

arc en rêve centre d'architecture bordeaux
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→ press kit

The Architecture of Staged Realities

(re) constructing
Disney



press kit

The Architecture of Staged Realities (re)constructing Disney

exhibition Thursday 28 March 2024 – Sunday 5 January 2025
grande galerie

every day except Monday, 11am – 6 pm, open until 8 pm on the second Wednesday of every month

opening talk
with **Saskia van Stein**, exhibition curator
Thursday 28 March, 6:30 pm

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Back to the Future, Mickey Mouse 1989-2012 Disneyland Paris (excerpt from the dyptique) © Irina Werning

Disney

The Architecture of Staged Realities

by **Saskia van Stein** exhibition curator

His characters may be reassuringly unambiguous, yet the man himself was anything but. So what is the social and cultural impact of Walt Disney's legacy? *The Architecture of Staged Realities, (re)constructing Disney*, on show at arc en rêve from 28 March to 6 October 2024, examines the influence of Disney's films and thinking on today's built environment and sense of identity.

Walt Disney's fantasies have grown from temporary distractions on the cinema screen into defining influences on global pop culture. The cartoonist, along with the empire he founded, has won both praise – for his technological innovations and the apparent simplicity and recognisability of his storytelling – and notoriety. The ingenuity with which he seamlessly entwines fairy tales and reality is accompanied by a compelling and one-sided conception of what the resulting wonderful worlds – and their inhabitants – should look like.

Walter Elias Disney (1901–1966) created on- and off-screen fantasy worlds in which viewers and visitors can temporarily escape everyday reality. His “wonderful world” had a modest beginning in the 1930s with cartoons and animated shorts but, with the creation of full-length films, theme parks, resorts and cruise vacations, it mushroomed into a global media empire over the following decades. The staging of an alternative reality was not confined to the movies and the Disneyland parks. With every step in the development of the company, the image of Walt, and his Walt Disney Company, has been carefully cultivated and expanded.

That constructed impression – of Disney as a carefree genius, the “father of the middle class”, whose company produces feel-good environments for the whole world – has a downside. With a blend of nostalgia, utopianism, simplification and cuteness, Walt Disney entices his audiences to immerse themselves in a world where reality and fiction merge. Inspired by European literature and architecture, Disney, known as the embodiment and champion of the American Dream, underlies a highly specific and limited type of cultural production.

The exhibition approaches Disney from different angles, creating divergent storylines. These range from the personality cult surrounding Walt Disney himself, to the problematic “heroes” in his work; from the multimedia experiences that connect cartoons, amusement parks and living rooms, to the time- and location-less architecture of Disneyfied suburbs; and from the performance of a 1960s utopia in the Epcot Center, to the manipulation of the worldview of generations of children. From smiling creatures to Marne-la-Vallée masterplans, the complexity of the self-proclaimed sorcerer's apprentice becomes clear through these interpretations of the constant interactions between Disney and the outside world.

The Architecture of Staged Realities, (re)constructing Disney presents contributions by theorists, architects, artists and other designers like Bas van Beek, Oliver Beer, Christian Boltanski, Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács, Carlos Diniz, Julien Discrit, Sveta Dorosheva, Benjamin Earl, Frank O. Gehry Associates, Élea Godefroy, Pete Ho Ching Fung, Sam Jacob, Oskar Johanson, Bertrand Lavier, Clara Lazla, Ateliers Jean Nouvel, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Christian de Portzamparc, Aldo Rossi, Arnau Rovira, Christophe Sillem, Karan Sunil, Pilvi Takala, Bernard Tschumi Architects, Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, Kem Weber.

Disney, a Real Fairy Story

by Saskia van Stein

extract from an article published in issue 78 of DAMN, Spring 2021

As a skilled wizard, Walt Elias Disney (1901–1966) manufactured environments to trick us into believing in his temporary getaways. Through the production of enchanting characters he told fantastical stories, all animated in the sheltered space of the cinema. Later his feel-good universe leapt into reality via his constructed architectural environments and gated communities, all staged realities that blended symbolism and nostalgia while speaking of alternative futures.



