CINEMAGIC

Number 10 $2

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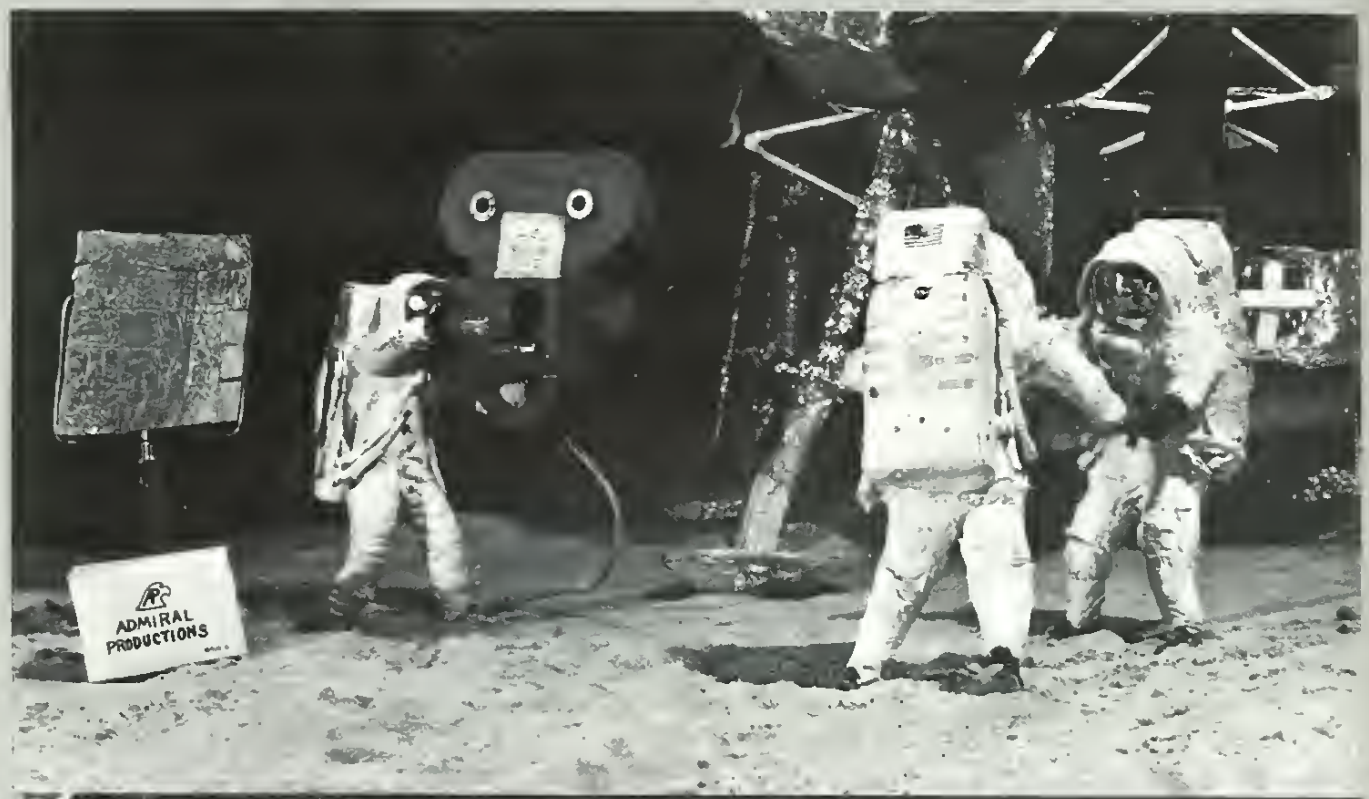
HOW TO CREATE FULL-BODY MONSTER SUITS



These two shots are from Richard Allison's amateur version of DESTINATION MOON, a stop-motion space epic. To find out how the models were made, turn to page 14.

CINEMAGIC

Editor/Publisher
Donald M. Dohler

Typesetting/Graphics
Thomas B. Griffith

Editorial Assistant
MaryAnn Merenda

Associate Editors
John Cosentino
Dave Ellis
Ted Richard Rae

Special Photo Processes
Britt McDonough

Special Artwork
Larry Schlechter
Dan White

Mail Assistant
Glenn Barnes

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PROFILES

DEPARTMENTS

(Note. In our last issue we promised an article this time on "Homemade Slit-Scan." Upon checking with the author of the piece, Richard Allison, we discovered that an almost identical article had been published in the December, 1976 SUPER 8 FILMAKER. In order that we don't present a rehash of their article we decided to cut our "Slit-Scan" feature and substitute it with a profile on Richard's film, DESTINATION MOON.)

CINEMAGIC is published quarterly (Winter, Spring, Summer, and Autumn) by Cinemagic Publishing Company, Inc., P.O. Box 125, Perry Hall, Maryland 21128. Single copy price from the publisher: $2.00 plus 50¢ postage/handling. Subscriptions: 4 issues for $8.00 (foreign and Canadian: $11.00); 8 issues for $15.00 (foreign and Canadian: $21.00). Contributions are welcomed, although we cannot assume responsibility for loss or damage due to postal neglect. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for the return of artwork and photos. No payment is made for contributions, other than a free copy of the issue in which a contributor's work appears. The film plots, characters, and events that appear in CINEMAGIC are fictitious (unless otherwise noted) and any resemblance to real persons or events is purely coincidental.

EDITORIAL

There is a sort of special feeling to this issue of CINEMAGIC, since it is our tenth edition, and also because of some new additions to our staff and some coming changes in our format. There's also a bit of "bad" news, which I'm sure most eagle-eyed readers have observed since first seeing our cover: that we have raised the price of a single copy to $2.00. Let's cover the bad stuff first.

The price-hike was inevitable, but I feel that we have held a reasonable price on CINEMAGIC ever since its inception in 1972 (when single copies were $1.00---a price held through to issue #3). Our last price increase was in July of 1975, and that $1.50 tag has held up (although sometimes shakily due to our rising production costs) until our last issue. That's two years of retaining a price which, for magazines of a similar nature and quality, would have been out of the question long ago. Many, many new fantasy and film oriented publications have cropped up in the past year and all of them are priced in the $2.00-$3.00 range, with some going as high as $4.00 for a single copy. We hope that you will bear with us on this increase, since it is the only way we can continue to produce the magazine in the manner we'd like. This increase goes into effect as of August 1, 1977. However, anyone who has subscribed prior to that time may renew their present subscription at the old rate. Also, anyone newly subscribing can get a slight price break by paying for a two-year run at only $15.00. As in the past, individual copies ordered from us will cost $2.50, with 50¢ going for postage and handling---so a two-year subscription actually saves $5.00. One year subscriptions will now be $8.00.

On the lighter side of this, our plans call for increased number of pages and an increase in color in the magazine. These additions will come to light within the next few issues of CINEMAGIC.

To help give better service, and get orders and correspondence out faster--as well as keeping up with our schedule--we have brought on two new staff people who will specialize in various aspects of the magazine.

MaryAnn Merenda hails from Baltimore and is majoring in business and stenography. MaryAnn is an avid film enthusiast, too (that helps!), and has fit into the CINEMAGIC mold well, working closely with yours truly in the bookkeeping, correspondence, filing, and records end of the magazine. MaryAnn also logs each and every new subscription and renewal, so she's the one to see if you have a question in those areas.

Tom Griffith, another native Baltimorean, joins the CM force in charge of typesetting, graphic design specialties, color overlay work, and advertising/promotional duties. Tom has been into the graphics field for most of his life, previously designing and/or engineering the graphics for such publications as MARYLAND MUSIC MAGAZINE, DUSTY RACK

DRAMAS, BON SECOURS HOSPITAL NEWS—LETTERS and other various local and national publications. He is also a part-time actor, having recently completed one of the lead roles (Sheriff Cinder) in the CINEMAGIC VISUAL EFFECTS production, THE ALIEN FACTOR.

With MaryAnn and Tom aboard, the entire CINEMAGIC workload will be handled faster and more efficiently than ever before.

Further inside the magazine you will see a brief updating about THE ALIEN FACTOR, which was the basis for a lengthy article in our last issue. Lots of enthusiasm and interest has been generated for the film, and many questions have cropped up. First of all, I should point out that CINEMAGIC magazine and CINEMAGIC VISUAL EFFECTS, INC. are two totally different entities, although both are comprised of basically the same people. There's no doubt, however, that the magazine is the basis for all that's happened---my many contacts with the several talented people involved in creating special effects for the film, my awareness of local filmmakers who became a big part of the project, and so on. It's all part of the total concept I had envisioned prior to starting the magazine, and it's rather gratifying to see it come to fruition. There's no doubt that CVE will continue to make feature films in the fantasy/sci-fi genre, and we will definitely be needing fresh, new, creative talent for such future productions. It gives me a good feeling inside to know that so many talented (and unheralded) folks will ultimately get their shots at working on feature films, and if you believe yourself to be the sort of creative and inventive soul we'll be looking for, I urge you to contact me. Tell me where your talents and interests are, give me some brief info on past accomplishments, and if possible, include a small sample reel of your effects work. Working on a film with us does not necessarily require that you come to Baltimore, although you would be more than welcomed to be with us if the trip were possible.

We are currently in pre-production planning for a new feature to be filmed this fall, so we'd like to hear from those interested in doing isolated special effects and graphics work (background paintings and such).

To close this editorial, I'd like to say a brief word on STAR WARS, the George Lucas blockbuster fantasy which has swept the country the last several weeks. If you read CINEMAGIC #5 (January 1976), you'll remember my editorial in which I mentioned STAR WARS, KING KONG, the new SUPERMAN, and other films as part of the revival of the fantasy, science fiction, and horror film genre. Predicting such a revival and having it come true are two different things, of course, but seeing the overwhelming success of STAR WARS only reaffirms that old editorial: that the fantasy/sci-fi boom is on again in Hollywood, and in bigger and better ways than I could have ever hoped for. The revival is indeed beneficial to all of us who are so in love with the genre.

--Don Dohler

MARYANN

TOM

LETTERS

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

PROS & CONS OF AN ANIMATION ISSUE

Dan Bridges
Assonet, Massachussetts

From the very first moment I received my copy of CINEMAGIC #8 I was engrossed with Ernie Farino's beautiful color cover! The concept presented in oils is ideal: the amateur filmmaker taking a dream and creating a reality.

The content of the issue is none other than superb! My highest compliments on this accomplishment. Somebody finally did it — CINEMAGIC has laid out much of the basic information needed by so many ambitious amateur model animators.

Congratulations on a truly magnificent job.

Wes Corliss
Batavia, New York

In your animation issue (#8) Ernie Farino's "Introduction" was very well done, though he could have added some behind-the-scenes details. This would include things like model size — often overlooked, but a model that is too big will create problems. Harryhausen works with much smaller models than Jim Danforth, although one of the Cyclops models from SEVENTH VOYAGE was 18 inches tall (with the other two measuring 5 inches and 7 inches). Danforth's Loch Ness monster was 36 inches long, and the plesiosaur from WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH was 42 inches in length.

Also I've recently learned that the pros aren't perfect: the Gwangi model from VALLEY OF GWANGI had to be recast five times because it literally began to fall apart in Ray Harryhausen's hands due to excessive handling. And David Allen's "Kong" model had a broken shoulder ball rod during animation. (David had to halt production and fix it.)

Even though Mark Sawicki used replacement heads I think he should have described in detail how to make a hinged jaw. Almost any stop-motion model anyone builds will require a hinged jaw for facial expressions. The skulls used by the pros are either wax cast or sculpted in balsa wood and sand-cast, which provides a realistic substructure to sculpt over.

William Torres
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

As much as I enjoyed your special stop-motion issue, I felt that you should have covered an all-important area of the technique — aerial brace animation. I have built several models, but two of them require some sort of aerial movement and frankly, I'm lost in this area.

Editorial Comment: *Of course, we can only get so much material into an issue of CINEMAGIC, and our stop-motion issue was based primarily on model-making techniques. However, you'll be glad to know that Ted Rae and Bruce Dods (of GROG fame) are collaborating on an aerial brace article. Latest reports from Ted and Bruce indicate that a brace can be built for as little as $20.00 using fairly standard materials. This article is slated to appear in one of our next two issues.*

BULLET HITS BAD NEWS

Ted R. Rae
Otisville, Michigan

In view of David Gene Smith's letter (CINEMAGIC #9) concerning bullet blast effects, I would like to relate an experience.

During the course of shooting one of our films it was necessary for an actor (in this case, me) to be shown with the effect of a bullet "ripping" through his body. To do this I secured a quarter-inch thick piece of leather to my abdomen and rigged an ordinary firecracker in a way that it could be ignited without the fuse (I won't detail the procedure here).

To make a long story short, we did explode the firecracker and after the scene was over, I felt a pain in my stomach. I discovered that just a small firecracker had ripped through the leather and into my skin. The bruise lasted several days, and I still have the scar from the experience.

Kurt Fillmore
Merced, California

A letter to CINEMAGIC regarding explosive bullet hits was answered quite correctly — they are dangerous. Although I do not recommend placing explosives on your actors, ricochets off of buildings and rocks are easy to do. Empty plastic medicine capsules of the type used by a veterinarian for for horses can be filled with Fuller's earth, flour, or any powdery substance. A powerful slingshot is used to shoot these capsules at the ground or at a rock your hero has ducked safely behind. They burst open and a small cloud of dust fills the air. Sound effects, of course, complete the illusion.

If the capsules are filled with Vaseline and shot directly at a window (with very thick glass, mind you), the effect resembles a bullet hole in the glass. These methods are inexpensive and easy to do and above all, they are safe to people and property.

HOW DO I CONTRIBUTE TO CINEMAGIC?

That question is often asked by our readers and we sometimes forget that not everyone read our first issue in which we put forth our concepts for the magazine. Those concepts, obviously, include article and profile contributions from our readers.

If you'd like to see something of yours appear in CINEMAGIC, here are some things to keep in mind: give lots of details on special effects, make-up, filming techniques, and materials used in your film. Try to supply us with as many quality black and white photographs as possible. If you're doing a "how-to" feature, be specific; keep in mind that many readers are just starting out into fantasy filmmaking and details must be spelled out. If drawings are submitted, be sure they are done neatly in black ink (blue doesn't reproduce in the printing process, and pencil costs extra money to screen). When you type your article, double space and leave margins of at least one inch on all sides.

Most of all, be natural in your writing style — pretentious writing with lots of unnecessary "big" words only tends to confuse a reader. Be yourself and say it like you think it.

We do not pay for contributions, but we will send free extra copies of the issue in which your work appears if we accept it.

