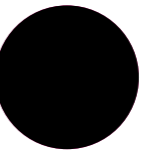


**Lamps for Neanderthal Man.**

I.

This is a manifesto. There is no doubting the originator's honourable intent (he is sworn in, with his left hand resting on his father's fuse cupboard). Even though he is relatively young, he has spent most of his life with the thoughts and theories on the nature of Light that will be presented here. He doesn't mince his words, but talks of a revolution. But let us proceed carefully.

He is Swedish, name of Wästberg. His first name is of less concern. He might be convinced to produce an initial or two out of his sleeve, but the subject requires some formality, as the conclusions are... shattering. Something went wrong a long time ago, and has only got worse since. The consequences are relentless. Such are the conditions and seriousness of the matter that we must start from the beginning.



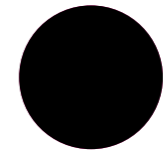
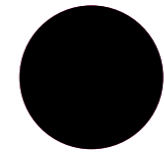
## II.

A forefather of the aforementioned Wästberg is sitting outside the entrance to a cave. Night has fallen, it is late autumn, and we are in the northern hemisphere, though not necessarily Sweden. His huge wooden club lies by his side. He can't sleep. He is alone. Behind him, inside the cave, a fire burns. Otherwise, it is empty. He has not yet formed a family. Like young Wästberg, he is relatively youthful.

Wästberg the forefather looks to the sky, towards the Pleiades. He doesn't know the stars by name; the word 'club' doesn't even appear in his vocabulary. His gaze now moves westwards and stops. There is a twinkle. A star is born this night! Our primitive friend nods his large head insightfully, but does not realise that the star, though he sees it being formed before his eyes, has already existed for thousands of years. It has taken the light that long to travel to earth.

If he could count, he could have multiplied time by the speed of light and concluded that the glowing dot is actually located *zillions* of miles from earth.

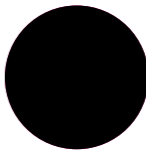
Then he could see that stars are no different from revolutionary ideas. They have been on their way for a long time, sometimes too long, before finally extinguishing. Ask young Wästberg.



III.

A sabre-tooth tiger roars in the night. Forefather Wästberg hears it, instinctively turns his head, and looks towards the cave. He views the fire, which seems to be flagging, critically. He sighs, gets up, goes in and adds some wood. He knows that tigers, no matter how big their teeth, fear fire. But he doesn't know if it is because of the heat or the light. He doesn't much care, as long as he survives the night.

The flames get going properly, and start licking the roof of the cave. He moves closer to the fire, feeling nearly euphoric for a while, but doesn't quite know why. Perhaps it is because of the star he just saw being born. Perhaps it is because of the elegant shadowplay the fire casts on the walls. He starts humming something. Not a tune exactly, not even anything pretty. But something.



#### IV.

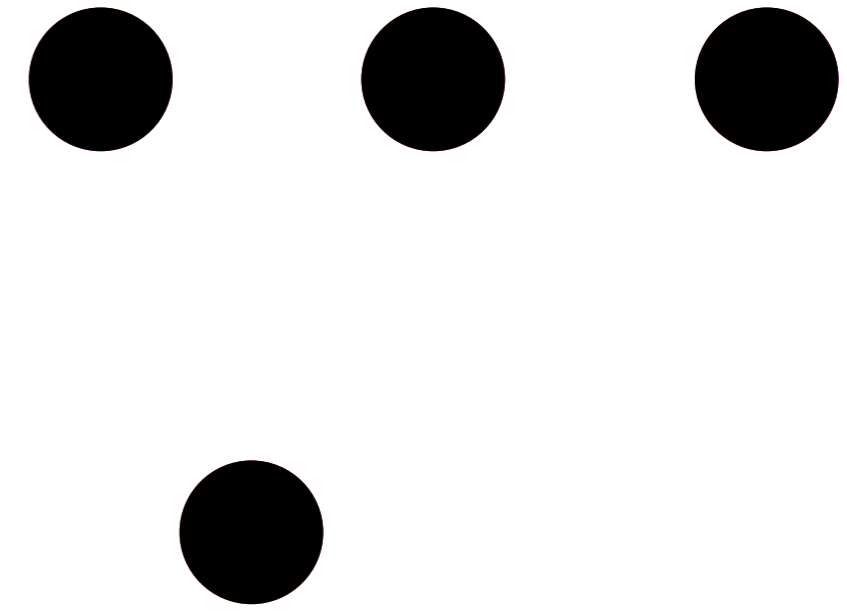
A fairly uninterrupted line of development continues from forefather Wästberg's day up to 1900 AD or thereabouts. At least as far as humankind's proximity to Light goes. Then something happened, or rather, was harnessed... which in time came to crackle vigorously, bolt off, and finally to explode. Which is more or less where we are now.

