

Integrate culture and creativity into the design of urban light festival:the 7th Amsterdam light festival

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Abstract: With the progress of light technology, the local lighting science and technology, and cultural elements will be combined, using lighting technology innovation to create the urban characteristic light festival, display shocking night scene, wake up the city night economy, and gradually become the trend of the city. Through the study of the 7th Amsterdam Light Festival, combined with the development of the domestic urban light festival, this paper combs and ponders the cultural and creative design of the urban light festival.

1. Introduction

The Amsterdam light festival kicks off in the winter, usually beginning in November to December of the first year and ending in January of the following year, lasting nearly two months. Already in the 1920s, light art gained a prominent place in public space in large cities in Europe, including Amsterdam. In October 1929, the first major Dutch "light event" took place here, the Edison Light Week. In 2012, Guttman - together with Rogier van der Heide and event organizer Raymond Borsboom - developed the first edition of Amsterdam Light Festival. With the further development of the scale of the city light festival and the exhibitors, the Amsterdam light festival has gradually become a large-scale public art activity of the international art level.

2. Features: Design characteristics of urban light festival

2.1 Discovery and utilization of urban public space environment

Amsterdam Light Festival makes full use of the urban public space environment, such as rivers, squares, buildings, streets, bridges and so on, to show a visual diversity of urban public space through light works of art. From the lights on historical buildings to the dynamic light systems in city parks, from the Gentlemen Canal to the Oosterdok Canal, to the Armer Canal, are the stage created by artists. The walking route and cruise route of the light festival present 29 public works of art to the audience. The obvious characteristic of urban light festivals is that the main rivers, buildings, and streets of the city are closely combined with the environment of urban public space.

2.2 The expression and form of light art

As one of the artists of the Amsterdam light festival, Karloina Katarzyna Hoorko's understanding of the shadow art is to tell the story through space, color, and light. She used light to create a mental state and completely change the space and the object. Howorko thinks the artist is not to consider the light of the light in his creation but to give it a new form of beauty: the "I like to work and use my creativity in different scales. Light can profoundly affect our emotions. If the light is not taken into account, space cannot be designed, which is not only for buildings but also for both the scene design and the immersive experience."

2.3 The connotation and transmission of urban culture

Amsterdam Light Festival presents a very contagious urban public art activity for tourists. The perfect presentation of the light festival requires not only the organizers to gather artists and light experts from all over the world, but also the artistic beauty of light art. The performance of light is not only the support of light technology but also the artistic display of culture, creativity, value and other things with inherent spirit to the public through the media of light, so that visitors are not caused by the following trend, but more to feel the physical and mental impact and artistic beauty brought about by works of art. Through the light art to show the cultural personality and characteristics of Amsterdam, so that the collision between tradition and modernity, the past and the future intertwined, showing a unique charm of the new city image.

2.4 Cooperation and participation of artists

The Amsterdam light festival is from the first idea to the final exhibition: the preparations take around 15 months. Work closely with domestic and foreign artists, designers and architects at all stages to show the art of the Amsterdam light festival. Under the specific theme, the concept of light art is called for in the global context. The project team of the Amsterdam Lighting Festival is then selected from the submitted concept together with the professional jury. The final selection of the work of art will be entered into the development and construction phase. Under the guidance of the professional team, the artists devoted themselves to the spread of Amsterdam. For 53 days the artworks are exhibited in the historic city center of Amsterdam.

3. Form: Public open space of urban light festival

3.1 Landmark building

The landmark building has a symbolic and spiritual significance in the design of the light section. The canal and the house embody the perfect combination of the city of Amsterdam and the history. Just like reflecting water surface - which sometimes moves fiercely and sometimes quietly, brightly or softly lit - < Craftscape > has different appearances. It is an intriguing play of light on the walls of the Mennonite Singel Church. But when you squint your eyes, you can see a mountainous landscape of light that floats mysteriously in space. Surprisingly enough, this illusion is caused by a very simple configuration: a processed metal plate is moved with an engine and reflects the light of an LED lamp. Sakamoto's mechanical imitation of natural, intriguing light (like that of the moon) is, like all of 9+1's work, a modern, technological interpretation of that tradition.

