The Dead Alive: The Visual Horror of Universal’s Monster

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The dead is alive. Archivists strive to preserve the past, almost as if one is preserving the dead. This film series will be a celebration of the dead, the ‘Golden Age of Universal’ monster films of the 1920s through the 1940s. Universal monster films were produced fast, and were forgotten even faster. But, with the revival of the horror genre in the 70s and 80s, many have revisited these monsters that were once thought as images of horror, today audiences have become desensitized to images of horror, due to saturation of images that we are constantly fed. More importantly, audiences have become charmed by these monsters. Now, they are studied by academia for multiple reasons, such as revealing the social and cultural dynamics that provide an insight to a time that is now the past. These monsters have become a cult sensation that are more popular than ever before. Researching what films to project and what type of media, where to project, what materials to exhibit, the guidelines to handling these materials, when to host the event, the cost of hosting the event, and of course the licensing terms. In looking into all of the important factors that go into planning a film series, I have combined my research results with a imaginable space for the event that would be ideal for the program.

So Why Classic Monster?

There are many factors to why having this film series is an important one to have. As time has passed, there have been films that are praised, and there are films that are marginalized. When *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* was released in 1923, it had box office success\(^1\). But, with the shift to sound, and then to color, one can argue that these silent films were left behind and forgotten as technology moved forward. Universal adapted to these changes, and by the 1930s

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they were producing what has come to be regarded as the golden age of horror. Since the revival of the horror genre of the 70s and 80s, viewers have returned to these classic monster films, and have found a new audience.

Although the selected films for the program are the biggest seller, the movie posters and photographs are also part of the attraction. These material are a part of the horror, and the charm, of these monsters. The movie posters illustrate the artistic and creative manner that advertised the films. Today, archivist strive to preserve these artifacts that illustrate the beauty of these monsters in a different perspective. It can also be said the same about the photographs. In juxtaposing the photographs during production and the personal items, it adds an element of reflection. By visualizing the monsters against the non-monsters, it can stimulate the viewer to define what does a monster look like, really?

**Audience**

In planning a film series, an important question to answer is who is the attended series? Throughout my researchers, theatrical venues and institutions have asked me this question. Ultimately, the series was begun for selfish reasons, my love for these monsters. But in the real world, it isn’t enough for theatrical venues, institutions, or archives to open their doors to their space, or even donors to provide funding. In planning his event, the audience has ultimately become a mixture. One, people have a great interest in restoration and preservation efforts. This is not only exclusive to film, in having an exhibit on movie posters and photographs, it bridges the film and paper community that are interested in these preservation efforts. Two, the film community who enjoys the experience of being in a venue that projects 16mm films. And, a new
audience that stumbles across, either for curiosity over these monsters or an admiration for these films. Essentially, the festival becomes a celebration of the arts, and the continuing efforts to preserve valuable artifacts for future generations.

Planning

Where does one begin for hosting a film screening? Selecting what to screen, is a horror on its own. Additionally, when selecting what to screen, one has to keep in mind licenses. How are these films being licensed? What are the guidelines to borrowing these valuable artifacts. In the end, UCLA was an important source for multiple factors. One, the films that I have selected to be screened are all on 16mm film. These were a part of restoration efforts that the institutions has gone to ensure that these films remain for future generations. Two, they provided with lending terms on their website that explained in great detail the licensing terms. In addition, they provided an application when one is ready to borrow. Third, and most importantly, they provide in great detail the handling guidelines to their films. These guidelines are broken down in general information, fees, shipping and insurance, print safety and clearance. As their guideline illustrates below, I have highlighted key factors. For example, the institution will only loan out films that houses two copies that are in the same ‘good’ condition. The prints are only to be projected three times, and must be projected on a conventional two projector system. In addition they set their lending price/insurance of $600, plus shipping must be handled through Fedex. What stood out the most was the FIAF clearance. It states that if one operates in the jurisdiction of another FIAF archive, a letter of assent will be required.

General information

Print loans will be restricted to films from the Archive’s preservation collection, or films for which the Archive holds at least two prints in equally good condition. Most films are available in 35mm only.

Archive prints will only be loaned to organizations that use a conventional two projector (changeover) system. Prints will not be loaned to organizations that use a platter projection system, or that build up prints onto larger reels in order to reduce the number of changeovers required.

In order to minimize wear and tear on our archival prints, films may generally be screened no more than three times on any loan. Requests for additional screenings will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Organizations that have not previously borrowed prints from the Archive may be asked to submit contact information for sources from which they have previously borrowed films or letters of reference attesting to their ability to handle archival prints responsibly.

Our ability to approve loan requests is limited by the number of prints our inspection and shipping staff can handle during a given period of time. Borrowers may be asked to reschedule a film for a later date, when a print is available or we are better able to accommodate their request. Or borrowers may be referred elsewhere if the same film is available in a print of comparable quality from a commercial distributor.

