

LA MAGIQUE LANTERNE MAGIQUE

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by FRED

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58 pages, price FF80.-.

In Paris on our way to the Jardin du Luxembourg my wife and I passed a bookshop on the corner of Bd St. Michel. In one of the windows, full of new publications before Christmas 1983, my eye was caught by a book with a picture of a magic lantern, see figure 1. This very attractive-looking book invited us to go into the shop.

The book *La magie lanterne magique* turned out to be a special kind of comic strip à la Philemon, but based on a story of a man named Leonleon, who has once asked Father Christmas for a magic lantern. Because this wish has gone astray for 60 years, Mother Christmas decides Leonleon must receive some compensation in the form of a 'real magic' magic lantern.

My wife bought me the book as a Christmas present. During the last days of that year I found a quiet moment to fly away on the wings of Fred's fantasy through his world of images.

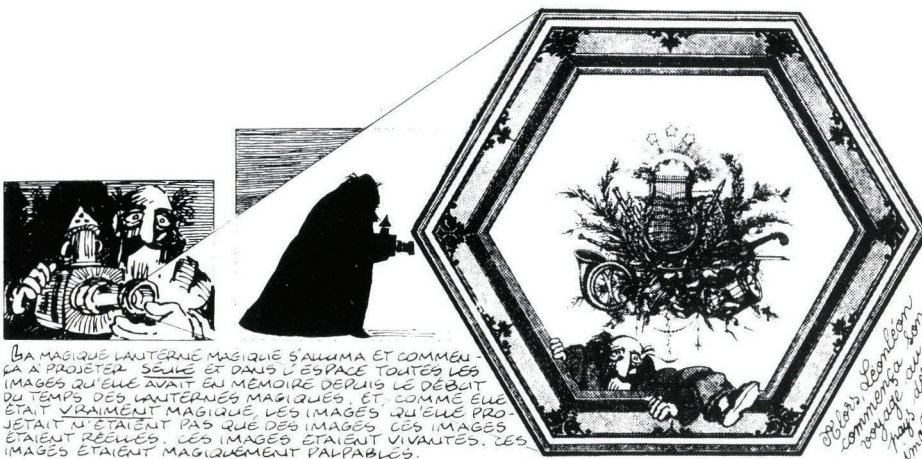
To continue the story: Having been presented the magique lanterne magique (MLM) by Father Christmas, Leonleon discovered the lantern produced images in the space of the room. These projected images are so real that Leonleon could step into the world of the image and so he did.

Another surprise was to discover the MLM could speak. The lantern made the proposition to reduce Leonleon so he could stand next to the chimney on the lantern. They planned to make a voyage. The journey started with the projection of an Oriental scene, wherein Aladdin recognised the MLM as his lamp.

With the smell of the Orient in their noses they decided to travel away.

By the next projection they arrived in the middle of the battle of Sebastopol and during this visit the MLM was damaged by a cannonball. Just out of the smoke of powder Leonleon and the MLM made a crash landing in a desolate and rocky landscape. When the MLM lighted the rocks,

some of the stones grew into monks. A magic repair was executed by three disguised soldiers for solving a riddle. Continuing their voyage they landed in the game of goose, but playing it was considered as dangerous. However, a next projection caused also a meeting with some problems, as they sailed into the cobweb of Araignée du Soir (1).



The next adventure involved an air war and after some narrow escapes from collisions with an aeroplane and other aeronautics, they met the fairy named 'Adorent Broder', who makes large embroideries out of comet tails. At last they finished the journey in a theatre Guignol.

There is some similarity between magic lantern slides of the old days and the coloured images of Fred. However, Fred's images do not correspond to a show of old-fashioned slides. Fred sometimes draws several corresponding images of a single object on a page. Figure 2 gives an example. Consecutive events are shown within that series. As far as I know, this trick was not used in traditional slides, but perhaps the owners of tri-unial lanterns have this kind of slides.

The fly-leaves and the cover of the book are decorated by some of the pictures. Further there is a preface, an interview with the designer Fred (Jean Charles Dumont) and a historical review about the publisher.

This is not a technical or an historical work, but it is a well prepared book with a fresh look at the world of the magic lantern. It aims at a wide public and it contains a lot of fun even for the experienced magic lantern lover.

Willem Tebra

Amsterdam, February 1984.