



Call for  
Concepts  
2018 - 2019

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Separate attachments:

- PowerPoint submission template
- Maps of the Water and Land Exhibitions (subject to change)
- Overview of preferred locations and reference projects from previous Water Exhibitions

# 1. Welcome to Amsterdam Light Festival!



Ralf Westerhof Paths Crossing (2015) Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

Thank you for downloading the Call for Concepts 2018-2019 Artist Briefing. This is the first step in submitting your proposal for the seventh edition of Amsterdam Light Festival.

By opening this Call for Concepts, we would like to give artists, designers and architects – whether emerging or established – an equal opportunity to become part of next year's festival. We encourage artists from all disciplines (fine art, (light) design, architecture, media art, sculpture, installation art, etc.), regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or nationality, to submit a concept for a light artwork.

After the call closes on **3 January (16:00 CET)**, all submitted proposals will be reviewed during a selection procedure which consists of two consecutive rounds.

Together with the festival's curatorial team, an international jury will select approximately 35 artists to create an artwork for either our Water Exhibition or Land Exhibition.

We request that you follow this briefing closely to make sure that the curatorial team and the jury will be able to understand your proposal and make a well-considered decision. We will not be able to consider concepts that have been submitted after the deadline, or do not adhere to this briefing.

## 2. Dates & Exhibitions



### Dates

#### ***WATER EXHIBITION:***

29 November 2018 – 20 January 2019

#### ***LAND EXHIBITION:***

13 December 2018 – 6 January 2019

### Exhibitions

Amsterdam Light Festival presents two exhibitions in Amsterdam's city center, each with a different and unique visitor experience.

1. The WATER EXHIBITION is a boat route that takes visitors past light artworks that either float on, hang above, or are positioned along the water.
2. The LAND EXHIBITION is an open-air exhibition, to be enjoyed on foot, in which light artworks are staged in urban areas including parks, squares and ponds.

You can submit a concept for either the Water Exhibition or the Land Exhibition, or both - you are free to submit as many individual concepts as you like. Please note that we charge a fee of €35 (incl. VAT) for each individual submission.

#### **Massimo Uberti & Marco Pollice**

Today I love you (2015)

Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

### 3. Curatorial Team & Jury

Amsterdam Light Festival's curatorial team is responsible for the curation of both the Water Exhibition and the Land Exhibition. The curatorial team will review all submitted proposals in collaboration with the international jury. This will result in a final selection of approximately 35 artists who will be invited to create an artwork for the festival. Together, these artworks form a coherent whole yet ensure diverse exhibitions, following the theme and the guidelines stated in this briefing. The curatorial team will continue to advise and support all participating artists during the development of their artwork after the selection procedure has taken place.

**The members of the jury will be announced on our website at a later date.**



**John Bell**  
Enthalpy (2016)  
Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

## 4. Theme

### **The medium is the message**

Every year, the festival revolves around a specific theme. We invite potential participants to respond and reflect on this theme in their concepts. This year's theme is inspired by the famous one-liner "The medium is the message".

"Electric light is pure information [...], a self-contained communication system in which the medium is the message." With this statement, Canadian philosopher and media theorist Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) illustrated his theory on the profound impact of media – such as radio, telephone, television, but also light – on our daily lives, in his 1964 bestseller *Understanding Media*.

According to McLuhan, light is often overlooked as a medium in its own right since it does not contain a literal message like speech or writing does. Yet light is not 'nothing'; it has the great potential to shape and transform our environment. McLuhan argued that media are much more than just menial tools we deploy to convey a message. He interpreted them as extensions of the human senses (the phone, for instance, is an extension of our voices and our ears), liberating them from our bodies and the restraints of time and space. This has changed the scale and the form of our (inter)actions – and society as a whole – thoroughly; the real 'message' of media in McLuhan's conviction.

