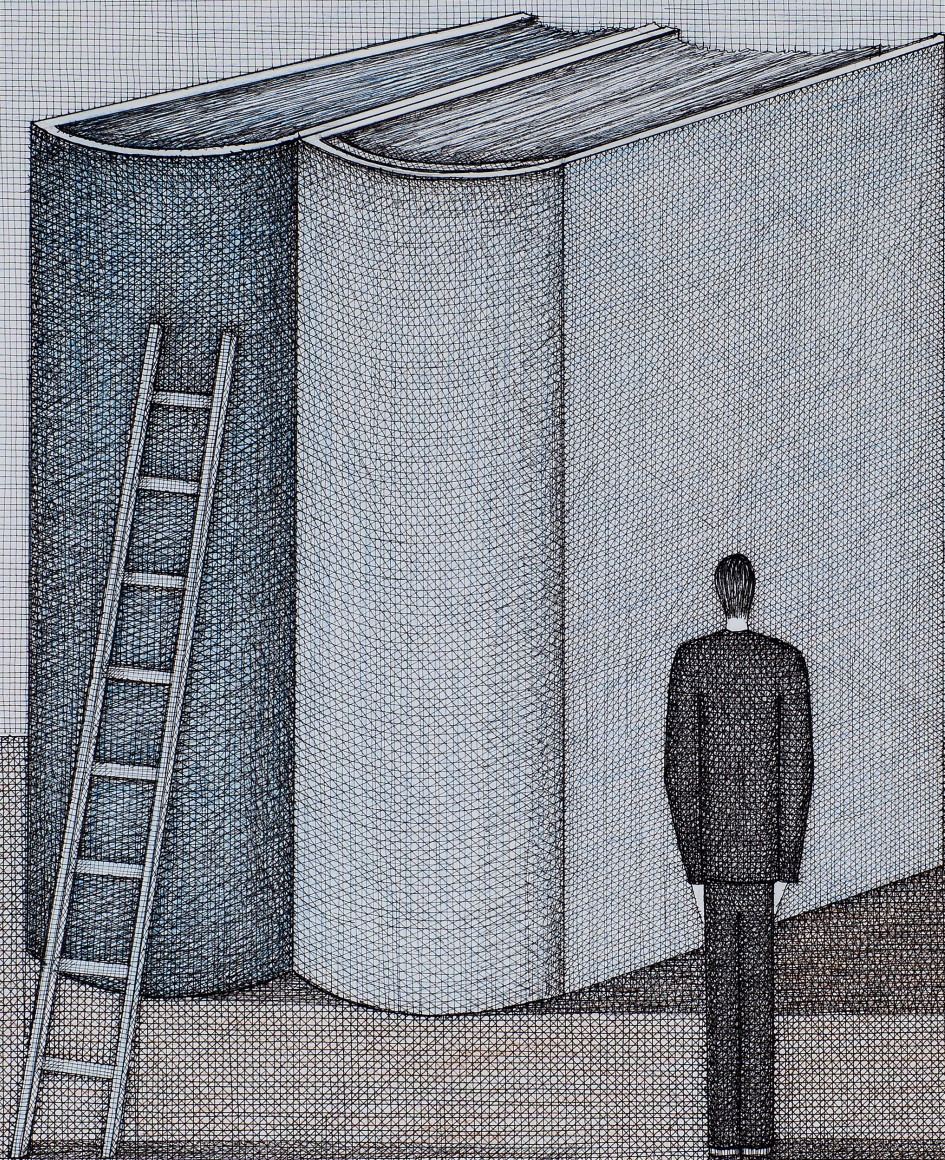


# The Role of Cultural Institutions and Events in the Marketing of Cities and Regions

Edited by  
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# **Night in a big city. Light festivals as a creative medium used at night and their impact on the authority, significance and prestige of a city**

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## **1. Research Methodology**

Research methods used in the preparation of this paper:

- The method of critical review and analysis of the literature available in English, German and French on the topic of light festivals, including the report: *The Economic and Cultural Benefits of Lighting Festivals* (LUCI, 2011).
- The practice-based research method. The following work has been enriched by more than 12 years of the author's professional experience in design and implementation of artificial lighting, gained by working in the leading design offices that specialize in architectural illumination in Germany, the USA, the UK and Switzerland.
- The method of interview with the organizers of the case studies presented in this paper. The collected data comes from e-mail correspondence with Kjell Hult and Anna Davidsson (Alingsås), Jocelyn Blanc (Lyon) and Helmut Bien and Angelika Kroll-Marth (Luminale/Frankfurt am Main).
- The method of observation through personal participation in festival events over the years. These studies are based on the author's experience as a participant in the Lights in Alingsås workshops and festival in 2002 and 2003, numerous visits to the Luminale as well as Light & Building Trade Fair in Frankfurt as an independent lighting designer

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and visitor in 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014 and a guest at the Fête des Lumières festival in Lyon in 2001 and 2012.

- The comparative method. It is based on comparing three different European light festivals. The study analyzes similarities and differences in the elements that influence both the planning and the outcome of such events.

## 2. Introduction

This research work addresses the issue of the art of illumination as a tool that can create complex artistic concepts of artificial lighting design for architectural objects, emphasize the context of the place or its relationships with nature, and compose unique projects, such as festivals of lights, which become cultural events for the city and its residents.

According to documented history records it appears that people have always used artificial lighting while organizing important religious or cultural events. Although this work mentions historical development of the events that are precursors of light festivals, it focuses mostly on the contemporary events, by covering three different case studies that illustrate good practices in Europe.

The concept of a festival as a cultural event has been known and propagated around the world for many years (Getz, 2005, p. 20–21). The word “festival” is defined as “a public, themed celebration” (Getz, 2005, p. 21), as well as “all expressions of cultural events. [...] that occur locally and can be informal in nature” (UNESCO, 2009, p. 26). Artificial light as a medium has been used over the centuries, but only in the last 20 years has emerged as a new phenomenon, a new type of festival in Europe and in the world — the festival of lights. This sudden boom is associated with the development of lighting technology, new techniques of illumination (3-D mapping projection), light sources (LEDs) and the development of lighting control systems and their automatization (Zielinska-Dabkowska, 2015). Undoubtedly, the above development of this new creative discipline has also been affected by globalization and easy “flow” of people.

So far, there has not been any accepted definition of the festival of lights in the world in the context described in this work. Therefore, the following proposal of the author, namely: a *festival of light* is “an artistic, thematic, live and cultural event, open to the general public (usually at no charge), repeated regularly, which uses artificial light as a medium and is part of Cultural Tourism”.

Cultural tourism on the other hand, is defined as “the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs” (Richards, 1996, p. 24) This form of tourism is also becoming increasingly popular around the world and can play a role in a regional development (OECD, 2009, p. 35). Cultural events in the form of festivals of lights have emerged as additional positioning mechanisms, after many cities began to use culture to promote themselves as brands (European Union, 2015; Palmer, 2004; Patel, 2013).

