



The Walt Disney Family Museum Celebrates 75th Anniversary of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* with Special Exhibition Illustrating the Creation of the Classic Film

Exhibition is accompanied by fully-illustrated catalogue

San Francisco, CA, June 12, 2012 – The Walt Disney Family Museum is pleased to present the special exhibition *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic* celebrating Walt Disney's first feature-length animated film.

On view from November 15, 2012 to April 14, 2013, the exhibition celebrates Walt Disney's vision and the artistry of his dedicated staff, illustrating how they shaped and defined an entirely new American art form through their creation of this groundbreaking film. Guided by the vision of a master storyteller, 32 animators, 1032 assistants, 107 inbetweeners, 10 layout artists, 25 background artists, 65 special effects animators and 158 inkers and painters and countless production staff came together to create the masterpiece. The exhibition is organized by The Walt Disney Family Museum, and guest curated by Lella Smith, Creative Director of the Walt Disney Animation Research Library.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic features more than 200 works of art including conceptual drawings, early character studies, detailed story sketches, and animation drawings. Also featured are delicate thumbnail layout watercolors, meticulously rendered pencil layouts, rare watercolor backgrounds, colorful cels, and vintage posters all illustrating how Walt Disney advanced the creation of an entirely new art form.

The exhibition is organized by sequence through the progression of the movie, featuring some never-before-seen works of art with behind-the-scenes stories about the film's production. The exhibition also features artwork from deleted scenes from the film, some of which were only partially animated. One is the *Bed Building Scene*, in which the dwarfs build and carve a lovely bed for Snow White. Filled with numerous gags, these sequences were great fun, but Walt felt that they took the focus away from Snow White's story. Other, less-developed



Gustaf Tenggren, c. 1937; book illustration; watercolor and ink on paper; Collection Walt Disney Family Foundation; © Disney Enterprises, Inc.

scenes included a fantasy scene of Snow White dancing in the stars, and the lodge meeting in which the dwarfs decide to make a bed for Snow White.

Gabriella Calicchio, the Museum's Chief Executive Officer comments, "I am extremely pleased to present *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic* as the museum's first major special exhibition. As the film turns 75, the exhibition showcases Disney's ongoing significance and relevance on contemporary culture. I am truly inspired by Walt's life and work, not only for the breadth of his creativity and for his accomplishments, but for his fundamental belief in the power of the imagination, his unwavering tenacity, and the visionary genius he became by following that belief. Disney's legacy is limitless and I hope the exhibition will ignite creativity and imagination in all of us."

Walt Disney's daughter Diane Disney Miller shares, "My Dad was completely and intimately engaged in this film from start to finish. It was the first of its kind to have the depth of character, careful attention to story, original music that helped tell that story, and superb artistry. It was, and is still, a masterpiece and I look forward to sharing it with our community and beyond. I hope visitors come away being inspired just as my Dad hoped to instill creativity, innovation, and imagination in the artists he worked with."

The Walt Disney Studios began work on *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* in 1934 and it was released at Hollywood's Carthay Circle Theater on December 21, 1937. While being the first full-length, animated feature film was a milestone, much of its cinematic importance to the evolution of animation derives from the skill with which the Disney artists imbued their characters with an inner life filled with emotion and thought. As Walt himself described, "Of all the characters in the fairy tales, I loved Snow White the best, and when I planned my first full-length cartoon, she inevitably was the heroine."

After its premiere in 1937, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* opened in 1938 at Radio City Music Hall and continued to play across the United States and in Europe throughout 1938 and 1939. The film was wildly popular, becoming the top-grossing film of all time, up to that date. Appealing to audiences of all ages, a wide variety of *Snow White* merchandise appeared in stores, ranging from toys and books to watches and puzzles. The film's songs were published on sheet music and RCA Victor albums featuring the film's memorable songs marked *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* as the first film to release a multi-record musical soundtrack.

Walt Disney's groundbreaking masterpiece drew worldwide acclaim, winning the Grand Biennale Art Trophy from the Venice Film Festival and special awards from the New York Film

Critics Circle and the Motion Picture Academy. The film also received an honorary custom-made Oscar® which consisted of one standard Oscar® statuette alongside seven miniature statuettes (representing each of the dwarfs), which was presented to Walt by Shirley Temple in 1939—this by far was the most distinctive award in Academy history.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs continues to garner accolades and awards. In 1989, it was among the first 25 featured films to be preserved in the Library of Congress' National Film Registry, and in 2008, it was named the Greatest Animated Film of All Time. The film also marked a pivotal milestone in animation. Calling upon the experience they gained from creating the early Disney animated shorts and the award-winning *Silly Symphonies*, Walt Disney and his artists defined the artistic foundation that would shape all their other animated feature films to follow.

