

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
May 1995

## DESIGNING MAGIC: DISNEY ANIMATION ART

June 10 - September 12, 1995

An exhibition of original animation art, from *Steamboat Willie* (1928) to *Pocahontas* (1995), is on view in The Museum of Modern Art's Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1 Gallery from June 10, to September 12, 1995. **DESIGNING MAGIC: DISNEY ANIMATION ART**, presents over 300 concept and story sketches, sequential animation drawings, layouts, background paintings, and cels on loan from The Walt Disney Feature Animation Library and The Walt Disney Archives.

"Walt Disney strove continuously to perfect the art of feature animation, giving his characters volume and subtlety, using music and sound effects as potent storytelling devices, and bringing a full palette of color to his backgrounds," observes Mary Corliss, Assistant Curator, Department of Film and Video, who organized the exhibition.

The majority of works on view are original cel set-ups -- character cels laid over opaque painted backgrounds. Each set-up represents a single frame, or one twenty-fourth of a second, when photographed by a camera crew (an eighty-minute animated feature film requires more than 115,000 individual images).

Highlights of the exhibition include a black-and-white cel set-up from *Steamboat Willie*, story sketches from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), sequential animation drawings from *Dumbo* (1941), and panoramic background paintings from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959).

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The original animation process required drawings to be hand-traced onto clear celluloid sheets, or cels, using colored inks. After 1960, a special Xerox process enabled drawings to be reproduced directly onto cels, preserving the animator's spontaneity while eliminating time-consuming tracing. Since 1991, computers have been used both to create and to color animation drawings, with handpainted backgrounds added for final filming.

In the past decade, a new team of artists and supervisors has reinvented the format, creating the next generation of Disney classics: *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Aladdin* (1992), and *The Lion King* (1994).

**DESIGNING MAGIC: DISNEY ANIMATION ART** is made possible with the generous cooperation of The Walt Disney Feature Animation Library, The Walt Disney Archives, and The Walt Disney Company.

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**VIDEO SPACES: EIGHT INSTALLATIONS** is made possible by Samsung Electronics Co., Ltd. Additional support is provided by generous grants from the Contemporary Exhibition Fund of The Museum of Modern Art, established with gifts from Lily Auchincloss, Agnes Gund and Daniel Shapiro, and Mr. and Mrs. Ronald S. Lauder; The Japan Foundation; and The Contemporary Arts Council and The Junior Associates of The Museum of Modern Art. Gifts from Margot Paul Ernst; Barbara Peshey-Miller; Fillmore Mercantile, Incorporated; Barbara Wise; the Canadian Consulate General, New York; Barbara S. Pine; Marian Cohen; and Patricia Orden are also gratefully acknowledged. Transportation was provided in part by Japan Airlines.

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