

Welcome to ASIFA Central! We are the Midwest -US chapter of ASIFA, the oldest organization of animators in the world. Our chapter was established in 1975. While our community is separated by our far-flung geography, we are united by our love of animation. Our diverse membership is a blend of independent animators, animation artists, professors, seasoned pros, students, and fans of the art of animation. We have a robust board working on a number of initiatives for 2020 including Ani-Jam's, Bi-monthly get-togethers, and an annual retreat, set to be a virtual event in 2020!

ASIFA Central Board (but never bored)



President and IAD Multiverse Traveler
Brad Yarhouse

Secretary of Unfocused Distractions and
Cracked Fonts
Jim Middleton

Coordinator for Membership and
Technological Phenomena
Charles Wilson

Treasurer and International ASIFA Star of
Stage, Screen, and Free Range Chickens
Deanna Morse

Social Media, Analog Conversions, and
Ink Tester
Christopher Sagovac

Interlocutor of Projects and Public Works
Gretchen Vinnedge

Award Winning, Best-Dressed Film
Director and ASIFA Central Website
Commando *WITH AN AMAZING
BASEMENT*
Julie Goldstein

Molder of Youthful Minds and Keeper of
Esoteric Knowledge
Steve Leeper

Tallest Human Ever to Animate
Robert Swieringa

Stopped Motionator and Tripod
Convergence Coordinator
Gary Schwartz

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR JULY 18-19! THE ASIFA CENTRAL SUMMER RETREAT WILL TAKE PLACE ON A COMPUTER NEAR YOU! Details Soon!



While the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit had generously opened its gates to the flood of animation enthusiasts for this summer's retreat, the CoVid pandemic had other plans. Charging into a retreat had a rather antithetical sound in this environment anyway, if one were to impose a collegiate spin to the concept...but the digressions continue from this keyboard.

As a result, many other gatherings have already been presented by video conferencing (ie, the recent Ann Arbor Film Festival) this year, and many others have begun to make the conversion or have flat-out cancelled long-standing conferences and festivals. There will be an ASIFA Central retreat in July - the board met at the end of April to brainstorm options and will be presenting its reorganized concepts soon. Technological options will help unite our diffuse membership for a truly unique experience.

Upcoming Adjustments to the Chapter's By-Laws



And not only that, but we need to conduct elections! Here is the latest word from our Membership Coordinator and Technological Phenomenon, Charles Wilson:
As we of the ASIFA Central board were reviewing our membership numbers last year and looking back to when we last held elections for officer positions, we noticed two things. The first was that there was a lot of time passing between our holding elections for officers, even though our charter specifies that we should be electing new officers every year. The second is that our charter is not in line with that of ASIFA International, whose officers are elected for three year terms. Now, while ASIFA chapters are afforded certain measure of autonomy, when we discussed the issue in light of the fact that we now have a number of members who are eligible for running for office, we made the decision to a) hold an election in 2020, and b) modify our charter so as to bring it in line with ASIFA International such that our elected officers will now be elected for a

three-year term.

Another reason we'd like to do this is so that the officers will have the opportunity to do more long-term strategic planning, which we believe will better serve our membership. And since we're pretty much doing this already due to the fact that up until recently we didn't have enough members eligible to become officers, the changeover is going to be relatively unnoticeable to our membership.

However, in the spirit of full transparency, we wanted to bring this change to you, our members, and open the matter up for dialogue. In the upcoming months, we would like to hear from all of you what your thoughts are so we can make a decision that best fits our membership.

And for those of you who have been a member of ASIFA Central for at least one-year, you are eligible to run for an officer's position on the board. If you're interested, please download and read the ASIFA Central charter and reach out to us before the upcoming elections this Fall so that you can be listed on the ballot.

We will be discussing this matter further at our upcoming MidWest Animators Retreat, so stay tuned for more information.

International Animation Day Update - October 28, 2020



he international ASIFA animation challenge accompanying IAD will involve up to 15 ASIFA chapters, each contributing two minutes of animation to introduce and promote this year's IAD festivities. The collective films will become part of *Spiritus Mundi: Animating the World*, a title inspired by Irish poet W. B. Yeats.

Each ASIFA chapter will create a piece representative of its region. The theme chosen by ASIFA Central is the "Moveable Feast," with ten contributors thus far signing on. One large table with a collection of dishes will ultimately represent the central US life and lifestyles, through use of

literal or metaphorical sounds and visuals.

