

The Magic Lantern

THE ROSE LANTERN AND SLIDES

Helmut Wälde

At the joint B-magic and Magic Lantern Society event in Brussels (see p.14) Helmut Wälde amazed the audience when he gave a magic lantern show using a combination of lantern and slides that is almost certainly unique and made well over 200 years ago. Here he tells us more about them.

The lantern was made around 1800 in Nürnberg (Nuremberg) and can be attributed to the workshop of Johann Friedrich Rose and his son Johann Christian Wolfgang Rose. The Hessisches Landesmuseum collection in Darmstadt houses a (much smaller) tin plate magic lantern with all the typical attributes of the Rose workshop that has a similar design to mine. My lantern has the embossed ornaments on three sides and is also made of tin plate. The body is elongated in order to balance the very heavy lens. The length of the body, including the lens, is around 50 cm; the length of the body only, including the slide aperture, is about 30.5 cm; and the total height is about 34 cm. There are two original metal caps to protect the lenses. The presence of the cap for the back lens is an important detail. This indicates that the lantern and the lens were stored separately. I think the reason for this was that the lantern was made for a travelling performer. With lenses of this quality the lantern must represent a considerable investment at that time so we can conclude that the commissioning showperson was already successful.

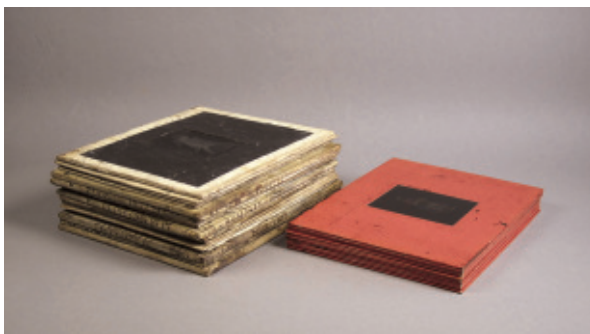
There are some features that suggest the lantern can be called a 'Ghost Lantern'. The lantern is painted black to prevent any light reflection. The chimney has a special construction to let out only heat and smoke but no light. The slot for the slides extends across the whole front of the lantern and is very slim – only about 5 mm – again to prevent light getting out.

The hand-painted glass slides are mounted in paper frames.

(continued on page 3)



1. The lantern



2. The two groups of slides

CONTENTS

Number 19 – June 2019

1. The Rose Lantern and Slides *Helmut Wälde*
2. **MLS Notice Board**
3. More Images from the Brussels Event
4. Some Lesser Known Life Model Slide Makers – 3. T.J. and W.F. Piggott of Leighton Buzzard *Richard Crangle*
8. Magic Lantern at Comebungalong *John Hyett*
9. 'Cackling is Not Laying Eggs' *Sarah Dellmann, Ine van Dooren and Gwen Sebus*
10. 3½-inch Square Photographic Slides *Lester Smith*
12. Mabor Limes *Andrew Mumford and Lindsay Lambert*
13. Stories from Lucerna *Sarah Dellmann*
14. Lanterns at the Fairground – the joint B-magic and MLS event in Brussels *Mary Ann Auckland and Sylvia Alting van Geusau*
15. Spring Meeting of the MLS *Mary Ann Auckland*



3. Woman with a hurdy-gurdy, possibly announcing a show



4. The devil – perhaps on his way to Blocksberg, where witches gather (above)

5. The blue eyes of this young man are looking directly at the viewer – and his face shows fear (right)





6. Death pointing at the Ten Commandments

On 17 April 1807 Franz Anton Lorgie put an announcement in the *Dresdener Anzeigen* about a series of shows he was about to present, mainly focussing on his mechanical figures. Lorgie (1765-1853) was a member of a famous dynasty of showmen specialising in puppet theatre and mechanical figures. The interesting part of the announcement for us is the following:



10. The skeleton that "appears as natural size and then returns to its former nothing"

(from page 1)

This had the advantage of saving weight for travelling. These paper frames measure about 21 cm by 17 cm. The glass slides themselves measure only about 8 cm by 6 cm. There are two separate groups of slides – one group of 10 slides is framed with red paper (Figs 3–6 are examples) and the other group of 17 slides is framed with black paper (Figs 7–10 are examples). The slides with the black paper were probably the earlier group, produced for the lantern from the Rose workshop. Both groups were clearly painted by different artists. The slides are not numbered. The figures of both sets are painted with a black background which was typical for use as ghost apparitions.

I am indebted to Bernd Scholze for finding an important reference in relation to ghost apparitions.



7. Leopold II (1747-1792), Holy Roman Emperor (top right); 8. Louis XV (1710-1774), King of France (above left); 9. Frederick the Great (1712-1786), King of Prussia (above right)

"... The show ends with a Ghost Apparition in which I show: 1. Frederick the Great [King of Prussia], 2. William, King of Prussia, 3. General Zythen. The last apparition is a skeleton that appears as its natural size and then returns to its former nothing. Further dates with a Ghost Apparition are on Wednesday: 1. Louis Seize [XVI of France], 2. Marie Antoinette, his wife, 3. the little Dauphin. On Friday the Ghost Apparition will show: 1. Maria Theresa, Holy Roman Empress, 2. Joseph II, Holy Roman Emperor, 3. Leopold II, successor of Joseph, also Holy Roman Emperor." Franz Lorgie ends his announcement as follows: "The show begins at 6pm every night. Entry is at 5 pm." Some of the subjects exactly match the images in my slides, including Frederick the Great, Leopold II and the skeleton that disappears to nothing – all from the black paper group of slides.

I am proud of the fact that a lantern of this age can still project so effectively and its custom-made ghostly images continue to delight an audience today.

MORE IMAGES FROM THE BRUSSELS EVENT (see also page 14)



Helmut Wälde showing a 'red group' slide (far left)
Ludwig Vogl-Bienek and Jeremy Brooker with biunial (left)

Ine van Dooren wearing one of her hats – with a fairground theme (right) (photos here and p.14 by Lester Smith, Gwen Sebus, George and Mary Ann Auckland)

