It's Alive Pre-Visit Guide for Teachers

Big Ideas & Major Themes

- Movie posters are an example of design – that is, they solve a problem or serve a particular purpose. They make use of color, shape, text, and composition to create a visual image that will attract and intrigue a potential viewer.
- Horror and science fiction movies tap into certain fears and anxieties in a society at that point in time; because they fall outside the realm of the realistic their themes can play up and hyperbolize what otherwise might be latent or unspoken fears.
- Often at the root of these movies is a fear of the other or the unknown. At times knowledge itself (often in the form of science) is depicted as the cause of evil, a call back to the origins of gothic horror during the romantic era.

The Black Cat, 1934, lithograph.

Standards Addressed

VA6-1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2; 7-1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2; 8-1.1, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 6.1, 6.2; VAH1-4 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 5.1

In the Classroom

Prepare students for your visit with one or more of these activities.

- Introduce an image by asking open-ended questions (like 'What's going on here?) or by examining the elements of art. Start with a painting or more traditional work of art and then try a movie poster. Compare and contrast the different ways artists convey information in each format.
- Look at examples of movie posters (or other forms of advertising) with particular attention to the typeface. See whether students notice any trends. (See the LoC reference below for access to a database of advertisements by theme.) Ask students to design their own typeface that embodies a particular movie or product.
- Have each student choose a movie from a prescribed time period. Ask students to research the current events or sentiments that the film might reflect or have been impacted by.

Resources

Want to explore more? Use these references to learn and share information with your students.

- Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences ' Margaret Herrick Library. https://collections.new.oscars.org/results
- Los Angeles Public Library Digital Collection of Movie Posters https://tessa.lapl.org/c06.html
- Advertising: Library of Congress. http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/themes/advertising/