

= Walt Disney Animation Studios =

Walt Disney Animation Studios , headquartered at the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank , California , is an American animation studio that creates animated feature films , short films , and television specials for The Walt Disney Company . Founded on October 16 , 1923 , it is a division of The Walt Disney Studios . The studio has produced 55 feature films , from Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs ( 1937 ) to Zootopia ( 2016 ) .

Originally founded as Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio in 1923 and incorporated as Walt Disney Productions in 1929 , the studio was exclusively dedicated to producing short films until it expanded into feature production in 1934 . In 1983 , Walt Disney Productions named its live @-@ action film studio Walt Disney Pictures . During a corporate restructuring in 1986 , Walt Disney Productions was renamed The Walt Disney Company and the animation division , renamed Walt Disney Feature Animation , became a subsidiary of its film division , The Walt Disney Studios . In 2006 , Walt Disney Feature Animation took on its current name , Walt Disney Animation Studios after Pixar Animation Studios was acquired by Disney in the same year .

For much of its existence , the studio was recognized as the premier American animation studio ; it developed many of the techniques , concepts , and principles that became standard practices of traditional animation . The studio also pioneered the art of storyboarding , which is now a standard technique used in both animated and live @-@ action filmmaking . The studio 's catalog of animated features is among Disney 's most notable assets , with the stars of its animated shorts ? Mickey Mouse , Donald Duck , Goofy , and Pluto ? becoming recognizable figures in popular culture and mascots for The Walt Disney Company as a whole .

Walt Disney Animation Studios , today managed by Edwin Catmull and John Lasseter ( who also manage Pixar ) , continues to produce films using both traditional animation and computer @-@ generated imagery ( CGI ) .

= = History = =

= = = 1923 ? 29 : Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio = = =

Kansas City , Missouri , natives Walt Disney and Roy O. Disney founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio in Los Angeles in 1923 , and got their start producing a series of silent Alice Comedies short films featuring a live @-@ action child actress in an animated world . The Alice Comedies were distributed by Margaret J. Winkler 's Winkler Pictures , which later also distributed a second Disney short subject series , the all @-@ animated Oswald the Lucky Rabbit , through Universal Pictures starting in 1927 . Upon relocating to California , the Disney brothers initially started working in their uncle Robert Disney 's garage at 4406 Kingswell Avenue in the Los Feliz neighborhood of Los Angeles , then in October 1923 formally launched their studio in a small office on the rear side of a real estate agency 's office at 4651 Kingswell Avenue . In February 1924 , the studio moved next door to office space of its own at 4649 Kingswell Avenue . In 1925 , Disney put down a deposit on a new location at 2719 Hyperion Avenue in the nearby Silver Lake neighborhood , which came to be known as the Hyperion Studio to distinguish it from the studio 's other locations , and in January 1926 the studio moved there and took on the name the Walt Disney Studio .

Meanwhile , after the first year 's worth of Oswalds , Walt Disney attempted to renew his contract with Winkler Pictures , but Charles Mintz , who had taken over Margaret Winkler 's business after marrying her , wanted to force Disney to accept a lower advance payment for each Oswald short . Disney refused , and as Universal owned the rights to Oswald rather than Disney , Mintz set up his own animation studio to produce Oswald cartoons . Most of Disney 's staff was hired away by Mintz to move over , once Disney 's Oswald contract was done in mid @-@ 1928 .

Working in secret while the rest of the staff finished the remaining Oswalds on contract , Disney and his head animator Ub Iwerks led a small handful of loyal staffers in producing cartoons starring a new character named Mickey Mouse . The first two Mickey Mouse cartoons , Plane Crazy and The

Galloping Gaucho , were previewed in limited engagements during the summer of 1928 . For the third Mickey cartoon , however , Disney produced a soundtrack , collaborating with musician Carl Stalling and businessman Pat Powers , who provided Disney with his bootlegged " Cinephone " sound @-@ on @-@ film process . Subsequently , the third Mickey Mouse cartoon , Steamboat Willie , became Disney 's first cartoon with synchronized sound , and was a major success upon its November 1928 debut at the West 57th Theatre in New York City . The Mickey Mouse series of sound cartoons , distributed by Powers through Celebrity Productions , quickly became the most popular cartoon series in the United States . A second Disney series of sound cartoons , the Silly Symphonies , debuted in 1929 with The Skeleton Dance .

= = = 1929 ? 40 : Reincorporation , Silly Symphonies and Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs = = =

In 1930 , disputes over finances between Disney and Powers led to Disney 's studio , reincorporated on December 16 , 1929 , as Walt Disney Productions , signing a new distribution contract with Columbia Pictures . Powers in return signed away Ub Iwerks , who began producing cartoons at his own studio .

Columbia distributed Disney 's shorts for two years before the Disney studio entered a new distribution deal with United Artists in 1932 . The same year , Disney signed a two @-@ year exclusive deal with Technicolor to utilize its new 3 @-@ strip color film process , which allowed for fuller @-@ color reproduction where previous color film processors could not . The result was the Silly Symphony Flowers and Trees , the first film commercially released in full Technicolor . Flowers and Trees was a major success , and all Silly Symphonies were subsequently produced in Technicolor .

By the early 1930s , Walt Disney had realized that the success of animated films depended upon telling emotionally gripping stories that would grab the audience and not let go , and this realization led him to create a separate " story department " with storyboard artists dedicated to story development . With well @-@ developed characters and an interesting story , the 1933 Technicolor Silly Symphony Three Little Pigs became a major box office and pop culture success , with its theme song " Who 's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf ? " becoming a popular chart hit .

In 1934 , Walt Disney gathered several key staff members and announced his plans to make his first feature animated film . Despite derision from most of the film industry , who dubbed the production " Disney 's Folly , " Disney proceeded undaunted into the production of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , which would become the first animated feature in English and Technicolor . Considerable training and development went into the production of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , and the studio greatly expanded with established animators , artists from other fields , and recent college graduates joining the studio to work on the film . The training classes , supervised by the head animators such as Les Clark , Norm Ferguson , and Art Babbit and taught by Donald W. Graham , an art teacher from the nearby Chouinard Art Institute , had begun at the studio in 1932 and were greatly expanded into orientation training and continuing education classes . In the course of teaching the classes , Graham and the animators created or formalized many of the techniques and processes that became the key tenets and principles of traditional animation . Silly Symphonies such as The Goddess of Spring ( 1934 ) and The Old Mill ( 1937 ) served as experimentation grounds for new techniques such as the animation of realistic human figures , special effects animation , the use of the multiplane camera , an invention which split animation artwork layers into several planes , allowing the camera to appear to move dimensionally through an animated scene .

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs cost Disney a then @-@ expensive sum of \$ 1 @. 4 million to complete ( including \$ 100 @, 000 on story development alone ) , and was an unprecedented success when released in February 1938 by RKO Radio Pictures , which had assumed distribution of Disney product from United Artists in 1937 . Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs was briefly the highest grossing film of all time before the success of Gone with the Wind two years later , grossing over \$ 8 million on its initial release , the equivalent of \$ 134 @, 487 @, 000 in 1999 dollars .

