

THE MAGIC LANTERN TODAY

Creative Re-Use of Cultural Heritage

The magic lantern was a very important technology of visual entertainment and means of education across nineteenth-century Europe. Many libraries and museums across Europe hold tens of thousands of lantern slides in their collections. However, a lack of standards for documentation and preservation limits the impact of existing initiatives, hinders the recognition of the object's heritage value and potential exploitation.

This workshop explores different strategies for curators, artists and educators to revive the legacy of the magic lantern as cultural heritage. We will explore how the artistic and educational re-use of old lanterns can today function as a creative tool to revalue the lantern as an important visual technology in the history of new media. Instead of exhibiting this old apparatus as an antique object, or historically re-enacting a Galantee show, media artists and curators develop contemporary strategies for reuse of the magic lantern in which they reflect on media history, concepts of vision and the role of media in our contemporary moment.

This is the 3rd workshop of *A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning*, an international research project dealing with the magic lantern as European cultural heritage. The project brings together researchers, museum curators and archivists, collectors and artists to promote sustainable use and management of lantern slides held in various European collections. The goal is to develop tools for documentation, preservation, digitisation and creative re-use.



Collodion positive on glass, for *Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brillant* (2016) © Sarah Vanagt

workshop 27-29 Oct 2016 *The Magic Lantern Today*

venue: M HKA
Museum of Contemporary Art
Antwerp | Leuvenstraat 32

Entrance to the workshop is free, but it is required to register in advance by e-mail at Sabine Lenk: s.lenk@uu.nl

exhibition

Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brillant - by Sarah Vanagt

27 October - 13 November 2016
M HKA | Tu-Su 11:00-18:00
Antwerp | Leuvenstraat 32

screening

An Evening With Sarah

Friday 29 October at 20:30 at
Cinema Zuid Antwerp |
Walsekaai 47

The Magic Lantern Today

is organized by the Research Center for Visual Poetics of the University of Antwerp and the Université libre de Bruxelles, in the framework of *A Million Pictures. Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning* | Joint Programming Initiative in Cultural Heritage – Heritage Plus.

More information on schedule and program can be found on our website:

www.visualpoetics.be

Program Thursday 27 October (14:00–20:00)

14:00 [Welcome coffee in M HKA FE](#)

14:30 - 16:00 [Curating the lantern](#)

chair: Kurt Vanhoutte (UAntwerp)

Welcome and introduction

Revisiting Vrielynck

[Edwin Carels \(KASK / School of Arts HoGent\)](#)

In 2003, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp (M HKA) acquired 'custody' of the Robert Vrielynck collection, the private collection of a notary from Bruges. The collection illustrates the development of film and projection equipment, comprising all types of technologies including the magic lantern and the camera obscura. As part of my research into media archaeology, I invited three visual artists to do an intervention in the collection, which led to the curation of three large-scale exhibitions. These not only opened up the collection to a public in each time a very adventurous way, they also established a stimulating dialogue between audio-visual artefacts and contemporary art.

The world according to Van Hal. Exhibiting local collections of lantern slides in the City museum of Turnhout

[Bart Sas \(City archive, Turnhout\)](#)

In 2013 the City Archives and Museums Turnhout and the Holy Sepulchre School organised an exhibition of 2 collections of lantern slides. One was made by a local priest and stored in the City Archives since 1976, the other was found on the attic of the school. The lecture focuses on the preparation of these collections and their presentation in the museum.

