

EVENTS

New breed of filmmakers revitalizing horror genre

BY COLIN COVERT  
STAR TRIBUNE  
(MINNEAPOLIS) (TNS)

“Horror films don’t create fear,” said the late Wes Craven. “They release it.”

Craven should know. The maestro created three milestones of 1970s, ‘80s and ‘90s terror — “The Last House on the Left,” “A Nightmare on Elm Street” and “Scream.” In each new decade Craven found contemporary voices to release age-old anxieties, from visceral gore as horrific as the nightly news from Vietnam, to larks that offered bloody fun.

While moviegoers put a nail in the genre’s coffin a few years ago as a marketplace glut of torture-themed thrillers wore out their welcome, reports of horror’s death were greatly exaggerated. A fresh breed of filmmakers is revitalizing the genre with original, creative, idiosyncratic movies that grab and eat you.

“We’re slowly getting over the ridiculous torture porn of the 2000s,” said Jesse Bishop, programming director of the Film Society of Minneapolis St. Paul, which hosts the long-running “Dark Out” horror showcase. “The great new horror films make you laugh as often, or more, than you actually jump. It’s no longer just the ‘boo,’ but a well-placed ‘boo’ that is important.”

The best recent films lift fear to impressive heights.

Blumhouse Productions is an exemplar of the new horror, with such low-budget chillers as the “Paranormal Activity,” “Insidious” and “Sinister” franchises.

“Horror always goes in phases. It comes and goes like

the tide,” said Ryan Turek, director of development for Blumhouse. “Usually the most recognized periods for horror are the periods when they say something about their decade. Now we’re living in a rather stormy climate politically and economically, and that paves the way for some great horror stories.”

The studio’s “Unfriended,” about a haunted computer chat room, and “The Gift,” about a high school relationship that returns cruelly years later, are both about bullying.

“We look for films that make a statement,” Turek said. “‘The Purge’ is a Rod Serling-esque commentary on gun control. What puts a creative renaissance on the map is when they have something to say.”

Since Nosferatu silently levitated from his coffin, bad dreams have been as irresistible a marketing gimmick as weepies that reduce viewers to tears.

Why would we pay to watch nightmare images? Stephen King, in his nonfiction history of modern horror “Danse Macabre,” explained that the creative use of fear “makes you, for a little time, a child again,” revisiting a time when fantasy operated as “a marvelous third eye.” Cinema reconnects us to the grotesqueries of the Brothers Grimm, and Aesop’s fables.

Filmed terror has launched careers from Bela Lugosi and Boris Karloff to Ridley Scott and Kathryn Bigelow. And now, fright has never been so bankable. As film technology rises in capability while falling in cost, it has created a boom time for a new generation of indie creators to bring individualistic works to viewers,



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Danielle Bisutti in “Insidious: Chapter 2.”

whether on a widescreen at home or in the movie house. Online streaming promotes unbridled fandom while fueling homemade horror movies.

We have never traveled to the heart of darkness in so many directions. It’s a development that film lovers of every stripe might applaud.

Blumhouse has even parlayed its success into prestige-film territory, producing last year’s Oscar-winning psychological drama “Whiplash.”

Despite the promising economics of horror cinema — a genre that doesn’t require large advertising budgets or expensive stars to sell lots of tickets — attempts by the major movie studios have produced lukewarm results.

Myriad horror film reboots have been launched, an endless stream of derivative “Pol-

tergeist,” “Carrie,” “Hostel,” “The Thing” and “Evil Dead” reshoots. Most of those re-makes are creatively misguided, failing to recognize what made the original films so terrifying in the first place. They are less shivery than disappointing.

Rather than following Hollywood’s cannibalistic impulse to feed on its own entrails, the young Turks attacking horror’s barricades are armed with original aesthetics and fresh ideas.

Jennifer Kent’s fraught debut “The Babadook” twisted a classic old-dark-house premise into a shocker whose true gold mine was a woman’s ambivalence about being a mother. It reached deep emotional levels of shame, stress and grief that no jump scare from a cat in a closet can provide.

In “It Follows,” David Robert Mitchell freaks out viewers without stock horror confrontations. His well-executed film twists the sexual anxieties of adolescence into a metaphor for the inevitable, unstoppable, ever-present fear of death itself. He created terrifying visuals simply out of the image of a distant somebody walking slowly toward the camera.

