

WARNER BROS. PICTURES & LEGENDARY PICTURES

PACIFIC RIM

MAN, MACHINES & MONSTERS



THE INNER WORKINGS OF AN EPIC FILM

FOREWORD BY GUILLERMO DEL TORO



PAN PACIFIC
DEFENSE CORPS

WRITTEN BY DAVID S. COHEN

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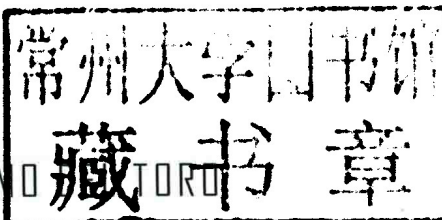
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INSIGHT  EDITIONS

San Rafael, California

PAGE 1 Pan Pacific Defense
Corps propaganda poster by
Carlos Salgado.


PAGE 2 Pan Pacific Defense Corps
propaganda poster by Raúl Monge.


RIGHT Concept of Striker
Eureka's damaged Conn-pod by
Keith Thompson.

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the skills and support necessary for sustainable land use.

Manufactured in Hong Kong by Insight Editions

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STRIKER EUREKA DAMAGE STAGE 1

Keith Thompson September 30, 2011

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD BY GUILLERMO DEL TORO	8
PROLOGUE	10

PART I MONSTERS IN THE MIST

SCRIPT & STORY	14
CHARACTERS	19
RALEIGH BECKET 20	THE CHINESE 34
MAKO MORI 24	THE RUSSIANS 35
STACKER PENTECOST 28	THE SCIENTISTS 36
TENDO CHOI 30	HANNIBAL CHAU 38
THE AUSTRALIANS 32	

PART II THE CRAZY KIDS IN THE SUBMARINE

ART & DESIGN	42
STORYBOARDING	54
THE JAEGERs	56
GIpsy DANGER 60	
STRIKER EUREKA 64	
CRIMSON TYPHOON 68	
CHERNO ALPHA 72	
COYOTE TANGO 76	

PART III DOING IT FOR REAL

SHOOTING & PRODUCTION	80
SPECIAL EFFECTS	88
SETS	90
THE CONN-PODS 91	
ALASKA & THE WALL 94	
THE SHATTERDOME 98	
TOKYO FLASHBACK 108	
HONG KONG 110	
THE DRIFT 116	

PART IV SIMULATING THE APOCALYPSE

POST-PRODUCTION	120
VISUAL EFFECTS	122
3-D	126
SOUND	127
MUSIC	127
KAIJU	128
RECKONER 132	BABY KAIJU 144
KNIFEHEAD 134	KAIJU BLUE 145
AXEHEAD 136	SCUNNER 146
BLADEHEAD 137	RAIJU 147
ONIBABA 138	SLATTERN 148
LEATHERBACK 140	PRECURSORS & THE ANTEVERSE 150
OTACHI 142	
CONCLUSION	154



