Berkshire museum Press Release
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The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons Comes to Berkshire Museum January 25, 2020

Special exhibition highlights original artwork and creative processes behind the classic animations

[Pittsfield, MA] – Forget duck season and rabbit season, January 25 to May 10 is cartoon season at Berkshire Museum! A whole cast of colorful characters and one-of-a-kind artwork will brighten the winter doldrums as part of The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons, an exhibition of original artwork from the world of Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies. An opening celebration featuring family-friendly activities, cartoon screenings, and light refreshments will be held Saturday, January 25, from 1 to 5 pm.

During this special exhibition, Warner Bros. fans of all ages can see production artwork including drawings, paintings, and transparent celluloids (known in the industry as “cels”) used to create some of the studio’s classic cartoon shorts from their debut in 1930 through the early 1960s as they explore the history of this legendary Hollywood animation studio. Never intended to be displayed, each work is a marvelous visual icon on its own, exhibiting the remarkable talent and ingenuity behind the familiar films.

Artwork, timelines, film clips, and interpretive panels shed light on the creative process behind the scenes of these masterpieces of satirical humor, trace the development of each iconic cartoon star, and explore step-by-step the techniques through which animated films are made. Works by all of the studio’s directors will be richly represented including Chuck Jones, Tex Avery, Friz Freeling, and Bob Clampett. A complete cast of Warner Bros. characters will be on display, from Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, and Bugs Bunny, to Marvin the Martian, Pepe Le Pew, Yosemite Sam, and even Sniffles the Mouse and Witch Hazel.
Alongside more than 160 drawings, paintings, cels, and related art objects used in the making of Warner’s classic cartoons, visitors will discover a unique assortment of scientific and historical specimens from Berkshire Museum’s collection that provide real-world context to animated favorites: from a preserved coyote, canary, rabbit, and duck to cast iron frying pans, dynamite, six shooters, and iconic helmets. Guests will be invited to step into memorable Warner Bros. scenarios and pose with beloved characters for souvenir photos.

“First and foremost, The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons is fun! But it also presents a unique opportunity for us to connect these animated classics to the real world through our diverse collection and interdisciplinary model of interpretation,” says Berkshire Museum Executive Director Jeff Rodgers. “What does a real coyote look like? What are the physics behind rocket skates? How do science and art blend to create animation? We hope to answer all of these questions and more with this exhibition and the extensive programming that will surround it.”

On Saturday mornings throughout the run of the exhibition, visitors to The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons can take a seat in Berkshire Museum’s theater to enjoy a collection of the classic shorts which have delighted audiences with their wit and surprising sophistication for ninety years. The fun continues in the Museum’s Lab 102 space where adults and children will be invited to experiment with animation techniques through hands-on activities.

Berkshire Museum’s current feature exhibition She Shapes History, which celebrates 100 years of women’s suffrage in the United States, will continue its run alongside The Art of Warner Bros. Cartoons through May 10. Together, the two shows will present a unique view of American life and culture in the 20th century through two very different lenses. She Shapes History is generously sponsored by Berkshire Magazine.

About Berkshire Museum

Berkshire Museum is located at 39 South Street (Route 7) in Pittsfield, MA. The Museum is open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday noon to 5 pm.
Admission is $13; free for children under 18, Museum members, and EBT cardholders. For more information, visit www.berkshiremuseum.org or call 413.443.7171.