In the impeccable futurist thriller “Ex Machina,” Alex Garland turned a frail romance with a humanoid artificial intelligence into a tense battle between alien, inhuman technology and narcissistic, selfish men.

Finance is a key to this creative boom, said Travis Stevens, a prolific producer of horror and action features.

“The economics of horror

are a lot easier over the last six or seven years for young filmmakers to get their shot,” Stevens said. “If you make a movie cheap enough, there is enough audience out there to give investors a chance of getting their money back.”

That advantage allows Stevens to fund little gems like Ted Geoghegan’s “We Are Still Here,” which subtly tip-toes from an homage to old-school phantasms into a hel-lacious dark-humor horror parody.

Big-budget filmmakers are taking advantage of the creative opportunity, too. Joss Whedon (“Avengers: Age of Ultron”) wrote his quippy “The Cabin in the Woods” as a journey through a broken fourth wall and into the bloody heart of the horror movie beast.

Screenwriter/director/producer E.L. Katz, whose credits include the anthology “The ABCs of Death 2,” began his love affair with horror as a young fan.

“It’s a good template to do whatever you want,” Katz said. “It’s a pretty open-minded world. That’s not so easy with the industry people because they like things to be cut and dried.” Big-budget spookfests like Guillermo del Toro’s new “Crimson Peak” are a rarity, Katz said — “something that happens for a studio only once every two or three years. But on your own, you can be a thousand different filmmakers in the genre.”

The true wellspring, he said, is “understanding the zeitgeist. What are people afraid of now?”

Quite a lot, apparently.

Things to Do

**BANGOR** — Bangor Parks and Recreation’s annual Halloween party, 5-6 p.m. for ages 2-5 and 6-7:30 p.m. for ages 6-12, Friday, Oct. 30, Parks and Recreation Center, 647 Main St. Games, activities, prizes and the Haunted Chamber. Free. For information, visit [www.Bangor-ParksandRec.com](http://www.Bangor-ParksandRec.com) or call 992-4490.

**BANGOR** — Live 1940s-style radio drama “Tales of Mystery and Imagination” featuring an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Murders in Rue Morgue,” 7:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30, Gracie Theatre. Those not in attendance can listen to the live broadcast on WHSN 89.3 FM. Individuals interested in attending the live performance are requested to be in their seats no later than 7:20 p.m. Free.

**BANGOR** — Penobscot Theatre Company presentation of Dramatic Academy Youth Production “Shuddersome: Tales of Poe” by Lindsey Price, 4 and 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30; 11 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 1, Bangor Opera House, Main Street. \$12; \$8 children. For ticket information, call 942-3333.

**BANGOR** — Bangor Historical Society “Ghostly Bangor Walking Tour,” 7 p.m. Oct. 27, departing from 159 Union St. \$10 per person.

**BAR HARBOR** — Author Max Wirestone discussing his book “The Unfortunate Decisions of Dahlia Moss,” 7-8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, Jesup Memorial Library. Books available for purchase with a percentage of sales donated to the library. 288-4245; [kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org](mailto:kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org).

**BLUE HILL** — Blue Hill Public Library’s Celebrity Spelling Bee fundraiser, 6:30-9 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30, at the Bay School’s Emlen Hall. 374-5515.

**BLUE HILL** — Author Robert Klose of Orono discussing and reading from his new novel, “Long Live Grover Cleveland,” 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, Blue Hill Public Library. Books

available for sale and signing. Free and open to all. 374-5515.

**BREWER** — Jams at the Grange, noon-5 p.m. first and third Sundays, through May, Old Town Riverside Grange, 1266 North Main St. Open to all levels of players and listeners. Unplugged stringed instruments only. Wheelchair-accessible. Food concession. First Sunday is Bluegrass Music Association of Maine Eastern Jam, \$3 to association members, \$5 others, Joan Richert, 989-5848. Third Sunday is The Grange Bluegrass Jam, \$3, Sandra Moon, 827-3698.

**BREWER** — Blue Grass Jam, 6-8 p.m. Tuesdays, Between Friends Art Center-Next Generation Theatre, 39 Center St. Pick or listen. \$3. For information, call 989-7100, email [nextgentheatradvertising@gmail.com](mailto:nextgentheatradvertising@gmail.com) or visit [nextgenerationtheatre.com](http://nextgenerationtheatre.com).

