Changing Icons: The Symbols of New York City in Film

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The Icons of the City

The architectural icons of the City have long served to allow film directors to identify the location of the primary setting in the film. Whether the film has been shot in the studio, on location, or been created entirely through CGI technologies, these symbols of the City provide viewers with immediate recognition of the urban setting. In fact, the images of the icons are in some instances so powerful as to *become* the representation of the city, allowing film makers to assimilate much of the footage by other means. Many of these notable architectural icons are charged with emotional and cultural imagery, due to their intrinsic connection with both the history of the City, and the cultural essence of what the City has come to mean. This charge can be the result of the architectural significance of the building, or the result of a set of events that may well have nothing to do with the "A"rchitecture.
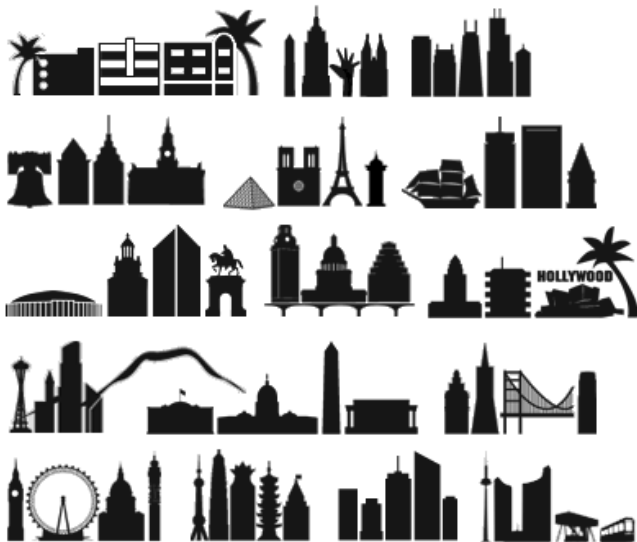

Fig. 1. Silhouettes of well known City Icons.[1]

These architectural symbols also begin to differentiate "new" cities, whose prominent building are entirely contemporary, from "old" cities, whose icons begin to show, even by silhouette, the evolution of the architectural style that has come to represent the culture or zeitgeist of the place. The icons of Dubai all reside in the present. The collection of symbols that represents London is capable of placing it in the past through the use of Big Ben or St. Paul's, or in the present, via the London Eye. Likewise for Paris, the past and present are contrasted through the Eiffel Tower and the Louvre Pyramid. Strikingly absent from the New York suite, are the paired rectangular images of the Twin Towers. Without an alternate "modern" icon, the city has lately come to be characterized by notable buildings of the past – The Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty and St. Patrick's Cathedral – leaving the identity of the present, quite unfilled. Not that there are no other contemporary *towers* in New York. The Seagram Building, ATT and Citicorp Towers, and new Hearst Building have important places in the creation of modern New York. But, situated in midtown, they lack a presence on the skyline and can never be adequately charged with enough meaning to replace the felled Twin Towers.

Urban Architectural Icons in Film
The actual use of these urban iconographic identifiers in film has changed throughout history, partially as a result of technological developments in filmmaking, and in part due to the evolution of architectural style. Early film made extensive use of painted backdrops as well as physical scale models or miniatures as its means of illustrating its version of the city. Most films were shot in studios where controlled interior spaces and artificial lighting provided the best results given the lack of sophistication of early cameras and difficulties with sound editing. If extensive city sets were required, scale models were constructed. Prior to 1927, with Walthur Ruttman's production *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, very few films used the actual city for location filming. Although the Metropolis of Fritz Lang's 1926 film of the same name was to become iconic and highly influential, it did not represent but the "idea" of New York – an idea snatched by Lang while viewing the New York skyline from the distant harbor. *Metropolis* has been characterized as "a film of powerfully expressive architectural metaphors, a gallery of contemporary visions, and an important turning point in the development of film architecture."[2] Erich Kettelhut and Otto Hunte's set designs are reputed to have been influenced by Lang's 1924 trip to New York, which occurred in the midst of a skyscraper boom unequalled in Europe. The setback style, as used in the 20 foot deep scale model of the central urban street scene, became the urban prototype for the city of the future, but it did not focus on a singular identifiable architectural icon.

