



# PANORAMA

International Panorama Council

Newsletter 49 | January 2026

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## President's Greeting

Molly C. Briggs

As we begin the new year, the *IPC Newsletter* is settling into a new rhythm. Going forward, we'll release quarterly issues in a simple newsletter format, making it easier to share news and updates as they happen. Each summer, we'll bring those issues together in a designed annual digest, building on the glossy magazine format introduced in 2024. The summer edition will present new contributions alongside reprints from the previous three issues, offering a single place to revisit the year's activities and conversations. This new approach lets us stay connected throughout the year while still producing a designed annual volume that gathers everything together.

Meanwhile the [IPC News page](#) continues to present news on a day-to-day basis. Please share your news by completing the [IPC News form](#). You can choose for your contribution to be included in the newsletter, news webpage or both.

IPC's 2025 conference, *The World at a Glance: Panoramic and Peep Technologies*, hosted by Lusófona University and NOVA University's Art History Institute in Lisbon, was a wonderful success! The conference program gathered a vibrant community of researchers, artists, managers and conservators exploring immersive and optical media in all their variety. IPC deeply thanks our hosts and to everyone who took part. You can review the program, and details about all past conference programs dating back to 1992, on our [Past Conferences page](#).

At the General Assembly meeting in Lisbon, IPC's membership elected two new Honorary Members: **Sara Velas** (United States) and **Dominique Hanson** (Belgium). Honorary Membership is a lifetime distinction that recognizes individuals whose work and service have played a formative role in the panorama world and in the life of the IPC community. This brings the number of living [Honorary Members](#) to five!

Honoree **Sara Velas** is a renowned panorama painter, designer, showperson, performer, and tireless advocate for panoramic arts. She served as IPC President from 2014–2017 and as Co-President from 2020–2023, and over many years has been an exceptionally active contributor to IPC through both standing and ad-hoc committees. Sara currently serves on IPC's Advisory Board and Heritage Committee, and she co-edits the *Visual and Creative Essays* section of the *Panoramic & Immersive Media Studies (PIMS) Yearbook* alongside Ruby Carlson. Through her leadership, creative work, and sustained service, Sara has played a central role in shaping IPC's public

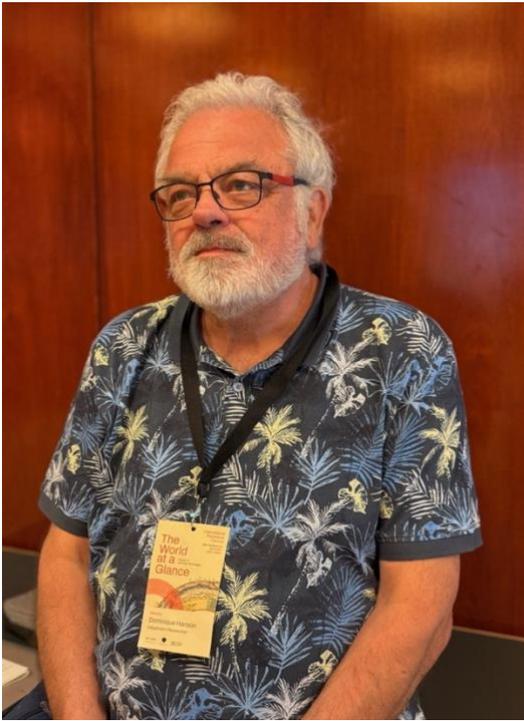
presence and internal culture and has been an extraordinary ambassador for panoramas and IPC.



L-R: Molly Briggs, Honorary IPC Member [Sara Velas](#), and Gabriele Koller at the 2025 Conference in Lisbon.

**Dominique Hanson's** lifetime Honorary Membership recognizes his formative influence in the panorama field and his many years of generous, steady service to the IPC. Dominique served as IPC Treasurer from 2017–2023, a role in which his care, reliability, and institutional knowledge were essential to the organization's stability and growth. He has been an exceptional advocate for IPC, working actively to develop institutional memberships and long-term partnerships, and maintaining sustained relationships with panorama organizations around the world. Formerly Director of the Royal Military Museum in Brussels, Dominique has brought deep professional experience, international perspective, and a collaborative spirit to IPC. His commitment has strengthened the organization in lasting ways, and we are delighted that he has agreed to accept this honor.

Plans are well underway for the **2026 IPC Conference!** **Save the date** for 23–25 September, with an optional post-conference tour on 26 September! Hosted by Panorama Konstanz and Yadegar Asisi, the conference will be held in the



Honorary IPC Member Dominique Hanson at the 2025 Conference in Lisbon. Image, Molly C. Briggs.

newly constructed eight-story building housing Asisi's newest panorama. While the subject matter has not yet announced, we can say that this new creation is a history panorama with place-based significance. And with panoramic top-floor views over Lake Konstanz and the surrounding region, this spectacular venue offers an extraordinary opportunity to think together about the past, present and future of the panoramas and

panoramic media. The call for presentation proposals will be released soon. Meanwhile, bookmark the [Upcoming Conference page](#), watch your inbox for further details, and [subscribe to our mailing list](#) if you have not already done so !

We are pleased to announce that the second volume of the *Panoramic & Immersive Media Studies Yearbook* is available for purchase as a full-color hardcover and as free Gold Open Digital Access. Access via the [IPC PIMS webpage](#), which links to the publisher's webpage. Volume 3 is currently in production, and the call for volume 4 will go live in coming weeks! Here again, if you would like to receive the call via email, just [subscribe to the IPC mailing list](#).