CREATING FULL-SIZE MONSTER SUITS

PART 1

NOTE: Any carpet supplies mentioned in this article can be purchased at "carpet layers equipment and supplies" stores. Carpet seaming latex costs about $10.00 per gallon, urethane carpet pad costs about $1.00 per square yard and is avilable at "carpet stores".

The approach I used to make a life size Zagatile monster suit was to view it as a very large stop-motion animation model which would have me inside of it to give it life rather than a metal ball and socket armature. But as important as this analogy was for the construction of the Zagatile suit, it would be the overwhelming desire that I had to share in the birth of our independent film corporation, CINEMAGIC VISUAL EFFECTS and our first feature, THE ALIEN FACTOR, which would motivate me to build the monsters and overcome the many problems encountered.

DRAWINGS

Most projects begin on the drawing board and the monsters for our film were no exception. The only specified requirements for them were that they be unique and have their own individual characteristics. Anything and everything that I had ever seen, whether it be animal, vegetable, or mineral, was subject matter for potential monsters. I made pencil sketches of dozens of different kinds of monsters and sent them to Baltimore. Don and the other

(please turn page)

TEXT, PHOTOS & DRAWINGS
BY **JOHN COSENTINO**

CVE members finally chose two of them as monsters for the movie.

The relatively slow communications via mail service between Michigan and Maryland caused each of us to be occasionally surprised by the other's progress. For example, one of the sketches they chose was returned to me with a note attached to it which said, "Interesting, would like to see this more developed." Probably one of the features that interested them was that this monster had tentacles, but upon further development of the sketch I removed the tentacles for practical reasons. The script was rewritten to accomodate the new design.

I was given the freedom to make independent changes in the monster's design throughout all stages of its creation and the approved sketch was my visual guideline for making the monster. I called it "The Bird Man" because of its bird-like claws, hands, and feet. During the clay sculpting of the upper body "The Brute Man" evolved because of the brutish features that I added. This use of different names, along with the nicknames such as clawfoot and bigfoot, at times made communication about the monster difficult. It was not until this monster was almost completed that we decided to name it "The Zagatile."

CONCEPT FOR NEGATIVE PLASTER BODY MOLDS

Before I could actually begin making the Zagatile I needed a full scale mannequin of my body over which the form fitting monster suit would be constructed.

The idea to make a life size duplicate of myself had always intrigued me, and besides, who else could I get to do this crazy thing? What I had in mind was to make two large wooden casting boxes, fill them with plaster, and then jump in! In one plaster casting box I would obtain a mold of the front half of my body and in the other a mold of the back half of my body. From these negative plaster body molds a mannequin duplicate of my body would be made. Basically that is what I did and what follows is the way that I actually went about doing it.

PREPARATIONS

Before I could start making the plaster negative body molds, certain preliminaries had to be taken care of. The first of these was to construct two boxes, each being four feet wide by six feet long by eight inches deep. The bottom of the boxes were made of ½-inch thick plywood reinforced with one-inch by two-inch wood strips that were nailed to its underside. The sides were made of two-inch by eight-inch lumber. Each box cost about $10.00.

Next I purchased 900 lbs. of "molding plaster" from a local builder's supply company. This kind of plaster comes in 100 lb. bags and costs about $5.00 a bag. The plaster would be mixed with water in the largest container I could find, which was a wheelbarrow. All of the plaster casting procedures were done in our basement because of the privacy it provided.

Personal preparations also had to be made. In order to keep the wet plaster from coming into direct contact with my skin, I wore a body stocking. I had tried to purchase the less expensive long-johns but they were not in stock at the stores because it was summertime. I also smoothed vaseline onto my hands to help lessen the dehydrating effect of the plaster.

CASTING FRONT HALF OF THE BODY

The initial preparations completed, I could now begin the plaster casting of the front half of my body. Upon mixing the first batch of plaster and water, I discovered that our wheelbarrow could only hold 50 lbs. of plaster. Therefore, it was poured and shaped around my body a little at a time. In this case the plaster was mixed with the water so that it had the consistency of thick mud. Using wood scraps, rags, and metal cans as filler material within the wet plaster was not a very successful approach to limiting the total amount of plaster used for the front half mold. To finish making this mold required 600 lbs. of plaster and 8 hours of work. Since I do not recommend the above procedure of body casting, the details have been excluded. A different approach to plaster body casting requiring 250 lbs. of plaster and 4 hours of work was used for the back half of my mold. This procedure is thoroughly outlined later in the article.

Plaster body casting can present unusual problems. For example, during one casting session I found myself in plaster that was too deep and too hard. I got stuck! I was forced to break free from the plaster mold. The idea, of course, is to remove one's self from the plaster while it is just firm enough to retain the shape of the body area that is being cast.

Another problem was trying to keep myself clean. After every 50 lb. batch of plaster was cast I rinsed myself off while standing in the basement washtubs. I usually just put a pair of pants on over the washed-off and still-wet body stocking, and then went on to mixing and pouring the other batches of plaster. But eventually I was required to make a change of body stocking because of the plaster that had hardened on it, or seeped through it and onto my skin and body hair. Oucchh!

CARDBOARD SILHOUETTE-CASTING BACK HALF OF BODY

The "different approach" I used to make the back half of my negative plaster body mold was to construct a cardboard silhouette enclosure slightly larger than myself, using it as a form fitted casting box.

First I traced the outline of my body on the bottom of the wooden casting box as I lay within it. Then I taped several 8-inch high cardboard strips along the traced outline and 3 inches away from it (see photo 1). This created a cardboard silhouette enclosure slightly larger than my body into which the plaster would be poured.

Because I was limited to mixing 50 lb. batches of plaster, I divided the silhouette enclosure into pre-determined sections. These "body" sections represented the following areas: foot to hip, back to neck, and fingers to shoulder. Only one section could be cast at a time, therefore "dams" were built at the end of each section so that the plaster would fill it half way up. The dams were merely cardboard pieces that had been cut to fit into the end of

Below: The original concept drawing, which was later modified to the Zagatile design discussed in this article.

each section and then taped into place.

After damming a chosen body section and filling it half way with plaster, the corresponding body part was placed into the wet plaster. Which body section to start with is up to personal choice. I started with my left body section, foot to hip. As I positioned myself into the wet plaster I quickly loosened the dam piece and pressed it flat to the bottom of the casting box. While laying in the plaster I allowed myself to sink only up to the natural half way parting line of my body so I could easily remove myself. After the plaster had thickened enough to stand on its own, I got out and rinsed myself off. I continued this damming/casting cycle until all the body sections were done and I had a completed back half negative plaster body mold (see photo 2).

RUBBER MANNEQUIN

I proceeded to make reinforced latex skin shells of my body into the completed negative plaster molds. These would later be sewn together and stuffed with foam to get a rubber mannequin duplicate of myself.

The first step in making the reinforced latex body skin shell was to apply three coats of latex into the negative plaster molds. Each coat of latex was allowed to dry before applying the next. I used carpet seaming latex because it is less expensive than pure latex. About two quarts of latex were required to complete this first procedure (see photo 3). The next step was to apply a latex and burlap layer. This was accomplished by brushing a very thick coat of latex into the molds, laying small pre-cut pieces of burlap material into the wet latex, and then dabbing them with a brush until the latex had soaked through the material. This required another quart of latex. If burlap is not available at local fabric stores, any heavy porous fabric can be substituted. After this latex-burlap layer was dry a series of 4-inch wide cardboard bands were glued onto it (using latex) to further strengthen the rubber skin shell (see photo 4). Finally, after two more latex-burlap layers were applied, requiring one quart of latex per layer, the reinforced skin shells were finished.

After these skin shells were thoroughly dry, they were pulled from the plaster molds. The excess rubber was then trimmed off and the two halves were sewn together using a curved carpet needle and thread. As the sewing was being done, urethane foam was stuffed into the body's hollow rubber skin shell to make it more solid. I used

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PHOTO 1

PHOTO 2

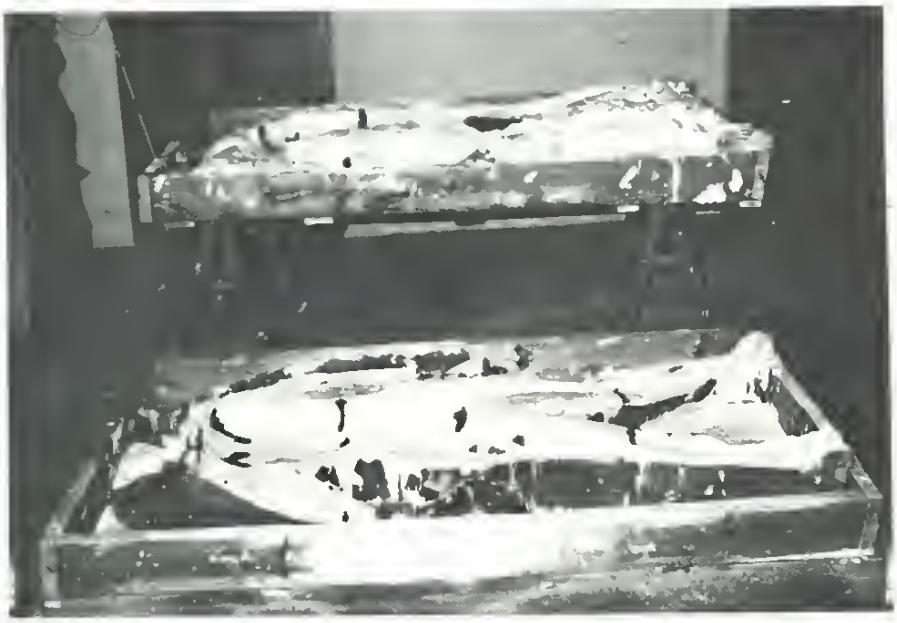
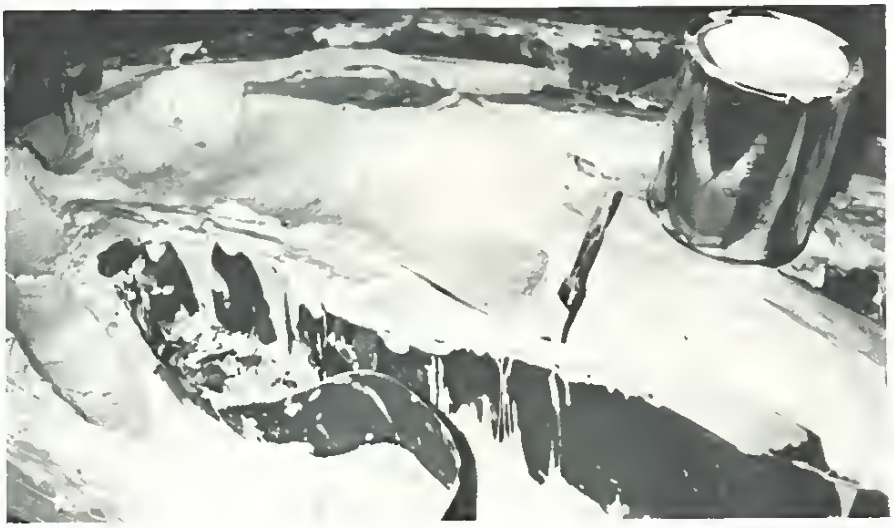


PHOTO 3



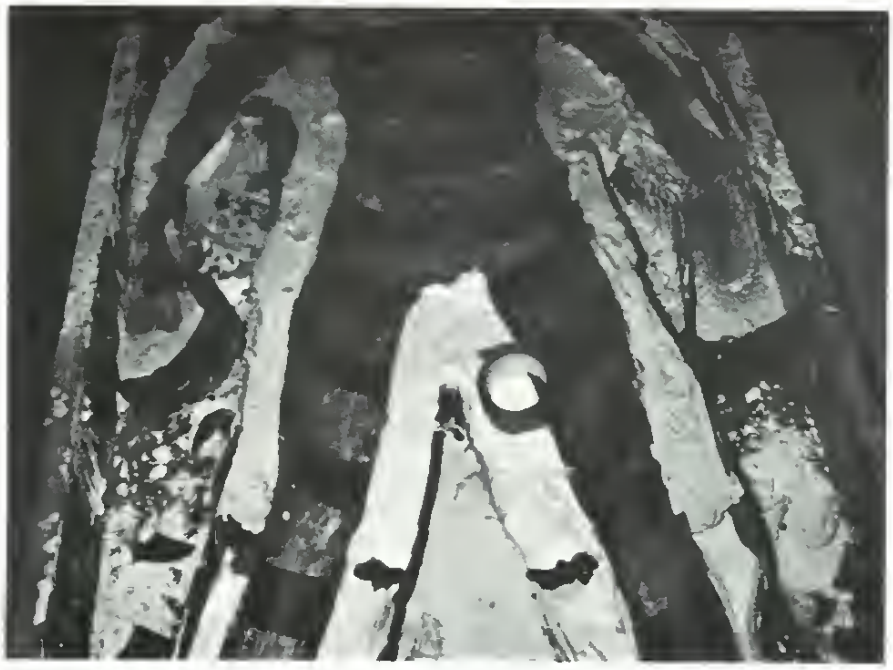


PHOTO 4

PHOTO 5

Above, left: This shows the inside of the mold, with the cardboard strengthener bands contact-glued onto the latex/burlap layer. Right: The rubber mannequin being assembled (the top half of the body is not together yet). Tape is wrapped around the stuffed rubber to help hold the front and back halves together.

about four square yards of urethane foam carpet pad, which is an inexpensive substitute for the foam that is sold at fabric and foam stores. Tape was also wrapped around the stuffed rubber mannequin to further shape and hold the two halves together (see photo 5). My assembled rubber mannequin was purposely made thinner than myself so the completed monster suit would fit tight.

FIBERGLASS MANNEQUIN

To suit my purpose the rubber mannequin had to be coated with a substance that would make it very rigid. I used fiberglass materials, which can be purchased at local plastic supply companies. The supplies needed were: two yards of 2-ply 146-44 TR fiberglass cloth, two thirds of a gallon of polyester resin, two and one half ounces of MEK Peroxide (catalyst-hardener), and four thirty-two ounce containers and brushes. The total cost of all these materials was about $15.00.

Fiberglass materials are easy to work with and yield products that are strong and lightweight. However, the polyester is messy to work with, the fiberglass cloth causes itching, and the fumes are dangerous because they are toxic. A well ventilated work area is absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, my plaster body molds were not in such an area, nor could they be moved due to their immense weight. Therefore, a direct fiberglass mannequin from my plaster body molds was not possible. This left me with no alternative but to take the intermediate step of making the rubber mannequin.