Young Wästberg was not a great admirer of his countryman Strindberg. The plodding years of high school took their toll. Strindberg (1849–1912), is considered to be one of Sweden's greatest writers in the wide world. This is not to say that he is that well known in the world, or even appreciated for that matter.

But Wästberg relented in his opinion of Strindberg when he encountered a quotation of the author:

*The electric light will make people work themselves to death.*

As we all know, this fear was fulfilled. The question is whether it is the 'electric' part that should be held accountable, or the 'light'.



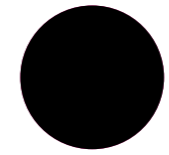
V.

Ampère eventually elbowed his way past candle wax, kerosene and sperm whale oil.

The classic experiments on productivity and motivation at Western Electric in Chicago from 1927 to 1932 provided a poser for the proponents of electric light. The more and stronger lights men in white coats put up on the company's ceilings, the more people worked. Until they yet again reduced the light until it was beneath the starting-point. Then people worked even harder.

Clearly, it was not the intensity of the light that motivated employees. It was the attention that the employees thought the men in white coats were giving them. But these answers were soon forgotten. Decades passed. More and stronger lights were screwed onto the ceilings of offices around the world. General lighting swallowed up desk lamps, both metaphorically and literally. Night turned to day. Even in people's heads. The boundary between work and free time, between office and home, was erased.

Those who spent their lives in the floodlights from above started to feel caught, unprotected, in the headlights. Motivation and production fell. People lacked a... private sphere. Not all of them realised these slightly absurd conditions. But they all felt accordingly.

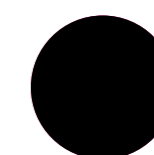



VI.

Why did no-one react? It would have been too late anyway.

Huge forces held onto pens and power drivers when office buildings were planned and furnished. Proprietors, foremen, local councils and health services had formed pacts with overstretched electricians. The ingrained, static, measurable world ruled (if in doubt, add a little more).

When the gates opened for the interior decorators and lighting experts, oversized, blazing fixtures were already screwed to the ceilings. It remained to plan the placement of the desks and make the best of the situation. And at the first reorganisation of the furniture, one would have to dismantle and refit the monstrosity on the ceiling.



A black and white photograph of a starry night sky. The background is filled with numerous small, bright stars of varying magnitudes. A prominent, bright, diffuse nebula or galaxy structure is visible, stretching diagonally across the frame from the upper left towards the lower right. The nebula has a complex, filamentary appearance with several bright, irregular patches and a central region of higher density. The overall effect is that of a vast, deep-space scene.

Wästberg's lamps create intimate spheres and simply make people feel somewhat safer. Regardless of whether the lamps are in offices, hotel rooms or homes.

## VII.

So this Wästberg wants to return to the Dark Ages?

He doesn't claim to be quite so revolutionary. But he wants to change society's basic view on lighting.

Return light to human proximity.

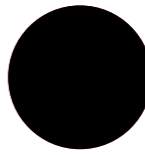
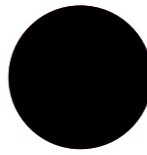
Open the eyes of those who close them without blinding them.

Reawaken the appreciation of sublime shadow and contrast.

Economise on energy, no small matter in a world that has transgressed its moral right.

So this Wästberg does want to turn development back? Absolutely not! Well, not more than one turn... two at the most.

Because people don't feel so well at work? Companies have been formed on looser principles.



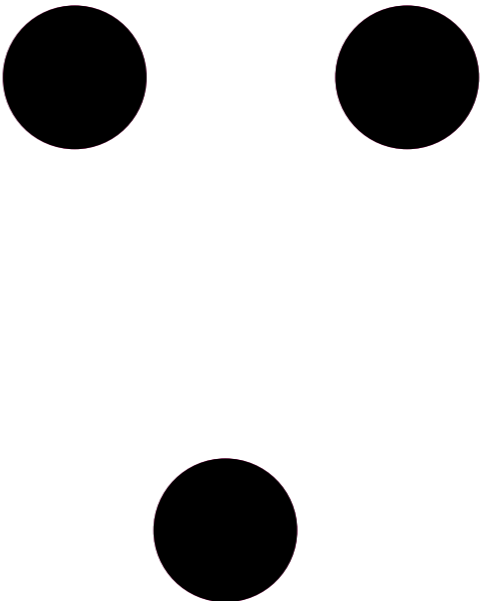
## VIII.

