

IN  
PRAISE  
OF  
SHADOWS

NEW EUROPEAN LIGHTING DESIGN



EXHIBITION PROPOSAL

NOVEMBER 2009

# IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

## NEW EUROPEAN LIGHTING DESIGN

Stimulated by debate around sustainability and the shift to low-energy, lighting has recently emerged as one of the most vibrant arenas in contemporary design.

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS showcases works by designers who imaginatively explore the potential of new technologies and alternative energy sources.

Initiated by curator Jane Withers at the invitation of EUNIC, the exhibition aims to broaden debate by exploring not only how we use energy for lighting but also question how we illuminate our lives – challenging the modern obsession with ‘brighter is better’. As well as works that play on the poetics of light and fixtures that demonstrate the freedom that low-energy light sources can bring to design, the exhibition includes alternative energy sources such as solar and wind power, and raises questions around excessive energy use and light pollution.

The exhibition was first staged as an intervention ‘camping’ in the V&A’s Jones Galleries (Europe 1600-1800) which had closed for refurbishment. Visitors went behind a hoarding and were given dynamo torches to navigate the darkened galleries. Here the new lights were mysterious interlopers contrasting dramatically with ornate works still on display from the collection, and creating a rich dialogue between the contemporary and the historic.

# SUMMARY

- First staged as part of the London Design Festival at the V&A, 2009.
- Showcases new lighting designs by 21 designers from 13 European countries.
- Supported by EUNIC (a network of European Cultural Institutes), the European Commission Representation in the UK and 13 member states as well as attracting commercial sponsorship.
- An imaginative initiative for engaging with a highly topical issue, the exhibition was designed to be a catalyst to debate around sustainability and the shift to low-energy lighting.
- Widely recognised as a highlight of the London Design Festival, it was extended by the V&A to continue after the festival.
- Received extensive international press coverage including Channel Four News, national newspapers, design press, and web and magazine coverage around the world.
- Conceived as a theatrical intervention within the V&A, creating an imaginative dialogue between contemporary and historic design and attracting new audiences to the V&A collection.
- Supported by the Megaman Talk on lighting and sustainability at the V&A .
- Conceived to tour internationally. We are now identifying potential sponsors, collaborators and venues.

# TESTIMONIALS

*“In Praise of Shadows was one of the hits of the 2009 London Design Festival. Expertly curated by Jane Withers it cleverly used a closed and dark space where the background was the museum pieces and the illumination the new exhibits. Sometimes a smaller show can capture visitors’ imagination and this was it.”*

Ben Evans, Director, London Design Festival

*“A must-see for all architects, innovators and eco-warriors.”*

Architects Journal

*“This is the show where technology meets art, with 21 light sources from all over the world ...it’s a total triumph.”*

Barbara Chandler, Evening Standard

*“In Praise of Shadows is a concise meditation on light curated by Jane Withers....There’s politics and science here, but also space for poetry.”*

Hettie Judah, The Word Magazine

*“One of the most magical experiences during the London Design Festival ....From start to finish this show was an illuminating adventure, which slowly revealed hidden treasures in the mysterious depths of this wonderful museum.”*

Leonora Oppenheim, Treehugger



LUCID DREAM, 2006, ERIC KLARENBEEK

Inspired by soap bubbles, Lucid Dream plays on the ability of glass to transmit light by internal reflection.



LIGHT BLUB, 2008, PIEKE BERGMANS

Light Blub is a giant light bulb that appears to be morphing into new forms, perhaps playfully symbolizing the end of the bulb as we know it.



LIFE 01, 2009, PAUL COCKSEGE. Prototype

When a flower is placed in the water the vase lights up from within. The stem acts as a conductor of electricity activating a small light source at the base of the vase. As the flower withers, the light slowly expires.



