



The Art of  
**STAR  
WARS**

Barbican Gallery  
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**GALLERY GUIDE**

**The Art of Star Wars** explores the work of the many creative artists involved in making the *Star Wars* films. In the beginning *Star Wars* was the dream of just one man: George Lucas. He invented the world of *Star Wars*, its characters and their stories. However, many people have played a part in bringing the ideas of George Lucas to the screen. They include graphic artists and model-makers, set and costume designers, and other artists working with special effects, sound and music. This exhibition considers their work.

## ARTWORK

Artists are involved at every stage in the making of the *Star Wars* films. After conceiving the story, George Lucas turns to graphic artists to illustrate key scenes and characters. These artists produce concept designs, which are used as sources of information and inspiration during the making of the film. *The Art of Star Wars* includes beautiful paintings by Ralph McQuarrie, who was the concept designer for all the films in the original trilogy. McQuarrie was the first to encapsulate the look and feel of the first *Star Wars* film, *A New Hope*: the yellows and browns of the dustbowl planet Tatooine as well as the industrial greys and blacks of the Death Star.

As a film comes closer to production, other artists produce storyboards. These sequences of images are used to illustrate many scenes and shots in the film, and *The Art of Star Wars* includes examples of storyboards from the original trilogy by artist Joe Johnston, such as images showing the attack on the Death Star in *A New Hope*. Finally, matte paintings are used to create the background in particular scenes, and the exhibition includes a matte painting which stood in for the snowy landscape of Hoth in *The Empire Strikes Back*, as well as a computer generated 'digital matte' from *The Phantom Menace*.



Tusken Raider, production painting by Ralph McQuarrie (*A New Hope*)

## MODELS

Thousands of models and props have been used in the making of the *Star Wars* films. Many of the models are of the spaceships and vehicles that feature in the films. Some are small-scale models used for miniature photography, while others are full-size. Models and props can be made from a variety of materials, including wood, metal and plastic, and parts are sometimes taken from toy model kits or from real machines.

*The Art of Star Wars* includes many models made by Industrial Light & Magic, the company set up by George Lucas in 1975 to create the visual effects for *A New Hope*. They include X-wing and TIE fighters from the original trilogy, as well as a spectacular full-size version of Anakin Skywalker's Podracer from *The Phantom Menace*. "The era of Episode I is more polished, more individualised," says Design Director Doug Chiang when comparing the latest film to the previous three. "Vehicles and ships are treated as art forms. Many of them are romantic and elegant. It is a craftsman's era."



Filming AT-ATs (*The Empire Strikes Back*)

## SOUND

Sound has always played a special role in the *Star Wars* universe. This is largely due to Sound Designer Ben Burtt, who has worked on all four films. Burtt invented many of the sound effects that are heard in the saga - including the noises made by weapons, spaceships and vehicles, as well as the voices and sounds associated with different characters, lifeforms and droids. Many sound effects have unexpected sources: the noise of a lightsabre begins with the sound of electronic interference on a TV set.

Music has also been central to the *Star Wars* films. Composer and conductor John Williams has written the scores for all four films to date and on each occasion he has recorded them with the London Symphony Orchestra, who are based at the Barbican Centre. Each score is made up of different themes, and characters such as Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader have different themes associated with them that recur throughout the saga.

## VISUAL EFFECTS

This section looks at how visual effects techniques have been used to create creature characters in the *Star Wars* films. When crime lord Jabba the Hutt was first seen - in *Return of the Jedi* - he was created using a full-size latex model. George Lucas originally intended to include Jabba in *A New Hope*. This scene was dropped before the end of filming, but was completed much later using digital effects, and incorporated in the *Special Edition* re-issue of the film.

