

Panel B2

Sala delle Colonne 1

Researching the History of Women in Animation

Bella Honess Roe

A Gendered Past? The History of Historical Research into Women in Animation



This paper explores the historiography of women in animation. That is, how have female animators been written about (and thus taught and perpetuated) in animation and film history? Through an examination of a variety of texts, including general animation histories as well as books and articles that focus specifically on female animators, I will suggest that women are commonly understood to occupy one of two positions in the history of animation: the artisanal outsider or the industry supporter. Thus, animators such as Lotte Reiniger, Faith Hubley and Alison de Vere are constructed as individual voices working within a 'feminine aesthetic' (Paul Wells, 1999, p.199) that carve out a space (both physical and metaphorical) to work outside of, and in spite of, the industry. Others, many of whom remain anonymous such as the Disney 'ink and paint girls', are relegated to support roles that facilitate the 'great men' of animation as they forge its history.

This paper will then seek to reposition this received history of female animators within the new frameworks offered by recent scholarship in feminist film studies, which has experienced a resurgence in the last decade, particularly around issues of historiography (for example, *Doing Women's Film History* ed. Gledhill & Knight, 2015; and *Reclaiming the Archive* ed. Callahan, 2010). As such, it will ask whether there are new avenues available for doing the history of women in animation and whether we might be able to start re-thinking the gendered discourse surrounding animation history.

Biography

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Bella Honess Roe (University of Surrey, UK) is a film scholar who specialises in documentary and animation. Her 2013 monograph [Animated Documentary](#) is the first text to investigate the convergence of these two media forms and was the recipient of the Society for Animation Studies' 2015 McLaren-Lambart award for best book. She has also published in journals including the [Journal of British Cinema and Television](#) and [Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal](#). She is currently editing a book on British animation studio Aardman Animations and co-editing another on the human voice in documentary. She is Senior Lecturer and Programme Director for Film Studies at the University of Surrey.