

Interactive Laser Audience Participation With Mike Gould And Illuminatus



A Conversation With Mike Gould

With Tim Bennett

Of ArgonTV

Interactive Laser
Audience Participation With
Mike Gould And Illuminatus

The following is a transcript of an interview between Tim Bennett ([ArgonTV](#)) and Mike Gould

If you like interactive lasers, then this is for you...



[Watch the video above to find out...](#)

If you prefer to read, scroll down to get the (slightly edited) transcript of the video.

Tools Featured In This Video...

- 1 - ArgonTV
<https://www.argontv.com>
- 2 - Illuminatus Lasers:
<https://www.illuminatuslasers.com/>
- 3 - Mike Gould Laser Artist:
<http://www.mikegouldlaserartist.com/>
- 4 - Illuminatus Lasers Interactive Laser Shows
https://youtu.be/K5vd_gabugc
- 5 - 2020 Legend of Sleepy Howell by Illuminatus Lasers
<https://youtu.be/3LR9ht8Lvgo>
- 6 - Dances With Lasers
<https://youtu.be/8oI2oLGKOqw>

Interactive Laser – Audience Participation with Mike Gould and Illuminatus

Tim Bennett: Interactive laser is just fun...

It's fun if you're in the audience, it's fun if you're the operator and it's certainly fun if you're the participant and today one of our topics is about interactive lasers.

So if you're one of those people who likes playing with gadgets like [laser harp](#) or like laser tag or if you love love going to shows where you actually trigger off the laser or if you're just like chasing the cat around the room with a little red diode, then this chat today is definitely for you, because we are being joined by a very special guest.

He's a magician when it comes to interactive laser and he has years of experience and loads and loads of stories.

So it gives me great pleasure to welcome to ArgonTV, Mr Mike Gould...

[Mike Gould laser artist](#) and Mike Gould [Illuminatus Lasers](#), that Mike Gould and let's kick off with possibly one of the most important questions of this chat, which is... how are you Mike?

Mike Gould: Well I'm pretty good.

We've survived covid, better than most people, in that I live out in the country and I have a rather large shop where I can build stuff and I have a rather large imagination, where I can think up stuff to build, so I spent a lot of quality time with a drill press and a band saw and soldering and doing... I build my own gear for the most part.

I work with Illuminatus Lasers which is a dedicated team of anywhere between 8 and 13 people depending on the scale of what it is we're trying to do most of which have been with us for years, especially my partner Wayne Gillis, who is the electronics end of what we do.

I build the projectors, he does the electronics and cabling and he's also our laser safety officer, so there's just bunches and bunches of people.

I would invite folks to go to our website.

Actually, I've got two.

One [laser artist](#), to one that's [Illuminatus](#) and the difference between the two is a little hard to explain.



At one point, I had an artistic representative who insisted that the art world is not going to want to muck around with somebody who's out in the streets doing lasers.

So he had me do a website for that...

About half our presentations are festivals and special events and stuff and the other half is museums, mostly science museums.

In fact we're getting ready to do a three-month show at a place called Moxi in Santa Barbara, California.

We'll be shipping our gear there at the end of the month and then flying in and spending a week setting up and fine-tuning it and then we fly home and hope to God that nothing breaks in the following three months.

So, I'm we're in the deep testing mode right now to make sure it doesn't break and I'm going to send down a spare anyway.

Tim Bennett: Excellent and yes this last year has been a really trying year and I think you'll... and you know you're saying earlier you don't live in the city you live out in the... what did you say? The sticks or something?

Mike Gould: Boondocks!

Tim Bennett: That's it yeah...

Mike Gould: Isn't that a filipino world word (Bundok).

Tim Bennett: Yes it is actually yes and I live on an island and I'm out of the city, so I can totally understand how different it is to living in a city during this period.

In fact I was in lockdown for a long time and I was able to get out of the city and come to the island in January of this year and I have a wonderful time.

I'm building a house at the moment and playing with ArgonTV and talking to awesome people just like yourself...

So we just recently met...

I was inspired to contact you and reach out to you, because I've been watching some of your awesome videos and if you haven't seen one of Mike's videos, I'll put some links beneath this video.

So if you're on YouTube, scroll down...

If you're on my website, scroll down, you'll find some links to Mike's videos and they're absolutely awesome...

Very entertaining and very educational at the same time!

Eduainment I think the word is...

Mike Gould: Yeah we try...

Tim Bennett: Yep so check those out, because they're fantastic and you know we've just met, but you have been doing lasers for some time...

What actually inspired you in the first first place to get into this amazing crazy world of lasers?

Mike Gould: Well, it's a long story...

Back when the continents had just separated, sort of late Pangaea kind of period, I got into light shows, which gives you a clue as to how old I am, but we had overhead projectors slide projectors.

A whole bunch of home brew projectors and we dragged these around to various parties and what would be called raves these days and I did that for... my partner Wayne Gillis and I did that for many years and then disco came along and that pretty much killed light shows.

So we got out of it and actually most of our gear is still stored under Wayne's staircase in his basement, but fast forward to nine... 2009 thereabouts, we were invited to appear at [Penguicon](#), which is an open source software / science fiction convention and at that point, I did some research and said "whoa you can get lasers pretty cheap these days."