During the production of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , work had continued on the Mickey Mouse and Silly Symphonies series of shorts . Mickey Mouse switched to Technicolor in 1935 , by

which time the series had added several major supporting characters , among them Mickey 's dog Pluto and their friends Donald Duck and Goofy . Donald , Goofy , and Pluto would all be appearing in series of their own by 1940 , and the Donald Duck cartoons eclipsed the Mickey Mouse series in popularity . The Silly Symphonies , which garnered seven Academy Awards , ended in 1939 .

= = = 1940 ? 48 : New features , strike , World War II = = =

The success of Snow White allowed Disney to build a new , larger studio on Buena Vista Street in Burbank , where The Walt Disney Company remains headquartered to this day . Walt Disney Productions had its initial public offering on April 2 , 1940 , with Walt Disney as president and chairman and Roy Disney as CEO .

The studio launched into the production of new animated features , the first of which was Pinocchio , released in February 1940 . Pinocchio was not initially a box office success . The box office returns from the film 's initial release were both below Snow White 's unprecedented success and below studio expectations . Of the film 's \$ 2 @. @ 289 million cost ? twice of Snow White ? Disney only recouped \$ 1 million by late 1940 , with studio reports of the film 's final original box office take varying between \$ 1 @. @ 4 million and \$ 1 @. @ 9 million . However , Pinocchio was a critical success , winning the Academy Award for Best Original Song and Best Original Score , making it the first film of the studio to win not only either Oscar , but both at the same time .

Fantasia , an experimental film produced to an accompanying orchestral arrangement conducted by Leopold Stokowski , was released in November 1940 by Disney itself in a series of limited @-@ seating roadshow engagements . The film cost \$ 2 million to produce , and although the film earned \$ 1 @. @ 4 million in its roadshow engagements , the high cost ( \$ 85 @, @ 000 per theater ) of installing Fantasound placed Fantasia at an even greater loss than Pinocchio . RKO assumed distribution of Fantasia in 1941 , later reissuing it in severely edited versions over the years . Despite its financial failure , Fantasia was the subject of two Academy Honorary Awards on February 26 , 1942 ? one for the development of the innovative Fantasound system used to create the film 's stereoscopic soundtrack , and the other for Stokowski and his contributions to the film .

Much of the character animation on these productions and all subsequent features until the late 1970s was supervised by a brain @-@ trust of animators Walt Disney dubbed the " Nine Old Men , " many of whom also served as directors and later producers on the Disney features : Frank Thomas , Ollie Johnston , Woolie Reitherman , Les Clark , Ward Kimball , Eric Larson , John Lounsbery , Milt Kahl , and Marc Davis . Other head animators at Disney during this period included Norm Ferguson , Bill Tytla , and Fred Moore . The development of the feature animation department created a caste system at the Disney studio : lesser animators ( and feature animators in @-@ between assignments ) were assigned to work on the short subjects , while animators higher in status such as the Nine Old Men worked on the features . Concern over Walt Disney accepting credit for the artists ' work as well as debates over compensation led to many of the newer and lower @-@ ranked animators seeking to unionize the Disney studio .

A bitter union strike began in May 1941 , which was resolved without the angered Walt Disney 's involvement in July and August of that year . As Walt Disney Productions was being set up as a union shop , Walt Disney and several studio employees were sent by the US government on a Good Neighbor policy trip to Central and South America . The Disney strike and its aftermath led to an exodus of several animation professionals from the studio , from top @-@ level animators such as Art Babbitt and Bill Tytla , to artists better known for their work outside the Disney studio such as Frank Tashlin , Maurice Noble , Walt Kelly , Bill Meléndez , and John Hubley . Hubley , with several other Disney strikers , went on to found the United Productions of America studio , Disney 's key animation rival in the 1950s .

Dumbo , in production during the midst of the animators ' strike , premiered in October 1941 , and proved to be a financial success . The simple film only cost \$ 950 @, @ 000 to produce , half the cost of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , less than a third of the cost of Pinocchio , and two @-@ fifths of the cost of Fantasia . Dumbo eventually grossed \$ 1 @. @ 6 million during its original release . In August 1942 , Bambi was released , and as with Pinocchio and Fantasia , did not

perform well at the box office . Out of its \$ 1 @. @ 7 million budget , it only grossed \$ 1 @. @ 64 million .

Production of full @-@ length animated features was temporarily suspended after the release of Bambi . Given the financial failures of some of the recent features and World War II cutting off much of the overseas cinema market , the studio 's financiers at the Bank of America would only loan the studio working capital if it temporarily restricted itself to shorts production . Then in @-@ production features such as Peter Pan , Alice in Wonderland , and Lady and the Tramp were therefore put on hold until after the war . Other issues affecting the studio at the time included the drafting of several Disney animators to fight in World War II , and the necessity for the studio to focus on producing wartime content for the U.S. Army , particularly military training and civilian propaganda films . From 1942 to 1943 , 95 percent of the studio 's animation output was for the military . During the war , Disney produced the live @-@ action / animated military propaganda feature Victory Through Air Power ( 1943 ) , and a series of Latin culture @-@ themed shorts resulting from the 1941 Good Neighbor trip were compiled into two features , Saludos Amigos ( 1942 ) and The Three Caballeros ( 1944 ) .

Saludos and Caballeros set the template for several other 1940s Disney releases of " package films " : low @-@ budgeted films composed of animated short subjects with animated or live @-@ action bridging material . These films were Make Mine Music ( 1946 ) , Fun and Fancy Free ( 1947 ) , Melody Time ( 1948 ) , and The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad ( 1949 ) . The studio also produced two features , Song of the South ( 1946 ) and So Dear to My Heart ( 1948 ) , which used more expansive live @-@ action stories which still included animated sequences and sequences combining live @-@ action and animated characters . Shorts production continued during this period as well , with Donald Duck , Goofy , and Pluto cartoons being the main output accompanied by cartoons starring Mickey Mouse , Figaro , and in the 1950s , Chip ' n Dale and Humphrey the Bear .

In addition , Disney began reissuing the previous features , beginning with re @-@ releases of Snow White in 1944 , Pinocchio in 1945 , and Fantasia in 1946 . This led to a tradition of reissuing the Disney films every seven years , which lasted into the 1990s before being translated into the studio 's handling of home video releases .

= = = 1948 ? 59 : Return of features , end of shorts , layoffs = = =

In 1948 , Disney returned to the production of full @-@ length features with Cinderella , a full @-@ length film based on the fairy tale by Charles Perrault . At a cost of nearly \$ 3 @, @ 000 @, @ 000 , the future of the studio depended upon the success of this film . Upon its release in 1950 , Cinderella proved to be a box office success , with the profits from the film 's release allowing Disney to carry on producing animated features throughout the 1950s . Following its success , production on the in @-@ limbo features Alice in Wonderland , Peter Pan , and Lady and the Tramp was resumed . In addition , an ambitious new project , an adaptation of the fairy tale " Sleeping Beauty " set to Tchaikovsky 's classic score , was begun but took much of the rest of the decade to complete .