## 4. Theme



Marshall McLuhan

This also holds true for light. Since the late 19th century light has, like no other medium, overcome the divisions of night and day, of inner and outer worlds, and of the subterranean and the terrestrial. It enables us to do

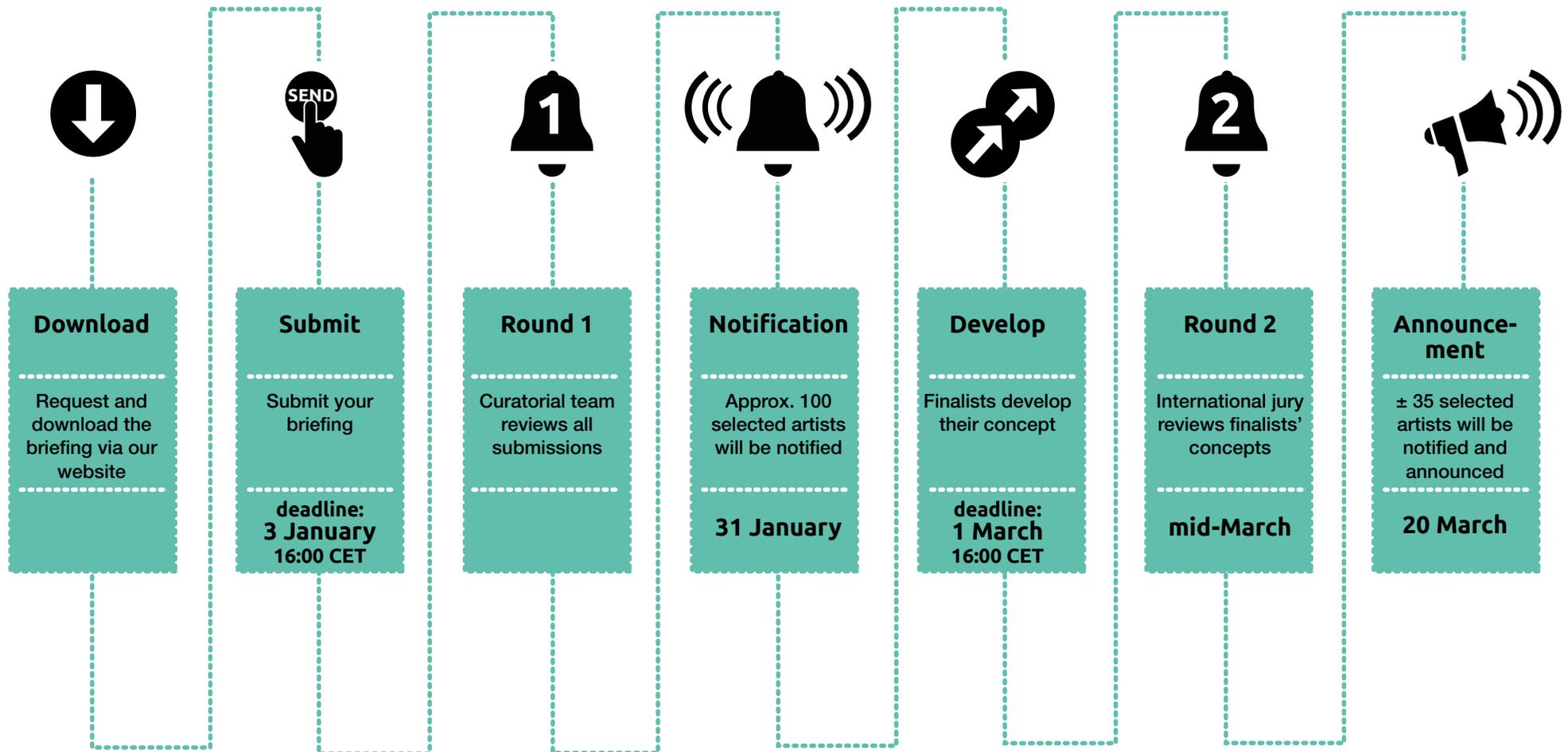
whatever we want, whenever we want (from brain surgery to an evening sports game) by creating spaces that would otherwise be enveloped by darkness, or as McLuhan said, “Electric lighting created space without walls, and day without night”. These spaces become places where we can extend our senses and activities, so “when the light is on there is a world of sense that disappears when the light is off”.

