

Entertainment Engineering & Filmmaking at Mizzou

Jeffrey Uhlmann

Filmmaking and Engineering

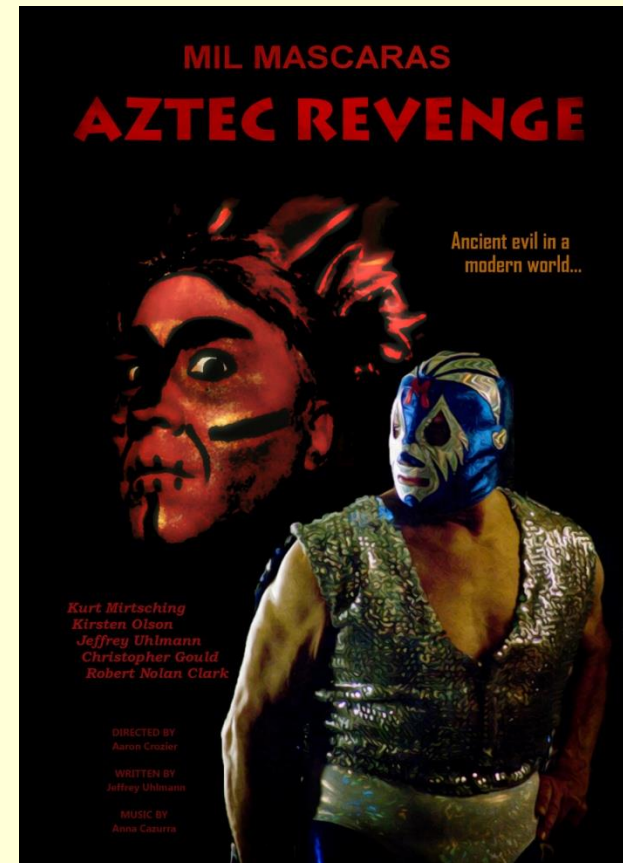
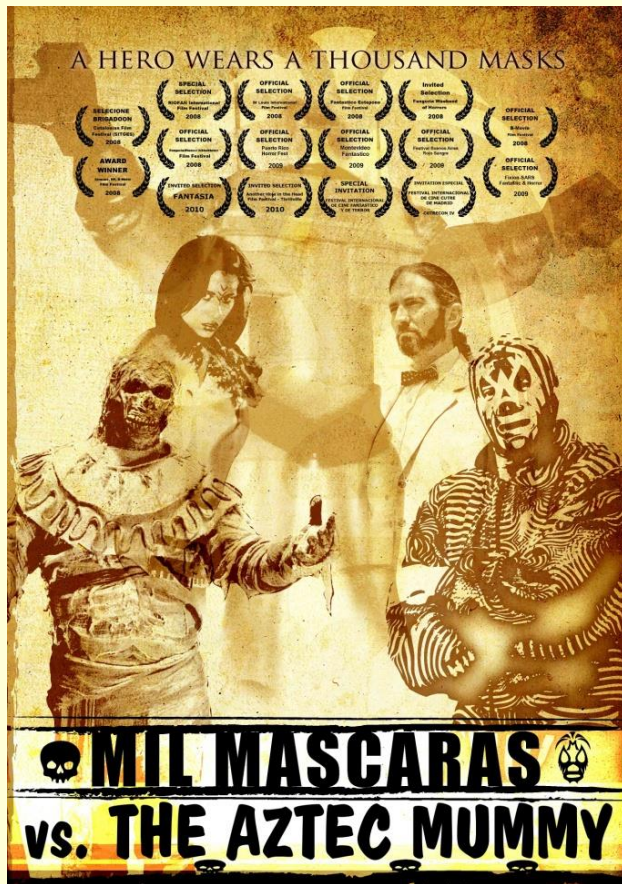
- Writing a play is a literary exercise. Producing the play is an engineering exercise.
- Filmmaking involves all the same logistical issues as producing a play -- but with a massive extra layer of complexity.
- Technology (e.g., for acquiring audio & video, producing digital effects, etc.) is what distinguishes film production from the production of a play.

“Filmmaking is an exercise in
problem solving...”

- Stanley Kubrik

Filmmaking at Mizzou

The College of Engineering has produced three feature films that have screened around the world at festivals and in theaters.



Filmmaking at Mizzou

The three films involved over 200 students and numerous faculty from departments across campus. They were funded by the College of Engineering and grants from the Mizzou Interdisciplinary innovation fund.

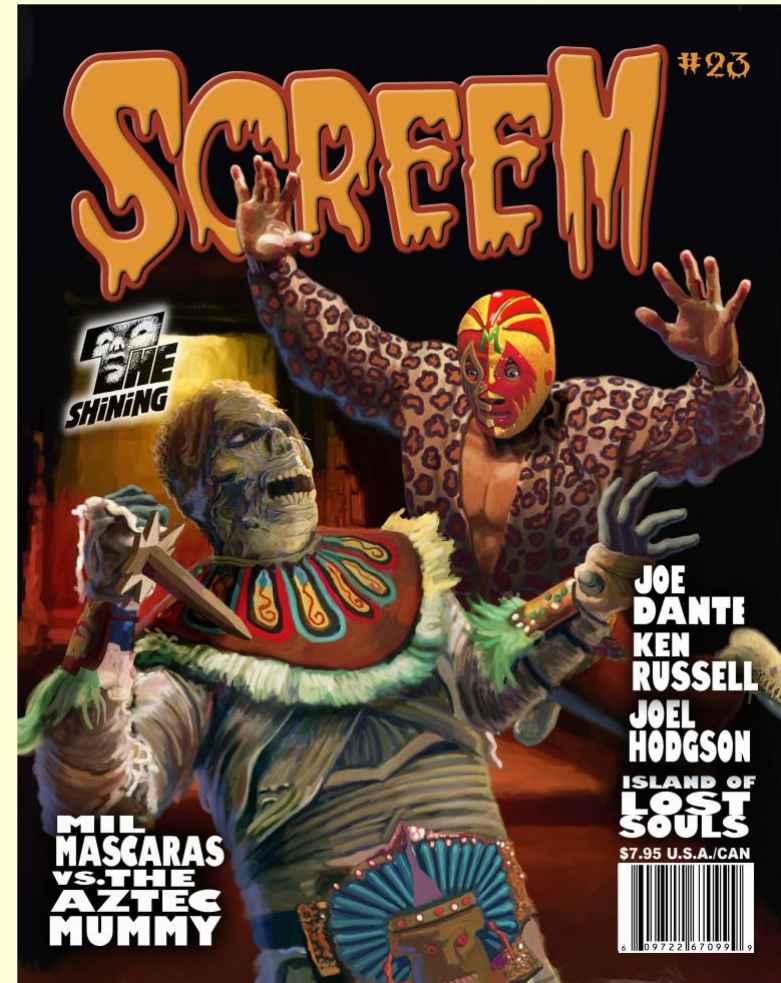


Filmmaking at Mizzou

“The University of Missouri is one of the most academically innovative schools in the world, and its College of Engineering is especially adventurous in providing interesting and challenging applications for its students.