Alice in Wonderland , released in 1951 , met with a lukewarm response at the box office and was a sharp critical disappointment in its initial release . Peter Pan , released in 1953 , was , on the other hand , a commercial success and the highest @-@ grossing film of the year . In 1955 , Lady and the Tramp was released to higher box office success than any other Disney feature from the studio since Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , earning an estimated \$ 7 @. @ 5 million in rentals at the North American box office in 1955 . Lady is significant as Disney 's first widescreen animated feature , produced in the CinemaScope process , and was the first Disney animated feature to be released by Disney 's own distribution company , Buena Vista Distribution .

By the mid @-@ 1950s , with Walt Disney 's attention primarily set on new endeavour such as live @-@ action films , television , and the Disneyland theme park , production of the animated films was left primarily in the hands of the " Nine Old Men " trust of head animators and directors . This led to several delays in approvals during the production of Disney 's Sleeping Beauty , which was finally

released in 1959 . At \$ 6 million , it was Disney 's most expensive film to date , produced in a heavily stylized art style devised by artist Eyvind Earle and presented in large @-@ format Super Technirama 70 with six @-@ track stereophonic sound . However , the film 's large production costs and underperformance at the box office resulted in the studio posting its first annual loss in a decade for fiscal year 1960 , leading to massive layoffs throughout the studio .

By the end of the decade , the Disney short subjects were no longer being produced on a regular basis , with many of the shorts divisions ' personnel either leaving the company or begin reassigned to work on Disney television programs such as The Mickey Mouse Club and Disneyland . While the Disney shorts had dominated the Academy Award for Best Short Subject ( Cartoons ) during the 1930s , its reign over the award had been ended by MGM 's Tom and Jerry cartoons , Warner Bros ' Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies , and the works of United Productions of America ( UPA ) , whose flat art style and stylized animation techniques were lauded as more modern alternatives to the older Disney style . During the 1950s , only one Disney short , the stylized Toot , Whistle , Plunk and Boom , won the Best Short Subject ( Cartoons ) Oscar .

The Mickey Mouse , Pluto , and Goofy shorts had all ceased regular production by 1953 , with Donald Duck and Humphrey continuing and converting to widescreen CinemaScope before the shorts division was shut down in 1956 . After that , all future shorts were produced by the feature films division until 1969 . The last Disney short of the golden age of animation was It 's Tough to Be a Bird . Disney shorts would only be produced on a sporadic basis from this point on , with notable later shorts including Runaway Brain ( 1995 , starring Mickey Mouse ) , and Paperman ( 2012 ) .

= = = 1959 ? 66 : Reduced feature animation , Walt Disney 's final years = = =

Despite the 1959 layoffs and competition for Walt Disney 's attention from the company 's grown live @-@ action film , TV , and theme park departments , production continued on feature animation productions at a reduced level . In 1961 , the studio released One Hundred and One Dalmatians , an animated feature which popularized the use of xerography during the process of inking and painting traditional animation cels . Using xerography , animation drawings could be photo @-@ chemically transferred rather than traced from paper drawings to the clear acetate sheets ( " cels " ) used in final animation production . The resulting art style ? a scratchier line which revealed the construction lines in the animators ' drawings ? typified Disney films into the 1980s . The film was a success , being the tenth highest grossing film of 1961 with rentals of \$ 6 @. @ 4 million .

The Disney animation training program started at the studio before the development of Snow White in 1932 eventually led to Walt Disney helping found the California Institute of the Arts ( CalArts ) . This university , formed via the merger of Chouinard Art Institute and the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music , included a Disney @-@ developed animation program of study among its degree offerings . CalArts became the alma mater of many of the animators who would work at Disney and other animation studios from the 1970s to the present .

The Sword in the Stone was released in 1963 , and was the sixth highest grossing film of the year in North America with estimated rentals of \$ 4 @. @ 75 million . A featurette adaptation of one of A. A. Milne 's Winnie @-@ the @-@ Pooh stories , Winnie the Pooh and the Honey Tree , was released in 1966 , to be followed by several other Pooh featurettes over the years and a full @-@ length compilation feature , The Many Adventures of Winnie the Pooh , which was released in 1977 .

Walt Disney died in December 1966 , ten months before the studio 's next film , The Jungle Book , was completed and released . The film was a success , finishing 1967 as the fourth highest @-@ grossing movie of the year .

= = = 1966 ? 84 : Decline in popularity , Bluth 's entrance and departure , " rock bottom " = = =

Following Walt Disney 's passing , Woolie Reitherman continued as both producer and director of the features . The studio began the 1970s with the release of The Aristocats , the last film project to be approved by Walt Disney himself . In 1971 , Roy O. Disney , the studio co @-@ founder , died

and Walt Disney Productions was left in the hands of Donn Tatum and Card Walker , who alternated as chairman and CEO in overlapping terms for the rest of the decade . The next feature , Robin Hood ( 1973 ) , was produced with a significantly reduced budget and animation repurposed from previous features . Both The Aristocats and Robin Hood were minor box office and critical successes .

The Rescuers , released in 1977 , was a success exceeding the achievements of the previous two Disney features . Receiving broad critical acclaim , commercial returns , and an Academy Award nomination , it ended up being the third highest grossing film in 1977 and the most successful and acclaimed Disney animated film since The Jungle Book . The film was reissued in 1983 , accompanied by a new Disney featurette , Mickey 's Christmas Carol .

The production of The Rescuers signaled the beginning of a changing of the guard process in the personnel at the Disney animation studio : as veterans such as Milt Kahl and Les Clark retired , they were gradually replaced by new talents such as Don Bluth , Ron Clements , John Musker , and Glen Keane . The new animators , culled from the animation program at CalArts and trained by Eric Larson , Frank Thomas , Ollie Johnston , and Woolie Reitherman got their first chances to prove themselves as a group with the animated sequences in Disney 's live @-@ action / animated hybrid feature Pete 's Dragon ( 1977 ) , the animation for which was directed by Don Bluth . In September 1979 , dissatisfied with what they felt was a stagnation in the development of the art of animation at Disney , Bluth and several of the other new guard animators quit to start their own studio , Don Bluth Productions , which became Disney 's chief competitor in the animation field during the 1980s .

Delayed half a year by the defection of the Bluth group , The Fox and the Hound was released in 1981 after four years in production . The film was considered a financial success by the studio , and development continued on The Black Cauldron , a long @-@ gestating adaptation of the Chronicles of Prydain series of novels by Lloyd Alexander produced in Super Technirama 70 .

