



# magic lights

*photo by Louis M. Brill*

In 1955, light shows were in their infancy. It would not be until the 1960's that they would take the entertainment world by storm. Unknown to most people the main building block which gave birth to all light shows was Lumia. Lumia is a many splendor light art medium that is focused in a multitude of entertainment forms from theater lighting to decorative light sculptures. Lumia was discovered in the 1920s by a Danish artist, Thomas Wilfred (1889 - 1968), who is recognized as the father of the modern (20th century) light show. While there are many kinds of light art (neon, liquid light, LEDs and lasers), Lumia stands out as an illuminated art medium where its visual presence is usually uniquely compelling to its viewers, whom after watching it a while, usually report feeling almost as if they are have entered trance-like states.

Wilfred described his Lumia compositions as "a visual experience of light with a wide range of intensity, color, and a broad spectrum of delicate forms which change with time." Lumia's visual form appears as a landscape of things known and unknown. In viewing a continuously animated Lumia display, it stirs the imagination as its observers find themselves conjuring up a medley of images that is transformative of evocative shapes. Wilfred went so far as to refer to Lumia, as the 8th major fine art form. Lumia has been credited with giving birth to visual music, and has often been used as a visual stimulus tool in psychological therapies.

One of a handful of people in the world today expanding on Thomas Wilfred's initial work is contemporary light artist Louis M. Brill. Brill constantly experiments with Lumia, as a sculptural medium and states that what he does is, "take light from its initial reference point and massage it into an ethereal presence which then expresses delight." As a self proclaimed tinker and an inventor, Brill has always built light sculptures and "projection devices" in varying formats to show off his light imagery, in artistic settings.

Brill has created entire Lumia theater shows known as the Theatre of Performing Lights. He has recently begun an archival documentation of his light art through his web site ([www.sacredlumia.com](http://www.sacredlumia.com)) and the publication of a book of his work with Lumia light: *Sacred Destinations and Journeys Along The Way*.

Brill is a firm believer of the synergy of content and context. With his art, his content is the light and the context is the space it's shown in. The context for the light art is the lack of ambient light around it when being projected. Brill has noted, "The very best lighting effect in my work is when the lights are turned off, and the room is so dark that you can take your hand carefully place it in front of your face, and NOT see it - at all." Brill proclaims that this pure darkness becomes his blank canvas to which his Lumia projections suddenly have the appearance of "floating" in space.



*Thomas Wilfred presenting one of his lumia lightscapes.*

Viewing these Lumia light sculptures is like viewing dimensional gateways into other worlds. More so it is a world one could visit and explore. As one views these other worldly landscapes, the Lumia inhabitants seemingly became alive and aware, as if they know you are there.

The book, *Sacred Destinations* consists of snapshots into other worlds. It brings the reader luminance visions of things seen and things imagined. It is a world of photons, of reflection and refraction, and mostly of imagination.

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