

XVII UNIVERSEUM ANNUAL MEETING

Connecting Collections

Book of abstracts

UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM & UTRECHT UNIVERSITY

9–11 JUNE 2016



The collection of the University Museum Utrecht in teaching and on the internet: new contexts for historical objects

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Keywords: lantern slides, Wikipedia, photographs

ABSTRACT

The collection of the University Museum of Utrecht University has grown from 500 to 200.000 historical scientific instruments (a.o., instruments, teaching material, photographs), documenting the history of the university, research and teaching. Now detached from their original contexts (e.g., lab or lecture room), new contexts are created that enable to use the sub collections in new ways, in exhibits, in teaching (university, schools), and in activities in the museum and on internet.

For example, in a course on writing for the general public a selection of the instruments is described by non-specialist students: these descriptions are made public on the University Museum website. The large collection of magic lantern slides is in demand for both teaching as well as research. Slides of geological expeditions to Ceram, Dutch East Indies (1917), were described by history students, in a joint project *Expedition Wikipedia* with the University Library, partners in the Dutch Foundation for Academic Heritage, the Tropenmuseum and Wikipedia on photographs and documents from scientific journeys. The pictures were donated to Wikimedia Commons, where they are open for further annotation. This year a project will start on early 20th century female scientists at Utrecht University. This paper will describe and examine this type of initiatives, which add new dimensions to the already diverse historical relevance of Utrecht University Museum's collections

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Paul Lambers has a doctorate degree in Paleontology and is curator of natural history and science collections at the University Museum Utrecht.