Coordination of the films celebrating IAD will become another online transition, with details being finalized. The current deadline for film submissions is July 1, 2020.

Since the project aligns with the 60th anniversary of ASIFA, that theme will also be woven into the production.

And speaking of ASIFA and its anniversary –

The Illuminating Light from Regina Pessoa by Bob Swieringa



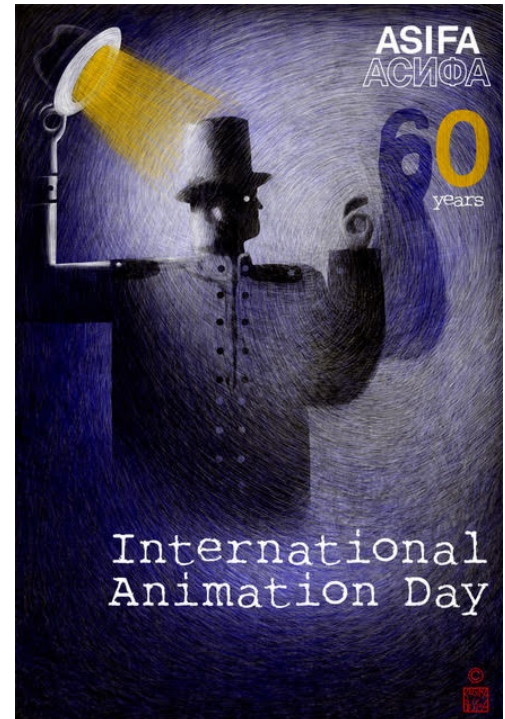
mitting from a magical hat, the light of animation illuminates the world, celebrating International Animation Day 2020 and the 60th anniversary of ASIFA. The hat is held aloft by Abi Feijó, creator of International Animation Day and former president of ASIFA. With this image, Regina Pessoa's IAD poster draws our attention to the magic and history of animation.

Regina gets her visual inspiration from painting (which she studied before encountering animation), alternative comic books, and literature.

"I was fascinated by the possibility of adding movement to the rich visuals and textures that I was developing in painting," to blend with the arts of cinema language, sound, music, and writing. In her films she thus turned to her lived experiences or to common themes that can be universally recognized (being young, being afraid of the dark), but from her unique perspective. "I continue to explore that path, taking inspiration from my own childhood and the people around me," such as her eccentric *Tio Tomás*, whose hat Abi holds.

The poster references histories that are personal and those that may be familiar but remain in danger of fading. "I think that more than ever it is necessary to teach the history of art and animation to young generations... What paper and pencil are and the power they represent... that an abstract concept existing only in the mind/idea/imagination might be physically and materially materialized through that perfect communication/connection and domain between brain and hand/body." For Regina, the short animated film is a "precious kind of laboratory" in which boundaries of technique, narrative, and content are explored.

Highlighting this play of light and shadow, the poster encapsulates the wish expressed by Regina, "that animation can be recognized and respected by the general public as the great art form that in fact it is."



Cover for *Das Loch im Vorhang*

Adventures in (Armchair) Historical Research by Charles Wilson



ne of the direct benefits of the Internet is the ability for researchers like myself to track down rare material in other countries. Not only is there a plethora of films from other countries being uploaded to sites like *YouTube* and *Vimeo*, but sites like Google Translate lower the communication barrier with their tools for translating foreign languages and in some cases, the ability to translate entire websites into English on the fly.

An example occurred earlier this year, when I was looking through my collection of works that involved Lotte Reiniger. Among the books I've located in the past were an original German copy of *Venus in Seide*, which featured Lotte's silhouette illustrations, or an old library copy of *Walking Shadows* from a bookseller in England -- *Walking Shadows* being a hardback essay written about

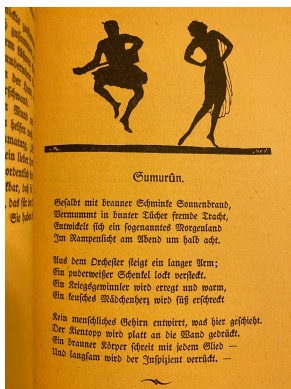
Lotte by Eric Walter White, one of her former assistants. This essay is particularly interesting as it gives details into Lotte's animation process – along with a few plates with images of models that she created but never used in her films.

