

## PRESS RELEASE Professional Lighting Design Convention, PLDC 2019

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### PLDC 2019 - report

- **Report on pre-convention meetings**
- **Overall report on event: conference, exhibition and activity areas**
- **The pursuit of recognition**
- **PLDR Award winners**
- **Outlook for PLDC 2020 and 2021**

PLDC again defined changes for the overall market. A number of meetings and activities throughout the event not only offered the opportunity for questions, but also offered answers with regard to the pursuit of recognition for qualified professionals.

### Largest pre-convention meeting programme in PLDC history

PLDC in Rotterdam offered the largest pre-convention meeting programme in the history of the event. The traditional Cities' Forum offered a **"Get smart training session"** for municipalities and all involved in the planning and design of lighting in the urban realm. The programme was prolonged to two days, offering the attendees presentations on case studies, design approaches and responsibilities in urban planning. Elettra Bordonaro and Don Slater guided the group of attendees through a classic urban environment, observing the environment through the eyes of the users. The Get Smart session concluded with discussion workshops focussing on "The relevance of a catalogue of criteria for municipal decision-makers", "Project management for urban lighting projects – who should be involved", "Finding an appropriate lighting specialist / design" and "Coordinating co-design". The topics discussed and the raised questions were then presented to a panel of experts for open discussion.

The Cities' Forum was kindly supported by Neri and Valmont.

A must for every educator in the field of light and lighting: the **Educators' and Researchers' Meeting**. The meeting, attended by educators and researchers from up to 20 different countries, began with a round of introductions. The update on the status quo of the Lighting Design Education landscape showed that progress has been made with regard to collaboration and communication between universities.

The researchers present reported on the growing level of cooperation between universities of applied sciences and other academic institutions. Representatives of the universities present showed an interest in finding out more about the core curriculum developed by the Think/Do Tank coordinated by VIA. The core curriculum is one of the parameters required for gaining recognition of a profession.

Some time was spent explaining the role of university programmes and researchers in the development of CPD (Continuing Professional Development), which is a further parameter required for gaining recognition of qualified professionals. Some universities offer CPD seminars to former graduates. Such learning opportunities may also be beneficial for practising lighting designers. Summarised research outputs are also essential for practising lighting designers.

A discussion then took place on Lighting Design modules at Bachelor/Master level for related disciplines (Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Urban Planning, Interior Design...) Henrika Pihlajaniemi from Oulu University and Gillian Treacy from the University of Edinburgh shared information about their teaching modules to start the discussion.

After the Associations' meeting in London, at the very first PLDC in London, the **Lighting Designers' Associations pre-convention meeting** in Rotterdam was a long-awaited meeting. The invitation-only meeting, attended by representatives from ten lighting designers' associations from around the world, began with a round of introductions and an update on the status quo of recognition of Lighting Design in different countries/regions.

The meeting continued by addressing factors that impact the degree of recognition, such as university programmes, membership in an association and documented CPD (Continuing Professional Development). Moderator Jonathan Rush, together with Alison Ritter, explained the background to the idea of creating a CPD platform, as initially discussed with the Think/Do Tank (a group of dedicated lighting designers, educators, researchers and industry representatives founded in 2015).

The meeting then discussed the merits and differences between licensing (mandatory) versus certification (voluntary). Although there was no conclusive response as to which would aid recognition more, the associations present agreed that it would help to show a joint position: a collective of associations that can unite around some of the common goals of the associations.

Jonathan Rush explained that in the Think/Do Tank there was a broadly united position that the following could be useful in establishing a unified cooperative of associations: Code of Ethics, Scope of Works, Career Path, Formal Education (core curriculum), Grievance Procedure and a Continuing Professional Development base (lifelong learning).

Given the consensus in the pre-convention meeting to move forward in a combined effort, Jonathan Rush proposed setting up a Dropbox into which existing information within the

respective associations can be copied so all associations can start discussing. This could initially comprise the Code of Ethics, Scope of Works, and Career Path. If the associations can agree on a unified version of those three, this could provide a sound basis for further cooperation. For more information, please contact Alison Ritter at [aritter@via-internet.com](mailto:aritter@via-internet.com)

A first at PLDC: a **workshop on the “Elements: light & water”**. Hosted by Filix, a group of 20 attendees were invited to a special format workshop, including a discussion workshop on the status quo of underwater lighting and a hands-on session where effects, techniques and applications were discussed and tested, and innovative design ideas explored. Workshop Head, independent Lighting Designer Paul Ehlert, was actively involved in the concept of the workshop. The workshop is planned to be repeated at future PLDCs.

The pre-convention meeting programme also included **three excursions**. Twenty lucky attendees were offered the chance to visit Light Artist Daan Roosegaarde’s studio, gaining an insight into the artist’s way of work and creative thinking.