The Black Cauldron was intended to expand the appeal of Disney animated films to older audiences and to showcase the talents of the new generation of Disney animators from CalArts . Besides Keane , Musker , and Clements , this new group of artists included other promising animators such as Andreas Deja , Mike Gabriel , John Lasseter , and Tim Burton . Lasseter was fired from Disney in 1983 for pushing the studio to explore computer animation production , but went on to become the creative head of Pixar , a pioneering computer animation studio that would begin a close association with Disney in the late 1980s . Similarly , Burton was fired in 1984 after producing a live @-@ action short shelved by the studio , Frankenweenie , then went on to become a high @-@ profile producer and director of live @-@ action and stop motion animated features for Disney and other studios . Some of Burton 's high @-@ profile projects for Disney would include the stop @-@ motion The Nightmare Before Christmas ( 1993 ) , a live @-@ action adaptation of Alice in Wonderland ( 2010 ) , and a stop @-@ motion feature remake of Frankenweenie ( 2012 ) .

= = = 1984 ? 89 : Michael Eisner takeover , restructuring , return to prominence = = =

Ron Miller , Walt Disney 's son @-@ in @-@ law , became president of Walt Disney Productions in 1980 and CEO in 1983 . That year , he expanded the company 's film and television production divisions , creating the Walt Disney Pictures banner under which future films from the feature animation department would be released . After a series of corporate takeover attempts in 1984 , Roy E. Disney , son of Roy O. and nephew of Walt , resigned from the company 's board of directors and launched a campaign called " SaveDisney " , successfully convincing the board to fire Miller . Roy E. Disney brought in Michael Eisner as Disney 's new CEO , and Frank Wells as president . Eisner in turn named Jeffrey Katzenberg chairman of the film division , The Walt Disney Studios . Near completion when the Eisner regime took over Disney , The Black Cauldron would come to represent what would later be referred to as the " rock bottom " point for Disney animation . The studio 's most expensive feature to that point at \$ 44 million , The Black Cauldron was a critical and commercial failure . The film 's \$ 21 million box office gross led to a loss for the studio , putting the future of the animation division in jeopardy .

Between the 1950s and 1980s , the significance of animation to Disney 's bottom line was

significantly reduced as the company expanded into further live @-@ action production , television , and theme parks . As new CEO , Michael Eisner strongly considered shuttering the feature animation studio and outsourcing future animation . Roy E. Disney intervened , offering to head the feature animation division and turn its fortunes around , while Eisner established the Walt Disney Pictures Television Animation Group to produce lower @-@ cost animation for television . Named Chairman of feature animation by Eisner , Roy E. Disney appointed Peter Schneider president of animation to run the day @-@ to @-@ day operations in 1985 . : 3

In February 1985 , Disney executives moved the animation division from the Disney studio lot in Burbank to a variety of warehouses , hangars , and trailers located about two miles east ( 3 @. @ 2 kilometers ) in nearby Glendale , California . The animation division 's first feature animation at its new location was The Great Mouse Detective , begun by John Musker and Ron Clements as Basil of Baker Street after both left the Black Cauldron production . The Great Mouse Detective was enough of a critical and commercial success to instill executive confidence in the animation studio . Later the same year , however , Universal Pictures and Steven Spielberg 's Amblin Entertainment released Don Bluth 's An American Tail , which outgrossed The Great Mouse Detective at the box office and became the highest @-@ grossing first @-@ issue animated film to that point .

Katzenberg , Schneider , and Roy E. Disney set about changing the culture of the studio , increasing staffing and production so that a new animated feature would be released every year instead of every two to four . The first of the releases on the accelerated production schedule was Oliver & Company in 1988 , which featured an all @-@ star cast including Billy Joel and Bette Midler and an emphasis on a modern pop soundtrack . Oliver & Company opened in the theaters on the same day as another Bluth / Amblin / Universal animated film , The Land Before Time ; however , Oliver outgrossed Time and went on to become the most successful animated feature to that date .

At the same time in 1988 , Disney 's started entering into Australia 's long standing animation industry , by purchasing Hanna @-@ Barbera 's Australian studio to start Disney Animation Australia .

While Oliver & Company and next feature animation , The Little Mermaid , were in production , Disney collaborated with Steven Spielberg 's Amblin Entertainment and master animator Richard Williams to produce Who Framed Roger Rabbit , a groundbreaking live action / animation hybrid directed by Robert Zemeckis which featured licensed animated characters from other animation studios . Disney set up a new animation studio under Williams ' supervision in London to create the cartoon characters for Roger Rabbit , with many of the artists from the California studio traveling to England to work on the film . A significant critical and commercial success , Roger Rabbit won three Academy Awards for technical achievements. and was key in renewing mainstream interest in American animation . Other than the film itself , the studio also produced three Roger Rabbit shorts during the late 1980s and early 1990s .

= = = 1989 ? 94 : Beginning of the Disney Renaissance , successful releases , impact on the animation industry = = =

A second satellite studio , Walt Disney Feature Animation Florida , opened in 1989 with 40 employees . Its offices were located within the Disney @-@ MGM Studios theme park at Walt Disney World in Bay Lake , Florida , and visitors were allowed to tour the studio and observe animators at work . The same year , the studio released The Little Mermaid , which became a keystone achievement in Disney 's history as its largest critical and commercial success in decades . Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements , who 'd been co @-@ directors on The Great Mouse Detective , The Little Mermaid earned \$ 84 million at the North American box office , a record for the studio . The film was built around a score from Broadway songwriters Alan Menken and Howard Ashman , who was also a co @-@ producer and story consultant on the film . Mermaid won two Academy Awards , for Best Original Song and for Best Original Score .

The Little Mermaid vigorously relaunched a profound new interest in the animation and musical film genres . Mermaid was also the first to feature the use of Disney 's Computer Animation Production System ( CAPS ) . Developed for Disney by Pixar , which had grown into a commercial computer

animation and technology development company , CAPS would become significant in allowing future Disney films to more seamlessly integrate computer @-@ generated imagery and achieve higher production values with digital ink and paint and compositing techniques . The Little Mermaid was the first of a series of blockbusters that would be released over the next decade by Walt Disney Feature Animation , a period later designated by the term Disney Renaissance .

Accompanied in theaters by the Mickey Mouse featurette The Prince and the Pauper , The Rescuers Down Under ( 1990 ) was Disney 's first animated feature sequel and the studio 's first film to be fully colored and composited via computer using the CAPS system . However , the film did not duplicate the success of The Little Mermaid . The next Disney animated feature , Beauty and the Beast , had begun production in London , but was moved back to Burbank after Disney decided to shutter the London satellite office and retool Beauty into a musical @-@ comedy format similar to Mermaid . Alan Menken and Howard Ashman were retained to write the song score , though Ashman died before production was completed .

Debuting first in a work @-@ in @-@ progress version at the 1991 New York Film Festival before its November 1991 wide release , Beauty , directed by Kirk Wise & Gary Trousdale , was an unprecedented critical and commercial success , and would later be seen as one of the studio 's best films . The film earned six Academy Award nominations , including one for Best Picture , a first for an animated work , winning for Best Song and Best Original Score . Its \$ 145 million box office gross set new records , and merchandising for the film ? including toys , cross @-@ promotions , and soundtrack sales ? was also lucrative .

