

## ***A Million Pictures.***

*Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the  
Common European History of Learning*



## **NOTES - Workshop 1**

**Exploring the needs of stakeholders for access, documentation and re-use. Utrecht, 3. - 5. September 2015.**

### **Participants:**

Frank Kessler (Utrecht University)  
Sarah Dellmann (Utrecht University)  
Zowi Vermeire (Utrecht University)  
Nele Wynants (University of Antwerp / Université Libre de Bruxelles)  
Kurt Vanhoutte (University of Antwerp)  
Sabine Lenk (University of Antwerp)  
Joe Kember (University of Exeter)  
Richard Crangle (University of Exeter)  
Angel Quintana (University of Girona)  
Daniel Pitarch Fernández (University of Girona)  
Francisco Javier Frutos (University of Salamanca)  
Beatriz González de Garay (University of Salamanca)  
Ine van Dooren (Screen Archive South East, Brighton)  
Ludwig Vogl-Bienek (University of Trier)  
Daniela Müller-Kolb (University of Trier)  
Soeluh van den Berg (EYE Film Institute Netherlands)  
Giovanna Fossati (EYE Film Institute Netherlands)  
Liliana Melgar (Library and Information Sciences, Madrid)  
Sjaak Boone (Board of collector's organization for historical photography "Fotografica")  
Emjay Rechsteiner (Filmmaker and Producer, Staccato Films)  
Phillip Roberts (University of York)  
Jan De Vree (M HKA, Museum for Contemporary Art Antwerp)  
Martin Vliegthart (Private Collector)  
Anastasia Kerameos (British Film Institute - Reuben Library)  
Klaus Staubermann (Principle Curator Science and Technology, National Museums Scotland)  
Annet Duller (Private Collector and Lanternist)  
Gwen Sebus (Private Collector and Lanternist)  
Thomas Cadbury (Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter)  
Mette Peters (Lecturer at Utrecht Art Conservatory, animation film specialist)  
Paul Lambers (Curator Natural History, University Museum Utrecht)

**Excused:** Tristan Mostert (Freelance Historian and former curator at Rijksmuseum and Boerhave museum), Eveline Sint Nicolaas (Rijksmuseum), Annie van den Oever (Groningen University), Bernd Warnders (Groningen University).

**Thursday, 3 September 2015**

Frank Kessler welcomed everyone to Utrecht University and wished the participants productive discussions. Sarah Dellmann briefly sketched the grant writing procedure and recalled the main objectives of the project *A Million Pictures*.

**Presentations of Projects & Discussion, Slot I: Research & Questions**

*Chair: Richard Crangle*

“Lantern Research at Trier University (the last ten years)“, Ludwig Vogl-Bienek, Trier University, Media Studies

Ludwig Vogl-Bienek gave an overview over magic-lantern related projects at Trier University. “Screen 1900” takes the screen as starting point for their research and understands lantern slide shows and early cinema screenings as cultural practices. Previous research projects centered around the use of the lantern in charity, welfare and temperance movements that used the screen in the discourse around the social question (1870-1914).

A central research concept is “art of projection” which also implies the creativity of the lanternist, not only the technical set-up of the lantern. The lanternist was a creative operator and performer and the lecturer was a performer, too. The lantern slide shows are the potential of projected images in live-performance. Vogl-Bienek calls for the consideration of how a lantern slide was presented in order to get to know it. In his current project, Vogl-Bienek works together with the Trier Center for Digital Humanities. The aim is to create digital examination objects that enable researchers to study lantern slides in detail even if collections are not physically accessible. Tools for creating digital research editions are developed, including demonstrations that simulate effects of slide and slide set mechanisms or addition of music. The data model is similar to the one in the LUCERNA database with some additional features and very detailed photographing. The digital editions will be informed by a manual: Companion to the Historic Art of Projection.

“Object-focused research and the problem of extraneous data”, Philip Roberts, York University

Philipp Roberts undertakes his current research on Carpenter Lantern Slides at the National Media Museum Bradford as a starting point to elaborate on various problems in research he encountered.

The found material has only been catalogued at collection level and does not describe the individual items, so it is difficult to find out information about relevant slide sets, how to date the objects and how to document them.

The museum collection consists of special effect lantern slides, hand-painted slides and transfer slides but has few photographic slides. The seeming randomness of the collection poses problems for systematic cataloguing. So far, Philip Robert relies on information intrinsic to the object (slides are easily traceable to their manufacturer by labels and titles). In

addition, indexes of the (intended) exhibition practices tell something about how they have been used.

Problems arise especially when looking for additional, contextual information about these slides such as exhibition locations, hardware related to the presentation of the slides, sales figures, image sources, business records of producers, etc.. Could sources such as producers of microscopes and telescopes help with dating lantern slides or shed light on the social-economic contexts of the lantern slide trade? Philip Roberts concludes by asking which datasets are already “out there” will support this type of research as well as identifying the type of data that is missing and how to obtain this data.