One excursion took the attendees to the Central Station, an architectural highlight of Rotterdam’s architecture: lead architect Marcel Blom, who was in charge of planning and realizing the project, provided interesting facts and figures as well as inside knowledge about the building.

Given that Rotterdam is the architectural hub of The Netherlands, an excursion to the “must see” buildings of the city was a given. Attendees of this walking tour were guided through Rotterdam, stopping at famous building and urban spaces, receiving information on the architecture, its history and lighting design.

## **The overall event: conference, exhibition and activity areas**

PLDC stands for a high-class platform for networking, learning and knowledge transfer, the conference programme being the main part of the event. Six Keynote Speakers from six very different backgrounds each opened either a morning or an afternoon session of the main conference: 74 presented papers on Lighting Case Studies, Professional Practice Issues, Lighting Research, Office & retail, Philosophy & debate, and last but not least the final Round of The Challenge. 87 speakers from 24 different countries shared their knowledge and experience and raised many points for discussion. How the lighting design profession is changing, what role AI plays in future and how lighting design can help revitalize a shopping experience to compete with online shopping, these were just a few topics that the speakers elaborated on.

The conference programme was again accompanied by a manufacturers' exhibition. The main target and focus of the PLDC exhibition is to support networking and interaction between all key players in the market, offering Lighting Designers, Industry, Researchers, (public) clients, Architects and professionals from related fields a framework in which all are accepted as valued parts of a high-quality market. Of course, the presentation of new technologies and technical approaches and developments also play a part in these discussions.

To further support interaction amongst attendees, the manufacturers' exhibition offered multiple areas and activities. Three moderated discussions were offered during the lunch breaks, with a wonderful smell of Dutch pancakes coming from the Women in Lighting Area. The Social Media Area provided charging points and direct access to the social wall of the event, and new business contacts could be met in the Pool Table area for a game of pool. The Partners' Areas offered the chance to read up on activities by the Partner Universities and Partner Associations, and Media Partners' publications were on display.

## **Plenary session on the pursuit of recognition**

A highlight – even if the session still raises a lot of points for discussion – was the plenary session on the pursuit of recognition. In the weeks leading up to PLDC, statements from the so-called Think/Do Tank were announced online to prepare the market for this session and the question – or reason – why the profession requires a professional CPD structure.

PLDC marks the largest gathering of persons from the different sectors within the lighting design community at different levels – lighting designers, lighting educators and researchers, architects, media architecture designers, urban planners, light artists, designers and facilitators from related disciplines, public and private clients, students of Lighting Design and related disciplines.

In some countries around the globe lighting designers' associations have been founded. Many of these sign up as Partner Associations of PLDC and recommend that their members attend the Thought Leadership convention to learn and network. Some associations are active on a local scale, others partner with other associations or events to gain visibility.

At the first PLDC event, PLDC 2007 in London/UK, a Declaration on establishing Lighting Design as a profession was read out to a room packed with just over 1000 PLDC attendees. In the meantime, PLDC has been known to attract more than 2000 attendees (Paris 2017).

Twelve years after the first PLDC in London, the convention is now staged annually. Serving as a platform for networking and discussion on and around professional practice, the spirit

and enthusiasm that builds up before the respective event and follows in its wake has given rise to renewed interest in discussing the way forward with regard to gaining official recognition for the work performed by lighting designers/specialists in this day and age.

Over the past years, a group of lighting professionals and enthusiasts have been working together in a Think/Do Tank\* to define the necessary steps for gaining recognition to raise the profession to the next level. One main point that evolved from these discussions is the need for a working, independent CPD structure for practising lighting designers to follow in the course of their career – in their own time and in different ways.

The PLDC 2019 programme included a 45-minute plenary session, offering the design community the chance to express their views and ideas on the status of Lighting Design in the world and to explain what structures and collaborative efforts are needed to define what knowledge, skills, creativity and creative thinking are required to recognise qualified professionals in the field.

**The Plenary Session closed with a vote from the plenum to obtain a clear statement on the pursuit of recognition. 80.2 % of the plenum voted YES – that forming a common front and committing to a professionally structured and independently coordinated CPD platform is the way forward to gaining recognition for qualified lighting professionals.**

## **The PLDR Award winners 2019**

The event closed with a Gala Dinner on the last evening. Koert Vermeulen and his team from ACTLD were responsible for the breath-taking light show. The event took place in an old submarine wharf, and the lighting included three gigantic LED chandeliers and multiple lighting features generously provided by Robe.