The successes of Mermaid and Beauty established the template for future Disney releases during the 1990s : a musical @-@ comedy format with Broadway @-@ styled songs and tentpole action sequences , buoyed by cross @-@ promotional marketing and merchandising , all carefully designed to pull audiences of all ages and types into theatres . In addition to John Musker , Ron Clements , Kirk Wise , and Gary Trousdale , the new guard of Disney artists creating these films included story artists / directors Roger Allers , Rob Minkoff , Chris Sanders , and Brenda Chapman , and lead animators Glen Keane , Andreas Deja , Eric Goldberg , Nik Ranieri , Will Finn , and many others .

Aladdin , released in November 1992 , continued the upward trend in Disney 's animation success , earning \$ 504 million worldwide at the box office , and two more Oscars for Best Song and Best Score . Featuring songs by Menken , Ashman , and Tim Rice ( who replaced Ashman after his passing ) and starring the voice of Robin Williams , Aladdin also established the trend of hiring celebrity actors and actresses to provide the voices of Disney characters , which had been explored to some degree with The Jungle Book and Oliver & Company , but now became standard practice .

In June 1994 , Disney released The Lion King , directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff . An all @-@ animal adventure set in Africa , The Lion King featured an all @-@ star voice cast which included James Earl Jones , Matthew Broderick , and Jeremy Irons , and songs written by Tim Rice and pop star Elton John . The Lion King earned \$ 768 million at the worldwide box office , to this date a record for a traditionally animated film , earning millions more in merchandising , promotions , and record sales for its soundtrack .

Aladdin and The Lion King had been the highest @-@ grossing films worldwide in each of their respective release years . With animation becoming again an increasingly important and lucrative part of Disney 's business , the company began to expand its operations . The flagship California studio was split into two units and expanded , and ground was broken on a new Disney Feature Animation building adjacent to the main Disney lot in Burbank , which was dedicated in 1995 . The Florida satellite , officially incorporated in 1992 , was expanded as well , and one of Disney 's television animation studios in the Paris , France suburb of Montreuil ? the former Brizzi Brothers studio ? became Walt Disney Feature Animation Paris , where A Goofy Movie ( 1995 ) and significant parts of later Disney films were produced . Also , Disney began producing lower cost direct to video sequels for its successful animated films using the services of its television animation studios under the name Disney MovieToons . The Return of Jafar ( 1994 ) , a sequel to Aladdin and a pilot for the Aladdin television show spin @-@ off , was the first of these productions . Walt Disney Feature Animation was also heavily involved in the adaptations of both Beauty and the Beast in



1994 and The Lion King in 1997 into Broadway musicals .

Jeffrey Katzenberg and the Disney story team were heavily involved in the development and production of Toy Story , the first fully computer @-@ animated feature ever produced . Toy Story was produced for Disney by Pixar and directed by former Disney animator John Lasseter , whom Peter Schneider had unsuccessfully tried to hire back after his success with Pixar shorts such as Tin Toy ( 1988 ) . Released in 1995 , Toy Story opened to critical acclaim and commercial success , leading to Pixar signing a five @-@ film deal with Disney , which bore critically and financially successful computer animated films such as A Bug 's Life ( 1998 ) , Toy Story 2 ( 1999 ) , and Monsters , Inc . ( 2001 ) .

In addition , the successes of Aladdin and The Lion King spurred a significant increase in the number of American @-@ produced animated features throughout the rest of the decade , with the major film studios establishing new animation divisions such as Fox Animation Studios , Turner Feature Animation , and Warner Bros. Animation being formed to produce films in a Disney @-@ esque musical @-@ comedy format such as Thumbelina ( 1994 ) , The Swan Princess ( 1994 ) , Anastasia ( 1997 ) , Cats Don 't Dance ( 1997 ) , Quest for Camelot ( 1998 ) , and The King and I ( 1999 ) respectively .

= = = 1994 ? 99 : End of the Disney Renaissance , declining returns = = =

Concerns arose internally at Disney , particularly from Roy E. Disney , about studio chief Jeffrey Katzenberg taking too much credit for the success of Disney 's early 1990s releases . Disney president Frank Wells was killed in a helicopter accident in 1994 , and Katzenberg lobbied CEO Michael Eisner for the vacant president position . Instead , tensions between Katzenberg , Eisner , and Disney resulted in Katzenberg being forced to resign from the company that October , with Joe Roth taking his place . Katzenberg went on to become one of the founders of DreamWorks SKG , whose 's animation division became Disney 's key rival in feature animation with both computer animated films such as Antz ( 1998 ) , and traditionally animated films such as The Prince of Egypt ( 1998 ) .

In contrast to the early 1990s productions , the mid @-@ 1990s Disney animated features presented a trend of diminishing returns . Pocahontas , released in summer 1995 , was a critical and commercial disappointment compared to its predecessors , earning \$ 346 million worldwide while still winning two Academy Awards for its music by Alan Menken and Stephen Schwartz . The next film , The Hunchback of Notre Dame ( 1996 ) , partially produced at the Paris studio , performed better critically but grossed only \$ 325 million worldwide . The following summer , Hercules , grossed only \$ 252 million worldwide and received positive reviews , but it was responsible for beginning the decline of traditional animated films . The declining box office success became doubly concerning inside the studio as wage competition from DreamWorks had significantly increased the studio 's overhead , with production costs increasing from \$ 79 million in total costs ( production , marketing , and overhead ) for The Lion King in 1994 to \$ 179 million for Hercules three years later . Moreover , Disney depended upon the popularity of its new features in order to develop merchandising , theme park attractions , direct @-@ to @-@ video sequels , and television programming in its other divisions . The production schedule was scaled back , and a larger number of creative executives were hired to more closely supervise production , a move that was not popular among the animation staff .

Mulan ( 1998 ) , the first film produced primarily at the Florida studio , earned \$ 305 million in worldwide box office . The next summer 's Tarzan , directed by Kevin Lima and Chris Buck , had a high production cost of \$ 150 million , but earned \$ 448 million at the box office . The Tarzan song score by pop star Phil Collins resulted in significant record sales and an Academy Award for Best Song .

In October 1999 , Dream Quest Images , a special effects studio previously purchased by The Walt Disney Company in April 1996 to replace Buena Vista Visual Effects , was merged with the computer @-@ graphics operation of Walt Disney Feature Animation to form a division called The Secret Lab . The Secret Lab produced one feature film , Dinosaur ( 2000 ) , which featured CGI

prehistoric creatures against filmed live @-@ action backgrounds . The \$ 128 million production earned \$ 349 million worldwide , below studio expectations , and the Secret Lab was closed in 2001 .

