Workshop “Yellow Face, Yellow Peril”
during

THE RED LANTERN
- Early cinema in dialogue with historical setting and context -

18 October 2010 - 10.00 > 17.00 (doors 9.30)
The Museums of the Far East (Chinese Pavilion, Laken)

During the screenings of ‘The Red Lantern’ (1919) at the Museums of the Far East, a workshop takes place, studying several important aspects that determined the film and still dominate its perception. The sheer irritation that was caused by the projected image of Chinese life in The Red Lantern is taught to have triggered the establishment of one of the first Chinese film production companies. By the end of the nineteen teens cinema had completely adopted the yellowface practice that stemmed from theatre, operetta and vaudeville. White actors were free to create stereotypes and to replace cultural dialogue by an obsession for bound feet... In addition, film was being used to ‘shock’ the home front into mobilisation against the Boxer rebellion (1900), one of the first fully mediatised incidents in world history. Re-enacted news events attested to the cruelties committed by the yellow race against poor white folks “who meant nothing more than to bring progress and civilisation.”

Free access for all, screening of The Red Lantern included.
Reservation is required at 02 741 72 14 (NL) or 02 741 72 15 (F)
Vlaamse Dienst voor Filmcultuur vzw
*The Chinese tell a story/ That’s full of mystic glory,/ Of the Orient, a tale of wonderment;/ By the Temple Walls, each night,/ They burn a red, red lantern bright/ To their ancient warrior maid they pray./ From English sire descended/ Her blood with China blended,/ Eyes of Saxon blue, skin of yellow hue;/ At the call of war’s command,/ Her heart turned to her Motherland,/ Evermore they honor her and say.*

**The Red Lantern** takes place in the China of 1900, where Mahlee (played by Alla Nazimova) struggles with her Eurasian origin. Although raised by a Chinese grandmother, little Mahlee will increasingly become aware of the European blood in her veins. Also because her feet were never tied, so in the eyes of the Chinese people she has “devil’s feet”. Yet she will rise to the status of “The Goddess of the Red Lantern”. Like a Joan of Arc, at the head of the Boxer Rebellion, she seeks to drive all Europeans from China...

**Yellowface, Yellow Peril & The Red Lantern**

At the beginning of the 20th century, little by little mercantilist motives made the whole industry adapt to American racial values. By the end of the year 1910 the practice of blackface and yellow face - taken from theater, vaudeville and operetta - had fully penetrated the profession. White actors were given free reign to construct Chinese stereotypes and a potential cultural dialogue got replaced by an obsession with bound feet, white slaves and torture chambers... The Red Lantern is dominated by such ‘cultural heritage’...

“At the end of WWI, California was not only the center of the world's film industry, it was also the center of a well-organized and heavily financed campaign against “the yellow races.” The expanding industrial farmers of the West Coast wanted no competition from the large numbers of vigorous Chinese and Japanese immigrants, who “should be kept in their place” as a cheap labor force. Film production established a pattern that colored the next few film years with threatening mandarins, smoking idols, long silhouetted fingernails, opium pipes, pigtails, and miracles of makeup. By 1919 these elements were inflated to spectacle proportions in The Red Lantern “ (Jay Leyda, Dianying Electric Shadows)

**Boxer War Media**

Together with the ‘Boer war’, the ‘Boxer war’ was one of the first armed conflicts where the ‘new medium’ film played an important part in illustrating, and even more propagating the homefront into mobilisation against such shocking barbarism. The impact of the reenacted actualties, focusing on the cruelties committed by the yellow race against goodwilling altruists of the true faith that brought civilisation and progress to a country still deep in its middle ages... It’s no coincidence that the boxer war catalyses the tragic outcome of The Red Lantern’s story: being a worldwide mediatised and exemplarious incident, in 1919 – 20 years after – it was till engraved in all potential spectator’s minds.

