Enlivening Public Space at Night, An International Overview of Light/Art/Festivals

By Leni Schwendinger
On behalf of Americans for the Arts
City Lighting ... Some History

- Security
- Aesthetics
- Festivals
- As a symbol of forward thinking
“In the nineteenth century, gas lighting on many city streets became synonymous with the illicit…”

“By the 20th Century, lamps, it was argued, would deter “scenes of lewdness and debauchery which are so frequently committed with impunity at present.”

-- John A Jakle, City Lights: Illuminating the American Night
NIGHTTIME DESIGN INITIATIVE

Seeks to research and demonstrate evidence-based analysis of today’s crucial after-dark issues, propose processes and products to address them, and provide examples demonstrating how such propositions actually work, are being tested, or have been executed, for tomorrow’s 24/7 cities.
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DESIGN PRACTICE
BASED ON THREE PILLARS

- **Increasing Safety and Welcome**
  - with illuminated legibility to increase space users’ confidence

- **Enhancing Public Health**
  - by extending the hours of walkability and social encounters

- **Augmenting Economic Vitality**
  - through retail and cultural offerings after dark

**NIGHTTIME DESIGN**

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Presenter point of view: Artwork
Presenter point of view: Education and pilots
Enlivening public space at night

Light Festival Category Basics

- Community, grassroots
- Professional arts
- Focus on technological, media, interactive
- City identity
- Partner events / Awards
- Traditional Arts
Resource: Lighting Urban Community International (LUCI)
A city membership organization

Light Festival website
www.luciassociation.org/festivals-europe/
Also has toolkit for members

Listed:
36 Europe
5 Americas
12 Asia/Africa/Oceania

Oldest 1998 – Turin, Italy
Grassroots/engagement / educational / volunteer

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School and neighborhood organizations
Paper and willow lantern making

Lanterns 2
Making Your Lantern

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:
A. Willow sticks
B. Masking tape
C. Gaffer tape
D. Scissors
E. Pliers
F. Candles
G. Bottle tops
H. Wire I. Strong tissue paper (NB. It must be wet strength tissue paper)
J. PVA glue
K. Piece of sponge or foam rubber

TO MAKE A SIMPLE PYRAMID

1. Cut 4 willows the same length for the base.
2. Join them at the corners with masking tape.
3. Join them at the corners with masking tape.
4. Add 2 diagonals.
5. Measure the vertical to the height you want, cut 4.
6. Use a variety of designs – remember they will show up in silhouette.
7. Decorate and strengthen the sides.
8. Fix it on with wire hinges.

Lanterns 4
COVERING THE LANTERN

21. This is a very strong sphere which you can turn into a face, an animal, a bird...by adding features. (N.B. you can add diagonals near the bottom to support the carda holder). REMEMBER THERE MUST BE 12’ CLEAR ABOVE THE FLAME. OTHER SIMPLE SHAPES:

22. Make a sheet of 5 willows. Tape at the bottom and near the top.
23. Add a circle and it becomes a fish. Work the thin end into a tail.
24. 4 willows and a semicircle becomes a boat.
25. A waterproof surface is best to work on, or cover your table with plastic. Mix PVA with water until it runs off the sides. Tear the tissue paper (remember it must be wet strength) into manageable pieces. Working on the table, spread PVA over the whole piece of paper with the sponge or foam rubber.
26. Leave a gap at the top (above the flame). Let the heat out. A final coating of PVA will strengthen the whole lantern.
27. Cover the base and the sides. Leave a gap at the top (above the flame). Let the heat out. A final coating of PVA will strengthen the whole lantern.
28. Apply the wet tissue to the lantern, overlapping each piece as you go.
29. Add a wire loop above the candle, and you will need a pole with a hook (gaffer tape) on it for carrying your lantern.

WARNING: DON’T WEAR A SHELL SUIT OR NYLON ANORAK
Multi-city installation to bring attention to vacant properties (U.S.)
Multi-city installation to bring attention to vacant properties (U.S.)
Community project to bring attention to displacement (Australia)
Professional

- Community, grassroots
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Portland Winter Light Festival / Of note: several partner activities
Portland, Oregon

- Community, grassroots
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Illuminated Bike Ride
Friday, February 2nd
5:30 PM
Aztec Willie’s
Luci d’Artista
Turin, Italy
Of note: Pioneers: Commissioning fine artists, conserving light art and lending

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Luci d’Artista Torino
Amsterdam, Netherlands

Of note: Festival, “lightartcollection” and “World Masters in Projection Mapping” award, 2018

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Conserving specific sculptural pieces and offering to sister festivals (a new business model).
Brocken 6A
Yasuhiro Chida
Japan

Inspired by a natural light phenomenon: the mysterious Brocken spectrum

4.5 m x 4.5 m x 4.5 m

A Window in Time
Motion Paintings
The Netherlands

Through the usage of LED lights and specially designed software pictures come to life in a moving painting of light.

12 m x 8 m x 3 m

Squared Time
Hanna Batsama
The Netherlands

By seeking all of the blocks of Squared Time together and being able walk around them, you can physically experience and comprehend how much time fits in one day.

Featured: Amsterdam Light Festival

add to my collection
Lumiere Festival
Durham, United Kingdom  Of note: Single curator

- Community, grassroots
- Professional arts
- Focus on technological, media, interactive
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- Partner events / Awards
- Traditional Arts
Lumiere, Durham, UK
Lumiere, Durham, UK
Lumiere, Durham, UK
Lumiere, Durham, UK
Fête des Lumières  
Lyon, France

Of note: The innovator of city identity, colors the streets, mix of professional and student

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Fête des Lumières, Lyon
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…Light Festivals: Initial considerations

• Is the festival an attractor for the city to enliven a particular district? Is it for the arts community or beyond? Which model is best: Community/grassroots, Professional arts, Focus on technological, media, interactive, City identity, Traditional Arts

• Who are best partners, what events will they associate? For more attention and involvement is an award program useful?

• Set goals in terms of artist participation, technologies, audience

• Integrate methodologies and practical needs: curatorial, competition, Staff/labor needs: theater electricians, event management, city requirements (permits) just to name a few