

# The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

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For Immediate Release

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## "BANJO THE WOODPILE CAT" MARKS THE BIRTH OF A NEW ANIMATION STUDIO

Between 1974 and 1980, a determined crew of up to 26 animators worked nights and weekends in their homes and in the garage of their director, Don Bluth, to produce a half-hour film, BANJO THE WOODPILE CAT. In the process, DON BLUTH PRODUCTIONS, a new animation studio, was formed.

In recognition of this important addition to the field of American animation, The Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art will screen BANJO THE WOODPILE CAT six times over the Thanksgiving weekend, November 27, 28 and 29 at noon and 1:00 pm in the Roy and Niuta Titus Auditorium. The voices of Sparky Marcus, Scatman Crothers and Beah Richards are heard in the story of a barnyard cat who visits the big city.

BANJO THE WOODPILE CAT marks a strong return to the classic production values of '40s cel animation: the adventurous animal characters are brought smoothly to life with the vivid, deep colors, realistic backgrounds, and fully orchestrated soundtrack of the great animated features. Approximately 90,000 man hours went into the detailed storyboarding, character and special-effects animation; 60,000 hand-painted and xeroxed cels made up the final work.

The formation of Don Bluth Productions called upon exceptional dedication from the founding crew, who created BANJO while moonlighting from full-time jobs as animation artists and directors. The \$1.2 million budget was raised by Bluth and the crew members.

The impetus for the formation of the studio, to quote from its literature, was that "the artists were rediscovering techniques and incorporating production values they felt had slipped away from the animation industry for two decades."

Don Bluth Productions also created the animated fantasy sequence from Xanadu, and is now preparing The Secret of NIMH, a feature-length animated film adapted from the best-selling children's book, to be released by United Artists in June '82.

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