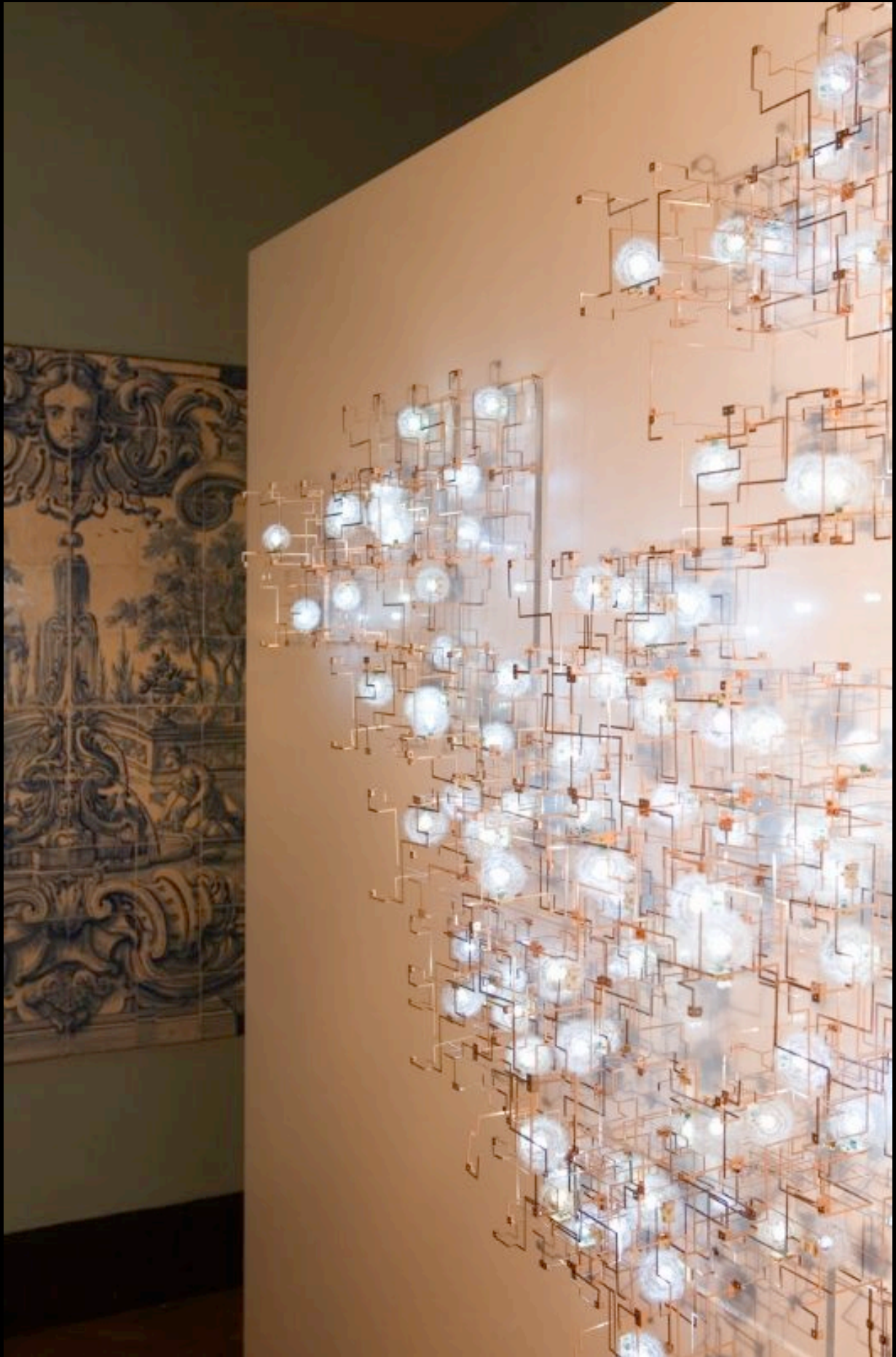
BULB, 2009, BÁLINT BOLYGÓ

The LED light passes through a large rotating incandescent bulb that has a photographic image of the world printed on its interior surface. The image is projected onto the surrounding space.



W08, 2008, STUDIOILSE

A modern take on the classic Anglepoise lamp, using what the designer describes as 'simple honest materials': 'Iron for its feelings of stability, reliability, trust; wood with its warmth and life'.



FRAGILE FUTURE, 2006–9, DRIFT

Exploring the amalgamation of nature and technology, Fragile Future combines an electrical system with real dandelion seed heads in a light sculpture that grows over the wall surface.



SOLAR LAMPION, 2004, DAMIAN O'SULLIVAN. Prototype

A concept for a modern take on a Chinese lantern powered by sunlight. While most solar lamps are left outdoors, Solar Lampion is designed to be brought indoors at night. The lighting fixture incorporates 30 miniature solar panels arranged in concentric circles and inclined at 30° to capture the maximum amount of sunlight to charge the lantern's battery. Each solar cell is connected to an LED.



GOLD F LIGHT, 2009, MICHAEL ANASTASSIADES

A standard low-energy fluorescent lamp is transformed into an object of refinement and beauty.



SHINE, 2009, VYTAUTAS PUZERAS

Inspired by electric sea creatures, Shine uses electroluminescent technology. The glowing elements on the pad can be charged from natural sunlight during the day and then gleam until dawn.



SCATOLA DELLA LUCE, 2009, MARIO NANNI, VIABIZZUNO. Prototype  
A portable reading lamp consisting of a sheath and inner drawer containing the LED. The drawer slides open and closed to vary the light intensity.



QUEEN'S CHANDELIER, 2008, PUFF-BUFF DESIGN  
A lightweight chandelier: each inflatable pocket contains an LED.



