



## Frankenstein

Directed by: Guillermo del Toro

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a Double Dare You, Demilo Films, Bluegrass 7 production

With the participation of: The Canadian Film or Video Production Services Tax Credit

Supported by:

The National Lottery through Screen Scotland

Presented by: Netflix

Produced by: Guillermo del Toro, J. Miles Dale, Scott Stuber

Line Producer: Melissa Girotti

Scotland and England Location Unit Line Producer:

Martin Joy

Unit Production Managers: Marie Claude Harnois, J. Miles Dale

Production Co-ordinator: Luke Genik

Financial Controller: Wendy Gaboury

Location Manager: Vince Nyuli

Post-production Supervisor: Julie Lawrence

1st Assistant Director: Walter Gasparovic

2nd Assistant Directors: Chad Belair, Karen Young

Script Supervisor: Douglas Rotstein

Casting by: Robin D. Cook

Written for the Screen by: Guillermo del Toro

'Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus' by: Mary Shelley

Director of Photography: Dan Laustsen

A Camera Operator: Gilles Corbeil

Steadicam Operator: James Frater

Head Lighting Technician: Michael Hall

Key Grip: Robert Johnson

Still Photographer: Ken Woroner

Visual Effects Supervisor: Dennis Berardi

Visual Effects Producer: Stacey Dodge

Visual Effects by: Herne Hill, Ticket VFX

Visual Effects and Animation by:

Industrial Light & Magic

Additional Visual Effects by: Bot FX, Yannix

Special Effects Supervisors: Geoff Hill, Andrew Verhoeven

Animatronics: Visionary Effects

Editor: Evan Schiff

Production Designer: Tamara Deverell

Supervising Art Director: Brandt Gordon

Frankenstein character design inspired in part by Bernie Wrightson's 'Frankenstein Monster'

Early Concept Development and Early Concept

Sculptures by: Spectral Motion, Berni Wrightson

Set Designers: Etienne Gravrاند, Sorin Popescu,

Shirin Rashid, Henry Salonen, Radia Slaimi,

Jane Stoiacico

Set Decorator: Shane Vieau

Graphic Designers: John Moran, Andy Tsang

Head of Concept Design: Guy Davis

Concept Artists: Oscar Chichoni, Vicki Pui

Concept Illustrator: Chris Penna

Storyboard Artist: Michael Derrah

Construction Supervisor: Marc Kuitenbrouwer

Costume Designer: Kate Hawley

Costume Supervisor: Cori Burchell

Make-up Department Head: Jordan Samuel

Key Make-up Artists: Oriana Rossi, Kristin Wayne

Creature Design by: Mike Hill

Wolf Puppets Created by: Bilodeau Canada

Taxidermy, Amazing Ape

Hair Department Head: Cliona Furey

Key Hair Stylist: Tori Binns

Character Prosthetics Make-up FX by:

Mike Hill Creations

Main & End Titles Designed and Produced by:

Filmgraph

Guillermo del Toro

# Frankenstein

*The IMAX screening on Sunday 10 May will be introduced by Guillermo del Toro*

Few filmmakers manifestly relish holding forth about their work as much as Guillermo del Toro famously does; sitting in a suite in the Venice Lido's Excelsior Hotel, he's less like a filmmaker simply promoting his latest product, more like a genial, enthusiastic guide providing a tour of the vast haunted manor of his themes and obsessions.

'This is a movie I've been pursuing for decades. I was pursuing it actually before I had a camera, as a kid as soon as I learned what directing was, that's the movie I wanted to make. I was very stringent with not trying it earlier until I was about 40, because I didn't feel prepared, I didn't feel brave or foolish enough to do it. But I knew I wanted to make it like a great handmade operatic production. It needed to be lush, and it needed to feel modern – I didn't want to do a Merchant-Ivory pastel, safe Victorian era. I wanted to be a little more vivid, a little more innovative.'

His *Frankenstein* melodrama, del Toro says, is 'a family movie – a father and son "generational pain" story. Over the years, it became very biographical for me – not that I created a monster, or my father hit me across the face, but because you grow under the shadow of a father and you become that father without realising it. That was very personal, and I always felt if I had done it younger, I would have done only the story of the son. But doing the story of Victor becoming his father and the Creature becoming Victor is what I found very inspiring.

