

Art Director for Lighting

A new Lighting Design discipline

As the lighting design profession develops in France, a new discipline has evolved – one that already accompanies Art and Theatre – that of Art Director for Lighting. Over the last ten years, a number of pioneers in the lighting profession have opted to take this path, working for public authorities and private clients. These men and women are now passing their know-how on to other professionals. Some of them work for national or local governments, providing an essential contact to young people starting out in the lighting profession, others work in companies heading teams of designers and ensuring the quality of the lighting matches user requirements. The Art Director for Lighting has become a real interface, a key step in establishing the lighting design profession. We interviewed six lighting designers who have become involved in this new discipline one way or another.

Vincent Valère

Born in 1945 in Lisieux/F
Official representative for Lighting Monum – Centre des Monuments Nationaux (CMN) (Centre for National Monuments) in Paris/F

In France, Monum is responsible for 115 public historical monuments belonging to the French Ministry of Culture. It is their job to promote the monuments to the public and to improve the quality and appeal of the monuments, whereby lighting plays a significant role.

After following his career as an artist, Vincent Valère joined the French Ministry of Culture in 1982, when Jack Lang was Minister of Culture, and was made

responsible for plastic art. In 1992, François Barré, then Director of Cultural Affairs, offered him the post of manager of the Department for Listed Buildings and Sites, today known as Monum. This gave him the opportunity to put his ideas into action: art in public spaces, the relation between the artist, town planning and architecture. We talked to Vincent Valère about his work.

Vincent Laganier: How did you start work in this public authority?

Vincent Valère: When I was appointed

in 1992, there was nobody who had specifically been responsible for lighting. My first step was, therefore, to contact all the lighting designers and light artists in France I could with a view to considering what possible changes could be made to the historical buildings and sites. I then compiled a practical manual to present the organisation with a workable strategy. When the new President and General Director took office in 1995 I was appointed Lighting Coordinator.

Vincent Laganier: How do you handle/approach a lighting project?

Vincent Valère: It depends. Sometimes I am approached by the local administrator of a monument, the local authorities, the President of CMN or the Minister of Culture himself. I then proceed to make a survey of the location. The first thing to decide is whether it is appropriate to light the site at night at all. Historical buildings were not designed to be illuminated artificially, so each case has to be looked at individually. Is it enough to flood light it, does it require a special lighting setting, or is architectural lighting required? For which public is it to be lit, with what intention, and with what financial and technical means?

Visitor potential is another important factor we have to consider: CMN is not state-subsidised; we survive on admission fees to the buildings and sites. This is the funding we use, for



Chambord Castle/F

Lighting design: Jean-François Arnaud, ECA

Vincent Valère: After a series of unsuccessful "Son et Lumière" events at Chambord Castle in 1995, I decided to have a technical report made on the site to establish the status quo and the existing electricity supply lines. Since the market for architectural lighting equipment is relatively small, I decided to opt for a permanent dynamic lighting installation. Costs: 45,734 euros for the design and installation. The "Son et Lumière" event in 1995 cost 2.28 million euros.

Photo: Jean-Marc Charles.

example, to finance lighting projects or night-time events.

It is always the building or site itself that determines what happens, because by analysing the potential of the project we can establish the type and complexity of the project: simple exterior lighting, static or dynamic lighting, interior lighting or a

scenographic setting for the whole site. In the latter case, images and sound can be used to support the overall effect.

Then we have to agree on how to stage and judge the design competition. This is very intensive. It is my job to define the specific conditions for the respective historical site, for

Saint Seurin Basilica in Bordeaux/F

Lighting design: Pierre Nègre and Régis Clouzet, L'atelier lumière

Josy Bibes Froment: I never interfere with the decisions made by engineers or lighting designers. But it is important that we pool our thoughts. As the person responsible for the lighting masterplan, it was my job to initiate, to encourage the key players to communicate and develop new approaches: I had to think in light! There are always important reasons for selecting a specific project. The project designed by the young lighting professionals from Grenoble was chosen because it is modern and for its stone architecture. Photo: Pierre Nègre.

example, the aesthetic integration of the luminaires and cables. The installations should in no way hamper the view of the building or site by day for visitors or photographers, or obstruct paths used by visitors and others on the site. We also have to put together a budget, and consider how to handle the different categories of visitors: children, adults, French visitors and foreign visitors, visitors who are informed about the site before they come, and those with no pre-knowledge of the site.

Vincent Laganier: Do you prepare the electricians for the work they have to do on the historical building or site?