My first laser cost a hundred bucks back in the early 70's, which was a lot of...

...that's about twenty thousand dollars in today's money or so, but, so we got a little Edmond Scientific HeNe and started messing with that and then we put it away and then 20 or 30 years later...

...oh now you can buy laser diodes, you don't have to use three phase and garden hose anymore!

Whoa we can get into this, so I built a number of projectors and we thought, "*okay what's a cheap...*" well first of all we have a nano dollar budget for just about everything we do...

So my first thought is, what can we do cheap and sturdy that's metal and is a box, well lunchbox, yeah, let's do a lunchbox...

So we built, I built a bunch of projectors, Wayne and I both did actually, into lunchboxes, schlepped them off to this Penguicon thing and it kind of grew out of hand ever since.

So we like lunchboxes, they're cheap, they're cheerful, they're sturdy...

Here's one right here...

This is one of the ones that's going, that's destined to go into Moxi and what I'm going to do is, I'm going to turn on mirroring, so it isn't backwards...

There we go...

So this is the famous Fireball XL5 lunchbox, daily decorated these are the connectors at the back and if you open it up, you see this...

Now we're getting ready to set this up in the Moxi Museum in Santa Barbara and as you can sort of see there are three knobs there and those knobs are actually jewels... sort of these fake glass jewels, so the idea is to make it as kid-friendly as possible and kids just love getting in there and yanking the jewels back and forth and we desperately are hoping that they don't tear them off.

So I've got extra strong epoxy on there and we'll be sending a few extras just in case.

Now what those lunch boxes will be controlling, is this...

This is called [a lumia projector](#), that I built with a homemade adjuster on the top and at the bottom, you can see all the labels and stuff we have to do and in the front there is a very special diverging lens and you can see two lumia discs behind it there, sort of...

That diverging lens is something that gives the lumia a really wide spread and those are a US government surplus from TOW missile nose cones and I found some online.

The guy wanted 15 bucks a pop...

I talked him down to 12 I think.

I bought all he had, but their brand new government surplus military ploughshare kind of things.

So we're very happy about that.

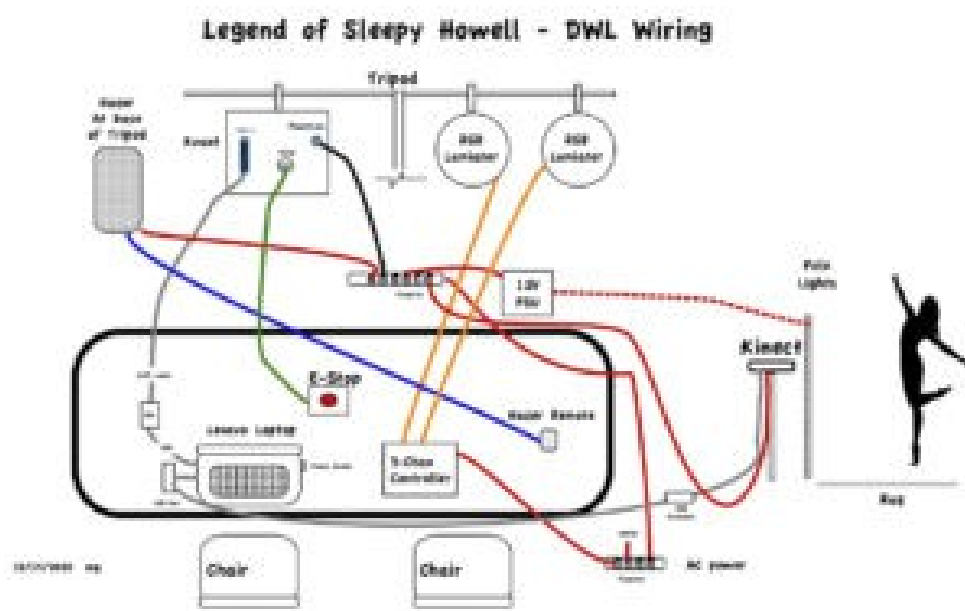
So we'll be hanging three of these in the in the museum along with three lunchboxes and just...

Oh touching back on what we you said about the videos, a lot of that is is directly due to Tom Bray, who is our production director and he does video and all sorts of other wonderful things and he is somebody that I happen to meet in college lighting class back in the early 70's.

I've been working with him ever since. I also met Wayne back in the early 70's, so we have a long history of the absurdly complex optical and very heavy equipment that we are now trying to pair backs.

Most of it fits into my van or my van and Wayne's car, so we're getting there, but we're having a wonderful time and right now we're planning this fall, we did a big thing in Howell, Michigan last October...

This [Legend of Sleepy Howell](#) and it was a drive-through thing in a park and what we did was set up five or six laser displays that people would drive past and we had scanning imagery, we had scrolling text, we had dances with lasers, which is one of our main interactive things, we had the haunted pavilion, which had negative space puppets floating around amidst a stew of lumia, we had the vortex which was a Radiator piece...



Now I think you've talked to Chris about Radiators at some point...