Finally, we are delighted to welcome **Peter Morelli** as editor of the IPC Newsletter. Peter is a retired city planner who helped in a major moving panorama conservation and presentation effort. His thoughtfulness and care are already shaping this publication in exciting ways. Thank you Peter for helping us bring the newsletter out on a more frequent and regular basis!

As always, IPC runs on the dedication of its volunteers. Not all are named here, but from the Executive Board to our topical committees, IPC is fueled by the expertise, creativity, effort and laughter of an incredible group of colleagues and friends. If you'd like to get involved, just reach out to [secretariat@panoramacouncil.org](mailto:secretariat@panoramacouncil.org). We welcome help in many ways, so just let us know how you might like to bring your skills to IPC! ●

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## IPC's Mission & Purpose

The International Panorama Council (IPC) is an international non-governmental and not-for-profit association, subject to Swiss law, that supports the

conservation and interpretation of heritage panoramas dating from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also promotes awareness of the broader panorama phenomenon, including its historic offshoots and current developments. IPC is active in the fields of panorama restoration, research, financing, exhibiting, marketing, and publishing. It promotes professional trusteeship and stimulates interdisciplinary discourse on historic and contemporary panoramas, moving panoramas, dioramas, and related ephemera, and related contemporary media including photography, film, video, and electronic VR interfaces. Throughout these efforts, IPC strives to connect the past, present and future of the panorama phenomenon worldwide.

## Fascinating Visual Spectacles

The word “panorama” is common in modern languages. However, this term was originally coined in the eighteenth century to describe a new, spectacular, and extraordinarily influential invention. A Panorama—or Cyclorama, as it has been called in some places and times—is a purpose-built architectural structure containing a large 360-degree painting that affords the visual and somatic illusion of standing in the middle of an actual place and/or event. Natural lighting from a cleverly concealed source enlivens the virtual experience. The panorama built upon earlier immersive interfaces such as the Eidophusikon, and in turn inspired a fascinating array of immersive and interactive interfaces including the Diorama, Cosmorama, Mareorama, Moving Panorama, etc. Some heritage panoramas survive to the present day, and new panoramas are being created in the twenty-first century.

## IPC Newsletter

The IPC Newsletter has been published semi-regularly since 2005 and currently publishes quarterly. It is edited by Peter Morelli with assistance from IPC’s Outreach Committee.

## IPC Executive Board

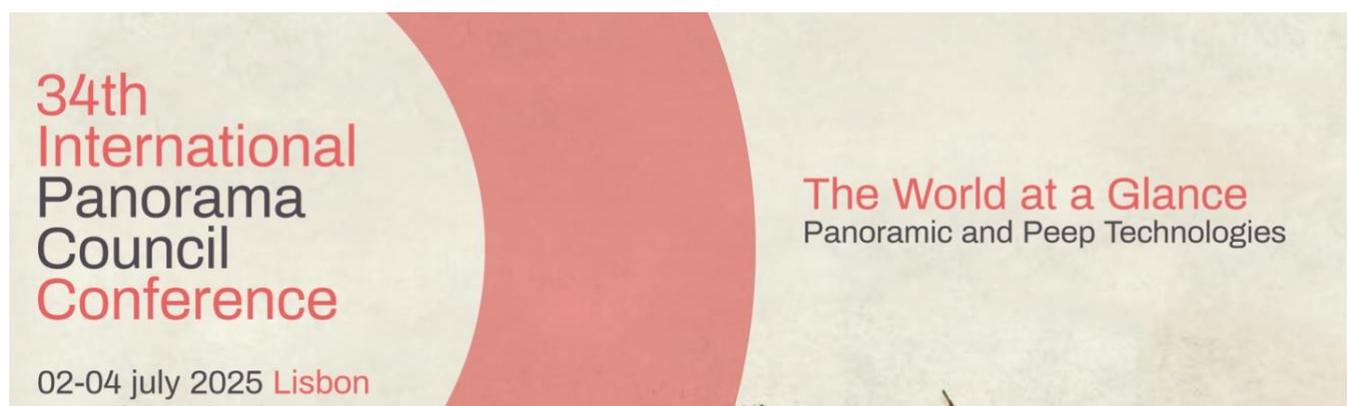
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## The World at a Glance—Panoramic and Peep Technologies

*Attendees Reflect on the 34<sup>th</sup> IPC Conference*

### Celebrating the Lisbon Conference and IPC's All-Embracing View

*by Peter Morelli*

The 2004 IPC conference in New York was the just the second outside of Europe and it included a presentation on a moving panorama. One participant questioned aloud the addition of the moving panorama to the circular panorama topics in the conference and the focus of the 11 previous IPC conferences. Paraphrasing after 21 years: “Why are we talking about this? These do not alter reality like the (circular) panorama.”

Perhaps not like the circular panorama, but the moving panorama surely presented an altered and wondrous reality both to theater goers in cities and especially to rural audiences in small country halls. While skeptical of the moving panorama, about which much less was known two decades ago, that member captured what would become the essence of IPC's member interests -- the altered perceptions created by the many artistic entertainments.

Dozens of other reality-altering, time-and-place-distorting, and optical reorienting devices, presentations and shows, have for centuries entertained, informed, and delighted large audiences in theaters and purpose-built panorama buildings,

but also viewers one at a time in parlors, on street corners, and at fairgrounds.