“Lantern Research at the University of Exeter, 2007-15”, Joe Kember, Exeter University  
Joe Kember gives a brief overview over lantern-related research projects at Exeter University. Lantern Shows were one element in the research project “Moving and Projected-Image Entertainment in the South-West UK, 1820-1914” that focused on the exhibition history by looking at locations and their business models. The central research questions were - “what range of venues employed media such as the panorama, magic lantern, and cinematograph, and for what educational, ideological and amusement purposes were they employed?”

- “What does the regional exhibition of moving and projected images reveal about their pervasiveness and their role in the formation of a national show-business?”

The research methodology was based on case studies in several locations in South-West England. Relevant sources were municipal, regional archives, national archives, trade publications and local newspapers. The need for source critique when working with newspapers as primary source was evident when reflecting on what a review actually was telling the research team. The outcome provided high variation from location to location in type of show, frequency and intended audiences. The data also proposes a shift from amateurs to professionalism in larger and smaller institutions. Soon, an co-authored will be published with the outcomes of this research.

## **Presentations of Projects & Discussion, Slot II: Re-Use & Collections**

*Chair: Frank Kessler*

“The Vrielynck Collection”, Jan De Vree, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, M HKA  
Head of collections and archives Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp. The museum’s collection provides an overview of the technical evolution of film. In this context it also contains various apparatuses (magic lanterns, optical boxes) and some slides related to the Magic Lantern medium. The status changes from contemporary art work to museum objects to sources for media archaeology to examples of instruments of a past visual culture. Artists are allowed to use the collection and create an intervention; the aim is to solicit new interpretations of the museal object. Jan De Vree presents the installation by Julien Maire who creatively used the analogue objects in an installation that used digital projection technologies, thereby asking the questions of the analogue as being well or not obsolete. Out

of this project M HKA expects concrete steps towards the activation of the Vrielynck collection as a “cultural heritage object library”, specifically focused on the magic lantern part of it. This activation it sees in terms of an in-depth understanding of the medium and the *performing* of that understanding, not as a collection display.

“Magic Lanterns and slides in the Collection Thomas Mallol at Museu del cinema Girona”, Ángel Quintana and Daniel Pitarch Fernández, University of Girona

Ángel Quintana and Danile Pitarch Fernández present the way in which the 2645 lantern slides of the Cinema Museum in Girona have been catalogued and made accessible until now. Almost all slides come from Thomas Mallol’s collection and are now available via the website of the Catalan public service website ([http://museusenlinia.gencat.cat/index\\_en.php](http://museusenlinia.gencat.cat/index_en.php)). The slides are described in terms of Register number, Name of object, Title (given or original), Author, Date (year) - Year beginning-ending, Materials and techniques, Dimensions (of slide and image), Description text (of the slide), Inscription, Country, Subject (what’s on the picture), Subject specification (textual description of the image), Context of use (genre), Condition (preservation), Alterations (preservation), Acquisition (preservation etc.). Most slides come from 1860-1900, the majority are photographic slides, as a starting point, they used the Barnes’ classification.

“The EYE collection of lantern slides”, Soeluh van Berg, EYE Film Institute Netherlands

The collection of EYE Film Institute Netherlands consists of circa 3,000 slides; they are part of the “film-related collections” but in the last years little research has been done. Most slides are from 1840-1900 but some rarities date back to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The slides cover geographical slides, scientific slides and some emotional/ atmospheric slides that create a visual effect on the viewer (e.g. dissolving views and chromatropes).

In the mid-1990s, Annet Duller photographed the collection of lantern slides and described them in binders with tracing forms. These files have been integrated into the collection database after 2006 – however acquisitions after 1996 have not been catalogued neither in an analogue nor digital way. The method of cataloguing is less detailed than LUCERNA and also object-centered, understanding each slide as an individual object. Relations between the slides are not documented yet. Subject keywords are given via the Thesaurus of EYE.

At the museum of EYE Film Institute, a magic lantern and a digital projection of lantern slides are part of the permanent exhibition in the “Panorama” floor that is freely accessible to visitors. The projection object is put under glass to show the apparatus that was used to project these images. Soeluh van den Berg sees the opportunity of *A Million Pictures* to research this collection more thoroughly and connect it to other lantern slide collections.

“The Royal Albert Memorial Museum collection of lantern slides”, Thomas Cadbury, RAMM

Thomas Cadbury presents the situation that small, understaffed museums face when dealing with a collection of lantern slides: small museums usually do not have in-house specialist knowledge about the lantern medium and slides. At the museum they did not know what to do with a box containing many thousand glass slides without a form of inventory. Because the

RAMM is now re-assessing the strong points of its collection, there is some time for curators to actually work with the collections. The RAMM was founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to promote awe and wonder about the world in arts and sciences to the local population. It still is a very well visited museum and won the award “Best British Museum” in 2012.

During the museum’s renovation, a collection of 5,000-7,000 lantern slide sets was discovered. Most slides date from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were used for educational purposes, temperance and entertainment. There was a small public exhibition on Exeter in magic lantern slides. Images from scanned lantern slides can also be used to illustrate e.g. the website or other forms of material. The collection is currently being catalogued by Richard Crangle, using the Collection facility of LUCERNA.

