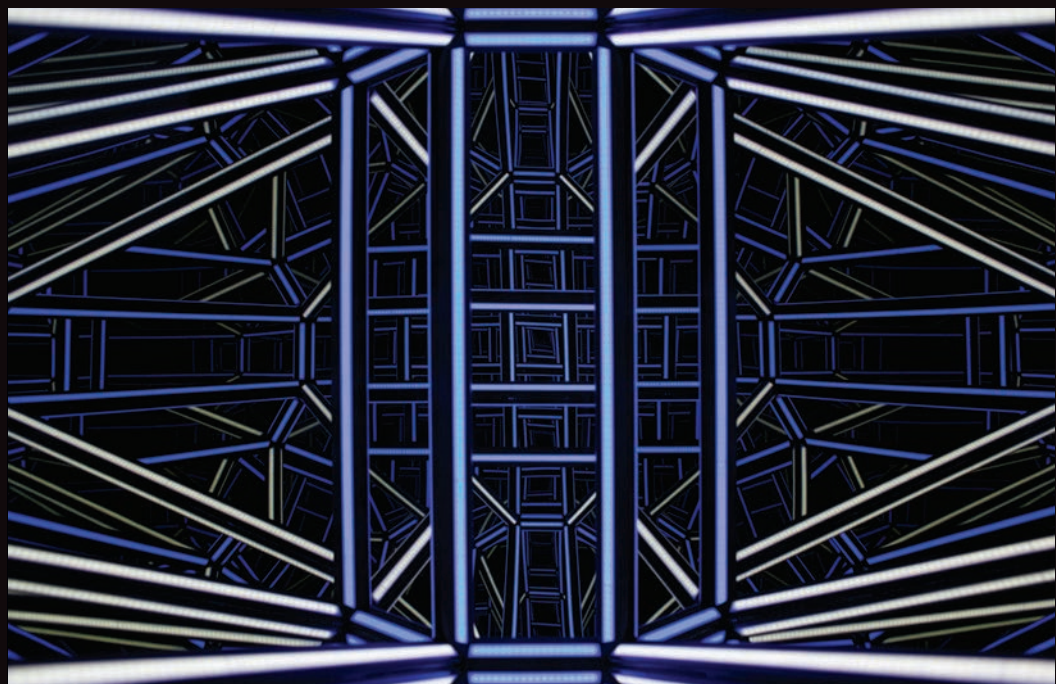


Incandescence

1 June–9 July 2016



ABBOTSLEIGH

 Grace
CossingtonSmithGallery

Incandescence

The complex medium of light behaves differently depending on space and time. *Incandescence* artists respond to the phenomenon of light as a physical material in their work, making us feel light is real. Light is transforming space and impacting upon viewer perception through the experience of illumination and colour.

Curated by Lisa Jones

ARTISTS

Brendan Van Hek

Cinnamon Lee

Dani Marti

Eugenia Raskopoulos

Giles Ryder

Jason Sims

Justin Henderson

John Wright

Tom Loveday

Warren Langley

Jason Sims, *Diametric* (detail), 2015, wood, reflective glass, mirror, stainless steel, MDF and LED lighting. Photo: Pippy Mount. Image courtesy the artist and MARS Gallery, Melbourne.

Lighting the Way


Everyday, without fail, the sun rises and illuminates the earth, and each evening, as it dips below the horizon, its brilliance diminishes and slowly fades to black. We used to be bound by this daily cycle of light and dark. But shamans, insomniacs, workaholics, artists and other denizens of the demi-monde have always been able to go about their business after the sun goes down. We've been lighting our homes and places of work since the discovery of fire, millennia ago.

However, light does more than just allow us to see in the dark. Light is wonderfully versatile: it can banish monsters and affect mood; it can conceal as much as it reveals. Mercurial, intangible and evanescent, it has an almost magical quality.

Not surprisingly, artists have always been fascinated by the possibilities of light. Palaeolithic cave dwellers understood that the flickering flames of their smoky animal-fat lamps would seem to animate the bison and horses they painted on rocky walls. Working by candlelight, Italian Renaissance painter Caravaggio seems to have anticipated the advent of electric lighting by several hundred years. The chiaroscuro effects he created in paint have all the tension and drama of a 200-watt spotlight on a darkened stage.

In 1880, Thomas Edison was granted US Patent 223898 for his incandescent bulb and the rest, as they say, is history.¹ The American inventor is often, mistakenly, given credit for inventing the light bulb. In fact, he was decades behind the first attempts. His work may not have been original, but by making the light bulb commercially viable, Edison changed everything.

