

Mary Blair

MID-CENTURY
MAGIC

THE WALT
DISNEY
FAMILY
MUSEUM



Portrait of Mary Blair by George Hurrell, 1945

Traveling Exhibition

Exhibition Overview

Mary Blair was a color stylist, concept artist, and designer whose vibrant and whimsical style left a lasting mark on mid-century American art and animation. Known for her bold, imaginative use of color, Mary helped define the tone of Disney animated classics throughout the 40s and 50s. Her remarkable talent for creating striking color combinations caught the attention and admiration of Walt Disney and earned her the title of Disney Legend. *Mid-Century Magic* explores Blair's personal life and artwork, focusing on her collaborations with Walt Disney and The Walt Disney Studios.



"it's a small world" decoupage postcard

This exhibition showcases the wide range of Mary Blair's artwork, including pieces in watercolor, pencil and ink, collage, and ceramic. While many visitors may recognize her style in beloved films such as *Cinderella* (1950) and *Alice in Wonderland* (1951), the exhibition goes deeper—highlighting how her artistic vision inspired Disney animators and Disneyland Imagineers to create enduring works that continue to captivate audiences across generations.



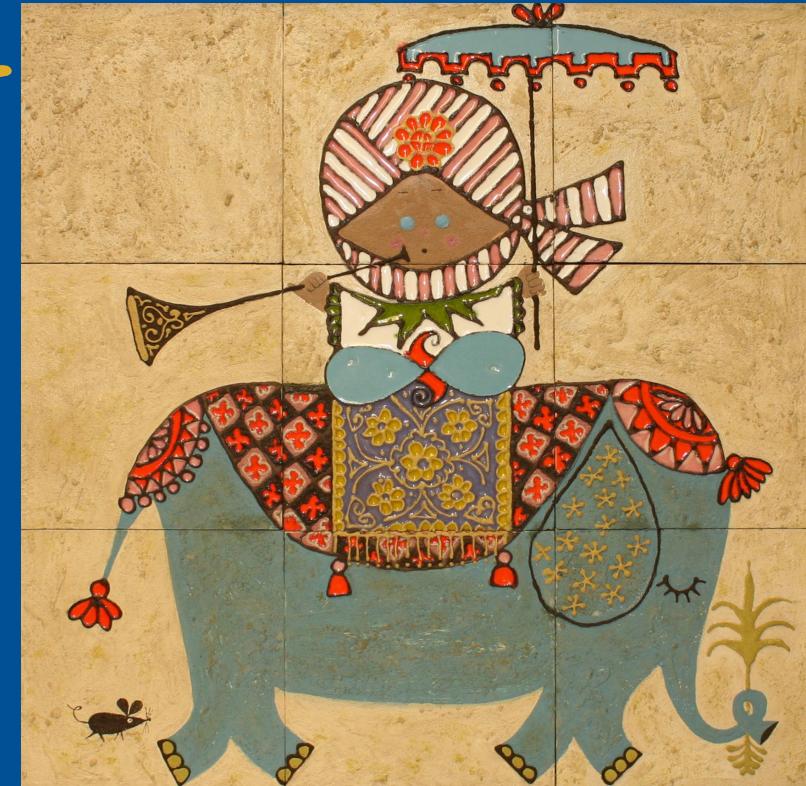
Mary Blair in front of visual development for *Song of the South* (1946)

Exhibition Themes

To better understand the evolution her unique style and her artistic contributions to the Disney aesthetic, guests will learn about Mary Blair's:

- Early artistic development and education
- Personal life and marriage to fellow Disney artist Lee Blair
- Involvement with the studio trip to South America
- Work as a color stylist, concept artist, and Disneyland attraction designer
- Professional relationship with Walt Disney
- Independent career as an advertisement illustrator

"When she did '*small world*', [Blair] got into a mode that was above and beyond anything she had ever done before...She [always] had a flair for stylization, but it never reached the pinnacle that it did for '*small world*'. Not only that, but it was a collage. If you look at some of the original artwork, there's wallpaper glued on it, there's burlap and dollies. She got childlike when she did this." — Rolly Crump



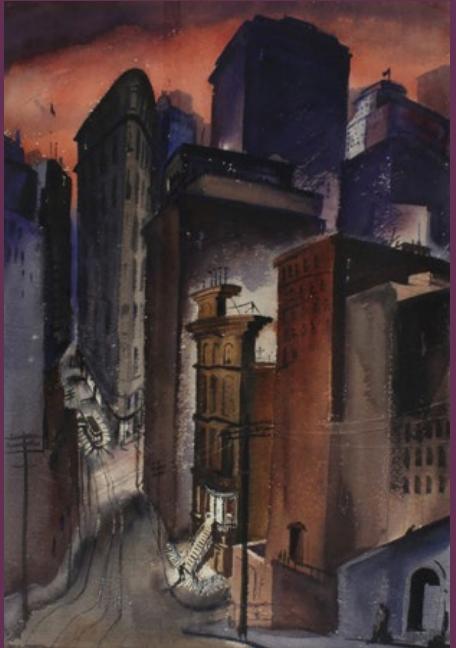
"*it's a small world*" mural for the Jules Stein Eye Institute c. 1966



