CINEMAGIC

Number 7

$1.50

THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

AN ANIMATED FANTASY FILM BY NEIL WARREN

A prisoner is carted to the torture chamber by the evil monk, in this scene from Neil Warren's clay animated fantasy, *The Pit and the Pendulum*. To find out what sort of bizzare tortures await the prisoner, turn to page 8.

CINEMAGIC

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LETTERS

CINEMAGIC, P.O. BOX 125, PERRY HALL, MD. 21128

John Cosentino
Warren, Michigan

Regarding *Creating A Beam-Down Effect* in CINEMAGIC #6, the author's matte technique is basically what I use myself, but if the person beaming down is to appear over the background scenery, as the article suggests, then one correction is necessary.

The initial rear projection master listed as "the first thing to do" must be filmed footage of only the scenery, without the subject in the shot. Then the camera is stopped (but not moved) and the subject is placed where he is supposed to be beaming in, and filming is continued to achieve a complete master for the effect.

Kevin Danzey
Coraopolis, Pennsylvania

The best article in issue #6 was *Paragon's Paragon*, but how did he (John Cosentino) film it? I became excited while reading the article, being able to relate to much of it—especially the part about building the sets—but there was no information on the filming: type of camera, film stock, lighting, sound recording, and so on.

Mike Canuel
Brooklyn, New York

I had reservations about seeing an all *Star Trek* issue of CINEMAGIC but I no longer have any qualms at all. Reading #6 was a joy and a great pleasure!

On John Cosentino's *Paragon's Paragon*, what did his electrical bill come to after filming?

Editorial Comment: To answer questions in both of the above letters we queried John Cosentino, who answers Mr. Danzey with: "I used a Canon 814 camera, which has an F 1.4 lens and a power zoom range of 7.5mm to 60mm. We used a variety of film stocks: Kodachrome 40, Ektachrome 160, Kodak Plus-X, and Anscochrome T-100. Ektachrome 160 was used only for the special effects that could not be shot with the slower Kodachrome 40. The Plus-X and Anscochrome T-100 are film stocks that I process myself in order to obtain reversed negative images for special scenes in the movie. The lights consisted of an 1150-watt studio lamp, a 650-watt quartz lamp, and a half dozen photo flood bulbs. Barn doors had to be used with these lamps during bridge scenes to keep the intense light from washing out the blinking Christmas lights behind the computer bank panels. Sound was recorded on an Akai GX-365 open reel deck using a cardiod microphone." And to answer Mr. Canuel: "To my surprise, the electric bill was only about $10.00 extra per month while we ran the bridge lights and filmed."

David Lewison
Redondo Beach, California

Lately your magazine seems to be leaning towards a format of a *fan* magazine about amateur fantasy films rather than a magazine about making them. I'd like to see much more of the how-to articles and less of the profiles.

How in the world do you make a tyrannosaurus model? I have a cast, a script, miniature sets, and everything else for a film I want to do, except the tyrannosaurus, which is vital to the story.

Editorial comment: Issue #8 should be your salvation on two counts: it's "how-to" from cover-to-cover, and it explains how to create ball/socket armatures, which can be applied to the making of any type of model.

David Budda
Drifton, Pennsylvania

What I'd like to see in your magazine is a listing of filmmakers who would like to see other filmmakers' films. I think my films are fairly good, but I have no way of comparing to other films unless I see them. Maybe other amateurs out there would like to see an exchange of films between one and another.

Editorial Comment: We'll be happy to publish full addresses of any filmmakers who'd like to exchange films.

Ernest M. Pittaro
Flushing, New York

Regarding the level of techniques that articles discuss, and some of the letters in CINEMAGIC, there seems to be a feeling of preference for the amateur methods, and your readers often express that they don't want to hear about the professional method.

I could conceivably understand this attitude if the professional methods entailed great expense, or a large labor force, or if the methods were far beyond the means of the average amateur—and some are—but if professional methods can be adapted for amateur applications, it seems to me that amateurs would be wise to listen to the pros and gain some pretty good tips.

By trial and error, or experience, many methods have been tried and discarded, and the ones that wind up as the professional methods are the ones that are the most expedient, the most dependable, and the ones that give the best screen effect.

I don't turn my nose up at the many amateur methods that have been generated by necessity, ingenuity, or a lack of funds, and if they serve their purpose, fine and dandy—but if someone is struggling with some strange material because he happens to have it at hand, and then rejects a superior material, I categorize that as gross stupidity.

Editorial Comment: Mr. Pittaro is a veteran professional animator and filmmaker who, among other things, once worked with animator Lou Bunin.

Robert Bloch
Los Angeles, California

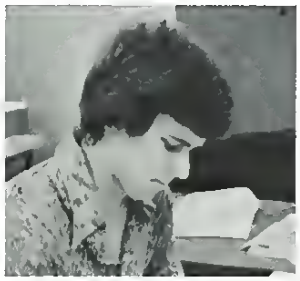
CINEMAGIC continues to offer a most fascinating glimpse behind the scenes—and I'm particularly pleased at the way you showcase the efforts of those who will one day supplant the Harryhausens and Danforths. It's a pleasure to read about them and their work.

David Bryant
Reno, Nevada

I'm writing about the book mentioned in CINEMAGIC #4. Are you going ahead with it.?

Editorial Comment: Because of several economic and distribution hang-ups, no All of the material for our intended book will be published in future issues of CINEMAGIC.

EDITORIAL



A lot of our contributors are better, or at least more efficient, filmmakers than writers.

This is by way of an excuse.

We've been promising you details on blacklight cinematography, *Dracula Goes To College*, and a detailed report by editor Don Dohler on the Balticon convention.

They're not here.

The reason is simple: CINEMAGIC remains an amateur magazine in all the important ways. We don't force people into deadlines, don't ride them mercilessly to give us *something* by a specified time rather than something better later, and don't expect our contributors to work to our own (editors') schedules. Deep down inside, we sometimes wish we were a little more pushy—but if we were, we'd go against our own grain and against the basis of this magazine.

People have to produce things pretty much at their own pace, whether those things are films or CINEMAGIC articles.

But we like to think we're a professional magazine in important ways as well. Our layouts, printing, and editorial requirements are in a class with those of professional magazines, in this field and others. We won't publish features until they come up to a level at which we and their authors can be proud of them.

So the missing features we'd advertised in earlier issues aren't here because they just aren't ready yet. In some cases, the writing needs polish or thorough re-working; in others, we need better and more explicit how-to information that will let you, as a reader, duplicate the effects being discussed; and in the case of the Balticon report, editor Dohler offers, "The material for the report is certainly there, but unfortunately, the amateur photographers I depended on to chronicle the event didn't come through, so I'm without photos to illustrate the piece. Somehow, without photographic support, I don't feel the piece is adequate enough and I'd just as soon run a substitute feature."

The point is, until we get what we need, we can't present the articles. If we did, we think we'd be cheating you.

Meanwhile, we have two excellent features to take the place of our missing two: *The Technique Of Creating Glass Paintings*, by Dougal Dixon, and a Film Profile on the clay animated film, *The Pit And The Pendulum*, by Neil Warren. Although these two articles were intended for a later issue, we're sure you won't mind seeing them now.

—Mark Estren

THE INVISIBLE WINO RETURNS

If A Script Called For Glasses And A Bottle To Be Moved About By "Invisible" People, How Would You Handle It? Here's How The Effect Was Produced By A Professional Studio ...

Article & Illustrations by **Bob Heath**

When we received a wine commercial to produce (the storyboard is Figure #1) we decided to film it all live action, not stop-motion, frame by frame, as in puppetry animation—which would have made it next to impossible to show the wine flowing into the glasses. It could have been done with different heated strips of twisted plastic, in the color of wine, frame by frame. But that way we were just asking for problems and double the work. So we went ahead on the assumption that twenty-four frames per second, straight ahead action was the best course to follow.

The only optical effect that was needed was the burn-in star animation effect when the two glasses touched during the toast, in frame D of the storyboard; and of course the mandatory line, bottom screen, at the end of the spot.

The entire commerical was photographed against a black velvet background and the rods supporting the bottle and glasses were painted dull black. These rods came in from off screen through a fitted hole in the black backdrop.

The biggest problem was to have the freedom of movement in the mechanical devices we had to construct. The glasses were the easiest to manufacture. Figure #2 shows how they were put together. A disc, made of aluminum, the same diameter as the base of the glass, was riveted to a flat aluminum rod. Then the bottom of the glass was glued to the disc. This was done with both glasses, for operation from off screen, right and left.

To give a variety in cutting angles from scene to scene, as the storyboard suggests, presented a little more of a problem. To give the feel of a man and woman really having their dinner drink, we made two different bottle mechanisms. Figure #3 shows the one we used for off screen right manipulation (as in frame B of the storyboard), which gave us a slight camera angle from the left side.

The wine pour in frame C of the storyboard presented an entirely new configuration to be constructed. Because this sequence was one continuous take from that pour to the end of the commercial, we would have to bring the bottle-supporting rod from the pouring position—an off screen left hold—to a perpendicular resting position, as in frame D. With such a large arc of manipulation (about ninety degrees), we would never be able to hold the bottle on any firm axis, as if it were being poured by an invisible hand actually holding the bottle normally. So we came up with the configuration in Figure #4. It had a lot of freedom, and we could start from the pour position and make a smooth move to a rock-steady final table position.

The center of a short flat steel rod was brazed to a long steel rod. A piece of concave sheet copper was rivited to the short flat rod. The bottle was glued to the concave sheet. To give us stable rigid action and also freedom in rotation, the long supporting rod was slid into a bronze bearing, and in turn, this bearing was brazed to a heavy bronze door hinge, for north and south tilt. The door hinge was screwed down to the support table behind the black backdrop. For better control of the pour of wine, a handle was brazed to the center of

Figure 1.

FRAME A	FRAME B	FRAME C	FRAME D	FRAME E
Invisible man and woman sitting at an invisible dining table, talking about the wine. Bottle and two glasses on the table.	Cut to: the man is pouring the woman a drink, as she raises her glass (angle shot).	Cut to: man pours himself a drink as he raises his glass (front shot).	Continue scene and zoom in; they both make a toast by clinking their glasses.	Continue scene and track out; simulate drinking, and zoom into table.

the long support rod.

We wound up with firm control of the pour, rotation, and the tilt, or resting of the bottle back on the invisible table.

The components for all of these devices were manufactured in one day in our studio shop, and the next day we shot 35mm live action speed. The shooting took a good part of one full day, with one man working each glass and another man at the bottle. We played a tape of the soundtrack for synchronization purposes, and after we got the feel of the action, it went fairly smoothly.

There was one small problem that we didn't foresee. When a take was made and wasn't to our liking, because of wine drops or wine level in the glass, we had to remove the real wine from the glass. And there were many takes of each scene. The glasses were crystal clear and we didnt want to foul them up with finger prints, or even tilt a glass that wasn't moving, since it was secured in position. But the wine had to be removed from the glass, and the best way was to siphon it out with a straw. The crew couldnt do it, because of the many takes of each scene—if we drank the wine, in no time at all we would have been half smashed. Besides, the wine didn't taste that good after being under those hot shooting lights. So we hunted around the studio for artists and other personnel to siphon out the wine each time, before we could do a new take. This was our biggest hold-up—waiting to make another take, while a volunteer siphoner was found! And our siphoners wouldn't take any more than two glasses because they, too, were working, and because of the taste of the hot wine.

