

Del Toro has designs on “FRANKENSTEIN” and “MADNESS”

Written by Michael Gingold

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Last night, as part of the TimesTalks series at New York City’s TimesCenter, Guillermo del Toro gave a highly entertaining talk about his STRAIN trilogy of novels, including this week’s release THE FALL (joined by his co-author, Chuck Hogan, and moderator Jason Zinoman), and also touched on his other recent projects. One of them was his forthcoming big-screen take on Mary Shelley’s FRANKENSTEIN, and Fango spoke to del Toro afterward to get a little more info on that and his H.P. Lovecraft adaptation AT THE MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS.



As it turns out, del Toro and his FX team have been prepping FRANKENSTEIN, in which his longtime collaborator Doug Jones will play the monster, longer than some fans might have thought. “We started the makeup development three years ago, based on [veteran horror artist] Bernie Wrightson’s design [pictured],” he tells us. “God willing, Bernie will be the main conceptual designer of the film—the sets, everything. Based on Bernie’s art and Doug’s scans, we created a prototype maquette, and then we went ahead and cast Doug’s body, face, everything, and sculpted the entire suit. We’re just waiting to start real preproduction on the movie, in order to sort of amortize the tests; we’re going to do full-body makeup tests with Doug to try to solve all the particularities of the prosthetics and suit.

“For those who know Bernie’s creature,” he continues, “it’s similar, except it’s far more lanky, and terrifying in a different way. It’s not exactly his monster; he did some alterations, we did some alterations, and it looks very cool, like nothing you’ve ever seen before.”

It should play very cool too with the man behind Pan and Abe Sapien inside the gruesome getup, though del Toro notes that Jones hasn’t begun preparation of his own for the role. “Doug is barely aware that we’re going to do it!” the director laughs. “I mean, I told him vaguely and he said yes vaguely, but you know, when the time comes, he’s gonna get in that suit and he’s

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gonna do it!” One thing Jones didn’t do, he reveals, was take a part in DON’T BE AFRAID OF THE DARK, next January’s remake of the classic TV chiller on which del Toro was a writer and producer. “There was no part for Doug there,” he says. “I tried my best, but I was not directing that one, it was Troy [Nixey], so I left it to him.”

Before FRANKENSTEIN lumbers to the screen, del Toro is gearing up to get his long-mooted MOUNTAINS OF MADNESS before the cameras. “We’ve been designing for some time now,” he says, “and we have a budget and we have a schedule and we have maquettes, we have a lot of concept art and key frames. We’re going to go in to the studio in two or three weeks and present them with everything, and pray for a green light.”

We’ll be praying right along with him. Look for a longer, exclusive interview with del Toro at this site very soon!

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