PAN PACIFIC
DEFENSE CORPS

DO WITH LESS SO THEY'LL HAVE ENOUGH



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LEGENDARY

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ROOTS OF PEACE

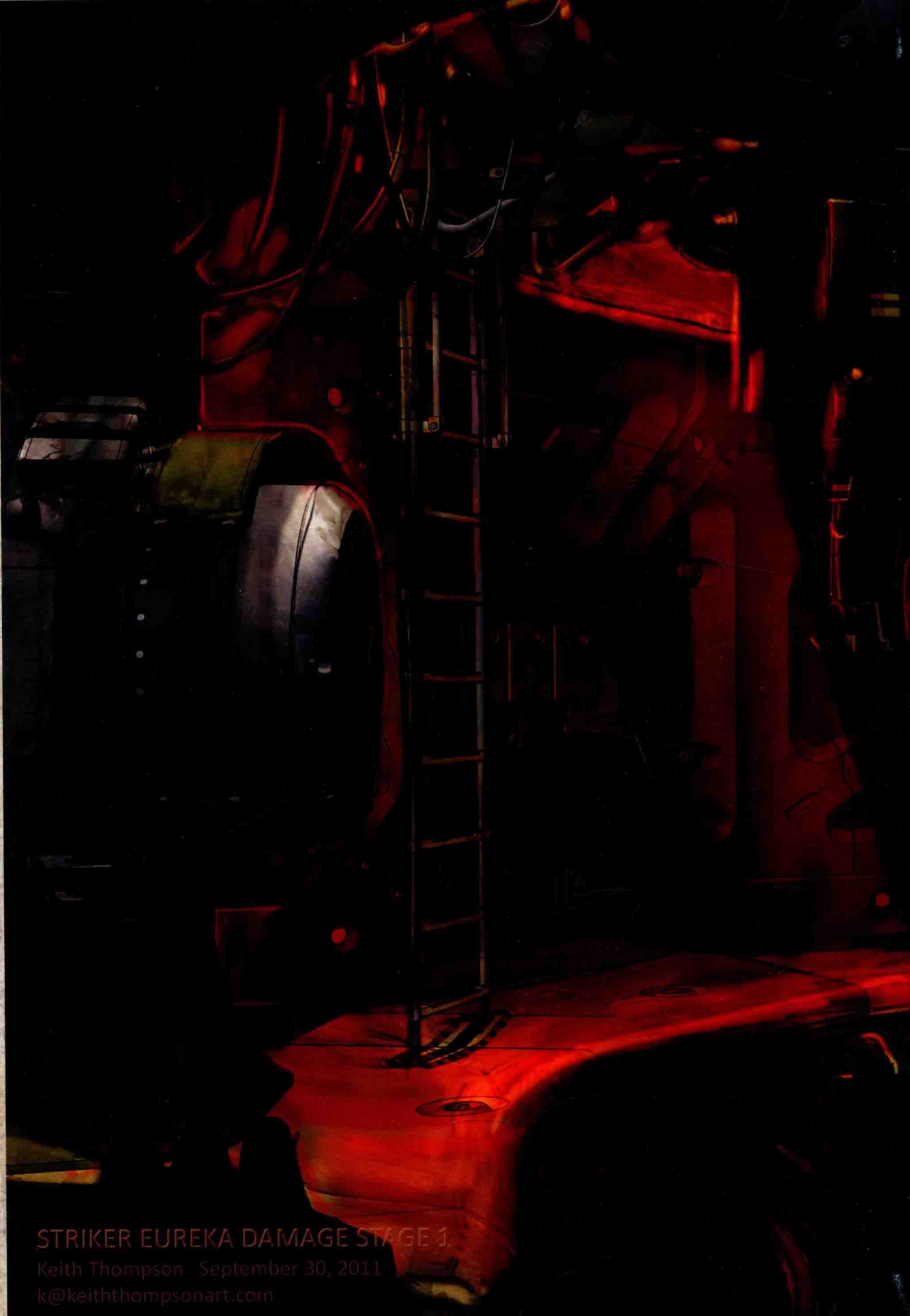


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PAN PACIFIC
DEFENSE CORPS



FOREWORD

BY GUILLERMO DEL TORO



THE MAKING OF *PACIFIC RIM* came at a crucial time in my life and, basically, it saved it.

At the time of this writing, we still don't know if the movie is going to connect with a large audience or not, but the making of the film has already been a transformative experience—the very best filmmaking process I've ever gone through. It has been so not only because the creative partnership was successful—with old and new collaborators—or because of how ideal my relationship with Legendary and Warner Bros. has been, but because it all happened for the right reasons, at the right time, and with the right people.

Don't get me wrong. Shooting this film was very demanding. *Pacific Rim* was an incredibly rigorous and precise filmic exercise—technically, logistically, and in terms of fiscal responsibility. But all of these demands were eased by an unparalleled artistic freedom. This movie came from the heart. In fact, it came from the youngest, freshest part of my heart. In making this film, my craft, experience, and rigor were those of a forty-eight-year-old man, but my heart was that of an eleven-year-old. This was playtime boot camp.

Orson Welles once famously exclaimed that making movies was like playing with “the biggest electric train set any boy ever had.” In this case we had an amazing sandbox full of robots, monsters, buildings, and toy cars, and we played with them endlessly. Thematically, the film tackles the idea of scale, of insurmountable problems being faced by people with little dramas in their lives. So our duty was double in these matters—we had to create a spectacle based on larger and larger odds, but we had to tend to the core of the film, which remained incredibly personal to me.

I seldom communicate with my design or VFX crew without a piece of paper and a pen. I doodle constantly and am always scribbling designs in my idea diaries. Thus I found it very telling that on *Pacific Rim*, amid all the world creation and avalanche of drawings by gifted artists such as Francisco Ruiz Velasco, Wayne Barlowe, Oscar Chichoni, and many others, what I drew in my diary was, mostly, human characters.

This is probably because, having co-written the screenplay with the fantastic Travis Beacham, I poured myself into all the characters in one way or another. For example, I identify completely with the journey

of Raleigh Beckett. After not riding a Jaeger for five years, he feels like I did after five years of not making a movie. Like him, I wanted to prove myself—not only to an industry or an audience but also to myself. And, like him, I got on board a gigantic machine and found myself.

Designing this world then gave way to executing it on screen, and in this task I had the invaluable help of Kate Hawley, Carol Spier, Andrew Neskromny, Legacy FX, Spectral Motion, and many, many others. And then there was ILM.

Working with ILM has been an amazing experience. I always make it a point to work with people whose work I admire and follow. That was the case with all my key VFX crew for this movie, and it was a special thrill to work and argue back and forth with one of my heroes, John Knoll. The commitment we all felt to this film—the commitment of creating the best damn robot and monsters we could—extended to not only the hundreds of people involved in our shoot, but also the hundreds of people at ILM.

What you have in your hands is a glimpse of an enormous archive, an enormous exercise in figuring out the technology, sociology, mythology, and science behind the giant monsters, giant robots, and the world they inhabit. We designed sets, logos, signs, zonings, pamphlets, ID badges, consoles, hardware, software, wardrobes, and even reproduced entire blocks of Tokyo and Hong Kong only to destroy them, mounting sets the size of houses on hydraulic gimbals. We spent thousands of hours figuring it all out, looking around, and getting lost in a world that we enjoyed the hell out of.

