

On a cloudy day in November 2018, many lantern scholars and enthusiasts gathered at the impressive exhibition space of the Mundaneum in Belgian Mons for the second biannual workshop organized within the scope of the EOS-funded project B-magic: The Magic Lantern and its Cultural Impact as Visual Mass Medium in Belgium (1830-1940). The significance of this event, organized by the University of Louvain (UCL) team, was manifold. Entitled “Magic Lanterns. Between Reality and the Imaginary”, the day focused on the iconography of lantern slides and on how lantern practices constantly oscillate between the realms of the real and the imaginary. This duality sparked the attention of over 40 workshop participants and guests.

The event was preceded by a lantern-aided lecture on 19th century Belgium through foreign eyes by the Dutch lanternist **Gwen Sebus**. Gwen invited the interested expert (and not-yet-as-expert) audience to actively participate in a discussion on a core issue for lantern researchers: how does the mechanism of this medium work and how does it succeed in creating lively images on the threshold between the realms of the real and the imaginary? To this end, she demonstrated many images with Belgian subjects from her own collection, inciting an interactive dialogue about recurrent themes (dog carts) and Belgian urban landscapes (city views, bridges, town halls etc.).

The workshop keynote speakers were also invited to reflect on the hybrid nature at the heart of both luminous projections, and the glass slides as such. Film scholar **André Gaudreault** from the University of Montreal (Canada) approached the question through the prism of intermediality, positioning the magic lantern in the centre of a number of cultural series which had, to a remarkable extent, marked the first moving pictures. In the following lecture, film historian **Marc-Emmanuel Mélon** from the University of Liège (Belgium) also took an intermedial focus by addressing the interplay between different media and distribution technologies in the oeuvre of Belgian photographer Gustave Maurissiaux (1872-1929). In turn, media scholar **Giusy Pisano's** (Louis-Lumière School, Saint-Denis, France) lecture drew attention to the textual dimension of lantern performances and slide iconography; namely, to the importance of performance scripts, slide lists and repertoires.

The Mundaneum, a centre of knowledge conservation and distribution, dedicated to the memory and the work of Belgian cosmopolitans Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine, was an ideal excuse for an extra event: a plenary lecture on Otlet, the founder of a unique and widely used library cataloguing system. This talk was delivered by B-magic senior scholars **Sébastien Fevry** and **Philippe Marion**, who had conducted special archival research at the Mundaneum for this occasion.

Following the morning lectures, the B-magic researchers found themselves in the limelight, which they used to demonstrate their first findings, aims, and aspirations to fellow academics, as well as collectors, practitioners and other workshop guests. Six new members of the B-magic consortium, doctoral students **Sylvia Louisa Alting van Geusau**, **Margo Buelens Terryn**, **Wouter Egelmeers**, **Bart Moens**, **Marte Van Hassel** and **Adeline Werry** prepared concise posters, summing up their research questions. A seventh poster by **Dulce Goncalves** presented the aims and stakes of the Utrecht University-led project *Projecting Knowledge – The Magic Lantern as a Tool for Mediated Science Communication in the Netherlands, 1880-1940*. The posters shall soon be available at b-magic.eu.

Furthermore, senior B-magic researchers gave a brief, but rich overview of questions regarding and approaches to the magic lantern in Belgium. The lantern was thus addressed as a travelling medium of knowledge transmission by **Iason Jongepier** and **Nele Wynants**. Herein, it was convincingly demonstrated that the lantern's geographical reach and impact can benefit a lot from contemporary digital humanities tools, such as GIS mapping technology. **Evelien Jonckheere** and **Kurt Vanhoutte** (B-magic project leader) zoomed in on the lantern's travels, focusing on the specifics of metempsychosis shows at fairgrounds. **Sabine Lenk**, **Nelleke Teughels** and **Natalija Majsova** then examined the migration of lantern slides to a different terrain, that of catholic education; here, specific attention was drawn to the complexity of religious slide analysis, due to the great variety of contexts, uses, and ends, to which they had been used. This part of the workshop was particularly fruitful, as researchers from other projects and universities joined the conversation, providing

insights on the particular cultural series of lantern-illustrated songs (**Robin Cauche**, University of Montreal), photographic slide imagery and uses (**Amélie Van Liefferinge**), and the lantern in public outreach initiatives in the Netherlands (**Nico de Klerk**, University of Utrecht).

After a fruitful final discussion, which had benefited from input by lantern practitioners, such as **Patrice Guérin**, who emphasized that all research must be grounded in technical knowledge of the medium and its functions, this rich and productive workshop was rounded off by a lecture by Belgian film producer and documentary film-maker **Françoise Levie**. The biographer of Belgian phantasmagorian Etienne-Gaspard Robertson, talked about the life and work of this artists, complementing the lecture by excerpts from a biographical drama on Roberston, *Merci, Monsieur Robertson*, directed by her father, the late Pierre Levie, in 1986. The excerpts served as an illustrative case in point, demonstrating tellingly the eternal connection of the lantern to the worlds of science, technology, popular culture, art, and, of course fantasy.