

Katharina Loew

Special Effects and German Silent Film *Techno-Romantic Cinema*

In recent decades, special effects have become a major new area of research in cinema studies. For the most part, they have been examined as spectacles or practical tools. In contrast, *Special Effects and German Silent Film*, foregrounds their function as an expressive device and their pivotal role in cinema's emergence as a full-fledged art. Special effects not only shaped the look of iconic films like *Nosferatu* (1922) or *Metropolis* (1927), but they are central to a comprehensive understanding of German silent film culture writ large. This book examines special effects as the embodiment of a "techno-romantic" paradigm that seeks to harness technology – the epitome of modern materialism – as a means for accessing a spiritual realm. Employed to visualize ideas and emotions in a medium-specific way, special effects thus paved the way for film art.

BIOGRAPHY

Katharina Loew is Assistant Professor of German and Cinema Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston.

"This is an original, deeply-researched approach to the fascination produced by German silent cinema, with welcome emphasis on the contributions of creative technicians working with their directors.

The author evokes films with loving, accurate finesse. Her perspective is especially valuable in its use of key German-language materials from the period."

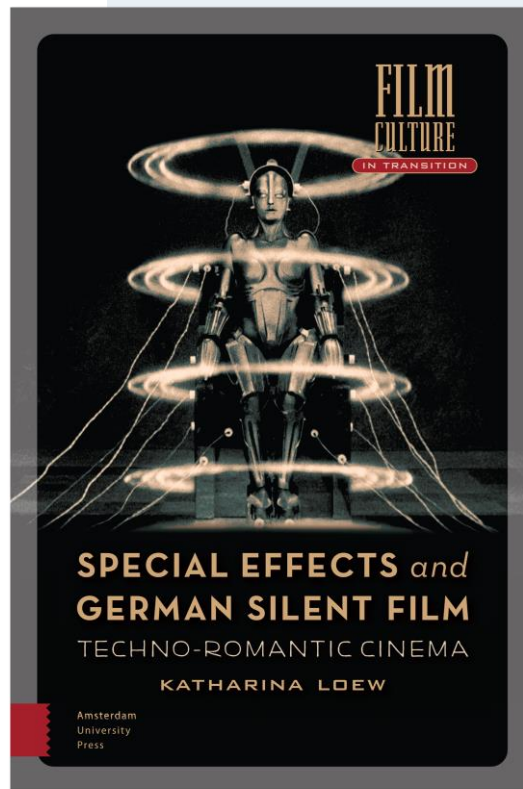
- Janet Bergstrom, University of California, Los Angeles

"Loew's masterful analysis, including never-before-seen production details of the most emblematic films of German cinema's Golden Era, decisively shifts special effects from the margins of film history to the very center of our conversation about silent cinema's claims to art."

- Scott Curtis, Northwestern University, author of *The Shape of Spectatorship: Art, Science, and Early Cinema in Germany*

"Meticulously researched and carefully argued, Special Effects and German Silent Film is a superb study of how technology, imagination, and a flair for the occult orient cinema toward its enchanted Romantic past and catapult it to its sublimely high-tech future."

- Jennifer Fay, Vanderbilt University, author of *Inhospitable World: Cinema in the Time of the Anthropocene*



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction: Special effects and the techno-romantic paradigm

Chapter 1. Imagining technological art: Early German film theory

Chapter 2. Modern magicians: Guido Seeber and Eugen Schüfftan

Chapter 3. The uncanny mirror: *Der Student von Prag* (1913)

Chapter 4. Visualizing the occult: *Nosferatu* (1922)

Chapter 5. The technological sublime: *Metropolis* (1927)

Chapter 6. "German technique" and Hollywood

Conclusion: Techno-romantic cinema from the silent to the digital era

Bibliography

Index

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