



Spa and fog illumination at Toskana Thermal Spa, Bad Schandau

## IN A FLASH

German design collective, NightLab's forte is atmospheric lighting design. Besides creating visual content for events and permanent installations, they use video projectors, their own patented lightmotiv projector and LED technology to surprise, awe and delight their spectators

**M**atthias Strobl is called the 'inventor of liquid fireworks'. This Bielefeld-based, German designer is known for his ever-evolving shapes and images which are transposed on buildings, in pools, over castles, trees, and very often in live concerts. Founder of NightLab, Matthias with four others on the team, have given a new definition to technology. Stringing together the laws of physics, chemistry and biology, they prepare mesmerising wreath reflections of squiggles and bubbles.

Fascinated by colours, light and nature, in the winter of 1997, Matthias took a bowl with salad dressing inside, placed it atop an inverted flower pot, put in a light bulb which projected the liquid on to the ceiling of his living room. That luminous brilliance got him hooked for life.

He patented the projector 'lightmotiv. analog' to design lights in an atmospheric ambience. The project enlarges a liquid or substance through a 35m diameter Petri dish. A mirror projects the contents of the Petri dish into every direction. These projections (made possible by two projectors) can beam up reflections up to 100m in diameter. Its analog technology is four times more effective than a regular standard video beamer, with pin-sharp projections. Matthias believes it's the brightest moving image projection in the world.

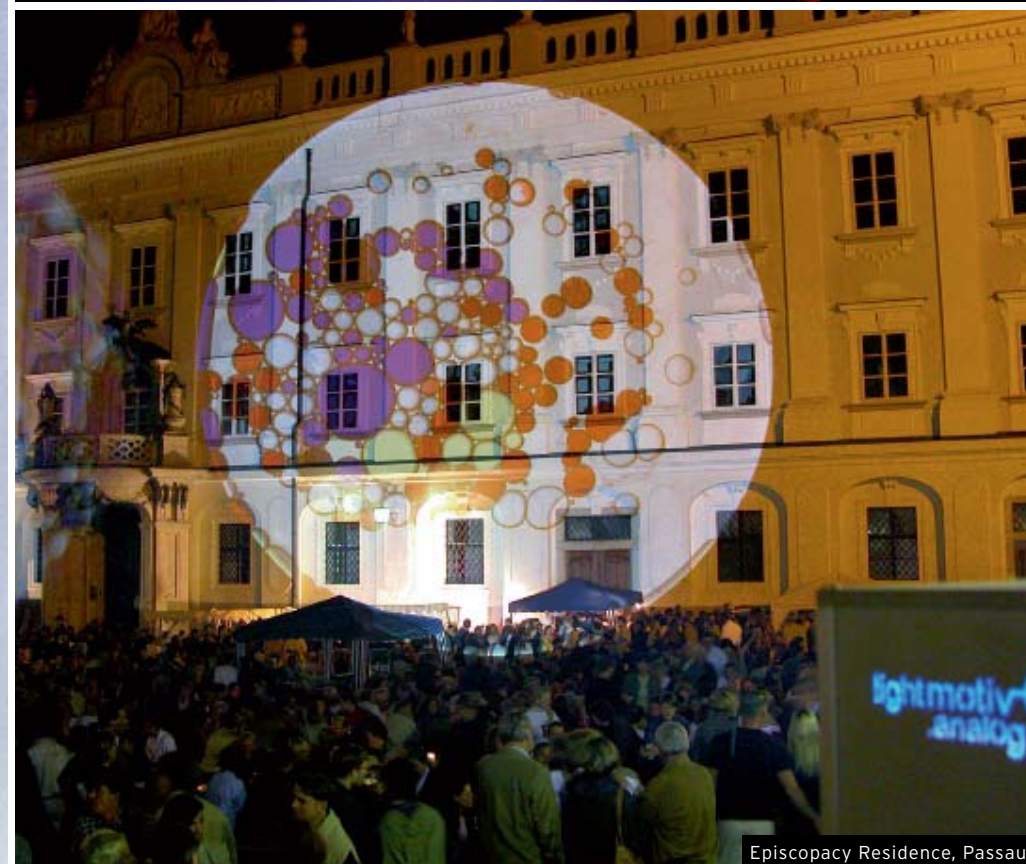
From dishwashing liquids, nail polish, bike chain oils, to silk painting colours, Matthias has experimented with over 2000 substances, and uses about 50 of them regularly to form these mottled, buoyant reflections in each of his projects. His bio-organic machine provides



Indoor Lighting



Liquidrom Spa, Berlin



Episcopacy Residence, Passau

unique moments that make one aware of the natural aesthetics, seen all around us. He says, "The skill is to know the way in which different substances react with each other. A novice could make a 'soup', quite literally out of all the liquids. But someone who knows the chemistry of these elements can conjure exciting pictures." Matthias and team also use tiny crayfish or crawling ants in the Petri dish, and quite often see guests at a table gleefully grabbing its reflection on tables and benches, as these miniature protagonist play their part on the 'stage'. At the turn of a switch, thick smudges of colours move like jellyfish through the room, gliding over the ceiling and walls, creating new forms with surprising effects. One never knows how the images will look. The beauty of each image lies in its unpredictability.

With the lightmotiv projector, Matthias can not only choose the substance, but also control its movement, speed and direction. It works well in clubs and parties where his gurgling, coloured baubles groove to the music. Says Matthias, "Every day we have scores of information before us, contending with our sense of balance and mental recreation. One solution is to design our environment in a way that keeps the digital frenzy out of our thoughts. Light captures our imagination and has the power to change our emotional state; it can be manipulated in a way to enhance our well-being." His moving pictures have illuminated pools, spas, domes, gardens, besides creating fog projection surfaces through which LEDs play their magic. Stylish cross-fading, pastel colours and sophisticated compositions make up NightLab's countless themes.

Their work has been showcased at art events, in nightclubs, at music events, besides being a medium for marketing and brand building. Ultimately, for NightLab, it's about collaboration, which involves lighting designers, VJs, photographers, video-artists, graphic designers. Matthias dreams of a day when his patented projector will have home-editions and people can enjoy his creativity in the comfort of their homes.