

A Brief History of Special Effects

By Evan Halleck

A Trip to the Moon(1902)

- ◆ First film to use miniature models
- ◆ Pioneered an extreme amount of special effects that had never be seen before
- ◆ Blew audiences and filmmakers minds on what could be done.



1900-1940's

- ♦ At this time matte paintings, stop motion, and miniature models were becoming the main techniques of special effects artists. These movies listed brought some of the techniques to new levels
- ♦ Great Train Robbery - One of the first films to use special effects to further the plot rather just for spectacle.
- ♦ Metropolis - Lang used a variety of techniques to create a massive fake city. He used matte paintings, mirror techniques, and models to create the city.
- ♦ King Kong - Had groundbreaking stop motion scenes used. Used stop motion and miniature models to make it look like a giant gorilla is climbing buildings.

1950-1960's

- ♦ Big budget effects film started to be created which led to massive crews working together to create some truly breathtaking effects at the time
- ♦ The Ten Commandments - First use in a movie of using blue screen. The film also used pyrotechnics and matte paintings to create this big budget masterpiece.

1950-1960's

- ♦ 2001:A Space Odyssey - Used early but very advanced techniques like slit scan, motion control, and front projection
- ♦ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E8TABIFAN4o>

1970's

- ◆ This decade showed that big budget special effects films could make extreme amounts of money.
- ◆ Jaws - Spielberg created a bunch of shark replicas to make Jaws come to life and scare the crap out of people at the time.



1970's

- ♦ Star Wars – Changed the game with both effects and how big a blockbuster could really be. It Spawned a generation of die hard fans and numerous sequels and prequels.
- ♦ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1g3_CFmnU7k

1980's

- ♦ Computer generated effects started to be used often and with every year were getting better and better.
- ♦ Tron - The whole film was driven by special effects that most of them were computer created.
- ♦ Young Sherlock Holmes - First CGI created character ever.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOsxXi-tu_U

1990's

- ♦ The nineties is when technology was advanced enough for movie makers to really push special effects to new boundaries.
- ♦ Jurassic Park – Dinosaurs were some of the best CGI at the time. Massive models were built.
- ♦ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B4J9TBIFxAg>

1990's

- ♦ Toy Story – First CGI feature length movie ever made took around three and a half years and 750,000 of rendering time!
- ♦ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DB3J6VMFXxM>

1990's

- ♦ Titanic – Created a massive CGI replica of what the titanic would look like. Became the most profitable movie at the time.
- ♦ Matrix – Used a variety of new techniques in the film. Extreme use of slow motion and camera rotation helped make this film a huge hit.

2000-present

- ◆ Around this time is when companies started to have massive CGI crews all working together to make movies. Since big blockbusters were making tons of money the studios could afford to pay hundreds of modelers at the time to make even better effects

2000 - present

- ♦ The Lord of the Rings – Groundbreaking in the effects world in so many different ways. Massive CGI armies, flying on eagles, and amazing motion capturing made this trilogy have some of the best effects ever made.
- ♦ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f0Krx0ozjJA>

2000-present

- ♦ The Hurt Locker – Made excellent use of the extreme high speeds of the Phantom camera. Was able to make a scene of an explosion in ultra clear and crisp slow-motion.
- ♦ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQF6KIQOzpY>
- ♦ Avatar – Changed effects in hundreds of ways. From the cameras used to the 3d technology, it is probably the most advanced movie ever made.