

Propstore

Entertainment Memorabilia Live Auction

MATTHEW YURICICH

MATTE PAINTING COLLECTION

Treasures from
Film and Television



Los Angeles

March 12 - 14, 2024

Propstore

Entertainment Memorabilia Live Auction

**All Matthew
Yuricich Matte
Paintings will be
offered on Day 1**

March 12 - 14, 2023



Los Angeles

propstore.com/liveauction

Day 1

March 12
Film & Television

*lots illustrated in this catalog

Lots 1 - 464
In-Person Bidding
Petersen Automotive Museum

Day 2

March 13
Film & Television

*see separate printed catalog

Lots 465 - 983
Online, Telephone and
Absentee Bidding Only

Day 2

March 13
The Anthony
Daniels Collection

*see separate printed catalog

Lots 984 - 1095
Online, Telephone and
Absentee Bidding Only

Day 3

March 14
Film & Television
No Reserve Lots

*online catalog only

Lots 1096 - End
Online, Telephone and
Absentee Bidding Only

Auction Begins 9:00am (PDT) / 4:00 PM (GMT) Each Day

All days streamed live at propstore.com

Online, Telephone and Absentee Bidding Available on All Days

* Certain films and shows have Lots offered on more than one day of the Auction; see Index on page 444 for a complete listing of available Lots by film or show title. Please see pg 436 of the primary auction catalog for Propstore's Entertainment Memorabilia Live Auction: March 12 - 14, 2024 for the Buyer's Guide, Terms & Conditions, and Sales Tax Quick Reference Guide, and Special Notices.

Foreword

The motion picture industry has, since its very inception around the turn of the twentieth century, been an ever-expanding factory of illusion. As if the creation of the moving picture itself wasn't illusion enough, filmmakers also called upon all manner of methods to expand their storytellers' canvases in ways that seem miraculous, yet were in fact tricks of the trade most pure, rudimentary and cost-effective.

Between 1907 and 1998 (when computer-generated images became the standard), no visual effect proved more reliably convincing than matte paintings. One of the most highly regarded masters of this now-lost art form was Matt Yuricich (1923 - 2012).

From the 1950s through the 1980s, Yuricich - a specialist in color matching to color shifting film stock - created backgrounds for live-action scenes that were crucial in defining the look of movies during Hollywood's Golden Era.

The practice of the glass shot, as it was then known, was a tried-and-true means of creating literally anything an enterprising director desired: set extensions, ornate ballroom ceilings, an extra few stories on a building, castles on a hilltop. In its most unadulterated form, the glass shot was created by securing a large plate of glass a few feet in front of a motion picture camera in order for a skilled artist to paint in additional scenery required by the script. The painted portion was then perfectly aligned with the partially constructed studio set or exterior, which, once photographed, merged imperceptibly into one as a complete and credible shot.

Matt was a colorist: his gift was to be able to paint to the color the film would be, rather than as it appeared on a matte board. If film stock tended to go blue, Matt would paint it brown to the correct degree to match the final film print.

With Cinemascope, film was squeezed by the anamorphic lens. Matt would paint it squeezed such that it would match the film and render correctly when projected.

If a matte was painted too realistically, it would appear wrong to the viewers' eyes. Instead, it needed to be painted loose enough to blend in with live-action imagery, as the human brain perceives it as sharp when in reality the image has a great deal of blur. A matte painting needed to match this blur.

How he painted in the wrong colors, how he painted in the wrong perspective, how he painted loose enough to blend into the picture that the audience does not notice - this was the magic of the old school master matte painters from the era of Hollywood's studio system. There were but a small handful of proponents in the medium whose work - as invisible as it was often intended to be - made as indelible an imprint on the field of special photographic effects as Matt's.

Beyond the impact of this largely lost art on a movie audience, the value of matte paintings to a production could be measured in hard cash. Matte artists saved moviemakers thousands, sometimes millions, of dollars in location and construction costs. It is only in recent years that such achievements have become known and celebrated. Studio bosses deliberately concealed the tricks of the movie trade from the public at large, wanting to preserve the "magic" of the Silver Screen (nevermind magicians of Yuricich's caliber remaining unknown except to the marquee names who employed them for their artistry.)

With intricate, precise, and mathematical work on the one hand, and refined artistry on the other, matte painting is an art form in the very DNA of movie history. It is gone forever now, and its evocative artifacts - the matte paintings themselves - remain the only links to cinema's cultural milestones.

Each matte painting is the unique work of a unique artist. The select crowd of collectors who recognize the importance and cultural value of filmmaking will relish owning rare examples of this vanished art that helped to define the American Century. Just as Picasso, Braque, and Duchamp brought Cubism to the artworld, and Jackson Pollock brought Action Expressionism into the galleries and auction houses, Matt Yuricich now brings matte painting to the wider art marketplace. His paintings, with their unique associations, are already treasured by connoisseurs of the form, collectors who are led as much by their hearts (the passion for beauty and technical artistry of each piece) as by their heads (for the clear opportunity to invest in work whose rarity is guaranteed to increase in value in the coming years.)

Along with security of provenance, this collection represents an opportunity to create room in the art market for a medium that promises to expand its audience and deepen its worth at the crossroads of popular culture and fine art. The mattes presented here are not only unique elements of movies, but also fragments of a lost art. As such, their value is poised to endure. Their immediate impact on

viewers is arresting, inviting contemplation of their nature and a vague sense of recognition. Matt's mattes perpetuate the mystery that surrounded their creation, progressing into the future as an enduring enigma wherever they are displayed. They stand as tangible remnants of a colossal process whose ultimate outcome exists only in projected light.

A matte is history embodied: history of the last century, history of the filmmaking craft writ large. Holding a matte is akin to holding a doorway to the past, revealing how it was forged. While most comprehend movies by viewing them, grasping a matte's value necessitates being told that you are looking at one, then experiencing that "Aha!" moment of realization. The matte serves as a magician's trick intended to captivate each beholder and evoke questions about the possibility of film art.

Created by artists known by that term, mattes occupy a distinctive space among movie memorabilia. They hold value as nostalgia triggers for specific films of a bygone era as well as high-quality artworks attributed to recognized creators. Modern mattes, which are generated on computers and printed, lack a physical dimension. They remain ageless, frozen in time, static, unchanging from the moment of their inception, and hence valueless, as there is no singular original digital print. There are only equally valueless and innumerable digital prints. But classical hand-painted mattes are one-offs; they age and evolve as living, breathing masterpieces.

Matte paintings often fall victim to their own success. When they work seamlessly, they go unnoticed. Upon observation, they present an incomplete picture: a glimpse behind the scenes, a cinematic artifact emerging from the camera's inner workings, a members-only moment from the realm beyond the camera lens rendered physical.

As a result, they have nearly vanished as an artform altogether. Only the select few treasured mattes held by museums and collectors endure as the last vestiges of this fading medium. This sale marks their final release by the Yuricich family, offering the lowest price that will ever be paid for these collected masterpieces throughout their future existence. The mattes represented here are the last of their kind. For those seeking investment security, look no further: each matte is a testament to beloved films, a tangible remnant of a vanishing art, and a piece of fine art crafted by a recognized artist.

