



The Shanghai Pudong Development Bank, an iconic building on the Bund, is illuminated by numerous lights.

Let there be light

Swiss brings his illuminating art to China, **Yu Ran** reports.

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China, world-renowned Swiss lighting artist, Gerry Hofstetter, illuminated iconic buildings and structures in Shanghai with a dazzling feast of light.

Three large-scale illuminations called "Swiss Night of Colors" were projected onto the Lupu Bridge on Monday at 6:30 pm, the Peace Hotel on Tuesday at 11:30 pm, and on the Pudong Development Bank on Wednesday at 11:30 pm.

"I was looking for both historical and modern buildings in Shanghai as the city has a mix of older architecture and modern developments, which also symbolizes the long-term friendship between China and Switzerland," said Hofstetter, 48.

Seven projectors on three boats were prepared for the work on Lupu Bridge, while three projectors, including the biggest projector in the world, were used to illuminate the Peace Hotel.

After 12 years' working in an investment bank, Hofstetter was tired of waiting for promotion to manager, so he left and became a helicopter pilot.

However, he gave up his helicopter pilot career within two years, as

he believed it too dangerous for a family man.

"I've attended so many events that were quite similar so that I've suggested to a hotel hosting such an event what was needed was a light show. It proved very successful," said Hofstetter.

"Afterwards, I was invited to create and design illuminations for variety of events."

Hofstetter said he enjoyed being an event organizer and artist.

Hofstetter specializes in the art of light projections on the world's most magnificent buildings, monuments, landscapes and mountains. These have included the Egyptian pyramids, the Washington National Cathedral, the Arc de Triomphe in Paris and Antarctic glaciers.

"Being an artist, I like traveling, culture, people and design — the combination of life and culture," he said.

Hofstetter is in love with the idea of being able to reinvent well-known monuments, buildings and landscapes in people's minds using his huge 6,000-watt projectors and slides to transform these places into temporary art sculptures.

His projects can also have a more serious message. In 2003, he traveled to Antarctica as part of the United Nations International Year of Freshwater to literally throw light

on the issue of global warming.

"I aimed to encourage the beholder to contemplate the lit-up monuments and infrastructures through his illuminations wherever possible," he said.

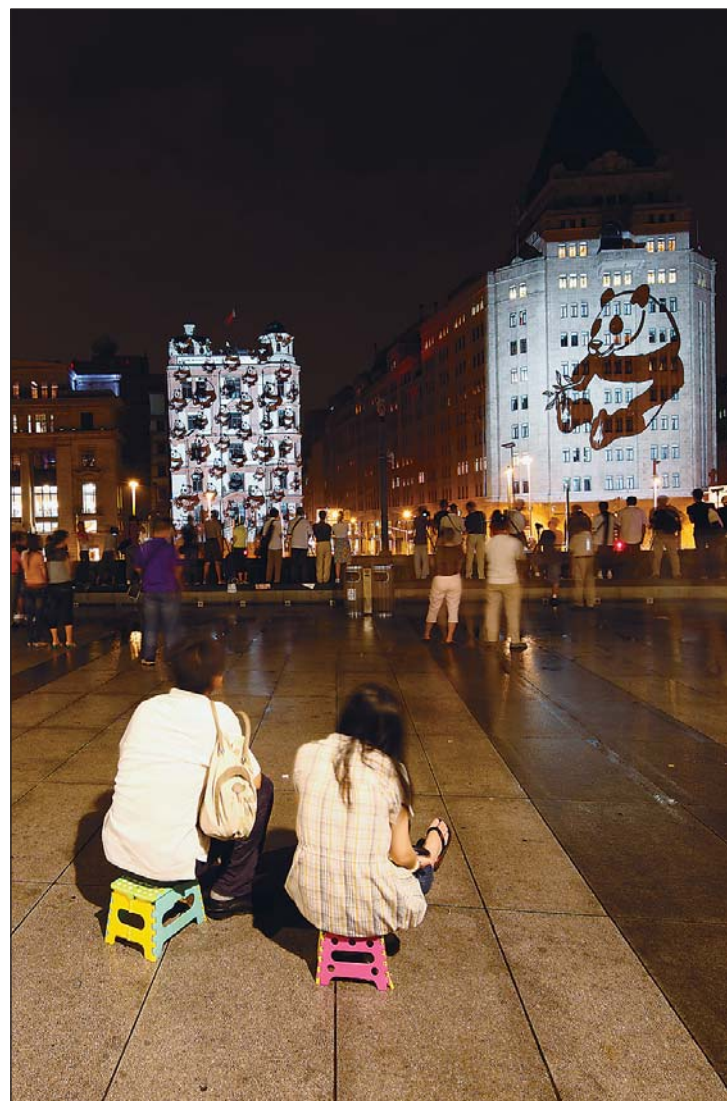
Hofstetter said he wants to motivate people to actively consider how our planet can develop in an environmentally friendly and sustainable manner.

Hofstetter designs all the images for projections and prepares the equipment himself. He takes his team through the project step by step. He said he wants to make sure all his shows leave perfect memories in spectators' minds.

"We sometimes have to wait hours to find suitable natural lighting and create a perfect image illumination. Helicopters and boats are needed to complete my projects," said Hofstetter, who prides himself on perfection.

Meanwhile, Hofstetter's solo exhibition *Light, Art, Visions* will open on Sept 17 at the Galerie Junger in Shanghai. It runs until Dec 31.

The exhibition will showcase Hofstetter's photography that revolved around his lighting art expeditions in the Antarctic in 2003 and 2005. He illuminated icebergs from a Russian expedition ship in an effort to create temporary



PHOTOS BY GAO ERQIANG / CHINA DAILY

A couple watches an illumination show on the Bund by Swiss lighting artist Gerry Hofstetter.



World-renowned Swiss lighting artist Gerry Hofstetter prepares for a light show in Shanghai.

memorials to increasing problem of global warming.

"Visitors can see those dramatic photos including the famous picture showing a polar bear, which lives in the Arctic, projected onto the Antarctic, where penguins have their habitat," said Hofstetter.

Hofstetter dreams of doing a big project in China.

"For China, I've dreamed for a long time to have an illumination in Guilin. I could travel with a boat to project images on the mountain."

He said he was looking forward to such a project.