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# PANORAMA

International Panorama Council

## Newsletter no. 36, September 2015



24th IPC conference participants ©Musée d'Histoire de la Ville de Luxembourg

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## 24<sup>th</sup> IPC conference

9-12 September 2015

The Executive Board of the International Panorama Council is pleased to look back on a fruitful conference with 50 participants from 16 different countries and 20 interesting presentations. The conference could have never been so successful without the intensive preparation work of our two Executive Board Dominique Hanson and Guy Thewes in cooperation with the IPC Secretariat and the local partners that included Axel Tixhon of the University of Namur, Isabelle Bondroit of the City of Namur and the Luxembourg History Museum.

The theme of the 24<sup>th</sup> IPC conference was *Layers of history: panoramas from classical to digital age*. On the first arrival day of the conference the participants and Executive Board of the IPC were welcomed by Maxime Prévot, the mayor of Namur. This was followed by an opening speech of the panorama artist Yadegar Asisi in which Asisi used the conference theme to talk about *the purpose of battle and war panoramas – then and now*. He posed questions like: What is the purpose of restoring and conserving ancient battle and war panoramas? Why create and exhibit new panoramas showing military conflicts? And, can such panoramas be used as statements against war itself? Using his own panoramas of LEIPZIG 1813 and DRESDEN 1945 he explained his view on showing 'war' in a panorama. Not the siege itself are topics he addresses but he creates esthetic landscapes in order to enlarge the esthetics and suspense of the audience.

The first official conference day started with a welcome by Sara Velas, President of IPC.

As we had lost two loved IPC members last year, there was time of remembrance of Ottó Trøgmayer and Ralph Hyde. Dr. Róbert Károly Kiss gave a talk about the history of the Árpád Festztys cyclorama, "The arrival of the Hungarians" and Heritage Park where Ottó Trøgmayer used to work and from where IPC started. At the General Assembly Gabriele Koller noted that the beautiful book of Ralph Hyde *Paper peepshows* was published and she also informed us about the interesting project that he still was working on, namely The 'Biographical Dictionary of Panoramists of the English-Speaking World'. He gave his research material to The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum, you can read more about this project in this newsletter.

All our speakers were selected on their contribution to the theme of layers of history. Panoramas respond to our aspiration to recover lost worlds and revive the important events in history. Although to use them as a "time-machine" can be somewhat confusing. Most of them were made long after the moment in history they depict. The battles they show have been fought many years before the painter decided to fix them on canvas, the places represented have changed since then. A real 'time-machine' was found by PhD candidate Molly Briggs, who showed us a new discovered moving panorama made by Marcus Mote that is stored in the Krannert Art Museum on the Urbana campus of the University of Illinois. Together with a whole team she was responsible for the digitalization of this massive canvas and to do research on the story. She will keep us posted when the moving panorama will be displayed again. Suzanne Wray talked about the big business that the European capitalists achieved with their panoramas in America. In 2014 Dr. Alexy Druzhinin obtained his doctorate title

with his thesis 'Artistic diorama as a form of art in Russia'. In his talk he gave an interesting summary of his dissertation in which he studied the developments of diorama art in Russia. Prof. Thiago Leitão looked at the ways in which digital techniques can contribute in order to recreate lost panoramas. He discussed the panorama Del Retiro which was showed in the city of Buenos Aires in the late nineteenth century.

Today, the panoramas in themselves have become historical monuments, reflecting the particular time they were made. In the case of recently painted panoramas, the complexity can even be greater: using in the 21<sup>th</sup> century a 19<sup>th</sup> century medium for representing an historical scene. The conference proposed to explore the different layers of history contained in panoramas, revealing their changing meaning. Dr. Seth Thompson presented his research on cultural heritage. He looked at the representations of Versailles in France. In 1819 completed John Vanderlyn a painted panorama of Versailles which is now in the permanent exhibition of the Metropolitan Museum of New York. Thompson showed the ways in which this cultural site was used. Next to the painted panorama he placed the Google's World Wonders Project of 2012 where he also looked at the visitors of Versailles nowadays and the differences between the representation of Vanderlyn and Google. The question of what to do with these layers of history were discussed in the paper of Dr. Gordon Jones. He told the history of the panorama of *The Battle of Atlanta* after it was made and how it was adjusted to the taste of the time and became in that way a confederate icon. Dr. Patrizia Kern Panoramias of the Battle of Gallipoli/Çanakkale also had a similar point of view of looking at the different circumstances

under which the panoramas of the Battle of Gallipoli / Çanakkale were realized and the political agendas and purposes behind the projects.

Large attention was also given to contemporary art and new media committed to the panoramic experience as a mean to cross time and space. Prof. Yunhui Ji of the Luxun Academy of Fine Arts of China gave a presentation of the Chinese panoramas. Hereby he showed that panoramas have special meanings and values in China. Dr. Magnus Moar and Mr. James Charlton took the panoramic experience to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In their paper they argued that the experience of viewing 360 degrees historical scenes, either within the *real* environment of the panorama or contemporary *virtual* environments, arise in part from the attraction of the immersive experience. Dr. Blagovesta Momchedjikova looked at pan-stereoramas, or better known as 3D scale models, of New York City and drew a distinction between the terms history and heritage, and ponder whether popular forms of entertainment concern themselves mostly with the latter. She showed the problems that occur with such a model that quickly gets outdated and showed the thin line between the question of history and heritage.