[It’s hard] to imagine anywhere else that could have pursued these kinds of projects.”

- Screem Magazine

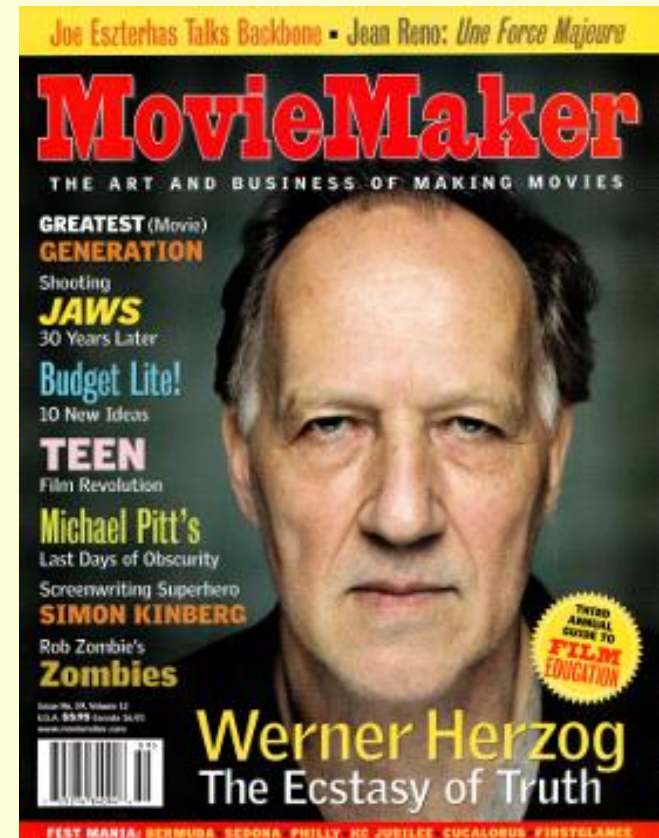


Filmmaking at Mizzou

Previously, only graduate programs like the USC's Institute for Creative Technologies and Carnegie-Mellon's Entertainment Technology Center trained engineering skills required to pursue careers in Hollywood "magic factories".

The biggest difference between the media engineering programs at other schools and the one at the University of Missouri is, of course, Uhlmann's unbelievably ambitious on-campus movie production.

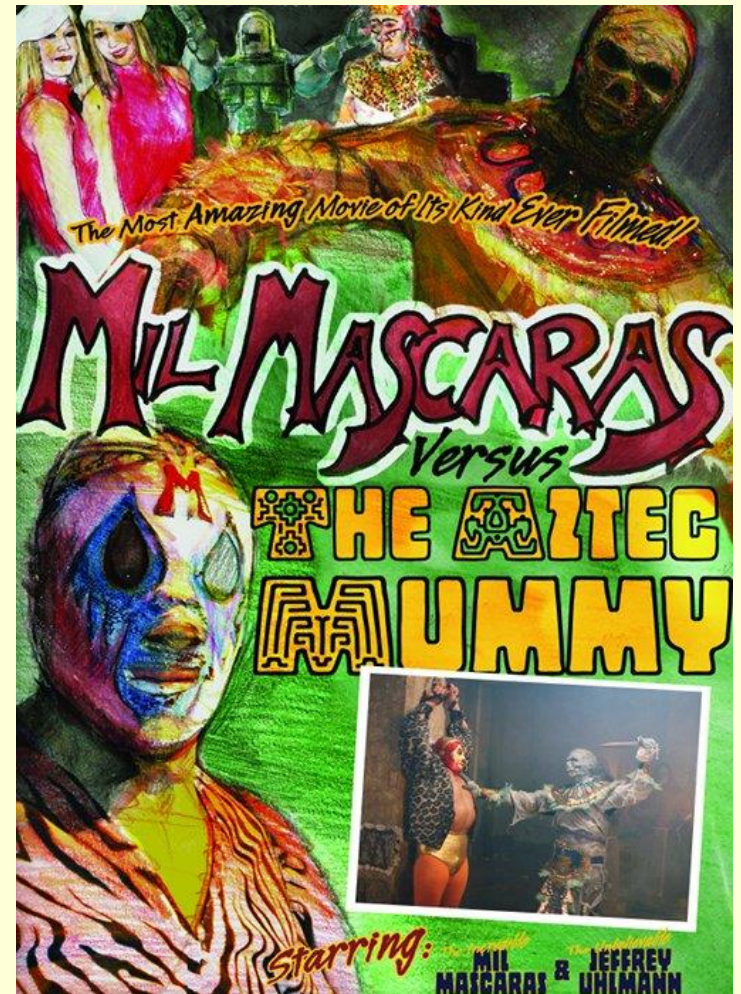
- MovieMaker Magazine



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy

This film was the proof-of-concept project undertaken by the College of Engineering.

Although overseen by engineering faculty, over 100 students and faculty from across campus participated in the effort.



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy

The tomb set (below) was constructed in a lab space in an engineering lab in Lafferre Hall. The sculptures on the walls were created by a professor and students from the Art department.



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy

The film was a high-profile event because it featured the legendary Mexican luchador, Mil Mascaras, with several Hollywood stars.

Right is Willard Pugh during filming in Jesse Hall. He is known for the Oscar-winning Steven Spielberg film, *The Color Purple*, and action films such as *Air Force One* (with Harrison Ford) and *Robocop II*.

Other Hollywood notables in the film include Richard Lynch and PJ Soles.



Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy

Independent of any publicity for the University, there is no doubt that everyone involved in the making of a film is motivated by the prospect of getting to see it play at festivals and theaters:



Theatrical Release



The Lyric shows the classic "Singin' in the Rain" and the soon-to-be classic "Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy"

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TOP STORIES

Toho Collection: Icons of Sci-Fi on DVD

Jean-Luc Godard's 2 or 3 Things I Know About Her on DVD

Bardelys the Magnificent & Monte Cristo - Two John Gilbert Lost Silents

Henry Fonda in The Trail of the Lonesome Pine on DVD

Roman Polansk's Repulsion on DVD

MOVIE NEWS

MIL MASCARAS VS. THE AZTEC MUMMY at The Plaza Theatre, Atlanta, June 2nd & June 5th



After 15 years, Mexican wrestler superstar Mil Mascaras returns to the big screen, reestablishing the real legacy of the Luchador, in MIL MASCARAS VS THE AZTEC MUMMY and the Plaza is bringing it to Atlanta!

The evening will be hosted by Amy Dumas, formerly known as LITA of the WWE. Four time women's champion and arguably the most famous female wrestler in the company's history, Lita's wrestling style was very influenced by the Luchadors and much of her training took place in Mexico.