'Of course it's horror, of course it's science fiction, it's all these things, because the source is that. But the more you know of the Mary Shelley novel, the more you see how biographical it is for her. I thought, "You have absorbed the novel, you have absorbed her life – make it biographical to you, as sincerely and unguardedly, as she did"' (biographical readings of *Frankenstein* have often focused on the death of Mary's premature first child in 1815, when she was 17).

The film is authentically rooted in the structure of Shelley's novel, beginning and ending like her story amid the ice floes of the far north. 'The Arctic for me is a perfect existential theatre of the mind,' del Toro says. The frozen wastes are at once a vision of the infinite and a prison. The ice-locked ship, in novel and film, echoes Mary's experience of creative freeze at the Villa Diodati in Switzerland in 1816, when she, Percy Shelley, Lord Byron and others decided to devise ghost stories: she struggled to think of anything, until the famous dream that unlocked her imagination. Del Toro is also faithful to the novel's juxtaposition of high-flown visionary idealism and the basely material: Victor's dream of new life and his grisly bricolage of entrails and decay; the themes of love and desire against the omnipresence of death (crystallised in the theme of syphilis, which affects one character).

'The very spirit of the gothic is the marriage of death and love,' del Toro says, 'the sublime and the corrupt – graveyard poetry, the sense of doom in the ruins lending them beauty. The gothic novels are inspired by Piranesi's engravings of the Roman ruins [18th-century images which became a key influence in the development of the gothic sense of space]. The edifice and ruins become an avatar of the human mind. Every great piece of gothic literature has this element.'

Shelley's novel is best known in its standard 1831 edition, but del Toro has a special fondness for the initial version of 1818: 'It's a lot more undisciplined, but it's the one I like the most, because she is tackling social injustice, capitalism,

Colourist: Stefan Sonnenfeld  
Music by: Alexandre Desplat  
Solo Violinist: Eldbjørg Hemsing  
Score Conducted by: Alexandre Desplat  
Supervising Music Editor: Gerard McCann  
Choreographer: Abby Warrilow  
Sound Designer: Nathan Robitaille  
Production Sound Mixer: Greg Chapman  
Re-recording Mixers: Christian Cooke, Brad Zoern  
Supervising Sound Editors: Nelson Ferreira, Nathan Robitaille  
Sound Effects Editors: Craig MacLellan, Paul Germann, Dashen Naidoo, Scott Hitchon  
Stunt Co-ordinators: Eli Zagoudakis, Marshall Virtue  
Movement Coach: Denise Fujiwara  
Cast:

Oscar Isaac (*Victor Frankenstein*)  
Jacob Elordi (*the creature*)  
Mia Goth (*Elizabeth/Claire Frankenstein*)  
Felix Kammerer (*William Frankenstein*)  
David Bradley (*blind man*)  
Lars Mikkelsen (*Captain Anderson*)  
Christian Convery (*young Victor Frankenstein*)  
Charles Dance (*Leopold Frankenstein*)  
Christoph Waltz (*Harlander*)  
Nikolaj Lie Kaas (*Chief Officer Larsen*)  
Kyle Gatehouse (*young hunter*)  
Lauren Collins (*hunter's wife*)  
Sofia Galasso (*Anna-Maria*)  
Joachim Fjelstrup (*Dr Edsen*)  
Ralph Ineson (*Professor Krempe*)  
Peter Millard (*Professor Stokeld*)  
Peter MacNeill (*Professor Maurus*)  
Burn Gorman (*executioner*)  
Sean Sullivan (*old hunter #1*)  
Stuart Hughes (*old hunter #2*)  
Gord Rand (*silversmith*)  
Kenton Craig (*Harlander's butler*)  
Val Ovtcharov (*outpost clerk*)  
Anders Yates (*Torfussen*)  
Adam Brown (*prisoner #1*)  
Santiago Segura (*prisoner #2*)  
Dexter Stokes-Mellor (*prisoner #3*)  
Shian Denovan (*nymph*)  
Mark Steger (*spinal corpse*)  
Rafe Harwood (*young William Frankenstein*)  
Gregory Mann (*head urchin*)  
Roberto Campanella (*woman in confessional*)  
Warren Albert (*Professor Kugelmann*)  
Kim Morgan (*guest at wedding and bistro*)

