

Lantern Slide Collection Finding Aid

Publication

Author

VSW

Publisher

Visual Studies Workshop

Data Entered By

Finding aid prepared by SUNY Brockport Collections Management course students, instructed by Jessica Johnston, Completed Nov 11, 2022

Updated by Melanie Gydesen, 2023

Updated by Ben Compton, 2026

Finding Aid Language

English

Description Rules

Describing Archives: a Content Standard (DACS)

Archival Description

Description Level

Collection

Unit Title (2.3)

Lantern Slide Collection

Material Languages

English

Abstract

The VSW Lantern Slide Collection houses a collection of over 60,000 19th and early 20th-century glass lantern slides, related equipment, and ephemera. The slides cover a wide range of subjects and were primarily used for educational purposes. The VSW holdings include primarily hand-colored and black and white photographic slides from sources such as the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences Department of Visual Education, the New York State Education Department Visual Instruction Division and the Keystone View Company. This finding aid provides an overview of the slides, projectors, and supplementary print material that can guide lantern slide research.

Physical Description (2.5, Extent)

Linear Feet: Approx. 800

Number of items: Approx. 60,000 lantern slides, 5 projectors, 33 books

Inclusive Dates (2.4)

ca. 1880s - 1920s

Creator (2.6)

Numerous manufacturers and makers are represented within the collections of lantern slides held at Visual Studies Workshop. VSW's holdings contain collections from the Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences Department of Visual Education, Pratt Institute, Museum of Modern Art, Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences, and the New York State Education Department Visual Instruction Division.

Paperwork in VSW's 'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box documents the following transfers. Other sources likely exist but lack a paper trace:

- 752 boxes of lantern slides from The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences in 1979
- Art instruction lantern slides and a walnut storage unit from the Addison Gallery of American Art in 1990
- 16,000 educational slides from Syracuse University in 1991
- 2000-3000 slides from The Museum of Staten Island in 1996

A preliminary survey of the companies and organizations listed on slide masking reveals that many of the slide makers, manufacturers and distributors operated out of New York City, Buffalo, and Chicago (the American Colony Photographers were Chicago-based), with a few located in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Tokyo, Japan. Some slide makers are unidentified.

- The University of the State of New York- Visual Instruction Division
- New York State Education Department, Visual Instruction Division
- American Museum of Natural History [New York City]
- T.H. McAllister, Manufacturing Optician, Nassau Street, New York
- Chas. Beseler Co. [New York City]
- Underwood & Underwood [New York City]
- Micrograph by E. G. Love, New York City
- L. W. (Leverett White) Brownell [New York]
- Brownell Nature Slides- Paterson, N. J
- Keystone View Company- Studios, Meadville, PA
- Williams, Brown & Earl. Inc.- Chestnut St. Philadelphia, PA
- Central Scientific Co. [Chicago]
- McIntosh Stereopticon Company [Chicago]
- Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences, Department of Visual Education
- C. E. Cummings, M.D., Buffalo
- Victor Animatograph Co. [Iowa]
- American Colony Photographers [Jerusalem]
- T. Ikeda (Toroku Ikeda), Tokyo, Japan

2.7 Historical Note

A chronology of major lantern slide developments can be found in the following publications, located in VSW's 'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box:

- “From Kircher to Kodachrome — A History of Lantern Slide Projection” Thesis paper by Marilyn Norcini, 1975
- *Magic Images: The Art of Hand-Painted and Photographic Lantern Slides*
- *Travels in Limelight: Projection of the World Through the Magic Lantern 1880-1930* document for exhibition curated by Robert Hewitt, Glenn Knudsen, David Kwasigroh and James Via, 1982-1983
- *The Magic Lantern : How Movies Got to Move* by Judith Thurman, 1978

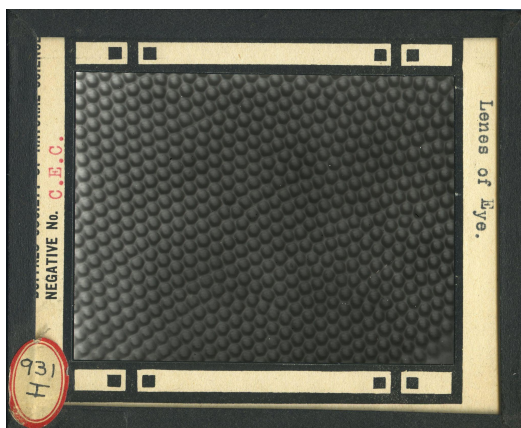
A Note on the ‘Liveness’ of Lantern Slides

While the VSW collection contains mostly still images and print ephemera, lantern slide lectures were a fundamentally live medium. To gain a fulsome understanding of what audiences might have witnessed and heard alongside these slides, researchers and artists can benefit from consulting scripts housed in the collections of nearby institutions like The George Eastman Museum (GEM).

