Strange Facts About Swiss Artist
H.R. Giger

By Robert DeSalvo
Swiss artist H.R. Giger was a dark master of surreal art with biomechanical themes. Read on to learn more about the influential artist whose legacy lives on.

H.R. Giger was part of a special effects team that won an Oscar for *Alien*.

Ridley Scott's harrowing 1979 sci-fi masterpiece *Alien* wouldn't have been half as scary as it is without H.R. Giger's designs, especially those of the xenomorph and its life stages. The eyeless alien that metamorphizes from a pod to facehugger to chestburster to full-grown xenomorph is the stuff of eternal nightmares.
H.R. Giger's father wanted H.R. to become a pharmacist.

H.R. Giger's father was a pharmacist and encouraged his son to follow in his footsteps because he didn't believe anyone could make a living making art. Giger moved to Zürich and studied industrial design at the School of Applied Arts. Pictured is Giger in 2012.
H.R. Giger's book *Necronomicon* got him the *Alien* gig.

H.R. Giger's first collection of his artwork, *Necronomicon*, was given to director Ridley Scott during preproduction on *Alien*. Scott hired Giger, whose artistic influence is felt through all subsequent films in the franchise, including more recent films such as *Prometheus* and *Alien: Covenant*. 
H.R. Giger was predominantly an airbrush artist.

For most of his career, Giger brought his nightmarish visions to life on canvas using an airbrush. Whereas most people will instruct you to use your index finger to depress the trigger on an airbrush, Giger did so with his thumb.
Actress Li Tobler inspired many works by H.R. Giger.

H.R. Giger was in a relationship with Swiss actress Li Tobler for several years. Although her life was "short and intense" according to Giger, her image inspired many works by Giger. Pictured is a sculpture replica of Giger's *Li II* painting.

H.R. Giger designed the cover art for Debbie Harry's *KooKoo*. 
H.R. Giger designed the cover art for Blondie singer Debbie Harry's first solo album, 1981's *KooKoo*. Harry described the art as a combination of sci-fi, acupuncture and punk. Giger also designed album artwork for Danzig, Steve Stevens, Carcass, Magma, Celtic Frost and many other music artists.
H.R. Giger created designs for a movie version of *Dune* that was never made.

H.R. Giger created artwork for Alejandro Jodorowsky's planned movie version of *Dune* in the 1970s that never came to fruition. A David Lynch *Dune* movie came out in 1984 but did not include Giger's designs. Pictured is a Harkonnen Chair originally designed to be Baron Harkonnen's chair in Jodorowsky's *Dune*.

H.R. Giger designed the creature Sil in the movies *Species*. 
The 1995 sci-fi hit *Species* stars Natasha Henstridge as a shape-shifting alien-human hybrid named Sil with one thing on her mind: mating. H.R. Giger designed Sil's look, and he pushed the makers of the film to change certain aspects of the creature so it wasn't too similar to the xenomorph in *Alien*. Pictured is a signed and numbered triptych of Giger's Sil design.

**There are two Giger Bars designed by H.R. Giger.**

Giger designed two Giger Bars, one in Chur, Switzerland and another in Château St. Germain, Gruyères, Switzerland (pictured). The walls and
chairs all have biomechanical design elements seen in his creations for *Alien* and the unfilmed version of *Dune*. 
H.R. Giger's art inspired many tattoos.

Giger passed away in 2014 after suffering a fall, but his artwork lives on. Many tattoo artists are inspired by Giger's work, especially those in the cyberpunk, goth and heavy metal communities. Pictured is a tattoo of an early *Alien* design, when the monster still had eyes.

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