This first-ever comprehensive history of animation surveys the evolution of this dynamic industry around the world – from Hollywood to Tokyo, from Moscow to Sydney.

Animation
The Global History
Maureen Furniss

460 illustrations
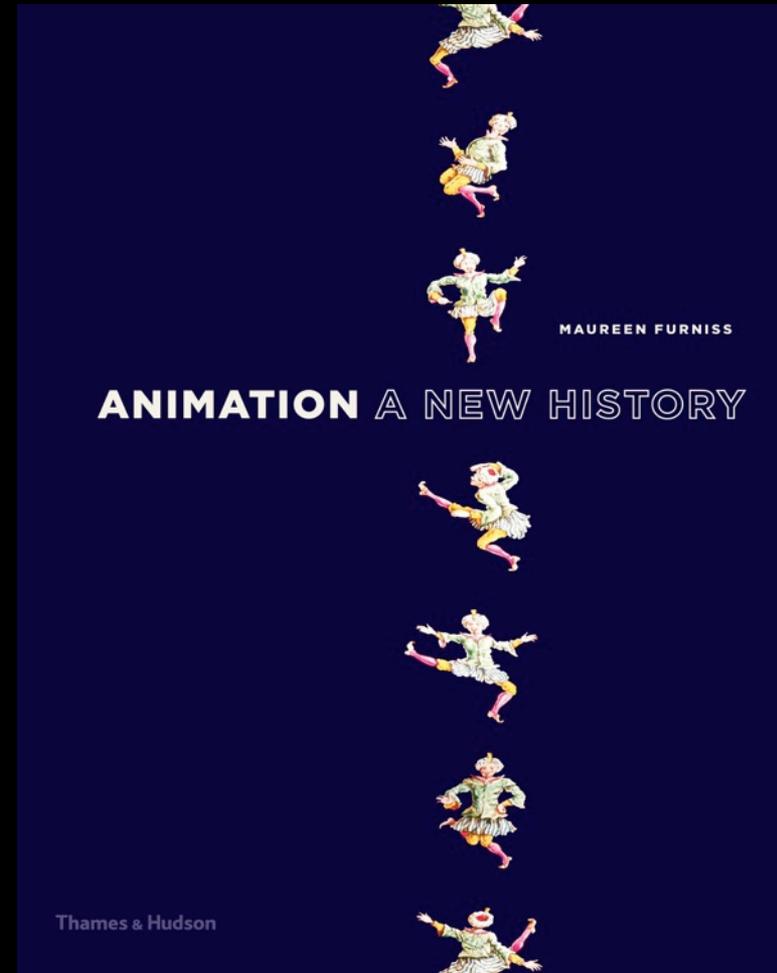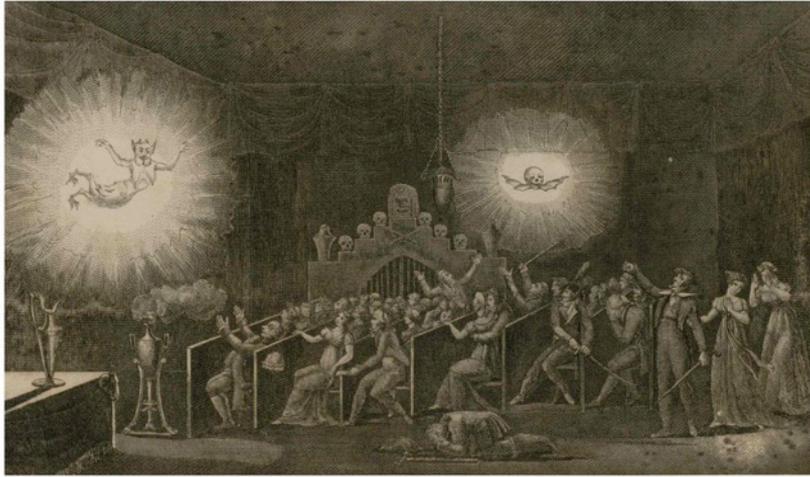27.6 x 21.5 cm
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MAUREEN FURNISS

ANIMATION A NEW HISTORY

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1.6 *Fantasmagorie*, probably 1797, depicted in an engraving in Étienne Gaspard Robertson's *Mémoires Récréatifs Scientifiques et Anecdotiques*, 1831

a translucent screen and used to project frightening images onto its surface. The Belgian scientist and artist Étienne Gaspard Robertson (1763–1837) is probably the best-known presenter of phantasmagoria, which he called *Fantasmagorie* to distinguish his work from similar shows. Although he toured Europe, in 1797 he settled into his own Paris theater, where he was able to design relatively complex productions. His shows involved:

a thin percale screen across one end of the cloister, hiding his "fantascope," a large magic lantern that could slide back and forth on a double track between fifteen and eighteen feet long. When the lantern was moved along its track, the images projected on the screen from behind would grow or diminish in size, depending on the distance from the machine to the screen.[3]

The subjects of the projections included witches, the head of Medusa, a bloody nun, a grotesque devil, tombs, and ghostly references to contemporary figures. Suspense could be heightened by the use of smoke, eerie music, loud bursts of thunder, and streaks of lightning.

When Robertson was not presenting his *Fantasmagorie*, he would give scientific demonstrations in another section of his theater, including displays related to hydraulics and physics, which incorporated a variety of animation-related techniques. Although the mixture of science and fantasy in Robertson's theater might seem contradictory by today's standards, at the time the general public did not necessarily understand science to be completely "real," as opposed to completely "magic" or supernatural—they perceived the world and its phenomena as both scientific and magical. Animation fit neatly into both realms.

By the mid-nineteenth century, magic-lantern technology was becoming increasingly sophisticated. Eventually, it entered inexpensive mass production, making innovations in technology and science accessible to the broader public. People were becoming increasingly familiar with the experience of image screenings, and this familiarity would prepare audiences for the advent of cinema. The magic lantern was not the only form of entertainment to emerge as a by-product of scientific developments, however; an array of other motion devices had similar origins.