Tim Bennett: Yes I have...

I have, but we haven't... we haven't actually done an interview yet and I'm dying to do it with him.

He's just busy...

Mike Gould: Yes!

So he's awesome.

You'll have a great time with him.

Anyway he and his buddies invented the Radiator.

We bought...

We were...

Wayne was one of the very first guys to buy one.

So we had that on display and Chris tells me it's the first commercial use of a Radiator, aside from the stuff that he was doing.

So anyway, we had a Radiator going, we had some images by [Nisha](#), who's an awesome laser artist and we hired her to do some really cool animations.

We had live music that was broadcast through an FM system, such that people in their cars could hear the music, a bunch of the lasers were keyed off the music, plus dancers were dancing to the music and then we had a whole bunch of beamage that worked, sort of well, because it was outside and there's wind outside and a bunch of other stuff.

Anyway, it was really great and I just finished talking to the directors of that yesterday and it looks like we might be doing it again this year, so we have our fingers crossed and uh we'll see how that goes.

Tim Bennett: And that that sounds fantastic!

You're kind of blowing my mind right now, because you covered about 50 years in a few minutes and you've gone from old school to new school and they kind of merge you know, the old school techniques merging with the...

...you talk about... you know lumia is not new!

Mike Gould: No! 1930's. [Thomas Wilfred](#), Rock and Roll!

Tim Bennett: Yeah! Absolutely, but it's a beautiful effect and I love the idea, that people can come along and play with it and actually get involved...

Mike Gould: Yes...

Tim Bennett: Enjoying the, you know, people work in their, What's In It For Me (WIIFM) mode these days and there's nothing better than getting an audience doing stuff, so that they can really feel part of the show.

I think it's fun!

Mike Gould: Absolutely! Absolutely and kids, especially if you look at our video, you'll see lots and lots of pictures of kids having a wonderful time, having to be torn away by their parents... "No... No... I want to play with the knobs" and stuff like that.

There's this wonderful thing in the United States, called [The Maker Movement](#), started by a guy (Dale) Dougherty, I think his name is, who founded [Make Magazine](#), so now there's all the people that have been building crazy stuff in their garages and basements, can now get together in Maker Spaces and share expensive tooling that they wouldn't ordinarily have and then they sponsor Maker Faires, which is all these people getting together in a museum or someplace exhibiting what they do and we do, at the Maker Faire in Detroit...

I don't know if they're going to do that this year, they didn't do it last year, but we've been there, five or six times and we've won Editor's Choice several... many times and that's where we really got our start with the interactive stuff, because Wayne and I, built the Interossetor, which is sort of a mechanical

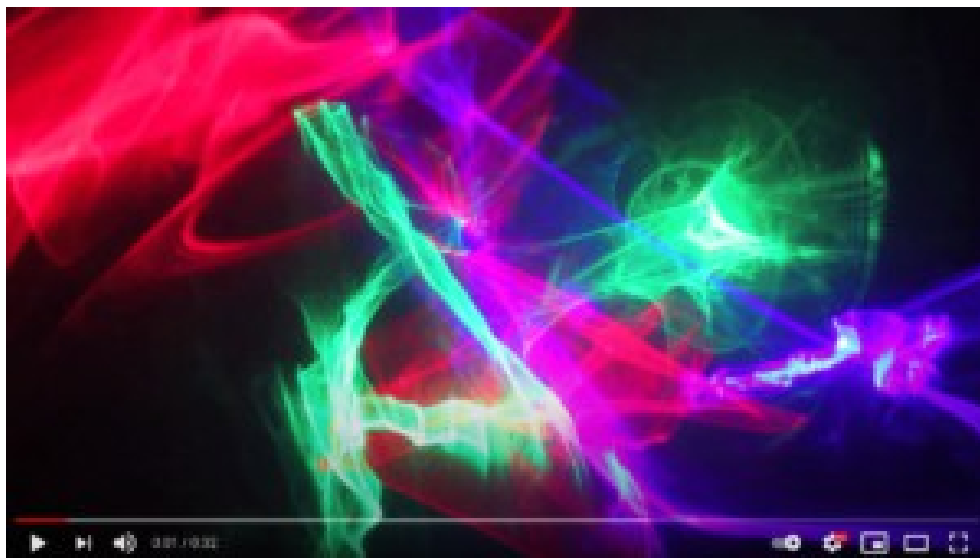
Radiator, monochromatic all analog thing that we built back in the mid 70's and we dragged that out from under the stairs and set it up at Maker Faire and put the controllers in front of kids and they loved it.

So, sort of a Spirograph generating kind of thing.

So we looked at that and said “hmm this could be popular!”

So we built several more, I built a yellow laser, which is called Willie Maize, M—A—I—Z—E and that is an open-loop scanning system thing that does lissajous projections much the same way the Interossetor did, only with galvos.

And we built little kid-friendly controllers for that and kids loved to play with that and then we started doing outdoor shows for [Full Moon, which is a light art festival in Ann Arbor, Michigan](#), which is where I was from...





Well, actually I'm still from there.

I just don't live there anymore...