As Namur being the conference location we could not have a conference without talks on the two special still existing panoramas made by Alfred Bastien and in the possession of the Royal Military Museum of Brussels but stored in the military barracks of Namur. Dr. Natasja Peeters and Sandrine Smets, M.A. gave a talk on the history of Alfred Bastien's panoramas the *Yser Panorama* and the *Meuse Diorama*. Prof. Axel Tixhon and dr. Bénédicte Rochet talked further on the developments and context of

the *Battle of the Meuse August 1914* as the last Belgian panorama. The question of what to do with a remaining diorama and even the existing of the original building was the question for Claire Barbier, M.A. and Aurore de Bruyn, M.A. whose talk was entitled *The diorama Battle of the Meuse; restoration prospects in the 21th century*.

## Novelties

A novelty this year was the presence of artists during the coffee breaks. This way the participants really got the time to take the time to crank the crankie of Sue Truman's Crankies Factory and look at the presentation of Patricia Lambertus' panoramic artworks. Also new was the conference table on which all the participants were allowed to leave their brochures or other panorama-related commercial information.

## Cultural program

As the regular IPC conference participants are used to, IPC conferences also have an extensive cultural program. Being in Namur was an excellent opportunity to visit the St. Aubain Cathedrale where we were invited by the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts to the curvilinear Loder's painting "Adoration of the Magi". During the conference Katarzyna Górecka, Dr. Marek Skłodowski and Dr. Piotr Pawlowski prepared a paper in which they gave an insight on the work they had done. The presentation focused on experimental research and theoretical analysis of fundamentals of stretching of large curvilinear canvasses.

The theme of the conference came together in the Luxembourg History Museum where the participants could visit a panorama of Luxembourg in two ways. On the one hand this was the actual painted panorama made

by the scenic artist Antoine Fontaine. But on the other hand the participants could also walk through the City of Luxembourg of the nineteenth century via *Second Life* via an Oculus Rift (immersive digital glasses). Dr. Guy Thewes and Antoine Fontaine talked about the developments of this small panorama of the City of Luxembourg and the reasons why the Museum decided to choose a panorama for their exhibition setting. In the evening we were treated on a lovely dinner which was supported by the City of Luxembourg.



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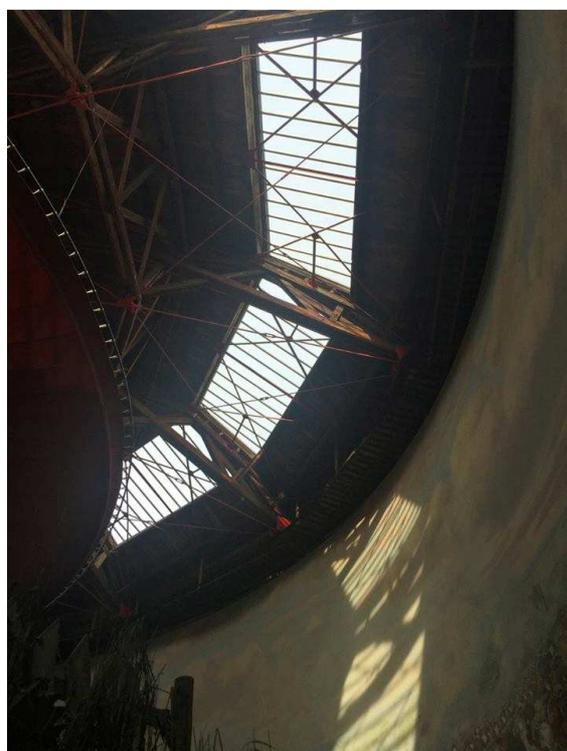
Unfortunately the state of the dioramas Battle of the Meuse and Battle of the Yser disallowed the group to visit these dioramas. But the visit to the original building, where the Battle of the Meuse originally was displayed gave an idea of the immense measurements of the canvas.



Citadel of Namur ©Patrick Deicher

The post conference tour to Waterloo was - despite of the rain - a beautiful visit. Since May 2015 the Museum reopened its doors with a whole new multi-media exhibition. The conservation team of the panorama of the Battle of Waterloo took us on a tour to the 'behind the scenes' of the panorama.

After a well organised lunch in the new Wellington café (the building of this new lunchroom was placed on the old fundamentals of the wax museum) we said goodbye to our participants and promised to see each other next year in Hungary. ◇



*The Waterloo Panorama from below ©Patrick Deicher*

## 25<sup>th</sup> IPC conference



We are pleased to announce that the 25<sup>th</sup> IPC Conference will be held in cooperation with the National Heritage Park of Ópusztaszer. This special jubilee will be in commemoration of the founder of IPC; Ottó Trogmayer. More information will follow as soon as possible. ◇

## Institutional and individual member acknowledgments

As IPC cannot survive without its members we are trying think of ways in which IPC can acknowledge its gratitude to its members. From this year on all individual members will receive a certificate. At the 24<sup>th</sup> IPC conference Sara Velas, President handed out special wooden plaques to the institutional members: the Luxun Academy of Fine Arts, China; the Asisi GmbH Company, Germany; the Luxembourg History Museum, Luxembourg and the National Heritage Park of Ópusztaszer, Hungary. ◇



*President Sara Velas hands out the plaque to the Luxun Academy of Fine Arts, China © Ruby Carlson*

## Changes to the Executive Board

Ryszard Wójtowicz has come to the end of his 3-year term on the Executive Board and he will now take the time to focus on his other professional projects. We thank him for his work and input, especially in regards to the preservation and conservation of panoramas worldwide!

At the General Assembly in Namur the IPC members were informed by the new Executive Board members of IPC. Guy Thewes and Mathias Thiel chose to continue their Executive Board membership. Dr. Blagovesta Momchedjikova and Prof. dr. Thiago Leitão were chosen as new members.

