



ART

LEADING LIGHT
White at the
Fillmore East in
the late Sixties

The Most Psychedelic Light Show of All Time

Get ready for a flashback – the Fillmore East’s trippy lights are returning to NYC

THE JOSHUA LIGHT Show – those swirling psychedelic backdrops that exploded fans’ minds at New York’s Fillmore East in the Sixties – are staging a comeback. For four nights in September, artists including Lou Reed and MGMT’s Ben Goldwasser and Andrew VanWyngarden will play NYU’s Skirball Center as founder Joshua White’s kaleidoscopic images are projected on a huge screen behind them. “We saw Spectrum perform with them a couple of years ago, and it made our faces melt,” says Goldwasser. “A good light show helps guide people into unfamiliar musical territory and increases their attention spans.”

For White, the NYU gigs are a sort of redemption. “We wanted to provide visuals that were on the same rich level as the music,” he recalls of the original light show. “But after Woodstock, bands started



CLOSE ENCOUNTERS Janis Joplin at Fillmore East (left); Supersilent backed by the revived Joshua Show (above).

to play 20,000-seat arenas, where it’s all about big lights, smoke effects and big hair. The light show was dismissed or ignored for years.”

White’s setup remains essentially unchanged: He and his crew use lenses, mirrors, oil-and-water mixtures and overhead projectors to create their trippy, lovely effects, improvising along with the music. “Back then, we were working with musicians who played – they didn’t perform,” says White, who went on to direct episodes of *Seinfeld* and *The Original Max Talking Headroom Show*. “A whole new group of musicians are doing that now. When I’m doing it, I’m 25 again. I go into that zone. It’s like a drug.” **DAVID BROWNE**