Walt Disney, in 1935, on the place de la Concorde in Paris

The man truly was an adventurous genius and his main medium was the American psyche. He understood how to produce a new culture for a nation yearning an identity. He merged a longing for old Europe with a utopian vision, and created the narrative, mastered and innovated the technological medium, and embraced mass media to produce popular culture for the rising middle classes. [...]

character building

Back in the 50s, to build Disneyland—The Happiest Place on Earth¹—on the site of a former orange orchard, Walt persuaded the media company ABC to invest in the purchase of 244 hectares of land around Anaheim, California. In return for its investment, Walt appeared in a weekly television programme to tell stories about alternative realities, technological progress, and updating viewers on the process of building the theme park. [...] By disseminating stories of wonder, Walt cast his spell of desire out across his future audience. The whole design pulled in visitors who wanted to explore new territories, but who found something oddly familiar upon arrival.

Inside Disneyland everything is staged and orchestrated: queuing up, dumping trash, smells, colours, light, scale, sounds, nothing is left to chance. Carefree leisure is the aim, yet it is all highly controlled and thought out into meticulously routed journeys that guide the audience along the main axes [...].

inspirations and inventions

In the era of world fairs and mid-20th century modernity, Walt understood the zeitgeist—American society was looking for a story of progress. To give them that designed identity he took inspiration from the cultural production of the old European continent, its literature and its architecture. Disneyland borrows from the Tivoli Gardens, the amusement park that opened in 1843 in Copenhagen and which Walt visited in 1951, and of course the Sleeping Beauty castle bears resemblance to the 19th century Schloss Neuschwanstein castle. Built by King Ludwig von Bavaria, it was in the region where Walt was stationed as an ambulance driver for the Red Cross towards the end of the First World War. Throughout his life, Walt gathered snippets of inspiration, elements he copied and resampled that resulted in a collage of familiar references.



Sleeping Beauty castle, Disneyland, Anaheim, California, 1955

[...] collaborations with American industry

The amalgamation of imagination, narration and media, coupled with the embrace of novel technologies led to collaborations with NASA, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and with some pillars of American industry, such as General Motors. These joint ventures paved the way for a mode of living, for a cultural production which trained the public for the same future they would come to inhabit.

For example, The Monsanto House of the Future, an attraction exhibited at Disneyland from 1957 to 1967, was a house that boasted how plastic might be used in the home of the future. There were also household appliances such as a microwave, a dishwasher, and a doorbell with a camera—all products that went on to become familiar household items. All the innovations Walt and his team contributed to were showcased in the form of product placements in the pavilions of New York's 1964 World Fair, and later in Disneyland with the ultimate purpose of producing desire.

Disney, a Real Fairy Story by Saskia van SteinMonsanto *The House of the Future*, 1957**a hypersimplified reality**

However, this is only one side of the story. Disney positions the nuclear white family and its singular kind of identity at the heart of the American Dream. Many of the Disney stories are sugar-coated reinventions of more gruesome coming-of-age, and underdog-comes-good fairy tales. The portrayal of the characters in the animations and movies contribute, unwillingly or not, to racial stereotyping and also enforce gender roles, which in return leads to the normalization of discrimination. The reinforcement of certain gender roles and divisions became apparent as early as the first full feature animation, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1937). While the Suffragettes were busy marching the American streets fighting for the right to vote during Walt's formative years, *Snow White* is placed behind the stove. And Walt even laid claim to her voice: he made sure the actress Adriana Caselotti (1916-1997) could not appear—vocally—in other movies ever again. [...]

The under representation or characterization of people of colour further ingrained existing stereotypes. In the early short entitled *Mickey's Mellerdrammer* (1933), Mickey Mouse portrays blackface thus linking the animation to the tradition of minstrel shows², the cultural production from which animation stems. Another aspect is the falsification of historical facts like the depiction of "happy slave life" in the animated musical *Songs of the South* (1946). Also, our relationship to and image of nature has been altered by its portrayal as too pristine.

This is all rather problematic, as we are informed and influenced by the culture we live in and the stories we share. The one-sidedness of both the narratives and the forms of representation and exclusion, hide and thereby suppress the plurality and complexity of day-to-day reality. This is particularly the case now, in our era where the favoured rhetoric of

populist political propaganda is over-simplification which, similar to Disney, deploys identification, symbolism, sentimentality or projected innocence to sway audiences into a certain set of ideals that serve to exclude others.

In order to achieve this sense of "wholesomeness", a set of utopian ideals were mediated through archetypes. In the production of hope and comfort, Disney's cultural fabrications are simultaneously manufacturing nostalgia for the past, as well as for the future. In order to do so, an eclectic multitude of architectural styles such as gothic ornaments, 19th century Beaux Arts features, or neoclassical elements are appropriated, mixed and staged to evoke an atmosphere rather than a place. You end up in a place that is neither here nor there. A copy so often copied, we forgot all about its original. This all ultimately leads to an architecture of reassurance.



