

Note: I am an admirer of Guillermo del Toro's work, and a fan. I have created this document as a way for myself to further study and analyze the work and process of del Toro for my own research and interest, with specific regards to this exhibition. As such, this document is intended to serve as a sort of personal addendum to the exhibition catalogue "Guillermo del Toro: At Home with Monsters". The images and film stills that follow are from my own research looking for "echoes" of inspiration between the del Toro collection and the works in Mia's collection.

Kate Pehrson, 3/2/17

I was first introduced to Guillermo del Toro's work in 2007, when I went to see "Pan's Labyrinth". As a lifelong lover of fairy tales, fantasy, and of course the movies, I had heard that this film was a masterpiece of storytelling and a visual wonder, and I couldn't wait to see it.

As a kid, I spent HOURS pouring over fairy tales and illustrations, soaking in stories of princesses, sorcerers, ghosts, creatures, curses, castles and forests. Big beautiful tales of love, power, magic, romance and mystery, death and spookiness wrapped in rich color and grandeur that was worlds away from my clean-lined, spotless, mid-century Scandinavian style house and suburban life in the 1970s. That being said, my parents valued education greatly, and supported anything I wanted to read. My mother especially appreciated my love of fantasy and fiction, she herself having a copy of H.C. Andersen's Fairy Tales illustrated by Arthur Szyk that I coveted. One of my treasured possessions to this day was a present from my mom: the Time Life Series of Books "The Enchanted World", which arrived monthly in individual editions titled "Ghosts", "Night Creatures", "Water Spirits" or "Magical Beasts" and so on.

This love of fantastic tales continued through my life, finding its way into my preferences for not only books and movies, but for music, visual and design styles, color and detail.

So basically, the ads for Pan's Labyrinth had me at "fairy tale".

It was my birthday and I had just passed into the 2nd trimester of pregnancy. After some pretty bad months of dealing with both morning sickness and my two-year-old already on the earth, my movie night birthday was my first time out in a while. And what a gift: I found myself staring in awe, horror and fascination at the screen watching the tale of Ofelia and the Faun unfold. This was detail and story and wonder to a degree I had not seen. Later I learned that it was "eye protein" that I was digesting. Great big sumptuous mouthfuls of it. I couldn't shake the imagery, nor could I shake something I couldn't quite put into words. There was something I recognized there. A sort of kindred spirit—something I'd been searching for.

I was hooked on del Toro and I wanted more.

Truth be told, the realities of two young children at home prevented me from exploring much further for the next several years, but I knew this was a filmmaker I wanted to keep my eyes out for.

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So, fast forward to a couple years ago. I saw that Guillermo del Toro had a new film out, and that it was a gothic romance. There was no question I was going to go see it: romance, costumes, ghosts, a creepy house, a dreamy cast—and del Toro at the helm? No contest.

I went to see “Crimson Peak” at the IMAX theater at the Minnesota Zoo, where I was immersed in the twisty dark love story in full color on a 6-story high screen. Massive surround sound, giant figures— imperiled heroine, mysterious handsome stranger, and crumbling castle. Del Toro had done it to me again. But this time, I was prepared. This time I could DO something about it, because I had a new job...as a movie writer!

The SECOND I found out that “At Home With Monsters” was coming to Mia, I knew I was going to not only go to the exhibition, but I was going to write about it, and use the publication I write for as a platform to share a tiny bit of this immense and visionary mind with my little pocket of the world.

Yup. Nerd Girl gone wild.

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As someone who has lived in Minneapolis her whole life, (and as a former CIF guide and Education department assistant) I am familiar with Mia and it’s collection, the changes it has gone through over the years, and many of the previous special exhibitions that have come through. It is so exciting for me as a fan and as a member to see a unique exhibit like this come to Mia: a chance for the institute and the community to explore what it means to have a collection, what it means to surround yourself with inspiration, how that inspiration in turn can inspire.

So many people have said so much about del Toro—many people in a far better position to comment on his work than I—but I think part of what makes him so unique is that really anybody can find something here to admire, and something that speaks to you.

You don’t have to be a fan of the horror genre to appreciate obsession or dedication to craft. You don’t have to be a movie fan to appreciate and artist at work. You don’t have to understand to admire.

I found in del Toro's work and in my research of the Bleak House contents a sort of kindred soul. While I don't nearly approach his dedication nor level of obsession or collection, I immediately understood what del Toro said when he described Bleak House as an "exploded view of my brain". I understood what he meant by this immediately. It's how I interact with the world.

I have surrounded my home with visual references that fuel my mind. Stuff I HAVE To have around me. Stuff I have to dust, yes, but mostly stuff I like to handle, reorganize, contemplate, and add to. I like rich sumptuous colors, vibrant detail, and mystery. While I don't say I EVER want a life-size replica of my favorite writers and artists sitting in the room with me, I can understand and appreciate the desire to have the spirit of those who have inspired you around you. I too have always enjoyed the juxtaposition of the "high" next to the "low".

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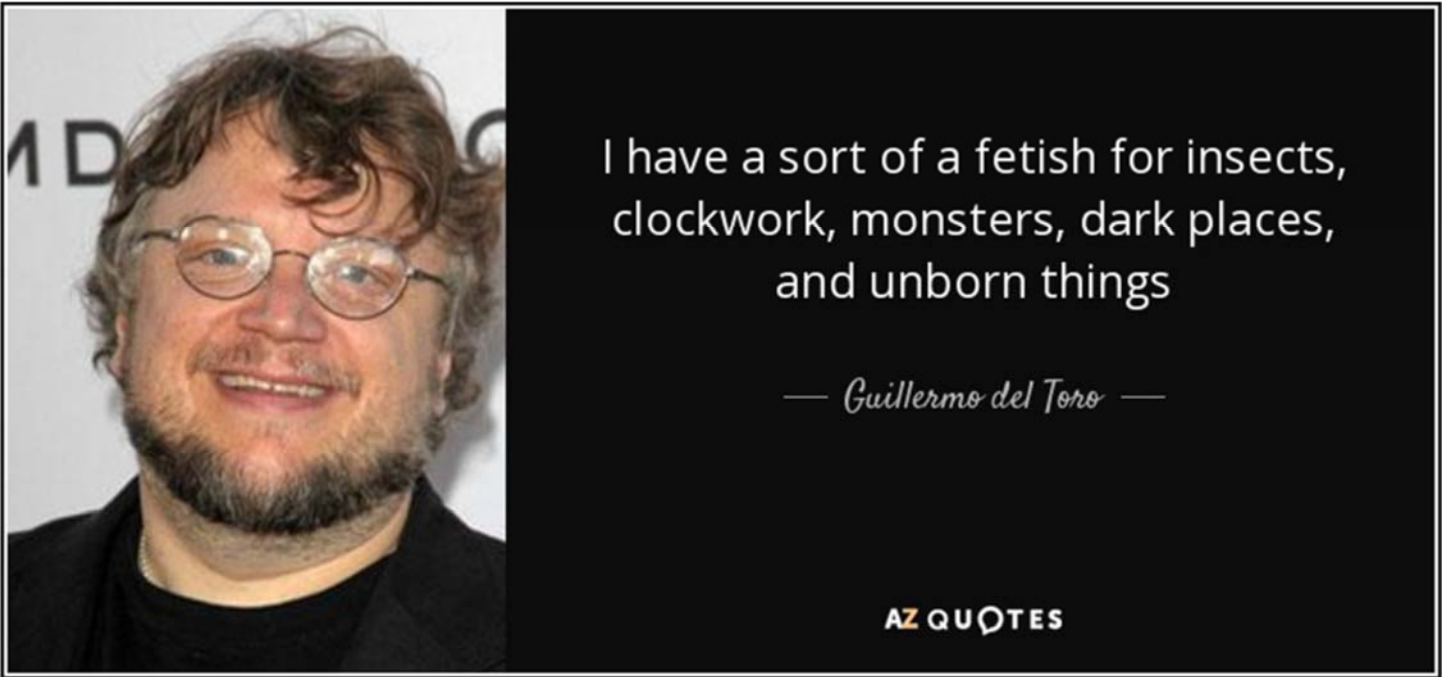
Del Toro said he wants to have a conversation with humanity. That's his goal with his movies , with his books, with all the things he helps produce, and with this exhibition. He said, "You can put your utmost effort into organizing all the symbols in your work, but you have blinders on about what other possible implications these symbols can have."

