

HOPE LIES AT 24 FRAMES PER SECOND

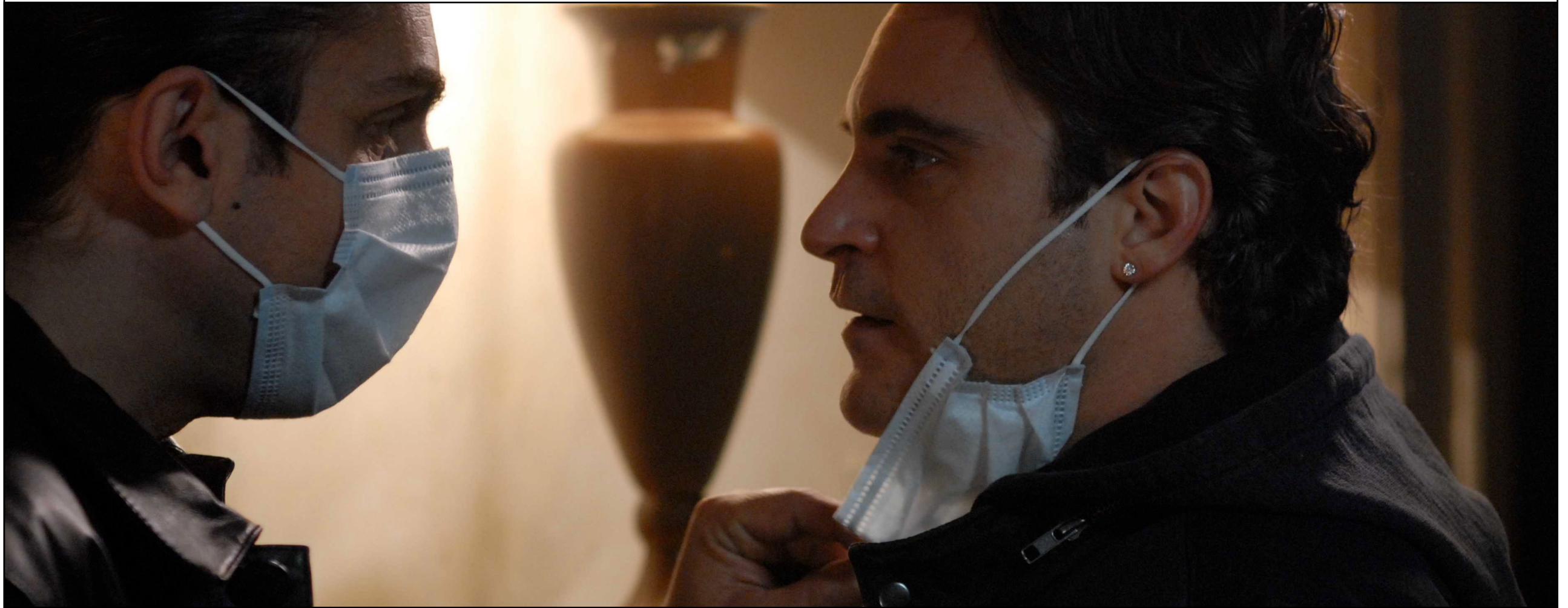
# Prometheus



A Hope Lies Monograph

INTRODUCING

# The Hope Lies Monograph



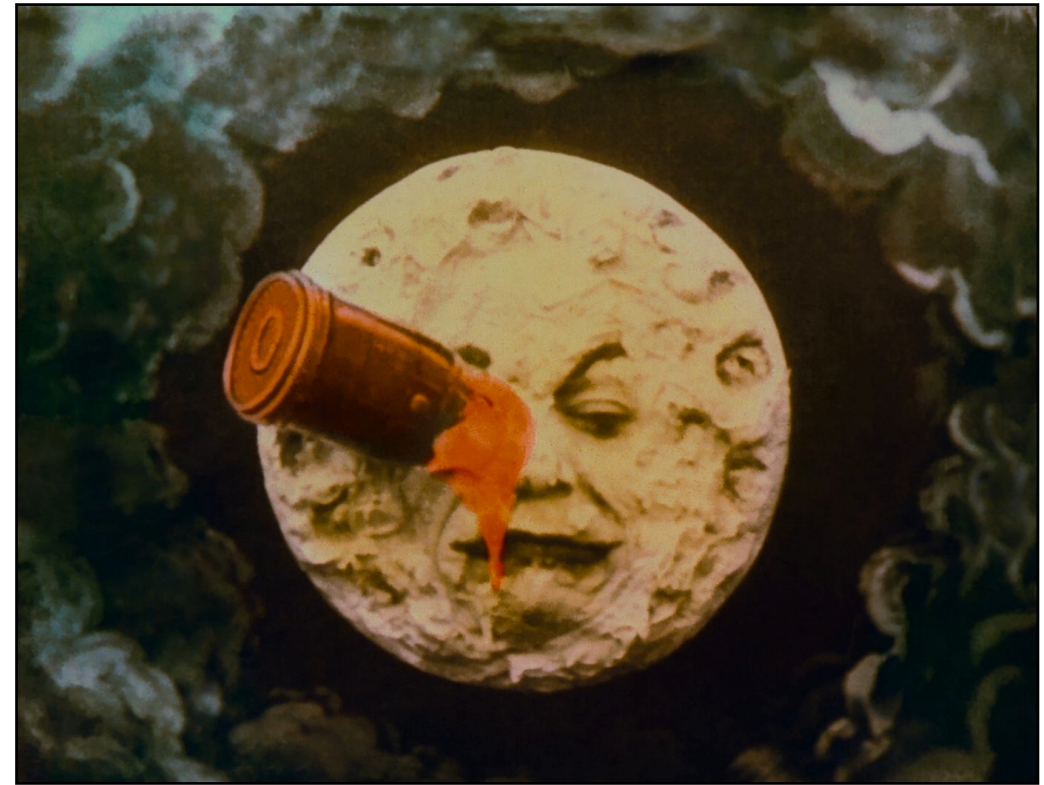
Welcome to the Prometheus edition of the Hope Lies Monograph. Hope Lies at 24 Frames Per Second is an independently run film website based in the UK. Over the course of the last two years Hope Lies has built itself up from simple blog to being one of the most respected film websites in the UK (and, we're told, the 16th most influential in Europe...).



Cinema fascinates us. Every facet, from the latest Aki Kaurismäki feature to the most over the top blockbuster that Hollywood has to offer, gives us something to mull over, debate or be passionate about. Our long held tagline on the website has been "*From A Bout de Souffle to Zabriskie Point, Hope Lies at 24 Frames Per Second attempts to cover every corner of the cinema spectrum*" and that stand remains as strong as ever: we have a passion for the cinema that knows no bounds, and we hope that these Monographs reflect that.

Technology also fascinates us, which is why we've decided to experiment a little with this Monograph that you hold in your hands. We are utterly convinced that the future of reading delivery is digital: it's convenient, it's good for the environment and ultimately it provides a very satisfying reader experience. We say this as fans of what publications like Film Comment, Cinema Scope and Empire Magazine have been doing with their digital alternatives to their traditional publications, and if we can replicate/mimic one iota of the great work being done by those institutions then we'll be happy. As with any experiment there will no doubt be issues at first, but we thank you in advance for helping us to resolve any that may crop up.

Our aim with the website has always been to remain as influence-free as possible, so we're looking to instill similar innovative methods of delivery here too: we want to keep this free, but we don't want to be overly reliant on advertising (We appreciate just as much as anyone how mass advertising can ruin a clean user experience). Feel free to get in touch if you would like to be involved with that aspect of the Monographs.





This Monograph is designed to be read in landscape orientation. That's when it looks its best. If you'd like to read it sans film stills and whatnot then simply turn it to portrait scale.

Each Monograph, as the title suggests, takes a look at one film. There's no defining reason for why a film might be subjected to coverage, but it's probably a given that a timely theatrical release will lead to featuring. With that in mind we do have a mammoth special edition in the works in which we'll be taking a look at the complete oeuvre of a specific filmmaker to mark an anniversary, but more on that later.