Well, while I was looking at the short list of publications that Lotte directly worked with, one that has eluded me for years piqued my interest. A quick visit to the normal sites that sold international books, such as Abe Books or the German antiquarian who sold me *Venus in Seide*, proved fruitless. Then, for some reason, I decided to switch gears. A quick search on the German-language version of Amazon.com, and there it was: a copy of Helmuth Krüger's *Das Loch Im Vorhang* (English

translation: *The Hole in the Curtain*). It's the only other book, that I am aware of, for which Lotte created silhouette illustrations (there may be more, I'm just not aware of any other than the aforementioned two). However, purchasing from Amazon.de proved fruitless. Google Translate wouldn't work on the Amazon website, and I couldn't figure out how to a) select international shipping or b) ask the bookseller if they even would ship to America.

After thinking about it for a day, I went back to Amazon and puzzled out the bookseller's name then tracked down their website. Lo and behold, there it was, listed on their website. And while struggling to figure out the German website, I made the welcome discovery that their shopping cart *had an English-language feature*.

A month later, I had a very weathered copy of this book from 1922 sitting on my desk, and a smile across my face as I tried to translate the handwritten dedication that the author -- Helmuth Krüger -- had written to someone named Rolf.

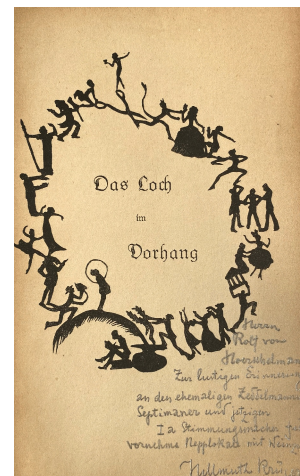


'Sumurûn' illustration on page 89

The images included in this article are taken of Lotte's silhouette illustrations to give readers an idea of how detailed her work was back then. For those interested in looking at all the illustrations in this book, a copy of *Das Loch im Vorhang* was scanned and posted on the Deutsche National Bibliothek website, which is accessible at the following link:

<https://portal.dnb.de/bookviewer/view/1128443937>.

Ain't modern life grand?

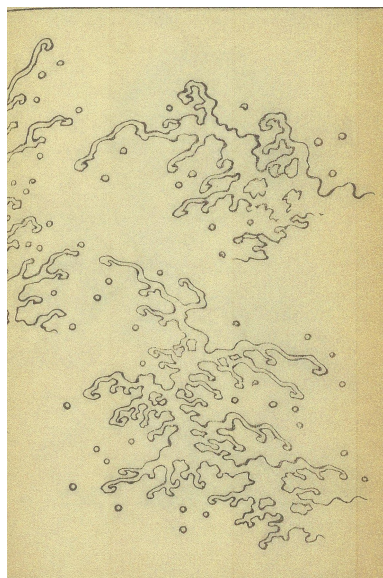


Lotte's silhouette with Krüger's dedication



Illustration from 'Flucht in die Rulissen' English translation: 'Escape to the backdrop'

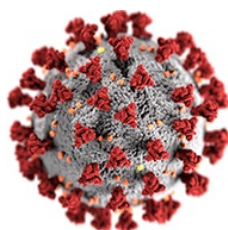
Public Domain Feast for the Eyes, or "A Wave Merely Returns to the Water"



he stunning 1903, two-volume wood block book on wave designs, *Hamonshu*, is now available online. Examples bracket the page, and the overall, the images range from baroque to surreal, to art nouveau. Each page is a visual treat.

The pdf can be downloaded through the *Public Domain Review* site at:

<https://publicdomainreview.org/collection/hamonshu-a-japanese-book-of-wave-and-ripple-designs-1903>



Fun Philately and Forbidden Films - The Song of the South - by Jim Middleton



Disney did have a special release *Song of the South!* - on postage stamps, that is, and only for the Turks and Caicos Islands, and that was in 1981. According to the internet, and we know that is never wrong, "Turks and Caicos is an archipelago of 40 low-lying coral islands in the Atlantic Ocean, a British Overseas Territory southeast of the Bahamas."

