



## **NEWS (/NEWS/) – LIGHT PERSPECTIVES: KATIE SFETKIDIS**

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*Light Show* (<http://www.mca.com.au/exhibition/light-show/?gclid=CKnns-icmsUCFVYrvQodNkEAag>) asks us to reconsider our relationship to our surroundings and how we see the world. While light is part of our every day, some people's profession involves thinking about light in a lot more depth than switching a light on or off. To prepare you for our new exhibition we've gathered a selection of perspectives on the impact and uses of light.

First is lighting designer [Katie Sfetkidis \(http://katiesfetkidis.com/\)](http://katiesfetkidis.com/), who has a history of working with light on both live theatre performances and in her own art practice.

### **Can you recall a memorable experience you had with light?**

When I was about 10 years old my mother took me to see a Netherland Dans Theater Performance, at the Arts Centre. The work involved these large dresses and the performers were underneath them and lit in a way that made the dancers look grotesque. I found the experience terrifying and exciting. This is probably one of my first memories of lighting design in performance and I still think about it often.

### **As a lighting designer, do you feel more in tune with the impact that light has on us every day?**

Once I became interested in light I started noticing it everywhere. How different buildings and streets were lit at night, or different light in my home. I also become very aware of how exposed we are to large amounts of light in urban environments. My fascination with darkness in my installation work is in response to this.

### **What makes light important for performers and musicians?**

Lighting has a huge effect on how we experience performance. Lighting design has the capacity to enhance and frame a performance by helping to pick out subtleties in the music or dramatic text. It also works to create a visual story for the performance work.

### **What is your process when you are designing lighting for theatre?**

I spend a lot of time researching and gathering information about a new production, including collecting a large amount of visual stimulus. [I use Pinterest \(https://www.pinterest.com/katiesfet/\)](https://www.pinterest.com/katiesfet/) a lot to do this; I create a new board for each project I am working on. I tend to watch quite a few films as part of the research for a new design and if there is music in the show, I also make a musical playlist.

Collaboration is a huge part of a lighting design and I normally meet with the director and the designer a number of times throughout the process. I like to spend as much time as possible in the rehearsal room also.

Generally two weeks out from going in the theatre I put together a lighting plan and this is where I start to think about what different looks we might want to create with light, what is the lighting arch and how we might support the story through lighting.

As a theatre lighting designer, most of my practical work (working with light) happens quite late in the process. Generally you have two or three days to hang the lights in theatre, focus them and then program all the different lighting states and work with the actors to put all the elements together.

### **Lighting can have a big impact on mood, whether sunlight, moonlight or room lighting. What do you think about the impact of artificial vs natural light?**

I am very conscious of the psychological impact lighting can have, particularly artificial lighting. I'm interested in how different coloured lights and light sources can affect our concentration levels, our sense of comfort and our sleeping habits. In particular I'm interested in the colour rendering properties of different types of light globes.

**How do you see the relationship between light and (physical) space?**

Light can shape a space in many different ways. It can affect how we appreciate the size of a space and the different colours within it depending on the colour rendering. Light makes a space feel open and inviting or claustrophobic.

**Do you see light in and of itself as a form or art? Or simply as an accompaniment?**

I think it's both. Many artists use light as their primary source but light is also really important in other forms of art such as painting or photography even if it isn't the physical medium. As a lighting designer for theatre, I see lighting as the design element that works to bring other design elements of set, costume and sound together with the performers on stage.

**About Katie**

Katie is a light artist and lighting designer for theatre. As a theatre designer she has worked with many companies including Melbourne and Sydney Theatre Companies, Malthouse and Belvoir St Theatre. She has been nominated for five Green Room Awards. In her installation practice Katie creates lighting and sound installations that explore the relationship between light and dark. Her work is influenced by dark spaces found in nature such as caves, space and the deep sea. Katie's recent work *In Deep Water* was an exploration of bioluminescence found in the deep sea. Katie has presented work in Festival of Live Art, Underbelly Arts Festival, Brisbane Festival – Under the Radar, Blindside Gallery and Newport Substation Gallery.

**Get tickets and learn more about the [Light Show \(http://www.mca.com.au/exhibition/light-show/?gclid=CKnns-jcmsUCFVYrvQodNkEAag\)](http://www.mca.com.au/exhibition/light-show/?gclid=CKnns-jcmsUCFVYrvQodNkEAag) exhibition.**

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Katie Sfetkidis *In Deep Water (object 4)* 2014. Image by Lucy Parakhina.



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