So we would set up the middle of a street, a very cold and wind-swept street at the beginning of April and stick our little lunchboxes in front of kids and they would control stuff on the walls and they'd have a wonderful time and then we got into [Dances With Lasers](#).



Now this is done using the Beyond, Ultimate Extreme, whatever it is that enables you to use Connect, so we got all that working and rigged up and then we mix that with the Lumia, which a different bunch of kids are playing with, so it's all very interactive and fun.

Basically fun is the operative word here.

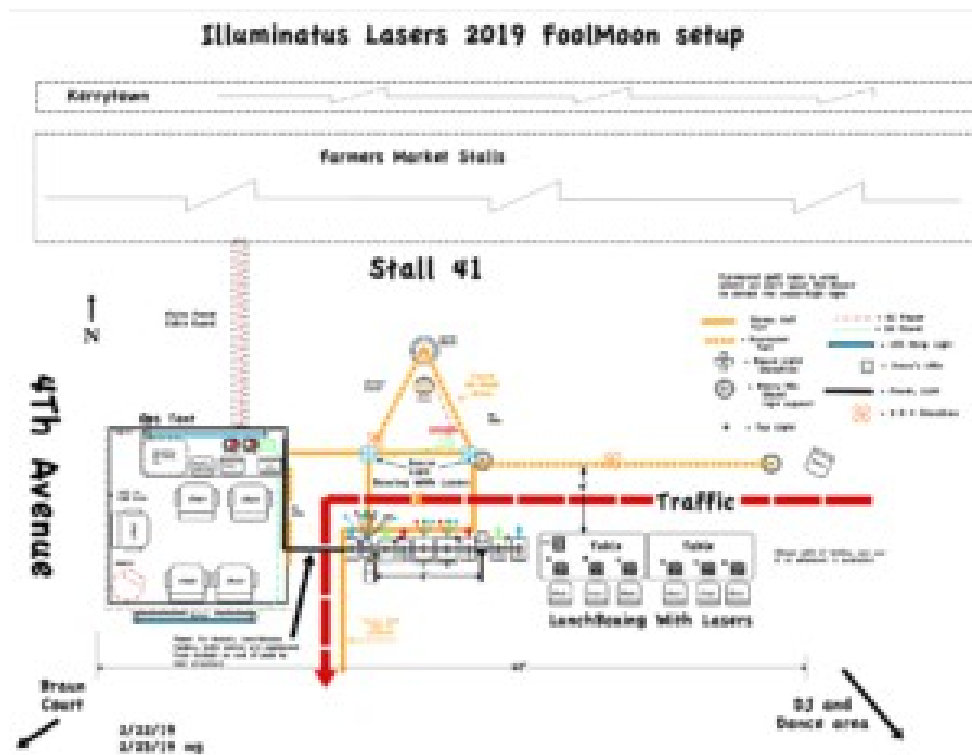
We don't do this for the money, because there isn't any.

We make a few bucks here and there, but and we're working on it you know...

All I need is one multi-millionaire to get really interested and I think we could really really do something.

Anyway, so as you say, we've been doing it for a while, but I'm always looking to new stuff to do.

I've designed a new system called Drums and Lasers, which is a percussion to laser interface and you'll see some of this on the video that you can go to, but, basically six people will be able to step up and whack on little drum pads that I've built and that will cause the lasers to project on the wall, to twitch about in sort of an atomic orbital sort of a pattern, but it would encourage six people to jam together.



Sort of like a drum circle and not only can you plug drums into it...

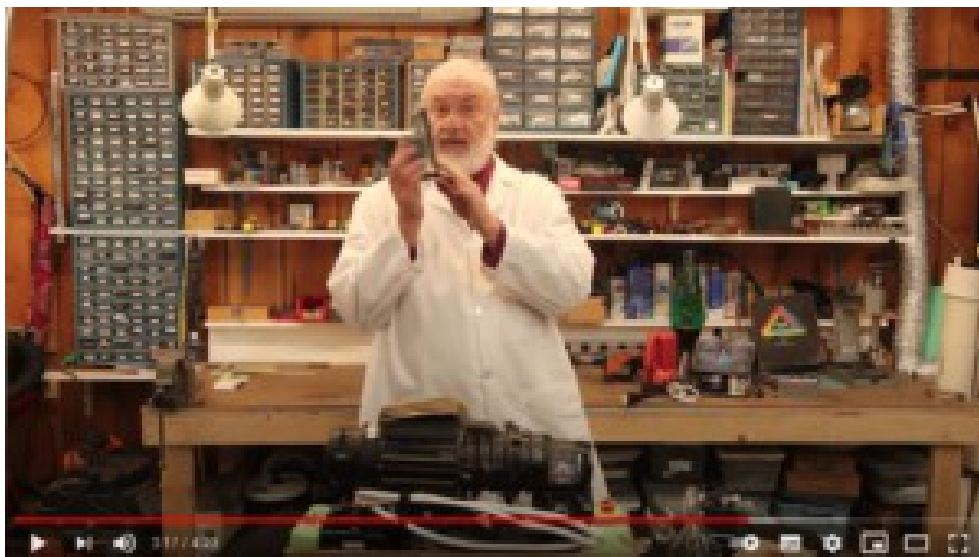
You could plug microphones into it, you could have a little choir step up and start singing and see their voices.

