

Arbor Lase

Arbor Lase is a large-scale public art event. It consists of interactive kinetic laser displays projected onto the western side of Tower Plaza in downtown Ann Arbor. This is to be scheduled for nights during the Art Fair. The displays are intended to provide:

- A public setting for epic-scale interactive kinetic laser Neo-Op art
- A means for visitors to take part in an interactive laser display
- A venue for Ann Arbor artists and school students to show off their design skills on a grand scale
- A good time for young and old

Lasers and personnel will be provided by Illuminatus, the laser lightshow troupe under the direction of laser artist Mike Gould, who is also the inventor/designer/fabricator of most of the laser projectors.

The Display

Conventional laser displays consist of beams and images.

We provide something different: a type of laser art called "Lumia", created by lasers shining through carefully handcrafted diffractive elements. Lumia creates a mesmerizing random pattern of light and shadows; moiré effects that are generated by the interference patterns that only coherent light can create. We will deliver Lumia to the Ann Arbor public on a massive scale, on a wall 267 feet high by 60 feet wide.

The Setting

Tower Plaza, located at 555 East William St., is the tallest building in Ann Arbor, and its western wall is visible for miles around. This is the tallest building between Detroit and Chicago, a canvas of epic proportions.

Tower Plaza reaches almost exactly the same height as the 22 story space we illuminated and illustrated in the J.W. Marriott Hotel atrium during ArtPrize 2012. We intend to build on that experience by directing a barrage of custom-designed, handcrafted multi-hue laser projectors at Tower Plaza from a platform mounted atop a van situated at the corner of East William and Thompson. Power will be provided from a tap into a nearby streetlight. The show will run from sundown (~9:00pm) to midnight each night, supervised by trained laseristas.

Interactivity

In addition to the abstract background lumia, we will be projecting the outlines of dancers onto the surface. We use a Kinect-based system to recognize the movements of visitors dancing, then take that signal and convert it into moving figures, all in real time. This is called *Dances With Lasers*. We have done this at FoolMoon in Ann Arbor, Maker Faire at the Henry Ford, and recently, at Lurie Tower for the UM Engineering School.

Ann Arbor Schools Participation

To demonstrate how lasers can be used to project still imagery, we propose working with A2 Middle and High Schools to have a logo design contest. Art classes would be encouraged to have students design simple logos; then each school would select the best of the entries and these graphic designs would be projected onto Tower Plaza during the event.

Ann Arbor Graphic Artists

There could be a similar event for professional artists and the public at large, much like the Art Association PowerArt! competition. The 10 best designs, judged by a panel of artists and maybe the public, make it to the display.

Logistics

The lasers will need to be powered by a regular 20amp circuit.

Our final contracts with building owners and other collaborators will describe power sources and other technical matters in greater detail. Illuminatus will expand on its significant experience with this sort of thing, having lit up the First National Building downtown for FoolMoon event in April of 2013, the back of the Ann Arbor Apartments building in 2014 and 2015, and the side of the AT&T building for a SPARK event in 2016.

Organizational Support

The Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority and the Ann Arbor Convention and Visitors Bureau are on board, standing by to help promote the event. Feedback obtained thus far suggests that Arbor Lase would create interest consistent with the 'cool cities' program and other initiatives intended to attract more young professionals and others with innovative energy. The new evolving field of laser art would appeal to this demographic, as well as everyone else in town.

Legal and Liability Matters

Illuminatus is fortunate to claim Attorney Steve Rich of Photonic Legal PLLC as a member. Mr. Rich will draft contracts with Arbor Lase partners and collaborators that will assure all involved of our acceptance of liability, insurance coverage, legally compliant equipment and procedures, and of other pertinent legal precautions and practices.

About the Artist

Mike Gould is an Ann Arbor born laser artist. He has been working with lasers on and off since 1972, and has made them his artistic focus since 2009. He exhibited an immense kinetic laser artwork at ArtPrize 2012, which went on to win first place from the international laser association (ILDA) for the most innovative application in the artistic division. He had a three-month solo exhibit of his interactive laser art at the largest gallery in the Alden B. Dow museum of Science and Art in Midland during October - December of 2013. He has also exhibited this laser exhibit for the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum July-August of 2014. In 2015 he did shows at the Saline Celtic Festival and for the UM College of Engineering.

With his Illuminatus Lightshow troupe, Mike has created, performed and presented for thousands of people attending events at leading Michigan hotels. These include the Detroit Marriott Troy, the Hyatt Regency Dearborn, and most recently the Marriott Renaissance Center in Detroit. Illuminatus also assisted in the 2013 UM vs Notre Dame night game laser display in Michigan Stadium, and the UM College of Engineering "GlowOut the Diag" event, lighting up Lurie Tower on North Campus. Illuminatus has performed at many Maker Faire Detroit events at the Henry Ford Museum, and at the last seven FoolMoon art events.

He also exhibited at the juried DLECTRICITY event in 2014, painting the front of the Majestic Theater in Detroit. Mike also exhibited at the juried *Tech + Art* show at the Ann Arbor Art Center in 2015. In 2016 he performed at the Kerrytown Concert House, at several private events and at an international corporate

gala in Miami, Florida. He also recently provided lasers for *Hereditary*, a horror movie shot in Salt Lake City. In 2018 he had a two-month outdoors exhibit ([Lasing Nang Talung](#)) at a juried event at the Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, WI. Illuminatus recently performed *Dances With Lasers* at the Lurie Tower again, as part of an event for the University of Michigan's College of Electrical & Computer Engineering.

Summing Up

Here we have an internationally recognized laser artist, presenting his large-scale art to a large audience, collaborating with students and local artists. This will be the largest art piece the city has ever seen.

Illuminatus Laser Team

Mike Gould, In Charge

Wayne Gillis, Founder, laser engineer

Bradley Cross, Instigator, community relations

Steve Rich, Counselor, logistics

Zita Gillis, Logistics

Tom Bray, Production Head

Ken Kozora, composer and crew

Draco, crew

Tim Prosser, crew

Bill Witcher, crew

Web Resources

Main site: <http://arborlase.com/>

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com>

<http://illuminatuslasers.com>

Videos of laser lumia

<https://youtu.be/J1X7q8U4TPc> (DLECTRICITY 2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x3hV3cizLvM> (Lurie Tower)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbBlj2FEqjA> (FoolMoon)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbe873cU7QY> (Studio shot)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kHzy0JEDazg> (A as in interActive)

<https://youtu.be/HPGvraTxv6M> (FoolMoon 2019)

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