthetics of fiction filmmaking in the 1980s and has had a considerable influence on many subsequent productions. Giger's designs and the environments he created for the film, particularly those relating to the biomechanical and sinister appearance of the alien ship and the monstrous creature at the centre of the story, have had a remarkable influence on the visual aspect of subsequent science fiction films, as well as on the creation of new monstrous characters and strange beings.

Without a doubt, the most striking aspect of the film is its dark and sinister aesthetic, presented visually in a very effective manner, and the enigmatic alien creature, the film's main protagonist. The film draws attention thanks to the collaboration of Giger, who displays his world of striking images. In *Alien*, the absolute protagonist is the monster, the extraterrestrial beast, the organic

scenery and the suffocatingly disturbing atmosphere in which it operates (unlike *Star Wars*, with its clearer staging and lack of *gore*).

Film critics are unanimous in their praise of the visual design and imagery of *Alien*. Despite the similarity of the script to other previous productions, the originality of Giger's designs always stands out among the various aspects of the film; one only has to look at the bonus material included in its DVD editions to see how prominent they are. It revolutionised contemporary science fiction cinema, on which it has had a significant impact. For this reason, the success of *Alien* must be associated with the participation of Giger, who gave the film its *raison d'être*, the monster, the absolute protagonist that would spawn sequels and become an icon of the postmodern scene as an emblematic figure. It is one of the most original manifestations of modern teratology, which is evident in one of the predominant media of mass culture and extends to other areas such as literature and different types of audiovisual media such as comics, video games and music videos. The biomechanical aesthetic that permeates the film is an original creation by the Swiss artist, whose contribution is fundamental to understanding important manifestations of the current artistic scene.

*Alien* inaugurated a subgenre, the psychological thriller, which has been highly developed over the last twenty years, and the *dark* aesthetic, the passion for the sinister in many audiovisual manifestations. It also opened the door to new possibilities for a genre that had been underrated until the 1960s. The film was one of the pioneers of psychological horror and is not metaphysical (like *2001*) but carnal, visceral, sexual, and that is why it is so disturbing. Ridley Scott was fascinated by Giger's work, with its sickening fusions of sexual organs, metal, liquid and flesh. The script was undoubtedly enriched by Giger's contributions. Giger created a monster for the cinema that everyone knows today. "People get scared very quickly when they see something they haven't seen before," he says. But what is striking about this creature is that it still has an impact almost thirty years after its release, and

this is largely due to its successful design and its sexual and violent connotations. It is a monster and represents, on the one hand, otherness, but on the other, the beast we all carry within us, thus activating deep symbolic and psychic mechanisms. Giger's art probes the subconscious, because it is partly inspired by the world of dreams and partly by the real world, which is the basis and main motivation for Giger's artistic response.

Giger is another craftsman in the history of cinema. His contribution is film design done by hand, using traditional stage illusionism in the design of characters and creatures, without the sophisticated use of digital effects that became prevalent in the 1980s and 1990s. For this reason, we believe that the artistic value of his collaborations is greater (more artistic and manual) as he does not use the resources provided by computers, but rather relies on his own skills. In almost all films, he creates conceptual designs through drawings, sketches and airbrush paintings to visualise and dimension his ideas, and then physically construct creatures, sets and characters.

In addition to this creative ability, he is capable of generating his own cosmos, just like other creators such as filmmakers Tim Burton, David Cronenberg and David Lynch. Giger manifests himself as the creator of a personal, strange and unique world. These authors have a peculiar surrealism; they propose to subvert reality, and this makes them more disturbing.

Perhaps to better appreciate his cinematic side, we should watch a film by Giger, in which, in addition to designing, he directed the production and was able to visualise his concepts and characters in his own way. *The Mystery of St. Gotthard* project is a personal idea in development about his world of biomechanoids in a futuristic setting that has been on hold for a long time. It would be interesting to see if Giger could control the film from the designs to the shooting, thus demonstrating his expertise in this field.

Currently, there is a disparaging view of fantasy cinema in academic circles, especially the science fiction subgenre. Considered B-grade until the 1970s due to its low budget and dubious quality, it became predominant and big-budget thanks to major productions and series such as *Star Wars* and *Alien* and the emergence of the action genre. However, critics consider it to be pure entertainment and empty. Of course, today it is the most watched genre and enjoys great popularity. Although most films seek commercial success, some have aroused the interest of critics due to their connection with interesting themes such as the future of mankind, motherhood, the figure of the monster, the world of dreams, and aggression and violence against the human body. In our opinion, there are fantasy films that are important because of their content. We are also interested in their visual and artistic qualities. For this reason, we believe that the role of the designer and creator of fantasy worlds is somewhat undervalued, despite the fact that they bring to life on screen characters and creatures that exist in the imagination but which move, terrify, attract or entertain us. In this sense, Giger's work as a designer occupies an important place in the contemporary scene. During the years he was working, science fiction films were launched as a first-rate artistic creation, as they combine the creative efforts of different disciplines. Giger therefore occupies a prominent role as a designer, as he is not just another technician at the service of the director, but plays a fundamental role as a creator, since the construction of the film will revolve around the character he designs.

One of the most relevant aspects of Giger's work is its connection with various current aesthetic trends and sensibilities and the influence it has had on various artistic and cultural manifestations. His fantastic creations, his post-industrial landscapes, his biomechanoids, his cinematic monsters and his futuristic designs have found an echo in other artists who have been inspired by Giger to create. Giger's poetics give way to a new concept of the sinister, which is formally produced through chromatic darkening and, in terms of theme, delves into the idea of death and the

birth and issues arising from sex. It is the realm of the aesthetics of darkness, ugliness and sinister, a vast and varied terrain that cinema and art in general continue to nurture. To see this, we need only trace some of the latest avant-garde trends such as *New Flesh*, *dark, gothic, cyberpunk, gore* and *cyborg-related* creations.

