



#37

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Start

- Housing complex, Milan
- School and day care centre, Helsinki
- Museum extension, Riga
- Public square, Lodi

Ready

- Faculty extension, Groningen
- Education centre, Porto
- Music school, Granville
- Media design office, Steyr
- Two houses, Jaén
- Student housing, Helsinki
- Hydroelectric power station, Kempten
- Housing, Dublin
- Villa, Palanga
- Hospital entrance building, Florence

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- Interview: Kersten Geers and David Van Severen
- Is Finland still on the architectural map?
- A tour of great architecture in Grand Paris
- Home: Lasse Lehtinen's black house, Lammi
- Karel Prager's Federal Assembly, Prague

Section: Light & mood

Charcoal box in Ostrava

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But a good lighting plan does more than just facilitate a harmonious whole. Perhaps even more important is the way light can be used to create a certain atmosphere. And atmosphere is absolutely crucial to the experience of architecture.

Countless everyday examples illustrate the relation between architecture, light and emotion. Look at how people light candles in their homes in autumn and winter – not just to relieve the darkness, but more especially to create a sense of warmth and cosiness. And the despondency that often steals over people in hospitals is due not just to the unpleasant things that often happen there, but also to the 'cold' fluorescent lighting. And in public spaces, 'cool' lighting (high colour temperature) or too little lighting (low luminous intensity), can sometimes evoke feelings of uneasiness or insecurity. Whereas in hotels, shops and restaurants, light is deployed in such a way that people start to relax the minute they step over the threshold, because it is as if they have entered a different, more alluring world.

Of course, in every case it is a matter of an interaction between light, materials and colour, but one way or another lighting turns out to be essential for the atmosphere of a place. And, as research has shown, a good atmosphere has a positive effect on consumer behaviour, the zest for work and even the healing process.

As such, there is growing interest in designing with artificial light. More and more cities are commissioning integrated lighting plans for streets, squares, buildings and

shop windows. In the office sector, the effect of light on general well-being and the ability to concentrate (read, productivity) is now well recognized and experiments with new lighting concepts and products geared to human biorhythms are being conducted. And in hospitals the lighting plan is increasingly treated as part of a 'healing environment'.

Music for the eyes

Nonetheless, the fact that research into the effects of such lighting concepts is still at an early stage and that the influence of light alone (and not the space as a whole) is difficult to measure, means that the light/atmosphere relationship remains a vague sort of phenomenon, as intangible as light itself. A possible contributing factor is that in modern architecture, unlike in modern art, the emphasis is on the rational rather than the emotional. Among architects there is still a certain taboo on designing 'by feelings'.

How then should we deal with light? How can architects exploit the potential of lighting to the full? One possibility is by trusting more to intuition. Like the successful German light designer Gerd Pfarré of Pfarré Lighting Design. In autumn 2010 his firm celebrated its tenth anniversary with an exhibition entitled 'Light is Music for the Eyes'. An apt analogy, since music is another outstanding creator of atmosphere. As Pfarré remarked in an interview about the exhibition with Luminapolis, 'A good lighting project can have a great impact on us; surrounded by the right light, we are feeling well... In fact, one can regard a lighting

scheme as an orchestration'. In the same interview he recounted how he started experimenting with light in photography at the age of sixteen, in a quest for the ultimate, dramatic effect. A process of trial and error that he repeated in designing light fittings that would achieve precisely the desired effect.

It appears that in addition to a more intuitive approach, this way of working – empirically, often with materials and products developed specifically for the project concerned – is essential for creating the right atmosphere. Take, for example, the design process followed by Moederscheim Moonen architects for a pavilion with an illuminated awning (see elsewhere in this article). They built a lot of 1:1 mock-ups in order to find the perfect combination of material and light source. There is a world of difference between this and the way most buildings are furnished with a 'standard' lighting plan – from the drawing table.

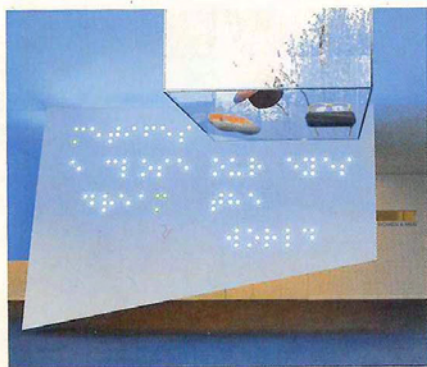
Custom lighting plans

Bespoke lighting plans are, however, gaining in popularity. Apart from atmosphere, one of the best sales arguments is energy savings. In houses and offices, for example, there is a trend towards lighting that reacts to movement sensors, sometimes in combination with a system to vary the colour and intensity of the light. But it is at the urban scale that real energy and cost savings are to be made by installing new, often computer-controlled, lighting systems. At the same time, this is an opportunity to reappraise the illuminated image of the existing city.

In an article ('Leuchtende Städte') in the November issue of the *Hochparterre* magazine, Roderick Hoenig analysed ten years of lighting policy in four Swiss cities. One surprising conclusion is that the trend towards reducing the overall light level is not motivated solely by a desire to save energy. The standard light levels (of buildings) turn out to be so high as to produce a certain flattening effect. The existing plans are no longer effective in commercial terms, either. 'Less is more' is consequently the new mantra: less light, more contrast. According to the article, lighting specialists are even looking to atmospheric lighting during Christmas and Light Festivals for inspiration.

The trend is clear, whereas light was still a 'scarce' commodity a century ago during the rise of Modernism, there is now an excess of (artificial) light. While back then Light, together with Air and Space, was seen as liberating, nowadays we have more than enough light and what we crave is a sense of well-being and intimacy – light that is not just about seeing but also about feeling.