NEW BOOKS

The Quotable Actor: 1001 Pearls of Wisdom from Actors Talking About Acting

In My Father's Shadow: A Daughter Remembers Orson Welles - Coming in November

Some Liked It Hot: Jazz Women in Film and Television, 1928-1959

Trippin' With Terry Southern - Gail Gerber's Memoir

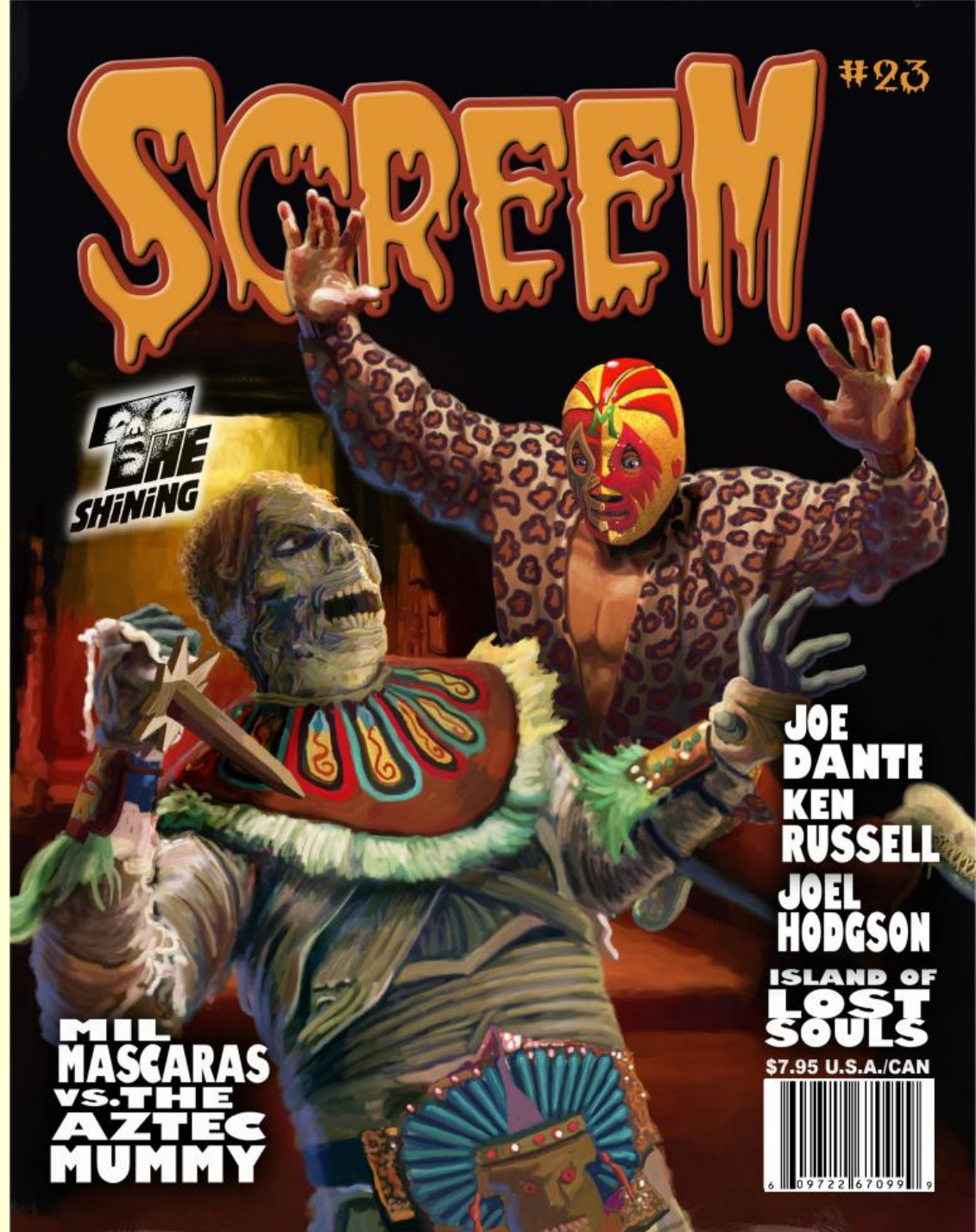
Pop Surf Culture - The Perfect Summer Read

David Lean: Interviews

Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy premiered in 2008 at a film festival in Rio de Janeiro and proceeded to become a hit with critics and fans at festivals around the world.

Since then it has become an undisputed classic that continues to attract festival invitations and magazine cover articles.

Few Hollywood films have such long-lasting success.



What the critics say
about *Mil Mascaras vs.
the Aztec Mummy*:

"Amazing movie entertainment...
Rivals any super hero film made
in the mainstream."

Bill Gibron (PopMatters)

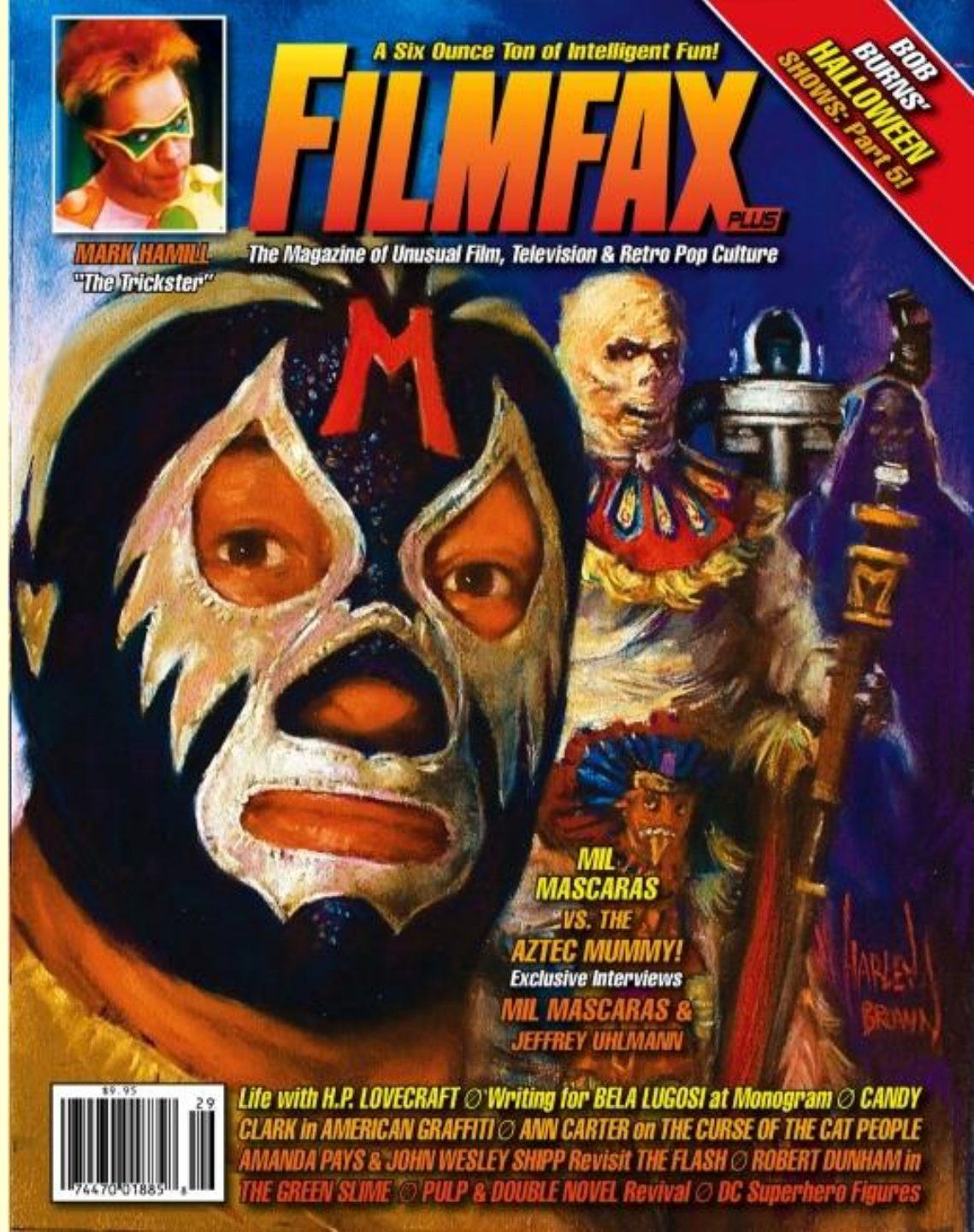
"Deliriously entertaining."
Rating: 'A'