Giger is not a fashionable artist; he is rather marginal, borderline. He does not fit into the recognised avant-garde, even though he currently leads a very powerful movement: fantastic art. Perhaps for this reason, he has not been included in current art studies (which do not quickly assimilate the influence of more or less marginal trends), but the aforementioned aesthetic trends and postmodern genres, to which we could currently attribute an important cultural role, consider him a cult artist.

Giger's world is a world of nightmares, with Freudian symbolism, decadence and an abundance of perverse sexuality. But there is also beauty behind his works, whether in his landscapes or his metallic nymphs. In his art, opposites meet: the positive and the negative, beauty and horror. A Gigerian beauty (mythical women and elegant lines of modernist and naturalist design) confronts a horror of the genre in all its fantasy aspects. Giger introduces us to the darkest aspects of our existence, of what surrounds us. He teaches us that perhaps this darkness is not as terrifying as it seems and encourages us to face it. It is an area of the psyche that many artists have not dared to explore.

Like almost every artist, Giger suffered a profound tragedy: *Alien*, which marked the zenith of his career, led to a commercialisation of his work that devoured his possibilities within the art world. After his period of creative splendour in the 1970s, he would no longer be so brilliant or contribute anything new, only flashes of brilliance in specific works. His shift towards the commercial was rather intentional, as he sought it out due to his fascination with cinema and his contacts with the musical avant-garde. *Alien* permanently typecast him, making him a prisoner in a way. The continuous commissions robbed him of the time to concentrate on his personal projects (although he has

he has brought forward interesting ideas such as furniture and architectural designs). In any case, the conception of strange beings and monsters fits in with his creative and artistic assumptions.

Giger sometimes wants to abandon his image as a painter of the macabre or an artist of horror, as many doors are closed to him for this reason, but he does not deny that many admire him precisely for this. He is always referred to as a painter of black magic or pornography, which he believes harms him in his own country and means that he is not taken seriously.

His work has not been properly promoted, partly due to Giger himself, although it is likely that he has been poorly advised at times and has even had bad luck in this regard. He has veered towards the commercial rather than the artistic. Let us remember that his posters were already being printed in 1968. This has made him a popular and accessible artist. His books are easily available (those published by Taschen) and his lithographs are not prohibitively expensive.

This explains why his originals are relatively inexpensive and why he is undervalued in the art world. Perhaps that is why he has not been exhibited in major museums. All this is a vicious circle, because if he had done things differently from the beginning, museum exhibitions would have relaunched his work, which would be more valuable today. But then again, he might never have participated in *Alien*, and today he would be virtually unknown.

*Alien* has been something of a problem for him, although it is undoubtedly his greatest success, and for some, *Alien* is the worst thing that ever happened to his career. To this day, he has not been able to shake off that label, and he may never do so. One can only imagine how he would have evolved had he not achieved such notoriety. But that is how it is. Giger always sought recognition, although he never imagined it would have such a huge impact.

Despite his international success, institutional rejection of Giger's work has not changed in recent decades. Major art museums, for example, have yet to take notice of him. The value of his originals is rather modest at present, and he even has to exhibit in alternative galleries and spaces, as is the case with his latest exhibition at the Halle Saint-Pierre in

Paris. This fact is even more significant in Switzerland, his native country, where he has not yet been given a proper exhibition, nor has he been recognised as the artist he is. Perhaps the cliché that he must first be recognised in another country before his own will take notice of him is true. His museum is also unconventional, more like a sanctuary, a temple of pilgrimage for admirers, and his works are not displayed according to contemporary museum standards, although the current layout has great charm. It is incomprehensible that his country does not value him in any other way, or at least promote his museum. If this continues, it will become a tourist attraction and never enter the art circuit.

We believe that with the passing of time and the continuous revisiting and updating of his work, Giger could become one of the most significant artists of the contemporary era. The constant references to his work by other artistic media mean that his contribution and interest remain latent. Time will surely place Giger in his rightful place. What is certain is that Giger will continue to develop his world, expressing his imagination uninterruptedly, guided by his own will, unaffected by negative criticism, censorship or scandal. Because Giger is a genuine artist, he has clear convictions, a need to create and to share with others his personal relationship with the world.

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## FILMOGRAPHY

As director/producer

**Heimkiller** (The Home Killer); **High**, 1967 Director: F.M.Murer Producers:

H.R. Giger and F.M. Murer

Category: short films, 16mm, 11 min.; High: black and white, Heimkiller: colour; magnetic sound

**Passages**, 1972 Director:

F.M. Murer

Producers: Nemo Film GmbH, Zurich/WDR Cologne and H.R. Giger

Category: documentary, 16 mm, colour, 50 min., optical sound

**Giger's Necronomicon**, 1975 Director:

J.J. Wittmer and HR Giger. Producers:

H.R. Giger

Category: documentary, 16 mm, colour, 40 min., optical sound On

the work of H.R. Giger from 1972 to 1975

**Giger's The Second Celebration of the Four**, 1977

Director: J. J. Wittmer and H.R. Giger

Producer: H.R. Giger

Category: short film, 16 mm, colour, 5 min., magnetic sound

**Giger's Alien**, 1979

Director: J. J. Wittmer and H.R. Giger

Producer: Mia Bonzanigo

Category: documentary, 16 mm, colour, 34 min., magnetic sound

Documentary about Giger's work on Alien; filmed by Mia Bonzanigo and J.J. Wittmer.