Blagovesta Momchedjikova, PhD, specializes in pan-stereoramas of cities, most notably, *The Panorama of the City of New York* model in the Queens Museum, of which she gives specialized tours. She is the editor of *Captured by the City: Perspectives in Urban Culture Studies* (2013) and guest-editor of *Streetnotes: Urban Feel* (2010). Her essay and poetry contributions appear in *The Everyday of Memory: Between Communism and Post-Communism*, *Robert Moses and the Modern City: The Transformation of New York*, *Streetnotes*, *ISO Magazine*, *The Journal of American Culture*, *Tourist Studies*, *Genre: Imagined Cities*, *PIERS*. She is a Senior Language Lecturer at New York University, where she teaches writing, art, and the city. In addition, she chairs the Urban Culture Area of MAPACA and conducts urban writing workshops nationally and internationally.

Thiago Leitão is a Full Professor of sketching and computer graphics techniques at the Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo of Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro,

Brazil. He has graduation in Architecture and Urbanism (FAU-UFRJ, 2006), Master of Science in Arts (PROURB/FAU/UFRJ Rio de Janeiro, co-realized at Sint-Lucas Architectuur, Hogeschool voor Wetenschap & Kunst, Brussels, 2009), and PhD (PROURB-FAU-UFRJ Rio de Janeiro, 2014). Since receiving his degree, he has been researching the history of Panoramas, the Panoramas of Rio de Janeiro, the 360° paintings and its conversion to digital media, and how the panorama experience can offer new contributions for the representation area of Architecture and Urbanism.

The composition of the Executive Board is now as follows:

Sara Velas, President (USA-Los Angeles)  
Dr. Guy Thewes, Vice-President (LU - Luxembourg)

Patrick Deicher M.A., Treasurer (CH - Lucerne)  
Dr Mimi Colligan (AU-Melbourne)  
Dominique Hanson (BE-Brussels)  
Mathias Thiel (GE - Berlin)  
Dr Blagovesta Momchedjikova (USA -NYC)  
prof. Thiago Leitão (BR - Sao Paulo)

See for more information about the biographies of our current Executive Board members in our previous 31<sup>st</sup> Newsletter.

Next to the Executive Board, the IPC is also creating an Advisory Board. More information will be supplied on this in a future newsletter. ◇

## Changes in the Auditing committee

We thank Gabriele Koller, MA for being the auditor of the IPC for the last two years. She will be succeeded by dr. Natasja Peeters

curator of the Royal Armee Museum in Brussels. As dr. Blagovesta Momchedjikova is chosen to the Executive Board her position also had to be filled. We are pleased to welcome dr. Gordon Jones senior Military Historian and curator at the Atlanta History Center in Atlanta, Georgia as our second auditor.

### Changes in the Secretariat

There will be a change in 2016 in the Secretary as Sylvia Alting van Geusau's additional professional commitments will prohibit her from continuing on.

At the General Assembly in Namur the IPC members have found a new Secretary General in Ruby Carlson. From 2016 the post address of the secretariat will be:  
 The Velaslavasay Panorama  
 1122 West 24th Street  
 Los Angeles, CA 90007

The email address remains: [secretary@panoramacouncil.org](mailto:secretary@panoramacouncil.org). Ruby Carlson is the Events Manager at the Velaslavasay Panorama and works in promoting, facilitating, and supervising presentations. Ms. Carlson has been an avid participant at the Panorama since 2008, and began a campaign in 2013 for fundraising for the Panorama entitled the "XYZ Club," a series of eight highly-produced yet intimate engagements hosted by revolving artists and scholars. In 2013, Ms. Carlson also spearheaded the campaign to take the Panorama's "Grand Moving Mirror of California" to Germany for a showing at the Kunstsaele Berlin. She is currently undergoing a certification process to practice psychoanalysis at the

Psychoanalysis Los Angeles California in Extension (PLACE). ◇

### New memberships area on our website

From this year on we have opened the memberships area on our website. The login codes are the ones that you made during your subscriptions. We understand that this might not be in your memory, so please send an email to the secretariat in order to ask for your login name and password. On this page you can find the General Assembly Documents, presentations and papers of previous conferences, the newsletters and much more! ◇

### IPC brochure



With the strong support of members Blagovesta Momchedjikova and Ruby Carlson, a new brochure has been created to share the activities & history of the IPC and also solicit for new members. Copies of this will be available for distribution at the conference, please take some home to share with colleagues, to gain more worldwide knowledge of the IPC! Please visit our website to download the digital .pdf version. To request hard copies of the brochure, please send an email to the Secretary. ◇

**PANORAMAS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

An early 20th-century panoramic photograph of a landscape, showing a wide view of a valley with buildings and trees. The image is framed by a dark border.

**MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL PANORAMA COUNCIL**

The members of the International Panorama Council are listed in the text, including names like Ralph Hyde, Stephan Oetterman, and others. The text describes the council's mission and the types of panoramas they support.

**IPC CONFERENCES**

The text describes the history and purpose of IPC conferences, which are held every two years. It mentions the 2013 conference in Leipzig and the 2015 conference in Rouen.

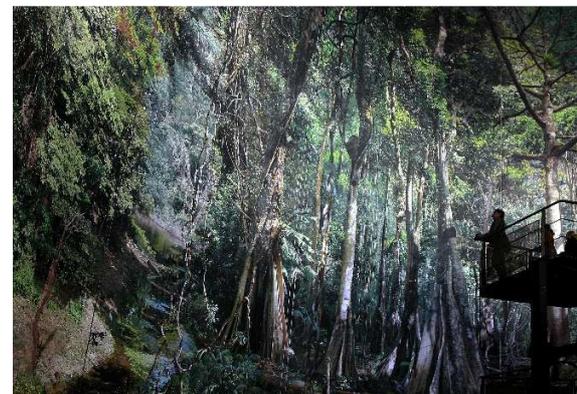
Please visit the website for more information  
<http://www.bdcmuseum.org.uk/> ◇

# INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS UPDATE

## Updates from Asisi GmbH

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of September two of Asisi's panorama's (LEIPZIG 1813 and ROME 312) will be closed to make room for two new panorama's (AMAZONIA and GREAT BARRIER REEF). The LEIPZIG 1813 at the Panorama Leipzig welcomed 440000 visitors from August 2013 until August 2015. The ROME 312 at the Panorama XXL in Rouen welcomed 100000 visitors from 20 December 2014 until 13 September 2015.

