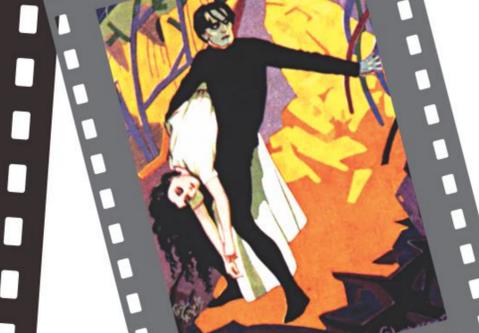
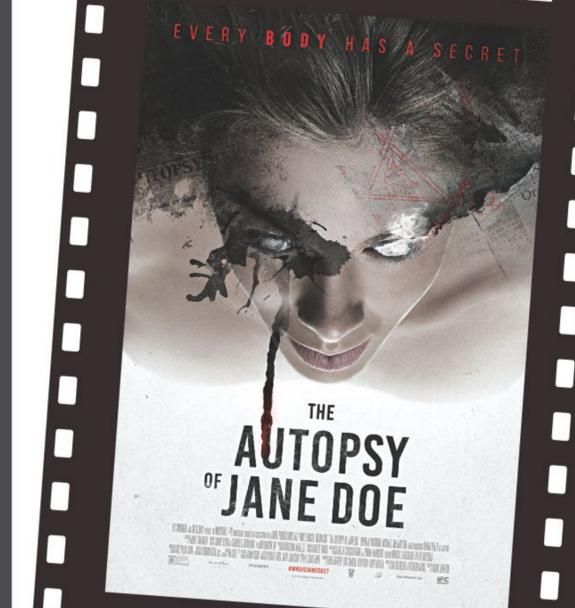
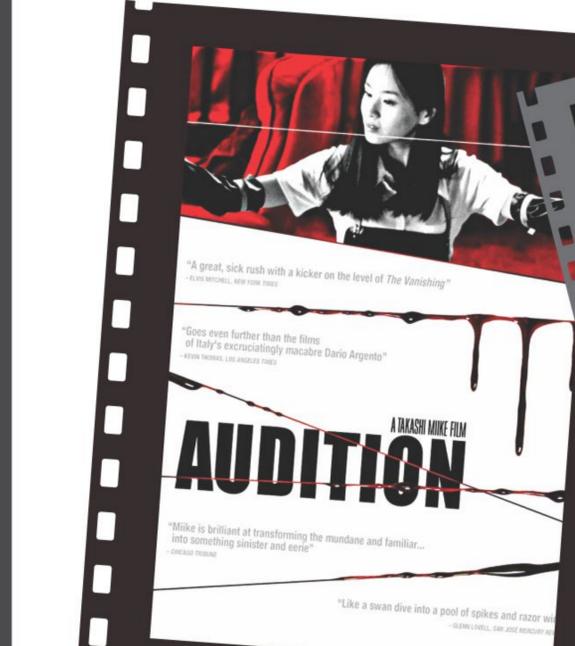
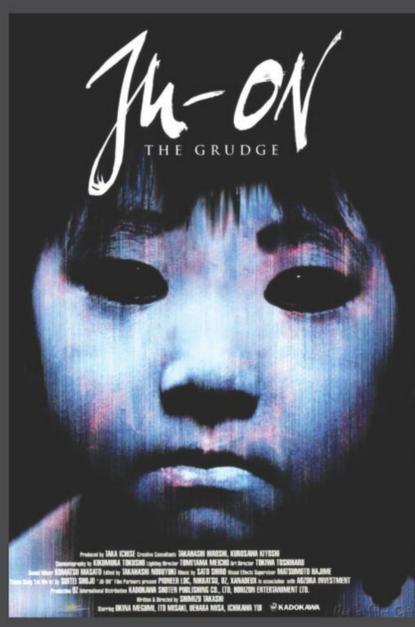


# HORROR MOVIES through the ages



The ultimate visual canvas is the silver screen. It should be of no surprise that the history of evolution of the horror genre on the big screen needs a course of its own! From black-and-white caped vampires (and their glamorous continuations in the later years) to chainsaw wielding maniacs to psychotic serial killers, fear now comes in every possible permutation and there is still more to come.

### IN THE BEGINNING

The first horror film on record is 'Le Manoir du Diable' (1896), created by one of film's earliest visionaries, Georges Méliès. It has a running time of a little over three minutes, and packs all the genre paradigms — bats, devils, witches, cauldrons, ghosts, and trolls, appearing and disappearing in puffs of smoke.

The term 'horror' was not even used at that time and movie goers viewed the silent films as 'Spook Tales'. The filmmakers drew on the influence of expressionist painters and spirit photographers of the 1860s.

### WORLD WAR I AND THE GERMAN IMPACT

As the First World War started, German expressionism took the movie industry to the next step. Given the national mood in wartime Germany, this led to some nightmarish designs.

'The Cabinet of Dr Caligari' (1919) coined as the 'granddaddy of all horror films', captures this theme in an eerie exploration of the mind of a madman. What makes it a sensation is that this contrasted dramatically with the documentary style of film making prevalent in Europe at the time, and proved that film could be a poetic, stylised medium as well as a reflective one.

