



**LEEDS  
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CENTRE**

# **STORIES IN THE DARK**

**BEN JUDD**

# OUTPUT INFORMATION

Title:  
Stories in the Dark

Output Type:  
M – Exhibition

Venue: Beaney House of Art and Knowledge,  
Canterbury. Commissioned by Whitstable Biennale

Year of first exhibition:  
2016

Month of first exhibition:  
March

Research Groups:  
Curating



# ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STATEMENT

Judd's curated exhibition and performances explored the different ways which analogue media, in particular the magic lantern, can invite participation. This research question stems from the unique relationship between the lantern and its audience; historically, magic lantern shows were the first time people saw projected moving images, and were used for storytelling, education, and entertainment.

The exhibitions' method was to examine how, in contrast to the digital in which technology is largely incomprehensible, the lantern's simple analogue mechanisms and projected images paradoxically allow a sense of wonder, in which the viewer suspends disbelief and engages their imagination. Unlike the pre-recorded nature of cinema, the creative act takes place live with the audience, encouraging a sense of participation. Judd's solo exhibition and performance *Apart, We are Together* (2015) at ICA, London explored this method, and his curated exhibition *Stories in the Dark* (2016) developed these ideas by inviting eight internationally recognised artists to respond to the medium of the magic lantern as both gallery installations and live works, using vintage lanterns, slides, or their direct descendants (16mm film, 35mm slide). The performance *Vast as the Dark of Night and as the Light of Day* (2014) took place during a trip to sea; the enquiry was distinct by mirroring the physical journey of the boat in the imaginary space of the lantern performance.

The context for sharing includes two exhibitions commissioned by Whitstable Biennale and a solo exhibition at the ICA, London (curated by Fatoş Üstek, director of Liverpool Biennial). Both exhibitions funded by ACE.

Significance is demonstrated by Whitstable Biennale's reputation as an important international showcase of innovative site-specific live and moving image work, as highlighted by *The Guardian*. *Stories in the Dark* received 6,958 visitors; the ICA is a world-renowned cultural centre and a major international venue of contemporary art.

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“We are delighted that the Beaney and Whitstable Biennale are working in partnership to host ‘Stories in the Dark’. The exhibition will provide local residents and visitors with the chance to enjoy contemporary works by some of the most exciting artists in the UK.”

**CLr Neil Baker, Chairman of Canterbury City Council’s Community Committee**

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“We are thrilled to be working with the Beaney to celebrate the very beginnings of cinema in a city with a rich tradition of storytelling. Stories in the Dark brings magic lanterns right up to date with contemporary ideas and technologies, opening up debates that are particularly relevant in our digital age.”

**Sue Jones, Director of Whitstable Biennale**



Stories in the Dark (2016).

Group exhibition at the Beaney House of Art and Knowledge, Canterbury. Curated by Ben Judd.

