3-LINE SYNOPSIS
Inventor, mystic, artist, Thomas Wilfred is the godfather of multimedia. Lumia is the story of Wilfred and other eccentric inventors obsessed with electricity, mysticism, and light.

125-WORD SYNOPSIS
Thomas Wilfred almost made it. He was not the first, or the last, to try to bottle light in an instrument and to play it like music. For two decades he hauled his steamer trunks of equipment around the country and transfixed people with his strange and beautiful projections.
It was the golden age of invention. Electricity was the new religion. This energy infected the arts. Inspired by occult philosophies from Blavatsky and Ouspensky, and scientific theories of Einstein and Heisenberg, Wilfred tried to express the world beyond the material.

He inspired many. The few who remain tell the tale of struggle and invention, obsession and anonymity. They all have fascinating stories to tell - of odd experiments, strange devices, and sorties into other dimensions.
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He began his career as a Danish Lute player, giving command performances for the Kings and Queens of Europe. He captivated audiences throughout the 1920's and 30's with his eerie, sensational projected light shows - or Lumia.

World War 2 intervened, followed by television and the New York School of Painting. Wilfred's star fell, and he spent his last decades making automated versions of his work and executing commissions for private collectors and museums.

He inspired many. The few who remain tell the tale of struggle and invention, obsession and anonymity: Charles Dockum, Chris Sidenius, Mary Hallock Greenewalt, and Earl Reiback. They were all self-made light artists who built fantastic machines to express their vision. They all have fascinating stories to tell - of daring experiments, strange devices, and sorties into mysticism.

It was the golden age of invention. Electricity was the new religion. This energy infected the arts. Inspired by occult philosophies of the East, along with modern science, Wilfred and his fellow Lumia artists tried to express the world beyond the material.
DIRECTORS’ STATEMENT
While making our first feature, “Video Out,” some of the VJs and video artists dropped the name of Thomas Wilfred in passing, and it was understood that he was considered the father of light art.

We had never heard of Thomas Wilfred, and we were curious as to who he might be and what he had done that so many fascinating people had mentioned him. We had no idea that this innocent-enough quest would lead us across the country and introduce us to a host of strange and brilliant artists, many of them quite old.

When we began "Lumia," we drove up to Sandy Hook, Connecticut to interview Chris Sidenius, but we weren't sure it would go beyond that. After all, we had a lot of other projects on the front burner.

We traveled to Los Angeles to see the Wilfred collection of Eugene Epstein. We went to Seattle to view and document the original Clavilux instruments that had been rescued from a trip to the dump by a few hours. We went to Port Townsend, Washington, to speak with the sharp-as-a-tack 98 year old Dorothy Conway, who had known Wilfred. These were just a few of the people we met and the places we visited.
Lumia documents the birth of light art, which many people may have witnessed, but about which few remain to testify.

The people were difficult to track down and some of them did not want to speak with us initially. We eventually won them all over. Some of them passed away before we finished editing the film.

While making Lumia, we learned something about the beauty of the memory, about the dignity of aging, and about the genius of electro-mechanical invention and the will to create. These artists had a vision and they twisted steel, colored glass, soldered wire and harnessed the power of electricity to bring their visions to life.

We were and remain inspired by their selfless devotion to their art, sometimes at the expense of their security, family and finances.
FEATURING:


Together, M.F. Chang and Paul Vlachos are 13Bit Productions. They have produced and directed: “Video Out,” a documentary on the history of VJs and video art, “Lumia,” The story of Thomas Wilfred and light art, “The Discreet Charm of the Hipster Class,” “The Quiet Room,” are currently working on two documentaries and a new feature based in the 13th Dimension. They are the creators of “The Analog Orchestra,” a robot band, and the annual “Robot Parade” in downtown NYC.

“Video Out” was winner of "Best Documentary Feature" at the Winnipeg International Film Festival, a "Grand Festival Awards" winner at the Berkeley Video and Film Festival, and an official selection at Mill Valley Film Festival, Dallas Video Festival, Alameda Film Festival, Black Earth Film Festival, and Westcliffe Digital Film Festival, the FIFA International Film Festival of Film on Art, 12 DIVA IMMI Fest in Eugene, Oregon, George Lindsey UNA Film Festival.

“Lumia” was an official selection of the Avignon Film Festival, the Athens International Film Festival, the Swansea Film Festival, Tacoma Film Festival (Official Selection), Honolulu Film Festival (Official Selection), Mammoth Film Festival (Official Selection), Las Vegas International Film Festival, and Mexico International Film Festival (Golden Palm Award).

“The Discreet Charm of the Hipster Class” was an official selection of the 2009 Yosemite Film Festival, where it won a 2009 Silver Sierra award.