The highlight of the evening was the PLD Recognition Award show. The trophies were presented to individuals, organisations and institutions to recognize their work, actions and achievements that have contributed to the advancement of Architectural Lighting Design. Before announcing the actual PLDR Award winners, the winner of this year's The Challenge was announced: Jessica Collier/US from Team Jim was announced the winner of the two-year programme. Jessica was also announced as the winner of the Award for the Best Newcomer for her attempt to resolve the disconnect between consumer education and the expanding palette of products by translating the metrics into a description of the qualities and attributes desired for specific application.

The prize for the Best Partner in Industry went to Casambi, for their innovative development for a wireless lighting control solution which has penetrated the market with convincing consequences.

Dr. Taylor Stone was awarded the Award for Research for his postdoctoral research at TU Delft/NL into the value of darkness and environmental ethics, showing a new perspective and applying interactive methodology to secure strategies for responsible urban lighting using new and emerging technologies.

The Award for Education went to The Lighting Institute for the effort that has been made by the founders of TLI to offer high-quality education courses, thus connecting the lighting community and enabling the healthy development of the profession.

The jury selection of the winner for the Best Daylight Award was a tough one. The prize went to Usual Studio for the Light Tunnel.

The Award for the Best Project went to DHA Designs for The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Galleries.

The nominees for the Award at Large were all cheered upon by the guests of the evening. The jury selected Kerem Asfuroglu as the overall winner in this category, for his mission to deliver holistic training to local electricians in Gambia, providing them with an insight into design concept work, project management, site work, and an introduction to solar power. The project resulted in permanent lighting in the library in Abuko, offering children and young adults the chance to learn at all times of day in a safe environment.

The final Award category did not have any nominees. The Lifetime Award recognizes a person / persons whose activities and efforts have been instrumental in helping bring the profession of Architectural Lighting Design to its current standing. Together with Diamond Sponsor Flos, Joachim Ritter, founder of PLDC, awarded this trophy to Francesco Iannone and Serena Tellini. "Presenting a Recognition Award to lighting designers in this day and age, and in so doing providing an indication of the future of the entire industry, was a key aspect when selecting this year's winner – or winners. They built up a successful reputation in the past, went through a period of change and can now be regarded as an outstanding example of how one can develop a new standing and renown in the lighting community and underscore the true value of their passion and commitment to purposefully designed lighting." Joachim Ritter justified the jury's choice, adding: "I would also like to underline the fact that they have spent their lives fighting for lighting design as a profession and are therefore a great source of hope and inspiration when it comes to the future of the profession and the masterminds who support them."

## **Congratulations to all winners of the PLDR Awards!**

We would like to express our thanks to Xicato for donating the lighting module for the PLDR Award trophies.

## **Outlook on PLDC 2020 and 2021**

While it was already announced that the 2020 overseas edition of PLDC will be held in New York City/US, the Gala Dinner was also the place and time to announce the location for the next European edition of the event. Joachim Ritter, founder of PLDC, who acted as the Steering Committee Chair since 2007 announced Stockholm/SE for the 2021 event.

### **New York City 2020 – a modified format**

The organisers have developed a modified format for the PLDC 2020 exhibition space, stepping back from the traditional booth concept, and rather offering meeting spaces of different sizes and formats – depending on the sponsoring category. The spaces will be designed as communication lounges, meeting points or open spaces.

The two-day event will comprise 24 presentations plus four invited Keynote Speakers, moderated discussions, excursions and pre-convention meetings. Traditionally, the conference programme will be put together through a Call for Papers. All submitted papers will be triple-blind reviewed by interdependent lighting designers from around the world, maintaining the high educational quality that PLDC stands for.

### **Stockholm 2021 – developing a winning system**

While PLDC in Stockholm will remain in its traditional format with the two main parts – the conference programme and the manufacturers' exhibition over the course of three days plus pre-convention meetings, accompanied by other educational activities and side events – the organisers are nevertheless looking at structures and elements to update the event and develop its purpose further: communication and education on all levels, high-quality presentation of new (!) technologies and products in the exhibition space, and interactive attendee models will provide the basis for these developments.

A Call for Papers will be issued in September 2020.

## **Acknowledgements**

The organisers would like to thank all sponsors and partners for supporting PLDC 2019: 71 Industry Partners, 18 Media Partners, 21 Partner Associations, 35 Partner Universities and Institutes, four Partner Cities and seven Partner Events attracted 1569 attendees to PLDC 2019 in Rotterdam!

– End –

## **At a glance:**

- What:** Professional Lighting Design Convention (PLDC) 2019  
**Where:** Ahoy Rotterdam, in Rotterdam/NL  
**When:** 22. – 26. October, 2019  
**Motto:** “merging masterminds”  
**Six tracks:**
- a) Professional Practice Issues
  - b) Lighting Case Studies
  - c) Research
  - d) Office & Retail – hospitality, shopping and office lighting
  - e) Philosophy & Debate
  - f) Final Round of The Challenge

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