*The Phantom Menace* features many digital effects, and this section also shows how the character Jar Jar Binks was created for the screen. Concept Designer Terryll Whitlatch helped generate ideas for the aquatic Gungan people, and her background in zoology and anatomy enabled her to give Jar Jar a believable biological base. Artists at Industrial Light & Magic then created computer animations based on these concept designs, and an actor stood in for Jar Jar on set before the final insertion of the computer generated image into the film.

## RESOURCE ROOM

This room contains a variety of electronic resources for the visitor to use, including a link to the *Star Wars* website, CD-ROMs with behind the scenes information and a selection of games that allow the visitor to take part in the Podrace or design a droid.

## COSTUMES

The *Star Wars* films feature many different costumes. Actors wear costumes to play human characters like Luke and Leia, as well as to portray creature characters such as Chewbacca. The first room in this section features costumes from the original *Star Wars* trilogy, and many of the clothes worn by the Rebels and their friends are very simple in form, such as Luke's Jedi robes or the outfit of the smuggler Han Solo.

The second room features costumes from *The Phantom Menace* including two of the many costumes made for Queen Amidala and her handmaidens. The Queen's costumes are very elaborate and colourful, and are designed to suggest the ancient culture of Naboo and the peaceful nature of the Old Republic. These costumes were based on sketches by Concept Designer Iain McCaig, interpreted by Costume Designer Trisha Biggar. "Every wardrobe in Episode I had a historical base," Biggar says, "but we changed the costumes to keep them from looking recognisably ethnic. There was an Asian influence, but there was also a mixture of North African and fourteenth and fifteenth-century Europe."



Queen Amidala, production painting by Iain McCaig (*The Phantom Menace*)

## DARTH VADER

This section contains an original Darth Vader costume, and creates the experience of the Sith Lord's brooding presence.

## CREATURES

The *Star Wars* films feature an amazing number of creatures, and these two rooms show a variety of designs and models that relate to them. One of the most famous characters in the saga is Jedi Master Yoda, who made his first appearance in *The Empire Strikes Back*. The first room includes concept designs for the character and one of the memorable models sculpted by Stuart Freeborn. Freeborn took the "wise" aspects of Yoda from Albert Einstein's face and "some of the funny bits" from looking in the mirror.

The second room shows some of the different ways in which creatures are brought alive for the camera, including creature costumes, masks and animatronics. Animatronics combines engineering with make-up and puppetry, and has been used to help realise the facial expressions of characters such as Yoda and Jabba the Hutt. The animatronic process is illustrated in this display by a replica bust of Ree-Yees, a member of the three-eyed Gran species.



Making a Yoda model | *The Phantom Menace*

## DROIDS

There are many different droids in the *Star Wars* universe, but one of the most famous is C-3PO, who was played by Anthony Daniels in the original trilogy. Prior to filming, a golden fibreglass and aluminium suit was designed to a life cast of Daniels' body. The 60-pound suit of armour took two hours to assemble, and once applied was both restricting and uncomfortable. Nevertheless, Daniels made the role of the protocol droid his own, voicing C-3PO in the clipped English tones that typify his fussy manner.

For *The Phantom Menace* George Lucas wanted droids to replace the Imperial stormtroopers seen in the original trilogy. Design Director Doug Chiang arrived at the design of the battle droids by elongating the shape of the stormtrooper mask and making the body more skeletal. A few fibreglass models of full-size battle droids were used on set, while the remaining thousands of soldiers were computer-generated. With their mechanical movements the battle droids are one of the most striking visual elements in the film.

## THE STORY CONTINUES...

In this last area you can see some of the many posters that have been made over the years to promote the *Star Wars* films. You can also take the controls of Mawhonic's Podracer, which features in the latest film - *The Phantom Menace*.


## OTHER EVENTS

To complement *The Art of Star Wars*, Barbican Screen will be showing a Lucasfilm Tribute during August. See the free August Film Guide for details or phone the cinema hotline on 020 7382 7000. There will also be a series of education events to coincide with the film screenings, contact Barbican Education on 020 7382 2333 for further information.

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