MJ Simpson

"Near perfect!" John Porter
(FANGORIA)

"Thank God for Mil Mascaras!"

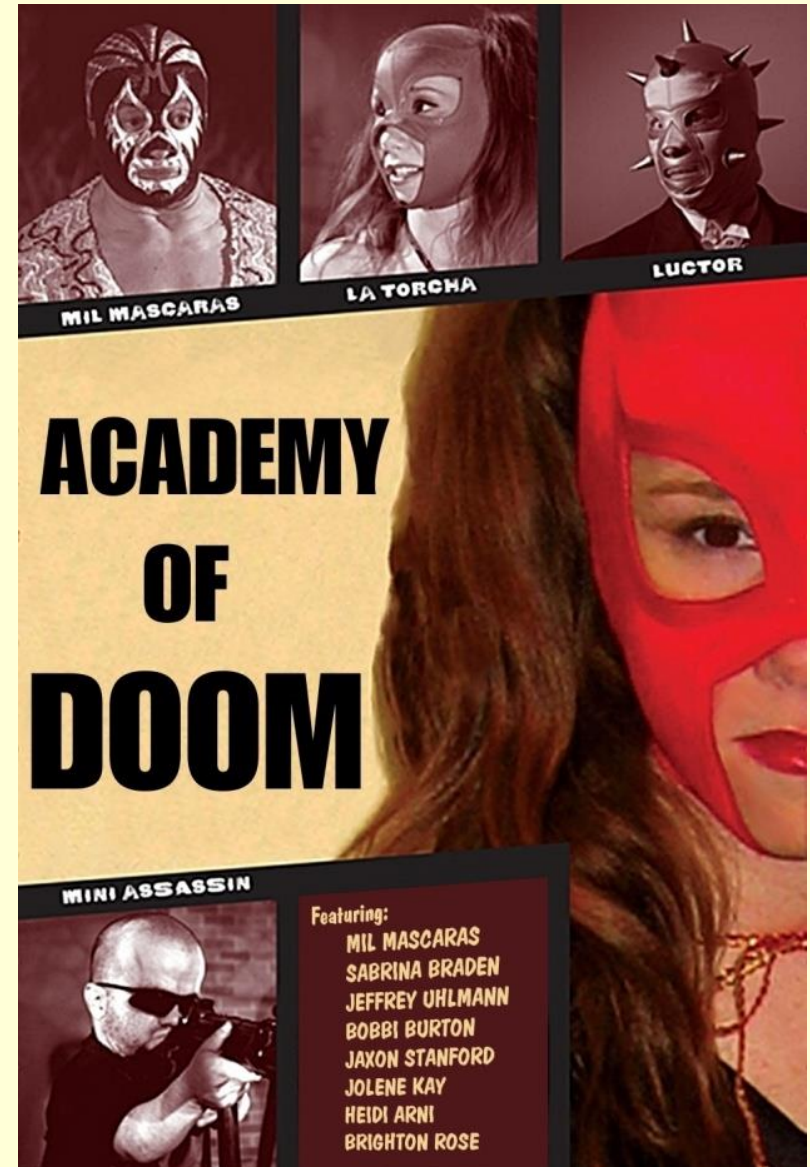
Richard Harland Smith
(Turner Classic Movies)



Academy of Doom

The second film also starred Mil Mascaras. Unlike the first one, this film was produced in collaboration with the new Film Studies program.

Pre-production and filming was undertaken by students as a part of a class offered through the Computer Science department, but many more students from Theatre and other departments participated on set as actors or production assistants.



