

## **JOHN ARMLEDER - IN THE SUPERMARKET OF ILLUMINATION**

A film by Marco Wilms

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in co-production with ARTE

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In the last 100 years electrical lighting has revolutionized our world to an extent matched by few other technologies. Since the early twentieth century artificial light has illuminated our streets, shop windows, advertising signs and houses. We inhabit cities and gardens of light, and a paradise of artificial light has evolved in the aftermath of our victory over darkness. As a medium for visual messages artificial light soon attracted the attention of artists, who have worked with light bulbs, fluorescent lamps, neon lighting and high-power searchlights since the 1920s. The focus of art has shifted dramatically from the illusory representation of natural light towards the actual utilisation of artificial lighting. Light is a compelling and spectacular medium, and most viewers are unable to ignore the visual stimulus emanating from light art installations. Playing on the act of seeing, and the patterns and experience of human perception, light art provokes an immediate reaction in its viewers. Artists have illuminated landscapes and created autonomous, luminous objects and spaces. Light ambience, light kinetics, reflection, graphics, logo-culture, and the play of art with natural phenomenon are themes around which gifted international light artists have created works of unbelievable intensity; interior installations on an occasionally grand scale, but in particular installations in exterior settings around a variety of artistic and architectural projects.

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The play of function and meaning, mass culture and glamour, and an ironic perspective on art historical phenomenon characterise the light installations of John Armleder. Cheap everyday articles, mass-produced in Asia, are the fundamental elements of the artistic concept behind Armleder's installation »Flash. Flash. Flash.« from 2004. A former member of the Fluxus Movement, Armleder's Oeuvre ranges from painting and object trouvé, to sculpture and design. His works often reflect upon the utopias of the twentieth century; questioning these visions and the achievements of Modernism from within the context of contemporary art history he develops unique interpretations of our world. His »Furniture Sculptures«, hybrid creations that inhabit a space between art and everyday objects, are exemplary models of his approach. In this episode we will accompany John Armleder on a shopping expedition to Shanghai, where he forages for new lights. While in Geneva, Armleder's adopted home, we will observe the preparations for his large feature exhibition in the MAMCO museum and visit a few of his favourite places.