



9/11 Memorial, Hoboken Case Study



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Karen Kuchel is an Australian artist and lighting designer living in New York City with her husband and young son.

She studied architecture and architectural lighting design at Parsons The New School for Design. She also holds a Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) and Bachelor of Music (Performance) from the University of Melbourne, and a Diploma for Graduates (Economics) from the London School of Economics.

Before coming to the United States, Karen worked as a management consultant at Accenture and business analyst.

Karen has won an IES Illumination Award of Merit for her work on the Hyatt Hotel Herald Square with PHT Lighting. She was one of 20 artists invited to create a gobo light projection for the Melbourne Festival of Light in 2013, and in that same year collaborated with CDR Studio Architects on an installation using deconstructed waste plastic bottles. In 2014, she won a competition to have several beach towel designs manufactured and sold by One Kings Lane.

She has a keen interest in using sustainable and recycled materials, as well as using materials that are good for our wellbeing. She is currently working on an artwork using recycled spectacles.

Karen is available for interior and exterior lighting design projects and for custom fixtures, light art and installations.

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Project

9/11 Memorial, Pier A Park Hoboken, New Jersey

Client

Demetri Sarantitis Architect / City of Hoboken

Context

In 2001, fifty-six Hoboken residents died in the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the most lost from any single community in the tragedy. The community decided to create a memorial to honor the souls lost in 9/11 and the Pier A Park in Hoboken, New Jersey was chosen as the location. The memorial went through a few design iterations, after the initial winning design proved too expensive. Demetri Sarantitis was ultimately chosen as the architect, and borosilicate glass panels were the starting point, having been purchased for the initial design.

The goal was to render the complexity of this situation in a thoughtful and moving way. I was brought on board to design the lighting for the memorial, and the nuance of feeling that was required by the project was highly important to me. This is an approach I bring to all my statement lighting pieces and designs, whether celebratory or more solemn.

Vision

Demetri's design envisaged a discreet line of glass panels, one for each lost resident of Hoboken, lit from underneath. I envisaged the glass glowing softly from within, representing the soul of each person, still here with us in spirit.

I also envisaged subtle color effects in the lighting to communicate some of the deep feelings around the memorial, and a dynamic program where the lights come on slowly, rising up to full intensity at dusk and then tapering off to just a whisper of light.

The name of each resident was to be marked on the memorial in some way, and the lighting had to be able to highlight this.

How to realize this in a way that was evocative and visually striking was a major priority of mine throughout the project.



Challenges

Materials & Lighting

Lighting glass so it glows is challenging with existing light fixtures. The light needs to enter at specific angles in order to reflect within the glass and glow.

I saw the need to create something new, and reached out to Rush Design. They designed and constructed a new fixture, to my specification, that would sit beneath the panels and illuminate the glass as envisaged.



Weather & Maintenance

Being an outdoor installation in a public space, next to salty water, the lighting needed to withstand harsh elements, be easily maintained, and be vandal-proof.

Rush Design worked on a tamper-proof enclosure that was robust enough to withstand weather and that could be easily removed, replaced with a spare and repaired. We also located controls in an underground bunker nearby and installed a wireless connection to monitor the installation remotely. This flags if a fixture needs repair, and also allows the lighting control program to be changed remotely.



