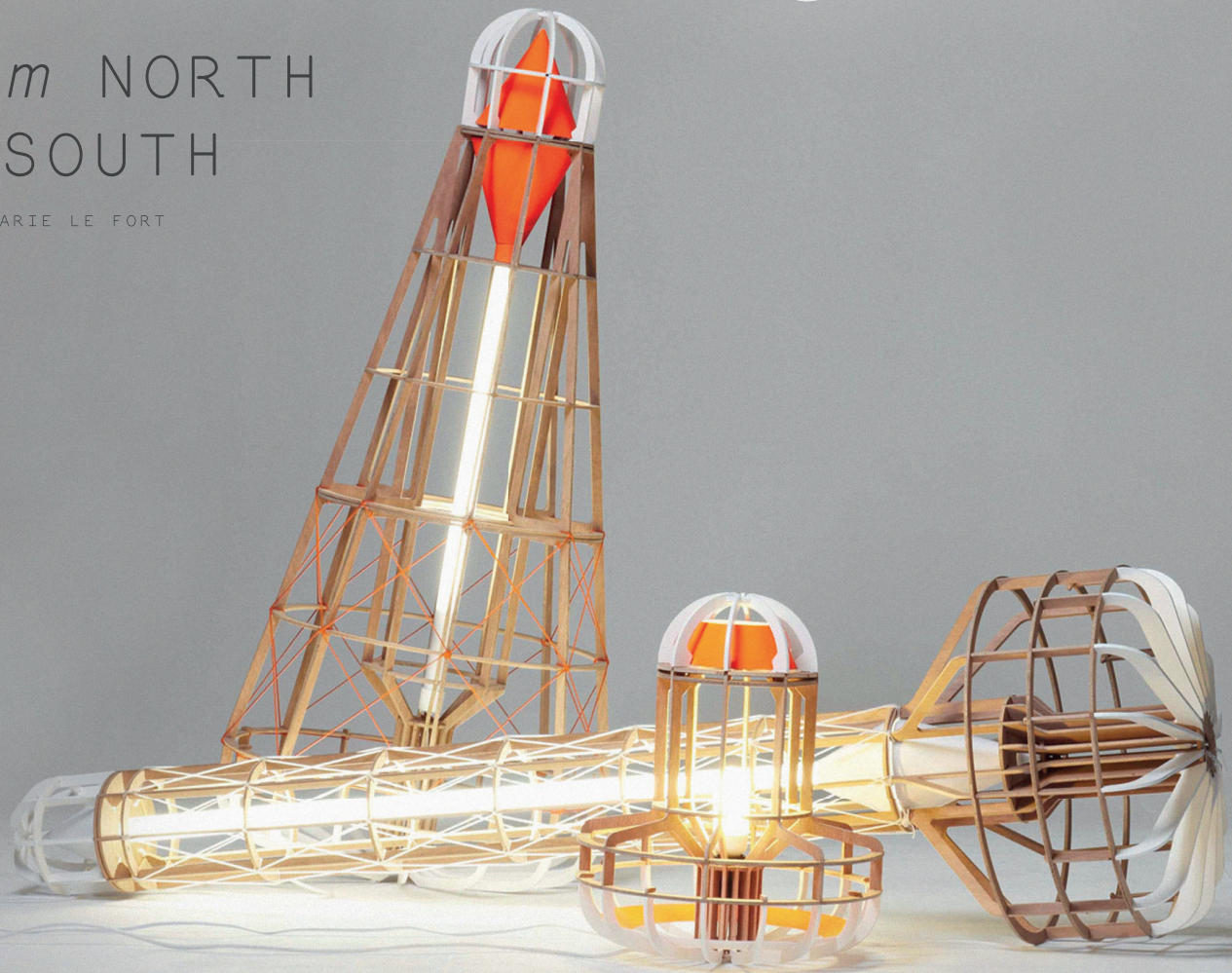


creative lights

from NORTH
to SOUTH

TEXT BY MARIE LE FORT



Welcome to a *territory* that embraces *experimentation*, where light never ceases to *reinvent* itself upon contact with talented *creative* people, *manufacturers* and *young* self-taught designers or collectives. *Overview* of a discipline undergoing a formal, technological and artistic *revolution*.

THE discipline to get involved in

'For more than a century, lamps have been conceived to support a single piece of technology: the incandescent bulb. Environmental regulations have recently forced this 100-year old technological marvel into retirement. Retrospectively, when Edison flooded the market with his first light bulbs in 1892, it marked the beginning of the end for gas lighting. In the same way as today, we are now turning our backs on incandescent lighting sources to enter into the era of electronic lighting (...) So it's hardly surprising then, to learn, that for designers, this is now THE discipline to get involved in', explains Robert Klanten, the co-founder of Die Gestalten Verlag, that has just published a book entitled *LUX, Lamps & Lights*.