While generally unavailable today, and thought to be unseen for generations, *Song of the South* has been re-released to theaters

several times after its original premiere, often to coincide with milestones in its own, or corporate, history: in 1956 for its 10th anniversary, in 1972 for the 50th anniversary of Walt Disney Productions, in 1973 as the second half of a double bill with *The Aristocats* (twice in two years, and that split billing?), in 1980 for the 100th anniversary of Harris's Uncle Remus stories, and in 1986 for the film's own 40th anniversary – and as promotion for the *Splash Mountain* attraction at Disney theme parks.

It is interesting that you can *experience* a portion of the film, *hear* music and observe references to the film, but not really *see* the film any more. In the meantime, the entire, uncut *Song of the South* has been broadcast on European and Asian television networks (and is likely the source for any circulating video material these days in the US. The first print of it I ever saw on blurry VHS video came with Japanese subtitles).

It was between the 1980 and the 1986 releases that these stamps were licensed and printed.

See the Jim Korkis book, **Who's Afraid of *The Song of the South*** for details on the film you will never see on Disney +.



Deanna Morse and Organic Art with Kaylee



The CoVid lock down has not really been all that dreadful for animators and artists - in fact, animation studios are *actually hiring*. To keep the crop of artists ever growing, Deanna Morse, safe in her Oregon compound, has enlisted neighbor and niece Kaylee in the creation of budding art with regional wildflowers and paper plates. *Kids, by all means, try this at home!*



Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: a waste of desert sand;
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Wind shadows of the indignant desert birds.
- W. B. Yeats

Festivals Continue to Move Online, Cancelling Face-to-Face Gatherings



Annecy's 2020 festival has made its move online official, according to a report from April 15. Details and jury selections are to be revealed by mid-May. The biennial Hiroshima international animation festival (August 20-24) has opted not to hold a physical event for its 18th festival. Nonetheless, film selection will begin May 1, and the competition selections will be revealed before the start of June. Award winners will be announced at the end of August. The Ottawa International Animation Festival (OIAF) is also transforming itself into a likely online experience. Their official release states it "will happen in September. It might not look like it usually does, but maybe it will. No matter what happens, the OIAF will go forward. You can bet you'll see a lot of familiar OIAF programs and opportunities in one form or another."



The list of changes will continue to grow. If you have a film in competition, be sure to get the latest news from the specific festival website.

Zoom Becomes Our Rotogravure

With the need for online meetings, we're getting pretty savvy with our Zoom experiences. It all began with the Ann Arbor Film Festival and Gary Schwartz and Deanna Morse adapting like bosses...

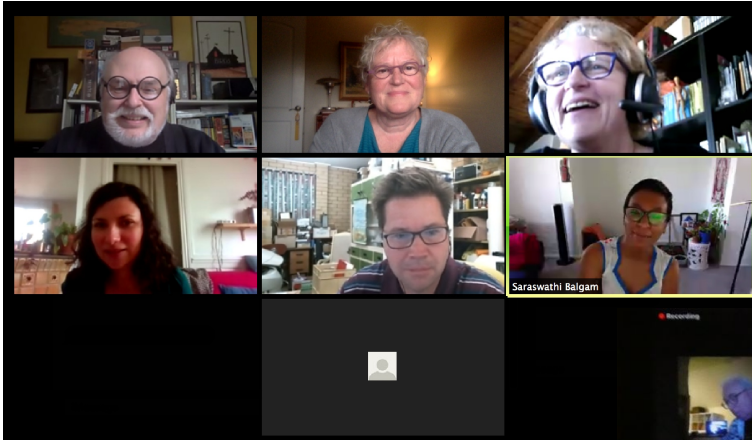


Gary Schwartz rules and schools at the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

Deanna Morse keeps the conversation alive with sprightly! insightful! illuminating! observations, probing questions, also during the Ann Arbor Film Festival.



But Wait! There's MORE!!!



Brad Yarhouse and Deanna Morse reach across to France, Australia, and a half-dozen other time zones to coordinate the IAD brainstorm. Jim Middleton's camera chose not to cooperate in the exercise. We learned that "anijam" in French is still probably "anijam."

ASIFA Central's Board all joined to send the month of April packing in a full-throated farewell! Jim's camera worked, but he went with hand-written notes vs word processing (it was still quieter than using a Remington portable...)



And now, an analog, electron-free, farewell....'til the next issue!