Vincent Valère: I organise an initial meeting on site with the client and the project team to explain what the project is about and why we are doing it. This is to motivate the team. You soon see what attitude the project manager and the team of electricians have when you are on site. I take a didactic approach, maintain close contact with the client, discuss as many details with the project manager as possible, so I can judge whether they are in the interest of the project, or whether they can be changed to keep within the budget.

Vincent Laganier: Do you check the quality of the lighting when the job is finished?

Vincent Valère: I consider it my job as a lighting designer to recommend a specific amount of time be dedicated to maintenance issues and design sustainability. This should be planned in from the design phase through to realisation and be automatically included in the contract with the client. That is to say that the project manager is expected to supervise the development of the project at regular intervals and ensure

that the quality of the design is maintained. I also recommend that the public works company is responsible for long-term maintenance.

Vincent Laganier: What do you think of appointing Art Directors for exterior urban lighting?

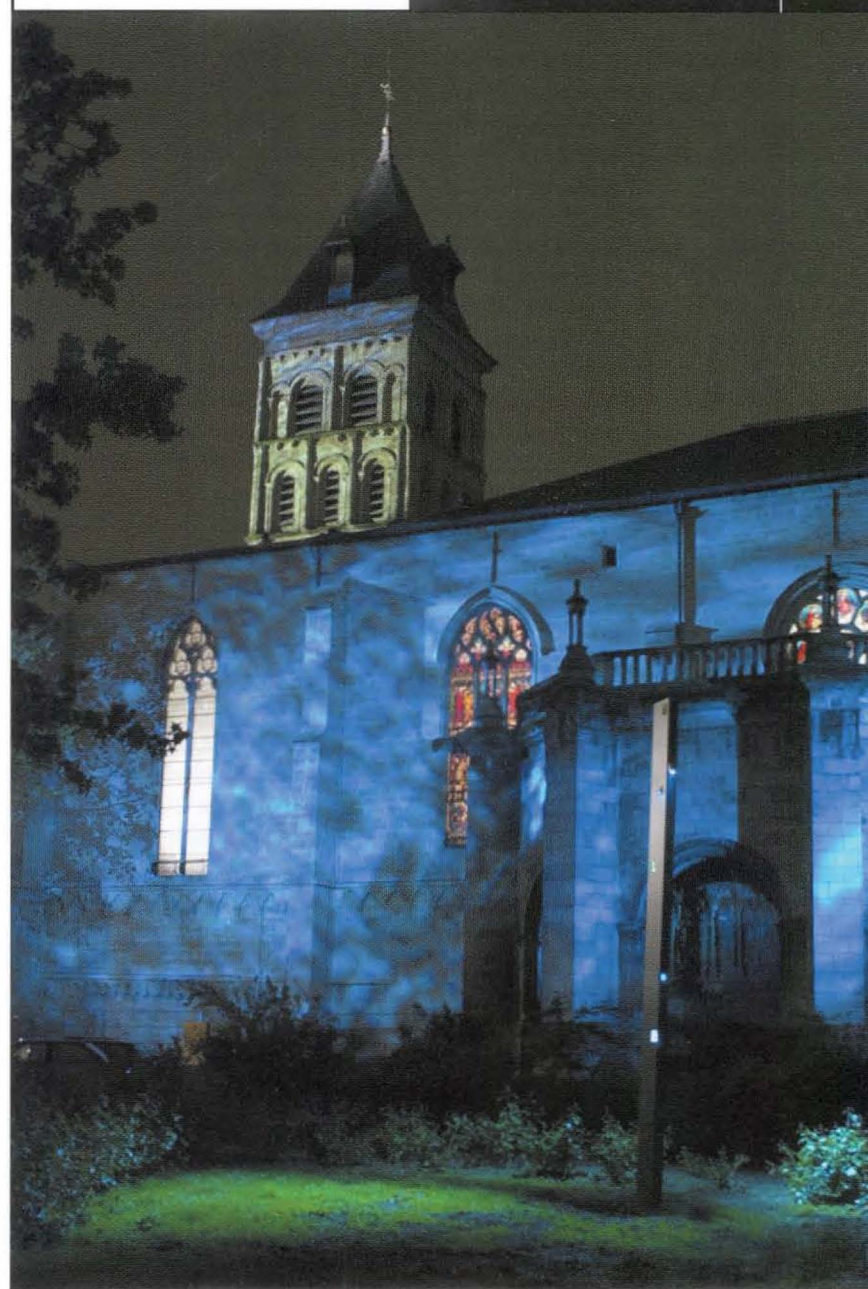
Vincent Valère: I am regularly approached by local authorities and asked to provide them with advice and recommendations when they are considering a lighting strategy. I do not take a fee for this consulting work, but would like to see CMN charging a fee for this kind of consulting. Working for public clients gives me the chance to get young designers jobs. These clients also need lighting designers to help them realise their urban projects, which opens up a whole new field of opportunities for professional lighting designers.

