

Vinyl text: (Iridescent or golden color)

GLOW: Selections from the Modern and Contemporary Collection (x 2)

Humans have manipulated the fundamental element of light for centuries, enhancing architectural spaces with features such as the stained glass window. However, the effect of light on a work of traditional media such as stone, bronze, or paint, is often overlooked. This exhibition focuses attention on three works from the museum's permanent collection that incorporate light as an essential visual component. Thomas Wilfred's *Convolux, Opus 160* (1965) is an exceptional example of the artist's signature light box assemblies. An important innovator, and one of the first to work with light as a primary medium in the first half of the 20th century, Wilfred's developments influenced later generations of artists exploring light and space, such as James Turrell. In *Constellation* (1984), an imposing sculpture fabricated from wire mesh, Bay Area artist and educator Richard Berger uses a single lightbulb to illuminate a portion of the work, lending the piece a sense of mystery and suspense. Finally, multimedia artist Tony Oursler's 2012 assemblage *Roman à Clef* integrates digital video projections and audio in a surrealistic and surprising commentary on human relationships. (x1)

Labels: (Please add "Do not touch" icons for each)

Thomas Wilfred (American, born Denmark, 1889–1968)

Convolux, Opus 160, 1965

Oak, translucent screen, lightbulb, motor, glass, colored gels

Gift of Clare Boothe Luce, 1968 (3527.1)

Born Richard Edgar Løvstrøm, Thomas Wilfred began experimenting with light as a primary medium for his art in the early decades of the 20th century. His innovative work was included in the seminal exhibition *15 Americans* at the Museum of Modern Art in 1952. His light constructions, which he referred to as "lumia," include a motor, a light source, and colored gels on glass. Featuring a continuous visual interplay of color, form and pattern, they were meant to be viewed in a quiet and darkened room. Early lumia were controlled by an operator, but by 1928 he had developed his first projector that could play independently. In later years he produced pieces for personal use, as well as for museum exhibition. HoMA is one of only six museums to own one of these rare works, 18 of which exist today. The particular sequence of *Convolux, Opus 160*, one of the final few lumia the artist created, has a duration of 15 days, 19 hours. Wilfred wrote about this piece as follows:

"Principal theme: descending, turning and advancing. Secondary theme: rising, unfolding and receding. The color sequence is held mostly in light, opalescent shades with sparing use of red, but with passages of red-orange and yellow, and also of a deep, intense ultramarine. Occasional passages appear in shades of grey only. On the inside

there is a color wheel made of colored glass with pieces of colored gels (like the ones used for lighting in theatre productions) adhered to the wheel.”

Separate label – larger type:

In order to protect the components, this piece will run during the following hours.
Thank you for your understanding.

10:00am – 12:00pm

1:00pm – 3:00pm

Richard Berger (American, 1944–2015)

Constellation, 1984

Steel mesh, paint, light bulb

Gift of The Contemporary Museum, Honolulu, 2011, and gift of Joseph Chowning Gallery (TCM.1988.26)

California Bay Area artist Richard Berger taught sculpture at the San Francisco Art Institute for over 40 years and was known for incorporating elements of light and shadow in his mixed media works. Reminiscent of a 3-D computer-generated cross section, *Constellation* takes the form of a life-size bed through the careful manipulation of layers of wire mesh. The surface of the sculpture appears as both a mountainous topographical map, as well as a bedspread, folded back, ready to receive the sleeper. The addition of a light source at the head of the bed reveals various points of intersection within the wire mesh, highlighted with thickly applied, brightly colored paint, within which the form of a human body can be deciphered. These points of intersection direct the viewers gaze to particular areas of the sculpture, and serve as a type of map with which to visually navigate the piece.

Tony Oursler (American, born 1957)

Roman à Clef, 2012

Video projection with sound, assemblage of found objects, steel stand

Purchase with funds from a gift of Frumkin/Adams Gallery, New York, by exchange, 2013 (2013-3-01)

New York artist Tony Oursler melds media culture with theatrical tradition through combining video, sound, and language with constructed or fabricated elements. Oursler divorces the moving image from the video monitor and projects it onto three-dimensional surfaces and environments, creating miniaturized worlds in which funny, strange, and surreal narratives

confront the viewer. *Roman à Clef* is from a body of work Oursler calls “micro sculptures.” Each incorporate small found objects and tiny video projections within a proscenium mounted on a metal stand. These intimate tableaux offer concrete pictures of thoughts and psychology. Oursler has described this body of work: “The characters interact as though they embody poetically layered patterns of thought. Each of these works is a contemplation on human relationships and the implicit existential struggle. I invite the viewer to lean in and decipher the shouts and murmurs as these relationships unfold. I hope they recognize a few of these situations.”