Motion Devices

The nineteenth century saw many medical advancements, as doctors studied the human mind and body and disseminated their findings to their peers. To illustrate discoveries and theories about the eye and how humans process visual information, some researchers developed motion devices that demonstrated perceptual processes, sometimes giving them lofty, Greek-sounding names to add to their credibility. A number of such inventions would later filter down to the general public as forms of entertainment, or optical toys. One of them, the **thaumatrope**, is a disk containing pictures on both sides that is spun to create an effect of two images merging into one (such as a bird on one side and a cage on the other becoming a bird in a cage) (1.7). The name roughly translates as "wonder turner," suggesting that its spinning created a surprising effect. The device's invention has been credited variously, but its popularity dates from the early nineteenth century, after the British doctor John Ayrton Paris used one in 1824 to demonstrate principles of vision to his colleagues at the Royal College of Physicians in London.

A thaumatrope contains two images that are combined into a single static one. Other motion devices utilize a series of images to create the **illusion** of animated movement. The **phenakistoscope**, meaning "spindle viewer," which was invented by the Belgian scientist Joseph Plateau (1801–1883) in 1832, uses only one side of a large, slotted disk (1.8). Images are lined up around its edge, separated by the slits. The viewer stands in front of a mirror, with the back of the disk facing toward him- or herself. By spinning the phenakistoscope and looking through the slits, the viewer sees animated movement that occurs in a continuous loop, or cycle.

A **zoetrope**, meaning "wheel of life," is another motion device that uses a series of images, in this case printed on a strip of paper that is placed inside a spinning drum (1.9). When the viewer looks through slits in the edge of the drum, he or she sees a continuous loop of motion. Although precursors existed, the zoetrope is generally attributed to the British mathematician William Horner (1736–1837), who built his model in 1834 as a variation on the phenakistoscope; he originally called his invention a "daedalus," popularly translated as "wheel of the devil."

Nowadays, the thaumatrope, phenakistoscope, and zoetrope are nostalgic collector's items. In contrast,

1.7 Thaumatropes with their original box, 1826

Fig. 99. — Phénakisticope de Plateau. (Page 125.)
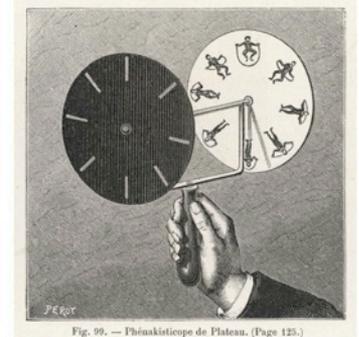
1.8 Phenakistoscope, c. 1832


1.9 Zoetrope, c. 1834

legends, including Mack Sennett, whose studio produced the Keystone Kops (see p. 44), and D. W. Griffith, who became one of America's best-known directors and also a co-founder of the United Artists studio. The film was shot by Billy Bitzer, Griffith's future cameraman and one of the most accomplished cinematographers in silent-film history. Bitzer had begun working for Biograph in the 1890s, in its previous incarnation as a manufacturer of "magical toys and optical novelties"—another indication of early cinema's roots in magic and illusion.

Other early examples of clay animation include John Stuart Blackton's *Chew Chew Land: The Adventures of Dolly and Jim*, from 1910, which is set within a live-action story about a boy who is a mischievous gum-chewer. After being reprimanded by his teacher, he goes to sleep that night and dreams about a man's head that emerges from a mound of clay in another surreal scenario. In contrast, W. R. Booth's *Animated Putty*, from 1911, is pure fantasy of the "it's alive!" type, featuring a lump of clay that escapes from a glazier and transforms into various shapes.

John Stuart Blackton and Lightning-Sketch Animation

Stopped-camera substitution, stop-motion, and drawn animation were all used to create films based on the lightning-sketch format, which had its roots in popular theater but was embraced by cinema in its earliest years. By 1896, the celebrated English caricaturist Tom Merry (born William Mecham) had been filmed at the Birt Acres studio in England creating live-action (that is, filmed in real time) lightning sketches of British and German political figures, although these films do not survive. Lightning-sketch films were often topical and, like other forms of cinema, grew more complex with every passing year.

John Stuart Blackton (1875–1941) created a number of lightning-sketch films that fortunately do still exist. In these works, he employed not only stopped-camera substitution, but also stop-motion titles and animated line drawings. Before entering the field of cinema, Blackton, a well-known newspaper cartoonist, performed a variation on lightning sketches in popular theater, presenting, with two partners, "magic, magic lanterns, drawings, ventriloquism and recitation."[4] He was filmed doing a lightning-sketch routine in Edison's Black Maria studio (see p. 29), probably in 1896 or
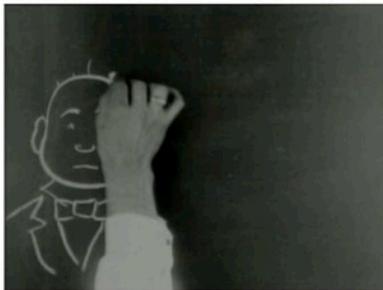
2.10 John Stuart Blackton, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, 1906

1897, and later this footage was released as a film, *The Enchanted Drawing*, copyrighted in 1900. In the film, Blackton faces a large pad of paper and quickly draws a man's head in real time, turning toward the camera twice, as if to acknowledge the audience. Then a series of tricks occur, as he draws several objects—a wine bottle and glass, a hat, and a cigar—and removes these things as real objects from the pad, a feat achieved by stopping the camera and substituting items into the picture. Meanwhile, the drawn character changes his expression within the span of two frames, another instance of substitution achieved by a stopped camera.[5]

A few years later, Blackton's *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces* (1906) was filmed at Vitagraph, the studio he co-founded in 1897. This lightning-sketch film opens with stop-motion cutout titles that pop into the frame. Then, when the action begins, we see only Blackton's hand, which outlines a man's head in

2.11 John Stuart Blackton, *Humorous Phases of Funny Faces*, 1906

chalk on a board (**2.10**). After Blackton finishes the outline, his hand disappears, but gradually a female companion is rendered by an autonomous animated line that appears on the drawing surface. This sequence is generally cited as the first example of drawn animation created using multiple drawings (as opposed to the stopped-camera substitution movement of Blackton's earlier film) to be screened in America. The appearance of the artist's hand in the film is also significant, as this visual became a motif of silent cinema, generally known as the "hand of the artist" (**2.10** and **2.11**). It functioned as a reminder for the audience that an animator had magically brought the images to life.

