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## **Anxiety in Experience: H.R. Ginger's Swiss Bars**

Abigail Hall Gilmore

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# Anxiety in Experience: H.R. Giger's Swiss Bars

Qualifying Paper

Submitted by Abigail Hall Gilmore

May 2015

The University of St. Thomas  
Art History Graduate Program

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# Anxiety in Experience: H.R. Giger's Swiss Bars

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Abstract: H.R. Giger, an artist frequently recognized for his design presence in the *Alien* movies, created numerous bars that seek to rebel against current trends of relaxing escapism. They encourage anxiety rather than comfort, and force patrons to be accountable for their actions. An examination of architectural therapy, bar trends, anxiety, and spatial construction yield a consistent support of the artist's history and intent. By analyzing the artist's life and influences, as well as his body of work, this paper submits the Giger bars are the culmination of his spatial design efforts, which began with two-dimensional images and moved into three-dimensional furniture and set design, incorporating the uncanny and the sublime with his hyper-realistic horror aesthetic.

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## Introduction

February 1992 brought predictably mild weather to one of Switzerland's oldest towns, Chur. There was certainly nothing about the weather that signaled what a monumental day it was for both the city and its prodigal son, artist Hans Rudolph Giger (1940-2014), (Fig. 1). Over the course of about a week, the city had seen a massive influx of outsiders, swelling its population of around 33,000 to fill hotels and the streets outside its newest attraction – the Giger Bar (Fig. 2).

The day was the result of a decade of planning and continuous work started on a chance when, two years previously on a visit back to his hometown, Giger happened upon the newest project of the man responsible for building approximately one-third of the city, architect Thomas Domenig. An old-schoolmate of Domenig's wife, Giger found no problems befriending Thomas, and the two soon began reconstructing a café Domenig had started several months before. Funding for the previously planned café was unsteady at best, whereas Giger's money, plentiful after his success designing the characters and set for the famed *Alien* movies, was both certain and ready. It took little convincing – the café was leveled to the foundation, and Giger's already imagined plans became the main focus of the conversation between the two men.

Yet the plans were, for lack of a better term, bizarre. Giger had designed a space completely against all the trends of the time, a space so confrontational it seemed unlikely to ever succeed as traditional bar. The chairs resemble the musculoskeletal structure of some strange, prehistoric beast; cold, metallic, and unwelcoming. The space does not invite patrons to sit, relax, and drink – if anything it discourages these comforts.

It was a design certainly not in keeping with the pleasant, tourist-friendly image of Chur<sup>1</sup>, and seemed doomed from day one to fail.

But despite its coldness, its oddness, it did not close. The Giger-bar still stands successfully to this day, over twenty-two years after its opening. This is another oddity – many bars close within five years of opening, most within fifteen.<sup>2</sup> And yet still...it stands. And not alone. The second Swiss Giger Bar, located in Gruyeres, a town of 300 residents, opened April 12, 2003 doubling the population of the small city in hours (Fig. 3).

Giger's second bar is even more bizarre than the first, the walls curving inward, forming a shape that has been described as the womb of some monstrous beast; horrifying, highly dynamic, and fascinating. Hundreds of babies realistically formed from copper adorn the wall in another bar, reminding the patrons of the consequences of gratuitous sexual activity and the resulting overpopulation, often an aftereffect of excessive alcohol consumption (Fig. 4). Anxiety is essential to the space – while most bars provide escape, Giger's bars lead patrons into a trap; they are captured, surrounded by reminders of their actions, only given alcohol as an escape.

Two other Giger-esque Giger bars have existed, but neither was like the Swiss bars. The Tokyo Giger bar (1988-1990) was created without the artist's full consent, and finished with his objection (Fig. 5). The Giger room in New York City's Limelight (December 1998 – January 2002) was his design, but more an exhibit than a bar (Fig. 6). The room could not be altered structurally, so the room was filled instead with backlit

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<sup>1</sup> Chur is one of the oldest cities in Switzerland, divided into two sections; the historic medieval village and the residential area. Buildings are constructed almost entirely in white stone with red tile roofs, and ski sites, as well as museums and churches (many of which are included on the Swiss registry of historic places), seem to beacon tourists to the clean, frozen conceptualization of a Swiss paradise.

<sup>2</sup> Bethan Ryder, *New Bar and Club Design* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2005), 26.

transparencies of his works. Neither of these can be considered Giger bars – Giger was never given the chance to construct space in the way he desired.

So, what did he desire? Why, in a world of options with near unlimited financial backing, did he choose to build two anti-trend<sup>3</sup> bars in one small town and one ultra-small town? It seems he was clear in his motivations and direction throughout the process; though a chance meeting made it possible for construction to begin, Giger had been planning and designing the bars for decades. This direction is essential to understanding the bars, and the artist, as H. R. Giger's two Swiss bars are a purposeful anomaly; they go directly against current trends focusing on providing relaxing escapism and instead stand as anxiety-focused spaces where the artist's hyper-realistic horror aesthetic loudly proclaims dystopian warnings. By disregarding trend-based success and instead embracing an artistic and societal calling, Giger catapulted himself firmly into the realm of the artist. Largely unrecognized by both art and architectural history, his bars clearly demonstrate his aesthetic, his motivations, and his creativity, and as such are objects deserving of further study.

The goal of this paper is to demonstrate the Giger and bar's place in history. His bars will be brought to the forefront, aggressively exposed for the stunning conceptual and spatial experiences they truly are. Regardless of history's recognition of such, bars are an essential part of societal interactions, relationship building, and trends of escapism. For centuries, the bar, tavern, café, saloon, or whatever it has been called has provided a meeting place, a home away from home, a respite. It has relieved anxiety, provided joy, and brought people together.

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<sup>3</sup> The term *anti-trend* is used in this paper to describe something that goes directly against trends, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This term is not meant to reference any specific movement or scholar's work, but rather as a blanket to classify non-trend focused creations.



But Giger's bars do none of this. If anything, they cause anxiety. They remove joy. They force the viewer to confront their fears, both conscious and unconscious. Surrounded by the results of uncontrolled sexual activity, eating disorders, and substance and sexual obsession, patrons drink, come together, stay. They enjoy the confrontation, find comfort in dystopia, and feel at home. Yet the visual experiences also cause distinct unease. Patrons are forced to confront the results of their drinking, both in the present and the future. The temporary leads to the permanent, the moment leads to forever. In a direct affront to the modern bar, he declares dystopia, embraces disaster.

The two Swiss bars are the culmination of Giger's spatial design efforts; large-scale biomechanical works which seamlessly meld the artist's hyper-realistic aesthetic with anxiety, horror, and the uncanny in a built product. When considering the majority of the artist's works are large scale paint and ink on canvas, it initially seems odd he would be so dedicated to the development of these spaces, yet, his only formal training was in interior and industrial design at the School of Applied Arts in Zurich from 1962-1970. What began in his early childhood with spatial construction of a horror ride entitled *Ghost Train* would be honed throughout his career, from the set design in *Alien* to his bars.

Giger's exploration and construction of space, though certainly unusual, is not without historical precedent. Architects have long been experimenting with the relationship between anxiety and spatial experience, though often with a focus on alleviating anxiety rather than causing it. This practice started coming to the forefront in the early nineteenth-century as urbanization and industrialization uprooted rural families and exploded the population of city centers. I will begin my paper by discussing the

concept of space in relation to the goals of these nineteenth-century architects and architectural therapy in relation to Giger's bars, historically and conceptual grounding his work.

This framework will be further built upon in the next section of my paper, where I will discuss the development and visual conceptualization of the uncanny and anxiety disorders, particularly agoraphobia and claustrophobia. Anxiety disorders will be considered specifically in reference to the construction of space, both following the trends of many early nineteenth century architects and the new concepts proposed by the Surrealists and Giger. This context will then be narrowed and explored only in relation to bar design, bar history, and current bar trends. It is my hope that firmly establishing a socio-historical framework will fully prepare the reader for the final section of my paper, where I will address the Giger bars as visual, experiential, and dystopian objects. They will be examined stylistically and compared to trend-focused bars, and then analyzed from a psychoanalytical approach, which naturally lends itself to an exploration of Giger's works. My research will be building upon the texts of authors Anthony Vidler, Carol Duncan, Henri Lefebvre, and Edmund Burke specifically in relation to these authors' explorations of space. This framework will support my own reading of Giger's construction of space, and will be established more fully later within this text.

### **Terms**

Before beginning any paper, it is necessary to define, classify, and explore the terms and method which are used throughout it. Many of the words I will be using within this paper have multiple definitions, and as such need to be clarified here. The terms *modern* and *contemporary* in particular stretch across only a couple of years or nearly a

century depending on who is using them. I will be using modern in reference to the past thirty years, and contemporary in reference to the past fifteen years. These confines were determined based on the relationships between the trends evident in Giger's bars and the trends evident in bars worldwide.<sup>4</sup>

To discuss similarities between Giger's bars and other bars, the word *bars* needs to be clarified as it relates to the history of the built environment. As bars, clubs, and restaurants are often part of one business and are nearly impossible to separate, they will be considered in this paper as long as the bar is a primary focus of the business or structure. A bar is considered an alcohol-focused establishment, where sitting and drinking is more common than at a club, where standing/dancing and drinking are more the focus.<sup>5</sup> Because motivations for bars are more similar to restaurants than to clubs, clubs will be excluded whenever possible.

There is no doubt bars or taverns have always played an important (or at least major) role in society, but their role has shifted from a refreshment stop or meeting place with friends to what bar design writer Bethan Ryder describes as "theatrical spaces that encourage performance...where [one] plays out their public identity."<sup>6</sup> This performance is strongly linked to the four components Ryder claims are used to seduce patrons into coming to the modern bar: comfort, escapism, flexibility, and theatricality. These four components tie in with the most current trends, which Ryder notes include the utilization of organic elements, technology, and lighting.<sup>7</sup> These trends and components will be

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<sup>4</sup> Ryder, 4-20.

<sup>5</sup> Ryder, 12-16.

<sup>6</sup> Ryder, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Bars are not written about from a design standpoint often. Ryder's scholarship is basically all that is available, and my referencing of it stems from its exclusivity and accuracy. The lack of other noted scholarship is not an oversight on the writer's part, but rather a reflection of the limited works available.

frequently referenced throughout my research, as they manifest in both Giger's bars and my reference bars. My work builds upon Ryder's by providing counter-points to hers; while she focuses on the common elements of bars, I will instead focus on the uncommon, and the importance of the bizarre as well as the popular in bar design.

As my research focuses on the experience of space, *anxiety* and space-related disorders also become relevant. *Anxiety* will be defined as a sensation of turmoil or distress caused by a perceived threat of fearful situation. This definition is meant to be specifically space-related, as that is the type of anxiety my research will be working with. *Claustrophobia* will be referenced as a fear of small or perceived small spaces, particularly if being trapped seems possible. *Agoraphobia* is a complex, multi-part anxiety disorder. For this study, it will be referenced only in regards to a fear of wide open or unknown spaces.<sup>8</sup>

The concept of the *uncanny*, the idea of something being at the same time familiar and strange, which frequently causes uneasiness, is also essential for an understanding of Giger's works.<sup>9</sup> Though this term is often used in reference to dolls, mannequins, or humanoid robots, several scholars have used it in a discussion of architectural space.<sup>10</sup> The uncanny clearly relates to the experiential anxiety of Giger's bars; they present a familiar environment, a bar, but incorporate unfamiliar elements, like chairs made of metal bones. The uncanny sensation is furthered by baby-doll metal heads on the walls and the *biomechanical* design of the bars. Giger's biomechanics combine human figures

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<sup>8</sup> Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Vidler, 6-8.

