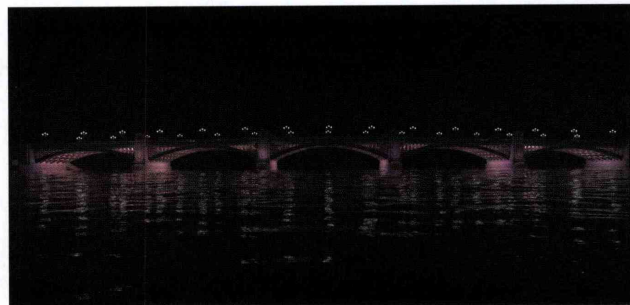




'I'M INTERESTED IN  
INTEGRATING AI AND  
ROBOTICS MORE  
INTO DESIGN'

*Opening the first of our 2023 profiles of industry newcomers, Dutch lighting engineer Guus Ketelings outlines his route into lighting, how light inspires him, and his hopes for the future*

*By Guus Ketelings*



Southwark Bridge as lit up through the Illuminated River public art project and, below, London Bridge

#### **TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF**

I'm Guus Ketelings, senior lighting engineer for DFL-UK. I'm a first-generation immigrant to the UK, having moved from The Netherlands in 2017. I've got a real passion for tinkering, engineering solutions and especially being creative in whatever media is presented to me. The lighting industry ticks all those boxes for me!

#### **HOW DID YOU GET INTO LIGHTING?**

I started in stage lighting back in 2012 as a 13-year-old, assisting with the building and breaking of tiny gigs (fewer than 500 attendees). In 2016, I took the plunge and reached out to my then (and still!)

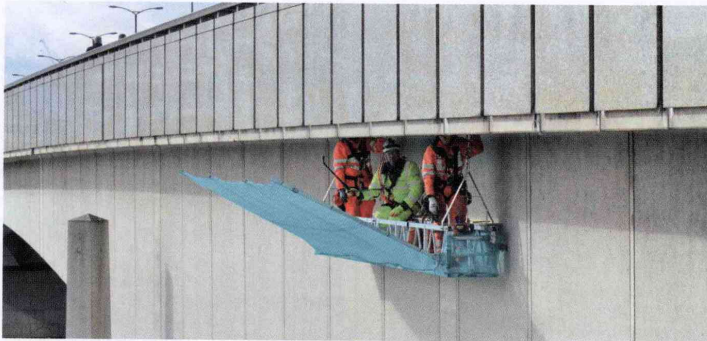
favourite record label to see if I could get involved. This resulted in operating shows for 10,000+ people.

Stage lighting was great but incredibly intermittent and not easily combined with my other endeavours, so I looked to turn this into a career in 2017. Ever since joining the industry, it's been a wild ride.

#### **WHY LIGHTING?**

Lighting is beautiful, essential, and a bit of an underdog in creative media. I get huge pleasure out of seeing people interact with the schemes I have designed. Sharing this passion I have for beautiful lighting by using only light as language, and succeeding, is what really drives me.

## Young and new lighters



Guus (right) worked as a volunteer on the Illuminated River project, an opportunity set up by the ILP

### WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST INTERESTING ABOUT YOUR ROLE AND WHY?

The interface between creativity and technology. My role covers anything from ideaation and concepts all the way up to construction.

I can be working on projects where you need to convert your ideas to a practical and buildable solution but which can also be very challenging yet, equally, incredibly rewarding once you've cracked a particular tough nut (often one that I have created!).

### HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY PROJECTS YOU ARE PARTICULARLY PROUD OF, AND WHY?

All of them! There is always one element in the projects I work on that I am particularly fond of.

If I had to pick one, I would have to say volunteering (through the ILP) for the Illuminated River project. As I described it in *Lighting Journal* at the time it was a 'once in a lifetime' opportunity because it gave you the chance to impact millions of people on a daily basis (*'Spanning the moment'*, June 2019, vol 84, no 6).

Getting involved in Illuminated River was what really pushed me towards public realm lighting and breaking away from functional lighting – which has been nothing short of a paradigm shift.

### HOW DOES LIGHT INSPIRE YOU?

I think that perpetual awareness of light that we all share really helps me find inspiration.

No matter where you are or what is producing the light, nearly every day I will see something and think 'oh, that's cool how the light interacts with that – hadn't thought of that before'.

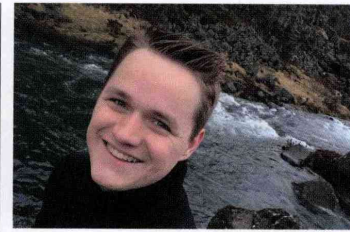
### WHAT BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES WOULD YOU SAY THERE ARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENTER THE INDUSTRY?

I can only speak for the sector I work in – consulting. But I think a significant push could be made on getting more apprentices without formal education into the industry.

Further education didn't interest me; I wanted to build a career. The industry is missing out on excellent people who can be guided into becoming successful engineers.

### DO YOU HAVE A MENTOR OR SOMEONE WHO HAS PARTICULARLY INSPIRED OR SUPPORTED YOU?

All my employers have been primary drivers who supported me in developing my career: DFL-UK, CU Phosco, Meno TV and so on. I have to give a special mention to The Corner Crew, who also helped push me into the work I love doing.



### HOW HAS THE ILP HELPED YOU ON YOUR LIGHTING 'JOURNEY'?

The ILP has created a platform that has allowed me to learn from industry stars, network with lots and lots of people and presented once-in-a-lifetime opportunities such as the Illuminated River work.

### WHAT'S YOUR AMBITION IN LIGHTING? WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IN, SAY, TEN YEARS' TIME?

Outside of my day job, I'm involved in things like game/software development and virtual events.

I think this latter space is currently heavily overlooked in the lighting industry. Integrating the knowledge we have within this field has already yielded some interesting results.

I'm particularly interested in integrating artificial intelligence, automation of robotic processes and more in our design flow, to see what new and interesting answers this brings to the table.

### WHAT WOULD BE YOUR MESSAGE TO OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE INTERESTED IN OR THINKING ABOUT A CAREER IN LIGHTING?

Find your passion and run with it. There is no better feeling than waking up in the morning and thinking 'another day – another interesting problem to solve/another cool lighting design to produce'.

If you can do what you love and get paid at the same time, life is good.



**Guus Ketelings** EngTech AMILP is senior lighting engineer at DFL-UK

### GET IN TOUCH

Don't forget, if you're under 35 or new to the industry and would like to tell your story during 2023, simple email *Lighting Journal* editor Nic Paton on [nic.cormorantmedia@outlook.com](mailto:nic.cormorantmedia@outlook.com) or the ILP's Jess Gallacher on [jess@theilp.org.uk](mailto:jess@theilp.org.uk). We'll then send you a questionnaire to fill in and return with a photograph. Simple!