In closing, we would like to thank you for downloading and giving this inaugural monograph a shot. Any feedback will be really appreciated.





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# Prometheus In Review



*Review By Adam Batty.* I'm not a fan of the Alien films, nor am I particularly fond of their director, the venerable Sir Ridley Scott, knight of the realm and director of the eclectic likes of Blade Runner, Thelma & Louise and G.I. Jane (although one must admit to holding something of a candle for his recent Robin Hood project, as unusual as it was). I've been vocally critical of the overt and testing marketing campaign for his latest film too, with new trailers and featurettes popping up on a near daily basis for the past few months, and refused to partake in such cynical ploys as referring to official studio-sanctioned twitter #tags whenever referring to the film. So, it's with perhaps the greatest of surprises that Prometheus really impresses, in spite of a number of problems.



# Prometheus (Scott, 2012)

## Noteworthy

1. Prometheus marks director Ridley Scott's long-awaited return to the Science-Fiction genre.
2. While not cited as a direct prequel to his Alien, the director had teased that Prometheus "shared DNA" with the earlier film.
3. An internationally drawn cast sees players from Australia, Scotland, Sweden, South Africa, Ireland, the USA and England in from of the camera.
4. The film was shot in 3D, marking Scott's first foray in to the format. His Robin Hood was mooted for a post-conversion in to three dimensions, but was abandoned late on in production.



*Noomi Rapace et al begin their expedition in to the truth behind mankind's origins.*

It's appropriate that one of the first things we see on screen is a reference to Frank Herbert's Dune (via the title card of one of the production companies, Dune Entertainment). It's doubly apt that the opening bars of Marc Streitenfeld's score recalls the iconic theme tune to Star Trek – The Motion Picture by Jerry Goldsmith, as Prometheus is

a feature more closely tied in tone to those two films than anything that's previously been put out under the Alien franchise prefix. An opening prologue, which brings to mind the cosmic epiphany of Terrence Malick's Tree Of Life (a film that makes for a surprisingly apt companion to the Scott movie, given both are essentially musings

on the birth and death of life, and where we came from and where we wind up) is beautifully executed, and makes for an awe-inspiring introduction in to the world Scott is presenting. The alien planet of LV-223 convinces for the most part actually, with a legitimate sense of wonder accompanying many of its revelations.



The film itself tells of a mission to the aforementioned alien planet of LV-223 (and not, notably, the alien planet of LV-426), in which a merry and diverse band of scientist-types head out to try and uncover the meaning of existence. With predictable results. Chaos ensues, as our protagonists begin to uncover the truth about the origins of mankind.

The love story at the heart of Prometheus has echoes of The Bride Of Frankenstein, with a conventional love story being the emotional barometer as everything descends in to chaos. The scripting

is flawed, but it's difficult to be especially critical about that aspect given that Prometheus is primarily a visual work, with the underlying structure little more than an outline for some pretty interesting and at times outright bonkers ideas. Lear and Darwinism form part of the films framework, with grand notions and dramatic tragedy. Nazism pops up too, with the "perfect" android of David, complete with blonde hair, blue eyes and the Weyland logo bringing to mind the Nazi eagle swastika badge, and talk of holocaust to boot. A self-administered cyber abortion makes for an interesting thing to see in a summer movie too.

The second act of the film is problematic though, with the film essentially falling in to a lull for a period of time. A subplot lamenting one characters inability to have children feels shoe-horned in and heavy-handed and included solely to maintain the series' pregnancy subtext, while some awful stoner humour raises its head too. As mentioned before, the script does have problems, plot-holes and unanswered questions, but that wasn't too much of an issue for us (what can I say, I'm a fan of Lost). One thing that did baffle though was the placement of an artificially aged Guy Pearce in the film. There's absolutely no need for Pearce and his dodgy prosthetics to be in there, given that he only appears as an old man, although one might presume that the younger Pearce featured in footage that didn't make the final cut of the film (while Scott claims this cut of the film is his "directors cut" one cant help but imagine that an extended edition DVD will eventually see the light of day). The cast in general is largely unlikeable, although Michael Fassbender is great and Noomi Rapace isn't too bad either. The rest of the gang are just type-vessels though, and invisible if anything. What is really unusual about Prometheus is that many of



its parts are actually quite flawed; yet somehow it all seems to merge together to great effect.