What electric lighting offered was clean, safe, odourless, reliable and, above all, bright light. All at the flick of a switch. The sheer scale of subsequent human achievement, from cinema and mapping the human genome, to 24 hour-a-day hospital emergency rooms, money markets and




drive-in burger joints in cities that literally never sleep, is unimaginable without it. Lighting illuminated a cultural revolution.

Of course, some artists remained committed to capturing the shifting effects of natural light. Working in the late 1890s, as electric lighting was beginning to take hold, Claude Monet painted some 20 canvases of Rouen Cathedral as the sunlight played across its gothic façade from dawn to dusk. At around the same time and closer to home, Tom Roberts and the other so-called Australian Impressionists managed to lay down in paint for the first time the unique qualities of the antipodean sun. In the 1920s and 1930s Australian painter Clarice Beckett dedicated herself to capturing haze, mist and the subtle light of early mornings and evenings.

But other artists quickly embraced the potential of the harsh glare of electricity. Circa 1929 American photographer Lee Miller inadvertently invented solarised photography when she switched on the overhead light in Man Ray's darkroom.² He went on to perfect the technique and created striking black and white nudes, many of Miller herself. In the early 1960s the American sculptor Dan Flavin started making bold abstract constructions from fluorescent tubes³. The Italian arte povera artist Mario Merz began using neon lighting in 1966. In 1970 Peter Kennedy became the first Australian to use neon light in his work.⁴ New York-based artist Vicki DaSilva has been combining the magic of light and photography to create 'light graffiti', a term she is credited with inventing, since the 1980s.⁵

More recently, from German artist Rebecca Horn's light filled-sculptures⁶ to British artist Tracey Emin's neon declarations of love⁷ and American sculptor James Turrell's major LED installation at the Guggenheim in New York,⁸ artistic



interest in the power of electric light to illuminate both materials and ideas continues unabated.

These artists, and many others, have taken the street vernacular of flashing neon and LED signs, the industrial practicality of fluorescent tubes, and the warm glow of incandescent bulbs and added these qualities to their creative palettes. And the Australian artists in *Incandescence*: Justin Henderson, Warren Langley, Cinnamon Lee, Tom Loveday, Dani Marti, Eugenia Raskopoulos, Giles Ryder, Jason Sims, Brendan Van Hek and John Wright, continue to light the way.

Tracey Clement May 2016

Tracey Clement is an artist and writer based in Sydney. She has written extensively on art and design for numerous publications and is the online editor of *Art Guide Australia*.

NOTES

¹ http://americanhistory.si.edu/lighting/history/patents/ed_inc.htm

² http://www.luminous-lint.com/app/contents/fra/_photographer_man_ray_solarized_nudes_01/

³ <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/artist/dan-flavin>

⁴ <http://www.mca.com.au/collection/work/200450a-b/>

⁵ <http://www.vickidasilva.com/about>

⁶ <http://www.lichtkunst-unna.de/en/collection/horn-rebecca.html>

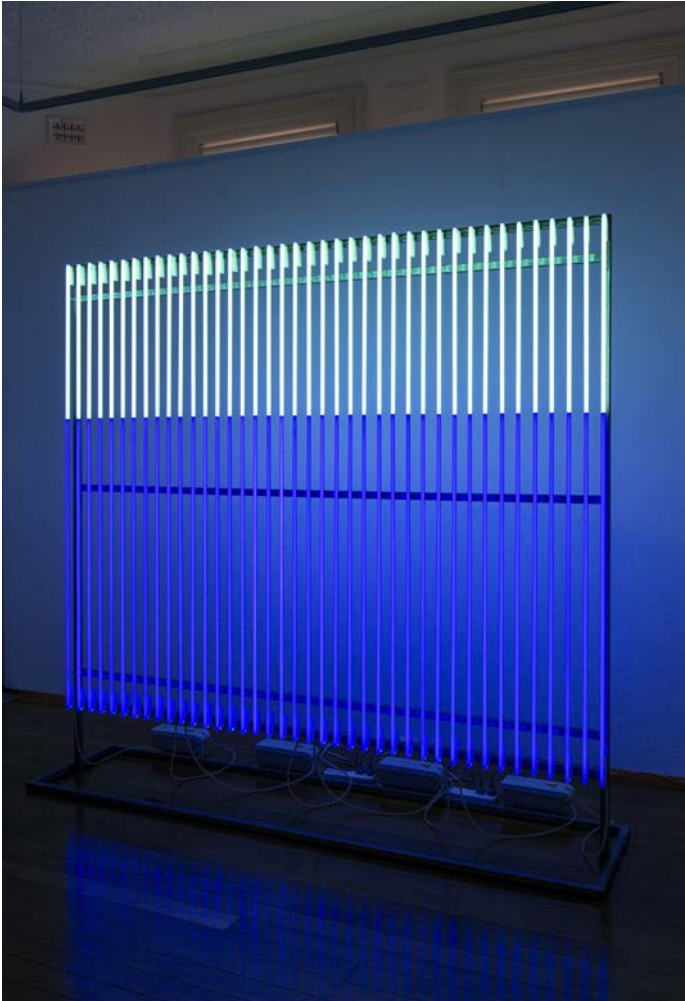
⁷ <http://www.traceyeminstudio.com/artworks/2014/02/my-heart-is-with-you-always-2014/>

