

## Ub Iwerks

Ub Iwerks was an exceptionally talented man and he used his talents to create changes within the animation industry. Ub grew up in Kansas, loving art and having the desire to make his drawings come to life just as Winsor Mckay did with Gerty. Eventually he got a job at the Pezman Ruban Commercial Agency where his great draftsmanship was recognized. A month later, Walt Disney joined the company and Ub and Walt, coming from similar backgrounds and both fascinated by pictures in motion, became really close friends. One day Walt and Ub decided to open up their own advertisement company, but soon discovered that they both needed a steady income to survive and their company wasn't providing that for them, so they both joined the Kansas City Slide Company where they got a behind the scenes look at motion picture production. At this company, Walt and Ub were able to try their hands at a animated commercial and it was such a success that they created a new company, the Laugh O' Grams, where they produced a series of fairytales reinvented to fit into the Jazz Age. Ub's straight ahead drafting process and swinging style helped to differentiate Walt and Ub's cartoons from the others of that era. Even with Ub's skills, and money, the company still ended up bankrupt, but not before Walt and Ub had produced the Alice series, a real life girl living in a cartoon world. However, Walt was unable to pay for the prints and therefore could not make any money off of it, yet. Walt soon left off to Hollywood, leaving Ub to look for a job to earn back his lost investment. Ub ended up getting a job back at the Pezman Ruban Advertising Company and soon worked his way up to the Head of the Art Department, then Walt sent a letter, asking Ub to move him and his mother to Hollywood, to join his newly formed company, since he didn't have the draftsmanship which Ub had. Walt being the friend and influencer he is, convinced Ub to quit his job and join his company and soon it was obvious that Ub was essential for the company, for he was able to outwork all the other animators 2 or 3 to 1. Working alongside Winkler, they produced a full series of Alice cartoons, but once Winkler got married she turned the company over to her husband Mintz. Mintz saw an opportunity in this. He decided to commission Walt and Ub to create a new character which he could sell to Universal Studios. With this Walt and Ub created Oswald the Lucky Rabbit. Without the constraint of real people, Ub was able to get out of the slapstick gags and into personality gags, creating a much darker cartoon than the Alice cartoons were ever able to become. Due to the success of their company, Walt and Ub were finally able to enjoy some social life and they both met their wives who joined the company and helped ink the finals. However, Walt didn't officially own Oswald so as the contract came to a close, Mintz offered Walt the opportunity to work for him, continuing in the animation business with a steady income, but Walt refused and was determined never to not own his creations. Walt, Ub and Walt's brother Roy now had no contract and no character, but that wasn't going to stop them. Walt, on his way back from his meeting with Mintz, had already begun his process of creating a new character. This character was to become the biggest success and the most famous "actor" of the late 1920's and early 1930's, Mickey Mouse. Mickey Mouse's first cartoon, "Plane Crazy" was created by Ub, and only Ub, in two weeks and was a huge success. Mickey was also the star in the first cartoon with sound, "Steamboat Willy" and he soon became an icon for the United States during World War II. However, the freedom which Ub experienced in the company, soon diminished as the company began to hire more and more employees and had to produce more cartoons at a quicker rate. Ub, disliked this and began to distance himself from Walt and eventually was confronted by an employee from Pat Power's agency offering to start up a studio for Ub, and Ub agreed. At his own company, Ub was able to create cartoons as well as technologies which helped to change the way

animations were produced, such as the 3D camera system which eventually led to the multiplane camera used at Disney. Ub may have been a successful animator, and his company was successful for a while, but soon people began to look for a release from society which Ub's cartoons couldn't provide. With the decrease in audience, the smaller profit from being an independent company and the rivalry against Mickey Mouse, Ub ended up closing his company and joining Walt's company again, not to animate, but to help with creating technology for special effects. Ub was able to create technology which took audiences suspension of belief even farther and winning several awards for Disney. Ub was able to take his abilities as an artist and draftman and create a character which will last forever and technology which ultimately changed the way animation and special effects were created.