I can't remember a commercial that we all enjoyed more, from the standpoint of joking about the guy who operated the "woman's" wine glass, to hunting up siphoners. Funny but when you need a wino, you can never find one. ■

Bob Heath has been working in the motion picture field since 1954 and has participated in just about every phase of film. He designed, animated, and photographed the short feature *The Critic* (narrated by Mel Brooks), which won an Academy Award in 1963. Bob has authored and published a book, *Animation In Twelve Hard Lessons*, and since 1967 he has run his own studio in West Islip, New York.

Figure 2.

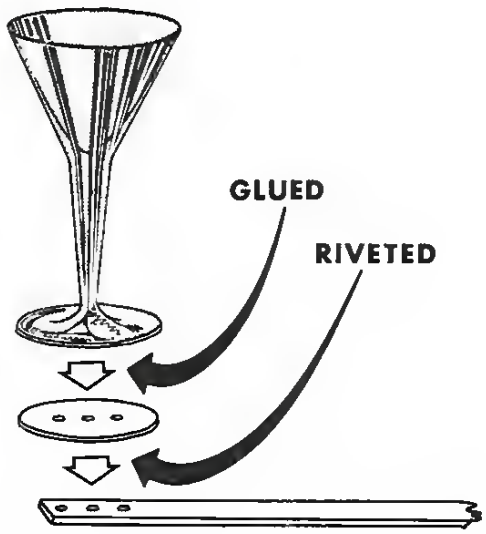


Figure 3.

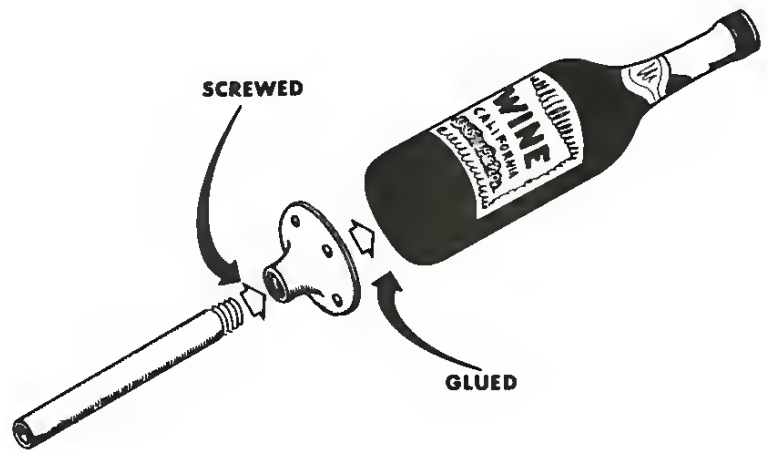
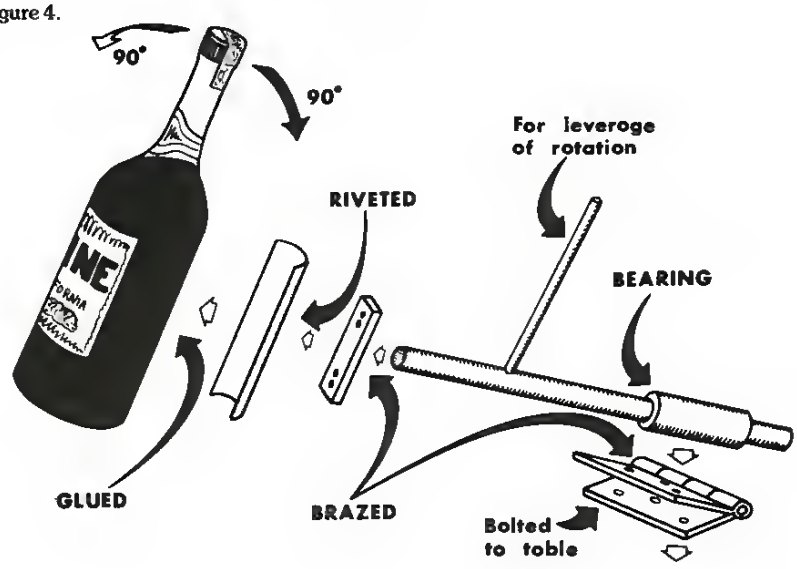


Figure 4.



THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM

Article by Neil Warren Photos by Fern Desroches

The Pit and *The Pendulum* is an animated film performed by three-dimensional characters made of plasticene clay. It has vague references to Poe's classic tale, but is mainly a satirical look at some of that author's more grotesque images. The theme is evil versus evil. Here is a synopsis of my version of the story:

The film opens in a surrealistic courtroom, where a prisoner is convicted of heresy and sentenced to death by an evil monk. The prisoner is rendered unconscious, and awakens in a hallway, surrounded by five doors. One by one these doors open, revealing a series of bizarre tortures, each initiated by the monk: a man is tempted by an Iron Maiden to meet his doom within her spikes; another is boiled alive in a large pot (much to the pleasure of an on-looking vulture); another's legs are stretched to outrageous proportions; still another has his thumb squeezed until it swells the size of a baseball; and a fairly buxom young maiden is menaced by a large black cat, shortly before she is walled up, except for the area about her bosom.

After witnessing these torments, the prisoner is dragged in a cart through one of the doors, and to his punishment. He is shackled to a large platform, and within moments, a pendulum is lowered. The evil monk begins the motion of the blade, which slowly descends upon its victim. The occupants of the "pit" scream for his death, while the crescent of steel draws closer and closer. The monk, in excitement, plays upon his fiddle as the blade approaches, but before it can make the fatal slice, the prisoner sprouts horns and a goatee, and enacts a fatal revenge on his would-be executioner. The prisoner *was* the "demon" he was accused of being, and so the "hunter" becomes the "hunted." The final shot has the monk's fiddle standing erect, playing Chopin's funeral march (in sour notes) over his divided corpse.

MAKING THE FILM

I had just finished a black and white 16mm film entitled *The Tempting Of Eve*, and was rather pleased with the way that the "devil" character had come off in the film. With this in mind it seemed that bizarre characters and ideas would work very well in a clay medium. The substance tends to lend itself to grotesqueness, due to the rough appearance of the clay as it is moved about, so I decided to do a horror tale. I immediately went to Poe, and considered *The Black Cat*, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, and *The Pit And The Pendulum*. The first story seemed far too complicated to adapt to animation, the second had already been done by Ted Parmalee in 1953, and the third did not really have the exact sort of plot that I wanted.

I read *The Pit And The Pendulum* over several times, and it seemed that the only logical approach to the subject matter (for me) lay in satire. I feel that clay animation is a comic medium, and to try to do something totally serious with it would result in something "kitsch" and be too distracting. So I wrote a ten minute script which utilized a few of Poe's images, but was mainly a semi-comical, semi-grotesque idea satirizing the horror film. Due to the plot in the original not being what I wanted, I decided to incorporate the old theme of "the hunter becoming the hunted," and then added a few bizarre tor-

(Please turn page)

Above: The evil monk pronounces a "guilty" verdict for the prisoner. Opposite page: The prisoner turns out to be the devil, and reverses positions with his would-be executioner.

tures which would be fun to animate, and would spice up the action and add more to the comical elements that the plot required. Once the script, breakdown, and shooting schedules were assembled, I began on the puppet constructions.

I started with the close-up face of the main character—the monk—which took approximately a week to sculpt, and then built the same model in a ten inch version, and also in miniature (about an inch and a half). Once these figures were completed and in continuity with each other, I went through the same procedure for the "prisoner" character. I've found it's much easier to alternate among three puppets of the same character, rather than using just one, as a larger variety of shots can be attained—and even more important, stronger facial details can be photographed when using full-sized busts.

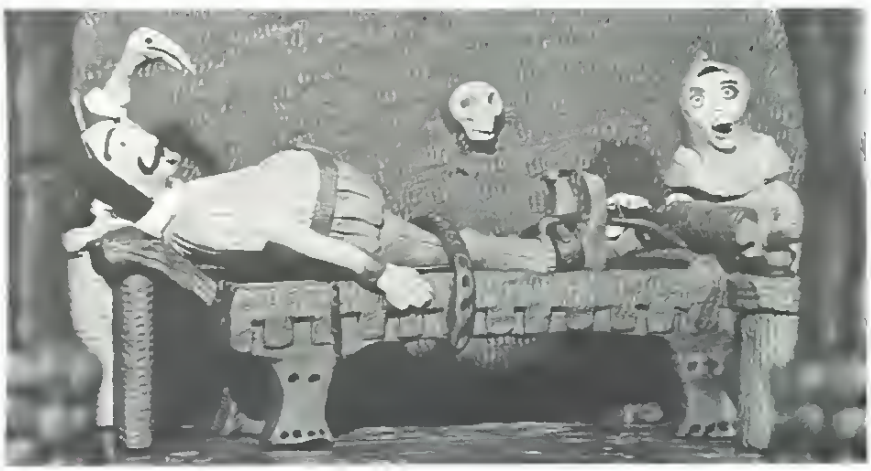
I used wire as my armatures, and although a lot of problems resulted (the worst being the splitting of the clay, the second being the wire's resistance to movement), it was durable enough to handle the constant abuse throughout six weeks of shooting. All in all, there were seven different sets constructed: the court room, the hallway, the five torture chambers, and the pendulum set. The walls for these sets were made of wooden plaques with braces, covered in clay and detailed, while the bases were solid plasticene. Props, which ranged from baskets to thumbscrews, were affixed to the base in any way possible, via pins, nails, wire, etc. to insure that they would not move around during animation processes.

The pendulum set was built in wood (by Keith Warren), constructed from blocks, beams, and dowel rods, and then covered in clay. The pendulum blade was suspended from the center of the set by a movable clamp at the end of a pole. This clamp could be fastened tight to hold the blade at any position across the set. A calibrated arch was attached at the top of the set, and a needle was placed on the end of the pole. When animating, I simply aligned the needle with the appropriate marking on the arch to insure a fluid, pre-calculated movement of the pendulum as it swished from side to side.

The major problems encountered during the course of shooting were concerned with the excessive heat from the Mickey Mole lights, because I used ECO stock with an ASA of only 25. Therefore, I was pumping a lot of foot-candles onto the set, which eventually caused an oil slick to appear on the clay (resembling perspiration on the monk!) and actually made the clay bases rise like bread! I brought in several fans to take care of as much of the heat as possible. The only other problem was a camera breakdown at one point, which destroyed 100 feet of good footage. Otherwise, I found the Beaulieu R16B to be a great camera for this type of work. It's much more dependable than spring-wound 16mm models as the tension on the springs of these cameras is never exactly the same, resulting in unequal exposure of frames and a horrible flicker problem.