⁸ <http://web.guggenheim.org/exhibitions/turrell/>

Brendan Van Hek

Brendan Van Hek is a multidisciplinary artist whose practice largely spans sculpture, installation and drawing. Works produced in recent years investigate the potential of neon and mirror.

Portable Horizon (aquamarine, midnight blue), 2015, is part of an ongoing series of works that focuses on the idea of the horizon line as a point of illusion, fantasy and idealism. A perceived line that marks the illusory meeting point between sky and land or sea, the horizon is magnetic, intrinsically romantic and forever unattainable. We can easily lose ourselves in the fantasy of that unattainable place.



Cinnamon Lee

Cinnamon Lee specialises in jewellery and lighting design practices. She works with 3D computer modelling and rapid manufacturing processes, in conjunction with traditional gold and silver smithing techniques, to produce work that explores the intersection between technology, the machine and the hand-made.

In a world which seems to exercise largely extroverted displays of wealth, character and status, the *Covert Jewels* series pays tribute to the value of discretion by focusing on the intimate relationships that can exist between object and wearer, rather than onlooker.



Dani Marti

Dani Marti works across video, textile, installation and public art and his works address ideas about portraiture and sexuality in minimalism and geometric abstraction.

The three works from the *Pointless* series are large woven circles incorporating customised corner cube reflectors and glass beads. They continue his work with the interlinking and weaving of images and fascination with industrial materials.

Represented by Dominik Mersch Gallery, Sydney, ARC ONE Gallery, Melbourne and Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide



Eugenia Raskopoulos

Sydney based artist Eugenia Raskopoulos explores the margins of photography and video, synthesising performance, writing, drawing and installation.

The work explores language as a visual form through its connection to gesture, writing, drawing and materiality. Through language, whether written or spoken, we can construct and deconstruct the definition of self. Her interest is in the pivot of the meaning of language, a place where language comes from the unconscious, where the unconscious speaks to us, where language becomes scrambled.



Giles Ryder

Giles Ryder is known for his subtle installations that combine industrial materials in conjunction with the influences of modern life and its embedded cultural associations. He uses the hard, reflective surfaces of advertising and consumerism in coordination with pared back, geometric paintings.

In the LED *Mandala* series he has worked with readymade light structures from Cambodia, traditionally found behind statues of Buddha in Khmer temples. He has layered Thai street vernacular with a minimalist aesthetic. He lives and works in Thailand and Australia.



Jason Sims

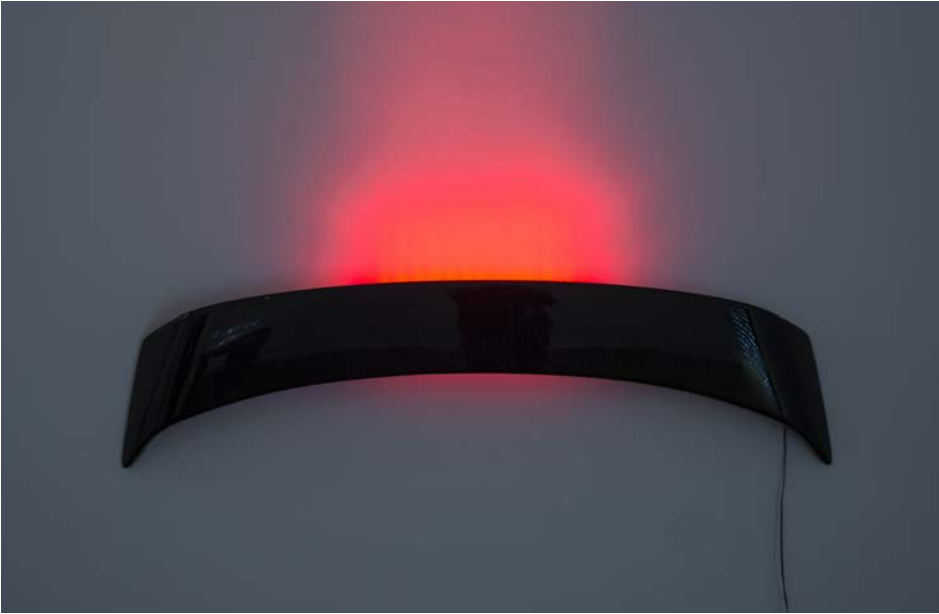
Jason Sims is an Adelaide artist whose sculptural works inventively explore light and space.

