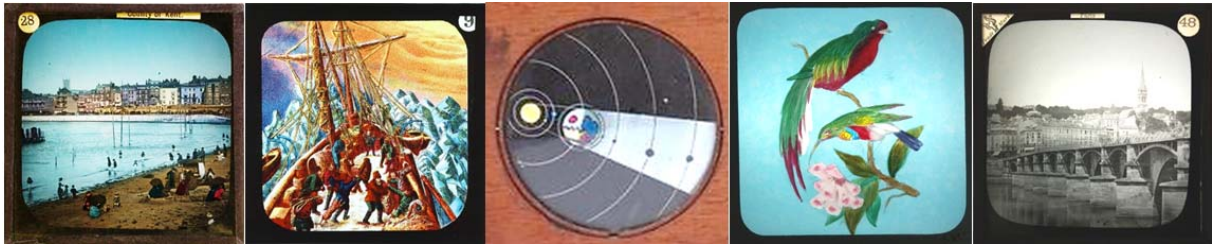


A Million Pictures



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

Newsletter # 03 | February 2016

Writing a report is a moment to make up a balance, not only towards the funding institutions, but also for oneself. With 2015 coming to a close, our first report to the JPI-coordinator was due, so we put on paper all our activities and achievements of the first seven months.

We are happy to say that, in spite of some administrative difficulties that two of our partners faced, we could report that we are on schedule and in some respects even ahead of it. Next to the activities that we promised to carry out, members of the consortium gave additional lectures and presentations of *A Million Pictures*. The shared experience of project members is that our audiences – be it a group of academics, people in the heritage sector or the interested public of a lunch time lecture in a museum – are as fascinated by the historical material as we are. This confirms that we are on the right track and encourages us to continue in this direction. We are looking forward to the doubtlessly inspiring year ahead of us – with discoveries in the archives, exchanges with researchers in other projects, fresh perspectives on this old material through creative re-use projects such as the one by Sarah Vanagt, and new insights into the role of lantern slides in the common European history of learning.

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From the Project Coordination

At this moment, the research in the archives is well underway. The PostDocs Richard Crangle, Sarah Dellmann and Sabine Lenk are at the moment all busy with documenting lantern slides and related materials. To give you an idea of the discoveries, Richard Crangle and Sarah Dellmann comment on slide sets that they digitised as part of their archival research at our Associated Partners, the Royal Albert Memorial Museum and EYE Film Institute Netherlands.

Between 27 December 2015 and 4 January 2016, we made changes to our project website. The project coordinators would like to thank information specialist Liliana Melgar for her work to make the website even more accessible and easier to maintain. The structure of the website and, thus, the links will not change anymore. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Short notes, images, articles, questions, requests, comments on this newsletter and more are highly welcomed! Please send them per e-mail to Sarah Dellmann: s.dellmann [at] uu.nl
Any items for the next newsletter (April 2016) should be submitted by

Thursday, 31st of March 2016

News from the Archives

Richard Crangle on discoveries at the RAMM Collection

“In the last few months, I have added a lot of slide sets from the collection of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum to the Lucerna database. It’s really difficult to choose one set that’s more fascinating than the rest, but there are some great images of Mesopotamia [=Iraq] taken by an Exeter photographer (A.O. Rowden) who was stationed there in the army in 1919 – see



<http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/set/index.php?id=3008611>.

The private collection from another local photographer (Weaver Baker) is also very impressive. He took many fine photos of churches, buildings, birds, cats (<http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/set/index.php?id=3007968>, which includes a self-portrait and ... er ... dolls <http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/set/index.php?id=3008806> - a bit weird.



We're nearly at the end of photographing the RAMM collection , with over 4,500 slide images taken, but there is still plenty to do in identifying and cataloguing the collection. The horizon is in sight – but then we start on the next collection.the horizon is in sight.”

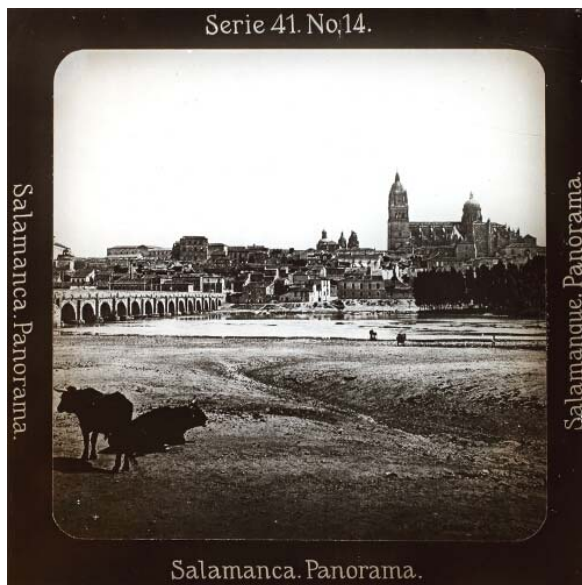
Richard Crangle is Postdoc Researcher at the University of Exeter (UK).

