

City turns lighting laboratory

Luminale 2012 organisers record more than 140,000 visitors at this year's event.

The biennial Luminale lighting festival has become a classic among Frankfurt's many large-scale public events. 2012 marked the sixth year that the lighting festival offered a cultural after-hours add-on to the Light+Building fair. Once again, world-renowned lighting designers, young artists and students turned the Rhein-Main region into an international arena for experimental light art and lighting design. The trend towards using buildings for large-scale projections and creating interactive installations continues. The first digitalised lighting projects were in evidence at Luminale years ago. Now they are part and parcel of the event.

In the Palmengarten entrance hall Luminale visitors were welcomed with the installation entitled "Schöner Schein" (English: Looks Nice). The glass dome of the conservatory was filled with glowing paper flowers. Photos: Andreas Wiegand



After a period of rapid growth in its early years, Luminale now presents around 150 events and thus ranks among Europe's established architecture and design festivals. During Luminale, everything in the region between Aschaffenburg and Darmstadt revolves around lighting. The focal points this year were Frankfurt with around 100 lighting events and Offenbach with around 40. German weather in April is not particularly reliable, but in spite of showers more than 140,000 were recorded as visiting the event. The Palmengarten alone, which was the centre of attraction at Luminale 2012, welcomed high on 30,000 visitors over the six days, which is double that of 2010. During Luminale the Palmengarten was transformed into "Lunas Park" and comprised nine lighting installations.

The Palmengarten entrance hall was the location for the installation

entitled "Schöner Schein" (English: Looks Nice) by the light artists from "Luminauten". The installation filled the glass dome of the conservatory with glowing flowers, attracting people from a considerable distance in and around the park. On entering the conservatory visitors were awestruck. What they presumed to be beautifully coloured blossoms had turned into a threatening pack of flesh-eating plants, proving just how deceptive appearances can be. The seductive sea of paper blossoms was illuminated using coloured light and decorative projections based on film sequences of visitors' movements. The concept was built around the indoor botanical gardens with flesh-eating plants contained within the Palmengarten entrance hall. Depending on the noise level inside the space, the fake flowers transformed themselves into a "Little

Light and sound installation "Angel's Trumpet – Datura" was also in the Palmengarten. It was made of self-replenishing raw materials such as willow, leather and wool. Photos: Emily Wabitsch



LIGHTING FESTIVAL

Luminale 2012 in Frankfurt/D

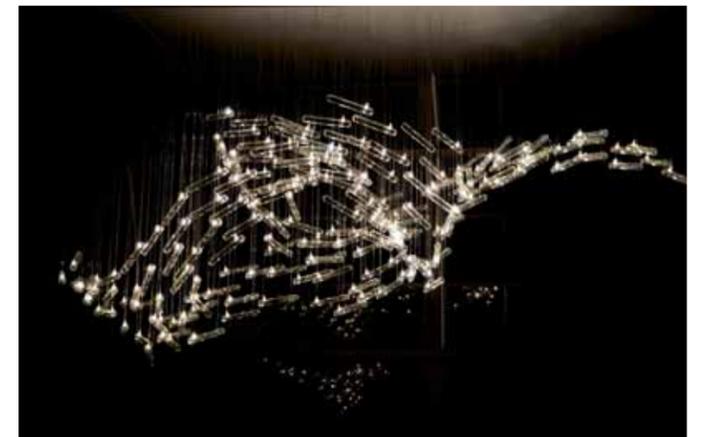
Shop of Horrors", accompanied by the menacing sound of chomping and chewing above the visitors' heads. When everything was quiet, the greedy jaws disappeared giving way to the idyllic array of coloured blossoms. "Schöner Schein" was continued outside with glowing paper water lilies on the pond, guiding visitors further into the park, where a further light art installation awaited them.