Fantasia Resorts, 2018 © Arnau Rovira Vidal

an immersive experience

This non-linear weaving with time and place, with real and fiction, with interior and exterior, introduces destabilizing ambiguities that are pivotal to captivating the Disney audience in an immersive experience. [...] Disney took a certain poetic liberty in order to construct a sense of the real. For instance, all the US flags at Disney theme parks are fakes. In fact, they each lack a star or a stripe, which allows them to not be subjected to the regulations that typically apply around flag raising or lowering. [...] Other techniques to skew what we see and perceive as real are at play. One of the most infamous is the "go away green" paint, which the company patented to camouflage and hide what's in plain sight. The idea being that visitors to the theme park will not notice objects painted a greyish-green shade as they are designed to be overlooked. [...]

Disney, a Real Fairy Story by Saskia van Stein

An example of the use of Go away green on a hangar in Epcot park

Many methods and techniques to conceal or influence what we see draw on filmic methods such as framing, collage, montage and the forced perspective. [...] Other sensorial triggers such as colour, sound, light and scent are being employed to further influence moods and behaviour. [...] As we temporarily commit to co-produce an imagination, we suspend our belief, escape into worlds of wonder and persuasive architecture while subliminally being informed by the norms and cultural codes of the fictions.

Disney city planner

[...] In fact, it was Disney's ambition to harness the park's success and influence real-world conditions. Walt had started to purchase vast amounts of land outside the theme park with the ambition to build property. His aim was to 'prototype' communities of tomorrow by creating vibrant yet controlled urban spaces to counter the crime-ridden inner cities, congested highways, and the ongoing sprawl that dominated the American urban sphere of the 50s and 60s [...]. Could this imply that we need to embrace Disneyfication as much more than a derogatory term? To say something has been Disneyfied most often implies that a 'real place' has been stripped of its authentic, historic or sometimes even gritty character. What does it say about us, that our inner cities become the backdrop for speculation, smooth facades and atmospheric spaces? Moreover, what is the long-term influence of social and cultural homogenization where sameness is performed?

the new digital frontiers

The Disney Company has gone on to achieve what Walt was attempting, namely, to establish an all-encompassing universe. With expanding investments into building and intellectual property, with resorts on nearly all continents, the omnipresence of merchandise (produced under very poor labour conditions), the production of games, ocean liner holidays and streaming service Disney+, the company has fully permeated our lives and homes. [...] The Disney Company is acquiring technological start-ups spanning fields from robotic engineering, cinematographic VR, to machine learning, artificial intelligence, and Computer Generated Images (CGI). [...]

So, what can we learn from the success of Walt Disney now that it's time to imagine alternative futures? His work being so much about his belief that imagination is the model for reality. In our era of individualism, fact-free politics, and the blurring of boundaries to sway citizens, an understanding of the cultural codes and an awareness of these developments are paramount.

1. This is how Anaheim Disneyland was called by the company when it opened in 1955.

2. The minstrel show was an American show created towards the end of the 1820s, featuring white actors who blackened their faces (blackface) or blacks who were generally portrayed as ignorant, stupid, superstitious, cheerful and gifted in dance and music. They existed until the 1950s, when they disappeared with the rise of the anti-racist movement.

The Poisoned Apple. Disney at the Gates of Paris

by Christophe Catsaros

extract from an article published in issue 510 of the magazine *artpress*, May 2023



Marne-la-Vallée, 2018 / © Maxime Lerolle / Reporterre

First, this image: Jacques Chirac, his face suffused with the rather idiotic gaiety that characterised him, receives a gift from Michael Eisner, the CEO of the Walt Disney Company. The framed photograph presented to the Prime Minister represents another gift: that of the poisoned apple offered to Snow White by the witch. Immortalised in 1987 at the time of the signature, this *mise en abyme* has long symbolised the dubious nature of the transaction. The French state invested four times more than the Walt Disney Company to have the privilege of welcoming the flagship of

American family entertainment on its territory. Thirty years later, in view of the evolution of the Parisian metropolitan project and the proliferation of neo-traditional ensembles in Île-de-France, another reading of this scene has become possible.

[...]

