

CHECKLIST

Walt Disney Productions

J. Worthington Foulfellow and Gideon (preliminary drawing for *Pinocchio*), 1939,
graphite and colored crayon on wove paper

Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.3

I'll Go (Jiminy Cricket in a Rain Puddle) (production celluloid for *Pinocchio*, no.
103), 1939, gouache on celluloid

Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.4

Jiminy Cricket (four preliminary drawings for *Pinocchio*), 1939,
graphite and colored crayon on wove paper

*Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore
1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.5.1-4*

Cleo (production celluloid for *Pinocchio*, no. 148), 1939, gouache on celluloid

Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.6

Enrique Chagoya, Mexican, born 1953

Utopian Cannibal. Org, 2000,

thirteen-color lithograph and woodcut with chine colle and collage

Purchased through a gift from Jan Seidler Ramirez, Class of 1973; PR.2002.02

Takashi Murakami, Japanese, born 1962

Oval Seated atop a Cosmos Ball,

2000, plastic and vinyl

Gift of the Director of the Hood Museum of Art; S.2000.53

Aaron Noble, American, born 1961

Luna, 2005, hardground, aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, sugarlift, white ground,
drypoint, and roulette

Purchased through the Claire and Richard P. Morse 1953 Fund; 2006.43

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Walt Disney Productions, *Cleo* (production celluloid for *Pinocchio*, no. 148), 1939, gouache on celluloid. Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.6. © Disney

ART IN MOTION

A Deeper Look at the Animated Figure and Its Presence in Contemporary Works

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Western fine art has typically been defined as “art forms developed mainly for aesthetics” and is generally associated with the media of paintings, sculptures, drawings, photography, and the like. Within the contemporary art world, experts fail to include animation in this grouping, most likely due to its origins in popular culture, the fact that it is often profit driven,

Walt Disney Productions, *J. Worthington Foulfellow and Gideon* (preliminary drawing for *Pinocchio*), 1939, graphite and colored crayon on wove paper. Purchased through the Guernsey Center Moore 1904 Memorial Fund; D.941.3. © Disney

and the tendency for teams (rather than individuals) to create it. Yet a good portion of the fine art of the past (and today) shared these characteristics as well. What makes animation different? This small installation asks this question through the juxtaposition of seven different pieces from the Walt Disney animated feature film *Pinocchio* and three contemporary works of art that feature animation. The animated figure appears in many different media in this installation, including gouache on celluloid, colored lithograph, plastic and vinyl, print, and graphite.

Walt Disney Productions, of course, defined classic, character-driven animation for generations. The company’s second feature-length animated film, *Pinocchio*, was produced in 1940, and the seven works from *Pinocchio* included here are treasures from a time when animation was already being reinvented thanks to the development of new technology and materials, namely celluloid. These “cels” are made of tough but flammable thermoplastic composed essentially of cellulose nitrate and camphor. While the drawings *J. Worthington*

Foulfellow and Gideon and the four small drawings titled *Jiminy Cricket* represent concept art for the film, *Cleo* and *I’ll Go* are cels that were actually used in the production of *Pinocchio* and are easily identifiable in the film.

Cel animation (which was first used by Walt Disney Productions in an animated feature film in 1937) allowed company artists to produce extremely believable sequences by creating a greater sense of depth. With hand-drawn animation, an artist would have to draw the background for every single frame. With cel animation, an artist could place the cels atop a master background image, thereby allowing more time for perfecting the movement of the characters. In the process of creating the literally thousands of cels and many master backgrounds required by their feature films, Walt Disney Productions began to archive its own art collection. Many of the animators that worked for Disney were required to take instruction in traditional art forms such as painting and sculpture. Thus, their final product (the animated film) was actually a collection of images of works of art that were then presented in sequence at a rate of twenty-four pictures per second. When conceptualized in this way, animation becomes another form of fine art, and some artists have long acknowledged this reality, drawing inspiration from both animated figures and comic books to create works of art that appropriate these forms into the “fine art” realm. Though the three contemporary artists represented here were not centrally concerned with animation, each uses the animated figure to convey or illustrate matters in which he is interested.

In his etching titled *Luna*, Aaron Noble appropriates and combines fragments of comic book figures to create a work that is in fact ultimately devoid of any complete, homogenous character. The well-known American comic book company Marvel Comics heavily influenced Noble’s work. Noble’s decision not to represent a complete character form stems from his interest in the formal and immediately recognizable qualities of the comic book figure. While Noble dismantles those conventions, literally and figuratively, any comic book fan, or fan of animation, would immediately recognize the source of the imagery that informs this work of art.

In contrast to Noble’s print, the comic book figures in Enrique Chagoya’s thirteen-color lithograph *Utopian Cannibal.Org* are employed to address deeper issues centering around Mexican identity and the endemic corruption of government and society in that country. Chagoya includes various images of comic book characters and popular animated figures to represent the

pervasiveness of American popular culture and comment upon colonialism, among other things. Some of the characters referenced in this work include Little Lulu, Mamerto, Fantomas, Mickey Mouse, Batman, and Superman. Mamerto (created in 1927) and Fantomas (created in the 1960s) are both Mexican comic book characters. Chagoya’s use of the animated figure allows him to address grave issues in an unconventional way and call into question the prominence and power of pop culture in Western society and its impact upon the deeper topics depicted in the piece.

Similarly intrigued by the impact of popular culture upon society, Takashi Murakami explores a new perspective on Japan in his work *Oval Seated atop a Cosmos Ball*. Murakami’s work is greatly influenced by anime (Japanese animation) and manga (Japanese comics). Here Murakami situates his small cartoon figure in a traditional lotus position, combining references to Buddhism with pop culture. *Oval Seated atop a Cosmos Ball* even utilizes sound by doubling as a CD player featuring music by the Tokyo-based experimental electro-acoustic duo ZakYumiko. Although *Oval* is not an animated figure from a specific show or movie, Murakami creates his own character as part of an attempt to lessen the gap between “high” and “low” art. Each of these three contemporary artists engages with “animated” figures in their own ways to convey different ideas and intentions, one of which is to blur the boundaries between fine art and popular culture. Hopefully this installation demonstrates that the animated figure is indeed to be found in contemporary works of fine art and also argues for a renewed appreciation of animation in light of its simplest, truest definition: art in motion.

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Aaron Noble, *Luna*, 2005, hardground, aquatint, spit-bite aquatint, sugarlift, white ground, drypoint, and roulette. Purchased through the Claire and Richard P. Morse 1953 Fund; 2006.43