Large Print

INSPIRING WALT DISNEY

THE ANIMATION OF FRENCH DECORATIVE ARTS

THE MET

Gallery 199

Inspiring Walt Disney
The Animation of French Decorative Arts

This resource includes all in-gallery text in the exhibition in an order that follows the layout of the galleries. It can be used with a text-to-screen reader program or printed before you visit the exhibition.

For labels that have an **Audio Guide number** after the text, click on the number (on your device) or go to metmuseum.org/audio-guide and enter the number.

We value your feedback. We would appreciate any comments or suggestions on these texts and this mode of delivery, and how we might make the Museum's special exhibitions, permanent galleries, and information more accessible to all visitors. Please email comments to feedback@metmuseum.org.

Access Programs at the Museum are made possible by Mary Jaharis and MetLife Foundation.

Major support is also provided by the Filomen M. D'Agostino Foundation.

Additional support is provided by the Estate of Doris Alperdt, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, an Anonymous Foundation, The Moody Endowment, Renate, Hans & Maria Hofmann Trust, Allene Reuss Memorial Trust, Jane B. Wachsler, The J.M. Foundation, Philip Elenko, William G. & Helen C. Hoffman Foundation, and The Murray G. and Beatrice H. Sherman Charitable Trust.

Lead corporate sponsorship for the exhibition is provided by

Morgan Stanley

Additional support is provided by The Florence Gould Foundation, The Danny Kaye and Sylvia Fine Kaye Foundation/French Heritage Society, and Beatrice Stern.

The exhibition is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and The Wallace Collection.

Read, listen to, or watch stories about these works on The Met website.
metmuseum.org/InspiringWaltDisney
#InspiringWaltDisney

no photography

ON WALL TO RIGHT

Film posters for
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)
Cinderella (1950)
Sleeping Beauty (1959)
Beauty and the Beast (1991)
The Walt Disney Studios

Walt Disney Archives

INTRODUCTION

Hollywood dream maker Walt Disney (1901–1966) had a lifelong fascination with Europe. When he founded his animation studio nearly a century ago, he could not have foreseen that his films and theme parks would become a lens through which an increasingly global audience would engage with European art and literature. This exhibition explores the inspiration Disney and his studio artists drew from French culture in particular. It brings together what may seem two very different worlds: the finest Rococo decorative works of art created for a small European elite and twentieth-century animated films made for an international public. These forms of artistic expression benefit from examination together, as areas of overlap are revealed in everything from humor to craftsmanship, workshop practices to technological advances.

Although separated by two centuries, the Disney animators and French craftspeople represented in the galleries ahead had one shared goal: the illusion of life. Their creative ingenuity allowed them to animate the inanimate, from candlesticks to teapots.

Children seem particularly drawn to such fantastical forms of animation. Indeed, children's perceptions of the world fascinated both the learned circles of eighteenth-century Paris and Walt Disney himself, who spoke of "that fine, clean, unspoiled spot, down deep in every one of us that maybe the world has made us forget, and that maybe our pictures can help recall." Visitors to this exhibition therefore are invited to rediscover that place within while exploring the wonders of Disney animation and Rococo decorative arts.

Audio Guide 600

These galleries feature ambient music from the film scores for Walt Disney's *The Clock Store* (1931); *The China Shop* (1934); *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937); *Cinderella* (1950); *Sleeping Beauty* (1959); and *Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

The majority of works on paper from Walt Disney Animation Studios displayed in this exhibition have been framed in such a way as to show as much of the surrounding sketches as possible. These doodles, squiggles, and color testing are testimony to the works being part of a sequence of steps in the production of an animated film, rather than the final product. They allow us to look over the shoulder of Disney's artists and to revisit their creative process.

TO LEFT OF SECTION TEXT

Walt Disney and family in Paris
1935
Home movie, silent, 2 min.

The Walt Disney Family Museum

“Walt, Roy, George Kamen and myself drove out to Versailles to see Louis XIV’s old home. It is magnificent. We also saw the little house of Marie Antoinette and the room where the Peace Treaty was signed in 1919.”
—Edna Disney, Paris, Summer 1935

IN CASE ALONG OPPOSITE WALL, LEFT TO RIGHT

Les contes de Perrault

1932

Charles Perrault (French, 1628–1703), with illustrations by Pierre Noury (French, 1894–1981)

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

The Sleeping Beauty and Other Fairy Tales from the Old French

1910

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch (British, 1863–1944), with illustrations by Edmund Dulac (French-British, 1882–1953)

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Le petit Poucet

ca. 1926

Charles Perrault (French, 1628–1703), with illustrations by Félix Lorioux (French, 1872–1964)

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Picturesque Great Britain: The Architecture and the Landscape

1926

Emil Otto Hoppé (German-British, 1878–1972)

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Among the great number of books Walt Disney purchased while exploring Europe in summer 1935 are the examples here: illustrated stories by the French author Charles Perrault and a volume of superb architectural images by preeminent Edwardian photographer Emil Otto Hoppé. Disney's book collection provided the artists he employed with a rich catalogue of visual sources, aiding in the translation of Europe's pictorial heritage into the popular new idiom of animation. While the Studio's library was diverse, the majority of the books were illustrated fairy tales, fables, and bedtime stories published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and spanning European artistic styles from the Gothic to the Rococo. The collection would remain the most important resource for Disney artists until the rise of Internet search engines, and continues to be consulted today.

Miniature album with photographs of Paris
ca. 1918
Metal cover with the Prussian royal crown encircled by the Hohenzollern motto “Gott mit uns” (God with us)

The Walt Disney Family Museum

Insignia of the *Ordre de la Legion d’Honneur*
1936
Enameled metal, silk ribbon

The Walt Disney Family Museum

Mrs. Disney’s Cartier bracelet with figures from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio*
1940s
Cartier (French, founded 1847)
Gold, enamel

The Walt Disney Family Museum

The souvenirs Walt Disney brought back from his first trip to France in 1918–19 included military tokens, a selection of contemporary European coins, and two unusual miniature albums with photographs of Paris attractions. The albums originally belonged to German

soldiers and bear the Prussian royal crown encircled by the Hohenzollern dynasty's motto "Gott mit uns" (God with us). Financially destitute postwar Europe was flooded with military memorabilia of the kind, and items bearing strong historical associations were exceptionally popular. The Cartier bracelet presented to Disney's wife, Lillian, and the order of the Legion of Honor bestowed on him in 1936 both bear witness to France's appreciation of Disney's cinematic work.

DISCOVERY OF EUROPE

Walt Disney's personal discovery of European visual culture at a relatively young age provided him with an inexhaustible source of inspiration from which he drew throughout his life. He first set foot in France on December 4, 1918, just three weeks after the end of World War I. As a Red Cross Ambulance Corps driver, he was stationed first outside Versailles, then in Paris, and finally in picturesque Neufchâteau. Nearly a year later, he sailed home optimistic and eager to establish himself as an artist. In 1923, he and his brother Roy founded their animation studio.

By the time of his return to Europe in summer 1935, Disney had become a celebrated cinematic pioneer. From a grand tour across England, Scotland, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and Italy, he brought back 335 illustrated books that would become the nucleus of his studio's research library. After World War II, Disney traveled to Europe regularly, often using these trips to gather new references and inspiration for his employees, as well as additions to

his growing collection of more than one thousand miniature household objects (see the case at right).

Another core component of the studio's early successes was Disney's identification of talent in European émigrés, including Kay Nielsen (Denmark), Gustaf Tenggren (Sweden), Bianca Majolie (Italy), Ferdinand Horvath (Hungary), and Albert Hurter (Switzerland).

ON WALL TO RIGHT

Selections from Walt Disney's personal collection of miniature furniture

First half of 20th century

Walt Disney Family Museum

Clockwise from top left

Four sets of miniature tools on wood panel

Group of chairs
1: Windsor chair
2: Antler chair
3: Dining chair after a design by Karl Friedrich Schinkel (German, 1781–1841)
4: Gothic revival chair
5: Corner chair after a design by Thomas Chippendale (British, 1718–1779)
6: Victorian rocking chair with corduroy upholstery
7: William and Mary armchair

Three miniature potbelly stoves by the Walt Disney Miniature Stove Works
ca. 1951

Four-post bed made by Walt Disney
(American, 1901–1966)
ca. 1951

Blue pitcher with the arms of the City of London in emulation of Wedgewood Jasperware

Miniature toby jug

Decorative plate with farmhouses

Spinning wheel

German wedding cupboard

Rococo Revival clock

Long-case clock

Center, inner circle

Group of eight “Limoges Fragonard” plates with courting couples

Center, outer circle

Twelve decorative Limoges plates

The tiny plates at center, purchased in Europe, are some of the only pieces in Walt Disney’s personal collection in the elaborate Rococo style. The mass-produced dishes stand in stark contrast to the finely executed miniature European decorative arts made in Narcissa Thorne’s workshop.

MINIATURE WORLDS

Escaping ordinary life to let your imagination run free: that was one of the aims of the miniature rooms designed by the Chicago heiress Narcissa Niblack Thorne, whose Louis XV boudoir is on view nearby. Disney first laid eyes on her small-scale interiors in 1939. They further inspired his idea for “Disneylandia,” a traveling exhibition of twenty-four miniature tableaux of an old Western town—a vision that gradually evolved into the Disneyland concept known today.

At left is a small selection of the many miniature objects Disney acquired during the early 1950s. In addition to mostly mass-produced dollhouse furnishings, it contains a four-post bed and three potbelly stoves that Disney designed himself.

The miniatures Disney bought speak to his affinity for whimsical and picturesque nostalgia. While it inspired some of his films, the grandeur of French art, architecture, and decorative arts that he came upon in Paris and its environs hardly entered the sphere of his personal taste. The frothiness of the Rococo greets us only in the tiny porcelain plates known as “Limoges

Fragonard" (after the French painter Jean Honoré Fragonard, 1732–1806) that Disney likely purchased in France in 1949. The dishes endlessly replicate about six different motifs of courting couples modeled on compositions by an earlier generation of French painters.

ON WALL LEFT TO RIGHT

Louis XV boudoir, 1740–60

ca. 1937

Workshop of Narcissa Niblack Thorne (American, 1882–1966)

Miniature room, mixed media

Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. James Ward Thorne

This miniature boudoir shows the refinement of French eighteenth-century interior decoration as seen through an early twentieth-century American lens. For the better part of the 1920s and 1930s, Thorne, a Chicago heiress, applied herself to the creation of nearly one hundred historical interiors on a scale of one inch to one foot, with astounding detail and exactitude. Inspired by Queen Mary's exquisitely furnished dollhouse at Windsor Castle, Thorne—who had no formal training in the history of architecture or interiors—oversaw a small workshop making tiny rooms of the periods and styles she deemed particularly important, from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. Like a film set, each room offered

a gateway into an otherwise inaccessible world, a vehicle for daydreaming and escapism.