Diametric is a series of light boxes reflecting space upon itself to create the illusion of a seemingly infinite void. These playful optical illusions draw the eye deeper and deeper blurring the space between reality and illusion.



Justin Henderson

Found objects play a significant role in Justin Henderson's work. The spoiler is an automotive aerodynamic device. Its actual function as a car part is as much a sign of power as a physical enhancement. Mounted on a white wall it appears other worldly, a synthetic moth, a prayer object from an unknown cult or an abstract sculptural artwork. From under the glossy black form a pinky red glow of the brake light emits, and further produces, connotations perhaps part erotic and part ominous, everything had stopped for the moment.



John Wright

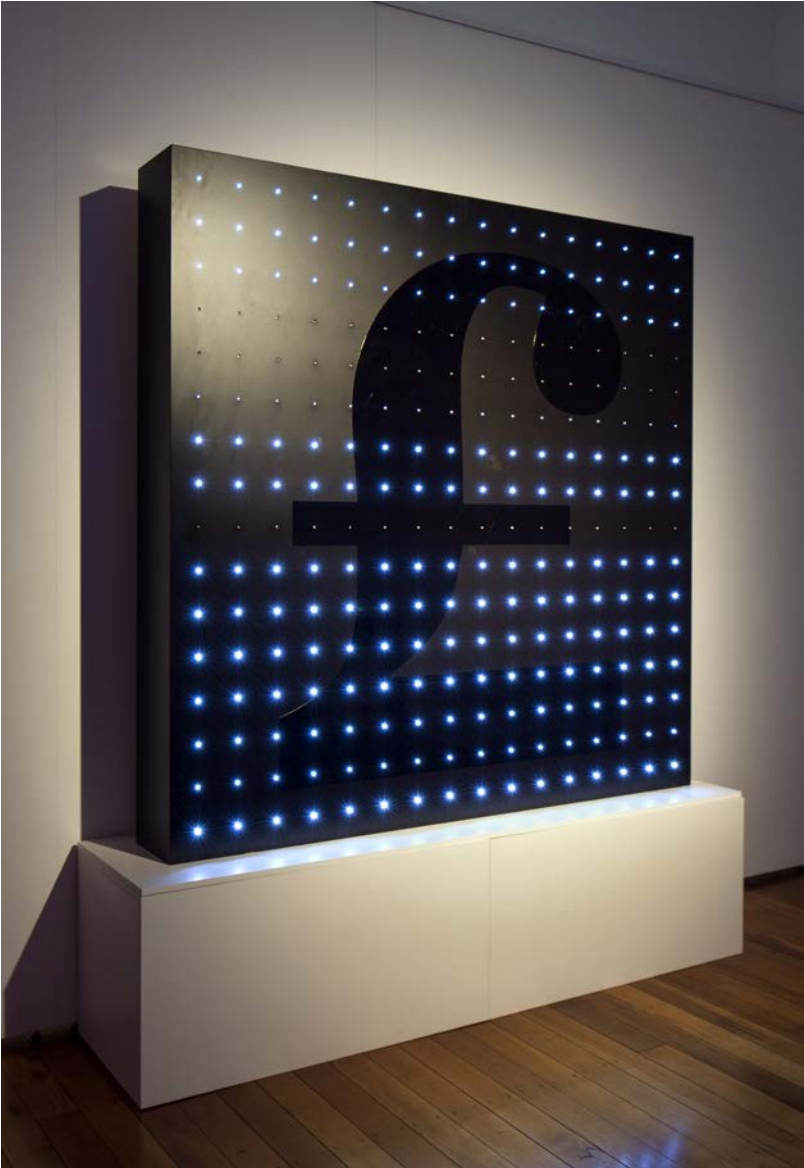
John Wright is a sculptor with a preference for drawing in space with steel and wire but his work in *Incandescence* shows him drawing in space with light. *Sea of People* is constructed from acrylic, catching the sunlight during the day and at night illuminated by LED lights. The lifesize figures have a mysterious presence and absence.



