Light Symposium 2010
Natural Light - Daylight and artificial lighting for mankind

Date: 27th-30th of October, 2010
Location: Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden

Light Symposium 2010 took place at Fotografiska in the end of October, as an arena for the discussion on the topic of Natural Light, or the relation between light and human being.

Attendance expectations were extrapolated and 250 people, from all over the world, followed the Symposium.

In general, the event was marked by a very inspiring and engaging atmosphere, translated in several layers. The location itself was unique, as the Photography Museum is one of the most acclaimed cultural venues in town at the moment. The conference area had a very strong connection with the waterfront, offering an amazing view of Stockholm. The main room, where lectures took place, had openings which didn’t distract the audience, but let daylight in, creating a coherent ambient for the discussions and lectures.

To ignite innovative discussions, 16 international speakers of distinguished experience and knowledge shared perspectives and ideas with a specialized audience.

The sequence of lectures was delivered in a way that each speech supported each other and enabled knowledge to be improved progressively, as in a journey starting from the basic issues involving men and light, from an astronomical perspective and ending with the latest available technologies and future perspectives of research in the field of architectural lighting based on human experience.

The astronomer Ferdinando Patat, PhD in Astronomy from Padua University (Italy), keynote on the first day, provided a very engaging and almost provocative lecture approaching the issue of light pollution. By the end of his speech, the message “Help us saving the night sky” was clear and powerful.

In his talk about the Biological Aspects of Light, Prof Abraham Haim, from the University of Haifa, Israel, discussed photoperiod, circadian system and light pollution among other issues, emphasizing the importance of lighting to respect nature and time.

PhD in Environmental Stress Biology and experienced in both academic and industrial settings, scientist Tessa Pocock examined the interaction of light, plants and man at the holistic and sub-cellular levels in a lecture named “Light, Plants and the Human landscape”.

Award-winning lighting designer specializing in landscape and public space, Dr Linnaea Tillett discussed the relation between Environmental Psychology and Lighting Design, based on theoretical and practical examples.
Founder of “Light Cibles”, Mr. Louis Clair approached the issues of daylight in architecture and the cultural differences between Western and Asian countries, based on artistic and design experiences in Europe and Asia.

Also a pioneer in independent lighting design, founder of lightmotif.arquitectura, Prof M.J. Pinto-Coelho delivered an inspiring talk about architectural lighting design and human experience based on the importance of shadows, in a lecture were no projects were explained, but images and concepts instead.

In accordance to his current research on the connections between lighting qualities and health and the consequences in the design of future spaces as well as practical experiences as lecturer at the Lighting Lab, Federico Favero discussed the relevance of time and locality, unfolding into the ideas of creativity and respect for social and natural rhythms to define the experience of architectural spaces.

Last speaker on the first Symposium day, independent Danish science writer Tor Nørretranders argued on new paradigms of our times, based the relation between mankind and daylight, from philosophical and environmental perspectives.

By the end of the day, speakers and the panellists Jan Ejhed and Diana Joels, both from the Lighting Laboratory, got together on the stage for the discussion panel. By summarizing the main ideas presented during the day and discussing their interconnections, the panellists started a discussion on the stage, which managed to engage the audience in a very vivid way. The issues of respect, appropriateness and humanism in design and beyond were of crucial relevance during the panel.

Second day, which intended to connect the theme of Natural Light with its spatial expressions, had a more architectural and practical framing.

In the morning, the day started with Vox Joventa, PLDA’s young lighting designers conference and competition. With very different topics and approaches, all 6 lectures delivered presentations on a very high level, making up for the event’s initiative to place Vox Juventa on the same level as the entire event, with no parallel activities.

In the afternoon, the keynote to start-up was Luke Lowings, responsible partner of Carpenter/Lowings Architecture and Design in London. Based on this collaboration that over the last twenty-five years has tried to connect the city-dweller and the natural world through the experience of daylight, the lecture approached the connections between architectural design and natural light, through several design examples.

Continuing with an architectural perspective, Iñaki Alday, representing aldayjover arquitectos award-winning practice from Barcelona, shared a number of ideas based on reflections and projects of public architecture and landscape with a common approach to the specific character of each place.

From a lighting designer’s perceptive, the relation between light and architecture was discussed by the Japanese largely acclaimed and worldwide experienced Kaoru Mende, who presented the Masterplan for Singapore and several projects engaging people with light.

Last speaker on this architectural day, Lars Gemzøe shared his experience of working, teaching and lecturing around the World, as Senior lecturer of Urban Design and associate partner at Gehl Architects APS – Urban Quality Consultants. His lecture included ideas and examples about public space and city life, mainly in relation to climate and daylight.

Second day was also concluded in a panel discussion, this time led by Torben Tyregod, who in a provocative way, asked the audience to turn their chairs into facing the openings.
of the room, instead the stage. By being able to see the waterfront and the landscape, another climate dominated the room, where a passionate dialog about light, architecture and society took place.

Third and last day arrived to an even more practical level, through the discussion of developments in technology to support a mankind centered architectural lighting design practice.

Providing a platform for discussion President Elect of CIE and Director of Division 6, atmospheric scientists Ann Webb, addressed the question “Can technology reduce the burden of lighting and dim the world with more intelligent systems of illumination?” based on ideas related to biological effects combined with an overview of the current tendencies related to lighting.

Björn Karlsson, from Mälardalen University, presented very comprehensively the latest technological developments in daylighting technology, specifically windows with high solar and light transmittance.

On the other hand, recent developments in artificial lighting technologies, as improvements in LEDs and control systems, were introduced by Peder Nordenback, based on his experience as Marketing Manager of Wennerström Ljuskontroll AB.

In the end, through examples of application of the latest available technologies and future perspectives on the use of innovations to create meaningful solutions, Rogier van der Heide, Vice President of Philips Design and Chief Design Officer of Philips Lighting, discussed also the importance of darkness and daylight for lighting design.

The panel discussion on Saturday was led by Staffan Annell, who together with Prof. Heinrich Kramer and Jan Ejhed, engaged the audience in a discussion involving the contradictions inherent to lighting design and the use of technology, so strong nowadays.

It’s possible to say after those 3 days, so intense and full of inspiration, there was no absolute consensus or answers in relation to the big questions related to Natural Light. At the same time, a huge step was made for a better understanding of the relation man-light, especially as a contribution to the development of new ideas and improvements regarding environmental issues.

It’s also possible to say that, by the end of the Symposium, the general impression was of a lot of ideas and information to be processed until 2012, when the third Light Symposium will take place in Wismar.