Audio Guide 601

Miniature long-case clock from Massachusetts Drawing Room, 1768

ca. 1940

English

Mixed media

Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. James Ward Thorne

Miniature sarcophagus commode from the Louis XIV Salon, 1660–1700

ca. 1937

Workshop of Narcissa Niblack Thorne (American, 1882–1966)

Mixed media

Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. James Ward Thorne

Walt Disney saw Narcissa Thorne's miniature rooms in San Francisco in 1939 and again at the Art Institute of Chicago in 1960, where he was given permission to handle this fully functioning long-case "grandfather" clock, which Thorne acquired from the London antiques dealer Arthur Punt. As a lover of whimsical mechanical marvels, Disney must have reveled in the fact that the clock could be opened and wound. He had hoped (without success) to enlist the talent of

Thorne’s craftsmen for his own miniature worlds; one of her especially prolific employees, Eugene Kupjack, later compared her attention to detail to that of Disney.

Scale line drawing for a pair of miniature sarcophagus commodes after a design by Alexandre-Jean Oppenordt (French, 1639–1715)

1930s

Workshop of Narcissa Niblack Thorne (American, 1882–1966)

Graphite on tracing paper

Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mrs. James Ward Thorne

Thorne's specially commissioned miniature reproductions are remarkably true to the originals. The sarcophagus commode made for her Louis XIV salon is an extraordinary replica of one in London's Wallace Collection—especially considering that it was produced on the basis of a black-and-white photograph from Thorne's go-to publication: *Thomas Arthur Strange's An Historical Guide to French Interiors* (1903). Her workshop's line drawing demonstrates a careful study of every detail of the historical design. The mass-produced and rather saccharine "Fragonard Limoges" plates Disney bought in France lack that kind of precision, the

romanticized dilution of their imagery working against an immersive experience of a French eighteenth-century setting.

ANIMATING THE INANIMATE

Disney animation and Rococo porcelain are both the products of extraordinary invention and teamwork. From 1929 to 1939, Disney released the *Silly Symphony* series, seventy-five short films that served as the studio's experimental laboratory. As animation processes and storytelling techniques rapidly evolved, animals, plants, and inanimate objects took on lead roles. *The Clock Store* (1931) and *The China Shop* (1934) reveal what might happen after the shopkeeper leaves for the night: objects come to life.

Both short films feature dancing porcelain couples of a kind that was immensely popular in eighteenth-century Europe. The invention of European hard-paste porcelain at Meissen, Germany, in 1709, had been an important milestone in the development of the style known as the Rococo. Combining sinuous curves and asymmetry with pastel colors and playful ornaments, it offered a fresh and witty response to the heavy language of its predecessor, the Baroque.

Known as "white gold" and previously imported to Europe from China, porcelain was a highly sought-

after luxury good, its making shrouded in secrecy. Manufactories arose across the Continent, each aspiring to outdo the others through daring designs. The French antiquarian the comte de Caylus was so enthralled by porcelain that he wrote a ballet about a prince transformed into a teapot (1739)—demonstrating the rich exchange between decorative and performing arts and presaging Disney's films made two centuries later.

IN CASE AT GALLERY ENTRANCE

The Magic Lantern

ca. 1760 (first version, 1757)
Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)
After a model by Etienne-Maurice Falconet (French, 1716–1791)
Based on a design by François Boucher (French, 1703–1770)
Soft-paste biscuit porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Ella Morris de Peyster, 1957 (58.60.10)

Children's complete absorption in imaginative play fascinated French Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau. This unglazed biscuit porcelain group represents children's ability to block out their surroundings and let their imaginations run free. It shows a girl peering into a "magic lantern," an early type of image projection, operated by a child showman. The "magic" of the title captures both the child's sense of awe and the wonder porcelains inspired in eighteenth-century viewers—similar to the excitement generated by animated films in the 1920s and 1930s.

Audio Guide 602

TO RIGHT OF SECTION TEXT

Story sketch for *The China Shop* (1934)

ca. 1933

Disney Studio Artist

Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

IN CASE TO RIGHT

Two Dancers

ca. 1758

Johann Friedrich Lück (1728/29–1797)

Höchst Manufactory (German, 1746–1796)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.286, .287)

The exaggerated elegance of the figures in some of Disney's earliest animated sequences, with elongated limbs and overblown gowns, recalls porcelain dancers produced in the mid-1750s, such as these. The female figure here is thought to be modeled on a portrait of the acclaimed French dancer and choreographer Marie Sallé by Nicolas Lancret, demonstrating that while France may have trailed behind Germany in the production of porcelain, its fashion trends inspired the entire European continent.

ON WALL LEFT TO RIGHT

Excerpts from *The Clock Store* (1931) *The China Shop* (1934)

Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)

Film clips

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The sequences shown here, from short films set in sleepy villages of Germanic atmosphere, feature porcelain couples come to life. In *The Clock Store*, an elegant mantel clock stages a fanciful dance between two shiny white porcelain figures to a minuet from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787). Disney's expert on human anatomy, Albert Hurter, who animated the scene, exaggerated the dancers' elegance by elongating their limbs and enlarging the woman's gown.

The China Shop features a porcelain couple as main characters. They waltz across a mirrored surface reminiscent of a surtout de table, or table centerpiece, their movements livelier and their dress less pretentious

than those of the other film's rather grandiose couple. Vases, teapots, and plates cheer their performance until it is interrupted by a brutal fight between the male lead and a horned villain.

Layout drawings and story sketches for *The China Shop* (1934)

ca. 1933

Disney Studio Artists

Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

This series provides a glimpse behind the scenes of the early production stages of a hand-drawn animated cartoon. After animating the dancing couple in the *The Clock Store* (1931), Albert Hurter was assigned character design and layout for *The China Shop*. Born and raised in Zürich, Hurter conferred a Germanic look to the *Silly Symphony* series of short films, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), and *Pinocchio* (1940). These drawings have been framed to reveal the copious annotations that testify to their status as working documents rather than finished works of art.

IN CASE LEFT TO RIGHT

Faustina Bordoni and Fox

ca. 1743

Johann Joachim Kändler (German, 1706–1775)

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.125)

Lady and gentleman playing a duet

1737

Johann Joachim Kändler (German, 1706–1775)

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Lesley and Emma Sheafer Collection, Bequest of Emma A. Sheafer, 1973 (1974.356.356)

Two opera singers

1749–50

Johann Joachim Kändler (German, 1706–1775)
After a composition by Charles Nicolas Cochin II (French, 1715–1790)
Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)
Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1964 (64.101.56)

Located outside Dresden, the Meissen manufactory produced some of the first European porcelain groups. Like Disney's earliest animators, the sculptor Johann Joachim Kändler relied on caricature and exaggeration to create his snapshots of fashionable society. The fox accompanying a singer on the harpsichord, for example, is believed to represent the Austrian composer Johann Joseph Fux. Many of Kändler's conversation pieces, which once adorned dining tables, represent music and song. The chamber music played to accompany court meals enhanced the illusion of these porcelain figures coming to life.

“IT’S DISNEY, BUT IS IT ART?”

The release of Disney’s first full-length feature film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, in December 1937, was a milestone in the history of filmmaking. Never before had a hand-drawn animated feature been more sophisticated and successful. A year after its premiere, Walt Disney presented The Met with a gouache on celluloid from the film, showing two vultures waiting for the evil Queen to fall down a cliff to her presumed demise. The gift, arranged by the modern and Surrealist art dealer Julien Levy, captured the interest of the press. One insightful conversation with Disney, in the *New York Times Magazine*, addressed a central question raised by the acquisition: “It’s Disney, but is it art?”

The interview reveals just how difficult it is to place Disney, whose ambitions fell outside the traditional categories of the fine arts. Some of his employees described him as a “one man Renaissance” and his work was admired by academic heavyweights such as Erwin Panofsky, the doyen of Euro-American art history. At the same time, the filmmaker claimed not

to know anything about art. The interviewer conceded with a wink: “No, Disney doesn’t know anything about art. Today, he is probably the world’s greatest single employer of artists: there are 600 of them on his payroll.”

image caption:
Interview with Walt Disney, *New York Times Magazine,* February 26, 1939. Disney artwork © Disney.

image description:
A two-page spread from a black-and-white newspaper article shows on the left a picture of Walt Disney looking at a blueprint. His right forearm rests on a table and his left hand is raised to his chin. Most of the spread is occupied by a large Disney illustration of two vultures on a tree limb in the rain, surrounded by a wide picture frame. On the frame are drawings of Disney characters.

“Disney’s watercolors . . . will be hung under the same roof with the greatest works of the greatest masters of painting, and the Metropolitan isn’t blushing about it.”
—*Philadelphia Record*, 1939

“All things considered, there wasn’t much fuss. . . about Disney’s joining the immortals. None of the museum’s trustees threatened to quit.”
—*New York Times Magazine*, 1939

LEFT TO RIGHT

The Vultures* from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937)

ca. 1937

Disney Studio Artists

Gouache on two layers of celluloid over watercolor and gouache background

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of the artist, 1938 (38.154)

Walt Disney presented this gouache on celluloid (transparent plastic used in animation) to The Met in 1938. Taken from one of the final sequences of the film, the image was placed on a specially made background, which is significantly darker than the rainy sky in the original film. The vicious-looking vultures were rendered by Ward Kimball, one of the so-called Nine Old Men, a group of the Studio's key animators from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Audio Guide 603

TOP

Excerpt from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)

Film clip

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

This lively sequence from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* shows the lead character dancing with her friends in their cottage. Released a mere three years after *The China Shop* (1934), Disney's first feature-length film exhibits astounding achievements in artistry and technology. To ensure accurate anatomy and convincing movement, this scene was performed by an actress and filmed so that the animators could reference the footage as their inspirational model.

BOTTOM

Prop storybook for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)

1937

Disney Studio Artists

Mixed media

Walt Disney Archives

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), and several other Disney films open with a traditional storybook shot, a visual transition from the real world to the fictional realm of hand-drawn animation. The present volume was produced specifically for the opening sequence of *Snow White*. Made in emulation of white vellum and adorned with black-letter typeface and golden decorations, the prop book heralds the Germanic storybook atmosphere of the movie.

Clockwise from top

Snow White
The Queen
The Witch
Dwarfs
ca. 1937
Disney Studio Artists
Gouache on celluloid

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Bella C. Landauer (50.511.10, .11–13)

Every second of hand-drawn animation required twenty-four individual drawings, each retraced on a transparent sheet of plastic, or celluloid, and colored with gouache. The “cels” were then placed on a background and captured by a camera. The images of Snow White and the Witch here bear numbers that record their position in the sequence of cels used for their respective scenes. The representation of the Queen is a color proof, used not in the film itself but to test out her color scheme (note that her tiara differs from that in the final cut). The Dwarfs are the product of the Cel Set-Up Department, which created cels

specifically for retail sale, with new, specially made backgrounds; in this case, a hand-rubbed wood veneer.

The Queen's peacock throne, concept art for *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937)
Late 1930s
Maurice Noble (American, 1910–2001)
Gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

For *Snow White*, animators looked at German storybooks as well as historical sources. The beautiful yet evil Queen, for instance, is thought to have been modeled in part on the mid-thirteenth-century statue of Uta, Margravine of Meissen, at Germany's Naumburg Cathedral. Maurice Noble's watercolor for the character's stately peacock throne, in turn, appears to have been influenced by the one made for the so-called Fairytale King, Ludwig II of Bavaria. The king himself looked to the Middle Ages when envisaging his fantastical palaces such as Neuschwanstein, which later would inform the designs of Disney theme park castles. Associated with pride and beauty, the visual reference to the peacock underscores the Queen's vanity. Noble worked for Disney from 1935 to 1941 and went on to join Warner Bros. Studios in the 1950s.