Humorous Phases of Funny Faces includes a range of tricks. **Reversed footage** is shown in a sequence that begins with an **abstraction**, moves to a blur, reveals a man and woman, and ends with the figures being "undrawn." The final part of the film

employs stop-motion. A clown is made to look entirely drawn on the board, but in fact its legs and arms are cutouts. As a result, they can move about freely as the clown interacts with a cutout hoop and a cutout dog that jumps through it. Later, the clown's leg and arm are instead depicted as chalk drawings. Like a magician, Blackton then erases them to "prove" it is chalk on a board; meanwhile, the remaining cutout limbs move about freely (**2.11**). At the end, the clown is almost completely erased, after chalk drawings are substituted for its remaining cutout appendages.

Wonderful Tricks: Special Effects in Early Film

The Visual Innovation of Georges Méliès

The effects used in early film were seen as somewhat comparable to magic tricks, part of the range of unexplainable phenomena and feats of conjuring that had fascinated society throughout the nineteenth century. Professional magic had reached a peak in the shows of Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin in Paris during the mid-nineteenth century, and in those of his protégé, Harry Houdini. Houdini was a strong advocate for professionalism in his field, exposing charlatans who professed to have "real" magical powers. He specifically targeted hoaxes associated with Spiritualism, a belief system that spread through Western culture during the nineteenth century. Its practitioners claimed to have the ability to connect to the spirit world during séances. This was at a time when such new technologies as microscopes, photography, and x-rays were revealing phenomena that had previously been invisible, making the existence of other hidden forces seem plausible.

The Frenchman Georges Méliès's (1861–1938) reputation as a performer was established after he purchased the famous magic house Théâtre Robert-Houdin in 1888 and developed many stage illusions. After he attended the Lumières' first screening in 1895 (see Box: Entrepreneurs of Early Cinema, p. 28), he envisaged cinema as an attraction for his theater. He created a company called Star Film and in 1896 built a studio made of steel and glass in his garden at Montreuil-sous-Bois, France, where he was able to film his subjects in natural light. By the end of that year, he

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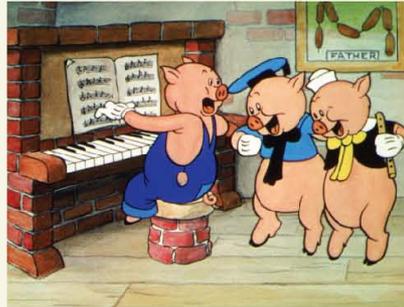
CHAPTER 5
Animation as Modern Art

CHAPTER 6
Disney's New Aesthetic

CHAPTER 7
Style and the Fleischer Studio

CHAPTER 8
Comedy and the Dominance of American Animation

Early Animation

In Russia, after leading the October Revolution, Lenin becomes the premier of the Soviet Union, the first Communist dictatorship in the world
1917–22

The Great Depression
1929–39

The Walt Disney Studios grow in size and incorporate specialized departments, in preparation for feature-length animation production
1930–36

1911
The Cameraman's Revenge (Władysław Starewicz)

1911
Wassily Kandinsky publishes his influential text *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*

1919–33
The Staatliches Bauhaus revolutionizes design during the creative Weimar period in Germany

1920s
Sergei Eisenstein and other Soviet filmmakers develop theories related to the importance of montage, or editing, in film

1921–25
Walther Ruttmann experiments with the concept of counterpoint in his abstract "Opus" films

1923
Walt Disney moves from Kansas City, Missouri, to establish the first animation studio in Hollywood

1926
In Germany, Lotte Reiniger completes one of the first feature–length animated productions, her silhouette film *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*

1927
The success of the Warner Bros. film *The Jazz Singer* (Alan Crosland) signals the end of the silent era

1928
Disney begins working with the Acme Tool and Manufacturing Company to develop specialized equipment, including camera stands

1929
The Skeleton Dance (Ub Iwerks) is the first film in Disney's music-driven "Silly Symphony" series

1930
Various color film processes start to be used in animation, along with black and white

1930
In Hollywood, Warner Bros. distributes the "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" series, created at Harman-Ising Productions

1930
Betty Boop is introduced, as a dog, in the Fleischer film *Dizzy Dishes*

1932
Disney starts working with the Chouinard Art Institute teacher Don Graham to create an educational program for his animators

1933
Alexandre Alexeieff and Claire Parker use their invention the pinscreen to create *Night on Bald Mountain*

1933
Leon Schlesinger Productions, including directors Tex Avery, Bob Clampett, Chuck Jones, Friz Freleng, and others, produces animation for Warner Bros.

1933
The power of the Nazi party in Germany increases through the 1930s, resulting in many people fleeing the country

1933
The General Post Office (GPO) Film Unit is established in Britain
A film archive is established at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York

1933
E. C. Segar's popular newspaper comics character Popeye appears in the Fleischer "Betty Boop" film *Popeye the Sailor*

1933
Three Little Pigs (Burt Gillett) introduces personality animation at the Disney studio

1934
The Production Code Administration tightens censorship across the American film industry

1934
The Fleischer studio begins to use its stereoptical process (or setback camera) to add dimensionality to its backgrounds

1935
Jews in Germany lose their citizenship as the Nuremberg Laws go into effect

1935
Composition in Blue (Oskar Fischinger) is made as an advertising film, despite German restrictions on "degenerate" abstract art

1935
The Warner Bros. character Porky Pig is introduced at the Leon Schlesinger studio

1935
A Colour Box (Len Lye) promotes the General Post Office in Britain

1936
Disney develops its version of a multiplane camera

1937
Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (David Hand) is the first cel-animated feature to be produced in the United States

1937
Strike at the Fleischer studio

1937
The Warner Bros. character Daffy Duck is introduced

1938
The Fleischer studio relocates from New York City to Miami, Florida
The Screen Cartoonists Guild, a trade union for animators, is formed