16:00 - 16:30 [Coffee & tea break](#)

16:30 - 18:30 [Lantern dramaturgies](#)

chair: Sabine Lenk (UAntwerp)

Liberating the lantern – the magic lantern show in the 21st century

[Mervyn Heard \(Freelance lanternist and scholar\)](#)

The magic lantern is a simple but potentially versatile instrument. Too often demonstrations and performances with the lantern are designed to convey the unity of artefacts and the lantern's traditional employment and not the anomalies which point to its more ingenious application. Using both historical examples and personal experiences Dr. Mervyn Heard explores the nature of the lantern in performance and the difficulty in defining a 'magic lantern show' for a 21st century audience.

www.mervynheard.com

illuminago | media archaeology & performance

The illuminago ensemble has presented magic lantern performances in many European countries and in the US and Canada since 1986. The experimental re-enactments and creative re-uses of magic lanterns and slides involve musicians, actors and other performers. This talk will canvass different approaches to lantern dramaturgies: the first example is about staging one work of the historical art of projection in one programme – such as Wagnerian Operas, then we talk about telling the history of the screen as live performance and the final examples are about presenting lantern slides from the 20th century that were used to show the First World War and to document ‘The Expulsion of the Armenian People into the Desert’.

[Karin Bienek \(lanternist\) and Ludwig Vogl-Bienek \(lanternist, Universität Trier\)](#)

www.illuminago.de

***Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brillant* : Archaeology of the projection microscope**

The projection microscope is a particular type of magic lantern, developed for showing enlarged images of microscopic subjects. This historical lantern inspired film artist Sarah Vanagt for an exhibition at M HKA (27 October – 13 November 2016). For *Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brillant* Vanagt revisits the history of the microscopes for a new installation and lantern movie. She thus offers a contemporary perspective on microscopy, science and spectacle. In this talk Vanagt and Wynants will discuss this fascination with the history of optics and early media and how this artistic re-discovery of the projection microscope today can function as a model for a theory and practice between science and art.

[Sarah Vanagt \(film artist\) & Nele Wynants \(ULB-UAntwerp\)](#)

www.balthasar.be

19:00

Opening: Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brillant

An installation with two lantern films by Sarah Vanagt
M HKA: INBOX
Antwerp | Leuvenstraat 32

20:30

Diner

l'Entrepôt du Congo
Antwerp | Vlaamsekaai 42
entrepotducongo.com

Program Friday 28 October (10:00–18:00)

10:00 - 11:00 [Historical and future case studies](#)

chair: Nele Wynants (UAntwerp-ULB)

Re-use in the past

The act to use something a second time has a long tradition, which goes back to Antiquity. The idea sounds almost like invented by environmentalists: why throw something away if you can make use of it again. Nevertheless, this simple action can have several meanings, therefore the word 're-use' is part of an important semantic field. Some examples from the past will show the wide range of connotations and may contribute to a better understanding of the term's significance.

[Sabine Lenk \(University of Antwerp\)](#)

Making maps speak and thinking geographically: Halford Mackinder's visual and verbal knowledge-making practices for less expert audiences c. 1885-1914

[Emily Hayes \(University of Exeter\)](#)

Synthesizing scholarship from the burgeoning field of lantern studies with historical geography, this paper will examine the life-long championing of the magic lantern by the first Reader in the 'new' geography at Oxford, Halford Mackinder (1861-1947). This paper will examine the formative influence of notionally 'popular' scientific lantern presentations on the geographical imagination and teaching practices of Mackinder. It will then map the visual and verbal knowledge-making practices and lantern performances of Mackinder to a diverse demographic and age range of students of geography across the period c. 1885-1914, including Oxford University Extension lectures to working class audiences, Royal Geographical Society audiences, school and higher education level students of geography.

11:00 - 11:30 [Coffee & tea break](#)

11:30 - 12:45 [Historical and future case studies - bis](#)

chair: Frank Kessler (Utrecht University)

Re-using and implementing optical toys: synthesis of movement and contemporary phenakistoscopes and zoetropes

[Daniel Pitarch Fernández \(University of Girona\)](#)

This presentation will show different contemporary examples of reusing and implementing XIXth century's optical toys related to the synthesis of movement (phenakistoscopes and zoetropes). These examples show not only a contemporary attraction to these devices (as an interactive medium, for instance) but also help to better understand the possibilities of the original technology (and therefore its value and interest). This case study could be used as a comparison for exploring contemporary uses of the magic lantern.

