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Makeup Effects

"Where fantasy becomes a three-dimensional reality"

By JOHN DODS

Women's lib has progressed a little," says Diane Hammond, explaining why her name precedes that of her male partner on their new business logo. Hammond and Davis is a new makeup-effects company based in Washington, D.C. Diane Hammond and her partner Tim Davis are now engaged in their first professional forays into special-effects filmmaking after years of distinguished enterprise in amateur filmmaking.

"We are doing makeup prostheses, puppets, effects-makeup, foam body-suits, and special props," explains Hammond. "We recently completed a mechanical head for the film A Gift for Toby," a short film lensed in Maryland. "The head has cable-control and bladder functions. We also worked on the sci-fi feature film Design 2084—an independent production; we had to build fetuses and cloning tanks. I generally handle most of the mold making and foam running," says Hammond. "Tim does most of the design work and sketches. We both sculpt and work on the internal mechanics."

The Early Years

For years the 29-year-old Hammond was a familiar face around the annual Balticon sci-fi film conventions. The face, however, was seldom her own, as she—together with friends—donned costume and prosthetic disguises to circulate through the crowds, providing an appropriately otherworldly atmosphere. Rather than reapply the prosthetics daily—a several hour process—Hammond kept them on for the entire weekend, sleeping and eating in the porous rubber face [this is not a recommended practice].

"I was always fascinated by makeup as a kid," says Hammond, "Watching Frankenstein and The Werewolf of London and wondering 'How did they do that?' I started fooling around with makeup when I was 16. The two movies that really spurred my interest came out the same year: Planet of
the Apes and 2001. As a result, my first makeup experiments were apes." Hammond widened her knowledge of makeup techniques over the years by long-distance communication with other makeup artists. "I had the opportunity to talk to Dick Smith a couple of times as well as to Tom Savini, Stan Winston, Richie Alonzo, and Arnold Gargiulo. There is always something that one artist will know that you don't know and one thing that they won't know that you can pass on to them; it's a marvelous way of exchanging information.

"I've never had any negative comments about my being a woman working in this field. Often when I'm talking shop to men in the business, they're fascinated that it's a woman they're talking to because we're still a rarity in the field."

Hammond and Davis became proficient at winning prizes in the makeup competitions and costumes contests in their area. Last year Tim Davis won first place at Balticon for his life-sized recreation of "Jabba the Hut." This followed his win of the previous year for his "Gamnorian-Pig-Guard." Together Hammond and Davis won both first and second place in the FANGORIA/20th Century Fox Quest For Fire caveman makeup contest.

Before their professional association was bonded, Hammond and Davis worked together on area film projects like Mark Chorvinsky's Strange Tangents (see FANGORIA #37). Says Hammond: "We did the melting effects in the scene where the 'Master' changes into a jelly-like..."
A bizarre makeup creation created by Hammond/Davis for the short film Strange Tangents. Front projection material in the eyes and mouth provided a weird, otherworldly glow.

A smaller “plunger head” with large bladder movements, and a stop-motion model.

“Saliva” tubes were placed in the mouth to facilitate the effect of a drooling monster.

With their work on A Gift for Toby and Design 2084 completed, Diane Hammond and Tim Davis have busied themselves with a new set of projects. “Now we’re building a three-foot-tall mechanical monster for our video demo-reel,” says Hammond. “It’s going to have radio-controlled orbital eye movement—movement in all directions. We’re also building a tentacled monster; we designed a mechanism that made the tentacles move like an octopus by means of cable controls. We learned so many do’s and don’ts on A Gift for Toby—it was a great experience.”

Recently Maryland’s Channel 20 featured Hammond/Davis’ handiwork on the Creature Features TV show. The makeup team was also featured on a local TV special Monsters, Magic, and Makebelieve—a documentary program covering many areas of special-effects filmmaking. On the show, Hammond was featured in a makeup demonstration doing which she was shown transforming a young lady into a female alien. “They ‘Chroma-keyed’ her right into a scene from the ‘Planet of the Apes’ TV series!” exclaimed the young makeup artist turned TV personality.

Women’s lib has made some progress. People like Diane Hammond have been pushing it forward.