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Apogee Historic Visual Effects
VistaFlex Camera Crane System Δ
Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979)

A historic visual effects VistaFlex motion-control camera crane system manufactured by Apogee and first used during the production of Robert Wise's Star Trek: The Motion Picture. Apogee, Inc. was formed by a group of key visual effects technicians who produced visual effects for Star Wars: A New Hope, including John Dykstra and Grant McCune.

The company operated out of the same facility in Van Nuys where work on A New Hope took place. When Lucasfilm moved ILM North to the Bay Area, Apogee kept the original Dykstraflex camera that was built for the film, along with other camera equipment. One of Apogee's first projects was to assemble a new working stock of camera equipment, including the VistaFlex motion control system, which was designed by Don Trumbull (the father of Douglas Trumbull) in 1978.

The VistaFlex camera features a tilting lens board and was designed by Sanford Kennedy and B.G. Engineering to be heavier-duty than the original Dykstraflex to reduce vibrations during operation. This specific system likely worked on all of Apogee's 1980s projects, including Caddyshack, Spaceballs, and Ghostbusters II. When Apogee disbanded in the early 1990s, the camera system was sold to Sony Pictures Imageworks, where it was employed on the production of films such as Speed, Starship Troopers, and Contact. During its time at SPI, the original open lattice-work of the arm was covered with additional metal sheets for a cleaner look, and stickers were applied by operators. The camera was sold off and later utilized in television productions during the 2000s before being retired as a collector's piece.

Included with the historic system is the original motion-control crane, "trojan helmet" rotator head head, camera, the custom electronic camera control box with Apogee logo engraved on the front, a wooden accessory box containing 4-perf and 8-perf movements, ground glass and viewing tube, an eyepiece and several other components, various cabling, and three manila folders containing several dozen printed copies of hand-drawn designs and paperwork from the development of the Vistaflex. This motion control system was fully functional at the time it was retired, though an experienced technician would be required to prepare and activate it again.

Dimensions: 194" x 72" x 127" (492.75 cm x 183 cm x 322.5 cm)

Contains electronic and mechanical components; see notice in the Buyer's Guide.

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

Estimate: \$20,000 - 40,000



16'2" (492.75 cm)