

# Danish Queen's Film Work Staged at Hermitage

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Queen Margrethe II with the costumes she designed for "Wild Swans."

ST. PETERSBURG — The artist behind a new exhibit at the State Hermitage Museum is no poverty-stricken bohemian struggling to meet ends meet in a chilly garret. The author of the "Wild Swans" exhibit, which comprises decoupages and costumes for the film adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale, is no other than Queen Margrethe II of Denmark.

"Wild Swans" features 43 decoupages and 11 costumes by the queen created specially for the JJ-Film production of the Wild Swans fairy tale. The film itself can be seen in one of the rooms of the exhibit, which was opened to the public Monday in the General Staff Building by Crown Princess Mary of Denmark, the queen's daughter-in-law.

"The idea to combine modern technology with the art of decoupage [the art of decorating objects by gluing colored paper cutouts onto them and varnishing them] came directly from Her Majesty," said Jacob Jorgensen, the producer of JJ-Film.

"Her Majesty is the author of the decoupages that were used as the background. She was on the set every morning from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for a month. We had two directors on the set, but really there were three: The Queen was also directing on and off," he added.

This is far from Margrethe II's first foray into the world of art. The queen is known for her passion for painting, church textiles, watercolors, prints, book illustrations, decoupage, scenery and embroidery, and for many years Her Majesty has been creating artistic decorations for Andersen's tales. During the production of the film adaptation of "Wild Swans," she also worked as a scenery artist.

Jorgensen has been working in collaboration with the Danish queen for 20 years, first creating documentary films, and then Snow Queen, another adaptation of an Andersen fairy tale.

"Wild Swans" tells the story of a princess whose brothers are turned into swans by a wicked stepmother. The girl has to save her beloved brothers from the curse, which she only just manages to do.

"My parents read Andersen's fairy tales to me, and now the time has come when my husband and I read the tales to our children," said Crown Princess Mary at the exhibit's opening Monday.

"'Wild Swans' is a well known tale and it teaches us some valuable lessons. This exhibit is about one of the greatest story tellers, but it also tells another fascinating story about the creation of a film: The story of how Jacob Jorgensen, in cooperation with my mother-in-law, Queen Margrethe, was able to combine modern technologies with the art of decoupage.

"The queen composed the decoupages with pieces of paper, and images carefully cut out from magazines and auction catalogues. These decoupages were used as the background for the film. The actors were wearing costumes also designed by Her Majesty, and using green screen technology.

The result was the creation of a magical universe. I hope this film will impress you as it has impressed me," Crown Princess Mary added.

The exhibit is part of the Hermitage 20-21 program that aims to present the most outstanding and cutting-edge trends in both Russian and foreign modern art.

"Wild Swans" also features some items from the Hans Christian Andersen Museum in Odense, Denmark.

Among them are the first Russian editions of Andersen's tales. A showpiece of the exhibit is an edition of his fairy tales that was published during the Siege of Leningrad in World War II.

Another very special place is occupied by a letter written by Andersen after the departure of Princess Dagmar of

Denmark to St. Petersburg, where she became Empress Maria Fyodorovna after marrying Tsar Alexander III.

The "Wild Swans" exhibit runs to Dec. 2 at the General Staff Building of the State Hermitage Museum, 1 Palace Square, M. Nevsky Prospekt. St. Petersburg. Tel. 571 3420. [www.hermitagemuseum.org](http://www.hermitagemuseum.org).

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