It's no surprise to learn that all the actors in the lighting industry are embracing the many different solutions that present themselves. Notably, important lighting manufacturers like Flos who collaborated this year for the first time with French lighting designer and visual artist Thierry Dreyfus: 'Wall Rupture' is a series of invisible LED light sources integrated within the architecture that produce a gold or silver glowing fissure across the surface of a wall. Painted red before being covered with gold leaf, following a meticulous Japanese procedure, this 'glowing fissure' was modelled on a scaled down relief of the Himalayan peaks. 'The place where you can touch the sky', stresses the artist. As for Piero Gandini, the president of Flos, he admits to being astonished: 'When I saw his table-sculpture in Basel, I asked him if it would be possible to adapt the concept to a vertical wall. Melting light into the architecture? You had to have the vision to imagine it... the result is superb; This light by Thierry Dreyfus is pure emotion'. The equally incredible 'Swarm Light' installation by rAndom Inter-

national has recently been unveiled at the V&A Museum in London: hailed for its exceptional beauty, this luminous swarm is a perfectly formed, interactive, electronic wonder that is brought to life by the surrounding noise, like a flight of lyricism, a choreography of lights. Another creative approach, another 'mise en abyme' is a series of lamps entitled 'Well of Life' by Arik Lévy: 'In tradition, as in everyday life, light represents life... I wanted to bring this vision closer together with the idea of capturing the reflection of light in a bucket of water; that was how 'Well of Life' came into being'. In diffusing visible light in the form of a coloured halo, the light really does succeed in escaping from the depths of the lamp to create an enigmatic object.

The light bulb is dead, long live the light bulb!

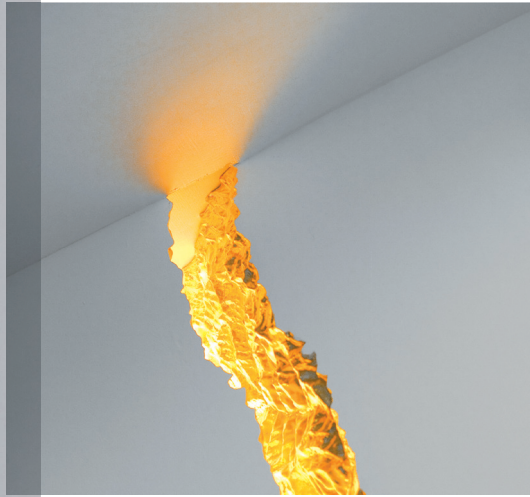
'Contrary to popular belief, playing about with light and rising to the challenge of new technologies is no simple matter. Because even if progress is being accomplished every single day, the designers who are busy creating new lighting experiences must take into consideration that the new sources fail to match the natural luminosity of incandescent bulbs. Creating a feeling of well-being and new experiences that reconcile technology and everyday objects, using different materials – natural materials like ceramics or wood, or extremely light ones like paper as well as rediscovering crafts – these are all creative avenues that will slowly but surely change lighting as we know it', adds Robert Klanten. And far from dying a death, the bulb will reappear from time to time, as and when it sees fit to deliberately adopt its form to emphasise beauty, as demonstrated in Mattias Stahlbom's E27 suspension



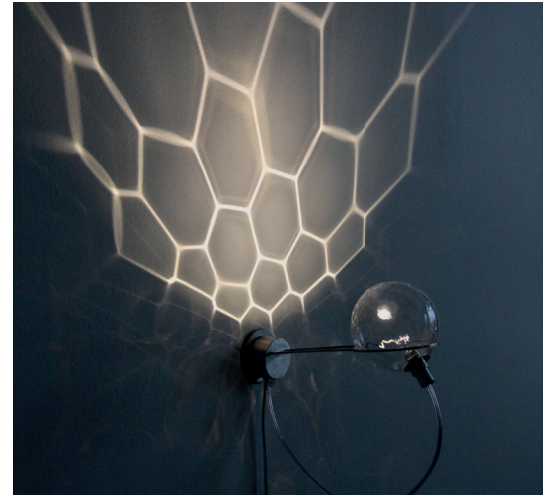
light for Muuto, which resembles a large, perfectly formed transparent bulb set in a colourful ring. A new economic challenge, the light bulb has been brought back to life in a more ecological form for the ALESSILUX project, an initiative led by Alessi in collaboration with Foreverlamp. Designed by Giovanni Alessi Anghini, Gabriele Chiave and Frederic Gooris, the luminaries reinterpret the lamp shade, the flame and the oil lamp: it's tongue in cheek, pastiche, a creative way of changing the very image of the light bulb. 'Looking to simplify and purify the very essence of these new bulbs, the shapes and materials used to create the DR series evoke the 1960s while using today's technology, in the spirit of the philosophy of Dieter Rams, 'Less is More; Less, but better'. An innovation which intends to revolutionise energy savings through a symbolic homage to the ancestral sources of light...