In their heyday, behind the enigmatic black curtains of special effects, matte painting legends were treated as walking marvels, artists-in-residence, national treasures, and reservoirs of age-old wisdom. Their decades-long training in the realms of paint and film made them technical experts. The idiosyncrasies of each matte lay in their artist-specific origins, as in traditional art collecting where an object's value is part and parcel of the artist's. This connection still defines matte paintings to this day.

Matt Yuricich stands as a paramount figure among the form's true legends. A representative of the great generation - the G.I. era - Matt possessed a love of dancing and forged friendships with Hollywood starlets of the '40s. Yet he remained soft-spoken, eschewing the limelight for a more modest career. Rooted in Midwest Ohio immigrant values, his passion for polka music resonated throughout his life. Early birds at the studio were met by the booming sounds of accordion and tuba echoing through empty hallways because Matt, averse to traffic, was always there ahead of the rest.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



MATTHEW YURICICH MATTE PAINTING COLLECTION

Matthew Yuricich, better known (and appropriately so, given his life's work) as Matt, was an American artist regarded as one of - if not the - foremost matte painters in the history of world cinema.

Born in Ohio to Croatian immigrants on January 19, 1923, Yuricich studied Fine Arts at Miami University before joining the US Navy during World War II. Upon returning to the States, he sought and found work in the effects departments of Hollywood studios, excelling quickly as a painter on the productions of post-war classics like Ethel Merman's *Call Me Madam*, Fred M. Wilcox's *Forbidden Planet*, and Stanley Donen's *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

Soon, Yuricich developed a specialty in color-matching background paintings to color-shifting film stock, an essential skill required to integrate mattes seamlessly into live-action photography. At the time, matte artists were expected to keep their artistry "invisible" to the naked eye in order to help audiences suspend their disbelief at certain images that were otherwise impossible to achieve. Yuricich's technical precision in executing invisible glass matte shots - in which painted plates of glass set in front of the camera simulated extensions to a set or environment - put him in demand with some of the most successful directors of his time.

In 1959, Yuricich worked as a matte artist on two films that would permanently secure his place in the pantheon. For Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*, he created the illusion of a modernist Frank Lloyd Wright-style home built atop Mount Rushmore for the film's rip-roaring climax. Then in Cecil B. DeMille's equally seminal *Ben-Hur*, he painted mattes simulating the presence of tens of thousands of ancient audience members in the unrivaled chase scenes. Both films were immediately hailed as visual masterpieces for their groundbreaking photographic effects, securing Yuricich 30 more years of work as well as unparalleled renown amongst several generations of Golden Age filmmakers.

Over the next three decades, Yuricich contributed matte paintings to many of the most renowned movies ever made, among them *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *The Poseidon Adventure*, *Westworld*, *The Towering Inferno*, *Young Frankenstein*, *Ghostbusters*, *Die Hard*, *Dances with Wolves*, and *Field of Dreams*. Recognition for effects artists was always slow-in-coming from film studios and it was not until 1976 that his contributions to cinema were formally acknowledged. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awarded Yuricich (along with L.B. Abbott and Glen Robinson) a Special Achievement Award for his work on *Logan's Run*. The following year, Yuricich - along with his brother Richard and a team of other effects visionaries including Douglas Trumbull - received his first and only competitive nomination for Best Visual Effects for Steven Spielberg's *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

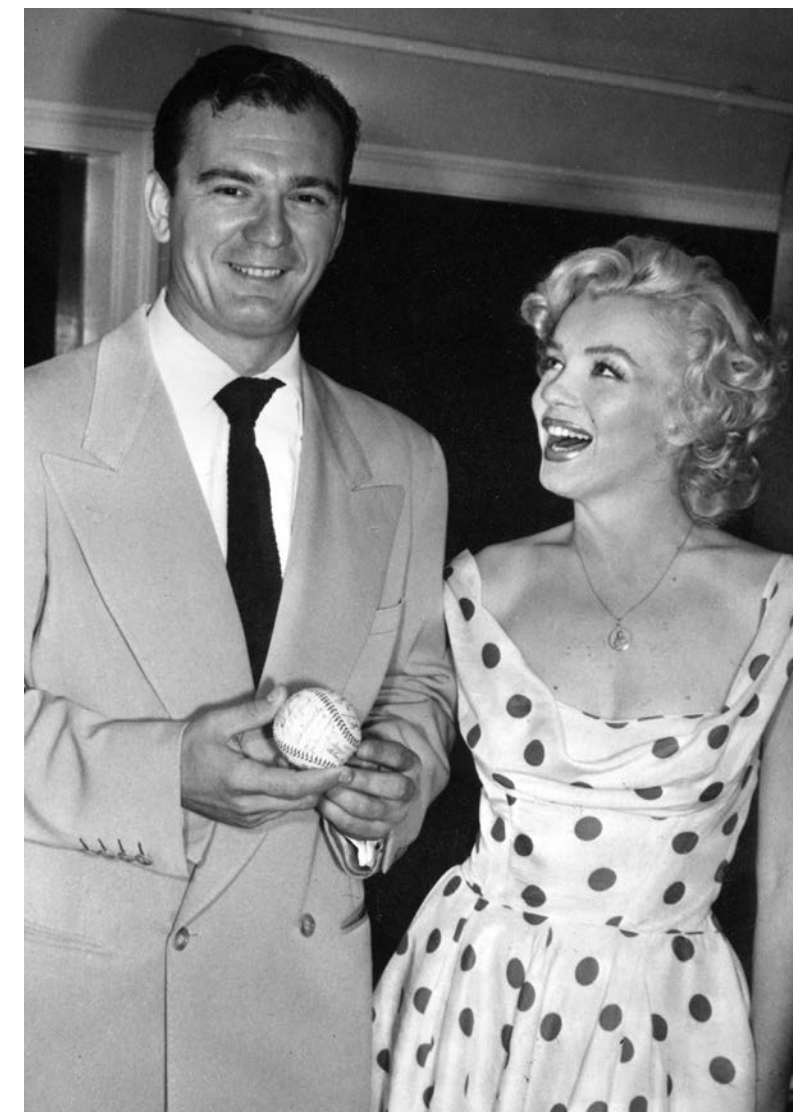
Yuricich also emerged in this period as a committed teacher and advocate for the field of matte painting at large, which was soon to be threatened by the advent of computer-generated effects. As the chief matte artist for companies including Entertainment Effects Group (EEG), its follow-up Boss Film Corporation, and Video Image throughout the 1980s and 90s, he took on a series of studio apprentices who learned to emulate both his notorious early-to-rise work ethic and impeccable artistic form. Several of these apprentices went on to create film art nearly as acclaimed as his own, with a raft of awards and blockbuster hits earned by work inspired by their mentor.

