



WADDESDON  
Rothschild Collections

## LIGHT ART AT WADDESDON IN THE 2015 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF LIGHT



*Image : ©Stuart Bebb Photography*

Light and Light Art is becoming an increasingly important aspect of the contemporary art programme at Waddesdon. From the earliest days of its creation by Baron Ferdinand de Rothschild from 1974, the Manor has embraced new technology. It was one of the first houses of its generation to use electric light – when Queen Victoria visited in 1890, she was reportedly so delighted by the innovation that she spent some time turning the lights on and off. Light, and the control of light has always played an important role in the interiors, whether through the magnificent collection of 18th and 19th-century chandeliers or the specially designed picture lights which were the first in the country to use cooler low-voltage bulbs.

Contemporary light works are also a feature. In 2004, the Munich-based lighting designer Ingo Maurer was invited to create a contemporary chandelier for the Blue Dining Room at the Manor. Porca Miseria was the result, a scintillating collection of broken porcelain, held as if in a frozen, mid-air explosion. It complements the room's delicate 18<sup>th</sup>-century carved panelling perfectly. In 2011, the Brazilian designers Fernando and Umberto Campagna were invited to create a series of chandeliers and lights for a special exhibition in the Coach House, some made from recycled glass, some woven from raffia. Two of them, Broken Dreams, are now in the Archive at Windmill Hill.

### **Architectural Lighting**

As part of the Centenary Restoration in 1992-4, the French lighting designer Pierre Bideau was commissioned to create an architectural lighting scheme to enhance the extraordinary architecture and landscape surrounding the Manor at night. Although it was cutting-edge at the



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time, that scheme is now over 20 years old, and both technology and infrastructure have made such advances over the period that The Rothschild Foundation decided in 2014 to commission an update. Woodroffe Bassett Design were chosen to create a contemporary scheme, which combines the latest LED lights with digital programming to enable dramatic washes of colour, as well as more traditional architectural accent lighting. It also paves the way for innovative projection art and musical light displays.

The dramatic effect of light on the building, sculpture, fountains and trees is an indication of the creative potential of Waddesdon and its gardens for light art. Bruce Munro is the first in what we hope will be a series of artists invited to collaborate with us. His residency began in 2012 and runs until 2015 with a series of light installations through the Garden. In 2014 we also hosted *Bit.fall*, a work by German artist Julius Popp, which married light, water and digital technology. The introduction of the Woodroffe Bassett architectural lighting scheme is part of a long-term strategy to develop light art as part of our contemporary programme, using the Manor itself as a backdrop for projections, illuminations and festivities which celebrate both the place and the medium.

2015 is the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies. The UN has recognized the importance of raising global awareness about how light-based technologies promote sustainable development and provide solutions to global challenges in energy, education, agriculture and health. Light plays a vital role in our daily lives and is an imperative cross-cutting discipline of science in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It has revolutionized medicine, opened up international communication via the Internet, and continues to be central to linking cultural, economic and political aspects of the global society.

**Woodroffe Bassett Design**, founded by Patrick Woodroffe and Adam Bassett, are leading lighting designers whose work encompasses music, art, architecture, theatre and fashion. Over the last forty years in the world of contemporary music alone, Woodroffe has lit artists as diverse as ABBA and AC/DC, Bob Dylan and Lady Gaga, Depeche Mode and Elton John, Raquel Welch, The Eagles, Stevie Wonder, Take That and the Rolling Stones!

The work has led to performances in some highly unusual places, from the Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro where The Rolling Stones played to the largest audience ever assembled for a rock concert, to The White House in Washington where Paul McCartney played to President Obama, and Buckingham Palace where the Queen celebrated her Golden Jubilee with a concert in the grounds of her house.

In the classical world Patrick and Adam have lit performances by many well-known singers, conductors and orchestras including The Three Tenors, Sir George Solti, Andre Previn and the London Symphony Orchestra. They have also lit some important operas together including two much-acclaimed productions of *Romeo and Juliet* in Vienna and *Giulio Cesare* in Helsinki, where in both cases the lighting took the place of the scenery on a bare stage.

As well as live performance lighting the team has also lit a highly eclectic collection of special events including international music festivals, couture fashion shows, industrial trade



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presentations, charity dinners and national inaugurations. Adam has been the lighting designer at the Doha Film Festival in Qatar since its inception and for fifteen years the pair have lit and

helped to produce events for Vanity Fair in Los Angeles for the Oscars and also for events in New York, Washington and the Cannes Film Festival. In 2012 Patrick was the lighting designer and Adam associate lighting designer, for the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the London Olympic Games with Adam co-designing the lighting for the Paralympic Games Ceremonies.

In film Patrick has worked with many different directors and producers including Martin Scorsese on the Rolling Stones feature *Shine A Light*. His work was featured in Michael Jackson's *This is It*, the film of the ill-fated tour for which he also conceived and designed the lighting.

In addition to their work in live performance Adam and Patrick have been responsible for many important architectural lighting schemes, including the lighting of the gardens at Highgrove House for The Prince of Wales, Prague Castle for President Havel, and The Millennium Dome in London. They have created permanent installations at The V+A Museum and Somerset House in London and designed the exterior lighting at the Wynn and Encore hotels in Las Vegas. They also conceived and lit the Lake of Dreams son-et-lumiere at The Wynn Hotel in Las Vegas and the Morphing Atrium at the Wynn Hotel in Macau.

Patrick and Adam have taught and lectured on the subject of lighting internationally and together they both continue to regularly consult on projects all over the world.