Thomas Cadbury emphasized the need for easy to follow manuals and best practice reports that provide tools/working instructions for museums without specialist knowledge inhouse. Otherwise, due to understaffing, such collections will remain in their boxes.

### ***DISCUSSION***

In the discussion, Kurt Vanhoutte referred to Jan De Vree and posed the question of the role of the artist in the project. He calls to consider forms of historical re-creations, re-enactments and “free-style uses” such as in artistic interventions as offering a promising methodology for research into the performativity of slides. What is the role of creativity and the artist in the preservation of magic lanterns and its slides? Kurt also calls to consider the artistic / re-use perspective in every step of our project /to reflect on what has been done also through an artistic perspective.

Ine van Dooren shares her experience that students who come to the archive look at the historical artifacts and their possibilities in performances differently then she documents them as an archivist. The meaning of the object can be learned in many different ways and changes over time.

Liliane Melgar suggests to launch a call for artists / create an award / offer gallery space and online expositions. Nele Wynants argues that artists also need income and that (online) exposition cannot be the only way to attract artists. Our possibilities are restricted by our budget. We need to find third (funding) partners in order to shed new light on the collections.

Inspired by Ludwig Vogl-Bieneks presentation and the digital tools in development, we would like to invite people to “create your own lantern show” on Lucerna. This would require to provide short background information about what a slide is and what it does.

Richard Crangle observed that the categories used by EYE Filmmuseum and Cinema Museum Girona can be quite easily mapped onto the categories applied in LUCERNA. The data import will remain a tricky thing to sort out but should not be impossible.

Someone noted that the digital images of the Mallol-Collection do not document information found on the carrier but “only” document on the image as it would appear in projection. While

this choice fits the demands to catalogue the collection at that time, we consider also information on labels, notes on slides etc. essential “marginalia” or “metadata” for future documentation projects.

Daniel Pitarch replied to a question that the digital images of the Mallol-collection slides are publicly available and hosted on the website of the provincial administration of Catalunya; there are no available data on who the actual users are that look at the digital collections.

Sarah Dellmann draws attention to the two main approaches to the documentation of slides: archives and museums usually aim to catalogue a given collection, thus starting from and centering on the objects; whilst other forms of research leads to documentation starting from a more conceptual level. It is necessary that the standard that we define caters to both needs.

Anastasia Kerameos points to the fact that many lantern slides have been digitized by individual projects from museums, but not all label their images as “lantern slides”.

There is a consensus that this project may create more visibility for the “sleeping collections” in archives and museum depots – the guidelines and examples of creative re-uses shall help interested parties doing something with their collections.

Sabine Lenk advises the researchers to take note of the situation of small museums. They are facing a lot of problems in terms of money and staff and thus can be reserved about researchers that ask too much or of participating in a big project such as ours, maybe due to bad experience with academics. Small museums should be approached with care in order to not be scared away.

### **Public Activity**

The first day of the workshop ended with a public activity: Elisabeth Waagmeester and Gwen Sebus presented each a fantastic magic lantern show on scientific entertainment at Parnassos Cultural Centre. The show was well attended by circa 80 persons in the audience.

## Friday, 4 September 2015

The day began with an exchange of impressions from Thursday's discussion, the lantern show and the ordering of raised discussion points. Frank Kessler recapitulated the different fields of knowledge / entry points of research that were presented yesterday: We need to know about the artifact, the exhibition practices, the *dispositifs*, business-practices and socio-economic trade. The fact that all these "datasets" need to be considered is a quality and also a challenge of this project because we will enable various types of research.

Frank Kessler recalls that we have to think big but limit our research to the various contexts of shows and producers for learning. Maybe the relevant difference for the documentation of a slide or slide set is not "amateur/professional" use but "commercial/non-commercial" production. Phillip Roberts asks when amateur use of magic lantern shows became more prevalent and how to determine from the slide who produced it.

Joe Kember suggested that the quality of the slide holds various information about its (intended) use. Once you have bits of knowledge about "when-who-which audience", this will also hint to the way it was performed.

Sabine Lenk, Richard Crangle and Anastasia Kerameos pointed to practical needs and potentials of LUCERNA: Through Lucerna, collections can be made visible, examples of re-use projects should be given and data can be published. Practical help is needed to instruct people about how to deal with the objects and to get to a better understanding of what these objects are.

There was consensus among the participants that the various perspectives on the material and the various aspects of the history and heritage of lantern culture are complex and intrinsically interconnected to other fields – the various perspectives on the material from the consortium enriches everyone's individual perspective. The diversity in expertise creates a good network so that no individual member has to know everything alone. We can help people with questions by referring them to other people in our network.

Kurt Vanhoutte adds that through the network, the trajectories of a slide, slide set or exhibition practice can be better charted than in the local case studies alone. A strong point of this project is that slides and their collections are not seen as individual collections but that the migration of slides, slide sets and the relations of collections to each other can be mapped.