Two good examples of this are the Eye Care for You spectacle store and the pharmacy featured in this Section. The lighting in these small-scale projects is not aimed primarily at asserting a maximum presence in the street or at showing off the products, but rather at subtly attracting the attention of passers-by. The interplay and manipulation of light and dark, visibility and invisibility, makes people curious about what kind of place this is and what is going on inside. In this particular strategy, the sensory quality is paramount. (KIRSTEN HANNEMA)



Braille poetry

MAASTRICHT (NL) — Eye For You seized on its relocation to Maastricht to take a critical look at the operation and social involvement of its **eye wear store/eye care centre**. Together with Stichting KUBES (an organization that promotes art by the blind), it worked on a new concept in which art and light are used to focus

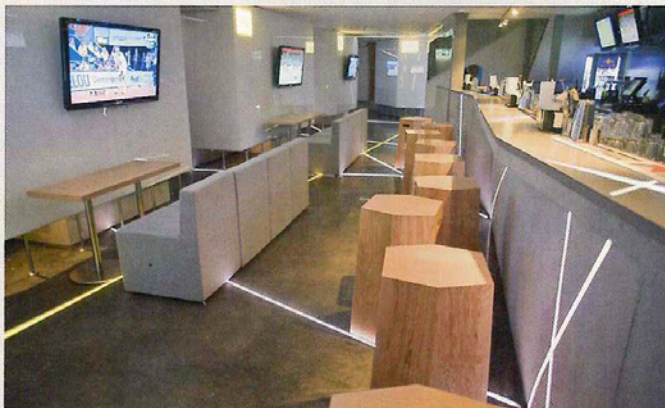
people's attention on the blind and visually impaired. The latter can exhibit artwork in the exhibition space, which takes up half of the centre. The sculptures are interspersed among a number of white, floor-to-ceiling cowl-like volumes which are used to display the spectacle collection. Thanks to this layout, people feel as if they are entering a gallery rather than a spectacle store.

In designing the interior, architects Bassam El Okeily and Karle Menten allocated an important role to light. Hundreds of LEDs embedded in the walls of the white volumes spell out one continuous sentence in braille: 'At times we open our eyes to see the world and, at times, we close our eyes to dream about it'. This illuminated braille poetry attracts the attention of passers-by so that

light becomes a means of communication, facilitating a dialogue about seeing and not seeing, between the clients and those who have no need of spectacles. (HANNELORE GEERAERTS)

EYECARE FOR YOU, 2010
Architect Bassam El Okeily and Karle Menten. Client Eye Care for You. Lighting manufacturer Nimbus. Viabizzuno Furniture and wall manufacturer made to measure by Moors NV. Address St Annalaan 25–29, Maastricht. Info www.bassamelokey.com, www.karlamenten.be





Light net

WARSAW (PL) — The **Confashion Sport Bar** is located in Warsaw, close to the old town, in the midst of office buildings and the fashionable restaurants and clubs that occupy nearly all street-level spaces along the east side of Moliere Street. Located in the arcades of a ballet school, this bar is aimed at businessmen who are interested in sport. Patrons can watch direct broadcasts of sporting events from around the world while eating breakfast, lunch, dinner or conducting a business meeting. With forty plasma

screens available, it is possible to watch individually chosen events in one of the hired boxes, as well as the most popular ones in the common areas.

The unifying element in the interior is a network of LED light lines that 'cut' through walls, floors and ceilings. According to the architects they allude to the demarcation lines on playing fields and courts as well as to the nets used in various sporting disciplines. Other 'sporty' elements are the wood parquet on the walls of the boxes, recalling the floors of sports halls, the transpar-

ent resin on the floors, referring to ice, while the bar seats are made of solid oak, similar to vaulting horses. (HUBERT TRAMMER)

CONFASHION SPORT BAR, 2010

Architects Moko architects Client PPC Sp. z o.o. Address Warsaw, Moliere 6 Info www.mokoarchitects.pl, www.confashion-sport.pl



Wine ambience

LOGROÑO (ES) — Olarra's new Winery Visitor's Centre in Logroño is a truly inspirational space. Created within the atrium of an existing industrial building, the new **winery centre** turns wine tasting into an experience that addresses all the senses.

The powerful concrete structure provided a perfect setting for the design by Iñaki Aurrekoetxea and Alex Laskurin (IA+B architects). Their goal was to create a playful relationship between the existing grey concrete walls and beams and the new programmatic additions, by enhancing the inherent qualities of the materials, shapes and shadows.

The relatively simple programme occupies two levels and has a total surface area of 1000 m². The ground level houses an exhibition area, a degustation space and a retail area, while on the upper floor, a wine tasting area, a small conference room and several office spaces are organized around a hexagonal void.

In fact, the entire atrium has an hexagonal shape, but this only becomes apparent in this central void. Here, a metallic staircase links both levels beneath a glass structure composed of various segments which evoke the garnet colours of red wine and generate a very special ambience and light quality. The rich contrast between the translucency of these glass prisms and the opacity and strength of the building skin provides a warm and comfortable environment. While on the top floor, natural diffuse light enters from pre-

existing openings bathing the space in a bright white light, on the ground floor the intensity of the wine-coloured glass – and the lack of natural light – creates a more dramatic mise-en-scène for the ritual of wine tasting.

The intense chromatic experience and the pleasant spatiality of this project intuitively make you feel that what you really need right now is a glass of fine red wine.

(CARLOS M. GUIMARÃES)

OLARRAS'S WINERY CENTRE, 2010

Architect IA+B (Iñaki Aurrekoetxea + Alex Laskurin) Location Logroño, Spain Info www.iab-arkitek.com

