

A MAJOR NEW BOOK FROM THE MAGIC LANTERN SOCIETY

DUTCH PERSPECTIVES

350 YEARS OF VISUAL ENTERTAINMENT BASED ON THE RESEARCH OF
WILLEM ALBERT WAGENAAR AND ANNET DULLER

The Magic Lantern Society is very pleased to announce the publication of a major contribution to the history of the lantern, optical entertainments, and early cinema: *Dutch Perspectives*, with over 600 illustrations, most in colour and many previously unpublished, concentrates on the Dutch contributions to media entertainments from 1659 through to the late 20th century. While the book's geography is well-defined, its eclectic collection of essays covers a wide range of materials, from important original research on the visual sources of the early 18th century *Musschenbroek slides*, accompanied by illustrations drawn



from several Dutch museums and private collections, to a unique memoir of a fairgrounds Bioscope show and their *serpentine dancer* who worked at the turn of the century, accompanied by the surviving slides that created the butterfly patterns for her performances.

Further chapters of the book document the illuminated peepshows and *fireworks without powder* that were alternatives to projected images, the use of the magic lantern for political and satirical commentary in the 18th and 19th centuries, new research

on a previously unrecorded *Dutch life-model slide maker* named Jacob van Staveren who worked in the early 20th century, and a valuable record of modern magic lantern performers, including Peter Bonnet and Willem Albert Wagenaar. A chapter by Annet Duller gives for the first time a detailed record of the appearance and use of the magic lantern in *books, popular prints, and songs for children* in The Netherlands.

At the centre of all of these topics on the magic lantern and early cinema is the life and work of the late *Willem Albert Wagenaar*, a long-standing member of the MLS, a major collector, and an enthusiastic showman. The book reprints his classic essay on the true inventor of the magic lantern that discusses Athanasius Kircher, Thomas Walgenstein and

Christiaan Huygens; it presents for the first time his original essay on the surviving *Musschenbroek* lanterns and their slides; and gives a clear impression of his own lantern shows and his skills as a showman and entertainer. Materials from the collection he assembled at his *Christiaan Huygens Theatre* are found throughout the book, which serves in the end as something of a *Festschrift* for this esteemed MLS member and Dutch academic, as well as being the completion of his dream of documenting the Dutch contributions to the history of optical media.

Few books on the magic lantern can match the density of illustrations in this volume, or the range of sources in public and private collections from which they have been drawn. Often surprising even to the sophisticated lantern enthusiast in its presentation of new materials, the information and illustrations in *Dutch Perspectives* is a contribution to the literature in the field which is not duplicated elsewhere.



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