As an Alien property it doesn't make much sense. Any connections to the 1979 film feel tacked on and almost inappropriate (in a way it feels like Scott has used the Alien brand name as an excuse to make a really interesting, weird science fiction film). As a piece of science-fiction Prometheus has much more in common with Steven Spielberg's Close Encounters Of The Third Kind or Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy than any film with an Alien title. There are a number of visual connectives to the earlier film, but these serve little more than to confuse, and while it's somewhat apt that a film about DNA can be best summed up as

sharing that particular nucleic acid with it's mooted counterpart, its not a particularly satisfying connection.

Alas, one would rather see a filmmaker like Ridley Scott, the archetypical workman auteur try his hand at something ambitious like this than Alien 1.5, which is seemingly what many had hoped for and expected. The Prometheus approach certainly beats the typical merchandise driven, happy meal hawking summer flick, and ought to be applauded for doing so.





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# Dedication To An Unknown Cause



Mark McManus is a lifelong fan of Ridley Scott and the Alien franchise. Said appreciation led to his creation of [PrometheusMovieNews.com](http://PrometheusMovieNews.com), a website dedicated to the charting of the production of Ridley Scott's film. Fascinated by the idea of someone putting so much in to an unknown entity, we asked Mark to put together a piece giving an insight in to this unique slice of fandom.



It's odd how a hobby, interest or passion can take over. My passion is film, and while there have been many that I've looked forward to over the years, none have come close to being an obsession like Prometheus has.

There are few directors whose films I will actively seek out. In fact, I could count them on one hand – Stanley Kubrick (not that there's anything new on the horizon from him!), David Fincher and Ridley Scott.

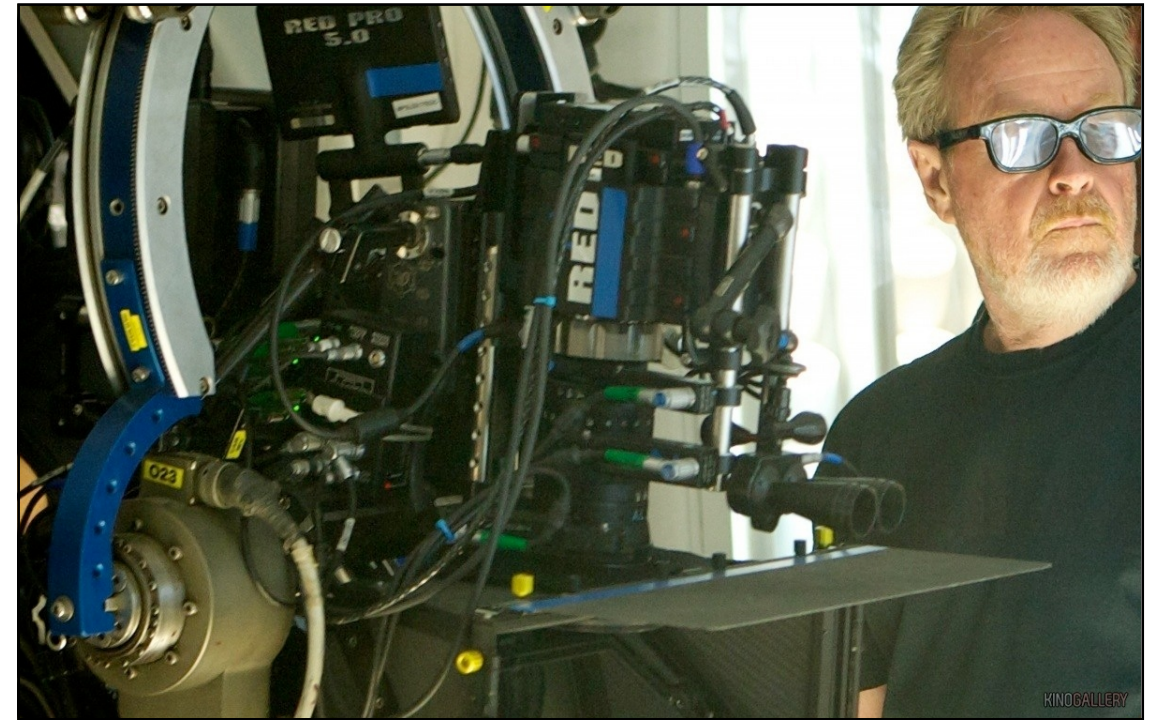
My admiration of Ridley Scott in particular has a tenuously personal edge to it. He is from near the same region of the North East of England that my own father came from, and I turned down the opportunity to attend the same art college – West Hartlepool College of Art - that Scott attended, when my own life went off on an unexpected tangent. More recently, my son, not even conceived when work on Prometheus began, is named Ridley.

