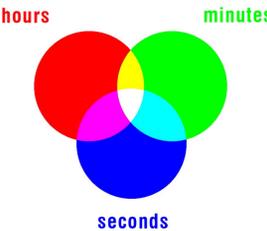




chrono.tower

dexia tower brussels



Year of conception: 2007
 Location: Brussels' Dexia Tower
 Date: 15.08.07 – 21.10.07
 from sunset to sunrise
 Commissioner: Dexia www.dexia.com
 Artists: LAb[au] www.lab-au.com

Copyright images: © Artists: LAb[au] - Architects: Philippe Samyn & Partners, M & J.M. Jaspers - J. Eyers & Partners -
 Lighting engineer: Barbara Hediger

The chrono.tower project is part of the 'Who's afraid of Red, Green and Blue' project cycle targeting a permanent enlightening for the Brussels Dexia Tower. It is the first project of a series entitled 'chrono' researching the parametric setting in between the basic units of time and the primary colours of light where hours=red, minutes=green and seconds=blue. The chrono.tower project takes as starting point Brussels' 145 m high Dexia Tower, from which 4200 windows can be individually enlightened by RGB-led bars. Rather than considering the enlightened façades of the building as an immense screen-like display having a resolution of 45 x 140 pixels, the project expresses its very medium 'light' by using its RGB colour code to propose a light-architecture.

The RGB colour model is an additive model in which red, green, and blue are combined in various ways to reproduce other colours. The name of the model and the abbreviation 'RGB' come from its three primary colours; red, green, and blue. The surface, in this case the facades of the building, are divided in sections of hours, minutes and seconds. Before midnight, hours and minutes have an upwards progression, while seconds have a downwards progression. Every second the blue surface is growing downwards, while every minute the green surface is growing upwards and, similarly, every hour that passes has the red surface grow upwards. This process is reversed after midnight and thus instead of adding colour, colours are subtracted. From sunset to sunrise, actual time is displayed on the tower through logic of additive blended colour-surfaces, constructing upwards towards midnight when reaching the ultimate combination of coloured light; white. A white pulse at midnight celebrates the new day, from which point light progressively "returns" to the sky.

The main idea of the proposal is to relate a conventional representation of time to light. Many architectural buildings have in their conception a strong relation to time, whether on the level of their orientation / implementation or on the level of displaying time in form of clocks to astrological calendars. Many of these buildings are public or collective monuments marked through these signs.

The proposal started with the idea to create a graphic light clock. This proposal may seem neutral at first, yet it expresses a notion shared by all humans within an artistic design. The problem of a light clock is that it would only be visible during the night and thus loses a lot of this shared meaning as a common readability, since the proposal introduces non common codes, of such a 'graphic clock' is difficult to achieve.

Therefore the proposition has been oriented to a time-based visual, graphic and dynamic system having its 'rules' based on seconds, minutes and hours. Seen from a 'light' point of view the time until midnight is the ending (getting darker = loose of light) of a day and the starting (getting brighter = gain of light) of another one. The proposal therefore evolved from the idea of a graphical clock to a system visualising the day /night relation, getting 'brighter' until midnight and getting darker progressively until the sunrise. From this shared comprehension the system would reverse the day/night relation (bringing back the light during the night) while celebrating the end of a day and the rise of a new day in form of light, a light which goes to the sky when the new days rise. At the end of the night the remaining enlightened top remains as a minimal sign visible on Brussels N-S and E-W axis.

Furthermore, the concept of the project relating light to time, introduces the notion of circadian rhythm. A circadian rhythm is a roughly-24-hour cycle in the physiological processes of living beings, mostly modulated by external cues such as sunlight and temperature. A 'circadian distortion' encompasses the shift into the alternation of day and night.

LAB[au] proposes with the chrono.tower project a time-based artwork, according to logics of the RGB-code and the concept of circadian distortion, establishing a language proper to the tower and its urban context, a light sign.