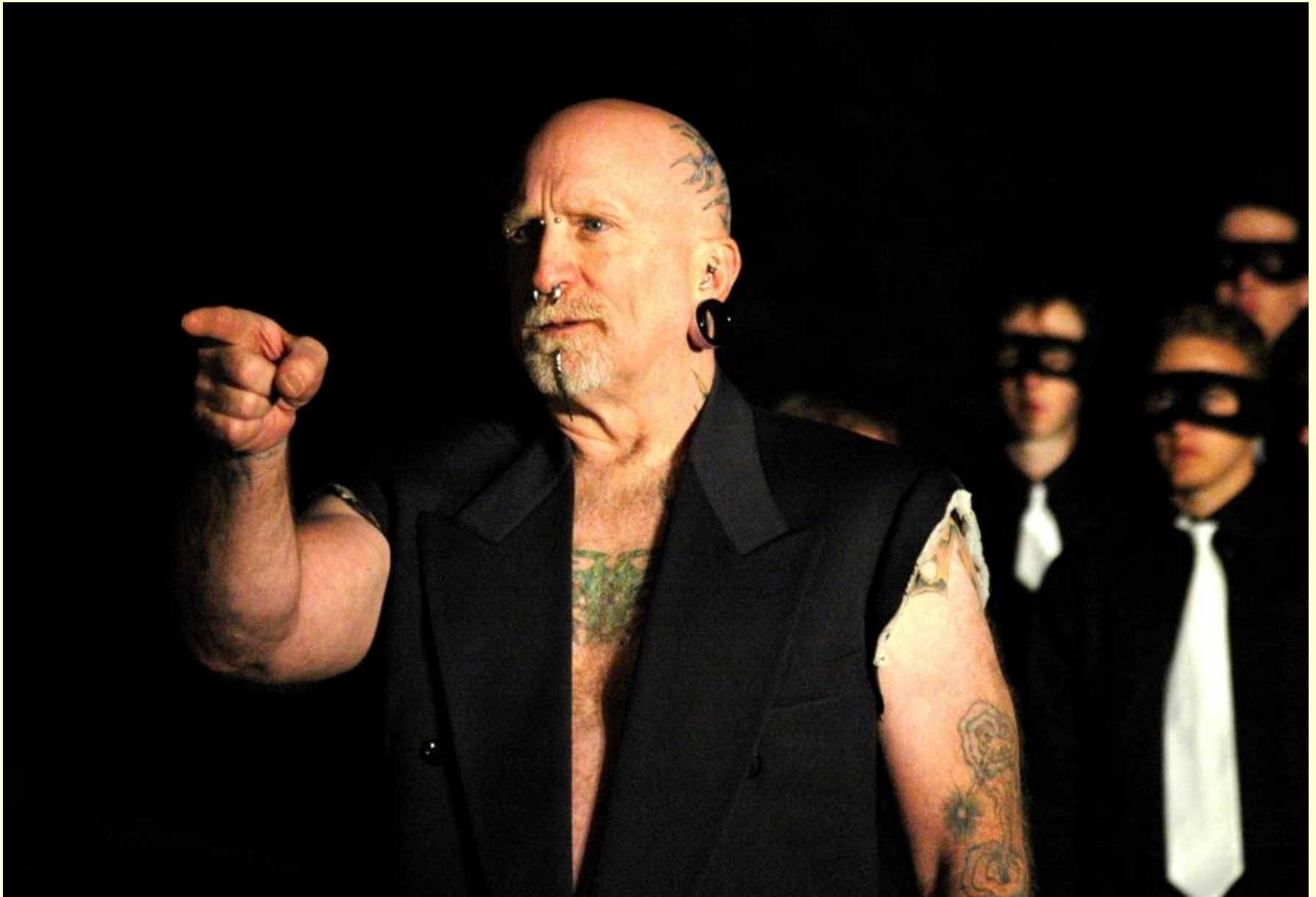
Academy of Doom



Academy of Doom



Academy of Doom



Academy of Doom

Students by day, flamethrowing actresses by night...



Academy of Doom



Academy of Doom

Academy of Doom enjoyed a highly successful 4-year run on the international film festival circuit, culminating at the prestigious Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal, Canada, in 2012.

Although it was produced with only a fraction of the budget of its predecessor, *Academy of Doom* proved that a small budget can go a long way when mixed with student passion and ingenuity.



AoD - Behind the Scenes



AoD - Behind the Scenes



AoD - Behind the Scenes



Aztec Revenge

The third film, *Aztec Revenge*, followed a storyline continued from the first film. The production model was similar to that of *Academy of Doom* except that it also included collaborations with students and faculty from Webster University in St. Louis, who supported post-production activities such as audio mixing.

This film first screened in 2015 and was completed in 2016.



Mil Mascaras: Aztec Revenge



Mil Mascaras: Aztec Revenge



Aztec Revenge

Aztec Revenge enjoyed a highly successful world premiere at the CutreCon International Festival of Madrid, Spain, in 2015 as part of a special two-night celebration of the films of Mil Mascaras.

According to festival organizers, *Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy* and *Aztec Revenge* were the clear audience favorites.

The film was later accepted by the prestigious, Oscar-qualifying, St. Louis International Film Festival.

FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE CUTRE DE MADRID

CUTRECON IV

Not The Final Chapter **del 29 de Enero al 1 de Febrero**



"MIL MASCARAS CONTRA LA MOMIA AZTECA" (2007) Todos los públicos
31 DE ENERO A LAS 16:20 HORAS
AUDITORIO C.C. CASA DEL RELOJ (Paseo de la Chopera 6-10)
ENTRADA GRATUITA. CONSULTA CÓMO RETIRARLA [AQUÍ](#)

VERSIÓN ORIGINAL SUBTITULADA AL CASTELLANO
El legendario Mil Mascaras protagoniza a sus más de 70 años de edad un acertadísimo homenaje al cine de luchadores mexicanos, repleto de guiños que desatarán las carcajadas de los fans de este subgénero y también de quienes se acerquen por primera vez a este tipo de cine.



MIL MASCARAS
AZTEC REVENGE
Ancient evil in a modern world...

"AZTEC REVENGE" (2015) Todos los públicos
1 DE FEBRERO A LAS 16:00 HORAS
SALA ARTÍSTIC METROPOL (C/ de las Cigarreras, 6), MARATÓN "KUNG FU TON" (ENTRADAS PARA ESTA MARATÓN COMPLETA, [AQUÍ](#))
PRECIO: 3.5 EUROS. ENTRADAS A LA VENTA [AQUÍ](#) Y EN TAQUILLA.

VERSIÓN ORIGINAL SUBTITULADA AL CASTELLANO.
La apoteósica conclusión de la trilogía protagonizada por el luchador mexicano Mil Mascaras escrita y producida por Jeff Uhlman, que comenzó con "Mil Mascaras vs The Aztec Mummy" y que continuó con "Academy of Doom" (2008). "Mil Mascaras: Aztec Revenge" llega a CutreCon en primicia mundial.

Aztec Revenge

On July 22, 2017, Mil Mascaras received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Fantasia International Film Festival in Montreal. *Aztec Revenge* screened after the ceremony to an enthusiastic crowd.



ABOVE: Mil receives the prestigious Fantasia trophy.



LEFT: Mil poses for the media next to the Aztec Revenge poster.

Aztec Revenge - Behind the Scenes



Aztec Revenge - Behind the Scenes



Aztec Revenge - Behind the Scenes



Movie Magic



This image is from a scene shot in one of the entrances to the Hearn's multipurpose building on campus.

Artistic lighting turns a bland concrete corridor into a visually interesting environment.

The complexity to do this is much greater than what one might expect.

Behind the Scenes



So what do students do?

- Each of the films began with a film production course. Students in the class oversee all pre-production planning. This requires them to apply their creativity to figure out how to make the best possible film within the given budgetary constraints.
- At the end of the semester the students in the class participate in filming. They learn the roles, terminology, etc., for all of the crew positions. They get hands-on experience with lights, cameras, etc.

So what do students do?