## Update from Asisi GmbH Opening 26 September 2015 Amazonia in Rouen Panorama XXL



©Asisi GmbH

Yadegar Asisi's inspiration for the AMAZONIA Panorama was to be found in the unbelievable biodiversity of nature and its consummate form. The Panorama literally focuses on the complexity of the rainforest habitat. At the same time, this nature Panorama is intended as a tribute to all those naturalists who have explored the rainforest.

## The legacy of Ralph Hyde

During the General Assembly Gabriele Koller informed us about the beautiful things Ralph Hyde left behind. Next to his wonderful book on Paper peepshows which is available on Amazon or Antique Collectors Club she also informed us about his project on panoramist biographies. We are therefore very grateful to Ralph Hyde's daughter Jeannette and his estate for donating Ralph's comprehensive but unpublished work The Biographical Dictionary of Panoramists of the English-Speaking World to The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum.

Ralph began the project as a joint venture with the German scholar Stephan Oetterman but continued working on it for many years after Stephan moved on to other projects. Although never finally completed the dictionary offers details on many hundreds of panoramists, not just in the UK but also the USA and other parts of the English-Speaking World (and indeed some in Russia too). Rights to the Dictionary are with the estate of Ralph Hyde.

The Dictionary complements the very extensive holdings in The Bill Douglas Cinema Museum on Panoramas and 19th century immersive media.

This particularly includes the names of Alexander von Humboldt,



First Opening weekend AMAZONIA, Rouen ©Asisi GmbH

who visited the Amazonian region at the beginning of the 19th century, and the botanist

Wilfried Morawetz, who gave Yadegar Asisi an understanding of the theme during their joint journey in Brazil. The complexity of the rainforest with its complex interlocking of mechanisms has fascinated naturalists ever since the discovery of America – a fascination shared by Asisi following his first exploration. AMAZONIA also enhances the sensitivity for the fragility of the rainforest in all its diversity and threat.

Asisi has undertaken 4 journeys through the Amazonian region for the purpose of developing a feeling for the rainforest. In the process, he took several thousand photographs and made countless sketches, which he then used for the Panorama. Humboldt himself had already made numerous sketches and promoted the presentation of a Panorama of the rainforest during the heyday of the Panorama to illustrate the concept of the complex essence of nature.

As in a clearing, the view from the visitors' platform in AMAZONIA opens up far into the Amazonian landscape: reaching to the crowns of gigantic primeval jungle trees, to fascinating plants in all shades of green and many species of animals native to the region. Thanks to the extremely high image resolution, it is even possible to discover the caterpillar on the leaf, sloths in the trees or parrots in the tree-tops in the Panorama using binoculars.

AMAZONIA was on display in Leipzig from 2009 to 2013 with two six-monthly breaks. In September 2015 the Panorama opened this weekend in Rouen, France. After the first opening weekend the AMAZONIA panorama already reach up to 12000 visitors!

### **Updates from Asisi GmbH Opening 3 October 2015 Great Barrier Reef in Leipzig**

The Panorama of the coral reef off the coast of Australia fits in seamlessly with the series of Yadegar Asisi's nature Panoramas. It portrays the unique underwater world of the coral reef in all its fragile beauty and complexity.

Together with its some 360 hard coral species, the Great Barrier Reef, discovered by James Cook in 1770, forms the largest structure created by living creatures on this planet. It also provides a habitat for numerous other species, including 80 varieties of soft corals and sea pens, over 1,500 species of fish, 1,500 sponges, 5,000 types of molluscs, 800 species of echinoderms (such as starfish), 500 types of seaweed and 215 species of birds.

Six of the seven species of marine turtles in the world are to be found in the Great Barrier Reef. The dugongs (sea cows) living



*Great Barrier Reef ©Asisi GmbH*

there are an endangered species – as are the marine turtles. Along with other species of whales to be found there, the humpback whales, who live in the Antarctic Ocean, take advantage of the nearby warm waters of the reef to give birth to their young.

The artist Asisi undertook several expeditions to the underwater world of the corals, clown fish, forceps fish, lion fish, marine turtles, starfish, etc. in the turquoise-coloured Pacific Ocean off the Northeast coast of Australia in order to conduct underwater research for his Panorama of the coral reef.

The observer has an underwater view. The fascinating refraction of sunlight in the water provides the major role in producing a dazzling display of colours encompassing the myriad shades of blue, azure and green. It immerses the submarine magical world of corals and sea creatures in bright contrasting tones of yellow, red and pink. By

compacting the scene, the Panorama creates an idealised space that in nature would not

be recognised in its entirety and at the same time. In the final analysis, this artistic elevating device allows an optimal perception of the coral reef. The blaze of colour and richness of detail of the Panorama also emphasises the uniqueness of creation while simultaneously arguing for its preservation. ◇

