

The works in *Magic Kingdoms* investigate our relationships to cultural iconography, taking apart what has been naturalized to us and re-configuring and transforming materials and meaning. Martin Arnold's *Shadow Cuts* and *Self Control* peel away layer upon layer of classic animation cells, highlighting fragments of actions by familiar cartoon characters, vibrating them between presence and absence. Disneyland Paris becomes a site of friction in Pilvi Takala's *Real Snow White*. Dressed as the iconic character, the artist encounters resistance from officials for the confusion her persona is causing fans wanting to meet their favourite Disney maiden. Which representation is real, and who owns the fantasy? Elodie Pong's *After the Empire* is a bubbling stew of cultural icons and historical figures; the pot boils over when the likenesses of Karl Marx and Marilyn Monroe discuss the end of history. Persijn Broersen and Margit Lukács' *Mastering Bambi* recreates Bambi's forest paradise, free of all its inhabitants. At first serene, the reinterpreted score begins to hint at the missing characters' trials and traumas. As if emerging from this vacancy of presence, the pristine, calm water surface in Elin Magnusson's *Follow the Water* is quietly ruptured by an overgrown penguin waddling out of its misty setting. Uneasy in its movements, the penguin suit restricts its wearer from a frantic pace; instead the incongruous scene unfolds in its own time. Joshua Thorson's *HORIZON* utilizes footage of the now defunct ride of the same name at EPCOT Center as a visual companion to a sci-fi narrative told through voice-over. The transmission comes from a researcher on a deep space colony, far from earth, yet still with its baggage. A break in the supply chain may be the catalyst needed to truly embrace the new.



***Shadow Cuts*, Martin Arnold, 2010, 5:00**

Martin Arnold directs his deconstructive impulses to the heritage of Walt Disney. The result is a neurotic re-animation that comes to life in the darkness between images, where the viewer meets his dreams and demons. How much do we miss when we blink our eyes? Intense repetition and subtle variations evoke surprising nuances from existing film material. Through a stroboscopic effect, Mickey and Pluto seem to have become involved in a veritable flashing light relationship. – Ann Arbor Film Festival, aafilmfest.org



***Real Snow White*, Pilvi Takala, 2009, 9:14**

The absurd logic of the "real character" and the extreme discipline of Disneyland become apparent when a real fan of Disney's Snow White* is banned from entering the park in a Snow White costume. As visitors are encouraged to dress up and a lot of costume-like merchandise is sold at the park, the full costumes are only sold for children. The Disney slogan "Dreams Come True" of course means dreams produced exclusively by Disney. Anything even slightly out of control immediately evokes fear of the real, possibly dark and perverse dreams coming true. The fantasy of the innocent Snow White doing something bad is so obviously real, that the security guards and management refer to it when explaining why the visitor can't enter the park dressed up as Snow White. – pilvitakala.com

*Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" from 1937 is the first full length cel-animated film in history. It's based on the fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm.



***After the Empire*, Elodie Pong, 2008, 13:50**

In this video, face-to-face conversations between late icons of popular culture and political and historical heroes - including Marilyn Monroe, Elvis Presley, Batman & Robin, Karl Marx - are orchestrated. Surrounded by a post-apocalyptic set, the actors embody their character's individual and symbolic extremes, longings, and ideals in simultaneously humorous and elegiac ways. – elodiepong.net



***Self Control*, Martin Arnold, 2011, 4:00**

"Arnold uses subtle loops and rhythmical effects to unearth what Hollywood productions and Disney features repress, releasing suppressed gestures and suggesting associations between human and machine, bringing specters in from the dark and blinding its characters and the audience in equal measure"
-Wilbirg Brainin-Donnenberg, aafilmfest.org



Mastering Bambi

Persijn Broersen & Margit Lukács, 2010, 13:06

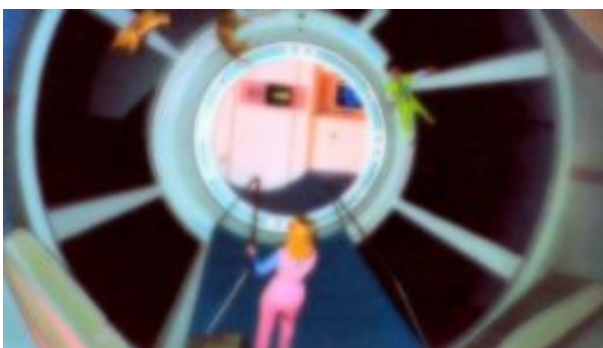
Walt Disney's 1942 classic animation film 'Bambi' is well known for its distinct main characters – a variety of cute, anthropomorphic animals. However, an important but often overlooked protagonist in the movie is nature itself: the pristine wilderness as the main grid on which Disney structured his 'Bambi'. One of the first virtual worlds was created here: a world of deceptive realism and harmony, in which man is the only enemy. Disney strived to be true to nature, but he also used nature as a metaphor for human society. In his view, deeply rooted in European romanticism, the wilderness is

threatened by civilization and technology. The forest, therefore, is depicted as a 'magic well', the ultimate purifying 'frontier', where the inhabitants peacefully coexist. Interestingly, the original 1924 Austrian novel 'Bambi, A Life in the Woods' by Felix Salten (banned in 1936 by Hitler) shows nature (and human society) more as a bleak, Darwinist reality of competition, violence and death. Broersen and Lukács recreate the model of Disney's pristine vision, but they strip the forest of its harmonious inhabitants, the animals. What remains is another reality, a constructed and lacking wilderness, where nature becomes the mirror of our own imagination. The soundtrack is made by Berend Dubbe and Gwendolyn Thomas. They've reconstructed Bambi's music, in which they twist and fold the sound in such a way that it reveals the dissonances in the movie. - pmpmpm.com



***Follow the Water*, Elin Magnusson, 2011, 3:50**

There is a penguin living in a lake somewhere in Sweden. He is the first of many penguins to come. He wakes up at dawn to explore the surroundings, the beach and the forest. He dislikes the lake, he thinks the fish tastes like mud but knows nothing else than to stay. He wants to fly away but has forgotten how to. Instead he waits for what he knows to be what he knew, for old memories to float away and for new memories to write his history. Tomorrow he will forget why he did what he did today. – elinmagnusson.com



***HORIZON*, Joshua Thorson, 2010, 13:00**

EPCOT Center, or, the Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, featured a ride called "Horizons," which was sponsored by G.E. It showed a future in which technology and innovation coupled with the family unit would evolve into exciting and previously unimaginable territories--with colonies in outer space and under the Earth's oceans. In 2000, the ride was demolished. The story in this video, about a family doing research on a colony in the Chamaleon Complex whose supplies and funding inexplicably stop arriving, and who are determined to survive however they can, was written to structurally accompany the archival video footage of the ride. - joshuathorson.com