

Ray Harryhausen

A Birthday Celebration



BRITISH ACADEMY
OF FILM AND TELEVISION ARTS



The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation



Introduction by George Lucas

Without Ray Harryhausen, there would likely have been no *Star Wars*.

Ray didn't work on the films, but his influence is felt in every frame – and the worlds of my own movies could not have been possible without the precedent he had set with his imaginative effects and the fantasies they conjured.

I myself remember seeing his films growing up in Modesto, years before I would ever think to explore a fantasy of my own. There wasn't much to do in my hometown, so when we weren't cruising and racing, we clung to these images of faraway lands and storybook adventures. Along with comic books and adventure serials, it was Ray's filmography which helped me to develop my own love of the fantastic. The Cyclops, the Hydra, the skeleton warriors, the It which came from beneath the sea: those were iconic images. And they are just as powerful today, just as influential.

In the history of cinema, credit is often given to the artistic auteurs – the directors, the producers, the screenwriters. But, though he's too humble to claim his rightful due, it's Ray who gave us the visual language to truly *experience* things beyond our empirical knowing, to pull back the curtain on imagination itself and make real the stuff of dreams. His was the spirit of innovation and imagination, coupled with a technical dedication so intense that it must have initially seemed like madness to those without the foresight to predict its outcome. His tireless, pioneering efforts at empire-building and monster-mashing gave us – the audience, and eventually the filmmaking community – permission to

Left: Harryhausen (left) with Charles H. Schneer, co-producer of Sinbad And The Eye Of The Tiger (1977), and a range of models in all shapes and sizes from that and other films. Front cover: Harryhausen animates the Kraken from Clash Of The Titans (1981).





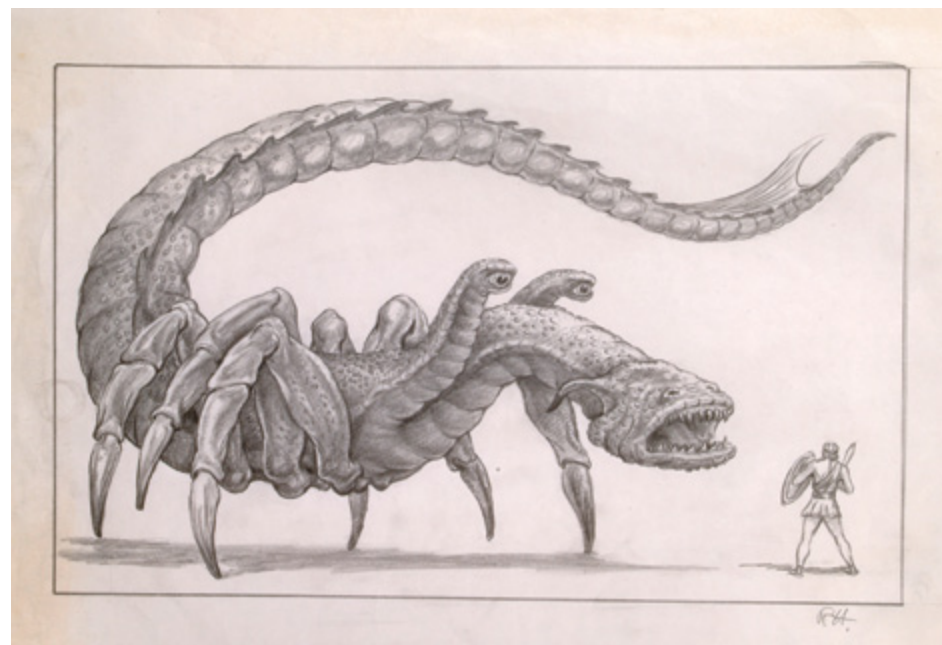
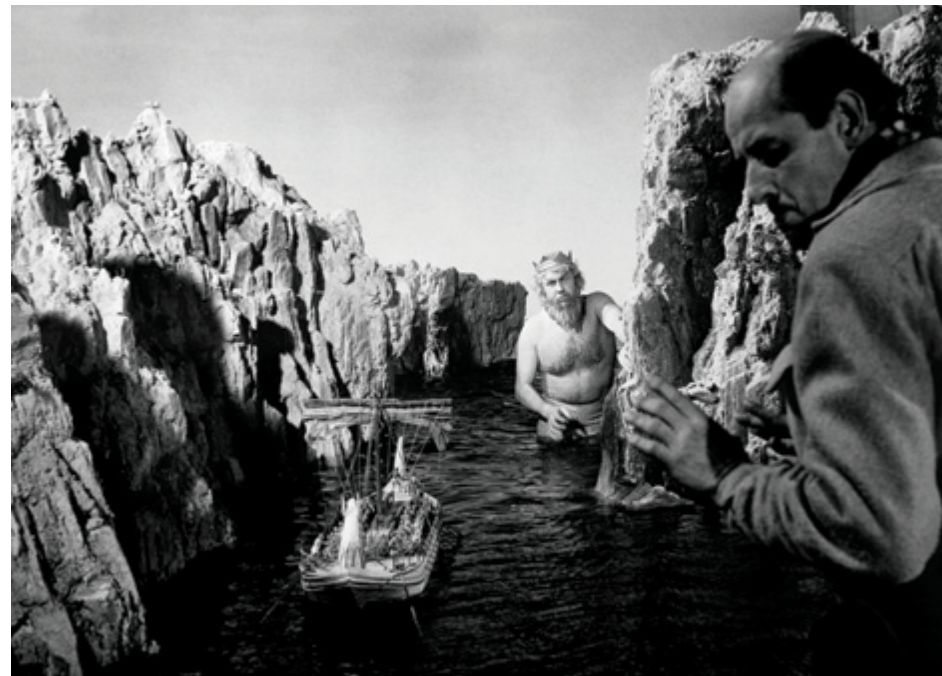
envision the fantastic. The relative simplicity of his framing and composition captured the essence of the magnificent; untainted by unnecessary cinematic flourish, the events seemed almost documentarian in their depiction. He made it all seem *real*.

