

Walter Anderson and World Literature

Exhibition at the

The University of Mississippi

March 26, 2009–January 29, 2010

Curator

John Anderson

Advisors

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Sponsors

Center for the Study of Southern Culture

Department of Archives and Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library

F&B Feder Foundation for the Beaux Arts

Walter Anderson and World Literature, an exhibition sponsored in conjunction with the Sixteenth Annual Oxford Conference for the Book on March 26–28, 2009, will remain at the J. D. Williams Library on the University campus through January 2010 and then travel to libraries and cultural centers throughout Mississippi for many years to come. Through this exhibition, Mississippians of all ages and visitors to the state will learn about our greatest artist, Walter Inglis Anderson (1903–1965), and his love for literature and the journals and stories he created.

In her introduction to *Hamlet and Beyond: Literature through the Eyes of Walter Anderson*, an exhibition from 2001, the artist's daughter Mary Anderson Pickard talks about the extraordinary role of books in her father's work, giving details about how "literature inspired more than a third of his art in drawings, watercolors, woodcarving, pottery, and linoleum block prints."

Anderson also created nearly 10,000 pen-and-ink illustrations of scenes from *Don Quixote*, *Paradise Lost*, Pope's *Iliad*, and Bulfinch's *Legends of Charlemagne* as well as *Paradise Regained*, Temora from *The Poems of Ossian*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, *Alice in Wonderland*, Darwin's *The Voyage of the Beagle*, and the Bible. Perhaps the best example of Anderson's illustrations for literature can be seen in *The Magic Carpet and Other Tales* (1987) retold by Ellen Douglas. *Magic Carpet* offers 20 stories from world literature and 24 reproductions of the artist's linoleum block prints from classics such as *Rapunzel*, *Thumbelina*, *The Sleeping Beauty*, *The Frog Prince*, *Puss and Boots*, *Cinderella*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and many other childhood favorites.

There is obviously an overwhelming amount of wondrous material for the new exhibition curated by the artist's son John Anderson, who concentrates on the books his father illustrated. For some, he uses text from the original book to accompany each drawing—to show what his father was reading as he drew the illustration at hand. Also included are samples of works like Anderson's original children's picture book, *Robinson*, and the fairy tales.

Walter Inglis Anderson Chronology

- 1903: Born, September 29, New Orleans, Louisiana
- 1922–23: Studies at New York School of Fine and Applied Art
- 1923: Family moves to Ocean Springs, Mississippi
- 1924–28: Studies at Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art
- 1927: Visits France and Spain
- 1928: Shearwater Pottery opened by brother, Peter
- 1933: Marries Agnes (Sissy) Grinstead
- 1941: Anderson Family moves to Oldfields, the Grinstead home in Gautier, Mississippi
- 1947: Moves to the Little Cottage at Shearwater (Horn Island voyages begin)
- 1949: Exhibits block prints and other works at Brooklyn Museum; visits China
- 1950: Exhibition at Brooks Museum in Memphis
- 1965: Dies, November 30, New Orleans, Louisiana



The Magic Carpet, Walter Anderson

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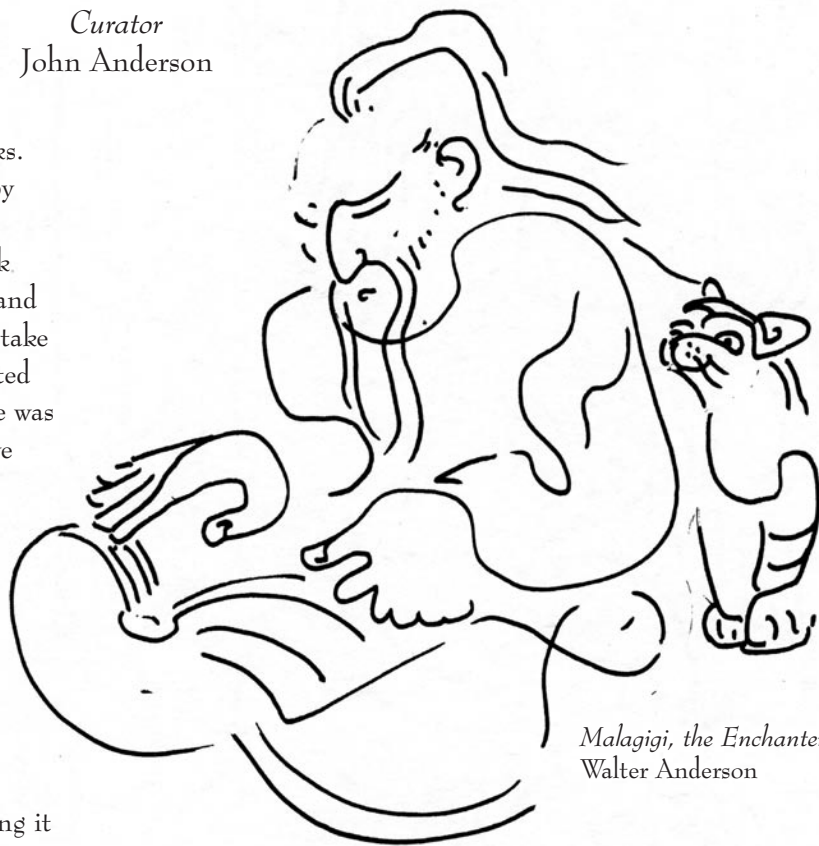
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Walter Anderson was unquestionably a lover of books. Almost a third of his art was inspired or enhanced by literature. Characters and themes from his reading fill many block print and mural designs. Pen and ink illustrations provide a dramatic link between words and images that is a joy to behold. Seeing a good writer take images from life and shape them into words fascinated him. By converting those words back into images he was expressing his appreciation and completing a creative circle that applauded the writing of many authors.

