

Dick Duerrstein

As a young child growing up in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles, Dick Duerrstein was always drawing. He loved to draw battle scenes and cars, especially cars that had been designed and painted by the iconic Ed 'Big Daddy' Roth. His mother's shopping list always included a note to buy him another ream of white paper, as he quickly filled every inch of both sides of each sheet with his meticulous graphite drawings. After high school, he studied at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena while working for a graphics firm.

His passion for art, along with his love of Disney comics and movies, fostered in him the dream of someday working for the Walt Disney Studios and in 1976 he began his career at Disney as Creative Director for their Consumer Products Division. Designing Disney merchandise for the national market, Duerrstein worked alongside many of the foremost animation artists of the 20th Century, including Ward Kimball, Marc Davis (and incidentally, with Chuck Jones at Warner Bros.) For the next 22 years, Dick had the opportunity to use his talent in many diverse ways, developing his own unique style that is prevalent in his paintings today.

His experience at Disney working on a wide variety of projects has given Dick a world-class sense of design. His artwork has adorned everything from record album covers and clothing to fine collectible items such as cel portfolios, art glass and furniture. Some of his published works include a series of three children's books that he illustrated, and a fine art serigraph series of Mickey Mouse, Minnie Mouse and Donald Duck. Dick began perfecting his current style of painting over fifteen years ago. Finding inspiration in the work of contemporary artists such as Keith Haring, Andy Warhol and David Hockney, he has imbued his paintings of cartoon characters with new life.

At home in his studio, Dick begins each painting by simply layering each aspect of the character, color by color, so that each painting expands beyond character interpretation. Working primarily on canvas in acrylics and oil pastels, his striking, contemporary style brings his images to life in a dramatic and unforgettable fashion. The vibrant colors and bold brushwork of his art create a sense of movement, excitement and reverence for the creative process. He truly enjoys the process of discovery involved in the conception and execution of his paintings, knowing that he can bring his imagination to life on the canvas for all to share.

Duerrstein's work can be found in the Walt Disney Studio corporate offices, Burbank, California; The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. and St. Jude's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee and private collections worldwide. Currently his work is seen in "The Art of Mickey Mouse" exhibition traveling through Japan.

Inspired not only by the animation artists he has worked so closely with but also with such diverse draftsman as Leonardo da Vinci and Von Dutch, Duerrstein has recently found inspiration from the animation drawings of Chuck Jones. "I believe I bring the spontaneity of his [Chuck Jones] original drawing to the forefront of my paintings, where the viewer can see the action up close. The backgrounds reflect the age and use of the original drawings, grounding them in history." Duerrstein has been working on a series of paintings that explore the relationship between the drawn line and the personality of the cartoon characters made famous by the legendary creator and director, Chuck Jones.

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