



A Light Read

Optic Arts Newsletter, Volume 1, Issue 1



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Welcome to "A Light Read," a monthly newsletter providing you with lighting industry trends, profile information on Optic Arts' latest projects, and resources we hope you find insightful and helpful.

For this first issue, we had a chance to catch up with Andy Powell, principal at Lighting Design Alliance. A lighting designer for more than three decades, Andy's work has taken him all over the world.

Optic Arts recently had the opportunity to work with Andy and his team at the Wilshire Grand Hotel and Centre in Los Angeles, a beautiful project owned by Korean Air. We are also currently working with Lighting Design Alliance on the addition of a new terminal at Los Angeles International Airport.

Being an industry veteran, Andy also shared his thoughts on the lighting industry's evolution and the ongoing fight to find quality lighting designers. Is there a talent war? Andy weighs in.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Wilshire Grand Hotel and Centre

Project Details:

73-story tower

Construction Began: 2013

Completed: 2016

Architect: A.C. Martin Partners

Electrical Contractor: Rosendin Electric

Optic Arts' products featured in:

Health Club

Chairman's Suite

Ground Floor Lobby

Restaurants

"Optic Arts was really useful in helping us solve problems throughout the process. They jumped right in and helped out. They're always willing to shoot us samples and they do it very quickly. I can't tell you how helpful that is to us because our projects are always going a million miles an hour. There's a lot of pressure to get things done so if you have to wait a week or two to get a sample, everyone just moves on to the next problem. So they are always very responsive.

They also helped us with mockups of a very unusual feature in the Health Club and had no qualms about sending out however many feet we needed of this certain tape light. And to make sure it all worked for us, they went out and installed it in the field."

– Andy Powell

**WHAT'S NEW FOR AGENTS****Optic Arts Build Configuration Program**

We're excited to offer our agents a new Build Configuration Program to help you provide your customers with more flexibility and efficiency. Whether your customers need quick ship components for complete flexibility onsite, product cut to length for onsite assembly or complete fixtures shipped installation-ready, this program will help you sell projects more effectively while giving your customers the support they need to keep their project on track.

[LEARN MORE](#)



IN THE LIMELIGHT



Andy Powell

3 Questions with Andy Powell, Principal at Lighting Design Alliance

How has lighting design evolved in the last decade?

In the last 10 years the LED Revolution happened. It has completely turned our profession upside down. We've had to completely adapt to a new reality. The other is the lighting designer profession has changed. Back in the 60s and 70s, a lighting designer only worked on high end projects, big hotels and theme parks. Now, we work on single family residences to the biggest projects imaginable and everything in between.

What are clients looking for in a lighting design partner?

They're looking for someone with both the technical knowledge and the artistic or design sense. Some architects, interior designers and even landscape architects like being involved in it. But even ones that do recognize they're not experts or don't have the time. As an independent lighting firm Lighting Design Alliance has always differentiated ourselves from lighting reps and others who have many motivations. In the case of lighting reps or manufacturers, their motivation is to sell their product. We can specify anyone's product, and our client's best interest is our top priority. I also think it's important to have a full scope of services so we can be their advocate during construction.

What are barriers you have to overcome from concept to execution?

The biggest thing that affects us during the design process is the budget. Almost every project has a budget issue, so it can wreak havoc on things. But we're so used to doing it, we treat it as part of the process. We don't usually get a budget to start with but when you work with clients over and over again, you get a good feel for their tolerance. But with new clients you don't, so sometimes you have to go to Plan B, or Plan C.

Did You Know?



Lesley Wheel, a lighting design pioneer whose notable projects include Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, the Monte Carlo Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, and Union Station in Los Angeles, believed the minimal use of light was the best way to create a memorable ambiance. She often would push herself to see how little light she could get away with on hotel projects.



INDUSTRY TRENDS

Lighting's Talent War

The need for lighting designers has grown significantly over the last 20 years. Many years ago, lighting designers usually only worked on high end projects, such as big hotels and theme parks. Now, they work on single family residences to the biggest projects imaginable and everything in between. But a designer's fees have not kept up with the market, which has affected the industry's ability to attract and keep fresh talent.

"There aren't that many lighting students out there and it's becoming fewer and fewer over time," said Andy Powell, who joined the profession in the 1980s. "And some college lighting programs are disappearing. We're getting to a crisis situation where we don't have anybody to replace us. We're having a hard time hiring people because there just aren't a lot of lighting designers out there. So here we've spent that last 40+ years establishing this great profession and now we don't know where the next generation is coming from."

Andy recalls being at a manufacturer's training event recently and this topic came up. Many people, he said, expressed their frustration and worry.

Organizations like the IALD need to keep doing what they're doing in supporting these college programs, but we need to do more. We need to talk to college freshmen when they are trying to figure out what to do with their lives and expose them to this great profession. Maybe go to the high schools. I know that's difficult, but it has to be done."

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The IALD Education Trust is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 charitable educational organization that provides direct support to educators, students and new graduates for the purpose of promoting the study of architectural lighting design.

MISSION: To grow the available pool of entry level lighting designers by fostering

connections between pre-practitioners and practitioners of the lighting design profession.

VISION: To create a better world through leadership and excellence in lighting design; to cultivate the universal acknowledgement and appreciation of the Power of Light in human life.

Optic Arts Supports The IALD Education Trust

DONATE TO THE IALD EDUCATION TRUST

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