

BRIGHT LIGHTS MARK THE '65 BLACKOUT

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THE 20th anniversary of the blackout that darkened New York City and much of the Northeast on Nov. 9, 1965, is being celebrated in the city this week with a festival called Urban Light.

The director, Patricia Pinckney, said the events, which are open to the public, are intended to show how lighting contributes to New York City's spirit. Miss Pinckney is a lecturer in lighting at the Parsons School of Design. The festival is sponsored by the New York section of the Illuminating Engineering Society and the International Association of Lighting Designers.

Activities tonight include the opening, from 6 to 8 P.M., of a free exhibition of historic, contemporary and artistic 20th-century lighting fixtures at the International Design Center, New York, in Long Island City, Queens. The show will continue on weekdays from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., through Nov. 27.

Tonight and each evening through Sunday at 10, the Limelight, a discotheque at 20th Street and Avenue of the Americas, will be an environment of light works by designers and light artists (admission, \$15). On Friday at 6:30 P.M., tours in glass-topped buses will feature the illuminated tops of New York skyscrapers; they will be guided by lighting designers (tickets, \$12; information, 718-896-4029).

The most spectacular event in Urban Light will be a laser light show on Saturday night from the 23d-floor terrace of the Crown Building at Fifth Avenue and 57th Street. While the performance may be seen from the street - the best viewing position is the Grand Army Plaza - a gala will overlook the show from the 64th floor of the RCA Building (tickets, \$40, 718-897-2242).

At the design center in Long Island City, an exhibit of 65 light fixtures will commemorate the night the lights went out in 1965. Chosen primarily by Lorraine Bonaventura, a New York architect, for their stylistic range, some are one-of-a-kind lights by artists; some have been commercially produced, and others custom-designed for particular buildings. The fixtures include reproductions of historic lanterns by Rambusch and contemporary art lamps by Harry Anderson, a Philadelphia artist. Mr. Anderson's floor lamps have

undulating garden hoses, like plant stems, supporting flowery glass shades. Many of the lamps were designed for the home and are old enough to have been the lamps that millions fumbled with in the dark two decades ago.

Other events in the festival deal with lighting on a larger scale. The Limelight's light performances are to take place inside and outside the building, a former church. Inspired by the stone of the Gothic-style structure, Leni Schwendinger, a New York artist, will project images of hieroglyphics and ancient alphabets on the outside walls, adding atmosphere with smoke machines and dry ice. Inside, Caterina Bertolotto, another New York artist, will project light through hand-painted slides onto moving theatrical scrims and onto people dancing. Ron Rocco, a third New York artist, will create an environment of laser images that change with live and recorded sound.

For Douglas Leigh, a designer who has lighted many New York buildings and will guide one of the bus tours, Urban Light is more than a commemoration of the blackout. "It's about the lift in our spirits that lights, especially artistic lighting on buildings, give," he said. "An appropriate way to do it is by reference to the blackout, when there were none."

The bus route, which Mr. Leigh has mapped out, will start at the newly illuminated RCA Building, go up to Central Park for its new lamps, and then proceed to structures that include the Crown Building, the Helmsley Building at Park Avenue and 46th Street and the Chrysler Building. The bus will then pass the Empire State Building on the way to more illuminated skyscrapers downtown. "The festival will be a reminder that New York is unique among American and European cities for its quantity of illuminated buildings," Mr. Leigh said.

The Saturday-night laser performance will be by Richard Sandhaus of the Science Faction Corporation. The performance is to start at 8:30 and continue until after midnight, repeating every 10 minutes. Using an argon laser, which has a blue-green color, Mr. Sandhaus is able to manipulate a single beam so rapidly that configurations in the sky appear to have between 50 to 100 beams. From the Grand Army Plaza, Mr. Sandhaus said, the beams can be seen along their length.

"The laser light on the Crown Building is an intensification of all the light on the skyline," Miss Pinckney said. "For me, the laser captures the sense of Manhattan."

For further information call 212-734-9615, 212-691-6779 or 201-327-8037. Tickets for the bus tour and the laser gala may be purchased through Ticket World, 212-307-7171. Buses to the International Design Center leave on the hour from 919 Third Avenue (56th Street).