Images of cute cats and sweet kittens that are shared in thousands on Facebook and other social networks clearly have their predecessor in lantern slide sets.

News from the Archives (continued)

Sarah Dellmann on discoveries at EYE Film Institute Netherlands

“In December 2015 and January 2016, I visited the depot of EYE Film Institute Netherlands to photograph slide sets of their collection. I chose to start with the cheap, mass-produced lecture sets produced by German manufacturer Unger and Hoffmann. These slides were widely used in education until WWII.



I am fascinated by the immersive effect that even the cheapest of the cheap material could have when it was coloured. Compare the coloured version with the black and white version of the set DAS SONNIGE SPANIEN, Teil 1 (“Sunny Spain”) <http://slides.uni-trier.de/set/index.php?id=3008766>

Another set that struck me was the set HOLLANDSCHE KASTELEN (“Dutch Castles”) <http://slides.uni-trier.de/set/index.php?id=3008628>. To date we do not know who issued this set but it was part of a Dutch series called “Mooi Nederland” (Beautiful Netherlands). The slides are in moderate condition but they still preserved some of their beauty”.

Sarah Dellmann in Postdoc Researcher at Utrecht University (NL).



Creative Re-use of the Magic Lantern Slides by Film Artist Sarah Vanagt

Looking for slides with organic material

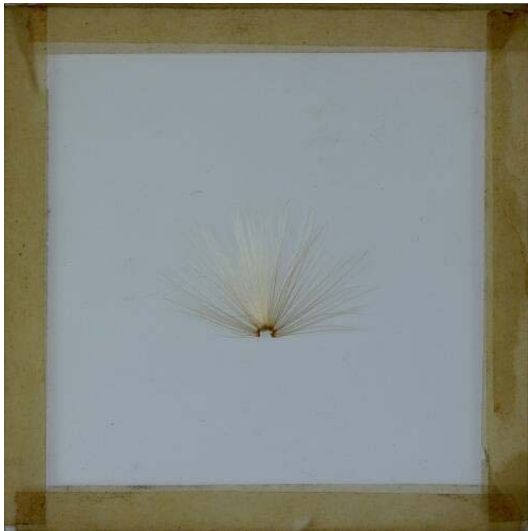
The Antwerp Museum of Contemporary Art (M HKA) holds a very particular collection of magic lantern slides and projectors. The collection was assembled by Robert Vrielynck, a notary from Bruges with a passion for all kinds of objects referring to history and technology of the moving image. The collector acquired several models of the *camera obscura*, the *Laterna Magica*, the 16mm camera and early video equipment. His rich and eclectic collection also comprises cinematographic paraphernalia such as optical toys, film posters, a collection of stamps with film celebrities, fair shares of film companies, and a remarkable magic lantern in the form of the Eiffel Tower and manufactured as part of the Paris World Exhibition in 1889. After the death of the owner, M HKA acquired the ‘guardianship’ of the Vrielynck collection, which was bought by the Flemish Community. Currently, Sabine Lenk (University of Antwerp: Research Centre for Visual Poetics) is re-organizing the whole collection in preparation for the digitalization of the magic lantern slides.



On the occasion of the upcoming workshop in Antwerp on “creative reuse of the magic lantern” (28-30 October 2016), film artist Sarah Vanagt was invited to develop a project inspired by the magic lantern slides and projectors in the Vrielynck collection. Vanagt will set up an exhibition at M HKA (from October 28 until November 13, 2016) displaying original lanterns and slides next to her own contemporary lantern film

Example of a slide that puts specimen between two glass plates: “Utricularia”. Slide 30 of the set [Insectivorous plants](#) (lecture: Flatters and Garnett, at least 30 slides, in/before 1905). Courtesy: RAMM. Image taken from <http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/slide/index.php?id=5091004>

which will also be developed for the event. The exhibition starts from the idea



that artistic re-use of old lanterns can today function as a creative tool to revive its important cultural heritage. Instead of an explicit remake of this old apparatus or a historically informed re-enactment of a Galantee show, Sarah Vanagt opts for a subtle adaptation of the magic lantern reflecting on the history of this popular medium for educational purposes.