Using softened general lighting combined with beautifully-designed direct lighting to be placed on desks or other plane surfaces, Wästberg wanted to create a new form of total solution.

In this way, cold and sterile environments with static intensity of light throughout could simply be changed to atmospheric environments with beautiful and functional lighting (which creates a sense of well-being).

The great challenge lay in direct lighting. The general lighting was already there (the monstrosity on the ceiling), and just needed to be turned down as much as necessary.

How would this heretofore unseen form of direct lighting be created, and by whom?



IX.

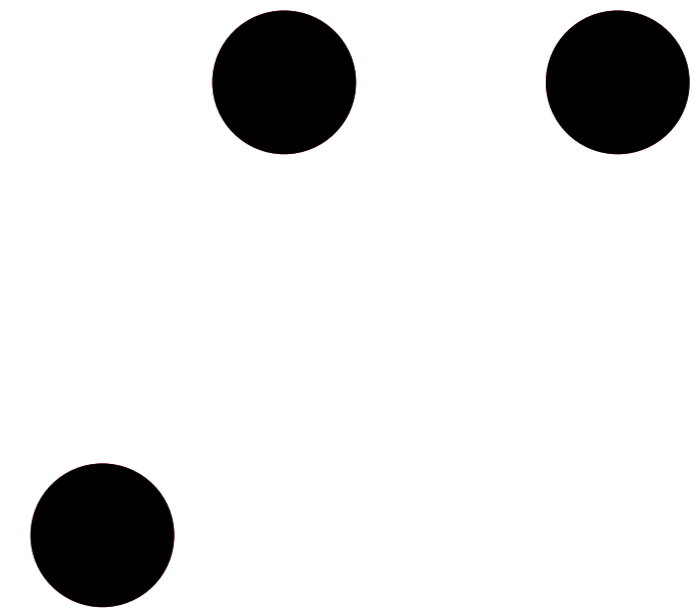
Some old truths in the lighting business are as follows:

“Beautiful lamps give off bad light.”

“Ugly lamps give off good light.”

Wästberg never understood that. Why can't two extremes be united?

He wrote to some of the most prestigious designers and architects in the world (who had more or less been friends of his since his apprenticeship), asking them what they might achieve starting from A. his own vision, B. the latest discoveries in lighting research and C. some non-negotiable product qualities. The response was overwhelming.

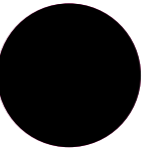


X.

Humans nowadays do not lie sleepless because of sabre-toothed tigers, dark green oceans ending in the Void, hysterical silent movie music... Nor do they fear God or the local constable.

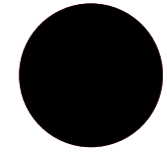
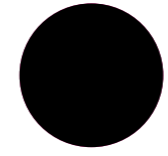
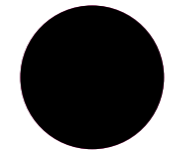
Instances of anxiety are more complex today. Quarterly reports, contradictory demands from the board of directors, from the environment, less ambiguous demands from the mortgage company, stress, inadequacy, loneliness, boredom...

People today feel irradiated and unprotected... exposed. Why not give them each a fire to shelter by?



XI.

People will continue to work themselves to death. People will continue to work themselves to death, even in the light of Wästberg's lamps. But they will feel better while doing it.



Lamps for Offices, Hotels and Caves.

This manifesto was published in Stockholm in February 2008 for the launch of the Wästberg Company's first four lamps, based on the experience, now more or less lost, of 300,000 years. The designers were Ilse Crawford, James Irvine, Jean-Marie Massaud, Claesson Koivisto Rune.

The Wästberg Philosophy may be summarised as follows: I. Decrease general lighting and use direct lighting. II. Direct lighting should have all the basic properties of task lighting, but a wider area of use. III. Direct lighting should include energy efficient light sources, minimal glare, flicker free light, plenty of light evenly distributed over a large surface, and the ability to adjust light intensity.

Since the launch, it may be hoped that the world has been shaken to its roots, and that in all four corners, fiery debate has arisen on what humanity has done to its immediate environment and what the real solution to these problems should be.

Follow the debate, the development of the company, the company's collaboration with the world's most prestigious lighting researchers and designers and the fruits of their labours at [www.wastberg.com](http://www.wastberg.com).

M. Wästberg