Klaus Staubermann also emphasized this "hyperlinked structure of knowledge" and sees the usefulness of connecting various spaces in Europe through the availability of material. The slide itself contains various traces of its making (painting techniques, the object collection of which it is part) that helps to gather information from the slide and its uses

Sabine Lenk points to the language problem: most local museums outside the UK do not have English as working language. Sarah Dellmann agrees that every Research Team should also



provide the knowledge in their own language to the institutions. The website of the project and research activities does not need to be fully in English.

Anastasia Kerameos emphasized the need for sustainable documentation and the long term hosting of the project website.

### **Presentation Projects & Discussion Slot III : Describe, Document, Database**

*Chair: Sabine Lenk*

“A typology of magic lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation: The content analysis applied to the taxonomic organization of the magic lantern slides”, Francisco Javier Frutos, Beatriz Gonzáles de Garay and Carmen López, Universidad de Salamanca

The Salamanca research team, represented by Francisco Javier Frutos, Beatriz Gonzáles de Garay, presents their reflections into the cataloguing of lantern slides and their implementation of a standard vocabulary for cataloguing magic lantern slides. They applied content analysis to achieve classification and categories. The objective is to suggest and define a typology of magic lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation: genre, format and production technique. The formal characters were chosen because other aspects were considered to vary too much for achieving sound and universally applicable categorization.

They developed a codebook and coding form to organize the magic lantern slides. Creating a consistency in how magic lantern slides are ordered.

Preliminary results: The magic lantern slides show regularities concerning the formal structure of representation that arrange their content; the research could thus inform the hypothesis initially formulated.

“The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some ‘opportunities to succeed’, part I:History and Theory”. Richard Crangle, University of Exeter

Richard Crangle starts with the history of LUCERNA: since the 1990s, he had the idea for a database for magic lanterns. The project of Trier University on poverty and screen culture (see above) created a dataset mostly based on newspaper reports of lantern slides shows that were connected to particular slide sets. A workshop at Trier led to the establishing of a network and the building of the LUCERNA database in 2006.

Because the Lucerna group is as yet not a formal organization, depending on the commitment of individuals it makes applications for funding difficult. For now, LUCERNA’s existence is assured via its use for projects at Trier university.

[As the discussion of these two papers is closely linked to the general discussion, they are noted together as one discussion]

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION**

Joe Kember and Frank Kessler chair the discussion. They identified the following points to address of previous talks and post-it’s on the wall:

- 1) IT LEVEL: how to organize data
- 2) PROJECT GOAL: These concern questions to develop standards. Right now, we are still creating an inventory of existing initiatives that lead to the questions that we have to address, but at some point, we need to turn this bottom-up-approach into a top-down approach in order to produce
  - agreements on working procedures
  - agreements on keywords / thesaurus
  - (working) definitions for the material we encounter

In a next step, through our various types of research, our intermediary results will feed back into these “top-down” agreements/definitions and modify them.

Liliana Melgar suggests to look into current web applications and developments on semantic web about linked concepts that would help us to make content searchable even not the same words (such applications would e.g. link “Belgian Sheppard” to “dog” or understand that “underground” and “metro” mean the same thing). Richard Crangle adds that a controlled thesaurus such as ICONCLASS is great for subject indexing (by coding the subject) and offers the subject keyword various languages but also very time consuming.

Sarah Dellmann notes that it is really instructive to see how all the different attempts to classify lantern slides so far resulted in similar categories. There seem to be two general approaches: the object-description approach (for describing collections) and a more conceptual approach, that charts the existence of lantern slides from e.g. trade catalogues but does not start from artifacts. However, even those approaches have similar criteria throughout the various museums and collections. She sees this as very promising for the project’s aim to develop a standard.

Finding Information / Tagging: Crowd-sourcing: Lilian Melgar informs that experience with crowdsourcing / asking users to tag content in database shows that the quality of results is usually not very high. Before asking the general public, it is necessary to ask what we want to get out of it and then ask specialized users for their help. Klaus Staubermann refers to image research companies that provide tools where different users can comment on an image and then comment on comments of other users as well.

Liliana Melgar points out that if LUCERNA wants to incorporate data and/or metadata, it must be a relative flexible platform and standardize ways in which information is shared. Together with Anastasia Kerameos, she agrees that google must understand it in order to be findable for the general user (algorithms created by ourself would not be as precise as Google’s for finding slides).

Francisco Javier Frutos, Beatriz Gonzáles de Garay and Liliana Melgar point to the possibility to upload data from Lucerna to the portal Europeana – but this would only make sense once a collection is fully described.

Sabine Lenk proposed to use LUCERNA also as publishing platform.

Sjaak Boone proposes to provide information on German Stereoscope manufacturers: very often, they also produced magic lantern slides.

A general debate over the task of LUCERNA arises: should LUCERNA “only refer” to lantern slides and lantern related material – as a reference work – or should LUCERNA include all of this material? Is it a place to *store* or a place to *redirect*? E.g. should LUCERNA also include scans of trade catalogs and historical journals/ newspaper clippings or would other platforms such as the Media History Digital Library be a better place to store such scans and then link them to LUCERNA? Is the main purpose, then, that LUCERNA connects dispersed material and refers users to where the objects are?

