**Eggeling, Viking (b. 21 October 1880, Lund, Sweden; d. 19 May, 1925, Berlin, Germany)**

Viking Eggeling, born in Lund, Sweden as the son of a music store owner, was an avant-garde painter who worked in Italy, France, Switzerland, and Germany. He became a pioneer of abstract cinema with *Diagonalsymphonien* [*Diagonal Symphony*, 1924]. Early in his career in Paris he was influenced by Cubism. In Zurich in 1918, he associated with the founders of Dadaism and subsequently was active in Constructivist groups. Eggeling sought to create a universal language of abstract symbols as well as a visual equivalent to music. His friend Hans (Jean) Arp, considered to be the pioneer of the Dadaist movement in Zurich, introduced him to Hans Richter, who had similar interests. The two soon collaborated in painting scrolls with sequential abstract images, which led both eventually to film and animation. Assisted by Bauhaus student Erna Niemeyer, Eggeling created *Diagonal Symphony*, a silent black-and-white short in which abstract shapes, constantly growing and disappearing along diagonal axes, created visual rhythms. Eggeling premiered his film to friends in 1924. Its first public screening was in Berlin at the 3 May 1925 First International Avant-Garde Film Exhibition titled ‘Der absolute Film’, featuring the works of several other avant-garde filmmakers*.* The film received critical praise for its exploration of time and the non-literary potential of film. Too ill to attend the public screening, Eggeling died sixteen days later.  *Diagonal Symphony* is his only surviving film.

**References and Further Readings**

Bendazzi, G. (1994) *Cartoons: One Hundred Years of Cinema Animation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Russett, R. and C. Starr. (1988) *Experimental Animation: Origins of a New Art*.  New York: Da Capo Press.

**Paratextual**

*Symphonie diagonale* can be viewed online on the Internet Archive site at

<http://archive.org/details/symphonie_diagonale>

**Richard J. Leskosky**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**