The rubber mannequin was taken outside where I could safely apply the fiberglass materials directly over it, thereby permanently sealing it within the fiberglass coating. The first step in working with the fiberglass materials was to cut the cloth into various sizes and shapes—small pieces for the sharp curves and detailed areas of the mannequin and larger ones for the flatter areas. Thirty-two ounces of polyester and an appropriate amount of MEK Peroxide were then mixed together and brushed onto the front half of the mannequin. The pre-cut fiberglass cloth pieces were then laid on and dabbed with a brush into the wet polyester/MEK Peroxide coating, until one layer of it completely covered this half of the mannequin. These cloth pieces were dabbed into the wet plastic in such a manner that no air pockets formed.

The back half of the mannequin was covered with the fiberglass using the same procedure as outlined for the front, but with an exception of a large nut placed into the back of the mannequin's fiberglass coating. The nut was just the right size to screw into my microphone boom. The boom was later connected to its stand, acting as a third leg for the mannequin so it could stand upright on its own and permit access to all sides.

After these front and back layers of the fiberglass were dry, a second layer was applied using the same procedure. It took about one hour to apply a layer to each half of the mannequin. The next day when the second layer was dry, I sanded it smooth, painted it, and then brought it back downstairs where I could finally begin constructing the monster suit over it (see photo 6).

SHAPING LEG MUSCLES

Before actually starting the muscle build up on the mannequin's legs, I raised it up off the floor so that it stood seven and one half feet tall. I also made full-scale two dimensional cardboard cutouts of the monster's feet and placed them at the bottom of the legs. These two preparations allowed me to construct the monster's legs in relationship to its height and foot design (see photo 7).

The stop-motion animation analogy was my guideline for shaping the monster legs. Muscle build-up techniques are frequently used over stop-motion armatures to create the bodies of fantasy creatures. In my case the six foot tall mannequin represented the armature. Foam strips representing muscles would be built up over the mannequin's legs until the shape of the monster legs was achieved. The legs would later be covered with fur.

The first step in making the monster legs was to put a pair of nylon tights

The two shots above show a front and back view of the "monster" shaping over top of the completed fiberglass mannequin. The mannequin has been raised up off the floor to the proper heights to accomodate the end result—a 7½-foot tall creature. Note the mike stand and boom connection, which helped support the mannequin during the shaping process.

PHOTO 6

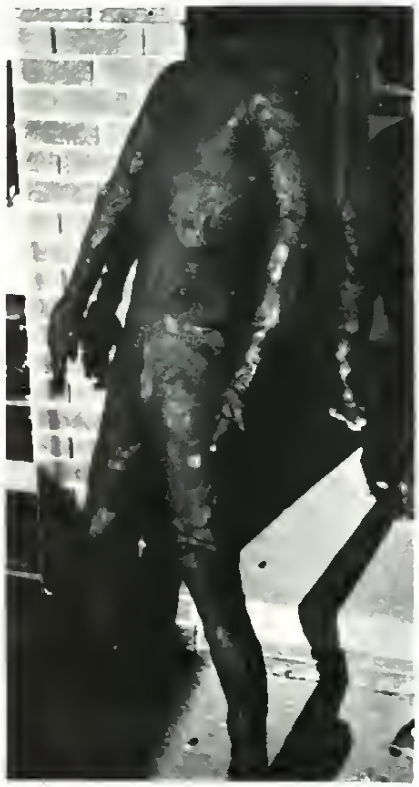


PHOTO 7

Above, left: the completed head-to-toe fiberglass mannequin. Right: Boom connected to mannequin, and a cardboard cut-out of the claw feet. This helped simulate what the finished creature would look like, and aided greatly in shaping leg muscles and proportions.

onto the mannequin. The tights were the base material on which the monster's leg muscles would be glued. This base material also acted as the inner form-fitting pants section of the costume. Next I cut a urethane foam pad into dozens of two-inch-wide strips. These foam strips represented the muscles of the monster. Using the anatomy of a human leg muscle structure as my guideline, I used latex to glue the first layer of muscle strips into place over the nylon base. Muscle strips were glued over underlying layers of muscle strips until the build-up resembled the design in the guideline drawing. During the building up process I kept in mind that fur was to be added over the leg muscle structure. When the fur is later applied the legs will take on quite a bit of bulk, so the muscle build-up must be kept thinner than what might seem natural.

Another adjustment that was made in the muscle structure of the the leg was lowering its knee in relation to the mannequin's knee. By centering the knee between the hip and the ground, the finished leg would have a more natural appearance (see photo 8).

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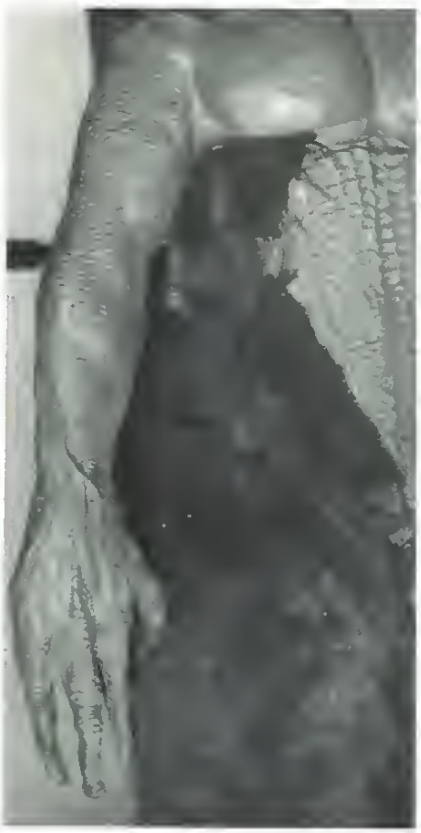
PHOTO 8

PHOTO 9

PHOTO 10

PHOTO 11



Top, left: The right monster knee in a lowered position, relative to the human knee. Top, right: The nylon base of the leg muscle build-up removed from the mannequin. Bottom, left: Clay and fur roughed in over mannequin and leg muscle build-up. Bottom, right: Clay sculpture more detailed here. Note the long fingers, which were later shortened and made fatter.

After the leg muscle shaping was completed this section of the monster suit was pulled off the mannequin. To do so required that it first be slit down the rear. Next, the nylon base insides of the legs was thoroughly covered with baby powder, which would allow it to be easily removed from the mannequin later on (see photo 9). The muscle structure was then put back on the mannequin and sewn together where it had been slit. The fur could now be attached to it and the rest of the costume fitted to it.

CLAY SCULPTURE

The stop-motion analogy was also used to make the upper half of my monster suit, except that a foam latex casting method would be used rather than the muscle build-up technique. Therefore a clay sculpture of the monster's upper body would have to be done over the mannequin.

Before doing any clay sculpting I wanted to get a "feeling" for how the fur covered legs would compliment the upper body clay sculpture. Consequently the fur was only temporarily pinned in place so that I could change the leg structure if need be. Next, I began to roughly shape the monster's clay upper body features onto the mannequin. When this was done I took a step back, looked at the monster, and pondered over what it looked like (see photo 10). I decided that the monster needed muscular features rather than the thin bird-like ones in the guideline drawing. Therefore larger muscles were added by using body building magazine photos for my new guideline. Biceps, triceps, and forearm muscles were piled on, and I even dared to give it pectoral muscles that were inspired by O'Briens, Kong (see photo 11). As tempting as it was to make skin textures and the stomach pattern haphazard, I resisted this short cut and stuck to nature's way of designing with symmetry. I used a small metal sculpting tool for much of the detailed work such as the veins, skin texture, and pores. I studied and duplicated, but in an exaggerated form, the crevices and skin texture lines of my own arms, hands, and fingers onto the monster. The hands were given large arthritic type knuckles. With the clay sculpting two-thirds done I felt satisfied that I was now on the right rack and confidently went back to permanently finishing the fur upholstery work on the legs. ■

TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

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DESTINATION MOON

Article & Photos by
RICHARD ALLISON

DESTINATION MOON started out as a very modest film back in 1968. By combining the soundtrack of George Pal's 1950 film with the visuals of an Apollo mission, I hoped to show the similarity between the science fiction of yesterday and the scientific fact of today. At first this film, shot in regular 8 and color, was to use stop-motion photography in a limited amount. The miniatures, such as they were, would be supplied by hobby kits. This project got blown out of proportion, however, with the end result being a tour de force a' la Harryhausen.

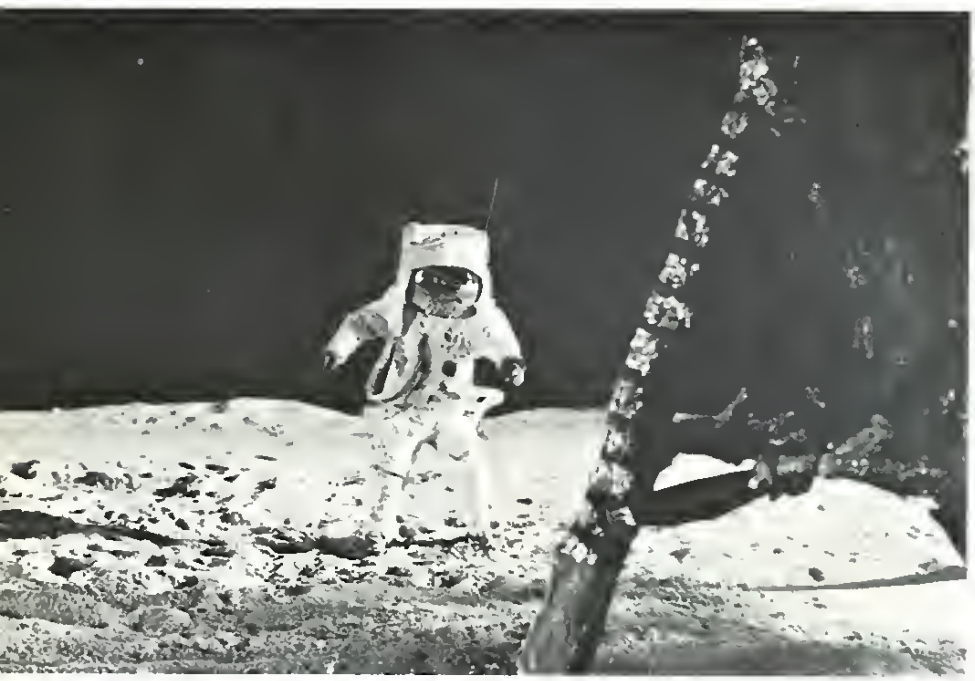
I realized that small, commercially available plastic models were neither detailed nor accurate, especially when compared with photos of the real thing. When I considered that animated astronauts would have to be used in many of the scenes, the construction of larger, more detailed models became a necessity.

The lunar module, although not the biggest, was certainly the most complex and difficult miniature to build. Illustration board was cut and glued in the basic shape of both ascent and descent stages. Over this, aluminum foil was sheathed for the outer skin. Extremely heavy cardboard tubing served as the landing legs and struts. Balsa wood and plastic were used for final trimming. Upon completion it stood over 20 inches high.

The bulk of the animation for DESTINATION MOON dealt with the actual "moon walks." Several moonscapes were built, with the biggest on an 8x10 -foot sheet of plywood. Covering this was a mixture of concrete "patcher" and fireplace ash. These materials, combined with painted backdrops, made for a most realistic appearance.

One sequence in the film depicts a space walk. For this, a miniature of a Saturn V third stage rocket (S-IV/B) with command/service module was built that reached a length of 12 feet.

Below: A miniature astronaut walks on the "moon," with the LM model looming in the foreground.

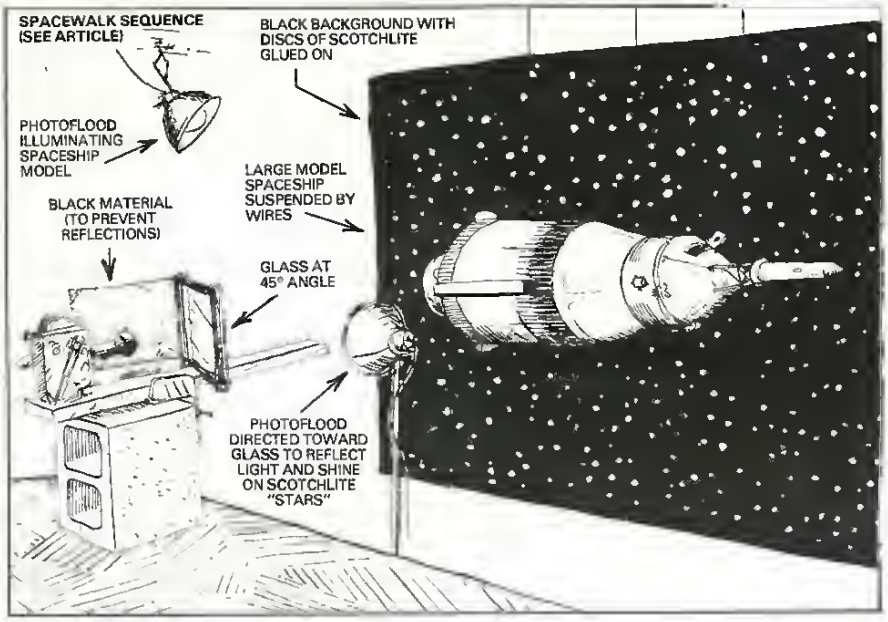


It was constructed in much the same way as the LM; illustration board being the main material with balsa trimmings. The miniature was hung on an overhead rig in front of a black backing covering an entire wall. Part of this sequence dealt with one of the astronauts losing his grip and "drifting" off into space. At this point extensive use of an aerial brace was a necessity. The black background was a big advantage for it made it easy to conceal the black wires. Instead of the usual aerial brace hanging from the ceiling with several strands of wire, I used two black wires running parallel from behind the rocket to the wall off-camera. The miniature astronaut was attached and animated slowly drifting along the wires in space. This type of aerial brace was uncomplicated and took little time to install for a new camera set-up.

To get the effect of the stars, several disks of Scotchlite were attached to the background. A pane of ordinary glass was mounted at a 45° angle to the camera lens, much like the pellicle prism found in many camera viewfinders. To the side of the glass, a photoflood reflected light to the Scotchlite "stars" giving them the necessary brightness. The camera and the pellicle arrangement were mounted together similar to a matte-box. This in turn was set in a large vise mounted on top of a concrete block to minimize camera shake during photography; the result was rock-steady.

The astronauts' space suits were made of cloth soaked in acrylic paint over a wire frame. The helmet visors were simply gold Christmas tree ornaments, while the backpacks were made from matchboxes. Standing about 6 inches tall, with the other miniatures scaled to size, the astronauts looked reasonably realistic and "performed" quite well.

