Across the water from The Magical Entrance is a glowing female statue, which stands at one of the boat entrances to the harbour.

Historic Harbour

Lights in Blokzijl took place in December, held in the historic centre of Blokzijl, Netherlands, following in the footsteps of Lights in Alingsås, which celebrated its 20th anniversary last year.

The inaugural Lights in Blokzijl event began with a workshop before the exhibition was open to the public. Ten international lighting designers gathered with students from all over the world to illuminate selected sites or buildings in the city of Blokzijl.

The workshop leaders for this year’s Lights in Blokzijl were Roberto Corandini, Sjoerd van Beers; Juliette Nielsen, Luciana Alanis, Korhan Şişman, Anuj Gala, Rogier Hengeveld; Kapil Surlakar, and Johan Moritz and Tina Wikström.

The workshop teaches theoretical and practical knowledge in lighting design, with the main aim to have a professional lighting designer guide the participants through the complete lighting design process of an actual full-scale project. The workshop lasted for six days and was supported by the industry with professional lighting equipment. Student electricians from the local high school were also involved in the project by assisting the workshop participants throughout the week.

A full day of presentations and a convention were held, where the workshop heads presented themselves, their careers and notable lighting projects they have worked on.

After this full day of presentations, the Lights in Blokzijl workshop teams’ students presented their work, followed by the official opening of the installations in the evening. Johan Moritz, Tina Wikström, Lin H. Le and Mandy La created A Strange Kind of Warmth. This team wanted to bring the citizens of Blokzijl to an exotic land, while still retaining a touch of home. They talked about Wortelmarkt, a hidden place behind a historic harbour that was once open to the sea, which is where the idea of connecting exotic lands came from. Another team also chose the same site of the Wortelmarkt, instead

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Berlux’s studio is one of the dancing houses along the water's edge. The Magical Entrance glows in various enchanting colours: green light glows under a bench in Fury of Nature and Emotions.

Using the houses, they wanted to create a connection with the people that live in the city. By connecting the illuminated houses to the harbour, they wanted to create a feeling of togetherness named, *A Magical Evening Where We Shine Together.*

Anuj Gala and Rogier Hengeveld’s installation *Tide & Time* was based around the concept of water in Blokzijl and the wealth and brightness it brings. This positive interpretation was contrasted with the insecurity that rises when the water levels get too high. The team pictured a story of “women waiting in front of their houses while staring over the water, hoping for the safe return of their loved ones.” Colour was the main focus of *Fury of Nature and Emotions* by Kapil Surlakar’s team. The static installation depicts the motion of the wind through the gradual colour variation in the trees. The house is focused at the back as a safe haven, with the benches representing different emotions: green being happiness and red representing anger.

Korhan Şişman’s team came up with a concept referring to nature and the benefits that spending time in it can bring. *Nature In Self* was based around the waterways, fields, trees and the ever-changing weather of Blokzijl. The team want people to see the beauty of the village and residents alongside the beauty of nature. All of these elements combined to create a range of warm, cool and unique colour combinations of light on the long waterfront.

*The Magical Entrance* was created by Luciana Alanis’s team, which discovers the play of nature, wind blowing, water flowing and reeds waving. Their idea was to enhance the beauty of the seas and make it stand out from the darkness.

Roberto Corandini’s team created the installation *A Magical Evening Where We Shine Together.* “We wanted to connect the illuminated houses to the harbour. We did this by lighting up the biggest tree on the street. We created the magical feeling of togetherness having lit up the houses in colours so they appear to be dancing in the moonlight,” explained Corandini.

Lights in Blokzijl returns to the harbour city in December 2020 and is currently taking applications for students to take part in this edition. www.lightsinblokzijl.nl