

A Contemporary Exploration of Light

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Luminousflux, which exhibited at the Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery as part of this year's Perth International Arts Festival, showcased a selection of contemporary artists' works demonstrating use of the element of artificial light. The gallery itself provided sufficient space for the positioning works, an important aspect that allowed the viewer to appreciate the interactions between each works' scale and the space. With fluorescent tubes and brilliant colour presented alongside more subtle effects of projections and references to landscape and space, the softly lit venue was illuminated with an array of inspiring light-related installations. This emphasis on light, as both subject and medium, touches upon the place of light in art and the enduring power of its attraction.

Included among the works was Tom Muller's wall piece *Scintilla Lux*. Like a glowing white star, drawing us towards its gently pulsing centre, each beam radiated dynamically outwards as if searching for connections in space. It conjured impressions of the cosmological and pulsing energy that permeates the universe.

In *Reflected Glory*, 2013, an installation by Rebecca Baumann, we find a cloud of glittering colour dancing on walls and ceiling. The softly coloured light cast on the galleries' neutral surfaces resulted from a spotlight aimed at an assortment of reflective party materials scattered across the floor. The contrast between the flimsy arrangement of the material and the light emitted from it suggested a connection with concepts regarding the fleeting nature of things and the value we attribute to them. The atmosphere of the installation was dreamlike, an exquisite play with the ephemeral.

Nearby were Tim Maslen & Jennifer Mehre's large images displayed in recycled light boxes. These scenes were haunted by silhouette figures, isolated within their designated landscapes. The foreground came to meet the edge of the frame touching the floor, inviting us to step into the places depicted.

Paul Caporn's *Container 1*, 2012, consisted of light projections that rippled like water behind a triptych of containers on the wall. This constant movement evoked a physical sensation, reminiscent of being at sea. Here the rhythmic fluidity of the light became a point of meditation.

Brendan Van Hek's *Colour Composition # 3*, 2013, evoked another tone. The multi-coloured entanglement of fluorescent tubes emitted an aggressive drone and energy. Electrical wires were left in clear view, a testament to the man-made source of its power. What allegedly began from the inspiration of landscape had evolved to encapsulate the dynamism and aesthetic of modern urban experience.

Exploring this exhibition inspires one to consider the historical context and past uses of light. Light has a long symbolic association with the spiritual and many of the works in *Luminousflux* carried a similar essence; the ephemeral quality, illumination, with references to nature, bodily awareness and space. From painted glass windows in cathedrals to candles and the use of gold leaf to symbolise the Divine and to stir emotions, light has played a long history in art and, as *Luminousflux* illustrates, will continue to endure in the art of contemporary times.