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Learn About Jim Henson and His Life in MS

Fans young and old can still visit the unique attraction at The MAX until May 4

MERIDIAN, Miss. (April 2, 2019) – There’s still time to see *The Jim Henson Exhibition: Imagination Unlimited* at the Mississippi Arts + Entertainment Experience in Meridian (The MAX). The exhibit, which explores the life of Mississippi-native Jim Henson, is one of the South’s most amazing attractions and will be open until May 4.

Adults and children alike have been flocking to The MAX since the exhibit opening in January to see the magical world of Jim Henson. In February alone, more than 6,000 visitors took in the unique attraction that explores the life of Mississippi-native Jim Henson.

Throughout his career, Henson created iconic puppet characters and stories for film and television that left an indelible mark on popular culture. Henson built the Muppets into an enduring international brand, contributed beloved characters to Sesame Street, and made movies that applied his vivid imagination to the big screen. The enduring appeal of Henson’s creations is evident as older visitors reconnect with childhood memories while youngsters make new connections.

Several generations have grown up with Jim Henson’s muppets, television shows and movies, and those visiting the exhibit are recalling those special TV moments. And yet, Henson’s creations continue to attract new fans as young children and elementary school groups are also enjoying the wonders of his work.

“We have been pleased to see the audience come in generationally,” said Mark Tullos, Executive Director of The MAX. “We are seeing not only small children, but the parent and the grandparent all coming at one time.”

The traveling exhibition – its first appearance in the South – features Henson’s iconic Muppets and other puppets from familiar productions like *Sesame Street*, *The Muppet Show*, *Fraggle Rock*, *The Dark Crystal* and much more. Visitors experience Henson’s creations and get a glimpse of how his early work in film and television evolved into the magical worlds that have become so familiar to audiences worldwide.

“Henson was not only a puppeteer which is what he’s best known for, but he was also a film producer, an illustrator, artist, craftsman and screenwriter,” Tullos said. “That’s something that people discover in this exhibition. We cover his entire life from the beginning of his career until his death.”

The exhibition features a broad range of artifacts related to Henson’s unparalleled career, including more than 20 original puppets, character sketches, storyboards, scripts, photographs, film and television clips, behind-the-scenes footage, iconic costumes, and interactive experiences that allow visitors to try their hand at puppeteering on camera and designing a puppet character.

“One of the things visitors to this exhibit notice right away is how artifact-rich it is,” Tullos said. “Not only are there original muppets and costumes, but also artifacts like letters he wrote to producers and illustrations he did when he created his productions.”

The exhibition provides behind-the-scenes material to reveal how Henson and his crew of puppeteers, writers, and designers created an iconic family of puppets and characters that continue to entertain both children and adults.

Imagination Unlimited begins with a brief look at Henson’s early life through images of Henson as a young man and reproductions of some of his early drawings and sketches, and then follows his steady rise and immense contributions to the art and industry of the moving image. Highlights include a Kermit the Frog puppet from 1978; handwritten scripts from Henson’s first television series, *Sam and Friends* (1955-1961); a clip from his Academy Award–nominated experimental film *Time Piece* (1965); Jen and Kira puppets from *The Dark Crystal* (1982); familiar *Sesame Street* puppets including Grover, Ernie, Bert, and Count von Count; plus costumes from *Labyrinth* (1986).

The Jim Henson Exhibition: Imagination Unlimited, funded in part by the Riley Foundation and the Jane Henson Foundation, is a traveling exhibition organized by Museum of the Moving Image (Astoria, New York) in cooperation with The Jim Henson Company, The Muppets Studio, and Sesame Workshop, and toured worldwide by Flying Fish. The exhibition features puppets and other objects donated to the Museum by the family of Jim Henson, plus works on loan from The Jim Henson Company archives as well as from private lenders. The traveling exhibition is a version of MoMI’s ongoing The Jim Henson Exhibition, which is on view at its home in New York City.

Link: <http://www.msarts.org/JimHenson/>

About The MAX

The MAX showcases Mississippi’s arts and entertainment experience in one immersive destination. Here, visitors of all ages explore the global impact of Mississippians on music, books, art, entertainment and cuisine. The MAX honors our state’s creative legacy and inspires the next generation of creators through a unique experience of interactive exhibits. Come discover the Mississippi roots of some of the world’s greatest arts and entertainment icons — like Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, B.B. King, Faith Hill, Sela Ward and Kermit the Frog, just to name a few.

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