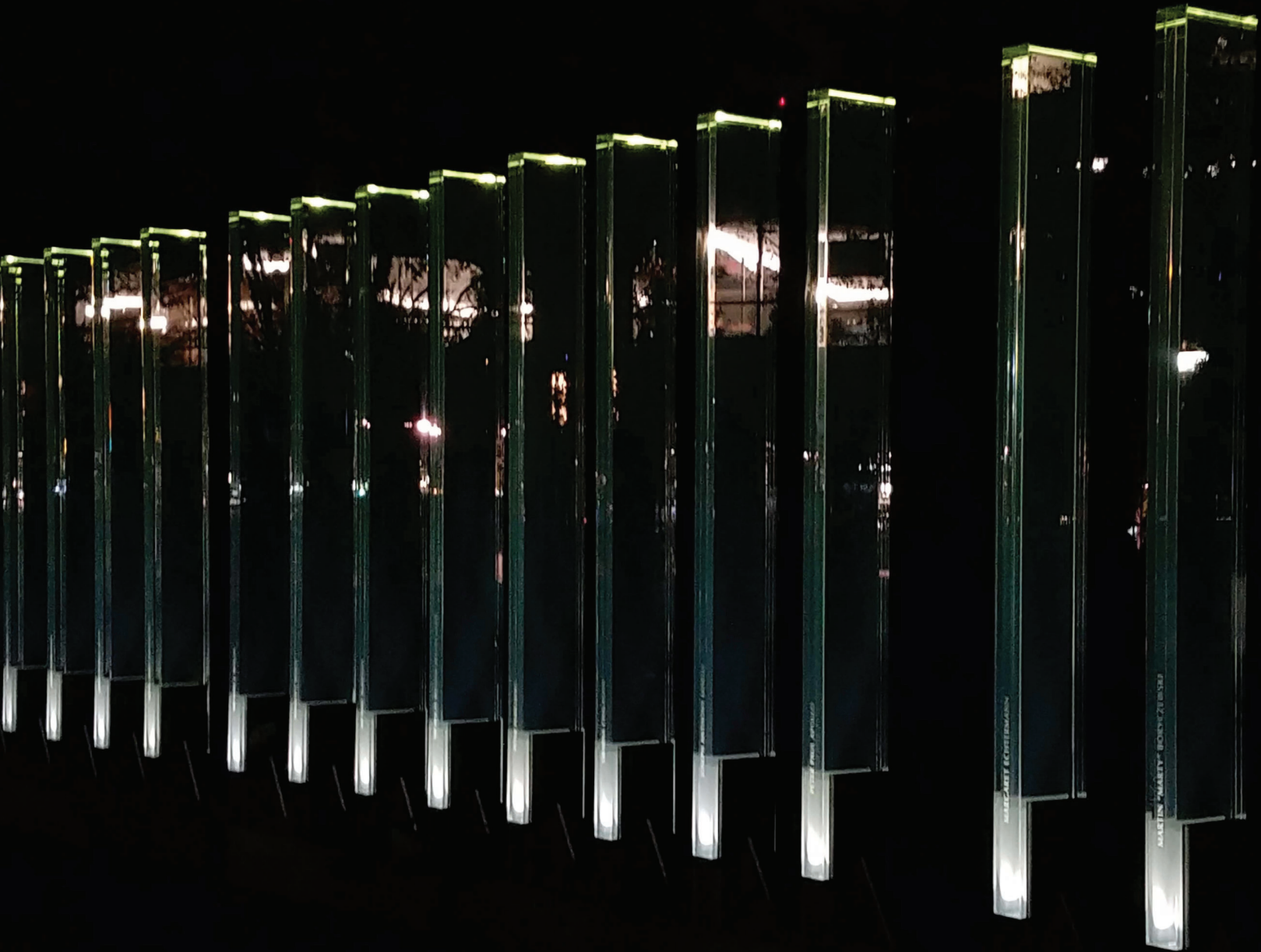
Surrounding Light Levels

At an early stage, I considered the existing light levels surrounding the site to test the concept. The lighting level needed to be subtle to create the right feeling and atmosphere, but this wouldn't work if the street and park lighting was too bright.

We placed the memorial on one side of a living wall and this has successfully shielded the memorial from a lot of the surrounding light.

Conclusion

The 9/11 memorial at Hoboken was completed in September 2017. It can be visited freely by the public at all times at Pier A Park, Hoboken, New Jersey, adjacent to the Hoboken PATH Station.



For custom lighting design and statement pieces, whether indoor or outdoor, large scale or small, please **reach out to me at kkuchel@kalkotadesign.com** to discuss how we could create a customized project for you that both fulfills your big vision and works with the practicalities of your location and materials.



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