



Spiceworld

Starring Mick Jagger, Orson Welles and Salvador Dalí. Scored by Pink Floyd. And featuring "whore-ships". The unrealised folly that was Alejandro Jodorowsky's *Dune* may be the most influential sci-fi movie never made...

WORDS SIMON BRAUND

IN THE SUMMER OF 1974, THE CHILEAN DIRECTOR ALEJANDRO JODOROWSKY MET WITH SALVADOR DALÍ AT THE HOTEL MEURICE IN PARIS.

His aim was to thrash out the details of Dalí's involvement in Jodorowsky's latest film. As you might imagine, given the unique personalities involved, it was not an entirely conventional counter. To begin with, the contract under negotiation was not a legal document, but a note Jodorowsky had penned on the back of a Tarot card depicting The Hanged Man, which he had presented to Dalí some days earlier. And instead of his lawyers, Dalí was attended by an exotic array of hangers-on that included, amid sundry seers and pretty boys, the grandson of French musical hall artiste Le Pétomane, whose operating hall had once entertained the crowned heads of Europe, and an Amazonian Dutch woman known as 'The King' who stood by while Dalí shaved her pubic hair with a comb. Still, despite the bizarre circumstances, the meeting was a fruitful one, and, given the project in question, appropriately outlandish.

The film that Jodorowsky had come to the Meurice to discuss was not another of his cutely personal, hallucinatory flights of fancy like 1970's *El Topo*, the psychedelic Western on which his international reputation rested, but rather a multi-million-dollar sci-fi epic that would redefine the modern space opera: an adaptation of Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*, in which Dalí would play the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IV. The decision to cast Dalí, and the utter madness surrounding his involvement, gives a hint — but just a hint — of Jodorowsky's magnificently crazed vision of *Dune*.

Tragically, that vision never reached the screen. Had it done so, it would have been, without doubt, one of the most extraordinary movies ever made. As it is, the impact it had on the future of sci-fi cinema — one well-loved franchise in particular — is quite at odds with a film that never saw the light of day.

ORIGINALLY SERIALISED IN THE MAGAZINE ANALOG SCIENCE FICTION & FACT IN 1963, DUNE WAS FIRST

published in book form in 1965. It was an instant hit, quickly becoming a huge bestseller. And although Herbert later claimed that nobody broke down his door with movie offers, it was inevitable Hollywood would come calling sooner or later. That it took six years for *Dune* to find a buyer is probably down to the daunting prospect it presents to filmmakers. It is a work of staggering complexity, an epic that imagines entire worlds in the minutest detail. In essence a Manichean fable backdropped by a power struggle between warring dynasties (principally House Atreides and House

Harkonnen), it tells the story of Paul Atreides and the fulfilment of his destiny as freedom fighter and messiah. At its core is the battle over the spice melange, the most valuable commodity in the universe, a substance so vital it bestows galactic dominance on whoever controls its production. Exploring themes of religion, philosophy, politics, mysticism and all points inbetween, *Dune* is revered as something of a sacred text by its army of adherents. In short, a property not for the faint of heart or the impoverished of ambition.

In 1971, the rights to *Dune* were purchased by Arthur P. Jacobs' Apjac International, the company responsible for the Planet Of The Apes franchise. With David Lean attached as director and Robert Bolt writing the screenplay, it was scheduled to start shooting when Jacobs had completed three Apes sequels and a musical version of Tom Sawyer. Sadly, Jacobs died of a heart attack in June of 1973 and *Dune*, a pet project of his, became entangled in his estate.

would come from Seydoux, and Jodorowsky would be given an entirely free hand to make the film as he saw fit. "Michel Seydoux gave me unlimited power and enormous financial support," said Jodorowsky. "I could create my team without economic problems."

Even though Jodorowsky was in good standing with *Caméra One*, it says much about the intrepid spirit of the age, fully embraced by Seydoux, that *Dune* came to him so easily — you can imagine how the folks at, say, Pathé would react today if Lars von Trier suddenly called them up and ordered them to buy *The Martian Chronicles* for him. *El Topo* and *The Holy Mountain* may have found an enthusiastic audience on the Midnight Movie circuit — *El Topo* practically *invented* the Midnight Movie — and they are among the most jaw-droppingly strange and original movies you could hope to see, brimming with extreme, violent imagery (weird sex, amputees, anti-religious symbolism, dwarves) that defies rational description. But

"I did not respect *Dune*. I wanted to recreate it. It didn't belong to Frank Herbert." Alejandro Jodorowsky

With Apjac's option due to expire in 1974, the odds on a Lean/Bolt version began to lengthen.

