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STORIES IN THE DARK LIGHT UP THE BEANEY

A unique contemporary exhibition using film, projection and sound opens at The Beaney House of Art & Knowledge in Canterbury on Saturday 19 March. The exhibition is co commissioned by The Beaney and the Whitstable Biennale

'Stories in the Dark' is curated by artist Ben Judd and will feature the work of nine specially selected artists who will use the magic lantern and other items from the Beaney's unique collections to stimulate and inspire new and contemporary artworks.

Invented in the 17th century, the magic lantern is a device akin to modern motion picture projectors. The lanterns created moving projections using oil lamps or candlelight through slides, creating breath-taking shows which brought projected moving images to audiences for the first time. The effect was spellbinding and imaginations were captured. Unsurprisingly, these intricate machines were often used by magicians and conjurers to create enthralling tales of ghosts and spirits.

In the digital age, technology is relied upon with little opportunity to understand its mechanisms. The magic lantern's relatively simple design provides a clear, slow-motion demonstration of how modern moving images work.

On Saturday 16 April, four unique live performances will take place throughout the Beaney. Original Victorian magic lantern machines and beautiful hand-painted slides will be used by artists, performers and musicians to create enchanting stories which intertwine Victorian tales with the contemporary. Full details and timings are at www.thebeaney.co.uk.

Chairman of Canterbury City Council's Community Committee, Cllr Neil Baker, said: *"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"*

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Director of Whitstable Biennale, Sue Jones, said: *“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.”*

Stories in the Dark is in the Beaney’s Special Exhibitions Room between Saturday 19 March and Sunday 19 June. Visitors are asked to make a ‘pay what you can’ donation in support of future temporary exhibitions. The exhibition is part of the Whitstable Biennale, which runs from 4 to 12 June, and also forms part of the programme of the University of Kent’s International Festival of Projections, which runs from 18 to 20 March.

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