“The World at a Glance: Panoramic and Peep Technologies,” in July 2025, our 34th IPC annual conference, explored and recognized the relationships among these visual media and the long and growing interest in them by IPC members. Our gracious and helpful hosts played a major role. They presented as a major public exhibit a walk-in VR version of a Lisbon cosmorama parlor that combined new technology with the old.

The relationships among the various media have sometimes been recognized. The artists, promoters, showman, and impresarios often participated in multiple media types. Any researcher looking at ads and articles in 19th century newspapers, not to mention handbills and broadsides, knows it can be difficult to determine whether a promoted show was actually a panorama, a magic lantern, or some other performance with a grandiose and fungible description.

More recently collectors and curators such as Richard Balzer, Erkki Huhtamo, Ana David Mendes, and Jonathan Gestetner have brought together objects and documents recognizing the relationship, if not unity, among these reality-altering technologies.

Our 34th conference explicitly explored and celebrated these diverse expressions of the interests of IPC members. To continue the celebration, we solicited brief reactions on some of the presentations at the Lisbon conference from both long time and new IPC members. We share those here. ●



Conference attendees at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The 34<sup>th</sup> IPC Conference – *The World at a Glance: Panoramic and Peep Technologies*. Lisbon, July 2-4, 2025.

## An Anecdotal Experience of a First Encounter by Philip Hunt

December 2024, on my way to the open forum of the game creators club, in a corridor of Lusofona University, why was there an illuminated facsimile of a painting inside a wooden cabinet with a triptych of lenses pointed at it? I had to know more. It was this first curiosity that led me to the IPC conference.

In the following days, during my research for the word “Cosmorama” (which seemed the significant description for the contraption), I read about Barkers panorama. I felt like I discovered a secret, or infrequently discussed, piece of media history.

As a student of art, I knew the difference between portrait and landscape in painting, I was aware of scrolls from the orient, and I was aware of cinema’s prehistory of zoetropes and story lanterns, and its varying widescreen formats. I had experienced virtual technologies and photographic algorithms that help create panoramic photos. I didn’t know way back in the 18th century, before cinema, a Scottish painter made a custom piece of architecture to facilitate an immersive experience.

After some further study of the IPC website, it is there that I connected the Cosmorama mock-up to the IPC

conference. At the conference, I had the strange sensation of the foundations and connections of visual art and media being reformulated in my mind. I became more aware of immersion. One point Nick Lowe made in his presentation stuck with me; to paraphrase: Like a conspiracy theorist, the more you become aware of the panoramic, the more you start to see its possible influence on every piece of media. ●

A new IPC member and first-time conference attendee, Phillip Hunt designs video games in Lisbon.



IPC members on the post-conference tour visiting the 1919 panoramic First World War memorial murals (1919) by Adriano de Sousa Lopes (Portugese, 1878–1944). The Great War Room in the Military Museum of Lisbon. Image, Victor Flores.

## Sparks of Inspiration—The IPC Holds a Broadband Welcoming Conference

by *Sophia Farmer*

I had the special opportunity of attending the 34th International Panorama Council Conference in Lisbon. It was with pleasant surprise that I felt quite welcome and at home among such brilliant academics and artists. Alison Campbell, my co-presenter and collaborator and I were afraid our experimental media and theory might fall flat or stick out too strangely among a group with such well researched niches. However, we were excited to meet other freaks like us; some enamored with animating and expanding once static ceramic tiled worlds such as Philip Hunt. While others, such as Diaa

Lagan, obsessed over preserving and adding to the illustrated watery worlds of Islamic Cartographies. It was easy to be overwhelmed with information during a schedule packed with presentations but there was plenty of time to sit back and gather sparks of inspiration for future projects.

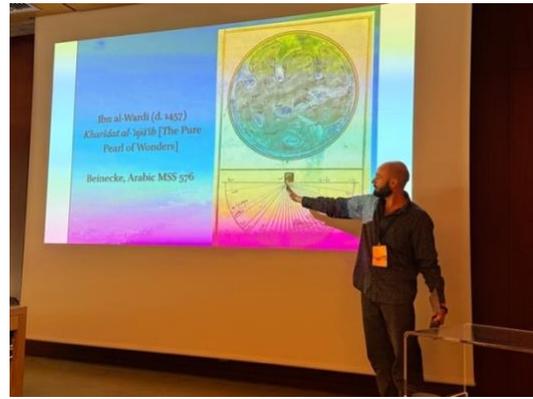
In “Portals for Seeing Close-up and Far Away,” Lowe captured the feeling of what it was like to take a train across the country in the late 1800s. The first map featured, “Trans-continental Illustrated,” is unique in that it doubles as an advertisement for train tickets, the promise of fantastical

transportation or escape, often characteristic of peeping technologies, is front and center. This panel of presenters marks a notable difference to the other conference sessions in that it did not seek to explore recorded peeping machinery but rather to posit a panoramic map as a more poetic peeping technology of transportation.

Whereas a stereoscope might promise to transport you somewhere, this map allows you to take the next step with the advertised travel across “The Switzerland of America.” This panoramic promise of adventure even advertises, “the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad are now prepared to arrange with parties that are desirous of visiting or colonizing in California, Nevada, Nebraska, or at any point along the Union and Central Pacific Railways, at Greatly Reduced Rates.”