“The most significant film treatments of the Boxers (lasting long in some spectators' memories) were produced by European and American firms as soon as the news reached and horrified foreign newspaper readers. These films were reconstructions - on Brighton lawns and on New Jersey farms of the recent events in and near Peking and were presented to audiences as authentic records of those events. All of these appear to be imitations of James Williamson’s success, Attack on a Chinese Mission, made in the winter of 1900-1901 at the Brighton villa where the Williamson family was then living, and the roles of heroic Britons and villainous Chinese were all played by the family and friends. Brighton, as a center of the British vogue in chinoiserie at the start of the nineteenth century, was able to furnish all the Chinese costumes and properties that were wanted.” (Jay Leyda, Dianying Electric Shadows)

**The Chinese Pavilion**

The Chinese Pavilion at Laken is the location for the projection of The Red Lantern and the workshop. Here the Museums of the Far East find a well suited location in properties built by King Leopold II around the turn of the century. The designs got drawn by the Parisian architect Alexandre Marcel that designed the Tour du Monde pavilion at Expo 1900. The Japanese Tower, Chinese Pavilion and the Museum of Japanese Art form an exotic whole that reflects the nineteenth-century penchant for Orientalism. The Chinese Pavilion hosts not a restaurant, as originally intended, but a collection of Chinese porcelain that was produced specifically for the Western market and reached Europe through the East Indian Companies.
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<td>Heet van de naald: voorlopers van Kuifje in China.</td>
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**Marcel van Nieuwenborgh** is a journalist and columnist for a.o. De Standaard newspaper and former vice-director of the China-Europe Institute. He published several books a.o. 'China vermoed ik' (China, I presume), 'Ferdinand Verbiest, missionaris of spion? Het rapport van de keukengod', (Ferdinand Verbiest, missionary or spie? Report from a kitchen god), 'China in Kuifje' (China in Tintin),...

**Arie Pos** studied Dutch and Compared Literature at Leiden University and wrote his PhD thesis on Dutch literary chinoiserie and the western image of China (1250-2007). He teaches Dutch Literature at the University of Coimbra, is a literary translator and author of 'Het paviljoen van porselein.' (The Porcelain Pavilion, Dutch literary chinoiserie and the western image of China (1250-2007)).

**Krystyn Moon** is an associate professor and director of American Studies at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Her teaching and research focus on the history of American popular culture and ethnic studies, which has led to her published book, 'Yellowface: Creating of the Chinese in American Popular Music and Performance, 1850s-1920s', and several articles.
* reconstructions - boxer rebellion

bombardment of taku forts, by the allied fleets (us, edison, 1901)

ackerman & biograph
- 6th cavalry assaulting south gate of pekin (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)
- 15th infantry leaving governors island for china (boxer uprising) 1900 (us, 1900)
- bengal lancers, the (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)
- charge by 1st bengal lancers (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)
- cossack cavalry (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)
- forbidden city, pekin; the (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)
- 4th ghorkas, the (us, raymond ackerman, 1901)

** fiction - yellow peril

the yellow peril (us, wallace mccutcheon, 1908)

*** reenactments - yellowface

UK
- beheading a chinese boxer (uk, mitchell & kenyon)
- attack on a china mission (uk, james williamson, 1900)

US
- chinese massacring christians (us, Lubin prod, 1900)
- beheading a chinese prisoner (us, Lubin prod, 1900)

Yellowface - corpus CINEMATEK

The Royal Belgian Filmarchive has – apart from The Red Lantern – several other ‘yellowface’key films from the same period. It’s interesting to check how European made yellowface differs from contemporary American ones that got distributed (or not) in Europe.

OPIUM
(Robert Reinert, Duitsland 1919) - 18.10.10 / 20:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal

BROKEN BLOSSOMS
(David Wark Griffith, USA 1919) - 20.10.10 / 16:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal & Zat 30.10.10 / 20:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal

WHERE LIGHTS ARE LOW
(Colin Campbell, USA 1921) - 21.10.10 / 18:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal

MR. WU
(Lupu Pick, Duitsland 1918) - 22.10.10 / 18:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal

A TALE OF TWO WORLDS
(Frank Lloyd, USA 1921) - 23.10.10 / 18:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal & 28.10.10 / 16:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal

DIE HERRIN DER WELT 1. TEIL - DIE FREUNDIN DES GELBEN MANNES
(Joe May & Joseph Klein, USA 1919) - 24.10.10 / 18:00 / CINEMATEK - Plateauzaal
The Red Lantern - the project

Cinematek (Royal Belgian Film Archive) is the proud owner of a unique print of The Red Lantern (1919), a masterpiece of the recently 'rediscovered' director Albert Capellani (1874-1931) in which diva Alla Nazimova (1879-1945) stars in a double role.

