Report for BAFTSS Animation SIG

FS74 - A (London) Film Society Reconstruction
Birkbeck Institute for the Moving Image
Saturday 15th June 2019, 1.30pm
Curated by Tashi Petter and Henry K. Miller

With support from BAFTSS Animation SIG and University of Reading, this event re-staged the 74th Performance of the (London) Film Society, screening seven of the eight titles originally shown at the Tivoli, the Strand on the 25th November 1934. For this 2019 reconstruction, where possible, the films were projected from 16/35mm prints.

With 150 advance bookings, on the day itself, the cinema was at capacity. On arrival, the 70 audience members were presented with various handouts, including a facsimile copy of the original 74th programme (thanks to the Bill Douglas Museum) as well as some mysterious sheets of tracing paper. Printed with English translations, these came in handy during the screening of Lotte Reiniger’s Das Rollende Rad (1934) with its German-language intertitles and voiceover. A subtitling strategy allegedly used by Film Society members during the 1930s, audience members were encouraged to hold up the transparent sheets in front of the screen, reading the translations while following the action.

Proceedings kicked off with an introduction by Tashi Petter, which highlighted the close but little-known relationship between the Film Society and the émigré silhouette animator Lotte Reiniger. Henry K. Miller provided further context and impromptu ‘filler’ during a few technical mishaps. Following the original running order, FS74 featured:

- B. Vivian Braun and Irene Nicholson, Beyond This Open Road (1934) – 35mm
- John B. Holmes, The Cathode Ray Oscillograph (1934) – 16mm
- Lotte Reiniger, Das Rollende Rad (1934) – 16mm
- Oskar Fischinger, Kreise (1933-34) and Muratti Greift Ein (1934) – h.264 (digital files)
- Alexeieff and Parker, Night on the Bare Mountain (1934) – 16mm
- Jean Vigo, Zero de Conduit (1933) – 35mm

Living British Cinema provided post-screening refreshments, which were enjoyed in the Keynes Library upstairs, an apt setting, given that Keynes and other figures from the Bloomsbury Group were among the founding members of the Film Society.

For more information about FS74 or future Film Society reconstructions, please contact t.petter@qmul.ac.uk or henry.miller@gmail.com
Facsimile copies of the original programme (with thanks to the Bill Douglas Museum)
Screen grab from Lotte Reiniger’s *Das Rollende Rad* (1934)

Report by Tashi Petter, 5th July 2019