Fees, shipping and insurance

In order to recover a portion of our costs to maintain a circulating film collection, UCLA Film & Television Archive charges a loan service fee that varies depending on such factors as film length and the number of films and screenings requested. Potential borrowers will be told the amount of the fee at the time they make their request. Payment of the loan fee is expected in advance. The Archive's loan service fee is in addition to any film rental required by the rights holder or authorized distributor.

The borrower is solely responsible for all shipping and insurance charges. All borrowers outside the Los Angeles area will be asked to furnish a Federal Express account number. Requests to substitute another shipper will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Shipment to and from locations outside Southern California must be by air, not ground.

Prints must be returned to the Archive, prepaid and insured for $600 per reel, immediately after the final screening date unless the Archive requests transshipment to another borrower. Responsibility for payment of transshipping charges and insurance is to be determined by mutual agreement between the borrowers.

Print safety

The borrower is responsible for inspecting prints after delivery and notifying the Archive of any damage discovered before projection. Otherwise, the Archive will assume that any damage discovered after the prints have been returned is the fault of the borrower.

Head and tail leaders may not be removed from any Archive print. Discovery that head and tail leaders have been previously removed should be reported as the borrower would report any other damage.

The borrower accepts full responsibility for the safety and security of the print from the time it is shipped or received from a previous borrower until the time it is returned to the Archive or transshipped to another destination. The borrower must
return or transship prints tails out on the reels on which they were received. Reel ends must be securely fastened with strong new tape.

Late return of prints will be grounds to refuse future loan requests.

The borrower will be expected to reimburse the Archive for lost prints and any form of damage including, but not limited to, heavy scratches, torn perforations, unauthorized cuts and splices, and breaks caused by the borrower during handling, projection, rewinding, or as a result of careless packaging and shipping, up to the full replacement cost of the print.

In order to safeguard the integrity of its motion picture collection, the Archive reserves the right to suspend or terminate borrowing privileges to any organization for any reason, including, but not limited to, undue or repeated print damage, unauthorized use or duplication of borrowed prints, or lack of adequate onsite security.

Clearances

UCLA Film & Television Archive is a member of FIAF, the International Federation of Film Archives. Organizations that operate in cities or countries that fall under the jurisdiction of another FIAF archive will be asked to secure a letter of assent from that archive before their request can be approved.

In addition, it provided a link to the loan application UCLA Print Loan Application (PDF).

The series also includes an exhibit component. In keeping with the realm of preservation efforts, movie posters and photographs will be included to showcase the work that institutions do to preserve paper artifacts. These materials will be borrowed from the Getty Images collection³, and the New York Public Library⁴. Both institutions practice different guidelines to lending material. Getty charges for licensing their material, and ask very specific questions to the specificity of using the artifacts, and for how long. Whereas NYPL operates on the public access side, therefore securing images for the exhibit would ultimately entail requesting permission for the material, and abiding to their guidelines. In addition, marketing and PR will be a huge contributing factor in letting viewers know about this special screening. With the help of social media, Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, it will provide viewers with information and

acknowledgement of this series, but also help ensure the series stays within budget. The series will be funded through grants. For example, applying to the The Nancy Mysel Grant, I hope to secure a grant that will fund the film series. The Nancy Mysel Grant awards those passionate about the preservation of film. The films, the movie posters, and the collections of photographs, all represent the preservation community that works passionately in caring and housing these cultural artifacts. Also, The National Endowment for the Arts provides opportunities to have the series funded. Through their efforts to support the art community, this film series illustrates the work that goes into preserving cultural artifacts that is art.

By securing the ideal items for the program, and researching ways into having the program funded, finding a space for the program is an important component for the beginning stages of planning. Throughout the research, I was able to contact venues for prices. Three venues offered three different options. The first one, University of Chicago, advised me that for a screening event it depended on the academic year, but by submitting a proposal for an event, the institution would fund the event. Second, Nitehawk theater in Brooklyn provided a pdf with a price listing. The flyer included that they had three theaters, which the cost ranged from $2,220-$750. They had also specified that their institution would be able to play DCP, 35mm, and Blu-Ray, and only available Monday thru Thursday, since they do screen featured films. Third, the Toronto’s TIFF bell lightbox prices to rent out the venue ranged from $5,000-$500.

5 Streible, Dan. “Re: [miap-students] Fwd: 2017 GRANT PREP - $5,000 Nancy Mysel Legacy Grant Offered by Film Noir Foundation to Film Restoration Students.” Received by, Erica Lopez. 2 Dec. 2016.
7 Ivy. “Re: Event Information.” Received by Erica Lopez, 2 Dec. 2016.
8 Varela, Florencia. “Re: Renting info needed.” Received by Erica Lopez, 5 Dec. 2016.
9 Varela, Florencia. “Re: Renting info needed.” Received by Erica Lopez, 5 Dec. 2016.
depending on the size of the theater. Additionally, they provided a staff rate, which included a projectionist at the cost of $35/hr. The venue does provide a space that exhibits items, which is ideal for the photographs and movie posters. These three venues emphasis the required budget one would need to host a film series. But, in seeking out grants, it provides opportunities to bring these items into the public space to be enjoyed.

