



Everything is Illuminated

For Berlin-based Cultural Curator, Alice Hinrichs, a family hobby as a little girl started a life-long journey to finding her home in the art world

Speaking in lockdown from her mother's kitchen in Germany, this cosy, domestic scene isn't Alice Hinrichs' usual work environment. Under normal circumstances you would probably find OA and Cultural Curator Alice out organising an exhibit, engaging in Berlin's world-famous, thriving contemporary art scene, or pioneering the medium of Light Art within the global art community. But, with museums and galleries having been closed across continental Europe to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, this safe place, with family close at hand and art work spread across the kitchen table, is the best place to reminisce about the past and hatch plans for the post-COVID future.

When asked about her journey to arrive at this point in her career, there was never an exact moment that signalled a new path, rather it was a gradual experience that started from her childhood. "As a kid, I was always being dragged to contemporary art exhibitions and sometimes there would be a Light Art piece and I was always automatically drawn to it without exactly understanding why." With James Turrell and Marie-Jo Lafontaine being household names and her father managing art galleries, it's no surprise that Alice went on to study A-level Art at Ardingly.

"The DT [Design & Technology] classes were so influential for me. I still remember the differences between different kinds of plastics, the laser cutters, using Google sketch-up – just knowing the basics of design and also production – which is still helpful for me when I work closely with artists."

above: Alice Hinrichs discusses Light Art during a preview at Factory Berlin © ARTE LUCE Kunstprojekte gUG photographed by offenblen.de

Nathaniel Rackowe -
Square Prism, 2020 © EVI
LICHTUNGEN International
Light Art Biennial Hildesheim,
photo by Sara Foerster





mayer+empl – *e-m architectural space intervention, 2018 as part of „extended-mind“, Alte Münze Berlin*
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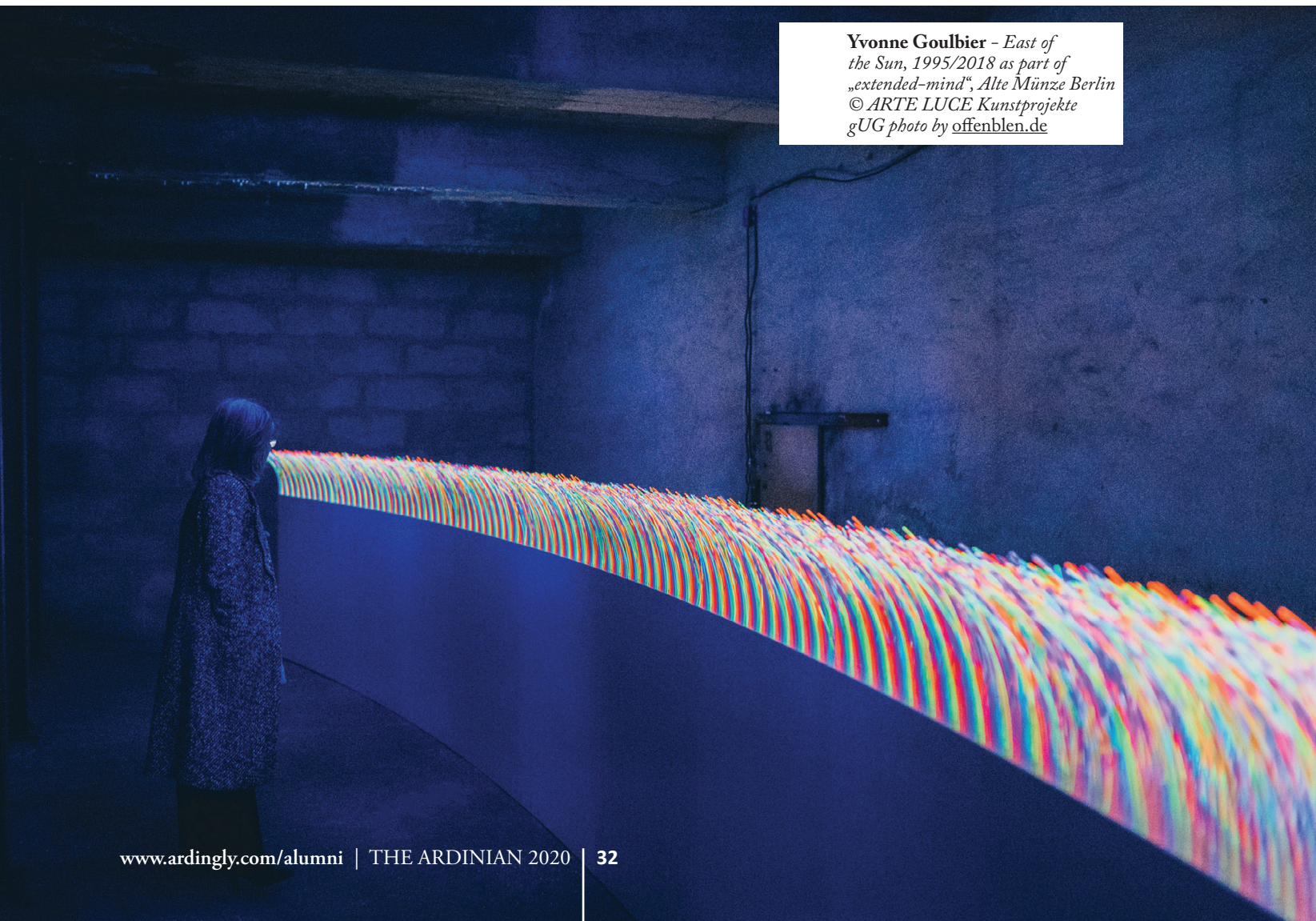
Feeling influenced to study Business rather than following her artistic tendencies, landed Alice a place in the Business Management course at King's College London, and although she was performing well in her studies, there remained a feeling that business was not the path for her.