Vincent Laganier: What are the key qualities of an Art Director for Lighting?

Vincent Valère: It has to be someone who has experience in the field of lighting design. He should know the market and the way projects are developed and handled: someone who knows all the specialists who may be involved in an urban project: lighting designers, lighting engineers, light artists, plus landscape architects, geographers, and qualified urban planners. He should also have experience in project management and, which is highly important, be familiar with local government practices and understand the requirements of the users of the urban spaces being lit. This is often the result of many years' experience on the job.

Josy Bibes Froment

Born in 1940 in Les Landes/F Artistic consultant in Bordeaux, France, responsible for developing the lighting masterplan 1995-2002



Situated on the Atlantic coast and with vineyards and Les Landes forest nearby, which have made the town so famous, Bordeaux is the seventh largest city in France. It has a rich history and has been known as the "City of Lights" since the 18th century. Bordeaux now has a population of 214,633 and a public lighting system comprising over 25,000 light sources.

In 1977 Josy Bibes Froment established a department of Education and Research in the 'CAPC Musée d'Art Contemporain' (Museum of Contemporary Art), dedicating her efforts to this project until 1988. She then founded an office for 'City Promotion and Marketing' in Bordeaux

council offices under Mayor Jaques Chaban-Dalmas. Since then she has become increasingly involved in the development of an urban lighting strategy and has now been appointed Coordinator of the city's urban lighting masterplan.



Vincent Laganier: How did you come to be appointed Lighting Coordinator for Bordeaux in 1995?

Josy Bibes Froment: The idea of a city having an Artistic Consultant or Art Director is a revolution in itself! Although I am afraid there are not

many towns that even consider this! From my previous experience I was convinced that the question of public lighting was not a purely technical one, but it was also of a political nature. This is exactly what I proposed in a dossier I presented to local politicians before the 1995 council elections. I had two aims in doing this: to introduce the idea of a lighting masterplan and its implementation. Both have been achieved.

The new mayor, Alain Juppé, had me appointed Lighting Coordinator via Councillor Christian Jean, the Delegate Responsible for Lighting and Historical Monuments.

Vincent Laganier: Was it your job to coordinate lighting issues with engineers and local government officials?

Josy Bibes Froment: I decided to install my office in the municipal Urban Lighting department. This was my way of making the small team responsible for dealing with technical lighting problems sensitive towards the idea of developing a modern lighting master plan for the city: a subtle combination of engineering and art. Roger Narboni developed a master plan along these lines (overall strategy and plan of implementation). It was difficult because it meant hi-

ding behind numbers, regulations and guidelines to a certain extent to give the engineers a feeling of security. I encouraged the works office to subscribe to magazines to arouse their interest in design, art, architecture and lighting. I then set about gathering more information for my colleagues and presented them with reports about projects in other European countries and around the world using information gathered from documentations and my personal travels, information about artists' exhibitions in galleries or museums – all with a view to pursuing new paths. I even went so far as to look for further education opportunities, often organised by manufacturers presenting new products or current projects, or congresses held at trade fairs. I also followed the work of lighting designers and architects in Aquitaine, for example, Yon Anton Olano and Jean de Giacinto, or even Jean Nouvel, and so on.

Any plans presented to the councillors had to be easily understood to direct their attention to lighting issues and to give them the feeling that their participation in the project was not restricted to being on the council's Urban Lighting steering committee. It was my job to collect ideas and comments from the tech-

nical team, and also from the technical committee who met before the steering committee, before inviting every councillor to the evening lighting trials.

Vincent Laganier: Where are the limits to the field of job you have within a local government structure?

Josy Bibes Froment: The main issue is: who has the final word – the Mayor, the lighting designer who develops the master plan, the Lighting Coordinator, the Council, the Principal Urban Planner, or whoever. Who compiles the dossiers? Who has the necessary knowledge, a feeling for aesthetics or an understanding of engineering? Who is responsible for the works? Who is responsible for design sustainability of the monuments – the colours, the value, the focussing of the projectors on site?