Installation photographs by Julian Hughes



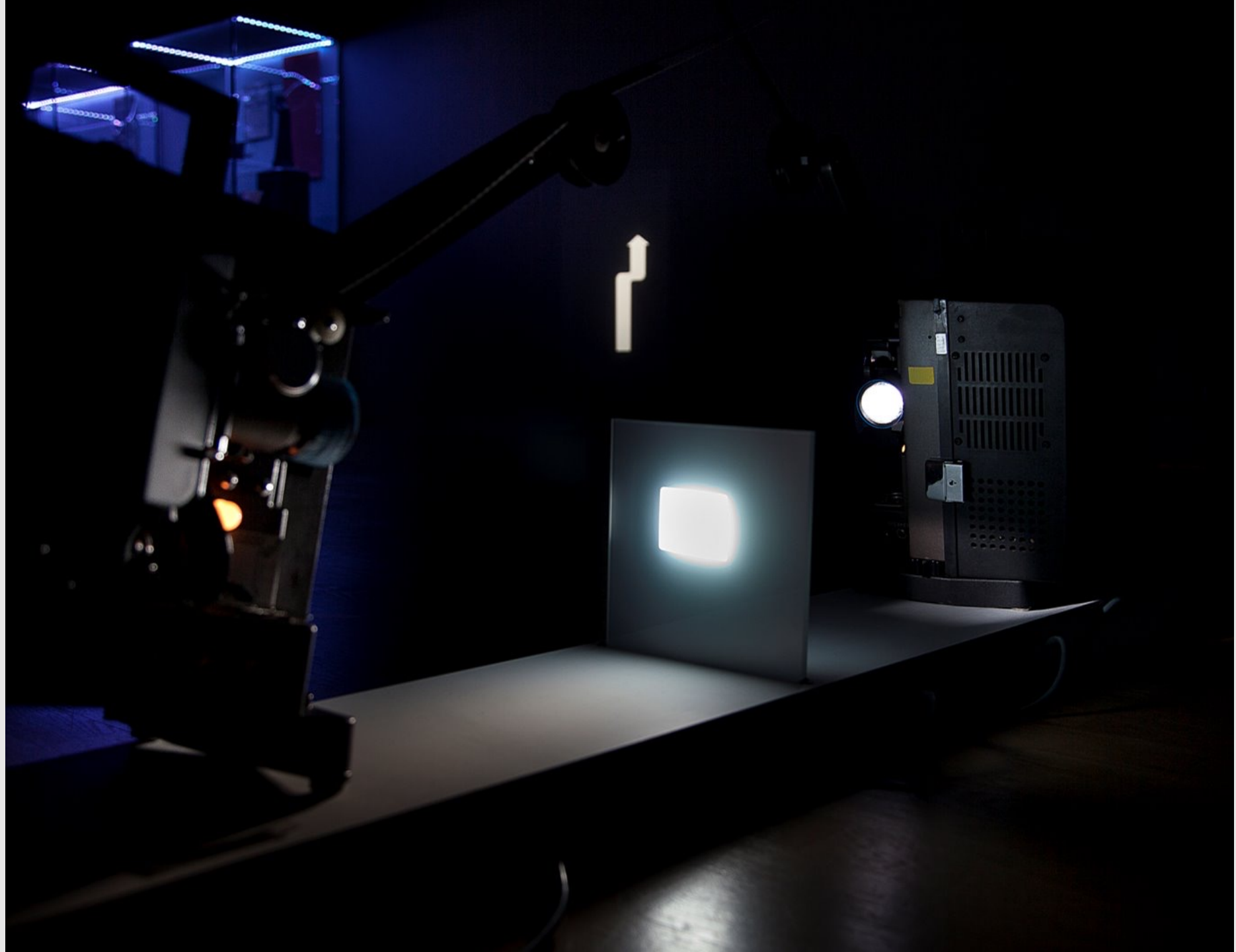


For *Stories in the Dark*, Lindsay Seers presented the immersive installation *We Could Never Have Seen it Coming* (2016). Taking inspiration from the spectral and narrative quality of the magic lantern, this work uses projection in the form of anamorphosis to place imagery undistorted onto the curved surface of a reflective object. The object becomes the eye of the piece - it replays an image as if in an act of recall, an event locked into its material - a mirror that remembers and replays a time past. Photographs by Julian Hughes.

Louisa Fairclough Magic Ideation

(2016)

An expanded 16mm film that explores the magic lantern show's properties of light and voice through the artisan processes of early cinema. Facing each other, a couple of film projectors fire a looped rhythmic incantation as the films cut from light to dark. In a rapid cadence the staccato poetry draws on the experience of living in the mind's eye, an ideation that vacillates between the romantic and suicidal.







Dryden Goodwin produced *13 x Christine*, a series of drawings produced on traditional 3 ¼ inch magic lantern slides, that were both embedded alongside original slides in the Beaney's collection and also projected through a 19th century magic lantern. The images are head studies of Goodwin's mother, separate moments from a sequence of movement. Each week a different slide from the set will be taken from the glass vitrine and switched with the one in the projector, creating a slow motion animation over the course of the exhibition.