In editing, I semi-fine-cut the picture and then laid in the sound effects, voices, and music, in six tracks. The sound effects were mostly improvised with the help of Roger Segalin, a friend who also did the voice for the "devil." We recorded most of them in a stairwell to achieve an echo, as I crawled up and down the steps dragging an armful of chains. I created most of the dialogue, with the help of Eureka Badger, who did the feminine voices, and Andrew Adams, who was responsible for the horrible screams needed in the torture chamber sequence.

In total, the film cost me well over a thousand dollars to make. It made it into the final competitions at the 1975 Canadian Film Awards, will be televised on the C.B.C. Vancouver network in British Columbia, and is currently involved in film festivals around the world. ■



Left, top: One of the cruel tortures witnessed by the prisoner—the monk stretches a man's legs to outrageous proportions. Bottom: The prisoner kneels between two gargoyles as he views each new torture. Note the detail and texture of the modeling in both of these photos; the sculptures required weeks of diligent work.

Left, top: Another of the bizzare tortures inflicted by the evil monk—a young maiden is walled-up alive, except for the area around her bosom. Middle: A long shot of the pit and pendulum setting. The basic structure is made of wood, and covered entirely in clay. Note the calibrated arch above the set; this was used to calculate precise, fluid motion of the pendulum swinging back and forth as it was animated in conjunction with the rest of the scene. Bottom: The monk's shocked and horrified expression is a result of the prisoner-devil switching positions with him. The pendulum's blade is about to slice a telling blow to the hapless monk. Neil Warren spent six weeks animating *The Pit And The Pendulum*.

About NEIL WARREN...

Neil Warren is a film-maker/animator living in New Hamburg, Ontario, Canada. He attended the Conestoga College of Applied Arts and Technology, where he studied all aspects of motion picture production. including a second-year course in animation. During this year, he completed a black and white 16mm fantasy film entitled *The Tempting Of Eve.*

In his final year of college Neil produced *The Pit And The Pendulum*, as well as doing work for a company called Animette Canada, which specializes in producing puppet animated films for C.B.C's *Children's Cinema* series. Neil worked on three such films: *The Bell, The Fisherman,* and *The Ducklings.* Currently, Neil is involved in clay animation for a children's series in Toronto.

The Pit And The Pendulum is a 16mm color/sound film, with a running time of ten minutes.

CONVENTION REPORT

We invite submissions for this page. If you recently attended a film or fantasy convention, send a brief write-up (about two paragraphs) about it giving us the name of the convention, where it was, the dates, and so on, plus some details on the guests and attractions. If possible, include a photo or two. If you know the details about an *upcoming* convention, send all the pertinent information (including membership costs) and a flier or brochure if you have one, and we will give the convention some advance publicity here. No charge for this.

COMING...

August Party—July 30, 31; August 1, 1976. Location: College Park, Maryland. This is officially labeled as "Washington, D.C.'s original *Star Trek* Convention," but it's being held at the University of Maryland. The program includes science fiction and *Star Trek* discussion panels, a costume contest, some top-notch fantasy and sf films, a dealer room, and, no doubt, a few surprises. Lodging is available in budget form ($9.65 for a single in the University dormitory) or first-class motel form (Quality Inn for $22.50 for a single). Membership for the entire three days is $5.00 at the door. For additional information, contact:

The August Party
c/o U.M.A.S.T.
Maryland Student Union
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland 20742

Sleaze Con—September 3, 4, and 5, 1976. Location: Wilmington, Delaware. Billed as a "multi-media sleazoid extravaganza," this sounds like more fun than the *World Science Fiction Convention* (see below). At last! A convention with no pretenses—wear your raggiest clothes, don't shave or bathe a week before coming, bring the amateur films that you're totally embarrassed by, and even sleep in the gutters of Wilmington if you'd like. Seriously, the program includes the sleaziest of everything, from feature science fiction films to television commercials ("... never thought gettin' out farm dirt wud make us s' famous ...")—you know, the kind of things and people who *think* they're good but whom we all know are really sleazy. For full details on the convention that offers "the best of the worst of just about everything," contact:

Sleaze Con
c/o Apocalyptic Productions
2 W. 5th Street
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

MidAmericon (the 34th World Science Fiction Convention) — September 3, 4, and 5, 1976. Location: Kansas City, Missouri. This is the annual "giant" of the science fiction world. Attendance is expected to be over 4000, even though the people in charge are asking $50.00 per head at the door! Guest of honor will be Robert A. Heinlein, the science fiction writer who scripted *Destination Moon*. Program includes panel discussions by many other science fiction authors, and a small selection of sf films. *MidAmericon* is being held at the Muelbach Hotel, which, from what we've heard, cannot comfortably hold 4000 people. We're all for science fiction and fantasy conventions, and we feel a duty to list this one, but we cannot recommend or endorse *MidAmericon*—especially not to film fans. For information, write:

MidAmericon
P.O. Box 221
Kansas City, Missouri 64141

PAST ...

Baticon 10 (The Baltimore Science Fantasy Conference) was held Easter weekend, April 16, 17, and 18 at the Hunt Valley Inn in Baltimore, Maryland. The programs went smoothly, and pretty much on schedule, and included a 1950's science fiction film festival, a special effects film workshop where animation models and foam latex make-up appliances were displayed and discussed, several science fiction discussion panels, and an amateur 8mm and 16mm fantasy film contest. The Guest of Honor was Isaac Asimov. The main film guests were George Romero, and his assistant, Ray Schmaus. George and Ray made themselves readily available (more or less without a break) from Friday afternoon through early Saturday morning. George's classic horror film, *Night of the Living Dead* was screened late Friday evening, after which George answered questions from the audience. His latest film, *The Crazies* was then shown into the wee small hours of the morning, with Mr. Romero and a faithful audience sticking it out through some 35mm projector difficulties. Attendance for *Balticon 10* was well over 1000, and understandable—at only $6.00 per person at the door ($4.00 in advance of April 1st), the convention is one of the biggest bargains in the world! Watch this page in our January issue for details on next year's *Balticon 11*.

—Don Dohler

Detroit Triple Fan Fare was held on May 28, 29, 30, and 31, 1976 at the Sheraton-Cadillac Hotel in Detroit, Michigan. Under the guidance of its new chairman, Greg Thekston, this convention was well organized and smoothly run, despite the fact that some of the advertised guests and films weren't there. Films shown included *Dirty Harry, Magnum Force, Valley of Gwangi*, and *Zardoz*. One nice surprise was a fifteen minute preview reel of the recently released *Logan's Run*. The program also featured a very entertaining amateur costume contest.

—John Cosentino

Discave (short for *District Conclave)* was held May 28, 29, and 30, 1976 at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington, D.C. This low key, lightly programmed science fiction gathering is now in its 19th year, and is run by the Washington (D.C.) Science Fiction Society—a vital and ribald crew headed by Alexis Gilliland and his wife, Doll. *Disclave*'s Guest of Honor was William Tenn, who showed up late but did make himself accessible to the fans. The highlight of the film program was *The Seven Samurai*, followed immediately by *The Magnificent Seven*. You could see the American version literally copy the Kurosawa script, page-for-page!

—Charlie Ellis

NEW — No. 106

ANIMATION

The above complete learning Kit is only $101.50, plus shipping. Lesson course book only, "ANIMATION IN TWELVE HARD LESSONS" $16.50, plus $1.25 shipping and handling. Our BIG NEW No. 106 Catalog with many new items, like nine other Kits, camera stands, pegs, peg bars, peg plates, peg bars made to order, disc, light tables, punches, field guides, punched cels-papers, backgrounds, reinforcements, exposure sheets, storyboards, inking boards, light boards, paints, inks, gloves, brushes, pens, books, track, photographic-editorial and photomation service.

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"CATALOG"

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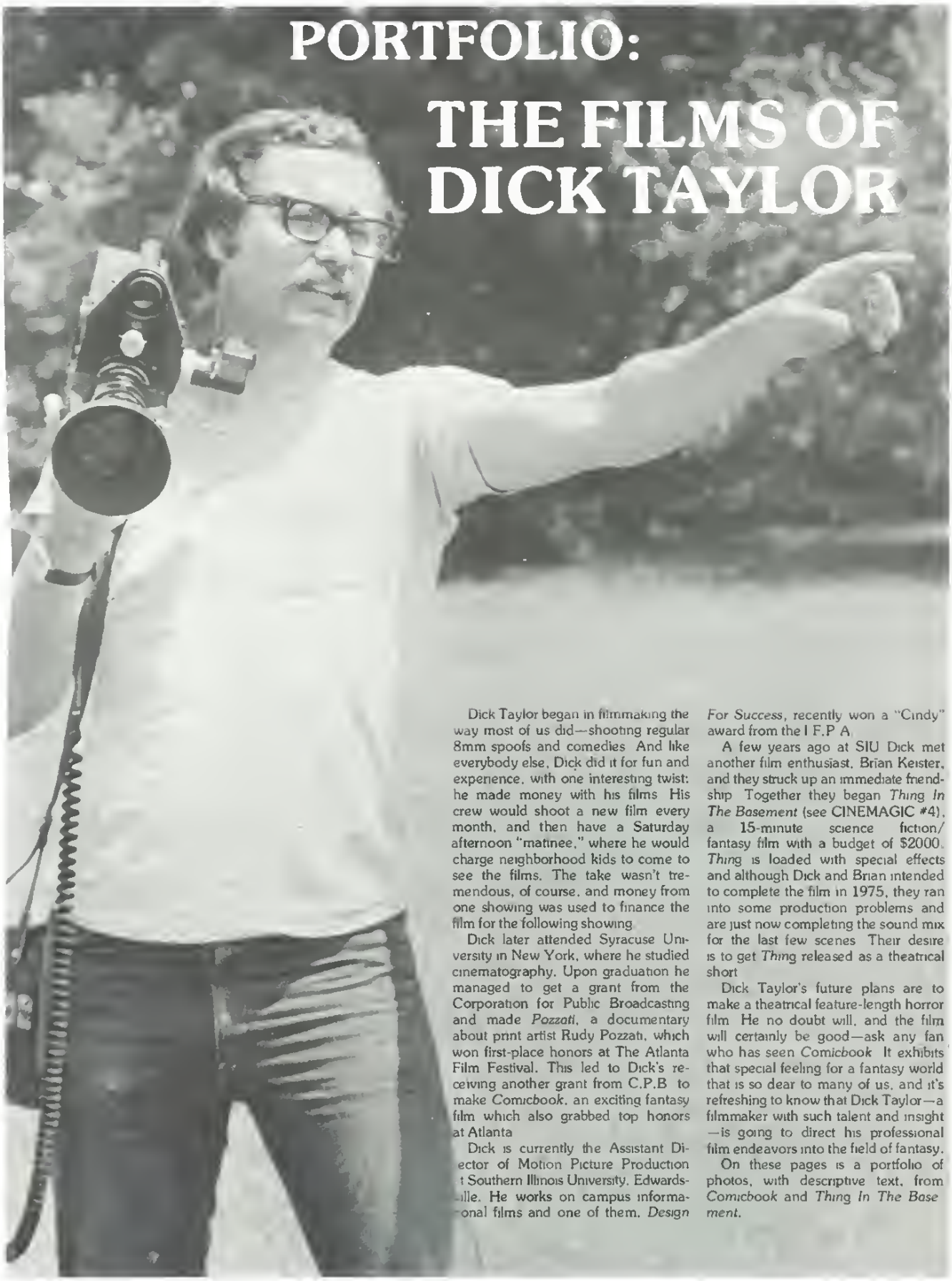
THE FILMS OF DICK TAYLOR



Dick Taylor began in filmmaking the way most of us did—shooting regular 8mm spoofs and comedies. And like everybody else, Dick did it for fun and experience, with one interesting twist: he made money with his films. His crew would shoot a new film every month, and then have a Saturday afternoon "matinee," where he would charge neighborhood kids to come to see the films. The take wasn't tremendous, of course, and money from one showing was used to finance the film for the following showing.