In this day and age, a whole new range of (online) media have taken over from McLuhan’s ‘traditional’ means of communication including the radio and television. Modern media have caused a confusing blur between true and untrue, real and fake, real life and virtual. The messages they convey often contain a biased perspective, and can even mislead you. Traditional media try to maintain their authoritative position, while world leaders express their opinions through social media. In order to keep track of this endless amount of information and be able to exchange messages continuously, our smartphones accompany us day and night, constantly lighting up.

This raises questions about the powerful influence of (new) media. When it comes to light as a medium, several specific, interesting issues come into play. For instance, what kinds of messages does the medium light transmit nowadays? In an era of fake news and alternative facts, can light maintain its objectivity? How does it communicate in a way that no other medium can? How does light shape or transform (digital) space? How does light extend and influence our reality? And how does it structure and transform our individual lives and society as a whole?

# 5. Selection & Submission Procedure

## 5.1 Key moments



A photograph of a man with glasses and a beard, smiling and looking towards a light installation. The installation consists of vertical tubes of light, some of which are glowing green and others blue. The background is dark, suggesting an indoor or nighttime outdoor setting.

# 5. Selection & Submission Procedure

## 5.2 Round 1

### *Submission*

After requesting this briefing, you should have received an email containing:

- A unique submission ID
- A download link for the briefing (including attachments)
- A link to our online submission portal

This ID is the 'linking pin' that will connect all of the different parts of your submission. Each unique submission needs its own submission ID, so for every additional artwork you would like to submit, you will need to download this briefing again in order to receive a new submission ID.

**Note that only proposals submitted via our online submission portal at [www.amsterdamlightfestival.com/en/cfc](http://www.amsterdamlightfestival.com/en/cfc) will be reviewed.**

Please fill out all of the required information in the submission form and subsequently upload your submission. Your submission for Round 1 is limited to a maximum of two PowerPoint slides including visuals. The PowerPoint template we have provided with the briefing is the mandatory format for presenting your concept. All submissions must be written in English; this applies to Dutch artists as well.

**Victor Engbers,**  
Greenhouse (2016)  
Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

### *Selection*

All submitted concepts will be reviewed by the curatorial team according to the following: compliance with the briefing, technical feasibility, the role of light, relevance, and artistic quality. Approximately 100 artists will be selected during Round 1. These artists will be asked to further develop their artwork's concept, technical design, and financial budget for Round 2. We will not elaborate on the motivation of the curatorial team's decisions, and the selection will not be made public.

## 5.3 Round 2

### *Submission*

The briefing for Round 2 will only be communicated with you if you have been selected during Round 1. You will receive specific instructions and feedback for Round 2, based on the concept you have submitted in Round 1. The submission for Round 2 is limited to four PowerPoint slides including visuals, and a separate, detailed budget.

### *Selection*

Our international jury will review all 100 concepts during Round 2. The jury will select ± 35 artworks to be exhibited at the festival based on artistic impact, multi-layered meaning, and creativity of the concept. Furthermore, the work should generate understanding, meaning and attention to make sure that visitors can



## 5. Selection & Submission Procedure

connect with the artwork. The jury will also consider whether a concept fits into the overall selection of artworks; together they should form a meaningful and impressive exhibition containing diverse interpretations of the theme.

### 5.4 Submission Costs

We charge €35 (including Dutch VAT) for each individual submission, in order to cover part of the costs of the selection procedure. This fee applies to all artists and each individual submission. The fee is to be paid

via PayPal and is non-refundable. It is possible to make credit card payments via PayPal. Please note that you need your submission ID during payment.