<sup>10</sup> Vidler, 6-22.

with hyper-realistic, futuristic, and horrific mechanical elements, predicting a dark future for a society obsessed with violence and sex.

### Space<sup>11</sup>

Space is a singular term with multitudinous connotations, definitions, and interpretations. It has been used to refer to a vast, endless void, benefit commercial expansion, aid the analysis of art, construct living areas, museum environments, personal relationships – and the list goes on. Works have been dedicated to each of these areas since antiquity, and many more will likely be dedicated in the future. The goal of this paper is not to create one of these volumes, but rather examine the type of space most relevant to Giger's bars; constructed space. This term refers to the real space in which we live, specifically, the space that is built with the intention to manipulate those existing in its confines.<sup>1213</sup>

Constructed space is constantly experienced and consistently unnoticed. The very concept of the construction of space (specifically residential and commercial) often hinges upon making it so natural and comfortable that those moving through it are not aware of its architecture. These spaces are neither random nor natural, but exist within the natural world as the result of planning and human influence.<sup>14</sup>

For centuries the idea of constructed space has been the focus of scholarly research but in the last few decades its impact on human experience has become

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<sup>11</sup> It could be noted that the term *space* was absent from the Terms section of this paper. This was not due to an oversight on my part, but rather because the word is so overreaching and complex that it would be difficult to mention it fairly without filling numerous pages.

<sup>12</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1991), 14.

<sup>13</sup> Lefebvre's theories on space are being used in this study for numerous reasons. The main importance for my examination is his discussion of the production of space. Scholars often focus on what space is and how it impacts those who move through it, but Lefebvre's perspective, initially focusing on how space is developed, is more relevant for this paper's purposes.

<sup>14</sup> Lawrence R. Good, Saul M. Siegel, and Alfred Paul Bay, *Therapy by Design; Implications of Architecture for Human Behavior* (Springfield, Ill: C.C. Thomas, 1965), vii-viii.

increasingly noted. Volumes by scholars such as Anthony Vidler and Carol Duncan have centered exclusively on how behavior changes as spaces change. Duncan's *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* examines the human/space interaction in the museum environment, noting that behavior changes and participants unknowingly begin a sort of ritualistic set of behaviors because of the assumed museum environment. Simply entering the building triggers a structure of expectations and movements; people change both their behaviors (lowering their voices), and their expectations (the objects within are important simply because they are in the museum setting).

These behaviors are triggered upon entry into many settings; reverence and silence when entering a church or religious building, intimidation when entering a large government building, a desire to purchase items when entering into a retail setting. Exterior appearance, interior design, music, smell, and societal expectations all play a role in the ways participants engage with these spaces, carefully combined to construct spaces that manipulate human behavior. One of the least studied of these spaces, bars, are an excellent example of how a space can be made to encourage certain behaviors, and will be the focus of a later section of this paper.

Economic reasons are obvious motivators for intentional space construction, but not the only motivators. Another reason revolves around calming and relaxing participants, through a type of architectural therapy. The idea of architecture therapy as a subsection of art therapy that involves the creation of architecture for therapeutic reasons has not been widely explored, if it has been considered at all. Discussions of architecture

therapy relate much more strongly to the construction of space; specifically, how architecture can both create and combat mental illnesses and anxieties.<sup>15</sup>

The role of space, and the influence it has upon those who move through it, cannot be underestimated when considering the intentionality of an area's construction. Whether for commercial profit, power proclamation, or therapeutic influence, it is evident that each element of a location can be carefully orchestrated to provide the desired effect. The next section of this paper will focus on the anxieties meant to be alleviated by constructed spaces, and the impact of these anxieties upon design in contemporary structures.

### **Anxiety and Architecture**

Anxiety and control are easily viewed as opposites. Anxiety, a feeling of inner turmoil or distress, is often the result of a feeling that one is out of control of a situation. In a space-related sense, then, it seems that the construction, capturing, and manipulation of space through architecture and interior design could be a perfect tool to combat anxiety. Or to create it.

Many authors have worked extensively with this relationship between anxiety and architecture. One such text by Anthony Vidler, entitled *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, notes there are a wide variety of mental disorders, including agoraphobia, and claustrophobia, that inform the construction of space.<sup>16</sup> Vidler argues the accelerated growth of cities in Europe toward the end of the nineteenth century combined with the recognition of mental disorders as medically based issues in

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<sup>15</sup> Good, 24-51.

<sup>16</sup> Vidler, 25-50.

the late 1880s created a new urban pathology; cities were recognized reflections of the chaos, anxiety, and excitement of both architects and citizens as their societies rapidly changed.

Viennese architect Camillo Sitte is an excellent example of this new breed of architects; he was greatly influenced by newly published theories in psychology and proposed multiple transformations in an attempt to fill the empty space of the city. Sitte recognized the anxiety the move from a secluded country home to a vast city could cause, writing “One naturally feels very cozy in small, old plazas....on our modern gigantic plazas, with their yawning emptiness and oppressive ennui, the inhabitants of snug old towns suffer attacks of this fashionable agoraphobia.”<sup>1718</sup> This transition, from one area to a vastly different area, visibly cause anxiety.

At the same time, rapid population expansion within cities often caused areas to be densely populated, and those used to the wide space of the country often developed strong feelings of claustrophobia in their new, crowded dwellings. This combination of mental disorders and the way they informed space seems odd; it seems the city was at the same time too large and too compact. The anxiety caused by the transition from countryside to city manifested in these two different disorders, a clear reflection of the energy and chaos this change generated.

These ideas are furthered by scholar Amjad Almusaed in his text *Biophilic and Bioclimatic Architecture Analytical Therapy for the Next Generation of Passive Sustainable Architecture*, where he argues the incorporation of nature and natural

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<sup>17</sup> Vidler, 27.

<sup>18</sup> Sitte is referring to agoraphobia in relation to a fear of wide-open spaces. Though it can also incorporate a fear of new spaces, or of meeting someone, or of leaving the home, in relation to this discussion I will be focusing on the aspect of agoraphobia Sitte identifies.



elements back into architectural design reduces both environmental issues caused by structures and the anxiety-inducing separation of humans and the natural environment. The construction of space is also discussed in *Therapy by Design; Implications of Architecture for Human Behavior*. In this text, the architectural implications of psychiatric facilities are discussed, including the previous prison-esque appearance of these facilities and the trauma they could cause patients. These structures were bleak, white, and small, and the anxieties of patients were magnified as opposed to combated by these structures.<sup>19</sup> Reconsidering these structures allowed architects, mental health professionals, and patients to feel more comfortable working with and living in these contained environments.

These examples show scholars and architects working with the idea of constructed space attempting to relieve anxiety. The idea of instead creating anxiety through constructed space is certainly more rare, but not unheard of. The Surrealist movement was especially adept at melding art and anxiety; many works were so bizarre and difficult to comprehend that viewers were left feeling anxious as a result. Yet the movement had a startling lack of architectural works. This is in part because Surrealist buildings, unlike an oil painting, are often expected to function practically. Structures, unlike paintings, are objects of both functionality and beauty; even the most fantastic of buildings is still meant to be walked through, or sat in, or hold paintings – at least most of the time.

So it became a goal of the Surrealist architect to create something that functions, but does not appear as if it should. Buildings should project into space, they should float,

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<sup>19</sup> Good, vii-viii.

they should be upside down, and they should challenge the viewer's hold on reality. This was a daunting task for architects of the early 1900s not only because of the technological limitations imposed upon construction, but also because of the thorough disapproval of architecture frequently expressed by the Pope of Surrealism, André Breton.<sup>20</sup> Because of these many limitations, it could be said quite fairly that Salvador Dalí was *the* Surrealist architect. Though architect Nadir Lahiji (among others) has written about the very Surrealist elements in the works of Le Corbusier and other modern architects, none of these architects has, at any point, had direct or intentional involvement in the Surrealist movement.<sup>21</sup>

One of the most noted Surrealist artist, Salvador Dalí, is an important figure to consider. An inspiration of Giger's (many of Dalí's works are present in the Giger museum, and a meeting between the two artists was a great joy to Giger), his works become even more important for discussion here. Two of Dalí's most famous structures are his *Dream of Venus* pavilion for the 1939 New York World's Fair and his Port Lligat house (Figs. 7-11). These two structures all served different purposes, but shared a common Surrealist motivation and execution. The *Dream of Venus* in particular was meant as an encompassment of Surrealism at the time, a funhouse that incorporated all the disorder and anti-logic of Surrealist beauty (Fig. 7).

Dalí advertised the *Dream of Venus* to the directors of the World's Fair as a "Surrealist House," and it fit quite well with the Fair's attempts to create what they called

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<sup>20</sup> Breton was well known for his authoritarian control of the Surrealist movement, excommunicating members who wandered too far from his Manifesto and dictating regularly whether or not something was actually Surrealist. Breton was vehemently against architecture as a whole, writing it was "the most unhappy dream of the collective unconscious" and "a solidification of desire in a most cruel and violent automatism."

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Mical, *Surrealism and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2005), 129.

the “World of Tomorrow.”<sup>22</sup> As Dalí wrote, “It is a Surrealist walk-through...in the manner of the old type ‘funny house’ but with each attraction translated into terms of surrealism, based accurately upon Surrealist theory and principles – thus the ‘funny house’ of tomorrow.”<sup>23</sup> The house was a small, free-standing building with multiple appendages and a plethora of red velvet. Ingrid Schaffner writes of it as, “a pile of white and pink stucco sculpted into a profusion of niches and protuberances,” with a large copy of Botticelli’s *Venus* on the façade, surrounded by live women in 1930s-style bathing suits with fishing rods.<sup>24</sup> The ticket kiosk was shaped like a giant, decapitated fish head and the entrance required walking through two widespread, shapely legs.

The first room within the structure was a large fish tank filled with floating telephones, a piano made out of a woman, an erupting Vesuvius, and rattling men made of Ping-Pong paddles and chain. Another room featured a thirty-six foot long bed with a gorgeous woman, sleeping naked, the next room a ceiling covered with umbrellas and hair, and a floor covered in lobsters, beds of hot coals, and champagne. The rest of the house includes numerous Surrealist scenes, many featuring Venus-like women, and all appearing to be straight out of a Dalí painting (Fig. 8). Though it relied heavily on interior scenes to create a Surrealist feel, the exterior appearance of the house as well as its odd construction firmly plants it within the realm of anxiety-inducing architecture. This “funny house of tomorrow” was much more than any sort of fun house; it was a strange collection of absurdities, artfully blended to confuse and disturb any willing participants.

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<sup>22</sup> Ingrid Schaffner, *Salvador Dalí’s Dream of Venus: The Surrealist Funhouse from the 1939 World’s Fair* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002), 38.

<sup>23</sup> Schaffner, 38-39.

<sup>24</sup> Schaffner, 1.

