

Foreword

Since the advent of computer generated imagery as a filmmaking medium, the critics and media have declared that so-called puppet animation is dead. But puppet animation — of which stop-motion animation is one kind — is *not* dead. Three-dimensional animated figures are alive and well. The announcement of their demise is definitely premature.

Granted, computer animation has had a tremendous impact on the public. Advertising companies constantly bombard our TV airways with some of the most amazing visual images ever seen. So amazing, in fact, that they make one forget the product that is being put on the market. Every news program seems to have an introduction that includes computer generated imagery. The use of CGI is so common that the public will eventually take it for granted.

Aardman Studios and Nick Park have contributed enormously to a revival of interest in claymation through their short films *Creature Comforts* and *Wallace and Gromit*. The *Thunderbirds* tele-

vision programs have restimulated interest in the long forgotten string puppet. Jim Henson was responsible for giving new life to the age-old hand puppet, the use of which dates back to ancient Greece.

As I see it, the computer is another tool, a glorious one I know, but only a tool. There is room for every technique, known and unknown, whose final aim is to entertain.

I followed in the footsteps of Willis O'Brien in making the animated figurine a *star* in feature motion pictures, where the live-action characters interact with the stop-motion figures in a most intimate way.

Stop-motion photography will always be remembered as a twentieth century art form. Its achievement is the creation of an illusion of artificial life, acting and reacting in a world of its own fantasy and imagination.

Ray Harryhausen
Fall 1998

The Stop-Motion Filmography

*A Critical Guide to 297 Features
Using Puppet Animation*

NEIL PETTIGREW

WITH A FOREWORD BY
Ray Harryhausen



McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
Jefferson, North Carolina, and London

Frontispiece: *King Kong* (1933), conceived by Merian C. Cooper and brought to life by Willis O'Brien, is still the yardstick against which all stop-motion characters must be measured.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication data are available

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Pettigrew, Neil, 1956-


The stop-motion filmography : a critical guide to 297 features using puppet animation / Neil Pettigrew ; with a foreword by Ray Harryhausen.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-7864-0446-9

Arrestox B library binding

Alkaline paper : 50# Finch Opaque and 60# Sterling Litho Gloss 

1. Animation (Cinematography)

2. Puppet films — History and criticism.

I. Title.

TR897.5.P495 1999 791.43'3 — dc21 98-49799 CIP

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Manufactured in the United States of America

McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers
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