Representation, Site Manipulation and the Role of Icons
Tall buildings have been central to the essence of New York architecture since the construction of the Singer Building (1907) and Woolworth Building (1913). By the 1930s, with a proliferation of *actual* skyscrapers available (Chrysler and Empire State Buildings both completed in 1930), the film industry refocused attention from a modeled vision of an imaginary future, such as the one illustrated in Fox Film's *Just Imagine* (1930), to one that used the actual architecture of New York as the subject, set, and sometimes star of films. The footage was often created as a large matte painting of the "impression of the" skyline that was placed behind the constructed set. These reference images of the New York skyline came to be known as "establishing shots", which served the purpose of telling the film audience the location of the film. In many films, these establishing shots might have been the only direct reference to New York, or representation of its actual urban architecture. The balance of the film may have been shot on set or in another city with similar architectural characteristics to the urban fabric of New York. This methodology holds true to the present day.

In the instance of film representations of New York City, the identifying use of the Empire State Building and the Chrysler Building, quickly gave way to the World Trade Towers shortly after their completion in 1973. Their simple form and sheer height dominated the New York skyline. Not that they were particularly remarkable in form, or designed by a renowned architect or otherwise of high "A"rchitectural significance. They simply represented the image of power, commerce and modernity, and dominated the New York City skyline like no other buildings before. The World Trade Center towers appeared on numerous film posters whether they were central to the plot of the film or not.[3] They were not charged with the representation of freedom and democracy, until they fell, as a result of "events", not commercial office architecture.

This quick switch to the World Trade Towers from the Empire State Building is glaringly obvious when we examine differences in the 1933 and 1976 versions of the classic film, *King Kong*. The 1933 version of *King Kong* brought the model based image of the Empire State Building, then the tallest structure in the world, to the forefront of the public eye,

through the establishing shots created for the film. In the 1933 version of the film, the climax of the film takes place atop the Empire State Building, thrusting the building into perhaps as important a character role as either Faye Wray or the giant Ape. The precariousness of the action was fully dependent on the height of the tower, the minimal hand grips provided by the architectural style and the vulnerable elegance of the dirigible docking port on top of the building.

Fig. 2. *King Kong* (1933) The identification of New York is made clear by the use of the Empire State Building in the foreground, and Chrysler Building beyond. (1976) The Empire State Building is diminished in the background as the WTC take front stage.

In contrast, the 1976 remake of *King Kong* by Dino De Laurentis chose to replace the Empire State Building with the newly constructed World Trade Center towers – which had at that point surpassed the former in height and significance to a modernized New York City – as they assumed their dominant role on the skyline. Although a relative success at the box office, critics felt that the use of the towers significantly detracted from the film, noting that the climb up the face of the towers was monotonous, due to the relentlessness of the architecture, and that the climax scene on the roof level was less exciting due to the expansive size of the roofs.

"The shape of the Trade Center, in contrast (to the Empire State Building), fought the story all the way…New York's newer office buildings offered so little to the fantasies of the movie city - or to fantasies of any sort."[4]

Excitement was instead provided by having Kong leap from building to building. Interestingly in John Carpenter's *Escape from New York* (1981), the sheer expanse of the top of the towers is recognized by Carpenter who uses the roof to land Kurt Russell's plane, a highly nerve wracking part of the film owing to the relative insufficiency of the platform for such a purpose. The opening screen in *Escape from New York* also captures the essence of the relationship that developed among the icons of New York City through the use of a simple identification silhouette outline.

Fig. 3. *Escape from New York* (1981): The manipulated identity skyline of New York City – ingredients: Statue of Liberty, World Trade Towers and a diminished Empire State Building in the distance vs. the actual skyline.

Where filmmakers might use key architectural elements within the plot of a film, the skyline can often provide an even more powerful image. The idea of the New York skyline, including references to the major architectural icons that contribute to its presence, is critical to the general discussion New York *as a city*, as although the skyline has long been employed as a key identifying element in film, it is also one of the pieces of film set that has been altered to suit the mood, budget and technological limitations of the film. The degree of manipulation has varied widely as a function of the use of created environments versus on-site shooting. Technological developments over the last 40 years have seen a slow shift to the incorporation of digital manipulation in almost all films, resulting in an almost seamless blending of digital and actual environments. Models, matte paintings and location shoots existed as the status quo for the inclusion of architecture in filming until the advent of bluescreen[5] and chroma key filming and then digital/CGI animation. Therefore the accuracy of the representation of the skyline and its associated icons has varied throughout the history of film due to a multitude of factors – some less "visible" than others.

