

Nathan Thomson

Light and Beauty – Good for the Soul?

Speakers Profile

Nathan Thompson is the founder and principal of the Melbourne based international lighting design practice The Flaming Beacon. The office is known for its responsive work on many beautiful small hotels in luscious locations scattered around the globe. They have current projects on 5 continents, are yet to get a project in Antarctica, but they have done one in North Korea. The office has won several international awards including one in the Prix Ars Electronica and a couple from the International Association of Lighting Designers

Nathan has worked with light in many fields including corporate, theatrical and music performance, manufacturing, specialist contracting, art making, education and mainly, design consulting.

He has taught architects, artists and industrial designers at several Universities in Australia, and in Germany at the HfG School of Design and in the Masters program at Hochschule Wismar. Nathan was the Art Foundation visiting professor at the department of Design | Media Arts in the School of Art and Architecture at UCLA in the USA during 2008 and 2009.

Abstract

Energy efficiency, limited resources, greenhouse concerns, jet lag inducing hormone levels, the need for darkness, the effect of visibility on branding, and even its good old fashioned effect on human safety, have been increasingly pulling the lighting designer in disparate directions and making the effective consideration of all these criteria less and less likely. As a result we are becoming less able to find the space and the time and the reasons to remember that the way we design light, the way we



distribute and arrange brightness, enables the perception of beauty. Are we forgetting, or are we no longer able to focus on, the effect our work has on the possibility to gain human, meaningful, personal joy from beholding the beautiful? What can we learn from aesthetics, the study of beauty itself, that may help us bring some focus back on what light can add to the beautiful; to elevating the importance of restoring the connection between seeing and the feeling that goes with smiling?

Nathan Thomson
The Flaming Beacon P/L
3F 358 Lonsdale Steet
Melbourne VIC 3000
Australia
nathan@tfb.com.au