Continuing on their tour visitors hit upon a pavilion shaped like a flower – an Angel's Trumpet, which had been designed by students from the Design School in Offenbach. The concept comprised using a local, self-replenishing raw material in an innovative way and in conjunction with a modern material with the idea of creating a completely new kind of space. The pavilion consisted of a delicate load-bearing

structure made of wood from the region covered with a translucent membrane. The two materials combined to make a harmonious whole, interpreting the idea of sustainability in a forward-looking fashion and lending the technical quality of the structure poetic expression. As an analogy to a living organism, the flower construction was designed to respond to and communicate with its environment, both visually and acoustically. The translucent membrane formed a skin between the wooden leaf veins, simultaneously serving as a reflective surface or space for video projections. Moving forms and changing colours underscored the analogy to a living organism.

Visitors were further delighted by an interactive installation in the gallery in the Palmenhaus entitled "Flylight". Flylight was designed by

"Flylight" was an interactive installation composed of more than 180 glass tubes that lit up and responded to the viewer in a rhythm inspired by the behaviour of a flock of birds. Photos: Studio Design Drift





"Please have a seat" invited Luminaire sightseers to rest for a while on one of the coloured light benches. Photos: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther



the Dutch design studio Design Drift and was composed of more than 180 glass tubes that lit up and responded to the viewer in a rhythm inspired by the behaviour of a flock of birds and the fascinating, seemingly random patterns they make in the air. This behaviour is actually not as coincidental as it looks, since birds have to keep a safe distance from each other. What will happen if an intruder interrupts their flight? That is what the viewer experienced when approaching the installation. The light artists from Design Drift converted this bird-behaviour into a digital DNA and translated it into understandable visualisations using light. Each light was controlled individually, but the behaviour was not programmed to a repeated pattern. Time after time the birds had to choose their way within the confines of the installation.

Downtown Frankfurt also had a lot to offer. Light artist Bernd Spiecker from Düsseldorf invited Luminaire sightseers to "Please have a seat" on one of his light benches. These were made of

eight-millimetre thick, translucent weather-proof acrylic glass cushions and equipped with programmable LEDs allowing the benches to change colour every two and a half minutes through blue, red, yellow and green. Bernd Spiecker: "A lot of people touched the benches first to see if they were hot before they sat down on them". The artist's intention was to take an everyday item out of its conventional context and open up a new perceptual dimension for users or observers in the public realm. "People respond emotionally to colour, and everyone is curious to know what it is like to sit on light".

"Growing Light", designed by young artist Stefan Lotze, was a little off the beaten track, but nevertheless well visited. His design studio, "gorillalighting" is dedicated to bringing a new awareness of light to people in their everyday lives. In "Growing Light" fine shoots of light spring up out of the darkness of the night. As the plants grow so do the viewers involvement. Luminaire 2012 was the first place it was shown. The



"Ovo" was installed on the Hauptwache plaza. People could walk through the wooden egg structure and experience light, sound and water effects. Photo: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther

The installation "Growing Light" comprised fine shoots of light springing up out of the darkness of the night. Photos: Gorilla Lighting

setting was a summer house in an idyllic park – light fibres climbed up a pergola in front of the house, branches of light grew out of the surrounding trees, attracting visitors to come closer and discover more. Delicate sprouts of light wound their way up through the dark red tulips in the flower bed in front of the house. The artist admits he took a long time to find the right location and spent six months actually preparing the project, which took him a week to set up. It was worth it: thousands of visitors came to marvel at the delicate lines of light and were enchanted by the experience. The piece was a trick of the light in the truest sense: the fine fibres were of different lengths and controlled separately. When programmed to light up in sequence, it did indeed look as if they were growing.

The Hauptwache, a famous plaza in the centre of the city, was the location of the lighting installation entitled "Ovo" (Portuguese for Egg) designed by ACT Lighting from Belgium. The multi-sensory installation made for a real eye-catcher, offer-