Advances in representation and filming, and a changeover to from studio and back lot to location filming in the 1970s and 80s, began to allow film makers to step back from the city, and easily include the *actual skyline* as a key identifier. This took the cityscape well beyond its former role in the "establishing shot" and guaranteed a gritty level of realism in the representation of the urban spaces and architectural icons in the film, as well as the relationship between the buildings and the action in the film. Location shooting was far less expensive, more realistic and more flexible than the construction of vast model based or full size sets that existed on the New York modeled back lots in California.

Although John Carpenter's *Escape from New York* (1981) was largely shot at night in a burnt out area of St. Louis, Illinois, it is believably blended into the film by the additional live film footage taken on Liberty Island[6] and the overview shots that include notable icons such as the World Trade Centre, Empire State and Chrysler Buildings. This was typical for many films as New York became prohibitively expensive or difficult for general location filming, in spite of the efforts of the Mayor's Office of Film and Broadcasting, which was established in 1966, to promote the same. Shoots tended to be done in replacement cities whose architectural appearance was sufficiently similar to particular sections of New York, so the scenes could be intermixed quite successfully, as long as the *classic* images of the New York "identifying icons" were included. During this transitional period in film – pre CGI – many films explored the "noire" or "dystopic" theme, whose dark hue allowed for fairly seamless amalgamation between location, matte, set and model views, in spite of technical deficiencies. The combination of the modes allowed for more creativity and flexibility.

Icons as Identifiers of the New York of the Future
In Luc Besson's *The Fifth Element* (1989) we see a vision of New York City 300 years in the future. This powerful futuristic extrapolation of an intensified New York, designed by Jean-Claude Mézières, has been compared to Syd Mead's revolutionary vision of Los Angeles in *Blade Runner* (1982). The film extrapolates the key elements of the present day metropolis of New York City to create architectural and urban environments that have an uncanny sense of familiarity with the New York City we know, yet create such a dystopic vision, so to elicit fear and disbelief. Mézières' matte painting illustrates New York 2259 at a time when sea levels had dropped and made the city virtually landlocked. As a result the iconic Statue of Liberty can be clearly seen soaring far above her 1997 height, distorting our accepted vision of the New York skyline.

Fig. 4. *The Fifth Element* (1997) Jean-Claude Mézières' New York skyline for *The Fifth Element*.

The Fifth Element uses clear architectural identifiers to support its depiction of New York. Although the Mézières aerial view of the skyline, save for the landlocked Statue of Liberty, mostly depicts an exaggerated density and height, with towers whose silhouettes closely resemble the Empire State and Chrysler buildings, some of the "internal" images clearly seem to show us the Brooklyn Bridge and several other more plainly identifiable icons. The ability to identify such icons defines the setting as New York. Without such architectural identifiers, the created environment would lose its intensity and fail to uphold the urban ideas that are so closely linked to this exacerbated, high density, urban environment that core to the understanding of the film in its representation of the future of New York, rather than an anonymous unnamed place.

The Impact of 9/11
In spite of the shift of the film industry to Hollywood mid 19th century, New York maintained her status as the historic cultural center and idea of "America". The Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building, and ultimately the World Trade Center Towers, came to be intrinsically linked to the notion of a "Free America", even if freedom was represented, in the case of the Empire State Building and Twin Towers, as commerce rather than in the case of the Statue of Liberty, as democracy. How then was the film industry to react to the creation of films in the obviously *incomplete* and damaged New York, post 9/11?

James Sanders' definitive work, "Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies"[7] was first published in December 2001, just a few months after the fall of the World Trade Towers. Its publication marked the end of an era for a particular freedom inherent in the film version of the city. The disaster spawned a general change in the way that the skyline and architecture

of New York were to be appreciated, both as elements or icons of urban identity, as well as presences in film.