But I digress...

Scott's skill at straddling genres is to be envied. Alien of course is a classic monster movie. Gladiator is an epic spectacle. Black Hawk Down drops us straight into a harrowing, visceral war zone. Hannibal, often dismissed as a poor sequel, has moments of delicious black humour and real suspense, with Scott keeping the visuals, Anthony Hopkins gleeful performance and Hans Zimmer's sweeping score in perfect harmony. To me it's the best of Hopkins' Lecter films.

And then there's Blade Runner. When the Final Cut was given a limited, digitally projected re-release to coincide with the movie's 25th anniversary, it was the first time I'd seen any version of the

film on the big screen. Putting aside its stunning digital spring clean and tweaking, the film looks timeless. If this is what a 25 year film can look like, I wondered, just imagine what Scott could do with today's technology. We'd soon find out...



When it was announced in August 2009 that Scott was returning to the Alien franchise I quickly re-factored a small blog I ran that was following Robert Rodriguez and Nimród Antal's "Predators" to focus on the new Alien prequel.

Things moved quickly, as Damon Lindelof came on board to re-work the original script by Jon Spaihts. This struck me as an inspired choice. Personally I class LOST as one of the finest TV shows ever made, but whatever your thoughts on the show, or on the merits of another Alien movie, there could be no denying that Lindelof would bring something unique to the table, and lift the



project above a simple hack job or cash-in. This was especially important given the damage done by the AvP movies.

Sure enough, once Scott and Lindelof started developing the ideas and story presented in Spaiht's script, the project mutated away from being a strict prequel and into Prometheus; into a film with big ideas, lots of questions and maybe a few answers; it had become something far more interesting...

All the while I followed news on the production with interest, posting links to articles as they appeared, then one day I got that which any movie site really wants – the exclusive. Into my inbox popped some photos taken at Pinewood, showing the set under construction. There was a cave/tunnel structure, a large, circular 'stone' doorway with strange hieroglyphics carved around it, and beyond that a large chamber with very HR Giger-esque detailing.



I didn't know it then, but these photos showed what became known as the 'ampule room'. What was missing from the photos was the giant head that has of course been seen many times since in movie's publicity campaign.

Not only were those photos an exclusive, they were the first leaked anywhere in the world, and for a couple of hours at least, the site was inundated with visitors. I say a "couple of hours" because, although not entirely unexpected, the speed of Fox's reaction did take me by surprise, as I received an email from them asking me to remove the images.

Since then of course, many images have been leaked to many sites, and Fox kept up the game of cat and mouse, issuing takedown notices on a regular basis.

In December 2011 the first teaser hit. With the only dialog declaring "we were so wrong", fast cuts showing the epic scale and the use of Audiomachine's supremely ominous Judge and Jury this minute long preview set the tone perfectly.