Each voice being a different color, sort of a deal or we could build a dance floor where people could dance and create stuff and we're making as open-ended as possible, but it's taking a long time and it's what I've been working on during the Covid year for the most part.

The projectors are done.

The projectors look a lot like these, they're basically these four inch extruded aluminum hobbies and i've got a special...

...actually the [transmodulator](#) is a part of the drums and laser setup.



It's still a highly guarded secret for the moment, although we may release it to the masses at some point.

Anyway, working on that and I've just got another idea for bilateral lumia that I'm going to be working on and experimenting with, but our main goal right now, is getting ready for Moxi in Santa Barbara.

Tim Bennett: WOW!

Ka-boom Ka-boom!

I think what you've been talking about is brilliant and all of a lot of what you were just talking about was done under lockdown, Covid, pandemic times...

Mike Gould: Yes absolutely!

Tim Bennett: You know one of the things I've been saying to a lot of people over the last year, especially these people who are considering closing down because they've got no work, is people in our industry have been saying for a very long time we're part of the creative industry and they're not being very creative at the moment, but you have been.

This is just like, you're blowing people's minds that I saw some of the show you were doing, which was the drive-through and if you've got some photos

or videos that you can send me, I'll include them in this, because what I saw was really beautiful and fantastic and this was done in a a very difficult time.

Your creativity...

The way...

I mean, first of all, you're passionate about it...

You said it's not for money and absolutely lasers generally aren't, but you're going to the level of the people that are using the equipment like...

Who would call the tool a lunch box, you know, other than kids...?

Mike Gould: Well they're cheap and cheerful and actually I won an ILDA award for them a couple years ago...

The Fenning Award and that's my fourth ILDA award.

All my ILDA awards have been for lumia.

Why because lumia is the least expensive kind of laser display you can do.

It's a laser and a piece of glass and a motor and you don't have to buy scanners which is the most, to my mind the most expensive part, that and the lasers.

Well lasers are now cheap.

You buy laser diodes from good old DTR and you use XYZ simple drives and some DC to DC converters and a bunch of other mojo that Wayne has mixed up and away you go.

Now as far as working in lockdown we're very fortunate that a lot of our people have, you know, basements or they can come over and work in my basement.

Zeta Gillis is our fabric maker and she built all the screens that we used at in Howell and did a whole lot of sewing.

We have a screen that's 60 feet wide by 9 feet tall and another one that's 20 by 9 and another one that's 12 by 9 and a few others I don't remember.

Anyway she sewed all those by hand...

It's doing a lot of reinforcing in it, so it would last and not blow away and it was all pretty delightful.

Tim Bennett: Brilliant!

I feel like I want to jump on a plane and come over and play with you!

Mike Gould: You'd be most welcome!

Tim Bennett: That would be brilliant and you know, what I like about this, is that you know the first time I saw laser, which was you know many many years ago, I was just like *"WOW! I've just discovered something new,"*

It changed my whole life... the instant I saw laser...

I'm still playing with it, you know 30 years later, but what you're doing is totally different to the normal kind of show.

It is interactive!

It's, you know people go, "Oh I've seen a laser, before," but what you're doing, is very very uniquely different.

I don't know... I'm not very familiar with anyone else's doing this kind of work...

You're kind of a unique positioning in this.

Mike Gould: Yeah!

It is it's pretty unique.

Chris Short, the guy that built the Radiator is...

...he's done some museum things using a hand pad of some sort... that are using an ipad or something that people can use.

As far as I know, we're the only people where multiple... where six kids can sit down and mess around with the lasers.

It's kind of a niche, but again it's all come out of finances or lack thereof.

Most of the stuff we build is fairly inexpensive.

We do have some... we've got a couple of [Kvants](#) and a Club Kat and we borrowed and a couple other projectors for our Hollow show...

So and those are... I mean for the cost of one Kvant, Quant, whatever the heck...

...cost of one of those, I can build a dozen lunchbox systems and I like building stuff.

Putting holes in aluminum is something I enjoy and I enjoy soldering.

I have a background in professional audio.

I used to work for a professional audio company, where I built all their snakes and a lot of their panels and that kind of stuff, so then I built my own recording studio an 8-track half-inch system that I ran for as far as that would go.

Probably 10-15 years and I'm still using some of that gear to power some of our our laser gear, because we're getting more and more into the audio stuff.

Actually two weeks ago, [we were in Downtown Ann Arbor](#) on Main Street, where our friend Ken Kozora, who also did the music at Howell, his jazz band was playing a jazz club, we did a display on the front of the jazz club's facade using two Radiators.

A guy we met, Henry Birdseye brought his Radiator and Wayne brought his and hooked him up into the Kvants and then I used the APC 40 through the Club Kat to do additional effects.

We had an FM broadcaster in the club sending the signal across the street to our stuff where we picked it up plugged it into the Radiators, plugged it into Beyond and it was all interactive.

Well mostly, they didn't have the music turned up very loud, so you couldn't quite get the interaction, but it was a good demonstration of possibilities and worked out really well.

