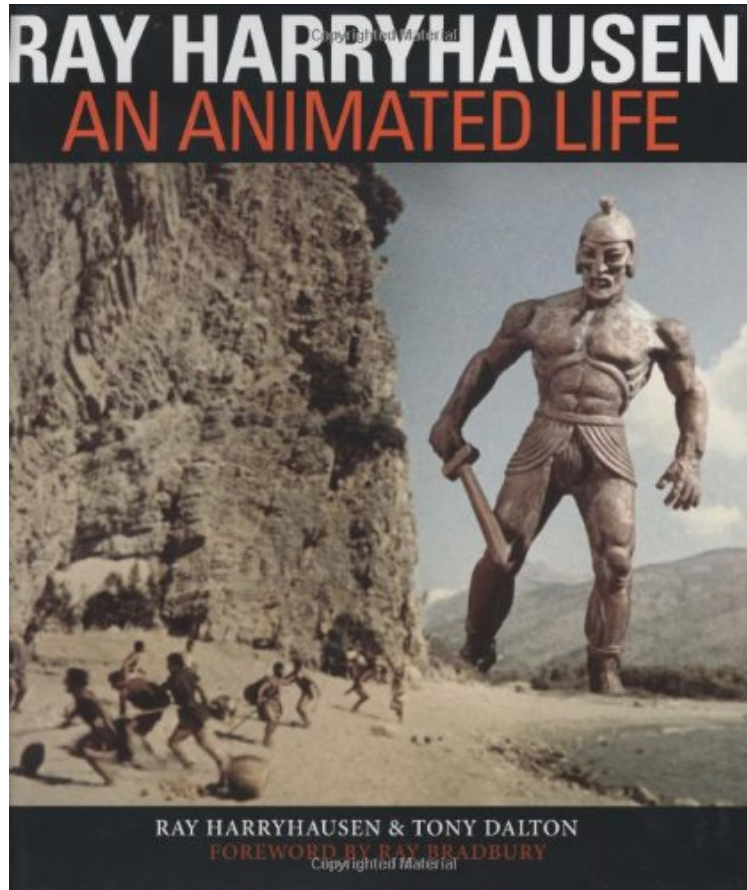


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Ray Harryhausen: An Animated Life

Ray Harryhausen, Tony Dalton

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Ray Harryhausen, Tony Dalton : Ray Harryhausen: An Animated Life before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ray Harryhausen: An Animated Life:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A great first hand account of the workings one of the ...By Martin R. KealeyA great first hand account of the workings one of the giants of technical effects; a figurative father to all the special effects practitioners currently working. Having grown up on Ray Harryhausen's movies (I was first terrified and enthralled by the hydra and skeletons from Jason and the Argonauts when I was six) I always loved seeing his work. Now I have gotten to "hear" his voice telling me how he created those amazing images and filling in some of the blanks on how such films are produced and brought to the screen. A fantastic addition to any special effects library. Ray Harryhausen deserves a long life in the memories of film fans for generations to come.22 of 22 people found the following review helpful. A Wonderful Record of an Amazing CareerBy SauropodIt's all here - behind-the-scenes info on every one of Ray Harryhausen's films, including his early experimental short subjects and unfiled projects like FOOD OF THE GODS and THE ELEMENTALS. Lots of preproduction sketches and storyboard art, photos of models and miniatures, a reasonable amount of technical detail, and a much more revealing, personal tone than we

have heard from Ray before. (But, ever the gentleman, he simply omits mention of any people he disagreed with - like the clueless director of VALLEY OF GWANGI who, rumor has it, tried to get Ray fired from the film! Neither the director's name nor the rumor appears in the text.) There is a respectable number of color photos and a huge assortment of black and white pix, all very well reproduced. Particularly interesting is a section at the end summarizing all the various projects that never made it past the development stage - and there were a lot! Also fascinating is the discussion of how the storylines of the movies changed dramatically through various drafts of the scripts. Giant rats in 7th VOYAGE OF SINBAD? A Valley of Vipers in a later Sinbad movie? (Producer Charles Schnee nixed both concepts, the latter because of "some extraordinary idea that it would frighten pregnant women," according to Ray.) My only gripe, and it is minor, is that some of the photos are very, very small. There's a shot of the clay sculpture of a Sphinx modeled for the unmade FORCE OF THE TROJANS that is about the size of a postage stamp! Larger would be better, but I can't quibble much with a book that covers so much territory and gives us a glimpse of an era and style of filmmaking that will never be repeated. For those who cherish the hand-crafted excellence of Harryhausen's work, this is a must-buy, and a huge improvement over his much less comprehensive FILM FANTASY SCRAPBOOK.5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Long overdue, but worth the wait.

By R. Gorey
Die-hard fans of special effects master Ray Harryhausen may recall Jeff Rovin's book "From the Land Beyond Beyond", which arrived in 1977. It was a welcome addition to the Harryhausen legacy, but was too subjective and fan-based for some tastes. Hard to believe it took almost thirty years for this definitive, color version of the Harryhausen story to arrive on the scene. Some will feel it is merely an extension of Ray's previous work, the Film Fantasy Scrapbook, and in many ways, it is, but there's so much detail here that this deluxe volume is worth picking up. Though of course modern special effects have become almost ridiculously complex, it's wonderful to hear Ray describe in great technical detail the processes and techniques he used to bring his animals and fantasy creatures to life in films like "7th Voyage of Sinbad" and "Jason and the Argonauts". He's also candid about which films worked for him (and audiences) and which somehow missed the mark. Even readers who prefer modern spectacles to Harryhausen's classical, stately epics should find something of value here, and there is plenty to inspire any animator, filmmaker, or budding cinematographer. This book isn't just a special effects guide, it's a valuable and integral part of the history of film: Harryhausen's career spanned five decades, and he worked with some of the greats in the industry--not only effects geniuses like Willis O'Brien, but actors like Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, James Franciscus, Honor Blackman, Richard Carlson, Jane Seymour and Raquel Welch. A little pricey, but worth the cost. A must have for Harryhausen fans, naturally, but anyone interested in the movies will come away satisfied.

