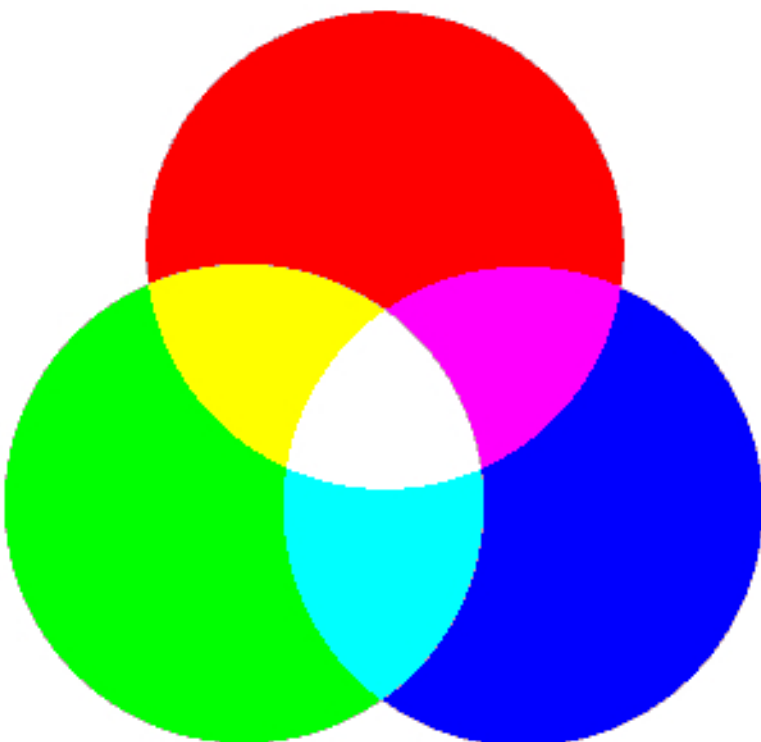# Who's afraid of RGB

edition for the dexia-tower Brussels project cycle

including:
chrono.tower LAb[au] 2007
weather.tower, LAb[au] 2008

Who's afraid of red, green and blue

about:

The title 'Who's afraid of Red, Green and Blue' refers to the 1950's series 'Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Blue' from the American artist Barnett Newman, one of the major figures of the 'colour field painters'. He used large, hard edged areas of saturated colours punctuated by narrow coloured vertical bands. This vocabulary reduces painting to its very elements such as colours and proportions, a painting in its most pure state, freed of any figurative aspects. Moreover, Newman's works were searching for a symbolic expression in abstract art, rather than an auto-referential language of its constituting elements.
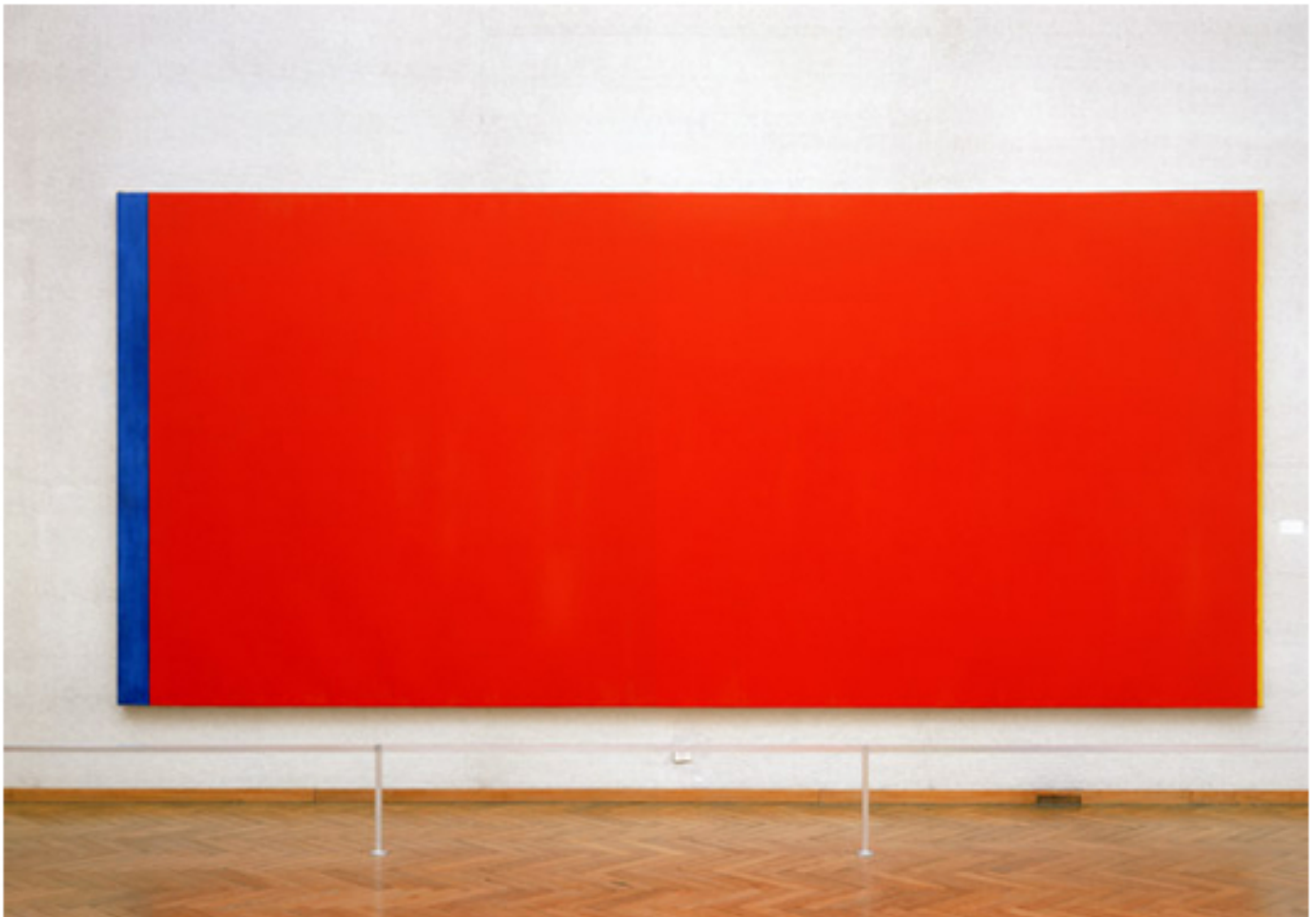
Barnett Newman: who,s afraid of red, yellow and blue

