



## Performing Illusions: Cinema, Special Effects, and the Virtual Actor

By Dan North

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### Performing Illusions: Cinema, Special Effects, and the Virtual Actor By Dan North

The camera supposedly never lies, yet film's ability to frame, cut and reconstruct all that passed before its lens made cinema the pre-eminent medium of visual illusion and revelation from the early twentieth century onwards. This volume examines film's creative history of special effects and trickery, encompassing everything from George Méliès' first trick films to the modern CGI era. Evaluating movements towards the use of computer-generated 'synthespians' in films such as *Final Fantasy: the Spirits Within* (2001), this title suggests that cinematic effects should be understood not as attempts to perfectly mimic real life, but as constructions of substitute realities, situating them in the cultural lineage of the stage performers and illusionists and of the nineteenth century. With analyses of films such as *Destination Moon* (1950), *Spider-Man* (2002) and the King Kong films (1933 and 2006), this new volume provides an insight into cinema's capacity to perform illusions.

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### **Editorial Review**

#### Review

An important addition to debates about film realism... Highly recommended to scholars. (Elizabeth Lathrop *Film Quarterly*)

#### About the Author

Dan North is Lecturer in film at the University of Exeter. He is the editor of *Sights Unseen: Unfinished British Films* (forthcoming, 2008).

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