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**Chris Treble  
Fall 2024**

**Exploring**

***Fantasy:  
Realms of  
Imagination***

**at the Bowers Museum**



# FANTASY

Realms of  
Imagination

**Fantasy: Realms of Imagination  
now at the Bowers Museum  
through Feb 16**



**Scan here for museum tickets  
and visitor information**

**This guide will help you navigate the exhibits highlights and provide additional context as you explore magical worlds filled with stories, art and surprises around every corner.**

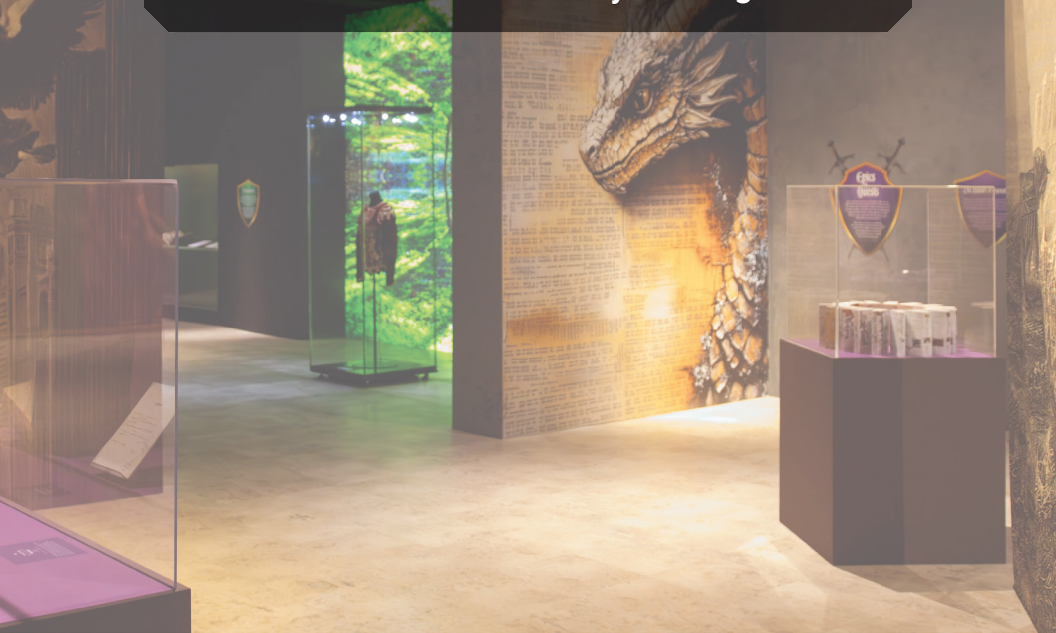
**Your adventure begins at the bookcase archway, a big wooden arch stuffed with old books. Walk through to discover the realm of “Fairy and Folk Tales”, where you’ll find open books with maps and pictures, and theater costumes from famous plays.**

**Next, explore the realm of “Epics and Quests”, filled with artifacts, books, and images from different worlds. Each corner has something new to explore.**

**“Realms of the Weird and Uncanny,” where visitors encounter bizarre artwork, sculptures, board games, and storytelling tools.**

**Lastly, step into “Portals and Worlds” to visit places like Alice’s Wonderland and pour over costumes and collectibles. Celebrate the fans and creators who bring these magical worlds to life.**

**Come dive into the world of fantasy and imagination!**



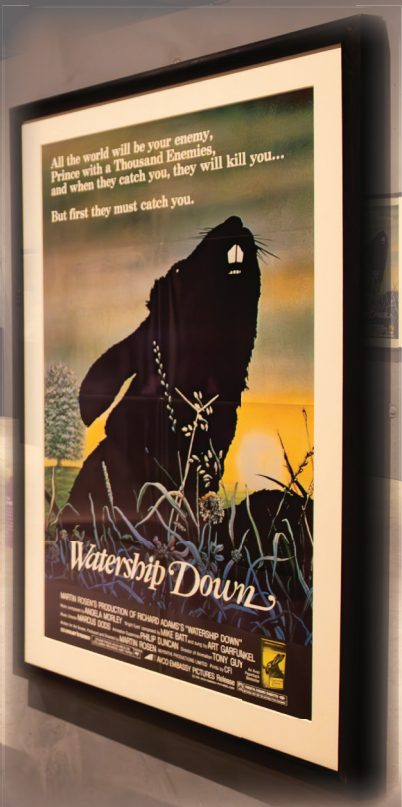
# “Fairy and Folk Tales”



Vast landscapes, intrepid heroes, mysterious portals, shadowy forces, enchanted woodlands... Fantasy encompasses all of these and much more.

