

VIII. The Peterson Full Wet Immersion Printer

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Peterson is licensed under the Carter patents, however, they have adhered to the standard Peterson Panel Printer Format.

They have built a single direction, full wet immersion printer, which operates right to left only, and conforms to the Model C direction of printing.

The Peterson format is at twelve o'clock for two reasons: (1) it is a straight-through printer path which is standard in the industry; (2) staying with the standard has made it possible for Peterson to offer wet printing

conversions for Peterson printers already in service.

The Peterson printer is wet only in the picture head, but they do offer a sound conversion for those who want it. The new printer contains the standard Peterson automatic light valve system. It will fill with liquid and printing can start after 60 seconds.

The PMPEA/Kodak Seminar: *A Close Encounter with Doug Trumbull*

The great magicians of the world are never supposed to reveal the secrets of their tricks. An exception to this rule occurred this year on the night before Halloween, when Douglas Trumbull addressed 2000 people and told how he had achieved the fantastic illusions in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. The occasion was the annual Professional Motion Picture Equipment Association (PMPEA) seminar held in conjunction with the annual SMPTE Conference.

This year the entire PMPEA seminar was devoted to Mr. Trumbull and his special effects. To make this truly a special event and to do justice to the spectacular visuals, the PMPEA (with assistance from Eastman Kodak Co.) rented the Ziegfeld Theatre for the entire evening of 30 October. The theater, a block north of the SMPTE Conference site, is considered by some to be one of the finest 70mm projection facilities on the East Coast. Coincidentally, it was the theater originally selected for the New York premier of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*.

Two Shows Required

Because the first show, at 6:15 p.m., was sold out more than a month in advance, a second show was scheduled for 9:00 p.m. — and that one too was sold out by seminar time. Both shows were huge successes. Mr. Chadwell O'Connor, President of the PMPEA, opened the evening and welcomed the audience to the seminar. Anton Wilson then gave a brief account of Mr. Trumbull's filmography and showed a five-minute excerpt from the film *Silent Running* which Mr. Trumbull both wrote and directed. Then, the house lights dim-

med and Mr. Trumbull began a slide presentation of production stills taken during the *Close Encounters* filming. The audience saw the planning and execution of miniature landscapes, the creation and mechanization of spaceships and flying saucers, and the sophisticated computerized cameras that actually photographed the effects. (Who would have believed that in the scene where the woman and her child were "buzzed" by saucers the road ended only 30 feet behind the actors? or that the village in the background was only a 3-ft by 5-ft tabletop model? or that the lights of the saucers were photographed on the same film only after the other action had already been shot?)

Mr. Trumbull went into great detail both verbally and visually, about the motion recording system that stores camera motion data in a computer during live action filming. This data is then retrieved during special effects filming and used to control servomotors that cause the camera to pan, tilt, dolly, etc., in exact duplication of the movements that were executed during live filming. Unlike early special-effects efforts, which were usually restricted to static shots, using this system allows complex camera movements while retaining perfect correlation with live action and later created effect.

No secret was sacred, and Mr. Trumbull covered every aspect of his creations including some "inside" anecdotes. His slide presentation was then followed by a 70mm reel of test footage Doug had shot while developing the effects for *Close Encounters*. This was indeed a unique experience, to see how the final effects developed from an idea to a practical and dazzling vis-

ual. Included in this reel were the marvelous moving cloud sequences, the mothership sequences, various spaceship tests as well as matte tests. Throughout the reel, Mr. Trumbull explained the technical elements involved.

A lively question and answer session followed, and then came the piece de resistance of the evening: a special demonstration reel that Mr. Trumbull had prepared of all the actual special effects from *Close Encounters* in 70mm and six-channel stereo sound.

Mr. Trumbull, the PMPEA, and the Eastern Kodak Co. are to be thanked for providing an experience that had — if anything — more impact than the *Close Encounters* film itself. "A Close Encounter with Doug Trumbull" was most effective and most appreciated.

Acknowledgments

Truly, too many people gave great efforts to this program for them all to be named. Some names with their special contributions really must be acknowledged however. Thus, thanks are extended to: Cindi Becker who as PMPEA Vice President handled all practical details; Chadwell O'Connor (PMPEA President); Kenneth Mason of Eastman Kodak who assumed half of the financial expenses of the seminar; Lee Duncan, Secretary-Treasurer of the PMPEA, who took care of publicity, posters, printing tickets, and sales; the Walter Reade organization (owners of the Ziegfeld); and Anton Wilson (program chairman) and Herbert Lightman (*American Cinematographer* Editor) both of whom proposed the idea of the seminar to Mr. Trumbull.