= = = 2000 ? 05 : Slump , downsizing and conversion to computer animation , corporate issues = = =

Fantasia 2000 , a sequel to the 1940 film that had been a pet @-@ project of Roy E. Disney 's since 1990 , was released on January 1 , 2000 . Produced in pieces when artists were available between productions , Fantasia 2000 was the first animated feature produced for and released in IMAX format . A standard theatrical release followed in June , but the film 's \$ 90 million worldwide box office total against its \$ 90 million production cost resulted in it losing \$ 100 million for the studio . Peter Schneider left his post as president of Walt Disney Feature Animation in 1999 to become president of The Walt Disney Studios under Joe Roth . Thomas Schumacher , who had been Schneider 's vice president of animation for several years , became the new president of Walt Disney Feature Animation . By this time , competition from other studios had driven animators ' incomes to all @-@ time highs , making traditionally animated features even more costly to produce . Schumacher was tasked with cutting costs , and massive layoffs began to cut salaries and bring the studio 's staff ? which peaked at 2 @,@ 200 people in 1999 ? down to approximately 1 @,@ 200 employees .

That December saw the release of The Emperor 's New Groove , which had originally been a musical epic called Kingdom of the Sun before being revised mid @-@ production into a smaller comedy , New Groove earned \$ 169 million worldwide when released in December 2000 , though it was well reviewed and performed better on video . Atlantis : The Lost Empire ( 2001 ) , an attempt to break the Disney formula by moving into action @-@ adventure , received mixed reviews and earned \$ 186 million worldwide against production costs of \$ 120 million .

By 2001 , the notable successes of computer @-@ animated films from Pixar and DreamWorks such as Monsters , Inc. and Shrek , respectively , against Disney 's lesser returns for The Emperor 's New Groove and Atlantis led to a growing perception that hand @-@ drawn animation was becoming outdated and falling out of fashion . In March 2002 , just after the successful release of Blue Sky Studios ' computer @-@ animated feature Ice Age , Disney laid off most of the employees at the Feature Animation studio in Burbank , downsizing it to one unit and beginning plans to move into fully computer animated films . A handful of employees were offered positions doing computer animation . Morale plunged to a low not seen since the start of the studio 's ten @-@ year exile to Glendale in 1985 . The Paris studio was also closed in 2003 .

The Burbank studio 's remaining hand @-@ drawn productions , Treasure Planet ( 2002 ) and Home on the Range ( 2004 ) , continued production . Treasure Planet was a retelling of Treasure Island in space that was a pet project of writer @-@ directors Ron Clements & John Musker . It received generally positive reviews and an IMAX release but was financially unsuccessful upon release , resulting in a \$ 74 million writedown for The Walt Disney Company in fiscal year 2003 . The Burbank studio 's 2D departments closed at the end of 2002 following completion of Home on the Range , a long @-@ in @-@ production feature originally known as Sweating Bullets .

Meanwhile , hand @-@ drawn feature animation production continued at the Feature Animation Florida studio , where the films could be produced at lower costs . Lilo & Stitch , an offbeat comedy written and directed by Chris Sanders and Dean DeBlois , became the studio 's first bonafide hit since Tarzan upon its summer 2002 release , earning \$ 273 million worldwide against a \$ 80 million production budget .

Most of the 1990s Disney features had been spun off into direct @-@ to @-@ video sequels , television series , or both , produced by the Disney Television Animation unit . Beginning with Return to Never Land , a 2002 sequel to 1953 's Peter Pan , Disney began releasing lower @-@ budgeted sequels to earlier films , originally intended for video premieres , in theaters , a process derided by some of the Disney animation staff and fans of the Disney films .

In 2003 , Tom Schumacher was appointed president of Buena Vista Theatrical Group , Disney 's

stageplay and musical theater arm , and David Stainton , then president of Walt Disney Television Animation , was appointed as his replacement . Stainton continued to oversee Disney 's direct @-@ to @-@ video division , DisneyToon Studios , which had been part of the television animation department , though transferred at this time to Walt Disney Feature Animation management .

Under Stainton , the Florida studio completed Brother Bear ( 2003 ) , which did not perform as well as Lilo & Stitch critically or financially . Disney announced the closing of the Florida studio on January 12 , 2004 , with the then in @-@ progress feature My Peoples left unfinished when the studio closed two months later . Upon the unsuccessful April 2004 release of Home on the Range , Disney , led by executive Bob Lambert , officially announced its conversion of Walt Disney Feature Animation into a fully CGI studio ? a process begun two years prior ? now with a staff of 600 people and began selling off all of its traditional animation equipment .

Just after Brother Bear 's November 2003 release , Feature Animation chairman Roy E. Disney had resigned from The Walt Disney Company , launching with business partner Stanley Gold a second external " SaveDisney " campaign similar to the one that had forced Ron Miller out in 1984 , this time to force out Michael Eisner . Two of their arguing points against Eisner included his handling of Feature Animation and the souring of the studio 's relationship with Pixar .

Talks between Michael Eisner and Pixar CEO Steve Jobs over renewal terms for the highly lucrative Pixar @-@ Disney distribution deal broke down in January 2004 . Jobs in particular disagreed with Eisner 's insistence that sequels such as the then in @-@ development Toy Story 3 ( 2010 ) would not count against the number of films required in the studio 's new deal . To that end , Disney announced the launching of Circle 7 Animation , a division of Feature Animation which would produce sequels to the Pixar films , while Pixar began shopping for a new distribution deal .

In 2005 , Disney released its first fully computer @-@ animated feature , Chicken Little . The film was a moderate success at the box office , earning \$ 315 million worldwide , but was not well @-@ received critically . Later that year , after two years of Roy E. Disney 's " SaveDisney " campaign , Michael Eisner announced that he would resign and named Bob Iger , then president of The Walt Disney Company , his successor as chairman and CEO .

= = = 2005 ? 09 : Rebound , Disney 's acquisition of Pixar , renaming = = =

With Iger in place as the new CEO of Disney , Steve Jobs resumed negotiations for Pixar with Disney . On January 24 , 2006 , Disney announced that it would acquire Pixar for \$ 7 @. @ 4 billion , with the deal closing that May . As part of the acquisition , Pixar executives Edwin Catmull and John Lasseter assumed control of Walt Disney Feature Animation as President and Chief Creative Officer , respectively , and the Circle 7 studio launched to produce Toy Story 3 was shut down , with most of its employees returning to Feature Animation and Toy Story 3 returning to Pixar 's control .

While Disney executives had originally discussed closing Feature Animation as redundant , Catmull and Lasseter refused and instead resolved to try to turn things around at the studio . Lasseter and Catmull set about rebuilding the morale of the Feature Animation staff , and rehired a number of its 1980s " new guard " generation of star animators who had left the studio , including Ron Clements , John Musker , Eric Goldberg , Mark Henn , Andreas Deja , Bruce W. Smith , and Chris Buck . To maintain the separation of Disney and Pixar despite their now common ownership and management , Catmull and Lasseter " drew a hard line " that each studio was solely responsible for its own projects and would not be allowed to borrow personnel from or lend tasks out to the other .