Fantasy deals with impossible things, often creating entirely new worlds with their own rules and boundaries. While it offers escapism, it also invites us to view our own world with new eyes. It offers stories that “defy reality as we know it” and continues to thrive in diverse media, from video games to film

Richard Adam's 1972 *Watership Down* follows a band of rabbits as they become refugees of an environmental crisis. It remains timeless in its depiction of the need for community and survival. Most recently adapted as a miniseries in 2018 by Netflix



**“With this exhibition, you come here to find something you are familiar with,” explains Matthew Sangster, professor of English literature at the University of Glasgow and the exhibit’s curator. “Then you find fantasies from other cultures, perspectives and formats.”**

**Sangster accompanied and curated the exhibit as it traveled from the British Library to here in Santa Ana, its first international showing.**



**“Visual culture is a big part of fantasy,” remarked Professor Sangster, standing before “An Anciente Mappe of Fairyland.” The mural, originally printed in 1918 by English artist Bernard Sleight, depicts scenes from many fantasy realms combined into one.**



**Fantasy: Realms of Imagination** offers something for all ages. Literary fans will enjoy early manuscripts of childhood classics like *Alice in Wonderland*. Gamers will recognize scenes from *Dark Souls* and early editions of *Dungeons & Dragons* while theater and costume enthusiasts will gush over wardrobes from *Sleeping Beauty* and *Wicked*.

Published in 1967, Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* explores teenage identity and the cycle of generational abuse intertwined with Welsh mythology. Displayed is the original plate that inspired the author's descriptions of the elven folk transforming from flowers.

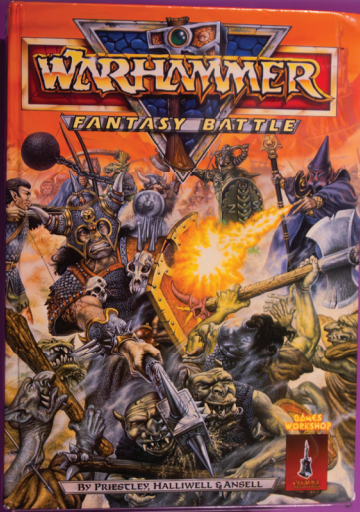




Princess Aurora's delicate pink dress and Prince Florimund's regal red tunic, both designed by Nicholas Georgiadis and worn for the 1968 Royal Ballet & Opera's production of Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty*. This performance's seamless blend of choreography, scenic design, and music set a standard for how future productions could combine artistic elements to create a more cohesive and powerful theatrical experience.



# “Epics and Quests”



Warhammer Fantasy is a fictional fantasy tabletop wargame developed in 1983 by British toy manufacturer Games Workshop. Its intricate lore and diverse factions continue to set the standard today with army scale miniature battle game *Age of Sigmar*, American football parody *Blood Bowl* and computer game series' like *Vermintide* and the three part *Total War: Warhammer* last released in 2022.

Across her 16-book series, American author Robin Hobb weaves an expansive epic, tracing the lives of interconnected characters bound by magic. The series grapples with political intrigue and the lost secrets of a long-forgotten civilization in *The Realm of the Elderlings*.





**A unique version of Gandalf's staff, made for Ian McKellen's personal use while filming Peter Jackson's The Lord of the Rings film trilogy, featured a built-in pipe. This clever addition allowed McKellen to smoke while staying true to Gandalf's character, reflecting the wizard's sage and whimsical nature. Though not part of the primary film design, the staff was used in smoking scenes, contributing both practical functionality and a touch of humor.**



**Tolkien's works have cultivated a vast, dedicated fanbase that spans multiple generations. This includes fan conventions, online communities, and fan fiction. The cultural impact is not just limited to books and films but extends into gaming, cosplay, and even academic studies. The community surrounding The Lord of the Rings remains a powerful example of how modern fandoms continue to shape cultural dialogue.**

**Stained glass windows, long associated with medieval storytelling, have become a cornerstone of the fantasy genre. Often featured in castles, temples, and magical settings, these intricate designs evoke history and enchantment.**



Fantasy creators across books, films, and games use stained glass motifs to depict myths, magic, and ancient prophecies. Meanwhile, fans have embraced this timeless art form, crafting their own stained glass-inspired pieces that merge classic designs with modern characters, proving its continued relevance in today's storytelling.



# “Weird and Uncanny”



Fantasy often evokes fear and uncertainty through uncanny yet familiar places. Eerie atmospheres are often found in the imaginations of tabletop role-players and computer gamers alike.

**Dungeons & Dragons** was first published by Americans Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson in 1974. In this collaborative storytelling game players use dice and chance to blend character-driven narratives, strategic battles and world-building.