Immediately prior to this point in history, a number of disaster films had been set in New York and freely depicted destruction to the architecture and inhabitants of the city. *Armageddon* (1998), directed by Michael Ray, saw the Chrysler Building snapped in two.[8] Roland Emmerich, in the productions of *Independence Day* (1996) and *Godzilla* (1998) also felt quite at ease destroying the icons of New York.[9] *Independence Day* sees the annihilation of the Empire State Building as well as a violent "topping" of the World Trade Towers as a result of a collision with an alien spacecraft, which viewed post 9/11 seems unnerving. However film reviewers of the period were not offended, characterizing the accepted role of special effects to entertain, while sidestepping any relationship to the "moral" use of architecture in film.

9/11 changed everything.[10] Disaster films that were scheduled for release were put on hold due to their now sensitive subject matter. Arnold Schwarzenegger's terrorist-themed action film *Collateral Damage*, and Martin Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* had their releases delayed. Jackie Chan's *Nosebleed*, about a plot to blow up the World Trade Center was dropped entirely.[11] The film industry stepped back to reassess violent content and the depiction of New York architecture in film. This represented a remarkable alteration in the relationship of iconic architecture to film. Censorship to this point had developed with respect to nudity, violence and language in the representations of *people* in film, *but had never dealt with buildings*. This new consideration was to voluntarily come from within the film industry, not from external sources.

Fig. 5. *Independence Day* (1996) The Statue of Liberty and the World Trade Towers as illustrated in the destruction of New York by aliens in *Independence Day*.

Where the inclusion of live footage of the World Trade Towers in the New York skyline pre 9/11 had been used to proudly symbolize a modern New York, the events of 9/11 forced a reassessment of the use of the Twin Towers as they could no longer be viewed casually. This resulted in a strained relationship between viewers and New York architecture. To catch glimpses of the towers employed as mere "city identity backdrops" in earlier films such as *Men In Black* (1997), positioned a tragic element in a now unacceptable comedic view. In reaction, directors have taken varying approaches to dealing with this potentially sensitive issue.

Fig. 6. *Men In Black* (1997) The World Trade Towers form an establishing backdrop behind a comedic scene in *Men In Black*

Some directors have purposefully included the former New York skyline as a political and moral statement. In *Gangs of New York* (2002), the film ends by fading from a view of the burning 1863 skyline into a pre 9/11 skyline featuring the Twin Towers. In this way Scorsese is using the pairing to make a declaration about the cycles of violence that have befallen New York. Steven Spielberg's film *Munich* (2005), which is also themed on reprisal violence, also includes a pre 9/11 image of the Twin Towers. The buildings are now charged with many levels of meaning that are entirely disconnected from the intentions their original architectural design, which drastically alters their potential use as filmic elements. Much like the Empire State Building as "actor" in King Kong, the Twin Towers have taken on an altered *character* role.

Fig. 7. *Gangs of New York* (2002) In *Gangs of New York* the 1863 skyline fades into a pre 2001 version that includes the World Trade Towers along with other iconic elements of the 20th century.

Directors whose genre focuses on catastrophe, had to find a way to continue to create films. Roland Emmerich continued to make disaster films of New York, wrecking, at least

compared to Godzilla and Independence Day, restrained havoc on New York's remaining iconic architecture. *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) centers around the destruction of the majority of the inhabitants as well as nature related damage to the buildings in the city due to the effects of a rapid and catastrophic ice age that has been caused by Global Warming, rather than terrorists or aliens. In contrast to *Independence Day* and *Godzilla*, the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building and Stature of Liberty are all left standing. The Statue of Liberty, given her isolated location and particular use and character, has remained in steady use throughout film history, and continues to be used to strongly represent freedom and democracy as part of her architectural and cultural charge as a monument, rather than as a commercial building.

Fig. 8. *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) The CGI view of the frozen New York skyline, featuring the Statue of Liberty.

The Day After Tomorrow is one of the few fictional films of this brief period that steps back and views the (digitally manipulated) skyline of post 9/11 New York City – minus the World Trade Towers. Others of this period completely avoid portraying the skyline. Emmerich seems to be able to do this with some dignity by positioning the Statue of Liberty very much in the foreground.

