

BIOHORROR

Monday, October 30, 2017, at 6:30 p.m.
Friends of the USC Libraries Lecture Hall
Doheny Memorial Library 240
University of Southern California



ABOUT THE PANELISTS

- ◉ Mark Fergus is an Academy Award–nominated writer and producer whose credits include *Iron Man*, *Cowboys & Aliens*, and *Children of Men*. He is one of the creators and executive producers of the SyFy series *The Expanse*.
- ◉ Joseph Hawkins is a lecturer in anthropology and director of the ONE National Gay & Lesbian Archives at USC.
- ◉ Adam Lowenstein is the author of *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. He is a professor of film studies at the University of Pittsburgh.
- ◉ Anna Phillips is a zoologist and parasitologist whose work focuses on leeches and tapeworms. She has conducted research in places as diverse as Rwanda, Tasmania, Brazil, Louisiana, and Connecticut.
- ◉ Isabel Cristina Pinedo is the author of *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing*. She teaches media and cultural studies at Hunter College at the City University of New York.

WHAT IS BIOHORROR?

Biohorror, also called body horror, biological horror, organic horror, or visceral horror is horror fiction that deals with the monstrous transformation, degeneration, or destruction of the physical body. It's graphic horror that deals with things like decay, parasitism, mutation, or mutilation. The term *body horror* was coined in a 1986 issue of the journal *Screen*. Of course, biohorror predates and exceeds the genre of film. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is a quintessential work of biohorror. Edgar Allan Poe and H. P. Lovecraft were other important literary predecessors to biohorror movies. Today, biohorror is also prevalent in video games.

KEY NAMES AND TITLES

- ◉ Clive Barker—*Hellraiser* and *Candyman* series
- ◉ David Cronenberg—*eXistenZ*, *The Fly*, *Dead Ringers* . . .
- ◉ Stuart Gordon and Brian Yuzna—*Re-Animator*
- ◉ Frank Henenlotter—*Basket Case*, *Brain Damage*, *Frankenhooker*
- ◉ Noboru Iguchi—*The Machine Girl*
- ◉ Lloyd Kaufman—*The Toxic Avenger*, *Tromeo and Juliet*
- ◉ Jordan Peele—*Get Out*

SNAPSHOT: THE FILMS IN THIS PROGRAM

◉ **Alien** (dir. Ridley Scott, 1979)

An extraterrestrial creature stalks and attacks the crew of a spaceship. This was Sigourney Weaver's first leading role, and the first film in what has become a legacy series spanning decades.

◉ **The Thing** (dir. John Carpenter, 1982)

A research facility in Antarctica comes across an alien force that can become anything it touches, blurring the line between human and non-human. Filmmaker and musician John Carpenter also made *Halloween* and *They Live*. *The Thing* was re-made in 2011.

◉ **Videodrome** (dir. David Cronenberg, 1983)

Described as "techno-surrealist," this film takes notions of media and mind control to their most disturbing extremes, where what happens on-screen has material effects on real-life bodies.



Alien

FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ◉ Adam Lowenstein suggests that sometimes horror films pose more of a challenge to dominant social orders than art cinema (which is often deemed progressive and innovative). What do you think? Can you think of examples of horror films that challenged the status quo? Or art films that reinforced existing power structures?
- ◉ How does Isabel Cristina Pinedo's work challenge both conventional and feminist analyses of the horror genre?
- ◉ What cultural anxieties did you see playing out in the films in this program?
- ◉ Did you see social critique or political subtext in any of the films?

IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MAY WANT TO CHECK OUT:

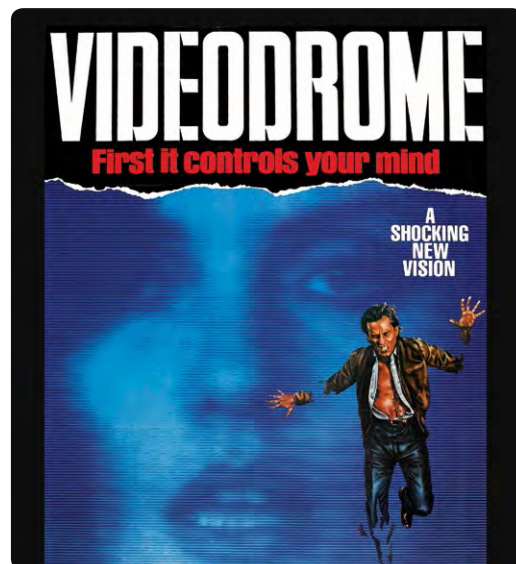
- ◉ Anna Phillips' webcast: *Living Together: Parasites and Hosts*
<https://qrius.si.edu/explore-science/webcast/living-together-parasites-and-hosts>
- ◉ *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film* by Adam Lowenstein
- ◉ *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing* by Isabel Cristina Pinedo
- ◉ *Body Horror: Essays on Misogyny and Capitalism* by Anne Elizabeth Moore

DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

HUGH MCHARG and ZOE PETTWAY UNNO of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about biohorror. USC students, faculty, and staff can access electronic resources through the USC Libraries homepage at libraries.usc.edu.

