

HerStory

of Animation

Mary Blair & Beyond

A landmark exhibition, HerStory of Animation showcases key women of animation. Featuring over 80 legendary artists behind iconic films and breakthroughs in the industry, including: Mary Blair, Bessie Mae Kelley, Lotte Reiniger, Lillian Schwartz and beyond – the alchemy of animation, artistry, technology, history and more, is experienced in this rare collective.

From the earliest moving images to today's box office blockbusters, women have always been key contributors to the animated arts, yet very little is known about these exceptional artists.

Working against the accepted roles of their day, many women broke ground and blazed trails to follow artistic pursuits not usually open to women. Whether pioneers in early films; sculpting souls from lifeless lumps of clay; formulating sand into captured movement; designing pixelated displays to dance – across every medium in motion, women were not only trailblazing artisans of animation, but they redefined the artform into a billion dollar industry.



Watch the
promotional video





Exhibition Specs

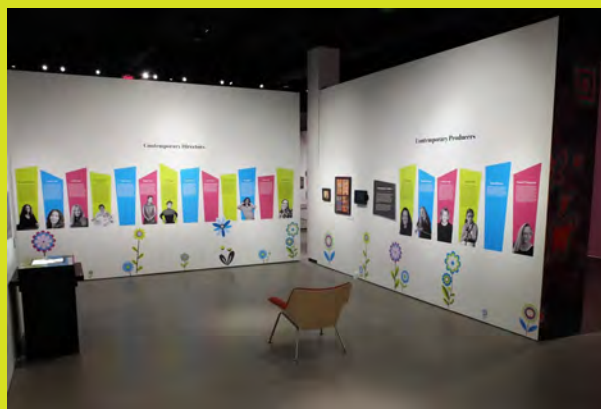
Square Footage: 4,700sq ft
 Adaptable floor plans - expanded, reduced
 Multiple monitors/projection for clips

Featured Objects:

- Rare original animation artwork by women from a century of Disney, Bray Studios, Lantz, Fleischer, Warner Bros. & more.
- Never-before-seen original production concept art, animated drawings, sculptures, cels showcasing the work of key women
- Featured clips/segments/interviews from significant animated films & artists
- Actual animation equipment, art tools, ephemera, posters, documents
- Custom created scale models and installations
- Original Disney Kem Weber animation desk
- Early Edison film camera & pre-cinematic technology

Hosting Requirements:

Insurance coverage, loan agreements, facility report, guest curator



Produced and Exhibited by:

Muskegon Museum of Art - June 6 - September 27, 2026

Curated by:

Guest Curator - Mindy Johnson - Author, historian, and leading expert on women's roles in animation and film history

Amelia Anderson - Curator of Women's Art at Muskegon Museum of Art

Designed by:

Kristina Broughton, Anchorside Design & Marketing

Supplemental Opportunities

- Lectures / Book signings
- Original Screenings
- Educational learning guide
- Docent training guide
- Programming guide
- Additional interactives
 - Shadow puppetry
 - Pinscreen insets
 - Flipbook elements
- Original narrative musical productions
- Visiting animators & artists
- Youth craft/activities
- Group tours
- Immersive experiences



HerStory of Animation: A Musical Celebration

Inspired by animation historian Mindy Johnson's book, *Ink & Paint: The Women of Walt Disney's Animation*, and the exhibition, *HerStory of Animation: Mary Blair & Beyond*, this original musical spotlights pioneers like Helena Smith Dayton, Mary Blair, Lillian Schwartz, Bessy Mae Kelley, and more while tracing women's lasting impact on film history.

The program features inspirational music from animated films and more, creating an uplifting, toe-tapping celebration of the women who colored animation history.

Written by Beth Beaman with musical direction by Regina Schlaff of The Playhouse at White Lake.

Debuted in July and August 2026.



To learn more or inquire:

Mindy Johnson - mindy.johnson@gmail.com / www.mindyjohnsoncreative.com / 213-709-8346
Kirk Hallman - khallman@muskegonartmuseum.org