

**Call for Papers:**

**Social Medium *avant-la-lettre*?**

**Social interaction and the magic lantern in the Low Countries (1870-1940)**



*Lichtbeeld met 'de wevers van Zele' from the collection 'Arm Vlaanderen', s.d. – Amsab-ISG.*

The magic lantern emerged in the seventeenth century and reached its apogee by the end of the nineteenth century with the projection of various handmade, printed and photographic lantern slides.

Although often reduced to domestic entertainment thanks to widespread mass-produced toy lanterns, the magic lantern was at the same time an effective tool for informing, instructing and propagating various messages in different social contexts. Schools, universities, religious groups, workmen societies, political movements and scientific circles instrumentalized the magic lantern. As such, the social impact of this visual medium should not be underestimated.

Carefully compiled series of projected images were provided with matching rhetoric and resulted in the promotion of ideals and ideologies on patriarchy, nationalism, colonialism, hygiene, et cetera. This even infected seemingly neutral projections of domestic entertainment and scientific lectures. By collecting contributions on unique collections of lantern slides and analysis of various visual strategies in lantern practices (revealing ideologies and social interactions), this special issue aims to detect the psychological and social impact of the magic lantern. With special attention for concepts such as 'Bildung', 'Civilization', 'Propaganda' or 'Self-Fashioning', this issue focuses on the impact of the magic lantern as a social medium.

This issue will investigate how social interaction was stimulated by the magic lantern through self-development, self-discipline, propaganda, manipulation, social protest, dissemination of lies ('fake news'), in different domains of society (school, recreation, professional life, politics, health, lifestyle, marketing, et cetera). This might reveal the magic lantern as a precursor of present social media.

Possible subjects regarding the magic lantern and social interaction are:

- Personal branding of political leaders with illustrated lantern lectures

- Re-use of popular lantern slides depicting the French Revolution in social conflicts
  - Creation of national identities in illustrated geographical lantern lectures
  - Promotion of patriarchy in toy lantern slides
  - Call for participation in missionary activities by illustrated colonial lantern lectures
  - Impact of lantern lectures in the reconstruction of buildings after WWI
- ...

Abstract of approx. 300 words must be sent before 15 March 2021 to [Evelien.Jonckheere@uantwerpen.be](mailto:Evelien.Jonckheere@uantwerpen.be). The author will be contacted soon after. Complete contributions (4000 words max.) are submitted for peer-review before 1 July 2021. Both Dutch and English submissions are welcome. Illustrations are encouraged!