

LEUK

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The existence of the human being is strongly linked to fire, to its manipulation, to its use.

It is believed that the beginning of the use of fire in food preparation occurred about five hundred thousand years ago, with the so-called Peking Man - *homo erectus* subspecies, discovered between 1923 and 1927.

But the use of fire as an illumination instrument is much older and can reach more than two million years.

It is about the sensory faculty of vision as one of the fundamental elements of what we have called human over thousands of years.

Light as a human element has a long history.

Bonfires turned into torches, an essential tool for cave ritual spaces.

Torches, in its turn, became candles.

But is a question about which one came first appears: candles or oil lamps.

The ancient Greeks had the habit of lighting candles - every sixth day of the lunar month - in celebration of the goddess Artemis, a goddess of sight and hunting - later translated into the Roman world as Diana.

The word Diana has its ancient etymological root in **dyeu*, a word belonging to the Indo-European prehistoric linguistic group, extinct about twenty thousand years ago, which meant "to shine". It passed into Sanskrit *dhyana* and to the Pali *jana*, crossed the eastern Indian side and penetrated what is now Tibet, becoming *ch'an* - a Mahayana Buddhist school which in turn traveled through south China until the 7th century, arriving at a large island, where today is Japan, turning into Zen.

That ancient Indo-European root passed to Latin Diana, the goddess of sight and hunting.

Hunting and Zen revealed in the same etymological root!

Romans had been making candles since about 500 BC.

In China there has been evidence of the use of candles made with whale oil since the third century BC.

But in many places of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the most commonly used instrument for illumination was oil lamps. In these regions, candle production would begin only in the early medieval period.

Monasteries, convents and churches have made great use of candles over the centuries.

Oil lamps are present in virtually all religions, and the oldest found appears to be from the Chalcolithic period, dating from around 4500 BC.

The history of lanterns finds an immediate identity with that of candles and oil lamps. The word *lantern* comes from the Indo-European **lap* which meant "set fire", "light", "light up", and it also generated our word *lamp*.

Over the centuries, lanterns have been changing - always using light emitted to be reflected on the most diverse surfaces.

This is the nature of fire as enlightenment: light reflection.

Through such great path of metamorphosis magic lanterns appeared, intensely developed in the seventeenth century - always keeping the principle of reflected light.

But in the second half of the twentieth century Virtual Reality would emerge and with it an unprecedented revolution in fire and lighting would happen.

For the first time, light was transformed into numbers in a totally mental, immaterial environment. It is the solid light.

It is about a light that doesn't exist, in principle, to be reflected on a real, concrete surface.

This new light can be present on computer screens or in various media from digital platforms. But its conception is pure mathematics, pure mental process.

If we take a digital image and analyze it in terms of language, we will come across a large number of numbers - there will be the new light, a virtual light - for the first time in the history of our planet!

Leuk is the title of the piece for an intervention on a Guzzini lantern called *Soirée*.

The title of the work is a prehistoric word, the Indo-European **leuk*,

which meant "light".

The work is the fusion of two different natures of light - the ancient and traditional light arising from fire, today translated into LEDs; and the virtual, mathematical, abstract light materialized in a transparent image on the lantern's glass on engraved on it.

Kind of magic lantern in the fusion of lights of a totally different natures, it is a design that leads to the contemplation of the virtual light revealed by the electric light.

The invitation for the elaboration of this work started from Lucrezia De Domizio, Baroness Durini, dear friend with whom I've developed many projects since 1990.

Lucrezia De Domizio is a friend of Domenico Guzzini, president of the Fratelli Guzzini spa company, created in 1912, and she created for him the project of the exhibition "Soirée, The Light of Thought".

The exhibition turns around the lamp Soirée, designed by Marco Merendi and Diego Vencato, produced by Guzzini.

Curator of the exhibition project, Lucrezia De Domizio determined twenty artists from fifteen countries.

My work has two versions. One of them is characterized by a virtual image, and the other by a drawing - also made in Virtual Reality - engraved with laser on the glass of the lantern. Both images are made in three dimensions. The piece made for the exhibition was produced by Luca Cantarini.

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Fortezza da Basso

artists in the exhibition:

Sevil AMIN (Iran) The Dream

Marco BAGNOLI (Italy) Benché sia notte (Spazio x Tempo)

Mario BOTTINELLI MONTANDON (Italy) Casa Luce Cielo

Riccardo CALERO (Spain) Naturale

Estelle COURTOIS (France) Luché

Dagmar DOST-NOLDEN (German) Human Light

Marcia GROSTEIN (Brazil, USA) Reflections of Ones Self'

Graham MARTIN (England) Things I want to say today'

Ireneo NICORA (Switzerland) FALÒS (lucente - splendente)

Shino YANAI (Japan) Shadows

Jan C M PEETERS (the Netherlands) Tiliafata

Emanuel Dimas de Melo PIMENTA (Brazil, Portugal, Switzerland) Leuk

Vitantonio RUSSO (Italy) Economia in controllo

Una SZEEMANN (Switzerland) Ondata

Medhat SHAFIK (Egypt) Mesopotamia

Omraan TATCHEDA (Cameroon, Italy) Indigo Souls

Paolo TRENI (Italy) Soirée Idyllique

Luisa VALENTINI (Italy) Un soffio appena...

ZOUBOULIS & GREKOU (Greece) Candle Light Illusion

Lucrezia DE DOMIZIO DURINI (Italy) Difesa della Natura Omaggio al
Maestro Joseph Beuys