He is also having a conversation with us and the museum. Del Toro has chosen about 40 artifacts from the Mia collection that "spoke" to him, and that are hung in the exhibition galleries alongside his own works. We can contemplate the ideas of collecting, obsession, immersion, process and creativity. We can consider the role of the museum in society, the role of the artist as inspired and inspirer, creator and reflector.

As individuals and exhibition-goers, we can be repulsed, stunned or seduced by what we see and feel as we "walk through" an artist's brain. We are seeing the same art, but "it is our soul that is different." I for one, feel a sense of relief . A sense of kindred, but also a renewed sense of rejoicing that we are all together in our uniqueness.

In the intro to the exhibition catalog, del Toro says he thinks we all have a piece of "glass" in our souls, that resonates with certain "notes" in the universe. He says his resonates "dark, low and full of monsters." Mine may not be quite that low, but pretty close.

How about you?



Guillermo del Toro Filmography

Director/Writer:

Cronos (1993) (Spanish with English Subtitles)

Mimic (1997)

Devil's Backbone (2001) (Spanish with English subtitles)

Blade II (2002)

Hellboy (2004) (Available to stream on Netflix)

Pan's Labyrinth (2006) (Spanish with English subtitles)

Hellboy II: The Golden Army (2008)

Pacific Rim (2013)

Crimson Peak (2015)

Del Toro is an artist, whose primary medium is the motion picture. He sees movies not as something you direct, but something you “orchestrate”. It is closer to a piece of music, or perhaps an opera than a piece of visual art. And, as a great orchestra conductor must understand each individual instrument in order to pull out it’s potential, a conductor also understands that all instruments playing together are greater than the sum of their parts.



El sueño de la razón produce monstruos, 1797-1798; Francisco Goya

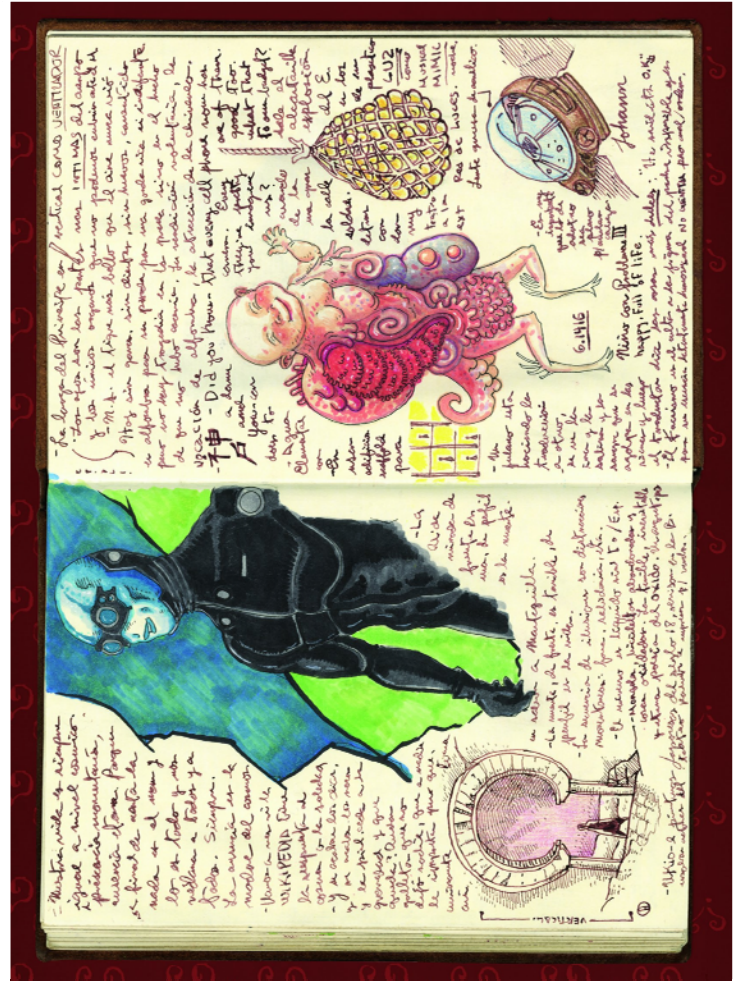
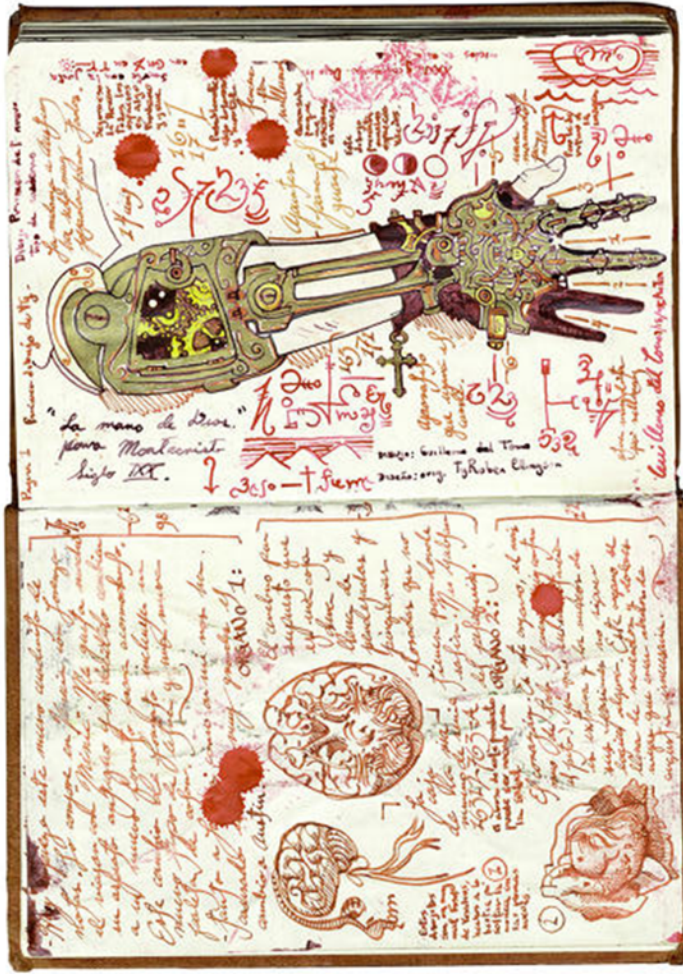


The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters (Australia), 2008, Yinka Shonibare

Del Toro writing in one of his notebooks in the comic room in Bleak House



He is an accomplished visual artist—he draws: (Taken from del Toro's notebooks)



Del Toro sculpts, and is aware of potential and possibility for his creatures and how they can be translated from page to 3-dimensional form and then into movement. How creatures will move on screen is integral to development in del Toro’s designs.