In 2006, Miami University bequeathed Yuricich with its Distinguished Achievement Award for his accomplishments as an educator and artist in the visual effects realm. He died six years later leaving a legacy that included effects contributions to over 70 film and television titles. And in 2017, he was posthumously inducted into the Visual Effects Society's Hall of Fame, where his legacy as both artist and advocate continues to be preserved into perpetuity.

Propstore is pleased to present these never-before-offered mattes from some of Yuricich's most beloved films. From *Logan's Run* to *Blade Runner* to *Ghostbusters* to *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*, this selection of extraordinary hand-painted artworks offers veteran collectors and casual movie fans alike unique access to one of cinema's great masters. The matte paintings offered speak to the rich history of cinema and the grand tradition of innovation that was necessary to bring so many of the world's favorite stories to life.

The physical matte shot is now a lost art that will never return again; all matte shots for modern filmmaking are accomplished digitally. Matte paintings were always simply a step in the process on the way to capturing a VFX shot in celluloid, rather than an end-product in themselves, but these hand-painted original artworks existed as evidence of how the shot was achieved. That is no longer the case—the matte shots of today, like nearly all visual effects shots, do not exist in any physical form. It is most likely that no new matte paintings will ever be created again, and the paintings from yesteryear that still exist are exceedingly rare.

Indeed, these offered works are among the scarce few original paintings still known to exist from Yuricich's career. The paintings are some of the last of their kind and in the years ahead will be the sole link to this great lost art form. Aside from their aesthetic qualities and inherent beauty, seeing them in person offers a rare peek behind the magician's curtain and insight into a once-prevalent art form that is now extinct and will not return again. These paintings are a moment in time -- a tribute not only to the eternal magnificence of this captivating form, but to the Silver Screen on a global scale.



Yuricich was the captain of Twentieth-Century Fox baseball team and was presented with a Yankees team-signed ball by Marilyn Monroe, who was married to Yankee star Joe DiMaggio at the time.

Blade Runner (1982)



Film frame showing Lot 55 matte painting composited into final shot

55 Hand-Painted Matthew Yuricich "Deckard Hangs from Roof" Aerial Street View Matte Painting

Dimensions: 80.25" x 38" x 0.25" (204 cm x 96.5 cm x 0.75 cm)

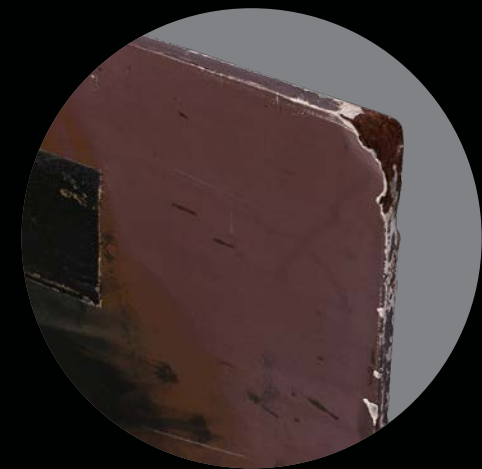
Estimate: \$25,000 - 50,000

Blade Runner is one of the all time finest examples of old school photo chemical visual effects work. The classic EEG frontlight/backlight matting techniques were beautifully employed and left competing VFX work in the dust. Blade Runner firmly and absolutely stamped its mark on the visual concept and effects art direction front with every frame of the film being a beautifully composed, lit and photographed work of art. It is not over-indulgent and uses effects shots only as a storytelling necessity. Blade Runner was sorely robbed of an Oscar by another more popular family picture.

The film required around fifteen painted mattes including a majority in the final confrontation between Harrison Ford and the superbly cast Rutger Hauer. Ford was composited into this showstopper viewpoint through a rotoscoped travelling matte over his lower body to 'hang' over Matt's aerial view.

The peculiar choice of muddy-green colour scheme was unavoidable due to the special intermediate duplicating film stock used by Doug Trumbull and Richard Yuricich. Matthew often had to conform to this artistically unfavourable photographic process, whereby normal artistic instinct of colour, hue and contrast had to be jettisoned. He became very adept at knowing how these odd hues would ultimately 'read' and 'colour correct' once optically composited and made into final release prints.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



Corner detail shows the depth of the board



A matte painting depicting an aerial street view hand-painted by matte artist Matthew Yuricich for Ridley Scott's Blade Runner. Rick Deckard (Harrison Ford) hung from a roof just before he was saved by replicant Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer).

The sequence - one of the most recognized in all of 1980s cinema - was accomplished by compositing live-action photography with a matte painting Yuricich created under his brother Richard Yuricich and Douglas Trumbull's Entertainment Effects Group (EEG), setting the film's compositing effects apart from the chroma key compositing that had become prevalent in other films by that time. Two slightly different shots of Deckard dangling from the roof utilized the same painting.

Yuricich worked with the assistance of Rocco Gioffre and Michele Moen to create around 15 matte paintings for the film, which was nominated for an Academy Award® for its groundbreaking visual effects work. After production, Gioffre and Moen went on to become acclaimed matte painters in their own right, cementing Yuricich's legacy as both artist and mentor.

This painting is rendered in mixed media on a large masonite board marked "97 A, V = 8 3 1/2" in the top-left corner. One piece of white gaffer tape on the front is labeled "FX 97, V=58, h=58, 97A," and another reads "BLADE RUNNER." The painting's distinctive green and brown hues were chosen specifically based on how the color and contrast would be picked up by the film stock selected by Douglas Trumbull and

Yuricich's brother Richard to photograph and composite the mattes (despite Yuricich's opposition to such odd hues). Also included is a modern-printed "working composite" photo print that illustrates the final composition of the lot, showing how the live action composited into the final artwork.

The board exhibits scuffs and edge wear from production use. Dimensions: 80.25" x 38" x 0.25" (204 cm x 96.5 cm x 0.75 cm)

Special shipping required; see special shipping notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Sold without copyright; see copyright notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Lot 55

Ghostbusters (1984)



Film frame showing Lot 109 matte painting composited into final shot



Corner detail shows the depth of the board

109 Hand-Painted Matthew Yurichich Terror Dog Gargoyle Matte Painting

Dimensions: 76.25" x 38" x 0.25" (193.5 cm x 96.5 cm x 0.75 cm)

Estimate: \$12,000 - 24,000

Ghostbusters was a smash-hit comedy and an effects filled extravaganza that would receive an Oscar nomination that year for its highly creative and comical visuals. Richard Edlund's Boss Film Group (formerly EEG and before that formerly Future General) provided the hundred or so photographic and miniature shots, with Yurichich acted as Chief Matte Painter, with the able assistance of the highly talented Michele Moen and former veteran Disney matte artist Deno Ganakes.

Among the scores of grand mattes were a number of what could be termed 'invisible' mattes - trick shots that pass by completely undetected - such as this matte of the gargoyle above a New York City street.