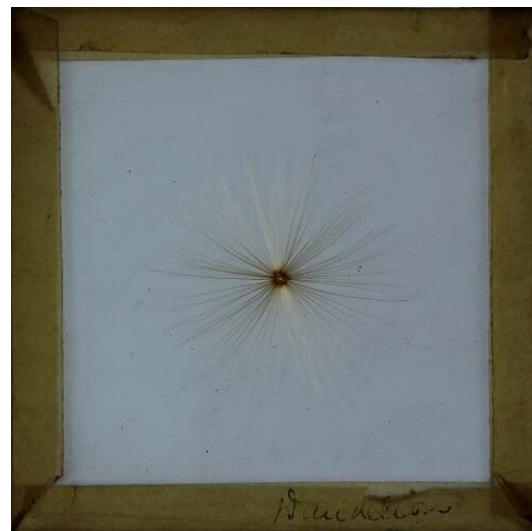
Unnumbered slide from the set “the Crabtree Collection: mounted seeds of plants”. Curtesy of RAMM. Image

taken from <http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/slide/index.php?id=5100517>

Can you help?

To this end, Vanagt is looking for original lantern slides that typically conserve organic material (specimen) between two glass plates: flowers, leaves, seeds, algae, but also insects and feathers (such as in the famous Carpenter and Westley series).

We welcome any information on this type of slides as well as images. Please contact: info@balthasar.be



Dandelion. Unnumbered slide from the set “The Crabtree Collection: mounted seeds of plants”. Curtesy of RAMM. Image taken from <http://www.slides.uni-trier.de/slide/index.php?id=5100516>

Series: Favourite Slides

In every newsletter, members of the research team share their fascination with lantern slides by pointing to their favorite source. In this newsletter, the word is to Frank Kessler.



Image: 3495 –lantern slide from a series of geologist on field work. Netherlands 1933. Courtesy University Museum.

“This slide comes from the collection of the University Museum in Utrecht. It shows a group of Utrecht geologists during a research trip to Cuba in 1933 trying to get their truck back on the tracks. As a photograph, it documents the problems scientist can run into when they are working in the field, and one can imagine this picture easily as an illustration in a book about the expedition. This, however, is a projection slide, and so it may have been used in different

Series: Favourite Slides (continued)

and more complex ways. It may have been projected as part of a lecture for the general public, maybe as part of a fundraising event for future expeditions, but also in a course to prepare students in geology for what they may run into once they leave the classroom and start doing actual research.

What is also very fascinating about this slide is that it quite probably is unique. It is not part of a commercially distributed set and so this may be the only slide showing this image. So it also is a something of a small miracle: once it was no longer of use, because the technology that was needed to project it was deemed obsolete, it could have been thrown away. But it has survived, and now it has become an image that we here in Utrecht use to illustrate the importance of our own research project.”

Frank Kessler is professor at Utrecht University and project leader of *A Million Pictures*.

The University Museum in Utrecht is one of our twenty project partners.

News

The relation between lantern slides and early cinema is the topic of a **panel** that has been accepted for the **14th International Domitor conference** in Stockholm from 14-17 June 2016. “Viscera, Skin, and Physical Form: Corporeality and Early Cinema” with presentations by Sarah Dellmann and Ine van Dooren, Richard Crangle and Joe Kember, Frank Kessler and Sabine Lenk. The title of the panel is: “Projecting the Human Body: a transmedial perspective. Domitor is the international society for the study of early cinema and has a tradition in both discussing the intermedial relations of early cinema. Domitor also seeks to promote close relationships between scholars and archivists. The program is not yet finalized; we will give more information in the next newsletter See also <http://www.domitor.org/>

Congratulations! Liliana Melgar defended her thesis on the 22 January 2016 at the University Carlos III of Madrid, Library and Information Science Department. In her thesis *From Social Tagging to Polyrepresentation: A Study of Expert Annotating Behavior of Moving Images*, Liliana Melgar investigates "nichesourcing," an emergent initiative of cultural heritage crowdsourcing in



which niches of experts are involved in the annotating tasks. This initiative is studied from an Information Behavior perspective, in relation to moving image annotation, and in the context of audiovisual heritage, more specifically, within the sector of film archives.