OPPOSITE WALL, RIGHT TO LEFT

DYNAMIC HEROINES

At first, the Disney Studios' workforce was largely divided between men employed in story, animation, and special effects, and women in the Ink & Paint Department, where about one hundred artists retraced each animation drawing on a transparent sheet of celluloid and colored the voids with gouache.

In the 1930s and 1940s a small number of women—including Bianca Majolie, Grace Huntington, and Sylvia Holland—gradually overcame what initially appeared an insurmountable barrier and entered the creative realm of the Story Department. Walt Disney had come to the realization that they had significant contributions to make to the stories he sought to tell.

In April 1940, Mary Blair joined the Studios. A celebrated colorist, she had a creative ingenuity that helped guide the aesthetic feel of the animated features of the 1940s and early 1950s. Blair was among those who took on the artistic lead for *Cinderella* (1950), based on Charles Perrault's 1697

version of the tale. While Disney was eager to repeat the box-office success of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), the grand costumes and refined interiors in *Cinderella*—described in the first script as set in “a small European kingdom” of “decidedly French” atmosphere—represent a break with the earlier film’s picturesque, Germanic storybook look.

image caption:
Mary Blair, ca. 1940. The Walt Disney Family Museum. © The Estate of Mary Blair

image description:
In this archival photo, a young woman, Mary Blair, with light skin tone, wearing a light-colored, wide-neck blouse, leans over her drafting table as she paints. Her body faces the viewer and her painting but she turns her head to look slightly to the left.

“She was the most amazing colorist of all time. I don’t think even Matisse could hold a candle to her.”

—Disney animator Marc Davis about Mary Blair, 1991

Cinderella arriving at the ball, concept art for *Cinderella* (1950)
1940s
Bianca Majolie
Pastel on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Designs for the King and Queen, *Cinderella* (1950)
1940
Josephine “Fini” Rudiger with Bianca Majolie, Dana Coty, and Albert Heath
Gouache and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Designs for Cinderella’s stepsisters, *Cinderella* (1950)
1940
Josephine “Fini” Rudiger with Bianca Majolie, Dana Coty, and Albert Heath
Gouache and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Bianca Majolie and Fini Rudiger, among the first women to work in Disney's Story Department, produced these early studies for *Cinderella*. Like the porcelain figurines for *The Clock Store* (1931), Rudiger's sketches present a satirical take on the opulence and femininity of eighteenth-century court costume. In August 1947, the Story Department moved the plot from the eighteenth into the nineteenth century. There are several possible reasons for the shift. The Rococo's overly sumptuous costumes could both distract from the main action—turning it into parody—and present an onerous technical challenge. Animating the complex, layered attire would be time-consuming and expensive, a predicament that reoccurred in the early production stages of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991).

Concept art for *Cinderella* (1950)

Clockwise from top left
Cinderella's stepmother and stepsisters rehearsing
The pumpkin carriage
Cinderella's father's country chateau
The King's study
Cinderella in front of a mirror
1940s
Mary Blair (American, 1911–1978)
Gouache, graphite, and pastel on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Mary Blair's gouaches for *Cinderella* reveal the strengths Disney recognized in her work: a vibrant palette paired with simple, clearly legible forms. Blair's creative ingenuity was the driving force behind the look of the Disney Studios' feature films of the 1940s and early 1950s. She took on three major projects for which early concepts already existed: *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), and *Peter Pan* (1953). Blair's unique sense of shape and color prevails in the backgrounds and costumes of those

films, but is less evident in the character design, which had to reconcile her abstract forms with the level of figurative realism Walt Disney sought.

Audio Guide 604

Concept art for *Cinderella* (1950):
Sketches for Lady Tremaine's bedchamber
Sketches for the furnishing of the stepsisters' bedrooms

1940s

Disney Studio Artists

Ink, graphite, and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Drizella's bedroom, background painting for *Cinderella* (1950)
ca. 1948–50
Disney Studio Artist
Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

These background paintings demonstrate a careful translation of Mary Blair's color styling for the film's final cut, and a meticulous study of art and architecture during the reign of French Emperor Napoleon III. The film invites its viewers into the intimacy of the characters' bedrooms, as if to grant us access to their innermost desires. Spaces range from the protagonist's tiny bower—in which she dreams of true love—to the king's gargantuan state bedchamber, in which he imagines the progeny that will secure the survival of his dynasty. Cinderella's stepfamily's bedrooms are the site of more trivial aspirations and echo the color schemes of the three women's respective dresses. The frilly ambience lightens the otherwise toxic mood created by their gruesome behavior.

Anastasia's bedroom, background painting for *Cinderella* (1950)

ca. 1948–50

Disney Studio Artist

Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Cinderella's transformation, *Cinderella* (1950)
Late 1940s
Character: Marc Davis (American, 1913–2000)
Effects: George Rowley (American, 1905–1991)
Graphite on paper (reproductions)

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The sequence of images shown here represents the twenty-four drawings required for one second of hand-drawn animation. Among the most iconic scenes in the history of animation, Cinderella's transformation exemplifies the level of attention Disney artists gave to the minutest of details. Under thousands of individually drawn (and later transferred to a cel and painted) sparkles, the title character's rags turn into a fine ball gown and she into a radiant apparition. Note the illusion of weight Marc Davis was able to lend her heavy gown. His collaboration with George Rowley, who drew each sparkle, represents an important team effort, which may help account for the tradition that this was Walt Disney's favorite scene. Many have interpreted the Disney princess's transformation as the realization of the "American Dream" of the 1950s.

Lady Tremaine's bedroom, background painting for *Cinderella* (1950)

ca. 1948–50

Disney Studio Artist

Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Background painting for *Cinderella* (1950)

ca. 1948–50

Disney Studio Artist

Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

MEDIEVAL ROMANCE

Sleeping Beauty (1959) is Disney's second treatment of a story by Charles Perrault, an influential literary figure at the court of Louis XIV who published a number of fairy tales at the dawn of the eighteenth century. The romance of a fifteenth-century castle, the château d'Ussé in the Loire Valley, is traditionally credited with inspiring his tale of a princess cursed to sleep for one hundred years.

With a soundtrack based on Tchaikovsky's 1890 ballet and pictorial roots in works by late medieval and northern Renaissance artists, Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* is considered by many to be one of the studio's most sophisticated productions. The *Unicorn Tapestries* in The Met collection, probably designed in Paris about 1500 and woven in the southern Netherlands, provided a significant starting point for the film's visual development. Visiting The Met Cloisters in the early 1950s, John Hench, a versatile and highly influential Disney artist who later became a central figure in designing Disneyland, was awed by the tapestries' bustling scenes and proposed them as

a visual template for *Sleeping Beauty*. Enthusiastic about the idea, Walt Disney enlisted the artist Eyvind Earle for the film's color styling; thus Earle's responsibilities for *Sleeping Beauty* were similar to those Mary Blair had fulfilled for *Cinderella*.

The success of Disney's projects was founded on craftsmanship and close collaboration. Animation artists face the "impossible task to make it look like the entire film was made by one person," recalls Floyd Norman, who joined the Disney Studios in 1956 at the age of twenty-four and is one of the last living artists who worked on *Sleeping Beauty*.

image caption:
Floyd Norman at his animation desk, ca. 1956. Disney artwork © Disney. Photo courtesy Floyd Norman & Fiore Media Group, LLC

image description:
In a color photograph, a man, Floyd Norman, with dark skin tone at his drafting table pauses drawing a cartoon character to look at the viewer. Behind him on a cork board are reference pictures and sketches.

CASE IN CENTER OF GALLERY

Prop storybook for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)
ca. 1955–59
Disney Studio Artists
Mixed media

Walt Disney Archives

In *Sleeping Beauty's* opening sequence, this gem-encrusted prop storybook gently ushers the viewer from traditional live-action footage into the fictional animated world. The book's designers likely drew inspiration from the Lindau Gospels, a precious ninth-century illuminated manuscript held together by a remarkable Carolingian treasure binding covered with jewels. Disney's introductory scene thus conveys a clear message: this animated feature aims to transport you into a realm inspired by the arts of medieval Europe.

Audio Guide 606

EITHER SIDE OF CASE

Illustrated pages from prop storybook for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)

ca. 1955–59

Disney Studio Artist

Walt Disney Archives

With their historical typeface, stylized architecture, and decorative imagery in the margins, these sheets from the *Sleeping Beauty* prop storybook that opens the film pictorially recall one of the most well-known works of art of the late Middle Ages: the Limbourg Brothers' book of hours *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (ca. 1412–16), a visual record of the extravagant lifestyle and luxurious court of John "the Magnificent," duc de Berry, arguably the most sophisticated art patron of his day.

TO LEFT OF SECTION TEXT, RIGHT TO LEFT

Excerpt from *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)

1959

Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)

Film clip

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Walt Disney and John Hench most closely reached their shared goal of bringing a tapestry to life in this pivotal scene showing Briar Rose and Prince Phillip waltzing through Eyvind Earle's stylized woods to Tchaikovsky's tune. Their love song "Once Upon a Dream" may not be rooted in the melodies of the troubadours, but it is true to the union of music and image that was central to medieval representations of courtship.

Concept art for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959):
King Stefan
The Queen
1950s
Kay Nielsen (Danish, 1886–1957)
Pastel on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Danish illustrator Kay Nielsen created some of the earliest preproduction concepts for the film, suggesting an ethereal depiction of the Middle Ages reminiscent of the legend of King Arthur. These two designs and the others on view nearby represent a different direction from the vibrant and colorful International Gothic style that eventually made it into the film.

Concept art for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959):
Enchanted forest
King Stefan's Castle
Two sleeping monarchs

1950s

Kay Nielsen (Danish, 1886–1957)

Pastel on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Story sketch for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)

1950s

Eyvind Earle (American, 1916–2000)

Gouache and graphite on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Concept art for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)
1950s
Eyvind Earle (American, 1916–2000)
Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

As de facto artistic director for *Sleeping Beauty,* Eyvind Earle was determined not to let anyone compromise his unique style in the process of translating highly finished concept designs into background paintings. He had Walt Disney's support: "For years and years, I have been hiring artists like Mary Blair to design the styling of a feature, and by the time the picture is finished, there is hardly a trace of the original styling left. This time Eyvind Earle is styling *Sleeping Beauty* and that's the way it's going to be!" Earle's gouaches, like this one with its exaggerated, thin tree trunks, stylized foliage, and elongated castle architecture, show how he drew inspiration from medieval paintings, illuminated manuscripts, tapestries, stained glass, and goldsmith work.

Shepherd and Shepherdess Making Music

ca. 1500–1530

Southern Netherlandish

Wool warp; wool and silk wefts

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Susan Vanderpoel Clark, 1967 (67.155.8)

Disney artist John Hench visited The Met Cloisters in the early 1950s and brought home to California reproductions of the famous *Unicorn Tapestries*, suggesting them as a visual template for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). In this comparable tapestry from the same cultural context, a man and woman sit under a tree in a tightly knit meadow of flowers, he accompanying her on the bagpipe, a musical reference typical of medieval representations of courtship. In the animated film, Disney and Hench sought to bring tapestries such as this one to life.

image caption:
The Unicorn Purifies Water (from the *Unicorn Tapestries*), 1495–1505. French (cartoon); South Netherlandish (weaving). Wool warp with wool, silk, silver, and gilt wefts. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of John D. Rockefeller Jr., 1937 (37.80.2)

image description:
This tapestry shows a unicorn kneeling by a fountain, surrounded by various woodland animals and people in brightly colored medieval clothing.

