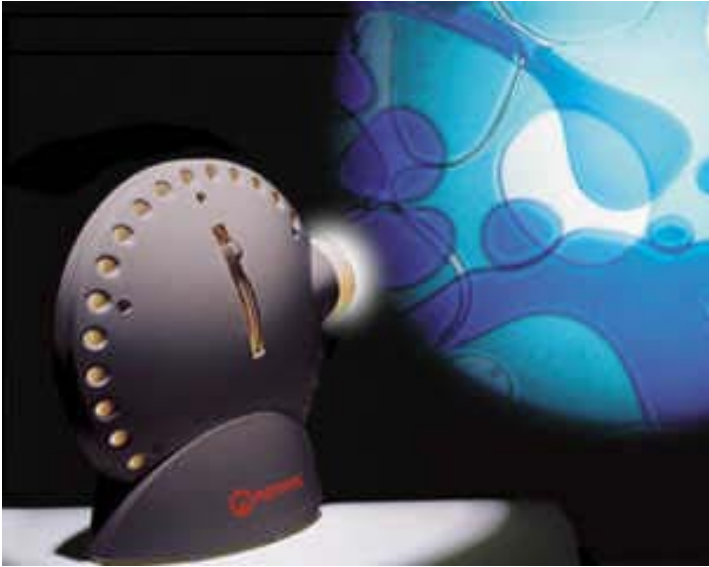


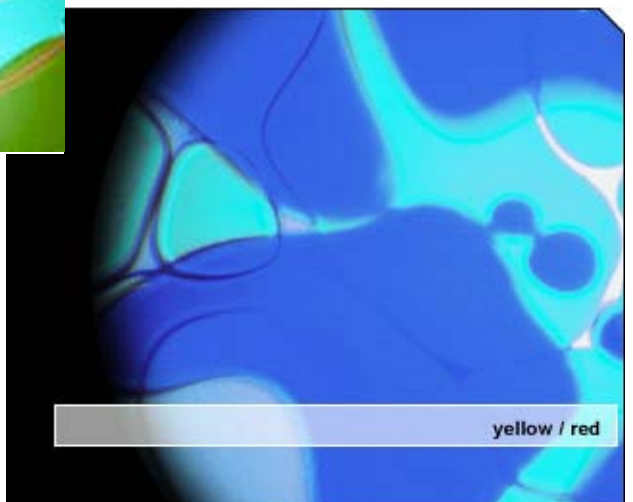
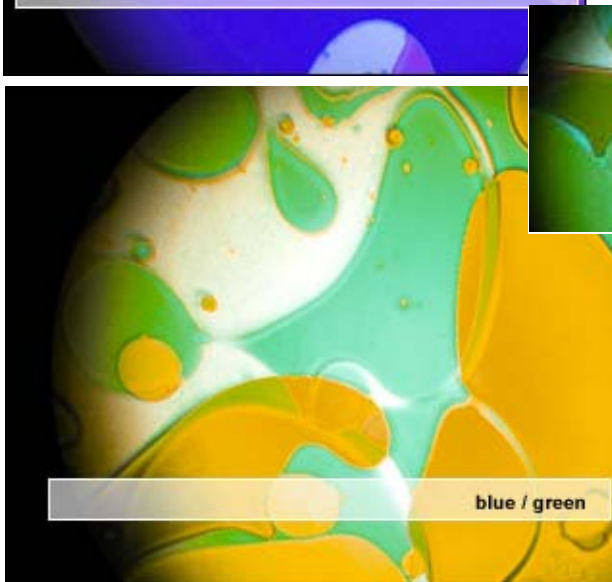
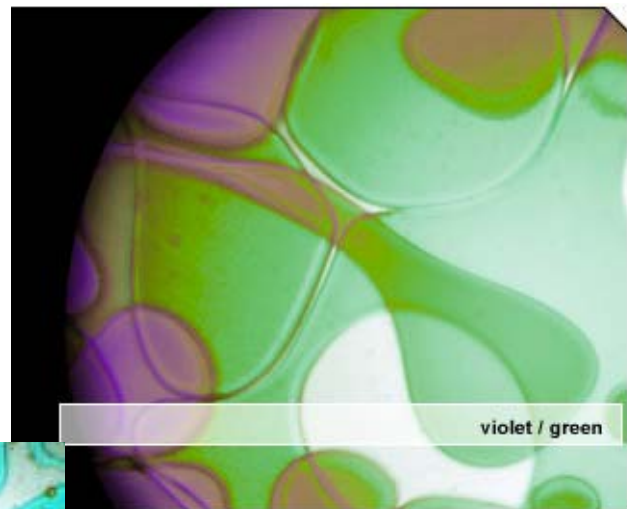
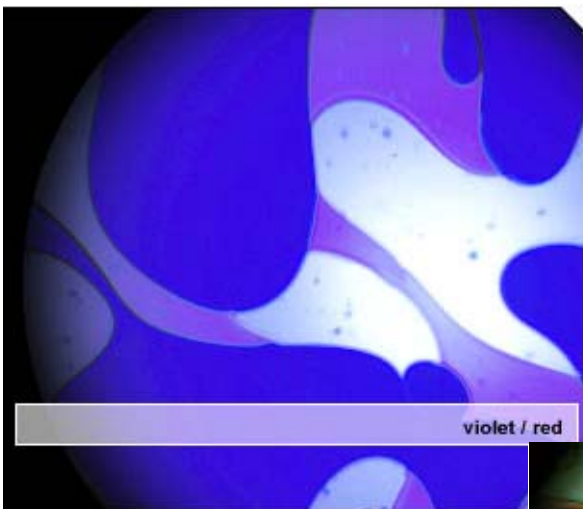
Let there be Light 3

