

## GALLERY-BY-GALLERY OVERVIEW

### Gallery 1 **Beginnings: Walt Disney's Early Years (1901-1923)**

Walt Disney was born in Chicago, IL on December 5, 1901. In 1906, his family moved to a Missouri farm, where he had an idyllic early childhood and first learned to draw. The farm failed, and in 1911 his family moved to Kansas City, MO where he rose at 3:30 a.m. to deliver newspapers on his father's paper route and fell in love with vaudeville and movies. In 1917, the family moved to Chicago, where **Walt**

**created cartoons for his high school yearbook**, took classes at the Art Institute of Chicago, and tried to enlist in the U.S. Army. Rejected for being underage, he joined the American Ambulance Corps and arrived in France as World War I ended. When Walt returned to the United States, he settled in Kansas City and got a

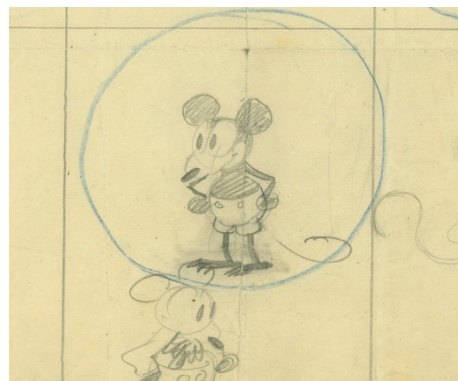


job at a commercial art studio. In 1920, while working at an ad company, Walt discovered the fantastical world of animation and immersed himself in the young medium. While keeping his day job, he began making Laugh-O-gram ad reels and animation shorts with artist Ub Iwerks. Laugh-O-grams Films soon went bankrupt, and Walt, at age 21 moved to California with \$40 in his pocket.

**Walt's early drawings** and mementoes from his childhood, as well as cameras similar to those he used in Kansas City, are highlighted in the Museum's first gallery.

### Gallery 2 **Hollywood (1923-1928)**

Walt arrived in California in 1923 hoping to find work as a director. But when he received a contract for his own work, he launched Disney Bros. Studio with his brother Roy. By the end of 1924, Walt was focusing on story development and directing and was no longer working as an animator. After several business setbacks, **Walt Disney created Mickey Mouse**, which established Disney Bros. Studio as the leading animation studio in the country.



With the third Mickey Mouse film, *Steamboat Willie*, Walt joined the vanguard of the talking-picture revolution by creating an animated film with synchronized sound. Both Walt and Roy Disney married during this period, Walt to Lillian Bounds, a studio inker.

Original artwork, including **the earliest known drawings of Mickey Mouse**, illustrate Disney's sensational success with his character. Other exhibit highlights include business correspondence between Walt and Roy, the move to the new Hyperion Studios, where Disney created four of its great animation features, and Walt's meeting with and marriage to Lillian Bounds.

Galleries 3      **New Horizons: The Emergence of the Walt Disney Studio (1928 to 1940)**

The success of Mickey Mouse let Walt Disney expand the newly renamed Walt Disney Studios and improve the quality of Studio animation. He then embarked on a series of ambitious projects, including the "Silly Symphonies," one-reel shorts that let him experiment with images, music, and story lines. In the following years, the Studio created the first three-strip Technicolor cartoons, introduced a multiplane camera to create the illusion of depth in animated films, and developed distinctive styles of movement and personality in its characters. Also in this period, Walt and Lillian's family grew to include daughters Diane and Sharon.

The continuing success of Walt's cartoons led to a revolution in the art and technology of animation. Vintage artifacts, animation art, character merchandise, and family photos chronicle the creative explosion of the 1930s, Walt's sudden world fame, and Diane and Sharon.

Gallery 4      **The Move to Features: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs***

Having redefined the art of animation, Walt dared to produce a feature-length film, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. During the four years that it was in development, Disney and his brother Roy secured six-figure loans – each loan enough to finance an entire movie – time after time, and skeptics called the film "Disney's Folly." Disney brought in an art instructor to work with his team and insisted that the animators study live models and animals. The studio created a Character Model Department, which constructed small sculptures of characters which let animators study characters in the round. ***Snow White*** premiered on December 21, 1937, and Disney won a unique Academy Award® for the innovative movie: a standard-sized Oscar®s and seven miniature castings.



**Original art from *Snow White***, three-dimensional model figures, magazines of the period, audio clips, and a wide array of related 1930s merchandise help recreate the story of Disney's pioneering effort to produce *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

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