More than 30 different festivals of lights have been identified in Europe on the basis of the information available online (Schielke, 2013) and from the organization of Lighting Urban Community International — LUCI (LUCI, n.d.) a unique international network bringing together cities and lighting professionals engaged in using light as a major tool for sustainable urban, social and economic development. They include:

- in Belgium: Light Festival Ghent;
- in Estonia: Tallinn Light Biennale;
- in France Chartres en Lumières; Fete des Lumières;
- in the Netherlands: Glow;
- in Germany: Leipzig Festival of Lights; Festungsleuchten, Genius Loci Weimar; Lichttrouten, Lüdenscheid, Berlin Festival of Lights; Luminale in Frankfurt RheinMain;
- in Switzerland: Lausanne Festival of Lights; Rendez-vous Bundesplatz, Bern; Lux Geneva Festival;
- in Sweden: Nattljus, Eskilstuna; Gothenburg Christmas town; Lights in Alingsas;
- in the UK: Illuminate Bath; Light Festival Longbridge, Birmingham; Lumiere, Durham; E-Luminate Cambridge Festival; Illuminating York.

By analyzing the above festival list one can conclude that such festivals take place in almost every country, including Poland — the better known ones include: Bella Skyway Festival in Torun or Light.Move.Festival in Lodz.

It should be noted that there are not many case studies related to the light festivals, due to the fact that it is a relatively new field of visual art. Most literature refers to other categories of festivals concerning, for example: dramatic arts, cinema, world culture, visual art and craft, literature, history and heritage, literature, music etc. (Newbold et al., 2015; Silber & Rosenstein, 2010; UNESCO, 2009, p. 10–11; p. 38). Therefore, the study presented here is quite unique because it compares three different types of light festivals in Europe that have never been shown in such constellation before. The method of case studies described here provides detailed information on the best practices in the selected cities. The author decided to choose light festivals in Sweden, Germany and France in order to show their different marketing approach and differences in their scope and size of the festival budget. All of them have been considered successful in terms of “attracting” visitors and generating income for the city. Even though they might reach different market levels (local, regional, national, international), they have significant artistic value. Having already been recognized and established in Europe, they contribute to the strengthening of the position and perception of the image of their host city and region.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how much light festivals can contribute to the promotion and communication of a European town in the development of its marketing strategy, contributing towards creating its image, significance and its distinctive target brand.

### 3. Historical background

Searching for the origin of light festivals in Europe, one should go back to the days of ancient Roman Empire and the festival in honor of the goddess Diana held at Nemi lake, southeast of Rome, upon the full moon of August. It was known as Nemoralia or the festival of torches because worshippers assembled by torch or candlelight performed procession around the lake (Fowler, 1899, p. 198–202; “Nemoralia,” n.d.; Whelan, 2015, p. 368). These performances can be regarded as the first events preceding the currently known light festivals. In the centuries that followed, the church played a large/major role in the “development” of light festivals and methods of illumination. Particularly, the need for artificial light appeared at the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth century, when numerous liturgical ceremonies began to take place outside church buildings after sunset. Various

types of woven iron baskets and other receptacles with glowing light were placed on sticks high above the heads of the spectators (The History of Stage and Theatre Lighting, 1929, p. 11). Processions with candles around a church and along the streets were also part of religious rituals. For example, the contemporary Lyon's light festival [fr. *Fête des Lumières*] has its roots in the religious procession with candles that took place along the streets ("History. From an age-old tradition to a unique urban event," n.d.). Fireworks, as a new way of obtaining lighting effects during night performances, have already been used in Italy since the fourteenth century. Over the period of the next two centuries, they spread to other parts of Europe (Salatino, 1998, p.vii). At the end of the eighteenth century, important buildings in Rome, Italy, were illuminated with artificial light, usually during major religious festivals or political events. The annual night fireworks display over Castel Sant'Angelo and the illumination of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican in particular were visible from various locations in the city (Goethe, 1816/1982, p. 344). Rome is believed to have held for several centuries the most spectacular festival of lights in Europe which lasted two days (Salatino, 1998, p. 37; p. 55). Between the fifteenth and eighteenth century, performances involving fireworks during summer festivals of light and sound spread also in European royal courts of Versailles, Paris, Dresden, Stuttgart, London, St. Petersburg and Ghent. These excellent night shows and light effects created by using fireworks were usually available to a privileged narrow social group as an extravagant and private spectacle (Salatino, 1998, p. 1–3), but also as a public spectacle created to celebrate historically important events, such as the end of war, coronations, birthdays and funerals. With time, the lower social class was able to take part in public and visual performances, as in the case of British fireworks festivals in the Vauxhall Gardens (Doderer-Winkler, 2013, p. 4 & p. 196), Hyde Park and Green Park (Doderer-Winkler, 2013, p. 8–7, p. 190–193) or on the river Thames in London (Doderer-Winkler, 2013, p. 16; Boyle, 2012).

The next important step in the direction of "creating" the idea of light festivals were World Exhibitions: regular exhibitions presenting cultural, scientific and technical heritage of countries and peoples of the world ("World's fair", n.d). The aim of the first exhibitions was to celebrate industrial achievements, that is, new technologies and inventions, which were examples of colorful and moving performances that influenced the future night image of cities. The intention of external illumination during World Exhibitions was to enchant and delight the audiences with light performances.

Paris was the city, which for years set the trend in this new field. The world exhibition in Paris [fr. *L'Exposition Universelle*] organized in 1889 had for many years been considered the most prestigious in the world, probably due to the fact that a unique structural engineering construction, the Eiffel Tower [fr. *La Tour Eiffel*] had been built especially for this occasion. It became the main symbol of the fair. This structure was also a background for the illumination performance designed to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the French Revolution. The two very powerful searchlights installed on the highest platform and sending their beams down to the exhibition buildings were seen in the sky and in the horizon of Paris even from a distance of 200 km away from the city. Electric light bulbs and old-fashioned magnesium light were used to illuminate the structure. The novelty was also the use of colored light — the tower was illuminated with French national colors (Monod, 1889, p. 96; p. 194–195; SETE, n.d.). An innovative control system for illumination of fountains was created for the first time on this occasion, allowing the play of water and light (Monod, 1889, p. 124–134; p. 361). Paris Fountain was lit at night in such a way that it created three-dimensional lighting effects. For the first time the night

spectacle was directed, the element of which were all the fountains located at the exhibition site. Every evening exactly at nine o'clock, those fountains started to colorfully sparkle with light, which was then followed by a spectacular firework performance from the Eiffel Tower, creating the impression of an imminent explosion (Dumas & de Fourcaud, 1889, p. 169–177; "The Paris World Exposition 1889, n.d.). Another World's Fair took place many years later, in 1937, again in Paris. Every evening at dusk, the fair premises and the river Seine were transformed in a vibrant and shimmering alley of lights, illuminating the promenade, roads and the inside and outside of buildings with artificial lighting. Some evenings there was an additional attraction, a spectacle combining light, water and music effects, when fireworks, multicolored lights of fountains, music and thousands of balloons were floating in the sky, lit by colored spotlights and searchlight ("The Paris World Exposition 1937", n.d.; Krauter, 1997, p. 161–162). These light performances proceeded smoothly, thanks to careful preparation which began exactly at the same time as the first architectural blueprints were drawn. Synchronization of the fireworks of all effects was controlled from two most modern electrical control panels, which was an important factor in the success of the event. The main attraction of the exhibition, located 300 meters above the Champ de Mars Park, was the Eiffel Tower, illuminated again. This time the structure was lit with white light from 30 searchlights directed upward, while the truss was illuminated with 10 000 neon lamps in three national colors. ("The Paris World Exposition 1937", n.d.). The importance of this building as a national symbol of Paris and France was emphasized with light. It took eight years to prepare such a perfect synchronization of architecture and lighting techniques. However, the efforts produced the intended effects — a nighttime image of the "City of Lights" [fr. *Ville de Lumières*] was created in the minds of fair visitors (Krauter, 1997, p. 161). The lighting projects created for the purposes of political propaganda also paved the way towards contemporary means of expression used in the concepts of light festivals. Light was a perfect medium to influence emotions of recipients and to promote selected content. In Berlin, where Edison's company founded its first European subsidiaries, electric lighting was used to serve political needs already in the second half of the eighties of the nineteenth century. In 1887, in connection with the celebration of Emperor Wilhelm's ninetieth birthday, Berlin cathedrals received external illumination. Wilhelm II was one of the first monarchs who discovered the importance of artificial illumination in the perception of the city after dark (Neumann, 2002, p.13). In the nineteenth century, on several more occasions, artificial illumination added splendor to political events, defining the successive stages of improvement in its use for propaganda purposes.