### 5.5 Further Questions

Since we believe that everyone should be able to access the same information, we have chosen to post all matters concerning the Call for Concepts on our website. Please take a look at the CFC section: <https://amsterdamlightfestival.com/en/light-art/call-for-concepts/>

If you require assistance, please send your question to [cfc@amsterdamlightfestival.com](mailto:cfc@amsterdamlightfestival.com). Keep your questions generic and do not upload images, etc. Please note that we will only answer questions regarding the Call for Concepts.

# 6. Artwork Criteria

## 6.1 General Criteria

**New artworks:** We give priority to newly created, high-quality artworks that will make their premiere at the Amsterdam Light Festival. In exceptional cases, we might consider exhibiting existing artworks. Please visit <https://amsterdamlightfestival.com/nl/kunst/lichtkunst/kunst-kunstenaars/> for an overview of the artworks that were created for previous editions of the festival. We suggest familiarising yourself with them in order to make sure your concept is new and unique.

**Role of light:** Light art is a complex form of art and unites the disciplines of science, technology, creativity and art. We would like to emphasise the importance of the comprehensive and creative use of light in your artwork. We are not looking for artworks in which light is used only to illuminate your work – light, in any form, should be the actual artwork. We require that the role of light is essential to your concept. We also strongly encourage the incorporation of new technologies and innovative use of light.

**Constructions:** All works at Amsterdam Light Festival are staged in the public space for a period of either 25 days (Land Exhibition) or 53 days (Water Exhibition). This requires rigid constructions and waterproof solutions. The winter weather in Amsterdam can be stormy, wet and freezing, so the technical feasibility, rigidity and durability of your artwork are of utmost importance. Please keep in mind that we should be able to rebuild and transport the artwork in a container to other locations after the festival.

**Theme:** The proposed artwork must respond to the theme; we welcome diverse interpretations.

**Sustainability:** We encourage sustainability, reuse and cradle-to-cradle methods, and highly appreciate energy-saving solutions. For Round 2, you will be asked to indicate the power consumption in Watt of the artwork you have proposed.

**Sound:** The use of sound is often not possible due to the residential area where your artwork will be installed. However, in exceptional cases it will be allowed.

Serge Schoemakers Architects & Digiluce,  
Alley of Light (2014)  
Photo by Janus van den Eijnden



# 6. Artwork Criteria

## 6.2 Specific Criteria Water Exhibition

**Period:** All artworks that are part of the Water Exhibition must be presented during the period 29 November 2018 to 20 January 2019 (a total of 53 days).

**Visitor Experience:** The Water Exhibition can be experienced in many different ways. Most visitors will see your artwork from a (canal) boat. These boats usually travel at a slow speed and occasionally come to a full stop. The tour takes about 75 minutes, so it is important that your artwork has a striking impact within a short time. It is also possible to experience this exhibition by bicycle or on foot, so it is just as important that artworks in the Water Exhibition can be enjoyed on land as well.

**Character:** Your artwork should have a multi-layered meaning – it should engage the festival’s visitors in some way. Your artwork should be monumental in appearance and clearly visible to the audience. Artworks in the Water Exhibition are often floating on, hanging above, or positioned along the water.

**Setting:** We ask you to be aware of the historical surroundings of the festival; it is important that your artwork connects with the specific characteristics of the city. For the Water Exhibition, we would like to ask you to pay special attention to water and how your artwork relates to it. You are welcome to integrate specific site elements and their context in your artwork.

**Locations:** Different types of locations are included in the Water Exhibition, which we have specified in detail on our website: <https://amsterdamlightfestival.com/en/cfc/locations>. We have described numerous key locations of artworks from previous editions of the festival. You are welcome to propose a new location as long as it is part of the Water Exhibitions route, but please note that the curatorial team will decide on the locations for all artworks.

