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to light up the elegant edifice, with its glass and steel cupola. More than 50,000 people went through the building's vast, empty shell, which was also host of the fashion shows of Dior, Chanel and Saint Laurent.

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"What is the sense of lighting buildings at night to show what you see during the day?" Dreyfus asks. "You have to bring another dream."

His personal memories of light come from deep down. He refers to the cathedral of Notre Dame with its golden glow of fat white candles and of being at boarding school, at age 14, playing cards by the light of flickering candles among feathered pillows.

"Candles are still for me the most beautiful, the movement, like fire, the moment of life," says Dreyfus, although his Paris studio is filled with high-tech light: a prototype of a crystalline lamp filled with sea salt, or modernist tungsten grid creations made in a limited edition of eight and sold privately. New experiments are to re-create 18th-century chandeliers, those haute emblems of French style, making the light glow from within.

Dreyfus recalls his first emotional experience of light as a child in the family's country house outside Chartres, when the flames in the hearth lighted up his grandfather's arm and its indelible stamp of the concentration camp.

Dreyfus says that he feels a certain responsibility to a family name that still reverberates with France's political scandal of the 1890s, when Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish staff officer in France's military hierarchy, was accused of spying for Germany.

"Jews say that God is light, and people say that light is God's shadow," Dreyfus says. "But light doesn't have words. It does not speak intellectually. It is about emotion."

In the fashion world, designers look to Dreyfus to express a mood or a feeling as well as to put clothes and models, literally, in the best possible light.

He works instinctively, often being asked to interpret with his skills the designers' vision.

Ann Demeulemeester, the Belgian designer who has worked with Dreyfus since 1989, says, "I can talk to him with other words than as a technician."

"With lights you really can make a certain atmosphere," Demeulemeester says. "I don't like what I call fashion light that is really oppressive,

but something more poetic. I'm not an easy person to work with. But Thierry is not just a person who is putting up some lamps."

Dreyfus has worked with Calvin Klein to warm the models' skin and make the clothes seem touchable; he helped concretize the instinctive ideas of Miguel Adrover; he brought a 1950s glamour to Giambattista Valli's summer 2005 show; and he follows precisely Slimane's concepts for Dior Homme.

"He has the capacity, he is passionate and obsessive — and he under-

talking about. Dreyfus disc tool, asking her makeup ir

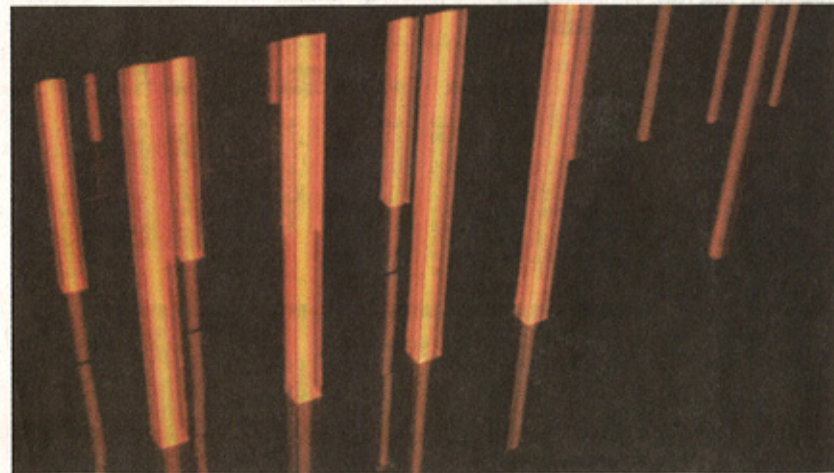
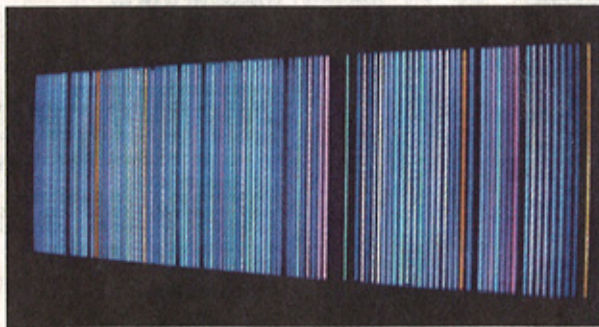