Spreading magic lantern knowledge through workshops for children

[Anna Carpena Torrens \(Cinema Museum Girona\)](#)

For eighteen years the Girona Cinema Museum has been performing magic lantern workshops for children aged 8 to 12. This allows them to discover the artistic, technological and social importance of magic lantern shows. We will explain the origin of the workshop and its evolution, its demand, children and teachers opinions and we'll summarize conclusions and experiences after years of doing this educational proposal.

Lanterns in film production

[Emjay Rechsteiner \(film producer and historian\)](#)

From his own practice as a producer and historian, Emjay Rechsteiner will demonstrate how he seeks to add an impression of authenticity by adding archival footage to fiction. Can magic lanterns be deployed to the same effect? If so: what infrastructure is required to facilitate the use of lanterns in films?

12:45 - 14:00 [Lunch at M HKAFE](#)

14:00 - 15:30 [Taxonomy and cataloguing](#)

chair: Sarah Dellmann (Utrecht University)

A study to develop a classification of magic lanterns and its accessories

[Patrice Guérin \(collector and historian of the art of light projections\)](#)

Magic lantern slides and other images on glass plates destined to be projected on a screen can't be studied exhaustively without examining the apparatus that is used for their projection. There is a reciprocal influence, as there is an interaction between what is projected and how it is projected. In my lecture I will first develop the three elements that are necessary for this kind of projections: an image, a light and an optical system, the latter two being components of the magic lantern. Then I will describe the parallel evolution of slides, lanterns and light sources from the 18th century to the 1950s and present a taxonomy of its different forms. Last, but not least I would like to talk briefly about an example of re-use currently on exhibition at the Musée National de l'Education (Rouen) in which slides, projectors and light sources are intimately interwoven: ten interactive displays show images in their historical context.

Introduction to The Companion for the Historical Art of Projection

[Ludwig Vogl-Bienek \(Universität Trier\)](#)

A vocabulary for magic lantern slides depending on their discursive genre

Carmen López & Francisco Javier Frutos (Universidad de Salamanca)

Based on the use of content analysis as a method for the taxonomic organization of magic lantern slides, our work proposes a controlled vocabulary for magic lantern slides depending on their discursive genre. The standardized vocabulary to define and classify the genres of magic lantern slides applicable in Type of Slide Subject (Lucerna's 'search for slide sets') brings together 29 terms and subterms. The terms have been defined from the concurrence of all the variables used in the codebook of the content analysis empirical study. From this vocabulary, we develop a mobile application (app) to facilitate the creative re-use of the magic lantern slides of the Museu del Cinema-Tomàs Mallol in the context of a temporary exhibition about this cultural heritage, which it is scheduled to open at the Museu in 2017.

15:30-16:00 [Coffee & tea break](#)

16:00-18:00 [Working group meetings](#)

Parallel sessions for project partners (in M HKAFE or café PIXEL).

- Best Practices of Digitization: news from the manual & further discussion on draft
- Metadata and Cataloguing: taxonomy of lantern slides
- How to continue? Ideas for a follow-up project
- Creative re-use (new)

18:30 [Diner](#)

FOMU - Fotomuseum: Museum café PIXEL
Antwerp | Waalsekaai 47
www.fotomuseum.be/en/plan-your-visit/museum-cafe

20:30 [An evening with Sarah](#)

CINEMA ZUID, Antwerp | Waalsekaai 47
(same building as FOMU / café PIXEL)

For the occasion of *Schijnvis / Showfish / Poisson Brilliant*, M HKA and Cinema Zuid organize a screening of Vanagt's recent films. The screenings will be introduced by the artist.

Programme Saturday 29 October (10:00–13:00)

Research Team Assembly

chair: Sarah Dellmann (Utrecht University)

13:00–14:00 [Lunch at M HKAFE](#)