The Map seller, “Hellboy 2”:

Drawing on left

Final film creation on right



Del Toro working on a troll from the trollmarket scene in “Hellboy 2”



He owned his own special effects company, **Necropia**, which specialized in making monsters and creatures. He cites legendary artist Dick Smith as an inspiration for monsters and makeup effects.



*Frederico Luppi as Jesus Gris in **Cronos***

*Actor Ron Perlman, Guillermo del Toro and makeup artist Mike Elizalde for **Hellboy***

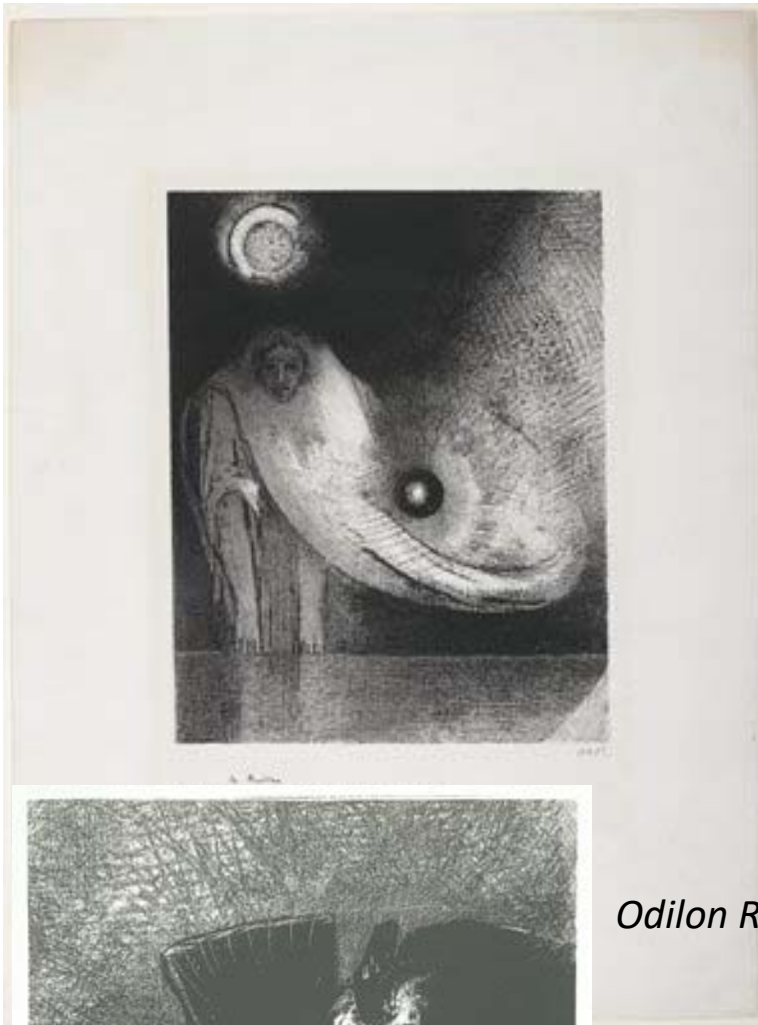


He is not just a creator—but a student of creation. He studies the brushstrokes that others use to better understand the final creation. In all media.

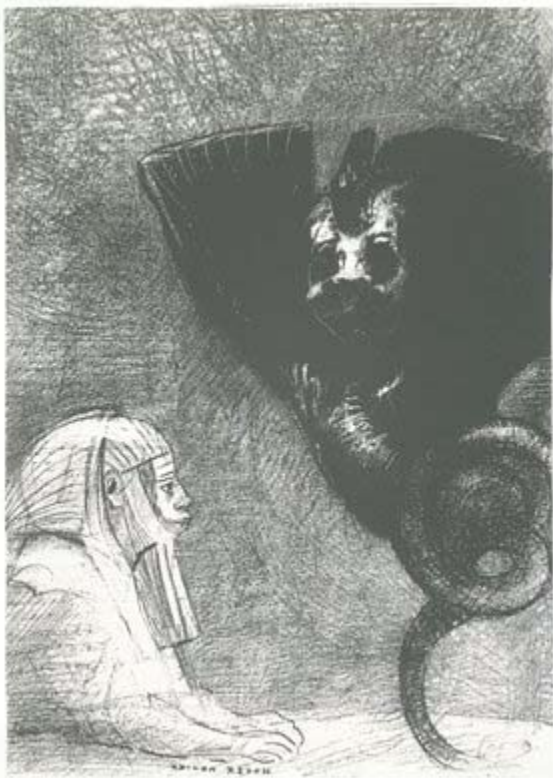
He is a visual art collector, citing Francisco Goya, the Symbolists (Rops, Redon, Bocklin, Schwabe), and others.