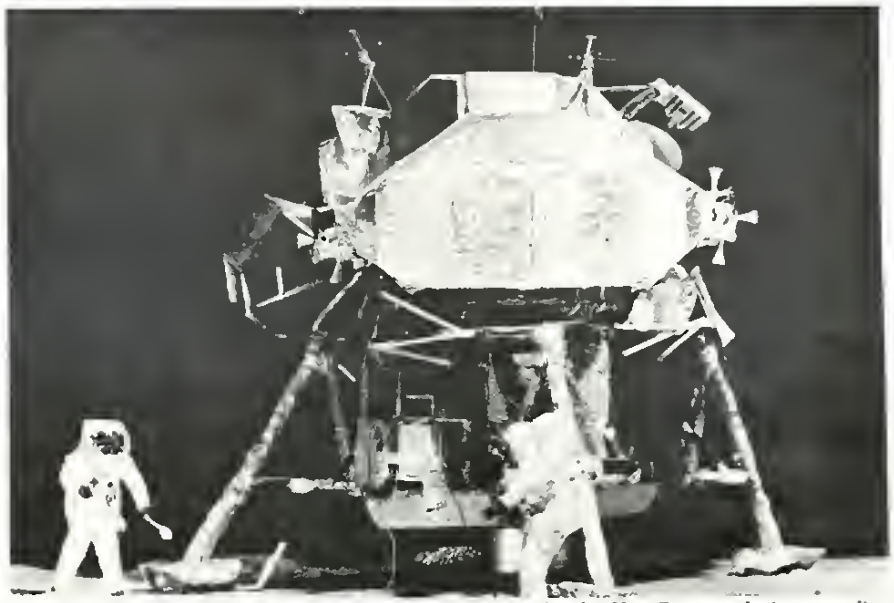
Several shots in this film made use of animated cut-outs. One shot, for example, pictured the third stage orbiting over the earth. Creating an effect



like this was simple. An 18 x 24-inch painting of the Earth was double-exposed with a shot of a painting of the rocket, animated on a black background. The only thing to watch for is that the rocket doesn't cross a point that will be occupied by a "star" from the first exposure. A slightly more sophisticated effect concerns the separation of the LM with the command/service module (CSM). In this shot, the LM is a simple cut-out animated on a painting of the moon. The CSM is a separate exposure. Not only is this craft moving across the screen, but diminishing in size as it recedes in the distance. In this second exposure, the camera pans right to left while zooming out. These two exposures combine to make a shot that is not only visually interesting but very inexpensive as well.

Still another shot in the film that utilized cut-outs is where the LM is moving over the surface prior to a landing. The first exposure has the ship moving across the screen while the camera zooms out. The second exposure, however, has the camera dollying across the lunar landscape appearing at the bottom of the frame.

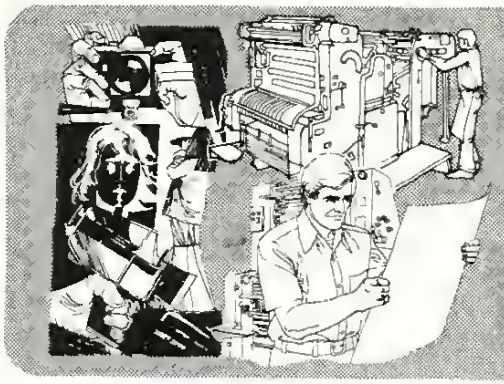
In many cases, flame and fire effects can be adequately achieved with double-exposure. Just as the LM lowers itself down to the moon's surface, a mighty blast of flame erupts from its engine. The first exposure was of a painting of the LM. For the second run through the camera, twelve black sheets of paper were used. Each sheet had an area cut out corresponding to the flames from the engine. Each sheet had tracing paper taped on the back, covering the area of "flame". After the tracing paper was painted with transparent color (red, orange, and yellow), it was lit from behind and shot in single-frame fashion similar to two-dimensional animation. For the third exposure, a painting of the lunar surface slowly rose from the bottom of the screen. As long as the LM didn't enter into an area occupied by the moon painting, the illusion succeeded. In all of these examples the black background helps a great deal.



Top, right: One of the several miniature astronauts made for the film. Bottom: A view revealing the entire LM model, as two astronaut models go about their business.

Effects like these are perfectly suited for the amateur. Although not up to Hollywood standards, they can be very effective in an amateur production. Considering the small amount of money it takes to create these effects, the price would seem to be worth it many times over.

I worked on DESTINATION MOON in my spare time for about three and one-half years. Many other film projects were made during that time but none had the variety or extensive use of special effects and animation as that one. As it stands today, DESTINATION MOON exists as a string of highlights on a hypothetical Apollo mission. Perhaps because it is not in the narrative form, as originally planned, it should be listed as a failure. But when Leith Stevens' beautiful score underlines the mysterious 8mm lunar surface, or when animated Apollo astronauts, in the voice of Warner Anderson, claim the moon "for the benefit of all mankind," one can see that the science fiction vision of the 40's and 50's wasn't too far removed from today's reality. ■



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.

George Perkins and Mark Behrend and their MB PRODUCTIONS of Brookings, South Dakota have just finished A GAME OF TERROR, a super 8 sound/color production. The film is about two men who explore an abandoned farmhouse and discover a "monster" making its home there. Running time is 10 minutes, and the cast includes Richard Woolworth, Ken Fredrickson, and George Perkins.

D C. FILMS of Lutherville, Maryland has completed its first film, SNIPERS, which deals with the conflicts of a futuristic society. Special effects include stop-motion and miniature explosions. Zoa Barnes stars in the 8mm production, which was conceived by Andie Dolan and David Cawley.

GALAXY FILMS of Bridgeport, Connecticut is currently filming THE WITNESS, in super 8 color/sound with a running time of 20 minutes. The story is about a killer who murders a bartender and a witness to the slaying who the killer pursues throughout the film. Special effects include realistic explosives and gunblast squibbs, as well as some gruesome make-up for stab wounds. GALAXY'S producers, Robert Ondira, Tom Phaneuf, and Lee Jamilik recently completed PAWS, a 32 minute take-off on you-know-what, with a "killer" cat as the star. PAWS has been well received in Connecticut, and was a hit last April at the Balticon 10 Convention in Baltimore, Maryland.

Charles Voner of Woburn, Massachussetts is currently producing a 16mm sound/color film entitled SURVIVAL IN THE WILD, a satirical film about an ostrich and a pig who have to cope with living in a house with a human being. The budget for the film has already hit the $1,000.00 mark. Stop-motion animation is being used for the two animals, with some supplemental cel animation effects. An original music score has also been composed for the film.

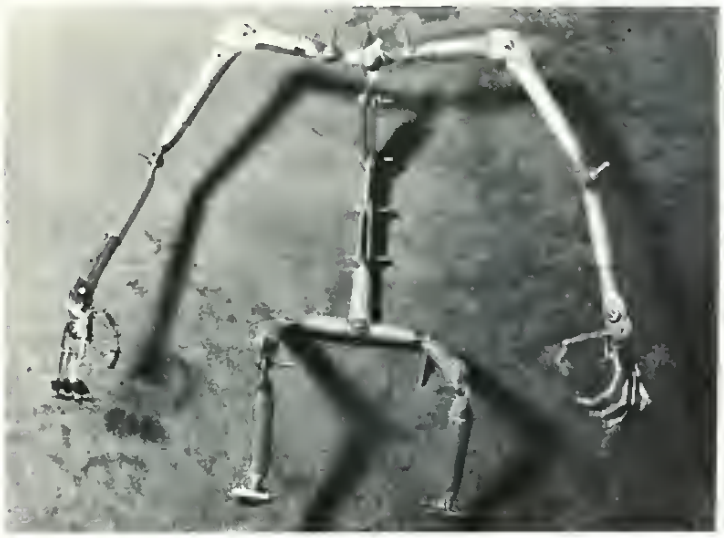
LYCOMING COUNTY FORESTRY REPORT is being filmed by Mike Hutchison of Williamsport, Pennsylvania. The super 8 color/sound film is a comedy and really has little to do with forestry, except for one quick skit. The production will include a "Bigfoot" spoof, a short but crazy ambulance chase, and a TV show starring Matt Shott, professional animator. Effects employed are animation and process shots. The cast includes Tom Woodruff, John Morris, Paul Roman, and Steve Loveland.

FABULOUS FLICKS FILMS of Livonia, Michigan is presently involved in pre-production for TIME EXCURSIONS, INC. The plot involves a wealthy hunter taking his two sons on an excursion back to prehistoric times. During the hunt, the hunter accidentally crushes a moth and the course of history is ultimately disrupted, as revealed in the final scenes of the film. Effects on tap consist of a time machine (complete with computers), a slit-scan scene when the time machine hurdles back into the past, and several stop-motion dinosaur models. There will also be many miniature sets and glass paintings. The 12-minute, super 8 color/sound production stars Tom Gerken, Dave Tucker, and Bob Carpenter.

Rod Labrana of Southgate, Michigan is heavily into production on ROBOT WARS, a film which is almost entirely stop-motion animation. In all, fourteen different models have been constructed. The sets, for the most part, are miniatures with glass paintings and rear-projected backgrounds. ROBOT WARS will be super 8 color.

Blade Galentine of Alexandria, Virginia has recently completed the animation epic, THE LEGEND OF TERRORDON. The film is about a prehistoric beast, Terrordon, who has come to life via the energy absorbed from the sun's rays. Ten ball-and-socket animation models were used for the film, which was shot mostly on miniature tabletop settings. Galentine is already planning a sequel: TERRORDON VERSUS TANTAR.

This stop-motion model was created by Ralph Miller of Elmhurst, Illinois for his film, BUG OFF, in which a household of bugs is infested with tiny little people.



A new twist for armatures: J. Patrick Kluesner of Anderson, Indiana uses metal tubing with flattened ends (above). To the right, the clay sculpture of the creature the armature belongs to.

TIMESLIP TOWER was recently completed by Kevin Danzey of Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. The film is about a building which, due to experiments in matter-transfer, is thrown into limbo (the whole building) where it glides from one place and time to another. Danzey has also completed THE PHOENIX LEGACY, about a man in suspended animation who wakes up in the year 2553 A.D., only to realize that he is the last human being left on earth. Both films are in super 8 color, with musical soundtracks.

Lewis Schoenbrun of Atlanta, Georgia has recently finished a science-fantasy film entitled THE EARTHMEN, based on a short story by the same name from Ray Bradbury's THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES. The film was produced through TRANSWAY PRODUCTIONS of Watchung, New Jersey. The story revolves around three astronauts who, upon arriving on Mars, are directed to an insane asylum. Special effects for the film include a stop-motion puppet, a miniature spaceship, rear-projections, and multiple exposures. THE EARTHMEN is a super 8 color/sound film with a running time of 18 minutes.

BUNNY AND CLOD, a take-off on BONNIE AND CLYDE, was recently completed by Harry Trueman and his NUGGET PRODUCTION STUDIOS of Arvada, Colorado. NUGGET has also produced a cel animation film entitled FREEDOM IN 1776. Both films have an approximate running time of 8 minutes.

The S.P.Q.R. MOVIE COMPANY of Haledon, New Jersey has just completed work on their new production, SUPERMAN VERSUS DIABOLICUS. The film, budgeted at $270.00, was shot in super 8 single-system sound and color and has a running time of 42 minutes. Special effects played a major role and consisted of animation, rear-projection, macro photography and several props such as a "break-away" stone wall, a bendable crowbar and gun, rocks that "shatter" and tape recorders which explode. The cast is comprised of Mike Maresca, Debby Licter, Jeff Grimshaw, Leo Guabello, Ken Zollo, Bob Coar, Chuck Ward, and Wally Manjkow.

An amateur version of PLANET OF THE APES is underway at SATURN STUDIOS of Rochester, Minnesota. Producer/Director Robert Nash is doing the ape make-up, but is using liquid latex rather than the foam latex processes used by John Chambers in the professional version. Costumes are being designed by Kim Johnson and cinematography handled by Paul Meek. The cast includes Terence Riska, Mike Tenhoff, and Chris Smith. The super 8 color/sound production is budgeted at $300.00 and will have a running time of 1 hour.

Tim Davis and his DYNAMIC FILMS of Washington, D.C. are lensing a camp science fiction film entitled CAPTAIN KOOKAMONGA AND THE STAR THIEVES. The story concerns the abduction of a nuclear scientist who is rescued by Captain Kookamonga, "the fat wonder of justice." Many full-size set pieces are being designed for the film, as well as some original foam latex make-up created by Diane Hammond. CAPTAIN KOOKAMONGA will contain effects such as mattes, rear projections, animated laser beams, miniature sets, and explosions. The super 8 color/sound production stars Rick Willett, Kathleen Phippard, Edwin Phippard, and Danny Riba, and will have a running time of 25 minutes.

Mike Behrend's MB PRODUCTIONS of Brookings, South Dakota have produced THE YUCK, a super 8 color satire of THE BLOB. "The Yuck" in reality is a beanbag chair which is moved about via invisible wires manipulated by offscreen crew members. Running time is 14 minutes and the cast includes George Perkins, Mike Monahan, David Fee, Ken Fredrickson, and Mark Behrend.

Alan Tuskes of Cleveland, Ohio is currently filming PARADISE LOST (not based on the John Milton classic). The story takes place 400 years in the future, when mankind is divided into two groups: the Industrialists and the Environmentalists. A conflict sets in when both groups abandon a poisoned Earth and discover (and battle over) a new planet capable of supporting life. Tuskes and co-producer Allan Faulhaber are constructing 7 stop-motion models for the film.