MEDUSA, 2008, MIKKO PAAKKANEN, SAAS INSTRUMENTS

Inspired by the movement of a jellyfish, Medusa is made of fibre optic rods lit by high-intensity LEDs. The rods expand and contract in a hypnotic motion. The movement can be stopped at any stage, so the light can be frozen in different shapes.



CEZ LIGHT, 2009, OLGOJ CHORCHOJ

A portable battery lamp charged by a photovoltaic panel. Exposing the panel for four hours to sunlight should generate enough energy to provide four hours of illumination.



SONUMBRA, 2008, LOOP.PH (RACHEL WINGFIELD / MATHIAS GMACHL)

Developed as part of the World Bank project Lighting Africa, Sonumbra is a proposal for low-cost, low-maintenance lighting for regions without access to the electricity grid. An outside parasol, by day it provides shelter from the sun. By night it lights up, using the energy collected in solar cells embedded in its canopy.



DOODLE, PLUMEN SERIES, 2009, HULGER. Prototype  
Designed as a reaction against the aesthetic of existing CFL products, Doodle is a proposal to give a more sculptural form to low-energy light bulbs.



BLOW LIGHT, 2009, TOM DIXON  
Blow Light is specifically designed to accommodate a low-energy Compact Fluorescent Lamp, allowing the lamp to give a strong directional light through the clear base. Originally designed for the big Trafalgar Square Giveaway in 2007, Dixon gave away 1000 free lamps to raise awareness of CFLs and promote sustainable design.



ICE AGE CHAIR, 2008, RADU COMSA  
Light diffuses through the fibre around the chair's shape and the chair itself disappears, reading as a negative image like a chair frozen in layers of old ice.

# FILM



LIGHT BALANCE, 2009, TOM FOULSHAM. Still from film.

The Light Balance project aims to demonstrate the energy wasted by a single incandescent bulb. The film shows the movement of a light bulb attached to a slow merry-go-round. A seated rider on one end is counterbalanced by the 10 m cantilever supporting a light bulb and sail. The heat given off by the single 400-watt incandescent bulb is enough to turn the slow merry-go-round.



#### CLAN DU NÉON. Film

Le Clan du Néon, a French network of eco activists, protests against the senseless waste of electricity and nocturnal light pollution by the millions of shop signs left on over night. In France, every illuminated sign has to have an external switch for emergency use and the Clan uses this to turn off advertising and shop signs.



#### LIGHT WIND, 2009, DEMAKERSVAN. Prototype

Inspired by the windmill, Light Wind is an outdoor light powered by wind. The structure has a propeller 2m in diameter and stores energy from every passing breeze to convert to light by night.



#### CYCLO, 2006, MARIE-VIRGINIE BERBET. Film and prototype

Cyclo explores the physiological and psychological effects of light. It consists of a desk blotter with activity sensors and a rotating light. The sensors detect the user's activity levels and vary the intensity of the light accordingly.

## EXHIBITORS

Michael Anastassiades (Cyprus)

Marie-Virginie Berbet (France)

Pieke Bergmans (Netherlands)

Bálint Bolygó (Hungary)

Olgoj Chorchoj (Czech Republic)

Clan du Néon (France)

Paul Cockshedge / FLOS (UK / Italy)

Radu Comsa (Romania)

Demakersvan (Netherlands)

Tom Dixon (UK)

Drift [Lonneke Gordijn / Ralph Nauta] (Netherlands)

Tom Foulsham (UK)

Hulger (UK)

Eric Klarenbeek (Netherlands)

Loop.ph [Rachel Wingfield / Mathias Gmachl] (UK / Austria)

Mario Nanni / Viabizzuno (Italy / Italy)

Damian O'Sullivan (Netherlands)

Puff Buff (Poland)

Vytautas Puzeras (Lithuania)

Mikko Paakkanen / SAAS Instruments (Finland / Finland)

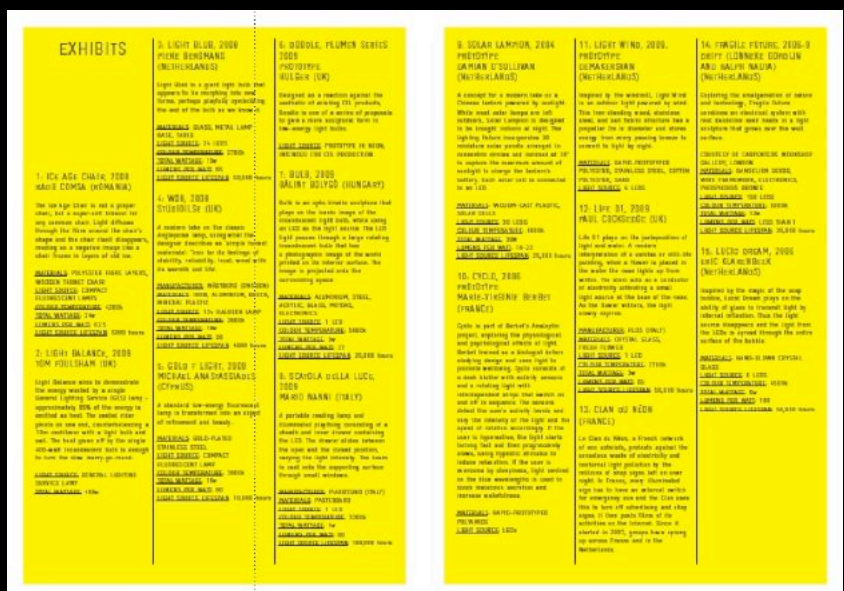
Studioilse / Wästberg (UK / Sweden)