Artificial light was also used at the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II, at the Kremlin in Moscow in May 1896. On this occasion, nocturnal illumination of architecture on such a large scale was created for the first time. The Kremlin was illuminated using techniques of contour lighting and searchlights. This ceremony was a demonstration of power and strength of tsarism (Upton, 1880, p. 532).

Once again, light was used for political purposes in May 1937, during the coronation of King George VI. Never before had external illumination been used in the United Kingdom on such scale. They were to demonstrate the power of Great Britain and the importance of the monarchy to millions of people around the world. That evening, London and other UK cities were shining with electric light. Fountains, as well as public gardens and parks were illuminated. Even at sea, the searchlights installed on British naval ships created a movable light show in the sky (Kircher, 1937). Similarly, during the coronation of Elizabeth II in June 1953, crowds took to the streets to celebrate in the daytime and at

night. The most important buildings in the city were illuminated, as well as The Mall, (the main road leading to Buckingham Palace) was decorated with coats of arms, flags and royal emblems, the fountain in front of the palace and the royal palace building (Zielinska, 2013, p. 64). In the thirties of the XX century political situation in Germany, including the National Socialists coming to power in 1933, contributed to the development of light architecture and outdoor illumination (Neumann, 2002, p. 46). They used the aesthetic power of light to emphasize the scale of mass, nighttime gatherings of supporters of the Third Reich. Light as a great impact power was to be used to influence attitudes and public behavior, and was meant to be the center of intellectual and emotional persuasion. One of the most important of these places was a large open space designed for take-off and landing of airships in Nuremberg — that was where the Nazi party held its annual reunions. The so-called cathedral of light was created there in 1934, which was a light installation constituting a new dimension of architecture. It was designed with 130 searchlights, and the light was used in such a way as to create a sense of a three-dimensional space rising into the sky (Krauter, 1997, p. 189–196; Schmitt, 1937). The XI Olympic Games held in Berlin in 1936 were also used to promote fascist ideology. They created a visual spectacle that was meant to impress the crowds at the stadium and, thanks to television broadcasts, all viewers around the world. During the closing ceremony of the Olympic Games, the Olympia Stadium in Berlin was surrounded by vertical searchlights that were leant towards the center, crossing themselves and creating a light canopy (Bernd, 2011).

Many of the techniques and concepts of light architecture were also used for nighttime light shows to celebrate the victory after the end of World War II. They were held in many places around the world, where military searchlights were used to create the light setting for the celebrations expressing joy of thousands of people rejoicing in the streets (Zielinska, 2013, p. 63–64; Grayson, 1953).

In the postwar period, the concept of the “light and sound” show [fr. *Son et lumière*], a type of night entertainment usually presented in the open air in a place of historical significance (“Son et lumière”, 2015) was the most similar to today’s light festivals. Special lighting effects displayed on the building facade or on the walls of ruins were synchronized with recorded or live narration and music to add more drama to the history of the place. The idea is attributed to the curator of the Chateau de Chambord in France, where the first such festival in the world took place in 1952 (“Son et lumière,” 2015). This medium has become very popular in France, mainly in the Loire Valley, in the palace of Versailles, or at Les Invalides in Paris.

In the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, more and more creative solutions of illumination began to appear, making the new discipline of light architecture flourish in the world. It seemed then that everything could be achieved, with the creators’ imagination being the only limit. Meanwhile, in the seventies of the twentieth century, the world suffered a massive energy and economic crisis (“1970s energy crisis,” n.d.; Horowitz, 2004; Kettell, 2015). It influenced the most highly industrialized countries dependent on oil and impacted all areas of the world economy. Illumination of architecture too become an area of activity affected by stagnation. Using external illumination seemed to be unethical in times of unemployment and massive inflation. All European countries had introduced severe restrictions on energy consumption, including external illumination of architecture and cities. As a result, the demand for realization of lighting designs and light festivals projects dropped considerably up till the nineties of the twentieth century.

It should be noted that there was a marked increase in environmental awareness of societies during the time of the crisis. The research conducted for the needs of different

disciplines identified a number of constraints arising from the effects of night lighting on buildings, as well as faced designers with a number of new requirements. Although the attempt to address these considerations was not an easy task, it became possible thanks to the development of new lighting technologies and of innovative techniques of illumination, the use of new materials, as well as cooperation of lighting designers with specialists from other disciplines. The visible effect of these actions was the revival of this creative field, demonstrated in a noticeable increase in the demand for illumination projects, including those relating to the organization of light festivals.

### **3.1. Light Festival *Fête des Lumières* — from a centuries-long tradition to a unique, worldwide event with ephemeral urban lighting, Lyon/France**

The light festival in Lyon is indirectly linked to dramatic events dating back to the year 1643, when the city was not only swept with an epidemic of plague, but was also in constant danger of wars threatening its borders. It was then that the people of Lyon consecrated and entrusted the city to Mary the Mother of God. In memory of these events, it was decided to decorate the top of the bell tower of the Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière with a golden statue of Mary, the patroness of Lyon. The ceremony, originally planned for the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1852, was canceled because of floods striking the city. The event was to take place then on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, unfortunately, due to the storm raging on that day, the ceremony had to be postponed again. However, the weather improved in the evening and people spontaneously set candles on balconies, window sills and under the basilica, so that the building on the hill was glowing with candle light and, as a result, was visible in the nighttime panorama of the city. Meanwhile, the residents took to the streets celebrating and illuminating the evening sky with firecrackers (*Fête des Lumières* 2014, n.d., p. 9; *Fête des Lumières*, 2012, p. 17). Since then, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, inhabitants of Lyon illuminate their windows with lights, and also hold a traditional evening procession with candles through the streets of the old town, from St. John 's Cathedral (see Figure 1) to the Basilica of Notre-Dame de Fourvière, to pay homage to the patroness saint of the city ("*Lyon-Fourvière*", 2014). This tradition is called the *Fête des Lumières*, which means "a festival of lights".

Toward the end of the 1980s, Lyon was not considered a good place to live, work, or to experience cultural events. It was a place frequently shrouded in fog, gray and depressing, notorious for its gloomy atmosphere (Ritter, 2001). The city sought to redefine its image. In 1998, the old town of Lyon, together with its historical and architectural landmarks, was named a UNESCO World Heritage Site (UNESCO, 1999). The city then received a new chance — it could already offer its product, namely, historical tourism. On the basis of this achievement, Henry Chabert, a municipal city planner, suggested using the historical ambience associated with the 8<sup>th</sup> of December (a date respected and significant in the religious tradition of Lyon) as the setting for a few day long art festival with artificial light (Laganier, 2002, p. 45). This concept was probably inspired by "*son et lumiere*" performances, a form of nightly entertainment already known to the French. A year later, in 1999, the first light festival took place in a small part of the old historic town of Lyon, targeting mostly local residents. This event turned out to be a great success, convincing the representatives of the city that it was the right direction to take in the future.