In addition to pre-production and working on set during filming, students also have the opportunity to work on post-production activities:

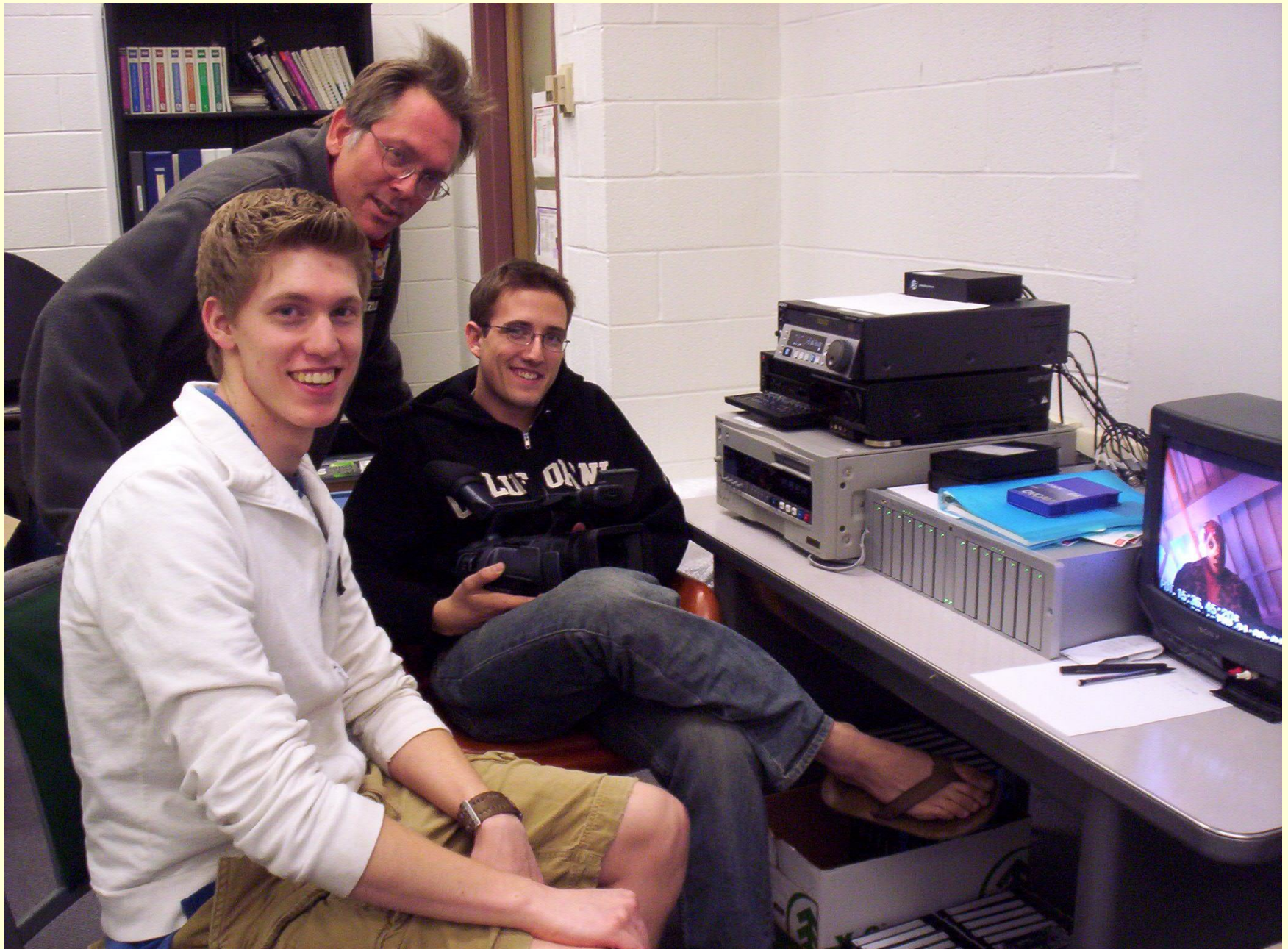
- Audio-Video courses teach nonlinear editing. The film projects allow students to work with real footage for real films.
- Computer Animation courses teach Maya, which is the Hollywood standard for film special effects (and for games as well)
- Media and Digital Effects courses teach special effects techniques, music composition with loops, and other topics relevant to games, films, and other multimedia applications.

Interdisciplinary Collaborations

In addition to CS/IT, many departments across campus formally collaborated. The following are just a few:

- The Department of Mechanical Engineering supported a Capstone project in which students developed specialized HD-camera equipment.
- The Theatre Department assisted with casting.
- The Department of Textile and Apparel Management assisted with wardrobe.
- The Department of Architectural Studies assisted with set design.
- The Department of Student Life assisted with student participation and campus logistics.







Many students who participated in one or more of the first three films have said that it was the most exciting and memorable experience of their college career.

Twenty years from now they'll not only be able to tell their children about it, they'll also be able to show them the film.



“I attended Mizzou looking for an opportunity to pursue both art and science. To scratch that itch I pursued a bachelors degree in both Computer Science and Fine Art Ceramics. At times during my undergraduate studies it felt like I was attending two separate universities because there was little opportunity for students from the arts to interact with those pursuing engineering or science degrees. Through the film program, current Mizzou students have much more opportunity to work together, which provides the students with invaluable real world experiences and connections.



I went on to get my Masters in Computer Science at Mizzou, and I currently work as a software developer at Boeing in St. Louis. Working on the films at Mizzou has given me a leg up in my career as an engineer.”

- Mike Sullivan

“One of the great things about the film program at Mizzou was that it gave me hands-on experience. There are lots of great books about filmmaking, and you read them and you get excited about it, but it's all hypotheticals. Until you actually get your hands dirty in it, you don't really fully experience what it's like to make a movie



I think it was really eye-opening for me because I realized what a collaborative art filmmaking truly is. And subsequently after that experience I started to look at all the different jobs people have and I said okay, well, editing is a component of this that really interests me, and I think this is the part of filmmaking that I'd like to try and get into after I graduate.”

- *Doc Crotzer*
Editor of 'Glee'

“I had my first real exposure to acting on film in *Academy of Doom*. It was nice to be educated as far as what "back to one" means, just how long you should wait after action is called before you start doing your thing - *and it was really fun learning to use a flamethrower!*

I always do remember that it started at MU, and it started on *Academy of Doom*, and I've always been very grateful for the journey.”

- *Jolene Kay*



Jolene’s experience and lead credit paved the way for her to land jobs in Hollywood as an actress in high-profile commercials (e.g., for Coca-Cola, left) and the occasional A-list Hollywood film (e.g., *Star Trek*, above)

Current & Future Projects

We are pursuing relationships with other universities and media production companies in the US and abroad to promote film-related collaborative projects.



Multiple collaborative efforts have been initiated in the African country of Zambia, where our three films are very popular and air frequently on television.



BACKUP SLIDES:

THE LUCHA FILM GENRE

A HERO WEARS A THOUSAND MASKS

SELECCION BRIGADON
Santiago Film Festival (SFF) 2008

SPECIAL SELECTION
Cine Latinoamericano Film Festival 2008

OFFICIAL SELECTION
St. Louis International Film Festival 2008

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Panamerican European Film Festival 2008

Invited Selection
European Week of Films 2008

OFFICIAL SELECTION
International Film Festival 2008

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Santiago Film Festival (SFF) 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Montevideo Festival 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Miami Film Festival 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Panamerican European Film Festival 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Panamerican European Film Festival 2009

OFFICIAL SELECTION
Panamerican European Film Festival 2009

INVITED SELECTION
Festival de Cine en el Sur de Chile Festival - Antofagasta 2010

INVITED SELECTION
FANTASIA 2010

MIL MASCARAS

vs. THE AZTEC MUMMY

All have starred the legendary luchador, Mil Mascaras.

