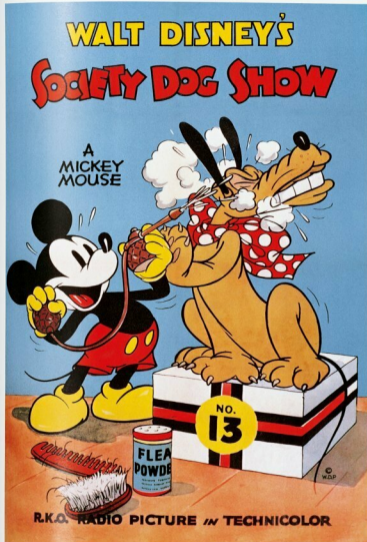




ABOVE Story sketches for *Society Dog Show*, turning on glass canvas. Mickey enters at the dog show with Pluto, and sets to work grooming him, with an array of curlicue tools, for the distinguished event. Pluto's owner sends Mickey's tooth flying, and while Mickey is searching for the lost article, Pluto discovers Flea in the next booth.

OPPOSITE The poster for *Society Dog Show*. Here again Mickey applies perfume to Pluto, who is having some of it.





ABOVE A classic 1939 Mickey Mouse Sunday gag written by Merrill De Haro, penciled by Manuel Geronzi and inked by Ted Thayer. Clever Mickey and assistant Goofy each have uniquely operational ways of solving a problem — but even in a blue moon, their methods are especially out-of-pipe.

BELLOW Cover art by Antonio Rubino for *Art magazine* (September 25, 1930), an Italian comic album reprinting the daily strip serial “Once the Outkick” (1928), plotted and penciled by Floyd Gottfredson, scripted by Ted Osborne, and inked by Ted Thayer. “Once” was the first Gottfredson story to feature Goofy as Goofy — rather than Dippy — and to give him the big chin, slanted eyes, and full wardrobe of his mature character design.



earlier BKS story, settles here into his permanent role as O'Hara's second, the triad of Mickey, O'Hara, and Casey will continue to resonate to the present day.

FROM MAGAZINES TO COMIC BOOKS

While “Mickey Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot,” in its 1941 newspaper comic book reprint, might have functioned as the first full-fledged, all-Mickey “floppy” — as newspaper comic books are called today — it was by no means the first Mickey periodical made for American newstands. By contrast, it came on the heels of eight years of constant Mickey magazine presence — just not quite in the form of a comic book, at first.

Mickey Mouse Magazine dated back to January 1933, when Kay Kamen and United Artists publisher Hal Horne introduced it as a five-cent digest to be sold at theaters. Late in the year, a second series was designed as a premium for local dairies, who could deliver copies to ongoing milk customers. In summer 1935, Horne broke from United Artists to publish a full-size third series for newstands. Aside from sharing content with the British *Mickey Mouse Weekly*, which began soon after, Horne's magazine joined forces with it to inspire a rash of worldwide spinoffs. Switzerland's *Micky Maus Zeitung* and Sweden's *Musse Pigg Tidningen* are two of the better known.

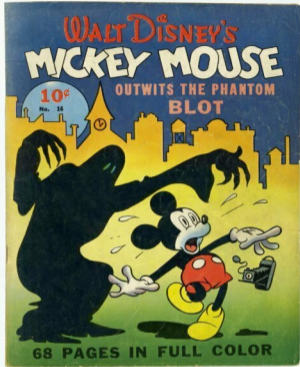
What was in a typical *Mickey Mouse Magazine*? Along with short, original comic strips, issue No. 5 (1936) features an editorial supposedly by Mickey (“Just Between Us”), and half-and-half gag cartoons with Disney characters. There is a stage play for readers to put on (“Lucky Ducky's Cabin”), and a couple of stories in prose — some Disney-specific, others not.

The only problem with *Mickey Mouse Magazine* was that Horne couldn't keep it up. While it soon sold a half-million copies per issue, Horne famously printed far too many more — and when this led to a money shortfall, Kamen bought out Horne's interest and took the magazine over. For a while, Kamen published it as “Kay Kamen Ltd.,” from 1937, he entered a new partnership with Western Printing and Lithographing Company, leading to an influx of Western-produced content and the enduring imprint of K. K. Publications.¹⁷

Under any inspect, however, Western was bullish about a new medium: not children's magazines, but the burgeoning field of comic books. As Western's hold on *Mickey Mouse Magazine*

RIGHT The Blot was referred to as a “phantom” in Gottfredson's 1939 daily strip, but never alongside his name. It was this reporter's Ted Osborne book *Four Color* (19) that first set the compound moniker “Phantom Blot.” Issue 18 was the first of many *Mickey Mouse Color* issues before, in 1952, Dell published *Mickey Mouse* 28, inaugurating Mickey's ongoing series. But unlike the numbering followed on the preceding two titles, Dell didn't update cover numbers, thus had issue 28.

BELOW A strip from the daily serial “Mickey Mouse Outwits the Phantom Blot” (1939), plotted and penciled by Floyd Gottfredson, scripted by Merrill De Haro, and inked by Ted Thayer and Bill Wright. The villainous Blot was inspired, according to Gottfredson, by various prevailing characters shared or released all in black: the arch-criminal Fantomas of French fiction, his kapee named “the Blot,” in Walter Hotten's comic strip; or the job, even the Doberman guards, as *Phantom* labeled in Disney's *Landscape Painter* (1945).





ABOVE Story sketches for the cartoon that will become *The Simple Things*. The working title will be discarded, but the gull's soprano action remains in the finished film. In addition to featuring star animators Fred Meese and Norm Ferguson, this film included scenes by other veteran Disney artists including Marvin Woodward, George Knell, and director Nck Hibbard, all of whom had joined the Disney staff in the 1930s.

RIGHT The poster for *The Simple Things*, the last theatrical Mickey Mouse short released during Walt's lifetime. How the world of Disney animation had changed since Mickey's earliest days! In 1929 Walt and his smoo staff of artists had scrambled to turn out a new Mouse picture every few weeks, in an effort to keep up with their release schedule. By contrast, *The Simple Things*—after a lengthy period of story development—started production in July 1951, and was completed and released nearly two years later.

OPPOSITE Mickey poses in a landscape that was intended to serve as a background for a photo session by prominent photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt with Walt Disney in 1950.