USA 2025

150 mins  
35mm (Sun 17 May and Sun 31 May)  
Digital (Wed 27 May)  
IMAX with Laser (Sun 10 May)

#### With thanks to

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**SIGHT AND SOUND**

travelogue, adventure stories, science. She is insatiably curious, and she merges all these things into one tale. When you are in your teens and you read *Frankenstein*, it's the greatest book ever written, because it has the same hunger that you have intellectually as a kid.'

Del Toro's script structures the narrative as a doppelganger story in two chapters: Victor's narrative, then the Creature's, both framed by their encounter in the Arctic, as witnessed by the crew of a Danish ship, its captain played by Lars Mikkelsen. The diptych structure, derived from the novel, establishes creator and Creature not just as parent and child, but as quasi-brothers – both essentially naive children, each embarked on his own agonised journey of apprenticeship.

Victor's tale is carried off with bracing dash, not least thanks to Oscar Isaac's genially vigorous performance, his scientist a flamboyant showman enthusiast, seen in a lecture theatre passionately defending his theories. In a key sequence, Victor is seen hand-stitching and carving his creation out of scattered body parts, in a grisly, grandiose but oddly exuberant *danse macabre* scored by Alexandre Desplat (the sequence inescapably echoing del Toro's own origins as a special-effects maestro with a commitment to the handmade).

'I wanted Victor to be a rock star,' he says. 'He's very Paganini, or Liszt – the rock stars of concerto. And I shot his lecture like a concert, the same way as the creation [of the Creature], which is rarely, if ever, shown on film. I wanted to make an anatomical waltz. It's not a horror sequence. It's a joyous sequence of him patching and cutting and stitching – it's really the most vitalist scene in the film.'

The Creature, meanwhile, is played by Jacob Elordi, stepping into a role originally to be played by Andrew Garfield, until he dropped out because of scheduling problems. Elordi's casting brings an extra dimension to the role, given the actor's intensely sexualised heartthrob image (*Euphoria*, 2019-; *Saltburn*, 2023; Elvis in Sofia Coppola's *Priscilla*, 2023). The well-carved features we see gradually emerging from the Creature's jigsaw physiognomy suggest a Luciferian fallen angel, with an androgyny that picks up on the sexual ambiguity of the 1930s Universal films – its Dr Frankenstein played as a 'feminised' intellectual by Colin Clive, while *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) introduced a figure of outright queerness in Ernest Thesiger's frenetically camp Dr Pretorius.

Elordi's Creature is first glimpsed as an embodiment of monstrous hyper-masculinity, roaring beast-like in the Arctic, indestructible and preternaturally strong. But in the flashback to his 'birth', he is childlike, vulnerable, delicate in his movements – the result of Elordi's several weeks of training with a Japanese *butoh* teacher. 'I told Jacob: "When you have the tools you need, you can call it a day. I don't want you to become a *butoh* dancer, I want you to know the basics." He did things with his shoulder and with his neck and his waist that disarticulated them in a great way.' Elordi's characterisation is all about sexual ambivalence, and indeed multiplicity, given the Creature's literally composite nature: this 'it' is at heart the ultimate 'they'. Del Toro's film depicts two thwarted romances: one between Victor and his creation, the other between the Creature and Elizabeth (Mia Goth) in this version, engaged not to Victor but his brother – the only person who understands this being.

'Ambiguity is one of the great virtues of Romanticism. Gothic is both sensorial – sensual – and spiritual. The "Other" is always present in horror and gothic romance – and always in a light that renders it not as something to be afraid of, but as something to recognise in yourself. There is great beauty to that, and a great liberation.'

Jonathan Romney, *Sight and Sound*, November 2025

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Programme notes and credits compiled by Sight and Sound and the BFI Documentation Unit

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