Tim Bennett: Now you've mentioned Radiator a few times and I'm sure there are some people watching this going, "What the hell is a Radiator?"

What is it?

Mike Gould: Okay yeah a Radiator is this awesome device that Chris Short and [Neon Captain](#) is the name of the company and I remember him demonstrating it at the ILDA conference in Baltimore eight years ago or six, four years... five years ago...

I don't know... whenever the heck it was and back then it was all modular and built into a Eurorack kind of a case and it's basically an analog synthesizer that outputs waveforms created by conventional quadrature amplifiers VCO's, VC's, VCA's, all that voltage control kind of stuff and then from that big rack.

They condensed it down to a nice panel about the size of an APC 40, where you can make all these awesome abstracts, so it is an abstract generator, but it's only been a short time and people such as ourselves are discovering new uses for it and ways to tweak it up.

For instance, I have these little drum pads that are about five by five and they have a little piezo sensor in it and you can tap on them and as you tap, it sends an impulse to the Radiator, which twitches the Radiator.

So again, it gives you more interactive kinds of stuff...

...but make sure you talk to Chris, he can do a much better job explaining it than we can.

I've known Chris for years.

He's a great guy and he also does a.... used to do a lot of lumia.

So I remember I visited him three / four years ago and he had a wonderful little small argon rig and we ran that through some lumia and it was very cool indeed.

Tim Bennett: Yeah I've been dying to get Chris on ArgonTV, because he puts out some incredible artwork with his Radiator.

Mike Gould: Absolutely...

He's won more ILDA awards than any living earth man as far as I know.

Tim Bennett: Oh wow... well yeah we definitely have to get him on then!

Mike Gould: Yeah i've only won four, I'm a picker...

Tim Bennett: Only...

It's an honor to win an ILDA award and you've got four that's flipping brilliant.

I didn't actually know that you had any, but that that's really cool.

So what's the future of interactive laser? Where is it going?

Mike Gould: Well a very good question and again a lot of it is driven by Covid.

Up till then everything was hands on.

You twisted knobs, you got your grubby little fingers all over the jeweled knobs or whatever, but the future seems to be hands off, for the moment.

Now fortunately, we've got the Dances with Lasers stuff, which is totally non-contact, you're dancing in front of a sensor.

The problem is people are lining up blocks around to get to it and they all have to be socially distanced, so that's a complication.

We hope to do a show in Detroit in September.

We don't know if we got in yet, It's called "[Dlectricity](#)" and for that we're getting Drums and Lasers ready to go.



So we may have just six microphones set up in front of people singing into microphones to control the lasers.

We've also done [theremin controlled lasers](#), we did a show in a...

Theremin is that... one of the first electronic music instruments.

You play it by waving your hand and goes "Woo Wee," so instead of making an audio thing we had it convert into a control voltage and that's what we did in Madison.

We did a show called [Lasing Nang Talung](#), which is used Thai shadow puppets rotating around inside an enclosure inside a Thai pavilion.



It was made of teak and covered with gold and you'll see some pictures of this in the video, but the idea was negative space again.

You see the puppets instead of being lit with a bulb, the puppets are lit with a lumia and then out in front there's this control console with people waving their hands in front of it.

So it's non-contact and by waving your hands in front of it controls the speed and brightness of the lasers.

So we, I hope down the road to be incorporating that into some of our stuff, as I'm building stuff.

I'm trying to make it as flexible as possible.

There's a back end that controls the lasers and there's the front end that people use to control the lasers and the idea is to get as many modalities of control into that as possible, singing, dancing, waving your hands around, performing in front of a camera, whatever works and again, the problem with Covid though, is people waiting in line.

So we're still grappling with that.

If we go back to how will this fall, it'll probably be another drive-through, but once the problem is passed, we hope to be progressing.

Tim Bennett: Yes and I saw some of the images from the drive-thru and I was super impressed with it and I think it's going to be a little while before we kind of get back to normal, if there's ever going to be a normal again.

I don't think this year is going to be, you know, relaxed that much, but it's going to come eventually and it's going to be fun when that happens.

I think it's going to be one hell of a party around the world and we can all just go out...

Matt Gould: Oh yeah! Well our theory is there's going to be a big pent up demand, so we're doing our best to get ready for that.

If I could have Illuminatus Lasers on the road every weekend with a small young crew other than myself doing the heavy lifting and schlepping it around and setting it up and tearing it down, that would be ideal.

I'm retired from my regular job.

I did computer support at the University of Michigan for 20 years, so right now social security and whatever I can scrape up from lasers is pretty much it for me.

So I'm trying to amp up and do as many museum shows or whatever is possible.

More Amazing Photos From Mike Gould









Tim Bennett: Yeah and I think that's an interesting comment you just threw away there, that there's going to be a massive demand for entertainment when it all goes back to normal, because like even just for me, I was saying the other day to my wife, you know I can't actually remember the last time I went out for dinner and I kind of like to go to a restaurant every now and again you know.

Mike Gould: Yeah well, they had outdoors dining for the Ann Arbor thing, with tables spaced apart and they were like 40 mile an hour winds blowing during the time, so we weren't going to be using any fog, no sir!