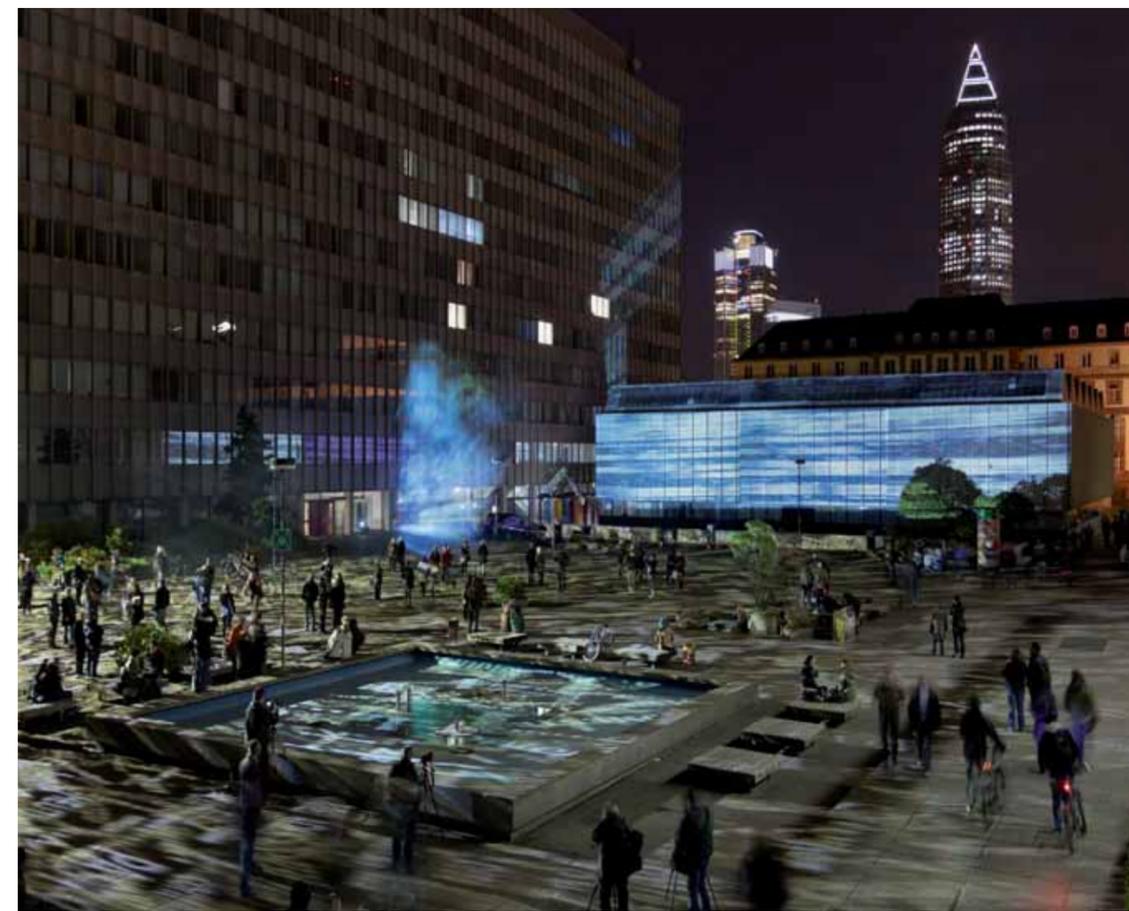


Tower 185 in Frankfurt was only completed towards the end of 2011. At Luminaire 2012 it was turned into the world's largest "High Striker". By striking a lever with a mallet a bright red light shot up the 200-metre high tower. Photos: Oliver Blum

Philipp Geist's light and sound installation "Time drifts" was installed on the square in front of Goethe University. Photos: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther

ring visitors a spatial experience of a special kind through the interplay of light, acoustic animations and water effects. The egg-shaped art piece was not only there to marvel at from afar, but was designed for people to interact with. It was possible to actually enter the Egg, whose dynamic form was based on the golden ratio and constructed using 24 spirally intertwined double strips of wood. The lighting designers addressed issues such as ecology and sustainability by using natural materials and energy-efficient LED technology only for what turned out to be a highly popular piece.

The largest installation at Luminaire 2012 took the form of an oversized on Tower 185 in the Friedrich Ebert Complex. It was named after the fairground attraction commonly known as the High Striker or Ring-the-Bell: "Hau den Tower", and was visible from a considerable distance. Visitors were invited to test their strength by striking a lever with a mallet to send a digital puck to the top of the 200-metre high tower and light it up in bright red.