And how can you bridge the gap between technology or engineering and art if there is nobody there to make the connection? There are four main points to observe when developing and implementing an urban lighting masterplan:

1. Travelling and gathering practical experience in everything that can encourage decision-makers and others concerned in urban projects

to be interested in and aware of the importance of good lighting in towns;

2. Do not limit yourself to one technology: lighting technology is constantly changing and developing;

3. Open up internal meetings to include other useful persons, materials, etc.

4. Pass on to others what you have learnt to get some feedback and response from other local creative activities.

In the end, it's really a question of how much you personally want to learn, how inquisitive you are and what you expect to learn from working in a technical job. Is it about ordering and replacing one lamp or ordering 500 different types of lamps for one building? I mean, it's your own decision to take a job like this and what you make of it! You don't decide to do it just to be someone from the public lighting department. It is the choice of a creative mind, of someone who knows what it's all about – a professional lighting designer who knows what he is doing. He or she has purposefully applied for the job, and been accepted!

Vincent Laganier: How do you see the lighting profession developing in the field of urban planning?

The Porte de Bourgogne in Bordeaux/F Lighting design: Sylvie Sieg

Roger Narboni: I agree with Josy Bibes Froment that we chose the right people for the job. The Porte de Bourgogne was Sylvie Sieg's first large-scale exterior project, and it was received very well. The same applies to Frédéric Druot and his work in Claveau (PLD No. 4, pages 10 to 15).

Photos: Vincent Laganier.



Josy Bibes Froment: Without knowing, in Bordeaux we were not far from being really well organised. We got very passionate about our masterplan and produced good results: around twenty different lighting schemes for monuments, fair press coverage and a good reputation. We even managed to cut costs (with the tramway lighting). Lighting designers such as Anne Bureau, Perial, Pescher have opened an office in Bordeaux, and foreign towns have also been known to seek our help when it comes to lighting. To sum up: seven years after our project was realised, 80 per cent of the inhabitants of Bordeaux were happy with the new urban lighting scheme.

But you won't find this kind of thing elsewhere! I don't think other towns have Artistic Consultants for Lighting. Maybe in future they could consider appointing a cultural consultant who is known and trusted by the local government officials, technical staff and the mayor himself. There are lighting designers out there who are very capable of filling such a position. There are a large number of sites that need new lighting schemes, because they otherwise run the risk of not being noticed after a while. It's not the

lighting designer's job to take over where the architect left off or to re-interpret or alienate architecture. Sometimes lighting design is a work of art, often an interpretation, but it must always respect the intention of the original designer!

Roger Narboni

Born in 1953 in Algiers/ Algeria Independent Lighting Designer, Director of lighting design practice Concepto in Bagneux/F.



After working as an artist and scenographic designer for large-scale exhibitions Roger Narboni founded his lighting design practice Concepto in 1988, specialising in urban lighting and concepts for large-scale lighting projects. He was Founding President of the Association des Concepteurs lumière et Eclairagistes (ACE) and has gathered enormous experience over the years as an Art Director for Lighting all over France, in particular in the cities of Angers, Bordeaux and Lyon. This is the voice of a committed and practical-minded designer.

Vincent Laganier: What did the work

you did during the third season of the summer lighting festival in the gardens of Angers Castle in 1993 involve?

Roger Narboni: It all started when Vincent Valère asked me to illuminate the gardens by night. It was my idea to bring together young or unknown lighting designers to do the job. Fortunately, I had practically "carte blanche". The job of Art Director developed from that. It was an interesting way for me to pass on my know-how without having to show my work, and to introduce new designers onto the scene who normally don't have the chance to get such interesting jobs.

Vincent Laganier: How did you manage to coordinate the different lighting projects?

Roger Narboni: First I spoke to each designer individually. Then we all met together. After viewing the entire site, I was able to propose specific mini-projects within the gardens. We were lucky that the site was very extensive and incorporated a lot of contrasting terrains. The likelihood of the different projects interfering with each other was not high. My job was therefore to manage the coordination between the projects at ground level, so to speak. Then each

of the designers presented his project idea. It was my aim to achieve an overall scenographic harmony from the standpoint of the viewer. I had to make sure circulation on the paths through the gardens worked well, so the designers didn't have to worry about that. We decided to maintain darkness between the projects. It was a huge task to convince the local government officials and conservationist that this was safe. They were very unsure, even though the castle is located centrally in the town and you can see perfectly well without additional lighting.

