



Contained LIGHT

The *Haute Lumière Light Award* was established by Paul Pamboukian of Pamboukian lightdesign some years ago to reflect the need to explore and stimulate discussion on light as a design medium. Fashioned and designed environments require imaginative light solutions that convey meaning, mood, atmosphere and visual appeal.

Key sponsorship to the competition has in the past allowed the winner to attend the renowned annual 'Lights in Alingsås' workshop where students to the Swedish town are guided by professional lighting designers.

The annual award focuses on young design talent in an attempt to stimulate and encourage entries that demonstrate experimentation by pushing the edge while considering the environmental dimension.

Never was this more important than in 2014, when Cape Town held the position of World Design Capital and the competition sponsors went the extra mile and recreated the winning design inside a shipping container. This 'light container' was hosted by V&A Waterfront over the festive season.

For interior designers, architects and industrial design students, the application of light is an essential design tool. It is opportunities like the *Haute Lumière Light Award* that give them the chance to rethink artificial light as a crucial, primary aspect of design. Recreating the winning design at the Waterfront gave the winner the opportunity to gain recognition across a large local and international audience as V&A has three to four million visitors over the festive season.

Claudine Parks, a third year student at Greenside Design Centre College of Design, was the winner of the *Haute Lumière Light Award* 2014 and the light container was based on her concept, Vortex.

Physically achieving the competition's objectives of demonstrating experimentation, pushing the edge, seeking essence and working with perception and deception was no mean feat. The internal space was constructed by wooden frame, with marine ply making up the panels. Each light source used 12 colour changing (RGB) LEDs on a circuit board connected in series to complete eight sections wired together. The installation consisted of 32 sections of

eight light sources connected to DMX controllers.

To increase the effect of perception and deception, a large mirror was mounted at the end of the container to double the space and effect. There was a lot of wiring work in a small space and keeping track of which wires were attached to which controllers gave the installers new respect for Telkom technicians who regularly deal with busy street corner telephone junction boxes.

DMX modules offer a great deal of flexibility when controlling light and sound in unison and are currently the optimum hardware for manipulating mood and atmosphere in a space. In the short time available to complete the light container it was not possible to use the DMX controls to their full capacity and in the end the team defaulted to standard sequences.

Over the four week period that the container was on display, thousands of people moved in and out of the space with a variety of responses; children were particularly fascinated, and sometimes a little wary.

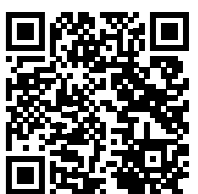
Looking at the container from outside it was hard to imagine the sense of depth and movement

inside - sound, colour, patterns of artificial light all moving in an unpredictable vortex. Many visitors felt drawn towards the entrance, some were transfixed and others found it difficult to negotiate their next move. Some felt at home moving between the plays of light that encapsulated them and others were disappointed that the exit was not a portal to their favourite night club!

South Africa has some outstanding design talent. However, unlike the USA or many countries in Europe, we do not always have the resources to support this talent to a point where it is self-sustaining. Young designers need to work hard to gain the recognition necessary to create a market for themselves that can sustain their ongoing efforts and this project was a great opportunity to inspire them.

The sponsors were: ELDC; Gibb Engineering; LED Lighting SA; MDS Architecture; Pamboukian lightdesign; Regent Light Solutions; SA Fashion Week and VISI. ^{LID}

Article by Pierre van Helden, LED Lighting SA



Scan to view the installation in progress.