

Lotte Reiniger through the looking glass

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School of Art, Design and Media

Poster Title: Lotte Reiniger Through the Looking Glass

Supervisor: Assoc Prof Hans-Martin Rall

**Context &
Background**

Charlotte 'Lotte' Reiniger (1899 - 1981) pioneered an avant-garde style of Silhouette Animation, inspired by fairy tales.

Reiniger's oeuvre of more than 40 films, have seen her demonstrating a uniquely rare talent with the scissors, transforming plain black cardboard into extraordinary characters, objects and sceneries.

Her most significant work is "The Adventures of Prince Achmed" (1926) which remains the world's earliest surviving feature-length animation.

She is indeed an inspiration, both as a pioneer of film and an exemplar for women.

1926▶



"Prince Achmed", Reiniger

**"Through the
Looking Glass"**

"The Tale of the Three Brothers" (2010) is an animated short, directed and designed by Ben Hibon for the "Harry Potter" series. The characters, although digitally rendered in 3-D, are modelled after shadow-puppetry and present a tactile look and feel.

"Limbo" (2010) is an Indie Game, created by Playdead studios. We play as a nameless little boy on a treacherous journey. The minimalism and soft-focus lighting creates a great atmosphere of running around in a world in light and shadow.



"Three Brothers", Ben Hibon

"Limbo", Playdead

2010▶



**Lotte Reiniger
Through the Looking Glass**

from Traditional Fairytales to Digital Expressions

with Fabian Kang



**Research
Aims &
Enquiry**

Reimagining Lotte Reiniger's work in this digital age is challenging. We live in a time where automation, procedural generation, information multipliers are afloat. Nothing is as tactile as it was before. Can the magic be recreated with the same sensibilities?

This project seeks to examine Reiniger's work, "through the Looking Glass" of film history, to seek her innovations and creative legacy in today's context. Also, within the Silhouette Animation genre, how has Digital Media developed or appropriated from the traditional?

**Research
Approach**



Museum Visits to Tübingen Stadtmuseum and Filmmuseum Düsseldorf, during exchange to Germany, were important to see the tactile quality of the medium itself.

Film Appreciation for Reiniger's extensive oeuvre, in conjunction with Critical Reading of relevant materials, was also important to contextualise and seek new perspectives.

**Litreature
Review**

Reiniger, Lotte. "Scissors Make Films." *Sight & Sound* 5.7, (spring 1936): pp. 13-15.

"Scissor Make Films" is an essential read to understand Reiniger's creative motivations and passion for her work. This allowed for better appreciation of the Tübingen Stadtmuseum collection.

Blattner, Evamarie. *Animation und Avant-garde, Lotte Reiniger und der absolute Film*. Tübingen, Germany: Universitätsstadt Tübingen, 2015.

In this critical essay collection, we get different perspectives from various writers on the Lotte Reiniger inspiration and her legacy. This made good for points of departure to discover silhouette animation in the digital contemporary.