“No one really told me that there could be a career in the arts, especially not in the managerial side of the arts. It wasn't until halfway through my Bachelor's degree that I realised that there must be people

who organise art exhibitions, marketing in the arts and all sort of things... eventually I decided that this [Business Management] is not really for me. So, from then on, I tried to focus each coursework, each opportunity to do something individual, to the path of the arts, and that led me into the contemporary art world.”

Alice undertook work experience and internships at top institutions such as Christie's Auction House in London where she worked in the Impressionist and

Yvonne Goulbier – *East of the Sun, 1995/2018 as part of „extended-mind“, Alte Münze Berlin*
© ARTE LUCE Kunstprojekte
gUG photo by offenblen.de



The London-based artist duo **Shuster and Moseley** inside their installation *Quietude: In-finites* 2018 as part of „extended-mind“, Alte Münze Berlin © ARTE LUCE Kunstprojekte gUG photo by offenblen.de

Following the success of *Extended Mind*, Alice was later commissioned as co-curator of EVI Lichtungen, a city-wide Light Art festival, in which she was instrumental in developing over 20 site-specific concepts, selecting artists and being the artistic vision behind a four-day event that welcomed around 40,000 visitors. When asked about her creative process and how such an artistic feat is achieved, Alice starts with the basics. Where is the art experienced?

“That is my first step: checking out the venue and, in this case, it was this entire city – now I know every corner of the city. I combined the places that I saw with artworks that I was already familiar with. Then I would approach the artists and engage them on the basis of a specific place, because for me, it is really important that whatever you show takes its reference from a specific space. A particular piece of art has its own meaning, but a space also has its own meaning, so there has to be some kind of correlation otherwise you're just placing an object within a space.”

For someone who is pioneering a lesser known medium within the art world, the process does not begin and end there. Alice is aware that in the art world, as in all industries, diversity is a critical step to success. This isn't only the case for the artwork itself, such as pieces that utilise projections as opposed to reflections, or where some are bold with neon colours, while others use natural light – but it is also the case to ensure that there is diversity amongst the artists themselves.

“I made it my personal rule that I want to have at least 45% women artists represented within exhibitions I curate and, I have to say, it's a tough task because there are so few women working with this kind of medium and I don't want to select works simply because they are made by women. If it is great art that happens to be made by a woman, then great, because that art has just been heightened.”

Looking to the future, Alice will continue to co-curate Evi Lichtungen along with ensuring that ARTE LUCE, now rebranded to L.U.C.E, continues its flagship exhibition, even with the pandemic delaying its autumn opening to the spring of 2021. In addition, Alice is about to embark on the opportunity to work with another of her passions, electronic music, as she is hoping to curate Light Art for a summer music festival to be held in Spain next year.

Hearing Alice describe the various layers and textures of Light Art, such as the impact of sound or other sensory experiences on the medium of light, as well as her professional ambition to raise awareness of this artform, alongside her personal goal of ensuring inclusivity within the industry, it can seem hard to imagine that there was ever a time in which she doubted what her path would be. When asked, however, what her advice would be to anyone considering a career in the cultural sector, her response is simple, but reflective of the journey that has brought her this far:

“Just do it!”

Modern Art department. She also cut her teeth at Berlin's Camera Work Gallery, which represents photography heavy hitters such as Richard Avedon and Patrick Demarchelier. Although being an intern at a contemporary art gallery is often a thankless and exhausting job, the hard work eventually paid off, allowing Alice to begin as a trainee at Auctionata, also based in Berlin, and to work her way up to PR Manager, where her work resulted in coverage in publications such *The New York Times*, *Observer* and *Forbes* magazine.

With her feet firmly within the contemporary art world, it was time for Alice to pivot from PR and marketing to her true passion: curation. A newly created programme at Bocconi University, one of Europe's top institutions, brought Alice to Milan and provided her with the opportunity to gain her Masters in Arts Management. Although the course wasn't exactly what she thought she was signing up for, it was here that she gained unbridled access to some of the best art in the Western world, and where she had the opportunity to organise her first professional exhibit, choosing to focus on the medium of light. It was here that ARTE LUCE – an international platform for Light Art – was born.

Since its founding, ARTE LUCE has gone on to launch the Light Art Weekend, an annual project that aims to combine scientific theories and concepts with international Light Art at unconventional venues. In its inaugural weekend, the project welcomed over 2000 visitors to the historic Alte Münze, Berlin's former State Mint, for *Extended Mind*, an exhibition of Light Art inspired by the philosophical concept that the mind, the body and the environment can be seen as a whole cognitive system, and as such, the mind is extended into the world.