Eighteen months later, with *Dune* still tied up at Apjac, Alejandro Jodorowsky found himself in New York. On one particularly fateful night he'd obviously been at the Stilton before turning in. "The Divinity agreed to say to me in a lucid dream," he recalled later, "Your next film must be *Dune*." Which was an odd thing for the Divinity to say since, at that point, Jodorowsky had not even read the book. Still, rising at dawn the next morning, he paced up and down outside the nearest bookstore with the fretful impatience of an alcoholic waiting for the bar to open. He read the 400-page novel in a single sitting, not stopping to eat or drink, and finished it on the stroke of midnight. At exactly one minute past midnight, he called producer Michel Seydoux in Paris and instructed him to buy the film rights. Seydoux, whose company *Caméra One* had distributed in Europe both *El Topo* and Jodorowsky's 1973 film *The Holy Mountain*, didn't bat an eyelid — even when a budget north

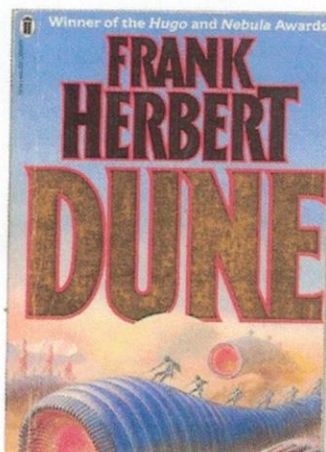
of \$10 million (a massive sum at the time) was mentioned. "Okay," he said, "we'll be in Los Angeles in two days."

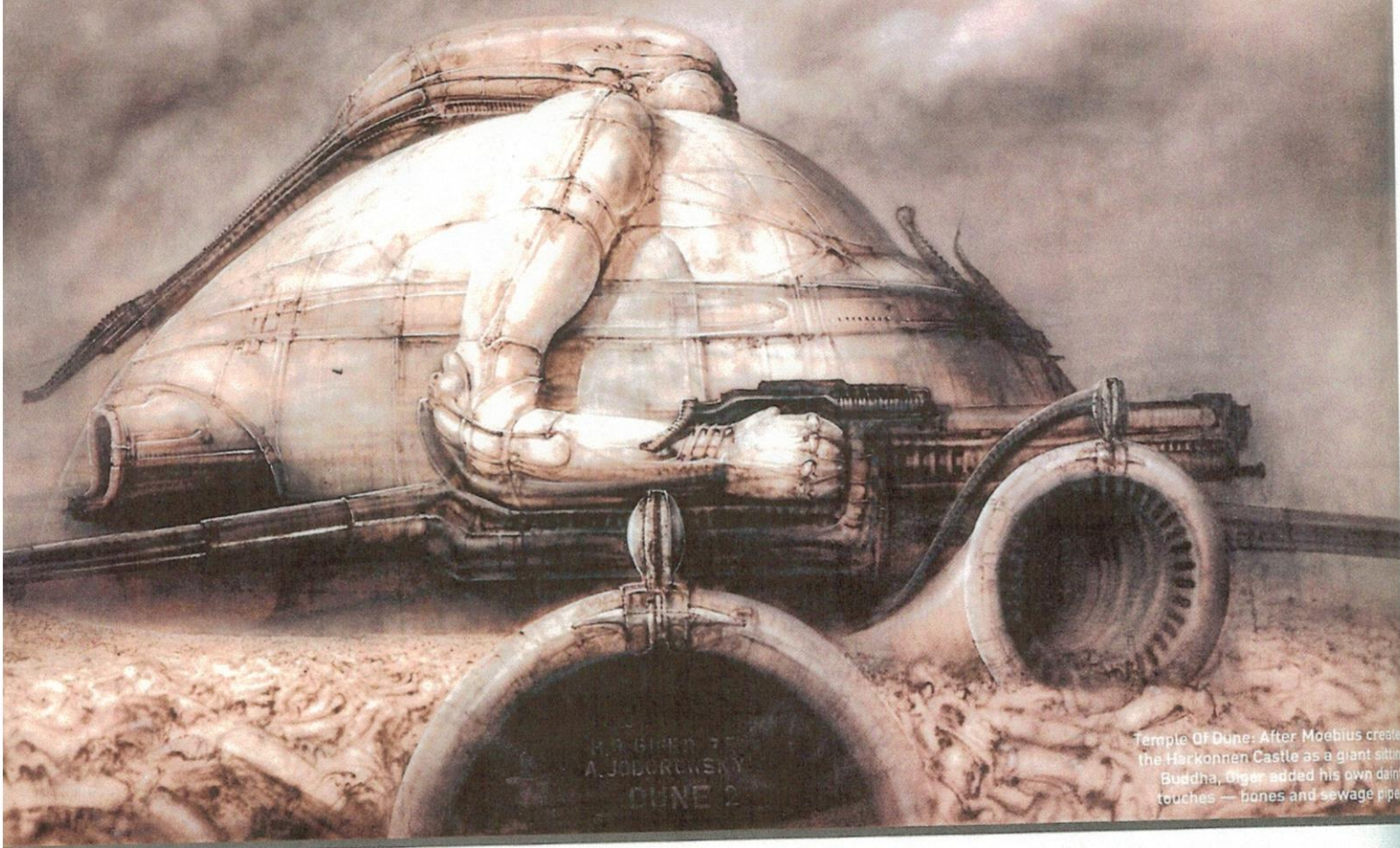
Sure enough, in December 1974, the rights to *Dune* were bought from Arthur P. Jacobs' estate by a French consortium led by Jean-Paul Gibon, executive producer at *Caméra One*. Financing