Concept art for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)
1950s
Eyvind Earle (American, 1916–2000)
Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Concept images like this one reflect Eyvind Earle's overarching vision. It was important to the artist that the backdrops were shown in perfect focus: "I chose to emulate the style of [Jan] van Eyck, in which an element in the foreground and a tree ten miles in the background are rendered with the same crispness." The quality he identified with the Netherlandish painter equally prevails in medieval tapestries, such as the one on view nearby. For the forest, Earle later recalled, "I rearranged the bushes and trees in geometrical patterns. I made a medieval tapestry out of the surface wherever possible. All my foregrounds were tapestry designs of decorative weeds and flowers and grasses."

Background painting for *Sleeping Beauty*
(1959)
1950s
Disney Studio Artist
Gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

ACROSS DOORWAY, RIGHT TO LEFT

Background painting for *Sleeping Beauty*
(1959)
1950s
Disney Studio Artist
Gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Story sketches for *Sleeping Beauty* (1959)
1950s
Eyvind Earle (American, 1916–2000)
Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Eyvind Earle's desire to uphold his visual hallmark frustrated many artists at the Disney Studios, who struggled to see how the style could be translated into animation. Yet the backing of Walt Disney (who was then focused on his new ventures, Disneyland and television) gave Earle considerable authority. The exploratory sketches of castle interiors and exteriors on view in this gallery reflect Earle's strong vision, which would imbue every aspect of *Sleeping Beauty.*

DISNEY RENAISSANCE, DISNEY ROCOCO

Thirty years after the premiere of *Sleeping Beauty* (1959), the Disney Studios embarked on the production of a new fairy tale, *Beauty and the Beast* (1991). Before his death in 1966, Walt Disney had several times considered adapting the story—first published in 1740 by French author Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve—but it was not until 1989 that production began in a small studio in London. The film helped initiate a decade that Hollywood would christen the “Disney Renaissance,” celebrating the rebirth of a form of hand-drawn animation many people thought had gone extinct.

The initial proposal for Disney’s *Beauty and the Beast* saw the story unfold amid the Rococo era, with an opening sequence inspired by Jean Honoré Fragonard’s *The Swing*, a picture evoking both motion and emotions. The eighteenth-century composition is one of the crown jewels of the Wallace Collection in London, located near the production team’s temporary studio. Representations of young women on swings centered on the illusion of movement: to some contemporaries,

the back and forth tangibly illustrated an indecisiveness in matters of the heart, while the wild foliage and shrubbery in Fragonard's painting was thought to hint at the uncontrollable nature of the human spirit.

While the London teams' early storyboards were revised and the original opening sequence scrapped, Fragonard's *The Swing* would eventually make a cameo appearance in Disney's *Frozen* (2013).

image caption:
Jean Honoré Fragonard (French, 1732–1806), *The Swing*, ca. 1767–68. Oil on canvas. The Wallace Collection, London. Image: © Wallace Collection, London / Bridgeman Images

image description:
In this painting set in an idyllic woodland, a young woman in a frilly pink dress flies through the air on a tree swing in the center. One pointed slipper kicks upward, and her billowing skirts reveal a white calf. To our left, a young man lies against a statue, his arm reaching towards the airborne woman; on our right, an older man pulls on ropes to operate the swing.

IN CASE

Automaton in the form of a chariot pushed by a Chinese attendant and set with a clock

1766

James Cox (British, ca. 1723–1800)

Case: gold with diamonds and paste jewels set in silver, pearls; dial: white enamel; movement: partly gilded brass and steel, wheel balance and cock of silver set with paste jewels

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982 (1982.60.137)

The precious music box included in early *Beauty and the Beast* story reels evokes gem-studded eighteenth-century “toys” such as this one created by the English goldsmith James Cox. Like the porcelain conversation pieces on view in previous galleries, Cox’s miniature automata—which could be set in motion for viewers—were objects of technical ingenuity and artistic invention designed to prompt dialogue and delight. This one was presented to China’s Qianlong emperor by the British East India Company in 1766.

TO LEFT OF SECTION TEXT

The Swing

ca. 1778–80

Hubert Robert (French, 1733–1808)

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917 (17.190.27)

While Disney artists turned to Fragonard's *The Swing* for inspiration on numerous occasions, his painting is but one iteration of a subject that captivated many eighteenth-century French artists. Hubert Robert's neoclassical composition is part of a decorative scheme he made for the château de Bagatelle, a glorified playground built by Queen Marie Antoinette's brother-in-law. Romance is central to the fête galante genre to which this painting belongs. Inside the pleasure grounds of Paris, adult courtship was veiled behind seemingly innocent games, as cheerful men and women gave themselves up to the experience of riding a swing or playing hide-and-seek. This zeal to temporarily escape the sobering realities of daily life is analogous to the desire of some adults to revisit

classic cartoons or Disney theme parks, returning to the stories and experiences of their childhood.

Audio Guide 607

ACROSS DOORWAY TO RIGHT OF SECTION TEXT, LEFT TO RIGHT

Rapunzel on a swing, CGI test for *Tangled* (2010)
2008
Lisa Keene (American, born 1959)
Kyle Strawitz (American, born 1963)
Digital animation

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Cameo appearance of Fragonard's *The Swing* in *Frozen* (2013)
Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)
Film clip

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The visual references to Fragonard's *The Swing* did not make it into *Beauty and the Beast*. The project's early story reel (a rough film test of the story in sketch form) was dismissed as lacking entertainment value. More than a decade later, however, Lisa Keene revisited Fragonard's work as part of her concept

studies for *Tangled*, based on the fairytale *Rapunzel*. Glen Keane, who supervised the creation of these test loops, recalled: “For ‘The Swing’ reel, the goal was to place Rapunzel in a 3D environment that had the feel of the richness of a Fragonard painting. Lisa Keene spent months studying his technique. . . . She and I loved how the foliage rolled and tree trunk curved in rhythmic shapes.” Though *The Swing* reference was also omitted from *Tangled,* it finally made a cameo appearance in *Frozen.*

The Swing* music box, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast (1991)

1989

Peter J. Hall (Scottish, 1926–2010)

Watercolor, marker, and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Former Dallas Opera costume designer Peter J. Hall produced this rendering of a music box featuring a girl on a swing for the original opening of *Beauty and the Beast*. Encrusted with diamonds and precious stones, the tiny treasure was intended as a pivotal prop: the only valuable commodity left in the family's possession after Belle's father loses his fortune. Demonstrating unusual maturity for her age, Belle encourages her father to sell it in the hope of overcoming their financial struggles. The consumption of decorative luxury goods like this box was an important subject of discussion in the learned circles of Rococo Paris. The French philosopher Voltaire defended the appreciation of precious yet useless objects—"the superfluous, a very necessary thing"—in his satirical poem *The Worldling* (1736).

Audio Guide 608

Belle's music box, concept art for the opening of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
Belle on a swing, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Mel Shaw (American, 1914–2012)
Pastel on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The artist Mel Shaw, who began his career at Disney in 1937 working on *Fantasia* (1940), *Dumbo* (1941), and *Bambi* (1942), made many pastels redolent of the mysterious atmosphere sought for *Beauty and the Beast*. One shows his imagining of Belle on a swing being pushed by her father, inspired by Fragonard's painting, and the other depicts Belle's precious music box.

Story sketches for the opening of *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Disney Studio Artists
Photocopy, marker, colored pencil, and gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Two slightly different early story reels were recorded for the opening sequence of *Beauty and the Beast*, both of which were ultimately rejected. The first version, seen here in storyboard drawings, opened with the traditional image of a book, as in previous Disney fairy tales. It continued with a garden sequence showing the lead character, Belle, wearing a pink dress and sitting in a swing pushed by her father, alluding to Fragonard's late Rococo picture *The Swing*.

TALE OF A SOFA

The original story of *Beauty and the Beast* makes no mention of the servants transformed into household objects that became essential to the success of Disney's adaptation. Yet the idea of humanizing an inanimate artifact, or anthropomorphism, held a prominent position in French literature and decorative arts of the 1740s and 1750s. The most notable example is a hugely popular story by Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon, a writer in the circle of *Beauty and the Beast*'s author, Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve. *The Sofa, A Moral Tale* (1742) describes a man whose soul is sentenced to journey from one sofa to the next until he witnesses a genuine declaration of love. Readers of the time could not help but notice that the activities the character observed while trapped in furniture form satirized the goings-on at the court of King Louis XV at Versailles.

The artists and animators working on Disney's rendition of *Beauty and the Beast* were unaware of the existence of *The Sofa*. It may be serendipity that—250 years after these two stories were written in one

another's immediate vicinity—Disney's filmmakers introduced household objects to tell their tale; or perhaps it is evidence of a timeless human desire to animate the inanimate.

TO RIGHT OF SECTION TEXT, LEFT TO RIGHT

“Canapé executé pour Mr. le Comte de Bielenski,” from *Oeuvre de Juste Aurele Meissonnier*

ca. 1742–48

Juste Aurèle Meissonnier (French, 1695–1750)

Gabriel Huquier (French, 1695–1772)

Etching and engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.62.5(51))

This design for a type of sofa embodies all the lively characteristics of the Rococo, including animated, swirling lines based on shells and rocks known as *rocailles* (for which the style is named) and harmony between the various decorative elements in a room, as seen in the paneling, which echoes the lines of the sofa. It is one of many examples of Juste Aurèle Meissonnier’s bold and dynamic furnishings created for an elite clientele—here, the Polish count Franciszek Bielenski—which helped define a taste for Rococo style across Europe.

Le Sopha: Conte moral (*The Sofa: A Moral Tale*) and *Le Canapé couleur de feu* (*The Settee the Color of Fire*)

1774 (first edition 1742)

Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon (French, 1707–1777) and Louis Charles Fougeret de Monbron (French, 1706–1789)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Thomas J. Watson Library

The first edition of *The Sofa: A Moral Tale* dates to 1742, just two years after Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve published *Beauty and the Beast*. The two authors knew one another: Claude Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon harbored a deep dislike for Villeneuve, who was the longtime companion of his father. Anthropomorphic storytelling soon became an unstoppable trend. *The Sofa* was so popular it went through eighteen editions in London alone.

The Declaration of Love

ca. 1724

Jean François de Troy (French, 1679–1752)

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 2019 (2019.141.21)

This painting, a type known as a *tableau de mode* that depicts fashionable society, illustrates how sofas functioned as a setting for romantic storytelling in the 1700s. The entire cast of characters, including the seated couple, Mars and Venus in the background painting, and an excitable lapdog, join together to recount an episode of tenderness—and it is the sofa that ties it all together. Jean François de Troy's composition resonates with a crucial scene from an unexecuted early story idea for *Beauty and the Beast* (displayed nearby), in which Gaston lounges on a sofa when introduced to Belle. As they sit together on the furniture, Gaston does not take the opportunity to express affection for Belle, but instead is interested only in assessing whether her beauty matches his own.

