



Europe & Middle East Candidate

George Lawton
Senior Designer
Drawn to the Light
Primary Location: United Kingdom
Running for 1st term



ABOUT THE APPLICANT:

I am a Lighting Designer for Themed Entertainment, Experiences and Live Events based in London, England. I started my professional career after graduating with a First Class BA(Hons) degree in Lighting Design from the world-renowned Rose Bruford College in 2019. Immediately following graduation, I joined the UK creative agency 'Imagination' as a Lighting Designer, working on a number of high-profile projects and international clients including Ford Motor Company, Disney Cruise Line, and Rolls Royce Motor Cars.

After leaving Imagination, I have worked as a Lighting Designer for international Cruise Ship projects, Mandoria - Europe's biggest indoor Theme Park, a host of themed entertainment projects, large-scale launch events across Europe, the Middle East and the US, and as Creative Director and Production Designer for Peloton's global studios in London and New York.

I became a member of the TEA in 2018 during my second year of university, and my journey with the organization has been truly transformative. Attending my first SATE Europe conference at EuropaPark shortly after joining, I was immediately captivated by the professional excitement and warm reception I received. I believe that this acted as the main turning point from taking my distant dream of working in the industry and making that a tangible reality.

Since then, I have actively engaged with TEA, attending every SATE Europe conference as well as participating in various in-person and virtual events. The TEA has been instrumental in shaping my industry knowledge, expanding my network of connections, and forming meaningful friendships.

One of the highlights of my TEA involvement was speaking at SATE Europe 2022 in Liseberg, Sweden. I had the opportunity to share my passion for lighting with an audience comprised mostly of non-lighting professionals. As a result of the overwhelming positive reception to my talk, I had the immense privilege of being invited back to co-host the 2023 conference at Europapark. I

collaborated with the talented SATE organizational committee, playing an active role in event organization and structure.

Motivated by these experiences, I am eager to continue playing an active role within TEA, contributing to conferences, events, and initiatives within the wider EME division. I aim to bring fresh perspectives and insights to the association while fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among industry professionals. I am committed to nurturing the next generation of themed entertainment professionals. Having personally benefited from the TEA community's support during my early years, I believe in paying it forward by providing guidance to emerging talents. By actively engaging with TEA's educational initiatives and mentorship programs, I aim to make a positive impact on the future of the industry.

VISION FOR THE TEA:

During my board term, my vision is to make significant contributions to the TEA by focusing on three key areas: Next-Gen engagement, Diversity/Inclusion initiatives and continued growth and development of the TEA's conference and events programs.

First and foremost, I am deeply committed to fostering and strengthening TEA's relationships with Next-Gen members and early-years industry professionals. Having personally experienced the kindness and support of TEA members when I was a student, I understand the transformative impact it can have on aspiring professionals. To achieve this, I would like to help shape future mentorship programs that connect seasoned industry leaders with emerging talents, providing them with guidance, advice, and networking opportunities. I believe that further the TEA's work in this area will not only help shape the future generation of themed entertainment professionals but also create a strong sense of community within TEA.

In addition, I am passionate about making our industry more inclusive and diverse. It is crucial that we open opportunities and platforms within TEA for underrepresented demographics, as there is an unfortunate tendency for the industry to remain relatively siloed and not representative of the global/regional majority. To accomplish this, I would like to play a part in actively working to establish partnerships with organizations focused on promoting diversity and inclusion. We could then look at building targeted outreach programs that specifically cater to individuals from marginalized communities. I would also advocate for diverse representation on panels, committees, and speaking engagements, ensuring that a wide range of voices and perspectives are heard within the TEA.

This feeds into my goal of helping to continue to grow and improve the TEA's array of events, talks, and conferences. In addition to focusing on D&I across these events, I would also like to build upon feedback from SATE 2023 to continue adjusting a fine-tuning the format of such a valuable conference. I believe it is exceptionally important that the TEA values the voices of its members and takes steps to evolve and progress, in contrast to some events that I have sadly seen meet their demise through lack of innovation or sincerity placed upon feedback.

SKILLS AND CORE COMPETENCIES

* Recent experience as a Next-Gen member: I am still relatively new to the industry, with just over 5 years of experience. I have the advantage of having been through the full TEA next-gen experience, with an understanding of how the organization can most effectively nurture early-years professionals.

* A breadth of knowledge and understanding from across the industry: Through diligent attendance at conferences, expos, and events (in addition to my own continued 'research trips'(!) to theme parks, experiences, and visitor attractions), I have a deep understanding of industry trends, emerging technologies, and best industry practices. This expertise can help shape TEA's initiatives and ensure that the association remains at the forefront of industry developments and innovation.

* Strategic Thinking: I excel in critical and strategic thinking. Through freelance-capacity work and building my own brand, I possess skills in developing long-term plans, setting goals, and identifying actionable steps to achieve objectives. I believe that this mindset will be valuable in aligning the TEA's initiatives with its strategic plan and core values.

* Collaboration and Networking: I am skilled in building relationships and fostering collaboration. In my professional project work, I have successfully collaborated with diverse ranges of stakeholders. I believe that my ability to connect with others will be valuable in engaging partners to champion the TEA's initiatives and enhance global membership.

* Leadership and Communication: I possess strong leadership abilities and effective communication skills through my experience in leading teams and managing projects. I am also an experienced public speaker, having successfully presented and subsequently co-hosted the TEA's SATE Europe conference. I believe that my leadership and communication skills would be instrumental in driving the TEA's initiatives forward.