The first answer is that LUCERNA should not replace other datasets but it should be a place where such datasets can be gathered and where data can be connected and shared with the purpose to connect and enable users to discover where the things are.

LUCERNA should provide tools and information that enable interested people to understand the material and to deal with it for several purposes (cataloguing, scanning lantern-related material such as slides, documenting, re-use).

Nele Wynants takes up the question on the role of the artists in this project: there is a trend that artists integrate or refer to historical, non-digital media and technology in their installations and performances (in a media-archaeological spirit). Kurt Vanhoutte suggests to create a mapping of “best practices” in order to get an overview over contemporary artists re-using the magic lantern or lantern slides in contemporary art constellations. Richard Crangle and Ine van Dooren suggest to contact members of the Magic Lantern Society who work with slides in their work for ideas about best practices. Sabine Lenk suggests to invite students from art schools to use the material once we have some first “best practices”. Ludwig Vogl-Bienek points to two different approaches: students/artists can either work in the tradition of “experimental media archaeology” that tries to reenact historical experiences /used of the apparatus or leave them completely free in their choice. Any documentation of either form of artistic re-use (e.g. recordings on DVD) will never be able to replace the here & now of performances / theatre experiments / media lab situation.

Tea / Coffee break

“The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some ‘opportunities to succeed’ part II: Practice”, Richard Crangle, University of Exeter

Richard Crangle explains the structure of the Lucerna database. It is a fully interrelated database, programmed in MySQL, organized in eight tables that relate to the main categories (Slide sets, slides, people, organizations, events, locations, hardware, texts). Information

about a Slide set can then be linked to information from other tables, e.g. organization (who was the maker?) and hardware (is there a lantern reading to the slide?).

Richard also explains the conceptual ideas behind each field and the history of its making: the bias on British slide sets 1880-1914 reflects the use of LUCERNA from previous projects but is not a necessary limitation. Especially information on lantern and lantern-related hardware is underrepresented – any additions are more than welcome.

Resolutions of slides in LUCERNA is fairly low – the idea is that LUCERNA does not provide access to high-resolution digital images but directs people interested in the material to the owner. Owners of slides need to be made aware of the fact that once they agree to make their content available on LUCERNA, everyone can do everything with it (and images can be downloaded – now they are in 300 dpi jpg and thus not useful for projection or professional purposes)

Further urgent points to decide are the level of keywording (on level of slide sets or slides?) and the questions of a controlled vocabulary for keywording / thesaurus.

Based on discussions in the Lucerna workgroup, Sarah wrote a manual for inserting data into Lucerna. She will make it available on the website (=> it is already made available at the internal part of the website)

*Suggested Changes, Desirable features and Issues to sort out in Lucerna:*

- How to connect the databases?
- Transferring between databases
- How do you demarcate what should be included in the database? And which databases should be connected and which should be excluded?
- The field “researcher’s notes” could be used to exchange information. Also, a note for logged-in users “what I was working on and had trouble with entering or found great” (something like an internal blog-function) would be a desirable feature. It should definitely be activated on the project website and then linked to the LUCERNA-item.
- The suggestion arises to have a more detailed/specialized view on the IT side of this problem at one of the upcoming workshops.
- Offer a thematic entry into the collections of LUCERNA

## **Saturday, 5 September 2015 - Research Team Assembly**

Workflows, organizational issues and time planning were discussed and agreed upon during the research team assembly.

Two working groups are installed:

“Best Practices for Digitization of lantern slides” – This group will provide instructions on how to make digital copies of the slides in good quality

“Website”: This workgroup will improve the website as major communication hub of the project’s activities

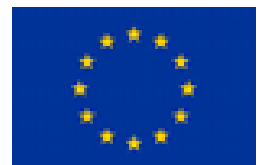
For the notes: Sarah Dellmann, Utrecht 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2015

Enclosed: - Program, including questions for the discussion.  
- Photo of the questions as noted on the wall



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[www.uu.nl/a-million-pictures](http://www.uu.nl/a-million-pictures)



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**Attachment 1: Program of the workshop “Exploring the needs of stakeholders for access, documentation and re-use” including questions for the discussion.**

## **Thursday, 3 September, Sweelinckzaal**

14:00 Arriving, coffee & tea

14:30 “Welcome words”, Frank Kessler, Utrecht University

14:40 Short introduction of participants

15:00 “A Million Pictures: The story before the beginning”, Sarah Dellmann, Utrecht University

### **15:15 Presentations of Projects & Discussion, Slot I : Research & Questions**

*Chair: Richard Crangle*

“Lantern Research at Trier University (the last ten years)”, Ludwig Vogl-Bienek, Trier University

“Object-focussed research and the problem of extraneous data”, Philip Roberts, York University

“Lantern Research at the University of Exeter, 2007-15”, Joe Kember, Exeter University