The 1980s were the conservatives' counter-attack. It is perhaps difficult for us to conceive the extent to which the expansion of the American empire and its arrival in Île-de-France was an ideological act. It was no longer a question of colonising production and the economy, but rather the imagination and everyday life. The 1980s embodied the moment in world history when the United States prevailed over its adversaries by taking control of their desires. *Top Gun* and *Levi's* commercials were as decisive in the victory over the Eastern Bloc as the deployment of the Pershing missiles in Europe in 1983. The arrival of Disney was part of these operations, which lastingly anchored American values in the European imagination. Disney's boss was no longer just a storyteller. He was received at Matignon as a head of state. His theme park was the outpost from which his new development model would radiate.

What was Eurodisney's urban planning the sign of? In 1988, in a rare burst of creativity, the Walt Disney Company brought together a college of architects to reflect on the project's architecture: Michael Graves, Robert Stern, Frank Gehry, Stanley Tigerman, Antoine Grumbach, Robert Venturi and Denise Scott Brown. Some of them designed the theme park hotels. The contest organised at the time was a real postmodern manifesto. The American company couldn't get this wrong. Although it entrusted the hotel that overlooks the entrance of the park to its own teams of designers, it also called upon several great figures of American and European architecture. Some, like Hans Hollein, even had the audacity to believe that this commission could be the subject of a critical response. Hollein proposed a hotel in the shape of an aircraft carrier, suggesting that capitalism can sometimes be consistent with critical self-analysis. Gehry, with his own

The Poisoned Apple. Disney at the gates of Paris by Christophe Catsaros

variation on "main street," did his best to bring some coherence to the new American colony. The most conceptual European projects (Rem Koolhaas, Aldo Rossi, Jean Nouvel, Christian de Portzamparc) were not carried out.

Yet the park was not devoid of architectural intentions. Michael Eisner, however reformist he purported to be, did not betray the original concept of Walt Disney's plan. In Paris, we find the same incongruous mix made up of the American pioneer imagination and a fantasised Europe, a sort of distant memory on behalf of the man who travelled through it as an ambulance driver during the First World War. Disney's distorted Europe may also have crystallised the resentment inherent in the American perception of the Old Continent. The distorted vision is also that of the emigrants who arrived at Ellis Island with the hope of a new world and the unavowed desire to leave the societies they had cut ties with behind.

Oedipus applied to the territory: kill the country of origin and mate with the host land. Nothing other than this pent-up desire can perhaps explain the violence with which the American squadrons destroyed the jewels of European urban planning in their legitimate effort to defeat Nazism during the Second World War. Incidentally, it is to the Walt Disney teams and their cinematographic war effort that we owe the most virulent plea for aerial bombardment against enemy cities. The New World unconsciously resented the Old and never missed an opportunity to attack its supposed superiority.

As a result, Walt Disney's theme parks remodelled the city as if they had previously crossed it off the map. They are the setting that was born when all form of urbanism had been erased. They thereby re-enacted the conquest of the West, when the massacre of the natives was followed by the time of edification. The settlers created their wooden city crossed by a wide, straight road: "main street." More than a camp and not yet a city. There, between the saloon, the church, the post office and the general store, life reclaimed its rights. Disneyland's "main street" is one of those acts of colonial urban planning whose virulence is not sufficiently estimated. An act of acculturation concealed within infantile joy; a shock treatment under general anaesthesia. It was not just a new beginning on any old ruin. It was a new beginning on the fresh corpse of the reviled archetype: the European city. [...]

contributions



Falling Alice
Oliver Beer

An animated film based on a quote from a Walt Disney cartoon. Oliver Beer extracted the images and gave them to children from the Nice region to reinterpret. Once reassembled, the film subliminally and kaleidoscopically delivers the traditional film narrative augmented by this complex childhood perception.

Falling Alice
Oliver Beer
2014

From the series *Reanimation*
Animation film 16 mm - digital, composed of 54 drawings / 2'17
Production : Villa Arson, Nice
Courtesy Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac
© Oliver Beer



Basney
Bas van Beek

In Disney films such as *Beauty and the Beast* and *Alice in Wonderland*, tea sets are often characters in their own right. By returning these fairytale objects to their inanimate porcelain condition, designer Bas van Beek plays with the distinction between original and copy, reality and fiction. Whereas in Disney films magic brings everyday objects to life, van Beek's pieces highlight the absurdity of these same objects in the context of an ordinary kitchen.

