

## TRENDS INTERIORS FAST TRACKS

### Neon lighting: Lite Brite Neon, Brooklyn, New York

CLAIRE WALSH, WGSN 24.05.07

**The Brooklyn company have been working with artists and designers for over a decade. But it is the launch of a custom-made home collection that has taken them mainstream. WGSN speaks with Matt Dilling, the studio's founder.**

The idea for Lite Brite Neon's new range was born out of **"the historical presence of function in lighting design."** As the company's work fuses **form, function and wit** to produce unique designs, embodying the past as well as engaging the future, it is little wonder that functionality inspires the fixtures they produce.



Brookhaven, the latest addition to the chandelier line



Shop window, New York



Lite Brite Neon

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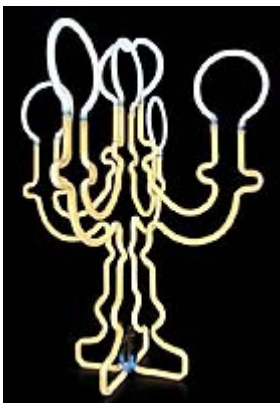
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The lights themselves comprise of neon tubes, coated with a **triphosphor coating**. This outer layer produces a high colour rendering index - the equivalent of **six 100-watt incandescent light bulbs** - but consumes less than 100 watts of energy. Simply Lite Brite Neon has launched a range that is as efficient, as it is desirable.



Candelabra



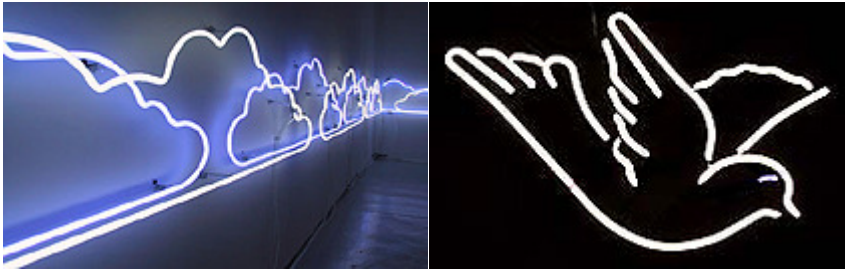
Sconce



Floor lamp

Little has changed in the process of neon light manufacturing since its invention in the late 19th century. Lite Brite's team all work by hand, heating and then bending the glass into the desired shape. The tubes are then filled with a **mix of gases**, and reheated to produce the required colour.

"The process helps inform the designs we produce," explains Dilling. "We are interested in the **evolution of function in design and its relation to aesthetics** - such as the design of a chandelier with multiple arms to produce more light in one location and the way this still functions aesthetically when not lit."



Green room installation, 2000

Dove

Dilling's passion for the medium is apparent. That ardour is a requirement in such a painstaking process, where there is little room for error. You would imagine therefore that he had devoted a lifetime to the craft, but at **just 28 he seems young to be the linchpin of the studio.**

After a brief stint in art school, Dilling founded Lite Brite Neon in New York. An appetite for his talents has seen the company become the **city's number one port of call** for all its neon needs. He can already look back on a career that has seen him collaborate with the cream of the art and design world.



Fischerspooner and Deitch Projects collaboration, 2003

Sarah Mitcheson, 2006

Lite Brite's expertise has been called upon by artists such as **Keith Sonnier** and **Bruce Nauman**. It has worked its neon magic for the likes of Stella McCartney, adidas, and MAC - to name but a few.

"We still love our role of getting to work with artists and designers on the projects they do, where we're more backstage, but we are getting to spend some time considering options for more of our own designs now."



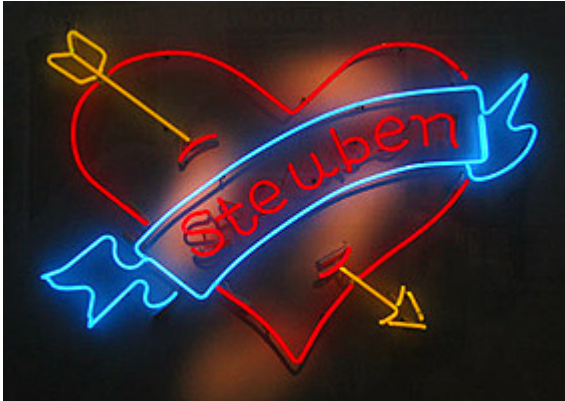
AVAF Neon, 2006

Calvin Klein underwear, 2004

"The best thing neon has going for it today is that it is truly a **solid, sustainable medium that has been overlooked because of its cultural context.** Neon's role now is rooted in the language it has been assigned culturally, but also the role it can play in being used for

what it does best, which aside from being seductive, is producing light."

The designs have been proving a hit stateside, and with **Abigail Aherne** snapping the lights up to launch in her London store, Lite Brite Neon could have an even busier future ahead of them.



Steuben Glass, 2004



New York Times Magazine,  
2006

### WGSN comment

Lite Brite Neon's work cleverly comments upon its medium, but also **redefines the cultural references**. The lighting the studio produces showcases iconic design and an intelligent treatment of what was once seen as a dated craft.

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