**Yasuhiro Chida**  
Brocken 6 A (2017)  
Photo by Mira Chaloupka



## 6. Artwork Criteria



Wilhelmusvlug  
Hourglass (2016)  
Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

### 6.3 Specific Criteria Land Exhibition

**Period:** All artworks that are part of the Land Exhibition must be presented during the period of 13 December 2018 to 6 January 2019 (a total of 25 days).

**Visitor Experience:** If you submit a concept for the Land Exhibition, please keep in mind that your artwork will be installed in a pedestrian zone, or perhaps in a park-like setting. Visitors will be able to experience your artwork from up close, and they will expect to be amazed. They look forward to interacting with your artwork and share their experiences with each other.

Lots of people will see the artworks and share their experiences. It is important that your artwork is impressive in its look and memorable for the visitors.

**Character:** We require that artworks have a multi-layered meaning, that they are surprising and inspiring, and that they raise questions and engage viewers of all ages and of all backgrounds. We encourage you to carry out research and speak with students, technologists and other professionals in the field of light.

**Locations:** There are different types of locations in the Land Exhibition. Your artwork will either be placed in a pedestrian zone of a residential part of the city, in a park-like setting, or a large public garden. You may suggest a location for your artwork in your concept but please note that the curatorial team will make the final decision – together with the artist – in favour of the visitor experience.

## 6. Artwork Criteria



### 6.4 Budget

For the Land Exhibition, we provide a maximum budget of **€12,500** (excl. VAT) per artwork. Approximately 15 artworks will be selected for this exhibition.

For the Water Exhibition, we have two budget categories (excl. VAT): **€25,000** and **€40,000**. For this exhibition, approximately 20 artworks will be selected as well.

The selection of the artworks will also be based on accurate budgeting and cost efficiency.

Your estimated budget should include everything: your fee, labour costs to build the artwork (from concept to installation on site), all materials, tools, facilities, (light) equipment, installation, construction and testing.

The festival will only arrange and pay for shipping costs, engineering services, construction calculation, power supply near the artwork, (technical and artistic) advice from our experts, security, basic maintenance, (limited) travel and stay during the building period,

insurances and publicity during the exhibition period. Please exclude these costs from your budget estimation.

Please note that once you have been selected after Round 1, you will not be allowed to increase your budget; this also applies after having been selected after Round 2. The festival will not provide additional budget for unforeseen costs in the development and production phase. For this reason, we ask you to calculate your budget wisely and realistically.

### 6.5 Sponsoring

We welcome artists to seek and propose sponsors to help lower the total costs of the artwork - below the budget that was originally set. The artist has to indicate sponsor contributions in the submission template in Round 1, and specify the secured funds in the budget template in Round 2. In general, private sponsors will only be given recognition in our communication if a specific agreement is made, which is only possible if the sponsorship does not conflict with one of the main festival sponsors.

#### Tropisme

This is it, be here now (2014)  
Photo by Janus van den Eijnden

# 7. Once selected

Our curatorial team will contact you on 20 March if you are selected as one of the artists participating in the 2018-2019 edition of Amsterdam Light Festival. You will receive feedback from our curatorial and technical teams, discuss the artistic and technical development of the artwork, and start the artist programme in our kick-off meeting.

## **7.1 From Concept to Artwork: Co-creation**

We encourage you to use innovative lighting solutions in your artwork. This, combined with the fact that the artworks must be placed in Amsterdam's public domain (in and under water, on buildings, bridges or on streets) means that additional curatorial review is needed, and specific technical knowledge and solutions are essential to develop and install the artwork. For this reason, Amsterdam Light Festival has chosen to co-create the artwork with the artist.

This means that the artist is primarily responsible for the artistic and technical realisation of the artwork, while the festival is responsible for funding and insurance, as well as the curatorial, technical and material review of the concept. In specific cases, an alternative approach (with regards to building the artwork in Amsterdam, for example) may be decided upon, in consultation with the artist.