**Koo Koo**, 1981 Director:

H.R. Giger

Producer: Chrysalis Records Limited (London)

Category: music video, 16 mm, colour, 6 min., magnetic sound?

Music video for Debbie Harry (Blondie); 2 music videos for the songs

*Backfired* and *Now I know you know*,

**A new face of Debbie Harry**, 1982

Director: F.M. Murer

Category: Documentary, 16 mm, colour, 30 min., magnetic sound

## **Satan's Head, 1992**

*Director: Paul Grau and H.R. Giger*

Episode of the German television series *Unresolved Secrets*, based on an occult script written by H.R. Giger.

### As designer/conceptual artist

**Swissmade 2069, 1968**

Director: F.M.Murer

Producer: Giorgio Frapelli

Category: feature film, 35 mm, colour, 45 min.; optical sound

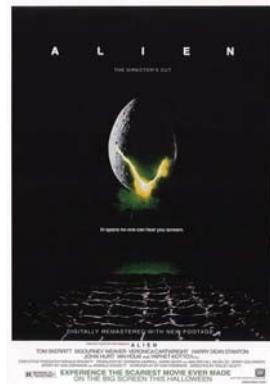
Director: Ridley Scott

Producer: Brandwyne Productions, 20th Century Fox Original

screenplay: Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett Category:

feature film, 70 mm, colour, 117 min.; optical sound

## Horror and science fiction film



**Poltergeist II**, 1986 Director:

Brian Gibson Producer: MGM

Production

Original screenplay: Michael Grais and Mark Victor

**Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 87 min.;**

**optical sound**

Horror film



**Teito Monogatari**, 1988 Director:

Akio Jitsusoji Producer: Japanese

Production

Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 135 min.; optical sound Horror

and science fiction film

**Alien III**, 1990

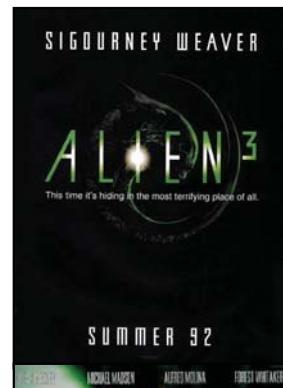
**Director: David Fincher**

Producer: 20th Century Fox

Original screenplay: Dan O'Bannon and Ronald Shusett

Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 112 min.; optical sound

Horror and science fiction film



**Species**, 1995

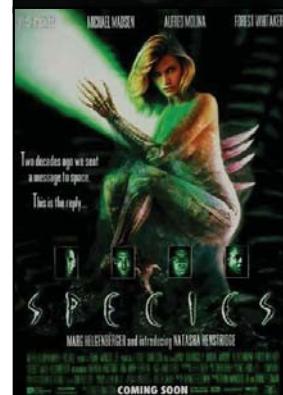
**Director: Roger Donaldson** Producer:

Frank Mancuso Jr., MGM; Original

screenplay: Dennis Feldman

Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 110 min.; optical sound

Horror and science fiction film



## **Unrealised projects**

Giger participated in several productions that were either never made or were made without taking his designs and ideas into account.

### **Dune, 1975**

Designs for A. Jodorowsky's Dune project, later made in 1984 by David Lynch. Giger's designs were not used. Designs for the planet Harkonnen.

### **Dune, 1979-80**

*Designs for the project to be directed by Ridley Scott. The worms and the Harkonnen chairs.*

### **The Tourist, 1982**

Designs for the project to be directed by Brian Gibson, produced by Universal and based on a screenplay by Clair Noto, Brian Gibson and Renee Missell.

### **The Train, 1988-1989**

Film project to be directed by Ridley Scott and produced by Carolco.

### **The Mystery of San Gottardo, 1989**

Personal project by H.R. Giger based on his biomechanoids.

### **Dead Star, 1990**

A production planned by Imperial Entertainment and to be directed by William Malone.

### **Batman Forever, 1994**

Designs for the *Batmobile III*, which were ultimately not used. Director: Joel Schumacher

Producer: Warner Bros.

**Kondom des Grauens** (The Killer Condom), 1996 Director:

Martin Walz

Producer: Ascot Film

Original screenplay: based on the comic by Ralf König

Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 100 min.; optical sound Horror film

**Species II**, 1998

Director: Peter Medak

Producer: Dennis Feldman and Frank Mancuso Jr. for MGM Original

screenplay: Chris Brancato

Category: feature film, 70 mm, colour, 90 min.; optical sound Horror and science fiction film

### **About his work**

**Tagtraum**, 1973

**Director: J. J. Wittmer**

Category: Documentary, 16 mm, colour, 28 min., magnetic sound

Report on the psychedelic encounter with three Swiss artists, C. Sandoz, H.R. Giger and W. Wegmueller, in Sottens (Basel).

Documentary by Robert Kopuit, **Die Traumwelt H.R. Gigers**, 1981 Documentary

by Alex Bohr, **Das Phantastischen Universum H.R. Giger**, 1986

**Sex, Drugs and Giger**, 1992

**Director: Sandra Beretta & Bätsch**

Producer: Swiss Film Festival Solothurn

Category: Animated short film, 16 mm, colour, 4'30 min.

Animated film with paintings by Giger produced by Sandra Beretta and Baetsch for the Solothurn Film Festival; 16mm, colour, 5 min.

**Benissimo**, 1995

Director: Max Sieber

Producer: DRS (Swiss Television) Category:

video clip, 6 min.