A screening of the movie will take place in the Museums of the Far East in Laeken, Brussels. More specific in the Chinese Pavilion that was built at the beginning of the twentieth century, reaching perfect harmony of Western and Oriental art craftsmanship. The exotic buildings confronts the audience with the Eastern influences that flooded Western art during the 18th and 19th century. The typical chinoiserie-trend cannot only be found in art and interior art from that period, Asian themes and settings were popular in early silent film as well. Set during the Boxer War, a historical event still fresh in the memory of Western audiences, The Red Lantern is a perfect example.

Prior to the film the spectators get a tour of the permanent collection of the Museums of the Far East. The site brings the audience into direct contact with the cultural context in which the film was created, while the historical footage in turn gives a new dimension to this beautiful pavilion and its exhibited collection. The film fully resonates with the works on display, accompanied by a soundtrack specially created for the film. A publication with essays, visual essays and a DVD with the film itself, rounds up all aspects.

The Red Lantern (USA, 1919)
director Albert Capellani / production Nazimova Productions - Metro Pictures Corporation / script writer June Mathis and Albert Capellani based on the novel by Edith Werry (1911) / cinematographer Eugene Gaudio / art director Henri Menessier / main actors Alla Nazimova, Noah Beery, Charles Bryant / 1731 m (2000 ft orig.)

Restoration
Noël Desmet for the Royal Belgian Film Archive from an original tinted and toned nitrate; inter-titles based on the original title list (Cinema - Television Library, University of California) - a few inter-titles missing in that list were translated from the Russian intertitles from the nitrate original that was used for the restoration.

Co-producers
VDFC (Flemish Service for Filmculture)
The Museums of the Far East
Chinese Institute (BkHC)
Cinematek
The Red Lantern (1919) is Chinese exotica van het zuiverste water. Het Filmarchief restau- reerde dit laat werk van recent geherwa­-­deerd regisseur Albert Capellani. Filmdiva Alla Nazimova schittert in een dubbelrol.

Het Chinees Paviljoen (1910) vormt net als de film die we er projecteren een perfecte harmo­-­nie van Westerse techniek, Oosterse fantasie en authentieke elementen. De chinoiserie die in de 19de eeuw onze Westerse kunsten over­-­spoelde is niet alleen in schilder- en interieur­-­kunst uit die periode terug te vinden, ook vroege stille films grepen vaak terug naar Aziatische thema’s en settings. Een rondleiding door de locatie brengt het publiek in direct contact met de culturele context waarin ook de film ontstaan is, terwijl het historisch filmmateriaal op zijn beurt een extra dimensie geeft aan dit prachtig paviljoen.

De film wordt begeleid door een speciaal gecreëerde soundtrack*, gebaseerd op door de film en Nazimova geïnspireerde 78 rpm platen en muziekbladen van toen.

* van Yves De Mey (Eavesdropper) (www.knobsounds.com)

The Red Lantern (1919) est une douceur exoti­-­que parmi les plus exquises. La Cinémathèque royale a restauré une œuvre tardive du réalisa­-­teur Albert Capellani, récemment redécouvert. La diva Alla Nazimova y apparaît resplendis­-­sante dans un double rôle. Et tout comme le film qui y sera projeté, le Pavillon chinois (1910) allie harmonieusement technique occidentale, fantaisie orientale et éléments authentiques. Les chinoiseries qui submergèrent l’art occiden­-­tal au 19e siècle ne se limitèrent pas aux arts picturaux et décoratifs; elles investirent égale­­ment le cinéma muet où les thèmes et décors asiatiques étaient fort présents. Une visite guidée du lieu permettra au public d’entrer directement en contact avec le contexte cultu­-­rel qui a vu naître le film, tandis que le matériel filmique éclairera sous un nouveau jour ce magnifique pavillon. L’œuvre est accompagnée d’une bande son inédite*, basée sur des musi­-­ques originales et des 78 tours de l’époque, eux-mêmes inspirés par Nazimova et le film.