And while it was Ray's visionary spirit which infused the film industry, it was also his example which influenced a generation of technical artists and effects innovators. These guys were the creative pioneers who followed in the trails Ray blazed. They'd watched his films (*The 7th Voyage Of Sinbad*, *Jason And The Argonauts* and all the others) in theatres and on TV, minutely dissecting the craft behind the art. They picked apart his techniques, attempting their own recreations in parents' basements, using dolls or homespun, homemade recreations of Ray's own designs. They were burgeoning artists seeking a master; and they found Ray.

These were the guys I ultimately hired for *Star Wars* – the guys who first formed Industrial Light & Magic – and I couldn't have been luckier to build my galaxy on Ray's foundation and influence. These young artists were hungry to show what they'd learned by his example, and *Star Wars* was the result. An important film in my career, it was just a signpost on a road – well off the beaten path – which Ray had been walking for decades.

George Lucas, April 2010

*Above right: Giving directions to Bill Gungeon as Triton in Jason And The Argonauts (1963).
Right: Harryhausen's sketch of the Scylla from the unrealised Force Of The Trojans (1984).*





Selected Filmography

This filmography details Harryhausen's special and visual effects work, though he has many additional credits, including producing and directing.

1940–42	The Puppetoons (<i>shorts</i>)
1942–45	Various work for the US Army Signal Corps under Frank Capra
1946	Mother Goose Stories (<i>short</i>)
1949	Mighty Joe Young
1950–53	Fairy Tales (<i>shorts</i>)
1953	The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms
1955	It Came From Beneath The Sea
1956	The Animal World
1956	Earth Vs The Flying Saucers
1957	20 Million Miles To Earth
1958	The 7th Voyage Of Sinbad
1960	The 3 Worlds Of Gulliver
1961	Mysterious Island
1963	Jason And The Argonauts
1964	First Men In The Moon
1966	One Million Years B.C.
1969	The Valley Of Gwangi
1974	The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad
1977	Sinbad And The Eye Of The Tiger
1981	Clash Of The Titans

Above left: Harryhausen poses some of the models from his early personal project, Mother Goose Stories (1946).

Left: Showing Tom Baker where the animation will be superimposed in The Golden Voyage Of Sinbad (1974).

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An extraordinary number of people came together to produce tonight's event to honour Ray Harryhausen. BAFTA and the BFI would like to thank all of them with warm special thanks to the Harryhausen family, Tony Dalton and Tim Nicholson.

The Harryhausen Foundation needs your support to continue to preserve the archive of irreplaceable films, models and artwork. To find out more, go to www.rayharryhausen.com

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