**Event**

The film series will take place on May 14th through the 20th of 2018. The film series will combine screening, and a display of movie posters and photographs. The films will be screened on the last three nights of the program. The display of movie posters and photographs will help promote the screening of these films, plus, two films will be projected in 16mm on the three nights. The theater will have a series of special excerpt of monster films, courtesy of the Creative film forum from Los Angeles, in addition with trailers from the selected titles.

Below (Figure 1.1) illustrates the film series brochure. Inside, audiences are provided with information over the location, date, and time. Listening the 16mm films that will be projected. In addition, the program provides the viewer with basic information over the films, such as the year, directed and stars, since these some of these films have been redone. Moreover, the cost of the film series will be broken down to different pricing. The list of prices will be listed on the homepage of the link that is provided in the brochure. They are:

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Chaney ticket: One day access to exhibition ................................................................. $20
Lugosi: One ticket for one film screening ......................................................................... $40
Karloff: One day access to exhibit and double feature ..................................................... $50
Universal Monsters: Access to all three days screenings, plus entrance to the exhibition ................................................................. $60

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*The Dead Alive: The Visual Horror of Universal’s Monsters*

May 14-20
Monday- Sunday 10 a.m.- 10 p.m.

Location:
DeMille
Radio Theater
1234 Monster,
Horror, Transylvania,
Friday May 18th
5 p.m.
7 p.m. Intermission

The Phantom of the Opera, 1925. Directed by Rupert Julian. Starring Lon Chaney, Mary Philbin, Norman Kerry, and Arthur Edmund Carewe. 16mm
8 p.m.

Saturday May 19th
The Cat and the Canary, 1927. Directed by Paul Leni. Starring Laura La Plante, Creighton Hale, Forest Stanley, Tully Marshall. 16mm
5 p.m.
7 p.m. Intermission

Dracula, 1931. Directed by Tod Browning. Starring Bela Lugosi, Helen Chandler, David Manners, and Dwight Frye. 16mm
8 p.m.

Sunday May 20th
Frankenstein, 1931. Directed by James Whale. Starring Colin Clive, Mae Charles, Boris Karloff, and John Boles. 16mm
3 p.m.
5 p.m. Intermission

Bride of Frankenstein, 1935. Directed by James Whale. Starring Boris Karloff, Elsa Lanchester, Colin Clive, and Valerie Hobson. 16mm
6 p.m.

Plus:
Over hundreds of visuals on display from May 14-20. Including, original movie posters, pictures from the movie set, and personal photos.

Special speaker: John T. Soister, introduces the films with a brief synopsis.

A special collection from the Creative Film Society of Los Angeles. Excerpts of Universal Monster Films.

Original Trailers will be screened
Additionally, I was able to look at the museum space of the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. For this research purpose, I have combined features of variety spaces in order to construct this project. I have utilized the space of the Warhol Museum to illustrate the way in which the material will be organized, and a visual concept to the order that guest will essentially navigate the space. It is important to mention that the venue for the monster exhibit will be on the top floor, the theater, and downstairs will house the materials for the week long program. Figure 1.2\textsuperscript{13} showcases the entrance to the exhibit. This is where visitors will enter the poster and photograph exhibit.

\textsuperscript{13} The Warhol, Pittsburgh. Personal photograph by author. 2016.
1.2 Entrance of the museum.
1.4. Hallway between the left and right room.

When visitors enter they will be directly in the (Figure 1.2) hallway. The hallway will be displaying the movie posters. To the left (Figure 1.4) will house the collection of movie set photographs. To the right (Figure 1.5) will include the personal photographs of the actors.

1.5. The Hunchback of Notre Dame, 1923 movie poster. Getty's Universal Images Group Collection.

1.6 *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1923 movie poster. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.

1.7 *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1923 movie poster. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.

1.8 *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 1923 movie poster. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.

1.9 *The Cat and the Canary*, 1927. Getty’s Universal Images Collection.

1.10 *Dracula* 1931. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.
1.11 Dracula 1931. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.

1.12 Dracula, 1931. Getty’s Universal Images Group Collection.

1.13 Dracula, 1931. Getty’s Universal Images Group Collection.


2.1. The right room of the exhibit will display personal photos of the Actors.
2.2. Lon Chaney. Getty's Corbis Historical Collection.

2.3. Lon Chaney. The New York Public Library’s George Arents Collection.

2.4. Lon Chaney. The New York Public Library's Billy Rose Theater Division Collection.


2.27. Boris Karloff. 1941. The New York Public Library’s Billy Rose Theater Division Collection.

3.1 The left room of the entrance will display photographs during production stage.


3.15. *The Cat and the Canary*, 1927. Laura La Plante (front) as Annabelle West and Martha Mattox (back) as Mammy Pleasant. Getty’s Corbis Historical Collection.


3.52. The Mummy, 1932 Actor Boris Karloff as the Mummy. Getty’s Moviepix Collection.


Getty’s Moviepix Collection.


Bibliography


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