

The Walt Disney Family Museum presents

Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle

Rediscovering the visionary artist behind *Sleeping Beauty*'s enduring style and artistic legacy

October 23, 2026 – April 18, 2027

San Francisco, CA. September 17, 2026—This fall, The Walt Disney Family Museum is delighted to offer guests another opportunity to view one of their most celebrated original exhibitions: *Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle*. Co-curated by CEO of Eyvind Earle Publishing Ioan Szasz and museum Director of Collections and Exhibitions Marina Villar Delgado, *Awaking Beauty* opens Friday, October 23 and explores the life and work of prolific American artist and Disney Legend Eyvind Earle. The presentation builds upon the museum's 2017 exhibition while offering a fresh perspective on Earle's remarkable artistic legacy.

Earle is best known as the color stylist—the artist determining not only the colors but the entire visual look—for Walt Disney's classic feature *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). His evocative concept and background art also helped shape such endearing films as *Lady and the Tramp* (1955), *The Truth About Mother Goose* (1957), *Paul Bunyan* (1958), and others.

Following the popularity of the museum's original retrospective in 2017, *Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle* has now been thoughtfully reenvisioned with roughly 200 works on view in the Exhibition Gallery on the museum's lower level, which includes two new gallery spaces debuting for this special exhibition.

"Eyvind Earle's striking and atmospheric style continues to inspire us, and we are excited to reimagine *Awaking Beauty* for a new generation of museum visitors," says museum Executive Director Kirsten Komoroske. "This iteration will offer a deeper look at Earle's remarkable career at The Walt Disney Studios alongside the breadth of his stunning personal work, featuring more than 35 loaned and recently acquired paintings that will be on view at the museum for the very first time."

Drawing inspiration from medieval tapestries, illuminated manuscripts, Pre-Renaissance Northern European paintings, and the American landscape, Earle created visual worlds of breathtaking detail and stylized grandeur. His richly patterned and romantic backgrounds—some taking nearly ten times longer to complete than a typical Disney background—gave his animated films a jewel-toned "moving illustration" quality.

Reflecting on his time at The Walt Disney Studios, Earle once said, "I put myself through art school and Walt Disney paid me a good salary all the while I unwittingly developed the style of painting, or rather, perfected the style that would stay with me the rest of my life."

In addition to his work at The Walt Disney Studios, Earle's distinctive interpretation of iconic American landscapes as a fine artist and printmaker continues to influence generations of artists and designers, notably on Walt Disney Animation Studio's *Pocahontas* (1995) and *Frozen* (2013), and the design of *Sleeping Beauty Castle* (*Le Château de la Belle au Bois Dormant*) in Disneyland Paris. For his work on *Sleeping Beauty* and his contributions to animation, The Walt Disney Company posthumously awarded Earle the prestigious Disney Legend Award in 2015.

"Eyvind was an honest and humble man, yet he was constantly challenging himself to push the boundaries of his own artistry with his enduring passion to explore, create and innovate," says Szasz, who began working with the artist in 1988. "Whether it was through a modest snowy landscape for a Christmas card or a more intricate background concept for films like *Sleeping Beauty*, Earle brought magic to everything he touched."

Villar Delgado adds, "Eyvind Earle occupies a singular place in American art history. He redefined what a Disney background could be, and then he spent the rest of his career proving that vision was only the beginning. This exhibition traces that arc, from the jewel-toned medieval forests of *Sleeping Beauty* to the serigraphs and paintings that made him one of California's most collected artists. We're honored to share his work with the depth and context it deserves."

Audiovisual elements throughout the special exhibition will offer a closer look at some of Earle’s work beyond the gallery, including a trailer for *West Side Story* (1961), a Chevrolet commercial, and more. Interactive activities will also complement the exhibition space, creating an engaging, hands-on experience for visitors of all ages.

Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle will be on view to museum members from Thursday, October 22, 2026 and the public from Friday October 23, 2026 through Sunday, April 18, 2027. Entry to the special exhibition can be added to a general admission ticket or purchased separately. Tickets are available now at waltdisney.org/tickets.

ABOUT IOAN SZASZ

Ioan Szasz is CEO of Eyvind Earle Publishing and co-curator of *Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle*. When Szasz arrived in California in 1988, he responded to an ad in a Monterey newspaper for a position as a “silkscreen printer’s assistant.” While Szasz knew little about silkscreen printing at the time, his new boss, Eyvind Earle, taught him all about the process. Over the years, Earle became more than just a mentor and boss to Szasz—he also became a dear and beloved friend. Szasz worked alongside Earle for nearly 13 years, from 1988 until Earle’s passing in 2000. Szasz continues his work for Eyvind Earle Publishing LLC, publishing and representing Earle’s artwork in the US and worldwide.

ABOUT THE WALT DISNEY FAMILY MUSEUM

The Walt Disney Family Museum presents the fascinating story and achievements of Walt Disney, the man who raised animation to the level of fine art, transformed the film industry, tirelessly pursued innovation, and created a global, yet distinctively American legacy. Opened in October 2009, the 40,000-square-foot facility features innovative technology alongside a vast collection of historic materials and artifacts that bring Disney’s achievements to life. Early drawings and animation, movies, music, listening stations, a spectacular model of Disneyland, and much more are presented in a myriad of interactive galleries. The museum is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in the scenic Presidio of San Francisco.

- Hours:** Open Thursday through Sunday: 10am to 5:30pm, last gallery entry at 4:30pm.
Closed Mondays through Wednesdays and the following public holidays: January 1, Thanksgiving Day, and December 25.
- Where:** 104 Montgomery Street, The Presidio of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA 94129
- Tickets:** Check waltdisney.org/tickets for current general admission pricing.
Awaking Beauty: The Art of Eyvind Earle exhibition only: \$15 for adults; \$12 for seniors & students; \$5 for youth | general admission add-on: \$10 for adults; \$8 for seniors & students; \$4 for youth.
Museum admission is free for members, children under 5, and active and retired military personnel, in addition to their spouses/dependents with valid ID.
- Contact:** 415.345.6800 | waltdisney.org/eyvind-earle
- Follow:** facebook.com/wdfmuseum | Instagram, Threads & X: @wdfmuseum
- Press Kit:** bit.ly/eyvind_earle_presskit
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