

Cinémathèque française: Magic Lantern Slides Collection



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The Cinémathèque française's collection of magic lantern slides illustrates the pre-cinema era and contains some of the finest and most well-preserved slides still in existence. A selection of around 1,500 of these hand-painted and photographic unique artworks from France, Great Britain, Germany and the USA covering the 18th century until the 1920s is available on EFG.

Detailed description provided by the archive:

The Cinémathèque française has one of the finest collections of lantern slides: some 17,000 items dating from the eighteenth century to the 1920s. It includes the creative work of almost all the major producing countries: France, Britain, Germany, USA. All the techniques of painting and printing are included: water paints, aniline, in series, lithograph, photograph, etc. Many slides are finely mechanized and sometimes have complex animation features. All subjects are represented: travel, science, religion, politics, history, fine arts, architecture, daily life, eroticism, scatology, devilish antics, etc. This exceptional collection has been assembled since 1936 by various officials and curators of the Cinémathèque, and also by various collectors, including Will Day (1873-1936). This collection is still enriched by donations and purchases.