

LIGHT READING

November/December 2013

Dear friends and colleagues,

I hope you enjoy our first issue of 'Light Reading'. It's launch is timed with the current season and relationship to light. Feel free to make suggestions or requests for future topics.

I invite you to celebrate this 2013 season of light and darkness!

Debra Gilmore
Gilmore Lighting Design

In Praise of Shadows

With the recent time change, and shrinking hours of daylight, more darkness surrounds us as we enter the 'season of light'. Associated with various religions and pagan celebrations, the term implies the opposite to many. With less daylight, we use more electric light during our waking hours.



For us lighting designers, it means our exterior craft can be seen earlier in the evening. We contemplate how to improve poorly designed night spaces, such as those that lack ambiance, or perhaps pose trip hazards. Many have too much light or the fixtures are located incorrectly so as to obliterate shadows. Without shadows, form and definition are lost, spaces become dull, flat, and uninviting.

The Washington DC region is dense with tree canopies that soon will be barren of leaves. More light will penetrate by day and night. Spaces and horizons will visually expand; shadows will grow in length as the winter solstice approaches. Shouldn't electric light be seasonally controlled to prevent it's winter trespass?

This 'season of light' inspired me to dust off Jun'ichiro Tanizaki's 1967 book, "In Praise of Shadows". Cultural differences also inform our perceptions about light, shadow and darkness. The Middle East has an entirely different interpretation of light and how it is regarded.



At-Turaif: Shedding Light on the Past

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is bringing it's cultural past back to life by restoring the 60 acre, UNESCO World Heritage site, At-Turaif, located in the district of ad-Dir'iyah just outside Riyadh. The ancient settlement, which dates back to the 1500's, was built beside a wadi (riverbed) and fortified

by mud brick defense walls and citadels. The project is a collaboration with [Ayers Saint Gross](#), a firm with expertise in a broad range of project types. Ayers Saint Gross develops elegant and effective solutions, specializing in the design of environments for the dissemination of knowledge and culture.

Once the re-establishment is complete, this original power base for the House of Saud will be illuminated by designs of Gilmore Lighting, headed up by one of two women working on the project, Debra Gilmore. Since the site is also being developed as a gulf region tourist destination, and the climate dictates cooler evening activity, special attention is being paid to how the scheme will work after sundown. This project, which is still in construction, was recently featured in this month's edition of [Mondo Arc](#).



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