***Unfathomable***, released in 2021 by Fantasy Flight Games, is a horror-themed board game designed by Tony Fanchi and Cory Konieczka. The game is set in 1913 aboard the fictional ocean liner SS Atlantica, en route to Boston. Players must work together to fend off terrifying monsters and otherworldly horrors, all while uncovering a hidden traitor determined to sabotage their efforts and sink the ship.



***Dungeons & Dragons*** has become a huge part of culture, inspiring video games like *The Elder Scrolls* and shows like *Stranger Things*. The game brings people together, helping them work as a team, think creatively, and build friendships. It also helps players improve skills like problem-solving and communication. *D&D* is now a big part of the way people play games, tell stories, and connect with others, making it an important part of modern entertainment.



# “Portals and Worlds”



World-building creates exciting imaginary worlds for Fantasy stories. Some are separate from our own, while others are entered through magical portals like doors, time travel, or other mysteries. Fans of Fantasy play a big part in keeping the stories fun and interesting.



Enchanted by otherworldly charm, Alice, the heroine of Lewis Carroll's 1865 novel *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, observes a dreamlike scene of giant mushrooms, steaming teapots and a mischievous cat, all exuding a surreal aura of absurdity.



This concept art by Brian Froud shows a mystic from the 1982 dark fantasy classic *The Dark Crystal*. Froud's drawings helped bring life to the magical and dark world that teaches important lessons about taking care of nature and working together to restore balance. Created by Jim Henson, *The Dark Crystal* is a big part of his legacy, proving how imagination and teamwork can create magical stories that last for decades. The 2019 Netflix show *The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance* continued the story for new fans.

## GATEWAYS & THRESHOLDS

Portals allow the reader to experience an imagined world through the eyes of a protagonist and compare it with our own. Perhaps as a result, they are particularly popular in children's fiction, firing the imaginations of young readers for whom the discovery of a doorway into another reality seems a real possibility. Portals first appeared in children's books in the 19th century. In more recent years, they have often acted as metaphors, with thresholds representing stages of growing up.

Portals in stories let readers explore imaginary worlds through a character's eyes and compare them to our own. They are popular in kids' books because they inspire young imaginations, making it feel like finding a magical doorway could really happen. Portals first appeared in children's books in the 1800s and now often symbolize growing up, with doorways showing life's changes.

## WORLDS OF FANDOM

Many fans have always had the desire to step up to the plate, either through costumes or through fan art. In the past, fans would often create their own costumes, but now, with the help of modern technology, fans can create more elaborate and detailed costumes than ever before. This is especially true for fans of science fiction and fantasy, who often create costumes that are both functional and visually stunning. These costumes are often worn at conventions and other fan events, where they can be admired by other fans and even inspire new ideas for costumes.





Susan Hilferty's enchanting emerald costume for the 2006 London stage production of *Wicked* dazzles with shimmering sequins and jewels. The dress' mermaid shape emphasizes the silhouette and is complemented by a chic lacy hat and parasol.



Cosplay is when fans dress up as their favorite characters from books, movies, and TV shows. People enjoy cosplaying characters from fantasy stories like *Lord of the Rings* because it brings them closer to the worlds they love. Cosplay helps fans express themselves and feel confident, whether as a hero or villain. Popular events like Comic-Con and Dragon Con are big gatherings where fans show off their costumes, meet others, and celebrate their love for fantasy. It's a fun way to connect with a community of fans.



***Magic: The Gathering*** is a card game that has made a huge impact on both fantasy and gaming. Since its release in 1993, it has shaped the way we see fantasy creatures like dragons and elves, and added new ones like Phyrexians. ***Magic: The Gathering*** lets players tell their own stories through the cards, making it different from other fantasy games. The game has inspired video games, books, and even other tabletop games like *Dungeons & Dragons*. Fans all over the world enjoy connecting through its story, strategy, and artwork, making ***Magic: The Gathering*** an important part of modern gaming and fantasy culture.

Established in 1953 by the World Science Fiction Society, the Hugo Award is one of the most prestigious awards in the fantasy genre, recognizing outstanding works of science fiction or fantasy published in the previous calendar year. It is named after Hugo Gernsback, the founder of *Amazing Stories*, the first science fiction magazine. Winning a Hugo Award can significantly boost an author's career, bringing their works to a wider audience. It serves as a mark of quality and innovation, influencing the reading habits of fans and industry professionals alike.





1530 West 17th Street  
 Santa Ana, Calif. 92706  
 Newsroom: (714) 564-5617  
 staff@eldonnews.org

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 CHRIS TREBLE**

CTreble@Gmail.com  
 linkedin.com/in/CTreble  
 @ChrisTreble.bsky.social

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