It was rendered with great effort to achieve just the right texture to the supposed stone gargoyle. When photographed by EEG's matte cinematographer Neil Krepela in the high resolution 65mm format, this created a quality that was almost three-dimensional. I wonder whether he utilised his old 'razor blade' technique to gently scrape at the painted stone to lend a tactile quality to it, as he did at MGM in the fifties?

The live-action plate was blended optically with the painting to create a seamless view that everybody assumed to be genuine, though observant viewers may see a passing car 'ghost' into Matt's gargoyle for a few frames.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



A matte painting of a Terror Dog gargoyle hand-painted by chief matte painter Matthew Yurichich for Ivan Reitman's Ghostbusters. Gozer the Gozerian (Slavitza Jovan) transformed the gargoyles overlooking Dana Barrett's (Sigourney Weaver) apartment building into Terror Dogs. The shot of one of the gargoyles looming over Dana's New York City street was achieved by optically blending a live-action plate with Yurichich's final "invisible" matte painting, so called for its use in trick photography.

Yurichich created over two dozen matte-painted shots for the film, with the assistance of Michele Moen and Disney veteran Deno Ganakes under Richard Edlund's BOSS Film Studios. The film's visual effects were ultimately nominated for an Academy Award®.

This ornately detailed matte painting is rendered in mixed media on masonite by Yurichich and applied with black tape around its borders. It is hand-marked "DA-2" on the side, indicating that it was used for that precise shot. Yurichich expended an exceptional amount of care into the texture of the gargoyle's stone carapace, such that when photographed by EEG's matte cinematographer Neil Krepela in 65mm, the brushwork took on an almost three-dimensional quality. It is speculated that Yurichich utilized a razor blade to add tactility to the stonework, an effects trick gathered from his time at MGM. Also included is a modern-printed "working composite" photo print that illustrates the final composition of the lot, showing how the live action composited into the final artwork.

The painting exhibits hanging holes in the corners of the masonite, paint scuffs throughout, and visible cracks in the top center and along the edges from handling. Dimensions: 76.25" x 38" x 0.25" (193.5 cm x 96.5 cm x 0.75 cm)

Sold without copyright; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Special shipping required; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Lot 109

Remembering Matt Yuricich

Matt Yuricich hired me by asking, in his down-to-earth manner, if I'd like to wash some brushes, and through the years, he became my lifelong friend and mentor. He was incredibly loyal, primarily to his family and then to his friends. Every Christmas, he'd purchase small gifts for all the ladies at Boss Film Studios, often bracelets or trinkets, elegantly boxed with ribbons. He'd then hand me a paper bag filled with these gifts and instruct me to distribute them after he had left for the day. He'd say he was too shy (with a twinkle in his eye). He shied away from attention, yet his actions were consistently generous and caring. A proud gentleman, he was a master of his craft. He taught me that matte painting was a skill that required learning and practice. Additionally, he was a gifted artist who painted beautiful landscapes in his spare time for art galleries, though he never truly advertised or promoted himself.

My journey began as an apprentice on *Blade Runner*, and Matt's teaching method involved having me sit on a stool behind him and simply observe. He'd arrive at the studio quite early in the morning, sometimes around 4:30 a.m. or 5:00 a.m., to tackle the most critical portions of the painting before the rest of us arrived. I'd be in before the dailies at 9:00 a.m., and after the dailies, I'd watch Matt paint for approximately two hours while he explained processes or pointed out details.

He was an excellent and patient teacher, and I feel fortunate to have received such training. By around 3:00 p.m., he'd direct me to an area on the painting that he wanted me to work on. He showed me how to inspect the film frame through a loop every few minutes while applying strokes to ensure successful blending. I was to keep looking through the loop and at the painting repeatedly until I understood precisely what I was aiming for.

On *Blade Runner*, the matte paintings were shot on a particular film stock so that to get a black color on film, the paint had to be a muddy, murky gray-green, but once a series of dabs of color stroked on the side of the matte painting were filmed and we could see the result, we knew what to mix to get that color. It was all in relation to the film; the painting itself was not a pretty picture to hang on the wall. Matt painted with Winsor & Newton long-handled sable brushes and made short dabs of color almost in an impressionistic style. He said the film would bring it all together, and it did. He smoked cigarettes then and would leave the cigarette burning in his mouth until the ash fell onto the oil painting; that was added "texture" which was O.K. Razor blades scraping away the top wet layer of a lighter brown would become a dirt road or a tree trunk; random texture that would photograph as realism. I would draft out in pencil the next painting or project a film clip onto a board or glass and trace in pencil the details so that Matt could come in the next morning and start a new painting. Also, I'd clean off his glass palette every night and lay out fresh oil paint in the same order that he'd been working with for years so that he could reach for a color without looking. At the end of the day, I'd often wash as many as 50 brushes with an Ivory soap bar in warm water and then place them carefully in a drying cabinet. If one of the brushes was a little stiff and not washed properly, Matt would toss it back into the turpentine-filled container to be washed again.

I wish he was still here; he had wanted to live to 100.

I really miss his stories; he remembered everything about every movie he worked on.

Michelle Moen, January 2024



Yuricich's Academy Award

I worked for my friend's father back in the mid 1970s. He was working at MGM studios on a futuristic film called *Logan's Run*. The film didn't mean much to me at the time, but the idea of working at MGM and making a good salary sounded great! Mr. Yuricich (that's Matt Yuricich) needed an assistant. The job duties were pretty basic: clean the art studio in the morning before Mr Yuricich started work. Be available throughout the day to run errands on studio grounds and transport the finished matte paintings to the building where they would set up the shot and film through the clear square of glass that would marry the live action with the matte image and create movie magic. Then finally, at the end of the day, clean the art brushes and set them up to dry properly for the next day's work.

It was all pretty basic stuff, but Matt had a specific way that he wanted the brushes cleaned that took me a few days to master.

I remember one day in particular when Matt was painting the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. for a shot in the movie showing the People's House some time in the future where the building was in ruin and covered by foliage. He started with a piece of glass. The matte was painted on glass to facilitate filming through the window left clear which allowed the action to be matched to the background scenery that didn't (in reality) exist (Note: the glass painting described is not the painting offered in this auction; the auction painting is on masonite.) The size of the painting was something like 4' wide by 3' tall. Anyway, Matt had a photo of the Capitol building and the blank glass canvas. He studied the photo in detail for a while; I want to say about 15 minutes or the time it took to finish his coffee. Then, he set to work, applying the paints to the palette and checking the colors against the photo. Once the palette was ready, he set the photo aside and began to paint. I would characterize his painting style as deliberate and assured. There was no second-guessing while he worked. Every stroke was applied quickly and with purpose. So in a matter of a few hours I saw the Capitol building constructed (painted) and destroyed by decay. Once the building was complete, he began with a new second palette to apply the foliage. It took Matt about five hours to complete this work. In five hours, I watched him build and destroy, through decay, the people's house. To paint that large of a glass canvas, in that short amount of time at that level of hyper-realism was indeed, a magical experience. At this point he would look back at the original photo and then make some minor adjustments. He also became very talkative and wanted to explain to me the process and its ultimate goal of realism on the screen.

