



The annual Haute Lumiere Light Award celebrates and promotes excellence in the understanding and application of artificial light. Its purpose is to rethink artificial light as a crucial, primary aspect of design and to create unusual visibility. Designs should be experimental and incorporate thinking about the unknown, push the edge, seek essence and work with perception and deception.

# Joint Exposure



**This year's brief stated:** Use timber only to create a self-supporting light fitting of any description. Manipulate light using any source and colour. In designing the object think primarily of how light interacts with it, and its surroundings. The design should be highly innovative, imaginative and original.

The jurors selected six designs from the submissions and their authors were invited to take part in the second stage of the award, the construction of a 1:1 prototype.

At an intense, one-day workshop on the qualities of light, held at the studio of Paul Pamboukian Lighting Design, each design was analysed and discussed in detail. The designers then set out to rethink, evolve, modify and even replace their original ideas within the context of their own, expanded appreciation of light.

One particular approach to the Award is illustrated by Mandi Botha's understanding and interpretation of the brief. 'Joint Exposure' fulfils different criteria – appearing unfinished and not that well worked.

While originally playing with lines of light on paper and randomly drawing them crossing each other, Mandi accidentally realised the potential in the 'joint' or node. The point of intersection is also a moment of interaction revealing cracks of light. Translating the idea three dimensionally, two streaks of light as rectangular boxes are slotted one into another. By exposing the joint, or making the jointing a feature by pulling the two elements apart, 'the user can control the amount of light and the configuration of the luminaire by combining light



to create form. The luminaire is intended for mood lighting or bedside applications; however there are a number of other possibilities.'

It is these possibilities, the potential the design holds, that are seductive. The immediate assumption is that the natural timber box lies on its back and lights upwards. It is transversed by a black painted box which, when pulled out of the cup-joint, switches on. It can be stood anywhere in relation as part of a personal 'light' composition – on, next or parallel to it. It can be used as a backdrop to a computer screen or as a torch. Placed back in the joint, but reversed it will continue to light – the other way is back to battery re-charge.

The lateral thinking behind this object and the many transmutations of the prototype are fascinating. The boxes can be imagined with two, three, four and even six sides lit. They can be of different lengths and proportions, slithers of light of several 'joints' – and multiples thereof. Different diffusers and throws of lights and even different light sources come to mind. And then of course, there is dimmer control and solar panel re-charging. As a primary design it transmits meaning, conveys mood, atmosphere and visual appeal, extending beyond the functional requirements of illumination. 'Joint Exposure' is switched on by pressing the natural timber diffuser-divider.

The Haute Lumiere Light Award was established by Paul Pamboukian five years ago to stimulate greater interest in the study and application of light as a critical design tool for architects and designers. In order to stress the value of practical experience and promote lighting as the inventive medium that it is, the winner of this competition attends the five day lighting workshop and conference that is held in Alingsås, Sweden, each year. The competition is organised and run by Paul Pamboukian Lighting Design with sponsorship from ELDA, Regent Lighting and Regent Design.

Photographs: Natalie Payne.