**BREWER** — Bangor Singles Club dancing and music, Country Mist for the Halloween dance, Oct. 30. Doors open 7 p.m.; music begins 8 p.m., upstairs Brewer Eagles Club. Cash bar. Cover charge \$8 Bangor Singles Club members; \$9 guests.

**BRUNSWICK** — Free panel discussion by four scholars on “Changing Climate and Dynamic Cultures: Survival in the Arctic,” 7 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 29, Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union, Bowdoin College. Panelists include Genevieve LeMoine, curator, Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Bowdoin College; Susan Kaplan, professor of anthropology and director of Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Bowdoin College; and Moderator Laura Henry, associate professor of government, Bowdoin College. Reception at Peary-MacMillan Arctic Museum, Hubbard Hall. For information, email [Laura.A.Henry@bowdoin.edu](mailto:Laura.A.Henry@bowdoin.edu) or call 725-3558.

**CALAIS** — Friends of Calais Free Library will sponsor Soup and Poetry, 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 30, at the library. Meal of soup, bread, sweets and beverages. Attendees will share favorite poems, or ones they have written. 454-2758; [kt Staples@calais.lib.me.us](mailto:kt Staples@calais.lib.me.us).

**CALAIS** — “Create Your Scarecrow” competition, through Nov. 2. Free. To receive guidelines, register and be assigned a lamppost, call Meredith at Boston Shoe Store at 454-2844, or Carole at Calais Bookshop at 454-1110. Participants will secure scarecrow frame to assigned lamppost with zip ties provided by scarecrow committee. Winners selected by popular vote and announced Oct. 24.

**FARMINGTON** — Discussion of representation of children in Jane Austen’s novels, facilitated by Daniel Gunn, University of Maine at Farmington professor of English, 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 28, Performance Space, Emery Community Arts Center, at the university Academy Street. 778-7424; [michael.johnson@maine.edu](mailto:michael.johnson@maine.edu).

**GRAND LAKE STREAM** — Author and journalist Paul Molyneaux and son, Asher, of East Machias to discuss their book, “A Child’s Walk In The Wilderness,” 7-9 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27, East Grand Lake School. For information, call Downeast Lakes Land Trust at 796-2100 or email [cbrown@downeastlakes.org](mailto:cbrown@downeastlakes.org).

**ORONO** — Second annual March Against Domestic Violence, noon-1 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 28, on the Mall, University of Maine.

**PALERMO** — Palermo Community Library Halloween Book Bash, 6-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 28, at the library. Participants encouraged to wear costumes. Learn about the library, make spooky eyes and other crafts. Snacks, spider punch and gift bags containing treats. 993-6088.

**PORTLAND** — Longfellow’s Haunted House tour, 6-7:30 p.m. Mon-

day through Saturday, through Oct. 31, Longfellow House, 489 Congress St. Snacks and beer available after the tour. \$20; \$15 Maine Historical Society members, plus a processing fee. Advance reservations required. Each tour limited to 12, appropriate for ages 21 and up. 774-1822; [info@mainehistory.org](mailto:info@mainehistory.org).

**PROSPECT** — Fright at the Fort, 5:30-9 p.m. Oct. 30 and 31, at Fort Knox, 740 Fort Knox Road. \$10 per person; \$5 age 12 and under; Express Tix \$12, \$7 age 12 and under. Proceeds support Friends of Fort Knox’s programs and maintenance of fort. <http://fortknox.maine-guide.com/Fright/index.html>.

**SEARSPORT** — Granite Grange No. 92 annual Halloween party, 2-4 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 27, Masonic Hall, corner of Elk and Main streets. Costumes optional. Free food and admission.

**For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit [www.bangordailynews.com](http://www.bangordailynews.com).**