BOOKS

- ◉ Belling, Catherine Francis. *A Condition of Doubt : The Meanings of Hypochondria*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.
Available as an electronic resource.



- Lowenstein, Adam. *Shocking Representation: Historical Trauma, National Cinema, and the Modern Horror Film*. Film and Culture. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Cinematic Arts Library BOOKSTACKS PN1995.9.H6 L69 2005
Also available as an electronic resource.

- Morgan, Jack. *The Biology of Horror: Gothic Literature and Film*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2002.

Cinematic Arts Library: PN3435 .M67 2002

- Picart, Caroline Joan, and Browning, John Edgar. *Speaking of Monsters: A Teratological Anthology*. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Doheny Memorial Library: HD9999.B442 T453 2005

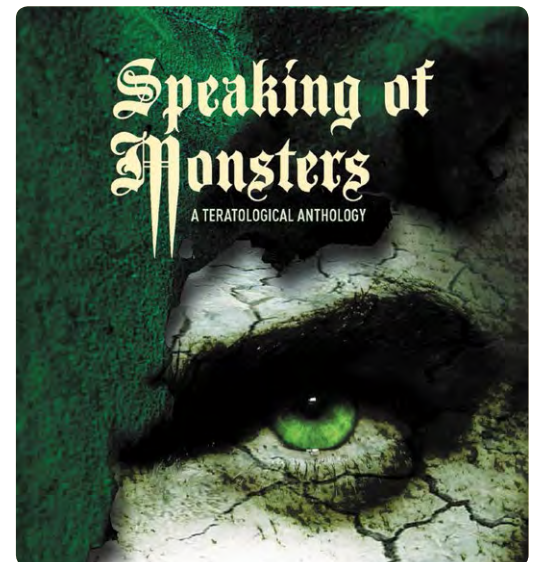
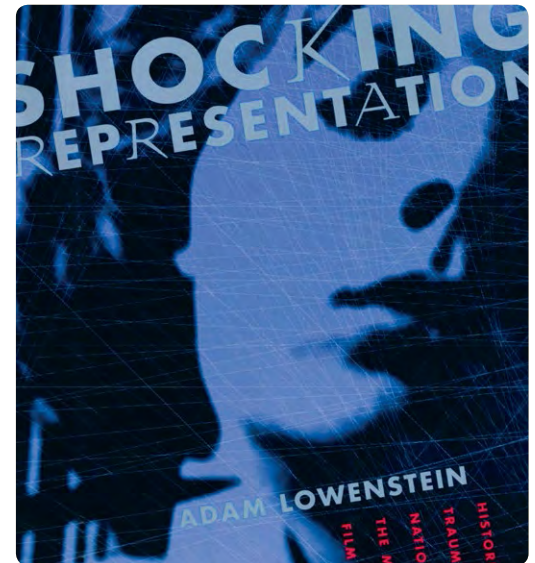
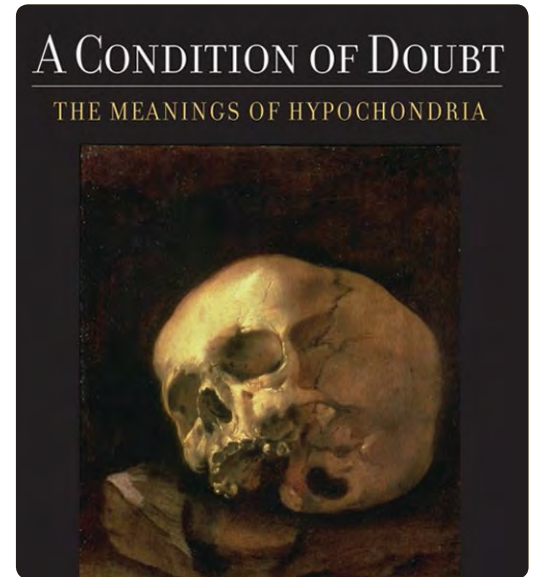
- Pinedo, Isabel Cristina. *Recreational Terror: Women and the Pleasures of Horror Film Viewing*. SUNY Series, Interruptions — Border Testimony(ies) and Critical Discourse/s. Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1997.

Cinematic Arts Library PN1995.9.H6 P46 1997

Also available as an electronic resource.

- Thacker, Eugene. *The Global Genome : Biotechnology, Politics, and Culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005.

Available as an electronic resource.



JOURNALS AND JOURNAL ARTICLES

- Cruz, Ronald Allan Lopez. "Mutations and Metamorphoses: Body Horror Is Biological Horror." *Journal of Popular Film and Television* 40, no. 4 (2012): 160-68.
- Horror Studies* [an academic journal]
- Parasitology* [an academic journal]

WEBSITES

These publicly accessible websites can help you explore examples of manifestations of health and psychological issues related to biological horror.

- Human Skin Parasites & Delusional Parasitosis
 Bohart Museum of Entomology, University of California, Davis
delusion.ucdavis.edu/delusional.html
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
www.niaid.nih.gov
- MedlinePlus
medlineplus.gov
- Publications by Anna J. Phillips, research zoologist
invertebrates.si.edu/staff/phillips.cfm