customer. In 1887 he travelled to Scotland



©Patrick Deicher

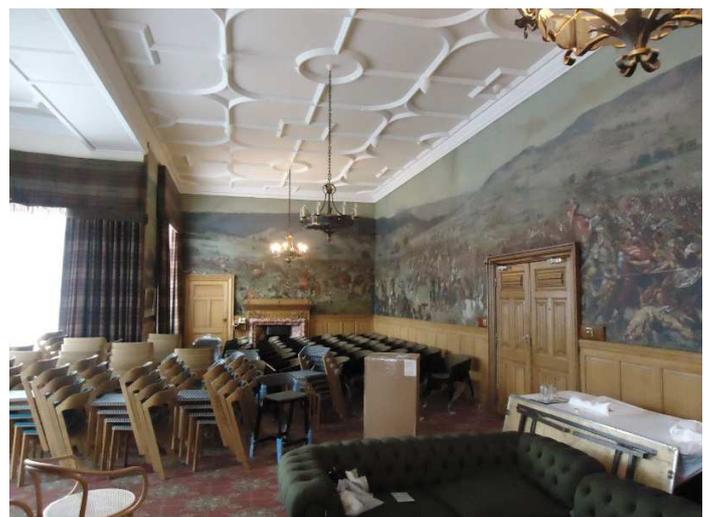
## MEMBERS UPDATES

### A Hidden Treasure, The Panorama of the Battle of Bannockburn

By Patrick Deicher

Travelling to Scotland, IPC treasurer Patrick Deicher visited the Hydro Hotel at Peebles to get an impression of a hidden panoramic treasure. Almost a third of the original panorama 'The Battle of Bannockburn' survives in the hotel's 'Bannockburn Room' where it is pasted to the wall.

German painter Ernst Philipp Fleischer (1850 - 1930) painted several war panoramas. In 1888 he created in his Munich (Germany) studio three panoramas for an English



for field studies of the battlefield of Bannockburn near Stirling. Philipp Fleischer's

painting of the Battle of Bannockburn enjoyed considerable success in Glasgow in 1888 where it was exhibited at the panorama rotunda in Sauchiehall Street. It depicted the defeat of England's Edward II by the Scots under Robert Bruce in 1314, a battle which secured Scottish independence.

Scottish hotelier Albert M. Theim, purchased several of Fleischer's panoramas. Large segments of the original panoramas of 'The Battle of Bannockburn' and 'The Battle of Omdurman' are today pasted to walls in the Hotel Hydro at Peebles on the Scottish Borders ([www.peebleshydro.co.uk](http://www.peebleshydro.co.uk)). The hotel is currently undergoing huge restoration works to bring it back to its early 20c. status when it was reopened in 1907 after a terrible fire of 1905. Due to the restoration works the Bannockburn Room is currently used as a depot for new furniture. Soon, it will be back as one of the hotel's main meeting rooms and open free view to the panorama fragments. ◇

### **Panorama Vught 1629: feasibility challenge to be initiated**

by Wim Kievits

At the moment there is a new initiative to explore the possibility of a new cyclorama near the town of Vught in the Netherlands.

The subject we aim to present deals with the siege of 's-Hertogenbosch by Prince Frederic Henry of Orange in 1629. The siege was unprecedented and many European princes and kings came to watch this spectacle of modern warfare. Painters acknowledged this

unique event capturing it on numerous paintings. These paintings will be used as a source to show the daily live in the city of Vught where prince Frederic Henry had his quarters. But it will also be possible to show the complete surroundings of Vught during the battle. Telling the story of the siege will not be too complex. Many before us have made it clear that this was a very historic event.

No, the greatest challenge will be to define the technical concept and work out the specifications that will enable the commissioner, the Foundation Panorama Vught 1629 to realize this huge project.

As recent panoramas were realised using modern multimedia techniques we are pretty confident that this will be the direction in which we want to conduct our research. We are looking forward to hear from all those members that recently have accomplished similar turbulent panorama projects. Where possible we want to learn from your experiences.

We will keep you informed about our progress. In the meantime do not hesitate to share your good practices with me, Wim Kievits ([wamkievits@ziggo.nl](mailto:wamkievits@ziggo.nl)) ◇

### **University of Kent acquired panorama collection of Christopher Lennox-Boyd**

By Ian Beckett

The University of Kent has acquired the panorama collection of the late Christopher Lennox-Boyd. There are 59 separate items but this includes an additional 23 items in an album. The majority are anamorphic orientation plans, keys, or descriptive explanations, many for panoramas shown at the Barker rotundas in Leicester Square and

in the Strand. The collection includes, for example, the panoramas of Constantinople (1801), Rome (1804), Dover (1809), The Battle of Corunna (1814), The Battle of Paris (1815), The Battle of Waterloo (1816), Athens (1818), Spitzbergen (1819), Madrid (1826), and Sydney (1829). There are also some for the rotunda in Spring Gardens such as versions of the Battle of Alexandria by both Robert Ker Porter and Samuel James Arnold. In addition, there are some programmes for other exhibitions such the poecilorama at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly (1826), and the cosmorama in Dublin (1829). The 'Colosseum' in Regent's Park is also represented with a descriptive catalogue. Overall, the collection presents a fascinating picture of the extraordinary variety of panoramas on show in London in the first two decades of the nineteenth century.

The Lennox-Boyd panoramas complement the University's existing Special Collections, which include the British Cartoon Archive, and its Theatre Collections, comprising a number of large and varied archives of theatrical texts, ephemera, documents and images.

