



Interview accompanying the release on the IMAGO website of the recording of the September ICLS /ITC Zoom meeting.

Questions from the IMAGO TC co-chairs: Aleksej Berkovic, Philippe Ros AFC and David Stump ASC, BVK. With the help of François Roger, CEO of Cininter Lighting rental house (France).

Question to Ediola, Ville & Michael:

- Could you please introduce yourself?

- **Ediola:**

My name is Ediola Pashollari, and I serve as the Executive Director of the International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS). In addition to this role, I hold several advisory and leadership positions within both regional and international organizations. Over the past 20 years, I have focused my career on fostering innovation, diversity, and professional growth within the non-profit sector.

I have earned three Master's Degrees - in Business Administration, Political Science, and Entrepreneurship - along with a Bachelor's Degree in Law. Although I am new to the film industry, I bring a strategic, visionary, and relationship-driven approach, with a strong commitment to looking beyond the present. I am thoroughly enjoying my time at ICLS, embracing both the challenges and opportunities that come my way.

- **Ville:**

I'm Ville, and I've been part of the film industry since 1992. After graduating high school and completing military service, I began my

career as an electrician, gradually advancing to the role of best boy. Since 1997, I've been working as a Gaffer, bringing extensive experience and a deep understanding of lighting design and execution to the projects I collaborate on.

- **Michael:**

I began my career in car photography in Detroit. I couldn't have planned a better training ground for the film industry. I learned more about light, color, balance and art than I could have imagined. About 25 years ago, I started my gaffing career.

Since then, I've had the fortune to spend time with some of the masters of the film industry. Each of them has left a lasting impression on my approach to work and life. I've learned their lessons and made them my lessons and hopefully imparted some lessons to them.

Questions to Ediola

- Could you describe ICLS (creators, date of creation, subcommittees, founders, establishing date, structure, activities, etc)

- **Ediola:**

The International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS) is a global non-profit membership organization dedicated to cinematic lighting professionals. It was founded on 6 June 2020, by industry gaffers Michael Bauman, Rafael Sanchez, and Martin Smith. The ICLS is registered in Los Angeles, USA as a 501(c)6 international membership organization and we currently have over 400 individual members and 39 corporate members from more than 40 countries.

We have established a vibrant international platform for the lighting community. Our mission is to provide a space for lighting professionals to connect, exchange knowledge, and enhance expertise beyond geographical borders. We offer various membership categories, including full, associate, observer, advisory, aspirant, and corporate members.

We proudly welcome members who are Head Lighting Technicians, Rigging Head Lighting Technicians, Console Programmers, and Fixture Supervisors from all corners of the globe. Our members serve in various Committees, mainly the Bylaw Committee; Corporate Membership Committee; Education Committee; Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility Committee; Finance Committee; Membership Committee; and others. Together, we are committed to building a supportive, technical, inclusive, and knowledge-sharing community that fosters growth and innovation in our field.

The ICLS focuses on education, networking, innovation, and diversity in the film industry. Its activities range from hosting events like roundtables and workshops to fostering a community that promotes knowledge sharing, professional growth, and inclusivity among set lighting professionals worldwide.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- Ville and Michael, could you please talk more about your path to ICLS?
 - **Ville:**

In the spring of 2020, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, I received an email invitation from Gaffer Michael Bauman for a Zoom meeting with gaffers from around the world. What started as informal discussions among over 150 gaffers about work, lockdowns, and our shared challenges soon evolved into more structured conversations. These meetings highlighted the need for a unified voice and collaboration in our craft, ultimately leading to the formation of the International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS) as a formal organization.
 - **Michael:**

I was invited by Michael Bauman to an informal group of film professionals that quickly evolved into a magnificent group of Gaffers, Rigging Gaffers and Console Programmers

Questions to Ville & Michael

- Please share your opinion regarding the profession's most significant recent changes or challenges:
 - **Ville:**

Over the past 20 years, rapidly evolving technology has been a game-changer in the field of lighting. Never before in the history of film lighting have we had such a vast array of tools at our disposal to bring creative visions to life. However, this advancement comes with its own challenges—keeping pace with the latest innovations and updates requires continuous learning and adaptation from all of us in the profession. Producers also face difficulties in understanding and budgeting for today's sophisticated lighting demands, particularly as costs have risen. In Northern Europe, where I'm from, this is especially noticeable. Allocating sufficient resources for modern lighting within tight budgets often requires significant compromises elsewhere, which isn't always easy to manage.
 - **Michael:**

I believe that our challenges are our opportunities. Every puzzle we find solutions for are small victories for our teams and the craft. Technology and budgets create new opportunities every day and out task it to find the best tools and people to both create solutions, but to make the days enjoyable.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- What do you think about the current level understanding of light, including the technical side of lighting among gaffers, cinematographers, art/production designers, directors, producers?
 - **Ville:**

The understanding of light has always been highly individual. Some professionals are naturally more interested in lighting and develop a deeper understanding, while others may not prioritize it as much. This variation in interest and expertise has remained consistent, even with the advent of new technologies. While advancements in lighting tools and techniques have expanded possibilities, they haven't necessarily

shifted the fundamental interest or understanding of light across roles in the industry.