Catmull and Lasseter also brought to Disney the Pixar model of a " filmmaker @-@ driven studio " as opposed to an " executive @-@ driven studio " ; they abolished Disney 's prior system of requiring directors to respond to " mandatory " notes from development executives ranking above the producers in favor of a system roughly analogous to peer review , in which non @-@ mandatory notes come primarily from fellow producers , directors , and writers . Most of the layers of " gatekeepers " ( midlevel executives ) were stripped away , and Lasseter established a routine of personally meeting weekly with filmmakers on all projects in the last year of production and delivering feedback on the spot .

Lasseter renamed Walt Disney Feature Animation to Walt Disney Animation Studios , and re @-@

positioned the studio as an animation house that produced both traditional and computer @-@ animated projects . In order to keep costs down on hand @-@ drawn productions , animation , design , and layout were done in @-@ house at Disney while clean @-@ up animation and digital ink @-@ and @-@ paint were farmed out to vendors and freelancers .

In 2007 , the studio released Meet the Robinsons , its second all @-@ CGI film , earning \$ 169 @.@ 3 million worldwide . That year , DisneyToon Studios was also restructured and began to operate as a separate unit under Lasseter and Catmull 's control . John Lasseter 's direct intervention with the studio 's next film , American Dog , resulted in the departure of director Chris Sanders , who went on to become a director at DreamWorks Animation . The film was retooled by new directors Byron Howard and Chris Williams as Bolt ( 2008 ) , which had the best critical reception of any Disney animated feature since Lilo & Stitch , and became a moderate financial success .

The Princess and the Frog , directed by Ron Clements & John Musker , was the studio 's first hand @-@ drawn animated film in five years . A return to the musical @-@ comedy format of the 1990s with songs by Randy Newman , the film was released in 2009 to a positive reception and was also nominated for three Academy Awards , including two for Best Song . The box office performance of The Princess and the Frog ? a total of \$ 267 million earned worldwide against a \$ 105 million production budget ? was seen as an underperformance due to competition with Avatar . In addition , the " Princess " aspect of the title was blamed , resulting in future Disney films then in production about princesses being given neutral / symbolic titles : Rapunzel became Tangled and The Snow Queen became Frozen . In 2014 , however , Disney animator Tom Sito compared the film 's box office performance to that of The Great Mouse Detective ( 1986 ) , which was a step @-@ up from the theatrical run of the 1985 film The Black Cauldron . In 2009 , the studio also produced the computer @-@ animated Prep & Landing holiday special for the Disney @-@ owned ABC television network .

= = = 2010 ? present : Continued resurgence = = =

After The Princess and the Frog , the studio released Tangled , a musical CGI adaptation of the Brothers Grimm 's Rapunzel tale with songs by Alan Menken and Glenn Slater . In active development since 2002 under Glen Keane , Tangled , directed by Byron Howard and Nathan Greno , was released in November 2010 and became a significant critical and commercial success , and was nominated for several accolades . The film earned \$ 591 million in worldwide box office revenue , becoming the studio 's third most successful release to date .

The hand @-@ drawn feature Winnie the Pooh , a new feature film based on the A.A. Milne characters , followed in 2011 to positive reviews but under @-@ performed at the box office . Winnie the Pooh remains to date the studio 's most recent hand @-@ drawn feature . Wreck @-@ It Ralph , directed by Rich Moore , was released in 2012 , to critical acclaim and commercial success . A comedy @-@ adventure about a video @-@ game villain who redeems himself as a hero , it won numerous awards , including the Annie , Critics ' Choice , and Kids ' Choice Awards for Best Animated Feature Film and received Golden Globe and Academy Award nominations . The film earned \$ 471 million in worldwide box office revenue . In addition , the studio won its first Academy Award for a short film in forty @-@ four years with Paperman . Directed by John Kahrs , Paperman utilized new software developed in house at the studio called Meander , which merges hand @-@ drawn and computer animation techniques within the same character to create a unique " hybrid . " According to Producer Kristina Reed , the studio is continuing to develop the technique for future projects , including an animated feature .

In 2013 , the studio laid off nine of its hand @-@ drawn animators , including Nik Ranieri and Ruben Aquino , leading to speculation on animation blogs that the studio was abandoning traditional animation , an idea that the studio dismissed . That same year , Frozen , a CGI musical film inspired by Hans Christian Andersen 's The Snow Queen , was released to widespread acclaim and became a blockbuster hit . Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee with songs by the Broadway team of Robert Lopez & Kristen Anderson @-@ Lopez , it was the first Disney animated film to earn over \$ 1

billion in worldwide box office revenue and is currently the highest @-@ grossing animated film of all time , surpassing Pixar 's Toy Story 3 . Frozen also became the first film from Walt Disney Animation Studios to win the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature ( a category started in 2001 ) , as well as the first feature @-@ length motion picture from the studio to win an Academy Award since Tarzan and the first to win multiple Academy Awards since Pocahontas . It was released in theaters with Get a Horse ! , a new Mickey Mouse cartoon combining black @-@ and @-@ white hand @-@ drawn animation and full @-@ color CGI animation . The studio 's next feature , Big Hero 6 , a CGI comedy @-@ adventure film inspired by Marvel 's Big Hero 6 comics , was released on November 7 , 2014 . For the film , the studio developed new light rendering software called Hyperion , which the studio continued to use on all subsequent films . Big Hero 6 received critical acclaim and was the highest @-@ grossing animated film of 2014 , and it also won the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature . The film was accompanied in theaters by the animated short Feast , which won the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film . In March 2016 , the studio released Zootopia , a CGI buddy @-@ comedy film set in a modern world inhabited by anthropomorphic animals . Zootopia was a critical and commercial success .

= = Studio = =

= = = Management = = =

Walt Disney Animation Studios is currently managed by Edwin Catmull ( President , Walt Disney and Pixar Animation Studios ) , John Lasseter ( Chief Creative Officer ) and Andrew Millstein ( President ) . Since 2006 , while continuing to live in the San Francisco Bay Area ( where they manage Pixar ) , Catmull and Lasseter have regularly commuted to Burbank every week to spend at least two days ( usually Tuesdays and Wednesdays ) at Disney Animation . They initially appointed Millstein as general manager and executive vice president to handle day @-@ to @-@ day business operations on their behalf . Millstein was promoted to the title of president in November 2014 , along with his counterpart at Pixar , general manager Jim Morris . Both Millstein and Morris continue to report to Catmull , who retains the title of president of both studios .

Former presidents of the studio include David Stainton ( January 2003 ? January 2006 ) , Thomas Schumacher ( January 2000 ? December 2002 ) and Peter Schneider ( 1985 ? December 1999 ) .

