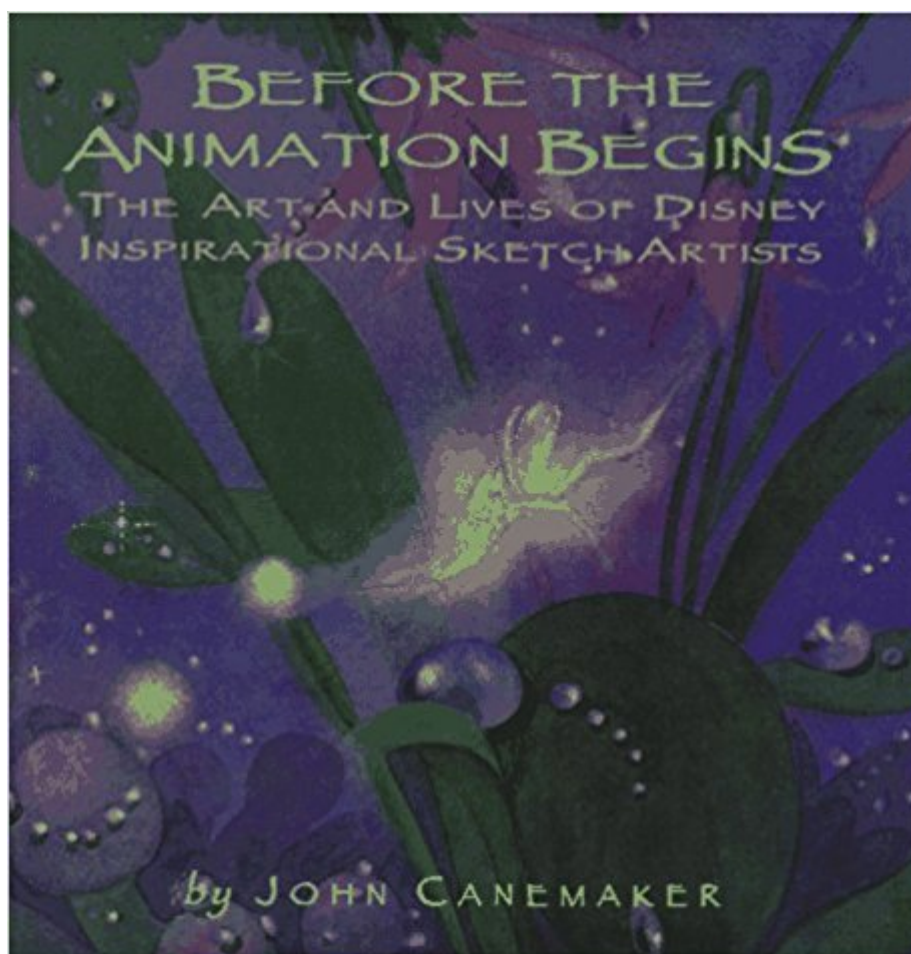


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# Before The Animation Begins: The Art And Lives Of Disney Inspirational Sketch Artists



## Synopsis

For the first time ever, the lives and work of the "inspirational sketch" artists who created Disney's classic animated films have been chronicled from the thirties to the present, with never-before-revealed details about their lives and interactions with the studios.

## Book Information

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Grade Level: Preschool and up

## Customer Reviews

For the first time ever, noted animation historian and animator John Canemaker documents the lives and works of Disney's "inspirational sketch artists" from the 1930s to the present. These are the people who visualize all the details surrounding each character in the initial creative period before the grueling labor of animation begins. "Through daydreams and doodles, they attempt to 'find' the film." The happy result of these flights of fancy are dancing ostriches and personality-rich broomsticks. Drawings and paintings of Disney characters leap right off the pages of this lush book, where you'll find pastels from Fantasia, faux wood-cuts of the Seven Dwarfs, paintings of Alice in Wonderland, and hundreds of other delightful, rarely seen images. The stories of artists such as Ty Wong, who created Bambi, and Bianca Majolie, the first woman to join the story department at Walt Disney (in 1935), are as provocative as their art. Canemaker does a fine job of placing the artists' lives and interactions with Disney studios in the historical context of modern art. Before the Animation Begins is a beautiful book.

Both of these heavily illustrated books look at two less celebrated sections of the Disney empire, and the rare artwork that both contain is their strongest asset. Canemaker's book is on the people who created preliminary sketches "that explore the visual possibilities in a literary property." These possibilities for any proposed cartoon include the visual style of the film, how the characters will look, the way a major scene could be portrayed, and so on. Specific sketch artists have put their individual stamp on the entire look of the finished film in such cases as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Bambi*, and *Night on Bald Mountain*. In addition, they have created memorable minor characters, such as Pocahontas's raccoon pal and *Beauty and the Beast*'s Mrs. Potts. Canemaker primarily concentrates on the feature-length cartoons, and he gives special attention to *Fantasia*. By chronologically examining the life and work of the significant sketch artists, he ably demonstrates their contributions. An interesting look at a neglected aspect of the Disney films. With a combination of imagination and engineering skill, the Imagineers create all elements of the Disney theme parks, from the rides, attractions, shops, and restaurants to the signs, light fixtures, trash cans, and landscaping. Starting with Disneyland and continuing up to the present day, this book attempts to show how "imagineering" created so many memorable experiences. Even with the aid of copious illustrations-never-before-seen artwork from the Imagineering Division's own files-the act of imaginative creation is difficult to re-create, and this work doesn't completely succeed in showing how the Imagineers brought their creations into being. It is further hampered by a once-over-lightly writing style. But that is a minor quibble in what for the most part is a fascinating before-the-curtain-rises look at the Disney theme parks. Both books are highly recommended for academic and larger public libraries. Marianne Cawley, Enoch Pratt Free Lib., Baltimore

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This is a must read for Disney enthusiasts. Preproduction sketches are the most fascinating artwork to look at of the Disney art. This book is a series of short bios on the various sketch artists who worked at the Disney studio throughout the years. It's great that info has been published about these people, because I reckon there isn't much out there about some of these artists. Here you'll find bios and art from people such as Albert Hurter, Gustaf Tengren, Joe Grant, David Hall, Mary Blair, Kay Nielsen. The Archive Editions Design book is a great supplement to this book. I hope this will get rereleased in the future.

Have you ever dreamed of approaching Walt Disney Studios with your own idea for a story they should make into a feature? A great story, but how could you get them to see that it was good for

them? This is a book about people who can do that. If a story were 'perfect' for Disney, these are the artists who will get the studio to understand that it is perfect. These artists share Walt Disney's greatest skill: the ability to get others excited about something wonderful, and they are able to do it through artwork. Usually this work is never appreciated by the public, as beautiful as it might be. This is beautiful artwork that is meant only for other artists to appreciate and be inspired by.

Canemakers book allows us to appreciate them as well for once, and also allows us to get to know what kind of people are able to do it. Awesome

Beautiful book!

Gorgeous book, thought for the price it might be in rough shape but it's great. Thanks!

John Canemaker is the best animation author in the business, and I own all of his books to date. Before the Animation Begins is beautifully illustrated and so informative--it is a book I pick up again and again. It is a must have for all Disney animation fans.

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