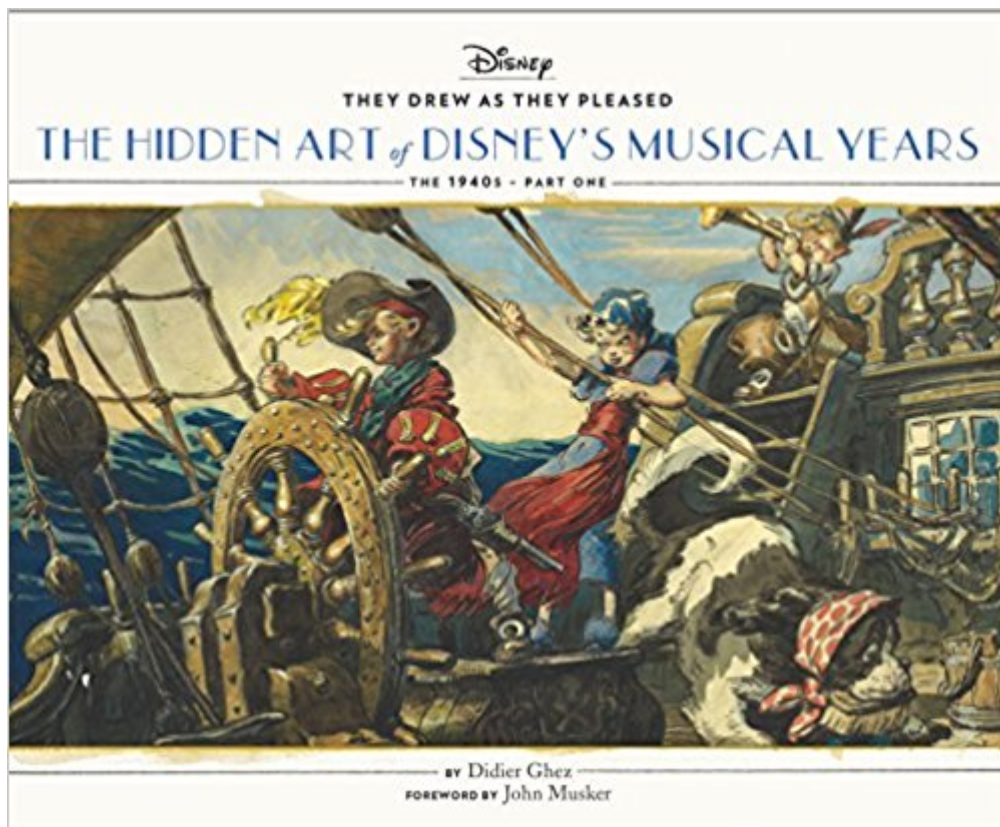




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# They Drew As They Pleased: The Hidden Art Of Disney's Musical Years (The 1940s - Part One)



## Synopsis

The 1940s ushered in an era of musical experimentation and innovation at the Walt Disney Studios. Artists from all over the world flocked to California to be part of the magic, and their groundbreaking styles influenced such classics as *Dumbo* and *Bambi* as well as shaped the masterpieces that followed such as *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan*. For this volume, author Didier Ghez has unearthed hundreds of enchanting imagesâfrom early sketches to polished concepts for iconic featuresâby five exceptional artists who shaped the style of the Studio's animation during this period of unbridled creativity. With evocative descriptions and excerpts from the artists' journals and autobiographies, this magnificent collection offers a rare look at the visionaries who breathed life into some of the most beloved films of our time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Disney's first female animator Retta Scott in front of storyboards of the abandoned project *On the Trail*.

After Chouinard, Retta had her mind set on a career in the field of fine arts. But art-related jobs were difficult to find in the United States at the tail end of the Great Depression, as Retta explained in her autobiography: One may ask what prompted me to enter the cartoon industry, when for many years I had my heart set more on the fine arts painting and illustration. However, ending my third year at Chouinard Art School the school director, Vern Caldwell, suggested that I apply for work at