Choreographed ballet with five dancers in a three-dimensional installation featuring paintings by HR Giger,

**Trilogie: H.R. Giger, Künstler, Designer, Visionär**. Star TV, 1998

Starring in: *Tell Saga, C-Files*. Fake documentary presented at the Kunsthause in Zurich by the artistic duo Com and Com.

## INTERVIEWS (1999-2003)

### **H.R. Giger**

Artist, Zurich

### **Andreas Christen**

Artist and designer, Zurich

### **Fritz Billeter**

Art critic, Zurich

### **Fredi Murer**

Filmmaker, Zurich

### **Beat Stutzer**

Director, Bündner Kunstmuseum Chur

### **Felix Baumann**

Director, Kunsthaus Zurich

### **Walo Steiner**

Printer, Densbüren

### **Vrena Voirêt**

Fellow student, Hausen am Albis

### **Karl Jost**

Deputy Director, Swiss Institute for Art Research, Zurich

### **Tobia Bezzola**

Curator, Kunsthaus Zurich

### **Christoph Becker**

Director, Kunsthaus Zurich

### **David Weiss**

Artist, Zurich

### **Silvio Baviera**

Gallery owner, Zurich

### **Patrick Gyger**

Director, La Maison d'Ailleurs/Science Fiction Museum, Yverdon-les-Bains

### **Ettien Chaton**

Curator, Gruyères

## APPENDIX I. LIST OF IMAGES

Giger in front of the poster for his exhibition at the Kunsthaus in Zurich, (1977)

### STATUS

- A-Cover of *ARh* + (1971)
- B-Cover of the exhibition catalogue at the Sydow-Zirkwitz Gallery in Frankfurt (1976)
- C-Cover of *H.R. Giger's Necronomicon* (1977)
- D-Cover of *H.R. Giger. N.Y. City* (1981)
- E-Cover of *H.R. Giger's Necronomicon 2* (1985)
- F-Cover of *Giger's Biomechanics* (1988)
- G-Cover of H.R. Giger *ARh* + (1991)
- H-Cover of *H.R. Giger Filmdesign* (1996) I-
- Cover of [www.hrgiger.com](http://www.hrgiger.com) (1997)
- J-Cover of *H.R. Giger's The Mystery of San Gottardo* (1998)

### 1-BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY

- 1- *Untitled* (1961)
- 2- Series *We, Atomic Children* (1963)
- 3- *Katarakt* (1977). Airbrush, 100 x 70 cm.
- 4- *The Dark Room* (1960)
- 5- *The Dark Room* (1960)
- 6- *The Dark Room* (1960)
- 7- Giger and Li (1969)
- 8- Li, painted by Giger (1973)
- 9- Giger on the cover of Hotcha magazine (1968)
- 10- Filming of *Swissmade* (1968)
- 11- Giger working in his studio. Image from the documentary *Passagen* (1972)
- 12- Manifesto *Asylum for Timothy Leary!* (1971)
- 13- Giger and Ernst Fuchs (1984)
- 14- The band Emerson, Lake and Palmer visiting Giger's studio (1973)
- 15- Dalí and Giger in Cadaqués (1975)

16- Giger airbrushing one of his designs for the film *Dune* (1976) 17 and 18. Giger working on *Alien*. Pinewood Studios, London (1977)

19. Giger and Dan O'Bannon (1978)

20 and 21. Giger and pop star Debbie Harry at the Hansen Gallery in New York (1980)

22. Giger and Debbie Harry during the filming of the music video *Now I Know You Know* (1981)

23-Giger working on preliminary work for *Species* (1994) 24-Sil, Giger and actress Natasha Henstridge (1995)

25- Giger at the entrance to the *Giger Bar* in Chur (1992)

26- Logo for the VIP room at the *Limelight* nightclub in New York (1998)

27- Aerial view of Gruyères and location of the HR. Giger Museum (1996)

28- Facade of the HR. Giger Museum (2000)

29- Giger and the sculpture *Birth Machine* (2000)

30- Giger and Carmen during the opening of the museum's *Giger Bar* (2003)

## 2- STUDY OF THE WORK

31- *The Phantom of the Opera - Tribute to Gaston Leroux* (1966). Ink on transcop. 24 x 21 cm.

32- *The Phantom of the Opera - Tribute to Gaston Leroux II* (1966). Ink on transcop. 24 x 21 cm.

33- *Biomechanical Landscape - Scythe* (1980). Acrylic on paper. 70 x 100 cm.

34- *Vampire* (1967-68). Ink on transcop on wood. 25 x 44 cm.

35- *Cthulhu Genius* (1967). Ink on paper on wood. 80 x 63 cm. 36- *Behemoth* (1975). Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm.

37- *Mordor VI* (1975). Acrylic on paper. 100 x 70 cm.

38- *Mordor VII* (1975). Acrylic on paper.

39- *Necronom III* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm. 40- *Necronom VII* (1976) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

41- *Giger's Necronomicon* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 42- *Waiting for Godot* (1966) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

43- *Tribute to Samuel Beckett II* (1968) Oil on wood. 100x80 cm

44- The Mystery of San Gottardo (1994)

45- Kafka's Metamorphosis (2002)

46- *Necronom I* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70x100 cm 47-*Necronom VIII* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 30x21 cm

48-*After the 120 Days of Sodom* (1966). Ink on transcop. 24 x 21 cm. 49-*Interpersonal Relationship II* (1991) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

50- *Illustration for the Marquis de Sade VIII* (1991) Ink on transcop. 30x21 cm

51- *The Master and Margarita* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100x70 cm

52- *Chidher Grün* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

53- Francis Bacon. *Figure Study* (1946). Oil and tempera on canvas. 123 x 105.5 cm.