(What is a *luchador*?
Who is *Mil Mascaras*?)

MIL MASCARAS:

**AZTEC
REVENGE**

What is a luchador?

The modern tradition of the masked luchador was begun in Mexico by El Santo - the Man in the Silver Mask.

He was a wrestler who resurrected the ancient Aztec tradition of the mask and assumed a new identity.

"El Santo" was not a fictional character he played - it was his new real-life identity.



Santo, Blue Demon, and Mil Mascaras are regarded as *The Big 3* of the tradition



Blue Demon



Mil Mascaras

The most fascinating aspect of the tradition is that the luchador wears his mask all the time in public. It becomes his new identity:

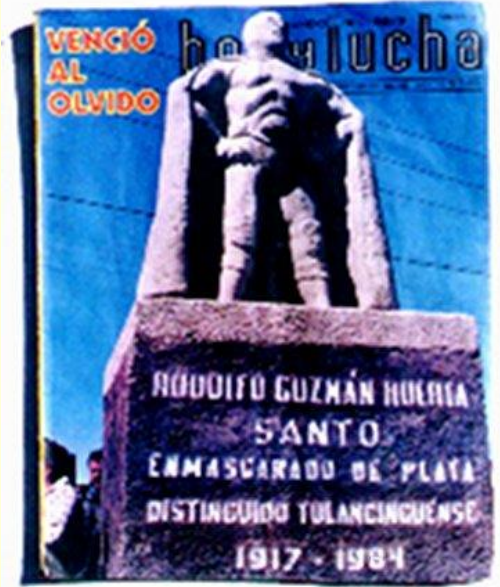
“When a luchador chooses to give up his own identity and adopt a mask he will begin to see how much of his previous life was driven by selfish interests [such as] trying to earn the respect of others instead of just doing what's right.”

- Mil Mascaras



El Santo

Santo became a legend. When he died in 1984, tens of thousands of people filled the streets to mourn his passing.



Santo was buried in his silver mask and cape.

Statues were erected in his honor throughout Mexico.

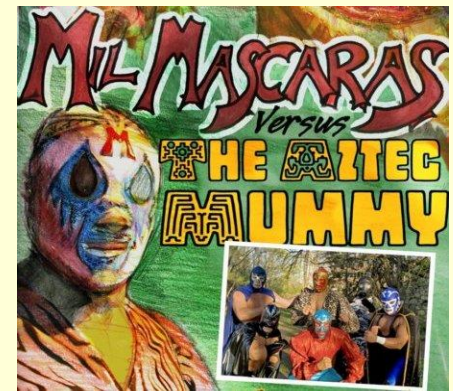
When Blue Demon died in 2000, he was honored with his picture on the Twenty Pesos note.

Like Santo, Blue Demon's iconic mask was passed to his son, Blue Demon Jr.



(The photo to the left shows Blue Demon Jr at a state function.)

The sons of Santo and Blue Demon appeared with Mil Mascaras in the film "Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy" in 2007.



Blue Demon Jr arrives at the National Assembly Hall for President Calderon's State of the Nation address in Mexico City.
(Wall Street Journal / Associated Press)

It is important to understand that luchadores such as Santo, Mil Mascaras, and Blue Demon always wear their masks.

Their masks represent their true identities.



"[*On Mexican culture*] ...the most fascinating is the enduring role of the mask. Masks were part of Mexican life for centuries before the arrival of the first European. Any good correspondent must try to understand the role played in the Mexican imagination by such characters as El Santo and Mil Mascaras."

From the keynote address by famed journalist Pete Hamill at the *Images of Mexico in the US Media Symposium*, Feb. 2000.

"Today you cannot understand Mexico without understanding *Lucha Libre*... to see the function of the mask in Mexican life, as Octavio Paz has written about. Unless you understand who El Santo was or Mil Mascaras or Blue Demon you cannot dig deeply into Mexican culture."

From *Perceptions and Misconceptions in US-Mexico Relations*, published by the Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC (2005).

Lucha Films

Santo, Mil Mascaras, and Blue Demon starred together or separately in over 80 films.



These films acquired a huge international cult following because of their surreal sensibilities.

Lucha Films

The appeal of the lucha film is that it stars super-hero characters *who actually exist*.

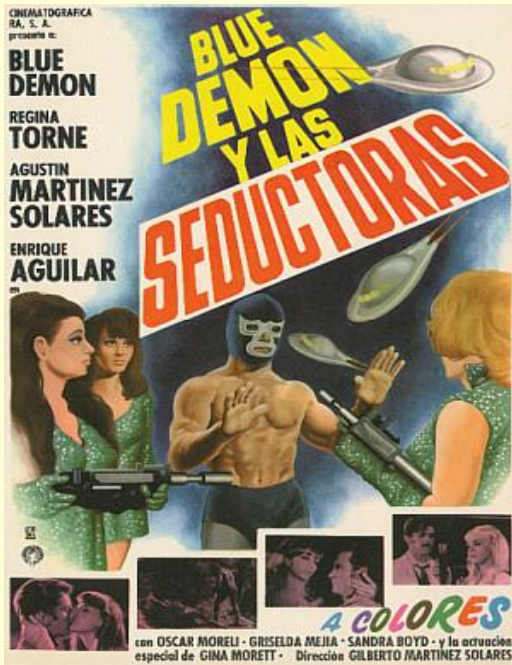
The typical plot of a lucha film may seem absurd by conventional standards, but it is produced as serious cinema.

The lucha genre is unique.



Lucha Films

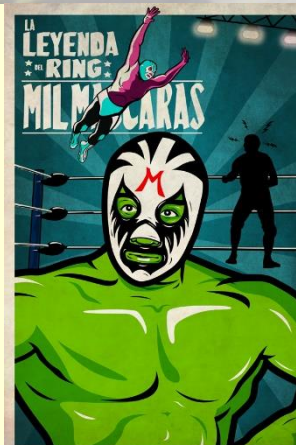
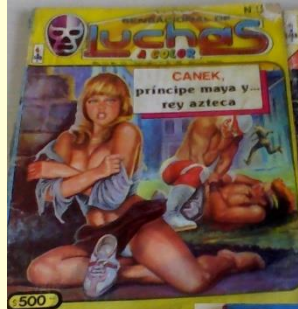
Kids in Mexico develop great affection for lucha films because they grow up watching them. As they get older, however, they sometimes come to believe that the genre is second-rate because it is ignored by Hollywood.



Outside of Mexico, film aficionados often regard lucha films as being more interesting and entertaining than Hollywood superhero films.

Other Media

In addition to films, lucha characters are featured in comic books that rival DC and Marvel in popularity around the world.



Who is Mil Mascaras?

Mil Mascaras - the Man of a Thousand Masks - is the last of the Big 3.

