

## **Research Statement for Lucas Granholm**

Over the course of my career as a lighting designer, each production has reaffirmed the power of lighting as a tool for storytelling. At its core, my research centers on using light as a narrative medium, one that not only illuminates but also heightens the emotional, aesthetic, and intellectual impact of a production. My work as a lighting designer is driven by a deep commitment to collaboration. Lighting does not exist in isolation but rather in dialogue with the efforts of directors, choreographers, and designers all working in tandem. I approach each project with the belief that lighting is most effective when it enhances and amplifies the contributions of my collaborators.

Lighting design has been a consideration for artists since the beginning of storytelling. However, lighting as an artistic discipline in its own right has only recently emerged, due in large part to the contributions of designers such as Tharon Musser and Stanley McCandless. Today, lighting design sits at the intersection of art and advanced technology. Modern mastery of lighting design demands fluency in LED systems, computerized networks, and digital control systems while still honoring the traditional role of light in shaping audience's perception. My research focuses on bridging this intersection of technology and artistry. How can we utilize the latest lighting technology to deepen the artistry of performance rather than overshadow it? In my lighting design process, I continually ask the age-old questions, such as: Does the intensity of a light source reflect the emotional weight of the moment? Do the colors and textures of the light accurately serve the performance? While these questions seem simple at first, answering them incorrectly can lead the lighting design astray.

As a lighting designer, I have had the privilege of working across theatre, dance, opera, and interdisciplinary performance. From traditional theatrical spaces to non traditional venues, I have explored how light can shape a space, influence perception, and tell a story without words. I approach each project as a fresh investigation into how lighting influences narrative, meaning, and audience's experience. While lighting design is, at its core, essential for visibility, my work often explores how lighting and immersive projections can transform the audience's relationship to space and story by moving beyond simply illuminating the performer and instead treating all design elements with equal importance.

My future research will expand across interconnected areas that reflect both my artistic practice and my commitment to advancing the field of lighting design. First, I aim to investigate the role of lighting and projection as a narrative element in installation art, expanding my work into more traditional gallery settings. This work seeks to develop new models of interdisciplinary collaboration, positioning light not only as a technical craft but as a central element of storytelling.

Second, I plan to continue innovating pedagogical approaches that integrate artistry and technology in the classroom. This trajectory emphasizes equity, sustainability, and adaptability, ensuring that students are prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of twenty-first century theatre and dance. Together, these avenues form a cohesive research agenda that bridges practice, technology, and education in pursuit of more expansive and inclusive forms of performance.

Ultimately, my research seeks to expand the role of lighting design as a narrative element while mentoring the next generation of designers to think critically, collaborate meaningfully, and design boldly. By combining professional creative work, scholarly inquiry, and pedagogical innovation, I aim to contribute to the field of lighting design in ways that honor its traditions while pushing the boundaries of its future.