I drew it in ecstasy. It was a concentrated image that nothing could take from me. If it was not poetry it was the image, asked for by Yeats, from which poetry is made.

By drawing illustrations for books Walter Anderson undoubtedly enhanced his reading experience, making it a more active process in which he played a vital role. But thinking of his illustrations as evidence of appreciation alone may be shortsighted. There also seems to have been a more practical element to them. He knew that some people respond more strongly to images than to language. So it was only common sense for him to suspect that increasing the number and quality of illustrations in a book would make it more appealing for those drawn to images. This also could enhance the experience of reading for those whose imagery was limited.

The numbers of drawings that Walter Anderson produced for each book suggest that he was considering illustrations for every page. The time that he spent carefully printing out the passages that went with each drawing supports this conclusion. The drawings for *Robinson*, a book that he wrote and illustrated in this manner, provide a good example of this process carried to completion.



Malagigi, the Enchanter,
Walter Anderson

Walter Anderson may actually have been imagining lithographic editions of the books he illustrated. Ironically, changes in printing techniques have recently made such an idea much more practical than it was in his lifetime just at a time when Hurricane Katrina has destroyed so many of his drawings that it would be impossible to fully reconstruct his efforts. But it is an intriguing concept. Perhaps the drawings and block prints that have been placed in this traveling exhibit will inspire some future artist to realize his dream of the perfect partnership between the visual and literary arts.

For more information, or to purchase prints of Walter Anderson's artwork, please visit the artist's various homes on the Web, the Walter Anderson Museum of Art in Ocean Springs, Mississippi, Realizations Shop, also in Ocean Springs, and Shearwater Pottery, the Anderson family pottery, founded in 1928.

Walter Anderson Museum of Art
www.walterandersonmuseum.org
510 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564-4632
228-872-3164

Realizations
www.walteringlisanderson.com
1000 Washington Avenue
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564
888-878-0503

Shearwater Pottery
102 Shearwater Drive
Ocean Springs, Mississippi 39564
228-875-7320

The 2009 Oxford Conference for the Book poster and t-shirt, featuring a self portrait of Walter Anderson are available at the Center for the Study of Southern Culture, located at Barnard Observatory on the campus of the University of Mississippi or by calling 662-915-5993.

A and Z block prints from *An Alphabet* by Walter Anderson

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Beginning with the letter "A" from *An Alphabet* on wall one near the women's rest room door, illustrations are listed in order, left to right, all the way through "Z." Dates are not listed on each panel, but most of the work was completed during the 1930s and '40s. Some are accompanied by the inspirational texts.

Panels 1–3
from *An Alphabet*, Walter Anderson

Panels 4–7
from *Legends of Charlemagne*, Thomas Bulfinch
Orlando Rides Bayard
Charlemagne's Knights
Rinaldo Salutes Before Fighting Orlando
Malagigi, the Enchanter

Panels 8 and 9
from works of William Shakespeare
from *Hamlet*
Alas, Poor Yorick!
from *King Lear*
King Lear Addresses His Daughters

Panels 10 and 11
from *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Samuel Taylor Coleridge
As Idle as a Painted Ship
The Mariner's Solitary Agony

Panel 12
from *Beauty and the Beast*, French fairy tale
Beauty and the Beast

Panel 13
from *Merlin and Arthur*, English legend
Excalibur

Panel 14
from *The Magic Carpet*, Persian folktale
The Magic Carpet

Panels 15 and 16
from *Aladdin*, Middle-Eastern folktale
Aladdin and Djini (top)
Aladdin and Djini (bottom)

Panels 17–22
from *The Iliad of Homer*, translated by Alexander Pope
Saturnia over Pieria
Saturnia over the Rolling Deep
Ascalaphus Rescued
Body of Sarpedon Restored
Althaea Curses Meleager
Hippodame

Panels 23–28
from *An Alphabet*, Walter Anderson

Panels 29–38
from *Robinson: The Pleasant History of an Unusual Cat*,
Walter Anderson

Panels 39–44
from *Don Quixote*, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra
The Don's Apostrophe to Dulcinea
Don Quixote Prepares to Attack
A Suffering Knight
The Don's Housekeeper on Chivalry
Quixote Furioso
A Certain Heroic Deed

Panels 45–51
from *An Alphabet*, Walter Anderson

Panel 52
from *Thumbelina*, Hans Christian Andersen
Thumbelina

Panels 53–60
from *An Alphabet*, Walter Anderson

Panels 61 and 62
from *Voyage of the Beagle*, Charles Darwin
Darwin in the Brazilian Jungle
Patagonian Penguins

Panel 63
from writings of Charles Darwin
Darwin in the Amazon

Panels 64–67
from *Voyage of the Beagle*, Charles Darwin
The Sailing of the Beagle
Tahitians Visit the Beagle
Darwin in Tahiti
New Zealand Chief

Panels 68–74
from *Paradise Lost*, John Milton
Eve Fascinated
Adam and Eve at Evening Prayer
Hail Eve
Raphael on the Eastern Cliff
Loading the Ark
The Flood

Panel 75
watercolor, unknown title

Panels 76–78
from *An Alphabet*, Walter Anderson

Panel 79
watercolor, unknown title

Panels 80–85
from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Lewis Carroll
Who Are You?
The Royal Procession
Down the Rabbit Hole
I Know Something Interesting Is Sure to Happen
The Cheshire Cat
Curious Dream