Ray Harryhausen is arguably the greatest stop-motion animator in the history of motion pictures, blazing new trails in special effects from the 1950s to the 1980s creating realistic dinosaurs, fantastic aliens, and imaginative mythological creatures. In the animator's own words, accompanied by hundreds of previously unpublished photographs, sketches, and storyboards from his personal archive, this book details Harryhausen's entire film career, from 20 Million Miles to Earth and Earth vs. The Flying Saucers to Clash of the Titans and Jason and the Argonauts. In words and images, this book explains the basics of special effects and stop-motion animation, along the way telling entertaining tales of working with the film stars of the day, such as Laurence Olivier, Maggie Smith, and Lionel Jeffries. Film buffs will relish such revelations as how Raquel Welch was picked up by a flying dinosaur in One Million Years B.C., why the octopus in Mysterious Island was really only a sixtopus, and what Medusa's blood was made from in Clash of the Titans.

From Publishers Weekly
It's mostly film buffs who will recognize the primary author's name, and they will rush out to buy this first-rate, heavily illustrated guide to the life and, more importantly, the work of arguably the premier special-effects master in Hollywood history. Harryhausen (b. 1920) is the undisputed master of stop-motion photography, the genius behind such memorable fabrications as the T-rex of The Valley of Gwangi, the giant ape of (the original) Mighty Joe Young, the fighting skeletons of Jason and the Argonauts and the giant crab of Mysterious Island. Harryhausen attributes his lifelong devotion to stop-motion to his initial viewing, at age 13, of King Kong ("I can remember every detail of that day quite clearly," he writes in the lengthy and deeply informative text that accompanies the book's hundreds of photos, bw and color; "...I became obsessed with [the film's] magic"). This obsession led young Harryhausen to his first serious attempt at a movable model, of a cave bear, then to a teen friendship with Ray Bradbury and Forrest J. Ackerman of Famous Monsters of Filmland fame, some mentoring by King Kong effects wizard Willis O'Brien and his first special effects job, with George Pal. The book, co-written with film historian Dalton, goes on to cover each of Harryhausen's major films in tremendous detail, with great attention to the technical side of stop-motion work, making this volume a must for special effects fans, despite the recent computer revolution (which, Harryhausen argues, makes creatures appear "too realistic" and lacking in an essential "dream quality"). Through his work, Harryhausen has brought magic to millions; this terrific book is a fitting capstone to his brilliant career.

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From Booklist
For the past half century Harryhausen has been the foremost practitioner of the craft of stop-motion animation, the cinematic

art of meticulously moving models, frame by frame, to create an illusion of motion. Inspired by King Kong, still the ultimate example of the technique, at age 13, Harryhausen soon became the protege of Kong's creator, Willis O'Brien. He progressed to bringing dinosaurs and giant, mutated animals to life in several fondly remembered 1950s horror films and hit his stride in a series of 1960s and 1970s period fantasy films that pitted such legendary heroes as Sinbad and Jason against harpies, centaurs, and, most memorably, sword-fighting skeletons. The advent of Star Wars and other increasingly technologically sophisticated sf movies rendered Harryhausen's painstaking, "homemade" approach prohibitively expensive. Harryhausen's anecdote-filled account of his career offers loads of technical details for those fascinated by specialized minutiae and hundreds of rare drawings and photos from his personal archives. In the age of CGI and digital animation, Harryhausen may be old school, but his art retains its appeal. Gordon Flagg

American Library Association. All rights reserved It's mostly film buffs who will recognize the primary author's name, and they will rush out to buy this first-rate, heavily illustrated guide to the life and, more importantly, the work of arguably the premier special-effects master in Hollywood history. Harryhausen (b. 1920) is the undisputed master of stop-motion photography, the genius behind such memorable fabrications as the T-rex of *The Valley of Gwangi*, the giant ape of (the original) *Mighty Joe Young*, the fighting skeletons of *Jason and the Argonauts* and the giant crab of *Mysterious Island*. Harryhausen attributes his lifelong devotion to stop-motion to his initial viewing, at age 13, of *King Kong* ("I can remember every detail of that day quite clearly," he writes in the lengthy and deeply informative text that accompanies the book's hundreds of photos, bw and color; "...I became obsessed with [the film's] magic"). This obsession led young Harryhausen to his first serious attempt at a movable model, of a cave bear, then to a teen friendship with Ray Bradbury and Forrest J. Ackerman of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* fame, some mentoring by *King Kong* effects wizard Willis O'Brien and his first special effects job, with George Pal. The book, co-written with film historian Dalton, goes on to cover each of Harryhausen's major films in tremendous detail, with great attention to the technical side of stop-motion work, making this volume a must for special effects fans, despite the recent computer revolution (which, Harryhausen argues, makes creatures appear "too realistic" and lacking in an essential "dream quality"). Through his work, Harryhausen has brought magic to millions; this terrific book is a fitting capstone to his brilliant career. - Publishers Weekly

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