Over the last years, the light festival of Lyon has become a major cultural event in the city. It has also become a leading spectacle in the world. Since then, every year around 8<sup>th</sup> December, for four nights Lyon becomes a centre of artificial light, performances and



light shows, creating unique designs that attract millions of tourists. Today, this festival is the main place for creative shows and light exhibitions, presenting the work of the best avant-garde artists from around the world (contemporary and up-and-coming artistic talents) in the form of an open-air laboratory (see Figure 2). Video, music and sound effects are used to accompany live images scattered throughout the city. This is why Lyon today is also known as the “European capital of light”.

The festival has also made the city of Lyon a more attractive and culturally important tourist destination. The marketing strategy “of using” artificial light at night in the form of an annual light festival has changed the city’s image and greatly increased the demand for cultural tourism. Today, with an estimated 4 million visitors, it is one of the biggest annual events in the world. As the festival is a free public event, the exact number of visitors remains unknown.

A series of prestigious awards and distinctions received by the city confirms the importance and attractiveness of this light festival. In 2009, Lyon was voted the most artistic French city, apart from Paris by Arts Magazine, a French art magazine (*Fête des Lumières*, 2012, p. 24). In 2011 it was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> globally and 2<sup>nd</sup> in France in the category of innovation (“Innovation Cities”, 2011). In 2015, the Telegraph, a British newspaper, reported Lyon to have moved to the first place as a popular short break destination among top European cities (“European city breaks”, 2014). In 2014, the Guardian, another British newspaper, named Lyon one of Europe’s top 10 light art festivals (Beanland, 2014). In addition, Lyon was also the winner of European Cities and Regions of the Future 2014/2015 in the ranking of fDi Magazine of the Financial Times, taking the 2<sup>nd</sup> place among 25 medium-sized European Cities in general category and the 15<sup>th</sup> in Top 25 European Cities Overall category (McReynolds, 2014). It should be emphasized that Lyon has a well-developed rail, air, river and city transport — hence the town is easily accessible to visitors. The city hosts predict that a new direct rail link between London and Lyon built in 2015 will increase the number of tourists from the UK in subsequent years.

The light festival, as a product developed by the city of Lyon, is the subject of growing international competition. That is why the city had to change its previous historical marketing strategy and adjust it to contemporary times. Gérard Collomb, the Mayor of Lyon, explains the current marketing strategy as follows: “[...] we chose to make Lyon a city of innovation. The challenge is both to remain competitive in a global economy and be able to meet the challenges of our time. Real laboratory of creativity, the Festival of Lights is part of this approach [...]” (Lehalle, 2014). The festival has a new theme every year, for example: “Light and spirituality”, “Light of art with artificial light”, “Streams of light”, “The 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the light bulb” or “History of light”, to name just a few. The artists taking part in these projects come from very different creative backgrounds and represent many disciplines. They are selected through a competition process and the number of outstanding projects presented each year is about 80 in total (LUCI, 2011, p. 5).

The City of Lyon selects both established professionals and young beginner artists to participate in the light festival, providing them with a chance to present their work to a very wide audience. The festival has already promoted many cutting edge temporary lighting installations, allowing each project to test new concepts and lighting techniques. It still surprises with its freshness, even though it has been organized for so many years. For example, in 2013, famous French fashion designers like Chantal Thomas and Jean-Charles de Castelbajac were invited to be part of this event and to create their own lighting installations (“Fête des Lumières 2013”, 2013; “Light Festival draws millions”, 2013). In addition, the city and sponsors grant three awards for the completed art projects

("Toujours plus d'affluence", n.d., p. 2). These and other innovations enable the festival to invariably retain its first place among light festivals in the world.

The December spectacle shows Lyon at its best, integrating architectural buildings, the river, parks and the city's history into illumination projects. Two special lighting techniques became particularly popular at the beginning: oversized projection of images on the main facades of significant buildings in the old town and coloured modifications of existing lighting installations, often accompanied by sound. Later, with the development of lighting technology, the lighting technique of 3D mapping projections ("3D\_projection" 2015; "Projection mapping", 2015; Zielinska, 2013, p. 116) became even more popular. Fête des Lumières it is now a light show that positions the city via creativity, where visitors are able to devise their own walking routes that take them through a lot of attractions, including a chance to view the illumination from a boat on the river.

One third of the festival's visitors come from Europe and other parts of the world, including the 37% of guests who come from French regions (*Fête des Lumières*, 2012, p. 18), making it a mixture of a local, regional, national and international event. French and foreign visitors want to experience the unique festival atmosphere, spend time with family and friends as well as admire new experimental performances and succumb to their charm. Gilbert Coudene, one of the light artists, described the festival in Lyon very accurately: "It's a festival for the people, you can see in their eyes, which are filled with emotions, you literally see their eyes light up" ("Light Festival illuminates", 2014).

The Departments of Event Management and Entertainment of the City of Lyon directly coordinates festival events. The team of organizers consists also of a number of enthusiastic experts from the departments of public lighting, the logistics of the festival, public spaces, landscapes, safety and prevention services or EDF, an electric power company. The whole project is created and supervised by an art director and a technical coordinator. In view of the prestige and importance of the festival, the whole undertaking is overseen by the mayor and the mayor's deputy (Lehalle, 2014).

The financing for the festival, according to Mr. Georges Képénékian, the *Deputy Mayor of Lyon for culture*, is as follows: "Half of the funding comes from the city and the other half comes from private partners. This is a showroom for them, a chance to show new technology. It's about innovation, the link between culture, industry, businesses and tourism, a chance for our city to spread its influence" ("Light Festival draws millions", 2013). In 2010, the total operating cost of the festival was 1.9 million (LUCI, 2011, p. 25), but already four years later thanks to the excellent marketing strategy the budget for the celebrations was valued at 2.6 million euros, of which half came from 69 private and institutional partners (Labeur, 2014b). "They have the opportunity to donate in cash or to make contribution in expertise or equipment [lighting] to fully fund a work", adds George Képénékian (Labeur, 2014b).

It is worth noting that this enormous undertaking is also backed by a number of cultural institutions. The support they offer takes different forms, for example, one of the main highlights of the festival is held in the Place des Terreaux (see Figure 3), a square where the Museum of Fine Arts [fr. *Museum des Beaux-Arts*] is located, the main façade of which has been used since 1999 as a projection display for creative installation.

The city is aware that the light festival is also a tremendous international showcase for Lyon. Experience in preparing the marketing side of the festival, the expertise in technical illumination together with the search and promotion of artists (Labeur, 2014a) has begun to translate directly into finances: "Many cities around the world want to copy what we're doing because they know that light is magic, light is what brings warmth to

the heart on a December night” said in 2013 Gérard Collomb, Mayor of Lyon (“Light Festival draws millions”, 2013).

From marketing perspective, *Fête des Lumières* can be treated as a saleable product or as a corporate brand that can be promoted and offered to a broader audience. Towns and cities that would like to use light festivals as a means of establishing themselves in the international tourist market send their representatives to Lyon in search of knowledge and practical know-how.