Basney
Bas van Beek
2013



Mastering Bambi
Persijn Broersen &
Margit Lukács

In *Bambi*, Walt Disney's 1942 animated film, animals take the starring roles. At least as important in the film, however, is nature itself, as a metaphor for human society. Disney created one of the first virtual worlds for *Bambi*. In his vision, deeply rooted in European Romanticism, the wilderness is threatened by culture and technology. The forest is presented as a magical source, an ultimately purifying zone, where the animals coexist peacefully. Broersen & Lukács recreate Disney's pristine world, but strip it of its harmonious inhabitants, the animals. What remains is a constructed wilderness, where nature becomes the mirror of our own imagination. The soundtrack is by Berend Dubbe and Gwendolyn Thomas. They reconstructed *Bambi's* music and edited the sound to expose the dissonances in the film.

Mastering Bambi
Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács
2011
video / duration 12'32"



Never Neverland
Julien Discrit

Wanting to map *Neverland*, the imaginary country, seems a natural but impossible undertaking, since it is precisely a question of showing what the map suggests. From Sir James Matthew Barrie's book to Disney's film, the artist discovered that a tiny island in the Bahamas, Gorda Cay, had been bought by Disney and renamed Castaway Cay to accommodate tourists. It was this map that the artist chose to create, that of a hybrid

space, a paradisiacal 'non-place', a medium for fictions. This veritable paradise on earth for adults, then, represents the ultimate expression of a utopia that fascinates and eludes us: *Neverland*.

Never Neverland
Julien Discrit
2015
geographical map, inkjet printing
loan of FRAC Lorraine



The Power of Disney
Sveta Dorosheva

Sveta Dorosheva draws a fascinating illustration for the *LA Times* on the attraction of Disney theme parks. The article is written by a Disney addict and looks into why many people visit the parks continuously despite the fact that it'd be cheaper to have a holiday somewhere else. Is the attraction the escape from reality where everything is fake? Sveta's artwork is a beautifully detailed dissection of the brain.

The Power of Disney
Sveta Dorosheva
2017
drawing



Roller Coaster of Progress
Benjamin Earl

In 1959, Walt Disney placed his first roller coaster order by recreating an artificial mountain landscape. The Matterhorn Bobsleds attraction reproduced the landscape of the Matterhorn, a mountain that straddles the Swiss and Italian Alps.

contributions

Subsequently, 13 different mountain areas were recreated in Disney parks around the world. Although they are on a scale of 1:100, the perspective effects give them a grandiose appearance. Roller coasters originated in Russia and entered the leisure industry thanks to mining, which introduced the use of carriages on rails. Earl's installation is made up of amateur images. By focusing on the disorientating movement of the cars on a rollercoaster, he asks the question: what are we actually looking for when we ride these attractions?

Roller Coaster of Progress
Benjamin Earl
2021
video / duration 11'07"



The Magic Kingdom
Élea Godefroy

Élea Godefroy captures the margins, the role and the impact of the settlement of the theme park in the development of a 2230 ha piece of land. Thriving on farmers' resignation, the development project reveals a space imbued with the Disney matrix, a sublimated heterotopic world.

The Magic Kingdom
Élea Godefroy
2021-2022
photographs



***REALITY IS FICTIONAL /
DISNEYLAND IS REAL***
Pete Ho Ching Fung

Pete Ho Ching Fung examines how the world of Disney is translated into the context of Hong Kong, where a Disneyland Resort opened in 2005, and China, where the Shanghai Disney Resort opened in 2016. He depicts forgotten histories, such as that of the Chinese migrant labourers who built the transcontinental railroad in the USA. He brings this forgotten history together with the contemporary censorship of Winnie the Pooh, the reaction to a meme in which President Xi Jinping is portrayed as the cartoon bear. Ultimately, Ho Ching Fung asks: in our post-global times, who determines how reality is constructed or appropriated, and who is silenced?

REALITY IS FICTIONAL/DISNEYLAND IS REAL
Pete Ho Ching Fung
2021
painted cardboard, wood and postcards



Empire of Ice Cream
Sam Jacob

Conceived between 2011 and 2019, 'Empire of Ice Cream' is a series of meticulously filled graph paper that show the remnants of architectural plans gathered from an assortment of historic and contemporary references. These elements are sometimes grand and monumental, others banal and generic, but all are summoned impromptu from Jacob's memory; segments from Ancient Greek temples, football pitches, something Meisian, parts of a church, orchards, foun-

tains, straightforward corridors, a chunk of Parliament, and a Buzzcock's single cover are some examples.