they presented little evidence Jodorowsky could handle a film of *Dune*'s magnitude: a multi-million-dollar, FX-heavy behemoth drawn from perhaps the most challenging novel in the sci-fi canon. They did, however, demonstrate an incredibly fertile imagination and an artistic fearlessness that bordered on mania; with the soul of a warrior-poet, Jodorowsky brought magic to the screen. If anyone could capture the essence of *Dune*, it was him.

WITH A LICENCE TO SPEND MICHEL SEYDOUX'S MONEY, JODOROWSKY DECAMPED TO

Paris to work on the script and begin assembling the "Seven Samurai" who would make up his creative team. Having dubbed Seydoux the first of these, he quickly signed up the second: an artist who could storyboard the evolving screenplay and take the elaborate special-effects into account. Taking a logical but unprecedented step, Jodorowsky approached French comic-book artist and co-creator of *Métal Hurlant* magazine (re-named *Heavy Metal* in America) Jean Giraud, AKA Moebius. Jodorowsky had known Moebius for several years and had persuaded him in the early '70s to begin drawing science-fiction rather than limiting himself to Westerns. Recognising the close relationship between comic books and storyboards, he surmised (correctly) that the 35 year-old Giraud would be the perfect candidate to map out the movie on paper. Naturally, recruiting Moebius did not follow prescribed





Temple Of Dune: After Moebius created the Harkonnen Castle as a giant sitting Buddha, Jodorowsky added his own daimonic touches — bones and sewage pipes

“What fun it was! Money was no object. And Jodorowsky would dance to motivate us.” Chris Foss

procedure. “I said to him,” Jodorowsky recalled, “If you accept this work, you must give up everything and leave with me for Los Angeles tomorrow.” Moebius asked for a few hours to think about it... The next day, he headed for Hollywood with Jodorowsky. The primary objective of the trip was to meet with Douglas Trumbull, visual effects supervisor on Kubrick’s 2001: A Space Odyssey — Jodorowsky’s first choice for FX supervisor on *Dune*.

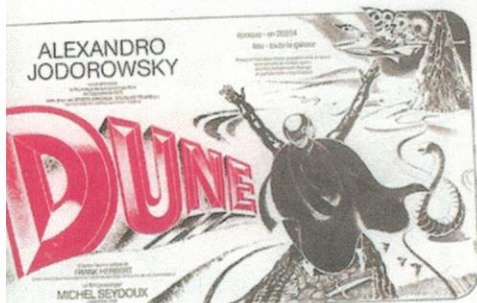
As you might expect, Jodorowsky’s vision of *Dune* was very much his own. He rejected the idea of Frank Herbert acting as technical adviser and did everything he could to keep him away from the project. He claimed that Herbert had not actually created *Dune* but “received” it in the form of myth by divine grace. “I did not want to respect the novel,” he said, “I wanted to recreate it. For me, *Dune* did not belong to Herbert as Don Quixote did not belong to Cervantes.” It was, thus, not just permissible for Jodorowsky to conceive his own version, but essential. “I had received a version of *Dune*,” he explained, “and I wanted to transmit it.”