For information, contact [specialcollections@kent.ac.uk](mailto:specialcollections@kent.ac.uk)  
See: [www.kent.ac.uk/library/specialcollections](http://www.kent.ac.uk/library/specialcollections)  
and [www.cartoons.ac.uk](http://www.cartoons.ac.uk) ◇

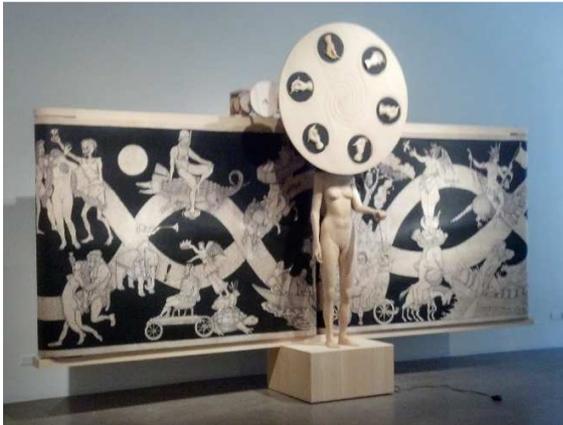
## Georama musical in St. Louis

By Suzan Wray

Georama, a musical about the life of John Banvard, will be performed in St. Louis, MO early in 2016. I was involved with the development of this in New York as a sort of

consultant on the moving panorama, where there was a staged reading in April. The director of the musical, West Hyler, has been working this for some time, and has tried to make everything historically correct or as much as it can be in a musical. In New York we had a panel discussion about the moving panorama: history, and how one might be done as new scenery. The staged reading had a moving digital panorama created on a computer, but West hopes to have a real painted or digitally printed one "move" during the St Louis performances. Peter Morelli, who has worked a great deal with the Saco Museum's "Pilgrim's Progress Panorama" has given advice about how to accomplish this. (The "Pilgrim's Progress" digital replica of the restored panorama was recently shown at Saco's City Hall, to musical accompaniment, and with a narrator.) It was great fun to see and hear the very talented performers bring the script to life during rehearsals; the moving panorama is almost a character in the musical.

Another tip to look at is an artwork that incorporated a moving panorama. Artist John Buck displays his fantastical, hand-carved art machines at Denver's Robischon Gallery. For more information please visit this website: [http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyles/ci\\_28556760/john-bucks-fantastic-art-machines-at-denvers-robischon](http://www.denverpost.com/lifestyles/ci_28556760/john-bucks-fantastic-art-machines-at-denvers-robischon) ◇



## The Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle

by Anthony Lowe



From Eisenach to Sachsen Schweiz a 560km journey in 20 metres lasting 14 minutes and 58 seconds. On a fine clear Saturday in October 2013 a small oak door creaked open at the bottom of the long and winding staircase which led up to the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle and through it the members of the Castle Trust puffed and bumped their way into view becoming as they did so the first audience of the Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle.

The Panorama is a Photographic digitally worked inkjet print using sound, and light to represent the 560km from Eisenach to Sachsen Schweiz with the visual part of the display covering approximately a

circumference of 20 meters and the sound and light installation lasting 14 minutes and 58 seconds from its dark silent start to the final crescendo. The Director of the Castle Trust had been a pillar of support during the creation of the Panorama and so it was fitting that he and the Trust members were the first to view the transformation of the Bottle Tower.

## Getting permission for the panorama

I had never met the Trust members and had not appreciated the extent of their advanced years. They assembled like so many carriages of a steam train arriving at its terminus pushing, puffing, bumping and jostling their sticks as they settled into the available seating. The lighting man Mario Bosemann had been unable to record the light show for the first performances and had perched himself gargoyle like in the lighting gantry unseen but far above the audience having climbed into the tower above the Panorama in order to play the light show by hand. I bit my knuckles as the first minutes of the performance passed and gradually the Trustees arose from their seats and moved around pointing at things. After a while a ghastly audience silence fell and half way through the performance I feared the worst I looked at the composer Falk Zenker "Oh my God they are hating it".

My worries, bitten knuckles and concern that the only headline might be one above a picture of Mario fallen from the gantry onto the Trustees were totally unfounded. In the first hour, three shows and 60 Trustees later the reaction had been exclusively of sustained appreciative applause, positive messages and goose bumps. But what was it that we had done. The Panorama in the

Bottle Tower started as a flat one dimensional picture destined to grace the New Altenburg Airport Terminal. The purpose of the picture was to show the new arrivals from London Stansted the attractions, landscapes, cities and towns of the area Ryan Air had landed them in and perhaps to encourage them to explore a little further than their immediate schedule allowed. The terminal building never saw a single passenger and just as the picture version of the Panorama was finished in 2010 so the airport closed its doors for the final time.

The Panorama in the Bottle Tower with music and lighting as a 360 degree installation was conceived after a visit to the oldest part of Altenburg Castle a massive defensive tower that had started life as a lodging for People and Animals in dangerous times and then a dungeon and then a corn store and at that time appeared to me as a cold and empty void. This unheated cavernous tower had a 40 degree temperature variation from summer to winter. I printed excerpts of the digital photographic pieces designed for the airport terminal building and took them to the Altenburg Castle Business Director with a brief explanation of the plan for a 360 degree audience audio visual experience. I was quickly referred on to the Museum Director who liked the look of the prints. She made sure to remind me that the Bottle Tower far from being "empty" as I had suggested was in fact an exhibition in itself. She said that if I could produce what I wanted without a single nail or screw infiltrating the precious walls of the Bottle Tower I could install my panoramic experience.

### **Sponsoring**

Having secured the agreement to use the Bottle Tower I turned my attention to the financing of the project arriving at a budget

of 35,000 euros. This amount ensured that everyone would get paid but no-one was going to get rich. I met with the CastleTrust and they agreed to adopt the Panorama in the Bottle Tower as their next project and targeted 10 sponsors who would contribute 3,500 euros each. I began the process by approaching businesses that had bought paintings from me and explaining that in addition to their sponsorship the recurring entrance ticket fees would secure the future of the Panorama in the Bottle Tower well into the future. The link between the Panorama and the Bottle Tower a well know and locally admired historic building proved fruitful for fundraising and it wasn't long before 8,750 euros had been pledged in sponsorship and the Director of the Trustees went on to secure the remaining funds.