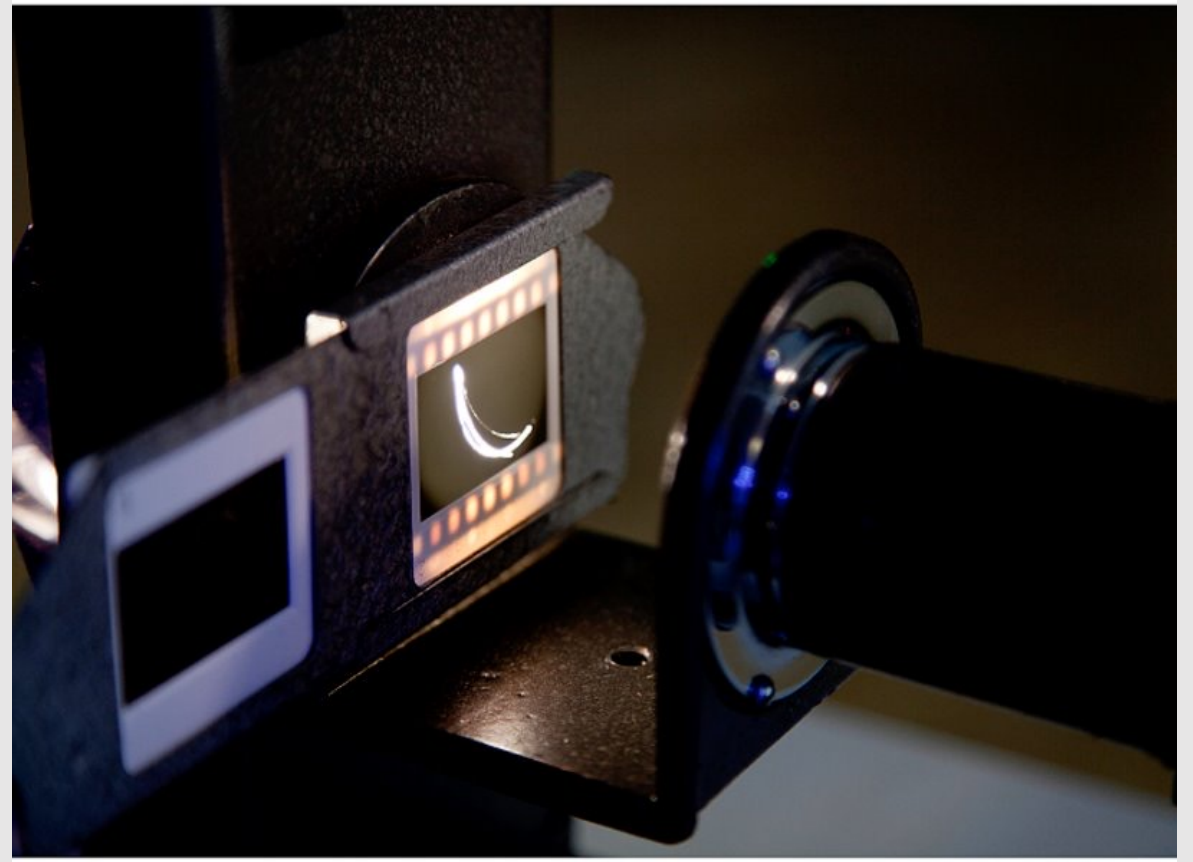


Dryden Goodwin

*13 x Christine*

(2016)

Magic lantern and hand drawn magic lantern slides. Embedded with the Beaneys permanent collection.



Guy Sherwin

*Moon LED Revolution*

(2016)

[35mm slide projector and LED light]

images of the moon and sun projected from an adapted slide projector onto a rotating paper screen, creating movement on its shifting planar surface. Sherwin's film works often use serial forms and live elements, and engage with light, time and sound as fundamental to cinema.





Adam Chodzko

*Mask Filter Arc*

(2016)

Mixed media and magic lantern slides. Embedded with the Beane's permanent collection. In the Materials and Masters gallery, Chodzko associates the Beane's Venus Flower Basket, (a nano-structured glass, deep ocean sponge, the remains of a dead bioluminescent animal) with two magic lantern slides; West Africa - A Christian reading to a pagan (1940s) and The Explosion of a Shooting Star (1934), both mounted as a diptych in the visor of a welder's protective mask. Together becoming costume, armour, lantern, and projector, suggesting that intense flashes of light are a sign of the process of inspiration, expiration, combination, vision and blindness, danger, ugliness and beauty.



Benedict  
*Drew PpPpeEeERrrrSUAaaadddderderd  
erDer*

(2016)

35mm slides and mixed media. Two 35mm slide projectors and a rotating disc. This rotating device acts as a shutter, alternating the projected image between each projector, resulting in the illusion of movement – the analogue equivalent to the digital GIF. The work references a variety of pre-cinema optical devices, from the zoetrope to the 3D stereoscope.