He said, "When you're painting, you have to understand that you're not painting a building itself but the light that reflects off of that building, and the only way you can do that is by looking at what you see, not what it is." In other words, look at colors of the reflected light, not the building.

He also said, "Let me show you what I mean. If I were to paint these columns on the building for you, I would paint them in this manner..."

He then proceeded to repaint one column in a different way that actually, to my eye anyway, looked much better; more real and defined.

So I said, "Well, that looks better to me, it looks so real."

He said "Right! But I need to paint this for the light of the camera, which is completely different from the studio light."

So, he adjusted the column back to its original style. At the time it seemed like an academic discussion to me, as I couldn't really understand what he was talking about. The next day, I took the completed painting over to the building where they would shoot the live action through the window and complete the effect. It took a few days for that work to be completed, but once it was, I was able to accompany Matt to the screening room to see the end result. It was so real I had a hard time believing it was the painting I saw him paint in his studio. Matt had used a technique specific to camera lighting that would allow the perception of hyper-realism for the viewing audience; it was "Movie Magic..."

John Duane, January 2024



Logan's Run (1976)



Film frame showing Lot 204 matte painting composited into final shot

204 Hand-Painted Matthew Yuricich Capitol Building Matte Painting

Dimensions: 66" x 28" x 0.25" (167.75 cm x 71.25 cm x 0.75 cm)

Estimate: **\$8,000 - 16,000**

Set in the 23rd Century, the post-apocalyptic, deserted environs of 'old' Washington DC needed to be rendered through matte work. For the majority of the mattes, Yuricich turned to an old technique that he employed in the fifties at Fox and MGM - the use of retouched photographic enlargements. Prints were developed and mounted on Masonite board, serving as a base for Yuricich to modify to illustrate hundreds of years' worth of neglect, rot, decay.

Evident in this otherwise wonderful matte is an odd pink tone. Traditionally, photo enlargements for matte work were done as black and white prints, but for Logan's Run they were done as colour prints. This caused enormous technical problems for Matthew, as he had great difficulty due to the chemicals within the photographic dyes seeping through! Matt complained that the colour enlargements caused all his foliage to turn, in his own words, "baby shit brindle brown." According to Matt, no amount of the most intense green available from Winsor & Newton could sufficiently mask the creeping 'red' within the paper!

Regardless, the film won the Oscar for the visual effects. Looking at the matte today, the red dye brings forth the physicality of the art and its changing life through time. It is antiquing the painting in real-time as its origin of inception recedes ever further into the past. The colour aging is complementary, the red to the green, as if it was chosen and is right on theme with the expression of the painting. In another work this might be jarring, but here it is fully in keeping with the message of the painting.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



Corner detail shows the depth of the board



A matte painting of the Capitol building hand-painted by matte painter Matthew Yuricich for Michael Anderson's Logan's Run. In the post-apocalyptic 23rd century, Logan 5 (Michael York) and Jessica 6 (Jenny Agutter) stumbled upon an Old Man (Peter Ustinov) in the dilapidated ruins of the US Capitol.

To achieve the haunting shot of the building in a state of vine-covered decay, Yuricich painted over an enlarged photograph applied to masonite with shellac, a technique he had been introduced to decades earlier using black-and-white prints of photographs as a matte artist at 20th Century Fox and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Yuricich received a special Academy Award® for his groundbreaking visual effects work, earning him a reputation amongst science-fiction fans and cinephiles alike as a master film artist.

The painting, a complete painting without any blank space for live-action footage to be composited in, is rendered in mixed media on masonite, hand-marked "Logan's Run," "Shot 106 - SC301X17-3 Ext. Capitol-Steps," and "#2" along the borders, and signed by Yuricich. However, this being a color print per the directives of special effects visual designer L.B. "Bill" Abbott, the color ink seeped through into Yuricich's paint and affected the color, leaving the painting with a pink hue. Also included is a modern-printed "working composite" photo print that illustrates the painting as seen in the film, prior to the photo-background shifting color to red.

The color photograph beneath this matte still exhibits an uncorrected red dye. The matte also exhibits a slash at the center, and the borders remain unpainted with some chipping to its right corner. Dimensions: 66" x 28" x 0.25" (167.75 cm x 71.25 cm x 0.75 cm)

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Special shipping required; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Lot 204

Masters Of The Universe (1987)



Film frame showing Lot 232 matte painting composited into final shot

232
Hand-Painted Matthew Yurich Skeletor (Frank Langella)
Throne Room Matte Painting

Dimensions: 76" x 34" x 0.5" (193 cm x 86.5 cm x 1.5 cm)

Estimate: \$8,000 - 16,000

Amongst Yurich's paintings for Masters of the Universe is this beautiful establishing shot of the giant throne room, where he has rendered a stunning near-full-frame painting with extraordinary detail work on the lines of statues around the space.

The production company built an elaborate set for these shots but problems arose when it was found to be next to impossible to capture in-frame. The problem was passed over to Yurich who recreated the entire setting on glass, additionally supplying a wonderfully deep crypt beneath the main area. Prop statues were built on the stage set but Matt found it easier to simply paint them all in. This was a frequent approach of Matt's as well as his contemporaries Ellenshaw and Whitlock. 'If in doubt, paint it out.'