3.2 The urban river

Amsterdam is a strange city, beautiful canals intertwined with the "water capital" scenery. Every year, the Amsterdam Canal is the design focus of the Lighting Festival. For example, 2018 work < Light a wish >: make a wish before you blow the fluff from a dandelion into the air – everyone knows this game. OGE Group's < Light a wish > visualizes the moment the seeds disperse in the air, taking your wish with them into the world. The enlarged, fuzzy seeds – of which there are 20 in total and measure 2 meters in height – dangle carefully above the canal and glow in a way that makes it look as though they are breathing. With < Light a wish > the artists visualize the good intentions that we quietly release and (hopefully) encounter again in the future. In this way, the illuminated dandelion puffballs are carriers of our deepest desires and dreams.

3.3 The urban streets

The node of the urban block is to combine the characteristics of place with the unique natural landscape. The two gigantic lamps that appear between lampposts on the Golden Bend are a wonderful sight. Jeroen Henneman created 'Two Lamps' specifically for this beautiful part of the canal. In < Two lamps >, Henneman has merged object and drawing, as is typical of 'standing drawings'. He makes spatial objects from drawings by placing them upright and ensuring that the air, and not the paper, is the carrier of the lines. Since the two lamps are covered in a special foil,

the sculptures take on two different roles in a 24-hour period: they appear as graphic, white drawings during the day and as silhouettes of light at night. Henneman's artwork reminds us of the importance of something as simple as a desk lamp: it ensures that we can work, read a book, or play a game wherever and whenever we want... What would we do without it?

3.4 The urban bridge

Mahali suspension Bridge (thin Bridge) is famous in Amsterdam's 1281 bridges, Mahali Suspension Bridge (also known as thin Bridge) is the most famous. The bridge is made up of two arches for walkers and cyclists and a drawbridge for shipping traffic, but it was the many triangles that formed the starting point for Vink's design. He traced the lines of the triangles with bright white light and extended them into and out of the water, almost like bringing back the lines that the original architects erased from the drawing board during the design process. This is how the bridge's skeleton formed the basis of his very large and impressive light sculpture. The bridge was designed in 1992 to connect Ostdokland with IJ tunnels and city centers, and architects deliberately chose a relatively light, open steel structure to keep Ostdok's view as unobstructed as possible. This is why the bridge is very simple. Vink turned the bridge into a remarkable work of art, a beacon for Ostdock. Like Vink's work, this work of art cannot exist anywhere else — it interweaves with the structure and shape of the bridge.

4. Strategy: design strategy of urban light festival

4.1 Architectural projection

The projection of the building has a sense of science and technology, a large picture and a novel form. The Japanese artists Kazue Monno and Takeshi Nagata, who make up the duo TOCHKA, are specialized in light painting animations. In collaboration with Stichting Juf op Straat, they worked with children from 30 classes in Amsterdam to create light painting animations for their artwork < Neighbors >. The children could watch the results live on a screen, making it immediately visible that light, in addition to paint, chalk, and pencil, could be used as a 'medium'. This way, they had the chance to experience what it's like to be a real artist. Monno and Nagata combined the children's eight domestic scenes from each school class into one big 'house', projected on the quay of the Schippersgracht using special, analog projectors built by the duo.

4.2 Light landscape

Light landscape can play an important role in creating the image of the city at night and constructing the light cultural atmosphere of the city. You can experience the way this affects others by taking a seat in between the figures of < Absorbed by light >, designed by the British Gali May Lucas and executed by Berlin-based sculptor Karoline Hinz. The phone and computer screens that, literally and figuratively, light up our lives are irresistible. And as a result, we engage ourselves more with the virtual and superficial reality than with each other and the real world around us, something Lucas makes painfully clear. Actively involving the audience in the 'story' is a recurring feature in the work of the British artist, who works in Amsterdam as a graphic designer.