### **Creating the panorama**

The photographic collection which underlies the pictorial element of the Panorama provides a record of the towns, cities and villages in south east Germany from the old east west border to the frontiers of Poland and Czech Republic ending amongst the dramatic sandstone towers created by the Elbe River as it winds its way lazily from the Czech border. The central focus of the pictorial Panorama concentrates on the urban and rural areas in and around Altenburg, Chemnitz, Leipzig, Zwickau and Gera.

In 2012 I started a search for the composer and musician who would provide a soundtrack to the pictorial Panorama. This took me to the musician and composer Falk Zenker whose elegant and powerful music had already been extensively used for installations in parks and buildings in the area of the Panorama. By now the pictorial element of the Panorama was sufficiently

refined for initial glimpses of the idea to be let out to the local press and public. We started with inkjet prints of bits of Towns alongside the developing soundtrack provided by Falk Zenker to give an impression of what the finished article might look like. The first launch of the Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle to the press and interested parties was well attended. After this initial sortie into the public eye the plan was to launch the completed version of the Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle in April 2013. One missing attendee at the initial launch was the Mayor and any members of the Town Council who owned the Castle. The reason for their absence quickly became apparent when we discovered that the Planning Department of the Town Council now considered the use of the Bottle Tower as a venue for the Panorama to be a "change of use". This simple bureaucratic term "change of use" meant that the Bottle Tower for so long an admired emptiness now needed to be subjected to a full and rigorous civil engineering survey. The survey was required to determine that the roof beams could carry the extra weight of the lighting gantry, sound system and hanging paraphernalia which was necessary to support the 360 degree audio visual experience that was to be the Panorama. The survey required a full and exhaustive measurement of the Bottle Tower along with a fire safety certification. In a single stroke of a "change of use" pen the costs of the project more than doubled inducing turmoil and confusion. Undaunted by the prospect and with that happy thought of "what do we have to lose" the original sponsors were approached again and asked to revisit their commitment to cover the additional costs. To their credit they agreed to do this. Furthermore the Town Council made a grant

of 8,000 to cover the extra costs we were about to pay them.

### **Lighting and music**

The search for a lighting technician for the Panorama began. I needed a permanent light installation that would run for 10 years. This was in stark contrast to the normal lighting installation that was a temporary affair often lasting only a night. The lighting experience for the audience needed to be tuned into and fully integrated to swell and grow with the music and work its tricks to highlight the picture and bring their inkjet-printed surfaces to life so that the audience which was never more than 4 or 5 metres from the pictures could believe they were within the Panorama.

The music composition continued to develop apace and Falk turned his attention to the acoustic challenges of the enclosed, limited and circular space the Bottle Tower provided. He planned to use two separate rings of sound each with 8 speakers hung behind the canvas at different heights. At the very top of the Panorama hung on the lighting gantry was a large bass speaker. This was twinned with a second equally large bass speaker sitting in the stone floor. Every speaker was individually controlled so that the sound performed the spiraling, rising, falling, spinning and directional twists and turns that would bring the pictorial element of the Panorama to life for the audience. After several mind numbing conversations with sound technicians where the sound system appeared to drink the whole of the expanded budget and more, a fit of sober thought pointed us in the direction of a small cigarette box sized gadget costing just 250 euros and assembled by a hobby electronics fanatic.

The same conversation also turned up our lighting man Mario Bosemann from Jene who turned in a plan that was firstly possible and secondly within the existing budget.

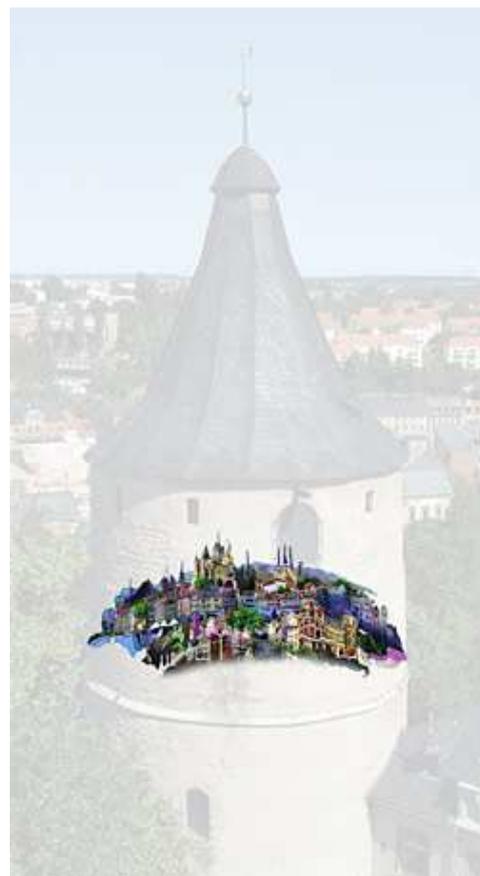
The April 2013 target was busted but by July 2013 the project was progressing well again. A hanging system for the inkjet print had been installed and the printed canvas stretched onto it. Now because of the delay both Falk and Mario were not available until well into August 2013. Falk laboured for 2 weeks designing and installing the sounds and music and tormented himself sequencing the flow of sound and music through the individually controlled speakers that would bring the Panorama in the Bottle Tower to life. Screens were mounted on the Bottle Tower windows and the space became dark enough for Mario to appear and sequence his lighting ideas with the powerful soundtrack Falk had now produced and installed. The detailed process of marrying sound with light took almost 4 weeks as lights were fitted, rejected and returned and then new ones were fitted and accepted in the painstaking process of integrating light and sound to develop the Panorama in the Bottle Tower as a truly visual and aural experience that made the audience feel that they were part of it.

