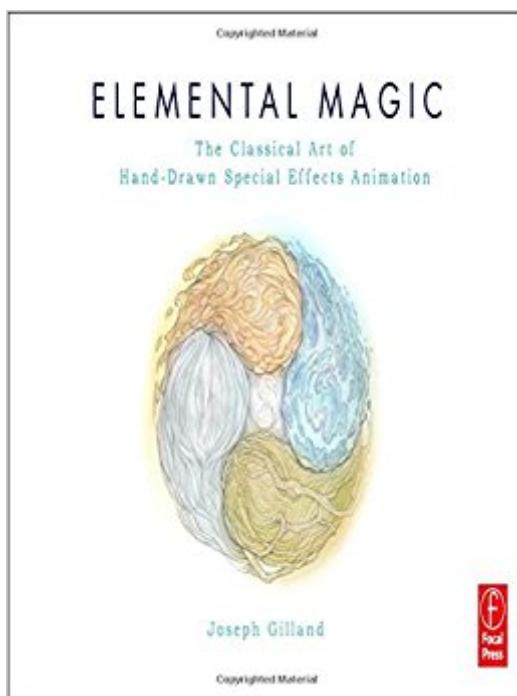


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# Elemental Magic, Volume I: The Art Of Special Effects Animation



## **Synopsis**

Create amazing animated effects such as fiery blazes, rippling water, and magical transformations. Animation guru Joseph Gilland breaks down the world of special effects animation with clear step-by-step diagrams and explanations on how to create the amazing and compelling images you see on the big screen. 'Elemental Magic' is jam-packed with rich, original illustrations from the author himself which help explain and illuminate the technique, philosophy, and approach behind classical hand drawn animated effects and how to apply these skills to your digital projects.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

Now, finally classical effects animation gets its day in the sun with Joseph Gilland's fascinating new book. It's a revelation of the amazing blend of the art and craft behind the magic of this wonderful art form. -Don Hahn, Academy Award-nominated producer of *Beauty and the Beast* and *The Lion King* Veteran Disney animator Joe Gilland's informative book delivers, for the first time, the real nitty-gritty on the art of hand-drawn special effects. The mysteries of how to believably animate abstract forms representing rain, fire, smoke, etc. are revealed in articulate prose, revelatory graphs, and elegantly beautiful sequential imagery. A must-have guide for animation pros, teachers, and students! -John Canemaker, Academy Award-winning animator, internationally-renowned animation historian, and teacher

In his 32+ year animation career, he has worked with such studios as Walt Disney Feature

Animation, Don Bluth Animation, Productions Pascal Blais and the National Film Board of Canada. At Walt Disney Feature Animation, he served as Supervisor of Visual Effects for the Disney features Lilo & Stitch and Brother Bear. At Disney he also served as Head of Special Effects Units for the Disney features Kingdom of the Sun and Tarzan, and was Special Effects Animator on such notable titles as Pocahontas, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, James and the Giant Peach, Hercules and Mulan. He served as Designer and Supervisor for all 2D and 3D visual effects on the television series Silverwing, and Chaotic at Bardel Animation in Vancouver. He has also designed and directed a wide variety of television commercials. Clients include General Motors, CocaCola, Honda, MacDonald's, Gillette, Players Tobacco, Larrouse Dictionaries, and Radio Quebec. For almost three years, he was the Head of animation, and Digital Character animation at the Vancouver Film School. He lectures at animation schools in Canada, Europe and Asia, and has conducted workshops at animation festivals and schools around the world. he is a professional musician and performer as well. He has been writing professionally for over three years now, and has a bi-monthly column in the online Animation World Magazine, entitled 'The Animated Scene' which has an enormous readership around the world. He has also had articles published in Animation Magazine, the world's foremost industry magazine, as well as well as an article in 'Cartoons' The International Journal of Animation.