GOYA pieces at MIA



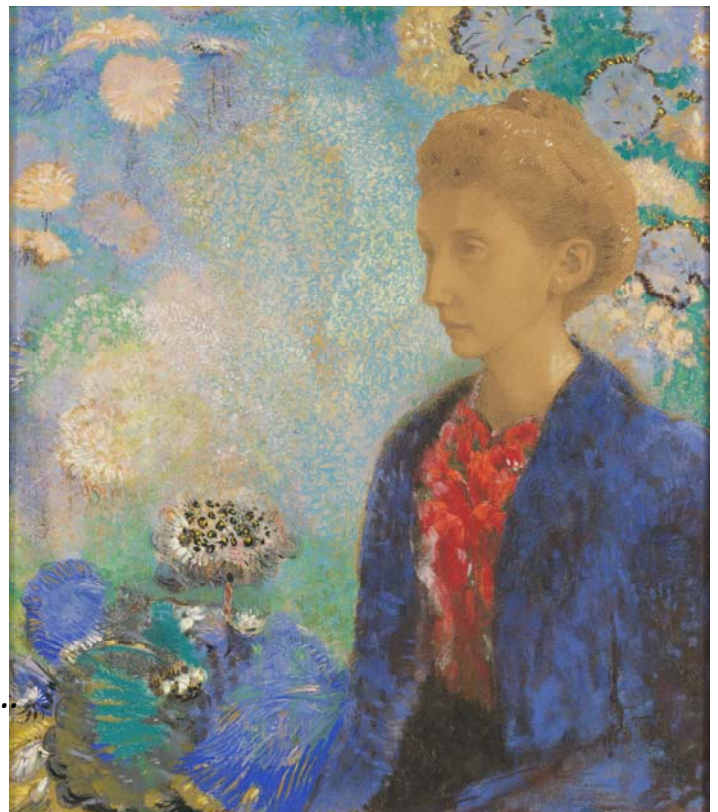


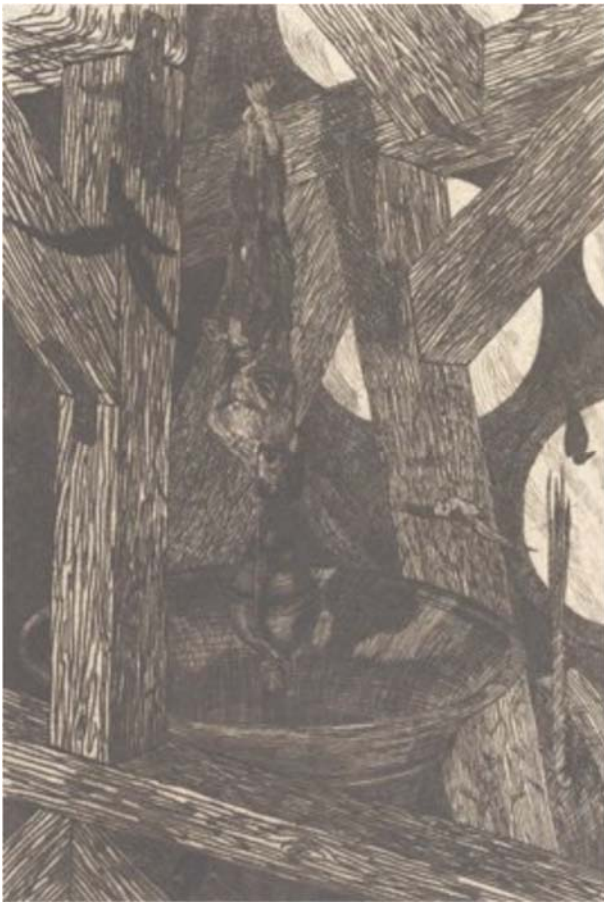
Odilon Redon pieces from Mia collection



Redon from Pinterest...

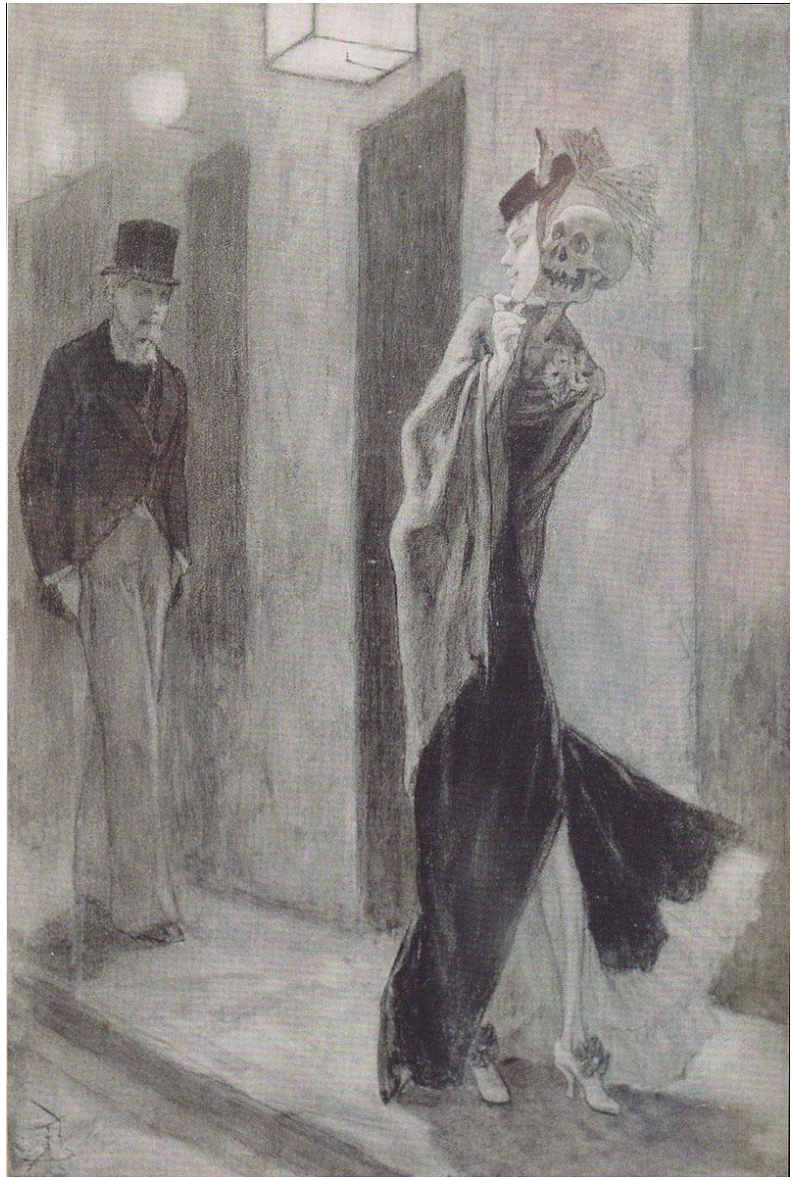
...In color





La Pendu from *Mia* collection

Felicien Rops



Felicien Rops, *Human Parody*



Ivana Baquero as Ofelia in Pan's Labyrinth, in the hall of the King of the Underworld

Del Toro is keenly aware of the impact of color, palette and lighting, and often starts with basic color palette when preparing to work on a new movie and set



There is a 3:20 minute YouTube video with some idea of how this works:

<https://youtu.be/zwDfwrHuMRI>

He is a sound artist—attuned to the landscape and layers of audio input that create a world in our ears as we take it in through our eyes. In fact, just in February he received the Filmmaker Award from the Motion Picture Sound Editors at their annual Golden Reel awards society for his contribution to film in the area of sound.

