

FROM THE BALCONY RAIL

Lighting The Future

Architects, like some lower orders of insects, are able to adapt to great environmental changes and survive throughout long fallow periods of deprivation. They switch from one form of work, say residential, to others, possibly governmental, depending on the economic climate. Or, switching metaphors, they are like migrant workers, harvesting whatever crop is in season.

The lighting industry, grown during the disco era to unimagined proportions, must look to a disco-less future in which flexibility and imagination will permit the same kind of diversification that architects practice. Lighting professionals must now learn to adapt.

Diplomatic Lighting

One area that is completely unexplored is diplomatic lighting. (This is not lighting designed for international conferences or meetings. While lighting could certainly be devised to make meetings more congenial, put representatives at ease, and smooth the way to agreement, I predict a more direct approach to the attainment of national policy through lighting.)

Lasargrams, \$30,000 Per Word

Since theatrical lighting has always been in the service of fooling an audience, making it believe in the unreal, it is not a major jump to make a whole nation believe a fiction. (Some cynics would say this is the main job of politics.) We already have the tools by which psychology, combined with lighting, can manipulate opinion.

Imagine a lasar programmed to write a message. The rapidly moving beam appears to be a continuous line of light. Tinkerbell in the current Broadway production of "Peter Pan" is just such a laser beam. Besides flitting from place to place, Tinkerbell writes like a huge light pen on the scenery.

Imagine, now, an undeveloped country populated by religious, superstitious, and scientifically innocent people. In the cloudy night sky a message in light appears,

moving across the sky. More than a mere projection, this is brighter by far, a message written by a heavenly hand. "God says release the hostages." "Drive the Russians Out." "Castro is a Devil." "Carter is the Messenger of God."

Lighting for Sex

Until now, lighting effects for sexual acts have been primarily mood inducing. The psychological state required for utmost fulfillment varies greatly and can be enhanced by many variables, not the least of which is lighting. Extremely shy people may prefer complete darkness, flickering light may be the choice of drive-in movie enthusiasts and nature lovers may choose the brightness of sunlight. While all of these lighting conditions are selected for psychological reasons, there may also be a correlation between light and the physiology of sex.

It is well known that light affects the body in many ways. It can cure certain liver conditions in premature babies, cause variations in female maturation and menstruation, and even bring about skin cancer. Lack of light affects miners and others working in darkness. Would it not be reasonable to assume that light in the proper intensity and wave length could create physiological conditions favorable to sexual activity?

With proper research, lighting devices could be sold as sexual aids. Imagine the available market for lighting kits which would include: lights, manuals, ceiling mirrors, and assorted paraphernalia. What a boom they would bring to the lighting business. New empires would be erected, a fitting climax to operations that have often been in the hole.

This project should be started at once. The research alone makes the doing worthwhile.

Environmental Lighting

I recognized another possibility for lighting industry expansion when I visited a home in which a large glass wall looked out on a lake, forests and a small island. As the sun went down and the



By Beeb Salzer

view became darker, certain parts of the scene stayed light. The effect was surreal. When the sun was completely gone I realized that artificial lighting (if we in the business should use that term) was brightening parts of the island and forest.

There is a certain magic in seeing large buildings, impressive monuments, bridges, and ocean liners lit at night. The scale of the objects, the number of lights, and the lighting skill required bring "ohs" and "ahs" from appreciative viewers. But, as common as it is to light large scale man-made objects at night, natural forms have only been lit on a small scale. Just think of the market for large outdoor lighting projects.

I, for one, would be interested in a contract to light the Rocky Mountains. Likewise, the Grand Canyon is a natural for night time displays since people come from all over to see the sun rise and set at the Canyon. With controlled light we could produce a dozen sun rises and sun sets each night. If this proved popular, we could build a dome over the Canyon and light it artificially 24 hours a day.

Maybe we could light the Atlantic Ocean like a large swimming pool, using under water lights in many colors. Imagine the Atlantic any color we wanted.

Looking Ahead

If readers feel that I have proposed future projects too farfetched, or that I have treated serious subjects lightly, I ask that they look back a few years. How many of us would have predicted that the lighting industry would gross billions serving a public eager to jump up and down in dark halls, suffer hearing loss from over amplified sounds, and be surrounded from floor to ceiling with flashing moving lights? Would this prediction have been taken seriously?

In lighting the future, only one thing is certain: we must adapt. □