54- Francis Bacon. Fragment of *Portrait of Pope Innocent X, after Velázquez's study* (1953)

55- Francis Bacon. *Three Studies of Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944) Oil and pastel on cardboard/wood. 145 x 128 cm

56- Photograph by Philippe Halsman based on a drawing by Dalí. *Human skull composed of seven naked female bodies* (1951)

57- Salvador Dalí. *Face of War* (1940–1941)

58- Hans Bellmer. *Bat Harvest* (1935-50)

59- Hans Bellmer. *Vanity* (1935-50)

60- Hans Bellmer. *Homage to Antonin Artaud* (1942)

61- Ernst. *The Eye of Silence*. 1943/44. Oil on canvas. 108 x 141 cm

62- Max Ernst. *Europe After the Rain III.* (1940-42) Oil on canvas. 54 x 146 cm.

63- Max Ernst. *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* (1945). Oil on canvas. 108 x 128 cm

64- Austin Osman Spare. *Drawing No. 1 from The Book of Ugly Ecstasy* (1924)

65- Austin Osman Spare. *The Vampires Are Coming* (1947)

66- Jean Benoit. *The Dog of Maldoror* (1959–64)

67- Jean Benoit. Costumes for the *Execution of Sade's Testament* (1959)

68- Arnold Böcklin. *The Isle of the Dead* (1886)

69-H.R. Giger. *The Isle of the Dead* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 140 cm

70- Ernst Fuchs. *Woman Reflected in a Row of Houses* (1946) *Die Stadt* series. Pencil on paper, 43 x 60 cm.

71- Ernst Fuchs. Fragment from *Behind Veronica* (1953). Mixed media on parchment. 14 x 18 cm.

72- Ernst Fuchs. *The Angel of Death Above the Gate of Purgatory* (1951) Mixed media on wood. 70 x 90 cm.

73- Ernst Fuchs. The Antilaokonte (1965) Pencil drawing on slate with paper appliqués. 150 x 200cm.

74- *Beauty and the Beast* (Jean Cocteau, 1946)

75- *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (Murnau, 1922)

76- *Vlad Tepes* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm 77-*National Park* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm 78-*Punk Glasses* (1977)

79- *Illuminatus I* (1978)

80- *Power and Powerlessness of Organisation* (1964) Ink on paper. 30 x 21 cm

81- *Safari* (1973-76) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

82- *Pump Excursion I* (1988) Acrylic on paper on wood. 140 x 100 cm

83- Detail of *Aleister Crowley, the beast 666* (1975)

84- *Baphomet* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

85- *Satan I* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood 100 x 70 cm

86- *The Second Celebration of the Four* (1976). Acrylic on paper on wood 100 x 70 cm

87- Eliphas Levi. *Baphomet* (1855)

88-H.R. Giger. *Baphomet* (detail from *Spell IV*) (1975)

89- *Lilith* (1976-77) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

90- *Relief of Lilith-Inanna*, wearing the lunar crown, made in Mesopotamia (2000 BC)

91- *In the Nest* (1967-68)

92- *Behemoth* (1975). Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

93- *Rat picture* (1977) Acrylic on paper. 60 x 70 cm

94-95-*Stockings* (1960)

96- *Untitled* (1961)

97- *Untitled* (1961)

98- *Cross* (1959-1960)

99- *Untitled* (1961)

100- *Untitled* (1961)

101- *Self-Portrait* (1961)

102-106-*Atomic Children* (1961-1963)

107-Cover of the sketchbook *A Feast for the Psychiatrist* (1966) 108-*Tilt* (1965)

Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

109- *Supermarket* (1965) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

110- *The Top Ten Thousand* (1964) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

111- *The Exhibitionists* (1965) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

112- *At the Doctor's* (1965) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

113- *Well VI* (1966-68). Ink on paper. 80 x 63 cm

114- *Well VIa* (1966-68). Ink on paper. 80 x 63 cm

115- *Well V* (1965) Acrylic on paper. 30 x 21 cm

116- *Pozo VII* (1966). Ink on paper on wood. 80 x 63 cm

117- *The Voice of Amerika I* (1966). Ink on paper. 42 x 50 cm

118- *Underground. Pozo Va* (1966). Ink on transcop on wood. 42 x 60 cm 119-  
*Astroeunucos* (1967). Ink on transcop on paper on wood. 170 x 108 cm.

120- *Mother with Child* (1967) Ink on paper. 80 x 88 cm

121- *Atomic Children* (1966-1968). Ink on paper on wood. 170 x 108 cm 122-*Organic Matter III* (1966). Ink on paper on wood. 80x63 cm.

123- *Underground* (1968)

124- *Biomechanoid* (1969) Ink on paper. 100 x 74 cm

125- *Biomechanoid* (1969) Ink on paper. 100 x 74 cm

126- *Biomecanoide* (1969) Ink on paper. 100 x 74 cm

127- *Untitled* (1971)

128- Illustration for the Marquis de Sade 4 (1991) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

129- Illustration for the Marquis de Sade 8 (1991) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

130-700 Years Waiting for CH (1991) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

131-700 years waiting for Auschwitz-Platzspitz (1991) Ink on transcop. 30 x 21 cm

132- *Vampira* (1962)

133- *Landscape* (1967-69) Oil on cardboard. 46 x 38 cm

134- *Landscape* (1967-69) Oil on cardboard. 46 x 38 cm

135- *Homage to Samuel Beckett I* (1968) Oil on wood. 100 x 80 cm 136-*Homage to Samuel Beckett III* (1969) Oil on wood. 100 x 80 cm 137-*Phalellujah* (1968-1969) Oil on wood. 100 x 70 cm

138- *Humanoid I* (1970) Oil on wood. 170 x 100 cm

139- *Passage Triptychon* (1970) Oil on wood. 140 x 205 cm.