In Jodorowsky’s *Dune*, Duke Leto Atreides (father of Paul) is castrated in a ritual bullfight

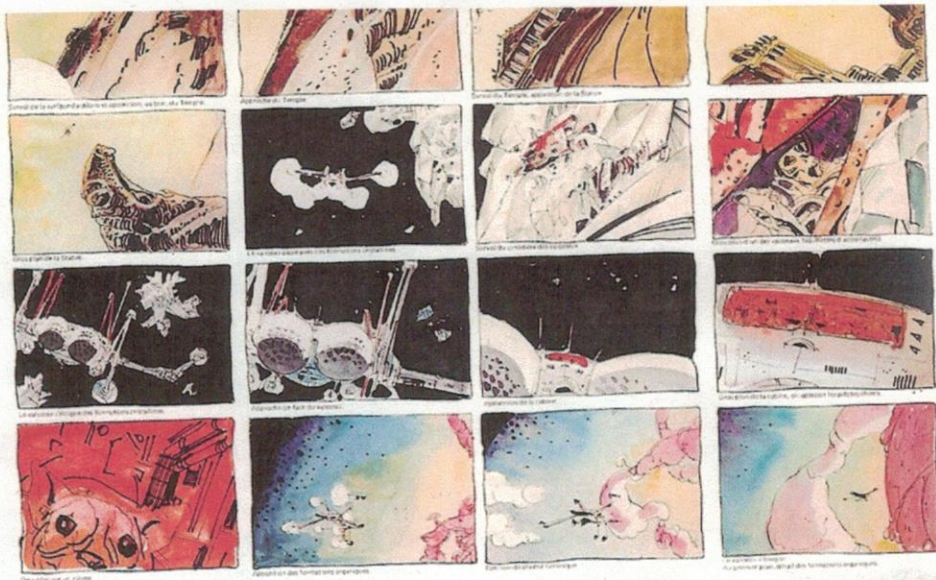
and impregnates Paul’s mother, Lady Jessica of the Bene Gesserit, not with his sperm but with a drop of blood; the spice melange is “a blue drug with spongy consistency, filled with vegetable-animal life endowed with the highest level of consciousness”. The Padisha Emperor inhabits an artificial planet made of gold and rules from a gold palace built “according to not-laws of antillogical”, whatever the hell they might be. Jodorowsky envisioned a spectacular finale in which Arrakis, the desert planet where the spice is found, is transformed into a verdant, rainbow-ringed world that “crosses the galaxy, leaves it, gives light — which is Consciousness — to all the universe”. For this “transmutation of matter” sequence, Jodorowsky claimed he consulted genuine alchemists, one of whom was over 100 years old, yet possessed with the energy of a young teenager. The director sought yet more technical advice from both gypsies and South American guerrilla fighters who schooled him in the ways of miracles and hallucinogenic ritual. He also engaged the enthusiasm of the Algerian government for a marathon location shoot high in the Tassili n’Ajer mountains of the northern Sahara.

On one subject, Jodorowsky’s imagination *really* went into overdrive. The director was adamant that the technology of *Dune*, particularly the spacecraft, would be wholly original, the product of an unfathomably alien civilisation and not rooted in assumptions of what our own technology might, one day, be capable of, i.e. “the degenerate and cold offspring of present-day American automobiles and submarines”, in Jodorowsky’s words, “the very antithesis of art, usually seen in science-fiction films, including 2001”. What Jodorowsky dreamed of were “womb-ships, antechambers for rebirth into other dimensions; whore-ships driven by the semen of our passionate ejaculations. The invincible and castrating rocket carrying our vengeance to the icy heart of a treacherous sun; humming-bird ornithopters that fly us to sip the ancient nectar of the dwarf stars giving us the juice of eternity.” For this somewhat tall order, he turned to British artist Chris Foss. Best known for his sci-fi book covers, particularly Isaac Asimov’s, Foss, like Moebius, had no experience in film at that time. “I was lugged off to Paris to meet this weird guy,” Foss recalls. “He always had women in tow and I found him going through my case, because he thought it was his girlfriend’s. So that was our first meeting: the great man’s got his back to me and is going through my suitcase. Which was a good start, and probably a symbol of things to come!”

At Jodorowsky’s bidding, Foss was installed in Paris ejaculating whore-ships and humming-bird ornithopters. “And what fun it was!” Foss enthuses. “Alejandro always had dreams of



above: Optimistic poster art for the release that never was. Right: A selection of Jean Giraud's storyboards from the original press kit, thanks to www.duneinfo.com. Here, the approach the temple on desert world Arrakis, discover a spaceship graveyard in a "crystalline formation", find the pilots of an insectoid ship are dogs, and watch a gnatlike vessel pass an "organic formation" ejecting plasma.



Gland designs: Chris Foss' vision of Dune's organic "ornithopters" included a fallen pirate ship "ejaculating" spice.

grandeur, so we had the most massive office block. Money was no object. I was given the biggest drawing board, I was given everything. You know the theme 10 in the Dudley Moore film? This was Alejandro's theme. He used to dance to it in the studios to motivate us..."

