

Just around the corner from the Palace Theatre (home of *The Cursed Child*), tucked cozily between a pub and a patisserie, is the design studio behind all of the graphic art in the Harry Potter films. To celebrate their one year anniversary, the House of MinaLima opened a new exhibition dedicated to *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*.

Visitors to London's most magical art gallery are often eager to see the entire collection, so the addition of the *Fantastic Beasts* exhibit was an opportunity to move the artwork around and re-work the space, allowing the team to display more designs as well as all of the new art, keeping it fresh for the many repeat visitors. The gallery is spread over four floors with a winding staircase to rival even *The Burrow*. Each floor has individual nooks devoted to different the design stories within the films. Follow the floor decorated with the Marauders Map to find a bright corner full of Weasley's Wizard Wheezes designs and quidditch posters. Hear the sound of a self-typing typewriter as you read the covers of the *Daily Prophet* fresh from the opening scenes.

Much of the required design work for the Harry Potter and *Fantastic Beast* films is editorial; from billboards, packaging, and books, to writing newspapers, many of which are on screen for a fraction of a second. "We try really hard to make sure the newspapers are factually accurate." says Samira, our host "If we mention a wizard or witch that they were around in the time...interacting with a person it would be plausible to be with." This fact-checking is especially important, given you can purchase any of the newspapers as prints to hang on your wall and peruse at leisure. These limited edition prints are all signed and numbered, and if you're feeling like a little something extra you can even find some designs with gold leaf detailing.

The most exciting aspect of each new film is the level of world design required. "*Fantastic Beasts* was especially exciting," a designer tells us "the earlier films are set in the present day so the muggle design wasn't particularly creative as it had to fit in with day to day life. In the 1920s however, even the 'NoMaj' design was so beautiful and stylized that team members didn't mind whether they were working with wizards or with the muggle stuff."

It is rumoured the next film may take place in Paris within the same decade. While this is not confirmed, the designers we spoke to were thrilled for the potential to work in another "very cool design era".

Though *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* is long past it's design stages, the London studio is still busily up and running with many different projects. Over the years they have worked closely with the studio tours and Universal, staying closely linked to the wizarding world even if not directly within the films.

On a personal note, what makes the art at MinaLima so special is that each design was all an integral part of the films, a much more interesting and unique way to embrace your fandom beyond the endless Hogwarts House themed merchandise and prop wands. For those who prefer to be more subtle with our fandom decorations, all of the pieces are well designed enough to enjoy simply as a piece of graphic art, the magical backstory serves as a secret cherry on top.

Whether you have watched the films until you can quote them line for line, or you're

a sucker for beautiful graphic art, Potterheads and design nerds alike will revel in this hidden gem.

If you find yourself in London then MinaLima is a must-see, especially if you are attending *The Cursed Child* as the studio is perfectly situated for you to pop in during the break between parts One and Two.

The House of MinaLima is open from 12 to 7pm every day. Entry is free, but be prepared to spend a few galleons to take home some artwork of your own.

BY JEPHA