* par Yves De Mey (Eavesdropper) (www.knobsounds.com)
**CHINEES PAVILJOEN PAVILLON CHINOIS DATA**

14.10 17.00 > 21.45 nocturne Brusselse Museumraad (BMR) / nocturne Conseil bruxellois des Musées (CBM), gratis toegang / admission gratuite 17.00 > 22.00 Film/séance 20.00 aan / à €2,50 et €1 (25 jaar / ans) max. 50 p rondleidingen / visites guidées F, NL, E

15.10 18.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 20.00 film > 21.45 (deuren / portes 18.00)

16.10 13.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 15.00 film / kinderanimatie NL > 16.45
16.10 18.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 20.00 film > 21.45 (deuren / portes 18.00)

17.10 13.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 15.00 film / animation pour enfants F > 16.45

18.10 10.00 > 17.00 (deuren / portes 9.30)
workshop Yellowface, Yellow Peril

22.10 18.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 20.00 film > 21.45 (deuren / portes 18.00)

23.10 13.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 15.00 film / animation pour enfants F > 16.45
23.10 18.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 20.00 film > 21.45 (deuren / portes 18.00)

24.10 13.30 rondleiding / visite guidée NL + F > 15.00 film / kinderanimatie NL > 16.45

**Tijdens de matinées op 16.10 en 24.10 is er kinderanimatie voor kinderen vanaf 4 jaar op een speelse manier kennismaken met de wereld van chinoiserie.**

Pendant les matinées du 16.10 et 24.10, il y a des animations pour les enfants de 4 ans et plus de manière ludique pour découvrir le monde de la chinoiserie.

**PARALLÈLEMENT AU PROJET PRÉSENTÉ DANS LE PAVILLON CHINOIS, ON A RENDEZ-VOUS AVEC UN AUTRE GENRE DE FILMS : LE "YELLOWFACE".**

Parallellement au projet présenté dans le pavillon chinois, on cherche à découvrir d'autres genres de films : le "yellowface".

Parallellemaal met het project in het Chinees paviljoen rond de typende "yellowface" film The Red Lantern, gingen we op zoek naar andere gevallen uit diezelfde jaren '10 waarin blanke acteurs Aziatische rollen spelen.

**‘Blackface’ en ‘yellowface’ waren heuse genres binnen de operette- en vaudevilleproductie.**

‘Blackface’ et ‘yellowface’ étaient des genres très courants dans la musique de cabaret et le vaudeville.

**EN DEELNEEMEN ZIJN GEVAARDE ZELDZAME EIGELEN FILMS.**

Les participants auront l’occasion de découvrir des films rares.

**’Blackface’ et ‘yellowface’ étaient des genres qui ont pu être utilisés pour diffuser image de peuples asiatiques.**

Les genres ‘Blackface’ et ‘yellowface’ ont été utilisés pour diffuser des images de peuples asiatiques.

**FOR HET OPMETEN VAN EEN RECHTVAARDIGE EN HIJSTERISCHE REPRESENTATIE VAN CHINEES NATIONS IS ER EEN NIEUWE Filmsemblein.**

Pour une représentation juste et hystérique des nations chinoises, un nouveau film a été réalisé.

**ET DE HET HISTORIEK VAN DE CHINESE EIGELEEN FILMS IS HET GEVAL VAN DE RED LANTERN.**

L’histoire des films chinois est représentée par le film The Red Lantern.

**DES AVISES DE LA CINEMATEK OP DE AUTEURSRECHT VAGUE.**

Le directeur de Cinematek a invité les auteurs à participer activement.

**HET HISTORIEK VAN DE CHINESE EIGELEEN FILMS IS HET GEVAL VAN DE RED LANTERN.**

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