In a second map called “From Ocean to Ocean! Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad” (the New York Printing Company, New York, c. 1869), Lowe explored a page detailing a so-called drawing room coach. The image reveals how the car conditions offer more windows to peer through while witnessing the landscape upon which we are invited to visit or colonize. The camera, as Lowe notes, the aperture, is evoked in the two-dimensional here, as if we are capturing the image of the landscape ourselves. During Lowe’s presentation I was reminded of the transportation I took to arrive in Lisbon from Chicago, the flight first pulled into Paris, meandering above French countryside and farmland. The farmland wiggled and waved in organic shapes where it appears rigid and squared off in the United States, related to water irrigation differences. Some of the maps we were shown were long form, we felt and unfolded them ourselves, they mimicked ribbons, meant to be held with others to generate discussion.

The fantastical, immersive and magisterial qualities of panoramas as documented through maps were critically explored on this panel. Diaan Lagan and Nicholas Lowe question this idea of “a journey in a single line.” I wonder what my road trips look like or my moving back and forth across the U.S., I am certain they zigzag. In “Reading Islamic Cartographies: Panoramic and Spatial Representation in



Diaan Lagan, presenting his paper, “Reading Islamic Cartographies: Panoramic and Spatial Representation in Al-Istakhrī’s Work (Kitāb Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik).” Friday, July 4, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon. Photo: N. Lowe

Al-Istakhrī’s Work (Kitāb Al-Masālik wa al-Mamālik), we witness further perspectives of how maps are shaped by their intention and use. Lagan extends this world of map making and employs panorama as art practice. Through the featured maps, spirituality and spiritual pilgrimages are highlighted as “cosmographic.”

Water becomes a grounding force, “a liminal space for imagination.” The stylized illustration featured in the maps Lagan discussed struck me, as similar to illustration styles that have peaked in popularity in the art and design world recently. Alison and I discussed this phenomenon in the uber back to the hotel, how by contrast, the current illustration style sometimes lacks the lineage, symbolism or spirituality that was evident in Lagan’s work. One might mistakenly compare the watery, spiritual shapes and trending design to Matisse, who heavily drew his inspiration from Morocco and other Islamic ornamentation. *La Chapelle Matisse*, a chapel in France designed by Matisse with stained glass comes to mind. As academics and artists, we are tasked with being critical of these visual histories and uncovering the legacy of use behind each object. ●

A first-time attendee to the IPC and the annual conference, Sophia Farmer liked what she found.

## *The Analog Panorama in Times of New Technological Possibilities—*

Keynote lecture by Yadegar Asisi, architect & panorama artist, Berlin, Germany

*Reviewed by Gabriele Koller*

Renowned artist Yadegar Asisi, with more than 20 years of experience creating panoramas, focused his lecture on whether the panorama can be regarded as a contemporary art form. Since opening his first “Panometer” in Leipzig, Germany in 2003, the artist has continuously made use of new technologies, establishing the panorama as an extremely successful twenty-first-century art form. However, he is most concerned that the use of immersive technologies only makes sense when combined with meaningful content. Today, new digital developments have made it possible to create huge spaces and gigantic projections. With regard to panoramas, Asisi asks whether they still have a place in our fast-moving world, and if they can be used in new contexts and for new purposes.



Artist Yadegar Asisi, conducting a day-long drawing workshop on the first day of the IPC Conference. Tuesday, July 1, hosted by the Early Visual Media Lab, Lusófona University, Lisbon.

In his first version of the Pergamon Panorama, completed in 2011–12, Asisi explored a new application of the panorama in relation to the demands of the museum world. The

Pergamon Museum, located on Berlin’s Museum Island, is named after the famous ancient Pergamon Altar, which is its central exhibit. Asisi intended to bring the altar to life and help visitors better understand it. In the museum exhibition, the altar was displayed in a room in front of a wall. To show visitors that the original altar stood free and could be seen from all sides, Asisi placed a mirror behind the altar and the wall, creating the illusion of depth.

In Asisi’s Pergamon Panorama, the altar is integrated into the historic landscape of Pergamon, helping visitors understand its size in relation to its surroundings. The second version of the Pergamon Panorama, which opened in Berlin in 2017 in a new building opposite the Bode Museum, enhances the historical aspect by depicting the altar as a place of bloody sacrifice, rather than white as in the museum. Additionally, an exhibition of original artifacts from the museum accompanies the panorama. These artifacts are presented in a way that adds dramatic effect to the topic. Together, the panorama and exhibition aim to enhance the perception of the altar beyond its previous presentation in the museum.

One of the main goals of Asisi’s panoramic work has been to make historical subjects understandable and bring lost historical sites to life. In addition to Rome and Pergamon, the artist has experimented with recreating famous ancient sites, such as Karnak and Babylon. There is more to come! ●

Gabriele Koller is a long-time member of IPC and currently serves as our elected Vice President.

## **On the Lisbon Cosmorama Exhibition**

*By Silvia Bordini*

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, optical views became widespread in Western visual culture. These devices,

which combined painting and optical instruments, created views of landscapes, natural settings, monuments, and famous cities, in order to give an observer the sensation of undertaking a series of visual journeys without moving, between vision and imagination, entertainment, illusion, instruction and surprise.

Among these instruments, the Cosmorama was famous: invented in Paris in 1808 and rapidly spread throughout Europe and America, it consisted of small oil paintings viewed through convex lenses and equipped with perspective devices and mirrors that enhanced and amplified the view with effects of brightness and relief.



Victor Flores introduces a group of IPC visitors to the exhibition “Cosmorama in Lisbon — Virtual Travels in the Nineteenth Century,” at the Cinemateca Portuguesa, Lisbon. Image, N. Lowe.