Contrary to a first rather polemic understanding, the title establishes a rhetoric question confronting the meaning and means of painting, as it directly questions the relationship in between the painting (object) and the viewer (subject).

In this sense, the reference to the Barnett Newman series is based on the research of a vocabulary of colour and shapes as a proper language for an enlightening of the Dexia Tower. The proposed artworks in the 'who's afraid of RGB' cycle are all based on the elementary codes of light, by researching a symbolic value proper to the status of the tower being an urban, thus collective, sign.

During a longer period, different variations on this theme will enlighten the facade of the tower to establish step by step the vocabulary of the tower enlightening while allowing to experiment and finalize a version which than will run every day for a long period. The first artwork of the series, Chrono.tower chrono.tower.jpg, relates the basic units of time to the primary colours of light while using RGB as a code for hours (= R), minutes (= G) and seconds (= B) .
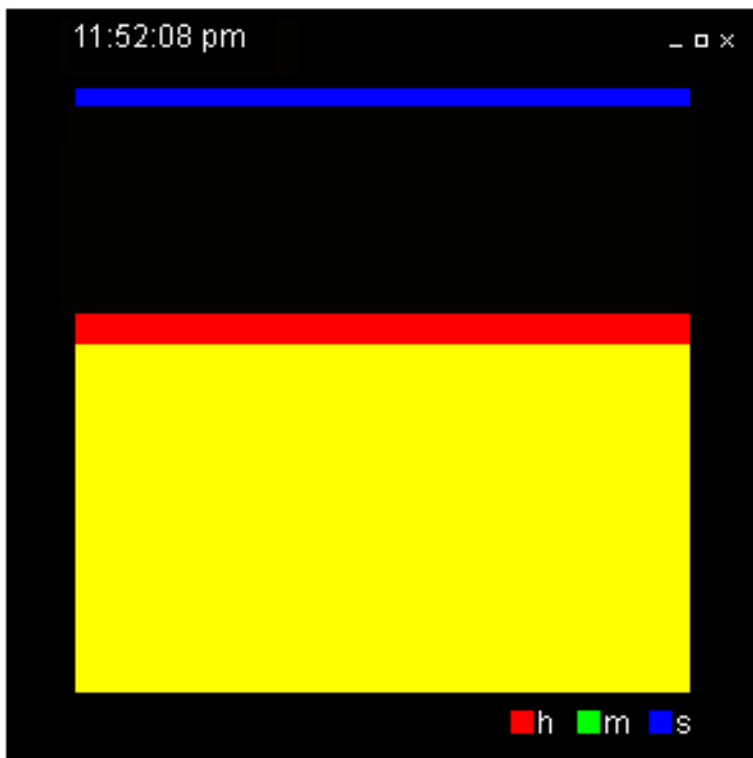

The second variation, the weather.tower weather.tower.jpg relates the coloured lights of the tower to the environmental weather conditions while relating temperature to colour, wind directions to pattern …

Additionally, the artwork can be downloaded in form of a widget, a small desktop application, which one can install on his/her personal computer.

This widget allows you to follow the process on your computer similar to the running artwork on the tower. The widget expresses one of the major project focus the symbolic relation between the private, individual and public, collective, space.
Besides the interactive enlightening, see LAb[au]'s touch inauguration project and the spectr[a]um event.

The who's afraid of rgb edition researches a permanent enlightening, based on generative art and forms one of the three program types foreseen for the enlightening of the tower.

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 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.

