



Interview with lighting designer
Dick Rutten

November 2022

BIOGRAPHY

Inspired by lighting during the academic years, studying Industrial Design Engineering with a focus on usability and human interactions with their 'context,' Dick Rutten was not as much inspired by the mechanical perspective of light, as he was by the way lighting is interactive.

Lighting makes visible, yet also controls, steers, and adapts what we see over time. Currently working for 12 years as a lighting specialist for Signify, Rutten started as a specifier/engineer and evolved in the creative area to inspire and guide with a master planning consultancy in urban and architectural lighting.



What made you choose a lighting design career?

After graduation, I was triggered by a vacancy for a "lighting application specialist;" just those words were enough for me to explore and apply. It was a deep dive with an ambition to grow towards a product design role, but that has not happened yet. I just really like the dynamic context to help inspire and guide others with my knowledge, vision, and insights.





What is your
motivation?

When my
designs and
visions result
in lighting
experiences
that the
clients want
but didn't
envision
beforehand.

Can you tell us more about your latest Color Kinetics projects?

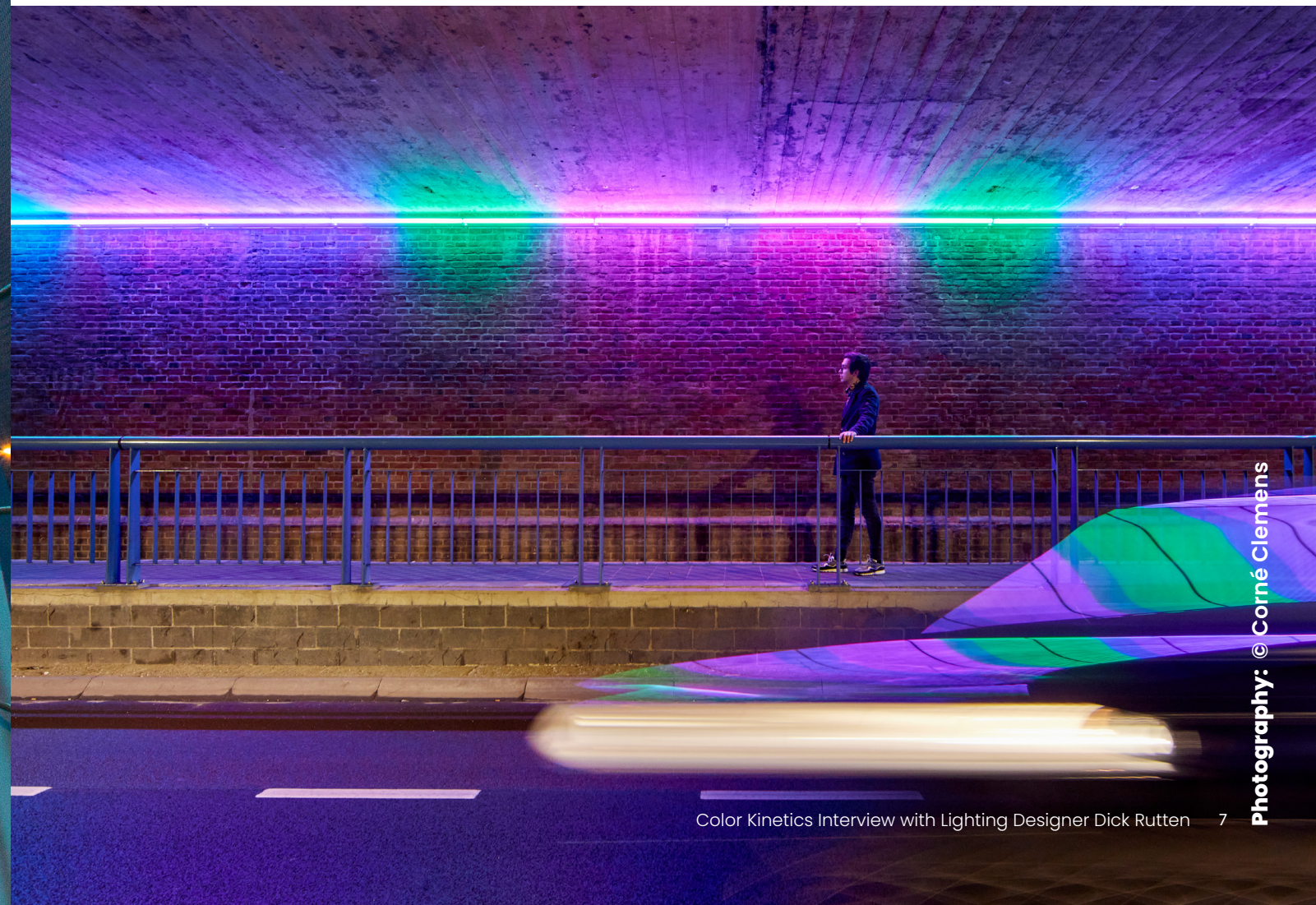
The Tegenbosch Bridge in Eindhoven, a real dynamic landmark that matches the 'design and technology identity' of the Brainport region in cooperation with IPV Delft and Heijmans. Subtle for car traffic on the highway with a WOW-factor for cyclists.

Complexity was the full integration of the lighting concept into the narrow bridge construction of 120 m (394 ft) length. The result is a perfectly balanced immersion in reactive dynamic lighting, without discomforting brightness for both cyclists and car traffic below.

How important are interactivity and connectivity in your lighting projects?

These terms are fundamental to the future role of light in public spaces, depending on your definition of interactivity (it has varying degrees, i.e., dynamic, responsive, interactive).

But dynamics over time are key for a futureproof installation, the right light at the right time controlled by connectivity for continuous control and adaptivity. Ecology and dark sky are more and more part of the design story, and control over time is the tool to balance the scales.



How do you push boundaries with your lighting design?

The Signify slogan is 'lighting beyond illumination.'



In general, I work with municipalities. I prefer to start from the urban role and opportunities of a location, not just highlighting an icon of the city, but also taking into account urban planning, routes and obstacles, linking with my master planning activities on a holistic perspective and how the object really improves the urban experience.

Examples are the Veentunnel (D. Rutten design) and Smidsgang (Arjen v.d. Crujsen design) in Deventer, which were both initiated based on my master planning consultancy for Deventer.

HEMA

How do you use the power of light to bring people together?

A unique project to bring people together was the center of Veghel.

The starting point was that the center itself was plain and uninspiring, while shopping should be an inspiring experience to compete with digital online stores.

A system that is so extensive, it needs a well-arranged ecosystem of stakeholders to continue its use over time, which is the tipping point between successful usage or not.

This installation integrates public lighting, architectural lighting, sound, and activity detection into a unique experience resulting from a multisensory and highly dynamic, one-of-a-kind design.



What is not yet possible in lighting architecture that you would like to see become reality in the future?

I would like to see an affordable and unified communication and control language (even broader than architectural), for more plug and play connectivity/accessibility.

It's all about cooperation between all light sources and cleverly managing it all with a complicated ecosystem of stakeholders – control, communication, and continuity over time.

Future plans?

Who knows? I'm a lighting enthusiast without a fixed goal on the horizon. Specification, consultancy, lighting/system design, experience design, and product design/strategy are all possible, as long as I'm able to create new lighting experiences with an inspiring team!

"LED lighting is built to be controlled with precision, speed, and design for differentiated experiences that fit their contextual needs over time!"

Lighting Designer Dick Rutten
November 2022