The magic of these pictorial spectacles was analyzed by several interventions at the 34th IPC Conference, “The World at a Glance: Panoramic and Peep Technologies,” and lived on for three months in the unique exhibition titled “Cosmorama in Lisbon—Virtual Travels in the Nineteenth Century,” at the Cinemateca Portuguesa in Lisbon.

Visiting this exhibition was for me an important and enjoyable experience, not only for the opportunity to see rare and fascinating historical artifacts but also for the impact offered by the interaction between the ancient Cosmorama and the modern immersive technologies of virtual reality that the exhibition organizers chose to utilize. The result was a process mediated between physical perception and virtual interpretation that brings the nineteenth-century virtual journey to the present day and integrates the old effect with the contemporary imagery.

Furthermore, visiting this exhibition was a further confirmation of the fundamental methodology I have adopted in my research over many years, that is, placing great importance on the study of artistic techniques—materials and processes in all possible historical and current articulations—as a tool for knowledge and interpretation in the field of art history. ●

After writing her first book on the panorama in the 1980s, Silvia Bordini moved on to other aspects of visual culture while teaching at The University of Rome La Sapienza.

## Monocular Vision, Lost Peep-Boxes, Cosmoramas and Wallpaper: Jean-Claude Brunner describes four conference presentations

*Monocular Vision and 17th-Century Dutch Perspective Boxes. Presented by Justina Spencer, University of King’s College, Halifax, Nova Scotia.*

The Italian renaissance applied the rules of geometry to realistically represent space on flat surfaces. A century later, the Dutch applied those rules in three dimensions: A perspective box creates a perfect illusion of space when watched through a

pinhole. These are a testament to the artist’s skill and a perfect amusement for the owners of such boxes.

Justina Spencer’s talk presented the collection of Dutch perspective boxes in the Royal Danish Kunstkammer in Copenhagen. The church interiors can be identified as Lutheran, Reformed, or Roman-Catholic, so that the artists must have been familiar with the distinctive elements as well as the technique to create the illusion. Re-creating nature in art is a bold claim that the viewers both then and now appreciate. One of the painters might have been Carel Fabritius, the topic of Benjamin Binstock’s talk.

Recovering [Carel Fabritius' Lost Peep-Boxes](#) and Proto-Panoramas. Presented by Benjamin Binstock, independent scholar, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

The Dutch painter Carel Fabritius is world-renowned for one painting in particular, the Goldfinch. The promising artist's career was brutally ended when he perished from the explosion of Delft's powder magazine. Benjamin Binstock has made it his mission to enlarge the slim surviving oeuvre of Carel Fabritius. He has tracked down one source that hints at the possibility that the Dutch perspective boxes in Copenhagen might have been painted by Fabritius. This promising lead needs further proof to make the attribution stick.

For the other attributions of paintings to Fabritius, Binstock relies heavily on similarity of topic, models and technique, which is not yet enough to convince the community of art historians. For panorama enthusiasts, [Fabritius's View of Delft](#) is the most intriguing painting as it features a distortion effect that likely was balanced by a viewing apparatus. There remains a lot to be discovered about Carel Fabritius.

*Colonial Landscapes at Home: Nineteenth-Century French Panoramic Wallpapers Inside Twenty-First-Century US Homes.* Presented by Blagovesta Momchedjikova, New York University, USA.

The Alsatian company [Zuber](#) has been producing exquisite wallpapers since 1797. Formerly sipping tea and chocolate or smoking cigars was restricted to kings and the highest nobility in their palaces. Thanks to Zuber's wallpapers the merely rich could transform their smoking rooms into a luxurious exotic fantasy of travelling to distant places such as India, China or America.

Having presented the company and its works, Blagovesta Momchedjikova highlighted one particular set of wallpapers, the 1834 Views of North America. Interestingly, the wallpaper was not only popular in Europe but also in North America as well where gentlemen liked to relax in a faux-exotic America from the real world outside. The White House installed its Views of North America wallpaper in 1961.

What was progressive and idyllic in 1834, is sometimes no longer politically correct in today's world. The talk presented

various ways to manage protests, interventions and takedowns of the historic wallpapers.

*Cosmoramaic Views by Hubert Sattler (1817—1904) and His Father Johann Michael Sattler (1786 1847).* Presented by Katja Mittendorfer-Oppolzer, Salzburg Museum, Austria.

Hubert Sattler featured prominently in Lisbon's Cosmorama exhibition at the Cinemateca Portuguesa. The Salzburg Museum in Austria holds the largest collection of works by Hubert Sattler and hosts the Salzburg panorama painting by his father Johann Michael Sattler. Curator Katja Mittendorfer-Oppolzer's talk presented the work of the two artists and gave a glimpse of the future UNESCO World Heritage Welcome Center in Salzburg's Mirabell Palace gardens.

Travelling alongside his father and family around Europe with a bulky city panorama, Hubert Sattler started painting cosmoramas that lend themselves better for travelling exhibitions. Hubert Sattler's cosmoramas are filled with a cinematic touch that draws the viewer in. The immersion effect is enhanced by the use of spherical lenses. Hubert Sattler gifted his collection to the city of Salzburg that built a Panorama Museum in the Mirabell gardens. It lasted until 1937.



Watercolor drawing of the view from Almada Hill of the Port of Lisbon, Ca. 1812. Henry Aston Barker (1774–1856). Image, Victor Flores.