Belle and Gaston on a sofa, story sketches for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

1989

Disney Studio Artist

Photocopy, marker, and gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

ON PLATFORM

Sofa (*ottomane veilleuse*)

ca. 1750–60

Jean-Baptiste I Tilliard (French, 1686–1766) or
Jean-Baptiste II Tilliard (French, 1723–1798)

Carved and gilded beechwood, upholstered in modern red velours de Gênes

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Jack and Belle Linsky Collection, 1982 (1982.60.72)

Having originated in the Middle East, the sofa was a relatively new and fashionable piece of furniture in eighteenth-century France. The designers of this example, the Tilliards, were the chairmakers (or *menusiers*) responsible for driving the development of the style. From about 1730 to 1760, the father-son pair supplied the French crown with tables, consoles, and chairs. This sofa's organic serpentine lines, restrained and graceful, suggest a kind of basket enveloping its sitters. The heart-shaped cartouche found on some of the sofa's legs and elsewhere is one of the Tilliards' characteristic touches.

Audio Guide 609

Carpet, model sheet for *Aladdin* (1992)
ca. 1991
Disney Studio Artists
Photocopies on paper

Footstool, model sheet for *Beauty and the Beast*, *Special Edition* (2002)
1998

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Although seat furniture lends itself particularly well to anthropomorphic transformation, it plays only a small role in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*. The castle dog is transformed into a yapping footstool, recalling a more aggressive example from the Mickey Mouse short film *Thru the Mirror* (1936, on view nearby). The Beast's footstool-dog has no face, reducing the communication of emotion to the physical responses of its body. In the right hands, the animation of a household artifact without facial expressions can be done to great effect. The artists working on both *Beauty and the Beast*'s footstool and *Aladdin*'s carpet made full use of the physical properties of the objects

to help convey their feelings—a challenge that generations of Disney trainees learned through the exercise of animating a half-filled flour sack.

Background painting for *Thru the Mirror* (1936)
1936
Disney Studio Artist
Gouache and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Clean-up animation drawings for *Thru the Mirror* (1936)
1936
Bob Wickersham (American, 1911–1962)
Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Flying sedan chair, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Mel Shaw (American, 1914–2012)
Pastel on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Disney artists working on *Beauty and the Beast* considered all kinds of objects that might come to life. This pastel by Mel Shaw envisages the villain Gaston dueling several household items. In the background is a magical sedan chair; in the first proposal for the Disney film, that piece of furniture served as Belle's mode of transportation between her village and the Beast's enchanted castle.

THROUGH GALLERY ENTRANCE, ON WALL TO LEFT

FLYING SCULPTURE

The great appeal of many animated Disney fairy tales is that they dramatize the fantasy of transformation. This came to the fore once again in Glen Keane's animation of the Beast turning from monster back to prince. The power of Keane's drawings stems from a combination of energetic movement, ever-changing perspectives, daring foreshortening, and convincing emotions. His sequence owes much to representations of the male body by the Renaissance sculptor Michelangelo and recalls the age-old ambition of many artists to breathe life into their sculptures.

Keane says he does not invent his characters but that they reside within him, waiting to be found—a notion that echoes Michelangelo's belief that sculptures are already present in a block of marble and need to be liberated through carving. As the Beast's weighty frame miraculously defies gravity and spirals in the air, the exceptional anatomy devised for the character is presented to full effect one last time. Had he lived to see Keane's work, architect Frank Lloyd Wright, whom

Walt Disney had invited to help train his ever-growing staff, might have repeated the advice he had given the filmmaker in the 1930s: Why not release these drawings in their rough black-and-white form, which expresses the motion in its full strength and spirit?

image caption:
Glen Keane at his animation desk, 1990. Walt Disney Archives.

image description:
In a color photograph, a man, Glen Keane, with light skin tone looks at the viewer and holds a sketch of an animated character.

IN CASE, LEFT TO RIGHT

***Skizzenbuch: Hundert Federzeichnungen* (*Sketchbook: One Hundred Pen and Ink Drawings*)**

ca. 1905–10

Heinrich Kley (German, 1863–1945)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Thomas J. Watson Library

Dancing elephants, model sheets for *Fantasia* (1940)

1930s

Disney Studio Artist

Photostat on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

These model sheets were drawn for an imaginative choreography of hippopotamuses, ostriches, alligators, and elephants performing in Disney's rendition of Amilcare Ponchielli's *Dance of the Hours* in *Fantasia* (1940). The animals' struggling attempts to evoke grace and delicacy recall the wit of German illustrator Heinrich Kley's elephant skaters, gliding over the rink with astonishing lightness. Disney artist Joe Grant acquired

a complete run of Kley's drawings as published in the weekly satirical magazine *Simplicissimus*.

Pair of vases (*vases à tête d'éléphant*)
ca. 1758
Jean-Claude Duplessis (French, ca. 1695–1774)
Sèvres Manufactory (French, 1740–present)
Soft-paste porcelain decorated in polychrome enamels and gold

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1958 (58.75.90a, b, .91a, b)

Based on designs by the multitalented royal goldsmith Jean-Claude Duplessis, these two vases feature elephant heads whose trunks once held candle sockets. They are among the most extravagant creations of the Sèvres porcelain manufactory, reflecting its willingness to expand the boundaries of taste through bold and innovative design. Art historian Luke Syson memorably likened them to a "*Dumbo* nightmare," and indeed they may be considered the Rococo equivalent to the highly imaginative elephant sequences from both *Fantasia* (1940) and *Dumbo* (1941).

FROM SECTION TEXT, LEFT TO RIGHT

The Beast, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Peter J. Hall (Scottish, 1926–2010)
Watercolor, graphite, marker, and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

This early proposal imagines the Beast as a mandrill, a large monkey, in eighteenth-century costume. In designing the Beast, Glen Keane studied the anatomy of many different animals at the London Zoo. “I started thinking about the American bison and the scale of that big beast, and the sadness in a buffalo’s eyes,” Keane recounted. “I was also thinking about the softness of a lion’s mane, and about the tusk and hair growing up on the snout of a wild boar, and studied the anatomy of bears. All these things were swirling around in my head.” When an assistant asked him what the Beast would look like, Keane listed the many characteristics he hoped to amalgamate, “and as I drew, it all suddenly came together in probably fifteen minutes.”

The Beast's transformation, rough animation pencil test for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1991
Glen Keane (American, born 1954)
Film clip

Walt Disney Animation Studios

When Glen Keane was in need of inspiration for the Beast's transformation scene, he visited the Norton Simon Museum in Pasadena, California. There he encountered French sculptor Auguste Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais* (1884–95), which ignited a creative spark: after circling the sculpture for thirty minutes to study its forms, he returned to his studio and animated the metamorphosis from mercurial creature to handsome prince. Drawing on the desolate expressions and weary gestures of Rodin's figures, Keane imbued the Beast at the moment of his impending death—and unexpected salvation—with a depth of emotion that is recognizably human. A cast of the large Rodin sculptural group is displayed at the west end of the Carroll and Milton Petrie European Sculpture Court at the exit of this exhibition.

Audio Guide 610

Paw studies, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Chris Sanders (American, born 1962)
Gouache, marker, and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

What should the Beast look like? Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve's 1740 version of the tale paints the picture of a creature with a terrifying voice, fish scales, and a heavy body disfigured by an elephant trunk. Later illustrated books envisaged him as a boar or a lion. All Disney artists working on *Beauty and the Beast* were encouraged to think about every character. Chris Sanders, who drew this selection of hands and paws, even imagined extraterrestrial mutants, foreshadowing the aliens he envisioned for *Lilo & Stitch* (2002).

Magdalena González
ca. 1580
German School
Oil on canvas

Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna / Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck

The girl in this striking portrait came from a family with a genetic condition today known as *hypertrichosis universalis,* in which hair covers the entire body. Originally from the Canary Islands, her father became a figure of curiosity at the courts of France and Italy, though he and his children were primarily regarded as animals and subjected to scientific study. This inhumane treatment was in keeping with early modern European court culture that made a spectacle of those regarded as different. Here, the artist has emphasized Magdalena's humanity through the look in her eyes, much as Glen Keane did with the Beast's expressions. *Beauty and the Beast* was released amid the AIDS crisis, leading some to interpret the villagers' treatment of the Beast as an allusion to the stigma around the epidemic, and his return to his human self as salvation from the illness.

Lion

ca. 1732

Johann Gottlieb Kirchner (German, 1706–after 1738)

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Wrightsman Fund, 1988 (1988.294.1)

This recumbent lion, designed by Johann Gottlieb Kirchner in the early 1730s, presents an arresting model of the king of beasts. The humanized expression Kirchner conferred on the lion somewhat undermines its ferocity: he appears not alert and ready to pounce, but melancholic, if not confused. Rather than literal attributes such as a crown or scepter, Kirchner gave this king eyebrows raised in bewilderment. Beginning in the Renaissance, anthropomorphic representations of animals (in which they have human traits) were closely linked to theories of human physiognomy, the practice of assessing character through outer appearances such as facial features. Centuries later, animator Glen

Keane would pay particular attention to making the eyes of the Beast a reliable mirror of his humanity.

Audio Guide 611

TO RIGHT NEAR GALLERY EXIT

PARODY OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

In response to the initial attempt at *Beauty and the Beast*, the Disney Studios' creative leadership expressed concerns about whether viewers would relate to the period atmosphere of eighteenth-century France. The library Walt Disney had assembled contained several volumes illustrating Rococo dress, but the extravagance and pastel tonality of male fashion in particular might have undermined the credibility and masculine appeal of a princely hero for a twentieth-century audience. Its intricacy also proved too complicated for hand-drawn animation, which may explain why some earlier Disney projects in this direction never saw the light of day.

Many eighteenth-century observers were similarly alienated by the fussy French fashion at Europe's royal courts. With the rise of satire, wigs became a prime target of mockery. Caricaturists in Paris and London delighted in poking fun at the latest hairstyles. The impracticality of ludicrously tall wigs—Queen Marie Antoinette is said to have removed hers to enter

a carriage and put it back on upon arrival—was ridiculed with gusto. Ultimately, the Disney team's engagement with Rococo dress was reduced to a satirical nod in *Beauty and the Beast*'s final cut: in an attempt to make the Beast look especially dashing and civilized for the evening with Belle, he receives an over-the-top hairdo.

image caption:
The Beast preparing for his evening with Belle, from *Beauty and the Beast*, 1991. Walt Disney Animation Studios © Disney

image description:
An animated character, the Beast, with a red face and horns scowls, his bottom fangs rising from an uneven lower lip below hooded blue eyes. His mane is curled in even ringlets; his hair and braided beard are tied with blue bows.

