

KUNST
IM ÖFFENTLICHEN RAUM
STEIERMARK

Light

Siegrun Appelt (AUT) for Graz-Reininghaus

Joseph Kosuth (USA) for the façade of the Natural History Museum in the Lesliehof, UMJ

Michael Schuster (AUT) for the Landhaus

Exhibition March to May 2015 in public space in Graz

Conference 20 to 21 March 2015 at Universalmuseum Joanneum

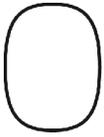
In the international year of light 2015 the Institute for Art in Public Space Styria at Universalmuseum Joanneum considers the subject of light und urban illuminating with three major art projects and a conference in Graz.

The cultural history of light plays a key role in the visual arts, gaining vast momentum in the 20th century thanks to electrification. In the words of media theorist Marshall McLuhan, electric light is a primary medium. Since the beginning of ubiquitous electrification towards the end of the 19th century, electric light became a subject and object of countless artworks of the modern avant-garde. The light-based media film, television and computer are three technological advances that have fundamentally changed the twentieth century and its visual culture to this day.

Today, the parameters of artistic reflection and technological innovation in matters of light have shifted towards media ecology. On the one hand, visual mass culture reaches practically every end-user in the form of a digital mobile phone, while on the other the media public has meanwhile recognised ecological issues of light to be a special problem. Using electric light in outdoor spaces is evolving into a complex, pressing problem. We talk about light pollution and environmental pollution, and the dark spots in many areas of Europe are becoming fewer and fewer. Even in the mountains, we can easily make out the locations of the nearest settlements and remote cities thanks to their domes of light. The only dark spots on a night-time map of the world are in central Africa and North Korea. At the same time, we are in a phase of unprecedented technological upheaval in the generation of light.

An exhibition project on the subject of light in public space must necessarily be set in a sphere full of contradictions. In terms of environmental politics, the euphoric mood in which light embodied greater progressiveness is a thing of the past. In reality, different urban players are still waging a fierce competition to outdo each other with prestigious brightness. Despite all justified criticism, it remains fascinating to see the intensity with which light can be generated today, and in what places – a matter of undiminished interest for artists. A project themed around light in public space must therefore deal with both extremes, engaging them both in a dialogue. With electric light as a primary medium, artistic interventions focus on the relationship of architecture and urban surrounding space, public squares, and spaces of communication. In the age of mass consumerism, digitalisation, semiconductor light-emitting diodes, and xenon spotlights dominate the darkness with countless throw-away products, while overall resources become increasingly sparse. They prompt a critical scrutiny of light pollution in the sense of media ecology.

Curators: Peter Pakesch, Elisabeth Fiedler, Dirck Möllmann



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Universalmuseum Joanneum Graz
Institute for Art in Public Space Styria

***Licht* conference**

The subject of “light” is a seminal one for the future of our society. The revolutions in electric light technology also permit a responsible handling of natural resources so as to balance energy production, light pollution, health risks, and economic advantages. The exhibition will be accompanied by an international conference exploring the subject of light in cultural history and art, biology, architecture and technology. The key theme is “Light pollution”. How can we manage the illuminated environment in an ecologically sensible, economically efficient, and aesthetically convincing way?

Invitees:

Cultural history

Prof. Dr. Serge Lemoine, Paris, Musée Grand Palais, Paris

Prof. Dr. Anselm Wagner, Institute of Architectural Theory, Art and Cultural Studies, Graz University of Technology

Art

Siegrun Appelt, artist, Vienna

Joseph Kosuth, artist, London

Architecture and planning

Dr. Karolina M. Zielinska-Dabkowska, Hochschule Wismar, Faculty of Architecture and Design

Prof. Brian Cody, Graz University of Technology, Institute of Building and Energy

Prof. DI Klaus Kada, Graz, architect

Dr. Birgit Schulz, head of Space and Light Laboratory, Graz University of Technology

DI Bernhard Inninger, Urban Planning Graz

Medicine

Prof. em. Anna Wirz-Justice, chronobiology, Psychiatric University Clinic Basel

Prof. em. Dr. Charlotte Remé, ophthalmology, ETH Zürich

Prof. Dr. Maximilian Moser, Medical University Graz

History

Mag. Paul Schuster, collection curator at Schloss Eggenberg, Graz

Dr. Käthe Klappenbach, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg