

The Magic Lantern: A Short History of Light and Shadow Aug. 14—Oct. 14, 2018



Artist Unknown, (Magic Lantern Trade Card), C.19th century,
Lithograph, Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

In recent years projection mapping, public viewing, etc., has meant that the act of watching images in the company of other people has become more common, but when and how did this first become established in society? The concept of using a projector to shine an image on a screen or wall dates back long before the invention of modern cinema to the invention of the magic lantern; this was the earliest form of projector and its popularity soon spread around the world. In this exhibition we will look at the history of imagery from the viewpoint of projection history to shine a light on a new aspect of image history.

The Tokyo Photographic Art Museum possesses a large collection of items connected with the early days of imagery, including various magic lanterns and other apparatus or materials dating back to before the birth of the cinema. In Japan, devices employing light and shadow to create a beautiful, mysterious world have a long history and are known of familiarly by a variety of names, such as *utsushi-e* (shadowgraph), *nishiki kage-e* (colored shadow pictures), *gento* (magic lantern), etc.

In this exhibition we will introduce the history of images that are created through light and shadow, focusing on exhibits from our collection and starting with the magic lantern. In addition we will look at the history of optical instruments or visual apparatus that have recently received attention under the titles of 'visual culture history studies' or 'media archaeology', introducing the results of the latest research to look back over the history of imagery and think about visual expression and image culture today.

1. The Birth of Magic Lantern



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The magic lantern is a projection device that was invented by Christiaan HUYGENS in the Netherlands during the mid-seventeenth century. It gradually spread throughout Europe during the eighteenth century; its applications were diverse, from academic use as a scientific apparatus like microscopes or telescopes, to an attraction employed by showmen or strolling entertainers, and it played an important role in the acceptance and spread of the concept of 'projection'. The popularity of the shadowgraph in France and Germany during the eighteenth century also served to promote the popularity of the magic lantern. In this section we will introduce the image culture created through shadow and light that was to lay the groundwork for the popularity of the magic lantern, focusing on shadow pictures and phantasmagoria. *

* Phantasmagoria were a form of horror show employing a magic lantern that first appeared at the end of the eighteenth century. It used a special form of lantern, known as a fantoscope, that was hidden from the audience and used to project frightening images of ghosts or phantoms. It is famous for having taken Paris by storm.

- 1: Eugène Charles François Guérard, Les Touristes #18: Déjeuner dans la trou de la Sorcière (Forêt noire.) c. 1854, Lithograph, hand colored
- 2: (Fantoscope Molteni), 1830-50, Wood, brass
- 3: (Slides for phantasmagoria), 1830-50, Glass, wood, brass

2. Magic Lantern Mania



Artist Unknown, (Magic Lantern Trade Card), C.19th century, Lithograph, Collection of Tokyo Photographic Art Museum

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the popularity of the magic lantern reached new heights, leading to the appearance of simple devices that were available at prices allowing them to be bought and operated by ordinary households. In addition, whether they were used for science or entertainment, the lenses or light sources were improved, shutters added and their function as projectors steadily enhanced. This section will be divided into three sections: 'The Eye of Science', 'entertainment' and 'Games at Home', to introduce the various types of magic lanterns that were produced for different purposes.

3. Magic Lantern in Japan

It is known that the magic lantern first entered Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868). As they are eminently suitable for displays or theater, they were initially enjoyed as a rare form of Dutch entertainment and underwent unique forms development throughout the country. When they were first introduced, they were given a numerous different names, such as '*kage-e tōrō* (shadow picture lantern), or '*genyōkyō* (phantom revealing mirror), as people searched for a suitable word based on the existing culture to describe a device for projecting images. Later, they came to be called by different names in different regions: *utsushi-e* (projection picture) in the regions surrounding Edo (Tokyo) and *nishiki kage-e* (colored shadow picture) around Kyoto. With the advent of the Meiji period in 1868 the magic lantern was promoted as the latest educational aid and named *gentō* (magic lantern). At around this time, the woodblock print artist, Yōshū Chikanobu, produced a work entitled 'Gentō shashin kurabe—Kanjinchō' (Daydreams by Magic Lantern Slide Series—Kanjinchō), which depicts a young woman yearning for an actor, combined with a magic lantern image of him performing in a play. From this we can see that for a long period, magic lanterns were popular throughout the world, their image technology capturing the imaginations of the people.