Walt Disney's. He knew I loved to draw animals and spent much time doing this at the Griffith Park Zoo and the Wild Animal Farm in Thousand Oaks. At first I was a little disturbed about going to Disney's for, up to that time, their pictures were the seven-minute cartoon shorts including the characters Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, Pluto, Goofy, and others they had developed. I had no inspiration to work on these cartoon shorts and was completely unaware of all of the feature-length pictures in the planning at the Studio. Vern knew that Bambi was in the making and felt I should fit in very well on this feature. So I began to work on Bambi in the Story Department [on March 23, 1939], on Seward Street. I have always been very grateful to Vern for prompting me to work at Disney's. I was delighted with the work and surprised to learn of all the wonderful work being done throughout the Studio. I was so glad to know and to work with so many talented artists. For many months we worked on the storyboards, until the walls started caving in. In this old studio, the termites had done their work. We moved to Burbank in [the fall of] 1939, into the new Disney studio, still under construction, into the Animation building. I worked with director Tom Codrick on the sequences of Faline and Bambi and the hunting dogs. I developed the hunting dogs into vicious, snarling, really mean beasts. I spent weeks on the dogs and almost every day [instructor] Rico Lebrun came to my room to give me much advice and support. I admired his tremendous draftsmanship and vivid enthusiasm. It really inspired me. [By August 1940] I finished all three sequences and they were ready for the layout men and the animators. It was then that Dave Hand and Walt felt that I should animate the dogs and the deer in these sequences. Dave came in each morning to show me the principles of animation and timing. My first test was used for the picture. I was so pleased. The men artists were stunned, as animators Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston wrote in their book about Bambi: A startling moment for us came when we saw Retta Scott's amazing sketches of the vicious dogs chasing Faline and keeping her cornered on a high ledge. We wondered who at the Studio could have drawn this terrifying situation so convincingly and would have guessed that such virile drawings could have been done only by some burly man, probably with a bristling beard and the look of an eagle in his eye. We were amazed to find instead that they were done by a small, delicate, wonderfully cheerful young woman with twinkling eyes and a crown of blond curls piled on top of her head. Retta was strong, had boundless energy, and drew powerful animals of all kinds from almost any perspective and in any action. No one could match her ability. When artist Bianca Majolie joined the Story Department in 1935 as its first female artist, the Disney Studio had experienced what amounted to a small revolution. Retta becoming an animator on August 6, 1940, was a major one. In Walt's mind, the story artists were a dime a dozen, but the animators were at the very top of the totem pole, the *crème de la*

craftsmen, the irreplaceable creative engine of the Studio. By becoming an animator, Retta Scott had joined the Phi Beta Kappa of Disney, and she knew it. Photo: Retta showing a sketch created for Dumbo to one of the clowns from the Cole Bros. Circus.

Friend Owl from Bambi by Retta Scott. Courtesy: Ben Worcester. An example of Retta Scott's powerful animation drawings for Bambi. Courtesy: Ben Worcester. Frightening dog study for the dog-chasing scene in Bambi. Courtesy: Ben Worcester. A scary clown from Dumbo by Retta Scott. Courtesy: David Tosh/Heritage Auctions.

Didier Ghez is the author of Disney's Grand Tour, Disneyland Paris, and They Drew as They Pleased: The Hidden Art of Disney's Golden Age: The 1930s. He lives in Florida. John Musker is a 38-year veteran of Walt Disney feature animation. Among the films he co-wrote and directed with Ron Clements are The Little Mermaid, Aladdin, Hercules, Treasure Planet, The Princess and the Frog, and the upcoming Moana. He lives in Los Angeles.

This book magnificently showcases the work of several Disney story artists and contains some of the most beautiful artwork I have ever seen from the studio, most of which I had never seen in any other publication. The text is lively and informative, not only giving insight into the artists' lives, but also insight into the creative process at the Disney studio in the 1940s.

Many new books published about the art of Disney animation have images already appeared in other older books. This book surprised by the hundreds of images of conceptual art never published, belonging to the Disney archives and also private collections. The documentation work of the author is very good. For more animation art book reviews enter in my account. ;)

Didier Ghez has once again provided us with a book full of rarely seen concept art. This time he covers the early 1940's. Concept artists covered are Walt Scott, Kay Nielson, Sylvia Holland, Retta Scott, and David Hall. Like the previous entry, most of this art has not been published before although some has previously surfaced on auction websites. There's also more biographical information on these artists that was previously unavailable, especially for David Hall, whose art is the richest in this volume. This series continues to complement John Canemaker's "Before the Animation Begins" (hopefully that will be brought back in print for current and future Disney enthusiasts to enjoy). Definitely one of the must haves for 2016. Looking forward to Volume 3, which

Mr. Ghez said will be on the Character Model Department.

Great addition to the fan library.

No problems.

Love this series and can't wait for the next volume!

It's a wonderful book filled with surprising details about the artists' lives, and astonishing concept art. A treasure for every Disney's fan.

Beautiful book; even better than the first book of the series. Excellent artwork and complementary text. Highly Recommended

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