### REALISM AND THE END OF THE SILENT ERA

The '20s saw the Hollywood movies coming to dominate the European market. The marked distinction was the move towards realism in the US movies while the European movie makers still favoured highly stylised sets.

FW Murnau's masterful Nosferatu (1922) was the answer to putting the expressionist designs with easily recognisable exteriors for a vampire story that actually believed in vampires.

### WHEN HORROR TALKED AND SCREAMED

Horror movies were reborn in the '30s as sound effects added an extra dimension to terror, from creaking doors, echoing footsteps to the rumbling of castle thunder. Audiences too wanted to be relieved from the everyday realities of the Great Depression and political turmoil in Europe, Asia and took to cinemas to be scared by largely supernatural monsters wreaking havoc on largely fantastical worlds.

Gems in this Golden Era of Horror included Frankenstein, Dracula, Dr Jekyll and

Mr Hyde, the Bride of Frankenstein, among others.

Mad scientists were raging theme at the time as the Hitler led Germany excelled in all things scientific as horror lovers were treated with the likes of The Island of Lost Souls, The Invisible Man, Murders in the Rue Morgue, The Mystery of the Wax Museum, to name a few.

### WEREWOLVES AND CREATURE FEATURES

Supernatural transformations reigned supreme in the '40s as movies like the Wolf Man and The Cat People took the screen with curses and evolution gone astray. The '50s saw radiation as a means of transformation and brought the likes of Godzilla as a post-World War II reminder. While not necessarily a 'horror' movie, the idea of a rampaging creature that could become the apex predator above the human race did leave a lasting impact.

Creatures from outer space also began to sprout with movies like 'Invasion of the Body Snatchers'.

(also the first 'splatter' movie) led the bandwagon of limited finances and high scare content.

### THE FLUID BORDERLINE BETWEEN HORROR AND THRILLER

For the '70s and '80s horror films took the worst of societal changes and threw back the best of scares. The Exorcist, Carrie, the Omen, Jaws -- from possessions to relentless sharks,

several mainstream releases in 2004-2005 contained startlingly graphic representations of torture — Hostel, Wolf Creek, The Devil's Rejects; Saw I-V being the flag bearers of 'torture porn.'

This new sub-genre posed the question -- whose eyes the audience is seeing through, torturer or victim?

Horror thrillers like the Orphan, and remakes like the Stepfather, the Last House

### FEARSOME TALES FROM JAPAN

The Ring and the Grudge, with their subsequent sequels and the advent of DVD availability, brought the English speaking audience's attention to the horror films from the Land of the Rising Sun. Both were remakes from their Japanese originals and made the horror lovers aware of a fully formed and yet to be visited trope.

Japanese horror movies draw on thousands of years of folklore, ghost stories, supernatural myths, and tales of honour and loyalty as well as idol culture and the suicidal tendencies plaguing the nation.

Form the numerous notable films, a paltry few are Shikoku, Audition, School Ghost Stories, Cure, Reincarnation, and Dark Water, as well as the original Ring and Grudge movies.

The Japanese Horror genre is not limited to movies and a significant amount of it can be found in Japanese animated series, or anime as popular culture coins it. From classics like Hellsing, Blood+, Hell Girl, Higurashi When They Cry and Monster to recent hits like Tokyo Ghoul, Aijin — horror is well covered in Japan!



these were movies the modern horror lover comes to recognise as the foundation for modern scare. Alien enjoyed a glorious watershed between the decades when special visual effects finally caught up with the gory imaginings of horror fans and movie makers.

The '80s movie going audience demanded everything in excess and Stanley Kubrick's The Shining delivered as demanded. The decade also boasted movies like A Nightmare on Elm Street, Child's Play, the Hitcher.

Silence of the Lambs, Se7en and American Psycho -- that paints a pretty gory psychotic picture for '90s. Horror was not the single defining genre for these movies as they included detective work (for the first two), extremely intelligent killers and the total story presenting the audience with a view into the mind of the killer.

### FORESIGHT, ZOMBIES AND REALISTIC GORE

The collective desire to see the future (and still being led to the inevitable disaster, or worse) came through with Final Destination.

The film "28 Days Later" made the cut as the first Zombie apocalypse sub-genre as it drew power from its depiction of realism, the very same thing that made "The Blair Witch Project" remain out.

on the Left are often over looked in the 2000s decade but pack in over the top shock and scare factor.

### WHAT'S NEXT?

The current decade is nearing the end and remakes, sequels, prequels, etc, are going all the way. Classic hauntings are making a comeback like the Conjuring films series. Overall, the return to atmospheric horror flicks that trade in fear, suspense, and mood is prominent through movies like Insidious, the Babadook, The Autopsy of Jane Doe.

As 2017 is on its final quarter, Anabelle: Creation, IT, and It Comes at Night have kept the audiences enthralled.

Confining the multitude of horror movies in a mere timeline is a mistreatment of the genre as many under-rated and unheard movies do not get their rightful placement. While a comprehensive list of horror movies is still a faraway dream (or nightmare!) the best probable way to watch through is to put in a healthy balance of classics with the latest and not sticking to Hollywood releases only. But do remember, for now in reality — the most horrific line is "No wi-fi or internet available." Happy watching!

By Iris Farina Photo: Collected