After a couple more months of radio silence, the marketing has now kicked into high gear, with trailers, viral videos and intricately designed websites filling in the backstory of the film and more.

In April I was lucky enough to be invited to London be at the world premier screening of approximately 15 minutes of footage from the film followed by a Q&A with Ridley Scott and stars Noomi Rapace, Michael Fassbender and Charlize Theron.

While many of the journalists there may have simply viewed the morning as just another press junket, for me it felt like a real privi-



lege, and some reassurance that I hadn't been completely wasting my time for the last two and a half years.

Many have said they feel too much has been given away in the film's marketing, and a quick search on the net will bring up any number of theories from people who are convinced they've got it all figured out. I honestly believe Scott and co are too smart for that. Rather, they want us to think we've got it all figured out, and have actually been very careful about what they are showing and saying; They have more than one or two surprises left to spring on us.

I haven't been running this blog for fame, glory or to make money, but because of a genuine passion, and the hope that I might help other people who are interested in the movie to find the information they are looking for. Looking at the visitor stats for the site, I am happy that I have accomplished that.

As I'm writing this piece, the film is two weeks away from release. I have my invite to the full press review screening on the 30th May, which I'll hopefully be able to attend, then, by the end of June, the hype will have died down, the film will be categorised as a hit or a disappointment, and all those secrets will be revealed. By the time you are reading this, you will have had the opportunity to see the film and will have formed your own opinion. Given the unprecedented level of expectation, I don't know if Prometheus could ever could live up to the hype, but I do have faith that what we'll see is a unique, smart, scary movie, with Scott returning to the series he started, and showing those young upstarts who followed him how it should be done.

And what then? The site has taken up so much time over the last few years, I'll take a break before deciding what to do next. There's the new Blade Runner project of course, and Scott has already stated he has ideas for a Prometheus sequel.

On the other hand, I have a feeling that Alvin and the Chipmunks 4 could be something special...





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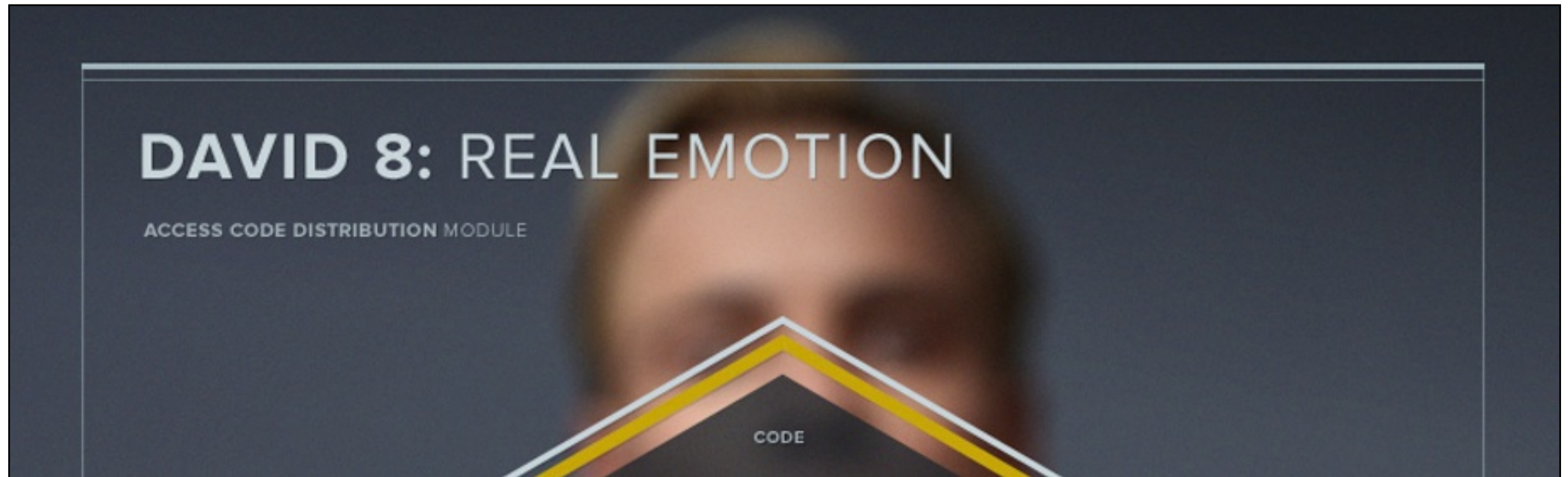
# Where Next For The Alien Franchise?