"[Foss] would plunge into his work for hours, millennia," wrote Jodorowsky in his feverish introduction to 21st-Century Foss, a collection of Foss' work published in 1979. "He would go for long walks in the small hours to a little plaza where lepidopterous creatures with human skin and prehistoric perfumes would entwine their pink tongues with long, transparent hairs around his British member."

"Well, I *did* have a nice walk back to my hotel," laughs Foss when *Empire* asks if he cares to comment on Jodorowsky's words.

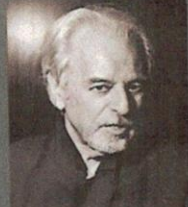
Meanwhile, having his French member similarly attended to (one hopes), Moebius was also beavering away on costume design and storyboards, eventually turning out over 3,000 drawings to chart the labyrinthine intricacies of Jodorowsky's script.

IT PROBABLY WON'T HAVE ESCAPED YOUR NOTICE THAT JODOROWSKY HAS A HIGHLY DISTINCTIVE WAY OF EXPRESSING HIMSELF. IT

denotes an extraordinarily creative mind and a unique approach to filmmaking — in fact, it's doubtful whether Michael Bay has ever referred to a spaceship as a humming-bird ornithopter, and if Ron Howard has ever taken advice from an alchemist, the event went unrecorded. But it also suggests that working with him demands a similarly idiosyncratic attitude. A glance at Moebius' sketches and Chris Foss' fantastic paintings make it clear that both were kindred spirits, even without a background in cinema, and that Jodorowsky showed great prescience in seeking their collaboration. Douglas Trumbull, on the other hand, proved not to be samurai material. At a meeting in Los Angeles, Jodorowsky found him arrogant, lacking in imagination and overpriced. "Like a good American," he said, "he scorned the project, making us wait while he spoke with ten

ALL ABOUT ALEJANDRO

YOUR 12-POINT GUIDE TO JODOROWSKY



1. Born February 7, 1929, in Tocopilla, Chile to Jewish-Ukrainian parents.
2. Published his first book of poetry at the tender age of 16.
3. In 1955, attended university in Santiago, Chile, and worked briefly as a circus clown and puppeteer. He later studied mime in Paris and performed worldwide with Marcel Marceau.
4. Along with surrealists Roland Topor and Fernando Arrabal, he created the Panic Movement in 1962, a group of artists dedicated to the god Pan.
5. Directed his first feature film, surrealist love story *Fando y Lis*, in 1968.
6. In 1970, psychedelic Western *El Topo* became a huge cult hit, instigating the Midnight Movie phenomenon.
7. Aside from "filmmaker", Jodorowsky's CV includes playwright, actor, mime, composer, amateur scholar in comparative religion, Tarot reader and psycho-magician.
8. His directing philosophy: "Most directors make films with their eyes. I make films with my *cojones*... I ask of film what most Americans ask of psychedelic drugs."
9. In 2005 he conducted the wedding service of 'shock rocker' Marilyn Manson and burlesque performer Dita Von Teese.
10. Among his legion of fans, Jodorowsky can count Luke Steele and Nick Littlemore of electropop outfit Empire Of The Sun.
11. Jodorowsky blamed Allen Klein, distributor of *El Topo*, for keeping it out of circulation for years. Jodorowsky believed Klein was waiting for him to die so he could make more money on the re-release.
12. He's currently collaborating with David Lynch on a Western called *King Shot*. Other participants are rumoured to include Nick Nolte, Asia Argento, and Marilyn Manson as a 300 year-old Pope.

people on the phone, finally showing us superb machines he tried to improve. Tired of this comedy, I left to research a young talent."

That young talent was 28 year-old Dan O'Bannon, whose no-budget effects on college buddy John Carpenter's *Dark Star* had caught Jodorowsky's attention. He was much more to the maestro's liking. "I was with a wolf child," said Jodorowsky. "O'Bannon was a real genius. He couldn't believe I'd entrust him with a project as significant as *Dune*." Two weeks after meeting Jodorowsky, he was hired as effects supervisor. Joining Moebius and Foss in Paris, he worked for the next six months overseeing a team of 30 artists and supervising work from Parisian special effects house Eurocitel. Jodorowsky's *Dune* was gradually coming to life.

The final member of the crew was the most radical. During negotiations with Salvador Dalí, Dalí had presented Jodorowsky with a catalogue of works by Swiss artist H. R. Giger. Jodorowsky was enthralled, seeing in Giger's disturbing, erotic imagery exactly the look he wanted for the debauched Harkonnen home planet — particularly the Harkonnen Castle, a symbol of the dynasty's monstrous degeneracy. After meeting Giger in Paris, Jodorowsky offered him complete autonomy to design the Harkonnen planet — "[A] planet ruled by evil," wrote Giger, "a place where black magic was practised, aggressions were let loose and perversion was the order of the day. Just the place for me, in fact." Giger described the Harkonnen Castle as "a symbol of intemperance, exploitation, aggression and brutality... The only link with the outside world is a drawbridge that can be lowered like an enormous penis to admit visitors. The main gate is only an entrance, never an exit... It has barbs like a shark's teeth that prevent anyone from turning back."

