One of the most famous special-effects sequences in the history of cinema is the robot’s anthropogenesis in *Metropolis*. The scene has become an emblem for the astonishing technical and aesthetic achievements of German filmmakers. Not only did special effects shape the look of many iconic films, they are also central to a comprehensive understanding of German silent film culture. Employed to visualize ideas and emotions in a medium-specific way, special effects demonstrated technology’s creativity and ability to transcend physical reality. By so doing, they played a decisive role in the evolution of cinematic expressivity. Special effects embody “techno-romantic” lines of thought, a concept that describes efforts to harness technology, the epitome of modern materialism, for the purpose of accessing a spiritual realm. While special effects have been mainly considered as spectacles or practical tools to date, this book foregrounds their function as an artistic device.

**BIOGRAPHY**

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