Empire of Ice Cream
Sam Jacob
2011-2019
drawing



Two to Tango
Oskar Johanson

An elaborate fantasy world forms the basis of the ultimate Disney holiday paradise. The installation focused on Disney's cruise liner operations and private island in the Caribbean, getting a behind-the-scenes look at all the interventions Disney made to give Castaway Cay a credible fictional history. From the interior of the cruise ship to a communications tower disguised as a palm tree, in Castaway Cay all indications of modernity are carefully excluded.

Two to Tango
Oskar Johanson
2021
installation

contributions



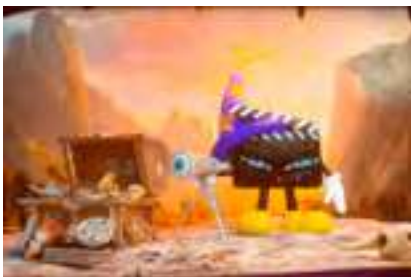
**Walt Disney Productions
1947-2022 n°3**
Bertrand Lavier

The Walt Disney Productions series, inaugurated in 1984 and regularly exhibited since, is composed of enlargements by Bertrand Lavier of abstract paintings, scribbled by the cartoonist of Mickey for an adventure of the mouse character in a museum of modern art. The artist also created the sculptures by isolating the elements of the setting, thus giving to the status of art object what was only setting and fiction.

Walt Disney Productions 1947-2022 n°3
Bertrand Lavier
2023

polyester resin
31 1/2 x 43 1/4 x 19 3/4 in.
(BL220)

© Bertrand Lavier, Adagp, Paris, 2024
courtesy of : Courtesy the artist and Mennour, Paris



Hypnosis of the Stolen Painting
Clara Lezla

Sketches, stories and maps are the main tools Walt Disney had at his disposal to imagine and create his worlds. In this video, Clara Lezla explores the promises and imagery hidden in these maps. Based on an interview with French geographer Jean-François Staszak, she presents an anthology of the map as a 'portal' to other worlds. Using the map as a vehicle for dreaming about and telling stories, the video questions the notion of simulacra ('copies' with no real

originals) as the most important component of our reality.

Hypnosis of the Stolen Painting
Clara Lezla
2021
video / duration 4'11"
sound design : Maarten Brijker



A world around Disney
Christoph Sillem

Using Google Maps and discovering a perfect circle around Disneyland Paris, photographer Christoph Sillem wondered about Disney's influence beyond this perimeter. What he found was a sort of replica of a French village from an undetermined century. Whereas at Disneyland Paris visitors flock here, the streets are empty. Clean and unobtrusively touched up, this place is a strange combination of the familiar and the bizarre, giving the impression of being in another country pretending to be France, while actually being in France.

A world around Disney
Christoph Sillem
2012
photographs



Real Snow White
Pilvi Takala

The artist Pilvi Takala demonstrates the absurd logic of the 'real fairy tale character'. Disneyland's extreme strictness becomes apparent when a fan dressed as Disney's Snow White* is denied entry. A wide range

of Disney costumes is on sale in the park, but they are intended for children only. The dreams referred to in the slogan 'Dreams Come True' may be produced only by Disney, and only within the theme park's boundaries. Any deviation raises the fear that real, possibly dark and perverse dreams might come true. The fantasy of innocent Snow White doing something bad is so real that guards and management refer to it when they explain why a visitor is not allowed to enter the park dressed as Snow White. Takala also capitalises on the growing trend of recreating famous cartoon characters in live action role play and cosplay.

Real Snow White
Pilvi Takala
2009
video / duration 09'19

exhibition plan

**9 chapters:****0. The Architecture of Staged Realities**

– carousel des illusions

1. Creative Beginnings**2. Appropriating Inspiration**

– *Basney*, Bas van Beek, 2013
– *Falling Alice*, Oliver Beer, 2014

3. Disney during WWII**4. Disneyland, from Map to System**

– *The Real Snow White*, Pilvi Takala, 2009
– *The Power of Disney*, Sveta Dorosheva, 2017

5. Cultured Nature

– *The Roller Coaster of Progress*, Benjamin Earl, 2021
– *Mastering Bambi*, Persijin Broersen & Margit Lukács, 2011
– *REALITY IS FICTIONAL / DISNEYLAND IS REAL*, Pete Ho Ching Fung, 2021-2024