## **7.2 Artist Programme**

After being selected, the participating artist will become part of our communication and creation programme. This programme consists of artistic coaching and advisory meetings, individual coaching, site visits and exposure during the 'making of' phase and the festival period. All artists selected for Amsterdam Light Festival 2018-2019 are required to visit Amsterdam for a two-day kick-off meeting on 17 and 18 March or 24 and 25 March (these dates are subject to change). During this visit you will meet the festival team, visit suitable locations for your artwork, and meet the other selected artists. To facilitate the site visit, the festival will provide for and arrange travel and accommodation for one person.

In the weeks after the kick-off meeting, we will continue to collaborate in order to further develop your concept, detail and document your budget, agree upon suitable locations, and prepare permit applications.

## **7.3 Commission Agreement**

If the jury selects you as a participating artist, we will formally commission you to create an artwork for Amsterdam Light Festival 2018-2019.

The commission will be drawn up in a contract, in which the relationship between the artist and the festival is defined as commissionee and principal.

The contract states the festival's work method, and the artist's rights and obligations during the making-of phase, the festival period (29 November 2018 – 20 January 2019) as well as future exhibitions.

# 7. Once selected

## 7.4 Artwork Ownership

The artistic idea and the concept of the artwork will always belong to the artist. However, the physical version of the artwork (created for and paid for by Amsterdam Light Festival) will belong to Amsterdam Light Festival. When operating software or creative and digital data are essential to the artwork, they should remain available to the festival in the case that the work will be re-exhibited (we will save a copy of the data in our archive). We may consider a rental construction in some cases - this needs to be made clear in the submitted concept. Please keep in mind that the festival can only consider this option when it results in significant savings in costs.