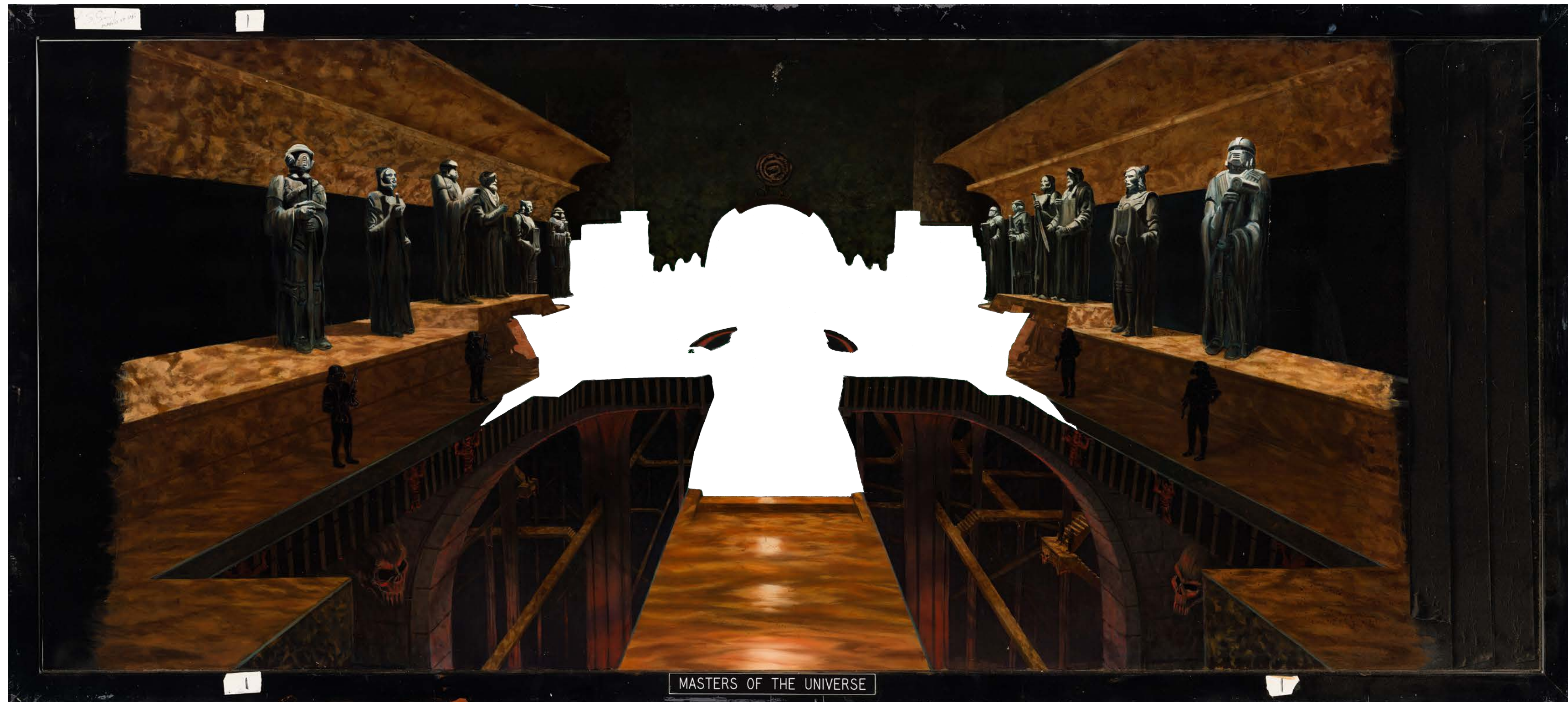
A marvellous piece of matte art, which like all pieces from the long dead traditional era, are actual paintings - physical properties, created by hand with time, care and a great deal of the artist's craft.

As time goes on, this marvellous piece of matte art is beginning to symbolise an entire genre of Movies. It is an anachronism, thoroughly locked and transportive to the 1980's. This physical painting on glass is in sharp contrast to our modern digital world. Beyond the title it was created for, it stands as a master standalone illustration and tells the story of the matte painting craft.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



Corner detail shows the depth of the board



A matte painting of Skeletor's (Frank Langella) throne room hand-painted by visual effects chief matte artist Matthew Yurich for Gary Goddard's Masters of the Universe. Skeletor ruled from his throne room inside the captured Castle Grayskull until He-Man (Dolph Lundgren) and his friends defeated him there. To create the scale of Skeletor's colossal throne room, an elaborate life-size set was built for the production, complete with massive statues built to enhance the sense of scope. Nonetheless, it still proved impossible to capture in its entirety in a single wide shot.

Yurich was therefore tasked with recreating the throne room set entirely in a painting, complete with the huge statues lining the sides and a deep, dark crypt beneath the walkway. Using techniques familiar to legendary matte painting contemporaries like Peter Ellenshaw and Albert Whitlock, this lustrous and detailed matte painting was rendered on a metal-framed sheet of glass by Yurich. It features "SS-1 Masters of Uni" handwritten on tape at the top left corner; three labels reading "1" around the frame, and a plaque on the bottom of the frame reading "Masters of the Universe." There are additional pieces of tape on the back and three strips of black tape down the length of the front right side.

Also included is a modern-printed "working composite" photo print that illustrates the final composition of the lot, showing how the live action composited into the final artwork. The frame exhibits some wear from age and storage, including areas of wear to the paint. Dimensions: 76" x 34" x 0.5" (193 cm x 86.5 cm x 1.5 cm)

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Special shipping required; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Lot 232

Painting Loose

The profession, as it was in what we will call "the traditional era," was simple in theory, yet highly demanding in practice. To have the skills to accurately paint and color-match, blend, and tie together a wholly manufactured painted setting, with that of an actual "live" photographed setting required incredible skill and the ability to not just paint a "realistic scene" or additions—quite the opposite in fact—whereby through timeless skills passed down by previous generations of matte artists, the focus would more than often be on an instinctive feel for light, shadow, the time of day, and natural phenomena, rendered often with a surprisingly loose and free hand, rather than labor-intensive academic precision. Knowing just how much to paint and just where to concentrate the brushwork, rather than attempting to create a gallery masterpiece, was the key to the success of gentlemen such as these, and Matthew was at the top of the game. What I term "the marriage of fact and fiction" was key to a successful completed matte shot. Composing and orchestrating an entirely believable scene using just oil paints, glass or masonite, and skilled camerawork fooled millions of picture goers for nearly a century.

Matte artists such as Matthew worked quickly. Often, flicks of the loaded brush or an accidental (though some would argue quite planned) smudge of pigment was enough to sell an effect or aspect of a given matte shot. Often, too much painting was ineffective and false, with less being more once set in front of the matte camera which would "read" the artwork cinematically, as opposed to a gallery viewer scrutinizing a piece in a museum.

Matthew possessed the instinctive abilities of, most importantly, where to draw the audience's eye when one of his mattes came up on screen. Draw their attention for the brief four or five seconds that the matte is on screen and they'll overlook the overall trick being played on them.

He takes into account the limitations of human vision to direct the viewer's focus and downplay the less polished elements of an image. Our eyes see distant objects as blurry and can't grasp every detail. Therefore, the painter's role is to aid the eye by creating an image that mirrors what it would have seen from the camera's perspective on site.

The creation of matte paintings is fundamentally about mimicking how our eyes perceive a scene. When we look far away, we don't see detailed features: a window on a far-off building looks like a vague gray blur, a tree appears as a simple green shape, maybe with a hint of brown. Our brains understand these distant objects and all that stuff. He said "No...I've got the picture right here as windows or trees because they interpret them in their context and tell us what they are. Our brains fill in the detailed specifics that our eyes miss."

In their artistic approach and staging, matte painters smoothly integrate this basic concept of cinematic vision. They also take advantage of the fact that while our vision is limited, a single element can prompt the brain to infer and make up for missing details. This is where ellipses become important. An actor grabs a door handle, and in the next shot, they're outside. The brain makes up for this apparent inconsistency by connecting the "gap" in time, creating a spatial link when faced with visual gaps. As long as the object left a mark, the brain fills in the gaps. This is the principle of metonymy, where a part stands for the whole, or in this case, a mark signifies the entirety.

Matthew tells a story of how he tricked a director who demanded detailed painting of cannons on an old ship. Instead, he drew a simple black line. When the film was screened, the director was pleased to see all the expected details on the screen.

What's particularly fascinating is the point at which, as you get closer to the painting, it starts to look abstract; but at a certain distance, typically two to three feet, everything comes together.

