

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910790412603321
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Titolo	Shadow woman [[electronic resource] ] : the extraordinary career of Pauline Benton // Grant Hayter-Menzies
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Montreal, : McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013
ISBN	0-7735-8910-4 0-7735-8909-0
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (261 p.)
Disciplina	791.5/3092
Soggetti	Women puppeteers - United States Women performance artists - United States Shadow shows - United States - History - 20th century Puppet theater - United States - History - 20th century Shadow puppets - United States - History - 20th century Performance art - United States - History - 20th century
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Cultural Geographies -- Shadow People -- Willow-Patterned Cathay -- The Red Gate Shadow Players -- Oriental Curiosities -- Shadows Pass -- World War -- Survival -- Cultural Revolution -- Shadow Woman -- Monkey King -- Epilogue -- Appendix: The White Snake.
Sommario/riassunto	Kansas-born Pauline Benton (1898-1974) was encouraged by her father, one of America's earliest feminist male educators, to reach for the stars. Instead, she reached for shadows. In 1920s Beijing, she discovered shadow theatre (piyingxi), a performance art where translucent painted puppets are manipulated by highly trained masters to cast coloured shadows against an illuminated screen. Finding that this thousand-year-old forerunner of motion pictures was declining in China, Benton believed she could save the tradition by taking it to America. Mastering the male-dominated art form in China, Benton enchanted audiences eager for the exotic in Depression-era America. Her touring company, Red Gate Shadow Theatre, was lauded by theatre and art critics and even performed at Franklin Roosevelt's White House. Grant Hayter-Menzies traces Benton's performance history and her

efforts to preserve shadow theatre as a global cultural treasure by drawing on her unpublished writings, the recollections of her colleagues, the testimonies of shadow masters who survived China's Cultural Revolution, as well as young innovators who have carried on Benton's pioneering work.

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