Vincent Laganier: Can you describe the job you were appointed to do by the City of Bordeaux in 1996 following the masterplan for lighting you developed?

Roger Narboni: When we develop a lighting strategy for a town we put together a plan of action for the following years. We did this for Bordeaux. The local government officials and the steering committee agreed to it. My job was to make a short list of designers, based on the references provided. We then proceeded to interview a specific number of them about specific projects. In some cases, we staged a competition, in others the lighting designers were

Place des Terreaux in Lyon/F

Lighting design: Hélène Richard und Jean Michel Quesne, Skertzo

Roger Narboni: Design practice Skertzo was told: "Realise a lighting project at the most significant location in Lyon with a budget of only 125,000 euros!" Most practices would have declined from the start, but Skertzo agreed to accept the challenge, because Laurent Fachard and myself expressly requested they do so. You need to have a lot of respect and authority in our line of business to inspire growing trust even when the going gets very rough. In the end, another 125,000 euros was added to the project budget. The result was both beautiful and stunning, a star project at the 2002 Festival of Light in Lyon. Photos: Vincent Laganier.



appointed directly. There were about 20 projects in all, with around 15 different lighting designers involved: local teams of architects, lighting designers or young talented designers at the start of their career.

Vincent Laganier: Why do you choose to use different kinds of designers to implement a lighting masterplan?

Roger Narboni: Since I started developing master plans for towns and cities, I have always presumed that they would lead to lots of different types of projects, which in turn would involve many different planners and designers – in the same way as an urban planner is glad to work with lots of different architects when developing urban landscapes! Unlike some of my colleagues, I believe that the idea of developing a lighting masterplan is not to guarantee I get all the lighting projects in one town myself. The desire to hold the reins over the entire urban project is often determined by material and financial interests. I sometimes have a lot of problems convincing local government officials that it is wiser in the long run to gather lots of opinions and ideas for the lighting projects. Of course, this is not the usual way to go about it. It's very hard work sifting through all the ideas and design proposals, but the town can only benefit from it. It will become a far more attractive and interesting place with enhanced diversity and dynamic quality.

Vincent Laganier: Last year you acted as Co-Art Director at the "Fête des Lumières" in Lyon together with Laurent Fachard. During the congress, you posed the question as to the monumental

dimensions of the urban space and the ability of the designers and artists to demonstrate this. Can you explain this question in more detail?

Roger Narboni: In the art world, people tend to think that as soon as someone is acclaimed an artist he or she is good at everything! I am convinced that the monumental quality of public spaces is a very special area, and that not everyone can work in it. When an artist is chosen to work on a huge space, we have to know if he can handle dimensions of

this kind. It is our responsibility not to offer artists ambitious spaces they cannot handle, because time and money for the realisation are limited. It is our job to convince our partners of the artists and designers we choose to work with. We are also expected to view the works, meet with the artists, keep informed, and know individuals' skills and qualities. We then expect the artist or team of artists to fulfil our dream, our common dream, that is to say. And we do everything to facilitate their work, adopting the role of the producer in the city administration.

Vincent Laganier: What qualities is an Art Director for Lighting required to have, in your opinion?

Roger Narboni: First, you need a certain reputation to be able to command the necessary authority. That is to say, if you don't have at least 15 years' experience, you won't be able to give anyone else advice. It is not only a question of age, but of experience and mutual respect. Then you need pedagogical qualities, lots of contacts and, if possible, you should possess the talent of not "rubbing people up the wrong way"! And you need to have original ideas, be able to play the director if necessary, but also be humble and simultaneously know how to make things work in general so that the final result makes sense.

Jean-François Arnaud

Born in 1953 in Suresnes/F Art Director for Lighting, independent Lighting Designer ECA (Etudes et Création d'Ambiances) in Poissy/F

Jean-François Arnaud got to know what team work was all about when he did a sailing course in Mazura Marine, during sailing trips and competitions and when he worked on son-et-lumière events for ECA. In 1989, the enthusiastic stage director created a permanent, dynamic lighting scheme for the mediaeval town centre of Cordes. In 1995, he was appointed Art Director for Lighting in Colmar. After a five-year break working for the lighting design practice Citélum, Arnaud is the only known full-time professional working as an Art Director for Lighting.