Peter Cook, January 2024



326 Hand-Painted Matthew Yuricich Golden Gate Bridge Matte Painting Preliminary Artwork **Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979)**

Preliminary artwork for a Golden Gate Bridge matte painting hand-painted by matte painter Matthew Yuricich for Robert Wise's *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. The iconic bridge appeared with futuristic tube additions in 23rd-century San Francisco. For the finished shot that appeared in the film, footage of real moving water and a shuttle model miniature, photographed separately by David K. Stewart, were added to give the otherwise static shot some movement.

Yuricich worked with his brother Richard, who served as director of photography for photographic effects on the film, under Douglas Trumbull and his Future General effects house. The film's special photographic effects, as seen in such landmark sequences as the arrival to San Francisco and the final encounter with V'Ger, earned the effects team a nomination for an Academy Award®.

This artwork, a preliminary yet no less ornately detailed illustration for the final matte painting of the bridge, was rendered by Yuricich in mixed media on illustration paper, taped to white backing board, hand-labeled "D-1," and taped over with an acetate sheet. The board exhibits smudging and staining from both paint and grime, stray pieces of tape, and bent corners. Dimensions: 30.25" x 20.25" (76.5 cm x 51.25 cm)

Sold without copyright; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

Estimate: \$4,000 - 8,000

Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979)



Film frame showing Lot 327 matte painting composited into final shot



Corner detail shows the depth of the board

327
Hand-Painted Matthew Yurich Golden Gate Bridge Matte Painting

Dimensions: 80" x 38.25" x 0.5" (203.25 cm x 97.25 cm x 1.5 cm)

Estimate: \$8,000 - 16,000

The long-anticipated feature film based on the beloved series, Star Trek: The Motion Picture stayed true to the essence and sensibility of its origins and was a massive showcase for special photographic effects work. VFX pioneer Douglas Trumbull led a skilled team included both Matthew Yurich and his brother Richard were heavily involved with the visuals on The Motion Picture, as Richard was the effects D.O.P.

While Yurich produced many mattes for this film, including Starfleet interiors, planets, and elements of the V'ger sequence, perhaps the most impressive shot was the beautifully rendered wide establishing shot above San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, several hundred years in the future.

This is a magnificent piece of artwork that was almost entirely painted, with only a small section of live-action 'plate' photography of the ocean composited in to bring in to life, as well as the addition of a miniature shuttle flying by.

The sky painted in this matte - always a challenge, even for the best matte artists - is marvellous. The brushwork appears spontaneous and loose, capturing the clouds without drawing undue attention to the work. That looseness was the mark of a skilled matte painter, and Yurich was known for whipping out skies out with minimal effort.

Peter Cook, Matte Painting Historian



A matte painting of the Golden Gate Bridge hand-painted by matte painter Matthew Yurich for Robert Wise's Star Trek: The Motion Picture. The iconic bridge appeared with futuristic tube additions in 23rd-century San Francisco. The shot was achieved by compositing Yurich's matte with footage of real moving water and a futuristic shuttle model miniature separately shot by photographic effects director David K. Stewart to lend movement to the frame. After filming, Yurich bought the painting back from production for \$500.

Yurich worked with his brother Richard, who served as director of photography for photographic effects along with Stewart as well as special photographic effects producer, under Douglas Trumbull and his Future General effects house. The film's

groundbreaking SFX photography, as seen in such landmark sequences as the arrival to San Francisco and the final encounter with V'Ger, earned the effects team a nomination for an Academy Award®.

This matte is rendered by Yurich in mixed media on masonite applied with a black tape border and hand-labeled "US 595" and for shot number "D-1." Yurich paid special attention to painting the clouds, making them look spontaneous and natural, rather than overly stylized or scenic in such a way that would leave the image feeling unrealistic. Also included is a modern-printed "working composite" photo print that illustrates the final composition of the lot, showing how the live action composited into the final artwork.

The board exhibits chipping in multiple places around its edges with paint splatches and smudging throughout. Dimensions: 80" x 38.25" x 0.5" (203.25 cm x 97.25 cm x 1.5 cm)

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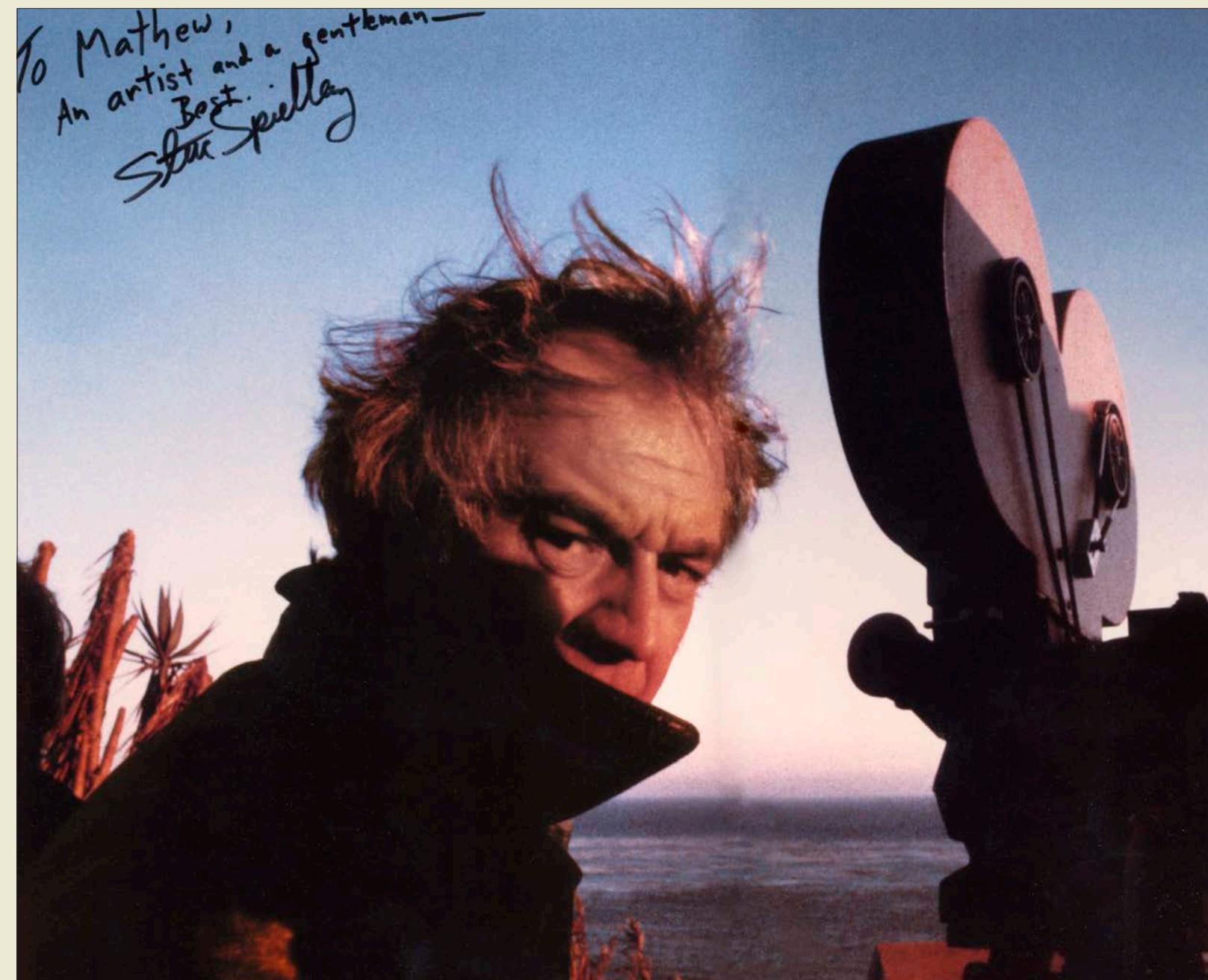
Lot 327

