

VINTAGE decorating



Storefront of Jadis, on Santa Monica's Main Street.

Movie Set Décor in Santa Monica

BY ALEXANDRA HOOVER

Most people looking for an encounter with the bizarre would not expect to find it on Main Street in Santa Monica. Standing at the corner of Main Street and Santa Monica, sipping your Venti coffee of the day, you may find yourself magnetically pulled to the south facing windows, and wonder "What is going on in that little shop across the street?"

Finishing your cup of coffee, you walk across the street and pay the dollar admission fee. On entering the store, you stare at the moving sculpture in the store front window and gradually expand your gaze to take in the plethora of objects around you.



You see antique cameras and typewriters, quack medical equipment, mannequins and movie props to films you never knew existed. Everything is for sale.

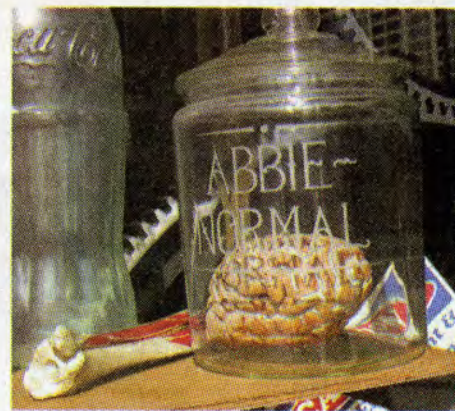
The name of the shop is Jadis. It is owned by Parke Meek, an ex-furniture maker gone avid antique/movie prop collector. Once an antique clothing collector – in the 1970s he owned a store called Ephemera, where such celebrities as the Rolling Stones were not uncommon to spot – Meek's interests reside in what he calls "weird stuff."



Scenes from the Universal Pictures film, *The Prestige*, set in Victorian era London.

"You want weird, you come to me," Meek explained and chuckled. In addition to collecting movie props and feeding squirrels outside his window (one of which, Meek says, looks like the old film actor Lionel Barrymore), Meek cultivates a contagious sense of humor.

Although Meek no longer custom makes props – as he



Faux brain in a jar, reminiscent of Young Frankenstein.

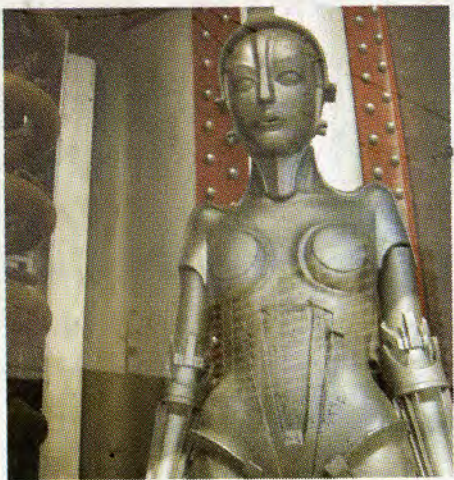
did for the 1995 film *Waterworld* – his collection continues to be attractive, especially for set decorators who visit Jadis on "scouts." After searching through Jadis' quirky assortment, decorators contact the shop on behalf of the art departments of films, television shows and commercials. Specifying their needs, decorators may choose props for the background of scenes and sometimes select what are used as visually prominent props (i.e., a large knife switch).



A poster from Fritz Lang's original 1927 film, *Metropolis*.

Jadis charges a minimum of \$150 a week for rentals. Frequently, however, a film may extend for several weeks. Meek's friend, Susan Lieberman – owner of Paris 1900, a neighboring antique shop that specializes in Parisian accoutrements – is extensively involved in the dealings at Jadis. According to Lieberman, "Some rentals have easily cost \$2000-\$5000 for the duration of the rental."

In addition to a plethora of other films, commercials, and television shows, props have been used in such recognizable sources as *The Prestige*, *Van Helsing*, *Mystery Men*, *Spiderman*, *Transformers*, *Batman and Robin*, *Casper*, *The X-Files*, *Waterworld*, *Click* and *The Addams Family*. Sometimes, as in the case of the notorious helmet from



Marie, a prop from Metropolis in the front window.

City of Lost Children, Meek will love a film so much that he makes his own prop replicas. The helmet for this peculiar film has been rented many times.

Jadis is located at 2701 Main St, Santa Monica, Calif. 90405. For hours and info call (310) 396-3477.