Unbridled creativity

On the gallery front, the new guard of design is emerging. In fact, it's almost as if lighting had become an artistic field in its own right: poetic, enigmatic, brilliant, each piece has its own personality. Produced in a limited edition of 8 or 10 units, the lamps created by Guillaume Delvigne for ToolsGalerie and Robert Stadler for Carpenters Workshop Gallery Paris certainly challenge the viewer to question the established ideals of traditional design: Delvigne's 'Bromo' lamp resembles an elegant, futuristic space ship, whereas Stadler's 'Lightspot' projects a colourful 3D shading effect onto the wall. It's only one small step from there to imagining the resurrection of a Lichtenstein painting... Halfway between futurist vision and cartoon strip, the luminescent presence of the ghou-like 'Sutfé' lamp by Collectif Dito permeates the environment - a friendly living organism to tame. The graphic 'Reconstruction' chan-



7.



8.

MORE ON  BLOG.TLMAGAZINE.BE

1. Buoy Lamps, PostlerFerguson, 2010
2. Reconstruction chandelier, Kouichi Okamoto for Kyoei design, 2011
3. Suspension 'E27', Mattias Ståhlbom for Muuto
4. Under the bell, Iskos-Berlin for Muuto
5. Well of Life lamp, Arik Levy, 2011
6. Suspension 'Metronome', Tim van Steenberg for DeltaLight, 2011
7. Section of golden Wall Rupture, Thierry Dreyfus for Flos, 2011
8. Magika wall lamp, Kristi Taiviola, 2011
9. Sutfé light, Collectif Dito, 2011

delier by Kyoei Design is a series of lamps clipped together to form an orderly yet chaotic post-industrial metallic mass, while the latest iconic designs to be produced by British design house Established & Sons lean toward cylindrical or conical forms: 'Dame' by Luca Nichetto is an ensemble of rounded layers while for 'Topp' Halgeir Homstvedt accessorises his 'pointed hat' with a bright yellow base. Inspired by fashion, 'Metronome,' the new light created by Belgian fashion designer Tim Van Steenberg for Delta Light® is also a very conceptual piece. 'We wanted to transcend the limits of our creativity, explore interfaces from other innovative environments.' Flexible strips, cut and superimposed on top of each other form the basis of this suspension lamp that resembles a white aluminium pleated skirt wrapped around a warm light. Theatrical, and mirroring the costumes that he creates for La Scala in Milan, 'Metronome' shines through a complex game of shadows and light.

Avant-garde Scandinavia

Through all these propositions, it is clear that the Scandinavians are always one step ahead in the sensibility stakes... Can we put this down to a lack of daylight that haunts these northern countries for a good part of the year? It's a tempting thought. Constructivist and intelligent approaches, minimalist and inspiring, their lighting objects stand out across all the creative disciplines. Finnish designer Kristi Taiviola's astonishing installations are created using projections of distorted light that mimic honeycomb cells, smoke or floral patterns. The constructivist 'Buoy Lamps' by PostlerFerguson evoke memories of marine exploration platforms, or lights projected during stormy weather from the summit of a lighthouse. Less industrial, the 'Bau Pendant' chandelier by Danish designer Vibeke Fønnesberg Schmidt (for Normann Copenhagen) that doesn't hide its association with geometric abstraction (the clue is in the name) is no doubt from the leading period of the Bauhaus! Conceived as a sculpture, this chandelier is composed of colourful, geometric birch disks that are assembled in a cluster and suspended in space like a work of art. 'Decoration shouldn't just be reserved for objects that we hang on the wall, it can also make use of more functional objects, like a table or lamp', explains the designer gazing at her artistic composition. Just as evocative, 'Forbidden Fruit' by the Swedish duo of Studio Glimpt is an ensemble of bright jewel-like lights with ceramic shades: made in collaboration with South African craftsmen, these lights, for animating interiors, were inspired by exotic fruits. But in the end, despite all this creativity, the great Ingo Maurer reminds us that 'it's less the form of the light that gives us an agreeable or unpleasant sensation but the quality of the light'.

to read: *LUX, Lamps and Lights*
published by Gestalten,
ed. Robert Klanten -RRP €35.00
www.gestalten.com



9.