

Light Requisite for An Electric Stage

Soignez vos façades, group show at Le Commissariat, Paris.

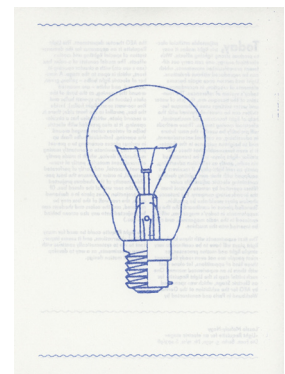
2012

For this installation, an electrical system is installed consisting of outlets, switches, and black cable. This new system parasites the existing lighting system of gallery. On the floor of the gallery is a box of hand painted incandescent light bulbs of various colors and forms plus a box of electrical cables with sockets and plugs that work in conjunction with the outlets installed in the ceiling and the hand painted light bulbs.

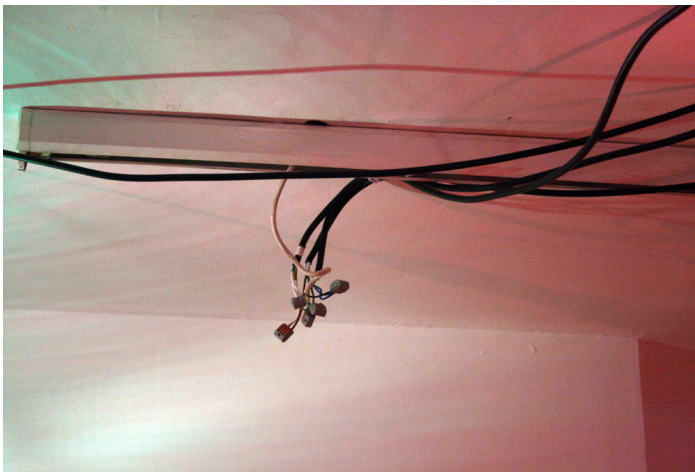
During the opening of the show I use these materials to execute a dynamic lighting situation. Following a script, I manipulate the lamps the create varying arrangements of color, intensity, focus, direction, and position.

I also sit behind a small stand offering visitors to buy a copy of *Light Requisite for an Electric Stage* in the form of a cheap plastic silver-glitter hats. The title given to the sparkle-hat is referencing the kinetic light sculpture by Laszlo Moholy-Nagy of the same name built between 1922 and 1930.

Similar to my installation, the sculpture of Moholy-Nagy used colored light bulbs to produce varying lighting effects. However Moholy-Nagy's light bulbs were in a box surrounding a motorized sculpture that refracted and reflected light as it spun round and round. Moholy-Nagy's oeuvre still exists today but in a reduced state without the light bulbs and box. In my installation the kinetic sculpture is replaced by the cheap plastic sparkle hats, and Moholy-Nagy's lighting effects--executed by programable relay switches and machines-- are instead executed with the action of my body and the bodies of the visitors in the gallery. Also Moholy-Nagy's text describing *Light Requisite for an Electric Stage* is used as an instruction manual for the plastic sparkle hat.



Above: cardboard boxes with light bulbs and lamps; table with sparkle hats, instruction manual, and cash box. Right: German, French and English cover pages for the instruction manual.



Today, adjustable artificial electric light makes it easy to produce strong lighting effects. With electrical energy, one can carry out different pre-calculated movements, which can be reproduced without deviations. Light and motion once again become elements of creation, in accordance with today's system of references. The fountains of the baroque era, the jets of water and water settings seen in Baroque festivities can be creatively revived with the help of light fountains and mechanical, electrical moving images. These methods will probably be used in the near future in advertising, as carnival entertainment, and to heighten suspense in the theater. It is even foreseeable that these and similar «light plays» will be transmitted via radio, partly as television advertising, partly as real light-plays, if receivers are equipped with their own lighting devices containing electric adjustable color filters operated by remote control from the broadcasting company. For instance shadow plays would also be possible. Stenciled pieces of cardboard, like the art supplements in today's magazines, will be enclosed in the radio magazines, and can be inserted into the machine.

The first experiments with these kinds of light plays will have to be confined to very simple light and motion processes, as most people are not even ready to accept these kind of apparitions, let alone deal with them in an experienced manner. One such initial step is the *Light Requisite for an Electric Stage*, which was sponsored by AEG for the exhibition of the German Werkbund in Paris and constructed by

the AEG theater department. The *Light Requisite* is an apparatus for the demonstration of special lighting and motion effects. The model consists of a cubic box (120 x 120 cm) with a circular opening in front, which is open to the stage. A number of electric light bulbs – yellow, green, blue, red, and white – are mounted around the opening, at the back of the plate (about seventy 15-watt bulbs and five 100-watt searchlight bulbs). Inside the box, parallel to the front side, there is a second plate, which also has a circular opening. It is also provided with electric bulbs of various colors ranged around the opening. Individual bulbs flash up in various places according to a pre-set plan. They illuminate a constantly moving mechanical device, which is made partly of translucent material, partly of transparent material, and partly of perforated material, in order to ensure the best possible linearity of the shadows projected onto the rear wall of the closed box. (If the projection takes place in a darkened room, the rear wall of the box may be removed, and the colors and shadows can be projected onto any size screen behind the box.)