For example, an article in *The Magic Lantern*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 1874), a Philadelphia-based trade journal available in GEM’s reference library, outlines a presentation on insects by “the Prince of American lectures on science”, professor Henry Morton (1836-1902) (Fig. 1). In cross referencing this lecture script with its visual analogue in the VSW collection (Fig. 2), the multi-sensorial experience of lantern slides can be further illuminated and restaged.

as a singular object comes out in surprising clearness]—The object I have in the apparatus is the eye of a fly—or perhaps we ought to say, the eyes of a fly, for, as you see, there are many hundreds of them there shown.

Fig. 1: Excerpt from ‘Professor Morton’s Lantern Lectures’, *The Magic Lantern*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (August 1874, George Eastman House Reference Library)



Lenes [sic] of Eye, ca. 1880s - 1920s, Black and White Lantern Slide, 3 1/4 x 4 in., C.E.C. [Photographer’s Initials], Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences Department of Visual Education, Lantern Slide Collection, Visual Studies Workshop.

3.1 Scope and Content

Due to the interdisciplinary nature of magic lantern performance and history, magic lantern-related materials span multiple parts of the VSW collection.

- Series 1- Lantern Slides
- Series 2- Projectors
- Series 3- Print Resources

Series 1- Lantern Slides

This series contains physical lantern slides in the VSW collection.

Item	Location
Lantern Slides	Research Center- https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1T7itlkiSWqnNA1KD37rO3LSgtMlz_fr3/edit?gid=2131937413#gid=2131937413
Visually Distinctive Lantern Slides (6 boxes including autochromes, slip slides, and panorama slides)	Research Center- Study Shelf 5 (Photography Stacks)

Series 2- Projectors

This series contains an inventory of lantern slide projectors.

Item	Location	Approx. Year
TM 11-2337 Still Picture Projector AP-4(I), Department of The Army	Research Center	ca. 1950s
Delineascope Projector, Model D, Spencer Lens Company	Research Center	ca. 1930s
Projector, Still Picture, AP-4 (3), Buhl	Research Center	ca. 1950s
Balopticon Projector Bausch & Lomb	Research Center	ca. 1930s
Picturol Projector Visual Educating Inc.	Research Center	ca. 1940s

Equipment Cage Inventory	Equipment Cage- https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uBMQ-Wu2RFfXvhcr49m7qW6BIOZxOvJedL3k0nR5RQ8/edit?pli=1&gid=1106229804#gid=1106229804	/
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Series 3- Print Resources

This series contains a non-exhaustive list of print resources for lantern slide research.

Title	Author / Artist / Publisher	Year	Location	Call Number
Subseries 1- Collections Documents				
Lantern Slide Handling Instructions	VSW	/	Online- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1klizD41PIK5rZsjyPlrwbq0ZC67uVgrY-mjqYqcrc6o/edit?tab=t.0	/
'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box	Various	/	VSW- Rare- https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QBYldVJwO7yRxDKvDd2h1LtUSHJ5gnQiidyYDdCA0s8/edit?tab=t.0	/
Subseries 2- Magic Lantern History				
A History and Handbook of Photography	S. Low, Marston, Low, & Searle	1876	VSW - Rare	TR145 .T61 1876
Decolonising the Camera : Photography in Racial Time	Sealy, Mark	2019	VSW - General Collection	TR183 .S43 2019

Flame, Electricity And The Camera; Man's Progress From The First Kindling Of Fire To The Wireless Telegraph And The Photography Of Color,	Iles, George	1900	VSW - Rare	T19 .I27 1901
"From Kircher To Kodachrome — A History Of Lantern Slide Projection" Thesis Paper (128 Pages) Incl. Bibliography, 1975, Mfa Suny Oneonta (2 Copies)	Norcini, Marilyn	1975	'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box	/
Ghostly Apparitions : German Idealism, The Gothic Novel, And Optical Media	Andriopoulos, Stefan	2013	VSW - General Collection	B2745 .A53 2013
Ghosts : The Illustrated History	Haining, Peter	1975	VSW - General Collection	BF1461 .H25 1975
History Of Photography	Eder, Josef Maria	1905	VSW - Rare	TR15 .E383 1945
History Of Photography, Volume 47, Issue 1- <i>The Slide Lecture</i>	ed. Ben-Choreen, Tal-Or; McManus, Karla	2023	'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box	/
Instruction In Photography	Piper & Carter	1884	VSW - Rare	TR146 .A26 1886
Magic Images: The Art Of Hand-Painted And Photographic Lantern Slides	Crompton, Denis; Henry, David; Herbert, Stephen	1990	'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box	/