The Salzburg panorama had to vacate its location to make way for an [art museum expansion](#) and shift to a new location near the original Panorama Museum. Called “Orangery Salzburg Panorama | World Heritage”, the Salzburg Panorama is set to re-open in 2026 in the Orangery on two floors. ●

Jean-Claude Brunner is a long-time IPC member and conference attendee who currently serves on IPC's auditing committee.



Top: IPC conference attendees taking in an evening view of the Port of Lisbon from Almada Hill, with Barker's Lisbon Panorama key (Ca. 1812). Left to right: Melissa Wolf, Chiara Masiero Sgrinzatto, Teresa Flores, Oleksandr Lyashchenko, and Sara Velas. Image, Victor Flores.



The view of the Port of Lisbon from Almada Hill, with Barkers Lisbon Panorama key (Ca. 1812). Left to right: Katie Algeo and Chiara Masiero Sgrinzatto. Image, N. Lowe.

# The Cosmorama in Lisbon: From nineteenth-century lenses to virtual reality

by José Candeias

From 28 June to 10 September 2025, the *Cinemateca Portuguesa—Museu do Cinema* hosted the exhibition *The Cosmorama in Lisbon – Virtual Travelling in the 19th Century*, a show dedicated to rediscovering a once-popular but now largely forgotten medium of 19th-century visual culture. Curated by Victor Flores, Susana S. Martins, and Ana David Mendes, the exhibition was a joint project of the Early Visual Media Lab (CICANT, Lusófona University) and the Art History Institute (IHA, NOVA FCSH/IN2PAST), developed as part of the FCT-funded research project *Curiositas – Peeping Before Virtual Reality*.

One of the exhibition's main attractions was the reconstruction of a historical Cosmorama, featuring three lenses through which visitors could view images just as 19th-century audiences once did. This reconstruction showcased works by Austrian painter Hubert Sattler (1817–1904), whose collection of 138 oil paintings — preserved today at the Salzburg Museum — forms the largest surviving collection of images made for Cosmoramas. A highlight was *The Mouth of the Tagus near Lisbon* (1868), capturing a striking 19th-century view of the city's riverfront and maritime activity.



A nineteenth-century Cosmorama room was recreated, allowing visitors to peer through lenses at paintings by Austrian artist Hubert Sattler (1817–1904). Image, Oleksandr Lyashchenko.

The curatorial project also introduced visitors to related visual media, such as zograscoptes, paper peepshows, polyorama panoptiques, and stereoscopes. Displayed alongside paintings and prints documenting itinerant optical entertainments in Portugal, these objects situated the Cosmorama within the broader ecology of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century visual culture.



The exhibition positioned the Cosmorama alongside other media devices and images of the nineteenth century. Image, Oleksandr Lyashchenko.

Bridging past and present, a VR Cosmorama recreated the Grand Optical Gallery of Austrian showman Thomas Karl Andorfer. The two-part experience first invited visitors to look through six virtual lenses, each reflecting a key theme from 19th-century Cosmorama displays: Cities, Monuments, Religion, Crystal Palaces, Current Affairs, and Nature. The second part offered an interactive map tracing the routes and identities of travelling showmen across the Iberian Peninsula between 1830 and 1870, reconstructed from hundreds of historical advertisements.



Thomas Karl Andorfer's Grand Optical Gallery was digitally reimaged in VR, inviting visitors to look through six thematic lenses. A virtual map extended the journey, charting the routes of Cosmorama showmen. Image, Oleksandr Lyashchenko.

The parallel exhibition programme included more than fifteen guided tours, some organised together with the 34th International Panorama Council Conference, held in Lisbon from 2–4 July 2025. These visits offered both experts and the

public a unique opportunity to explore the history and cultural impact of Cosmoramas. On 6 September, the programme also featured the launch of *Cosmorama. The Forgotten Medium*, a book edited by Victor Flores and Susana S. Martins, and published by the Early Visual Media Lab with the Art History Institute, NOVA FCSH. This groundbreaking volume — issued in both Portuguese and English — explores the images, itinerant showmen, routes, and audiences of this forgotten medium. The e-book version is freely available for access. The

launch event included a presentation by Gabriele Koller, curator of the Panorama Museum in Altötting, Germany, and Vice President of the International Panorama Council. The *Cosmorama in Lisbon—Virtual Travelling in the Nineteenth Century* offered an unprecedented opportunity to re-experience the sensory and cultural impact of this once-celebrated visual medium. ●

The book of *Cosmorama. The Forgotten Medium* is freely available for access [here](#).



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## From Archives to Audiences: ERC “Science at the Fair” project disseminates research through exhibition and open-access database

by Bart Moens

In collaboration with the Museum of Daily Life, Huis van Alijn (Ghent), the ERC-funded Science at the Fair (SciFair) project has curated the exhibition “Foorwonder,” which explores the intersections of science, spectacle, and popular entertainment at the late-19th- and early-20th-century fairgrounds. “Foorwonder” presents historical research

alongside a wide range of surviving objects, including immersive and peep media such as magic lanterns, stereoscopes, mutoscopes, and an exceptional megaethoscope once owned by a travelling show person. Visitors encounter a vibrant panorama of attractions that once animated European fairgrounds: anatomical museums, mechanical theatres, optical

illusions, early cinema, and more. The exhibition runs until 26 April 2026 at Huis van Alijn, Kraanlei 65, 9000 Ghent, Belgium. More information is available via the [museum's website](#).