His second prominent work, the Port Lligat house near Cadaqués, Spain was the artist's home from its completion in 1930 to 1982, when he left for Púbol Castle (Fig. 9). It now functions as museum, housing many of his works. The house is true Surrealist imagining; the exterior appears to be a collection of unstable rectangles while the interior is labyrinthine in structure, spiraling out in blind passageways and disorientingly slight changes of level. These passages and level-shifts make the house seem a place of chaos and unreality; the home is no longer comforting and solid but spread out and uncertain. The windows are also of different shapes and proportions; some are too high to reach while others hover barely above the ground. Though furnished in warm colors and velvets, the house still seems to exist in the uncanny, something familiar and foreign existing in the same structure.<sup>25</sup>

Two different perspectives on the complex relationship between architecture and anxiety, that of scholars like Anthony Vidler, Amjad Almusaed, and Camillo Sitte and artists like Salvador Dalí were presented here. These two conceptualizations barely scrape the surface of the dynamics between architecture and anxiety in constructed space, and are meant rather to demonstrate the two most common directions anxiety-influence spaces take. As the next section of my paper will demonstrate, bars continue this theme, either seeking to alleviate anxiety or, in the rare case of H.R. Giger, bring it to the forefront of patron experience. Giger's life and body of works obviously influence the plan of his bars, which will be demonstrated in the following section of this paper.

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<sup>25</sup> While we have no evidence that Giger visited either of Dalí's structures, it does seem likely based on his great admiration of the artist that Giger would have been aware of them. Any direct influence is, however, not able to be proven.

## Giger

Hans Rudolf “Ruedi” Giger was born on February 5, 1940, in Chur, Switzerland. In his own words, he had “a wonderful childhood, full of secrets and romantic settings.”<sup>26</sup> His wrote about his family but never gave the whole story, speaking often about his father but seldom about his mother or elder sister, Iris. His father was a chemist, wealthy but always concerned about money and his son’s decision to follow what he referred to as a “breadless” profession.<sup>27</sup> Despite this, their relationship was largely a positive one, and Giger often described his father as “an authoritarian but kind man.”<sup>28 29</sup>

From an early age, Giger writes of obsessions with girls, the dark, and blood. His obsession with females, which he calls the “fair sex,” seems to have come from his inability to talk to them; as a child he was a poor student, poor athlete and self-described as “painfully shy and fat.”<sup>30</sup> He tried instead to impress girls from afar with his art, and a homemade horror-ride he called “ghost train.” Ghost train was a one-way ride in small carts pushed by Giger through a narrow, dark hallway filled with demons and ghosts that Giger’s friends would animate. This would be his first publicly viewed art work, created at the age of 13, focusing on a horror-house like concept he never truly abandoned. As Giger writes, “My customers were pretty girls, who naturally got free tickets...the boys had to pay.”<sup>31</sup> His preoccupation with women can be seen in the majority of his works and in his life, a continuation of his elementary school hopes of being near the pretty girls.

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<sup>26</sup> H. R. Giger, *HR Giger ARh+* (Berlin: Taschen, 1991), 8.

<sup>27</sup> Giger, *HR Giger ARh+*, 12.

<sup>28</sup> Giger, *HR Giger ARh+*, 12-13.

<sup>29</sup> H.R. Giger passed away on May 12, 2014 in Zürich from injuries obtained during a fall.

<sup>30</sup> Giger, *HR Giger ARh+*, 12.

<sup>31</sup> Giger, *HR Giger ARh+*, 14.

He has had three significant romantic relationships, the first with actress Li Tobler from 1966-1975. This relationship is the most discussed, likely because of her influence on his works, and her tragic suicide in 1975.<sup>32</sup> Giger idolized her, painted her again and again, and referred to her as a “fairy that climbed out of my dreams and had become reality.”<sup>33</sup> He tried to pull her out of her depression many times by scheduling shows for her and involving her in his art, but she remained unhappy and ran away with an American man in 1974, returning a month later. In 1975, she would shoot herself with one of the many antique pistols Giger collected, deeply traumatizing the artist and causing a dramatic darker shift in his works.<sup>34</sup> Many have noted his feelings toward Li never really passed; his next wife, Mia Bonzaniga, closely resembled Li, and the women in his paintings seem to always have Li’s eyes (Fig. 12).

Giger addressed many themes in his works, though nearly all center on a common conceptualization and confrontation of fear. Several common subjects of Giger’s involve birth trauma, fear of castration, claustrophobia, disgust, mechanical domination of humans, fear of female sexuality, physical mutilation, and overpopulation. Giger’s works frequently incorporated bones, biomechanoids, deformed children born from nuclear war, and highly sexualized human figures. In his own words, “I’m ever so happy when people are upset with my works; they should be, they’re the reason they exist.”<sup>35</sup> By depicting in startling detail the things we most fear, his works force us to acknowledge the consequences of acts of war, sexual debauchery, and selfishness.

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<sup>32</sup> H. R. Giger and Beat Stutzer, *HR Giger: The Oeuvre Before Alien, 1961-1976* (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2007), 128.

<sup>33</sup>Giger and Stutzer, 127-9.

<sup>34</sup>Giger and Stutzer, 129.

<sup>35</sup>Giger and Stutzer, 101.

Yet his works are not purely darkness, they often have playful and even beautiful elements interwoven with the confrontation of fear. In Giger's own words, "You can eat in a room in which my pictures hang on the walls, because my paintings depict parties, too. It's true that my paintings are about death and decline, but I always portray them in an aesthetic way."<sup>36</sup> The expert way in which he rendered his subjects and the high fantasy he incorporated creates worlds that serve as complex predictions of dark futures, rather than momentary terrors.

The amount of works produced by Giger is staggering. He considers his art to fall under the category of Fantastic Realism, though his works have also been categorized as Surrealist, Biomechanical, and Futurist.<sup>37</sup> His works on canvas are perhaps the most recognized, and are widely varied in scale and medium; some of his works are no larger than the human hand while others fill rooms. His earliest works, produced from age six to age nineteen when they were first published in underground magazines like *Clou* and *Hotcha*, were mainly small-scale ink drawings (Fig. 13). He would progress to oil painting not long after, then would spend several decades working on a larger scale using an airbrush, markers, and pastels (Figs. 14-19). His first solo exhibition was in 1966, and largely featured his drawings and paintings.

He is also well known for his designs for films, most notably for the 1979 film *Alien* for which he won an Oscar. He designed the set as well as the Alien itself, the Derelict, and the Space Jockey (Fig. 20). His aesthetic is clearly evident in these characters, and the popularity of the *Alien* films is likely one of the reasons his works are such a part of Science Fiction culture. Giger also designed large parts of the other *Alien*

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<sup>36</sup> Giger and Stutzer, 72.

<sup>37</sup> Giger and Stutzer, 18-29.

movies (1979, 1986, 1992, 1997, 2004, 2007), the *Dune* movies (1984, 2000), *Batman Forever* (1995), and most recently the film *Prometheus* (2012). Giger directed a number of films in the 1960s and 1970s as well, including *Swiss Made* and *Giger's Necronomicon*, which were considered well done but not widely seen. Film design's consistent presence throughout Giger's career, as well as the similarity of the majority of his work to elements from these films, demonstrates its high importance to the artist.

He has also illustrated several books including his own popular text *Necronomicon*, published in 1977, dabbled in photography, designed posters for several high profile events and the film *Future-Kill*, and created a multitude of hyper-realistic sculptures (Fig. 21). He has also designed a line of guitars and bases for Ibanez guitars, microphone stands and equipment for several bands, a multitude of album covers, and the video games *Dark Seed* and *Dark Seed II* (Figs. 22).

Two of his main influences, biomechanics and Futurism, manifest in nearly all of his works. The concept of biomechanics has been around for centuries; Leonardo da Vinci could be regarded as the first biomechanic, though he would not have known the word to refer to himself as such. The popularity of the concept of man as machine grew during the Industrial Revolution, when the importance and relevance of machines rapidly expanded. Biomechanics ranges from the broad to the very specific in definition, but always refers to something related to the study of the body as a machine. Biomechanics study human anatomy in the same way engineers study machines; there is no concept of a personal relation, rather, the human body is viewed simply as a group of mechanical systems which work together to achieve goals.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Good, 95-110.



Biomechanics are interesting as well because they deal with micros and macros in the human form. Biomechanical studies can be used to track the movement and development of the entire body as well as the individual progression of a cell. The study of even the smallest function of the human body aids in the understanding of the whole, just as a knowledge of the capabilities of steel make it possible to build a stronger overall structure.

The concepts of biomechanics have been useful outside of their intended purposes as well. The human machine has become an inspiration for multiple artists, particularly H. R. Giger. Giger's humans are blended with robots, combined past the point of being able to determine where man ends and machine begins. This connection between man and machine certainly seems futuristic, and ties into another influence of Giger's, Futurism.

Futurism was an artistic and social movement started by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti in the early twentieth-century. Marinetti's *Futurist Manifesto*, published in 1909, laid down the foundations and goals of the movement, proclaiming, "We want no part of it, the past...we are young and strong, the *Futurists!*"<sup>39</sup> The Futurists emphasized youth, technology, violence, nationalism and a fierce rejection of the past. They felt the errors of those currently in power were poisoning the chances of the young to achieve great things, and believed to truly make art they needed to break free from the oppressive bounds of old society. His influence from both Futurism and biomechanics can be seen as his dystopian conceptualization of the ultimate industrial design – fixing the faults of humans by melding them with machines (Fig. 23). This industrial design ultimately fails

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<sup>39</sup> Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), 32.

to remedy the corruption of humans, instead turning them into beautiful but horrifying machines with all-too-human desires. The presence of this ultimate industrial design is the backbone of Giger's bar designs, and seems like a direct affront to common bar trends.

### **Bars – The Past and the Present**

As previously noted, bar design critic Bethan Ryder has asserted that four main components are used to seduce patrons into coming into the modern bar; comfort, escapism, flexibility, and theatricality. Ryder claims these elements are all achieved through varying means. Lighting plays an important role in each; it can be lowered to create a mellow, comforting feeling or a sense of escape, spotlights can be added to create a more theatrical environment, and changing color schemes allow for flexibility throughout the evening. Natural elements are frequently incorporated to encourage comfort and escapism, and bold pieces, such as giant crystal chandeliers or bars made of ice add theatricality to bars.

These trends continue to be utilized because they prove successful.<sup>40</sup> Bars are economically motivated institutions, and they will most likely not continue to garner patrons if they do not provide comfort, escapism, flexibility, or theatricality. To demonstrate the prevalence and consistency of these trends' presence, two bars will be examined here. So-An is, opened in April, 2001, is a bar that warrants mention for a variety of reasons (Fig. 24). First, it was designed by Zokei Syudan, perhaps the most well-known and frequently commissioned restaurant, club, and bar designers in Asia, particularly in Tokyo.<sup>41</sup> Second, it provides an example of bar architecture from an area

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<sup>40</sup> Ryder, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Ryder, 89.

with a plethora of bars and clubs. Tokyo is a center of nightlife, and its constantly changing and numerous bars demonstrate this perfectly.

