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Plus
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From BOND to BATMAN**

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**The Fantasy Art of
GREG HILDEBRANDT**

The WORLD FANTASY CON

Preview: THE DAY AFTER



**All The Latest Information
On Upcoming
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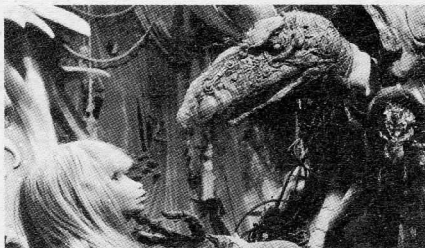
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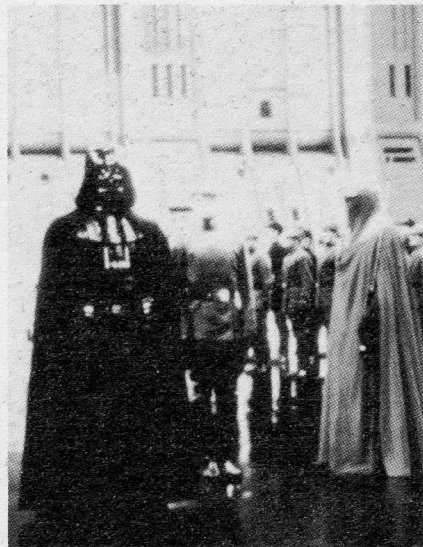
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Behind-the-Scenes with:

THE DARK CRYSTAL

Referred to in secret for years as "the Froud project," Henson's **The Dark Crystal** is a landmark in fantasy filmmaking. Work began in New York as long ago as 1977 and soon evolved in a mammoth undertaking which drew on the talents of artists literally from around the world.



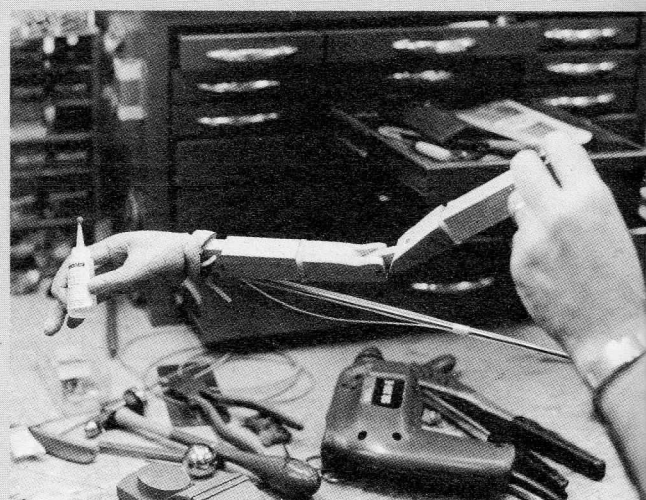
There may only be two characters on-camera, but each may require several assistant puppeteers in addition to the main operator to bring the character to life. Here, four assistants work as one with Jim Henson, principal puppeteer for Jen. All eyes are on the video monitors to coordinate actions.



Left: Jim Henson conducts a workshop twice a week during the production of *The Dark Crystal* for prospective puppeteers. Some of his students performed as back-ground characters in the crowd scenes. As you can tell from the photo, a puppeteer has a strong right arm. Most of the Pod villagers and slaves are standard hand and rod puppets, usually requiring only one person to manipulate them, though several persons were needed to operate the Pod musicians. Sherry Amott oversaw the construction, fabrication and realization of these characters.



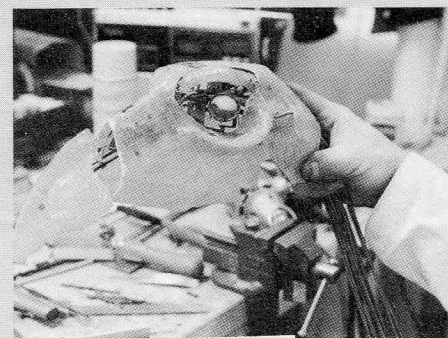
Above and below: The Landstriders were sculpted and developed by Valerie Charlton. The creature has a moving skeleton—a flexible spine, rib cage and pelvis.



At top left is an array of Pod people heads. Their garments, which had an all-ethnic cast, were hand-crafted of raw silk. The fabric was hand-dyed to achieve muddled warm earth tones and red highlights. The costumes were all handstitched, then distressed, creating an old worn look. At upper right, the mechanics of a Gelfling hand and arm are revealed. Both radio controls and cable controls were used to animate the figures. At lower left, Pod parent and Pod child are posed in front of a scale chart. While heads and hands are foam latex, the body is constructed of open cell foam. At lower right, a baby Kira is fed by a loving Pod person. The Pod People were much easier to bring to life than the Gelflings; puppeteers found that they could almost entirely rely on "Muppet moves" to animate the characters. The Gelflings required far more subtler movement to look real. The problem was complicated by the Gelfling puppets which were stiff and difficult to operate. Jen in particular is fairly "stone"-faced throughout the picture.



Upper left: A close look at the hand of a Mystic as the performer is sewn into his role. Upper right: A corner of the Henson shop devoted to making set pieces. Lower left: Artist Lyle Conway sculpting Aughra, who was originally a he called Habidabad. Lower right: Tears are added to Jen in the final scene.



The Skeksis were sculpted by Lyle Conway. They have more working parts than the other creatures. The Chamberlain is the most complicated with 21 cables operating different parts; he was cast in foam latex while the others were sculpted in Scotfoam.