1939
Gulliver's Travels, Fleischer's first animated feature film, is released

1940
The Warner Bros. character Bugs Bunny is introduced
In *Puss Gets the Boot*, William Hanna and Joe Barbera introduce the cat and mouse who go on to star in MGM's "Tom and Jerry" shorts

1940s
Pinocchio (Hamilton Luske and Ben Sharpsteen)
Fantasia (Norman Ferguson) is released as a "concert feature," expanding on the "Silly Symphony" series concept
Dumbo (Ben Sharpsteen)
Bambi (David Hand)

1941
Strike at the Disney Studio

Fascism had spread through Italy, the Nazis were in firm control of Germany, and the far right was gaining strength even in France, the film depicts two women and a man frolicking through an industrial area that functions as an idyllic fantasyland. *The Joy of Life* was made in Paris by the English artist Anthony Gross and the American photographer and producer Hector Hoppin. After moving to Paris, Gross had begun making studies of workers and factories, and he later approached Hoppin with the hope of setting his images in motion. The look of the film is heavily influenced by the **Art Deco** style, which is light and decorative. In 1940, Gross returned to London and became an official war artist.

Support for Modernist Animation

The Film Unit at the British GPO

In 1933, the British government began to support creative filmmaking through the development of a film unit that would promote and explain the function of the General Post Office (GPO). The Scottish documentary filmmaker John Grierson became the GPO Film Unit's first director, and oversaw its production agenda for the remainder of the 1930s. In developing his vision, Grierson looked not to Hollywood, but rather to Soviet Russia and Germany films, whose films were stronger models for social relevance, experimentation, and the documentary form. Under Grierson's leadership, the GPO Film Unit thus embraced experimental visuals and sound, in terms of a poetic documentary practice; it also embraced Modernist animation.[34] The unit lasted until 1940, when it was taken over

by the Ministry of Information after the outbreak of World War II and renamed the Crown Film Unit.

Norman McLaren (1914–1987), from Scotland, and Len Lye (1901–1980), who had emigrated from New Zealand, both began working for the GPO during the 1930s, early in their careers; they were eclectic artists, eventually known for pioneering **direct filmmaking**, where images are created directly on filmstrips without the use of a camera. McLaren's direct film *Love on the Wing*, completed at the GPO in 1937 (**5.18**), reflects the influence of modern art, with title images and backgrounds that suggest the work of the Italian Surrealist painter Giorgio de Chirico.[35] Its animation shows a man and woman, in a romantic relationship, repeatedly **morphing** into objects that fit together, such as a letter and envelope and a lock and key. As the film progresses, the pairings of these stream-of-consciousness-style images become increasingly eroticized, a fact that did not escape the Postmaster General, who put the film on limited distribution.

Len Lye

After moving to England, Lye became one of the most accomplished filmmakers in the GPO Film Unit, as well as one of the most eccentric. As a young man Lye had traveled to Australia and Samoa to pursue his interest in indigenous art. Eventually he took a job on a boat that ended up in England. There he embarked on his first film, *Tusalava* (1929), which depicts a kind of creation myth, influenced by Lye's interest in Maori and Samoan cultures. Lye's rough ways, which earned him the nickname "cowboy from the colonies," and the artwork inspired by his study of indigenous cultures attracted the attention of artists in London. As a result, he was invited to join the Seven and Five Society, which in the 1920s and 1930s was at the

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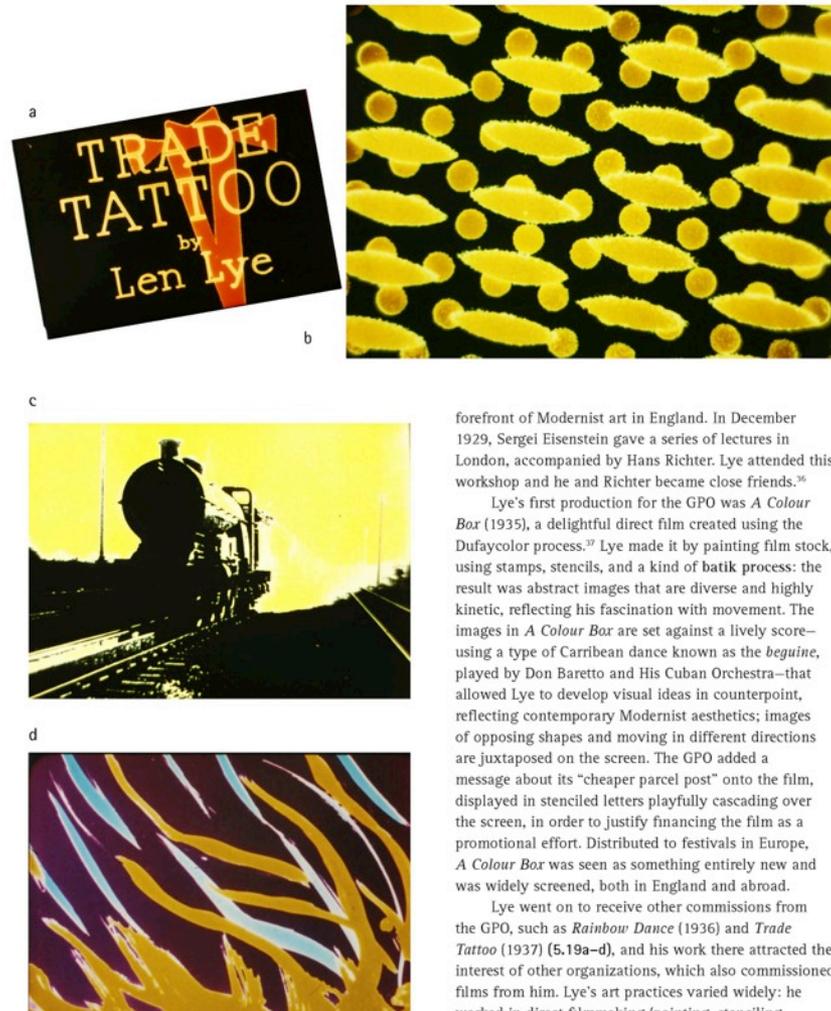
5.19a–d Len Lye, *Trade Tattoo*, 1937

forefront of Modernist art in England. In December 1929, Sergei Eisenstein gave a series of lectures in London, accompanied by Hans Richter. Lye attended this workshop and he and Richter became close friends.[36]