Foreign delegations of light festivals’ organizers take note of light installations presented during festival events. They also pay attention to the artists participating in the event in order to invite them to take part in their own festivals. Lyon, being aware of its experience and rank, “went one step further” and already began to cooperate in the organization of festivals of lights with other cities: with the city of Birmingham and Moscow in 2014, with Dubai in Saudi Arabia and Chinese Xian in 2014, and with the city of Leipzig in 2015 (*Fête des Lumières* 2014, n.d. p. 12–13). This is exactly the recent marketing strategy promoted by the city and echoed in the words of Jean-François Zurawik, Events Director at Lyon City Hall: “The *Fête des Lumières* has left its mark on Lyon, it’s in its genes, in its history and its tradition, and it’s also an opportunity for the city to promote itself and its know-how abroad” (“Light Festival illuminates”, 2014). The city is already known because of its many successful initiatives. In 2002, it created Light Urban Community International (LUCI), an international network of cities of light as a platform for design and promotion of urban lighting projects through international reflection and debate (“OnlyLyon”, 2012, p. 26; “Lyon: the light specialist”, n.d.). Huge interest in the festival is also evident in the number of foreign delegates attending Lyon Light Festival Forum (LLFF) — two days of conferences and events for representatives of different cities, other organizations of professionals and journalists (LUCI, 2011, p. 21). This forum was established in 2011 by the city of Lyon and the LUCI Association as a place for discussion, exchange of experiences and networking (LLFF, n.d.; LLFF Programme, 2014). In 2014, 180 people representing 36 cities took part in the third edition of the Forum. The main theme focused on the question how and if light festival can function in accordance with sustainable development? (“Cities gather in Lyon,” n.d.).

From the economic perspective, the light festival is a major contributor to the local economy, not only for the city but also for the whole of the Rhône-Alpes region. It is estimated that, thanks to the festival, there are about 10,000 jobs in the form of hundreds of small and medium-size companies, laboratories and even of higher education institutions with the departments specializing in lighting (“Lyon”, 2012). This is also evident in the use of such services as, for example: hospitality, catering, trade or transport. The hotel industry is, however, still the main beneficiary of the event.

According to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Lyon, the number of overnight stays between 2012 and 2013 increased by 12.5% (Lehalle, 2014), but this figure does not reflect the reality as 70% of the respondents declared staying with family or friends (Labeur, 2014b). According to the available data, during the four days of December there is a fourfold (more than on the weekends or even around Christmas or New Year) increase in the revenues of bars, cafeterias and restaurants (Lehalle, 2014), in withdrawals from cash points (Labeur, 2014) or in the number of trips taken by city and regional transport. In 2013, 6.5 million journeys were registered by public transport in Lyon only in this period (Labeur, 2014b). It is also interesting that more than 10 000 visitors participated in organized guided tours during the days and nights of the festival — which represents a 16.4% increase between 2013 and 2014 (“Toujours plus d’affluence”, n.d., p. 4).

The survey conducted last year testifies that Lyon, thanks to the festival, has achieved a spectacular success: up to 94% of the visitors are interested in participating in the new edition in 2015 and intend to return there in December (Lehalle, 2014). The opinions of festival participants confirm the above and best illustrate the atmosphere of the festival: "It felt like the entire world had turned up for the festivities. Some of the attractions were incredibly fabulous with the use of current technology and creativity[...]" (Chrysalisworld, 2014); "Brilliant. It was magic, all the candles burning in every single window all over town. It is the best day to make a night tour" (Daniel G, 2014); "This [experience] was absolutely splendid. It's no wonder that people come from all over the world to watch [festival] every year [...]" (Marilena P, 2015).



Figure 1. Fête des Lumières 2014 Lyon, Color or not (St. John 's Cathedral), light artist: Yves Moreaux. Copyright 2014 by Pierre-Jean Durieu/Shutterstock.com. Reprinted with permission.

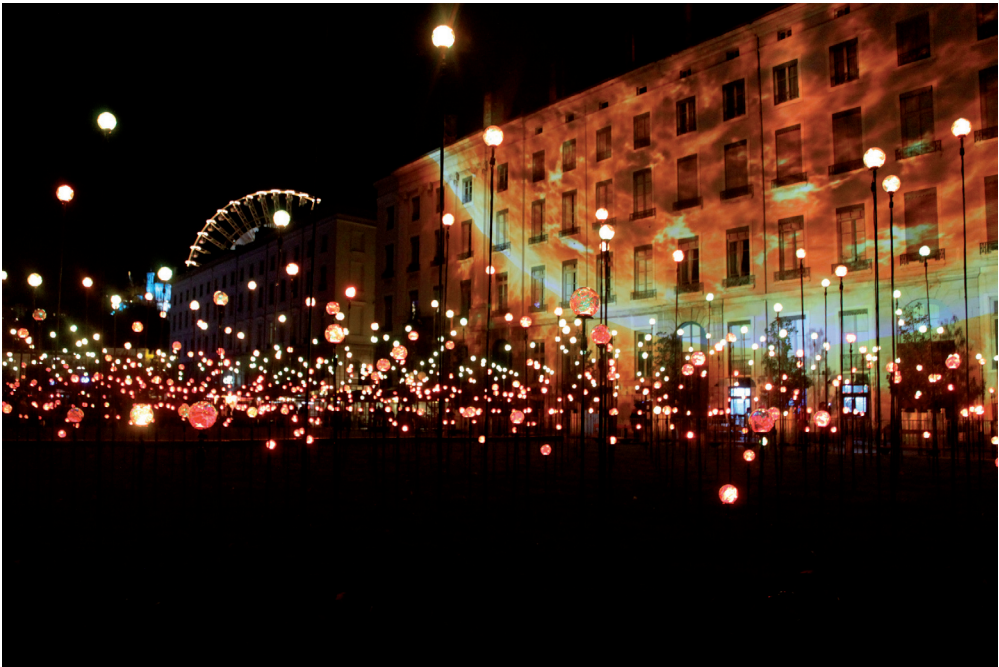


Figure 2. Fête des Lumières 2014 Lyon, LANIAKEA (Place Antonin Poncet), light artist: Jérôme Donna, Simon Milleret-Godet. Copyright 2014 by Sahar Mohsenifar. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 3. Fête des Lumières 2014 Lyon, Land of Lights (Square des Terreaux), light artist: Gilbert Coudène, Cité Création. Copyright 2014 by Robertobemi/Shutterstock.com. Reprinted with permission.

### 3.2. Luminale — the Biennale of Lighting Culture and its laboratory character, Frankfurt am Main/Germany

The light festival which takes place every two years in Frankfurt am Main in Germany and in a part of the Rhineland region is an interesting example of a cultural event of a different nature. *Luminale — the Biennale of Lighting Culture* is an international cultural festival, which was developed directly as a result of cooperation with the Light & Building, the largest and most significant leading trade fair for lighting and building services technology in the world.