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In parallel with the exhibition, the SciFair project has launched its [open-access database](#). Drawing on interdisciplinary research at the University of Antwerp, this curated online archive assembles information on the role of itinerant show people in circulating science, knowledge, and visual culture across Western Europe (1850–1914). The database consolidates archival materials from diverse collections—ephemera such as posters, broadsides, engravings, postcards, and photographs, as well as administrative records, correspondence, journals, newspapers, and objects like anatomical wax models,

containing over 6,000 historical sources, nearly 8,000 attractions, and close to 4,000 individual show people. From enthusiasts to scholars, all are invited to explore the database! (There is lots of interesting stuff there! —ed.) ●



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## Member News and Announcements

### **Sylvia Alting Van Geusau to join Allard-Pierson Museum in Amsterdam as curator and team leader for the performing arts collection.**

Sylvia Alting Van Geusau, a recognized expert in panorama studies, theater, and art history, and a long-time member of the IPC, has assumed the role of curator and team leader for the performing arts collection at the Allard Pierson Museum in Amsterdam. She succeeds Hans van Keulen.

As part of the University of Amsterdam, the Allard Pierson Museum operates as both a museum and a research center, dedicated to making its scholarly collections accessible to a broader public. Its vast and diverse holdings span numerous fields, including archaeology, literature, cartography,

and the performing arts. From music and theater to circus arts and historical performance, the museum's archives offer a rich, multidisciplinary foundation for Sylvia's interdisciplinary curatorial approach.

Sylvia holds a Master's in Art Studies from the University of Amsterdam, where her thesis focused on 19th-century panoramas in the city. Since 2019, she has served as a librarian and research skills instructor at the Academy of Theatre and Dance in Amsterdam. In 2021, she deepened her connection to Allard Pierson, working as a freelance information specialist for the Performing Arts team. Her scholarly contributions include research on the distinguished Amsterdam art dealers Frans Buffa & Zonen for the Netherlands Institute for Art History, as well as articles for Theaterwetenschap aan de Amstel (Theater

Studies on the Amstel). Outside her academic duties, Sylvia is the editor-in-chief of the open-access Journal of Media History and secretary of the board at De Nieuwe Toneelbibliotheek (The New Theatre Library), part of a commitment to expanding access to performance-related knowledge.

In her new role, Sylvia plans to amplify the visibility of the museum's collections, prioritizing accessibility, inclusion, and community engagement. She believes that performance heritage—like panoramas—thrives when it is actively shared, critically examined, and discussed in public forums.



Photo: Sylvia Alting Van Geusau

For Sylvia, the performing arts collections at Allard Pierson are “not static repositories, but living archives of experience and expression.” Under her leadership, these collections will continue to provide immersive and thought-provoking encounters with the past, sparking new perspectives and conversations for audiences today. To learn more about Sylvia Alting Van Geusau, find this link to the [Allard Pierson](#) website.

Thanks to Daniela Chico.

**Mesdag Panorama Now a National Museum.** The Museum Panorama Mesdag, (Netherlands), with the famous panorama painting of Scheveningen, will be a national museum from 1 January 2026. This was announced by Minister Moes (Education, Culture and Science). The museum is in difficult financial straits. The descendants of Hendrik Willem Mesdag

and Sientje Mesdag-van Houten have therefore decided to transfer the collection and the museum building to the State. In this way, this unique and impressive heritage remains accessible to the Dutch and international public.

[Museum Panorama Mesdag wordt rijksmuseum: uniek erfgoed behouden | Nieuwsbericht | Rijksoverheid.nl](#)

Thanks to Patrick Deicher.

**The Sphere: An All Encompassing View.** As IPC members know, “panorama” was a neologism based on Greek elements meaning all encompassing view. 2025 saw the completion of The Sphere in Las Vegas, Nevada. It's a huge dome designed for very large surround-projections for very large audiences.

A [New York Times article](#) describes a manipulated production of the classic Wizard of Oz movie, reworked with artificial intelligence, to be viewed in The Sphere, which seats about 18,000 people. (The huge old movie palaces of the 1920/30s seated 2500-3000.) Ticket prices start at \$109.

Our friend Suzanne Wray, who called this new attraction to our attention, once presented on Chase's Electric Cyclorama, which was to project lantern slides to create one huge circular image around the inside of a panorama rotunda in Chicago. Chase intended for his venue to be a domed one, but the Electric Cyclorama never worked out.

For The Sphere ‘...artificially generated images were added to scenes to make the original movie big enough to fill the venue's massive screen, which wraps up, over and around the audience.,’ according to the newspaper. There are some special effects added as well. Maybe if Chase had had access to AI, Suzanne wonders....

Thanks to Suzanne Wray

**N. C. Wyeth Re-installed in Large Format.** A huge mural painted during the depression by American illustrator N. C. Wyeth has been reinstalled in a circular barn on grandson Jamie Wyeth's Point Lookout Farm, outside Wilmington, Delaware, and near the Wyeth studios in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. Wyeth's mural is 60 feet long and 19 feet high. “For three quarters of a century, it hung behind the tellers in the downtown Wilmington Savings Fund Society, inspiring visions of thrift and industry,” according to the [New York Times](#).

It is a big painting, but not originally circular. Of interest to IPC members may be detailed descriptions of the challenges of restoration to the damaged painting. The painting is accessible from the nearby Brandywine Museum of Art.

Thanks to Suzanne Wray

### **Sara Velas named a Fellow at LAIH at USC.**

IPC member Sara Velas has been named a Fellow at the Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at the University of Southern California. The Institute released this biography of Sara:

Sara Velas is an artist, curator, graphic designer, gardener, urban humanist and native Los Angeleno. She is the Founder and Director of the Velaslavasay Panorama, an institution dedicated to the panorama phenomenon that she established in the year 2000 on Hollywood Boulevard to explore tropes of cinema and visual storytelling in collaboration with a wide range of artists, designers, movie makers, cultural practitioners and more.

