**Reiniger, Lotte (1899-1981)**

Charlotte ‘Lotte’ Reiniger, born in Berlin, the first woman animator, was the foremost practitioner of silhouette animation (paper cut-outs lit from beneath and manipulated one frame at a time under the camera) and anticipated by a dozen years Disney’s multi-plane system of separating image levels under the camera to create illusory depth. Chinese shadow plays fascinated her as child, and a lecture by German Expressionist director/actor Paul Wegener on animated film inspired her as a teen. While a student at Max Reinhardt’s acting school, she published a book of silhouettes of his actors. Reiniger made her first silhouette film in 1919. She gravitated to fairy tales, fantasies, and operatic themes, but her films nonetheless usually contained wry social commentary, often on gender issues. She also made theatrical commercials and special silhouette effects scenes for live-action features. Assisted by husband and live-action director Carl Koch and animators Berthold Bartosch and Walther Ruttmann, in 1926 she completed her feature-length masterpiece, *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* [*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*]. The first animated feature made in Europe, it employed tinted film stock to reinforce the emotional impact of each scene. Her second silhouette feature, *Doktor Dolittle und seine Tiere* (*Dr. Dolittle and His Animals*, 1928), premiered in Berlin with a score by Kurt Weill and Paul Hindemith. Reiniger’s filigreed images are intrinsically abstract and expressionistic, and her stories partake of the surrealism of dreams. After World War II, she worked mostly in Great Britain.

**References and Further Readings**

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

Blattner, E. and K. Wiegmann, eds.(2010) *Lotte Reiniger,* Berlin: Ernst Wasmuth Verlag. Images from Reiniger’s non-film silhouette theatre productions.

Moritz, W. (1996) ‘Some Critical Perspectives on Lotte Reiniger’, *Animation Journal*, 5:1, 40-51. Reprinted in M. Furniss, ed. (2009) *Animation – Art and Industry*. New Barnet: John Libbey.

Reiniger, L. (1970) *Shadow Theatres and Shadow Films.* London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd.

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

**Filmography (all silhouette films)**

*Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* [*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*], Feature film, based on tales from the *Arabian Nights*. (1926)*Doktor Dolittle und seine Tiere* [*Dr. Dolittle and His Animals*], Feature film based on Hugh Lofting’s novel. Accompanied at the Berlin premiere by a score with music by Kurt Weill, Paul Hindemith, and conductor Paul Dessau. (1928)*Die Jagd nach dem Glück* [*The Pursuit of Happiness*] Live-action feature co-directed by Rochus Gliese and Lotte Reiniger about a carnival’s shadow-puppet theater operators. Includes a 20-minute Reiniger silhouette animation sequence. Stars Jean Renoir, Catherine Hessling and Bertold Bartosch (1930).

*The Magic Horse,* from *Arabian Nights.* (1953)  
*Snow White and Rose Red,* from the Brothers Grimm. (1953)*The Three Wishes,* from the Brothers Grimm. (1954)  
*The Grasshopper and the Ant,* from LaFontaine's fable.(1954)  
*The Gallant Little Tailor,* from the Brothers Grimm.(1954)  
*The Sleeping Beauty,* from the Brothers Grimm.(1954)  
*The Frog Prince,* from the Brothers Grimm. (1954)  
*Caliph Stork,* from a Wilhelm Hauff fairy tale. (1954)  
*Cinderella,* from the Brothers Grimms. (1954)*Hansel and Gretel,* from the Brothers Grimm. (1955)  
*Thumbelina,* from Hans Christian Andersen.(1955)  
*Aucassin and Nicolette,* after a medieval fable. Produced at the National Film Board of Canada. (1975)

**Paratextual**

Photos of Reiniger at work; <http://www.lottereiniger.de/fotos/index.php>

Video clips from BFI: <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/people/id/528134/>

**Richard J. Leskosky**

**University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**