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They Drew As They Pleased Vol. 3: The Hidden Art Of Disney's Late Golden Age (The 1940s - Part Two)



Synopsis

Walt Disney always envisioned the studios that bear his name remaining relevant by consistently taking creative risks and doing the unexpected. Heading into the 1940s, he crafted an entirely new division of the studio called the Character Model Department, which focused solely on the details of character development. This latest volume from famed Disney historian Didier Ghez profiles six remarkable artists from that department, sharing uncommon and never-before-seen images of their influential work behind the scenes. With vivid descriptions and passages from the artists' journals, this visually rich collection offers a rare view of the Disney artists whose work gave rise to many classic Disney characters, and who ultimately rewrote the future of character creation in animation.

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Customer Reviews

Don quixote lives again

The Don Quixote project continued to have a complicated and long life at the studio following Eduardo Dela Cruz's departure. In April 1940, it was resurrected by the head of Disney's training program, art instructor Don Graham, who wrote in a memo to John Rose: It seems that in order to protect the rights on Quixote the studio must show evidence that this picture is actually in work. At the same time Tytla has been very anxious to form a group which could meet once a week and explore the possibilities of Quixote from a drawing point of view. At the present time there are about a dozen men who are vitally interested in joining such a group. This plan laid out by Don Graham does not seem to have been approved, but a few months later

Jack Miller was tasked by Joe Grant to develop the Quixote story further. With the demise of Grant's Character Model Department in 1941, the project was shelved again, only to be revived in 1946. That year, artist Jesse Marsh created a series of story boards inspired by a rare French book version of Don Quixote illustrated by Gus Bofa, which John Rose had donated to the studio in the late 1930s. Jesse Marsh's interpretation of the story was based on the tone poem created by Richard Strauss in 1897. The idea of using Strauss's tone poem had been suggested by writer Bob Carr in 1940, among other possibilities for sequences that could be integrated in a sequel to Fantasia. In 1950, Walt even considered adapting Don Quixote as a live-action movie featuring Cary Grant and the Mexican actor Cantinflas. But all those projects were eventually abandoned. The story of Don Quixote was simply too hard to adapt to the screen. As for Eduardo, after having left New York in July 1940, he roamed the Americas and Europe in the pursuit of new artistic ventures—paintings, of course, but also novels and a few ballets. His major achievement, however, was his illustrated diary, *My Book of Pleasure*, which he started painting in 1935 and completed fourteen volumes later, in 1988. Eduardo Soler Franco passed away in Santiago, Chile, on March 24, 1996. He would have been surprised to know that in the mid-1990s, the Brizzi brothers, who were running the Parisian subsidiary of The Walt Disney Studios at the time, were still trying to get an ambitious project off the ground: an animated version of Don Quixote. Photo: Jack Miller at work on Don Quixote, c. 1940.

Various characters from Don Quixote as imagined by Eduardo Soler Franco [View larger](#) [View larger](#) [View larger](#) [View larger](#)

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Didier Ghez has conducted Disney research since he was a teenager in the mid '80s. His articles about the parks, animation, and vintage international Disneyana, as well as his many interviews with Disney artists, have appeared in such magazines as *Disney twenty-three*, *Persistence of Vision*, *Tomart's Disneyana Update*, *Animation Journal*, *Animation Magazine*, *Storyboard*, and *Fantasyline*. He is the author and editor of numerous books about the Disney Studio and its artists, including the *Walt's People* book series and the *They Drew as They Pleased* book series. He also runs *The Disney History* blog (disneybooks.blogspot.com) and *The Disney Books Network* website (www.didierghez.com). Andreas Deja has worked as a Disney animator for over 30 years on many

films including The Little Mermaid, Beauty and the Beast, Aladdin, The Lion King, Lilo & Stitch, and The Princess and the Frog. He was recently named a Disney Legend by the Walt Disney Company.

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