"Le Phénix" Theatre in Valenciennes/F

Lighting design: Marc Lizée, Citélum

Architects: Emmanuel Blamont and Lou Caroso

Jean-François Arnaud: The lighting strategy for Valenciennes comprised 60 locations. We were asked to coordinate and realise the individual projects. In my function as Art Director, I chose five lighting designers, three from Citélum and two from ACE. The lighting of the theatre was designed completely differently than I would have done personally, but as with my last lighting projects in Lille or Chambord, the designers decided to opt for a dynamic lighting solution. This is a good example of how the know-how of the young generation of lighting designers is coming into its own. Photo: Jean-Marc Charles.

We spoke to the professional pioneer.

Vincent Laganier: What did you do from 1996 to 2001 at Citélum?

Jean-François Arnaud: My work involved developing dynamic lighting schemes. I was an Art Director and headed the company's design office under the Technical Director. The people in my team were on average 25 years old and had about five or six years' study or practical experience after their final school exams. They were all specialised in lighting or design and had real know-how, but not a lot of experience in the field. At the beginning, this meant giving them as much practical experience as possible. We worked on projects in Colmar, Valenciennes and Rio de Janeiro in teams of two. Their assignment was to make an analysis of the lighting in the respective towns with a view to deducing some useful principles on which to base their future designs.



After that, I was available to answer any questions they had about their individual projects. I had to accept that the concepts they developed were not my own, which can be very frustrating for a designer at first, because you have to allow the young people to defend their ideas with convincing arguments. I supervised the designs in a general way – without expressing criticism, if the design was realistic and feasible – drawing the young teams' attention to the artistic and technical options open to them within the confines of the budget. For example, moving exterior projectors can become very popular with young designers, whereas they may be a number of other simpler ways of achieving the same, or even a better, effect. New technologies should only be used when there is no other way of achieving the desired ambience for the project. Technology is developing at an extremely fast rate, and you have to be careful when you use advanced technological equipment, to avoid restricting your design scope because you have to adhere to a strict budget and allow for maintenance costs!

Vincent Laganier: How do you work today in Orléans? Do you also coordinate work in teams?

Jean-François Arnaud: In Orléans, I am the Art Director or Head of the team comprising the technical services people (lighting projects and public lighting) and their staff in training. After carrying out tests and work on site, they are now planning the lighting street by street. When this documentation is pieced together it will make a "practical lighting plan". The streets will be illuminated simultaneously over six to eight months in accordance with the plans. My job as Art Director is to make sure the quality of the lighting is maintained throughout the project. In general, it is possible to train young people well, if the teams comprise multiple skills and the individuals have sufficient basic know-how. As soon as a local team is put together, we have to find out about road signage, road surfaces, and so on. I like to include the client as part of the team! In contrast to some of my colleagues I don't sell a concept on paper, but try to present something more concrete.

Vincent Laganier: What qualities do you think an Art Director for Lighting should have?

Jean-François Arnaud: I am pretty sure that, irrespective of age, you need about ten years' practical experience to do the job. Apart from the fact that you should be able to work well in a team, which is not always easy for a designer who is used to working and making decisions on his own. You shouldn't be afraid of involving other people and entrusting them with responsibility. An Art Director's experience should also include commercial aspects: he should know how to sell his art and inspire others with his enthusiasm, be self-confident and swim against the tide if necessary, and introduce innovative ideas. Otherwise none of your ideas will get further than concept-on-paper stage! I guess you also need to get on well with people in general and be able to distance yourself from the project at hand. It's a bit like being a football coach! Someone who knows the rules of football, knows the players and how to motivate them. It's management, pure and simple!

Vincent Laganier: Do you consider the work of the Art Director for Lighting to have any restrictions?

Jean-François Arnaud: Well, I don't feel any restrictions in my work, unless you mean the team's good taste,

and understanding the client's "request"! I see myself as more of an impressionist than a classical painter. My global vision is comparable to a Meccano building kit, meaning I can piece it together differently every day. It's the same in life: everything is in a constant process of change. Over the last few years, too much attention has been paid to lighting design, which has sometimes proven to be detrimental to the resulting visual environment. Light is just one component of an ambience, along with climate, the seasons, nuances of sound and light and the built environment. It is not important for me to know that I have realised a good lighting design concept, but that someone walking around a town at night thinks "What a nice place this is!" without knowing why. Of course, we will always need well documented projects and independent lighting designers from a variety of fields. I believe that the professional lighting designer is absolutely necessary to guarantee the quality of the individual project, whereas the Art Director for Lighting is responsible for making sure the whole picture fits together.