6. Expansion as a Model

– *The Magic Kingdom*, Élea Godefroy, 2021
– *Two to Tango*, Oskar Johanson, 2021
– *Never Neverland*, Julien Discrit, 2015

7. Val d'Europe, Nouvelle Ville

– *A World Around Disney*, Christoph Sillem, 2012
– *Empire of Ice Cream*, Sam Jacob, 2011-2019

8. Perpetual System

– *Walt Disney Productions 1947-2022 n°3*, Bertrand Lavier, 2023
– *Le Club Mickey*, Christian Boltanski, 1990
– *Hypnosis of the Stolen Painting*, Clara Lezla, 2020

9. Virtual Disney Worlding

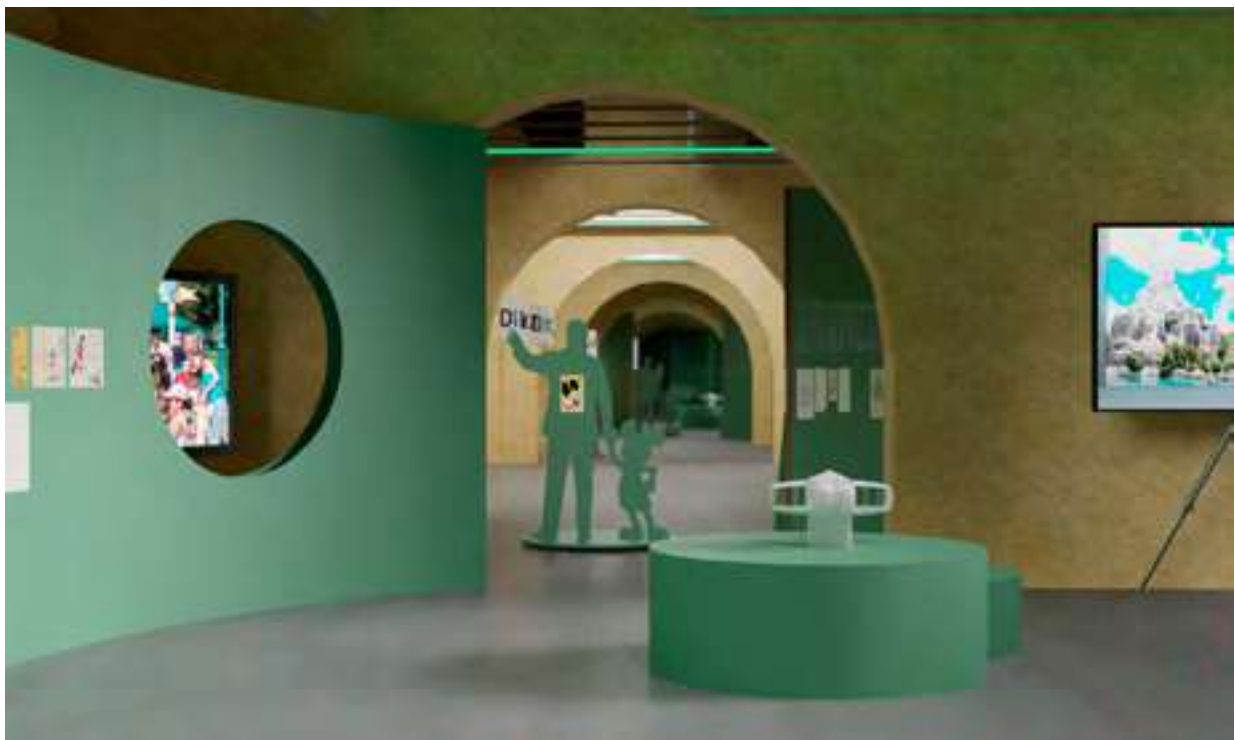
– *A Map of Walt Disney Company's World Wide Assets*, Irene Stracuzzi

exhibition design

The exhibition takes up the whole of the main gallery, offering a non-linear route through the themes developed in the exhibition.

Curved walls and winding paths alter the gallery's enfilade vision, forming a landscape of different shades of green-grey. This colour, called *Go Away Green* by Disney, was developed to hide the undesirable elements of the décor in Disney theme parks and neighbourhoods (backdrops, street furniture, etc.).

The large arc en rêve gallery is divided into nine sub-galleries tracing the history of Walt Disney, the gradual development of the animation company into a multinational leisure and entertainment company, its relationship with militarisation, globalisation and its research into urban planning.