Those with enough clout made it up to the executive suite. The installation proved to be far more than an amusement park attraction. By flexing their muscles and activating the installation visitors sent series of waves of soft light up and down the tower, entering into a dialogue with the cityscape.

One of the public's favourites was the light and sound installation by light artist Philipp Geist from Berlin. "Time drifts" was installed on the square in front of Goethe University and incorporated a fascinating visualisation of time and space, fleetingness and presence. The artist opted not to use screens, and projected words and ideas onto the ground, onto facades and on fog instead. The result was a combination of concrete, tangible projections on architecture coupled with transparent, fleeting impressions on fog. Words and phrases were rendered visible briefly, symbolising transience, and disappeared practically as soon as they had been perceived – an apt installation for the location, which is designed to become a cultural site and meeting

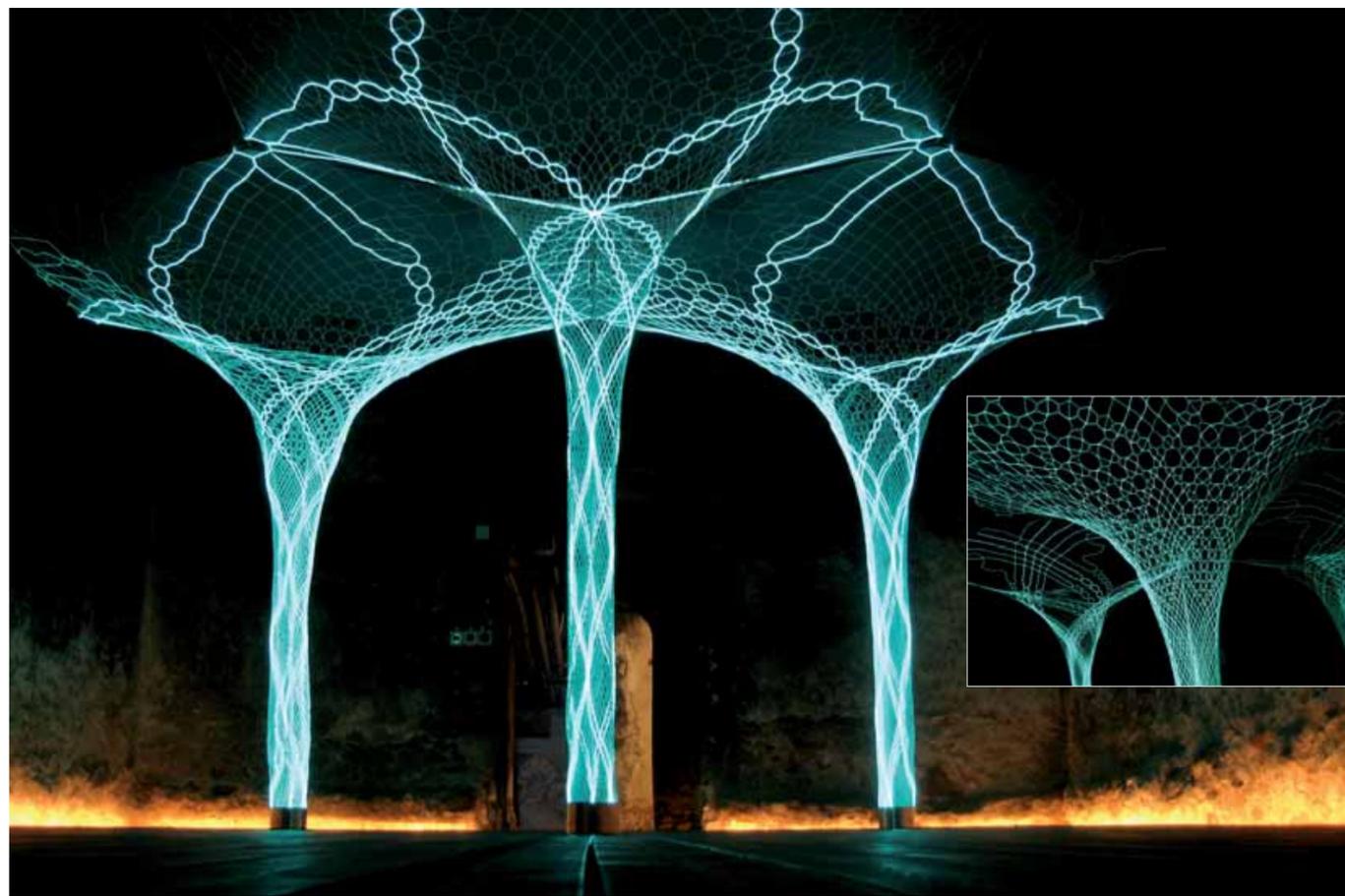
place for thinkers.

