



Padova,
Centro Culturale
Altinate | San Gaetano
2 ottobre / 23 febbraio 2025

PRESS RELEASE

How is a story born? **DISNEY** **The Art of Telling Timeless Stories**

**From 2 October 2024 to 23 February 2025
at the Centro Culturale Altinate San Gaetano in Padua**

Telling timeless stories while managing to enchant the audience is considered a true art, but behind the typical immediacy of the perfect artistic result there are - as is often the case in the art world - **years of creative research work**, generally unknown to those who hear these stories.

After the success of the previous stops at the Mudec in Milan, Palazzo Barberini in Rome and Palazzo Ducale in Genoa, **from 2 October 2024 to 23 February 2025** at the **Centro Culturale Altinate San Gaetano in Padua** comes **"Disney. The Art of Timeless Storytelling"**, the exhibition that tells the public about this extraordinary creative process.

Promoted by the **Municipality of Padua - Department of Culture**, produced by **24 ORE Cultura-Gruppo 24 ORE** and curated by the **Walt Disney Animation Research Library** with the collaboration of **Federico Fieconi**, historian and critic of cartoon, the exhibition tells the story of the Walt Disney Animation Studios, a pioneer in the art of animation, and their most famous characters, beloved by adults and children alike.

Their innovative creative approach to storytelling has created some of the most beautiful and famous films of the 20th century, including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937), *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia* (1940). The exhibition presents **priceless original works from the Disney Animation Research Library's collection**, including *Hercules* (1997) and *The Little Mermaid* (1989) up to the most recent animated film *Frozen 2 - The Secret of Arendelle* (2019), created by a new generation of artists and filmmakers still deeply inspired by Walt Disney's legacy.

"There are a few truly evocative words that everyone around the world knows, at least in the western world: Disney is undoubtedly one of them. Disney cartoons and then feature films, over the decades, have contributed to the education of generations of girls and boys and Disney's impact has been and still is enormous. Walt Disney invented a timeless way of telling stories, as the curators of this beautiful exhibition correctly define them, that has itself become timeless, managing to adapt to changes in time, changes in taste and new techniques, without losing Disney's distinctive identity. This is enough to make its story fascinating. This exhibition goes further and reveals the creative process, the behind-the-scenes work that makes the creation of these works possible,

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creations that have rightfully entered the history of cinema and contemporary art. It is an extraordinary opportunity for everyone: of course for children and families and Disney fans, but also for those involved in art and film, and for all curious people who want to discover "how" the characters and stories that have accompanied us since our childhood years came into being. I would like to thank 24 ORE Cultura-Gruppo 24 ORE, the Walt Disney Animation Research Library and the historian and critic of cartoon Federico Fieconi for having brought this extraordinary story to Padua, which places our city on the short list of not-to-be-missed exhibitions in Italy this autumn," says **Andrea Colasio, Councillor for Culture and Tourism of the Municipality of Padua.**

The touring exhibition "**Disney. The Art of Telling Timeless Stories**" pays tribute to a century of Disney Animation history - in 2023, the Walt Disney Studios celebrated its 100th anniversary - and to its important cultural heritage, which, even today, continues to fascinate young and old alike and is an invaluable source of inspiration for contemporary creators.

The exhibition is a unique opportunity to "enter" the Disney Animation archives - the highly regarded Animation Research Library not open to the public - and immerse oneself in the stories through **original works such as character concept drawings, story sketches, animation drawings, layouts and backgrounds from the 1930s to the present day** created by historic animators, including, for example: **Les Clark**, one of Disney's longest-serving animators who worked on famous characters such as Mickey Mouse and Cinderella; **Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas** - the legendary "Frank and Ollie" - among the key animators of *Pinocchio*; **Ward Kimball**, who brought *Pinocchio's* Jiminy Cricket to life; **Marc Davis**, known for his work on female characters such as Aurora and Maleficent in *Sleeping Beauty* (1959) and many others.

The **exhibition route tells the visitor the story of Walt Disney Animation Studio's masterpieces** by tracing the stories - that we are all used to knowing in the Disney version - back to the ancient matrices of epic and literary tradition: these are the **myths, medieval legends and folklore, fairy tales and fables** that have constituted the archetypal narrative heritage of the world's diverse cultures for centuries, a true melting pot between the different continents. These are also the **thematic sections of the exhibition**, in which the most famous stories from which the Disney films were based are presented in a narrative key through the display of story sketches, focusing on the exploration and sometimes the evolution of characters, settings and plots.

It was the summer of 1935 when Walt Disney decided to take a long trip to Europe in search of new stimuli and ideas. Fascinated by the illustrations of European stories, he returned to America with 335 illustrated books, a source of dozens of potential stories for inspiration: many works by the Brothers Grimm, and fifteen Italian titles, including a Salani edition of *Pinocchio*. A valuable "booty" that will feed part of Disney's filmography.