# GRAPHIC IDENTITY

BRAVO CHARLIE MIKE HOTEL developed the graphic identity for In Praise of Shadows. In keeping with the concept of new works 'camping' within the museum exhibits, the graphics were designed as a bold addition to the existing gallery signage and the yellow panels were illuminated by LEDs so that visitors could easily find the exhibit labels and read them by torch light.

Graphics include:

- Exhibition identity and signage
- Promotional flyer / poster
- Exhibition guide with an essay by Jane Withers providing context for the exhibition and technical information (print run 8000)



# EXHIBITION TEAM

Curator - Jane Withers [www.janewithers.com](http://www.janewithers.com)

Production - Kate Bailey

Exhibition design - David Jode

Lighting - DHA Design Services Ltd

Technical consultant - Eddie Smith, Eureka

Graphic design - BRAVO CHARLIE MIKE HOTEL [www.bcmh.co.uk](http://www.bcmh.co.uk)

Installation photography - Paola Pieroni

## TORCH LIGHT

At the entrance, visitors were given battery-free dynamo LED torches to tour the exhibition and read the exhibit labels. It also became an exciting way to explore the historic museum exhibits in a different light.



## EVENTS

The IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS preview was held on 18.09.09 in the Jones Gallery followed by a reception at 5 Cromwell Place. The event was attended by European cultural attachés and EU representatives, designers and opinion formers, and international journalists.

MEGAMAN TALK: IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS was held on 23.09.09 at the V&A. This event to accompany the exhibition was specially staged as part of the London Design Festival at the V&A programme. Sponsored by Megaman, the talk provided a platform for discussion around new European lighting design, with practitioners and experts exploring the impact of regulation change and the shift to low-energy bulbs.

### **Speakers:**

- Paul Cocksedge – leading lighting designer
- Jane Withers – Curator, In Praise of Shadows exhibition
- Magnus Wästberg – Wästberg, Sweden
- Claudia Dutson – Helen Hamlyn Centre, Royal College of Arts

### **Chair:**

- Grant Gibson, Editor, Crafts

The Dutch Embassy held an evening reception on 21.09.09 to celebrate Dutch Design Innovation and IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS during the London Design Festival. This networking event was held in the Sculpture Gallery at the V&A.

# PRESS

The exhibition featured on Channel 4 News, and received international coverage including the following:

Architects Journal

Condé Nast Traveller

Core 77

David Report

Design Exchange

Designboom

Designlines

Design Magazine (China)

Design Net Magazine (South Korea)

Dezeen

Dwell

Evening Standard

FFFFound

Financial Times

House & Garden Magazine

Inhabitat

International Herald Tribune

Matchbox Magazine

Professional Lighting Design Magazine (China)

Sunday Times Style

The Ecologist

The London Magazine

The London Paper

The National

The Telegraph

The Word Magazine

Treehugger

World of Interiors

**IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS** was first staged as part of the  
LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL 2009 AT THE V&A

It was supported and organised by EUNIC London (European Union National Institutes for Culture) with the support of the European Commission Representation in the UK. EUNIC is a partnership of national institutions for culture, engaged beyond their national borders and operating with a degree of autonomy from their governments.

The exhibition was also supported by 13 countries belonging to EUNIC, and by Megaman UK, the low-energy lighting manufacturers, sponsors of the Megaman Talk.

Supported by:

EUNIC LONDON

EUROPEAN COMMISSION REPRESENTATION IN THE UK

EUROPEAN YEAR OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION 2009

LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL

AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM

PLASSER UK

BRITISH COUNCIL

CYPRUS HIGH COMMISSION

CZECH CENTRE

THE FINNISH INSTITUTE IN LONDON

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

CULTURESFRANCE

HUNGARIAN CULTURAL CENTRE

ITALIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE

MEGAMAN

MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA

EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

MONDRIAAN FOUNDATION

POLISH CULTURAL INSTITUTE

ROMANIAN CULTURAL INSTITUTE

SWEDISH PRESIDENCY OF THE EU

EMBASSY OF SWEDEN

V&A



Press images available on request.

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Installation photography: Paola Pieroni