

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

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JIM HENSON'S EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO SCREEN CULTURE EXPLORED IN EXHIBITION AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS AT MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

Jim Henson's Fantastic World: July 16, 2011–January 16, 2012

Astoria, New York, July 12, 2011 — Jim Henson, the internationally known creative figure whose work encompassed film, television, and puppetry, made elaborate imaginary worlds filled with unique characters, objects, and environments. A major exhibition devoted to his work, ***Jim Henson's Fantastic World***, will open at Museum of the Moving Image on Saturday, July 16, 2011 and continue through Monday, January 16, 2012. For its New York run, the Smithsonian traveling exhibition will be enhanced by an array of programs, talks, and performances, including special screenings, personal appearances by members of Henson's family and his close collaborators, and education programs for visitors of all ages.

"We are very pleased to be presenting *Jim Henson's Fantastic World* at the Museum," said Herbert S. Schlosser, the Chairman of the Museum's Board of Trustees and former President and CEO of NBC. "Jim Henson is a singular figure in the history of entertainment. His work has inspired generations of creative artists. His ingenuity and artistry have informed and entertained audiences around the world."

"It is rare for the Museum to present an exhibition devoted to a single individual, but there is no more fitting subject than Jim Henson," said Carl Goodman, Executive Director of the Museum. "Best known for creating beloved characters such as Kermit the Frog and Big Bird, he was also a special-effects wizard and technical innovator. By presenting this exhibition along with screenings, talks, workshops, and other special programs, the Museum is uniquely situated to explore all facets of Henson's many contributions to screen culture."

The exhibition features more than 120 artifacts, including drawings, storyboards, and props, and video material that illustrate Henson's boundless creativity and innumerable accomplishments. A special addition to the exhibition at Museum of the Moving Image is a puppet of Miss Piggy from *The Muppets Take Manhattan*. Among other highlights are fourteen additional iconic original puppets of such characters as Kermit the Frog, Rowlf, Bert, and Ernie; photographs of Henson and his collaborators at work; and excerpts from Henson's early projects and experimental films. The

exhibition spans Henson's entire career, beginning with drawings, cartoons, and posters produced during his college years in the late 1950s and concluding with objects related to the inspired imaginary worlds of his popular fantasy film *The Dark Crystal* (1982). Visitors will encounter materials from Henson's best-known projects, *The Muppet Show*, *The Muppet Movie* and its sequels, and *Fraggle Rock*, as well as objects related to his *Sesame Street* characters. Visitors will also learn about *Sam and Friends*, an early show Henson created in the 1950s, Henson's television commercial work in the 1960s, and the segments Henson made for *The Ed Sullivan Show*.

"My father's joyful sense of anarchy and creative play comes through in all of his work," said Cheryl Henson. "Seeing so many of his early creations and original concepts shown in this exhibition is a delight. The Henson family is thrilled to have this wonderful exhibit come to Museum of the Moving Image, just blocks away from the Henson puppet-building workshop and the television studios where *Sesame Street* is taped in Astoria."

"It's such a treat to get to know Jim Henson through his doodles and drawings, his puppets, and his fantastic performances," said Karen Falk, curator of the exhibition and archivist at The Jim Henson Company. "How perfect that *Jim Henson's Fantastic World* exhibition has come to New York where Jim based his corporate and production facilities. Now visitors viewing his original work firsthand will have the opportunity to experience his creative thinking and learn about the man who made the whole world smile."

The Museum has worked in close collaboration with the The Jim Henson Legacy and The Jim Henson Company to organize screenings, educational programs, and special events to commemorate Henson's 75th birthday on September 24 as well as other milestones during the period the exhibition is on view. These include screenings of *Time Piece* (1965), Jim Henson's Academy Award-nominated experimental short, in the Museum's Video Screening Amphitheater; a rare conversation with Jane Henson, co-founder of *The Muppets* and wife of the late Jim Henson, on September 18; a preview screening of the Sundance hit documentary *Being Elmo* with its subject, puppeteer and performer Kevin Clash and director Constance Marks in person on September 25; exclusive showings of compilation programs featuring hundreds of highlights and special moments from the history of the Muppets; screenings of *The Muppet Movie* and its sequels, *The Dark Crystal*, and other films, many accompanied by appearances by actors, puppeteers, designers and other close Henson collaborators. A complete schedule through the end of September is now available.

Additional events will include an anniversary screening of a newly restored 35mm print of *Labyrinth* with special guests, a presentation by Jim Henson's son Brian Henson, and other screenings and conversations in October through the end of the exhibition run in January.

Educational programs will include 30-minute guided tours of the exhibition (every Saturday and Sunday at 3:00 p.m.) and family workshops.

Jim Henson's Fantastic World is organized by The Jim Henson Legacy and Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), in cooperation with the Henson Family; The Jim Henson Company; The Muppets Studio, LLC; and Sesame Workshop. The exhibition is made possible by the BIO channel. Additional support has been provided by The Jane Henson Foundation and Cheryl Henson. Support for the exhibition at Museum of the Moving Image is provided by Five Napkin Burger, The Astor Room, and Schmutter, Strull, Fleisch Inc.

The Jim Henson Legacy is a non-profit 501(C3) organization that is dedicated to preserving and perpetuating Jim Henson's contributions to the worlds of puppetry, television and motion pictures, special effects and media technology. More information at www.jimhensonlegacy.org.

The Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES) connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history. More information at www.sites.si.edu.

Museum of the Moving Image is the only institution in the United States that explores the art, industry, and innovation of screen culture in all its forms. Embracing topics that range from nineteenth-century optical toys to the latest Internet developments, it provides insight into every phase of the production, promotion and exhibition of moving images. Engaging an international audience of all ages, Museum of the Moving Image offers a distinctive, highly interactive core exhibition; contemporary and retrospective programs of films from around the world; public discussions with leading figures in film and television; a unique collection; inspiring education programs; stimulating changing exhibitions; and groundbreaking online projects. A major renovation and expansion completed in January 2011 doubled the size of the Museum and added two new theaters, an education center, and new galleries. More information at movingimage.us

Press contacts:

Tomoko Kawamoto, Museum of the Moving Image
tkawamoto@movingimage.us / 718 777 6830

Jennifer Schommer, Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES)
schommerj@si.edu / 202 633 3121

MUSEUM INFORMATION

Hours: Tuesday-Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Friday, 10:30 to 8:00 p.m. Saturday-Sunday, 10:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Closed on Monday except for holiday openings).

Film Screenings: Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays, and as scheduled.

Museum Admission: \$12.00 for adults; \$9.00 for persons over 65 and for students with ID; \$6.00 for children ages 3-18. Children under 3 and Museum members are admitted free.

Admission to the galleries is free on Fridays, 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. Tickets for special screenings and events may be purchased in advance by phone at 718 777 6800 or online.

Location: 36-01 35 Avenue (at 37 Street) in Astoria.

Subway: M (weekdays only) or R to Steinway Street. Q (weekdays only) or N to 36 Avenue.

Program Information: Telephone: 718 777 6888; Website: movingimage.us

The Museum is housed in a building owned by the City of New York and its operations are made possible in part by public funds provided through the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, the New York City Economic Development Corporation, the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and the Natural Heritage Trust (administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation). The Museum also receives generous support from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. For more information, please visit movingimage.us.

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