It is its laboratory character which distinguishes this light festival from among many others. According to Helmut M. Bien, the artistic curator and festival manager (who initiated the project in 2000 and realized it for the first time in 2002): “Luminale is deeply connected with the fair, and the trade show follows the stream of innovations, [...] we follow the evolutions of technology: the digitalization of light and its interactivity; LEDs and OLEDs; sustainability and green building strategies. It is not a festival of lanterns and romanticism, but a festival of art, design, and technology” (Donoff, 2014). “During Luminale, the city becomes an experimental field for creative personalities. The laboratory character distinguishes Luminale [from many other lighting festivals] and offers young lighting designers a launching pad for becoming internationally renowned” (“Luminale 2014”, n.d.). For Wolfgang Marzin, Chairman of the Board of Management of Messe Frankfurt: “Luminale takes the innovations to be seen at Light + Building into the city and thus opens up new perspectives for the artistic and sustainable lighting of architecture and the city” (“Luminale 2014”, n.d.).

During Light + Building lighting technology fair, the city of Frankfurt and its surrounding area is filled with designers and lighting specialists, architects, artists, journalists, curators of exhibitions, academic teachers, students, tourists and residents of the city of Frankfurt and the surrounding areas. For a period of one week, the city becomes a center of lighting technology in the world, and Luminale takes this opportunity to create the festival both in collaboration with these lighting experts and for them, every night when the fair ends. Luminale is a bridge between the exhibition at the trade fair and the city of Frankfurt, allowing them to complement each other. Frankfurt, as a city of skyscrapers, is exciting due to its modern architecture, and the fair was initiated to become a leading international meeting place for all who are interested in the technology of light.

Most of the established festivals as, for example, Fête des Lumières in Lyon, are known thanks to the marketing of the city, tourism and enormous budgets. Luminale is a festival without a [project] budget. Every artist or designer must raise their own funds for their concepts (A. Kroll-Marth & H. Bien Projektbüro Luminale, e-mail communication, May 29, 2015). Each project is autonomously organized and financed, whether or not those are visions proposed by well-known designers (see Figure 4), or low-budget student projects (see Figure 5), creating a wide range of lighting installations which transform museums, galleries, industrial architecture, construction sites, buildings, monuments, historic facades, squares and parks. Year by year, this cultural event attracts more and more new visitors. The 50 projects presented during the first festival in 2002 grew to 100 installations in the second edition of the festival (Donoff, 2014). The last festival in 2014 attracted about 250 000 visitors, who came to watch 180 different lighting installations (Bien, 2014). During the festival events, the Luminale guests fill the streets and squares of the city in the evening, where you can admire the works of art, utility

facilities, light performances and sound installations (see Figure 6). At that time the authorities of Frankfurt create many opportunities to explore the city at nighttime, such as organized guided walks, boat cruises, free shuttle buses or light tram rides.



Figure 4. Luminale 2010 Light Lab (light art installation inside the Portikus building), light artist: Olafur Eliasson. Copyright 2010 by Katrin Schilling. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 5. Luminale 2014: re:connect — reflect (Frankfurt Railway Station), light artist: Prof. Tjark Ihmels with students from FH Mainz. Copyright 2014 by Messe-Frankfurt. Reprinted with permission.

This combination of trade fair and festival events, as in the case of Frankfurt, may become a means of mass communication and promotion. The city has a very clear marketing strategy of the event. According to Peter Feldman, the Lord Mayor of the city: “Luminale is the only festival in the world that targets both experts and the general public. At Luminale visitors can immerse themselves in the world of lighting designers ‘overnight’ and see Frankfurt from fascinating perspectives” (Messe Frankfurt, 2014). This interdisciplinary project is based on harmonious cooperation of different departments of the city administration along with local councils, universities, churches, cultural institutions and media, as well as entrepreneurs and sponsors. Many cultural institutions make their facilities available for the needs of the light festival, allowing light projection both on their facades (see Figure 7) or inside the premises, where light installations and light objects are presented.

In addition, the event has recently (2010, 2012, 2014) been accompanied by the *The Media Facades Summit*. It provides a forum for discussion about problems and challenges that emerge in relation to the topic of designing and building media facades. The most renowned designers, academics and industry experts in this field come together during this event (Media Architecture Institute, 2014).

In the case of the city of Frankfurt, Luminale as a cultural event has become an integral part in the process of building the brand of the city and region; it has also influenced its development and significance in the world. This is evident in the words of Petra Roth, the Lord Mayor of Frankfurt in the years 1995–2012: “[This event] draws both professionals and residents onto streets and squares, into parks and to the river



bank. Luminale has changed the view of the city and its skyline over the years” (Messe Frankfurt, 2012). “Internationally it is a ‘must see’ in the creative scene and is one of the strongest event ‘brands’ in Frankfurt RheinMain” (Bien, 2010). “Light transmits messages, light connects. The speed of light, and light’s fleeting characteristics are symbolic for the transformation of society into a media, service and knowledge economy. Frankfurt am Main and the surrounding regions are preferred sites with-in global competition for this future vision. This is why Luminale suits us so well” (Bien, 2008).

Other cities, including London, are inspired by the example set by the illuminated Frankfurt, yet it is difficult to copy this unique idea — there is only one Frankfurt with its trade fair and Luminale in the world.



Figure 6. Luminale 2012 OVO — a multi-sensory art installation (Frankfurt old town), light artist: Odeaubois and ACT Lighting Design. Copyright 2012 by Oliver Blum Photography. Reprinted with permission.



Figure 7. Luminale 2008 Leuchtzeichen (projection on the facade of Literature Institut), light artist: Hartung and Trenz. Copyright 2008 by Oliver Blum Photography. Reprinted with permission.

### 3.3. The Lights in Alingsas — a festival of lights and educational workshops with outdoor urban and landscape lighting installations

Making a cultural event, which is a light festival, popular and significant does not always depend on its scale, extent and budget. An example of the above is the model developed in Alingsas, Sweden, which is nowadays called the town of light of Scandinavian countries. Even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this ordinary town with its characteristic wooden architecture and approximately 35 000 inhabitants, situated in southern Sweden between Stockholm and Goteborg, was not heard of in either Europe or in the world. Everything has changed, however, thanks to the international light festival and lighting workshops.

The aim of the first external illumination workshop, which was held in the town of Alingsas in 1997 for the students of lighting and interior design of the nearby University of Gothenburg, was the practical experience of artificial lighting through the implementation of a real illumination project in the town (Keely, 2013, p. 112–113). During the workshop, town representatives became aware of the great potential that new initiative could have in attracting public interest and thus supporting the marketing of the town. They saw the light festival as a project creating a unique and attractive cultural event. Already in 2000, the representatives of the town of Alingsas and the Professional Lighting Designers' Association (PLDA) officially organized an event called *Lights in Alingsas*.

PLDA supervised the content and logistics of the workshops in the years 2000–2012 (A. Davidsson Alingsås kommun, e-mail communication, May 12, 2015).

Thanks to the town inviting PLDA to cooperate, the light festival and external illumination workshops have become a way of promoting a new type of career of lighting designers, as well as demonstration and promotion of the quality of environmental illumination performed by this newly formed professional group of designers in Europe. This cultural event was destined to succeed from the very start because of a successful professional cooperation of the organizers with the town authorities and other numerous partners.

The initiator and owner of the project is the municipal office of Alingsås, which works with the department of tourism and town marketing, an event planning agency, a bank, a local power company and other partners. Today, trainee electricians from a local technical school are also involved in workshop projects and assist workshop participants (A. Davidsson, e-mail communication, May 12, 2015). In addition, as part of their advertising strategy, lighting manufacturers provide their cutting-edge lighting equipment.