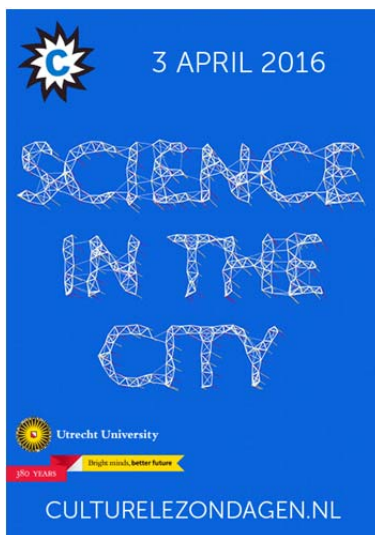
The consortium of *A Million Pictures* congratulates Dr. Liliana Melgar to the well-deserved title. Liliana Melgar took part in the first workshop and gave valuable comments from her view point as an information science specialist. She also helped developing the project website. We wish her all the best for her work at the University of Amsterdam!

News (continued)

The edition 6/2015 of the journal *monuments vaudois* features, among other, a report on lantern slides in their collection. To order a copy of the journal visit the website: www.monumentsvaudois.ch.

Upcoming Activities

3 April 2016 – Utrecht, NL



Mini-Lecture and Live music with lantern show at Culturele Zondagen Utrecht, NL

The April edition of the “Cultural Sundays” in Utrecht is dedicated to the 380 anniversary of Utrecht University. Sarah Dellmann and Frank Kessler will present examples of lantern slides in the collection of the university museum and thereby show how scientists and professors used these slides in their academic teaching around 1900.

Liselotte Westerterp from the Utrecht Conservatory composed *The Journey*, which will be performed live together with the presentation of scientific slides of Tibet and Mongolia around 1900. For exact time and place, see our website or <http://www.culturelezondagen.nl/>

Until 29 February 2016 – Delft, NL

Exhibition “Ter leering en de vermaeck - De toverlantaarn in Tetar”

This exhibition presents the history of the magic lantern in the museum Tetar in Delft. The objects from the collection of Nico’s toverlantaarnmuseum are complemented by number of magic lantern shows. For more information, see <http://tetar.nl/toverlantaarn/>



Upcoming Activities (continued)

14-16 April 2016 – Girona, ES

Workshop: “Defining guidelines for description and cataloguing – discussing first results”

The second workshop of our series will evaluate the ways in which stakeholders document lantern slides, both regarding meta-data and the digitization process of lantern slides. Representatives from collections in Spain and group members will exchange their experiences. On Friday morning, an expert from the Centre de Recerca i Difusió de la Imatge, [CRDI](#) (“Center for research and dissemination of Images”) will give a hands-on presentation on cataloging and digitizing slides.

The final program and the details of the public activity on Thursday, 14 April are being finalized at the moment; for updates, visit our website <http://a-million-pictures.wp.hum.uu.nl/workshop-2-defining-guidelines-for-description-and-cataloguing-discussing-first-results/>

If you are interested in joining the workshop, please contact Daniel Pitarch Fernández (daniel.pitarch [at]gmail.com) or Sarah Dellmann (s.dellmann [at uu.nl])



Hands on! Digitizing lantern slides at CRDI. Image taken from http://www.girona.cat/sqdap/cat/servei_arxiu_crdi.php

About

This newsletter informs about the activities of the project A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefact in the Common European History of Learning.

The magic lantern was the most important visual entertainment and means of instruction across nineteenth-century Europe. However, despite its pervasiveness across multiple scientific, educational and popular contexts, magic lantern slides remain under-researched. Although many libraries and museums across Europe hold tens of thousands of lantern slides in their collections, 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. *A Million Pictures* addresses the sustainable preservation of this massive, untapped heritage resource.

A Million Pictures is a collaborative research project between researchers from Utrecht University (NL), University of Exeter (UK), University of Antwerp (BE), University of Girona (ES), University of Salamanca (ES) as well as twenty Associated Partners.

A Million Pictures runs from June 2015 until May 2018.

More information about past and present activities are available on our project website: www.uu.nl/a-million-pictures



A Million Pictures: Magic Lantern Slide Heritage as Artefacts in the Common European History of Learning is a Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage – Heritage Plus project which is funded by NWO, Belspo, AHRC and MINECO and Co-Funded by the European Commission.



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This newsletter is edited by Sarah Dellmann, additional contributions are written by Richard Crangle, Frank Kessler and Nele Weynants.