4. Slides

Magic lanterns generally used glass slides with pictures painted on them. The collection of the Tokyo Photographic Art Museum contains a variety of slides including those depicting ghosts and angels from phantasmagoria, those which used some mechanism to make the image move, and some which are not painted but have photographs printed on them. Some of the slides are of text, describing the story being shown, and these would have been read out to the audience by a narrator or performer, allowing us a glimpse of what the shows must have been like.

5. After the Magic Lantern

Approximately two hundred years after the invention of the magic lantern, the Lumière brothers invented the first motion picture technology that they called *cinématographe*. Cinema can be said to be a new form of the projection culture that had developed from the magic lantern. This section will present works and exhibits dating from the earliest days of filmmaking, show the relationship that exists between the magic lantern and contemporary video works, and introduce a projection work by the contemporary artist, Koganezawa Takehito.

Total Number of Exhibits : approximately 150

Related Events

[Lecture on Magic Lanterns \[Japanese only\]](#)

Date and Time: September 29, 2018 (Sat.) 14:30–16:30 (doors open at 14:00)

Lecturers: Kusahara Machiko (Researcher into media culture theory), Matsumoto Natsuki (image culture historian), Iwata Yoriko (Professor, Chukyo University)

Number of Participants: up to 190 / Venue: Tokyo Photographic Art Museum 1F Hall / Participation Fee: Free

* Entry in order of numbered tickets, seating unrestricted

* Numbered tickets will be distributed at the 1F Hall reception desk from 10:00 on the day

Gallery Talk by the Exhibition Curator

The curator will provide explanatory talks on the exhibits from 14:00, every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month and from 18:10 on August 31 (Fri.) during the Summer Night Museum. Please gather at the entrance of the B1F gallery with a current exhibition ticket (date-stamped for that day)

Have Fun, Collect, 'TOP Stamp Rally'

In addition to enjoying three exhibitions, visitors can also participate in the TOP Museum stamp rally to receive TOP original goods. The object is to collect stamps after viewing the featured exhibitions in order to receive original goods.

* Stamp Rally period: May 12, (Sat.) – November 4, (Sun.) 2018

* Stamp card issued: May 12, (Sat.) – October 14, (Sun.) 2018

* Exchange period: August 11, (Sat. Holiday) – November 4 (Sun.) 2018

Outline of Exhibition

Period: August 14 (Tue.) – October 14 (Sun.) 2018 (55 days)

Venue: Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, B1F Gallery, Ebisu Garden Place 1-13-3 Mita, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0062, Japan

Tel: 03-3280-0099 Fax: 03-3280-0033 URL: www.topmuseum.jp

Open Hours: 10:00–18:00 *Final admission 30 minutes before closing (Thur. & Fri. open until 20:00)

*However, on Aug. 16(Thu.), 17 (Fri.), 23 (Thu.), 24 (Fri.), 30 (Thu.), 31 (Fri.), we are holding the 'Summer Night Museum' when the museum will be open until 21:00

Museum Closed: Closed every Monday (however, the museum will open on Sep, 17 (Mon, national holiday), Sep. 24 (Mon, national holiday), Oct. 1 (Mon., Tokyo Citizen's Day), Oct. 8 (Mon, national holiday) and close on Sep. 18 (Tue.), Sep, 25 (Tue.) and Oct. 9 (Tue.)

Admission:

Adults ¥500 (400), Students ¥400 (320), Junior and Senior High School Students/People aged 65 or over ¥250 (200)

*The figures in parentheses indicate the discount rate for groups of 20 or more. *Admission is free for people over 65 every 3rd Wednesday. *grade school children or younger, junior high school students living or attending schools in the Tokyo metropolitan area and those with handicapped person's passbook together with their carers are free. *However, from Aug. 16 (Thu.) to Aug. 31 (Fri.) the Summer Night Museum discount will apply from 18:00 to 21:00 every Thursday and Friday (university, junior high and senior high school students: free, adults over 65: group rates) *only one discount applicable

- Sponsored by Tokyo Metropolitan Government, Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Nihon Keizai Shimbun
- Supported by Toppan Printing Co., Ltd.

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TOKYO PHOTOGRAPHIC ART MUSEUM