Lye's first production for the GPO was *A Colour Box* (1935), a delightful direct film created using the Dufaycolor process.[37] Lye made it by painting film stock, using stamps, stencils, and a kind of **batik process**: the result was abstract images that are diverse and highly kinetic, reflecting his fascination with movement. The images in *A Colour Box* are set against a lively score—using a type of Carribean dance known as the *beguine*, played by Don Baretto and His Cuban Orchestra—that allowed Lye to develop visual ideas in counterpoint, reflecting contemporary Modernist aesthetics; images of opposing shapes and moving in different directions are juxtaposed on the screen. The GPO added a message about its "cheaper parcel post" onto the film, displayed in stenciled letters playfully cascading over the screen, in order to justify financing the film as a promotional effort. Distributed to festivals in Europe, *A Colour Box* was seen as something entirely new and was widely screened, both in England and abroad.

Lye went on to receive other commissions from the GPO, such as *Rainbow Dance* (1936) and *Trade Tattoo* (1937) (**5.19a–d**), and his work there attracted the interest of other organizations, which also commissioned films from him. Lye's art practices varied widely: he worked in direct filmmaking (painting, stenciling, and scratching on film), live-action documentaries

5.18 Norman McLaren, *Love on the Wing*, 1937

Disney's First Feature Films

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs

By the mid-1930s, Disney had realized that working in the short-film form limited his ability to make a profit. He therefore set his sights on feature production, a goal that was realized in 1937 with the release of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (supervising director David Hand). The film was in planning by 1934, and its premiere came three years later, in December 1937, with a general release in 1938. It is an adaptation of the nineteenth-century story Schneewittchen, originally recorded by the Brothers Grimm; however, Disney's version was based on two versions for the stage, that of the nineteenth-century writer Karl August Goerner and Winthrop Ames's Broadway production of 1912.[34]

In Disney's version, the prince has no charisma and is given a minimal role, while the dwarfs have well-defined, endearing personalities and the animals are charmingly anthropomorphic. Originally, the prince's role was larger, but animators had a difficult time drawing a character as engaging as Snow White. The contrast between the characters is most obvious when he joins her at the wishing well: she moves gracefully and is an appealing, somewhat caricatured character, while he moves stiffly and is based on a more realistic design, with the result that he ends up looking like a somewhat creepy stalker. So, when footage had to be cut, it was natural to reduce his screen time. Disney guided the animation of the Snow White character by providing live-action reference footage of a dancer named Marjorie Belcher (later Marge Champion), who was filmed as she acted out Snow White's parts, under the direction of the animator Hamilton Luske. Animators then used this footage to greater or lesser degrees to assure conformity in their images. Disney felt that the use of reference footage would help ensure that his artists created consistent, well-animated work throughout the production. The dwarfs are much more interesting than the princess, however, because they have such distinctive personalities, which shine through in animation that was not tightly guided by reference footage.

In developing the film's characters, it was important to retain clear differences between Snow White, as a "real girl," and the dwarfs as childlike "little men" (to use the princess's description). She cooks and cleans for them and orders them to wash up for dinner,

6.12 The Cookie Queen in The Cookie Carnival, dir. Ben Sharpsteen, 1935

just as a mother would. As a result, we are made to understand that the dwarfs are not suitable love interests for her, as an unmarried woman alone in a house with seven men. Only the prince, who remains off screen, will do. This kind of assurance was important at a time when film censorship required strict morality in storytelling.

The success of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs of course required the development of an appealing female figure, but Disney was not confident that his animators could handle the task. He had encouraged development of human characters in a range of "Silly Symphony" films, but the results had been disappointing. Things began to change when he lured the New York animator Grim Natwick to the studio. Natwick's skill was evident when he was assigned to animate part of the Cookie Queen in the "Silly Symphony" The Cookie Carnival (1935, dir. Ben Sharpsteen) (6.12). Although the film is largely characterized by rubber-hose animation, cycles, and fairly generic characters, by the end of the film the Queen has evolved into a relatively well-developed character—the only member of the ensemble to do so. It is easy to see a shift between the first depiction of the character as a "poor cookie," animated by Bill Tytla, and her later visualization by Natwick, when she dresses up for the parade and becomes "queen."[35] The Cookie Queen character has overtones of Betty Boop (see p. 116). That character began her life at the Fleischer studio in 1930 and was principally developed by Natwick, who was working there at the time.

Much of the Snow White character's animation was handled by Natwick; he had originally created a

6.13 Snow White in the forest, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, 1937

relatively older and more provocative character, but she was eventually toned down to reflect the girlish qualities of the final figure.[36] The dwarfs were designed and animated primarily by Fred Moore and Bill Tytla, whose combined efforts resulted in seven highly charismatic, distinctive personalities, adding dimension to the relatively flat character of the princess and to the prince, who has no personality at all. Moore is credited with developing the appealing, rounded forms of the dwarfs, and is especially acclaimed for the scene when they first meet Snow White in their room. Tytla's work includes the washing sequence, when the characters gather around the tub before dinner (though Moore animated a small portion, in which Dopey swallows a bar of soap).[37]

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was a huge success, partly because of its incorporation of the animation techniques developed at the studio during the 1930s, as well as its use of Technicolor and the multiplane camera setup. Unlike sound, color was not universally embraced by the film industry, as it was seen as compatible only with certain genres, such as musicals and animated films (as opposed to detective or horror films, for example). Even within animation, color was used selectively because of the expense. So, the use of color in the film made it stand out from many of the other feature films of the time, live-action or animated.

Early in animation history, camera stands used to shoot the artwork on film were designed by the studios themselves; they were relatively simple, holding both the artwork and the camera in fixed positions. Beginning in 1928, Disney had worked with the Acme Tool and Manufacturing Company,[38] founded by Adolph Furer, to develop specialized camera equipment, including its multiplane rig in 1936; Acme specialized in animation stands, optical printers, matte printers, process cameras, and related equipment and accessories. In the 1940s, Acme, Oxberry, and other rostrum camera stands entered the animation market, making the shooting process more flexible: artwork could be shifted from side to side and the camera could be moved toward or away from the artwork.

In Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, the multiplane system is used to create dimensionality and drama in various scenes to impressive effect: for example, when Snow White runs through the forest near the beginning (6.13), her fear (and that of the viewer) is heightened by the dimensionality and resultant

backgrounds, such as Maurice Noble (1911–2001), who worked with Jones at Warner Bros., beginning in the 1950s (see p. 135). Noble was known for creating playful environments, often including exaggerated perspectives, dramatic shadowing, and inventive painting styles. During his time at the Chouinard Art Institute, he specialized in watercolor painting, and by 1934 he was working at Disney on backgrounds for "Silly Symphonies" films and later *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). After participating in the Disney strike of 1941, he was no longer welcome at the studio, and, along with many other animators at that time, he enlisted in the Army Signal Corps. Noble began working at Warner Bros. in 1952, and collaborated with Jones as a layout artist for many years, into the 1970s, even after the studio closed and the two moved on to other positions. *What's Opera, Doc?* (1957) (see p. 129) is one of the highlights of this partnership, which spanned more than sixty films.

Disney's Modern Look

The style of Walt Disney's studio was strongly guided by his personal aesthetic, shaped by such factors as his interest in live-action cinema, his business sense, and his travels outside the US. During the 1930s, he had taken a trip to Europe and returned with design concepts that found their way into his feature films, including *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937, see p. 104). In 1941, while a strike was being arbitrated at the studio, Disney and a group of artists went to Brazil, Argentina, and Chile on a "Good Neighbor" tour sponsored by the US government. This program was instituted in part to retain good relations with Latin American countries during wartime, in order to counter the efforts of Axis powers in the same regions. By agreeing to the trip, Disney was assured of some much-needed funding as long as he produced work incorporating related cultural content—*The Three Caballeros* (supervising dir. Norman Ferguson, 1944) was among the results (see p. 114).

Mary Blair (born Robinson, 1911–1978) was a painter who had attended San Jose State College (now University) and the Chouinard Art Institute, embracing the Regionalist style in her watercolors of the 1930s. She and her husband, Lee Blair, had worked for other studios before she joined him at Disney in 1940. She left the studio within the year, but was re-hired before the trip took place. As a result of her travels, Blair's work was transformed, turning toward the abstract and modern with a bold use of color. She then emerged as a significant creative force at The Walt Disney Studios, where she remained until the early 1950s.


12.7 Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, and Wilfred Jackson, *Alice in Wonderland*, 1951

Blair contributed inspirational art and color design to a number of films, including *The Three Caballeros* and three films of the 1950s: *Cinderella* (1950), *Alice in Wonderland* (1951) (**12.6, 12.7**), and *Peter Pan* (1953), all directed by Clyde Geronimi, Hamilton Luske, and Wilfred Jackson. She also contributed to Disneyland, in murals and designs for the "It's a small world" attraction. Blair's career in illustration and design continued in other contexts as well; for example, she is well known for illustrating children's literature in the "Little Golden Books" series.

Walt Disney never really embraced the modern aesthetic, though it was developed in some of the studio's short films. One is *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom* (1953) (**12.8**), directed by Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols, with character design by Tom Oreb and a color-styling credit for Eyvind Earle, an accomplished painter who

12.8 Ward Kimball and C. August Nichols, *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom*, 1953

12.6 Conceptual artwork by Mary Blair for *Alice in Wonderland*
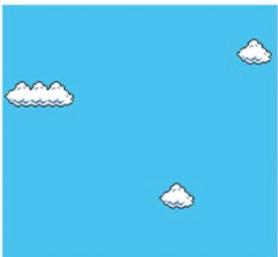
16.21 Corey Arcangel, *Super Mario Clouds*, 2002

mods created by fans have outlasted the game itself. For instance, game-players furthered development of the incomplete, bug-ridden action-adventure *Vampire Bloodlines*, which had been developed for Activision and released in 2004 by the now defunct Troika Games. Yet another manifestation of game mods is found in the work of the artist Corey Arcangel, whose *Super Mario Clouds* (2002) (16.21) was made using a "Mario Bros." game cartridge. To create the piece, he erased everything on the cartridge but the clouds and sky. His other mods are applied to such games as "Tetris" and "Space Invaders."

A practice known as **machinima** has developed around the use of **game engines** to create new works within real-time animated game environments. For example, the FPS *Halo* provides the basis of the machinima series "Red vs. Blue," created by Burnie Burns at Rooster Teeth Productions and first released online in 2003 (16.22). The science-fiction comedy involves soldiers facing combat in a desolate stretch of land. It parodies the FPS and sci-fi genres as strange things happen to the characters, who talk to each other more often than they engage in fights. The machinima community is now large, and is supported by various institutions. In 2000, Machinima.com was founded by Hugh Hancock as a hub for this kind of work. It is now a massive undertaking, featuring scripted series, original content, weekly and daily shows, game-play videos and more, seen by millions of viewers monthly. An online event, the Machinima Expo (or "MachinExpo"), was launched in 2008 as an annual international machinima festival that includes a juried competition of productions.

The field of machinima has evolved in interesting ways as artists bring experimental attitudes to their productions and explore their individual voices using materials intended for mass consumption. A great example is Phil Solomon, whose *Untitled (for David Gatten)* (2005), made with Mark LaPore, and *Rehearsals*

16.22 Burnie Burns at Rooster Tooth Productions, "Red vs. Blue," 2003

16.23 Peggy Ahwesh, *She Puppet*, 2001

for Retirement (2007) were created from the game *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas* (2004). These works refigure the action-oriented material into a place of introspection and atmospheric environments. A related example comes from Margaret "Peggy" Ahwesh (1954–). Her video of 2001, *She Puppet*, provides a critique of Lara Croft's female identity in the *Tomb Raider* video game (see p. 294), fitting into the artist's broader interest in gender issues and sexuality (16.23). *She Puppet* employs scenes from game play that emphasize Croft's alienation, accompanied by individuals reading passages from three sources: Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquiet* (1984), Joanna Russ's science-fiction story *The Female Man* (1975), and thoughts from the musician and philosopher Sun Ra.