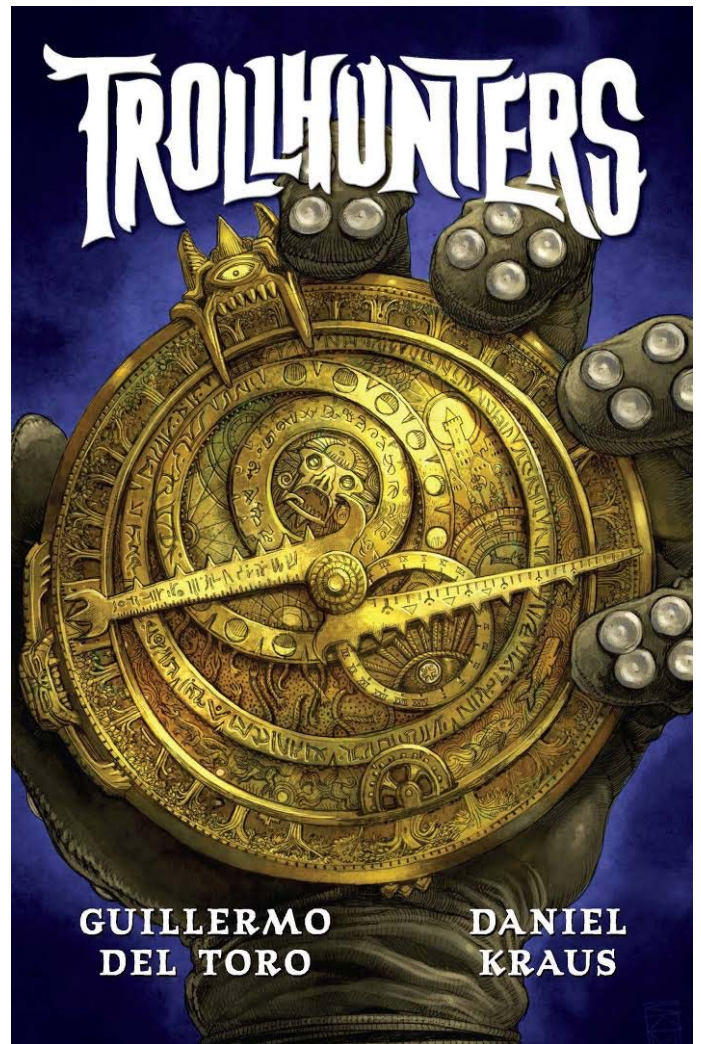
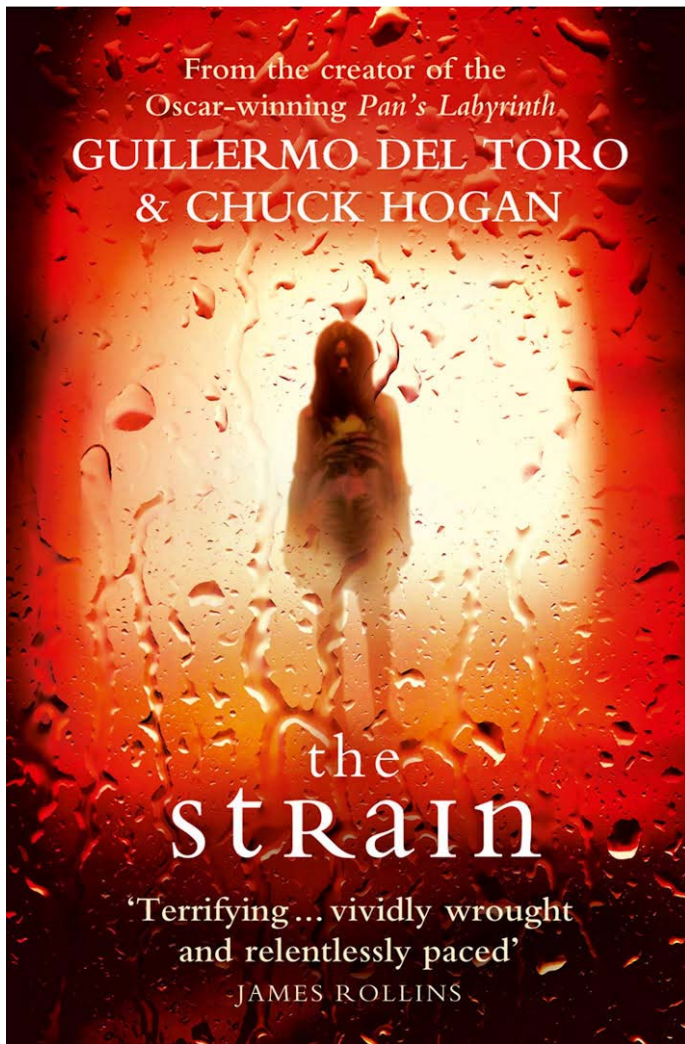
“Texturally and narratively, sound and image fuse in the cinematic experience,” says del Toro. “I have spent as much time on the mixing board as I have on a stage shooting or in a color correction suite grading the final film. To paraphrase Mark Twain: ‘The difference between the almost right sound and the right sound ‘tis the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.’”

Scott Gershin, longtime sound director and frequent collaborator “notes that working with a director with such a consuming interest in the nuances of sound can be daunting. “Guillermo can be tough and demanding,” he asserts. “He’s challenging, but in a good way. He makes me work hard.” He adds, that the hard work continues through the final mix. “He uses all the tools in the sound chain. If there are surrounds, he wants to hear them. If there’s a sub, he wants to hear that. If it’s a 7.1 Atmos mix, he wants to have fun with it and he’ll take advantage of it on a scene, by scene basis.” It’s exactly that passion and high expectations that makes working with del Toro rewarding, says Gershin. “He makes me stretch muscles and experiment,” he notes. “He’s also very appreciative when good sound happens. It’s all about creativity and the work. I find that very gratifying.”

(Excerpted from (<https://www.shootonline.com/spw/mpse-filmmaker-award-winner-guillermo-del-toro-appetite-sound>))

He has a longstanding relationship with composer Javier Navarrete, who composed the music for both *Devil’s Backbone* and *Pan’s Labyrinth*, winning an Oscar for the latter. He recently selected Alexandre Desplat to be the composer for del Toro’s latest project “*The Shape of Water*”. Desplat wrote the scores for other films such as *The King’s Speech*, *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, *Godzilla*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Argo* and *The Imitation Game* and previously worked with del Toro projects *Rise of the Guardians* and his Netflix series “*Trollhunters*”

He is an imaginative and writer, having written all of the movies he’s directed, as well as screenplays for “The Hobbit: an Unexpected Journey”, and “The Hobbit: Battle of the Five Armies”, as well as the Vampire series “The Strain” and “Trollhunters”, both of which have been adapted for television.



He is an avid reader, citing many authors including: HP Lovecraft, Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe, Andrew Lang, Edgar Allen Poe, and Charles Dickens, the latter having a whole section of GDT's collection devoted to him, as well as calling "Bleak House" after Dickens' work. He has famously tried to make an HP Lovecraft novella 'At the Mountains of Madness' into a movie for years.

Guillermo del Toro has said Stephen King is his favorite living writer.



He is a fan boy—He loves pop culture, comics, Japanese manga, he once directed one of the infamous “Simpsons” Halloween episodes.



Plastic collectors items and the like are mingled amongst the more “highbrow” works in his personal collection.



Untitled 66, 1977

Joel D. Levinson, Gelatin silver print

He is a film fan. An avid watcher and re-watcher. He cites his three favorite film creatures as Frankenstein’s Monster, the Gill-Man from “Creature from the Black Lagoon”, and Lon Chaney’s Phantom of the Opera. He says his obsession with Frankenstein’s monster borders on fetish and obsession.



Del Toro just revealed that the Gill-man creature is the inspiration behind his latest film *The Shape of Water*



Ricou Browning as the Gill-man in Creature from the Black Lagoon



Lon Chaney, Sr. as the Phantom (Erik) in the 1925 film Phantom of the Opera

For a list of films Guillermo del Toro has recommended, this link:

With the caveat that he has said it is HIS list, and a true film-lover must cultivate their own taste.

https://letterboxd.com/ben_macdonald/list/guillermo-del-toros-twitter-film-recommendations/

"Lost films only stay lost if no one looks for them. Be curious. Be peculiar. What you watch is what you are."

