

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/08/movies/ray-harryhausen-cinematic-special-effects-innovator-dies-at-92.html?nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20130508

When I was eight years old, in 1959, I saw “The Three Worlds of Gulliver,” at the Lensic Theater in Santa Fe, NM, , one of the films that changed my life—I fell in love with the storytelling, but it was the first film where I was struck by the actual film-making itself, especially the merging of the different sizes of characters in a seamless style. I saw the glorious “Fantasia” around the same time, at the El Paseo, but it was cartoon and live action, and as extraordinary as it was, it was, well, a movie. The Harryhausen figures were real life, as best as I could tell.

Four years later, one of my favorite films of all times was released: “Jason and the Argonauts,” with its mythmaking and especially its cinematography and special effects, the hydra-headed monster, the creatures of the deep, and especially and memorably, the skeleton soldiers. I later discovered that these were among the work of Ray Harryhausen, who both made many more movies (more skeletons in “Sinbad,” etc.) and who inspired a generation of filmmakers, technical film/camera experts, and makeup artists. I even tried to use a clunky family camera to film a war battle scene with a fort and plastic soldiers, carefully using his stop-motion style, which, of course, did not work in our dining room in New Mexico.

This week, he died, one of those extraordinary artists who give life meaning. Watch these skeleton fights and then tell me they are *not* real...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M20PgQ10scE> (interview with RH)

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/25902/Jason-and-the-Argonauts/trailers> (Jason trailer, featuring skeleton fight)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MOZK4MiIMZM> (full skeleton fight scene)

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