Credits List

- Under Siege II (1995) Warner Bros.
- Janet Jackson's If (1993) MTV music video
- Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man (1991) MGM
- Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey (1991) Video Image
- Flight of the Intruder (1991) Paramount
- Dances with Wolves (1990) TIG
- Opportunity Knocks (1990) Universal
- Field of Dreams (1989) Universal
- Harlem Nights (1989) Paramount
- Vibes (1988) BOSS Film Studio
- Die Hard (1988) BOSS Film Studio
- Monster Squad (1987) BOSS Film Studio
- Masters of the Universe (1987) BOSS Film Studio
- Solarbabies (1986) BOSS Film Studio
- The Boy Who Could Fly, The (1986) BOSS Film Studio
- Poltergeist II: The Other Side (1986) BOSS Film Studio
- Legal Eagles (1986) BOSS Film Studio
- Fright Night (1985) Entertainment Effects Group, BOSS Film Studio
- "V" (tv series) (1983) Van Der Veer
- 2010 (1984) Entertainment Effects Group
- Ghostbusters (1984) Entertainment Effects Group, BOSS Film Studio
- Brainstorm (1983) Entertainment Effects Group
- Strange Brew (1983) MGM
- The Thorn Birds (1983) ABC
- Heart Like a Wheel (1983) FOX
- Chanel No. 5 "Share the Fantasy" Commercial (1982) Entertainment Effects Group
- Blade Runner (1982) Warner Bros.
- Yes, Giorgio (1982) MGM
- Cannery Row (1982) MGM
- My Favourite Year (1982) MGM
- Pennies from Heaven (1981) MGM
- Under the Rainbow (1981) Orion
- The Last Chase (1981)
- 1941 (1979) Universal
- Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979) Paramount (Future General Corporation)
- China Syndrome, The (1979) Columbia Van Der Veer
- Wholly Moses (1979) Columbia
- Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) Columbia (Future General Corporation)
- Damnation Alley (1977) FOX
- Pink Panther Strikes Again (1976) AMJO – (re-do of some of original UK mattes).
- Logan's Run (1976) MGM – Oscar
- The Dutchess and the Dirtwater Fox (1976) FOX
- Death Race 2000 (1975) New World Pictures
- The Ultimate Warrior (1975) Warner Bros.
- White Line Fever (1975) Columbia
- Doc Savage: The Man of Bronze (1975) Warner Bros.
- The Wind and the Lion (1975) MGM
- Lucky Lady (1975) FOX
- Young Frankenstein (1974) FOX
- Towering inferno (1974) FOX
- Sandberg's Lincoln (1974) Warner Bros. tv movie
- Planet of the Apes FOX (mid 70's tv series)
- Logan's Run MGM (mid 70's tv series)
- The Island at the Top of the World (1974) Disney
- Westworld (1973) MGM
- Jonathan Livingston Seagull (1973) Paramount
- Soylent Green (1973) MGM
- Lost Horizon (1973) MGM
- Battle for the Planet of the Apes (1973) FOX
- The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean (1972)
- Conquest of the Planet of the Apes (1972) FOX
- The Poseidon Adventure (1972) FOX
- Earth II (1971) MGM TV movie
- Beneath the Planet of the Apes (1970) FOX
- Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970) FOX
- The Gypsy Moths (1969) MGM
- Guns for San Sebastian (1968) MGM
- Ice Station Zebra (1968) MGM
- The Power (1968) MGM
- Planet of the Apes (1968) MGM
- The Man from the 25th Century FOX
- Point Blank (1967) MGM
- The Greatest Story Ever Told (1965) MGM
- Dr. Zhivago (1965) MGM
- Honeymoon Hotel (1964) MGM
- The Unsinkable Molly Brown (1964) MGM
- The Prize (1963) MGM
- The Courtship of Eddie's Father (1963) MGM
- Mutiny on the Bounty (1962) MGM
- Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse (1962) MGM
- Billy Rose's Jumbo (1962) MGM
- Atlantis, the Lost Continent (1961) MGM
- King of Kings (1961) MGM
- Cimarron (1960) MGM
- Please Don't Eat the Daisies (1960) MGM
- Never So Few (1959)
- Green Mansions (1959) MGM
- Ben Hur (1959) MGM
- Tarzan, the Ape Man (1959) MGM
- North by Northwest (1959) MGM
- The World, the Flesh, and the Devil (1959) MGM
- Run Silent Run Deep (1958) MGM
- The Brothers Karamazov (1958) MGM
- Silk Stockings (1957) MGM
- Forbidden Planet (1956) MGM
- Love Me or Leave Me (1955) MGM
- The King's Thief (1955) MGM
- The Prodigal (1955) (1955) MGM
- Jupiter's Darling (1955) MGM
- Kismet (1955)
- Untamed (1955) FOX
- Brigadoon (1954) MGM
- The Egyptian (1954) FOX
- Garden of Evil (1954) FOX
- Seven Brides for Seven Brothers (1954) MGM
- The Student Prince (1954) MGM
- Prince Valliant (1954) FOX
- Demetrius and the Gladiators (1954) FOX
- Hell and High Water (1954) FOX
- King of the Khyber Rifles (1953) FOX
- The Robe (1953) FOX
- Titanic (1953) FOX
- White Witch Doctor (1953) FOX
- Destination Gobi (1953) FOX
- Call Me Madam (1953) FOX
- Monkey Business (1952) FOX
- Day the Earth Stood Still (1951) FOX
- The Great Caruso (1951) MGM
- The Desert Fox (1951) (1954) FOX
- Rogue River (1951) FOX
- For Heaven's Sake (1950) FOX



Matt Yuricich with Marlene Dietrich at the Hollywood Canteen



"Lock down that damn camera!" — Yuricich's often-repeated mantra for cameraman, in reference to making a camera as stable as possible for a matte shot. Without a rocky-steady filmed image from the camera, successful matte composites were impossible.

Booklet Acknowledgments

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- **Peter Cook**
- **John Duane**

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- **Jaret Sears**
- **Shelley Moench-Kelly**



Zurich

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