

#CRAFTSMANSHIP

The Aztec Warrior of Gold

This Aztec warrior figure is more than a piece of precious metal. It is a storyteller, a preserved echo of a civilization that once thrived



Over 700 years ago, in the heart of Central Mexico, a master artisan shaped a striking figure of a warrior, an artifact that today offers us a rare glimpse into the elite military class of the Aztec world. Created during the Post-Classic Period (900-1521 AD), this figure is a powerful symbol of the artistry, symbolism, and military culture of ancient Mesoamerica.

Origin and Cultural Significance
Attributed to the Aztec culture or possibly originating from Tetzcoco, one of the most important city-states of the Aztec Triple Alliance, the figure represents a richly adorned warrior, possibly of noble or elite status. Tetzcoco was a renowned center of learning and culture, an artifact from this region often reflect a high degree of sophistication.

The warrior is shown wielding a dart-thrower (atlatl), darts, and a shield, classic symbols of Aztec warfare. The atlatl, a spear-throwing device, gave Aztec warriors a formidable advantage in battle. These tools, along with his decorated jewelry and sandals, suggest this figure may represent a high-ranking individual, perhaps even one tied to the military or religious elite.

Material and Craftsmanship
The sculpture is cast from a gold-silver-copper alloy, a technique that demonstrates advanced metallurgical skills. Mesoamerican goldwork often held both material and spiritual value, symbolizing divine power, solar energy, and elite status. Despite being only 11.2 × 6.1 cm (4.4 × 2.4 in) in size, the detail is extraordinary, from the texture of the warrior's gear to the carefully rendered facial features.

The calendar glyphs etched on the figure's back read "2 Rabbit, 3 Water," corresponding to dates or ceremonial cycles in the Aztec calendar system, which included two interlocking cycles: the 260-day ritual calendar (Tonalpohualli) and the 365-day solar calendar (Xiuhpohualli). These glyphs may provide insight into the object's ritual purpose or the identity of the figure.



● Verna Mohon

Last week, I saw M3GAN, the new horror-comedy starring Allison Williams and a robot-doll in a blond wig. I liked it enough. The doll character is genuinely well-done, a seemingly hard-to-nail mix of creepy, and campy, but I walked out of the theater with a vaguely empty feeling. I couldn't quite place it until I started talking with my friends about where the movie was set, and I realized I had no idea. One answer is somewhere in Silicon Valley, given its bald critique of big tech. It didn't actually feel like Silicon Valley, though. It didn't feel like anywhere at all. (Update: I've been informed it's set in Seattle, although it didn't feel like there either.) Every lack-drop was generic and crisp; the scrubbed tech-compound where Gemma (Allison Williams) works; the bland, Wayfair-decorated house she lives in; the clean, non-specific streets she drives on. I thought little of this while watching. The movie looked expensive and professional, or at least had the hallmarks of those things: glossy, filtered, smooth. Only after it ended did it occur to me that it seemed, like so many other contemporary movies and shows, to exist in a phony parallel universe we've come to accept as relevant to our own.

To be clear, this isn't about whether the movie was "realistic."

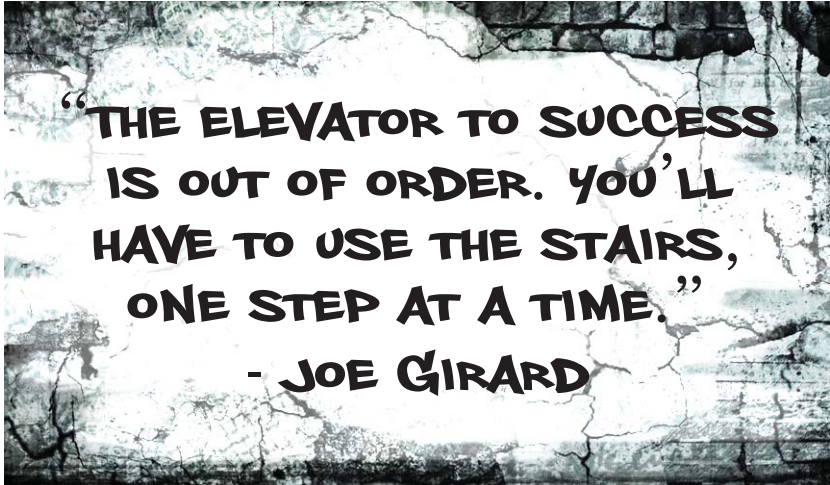
Movies with absurd, surreal, or fantastical plots can still communicate something honest and true. It's actually, specifically, about how movies these days look. That is, more flat, more fake, over-saturated, or else over-filtered, like an Instagram photo in 2012, but rendered in commercial-like high-def. This applies to prestige television, too. There are more green screens and sound stages, more CGI, more fixing-it-in-post. As these production tools have gotten slicker and cheaper and thus more widely abused, it's not that everything looks obviously shitty or too good to feel true, it's actually that most things look mid in the exact same way. The ubiquity of the look is making it harder to spot, and the overall result is weightless and uncanny. An endless stream of glossy vehicles that are easy to watch and easier to forget. I call it the "Netflix shine," inspired by one of the worst offenders, although some reading on the topic revealed that others call it (more boringly) the "Netflix look."