He is a scholar, wrestler, and accomplished artist.

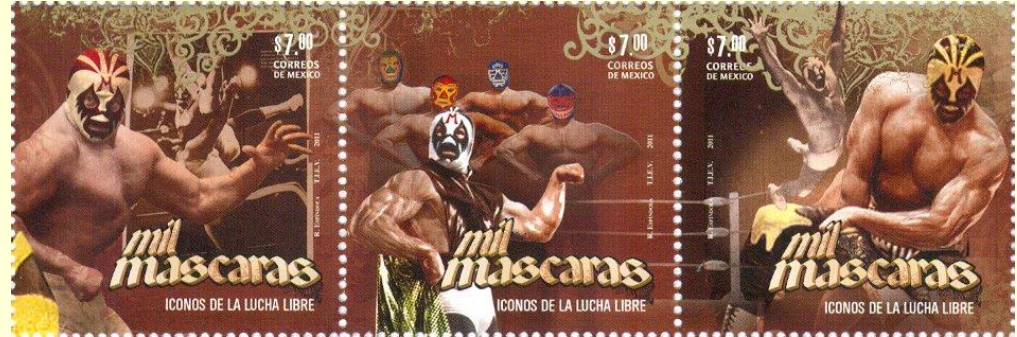


Mil Mascaras revolutionized the tradition with his many mask designs.

He is an international star and has served as Mexico's most famous cultural ambassador.



Mexico recently honored Mil Mascaras with three postage stamps bearing images from his legendary career.



No living person has ever received such an honor.

Mil Mascaras - Cultural Icon

Mil Mascaras was a red-carpet special guest at the 2007 Imagen Awards (analogous to the NAACP image awards) ceremony at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, CA.



Although he comes from Mexico, his iconic status is not limited to the Hispanic community and Spanish-speaking countries. This can be seen from the following slide showing a poster for the 2000 Chiller Convention & Expo at which Mil was a special guest.

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Tickets are available at the door for
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3 day V.I.P. pass for only \$25.00.
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when accompanied by an adult. Make
checks or money orders payable to:

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P.O. BOX 23

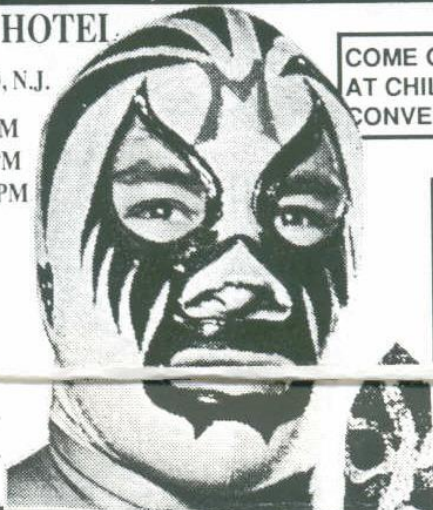
RUTHERFORD, NJ 07070

(Advance ticket orders must be received by 10/1/2000)

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AT CHILLER THEATRE'S 1ST HALLOWEEN
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SATURDAY NIGHT CHILLER
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COME PARTY WITH THE MONSTERS!

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(Schedules permitting)

El Hijo del Santo

Mexican Wrestling Legend

Mil Mascaras

Mexican Wrestling Legend

James Doohan

Star Trek's "Scotty"

Billy Dee Williams

The Empire Strikes Back

Tura Satana

Faster, Pussycat, Kill, Kill!

Patricia Neal

The Day the Earth Stood Still

Bob May

The Lost in Space Robot

Dick Tufeld

The Robot's Voice

Zacherley

Legendary TV Horror Host

PLUS MANY MORE TO BE

MODEL CUSTOMIZING CONTEST

Model kit builders from all over the
country will be competing in this model
customizing contest. Kits will feature
creatures from the past and present,
from some of our favorite sci-fi, fantasy
and horror movies. Last show some of
the most incredible kits were entered.

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Rob Zombie

"ONE OF MY FAVORITE CONVENTIONS TO
ATTEND IN THE WORLD, YES INDEED!!!"

Jonathan Harris

"THE BEST RUN CONVENTION OF IT'S KIND"

Note that Mil is
featured in the
photo and is
credited (with
the son of El
Santo) above
Scotty from
Star Trek, Billy
Dee Williams
from Star Wars,
and Oscar-
winner Patricia
Neal.

This shows how
significant the
"cool" factor of
lucha is and the
organizers' view
of its appeal to a
large audience.

Why Make Lucha Films?

Lasting appeal - Literally thousands of independent films are produced each year.

The vast majority are completely forgotten shortly after they are "released".

The vast majority of non-genre Hollywood films meet the same fate. That's why the "franchise factor" has become so important in Hollywood.

For cultural and cult-aesthetic reasons, lucha films will always have a dedicated audience. And the filmographies of Santo and Mil Mascaras will always represent the defining films of the genre.

The Franchise Factor

DreamWorks eyes View-Master toy as movie concept



Tue Jul 7, 2009 9:52am EDT

By Borys Kit and Jay A. Fernandez

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) - View-Master, the Fisher-Price toy with little 3-D picture discs of mountains, rivers and caverns that kids could rotate through a viewfinder, is the latest vintage toy getting a second life on the big screen.

DreamWorks is in negotiations to acquire movie rights to the toy from Mattel (which owns Fisher-Price) and has asked writer-producers

Alex Kurtzman and Roberto Orci to do some "Transformers"-style magic on it.

Brad Caleb Kane, who worked as a writer-producer on the duo's Fox series "Fringe," is on board to write the screenplay. Kurtzman and Orci would produce.

Story specifics are being kept under wraps, though Kane, who during the holiday weekend sent out a message on Twitter announcing his involvement, said, "It'll be like the old '80s Amblin movies: 'Goonies,' 'Young Sherlock' ... in that vein." (That post has since been taken down.)

The Kurtzman-Orci production banner has specialized in Amblin-style movies. Kurtzman and Orci do have experience with toy brands, as well: Their resumes include the two "Transformers" movies, which are based on Hasbro toys.

DreamWorks is hoping to make a family-friendly movie. The studio, the producers and Kane will devise a story from scratch. That approach is becoming more common as Hollywood picks up properties based on the allure of brands and board games. **Universal recently picked up rights to the Atari video game "Asteroids" and under its Hasbro deal is developing movies based on such games as " Battleship" and "Candyland."**

Why Make Lucha Films? (cont'd)

The franchise/genre appeal opens doors to film festivals and theatrical distribution.

"Mil Mascaras vs. the Aztec Mummy" received numerous festival invitations even before filming was completed. After popular and critical success on the international festival circuit, the film enjoyed a 300-screen theatrical release and numerous special-event screenings. It continues to attract media attention and has appeared on several magazine covers within the last year.

"Academy of Doom" and "Aztec Revenge" subsequently proved that small budgets are no obstacle to popular success at major film festivals.