Heroes and Damsels in Distress

In the mid-twentieth century, the American writer Joseph Campbell introduced his influential model of "The Hero's Journey," or "monomyth," a pattern found in stories worldwide. It features a male character who passes through a series of stages along his journey, facing tests and receiving rewards, and returning home transformed—having saved someone or something—ready to rejoin humanity. Certainly, the hero monomyth can be found in many game narratives; from their earliest days, animated games have prioritized a masculine point of view, and quests of that nature are a mainstay of the industry. Female characters, when they have appeared,

typically have been passive objects to be saved by the hero, rather than active characters. Even after female avatars were increasingly being incorporated into games during the 1990s, the vast majority of titles continued to represent mainly male characters in active roles.[2] Game publishers develop their products based on the logic that an overwhelming majority of their players are boys and men. To capture the largest portion of that market, therefore, they create games that they believe favor a male point of view.

Even the seemingly innocuous game *Frogger*, designed by Konami and released as an arcade platform game in 1981, reflects this pattern. The player begins with a set of frogs that must jump around to avoid cars, natural obstacles, and enemies, such as snakes. The male gender of the characters becomes clear through the introduction of lady frogs, identified by being pink, which can be escorted to safety in order to earn points. In some versions of the game, there is even a specific "Lady Frog Rescue" mode. *Frogger* is just one example; other early arcade games, such as Don Bluth's *Donkey Kong* and *Dragon's Lair*, released in 1984, also feature the rescue of female characters.

Ms. Pac-Man, released as a coin-operated arcade game in 1981 by Midway Manufacturing, made one of the first gestures toward representing an active female character: it added a "Ms." to the front of the Pac-Man identifier, and its main character has a bow on her head and red lipstick. The ghosts that chase her were modified, too, as one of them is named Sue. This version of the game also brought added features to the original Pac-Man, making it popular among both male and female players. Also significant is the debut of Carmen Sandiego in 1985, the female criminal mastermind who takes players on a worldwide adventure in the educational game *Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?* (see p. 287). The following year, in 1986, the adventure game *Metroid* was developed around the athletic female character Samus Aram, a bounty hunter in space; it was created by a team at Nintendo and first released in 1986. One software company, Her Interactive (which started as a division of American Laser Games in the mid-1990s, but later became an independent company), has focused on games for female players and aims for a more realistic representation of women and girls. Its best-known titles feature the adventurous character Nancy Drew in mystery adventure games that were first released in 1999.

of expression. Dissent did appear from time to time, however, and one of the best-known examples came from Trnka. Although his films of the 1950s had appealed to young viewers and had been in keeping with government regulations, toward the end of his career he produced a film that was quite different: *The Hand* (1965, see p. 189), a commentary on the oppression of artists by the state. This film was created during a relatively relaxed period in Czech history, which saw increasing interaction with the West; in respect to animation, this contact included subcontracting work for producers in other countries.

The American Gene Deitch worked with a unit at Bratří v Triku that was supervised by a woman he later married, the producer Zdenka Deitchová (see p. 167), to fulfill contracts with American producers. Such companies as Rembrandt Films and Weston Woods, and the Dutch children's author Hendrik Magdalenus "Dick" Bruna, paid the Czech Filmexport Agency directly for the use of production facilities,[13] while Deitch worked as their representative; he retained his US citizenship and was paid by the Western producers who hired him, but he continued to work in Prague from 1960, through ongoing political turmoil. By the mid-1960s, Czechoslovakia was experiencing serious economic problems and underwent another phase of political and social change. Democratic reforms—including an end to media censorship—were introduced, culminating in the short-lived Prague Spring of 1968. In August that year, Soviet troops invaded and Czechoslovakia fell under the control of the USSR, and a period of what was called "normalization" began.

Political Dissent in the Films of Jan Švankmajer

The Czech filmmaker Jan Švankmajer (1934–) has had a long history of creating provocative live-action and animated works. He attended college from 1950 to 1958, when it was illegal to display and study modern art, which was seen as Western and bourgeois; instead, he studied Soviet avant-garde theater and film.[14] As the thaw began in the Soviet Union, in the late 1950s, modern art filtered into publications and classrooms. Upon leaving school, Švankmajer collaborated with avant-garde theater groups, such as Laterna Magika.

A few years later, in 1964, when Švankmajer entered the film industry and began directing short

17.13 Giuseppe Archimboldo, *Vertumnus, c. 1590–91*

works, Czech filmmaking was at a high point, gaining an international reputation through the production of live-action features collectively known as the Czech New Wave. Committed to the Surrealist aesthetic, he joined the Prague Surrealist group in 1970; his wife, Eva Švankmajerová (1940–2005), a painter, poet, and ceramicist, was a member as well. Švankmajer has also been strongly influenced by Mannerism, a decorative style of image-making that emerged in the sixteenth century; a well-known practitioner was Giuseppe Archimboldo (c. 1526–1593), who created portraits of his patrons out of images of fruit, vegetables, flowers, and other items (**17.13**). A third influence comes in the form of political environments, reflecting the varied ideological contexts in which Švankmajer has lived. Švankmajer's embrace of these realms marked him as a subversive for much his career.

As a result, a number of Švankmajer's early films were banned and he was effectively exiled from filmmaking between 1972 and 1980. During this time, he moved into other forms of art. But no matter, when he returned to animation. Among his well-known films is *Možnosti Dialogu* (*Dimensions of Dialogue*, 1982), which is a not-at-all subtle commentary on social and

17.14 Jan Švankmajer, *Dimensions of Dialogue*, 1982

political breakdown (**17.14**). Švankmajer's Mannerist sympathies are clearly demonstrated in the film, which is structured in three episodes. The first of them depicts opposing heads—built out of vegetables, hardware, and other materials—that eat and regurgitate heads in other forms. At the end, the heads turn into identical copies, reflecting both the violence and the ineffectiveness of political domination. The other two episodes in the film also explore political themes, while demonstrating Švankmajer's skill as a stop-motion animator and his Surrealist attraction to materials that are intended to evoke a visceral response. Predictably, *Dimensions of Dialogue* was banned—in fact, it was shown to the ideology commission of the Czech Communist party as an example of what had to be avoided.[15]

Despite the sanctions against his work, or partly because of them, Švankmajer has managed to have a long and luminous career making both live-action and animated short films and features, as well as sponsored films. Czechoslovakia eventually followed the path of other Eastern Bloc countries, breaking down the ideological and physical barriers that separated it from the West. Its Communist era finally ended in 1989 with the Velvet Revolution, a non-violent transition of power brought

about by student protests and a general strike. Meanwhile, during the 1980s, Švankmajer had been funded by organizations outside his own country and so was able to continue his work. For example, the British television network Channel 4 supported production of his Surrealist live-action and animation feature *Něco z Alenky* (*Alice*), released in 1988 (**17.15**). This film captures the disturbing nature of the original *Alice in Wonderland* story, as the precocious Alice is subjected to all sorts of strange experiences. Švankmajer was also commissioned to create short works by other clients, such as MTV, resulting in *Flora* and *Meat Love*, both from 1989.

