



With the opening of Sony's new entertainment complex in Tokyo, the future of cinema has already begun. The creative use of Hoya-Schott's fiber optics for lighting helps give the complex its unique futuristic atmosphere.

Boundaries exist so they can be crossed. With their unending stream of new projects, Japanese architects, engineers and technicians are constantly crossing the boundaries. The electronic media increasingly molds the way we perceive our world: Telecommunications have conquered the wireless world and even lighting systems have entered new territory. Japan always has its mind set on the future and Sony, the electronic giant, is the undisputed master for making futuristic dreams reality. An example of this is the new entertainment complex in Tokyo known as "Mediage" – from media, image and message – bringing human beings and the new technologies ever closer.

High-tech cinemas invite you in

On the reclaimed land of the imposing coastal district Odaiba located on Tokyo Bay, Sony Corporation opened the ultramodern Mediage amusement park in April 2000. The park consists of a huge building complex built on an enormous 21,000-square-meter (over 25,000 square yards) piece of land on which visitors find cinemas, restaurants, shops and high-tech video game arcades. The centerpiece of Mediage is the gigantic, novel 13-cinema multiplex movie palace offering a total of 3,100 seats. According to Sony, the future of the cinema is taking place right here. The so-called "multi-screen" cinemas are replacing traditional movie theatres. In the land of the rising sun, it is estimated that there will be 3,000 more of them in only three or four more years. Of course, Sony uses the latest state-of-the-art audiovisual techniques such as digital projectors (DLP), sound systems and communication networks. Soon, Mediage will also introduce the novel "E-Cinema" system in order to transmit important sports events live via satellite.

ENTERTAINMENT

Original lighting

And yet the latest Japanese movie center would have only half of its impact were it not for the spectacular lighting that Sony installed in its enormous multi cinema complex. Cinema 1 – the largest and by far the most impressive of all cinemas in the two-story complex, gives the visitor the feeling of standing under an infinitely large starry sky. The unforgettable impression is successfully conveyed through the use of 1,500 tiny points of light. The fiber optics lighting system for five cinemas and the aisles was provided by Hoya-Schott, a joint venture company founded in 1988 between Hoya Corporation of Japan (the country's largest manufacturer of glasses for spectacles) and Schott Glas of Germany. Since then, Hoya-Schott applies the vast know-how of its parent companies to solve complex lighting solutions. In addition, the company has started developing and selling its own, original products.



Original light design using fiber optic lighting inside one of the 13 Mediage cinemas.

are hard to reach", says Arai. A total of 63 km (39 miles) of "Spectraflex" fiber optic light guides was used to transmit light to all 2,400 points. When compared to conventional lighting systems, the new technology is not only considerably easier to maintain, but also a significant energy saver as well. Only one light source is needed to feed a large number of points.

Non-stop fun

Apart from the unique cinematic experience created by state-of-the-art lighting and audiovisual technology, moviegoers can take advantage of an additional service. Visitors to the cinema's "prime section" can pre-order their favorite dishes from the Mediage restaurant of their choice. Plus, the best seats can be booked in advance via the Internet. In Japan, the future of the cinema has already begun ■

"The fiber optic lighting technology developed by Hoya-Schott exceeds the possibilities of conventional lighting systems in many ways", said Hayato Arai, the light designer in charge of the project. Using fiber optics from Schott, the Japanese light artist can get the maximum possible pliability from the material, allowing him to use his full creative powers. "The small diameter of the material coupled with its high flexibility allows me to use it in places that



ON A SUPERLATIVE SCALE



Form and function: Not only do the many points of light help viewers find their way, the appealing design is also very low maintenance. Only 16 bulbs are needed to provide the light for all 1,500 points in cinema 1 above.



Tokyo: The Metroplex

◆ Around 11.6 million people live in this Japanese metropolis. Administration and governmental institutions, industry, universities, trade and banks are all located here. Two thirds of the country's largest concerns have their headquarters in Tokyo.

◆ Over the decades, Tokyo has swallowed up the neighboring cities of Yokohama and Kawasaki and is now the largest metroplex in the world.

◆ Japanese youth prefer to go to the hip area Harajuku near the famous Meiji shrine, where rows of small clothing and accessory shops as well as cafes are squeezed together.

◆ Japan's teenagers like to color their hair in shrill colors, wear loud clothing and carry cell phones. Fold up scooters are the latest accessory of the truly 'in'.