



The Handelsblatt publishing house Luminale project was a students' competition organised by the University of Wismar, and initiated by lighting design practice AG Licht and the architects who designed the building, Jo.Franzke Architekten. The winning lighting solution was the one submitted by Isabel Dominguez and Christian Wendel. Both the architecture and the use of the building as a media company were ideas that were addressed in the design concept.

Financial newspapers are dynamic by nature. They have to be flexible because they are required to process continually changing data. The impetus Handelsblatt media give to the market contributes to future economic development. The layout of the facade of the building provided the basis for the dynamic lighting design.

The lighting concept has two main features: dynamic quality and layout, which are also key issues for financial newspapers. The concept supports the idea of information being forwarded dynamically from "info box" to "info box" and onwards to the world. Syllables of words that are important for the Handelsblatt group were backlit, inviting visitors and

passers-by to decipher the messages and data, just as journalists working inside the building evaluate news they receive and are required to process.

Project team:

Lighting design concept: Isabel Dominguez and Christian Wendel
Students' group headed by: Prof. Susanne Weber

Products applied:

44 x 500 watt PAR lamps (theatre)
40 x T26 fluorescent battens (Zumtobel Staff – ZE) with digital dimmable electronic ballasts
600 metres' cotton cloth

Lighting control: DMX recoder using "grandMA" software

The DALI-controlled fluorescent battens were rendered DMX-compatible using signal converters from KWL.

Photos: Jens Salzmann

installation "Burning Beauty" in the university grounds.

The overall Luminale event officially comprised 80 locations. The number of projects and visitors alike multiplied in comparison to the previous Luminale event. Independent of the fact that it was practically impossible for all people involved in the fair itself to see all the installations, word soon spread as to which of the Luminale installations were a must to see in 2004. The mass of coloured and dynamic lighting installations once again showed that the presentation of state-of-the-art lighting technology was often more important than the conceptual quality of the projects. According to Project Manager Helmut Bien, this is a deliberate feature of the overall event. It is no doubt wonderful to have so many projects offered for Luminale, but this does give rise to the risk of sending out wrong signals to the general public, clients and architects. It might be a wise move for the Luminale project team to consider appointing an Art Director and involving him in the selection process. The industry is looking for experts in the field of architectural lighting design. The same should also apply to industry events, such as Luminale. In general, Luminale does work: towns and local governments, as well as the general public, are beginning to understand the significance of light in the urban environment, and the tendency is for towns to rethink and improve their urban lighting schemes. What Messe Frankfurt cannot manage to do – attract more architects and owners to light & building – can be realised by an event such as Luminale. As I said: with all the inherent chances and risks.

Text: Joachim Ritter