So-An is located in the business district Shinbashi, inside a seven-story building that features another Zokei Syudan bar. The focal point of So-An is the bar itself, which stretches around the edge of the room, seating 58 patrons at a time. The bar is made of a green glass punctured with holes to act like vases for fresh flowers, and is lit from beneath (Fig. 25). The floor is made of dark green and brown leaf-shaped tiles, also illuminated from below. The ceiling is decorated by overlapping, multi-colored pieces of paper shaped like leaves, creating the impression of a forest canopy (Fig. 26). Other tables are scattered throughout and a steel-framed cave-like structure covered in twigs seats another ten patrons in the corner.

The use of driftwood in the bar, as well as the repeating leaf shapes and forest-like appearance directly echo a trend discussed by Ryder, Farrelly, and Boissière – appropriating nature, through rustic textures, recycled elements, use of natural elements, and mimicking of natural light. Organic forms and organic objects are frequently used in modern bar designs, often to create a means of escape for patrons trapped in lives of technology and chaos. These natural elements create a soothing environment that not only draws consumers in but also keeps them there for several drinks.

In reference to alcohol, So-An is primarily a bar for Shochu, an ancient liquor distilled from produce. Though long out of style and the sort of ugly stepsister to Sake, Shochu has enjoyed an immense popularity in Japan since 2003.<sup>42</sup> The use of a bar specifically for liquor that recalls the past demonstrates another trend discussed by Ryder and Farrelly – nostalgia. The popularity of this trend is again likely due to the twenty-first

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<sup>42</sup> Ryder, 28.

century attempts at escapism; it is difficult to worry about an upcoming deadline if you suddenly find yourself feeling transported back centuries.

Overall, the very nature-inspired, nostalgia-based design of So-An has caused it to successfully function in the business district in which it is placed. The escape offered by the bar is achieved through an appropriation of nature in material and in impression, and through the nostalgic release offered by ancient liquor. It is an excellent example of what modern bars are seeking to achieve and how they achieve it, as is the next bar I will examine.

Le Chlösterli is located in Gstaad, Switzerland, a town with roughly nine thousand residents, a far cry from the millions living in cities like Tokyo. The idea of a bar like Le Chlösterli in a small Swiss town is surprisingly not unusual; the tourism industry in Switzerland is strong because of the concept of a place Le Chlösterli's designer Patrick Jouin describes as "so frozen in the past, [with] a perfection that can be quite serious...yet also a place to go on holiday and have fun."<sup>43</sup>

Le Chlösterli seems like the perfect place for those looking to go on holiday and have fun. Opened in December of 2003, Le Chlösterli was constructed inside a space originally built by monks of the Abbaye de Rougemont in 1721 (Fig. 27).<sup>44</sup> Jouin took great care to maintain the original eighteenth century idea of the building, as he notes, "We were surrounded by old things, so we didn't want to introduce anything fake. Everything is Swiss-made. We used stone, leather, glass – materials that age very well."<sup>45</sup>

This integrity is clearly reflected in the furniture of the bar as well, including the abstracted cow bar stools, leather poofs that resemble bales of hay, and tables made to

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<sup>43</sup> Ryder, 92.

<sup>44</sup> Ryder, 92-93.

<sup>45</sup> Ryder, 92.

look like large pails full of milk (Fig. 28). This clearly reflects the previously discussed theories about the power of nostalgia in a bar space. Though Jouin is clearly committed to the history of Gstaad and the structure, he also integrates very modern elements into Le Chlösterli's design. This is particularly obvious in the LED-filled resin panels built into the floor and walls, which glow and pulse with the music.

These two bars, one in a bustling metropolis and the other in a quiet Swiss town, effectively demonstrate the current trends in bar design. Both incorporate comfort, escapism, theatricality, and flexibility, as well as other popular features, signaling both nostalgia and a reconnection to nature. Their successfulness in such different locations indicates the effectiveness of these trends in practice, and suggests that the use of these trends is a smart method to garner business.

### **The Giger Bars**

The bars of H.R. Giger are a far cry from the rustic-futurism of Chlösterli and the peaceful, naturalistic So-An. While those two bars provide escape, Giger's bars prevent it. Instead of welcoming patrons and encouraging them to stay and relax, Giger's bars encourage patrons to feel uncomfortable, to acknowledge the consequences of alcohol-induced escape. To demonstrate these differences and cement the importance of these bars in the field, this section of the paper will analyze the Giger bars. I will be briefly focusing on the Tokyo and New York bars as prototypes for the Swiss bars, primarily the reasons they failed and what Giger changed moving forward. I will then perform an in-depth analysis of the two Swiss bars, including their history, a formal analysis, and an exploration of patron experience. The final section of my paper will focus specifically on

why the bars were constructed the way they were, linking together this study with my previous discussions of bars, architecture, and anxiety.

In the artist's own words,

Our society is a society surrounded by poison, beautiful, intelligent people defeated by weakness, a love of vices, drugs, sex, alcohol. Do I drink? Seldom. But I never go to bars. They encourage the very things my works are confronting.<sup>46</sup>

It seems bizarre, then, he would choose to construct bars, and sink such time and effort into their creation. Since it is obvious the artist is not a great fan of bars, other reasons for their construction must be considered. While examining his bars here, I would argue rather than creating bars for typical purposes, he instead designed them as a continuation of his set design efforts, combining his interior design training with elements of his *Alien* aesthetic, developed decades before.

Giger's first bar, erected in Tokyo in 1988, failed shortly after opening (Fig. 29). It was first proposed to Giger by an audience member after he spoke at a science fiction convention in Tokyo, and Giger immediately stuck to the idea. Unfortunately, problems arose as soon as planning began. Giger abandoned the bar during construction because his design plans were not being followed, and swore it off completely when it became evident it had become a meeting place for the Yakuza.<sup>47</sup>

Everything in each of his bars was meant to be carefully orchestrated by Giger himself, including the shape of the space, placement of each table, and design of the bar, chairs, mirrors doors, lamps, coat racks, and ceilings. As in all his projects, Giger became furious when not consulted about progress or changes. The general plan for the Tokyo bar was never fully established, as the first idea the artist presented was unable to be

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<sup>46</sup> Giger, *HR Giger ARh+*, 19.

<sup>47</sup> An organized crime syndicate in Japan, often considered the "Japanese Mafia."

executed with Tokyo's earthquake codes. Giger had envisioned "tables-for-two in open elevator cars in the manner of gliding elevators that would travel up and down the four-story establishment, perpetually in motion (Fig. 5).<sup>48</sup> When this idea was turned down and a new concept was proposed and carried out without consulting Giger, he was livid and in his own words "threw in the towel [for the bar] created against my will."<sup>49</sup> It was clearly an unwelcome development in Giger's architectural projects, and his goals for the Giger bars.

This abandonment clearly demonstrates Giger's motivations for his bars. These spaces were never meant to be practical, nor were they simply money making ventures. Giger sunk a considerable amount of resources, both time and money, into developing his vision, but refused to stand behind the bar after it became clear it was not the bar he imagined. The Tokyo bar was certainly popular, and Giger could likely have profited from continuing his support of it. The Yakuza brought both wealth and status to the bar, yet Giger was persistent in his rejection of the space, and likely grateful upon its closure in 1990.

The room in the New York City Limelight Bar, completed in December 1998, was H.R. Giger's second attempt at a Giger-space, and much more in keeping with the artist's vision (Fig. 6). It served as the club's exclusive VIP room, and functioned practically as a temporary installation, incorporating his furniture designs, paintings turned into transparencies and illuminated, and sculptures. The Giger room remained in the Limelight until the club unexpectedly closed in late January 2002, a relatively long run for a temporary exhibit. Very little documentation exists regarding this installation,

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<sup>48</sup> H. R. Giger, *Www HR Giger Com* (Köln: Taschen, 1997), 86-89.

<sup>49</sup> Giger, *Www HR Giger Com*, 86.

though the extent of time in which it stayed in the Limelight suggests it was a reasonably popular addition. The classification of the Limelight room as an official Giger bar is a bit uncertain as it was always more than an exhibit versus a space the artist was allowed to modify freely, but it does demonstrate Giger's continuing desire to work with interior design and architecture in relation to bars.

The two extant bars in Chur and Gruyères, Switzerland both feature complete designs by Giger, and were erected about a decade apart; the bar in Chur opened in 1992 and the bar in Gruyères opened in 2003 (Figs. 2-4). The Chur bar was opened on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 1992, two years after construction commenced. It was the result of a chance meeting between the Swiss architect Thomas Domenig and H.R. Giger, one in which Giger heard of a failing café construction currently going on in Chur. Giger jumped on the opportunity to finally create a bar that coincided with his vision, and planning began.

The Chur bar is a 2,500 square foot, single room, centered around a 35 foot bar (Fig. 30). The concrete floor is covered entirely in metal panels, etched with sharp, frequently phallic biomechanical shapes (Fig. 31). The walls are a rich black, with alternating vertical-oval mirrors and glowing orange bulbs, held to the wall by two-taloned, mechanical claws (Fig. 32). The ceiling is made of fiberglass, diamond shaped panels, again covered in biomechanical drawings, with recessed black centers. The diamonds are pressed closely together, and dotted at their meeting points with small, bright lights. There is no natural light inside; even the entrance to the bar is designed to avoid light, as patrons are filtered through a hallway that makes the entrance of any light into the bar impossible.



The central bar is constructed of a combination of concrete, iron, and fiberglass. It curves around in a half moon, the bottom recessing into small, etched caverns and the top reflecting the faces of those who sit around it. Eight throne-like chairs covered in biomechanical skeletons and topped with large, splayed hipbones surround the bar, raised up on two separate platforms that are covered in the same biomechanical etchings as the floor panels. These chairs were originally developed by Giger for the *Dune* movies but were not used, and are referred to and for sale as Harkonnen Capo chairs. A sculpture of a small man's head and torso floats on a pole at the center of the bar, directly lit. The man appears malnourished and his missing limbs and placement is disturbing at best; he seems to sit in judgment of those beneath his floating form.

The rest of the bar has smaller tables placed to either side of the central bar and placed around the walls beneath the mirrors. These chairs do not resemble the Harkonnen around the bar but still feature a disconcerting biomechanical design; the legs slant dramatically up into the base, which is connected by a spine-like pole to its back (Fig. 33). They present an arguably semi-comfortable shape, but still vary from a typical bar booth. None of the seats invite patrons to stay, nor does the décor.

Giger's bars force confrontation. Mirrors placed on all walls of the restaurant and on the bar reflect patrons' faces back toward them; no escape or portal to the outside world is offered. They are left alone with their drinks, watching either themselves or looking around at chairs seemingly made of bones. The space surrounds its occupants with darkness, forcing them to confront their consumption and its consequences. The small alcoves underneath the bar appear like gapping caves, ready to envelope patrons, encouraging claustrophobia, as does the darkness and closed nature of the bar. The need

for alcohol to escape the terrors outside the bar is confronted by the terrors inside the bar; a clear signal that no problems can be solved simply through substances or locale.

The Gruyères bar, opened in 2003, was the culmination of Giger's bar design efforts (Fig. 4). It would prove to be the inspiration for any future bar efforts. The 4,800 square foot bar was constructed as an addition to the Giger museum, a 400 year old, four-story medieval chateau which Giger has renovated to better fit his aesthetic (Fig. 34). The bar can be entered through the north side, which is unmarked, while the museum is entered through the south side, largely noted (Fig. 35). The bar was built onto the side of the museum, and added as both a supplement to and continuation of Giger's artistic efforts. The bar, like the museum, melds old and new, natural and unnatural, soft and hard.