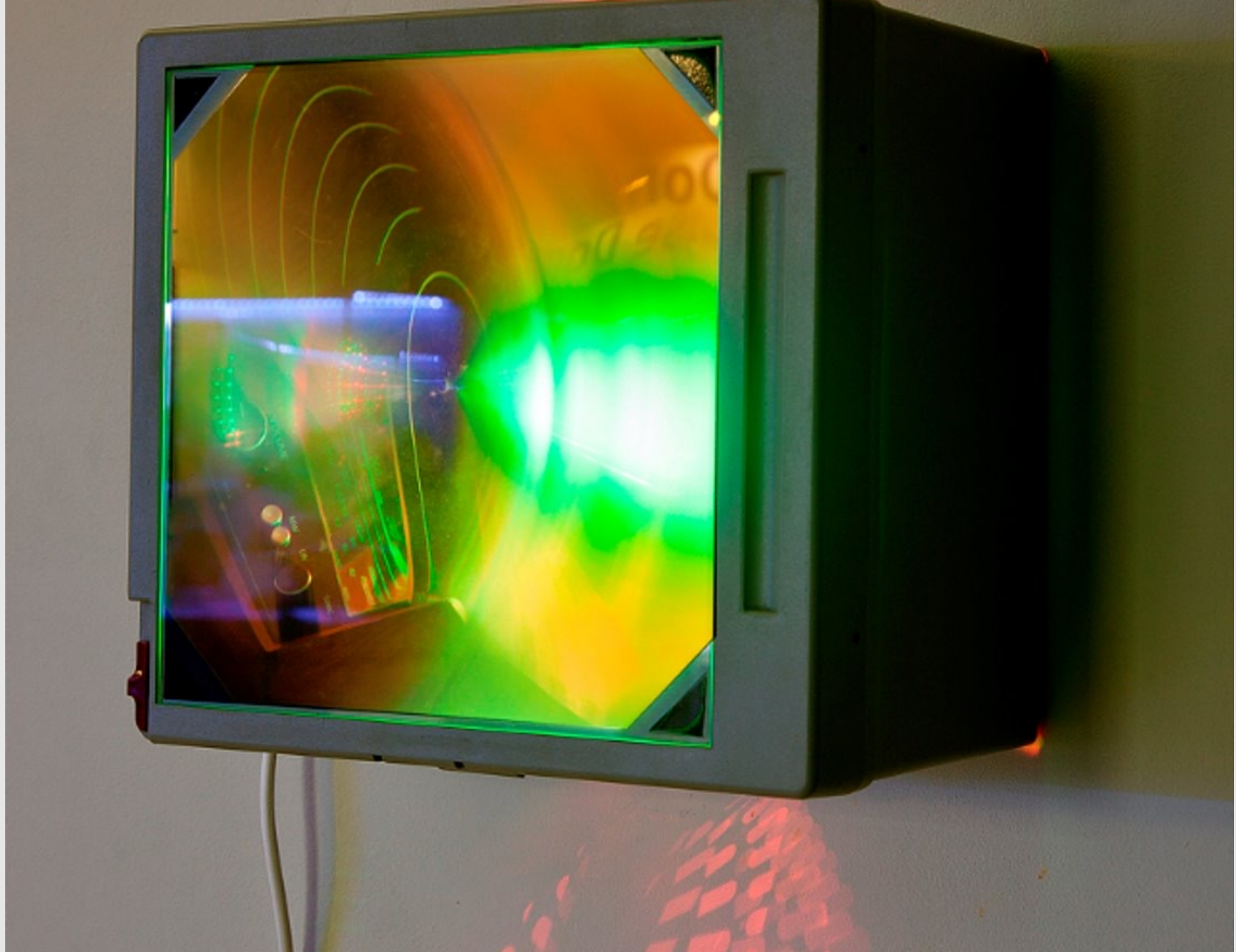


Haroon Mirza

*Radio Shackled Up*

(2016)

Overhead projector, radio and LED lights. A vintage overhead projector has been flipped vertically and hung on a wall, its fresnel lens now the focus of the machine, as opposed to the images which it may have once projected. Inside the projector, and visible beneath the lens's surface, sits a combination of LED lights and a vintage analogue radio. As the radio switches on at random times, one can hear the radio's interference with the LED lights creating an ominous rhythmic hum, heard through the radio's speaker. The viewer is forced to look at the machine itself, to decipher how the distortion of image beneath the lens is achieved, and how the sound is being produced.