For the film's soundtrack, Jodorowsky envisioned each planet having its own score, composed by different artists. He contacted Virgin Records. Glancing at their artists roster, Virgin suggested Gong, Mike Oldfield and Tangerine Dream. With typical chutzpah, Jodorowsky replied, "What about Pink Floyd?" His effrontery paid off. The Floyd, it turned out, were big fans of *El Topo*, and invited Jodorowsky and Jean-Paul Gibon to Abbey Road Studios where they were putting the final touches to *Dark Side Of The Moon*. When they arrived, instead of the visionaries he'd anticipated, he was met by a bunch of ill-mannered beardies stuffing their faces with steak and chips while he and Gibon stood around until, as Jodorowsky put it, "their voracity [was] satisfied". Furious, he stormed out. Floyd guitarist David Gilmour rushed after him, apologising profusely. He mollified Jodorowsky by inviting him to sit in on the final mix of *Dark Side Of The Moon*, an experience Jodorowsky described as "ecstasy". A meeting was duly convened in Paris. "We all ended up in a room together passing the time of day," remembers Foss, "while the lawyers had the mega-rows in the next room." After much negotiation, it was agreed that Pink Floyd would provide the bulk of the music for *Dune*, later

releasing it as a double soundtrack album.

Jodorowsky then turned his attention to the cast. His wishlist was so outrageous it must have seemed impossible even to him. Orson Welles, Mick Jagger, Charlotte Rampling, Alain Delon, Gloria Swanson and Hervé Villechaize were all to play major roles. (Jodorowsky had earmarked the role of Baron Harkonnen — a creature so grotesquely fat he floats around on antigravity bubbles attached to his limbs — for Welles. Best. Casting. Ever.) It's at this point that the failure of Jodorowsky's *Dune* is most exasperating. What madness would have ensued had Orson Welles, Mick Jagger and Tatoo from Fantasy Island been herded together for six months in the Sahara, with Jodorowsky acting as ringmaster. Add Dalí to the mix and it becomes almost too tantalising to contemplate.

IN JODOROWSKY'S VERSION OF *DUNE*, THE PADISHA EMPEROR IS A MADMAN WHO'S CEDED MUCH OF HIS POWER TO A MECHANICAL SIMULACRUM

of himself so life-like that his subjects cannot distinguish it from the real thing. Jodorowsky firmly believed that Salvador Dalí was the only person who could portray the character. He pursued Dalí relentlessly via a succession of surreal meetings in Paris, Barcelona, Dalí's studio in Cadaqués on the Costa Brava, and in the bars of Manhattan's St. Regis hotel. Dalí was intrigued, but he was not about to surrender his services easily. However, he was impressed

"The Harkonnen planet is a place of black magic and perversion. Just the place for me, in fact." **H. R. Giger**

with Jodorowsky's gift of the Tarot card and, after the meeting at the Meurice, invited him to dinner. At the restaurant, Jodorowsky produced a questionnaire he had drawn up to gauge Dalí's thoughts. "I came prepared," he said. "I came prepared, too," replied Dalí. He then presented the director with a sketch he had made of the Emperor's throne, making it clear that it was a condition of his involvement that he be depicted putting it to use. The throne comprised of two entwined dolphins, their tails forming the base of a magnificent toilet, their mouths its twin bowls: one for the "excrement", one for the "wee". It was, apparently, absolutely necessary to show the Emperor "making wee and excrement". Jodorowsky asked him whether it would also be necessary to show his penis and anus. No, Dalí assured him, a double would do. (Foss recalls the throne-toilet's genesis rather differently: "I have this lovely colour sketch by Jean Giraud, a magnificent rendering of the Emperor on his throne. Alejandro didn't like it, and Giraud was so pissed off he turned it into a giant toilet and dedicated it to me!")

In subsequent meetings, mostly attended by Le Pétomane's ancestor and Dalí's muse, French disco diva Amanda Lear, Dalí laid down a few more conditions. First, he would not read the script or take direction, but simply make things up as he went along. Jodorowsky decided he could accommodate this by devising a list of questions that would coax out a usable performance. (He also headed off another problem: Dalí's perverse tendency to position himself anywhere on the set except where he was supposed to be. He resolved to light not just the set but the surrounding area too, including the dressing rooms, corridors and toilets.)