The Gruyères bar is over twice the size of the Chur bar (Fig. 36). It is enveloped by beige double concrete skeleton ribs that run the length of the ceiling, crisscrossing over one another and creating a womb-like skeleton structure (Fig. 2). This bar shares similar chairs, floor design, and tables to the Chur bar, but differs significantly in design. The Gruyères bar was meant to both add to and incorporate the Giger museum.

The south wall is adorned by the heads of infant children, eyes closed and mouths open – suggesting death (Fig. 4). Giger's frequent warnings about the dangers of overpopulation are evident here; alcohol, frequently consumed in bars, is often the cause of unprotected sex. This leads to often unwanted pregnancy and either aborted or undesired children. Either way, parents are left with the results of their actions, and forced to make sober decisions about non-sober matters.

Small alcoves exist throughout the space, surrounded by skeleton chairs (Fig. 37). A half-moon central bar, similar to the Chur bar, is an important but almost overwhelmed by the rest of the room. The space masterfully melds open and closed, small alcoves encouraging claustrophobia and large, open spaces encouraging agoraphobia. No sitting area proves to be comfortable; each provokes a confrontation.

The exterior-facing walls have similar portals to the mirrors in the Chur bar, but these instead offer an opportunity to gaze through them (Fig. 38). Though different from the self-reflections offered by the Chur bar, they still force confrontation. Non-patrons will walk by sitting patrons, gazing in on them or, perhaps worse, ignoring them. Patrons are left with a profound feeling of guilt; at best they are lazy, at worst, repulsive.

The use of concrete was not practical, especially on the ribs running across the ceiling. It was incredibly heavy, and there were several failed attempts at their placement before the final result was achieved.<sup>50</sup> Concrete was chosen rather because it appeared the way Giger wanted; he felt the to honor the 400 year old castle the museum was housed in, he must incorporate elements that had the appearance of the same age. This explains the largely bone colored space, as well as the lack of prominent artificial lighting.

Every surface in the Giger bar was hand-polished to the point of perfect smoothness, mimicking the feel of freshly cleaned bones. Patrons are not discouraged from touching the ribs or any surface within the bars, rather, they are able to experience the bar through both touch and sight.<sup>51</sup> This is again unusual for most bars; the emphasis is seldom on touch and rather more focused on sight and sound. The absence of music in

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<sup>50</sup> Steel bars were driven through the concrete ribs into the structures' interior walls, stabilizing the otherwise unstable material. The bars were covered with concrete where the extended into visibility, maintaining the overall image of the space.

<sup>51</sup> Giger, *Www HR Giger Com*, 97-98.

the Giger bars amplifies the voices of the patrons, forcing either silence or interaction.<sup>52</sup> They do not allow, as many bars do, the opportunity to blame loud music for an absence of conversation.

Giger's bars are far from comforting. Patrons are not welcomed to stay; the chairs are made of hard metal and concrete ribs, and the spaces invite judgment and guilt. No spot in either of the bars is cozy; any privacy offered by alcoves is removed by the silence of the bars and, in the case of the second bar, the bodies of infant children lining the walls. The open hours of the two bars refuse to accommodate patrons either; while many bars are open from dinner to early morning, the Giger bars are open hours more typical to those of museum – 10 AM to 8:30 PM, and closed on Monday.<sup>53</sup>

Yet they remain popular, and open, even after the artist's death. The remote locations of both the bars seem to encourage a pilgrimage of sorts for Giger fan's, who come from all over the world to have a drink in the Giger bars. His strong following, evident in his influence in tattoo culture, music, science fiction media, and video games, clearly remains after his passing. Despite the lack of comfort provided by the bar, and the uncanny nature of the bar's atmosphere, his fans still frequent the bars, excited for any connection with the works of the artist. The bars go beyond a painting; they surround patrons, providing a Giger experience which cannot be matched – unless, perhaps, the *Alien* sets still stood.

Giger's bars, built within at least partially existing spaces, seem to be the ultimate biomechanical work. Rather than choose to build his bars as freestanding structures, he decided to modify existing spaces, taking the “organic” existing structure and

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<sup>52</sup> Giger, *Www HR Giger Com*, 97.

<sup>53</sup> Giger, *Www HR Giger Com*, 98.

mechanically modifying it to fit his ideal aesthetic. The influence of biomechanics is clearly evident in this modification, as is the presence of the uncanny. Everything familiar is made strange; lamps, sources of light and comfort, are surrounded by claws, or in the second Giger bar, nonexistent. The chairs and tables typical to the normal bar are constructed from what appear to be mechanical bones; windows are really mirrors. The continual reinforcement of the uncanny throughout the bars perfectly demonstrates Giger's aesthetic, the combination of the usual and the fantastic. The artist's works, especially his bars, are also clearly manifestations of philosopher Edmund Burke's concept of the sublime, the idea the imagination is moved to a sense of fear and horror by the awe of the dark, the unknown. The continuing presence of patrons, despite the horrors of the bars, demonstrates Burke's conceptualization of the simultaneous attraction and fear something can encourage. Patrons are drawn to the bars because they are frightening and anxiety-inducing; they find whatever they are looking for in the bizarre spaces.

Though Giger never achieved his dream of having a Giger bar in every city, it seems that the dream could be completed after his 2014 death. Shortly before he died, he met with Andy Davis, the head of Sci-Fi Hotel, a fantasy art inspired hotel that, like Giger's bars, exists outside of normal trends. The joint plans between Giger and Davis were presented for the establishment of Giger bars in cities including London, New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, Seattle and San Francisco. Davis stated that "The important part is total authenticity. Giger and his team will be completely involved in the process and ultimately, sign off on it. This is a Giger work of art, not just a copy, but the real

thing, with Giger's involvement from start to finish. It is the vision of HR Giger himself, not Sci-Fi Hotel®, not any business plan, it is art, pure and simple.”<sup>54</sup>

Whether or not these bars will proceed now that the artist has passed remains to be seen. Regardless, as the two Swiss Giger bars stand now, they are masterpieces, intentionally rejecting formulaic success and instead embracing the oddness, and the humanness, of our all-too-frequent behaviors. The message of his bars remains timeless, and will continue to haunt patrons as the years pass on.

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<sup>54</sup> “H.R. Giger Bar,” H.R. Giger Bar Official Website. Last modified November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Accessed January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015. [www.gigerbar.com/](http://www.gigerbar.com/)

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## Images

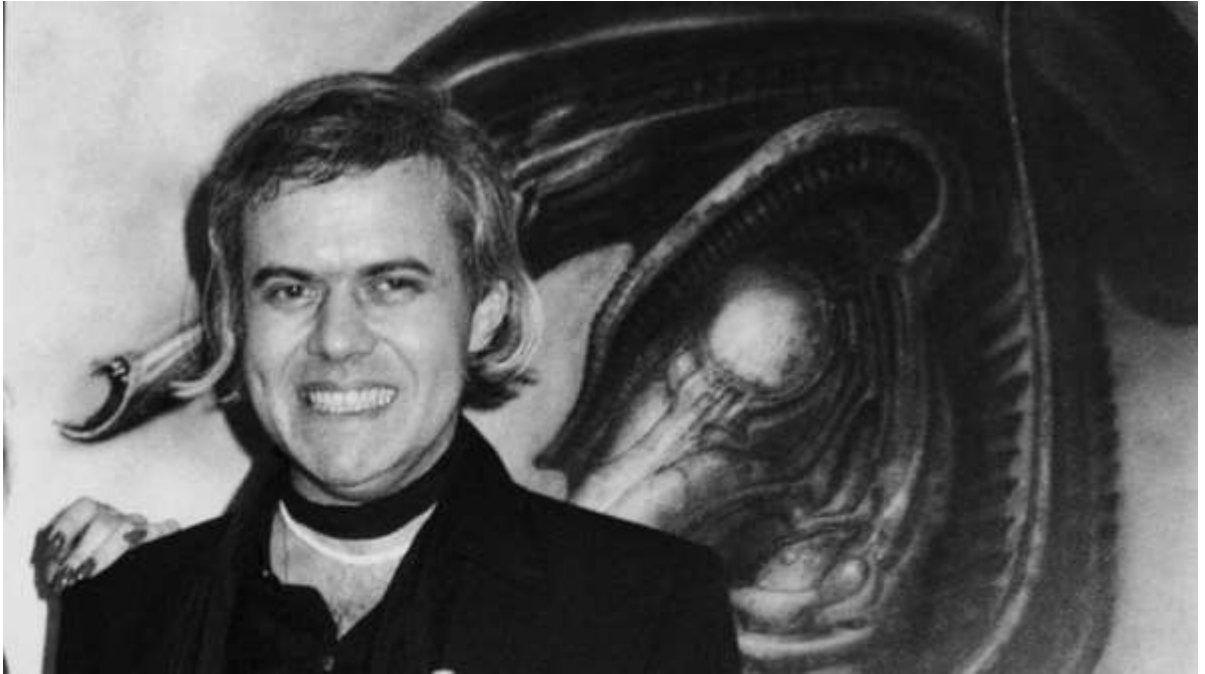


Fig. 1 H.R. Giger with His Work, 1964.  
The artist poses with one of his early works, an inspiration for the *Alien* movies.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 2 H. R. Giger Bar in Chur, Switzerland by H. R. Giger, 1992.  
The custom chairs, windows, and floors in the Chur Giger Bar.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 3 H. R. Giger Bar in the Giger Museum in Switzerland by H. R. Giger, 2003. This image clearly shows the skeleton womb-like nature of the second Swiss bar. (H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 4 H. R. Giger Bar in the Giger Museum by H. R. Giger, 2003.  
The wall of infants in the second Swiss Giger Bar.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)