# APPENDIX

Tracy Affleck, 'Stories in the Dark: Contemporary Responses to the Magic Lantern', in WOW, April 2016

Available at: [https://issuu.com/sue-davis/docs/issuu\\_april\\_wow\\_2016](https://issuu.com/sue-davis/docs/issuu_april_wow_2016)

# STORIES IN THE DARK

CONTEMPORARY RESPONSES TO THE MAGIC LANTERN

WOW INTERVIEWS ARTIST BEN JUDD ABOUT HIS PRACTICE AND THE NEW EXHIBITION HE HAS CURATED FOR THE BEANEY HOUSE OF ART AND KNOWLEDGE IN CANTERBURY

**YOUR WORK SEEMS TO CROSS OVER BETWEEN FILM, PHOTOGRAPHY AND PERFORMANCE. COULD YOU DESCRIBE HOW THESE INTERTWINE IN YOUR PRACTICE?**

I have previously used stereoscopic (3D) photography as it is a largely obsolete medium, like the magic lantern, and a prism through which some of the themes that are central to my practice, such as magic, belief and immersion, are explored. These early optical devices have the potential to be magical – partly through their historical association, and the awe that they inspired pre-cinema. With these media there is a paradox: the revealing of the process somehow increases a sense

of wonder. Conversely, I have no idea how a computer works, and it therefore has no sense of magic.

Recently the work has focussed on video and performance as a way of examining my relationship to specific individuals and groups. My work also explores how communities can evolve rhythmically or choreographically. In my performances with actors, a pattern might start emerging from a group of people, and that pattern is increasingly about a physical centering, a coming together.

**THE MAGIC LANTERN HAS BEEN PREVALENT IN YOUR PRACTICE. COULD YOU GIVE US A BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THIS AND HOW WORKING WITH IT HAS DEVELOPED?**

I have used magic lantern projections in several recent performances as a way of connecting the audience to gatherings that instill a sense of belonging and wonder, such as campfire storytelling, séances, or Quaker meetings; the projected imagery often acting as metaphors for otherworldly experiences. I am interested in the way the medium can invite participation: historically, magic lantern shows were the first time people saw projected moving images, and were used for storytelling, education, and entertainment.

In profound contrast to our digital age in which the technology is largely incomprehensible, the magic

lantern's relatively simple analogue mechanisms and projected images paradoxically allow a sense of wonder, in which the viewer suspends disbelief and engages their imagination. Unlike the pre-recorded nature of cinema, the creative act takes place live with the audience, encouraging a sense of participation.

**YOU HAVE CURATED THE 'STORIES IN THE DARK' EXHIBITION AT THE BEANEY. WHICH OTHER ARTISTS ARE INVOLVED?**

The exhibition includes gallery work by eight internationally recognised artists: Dryden Goodwin, Lindsay Seers, Benedict Drew, Louisa Fairclough, Haroon Mirza, Jordan Baseman, Adam Chodsko and Guy Sherwin. All of their work has a way of engaging the viewer in an exploratory process – there is space, or gap in the work that allows the viewer to use their imagination and participate. Several of the artists also use contemporary versions or descendants of the magic lantern, such as Guy Sherwin and Louisa Fairclough's use of projected 16mm film, and Benedict Drew's digital projections.



**WHAT WAS THE ARTISTS' STARTING POINT?**

The only theme was the magic lantern – to respond to the medium. They were also invited to explore and interact with the Beaneys' extensive collection – I am interested in how the Victorian museum's obsession with collecting and categorising objects from around the world can be seen reflected in the lantern's use as a tool for

bringing the distant, often 'exotic' and unseen world into close contact with the public.

**ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS WITH THE COLLECTIONS BY THESE ARTISTS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT?**

The three artists who have interacted with the collection are Seers, Goodwin and Chodsko. Seers's 'We Could Never Have Seen it Coming' (2016) has involved using several items from the museum's extensive offsite store and bringing them into the gallery, which are arranged in order to create a specific environment for her work.

Dryden Goodwin is presenting '13 X Christine' (2016), a series of drawings produced on traditional 3/4 inch magic lantern slides, that will be both embedded alongside original slides in the Beaneys' collection and also projected through a 19th century magic lantern. Chodsko has produced 'Ask the Dust' (2016), a projection of dust from the cannon in the Beaneys' offsite store, and 'Mask Filter Arc' (2016), incorporating original lantern slides into a new sculptural work.

**AND WHAT'S NEXT? WHAT OTHER PROJECTS ARE YOU WORKING ON AT THE MOMENT?**

I have various projects in the pipeline... I'm really interested in designing and building a temporary structure that can be used to house various offsite performances. You can subscribe to my mailing list for regular updates! <http://benjudd.com/contact/>

'Stories in the Dark: Contemporary Responses to the Magic Lantern' is at The Beaneys House of Art and Knowledge, 18 High Street, Canterbury until 19 June. Pay What You Can.

