



BRILLIANT

Chris Levine and Thierry Dreyfus trip the light fantastic

The average person only notices light when it's bad, but sometimes light can do more than just set a mood. "Light is all too often taken for granted because it is so much a part of how we function as living beings," says artist Chris Levine. "But when it's taken out of a familiar context, invariably people respond to its beauty." Levine works with lasers, holographics, and sensory media, often collaborating on images with photographers Nick Thornton-Jones and Warren du Preez. Lasers, Levine explains, are by definition light in its purest form. (The image above is a laser projection cast onto a wall, a freeze-frame of an evolving organic form.) In addition to developing a line of lighting products for Habitat (don't expect your run-of-the-mill reading lamps), Levine is currently working on *ly-project*, a sound and vision installation that had its first DVD release last summer. The project includes outdoor laser light works for events such as the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan, where laser imagery was tuned to bass-level audio-wave forms. "Light is a fluid, silent, pure, and intangible substance that can transform life and open the soul to positive emotion," contends Dreyfus. Best known for his work in the

fashion world, Dreyfus has created lighting and sets for designers such as Helmut Lang (whose trademark light is in fact a "non light") and Hedi Slimane (with whom he collaborated on a ceiling of crystal tears for the Dior Homme Spring 2002 show). He was recently commissioned by the Caisse des Depots et Consignations in Paris to light its building on the Quai Anatole France. (The bank's other building was lit by artist James Turrell.) While artists have struggled for centuries to capture the otherworldly light of Paris in paintings and photographs, Dreyfus's neon-tube installation breaks it down to a simple formula: a mix of lavender, light amber, light pink, clear blue, and powder. The piece resides in an open courtyard along with a large sculpture by Jean Dubuffet. At night, light creeps through the gates onto the street, as if the sun itself has been captured behind bars.

This page: Neon-tube installation for Caisse des Depots et Consignations, Paris, Thierry Dreyfus
Opposite page: *Laser Nebula*, Chris Levine
Photo Warren du Preez and Nick Thornton-Jones