Rob Girvan is an occasional contributor to Hope Lies at 24 Frames Per Second. In this chapter he takes a look at the future of the Alien/Prometheus franchise, speculating on the wheres, hows and whys of the future of the series.



# Where Next For The Alien Franchise?



*A section of one of the several viral advertisements that ran in print and video form promoting Prometheus.*

So it is finally here. Prometheus, the third science fiction film by Ridley Scott, and the first major entry into the Alien universe since 1997 and Alien Resurrection (I don't understand why you keep shouting "AVP" at me. I have no idea what you are on about). Film reviews have been diverse and a range of opinions and arguments are being fought across the Internet by fans and critics alike.

One thing is for sure – it is unlikely there will be a blockbuster as contentious this year.

In terms of its success, early numbers in the countries where it has opened so far, including the UK, are strong. The American release is only days away and people want to be part of the conversation, good or bad. Among the questions being raised are "What next?"



and “Where does the Alien franchise go next?”. Fox has a number of options available:

**Prometheus 2:** This is the most obvious next step. Prometheus ends with Elizabeth Shaw and the android David on-board a Space Jockey ship and heading towards what is presumably their home world. The film would likely not be called Prometheus 2. A good guess would be Paradise – a word used by Shaw’s father during her dream, and it fits with the wider context of where the story is going. Would Scott direct it? He has a number of projects lined up, and at the age he is at, there may be sense in handing the reins to someone else. The usual names, Duncan Jones and Neil Blomkamp, would likely be at the top of any lists. Gareth Edwards, whose Godzilla project seems to have stalled, may also be a candidate.

Any film that continues from Prometheus would be even less connected to Alien. We might see some of the gaps in logic over the reproductive cycle get explained. The mural in the urn room, which hints towards a form of the xenomorph being worshipped by the Space Jockeys, may be an indication as to where the next film will take audiences.

In the past Scott has described how he thought about the alien killing Ripley at the end of Alien, and then being able to mimic her voice. A far darker ending, but you wonder whether a crumb of that idea was put into this film? An Alien with true intelligence would be a radical and interesting departure from what we know about the Starbeast.

**Alien 5:** Prometheus is not a direct prequel to Alien. It inhabits the same universe. This gives Fox the chance to reboot the mother series to a new generation. The unsatisfying conclusion to Alien: Resurrection means that the studio has scope to bring back the xenomorph and not have it clash with the story that Prometheus is telling.

Whether this means Ripley coming back is up in the air, but it may not be out with the realm of possibility. One of the reasons why Scott went in the direction he did was due to a feeling the Alien as a figure of fear had been watered down. It would take an intelligent director to bring that fear back to audiences, but it isn’t impossible. Giger’s design remains unique and disturbing.





And now for the most intriguing idea...

**Prometheus 2/Alien 5:** We are now in a post-Marvels Avengers world. The idea of a shared universe hurtling towards a grand finale has been proven to work, and more importantly result in giant box office. With Prometheus out, Fox has in a roundabout way kick started its own version of this concept. It would take a lot of planning, and a commitment perhaps beyond the willingness of Fox. But it would be a fascinating direction in which to take the franchise.