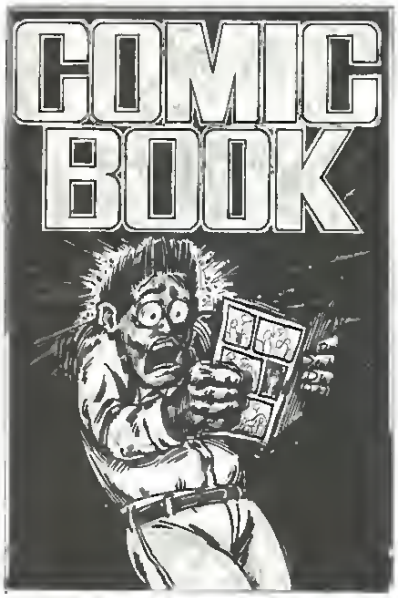
Dick later attended Syracuse University in New York, where he studied cinematography. Upon graduation he managed to get a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and made *Pozzati*, a documentary about print artist Rudy Pozzati, which won first-place honors at The Atlanta Film Festival. This led to Dick's receiving another grant from C.P.B. to make *Comicbook*, an exciting fantasy film which also grabbed top honors at Atlanta.

Dick is currently the Assistant Director of Motion Picture Production at Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville. He works on campus informational films and one of them, *Design For Success*, recently won a "Cindy" award from the I.F.P.A.

A few years ago at SIU Dick met another film enthusiast, Brian Keister, and they struck up an immediate friendship. Together they began *Thing In The Basement* (see CINEMAGIC #4), a 15-minute science fiction/fantasy film with a budget of $2000. *Thing* is loaded with special effects and although Dick and Brian intended to complete the film in 1975, they ran into some production problems and are just now completing the sound mix for the last few scenes. Their desire is to get *Thing* released as a theatrical short.

Dick Taylor's future plans are to make a theatrical feature-length horror film. He no doubt will, and the film will certainly be good—ask any fan who has seen *Comicbook*. It exhibits that special feeling for a fantasy world that is so dear to many of us, and it's refreshing to know that Dick Taylor—a filmmaker with such talent and insight—is going to direct his professional film endeavors into the field of fantasy.

On these pages is a portfolio of photos, with descriptive text, from *Comicbook* and *Thing In The Basement*.



Comicbook

Comicbook is a 30-minute 16mm color/sound film that Dick made for a budget of $2100.00 (through a grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting). The story is about college student Ralph Baggit (played by Steve Snyder) who is researching a thesis on the evils of comic books. Baggit goes to "The Comic Book Institute" and with the cooperation of the librarian, nestles himself in a huge vault of comics. There, speaking into a tape recorder, Baggit inflicts a vindictive tone against the comics industry, and "Mighty Fine Comix Group" in particular, who were responsible for such super-hero characters as *The Volt*, *The Cockroach*, *Mister Strength*, and the supreme villain, *The Black Viper*. After his verbal attack, Baggit senses something strange, hears a weird, vibrating noise, and looks up to see *The Black Viper* standing nearby. The character is at first in cartoon form, then metamorphoses into a live *Viper*. The super-hero fires a laser-ball ray at Baggit (who narrowly escapes the ray's explosive power), and an exciting chase ensues. During the course of the chase, Baggit at one time or another runs into all of the super-hero characters he denounced earlier; none of them will help him. In the end, Baggit is drained and weary, and a blast from the Black Viper's gun hits its mark--a clean shot through Baggit's upper back. As Baggit lays in the mud, a strange thing occurs: as he screams "What's happening?!" Baggit himself turns into the last panel of a comic book strip.

Left: One of the comic book covers drawn by Steve Snyder (who also played Ralph Baggit). Below, left (top): In a gag scene, Snyder offers *The Rock* a drink while the *Block Viper* (Mike Orloff) awaits the next scene. Bottom: Dick Taylor, his producer, Augustus Borghese, and Mike Orloff between takes. Below, right: In another gag photo, *The Volt* menaces Snyder (who cringes at the anticipated blow). This scene was not in the actual film.

Above: *The Block Viper* takes a shot at college student Ralph Baggit, while Dick Taylor captures the action with a hand-held camera. In the film the ray was not straight—it was a round ball that sailed through the air. Such effects were added to the film via bi-pack optical printing. Right: Taylor and Borghese set up a shot of *The Block Viper* (Mike Orloff) in one of the bleak corridors of "The Comic Book Institute," which was really the basketball stadium of Indiana University. Below: The cel of Steve Snyder, which is the last scene in the film. This was originally a live action scene, and changes slowly to a comic strip panel. A six-cel composite was used to create the effect on film.

The Thing In The Basement

A brief preview of *Thing In The Basement* was published a year ago in CINEMAGIC #4. At that time, the film was 80% completed, and as of now, it is 99% complete. *Thing* required a budget equal to *Comicbook*, but will have a running time of only *half* the latter film's 30 minutes. The result is higher production values and a larger variety of visual effects than in *Comicbook*. The basic plot of *Thing In The Basement* has a group of suburban men playing poker at one of the men's houses, when a "meteor" crashes through the roof of the house and lands in the basement. The meteor is really a spacecraft piloted by the *Thing* (a sole occupant). The men grab rifles and revolvers and head toward the basement, and a battle of wits and force ensues, with a comical twist ending.

On the two pages after this, Dick Taylor and company provide us with some behind-the-scenes make-up tricks. In the future, we will run an article on the making of the film's optical effects and miniature sets.

Right: *The Thing In The Basement* (John Buechler) kills Bennet Tarrelton. In the film, Tarrelton disintegrates in a flash of colors. Below, left (top): Dick Taylor eyes up a tight shot on Buechler. Bottom: John Buechler and Steve Snyder take a break between scenes. Snyder, who starred in and animated the effects in *Comicbook*, also plays one of the feature parts in *Thing*. Below, right: Snyder, Brian Keister, and Dick Taylor, with guns drawn, move toward the basement. Keister produced *Thing* with Taylor.

Photos by John Locus

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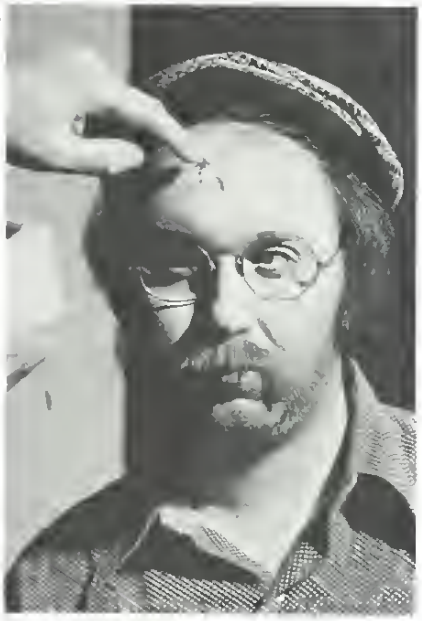

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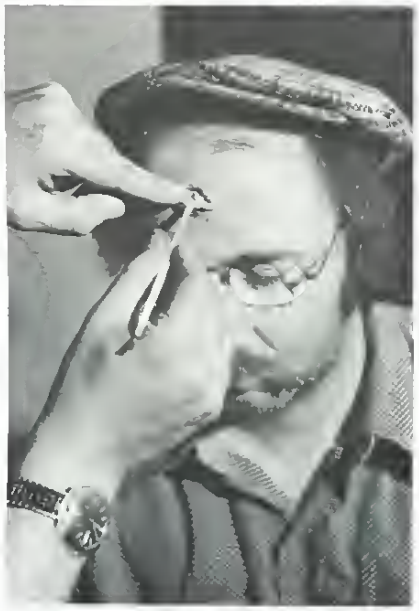

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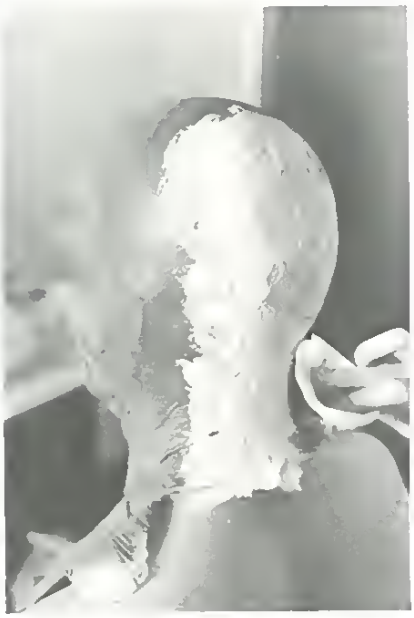
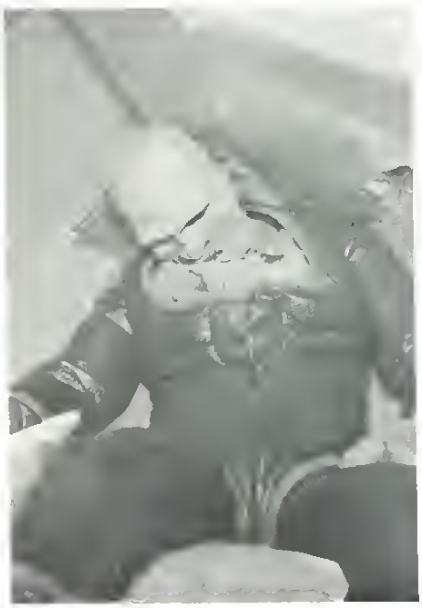
Photos by Brian Keister

Above: In *Thing In The Bosement* one of the poker players makes the mistake of throwing a knife at the alien. The alien then fires an "eye" ray which penetrates the human's chest and forehead. Whit Reichert, who plays the unfortunate poker player, gets blasted at the top of the basement stairs. The photo sequence at right shows how Dick Taylor created the ray "hole" in Reichert's forehead: 1. Max Factor nose putty is blended into the skin. 2. Red and blue lining colors are blended into the putty (to give a "bruised" look). 3. A hole is torn into the putty using the end of a small paint brush. 4. The edges of the wound are colored with stage blood. 5. The wound is filled in with stage blood. 6. The final effect (note hole in wall behind Reichert).



Photos by John Locus

How to apply a "Thing" mask in three easy steps: Above, left: Mary Kubiak tapes up the slit in the back of John Buechler's full-head "Thing" appliance. The slit is necessary for removing the mask, but must be concealed for filming. Above center: Liquid latex is generously applied to conceal the tape, then dotted with a bumpy texture provided by a paper towel. Above, right: After the latex is dry, a mixture of acrylic paint—matched to the color of the mask—is applied. Right: John Buechler gives us a sign that the seam has been properly hidden. Below: Buechler suited and made up for a scene in the film—is *The Thing In The Basement* dead? Hopefully, the film will be released as a theatrical short one day soon, and we can all find out ..