The Return of the Empire State Building
Without the World Trade Towers or the New York skyline to use as architectural icons for the City, directors searched for more immediately acceptable ways to continue to cast New York in a film role. This was able to be carried out differently for a resurgence of films that recalled a more historic New York, versus those set in the present time.

It was very simple for "Icon No. 2" to step back into the starring role in films that were set "before 1973". In movies such as Kerry Conran's *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) we see the return of the Empire State Building, Flatiron Building and Chrysler Building as the recognizable symbols of New York City. In the case of this film, the story is set in a pseudo-historic time, making the use of the Empire State Building, and avoidance of the World Trade Towers feel appropriate.

> "To help build New York City environments … a one week digital photo safari, gathering static photographic textures of period urban architecture. WOT then referenced the textures to develop a 3D model representing a four-block area of the city. … fashioned landmarks such as the Empire State Building and Chrysler Building

as positionable models, which artists could place and adjust to compose backgrounds."[12]

Through digital technologies they could freely move the images and ghostlike silhouettes of the Empire State Building around the setting, to better position them for the scene. Iconic images of New York architecture of the period in the "establishing shots" were central to the understanding of the context.

Fig. 9. *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) The Hindenberg docks at the pinnacle of the Empire State Building.

Peter Jackman's remake of *King Kong* in 2005 provided a highly realistic update of the original 1933 film, again returning the Empire State Building to a starring architectural role. The use of CGI in the film facilitated the creation of an uncannily realistic view of historic New York City. The pinnacle of the Empire State Building again provided a thrilling and precarious architectural setting for the action of the film – digitally rather than as a scale model – again appropriate given the historic setting of the film.

Fig. 10. *King Kong* (2005) King Kong climbs to the top of the Empire State Building, making physical use of the detail provided by the architectural style of the period.

In May 2002 post-9/11 audiences were re-energized by a slate of superhero films, set in the current period that required filmmakers to actively address the altered reality of New York architecture. Three films, *Spiderman* (2002), *Spiderman 2* (2004) and *Spiderman 3* (2007) can be seen to characterize a kind of "architectural healing", as they begin to slowly embrace the modern urban architecture of New York City, as is revealed by examining the treatment of the Empire State Building, and general urban environment of New York in the films.

Sam Raimi's *Spiderman* was in production as of 1999 and set to be released after September 2001. Its initial promotional trailers and posters depicted criminals caught in a huge web that was woven between the World Trade Towers, the natural pre 9/11 urban identifiers of New York City.

> ""The World Trade Center was featured very prominently in the teaser trailer," noted John Dykstra (of Imageworks). "That became a point of pain to a lot of people, and that was not the business of this movie, so the studio removed it. However no changes were made to add or delete the towers from any scene of the film, because they were not featured in any of the scenes.""[1314]

Fig. 11. Original promotional images of Spiderman, pre 9/11 that were pulled after the events.

Films that were largely CGI based could take a more inventive approach to the reintroduction of modern, post 9/11 New York to the film version of New York. These films were not dependent on location filming. They could be selective about the amount of "architecture" used in the film sets and be quite manipulative about how this architecture was to be viewed in the film. The filming techniques in the *Spiderman* series saw Imageworks generate an array of digital buildings of varying levels of architectural detail to increase its existing database of New York architecture. The images in some cases included a higher than normal level of detail, derived from the actual architecture, thereby allowing greater interaction of the characters with the building exteriors. This was critical for the close up action shots, but far less important as the digitally invented cityscape faded into the distance.

> "We didn't want to just photograph the city and put Spider-Man in it, because the realistic images would sort of 'spit out' the CG character," says (Sam) Raimi. "So I

tried to find those buildings that were magical and make the whole city nothing but those — like the Chrysler Building, with its majesty, or the Empire State Building, with its dream of tomorrow, and all the great tiles in the subways, all the beautiful brownstones."[15]

Spiderman has a very tentative "New York" presence in the film. There are no clear views of the skyline. Any references to actual, identifiable New York buildings, such as the Empire State Building or Chrysler Building seem purposefully unfocused or atmospherically hazy.