Mary Blair shows Walt a model for "*it's small world*", c. 1965



Early Life & Training



San Francisco Nights, c. 1930s



Mary and Lee Blair on their wedding day,
March 3, 1934

Mary & Disney Animation



Mary Blair shows a drawing of Donald Duck to a
duck, 1940



Storyboard art for *Dumbo* (1941)





Loading Llamas in Peru, 1941



Mary Blair at the Hotel Glória in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1941

The South America Trip

In 1941, Walt Disney and a selection of studio artists—including Mary—took a diplomatic trip to South America on behalf of the United States government's goodwill efforts. The trip introduced her to new colors and cultures that would inspire her artwork for the rest of her career.



Mary Blair and Walt Disney tip their hats to Mexican dancer Carmen Molina on the set of *The Three Caballeros* (1945)

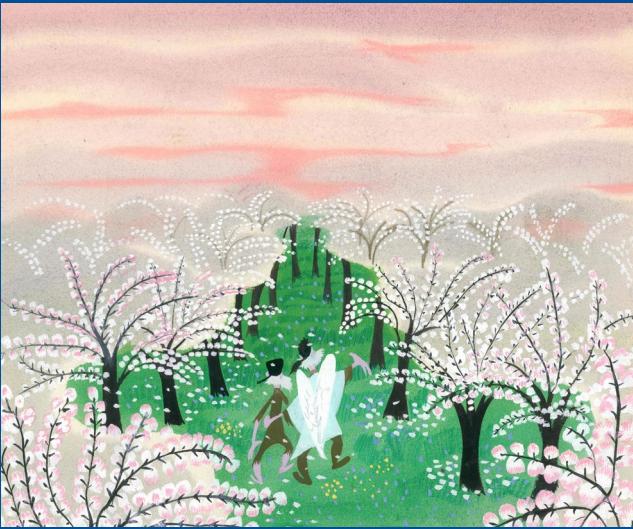


Cinderella (1950) concept art

40s & 50s Features



Melody Time (1948) concept art



Alice in Wonderland (1951) concept art



Mary Blair showing paintings to studio visitors, 1945

Independent Career



Blue Bell Kids Play Clothes advertisement,
c. 1953



Bonwit Teller window display by Mary, c. 1962

Reunion with Walt



Mary reviewing print for Disney's
Contemporary Resort mosaic mural tile,
c. 1971



L-R: Marc Davis, Walt Disney, and Mary Blair on a Disney Studios soundstage testing World's Fair attractions, c. 1964





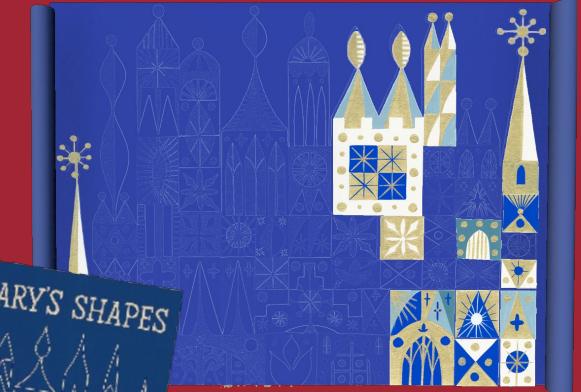
Interactives



Mary Blair Digital Experience: An augmented reality interactive which allows guests the opportunity to place themselves within a selection of artworks created by Mary Blair.