TO LEFT OF SECTION TEXT, RIGHT TO LEFT

Story sketch for *The Emperor's New Clothes* (unproduced)
1940
James (Jim) Bodrero (American, 1900–1980)
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Prince John, concept art for *Robin Hood* (1973)
Early 1970s
Ken Anderson (American, 1909–1993)
Marker, photocopy, and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Beast, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Mel Shaw (American, 1914–2012)
Pastel on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

These three interpretations of Louis XIV's state portrait by French artist Hyancinthe Rigaud, painted in 1701 as a parting gift for the ruler's grandson, the king of Spain, attest to the timeless appeal of a powerful image. They also illustrate how generations of Disney's creative staff called on the work of their predecessors. In 1940, Jim Bodrero likely used the image as inspiration for his proposals for *The Emperor's New Clothes*. Three decades later, Ken Anderson revisited it as a proposal for Prince John in *Robin Hood* (1973). Finally, Mel Shaw imagined the Beast in court dress.

Embroidered panels for a man’s suit

1780s

French

Silk embroidery on woven silk, satin stitch; stem stitch, knots, and silk net

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Irene Lewisohn and Alice L. Crowley Bequests, 1982 (1982.290a–e)

This finely crafted panel for a gentleman’s suit, combining figured purple silk, colored floral needlework, and white netting, reveals just how rich men’s clothes could be in eighteenth-century France. The multiple pieces here (cuffs, collar, and front panels for a man’s coat, knee bands for breeches) represent a suit ready to be cut and sewn to the client’s measurements. Due in part to its complexity, Rococo dress was reduced to but a few satirical nods in the final version of *Beauty and the Beast*.

Belle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
Gaston, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Jean Gillmore (American, born 1953)
Photocopy and marker on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Jean Gillmore, whose sketches for Belle and Gaston parody the elaborate nature of court dress, had taken a particular interest in the costumes for *Beauty and the Beast*, combing London museums for inspiration. Two popular films set in the eighteenth century, *Amadeus* (1984) and *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988), were also key early sources. The eventual change of course brought about some relief for Gillmore, who admitted that Rococo costume was too complicated to animate: “Today, you could do it in CGI, but it was impossible in hand-drawn animation.”

Audio Guide 612

ACROSS DOORWAY

OBJECTS COME TO LIFE

The supporting cast of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* includes a trio of domestic staff turned into household objects: Mrs. Potts, a teapot; Cogsworth, a mantel clock; and Lumiere, a candlestick. While the 1740 story makes no mention of this, the theme of giving life to inanimate artifacts runs throughout eighteenth-century French literature and the design of decorative arts. The impulse to attribute human properties to objects appears to derive from a desire to connect with other people; in their absence, people anthropomorphize things close at hand, like pets, plants, or household goods. In fact, the language Europeans developed to describe the components of a piece of furniture borrows from the terminology of human anatomy: legs, feet, back, arms. In addition to anthropomorphism, zoomorphism (animal attributes such as lion claws and heads) augmented the ornamental repertoire.

Rococo decorative arts were playful objects that talented craftsmen set out to animate through ingenious forms, colors, and materials. The

eighteenth-century teapots, candlesticks, and clocks that informed the appearance of those in *Beauty and the Beast* were highly prized luxury goods in their own right—as were the commodities associated with them, such as tea and candles.

image caption:
Mrs. Potts and Chip; Cogsworth and Lumiere, from *Beauty and the Beast*, 1991. Walt Disney Animation Studios © Disney

image descriptions:
In the top image, Mrs. Potts, an animated pink teapot with a woman's face, and Chip, an animated teacup with a boy's face, both on a red tray, smile. In the bottom image, Cogsworth, an animated clock with a man's face gestures to Lumiere, an animated candelabra with man's face. They look at each other, smiling. Both stand on a shiny surface.

IN CASE

Five-light candelabrum

1736

Johann Joachim Kändler (German, 1706–1775)

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, The Charles E. Sampson Memorial Fund, the Howard Bayne Fund and Anderson and Rush Gift, 1988 (1988.167)

This monumental candelabrum in the form a woman—modeled by Johann Joachim Kändler for Count Alexander Joseph Sulkowski—is among the most ambitious, ostentatious, and difficult projects carried out at Meissen. The female figure's arms and the lively, scrolling acanthus branches she carries become almost indistinguishable. Flamboyant artifacts such as this that blur human and ornamental elements attest to a mid-eighteenth-century fascination with permeable boundaries between the animate and the inanimate.

TO RIGHT OF SECTION TEXT, LEFT TO RIGHT

Cogsworth, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Peter J. Hall (Scottish, 1926–2010)
Watercolor, marker, and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

An avid museumgoer, Peter J. Hall accumulated a substantial library of art books that he consulted when creating his designs for historical costumes. This watercolor is the first proposal for Cogsworth. It shows a debonair majordomo donning a white periwig juxtaposed with his reincarnation as a large long-case clock with Boulle marquetry (a veneer of turtle shell, brass, and pewter). Hall's design presents a loose amalgamation of several types made in Paris between 1690 and 1720. Both the clock's proportions, recalling the human body, and the term "face" used to describe a dial encourage the imaginative leap. The red turtle shell veneer rendered here is visible on the clock displayed on the adjacent platform.

Audio Guide 613

Cogsworth, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Brian McEntee (American, born 1957)
Marker and photocopy on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Brian McEntee took over the artistic direction of *Beauty and the Beast* following the rejection of the first story reel and the decision to make the film a joyful Hollywood musical. Accordingly, he suggested Cogsworth change from a long-case to a mantel clock, so as to improve his capacity to interact with the other cast members. McEntee had previously worked on *The Brave Little Toaster* (1987), in which the objects' function is part of their character. Lampy is bright and bold; Toaster, warm on the inside; and Kirby the shy vacuum cleaner holds everything in. Similar metaphors were applied to characters in *Beauty and the Beast*: Lumiere is flamboyant, Cogsworth tightly wound, and Mrs. Potts warm and comforting.

ON PLATFORM, LEFT TO RIGHT

Musical bracket clock with calendar

ca. 1770 or later

Clockmaker: Thomas Lozano (Spanish, active 1700–1715)

Case and bracket: mahogany, with gilded-brass mounts; dial: silvered brass

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Wm. C. Egleston, in memory of her husband, 1907 (07.275a, b)

The stocky shape and splayed legs of this mahogany calendar clock recall Cogsworth's proportions and stance. Small mantel timepieces like this were an invention of the late seventeenth century, enabled by a shorter pendulum than had been previously in use. A native of Spain, Thomas Lozano learned his craft in London and spent his working life there, hence the London place-name and Spanish spelling on the dial of this clock, though the use of gilding and sinuous curves shows the internationalism of the French Rococo.

Clock with pedestal

ca. 1690

Case attributed to André Charles Boulle (French, 1642–1732)

After a design by Jean Berain (French, 1640–1711)

Clock by Jacques III Thuret (1669–1738) or his father, Isaac II Thuret (1630–1706)

Case and pedestal: oak with marquetry of tortoiseshell, engraved brass, and pewter; gilt bronze; dial: gilt brass with white enameled Arabic numerals; movement: brass and steel

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Rogers Fund, 1958 (58.53a–c)

André Charles Boulle headed a large enterprise in the Palais du Louvre, at one point employing twenty-six artisans. The level of craftsmanship and fantasy showcased in his clocks is a reminder of the eruption of magnificent splendor during the reigns of King Louis XIV and his two successors. The timepiece is surmounted by royal symbols in gilt bronze: a sunburst with a mask of the sun god Apollo, a crown, lyres, and cornucopias, the traditional symbol of abundance. Though the subtle shades of the veneer would be

difficult to render in animation, in Disney's live-action *Beauty and the Beast* (2017), Cogsworth sports a case of maroon Boulle marquetry inspired by a clock in London's Wallace Collection.

Wall clock (cartel) with movement of later date

Case ca. 1745–49; movement ca. 1756

Case maker: Jacques Caffieri (French, 1678–1755)

Clockmaker: Ferdinand Berthoud (French, 1727–1807)

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1936 (35.18)

Caffieri was one of the key figures who introduced the art of gilt bronze to French interiors and furniture at the end of the seventeenth century. This complicated and highly asymmetrical cartel clock (a cartouche-shaped timepiece meant to hang on the wall), incorporates imagery of Diana, Roman goddess of the hunt. By the 1730s, hardly any fashionable furniture was produced that was not adorned with gilt-bronze mounts.

IN CASE, CENTER OF GALLERY

Patience Teapot

1882

Worcester factory (British, 1751–2008)

Porcelain

Brooklyn Museum, Bequest of Laura L. Barnes and gift of John D. Rockefeller III, by exchange (2009.69a–b)

Probably the most famous and widely circulated of anthropomorphized teapots is this satirical commentary on the obsession of some consumers with Sèvres, Meissen, and Chinese and Japanese porcelain. It has been read as a reference to Irish playwright Oscar Wilde, who famously proclaimed he found it “harder and harder every day to live up to [his] blue china.” Portrayals of men in this pose have at times been used as markers of homosexuality. In the eighteenth century, author John Doran called performer Henry Mossop “the teapot actor” in reference to his favorite standing pose and, presumably, his personal life.

IN CASE, CLOCKWISE

Teapot with cover

ca. 1719–30

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Decoration attributed to the Aufenwerth Workshop

Hard-paste porcelain decorated in polychrome enamels and gold; metal chain and mounts

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1970 (1970.277.5a, b)

Throughout the eighteenth century, European potters capitalized on the opportunities teapots presented for quirky humanized and animal-based designs. Not always intended for practical use, the ceramic vessels could take on whimsical or comedic shapes. One of the most distinctive models produced at the Meissen porcelain manufactory is this teapot in the form of a helmeted, bearded man. He holds a dolphin that forms a spout, while a mermaid on the shoulders of a satyr serves as the handle.

Audio Guide 614

Teapot

ca. 1715–20, decoration ca. 1725

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Irwin Untermyer, 1970 (1970.277.6a, b)

This eagle-spout shape, to which the designer has added sumptuous golden wings, is an early Meissen example of animal forms incorporated into the teapot. The fine gold decoration, borrowing from prints and probably painted in Augsburg, exemplifies a contemporary interest in Chinese culture (porcelain and tea were the two most popular exports from China to Europe) as well as the value placed on objects made from newly developed European white clay.

Teapot with equestrian scene

1722

Meissen Manufactory (German, founded 1710)

Hard-paste porcelain painted with colored enamels and gold over transparent glaze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of William B. Osgood Field, 1902 (02.5.39a, b)

With its brightly enameled narrative scenes, this teapot is an early production from Meissen. The subject matter derives from prints then in circulation ridiculing imagined challenges dwarfs would face during equestrian training. One side, for example, shows a person shooting while his horse's rear produces a commensurate explosion. It demonstrates the way negative and harmful depictions were integrated into the art of earlier eras.

ON WALL TO RIGHT OF PLATFORM, LEFT TO RIGHT

Projet d'une grande Pendule, from *Oeuvre de Juste Aurele Meissonnier*

ca. 1742–48

Aurèle Meissonnier (French, 1695–1750)

Gabriel Huquier (French, 1695–1772)

Etching and engraving

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, New York, Rogers Fund, 1918 (18.62.5[54])

Once called an "unruly genius," Aurèle Meissonnier was one of the leading designers and promoters of the French Rococo style. He worked as a furniture designer, sculptor, painter, and architect, and produced objects for King Louis XV and other nobles across Europe. Prints recording his designs demonstrate the imagination and creativity that he unfurled across the page. Here, Meissonnier has designed a popular eighteenth-century clock known as a pendule, hung in front of a wall panel and with other elements in the room visible, showing the unified decorative schemes of Rococo interiors.

