

The Nine Old Men: The Creative Giants Behind Walt Disney's Golden Age of Animation



The Nine Old Men were a group of legendary animators who played a pivotal role in shaping the Golden Age of Animation at Walt Disney Studios. They were responsible for creating some of the most beloved and iconic characters in film history, including Mickey Mouse, Snow White, Pinocchio, and Bambi. Their unique talents and dedication to their craft left an indelible mark on the world of animation, inspiring generations of artists and filmmakers.



The Nine Old Men: Lessons, Techniques, and Inspiration from Disney's Great Animators by Andreas Deja

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The Early Years

The Nine Old Men were born between 1896 and 1908. They came from diverse backgrounds and had varied artistic experiences before joining Disney Studios. Some, like Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas, had a strong foundation in classical drawing, while others, like Ward Kimball and Les Clark, had experience in caricature and cartooning.

Despite their differences, they shared a common passion for animation and a desire to push the boundaries of the medium. They joined Disney Studios in the early 1930s, just as the studio was beginning to establish itself as a leader in the field.

Working with Walt Disney

Walt Disney recognized the talent and potential of the Nine Old Men, and he gave them a great deal of freedom to develop their ideas and experiment with new techniques. He saw them as his trusted collaborators, and he often sought their advice on creative matters.

The Nine Old Men worked closely with Disney on many of his most famous films, including "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" (1937), "Pinocchio" (1940), and "Fantasia" (1940). They also played a key role in the development of new animation tools and techniques, such as the multiplane camera and the Xerox process.

The Golden Age of Animation

The period from the late 1930s to the early 1950s is known as the Golden Age of Animation. During this time, the Nine Old Men produced some of their best work, including such classics as "Bambi" (1942), "Cinderella" (1950), and "Peter Pan" (1953).

Their films were characterized by their beautiful artwork, fluid animation, and memorable characters. They also explored new themes and ideas, such as the importance of family, the power of dreams, and the fragility of nature.

The Legacy of the Nine Old Men

The Nine Old Men retired from Disney Studios in the late 1960s and early 1970s. However, their legacy continued to inspire and influence generations of animators. Their work is still studied and admired today, and their techniques and principles are still used in modern animation.

The Nine Old Men were true pioneers in the field of animation. They helped to create some of the most beloved and iconic characters in film history, and they played a key role in shaping the Golden Age of Animation. Their legacy continues to inspire and influence animators around the world.

The Nine Old Men were a group of extraordinary artists who made a significant contribution to the world of animation. Their work has touched the lives of countless people around the world, and their legacy will continue to inspire and influence generations to come.

Individual Profiles

Les Clark (1907-1979) was known for his strong character design and his ability to create realistic movement. He animated such characters as Dumbo, Pinocchio, and Jiminy Cricket.

Marc Davis (1913-2000) was a master of caricature and exaggeration. He animated such characters as Cruella de Vil, Maleficent, and Captain Hook.

Ollie Johnston (1912-2008) was a skilled draftsman and animator. He animated such characters as Bambi, Mowgli, and Prince Charming.

Ward Kimball (1914-2002) was known for his comedic timing and his ability to create memorable animal characters. He animated such characters as the Three Little Pigs, Jiminy Cricket, and Donald Duck.

Eric Larson (1905-1988) was a specialist in special effects animation. He created the underwater effects for "Fantasia" and the flying scenes for "Peter Pan."

John Lounsbery (1911-1976) was known for his fluid animation and his ability to create realistic human characters. He animated such characters as Cinderella, Ariel, and Prince Phillip.

Wolfgang Reitherman (1909-1985) was a versatile animator who worked on a wide variety of films. He directed such classics as "The Jungle Book"

(1967) and "The Aristocats" (1970).

Frank Thomas (1912-2004) was known for his meticulous attention to detail and his ability to create complex and believable characters. He animated such characters as Snow White, Pinocchio, and Ariel.

Milt Kahl (1909-1987) was a master of animation and one of the most influential animators in history. He animated such characters as Bambi, Lady, and Shere Khan.

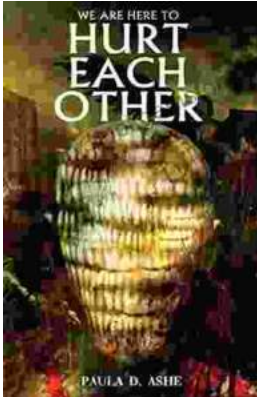


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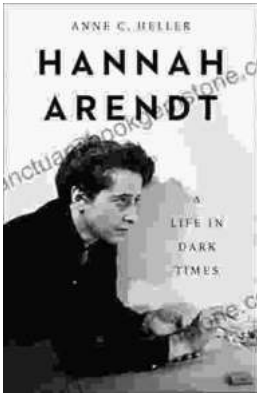
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