Many of Švankmajer's films involve food or the act of eating, which are effective means for stimulating sensory reactions in an audience, beyond sight and hearing. *Flora*, which runs half a minute, depicts a disturbing scene of a woman's body, made of food items, decomposing as she lies tied to a bed. In the one-minute *Meat Love*, two pieces of beef share a doomed romance. Yet another example is *Tma, Světlo, Tma* (*Darkness, Light, Darkness*, 1989), based on a story by Edgar Dutka, in which clay body parts are joined with a real tongue and brains that are captured by the hands

17.15 Jan Švankmajer, *Alice*, 1988

22.5 Hayao Miyazaki, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, 1984

22.6 Hayao Miyazaki, *Princess Mononoke*, 1997

efforts are made to tell the story creatively, using varied angles, multiplane shots, and such effects as double exposure and decorative patterning—for example, at the end of the film, when Hols falls into a dense forest. There is also an attempt to create complexity in the characters, particularly a young woman named Hilda, who regrets her role in the enemy's evil schemes. Although the film did not do well on its release, it did provide a launching point for some important industry figures, including both Takahata and Miyazaki.

After leaving the Toei studio, the two men worked on a variety of animated television series and other projects. Meanwhile, Miyazaki also produced a number of print comics: "Nagagutsu wo Haita Neko" ("Puss in Boots," 1969), a newspaper serialization of a Toei animated feature; "Sabaku no Tami" ("People of the Desert," 1969–70), a story with a wartime theme for a children's newspaper; and "Doubutsu Takarajima" ("Animal Treasure Island," 1972), another serialization of a Toei Animation feature. It was not until several years later that Miyazaki would embark on a personal manga, "Kaze no tani no Naushika" ("Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind," 1982–94). Based partly on his reading of various books and articles about the environment, the manga is a complex work about Princess Nausicaä—named after a brave Greek

princess in the epic poem *The Odyssey*, attributed to Homer—who confronts environmental disasters, war, and the dark side of human nature. Miyazaki's manga was published in *Animage* and was very popular.

In 1978, Miyazaki started directing, beginning with the television series "Future Boy Conan" at Nippon Animation. But he left the next year for an even better opportunity: a chance to direct a feature film, *Rupan Sansei: Kariosutoro no Shiro* (*The Castle of Cagliostro*, or *Lupin III: Castle of Cagliostro*), in 1979, adapted from Monkey Punch's successful manga series, "Lupin III." The film was made at Tokyo Movie Shinsha (now TMS Entertainment) and distributed by the major Japanese film studio Toho. Later, Miyazaki also directed episodes of the "Lupin III" television series at the studio, getting credit under the name of Tsutomu Teruki.

After several other projects, Miyazaki was able to write a screenplay for and direct a feature version of his own manga. His film *Kaze no Tani no Naushika* (*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, 1984), was made at Topcraft and distributed by Toei (22.5). In it, Nausicaä tries to help her community in the midst of devastating environmental conditions and aggressive attacks by hostile forces, expertly navigating the skies by riding on a wind glider. Another skill is her sensitivity to nature, which becomes important as she wards off swarms of

insects that she realizes are mainly trying to save the world. Underlying the film is a strong message about environmentalism, in the form of a warning that humans are poisoning the land they depend on for survival. This theme would be a major characteristic of Miyazaki's work, as would the significance of active female characters. At times, the film shows Nausicaä in real danger: for example, when she slides into a lake filled with acid and burns her foot. And although most of the film's leading roles are male, Nausicaä is aided by a group of women who free her and apologize for her ill-treatment. Aesthetically, the film still relies heavily on limited techniques, especially when it comes to dialogue and the crowd scenes, in which the majority of people remain still. Since the characters mostly wear protective masks, their lips cannot be seen; other characters sport lip-covering moustaches that move only in general ways. Great care is given to the development of the landscapes, however, as they are central to the film's themes—Miyazaki would become known for his detailed background art, revealing the beauty and complexity of nature. The film's score was commissioned from Jo Hisaishi (born Mamoru Fujisawa), an eclectic composer who also worked on subsequent Miyazaki films.

As Miyazaki's career developed, it became apparent that the narrative elements of his works often reflected

his own life experiences. For example, the long illness of his mother when he was a child seems to have inspired the character of the sick mother in *My Neighbor Totoro*, while the time he spent around his uncle's airplane company resulted in a common flying motif, as in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Winds* and *Kurenai no Buta* (*Porco Rosso*, 1992), in which a flyer who has lost his faith in humanity must become a war hero. Miyazaki's experience of war and its aftermath in Japan contributed to his pacifist leanings and concern for the environment, which can clearly be seen in *Mononoke Hime* (*Princess Mononoke*, 1997), a film that depicts the delicate natural environment and the destruction caused by human development (22.6).

Studio Ghibli and Totoro

In 1985, Miyazaki and Takahata founded Studio Ghibli in Tokyo, where they continued to make animated feature films, beginning with Miyazaki's *Tenku no Shiro Laputa* (*Castle in the Sky*, 1986). The concept was inspired by Jonathan Swift's eighteenth-century novel *Gulliver's Travels*, which includes an island that floats in the sky. The film tells the story of two children who are being pursued by air pirates and government officials, and a special gem that appears to have magical powers.

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