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### **IFTR Scenography Working Group**

**Transformative Scenographic Discourses and Practices Symposium  
@ Prague Quadrennial 2023  
9/6/23 at Charles University  
11/6/23 at National Gallery - Veletržní palác**

This proposal meets - Physicality, materiality and the senses in scenographic practices and discourses and Affect and scenography

“Hanging about in the dark”: Materiality, transformation and the joy of light

This paper will consider aspects associated with the experience of light and darkness drawing on examples of contemporary relational performance practice and audience experiences and emerges from recent writing in [\*Contemporary Performance Lighting: Experience, Creativity, and Meaning\*](#) (Graham, Palmer & Zezulka, 2023).

Light’s profound psychological and physiological effect on human bodies conditions our entire experience of the world and the way in which we think and feel (de Kort and Vetch, 2014). Light and its material qualities are therefore an essential, although frequently overlooked, component of all experiences of performance.

We see through light, we witness the effects of light, and we feel light – it conditions our moods and directly affects our behaviour – and yet light is, paradoxically, an immaterial material; its materiality only obtained by proxy, through coming into contact with another material object.

Light’s materiality is inherently bound to the spatial and temporal conditions in which it is employed and this presentation will focus on specific examples and qualities of designed light that deliberately contribute to, disrupt and transform contemporary audience experiences.

De Kort, Y. and Veitch, J. 2014. 'From Blind Spot into the Spotlight: Introduction to the Special issue "Light, Lighting and Human Behaviour"' *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 39, pp1-4.

Graham, K. Palmer, S. & Zezulka, K. 2023. *Contemporary Performance Lighting: Experience, Creativity and Meaning*, London. Bloomsbury Methuen.

Dr Scott Palmer is Associate Professor in Performance Design in the School of Performance & Cultural Industries at the University of Leeds, UK. His teaching and research focus on designing environments for audience experience including those mediated through the mobile phone, interactive video and 360 fulldome environments. Publications include *Light: Readings in Theatre Practice* (2013), *Scenography Expanded: An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design* co-edited with Joslin McKinney (2017) and the new anthology *Contemporary Performance Lighting: Experience, Creativity and Meaning* in collaboration with Katherine Graham and Kelli Zezulka (2023). He is Associate Editor of the *Routledge Theatre and Performance Design Journal* and co-editor of Bloomsbury's Performance + Design book series.

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