



Disney

SKETCHBOOK

BIOGRAPHY

Gabby Capili

Story Apprentice, "Kuzco"

GABBY CAPILI joined Walt Disney Animation Studios in 2019 as a storyboard apprentice, and contributed in that capacity to Disney's award-winning 2021 animated feature, "Encanto." Born and raised in and around San Francisco, Calif., Gabby had an interest in comic strips (including such favorites as Calvin and Hobbes and Peanuts) as a young girl, and even developed an idea for her own comic book at the age of 16. One particularly memorable childhood experience was being taken out of school on her ninth birthday to go with just her dad to see her first Disney film in a theater, "The Emperor's New Groove."

Despite being a talented young artist, Gabby decided to pursue another interest – marine biology – when she went off to the University of California at Santa Barbara. She quickly realized that art was her true passion and made plans to follow her initial instincts. Buckling down, she finished her undergraduate studies (a BA in English Language and Literature) in just two years, and followed that with a four-year animation program at California Institute of the Arts (CalArts). It was there that she became a teaching assistant to the legendary Disney animator Dale Baer, who was her instructor and mentor. In this creative environment, Gabby made several student films ("Dennis the Dinosaur," "Winston"). After graduation, she moved to the East Coast to focus on creating comics and painting in a mountain cabin. A call from a Disney recruiter to come in for an interview came at a difficult time, as her beloved grandmother was dying. It was hearing a song from "Moana" on her way to the interview, in which Moana's Gramma Tala comes to her in the form of a manta ray, that convinced her she was on the right path. She heeded the call to adventure and began her internship at Disney Animation in 2019.

After working on "Encanto" and completing her "Sketchbook" episode in 2021, Gabby accepted the invitation of a school friend who was embarking on a conservation mission in Thailand to preserve underwater habitats for marine life, and to help remove nets and traps left behind by fishermen. After several months of diving and adventure, she returned to San Francisco, where she is currently pursuing her dream of creating the comic strip she had envisioned as a teenager.