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# Ann Foley on 'mission suit' secrets in *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design



by Victoria Davis 6 days ago

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A veteran of designing wardrobes for smash-em-and-bash-em films and television series, costume designer Ann Foley admits to inserting a fair share of fandom-inspired Easter eggs into the *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design, with every character, she says, having their own "mission suits."

If you've seen [Wingard's latest "Titan" of a box office success](#), you'll remember the trippy, technicolored mission to Hollow Earth and the Monarch team's futuristic adventure attire. Foley is no stranger to the wear, tear, and visual effects considerations that must be taken to create believable outfits that draw you into a character, even amidst the explosions and fight sequences that can make it difficult to draw viewers' eyes into any other aspect of the story.

But Foley's goal in the *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design was to add some nostalgic flair to almost every main character in Adam Wingard's film, not only to highlight

each character's story arcs, but also to showcase their own psychological and physical missions, thus building a bridge between fans and the characters, be they old friends like Madison Russell or new, but endearing acquaintances like the tiny but mighty Jia.

From cultural talismans, familial hand-me-downs, and childhood 80s films, Foley shared with Hidden Remote the hidden secrets behind the *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design—catering to both fan and character nostalgia—as well as her and Wingard's brainstorming process when it came to considering the high scores of neon lighting and special effects of the Hollow Earth mission.



## ***Ann Foley shares hidden nostalgia behind Godzilla vs. Kong costume design***

**Hidden Remote:** How did you first get involved with this film? What drew you into the idea of working on this project?



**Ann Foley:** Well, I worked with Legendary [Entertainment] on *Skyscraper*, and so they brought me to this project as well. But it was my first time working with director Adam Wingard, who I adore. I loved his vision for the film and what he wanted to do with the characters. We were both totally on the same page.

**Hidden Remote:** And what was the vision for the characters that you two bonded over?

**Foley:** We were talking the same visual language when it came to all of the characters and color palettes. He loved the idea of using color to tell a story. For example, the use of red in the film, we stripped it out except when we're dealing with the Titans. So only the characters—like Madison and Jia—who had a connection to the Titan would wear red. When you look at the film, it's a little hidden easter egg.

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**Hidden Remote:** You've also worked on a lot of other intense action films and television shows before like *Altered Carbon* and *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* Is that a genre you're drawn to as a costume designer?

**Foley:** I think it is. It definitely seems to be my wheelhouse. But it's not anything that happened on purpose, it just progressed naturally. But I do love it. I love figuring out the puzzle because there are so many different elements and you're working in tandem with so many different departments—VFX, props—all trying to make the scene work.



**Hidden Remote: Was one of those puzzles you had to tackle the high concentrations and uses of neon lighting and intense visual effects as it related to the wardrobe?**

**Foley:** Oh, yeah. We had to camera test everything, especially the mission suits and that fabric. I worked really closely with Ben Seresin, who was our DP, figuring out what the lighting was going to be—even more so once we got into Hollow Earth—and how it was going to affect the color of those suits.

Adam was also very specific about what he wanted the suit fabric to be as well. He wanted it to have its own texture and shift and change color when the light hit it.

But he didn't want it to feel like a superhero suit or a spacesuit.

**Hidden Remote:** In addition to lighting, as a costume designer, it seems like you would have to put yourself into the script as a character in the film, thinking about what a teenager would want to wear on a mission to break into a government building or what a crew of scientists would wear going to Hollow Earth for the first time. Is getting in that mindset part of the design process for you as well?

**Foley:** Absolutely. I'm always trying to get into the head of the character. As costume designers, we're trying to tell a story as well, and convey visually to the audience who that character is and what their arc is. In the film, everybody had their own version of "mission suits." Madison, Josh, Bernie and Jia were all on their own Team Godzilla or Team Kong missions. And hopefully, if we've conveyed these characters through their costumes properly, the audience can relate better with what they're going through.

When I talked to Adam about this idea, I knew I wanted to pay homage to Madison's mom from the last film as well who was on her own mission, to save the Titans and save the planet. So the jacket that Madison wears in this film came from her mom's closet, like she picked up where her mom left off with her goal to save Godzilla. So, for her, that's her mission outfit. And then there's Bernie's mission outfit—the coveralls with his fanny pack with all of his tools to do whatever it is that he's doing with his conspiracy theory podcast.



**Hidden Remote:** And I have to ask about Jia too, because her outfit is really unique in that it's sort of also tipping a hat to previous *Kong* films and a group of people we actually don't ever see in this film, but she also has her own flare with the untied converse shoes. What all went into the decisions of her costume design?

**Foley:** I love Jia's character and her costume was definitely influenced from the previous film. And it was really important to me that we represented her Iwi heritage. But I also wanted to show the passage of time, because the last time we saw the Iwi was on Skull Island in the 70s. And obviously, Monarch has been on the Island so there would be a bit of an influence, so that's where the sneakers came from.

But Jia's necklace is another easter egg. It's made out of Skull Crawler teeth that she gathered on the island. Because it's a Skull Crawler that had killed her family, I love that this necklace is sort of a talisman that protects her and acknowledges that danger of the past, but also empowers her for the future. The other thing that we do with Jia is we put Iwi language down the front of her wrap, as well.



**Hidden Remote: Is it super satisfying getting to input all these nostalgic and symbolic details into the film and representing all these other stories?**

**Foley:** I did that a lot on *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D* and it was so rewarding. We had the best fans on that show and most of the time they picked up on those little easter eggs and even eventually started looking for them. I could tell it meant a lot to them so I try to continue to do that on every show or film moving forward. It just makes it more fun sometimes.



**Hidden Remote: Did the vision for the character costume designs on *Godzilla vs. Kong* change over time from when you and Adam first came together to brainstorm?**

**Foley:** It always does. That's just the nature of filmmaking. It's constantly evolving and changing. And that's just part of the collaboration with all departments. I think a

really good example of that was Alexander Skarsgård's character, Nathan. When Alex was cast, he brought a really wonderful and interesting idea to the table for Nathan, which was that child of the '80s, early '90s, which ended up being a lot of fun because his outfit is clearly inspired by *Back to the Future* and *Lethal Weapon*. It just gave his character a little extra twist.

**Hidden Remote: With so much background in intense action films, what made working on the *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design, and the film in general, a unique experience for you?**

**Foley:** I loved shooting in Hawaii and Australia. It was probably one of the highlights of my career. It was absolutely fantastic and I really hope and pray I get to go back.

It was such a great crew and an amazing, epic cast. I felt so lucky to be part of this experience in this journey. And I was so grateful to Adam and Alex Garcia, the producer, and Eric McLeod, our other executive producer for bringing me on on this journey. I loved being part of it every minute of it.

**NEXT:** Will *Godzilla vs. Kong* be available on Blu-ray and DVD?

**Did you catch these Easter eggs in the *Godzilla vs. Kong* costume design? Where there others we forgot to mention? Let us know in the comments below!**

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