



# The Invisible Art: The Legends of Movie Matte Painting

*Mark Cotta Vaz, Craig Barron*

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The Skull Island of King Kong, the Emerald City of Oz, Scarlett's Tara in Gone with the Wind, Citizen Kane's dark Xanadu, the Imperial Rome of Ben Hur, the worlds of Star Wars - these classic movie images aren't created with celluloid but with brush, oils and a sheet of glass. With these simple tools, the skilled matte artist can conjure up castles or city skylines, wooded glens or vast deserts, planets in space or places out of time. When combined with live action, an audience can view a 'matte shot' and be convinced they are looking at something real. It is as grand an illusion as has ever been concocted in the name of movie magic - and to date, it has been an invisible art. The Invisible Art marks the first in-depth look at the evolution of this indispensable special effect. Authors Mark Cotta Vaz and Craig Barron tell this untold story through the words and works of the unsung matte artists themselves. Their story and the matte paintings they produced span the whole of movie history, from the swashbuckling derring-do of film's frontier days to Hollywood's glorious Golden Age, through the rise and fall of the studio and on to today's global mega-movie events. Many of the over 400 images featured were uncovered and photographed by Barron expressly for this volume. Vaz and Barron have also supplemented their extensive research with exclusive interviews with icons such as Francis Ford Coppola and Ralph McQuarrie. Matte painting has been a mainstay of movies and the tool of creators from Selznick to Spielberg. For movie fans who have been watching and believing in these painted illusions, the secrets of The Invisible Art will be a revelation.

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