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Dark Matter Gallery Launched in Berlin

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Dark Matter is a brand-new permanent exhibition space for lighting, visual and sonic art, and technology in Berlin's lively Lichtenberg district, currently comprising seven unique sculptural and kinetic visual works created by light artist Christopher Bauder of WHITEvoid.

This experience, which opened last week, is the long-term brainchild of Christopher and his quest to curate a "parallel cosmos of expansive lighting installations blurring the boundaries between real and digital worlds" capturing and stimulating emotional, spiritual, and imaginative journeys as guests embrace the artworks – some interactive, some reflective, all fascinating – engaging and experiencing a wide range of emotions.

Robe lighting is delighted to be involved in this project, initially with the supply of Tetra2 and MegaPointe fixtures which will be used for special events lighting in one of the large exhibition spaces, Hall 2.

The seven pitch-black rooms making up Dark Matter – in three buildings on a one-way walkthrough route – are part of a former factory building acquired by Christopher in 2019 and extensively renovated and converted into this vibrant and thought-provoking presentation space over the last 13 months.

Achieving sufficient blackness was fundamental to encouraging guests to leave their real worlds ... and dive into a different dimension where abstract meets imagination in an intense and all-encapsulating psychological journey, triggered by light and sound, vision and hearing.

Dark Matter has been a major lockdown mission for Christopher!

The art pieces range from "The Tone Ladder", a playful concept originally designed and built in 2001 whilst Christopher was a student at Berlin University of the Arts, to the most recent,

“Inverse”, which has been bespoke imagineered especially for Dark Matter.

The 32 x Robe Tetra2 moving LED battens are rigged in the roof of Dark Matter’s second event space which also houses exhibits "Bonfire" and "Polygon Playground". They will help energise the room when used for events and special shows.

The extended space has an original timber framed roof with spectacular beam-work, so the Tetra2s are aligned along each side of the long walls to highlight the intricacies and geometry of this roof structure.

“We wanted this fixture for general lighting and for its creative potential,” explained Christopher, “for captivating effects like pixel waves and moving shafts and curtains of light”.

The MegaPointes are being used as "Moving Lights" in a double sense, since they are moving up and down attached to KINETIC LIGHTS’ latest powered cable winch development WinchXL.

Christopher has regularly used Robe Pointes and MegaPointes in his recent large-scale lighting installations, most notably SKALAR which has toured internationally and Apologue 2047/2 which toured China.

The fascinating series of Dark Matter installations start with the stark “Electric Sky” located in the first room featuring the raw unadulterated beauty of pure white light, before visitors move on to “Inverse” which is an automated piece, adding the effect of motion although the lighting itself is static.

In the third room, visitors can experience “Circular” which offers the full sensory spatial phenomena of light and motion combined.

The first three rooms are all palpably artificial and all the works inter-connect and communicate, while the fourth space, “Bonfire”, is more contemplative and geared towards colour and calm. It exudes a more natural and organic mood with a massive bonfire that looks very real and is accompanied by an authentic 3D soundtrack ... making it easy to believe you are in front of a real fire!

The fifth space, “Polygon Playground”, captivates with a projection mapped scenic piece in the centre which also starts off the interactivity element of Dark Matter with lighting effects synched to reactive sounds, so people can participate and actively engage in the work rather than spectating.

The sixth room is the largest space and features “Grid”, a full-scale sound and light installation conceived by Christopher and computer music artist Robert Henke. “Grid” is a fully immersive experience that captures all senses and includes a HOLOPLOT X1 Matrix Array sound system for delivering incredible and intricate 3D audio.

The final space is “Tonal Ladder”, an ebullient and fully interactive artwork where guests create their own sonic and visual experiences by stepping on or touching the different rungs of the ladder, activating different sound and lighting effects to create music or events. Up to six people can play ‘light animations’ or create micro disco music. It is a totally fun space for people to enjoy and experiment with everything they have experienced and thought about light and sound in the previous rooms.

“It is about pure joy and how to be a creator,” says Christopher summing up the final room.

It enables guests to leave Dark Matter filled with new perspectives, ideals of how they can be creative and enjoy the therapeutic elements of lighting and sound as well as how they might look at and experience the natural world around them in completely different contexts!

Music and lighting are utilised to enhance states of emotion, investigation or thinking, and all the installations have a definite technical edge as well as being living, breathing pieces of art.

Dark Matter has been designed and choreographed from the off to appeal to a very broad audience. It traverses all ages from young children upwards, and all backgrounds and experiences. “Lighting and sound can cross every possible barrier and be a universal trigger for a new individual experience, every single one completely different from the next.”

It also opens cutting edge technical and creative art to those who might never venture into a conventional gallery space, and this has been a driver for Christopher and the WHITEvoid team, not just at Dark Matter but generally when developing new projects and ideas.

Control for all the installations apart from Tone Ladder is Derivative’s Touch Designer, the hazers are from MDG, with video projectors provided by Barco.

Dark Matter is now running as a fully covid-safe environment with proper social distancing and a safe, regulated one-way system through all the halls ... and tickets for the first weeks of operation have completely sold out.

A substantial outdoor area will be landscaped and developed in the coming months signalling that this is just the beginning for this invigorating new environment showcasing technology, invention, and fun.

Harry von den Stemmen, Robe's global sales director commented, "Robe has enjoyed a very good and fruitful cooperation with Christopher Bauder, WHITEvoid and his other venture Kinetic Lights in the years immediately before everything was halted due to the global pandemic, so there is already quite a history and it has been a homage to the art and creativity of the team around Christopher since day one!

"In January 2020, Josef (Valchar, Robe lighting CEO) and I visited Christopher's new premises in Berlin where 'Dark Matter' now stands. As soon as Christopher showed us the plot of land and related his plans, we were 'on fire' with enthusiasm for the new project, and now we are proud to be actively supporting the realization and cementing our cooperation.

"The technical competence and artistic talent of the team behind 'Dark Matter' is super-impressive, and we just love Christopher's creativity and commitment to innovation and pushing all the boundaries all the time! We are certain this project will get all the interest, credit and success it deserves."

Photo Credit: WHITEvoid