Christopher Moore/Andrew Thomas, above and below



Courtesy of Thierry Dreyfus

Thierry Dreyfus followed Hedi Slimane's concept at the Dior Homme autumn/winter 2004 show, top; a YSL show in 2004, above, and Ann Demeulemeester's spring/summer 2006 collection, above right. One of two light installations, right, Dreyfus did for the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignation in 2000, at a hôtel particulier in Paris. Below is a light box created by Dreyfus.



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A slide show of Thierry Dreyfus's work.

PROFILE

Thierry Dreyfus,
an artist of light



Alexia Silvagni

The Grand Palais, right, illuminated by Thierry Dreyfus for its reopening in October, and with a different lighting in the inset. The project was a defining moment for Dreyfus, above. The artist won a worldwide contest to light up the Paris landmark, with its glass and steel cupola. More than 50,000 people visited the building.



Courtesy of Thierry Dreyfus, above and inset

Of illumination
and inspiration

By Suzy Menkes

PARIS
All the fun of the fair will explode this week as a traditional carousel and circus take over the newly restored Grand Palais on Thursday. As with a previous project, when the Parisian monument was reopened to the public in October, the imaginative illumination of an urban fête will give the historic building a modern edge.

Thierry Dreyfus is the man who is making the City of Light live up to its name. The designer is the master of the soft glow, bright beams and laser lines.

In collaboration with fashion designers from Helmut Lang through Calvin Klein and Dior Homme's Hedi Slimane, Dreyfus, 40, has pushed the boundaries of runway modernity. And from his Paris studio, he creates lighting objects that have become collect-

ors' items. Dreyfus may be an artist with light, but he is too modest to give himself that title or to compare himself with conceptual neon experimenters of the 1980s and with the light installations of the American artist James Turrell.

"If being an artist is to be recognized in an artist milieu, I don't care about that," he says. "I have had the chance to be recognized in fashion as a light designer."

Illuminating the Grand Palais for the reopening was a defining moment for Dreyfus, who won a worldwide contest to light up the elegant edifice, with its glass and steel cupola. More than 50,000 people went through the building's vast, empty shell, which was also host of the fashion shows of Dior, Chanel and Saint Laurent.

"On that first day, I was outside listening — people were saying that they felt so serene," says Dreyfus, describing the

4,500 people gathered in the dusk.

"Everyone was waiting for the light, and because the sun was going down, a wave of emotion was going through the people," he said. "When they came in, there was nothing to buy and nothing to sell, but I had opened a door with my sensibility."

Instead of laser beams raking the exterior as in a "son et lumière" show, a glowing flow of changing colors was reflected by mirrors from sky to floor and out from the glass roof.

"What is the sense of lighting buildings at night to show what you see during the day?" Dreyfus asks. "You have to

stands," says Slimane, for whom Dreyfus produces graphic visual scenarios. The lighting designer expresses their working relationship like this: "When Hedi asks for red, I know what red he is talking about."

Dreyfus discusses light as a practical tool, asking how a woman can put on her makeup in the artificial light of a

bathroom. He also speaks as an artist does, describing Paris as a "yellow" city, Tokyo with "neon everywhere" and Africa tinged green with neon "that has not been changed for years."

"My definition of artists is of people who need to create as others need to go to films or see friends," insists Dreyfus. Yet he himself suddenly felt the need

to record the Grand Palais project by photographing it in all its lyrical, luminous color. Those images will be published in a book from Assouline in the new year, and Dreyfus is thinking tentatively of a finding a gallery. His art seems to be coming out of the shadows into the light.

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