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THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM PRESENTS SPECIAL EXHIBITION OF WORK BY
HEINRICH KLEY FROM WALT DISNEY'S COLLECTION

Exhibition is First of Kley's Work in United States



(Left): Heinrich Kley's *Jugend Titelblatt*, courtesy The Walt Disney Family Foundation

(Right): *Chernabog Concept Drawing*, ©Disney

San Francisco, CA – April 9, 2012—The Walt Disney Family Museum is pleased to present the special exhibition *Heinrich Kley: From Fantasy to Fantasia* featuring drawings by Heinrich Kley—Walt Disney's most admired European illustrator—paired with art from Disney's famed animated film *Fantasia* (1940). On view from May 11 to September 17, 2012, this exhibition features 29 drawings by Kley and alongside more than 25 sketches, concept art, and maquettes from the Walt Disney classic film. Also on view are four of Kley's sketchbooks which feature some 50 pages of intricate drawings. The Kley artworks are from Walt Disney's collection and are on public view for the first time in the United States.

Walt Disney was known to seek great inspiration from European fairy tales for his films; not only was he inspired by them, he made them his own. Walt also looked to European art as a source of inspiration, especially book illustration. Heinrich Kley was one of Walt's favorite illustrators and he collected Kley's work in depth. During a trip to Europe in 1935, it is well documented that Walt returned with some 350 illustrated books and artworks that he acquired with the intention of using as a source of inspiration for future projects. He responded to the beauty, drama, and powerful visual narrative and

irony of Kley's work. In a 1964 television interview Walt said, "Without the wonderful drawings of Heinrich Kley, I could not conduct my art school classes for my animators."

Disney's work *Ben Ali-Gator holding Hyacinth Hippo*, (c. 1940), which depicts an alligator holding a hippo ballerina above his head is similar in ironic nature to Kley's *The Steeplechaser*, (c. 1920), where the slowest animal, the tortoise, is portrayed jumping over a fence with a frog riding on his back. According to film historian John Culhane, "The tradition of caricaturing human aspirations with animal analogies stretches from Grandville and Tenniel to T.S. Sullivant and Heinrich Kley. It is a tradition that Disney artists had been consciously studying since the early thirties."

In Kley's work *Kesselschmiede (Kettle Forge)*, (c. 1920), the kettle takes on a human face which was also a direct influence on the Disney drawing of *Casey, Jr.* where the train takes on a similar human face. Walt and Kley both had a love of machines.

Disney's *Chernabog Concept Drawing*, (c. 1940), for *Fantasia's* "Night on Bald Mountain" scene where the devil Chernabog summons evil spirits and restless souls from their graves is deeply influenced by Kley's work *Jugend Titelblatt (Title Page of Youth)*, (c. 1920), where two demons lord over a mechanical factory, turning it into their own industrial playground.

Kley's artworks for example, showcase animals dancing, mice playing fiddles to an audience of snails, and rabbits boxing, in response, *Fantasia's* "Dance of the Hours" features dancing crocodiles, elephants, alligators, and the aforementioned hippo ballerinas. As Walt said in a memorandum to Ted Sears, first head of the story department in 1935, "Some of these little books that I brought back with me from Europe have very fascinating illustrations of little peoples, bees, and small insects, who live in mushrooms, pumpkins, etc. This quaint atmosphere fascinates me and I was thinking how we could build some little story that would incorporate all of these cute little characters.....Mickey and Minnie might take a ride on a magic carpet and arrive in a weird land or forest, meet little elves of the forest, or be captured by an old witch or giant or ogres."

About Heinrich Kley

Heinrich Kley (1863–1945) was born in Karlsruhe, Germany, and studied art with Ferdinand Keller at the Karlsruhe Academy and later with C. Frithjob Smith in Munich. He began his career as an illustrator and a mural painter focusing on portraits, animals, landscapes, and architecture.

By the turn of the century Kley's interest changed to modern industrial life, including factories, blast furnaces, ship docks, industrial buildings, and machinery. One of his best-known oil paintings from the time is *Tiegelstahlguss bei Krupp (Crucible steel casting with Krupp)*.

With his move to Munich c.1910, Kley gave up painting to concentrate on pen and ink drawing. His bizarre and imaginative juxtapositions of humans and animals engaged in social situations, (dancing, eating, etc.) or in dream-like, surreal situations were imbued with his sarcastic wit. He quickly became famous for his work as it appeared in satirical magazines of the day including *Jugend* and the notable humor periodical *Simplizissimus*.

In 1937, Kley was first introduced to the American audience through *Coronet Magazine* which published his work in three consecutive issues. According to Disney animator Joe Grant, Kley was an enormous influence on the look of the film. "The Dance of the Hours," a ballet with music from Ponchielli's opera *Gioconda*, features dancing animals that could be right out of the pages of one of Kley's sketchbooks.

To this day, Kley's drawings rank among the most imaginative and satirical cartoons of all time.

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ABOUT THE MUSEUM

The Walt Disney Family Museum presents the fascinating story and achievements of Walt Disney, the man who raised animation to an art, transformed the film industry, tirelessly pursued innovation, and created a global and distinctively American legacy. Opened in October 2009, the 40,000 square foot facility features the newest technology and historic materials and artifacts to bring Disney's achievements to life, with interactive galleries that include early drawings and animation, movies, music, listening stations, a spectacular model of Disneyland and much more.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wednesdays through Monday; closed on Tuesdays and the following public holidays: New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

Tickets: \$20 adults, \$15 seniors and students, and \$12 children ages 6 to 17; Admission is free for members.

Where: The Presidio of San Francisco, 104 Montgomery Street, San Francisco, CA 94129

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