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Special Effects: The History and Technique

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Abstract

Spanning the rich history of movie magic, from George Mlis's A Trip to the Moon to George Lucas's Star Wars: Episode I-The Phantom Menace, and the Wachowski Brothers' The Matrix, this completely up-to-date guide to visual trickery is unparalleled in scope, presenting a clearly written, lushly illustrated chronicle of special effects development over ten decades of filmmaking. Starting with the earliest use of smoke and mirrors in

silent films, the book goes behind the scenes to reveal the methods used in creating the cinematic world of make-believe, ranging from optical composing animation, sound effects, model-making, special-effects makeup, and matte painting to the most astounding electronic innovations seen in blockbuster movies now hitting movie screens. Packed with information obtained from hundreds of interviews with both the legendary and current leading names in the field of special effects production, the book includes illustrations showing, by the use of unique segments of photographs, many never before available in print, how many of the effects are achieved. This dazzling volume, as entertaining as the films it covers, is a must for lovers of movie fantasy, students of film and popular culture, and amateur filmmakers.

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