With the installations typical of Luminaire, artists and designers explore the potential of control equipment, sensors and software and thus test the technologies that enable the industry to develop energy-saving and highly efficient products. The interplay of artistic creativity and industrial application was mutually inspirational.

Luminaire is well on the way to being a green-city festival that promotes and opens exemplary buildings to the public. The Energy Department of the City of Frankfurt once again offered climate tours to enable interested persons to gain an impression of the efforts being made in Frankfurt in terms of climate protection. Frankfurt on Main is demonstratively committed to energy efficiency and has been a member of the Climate Alliance of European Cities for 20 years. It is known as the passive house and green tower capital of Germany.

Sustainability was also a key aspect of the work of Mainova@





Loop.pH is a London-based art and design studio specializing in urban interventions using cutting-edge technologies to cast a speculative view into the future. At Luminale they presented their stunning installation Archilace. Photos: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther

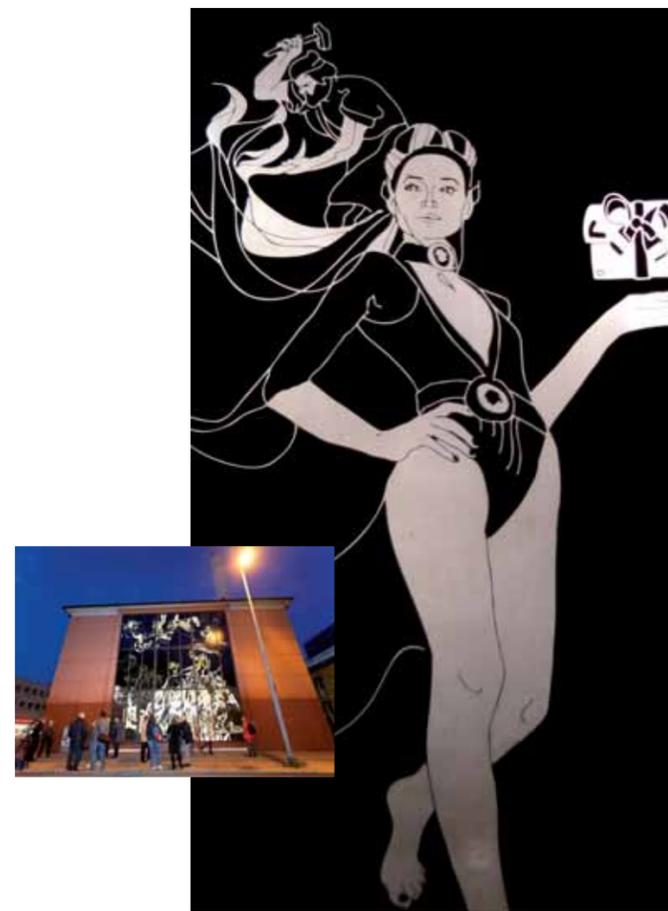


"Vom Rätsel Wasser" (On the mystery of water): a mighty waterfall was incorporated into the area around the altar in St. Catherine's Church in the form of a three-part video projection. From time to time the ceiling in the church virtually opened and closed, offering a view of the cloudy sky. Photo: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther

Luminale 2012 award winner Katharina Berndt, whose design for the Mainova power station in Allerheiligenstrasse has become a permanent lighting scheme. The 29-year-old graphic designer from Bremen in the north of Germany designed an installation in the form of cathedral-like silhouette designs entitled "Scherenschnitt-Inszenierung" for the windows of the power station. The huge motifs are backlit: they become visible when the interior lighting is switched on – a real eye-catcher on one of Frankfurt's main roads. Katharina Berndt: "The installation turns the utility into a dramatic night-time attraction in the centre of the city". The project has an especially clever side effect: the graphics can be viewed from both sides of the window. So during the daytime when the sun is shining the people working in the utility can see the pictures at the windows, and at

night, when the machine room is illuminated, passers-by can see them. The jury found the project convincing both from an artistic point of view and from the way it addressed criteria such as energy efficiency and sustainability. The design uses the light and shadow inside the building and does not require any additional energy.