The great innovative effort of the Disney artists was - and still is - to **bring these stories to the cinema** using various innovative artistic tools. The exhibition also recounts how "from Walt's suitcase" to the silver screen, over more than 100 years, the techniques behind the preparation process of animated films have evolved: **from hand drawing** - the founding element of work at the Studios - with the use of different materials such as **graphite, coloured pencils and crayons, charcoals, watercolours, tempera, acrylics and collages on**

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paper, to today's **computer graphics** that realise the animation and colouring processes through digital means, revitalising and updating the universal value of fairy tales. A technological voyage that chronicles the journey of the art of animation and Disney's ongoing commitment to pushing the creative and technical boundaries of the industry in ever more innovative ways.

Animation is an **artistic medium** that allows different narratives to be represented with immediacy. From the very beginning, Walt Disney and his creative team on these themes, giving human aspects and feelings to the animals and objects of fairy tales, fairies and other fictional creatures of fairy tales and fables, with such naturalness and verisimilitude that they quickly achieved worldwide success. With a very detailed study of human and animal behaviour, Disney artists have over the years created universally known characters such as **Mickey Mouse** and **Donald Duck**. Myths and legends of gods and heroes, animals of fables, tales of knights, witches, wizards and princesses take on the features of cartoons: from **Robin Hood** (1973) to **Sword in the Stone** (1963) to **The Three Little Pigs** (1933) from **Hercules** to **Pinocchio**, **Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs**, **Sleeping Beauty**, **Cinderella**, **The Little Mermaid**, up to **Frozen 2 - The Secret of Arendelle**.

While the symbolic value of stories over the decades has remained intact, it is in fact **the production techniques that have evolved**. The exhibition tells the public **how an animation masterpiece is created**, showing the "**behind the scenes**" of some of the greatest Disney films of all time, getting to the heart of the studio and the **artistic process**. Indeed, it takes months and years of work by an entire team coordinated by one or more directors to produce an animated film: a slow, continuous and very meticulous creative collective process that, from an initial idea, builds an entire film through thousands of images that gradually come to life. In the exhibition, visitors can trace the entire behind the scenes creative process of a Disney Animation film. It starts with an idea, a **concept** and develops into a **narrative plot**. Then, the **characters** are created. Every single character that will animate the story is "visualised" by Disney's artists and, even before our hero (or villain, or sidekick) has the face and features we are used to recognising in the film, their eyes, hair, clothes and most iconic movements are imagined, resulting in sheets and sheets of preparatory sketches in which the character slowly comes to life.

The work of the team is supervised by an artistic director. With the same creative process and under his or her guidance, the **settings** are defined. By transforming hundreds of thousands of images one after the other into frames, the film is created.

The exhibition presents a **very scenographic set-up**, starting with a spectacular animated book that, in so many classic feature films, represents the beginning of every great story. From here, visitors pass through the four spectacular rooms of the exhibition itinerary to arrive at the "Frozen room", an evocative room that - through sounds, crystals, reflections and lights - allows visitors to immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the magical Kingdom of Arendelle.

The exhibition at the Centro Culturale Altinate San Gaetano is also enriched by a special **interactive itinerary designed specifically for children** - from 4 to 10 years old - with **numerous fun educational activities** to discover throughout the exhibition halls. In particular, young visitors will be guided throughout the exhibition by the images of Jiminy Cricket: through a few questions, children will be invited to look into a small peephole,

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to observe their favorite characters and discover a few more fun facts. Using magnetic puzzles, boys and girls will be able to reconstruct characters and reorder the sequence of scenes from Disney masterpieces, just like real filmmakers, while in the magical Sherwood Forest they will find a place completely dedicated to them, where they can draw, thanks to a special light table, their best-loved characters, taking home a special souvenir of their adventure. In addition, throughout the exhibition adults and children can take a souvenir photo with the most iconic characters from Disney Animation history, or feel like princes and princesses for a day by sitting on the throne of on the throne of *Sleeping Beauty's* enchanted castle.

Throughout the duration of the exhibition, a series of **educational activities and collateral initiatives** are planned to discover and further explore the contents of the exhibition: from animated guided tours for schools and families with riddles and games, to thematic guided tours for adults dedicated in particular to the different techniques and main inspirations that gave life to the Disney Animated films.

The exhibition is accompanied by the **catalogue** "Disney. The Art of Telling Timeless Stories" edited by Federico Fiecconi and **published by 24 ORE Cultura**.

Press kit available at this link:

bit.ly/Disney_Padova

PRESS OFFICES:

Exhibition "Disney. The Art of Telling Timeless Stories"

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DATES

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HOURS

Hours: from Tuesday to Sunday, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Monday from 2:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

The ticket office closes one hour before closing time

TICKETS

Full € 15.00 | Discounted € 13.00 | Children € 6.00

EXTRAORDINARY OPENINGS OR CLOSURES

Thursday, 31 October, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Friday, 1 November, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, 8 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 24 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Wednesday, 25 December, from 2:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, 26 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday, 31 December, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, 1 January, from 2:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Monday, 6 January, from 2:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

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