FILM & FANTASY PUBLICATIONS

FANTASY MAGAZINE INDEX—one-shot; 40 pages; offset; black & white cover. This nicely presented, magazine-format index is a reasonably thorough guide and listing of publications devoted to science fiction, horror, and fantasy film-oriented themes. Listings are alphabetical by title, with issue numbers and a brief description of contents of each issue of a particular magazine. Unfortunately, all of the publications listed are not currently in print, and editor Del Winans doesn't tell us which issues are available and which ones aren't. Also, no prices are given, and addresses for all publications are lumped together in a separate listing in the back of the index, rather than with the alphabetical listings. Nevertheless, it should be a helpful guide for those who are new to the field, and it has a three page "Introduction" by Forrest J. Ackerman. The price is a bit steep at $4.00 per copy, but acceptable in view of the fact that this is a one-shot affair. Available from: *Del Winans, 226 South Bouldin Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21224.*

OLD DARK HOUSE #2—published irregularly; 52 pages; offset; black & white cover. The latest issue of this new fantasy film magazine contains, among lots of other things, a 6-page interview with Don Dohler about THE ALIEN FACTOR (including 12 stills from the film), part 1 of a detailed retrospective on THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, and a brief article with stills on STAR WARS. Many other films are reviewed or previewed. Available for $2.00 per copy from: *George LaVoo, 23 Public Square, Brecksville, Ohio 44141.*

THE OUTER LIMITS #1—published irregularly; 64 pages; offset; slick covers. The first of several volumes of a magazine devoted entirely to THE OUTER LIMITS, one of the most original and creative TV series ever produced. Editor/Publisher Ted Rypel is doing the logical thing and covering the episodes chronologically, with the first twelve shows being represented in this first issue. Lots of interesting behind-the-scenes stills, pre-production sketches, and artwork. Each episode is reviewed, with a plot synopsis, and the cast credits given. The format is clean and uncluttered. Available for $2.50 per copy from: *Ted C. Rypel, 11100 Governor Avenue, Cleveland, Ohio 44111.*

PURE IMAGES—published irregularly; 44 pages; offset with some interior color; slick color covers. Another new magazine in the vein of CINEFANTASTIQUE, attempting to cover a lot of ground on fantasy in film and television. Although most of the articles in this premiere issue are nothing more than previews with photos, there is one decent feature on Ray Harryhausen's films, with several good stills (and several all-too-familiar ones). The photo reproduction and typesetting give PURE IMAGES a nice look, but the majority of the material lacks depth. Available for $2.50 per copy from: *Greg Theakston, 13970 Lamphere, Detroit, Michigan 48223.*

CIRCUIT NEEDS NEW WOMEN'S FILMS

The National Women's Film Circuit is inviting submissions for its new film package. The Circuit, a project of Moonforce Media, Inc., is a nationwide series of showings of feminist films which started in 1975. Since then, two different packages of films have toured to over 30 cities. Proceeds from showings are divided between the filmmakers, local producers, and Moonforce Media. To qualify for our third package, the film production should be substantially controlled by women. All filmmaking styles and subject matters are welcome. Films and entry forms are due by October 1, 1977. For further info and entry forms write to:

Moonforce Media, Inc.
P.O. Box 2934
Main City Station
Washington, D.C. 20013

Films must be in 16mm only, with optical soundtracks or silent. There is no limit to number of entries and no entry fee.

READER EXCHANGE

If any CINEMAGIC readers out there know of a college or film course geared toward the sort of special effects knowledge needed for the fantasy, horror, and science fiction genre, please let me know! *Marc Silvestri, 2652 W. Rosemont, Chicago, Illinois 60659.*

Interested in writing fantasy? We are an amateur film company looking for a fantasy script involving creatures and dinosaurs for a stop-motion oriented film. The script should be geared to a running time of between 70 and 100 minutes. Write to: *The March Company, 145 Wesley Street, Capitola, California 95010.*

I wish to contact filmmakers in the Los Angeles area doing work with ball/socket armatures--especially King Kong freaks. I'm interested in starting some sort of stop-motion coalition to advance the state of three-dimensional animation beyond its unjustified "gimmick" image in professional film circles. Contact: *Christopher R. Mohr, 11144 Excelsior Drive, Norwalk, California 90650.*

I would like to get in touch with anyone in my area interested in doing stop-motion animation films: *Paul Stadinger, 239 N. 9th Street, Allentown, Pennsylvania 18102.*

FILM FESTIVAL RESULTS

The first annual Kinetic Image Film Competition was a rousing success, according to chairman Jim Caldwell. In all, 22 films were entered and judged, with each entrant receiving a detailed critique sheet. The top ten films received a public showing. The winners were:

1. *MUSIC BOX – Phil Preston, Trenton, Michigan*
2. *CAFETERIA ODYSSEY – Robert Weir, Ithaca, New York*
3. *I SEE THE OCEAN, THE OCEAN SEIZE ME – Keith Bowsza, Westminster, California*
4. *WORD POWER – Roger Rodgers, Miami, Florida*
5. *THE RETURN OF THE SPACE RANGERS – Richard Geiwitz & Chris Gummer, Baltimore, MD.*
6. *BABY FACE – Roger Rodgers, Miami, Florida*
7. *IGNUTZ & OLAF – Phil Preston, Trenton, Michigan*
8. *LA MAISON – Roger Williams, Slidell, Louisiana*
9. *MASQUE – Keith Bowsza, Westminster, California*
10. *THE WEB – Phil Preston, Trenton, Michigan*

Those interested in entering next year's Kinetic Image Competition can write for entry forms to:

Mr. Jim Caldwell
1845 Solon Avenue
Dunedin, Florida 33528

EVENT OF THE MILLENIUM LESS THAN EVENTFUL

The 1977 World Science Fiction, Horror, and Fantasy Expo, which for several months had been advertised as an almost unbelievable gathering of professional film industry personnel and boasting of "more than 100 feature films" turned out to be a sour disappointment for many anxious fans who attended. Our man on the scene, Ernie Farino, was lucky enough to have his trek to the Tucson seminar paid for by the film company he works for. Ernie files this report:

Unfortunately, The 1977 World Science Fiction, Horror and Fantasy Expo, held in Tucson, Arizona June 2-5, was less than expected. Unbelievably poor organization and operational procedure marred the convention so much that at one point, several of us were considering lawsuits. Eventually, the scheduled guests did arrive, mostly on or after Saturday, though few of the scheduled films arrived and even fewer were shown in their announced timeslots (many fans missed films, speakers and panels simply because there was no printed program at all---just constantly updated mimeographed sheets relating the day-to-day changes).

Considering the presence of Ray Harryhausen and Jim Danforth, the eventual showing of only 4 or so animation films (and one of those being EYE OF THE TIGER) seemed irritating enough, but the scheduling of WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH and SEVEN FACES OF DR. LAO starting at 2:30 a.m. Saturday morning was almost too much to tolerate. The 35mm film facilities, where some of the lectures were also held, was located a 20-minute walk away from the convention hotel, and the convention organizers did not have enough foresight or courtesy to provide transportation for the guests (Rich Catizone and I walked over with Harryhausen and Schneer, which was fortunate for them, since their "official escort" had no idea where they were to appear) Ray and Charles were able to attend only for Friday but, through a mixup, the models Ray had brought were never put on display for the fans, and immediately following the talk and some hasty autographs in the lobby, Ray and Charles (after walking back to the hotel) were whisked off to a "guests only" banquet for the remainder of the evening, further limiting contact with the fans. (I should mention that Ray and Charles seemed only too happy to visit with the fans, sign autographs and just chat, and appeared to be just as puzzled/irritated at the whole setup as the rest of us.)

Below: The master himself—Ray Harryhausen chats with fans as Charles Schneer sits by in the background.

Photos: Ernie Farino

Above: From right to left: Jim Danforth, George Pal, Harlan Ellison, and Jack Arnold.

Jim Danforth, who was able to attend all four days, brought along one of Willis O'Brien's original WAR EAGLES armatures (an eagle), an original MIGHTY JOE YOUNG armature, and a superb dinosaur armature Jim had built himself. Jim also unveiled a breathtaking oil painting he had done for his current TIMEGATE project, which may be used for the one-sheet poster. Jim and L.B. Abbott shared the stage just prior to the arrival of Harryhausen and Schneer, and conducted a most interesting discussion of various special effects techniques. Other guests in attendance included Robert Wise, Harlan Ellison, artist Boris Vallejo, George Pal, James Doohan, Jack Arnold, John Agar, Johnny Weismuller, Robert Heinlein, June Foray (creator of many cartoon voices including Rocky and Natasha from ROCKY AND BULLWINKLE SHOW), Clarence Nash (voice of Donald Duck), makeup artist William Tuttle, Whit Bissell, Mae Questal (voice of Betty Boop and currently known as "Aunt Bluebell" in paper towel commercials), Jack Haley, Sr. (Tin Man in WIZARD OF OZ) and Roger Zelazny. Ian Ballentine, of Ballentine Books, set up a special room with about 20 original Frank Frazetta paintings, and the regular art room included many original Kelly Freas and Boris Vallejo paintings (as well as a few original costumes courtesy Western Costume Company, including the original cape worn by Ming the Merciless and the now-decrepit alien suit from EARTH VS. THE FLYING SAUCERS). All of the original Kenneth Strickfadden Frankenstein Lab electrical equipment was assembled, and looked quite impressive, though few of us ever saw it in operation due to the crazy scheduling (I had to see clips on the 10:00 News to catch any of it).

The dealers room was of average size, with a fairly widespread variety of material (though surprisingly little film of any kind was available). The STAR WARS phenomenon has already hit strong, incidentally, and is starting to quickly overtake the STAR TREK market; one dealer sold all of his STAR WARS material within the first 20 minutes of the first day, and was stuck with the STAR TREK stuff for the rest of the convention!

If it weren't for the guests themselves, the convention would've been pretty much a failure. Few of the promotional promise were lived up to by the convention committee, and trying to plan your day around certain events was like feeling your way around in a fog (even Robert Wise missed his own panel because of the scheduling, while giving a talk following DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL, and no one in the committee could find him...). Attendance seemed good, but morale certainly wasn't.

---Ernie Farino

THE ALIEN FACTOR

IN OUR LAST ISSUE WE PRESENTED A "SNEAK PREVIEW" OF THE NEW FEATURE FILM BEING PRODUCED BY CINEMAGIC VISUAL EFFECTS. AS PROMISED IN THAT PREVIEW, HERE IS AN UPDATE ON THE FILM'S PROGRESS:

by DON DOHLER

Since we weren't quite halfway through principal filming of THE ALIEN FACTOR when I wrote the sneak preview article in CINEMAGIC #9, it was hard to envision the magnitude of post-production duties yet to come. But they came--one after another--and it seemed as though they'd never stop.

Our main shooting ended on a dreary, freezing-cold day near the end of February, and by mid-April we had rough-cut the film and finished some additional interior scenes. A lot has happened since then.

It was near the end of April that we contracted special effects ace, Ernest D. Farino to do our opening and closing titles/credits sequence, as well as some special optical effects needed for the main film. There's no doubt about it: Ernie, once just another talented (and hopeful) amateur, proved his professionalism and creativity by sending us a test reel of the opening title sequence. Beautiful. Without hesitation, one of the niftiest title openings we'd ever seen and, by God, even better than STAR WARS! If Ernie isn't right up there with the likes of Ray Harryhausen or Jim Danforth one day soon, then it'll be because Kodak stopped making film stock.

Enter another "once-was" amateur, Kenneth Walker, and his unique and exciting musical score composed especially for THE ALIEN FACTOR. Ken somehow created symphonic musical pieces (which often sound like an entire orchestra) using just a roomful of synthesizer components he pieced together himself. It proves once again that it isn't the money, but the creativity of the individual that counts.

Meanwhile, Dave Ellis and I polished our editing, and with the addition of "track 2" sound effects and "track 3" music, we really saw THE ALIEN FACTOR come alive before us as a full-fledged, real-for-sure motion picture. A total of nine grueling weeks at the Cinemonta flatbed editing machine had paid off. And a very handsome reward, indeed, to see the fruits of endless hours (18 a day average, 7 days a week) of taking bits and pieces of film and sound and trying to assemble it into a concise, coherent story.

Needless to say, it's really quite a thrill to see your first feature film come to life--and we haven't even seen it in its finest form yet. As I write this, we're still awaiting our first, perfectly timed and color-corrected composite print from the lab. And that says nothing of our cast of actors and actresses who haven't seen much of anything since filming ended several months ago. A patient group, and a talented one--the acting in the film really is convincing and believable; in fact, more so than I expected. They may not be Hollywood actors, but I'll bet that 99% of the audiences who see the film won't know that!

Where do we go from here? Well, if all goes well, we will have locked up a deal on THE ALIEN FACTOR by the time you read this. We have some interest from two well-known distributors (who must remain nameless for now) and a lot of interest from some lesser-known distributors. It all depends on what sort of offer we get, but there's no denying the fact that THE ALIEN FACTOR is a commercially viable commodity and a potential big money-maker. If one of those distributors agrees with that fact, you'll probably be watching the film at your local theatre one day very soon. We hope you enjoy it!

THE ALIEN FACTOR poster artwork created by Canadian artist Tim Hammell.

CREATING REALISTIC MINIATURE SETS

Article and Photographs
by
CRAIG REARDON

I like to use miniature settings when it's necessary to show an animated figure in actual surroundings. I've experimented with rear projections, and when you only have amateur 8mm equipment to work with, rear projections don't work. The equipment isn't built for it. On the other hand, a well-constructed miniature can be extremely convincing. This may seem hard to believe, but I've fooled people into accepting my miniatures as the real thing. So it's possible to put one over on your audience.

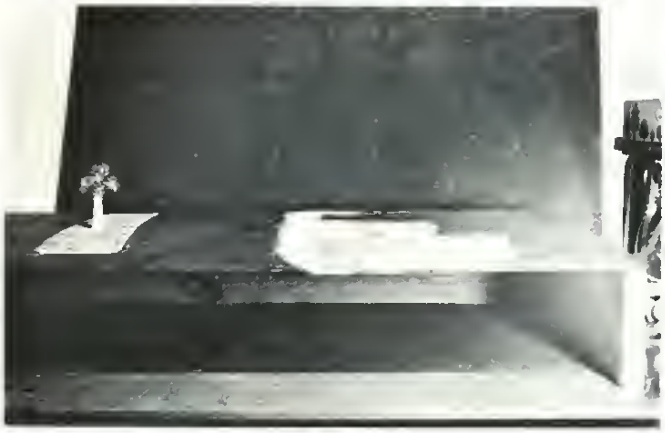
I recently made an 8mm film featuring a giant gorilla (the old Kong routine) wreaking comical havoc on a motorist in front of my house. OK, hang the plot—it was just an exercise in trick photography. I needed to make a miniature of my house to accomplish this plan, and I'll describe how I went about doing it. All miniature problems present different challenges, but the techniques I used on this job are adaptable for other applications.

I wanted to be able to show the front of my home in a long shot, from two directions. I didn't want to be stuck with one static angle. Therefore, I planned to build a stationary miniature of my house, and paint two different backdrops which would give the effect of seeing the area from two different points of perspective. The first step was to load my camera with color film and take several shots of the house. Then I sorted through the prints and picked two angles. I decided to use these shots later on, copying them exactly when I painted my two backdrops. Meanwhile, I set about building the miniatures that would go in front. For this chore, I referred to all the photos I'd taken.

