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Mario Nanni's latest work highlights the growing significance of crossing creative disciplines

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Lighting designer and multi-disciplinary visual artist Mario Nanni has brought his illuminated architecture projects to London for the first time with a screening of his latest 'light poem', *Da Sempre per Sempre* (All Along Forever).

The founder of Italian lighting manufacturer Viabizzuno, Nanni works with architects and designers worldwide to create 'not just products, but solutions', while his 'light poems' use film in an unconventional context to illuminate spaces and reveal new dimensions to the architecture of a building.

Having collaborated with a plethora of other artistic and architectural visionaries including Kengo Kuma, legendary painter and film director Peter Greenaway, Peter Zumthor for the Serpentine Pavilion 2011 and David Chipperfield for the Wakefield Museum, this latest project arose when the Gucci Museum commissioned Nanni to create a light show to celebrate its 90-year anniversary.

The spectacular result involved a system called '2.9LD' that used projected film to illuminate the façade of the building in a fifteen-minute sequence, depicting a silent narrative through the medium of light.

At its debut screening in London at the Viabizzuno Inlondra showroom on Great Titchfield Street, the audience gathered in a low-lit basement sipping Nanni's own homemade white wine and sitting on stools of his design, while the creator explained his concept for the Gucci project. It was an exploration in two parts: that of the Gucci Museum and the history of the building itself, a former palace from the Renaissance era called the Palazzo della Mercanzia Florence. In an approach typical of Nanni's contemplative artistic process, he 'tried to figure out the client's needs for light by understanding and listening to the place.'



He extracted colours from Italian Renaissance painting, with its heavy use of reds, blues and greens, while obscure scenes draped over the windows are revealed as fragments of 14th- and 15th-century paintings, which appear to be illuminated from the inside. His work establishes 'a visual relation between real and imaginary objects: light takes a physical shape, turning into volume...'

A similar project at the Scala in Milan conveyed the value of history and knowledge through a sequence of falling books. In this he tells 'the story of the human being', revitalising our relation with the past and emphasising its importance in our current collective mentality. The narrative also depicts the boat used to carry material to build the Duomo on a channel designed by Leonardo Da Vinci – yet another reminder of the underlying connectedness of things.

Nanni sees his purpose as creating 'not just light but art', which is perhaps why his work was discovered by internationally-renowned video artist Bill Viola, who he went on to collaborate with. His work does indeed cross disciplines in a way which he himself compares to the multi-dimensional creativity of Da Vinci. His all-encompassing approach to lighting is translated into Viabizzuno, where 'form follows light'; more weighting is placed on mood and atmosphere than the form of fixtures. A spokesperson for the company reflects that 'people don't always appreciate how much lighting [alters] architecture, but hopefully now this is changing'.

Nanni believes that channeling creativity through a range of outputs – just as Da Vinci did – is the way forward. And from a sustainability point of view as well as that of preserving historical knowledge, Nanni's work highlights the infinite possibilities for a building to be reinvented, re-used and re-imagined, without the need for demolition and rebuilding – to at once save resources and see history in a continually new light.