I figured I'd start leaving reviews since apparently, the possibility of bogus reviews are high in number these days. This book's shipping process was actually a bit funky. I'm not sure if it was a fluke or not, but I got this book pretty late, and my current order's list STILL doesn't have a confirmation that I received it~ Pretty curious~!However, I did get the book. And it's flippin' amazing. This was written by one of the main Disney Effects Animators back in the traditional renaissance. You can google that guys name to find his IMDB and see that he's worked on stuff like Mulan, Hercules, Tarzan etc. If you're a serious visual artist at all - I highly suggest you pick up this book. Though it's written by an animator, it has an INSANE amount of physics backing it up. There's a portion of this book that is entirely about a water splash? Or waves? Where the artist goes through and explains the movement/general path of motion for ALL SORTS OF STUFF and it's hella insightful. I highly recommend this, and the 2nd book. If you're an effects animator, and you don't have this in your library, you're missing out.

So far I really like this first volume. It gives solid advice on how to approach drawing effects. I've read reviews that suggest you to straight to volume 2. But I feel you miss the basic stuff, that is

pretty important. I recommend getting both books. It will help publishers print more books on animation. Especially the hand drawn stuff.

I've been hoping for years that someone would write a comprehensive book on 2D effects animation. Something more than the little "how to draw and flapping flag" or "how to make a fire cycle" bits that get tacked on in other animation books. Disney veteran Joseph Gilland has finally given us that first book dedicated to 2D effects animation. He's broken down effects into four broad categories (water/liquids, fire/smoke, props/solid objects and magical effects) and laid out the principles needed to bring them to life on paper. Since every real-world splash and flame is unique, Elemental Magic isn't so much of a "how to draw" type book as it is a "how to approach" book. Gilland breaks down the basic behaviors of different types of matter and the working methods needed for an animator to capture the dynamic essence of an effect without being tied to a hyper-real style or getting bogged down in an unmanageable level of detail. And this book doesn't solely apply to hand-drawn effects. Each section on a type of matter includes several pages on how to apply these classical animation principles to digital effects work. How to get the most out the computer's ability to do the heavy lifting on effects. Hopefully this isn't the last book ever published on 2D effects animation. Gilland himself mentions that he's only scratching the surface with this book and that water, smoke or any other element could warrant a full volume treatment. I hope someone takes him up on that offer, and with Elemental Magic we now have a solid foundation to build on.

Special Effects (SFX) is as old as Cinema. Any and all methods have been used to simulate effects in live action as well as animation films. This book and its sequel gives this unique art a detailed treatment that is long overdue. It is essential in teaching art not to focus too much on How to do 'this', How to do 'that' etc. It is always easy to teach that. But art is about creativity and not about repeating something like one does in an assembly line. More so in this niche domain of Special effects which is at the same time as much of a science as art. This book deals it the right way by introducing the reader to the approaches of special effects, beginning with early attempts at animation special effects. A great amount of detail is provided in the study of the elements, and how it gets integrated into an effect. One begins to appreciate how much the study, observation of the real world in extreme detail is an essential ingredient of understanding effects. The book equips the reader with all the mental tools needed to get started on a journey, where one goes into his/her own path of exploration, study, experimentation and producing Effects. Instead of merely showing, say,

how to make smoke. The study of Effects animation, is in essence a study of natural phenomena. Hence wast. For instance when we say water it implies... (I quote from the book:) Splashes, Ripples, Waves, Bubbles, Fountains, White water, Geysers, Water hoses, Raindrops, Rivers, Waterfalls, Oceans, Ice, Snowflakes, Avalanches and Slush !! Whoa!.. You get the point! This volume deals with two categories.(1) Liquid(2) Fire, Smoke and Explosions The author uses a very very simple, clear and lucid language, breaks down the process ever so slowly, with enough examples, time and explanations that aid in the assimilation of the subject. Since the treatment is at a fundamental level, what one learns forms the foundation for any medium.

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