### **16:30 Presentations of Projects & Discussion, Slot II: Re-Use & Collections**

*Chair: Frank Kessler*

“The Vrielynck Collection”, Jan de Vree, MHK Antwerpen

“Magic Lanterns and slides in the Collection Thomas Mallol at Museu del cinema Girona”, Daniel Pitarch Fernández, University of Girona

“The EYE collection of lantern slides”, Soeluh van Berg, EYE Film Institute Netherlands

“The Royal Albert Memorial Museum collection of lantern slides”, Thomas Cadbury, RAMM

### **20:00 -22:00 Opening ceremony with lantern show**

## Friday, 4 September 10:00-17:30

10:00 Reflection on Thursday & settle order of discussion points

### 10:30 Presentation Projects & Discussion Slot III : Describe, Document, Database

*Chair: Sabine Lenk*

“A typology of magic lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation: The content analysis applied to the taxonomic organization of the magic lantern slides”, Javier Frutós, Beatriz Gonzáles de Garay and Carmen López, Universidad de Salamanca

“The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some ‘opportunities to succeed’ part I: History & Theory”, Richard Crangle, University of Exeter

**Points for Discussion:** How should an ideal database for lantern slides look like and how can it connect the several existing databases? Obviously by discussing this we need to address the kind of users we expect and their wishes. (from Soeluh van Berg)

12:30 Lunch

### 14:00-15:30 Discussion: Getting concrete: which points are relevant for *A Million Pictures*?

*Chairs: Joe Kember and Frank Kessler*

What can we learn from existing initiatives? Which aspects are implicitly or explicitly relevant for documenting lantern slides from the various perspectives? What are the best practices? What should the research teams consider?

#### **Points for Discussion (general):**

- Out of this project M HKA expects concrete steps towards the activation of the Vrielynck collection as a ‘cultural heritage object library’, specifically focused on the magic lantern part of it. This activation it sees in terms of deep understanding and the performing of that, not as a collection display. Elements of outcome it would appreciate are:
  - a qualified inventory of its assets (both the images and the magic lanterns themselves that may be a support for it),
  - an enhanced understanding of the topic embedded in the museum information system (especially through the ensembles.org software), with licenses of non-commercial digital republication of research outcomes,
  - operationalized methodologies to perform the images in different ways for different audiences (e.g. children, scientists, students, museum audiences, art world event audiences), including ways of appropriation of the capacity by potential heritage constituencies,
  - an operational mechanism for making presentation copies of the images (digitalization as an instrument, not a goal on its own behalf),
  - an agreement to share images throughout the network (permanent capacity of non-commercial use within the partner institutions of presentation copies of images, if the owner institution is clearly mentioned). (from Jan de Vree)

- Can we agree on a standard for scanning within the project (resolution, file format) or are the diverse needs too specific? What would a protocol for scanning and storing the scans be? (from Sarah Dellmann)
- The need for the researcher (from Claire Dupré la Tour):
  - to download the images for research, and for the illustrations of publications and conferences (questions of the quality of the downloads, their octets size; question of the copyrights, etc.)
  - to have access to the description of the slides themselves
  - technical format (size)
  - the content of the slides (image and/or text)
  - if it is in color or black and white
  - used images techniques (painting, photography, hand drawing, etc.)
  - fixed or for animated projection
  - used technique of reproduction (lithography, etc. - I know nothing about that question, I would be very interested to learn about!)
  - series they belong to, country of production, name and town of the manufacturer, name of the artist,
  - genre (geography, travel, natural sciences, medicine, religion, songs, stories for children, adaptation of tales, novels etc. or stories yet existing, publicity, announcements related to the projection itself or the show, if it is related to a film - cf film titles or film announces, etc.)
  - what is known about their specific use at their time,
  - lectures provided with them or information that there is no lecture known
  - to have the possibility to select those criteria through key words to launch the research (for example, my criteria would be "text" and "story", so that I can access to all the slides containing a text to tell a story, the option "text" is yet existing in the Lucerna website as a lot of possibilities, relations, etc.)
  - to have access to the history of the collections, and to know from where and when the slide arrived in the archive (ex : a donation in 1995, from Mr. Dupont, collectionneur in Paris)
  - to have access to digitized related books, brochures, and documentation of their time,
- It would be great to have access in the site to a bibliography on the magic lantern at its time, and a bibliography of researches on the topic since maybe the years 1940 or so (from Claire Dupré la Tour)
- While I was photographing a portion of Joss Marsh and David Francis' collection, I noticed that quite a few slides with wooden frames had extensive marginalia. As you can imagine, this kind of information would quite valuable to those trying to reconstruct particular shows, but I had difficulty determining how to best preserve this data. Does the consortium have any suggestions? If the project anticipates working mostly with standard sized slides, the chances of encountering such marginalia are small. The problem that we encountered was that some slides have notes on multiple sides of the frame and in multiple hands. Preserving a sense of where the note was on the frame and in which hand helps recreate various iterations of the show. We opted to take multiple images of the slide (one of the image, several of the frame). I believe that the museum's catalog of these slides contains a transcript of this marginalia. (David can confirm.) With Joss and David's permission, I'd be happy to send along images of a such a slide to serve as an example.