Tom Loveday

Tom Loveday is an academic and conceptual artist producing oil and acrylic paintings, installations and videos.

Dark Matter draws visual ideas from the standard currency symbol, the pound as well as the stock market signs in which share values are presented to the 'floor.' The work frames this imagery, of the world of money and investment, as "dark matter" a substance invisible to science and yet which has been mathematically theorised as making up most of the matter in the universe.



Warren Langley

Warren Langley works with light and glass in sculpture and architecture. He has created public artworks for government and corporate clients.

These digitally imaged glass and light constructions are from a series of works on the nature of closed systems. They use images of profound natural beauty embedded with geometrically closed lighting constructions to elicit comment on the fragility and delicate balance of our own planetary closed system.



Artists

Brendan Van Hek

Portable Horizon (aquamarine, midnight blue), 2015

Neon, galvanised steel

230 x 242.5 x 60 cm

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Represented by Sarah Cottier Gallery

Cinnamon Lee

Covert Jewels, 2015

925 silver, 999 gold plate

15 x 24 x 24 mm each (x six)

Courtesy of the artist, Sydney

www.cinnamonlee.com

Dani Marti

Pointless, 2016 (Three works:

Pointless Blue; Pointless Gold;

Pointless Green)

Customised corner cube reflectors,

glass beads on aluminium frame

85 cm diameter x 20 cm depth

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Represented by Dominik Mersch

Gallery, Sydney and ARC ONE

Gallery, Melbourne

www.danimarti.com

Eugenia Raskopoulos

Broken Tongue 1, 2002

Type C photograph

180 x 78 cm

Broken Tongue 3, 2002

Type C photograph

180 x 78 cm

Seeping, 1994

Neon

106 x 38 cm

Represented by William Wright

Artists Projects

www.eugeniaraskopoulos.com

Giles Ryder

Mandala for the Lost – Three

works, all: 2015, animated LED

lightwork, digital print, Perspex vinyl

gel 'haze screen'

Big Progress / Pathways for your

Future / Pre-packaged Deals/ Happy

People [Mantra reads Black / White /

Pink / Black Repeat], 60 cm diameter

I live in the Jungle, I live in the Jungle,

Paint dries quick, but it takes just as

long to do, Eating bug jam, Funky

salted crab, Tigers, Bananas,

Monkeys, Jungle Girl, Monkey sees,

Monkey does, Dog eat Dog, Tropical

Jungle Heaven, 15 million people,

[Mantra reads Yellow Orange White

Purple White Red White Pink White

Black], 80 cm diameter

*Unfortunately history does repeat
[Mantra reads Black White Black
White repeat] education modules
and colonial hangovers – we can
ix it. 45 cm diameter*

POA

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Courtesy of the artist and MARS Gallery

Jason Sims

Diametric, 2015

Wood, reflective glass, mirror,
stainless steel,

MDF and LED lighting

91.5 x 88.5 x 84cm (including plinth)

Photo: Pippy Mount

Represented by MARS Gallery,

Melbourne

www.jasonsims.com.au

Justin Henderson

Spoiler, 2015

Automobile spoiler,

125 x 30 cm

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Courtesy of the artist

John Wright

Sea of People, 2014

Acrylic

Life size, various dimensions

Courtesy of the artist

www.blackpig.whydavid.com.au

Tom Loveday

Dark Matter, 2009

LED light sources and melamine
laminate, MDF carcass,
electronic system built in
180 x 180 x 25 cm

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Represented by

Conny Dietzschold Gallery

www.tomloveday.net

Warren Langley

Closed System Ocean, 2016

Digitally imaged glass and light
construction

1600 x 1400 cm

Closed System Wealth, 2016

Digitally imaged glass and light
construction

1600 x 1400 cm

Photo courtesy Richard Glover

Represented by the Australian
Galleries Sydney

www.warrenlangley.com.au



Gallery hours Monday to Friday 10 am-5 pm, Saturday 9 am-4 pm FREE ENTRY | Gate 7, 1666 Pacific Highway, Wahroonga
02 9473 7878 gcsgallery@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au | www.gcsgallery.com.au | An Anglican Pre K-12 Day and Boarding School for Girls