Spiderman 2 (2002) begins to acknowledge the city. However, the views of the skyline in *Spiderman 2* are predominantly nighttime views, with only the hazy lights of the Chrysler Building vaguely recognizable beyond Spiderman's web. In *Spiderman 2*, we see the Empire State Building as a reflection in the glass outside of Peter Parker's apartment, reminiscent of the way that Jacques Tati incorporated the icons of Paris into the modern setting of *Playtime* (1967).[16]

Fig. 12. *Spiderman 2* (2004) The Empire State Building is vaguely recognizable in the reflection as M.J. looks out of Peter Parker's balcony window.

The third installment of the *Spiderman* series (2007) places the city of New York in a starring role, while continuing the escapism offered by the super-hero film genre. Compared to the minimal number of realistic views of New York that begin to emerge in *Spiderman 2*, there is a less subtle "creep" that is evident in *Spiderman 3*, towards a more visible use of easily identifiable New York icons. Recognizable buildings such as the Citicorp building and ATT Tower by Philip Johnson are clearly evident in some of the early sequences in the film.

Fig. 13: *Spiderman 3* (2007) Citicorp and the ATT Building in the skyline.

Although Peter Parker still resides in the same apartment, in *Spiderman 3* the Empire State Building has been "relocated" several blocks closer to Parker's apartment, so that its

presence is clearly felt in each day or night view from his apartment out into the city – re-establishing the iconic "establishing shot" so traditional in earlier films. It also appears quite clearly in the closing sequence of the film. As with Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, it has been manipulated in terms of its urban position, and additionally in contrast to its surrounding buildings to increase its visual prominence.

Fig. 14: *Spiderman 3* (2007) The Empire State Building frames the closing scene in the film.

In *Spiderman 3* Raimi has increased his repertoire of CG buildings, using the ones from *Spiderman* in the distance, *Spiderman 2* at mid ground and with improved technology, the newest additions in the foreground of *Spiderman 3*.[17] Spiderman 3 also used more actual footage of the city in both the distant establishing shots as well as the action sequences. This was done using a Spydercam[18] which captured the motion shots while a camera was run along wires that were suspended from tall building to tall building, over the city streets of midtown New York. These live action sequences were blended with large scale physical models of the buildings as well as CG effects and character action to provide a more realistic interaction with a recognizable New York setting.[19]

As society gains distance from the immediacy of 9/11 and sensitivities surrounding violence against buildings in film, *Spiderman 3* escalates the amount of destruction to modern buildings as part of the film plot. Where the first two films involved the destruction of abandoned warehouses and balconies, or bashing openings in brick and stone façades, the inaugural key piece of plot development in *Spiderman 3* involves a runaway crane that creates a massive slice through a modern glass, steel and concrete office tower, that included plate shots of the Alliance Capital Building in New York[20]. The destruction of the corner support point of the building closely approximates the nature of the cut into the World Trade Tower that resulted in its collapse. This change in the portrayal of New York City may or may not signal a *conscious* evolution by the director of the series to bring it visually closer to the modern, less nostalgic city, while simultaneously distancing itself from the tragedy. At the very least, this return to the use of recognizable architectural elements allows for a more immediate relationship between the story and the city that was not possible when using more generic CG representations of buildings.

There are also significant segments of the most recent installment of the series that have been purposefully filmed on the streets of New York or in Central Park. Interviews with the actors reveal a delight and energy at the return to the location shoot, citing a better level of energy and connection when filming "in the city", with "interested onlookers", versus set or green screen filming.[21]

A blip in time?

It is to be noted that the films whose explicit subject matter – be it documentary or docudrama – *is* 9/11 have been purposefully excluded from this discussion. They constitute a genre so specific unto themselves as not to have relevance to the general discussion of fictional films both pre and post 9/11 that make reference to the mythic dream city called New York, and its celebrated architectural icons.

Initial cinematic reactions to 9/11 differ from the state of films in 2007. The number of films that are once again engaged in location shoots in the city of New York has escalated. The past six years mark an anxious transitioning stage while New York awaits the completion of the Freedom Tower that will fill the void in her skyline. In the fullness of time, the period that must confront the marked absence of the World Trade Towers will be short. This period, however, may be significant in its creation of an artistic as well as moral position in reference to the treatment of the icons of the city in film.