140- *Bathtub II* (1970) Oil on wood. 140 x 210 cm.

141- *Passage I* (1969) Oil on cardboard. 54 x 46 cm

142- *Passage IV* (1969) Oil on wood. 100 x 80 cm

143- *Passage VI* (1969) Oil on wood. 100 x 80 cm

144- *The Four Elements* (1970) Oil on wood. 110 x 85 cm 145-146-  
Garbage collection in Colonia. Photos by Giger (1971)

147- *Passage XXII* (1972) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

148- *Passage XXIX* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 149-153-  
Sequence from *Illuminatus I* (1978)

154- *Assuan* (Detail) (1972)

155- *Chiquita* (1972) Ink on paper on wood. 240 x 418 cm

156- *Aleph* (1972-73) Ink on paper on wood. 240 x 216 cm

157- *Bathroom Door* (1973) Ink on paper on wood 200 x 75 cm

158- *Kitchen Door* (1973) Ink on paper on wood. 200 x 75 cm 159-*Landscape X* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

160-*Landscape XVII* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 161-*Landscape XIX* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 162-*Landscape XX* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

163- *The Lord of the Rings II* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 140 cm

164- *The Lord of the Rings I* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

165- *Biomechanical Landscape* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm.

166- *Biomechanical Landscape I* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 167-  
*Biomechanical Landscape III (Trains)* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

168- *The Spell I* (1973-74) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm

169- *The Spell III* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm

170- *The Spell II* (1974) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 420 cm

171- *The Spell IV* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 420

172- *Temple of Passages (Life)* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm

173- *Temple of Passages (Entrance)* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm

174- *Temple of Passages (Death)* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm

175- *Temple of Passages (The Way of the Magician)* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood.  
240 x 280 cm

176- *Spiegelbild* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 177-  
*Necronom II* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 178-*Necronom III* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

179-*Erotomechanics IV* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 180-  
*Erotomechanics VI* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 181-*Erotomechanics IX (Fellatio)* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

182-*Erotomechanics V* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 183-  
*Erotomechanics VII* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 184-  
*Erotomechanics VIII* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

185- *New York City XII. Science fiction* (1981) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

186- *New York X. Chelsea Beasts* (1980-81) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

187- *New York XI. Exotic* (1980-81) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

188- *New York XVIII* (1981) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

189- *Chinese Evolution* (1981-84) Acrylic on paper on wood. 240 x 280 cm 190-*Victory IV* (1983) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

191- *Victory V* (1983) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

192- *Bombs I* (1983) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

193- *The Redeemer* (1983-87) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 50 cm

194- *Magma II* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

195- *Pumpexcursion I* (1988) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 196-  
Sandoz, Giger and Wegmüller (1973)

197- Sandoz, Giger and Wegmüller. *Tagtraum* (1973) Ink, pencil, wax and acrylic on wood. 240 x 280 cm

198- Giger/Martin Schwarz. *Passion* (1984) Acrylic on paper on wood.  
100 x 70 cm

199- *Head I (Playmate)* (1966). Ink on transcop. 42 x 60 cm.

200- *Zwingt mensch raus* (1967). Engraving. 65 x 46 cm

201- Poster for the Floh group in Cologne (1968)

202- Poster for *Pöetenz* (1967)

203- Poster for the exhibition at the Petersen Gallery (1985)

204- *Biomecanoide*. Poster for the exhibition at the Sydow Zirkwitz Gallery (1975)

205- Poster for the film *Future Kill* (1984)

206- Poster for the Hell Angels meeting (1989) (Hand-painted poster, 45 x 43 cm).

207- Cover for the band Walpurgis (1969) Ink on Transcop, 32 x 64 cm 208-*Brain Salad Surgery II* (1973) Acrylic on paper, 34 x 34 cm

209- Cover of *Brain Salad Surgery* (1973)

210- *The Magician* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

211- *Debbie Harry II*. Cover of *Koo Koo* (1981)

212- *Debbie Harry I. Koo Koo* (1981)

213- *Debbie Harry III. Koo Koo* (1981)

214- *Mumien*. Cover for Floh de Cologne (1974) 215-  
*Attakh*. Cover for Magma (1978)

216-Cover for Steven Stevens, Atomic Playboys (1989) Acrylic on photographic paper.  
120 x 120 cm

217-Cover for Carcass, *Heartwork* (1993)

218-219-Images from Mylene Farmer's *Mylenium Tour 2000*

220-222-Jonathan Davis and the microphone stand designed by Giger for Korn  
(2001) 223-224-Designs for Korn's microphone stand (2001)

225-Design of the *Dolce Vita* wine label (1986)

226-Design of a bag for the Migros company (1990) 227-  
Various typefaces designed by Giger

228-*Torso* (black polyester) (1965) 57 x 17 x 17 cm

229 *Mask* (1965) black polyester

230- *Large head* (1965). Black polyester, dimensions unknown.

231- *Small head* (1965). Black polyester, 30 x 12 x 21 cm

232- *Baby suitcase* (1967) Polyester 20 x 50 x 75 cm

233- *Beggar* (1967), polyester/bronze. 58 x 58 x 75 cm.