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

11h 52m 08s

↓

0-12 pm

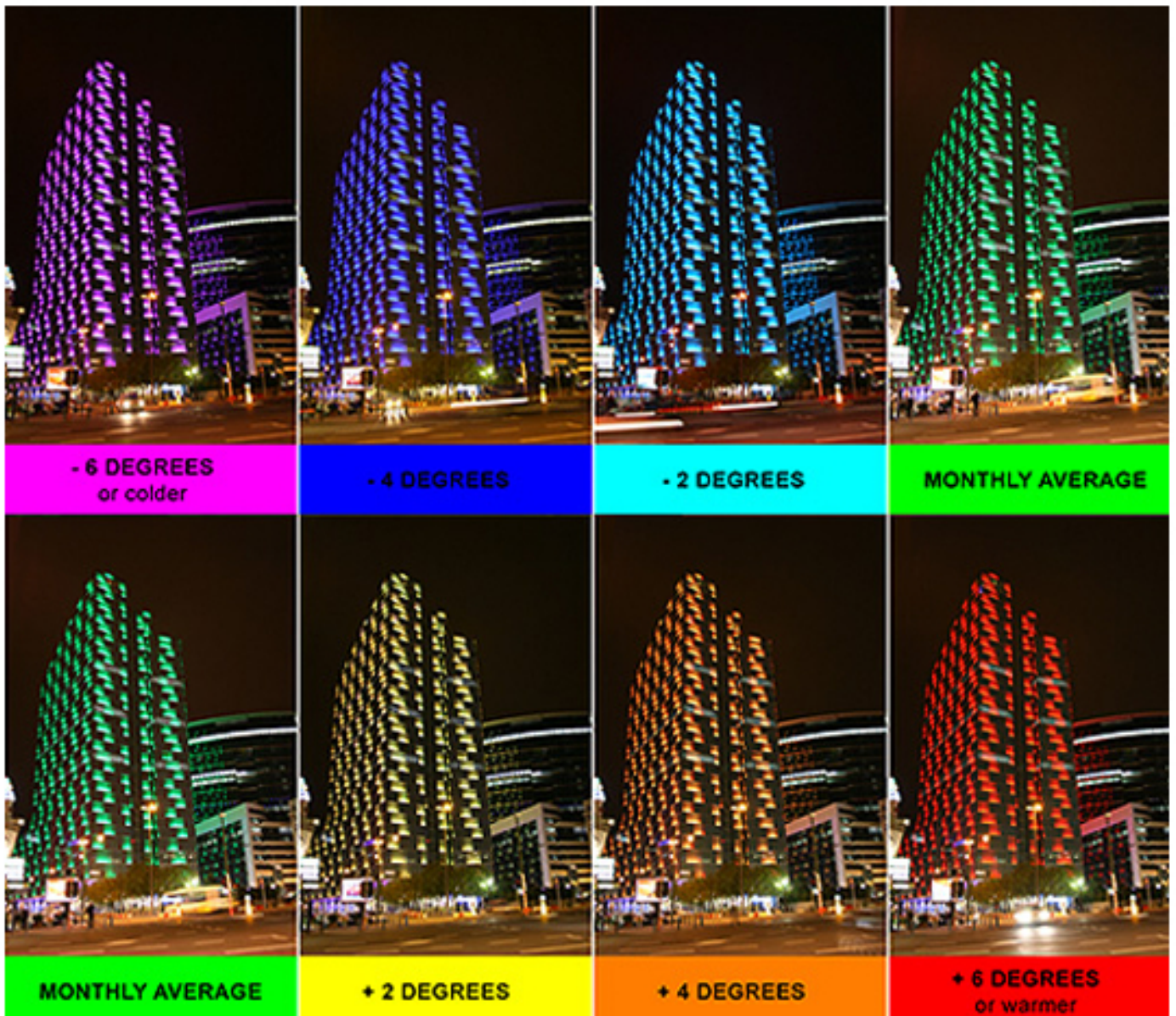| hours	minutes	seconds

The project takes as starting point Brussels' 145 m high Dexia Tower, from which 4200 windows can be individually color-enlightened by RGB-led bars. For the next months a new project within the series 'Who's Afraid of Red, Green and Blue', will forecast tomorrow's weather for Brussels, in collaboration with the Royal Meteorological Institute of Belgium.

The project displays tomorrow's temperature, cloudiness, precipitations, and wind, by using colors and geometrical patterns to visualize these data.

A color-code corresponds to tomorrow's temperature compared to the monthly average, linked to a scale of color-temperatures ranging from violet (-6° or colder), blue (-4°), cyan (-2°), green (monthly average), yellow (+2°), orange (+4°) to red (+6° or warmer):

For example: When tomorrow's temperature is two degrees higher than the monthly average, the tower colors 'yellow'. Furthermore, the level (dark / light) of this color corresponds to the light-condition of the sky of the upcoming day.

Geometrical patterns are created with a vector-field, constituted of small lines which constantly re-orient, causing patterns, letters and numbers to appear. These patterns are visualizing tomorrow's cloudiness, showers (rain, snow, ice …) and wind.

- 6 DEGREES or colder · - 4 DEGREES · - 2 DEGREES · MONTHLY AVERAGE · MONTHLY AVERAGE · + 2 DEGREES · + 4 DEGREES · + 6 DEGREES or warmer

who's afraid of red, green and blue