A world around Disney © Christophe Sillem

curator

Saskia van Stein

Curator of the exhibition, Saskia van Stein currently directs the master's programme The Critical Inquiry Lab at the Design Academy in Eindhoven and the Rotterdam Architecture Biennale. She has been artistic director of Bureau Europa, an architecture and design platform based in Maastricht, and curator at the Netherlands Architecture Institute (NAi). Her practice is characterised by a transdisciplinary approach in which contemporary social problems give rise to questions about analysis, imagination and representation, and how these manifest themselves in the built environment. Drawing on his deep interest in curating exhibitions, van Stein explores the possibilities of different exhibition formats and methods of knowledge production, in which the performativity of cultural production plays a central role.

Juliette Mirabito

Juliette Mirabito is an editor and curator. Looking at contemporary creation through the prism of heritage and performativity, she carries various exhibition, publication or performances projects alone or collectively. She currently works as a public program curator for Rib, a contemporary art space in Rotterdam, she is also the assistant editor of the *Errant journal*, a thematic research publication dedicated to the pluriversal epistemologies.

graphic designer

Irene Stracuzzi

Graphic designer Irene Stracuzzi lives and works in Amsterdam. She teaches at the Design Academy in Eindhoven, where she is attached to the master's department as a design tutor. Irene Stracuzzi specialises in graphic design, art direction and information design. She works both independently and as part of a team for clients in the artistic and cultural fields. In her research, Stracuzzi focuses on translating complex results into accessible visual formats, reflecting her vision of the role of design as a critical tool for sharing and disseminating knowledge.

exhibition curatorship

Saskia van Stein

exhibition curator

Juliette Mirabito

assistant curator

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With contributions by :

Bas van Beek, Oliver Beer, Christian Boltanski, Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács, Carlos Diniz, Julien Discrit, Sveta Dorosheva, Benjamin Earl, Frank O. Gehry Associates, Élea Godefroy, Pete Ho Ching Fung, Sam Jacob, Oskar Johanson, Bertrand Lavier, Clara Lazla, Ateliers Jean Nouvel, Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA), Christian de Portzamparc, Aldo Rossi, Arnau Rovira, Christophe Sillem, Karan Sunil, Pilvi Takala, Bernard Tschumi Architects, Venturi, Scott Brown & Associates, Kem Weber.

An earlier iteration of the exhibition

The Architecture of Staged Realities,

(re)constructing Disney has been shown in 2021 at Het Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam, with an exhibition design by Frédérique Albert-Bordenave.

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special collaboration

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Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UCSB, Santa Barbara

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Éo, toutes architectures, Bègles

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Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam

Dominique Paini, Paris

The Venturi, Scott Brown Collection, Philadelphia

visuals available for use

to download the visuals: <https://we.tl/t-QETEPDcOjE>



01_ Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács :
Mastering Bambi, 2010
video
Courtesy d'Akinci



02_ Pilvi Takala :
Real Snow White, 2009
video
Courtesy de Carlos/Ishikawa, Stigter van Doesburg et Helsinki Contemporary.



03_ Fantasia Resorts, 2018
© Arnau Rovira Vidal



04_ Rue des Genêts, Bailly-Romainvilliers (Seine et Marne), série « A world around Disney » 2009
© Christoph Sillem



05_ Marne-la-Vallée, 2018
© Maxime Lerolle / Reporterre



06_ The Magic Kingdom
© Eléa Godefroy



07_ The Magic Kingdom
© Eléa Godefroy



08_ club Mickey, 1961
collection Ferret d'Avant



09_ Walt Disney, 1935
sur la place de la Concorde, devant l'Hôtel de Crillon



10_ Serris
© Eric Tabuchi - Nelly Monnier



11_ Coupvray, Disneyland Paris
© Eric Tabuchi - Nelly Monnier



12_ Coupvray_ Disneyland Paris
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useful information

The Architecture of Staged Realities (re)constructing Disney

exhibition

exhibition Thursday 28 March 2024 – Sunday 5 January 2025
grande galerie
every day except Monday, 11am – 6 pm,
open until 8 pm on the second Wednesday of every month

press visit

Thursday 28 March 2024 at 2:30 pm

opening

Thursday 28 March 2024 at 6:30 pm

→ opening talk

with **Saskia van Stein**, exhibition curator

→ exhibition opening

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