Cogsworth, model sheet for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1990

Disney Studio Artist

Photocopy, ink, graphite, paint, and collage elements on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Model sheets such as these were designed to assist the large team of animators, led by each character's supervising animator (in this case Will Finn), to understand the various angles and emotional responses.

Mrs. Potts, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Peter J. Hall (Scottish, 1926–2010)
Gouache, marker, and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Peter J. Hall's first proposal for Mrs. Potts, who hopes to counteract the Beast's behavior through warmth and kindness, illustrates the artist's consideration of historical sources. Not only does his depiction of a female servant holding a tray recall Swiss painter Jean Etienne Liotard's *The Chocolate Girl* (1743–44), but he also seems to have drawn inspiration from two of the earliest models of porcelain teapots ever made in Europe, at Meissen. Comparable examples are displayed nearby.

Mrs. Potts and Chip, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1989

Joe Grant (American, 1908–2005)

Photocopy, ink, and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Mrs. Potts, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1990

Chris Sanders (American, born 1962)

Pastel on paper, adhered to board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Artistic Director Brian McEntee likened Mrs. Potts's disposition to that of a reassuring English grandmother type, a gentle force balancing the egos of the charismatic Lumiere and the anxious and exacting Cogsworth. One early attempt at the character was drawn by Joe Grant, who designed the evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937) some sixty years earlier. Chris Sanders elaborated on Grant's sketch by removing Mrs. Potts' overbite and replacing the tea cozy with a scheme of white, gold, and shades of pink, the colors of the French Rococo.

Mrs. Potts, model sheet for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Disney Studio Artist
Photocopy on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Chip, model sheet for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Disney Studio Artist
Colored pencil, graphite, ink, and photocopy on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Many artists are involved in the animation of one character. David Pruiksma led the team that gave life to the jovial and affectionate Mrs. Potts, to whom British actress Angela Lansbury lent her voice. A specialist in plump and cuddly characters (he oversaw the animation of Flounder in *The Little Mermaid*, the Sultan in *Aladdin*, and Pumbaa in *The Lion King*), Pruiksma observed that Lansbury's mannerisms included frequent and lively head tilting. The conversion of

these motions into hand-drawn animation recalls the principle of “squash and stretch,” Disney’s equivalent to the malleability of unfired clays, as Mrs. Potts bounces freely from one plane to another—tables, trolley, floor—without breaking.

Lumiere, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

1989

Peter J. Hall (Scottish, 1926–2010)

Gouache, marker, and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Lumiere, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1990

Disney Studio Artist

Photocopy, marker, and ink

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

IN CASE

Candlestick

1735–50

After designs by Juste Aurèle Meissonnier (French, 1695–1750)

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, 1999 (1999.370.1a, b)

Juste Aurèle Meissonnier, hailed the “high priest” of the Rococo, dreamed up in 1735 a candlestick that became a model for an entire generation across Europe. Almost like an abstract sculpture, it has a visual rhythm of C-curves, S-curves, and undulations that suggests dynamic movement, leading the eye across the complicated surface.

Audio Guide 615

Candlestick

ca. 1745

Attributed to Juste Aurèle Meissonnier (French, 1695–1750)

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Lesley and Emma Sheafer Collection, Bequest of Emma A. Sheafer, 1973 (1974.356.184, .185)

Meissonnier's eccentricity can be seen in this candlestick that incorporates scrolling foliage and waves, the stem modeled with two small boys entwined with plant life and shell medallions in relief. Chubby, frolicking cherubs were deeply embedded in the sentimental vocabulary of eighteenth-century art, especially in French decorative paintings, which may account for the popularity of this candlestick's design.

ON WALL TO RIGHT

Pair of wall sconces (*bras de cheminée*)

ca. 1761

Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)

After a design by Jean-Claude Duplessis (French, ca. 1695–1774)

Soft-paste porcelain, gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Samuel H. Kress Foundation, 1958 (58.75.65, .66)

These sconces in the shape of plant-like scrolls demonstrate the marvelous invention of the goldsmith Jean-Claude Duplessis, one of the most ingenious artists of his time. This particular pair may have been purchased by Madame de Pompadour, a prominent patron of Sèvres. The illusion of movement and organic forms bring the object to life, much as Disney animators imbued their characters with movement and naturalism.

Lumiere*,* concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Kevin Lima (American, born 1962)
Photocopy, gouache, and marker on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

In this early sketch for Lumiere, showing him with something of a shifty demeanor, his body is tinted blue rather than yellow—suggesting that he was initially meant to have been made of silver instead of gilded bronze. Metal does not translate well into traditional animation, yet a deep yellow was more likely to be read by the viewer as gilded metal than blue or gray as silver and would also complement the golden highlights of Mrs. Potts' and Cogsworth's respective color schemes.

IN CASE

Candlestick with two branches

ca. 1745–60 or 19th century

French

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1475)

The highly original design of this candlestick, with its elaborate base, swirling plant-like stem, and twisting candle sockets in the form of vegetative branches, pushes the dynamism of the Rococo to its limits and appears to nearly transform the object into a living form. Within the constraints of hand-drawn animation the outline of Lumiere's body had to be relatively modest, without many ornamental details. By contrast, the designers of Rococo candlesticks like this one outdid each other in breathing life into their creations by suggesting motion through sinuous lines.

Lumiere, model sheet for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

1991

Nik Ranieri (Canadian, born 1961)

Colored pencil, graphite, and ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

THROUGH DOORWAY, TO LEFT

“IF IT’S NOT BAROQUE, DON’T FIX IT”

“As you can see, the pseudo façade was stripped away to reveal the minimalist Rococo design. . . . This is yet another example of the late-Neoclassical Baroque period. And, as I always say, if it’s not Baroque, don’t fix it.” Thus resounds Cogsworth’s feeble attempt to lighten up his dry guided tour through the Beast’s castle, having long since lost Belle’s attention. His incomprehensible string of stylistic terms makes very little sense, but then neither, one might argue, do the combinations of Gothic, Baroque, and neoclassical forms in and outside the Beast’s castle. Yet the castle’s architecture was particularly important to the story development, with the atmosphere of its interiors reflecting the gradually improving mood as the Beast’s temper mellows in the company of Belle.

The magic and opulence of the Beast’s castle take center stage in Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve’s original tale. She describes a staircase of agate with a golden banister; a porphyry dining

table dressed with cakes, dried fruit, and dessert wines; a large cabinet of mirrors; and wardrobes filled with treasures and dresses “so superb that not even a queen could wish for anything more beautiful.” Villeneuve’s lead character is beguiled by this grandeur, a situation in keeping with Rococo notions of the seductive powers of luxury.

Audio Guide 616

LEFT TO RIGHT

Belle exploring the Beast's castle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Mel Shaw (American, 1914–2012)
Pastel on mat board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The innumerable impressions of the Beast's castle by different Disney artists allow one to retrace the design trajectory. Mel Shaw's moody pastels capture the gloomy, almost scary atmosphere the film originally intended to convey, while Hans Bacher's dramatic gouaches, on view nearby, explore the castle's architecture from every possible angle, creating a sense of high drama.

The Beast's Castle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Hans Bacher (German, born 1948)
Gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Beast's Castle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1989
Hans Bacher (German, born 1948)
Gouche, marker, and photocopy on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Ballroom scene from *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
1991
Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)
Film clip

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The narrative crescendo of *Beauty and the Beast* leads to a romantic scene in the most spectacular room of the castle: the couple waltzing through a three-dimensional ballroom in a then cutting-edge cinematic sequence involving the latest CGI technology. Don Hahn relates: “You have to remember this was four years before *Toy Story* (1995). It was not a given that it could even work. . . . I was afraid the audience would hate it, because it looked so foreign to the rest of the movie, but it became a signature piece.” While the oval ballroom took inspiration from Louis XIV’s Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, the figures on the ceiling are reminiscent of French painter Jean Honoré Fragonard’s *Swarm of Cupids* (ca. 1765–77) at the Louvre as well as his

cherubs in *The Progress of Love* (1771–72) at the Frick Collection in New York.

Audio Guide 617

Six-light chandelier

ca. 1740

French

Gilt bronze

Ballroom, layout drawing for *Cinderella* (1950)
ca. 1948–49
Disney Studio Artist
Graphite, ink, and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Beast's library, layout drawing for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990–91
Ed Ghertner (American, born 1957)
Graphite and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The production of the final background paintings for *Beauty and the Beast* was overseen by Lisa Keene, whose most celebrated interior may be the grand Baroque library revealed in a pivotal moment during the characters' courtship and reflecting Belle's literary interests. Ed Ghertner's library layout on view here, like the ballroom layout made for *Cinderella* some forty years earlier, shows how background painting could evoke dramatic camera moves without the use of CGI animation.

clockwise from top

Ballroom, visual development for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Disney Studio Artist
Photocopy on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Belle's bedchamber, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Brian McEntee
Colored pencil and graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Ballroom modeled on the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1990
Michael Hodgson
Graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

When Brian McEntee took on the art direction of *Beauty and the Beast*, he injected the interiors with a lighthearted quality. Here, for example, is his suggestion for Belle's bedchamber, furnished with an inviting *lit à la polonaise*, a style of bed made popular in France by King Louis XV's consort, the Polish princess Maria Leszczyńska. Most edges were smoothed to give the objects a more cuddly, cartoony look.

“BE OUR GUEST”

In the eighteenth-century version of *Beauty and the Beast*, the castle’s household staff remain unseen; in that cultural context, the ideal servant was invisible. When it came to special occasions, however, pages and footmen might be dressed in rich liveries and considered accompaniments to entertainment, along with gold plate, exquisite porcelain services, food, wine, and music. It is the seductive power of these trappings that lent agency to what might at first seem superfluous decorative objects. Items associated with great wealth, authority, and comfort could have considerable impact on people—hence their use in diplomatic negotiations.

In Disney’s film, it is less the luxury of the castle itself than the hospitality provided by the household that encourages Belle to stay. “Be Our Guest,” the grand musical number led by Lumiere (inspired by French entertainer Maurice Chevalier), recalls the lavish festivities at Versailles and other European courts, with an interplay between extraordinary decorative arts, food, music, dance, and ephemeral decoration like fireworks.

ON PLATFORM, LEFT TO RIGHT

Objects from a table service

1770–80s

Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)

Soft-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Emma T. Gary, 1934 (37.20.13, .28, .31, .35a, b, .38, .52, .53, .55–.57, .59, .61, .63, .68, .112, .127, .133, .174a, b, .175, .179, .184, .188, .207, .209, .220, .224, .233)

The Sèvres Manufactory, founded in the mid-eighteenth century, quickly became the producer of the most sought-after porcelain in Europe. The porcelain objects on view here, including plates, bowls, trays, and ice cream cups, form part of an elaborate service comparable to those used by the kings of France. Animated in ornament and form, these pieces were designed to enliven a dining table. Displayed alongside them is a lively gilt-bronze candlestick after Meissonnier that might recall Lumiere, the character best known for his “Be Our Guest” musical number.