Alan Wilburn



In this, my last set of ramblings, I am covering the Mathmos Space Projector. When I first got it, I thought that it might be based on the larva lamps of the 1960s and wondered if they were made by the same firm/designers because both were made in Poole, Dorset – and it turns out that I was right. I remember when we visited friends there in the dim and distant past seeing a large shop near the quay selling nothing but larva lamps.

The setup is on the lines of a slide projector, where the bulb shines through a circular slide and a filter frame and then the image goes through an adjustable lens to focus the image onto the wall or ceiling.



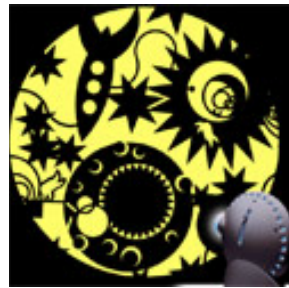
Some of the colours available

The slide is circular with a set of tracks around the edge and, I think, consists of three pieces of glass with two sets of viscous oil in the spaces between the discs. When the disc is put in the machine, it rotates slowly with half the disc in the beam of light and the oils are able to move around. As it rotates, this gives different movements to the oil, and the speed of movement increases with the rise in temperature and the lowering of viscosity within the body of the projector. The two oils are a different colour which gives four colours to the projected image, two being the oil colours, one the colour that comes from the light shining through the two colours overlapping, and then the white light.

The disc slots into a carrier which pushes it into place; I would imagine that you are only seeing about a sixth of the disc at any one time. The disc rotates quite slowly to give plenty of time for the viscous oils to move even though they are at a high magnification.

There is also a slide carrier between the disc and the lens so that acetate filters can be used. We did not find the filters of much use on the discs, cutting out light and giving a murky image; they are for mainly of use with the designer discs that only use white plus a single coloured cut-out in the disc.

As the oils warm and become more elastic they break into smaller 'globs' that then move faster into many different shapes, as in a larva lamp, and then recombine generating a variety of shapes. We project onto the ceiling giving an elongated image that can be viewed from the comfort of our bed and we can work out the meanings of the 'inkblot' images that are produced, a laser pointer comes in useful to pinpoint the quickly changing area that you may wish to comment on before it morphs into something totally different.



Different artists have designed their own discs and are displayed on different websites. Personally we do not like any that we have seen or bought, but I will display some of them so you can make up your own mind. With each designer disc there are a number of the filters to change the background colour.



Using the lighting effects that have been covered in the three articles has helped us to alleviate stress and promote relaxation; I personally have found them to be of a calming nature and they have given my wife and me much enjoyment.

<http://www.mathmos.co.uk>

http://www.thelowcompany.co.uk/acatalog/MATHMOS_SPACE_PROJECTOR.html

These will get you started, Mathmos Space Projectors UK will give a fair number of hits in Google.