PRESS NOTICES

Have a horror, science fiction, or fantasy film currently in production? Send the details about it (title, names of actors, effects, type of film, etc.) and, if available, a publicity photo to *Press Notices, c/o CINEMAGIC, P.O. Box 125, Perry Hall, Maryland 21128* and we'll include a write-up about your film in this section.

Syntax Productions of Denver, Colorado is working on *The Time Trackers*, a science fiction adventure using a number of special effects, including double-exposure, time-lapse, black-screen matte, and extensive miniatures. One sequence will feature a near-fatal crash betwen a sub-orbital transport craft and a UFO. The super-8 color/sound film is being directed by Leigh Hanlon, with assistance from Ray Daniel, and stars Bill Daniel and Leslie Stuart.

Brian Madigan of Nedrow, New York is currently producing *Invasion Of Earth—Part I: The Spy*, an 8mm silent sf film. The plot concerns an alien spy who lands on earth and kills a teenage boy, then assumes the dead youth's identity. The film, being done mostly for the sake of production experience, will have a running time of about ten minutes.

Joseph W. Partlow III of Midway Island (FPO San Francisco, California) and his *Goony Productions* are in the midst of filming a full length science fiction epic entitled *Tag*, about a civilian-operated spaceship that plays "tag" with a fully armed battleship. *Goony* recently completed a short film about a Keystone Kops-style bank robbery, and they have another film—a werewolf farce—on the drawing boards.

Son Of Kong's Revenge is in elaborate pre-production stages. The film's producer, Wes Corliss, of Batavia, New York, is doing complete continuity and storyboard drawings. His Kong will be a 13-inch animated puppet. The animation model will be combined with live action via front-projection techniques. *Son Of Kong's Revenge*, which is being shot in 16mm black and white, has already been in pre-production for five month's, and Corliss expects to work another year before completing the project.

Jerry Roberts and Harold Trueman of Arvada, Colorado have recently completed several films under their *Nugget Productions* name: *The Heist* is a comedy about a jewel thief who knocks off a jewelry store, is chased all over town by the cops, and finally escapes—only to realize that the jewels were display fakes. This film was recently entered in a Colorado Springs film festival. *Super Klutz And The Bank Robbery* is a super-hero spoof about a bank-robber who is pursued by Super Klutz. The highlight of the film comes when Super Klutz has a spectacular fight scene with the robber—Klutz wins, grabs the briefcase with the stolen money, and leaps up to the top of a building, where he clumsily jars open the briefcase and the bills go flying all over the city. One special effects sequence has the hero flying through the air. *The Microfilm Mix-Up*, a spy-adventure, took eight months to produce and was completed in March of 1976. All three of these *Nugget Productions* films were shot in super-8.

Anarama Productions of Indianapolis, Indiana has completed a 31-page script for *Le Triton*. Live action footage will be shot during the summer, with special effects work being done in the fall and winter. The script, written by *Anarama's* James Mannan, calls for such effects as animation, rear-projection, and live action/slow-motion miniatures. *Le Triton* will feature nine characters, including a merman.

Allie C. Peed III and Greg J. Gosian and their *Solar Six Productions* of Rochester, New York have begun work on *Deceptions*, a 16mm film with a proposed running time of one hour. The story is set in earth's solar system in the year 2389. Crews of the starfreighter Vadenda and the

A pre-production drawing of how Larry Schlechter of Baltimore, Maryland envisions a scene for an animated film he is working on. The model for this creature is currently under construction.

John Buechler and Steve Polwort of Bethalto, Illinois are making a super-8 fantasy film using these two animated creatures. John made the models out of wire and foam latex.

starliner Radon have been captured by space pirates, who have been attacking ships going to the outpost colonies beyond Pluto. Eight miniature spaceships—ranging in length from six inches to eight feet—are being used. Full sized props will include control consoles (one of which will actually have computer read-outs from a telephone-linked computer) and weapons. The visual effects include the use of mattes, front and rear projection, and high-speed cinematography. *Deceptions* will have original music. The film is scheduled for completion in December of 1976.

Void will be filmed this summer by George Perkins of Brookings, South Dakota. The super-8 color production concerns an earth space mission launched in the 1980's, during which the spacecraft encounters a meteor storm and is rendered inoperative. Special effects planned: the spacecraft gliding through space, interior zero-gravity shots, a space walk, and the meteor storm. A short sequence in the film takes place on future earth, and several futuristic buildings are being utilized as background scenery. *Void* stars George Perkins, Mark Behrend, and Richard Woolworth, and will have a running time of ten minutes.

Associated Film Productions of Bogota, New Jersey is currently doing final editing on *Nocturne*, a 16mm black and white film about a young artist who dreams about a girl he has never met. He is so captivated by her that he sketches her likeness upon awakening. John Mathews wrote, directed, and photographed the film. Production assistants were Mary Jarman, Harry McDevitt, and Neil Pappalardo. *Nocturne* stars Mary LoBue and Kevin Shinnick. *Associated* recently completed *Death At Seven*, a super-8 color/sound film concerning dreams, reality, and death. Dean Kasturas and Kevin Shinnick handled all phases of production.

Kevin Danzey's *Krystol Films*, based in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, recently began shooting *Zar-Proto*, a super-8 science fiction film with a humorous twist ending. Several special effects will be employed in the film.

Cinemagic Visual Effects, comprised of the CINEMAGIC magazine staff located in and around Baltimore, Maryland, is working feverishly on a final script, preproduction drawings, and make-up concepts for a feature-length horror film. The film (title undecided as yet) will spotlight five original creature make-ups, which will be produced using mold and foam-latex processes. The production crew consists of Bob Haupt (unit one camera and sound), Britt McDonough (unit two camera), Ed Litzinger (make-up), Larry Schlechter (make-up), Charlie Ellis (production assistance), and Don Dohler (screenplay/direction). Cast in feature roles are Tom Griffith, Tony Malanowski, and George Stover. The film (which begins shooting in August) will be released theatrically in early 1977.

FILMMAKER SEEKS TECHNICAL & ARTISTIC ASSISTANCE FOR FANTASY FILM

I would like to film a 30-minute super-8 color/sound film done with marionettes in the vein of Gerry Anderson's series *(Supercar, Fireball XL5, Thunderbirds,* etc.). I need to get in touch with others who have attempted to produce such a film. I'd also like to hear from super-8 cameramen, editors, lighting men, set builders, puppeteers, directors, writers, electrical technicians and so on. I need top-notch special effects artists, too, since the film will be *filled* with effects. PLEASE NOTE: This is a self-financed pilot for a possible TV series. If the series is sold, people involved in the pilot will get paid; otherwise, it's volunteer work. The best qualified people will get jobs in the production departments of producing the series for television. People who are interested (serious inquiries only) and who live in the New York metropolitan area, should write to:

Mike Canuel
c/o Film
9054 Ft. Hamilton Pkwy.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209

That's CINEMAGIC editor Don Dohler after a night of doing magazine layouts! Seriously, this is a foam latex creature prototype created by Dohler and Larry Schlechter for an upcoming feature horror film the CINEMAGIC crew is involved with.

AMATEUR FANTASY FILMS SOUGHT FOR TELEVISION

Ron Merk Productions is seeking completed animated, stop-motion puppet, and live-action films for children, to be shown on a syndicated series, *The Fabulous World Of Pinocchio*. Films should be in color, and either 16mm or 35mm (no 8mm gauges). Payment will be on a revenue-sharing basis. For details, write:

Ron Merk Productions, Inc.
101-B Montross Avenue
Rutherford, N.J. 07070

WDCA-TV, Channel 20 in Washington, D.C. is interested in receiving 16mm fantasy, science fiction, or horror films for its *Creature Feature* program, which is aired at 11:00 P.M. on Saturdays. The amateur films will be shown along with *Creature Feature's* regular feature horror movie. Films submitted must have a running speed of 24 FPS and may be either optical or magnetic sound. No payment is made, but Channel 20 will pay air-express/insurance fees both ways. Films received will be videotaped and returned immediately to their owners. Channel 20 is a very progressive station, and is not strictly bound by normal television censorship. For a release form, write:

Mr. Dick Dyszel
WDCA-TV
5202 River Rd.
Washington, D.C. 20016

SOCIETY FOR FANTASY FILM FANS

The Academy Of Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Horror Films is a non-profit organization consisting of individuals devoted to presenting awards of merit and recognition for genre films, and to promoting the arts and sciences of such films.

All members have equal voting rights in the selection of the annual Golden Scroll Awards. Nominations are made by a Board of Governors and ballots are mailed to all members. Members are invited to attend a gala annual awards ceremony held each year in Hollywood.

For complete details and a membership application write:

The Academy of Science Fiction,
Fantasy, and Horror Films
334 West 54th Street
Los Angeles, California 90037

FIFTH ANNUAL AMATEUR-8 CONTEST

The world's *best* competition for filmmakers who work in regular 8, super-8 and Single-8 is now ready to mail entry forms for its fifth annual contest. The *Amateur-8 Contest*, under the impeccable guidance of Phil Preston, is a contest for *all* entrants, win or lose. Nobody is left "high and dry" here; each and every film entered receives a detailed critique sheet full of helpful hints and suggestions. Eight winners will receive handsome, full-sized certificates. Each contestant receives final statistics of the contest. Films may be on any topic, color or black & white, sound or silent. Running time per film should be 20 minutes or less. Entry fee is only $1.00 (to cover return postage/insurance). To receive full details and entry forms, write:

Mr. Phil Preston
Amateur-8 Contest
2971 Longmeadow Drive
Trenton, Michigan 48183

NOTEWORTHY FANTASY FILM PUBLICATIONS

The following magazines, devoted to the fantasy, science fiction, and horror film genre, should be of interest to our readers. In most cases you can write to each publisher for a descriptive flyer about his respective publication:

BLACK ORACLE—published irregularly; 40 pages; digest size. A small, friendly magazine devoted to the appreciation of fantasy and horror films. Every issue contains several reviews of major films, plus interesting retrospectives, articles, and interviews with the pros. Issue #9, now available, features a tribute to the late Fredric March. Price: 60¢ per copy, or a three-issue subscription for $1.50. Back issues are also available at these prices: #7 and 8: 60¢ each; #6: 75¢ each; #5: $2.00 each; #4: $1.00 each. Make checks payable to George M. Stover, and mail to: *Black Oracle, P.O. Box 10005, Baltimore, Maryland 21204.*

CINEFANTASTIQUE—published quarterly; 48 pages; gloss stock; full-color covers. This magazine is an absolute must for the serious horror, fantasy, and science fiction film fan. Each issue is jam-packed with detailed articles on all major new genre releases, reviews, and meticulously researched retrospectives of the classics (such as *The Day The Earth Stood Still, Forbidden Planet, Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*, et al). *CINEFANTASTIQUE* is visually stunning, with more than 70 photographs and 8 pages of full-color in each issue; flawlessly printed in a full, 8½ x 11-inch format. All 17 back issues are available. A descriptive flyer is available from the publisher. Price for new subscriptions: $10.00 for one year (4 issues); individual copies of a new issue may be ordered for $4.00 each, from: *Cinefantastique, P.O. Box 270, Oak Park, Illinois 60303.*

CLOSEUP—published irregularly; 48 pages; gloss stock. The magazine devoted exclusively to the world of stop-motion animation. The current issue, #2, is all about the animated puppet films—those "tabletop" productions with a definite fairytale atmosphere. The issue features interviews with seven noted puppet film animators, and is illustrated with more than 100 rare, behind-the-scenes photographs. Issue #3 of *Closeup* (to be published later this year) will be devoted entirely to the 1933 classic, *King Kong*. Price: $3.25 per copy, from: *David Prestone, 46-16 Marathon Parkway, Little Neck, New York 11362.*

Claudine Griggs

Three-headed Dragon

CAPSULE PROFILE

Like most amateur animators I was thrilled by horror, fantasy, and science fiction movies from an early age. Every time that I watched King Kong pound through the streets of New York, or Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, and the Cowardly Lion skip down the yellow brick road, I renewed my love affair with the characters, music, photography, and writing of each movie.