4.3 Interactive device

The interactive installation art has its unique audience participation and autonomy, which is more flexible than traditional media art. For example, the resolution of the images that Felipe Prado's < Picto Sender Machine > produces is not only lower than we're used to but is actually lower than the resolution of the first-ever digital photograph from 1957. < Picto Sender Machine > is a welcome change in a time that we are used to seeing films, television programs, and photographs in high definition. The 'machine' consists of an enormous low-resolution screen of 1200 enlarged pixels and invites you to record a short video message. But you can't use words to express your message; only your silhouette, movements, dance steps and gestures will be translated into blocks of light, to see by the audience on a live screen. Express your thoughts creatively only using your body.

5. Action: design theme of urban light festival

5.1 Historical and cultural themes

Amsterdam's regional culture is based on a concrete form and spiritual inheritance as the form of display, with distinct emotional color and personality characteristics. Neustetter researched the Maritime Museum's collection, which contains around 400.000 objects relating to Dutch maritime history. By alternately illuminating the silhouettes with multiple lights, the shadows overlap each other in different ways, consequently creating a range of patterns and imaginary landscapes < Shadow Scapes >. You could view this as a map of light and darkness: a shadow scape. Neustetter compares this process to the maps drawn by Dutch settlers and traders who traveled different continents and appropriated entire territories, cities, villages, (art) objects, and even people. Neustetter shows us that tools of exploration and objects that were once taken as souvenirs and are now stored in the dark can literally be 'brought to light' and become the subject of discussion.

5.2 Entertainment experience theme

Light festival is a public art activity in large cities, attracting people out of the outdoor need a variety of entertainment experience. The psychology behind the physical or digital button is quite simple. For example, the installation < Action > Reaction 2.0>, Sjimmie Veenhuis demonstrates how refreshing it can be to give something like a button, which is ultimately a 'mediator' between us and all kinds of technology, a different meaning. The work consists of a large screen with around 1,000 buttons that, after they have been pressed – because yes, they're really asking for it – light up in a variety of different colors like single pixels. Veenhuis invites viewers to consider the patterns they can create with these pixels and how they could even work with someone else to create something spectacular. While buttons are the focus of this artwork, Veenhuis has highlighted books, warning tape, and traffic signs in his other installations. He uses these everyday objects in their original form but transforms them through the formation of patterns.

5.3 Energy-saving and environment-friendly subject

Energy-saving and environmental protection have been widely concerned by all walks of life. The festival not only infects every audience with its dazzling and colorful lights but also advocates an environmental concept that reduces energy consumption and awakens the vitality of the city. It has formed, as Meke Vrienten shows us with her installation, a new natural light that surrounds us. Vinten built this 'monument' using more than 40 everyday objects along the banks of the Schippersgracht as an ode to the lamps that form such an important part of the decor of our daily lives but that we often don't even notice. They are reminiscent of the 'readymades', or the everyday objects and products like urinals, bicycles and snow shovels that artists presented as art objects in the early 20th century. Not only is < Natuurlijk Licht > an ode to these devices that work so hard for us, but it's also a critique. Because even though the light that these objects emit might be useful to the user, they are also a symbol of mass consumption and the indifferent ways we treat our environment.

5.4 Light technology theme

One piece of work is based on light, which shows the basic knowledge of light or various information about the application of light through modern technology. < Continuum > is a mysterious, illuminated block with colored surfaces. There is something special about these surfaces: sometimes they're pink, sometimes they're blue- it depends on where you stand as the viewer and changes with every movement you make. To create this effect, artist Sebastian Kite makes clever use of the unique properties of light. At the same time, This experience of light, surface, and space is strikingly similar to the way we communicate with one another. We often think that the process of sending, transmitting and receiving messages is on a 'continuum', that it's a full circle. But the message (in < Continuum >: the light) is almost always distorted by the medium used (in this case, filtering surfaces), and it is meaning depends on your perspective. Kite's

work always takes the audience into account, inviting them to experience space consciously or differently through light, music, and performance.

6. Summary

As a large-scale cultural activity, the light festival is helpful in promoting the development of the urban cultural creative industry, making the public feel the charm of creative and enjoy fashion life. In Amsterdam, we don't have to be afraid of the dark winter. With the help of modern domestic light artists, the Amsterdam Light Festival makes the city alight world every year. In this annual holiday, both young and old, citizens and tourists, are attracted by these “wonders”. At the same time, the light festival also offers talented light artists an excellent platform to show their latest works.

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