Nathalie Gouraud

Born in 1968 in Angers/F
Lighting Projects Manager
ETDE in Montigny-le-Bretonneux/F

ETDE in France is one of the Bouygues Construction Group's 110 subsidiaries worldwide involved primarily with the design and realisation. As a distribution network company, ETDE is a designer of public lighting systems, including maintenance and long-term operation. Nathalie Gouraud's first job after her commercial and legal training was in 1990 at Lumistars, a wholesaler for architectural lighting equipment. She became increasingly more interested in the developments on the lighting market and joined the lighting design practice Concepto at the end of 1991. There she worked as a lighting designer, covering projects from the design phase through to realisation. In September 1997, Nathalie Gouraud joined ETDE in a newly created position: Lighting Projects Manager.

Vincent Laganier: What does your job as Lighting Projects Manager at ETDE consist of?

Nathalie Gouraud: My job is to create and coordinate new lighting projects in the field of architecture and urban planning. I consult public and private clients when they are deciding on a lighting design. First, I talk to them and find out what they need and have in mind and then I put them in touch with competent partners and supervise the projects through to their realisation. Sometimes it's just a matter of a one-off event, sometime a long-term strategy. The projects are always original and coherent. My know-how is not a stand-alone, however, and needs the back up of other French or international colleagues.



Vincent Laganier: Roger Narboni developed a lighting masterplan for the town of Blois – how were you involved with that project?

Nathalie Gouraud: In 2000, the town of Blois set out to find lighting designers for 16 sites and buildings. Louis Clair was asked to carry out a study of the sites. My job was to coordinate the Light Cibles and ETDE team. You might say I was the interface between the designer and our team of engineers. First I helped our project engineers put together a technical plan. Our primary occupation was listing the constraints inherent to each of the chosen sites. This way of working allowed Louis Clair to develop his lighting projects more realistically. The group then tried to find solutions for an optimised investment and maintenance programme. In the end, I supported the project engineers during the implementation phase right up to final focussing.

Vincent Laganier: How do you pass your knowledge of lighting on to your teams of engineers?

Nathalie Gouraud: We have a lot of alert, experienced and enthusiastic people working for us. Every lighting project provides me with the oppor-

Château de Saint-Germain-en-Laye/F

Lighting design: Steff Grivelet and Jean-François Arnaud

Jean-François Arnaud: The job of an Art Director for Lighting includes developing new means of communication for presenting lighting concepts such as the largest (on a 1:1 scale) computer graphic design in the world that was realised at the end of 2001. This innovation meant saving immense time in the decision process that involved politicians and the public. We showed the people of Saint-Germain-en-Laye what the castle would look like when lit by simulating the lighting design with huge images. The enthusiastic reception this generated gave the local authorities a positive planning perspective. Photo: Jean-Marc Charles



tunity to refresh my sensitivity towards light, because I am required to explain the overall picture, the aims, the choice of sites and so on to the team of engineers. Everyone becomes individually involved in the project, each person adding his contribution to make the whole thing work. This means that the "basic role" that light plays becomes an indispensable key to the success of the project. I was always of the opinion that hands on work is the best way of learning something. Nowadays, the technocratic spirit generates educational requirements that are considerably more formal than those inherent to a building site.

Vincent Laganier. What are the qualities of an Art Director for Lighting in a private company?

Nathalie Gouraud: To be able to respond to the lighting designers' ideas, he or she should have an excellent knowledge of the lighting world, plus creative and persevering management skills. The latter is not necessarily an intrinsic quality that applies to Art Directors, but is definitely required when you are dealing with teams and handling synergies.

Tracy Eck

Born in 1962 in Chicago/USA
Principal Lighting Designer
Walt Disney Imagineering, Disneyland Resort Paris, Marne la Vallée in France.

When it was first built in 1992, the Walt Disney theme park Euro Disney, which is just one hour away from Paris, covered a total of 57 hectares (over 120,000 acres). Today it has expanded to cover 1,943 hectares (nearly five million acres) and includes two parks with 65,000 luminaires, seven theme hotels, two congress centres, a leisure village with nighttime entertainment and a golf course. Having completed her studies in Stage Design and Lighting and gained practical experience as an international lighting designer (in theatre, dance and music), Tracy Eck took over the 'Creative Development' department of Disneyland Paris in 1990 in preparation for the grand opening. Once the park was



open to visitors, lighting designer Yves Benyeta compiled a report on the quality standards the Disney designers were expected to follow.

Vincent Laganier: What is your job at Euro Disney in Paris?