"Your taste in film is a quest. You have a palate and you must refine it to match your essence. Never settle and never follow blindly."

"Film is a religious call. No one is right or wrong- During the very same mass some look at the clock while others find their Damascus road"

"Wittgenstein said: 'The limits of your language are the limits of your world'. The same is true of your visual language. Be curious. Want more"

"Favorite movies don't have to be perfect movies. Like in any relationship, Love is what makes them stick around."

"If we don't defend what we love- if we let it fade- then our lives lose meaning."

From the mind and mouth of Guillermo del Toro

- ***Every single act of creation is political at some level***
- ***You can put your utmost effort into organizing all the symbols in your work, but you have blinders on about what other possible implications these symbols can have.***
- ***There is a part of film that is like a song...I can love it, and you can hate it...it's the same movie. It's our soul that is different.***
- ***Most of the time, discussions about movies start and stop at content, at dramaturgy....you orchestrate a movie. There is a part that is only understood in the movement of it at the moment.***
- ***My mission is evangelical—I'm a sharer—an enthusiast.***
- ***I collect images because they feed you back.***
- ***I come from a culture of arranging. In Mexico we say "give us five objects, and we'll make an altar***
- ***We live in a disposable culture. That is the opposite of me. We all seem to be waiting for the 2.0 of everything! Including our F#@king Life!***
- ***There is nothing post-modern about what I do. I wear my feelings on my sleeve. I am completely un-ironic.***
- ***I had grown up with my mother's opinion of what I could hang in my room...then my wife's. Bleak House was my emancipation.***
- ***I want to be promiscuous with art.***
- ***Why should YOU tell ME what feeds me?***
- ***Art has 2 functions: to define the world, and to define you***
- ***The only thing that gives me uncertainty—that scares me—is certainty.***
- ***Success is F#@king up on your own terms***
- ***To know what you fear is to know who you are—illuminate the negative space***

In my “addendum”, I have selected objects I found on the artsmia.org website that reminded me of his work. I looked for what I call “Echoes”

Funny enough, I chose some of these objects before I had a chance to see that del Toro had connected with them as well. He is encouraging us to go out and find the things that inspire US.



Dear Diary--Never Since We Left Prague, 1955

Leonora Carrington, Oil on canvas

*(In the exhibition)



**Driftwood,
Dark Roots, Maine, 1928
Paul Strand,
Platinum print**



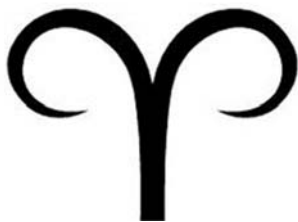
Ofelia and the Faun, Pan's Labyrinth



Ofelia at the entrance to Pan's Labyrinth

What is this symbol?

- Found in Faun's horns,
- Echoed at the entrance to the labyrinth
- Symbol for Aries



(astrological)



Goldweight [Ram's Head], 19th-20th C,
Akan, Brass

- Some have said Fallopian tubes...



Horned Forest Spirit Mask,
20th C, Kuba



Pole finial, 12th century BCE
Unknown artist, China, bronze



Mars His Idiot, 1937

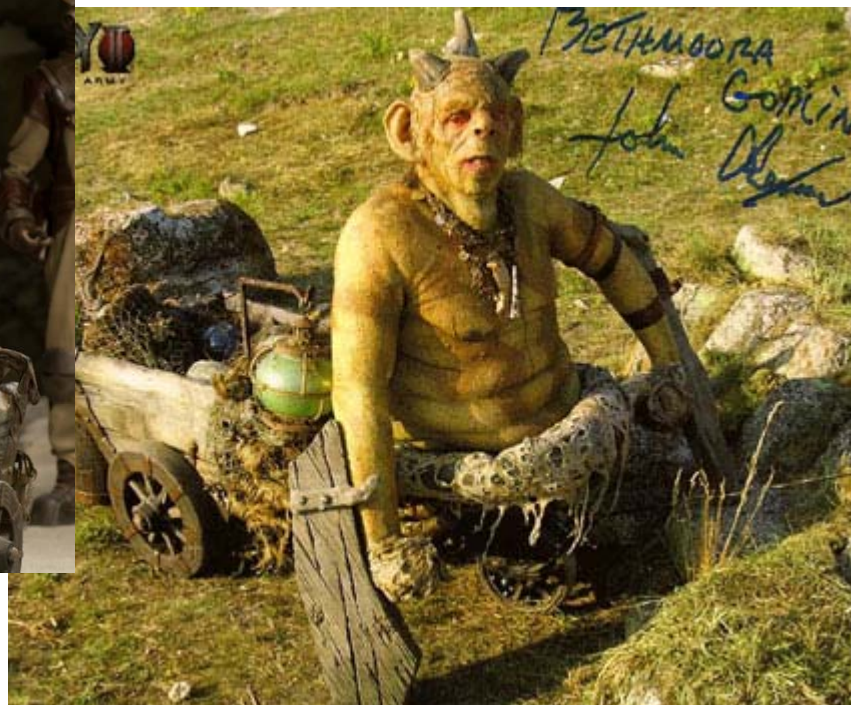
Kerr Eby



Mr. Wink, Hellboy 2



Bethmoora goblin, Hellboy 2



Funeral March for the Minimal Man, 2002 Chris Mars

*(In the Exhibition)



