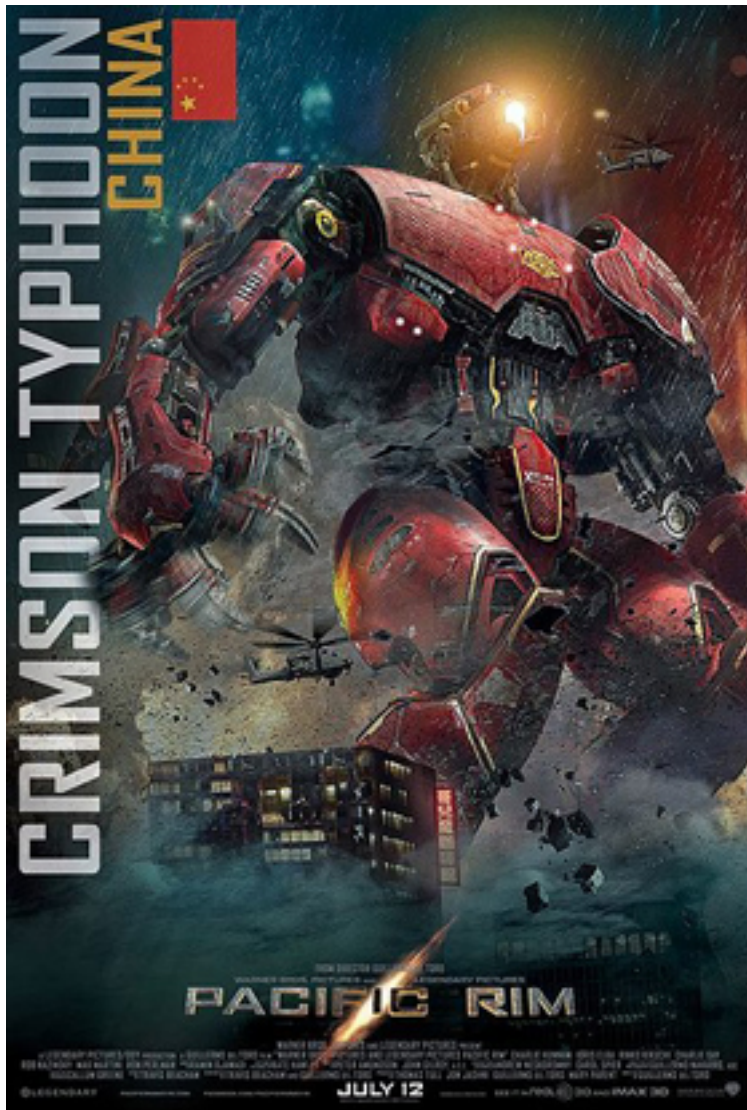


Robots defend planet from subterranean sea monsters in apocalyptic adventure

Written by Kam Williams



Pacific Rim

When an undersea earthquake ripped a massive fissure along a fault line beneath the Pacific Ocean, it left a crevice wide enough for a race of subterranean sea monsters to escape and rise to the surface. Dubbed Kaiju, these Godzilla-looking creatures quickly launched a series of assaults on cities all across the planet.

With millions of lives lost and many major metropolitan areas devastated, we find civilization teetering on the brink of oblivion as the world's decimated nations decide to pool their dwindling military resources. That desperate collaboration leads to the creation of giant robots known as Jaegers.

Each of these high-powered weapons is simultaneously operated by two pilots whose minds are connected by a neural bond enabling them to share their every thought and emotion. The only problem with these state-of-the-art killing machines is that they're soon being lost in battle faster than more replacements can be built.

The challenge of figuring a way to turn the tide in the war falls to Stacker Pentecost (Idris Elba),

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Commanding Officer of the Pan Pacific Defense Corps. "We're not an army anymore," he laments, looking at the depleted, ragtag team of soldiers and scientists representing the last hope of humanity. "We're a resistance."

Foremost among his intrepid crew members are Raleigh Becket (Charlie Hunnam), a grizzled, American vet recently coaxed back into the cockpit. He'd retired after his co-pilot brother (Diego Klattenhoff) perished at the hands of a bloodthirsty Kaiju.

At the other extreme, we have Mako Mori (Rinko Kinkuchi), an inexperienced trainee who has proven herself on a fight simulator but is yet to see any real combat. However, as the sole survivor of a Kaiju ambush that leveled her hometown and claimed the lives of her entire family, the revenge-minded rookie is more than ready to confront the enemy. And so forth.

After establishing the motivations of each of the simplistically-drawn characters, "Pacific Rim" morphs dramatically into a spectacular, special f/x showdown. Written and directed by Oscar-nominee Guillermo del Toro (for Pan's Labyrinth), the visually-captivating sci-fi is most likely to be compared, and favorably, to the Transformers franchise for, here, it proves far easier to keep the good guys (robots) and bad guys (monsters) straight.

A mesmerizing, if mindless, apocalyptic adventure that doesn't ask anything more of you than to enjoy the action and root heartily for the heroes.

Excellent (4 stars)

Rated PG-13 for pervasive violence and brief profanity

In English and Japanese with subtitles

Running time: 131 minutes