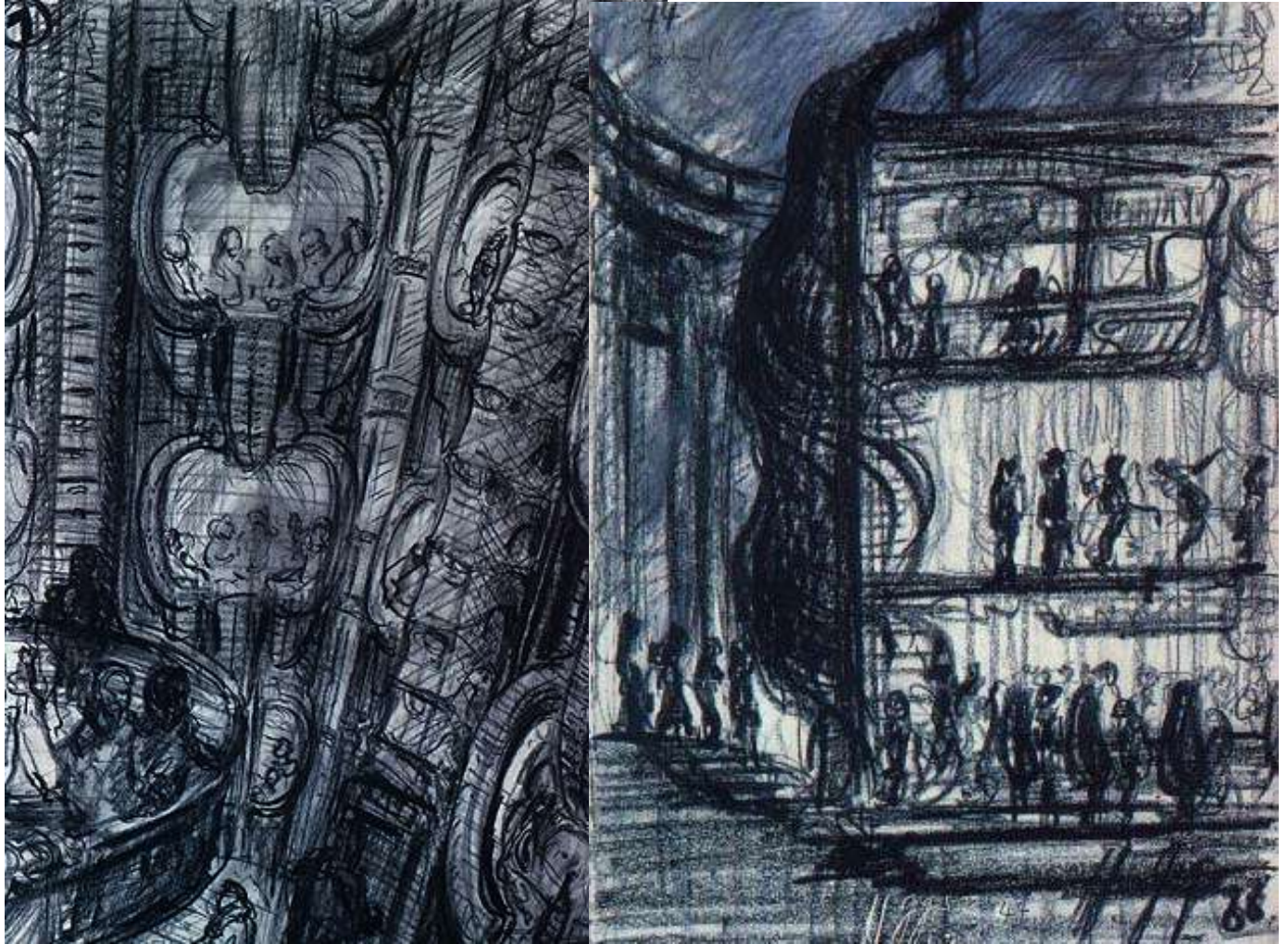


Fig. 5 Two sketches for the Giger Bar in Toyko by H. R. Giger, late 1980s. These sketches show the Giger bar as the artist had planned it, larger, more detailed, and complete with moving elevator cab-like seating.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 6 Four photographs of the Limelight, by H. R. Giger, early 1990s.  
Four images show the Limelight in varying stages and from various angles, including an image of the artist in the bar, two figures positioned near booths, and the biomechanical stairs.  
(The Gothamist website: <http://gothamist.com/2014/05/13/giger.php>)

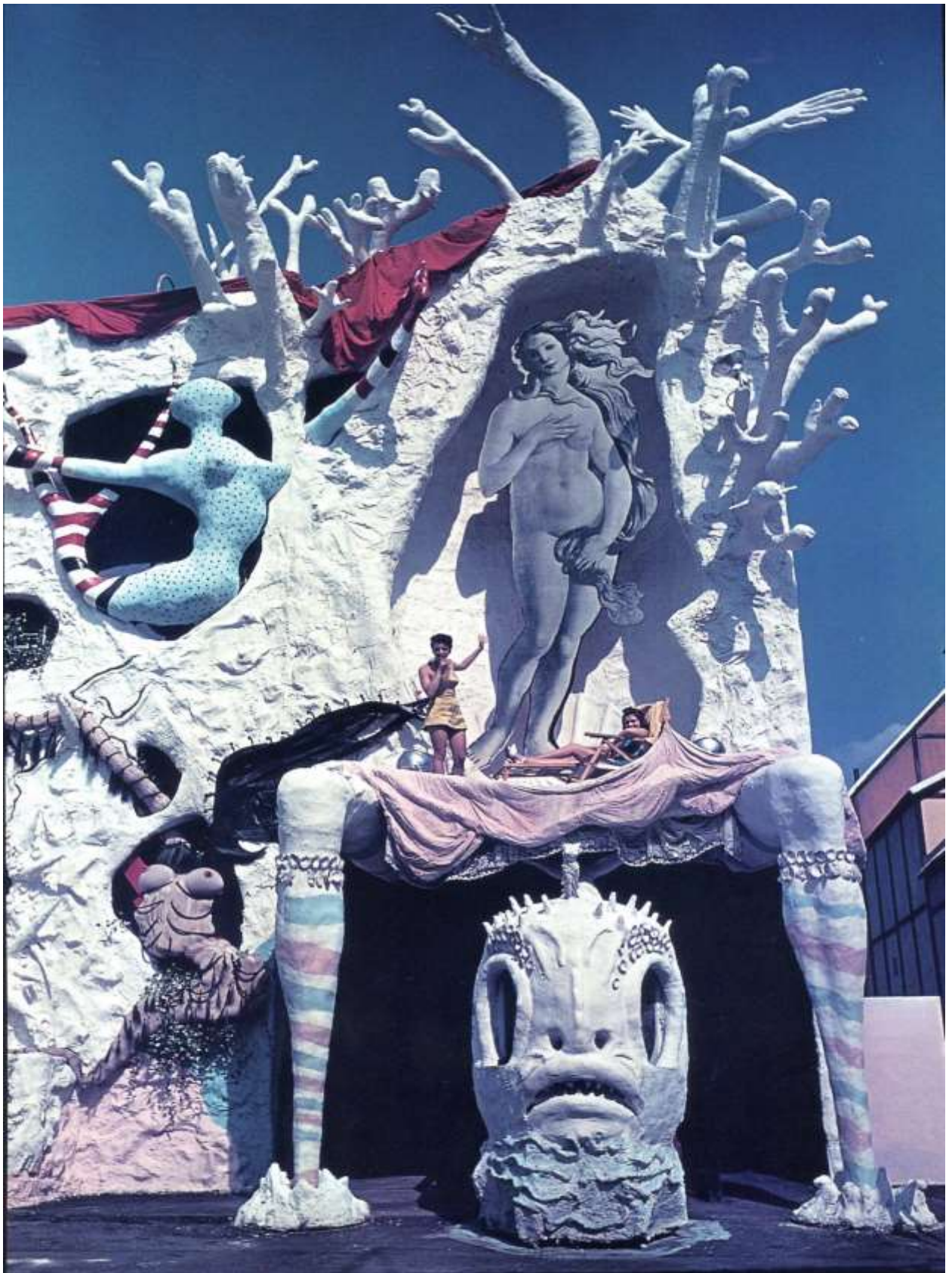


Fig. 7 *Dream of Venus* by Salvador Dalí, 1939.  
This funhouse is an example of one of the few works of Surrealist architecture.  
(The City University of New York's Website:  
<http://dreams.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/2010/04/19/salvador-dalis-dream-of-venus/>)



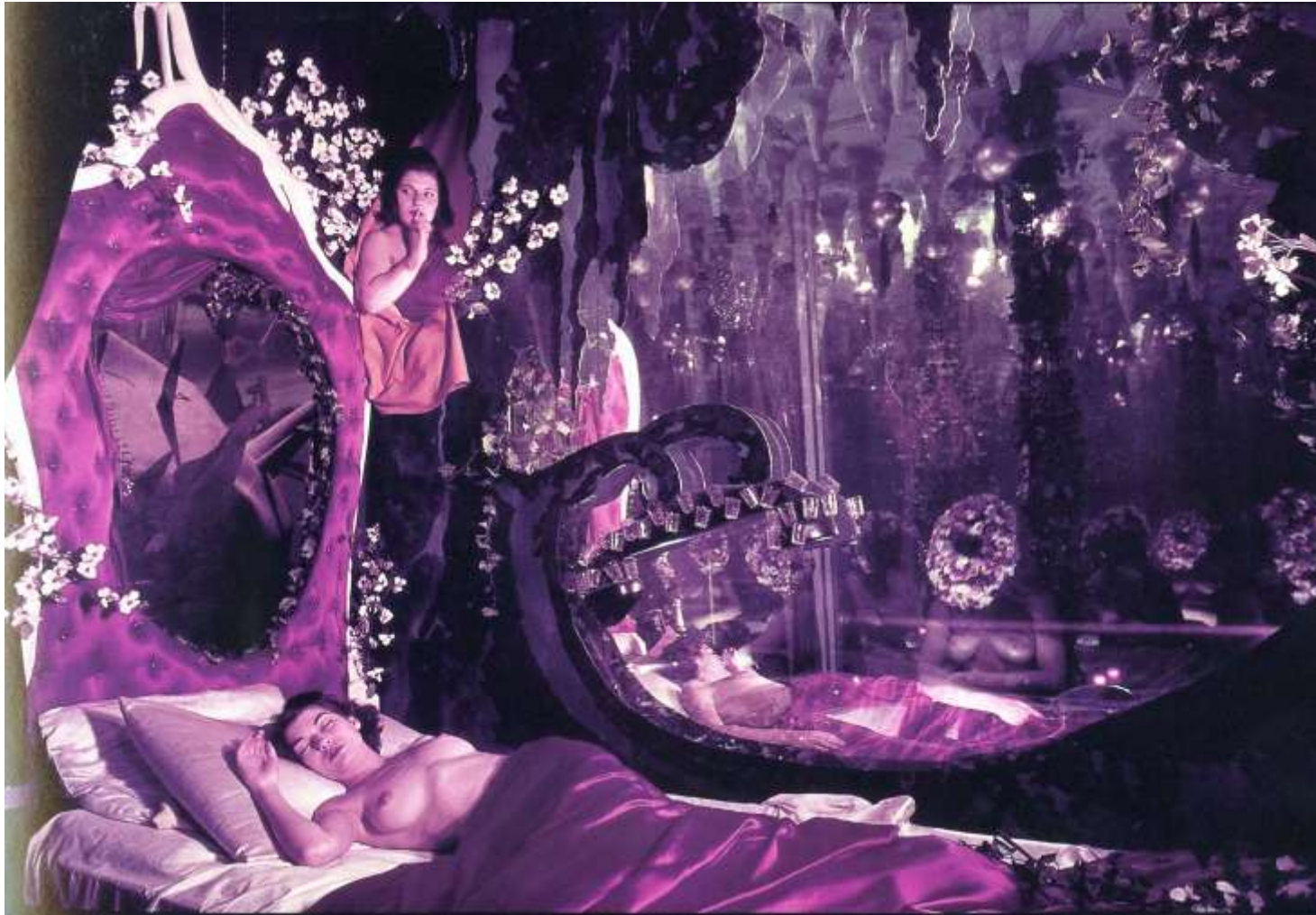


Fig. 8 *Dream of Venus* by Salvador Dalí, 1939.  
This room from Dalí's funhouse is an example of one of the few  
works of Surrealist architecture.  
(The City University of New York's Website:  
<http://dreams.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/2010/04/19/salvador-dalis-dream-of-venus/>)



Fig. 9 Port Lligat House by Salvador Dalí, 1930.