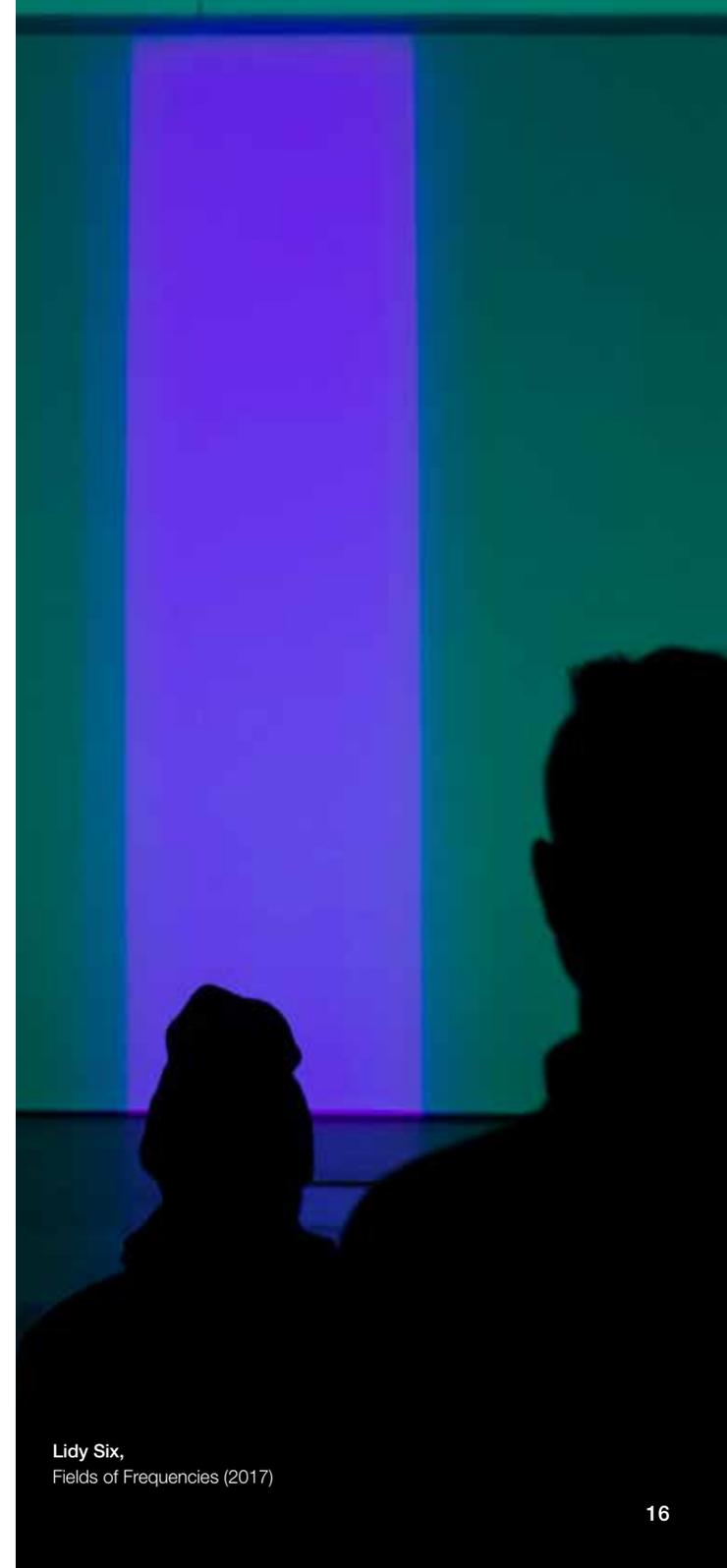
## 7.5 Future Exhibitions

After each edition, we place the artworks in temporary storage and do our best to make sure they stay in good condition. Since we believe storage is the worst place for an artwork, we actively seek out new platforms for the artworks at events and festivals around the world. Over the past few years, Amsterdam Light Festival has built a large network of partners, which has allowed us to exhibit works from previous editions all over the world. The artist is always

consulted for his or her artistic vision for each re-exhibition, and is sometimes invited to travel to the exhibition site. A follow-up fee is also paid to the artist each time the work is re-exhibited. Amsterdam Light Festival takes care of all the paperwork, contracts, transport, insurance, carnets, etc. In order to make your artwork suitable for future exhibitions, please take into account the construction criteria. For this reason, we also require you to supply a manual of the artwork.

## 7.6 Copy and Image Rights

All artists selected for Amsterdam Light Festival 2018-2019 will grant the festival full rights to publish images of the artist and the concept, the name and the content of the artwork at no cost. These rights are exclusive until the opening of Amsterdam Light Festival 2018-2019 and continue non-exclusively after that for an unlimited period of time. By submitting your artwork, you agree to cooperate as much as you can with our activities in the fields of public relations, social media and other online communications. In order to present your work in the best way possible, it is your sole responsibility to deliver the right content to the festival team. Furthermore, if you present your work in any media, we would like to ask you to mention that the work is commissioned by and staged at Amsterdam Light Festival.

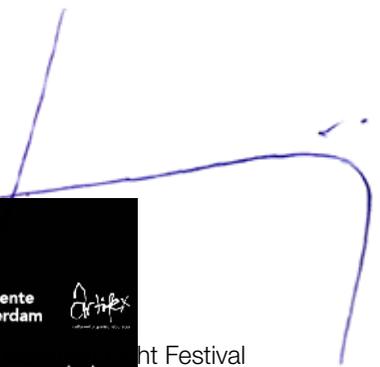


Lidy Six,  
Fields of Frequencies (2017)

# And now... off you go!

We are very much looking forward to receiving your submission, and we wish you the best of luck in creating your concept. Amsterdam Light Festival is an exciting celebration of light, art, design and innovation, and we sincerely hope you will become a part of it!

Best regards,



**Founding Partner** **Premium Partners**



Amsterdam Light Festival

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