Now it's your turn.

PAGES 6-7 Concept art of beached Gipsy Danger by Hugo Martin.

OPPOSITE Director Guillermo del Toro on the set of Hannibal Chau's lair.

ABOVE Del Toro sets up a shot while cinematographer Guillermo Navarro looks on.

PROLOGUE

IT IS SATURDAY AT COMIC-CON 2012, and the fans have overrun the San Diego Convention Center. A walk of even a few yards is an adventure, both for the difficulty of pushing through the crowd and for the Whovians and Trekkers, Sith and steampunks to be met along the way. Amid this geek tsunami, Legendary Pictures' booth is an eddy. Fans curious about Legendary's upcoming films besiege every entrance. A display showcasing a less familiar Legendary movie, something without a decades-long pedigree or proven fan base, can be seen through a gap in the throng.

Behind the glass are two rugged, slightly surreal pilot suits from *Pacific Rim*, the giant-robots-versus-giant-monsters adventure from *Hellboy* director Guillermo del Toro. No one has seen *Pacific Rim*, which is a full year away from release; the first teaser is about to be revealed nearby. The pilot suits are presented with scant explanation and there is no video of *Pacific Rim* on the booth's video screens. Fans must make up their own minds.

And so they do. Up strides the Batman—or at least, a man in a flawless replica of the Tim Burton/Michael Keaton 1989 batsuit. He looks the suits up and down, one steampunk in olive drab, another black and glossier than his own, and renders judgment: "That's good armor." Then he is gone.

At an adjacent hotel, at about the same time the fans are approving his movie's pilot suits, Guillermo del Toro is struck by a sudden attack of nerves. Such anxiety is new for del Toro; Comic-Con is family for him. His films alone make him royalty here: horror films *Cronos* and *The Devil's Backbone*; the more mainstream *Hellboy* movies; and his 2006 masterpiece *Pan's Labyrinth*. Moreover, he loves comic books, science fiction, and fantasy as much as anyone in a superhero suit, and the fans love him for it.

But this day, while he is dressing, "It hit me like a ton of bricks," he recounts. "I grabbed my wife and I said, 'I'm absolutely petrified.'"

"You have a beautiful movie, don't worry," she said. That set him at ease—but only for a moment.

"Rarely has a movie been more important for me personally," del Toro explains. "Not since *Cronos*, or maybe *Pan's Labyrinth*, has a movie been that important." *Pacific Rim* is del Toro's child, and it's about to make its debut in front of 6,500 fans in Hall H, Comic-Con's harshest crucible.

Most fans who make it into Hall H were in line before dawn; some camped out overnight. Their reward is a day spent watching previews of upcoming movies and hearing from directors and stars. Their response to *Pacific Rim* will be dissected by press and studio brass alike. A positive Hall H reaction does not guarantee success—the annals of box office flops are littered with Comic-Con false-positives—but a poor one would

be a very bad sign. One preview earlier in the day has already been met with snickers. It's a tough room.

Warner Bros. and Legendary's presentation includes teasers for *Man of Steel* and a mood piece for a film about Godzilla. As *Pacific Rim*'s turn approaches, "Everybody around me was very happy, confident," del Toro says. "I was shitting my pants." He worries *Pacific Rim* could be judged harshly by the Comic-Con crowd because of the movies he hasn't made in the four years since he made an appearance here, the most recent being an adaptation of H. P. Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness*, which was canceled at the last moment.

The lights dim and the *Pacific Rim* teaser unspools. Del Toro watches the crowd as they get their first glimpse of the world of *Pacific Rim*. "To fight monsters . . . We created monsters," the titles proclaim. There are glimpses of mortal combat between robots and monsters, striking pilots in those high-tech suits, and their leader making the stirring declaration, "We are canceling the apocalypse!"

As the trailer ends, the crowd roars.

"That was huge," says del Toro. "It was completely a life-affirming experience. I was very moved by the chitter-chatter, the hush, the whispers. I felt the room was really, really excited," he says. "That's what affected me in a beautiful way."

After the ovation, del Toro forgets "everything"—forgets his agenda, forgets to show the trailer a second time. "It's very rarely that I get overwhelmed at a public event," he says. "I was overwhelmed completely."

That night he screens the footage again, more calmly this time, for a few lucky fans at a nearby hotel, taking questions from them and hanging out with them as they munch on popcorn and hot dogs. This is the Guillermo del Toro they love: exuberant, generous, and warm. But they don't realize that not so long before, del Toro had been in a suspended state. He needed a tonic, something to restore the pleasure of filmmaking and the wonder he'd felt as a boy watching movies in Guadalajara, Mexico. He had needed a movie where he could feel creative freedom and a sense of support from partners who wanted to make the movie as badly as he did.

He found all that, and more, in *Pacific Rim*.

OPPOSITE The *Pacific Rim* San Diego Comic-Con 2012 poster by Hugo Martin.



PACIFIC RIM



MONSTERS IN THE MIST