This house that Dali lived in is one of the few works of Surrealist architecture.  
(Port Lligat Website: [https://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/portlligat/en\\_index.html](https://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/portlligat/en_index.html))



Fig. 10 Teatro Museo by Salvador Dalí, 1974.  
Dalí's museum is another example of one of the few works of Surrealist architecture.  
(Teatro Museo Website: [http://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/figueres/en\\_index.html](http://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/figueres/en_index.html))



Fig. 11 Teatro Museo by Salvador Dalí, 1974.

This part of Dalí's museum is a clear reflection of the juxtaposition between modern and ancient; clean glass contrasting bright stone, Christ like figures posed on top of modern vehicles.

(Teatro Museo Website: [http://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/figueres/en\\_index.html](http://www.salvador-dali.org/museus/figueres/en_index.html))



Fig. 12 *Li II* by H. R. Giger, 1974.

This acrylic on wood piece demonstrates a frequent subject of H. R. Giger, his now deceased partner Li Tobler, the year before she committed suicide.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 13 *Shaft No. 7* by H. R. Giger, 1966.

This ink on paper drawing demonstrates the most common medium utilized by H. R. Giger in the early years of his career, as well as frequent subjects and themes of the artist – shafts, women, biomechanics, and bones.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)

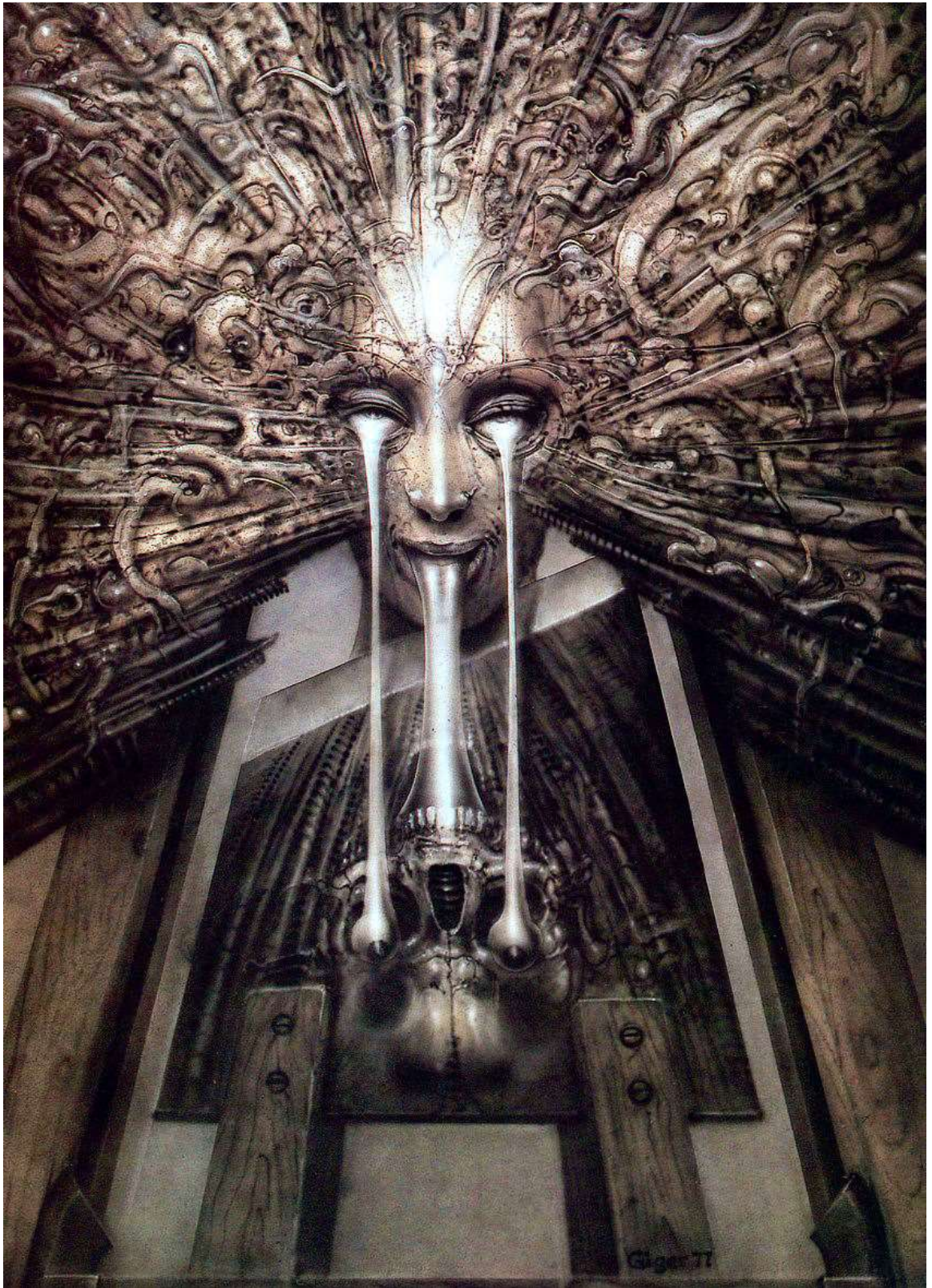


Fig. 14 *Mirror Image* by H. R. Giger, 1977.  
This acrylic on paper demonstrates Giger's switch in materials, as well as his continuing obsession with Li's eyes and early development of his biomechanical figures  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 15 *New Order* by H. R. Giger, 1985.

A graphic ink on paper, layered with acrylic, depicts a biomechanical machine, connecting two female figures.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)





Fig. 16 *Jodorowsky's Dune* by H. R. Giger, 2014.  
A proposed drawing of the murder machine monster for the original, unmade *Dune* movie,  
redrawn by Giger in 2014 for a documentary about the film.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 17 *Necronomicon* by H. R. Giger, 1971.  
A print of one of the drawings in Giger's book *Necronomicon*, similar to the soon-to-be-designed *Alien*.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 18 *Astro-Eunuchs* by H. R. Giger, 1967.  
An early ink drawing by Giger.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 19 *Unknown* by H. R. Giger, 1983.  
An airbrush portrait of an unnamed figure.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 20 Film still from the movie *Alien of the Alien* by H. R. Giger, 1979. This image gives an accurate idea of how detailed and frightening Giger's incredible popular Alien figures were.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 21 *Birth Machine* sculpture by H. R. Giger, 2010.

This sculpture demonstrates several important subjects of Giger, including concerns about overpopulation, birth trauma, technology, and biomechanics. It also demonstrates Giger's comfort level with sculpture, and provides an excellent example of his newer works.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)

**g i g e r**  
SIGNATURE SERIES

RGTHRG2-  
"N.Y. City XI (Exotic)"  
Painting by H.R. Giger  
Ibanez RG Mahogany Body  
5pc Wizard II Thru-Neck  
Edge Pro II Bridge

The visionary creator of the Alien, H.R. Giger, and Ibanez Guitars proudly present the second generation of H.R. Giger Signature models.

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For more information on H.R. Giger and the Ibanez H.R. Giger signature models visit [ibanez.com](http://ibanez.com)  
The long-awaited H.R. Giger signature SHRG2 model featuring a metal-coated Ibanez S mahogany body etched with H.R. Giger's "Biomechanical Matrix" available soon.

**Ibanez**

Fig. 22 Poster advertising Giger guitars by H. R. Giger and Ibanez. This poster shows one of the Giger guitars, an example of Giger's popularity among musicians and in popular culture.

(Ibanez website: <http://www.hrgiger.com/ibanez.htm>)



Fig. 23 A. *Crowley (The Beast 666)* by H. R. Giger, 1975.  
This acrylic on paper demonstrates the biomechanical figures of H. R. Giger, as well as the overtly graphic sexual elements of many of his works.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)





Fig. 24 So-An by Zokei Syudan, April 2001.

This image of the So-An Shochu bar shows several important elements, including the cage covered with twigs, the bar, and the natural lighting scheme. (Zokei Syudan's website: <http://www.zokei-syudan.co.jp/>)



Fig. 25 So-An, bar detail, by Zokei Syudan, April 2001.

This image of the So-An Shochu bar shows the backlit, green glass bar, complete with modern and natural elements like the flowers sitting in the holes that were drilled into the bar to serve as vases.

(Zokei Syudan's website: <http://www.zokei-syudan.co.jp/>)



Fig. 26 So-An, ceiling detail, by Zokei Syudan, April 2001.  
This image of the So-An Shochu bar shows the paper leaves on the ceiling and the lit leaf tiles on the floor, both of which reinforce the nature-based idea of the bar.  
(Zokei Syudan's website: <http://www.zokei-syudan.co.jp/>)



Fig. 27 *Le Chlösterli* by Patrick Jouin, December 2003.  
This image of *Le Chlösterli* shows the exterior of the structure, built in 1721, which appears very traditional and influences the traditional-esque elements of the interior.  
(Le Chlösterli's website: <http://www.chloesterli.com/>)



Fig. 28 *Le Chlösterli* by Patrick Jouin, December 2003.

This is the *Le Chlösterli* interior, including the LED-filled resin panels in the floor, tables meant to look like buckets filled with milk, leather poofs meant to look like hay bales, champagne buckets that are really milk buckets, and a large glass wall that separates the bar and the adjoining restaurant. .

(Le Chlösterli's website: <http://www.chloesterli.com/>)