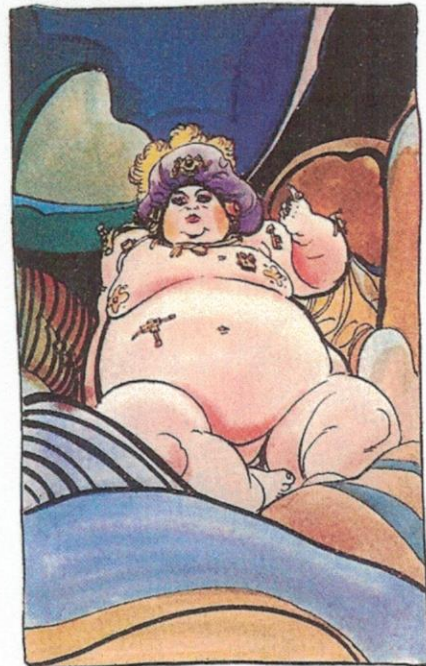
Secondly, Dalí insisted he would not shoot anywhere but Cadaqués and that his fee would be \$100,000. An hour. Jodorowsky calculated he'd need Dalí for an hour a day for a week — a huge strain on the budget. In the end, he cut his role to a page-and-a-half of script, settling on a wage of \$150,000 for three hours of work. His solution? To use the robotic Emperor as a stand-in, a plan that delighted Dalí, especially when it was agreed the automaton would go to



Nightmare city: Giger's macabre vision of the biomechanical drawbridge leading to the Harkonnen Castle (just seen on the horizon).

Back Story: **Dune**

Le Baron Vladimir HARKONNEN, père de Jessica, complice de l'Empereur de la Galaxie.



RABBAN La Bête, dictateur, idiot, criminel, hermaphrodite.

Above: Just two of Jean 'Moebius' Giraud's character and costume designs, here depicting Baron Harkonnen in all his corpulent glory and Rabban The Beast: "Dictator, idiot, criminal, hermaphrodite." Taken from the original press kit, courtesy of www.duneinfo.com.



his museum when filming was complete. With his honour and gargantuan ego satisfied, Dalí also consented to shoot in Paris, although he promised it would cost more than filming in Cadaqués. "The Master is a saboteur," added Amanda Lear, somewhat ominously. "He likes the things that fail." Later, Dalí proudly showed Jodorowsky his bed, the central feature of which was a pair of entwined dolphins. A draughtsman was also present, frantically scribbling notes for the construction of the Emperor's throne.

At a lavish dinner to celebrate the deal, The Hanged Man sanctifying the affair, Jodorowsky was perturbed to see that Pier Paolo Pasolini was sat opposite Dalí and was handed by the artist throughout the meal. Jodorowsky's fears that Dalí was collaborating with Pasolini behind his back were put to rest by Lear. The Italian director was only there, she told him, to seek permission to use one of Dalí's paintings in the artwork for 120 Days Of Sodom. (Dalí agreed, incidentally. For a fee of \$100,000.)

Sadly, the celebrations were short-lived. In December 1975, with set construction about to begin, Dan O'Bannon travelled to LA to seek out the high-resolution VistaVision equipment he needed for the special-effects shots. While he was there, O'Bannon was astonished to receive a telegram informing him that Dune's financial backers had pulled out and the film was postponed indefinitely. The production facility in Paris was abruptly shut down and the Seven Samurai were scattered to the winds.

IT'S EASY TO SPECULATE ON WHY DUNE FAILED. IT WAS INSANELY OVER-AMBITIOUS, A GLORIOUS GRAND FOLLY THAT SIMPLY COLLAPSED

under the burden of Jodorowsky's dreams and a script the size of the Argos catalogue. Then again, if you chart the evolution of any of his films, most of which could be termed insanely over-ambitious, it's a miracle *any* of them got made. The best explanation is that, like many non-Hollywood movies of this scale, the financing wasn't secure enough to sustain it. With \$2 million of the budget spent in pre-production, Seydoux and Gibon got cold feet and turned the lights out. It was Jodorowsky's assertion that Hollywood sabotaged the film for being too French and not 'American' enough; as Foss puts it, "The Americans just flipped." Jodorowsky also hinted at "intrigues and plundering", implying that, after the storyboards circulated the studios, the visual style of *Dune* turned up in thinly veiled form in *Star Wars*. Whatever the truth, there's no denying that Jodorowsky's *Dune*, even though it was abandoned before a single frame of film was exposed, changed the course of sci-fi cinema.