But it was fairly safe.

Now that was almost two weeks ago.

We'll give it another week and see if there's a spike in Ann Arbor.

We hope not.

Most of the people at work had masks on.

My crew all had masks on...

So, see what happens!

Tim Bennett: Indeed and I think it's going to be a very, you know...

If you've ever read Think And Grow Rich or any of Napoleon Hill's stuff, he always says in everything bad, there's always some good that you can find from it and I think, you know, that there was... there's a lot of good things coming out of Covid.

Like creativity and new things coming.

Like I've been saying for literally three years, I want to start ArgonTV, but I was always too busy and then after lockdown, I had nothing to do and we started ArgonTV.

And it's and it's where I want to go, because you know, I'm not getting any younger... I know I look 35, but I'm not...

I'm not getting any younger and I want to look at other things and ArgonTV was actually stemmed from something I did in 2012 which was similar.

I made two movies in 2012 and we did a lot of interviews after that and I thought "this is kind of an interesting concept, I kind of like this," and then I just got too busy to do it.

Well now in Covid, I'm not too busy.

Mike Gould: Good for you.

Tim Bennett: You know, there's some good stuff come out of it and I think, as I was saying earlier, if we all put our creativity together and actually start moving forward, we can find new stuff, create new stuff and that's going to take us to a new place.

I think it's good.

I mean what you're doing is truly amazing and I think, you know, there's a lot of people who are going to be looking at what you're doing going, "that's very interesting!"

Mike Gould: Well we certainly hope so.

I sort of got my foot in the Hollywood door a couple three years back.

You may have heard of a movie called Hereditary?

Tim Bennett: Yeah!

Mike Gould: Well, I did the lasers for that.

I'm one of the very few people that if you search, if you Google 'laser artist,' I used to come up first.

I have no idea where I am now, probably Adam LeBay is ahead of me, he's kind of the Hollywood...

You should interview him too by the way...

Tim Bennett: He's another one that's impossible to get hold of because he's busy...

Mike Gould: He's a very busy guy. I met him at ILDA three four years ago. He was the guy that took the shot for the intro to windows, all the the projected window stuff that was him...

So that year he won first prize in the video category.

I won the second prize and he probably had a budget, you know, of a couple million...

I had a budget of, I think, three thousand dollars and so that was kind of cool anyway.

That was fun.

So [I got myself into the IMDB](#), the internet movie database and I sort of had hopes, you know, maybe somebody else needs some lumia here or there.

Hasn't happened yet, but, you know, once the word from your video gets around, I'm sure I'll just be inundated with offers and I'll owe it all to you.

Tim Bennett: WOW! Well don't forget the commission check!

Mike Gould: Won't forget that!

Tim Bennett: Yeah! It was funny, the thought you were saying earlier about you don't get rich with lasers, I remember when I first started, which was about 89 or something, I saw a website by one of the bigger companies at the same time... it had a FAQ page and it says, "will I ever make a lot of money doing lasers?" They said definitely not! I thought I must be in the wrong profession!

Mike Gould: The only way to make a small fortune in the laser business is to start with a large one.

Tim Bennett: And then lose it all!

Brilliant!

Talking about interactive lasers, do you remember or did you ever see the [Glove Puppet](#) concept by Pangolin, where you put a glove on and control?

Mike Gould: No...

I've seen various things like that.

Yeah they're cool.

There's also a wireless thing called [LEAP \(Actually Leap Motion\)](#).

I think that tracks hand movements and that's something we've looked at a little bit...

Wicked Lasers makes a part of their software. It's called Cast and it's a lot like the Connect based thing and at one point I had a little webcam aimed at a desk where you could put your hand and you could do hand shadow puppets and my idea was to combine that with Dances With Lasers and we've never quite had the resources to pull that together, but I've got all the parts and the hardware and the software.

So we may be doing something like that.

There's also more that I'd like to do with robot avatars from our shadow puppet experience.

I'd like to build a shadow puppet that would be controlled wirelessly using a servo motors and we could have that casting a shadow from lumia and then we could have audience out in front with joysticks and controlling this little dancing puppet that would do something on stage.

So we'll see if that ever happens.

Tim Bennett: Yep that's cool! That's super cool.

I like how your mind works with all these crazy ideas when they take you to different places and I know that we could actually talk for about six or seven hours and go right through the night and obviously we can't of do that.

It's been you know fantastic talking to you.

If people do want to get in touch with you, what's the best way for them to do that?

Mike Gould: Well visit our our website.

The website is illuminatus.com or my artist's thing is mikegoldlaserartist.com and you'll be posting all that stuff from there.

Now, I should mention a bunch of the other people that I work with;

Steve Rich is our legal guy and he also works with some graphics and bunches of other stuff.

His kids Jacob and Ben have helped out a lot.

I have a machinist named Bill.

Now there's this thing called [SELEM \(South Eastern Laser Enthusiasts Meeting\)](#) which is a convention, a yearly convention that all the serious laser geeks in the world get to and they're just getting it together right now to be held in Delaware.