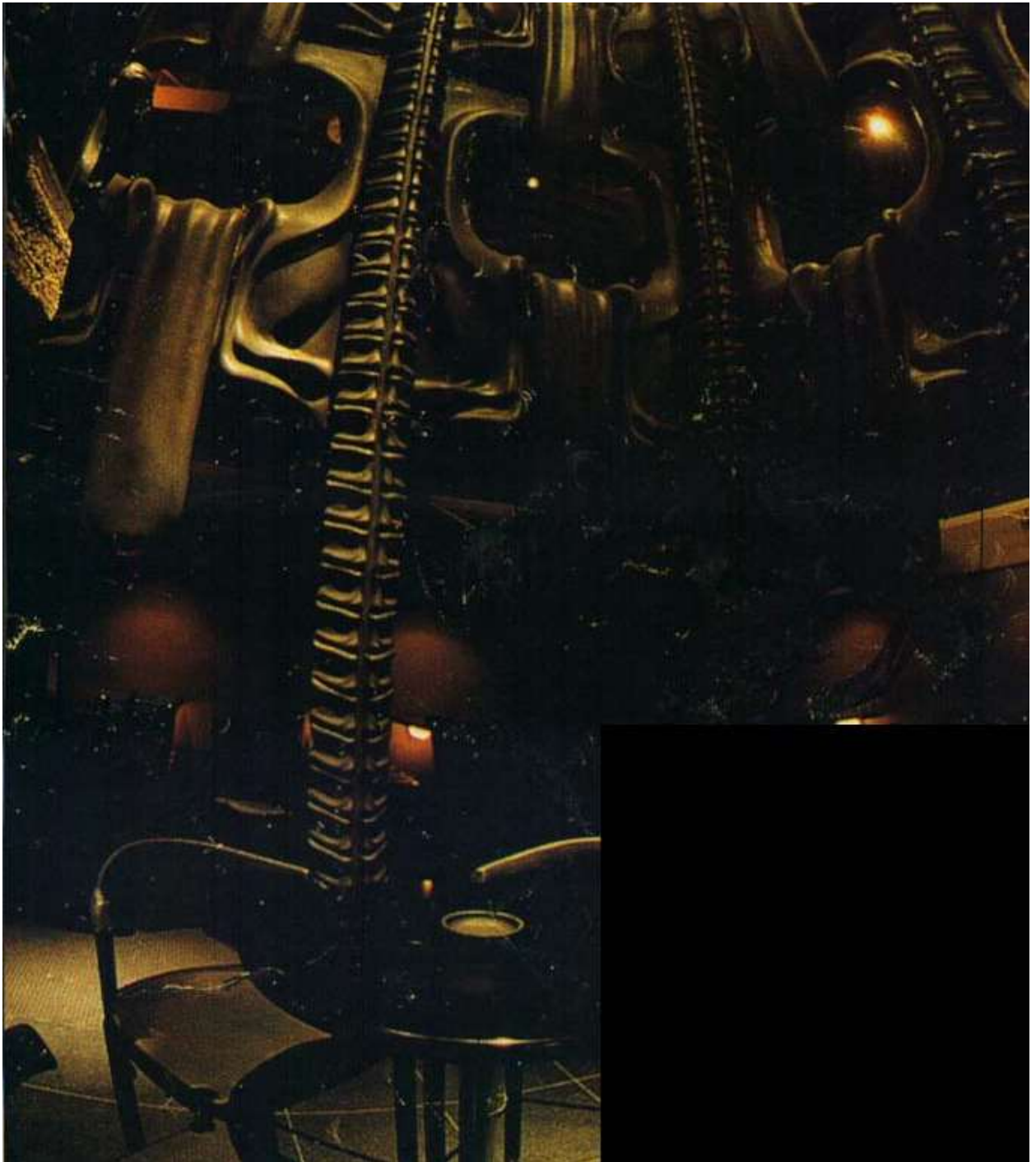


Fig. 29 Interior of Giger Bar in Toyko as it was actualized by H. R. Giger, late 1980s. This photograph shows the interior of the Tokyo Giger bar, complete with tables and hanging pods for guests to sit in. This bar was not created in the way Giger wanted, and he broke ties with it. (The blacked out corner was done by the Giger website to block out a patron)  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 30 The Entrance to the Chur Giger bar, H.R. Giger, 1992.  
The entrance to the Chur Giger bar; patrons enter the door and are channeled down a long dark hallway to the left.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 31 Floor of the Chur bar, by H. R. Giger, 1992.

This image demonstrated the elaborate etchings present on each panel of the floor in the Chur Giger bar.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)





Fig. 32 Lights in the Chur bar, by H. R. Giger, 1992.  
This image demonstrates the orb shaped lighting on the walls in the Chur Giger bar.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)

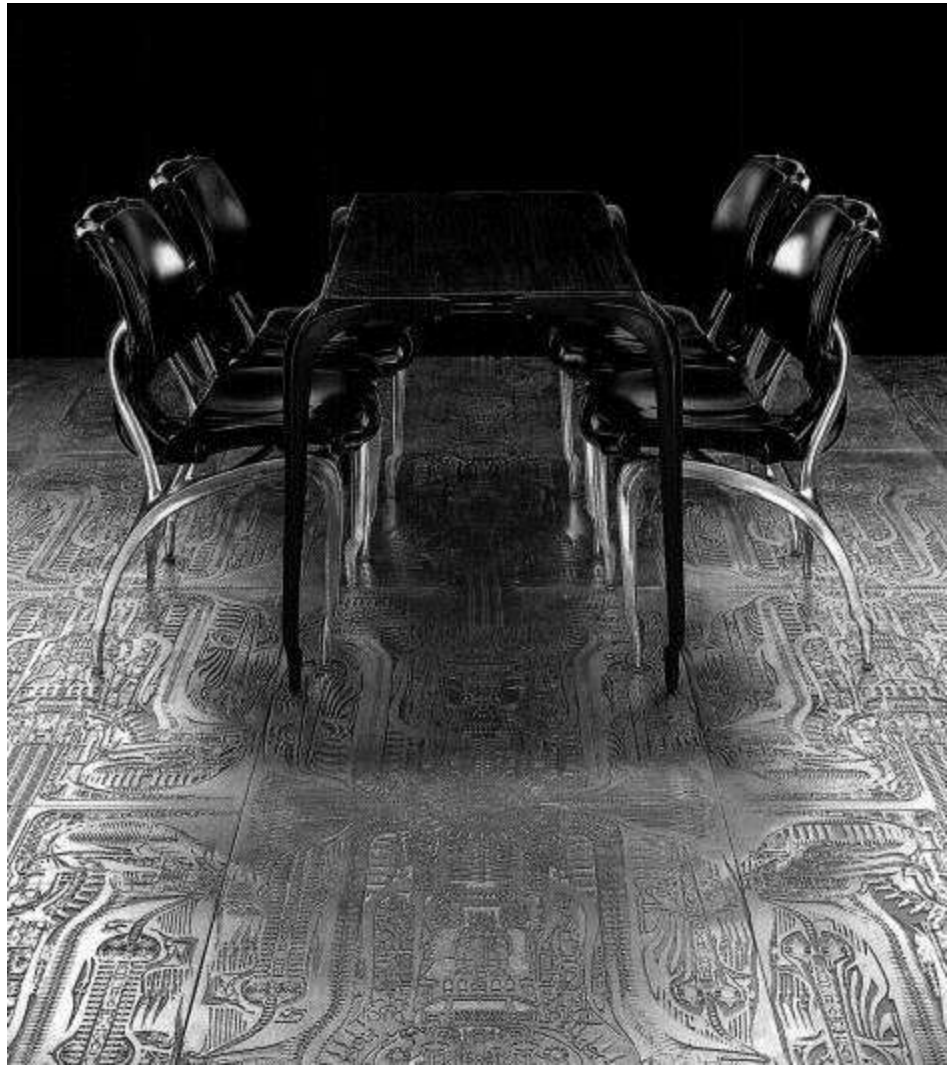


Fig. 33 Chairs and Floor in the Chur bar, by H. R. Giger, 1992.  
The curved, spinal nature of the chairs in the Chur Giger bar, placed atop the biomechanical,  
etched steel flooring.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 34 Exterior of the Giger Museum and Bar, by H. R. Giger, 2003.  
The 400 year-old exterior gives few hints as to the interior content; while the exterior seems largely preserved in its original state, the interior houses Giger's graphic works.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 35 Exterior of the Giger Museum and Bar, by H. R. Giger, 2003.  
The 400 year-old exterior on this side of the Giger Musuem has been modified, with a highly detailed archangel and a miniature *War Machine* welcoming patrons into the Musuem.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)

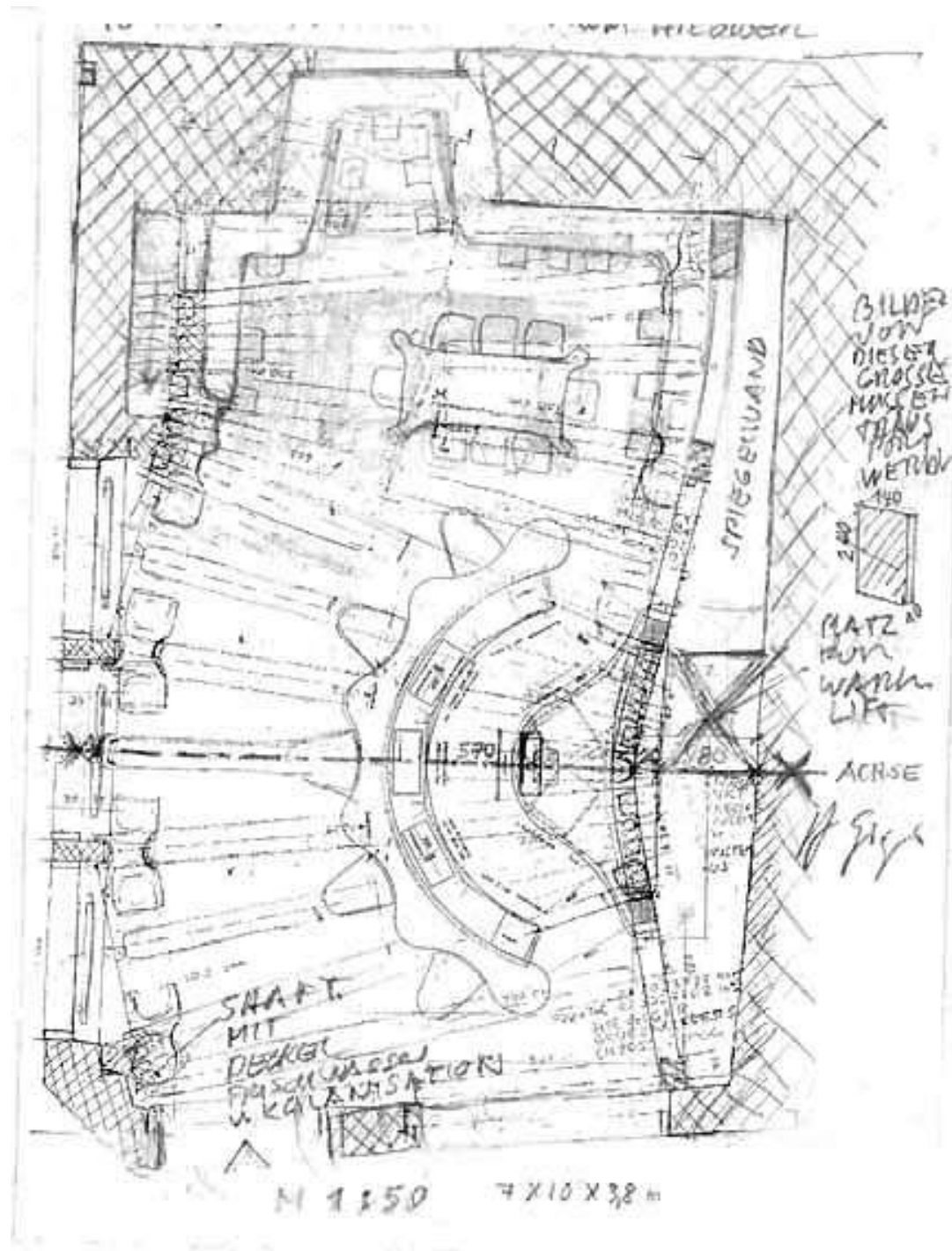


Fig. 36 Floor Plan - Gruyeres Bar, by H. R. Giger, 2003.  
 This early floor plan shows Giger's plan for his Gruyere bar including chair and bar placement and initial dimensions.

(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 37 Patrons in an Alcove, Gruyeres Bar, by H. R. Giger, 2003.  
A wall of infants looms over patrons in one of the many alcoves throughout the bar.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)



Fig. 38 H. R. Giger Bar in the Giger Museum in Switzerland, window view by H. R. Giger, 2003.

This image clearly shows the large, window-portals in the second Swiss bar.  
(H. R. Giger's database: <http://www.hrgiger.com/frame.htm>)