Every year in autumn, dark evenings in the town are transformed by means of visually exciting lighting installations (see Figure 8; Figure 9). In recent years, this most important cultural event in the town has been visited by over 85 000 local and foreign visitors from all over the world. It is worth mentioning that they spend almost 4.2 million Swedish Crowns in one month (K. Hult, e-mail communication, May 10, 2015). Lights in Alingsås holds the rank of the biggest workshops and urban lighting event in northern Europe. These workshops provide theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of external lighting design. Their main aim is to have a professional lighting designer guide participants through the whole design process of the actual full scale lighting project.



Figure 8. Lights in Alingsås 2005, The tunnel, lighting designer: James Wallace with students. Copyright 2005 by Patrik Helin/Alingsås kommun. Reprinted with permission.

At the same time it has become an important meeting place for professional architectural lighting designers, students and other specialists who work with light. In recent years, every Swedish town planner who works with lighting has at least once paid a mandatory visit to the festival of lights in Alingsås.

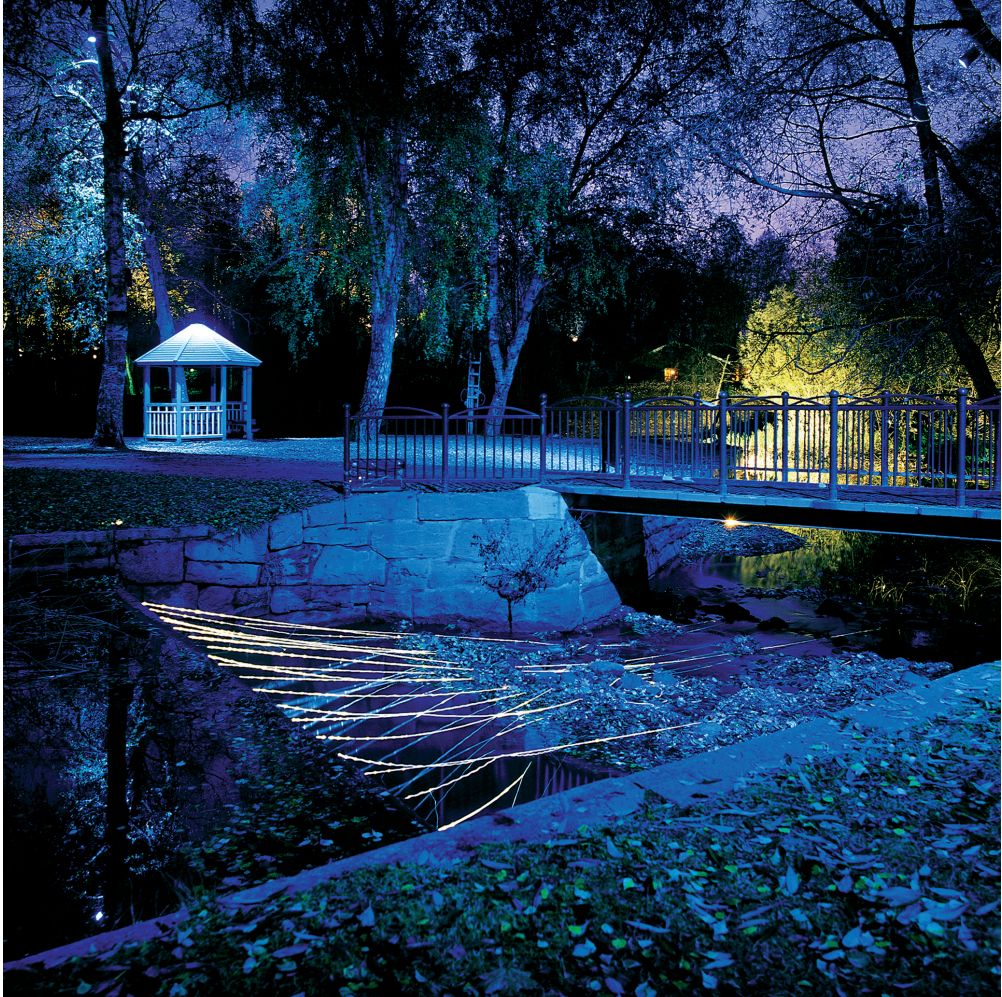


Figure 9. Lights in Alingsås 2002, The mouth of the river, lighting designer: Louis Clair with students. Copyright 2002 by Patrik Helin/Alingsås kommun. Reprinted with permission.

In contrast to the Luminale in Frankfurt, it takes only an hour and a half walk to admire the illuminated objects and light installations. The aim is to create an illuminated route through the town, where all selected objects and places (different every year) can be admired one after another. There are paid guided tours several times every evening for those wanting to learn more about lighting designers, their installation ideas and interpretation of the theme. For a period of five weeks, the town's dark evenings and outdoor environment are transformed into fascinating lighting installations. Cold and anonymous facades of buildings as well as parks, forests or lakes gain a new image as they are trans-

formed into warm, colorful and inviting spaces. These oases of light, in turn, create new attractive places in the town. (see Figure 10).



Figure 10. Lights in Alingsas 2000, The Church, lighting designer: Roope Siirainen with students. Copyright 2000 by Patrik Helin/Alingsas kommun. Reprinted with permission.

Every year this event follows a similar pattern. Several world renowned-professional light designers are invited to Alingsas to demonstrate their expertise and knowledge of the field of illumination and, together with a team of about 70 international students divided into groups, develop concepts and implement a temporary project of illuminating selected sites or architectural structures in the town. It is worth emphasizing that so far about 80 professional designers have led practical training in the form of workshops with the next generation of lighting designers and other young members of the design community. When the workshop comes to an end and after the official opening of the festival, the project is handed over to the town and made available to the public for the following five weeks. An integral part of the workshop is thematic conference on artificial

light with speakers specializing in architectural lighting design in universities, as well as other professionals working in this field.

Kjell Hult, Chief Development Officer of Alingsås Municipality describes the early marketing strategy of the 2000: "We did a lot of marketing under the theme Lighting in Alingsås for example [we created internet] website, brochures, [placed] advertisement in regional and national newspapers. Numerous invitations to conferences were sent to professionals like architects, town planners, engineers, designers, artists, landscape gardeners and so on. The idea was to make people come to Alingsås and combine the conference with professional tour of the illuminated objects" (Hult, 2001, p. 41). Today, the town lighting strategy puts the emphasis on: "Function, safety, and [its] image" (Hult, 2015, p. 38).

The town authorities of Alingsås understand that a successful marketing concept [promoting the town as a brand], must still be improved and developed. Therefore in 2015, music composer was invited to write a piece of music for each of the illuminated sites, which was to become part of the lighting installation. The costs of the entire festival are approximately 400 000 euros per year in public money, which is just 0,2% of the town budget, but the pay-back comes in the long run with new taxpayers and new businesses (in addition to direct local revenues). It turns out that the Lights in Alingsås festival has far-reaching consequences that affect not only the development of the town itself in terms of its wealth, attractiveness or the increase in the number of inhabitants — the number of taxpayers has increased by 15% since 2000, an average of 1% per year (K. Hult, e-mail communication, May 10, 2015). It has also played a role in educating local residents and stimulating their aesthetic sensitivity. Today, they identify with the town just because of the festival and are proud of the fact that they live or were born in Alingsås.

