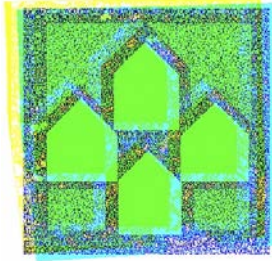


Hic et nunc  
Hic et nunc



a s b l

Beau Site 2° Av. 3  
B-1330 RIXENSART  
B E L G I U M

Tel. +32 2 653 66 12  
Fax +32 2 653 66 12  
(phone **before** sending)

jl.capron@gmail.com

[http://users.belgacom.net/hic\\_et\\_nunc](http://users.belgacom.net/hic_et_nunc)

SNCI 149-0564615-50

facteurs humains et environnement construit  
human factors and built environment

### THREE HEROES AND A GLOBAL VILLAIN

Recently, Brussels got three new visual landmarks nightly lit. They share in common the characteristic to be tall buildings that were landmarks during daytime and were visually disappearing at dusk. By the addition of lighting devices (LED) they became landmarks in the dark too and help citizen to have a clearer understanding of the city structure. The two first are towers located on the outskirts of the city, where highways enter into the urban area. The first, a television wave's emitter, is located on the south-west of Brussels and the second, an electric power plant cooling tower, is located on the north-east. The third, Brussels' tallest skyscraper, is located at the boundary between the central business district (CBD) and the historical city center.

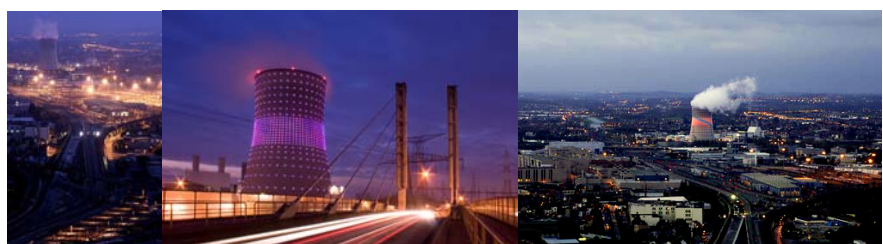


Electric power plant cooling tower / Television wave's emitter / Brussels' tallest skyscraper

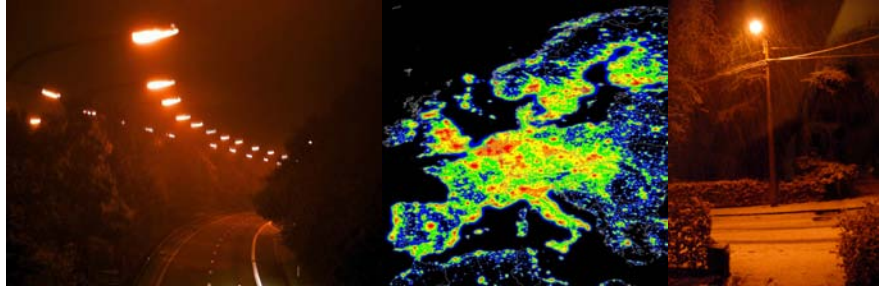
Yet, could we call them "heroes"? They show for sure an expression a heroic attitude with there top lit, high above the urban roofs. And their ever changing colored light gives a festive atmosphere. Nevertheless, such privately owned lit tower raised questions in regards to lighting master plan that the city of Brussels is trying to set up, while some other could wonder about the lighting pollution caused by so much light on such tall structures. Indeed, those landmarks seem to be really efficient at the metropolitan scale, but there is no feeling of place at the bottom of those lit structure. If there isn't public space at the bottom of the two towers, there is a public square located in front of the skyscraper. Due to the contrast of illuminance between street lighting and the building lighting, the square is really a no-man's-land, especially at night.



Should therefore my hero be an open space lighted for, by and during social events, especially if they are ephemeral? Such an atmosphere recalls me some foreign experience, but I don't really know such equivalent in Belgium. Moreover, the best should be efficient for both, the global (urban scale) and local (human scale) scale. This has still to be designed, with the human factors as the starting point...



The "villain" is emblematic of Belgium, because it makes the country even recognizable by the astronauts! It is the dense network of highways and other main roads, lighted during all night long. Even worse are the sodium lamps (which are said to be very efficient from an economical point of view) that illuminate with an awful orange and dull light that literally erase colors and shadows. The sad aspect is that such a "sodiumization" is spreading all over the country. Last winter, "white lamps" (presumably HQL type) were replaced by sodium in my street too, changing the relationship between pedestrians who don't recognize anymore each other and giving even to the snow a very strange aspect!



Belgian highway / Belgian red spot on Europe light pollution map / Orange snow

*Jean-Luc CAPRON, Dr. Eng. Architect [Tokyo Univ.], Ass. Prof.*