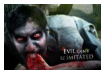

The world of horror certainly is a diverse and multi-faceted entity. For those in it for the blood, there's plenty of gore and guts to go around. For those who seek something more substantial, a vast universe can be found beyond its grimy facade. Horror is a genre driven by passion. Those who operate within its boundaries are fueled by a love for the macabre and an overwhelming desire to create. Nowhere does the spirit of independent filmmaking flourish like it does here. No other genre can boast the type of loyalty and devotion like the kind found amongst the widespread community of horror fans. There are many who celebrate these distinguishing traits, but few who have gone to as great a length as Douglas Schulze. An independent filmmaker who works primarily in fright flicks, Schulze is also the co-founder of Michigan's THE MOTION PICTURE INSTITUTE. His journey from fan to filmmaker is relatable to anyone who's ever thought of picking up a camera and is both an inspiration and example of what the world of horror is all about. Now, his latest feature hits the 2012. New York City Horror Film Festival

Like so many others, his story begins at an early age. "My obsession started with science-fiction," Schulze tells Fango. "My parents took me to see Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY and that sort of warped my mind forever." Once transformed, Shulze was hooked, seeking out more frightening fare. This led him straight to the gateway of horror hosts and kid-friendly afternoon programming. "There were local TV shows like The Ghoul and Sir Graves Ghastly that would show the old HAMMER films and NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. I think every little kid loves horror movies. For me, everything springboarded from there."

Through the years, his obsession continued to grow and his intrigue became increasingly piqued. But prior to his work as director, he shared a sentiment felt by many other curious potentials and remained hesitant to follow the filmmaking path. "I always saw film as an aloof career objective because I thought it was reserved for the Hollywood elite." His conceptions would soon change. After the success of THE EVIL DEAD, he began to see filmmaking in a completely different light. "Movies like the locally produced THE EVIL DEAD turned me onto independent filmmaking. I saw that making movies was attainable for someone outside the Hollywood system."

From there he began making his own films and would steadily team with many great genres

names. In addition to working with Academy Award-winning FX artist Chris Walas (THE FLY), Shulze would also go on to direct several notable actors, including Sid Haig (HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES), Dee Wallace Stone (THE HOWLING) and David Emge (DAWN OF THE DEAD). “It’s fun touching that realm and at the same time you learn a lot from these veterans that have so much experience,” he reflects. “It’s a wonderful cauldron of knowledge. All great people.”

The success he found on the independent circuit, coupled with his devotion to the filmmaking community, would eventually give birth to The Motion Picture Institute. “Working as an independent artist in Michigan led to an endless stream of inquiry from other aspiring filmmakers asking how I made my movies and where I found the money to make them. That knowledge became something my fellow collaborators and I started to give back to other filmmakers. Initially, it took the shape of workshops and over the years it kept evolving. Eventually, the institute was born.”

THE MOTION PICTURE INSTITUTE is not your typical film school. It offers a one-year program that is thoroughly extensive, but also quick enough to get filmmakers into the field while they are eager and active. “We have an overall philosophy that four years of film study is excessive,” Schulze explains. “But weekend workshops are almost a complete waste of money because it’s too little. We’ve spent almost 15 years perfecting what we feel is a very comprehensive program and creating a nice haven for independent filmmakers.”

While his passions remain in the horror genre, and a script breakdown for PIRHANA 3DD is a required assignment for this year’s curriculum, Schulze feels that THE MOTION PICTURE INSTITUTE has plenty to offer for filmmakers of any type. “The filmmaking language is the same, regardless of genre,” he says. “I may use more examples of horror in class, but whether you’re directing horror or a comedy you still have a setup and a payoff. It’s just whether the payoff is a joke or a mutilation.”

Schulze's latest feature, MIMESIS is steeped in horror tradition and is ultimately a story about role-playing. "The word MIMESIS means 'life imitating art' and hanging in the convention circuit you run into a lot of extreme horror fans. It's not too far of a stretch to imagine some of these people going completely overboard. That's what MIMESIS is really about." Designed as a continuing franchise, MIMESIS is the tale of an underground group of extreme fright fans that can't simply watch their favorite horror films. Instead, they choose to live their favorite horror films. Schulze reportedly drew inspiration for MIMESIS from the scrutiny he feels the horror genre continually finds itself under. "Art is always being blamed and horror can always be the scapegoat for lunatics. That idea unto itself prompted me to explore this story."

As of this moment, MIMESIS has had a successful run and has played over a dozen festivals around the world, including France's La Samain Du Cinema Fantastique. While he admits that winning awards is not his utmost priority (though MIMESIS did win Best Screenplay at La Samain Du Cinema Fantastique) he certainly appreciates the magnitude of what each festival represents. "It's always an extreme honor to be a part of these festivals and to be accepted into a sort of elite tier of filmmakers." MIMESIS is currently slated to screen at the New York City Horror Film Festival and Schulze could not be happier. "New York has always been a big melting pot for horror and this is a festival we've really been hoping for. We're very ecstatic to be screening there."

For more on MIMESIS, its NYC Horror Film Fest screening and its coming release, head to the official Facebook . And to learn more about The Motion Picture Institute and the programs it has to offer, please visit MPI Film .