



MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday 7 February 2023

ACMI announces a season of horror in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology and University of Pittsburgh

Today ACMI is excited to announce *Focus on the Dead*, a spotlight on seven exclusive films spanning half a century of modern zombie cinema and beyond, screening this autumn at Australia's national museum of screen culture from **16 March to 2 April**.

Accompanying the focus season, ACMI is also co-presenting a two-day conference, *Mapping Global Horror: Australia, Japan and Beyond*, in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology and University of Pittsburgh. Hosted on **17 and 18 March at ACMI**, the program is an opportunity to further explore the global phenomenon of horror cinema through talks and presentations with world-leading academics, researchers and directors, including Japanese-Australian writer/director Natalie Erika James (*Relic*, 2020).

Curated by Reece Goodwin, *Focus on the Dead* aims to unpick the evolution of the zombie film and interrogate the links of the subgenre to the personal and political. It will include the Australian premiere of George A. Romero's seminal *Dawn of the Dead 3D*, painstakingly restored frame-by-frame from the original theatrical release under the supervision of the film's producer, Richard P. Rubinstein.

ACMI Film and TV Curator, Reece Goodwin, said: "Since George A. Romero's original anti-fascist classic *Night of the Living Dead* (part of his *Trilogy of the Dead*), the modern zombie film has had a complex trajectory, diverging into lots of disparate directions and covering a ton of ground – Romero's living dead are still walking, and their stage is now truly global. Unbound from the zombie film genre, this spine-tingling film season offers an exciting and thought-provoking exploration of the horror genre and its many forms."

Providing an incisive look into horror, the *Mapping Global Horror* conference is a rare chance for screen industry professionals, academics and horror fans to deep dive into a genre that is as popular as it is socially and culturally significant worldwide. With Australia and Japan as primary entry points for a discussion, conversations and workshops hosted across two days will cover a breadth of new and revitalised themes and ideas, such as zombies, women in horror and folk horror.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION,
IMAGES OR INTERVIEWS,
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Dr Andrew Lynch, conference organiser and Lecturer in Cinema and Screen Studies at Swinburne, said: “As well as tracing how the horror genre has been shaped by such transcultural anxieties, the event showcases the key role of both Japan and Australia - and even Melbourne specifically - in horror’s operations as both a global genre and a global community.”

Dr Jessica Balanzategui, conference organiser and Senior Lecturer in Media at RMIT, added: “The event highlights how horror as a global force is a powerful agent of social reflection on death and ageing. Horror films from different time periods and regions illuminate how our deepest fears are inflected by our cultural context.”

In ACMI’s *Focus on the Dead*, seven features will screen as part of the season including George A. Romero’s original ***Trilogy of the Dead***, a revolutionary series of zombie films that began with the 1968 film ***Night of the Living Dead***, followed by ***Dawn of the Dead*** (presented in a newly restored 3D version making its Australian premiere) and ***Day of the Dead***.

A precursor to the zombie film as we know it today, ***The Last Man on Earth*** is credited as a major influence on George Romero and his genre-defining vision of slow-moving zombies. Based on the book *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson – also adapted into *The Omega Man* (1971) and *I am Legend* (2007) – the 1964 adaptation has developed a cult following, offering an aesthetic touchpoint with its crisp black-and-white photography and eerie Rome-filmed streetscapes.

ACMI has also secured the first Australian theatrical screening of ***Relic***, a disarmingly sensitive psychological horror that follows three generations of women responding in different ways to the decline of the eldest. The screening will be followed by a Q&A with Japanese-Australian writer, director and producer Natalie Erika James. This assured debut feature wowed audiences at its Sundance Film Festival premiere in 2020 and due to the pandemic was fast-tracked to streaming platforms.

French-Senegalese director Mati Diop makes her feature film debut with ***Atlantics***, an enchanting drama tiptoeing around the horror genre. The beguiling story of profound loss follows up on Diop’s short film of the same name about a group of Senegalese men embarking on a perilous sea voyage – now shifting focus to the women left behind. The film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival in 2019, where Mati Diop became the first woman of colour to have a film screening in competition.