Fig. 15: The New York Skyline with the Freedom Tower. The majority of current promotional images are set in a vertical format and exclude the portion of the skyline that contains the Empire State Building.

It will remain to be seen whether the construction and completion of the Freedom Tower will be forcefully embraced by the film industry as its construction proceeds over the next several years. It will indeed alter the New York skyline and provide a new era for urban settings and architectural relationships.

Images (selection to be edited down/collaged/combined to the allowed 5…):
Fig 1: Silhouettes of well known city icons.
Fig 2: *King Kong* (1933) RKO Pictures
Fig 3: Escape from New York (1981) Avco Embassy Pictures
Fig 4: *The Fifth Element* (1997) Société des Etablissements L. Gaumont
Fig 5: *Independence Day* (1996) 20th Century Fox
Fig 6: *Men In Black* (1997) Amblin Entertainment
Fig 7: *Gangs of New York* (2002) Miramax Films
Fig 8: *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004) 20th Century Fox
Fig 9: *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow* (2004) Brooklyn Films II

Fig 10: *King Kong* (2005) Big Primate Pictures
Fig 11: *Spiderman* (2002) Promotional image and screen captures from the banned trailer.
Fig 12: *Spiderman 2* (2004) Marvel Enterprises
Fig 13: *Spiderman 3* (2007) Columbia Pictures
Fig 14: *Spiderman 3* (2007) Columbia Pictures
Fig 15: The New York skyline with the Freedom Tower.

Notes:

[1] Image credit: http://www.cityofsound.com/blog/2006/09/index.html
http://www.cityofsound.com/blog/2006/09/skylineist.html
[2] Neumann, Dietrich, editor. Film Architecture: Set Designs from Metropolis to Blade Runner. New York: Prestel, 1999. p. 95
[3] A Persistence of Vision: 25 Years of WTC TV and Movie Art
http://septterror.tripod.com/wtcmoviepost.html
[4] Sanders, James. Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003. p. 102
[5] Bluescreen has given way to the more predominant use of Greenscreen in recent years, which seems to work better with digital techniques and facilitates less "ghosting" around the superimposed scenes.
[6] John Carpenter Press: Hollywood Reporter, October 24, 1980.
http://www.theofficialjohncarpenter.com/pages/press/reporter801024.html
[7] Sanders, James. Celluloid Skyline: New York and the Movies. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.
[8] VFX HQ: Armageddon: New York
http://www.vfxhq.com/1998/armageddon_ny.html
[9] DVD Active: The Martians are Coming
http://www.dvdactive.com/editorial/articles/the-martians-are-coming.html
[10] The State of Movies After September 11, 2001.
http://septterror.tripod.com/movies.html
[11] 9/11's Impact on the Film Industry Continues. Nicholas Moreau. October 19, 2001.
http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/academy_awards/82852
[12] Cinefex 98. Donald Shay, editor. July 2004. Joe Fordham. "Brave New World: Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow." p. 18-24
[13] Cinefex 90. Donald Shay, editor. July 2002. Joe Fordham. "Spin City: Spider-Man". p. 130
[14] This is not entirely true. There remains a sequence in the film that focuses on a close-up of Spiderman's highly reflective eyes, featuring a very clear reflection of the World Trade Towers.
[15] New York Daily News. Spin City: Spiderman 3 Shoots for the Skyline, April 1, 2007.
http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/movies/2007/04/01/2007-04-01_spin_city.html
[16] Lamster, Mark, editor. Architecture and Film. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000. Joan Ockman. "Architecture in a Mode of Distraction." p. 179
[17] Cinefex 110. Donald Shay, editor. July 2007. Jody Duncan. "The Enemy Within." p. 100.
[18] The Official Spiderman 3 Blog. Video clip.
http://www.spidermanmovieblog.com/archives/2007/05/spydercam.php
[19] Cinefex 110. Donald Shay, editor. July 2007. Jody Duncan. "The Enemy Within." p. 91 – 92.
[20] Cinefex 110. Donald Shay, editor. July 2007. Jody Duncan. "The Enemy Within." p. 91
[21]
http://www.spidermanmovieblog.com/archives/2007/05/spiderman_3_on_location_in_ny.php