Still Life with Fruits,
Foliage and Insects,
c. 1669

Abraham Mignon,

Oil on canvas

*Jessica Chastain
as Lady Lucille
Sharpe in Crim-
son Peak*





Forest Coat, 2005

Jon Eric Riis, Silk, metallic threads, beads, sequins

Mira Sorvino examines a bug from the "Judas Breed" in Mimic





An insect/fairy transformation in Pan's Labyrinth



Helmet in dragonfly shape, 17th century

Unknown artist, Japan,

Iron, lacquer, wood, leather, gilt, pigments, silk, papier-mâché

*not in exhibition, but on display in galleries



Detail of moth motif on wallpaper

Allerdale Hall, Crimson Peak



Moth-inspired chair in Crimson Peak

*Tom Hiddleston, Mia Wasikowska and Jessica Chastain in **Crimson Peak***





*Mia Wasikowska as Edith Sharpe examines mural/moths in **Crimson Peak***

A Man and a Woman Examining
Orchids which Grow from
a Skull, c. 1920

Heinrich Kley



The Citron and Insects,
19th century,
Priscilla Susan Bury,
Watercolor



A reaper from *Blade 2*



Behold now Behemoth which I made with thee, 1825
William Blake, Engraving

Sammael from *Hellboy*

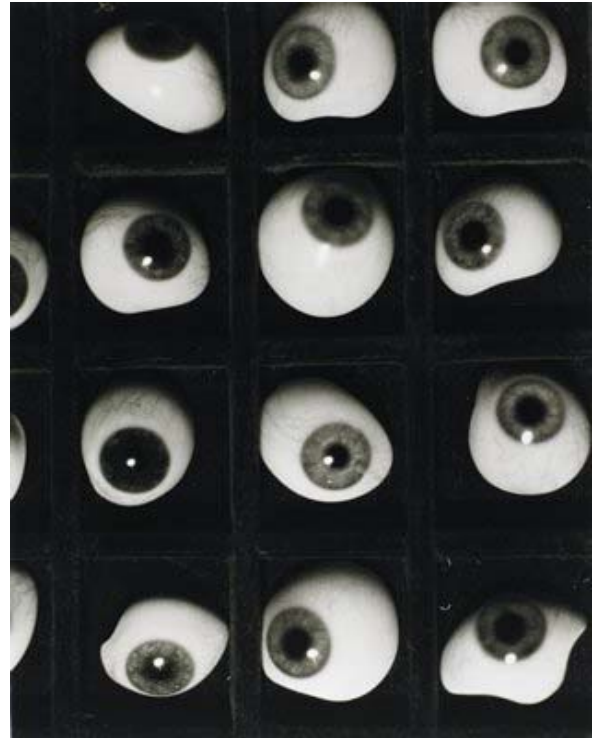


Death, c. 1912-1913 (published 1920)

Christian Rohlf; Publisher: Die Schaffenden, Woodcut in dark blue ink



Glass Eyes, c. 1928,
Herbert Bayer, Publisher,
Rudolph Kicken Gallery,



Angel of Death played by Doug Jones, **Hellboy 2**

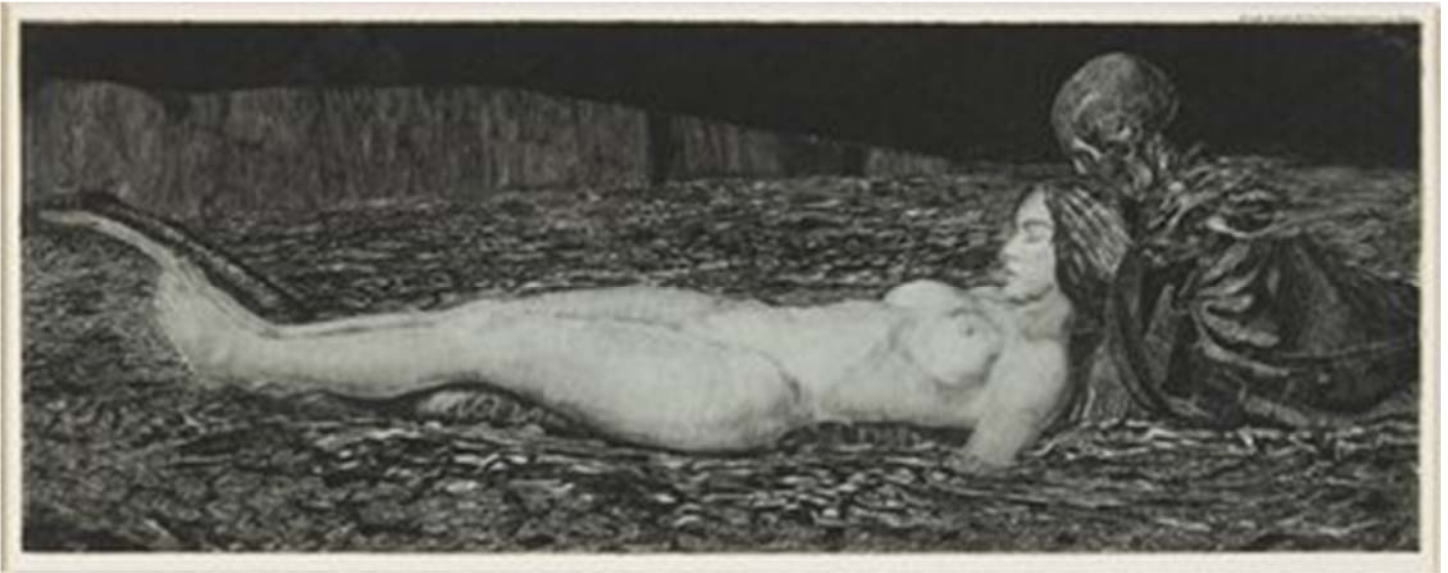


*The Pale Man, played by Doug Jones, **Pan's Labyrinth***



Satyr Drinking
(with alternate study
of hand),
20th century

Heinrich Kley
Graphite on paper



A Dead Woman, from the series *Death and the Maiden*, 1902, 1907
August Brömse, Etching on blue chine collé



*A skeleton in a vat of red clay in **Crimson Peak***



Chris Nkulo and Patience Umeh,
Enugu, Nigeria, 2008
Pieter Hugo, Digital C-print

Ofelia and the Faun, Pan's Labyrinth





A Perspective of Roman Arches, with Two Lions Carved in Relief on Stone Slabs in the Foreground,
c. 1761, Giovanni Battista Piranesi



Perspective of Arches, with a Smoking Fire,
Plate 6 from *Carceri d'Invenzione*, 1749,
Giovanni Battista Piranesi

*Troll Market, **Hellboy 2***



The Photojournalist, 1955

Andreas Feininger

Gelatin silver print



*Abe Sapien in **Hellboy 2***





Hand pendant, about 1850
Unknown artist, Morocco Silver, enamel, *glass*



Hand with Mirror, 1100
Chimu, Wood, metal



"Pale Man" from *Pan's Labyrinth*



*Giant Toad from **Pan's Labyrinth***



"Frog Bank" (or "Two Frogs") *mechanical bank*, c. 1882

James H. Bowen; Manufacturer: J. & E. Stevens Company, Cromwell, Connecticut, 1843-1950s iron, pigment, glass

"Frog on Rock"

mechanical bank, c. 1920-1930s; M. Elizabeth Cook; Manufacturer: Kilgore Manufacturing Company, Iron, pigment





Ofelia uses her key in Pan's Labyrinth



"Key, Golden Gate (semi-mechanical)"
mechanical bank, c. 1915
W. J. Somerville, Iron, pigment

Lady Lucille Sharpe and her chatelaine



Mural in nursery of Allerdale Hall, **Crimson Peak**

Exterior Shot of Allerdale Hall in **Crimson Peak**





"Panorama Bank" *mechanical* bank, c. 1876

J. Butler, American; Manufacturer: J. & E. Stevens Company,

Cromwell, Connecticut, 1843-1950s, Iron, pigment, glass



Funeral torch, c. 1720

Unknown artist, Italy

Gilded and painted wood and wrought iron



Cast of teller's wicket, 1967 (designed 1908)

Louis Henri Sullivan;

Designer: George Grant Elmslie;