There is always something which keys the size of all of your miniatures. In this case, I needed a little miniature Volkswagen, because the ape was going to mash it. I didn't want to build anything that detailed myself--I preferred to buy a nice little toy VW from the local hobby store, which I did. This became the key miniature, and everything else would be built to its scale.

I started on the building first. I took a large sheet of illustration board, about 3x3 feet, and held the little VW up against it, nose first. I sketched the approximate size of the garage door around the VW, referring to a photo.

Left: The miniature set and the components used for scale--the toy Volkswagen and the stop-motion ape model. In the film, the ape crunches the auto. This miniature setting is a re-creation of writer Craig Reardon's own house and street.



Left: The raised platform and the beginnings of the miniature set. Right: Close-up view of the planter construction.

This outline gave me something to go by, and I estimated the size of the whole wall, drawing it around the door. This was going to become the wall facing the street in the "inner" portion of the building. The building had such an unusual construction that I decided to build it in two parts: a straight, inner core, and a wrap-around outer section. This wall I'd begun to draw was for the inner core. I next drew in the brace of windows on the upper story. I did all this by estimation, by eyeball. I made my right angles using a triangle sliding along a T-square, the way draftsmen do it. Now I drew a partial wall to the right of this wall, which would become the wall facing the camera. It was partial because I only wanted to show just so much of the house, so there was no need to build the whole thing. The camera frame would mask the fact that the house was only partially built. I cut these pieces out, using a sharp single edge razor blade in a holder, cutting along a steel ruler, on a glass surface (glass gives you a clean cut). Using these pieces for a guide, I began to draw the walls for the outer section of the building. First I drew the wall facing the street, adding the large picture window and the smaller window to the right of that. Then I drew the wall facing the camera, and put in the three windows. I cut these pieces out too. I glued both sections together. I use Duco, a tough plastic cement that dries fast. When I glue two pieces of cardboard together at a right angle, I first glue a length of balsa wood, about ¼-inch square, along the join on one piece. That gives me something more to glue to. Then I trim both edges of the cardboard pieces, so there will be one clean corner, and not a crude joint where one piece butts up against the other.

Next I had to make windows. There were already holes cut for them, but there had to be something to back those holes up. I drew a rectangle for each window on a sheet of cardboard, each one a little bit oversize. Then I painted in drapes in the correct shades, trying to make them look three-dimensional, using plain opaque watercolor. I had a special problem on the many single windows upstairs because they had frames, set back inside the window opening. I solved this quickly by tracing these windows onto board, then reducing each opening. These reduced squares, once I cut them all out, would leave a little border simulating window frames. I cut these out in one piece and glued it behind the window holes, and voila!, instant sunken window frames. Now I glued a strip of acetate behind every window opening in the building, to simulate glass (I later found out that the acetate facing the camera will reflect a different image on every frame of animated film, which creates a wildly flickering effect. So for any windows that face your lens, create the effect of glass with watercolor; otherwise the acetate is still fine). I glued all the painted cardboard pieces behind the acetate, and I had the effect of windows with drapes behind them.

Now, the roofs. I took the core (inner) building, still a separate unit from the outer section, and held its topside against a sheet of board. I marked how far I wanted the roof to extend out from the building, as it did in the photos, and then I cut the roof out. The roof for the outer section of the building was done the same way, except the inner edge had to be trimmed by trial and error until it hugged the inner section correctly. I noticed that eaves were visible beneath the roof where it jutted out around the house. I tried simulating them by painting them, but that looked lousy, so I decided to create them in 3-D. I merely glued a thin (1/16-inch) sheet of balsa all around the edges, then cut out little squares at regular, measured intervals. What was left behind suggested a regular succession of eaves. I glued the roofs, complete with eaves, on the miniatures.

Finally, I glued the building together. First, though, I cut a large hole through the inner section so I'd be able to reach through that into the outer section, from behind. I needed to have the ape punch a hole in the picture window and pull out a man, and therefore I had to be able to feed a miniature "human" puppet out through the window from behind.

Okay, now the problem was the surrounding street. I had to place the house on some sort of elevated stage, because I had to fasten my ape puppet to this stage using bolts—screwed into his feet—fed through holes drilled in the stage. To insert these bolts and fasten them with wingnuts, I needed space underneath the stage. I solved this by cutting out a sheet of sturdy 1/8-inch Masonite, 1½-feet deep and 3-feet long. I nailed 1 x 4-inch planks around three sides, which supported the Masonite stage 4 inches off the ground, just enough to reach under. This enabled me to concentrate on plotting the miniature details of the street.

The house and property were naturally on a higher level than the street, so I glued a 1 x 1½-foot sheet of the same 1/8-inch Masonite to the right end of the stage. That gave me my elevation, and I traced around the base of my miniature house with a white colored pencil as I held it on this raised area. I then planned how the lawn and the planter toward the rear of the house would fit in. At this point I built the planter. It was made in three cardboard sections: one triangular piece extended from the house, tapering down the sidewalk. Another piece

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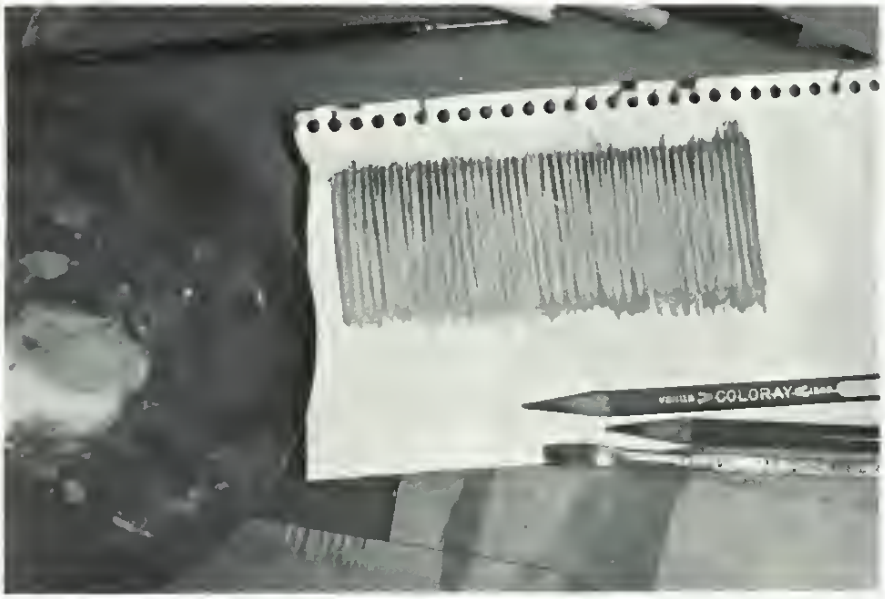

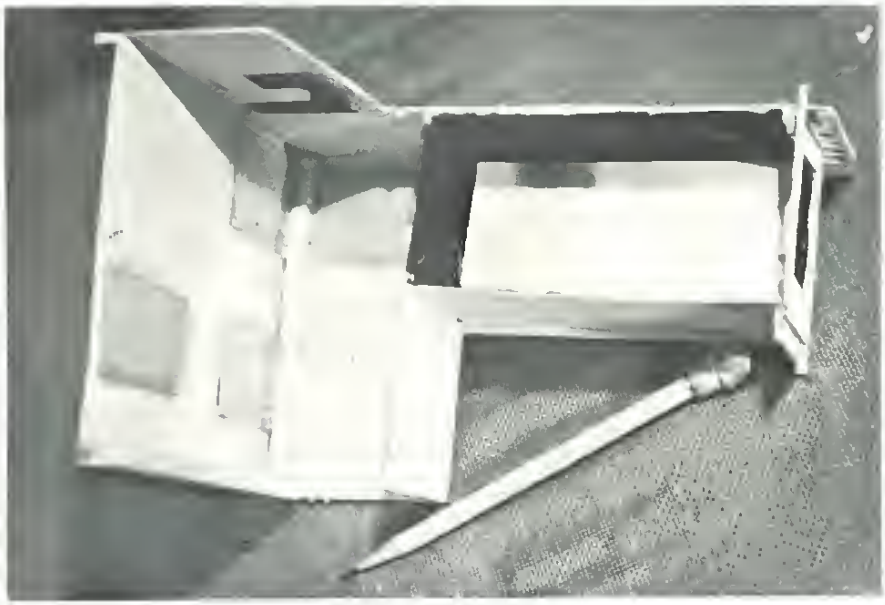

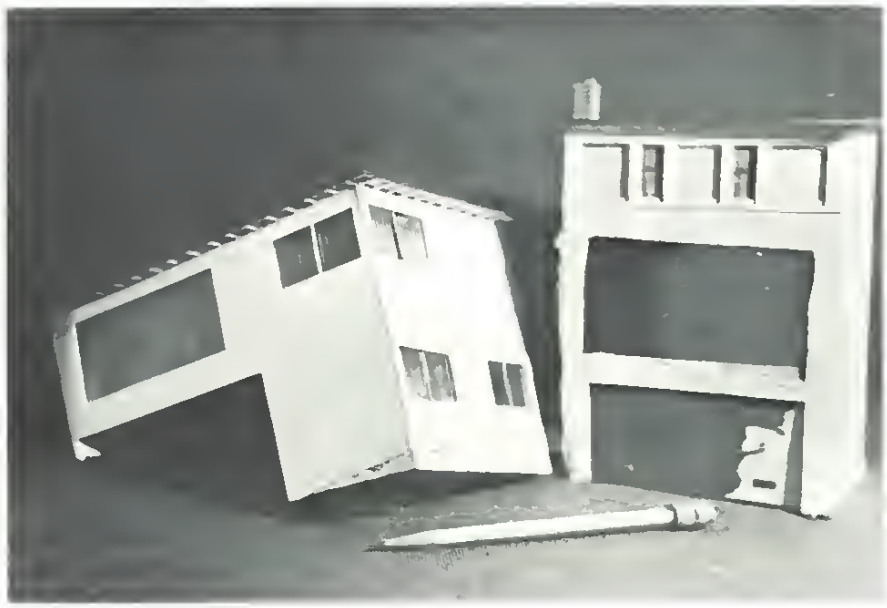

represented the planted area. The third piece was notched to represent a brick wall on the neighboring property. The piece representing the planted area was puttied over with a thin coating of papier mache mix. This is a material that can be purchased under different brand names in hobby stores. It's usually powdered asbestos. Mix it with water and white glue, but don't breath the fluffy asbestos till it's completely soaked (the fibers irritate your lungs). This paste dries with a rough look that suggests earth. When this was dry, I assembled the planter and glued it in the proper position next to where the house would go. Now I glued down the house, and put Saran wrap over the base of the wall near the lawn. Then I mixed up more paste and set about making the lawn. This was contoured to match what I saw in the photos. The Saran wrap protected the cardboard house from absorbing the water from the paste and warping.

The sidewalk was cut from a sheet of illustration board, and glued at a slight angle descending into the street. I left a gap in it and modeled the curved driveway with more papier mache paste. There was a grassy divider strip surrounded by a curb running down the center of the street, which I recreated by cutting it out of illustration board. I glued it in place with white glue and spread a thin layer of paste over it to simulate the turf. I took sawdust, collected years ago from underneath a table saw my dad had, and sprinkled it into a layer of white glue spread over the grass areas, to create the texture.

Before painting everything, I still had some minor construction jobs. There was a street sign next to the planter, another on the divider strip, and still more signs attached to a towering street light. I had to make these, and the street light. I cut the small signposts from a strip of 1/8-inch square balsa wood, cutting it down to match the scale of each respective post. For the light standard, I took the same 1/8-inch balsa strip and cut myself a section to represent the bulk of the pole. I cut a ¼-inch piece of square balsa, gouged a hole in it, and glued it at the base of the 1/8-inch piece. Since the light pole was octagonal, I sliced the corners off the pole very

Left, top: The "draperies" for the windows are painted. Center: The outer shell component, seen from behind. Notice the balsa wood bracing and where the drapery inserts have been taped over the window openings. Bottom: The two building components--outer shell on the left, inner core on the right. Pencil below them shows relative size of the model.

evenly, leaving eight sides instead of four. I used a little Testor's contour putty (used for plastic models) to blend the base into the pole. I shaped it with a small brush dipped in acetone. At the top of the real light standard the light fixture was suspended from an extension. I simulated the extension with a piece of aluminum wire, and I glued a small oval disc of cardboard to the end of it (after bending a little circle into the end of the wire to give the cardboard something to stick to). I shaped the light fixture on the cardboard with papier mache paste. I stuck the other end of the wire into the top of the pole and glued it there with a drop of Duco cement. I set the whole thing aside to firm up and took a white index card and drew all the signs. I even put in the right lettering with a fine-tip pen. I cut these tiny signs out with a razor blade and glued them all on their respective poles.

There were a number of palm trees running down the street divider, but most of them I would paint on my backdrops. However, one had to be built in three-dimension. I started with a short little stick, about ½-inch long—maybe an inch—and wrapped steel wires around it, splaying them out at the bottom and the top; the ones at the bottom provided me with something to anchor the "plant" to the base, while the ones at the top would form the palm fronds. The actual fronds were sliced from acetate and glued in place. For the frayed area where the dead fronds had been cut back, I wrapped little sawtoothed strips of construction paper around the trunk. The trunk had been modeled over the wires and stick with papier mache paste, and smoothed up with contour putty. I painted the palm with opaque watercolors.

Rounding out my construction chores, I added a balsa chimney to the roof of the house, and I fashioned little boulders in the garden planter with blobs of contour putty. I used opaque watercolor to paint everything, because it dries flat, and colors in nature aren't shiny. I painted the house, the driveway and sidewalk, the street, and the grassy areas. I stippled various colors into the sidewalk and street to make them more realistic, and I took special care to make the colors in the lawns contrasty so that when they were viewed from a flat angle they would look like grass, not green felt.

Finishing touches included lichen clumps in the planter to approximate geraniums. For the flowers themselves I just gobbed on bits of papier mache mix blended with pink paint. I painted the signs and glued them in their places. I anchored the light standard by sticking a straight pin up the hole drilled through the stage, into the base of the light. Then I fastened it with Duco, and covered the base of the pin underneath the stage with papier mache mix to hold it in place (the papier mache mix dries hard as nails). I also added little strips over the windows in the lower story. These were cut from thin cardboard and painted with silver enamel.