If you've ever watched a brand-new blockbuster or an expensive streaming series and thought it somehow looked flatter, cleaner, or strangely artificial, you're not alone. Online, people often call this aesthetic "the Netflix look."

The phrase doesn't necessarily mean bad cinematography or lazy directing. In fact, many of these productions are made by some of the world's best filmmakers using enormous budgets and A-list casts. Yet, they often share a surprisingly similar visual style. So why? The answer has less to do with artistic talent and more to do with technology, standardization, and one company's approach to building a global streaming platform.



THE WALL



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The "Netflix Look"



#HOW MOVIES LOOK



A Company Built Around Distribution
Netflix wasn't founded as a film studio. It was founded to solve a distribution problem.

First, it mailed DVDs, then, it pioneered large-scale video streaming. Unlike traditional Hollywood studios, Netflix's biggest engineering challenge wasn't making movies, it was delivering millions of hours of video reliably to viewers using thousands of different devices around the world.

That engineering-first mindset would eventually shape how Netflix made films as well.

Treating Movies Like Software

One of Netflix's key executives was Neil Hunt, a computer scientist with a Ph.D. in image processing. Rather than approaching film purely as an artistic medium, Netflix increasingly approached it as a technology product.

Software products are built to be standardized, scalable, and future-proof. Netflix applied similar thinking to filmmaking.

Instead of every production making completely independent technical decisions, Netflix created detailed production specifications designed to ensure that every original title could be archived, remastered, streamed, and adapted for future technologies.

The goal wasn't simply to make movies, it was to build a library that would still work decades later.



The Approved Camera List

Perhaps, the clearest example is Netflix's famous approved camera list.

Unlike many traditional productions, Netflix doesn't simply ask cinematographers to use whatever camera they prefer. Original productions are generally expected to shoot on cameras that meet Netflix's technical standards.

- Those standards include requirements such as:
- Native 4K image capture (rather than upscaling).
- High bit depth for greater colour information.
- Professional data rates and codecs.
- Dynamic range suitable for HDR mastering.

If a camera doesn't meet these standards, it generally isn't approved for principal photography on Netflix

Poet's Day

Poet's Day is celebrated today to honour poets and their valuable contributions to literature and society. Poets use beautiful words to express thoughts, emotions, and ideas that inspire people. On this day, schools and cultural organizations arrange poetry recitations, writing competitions, and literary events. Students are encouraged to read and write poems to develop their creativity and language skills. Famous poets and their works are remembered for their lasting impact on culture and history. Poet's Day reminds us to appreciate the beauty of poetry and the power of words to educate, entertain, and bring people together.



#CURVED

The Science Behind Banana's Curved Shape

The difference in light exposure is the key to understanding the banana's curve

Bananas are one of the most recognizable fruits in the world, known for their bright yellow colour and distinctive curved shape. But why aren't bananas straight? The answer lies in plant biology, specifically in how banana plants respond to light and gravity through a process known as tropism.

Bananas grow on large herbaceous plants belonging to the genus Musa. Although often called "banana trees," these plants are technically giant herbs. They produce enormous, thick leaves that can stretch several feet long. These leaves spread outward and upward, forming a dense canopy over the developing fruit.

The Deep Shadow Effect

As bananas begin to grow, they emerge from a large flower cluster near the top of the plant. At first, the young bananas hang downward. This early downward growth happens because of gravity, a response known as positive gravitropism.

However, the giant, overlapping leaves of the banana plant create a deep shadow around the hanging fruit. Beneath this canopy, the developing bananas are partially starved of direct sunlight. Light becomes uneven, with one side of the fruit receiving more exposure than the other. This difference in light exposure is the key to understanding the banana's curve.

Negative Tropism and Light Response

Plants respond to environmental stimuli through tropisms, directional growth responses. In the case of bananas, two forces are at work:

- Gravitropism: growth in response to gravity
- Phototropism: growth in response to light

This upward bending happens because the side of the



When bananas first form, gravity pulls them downward. But as they continue developing, they begin responding strongly to light. Even though they start in deep shade, the fruit shifts direction and begins growing upward towards the available sunlight.

This upward bending happens because the side of the

banana exposed to more light grows faster than the shaded side. The uneven growth rate causes the fruit to curve. This is a classic example of phototropism in action.

Nature's Efficient Design

The curved shape of a banana is not random. By bending upward, the fruit positions itself for better light exposure, which supports healthy development. In wild banana species, this positioning may also make the fruit more visible to animals that help disperse seeds.

In essence, bananas grow curved because they begin life hanging downward in deep shadow under massive leaves. As they seek sunlight, uneven growth caused by differential light exposure makes them bend upward. The familiar crescent shape is the result of gravity, light, and the remarkable adaptability of plant growth. The next time you hold a banana, remember that its curve tells a story, one shaped by sunlight, shadow, and the natural forces guiding its growth.