An Honorary Member of the International Panorama Council, Velas led the creation of the world's only collaborative USA><China panorama. Sara and her longtime collaborator Ruby Carlson are founders of Immersive Research Media Associates 360, a consulting project on immersive art and entertainment, and serve as editors for the Visual and Creative Essays section of the Panorama and Immersive Media Studies Yearbook, published by DeGruyter. Born in Panorama City, California, Sara Velas studied Painting in St. Louis at the tail end of the 20th century, receiving her BFA from Washington University in 1999.

### **Panorama Resources at the Crankie Factory Site.**

IPC Member Sue Truman's web site is devoted to crankies, small moving panorama-like "story telling machinery." Sue has demonstrated crankies at IPC conferences. But the site also has one of the most complete collections of panorama related information on the web. It's always a treat to visit [The Crankie Factory](#) online.

Thanks to Peter Morelli.

**Ralph Hyde—A Legacy of Helping.** Late member Ralph Hyde left behind an incredible legacy of books and articles on panoramas and other visual media. Ralph was known as a very generous colleague. Before the internet made things a bit easier, you could send Ralph a letter in London with a question about a panorama or an artist, and expect the carefully crafted return letter across the Atlantic a couple weeks later. (That's really how we used to do research.) One of Ralph's major research efforts, available to all on the web, is the "Dictionary of Panoramists of the English-Speaking World." Many IPC members contributed. It's 540 pages long, with thousands of entries. Find it at the [Bill Douglas Cinema Museum](#).

Thanks to Peter Morelli

### **Asisi Drawing workshop at IPC 2025 Conference.**

Panorama artist Yadegar Asisi gave a fascinating keynote on the "analog panorama" in current times at our Lisbon conference. (See Gabriele Koller's description in this issue.) It might be safe to say that Asisi's first love is drawing. About 20 of us were fortunate to attend a pre-conference full-day drawing class before the opening of the conference. Asisi is a great teacher of drawing. You, too, can study drawing with Asisi on [his YouTube channel](#), which is mostly dedicated to teaching drawing. (If you don't speak German, YouTube does an adequate job of translating if you push the right buttons.)

Thanks to Peter Morelli

### **Arts & Media Archaeology: Living Histories; Or, Hands on for a Deeper Understanding. 6–10 July 2026.**

University of Antwerp City Campus. Deadline: 12 March for early bird and non-EU citizens, 11 May for regular registration.

The 2026 edition of the Arts and Media Archaeology Summer School will focus on the interplay between media developments and performative culture, spanning from the late eighteenth century to the present day. Through lectures, artist talks, re-enactments and interactive hands-on experimentation, the summer school programme aims to foster students' ability to think through media by questioning their materiality, sensory properties, and its role as a historical source. Across five days, we will explore how hands-on engagement with media devices - from magic lanterns and anatomical models to panoramas and virtual reality environments - can activate new forms of historical understanding. This approach resonates

with a broader turn in the humanities toward material and sensory epistemologies - ways of knowing that emerge from doing.

This Summer School is aimed at research MA and PhD students and more advanced scholars in the field of Arts, Performance, Film, Media and Cultural History from the University of Antwerp and other universities in Belgium and abroad. Successful completion can be awarded with 6 credits in accordance with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Course content includes:

- Lectures and interactive sessions by Deirdre Feeney, Erkki Huhtamo, Melissa Ferrari, Melissa Van Drie, Monica van der Haagen-Wulff, Rod Bantjes, and more confirmed speakers to follow
- Group projects and exchange sessions where participants share their own skills and research
- Field trips to the Ghent University Museum (GUM) and the Photo Museum Antwerp (FOMU)
- An evening magic lantern lecture performance
- Opportunities for networking through communal lunches, a reception, and a social dinner for participants, organizers, and speakers

You can find more information and the registration link on the University of Antwerp [Summer School website](#). Stay up to date on this summer school and future events through their [newsletter](#), [Facebook](#), and [blog](#). The Summer School is organized in the framework of “Science at the Fair: Performing Knowledge and Technology in Western Europe, 1850–1914.” See [Science at the Fair](#) for more information.



Thanks to Bart Moens.

**Asisi’s Panorama of the Antarctic Opens January 24, 2026 in Leipzig, Germany.** Honorary IPC member Yadegar Asisi’s newest panorama puts “the world’s coldest region in the spotlight—showcasing the land and marine environments around the South Pole, bordered by Patagonia in South America and Cape Agulhas in South Africa, as well as Tasmania and New Zealand.” Learn more at <https://www.asisi.de/en/panorama/antarctica>.



Antarctica exhibition. Image, Leipzig Tourismus und Marketing GmbH.

Thanks to Gabriele Koller and Molly Briggs.

**Save the Date! 35th IPC Conference: Panoramas and the Future, 23–25 September with an optional post-conference tour 26 September.** Hosted by Panorama Konstanz and Yadegar Asisi, the conference will be held in the newly constructed eight-story rotunda housing Asisi’s newest panorama. The call for presentation proposals will be released soon. Meanwhile, bookmark the [Upcoming Conference page](#), watch your inbox for further details, and [subscribe to our mailing list!](#)

Thanks to Gabriele Koller and Molly Briggs.