

Exclusive: Producer Jeffrey Katzenberg Offers Sneak Peek of ‘Monsters vs. Aliens’ in Chicago

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on December 8, 2008 - 5:07pm

- [Brian Tallerico](#) [2]
- [DreamWorks Animation](#) [3]
- [HollywoodChicago.com Content](#) [4]
- [Hugh Laurie](#) [5]
- [Jeffrey Katzenberg](#) [6]
- [Kiefer Sutherland](#) [7]
- [Monsters vs. Aliens](#) [8]
- [Reese Witherspoon](#) [9]
- [Seth Rogen](#) [10]
- [Stephen Colbert](#) [11]
- [Will Arnett](#) [12]

CHICAGO – Jeffrey Katzenberg stopped off in Chicago on the morning of Monday, December 8th, to preview DreamWorks Animation’s “Monsters vs. Aliens” and show off the brand-spanking-new 3D technology that will be used for all upcoming animated films produced by the studio.

After an introduction by Katzenberg, critics, journalists, distributors, publicists, and others were treated to roughly half an hour of footage, spread over three distinctly different scenes.

Before the audience donned their 3D glasses (but after the coffee and Danish), Mr. Katzenberg spoke for about fifteen minutes about what he considers as important a technological advancement as sound and color to the history of film. Instead of taking projects that were conceived in 2D and converting them to 3D, Katzenberg has dictated that all of the filmmakers under the DreamWorks banner conceive and author their works with 3D in mind. It was a creative development that would fuel an interesting discussion and debate after the footage was shown, but it was met with all positivity beforehand.



Monsters vs. Aliens opens on March 27th, 2009 from DreamWorks Animation.

Photo credit: DreamWorks Animation

Highlights from Mr. Katzenberg’s introduction:

“To me, when I look at the history of the film, there have been, to date, two great revolutionary changes. The first is in the 1920s when movies went from silent film to talkies and the second great revolution is the arrival of color in the 1930s. Now, seven decades later, I believe that we are looking at what may be the next great change with the arrival of 3D. The first two were actually about bringing a better experience to the audience. This one is about bringing the audience into the movie experience itself.”

“It was an exploitation gimmick. It was a trick. For the most part, it was put on usually B-movies, many ’50s and ’60s, sci-fi monster movies. It was more for marketing than the experience. It was about reaching out and making you self-conscious of the process of 3D. In the last few years, all of this has changed.”

“All of the things that have changed come down to one word - digital. In the same way that digital technology has radically altered special effects to the extent that we can feel like we’re actually riding on the Titanic or traveling across buildings with Spider-Man or coming face-to-face with King Kong, it’s completely transformed 3D into a medium that can actually replicate the most remarkable human sense of all - the sense of sight.”

Something that Mr. Katzenberg got into in more depth in the Q&A section following the film was the interesting suggestion that developments

in technology NOT related to the actual filmmaking process have had a huge impact on this development - home theaters and piracy. Of course, for the latter, it's impossible to pirate a movie in 3D because the standard camera will pick up a blurry image and, for the former...

“If you think about what’s happened in the home in the last decade, the rate of innovation is breathtaking. You now have huge, flat-screen TVs, High-Def, Blu-Ray, stereo sound. It’s an amazing thing that has happened. As that has occurred, the theater experience has remained constant. This is an opportunity to reclaim a unique experience that can only be recreated in a theater. At DreamWorks, we believe so much in this that all of our films and our whole studio have been retooled for the medium. Beginning next year with the release of *Monsters vs. Aliens*, all of our productions moving forward, from the very first storyboard right to the final release print, are being authored in 3D.”



Monsters vs. Aliens opens on March 27th, 2009 from DreamWorks Animation.

Photo credit: DreamWorks Animation

So, what's the story being authored in “*Monsters vs. Aliens*”, opening on March 27th, 2009?

“As the film begins, the planet Earth has been attacked by outer space by an alien who definitely isn’t coming in peace. Our weapons are completely ineffective against it. And so, the U.S. Government has no choice but to tap into the most highly, super, extra top-secret program in its arsenal. Unbeknownst to all of us, the government has been rounding up monsters and locking them away in a super, maximum security prison. These monsters now represent Earth’s only chance for survival.”

“The smartest of the bunch is the brilliant scientist, Dr. Cockroach, Ph.D. Using the voice of Hugh Laurie.”

