Haute Lumière 2015

The Haute Lumière Light Competition, conceived and managed by Pamboukian lightdesign, reflects a need to explore and stimulate debate on light as a design medium. Fashioned and designed environments require imaginative light solutions, which convey meaning, mood, atmosphere and visual appeal. The purpose of the competition is to rethink the application of artificial light as a crucial, primary aspect of design and as an inventive medium that extends beyond the functional requirements of illumination.

The brief for 2015 was: Create any original light 'object' (single/multiple source) that has an impact on a self-defined interior space. Explore movement in light, texture, mood and task. In asking the question what is light, investigate the expressive qualities of light such as: shadow, contrast, edge, colour and magic. The design will be evaluated on originality and creativity. Avoid clichés!

Four finalists were invited to a workshop run by Paul Pamboukian. Each of their designs was analysed and discussed in detail. The designers then set out to rethink, evolve and modify their designs within the context of their extended appreciation of light and it was from the final submissions that a winner was chosen.

Bongisa Msutu of Pamboukian lightdesign, who oversaw the entries to the competition asked each of the finalists four questions to find out how they felt about this year's competition. The questions were:
1. *What was your aim with this design (besides fulfilling the brief)?*
2. *What did you learn about light through this process?*
3. *What did you learn about yourself and your own creative process with this competition?*
4. *What advice would you give future entrants as guidance?*

Braam de Villiers - WINNER
1. 'Moonlight' pays homage to the South African artist Berco Wilsenach. Wilsenach's fascination with celestial objects inspired me
2. Light is emitted, reflected and can travel through mediums. The source (lamp) is always seen as the centre of the light, yet it is only the beginning of the path of light. Light engages with objects that change the nature, quality and direction thereof.
3. Engage constantly with creative people across the spectrum, i.e. artists, scientists, bankers etc. Your idea could be the biggest threat to your concept. Develop multiple concepts.
4. Cross reference! Cross pollinate! Think! Dream! Most importantly, have fun!

Conrad Chicane
1. I wanted to design something unique and unusual. I wanted to challenge myself mentally and physically.
2. We only notice our surroundings because light exists – without it we wouldn't see or experience anything. Light has the capacity to alter or manipulate our environment. However, light can be manipulated too, through the use of reflective surfaces, which in turn alter colour temperature and light intensity.
3. I realised I am a lot stronger than I thought mentally and physically. I had to bend the stainless steel sheet, and do the powder coating and electrical wiring myself. As long as you stick to a concept, and have a reason for what you are doing, you can achieve anything.
4. Have an action plan, stay organised, and maintain a good schedule. Know what you want to achieve with your design. Should you hit a block, change the direction of your design process. Read the brief! Keep it simple!

Monique Brown
1. The objective was to manipulate and control the characteristics of gradient light glow by means of pixilation. Breaking form up into its most basic parts and enlarging it until it is unrecognisable.
2. Unlike product design, designing with light requires a far more hands-on approach. Lighting is unpredictable and reliant on so many variables that it is essential not just to design on paper, but to test ideas continually. Lighting is not merely illumination; it plays a major role in the atmospheric quality of an environment.
3. Design is infinite and can always be pushed further. This competition taught me the importance of light and its endless possibilities. I discovered how empowering it is being able to take a design from concept phase to creation.
4. Let experiments guide your design. Be open to the new and unexpected results that light can offer.

Astrid Haarhoff
1. To explore artificial lighting as a medium and explore the way light can be manipulated using one source at different angles.
2. I have learnt that artificial lighting extends beyond the functional requirements of illumination. Every aspect within light can affect artificial lighting, i.e., colour temperature, the housing of illumination, the amount of light seen, the angle of light, etc. All these elements can alter the mood and atmosphere created by light.
3. Through this process I have learnt that I have a passion for light and its applications. The most important part of my creative process is that of concept development.
4. Start with a strong concept and allow that concept to define the artificial light being applied. Have fun with it and explore. Lighting is a whole new world!
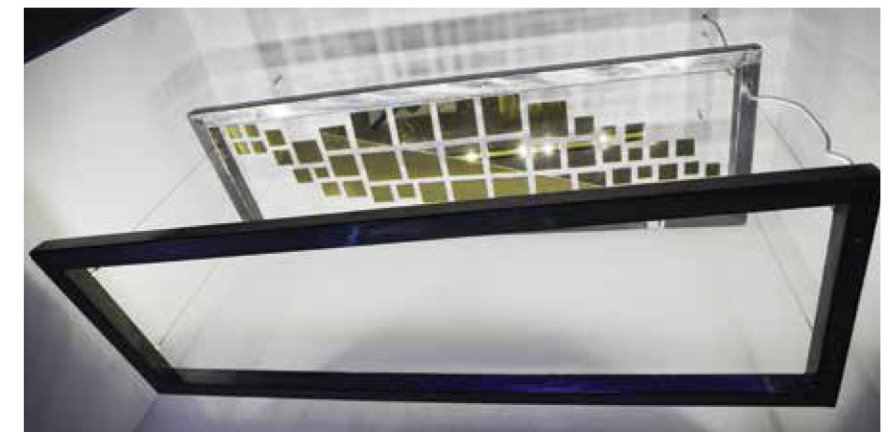

Braam de Villiers' 'Moonlight' Light and Dark reflection.
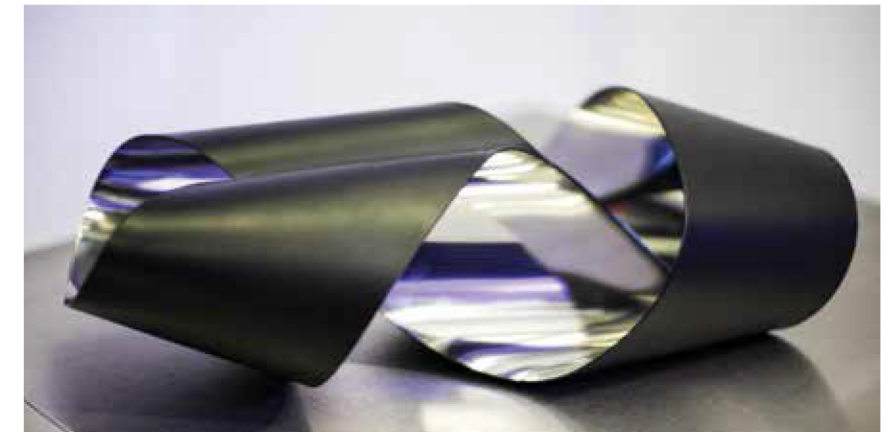
Pavilion vs light by Conrad Chicane.

Pixel-Lys by Monique Brown.

The winning entry this year was from Braam de Villiers for his submission Moonlight. Braam will attend the Lights in Alingsås workshop in the Swedish town of Alingsås.
The Haute Lumière competition is sponsored by Pamboukian lightdesign, LED Lighting SA, Regent Lighting Solutions, Lights in Alingsås and SA Fashion Week.

Simplicity by Astrid Haarhoff.