The collapse of the project was so devastating to Dan O'Bannon that he suffered a nervous breakdown and spent some time in a psychiatric hospital. Broke and homeless, he turned to screenwriting, churning out 13 scripts in quick succession. The last of these, written »

"I liked to fight for Dune. All the battles were won, but the war was lost." **Alejandro Jodorowsky**

Dark castle: Giger saw the Harkonnen palace entrance mutating from sitting Buddha to menacing, Alien-prototype skull.

with old friend Ronald Shusett, was called *Star Beast*. It was later retitled *Alien*.

Star Wars fans may disagree, but in terms of visual style, *Alien* is the most influential sci-fi film of the past 50 years. And that's due in no small part to the creative talent used to bring O'Bannon's script to the screen — Jean Giraud, Chris Foss and H.R. Giger. Jodorowsky's decision to employ artists from outside the film world on *Dune* was revolutionary. Had he not done so, it's inconceivable that Giraud, Foss and Giger would have reunited for *Alien* and, without their contributions, it would not have been the benchmark that it is. Foss, indeed, would go one further: "If Doug Trumbull had been willing to work with Alejandro, then Dan O'Bannon would never have happened, and I would venture to suggest that *Alien* would never have happened."

And, to throw a little more fat on the fire, take a look at the 'organic' spaceships and Art Deco rockets of the Star Wars prequels. The

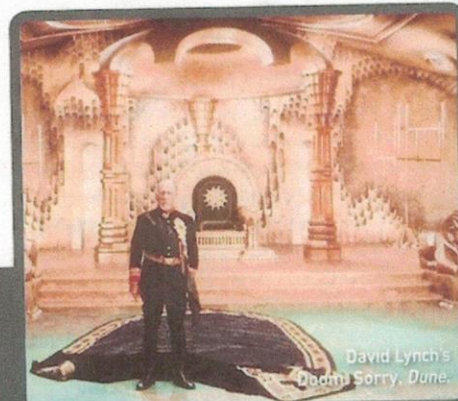
phrase "humming-bird ornithopter" might not strike you as entirely appropriate, but it's clear that they — as do the spacecraft in most other sci-fi movies of the past 30 years — owe a good deal more to art than they do to NASA. Indeed, *Dune* launched Foss' film career; as well as *Alien*, he went on to do designs for *Superman: The Movie*, and also worked with Kubrick on *A.I.* "I only wish I'd done other films before I did Alejandro's, because then I'd have realised what a party it was!" he reflects.

Jodorowsky himself claimed that *Dune* changed his life. But despite it consuming over two years of his time, he remained sanguine. "I liked to fight for *Dune*," he said. "Almost all the battles were won, but the war was lost. All those who took part in the rise and fall of [*Dune*] learnt how to fall one and one thousand times with savage obstinacy, before learning how to stand. I remember my old father who, while dying happy, said to me, 'My son, in my life, I triumphed because I learned how to fail.'"

In the winter of 1976, the rights to *Dune* were sold on to Dino De Laurentiis and, after Ridley Scott took a brief stab at it, it fell to another uniquely gifted artist to do battle with Herbert's enigmatic masterpiece. Like Jodorowsky, David Lynch was never the same again.

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H.R. Giger, Chris Foss and Moebius' art will appear in the exhibition **Alejandro Jodorowsky's *Dune*** at The Drawing Room from September 17 to October 25, 2009. See www.drawingroom.org.uk for details.



David Lynch's *Dune*. Sorry, *Dune*.

THE DUNE LEGACY

Ridley Scott's *Dune*

In 1979, Dino De Laurentiis gains the rights and hires a post-*Alien* Ridley Scott. H.R. Giger joins, as does author Frank Herbert, who clashes over various drafts. After his brother dies from cancer, Scott pulls out. The film collapses.

THE OTHER ATTEMPTS — SUCCESSFUL AND OTHERWISE — TO ADAPT FRANK HERBERT'S *DUNE*, POST-JODOROWSKY

David Lynch's *Dune*

De Laurentiis' *Dune* eventually hits screens in 1984. Directed by David Lynch (who spent three-and-a-half years on the movie) and starring Kyle MacLachlan, Sean Young and Sting, it is a critical and commercial disaster.

John Harrison's *Dune*

In December 2000, the Sci-Fi Channel airs a three-part serialisation of *Dune*. Written and directed by John Harrison and starring William Hurt, it is embraced by fans of the book as something of a guilty pleasure.

Peter Berg's *Dune*

In March 2008, Peter Berg signs on to direct a new adaptation, due in cinemas 2010. "It's [going to be] a badass action film with Shakespearean character drama," he tells *Empire*. "It remains a very unrealised book."