A key program highlight, ***Train to Busan*** – from South Korean director **Yeon Sang-ho** – is an action-horror praised as one of the best modern zombie films of all time. It follows

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a man and his estranged daughter who become trapped on a speeding train during a zombie outbreak in South Korea.

Lead conference organisers: Jessica Balanzategui (RMIT), Charles Exley (University of Pittsburgh), Adam Lowenstein (University of Pittsburgh), Andy Lynch (Swinburne University of Technology) and Angela Ndalianis (Swinburne University of Technology). Major funding support from the University of Pittsburgh's Global Studies Center, Office of the Provost, Japan Endowment and Asian Studies Center. Additional funding from Swinburne research engagement grant, and in-kind support from RMIT.

Tickets for both Focus on the Dead and Mapping Global Horror: Australia, Japan & Beyond are now on sale. For full program details, visit acmi.net.au.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

Download all media assets [here](#).

Mapping Global Horror: Australia, Japan & Beyond

17 March and 18 March, 11am-4pm

ACMI, Fed Square, Melbourne

Members \$50, Full \$70, Concession \$55

Book at acmi.net.au

Focus on the Dead

16 March to 2 April 2023

ACMI Cinemas, Fed Square

Members \$12, Full \$18, Concession \$14

3-session pass \$33–45

6-session pass \$66–94

Book at acmi.net.au

Thursday 16 March, 6:30pm and Saturday 25 March, 6:30pm: *Night of the Living Dead*

Friday 17 March 6pm: *Relic*, followed by Q&A with director Natalie Erika James

Saturday 18 March, 4pm and Thursday 23 March, 6:30pm: *Dawn of the Dead 3D*

Sunday 19 March, 3pm: *Train to Busan*

Friday 24 March, 6:30pm and Saturday 1 April, 4pm: *Atlantics*

Saturday 25 March, 4pm and Sunday 2 April, 3pm: *The Last Man on Earth*

Sunday 26 March, 3pm: *Day of the Dead*



ABOUT ACMI

ACMI is Australia's national museum of screen culture. The museum reopened in February 2021 after a two-year, \$40 million redevelopment – an architectural, programmatic and technological transformation. ACMI celebrates the wonder and power of the world's most democratic artform – fostering the next generation of makers, players and watchers. ACMI's vibrant calendar of exhibitions, screenings, commissions, festivals, and industry and education programs explore the stories, technologies and artists that create our shared screen culture. Navigate the universe of film, TV, videogames and art with ACMI. More at acmi.net.au

ABOUT SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Swinburne University of Technology is defined and inspired by technology and innovation, and renowned for our strong industry and community engagement. Swinburne is home to the Centre for Transformative Media Technologies and the Cinema and Screen Studies program, which have nation-leading research and teaching strengths in the intersections between screen entertainment, genre and technological change. With a vision to bring people and technology together to build a better world, our people are driven by a shared purpose: to create tomorrow's technology and the human capital and talent required for a digital, tech-rich future. Swinburne is a different university – one that is truly of technology, of innovation and of entrepreneurship. We give students real-world experience to succeed, and empower our researchers to collaborate with industry, community and government to co-create the technology solutions our world needs.

ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

The University of Pittsburgh has emerged as a leader in the research field of horror studies. In 2019, Pitt acquired the George A. Romero Collection to establish the world's first Horror Studies Archive, a continuously growing public resource that includes the work of many prominent filmmakers, authors, and artists. Pitt is also home to the Horror Studies Working Group, an interdisciplinary collective of scholars, students, and community members dedicated to initiatives such as the "Horror Genre as Social Force" scholar community (via Pitt's David C. Frederick Honors College), the Global Horror Studies Archival and Research Network (via Pitt's Global Studies Center), and collaborations with the George A. Romero Foundation. More at www.horormatters.org