

THE INNOVATOR

BRANDING, DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE PERSPECTIVES ON LIGHTING

NO. 5

BRANDING
DESIGN
ARCHITECTURE

LIGHTING GIANTS

Industrial history transformed

DAVID PHILLIPS

"Life's too short for bad presentations"



Oscar Nyström

A passionate light story

BRANDING INTERIORS

COCA-COLA AND RED BULL

VIALUME — DESIGNING GOOD LIGHT

CELEBRATING CITIES IN LIGHT

MAKING AN ENTRANCE

FAGERHULT



Oscar Nyström, Lighting Designer: Expressing and enhancing the qualities of the surrounding.

Architectonical lighting, outdoor lighting, exhibitions, discos, shows, operas... Oscar Nyström has done it all. From luxury hotel resorts to super yachts, royal palaces and the homes of the stars, meet the passionate lighting designer who really knows how to make an expression.

TEXT AMELIE BERGMAN | PHOTO HANSSON SMART AND BOSSE LINDQWIST

Oscar's obsession with light started at a very young age.

"My first word wasn't 'mum' or 'dad', it was 'lamp'. From a very small age I was fascinated by everything that emitted light; flashlights, light bulbs, luminaires... I was drawn to them as a moth to the light", Oscar recalls.

Rather than the traditional toys or stickers Oscar started collecting luminaires, light sources and pretty much anything else he could get his hands on. Parents, relatives and friends of the family encouraged his interest and brought their own contributions. It didn't take long for the news to spread throughout the small town of La Garde-Freinet on the French Riviera, where Oscar was brought up.

FROM THE DISCO TO THE OPERA

Around the age of ten, his parent's friends started asking him to help them out with the lighting arrangements for their garden parties.

"Everyone in La Garde-Freinet knew about my lighting collection, so whenever there was a village festivity I was contacted."

It didn't take long before Oscar got to hang out with the Big Boys.

"Some teenage guys had a traveling disco and I got to rig the light. Of course, they didn't let me hang around when the party started – I was too young – but it was a good way to learn. Some years later I took up my own business, traveling along the French Riviera as a DJ with my light and sound show." >>



Oscar Nyström

Oscar Nyström started his career as lighting designer at the age of ten. To him, it's the creative ambitions of the project that matters, not size or budget.

Photo: Bosse Lindqwist.



Private home, France.

>> By that time, Oscar's parents had realised light was the only way their son was ever going to go.

"Honestly, school wasn't my cup of tea. So mum and dad found out which schools offered courses in lighting design. There were a few options – but there was also a catch. You had to have professional experience. And I was still in my early teens..."

For a period Oscar had an internship at Stockholm's City Theatre and then went on to work as an assistant

for Hans-Åke Sjöquist, a legendary lighting designer who specialises in classic music scenes. For two years Oscar travelled Europe with his mentor Hans-Åke, lighting some of the world's most prestigious opera-scenes; The Bastille, Opera Garnier, Orléans, Marseille and Stockholm.

Aged 17, Oscar began his studies at London's City of Westminster College. It's obvious that he had a blast. During the days he studied at college or getting some professional practice at West Ends

big stage shows. By night he was a resident at a famous nightclub working as a light jockey. In 1992 Oscar graduated and began to work as a freelance lighting designer and in 1999 he founded his company Oscar Nyström Lighting Designer in St Tropez.

A MATTER OF COURSE

Today, Oscar's projects span over three continents – Europe, Africa and North America – where he has illuminated palaces, luxury hotels, royal palaces,



Private home, France.



Private home, France.

private residences and public parks and interiors. Hyatt Hotels and Resorts is one of his many customers and partners. His impressive list of references also include the Nina Ricci Head Office in Paris, Moroccan luxury resort La Mamounia and a string of famous international nightclubs, music venues, museums and exhibitions. He's also been called as an expert by a kitchen appliance manufacturer, helping to create the right light setting to make food look even more appetising in the fridge.

According to Oscar it's not a matter of size or budget. He happily takes on small assignments; it's the creative ambitions of the projects that are important.

"Lighting is the perfect way to make an expression and to make an impression, no matter what the circumstances. A well thought out lighting strategy can mean a lot to an identity, whether its focusing on temporary lighting decorations, like Christmas illuminations, or longer-term architectural lighting. You

don't have to look like 'Versailles' or 'Las Vegas'. But you can still have a huge impact. There's a creative lighting solution for every budget."

With over 20 years' experience in the business, Oscar has witnessed how the lighting designer's participation in a project has become a matter of course.

"Being part of the project from scratch is absolutely necessary to be able to express the client's ambition. Nowadays, most projects always have a creative director or head architect >>



Private home, France.



“Outdoor lighting is always a challenge. When planning the light you have to remember that the outdoor is never static. The lighting solution has to work at all hours, rain, wind or shine.”

Oscar Nyström, Lighting Designer



» who, after consulting the client, puts together a dream team of architects, interior- and landscape architects, audio video- and lighting designers.”

FINDING THE BALANCE

Oscar is renowned for his personal style where artificial light interacts seamlessly with natural light. It’s an abstract art form, requiring meticulous preparations. Light sources and fixtures are often made invisible; with the eye being intuitively drawn toward the illuminated objects. And, if Oscar cannot find the luminaire he’s looking for, he designs them himself in collaboration with manufacturers.

Identifying the unique properties and expressions for each project is crucial and Oscar prefers to create several emotions in a scene to make it work under varying conditions. He uses intelligent lighting control systems to create a dynamic light variation during the day and different seasons.

“Outdoor lighting is always a challenge. When planning the light you have to remember that the outdoor is never static. The lighting solution has to work at all hours, rain, wind or shine.”

There’s also a big difference in lighting cultures, depending on geography and climate.

“In the northern hemisphere, cus-

tomers prefer a warm, dimmed, glowing light. In the southern hemisphere the customers love bright, cold showers of light.”

Another thing you must not forget when creating a lighting design is that it has to be intuitive and user friendly.

“When handed over to the end user it should be easy to use and maintain, with pre-set lighting scenarios that can change with the time of day and the season. The concept must be thought out, all the way. Otherwise it won’t be used properly, or not at all, and the expression will be lost.” ■