Now that the setting itself was finished, the backdrop needed to be done. I already had selected those two photos of views I wanted to recreate. It was now a matter of transfering these views to a backdrop, which would be in practical proportion to the miniatures. I got myself a large piece of 1/8-inch Masonite, 3 x 3½ feet, for the backdrop. I primed it with white gesso, and when that was all dry I set it on edge on the stage at the rear, leaning it against the wall. I carefully consulted the first view I wanted, and scrunching myself down on a level with the miniature street, I reached out with a pencil and began to roughly indicate a silhouette of all the features of the backdrop. Occasionally I checked myself by viewing the same thing through the viewfinder of my movie camera. And I kept referring to my photo. When I had it satisfactorily roughed in, I flipped the board over 180 degrees and did the same thing for the other view. When that was done I took the board and sat down with it to refine the rough indications into a drawing. Reappraising my methods, I think an easier approach might be to have slides made from your color negative, and try projecting the scene onto the board and just tracing it. Or, if you decide to stick with the method I used, try to include in your "art repertoire" the ability to do a good perspective drawing, using techniques gleaned from drafting or perhaps mechanical drawing experience. I lacked this extra skill and consequently had to make do with subtle distortions in my rendering. When I originally painted the backdrop, which was the next step, I decided to use the same opaque watercolors I'd been using to color the miniatures. I wanted that same matte finish on the drop. Well, I got it, but it was terribly difficult to work with those opaque watercolors, and I suggest you try something else instead (at least as a test). In fact, I eventually reworked the backdrops using oil paint, which is for me a much more compliant medium. I managed to minimize the bouncing glare caused by using oils by mixing my paints with a painting medium mixed of more tur-

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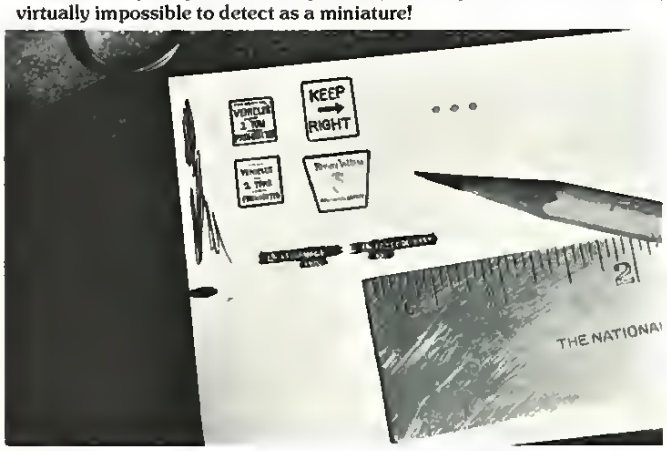
Below, left: The various street signs are carefully drawn on an index card, then cut out and placed at the appropriate areas within the setting. Right: One view of the completed miniature setting. Only the house in the foreground, the first plant on the grass strip, and the "keep right" sign are real-life models. Everything in the background (including the house next door) is a forced perspective painting. Meticulous attention to detail makes this virtually impossible to detect as a miniature!



Three views of the miniature: top, the front angle. Center, a tennis ball and pencil reveal the true size. Bottom, with ape and toy car, ready for action.

pentine than linseed oil, and by spraying the completed work with Krylon dulling spray. (Filming through a polarizing filter will eliminate such reflected glare entirely.)

The completed set was assembled on a table top against a wall, so that I could lean the backdrop against something. I was able to change perspective as easily as turning the drop upside down, or rightside up again, suiting my original intentions. I used a little white clay blended with grey paint to blend the street set into the painted street. Crude as that sounds, it was largely undetectable in the film. Lighting the set was tricky only in that it could only be lit from either side, not in front (lest the objects cast their shadows on the drop). Of course, this was anticipated, and the drop was done so that the painted shadows matched the ones thrown by the miniatures when lit. A miniature should be constructed with meticulous care, but bear in mind that it is the overall effect of the work that will impress your audience. This means that general proportions and colors (presuming your film is in color) should be recreated as accurately as possible. If the miniature is convincing in itself, it will convince your audience, and need not be faithful to the last flyspeck. ■

MATERIALS

There is absolutely nothing you will need to mail away for in order to build miniatures. The materials you need can be located in stores and from suppliers in your own neighborhood.

Lumber Yard/Building Supply

Duco cement, white glue, contact cement, wire, glass, Masonite, fibreboard (I didn't use this material for this miniature, but it's handy), wire cloth (can be used as a basis for building miniature mountains), all types of plaster, single edge razor blades, epoxy glue and epoxy putty; hand tools such as wire cutters, hammers, push drills, brush cleaner, etc.

Art Store/Hobby Store

Acrylic paint, opaque watercolors (comes in tubes), brushes, colored pencils, papier mache mix, contour putty, acetate, balsa wood, Duco cement, white glue, Krylon spray, liquid glazes (for coating something with a high shine), illustration board, construction paper, pallettes, pallette knives, modeling clay, X-Acto knives, gesso, pens, lichen (to suggest miniature vegetation), etc.

You should also hoard all kinds of cardboard (except corrugated), in every kind of thickness—cereal boxes are very handy. Save plastic materials, such as celluloid, cellophane, or acetate packaging material. Save chunks of styrofoam. Collect twigs, bits of sponge, pebbles, sawdust. Always keep your eyes focused for things in your everyday life which suggest something else in miniature. Keep your imagination working all the time.

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FOR SALE: I have posters for sale including many sci-fi titles. For list send 25¢ plus a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: *BRIAN TUCKER, 5374 MURPHY LAKE ROAD, MILLINGTON, MICHIGAN 48746.*

CREATIVE TIME-LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY: Free informative "Tips for Time-Lapse Photography" plus detailed brochure on mechanical and electronic intervalometers. Write to: *SCIENCE DIMENSIONS, P.O. BOX 582 (C), COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA 92627 - or call: (714) 545-4498.*

ATTENTION RAY HARRYHAUSEN FANS: For the first time you can own a copy of the television spot for Ray's newest epic, SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER. Available currently in super 8 magnetic sound only. Price per spot: $12.50 (includes postage and handling). Make checks and money orders payable to me: *Harold Miles II, 8203 Braeburn N. Drive, Indianapolis, Indiana 46219.* Please allow 2 to 4 weeks for delivery.

STOP-MOTION MODELS FOR SALE! I am now offering for sale a 10-inch Kong model, with a ball and socket armature and movable eyes and lips. Each one custom built upon order. For details and prices write: *Tom Baker, 3618 Driftwood Drive, Charlotte, North Carolina 28205, or phone (704) 535-2651.*

GET 'EM WHILE YOU CAN! Don't be among the disappointed folks who miss back issues of CINEMAGIC! A perfect example: we have returned over 100 orders for #8, our special stop-motion issue which sold out within two months after it was published! Issues #1, 2, 6, and 9 are also on the sold out list, and supplies of our other editions are rapidly dwindling. Order them now while we still have them in stock. Prices as follows: Issue #3 (very low quantity) – $4.00 each; #4 –$3.00 each; #5 – $3.00 each; #7 – $3.00 each. Make checks and money orders payable to CINEMAGIC and mail, along with your name and address to: *CINEMAGIC, P.O. BOX 125, PERRY HALL, MARYLAND 21128.* Prices include postage and shipping in a 24-pound envelope.

DOUBLE-EXPOSURE EFFECTS WITHOUT BACKWIND

Article & Photos by JIMMY BRYANT
Drawings by DAN WHITE

Anyone who has been filming for any length of time has run into situations where a fade, double exposure, or the like would add that certain "something" to make a particular scene work. Unfortunately, these effects are hard to come by unless one has the resources to hire a film lab to do the work (few of which can work with the super-8 format) or unless the camera is equipped with that all-important backwind capability. However, by taking a basic technique and adding a few modifications, the impoverished filmmaker can accomplish these and many other effects with nothing more than a camera with a diaphragm lock button to override the automatic exposure system and a two-way mirror.

The basic set-up is shown in figure 1. The final scene will consist of subject A, which is transmitted through the mirror, and subject B, which is reflected from the surface. Always make sure the silvered surface of the mirror is facing the camera. If the silver is not facing the camera, not only will the camera pick up subject B reflected from the silver, but it will also pick up a "ghost" reflection from the front surface of the glass itself. You can easily distinguish the two surfaces by lightly touching one of them. If there is only one reflection of your finger, you are touching the silvered surface. If there is the primary reflection and an additional faint "ghost" image, you are touching the non-silvered side. When touching the mirror, do it on one of the corners that are not likely to be in the camera's field of view. Also, be sure to immediately clean the area you touched, for the normal acidity of your fingertip could etch off some of the silver coating.

When setting up for these effects, place the camera as far away from the mirror as possible, but make sure that nothing is in the camera's field of view but the reflection from the mirror. When deciding which is to be subject A and which is to be subject B, remember that most two-way mirrors reflect 60% and transmit 40% of the available light. Hence, the reflected subject should be one which will have the least amount of illumination, since the reflected image will be much brighter than the transmitted one, assuming that each is illuminated by the same amount of light. This basic set-up will remain unchanged throughout most of the effects to be described.

DOUBLE EXPOSURES

The effects most called for usually involve a double exposure of some sort —such as ghosts—or to illustrate what the character is thinking. This can be accomplished by setting up the shot as if the ghost image were not going to be there. This shot will be subject A. Subject B will be the superimposed image. For example, let's say that we want to illustrate a man sitting at a desk, talking to the ghostly image of his father. The man at the desk will be subject A. The actor portraying the father will be subject B. Subject B should be standing in front of a black backdrop. Remember, the backdrop as well as the subject will be reflected into the scene. A white backdrop would give the effect of reducing the contrast of subject A. By looking through the camera's viewfinder, you can give directions to the actors to position them before actually filming. This method will also let you adjust the lighting for the two subjects until they are matched. You can also fade the "ghost" in or out by increasing or decreasing the amount of light falling on subject B. The best way to do this would be to place two polarizing filters between the mirror and subject B. When they are aligned, all of the light will reach the mirror. By rotating one of them, the light reaching the mirror can be gradually reduced to zero. This method will not effect the color balance of the shot. If you try to reduce the light by dimming the lights falling on subject B, the color balance will be shifted toward red.

This method can be varied by replacing the backdrop with a rear projection screen. With this set-up, any pre-filmed sequence can be put into the scene, such as mid-air explosions, etc. This process also lends itself very well to titles. However, if the titles are to be subject B, remember that they will be reflected, so they will turn out backwards. You can correct this by arranging the letters backwards, or if that is not possible, use a second mirror to form a reflected image of the titles and route this to the two-way mirror.

UNUSUAL EFFECTS

More complicated effects can be done with this system if you have the time and the patience. Until you get the hang of it, the process will seem a bit tedious at first, but the final results will be well worth the trouble. These range from a simple glowing effect of an isolated object to a complete disintegration of the subject during which it begins to glow, increases in brightness to a white intensity, until finally the white glow fades away, leaving no trace of the original object. Let me again emphasize at this point that the camera does not have to have any type of backwind capability in order to achieve these effects.

The heart of this modified system is a light box of some sort. The easiest way to construct this is to build a wooden box, approximately a foot long. For most purposes, a height and width of six to eight inches will suffice. Leave a hole in the back (centered) about two inches in diameter. At the other end, mount a piece of frosted glass so that it forms the entire end

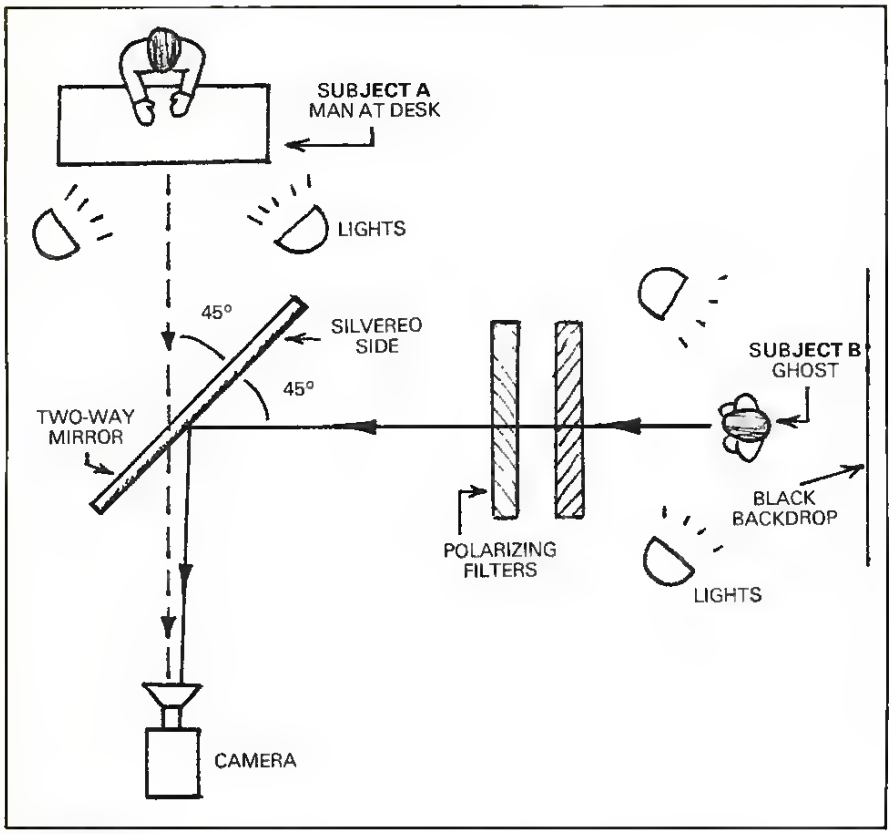
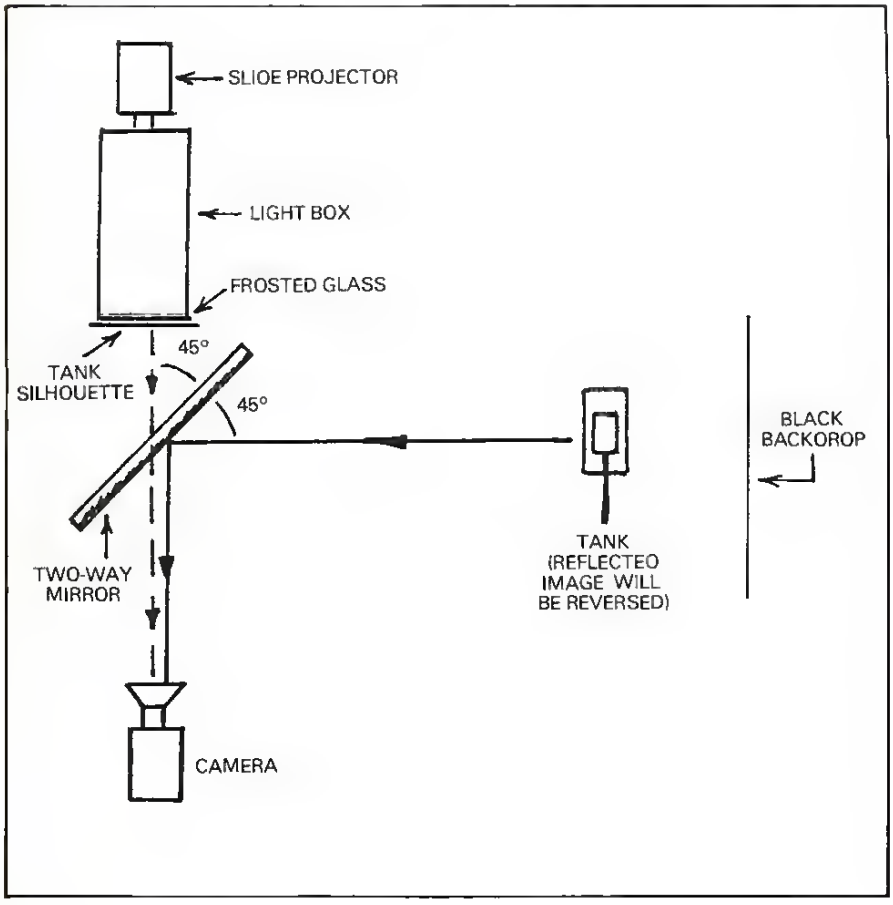


FIGURE 1.

