

Expert review.

I am both honoured and pleased to be able to commend the practice of Jan Ptacin to your academy. I have been asked to comment on the significance and artistic value of his work, and on the importance of his practice, and pedagogy, to the development of the academy.

Today there is a much wider understanding of light's potential power to affect all aspects of human life, including how we receive and understand performance and architectural space. At the same time the possibilities available to those wishing to manipulate light in a creative way, grow year by year. Video and LED technology offer tremendous scope for creative responses. Ptacin's practice and teaching engage with both the technical and aesthetics of all these with great assurance.

In the realm of performance making, there is an increasing emphasis on collaboration. This too is an area where Ptacin is an exemplar of good practice.

The development of the theatre lighting designer as an independent creative practitioner has its roots primarily in the USA in the 1930s. UK practice took some 20+ years to catch up. Throughout this time through, in most of continental Europe the creative use of light was the domain of the Scenographer / Set Designer, or Building Engineer. As technology has enabled more possibilities, and audience expectations of live performance have become more sophisticated, more theatre and performance makers want to work with people able to make a creative response to lighting and video, that is, to work with Lighting and Video Designers. It is in this climate that Ptacin's practice has grown up, and it is important to acknowledge that he had few, if any, role models in Slovak or Czech theatre. This is something that makes his practice doubly impressive, for at the same time as maturing as a creative Lighting Designer, he has needed to convince many of those he has worked with of the very need for that role.

The work presented to me in this portfolio is of fine quality. Beautifully crafted images that balance the need to tell stories with a desire to achieve aesthetic harmony, when that too serves the production. This is light that is also unafraid to be the thing its self when required. Here we see examples of Ptacin, as Lighting Designer, sculpting bodies, and space - guiding the gaze of the audience, by turn revealing and hiding, colouring space to enhance emotional response, and much more.

By this award, your institution makes it more sure that these hard-won skills and understandings will be passed on to future generations of theatre and performance makers, and others, which can only benefit the institutions and the wider world it seeks to influence.

I have no hesitation in supporting the application of Jan Ptacin to the title of Docent.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nick Moran', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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