While attending Montclair High School, California, I met a man who first introduced me to the technical aspect of stop-motion filmmaking. Using clay models, simple backyard sets, and an 8mm movie camera I began animating short scenes and, later, experimenting with building models.

Animation models come in all sizes, and colors. Some are so intricate and detailed that they would be impossible for the average hobbyist to build; but, by using simple construction methods I found that creating an animation puppet can be a home project.

My model, a three-headed dragon, was formed by sculpturing wax over an aluminum and steel skeleton, casting the entire model in a one piece plaster mold, heating and draining the wax, and, finally, injecting liquid rubber into the remaining cavity.

Designing the metal armature is difficult because every joint and piece of metal must be carefully drawn and dimensioned. Since the pieces are constructed separately and assembled later, the exact placement and measurement of each piece is needed. While drawing the armature I tried to imagine a living dragon, visualize its anatomy, and design joints to duplicate its field of movements.

Ball and socket joints are constructed by welding a ball bearing on each end of a steel rod and fitting the bearing between two aluminum plates; however, with very small bearings (¼ inch or less in diameter) the heat from the torch will deform their shape and their usefulness. Small bearings are attached with tiny machine screws after the ball and rod have been drilled and tapped. With the bearings attached, these rods resemble metal Q-Tip swabs and range in length from about a half inch to six inches, depending on the desired space between joints. The ball is then inserted between two aluminum plates which are cut from flat strips of shower-door molding and countersunk to receive the bearing. A simple bolt, running between the metal plates, is used to tighten or loosen each joint. Once the armature is designed and the necessary pieces constructed, the joints are fitted together and wire is attached to form toes, ribs, and the tip of the tail. Now the skeleton is complete.

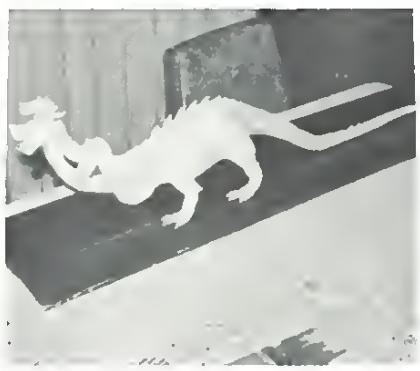
I now sculptured wax over the entire armature. I used about four pounds of paraffin wax. The wax is available at paint companies for about $2.00 for an eleven-pound block. I preferred using wax because this allowed me to cast the model in a one-piece mold, which eliminated the usual seams inherent in using a two-piece mold. Melted in an empty coffee can and then allowed to cool slowly, the soft, pliable wax was skimmed from the edges of the container and used like clay, gradually building flesh onto the skeleton. After the rough shape was formed, the excess wax was cut away and the surface detail applied. The sculptured wax dragon, with armature inside, was then cast in a one-piece plaster mold.

The model was molded in a wooden box using plaster of Paris. Placed upright in the box, the dragon's feet and tip of its tail made direct contact with the bottom and side of the container; thus, as the plaster was poured over the model, small openings remained in the mold. When the plaster had hardened, the mold was heated in a gas barbecue allowing the wax to drain through the feet and tail.

Finally, with the wax drained and the skeleton positioned inside the cavity, I injected liquid latex (available at arts and crafts stores) into the mold. Enough latex should be injected to give the model a thick skin, but not a mass of solid rubber, and the mold should be rotated to assure even distribution of the liquid.

After the rubber had set for three days I began to cut, drill, file, and hammer until all the plaster was chipped away and my dragon stood before me. To complete the project I patched a few flaws and painted the final features.

The entire process of building this animation puppet, including deciding what I wanted to make, sketching it, designing and building the armature, sculpturing the wax, and molding and painting the final figure, took me about one hundred and twenty hours; however, the job has not ended. Now, I must give life to my dragon through the magic of animation. ■



Right: The ball/socket armature built by Claudine for her 3-headed dragon. Far right: the wax sculpture of the dragon.

THE TECHNIQUE OF GLASS PAINTINGS

Article, Photos, & Illustrations by DOUGAL DIXON

Glass painting is one of the oldest special effects techniques used in the cinema. It is not known who first developed it but the first recorded instance of its use in films was in 1907 when pioneer filmmaker Norman Dawn restored a ruined building to its former glory by filming it through a sheet of glass on which had been painted a reconstruction of the building's roof. Since then the technique has been widely used to add background elements to live action shots, or to supply the top floors of buildings when only the ground floors have been built as full scale sets, or any one of hundreds of other combinations of live sets with glass painted elements.

One of the less well known applications and the one I will be dealing with in this article is the use of glass paintings to create miniature sets.

The classic example of this was *King Kong*, in which the glass paintings were so skillfully executed by Byron Crabbe and Mario Larrinaga that they were works of art in themselves. For example, consider the atmospheric jungle sequences: the foreground trees and undergrowth were painted on a plate of glass some ten feet long and this was set up in front of the camera. Next, a few feet behind this foreground glass, the middle vegetation was painted on a second plate of glass. The scene was continued into the background for another few plates of glass, depending on the actual depth of the set required. Sufficient space was left between the glass plates to allow the various animation models to be put through their paces at different depths. The stegosaurus that walked across the background in one scene and then re-appeared in the middle distance actually went around the end of a glass plate when it was out of view. (The film also included countless other effects to combine live human figures and running water in the foreground of the sets, but we are only concerned here with the glass paintings.)

A set-up such as used in *King Kong* is by far the easiest way to construct a miniature set for animation purposes. To build a detailed, realistic model set is time-consuming and the end result is precarious—trees are constantly being knocked over and rocks ploughed up by the animator's hands. A glass painted set solves most difficulties.

You will need at least two pieces of glass (I have obtained good results with pieces measuring 3 feet by 2 feet), an opaque backdrop on which to paint the most distant portion of the scene, and some suitable paints. I use poster paints but they are not ideal because they are not absorbed into the glass surface and tend to run before they have dried. They also show a tendency to wash off when another color is applied on top of the first. However, poster paint applied thickly can be puddled around on the glass to obtain a very realistic foliage effect. Their great advantage, though, is that once a set is finished with, one wipe with a damp sponge will remove all traces of poster paint from the glass plates, leaving them ready to be painted up with the elements of the next set.

To create your glass painting you must first have a good idea of what is to happen in it and design the scenes accordingly. In *King Kong* complicated pre-production drawings were prepared and these were projected onto the glass plates so that exact reproductions could be painted on. This is quite unnecessary in amateur work, but if you need to have a very closely designed landscape you could draw it on a sheet of paper the size of your glass plate, put your plate over the drawing, and trace the outlines of the various components. Remember, however, that once everything is set up, perspective will make images on the further away plates appear smaller. The foreground plate should carry a fairly open design consisting of undergrowth along the bottom, foliage along the top, and tree trunks, branches, and creepers in between (figure 1). These should be executed boldly with sharp edges and harsh shadows and highlights. The second plate can be well covered if all the action is to be in front of it; or it can be left quite open (as the foreground plate) if something is to happen behind it. The second plate should be painted in a softer style than the first. The extreme background can be done on a sheet of poster board and mounted at the back of the set. This should be very

Figure 1.

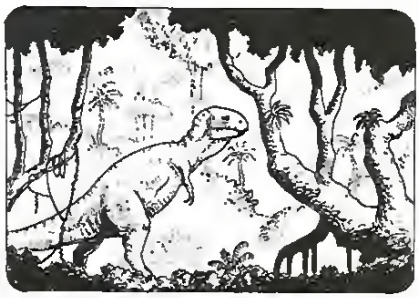
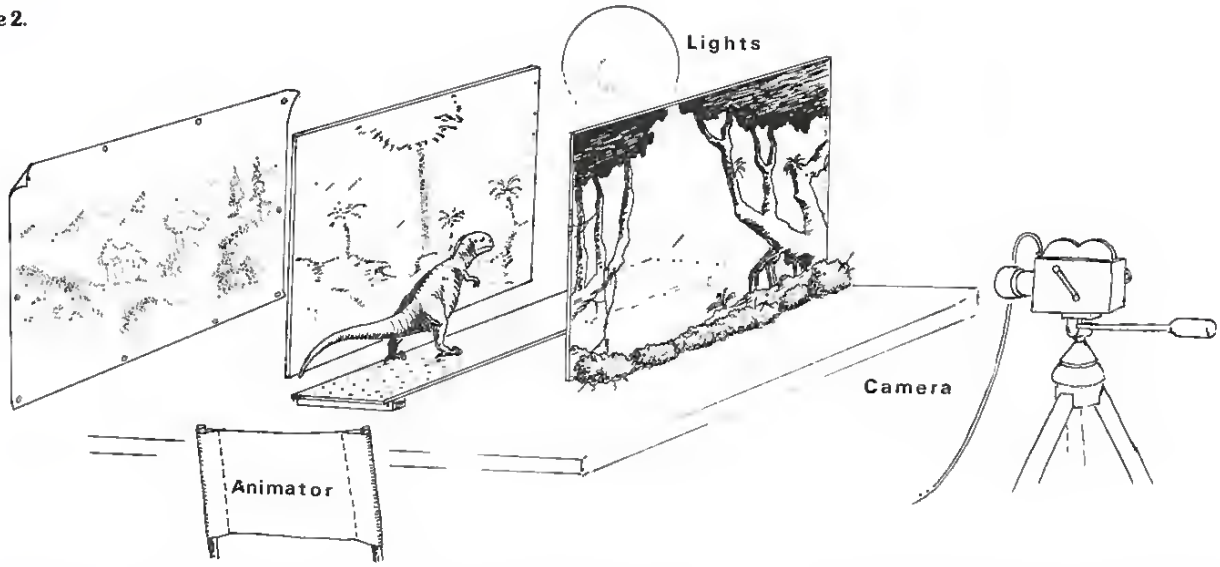


Figure 2.



subdued and I have found that the best medium for this is pencil. If a misty jungle effect is required the grey colorless shapes produced by pencil are very effective and their edges can be smudged to add to the atmosphere. If color is required on this background, crayon (applied lightly) is usually sufficient.

