



DESIGN GENIUS H. R. GIGER

Fox hired Giger to create a new alien design, but stuck to using their same old thing.

By Jan Doense

Swiss surrealist artist H.R. Giger, who won an Academy Award for his groundbreaking designs for Ridley Scott's *ALIEN* (1979), was approached by the producers of *ALIEN 3* and asked to redesign the titular creature. "This time around it had to be more animal-like, more elegant," said Giger by phone from his studio in Zurich. "You shouldn't get the feeling that it was a man wearing a suit. Basically, the head had to remain unaltered but the body had to change. David Fincher, the director, told me I would have total freedom. I worked on it for about a month, in August 1990. That was all the time I was given. But as far as I know, my designs were not used. That's disappointing."

Giger had not been asked to work on *ALIENS* (1986), Fox's earlier sequel which also utilized his designs from the original film. Unlike Giger's close collaboration with Scott, on *ALIEN 3* the artist merely faxed his designs. "Fincher would comment on them," said Giger. "Then my colleague, Corneliu de Fries, made small scale models based on my drawings. Finally photographs of those models were sent to Pinewood, where the construction of the final models was handled by the same people who worked on *ALIENS*."

"The shooting was interrupted because the original ending had to be altered for some reason. Apparently there were resemblances to the ending of *TERMINATOR 2*, but I can't be sure because the script of *ALIEN 3* was never given to me, which is a funny thing, come to think of it. Anyway, after that hiatus, a decision was made to stick to the creature design of the second film."

Giger is disappointed with Fox's cost-cutting on the new sequel and for the missed opportunity for *ALIEN 3* to be something more than a retread. "I came up with some nice improvements even though I wasn't given too much time," said Giger. "For instance, the skin of the creature was designed to produce tones; it had valves on it, like a saxophone. Maybe they just ran out of money. A

Giger wasn't even asked to work on Fox's *ALIENS* (1986), whose Alien Queen was an interpretation of Giger's distinctive style by Stan Winston's effects crew.



Giger, with his Oscar-winning creature design for Ridley Scott's *ALIEN* (1979). The Swiss surrealist artist's redesign of the creature for *ALIEN 3* was abandoned.

lot was spent on Sigourney Weaver. I read in the papers she got something like \$5.5 million for playing Ripley again. Imagine what could have been possible if all that money had been spent on the creature design! It could have been *ganz toll*. After all, the star of an *ALIEN* film should be the alien itself, right?"

No doubt Giger wasn't offered a script to read because it was still in the process of being

written at the time (see "Development Hell," page 23). What he doesn't realize is that his discarded design input was probably solicited to spur the production's own faltering story ideas. "They told me it would be more like the first one," said Giger. "More suspenseful. Not a war movie."

Despite the disappointment of *ALIEN 3*, Giger is excited by the possibilities of film and is eager to do more movie work—he is represented by New York agent Leslie Barany. Noted de Fries, Giger's sculpting apprentice, "It's a shame, since *ALIEN* so few interesting film projects have come his way. It's evident this man is capable of doing amazing things. What Giger really needs is a producer who not only admires his work, but is also willing to spend the time and money needed to bring his visions to proper life. Unfortunately though, it seems this business is run mostly by lawyers instead of creative peo-

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ple.

Dark Horse Comics, who publish a Fox-licensed ALIEN comic book series, has plans to publish Giger's *ALIEN 3 Sketchbook*, containing the artist's unused designs for the film, which could be available as early as June. Plans also call for Dark Horse to publish signed and numbered limited edition posters of Giger's ALIEN 3 designs, as well as sell a model of Giger's unused Bambi-burster concept. Among Giger's abandoned work for the film was a life-sized, seven-foot sculpt of the mother alien, crafted by Giger and DeFries in the artist's basement in Zurich.

Meanwhile Giger remains busy with other film projects, including designs for director Bill Malone's DEADSTAR, and for Giger's own property THE MYSTERY OF SAN GOTTARDO, about, said Giger, "a hospital in Chur where, at night, arms and legs of patients are being cut off and stolen." Giger's American publisher brought the idea to the attention of Clive Barker. "He liked it and confessed to being an admirer of my work," said Giger. "He's a very busy man, but who knows, maybe someday he'll find time to do something with it." Barker has penned the introduction to the newly published edition of Giger's classic *Necronomicon*, the basis of his ALIEN designs. •