234- *Obtaining Life* (1966/1967). Polyester, wood. 150x155x15 cm

235- *Biomecanoid* (1969) Black polyester

236- *Amerika* (with Li Tobler) (1968)

237- *Taurus* (1995) Aluminium

238- *Pisces* (1993) Aluminium

239-*Bullet Child* (1999)  
Aluminium

240-*Watchguardian V* (1993) Aluminium and  
steel 241-*Birthing Machine* (1999) Aluminium

242- *Biomechanoid 2002* (2002)

243- *Guardian Angel* (1997)

244- *Bed Station I* (1976), acrylic on wood paper, 70 x 100 cm

245- *Smoker's chair* (1977)

246- *Plan for wardrobe and chest of drawers* (1981)

247- *Plan for table leg* (1980)

248- *Harkonnen Throne* (1980)

249- *Frame and lamp* (1980)

250- *Harkonnen table, two Harkonnen-Capo chairs and four Harkonnen chairs* (1982)

251- *Giger Bar Tokyo, entrance design* (1988)

252- *Giger Bar Tokyo, entrance* (1988)

253- *Giger Bar Tokyo, interior design* (1988)

254- *Giger Bar Tokyo, interior decoration* (1988)

255- *Bar Giger Chur* (1992)

256-257- *Bar Giger Chur* (1992)

258- *Giger Museum. Facade design* (1998)

259- *Giger Museum. Staircase design* (1998)

260- *Giger Museum. Design of the wagons* (1995)

261- *Giger Museum. Façade* (2002)

262-263- *Giger Museum. Designs for the Bar* (2001)

264- *Giger Bar, designs*. Gruyères (2003)

265- *Giger Bar*. Gruyères (2003)

266- Giger and Ridley Scott during the filming of *Alien* (1978)

267- Chris Foss. *Alien spaceship* (1977)

268- Giger. *Alien spacecraft* (1978)

269- Ron Cobb. *Alien pilot* (1977)

270- Giger. *Alien pilot* (1978) 271-272- Chris Foss. *Egg silo* (1977)

273- Giger. *Egg silo* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood 100 x 140 cm 274-276- Ron Cobb. *Designs for the alien* (1977)

277- *Necronom IV* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 278- *Necronom V* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm 279-284- *Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Sequence on the alien planet 285- *Landscape* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

286- *Landscape with the ship aground* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood 70 x 100 cm

287-*Detail of the ship* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 288-*Top view of the ship* (1978). Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

289-*Entrance to the ship* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 290-*Interior corridor of the ship* (1978). Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

291-*Passageway with membrane* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

292-*Egg silo, version I.* (1978)

293-*Cabin of the alien spacecraft* (1978)

294-*Alien Egg,* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm.

295-*Alien Egg, version II* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm.

296-*Alien Egg, version III* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm.

297-*Agarracaras, version I* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

298-*Agarracaras, version II* (1977) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

299-*Astronaut with helmet and agarracaras* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

300-*Alien I, Agarracaras* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

301-*Alien II, Chestburster* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

302-303-*Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Monstrous birth.

304-*Alien III, front view* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 210 x 100 cm.

305-*Alien III, side view* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 210 x 100 cm.

306-*Alien III, front view V* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm.

307-*Alien III, side view V3* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 140 x 100 cm.

308-*Ron Cobb. Cocoons* (1977)

309- Giger. *Cocoons* (1978)

310- Head of the Alien (1978)

311-312-*Alien* (Ridley Scott, 1979). Alien attack.

313-316-Giger working on Alien. Shepperton Studios (London) (1978) 317-  
*Alien Monster I*. Cover of the book *Giger's Alien* (1979)

318- *Hieroglyphics* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

319- *Alien Monster IV* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 140 x 140 cm 320-*Alien Monster V* (1978) Acrylic on paper on wood. 140 x 140 cm 321- *Dog costume* (1968)

322- *Swissmade 2069* (Fredi Murer, 1968). Polyester

323- *Alien for Swissmade 2069* (1968)

324- *Swissmade 2069* (Fredi Murer, 1968)

325- *Poltergeist II. The Vomit* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

326- *Poltergeist II. The Metamorphosis* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

327-328-*Poltergeist II. The Primitive Creature* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

329-330-*Poltergeist II. The Great Beast* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

331-332-*Poltergeist II. The Cave* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

333-*Poltergeist II. The Smoke Beast* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

334-*Poltergeist II. The Vortex* (1985) Acrylic on paper on wood 70x100 cm

335-338-*Poltergeist II* (Brian Gibson, 1985)

339-340-*Goho Doji* (1987) Acrylic on paper on wood. 140x100 cm

341- Sil kills a victim with its spinal spikes (1994). Pencil on paper. 30 x 20 cm.

342- Sil (1994). Marker on Transcop. 80 x 30 cm.

343- Metamorphosis of Sil's head (1994). Marker and pencil on paper. 30 x 40 cm.

344- Sil (1994)

345-346- Sil (1994). Marker on transcop. 207 x 70 cm/70 x 24 cm.

347-348 Ghost Train (1994). Ballpoint pen and marker pen on paper. 50 x 162 cm

349- Ghost Train (1994). Marker on paper. 46 x 48 cm.