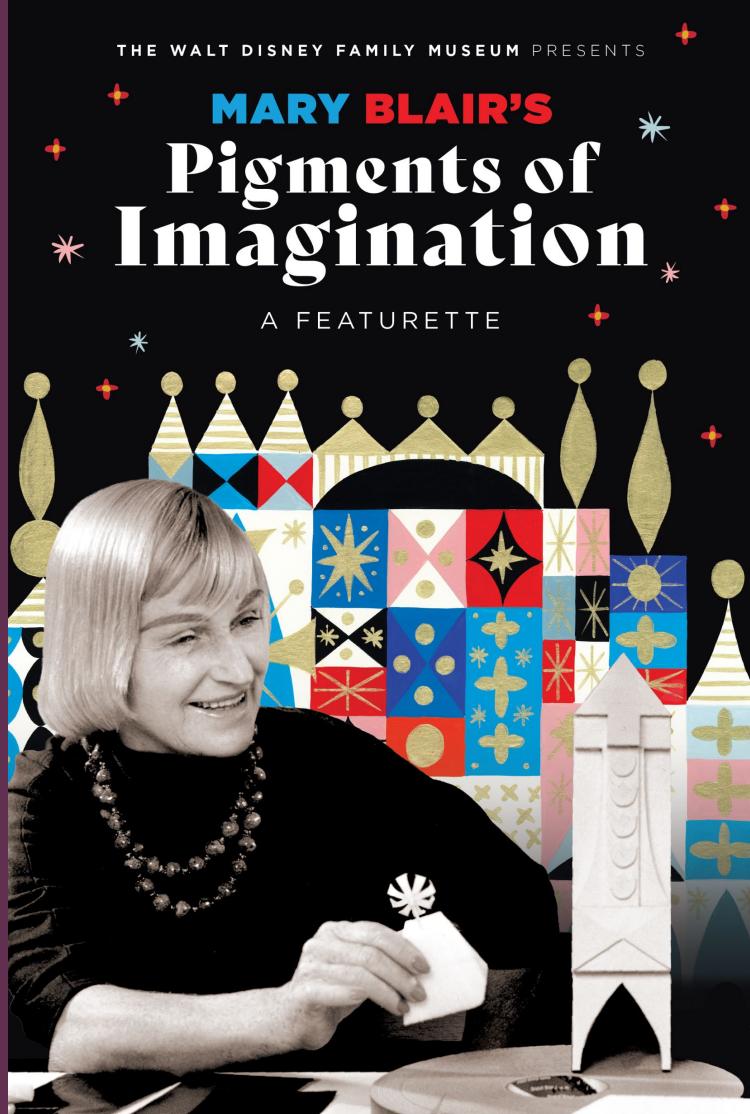
Mary's Shapes: Play with shapes just like Mary Blair! Use the touch screen to move around pieces of Mary's artwork like a puzzle, creating your very own beautiful and fun design using Mary's colors and shapes.

Paint Like Mary: Guests can paint like Mary by filling in one of her beloved pieces of art with their own choice of vibrant colors. Experiment with color palettes and create a digital masterpiece!



Media

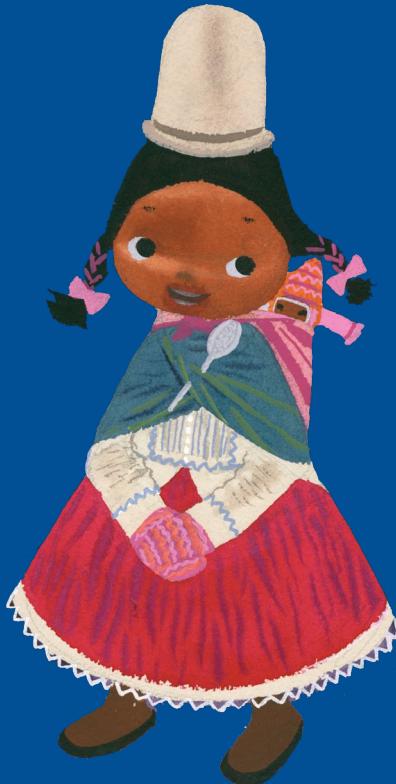
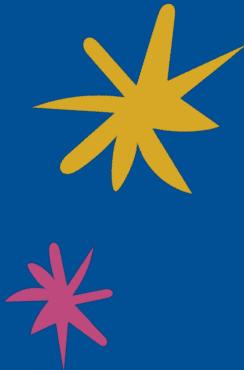
Complementing the exhibition is a featurette, produced and edited in-house at WDFM, that showcases works from the exhibition, paired with corresponding, iconic Disney scenes. Narrated by animation historian Mindy Johnson, this featurette includes interviews with Disney artists and experts, along with home video footage of Mary never previously shared with the public. **(Runtime: 46 minutes)**



Asset Breakdown & Technical Details

This exhibition consists of:

- Approximately 215 linear feet (wall space)
- Objects: 78 original and facsimile artworks (most of which are framed or in wall cases)
- Graphics (photos, reproductions, etc): 19 digital files, 18 physical prints, 10 text panels (physical or digital)
- A 46-minute featurette film (digital file)
- 3 interactive activities (digital files, one touchscreen monitor)
- **Approximately 8 crates of material**



For more information, please contact:

MARINA VILLAR DELGADO
Director of Exhibitions and Collections
mvillar@wdfmuseum.org

THE WALT
DISNEY
FAMILY
MUSEUM