Caster: Jerry Bonnette

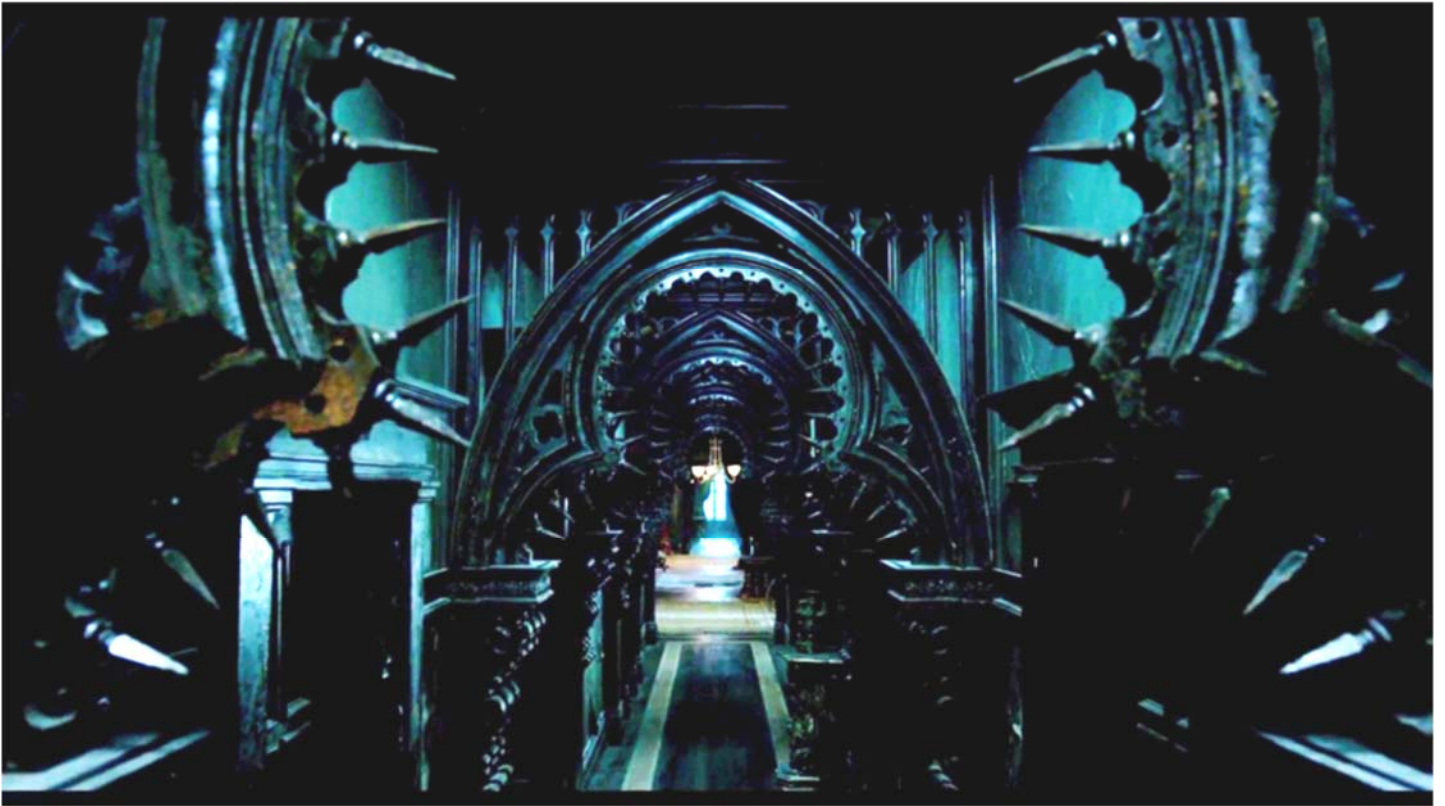
Bronze



Folio stand, c. 1870s
Attributed to Luigi Frullini
Walnut



*Sharpe family crest **Crimson Peak***



Interior Shots—Crimson Peak



Bibliography:

Guillermo del Toro: At Home with Monsters: Inside His Films, Notebooks, and Collections, Aug 30, 2016, by Guillermo del Toro and Guy Davis

Exhibition book/catalog

Guillermo del Toro Cabinet of Curiosities: My Notebooks, Collections, and Other Obsessions Hardcover – October 29, 2013, by Guillermo Del Toro (Author), Marc Zicree (Author)

Came out a couple years before the exhibition catalog, an artistic, coffee-table style book looking at del Toro's obsessions with collecting and the art of his famous notebooks.

The Devil's Backbone and Pan's Labyrinth: Studies in the Horror Film, May 17, 2016, Danel Olson, editor

Analysis and comparison of two of del Toro's most compelling works, Olson sees these films as companions to each other and has put together a collection of essays and interviews with the cast and crew of the films. Includes a forward from Guillermo del Toro.

Crimson Peak: The Art of Darkness, Oct 13, 2015, by Mark Salisbury

A coffee-table style book that combines lush photography, interviews, trivia and snippets from cast and crew about the production design and research behind the story and film.

The Golden Labyrinth: The Unique Films of Guillermo del Toro, by Steve Earles, 2009, Noir Publishing, UK

A book written by a fan, this is not so much in-depth cinematographic analysis as a compendium of photographs, trivia and stories about the films. Not the greatest writing ever, but each film is given a *thorough* retelling – the film written out in complete narrative form on the page.

Monsters: Monsters: Evil Beings, Mythical Beasts, and All Manner of Imaginary Terrors, David D. Gilmore, 2009, University of Pennsylvania press

Using colorful and absorbing evidence from virtually all times and places, *Monsters* is the first attempt by an anthropologist to delve into the mysterious, frightful abyss of mythical beasts and to interpret their role in the psyche and in society. After many hair-raising descriptions of monstrous beings in art, folktales, fantasy, literature, and community ritual, including such avatars as Dracula and Frankenstein, Hollywood ghouls, and extraterrestrials, Gilmore identifies many common denominators and proposes some novel interpretations.

On-Line Bibliography

- <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2011/02/07/show-the-monster>
The article that inspired the exhibition
- <http://deltorofilms.com/home-monsters-interview-lacmas-curator-britt-salvesen/>
- <http://unframed.lacma.org/2016/11/10/guillermo-del-toro-chemist-interview-keith-mcdonald-and-roger-clark>
- <http://brightwalldarkroom.com/issue-44/2017/2/14/an-interview-with-guillermo-del-toro>

Once the choice is made, it's a meaningful choice. That's why the discussion in art is that the moment Duchamp signed that urinal, he declared it a work of art because his gaze made it art. He said, if I look at it the right way, this is art. Which in a different, pop way is Andy Warhol transforming the Campbell's soup can by making it a work of art, or Lichtenstein blowing up comic book panels. Because I think that the moment you look at it as art, and you treat it as art, it is art. There's a willingness, there's a faith, there's a very, very magical alchemy that happens when somebody looks at something with enormous love and enormous passion—and it doesn't matter what that material is. It can be a comic book page, it can be a silly story, and you don't change it, but the way you look at it transforms it. Which is a very different exercise than postmodernism. Postmodernism or kitsch is me winking at you, saying 'I know it's silly, but I'm being ironic. I'm above the material.' And for me, the transformative power of art is you are *not* above the material.

<http://brightwalldarkroom.com/issue-44/2017/2/14/an-interview-with-guillermo-del-toro>

- <http://www.moviemaker.com/archives/series/criterion-crash-course/criterion-crash-course-trilogia-del-toro/3/>