Bradford Billet is hosting and we hope to be there, but there's a guy on our crew named Bill Witcher and he's been to every single SELEM there ever was.

He's a hardcore laser enthusiast.

We have Draco, who does our drone stuff he's just getting into that, but he's also a laser enthusiast and helps with electronics and that kind of stuff.

We have Tim Prosper, we have Bradley Cross, we have...who else we got right... and then Tim Prosser...

Ken Kozora is our kind of our staff composer, we work with him and a bunch of stuff and that...

I apologize if... I should have had a list in front of me so I don't leave anybody out, but I think that's the main... plus the number one helper is my wife Sally, who helps keep me alive and ambulatory and mobile and who is a wonderful wife.

Tim Bennett: And they say behind every great man, there's a greater woman, so that's awesome.

Mike Gould: Absolutely...

Tim Bennett: And I think that's a really helpful thing. I mean the same with me my wife. We've been together nine years and she's very very supportive and it really helps when you have that kind of support behind you, but it sounds like you have a fantastic team and as I said I'd love to come up one day and meet you all when we can...

Well better still you come here, bring the team too!

Mike Gould: I'd love to.

I'd love to visit the Philippines.

Tim Bennett: Well I move backwards and forwards between The Philippines and Thailand.

I spent two years in Thailand for the last two years.

Mike Gould: Awesome because our whole thing that we did with the Theremins, that was all Thai.

I ordered a bunch of Thai shadow puppets and swung them around to cast shadows and learned a lot about Thai culture.

Now most of the the Nang Tulung stuff is Southern Thai, but I'd love to visit there somewhere, just to eat the food, for no other reason.

Tim Bennett: Oh yeah! It's a beautiful country, with beautiful people and funny you're talking about shadow puppets, I have a friend, John Rule, who's in Cambodia and Siem Reap and he has a theater there that does the [Cambodian dancing \(Bambustage\)](#), but in a very different way using shadow dancers...

Mike Gould: Do they hold the big puppets over their heads and dance around? I think I've seen some of them.

Tim Bennett: They do and they come out around the front of the stage as well.

You can actually see the operator with it and it's really well done it's really cool...

...or it was until, you know...

So yeah, you know, I think we live in a really interesting world of, you know, our industry is very interesting and I think getting paid to have fun and create fun for other people is just one of the best things it ever could be.

I mean it doesn't get much better than that

Mike Gould: Very true!

Tim Bennett: Yeah so Mike, I want to thank you very much for being here on ArgonTV with us today and sharing some of your stories.

As I said, I know we could talk forever...

We've both been in the industry for a long long time and it's just, you know, lots of stories there...

So thank you for being here and being with us.

Mike Gould: Thanks

Tim Bennett: And as I say, I'll put all the links to your videos and your websites and everything down below.

So if you want to know what Mike's doing, just scroll down and you'll see all the links and then you need to get in touch with Mike and help him out or you know share ideas and the more the merrier...

Mike Gould: Or hire us, if you want to hire us... yeah by all means give me a touch and we'll we'll come do a show for you...

You bet!

Tim Bennett: That's a good idea!

Yeah it'd be nice to be hired.

I forgot what that's like!

All right, well we have been talking with Mike Gould, laser artist and from Illuminatus Lasers about interactive laser.

Links To Mike's Videos and Pages:

Interactive Lasers:

https://youtu.be/K5vd_gabugc

Sleepy Howell:

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/howell.html>

<https://www.howellrecreation.org/sleepyhowell>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LR9ht8Lvgo&list=PLjM4cTWofBWp2NCEIXt3J3TreO86zw5K7>

Talks With Lasers

<https://youtu.be/07tavf1MZCQ>

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/TalksWithLasers.html>

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/sslgalleries/twl/index.html>

DIY Lasers

<https://youtu.be/FcysfRiXVqk>

https://youtu.be/_dJzSp7PSLU

<https://youtu.be/sbdxqOKn3mA>

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/sslgalleries/diy/index.html>

http://mondodyne.com//A2SF_DIY/

SummerFest

<http://mondodyne.com/A2SF/>

Lasing Nang Talung (Theremin controlled lasers)

http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/lasing_Nang_Talung.html

Napa Lighted Arts Festival

<https://youtu.be/7uGQE9LBytk>

Shop Tour:

<https://youtu.be/2jF9NX2A4s0>

Soleri, So Laser

<http://mikegouldlaserartist.com/ssl.html>

<http://mondodyne.com/1SSLwww/>

Dances With Lasers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ol2oLGKOqw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPGvraTxv6M>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KwAkl5PfhKE>

Dow Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dP3Fw-gbtQ>

Laser Archeology

Lasers of Ancient Rome:

<http://mondodyne.com/archeology/Muses.pdf>

Lasers of the Renaissance:

<http://mondodyne.com/archeology/LasersRenaissance.pdf>

Lasers of the Victorian era:

<http://mondodyne.com/archeology/LasersVictorian.pdf>

Agricultural Lasers:

<http://mondodyne.com/archeology/AgLasersMo.pdf>

Legend of Wobbulator Woman:

<http://mondodyne.com/archeology/WobbWoman.pdf>

Transmodulator

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnZQ_Zybrt8

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