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There's Much Light at Maastricht

Art dealers wanted fireworks to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the European Fine Art Fair in Maastricht, the Netherlands. But that idea was deemed too dangerous, so instead they settled for an installation of 20,000 cascading white LED lights, above, that shimmers at the fair's entrance. The work of the American artist **Leo Villareal**, that installation, "Cylinder II," is computer-controlled and changes over time, creating different patterns and movements throughout the day. The work, set against a black backdrop, is a particularly dramatic addition to the festive floral arrangements that have become the signature of this annual fair. But even before visitors began pouring through the cavernous convention center for the fair's invitation-only opening on Thursday afternoon, the name-calling had begun: some dealers christened "Cylinder II" the "disco inferno"; others "the Las Vegas light show." There were also less-friendly terms. A few years ago the National Gallery of Art in Washington commissioned Mr. Villareal to create an installation featuring 40,000 programmed LED nodes along the 200-foot walkway between that museum's East and West buildings. On Thursday Mr. Villareal was in Maastricht, greeting collectors as they entered the fair. When he was told about some of the unflattering names given to his creation, he smirked and said: "It's a different world here. I'm hoping some people will get it. But it's a pretty tough crowd."

CAROL VOGEL