

The Museum of Modern Art

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FAMED FEATHERED FAVORITE FEATURED AT MODERN MUSEUM

Woody Woodpecker, famed feathered favorite, and his creator Walter Lantz, who has been associated with Universal Pictures for nearly fifty years, will be honored in a special three-day program which will be part of The Museum of Modern Art's eight-month retrospective Universal Pictures: 65 Years. Lantz will present two programs of his animated short films, including "Knock, Knock," the first cartoon in which Woody appeared, and "The Legend of Rockabye Point" with Chilly Willy which won an Academy Award. Also included is the animated Technicolor introduction to "King of Jazz" (1930, starring Paul Whiteman and Bing Crosby) and several other cartoons. The programs will be presented on Sunday, June 19 at noon and 2:30 p.m., with additional showings on Monday, June 20 and Tuesday, June 21 at noon. Walter Lantz and Mrs. Lantz will be the guests of honor at the Sunday showings and will address the audience.

Walter Lantz began his animation career in New York in 1916. While working in a studio which animated Hearst comic strips for movie theatres, he was a collaborator with Gregory LaCava, who later became a well-known Hollywood comedy director. In 1921 Lantz moved to the studio of John Randolph Bray, where he worked on the character Colonel Heeza Liar, and within two years was named studio manager. He moved to Hollywood in 1926, and for a short time was a gag man for Mack Sennett before moving on to Universal. Here Lantz took over and redesigned the popular character Oswald Rabbit, who had been dropped by another young animator, Walt Disney, who left the studio to pursue the possibility of an animated mouse.

While Lantz also invented Andy Panda, his greatest creation was Woody Woodpecker, who has appeared in more than 250 cartoons. Ironically, to supply

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the voice and laugh for Woody, Lantz unknowingly selected his wife Grace's voice from many recordings submitted. Mrs. Lantz has provided Woody's sound ever since.

This year Woody Woodpecker celebrates his 35th birthday, and Lantz has his own animation studio which maintains the ties with Universal which began in 1928. He continues to produce cartoons that are shown in virtually every country in the world.

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