Movement In Two Dimensions	Cook, Olive	1963	VSW - Rare	GV1559 .C65
The Illustrated Exhibitor : A Tribute To The World's Industrial Jubilee	Cassell, John	1851	VSW - Rare	T19 .I27 1901
The Magic Lantern : How Movies Got To Move	Thurman, Judith	1978	VSW - General Collection	PN1994.5 .T5 1978
<i>Travels In Limelight: Projection Of The World Through The Magic Lantern 1880-1930</i>	Hewitt, Robert; Knudsen, Glenn; Kwasigroh, David; and Via, James	1982	'Lantern Slide Info' Archival Box	/
Subseries 3- Technical And Instructional Documents				
Lantern Slides, How To Make And Color Them.	Eastman Kodak	1921	VSW - Rare	TR505 .E275 1934
The Art Of Projecting : A Manual Of Experimentation In Physics, Chemistry, And Natural History, With The Porte Lumiere And Magic Lantern /	Prof. Dolbear, A. E.	1877	VSW - Rare	Q186 .D6 1877
The Audio Visual Advisor For Educators,	Parlato, Salvatore J., 1931-	1964	VSW - General Collection	TS2301 .A7 P3 1964
The Book Of The Lantern : Being A Practical Guide To The Working Of The Optical (Or Magic) Lantern ; With Full And Precise Directions For Making And	Hepworth, T. C.	1899	VSW - Rare	Q186 .H52 1899

Colouring Lantern Pictures /				
The Lantern-Slide Manual	Hazell, Watson and Viney	1892	VSW - Rare	TR505 .H63 1892
The Magic Lantern : How To Buy And How To Use It ; Also, How To Raise A Ghost	Houlston	1876	VSW - Rare	TR506 .M3 1870
The Sciopticon Manual, Explaining Lantern Projection In General, And The Sciopticon Apparatus In Particular	Marcy, Lorenzo J.	1877	VSW - Rare	TR505 .M3 1877
Optical Lanterns And Accessories; How To Make And Manage Them, Including Instructions On Making Slides. With Numerous Engravings And Diagrams.	ed. Hasluck, Paul N.	1903	VSW - Rare	Q186 .H35
Optical Projection : A Treatise On The Use Of The Lantern In Exhibition And Scientific Demonstration	Wright, Lewis	1901	VSW - Rare	Q186 .W9 1901
Popular Scientific Recreations In Natural Philosophy, Astronomy, Geology, Chemistry.	Ward, Lock	1883	VSW - Rare	Q164 .T6 1883

Richardson's Handbook Of Projection : The Blue Book Of Projection.	Chalmers Pub.	1927	VSW - Rare	TR890 .R5 1927 v. 1
Subseries 4- Artist Engagement With Slides (Lantern Slides And 35mm)				
About 30 Works By Michael Snow = Autour De 30 Œuvres De Michael Snow : [At The] Center For Inter-American Relations ... New York, 15 Nov-31 Dec 1972 : An Exhibition	Snow, Michael	1972	VSW - General Collection	N6549 .S6 O8
Afterimages, Vol 1, Issue 10 February 1974 (Contains Profile On The Work Of David Heath)	Heath, David	1974	VSW - General Collection	
Art Of Projection	ed. Eamon, Christopher; Douglas, Stan	2009	VSW - General Collection	N6494 .P74 A78 2009
Cindy Sherman : The Early Works 1975-1977 : Catalogue Raisonné	Sherman, Cindy	2012	VSW - General Collection	04.1 .S553 Ea 2012
Doug Baird	Baird, Doug	1996	VSW - General Collection	04.1 .G619 1996
For A Burning World Is Come To Dance Inane : Essays By And About Jim Pomeroy	Pomeroy, Jim	1993	VSW - General Collection	04.1 .P785 Fo

Jim Pomeroy, A Retrospective	Pomeroy, Jim	1993	VSW - General Collection	04.1 .P785 Re 1999
Projected Images : Peter Campus, Rockne Krebs, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, Ted Victoria, Robert Whitman : Walker Art Center, 21 September-3 November 1974 : An Exhibition	ed. Peter Campus, Rockne Krebs, Paul Sharits, Michael Snow, Ted Victoria, Robert Whitman	1974	VSW - General Collection	TR646 .U6 M5688 1974
The Ballad Of Sexual Dependency	Goldin, Nan	1986	VSW - General Collection	04.1 .G619 Ba
The Magic Lantern: Recent Slide Shows	Bloom, John; Finley, Jeanne C.	1986	VSW - General Collection	TR505 .M34 1986
Slideshow	Darsie, Alexander M.	2005	VSW - General Collection	N6494 .P74 A78 2009

3.2 System of Arrangement

The lantern slides are stored in open boxes, both wooden and cardboard, on seven shelving units in VSW's research center. The slides are organized by either geographic location, subject, or donating body. Books are organized in accordance with the Library of Congress Classification system (LCC).

Lantern slides originating from The Buffalo Society of Natural Sciences Department of Visual Education have corresponding cue cards outlining each thematic section. These cue cards are stored in beige boxes next to the Collections Manager's Office, located in the northwest corner of the Research Center.

4.1 Conditions Governing Access/Reproduction and Use

This collection is open for research.

4.5 Languages & Scripts of the Material

Materials are in English.