Walt Disney Animation Studios' Process

Story Sketch

In making *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, the artists began by creating thumbnail drawings of key scenes called story sketches, which were then pinned in sequence to large boards. This process, called “storyboarding,” allowed Walt to preview the story visually and make adjustments long before the first frame of film was shot. This innovative technique, perfected at The Walt Disney Studios, is an industry standard today.

Concept Art

Whether a simple sketch or a fully realized painting, concept art helps establish and define the visual style of a film, hundreds of concept drawings were created to establish the look of the characters, the locations, and the film's colors and visual moods.

Model Sheet

Once the visual style of the film is determined, official model sheets are created for use by the Disney artists. This crucial visual tool ensures the characters, props, and locations remain consistent throughout the film.

Layout and Background

Layout artists act as the animated film's cinematographer. Layouts establish the camera's point of view and the special relationship of the characters to the background environment. Backgrounds bring a predetermined layout to life, creating an environment infused with color, light and mood. Together, layouts and backgrounds create the animated equivalent of live action movie sets.

Animation

Animators hand-draw every movement of the character, changing each movement and expression slightly with each successive sheet of animation paper. Every second of animated action requires 12 to 24 drawings. The lead animator makes rough pencil sketches (called *ruffs* in animation shorthand) of the movement's extreme limits, concentrating on the dynamics of

motion and acting. The assistants, or “inbetweeners,” produce the intermediary drawings, bridging the movement between the beginning and ending limits. Finally, cleanup artists rework the rough sketches, turning them into finished drawings.

Cel

Every line crafted by animators in the animation drawing is painstakingly copied onto the front side of a cel by artists specifically trained in the art of inking. Once inked, cels, short for celluloid, are then painted to their full color glory on the reverse side of the acetate sheet, so none of the line work is affected. The mixing of well over 1500 colors and shades defines the final hues used for painting characters and backgrounds.

Cel Setup

The final step involves photographing each of the inked and painted animation cels against the finished backgrounds. When projected consecutively on film, these individual production cel setups are brought to life with full vibrancy and convincing movement. Approximately 125,000 cels were painted for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, representing only ten percent of the more than one million pieces of artwork created for the film.

Exhibition Catalogue

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Walt Disney Family Foundation Press will publish a fully illustrated 256-page catalogue written by Disney historian J.B. Kaufman. The catalogue features more than 200 pieces of art, many reproduced from original concept sketches, background paintings, and production cels, as well as alternate character concepts, deleted scenes, and step-by-step process shots.

Kaufman has published extensively on topics including Disney animation and American silent film. He is the author of *South of the Border with Disney*, and coauthor, with Russell Merritt, of *Walt in Wonderland: The Silent Films of Walt Disney* (winner of the Kraszna-Krausz Award and the Society for Animation Studies’ Norman McLaren-Evelyn Lambart Award, and chosen by *The New York Times* as a Notable Book of the Year), and *Walt Disney’s Silly Symphonies*. He has also been a regular contributor to the Griffith Project at Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, the distinguished annual silent-film festival in Pordenone, Italy, and speaks frequently on Disney, silent film history, and related topics.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Walt Disney Family Museum presents the fascinating story and achievements of Walt Disney, the man who raised animation to an art, transformed the film industry, tirelessly pursued innovation, and created a global and distinctively American legacy. Opened in October 2009, the 40,000 square foot facility features the newest technology and historic materials and artifacts to bring Disney’s achievements to life, with interactive galleries that include early drawings and animation, movies, music, listening stations, a spectacular model of Disneyland and much more.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs: The Creation of a Classic

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesdays through Monday; closed on Tuesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 seniors and students, and \$12 children ages 6 to 17.
Admission is free for [members](#).

Special ticket price for *Snow White*: \$10 general.
Special combination ticket which includes general museum admission: \$25 adults; \$20 seniors and students; \$15 children ages 6 to 17.

Where: The Presidio of San Francisco, 104 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94129

Contact: 415-345-6800 / www.waltdisney.org
www.facebook.com/thewaltdisneyfamilymuseum
www.twitter.com/WDFMuseum

Media Contacts:

Andi Wang
Communications Manager
p: 415-345-6816
c: 415-264-2709
awang@wdfmuseum.org

Libby Garrison
Director of Marketing and Communications
p: 415-345-6822
c: 415-652-3082
lgarrison@wdfmuseum.org

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