The *Light Requite* could be used for many optical observations, and it seems important to me to systematically continue with these experiments, as a way to develop light and motion design.

Laszlo Moholy-Nagy
«*Light Requisite for an electric stage*»
Die Form. Berlin. 5. 1930, Nr. 11/12, S. 297/98



When Something's Good It's Always Good

in collaboration with Augustin Grenèche
Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris, Paris.



During the conception of this work, the ban on incandescent light bulbs in Europe had already started. Notably all frosted incandescent light bulb had been taken out of production and off the market since two years. When the light bulb ban started in 2009 there were dozens of articles the newspapers with headlines such as “Let There Not Be Light (At Least a Certain Kind)” and “Official Responsible for Light Bulb Ban is a Former Communist.” However, two years later, this economic and political policy has apparently faded from the spotlight. I wondered if people still cared about this monumental aesthetic transformation?

In order to engage people and provoke a conversation or an exchange, I decided to give away, for free, several hundred incandescent light bulbs that I had myself applied a frost or matt finish to the glass surface. To create my light bulb stand I appropriated an art work from friend and colleague Augustin Grenèche that consisted of a sentence written with giant wooden letters, mimicking an advertising billboard or a cinema marquee: “When Something's Good It's Always good.”

The sign and the light bulbs were installed in front of the main entrance to the Cité Internationale Université de Paris: a busy student center in the south of Paris. Over the course of an afternoon, I gave away hundreds of light bulbs and had countless engaged conversations with various people passing by on topics ranging from economy, ecology, aesthetics, health, nuclear energy, globalization, consumer freedom, and planned obsolescence. Most people took a light bulb. Some took two or three. One woman took 10 and another woman wanted to take the entire stock!



L'Ampoule Eco-Citoyenne

in collaboration with Thibaud Guichard and Luca Wyss

Power point presentation, 5-watt light bulb, and case of 100 "5-watt" light bulbs

Parties Prenantes, Béton Salon et La Vitrine, Paris, 2009.



Above: 5 watt light bulb and power point presentation.



Top: "5 watt" light bulb. Bottom: case of "5 watt" light bulbs for distribution.

This conference/ performance uses document and fiction to introduce to the public the "Eco-Citizen 5 Watt Incandescent Light Bulb." We demonstrate how other lighting technologies marketed as low consumption are toxic to produce and dispose of, thus negating their eco-friendly status. Furthermore, the traditional incandescent 60 watt light bulb has been condemned as inefficient. Through absurdist logic we argue that all lighting in public and private, interior and exterior, must be equipped with the incandescent 5 watt light bulb to reflect a politically correct consumption target. At the end of the conference we distributed to the public our own 5 watt incandescent bulbs.

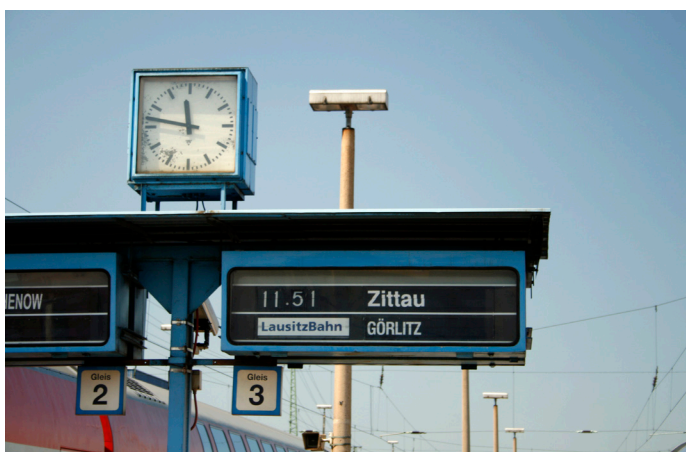
The conference took place in the context of Parties Prenantes a collaboration between Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Arts Paris-Cergy, Art and Social Practice of Portland and Béton Salon. This work was the product of collective investigations into the daily life around the newly constructed neighborhood of Paris Rive Gauche.



Excerpts from the power point presentation.

A light shines on

Conference/ performance: overhead projector transparencies, diaporama, and table.
2009- ENSAPC, Cergy.



This work-in-progress traces the ongoing search for a light bulb. Through the use of maps, diagrams, and a bank of photographic images a story is constructed taking the audience on a voyage framed in the ruins of modernity and executed in the spectacle of the quotidian. The photographic documents I use are images that I have produced myself while traveling through the various locations featured in the slide show. Whether traveling in a train, crawling through a tunnel, operating electrical switches or telling the story for an audience; I am physically involved in the work.