The images on the foreground plate should be augmented by a few three-dimensional components—lumps of moss strung along the bottom of the plate will eliminate the edge of the glass and a twisted stick will form a fallen tree branch. The sharp images that these "live" props produce will contrast nicely with the subdued nature of the paintings behind and add greatly to the impression of depth.

All the components should be mounted securely in a rigid frame with sufficient space between the plates for the animated figures and the animator's hands. The best way of working a set like this is to take a seat at one side of it in a position where you can reach all parts of the set with your hands. The shutter on the camera can be operated by a rubber bulb air pressure release placed on the floor and worked by your foot, or a regular cable release long enough to reach from the camera to you. Figure 2 shows the ideal positioning of the lights, camera, and animator.

If, in an emergency, a new set has to be created quickly, a lazy way of doing this is to take out the existing glass paintings and turn them around. This is not really recommended to the conscientious animator, but it does work in a pinch. You can even design the paintings to be turned upside down for different scenes.

The whole glass painting process can be simplified in some cases by confining the painted component to one plate of glass in the foreground. In this case the sky and background are painted at the top of the glass and the foreground at the bottom, leaving a clear space in the middle through which the animated creature is viewed (figures 3 and 4). The thing to watch here, however, is that the animated model does not rear up and "disappear" behind the sky.

Lighting is an important consideration when using glass paintings. One of the undesirable properties of glass is that it reflects light. Do not set up lights so that they shine on the glass from the front or they will appear on film as reflections. It is surprising just how easily this can be overlooked and the reflection as seen through the viewfinder dismissed as being of no consequence. The lighting should come from the side—one side only if harsh sunlight is to be simulated—and the paintings should be executed in the first place with this lighting in mind so that shadows and highlights are in the right positions. Be careful to arrange the lighting so that shadows of one plate of glass are not thrown onto another plate or onto the backdrop. If your camera has a great deal of chromium plating on it, cover it with black cloth with a hole cut out for the lens so that the chrome doesn't reflect light which will appear as ghostly images on the processed film. For the same reason it is advisable to set up everything so that there is not a white wall close behind the camera. A distant wall should not prove to be a problem if there is no light shining directly upon it.

Something that you must accept before you start into glass paintings is that someday your tripod will foul a cable, jerk your set, and the whole creation will end up on the floor. This will underline another undesirable property of glass: its brittleness. However, do not despair. The curved edge of a broken plate of glass can be readily adapted to some element of the set, and can actually

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Figure 3.

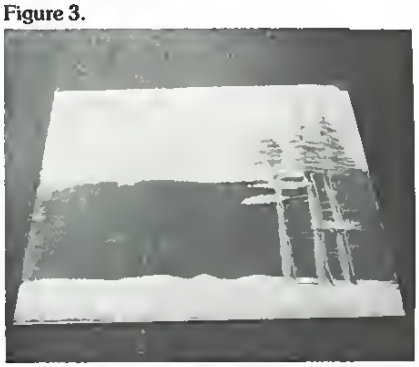


Figure 4.

enhance realism in some cases (figure 5).

A useful element that can be brought into a jungle or mountain scene is a flying creature. This need not have an important part of the action—it can just appear for a second or two in the distance so that it does not matter whether or not the audience has noticed it. The audience usually does, however, and this adds tremendously to the impact of the scene or, if the audience is technically minded, to their appreciation of the work you have put into detail. The flying creature is cut out from black adhesive tape. First, the body is cut out and then several shapes representing the wings in different positions. A line of flight across the glass plate is decided on and the body adhered to the glass at sucessive points along this line while the animation of the main figure is in progress. A different wing shape is also stuck on for each frame so that a flapping action is achieved. The creature can be removed from the plate altogether when it is supposed to be flying behind a painted element (rock or tree or whatever). This effect—a sort of replacement animation—is best suited to having the creature flying across a horizontal or vertical plane. If it is to fly toward or away from the camera, different sizes of bodies and wings would have to be cut out. Figure 6 shows a workable wing pattern, and figure 7 shows such a flying creature in an actual scene.

As you can see, the glass painting process is very versatile and other applications—such as combining glass paintings with physical miniature sets—constantly suggest themselves to the animator who wants to get the most out of his miniature work. ■

Figure 5.

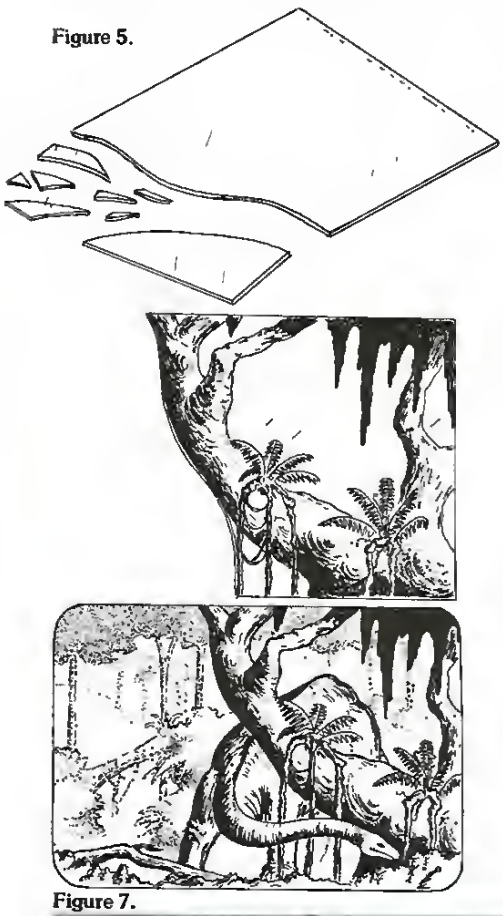


Figure 6.

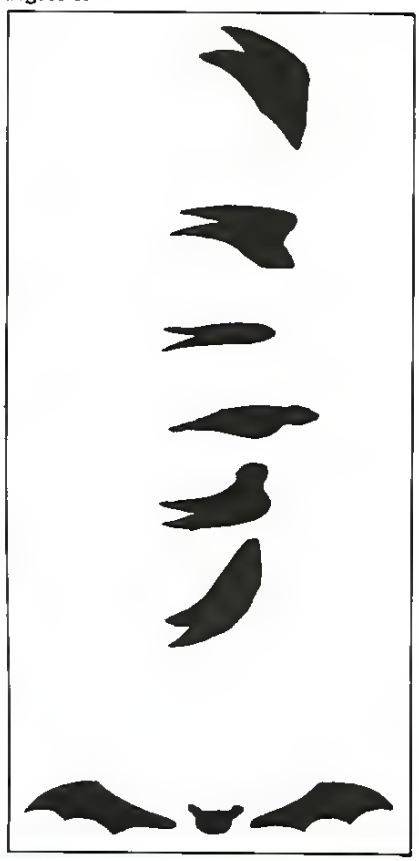


Figure 7.

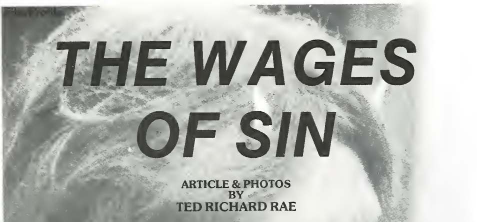
Dougal Dixon is a filmmaker from Essex, England. Working in 16mm, Dougal recently completed a thirteen minute fantasy film entitled *Fall Of The Wizard*, which employed several animation creatures, a two-dimensional (cartoon) fire-demon sequence, miniature castles, and glass paintings. The film won second place last year in the fiction category of The Institute of Amateur Cinematographer's regional competition in England.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The Techniques of Special Effects Cinematography, Raymond Fielding. Published by Focal Press, London and New York, 1972. Pages 47-73. Good introduction to the glass painting technique.

FXRH (Special Visual Effects Created By Ray Harryhausen) Published by Ernest D. Farino. Issue #3, summer of 1972. Pages 10-12. An account of the glass paintings used in *King Kong* as told by Ray Harryhausen during an interview at the National Film Theatre, London.

American Cinematographer. November 1974 issue. Special edition devoted to the film *Earthquake*, with an article by Albert Whitlock on the modern applications of glass paintings.



THE WAGES OF SIN

ARTICLE & PHOTOS BY TED RICHARD RAE

[illegible] *Wages* [illegible] was originally [illegible] as a high school drama class [illegible]ct in May of 1975, under the [illegible]tive title of *Welcome To Hell*. [illegible] story's original idea came from [illegible] rile imagination of my friend [illegible] associate, Rod Jakubik. [illegible] first [illegible] t was simply that of a dope [illegible] who dies and goes to Hell. [illegible] spontaneous ideas and a couple [illegible] we had our plot, a [illegible] which follows.

[illegible] police [illegible] ets, [illegible] ss— [illegible] es- [illegible] get the [illegible] he finds [illegible] n killed a [illegible] his a rich [illegible] asked for [illegible] ingly con- [illegible] s a cash- [illegible] he gets greedy and [illegible] not without getting [illegible] trouble.

[illegible], the freak shoots up to [illegible] h. His high soon turns [illegible] e, however, as flash- [illegible] guilt from his two victims [illegible] from a third story balcony. [illegible] his [illegible] on the streets below. Even in death the freak's troubles are [illegible] over, for he soon finds himself in Hell. Menaced by demons, he is finally taken before Satan himself. In a twist ending, Satan turns out to be the dude the freak "killed" on the street—which brings us to the film's final title: *The wages of sin . . . are death*.

MAKING THE FILM

The Satan-dude role was filled by a friend, Ron Carson, who is built well and sports a moustache (which made make-up easier), besides being a pretty good actor. Rod Jakubik, taking time out from his position behind the camera, hopped out front to portray the cripple in a small cameo role. Brian Tucker, who has been a big help on other projects, doubled as a policeman and a pedestrian.

The effects sequences, which comprise about one half of the film and consumed more than twice as much time as the live action to film, all presented a challenge to film realistically on our almost non-existent budget. A myriad of techniques, including stop-motion animation, static mattes, photo cut-outs, front and rear projection, and an unusual technique of glass superimposition were employed.

The drug-induced high of the dope freak, which lasts about thirty seconds on film, has many weird psychedelic effects. Footage was taken of many colored strobes and similar manufactured light set-ups, and was later intercut with some homemade light effects. These were done by affixing crumpled aluminum foil to a revolving disc and filming it, in many exposures and in a variety of ways such as different degrees of focus, fades, dissolves, zooms, pans, and slow motion. This gave us an appropriately swirling mass of colors. Also combined with this footage were previously filmed scenes of the victims taken through plexiglass, which was sanded to leave a haze around its edges, to simulate a misty flashback effect.

For obvious reasons of danger, the death fall from the third story balcony could not, and was not, filmed in a conventional live-action manner. A long shot of a trashy looking balconied building was taken with careful attention paid to the positioning of shadows. Later within the limits of one of these shadows we burned in the image of a photo cut-out of the freak falling by animation. Burning in is a process of double exposure by which two pieces of film are combined without the use of mattes. The background is one stop *underexposed*, while the object being burned in is one stop *overexposed*. The ultimate illusion was that of a person falling from a high building and was accomplished without exposing the actor to danger.