- **Michael:**
I think that there is a wide range of understanding amongst the teams we have the pleasure of working with. Each person brings a particular technical knowledge, and our job is to fill in the gaps where we may have additional knowledge in specific areas.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- How the process of new tools implementation (like LEDs, moving lights, IBL etc.) in a film production process is going in terms of time requirements for testing, planning and on set setting?
 - **Ville:**
The introduction of new tools such as LEDs, moving lights, and Image-Based Lighting (IBL) has significantly transformed film production processes. While these technologies allow for incredible flexibility and creative possibilities, they also demand much more time for testing, planning, and on-set implementation. One of the biggest challenges is helping producers understand that this additional preparation time is essential. Directors and cinematographers often have high expectations, knowing that modern lighting can achieve impressive effects and quick adjustments on set. However, these capabilities rely heavily on meticulous pre-planning and testing to ensure everything runs smoothly. Balancing these demands with production schedules remains a critical but ongoing challenge.
 - **Michael:**
The rate of development is like nothing we've ever experienced. The demand on teams is overwhelming at times, but the solution for that is hiring teams that have skill sets and knowledge bases that can compliment my own.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- In particular, do you think that the fact that lights and new tools are an integral part of the digital workflow is sufficiently understood by all the players in this chain?
 - **Ville:**

I don't believe everyone in the production chain fully understands that lights and new tools are now integral components of the digital workflow. The rapid pace of technological development has been difficult for some to keep up with, leaving gaps in understanding. While many recognize the creative possibilities offered by these advancements, the technical and workflow implications are often less appreciated, which can lead to misaligned expectations and challenges in collaboration.
 - **Michael:**

I don't know that everyone in the chain has ever known exactly what we do. For 100 years, there was a magic black box that only a few people on set understood. In my opinion, that box has merely been digitized.

Questions to Ediola

- The ITC has received comments about the lack of women in its ranks. We are considering strategies to change this. What are the ICLS's strategies?
 - **Ediola:**

The International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS) is actively working to address gender disparity and promote diversity through several policies and strategies. These initiatives include setting clear goals for hiring and promoting more women, organizing events and programs to raise awareness about unconscious bias and inclusive practices, and creating mentorship programs through the aspirant membership platform to pair experienced professionals with women in the industry. Additionally, ICLS collaborates with various organizations and institutions to create opportunities for women in cinematic lighting. These combined efforts aim to foster a more inclusive and equitable environment within ICLS and the broader film industry.

Questions to Ediola, Ville & Michael

- The industry talks a lot about sustainable technologies and “green behavior”. LEDs have made it possible to significantly reduce energy consumption. But HMI and Fluorescent are still much higher power efficiency. The mining of the rare earth elements needed to produce these types of light sources along with waste management complexity are rarely mentioned. What is your vision about the green approach?
 - **Ediola:**

At the International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS), we are committed to promoting sustainability and reducing environmental impact within the film industry. The shift toward sustainable technologies is commendable. Through our events, we plan to educate both individual and corporate members on responsible sourcing, innovative recycling, sustainable alternatives, comprehensive lifecycle assessments, and raising awareness about the environmental impact of lighting choices.
 - **Ville:**

I believe it’s crucial for everyone to consider what steps they can take to adopt greener practices, and this should naturally extend to filmmaking. However, our industry is often full of disposable elements, such as temporary sets, which makes true sustainability challenging. In lighting, the development of low power consumption tools, like LEDs, has been a significant achievement. Yet, we must also consider the bigger picture. The materials required to produce these tools—such as rare earth elements—and the complexities of waste management raise important questions. Are the tools we label as 'green' truly sustainable, or do they carry hidden environmental costs? It’s vital that we look beyond energy consumption and evaluate the entire lifecycle of the equipment we use.
 - **Michael:**