Monteith (*seau crennelé*)
Fruit dish (*compotier carré*)

Bottle cooler (*seau à bouteille*)
Sugar bowl
Saucer

Twelve plates (*assiettes à palmes*)

on wall

Still Life with Silver

1726

Alexandre François Desportes (French, 1661–1743)

Oil on canvas

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, Mary Wetmore Shively Bequest, in memory of her husband, Henry L. Shively, M.D., 1964 (64.315)

Alexandre François Desportes depicted a number of great buffets evoking the festivities at the French royal court. This example, probably made for a dining room, suggests splendid hospitality in the vein of “Be Our Guest.” It presents an array of silver and gold plate, Japanese porcelain, and hardstone vessels presided over by the marble mask of a satyr, whose mischievous gaze recalls the Disney character Lumiere. The composition is animated by the figural adornments on the objects, including mythological narratives on the silver and a large tureen adorned with dragon handles.

Audio Guide 618

ON PLATFORM, LEFT TO RIGHT

Candlestick with two branches

ca. 1745–60 or 19th century

Gilt bronze

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 (1975.1.1476)

Six ice cream cups (*tasses à glace*)
Tray
Ice pail with cover (*seau à glace*)

Salad bowl (*saladier*)
Shell-shaped fruit dish (*compotier coquille*)

Oval fruit dish (*compotier ovale*)
Cup and saucer (*gobelet litron et soucoupe*)
Half-bottle cooler (*seau à demi-bouteille*)

Objects from a table service

1770–80s

Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)

Soft-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of Emma T. Gary, 1934 (37.20.13, .28, .31, .35a, b, .38, .52, .53, .55–.57, .59, .61, .63, .68, .112, .127, .133, .174a, b, .175, .179, .184, .188, .207, .209, .220, .224, .233)

The Sèvres Manufactory, founded in the mid-eighteenth century, quickly became the producer of the most sought-after porcelain in Europe. The porcelain objects on view here, including plates, bowls, trays, and ice cream cups, form part of an elaborate service comparable to those used by the kings of France. Animated in ornament and form, these pieces were designed to enliven a dining table. Displayed alongside them is a lively gilt-bronze candlestick after Meissonnier that might recall Lumiere, the character best known for his “Be Our Guest” musical number.

OPPOSITE WALL

ARCHITECTURE OF THE IMAGINATION

While initial concepts for Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* imagined a quiet evocation of rural France and echoes of Fragonard's *The Swing*, the film's final cut begins with a slow approach to the Beast's noble abode towering atop a steep hill. In numerous Disney fairy tales, a castle boasting clusters of spirals and steeples acts as visual focal point and principal stage set for the story. That a fairy tale like *Sleeping Beauty*, unfolding in the Middle Ages, would be retold in such surroundings does not surprise, but consider *Beauty and the Beast*, loosely set in the eighteenth century. The strict symmetry and horizontal outlines of French palaces such as Versailles have failed to spark the imagination in the same way as the commanding verticals of medieval European architecture.

The roots of nearly every Disney castle—whether on-screen or in theme parks—lie in the alpine region of the Allgäu in Germany. Schloss Neuschwanstein was built at the end of the nineteenth century for the ill-fated Ludwig II of Bavaria, known as the Fairytale

King. Seeking to escape the sobering realities of government, the young monarch fled into a private world of art and music. The splendid and ethereal outlines of his enigmatic castle prompt one to imagine what lies behind each tower and dormer. It is this sense of wondering and not knowing that has appealed to generations of Disney artists.

VIDEO ON WALL TO LEFT

Castles from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), ***Cinderella*** (1950), ***Sleeping Beauty*** (1959), **and *Beauty and the Beast*** (1991)
Walt Disney Animation Studios (American, established 1923)
Film clips

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Audio Guide 619

TO LEFT OF SECTION TEXT, RIGHT TO LEFT

Santa's Castle for *Santa's Workshop* (1932)
1932
Disney Studio Artist
Graphite, watercolor, and ink on paper

The Walt Disney Family Museum

This image opens a short released in December 1932, just in time for Christmas. It is one of the earliest Disney castle fantasies, heralding those of *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Beauty and the Beast*. The towers pointing to the skies recall both medieval castles and the shape of a Christmas tree, widely recognized as a symbol of hope. Rather like Walt Disney's animation studio, Santa's workshop is meant to be a place where dreams can come true.

Concept art for *The Little Mermaid* (1989)
ca. 1940–41
Kay Nielsen (Danish, 1886–1957)
Pastel, graphite, and gouache on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

“Ave Maria,” concept art for *Fantasia* (1940)
1930s
Disney Studio Artist
Gouache, graphite, and conte crayon on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

As with *Beauty and the Beast*, Walt Disney had commissioned earlier explorations of Hans Christian Andersen’s 1837 story *The Little Mermaid*. Kay Nielsen created numerous preparatory sketches for an animated rendition of the tale in the late 1930s, which proved an important source of inspiration for the artists who revisited the project for its 1989 release. His representation of the prince’s castle evokes a fairy tale architecture pointing to the sky. He explored the same idea in his sketches for a proposed sequence in *Fantasia* (1940). When Walt moved away from the

idea of staging “Ave Maria” in a Gothic cathedral, Nielsen produced designs for a forest that echoed the pointy arches of a medieval nave.

Interpretation of Chambord, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)
ca. 1989
Hans Bacher (German, born 1948)
Graphite on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Versailles, visual development for *Cinderella* (1950)
Late 1940s
Disney Studio Artist
Ink on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

These concept sketches illustrate the timeless appeal for Disney artists of the French chateaux Chambord and Versailles, built by the two most avid architectural patrons ever to sit on the French throne, François Ier and Louis XIV, respectively. Both castle designs here were later replaced by designs on view nearby—one by the glowing paper-cutout-like castle envisaged by Mary Blair, the other by Brian McEntee's fantastical creation for the Beast.

Castle, concept art for *Cinderella* (1950)

1940s

Mary Blair (American, 1911–1978)

Gouache on board

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Beast's Castle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1989

Hans Bacher (German, born 1948)

Ink and marker on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

The Beast's Castle, concept art for *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

ca. 1989

Hans Bacher (German, born 1948)

Photocopy, ink, and colored pencil on paper

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Theme parks are primarily an invention of eighteenth-century Europe, the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens established in London in 1785 being the most famous example. As Walt Disney developed his vision for what would become Disneyland, he visited a great number of European amusement parks and zoos. He was particularly taken by the atmosphere of the Tivoli Gardens, built outside Copenhagen in 1843 with the support of King Christian VIII of Denmark.

Today, Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland is a sight as recognizable as the Eiffel Tower. The "wienie," Walt Disney's own term for an architectural focal point, has become a symbol of optimism and reassurance for many people. Six Disney theme park castles—Anaheim (1955), Orlando (1971), Tokyo (1983), Paris (1992), Hong Kong (2005), and Shanghai (2016)—reinterpret to some degree the skyline of the German Neuschwanstein castle, but also incorporate details from Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance buildings. When the Hong Kong castle was expanded in 2020, however, designers broadened the spectrum

of sources of inspiration to include colorful structures such as the Palácio Nacional da Pena outside Lisbon and the vibrant architecture from more recent Disney animated films. The embrace of cultural diversity, through references to thirteen different Disney heroines, is the overarching theme of Hong Kong's reimagined castle.

Elevation of Sleeping Beauty Castle, Disneyland, Anaheim

1955

Roland E. Hill

Graphite on paper

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Comparative study of Disney castles (Anaheim and Orlando) to establish height of the Disneyland Paris Castle

1986

Ahmad Jafari

Work on paper

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Castle of Magical Dreams, Hong Kong Disneyland

2020

Sum Wan Liang, Sandra

Digital print

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Disneyland Paris, *Le Château de la Belle au Bois Dormant*

1988

Frank Armitage

Acrylic

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Cinderella Castle, Tokyo Disneyland

1980

Miyuki Iga

Work on paper

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

Concept for Enchanted Storybook Castle, Shanghai Disneyland

2012

Douglas R. Rogers

Graphite on paper

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

ON WALL ACROSS GALLERY EXIT

Bird's-eye view of Disneyland

1953

Herbert Ryman

Graphite on paper

Walt Disney Imagineering Collection

This is an early vision of Disneyland that Walt and Roy O. Disney used as supporting material to win over potential investors. In September 1953, Walt rang artist Herbert Ryman: "Look, Herbie. Roy is going to New York on Monday to line up financing. . . . I've got to give him plans for what we're going to do. Those businessmen don't listen to talk, you know; you've got to show them what you're going to do." Thus, Ryman, under the rigorous guidance of Disney, translated the theme park vision to paper. Presiding over the joint effort is Ryman's initial version of a Neuschwanstein-inspired European castle.

Audio Guide 620

ON WALL TO LEFT

Stained-glass window background from opening sequence in *Beauty and the Beast* (1991)

1991

Disney Studio Artists

Reproduction on transparency of xerographic print and marker on celluloid

Walt Disney Animation Research Library

Following the rejection of the early story reel and Hans Bacher's historically-rooted proposals for the Beast's abode, Brian McEntee and his team produced a design for a more fantastical fairy tale castle. The opening inspired by Fragonard's *The Swing* was replaced with a series of stained-glass windows describing the lead character's curse, a narrative device performing the same introductory role as the prop storybooks used in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*.

IN CASE

Pair of tower vases with covers (*vases en tour*)

ca. 1763

Attributed to Etienne-Maurice Falconet (French, 1716–1791)

Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)

Soft-paste porcelain

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of R. Thornton Wilson, in memory of Florence Ellsworth Wilson, 1956 (56.80.1a–c)

Pair of tower vases with covers (*vases en tour*)

ca. 1762

Attributed to Etienne-Maurice Falconet (French, 1716–1791)

Sèvres Manufactory (French, founded 1740)

Soft-paste porcelain

The Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens, San Marino, California, The Arabella D. Huntington Memorial Art Collection (27.31)

These two pairs of so-called tower vases probably designed by the sculptor Etienne-Maurice Falconet are reunited here for what is likely the first time in

250 years. They are among the most sophisticated vases ever produced by the Sèvres porcelain manufactory. The pink lids of the Huntington pair—which recall Sleeping Beauty Castle at Disneyland—might seem at odds with the fortified architecture. Pink has been linked primarily to feminine fashion for most of the twentieth century, yet it had broader resonances in earlier eras: the color's rising popularity in the Rococo era was championed by Madame de Pompadour, mistress of King Louis XV and a major patron of the arts. Jean-Baptiste Marie Pierre, principal painter to the king, grew increasingly frustrated with French artists returning from training in Italy "with color and vigor, which they lose little by little, driven by the need to please a nation that wants everything colored pink."

Audio Guide 621

IN CASE NEAR EXIT

Seven Arts City (urban planning proposal)

ca. 1955–60

Walt Disney (American 1901–1966)

Walt Disney Archives

Shortly after Disneyland opened, Walt Disney was already planning his next projects. Among them was the concept of a “seven arts city,” an American version of the German Bauhaus art school and community. The utopian town was to include academies for the visual and performing arts, theaters, and an encyclopedic museum that would “collect in one place the great art treasures of all time in reproduction so scientifically exact as to be indistinguishable from the originals.” While the museological experiment never saw fruition, the mere concept speaks to Walt Disney’s lifelong drive to share art with a broad audience.

Audio Guide 622