

Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, Features Kirk Hammett Collection

The Columbia Museum of Art in Columbia, SC, will present *It's Alive! Classic Horror and Sci-Fi Art from the Kirk Hammett Collection*, an exhibition of graphic art that has seeped into the public imagination and reflected society's deepest fears and anxieties for nearly a century, on view from Feb. 15 through May 17, 2020.

Best known as lead guitarist of the famed rock band Metallica, Kirk Hammett is also an obsessive collector of visually arresting horror and sci-fi film art and has dedicated the last three decades to creating one of the world's most important collections. The exhibition, organized by the Peabody Essex Museum (PEM), is touring internationally and makes its final stop at the CMA.

"This show reminds us that art casts a broad net and includes more than paintings with big gold frames," says CMA Chief Curator Will South. "It is about the dreams and fantasies that stick with us through childhood and beyond. Dreams which include, as we all know, plenty of monsters."

It's Alive! explores the interplay of creativity, emotion, and popular culture through 135 works from 20th-century cinema, including posters by an international array of graphic designers, rare works by unidentified master artists, and related memorabilia such as electric guitars, lobby cards, film props, and costumes. Originally designed as ephemeral works, many of the works on view are exceedingly rare or even singular in nature. Celebrating the graphic artistry of these posters, the exhibition also delves into the cultural meaning of horror and sci-fi films and the scientific underpinning of fear.

Hammett credits his collection as a primary source for his own sonic creativity, reflecting, "The stuff of horror has a mojo that always works on me. I start producing ideas. They just flow like liquid."

Originally printed in large numbers, 20th-century horror and sci-fi film posters integrated commercial, decorative, graphic, and fine art forms into a publicly accessible medium designed to captivate passersby. Bold, stylized lettering and vibrant swathes of color drew the eye from the title headline to the claws of multifarious ghouls, monsters, or men from Mars. These meticulously hand-drawn compositions could be found everywhere from lobbies to train cars to the pages of magazines. Inevitably, theaters changed up their offerings, and these carefully designed promotional materials were often discarded.

For a time, Universal Pictures contracted the Morgan Lithograph Company to produce their posters. Ten artists worked exclusively on Universal Pictures' account in a building adjacent to the studio, allowing Universal's art director control over how a film was marketed. Poster production was incorporated into an integrated strategy of filmmaking, promotion, distribution, and presentation that became known as the studio system. Pressbooks advertised a range of creative marketing products to theaters that were intended to keep the promotion of a film on message. For the 1931 release of *Dracula*, pressbooks advertised "Posters that Fascinate with Weird Appeal" and "Paper that Lures like the Vampire Himself."

Before becoming a cult icon who routinely plays sold-out stadiums around the world, Hammett was a shy kid "dreamily obsessed," as his biographer Stefan Chirazi writes, "with monsters, ghouls, toys, movies and guitars." The original Frankenstein with Boris Karloff was the first monster with whom Hammett connected; then came *Godzilla*, the *Mummy*, and a whole cast of fantastical outsiders.

Hammett's collection plays on our curiosity about the supernatural, the other, the mutant, and the beast within us. It toys



Lionel Reiss, "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari", 1921, produced by Decla-Bioscop, Germany, printed by H.C. Miner Lithograph Company, lithograph, 41 x 27 in. (104.1 x 68.6 cm). Courtesy of the Kirk Hammett Horror and Sci-Fi Memorabilia Collection.

with our collective anxieties and suspicions during times of social, political, cultural, or economic tumult and our need to cope with growing pains and feelings of estrangement.

"My collection takes me to a place where I need to be," says Hammett. "Among the monsters, where I'm most comfortable and most creative. That's where the magic has happened for me all these years and it's something I've come to trust. From the moment I first encountered these characters, I could see that these guys had just as much difficulty in coping as I did. It's a very, very dark universe when we shut our eyes at night."

Terror is one of the strongest emotions we are capable of feeling, and many are drawn to horror and sci-fi films for that very reason. Researchers are now learning more about the creative mindset such films can induce. When watching frightening films, the brain and body have an intensified experience while the cognitive mind can know there is no real danger or harm. "For those who can suspend reality for the sake of momentary thrills, empathy may be what allows them to feel the anxiety and fear that the characters are experiencing, and to enjoy the rush in the safe atmosphere of the theater," explains New York University neuroscientist Joseph Ledoux in the exhibition catalogue.

"Hollywood posters and now Hollywood trailers continue to fill our imaginations," says South. "Part of this story is that art was and remains at the center of attracting our attention: to bring a Martian to life, it took artists to create them."