This has been a thorn in the side of the film industry since the beginning. We can create solutions for our portion of the industry, but until we fully embrace the idea that we are horrible polluters from top to bottom, there will not be an actual “green” set. Battery technology is amazing, but the power to charge them is still dirty and the proper disposal of the batteries is still very rudimentary. We still use lunches from foam containers and throw them in a dump. I could go on for hours.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- We hear a lot of complaints from everybody including many rental houses about lower reparability indexes and short functional longevity of modern lighting fixtures, color stability, heat management, IP rating. Do you think that organizations such as SMPTE, ICI and associations such as ICLS, IMAGO can do something about this?
 - **Ville:**

Many manufacturers are now investing significant time and resources into developing strong, long-lasting equipment, and there are some excellent products on the market. Unfortunately, these high-quality items tend to be more expensive. On the other hand, there has always been manufacturers who cut corners to produce cheaper alternatives. And thanks for more complicated technology these cheap manufacturers are now more than earlier. This results in products with lower reparability, shorter functional longevity, and potential issues with color stability, heat management, and IP ratings. This a part of eternal balance of quality and money. Organizations like SMPTE, ICI, and associations such as ICLS and IMAGO can certainly help by advocating for higher standards and demanding better quality from manufacturers. Ultimately, it's about finding the balance between quality and cost, and as an industry, we need to prioritize and support well-made products.
 - **Michael:**

Education from top to bottom is the most important solution in this case. We must convince rental houses that high-quality, long-lasting fixtures are ultimately more profitable and responsible, but the manufacturers have responsibility here. So often, I hear about users getting free replacements for broken fixtures, because it is cheaper than fixing them. I believe that manufacturers should consider reparability in the design phase and not after the product is released. Additionally, products should have upgrade capability instead of replacement options.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- How do you see the future of the relationships between gaffers/cinematographers and lighting tools manufacturers?
 - **Ville:**

Thanks to the internet and modern communication tools, maintaining relationships between gaffers, cinematographers, and lighting tool manufacturers has become easier and more direct than ever. Given the rapid pace of technological development, these relationships are already crucial, and they will only grow more important in the future. As new lighting technologies continue to emerge, ongoing collaboration and communication between all parties will be essential to ensure that the tools meet the evolving needs of the industry and allow us to achieve the best results on set.
 - **Michael:**

I already enjoy the relationships between all three parties. The Discord option with the ICLS lets high end users directly converse with the manufacturers. Often, the person who answers the questions in Discord is the person capable of solving the issues. If other organizations had the same type of communication, it would be amazing.

Questions to Ville & Michael

- How do you see the future of the relationships between gaffers/cinematographers and rental houses?
 - **Ville:**

In smaller countries, such as the Nordic countries, I foresee more mergers between event technology rental houses and traditional film equipment rental houses. Many of the current film equipment rental houses in the region are too small to meet the growing demand from gaffers and cinematographers now and in the future. To stay competitive, rental houses will need to offer a broader range of technology, from moving heads to LEDs, as well as traditional tungsten and HMI lights. This will ensure that they can provide the diverse lighting solutions required for modern productions.

- **Michael:**

The relationship between gaffers and rental houses continues to evolve. In many ways, not much has changed. We send a list; they quote the list and then send the gear. But, the landscape is changing. Rental houses are also manufacturers and are providing education. We need to support those efforts and encourage involvement by all parties in both education and relationships.

Question to Ediola, Ville & Michael:

- What do you expect from ICLS and ITC cooperation expansion?
 - **Ediola:**

From the expanded cooperation between the International Cinema Lighting Society (ICLS) and the International Technical Committee (ITC) of IMAGO, I anticipate a significant positive impact on both organizations. This collaboration is expected to facilitate the sharing of best practices, innovative solutions, and resources, thereby enhancing the sustainability and efficiency of the industry. By working together, we can drive advancements in lighting technology, promote environmental responsibility, and foster a more inclusive and diverse industry.
 - **Ville:**

I hope the expanded cooperation between ICLS and ITC will bring gaffers, desk operators, and cinematographers closer together, fostering discussions about current lighting trends and future demands. By collaborating more closely, we can strengthen our collective voice, enabling us to better influence producers, manufacturers, and the overall processes involved in lighting films. Together, we can drive positive change and ensure that the industry evolves in a way that meets our needs and the demands of modern filmmaking.
 - **Michael:**

As both organizations are worldwide groups, I hope that we expand our outreach to areas that don't have equal resources. I'd like to see both groups working towards inclusion, both regionally, but locally as

well. I don't have expectations, but I do have hopes. I am proud to be involved in the process and I hope to be for a very long time.