

TRAVELING EXHIBITS: Terror in the Theater: Fifties Fears



The Day The Earth Stood Still: Classic 1951 science fiction movie which illustrates the fear of advanced technology.

The great number and popularity of science fiction movies in the 1950s has led some to call the decade the “Golden Age of Science Fiction Films.” The fantasy and adventure embodied in the science fiction movies of the time often masked real fears and anxieties of the Cold War era. It seemed the advent of atomic

weapons, the rise of Communism, and the confrontation

with the Soviet Union threatened the future of the United States. These factors, along with increasing numbers of flying saucer sightings, led to a climate of paranoia. Science fiction films of that decade commonly expressed several themes: fear of technology leading to unintended consequences; invasion of the planet by aliens; and the effects of atomic radiation. Because science fiction movies were not constrained by reality, more imaginative outcomes and plot lines could be addressed in creative ways. Often included, were monsters ranging from aliens from the furthest reaches of space to prehistoric monsters from the depths of the ocean.

Terror in the Theater: Fifties Fears showcases the fears faced by the world in the 1950’s, whether real or imagined. Included in the exhibit, from the Forrest Ackerman Collection at the American Heritage Center, are posters and photos from 50’s movies contrasted with earlier and later science fiction classics such as King Kong.

Size: 26 framed pieces (2 crates)

The American Heritage Center (AHC) is the University of Wyoming's repository of manuscripts collections, rare books, and the university archives. Many universities have primary source repositories. Few have repositories as extensive and significant as the AHC. More importantly, few universities have such repositories as welcoming and accessible to undergraduate and graduate students. Internationally known for its historical collections the AHC first and foremost serves the students and citizens of Wyoming. The AHC sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs including lectures, symposia, and exhibits. Not a dusty attic or an exclusive sanctuary, the AHC is a welcoming, lively, place where both experts and novices engage with the original sources of history. Access is free and open to all.

American Heritage Center

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Business Hours

M-F: 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.



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