I'm also interested to hear how the project intends to preserve images of the slides. Will you be photographing them? Scanning? We discovered that we could get sharper images of the slides if we didn't photograph through the cover glass, so we opted to photograph the painted side of the slide. The downside to this is that we're having to digitally manipulate the images so that they are not backwards (from Mary Borgo, Indiana University, via e-mail)

- Which information about lantern slides is required from an archival perspective to understand their historical, museal (= exposition), performative (= showing) value? (From Sabine Lenk)
- What forms of documentation and digitisation are required by academic and non-academic stakeholders? (From Sabine Lenk)
- How does each collection's priorities for access and re-use influence its requirements for documentation and digitization as well as the archival / academic perspective on and the knowledge of this medium (= what we know today about it is the result of selections that were made in the past concerning the digitisation of slides, accompanying lectures, contemporary texts and the photographing of lanterns)? What are the consequences for researchers of decisions taken by heritage institutions? (From Sabine Lenk)

***Points for discussion (Lucerna/Database specific):***

- digitization and reference to the location / collections where the slides are held (from Soeluh van Berg)
- Adaptation of the typology of lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation in Lucerna (from Francisco Javier Frutos).
- What metadata could be extracted from the database? (from Phillip Roberts)
- Consider ways of exposing the data to the semantic web, including the possibility of publishing the database in RDF (from Anastasia Kerameos)
- Could crowd sourcing of information be an issue? (from Sabine Lenk)
- What future technical developments could / should be issue for the discussion (e.g. picture identification tools)? (from Sabine Lenk)
- How can Lucerna be made better known (e.g. marketing strategies) to special audiences (archives, museums, collectors) and a broad audience (e.g. newspapers and other media, research institutions in history, social sciences, geography etc.)? (from Sabine Lenk)
- What is the message the group behind Lucerna / *A Million Pictures* wants to send out? What is the advantage / disadvantage for Lucerna / *A Million Pictures* to be known to a broader audience? (from Sabine Lenk)
- Would it be useful to be present on big data machines or in social media? (from Sabine Lenk)  
Use of controlled thesauri for the description of image-content: is it too time consuming or should we apply that nevertheless? Or do we link vocabularies (from Sarah Dellmann)?
- In how far should we use standardized vocabulary for the entry of data into the database – in the different languages? Should we control the use of vocabulary completely / leave it completely open or something in between? (From Sabine Lenk)
- How to document the variety of circulating words for the same phenomenon in the database? Do we need to compile a list of words that were used in lantern history and write an etymology about them, explaining which words all fall under the concept "X " in the database (e.g. Lucerna

calls everything “lantern slides” and not “transparencies”). Should alternative words that occur in historic writings be documented and if so, how? (from Sarah Dellmann)

15:30 Coffee & Tea Break

**16:00 Presentation Project & Discussion Slot IV : Describe, Document, Database**

*Chair: Sarah Dellmann*

“The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some ‘opportunities to succeed’, part II: Practice”.

Richard Crangle, University of Exeter

(Hands-on, information on entering data, detailed description how website works and how fields are related to each other. Import/Export of data, upload images)

17:00 Wrapping up and end

19:00 Social Evening: Dinner at Restaurant “Osteri To Steki”,

## Saturday 5 September 10:00-14:00, Research Team Assembly

10:00 Reflections on Friday

### 10:30 Practical and organizational matters

*Chairs: Kurt Vanhoutte and Nele Wynants*

- Time plan & dates for workshop 2 (and others)
- How to communicate (emails to one / all)?
- ICT Infrastructure for storing/sharing data (as alternative to dropbox).
- How to scan slides for the project (refer to discussion Thursday & Friday)
- Website: how to use it, what to change
- Newsletter and ways of reporting
  - information on contacts from interested people
  - How to keep everybody / a small group informed of the results? As we wrote in the application, every group sends an update every two months for the project newsletter as well as the last day of the workshop. Is there need for additional forms of reciprocal information / update every month / semester useful for the whole group or unproductive (too much to read)?
- Workflow / protocols for inserting data
- Social Media: What makes sense and what does not?
- Official project description (discussion of concept)
- How broadly should we advertise our project? Can we offer guidance for interested researchers/institutions that are not involved officially to contribute their ideas?
- How to work with others (institutions, researchers etc.) which are not part of the project (= do we need guidelines/ a protocol)?
- Publications: How to cooperate and support each other (e.g. writing articles together across borders), exchanging interesting discoveries (= illustrations or other source material), informing partners about one's academic needs (= e.g. looking for pictures and contemporary texts, need for historical details etc.), reviewing articles before publication etc.?

