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THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

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MUSEUM OF MODERN ART SHOWS ORIGINAL MATERIAL FROM BAMBI AND
OTHER DISNEY FILMS IN EXHIBITION OF ANIMATED FILM MAKING

The complicated process of making a Disney animated sound picture will be shown in the Young People's Gallery of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, in an exhibition entitled Walt Disney's Bambi: The Making of an Animated Sound Picture. It will open to the public Wednesday, July 15, and remain on view through August 17.

The exhibition will consist of original drawings, photographs, backgrounds and painted "cels" (pictures on celluloid used to carry the action forward), not only from Disney's newest picture Bambi which will be released soon, but also from Fantasia and The Reluctant Dragon. Also included will be photographs of the Disney staff at work, exposure sheets, production schedules, the instruments and gadgets with which they produce sound effects, and even a three-dimensional block model of the huge Disney studio in Burbank, California. To complete the visitor's excursion into the land of animated film magic a two-and-a-half-minute sequence from Bambi will be screened before his eyes in the galleries at the touch of a button.

Walt Disney was one of the first donors to the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. In the fall of 1935 he presented the Film Library with his first Mickey Mouse, Plane Crazy, never commercially released; his first Silly Symphony, Skeleton Dance; and his first cartoon in technicolor, Flowers and Trees. He has continued his generous support, and his contributions of films are often shown non-commercially on museum screen programs in New York and elsewhere throughout the country.

Iris Barry, Curator of the Film Library, says of Disney and his art:

"Nothing more joyous or more genuinely American than the Disney cartoons has ever reached the screen. They were the first films to combine sound and pictures in an imaginative way, the first to use color so that it had some real meaning. Their simplicity, their tremendous gusto and defiant disrespectfulness at once caught the public fancy and have steadily maintained it, despite some few flights into artiness and sentimentality in the longer experimental features.

"These fables of Disney's contain more than laughter

and the thrill of danger, for they are basic contemporary folklore. The incomparable Mickey and Pluto are constantly good medicine. The Three Little Pigs snapped us out of the depression with a song. Donald Duck has lately shed a light touch of fantasy on the income tax itself, and now here comes a new arkful of animals and rainbows at a singularly propitious moment. Nothing seems too difficult once one has seen Thumper and Bambi on ice!"

The exhibition is divided into three sections:

I. A series of nine panels on which are mounted original drawings and finished "cels" of the principal characters, events and backgrounds in Disney's new picture, Bambi. These will introduce the spectator to the animal characters and their story. The panels are titled: Bambi and his Mother, Bambi and his Friends, Thumper (the rabbit), Flower (the skunk), Owl, Dramatic Incidents in the life of Bambi, Scenes from Bambi, and the Rain Sequence.

II. A series of twelve panels which describe by means of photographs, labels and drawings by Disney artists the making of an animated sound picture from its conception as an idea to its completion in the celluloid. The complicated process is made clear by groupings of the photographs, labels and drawings on the separate panels, as follows:

Visualizing the Story. Walt Disney and his idea-men talk over the possibilities of a story idea. Artists make story-sequence drawings to determine the action of the picture. They also draw from a live deer to discover the possibilities of action and story.

Developing Character. Artists make drawings of all the different characters in the picture. These are carefully planned to the last detail and used as models for all further drawings. They also build small three-dimensional models of the figures to help in animation.

Creating Mood. Special artists work on "atmosphere sketches" to set the mood and key of each scene. These are colored sketches, with no detail or finish, very small and delicate, many of them remarkable little pictures in their own right.

Visualizing in Three Dimensions. In a large Live-Action Studio living actors are photographed acting out different scenes from the story to help the animators. Also small stage sets are built, and little models of the figures are moved on them to help the layout men.

Integrating Sound and Action. This panel shows the different methods of producing sound in a Disney picture: the people who speak the dialogue, the musicians who create the musical accompaniment,

and all the strange gadgets and contraptions used to reproduce various sounds in nature.

Relating Characters and Background. This work is done by background and layout men. The background men keep the action fully in mind as they paint the forest scenes; the layout men make the connection between background and action by planning just what scenes will be taken during a certain sequence and how the camera will move across the scene.

Timing. This complicated process is undertaken by all the various departments. The length of each action (how many "frames" of film it uses), each speech, each background, is recorded on an Exposure Sheet which is given to the animators before they start to work.

Animation. When the story has been planned and drawn in detail, the drawings are sent to the animators who make the thousands of "in-between" drawings involved in all the actions. Although these artists have little to do with the characters or the story as a whole, they have a great deal of freedom in determining the way the different figures move. This factor is very important in the quality of the final picture.

Inking and Painting. The finished drawings of the animators are sent to the Inking and Painting Department where 200 girls trace them onto the final "cels" and fill in the colors as they are indicated on a Color Model Sheet.

Photographing and Cutting. These finished "cels" are photographed on the Master film strip. This highly technical task involves the use of special cameras, the most important of which is the multiplane camera, invented by the Disney Studios to achieve the effect of distance in the animated pictures.

III. Excerpt from Bambi and three-dimensional block model of the Disney studio in Burbank, California. At one end of the gallery is a box in which a projector is installed. Here, at the touch of a button, the visitor may see a two-and-a-half-minute run of the actual finished film of Bambi. At the entrance of the gallery the block model will give the visitor some idea of the big Disney studio, built very much like a modern factory. A comprehensive label will identify each building of the huge plant and describe what takes place in it.