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Dreamy Layers of Light

Lightwall, work by Beth Galston.
At Kingston Gallery, Boston,
August 31-September 25, 1983.

by Eileen Roche

"Lightwall" is a deceptively simple piece of environmental sculpture that can be transformed by viewer interaction into layers of light that are of dream-like complexity.

In Beth Galston's installation, the viewer enters into a large darkened room with white walls. Several projectors in different locations throughout the room, timed and monitored by a hidden computer, cast light which bounces off strips of mirrored plexiglass on

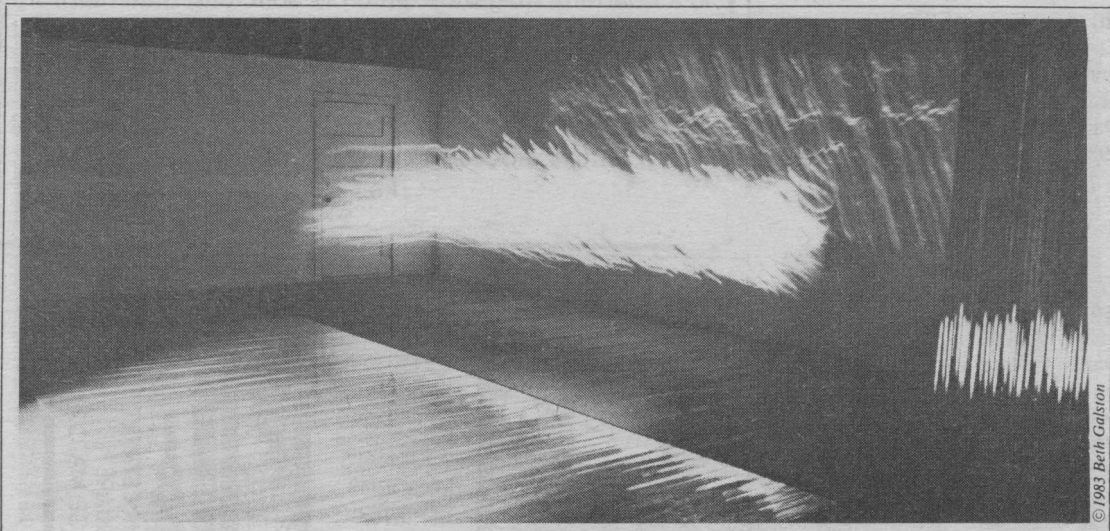
the floor and hanging from the ceiling vertically. At first you are confused: are these slide projections, close-ups of delicate fibers or organic constructions, portions of a faraway galaxy? The images shift, vanish and return, with slight variations in color, in a sequence repeating every four minutes. You can make a shadow with your body, or move one of the many plexiglass strips up and down and see the light move across the room. Each strip reflects a thin line of light, and as the light source changes, reflections shift and overlay each other, creating varying patterns and spatial configurations.

Galston, a fellow at the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, is interested in the transformation from what is hard-edged and geometric (cold plexiglass strips) to the softness and

evocative quality of light (their changing reflections). These ethereal, ephemeral projections are irregular and organic-looking, due to the slight irregularities in the wooden floor surface and the walls, causing fascinating distortions.

Galston's work invites people's participation and movement, and it extends the realm of sculpture into that of architecture and theatre. You can walk through; interact; bring a flashlight, pocket mirror or crystal; make shadows and watch the reflections drift past like clouds in the sky.

This environment could be an exciting place for a dance performance, experimental theatre or a movie set. Galston's creativity promotes the humanization of technology and makes it accessible and fun.



Beth Galston's "Lightwall"

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