The "unusual technique" of glass superimposition that I mentioned earlier was used during a sequence set in a morgue, in which the freak's soul arises from and leaves its earthly body. Looking back now I cannot recall why this system, which is definitely more difficult to execute properly, was used rather than a simple double exposure. To film this sort of effect a sheet of glass is placed at a forty-five degree angle in front of the

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Inlay: Ron Carson as Satan. Make-up by Ted Rae.

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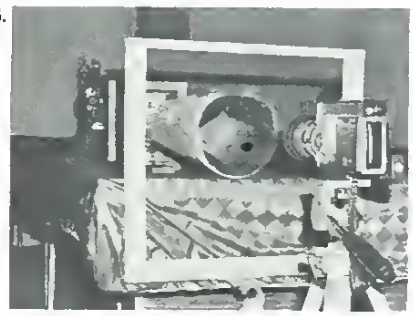

4.

camera. The camera therefore films both the action taking place directly in front of it, seen through the glass, and the action taking place at a ninety degree angle to it, as seen reflected from the glass. The latter action, however, is seen in a phantom-like image, which in this case was what we sought. Drawbacks of this technique are: the need for two identical sets (one covered entirely in a non-reflective black so that *only* the reflection of the phantom-actor will be picked up by the camera —this "black set" is the one that is positioned at a ninety degree angle to the camera), which requires twice as much space; the extra time needed to set up; and the very careful control of lighting required to eliminate unwanted reflections. These drawbacks by far outweigh the advantages of being able to view the effect during actual filming, and the possibility of closer interaction between live actors and the "phantom" image.

One interesting scene, which was a challenge to film, was the descent of the freak into Hell. The script called for a shot looking down a deep rocky tunnel with fire burning at the bottom, into which falls the soul of the freak. To film this a three foot long miniature tunnel was built in forced perspective. One-half-inch hardware cloth was rolled into a slight cone and styrofoam blocks of varying sizes (depending on how deeply in the tunnel they were placed) were affixed to the inside of the cone. Papier mache was then applied over the top of this and was coated with plaster. To help further enhance the illusion of great length in the miniature, details in the sides of the tunnel were gradually blended in from the top; and the intensity of paint color was lightened toward the bottom to simulate the loss of detail perspective that comes with great distance. During actual filming, footage of real fire was rear projected and matted in at the bottom of the tunnel, which was in fact filmed horizontally (not vertically, as it appears on film). On top of this footage we burned in a zoom-out on a spinning photo cut-out of the freak, filmed against black velvet, to complete the effect.

Front projection was used (though only in close-ups) for scenes in which the freak is in Hell, which of course were built in miniature. The Scotchlite sheeting for a reflex screen, which measured two feet square, was donated by a friend who is employed by the Flint, Michigan Highway Commission. The set up by which the front projection shots were filmed was not permanent, (although a permanent set up for future use is planned); therefore, the quality of these shots was not as good as it should have been. The beam combiner in this case was simply a piece of glass. Normally, a beam-splitter mirror should be used, but I could not find one. The glass cast a double image reflection (caused by light being reflected from the first and second surfaces of the glass, and resulting in a slight phantom-type image); however, in this case it was allowable because the background slides were purposely put out of focus to simulate the extreme depth-of-field loss that is so unavoidable in tight close-ups. So it was impossible to tell if the image being projected was double or not.

For long shots in the Hell sequence a six inch animated human model

Left: 1. Ted Rae, Ron Carson, and Brian Tucker in feature roles. 2. These manacles are made from two tuna fish cans and a length of chain sprayed dark grey. 3. This set-up shows the glass matte technique used to show the freak's descent into Hell (note the small, black matte painted on the glass). 4. A close view of the "Hell" tunnel under construction. 5. Another view of the tunnel, which is 3 feet long. 6. The devil's throne is styrofoam, and the jointed legs are liquid latex. The top half of Satan—the live actor—was matted into the throne.

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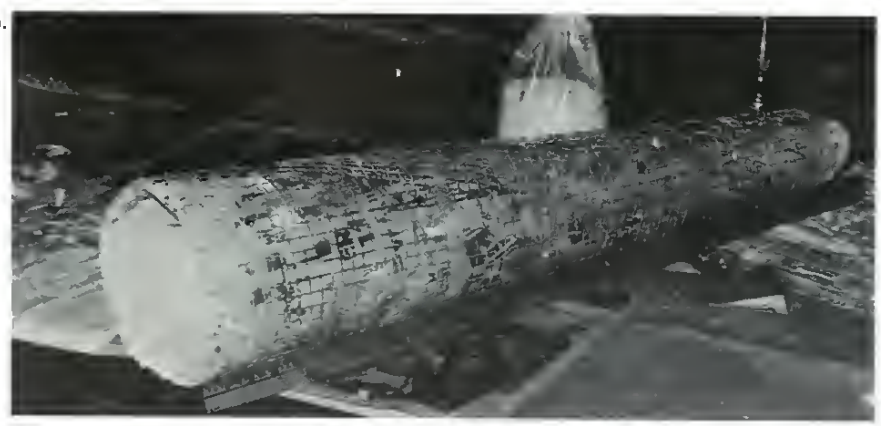

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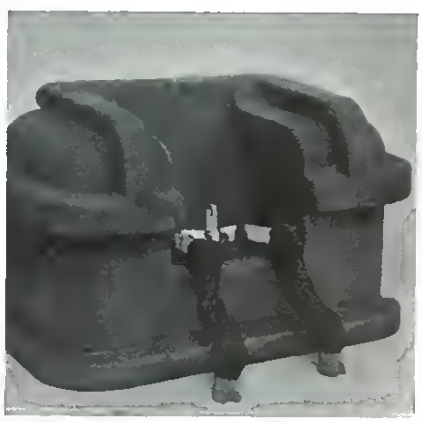

was used. This model was sculpted in clay over a wire armature which was "hot glued," rather than soldered, together. Hot glue is dispensed from a glue gun which heats up a solid stick of glue into a semi-fluid which is quite workable just before it cools completely. (Such glue guns are readily available in hardware stores and discount department stores.) In this case, I layed the pieces of wire which were the "body" and the "arms" of the skeleton across each other to form a cross, applied a wad of hot glue where the two wires met, and squeezed the glue all around this joint to join the pieces of wire. This technique of making joints is fine for armatures that will use a latex build-up body, but if you intend to apply *foam* latex over such a wire armature, you must use solder. Foam latex requires curing in an oven, and this heating would more than likely melt the hot glue.

With the armature and sculpture complete, I molded the model in two pieces out of dental stone (dental supply houses—about $12.00 per 25-pound box) while incorporating the tie-downs (used to secure the model to peg board while animating; they are made of small bolts and nuts which were "capped" with more hot glue) as part of the actual mold. This helped to insure an exact fit of the armature once it had been removed, stripped of clay, and repositioned in the mold for application of the liquid latex. The molded model was painted with a mixture of acrylic paint and liquid latex. These colors were matched by eye to the colors of the actor's clothing and skin tones. A harpy-demon was constructed in a similar way except that it was of a larger size (as a need for close-ups dictated).

Made over the period of more than a year, *The Wages Of Sin* was produced in many broken segments. Shots which appear back to back in the finished film were often filmed weeks or months apart. Considerable shooting and reshooting of scenes was often required because of our inexperience and learning improved methods to replace sequences that had been shot earlier.

The film was shot in super 8 color using a Canon 814 Electronic. The special effects, for the most part, were shot in the camera. Overall running time of the film is about ten minutes. ■

WAGES OF SIN—DATA

Producers ..... **Ted Rae**
Rod Jakubik
Soundtrack ..... **Ted July**
Editing & Effects ..... **Ted Rae**
Satan ..... **Ron Carson**
Dope freak ..... **Ted Rae**
Cripple ..... **Rod Jakubik**
Policeman ..... **Brian Tucker**

ABOUT TED RAE

Ted Richard Rae is a filmmaker and special effects enthusiast living in Otisville, Michigan. Together with his good friend, Rod Jakubik, Ted has produced several horror and fantasy films in super-8. Two of these are award-winners. *BLADE, The Man From ACE*, a spy-spoof adventure, was a winner in the 1975 *Amateur-8 Contest*; and *The Power Of Darkness*, a horror-spoof, won third place at the 1976 *Balticon Amateur Fantasy Film Contest*.

Ted recently developed his own method of creating ball-and-socket armatures, and to enhance his knowledge of the animation field, he took a trip to California this summer to meet with Jim Danforth.

The Wages Of Sin is Ted's most ambitious project to date, and if the quality of the film is any indication of talent and enthusiasm Ted Rae indeed, has a bright future in the fantasy film genre.


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Right: 1. The wire armature for the animation model of the human; the wire is hot-glued together. 2. The completed clay model of the human—note the "tie-down" bolts extending from the legs. 3. The torso and limbs of the Satan model are molded in liquid latex; the head, hands, and feet are added later using a build-up process. 4. The jointed skull of the Satan model is made of a small wood dowel and liquid plastic. The teeth are toothpicks.

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NEXT ISSUE: STOP-MOTION ANIMATION MODEL-MAKING!

Our eighth issue, due in October/November, will be a blockbuster edition of CINEMAGIC. For years our readers have been asking for an article on constructing ball-and-socket armatures, and the correct method of casting models in foam latex. Well, we've finally put it all together, and we expect issue #8 to be one of our proudest achievements in four years of publishing.

- **A FORWARD TO STOP-MOTION ANIMATION** by Ernest D. Farino kicks off the issue. Ernie discusses all of the details and background information about the history of stop-motion animation, from crude beginnings with George Melies to today's top animators like Harryhausen and Danforth. All aspects of the animation medium are explored. Loaded with interesting facts and insights.

- **CREATING PROFESSIONAL BALL-AND-SOCKET ARMATURES** by Mark Sawicki. Mark gives you all the details you ever wanted to know about ball-and-socket armature construction, and then some. Nothing is left to guesswork—Mark describes every step of the process, tells you exactly which tools are required, and points out where to obtain the necessary materials and tools. More than twenty clear, close-up photos show you the correct method of executing each step of the way.

- **CASTING A FOAM-LATEX MODEL** by Craig Reardon. Once you have assembled your armature, you'll want to know the proper technique of creating a flexible, detailed model, and Craig spells out the process in over thirty meticulous photos. Everything is included here—from clay sculpture to painting your model and, if necessary, adding hair. Even small detail work like eyes, teeth, ears, and fingers are explained. We also tell you where to get the best quality foam-latex formula.

- **STOP-MOTION BIBLIOGRAPHY**, compiled by Ernest D. Farino, rounds out the issue. More than forty magazine, book, and article references are listed so that you may further enhance your library on stop-motion animation. Each listing has a brief description, plus name and address of the publisher, and approximate cost of the publication.

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Creator meets creation, as artist Steve Snyder is about to be thrown by *The Rock*, one of the many animated super-hero characters Steve designed for the film, *Comicbook*, which was produced by Dick Taylor. For more exciting scenes from Dick's films, see page 14 inside.

Cinemagic
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