

EUNIC PRESENTS

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS

AN EXHIBITION ON NEW EUROPEAN LIGHTING

CURATED BY JANE WITHERS

19–27 SEPTEMBER 2009

LONDON DESIGN FESTIVAL AT THE V&A

In Praise of Shadows showcases works by 21 European designers who imaginatively explore not only the potential of low energy lighting and alternative energy sources but also the way we think about light and darkness.

The catalyst for 'In Praise of Shadows' is the EU directive to phase out low-efficiency light bulbs (from September 2009 through to 2012). It is rare that a design issue affects us all as directly as the switch to low energy lighting and as well as stimulating experimental design the changeover is provoking controversy and confusion around environmental issues. And yet this should be an opportunity to do more than just change a light bulb, it's a chance to explore new thinking about lighting and sustainability.

In Praise of Shadows aims to add spark to the debate by raising questions not only about how we use energy for lighting but also how we illuminate our lives – challenging the modern obsession with 'brighter is better' that has held sway for the last century.

The exhibition includes works that play on poetics of light, for example Fragile Futures by Drift. A magical hybrid of nature and technology, the electric circuit seems to grow organically over a wall sprouting dandelion seed heads along the way. It also includes works that demonstrate the freedom that low energy light sources can bring to lighting design: for example Queen's Chandelier by Polish designers Puff Buff, an extremely lightweight chandelier where each LED is enclosed in an inflatable pocket. It explores alternative energy sources such as light and wind – for example Demakersvan's Light

Wind and Sonumbra by Loop.ph. Developed to bring lighting to areas off the national grid, Sonumbra is a giant parasol embedded with solar cells and electroluminescent wires: by day it serves as a sunshade and by night it gives off the light it absorbs.

Finally, the exhibition addresses issues around energy usage and light pollution through the work of French eco-activists Clan du Néon who protest against waste by turning off illuminated signs and posting films of their actions on the internet. One film shows three figures in fluorescent wigs running down rue de Rivoli turning off famous fashion shop signs using external switches intended for emergency use. It's both funny and deeply important: why do we sanction bright lights of advertising pouring energy into our over illuminated skies? As much as low-energy technologies it is thinking like this about how we use energy and what is acceptable that can help change habits and point the way to a sustainable future.

In Praise of Shadows takes place camping in a section of the Jones Galleries (Europe 1600-1800) closed for refurbishment. Visitors will go behind a hoarding and be given wind-up torches to navigate the darkened galleries where the new lights will be mysterious interlopers contrasting eerily with ornate works still on display.

The exhibition is organised by EUNIC London (European Union National Institutes for Culture) – with the support of the European Commission Representation in the UK.

IN PRAISE OF SHADOWS TALK SPONSORED BY MEGAMAN.

23rd September 1-2pm. Hochhauser Auditorium, Sackler Centre, V&A.

An event to accompany the exhibition, specially staged as part of the London Design Festival at the V&A programme. Sponsored by Megaman, the talk provides a platform for discussion around new European lighting design, with practitioners and experts exploring the impact of regulation change.

Free entry. To reserve your place email eunic@londondesignfestival.com

PRESS CONTACT

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FURTHER INFORMATION

www.londondesignfestival.com

www.vam.ac.uk

www.europe.org.uk/culture

www.eunic-london.org

www.megamanuk.com

www.janewithers.com



Queen's Chandelier 2008

Puff Buff (Poland)

Queen's Chandelier challenges the traditional idea of a chandelier as a stately and weighty appendage. Made of inflatable pockets, each containing an LED, it is extremely light despite its size.



Light Wind 2009

Demakersvan (Netherlands)

Light Wind is a proposal for an outdoor light powered by wind. This freestanding wood, stainless steel, and sail fabric structure has a propeller 2 metres in diameter and stores energy from every passing breeze to light up by night.



Fragile Futures 2006-9

Drift [Lonneke Gordijn / Ralph Nauta] (Netherlands)

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



Sonumbra 2008

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

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 offers shelter from the sun. By night it sheds light, using the energy collected in solar cells embedded in its canopy.



Bulb 2009

Balint Bolygo (Hungary)

Bulb is an opto-kinetic sculpture that plays on the iconic image of the incandescent light bulb, while using LEDs as the light source. A strong LED light passes through the large rotating incandescent bulb printed with a world map, which is then projected onto the surrounding space.



Light Blub 2008

Pieke Bergmans (Netherlands)

Light Blub is a light bulb that appears to be morphing into new forms, perhaps symbolising new possibilities in lighting.

High resolution and further images available on request.

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VENUE

Jones Galleries

Victoria and Albert Museum

Cromwell Road

London

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OPENING HOURS

10.00 to 17.45 daily

10.00 to 22.00 Fridays

ADMISSION FREE

FEATURING

Michael Anastassiades (Cyprus)

Marie-Virginie Berbet (France)

Pieke Bergmans (Netherlands)

Balint Bolygo (Hungary)

Olgoj Chorchoj (Czech Republic)

Clan Du Néon (France)

Paul Cockshedge (UK)

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 (Italy)

Damian O'Sullivan (Netherlands)

Puff Buff (Poland)

Vytautas Puzeras (Lithuania)

Mikko Paakkanen (Finland)

Studioilse / Wastberg (UK / Sweden)