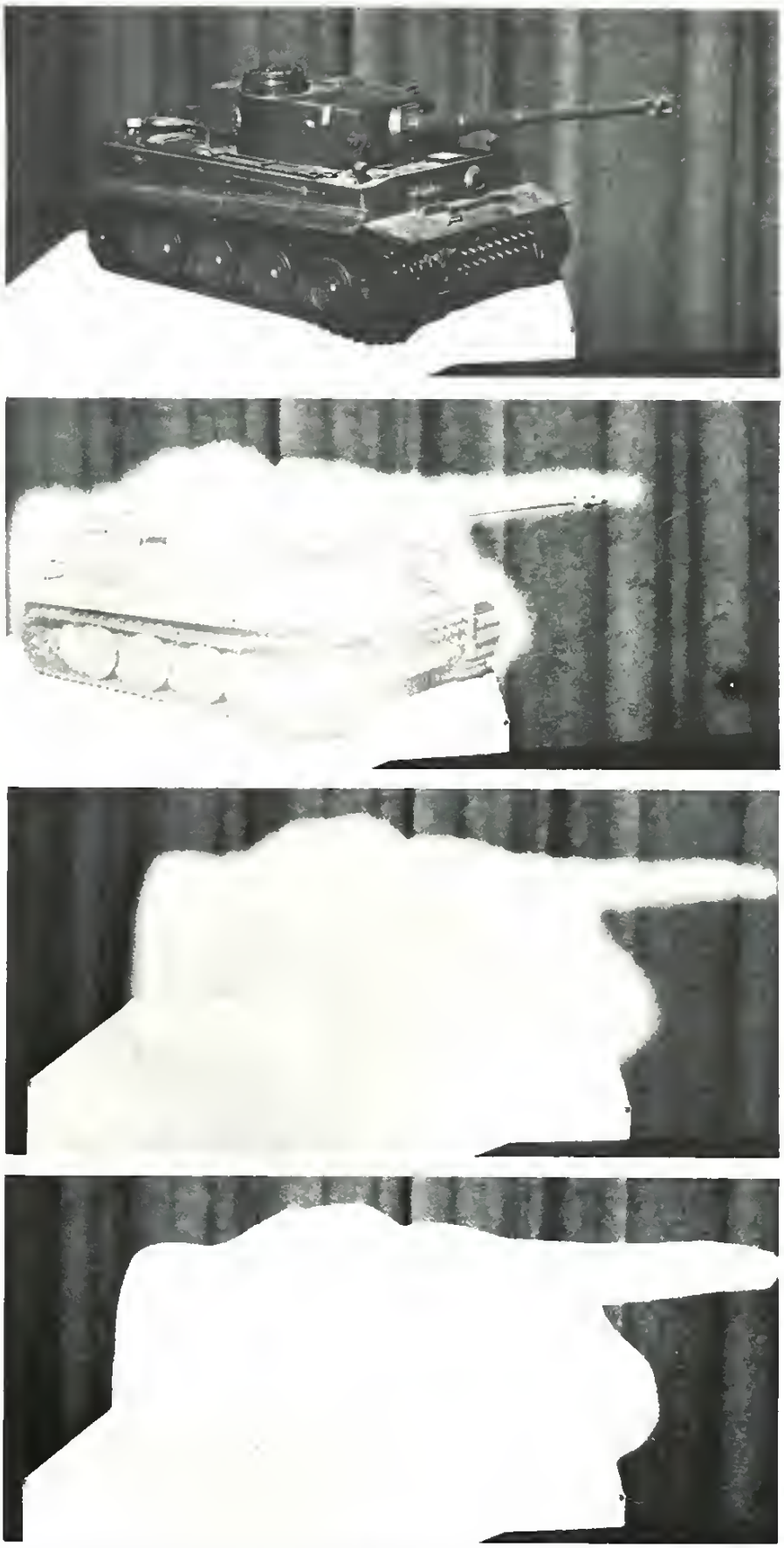
Below: This illustration shows the set-up necessary for doing the tank "disintegration" described in the article.



panel. A slide projector is used to project a light beam through the hole in the back of the box while the glass serves to diffuse it. If you can't get the projector right up to the hole, make a cardboard tube to form a bridge from the projector to the box through which the light beam will pass without allowing any stray light to affect the camera. The only other materials you need are some black construction paper, a piece of clear plastic large enough to fit over the front of the light box, and a dimmer switch.

The effect is carried out as follows. Say for example, you have a model army tank you want to disintegrate. First of all, set up the scene with the model so that the camera is filming its reflection (subject B). This is important, since it is illuminated by the reflected light from the movie lamps. The light box will be arranged so that it is aimed straight at the camera, shining its beam through the mirror. Since 60% of the light is lost through transmission, the light box is better able to take up the slack than would be the movie lamps. Place the sheet of plastic over the front of the light box. The slide projector is plugged into an extension cord which has the dimmer switch wired into it. Turn on the projector and dim it so that when you look through the viewfinder you can just barely see a faint glow covering the scene you want to film. This is a combination of the reflected scene and the light box. The box should be about a foot away from the mirror. As you are viewing the scene, take a flair tip marker and very carefully trace the outline of the reflected tank onto the plastic. This may take some practice at first until you get the knack of drawing while looking through a camera. When you have completed the outline, turn off the light box. Take a piece of black construction paper and cut it to fit the end of the light box. Using the outline you traced on the plastic, use a razor blade and very carefully cut out a hole in the paper to exactly match the outline on the plastic. Turn the light box on once more, dim it, and look through the viewfinder. Adjust the paper onto the frosted glass of the box until the glowing hole you see exactly covers the tank. At this point, the tank should be appearing to glow. Tape the paper in this position. You are now ready to disintegrate the tank. Turn off the box. Turn on the movie lamps so that the tank is illuminated as if you were going to film it as a straight shot. While the camera is still

(please turn page)



Above: This series of photos illustrates the effect of the tank disintegrating. As the light source for the tank is faded out, the light source for the disintegration matte is faded in.

running, turn on the box so that it is barely on. Increase the brightness until it is at a maximum. At this point, you should see only the glowing white shape of the tank through the viewfinder, but not the tank itself. Shut off the camera. Remove the tank. Begin filming again. The light box should have remained at its maximum brightness throughout the entire operation up to now. When you resume filming, dim the box until the light is completely off. The effect is now complete. When you view the film, you will see the tank and it will begin to glow intensely until only the white shape is seen. As it fades away, the tank will have been "zapped." By using different colored filters over the box, and adjusting the light box to varying brightnesses, you can also cause objects to glow, as if heated to varying temperatures.

As you set up your shot, you will probably notice that your light source is a lot closer to the camera than is the scene you are filming. This is desirable, for if you focus on the scene the light source will be out of focus, giving it that soft, glowing effect while at the same time helping to camouflage the cut edge of the paper.

One more thing: if your camera has an automatic exposure system, it must also have a diaphragm locking switch or a manual override for this set-up to work. At any point of the effect where it requires the changing of brightness of the light box, the camera aperture must be locked in its position. If not, as the light source increases the camera will stop down its lens, giving the net result that as the glow increases the area surrounding it will appear too dim, and vice versa. This is also necessary when doing simple fade-outs as described earlier.

All of the materials should be readily available at any hardware store, with the exception of the two-way mirror. Look in your local yellow pages under glass and mirrors. I bought my mirror about three years ago, at which time it was about $10.00 a square foot. One square foot should be adequate for most shots involving miniatures. In sequences where both the transmitted and reflected images are "live", however, you may find that a larger size would be desirable. ■

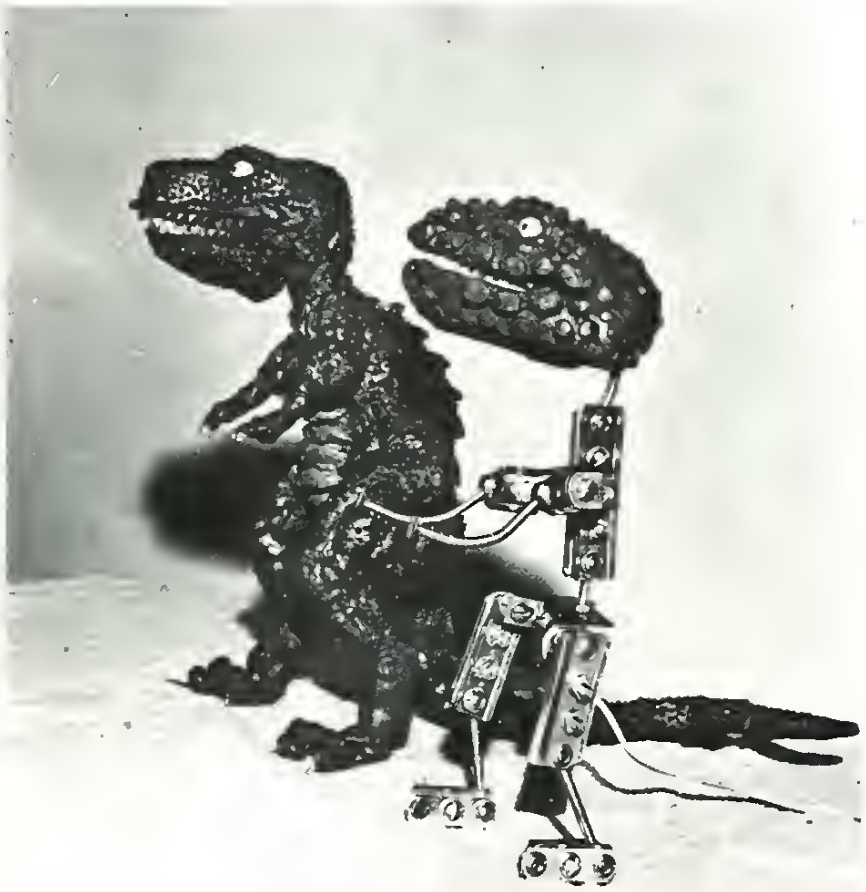
ABOUT THE AUTHOR
Jimmy Bryant is a filmmaker and special effects enthusiast residing in Irving, Texas.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

THE SIMPLIFIED BALL-AND-SOCKET ARMATURE: Under pressure from our readers, we have moved this article ahead of schedule. In issue #8, CINEMAGIC made history by presenting the step-by-step instructions for building professional ball-and-socket armatures for stop-motion models. Now we're going to give you a much easier alternative--an ingenious method created by Blade Galentine, an amateur filmmaker from Alexandria, Virginia. Blade's technique requires no drilling, no soldering, and just a little bit of cutting and filing. The parts needed are generally available by mail (and in some cases in stock at local stores) at a very reasonable cost. Together with Britt McDonough (who has refined the process considerably), Blade will show you how to build simplified armatures in step-by-step illustrations and photos.

CREATING FULL-BODY MONSTER SUITS: PART 2-- The second part of John Cosentino's method of creating head-to-toe creature outfits. Lots of new photos, coupled with detailed text, take you many steps closer to completing your own creations. This three-part article will conclude in issue #12

AFTERMATH-- A fascinating film profile which covers the special effects techniques in extensive detail. Many photos and drawings accompany the text. By Dan Noga and Garry Fernington.



Simplified Ball-and Socket Armatures

FRONT-SCREEN PROJECTION-- A lengthy article covering all aspects of this intriguing technique, and its applications in respect to stop-motion animation work. We're rather proud to have this article in our files, since it was written by Ben Burtt (see ROD FLASH! in CINEMAGIC #4), the man who created all the special sound effects for STAR WARS (including the delightful computer gibberish of Artoo-Detoo). Many photos and illustrations.

COMING: There are lots of exclusive, eye-opening features and articles coming in future editions of CINEMAGIC. Just to give you a few examples: AERIAL BRACE ANIMATION, a detailed feature by Ted Rae and Bruce Dods on how to build an inexpensive aerial brace rig, illustrated with diagrams and several fascinating stills from Bruce's newest GROG film; CREATING LATEX MAKE-UP, by Craig Reardon--one of the most detailed step-by-step articles we've ever seen! We're pulling our hair out trying to decide on which of the 50-plus sequential photos to use; FOREST STORY (formerly titled ABDUCTION OF GROG --see CINEMAGIC #5)-- a detailed profile on special optical effects, lighting techniques, and set-building information used for Bruce Dods' new 20-minute stop-motion extravaganza.

And, of course, there will be the usual array of film profiles, Press Notices, how-to articles, and amateur film information you find only in CINEMAGIC. Don't miss an issue!

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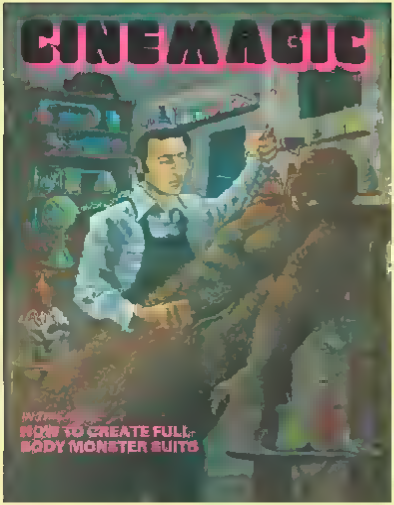
WHO WAS THAT MASKED MAN? One of the weird aliens from THE ALIEN FACTOR. For more on the film's progress, see page 20 inside.



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