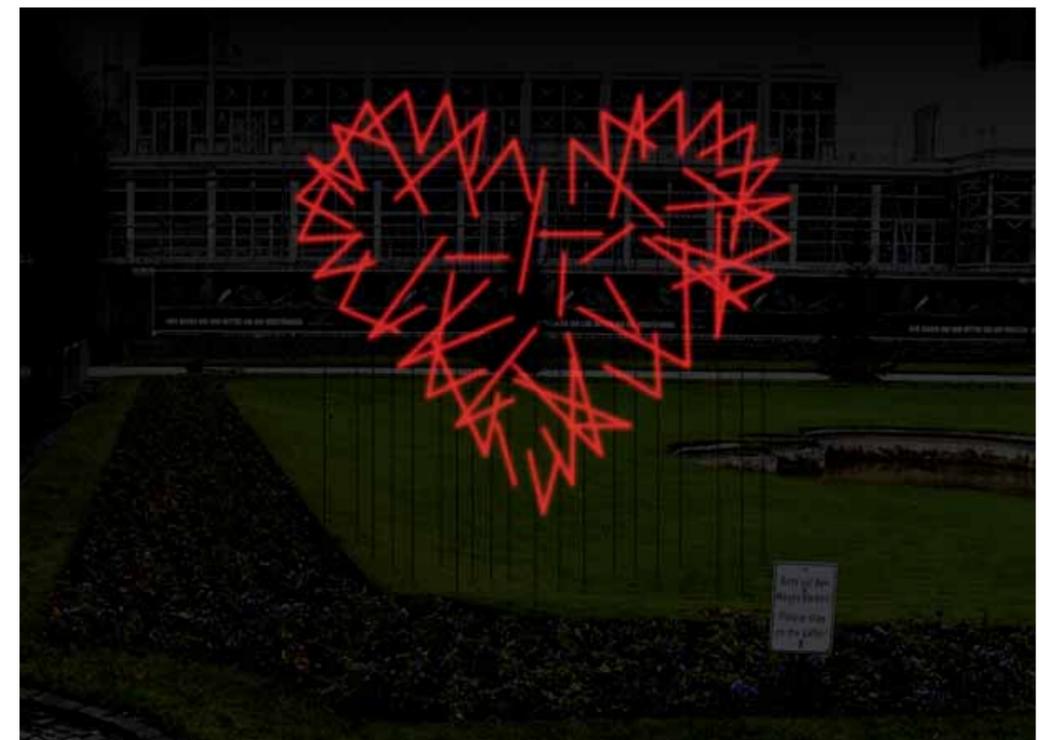
The seventh Luminale is due to take place in 2014 irrespective of whether Frankfurt wins the European Green City Award. The acclaimed architecture and design festival will concentrate on the themes of sustainability, climate protection and energy efficiency, and will thus be in line with the focus of the next Light+Building.



The winner of Mainova@Luminale 2012: the "Scherenschnitt-Inszenierung" (Silhouette Designs) for the windows of the Mainova power station is to become a permanent lighting scheme. Photos: Joachim Storch, Andreas Wiegand



"JETZT Archäologische Schatten" (AND NOW for some archaeological shadows) was the title of the exhibition of Fabrizio Corneli's work in the Archaeological Museum in Frankfurt. The Italian artist created shadow drawings on the walls exploiting the interplay of three-dimensional shapes and sunlight or carefully positioned electric light, candles and LEDs. Photo: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther



"Broken Heart" in the Palmengarten. The heart could only be perceived when viewed from a specific position. Photo: Messe Frankfurt Exhibition/Jochen Günther