It's Alive! Classic Horror and Sci-Fi Art from the Kirk Hammett Collection is presented through the support of our generous sponsors. Frankenstein sponsors: Sam and Sandy McGuckin. Dracula sponsors: Sheila and Tony DiCioccio. Mummy sponsors: Coal Powered Film Works, William and Justine Roberts, and Susan Thorpe and John Baynes. Werewolf sponsors: Barbara B. Boyd, The Braddock Group of Janney Montgomery Scott LLC, Marty Fort, John Frick, Michel G. Moore, Lyman and Jocelyn Munson, Jerel Rosati, Marcia Stine, and Bill Schmidt. Grantors: City of Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina Arts Commission, and the Town of Lexington.

The exhibition was organized by the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

For further information check our SC Institutional Gallery listings or visit (columbiamuseum.org).

if ART in Columbia, SC, Offers Works by Philip Morsberger & Anita Huffington

if ART in Columbia, SC, is presenting *Form & Figure*, featuring oil pastel drawings and bronze and stone sculptures respectively by Philip Morsberger and

Anita Huffington, on view through Feb. 15, 2020.

The 85-year-old Huffington, who *continued above on next column to the right*

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studied dance with Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, came out of the 1950s New York City art scene as a sculptor. Morsberger, 86, is the former Ruskin Master of Drawing at Britain's Oxford University and among the United States' most prominent figurative painters of the past decades.

Morsberger's figurative and abstract oil pastel drawings are from 2019. They are a selection from his massive recent output of drawings. Huffington will present classical-inspired bronze, wood and sandstone figurative sculptures from the 1994 - 2009 period.

Baltimore native and Augusta, GA, resident Morsberger (b. 1933) is among the Southeast's most prominent painters. In the mid-1950s, he studied at Oxford University, where from 1971-1984 he was the university's Ruskin Master of Drawing. He used the prestigious position to develop and head the now renowned, full-blown art department at the university. In the United States, Morsberger has taught at Harvard University; Dartmouth College; the University of California, Berkeley; Miami University in Ohio; and the California College of Arts and Crafts, now the California College of Arts, in San Francisco. He retired from teaching after a five-year stint as artist in residence at Augusta State University, now Augusta University.

Morsberger's work is in many museums, including Oxford's Ashmolean Museum and the South Hampton City Art Gallery in England; the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the San Jose Museum of Art and Sacramento's Crocker Art Museum in California; the Morris Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art Atlanta in Georgia; the Columbus Museum of Art and Youngstown's Butler Institute of American Art in Ohio; the Rochester Memorial Art Gallery in New York state; Dartmouth's Hood Museum in New Hampshire; and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans. He has exhibited widely in the United States and Europe.

Morsberger was the subject of the 2007

book *Philip Morsberger: A Passion for Painting* by Christopher Lloyd. He and his work also were the topic of or included in numerous other books and catalogues, including Susan Landauer's *The Lighter Side of Bay Area Figuration* (2000), J. Richard Gruber's *Philip Morsberger: Paintings and Drawings from the Sixties* (2000) and Marcia Tanner's *Philip Morsberger* (1992).

Anita Huffington (b. 1934), also a Baltimore native, has been exhibiting her sculptures continuously since the mid-1970s. Her work is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Arkansas Art Center, the Crystal Bridges Museum of Art, also in Arkansas, and other public collections. She has shown at the Morris Museum of Art in Augusta, the Mississippi Museum of Art in Jackson, Georgia's Columbus Museum of Art and other museums, galleries and art centers. The book *Anita Huffington*, with photos by David Finn, was published in 2007.

Studying with Graham and Cunningham, Huffington was part of the New York City art scene of the late 1950s and early 1960s, when she hung with painters such as Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline and Philip Guston. Relationships such as those set her on the path of expressing her feelings for movement and life not through dance but through sculpture. She earned a BFA and MFA from City College in New York. In the mid-1970s, Huffington moved with her late husband to Arkansas's Ozark Mountains to exchange city life for nature. Living in a log cabin surrounded by nature had an impact on Huffington's work, which at times took on the characteristics of trees, wind, rock and soil. Half a decade ago, Huffington moved to Augusta.

In addition to the influences of the New York scene, author Nancy Princenthal related Huffington's work to earlier modernists, including the paintings by Amedeo Modigliani and sculptures by Constantin Brancusi and Isamu Noguchi. Pulitzer Prize winning art critic Holland Cotter referred to "the sense of mystery hiding