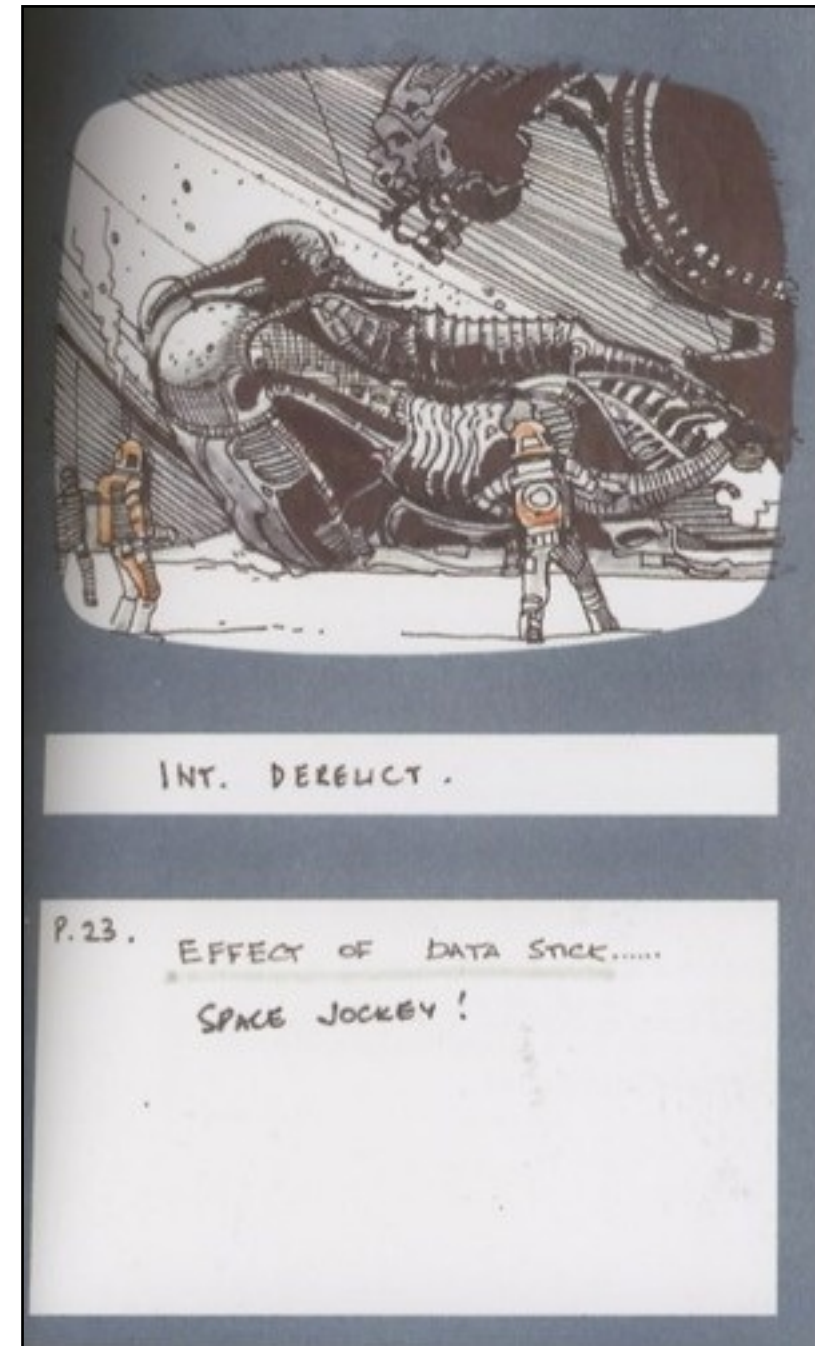
The theme of the Alien franchise has been the desire of "The Company" to obtain the Alien. The theme of Prometheus is about going out "there" to find the makers of civilisation. It is not difficult to see how these two ideas could link up with a film that draws the entire series to a close.

And now the worst of possibilities...

**AVP3:** Prometheus tanks in America. Fox, in an attempt to dry out what remains of the franchise, makes AVP 3 on a 20 million dollar budget, and starring some former Wrestlers in the lead roles. The film is a huge success and nothing interesting ever happens in the series ever again. And then they will remake Alien.

Let us try and avoid this one please.

*Whatever the choices the studio makes, it is unlikely this is the last we will hear of the Alien franchise.*





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# Credits

Hope  
Lies at 24 Frames Per Second

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