Since October 2013 when the first audience arrived the Panorama has required just a single small repair. By March 2014 the Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle had had 2,960 direct visitors and an estimated 9,000 visitors arriving on a Castle Ticket. In 2015 the Altenburg Rotary Club printed a descriptive book of the Panorama in the Bottle Tower and a 12 minute film was produced describing the Panorama.

In 2015 the Castle museum donated a room in front of the Panorama so that the Public can watch the film and read about the History of the Panorama before visiting it 16 people can watch the Panorama at any one time. It is 6 metres high with a circumference of 20 metres and 120 square metres in total. It lasts 14 minutes and 58 seconds and is based on a day.

There were 15 local sponsors. The Panorama in the Bottle Tower at Altenburg Castle cost 100,000 euros with 92,000 euros coming from local businesses.

Please visit Anthony Lowe's website for more information and pictures of the panorama <http://www.anthonylowe.de/index.html> ◇



*Panorama in the Bottle Tower ©Anthony Lowe*

## Panorama Mesdag brought to life and on the move

By Ernst M. Storm



*Moving Mesdag on the Museum Square, Amsterdam  
©Panorama Mesdag*

As part of the festivities celebrating Mesdag's 100-year-old cultural legacy, a team of Panorama Mesdag, the Netherlands branch of Samsung, and Dutch documentary filmmaker and video artist Menno Otten have worked up the Mesdag Panorama into an all new experience: a digitalized version is on show on 14 enormous Samsung Curved S-UHD screens, each one meter high and with a diagonal of 2.2 meter (88 inch). The 360 degree screen placing and the surround sound make the visitor part of the Hague's shoreline, where Mesdag sketched

his panorama. But there is an even more tantalizing experience, because Menno Otten designed several adaptations, adding seasonal changes and subtle movements, making the panorama 'move' and travel through time.

In 'Moving Mesdag' there is smoke from a steamer on the horizon, horses trot on the beach, and the wind starts to play a role in the originally static and silent panorama experience. Now not only the daily changes in the weather conditions are notable, but very slowly the panorama turns from day to night, and encounters all seasons of the year several times on the same day.

Digital artist Otten merges the professional facilities of Samsung with the Mesdag family cultural heritage into a new experience. It was first on show in Amsterdam in August, during several cultural highlights, including the great maritime SAIL'15 experience and a place right between the Rijks Museum (photo) and the recently enlarged Van Gogh Museum. More travelling is being planned, and will be announced on [www.panorama-mesdag.com](http://www.panorama-mesdag.com).

Amsterdam was one of the only two other places the painted panorama ever travelled to in its early years. The German panorama production center of Munich was the other. The virtual travels are closely related to the roots of the 19<sup>th</sup> century panorama phenomenon, traveling the world, attracting and fascinating millions of people. Mesdag's panorama, however, only traveled twice, and was afterwards restored by the artist himself, who also took care of the exploitation of it until a few years before his death. This greatly helped to keep it in top condition. Now it is the oldest surviving real panorama in the world, still in its original location at Zeestraat 65, in the center of The Hague, attracting some 140,000 visitors

each year. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Mesdag put the city on the cultural map, both nationally and internationally. In addition to being a marine painter, Hendrik Willem Mesdag (1831-1915) was an entrepreneur, collector, organizer, Maecenas, and an important source of inspiration for many painters from The Hague School.

Until 4 October 2015 'Mesdags owned by the family' decorate the traditional and the new rooms in Panorama Mesdag. From 19 October – 6 March 2016 an exposition of antique stereo photographs from The Hague will be on show, and from 19 October – 20 March 2016 a new collection 'Sartorial Statues' by Peter George d'Angelino Tap, stressing the different use of color between H.W. Mesdag and Vincent van Gogh. His monumental haute couture is always in a dialogue with an imaginary environment. Trying to escape trend and time, multi-artist d'Angelino Tap is a fashion designer whose designs found their way to the world of theater, opera, and ballet – and now panoramas. ◇

## New publications

Sillevis, John. *'Panorama Mesdag Album'*, issued by Panorama Mesdag, The Hague, EUR 12,50, ISBN English version 978 90 5594 998 4 and 978 90 5594 997 7 in Dutch.

Madeline, Laurence / Bouiller, Jean-Roch, *J'aime les panoramas. S'appropriier le monde. Catalogue d'exposition au Musée Rath, à Genève, du 12 juin au 27 septembre 2015, et au MuCEM, à Marseille, du 4 novembre 2015 au 29 février 2016, Paris/Marseille/ Genève, 2015, ISBN 9782081363304*

Kern, Patrizia, *Panoramen des Krieges. Verhandlung nationaler Identität anhand der Inszenierung kriegerischer Gründungsmythen in türkischen Museen, 2002-2009, Dissertation, Heidelberg 2013 - Now available for download <http://www.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/archiv/18026>*

## Publication offer

A new offer to our members is a reduced wholesale price for orders of the 2010 IPC publication 'The Panorama in the Old World and the New', edited by Gabriele Koller M.A. in cooperation with Dr. Mimi Colligan.

IPC Members (and their museums/panoramas/universities) may now order wholesale priced at 16 EUR for (plurals of) 2 copies, postage included. A minimum retail selling price of 20 USD/copy or 15 EUR/copy is customary.

Order at: <http://panoramacouncil.org/en/shop>.

## Next newsletter

The next newsletter will be published in January 2016. Please send your information to [secretary@panoramacouncil.org](mailto:secretary@panoramacouncil.org) before 15 December 2015. ◇