Tuesday prime time

MOVIES

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
BROADCAST	<b>2</b> NBC 207 Inside Ed.	Best Time Ever With NPH	The Voice (N) (HD)	Chicago Fire (N) (HD)	News				
	<b>4</b> CBC Rick Mercer 22 Minutes	Young Wolves	The National (N)	CBC Coronation Rick Mercer					
	<b>5</b> CBS Big Bang	Broke Girl	NCIS (N) (HD)	NCIS: New Orleans (N)	Limitless (N) (HD)	News			
	<b>5.2</b> CW Family Guy	The Flash (N) (HD)	iZombie (N) (HD)	News Seinfeld	Cougar				
	<b>6</b> NBC 207 Inside Ed.	Best Time Ever With NPH	The Voice (N) (HD)	Chicago Fire (N) (HD)	News				
	<b>7</b> ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	Muppets Fresh-Boat	Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.	Wicked City (N) (HD)	News			
	<b>7</b> WAGM FOX The Insider	Pregame	2015 World Series New York Mets at Kansas City Royals. (N)	Big Bang					
	<b>8</b> ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	Muppets Fresh-Boat	Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.	Wicked City (N) (HD)	News			
	<b>MPBN</b> PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	War of the Worlds	Secrets of the Dead (N)	Frontline (N) (HD)	C. Rose				
	<b>9</b> IND CSI: Cyber (N) (HD)	The Flash (N) (HD)	Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.	News-Lisa CTV News	Daily Show				
KIDS	<b>13</b> CBS Ent The Insider	NCIS (N) (HD)	NCIS: New Orleans (N)	Limitless (N) (HD)	News				
	<b>22</b> FOX Mod Fam	Pregame	2015 World Series New York Mets at Kansas City Royals. (N)	FOX 22					
	<b>33</b> IND M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	In Touch	Happy Days Laverne Hogan Hero	C. Burnett				
	<b>33</b> IND Big Bang	Big Bang	The Walking Dead	The Walking Dead	WBZ News (N) (HD)	Seinfeld			
	<b>NICK</b> WITS	Thunder	iCarly	Full House	Full House	Full House	Friends		
	<b>DISN</b> Halloween	(35) ** Return to Halloweentown	Star-For.	Star-For.	Liv-Mad.	Jessie	Girl Meets		
	<b>FAM</b> Nightmare	Toy Story	Monica the Medium (N)	** Hocus Pocus (1993, Comedy) Bette Midler. (PG)	700 Club				
	<b>HIST</b> Digging Deeper	Digging Deeper	Digging Deeper	Digging Deeper	Digging Deeper				
	<b>DISC</b> Yukon Men	Yukon Men	Yukon Men (N)	Yukon Men (N)	Alaska				
	<b>TLC</b> Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss	Cake Boss		
LEARN	<b>A&amp;E</b> Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage	Storage		
	<b>ANPL</b> River Monsters	River Monsters	(:01) River Monsters: Unhooked	River					
	<b>CSNE</b> SportsNet	Early	Patriots Quick	Celtics Patriots	Sports	SportsNet	Sports		
	<b>ESPN</b> SportCtr	Top 25	E:60 (N)	30 for 30	Shorts	SportCtr			
	<b>ESPN2</b> Baseball Tonight (N)	Football	NFL Live (N)	Football	NFL Live	30 for 30 (N)			
	<b>NBCSP2</b> NHL Live (N)	NHL Hockey Tampa Bay Lightning at St. Louis Blues. (L)			NHL	Blazers			
	<b>NESN</b> NHL Hockey Arizona Coyotes at Boston Bruins. (N)				Sports	Sports			
	<b>CNBC</b> The Profit	Shark Tank	Shark Tank	The Filthy	The Filthy	Shark Tank			
	<b>CNN</b> Erin Burnett OutFront (N)	Anderson Cooper 360	CNN Special Report (N)	CNN Tonight	Cooper 360				
	<b>FNC</b> Greta Van Susteren	The O'Reilly Factor (N)	The Kelly File (N)	Hannity (N)	O'Reilly				
NEWS	<b>MSNBC</b> Hardball Chris Matthews	All In With Chris Hayes	Rachel Maddow Show	The Last Word	All In With				
	<b>AMC</b> (6:00) Friday the 13th (R)	* Friday the 13th, Part 2 (1981) Amy Steel. (R)	* Friday the 13th - Part III (1982) (R)						
	<b>BRV</b> Below Deck	Housewives/OC	Below Deck (N)	(:15) The People's Couch	Happens				