Other Disney executives who also exercised much influence within the studio were Roy E. Disney ( 1985 ? 2003 , Chairman , Walt Disney Feature Animation ) , Jeffrey Katzenberg ( 1984 ? 94 , Chairman , The Walt Disney Studios ) , Michael Eisner ( 1984 ? 2005 , CEO , The Walt Disney Company ) , and Frank Wells ( 1984 ? 94 , President and COO , The Walt Disney Company ) . Following Roy Disney 's passing in 2009 , the WDAS headquarters in Burbank was re @-@ dedicated as The Roy E. Disney Animation Building in May 2010 .

= = = Locations = = =

Since 1995 , Walt Disney Animation Studios has been headquartered in the Roy E. Disney Animation Building in Burbank , California , across Riverside Drive from The Walt Disney Studios , where the original Animation building ( now housing corporate offices ) is located . The Disney Animation Building 's lobby is capped by a large version of the famous hat from the Sorcerer 's Apprentice segment of Fantasia ( 1940 ) , and the building is informally called the " hat building " for that reason . Disney Animation shares its site with ABC Studios , whose building is located immediately to the west .

Until the mid @-@ 1990s , Disney Animation previously operated out of the Air Way complex , a cluster of old hangars , office buildings , and trailers in the Grand Central Business Centre , an industrial park on the site of the former Grand Central Airport about two miles ( 3 @.@ 2 km ) east in the city of Glendale . Today , the DisneyToon Studios unit is currently based in Glendale . Disney Animation 's archive , formerly known as " the morgue " ( based on an analogy to a morgue file ) and

today known as the Animation Research Library , is also located in Glendale . Unlike the Burbank buildings , DisneyToon Studios and the ARL are located in nondescript office buildings near Disney 's Grand Central Creative Campus . The 12 @,@ 000 @-@ square @-@ foot ARL is home to over 64 million items of animation artwork going back to 1924 ; because of its importance to the company , it requires visitors to agree to not disclose its exact location within Glendale .

Previously , feature animation satellite studios were located around the world in Montreuil , Seine @-@ Saint @-@ Denis , France ( a suburb of Paris ) , and in Bay Lake , Florida ( near Orlando , at Disney 's Hollywood Studios , one of the four theme parks at Walt Disney World ) . The Paris studio was shut down in 2002 , while the Florida studio was shut down in 2004 . The Florida building survives as a show and tour called The Magic of Disney Animation .

In November 2014 , Disney Animation commenced a 16 @-@ month upgrade of the Roy E. Disney Animation Building , in order to fix what Catmull has called its " dungeon @-@ like " interior . For example , the interior was so cramped that it could not easily accommodate " town hall " meetings with all employees in attendance . Disney did not disclose the renovation 's cost , but Lasseter revealed that " [ t ] he whole center of the second floor will have an atrium that will go up two stories [ ; ] we want to make this building so beautiful that it 's worthy of the artistic talent that 's there . " In addition , it was revealed that the large sorcerer 's hat will become the building 's main entrance . Lasseter stated , " There will be a gorgeous stairway that goes up into the hat , it 's a really great symbol , like you 're entering the building through the magic of Mickey Mouse 's hat . " Due to the renovation , the studio 's employees have been temporarily moved from Burbank into the closest available Disney @-@ controlled studio space ? the DisneyToon Studios building in the industrial park in Glendale and the old Imagineering warehouse in North Hollywood under the western approach to Bob Hope Airport ( the Tujunga Building ) . Director Don Hall analogized the studio 's relocation to the end of The Empire Strikes Back , where " you know they 're going to get back together . "

= = Productions = =

= = = Feature films = = =

Walt Disney Animation Studios has produced animated features in a series of animation techniques , including traditional animation , computer animation , and animation combined with live @-@ action scenes . The studio 's first film , Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs , was released on December 21 , 1937 , and their most recent film , Zootopia , was released on March 4 , 2016 .

= = = Short films = = =

Since Alice Comedies in the 1920s , Walt Disney Animation Studios has produced a series of prominent short films , including the Mickey Mouse cartoons and the Silly Symphonies series . Many of these shorts provided a medium for the studio to experiment with new technologies that they would use in their filmmaking process , such as the synchronization of sound in Steamboat Willie ( 1928 ) , the integration of the three strip Technicolor process in Flowers and Trees ( 1932 ) , the multiplane camera in The Old Mill ( 1937 ) , the xerography process in Goliath II ( 1960 ) , and the hand @-@ drawn / CGI hybrid animation in Off His Rockers ( 1992 ) , Paperman ( 2012 ) , and Get a Horse ! ( 2013 ) .

= = Collaborations = =

= = = Parks and resorts = = =

Walt Disney Animation Studios has occasionally collaborated with Walt Disney Creative

Entertainment and Walt Disney Imagineering to create attractions for various Disney theme parks and resorts . Some of these attractions are :

Gran Fiesta Tour Starring The Three Caballeros , at Epcot

Mickey 's PhilharMagic , at the Magic Kingdom , Hong Kong Disneyland and Tokyo Disneyland

Stitch 's Great Escape ! , at the Magic Kingdom

Stitch Encounter , at Hong Kong Disneyland and Tokyo Disneyland , and Walt Disney Studios Park as " Stitch Live ! "

Fantasmic ! , at Disneyland , Disney 's Hollywood Studios and Tokyo DisneySea

World of Color , at Disney California Adventure

Disney Dreams ! , at Disneyland Park Paris

Seven Dwarfs Mine Train , at the Magic Kingdom

Frozen Ever After , at Epcot

= = = Video games = = =

Walt Disney Animation Studios has also collaborated and put input through the company 's Disney Interactive unit for several games . Some of these games are :

Disney Infinity series ( Developed by Avalanche Software )

Kingdom Hearts III ( Co @-@ Published / Developed by Square Enix )

= = = Associated productions = = =

Walt Disney Animation Studios has occasionally collaborated with other studios to assist in the production of some animated and live @-@ action features . These films are :

The Reluctant Dragon , providing the animated segments

Victory Through Air Power , providing the animated segments

Song of the South , providing the animated segments

So Dear to My Heart , providing the animated segments

Mary Poppins , providing the animated segments

Sesame Street ( television show ) , providing the animated segments

Bedknobs and Broomsticks , providing the animated segments

Pete 's Dragon , providing animation

The Brave Little Toaster , providing development

Who Framed Roger Rabbit , providing animation , layout , animatics and storyboards ( animation unit only ) , and special effects

The Nightmare Before Christmas , providing second @-@ layering traditional animation

A Goofy Movie , providing story , development , and pre @-@ production

Toy Story , providing development

James and the Giant Peach , providing second @-@ layering traditional animation

Saving Mr. Banks , providing animation for a short scene recreating an episode of the Disneyland TV show

= = = Documentary films about Disney animation = = =

A Trip Through the Walt Disney Studios ( 1937 , short )

The Reluctant Dragon ( 1941 , a staged " mockumentary " )

Frank and Ollie ( 1995 )

Dream on Silly Dreamer ( 2005 )

Waking Sleeping Beauty ( 2009 )