Tracy Eck: My job is to coordinate a team comprising four lighting designers to maintain the quality of the lighting of the two parks – that's our main job –, the village and the hotels. This means working closely with the maintenance team, and reacting when they feel there is a need. They turn to us, when they need new specifications, because one of the products used is no longer manufactured. We respond to the need to modernise the installations while maintaining the original design concept. We also help when some of the attractions are refurbished by indicating what measures are necessary to sustain the design.

Vincent Laganier: How do you manage to maintain the quality of the lighting?

Tracy Eck: Throughout the year we carry out inspections on the attractions and installations at least once. We examine the lighting closely for a

whole week, or longer if necessary, and make a detailed list of everything that has to be readjusted, painted, or whatever, and then pinpoint priorities. This work is coordinated with all other departments: with the Art Director of the park, those responsible for the finishing effects, animations, sound and special effects.

Vincent Laganier: Do you train maintenance staff in lighting?

Tracy Eck: At their request we do organise in-house training programmes on lighting or the lighting control of individual attractions to show them how to handle the technical equipment.

But they learn most on the job!

When we are realising a new attraction or a new park, several guys from the maintenance department are allotted to us for about six months before the opening. They learn about adjusting and controlling the lighting just by being involved in the creation of the installation for the new project. This means they also learn the different parameters for assuring the quality of a lighting installation. And the lighting designers get to relate better to the electrical engineers, and vice versa.



Alleverd Church in Isère/F

Lighting design: Nathalie Gouraud and ETDE South-East

Nathalie Gouraud: We were commissioned to illuminate a church window from the inside that was very close to the church organ. Access and maintenance had to be as simple as possible. I therefore proposed using the rear side of the organ as a reflector by spanning it with white satin. The result: only two projectors were required to be mounted on either side of the window. The satin material was fixed to the organ at four points. It was a simple solution that taught us a lot.
Photo: Nathalie Gouraud.



Place des Frères Lumière, Walt Disney Studios/F

Lighting design: Tracy Eck

Tracy Eck: When we are working on a large-scale project, I return to California to work during the design and realisation phase. Then I return to work on the specs and supervise the installation. This was the case in the Walt Disney Studios. There were three of us in the lighting design team there for almost three years, seven months of which I spent in California. Paula Dinkel was the Principal Lighting Designer heading the team, with Laura Yates as Senior Lighting Designer and myself. Team work is the best way of achieving optimum results. That's why I find it so interesting working with external consultants, because the exchange of information is so enriching. I know things the others don't, and vice versa. It's a great way of updating your own knowledge. It's what keeps lighting alive.

Photo: Tracy Eck.

We post all the final reports, including lighting plans and lighting control plans on the website afterwards, which provides good support material for long-term maintenance schedules.

Vincent Laganier: Do you sometimes use independent lighting designers?

Tracy Eck: The design of an attraction and the story it tells are stipulated in-house. Generally, there are already designs available. When we start thinking about a new lighting design, I spend a lot of time with designers and operating staff that do not necessarily have any lighting experience to understand their ideas and basic requirements. That is the most important phase where we "translate" their ideas into lighting concepts. Consultants are then outsourced by the Disney company. Since we know the park and the way it is run well, we can make suggestions, and we can also recommend products, because we know what

works well and lasts longest. As far as the hotels are concerned, the people responsible for the development of the park select the lighting designers they want. In this case, I usually stipulate the basic concept. The lighting consultant then develops the design by adding elements. Then we discuss it together. He is then responsible for all phases of the project up to the final documentation. We attend the lighting trials and supervise the implementation.

Vincent Laganier: From the point of view of your experience in event lighting design, how do you see the future of urban lighting?

Tracy Eck: A few years ago, I met François Jousse, the technical advisor to the City of Paris on Public Lighting. I was immensely impressed by his global vision of the city. French towns tend to have fairly coherent public lighting systems. In the USA, the private sector comes

into play far more, because individual companies want to promote their image within the urban landscape. The projects may be excellent, their aim is not to blend in, however, but to stand out! Some projects present such a stark contrast to the rest of the environment – I love that kind of thing! But that wouldn't work in Paris. You can't set a rule and apply it to the whole world. You have to look at each location individually and see what is possible against the given historical and architectural backdrop.

And a town is not Disneyland, but it is a place that receives visitors! I have the same considerations when I'm designing in the theme park – we have to take safety very seriously, too. An interesting aspect is the combination of the technical with the artistic. The traffic passing in and out of a town tells a story too, don't you think?

Compiled by Vincent Laganier