	<b>CMT</b> Last Man Last Man	*** The Help (2011, Drama) Viola Davis, Emma Stone, Bryce Dallas Howard. (PG-13)							
	<b>COM</b> Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Tosh.0	Drunk	Daily Show		
	<b>E!</b> E! News (N)	Botched	Botched (N)	Fall Preview Special (N)					
	<b>FOOD</b> Chopped	Chopped Junior (N)	Chopped (N)	Chopped (N)	Chopped				
	<b>FX</b> (5:30) *** Elysium (R)	** The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2 (2012) (PG-13)	Twilight Saga: Breaking 2						
	<b>GAC</b> Alaska Alaska	Alaska Alaska	Alaska Alaska	Alaska Alaska	Alaska				
	<b>HALL</b> The Waltons	The Waltons	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle	Golden Girls			
VARIETY	<b>HGTV</b> Fixer Upper	Fixer Upper	Fixer Upper	Hunters	Hunters Int'l	Fixer Upper			
	<b>LIFE</b> Celebrity Wife Swap	Celebrity Wife Swap	Celebrity Wife Swap	(:02) Celebrity Wife Swap	Life Swap				
	<b>MTV</b> Nicki Minaj: My Time	* How High (2001, Comedy) Method Man. (R)	Finding Carter (N)	Follow the					
	<b>OXY</b> Back for More	Back for More	Fix My Mom (N)	Pretty, Strong. (N)	BGC: Back				
	<b>SPIKE</b> Ink Master	Ink Master	Ink Master (N)	Sweat Inc. (N)	Ink Master				
	<b>SYFY</b> *** I Am Legend (2007) Will Smith. (PG-13)	Face Off (N) (Part 2 of 2)	Face Off (N) (Part 2 of 2)	Face Off (Part 1 of 2)	Face Off				
	<b>TBN</b> Supernat. Potters	Trinity J. Meyer	Prince S. Furtick	Praise the Lord (N)					
	<b>TBS</b> Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Big Bang Big Bang	Big Bang Big Bang	Conan (N)				
	<b>TCM</b> The Night Heaven Fell	** Gigi (1949) Gaby Morlay. (NR)	*** Cleo From 5 to 7 (1961) (NR)	Salaam					
	<b>TCM</b> (6:10) ** Last Vegas	*** Akeelah and the Bee (2006) (ESP) (PG)	*** Keeping Up With the Steins						
PREMIUM	<b>TNT</b> NBA Tip-Off '15 (N)	NBA Basketball Cleveland Cavaliers at Chicago Bulls. (N)	NBA Basketball						
	<b>TRAVEL</b> Bizarre Foods America	Bizarre Foods (N)	Booze Traveler (N)	Hotel Impossible (N)	Bizarre				
	<b>TRU</b> Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Imp. Jokers Imp. Jokers	Adam Ruins Billy-Street	Adam Ruins				
	<b>TVL</b> Facts-Life Facts-Life	Facts-Life Fact of Life	Raymond Raymond	Jim Gaffigan Jim Gaffigan	King				
	<b>USA</b> Law & Order: SVU	Law & Order: SVU	Law & Order: SVU	Law & Order: SVU	Mod Fam				
	<b>VH1</b> Love & Hip Hop	Couples Therapy	Black Ink Crew: Chicago	*** New Jack City (1991), Ice-T (R)					
	<b>WGN-A</b> (6:00) ** Man on Fire (2004)	Denzel Washington. (R)	Manhattan (N) (HD)	(:03) Manhattan (HD)	(:06) Salem				
	<b>ENC</b> (6:15) ** Stick It (2006) Jeff Bridges. (PG-13)	*** Eight Below (2006, Adventure) (ESP) Paul Walker, Bruce Greenwood, Moon Bloodgood. (PG)	(:05) ** Pompeii (2014, Adventure) (ESP) Kit Harington. (PG-13)						
	<b>HBO</b> (6:15) *** Charlie's Angels (2000) (PG-13)	The Leftovers An old enemy returns. (ESP)	** Bad Words (2013, Comedy) (ESP) Jason Bateman, Kathryn Hahn. (R)	Amy Schumer: Live at the Apollo					
	<b>MAX</b> (6:15) *** The Fabulous Baker Boys (1989) (R)	(:15) *** Transamerica (2005, Comedy-Drama) (ESP) Felicity Huffman, Kevin Zegers. (R)	The Knick Cornelia enlists the Clearly to do a job. (ESP)	*** Brothers (R)					
	<b>SHOW</b> Meat Loaf: In and Out of Hell (ESP)	Homeland Carrie cannot find answers. (ESP)	Inside the NFL (N) (ESP)	A Season With	A Season With	Inside the NFL (ESP)			
	<b>STARZ</b> (:15) *** Bridget Jones's Diary (2001, Romance-Comedy) (ESP) Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth. (R)	Blunt Talk (ESP)	Da Vinci's Demons (ESP)	(:25) ** McFarland, USA (2015) Kevin Costner.					