12:00 Lunch

### 12:45 Practical and organizational matters (continued)

*Chairs: Kurt Vanhoutte and Nele Wynants*

13:45 Settle agreements, wrap up and good bye

14:00 End

## Description of the Presentations

### Slot I: Research & Questions

#### Lantern Research at Trier University (the last ten years)

*Ludwig Vogl-Bienek, Trier University*

I will give a brief account on the research focus Screen1900 at Trier University that examines the history of the screen and the art of projection. Between 2004 and 2010 we researched the use of the lantern in charity and social care. Currently we are working on “The Fundamentals of Digitalisation of Works in the Historical Art of Projection as Applied to Media History, Methodology and Media Technology” (2014-2018). With the aid of methods and tools of the digital humanities a virtual research environment will be established to enable archivists, curators and scholars to generate digital source editions of historic lantern slide sets and related material.

#### Object-based methods in lantern research

*Philip Roberts, York University*

I will discuss methods for object-focused research and the kind of information that this can reveal, as well as the need for extraneous contextual data (exhibition, manufacturing, economic conditions, etc.) and the difficulties with collecting this. I will identify a number of data sets that could support magic lantern research and begin to think about how a collaborative research network could help to meet these research needs.

#### Lantern Research at the University of Exeter, 2007-2015

*Joe Kember, University of Exeter*

This paper will provide an introduction to some recent work concerning the magic lantern that has taken place at Exeter. In particular, it will explain some of the findings of the AHRC ‘Moving and Projected Image in the South West UK, 1820-1914’ project, with an emphasis on lantern exhibition 1880-1914. It will also make some initial comments concerning the requirements of three UK stakeholders in ‘A Million Pictures,’ the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter; the Library of Birmingham; and the Royal Geographic Society.

### Slot II: Presentation and & Re-Use of Collections

#### The Vrielynck Collection

*Jan de Vree, MHK Antwerpen*

Muhka is a contemporary art museum that also has a film-museological function, cooperating structurally with the Brussels film archive. Beside a collection of contemporary art, Muhka has the important Vrielynck Collection of precinema- and cinema hardware. It perceives this collection as an object library that is important as part of the collective memory, because it embodies mass medial developments. The presentation will give insight into how the Vrielynck Collection has been researched through a series of exhibitions in which artists like Julien Maire, Zoe Beloff, and David Blaire related to this collection.

## **Magic Lanterns and slides at Museu del cinema Girona, Col·lecció Tomàs Mallol**

*Daniel Pitarch Fernández, University of Girona*

An overview of the collection of magic lantern slides preserved at Museu del Cinema-Col·lecció Tomàs Mallol, regarding their typology, genres and actual catalogue.

## **The EYE collection of lantern slides**

*Soeluh van Berg, EYE Film Institute Netherlands*

I will focus on the kinds of slides that can be found in the EYE collection and the stages of registration from 1991 to the present. The goal of these initiatives to work on the collection has been mainly to get to know the collection and thus prepare it for further use in live performances and research. Unfortunately new additions after the nineties are not documented.

## **The Royal Albert Memorial Museum's collection of lantern slides**

*Thomas Cadbury, Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter*

One of RAMM's little known treasures is a collection of several thousand glass lantern slides, covering subjects from science to entertainment, and including Exeter views by prominent local photographers of a century ago. The size and significance of the collection was realised during a cross-collection collections review. The review highlighted how this collection relates to others in the museum and emphasised the importance of digitisation in making it accessible. A selection of images from the collection featured in the '[Life through the Lens](#)' temporary exhibition in 2012-2013 and others are available on our [Collections Explorer website](#) and the [Magic Lantern Web Resource](#).

### **Slot III: Describe, Document, Database**

## **A typology of lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation**

*Javier Frutós, Universidad de Salamanca*

This presentation will address the following questions: Which information about lantern slides is required from an archival perspective to understand their value? What is a typology of lantern slides derived from their formal structures of representation? The presentation will also outline first ideas that the work package will address: Firstly, the development and implementation of a standard vocabulary for description and cataloguing magic lantern slides and secondly, initiative to create a taxonomy of lantern slides to design apps.

## **The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some 'opportunities to succeed' / Part I: History & Theory**

*Richard Crangle, University of Exeter*

An introduction to the Lucerna magic lantern web resource, with a practical demonstration and discussion of its role within the *A Million Pictures* project. Both parts will focus on the same aspects, the first part on the conceptual ideas behind the resource, initial aims, implications in the way that

things are documented. This will include

- presentation of data entry and editing
- principles for creating images
- cataloguing and keywords
- areas that need more development
- ideas for future directions.

Please familiarise yourself with the resource ([www.slides.uni-trier.de](http://www.slides.uni-trier.de)) before the workshop, and come with questions, especially “how do I...?”, “why...?” and best of all “why not...?”

#### **Slot IV : Describe, Document, Database**

### **The Lucerna Magic Lantern Web Resource: some ‘opportunities to succeed’ /**

#### **Part II: Practice**

*Richard Crangle, University of Exeter*

The same topic, but this time addressed as a hands-on experience with a focus on how fields are related to each other:

- how to enter data and edit content;
- practical work routines for creating images;
- applying cataloguing and keywords.