[thebeaneys.co.uk](http://thebeaneys.co.uk)  
[benjudd.com](http://benjudd.com)

**LIVE MAGIC LANTERN PERFORMANCES, 16 April**

Various galleries at The Beaneys: free admission, drop in

Four unique live performances take place throughout the day, all of them using the magic lantern in different ways. Ben Judd will be restaging the performance that he showed at the ICA last year, 'Apart, We are Together', which references the 'pose slide' genre of magic lantern projections, popular in variety theatre, pantomime, and vaudeville in Europe and USA, 1890s-1950s. Also showing will be Barnyard Productions, Jeremy Brooker and Lamplighters, Louisa Fairclough, David Francis and Joss Marsh, Nicole Mollett and Frog Morris.





'Pick of the Week', The Guardian, April 2016

For details of the full press coverage for Whitstable Biennale see: <http://www.whitstablebiennale.com/press/press-archive/>

## exhibitions

### \* Pick of the week

**Stories In The Dark** *Beaney House Of Art And Knowledge, Canterbury* Nine artists, including Benedict Drew, Haroon Mirza and Lindsay Seers, take the 17th-century invention of the magic lantern as inspiration. Curated by Ben Judd.

**Elizabeth Price** *Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford* The Turner prize-winning artist has delved into the institution's collection of ethnographic photography to make this new installation.

**Michael Simpson** *Spike Island, Bristol* Last few days to see the underappreciated paintings of the British artist.

**Giacomo Manzù** *Estorick Collection, London* The sublime figurative portraits of the Italian modernist are profiled.

**SUBMIT LISTINGS FOR CONSIDERATION AT LEAST THREE WEEKS AHEAD OF PUBLICATION AT CREATE.LISTORA.COM**

#### **Barnstaple**

- **Into The Landscape**  
Painting and photography.  
*Goodwin Gallery (facebook.*

*Fashion Museum (01225 477173) Sat-Mon, Tue-Fri 10.30am-5pm, to 1 Jan, £8.75, concs £7.75, child £6.75, family £27. [DA]*

- **The Hurter & Driffield Centenary**  
Photographs, historical artefacts and more.  
*The Royal Photographic*

*ICIA (01225 386777) Sat, Mon, Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, to 28 May, free.*

- **Anthony Scott**  
Bronze sculptures.  
*Beaux Arts (01225 464850) Sat, Mon, Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, to 2 Apr, free.*

- **Style Of A City**  
Works by various artists.  
*David Simon Contemporary (01225 460189) Sat 10am-6pm, free.*

- **World War One Recruiting Posters**  
Art and artefacts.  
*Victoria Art Gallery (0122 477233) Sat, Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, Sun 1.30pm-5pm, to 13 Apr, free.*

#### **Bedford**

- **JMW Turner & The Art Of Watercolour**  
Selection of watercolours  
*The Higgins Bedford (01225 718618) Sat, Tue-Fri 11am-5pm, Sat-Mon, Tue-Fri 2pm-5pm, to 10 Apr, free. [DA]*

#### **Bexhill-on-Sea**

- **Tonico Lemos Auld**  
Contemporary sculpture  
*De La Warr Pavilion (01229111) Sat-Mon, Tue-Fri 10am-5pm, to 10 Apr, free.*

- **Richard Forster: Levitt**  
See Preview.  
*De La Warr Pavilion (01229111) From 26 Mar, Sat-Mon, Tue-Fri, phone for times, to 5 Jun, free.*

- **Christabel Goodwin: Highwoods Pottery**  
Distinctive ceramics.  
*De La Warr Pavilion (01229111) Sat-Mon, Tue-Fri, phone for times, to 10 Apr, free.*

#### **Bideford**

Keywords:

Magic lantern  
Phantasmagoria  
Curation  
Analogue  
Participation  
Performance  
Moving image  
Installation  
Collectivity

Key dates:

19 March – 19 June 2016

Funding:

Arts Council England  
Nottingham Trent University  
Whitstable Biennale

Links:

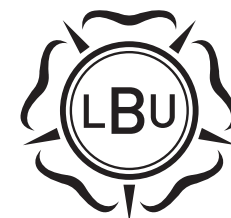
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