In the case of Alingsås, since the initiation of its unique light festival, it has been possible to build a distinctive brand of the town, not only locally in Sweden but also in the international arena. Currently, it is a "must see" cultural event and tourist destination. It is worth noting that the town has also received local and international awards for its initiative (A. Davidsson, e-mail communication, May 11, 2015). It is interesting that this festival has become very popular in Scandinavian countries. This is most probably due to the fact that in northern Europe less and less natural light is available from autumn onwards, which substantially reduces the length of the time spent outdoors. The festival then compensates for ordinary seasonal tourism. Local residents treat this event as an opportunity for rest, entertainment and interaction with other residents of the town as well as an income opportunity for local businesses by creating 100–150 new jobs every year. (K. Hult, e-mail communication, May 10, 2015). For tourists, in turn, it represents a new form of entertainment and a possibility to experience the local culture.

Lights in Alingsås, as a cultural event, creates interactive, relationally oriented experience of the atmosphere of the place; that is why it has become a key tool for the promotion and development of the town. The branding strategy has been followed up by ambitious plans for housing and industrial development. Alingsås is nowadays very attractive to new residents and small businesses.

Kjell Hult sums up its development: "Fifteen years ago the town of Alingsås settled a 'Town branding strategy'. The main idea was to mix the small-town atmosphere with something quite different, something that could give Alingsås an international leading role in urban design. That is why we created Lights in Alingsås, a combination between education (workshop) and event (guided tours). And the result has been a success — exactly the way we once planned. And so now lighting design is very important in branding of the town — in fact, it is the brand" (K. Hult, e-mail communication, May 10, 2015).

## Conclusion

More than half of the world's population nowadays lives in urban areas. This number is expected to increase to 75 per cent by 2050 (Burdett, 2008). Therefore, to keep up with the times of global urbanization, cities are looking for completely new marketing methods. Today, they need to redefine their role and aspirations, as well as position themselves as recognisable brands, by launching promotional campaigns aiming to attract young talents, businesses, investors and tourists. That is why the places with a unique character in terms of economy, culture, ecology or sustainable development become much more attractive. They must emerge as significantly different from their competitors and need to promote themselves as unique products in the global market. One such tool is the creative use of artificial light at dusk in the form of light festivals, which can not only help to build a distinctive brand of a city, but will also provide added value for the night-time economy.

A growing number of towns, cities and communities are beginning to recognize the value of artificial light after dark, not only in terms of safety, but also as an impact on and a new image and attractiveness of the illuminated places. This new concept can help to develop a sense of identity for the people who live there. It is also a fascinating way to demonstrate the exceptional quality of an urban community, which visitors and tourists can admire during celebration. Festivals are intended to help build the brand of a place as a center of arts and innovation. Successful lighting installations are a source of inspiration for towns and cities and permanently influence their development. The use of artificial light attracts attention and greatly increases numbers of visitors, making the places that host festival events popular tourist destinations. This, in turn, allows those towns and cities to demonstrate a future-oriented approach toward the development of a safe and friendly environment and to show their openness to new ideas in the field of urban development. A light festival is also a chance to attract tourists for the places that do not have any particular historical heritage, as in the case of town of Alingsas. In addition, such projects are seen as a main source of income and tourism at urban, regional, national and international level (UNESCO, 2015, p. 7), they attract people of different ages and with various educational backgrounds because light is magic and unites all.

Although the festivals presented here show considerable differences in duration (from 4 days to 5 weeks), seasonality (an annual or biannual event) and the size and scale (operational costs and numbers of visitors), they all achieve their objectives. It happens mostly because, thanks to their light installations, they trigger unusual effects. It also seems that the time of the year is not an important aspect determining the success of light festivals. It does not matter if the event takes place in December (Fête des Lumières, connected with the 8<sup>th</sup> of December; the date of a religious ceremony), April (Luminale, on the occasion of the Light & Building Trade Fair) or in September/October (Lights in Alingsas). It is interesting that the majority of light festivals in Europe take place in autumn and winter, probably because of early dusk and also as an attempt to compensate for a lack of spring-summer tourism. It has been recognized that light festivals, as unique cultural events created with the use of new media, can make towns and cities more attractive for a longer period of time, no matter what time of the year they are organized (such as late autumn or winter). The period of time when festivals take place will, in turn create a more welcoming environment for the whole community, i.e. for residents, city workers, students, tourists and other visitors, who will generate additional income for the place.

One of the major discoveries of this research is the fact that, in order to establish the image and attractiveness of the light festival as a popular destination, festival events

should have a clearly-defined topic, which will distinguish them from their competitors, or, which should be directly tied in with another event, for example: with the Light & Building Trade Fair, as in the case of Frankfurt. The festival *Fête des Lumières* has several themes, all of which promote the city: “*Fête des Lumières* — event born from tradition”, “The main worldwide event for ephemeral lighting” or “Festival of technology and artistic creativity”. Lyon has recently started to position itself also as a “City of art and culture”. On the other hand, the *Luminale*’s theme is “Festival of art, design, and technology”, while “*Lights in Alingsas* — a festival of town and landscape illumination in” a more intimate town of Alingsas focuses on a combination of education and events. Each of these three festivals has a specific theme that distinguishes them from each other. Each idea is unique. Perhaps, one of the additional reasons why light festivals have been successful in these places is the fact that these places are pioneers in the whole development of this undertaking and their logistical and artistic expertise is very valuable and incomparable with anything else.

Light festivals today are a sector of creative industries connecting new media, art and entrepreneurship (business), having a positive impact on their host city by drawing further visitors and creating publicity (LUCI, 2011, p. 51). In case of the light festivals in Alingsas and Lyon, the festival itself becomes an ultimate destination. In contrast, visiting the Light & Building Trade Fair of *Luminale* in Frankfurt seems to be a bigger attraction than the festival. (The recipients of the festival are mainly students, artists, and local residents from Frankfurt and the region, and, to a lesser extent the trade fair visitors or people working at the fair). An easily accessible location of the festival site has definitely a significant effect on its success, in terms of numbers of national and international visitors. Lyon, Frankfurt and Alingsas, offer quick and easy access by car, train or plane to the destination point. A scale of the event, an operational budget, as well as sponsor’s contributions can vary greatly, from a very large budget (*Fête des Lumières*) through a small one (*Lights in Alingsas*) to almost no budget at all (*Luminale*). It does not, however, adversely affect the success of the festival.

It is also important to emphasize that the artistic concepts of illumination presented in the form of a light festival are not permanent projects of external lighting, which, to a large extent, determines their success, because they often require different technical knowledge and lighting equipment. Sometimes, as in the case of the town of Alingsas, professional lighting designers are involved in the concept and execution of this event, but this is an isolated case. In most of the recent festivals, the projects have been created by light artists, theater designers, set designers or video and 3D projection mapping designers. Such short-lived events are a great visual experience. However, if they suddenly became permanent, after some time, their colors and dynamics would unfortunately become quite tiresome for city residents. In addition, it is impossible to ignore the problem of polluting the earth’s atmosphere with artificial light and its negative impact on the environment, flora, fauna, as well as human health. Hence permanent illumination of historical buildings, important town facilities, parks and other elements integrated into landscapes relies on professional projects prepared by architectural lighting designers.

On the basis of the research into the case studies of European light festivals, such as *Fête des Lumières* in Lyon, *Luminale* in Frankfurt and *Lights in Alingsas* in Alingsas, one can say with conviction that this type of cultural events has a positive impact not only on the authority, significance, and prestige of towns, cities and regions, but also on their economy, infrastructure and their place in the global market.



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