“Next is B.O.B., voiced by Seth Rogen. He’s an indestructible, gelatinous blob that will eat anything and everything.”

“Insectosaurus is a giant tower of power who speaks in an unintelligible roar that can only be understood by his best friend, Missing Link.”

“It’s hard to classify this fellow as his name says he is the Missing Link between prehistoric man and our undersea ancestors.” (Voiced by Will Arnett)

“The newest addition is Susan Murphy, voiced by Academy Award-winner Reese Witherspoon. Susan was actually about to have the happiest day of her life, her wedding. Just before the ceremony was to begin, she was hit by a meteor, which covered her in some mysterious space goop which caused her to grow to fifty feet tall.”

"Over the years, there has been only one man tough enough to track down this team of misfit monsters and lock them away and that would be General W.R. Monger, voiced by 24 star Kiefer Sutherland. He reports directly to the President of the United States, played, appropriately, by Stephen Colbert."



Monsters vs. Aliens opens on March 27th, 2009 from DreamWorks Animation.

Photo credit: DreamWorks Animation

Recaps of the Footage

1. The longest scene shown to audiences was clearly meant to truly show off the depth of the 3D technology. The filmmakers are striving to almost "reverse" the expectations of 3D. Audiences won't have things thrown at them like in "Friday the 13th 3D" or "Captain EO". Instead, the technology is striving for depth "into the screen".

The first scene shown tried to illustrate this with fields of tanks and soldiers trying to take down the alien probe. Flanked by security, the President arrives at the crash location and climbs an enormous staircase (another good way to show depth in 3D) to greet the new visitor. At the top, he plays a couple of synthesizer songs that will be familiar to movie fans, but the probe only ends up aggravated and on the move.

After the assembled Army unleashes hell on the metallic monster with no effect at all, the scene switches to the President's war room, where the audience is introduced to General Monger and his plan to let the monsters save the day. It was a great scene to show the audience assembled with about 10-12 minutes of footage that includes all of the character introductions and a heavy dose of what the 3D technology can do.

2. If the first scene was about introductions, the second was about the protagonists that Katzenberg and DreamWorks hope we will all learn to love. The scene opens with Susan waking up in a cell, unaware even that she's grown in height. She meets the other monsters - Dr. Cockroach, B.O.B., Missing Link, and Insectosaurus - before General Monger comes and ushers everyone into their cells. 3D isn't the focus of this scene but it does make clear that the character design and voice work in "Monsters vs. Aliens" might be just as remarkable as the technological advancement. Seth Rogen, in particular, looks to be a scene-stealer yet again.

3. The final scene was the action sequence involving a heck of a battle between the monsters and the alien probe. Susan uses cars in the San Francisco streets as roller skates to cruise to the action on the Golden Gate Bridge and try to save the innocent humans from alien attack. It's an impressive sequence, both on a visual level and the way all of the monsters are used to save the day. Katzenberg made clear that this was not the finale of the movie although it easily could have been, which gives us a good indication that action will be a priority in "Monsters vs. Aliens".

The Q&A that followed the presentation started off a little heated as two critics questioned the idea that 3D technology is anything more than a gimmick. Katzenberg reassured the audience that it's not a focus group thing or a gimmick but that filmmakers are dying to use this technology to tell deeper stories. He even claimed that he expects all films to be in 3D in five or six years and that the dawning moment for him was when he saw Polar Express in 3D. He says he immediately got on the phone and the 2D to 3D transition at DreamWorks was initiated. See if it paid off when "Monsters vs. Aliens" opens on March 27th, 2009 from DreamWorks Entertainment.

By [BRIAN TALLERICO](#) [13]

Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

brian@hollywoodchicago.com [13]

Source URL (retrieved on Apr 19 2024 - 12:05pm):

<http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/5963/exclusive-katzenberg-offers-sneak-peek-monsters-vs-aliens>

Links:

[1] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/users/briantt>

[2] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/brian-tallerico>

[3] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/dreamworks-animation>



- [4] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hollywoodchicagodotcom-content>
- [5] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/hugh-laurie>
- [6] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/jeffrey-katzenberg>
- [7] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/kiefer-sutherland>
- [8] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/monsters-vs-aliens>
- [9] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/reese-witherspoon>
- [10] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/seth-rogen>
- [11] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/stephen-colbert>
- [12] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/news/will-arnett>
- [13] <mailto:brian@hollywoodchicago.com>