350- *Dune I* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

351- *Dune II* (1975) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

352- *Dune IV* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

353- *Dune V* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

354- *Dune VI* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

355- *Dune Worm XII* (1979) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm 356-*Tourist I. Biomechanical Birds* (1982)

357-*Tourist VII. Aquatic Aliens* (1982)

358-*Tourist II.* (1982)

359-*Tourist IV. Tentacled Creature* (1982)

360-*Tourist IX. Alien* (1982)

361- *Tourist XI* (1982)

362- *Dead Star* (1990)

363- Designs for *Alien III* (1991)

364- Designs for *Alien III* (1991) Pencil on transcop, 20 x 40 cm 365-  
*Batmobile* (1994)

366-*Heimkiller* (1967)

368-369-*The Second Celebration of the Four* (1975)

370-371-Images from Debbie Harry's music video *Backfired* (1981)

372-375-Images from Debbie Harry's music video *Now I know you know* (1981)

376-*Departure for Sabbath* (1976)

377-*Begoeterung* (1979) 378-  
*Dance of the Witches* (1977)

379-*Entrance* (1972)

380- *The Magician* (1975) Pencil and acrylic on wood. 131x60 cm

381- *The Trumpets of Jericho* (1983-87)

382- *Biomechanoid* (1976)

383- *Biomechanoid I* (1975-83)

384- *Biomechanoid 75* (1975)

385- *Birthing Gun* (1967). Ink on paper on wood. 170x110 cm.

386- *Landscape with Children XVIII* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

387- *Landscape with Children XIV* (1973) Acrylic on paper on wood. 70 x 100 cm

388- *Death Birth Machine I* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

389- *Biomecanoide I* (1974)

390- *Death bearing machine III* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

391- *Alpha* (1967). Ink on transcop on paper on wood. 120 x 105 cm.

392- *New York City VI. Torso* (1981) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

393- *Iluminatus I*, fragment. From left to right: Golowin, Leary and Lovecraft.  
(1978) 394-Portrait of Crowley in *The Beast 666* (1975)

395-398-*Self-portrait of Giger* (1981)

399- *Sergius Golowin* (1976) Acrylic on paper on wood. 100 x 70 cm

400- Fritz Billeter (1976)

401- *Minon* (1974) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm 402-  
*Friedrich Kuhn I* (1973) 80 x 60 cm. Acrylic on photo.

403- *Li II* (1974) Acrylic on paper on wood. 200 x 140 cm

### 3- REPERCUSSIONS

404- David Ho. *Fallen Angel* (2000)

405- David Ho. *Silent Scream* (2000)

406- Joachim Luetke. *Marilynmachine I* (1999)

407- Brom. *Grafter* (1997)

408- Demetrios Vakras. *Breathing Apparatus* (1996). Oil on canvas. 106.5cm x 84cm

409- Daniel Oullette. *Illness Licking the Temple of Beauty* (1994)

410- Jean Fontaine. *Interior Garden* (1999)

411- Jean Fontaine. *Typewriter* (1999) 412-

Sorayama. *Gynoid 1* (1983-1985)

413-Sorayama. *Sexy Robot 3* (1983-1985)

414-Stelarc. *Multiple Arms* (1982)

415- Marina Nuñez. *Untitled (science fiction)* (2000)

416- *Reina Borg* (1996)

417- *Edward Scissorhands* (Tim Burton, 1991)

418- Chris Cunningham. *Mean Machine* (1995)

419- *Judge Dread* (Danny Cannon, 1995)

420- Alien Queen. *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986)

421- *Alien 3* (David Fincher, 1991)

422- *Predator* (John McTiernan, 1987)

423- Patrick Tatopoulos. Designs for *Pitch Black* (2000)

424-Comic *Aliens Apocalypse* by Norma, issue no. 2 (2000)

425-426- *Videodrome* (David Cronenberg, 1982)

427-*Hellraiser* (Clive Barker, 1987) 428-

429-*Dark City* (Alex Proyas, 1998)

430-431-*Tetsuo: The Iron Man* (Shinya Tsukamoto, 1989) 432-Nine Inch Nails. *Happiness in Slavery* (1992)

433-434-Covers for the *Lovecraft Library* series 435-436-

Cover and back cover of *Entitäten* (1997) 437-439-

*Leotard art*. Model painted by Giger (1981) 440-Tattoo by Elio España (1995)

441-Tattoo by R. Hoelzer (1996) 442-

Tattoo by Andrea Elston (1996)

443-Michael Jackson's music video, *Captain Eo* (1986)

444-Cover of *Darkseed* (1994)

445-Cover of *Darkseed II* (1995)

446-Darkseed

447-448-Gigerstein (1998)

## APPENDIX II.SELECTED EXHIBITIONS

Here we list the exhibitions for which we have documentation and which are discussed in one of the chapters of the thesis.

### **Solo**

1966- Benno Gallery, Zurich

1968 – Vor der Klostermauer Gallery, St. Gallen

1970 – Bischofberger Gallery, Zurich

1976 – Sydow-Zirkwitz Gallery, Frankfurt

1977 – *Passagen Tempel* – Kunsthaus –

Zurich

1980 - Werke zum Film Alien. Hansen Galleries, New York

1984 - *Retrospektive Seedam- Kulturzentrum, Pfäffikon* 1988 -

*Drawings expanded* - Art Magazin Gallery, Zurich 1988 -

Petersen Gallery, Berlin

1993 *Watch-Abart*- Burgdorf, New York,

1996- *Visioni di fine millenio*- Milan

2002 - *Recent Sculptures and Prints* - Fuse Gallery, New York

2004 - *Le monde selon Giger* - La Halle Saint Pierre, Paris

### **Group exhibitions**

1968 - *Hommage à Che* - Stummer & Hubsschmid Gallery, Zurich 1969 -

*Phantastische Figuration in der Schweiz* - Helmhaus, Zurich 1978 -

*Images of Horror and Fantasy* - Bronx Museum, New York. 2000 -

*Phantastik am Ende der Zeit* - Erlangen

2004 - *Andererseits: Die Phantastik* - Landesgalerie am Oberösterreichischen Landesmuseum, Linz